



Shakespeare Matters

"The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship"

Vol. 1: no. 2

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments..."

Winter 2002

The Ashbourne Portrait: Part II

Costume dating debunks Folger's Hamersley claim

By Barbara Burris ©2001

"The emperor walked in the procession under his crimson canopy. And all the people of the town, who had lined the streets or were looking down from the windows, said that the emperor's clothes were beautiful. 'What a magnificent robe! And the Train! How well the emperor's clothes suit him!' None of them were willing to admit that they hadn't seen a thing; for if anyone did, then he was either stupid or unfit for the job he held. Never before had the emperor's clothes been such a success."¹

In the area of costume the Ashbourne portrait of Shakespeare has long been a Stratfordian version of "The Emperor's New Clothes." Art experts who have examined the painting including Wivell in 1847, Spielmann in 1910, and the art experts the Folger Shakespeare Library has consulted since 1931, when they purchased the portrait, have not expressed what they must have seen, that the costume is that of a nobleman from the 1570s. Like the emperor's counselors, who out of fear for their reputations and positions, concealed what they really saw and pretended to "see" the emperor's invisible "clothes," these art experts have ignored and concealed evidence in this painting that contradicts the Stratfordian mystique and claims for Sir Hugh Hamersley. They have ignored evidence in the painting and the costume that as experts they must have seen and in any other circumstance would have used without any qualms in a rational dating of the portrait.

Only the well known art expert M. H. Spielmann, who examined the painting in 1910, cautiously remarked upon discordant elements in the painting that contradicted the official view of a Shakespeare portrait of the Stratford man. These dissonant elements included the problems with the inscription, nobleman's dress, neck ruff, age of the sitter and similarity of the costume to the Earl of Morton who died in 1581, thirty years before the 1611 date on the painting.² But, like the emperor's counselors, Spielmann hesitated to draw the logical conclusions from his observations. Instead he fell in step with the Jacobean dating of the portrait that fit the Stratford man. Yet it was Spielmann's reference to the similarity of the Ashbourne costume with the costume of the Earl

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First Fellowship meeting held

Board elected; meeting dates, program schedule established



Dr. Charles Berney, Fellowship President

On a cold day in late October, members of the Shakespeare Fellowship met for the first time in the warm and welcoming home of Isabel Holden of Northampton, Massachusetts. Some had arrived from Boston, some from New York and Connecticut. I had come from Toronto. Just shortly after the tragedy of September 11th, it wasn't a time conducive to traveling, but nonetheless, twenty of us still managed to make the trip.

After coffee and greetings, we removed to the living room and began to talk, with Chuck Berney taking the chair. We were thrilled to learn we already had 100 members—we now have over 150—and were even happier to receive our first issue of *Shakespeare Matters*, which—slick and

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On Shakespeare's portrayal of the moral life

By John Baker

Recently I picked up a copy of a nearly century-old book on Shakespeare, Frank Chapman Sharp's *Shakespeare's Portrayal of The Moral Life* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1902), and it reminded me yet again of the timelessness of Shakespeare and Shakespeare studies. Regardless of where one stands on the authorship debate, it is always useful to remind one's self about the man who authored these remarkable works, what he was up to, and why it matters even today, four centuries later.

Since moral philosophy does not change, the book is as valid today as it was a century ago, perhaps more so, since modern philosophers don't seem to think as clearly as Sharp. Moreover the subject, Shakespeare's works, have not changed at all, unless one counts the new texts and manuscripts—such as the Dering and

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Letters:

To the Editors:

Barbara Burris' most interesting and well-presented article in the first edition of *Shakespeare Matters* referred briefly to the poem, *A Lover's Complaint*. In her article Ms Burris referred to a line taken from the second verse: "Upon her head a platted hive of straw," which she construed as a possible reference to Queen Elizabeth's "gold red periwig, etc." I am sure that Ms Burris will not object to my adding, that this type of head-dress was forcibly imposed upon women, in some parts of medieval Europe, after they had given birth to an illegitimate baby. The subject of the poem has therefore been discreetly labelled as an unmarried mother, resulting from her seduction. I also suggest that this symbolism is reinforced by the opening line which sets the scene: "From off a hill whose concave womb ...," since this also implants thoughts of pregnancy in the mind of the reader from the very start.

By a fortunate coincidence, an exhibition of "Inquisition Torture and Intolerance" at the Museum of Man in San Diego presently has an exhibit on display of a woman attired in a plaited straw head-dress, after having given birth to an illegitimate child.

David Roper
Truro, Cornwall
United Kingdom
16 October 2001

To the Editors:

With my receipt of the first issue of *Shakespeare Matters* I was immediately drawn to read Barbara Burris' first article on the Ashbourne portrait, having recently heard her presentation at the SOS Conference. The evidence she reviewed at Carmel was fascinating; but, as usual, I craved the hard copy.

There are two issues I found in the article to worry me. That Chapman's two *Bussy D'Ambois* plays link Oxford to *Hamlet*, point to Oxford's trip abroad, and hint at his authorship of poems credited to Shakespeare, I completely agree. That the words "verse in paper royall ...bound richly up, and strung with Crimson strings" is a description of the exact book held in the hand of the man in the Ashbourne portrait in particular is an assumption I would

hesitate to make. It is true that the text does "link the Poet" to this type of book, but it doesn't "identify" Oxford in this portrait and this specific book. Secondly, I do not credit the connection in *Romeo and Juliet* she proposes, though I understand her argument.

The specific details of Chapman's text relative to the book of the "foolish Poet" lead me, as a librarian, to picture a large book, as "paper royall" is a term meaning "paper of a size measuring 24 by 19 inches, as used for writing and 25 by 20 for printing." (OED, royal paper, paper royal) Consulting Gaskell's *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (1995) we find that a royal octavo would be about 23 X 15 cm. after the usual 3 folds of that size sheet of paper. The paper in this period would probably have been imported from Italy or France. The 6th edition of *The Bookman's Glossary* puts the size at of a royal octavo at 10 X 6 and 1/4 inches. The book in the portrait looks as if it might be a regular octavo or perhaps a smaller size, but a "royall" evokes the image of a larger book, especially a royal folio. This is backed up by the next line where a presumably large piece of parchment is being "smooth'd with the Pumice" and "rul'd with lead," as a very richly ornamented manuscript page might be prepared. A book on parchment would have

been about three times more expensive than paper. The word "royall" may have poetic overtones add to the picture of those highly-born who have over-blown egos about their verse, but there were more such courtier/poets than De Vere on the scene to whom this description might apply.

Because Harvey used the word "apish" and "ape" to describe Oxford, I can't assume that every use of "ape"—a man who imitates, often Continental manner and dress—always means Oxford. Jonson seems to use the word about the Stratford man. The Shakespeare plays employ it in several instances applying to characters created there. French manners were aped at court by many, even if we think of Oxford as the leading example. And "never" and "ever" have evermore been great end-rhyme words. If the Bard used them, so could Chapman, and thereby gain attention. I even think that "Admiring E.Ver." might ask to be taken seriously. I'll concede at the same time Chapman might be highly ambivalent about Oxford and tried to write a better Hamlet character without necessarily subscribing to the picture of De Vere as a "ditcher." That the passage is a paraphrase of one from Catullus seems reason enough for creating a satirical portrait which happens to be at odds with the passage praising De Vere.

Shakespeare Matters

Published quarterly by the
The Shakespeare Fellowship

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The Shakespeare Fellowship

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Subscriptions to *Shakespeare Matters* are \$30 per year (\$15 for online issues only). Family or institution subscriptions are \$45 per year. Patrons of the Fellowship are \$75 and up. Send subscription requests to:

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The purpose of the Shakespeare Fellowship is to promote public awareness and acceptance of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), and further to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication into all aspects of Shakespeare studies, and also into the history and culture of the Elizabethan era.

The Society was founded and incorporated in 2001 in the State of Massachusetts and is chartered under the membership corporation laws of that state (nonprofit status pending).

Dues, grants and contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

As for Lady Capulet's speech to Juliet asking her to read Paris like a book (Lines 81-94, I, iii) and by marrying him provide a cover "that in gold clasps locks in the golden story," I submit that the figure is a natural one for the author of many plays to use. Gold clasps around a golden story don't necessarily equal Shakespeare's manuscript book of sonnets. In fact, if anything is specifically suggested in Romeo and Juliet it may be that a "golden book" in this period referred to a register of the nobility of the state of Venice. (OED) Oxford knew the distance from Venice to Verona.

Books—richly bound books with gold-stamping or tooling, gilded edges and tied with crimson string or cord—were prized possessions. Most books didn't come bound, but only sewn, and the wealthy or "noble" often decided to afford richly decorated bindings with either ties (usually worn off) or metal clasps to keep the pages compact. However, Gaskell says, "Gold tooling... became increasingly common from the mid sixteenth century and was not confined to bespoke binders..." while "heavily gilt retailers bindings such as the small English devotional books that were sold in large numbers from the 1560s until the later seventeenth century were indeed intended to look expensive while really being cheaply executed..." Photographic examples of finely done "golden" volumes can be seen in the works of Mirjam M. Foot, leading scholar of bindings of this period. The Huntington and Folger own many examples in all sizes and yes, the OED uses the Chapman lines from *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* to define the term string—"to bind, tie, fasten or secure with a string or strings."

The book in the Ashbourne portrait might not be the Sonnets. A book, either printed or in manuscript, is the proper symbol for the Bard and his life of writing as Ms. Burris points out, but assuming it is a portrait of Oxford, might it not be Hamlet's book, *Cardanus Comforte*, or Castiglione's *El Cortegiano* with Oxford's prefatory letter, or maybe a copy of a commonplace book which he probably made and isn't extant? Maybe it was a copy of sonnets by his uncle, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, or a prayer book such as Queen Elizabeth may have held in one or more of her portraits. From our perspective we'd like it to be *The Sonnets*, but we might be mistaken.

There are many facets to the fine and
(Continued on page 32)

From the Editors

Tender airs, Tudor heirs

Some irreverent wag once claimed that if a drunken Stuart compositor had up-ended the "n" in "tender air" (*Cymbeline* V,iv,140; V,v,445), the result would be a perfect homophone for the controversial theory over which there has recently been so much trouble. We don't claim to know why Shakespeare chose to transform this curious turn of phrase, which also appears so prominently in the Sonnets under the variation "tender heir" (1.4), where it refers to the Fair Youth, into an oracular enigma in *Cymbeline*. But there is no doubt that "tender air" and "Tudor heir" are close enough to invite a circumspect second glance. Nor is there any doubt that Posthumous Leonatus' oracle concerns royal succession. Nor is there any doubt, finally, that dynastic questions are fundamental to Shakespearean texts, as are—in many—royal bastards and changeling children. Often these ultimately inherit—or at least are seen to deserve to—in the fictional, compensatory world of the Shakespearean oeuvre.

To anticipate some of the objections Paul Altrocchi's analysis of the "Persian lady"—apparently a portrait of Queen Elizabeth I—is likely to evoke in some rarified quarters, we'll take this opportunity to lay some cards on the table: yes, we think that the "Tudor heir" theory—which argues that the Shakespeare question is inextricably linked to issues of the dynastic succession of the Tudor government under Queen Elizabeth I—merits open-minded consideration and very close examination.

This is a matter of principle, not dogma or even private conviction.

Shakespeare Matters will evaluate submissions, in consultation with our editorial associates, on the basis of the quality of argument and analysis, not on whether we happen to agree with the conclusions of a given writer. We will deploy our editorial prerogatives to combat the unfortunate tendency of Oxfordians to replicate the censorious values which have produced the present intellectual cul-de-sac of Shakespearean orthodoxy. Banning discussion of "offensive" topics which can't harm anyone, and might open up new avenues for inquiry and investigation, is bad ethics, bad strategy, and bad thinking.

On the contrary, we expect and hope to publish articles which will challenge the

presuppositions of our readers, and of ourselves. We vow to go out of our way to find articles which offer controversial interpretations, to print them, and then to facilitate as much dialogue, debate, and discussion as possible.

We regard this as our editorial responsibility.

The conclusions of articles, then, are always those of the individual writers, not the editors, the Shakespeare Fellowship or its Trustees. In no case does publication of an article imply an endorsement of the conclusions or reasoning of the article; it merely indicates our conviction that the article is sufficiently probative to stimulate a useful and educational dialogue which facilitates the purposes of the Fellowship as defined in its Mission Statement.

The Shakespeare Fellowship neither endorses nor condemns the "Tudor heir" theory in any of its published permutations. Some of our members believe that the theory, in one form or another, resolves many longstanding enigmas of Shakespearean scholarship and Tudor/Stuart cultural and diplomatic history.

Tudor heir advocates such as Mrs. Sears in her *Shakespeare and the Tudor Rose* (2nd edition forthcoming from Meadow Geese Press) have, in our opinion, established a firm foundation for the plausibility of the theory. However, a new theory inevitably produces new problems and questions. Its proponents, if they practice intellectual honesty, must consider these. By no means have the advocates of this theory prevailed by satisfying all our doubts on some critical points of fact and interpretation. And their critics have sometimes made valid arguments which deserve consideration, discussion and debate.

Shakespeare Matters welcomes dissent—polite, open, reasoned dissent—from any article or editorial we publish. In fact, we propose to establish a regular feature in our newsletter which is specifically designed to allow readers the opportunity to "talk back" to the editors (or writers of major articles). This "My Turn" column will afford us a chance to hear from you, our readers. Of course we hope you'll write to agree as well as disagree, to clarify as well as complain, and to enlighten as well as to argue. But even if you're just feeling cranky please, do, write.

Fellowship (continued from page 1)

professional-looking—was filled with insightful articles.

The first order of the day was business, and there was a motion by Ron Destro that a nine-member board containing five officers be elected by acclamation to serve for one year. Those officers would be Chuck Berney (President); Lynne Kositsky (Vice President for internal communications); Roger Stritmatter (Vice President for outreach and education); Alex McNeil (Treasurer); and Ted Story (Recording Secretary). Members at large would be Paul Altrocchi, Steve Aucella, Pat Urquhart, and another member to be chosen at a later date. The motion was seconded by Betty Sears and passed unanimously.

We decided to conduct board meetings via email. Each month the recording secretary would precis them for the minutes and those minutes would be displayed on the Shakespeare Fellowship website. We also decided to be a truly open organization, with as much input as possible from members. Membership meetings would be annual, probably in November, and in all likelihood tied in with conferences. Bill Boyle suggested that our first conference

be held in Boston, to try to tap into the educational system there, and plans are now proceeding to that effect. We needed, everyone agreed, to be an organization of action, with outreach and education as our primary goals.

We discussed other initiatives before adjourning for a delicious meal, which Isabel Holden and Siching Song had been preparing all morning.

Following lunch, Tony Burton, a lawyer and Shakespeare scholar, but emphatically not an Oxfordian, gave a fascinating paper on *Hamlet* and Inheritance. There was a lively discussion afterwards; several of our members tried somewhat noisily to convert Mr. Burton to our persuasion—with very little success, I might add.

After yet another break for tea—Oxfordians do seem to need a lot of sustenance—there was a Board of Trustees meeting with everyone welcome to attend, our first chance to be open to all.

The point was made that as an executive committee encourages secret decisions we



Fellowship founding members (l to r) Betty Sears, Mark Anderson and Charles Boyle at the 3rd Annual Renaissance Festival in Vermont last August. The popular Festival was co-founded by Sears in 1999.

shouldn't have one. There was unanimous agreement to this, and we went on to discuss various matters, including a website committee, the newsletter, and our 501C tax status.

We adjourned in the late afternoon, but of course that wasn't the end of the day's events, as at least 10 of us met later for dinner, drinks, and more discussion. It was sad to part, but all in all it was a memorable, heart-warming experience, and a fitting beginning to the Shakespeare Fellowship.

—Lynne Kositsky

From Fellowship President Dr. Charles Berney

One excellent newsletter might be a fluke, but two excellent newsletters is a tradition. As you can see from the document in your hand, the Shakespeare Fellowship has a tradition of bringing you incisive, well-documented research, as exemplified by the articles contributed by Barbara Burris and Paul Altrocchi, continuing with topics reported on in our first newsletter. We have already been approached by the *World Shakespeare Bibliography* requesting copies for their organization.

Our dream of an open and active Oxfordian society is fast becoming reality. Membership is growing rapidly. So far we have garnered 130 responses to an initial mailing of less than 500, a return of better than 25%. In addition, about 25% of our respondents have joined as patrons, contributing \$75 or more. I regard this as an inspiring indication of enthusiasm for the Oxfordian movement and faith in our fledgling organization. My special thanks to each of you who have gone this extra mile.

We are currently laying plans for future get-togethers. We have reserved our customary room in the Harvard Faculty Club for the traditional Oxford Day banquet, this year on Friday, April 26th, and are hoping to expand the tradition by arranging a program (speakers, perhaps a panel) for the following morning. We are also planning for a conference to be held in the Boston area in November 2002, possibly at the Newton Marriott, where the successful 1999 conference was held. Peering into the crystal ball for plans beyond 2002, we discern indications of New York in 2003, Carmel in 2004, and Stratford, Ontario, in 2005.

Our website (<http://www.shakespearefellowship.org>) currently has 62 members registered for the discussion boards. Through the kindness of Mark Alexander, the complete text of *Shakespeare Identified* is available here. The web committee hopes the site will eventually provide a public-access archive of articles on each Shakespearean play, tailored to students doing research on particular texts who want to know how the Oxfordian perspective affects our understanding of the plays. Dr. Felicia Londre's essay, "*Hamlet* as Autobiography," is an example of the type of essay we hope to make available to a wider audience through the site. Special thanks are due to Julie Wood, a web-site designer from Michigan, for her dedicated efforts.

Let me close by asking that those of you sending materials to our newsletter editors use the following addresses: William Boyle, Shakespeare Matters, P.O. Box 263, Somerville MA 02143, or Dr. Roger Stritmatter, 20 Day Avenue, Northampton MA 01060. The Belmont address (Box 561, Belmont MA 02478) should be used for financial matters, or for communications intended for me. Incidentally, we are planning to post our membership list on our web site in the near future. If for any reason you do not wish to be included, please contact me at the Belmont address.

As noted above, April 26th, 2002 in Cambridge will be our first official get-together since our founding meeting, and we're planning to make it a gala affair. I hope to see many of you there.

With warmest best wishes, Chuck Berney

Guest Column
My Turn

New beginnings

By Dr. Daniel L. Wright

Since 11 September, none of us are as we were before that yet still almost unbelievable day. Our perceptions of the world, our families, friends, colleagues, adversaries and ourselves have been changed in fundamental ways by the enormity of the blow that has been struck against us. The shock has been psychic as well as physical. We have awakened to a new sensitivity and vulnerability, to the recognition that a spectacular, malevolent conspiracy of invisible, evil genius lurks in our midst. "Eden" has been invaded; we have been struck with incredible violence by a sinister power that is fortified by deep resentment and sustained by a centuries-old hatred that has resolved never to end its bloody vendetta against the West.

However, although 11 September, like a spectre, continues to haunt our waking and sleeping moments, it has summoned us, simultaneously, to pensive thoughts and a break with tired routine; it has invited us to re-evaluate what we should be doing with our lives. We have been challenged not only to re-examine old assumptions of security and trust but challenged to reconsider our priorities in this horrific reminder that we live all-too-short and unpredictable lives. What are we about as individuals, as a nation, as a people at the sunset of an era and at the bloody dawn of an unknown age?

These were some of the questions that the writer who called himself Shakespeare addressed in his immortal works, for Shakespeare, like us, lived in a society that grew robust in the warm glow of a "golden age" at the same time that it struggled over the icy, dangerous terrain of war, insurrection, terror and foreign intrigue. If Shakespeare was who we think he was, for half a century he rode the crest of a rising if turbulent tide of great national achievement and prosperity even while, in the midst of his country's heady surge toward prominence and renown, he endured personal hardship and bitter disappointment, soul-piercing betrayal, and losses—emotional and financial—of staggering proportion. He anchored his plays, especially his histories, in the complex questions and problems of the day while England struggled to understand

what she ought to be as she assumed a hitherto unprecedented place at the center of European affairs—a position from which she would become poised to command the future and, in substantial part, influence the affairs of the world for generations to come. What kind of nation would she be? Would she prostitute herself to vanity and the pursuit of empire, or would she overcome the lure of overreaching dominion to struggle for a destiny that would ennoble her and bestow on her people a dignity that mere wealth and power could not provide? Would she turn inward, repeat past mistakes, and be torn asunder by old rivalries and unbroken obedience to codes of violent and retributive justice, or would she learn to incorporate into her national life a new appreciation for the Classical world's virtues of patience and endurance, mingle those with a renewed Christian commitment to repentance and forgiveness, and therein strive to heal her broken land and "cleanse the foul body of the infected world"?

For us, as students of Shakespeare who recognize that this writer was a cultural midwife at the moment of his nation's emergence from the dark isolation of its native womb into a world of cosmopolitan brilliance, lingers, therefore, an important question: was this most influential of all writers who assisted at the literary birth of his nation, suckled it in its cultural infancy, and helped it take its first steps among those lands that had been captured by the intellectual promise and zeal of the Renaissance, a provincial, untutored and acquisitive bourgeois who journeyed to London (handicapped—at least a bit[!])—as former Yale Professor Tucker Brooke admits, by a "plentiful lack of knowledge") with the goal of enriching himself for idle retirement by writing throwaway work for the illiterate masses? Was he a man with a craving after fame and fortune, who, in the imagination of Walter Sullivan, set out for London "[w]ith a few belongings in his hand, a long vision in his eyes, and clowns and heroes and ringing lines of poetry simmering in his head"? Or (as if we really need ask!) was he a passionate and ac-

claimed playwright and poet, a lauded historian and scholar, a courtier surrounded by persons of the highest power and consequence whose ancestors and families fill, in rich detail, the ranks of the Shakespeare plays? Was he an eccentric, erudite, broadly traveled linguist and wordsmith, a patron of writers and playmakers whose life, from its earliest years, had been anchored in a world of learning, literature and theatre? Did his work reap a personal fortune or dispense one?

Of course, we know the answer to that. We know who he was, what he did, and what it cost him—but the greater world does not, and perhaps more regrettable than its ignorance is its indifference to the question of who this unrivalled contributor to our individual and collective self-understanding was. In the light of the events of 11 September, the question of who Shakespeare was may seem inconsequential to some. But I would put it to us that if we believe the works of Shakespeare to be discerning guides to the complexity and indecisiveness of a nation on the precipice of profound change, the writer who created these treasure-laden companions for our lives' journeys is someone we want to know, engage, quarrel with, and learn from. And I submit we cannot do that when we are expected to suspend rational judgment and accept the incredible proposition that this man who relied so extensively on the stories, examples and personages from manifold works of classical antiquity never needed to read any of those works because, in the words of Stratfordian author T. W. Baldwin, the singularity of his genius was such that he could acquire their contents "by absorption from the air."

As Oxfordians of post-September cataclysm sensibilities, therefore, Shakespeare confronts us with new challenges. Among them, he invites us, in all the spheres of our lives, to move from where we have stood, mired in silent acquiescence to hollow tradition, from inaction and quarrelsome pettiness to fresh associations of fellowship, collaboration, support and learning. To this long-overdue goal of shaking off

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Folger's SQ asks, "Why should we study Shakespeare?"

A recent mailing from the Folger Shakespeare Library's *Shakespeare Quarterly*



"Dislocating Shakespeare"

asks provocatively, "Why should we study Shakespeare anymore?"—a sentiment that is keeping with the thinking behind the founding of the Shake-

speare Fellowship and *Shakespeare Matters*. It also can be seen as something of a response to the recent trend in some quarters that seems to be trashing and marginalizing the Bard.

Of course, lurking behind all this is the unmentioned "A" word—authorship. And yet, ironically, inside a small brochure enclosed in the SQ mailing, "authorship studies" does make an appearance—as a hot new topic for Shakespeare scholarship, spliced in between "cultural studies" and "deconstruction" in a list of all the most chic topics *du jour*. Thus authorship is effectively neutralized and subjugated to the latest academic theories.

As is often the case in this paradigm shift, however, what the editorial voice denies or marginalizes is flamboyantly evident in the iconography of the sales brochure, apparently a joint production of the Johns Hopkins Press—a center for radical chic literary theory—and the Folger

Shakespeare Library. The brochure features an image of the Droeshout engraving as used on the cover of the *Quarterly's* Winter 2001 issue, adorned with Maori motifs—i.e., nativized in honor of the issue's interview with Maori poet and translator Merimeri Penfold, on the subject of translating the Sonnets into Maori. The theme of the entire Winter issue is "Dislocating Shakespeare."

So while authorship is only one item in a long list of theoretical paradigms invoked by Paster, it is—pretty obviously—the central issue, the nagging question, the bothersome little irritant that just won't go away, which haunts the *Quarterly's* new public relations efforts.

While Editor Paster seems quite enamored by the fig leaf of contemporary theoretical fashions, which have frequently served as an emotional and intellectual pretext for academicians to avoid dealing honestly with the authorship question, there is direct language in the brochure which readers of *Shakespeare Matters* will consider a welcome relief to academic jargon and dissimulation:

"In our pages," Paster writes, "Shakespeare isn't worshipped as a cultural icon; he is studied as a brilliant artist whose dramatic and lyrical inventions touch on every aspect of human discourse and experience: gender relations, race, class, desire, family affection and rivalry, existential sorrow, comedy, history, and that rich terrain known as language." We'll drink to that, Dr. Paster.

For information on subscribing to the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, write to The Johns Hopkins University Press, P.O. Box 19966, Baltimore MD 21211-0966 U.S.A.

and a generosity of spirit that Shakespeare instructed us to practice when, in the words of Duke Vincentio of *Measure for Measure*, he bad us always put forward our best natures in our associations with other people:

Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our
virtues

Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not.

Here's to an exciting journey! I look forward to seeing you in Portland in April!

Authorship Symposium

A symposium on Shakespearean topics was held on the Harvard University campus on Saturday, November 3rd, sponsored by Paul Streitz's Oxford Institute. The event was opened by Hank Whittmore, who spoke on the historical events of 1601-1603 (the Essex rebellion, the death of Elizabeth), and related them to passages in the *Sonnets*.

Chuck Berney then presented reasons for associating particular historical figures with characters in *Hamlet*. He began with the usual Burghley/Polonius identification, then covered the other characters, including the link between Yorick and Will Somers, who was jester to Henry VIII. The Earl of Leicester's reputation as a poisoner was emphasized, strengthening his identification with Claudius.

The session was closed by a talk from Oxford Institute director Paul Streitz, who used material from his newly-published book, *Oxford*, to make a case for the theory that Edward de Vere was the child of the young Elizabeth and Thomas Seymour, placed in the de Vere household by William Cecil. After the symposium, some of the participants, their intellectual hunger sated, gathered at a local pizzeria to satisfy more corporeal appetites. Others trekked back to New York to attend a surprise birthday party for Hank Whittmore.

15th Oxford Day Banquet scheduled for April 26th

The 15th Annual Oxford Day Banquet will be held on Friday, April 26th at the Harvard Faculty Club in Cambridge, Mass.

The event will now be sponsored by the Shakespeare Fellowship, and plans call for expanding the usual schedule by adding a Saturday morning seminar to the weekend's activities; topics under consideration include Shakespeare and religion, with Dr. Roger Stritmatter's work on Oxford's Geneva Bible being highlighted, along with the current debate over Shakespeare's own religious beliefs (i.e. a Catholic?).

Contact Chuck Berney at cvberney@rcn.com for further details.

Wright (continued from page 5)

past associations and working with one another in forums and with persons who promote cooperation, embrace friendly dissent, pursue cordial relationships and practice mutual respect as mechanisms to create better avenues for us to pursue with others a more perfect understanding of who Shakespeare was, I see the Shakespeare Fellowship committed in ways that no similar organization is or has been. In the Shakespeare Fellowship, I look forward to spirited wrangling, genial contentiousness, a commitment to excellence

Stritmatter Bible dissertation nominated for award

Roger Stritmatter's 2001 PhD dissertation (*The Marginalia of Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible: providential discovery, literary reasoning and historical consequence*) has been nominated for the prestigious Bernheimer award for the best PhD dissertation in Comparative Literature. To date the competition judges have not responded to the nomination.

However, Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens—whose numerous public comments in support of de Vere's authorship have made him the most outspoken of several Supreme Court Justices who support inquiry and debate on the authorship question—has already weighed in with his

personal congratulations to Stritmatter in a recent letter.

Stevens refers to the dissertation as "an impressive piece of work" and endorses its primary conclusion: "You demonstrate that the owner of the de Vere Bible had the same familiarity with its text as the author of the Shakespeare canon."

"I trust you will not object," added Stevens, "if I refer to your thesis when I comment on the authorship question in future talks...in time, more and more traditional scholars will be compelled to recognize the force of the evidence you have assembled in support of the Oxfordian position."

Special Offer

Subscribe to Shakespeare Matters and receive Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible for only \$45.00.
(See page 31)

"Roger Stritmatter has provided for us a map of the author's mind as his creative art was informed by Scripture."

—Dr. Daniel L. Wright

"A stunning piece of scholarship."

—Sir Derek Jacobi

"I enjoyed the book immensely ... words such as 'definitive' and 'conclusive' do not seem out of place."

—Michael York

"An impressive piece of work ... demonstrates that the owner of the de Vere Bible had the same familiarity with its text as the author of the Shakespeare canon."

—Supreme Court Justice John Stevens

Shakespeare Oxford Society Conference

The Shakespeare Oxford Society held its 25th annual conference in Carmel, California last October 4th to 7th. This was the second time the Society has visited Carmel for one of its annual conferences, the last being in 1994.

A highlight of this conference was the special series of Shakespeare and Shakespeare apocrypha plays—"Royal Blood: the Rise and Fall of Kings"—being put on by conference host Stephen Moorer's Carmel Shakespeare Festival. Conference attendees were treated to performances of *Richard II*, *Edward III* and *Thomas of Woodstock* (these plays are reviewed by Chuck Berney on pages 31-32).

Several of the conference papers focused on these same plays (Richard Desper on *Edward III* and Stephanie Hughes on *Thomas of Woodstock*). *Henry V* also received some attention, with Dr. Ren Draya speaking on "*Henry V: the Gentler Gamester*," and Ramon Jimenez on, "Rebellion Broached on a Sword," making a case for an early composition date for the play.

Early composition dates for some plays was also the theme of David Roper's paper on Henry Peacham's chronogram (first published in the July 2001 *De Vere Society Newsletter*), in which he considers that the famous sketch of *Titus Andronicus* dates all the way back to 1575, thus placing the play's beginnings then also (when Stratman

was but 11). Dr. Alan Nelson debated Roper on his theory Sunday morning and offered an alternative reading of the sketch's short-hand Latinized date.

Nelson also spoke on Oxford's possible behavior upon the succession of James I. Other papers included Scott Fanning on "Titan and the Ghost of Hamlet," and Bill Farina on "Italian sources for *Venus and Adonis* and *Rape of Lucrece*."

Katherine Chiljan's "New Spin on the Elizabeth Procession Portrait" (she considers the wedding may have been Southampton's) was one of three conference papers on portraits. The other two—by Barbara Burris and Paul Altrocchi—appear in this issue of *Shakespeare Matters*. Another paper—Charles Boyle's response to Diana Price's *Elizabethan Review* article on the Tudor heir theory—will appear in *Shakespeare Matters* in 2002.

At the AGM five new SOS trustees were elected: Dr. Frank Davis (Savannah, GA); Marion Buckley (Chicago, IL); Barbara Flues (North Carolina); Wayne Shore (San Antonio, TX); and Jim Sherwood (New York, NY). Current trustee and treasurer Joe Peel (Nashville TN) was re-elected to another term.

The meeting ran overtime discussing former trustee William Boyle's tenure as Treasurer and the ongoing dispute over whether certain disbursements made by Boyle were or were not authorized.

Who Wrote Shakespeare?

Evening seminar at the
Smithsonian Museum
January 29th, 2002

Mark your calendars (Tuesday, January 29th, 6:30 to 9:00 pm) for what promises to be a hot and lively "courtroom drama" as two renowned experts on the Shakespeare authorship question are cross-examined by two of the best trial lawyers in the country.

Gail Paster, editor of the *Shakespeare Quarterly* and professor of English at George Washington University, will be the advocate for the man from Stratford. Richard F. Whalen, past president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and author of *Shakespeare: Who Was He?* will present the case for Edward de Vere.

They will be cross-examined by Robert S. Bennett, renowned trial lawyer with Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP, and former counsel to President Clinton and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger; and by E. Barrett Prettyman Jr., senior partner at Hogan and Hartson, former special assistant to President Kennedy, and recent inspector general of the District of Columbia. William F. Causey of Nixon Peabody LLP will moderate.

The evening will conclude with a discussion and questions from the audience.

The Queen Elizabeth Pregnancy Portrait:

Who designed it and who did the cover-ups?

By Paul Hemenway Altrocchi, MD

"Truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long—a man's son may, but in the end truth will out." (The Merchant of Venice)¹

For centuries the portrait known as Queen Elizabeth in a Fancy Dress has tantalized English art experts by its complex indecipherable symbolism.

The painting shows a pregnant lady in a highly-decorated silver gown, wearing a tapered headdress with a long veil extending down her back, standing under a tree bearing nuts. Her right hand crowns a weeping stag with a circlet of pansies. Three enigmatic Latin mottoes are spaced along the trunk of a large tree on the left, and a graceful gold cartouche on the right contains a 14-line poem.

The portrait has been owned for more than 300 years by the English Royal Family which labeled it as Queen Elizabeth until recently. Oxfordians first learned of it about 35 years ago.²

In 1898, Ernest Law agreed that the portrait was of Queen Elizabeth and concluded that "This curious picture, with its fantastical design, enigmatical mottoes, and quaint verses, doubtless has some allegorical meaning which we are now unable to interpret."³

England's most respected art expert Sir Roy Strong, now in his 90s, said that "Without doubt we are looking at . . . the most complicated of all Elizabethan allegorical portraits.⁴ He also stated that "such a picture cannot have been conceived as anything other than a major statement."⁵

According to the published literature about the Pregnancy Portrait, its complex symbolism has remained a mystery to the Royal English art world up to the present time.

A history of the painting

1. The portrait was painted between 1594 and 1604 by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (1561-1635). For solid reasons of style, landscaped background, and similarity to other paintings, particularly Gheeraerts' Ditchley portrait of Queen Elizabeth which has a similar cartouche and identical calligraphy, this attribution is not debated.⁶

2. In 1613, a portrait of "a beautiful Turkish Lady" was seen hanging at Somerset House in Westminster, a house owned by the Crown.⁷

3. The portrait was lost to the royal family sometime during the 1600s. Whether it was thrown out during the Commonwealth, after the beheading of Charles I in 1649, is not known.

4. In the early 1700s Sir John Stanley recovered for the Crown the painting of "Queen Elizabeth in a strange fantastick habit" from a painter who had bought it at a flea market in Moor Fields.^{8,9}



The Royal Collection ©2001, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Fig. 1. "Lady in a Fancy Dress" by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger. Reproduced with permission by The Royal Collection (copyright 2001 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II).

5. George Vertue in 1725 saw the royal cipher of Charles I (1625-1649) on the back of the painting, subsequently removed.¹⁰

6. In Queen Anne's reign, 1702 to 1714, the portrait was displayed at St. James' Palace, labeled as Queen Elizabeth in a fancy dress.^{11,12}

7. Queen Caroline, the wife of King George II (1727-1760), transferred the painting to the Queen's Gallery of full-length portraits of English Sovereigns in Kensington Palace, where it stayed for more than 100 years as a portrait of Queen Elizabeth.¹³

8. Queen Victoria moved the portrait to Hampton Court Palace in 1838 where it has remained, currently in the Renaissance Galleries, Room 1.¹⁴

9. In 1849, art critic Horace Walpole described it as a “picture of Elizabeth in a fantastic habit, something like a Persian.”¹⁵

10. In 1898 Ernest Law, in a description of all paintings hanging at Hampton Court Palace, for the first time printed a photo of the painting and described it as Queen Elizabeth in a fanciful dress.¹⁶

11. In 1959, Frances Yates thought the headdress and veil were similar to the 1581

Persian Virgin woodcut by J. J. Boissard.¹⁷

12. In 1959, Janet Arnold, an apparel historian, thought the painting was most likely an emblem or allegory “with some symbolical meaning, now lost” rather than an actual event like a costume party or masque.¹⁸

In sum, the portrait has hung in Royal Palaces for almost 300 years, at Hampton Court Palace for the last 164 years. During this time, the portrait’s lady was designated as Queen Elizabeth until the 20th century when the label at Hampton Court was changed to “Portrait of an Unknown Woman.” The current listing by The Royal Collection is “Portrait of a Woman . . . in a loose white Oriental dress richly embroidered.”

Comments on specific features of the Pregnancy Portrait

That the Lady is pregnant has not been disputed in the art literature. The tree bearing “fruit” is a walnut, quite common in England but having its origin as a Royal Tree sent to ancient Greece by Persia.¹⁹

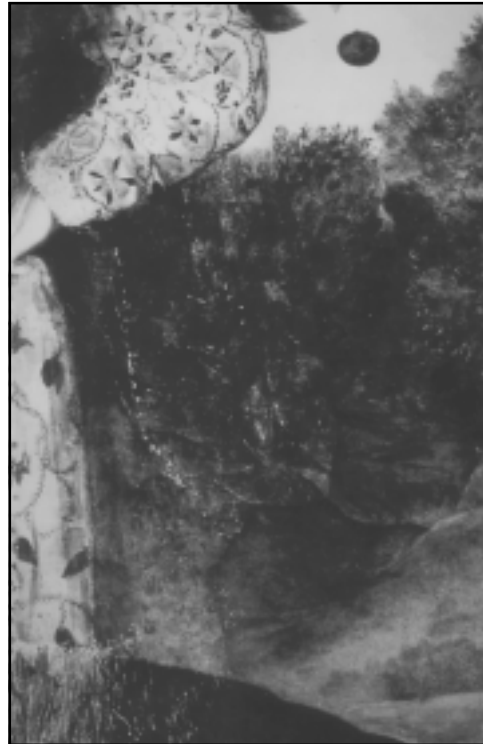
The headdress is studded with pansies and the lady is placing a wreath of pansies on a crying stag’s head. Pansies were the Virgin Queen’s favorite flower and symbolized royalty, chastity, and Queen Elizabeth. Strong points out that “the pansy’s strongest allusion in the last years of the reign was to the Queen.”²⁰

The white pearls below the lady’s left ear and around her right wrist also symbolize regal chastity despite the obvious pregnancy.²¹



The Royal Collection ©2001, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Fig. 2. Closer detail of stag’s head; note stag’s tears and the crown of pansies.



The Royal Collection ©2001, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Fig. 3. Closer detail. Note rubbing and over-painting near lady’s left elbow, and the original shrubs, hills, and pond on lower right.

The weeping stag is from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, in which Actaeon is transformed into a stag by the Goddess Diana after he came upon her bathing nude in a stream. According to Strong, “there could only be one Diana in Elizabethan England, the Virgin Queen herself.”²²

Strong believes that the attire is Persian and he labels her The Persian Lady.²³ The dress decoration includes grape clusters, green leaves, dove-sized exotic birds, honeysuckle, and red roses. She wears blue slippers elaborately adorned

with large blue-silver pearls.

Strong is unable to designate any particular symbolism for the two male chaffinches in the walnut tree’s branches. He says that the cartouche poem seems to be a coded lament of lost love, perfidy, injustice, and sadness but he cannot translate the meaning.²⁴

Deliberate changes in the painting’s composition before 1898

The Royal Collection’s 2001 Catalog says that the painting “has been extensively rubbed (i.e. erased, extirpated, or blotted out) and, especially in the background, heavily repainted. The outline of the dress down the sitter’s left side has been drastically simplified; the overlapping folds of the dress and its fringes have been painted out.”²⁵

Studying color enlargements meticulously with magnifying glasses yields the following observations:

1. Incomplete painting-over of a portion of the lady’s dress on her left side was presumably done to make her look slimmer and less pregnant. Nothing could be seen through the silver dress, so there was nothing objectionable behind it. Residua of silver tassels which lined the lovely transparent spangled wrap of gauze are easily seen, now out of place.

2. In the light-colored area on the right side of the painting there are gentle hills interpreted as original. These are interrupted by crude green swirls and swaths, painted with all of the refined brush

(Continued on page 10)

Persian Lady (continued from page 9)

techniques of Huckleberry Finn whitewashing Tom Sawyer's fence. Strong states that the portrait of Captain Thomas Lee, painted by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger in 1594, for the first time placed English portrait-subject in a landscape.²⁶ Lady in a Fancy Dress, dating to the same period,²⁷ once had a similar landscape, now painted over. Under high magnification, remnants of foreground buildings and faint receding hills can still be seen despite the attempts at obliteration.

3. The dark foreground immediately above the cartouche has been extensively painted over, annihilating any original symbolism. Here also one can recognize remnants of buildings. A pond on the right, with reflections of shrubs, has been narrowed by brown and black paint. It seems to show partial reflections of other buildings, no longer visible.

4. A dense growth of trees and bushes, ineptly added, is silhouetted against the sky, totally out of perspective with the small hills and shrubs of the original background and quite uncharacteristic of Gheeraerts.

5. In 1725, George Vertue said the portrait showed birds flying.²⁸ Now there are none. Was one of these the "restless swallow" described in the cartouche poem's first line, now swallowed up by re-painting?

6. The area for lettering in the inferior portion of the cartouche is quite faint. Magnified shadows appear to show an R in the center, a Royal crown on the right within a square, and a very faint E on the left. If indeed it originally read ER, which stood for Elizabetha Regina, then obviously the lady's identity would not have been in question. ER and a crown did appear on some paintings of Queen Elizabeth.²⁹

7. The first two mottoes have white, easily readable paint. The last two words of the crucially important third motto have been altered. Circumstantial evidence (vide infra) suggests that the letter-alteration occurred before 1725.

Comments on painting alterations before 1898

There are no depictions of the portrait until Ernest Law's photo-illustrated *The Royal Gallery of Hampton Court. Illustrated Catalogue* in 1898.³⁰ This clearly shows these aforementioned background alterations, and also establishes a baseline for noting further changes to the painting that have occurred in the 20th century.

Non-royal owners in the 1600s would have had no motivation to alter a painting of Queen Elizabeth. Since the Royal Family has owned the portrait most of the time since it was painted, and since it was definitely labeled as Queen Elizabeth until the 20th century, there would have been no reason to paint out any background scenes if they merely confirmed her royalty, e.g. a royal castle or a royal heraldic crest.

It is postulated, therefore, that originally the right-hand side of the painting contained symbols unacceptable to the Royal Family which linked the Queen to some other individual or individuals.

Deliberate changes in the painting after 1898

The 2001 Royal Collection catalog states that "the adornments on the veil (have been) almost entirely obliterated."³¹ Granting the

limitations of examining photographic reproductions of the portrait in books and articles, sequential analysis of Queen Elizabeth's veil in art publications yields the following tentative interpretations:

1. In 1898 (Law), the upper veil is slightly opaque so that dark embroidery can display a large "R" standing for Regina.

2. By 1959³² a number of new dark embroidery lines and patches have been painted on the veil, making the "R" less well defined.

3. Strong's 1969 illustration of the portrait³³ shows additional dark patches and swirls on the upper veil in the vicinity of the "R."

4. Between 1969 and 2001, the upper veil has been deliberately altered for the third time—densely whitened, wiping out the dark embroidery almost completely and becoming totally inconsistent with the lower veil's delicate transparency.

These three veil-alterations occurred in the last 103 years, the most drastic in the last 33 years during the current reign of Queen Elizabeth II. All of these painted alterations are concerned with eliminating the royal symbolism on the pregnant lady's upper veil.

It was in this same epoch that the Royal Collection changed the name of the lady from Queen Elizabeth to "Unknown Woman." This correlation cannot be ignored.

A century of deception continues

Since the pregnant lady became anonymous, deliberate attempts have been made in the last century to label her as someone else.

In 1914 a royal art expert, Sir Lionel Cust, said the portrait was of Arabella Stuart, first in line to the throne after James I. Strong says this is untenable because her many portraits do not show any resemblance to the lady in fancy dress.³⁴ This raises questions as to the motivation of such a highly respected, knighted royal art critic as Lionel Cust.

Despite symbols implying royalty, chastity, and the Virgin Queen, Strong in 1992 decided to disagree with more than 300 years of opinion by art experts, the Royal Family, and his own analytical evidence, and state that the painting is of a pregnant Frances Walsingham, widow of Philip Sidney and wife of the Earl of Essex.^{35, 36}

The purpose, Strong decides, was for the portrait to elicit Queenly pity so she would spare the life of Essex.³⁷ But if the Queen refused to see Frances personally at that time, which she did, why would she allow a portrait of Frances in her eyesight? Secondly, if it is Frances, why was it altered so many times? She was neither noble, nor a member of the Queen's court, nor controversial, nor noteworthy in any respect.

Frances Walsingham's only known portrait is in the Mildred Anna Williams Collection at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco.³⁸ Strong says the portrait's identity is certain.³⁹ Its provenance is well known, being first described in 1590 by John, Lord Lumley.⁴⁰

The face on the pregnant lady is much more similar to that on the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth by Gheeraerts than the face on the Frances Walsingham portrait. Also, the portrait of Frances shows brown hair and gray-blue eyes.⁴¹ The Pregnancy

Portrait lady has orange hair and greenish-brown eyes, as did both Queen Elizabeth and Henry Wriothesley.

It is not immediately clear why world-respected royal art critics put forward other portrait-candidates who are so easily disproved.

Translation of the three mottoes

It is now time to analyze the three Latin mottoes on the tree.

1. *Iniusti Justa querela* (upper motto).

(a) Strong's translation: "A just complaint of injustice."⁴²

(b) Author's translation: "A complaint about injustices is just," which is basically the same as Strong's interpretation.

2. *Mea sic mihi* (middle motto):

(a) Strong's translation: "Thus to me my ..." Since this has no meaning, and since the word *mea* is feminine, Strong suggests adding *regina* to the end of the motto so that it means, "Thus to me my Queen."⁴³

(b) Author's translation: "Thus what is mine should be mine, namely the Queen." Again, this is essentially the same as Strong.

3. *Dolor est medicina ed tori* (lower motto): This motto has caused the most translational problems because:

(a) *ed* is not a word in Latin.

(b) The space after the non-word implies that letters are missing.

(c) Superimposed brown paint blurs "*ed tori*." The swirling crossbar of the "t" in *tori* has been painted out. The "t's" vertical stem is the same as the three other t's in the mottoes and quite different from the taller, narrower stems of the "t's" in the first motto and third mottoes. Orthographically, the "t" in *tori* is definitely a "T" and not an "I."

George Vertue in 1725 thought the motto was "*dolor est medicina dolore*."⁴⁴ Since he read the first letter of the last word as an "I", this suggests that the alteration of the "T" occurred before 1725.

Strong in 1963 thought the last two words were "*ed lori*" which is not Latin and makes no sense (Grief is medicine of the leather thongs?).⁴⁵ In 1992 Strong says that the third motto is in Italian and reads, "*Dolor est medicina e d(o)lori* which he thinks means "Grief is medicine for grief."⁴⁶ This is bad Latin, bad Italian, and less than clear in English.

Others have read the motto as *Dolor est medicina ad(ju)tori*, adding two missing letters, but "Grief is medicine for helpers" still

makes no sense.

Another interpretation of the third motto is *Dolor est medicina ad lori*, misreading the two altered letters as the alterers intended.⁴⁷ The translation of "lori" as "leather thongs" renders the motto meaningless.

New analysis of the key third motto

In fact, in agreement with Ernest Law in 1898,⁴⁸ the third motto is in Latin and, when magnified, reads:

Dolor est medicina ed tori

Dolor = grief, anguish, sorrow, or, as used by Livy, the torment of love.⁴⁹ *Est* = is. *Medicina* = medicine, remedy, or healing process. "*Ed*" is not a Latin word. *Tori* is probably the plural of *torus* = bridal or conjugal bed, bulge or round swelling. With such meanings, a play on words is conceivable since the portrait lady is clearly pregnant, although the Romans did not use *torus* to mean pregnancy.⁵⁰

Renaissance England, fueled by its extraordinary literary explosion, loved new words, new word usage, and the stimulating complexities of crafty phraseology. But why would the painting's creative designer put in a non-word followed by a space?

For two reasons. Most importantly, the words "*ed tori*" must have a symbolic meaning on their own. Secondly, the space after the non-word "*ed*" is an open invitation to fill in whatever number of letters is most appropriate to create a new and significant last word in the motto.

There is space for only one letter between "*ed*" and "*tori*." Would the painting's creator leave one space if he wanted one letter to be supplied, and three spaces for three missing letters? No. It is not the width of the blank space which

is significant but its invitational presence.

If the above interpretation is not correct, and only one letter is missing, why didn't the portrait designer put in that letter? For example, the letter "i" makes the Latin word *editori*, the plural of an uncommon word in classical Latin, *editor*, which means "that which brings forth or emits," as in breezes or vapors. This has no relevance to the painting.

In classical Latin, *editori* is not an accepted grammatical form of *editus*,⁵¹ meaning high geographic places and, uncommonly, lofty status.

Accepting the implied invitation to fill in the blank between the nonword "*ed*" and "*tori*," the following three missing letters are now proposed: "uca." The actual motto, therefore, would then read:

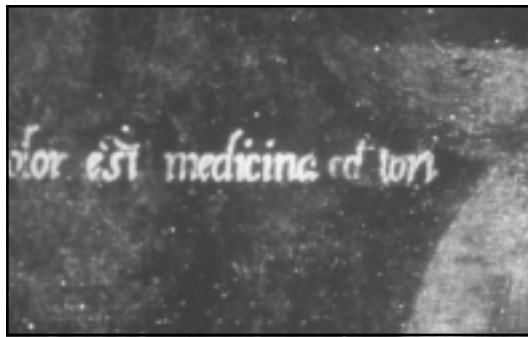
Dolor est medicina educatori

(Continued on page 12)



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Fig. 4. The upper motto. Note tallness and thinness of the "I" in *querela*, and thickness and swirling crossbar of the two "t's."



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Fig. 5. The crucial lower motto. Note partial paint-over to obscure the "e" in "*ed*" and the "t" in "*tori*" including elimination of the swirling crossbar of the "t."

Persian Lady (continued from page 11)

Educatori = the plural of rearer, bringer up, foster father or, as used by Cicero, foster parentage.⁵² Thus, the motto can now be translated as:

“Anguish is part of the healing process for foster parentage.”

So the plot thickens as we are now made aware of a foster parent theme in the portrait.

But the quintessential third motto yields a further decipherment. *Torus* is pronounced the same as its homonym, the Latin word *taurus*, meaning bull, steer, or ox. The plural is *tori* = *tauri* = oxen. Immediately, the crucial cipher becomes clear:

Dolor est medicina ed tori = *Dolor est medicina ed tauri*
“Anguish is part of the healing process for Ed Tauri = Edward Oxen = Edward Oxenford.”

Edward de Vere was the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford. The word “oxford” derives from oxen fording a stream. De Vere often signed his name “Edward Oxenford.”

The three mottoes, therefore, inform us of the portrait’s major symbolic themes:

1. Injustice.
2. The Queen should have been mine.
3. Foster parentage.
4. The person who suffered anguish from these three central themes is Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford.

New Pregnancy Portrait hypotheses

With Edward de Vere’s signature literally staring us in the face, new portrait hypotheses are now justified. Sometime between 1594 and his demise on June 26, 1604, Edward de Vere commissioned Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger to paint the portrait of a pregnant Queen Elizabeth, with de Vere himself devising the complex symbolism.

The purpose? To record for history that the Queen was pregnant by him in 1573-1574 with the son who became Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, who should have been lawful heir to the Tudor throne.

One may postulate that symbolism on the painting’s right side contained buildings which identified the Third Earl of Southampton. Why buildings? Because remnants can still be seen under magnification. The painting’s theme would represent a threat to the legitimacy of the Stuart monarchy and one may speculate that these paint-overs occurred during the many years of ownership of the painting by the Stuarts in the 1600s.

In the past century the paint-over deceptions had another purpose—to protect the myth of The Virgin Queen by eliminating any connection of the pregnant lady to royalty and thus to Queen Elizabeth I.

New interpretations based upon these hypotheses

The portrait lady’s fancy dress is more likely Turkish than Persian. Queen Elizabeth worked hard to establish relations with Turkey, exchanging ambassadors in 1583, with vigorous trade

beginning soon after.^{53, 54} Elizabeth gave gifts to the Sultan and Sultana. When the Sultana asked what gifts the Queen would like in return, Elizabeth’s answer twice was clothes in Turkish fashion.⁵⁵

In 1593, Elizabeth received a rich gown of gold; the headdress, “which the Queen so much wanted,” had been stolen. In 1594, the Sultana sent two silver garments, and in 1599, silver attire. Following Queenly fashion, by 1600 Turkish clothes, including turbans, were an English fad.⁵⁶

The portrait lady’s dress is silver—is it one of the actual dresses from the Sultana? Was it available to Gheeraerts to copy for the portrait?

Did de Vere himself visit Turkey in the fall of 1575, sailing from Venice? Is this why the Queen called him “My Turk”?⁵⁷ Is this why de Vere chose to show her in the Pregnancy Portrait in Turkish attire?

There was no official English diplomatic or trade relationship with Persia at this time for good reason — the Persians were enemies of the Turks and they were at war for 12 years during this period.⁵⁸ Given Queen Elizabeth’s persistent efforts to establish Turkey as a trading partner, it is unlikely that she would wear clothes of Turkey’s foe.

De Vere himself may not have liked Persian attire, for he has King Lear say (111, 6, 36-39):⁵⁹

“You, sir . . . I do not like the fashion of your garments.
You will say they are Persian; but let them be changed”

The Royal tree is bearing its fruit, walnuts, just as the pregnant lady is bearing the fruit of her womb.

The Queen is wearing a large oval earring with a highly unusual decorative color — dark brown. Originally, this may have been an armillary sphere with a diagonal ecliptic and a series of horizontal concentric rings designed to show the earth’s central place in the celestial heavens. Queen Elizabeth wore such an armillary earring in the Ditchley portrait. Since this was her own regal symbol as Earth’s heavenly monarch and as the moon goddess Cynthia or Diana,⁶⁰ there was ample reason to eliminate this royal connection by painting the earring brown.

Two highly-colored male chaffinches, beautiful birds which have lovely songs, are seen in the shelter of Royal branches. Do they represent the beautiful creativity of writers and poets, sheltered by Royal authority from Cecilian suppression and censorship?

Crowning the stag’s head with a circlet of pansies, Elizabeth’s favorite flower, represents a crowning of de Vere as the Queen’s husband. The author believes that in February, 1574, with Elizabeth already five months pregnant, she and de Vere talked about marriage and the possibilities of annulment of Edward’s unwanted marriage to Anne Cecil, with Archbishop Matthew Parker in Canterbury, and again for two days in March at the Archbishop’s residence in Croydon, south of London.⁶¹ The author thinks that the Queen and de Vere did exchange rings at this time, tantamount to marriage.

In the Pregnancy Portrait, there are two rings hanging on a black cord around the lady’s neck. The cord is tied in a symbolic knot over her upper chest. Attached by a second knot is a side-loop with a ring of rubies and diamonds which may be de Vere’s ring given to him by the Queen. The ring with a circlet of diamonds at

the cord's end may represent the Queen's ring given to her by Edward de Vere.

The cartouche poem

The poem in the cartouche is quite de Verean and describes the Queen's pregnancy by him, the injustice of the broken engagement, and his sadness over the loss of his son by forced foster parentage:

The restless swallow fits my restless mind,
In still reviving still renewing wronges;
Her just complaints of cruel[t]y unkind,
Are all the music that my life prolongs.

With pensive thoughts my weeping stag I crown,
Whose melancholy tears my cares express;
His tears in silence and my sighs unknown
Are all the physic that my harms redress.

My only hope was in this goodly tree,
Which I did plant in love, bring up in care;
But all in vain, for now too late I see
The shales be mine, the kernels others are.

My music may be plaints, my physique tears
If this be all the fruit my love tree bears.

The cartouche calligraphy is identical to that in the Ditchley portrait's cartouche. It is not in de Vere's handwriting. The poem is similar in style to de Vere's poem in his preface to Bedingfield's translation of Cardanus' *Comforte*, "Published by commandment of the right honourable the Earle of Oxenforde, Anno Domini 1573."⁶² Sample verses are as follows:

The labouring man that tills the fertile field
And reaps the harvest fruit, hath not indeed
The gain, but pain; but if for all his toil
He gets the straw, the lord will have the seed.

The manchet fine falls not unto his share;
On coarsest cheat his hungry stomach feeds.
The landlord doth possess the finest fare;
He pulls the flowers, the other plucks the weeds.

So he that takes the pain to pen the book
Reaps not the gifts of golden goodly muse;
But those gain that, who on the work shall look,
And from the sour the sweet by skill shall choose;

For he that beats the bush the bird not gets
But who sits still and holdeth fast the nets.

If one compares selections from each, plus two lines from Sonnet 38, the similarity of meter and rhyme is even more striking, as is the powerful antithesis used to end stanzas:

Cardanus:

He gets the straw, the lord will have the seed.
He pulls the flowers, the other plucks the weeds.

For he that beats the bush the bird not gets
But who sits still and holdeth fast the nets.

Portrait:

The shales (= husks) be mine, the kernels others are.

Sonnet 38:

If my slight muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

The author believes all three poems were written by Edward de Vere, and that he wrote the portrait-poem in his style of 1573 to commemorate Queen Elizabeth's pregnancy by him in 1573.

Analysis of the cartouche poem's content

One of the premises of this paper is that Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, was the son of Queen Elizabeth and Edward de Vere, an hypothesis first put forward by Percy Allen, independently by Dorothy Ogburn,⁶³ and more recently by Betty Sears.⁶⁴ This author finds evidence in favor of the "Tudor Rose Theory" compelling, including Thomas Nashe's *Prologue to The Choice of Valentines*, written directly and openly to Henry Wriothesley:

Pardon, sweet flower of matchless poetry
And fairest bud the red rose ever bore ...
Ne blame my verse for loose unchastitie
For painting forth the things that hidden are.

Aware that this theory is not universally accepted and that alternative poem interpretations will be forthcoming, the author tentatively interprets the portrait's cartouche poem as follows.

The restless swallow fits my restless mind,
In still reviving still renewing wronges;
Her just complaints of cruel[t]y unkind,
Are all the music that my life prolongs.

De Vere's active mind is reviving powerful memories of Elizabeth's 1573 pregnancy. She told de Vere it was cruelly unkind that Monarchy realities compelled her to cancel their wedding plans. One reason she decided against open recognition of their son as Tudor heir was the realization that he might be subjected to illegitimacy accusations all of his life, just as she had been. The memory sustains his life that she favored the marriage but was overruled by her sense of royal duty, although there were clearly other reasons for her decision.

With pensive thoughts my weeping stag I crown,
Whose melancholy tears my cares express;
His tears in silence and my sighs unknown
Are all the physic that my harms redress.

The pansy derives its name from *penseé*, French for "thought." De Vere thinks about the symbolic crowning of the stag, himself, by the pregnant Queen, a theme which he commissioned Gheeraerts to paint. The stag's silent tears represent his own tears of grief, with introspective anguish over loss of his regal son being the only healing process available to taper his sorrows over time.

Just as Edward de Vere was regally commanded into silence by

(Continued on page 14)

Persian Lady (continued from page 13)

the Queen about their son, so Actaeon saw Diana bathing nude and was struck silent by metamorphosis into a stag as in Book 3 of the *Metamorphoses*. The 1567 translation was ascribed to Arthur Golding, Edward's uncle and Latin tutor,⁶⁵ but there are those who believe de Vere was the translator. The weeping-stag passage ends with these lines:

But when he saw his face
And horned temples in the brooke, he would have cryde alas,
But as for then no kinde of speach out of his lippes could passe.

He sighed and brayde, for that was then the speach that did remaine,
And down the eyes that were not his, his bitter teares did rain

Sir Roy Strong says that in addition to the allusion to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, "The touchstone for the weeping stag is the scene in *As You Like It* of the melancholy Jaques reclining at the foot of a tree observing a weeping stag beside a stream," and crying himself over the wounded deer's misfortune.⁶⁶

The third stanza of the Pregnancy Portrait poem is:

My only hope was in this goodly tree,
Which I did plant in love, bring up in care;
But all in vain, for now too late I see
The shales be mine, the kernels others are.

Edward de Vere placed his hopes and dreams in the Queen's pregnancy, conceived with her in love and supported by him with caring throughout the pregnancy, including the final eight to ten weeks at his manor house of Havering Atte Bower in May, June, and early July, 1574.⁶⁷ But all in vain (the actual word in the poem is spelled "vanie") because, after their son was born, she decided against their marriage. Thus de Vere gets nothing, equivalent to the husks of walnuts, while others get the Royal fruit, their son, adopted-out to foster parents.

The cartouche poem's final two lines are:

My music may be plaints, my physique tears
If this be all the fruit my love tree bears.

The melodic poetry of his life is now reduced to lamentation and tears of sorrow, the only residua of a royal pregnancy (his love tree) gone astray—no marriage for de Vere or the Queen, no acknowledged son for de Vere, and no Tudor heir for the Queen.

Summary of author's interpretation of portrait's symbolism

1. The portrait lady is Queen Elizabeth I, pregnant in 1573-1574 with de Vere's son. Against de Vere's strong wishes, this son was adopted out to foster parents at the Queen's insistence, namely to the Wriothesleys, and became Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton.

2. England's Royal Family owned the portrait intermittently in the 1600s and constantly since the early 1700s.

3. The extensive, deliberate, obliterating paint-over on the right may well have symbolically linked Queen Elizabeth to Henry Wriothesley and would, therefore, have represented a threat to the legitimacy of the Stuart Monarchy. Since Edward de Vere blazons



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Fig. 6. "Queen Elizabeth in a Fancy Dress" as illustrated by Ernest Laws in his 1898 book *Royal Gallery at Hampton Court*. Note the "R" on upper veil, which stands for Regina (Queen). This "R" is no longer visible today.

his own name in motto number three on the left, there would have been no necessity to further identify him on the right.

4. The paint-outs began before 1898 and may have occurred before 1725.

5. Techniques like x-ray or infra-red analysis would be necessary to uncover the truth underneath the crude paint-overs. This seems unlikely since the painting's alterations most likely occurred when the painting was owned by the Royal Family, and the painting is still owned by them.

6. That the portrait clearly portrays a pregnant Queen Elizabeth has apparently been regarded in the last century by The Royal Family and/or its Royal Art experts as incompatible with the historical mythology of The Virgin Queen. This would seem to provide the motivation for the spread of misinformation regarding the lady's identity, for the painting out of the veil's large R, which stood for Regina, and for putting forth other candidates for being the pregnant lady.

7. Sufficient clues remain elsewhere in the painting, however, to offer meaningful interpretations of original symbolism.

8. The attire is Turkish, symbolic of Edward de Vere's nickname, "My Turk," and of dresses requested by, and given to, Queen Elizabeth from the Sultana of Turkey in the 1590s during the initial stages of trade relations.

9. The lacrimating stag is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* which

represents de Vere as the Queen's muted lover, forbidden to acknowledge their son, The Third Earl of Southampton, just as Actaeon was struck silent by the Goddess Diana.

10. The Queen crowns the stag with her favorite flower, pansies, symbolizing her promise to make de Vere her Royal consort.

11. De Vere's cartouche poem was written in the same style as his 1573 poem prefacing Thomas Bedingfield's *Cardanus' Comforte* and symbolizes the onset of the Queen's pregnancy by de Vere in 1573.

12. The two rings hanging from her neck signify an actual exchange of rings and vows between the pregnant Queen and de Vere in early 1574.

Summary of the Pregnancy Portrait's three Latin mottoes

1. *Iniusti justa querela* (motto level with the Queen's head): "A complaint about injustices is just."

The injustices include Elizabeth's unilateral decision not to marry de Vere, her refusal to legitimize her son by him, and her adopting out of their son, thus depriving England of a Tudor heir and preventing de Vere and Henry Wriothesley from having a normal father-son relationship.

2. *Mea sic mihi* (motto level with the Queen's heart):

"Thus what is mine should be mine." Edward de Vere and Queen Elizabeth may have exchanged rings symbolizing marriage despite his existing, disharmonious, forced marriage to Anne Cecil. He and the Queen should have had a stimulating, mutually-benefiting marital relationship.

3a. *Dolor est medicina educatori* (motto level with the stag's head, i.e., de Vere's head, and also level with the baby in Queen Elizabeth's womb) = "Anguish is part of the healing process for foster parentage," i.e., "Anguish is part of the healing process for having to give up one's son to foster parents."

3b. The conversion must be made of *Dolor est medicina ed tori* into *Dolor est medicina ed tauri*, yielding Edward de Vere's unmistakable ciphered signature as Edward Oxenford, the allegory's creator: "Anguish is part of the healing process for Edward Oxenford."

The author believes that these superbly inventive motto-meanings are not far-fetched and did not happen by chance alone.

Perhaps those who are still reluctant to embrace the Prince Tudor theory should recall the words of J. P. Morgan when he was asked to render advice on investing in the stock market: "It is better to be on the caboose than not on the train at all."

Edward de Vere and the Queen were multi-lingual including elegant fluency in Latin. Both delighted in the intricate play on words so enjoyed by Elizabethans during their incandescent literary and cultural outburst beginning in the last quarter of the 16th Century, initiated by Edward de Vere, stimulated by Queen Elizabeth, and maintained primarily by de Vere and his University Wits.

An expert at authorship clues in his plays, de Vere used powerful portrait clues—within Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger's painting itself, in the cartouche poem, and in the three Latin mottoes—to convey his important message to history.

In 1992, Sir Roy Strong concluded that "This picture is unhappy. Its theme is of wrongs and injustice, of tears and grief, of fruits snatched by others."⁶⁸ This paper concurs and provides the missing context wherein the painting and its symbolism finally make sense after centuries of bafflement, real or feigned.

Meaning of this portrait for the authorship question

As Michael Bath said in 1986, "Study of Shakespeare's relation to the visual arts involves defining the iconographic codes and conventions within which his imagery operates."⁶⁹

Despite mutilations, paint-overs, and cover-ups on a number of occasions in the past 400 years, all of which most likely occurred during ownership by the Royal Family of England, the Pregnancy Portrait's detailed, complex, iconographic symbolism conveys the vivid message that Queen Elizabeth gave birth to a son, fathered by Edward de Vere, who was adopted out and became the Third Earl of Southampton.

This explains why Edward de Vere wrote so many loving, father-son sonnets and such tender dedications to the Third Earl of Southampton for his long narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, his first publications under his pen name: William Shakespeare.

Of whatever authorship persuasion, all agree that the Sonnets, the two long narrative poems, and Shakespeare's plays were written by the same person, namely William Shakespeare. Therefore, if de Vere wrote the sonnets, *Venus and Adonis*, and *The Rape of Lucrece*, as the Pregnancy Portrait implies by its vivid symbolic imagery of de Vere's paternity of the Third Earl of Southampton, then he also wrote the plays.

Vital clues in the original Pregnancy Portrait have been painted over—especially those on the painting's right side which are postulated as once connecting Henry Wriothesley to the pregnant lady, Queen Elizabeth I. Despite this shortcoming, the Pregnancy Portrait is tentatively put forward as further evidence that Edward de Vere is William Shakespeare.

The author thanks the following individuals for help with this paper: Cate Altrocchi Waidyatilleka; Anne Bingham Altrocchi, MD; Prof. Dirk Held, Professor of Latin, Connecticut College; and Allison Pennell, M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco.

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Ashbourne (continued from page 1)

of Morton, who died in 1581, that intrigued me and sent me off in the direction of researching the costume to learn the true date of the painting.

This second article in the series detailing my more than two years research into the Ashbourne Shakespeare portrait focuses on the costume in the portrait and what it reveals about the sitter and the time period in which the portrait was painted. Through this examination, which dates the painting to the late 1570s, the Folger's claims about the 1611 inscription date and Hamersley's supposed "coat of arms" become irrelevant. Costume evidence proves that the painting cannot have been painted in the 1600s or the 1590s, or even during most of the 1580s. Hamersley was 15 years old in 1580. This costume evidence is there for all to see, but the art experts called on by Stratfordians to evaluate the picture have ignored it, avoided it, and denied it just as the emperor's counselors ignored the evidence they saw when they were questioned about the emperor's "beautiful" invisible clothes.

The late 1570s dating of the painting by costume also confirms Charles Wisner Barrell's X-ray examination of the Ashbourne that revealed a portrait of Edward de Vere beneath the overpainting into Shakespeare.³ And it places the painting back in its correct time frame when the Dutch painter Cornelius Ketel—whose initials were exposed beneath the overpainting by Barrell's X-rays—was in England from 1573 to 1581, and was known to have painted a portrait of Oxford.

At this point you might be asking why all the fuss over a portrait? The answer is best expressed by quoting from a February 1982 letter from the Folger Shakespeare Library when the Library was proclaiming Hugh Hamersley, former Lord Mayor of London in 1627/8 as the painting's subject. The letter, intended for Geoffrey M. Lemmer, conservator of the Baltimore Museum of Art giving him instructions about the portrait, states that, "...the portrait is an important document in the controversy over the true authorship of Shakespeare's works."⁴

Indeed it is an important document in the authorship controversy. In fact, the portrait is actual physical evidence connecting Oxford with the name Shakespeare. The Ashbourne, which is the largest

and most beautiful of all the famous portraits of the poet, is one of three of the well-known Shakespeare portraits, including the Janssen and the Hampton Court, that photographic expert Charles Wisner Barrell X-rayed in 1937. Barrell found that all three portraits were over painted portraits of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.⁵ The Earl is the same man whom J. Thomas Looney discovered to be the real Shakespeare in 1920.⁶

Costume dating

In response to Barrell's evidence for Oxford as the Ashbourne sitter, previous Folger administrations cast about to find anyone but Oxford as the sitter in this portrait. In addition to ignoring the evidence in the painting, like the swindlers who wove invisible cloth for the emperor's "clothes," the Folger since 1979 has woven its own story out of airy nothing, claiming Sir Hugh Hamersley, a Lord Mayor of London in 1637/8, as the Ashbourne sitter. As we shall see in the costume dating of the Ashbourne in this article, the Folger claims for Hamersley based upon the bogus 1611 inscription and the purported Hamersley "coat of arms" are invalidated by the costume evidence that proves the portrait cannot have been painted in the 1600s.

Costume is the single most reliable and universally respected method of dating portraits whose dates are unknown or in dispute. The dating of costume is a reliable means for dating a painting within a range of a few years and sometimes even within a year or two. Just as we can date 1920s, 30s, or 50s pictures from our familiarity with the clothes, hair styles and objects in those times, so art experts rely on extensive knowledge of the changes in fashion and in painting styles in dating portraits.⁷ As in our own time, fashion in Elizabethan and Jacobean England generally changed by decades, with some overlap of course, especially at the beginning and end of a decade.

In studying costume and looking at large numbers of portraits in a particular era, such as the Elizabethan era, one becomes familiar with the patterns of dress and forms of portraiture unique to various decades during that time. One learns from this study that certain aspects of costume absolutely confirm the dating of portraits.

When Spielmann says of the Ashbourne sitter, "We thus have the presentment of a

handsome, courtly gentleman, well formed and of good bearing, and apparently of high breeding...,"⁸ and adds that, "This gentleman is clearly not in stage dress; there is nothing of masquerade about the presentation," he is referring to the kind of presentation and clothing that portraits of noblemen exhibit.⁹ Spielmann also notes that, "It is difficult to imagine Shakespeare's friends, Ben Jonson the dramatist or Burbage the actor, attired in such a costume, rich as it is and fashionable, albeit sober and in good taste."¹⁰ In fact, as Spielmann well knew, all the actors and dramatists of that time were portrayed in commoner's garb—all, that is, except Shakespeare.

Ruth Loyd Miller notes that "there are at least 12 altered portraits (into Shakespeare) of undoubted Elizabethan or Jacobean composition. Until very recent times 6 of these paintings had been held by various members of the old English Aristocracy and had no connection whatsoever with Stratfordian ownership."¹¹ For example, the Hampton Court portrait of Shakespeare, which Barrell found to be an over-painted portrait of Oxford holding the sword of state (blacked out), did not leave the collection at Penshurst Place, seat of the Sidney-Herbert families, until it was given to King William IV. This was the same Sidney family of whom Mary Sidney's sons, the earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, were the "incomparable brethern" to whom the 1623 Folio was dedicated. Oxford's daughter Susan was married to the Earl of Montgomery, one of these two "incomparable brethern."

Miller adds that, "Of the 12 genuine 'Renaissance studies' of Shakespeare listed by *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 8 depict him wearing the attire of a nobleman."¹² One of the most interesting of these is the portrait of Shakespeare in nobleman's garb formerly in the Tudor collection at Windsor Castle, given by Queen Victoria to the novelist Lord Lytton. "Another is the miniature called 'Shakespeare' acquired by the Earl of Oxford (2nd creation) about 1719 showing the bard in the dress of a 16th century nobleman."¹³

The sitter's wardrobe

So we first take note of the nobleman's rich yet tasteful black velvet doublet and

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Ashbourne (continued from page 17)

black velvet and gray trunk hose in the Ashbourne portrait. He is sporting a richly tooled dress dagger belt and holding the top of a gauntlet embroidered in cloth of gold—of the kind courtiers wore on dress occasions. Spielmann notes these aspects of the painting and then states, “Just such a dress, belt, and glove as we see in the portrait of James Douglas, Earl of Morton, who died in 1581—that is to say 30 years before the date of this picture.”¹⁴

Intrigued by Spielmann’s comparison of the Ashbourne costume to the costume of the Earl of Morton, I began a quest to date the painting by costume. I found that the Earl of Morton painting had been dated by costume to circa 1575 by Sir Roy Strong.¹⁵ And I soon found out why Stratfordians have avoided this issue of the costume. As I learned more about Elizabethan and Jacobean fashion it became clear that the outfit worn by the Ashbourne nobleman fit into a 1570s time frame.

I was soon excited to learn that after 1583 in England wrist ruffs were no longer worn, but were replaced by wrist cuffs. As Spielmann noted in his description of the Ashbourne, “around the wrists are small figure-eight edged ruffs (rather than ruffles) with small white corded edging.”¹⁶ The wrist ruffs in the Ashbourne (Fig. 2), originally a brilliant white, had been deliberately muddied with dark gray paint to make them less noticeable but they had not been altered or completely painted over as had the original neck ruff. Here was compelling proof dating the Ashbourne painting before 1583, making it absolutely impossible that the portrait was painted in the 1600s or the 1590s or even during most of the 1580s. I poured over portrait books looking at wrist ruffs and cuffs and found that wrist ruffs had indeed begun to phase out at the very beginning of the 1580s and cuffs had replaced them in English fashion by 1583.

I also explored neck ruff fashions because Barrell’s X-rays had uncovered the outline of a very large circular neck ruff under the much smaller crudely painted ruff now visible in the painting. Spielmann’s observations from his naked eye examination of the portrait in 1910 anticipate and coincide with many of Barrell’s findings in 1940, including his description of the visible neck ruff. “The multifold ruff, zig zagged, yellowish in tint, with highlights of



Fig. 1. This 1848 woodcut of the Ashbourne reveals more of the detail of the doublet, with its close fitting sleeves and a waistline dipping slightly below its natural position, elements that place it clearly in the 1570s / 1580s era of Elizabethan men’s fashion.



Fig. 2 (Ashbourne detail). The wrist ruffs worn by the Ashbourne sitter went out of fashion in the 1580s.

a stronger yellow *almost seems to be by another hand*, and is certainly the most, and indeed the only, scamped part of the picture.”¹⁷ (emphasis added)

What Spielmann is saying is that the ruff doesn’t fit this painting. It is fuzzy, muddied and crudely executed, like the over-painting of the sitter’s hair, both of which are unlike the finely painted detail in

the rest of the painting.

The crude ruff now visible in the portrait is formed to look like an early 1600s ruff, as can be seen in many paintings of that period, such as the portrait of Robert Cecil in 1602.¹⁸ In viewing the painting in person one can even see with the naked eye differences in the background paint around the head area where the original ruff was over-painted.

After I had studied enough portraits and read enough about various aspects of Elizabethan and Jacobean costume to be certain that the evidence of the doublet and trunk hose and ruffs fit the 1570s date, I wrote for expert confirmation of my findings on the Ashbourne costume. I received a gracious response from Susan North, head of Textiles and Dress at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Along with other visuals, I had sent her a copy of the 1848 woodcut made directly from the Ashbourne (Fig. 1) that clearly delineates the costume details that are hard to see in reproductions of the portrait because of the black dress.

Ms. North agreed with my conclusions, writing, “I would agree that the dress does not appear to date from 1611...The general shape of the doublet with close fitting sleeves and a waistline dipping only slightly below its natural place in front corresponds with men’s dress of the 1570s...Regarding your comments on the wrist ruffs, I agree that these go out of fashion in the 1580s.”¹⁹

Everything she said agreed with my conclusions about a 1570s costume including the fact that the wrist ruffs on the portrait precluded any possible claim that this could be a 1600s portrait. But Ms. North also wrote that she was “puzzled” about the large neck ruff which the X-rays had uncovered under the visible circa 1610 smaller ruff painted over it. She noted that, “Those [ruffs] of the 1570s are quite modest in size for men and women. It isn’t [until] about 1585 that the ‘cartwheel’ shape becomes popular.”²⁰

She was puzzled because the visibly scamped and muddied ruff clearly didn’t fit the 1570s costume or detailed painting styles of that time, yet the over-painted large circular ruff underneath it (uncovered by Barrell’s X-rays) also didn’t seem to fit the 1570s costume, because—as she noted—neck ruffs in the 1570s were smaller. But I eventually found these doubts easy to resolve.

During most of the 1570s neck ruffs

were smaller, such as the neck ruff in the 1575 Welbeck portrait of Edward de Vere or the considerably larger but still modest neck ruff in the Ketel portrait of Christopher Hatton in 1578.²¹ The large cartwheel ruff (which the over-painted ruff in the Ashbourne is not) became popular in 1585 as can be seen in the 1586 portrait of Sir Henry Unton.²² Although it was not yet the dominant fashion, by the end of the 1570s some gentlemen and aristocrats were wearing the large French style ruff as is shown in the 1581 picture of the Duc and Duchess de Joyeuse.²³

In fact we have examples of English gentlemen in 1579 and 1580 wearing this very large French style ruff in the portraits of what is called Philip Sidney in 1579²⁴ and William, Lord Russell in 1580.²⁵ (Figs. 3 and 4.) Both are wearing the French style ruff, which differs from the later cartwheel ruff fashion that became popular in the mid-1580s. Lord Russell's ruff has details similar to the lacy detail that was kept on from the original ruff in the Ashbourne and re-used in the detail of the ruff now visible on the painting. It is significant that Lord Russell's French ruff fits perfectly over the X-ray outline of the original over-painted ruff in the Ashbourne.

Direct testimony about Oxford's wardrobe

Gabriel Harvey provides evidence that in 1580 Oxford was wearing this large French style ruff made with expensive fine Cambric or Camerick linen, in his mocking poem about Oxford, *Speculum Tuscanismi*, printed in mid-1580:

"...A little apish flat couched fast to the pate like an oyster, French Camerick ruffs, deep with a whiteness starched to the purpose..."²⁶ (emphasis added)

Harvey's description of the French Camerick ruffs as being "deep" or wide and "starched to the purpose" refers to the fact that these large ruffs had to be heavily starched to be stiff enough to stand up off the shoulders and frame the face. Sometimes a kind of frame was used to hold them up as well. But as critics of fashion at the time sarcastically observed, they became something of a wilted problem when it rained.

In these examples of large French ruffs



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Figs. 3 and 4. Large French neck ruffs started to come into fashion by the late 1570s. These two examples—of Sir Philip Sidney (Fig. 3, left) and Lord Russell of Thornhaugh (Fig. 4, right)—both appear in Roy Strong's *The English Icon*. Russell's elaborate ruff is similar to what the original Ashbourne ruff may have looked like.

that were worn in 1579 and 1580 and in Harvey's poem that describes Oxford sporting this type of ruff we have the answer to Ms. North's questions. The large white starched French Camerick ruff, which Harvey describes Oxford as wearing, was the same as the original white French ruff in the portrait. This original white French ruff was partially painted over and what was left was muddied over into the scamped imitation of a circa 1610 ruff to fit the altered 1611 date on the painting.

With this information about the original French style ruff in the painting we can now refine our dating of the portrait even further to the very late 1570s when these large French ruffs were worn by a number of fashionable gentlemen most likely at the Court. Thus the painting can be dated circa 1579 to 1580. Hugh Hamersley was 15 years old in 1580. But most importantly Cornelius Ketel, a fine Dutch portrait painter, was in England at that time doing his best portrait work.

Ketel's friend and biographer Van Mander noted that Ketel had painted a portrait of Oxford.²⁷ This portrait, which all evidence points to as the Ashbourne portrait of Shakespeare, was most likely painted sometime after his painting of Hatton and the Queen in 1578. Hatton is credited with introducing Ketel as a painter to the Court²⁸ which fits the costume dating

we have done placing this portrait circa 1579-80.

Mark Evans, Head of Paintings at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, England wrote to me that the "format of the portrait of which you sent me a photocopy would appear more consistent with a date in the 1570s than circa 1611."²⁹ In fact there is a striking similarity of the style of the Ashbourne to another Ketel portrait of the period, the Thomas Pead portrait, painted in 1578.³⁰ (See Figs. 5 and 6, next page.) Pead was a registrar recording births and deaths. The painting of Pead includes a partial corner of a table in the front right hand side of the painting covered with a green cloth painted in the same manner as the red cloth on the table in the Ashbourne. The table also has a skull on top, representing Pead's recording of deaths, and the painting has the same kind of brown tone in the background as the Ashbourne. Pead is also dressed in black with brilliantly contrasting white detailed neck ruff and wrist ruffs, indicating what the Ashbourne's original ruffs would have looked like before they were muddied over.

The dating of the Ashbourne painting by costume which sets the Ashbourne in its proper time frame of circa 1579-80 raises the issue of the incongruity of the costume of the St. Alban's portrait with the inscrip-

(Continued on page 20)



Courtesy, The Berger Collection

A 1578 Cornelius Ketel painting of Thomas Pead (Fig. 5, above) shows remarkable similarities to the Ashbourne (Fig. 6, right), particularly the skull sitting on a partially-showing table, the sitter's black costume with white trim, and a medium-brown background.



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Ashbourne (continued from page 19)

tion denoting that it is a portrait of Edward de Vere. The style of the doublet and the high collar with its tiny lace edged in black that is a precursor of the ruff, in the St. Alban's portrait belongs to the period of the late 1550s or 1560s. Sir Roy Strong has dated it circa 1565.³¹ Because of the intertwined ribbon of black and white (the Queen's personal colors, not the Oxford colors) suspending the Oxford boar, I would date it from 1558 (when the Queen came to the throne) to 1562 when its sitter, most likely John De Vere, the 16th Earl of Oxford died. Because the sitter appears to be in his early 40s and the costume is of the early 1560s it cannot be Edward de Vere who was in his teens in the 1560s.

The inscriptions

Which brings us to the issue of inscriptions. Spielmann's suspicions about the 1611 inscription on the Ashbourne that was in a different paint from the original paint

and stood out in slight relief above the rest of the painting were correct. "Whether or not it (the inscription) is a later addition is an open question; but the fact must not be lost sight of that the colour of it corresponds to that of the book-cover gold and that of the thumb-ring and is in sharp contrast to that on the belt and glove."³² Spielmann maintained the Jacobean dating in spite of contrary evidence, but he added later that, "The picture is pretty clearly an original and no copy; and obviously represents a gentleman of the early years of Jacobean rule, who, if the 'AETATIS SUAE 47' is to be trusted, *looked young for his age*"³³ (emphasis added). Oxford in 1580 would have been around 30 years of age, not age 47, as in the inscription on the painting, which fit the age of the man from Stratford in 1611. Clearly the overpainting of the full head of hair above the forehead was intended to make the sitter look older to fit the inscription age.

The point is that inscription dates and names on portraits can be and have at times

been wrong either by mistake or by design. The fact that the St. Alban's has the name Edward de Vere blazoned across it does not counter the primary costume evidence that Sir Roy Strong used to date this painting circa 1565. The costume proves that the inscription is wrong in the St. Alban's portrait. Using the same costume dating methods and evidence for the Ashbourne, the 1611 date on the inscription, as Spielmann suspected and Barrell confirmed with X-rays, is wrong: it is not the original inscription. The 1611 date is a false date added later. Additionally, Barrell's X-rays confirmed that the original inscription in the Ashbourne portrait had been rubbed out so vigorously that holes were made in the canvas, although ghostly remnants of letters could still be seen.

Spielmann stuck with the 1600s time period for the Ashbourne despite all the evidence he observed to the contrary. Other experts called upon by the Folger have also gone along with the charade about this painting. Such is the power of an entrenched

viewpoint and the power of institutions that promote that viewpoint to intimidate and influence even trained experts perceptions and reporting of the facts before their eyes. Like the Counselors around the emperor who were questioned about the emperor's "clothes" the experts have not been willing to report what they see and what is really there in this painting.

In conclusion, the circa 1579-80 costume in the Ashbourne Shakespeare portrait eliminates as subjects both the Stratford man and Hugh Hamersley, who would have been 14 and 15 years old respectively in 1580. The costume is that of a nobleman. Looney discovered in 1920 that the nobleman poet playwright Edward de Vere was the author behind the Shakespeare mask. The Dutch painter Cornelius Ketel, whose initials Barrell found in the painting through X-rays, was in England from 1573 to 1581. Hatton introduced Ketel as a painter to Elizabeth's Court in 1578. Van Mander notes Ketel painted a portrait of Oxford. In 1580 Harvey mocked Oxford's wearing of large French Camerick ruffs. Barrell's X-ray examination revealed a large circular ruff under the visible ruff. Lord Russell's 1580 French ruff fits perfectly over the outlines of this hidden ruff. Thus more evidence accumulates to confirm that the Ashbourne portrait of "Shakespeare" is the nobleman poet and playwright Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford.

The next articles in the series on the Ashbourne portrait will examine the purported restoration of the painting begun in 1979 and the deceptions of past Folger administrations in their claims regarding the inscription and the spurious Hamersley "coat of arms." In addition I will provide new evidence linking the crest on the painting with a 1599 crest used by Edward de Vere. A separate article in the future will delve into who, when and why the portraits were changed and what the portrait changes reveal about the implementation of the Shakespeare fraud.

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Baker (continued from page 1)
Cardenio—as part of the canon.

Many of us don't know what philosophy is, let alone what moral philosophy is. So lets start with philosophy. It asks three questions about the world: What is real? How do we know it? What does it mean to me? The three branches are: metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. Ethics is that part of philosophy which deals with making moral choices and with organizing choices in terms of moral values.

Values can be viewed as "intrinsic" or "extrinsic," meaning internal and unchanging, or situational and pragmatic.

It is clear from this that Shakespeare's plays are predicated on "situation-based ethics," and focus our attention on characters not only capable of changing, but in fact undergoing dynamic change. Othello's "intrinsic" goodness which his wife recognizes and marries, is changed by his behavior into an evil she does not know or understands, "Husband?" she cries.

Indeed millions of us—fundamental Muslims and Born Again Christians, to name just two groups—suppose religion is a philosophy and that ethics must be based on a religion taken on faith. Shakespeare rejects this view. His characters are not black and white, but are realistic personalities struggling within themselves for the "right" course of action, as exemplified by Hamlet's dilemma.

Recall the story of how Dante was located while masked in a large crowd of playful revelers. The searchers were instructed to interrogate revelers with the question, "Who knows the good?" To which Dante promptly answered, "He that knows evil."

It turns out that Shakespeare presents us in his plays with marvelous examples of evil.

Once we know evil we can say to ourselves that we don't want to be like Macbeth, or Hamlet or Othello—not to mention Iago, or Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. If we are women, we can learn from the "mistakes" of Desdemona. A passive ignorance is Desdemona's problem. If she had actively combated Othello's growing fears, she might well have changed her own destiny. Failing in this, she could have opted out.

So, from a study of Shakespeare the wise in the audience will know evil and be more able, in the moral course of our lives, to guard against it in our search for our unique personal good. We will also be strengthened in our basic understanding of

human nature, for Shakespeare is a source book of human nature, as many have pointed out.

Consider that Shakespeare does not hold up examples of good men and good women for us to dote upon, emulate or to model our behavior upon, as the old "morality" plays did.

Why?

Because Shakespeare was a true Platonist. He expected us to find good on our own, particularly once he'd pointed out

***"It is clear ... that
 Shakespeare's plays
 are predicated
 on 'situation-
 based ethics..."***

what was bad, à la Dante.

As it turns out, for Shakespeare good is more personal than evil. What is good for one may not be good for another. This is because we are so unique, due to what Robert Ardrey calls "the accident of the night" and others call the wisdom of God. Thus the positive fulfillment of our uniqueness takes many diverse turns and cannot properly be addressed by an *a priori* philosophy.

On the other hand, evil is a commonality: it is the lowest level to which all of us may fall. This is why there isn't much difference between murderers and traders, but there is a great deal of difference between drivers.

Ok, so Shakespeare's moral teachings consist primarily in dramatizing how people become evil and, in a few cases, as with Lear, Othello and Hamlet, how they attempt to extricate themselves afterwards. Othello in killing himself freed himself from what he had become. His action runs counter to "God's canon against self slaughter," which one should point out, and is good proof that the author wasn't Catholic.

Finding moral advice in Plato and Shakespeare is thus difficult. Often it is hidden and not completely obvious. Consider Sharp's observation tucked away near the end of his study (221) which runs like this:

In interpreting the plays themselves we may be less rigorous. Each of them is a group of problems or puzzles, set for the spectator's pleasure and profit.

Did you get that, gentle reader? It's important.

Each play—indeed each scene and each line and, yea, often, each word—is a puzzle set for the spectator's pleasure and profit. And Sharp means, "moral profit." We become better persons, more human in Bloom's sense, from seeing, reading and reflecting upon these great dramas.

Sharp continues,

The answers lie deep where the superficial and the indolent shall never find them...[for] the dramatist is subtle and will let no one win the prize who is not willing to observe carefully, to think patiently, and to pay for more than one ticket of admission.

Isn't that lovely? Doesn't it make you marvel at both Sharp and Shakespeare? Doesn't it bring a smile to your face and a bounce to your walk? Can you not see the Author chuckling and waiting expectantly for your return? Where he intends to hook you again. Always the old cobbler, waiting to work upon us all, to mend our souls with his magic, as the opening aural puns in *Julius Caesar* suggest.

Sharp holds out one conciliatory fig:

But it lies in the very nature of the game [i.e., the one between the Author and the reader/spectator] that the solution must not be beyond the reach of human ingenuity.

While this is true, and important, despite all of Sharp's wisdom, he misses the moral point entirely, even when he is so close to it. Sharp should have asked himself: "Why does Shakespeare engage his audience in this game?"

None of us venture into the Author's realm to be surprised. So the Author's intention cannot be either suspense or the character's unfolding that drives suspense, but rather the engagement of his audience in questions of a moral nature. Thus the author is clearly interested, as any social or political or moral philosopher, in the journey of souls within his audience as effected by his ministrations.

The Author is grooming us to become better citizens. Grooming us toward superior discernment. Causing us to exercise our moral facilities in making good judgments rather than bad ones.

Only the twisted can see Othello and want to be like Iago. Rather the ordinary sees Othello taken down by jealousy and resolves not to follow a similar course. This collective resolution, among English speaking peoples, has changed the course of western civilization. Women are more than stomachs and wombs and they are not the property of their husbands, as Emilia so eloquently stipulates.

Interestingly more of Shakespeare's women are good role models than his males, or so I suppose without counting. Even Emilia and Desdemona can be emulated, though guardedly so, because both met tragic fates, where prompt earlier action would have averted it.

Before I close, I want to direct our attention to what Sharp says about the absence of accidentals in Shakespeare. Because of the Stratfordian dogma he's a bit apologetic about it. He writes,

I know the casual reader of the plays will smile at this statement: but here are no accidents in the great tragedies. Least of all in *King Lear*. In the compass of thirty-two hundred lines is told a story almost as full of incident as *War and Peace*, crowded with characters as clearly conceived and as completely developed as those of the Russian novel. These wonderful results are accomplished by an employment of suggestion that has no parallel in literature. The effect of every word is carefully measured; it always reveals something; it may reveal much.

To prove this Sharp directs us to Kent's "innocent looking phrase," early in *Lear* which explains, when we reflect upon it, Kent's own tragedy:

Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Loved as my father, as my master
follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my
prayers. (I,i,141)

Sharp argues,

...as a prosperous nobleman, Kent has never had any occasion to doubt the existence of Providence. Evil he must have seen, but he has never known— or at any rate realized—its worst possibilities. Then comes overwhelming misfortune to one he loves, coupled with the revelation of malignant wickedness of those whom he has personally known. As a result, God has gone from his world. The sufferings and the heartlessness in his master's family cost him not only his life, but also his religious faith.

What Sharp is pointing out is that if the casual reader had missed this line about Kent's "prayers" tucked innocently way in the first part of the play, the reader would have missed the entire point: Kent is destroyed both in body and in soul by the events of this play. Broken. So it may be said that the entire play turns on one word. There are many such turns in *Lear* and in the other great plays as well.

Sharp is right, each word is considered and weighted. As he notes, we have been

***"Plays devised for
entertainment are
suspense driven,
not morally driven,
as Emerson noted."***

given clues towards our interpretations of the plays. And the answer, Sharpe explains, does not lie beyond human understanding:

Therefore, in [these] properly constructed dramas the most probable explanation of an action or character, even if it be only barely probable, is the true one. This holds even where the number of our data is ridiculously small, for we must believe we were given all we need. Not so in life. Nature has entered into no tacit agreement with us to preserve all that is required for the answers to our questions, and to provide a corrective for misleading facts.

Which is why we need moral philosophy to sort our way through the maze.

For me the vital point follows closely from this. Yet Sharp misses it entirely and argues that we simply can never know the mind of the Author, whereas we can and indeed must know the mind of Kent and Hamlet:

I do not claim that the plays reveal absolutely nothing about the mind and the experience which were their sources; here and there we may undoubtedly detect the man in the pattern he is weaving. But I do maintain that the preceding paragraphs, or the material as yet presented by any other student of Shakespeare, is totally inadequate for the construction of a theory of his positive theological beliefs....this secret we may never hope to pierce.

In this I believe Sharp—and all Stratfordians—have made a fundamental error. The fact is that the mind behind these plays constructed them not for his own amusement, in which case his ultimate intention could not be glimpsed, but for us. With this knowledge in hand, we can pierce this veil. This man believed, wholeheartedly, in the future of mankind. He loved us one and all and he gave of himself, of his time and of his creativity, freely, over and over, so that we might become better persons.

So we can understand his "positive theological beliefs." They weren't religious, they were moral or humanistic. They rest on the Platonic foundation that we can improve our own lot, but only through great effort and what might be called the didactical exposure to evil.

For, as Glaucon notes in the *Republic*, his soul is not harmed when Socrates is with him, even though he is taken into the presence of "evil."

So it is for those careful readers who will pay more than one price of admission to Shakespeare: their souls are in good hands and the process of close scrutiny to his text will prove positive. His text will prove positive. The Author was a man who knew evil and wanted to share this knowledge with us, so that we might avoid it, and through this avoidance live a better life.

So we can say, unequivocally, that Bloom, not Sharp, was right. We do know the moral underpinnings of these works: they were positive. As has been their effect on mankind. The supposition that they were written for momentary pence is ridiculous beyond description. Plays devised for entertainment are suspense driven, not morally driven, as Emerson noted. The fabric of these plays is far more complex than needed for mere entertainment and the Author's labors, thus, far greater than would have been called for.

These plays represent a labor of love and the object of that love was a better future for mankind. He did not like serfs nor servitude and wrote in order that we might be free and better masters of our own fates than the twisted kings who had ruled us for all too long. In his brave new world only the repatriated exile might rightly rule. Just as in Plato, it was the philosopher who returned to the cave who knew what to do.

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Column
A year in the life
By Hank Whittemore

1589: The Metamorphosis begins

The first full year after England's victory over the Spanish armada in 1588 opened a new chapter in the nation's history. Victory celebrations that November had marked the great dividing line of Elizabeth's reign; the initial three decades were over and the final 15 years now lay ahead. William Cecil, Lord Treasurer Burghley could tell himself that his Protestant Reformation in England had every chance of succeeding. The destruction of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots had been achieved in 1587; the defeat of King Philip's invasion had been followed by the sudden death of Burghley's longtime rival, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whose hold over the Queen and lust for power had been surpassed only by his evil reputation and blundering incompetence.

The sole fly in Cecil's ointment was that, remarkably enough, reckless young Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex had already replaced his stepfather Leicester as Court favorite. Essex in the spring of 1589 violated the Queen's command by scampering off to Portugal, only to return a military hero whose popularity rivaled that of the monarch herself. Here was a new challenge to the supremacy of Burghley, who was even now planning for the transference of governmental control to his little hunchbacked son, Robert Cecil. From here on it was urgent, more than ever, to prepare for the death of the Queen by securing power behind the throne in time for the royal succession.

The end game of England's political struggle had begun.

Publicly the final contest would begin

With this issue of Shakespeare Matters Hank Whittemore begins a regular column, "A Year in the Life," in which he will review the key events (history, politics, arts and literature, personal life, friends, family, etc) during just one year in the lifetime of Edward de Vere/Shakespeare. Coming up in our next issue (Spring 2002):

*1564: The Education of
Young Shakespeare*

in April 1590 upon the death of spymaster Francis Walsingham, whose post of Secretary of State was to remain open until Elizabeth's gift of it to Robert Cecil six years later. The first private move came in the fall of 1589, when Burghley began trying to block Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, from attaching himself too strongly to Essex's ambitions. The younger lord, still at Cambridge, also had military dreams and appeared destined to become a Court favorite as well. Noting in his diary for the sixth of October that "Edw. (sic) Co. Southampton" was now 16, Burghley launched a campaign to have him marry his 14-year-old granddaughter, Elizabeth Vere. This union would bring the earl into alliance with Burghley's family; but Southampton, stalling with a request for a year to think it over, had no stomach for the Cecils; and as subsequent events would prove, he was already casting his lot with Essex.

Southampton's prospective father-in-law, Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, was going through a transition of his own in the year 1589. Oxford had acted as the guiding force behind the golden renaissance of English literature and drama over the previous decade, but now that great surge of creativity was ending. The earl's wife Anne Cecil had died in June of 1588, a month before the armada was sighted; and her father, Burghley, had proceeded against him for his marriage debt, seizing some of his lands and holding them for payment. Although Oxford was still receiving quarterly sums from his annual grant of a thousand pounds, he was also selling off Fisher's Folly, his London house where the "university wits" had labored to write under his inspiration and guidance. Oxford was heading into retirement and virtual seclusion. His acting company the Paul's Boys would play three times during the 1589-90 season at Richmond Court, but the group would disband after that as Oxford moved to the countryside. In relation to the other poets and playwrights, he had been the indispensable sun around which these planets had moved; when his gravita-

tional pull could no longer sustain them they would fly off course, scattering and disintegrating on their own.

In September 1589 two of these writers, Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Watson, were arrested for involvement in a brawl and accused of having murdered an innkeeper's son. Both were imprisoned at Newgate and acquitted that December. Like others in Oxford's circle such as Anthony Munday, they were involved not only with literature and the stage, but also with Walsingham and his underworld of espionage.

During 1589 the pamphlet war against the unidentified Puritan writer "Martin Marprelate" went into full swing; and surely it was Oxford who had recruited John Lyly, Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe to help slash back on Archbishop Whitgift's behalf. Nashe, addressing university students in a preface for *Menaphon* by Greene, spoke of "whole Hamlets" and "handfuls of tragical speeches," referring to a play already so well known that even a passing allusion to it would trigger recognition. An Oxfordian dating of *Hamlet* would push back its initial draft by several years, with Eva Turner Clark suggesting that in 1589 the earl began *Macbeth* in reaction to the assassination that July of Henry III of France. (The slaying's brother-in-law Henry of Navarre succeeded as Henry IV; and Queen Elizabeth sent Lord Willoughby to Normandy in military support of this new Protestant ally.) According to Clark's chronology, Oxford would howl on the page as Lear in 1590, completing the "Shakespeare" plays to be revised up until his death in 1604.

Oxford's descent from public view in 1589 was less a "retirement" than the beginning of a metamorphosis. Over previous decades he had served the Queen and her policies as directed by Burghley with help from Secretary Walsingham. His dramatic activities had helped rouse patriotic national support against Spain; and his employment of writers had also given them cover while they acted as spies and gave other kinds of governmental assistance. Now, at this critical juncture in the political

life of England, the path for Oxford henceforth leads to "Shakespeare"—the poet who will dedicate *Venus and Adonis* to Southampton in 1593 and pledge lifelong "duty" to him in his dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece* the following year.

"What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours, being part in all I have, devoted yours," he will tell Southampton publicly in 1594, signing himself as "Your Lordship's in all duty, William Shakespeare."

The publisher-printer of *Venus* and printer of *Lucrece* would be Richard Field, who appears to have been involved in early preparations for Oxford's transformation. Although traditional biographers of "Shakespeare" have tried to make much of Field's origins in Stratford-upon-Avon, the fact is that in 1589 he issued two works intimately connected to Oxford's life; and these served as springboards for his "disappearance" from the public scene before his debut under the Shakespeare name.

One work Field published was the second edition of the English translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* attributed in 1567 to Oxford's uncle, Arthur Golding. Here was the sudden re-emergence in 1589 of a work that the earl himself may have written more than two decades before, as a teenager; and here was the very translation of Ovid to be used by "Shakespeare" as his favorite source of words, themes and inspiration. In fact this new author with the heroic-sounding name would announce his arrival with a Latin epigram from Ovid on the title page of *Venus*, establishing his link with the Roman poet of antiquity.

The other work published by Field in 1589 was *The Arte of English Poesie* with its conspicuous mention of courtier-poets "who have written excellently well as it would appear if their doings could be found out and made public with all the rest, of which number is first that noble gentleman, Edward Earl of Oxford." It is difficult to avoid the feeling that this statement was an announcement of some kind. Suggesting he couldn't reveal the identities of these courtier-poets, the anonymous author went right ahead and blared the name of the man who stood highest of them all. This was not a contradiction, however, because the anonymous author of *Poesie* emphasized it was the "doings" or specific writings of Oxford that could not be found out and made public. The fact of his being a great

poet was obviously quite well known; what couldn't be discovered and revealed was not the man, but, rather, the works of the man. The author was proclaiming that many familiar poems or plays had come from the pen of Oxford, but he had failed to claim authorship of them.

The bottom line was that the author of *Poesie*, whoever he was, had created a perfect setup for the arrival of "Shakespeare" four years from now. Edward, Earl of Ox-

***"Oxford's descent
from public view
in 1589 was less
a 'retirement'
than the beginning
of a metamorphosis."***

***"...the author of Poesie,
whoever he was,
had created a
perfect setup for
the arrival
of 'Shakespeare.'"***

ford, was about to plummet from men's eyes and fall into virtual invisibility; but he might as well have stood on the edge of a high diving board and raised his arms wide, like a swan spreading its wings, for all to see.

That Richard Field, the man who would introduce "Shakespeare" to the world in 1593, was issuing both *Metamorphoses* and *Poesie* in 1589 could hardly be more appropriate. Equally so is that Field himself dedicated *Poesie* to "the Right Honorable Sir William Cecil, Knight, Lord of Burghley, Lord High Treasurer of England,"

father-in-law of Oxford, the best of the courtier poets whose works could not be found out or made public. So we are led right back to Burghley at the great dividing line of the Elizabethan reign, with the political end game beginning and Oxford himself about to undergo his metamorphosis.

While dedicating this work to Burghley, however, Field made clear that its primary reader was to be Elizabeth herself. "This Book (right Honorable)," he addressed Cecil, "coming to my hands, with his bare title without any Author's name or any other ordinary address, I doubted how well it might become me to make you a present thereof, seeming by many express passages in the same at large that it was by the Author intended to our Sovereign Lady the Queen, and for her recreation and service chiefly devised." Be that as it may, Field went on, he thought it best to make Burghley "a partner in the honor of his (the author's) gift."

A few lines later Field wrote of, "the first view of this mine impression" of *Poesie*, a turn of phrase similar to the one "Shakespeare" would use to describe *Venus and Adonis* as "the first heir of my invention." In any case, he had seen the book "to be a device of some novelty (which commonly giveth every good thing a special grace) and a novelty so highly tending to the most worthy praises of her Majesty's most excellent name (dearer to you I dare conceive than any worldly thing besides)," and therefore "me thought I could not devise to have presented your Lordship any gift more agreeable to your appetite, or fitter for my vocation and ability to bestow, your Lordship being learned and a lover of learning, my present a Book and my self a printer always ready and desirous to be at your Honorable commandment. And thus I humbly take my leave from the Black-friars," Field ended, on "this 28th of May 1589."

So this book confirming Oxford as the best of the courtier poets is intended for the Queen and dedicated to Burghley by the man who will introduce "Shakespeare" in conjunction with the Earl of Southampton in 1593, by which time the latter will have spurned any marriage alliance with the Cecils in favor of one with Essex.

Now in 1589, these key players in the drama are standing at the brink of an unknown future, at a time when "history" is yet to be made.

Column
Paradigm Shift

By Mark K. Anderson and Roger Stritmatter

The Potent Testimony of Gabriel Harvey: *Master "Pierce Penniless" and his "Sweetest Venus in print.... armed with the complete harness of the bravest Minerva"*

By the 1580s Edward de Vere had established a formidable reputation for subsidizing writers, scholars and dramatic productions with his inherited fortunes. This outpouring of money began in the 1570s and reached a peak in the next decade, with London productions at the Blackfriars Theatre that introduced the modern five-act play to England.¹ By the end of the decade, however, de Vere's resources were exhausted. He resembled the Shakespearean protagonist Timon of Athens²—a formerly munificent patron who, as he grows ever more destitute, is abandoned by his friends and colleagues.

Orthodox scholars like to trot out this history of de Vere's financial descent as an argument against his authorship of the Shakespeare canon, but, of course, the story of de Vere's life, whether good, bad or ugly, contains numerous unexpected confirmations of the theory. In 1590 occurred a remarkable event, the reverberations of which contain in miniature a logical proof of the theorem identifying de Vere with "William Shakespeare," the author of *Venus and Adonis*.

In 1590, de Vere agreed to pay the rent on a furnished apartment near St. Paul's Cathedral for the elderly poet Thomas Churchyard and the aspiring satirist Thomas Nashe. Churchyard, by now in his late 60s or early 70s, had lived under de Vere's on-again-off-again patronage for several decades,³ served as a mercenary and intelligence agent for de Vere in the Catholic-Protestant wars in the Netherlands. Nashe was just starting his flamboyant career as a satirist, having only a year previously written the preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589) which contains the enigmatic reference to the so-called "Ur-Hamlet."

Nashe and Churchyard had no money of their own; they looked to the benevolent Timon to co-sign the rental agreement and

provide ready cash to underwrite their literary ambitions, extending their hands in expectation of the heart-warming clink of gold sovereigns. However, de Vere didn't pay; Nashe and Churchyard quickly learned that they were out in the cold. The only metallic sound they heard was the clang of bells from the church a few doors down, St. Benet's of Paul's Wharf.⁴

When the landlady Julianne Penn came to collect the advance for the first quarter's rent—several thousand dollars in today's money—still no one paid, and her pleas went unheeded.

The transaction is very well preserved in extant documents. Before long, the beleaguered hostess appealed to de Vere himself, complaining of "The great grief and sorrow I have taken for your unkind dealing with me." The letter explains that she considered Churchyard's signature a security against Nashe's reputation. "You know, my Lord, you had anything in my house, whatsoever you or your men would demand, if it were in my house," she adds. "If it had been a thousand times more I would have been glad to pleasure your Lordship withal. Therefore, good my Lord, deal with me in courtesy, for that you and I shall come at that dreadful day and give account of all our doings."⁵

It is a pitiful and earnest plea that de Vere was unable to redress. He was, however, able to do the next best thing: He raised the hostess to immortality. In the second part of the *Henry IV* plays, the landlady Mistress Quickly wants to evict Falstaff because he can't pay the rent. The pathetic tone of her pleas with the authorities seem to imitate Penne's surviving letter (a trick, incidentally, which de Vere frequently and skillfully employed):

I praye, since my exion [i.e. legal suit] is enter'd and my case so openly known to

the world, let [Falstaff] be brought in to his answer. A hundred mark is a long score for a poor lone woman to bear, and I have borne and borne and borne; and have been fubbed off and fubbed off and fubbed off, from this day to that day, that it is a shame to be thought on. There is no honesty in such dealing, unless a woman should be made an ass and a beast to bear every knave's wrong.⁶

In its fictional form, the ending to this interlude is comic. Falstaff smooth-talks his way out of debt and borrows still more money so he can continue to raise hell with his drinking buddies.

Would that de Vere's actual biography had as many mirthful endings. In Churchyard's undated letter to his landlady, presumably written after her pleas had proven futile, we learn that matters had eventually become so desperate that the poet had to seek sanctuary in a local church.⁷

"I never deserved your displeasure and have made Her Majesty understand of my bond touching the Earl of Oxford, and for fear of arresting I lie in the sanctuary," Churchyard writes to his hostess of his desperate circumstances. "For albeit you may favor me, yet I know I am in your danger and am honest and true in all mine actions."⁸

Nashe, for his part, found no sanctuary. He was promptly hauled off to debtor's prison.

This financial fiasco is recounted with obvious relish by a vociferous critic of Nashe's, the Cambridge University pedant Gabriel Harvey, in his 1592 pamphlet, *Four Letters*. The incident, furthermore, gave rise to a nickname for de Vere which turns out to be pregnant with long-delayed implications for the Shakespearean question.

The pamphlet was one salvo in a bitter war of words between Nashe and Harvey—written about extensively by Shakespeare Fellowship founding member Elizabeth

van Dreunen—during the early 1590s. The origin and purposes of the pamphlet war are still obscure, but the most authoritative testimony identifies Edward de Vere, known under the sobriquets “Will Monox,” and “Master Apis Lapis,” as a central player in the dispute. In his collected works of Nashe, the distinguished renaissance scholar Ronald McKerrow acknowledges that the dispute “seems in its origin to be an offshoot of the well-known one between Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford and [his rival] Sir Philip Sidney in 1579...”⁹ a theory which Ms. van Dreunen has developed in some detail, first in her 1985 essay “Edward de Vere and the War of Words” (published under the name Elizabeth Appleton) and more recently in her book (to be reviewed in our next issue), *An Anatomy of the Marprelate Controversy: Retracing Shakespeare’s Identity and that of Martin Marprelate* (Mellen Press, 2001).

The pamphlets, of which *Strange News* is one, are a critical but typically ignored body of evidence in the Shakespeare question. Scholars often avoid these documents because their obscurity can be a challenge. Frequently the debaters seem to be writing in code. They employ multiple nicknames for each other, and for allies or would-be allies on both sides. One of the most prominent sobriquets reserved for de Vere, for reasons that should by now be becoming obvious, is “Pierce Penniless.” Harvey first uses this name for de Vere in his 1592 pamphlet *Four Letters*, in a passage concerning the Julianne Penn episode: “I would think the counter [i.e. prison], Mr. Churchyard, his hostess Penia,¹⁰ and such other sensible lessons might sufficiently have taught [Nashe] that ‘Penniless’ is not lawless and that a poet’s or painter’s license is a poor security to privilege [against] debt or defamation.”¹¹

We might paraphrase the passage as follows: “You, Mr. Nashe, have defamed me. You also owe some serious debt. ‘Penniless’ granted you a poet’s license, but he is not lawless and therefore will not endorse your defamation or pay your outstanding bills.”

Harvey is partly right about this, although Nashe undoubtedly did not want to admit it. If Harvey was often a pedant, Nashe was sometimes a loudmouth. In his re-

sponse in *Strange News*, without acknowledging Harvey, Nashe could not let de Vere’s *faux pas* pass unnoticed. In his dedication to “Gentle Master William” he speaks of de Vere’s gaffe and throws in an extra jab at the expense of his patron’s children. Nashe begins with the fact that Churchyard had to seek asylum from his landlady in a nearby church—an act that would have activated the legal machinery of the London Archdeacon’s court.

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“I would speak in commendation of your hospitality likewise,” Nashe writes, “But that it is chronicled in the Archdeacon’s Court, and the fruits it brought forth (as I guess) are of age to speak for themselves. Why should virtue be smothered by blind circumstance? ... You kept three maids together in your house a long time: A charitable deed and worthy to be registered in red letters.”¹²

In this paragraph Nashe’s wit apparently inflicted a bruise on his patron’s public pride. Both Churchyard and his landlady are in their 60s or 70s, which is why Nashe sarcastically opines that they are “of an age” to speak for themselves. But then Nashe hits one below the belt: By 1592, de Vere’s estates had become so overburdened

that his three daughters from his first marriage had to be raised in the household of their grandfather (de Vere’s father-in-law) the Lord Treasurer of England, William Cecil Lord Burghley. The “charitable deed” was de Vere’s parentage of his own daughters, the “three maids.” Now, however, the deed deserves to be written in account books filled with red ink, i.e. symbolizing de Vere’s bankrupt estate.

After he had calmed down, Nashe probably recognized the error of his ways. In the second and all subsequent printings of *Strange News*, the paragraph is cut, replaced by a generic passage that only hints at the excised controversy. In the revised copy, de Vere the deadbeat financier becomes de Vere the “infinite Maecenas” referring to the Roman politician who was famous as a patron to the poets Horace and Virgil. (Eight years before, Robert Greene had also praised de Vere as a “Maecenas.”)¹³

“Yea, you are such an infinite Maecenas to learned men that there is not that morsel of meat they can carve you but you will eat for their sakes and accept very thankfully,” Nashe writes in the second edition of his dedication. “Think not, though under correction of your boon companionship, I am disposed to be a little pleasant, I condemn you of any immoderation either in eating or drinking, for I know your government and carriage to be every way canonical. Verily, verily,¹⁴ all poor scholars acknowledge you as their patron, provider and supporter, for there cannot a threadbare cloak sooner peep forth but you straight press it to be an outbrother of your bounty.”¹⁵

“Disposed to be a little pleasant” though Nashe may have been, one reads this paragraph and still detects a slight growl in the author’s voice. The fact that he says he was “under the correction” of de Vere’s “boon companionship” suggests both that the earl twisted Nashe’s arm to put in the correction he did and, by extension, that he must have approved of the rest.

In 1592, even though he was thrown in prison for de Vere’s irresponsibility, the young Nashe still seems a little star-struck by the eminent earl. Of course, if your pal turned out to be Shakespeare, you’d be too. “However I write merrily,” Nashe says. “I

(Continued on page 28)

Paradigm (continued from page 27)

love and admire thy pleasant witty humor, which no care or cross can make unconvertible. Still, be constant to thy content; love poetry; hate pedantism."

"I'll be your daily orator," the satirist continues. "[T]o pray that that pure sanguine complexion of yours may never be famished with pot-luck, that you may taste till your last gasp and live to see the confusion of both your special enemies: Small beer and grammar rules."

But back to "Pierce Penniless." The punchline to Harvey's 1592 identification of de Vere as Pierce Penniless comes a year later in his spring 1593 pamphlet, *Pierce's Supererogation*.

For all his affected prolixity, Harvey could be astonishingly direct at times. While Nashe's preface to *Strange News* refers to de Vere as a "copious Carminist," Harvey's work announces that "Penniless" has been working on a poem about Venus and Adonis. (He also expresses his anxiety at being ribbed in the play *Love's Labor's Lost* and cites a line from Falstaff in *Merry Wives of Windsor*.¹⁶)

Pierce's Supererogation praises the great literary works of his friends Edmund Spenser and the late Sir Philip Sidney. But their works, Harvey continues, began to sprout in the writings of other authors: Greene, Nashe and "M. Pierce Penniless."

Spenser's and Sidney's unrivaled literary works, Harvey states, "were but the violets of March or the primroses of May: Till the one began to sprout in M. Robert Greene the other to blossom in M. Pierce Penniless, as in the rich garden of poor Adonis. Both to grow in perfection in M. Thomas Nashe."¹⁷

Stop and read that passage again. Harvey speaks of "Pierce Penniless" as being an author of a poetical work drawn from "the rich garden of poor Adonis."

Since Harvey explicitly names Nashe as someone distinct from "Penniless,"¹⁸ the nickname in this instance can only refer to the same man that Harvey meant when he spoke of the Churchyard incident: "Penniless' is not lawless," Harvey wrote of de Vere.

And now, Harvey says that "Penniless" is drawing his inspiration from the "garden of Adonis."

Pierce's Supererogation is subscribed with a specific date—27 April 1593—only two weeks after the registration of *Venus and Adonis*, the text in which the name "Shakespeare" first appears in print. Apparently, the poem was not yet printed. In *Pierce's Supererogation*, however, Harvey is retailing his private knowledge of the not yet quite public "M. Pierce Penniless ... in the rich garden of poor Adonis."

The punchline, however, is yet to come. "Who can conceive small hope of any



Harvey's *Pierces Supererogation* was registered on April 27, 1593.

possible account," Harvey continues, "Or regard of mine own discourses were that fair body of the sweetest Venus in print as it is redoubtably armed with the complete harness [i.e. armaments] of the bravest Minerva."¹⁸

If any confirmation is needed, Harvey here restates that it is indeed Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* about which he writes. It is a work about Venus, "not yet in print." Furthermore, the poem is armed with "the complete harness"—i.e. with the armor and weapons—of the classical goddess Minerva/Athena, the patroness of literature known to Elizabethans as "the spear-shaker."

Unlikely as it may seem, despite several decades of research into the theory of de Vere as Shakespeare, the argument of this essay is new. A summary of the case, posted at the Fellowship's website ([www](http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/News/Gabriel_Harvey).

[shakespearefellowship.org/News/Gabriel_Harvey](http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/News/Gabriel_Harvey)) may help the reader to follow the logic which leads to the inevitable conclusion that Gabriel Harvey in his *Four Letters* testifies that Edward de Vere wrote the poem *Venus and Adonis* under the pen-name "William Shakespeare."

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References:

- 1) In his chapter on the year 1583-84 at the Blackfriars Theater, theater historian Charles William Wallace writes, "Then, under the Earl of Oxford's financial support and patronage, the Blackfriars took a stride. Himself a university man, musician, lyric poet and dramatist, another Henry VIII in the love of such pleasures, he brought to the Blackfriars two kindred university spirits, George Peele and John Lyly... These plays by Lyly and Peele at the Blackfriars mark a new era in the form of the English drama, and the two authors share the honor. They are the first modern five-act plays ever known to have been performed before a public audience in an English theatre." *The Evolution of the English Drama Up To Shakespeare*. George Reimer, Berlin (1912) 181.
- 2) According to conventional scholarship, Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* was written sometime between 1605 and 1609 — several years after de Vere had died. In fact, the claim that many Shakespeare plays were written after de Vere's 1604 death is now often used as a "silver bullet" to kill the whole case for de Vere as Shakespeare. This argument, however, is founded largely upon institutionalized circular logic: Scholars have long assumed Shakespeare to have written Shakespeare and have codified an "accepted" chronology of composition that fits the details of Shakespeare's life. With de Vere as Shakespeare, naturally, the chronology of the plays changes. But the simple fact that the de Vere chronology differs from present scholarly convention does not make it wrong. It just makes the subject verboten within the academy—which, in fact, may be more of an endorsement of the case's persuasiveness than academics realize.
- 3) In the *Dictionary of National Biography* entry for Churchyard, one learns that the poet "was born at Shrewsbury about 1520 and in his youth was attached to the household of the famous Earl of Surrey, whose memory he fondly cherished throughout his long life." Surrey was de Vere's paternal uncle.

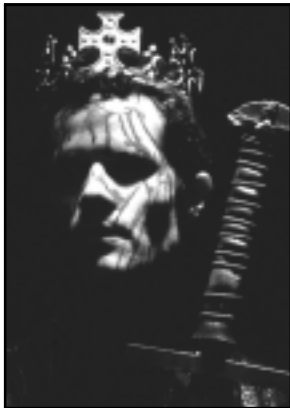
- 4) An echo of this real-life event seems to have crept into *Twelfth Night*, in which this unlikely semantic association—between the bells of this quite specific but obscure chapel and the sound of coins doled out to needy fools—appears as the basis for some witty repartee between the fool Feste and his patron, Olivia, who rewards the jester for his verbal agility with a coin. But Feste wants more money. The lady begrudgingly pulls out another gold piece and hands it over. Feste, undaunted, still wants more. The jingle of these coins, he says, sounds like the peal from St. Benet's steeple. Primo, secundo, tertio is a good play," Feste jests. "And the old saying is the third pays for all. The triplex, sir, is a good tripping measure; or the bells of St. Benet, sir, may put you in mind—one, two, three." Unlike his fictional lord, however, de Vere had no gold to hand out. The third did not "pay for all" but left the other two dangling in debt. There were particular reasons, in 1592: his enemy Christopher Hatton had just become Lord Chancellor of England. As Chancellor, Hatton promptly put himself into the business of settling old scores, the first of which was an old vendetta against de Vere. Hatton forced collection on a crippling load of debt to the crown. The debt trickled down to Nashe and Harvey's landlady, Julianne Penn.
- 5) Lansdowne MSS., 68.114. Transcribed by Charles Wisner Barrell. *Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly* 5:4 (Oct. 1944)59-60.
- 6) *2 Henry IV* 2.1.28-36.
- 7) *ibid.* 60.
- 8) Lansdowne MSS., 68.115. Transcribed by B.M. Ward. *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*. John Murray, London (1928) 303.
- 9) McKerrow *Nashe* V:73.
- 10) Harvey is being characteristically precious here in Latinizing Churchyard's landlady's name, Julianne Penn. Nashe replies to this Harveyism by calling his adversary a "whore-son ninyhammer" for "hop[ing] to dash me quite out of request by telling me of the 'counter and my hostess *Penia*'!"
- 11) Harvey. *Four Letters and certaine Sonnets: Especially touching Robert Greene and other parties by him abused*. John Wolfe, London (1592) reprinted in *The Works of Gabriel Harvey, D.C.I.* Alexander B. Grosart, ed. private circulation, 1884 [reprinted by AMS Press, New York (1966)] 1:199.
- 12) McKerrow, 1:255-6.
- 13) "Wherever Maecenas lodgeth, thither no doubt will scholars flock." Robert Greene. *Gwydonius, The Card of Fancy*. William Ponsonby, London (1584).
- 14) A past-time of some advocates for de Vere is to find as many groan-worthy puns on the names "Vere," "Oxford," "Edward" as can be summoned out of the Shake-speare canon and its tributaries. While such zealotry has undoubtedly tainted the waters, there are occasions more often centered around de Vere's family motto (Vero nihil verius/"Nothing truer than truth") than his family name when authorial identity puns serve an artistic or comic or sardonic purpose. In this case, if Nashe doesn't mean to taunt the reader with the obvious lexical connection between "Verily, verily" and Vere, he's being unusually clumsy in his selection of words.
- 15) Nashe ends the paragraph with the line "Three decayed students you kept attending upon you a long time." The identity of the third "scholar" and probably would-be housemate with Nashe and Churchyard has yet to be advanced. Wisner Barrell guesses (*op. cit.*) that the third is either the playwright John Lyly, who was indeed a long-time recipient of de Vere's patronage, or Robert Greene himself.
- 16) In *Pierce's Supererogation*, Harvey speaks of someone staging a comedy that "threatened" him. "Baubles and comedies are perilous fellows to decipher and discourage men (that is the point) with their witty flouts and learned jerks; enough to lash any man out of countenance," Harvey writes in his tract *Pierce's Supererogation*. "... Gentlemen, beware of a chafing pen that sweateth out whole reams of paper and whole theaters of jests." [Harvey *Pierces Supererogation* 2:213 (Grosart ed.)] In fact, the same month Harvey writes this portion of his diatribe (November 1589) a London theatrical troupe appears to have performed Shake-speare's *Love's Labor's Lost*, which was then suppressed for its topical jests and allusions. [F.G. Fleay (*Life and Work of Shakespeare* (1886) 102; reprinted in the Variorum edition of *Love's Labor's Lost*, Horace Howard Furness ed. J.B. Lippincott Co. (1904) 336-7) argues that the Lord Strange's company performed *Love's Labour's Lost* at the Cross-Keys Inn.] The comedy is filled with references to many contemporaries and events in de Vere's life and world. But the one Harvey undoubtedly took offense over is the Shake-speare canon's most Harveyesque character: The witless pedant Holofernes, a figure in whom both orthodox and heterodox scholars have seen an antagonistic likeness drawn of Harvey. [For commentary on the harsh light in which Holofernes is cast, cf. O.J. Campbell *Shakespeare's Satire* (New York 1943) 32-37; Bryan A. Garner "A Note on Holofernes' Pronunciamentos" *American Notes and Queries* 20 (1982) 100-1. While such critics as M.C. Bradbrook ("St. George for Spelling Reform!" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 15:3 (Summer 1964) 135, fn. 13) point out inexactitudes in the correlation between Shake-speare's pedant and Harvey, it's also important to note that Harvey, widely recognized and criticized for his pedantry, vented his spleen over far less substantial supposed criticisms than this e.g. Nashe's observation that his father was a rope-maker, etc.] Mocked, barbed and "thrust... upon the stage," Harvey admits to his foreboding over being lampooned by such a towering figure as Shake-speare. Indeed, in describing his consternation Harvey quotes Shake-speare himself: "I feared the brazen shield and the brazen boots of Goliath and that same hideous spear like a weaver's beam," Harvey writes. [*Pierces Supererogation* 282.] In these words, Harvey offers an ironic turn on the original phrase, where a cowardly Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* boasts of his infinite courage, saying that he "fear[s] not Goliath with a weaver's beam." [5.1.23-24] The original source of these quotes, in fact, II Samuel 21:19, where King David's meager military might is contrasted to the sophisticated weaponry of his famous opponent Goliath. As it happens, Shake-speare's interest in this obscure detail from Davidian lore is amply noted in Edward de Vere's personal copy of the Bible, where de Vere not only marked the section where the allusion appears, he even underlined the words "weaver's beam." In short, Shake-speare's bombastic braggart Falstaff refers to arcane lore from the Old Testament. Then Harvey steals a line from Falstaff's quote. But, in Harvey's case, the man with the "spear" is not a biblical character but rather a real contemporary figure whom Harvey both fears and mocks. That man is de Vere, i.e. Shake-speare.
- 17) Harvey. *Works*. Alexander Grosart, ed. AMS Press, New York (1966; orig. ed. 1884) 2:50.
- 18) Nashe and Harvey love to bandy about multiple nicknames for everyone. De Vere, is variously referred to as "The Ass," "The Old Ass," "Nashe's St. Fame," "Entelechy," and "Pierce Pennilesse" —among others. To complicate matters, "Pierce Penniless" is also the name of a pamphlet Nashe wrote loosely based on de Vere's troubled finances, and so at various points in Harvey's rhetoric, "Pierce Penniless" clearly refers to Nashe himself. Fortunately, a glance at the larger context within which these "Pierce" allusions are situated often makes it clear when "Pierce" means the author of *Pierce Penniless* and when "Pierce" means the subject—Edward de Vere. In this case, because Nashe is named as someone distinct from "Pierce" this leaves only one choice for the real-life person being referred to.
- 19) Harvey. *Works* 2:324.

Moorer's Marathon, or three plays in one day

Ambitious program schedule in Carmel delivers history

By Chuck Berney

One of the reasons to attend the Shakespeare Oxford Society conference in Carmel last October was the opportunity to see three Shakespearean history plays in chronological order, with the added incentive that the first two are seldom performed. The plays were *Edward III* (recently admitted to the canon by academics), *Thomas of Woodstock* (apocryphally Shakespearean), and *Richard II*. They were presented as the Pacific Repertory Theatre's summer season under the rubric



John Oswald as *Edward III*

"Royal Blood: the Rise and Fall of Kings." The plays were chosen and directed by Stephen Moorer, founder and head of the Pacific Rep, which hosted the conference. Moorer arranged for a special challenge for history-hungry playgoers: on Saturday, 6 October 2001, the three plays were performed in sequence, back to back—*Edward III* in the morning, *Woodstock* in the afternoon, and *Richard II* in the evening.

Edward III tells two stories: the first is the king's potentially adulterous infatuation with the

beautiful but virtuous Countess of Salisbury. John Oswald as the king and Julie Hughett as the Countess brought flair and dramatic tension to their scenes of lust opposed by honor. Comic relief was provided by the king's efforts to produce a poem worthy of the Countess's charms. He enlists the aid of a poet, Lodowick, played with panache by Tim Hart, and the contrast between the soaring rapture of the smitten king and the down-to-earth observations of the poet was delightful. The interaction between the two smacked of personal experience on the part of the author (Oxford/Golding? Oxford/Lyly?).

The second story told by the play is that of the attainment of maturity and martial glory by the king's son, Edward the Black Prince, by his triumphs over the French at Crécy and Poitiers. The production was staged in the round (appropriately, in the Circle Theatre) with the actors practically on top of the audience; this gave the action an immediacy and urgency that was extraordinarily compelling. The battle scenes were choreographed effectively and accompanied by music that added greatly to the impact. David Mendelsohn as the Black Prince played the role with an iconic intensity that was entirely convincing. All in all, this was a brilliant production, and a satisfying introduction to a play that few if any of us had seen before.

When *Thomas of Woodstock* opens, four of Edward III's seven sons are deceased, including Edward the Black Prince. His son has ascended the throne as Richard II, but the country is being governed by his three surviving uncles: York, Lancaster (John of Gaunt) and Gloucester (Thomas of Woodstock, officially the Lord Protector). The story concerns Richard's efforts to wrest

power from his uncles, climaxing with the murder of Woodstock. Among the links to the previous play are the reappearances of Edward III and the Black Prince as ghosts warning Woodstock of his fate.

Part of the fun of being an Oxfordian is discerning the identities of real-life models for characters in Shakespeare's plays (there's no doubt in my mind that Woodstock is by Shakespeare/Oxford). Stephanie Hughes gave compelling evidence that the title character, "Plain Thomas," was based on Oxford's tutor Thomas Smith, an important figure in the Elizabethan intellectual landscape. In the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* (Summer 1999) I pointed out that Sir Henry Green, the most prominent of Richard's sycophants in the play, is actually a stand-in for Robert de Vere, the 9th Earl of Oxford, historically the most important of Richard's favorites ("vert"—French for green—and Vere are pronounced identically).

After centuries of neglect, *Woodstock* seems to be getting popular. Roger Stritmatter pointed it out to Timothy Holcomb, director of the Hampshire Shakespeare Company, which mounted an excellent production (said to be the American premiere) in the summer of 1999. Anne Pluto and the Oxford Street Players did a version with an all-female cast early in the year 2000, and the Emerson Stage Company plans performances in February and March of 2002 (see the ad for this production on page 31).

Unfortunately, the Pacific Repertory production of *Woodstock* was the weakest of the three plays presented. Part of the problem was the performance of Michael Sandels in the title role. The basis of Woodstock's character is his plain-spokenness ("I'm Plain Thomas, by th' rood, I'll speak the truth"); the role thus demands an actor of weight and dignity (the Burl Ives of 1958 would be ideal). Sandels came closer to the Burt Reynolds of 1977 (*Smokey and the Bandit*). He elaborated the role with so many gestures and facial expressions that when he said "Plain Thomas will speak plainly," I thought, "Why is he trying to con me?" The comic duo of Tresilian and Nimble was one of the highlights of the Hampshire Shakespeare production; in the present case Tim Hart and Nathan Sanford, who were delightful in *Edward III*, were allowed to overact—comic dances of glee at their own villainy replaced a believable relationship.

Another problem was that Moorer trimmed the play to make it fit with its successor. Queen Anne and Henry Green both die in *Woodstock* but show up alive in *Richard II*. The director's solution was to insert a line (a scene or two after reports of Anne's illness) indicating she didn't die after all, and to omit the fight in which Green is killed. The first change is anticlimactic ("Why did we bother to worry about Anne?") and the second (since Green is the most important of the flatterers) distorts the structure of the play by eliminating a climactic scene.

In *Woodstock* the character of the governor of Calais, who is responsible for the murder of Plain Thomas, is called Lapoole. Historically, the governor at that time was Thomas Mowbray, the name Shakespeare gives to the same character in *Richard II*. The quarrel between Bolingbroke (Woodstock's nephew, later Henry IV) and Mowbray opens the play; they each accuse the other of treason and the spectator is puzzled (what are they talking about?). Finally



In one of Woodstock's comic moments, Thomas of Woodstock (Michael Sandels) chats with a horse in his courtyard.

Bolingbroke gets specific and charges Mowbray with the murder of Woodstock, to which Mowbray replies "Islewhim not, but to my own disgrace neglected my sworn duty in that case," which is a self-serving description of the action in Scene 5.1 of

Woodstock. If one is to make alterations in Woodstock for the benefit of those about to watch Richard II, I suggest that the most helpful change one could make would be to change Lapoole's name to Mowbray, so that the cause of the opening quarrel in the later play is immediately clear.

Back to Carmel. I must confess that I wimped out—I did not see all three plays in one day, but took Saturday evening off, postponing my encounter with Richard II. On Sunday evening I strolled to the Forest Theatre, a stage surrounded by magnificent evergreens. Bonfires roared on each side of the space, warming the audience (at least by proxy), and filling the air with scents redolent of warriors' encampments.

The magic was back. And the play was satisfying. Brian Hurdon was convincing in the title role, and John Oswald again made the most of the magnificent opportunities given him by the Playwright, delivering John of Gaunt's dying speech ("This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle . . .") most movingly.

My only previous experience with Richard II had been via the BBC video of 1978, directed by David Giles and starring Derek Jacobi. Thus I was confused when the Pacific Repertory's performance got to Scene 5.2, York's discovery of the treasonous letter

that his son, Aumerle, is carrying. The audience was laughing! The scene, which I had believed to be deadly serious, was being played for comedy! When I got home, I checked out the video again; sure enough, the BBC actors were trying to play it for comedy, but were not succeeding—it just wasn't funny. It was not the actors' fault. They were all skilled players, and on the second viewing I recognized that Charles Gray, the actor playing York, had shaped his performance throughout the play with an eye to comedic effect in Scene 5.2.

But the medium shapes the message. There's something about having live actors before you in the flesh (and perhaps being surrounded by an audience of your fellows) that allows you to accept sudden changes in tone. And the comic scene just before the conclusion of a tragedy is a device that Shakespeare is fond of (think of the Clown with the asp in Antony and Cleopatra, or Osric in Hamlet). Live and learn.

Stephen Moorer is to be applauded for his audacity in scheduling three history plays (with more to come in succeeding summers), for his immense contributions to the success of the conference, and for his generally deft and frequently inspired direction of these important plays.

I am thus delighted that a tentative agreement has been reached for the Shakespeare Fellowship to conduct its third annual conference in Carmel in October 2004, which will be the concluding year for the Royal Blood series. Henry VI, part 2 and Richard III will be presented then.

See you there!

Thomas of Woodstock at Emerson College
 Directed by Michael Hammond
 Feb. 27th to Mar. 3rd, at Emerson College, Studio Theatre, 69 Brimmer St. Boston, MA.
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Letters (continued from page 3)

extensive research here presented for which I am grateful and which will send me back to the bookshelf to read more of Allen, Barrell, Chapman etc. bearing on the subject. Ms. Burris has a compelling tale to tell, at least as I remember hearing it, and she doesn't need a good deal of this "layer of evidence" which I find shaky. The evidence will stand without it and I'm looking forward to reading it in the next several issues of *Shakespeare Matters*.

Virginia J. Renner
Retired Reader Services Librarian
Huntington Library, California
1 December 2001

To the Editors:

We would like to share with your readers some news from our Sydney-based Kinetic Energy Theatre Company.

We are creating a series of plays about the authorship question, the first of which—*SHAKE-SPEARE, Part 1*—premiered in October 2001. The plays look at how Shakespeare's work reflects the life of Edward de Vere in stunning detail, therefore suggesting the Earl to have been the true author, ingeniously concealed within his own words. This drama-documentary leads the audience, with the help of co-narrators Francis Bacon and Mary Sydney, through de Vere's personal history and the socio-political labyrinth surrounding it. The characters (protagonists: Oxford, Eliza-

beth I, Burghley, Anne Cecil, Hatton, Leicester, Henry Howard, Anne Vavasour, Henry Wriothesley, et al.) come to life breathing Shakespeare's own words: taken from their portraits in the plays and sonnets where they were trapped in disguise.

The process of this reverse interpretation is guided by a combination of forces: our artistic intuition, our own detective work, as well as the excellent Oxfordian research spanning from Looney via Ogburn to now. Parts 1, 2 and 3 cover the Elizabethan past; Part 4 will look into more recent issues, using as a major inspiration the Barrell courtcase and intrigues surrounding the Ashbourne portrait. Our pre-season publicity met with no response, perhaps because it coincided with the September 11 events. But later, when we tried again to drum up some interest from local academics and teachers, the response was bluntly: "Who cares. It's not important to know who the author was. We've got the plays."

Public dialogue began when the major paper's review came out. It was a classic case of Stratfordian vitriol. Virtually ignoring the play, the critic contented himself with attacking our Oxfordian perspective. Numerous complaints caused the arts-editor to give us redress, inviting us to write a defence of the Oxford case, while giving the same critic (!) the opportunity to respond from the Stratfordian view. He expected to spark off a debate among the wider public. But the double article prompted only one reply: from the director of a company specialising in Shakespeare

productions, with a virtual monopoly on the subject. Without seeing our play, this director defended the critic's arguments and added to the list of Stratfordian misconceptions. The debate then fizzled out (further contributions from us were not desired). But there is hope it may be rekindled when we premiere our *SHAKE-SPEARE, Part 2*, which is planned for early 2002.

Feedback from our audience has been overwhelmingly positive: for many it was an eyeopener, not only into the man behind the name, but also into the mind and spirit of the Elizabethan age. To be witness to a great man's story, obliterated from official history, inspired many to look into the authorship question themselves. The underlying metaphor relevant today was not lost on them: and so it stands—de Vere, after 400 years, still serving truth.

Jepke Goudsmit and Graham Jones,
Co-writer/directors
Kinetic Energy Theatre Company
Sydney, Australia
23 November 2001

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