



# Shakespeare Matters

"The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship"

Vol. 1: no. 3

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

Spring 2002

## Ashbourne Story III:

*Close review of the painting's restoration reveals a history of deception and destruction*

By Barbara Burris

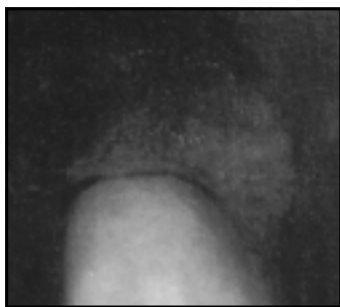


Fig. 1 By permission, Folger Shakespeare Library  
On the top is the left wrist ruff (Fig. 1) as it appears today (after a 20-year restoration project). It is nothing more than a blob, where once upon a time (as shown in Fig. 2, below, in a detail from a 1961 Folger print) it had full detail.

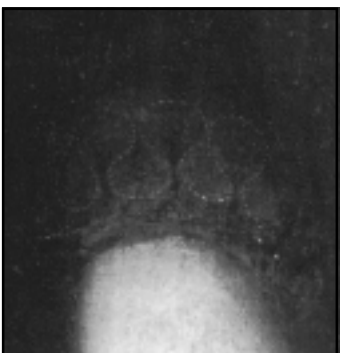


Fig. 2 By permission, Folger Shakespeare Library

as a 17th century painting.

The earliest tamperer—who originally altered the Ashbourne portrait into "Shakespeare"—understood the threat that these out-of-style wrist ruffs posed to the false 1611 inscription date on the portrait and muddied the originally brilliant white ruffs by painting them dark gray to make them less noticeable. Although this unknown tamperer changed the structure of the neck ruff when he overpainted it, he did not bother to alter the basic structure of the wrist ruffs before darkening them with gray paint.

(Continued on page 10)

## New documents vindicate Barrell

*Folger's own files negate its dismissal of his 1940 work*

In Part III of her continuing series on the Ashbourne portrait of Shakespeare owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library, researcher Barbara Burris—using files on the painting's restoration provided by the Folger—has found that the world famous Shakespeare library has apparently always known that the all-important "CK" monogram—first discovered by Charles Wisner Barrell in his x-ray/infrared analysis of the painting in 1940—has been right where Barrell first found it. This "CK" monogram is important because it most likely stands for the Dutch artist Cornelis Ketel—known to have painted a circa 1580s portrait of Oxford which is now lost.

It was the presence of this monogram on the painting that was key in leading Barrell to conclude that the original sitter was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Four decades later—during a cleaning and restoration of the painting—it was the purported total absence of the "CK" from both the painting's surface and from x-rays taken by the Folger in 1948-49 that led the Shakespeare

(Continued on page 8)

## Smithsonian showdown and New York Times feature article rock the authorship debate

The first two months of 2002 continued the ongoing saga of the Shakespeare authorship question, and perhaps someday may be seen as one of the watershed moments in the resolution of the controversy. Within three weeks we witnessed a sold-out auditorium in Washington DC, gathered to hear the editor of the prestigious *Shakespeare Quarterly* debate an Oxfordian author, followed just two weeks later by a feature article on the authorship question in *The New York Times*.

While the event at the Smithsonian could be chalked up as just one more debate in the long history of the controversy and therefore not all that significant (the sold-out auditorium of 600 notwithstanding), the decision by *The New York Times* to publish a major article on the authorship question in its Sunday Arts and Leisure section (February 10, 2002) was, well, major. Moreover, the

(Continued on page 6)

## Letters:

To the Editors:

I want to thank Virginia J. Renner, Retired Reader Services Librarian, Huntington Library, California, for her thoughtful and informative response to "A Golden Book, bound richly up" (*Shakespeare Matters*, Fall 2001). Her information about the Paper Royall being a certain large size implying a book of a large size I find an interesting addition to understanding Chapman's lines. Her comments have made me take another look at these lines.

A close reading of Chapman's lines indicates that the book in the sifter's hand is not of paper but of parchment which would be either large parchment cut down for this book or made to size.

All his most *self-loved verse* in paper  
*royall*,  
Or Parchment rul'd with Lead,  
smooth'd with the Pumice;  
*Bound richly up, and strung with Crimson Strings;* (emphasis added)

Clearly Chapman is saying the richly bound book is made not with paper but with parchment. As you noted parchment was very expensive, but also the most long lasting or "immortal" of writing surfaces for a book, and would be the natural choice for a courtier poet like Oxford, for his immortal poems.

About the book not being Oxford's, I noted the reasons it was not a dedication copy to Oxford. There is a personal iconography in a portrait of this sort. The portrait shows his courtier's glove and the boar's head ring (which I did not discuss, but which I think represents not only the Oxford boar but the Henry IV plays and Boar's head tavern). I do not think Oxford as a poet playwright himself, would be holding someone else's book in his portrait. Chapman also says that it is the book of the poet's "own self-loved verse." I maintain there was no more important verse to Oxford than his personal sonnets.

As to my connection of Chapman's references to "apish" and the "Ape-loved issue of his brain" etc. to Oxford, I agree with Ms. Renner, and noted that these terms are references to actors, theatre or to fashion and do not apply solely to Oxford. But in the context of this play and the lines cited and the fact that Oxford is actually named in this play taking off on Hamlet, I think it is more

than legitimate to connect specific uses of these terms by Chapman in specific instances in the play to Oxford. Especially as we have other instances of these terms being applied to Oxford.

I want to thank Ms. Renner again for her comments and especially for drawing my attention to the lines about paper and parchment in the lines about the noble poet's book.

Barbara Burris  
Royal Oak, Michigan  
1 February 2002

To the Editors:

As a long-term researcher, speaker and writer on the pamphlets of the writers Thomas Nashe, Gabriel Harvey and Edward de Vere in their battle of writings of 1588 to 1596, I was most intrigued by the title Mark N. Anderson and Roger Stritmatter gave their column: "The Potent Testimony of Gabriel Harvey: Master "Pierce Pennilesse" and his "Sweetest Venus in print ... armed with the complete harness of the bravest Minerva" in the Winter 2002 issue of *Shakespeare Matters*.

On re-reading this text very carefully several times, however, I found a number of disconcerting inaccuracies in it. The most troubling one was the fact the writers apparently wrongly connected certain passages in Gabriel Harvey's *Pierce's Super-*

*erogation* with other passages with the use of their words "Harvey continues." This they did twice, creating the impression that the passages actually followed each other in Harvey's text when in fact they do not (see p. 28, column 1, line 20 to p. 28, column 2, lines 17 to 18, ending in "Minerva" in the article).

Taking the most important comment for Anderson and Stritmatter first, these writers closely link their newly discovered passage on Minerva—"Who can conceive small hope of any possible account" [etc.] down to "Minerva"—to the passage stating "M. Pierce Pennilesse, in the rich garden of poor Adonis" with the use of the words "Harvey continues." The footnotes in the article are confusing in this regard, since the note for the second quote sends the reader to footnote 18, which has nothing to do with *Supererogation*. [Ed. note: see the authors' comment following this letter].

Nonetheless, there appears to be an immense distance between the two passages claimed by the writers to follow each other in Harvey's text. Meanwhile the writers' statement made earlier (p. 28, column 1, lines 20 to 30) that Harvey's work announces that,

Pennilesse has been working on a poem about Venus and Adonis" which follows on with, "*Pierce's Supererogation* praises the great literary works of his friends Edmund Spenser and the late Sir Philip Sidney. But

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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.

their works, Harvey continues...

seems incorrect here. For in my copy of *Pierce's Supererogation*, pages 1-15 are largely devoted to attacks on Nashe; Harvey makes neither of these pronouncements.

Elizabeth Appleton van Dreunen Ph. D.  
Toronto, Ontario  
12 February 2002

*We are indebted to Elizabeth van Dreunen for pointing out an editorial oversight in the previous issue of Shakespeare Matters. In the article "The Potent Testimony of Gabriel Harvey" (Winter 2002; 28), Gabriel Harvey is quoted, from his Pierce's Supererogation, speaking of, "the fair body of the sweetest Venus in print." The article neglected to note that this quote came later in the book, after the "Pierce Penniless... in the rich garden of poor Adonis" excerpt. The correct page reference for the "fair body" quote is given in footnote 19: "Alexander Grosart's edition of Harvey's works, 2:324."*

—Mark Anderson and Roger Stritmatter  
(Editors note: Dr. van Dreunen's recent book on the Marprelate affair is reviewed in this issue on pages 25-27)

To the Editors:

The pansies in the Persian Portrait purported to be Elizabeth the First ("Queen Elizabeth Pregnancy Portrait," Winter 2002) are not pansies as we know them today in the United States. In Elizabethan England this little wild viola tricolor of purple, white and yellow was called heartsease. It is recognized in our country by the name of Johnny-jump-up.

Although we know that the Elizabethans loved flowers and planted them according to their perfumed scents, it is worth noting that a Mr. W. Foxton published a pamphlet in 1914 in England that lists 69 flowers mentioned in Shakespeare!

The French marigold was Mary Queen of Scots favorite flower and she used it in her embroidery profusely. However I was surprised to learn that Mr. Strong, the art expert, states, "that the pansy was the Virgin Queen's favorite flower."

Frederick Chamberlin wrote in 1922 in *The Private Character of Queen Elizabeth* that at the age of eleven Elizabeth embroidered heartsease on the cover of a book that she translated and gave to Katherine Parr as a New Year's gift. Thus far, this is the only reference that I can connect the pansy or heartsease with Queen Elizabeth as perhaps being her favorite flower.

Marlene Benjamin  
Aurora, Ohio  
17 January 2002

### From the Editors

## Making news

We were doing some reading the other day and came across an amusing anecdote contained in an open letter to the members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, from Director/Editor Richard C. Horne, in the March 30, 1966 issue of Society's 'zine: "the fact that you have not had a bulletin or news-letter from your Society since August does not mean we are dead or sleeping, although it might strongly suggest it. The treasury, by that time, had been depleted..." But now renewals were trickling in, and Horne had money for postage. He wrote to assure subscribers that he was not sleeping.

Like those early pioneers, the editors, trustees and officers of the Shakespeare Fellowship volunteer many hours of our precious personal time to deliver you a publication worth reading.

This issue is a whopping 36 pages of intrigue and insight. We weren't sure if we had the money to print such a large issue—but President Berney passed the hat among some of our more generous benefactors, and we collected enough change to pay the printer's bill.

You'll also notice that the publication of this issue is a few weeks delayed—but please rest assured that we haven't been sleeping! We were ready to print in early April but Barbara Burreis's article on the

Ashbourne was demanding, and then in April her article became a story in itself as we shared a galley proof with both the Folger Shakespeare Library and former Shakespeare Oxford Society Executive Vice-President Dr. Gordon Cyr.

Dr. Cyr, as you will find on page nine, was moved to change his position on who the portrait's original sitter had been. This is a most significant development in the Ashbourne story, and we salute Dr. Cyr for his forthrightness in reconsidering his past position on this issue and joining with those who reject the notion that this famous "Shakespeare" portrait could possibly be Sir Hugh Hamersley.

We think this story, particularly the installment in this issue, is one of the most important articles ever published in an Oxfordian journal. We will have more to say on this matter in our next issue, after Part IV of Burreis's series has been published, with its further documentation of the questionable manner with which the Folger Shakespeare Library has dealt with the possibility that this priceless artifact might actually be the "true" Shakespeare—Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford—and how it has discharged its custodial duties in managing the restoration of this painting over the past 20 years.

## State of the debate

At any other time in recent memory, the dual authorship events of the debate sponsored by the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, last January 29th, followed closely by the feature article in the *New York Times* on February 10th, would have been the lead story on the front page. Yet, as noted above, our own evolving story on the Folger Shakespeare Library and its handling of the world famous Ashbourne "Shakespeare" portrait has, in our estimation, trumped both of these landmark events.

But we must take the time to note just how significant these other two events are, for they both seem to signal that the oft-spoken of paradigm is, indeed, shifting.

The turnout at the Smithsonian event was impressive, and those who attended report that most attendees had been reading up on the authorship story, and were quite knowledgeable about the strength of

the Oxfordian arguments in support of Edward de Vere's having been the true Shakespeare. Audience reactions throughout the Smithsonian debate clearly indicated a broad base of support for de Vere.

Meanwhile, the *New York Times* broke new ground by publishing a major article on the Oxfordian movement. Oxfordians everywhere owe the *Times'* William S. Niederkorn a vote of thanks for his many months of reading and research that lead up to this article, and just as importantly, his tireless efforts within the *Times* to keep his fellow writers and editors apprised of the strength of the Oxfordian case.

We understand from what Mr. Niederkorn said at the annual Oxford Day Banquet in April that there are a number of writers and editors in the *Times* offices who now appreciate that the authorship story is for real, and that is good for all of us.

## First Annual Fellowship Conference, October 18-20

After nine months of astounding growth, the Shakespeare Fellowship is delighted to announce that its first annual Conference and Banquet will be held October 18-20 at the luxurious Royal Sonesta Hotel on the Charles River in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

An impressive roster of speakers will include Dr. Ren Draya, Dr. Daniel Wright, Dr. Anne Pluto, Dr. Paul Altrocchi, Dr. Eric Altschuler, Barbara Burris, Ron Halstead, Richard Whalen, William Boyle, Hank Whittemore, Jonni Lea Dunn, William Niederkorn, Gerit Quealy, Ken Kaplan, Stephanie Hughes, and Jason Moore.

The Social Law Library of Boston will host a Friday evening reception and panel discussion on Shakespeare's Philosophy and the Rule of Law, likely featuring a distinguished guest (details pending).

Terry Ross will debate Dr. Roger Stritmatter on the relevance of the Geneva Bible to the authorship question.

The Fellowship has reserved 40 rooms at the Royal Sonesta Hotel at the special conference price of \$179 per night. Additional rooms are available at the nearby Holiday Inn Express at \$159 per night. Those on limited budgets are encouraged to consider sharing a room with another attendee. Lynne Kositsky will keep a roster of those wishing to share and help attendees exchange information to facilitate the process. Please email her ([kositsky](mailto:kositsky))



*The Shakespeare Fellowship conference will be held at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, on the banks of the Charles River in Cambridge, Mass., directly across from downtown Boston, close to numerous famous landmarks and transportation.*

[@ican.net](http://ican.net)) if you wish to avail yourself of this service.

The conference will not only provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas and development of Oxfordian theory; it will also be a seminal event in the formation of our new organization: an opportunity to build on our ideals of political openness, lively and respectful debate, and strategic vision and initiative.

### International authorship conference scheduled for July 2004 in London

The De Vere Society in Great Britain has announced that a special international conference on the Shakespeare authorship will be held in July 2004, the four hundredth anniversary of the death of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

Present plans call for the conference to be based at St. Johns College in Cambridge, but with related events taking place throughout the conference week in both London and at Castle Hedingham.

A recent letter sent out from De Vere Society Treasurer Alan Robinson announced a fundraising program, with the goal of raising a total of \$50,000 for the

planned conference. Grant aid will also be sought from the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation, but, Robinson noted, aid from these organizations will be contingent upon \$15,000 being raised from De Vere Society members by Fall 2002. Robinson encouraged all members to donate \$112 each towards this once-in-a-life-time event (A. Robinson, The De Vere Society, 8 Haywards Close, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1UY, UK).

Other recent communications from the DVS confirm that the Shakespeare Fellowship and its members will be welcome at this gala authorship event in two years.

## Shakespeare Fellowship Foundation

In cooperation with the Shakespeare Fellowship board of trustees, the Caldwell Trust Bank of Venice, Florida has established an independent 501(3)-C foundation, The Shakespeare Fellowship Foundation, to help fund the activities of the Fellowship. The trust agreement between the Foundation and the Shakespeare Fellowship states that the purpose of the fund is to "aid and assist financially research, support, activities and efforts toward the objective of establishing once and for all the true and correct identity of the author of the enormous literary works known to the world as 'Shakespeare.'"

Toward this end, the Shakespeare Fellowship Foundation distributions may be made directly to organizations for such purposes or as contributions to qualified charities authorized to provide financial assistance to such organizations and such charitable activities.

One important step has already been taken to facilitate making distributions from the Foundation funds. Fellowship President Chuck Berney has announced the formation of a Grant Committee to oversee the distribution process. The committee members are: Chuck Berney, President of the Shakespeare Fellowship, Alex McNeil, treasurer of the Shakespeare Fellowship, Dr. Ren Draya, Professor of English at Blackburn College in Illinois, Sally Mosher, a long-time Oxfordian from California (and an acclaimed harpsichordist), and Earl Showerman, a physician and computer expert from Oregon.

One goal of the Foundation is to develop sufficient assets to fund the operating budget of the Shakespeare Fellowship from interest revenues. The Foundation has already been the recipient of a \$6,000 donation from an anonymous benefactor, and looks forward to many more such generous donations in the future. Those interested in making contributions to the Foundation are invited to contact Charles Berney ([cvberney@rcn.net](mailto:cvberney@rcn.net)).

Authorship in the news

## Freed's *Beard of Avon*, Rubbo's *Much Ado* about Something both get national coverage

While the debate at the Smithsonian in January and *The New York Times* article in February dominated the authorship news stories in early 2002, other events and related stories that were also garnering national coverage as the Shakespeare authorship debate keeps on capturing the attention and imagination of both artists and the general public.

In California award-winning playwright Amy Freed's new play *Beard of Avon* drew rave reviews after its preview opening last summer, and it continues to find new audiences on the west coast, and now—in 2002—it is apparently going to be produced in other cities around the country.

The play is Freed's irreverent look at the authorship debate, and while the role she gives to the Stratford man—he collaborates with Oxford!—is not accepted by most Oxfordians, her play does treat the authorship question as something worth paying attention to, and the success of *Beard* will undoubtedly bring wider awareness of the authorship debate to theatre goers.

In a review in the *San Jose Mercury News*, Freed is quoted, "Shakespeare has become in our culture, with good reason,

the most defining voice of western humanity ... You want to know where it came from ... The question excites such monstrous emotions ... In the past there has been a lot of social snobbery. We're very wedded to the idea of self-made people. So there's really a lot of cultural projection on both sides."

Meanwhile, while Freed was using humor to gently bring the "monstrous emotions" of the authorship debate to her audience, another major authorship event took place on the silver screen. Australian Michael Rubbo, unabashedly in love with Calvin Hoffman's 1955 book *The Murder of the Man Who Was Shakespeare* (a Marlovian authorship view), has produced a 94-minute documentary film ("Much Ado About Something") on the case for Marlowe as Shakespeare, and has succeeded in getting his work national distribution (it played at the Film Forum in NYC in February), and as of this spring (2002) it has been sold to both PBS and the BBC (it aired in Britain in April).

For Oxfordians, the anti-Stratfordian arguments in the film are valid any day of the week, and some familiar faces pop up throughout the 94-minutes: Mark Rylance,

artistic director of the Globe Theatre in London, Marlovian John Baker (whose essay on Shakespeare's moral philosophy appeared in the last issue of *Shakespeare Matters*), and such mainstream scholars as Jonathan Bate and Stanley Wells.

The film was also featured as part of the February 10th *New York Times* feature article, and received a separate review from Elvis Mitchell in the *Times* (among others).

The difference between the two *Times* treatments of this film is revealing. Where Niederkorn, for example, quotes Mark Rylance as saying that once he didn't care about who the author was, but now he cares very much, Mitchell evokes the more standard conspiracy concerns of some commentators when he writes that, "[while] the conspiracy theories are wonderful stuff," the film, "could be veering into Oliver Stone territory [but doesn't]." He concludes on the note that Rubbo's view is "that disproving Shakespeare's authorship" is not akin to "lining up at Kinkos" to photocopy one's own theories about JFK.

In other words, the Shakespeare authorship debate may actually be going mainstream, because it's *not* like JFK theories.

That, we presume, is an endorsement.

## "Veering Away"

### Shakespeare Newsletter plays with Oxford

*The Shakespeare Newsletter*, now published at Iona College in Purchase, NY has been reporting on Shakespeare—and the authorship debate—for many decades. Founded in 1951 by Dr. Louis Marder, the debate was often mentioned in its pages, and Marder himself would on occasion accept invitations to authorship events. Beginning in the late 1970s, and continuing into 1991 the newsletter also featured a regular paid page on Oxfordian and/or other authorship news. But in 1991, with Marder retiring and selling the newsletter to Iona, the editorship passed into the hands of Thomas A. Pendleton and John W. Mahon, and a new policy on the authorship question was initiated.

Pendleton wrote in the Winter 1991 issue explaining why they had decided not

to give the authorship controversy any more coverage than it deserved, noting, of course, that by publishing a full page on authorship in each issue, the newsletter had been giving it "a prominence and plausibility that it did not deserve." From now on, promised Pendleton, the newsletter would publish only those materials that might "legitimately be considered news of interest to Shakespeareans."

In the 10 years since 1991 the new *SNL* editors have found themselves including authorship in their pages a lot more than they may have ever anticipated, but with their most recent issue (Fall 2001) a new benchmark was reached. For in this issue editor Pendleton himself presents (under the title, "Veering away") a two and one-half page "transcript" of a conversation between

Queen Elizabeth I and her chief advisor, Lord Burleigh, discussing such puzzling state matters as Oxford and an undercook, sodomy, state secrets, plays, conspiracy, state secrets some more, conspiracy some more, and of course some guy named "Shipshape," or "Slipshod," or "Speaksure," or something.

It's an entertaining read, and finding it in the pages of *SNL* is, well, intriguing. Where once a single page—paid for—was giving authorship a prominence it did not deserve, now two and one-half pages of well-crafted free publicity is, apparently, "news of interest to Shakespeareans." And straight from the pen of Dr. Pendleton himself, we are guessing. In another 10 years will the Fall 2011 issue of *SNL* be telling us, "We always knew it was Oxford?"

*Smithsonian, Times* (continued from page 1) *Times* article—in addition to reporting on the Smithsonian debate—drew heavily on *Shakespeare Matters* co-editor Roger Stritmatter's dissertation on Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible, and gave significant space to Barbara Burris's recent work on the Ashbourne portrait (as published in recent issues of *Shakespeare Matters*, including this issue).

Many Oxfordians involved in the authorship issue over the years have debated just what would constitute victory, short of a definitive smoking gun; the consensus has usually come down to significant movement from major cultural institutions that would, once and for all in the eyes of the mainstream, legitimize the debate. Examples of the sort of institutions whose public position on the authorship debate could be seen as signaling "paradigm shift underway" have included: the Folger Shakespeare Library, Harvard University, and *The New York Times*. So, with the *Times'* decision to go from ignoring the story to covering the story, we can begin to wonder, "What next?"

Just weeks ago we were ready to report that perhaps the Folger should also be counted as having at least softened its stance on the authorship, in light of its recent decisions to state during public tours of the Library that it took no position on the debate, and, more recently, their full cooperation with Barbara Burris and this publication in providing images and files for our series on the Ashbourne portrait, a story which our readers will now see—as reported in Part III in this issue—casts a harsh light on how the Folger had treated the issue in the past.

### Paster new Folger Library Director

But just when we thought things were changing on this front as well, along came the announcement that Dr. Gail Kern Paster—currently the editor of the Folger's *Shakespeare Quarterly*—had been appointed the new Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library (replacing outgoing Director Werner Gundersheimer on July 1, 2002). Since Dr. Paster was just coming off her January 29th debate with Richard Whalen (author of *Shakespeare: Who Was He?* and a past president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society) at the Smithsonian—where she led off by stating that, "this joke has

gone on long enough" [meaning the authorship debate], and concluded the evening by stating—in response to a question from the audience—that she had not read Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, the real news may be that the authorship Cold War is back—at least at the Folger.

However, despite Dr. Paster's firm if not hostile stance against the authorship question, the turnout at the Smithsonian certainly indicated that there are ever increasing numbers among the public who are interested, and who see the debate as significant, valuable, and—most importantly—credible. Informal chats with some of those who attended revealed this interest, and also that many of those who had turned out for the event had been reading up on the subject.

Adding to the significance of the event was the presence of the two prominent Washington lawyers who would cross-examine the debaters. Robert S. Bennett (formerly President Clinton's counsel) represented Richard Whalen and questioned Paster, and E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr. (a former special assistant to President Kennedy, and a recent inspector general in the District of Columbia) represented Paster and questioned Whalen (the two debaters did not directly question each other). William F. Causey (of the firm Nixon Peabody LLP), who organized the event—reportedly after reading Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*—served as moderator.

While the promised vote by the audience that had been mentioned in the Smithsonian's early press releases about the debate did not take place, it was clear to most observers—based on some of the audible responses during the evening—that the audience was probably more sympathetic to the Earl of Oxford than the Stratford man.

However, one certain result was that Robert Bennett—in his detailed preparations—had pretty much become an Oxfordian. Richard Whalen, who has participated in more than a few of these authorship events, commented later that Bennett—who did extensive reading on the subject leading up to the debate—had told him that there was no question in his mind—it was Oxford. Of course, Whalen went on to remark, "he was 'representing' me, so he had the incentive to defend his

client." (We don't know if E. Barrett Prettyman had any strong convictions on the issue one way or the other, either before or after his preparations.)

Whalen also noted that, "While the debate format draws an audience, especially if the subject is Shakespeare, I'm reluctant to have it seen as an 'us vs. them' confrontation. Sooner or later, Oxfordians are going to have to win over enough of the Stratfordian establishment professors to turn the tide. Put-downs won't help. Oxfordians do, of course, have truth on their side, and 'truth is the daughter of time.'"

However, once the debate did start it was a typical authorship standoff, and Dr. Paster started right off with a put-down of the whole issue ("This joke has gone on long enough").

### The usual suspects

Paster then went on to round up all the usual, suspect Stratfordian defenses that their author "could have" done it all, from his self-education in a multitude of books and languages (with, of course, his illiterate daughters and his own questionable handwriting not being a problem), to his knowledge of Italy being acquired "somehow," and finally to his survival in a political environment in which most other writers eventually ran afoul of the state, winding up dead or imprisoned being no big deal (at one point, speaking about *Richard II*, she asked whether Oxford had been summoned to be examined after the Essex Rebellion). On the subject of Italy, for example, Paster conceded that her man probably never left England, to which Bennett drew much audience laughter with his quip, "Well, at least we know our man got on a boat."

One of Bennett's most effective rejoinders during the evening was his wonderment at how the works themselves could be offered as proof of the Stratford man's literacy and authorship, pressing Paster more than once that this defense was simply circular reasoning that never really addresses the key problem about the obvious misfit between the Stratford man's life and education and the world of the plays.

In highlighting this point, Bennett was picking up on Richard Whalen's opening statement for the Oxfordian position, which concentrated first on the Stratford man's

lack of qualifications before moving on to the reasons why Oxford was Shakespeare. In response, E. Barrett Prettyman's cross-examination of Whalen then went into a series of questions about why Oxford "couldn't be Shakespeare," ranging from the familiar post-1604 plays (e.g. *The Tempest*) to the equally familiar "such a conspiracy couldn't have been kept secret"—to which Whalen gave his standard answer that Oxford's authorship was an open secret, not a conspiracy.

Probably the best moment in these Prettyman-Whalen exchanges occurred when Prettyman pressed Whalen about Oxford's own playwriting (as mentioned by Meres, Puttenham, etc), asking him more than once, "Where are all these purported Oxford plays?" Whalen's deft response—that we have them all today in the works of Shakespeare—drew one of the evening's biggest audience laughs.

### The all important "Why?"

One key question that popped up over and over throughout the evening was: "why would the authorship be kept a secret in the first place?" Paster in her opening remarks stated that, "No one would have a reason to lie about Shakespeare," and in her conclusion asked, "Who would care about concealing Oxford in 1623?" She elaborated on this point by noting that to believe Oxford was the author, one would have to believe that all those involved in the First Folio project in 1623 were involved in a hoax.

Prettyman also weighed in on this point by asking Whalen in one of his crosses, "Why a secret after both his death and Elizabeth's?"

Whalen's answer to these questions was to downplay elaborate conspiracy theories. In his answer to Prettyman he said that covering up Oxford's authorship mostly had to do with covering up his outrageous behavior and lifestyle, and since this was an "open secret," it wasn't really such a big deal. Of course, not all Oxfordians agree that it was just the open secret of Oxford's life and behavior that launched the Stratford attribution, but that's a story for another day.

Paster, however, provided her own an-



*The featured coverage in the Sunday NY Times will undoubtedly have an influence on the public perception of the authorship debate.*

swer to the conspiracy question. In her concluding remarks she said, "Oxfordian conspiracy theories are a reaction to Bardology ... but now we have Oxfordian Bardology." She went on to cite Harvard professor Marjorie Garber's comments about the conundrum of authorship itself, i.e. the question: "how do great works get authored?", and concluded by stating that, "We as Americans have no reason to believe that only an Elizabethan aristocrat could be the author."

Thus, Paster's closing note was to reduce the entire debate to an attack on Oxfordians and their personal problems in coping with the almighty Bard—not the first time Oxfordians have heard that refrain, but a little unsettling to hear this kind of inflammatory rhetoric coming from the next director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, an institution from whom we have come to expect something more enlightened.

### New York Times on hand

In attendance for all this was William Niederkorn of *The New York Times*, in the final stages of preparing his February 10th article ("A Historic Whodunit: If Shakespeare Didn't, Who Did?").

Niederkorn's judicious but sympathetic treatment of the Oxford case marks a gigantic shift in attitude from *The New York Times* of even a few years ago. In comments to the newsletter, Niederkorn underscored that attitudes towards the authorship question have shifted throughout the institution, with many editors and writers now

aware of the issue and apprised of the strength of the Oxford case. Niederkorn himself joined the Shakespeare Fellowship at the annual Oxford Day Banquet at the Harvard Faculty Club April 26th, and participated in the Fellowship's April 27th "state of the debate" panel. He will also join the Fellowship at our First Annual Conference in Cambridge this fall.

The bulk of his ground-breaking essay focused on *Shakespeare Matters* co-editor Dr. Roger Stritmatter's Ph.D. work on Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible, and also gave a generous amount of space and several prominent graphics to Barbara Burris's work on the Ashbourne por-

trait (as published in the first three issues of *Shakespeare Matters*), along with some highlights (using graphics) of Charles Wisner Barrell's findings from 1940.

Dr. Daniel L. Wright's annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference was also given prominent mention, with Dr. Wright quoted several times in the article. The complete article is available on the web through the Fellowship's website at: [www.shakespearefellowship.org](http://www.shakespearefellowship.org).

Of special interest amid all this coverage, however, was how Niederkorn chose to close his essay. He wraps up on this note: "One tough question for Oxfordians: 'Why did Oxford hide his authorship?'" This is, of course, the same vexing question that kept popping up all night during the Smithsonian debate.

And here Niederkorn did not shrink from listing some of the most prominent—and controversial—answers, from Oxford being gay, to Southampton being the son of Oxford and Elizabeth, and even to Oxford being the son of Elizabeth. He also added in a theory few Oxfordians may have ever considered: that Oxford was a suicide, and thus liable to the "severe penalties [exact] against the heirs of suicides." He elaborated on none of these theories, but just lay them out for his readers (perhaps in a "to be continued" mode?).

So, as was also apparent in the course of the Smithsonian debate, it is the "Why?" question that keeps coming back, and it is that question that, in the end—long after Oxford is accepted as Shakespeare—must eventually be answered.

—W. Boyle

*Barrell vindicated (continued from page 1)*

Oxford Society to agree with the Folger that the painting was not the lost Ketel of Oxford, and that the original sitter was Sir Hugh Hamersley, Lord Mayor of London in the late 1620s-1630s.

Among the files released to researcher Barbara Burris was one containing a June 1988 memo from William Pressly (hired to work on the painting's restoration in 1988-1989) to Folger Director Werner Gundershiemer in which he writes that, "the monogram is only faintly visible" on the Folger's 1948-49 x-rays (thus acknowledging that *it is there*). The significance of this memo is that five years later, in his Spring 1993 *Shakespeare Quarterly* article on the Ashbourne, Pressly writes, "the facts about the initials are open to question, in that a later series of x-rays made at the National Gallery of Art by Stephen S. Pichetto late in 1948 or early 1949 do not reveal a 'CK' beneath the coat of arms." This statement, published in the Folger Library's flagship publication, can now be seen as deliberately false.

In addition to the Ashbourne files, the Folger has also provided to Burris (through the Shakespeare Fellowship) copies of these 1948-49 x-rays, and everyone who has studied them to date can confirm that, indeed, the "CK" monogram is there, but, as Pressly wrote, very faint, and apparently, as Burris's examination shows, partially damaged.

So, even though the Folger was forced to publicly apologize to Barrell in 1949 for suggesting that he had doctored his work in some manner, it now is evident that any tampering with the evidence present in the painting has taken place during the Folger's custody of the painting, perhaps as early as between Barrell's article in 1940 and the 1949 settlement of the lawsuit brought by Barrell against the Folger for slander.

Other parts of Burris's research reveal that the restorations of the painting undertaken in 1979-1981 and completed in 1988-1989 are also flawed, and reveal instances of tampering with the painting rather than simply restoring it. Some of the flaws and tampering are discussed in Part III of her series (page one, this issue), while the rest will be documented in Part IV, to be published in our Summer 2002 issue.

While Pressly's 1993 article was presented to the world as the last word on the Ashbourne and confirmation of the identity of the original sitter as Sir Hugh Hamersley, this off the record admission about the "CK" by Pressly is stunning. Shake-



Bill Boyle photo

*Pictured together at the 1987 Moot Court Debate are Charlton Ogburn (right) and Gordon Cyr (center). It was an article in the Fall 1997 Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter about the debate (in which the Ashbourne attribution was mentioned) which prompted Cyr to write a Letter to the Editor about the Ashbourne portrait. It was in turn this letter from Cyr that got Barbara Burris started on researching the Ashbourne.*

speare Oxford Society Executive Vice-President Dr. Gordon Cyr had been told in 1979 that the "CK" *was not present* on the painting itself nor the x-rays, leading him to agree with the Folger that the original sitter was Sir Hugh Hamersley, and announce this finding in the Summer 1979 *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*. It is now apparent that he was misled by the Folger, and enticed into what was clearly a false attribution of Hamersley as the sitter.

Both Dr. Cyr and the Folger Shakespeare Library were provided with galley proofs of this article in the weeks leading up to publication, and invited to comment. The Folger's response, provided from Curator of Art Dr. Erin Blake, was that, "It is not the Folger's practice or policy to comment on the scholarship derived from or supported by our collection."

This response seems to us to duck the key question raised in Burris's study, which is *not about others' scholarship* derived from using their collection, but is rather about *their own handling of their collection (and artifacts)*, and whether *their* scholarship in that handling has been deliberately misleading to scholars and researchers using their collection.

Dr. Cyr, however, has offered to speak on the record. In a telephone interview with us in late April, he stated that we could use the following statement as a direct quote

from him: "I was used."

He continued that, "I had been under the impression that the Folger was acting in good faith in my dealings with them ... but now [I realize] that this was apparently not so ... I agree with the work that Burris has done, and with her conclusions ... and will support any call for the Folger to remove the Hamersley attribution from the Ashbourne portrait."

Since that phone interview, Dr. Cyr has provided us with a detailed statement (see page nine) on this entire matter of his—and the Shakespeare Oxford Society's— involvement with the "discovery" of Sir Hugh Hamersley as the Ashbourne sitter. Although Cyr has some questions about certain facts in the case, he whole-heartedly agrees with the basic conclusions reached so far in Burris's Ashbourne series—that the Hamersley attribution is not only mistaken, but may well have been deliberately misleading. And he openly acknowledges that he and his wife were apparently misled by the Folger director O.B. Hardison—and by conservator Peter Michaels—in reaching the conclusion that the sitter was Hamersley.

Another interesting aspect of Dr. Cyr's statement is his testimony that Charlton Ogburn was directly involved in all these events in 1979, and that it was Ogburn who wrote the article in the Fall 1979 *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* telling Society members that they should consider the case to be closed on the Ashbourne's possibly being Oxford.

However, towards the end of his life in the late 1990s Ogburn was having second thoughts about the Ashbourne, as revealed in his article in the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* (Summer 1996), in which he wrote that,

Wiser than I, Charles Boyle and some others stood by Barrell's interpretation ... while I ... omitted the portrait from *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, to my later regret. (24)

As Cyr and Ogburn both noted in their writings in 1979, and has been noted by many Oxfordians since, this "finding" of the Ashbourne sitter being Hamersley, not Oxford, has been a bone of contention for Oxfordians for two decades. But it appears now that the mis-attribution to Hamersley can be safely put aside, whether the Folger Shakespeare Library chooses to comment or act upon our Ashbourne series or not.



## “Smile and smile, and be a villain”

By Dr. Gordon C. Cyr

The saying persists, “One should say nothing ill of the dead.”

But it is not my fault that I am alive nor my fault that those whose word I trusted in good faith have now been shown—thanks to the Herculean labors of Barbara Burris—to have exploited that trust. I and my late wife Helen acted (including rushing into print) on the basis of what we were told and more importantly, what we were shown by the Folger’s director O.B. Hardison, his staff, and the conservator the Folger hired, Peter Michaels of Baltimore.

Helen and I did not proceed unilaterally. Every step we took was in consultation with the Honorary President of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, Charlton Ogburn, Jr.—who was also the newsletter editor at the time (as announced in the Fall 1978 newsletter, p. 5). It was Charlton—not me—who wrote the “Henry Clay Folger’s Memorial” article (Spring 1979) and the “More on the Portrait” article (Fall 1979). He also contributed “my” closing one and one-half paragraphs in the article signed by myself. I have signed all my own written contributions to those issues.

Since we were given [by the Folger] two copies of the color photo [of the uncovered coat of arms], we also sent one copy to Judge Minos and Ruth Loyd Miller, along with the information Helen and the Folger had gleaned on Hamersley. The Millers never replied to our mailing, and I am unable to locate our copy of this photo. (When Helen and I were removed as officers of the SOS in 1988, I turned most of the files and correspondence over to Robert O’Brien of Columbia, Maryland.)

On the basis, then, of what we were shown and told [in 1979], I can now categorically assert the following:

1) The rams’ heads on the shield were gold—at least a slightly faded yellow—on both the color photograph and the painting itself as we saw it in Michaels’ studio, where the shield was exposed, and before any restoration was undertaken. I admit to not being an expert in heraldry, but as my Summer 1979 article makes clear, we were acquainted with several heraldic terms for colors, including “gules” and “or.”

As to how later photographs of the coat of arms seem to show the rams’ heads as red

or red/orange I haven’t the slightest idea.

2) The lettering “MORE” at the end of the scroll appeared clearly, if faintly, on the line drawing (appended to the Summer newsletter), the color photograph, and on the painting as we saw it in Michaels’ studio. Now this represents a clear discrepancy between what I assert and Michaels’ June 18th interim report, for which I can only guess three possible explanations: Michaels was mistaken, or he meant that the preceding words had been obliterated, or someone put these letters in to “lead the Cyr towards Hamersley” (as Burris suggests).

My own preference—based on Occam’s Razor, or the rule of simplicity—is for the second explanation [i.e. that he meant the preceding words].

3) Neither I nor Mrs. Cyr would have agreed with the Folger Library’s identification of the Ashbourne as Hamersley if the facts of Points #1 and #2 above had not been as I have stated them. But I cannot take exception to Burris’s inferences that we and the Society (and it should be added, Charlton Ogburn) were “set-up” to reach the conclusion the Folger and its director wanted.

Nor can I acquit Peter Michaels (whose 1982 murder and sensational reporting of it in the *Baltimore Sun* shocked the artistic community of my adopted home city) of complicity, whatever his differences with the Director may have been. It was Mr. Michaels, after all, who insisted, when we asked, that the “age of the painting” could be determined by the inscription date, and the sitter identified by matching the date with the shield!

It was he also who led us on a false trail by claiming that he “could not find that thing”—i.e. the “CK” monogram. This led Fred McHugh and myself to opine that it had been removed in the cleaning. And this supposition in turn led me to be the father of William Pressly’s “preposterous theory” that Clement Kingston—for some inexplicable reason—signed his own forgeries and then covered them up.

So, I am now happy to report that—with the exception of my differences with Barbara Burris on my points #1 and #2, and perhaps on a few other minor issues—that, thanks to her, I can now remove this point

of contention within the Oxfordian movement:

- I no longer believe that the Ashbourne sitter was Hamersley. The portrait of him that Burris supplies shows little resemblance to either the Welbeck of Oxford or the Ashbourne, which, of course, closely resemble each other!

- I support the Shakespeare Fellowship’s efforts to get the Folger to remove the Hamersley attribution.

- I now believe that the sitter—on Barrell’s and Burris’ evidence—is probably Oxford at about age 30 or thereabouts, painted 1579-1583.

- I believe it is either a Ketel portrait or (as Wolf Stechow allowed) a later copy of same.

- I now agree with Burris’ view that the “CK” monogram could be a genuine Ketel monogram. Although the “C” does not resemble the typically circular “C” of the other “CKs”, the “K” on the Ashbourne monogram resembles two of the Ketels in that the upper branch is a single line, whereas the lower branch is of the same thickness as the stem.

- I now believe the coat of arms and inscription were added later, subsequent to 1612, and prior to Clement Kingston’s ownership (but for the life of me I cannot figure out why!).

- I still believe that C. W. Barrell erred mightily in his hasty misidentification of the arms as those of the Trenthams. This led him—and other Oxfordians such as Canon Rendall and Gwyneth M. Brown\*—to futile speculations on the Ashbourne’s “provenance.” The Folger was thus enabled to seize on this one weakness. And their later chicanery does not alter the consequences of this error.

- I still believe Barrell should have answered Wolf Stechow’s demurrals, as he promised to do in his October 1941 letter to the *Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter* (British edition), in response to the Stechow comments published in the April 1941 issue. And he should have informed his American readers of these objections.

\*See Helen Cyr’s report on Bowen’s “conjectural pedigree” at the SOS 2nd Annual Conference (*SOS Newsletter*, Fall 1977, p. 4-5)

*Ashbourne (continued from page 1)*

Because the wrist ruffs still remained visible beneath the gray paint—and because they contradict the Hamersley attribution—they become a guide that helps us measure how honestly the Folger Shakespeare Library has dealt with the evidence of this painting. Our investigation does not inspire confidence in the integrity of the painting's recent "restoration" while in the Folger's possession.

By viewing various stages of the cleaning and restoration of the Ashbourne we can see what was done to the wrist ruffs after the original tampering that attempted to turn this portrait into one of Shakespeare. The images on this page (Figs. 3-6, top right) show how the right wrist ruff appeared in four versions of the painting, beginning with the earliest photo of the portrait in 1910 and concluding with the restored painting as it is now displayed at the Folger (the two different states of the left wrist ruff appear in Figs. 1-2 on page one).

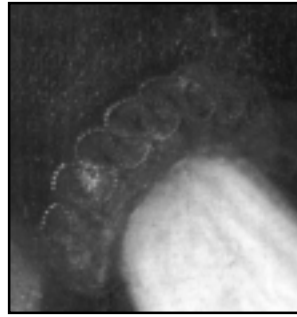


Fig. 4

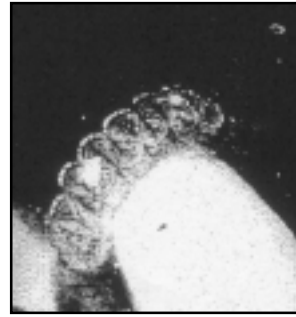


Fig. 5

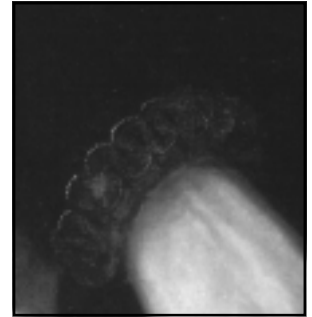


Fig. 6



Fig. 3

In the four states of the right wrist ruff pictured here we can see how the current state on the top right (after restoration) is the darkest of them all. From bottom left to top right we have: Fig. 3) the wrist as it appeared in the 1910 *Connoisseur* magazine article by Spielmann; Fig. 4) the wrist as it appears in a print from a 1961 B&W Folger negative; Fig. 5) the wrist in 1988 during restoration (when cleaning revealed more of the structure and the ruff appears at its lightest); and Fig. 6) the wrist as it appears today, considerably darkened (even more than its appearance in 1910 and 1961).

(Figs. 3-6, by permission, Folger Shakespeare Library)

### Changes over time

Writing in *Connoisseur* magazine in 1910, M. H. Spielmann was the first art expert to examine the Ashbourne portrait of Shakespeare (then owned by R. Levine). Spielmann noted that, "around the wrists are small figure-eight edged ruffs (rather than ruffles) with small white corded edging." In the color reproduction of the portrait the left wrist ruff is virtually invisible, with just a little cording of the figure-eight design discernible. The right wrist ruff (Fig. 3) appears darkly grayed, making it almost unnoticeable against the dark costume. But enough of the detail remains to illustrate the figure-eight structure described by Spielmann.

A much later color reproduction of the Ashbourne appeared in Ruth Loyd Miller's 1975 reprint of *Shakespeare Identified*. The painting had been cleaned after the Folger acquired it in 1931 but before C. W. Barrell examined it in 1937 with x-ray and infrared photography. This cleaning revealed more of the original paint in the face and hand area and appears to be the most accurate representation of the face of all the portrait versions. Although the painting was not restored—that is, the layers of overpaint were not removed—the right wrist ruff was brightened, showing more of the figure-eight structure and highlights of the corded edging. A white spot shows the original white paint peeking through (this state of the right wrist in the painting is represented by a 1961 print from the Folger—Fig. 4). Although the left wrist ruff in this 1961 print remains darker than the right, it is visible, and has full detail (see Fig. 2 on page one).

The third picture of the right wrist ruff (Fig. 5) is labeled B13 in the Page 1988-89 Restoration Folder in the Folger Ashbourne Files. This black and white photograph shows the lightest version of the ruff. The figure-eight structure is even more visible than it is in the Miller 1975 reproduction or the Folger 1961 print.

The fourth picture of the right wrist ruff (Fig. 6) is astounding. It is taken from the Folger color reproduction of the Ashbourne portrait as it is now displayed in the Founders Room—after the 1979-1981 and 1988-1989 restorations. The ruff is now darker in parts than in the 1910 Levine picture (Fig. 3). The dark paint has obscured most of the figure-eight structure making the remaining

hints of it difficult to discern. The left wrist ruff (see Fig. 1 on page one) in this "restored" Ashbourne has a crudely fuzzied indistinct grayish mass over the left hand showing no trace of the original figure-eight structure. In fact it has no identifiable structure at all. It is neither a ruff nor a cuff.

While there is nothing in these overpainted wrist ruffs that directly connects "Shakespeare" to this painting, the wrist ruffs do prove that the Ashbourne was not painted in the 1600s as the Folger claims. Instead of clarifying and bringing out the structure and color of the original wrist ruffs, the Folger's restorations have darkened and obscured them further, apparently in an attempt to conceal evidence fatal to the Hamersley attribution.

The wrist ruffs—even in their present damaged state—are visible evidence that threaten the Hamersley claim. They provide easily observable documentation that the Folger restoration included changes to the portrait that are inconsistent with accepted practices of painting restoration. These changes exemplify the unprofessional manner in which the Folger attended to its duties as a curator of historical artifacts.

### In the beginning ... Barrell's *Scientific American* article

In January 1940 Charles Wisner Barrell, an expert in photographic techniques (employed by Eastman Kodak), shocked the literary world by publishing an article in *Scientific American* identifying the Ashbourne portrait of "Shakespeare" as the lost Cornelis Ketel painting of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. The key evidence in support of this claim was provided by x-ray and infrared analysis which revealed earlier painting under the present surface.

Barrell's thesis rested principally on three arguments: 1) Several 17th and 18th century sources for Cornelis Ketel (who left England in 1581) having painted a portrait of the Earl of Oxford, 2) an interpretation that the coat of arms revealed by the x-rays depicted the three griffin heads of the coat of arms of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, and 3) that the monogram "CK" found by the x-rays was that of Cornelis Ketel, who used such



Fig. 7 By permission, Folger Shakespeare Library



Fig. 8 By permission, Folger Shakespeare Library

Shown here are two versions of the Ashbourne, both provided to us by the Folger. In Fig. 7 on the left is the painting as it appeared in 1961 (reproduced from a B&W negative). In Fig. 8 on the right is the painting as it appears today, on display in the Founders Room.

monograms to “sign” his work. (See Figs. 7 and 8 on page 11 for views of the painting showing the portrait with the coat of arms hidden before the Folger restoration, and today—after the restoration—with the coat of arms revealed.)

Barrell’s identification of Oxford as the sitter in the Folger’s most prized “Shakespeare” portrait caused an immediate sensation. An AP feature story provoked “many follow up newspaper items and articles on the *Scientific American* story, with editorial writers, columnists, book-reviewers and drama critics featuring the portrait discoveries as one of the liveliest topics of the times.”<sup>1</sup> The story ran in feature articles and editorials in newspapers from coast to coast and gained international attention.

More publicity ensued in 1948 when Barrell sued Dr. Giles Dawson, Curator of the Folger Shakespeare Library, for libel for impugning his professional reputation. In a letter which later became public (reprinted in Ruth Loyd Miller’s 1975 edition of *Shakespeare Identified*) Dawson stated that, “...we were entirely unable to see any of the things he [Barrell] saw in the negatives. They just weren’t there. If he can produce pictures of these things they must have been doctored up.”<sup>2</sup> Dawson subsequently “posed for a news photograph standing on top of a ladder and holding a magnifying glass in front of the Ashbourne portrait,” as if looking for the evidence that Barrell had uncovered.

Miller notes that “...in his deposition in the lawsuit Dr. Dawson testified under oath, that he had ‘never seen the negatives,’ and he was not present when Mr. Barrell took the pictures.”<sup>3</sup> In fact the examination of the painting was done in Washington DC at the National X-Ray Laboratories by top men in their fields under the direction of O. M. Singer.<sup>4</sup>

Dawson further acknowledged in his deposition that, subsequent to Barrell’s examination, the Folger had authorized a second

x-ray examination, conducted by Stephen Pichetto at the National Gallery of Art in 1948-49. Those results were never made public. Rather than present these x-rays in court to substantiate Dawson’s claim that Barrell had fabricated evidence, Dawson instead apologized publicly to Barrell and settled the suit out of court. Concluded Miller—correctly, as is now clear—“This seemingly constitutes a tacit admission that the Folger examinations confirmed Barrell’s findings.”<sup>5</sup>

The 1948-49 x-rays will be important to our evolving story. But this second flurry of unfavorable publicity surrounding the Ashbourne was a great embarrassment to the Folger.<sup>6</sup> After Dawson’s apology, the Library made no formal response to Barrell’s remarkable findings for 45 years, until William Pressly, writing in the Spring 1993 *Shakespeare Quarterly* (a Folger publication), finally attempted to officially refute the case made in the *Scientific American* in 1940. Pressly, an art expert who had been hired by the Folger to advise on the painting’s second round of restorations in 1988-89, based his case against Barrell on events that had taken place during 1979-1981, when a previous restoration provided an opportunity to identify the original sitter.

Incredibly, it was in 1979 that the Shakespeare Oxford Society would become the organization that announced that the original Ashbourne sitter *was not* Oxford, but instead *was* Sir Hugh Hammersley, a Lord Mayor of London in 1627/28.<sup>7</sup> The Folger itself took no public position on the Hammersley attribution until Pressly’s 1993 *Shakespeare Quarterly* article.

#### Authorship debate heating up

By the time of the 1993 article the authorship debate was

(Continued on page 12)

*Ashbourne* (continued from page 11)

heating up again. The 1987 Moot Court Debate in Washington, the 1989 *Frontline* documentary on PBS and the 1991 *Atlantic* cover story all drew increasing attention to the issue. Charles Burford was touring the United States speaking on the authorship question—drawing large audiences and media coverage—and British researcher Derran Charlton was posing some difficult questions about the Folger's identification of the painting as Hamersley. Charlton's research in the archives at Wentworth Woodhouse (only 30 miles from Ashbourne village) revealed that of all the paintings described in the 1696 will of William Wentworth, only one—a full length Ketel painting of Oxford also described by the antiquarian George Vertue in his 1721 notebooks<sup>8</sup> as still being in the possession of Dowager countess at the Wentworth property in Yorkshire—was not listed in the 1782 inventory of the same property. Yet, in the same inventory, a painting listed only as “Shakespeare” makes its first appearance among family portraits. The provenance of this painting will be addressed in more detail in a subsequent article in this series.

In his article, Pressly ignored any question of the painting's provenance, the identity of the painter (beyond a categorical denial that it was Cornelis Ketel), or how it may have arrived at the Ashbourne free school where it first received notoriety in 1847 when headmaster Rev. Clement Kingston attempted to commercialize it as a painting of “Shakespeare.” Pressly based his support for the 1979 Hamersley attribution solely on the portrait's dated inscription and on assertions that the coat of arms revealed in 1940 by Barrell's x-rays were Hamersley's (as supposedly established during the 1979-1981 restoration when the paint covering it was removed).

Pressly's article ignores many problems with these assertions and suppresses critical evidence supporting Barrell's original findings. Problems in Pressly's article reflect more fundamental problems with the Folger's handling of this unique artifact, a history packed with curious and unresolved contradictions. The Folger's own files on the Ashbourne painting—acquired on microfilm by the author in May 2001—provide evidence that the 1979-1981 work on the painting was anything but a normal restoration project.

### Folger Ashbourne files consulted

Much of what follows in this article was made possible by studying this cache of files (labeled the Ashbourne Portrait Files in its records, with numerous topical sub-folders). A number of these records were mentioned in Pressly's article (under footnote 2), alerting readers and researchers to their existence and possible availability, but as far as the author is aware they had never before been requested by anyone.

The most outstanding feature of these files is their revelation of the struggle that developed between the painting's independent restorer Peter Michaels (who died in 1982 before completing his work) and then Folger Director O.B. Hardison, who issued instructions to Michaels on what he was to do, and frequently ignored Michaels' pleas to conduct a “full restoration” of the portrait.

At this point, it will be helpful to summarize the key areas of contention between the Folger (as presented by Pressly) and Barrell regarding the portrait. These points appear in the box on page 13.

Three of the Folger/Pressly contentions about the Ashbourne—regarding the painted-over hair above the forehead, the ruff (or head area) and the coat of arms—were also at the center of the

“Pressly's article ignores many problems with these assertions and suppresses critical evidence supporting Barrell's original findings.”

struggle between Michaels and Hardison. Hardison did not want Michaels to uncover the hair above the forehead, claiming it was scraped out, and often describing it as the forehead rather than the area of the head above the forehead. Nor did Hardison want Michaels to remove the overpainting around the head area that might uncover the large circular ruff which Barrell's infrared analysis had revealed. And after having a sketch and photographs made of the uncovered coat of arms, Hardison initially wanted Michaels to cover it up again.

[Editors' note: the Folger has also made available copies of the x-rays taken in 1948-49 by the National Gallery of Art for the Folger in preparation for the court case involving Barrell. However, it declined our request to publish any images taken directly from these x-rays, stating that after 50 years the quality of the original x-rays may have deteriorated, and what it had released were copies of these “possibly” deteriorated originals. These x-rays have been reviewed by the author, the editors of *Shakespeare Matters*, and other officers of the Shakespeare Fellowship.]

### How and why the Folger came to “find” Hamersley

In 1975 Ruth Loyd Miller published her two volume re-issue of Looney's *Shakespeare Identified*, a key event in the reemergence of the authorship debate. Miller devoted one section to the Ashbourne portrait, with side-by-side images of the Welbeck portrait of Oxford and the Ashbourne, a brief history of Barrell's work in the 1940s, and a summary of his lawsuit against then Folger Curator Giles Dawson.

The very next year (1976) the Ashbourne portrait was a major topic at the Shakespeare Oxford Society's 1st Annual Conference in Baltimore. The guest speaker was the fine art conservator Peter Michaels, who would be hired by the Folger to work on the Ashbourne three years later. Michaels spoke on the techniques for examining, restoring and dating paintings that had been overpainted—such as the Ashbourne. An article in the Summer 1977 *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* reports on Michaels' presentation and what he had in mind for examining the Ashbourne.

[Editors' note: Miller attended this conference, and is reported to have asked, “What are the parameters for an examination by Dr. Michaels? What are the guidelines? What are the standards?” In a recent interview<sup>11</sup> with an editor of *Shakespeare Matters*, Miller spoke of her dissatisfaction at the time with the “vague response” of Helen Cyr (wife of then Society Executive Vice-President Gordon C. Cyr) to her questions, a response indicating to her that no specific standards or guidelines were in place (although it should be noted that the 1977 article on Michaels's talk concludes with the statement that, “in a subsequent session of the conference members agreed that the Society should pursue a cooperative project with the Folger Library of the sort described by Peter Michaels,” indicating that some sort of plan of action was contemplated).]

Then an article in the Spring 1979 *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* noted a surprising turn in the Folger's position on the

(Continued on page 14)

## *A Comparison of the conclusions of two major published studies of the Ashbourne Portrait: Barrell in 1940 and Pressly in 1993.*

### Barrell's x-ray & infrared exam<sup>9</sup>

#### 1) *Inscription of sitter's age and date*

The visible 1611 inscription is not the original inscription. X-rays showed the original inscription, now completely invisible, had been rubbed out so vigorously it left perforations in the canvas. (Spielmann in 1910 also questioned the inscription, noting that it was painted with the same paint used to cover the book oval and signet seal thumb ring.)

#### 2) *Neck ruff*

The neck ruff is altered. Infra-red analysis revealed a large circular ruff—characteristic of Elizabethan but not Jacobean style—beneath the visibly “scamped”—foreshortened—and muddied ruff.

#### 3) *Over-painted forehead*

X-rays revealed hair above the forehead that had been painted over. The forehead had been raised to an unnatural height in covering the hair.

#### 4) *The “CK” monogram*

The “CK” monogram of the Dutch painter Cornelis Ketel is clearly visible in the scroll under the coat of arms. Ketel, who was in England from 1573-1581, and was known to have painted a portrait of Oxford.

#### 5) *Over-painted coat of arms*

An over-painted and partially scraped out coat of arms was revealed, but the x-rays of the coat of arms are hard to read. Barrell concluded it was of the Trentham family (based on his interpretation that the heads on the shield are griffins).

#### 6) *Boar's head ring*

A rubbing revealed a boar's head under the blob of paint covering the signet seal thumb ring.<sup>1</sup> The Oxford family crest was a full boar, not a boar's head. This full boar was displayed on an Oxford family signet ring, which Barrell located in the Cecil archives, though it was of poor quality. [De Vere made many heraldic changes to the Oxford arms and information will be presented in the future that the boar's head is an important part of the iconography of the painting involving connections to the Boar's Head tavern and the plays].

#### 7) *Wrist ruffs*

[No comment—but see the extensive discussion in this and the previous issue of *Shakespeare Matters* (Winter 2002). The wrist ruffs are a critical chronological marker validating Barrell's principal conclusions in 1940].

### Folger/Pressly Ashbourne claims<sup>10</sup>

The inscription is original to the painting. The 1611 date now visible on the painting was originally 1612, but the “2” from the original 1612 date which fit Hamersley's age of 47 had been changed to a “1” to fit the Stratford man's age of 47 in 1611.

Pressly: no comment. More generally, the Folger seems to believe that the neck ruff is original and has not been altered. However, the “Restoration Issues” folder includes an item, Chronology, Examinations, Restorations, x-rays, etc., in which NPG art historian David Piper describes the “neck ruff altered.”

Pressly: No comment. More generally, as the files show, Barrell's point is conceded by the Folger. No restoration was done to this part of the canvas because the Folger claims that the hair above the unnaturally raised forehead had been completely scraped out before the area was painted over. Only the overpaint was left on the canvas. The 1949 Pichetto x-rays contradict this claim. It is curious that Dr. Pressly passed over all this in silence in his supposedly comprehensive survey of the issues regarding the disposition of the painting.

The Folger's position on this critical question has changed several times, sometimes in the space of a single paragraph, giving a strong appearance of *ad hoc* reasoning: 1) The “CK” initials don't match Ketel's monograms, 2) The “CK” initials aren't there or are barely decipherable without Barrell's x-ray pictures as a guide, 3) the “CK” initials are those of Clement Kingston, who doctored the painting in 1847, signed his forgeries, and then covered up his signature from embarrassment (see further discussion about the “CK” monogram on pages 20-21).

The arms are those of Sir Hugh Hamersley, a haberdasher merchant and Alderman who was granted arms in 1614, two years after the alleged date of the painting, and became Lord Mayor of London in 1627/28. The shield is interpreted as showing three rams heads coupé and the demi-griffin segreant of the Hamersley crest (see the box on page 17 for more on the coat of arms).

No comment.

No comment.

*Ashbourne (continued from page 12)*

Ashbourne painting.<sup>12</sup> A plaque accompanying the painting—then on display in the library's Great Hall—read:

The Ashbourne portrait might be a painting of a Jacobean gentleman who happened to look like Shakespeare; more probably the painting was altered to resemble Shakespeare. X-rays revealed extensive over-painting. In 1940 Charles W. Barrell argued in the *Scientific American* that the subject of the underpainting is Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, believed by some to be the author of Shakespeare's plays. Unfortunately the various scholars who have examined the portrait and its x-rays disagree strongly as to whether or not there are enough details to make any identification.

### The Folger hires Peter Michaels

In early 1979, shortly after this grudging nod to Barrell on the plaque in the Great Hall, Peter Michaels was contacted by the Folger to prepare a number of Shakespeare paintings—including the Ashbourne—for an upcoming traveling exhibition. The Ashbourne would have to be labeled as someone. If it was labeled Shakespeare there were bound to be many questions asked about Barrell's identification of it as Oxford. Although the Folger was willing to mention "Oxford as Shakespeare" in its "in-house" display, it may also have perceived the problems involved with spreading this association around the country in a traveling exhibit. Of all the portraits prepared for exhibition only one was not included in the tour—the Ashbourne. Instead, what appears to have started out as a simple cleaning in preparation for a tour wound up months later as a major restoration project, the end result of which was a proclamation that the sitter was Sir Hugh Hamersley.

Even "curiouser" was the direct involvement of Oxfordians in this process, manifested through contacts between the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Shakespeare Oxford Society for several years leading up to summer 1979. In December 1978 Society Executive Vice-President Gordon C. Cyr had written a letter to Folger Director Hardison, thanking him for the plaque under the Ashbourne, and asking if the Folger would credit Barrell for the x-ray investigation—he noted that it was unclear from the plaque's wording that it was Barrell who had the x-rays made. He also asked Hardison—based on the recommendations from conservator Peter Michaels—if the Library would allow the National Bureau of Standards to examine the painting with neutron radiography, a new method that penetrates deeper than x-rays and can expose brush strokes, the nature and age of pigments, etc. Hardison's reply was, "that when the Ashbourne was rehung after the present renovation he would suggest changing the legend to give Mr. Barrell credit for the [x-ray] photographs and that he would be much in favor of the plan" to use neutron radiography on the painting.<sup>13</sup>

But the painting was not subjected to neutron radiography and would not be re-hung in an area accessible to the public for another 20 years. After Michaels's untimely death in 1982 the work remained in an unfinished state until 1988, when Arthur Page,

another conservator, was hired to complete the job. As it turned out, the Folger—through the now scheduled 1979 tour preparations—was preparing to pull a fast one on the Ashbourne issue.

### Painting restoration

The purpose of a restoration is to return the painting as far as physically possible to its original state, unless the restorer has reason to think that so doing would injure the painting. The Folger's "restoration" of the Ashbourne, as we will see, was not based on the restorer's recommendations or art expert's advice. In fact—as the Ashbourne files document—Folger Director Hardison personally directed it, at times making decisions contrary to advice from Peter Michaels and other art experts who were consulted. As the files show, this purported restoration was based on administrative decisions about what to uncover, what not to uncover, and even instructions about *covering up again* sections already *uncovered*. All such decisions were apparently driven by a need to provide "evidence" that the painting was of Hamersley while simultaneously maintaining its "Shakespeare" appearance. The "restoration" also appears to have been a fishing expedition to uncover the coat of arms and proclaim Hamersley as the sitter.

It should be noted that the Folger Ashbourne files display a noticeable lack of documentation in several key areas, as if sanitized with an eye to eliminating items which might contradict the Library's public position that the Ashbourne is a portrait of Hamersley. Often, however, the remaining documents indicate the difficulty which the Folger faced in dealing with the Ashbourne problem. The fifth document in the file, for example, is an undated handwritten note which states, "Conservation report not done because of difficulties examining this work under available conditions."<sup>14</sup> The conditions were indeed difficult, made so by Folger Director Hardison's demands and his interference.

### The coat of arms issue

At some point after the 1948 lawsuit Dawson and others at the Folger seem to have focused on the coat of arms hidden under the overpainting, perceiving weaknesses in Barrell's conclusions that the coat of arms was of the Trenthams, the family of Oxford's second wife.

In 1950 the Richmond Herald at Arms wrote to Dawson that he had studied the Folger x-ray photos for "traces of an achievement of arms."<sup>15</sup> He stated that the crest cannot be Oxford's since it is not the Oxford boar crest and that the arms cannot be the Countess of Oxford's because her father's arms would be combined with her husband's with the husband's crest above. The Richmond Herald also stated that, "The shield in the [x-ray] photograph shows a charge [i.e., a head] three times repeated...but too indistinctly for me to say what the charges are..."<sup>16</sup>

Years later, in an undated summary in the Folger files of the chronology of the painting, next to a heading, "1963-David Piper (National Portrait Gallery, London)," a notation reads, "coat of arms, shield with 3 rams (?) heads coupe, elaborate mantling, conceivably a griffin in the crest."<sup>17</sup> Apparently, the notion that the three charges on the shield were rams heads was already being considered in the early 1960s.

Sixteen years later the Folger claims for Hamersley would come to rest *entirely on the interpretation that the heads on the shield are rams heads* and that the crest is a griffin holding a cross crosslet fitchy—just as in the Hamersley coat of arms. Given the

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notations in the Piper folder, it would seem reasonable to consider that at some time between 1950 to 1979 the Folger had already determined that the coat of arms was the key to the issue of the sitter's identity, and may also have already reached some conclusions about the charges on the coat of arms.

### The coat of arms uncovered

Early in the project, on May 1st, 1979, Michaels phoned Hardison informing him that he had begun to uncover the shield in the coat of arms area. Hardison replied with instructions to "Uncover new date and coat of arms. Photograph and check with Library before proceeding."<sup>18</sup> In the Summer 1979 *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* proclaiming Hamersley as the Ashbourne sitter, Gordon Cyr further noted that, "When Michaels notified the Folger Library about his inscription and shield findings, Dr. Hardison ordered further work halted until the Folger decided how much of the original surface should be revealed."<sup>19</sup>

A telling memo on June 8th, only five weeks later, shows that, from the start, the Folger had no intention of restoring the picture to its original condition, and apparently was only after the coat of arms information. In a handwritten unsigned note a Hardison assistant stated, "I said color picture of Ashbourne with coat of arms before we cover it up again-O.B. [Hardison] back Monday. Deadline for all Sept. 1."<sup>20</sup> (emphasis added)

On June 20th, after the coat of arms had been fully uncovered, Michaels was asked to draw it. A June 21st handwritten memo asks, "will he (Michaels) sketch helmet, griffin, rams heads. Yes."<sup>21</sup> This memo is attached in the file over a sketch drawn by Michaels's assistant, Lisa Oehrl. Michaels's worksheet states it took *him* three hours to "draw out the design of coat of arms by hand." (emphasis added)<sup>22</sup> Photos of the uncovered arms in the file indicate that this is a reasonable estimate for a detailed drawing, but there is nothing showing a separate drawing done by Michaels. All that exists is the sketch done by Lisa Oehrl, a simple line drawing with added "details."

One of those details is the "MORE" lettering on the scroll. But Michaels had already stated that there was no lettering on the scroll, it had been "obliterated."<sup>23</sup> Clearly, Michaels himself wouldn't have put the "MORE" lettering on a hand-drawn design. Besides, the Folger already had detailed color photos of the coat of arms, so why would it need a sketch of the arms? As we shall see, this sketch was needed to present an *interpretation* of what is on the arms, and to add details that are not there in the photos (see the sidebar on page 17 for further details on the "composite sketch" drawn by Oehrl and how it compares with a photo of the uncovered coat of arms and with a 1911 version of the Hamersley coat of arms as found in *Burke's Landed Gentry*).

### The half day of miracle research

With the coat of arms now uncovered and the interpretative sketch in hand, Hardison invited Gordon Cyr and his wife Helen to the Folger to discuss the painting. The meeting, which probably took place on July 5th, precipitated a half day of research by Mrs. Cyr which, her husband later claimed, unequivocally proved that the sitter in the painting was Hamersley. At the meeting the Cyrs were shown a 5x7 color photo of the uncovered coat of arms and a sketch that apparently was presented to them as Michaels's sketch of the coat of arms. In his written report of these events Cyr identified it as Michaels's sketch. [Editors' note: In a recent phone

*"In addition, there is a critical 'detail' that was added to the scroll on the sketch—the letters 'MORE,' which subsequently formed the basis for confirming that Hamersley ... was the sitter."*

conversation with *Shakespeare Matters*, Cyr has identified the sketch he was shown at the Folger in July 1979 as the same sketch published in the Summer 1979 *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, and reproduced 14 years later in Pressly's 1993 *Shakespeare Quarterly* article—the sketch that was made by Michaels's assistant Lisa Oehrl. As noted, it is the only sketch that has survived—Michaels' drawing is missing.]

This sketch was not a direct representation of what was on the painting. It was an interpretation showing that the heads on the shield were rams heads couped (which in heraldry means "the head or limbs of any animal cut close."<sup>24</sup>) The sketch also depicts the crest as showing a griffin holding a cross. But here too there are problems, since even Pressly in his 1993 article (in footnote 27) notes that Oehrl's sketch actually shows a *cross bottony fitchy* rather than a *cross crosslet fitchy*<sup>25</sup>; this is an important distinction, since the 1911 version of the Hamersley crest includes a *cross crosslet fitchy*, not a *cross bottony fitchy*. This part of Oehrl's sketch was based on the painted circles visible on the painting, but which are not on either the Barrell or Folger x-rays. The author has reason to believe that the coat of arms had been tampered with sometime after the 1948 x-rays and before the 1979 Michaels restoration. In any event, the sketch from which the Hamersley identification was to be made had an important element of his arms *wrong*.

In addition, there is a critical "detail" that was added to the scroll on the sketch—the letters "MORE," which subsequently formed the basis for confirming that Hamersley, whose motto is listed as "HONORE ET AMORE," was the sitter. In an interim report dated June 18th, 1979, over two weeks before the July meeting between Hardison and the Cyrs, Michaels had stated that there was *no lettering on the scroll*—that it had been "completely obliterated."<sup>26</sup> So by some strange coincidence two key elements in the Oehrl sketch—the couped rams heads and the "MORE" added to the scroll—were a perfect fit to the Hamersley coat of arms.

After the meeting Mrs. Cyr, "armed with a color photograph of the newly exposed shield and Mr. Michaels' assistant's line drawing of the details—both kindly furnished by the Folger Shakespeare Library—consulted sources at the Peabody Library, inasmuch as the Folger's staff *had not yet identified whose family had exhibited this particular grouping of charges and colors.*"<sup>27</sup> (emphasis added)

It is clear from Cyr's account that an *An Alphabetical Dictionary of Coats-of-Arms*, a Heraldry book that makes connecting arms to names accessible by listing coats of arms under various headings—birds, bird heads, etc.—was consulted first. This is the logical place to start when one has a coat of arms but no idea what family name it belongs to. There are no illustrations with most of the listings. Because Oehrl's interpretive sketch showed three rams heads on the shield, the entry "3 heads" and the sub-heading "Sheep-rams" was consulted. As noted, the color photo of the Ashbourne arms from the Folger files shows that the heads are red—actually more orange or red-orange than red.

(continued on page 16)

*Ashbourne* (continued from page 15)

Now it is very interesting that under this “Sheep-rams” heading on page 932 there are *no red rams’ heads—couped or otherwise—listed*. As far as we know there are no red rams’ heads or groups of three red rams’ heads as charges on shields in British heraldry. A number of rams’ heads couped are listed, but they are all either white or gold. If this had been a true blind search it would have stopped here when no red rams’ heads were found on shields. At that point the interpretation that the heads are rams’ heads should have been questioned. Or at least the Folger should have been contacted and told that the *Dictionary of Arms* did not list any red rams’ heads as charges on shields. But that is not what happened. Instead, Mrs. Cyr fastened on this entry in the listing:

Gu. [Gules, i.e. red] three rams heads couped or [gold], HAMMERSLEY, Pall Mall, London, HAMERSLEY, Lord Mayor of London, 1687; and co. Stafford; granted 1614, HAMERLE V.<sup>28</sup>

*“But why bring in the Cyrs—certainly no heraldry experts—to determine the sitter through heraldry research?”*

The “Gu.” for “gules” (red) listed first describes the color of the *shield, not the heads*. The Hamersley shield is red. The three rams’ heads couped are *gold*. This is how the Hamersley shield appears on the full-length portrait of Sir Hugh painted in 1716—gold rams’ heads on a red shield. But this set of colors for the shield and charges is the *reverse* of the Ashbourne color scheme.<sup>29</sup>

For no apparent reason Hamersley was chosen out of the two arms listed with red shields, but no red heads. As we have seen, Hamersley’s rams’ heads are gold. How can one accept *gold* heads on the shield when they are definitely *red* heads in the painting without knowing who the sitter was supposed to be? Matters become even more curious as Cyr describes it in his article: “Mrs. Cyr soon found that the shield belonged to Hugh Hamersley, who had been Lord Mayor of London in 1627, but a typographical error showing this date as ‘1687’ momentarily confused her.”<sup>30</sup> (emphasis added)

How can one be “momentarily confused” by the “wrong” date if one doesn’t know who is being looked for in the first place? Wouldn’t the logical response be that this date was clearly wrong for the person in the Ashbourne painting? Wouldn’t one then look into other possibilities? In fact the *Alphabetical Dictionary of Coats-of-Arms* is the only heraldry book with this typographical error about Hamersley. If this were truly a blind search, how could she know this was a typographical error? This wrong date added to the wrong colors on the shield made two strikes against Hamersley. This should have stopped the search into Hamersley and sent it in other directions.

But Cyr makes it clear that Hamersley had been settled on despite the typographical error. He continues, “She also found several mottoes ending with “MORE,” [a “detail” added to the Folger sketch that is not on the painting as Michaels states in the files] but in the time available was *unable to tie any of these to anyone named Hamersley...*”<sup>31</sup> (emphasis added) Why continue to try to tie anything to Hamersley?

But miraculous help was at hand. “The next day she phoned Ms. Lievsay, one of the Folger staff members who participated in our meeting with Dr. Hardison, and found that the *Folger’s superior*

*reference sources had yielded the same information*, that the motto was ‘Honore et Amore’ (which Mrs. Cyr could only find listed for the Richards family), and that the portrait subject’s year of birth was 1565.”<sup>32</sup> (emphasis added). The year 1565 would fit perfectly with the 1612 date over which the present 1611 date had been painted, making the sitter 47 years of age.

Cyr concludes, “All of the evidence, therefore, converges on this particular Lord Mayor, who was officially granted arms in 1614.”<sup>33</sup>

### More questions

The Folger’s immediate “co-discovery” of Hamersley raises more interesting questions. A note in the Folger files records the receipt of Michaels’s negatives on June 21st. Two weeks later the Cyrs were provided with a photo.<sup>34</sup> Why didn’t the Folger embark on its own investigation of the sitter’s identity, with this photo information in hand? Especially since it was so easy in half a day with their “superior resources” to hit upon Hamersley later in July as they informed Helen Cyr when she phoned. Gordon Cyr reported in his Summer 1979 article that the Folger did not know the identity of the sitter when they met on July 5th. It is hard not to conclude that the meeting has all the hallmarks of a setup—with Hardison bringing the Cyrs into sharing in this discovery of the identity of the sitter. Was this supposed blind search for the owner of the Ashbourne coat of arms in reality a directed treasure hunt with a predetermined outcome?

But why bring in the Cyrs—certainly no heraldry experts—to determine the sitter through heraldry research? The Folger had consulted a Herald at Arms in the 1950s about the validity of an Oxford coat of arms connection. But nothing in the files indicates that the Folger ever sent photos of the uncovered coat of arms or sketches to the Richmond Herald at Arms for an expert opinion.

In his June 18th interim report Michaels expressed the hope that “an experienced herald could identify [these] arms.”<sup>35</sup> Does it not seem odd then that the Folger instead called in an officer of the Shakespeare Oxford Society to determine this heraldic connection and “verified” it the next day with a half-day’s research without ever consulting a Herald at Arms?

### SOS used to promote Hamersley claim

Although the Folger began in 1979 calling the Ashbourne a painting of Hamersley, it did not publicly announce this claim for another 14 years. Not only was the attribution apparently too shaky on evidentiary grounds, it must have also feared an Oxfordian call for an investigation of the portrait in response to any Hamersley claims coming directly from the Folger. Instead the Hamersley attribution was put out through the Shakespeare Oxford Society. Without further research, Cyr rushed into print in the summer 1979 *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* trumpeting Hamersley as the true Ashbourne sitter based on the coat of arms “discovery.” For a time, the Folger even referred inquiries about Hamersley to the Shakespeare Oxford Society!

Oxfordians, frustrated and angry about the undermining of Barrell’s findings, found it difficult to respond. Information documenting the weaknesses of the Folger claim was buried in the Folger files and the Folger had complete control of the painting. In fact the painting was not put on public display until April 2000 in the Founders Room, where it can be viewed only on guided tours (for at least part of the 1990s it was hung in a staff hallway near the

(Continued on page 18)



## The Coat of Arms and the the Composite Sketch

The composite sketch (Fig. 10, center) that was prepared in the search for the identity of the sitter in the Ashbourne presents problems about accuracy and interpretation of virtually every element of the coat of arms. As can be seen in the three figures on this page, it may well be that this composite sketch relied as much on the 1911 Ducat-Hamersley image (Fig. 11, right) in *Burke's Landed Gentry*<sup>36</sup> as on a straight copying of what was actually revealed after the coat of arms was uncovered (Fig. 9, left).

### "MORE"

The "MORE" lettering on Oehrl's sketch was the key factor in identifying Hamersley when Mrs. Cyr called the Folger in July 1979. "MORE" is part of the Hamersley motto of "HONORE ET AMORE." Thus determining the source Oehrl used for the "MORE" on the sketch is crucial to an interpretation of the coat of arms on the painting.

It is extremely significant that both Barrell's and the Folger's X-rays confirm the "CK" letters beneath the scroll but do not show any "MORE" lettering which the Folger claims is the original lettering on the scroll.<sup>37</sup> If the "MORE" was a part of the original lettering on the scroll and visible on the painting it would show up in these X-rays.

In fact the "MORE" is only faintly visible in enlargements of color prints taken from color slides in the Michaels Restoration folder. Only by looking closely at the color enlargement of the coat of arms in good light can one see the very faint and thin orange paint outlining the letters "MORE" on the right side of the scroll. It is clearly surface paint that has been added. Apparently this is the sole basis of the Folger's claims for the "MORE" on Oehrl's sketch. This is what Michaels dismissed as the original lettering on the coat of arms when he stated in his June 18, 1979 Interim report that, "Unfortunately, all of the lettering which must have been on the band below [the shield] was obliterated." (emphasis added) Perhaps Michaels's refusal to accept this added lettering was the reason for the Folger's later cryptic admonishment in its instructions to him in 1981, "Don't fill in any words that aren't there (the "MORE" is visible)."

But surely if the "MORE" shows even faintly on enlargements of Michaels's photos we should find these same "MORE" letters on the coat of arms in the painting now. But they are no longer there on the painting as it is now displayed in the Founders Room at the Folger. Apparently someone thought better of leaving this open to scrutiny.<sup>38</sup> This "MORE" lettering appears to have been added to the scroll along with other changes made to the coat of arms sometime after the 1948 x-rays and before Michaels uncovered the arms in 1979. We will take up this issue of the "MORE" lettering again when we discuss the stages of tampering with this painting in the next article.

### The Rams' Heads

The "rams heads" are interpretations of the heads or charges on the shield. In the Ashbourne color file photos (see Fig. 9) of the painting taken by Michaels all the heads are red, and all three have remnants of gold paint around the top front area, most likely meaning that these were bird heads, each with a gold-colored beak. This dual color representation is called "armed" in heraldry when a foot or horn or beak or other part of a body is a



Fig. 9 (uncovered coat of arms)



Fig. 10 (Lisa Oehrl sketch)



Fig. 11 (1911 Ducat-Hamersley)

(Figs. 9 and 10, by permission, Folger Shakespeare Library)

different color from the main body color. In the coat of arms on the painting now only the upper right head shows a gold beak, the others have been removed or painted red, so it looks like this gold beak color is an aberration. The Hamersley rams are not armed and they are all of one color—gold, not red.

The rams heads on the Oehrl sketch resemble very closely the rams heads in the only visual representation of a Hamersley coat of arms—the Ducat-Hamersley arms—reproduced in *Burke's Landed Gentry*. The rams in the sketch appear to be modeled on these heads in the Ducat-Hamersley shield, not from anything visible in the painting. Overlays show that the sketched rams heads do not fit the shapes of the heads on the painting.

### The 1911 Ducat-Hamersley Arms

The rams' heads on the Ducat-Hamersley coat of arms and the Folger sketch do not look like the gold rams' heads on the Hamersley coat of arms on the full-length 1716 portrait of Hamersley, which simply displays a red shield with gold rams' heads but no griffin crest. The engraving made from the 1592 head and shoulders portrait of Hamersley has no coat of arms with which to make a comparison. The Ducat-Hamersley coat of arms that the sketch seems to imitate was granted in 1911 and is a composite coat of arms combining the arms of the Hamersley and Ducat families. It is the only visual representation of any Hamersley arms in the heraldry books.

The Folger does not seem to have noticed that this imitation of the rams' heads from a 1911 grant of arms is a major problem. In fact, Hugh Hamersley was granted a coat of arms in 1614 and the original drawing of his arms in the heraldry records must be quite different from the combined two family Ducat-Hamersley arms granted in 1911. Of course the artist who painted the coat of arms on the Ashbourne could have had no knowledge of this 1911 grant of arms.

### Griffin Crest

The demi-griffin segreant in the crest in the Folger sketch also appears to be modeled on the 1911 arms, but the cross is incorrect. The 1911 Ducat Hamersley includes a cross crosslet-fitchy, but Oehrl's sketch shows a cross bottonny fitchy, with rounded rather than square edges. Pressley notes this problem in a footnote (#27) in his article, but glosses over the major problem it presents for

identifying the arms shown in the painting with those of Hamersley as shown in the modern heraldry books.

### Helmet

The Helmet poses yet another problem for the Folger case. The helmet depicted in Oehrl's sketch identifies the crest heraldically as belonging to a peer, not a member of the gentry like Sir Hugh Hamersley. The sketch clearly shows an open helmet with grates—the squares represent the grates over the opening in the helmet on the sketch. This opening with grates over it is still visible on the Ashbourne helmet in the file photos. This is the style used for peer's helmets—open with grates or bars.<sup>39</sup>

### Conclusions

The Oehrl sketch appears to be a composite sketch taken partly from the coat of arms on the painting and partly from details as presented on the 1911 Ducat-Hamersley coat of arms as reproduced in *Burke's Landed Gentry*. It was this interpretive sketch that was used to "discover" Hamersley.

The Folger files strongly suggest that Michaels, who insisted that the lettering on the scroll had been obliterated, had made a drawing—now lost—from the painting. A June 21st bill from him itemizes "3 hrs. draw out design of coat of arms." At least two other references to this missing drawing occur in the file.

In his 1993 article William Pressley omits any specific mention of the far more detailed restoration photos in the Folger file, the cover-up of crucial parts of the coat of arms on the painting now, or the apparent struggle between Michaels and Hardison over the visibility of those crucial letters "MORE" and the existence of a Michaels drawing made prior to the Oehrl sketch supplied to the Cyrs. He reproduces the partially re-covered coat of arms that is on the Ashbourne now, as if that were all that existed. To this he adds the Oehrl sketch in the guise of helping the reader decipher what is "difficult to see on the scraped and now faint image." He then states that, "this drawing was executed without the knowledge of the sitter's identity. It was, however, the evidence of the drawing that established the identification [of Hamersley]."<sup>40</sup>

—B. Burris

*Ashbourne* (continued from page 16) Founders Room). A brass plaque describes it as a portrait of Sir Hugh Hamersley.

### Pressly's story of the discovery of Hamersley

Let us see how William Pressly recounts these events in his 1993 *Shakespeare Quarterly* article, the first official Folger announcement of the "discovery" of Hamersley as the sitter.

He completely omits the involvement of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Cyrs and states that "Lilly Lievsay and Laetitia Yeandle, head of cataloguing and curator of manuscripts at the Folger, respectively, were the first to link this image conclusively to the armorial coat of Sir Hugh Hamersley, who was forty-seven years old in 1612, the date found beneath the altered 1611 of the inscription."<sup>43</sup>

Nothing is mentioned about the July 1979 meeting with the Cyrs, at which the Folger claimed ignorance of the sitter's identity. Pressly does not mention Mrs. Cyr's half-day research and her call to Ms. Lievsay at the Folger the next day. Or that she was told the Folger—with "their superior resources"—had just found that the motto "Honore et Amore" belonged to Sir Hugh Hamersley, who was then proclaimed the sitter.

After describing Hamersley's coat of arms, Pressly continues, "The coat of arms revealed in the Ashbourne Portrait fits this description, including (in the scroll at the bottom) the last four letters of the motto, 'MORE'."<sup>44</sup> (emphasis added) But the "MORE" was not visible on x-rays and the faintly visible "MORE" surface paint lettering seen in enlargements of Michaels's photo of the arms is no longer visible on the painting now. (see Fig. 10, page 17).

Much in Pressly's article will raise doubts in a skeptical reader. For example, while informing readers that "Gules" is red and "or" is gold, Pressly omits to mention the critical fact that "Gules" refers to the *shield color*, and "or" to the *rams heads*. Nor does he reveal that the heads on the painting are *red*, while the Hamersley rams heads are *gold*—just as they are portrayed on his 1716 portrait. And, as we shall see in the next section below (on "CK"), there were

## What Did Hamersley Look Like?



Fig. 12 National Portrait Gallery



Fig. 13 Folger Shakespeare Library

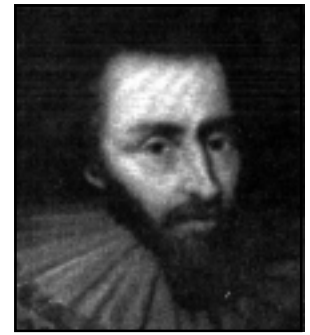


Fig. 14 Haberdasher's Hall

Here is a comparison of an image of Hugh Hamersley from the 1716 Haberdasher's Hall painting (Fig. 14, right) with the Welbeck portrait of Oxford (Fig. 12, left) and the Ashbourne (Fig. 13, center). Even to the unpracticed eye the basic mismatch between Hamersley and the Ashbourne is apparent, most noticeably the overall shape of the nose and the dark eyebrows. On the other hand it was the close similarity between the Welbeck and the Ashbourne which first lead Barrell to do his x-ray and infrared study of the latter portrait.

After the identification of the Ashbourne sitter as Hamersley in summer 1979, both the Folger staff and Cyr had still not—to our knowledge—actually seen a portrait of Hamersley.

The Folger staff immediately began calling the Ashbourne a portrait of Hamersley and within days began contacting art experts and portrait galleries naming him as the sitter. They also began trying to find a picture of Hamersley in a flurry of letters, some even addressed to his descendants. By July 18th they had a photocopy of an engraving made from the 1592 head and shoulders painting of Hamersley, *which is the only contemporaneous painting of him*, but they were still searching into the late fall for a painted portrait. This engraving, in fact, hardly looks like the face of Hamersley as portrayed in the full-length 1716 Haberdasher's portrait (Fig. 14)—*anon-contemporaneous* painting which is also based on the 1592 painting.

The Folger staff also began research into Hamersley's life. How much Stratfordians wanted to believe in this alternative to Oxford can be seen in this comment from David Piper, an art expert at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (and formerly of the National Portrait Gallery) who wrote, in his July 1979 response to a Folger notification about the "discovery" of Hamersley: "May I say, however, how glad I am that you have gone thus far as it should settle the question that (as Giles Dawson discovered) can be very tiresome and time-consuming."<sup>41</sup>

But, in fact, Hamersley does not look like the sitter in the Ashbourne. The eyes, eyebrows, nose and mouth are quite different from the Ashbourne sitter's. Hamersley's eyes are dark and of a different shape from the Ashbourne subject, and his eye-

brows are dark, straight across, and much heavier than the auburn reddish thin arched eyebrows of the Ashbourne. Hamersley's nose has a high crook at the top near the eyebrows and different shape down the length of it and at the end. He has high cheekbones that taper down to a thinner, longer face, and dark hair and beard while the Ashbourne sitter had a gold red beard and had auburn hair at least before the 1988-89 restoration. It also appears that Hamersley has a darker complexion in the color photo of the 1716 painting, which is very different from the fair complexion with rosy cheeks in the Ashbourne, at least before the 1988-89 restoration.

But William Pressly, in his article on Hamersley in the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, tells us to ignore what the sitter looks like. Instead, he writes,

It is the inscription and coat of arms found on the Ashbourne Portrait, rather than the shape of the head, ear, beard, and nose, that make possible the identification of the original sitter as Hamersley, but these features, excluding the overpainted forehead, are consistent with those seen in the full-length portrait of Sir Hugh in the Haberdasher's Company in London.<sup>42</sup>

According to Pressly's definition, my face might pass for yours if your features are, "consistent with" mine—whatever that means.

In contrast it was the almost exact match of the face in the Welbeck portrait of Edward de Vere with the Ashbourne face—first noted by Father Beauclerc in his examination of the Shakespeare portraiture's connection to Oxford—that was the impetus for Barrell's investigation of the Ashbourne portrait.<sup>42A</sup>

other significant problems with the evidence, none of which Pressly discloses. However, he did find the space to remark, "The Oxfordians were quick to accept the new findings, even to the point of claiming partial credit for establishing the sitter's identity as Hamersley."<sup>45</sup>

Many Oxfordians, however, did not accept the Hamersley claim. A Fall 1979 *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* article—unsigned, but (according to Gordon Cyr) written by Charlton

Ogburn—defensively tried to cut off all discussion of the issue. It stated, “Some of our members have expressed distress over what they consider the precipitate speed with which Gordon C. Cyr’s article on the new identification of the subject of the Ashbourne portrait was disseminated in the newsletter.”<sup>46</sup>

After noting that the evidence of the coat of arms proved conclusively that Hamersley was the sitter, the author stated that the case was basically closed and no further discussion was necessary. It concluded that, “...it seemed very important to us to forestall any further citation of the Ashbourne portrait by our members as an element in the case for Oxford....”<sup>47</sup> From this point forward the Folger could claim Hamersley as the sitter with little fear of an Oxfordian call for an investigation of their claims.

### The “CK” monogram



Scientific American  
Fig. 15. The “CK” monogram as it appeared in Barrell’s 1940 *Scientific American* article.

In this same Fall 1979 newsletter one notable individual wrote in to disagree with Cyr’s conclusions on a key piece of the evidence in the Hamersley attribution. The letter writer was Fred D. McHugh, an editor with *Scientific American*, who had worked with Barrell on developing and publishing his story in 1940. McHugh’s objections centered on the “CK” monogram which Barrell’s x-rays had found on the painting.

The “CK” monogram, which Barrell had discovered in 1940 and identified as belonging to Cornelis Ketel—the fine Dutch portrait artist, painter of a “lost” portrait of Oxford—is extremely important to the issue of the identity of the sitter. Its existence

is of great significance in this story, since it was the purported *total* absence of the “CK” that—along with the coat of arms identity—had led Gordon Cyr to sign on to the Hamersley attribution in 1979.

Cyr had mentioned in his Summer 1979 *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* article that Michaels, using the Folger 1948-49 x-rays for comparison, had told him that there were *no* “CK” initials visible in the x-rays or on the painting (the Folger files preserve no comments by Michaels regarding the “CK” monogram). Cyr had visited Michaels’s studio just before the publication of the Summer 1979 newsletter and reported that, “The so-called ‘C.K.’ monogram...does not show on either the Folger Library’s x-ray or the newly-cleaned ‘Ashbourne’ surface. He quotes Peter Michaels: “this [the “CK”] is apparently an illusion, since it does not exist.” Cyr added that, “the only apparent explanation, according to Michaels, is that Barrell’s camera picked up a defect or a worn stripping on the canvas.”<sup>48</sup>

### To see or not to see

It was this comment quoted from Michaels (“defect or worn stripping”) that aroused an indignant response from *Scientific American* editor Fred McHugh. “An illusion? A defect in the canvas?” McHugh asked. “It is neither. The hard fact is that the monogram did show at the point Barrell said it did, adjoining the shield, as our *Scientific American* reproductions prove.

“Further, it could not possibly have been an accidental ‘show

up’ of flaws in the canvas, for no one, seeing the original pictures as I did and studying them at close range during a three-hour presentation by Barrell as I did, could conceive of such a juxtaposition of atoms, molecules, of whole canvas fibers as would make an ‘accidental,’ perfectly outlined, artistically designed CK monogram as reproduced in the *Scientific American* half-tones.”<sup>49</sup>

McHugh proposed some possible reasons for the monogram not showing up, guessing that it may have been added to the varnish by a forger and thus removed during Michaels’ cleaning. If the “CK” had been added by a forger to the paint on top of the ribbon on the coat of arms, and later removed, there would likely be no trace of the letters deep in the canvas.

However, McHugh concluded on a strong note: “Nevertheless, no conjectures or assumptions can write off C. W. Barrell’s original monogram ‘CK,’ for I saw it clearly in the original x-ray pictures, and it was not—repeat not—a re-touch job!”<sup>50</sup>

However, it now turns out—incredibly—that the “CK” monogram *is there*, and can still be seen on the Folger’s own 1948-49 x-rays (copies of which have been consulted by the author and the editors for this article). One must look closely, but the ghostly presence of the “CK” monogram is unmistakable, exactly where Barrell had first found it—between the ribbon under the right side of the scroll on the coat of arms—but now barely visible.<sup>51</sup> This lingering visibility of the “CK” may help to explain why the Folger unexpectedly decided to settle with Barrell out of court in 1949.

The faintness of this image—so clearly visible in the Barrell x-rays—raises the question, “what happened?” One possible explanation may be that there was a significant difference between the x-ray technology (including perhaps the degree of contrast in the final images) used by Barrell and that used by the National Gallery of Art. The author believes that the “CK” monogram itself was tampered with in an attempt to remove it, sometime between Barrell’s investigation in the late 1930s and the 1948-49 Folger x-rays. The author has examined the “CK” monogram closely on the Folger x-rays and drawn what now remains of the “CK” (see Fig. 16).

It is understandable that Michaels may not have seen the monogram in the Folger x-rays—as Cyr reported—since it is difficult to spot it today without looking very carefully at the x-rays.<sup>52</sup>

### Pressly knew

Even more incredible than Michaels not seeing the “CK” in 1979 is that William Pressly, in an attachment (“A History of the Ashbourne Portrait”) to a 1988 memo to Folger Director Werner Gundersheimer, acknowledged that the “CK” *can be seen* on the Folger x-rays! This observation, however, never made it into his



Fig. 16. The author has examined the “CK” as it now appears on the Folger x-rays with a magnifying glass, and found that it clearly shows signs of having been scraped. Pictured here is the author’s own drawing of the remnants of the image, made directly from the x-ray.

(Continued on page 20)

Ashbourne (continued from page 19)

1993 *Shakespeare Quarterly* article, apparently because of its inconsistency with his theory—based on unsubstantiated claims of a stylistic discrepancy—that “Ketel never touched this canvas.”<sup>53</sup>

In this attachment Pressly wrote,

The monogram [i.e., the “CK”] is only *faintly visible* on these x-rays.” [emphasis added] ... Without Barrell’s illustration it would in fact be impossible to read with any certainty the marks as “CK,” and the letters are no longer visible on the canvas itself. Assuming that Barrell did not strengthen the marks in his photograph and the letters are indeed as depicted, then one might speculate that they stood for Clement Kingston; who could not resist initialing his handiwork, even though he had to cover the letters with overpainting.<sup>54</sup>

Yet in Pressly’s 1993 article promoting Hamersley as the Ashbourne subject and attacking Barrell’s conclusion that the “CK” monogram belonged to Cornelis Ketel he states that, “...the ‘facts’ about the initials are open to question, in that a later series of x-rays made at the National Gallery of Art by Stephen S. Pichetto late in 1948 or early 1949 *do not reveal a ‘CK’* beneath the coat of arms.” (emphasis added) After that absolute statement, Pressly plows on, arguing that, “If these initials *are or were* there, they more likely stand for ‘Clement Kingston,’ the painting’s owner who was the first to profit from its “discovery.” (emphasis added)<sup>55</sup>

Since we know now that Pressly knew the monogram was visible, his choice of words (“are or were there”), coming right after his statement that the Folger x-rays “*do not reveal a ‘CK’* beneath the coat of arms,” is significant.

### What happened?

The discrepancy of the much-reduced visibility and erasure of part of the monogram as it appears in the 1948-49 x-rays does raise a serious question which Pressly’s muddled logic manages to completely obscure. How can an image fully visible in 1940 be so difficult to see in 1949? While Pressly feels free to speculate in this memo on whether Barrell may have “strengthened” the “CK” in 1940—shades of Dawson’s charges against Barrell in the 1940s!—and while he also floats the idea the Clement Kingston placed the “CK” on the canvas—and then painted over his own handiwork!—he simply skips over any consideration of the other obvious possibility for the present faintness and partial erasure of the image: that the “CK” had been tampered with *post-Barrell*.

We do know from Michaels’s own testimony that scraping had occurred on this part of the canvas. Michaels notes in his 1979 interim report to the Folger that, “the remains of the coat of arms” was “buried under two very thick but different layers of brown overpaint....Apparently some restorer in the past had scraped off parts of it, *possibly to make it less visible under x-ray detection*. But even so, your x-ray plates do show these remnants when one knows what and where to look.”<sup>56</sup> (emphasis added).

This reference to an attempt to evade x-rays is provocative, since x-ray technology was not discovered until 1895 and there was no threat of x-ray examination of the Ashbourne until *after the Folger purchased it* and Barrell had conducted his own x-ray and infrared investigation in 1937.

As we have noted, the Folger x-rays were made in 1948 by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC and were examined at the time by Stephen S. Pichetto, official consultant restorer to the Gallery. The Folger does not have Pichetto’s report in their files, although in a 1964 memo Dawson cites a communication (now

lost?) from Pichetto. While it is understandable that there is no final report from Michaels (who died before his work was completed), it is surprising and disappointing that there is also no report from the x-ray expert, either in the Folger files or at the National Gallery of Art.<sup>57</sup>

### The “CK” position and the “CK” gap

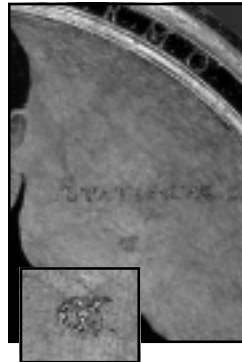


Fig. 17. Detail from 1754 Ketel painting of Adam Wachendorff showing how Ketel’s “CK” (enlarged in inset on lower left) can be near the center of a painting.

There are several other important questions about the “CK” monogram: Why is its position on the canvas so far down (closer to the sitter’s right shoulder than to the edge of the canvas), and why is it embedded in the lower ribbon of the uncovered coat of arms.

We know from examining other “CKs” on Ketel paintings that he would predictably put his initials close to the inscription listing the date and age of sitter. That they appear so far down on the Ashbourne canvas can most likely be explained by noting that some paintings of this period contained a small coat of arms or a brief inscription on either the upper left or upper right quadrant of the canvas as part of the original overall design. If the original Ashbourne had such an element—shield or inscription—beneath the original date and age of sitter, then Ketel would have placed his “CK” *below it* (and thus far down from the top edge). For example, the 1754 oval-shaped painting of Adam Wachendorff (Fig. 17) shows the “Age of Sitter” inscription close to the sitter’s neck and shoulder, with the “CK” under it. If this inscription were to be totally scraped out, but the much smaller “CK” underneath it overlooked, the end result would be, like the Ashbourne, the “CK” appearing to float in the middle of the painting.

As to why the “CK” appears “embedded” in the coat of arms ribbon, a look at the Folger photo of the uncovered coat of arms (Fig. 19) shows a definite gap, clearly visible in the ribbon under the right side of the scroll. This is exactly the place where the CK initials appear in the photo of Barrell’s x-rays (Fig. 18). The gap has been painted in and the area in the scroll above it has been altered and darkened in places (due, the author believes, to the attempted removal of the “CK” initials and then an extension of the repaint to conceal this). Here is where the “CK” monogram *would have shown as clearly* as the rest of the coat of arms when Michaels uncovered this area of the painting, *if someone had not tried to eliminate it* so it would not be visible on either the painting or in x-rays.

Why they did not fully succeed and why remnants of the “CK” are still visible on the x-rays may tell us a good deal about when the monogram was put on the painting and provide more evidence about the sitter. It is important to keep in mind that Michaels had commented about the multiple layers of paint around the coat of arms and commented on “attempts to avoid x-ray detection.”

Positing that the “CK” monogram was indeed there *first as the signature of the artist*, that an original shield or inscription once present had been scraped away, and finally that the present *coat of arms was added later, and painted either around or over the “CK”*, then the problem of how the fainter remnants of the “CK” were left in the canvas can be solved. The Fall 1979 *Shakespeare Oxford*

*Society Newsletter* reported that Michaels believed that the coat of arms *was added later* to the painting. It was not uncommon to add coats of arms to paintings later, sometimes long after they were painted.

This would also explain Ketel expert Wolf Stechow's comment that neither Ketel (nor any artist) would *put his initials in the place they are found* on this painting, as a part of the coat of arms.<sup>58</sup> The answer is that Ketel *didn't place his initials within the coat of arms*. Instead, his monogram was incorporated into a coat of arms that was added to the painting much later. The x-rays show that the "CK" is not painted over the ribbon, as it would have been if it had been added later to the painting; they show that the ribbon is painted around the "CK," confirming that the "CK" was there before the coat of arms was painted.

If we are right that someone attempted to scrape out *just* the "CK" from the painting *after* Barrell's work, that would also explain why it would be so hard to remove the "CK" entirely from the canvas. The earlier and more original the "CK" the deeper the paint would penetrate into the canvas. It seems that whoever tried to remove the "CK" found that it was too deeply embedded to remove completely without abrading and damaging the canvas itself. Thus the fainter but still discernable remnants of the original "CK" initials are still visible on the Folger x-rays.

This evidence that "CK" is the monogram of the painter of the portrait, not the later initials of some forger, brings us back to what painter had the initials "CK" and used a monogram style similar to that found on this painting. Not only what painter, but what fine portrait painter, as this exceptional portrait proves, despite the abuse it has endured from neglect, multiple cleanings, overpaintings, and tampering.

We have already demonstrated through costume dating that the Ashbourne portrait was painted circa 1579-81. There were not many fine portrait painters in England at that time, but we do know that Ketel—considered one of the finest Dutch portrait painters of his time—was in England from 1573 to 1581, and is known to have painted a portrait of Oxford. Barrell in 1940 had displayed some of Ketel's monograms from his other works, comparing them to the monogram on the painting. Ketel used similar styles of monograms to sign his work (see the example of the Ashbourne "CK" and three other bonafide Ketel "CKs" in Fig. 20). The "CK" from the



Fig. 18 Scientific American



Fig. 19 Folger Shakespeare Library

In Fig. 18 (top) is the "CK" "embedded" in the coat of arms ribbon as shown in Barrell's x-rays, while in Fig. 19 (bottom) the same area can be seen as it appeared on the painting itself after the coat of arms had been uncovered. The break in the ribbon paint is readily apparent right where the "CK" had been. This is the "CK" gap—further confirmation that "something" had once shared that same spot with the ribbon.

Ashbourne has characteristics consistent with these other monograms.

The evidence thus points to Cornelis Ketel as the painter of this portrait, which is therefore the lost Ketel portrait of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

### Conclusion, Part III

In the fourth part of this series (and the second part of the Restoration story) we will examine the rest of the 1979-1981 Michaels restoration work, and the second phase of the restoration in 1988-89 (under the direction of Arthur Page and William Pressly).

Part IV will also describe the alterations to the arms on the painting that show up on Michaels's photos of the coat of arms, as well as some additional alterations that appear in the Page 1988-1989 photos. We will examine the debate over whether to uncover the hair under the bald head and area around the neck ruff, plus the strange decisions made in completing the uncovered right ear.

We will also discuss the issue of tainted evidence and the Folger's final directions to Michaels during this "restoration" (directions that seemingly would result in more "evidence" for Hamersley), and dig deeper into Pressly's 1993 *Shakespeare Quarterly* article claiming Hamersley as the sitter.

Future articles will present this author's theory on what the original coat of arms may have been, and explore the fascinating history and provenance of this painting that brought it to the Ashbourne school. And we will explore some possible explanations regarding the who, when and why of the changes transforming the Ashbourne—and other Oxford portraits—into "Shakespeare." These explanations may help open up a window on the implementation of a phase of the "Shakespeare" fraud.

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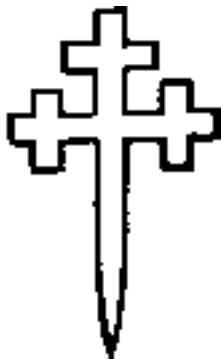
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1. Ruth Loyd Miller, *Shakespeare Identified in Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford*, Vol. II. (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975), 407.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 426.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 426.
4. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 423.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 429.
6. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 429.
7. Gordon C. Cyr, "Portrait Identified: Ashbourne Sitter NOT Oxford, New Findings Show." (*Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, Summer 1979 Vol. 15, No. 3).
8. Vertue, George. *Notebooks*. Vol. 1 (Oxford: Printed for the Walpole Society by J. Hohnson at the University Press, 1930-35), 91.
9. Charles Wisner Barrell, "Identifying 'Shakespeare,'" (*Scientific American*, January 1940), 4-8 and 43-45.
10. William L. Pressly, "The Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare: Through the Looking Glass," (*Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 44 No 1 Spring 1993), 54-72.

(Continued on page 22)

*Ashbourne (continued from page 21)*

11. Interview with Ruth Loyd Miller by Roger Stritmatter (March 2002)
12. Ogburn, Charlton. "Henry Clay Folger's Memorial" (*Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, Spring 1979, Vol. 15 No. 2), 1.
13. *Ibid.*, 2.
14. Ashbourne Portrait Files. Folger Shakespeare Library. Washington, D.C. "Shakespeare- Ashbourne FP sl 165 folder." Pages are not numbered in any of these files.
15. Ashbourne Files. "Coat of Arms Identification" folder.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. Cyr, Portrait Identified, 2.
20. Ashbourne Files. "Coat of Arms Identification."
21. *Ibid.*, Michaels Restoration.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.* 18 June 1979 letter to A. Skiff.
24. Francis J. Grant, Albany Herald, Editor. *The Manual of Heraldry* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1962) 70.
25. Cross crosslet vs. cross bottony. A cross crosslet and a cross bottony are two very different emblems. The cross crosslet fitchy (on left) has small crosses at the edge of each bar of the large cross, while a cross bottony (on right) has rounded tips at the end of each bar of the large cross. "Fitchy" describes whether the cross has one spiked bar, as in the cross crosslet fitchy below (on left). A cross bottony fitchy would have the same spiked bar on the bottom as in the cross crosslet fitchy.



A cross crosslet fitchy



A cross bottony

26. Ashbourne Files, Michaels Restoration.
27. Cyr, Portrait Identified, 2.
28. John W. Papworth, *FR.I.B.A. An Alphabetical Dictionary of Coats-of-Arms: Families of Great Britain and Ireland* (Baltimore: Genealogy Publishing Co., 1965), 932.
29. There is one other coat of arms listed for a Ramsay, with a red shield like Hamersley and three rams' heads coupé, white, but this entry was ignored.
30. Cyr, Portrait Identified, 2.
31. *Ibid.*, 2.
32. *Ibid.*, 2.
33. *Ibid.*, 3.
34. Ashbourne Files, Michaels Restoration.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Peter Townsend, Ed., *Burke's Landed Gentry*, Vol. I 18th Ed. London: Burke's Peerage Ltd., 1965, 359.
37. Barrell's X-rays reveal only a few marks that appear to be remnants of letters, but which are not clearly defined or recognizable. These

- remnants are not even close to the placement and configuration of the Folger's sketch showing "MORE" on the scroll. The Folger's X-rays, like Barrell's, only show marks that resemble letter remnants and like Barrell's marks are closer to the center of the scroll than the spread out "MORE." There is no "MORE" on either Barrell's or the Folger's X-rays. Yet the "CK," or remnants of it, are still faintly though clearly visible on the Folger X-rays despite the fact that the "CK" was removed from the painting surface and is no longer visible when viewing the coat of arms. If the "MORE" were part of the original painting and visible on the coat of arms now it should show up in the Barrell or Folger X-rays, which it does not.
38. The right side of the scroll on the coat of arms visible on the painting now looks very different from the Michaels' file photos. The scroll is lumpy and painted over in places with the background paint used to cover other parts of the coat of arms. Some of this lumpiness combined with dark background paint appears to form something that could be taken for an "O" and an "R" but a "MORE" as it appears faintly on the Michaels photos is no longer there.
39. Grant, *Manual of Heraldry*, 92.
40. Pressly, Ashbourne Portrait, 64.
41. Ashbourne Files, Restoration Issues.
42. Pressly, Ashbourne Portrait, 65-66.
- 42A. Miller, Looney, *Shakespeare Identified*, Vol. 1, 656
43. Pressly, Ashbourne Portrait, 64.
44. *Ibid.*, 64.
45. *Ibid.*, 66.
46. Charlton Ogburn, More on the Portrait (*Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, Fall 1979, Vol. 15, No. 4) 5.
47. *Ibid.*, 5.
48. Cyr, Portrait Identified, 6.
49. Ogburn, More on the Portrait, 6.
50. *Ibid.*, 6.
51. The whereabouts of Barrell's original x-ray's are unknown; they were apparently discarded by the *Scientific American* after years of storage.
52. David Piper, the Ashmolean Museum art expert, also did not see the "CK" monogram in the Folger X-rays. He is quoted in the file in 1963 stating that, "No signature visible. Initials claimed by Barrell probably flaws in the paint or canvas weave." (Ashbourne Files, Restoration Issues).
53. Pressly, Ashbourne Portrait, 61.
54. Ashbourne Files, Michaels Restoration.
55. Pressly, Ashbourne Portrait, 61.
56. Ashbourne Files, Michaels Restoration.
57. Since Hardison, in his May 1979 handwritten instructions, noted that the Folger might need to take, "New x-ray or other treatment, if it will provide better info than we have," we also cannot be sure that the Folger x-rays from 1948-49 are the only ones ever taken. (Ashbourne File, Michaels Restoration).
58. *Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter* (April, 1941) 4

## The Shakespeare Fellowship on the Internet

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# Book Reviews

***The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare.*** (Edited by Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells. Oxford University Press, 2001.)

By Richard Whalen

Better for browsing than research, this latest companion to Shakespeare is more interesting for its quirkiness than its scholarship. With its large format and more than 120 illustrations, the handsomely produced volume is eminently suitable for a prominent position on coffee tables, where it is handy for idle browsing in its alphabetical entries. Some are quite strange.

What writer or researcher, for example, would ever have occasion to look up, "Father who has killed his son"? Or an entry that refers the reader to, "Soldier who has killed his father."

Or "Death." Or "Crab." Or "Flying." Or "Lion." (See "Snug.") Or "Philip." (See "Joseph.")

Who would pick up this volume for standard definitions of words such as allusion, authenticity, meiosis, oxymoron or lute?

At the other end of the spectrum of relevancy are major entries for the works of Shakespeare. But here the reader finds extended synopses so pedestrian they sound like a police reports. Also covered at some length, scattered in several entries, is the authorship controversy. The tone is predictable.

Elsewhere among the 529 pages are entries by 62 contributors for characters in Shakespeare's plays, notable men and women of the time, scholars and actors over the centuries, and the purported portraits of Shakespeare. Occupying full pages are the Flower portrait, which is dismissed, and the Chandos portrait, "c.1610, the only likeness of Shakespeare thought to have been executed before his death."

The Ashbourne portrait, thought for a century to be of Shakespeare, is not shown. Perhaps it looks too much like an aristocrat. The short entry says its restoration in 1979 by the Folger Shakespeare Library revealed evidence that the sitter was Sir Hugh Hamersley. The entry says nothing about the work of the Oxfordian Charles Wisner Barrell or the widespread acclaim

that it received in 1940, echoed recently in a major article in *The Sunday New York Times*. Barbara Burris, an independent scholar of Royal Oak, Michigan, confirms Barrell's identification of the sitter as Edward de Vere, the 17<sup>th</sup> earl of Oxford and true author of the works of Shakespeare. (See her latest article, beginning on page 1)

## The Authorship Controversy

The two editors of the *Oxford Companion* diverge in their treatment of the Strat-

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ford man's biography and claims for other writers as the true author.

Stanley Wells is quite cautious in his biography of the Stratford man as the author, sometimes surprisingly so. Wells is a leading British scholar and former director of the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham. Yet he hedges the evidence for his man: Groatsworth "suggests" that he was well known on the theatrical scene, not that he was also a dramatist, as Stratfordians usually contend. "Presumably," says Wells, he started to write before joining a theatre company. "We cannot be sure," he says, that all the references in London are to him. The entry is full of locutions such as "may have," "seems to have," and "often been supposed."

Summing up, Wells says, "Though we know more mundane facts about Shakespeare's life than about any other dramatist of his time except Ben Jonson, they reveal little of his personality. That lies *buried* [emphasis added] deep beneath the

surface of his writings." Buried so deeply, Oxfordians would say, as to be indiscernible.

Wells is even more cautious on the gravestone in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford, and he raises several questions. Eschewing certitude, he says "the tradition that it is his dates back well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century." He notes that his wife's stone, not his, lies directly under the monument and bust. Why, he asks, is it that his stone (if it is his) "lies not merely in the chancel but as close to altar as it is possible to get?" And, he asks, "may there be any connection between the shortness of the stone (3 feet 7 inches) and the fact that it bears no name?" It seems odd, he continues, "that there is nothing on the stone carved with what is generally believed to be Shakespeare's epitaph to link it with Shakespeare."

"Conceivably, then," he concludes, "a part of the original stone lies hidden under the steps (to the altar) and might be carved with Shakespeare's name or bear marks indicating that it once bore a memorial brass. This could be investigated: but only by someone bold enough to run the risk of invoking Shakespeare's curse" on anyone who moves his bones. Rarely, if ever, has a Stratfordian scholar expressed such doubts about the burial of their man; and he does so in a reference work designed for the general reading public.

In contrast to Wells, Michael Dobson—a professor of Renaissance drama at the University of Surrey Roehampton—takes a cavalier attitude to show off his scornful wit in the six entries he contributes on the authorship controversy. Dobson has not, however, published anything of significance on the biography of the Stratford man or the Oxfordian proposition. Nevertheless, he is the author of three long and three short entries that total almost two full pages on candidates for the authorship of Shakespeare's works. Rather than address the non-Stratfordian arguments, he takes a wry historical approach. He must think it's an important current issue, however, for he calls it a "seemingly unstoppable phenomenon."

In his main entry, he cites mainly Joseph C. Hart and Delia Bacon, both Americans; "and blue-blooded candidates for the

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*Book review (continued from page 23)*

authorship continue to find their most eager (and munificent) supporters in the United States—a country whose citizens, long emancipated from the British monarchy and aristocracy, apparently find it easier to entertain romantic fantasies about their unacknowledged talents than do the British themselves.” Oxford gets one brief mention in the main entry.

On the “Oxfordian theory,” he describes Oxford as “notorious...violent and irresponsible,” obviously based on the entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He critiques J. Thomas Looney’s book identifying Shakespeare as Oxford, cites the so-called “Prince Tudor” theory as if it were the principal theme of Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn’s *This Star of England*, omits any mention of Charlton Ogburn’s books and concludes:

Since the 1980s, the Oxfordian theory has been enthusiastically propagated by one of de Vere’s descendants, the Earl of Burford...who has successfully appealed, in particular, to the displaced snobbery of wealthy Texans.

The identity of these wealthy Texans would be a keen interest to the cash-strapped Oxfordian organizations in the United States and England.

Dobson disposes of the Baconian theory as the work of spiritualists and readers looking for “occult Neoplatonic allegory” or mathematical cyphers, while erroneously including Mark Twain with the Baconians. Max Beerbohm’s cartoon of “Shakespeare” slipping the manuscript of *Hamlet* to Francis Bacon gets a full page. The Marlovian theory is “picturesquely dotty.” The Rutland theory is “a minor sub-heresy.” And the “bizarre” Elizabeth theory is “one of the crowning glories of the Authorship Controversy.”

Readers who follow the cross-references to all six entries might well wonder why Dobson spends so much time and space on a subject he obviously disdains to address directly.

### Other “Companion” books

Shakespeare has many “companions” in modern-day publishing. There are three others worth mentioning here.

Appearing at the same time as the *Oxford Companion* is *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare* (2001), edited by Margreta de Grazia and none other than

Stanley Wells. Not a reference book or a book for browsing, their *Companion* presents 19 essays on topics of current interest in academia, not including the authorship controversy. The fourth since 1934 under slightly different titles, it is one of 53 in a series on various literary subjects from the publisher.

Wells did not contribute an essay, but de Grazia, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, notes in her essay that pupils in Stratford “would have learned to read and write (and even speak) not English, but Latin.” So how, the reader might ask, did the Stratford lad—even if he went to the school—shed his Warwickshire dialect and learn to read and write the sophisticated English of London used so masterfully in the poems and plays? De Grazia provides no answer.

Ernst Honigmann of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne supplies a standard biography of the Stratford man, although acknowledging that his life “includes many unsolved puzzles, explained differently by different biographers. My account will displease traditionalists on many points.” He then lists a dozen points, including his views that the Stratford man may well have been a secret Roman Catholic and that the first plays date to 1586 (when the Stratford man was a 22-year-old father of twins born the year before.)

*A Companion to Shakespeare* (1999), edited by David Scott Kasten of Columbia University, is another book of essays by academics, 29 in all. The biographical essay is by David Bevington of the University of Chicago, editor of the Harper Collins collected works.

To his credit, Bevington recognizes that many have seen a mystery in the biography, that is, “how a boy from a country town who never attended a university could have written all those amazing plays and poems.” To answer it, he relies on the Stratford man’s upbringing and grammar school education. He was “born into a prosperous family and had the advantage of excellent schooling,” even though the school records are missing and his father fell on hard times. Bevington sees him as “a decent wonderful human being,” admits that there are unfortunate gaps in his biography and ignores the difference between the Shakspeare and Shakespeare spellings in order to say that Shakespeare of Stratford was Shakespeare the actor and dramatist. Case closed.

The same conflation of Shakspeare and Shakespeare enables him to cite “the impressive number of testimonials to Shakespeare as man and writer.” Oxfordians contend that the testimonials were to Oxford writing under the pseudonym William Shakespeare. None of them identify Shakespeare as being from Stratford, as do three, and only three, non-literary records found in London.

As for the Oxfordian proposition, Bevington says, “[that] theory...must also struggle with the irrefutable fact that Oxford died in 1604 before the performance [emphasis added] of many of Shakespeare’s greatest plays.” The issue, of course, is when they were written, not when they were first performed. Posthumous performance or publication is not at all unusual for authors. Bevington put one past the unwary reader.

And then there’s *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare: An Introduction with Documents* (1996) by Russ McDonald of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, “with the advice from more than 130 scholars.” His *Companion* is valuable for its transcripts of scores of hard-to-find documents of Shakespeare’s time.

His section on the anti-Stratfordians repeats the same faulty arguments of excellent schooling and post-1604 plays. In one bizarre passage, he writes that Oxfordians contend that “all traces of aristocratic origins and connections were expunged from the plays and poems so as to maintain the fiction of humble authorship.” That is, of course, exactly the opposite of what Oxfordians argue. Much worse, the only “Oxfordian” document he reproduces is a ridiculous cipher code from a book by George Frisbee in 1931. No Oxfordian author has ever cited the book, much less presented it as evidence for Oxford.

While entertaining, *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* is superficial compared to *The Reader’s Encyclopedia of Shakespeare* (1966), which unfortunately is out of print and due for an update. One of the most valuable of desk reference books for researchers and writers, its editors were Oscar James Campbell and Edward G. Quinn.

Finally then—returning to the Dobson/Wells *Companion*—who was “the soldier who has killed his father?” The entry reads: “In *Richard Duke of York (3 Henry VI)* he laments his tragedy before King Henry, 2.5, followed by a second soldier who has killed his son.”



**An Anatomy of the Marprelate Controversy 1588-1596: Retracing Shakespeare's Identity and that of Martin Marprelate.** By Elizabeth Appleton, 472 pp. The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000 (*Renaissance Studies No. 5*). Regular List Price: US\$ 119.95; Discounted Web Price: US\$ 95.95)

By Roger Stritmatter

It would be easy to overlook the importance of Elizabeth Appleton's new book on the Marprelate controversy. It is not a glossy blockbuster for general readers. It will never be turned into a movie. It traverses a difficult and sometimes perilous terrain of interpretation which can no doubt strain the patience of an unmotivated reader. The subject itself, to many readers, may appear obscure, trivial, or even "academic."

And yet, *An Anatomy of the Marprelate Controversy* is a book of singular importance, perhaps the most important "Oxfordian" book to appear since Joe Sobran's *Alias Shakespeare*, although for very different reasons. To begin with, it is the first book ever published by an academic press which overtly endorses an Oxfordian perspective attributing the works of "Shakespeare" to Edward de Vere. In itself this is a gratifying sign of the book's significance and the author's accomplishment. In honor of the publication, moreover, Appleton has been awarded an honorary doctorate in history by Mellen University—another first for the Oxfordian movement and feather in the author's cap.

But the book's true virtue is to have cast a burning spotlight on one of the most significantly neglected areas of Elizabethan literary history known to this writer: the hitherto obscure identity of the flamboyant Anglican satirist "Pasquill Cavaliero of England," who published three short pamphlets in the religious controversy (c. 1589) known as the Marprelate controversy. It was this enigmatic writer—whom Ms. Appleton identifies as the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford—who seized the gauntlet thrown down by the elusive Puritan satirist, "Martin Marprelate," against the episcopacy of the Anglican reformed church in 1589, and answered Martin on behalf of the orthodox church.

The general outline of the controversy has been well understood by literary historians for many decades, but the identities of

the participants have remained shrouded in a historical fog until very recently. Incited by the 1587 publication of a lengthy anti-Puritan tome by Dean John Bridges of Salisbury, *A Defence of the Government Established in the Church of Englande for Ecclesiasticall Matters*, Puritan controversialists advocating Presbyterianism and other reforms which threatened the power of the crown to regulate the Church, began writing and publishing a series of inflammatory pamphlets. The collapse of the Span-

church"<sup>1</sup>—on Church apologists like Bridges. He was soon joined by "Martin Junior" and other imitators. In less than two years a series of six books appeared under the Marprelate imprimatur, all published from a renegade press the very existence of which violated the Draconian 1586 decree on the regulation of the printing industry in England.

The stir was huge. A whole nation was being held hostage by the entertaining but seditious prose of a radical reformer who first wanted to sack some of the leading Anglican prelates for immorality and profiteering and then institute a Presbyterian form of church government in which the common people elected their own church authorities.

The Anglican establishment was caught in a trap. For a Bishop to debate with a pseudonymous satirical rogue like Martin Marprelate<sup>2</sup> constituted an unacceptable loss of dignity. On the other hand, a failure to reply allowed Martin's scurrilous rumor-mongering and heretical theology pass unchallenged. The solution was to hire Thomas Nashe and some of his friends to rebut Martin with his own undignified rhetoric. The pamphlet war which ensued was bitter, sometimes verging on the apocalyptic: Martin's ecclesiastical enemies, who adopted colorful pseudonyms of their own—Cuthbert Curry-Knave, Marphorius, and Pasquill Cavaliero of England—threatened him with imminent death and dismemberment when the pursuivants finally caught up with him. These rambunctious civil servants threw Martin's satirical wit right back in his face.

### Pasquill enters the fray

In his first pamphlet (Figure 1) Pasquill promised that he had been "dub'd for his service at home... for the clean breaking of his staffe upon Martin's face" and predicted that Martin would find "no other refuge but to runne into a hole, and die as he lived, belching" (A2)<sup>3</sup>. The "war of words," as Ms. Appleton terms it, had been joined.

Elizabeth Appleton is a sharp-eyed reader of R.B. McKerrow's 1904 magnum opus of the *Collected Works of Thomas Nashe*. It was here that she spotted McKerrow's reprints of three little pamphlets, all published in 1589-90 under the enigmatic *nom de plume*, Pasquill

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Fig. 1. The title page of the first "Pasquill" pamphlet, by which the "war of words" (as Appleton terms it) was joined..

ish armada in 1588 further emboldened the domestic rebels, who took advantage of the hiatus in international tensions to renew their complaints of corruption among the prelates and advocacy of radical reform. A stream of pamphlets, many published from a secret, migratory press operated by the Welsh printer John Penry, poured forth from 1588-90.

The new breed of Puritan rhetoric cast aside the restrained erudition of an earlier generation of reform advocates like John Field and Thomas Wilcox, who in their 1572 *Admonition to the Parliament* had politely debated theology with Anglican divines. The most persistent and talented of these new controversialists published his work under the name "Martin Marprelate." Martin inaugurated a vigorous, sustained, satirical attack—including "threats and taunts against supporters of the English

*Marprelate review (cont'd from page 25)*

Cavaliero of England. Although McKerrow included these pamphlets<sup>4</sup>—purely on tradition—as pseudonymous works of Thomas Nashe, he also expressed a clear conviction that this traditional attribution was fatally flawed.

It is some measure of the strong conformist tendencies in Elizabethan literary studies that for a hundred years no enterprising graduate student could be induced to pick up the gauntlet McKerrow threw down by indicating that Nashe was not the true author of the Pasquill tracts. Although several Anglican writers opposed Martin, Pasquill was the most formidable and rhetorically effective. His prose is colorful, rhythmic, learned, iconoclastic, and entertaining. He is obviously an insider to the London theatrical scene, making many references to the fate of Martin Marprelate at the hands of the comedians. He is a habitu  of London Stone, Oxford's London residence a few doors from the Eastcheap Boar's Head Tavern of *Henry IV* fame, a world-traveler who takes regular jaunts overseas to France and Italy, and a court insider who has sat in the Star Chamber and boasts of his close relations with the Queen.

But who is he? The question should have been as important to English literary professionals as the identity of Martin. Why wasn't it? Pasquill's literary fingerprint—that of one of the anti-Puritan and theatre-loving “wolfish Earls” who through their patronage and authorship helped to create the Elizabethan theatre—made him a taboo subject for English literary studies, a discipline which has devoted many decades to preserving the literary secrets of the Elizabethan world from survey by independent scholars such as Ms. Appleton.

As an independent, adult scholar working outside an educational establishment which persists in promulgating the deception that there is no Shakespeare authorship question, Ms. Appleton of course had no such qualms. By the early 1970s she was hard at work analyzing the many reasons for attributing the Pasquill pamphlets to Edward de Vere, the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. The results of her research were self-published in a 1985 monograph, *Edward de Vere and the War of Words* (Elizabethan Press).

Appleton's new book, an expansion of her 1985 monograph, is the most comprehensive study of the attribution of the Pasquill pamphlets ever done. It seems

unlikely that her conclusions regarding the critical question of Pasquill's identity will be challenged by any reputable literary historian. As Father Francis Edwards writes in his introductory preface to the book, “the least sympathetic critic...can hardly deny that...Appleton has presented a strong case which cannot easily be answered and certainly not simply put out of court.”<sup>5</sup> This reviewer concurs with the distinguished historian from England. The evidence assembled here is simply too comprehen-

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sive—if sometimes confusingly knit together—to admit of successful challenge on the primary conclusion, identifying Edward de Vere with Pasquill<sup>6</sup>.

Moreover, forthcoming evidence—especially of a stylometric nature—will go far to confirm Ms. Appleton's inference that de Vere was the mind and pen behind “Pasquill” (a name which, incidentally, although of course Italian in origin, makes a stunning Anglo-French pun on the loss of public identity invoked in the adoption of the pseudonym: “ne pas quill”). The implications of this discovery cannot be underestimated. If Appleton is correct, we now have conclusive evidence that Edward de Vere, a mere four years before the first appearance of the name “Shakespeare” in print, was writing for the Anglican authorities under a popular *nom de plume*, in pamphlets which incidentally make copious reference to the London theatres as a

prominent locus of the religious dispute.

### **The Marprelate pamphlets and “Shakespeare”**

Beyond this impressive accomplishment of successfully identifying, after more than four hundred years, an enigmatic and important figure of literary controversy, Appleton's book brings forward into the spotlight a significant corollary. Although the Marprelate battle itself was short-lived, it had an extended afterlife in the ensuing pamphlet duel between Tom Nashe and Gabriel Harvey (1592-97) which continued long after Martin Marprelate and his “sons” had fallen silent. Specialists of the period are aware—though the vast majority of Shakespearean teachers and the general public interested in English literature may not be—that both the Marprelate war itself (1588-90), and its aftermath in the Harvey/Nashe literary duel, are important episodes in the early literary history of “Shakespeare”; many experts trace rhetorical elements of the Marprelate episode in plays such as *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Henry IV*; Martin himself gave his name to the Puritan hedge priest Sir Oliver Mar-Text in *As You Like It*; we first read of *Hamlet* in Nashe's 1589 preface to Green's *Menaphon*; Nashe's *Pierce Pennilesse* (1592)—in which he invented the character which Appleton and others<sup>6A</sup> have identified as a parody of Edward de Vere in his financial troubles—is probably the single most important surviving document on the theatrical history and culture of the early 1590s, giving, as it does, a sympathetic insider's view of what Nashe calls the “pollicie of Playes,”<sup>7</sup> as well as the only extended Elizabethan account of the staging of a play by Shakespeare (*I Henry VI*):

What if I prove plays to be no extreame; but a rare exercise of vertue? First, for the subject of them (for the most part) is borrowed out of our English Chronicles...How it would have ioyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to think that after he had lye two hundred years in his Tome, he should triumphe againe on the Stage, and have his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at severall times), who, in the Tragedian that represents this person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.<sup>8</sup>

Harvey, for his part, in his *Pierce's Supererogation* (1593), responds to Nashe's defense of playmaking with excessive complaints about being satirized in "pelting comedies" and warns citizens that they must "fea (i.e., payoff) Euphues<sup>9</sup>, for feare less he be moved, or some one of his apes hired, to make a play of you."

When, therefore, Roland McKerrow—long before Elizabeth Appleton assembled the abundance of new evidence presented for the first time in this book identifying Oxford with a host of sobriquets ("Pierce Pennilesse," the "Old Asse," Master Apis Lapis" and "Euphues" being only four of the most frequent and persuasive examples) used by both Nashe and Harvey—argues that the Earl of Oxford was the stalking horse in the Harvey-Nashe quarrel<sup>10</sup>, we must realize how fragile the orthodox consensus on the Shakespearean question really is, and how urgent the need for informed dialogue between scholars holding diverse views on the question. The predicate of such a dialogue, of course, is an end to the name-calling and argument by exclusionary definition—"scholars" are people who agree with "us," and everyone else *is not* "a scholar"—which has characterized the work of certain loud and aggressive partisans of the orthodox school holding forth on the Internet among other forums.

### Who was Martin Marprelate?

By no means does this imply that this reviewer endorses all the conclusions contained in Ms. Appleton's book or is entirely happy with all her modes of reasoning or the style of presentation offered in this book. It does not undermine the truly original and important character of her work on Pasquill to wish that Ms. Appleton had treated the identity of Martin Marprelate, which she believes to have been a pen name of Gabriel Harvey, in some other context.

This unfortunate corollary argument is susceptible of so many lines of doubt and disproof that it seems a shame to have jeopardized her valid insight into Oxford's central role as a figure in the Martinist controversy by including it in the same book.

For starters, Appleton seems to have overlooked the significance of Leland Carlson's impressive 1976 study of the Marprelate phenomenon, *Martin Marpre-*

*late, Gentleman: Master Job Throckmorton Laid Open in All His Colors*. Surprisingly, Francis Edward's introductory survey of the literature on Martin Marprelate also slights this important work, referring only to the earlier tradition of Donald J. McGinn and other scholars, who hypothesized that Martin was John Penry, the Welsh printer of many of the pamphlets. Penry was actually executed in 1593 as the ostensible author, but seems more likely to have been a convenient scapegoat than a real author.

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Although listed in her bibliography, Carlson's impressive case identifying Martin as the Puritan divine Job Throckmorton, who was arrested and questioned as a suspect in the case but never brought to trial for the offense, is not considered in any detail by Ms. Appleton. Amusingly, Appleton's bibliography (459) lists an incomplete title for Carlson's book, omitting Throckmorton's name, just as she has omitted the substance of Carlson's argument identifying Throckmorton as Marprelate. That is a pity. Carlson marshals an impressive circumstantial evidence in support of this theory, including—to this reviewer—a convincing stylistic comparison between Throckmorton and "Martin." A similar stylistic comparison of Harvey's prose with Martin's would demonstrate the superior robustness of Carlson's theory identifying Throckmorton as Martin. More to the point, however, Appleton's omission of the

Carlson argument does a disservice to her readers. Whether Carlson is right or wrong to identify Throckmorton as Marprelate, by omitting his arguments, Appleton fails to inform the reader of the leading alternative to her own theory. Ultimately this damages her credibility by creating the impression that she is unwilling to be candid about the limits of her own conclusions.

On the other hand, it is impossible to doubt that Gabriel Harvey was, as Appleton argues, in some way mixed up with the Marprelate affair. Both Nashe and "Pappe with a Hachet" (Lyly) attempted to embarrass Harvey, accusing him of being in league—or worse—with Martin. These accusations were surely, as Carlson infers, motivated by the desire to damage Harvey by implicating him in a capital crime.

But when Carlson characterizes Pappe's accusations as "spiteful" and "irresponsible"<sup>11</sup> he is taking sides before weighing the full evidence implicating Harvey and his brothers in the dispute. There was no shortage of acrimony on both sides in this literary war. To say that Harvey was involved, however, does not make him Martin. He seems rather to have been a somewhat awkward emissary and intermediary who had friends or associates on both sides of the quarrel. Compared to Leland Carlson's painstaking and refreshingly focused assemblage of evidence to support his theory identifying Throckmorton as Martin, Appleton's case for Harvey is weak and unconvincing.

Nor is this, unfortunately, the only doubtful conjecture contained in the book. Regrettably the reviewer must after some consideration indicate his doubt over Ms. Appleton's identification of the Earl of Oxford as the author of *The Trimming of Thomas Nashe* (1597), a book usually thought to be written by the Cambridge barber and satirist Richard Lichfield and which seems to have only the slightest stylistic affinity with Oxford's other prose compositions, including the Pasquill tracts.

Appleton's book does, however, underscore the urgent need for a systematic stylistic analysis of the writings of Nashe, Harvey, Oxford (prose), Pasquill and Martin. Oxford's literary fingerprints are all over the Pasquill pamphlets. Elizabeth Appleton, as the first scholar to have recognized the significance of this reality, deserves the fondest thanks from all students

*(Continued on page 36)*

*Paradigm Shift*

By Mark K. Anderson

# Ross's Supererogation

I recently interviewed a controversial scientist whose work in the fields of physics and neurology has stirred up a firestorm of debate—with staunch orthodox and heterodox champions, character assassinations and highbrow mudfights that would all be familiar stuff to Oxfordian eyes.

"I really enjoy it when people get hostile," the researcher said. "Because I'd much rather be criticized than ignored."

I am pleased to report that "The Potent Testimony of Gabriel Harvey," a column Roger Stritmatter and I adapted for the last issue of *Shakespeare Matters*, has certainly not been ignored. Two strongly worded critiques so far have come in—one from each side in the authorship debate. And after going through the objections raised, two facts become clear: A few important clarifications and emendations are in order, which I will cover in the following pages. More important, I've also learned that "The Potent Testimony" suffers from one major oversight: Our case is actually considerably stronger than we first appreciated. At the conclusion of this article, I'll bring forward new evidence that buttresses our essential claim that the Cambridge scholar Gabriel Harvey effectively cited Edward de Vere in 1593 as the author of the forthcoming Shakespeare poem *Venus and Adonis*.

The most indignant critique of "The Potent Testimony" has hailed from the Internet address of Terry Ross, co-editor of the Shakespeare Authorship web page ([www.ShakespeareAuthorship.com](http://www.ShakespeareAuthorship.com)) with fellow Stratford advocate David Kathman. Ross's response appeared on the Usenet forum **humanities.literature.authors.Shakespeare**. A link to the critique is posted in the "Virtual Classroom" section of the Shakespeare Fellowship website.

Ross's objections—filled with those blustery sighs of disbelief that will be familiar to anyone who's read his work before—come in three flavors this time:

1) Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford has nothing to do with the Elizabethan *nom de guerre* "Pierce Penniless"

2) The Cambridge University academic Gabriel Harvey's 1593 statement

about "Pierce Penniless" and the "garden of Adonis" has nothing to do with Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593)

3) Harvey's subsequent 1593 statement about "Venus" and the "harness of the bravest Minerva" also has nothing to do with Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593).

The effect of Ross's essay is almost exclusively negative. He does not provide a coherent alternate reading of Harvey's words. Instead, one is left with a series of pronouncements about what Harvey did *not* say. Indeed, as might be expected, Ross attacked every point in the previous column, which argued that in the 1593 pamphlet *Pierces Supererogation or A New Praise of the Old Ass*, Harvey deftly announced the print debut of Edward de Vere's forthcoming poem *Venus and Adonis*, under a pen-name given by that "spears-shaking" goddess Minerva. Alas, as Ross put it, the column was "Utterly valueless as literary history or literary criticism."

"But hey," he then adds, "Maybe that's just me."

Before delving into Ross's three objections in detail, it's worth revisiting the context in which Gabriel Harvey's words appeared. At the time, Harvey was enmeshed in a heated and often obscure literary dispute—not unlike the present-day authorship controversy—with his witty rival Thomas Nashe. The two argued in print over topics that centuries of scholarship still haven't fully understood. However, it is known that the whole affair ultimately came to a halt in 1599 when the Archbishop of Canterbury ordered all the copies of books by both authors to be confiscated and destroyed. In 1910 Ronald B. McKerrow came closest to an explanation of these events in proposing that the scandalous quarrel "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."

To a first approximation, Nashe and Harvey were foot-soldiers in a longstanding feud between two rival factions at court. On one side were Edward de Vere and his merry pranksters—including Nashe and the play-

wright John Lyly—and on the other were the surviving strands of the Sidney-Leicester faction (both Sir Philip Sidney and his uncle the Earl of Leicester had died by 1593), with their literary allies, including Edmund Spenser and Harvey.

One of Nashe's volleys in this dispute was his 1592 pamphlet *Strange News*, which he dedicated to de Vere under the sobriquet "Master *Apis Lapis*." Charles Wisner Barrell's persuasive analysis of this dedication, which originally appeared in the October 1944 *Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly*, is now posted in the Shakespeare Fellowship web site. As Barrell was the first to emphasize, Nashe's dedication praises *Apis Lapis* as a brilliant and prolific author—and refers to him under the loaded nickname "Gentle Master William."

It is unfortunate that Barrell's discovery has remained obscure even within Oxfordian circles. It is, I would argue, one of the most important articles in the history of the authorship controversy. Those not already familiar with the essay are encouraged to surf over to the "State of the Debate" page on the Virtual Classroom section of [ShakespeareFellowship.org](http://ShakespeareFellowship.org).

Barrell's opus is also the starting point for the "Pierce Penniless" argument. For it establishes, without any additional argument, that Ross is simply wrong on his first point: "Harvey's references to 'Pierce Penniless' ... are ALWAYS references to Thomas Nashe and are NEVER to Oxford," Ross asserts [Ross's caps]. Ross gives no evidence for this *ex cathedra* statement, and one can readily appreciate why. The position is untenable. While it is certainly true that sometimes Harvey refers to Nashe as "Pierce Penniless," it is certainly not true that he only uses the name to refer to Nashe.

As Barrell first argued, and as Stritmatter and I pointed out in the last issue of *Shakespeare Matters*, de Vere reneged on a deal he had apparently made with Nashe and the poet Thomas Churchyard to pay their rent. Harvey chides Nashe over this fiasco—for which Nashe ended up in debtor's prison—and in the same passage speaks of the mystery man who got Nashe into trouble (i.e. de Vere), using the nickname "Penniless." (Of course, as Ross points out, Harvey elsewhere refers to de Vere by name.

But this point is irrelevant to our argument. Harvey also refers to Nashe by name and by multiple nicknames.)

Shakespeare Fellowship member Elizabeth Appleton van Dreunen continues the “Pierce Penniless” = Edward de Vere argument at length in her book *An Anatomy of the Marprelate Controversy*. (See page 25 for a full review.) She points out, for instance, that in the pamphlet *Pierce Penniless*, Pierce is someone other than Nashe himself. He is an older and more experienced writer and is also Nashe’s patron. Van Dreunen also notes that Harvey describes “Pierce” with the same words (the alpha of alphas, the “AperseA”) that he used to portray de Vere in 1580 as a Tuscanish noble. Those still doubtful that Harvey and Nashe alluded to de Vere as “Pierce Penniless” should seek out van Dreunen’s book.

One recurrent theme in Harvey’s commentary on Pierce Penniless is that Penniless is an author with a huge store of unpublished materials being held “in abeyance” by unnamed institutional forces: “[I]n honor of the appropriate virtues of *Pierce* himself,” Harvey writes. “... His other miraculous perfections are still in abeyance, and his monstrous excellencies in the predicament of Chimera.” The Chimera was a fabled monster with a goat’s body, dragon’s tail and a lion’s head which, according to *Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, “is used in English for an illusory fancy, a wild, incongruous scheme.” In other words, Harvey says that Penniless *himself*—a distinction that suggests that this is the real of the two Pennilesses, i.e. de Vere—has some “miraculous” works that are nevertheless stuck in a strange intermediate state where the head and the body are two different entities. This, to my inferior eyes, looks suspiciously like Harvey is pointing to a disguised author hiding behind a frontman.

Of course, one must also keep in mind that sometimes when Harvey writes of “Pierce Penniless,” he means Nashe. Yet even some third-party commentators on the Nashe-Harvey battles understood that “Pierce” was at times a sobriquet for de Vere. Consider Thomas Dekker’s belated response to *Pierce Penniless*—his 1606 tract *News from Hell*—which addresses the ghost of the late Nashe as “thou sometimes

secretary to ‘Pierce Penniless’ and master of his requests.” Dekker obviously isn’t calling Nashe a “sometimes secretary” to himself. So we find again that “Penniless” must be someone other than Nashe—someone like that mysterious penniless Earl who wouldn’t pay Nashe’s 1591 rent.

This brings us to the second point:

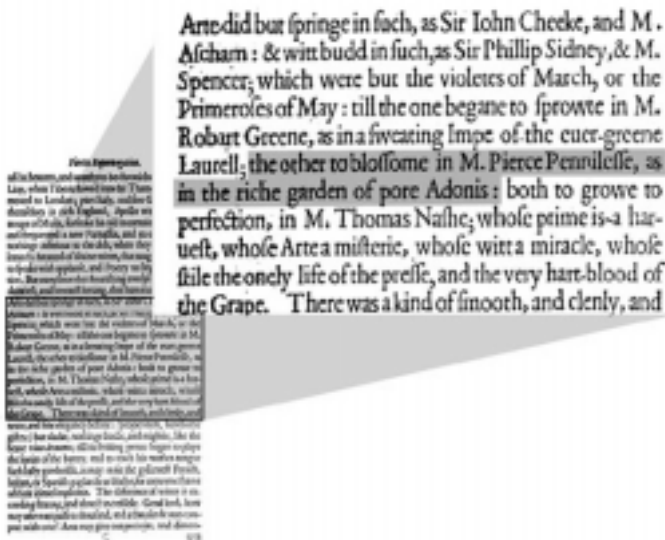


Fig. 1. Gabriel Harvey’s 1593 testimony over Edward de Vere, a.k.a. “Pierce Pennillessse.”

Gabriel Harvey’s statement in April of 1593 that “M. Pierce Penniless” is an author whose wit has lately “blossomed... in the rich garden of poor Adonis.” (See Figure 1) As asserted in the previous column, this is a surprisingly explicit piece of testimony, because Harvey also names Nashe in the same sentence—thereby excluding him as the “Penniless” of this passage. And what, less than a fortnight after the registration of Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*, could Harvey possibly have meant when he wrote of “Pierce Penniless ... in the rich garden of poor Adonis”?

According to Ross, it’s not what you think: “Harvey’s point thus is NOT that Pierce Penniless intends to write (or has written) a riff ABOUT the Garden of Adonis, but that [Pierce’s] magnificent wit blossomed as rapidly as flowers bloom in that garden. ... [Emphasis in original]

“Not to spoil the joke for readers more astute than Stritmatter and Anderson, but Harvey really means to mock by overpraising,” Ross continues. “... Perhaps the irony of Harvey’s mock encomium was too subtle for Stritmatter and Anderson, so let me plainly state that Harvey really didn’t think that Nashe WAS superior in art and wit to

Cheke and Ascham, to Sidney and Spenser.”

Ken Kaplan, a patient Oxfordian advocate on the Usenet Shakespeare forum, brought the first “Pierce” column to the group’s attention. And that, apparently, was his first mistake:

“One of the difficulties in helping someone like Ken Kaplan with the explication of texts written in the 1590s is that Ken does not know a great deal of Elizabethan literature,” Ross writes. “I do not mean this as an attack on Ken; it’s just that if he were more widely read in the literature of the period, he might be less impressed by Oxfordian essays. I’ve read a fair amount of the literature of the period, and I cannot read the phrase ‘garden of Adonis’ without being reminded of Spenser’s Garden (or Gardens) of Adonis in book 3 of *The Faerie Queene*.”

Funny. I’m actually more reminded of Mark Twain’s Schoolmaster Dobbins in chapter 21 of *Tom Sawyer*: “Vacation was approaching. The schoolmaster, always severe, grew severer and more exacting than ever, for he wanted the school to make a good showing on ‘Examination’ day.

His rod and his ferule were seldom idle now—at least among the smaller pupils. ... As the great day approached, all the tyranny that was in him came to the surface; he seemed to take a vindictive pleasure in punishing the least shortcomings.”

But hey, maybe that’s just me.

Certainly, no one would deny the importance of Spenser’s discussion of the “gardens of Adonis” in his *Fairy Queene* (1590, 1596). But Spenser is hardly the only author of the period who cites this literary idiom. More important, in all his huffing, Ross obscures the basic point that his interpretation of Harvey’s words, “Pierce Penniless... in the rich garden of poor Adonis,” makes little sense. Ross would have us believe that “M. Pierce Penniless” is either Nashe’s 1592 pamphlet *Pierce Penniless*, or it’s a stand-in for Nashe himself. Yet the parallelism of the passage suggests that each entry in the list is an author, not six authors and one pamphlet written by an author who has already been named. And the logic of the passage suggests that each entry in the list is a unique individual, not five authors and one author under two different names.

(Continued on page 30)

*Supererogation* (continued from page 29)

Our reading proposed in the previous column—that “M. Pierce Penniless” is Edward de Vere and the “rich garden of poor Adonis” refers to the Shakespeare poem *Venus and Adonis*—is still the most plausible. Why would Harvey say that Nashe’s work has “grown to perfection” in Nashe’s own work? On the contrary, Harvey labors to maintain the parallel development of the two branches of this passage to make it clear that Penniless is not, here, the same person as Nashe. And yet we’re instructed to pick the interpretation that scuttles the parallelism. Again, unless one’s dogma prohibits such a reading, the simplest explanation in this case is clearly the one that is also anathema to the Stratfordian faith. No wonder Ross has come so unglued.

Yet I don’t dispute all of Ross’s arguments. I certainly agree with his contention that Harvey’s writing about the “garden ... of Adonis” invokes an idiomatic meaning. *Brewers Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, defines Adonis’s garden as “a worthless toy” or “very perishable goods” and cites passages from Spenser and Milton as examples. In other words, Adonis’ garden is a mythological place where all things are ephemeral and transitory.

*Venus and Adonis* was a popular, stylized text which Harvey himself would later mention in a handwritten marginal note to one of the books from his library. In this note, found in Harvey’s 1598 edition of the works of Chaucer, Harvey says that *Venus and Adonis* appeals to “the younger sort”—as contrasted to graver works such as *Lucrece* and *Hamlet*, which Harvey says by way of contrast are suited to “please the wiser sort.” In addition to providing a perspective on contemporary Elizabethan views about *Venus and Adonis*, Harvey’s quote also aptly illustrates the idiomatic meaning of “garden of Adonis.” On one hand we have a bunch of kids who adore *Venus and Adonis*, on the other we have the “wiser sort” who apparently don’t.

Ross argues as follows: Because there’s no “garden of Adonis” explicitly mentioned in *Venus and Adonis*, then Harvey couldn’t possibly have been referring to the Shakespeare poem when he wrote “Pierce Penniless... in the rich garden of poor Adonis.” However, as seen above, the idiomatic meaning of “garden of Adonis” suits Harvey’s purposes perfectly. By saying that Pierce’s wit has blossomed “in the rich garden of poor Adonis,” Harvey is taking a sarcastic jab at what he evidently sees as a frivolous exercise of Pierce’s poetic talents.

In April of 1593, Pierce’s wit has newly “blossomed” in an ephemeral work where Pierce’s incredible mind is only being used—in the words of Harvey’s more explicit description of *Venus and Adonis*—to “please the younger sort.”

This statement of Harvey’s is an important new piece of evidence for Oxfordians: It provides an immediate rejoinder to the objection that no one ever just came right out and said that Edward de Vere wrote Shakespeare. Here, thanks to Harvey and

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his testimony concerning “Pierce Penniless,” we can see that, in fact, someone did.

There’s plenty more where that came from, too. Van Dreunen’s book takes a fine first step toward piecing together the entire record of the Nashe-Harvey pamphlet war—a literary dispute in which the Earl of Oxford figures prominently.

Having said that, there’s a trickier later part to our previous column that Ross attacks that also must be addressed.

In our analysis, Stritmatter and I cited the following later passage from *Pierce’s Supererogation*: “The stay of publication resteth only at my instance: Who can conceive small hope of any possible account 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 of the bravest Minerva.” In short, we argued that the “fair body of the sweetest Venus” in this passage was a reference *Venus and Adonis* and the “complete harness of the bravest Minerva” was the pen-name “Shakespeare,” given by the commonplace affiliation between Minerva and the shaking of spears.

Here, all kidding aside, I would like to thank Ross for pointing out—in his own

vindictive way—an important ambiguity to this Harvey quote. To wit, the passage manifestly connects with other passages in *Pierce’s Supererogation* in which Harvey appeals to a patroness whose anticipated works he expects to redeem him from his critics. Ross aptly cites Nashe’s 1596 pamphlet *Have With You to Saffron Walden*, where Nashe makes it clear that Harvey’s “Venus” is his patroness. Although the identity of the patroness has never been definitively established, Alexander Grosart ventures a plausible educated guess that she was, in fact, Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke.

Both Stritmatter and I agree with Ross that this larger context qualifies our reading and suggests a more innocent surface interpretation. But, as with Ross’s claim that Penniless “ALWAYS” means Nashe, one needn’t be dogmatic about a single interpretation here either. Both readings work, and it’s hardly a stretch to suggest that Harvey meant it that way.

In any event, the point is secondary. The “Venus/bravest Minerva” passage was only offered up as independent confirmation of our primary thesis. Although we didn’t fully appreciate it when we wrote “The Potent Testimony,” there’s actually more confirmatory evidence of our thesis than what we’ve cited above. In one passage we present here for the first time, Harvey parodies the epistle dedication to Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*—removing any potential objections that Harvey was unaware of the yet-unpublished Shakespeare poem when he wrote *Pierce’s Supererogation*. In another passage, Harvey alludes to an emerging authorship controversy in which he could unambiguously “dismask” a well-to-do actor—but he declines to do so to appease those in power with whom he wants to remain on good terms.

As he concludes *Pierce’s Supererogation*, Harvey signs off with a riff that jokes on the epistle dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. Here’s the relevant passage from Shakespeare: “[I]f your honor seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have honored you with some graver labor.”

Here are the words with which Harvey concludes *Pierce’s Supererogation*:

And so for this present, I surcease to trouble your gentle courtesies: of whose patience I have ... in every part simply, in the whole tediously presumed under correc-

tion. I write only at idle hours that I dedicate only to *Idle Hours* [his emphasis]: or would not have made so unreasonably bold in no need fuller discourse than *The Praise or Supererogation of an Ass*.

Notice here that Harvey not only emphasizes and repeats the phrase “idle hours,” but he also does it in the larger context of a mock dedication. So much for the fallback position that Harvey knew nothing about Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* when he wrote *Pierce’s Supererogation*.

One recurrent theme in Harvey’s writing is that he is privy to some of the greatest secrets of the age, but that for the sake of discretion he will not commit this knowledge to print. In *Four Letters* he boasts of noble authors whom he cannot dare to name in print: “I dare not name the Honorabler Sons & Noble Daughters of the sweetest, & divinest Muses, that ever sang in English, or other language: for fear of suspicion of that, which I abhor.” The thing Harvey abhorred, ironically, is the vice for which he became famous around the Privy Council: indiscretion.

In *Pierce’s Supererogation*, Harvey boasts that, if he chose to, he could state things much more plainly and there would be no mistaking his inside knowledge of great affairs. In fact, in one astounding passage Harvey threatens to “dismask” a “rich mummer.” And as the OED tells us (definition 2), a “mummer” is “an actor in a dumb show.”

Furthermore, Harvey boasts that if he did unmask this well-off player, it would make his book the “vendablest book in London” and transform the registrant of the book into “one of the famousest authors in England.” (Might this in fact be what Harvey really meant when he promised the “supererogation” of “Pierce Penniless”?) Harvey concludes that the man who keeps secrets also keeps powerful friends, and this to him was evidently reason enough to say nothing more explicit:

Here’s the stunning passage in Harvey’s own words (and with his emphasis):

Pap-hatchet talketh of publishing a *hundred merry tales* of certain poor Martinists; but I could here dismask such a rich mummer and record such a *hundred wise tales* of memorable note with such a smart moral as would undoubtedly make this pamphlet the vendablest book in London and the register one of the famousest authors in England. But I am none of those that utter all their learning at once.

Translation: Just like John Lyly (who took the nickname “Pap-Hatchet” in the Martin Marprelate quarrel) threatened to unmask Martin Marprelate, I could here unmask a rich actor—and in doing so, I could make this book the best-selling book in all of London and make yours truly the most famous author in all of England. But I won’t do that.

The word “rich” is particularly revealing here. Recall that by 1592, we find the Stratford denizen William Shakspeare in

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London doling out a £7 loan. The fact that he had ready cash on hand representing more than a third of a typical year’s wages for an actor suggests that while he may not yet be lord of New Place, the epithet is certainly appropriate. He may not have been a rich man in 1593, but he was a rich mummer.

So here, as Ross does in the end, is the rub: If one stipulates that Harvey does not mean Edward de Vere when he writes of “Pierce Penniless ... in the rich garden of poor Adonis” in 1593, alternative plausible explanations need to be advanced for the passage in question in addition to the following other passages:

- Dekker’s assertion that Nashe was “sometimes secretary” to Pierce Penniless
- Harvey’s assertion that “Pierce” has “miraculous perfections... in abeyance.” And those “perfections” are in the “predicament of Chimera.”
- Harvey’s ending *Pierce’s Supererogation* with a spoof of the epistle dedication to *Venus and Adonis*
- Harvey’s astonishing statement that he could “dismask... a rich mummer”

and in so doing, his book would become “the vendablest book in London.”

Despite Harvey’s best efforts to button his own lips, he still ended his literary career in disgrace and disrepute. And that, one suspects, was in no small part due to his own inability to keep a secret. In 1599, the Archbishop of Canterbury and others issued a decree stating, in part, that “All Nashe’s books and Dr. Harvey’s books be taken wheresoever they may be found and that none of their books be ever printed hereafter.” All copies of the Nashe and Harvey books which could be confiscated by authorities were burned. Nashe died within two years of this decree. Before dying, he managed to publish his *Summers Last Will and Testament* (written c. 1592), a play which features an obvious cameo of appearance of the “penilless” de Vere as the character “Ver.” Harvey lived another thirty-two years, dying an old man in 1631. But, during this long dry season, he never published another book.

One is, of course, free to continue reading the above “Pierce Penniless” revelations as if Harvey were writing all along about his powerless adversary Thomas Nashe and his romantic book about a wholly imaginary bankrupt nobleman who makes a supplication to the devil to help him survive. Such a reading is consistent with the premises on which orthodox Bardolatry depends to perpetuate itself. In fact, Nashe at times even tries to obfuscate the record and encourage the misinterpretation of Harvey’s words so that his “sometimes” boss de Vere can be kept out of the fray. But the Archbishop of Canterbury and the privy council apparently saw through the ruse. And so should 21<sup>st</sup> century readers: Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe spilled the beans on the secret life and identity of a powerful nobleman, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

For this, Harvey and Nashe were punished by an Elizabethan state dedicated to preserving the public fiction of Shakespearean authorship. But, by the same token, they also become our two most compelling witnesses to the truth.

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(Roger Stritmatter contributed to this article).

*(Because of space limitations in this issue of Shakespeare Matters, we cannot provide the footnotes that go with this article. The entire article, with footnotes, is available to readers in the Virtual Classroom on The Shakespeare Fellowship website at: [www.shakespearefellowship.org](http://www.shakespearefellowship.org))*

*A Year in the Life***1564: The education of young Shakespeare**

By Hank Whittemore

**F**ourteen-year-old Edward de Vere was on the 1564 royal summer progress when Elizabeth I of England paid her historic visit to Cambridge University for five thrilling days and nights that August. Chancellor William Cecil was in charge while his arch political enemy, High Steward Robert Dudley, acted as master of ceremonies; but then a single, unplanned event may have made a lasting impression upon young Oxford, helping to set his course toward becoming a dramatist with Her Majesty in mind as his most immediate audience. The episode also may have planted the seed for the play-within-the-play of Hamlet, by which the Prince intends to “catch the conscience of the King.”

Elizabeth was set to leave Cambridge on Thursday, Aug. 10, 1564, for 10 miles of travel to the home of Sir Henry Cromwell at Hinchinbrook Priory, where she would spend the night. Oxford was still on the progress and surely witnessed what happened next, as described by Spanish ambassador Guzman de Silva, who wrote:

When the Queen was at Cambridge they represented comedies and held scientific disputations, and an argument on religion in which the man who defended Catholicism was attacked by those who presided, in order to avoid having to give him the prize. The Queen made a speech praising the acts and exercises, and they wished to give her another representation, which she refused in order to be no longer delayed. Those who were so anxious for her to hear it followed her to her first stopping-place, and so importuned her that at last she consented.

Having arrived at Hinchinbrook that evening, the Queen and her Court gathered by torchlight to attend the student production – a distasteful burlesque intended to mock Catholic zealots imprisoned in the Tower. These included Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, known as “Bloody Bonner” for burning Protestants in Mary Tudor’s reign, and Bishop Stephen Gardiner of Winchester, who had urged that Princess Elizabeth’s head be cut off. The current University atmosphere was charged with the rapidly developing Protestant radicalism known as the Puritan movement, but

the Queen and Secretary Cecil were ending hostilities with France while trying to maintain good relations with Catholic Spain, so Elizabeth was hardly in a mood for anti-Papal displays that surely would be reported back to Spain by de Silva, who did just that:

The actors came in dressed as some of the imprisoned Bishops. First came the Bishop of London carrying a lamb in his hands as if he were eating it as he walked along, and then others with devices, one being in the figure of a dog with the Host in his mouth.

Relying on other witnesses as well, the ambassador added:

The Queen was so angry that she at once entered her chamber using strong language; and the men who held the torches, it being night, left them in the dark, and so ended the thoughtless and scandalous representations.

We might imagine how this scene struck young Oxford. Here was vivid proof that a dramatic representation could directly alter the emotions of the monarch. Here was spontaneous evidence of the power of a play to affect Elizabeth’s attitude and perhaps even her decisions. And here, too, was how an unwise point of view depicted on stage to such an extreme could rouse the audience into a condemnation of it. In this case the burlesque backfired upon the students, undoubtedly moving the Queen toward more sympathy for Catholics and making her even less happy with Puritans.

**A remembrance of things past?**

Did Edward de Vere recall this event when he set the “Mousetrap” scene of Hamlet at night with the King’s guard “carrying torches”? When Elizabeth rose to rush off, did Cecil call to stop the play as Polonius does? Did the Queen call for light as Claudius does? Elizabeth swept away using “strong language” as the torchbearers followed, leaving all “in the dark,” and the author of Hamlet would write:

Ophelia: The King rises.

Hamlet: What, frightened with false fire?

Gertrude: How fares my lord?

Polonius: Give o’er the play!

King: Give me some light! Away!

All: Lights, lights, lights!

Young Oxford was already a well-tutored scholar whose Renaissance outlook had drawn him to literature and history among a myriad of fields. At this time the first four books of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* were being translated under the same roof where he resided at Cecil House; and this great source of Shakespeare’s work would be attributed to his uncle, Arthur Golding, who in May had dedicated *Th’Abridgement of the histories of Trogus Pompeius* to his nephew by declaring:

It is not unknown to others, and I have had experience thereof myself, how earnest a desire your honour hath naturally grafted in you to read, peruse, and communicate with others as well as the histories of ancient times, and things done long ago, as also the present estate of things in our days, and that not without a certain pregnancy of wit and ripeness of understanding.

Elizabeth, 31, displayed her own Renaissance spirit and love for learning when she and her retinue entered Cambridge that summer amid trumpets and fanfare. “The days of her abode were passed in scholastic exercises of philosophy, history, and divinity,” Nichols reports, adding she spent three of the five nights feasting on “comedies and tragedies.” The Chapel of King’s College had been transformed into a “great stage” covering “the breadth of the church from the one side unto the other,” with a place for Elizabeth at the far end. Special platforms had been built so members of her official party could stand; and the first performance was on Sunday night:

When all things were ready for the players, the Lord Chamberlain with Mr. Secretary came in, bringing a Multitude of the Guard with them, having every man in his hand a Torch Staff for the Lights of the Play (for no other lights was occupied) and the Guards stood upon the Ground, by the stage sides, holding their lights.



This was a Plautus comedy, the *Aulularia*, lasting from nine to midnight. On Monday evening the Queen arrived for a tragedy of *Dido* by Edward Haliwell, a former College fellow; and this time Cecil and Dudley offered to “hold both books on the scaffold themselves” during the performance. These “books” contained the play’s text and were passed among the spectators, a practice noted in *The Spanish Tragedy*:

But, good my Lord, let me entreat your  
grace  
To give the King the copy of the play:  
This is the argument of what we show.

On Tuesday night the Cambridge actors put on *Ezechia*, a tragedy by Nicholas Udall, author of *Ralph Roister Doister*, who had died in 1556. During Wednesday the Queen “rode through the town and viewed the Colleges,” Nichols writes, and “made within St. Mary’s Church a notable Oration in Latin, in the presence of the whole University, to the Students’ great comfort,” but that night she was too exhausted to attend the fourth play, *Ajax Flagllifer* by Sophocles. Then at seven o’clock on the morning of her departure, “certain Noblemen were admitted to the degree of Masters of Artes ... in her Grace’s lodging,” among them:

Robertus Dudley (1532-1588), the much-detested favorite of Elizabeth, who will create him Earl of Leicester next month, even as he styles himself a Puritan and schemes to be king.

Henricus Carie, Lord Hundson (1524-1596), officially Elizabeth’s cousin but more likely her half-brother, who will be patron of Shakespeare’s company, the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, in 1594.

Edwardus Vere, Comes Oxoniae (1550-1604), the poet-dramatist to become “Shakespeare” in 1593 while dedicating his future works to Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, last of the royal wards, who will help lead the Essex Rebellion of February 8, 1601, against Robert Cecil.

Edwardus Manners, Comes Rutlandiae (1549-1587), a fellow royal ward with Oxford.

Gulielmus Cecil (1520-1598) who will become Lord Burghley and Oxford’s father-in-law in 1571, as well as the mastermind of the Protestant reformation until his death.

M. (Thomas) Heneage (1532-1595), to become Treasurer of the Chamber in charge of paying Burbage, Shakespeare and Kemp for the Lord Chamberlain’s performances at Court in December 1594, several months after becoming second husband to the Countess of Southampton.

### A new play at court

After Dudley was made Leicester on Sept. 29, 1564, a new play called *Damon and Pithias* was rehearsed for university students and presented at Court that Christmas. This self-styled “tragical comedy” (coining the term) would be attributed to Richard Edwards, Master of the Children of the Chapel, the boy company that performed it; but future scholarship may well confirm that the teenage Edward de Vere

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\*\*\*\*\*

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Edward de Vere  
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was the author. If so, he may have been taking deadly aim at Leicester for trying to gain the Queen’s trust in order to serve his own ends:

I brought up in learning, but he is a very dolt  
As touching good letters; but otherwise  
such a crafty knave,  
If you seek a whole region his like you  
cannot have;  
A villain for his life, a varlet dyed in grain...

(Hamlet will wish he had “fatted all the

region kites with this slave’s offal,” adding about Claudius, “Bloody, bawdy villain!”)

A flattering parasite; a sycophant also;  
A common accuser of men; to the good an  
open foe...  
He spareth no man’s life to get the king’s  
favor...

“We talk of Dionysius’ court, we mean no court but that!” the chorus declared in the prologue of *Damon and Pithias*, offering a foretaste of Shakespeare’s habit of using foreign settings as allegorical renderings of the English court. In this early instance the dramatist wiped away all pretense, however, by having the chorus at the end turn from King Dionysius and sing directly to Regina herself:

The strongest guard that kings can have  
Are constant friends their state to save.  
True friends are constant both in word and  
deed...  
True friends talk truly, they gloze for no  
gain;  
When treasure consumeth, true friends  
will remain;  
True friends for their true Prince refuseth  
not their death.  
The Lord grant her such friends, most  
noble Queen Elizabeth!

Back in August, the fourteen year-old nobleman whose earldom motto was “Nothing Truer Than Truth” had witnessed the power of words spoken from the stage to affect his sovereign. Now, five months later, was this play at Court during Christmas 1564 from the pen of Edward de Vere? If so, he was putting into action what he had just seen and learned; and in that case, the young Shakespeare was already setting forth to catch the conscience of the Queen.

### Sources:

Boas, Frederick. *University Drama in the Tudor Age*, 1914; chap. 5, appendix 3  
Nichols, John. *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 1823  
Ward, B. M. *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, 1928  
Jones, Richard, printer. *Damon and Pythias*, 1571. (Transcript by Barboura Flues)  
*The Spanish Tragedy* (II, iii; 5-7)  
*Hamlet*, mousetrap scene (III, ii, 277-281); soliloquy, (II, ii, 586-588)

*In the next issue— “1580: Shakespeare and the invention of the English novel.”*

*Confidential Video Bard**As You Like It: 1936, 1978, 1983*

By Chuck Berney

In 1896 William Gilbert was working on the libretto of his last collaboration with Arthur Sullivan, *The Grand Duke*, a comic opera set in the fictional German duchy of Hesse-Halbfennig. One of the characters is Julia Jellicoe, an English actress. Gilbert wanted her accent to contrast with the speech of the inhabitants of “Hesse-Halbfennig,” so in his topsy-turvy way he gave the role to Ilka von Palmay, a Hungarian actress with a strong German accent (the rest of the cast, of course, spoke impeccable English). The 1936 film version of *As You Like It* is reminiscent of *The Grand Duke* in that the lead role is played by an actress with a German accent while the rest of the cast speaks flawless English, although in this case there is no explanation for the discrepancy (however, one character comments on it: in Scene 3.2, Orlando says to Rosalind “Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling”).

The actress playing Rosalind is Elisabeth Bergner, whose fame was so great in 1936 that her name came before the title; today she comes across as dime-store Dietrich. The decision to cast her is less puzzling when you learn that the picture was produced by Paul Czinner, an Austrian director who happened to be her husband. While one may fault his judgment in selecting a female lead, his production team is amazing: the adaptation was by J. M. Barrie (*Peter Pan*), the music was by William Walton (who later composed an opera based on *Troilus and Cressida*) and the editor was David Lean, who went on to direct *Bridge on the River Kwai*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, and *Dr. Zhivago*.

Orlando is played by Laurence Olivier, then 29 and already a veteran, having done 10 previous films (his next film was to be *Fire Over England*, a tale of the Spanish Armada in which he played opposite his future wife, Vivien Leigh). This was his first Shakespearean film, and with his hooded eyes and black hair he gives a vaguely sinister impression, evoking a young version of his Richard III. In his bout with

Charles the Wrestler (Lionel Braham, 58 years old, with the rippling physique of the Pillsbury Doughboy), Charles is definitely the underdog.

It is axiomatic among cinema buffs that

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**“When several  
video versions of  
a Shakespeare  
comedy are  
available, the most  
entertaining ver-  
sion will be a  
stage production.”**

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the “look” of a historical film is determined more by the period in which it was made than by the period in which it is supposedly set. That is definitely the case where whipped-cream castles could have been left over from the 1935 *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Touchstone’s costume again reminds us of Gilbert & Sullivan—he looks like he’s straight from a D’Oyly Carte production of *Yeomen of the Guard*. Fashion note for *Thomas of Woodstock* fans: the fop Le Beau is wearing “Polonian shoes with peaks a hand full long, tied to the knees with chains...” so that “the chain doth, as it were, so toefify the knee and so kneefify the toe that between both it makes a most methodical coherence, or coherent method.” (*Woodstock* 2.3; 3.2)

The second half of the film is hard to enjoy, partly because of the poor quality of the print and partly because Bergner is trying too hard to pour on the star power. There’s no attempt whatever to make her

disguise credible—she’s still in full glamour make-up—lipstick, eye shadow, rouge—the whole nine yards. Rather than a Ganymede, she comes across as a Teutonic Ally McBeal on speed. Her self-involved performance doesn’t give Olivier anything to act against, so he mostly sits around looking moody. The only enjoyable scene in the second half comes from a surprising source—William the yokel. As was argued convincingly by Alex McNeil at the 1999 SOS conference, the character is Oxford’s stand-in for Shaksper of Stratford. In this production he’s played by Peter Bull, later to gain cinematic immortality as Alexi, the stolid Russian ambassador in Kubrick’s *Doctor Strangelove*. His bland, rustic exterior seems to be hiding a shrewd animal cunning, which makes me think that perhaps this talented actor came close to the historical truth.

The BBC Shakespeare videos made from 1978 through 1980 all open with an introduction showing travelogue shots of Windsor Castle, Venice, Stratford-on-Avon (with the bizarre, spidery signature of its favorite son at the bottom of the frame), the Parthenon, and the Tower of London, all accompanied by a lackluster fanfare attributed to the aforementioned William Walton (I privately refer to this as “the cheesy intro”). Jonathan Miller took over as artistic director of the enterprise around 1980, so I give him credit for changing the introduction to the dignified calligraphy over 16<sup>th</sup> century music used for the remainder of the series. The BBC production of *As You Like It* stems from 1978, and so opens with the travelogue. It was directed by Basil Coleman.

Writing in 1957, critic John Russell Brown commented on *As You Like It*:

... the play’s generosity and confidence spring chiefly from the characterization of Rosalind. She insures that Shakespeare’s ideal of love’s order is not presented as a cold theorem; in her person, love’s doubts and faith, love’s obedience and freedom, coexist in delightful animation.

The “delightful animation” of the BBC version is provided in full measure by Helen Mirren, a treasure of the British stage. Her performance as Rosalind goes straight to the heart, and is the chief reason to see this production. Orlando is played by Brian Stirner, who looks like Dana Carvey with a Dick Smothers mustache. Stirner is slight of build, so when he confronts Charles the Wrestler, played by tall, buff David Prowse (who was the body of Darth Vader in *Star Wars*), he’s definitely the underdog. Orlando wins the match by means of an unconventional (and unconvincing) cannonball move. Jaques is played by Richard Pasco; I can’t fault him as an actor—he has a character—but it’s a character I can’t stand: arrogant, self-involved, self-pitying. When Orlando says to him (3.2) “I am glad of your departure,” I cry ‘Amen!’ (The 1936 production solves the Jaques problem by cutting most of his lines.) The Silvius and Phebe of Maynard Williams and Victoria Plunknett are finely drawn; Williams in particular has an innocent earnestness that is appealing.

Searching the catalog one day, I discovered that the Natick library had a video of a Canadian production of *As You Like It* from 1983. Intrigued, I made the 30-mile trip to check it out. It was well worth it—the video was based on a Stratford Festival stage production filled with fire, pacing and humor, more enjoyable in almost ev-

ery way than the two versions that preceded it. The acting was fine. Andrew Gillies was a “Goldilocks” Orlando, not predatory (like Olivier), nor wimpish (like Stirner), but just right. Roberta Maxwell was both touching and amusing as Rosalind. In Lewis Gordon’s *Touchstone* we at last got a fool who had some smell of professionalism about him; he first appeared in clown makeup, and was equipped with tools of the trade, such as a hand puppet and bulb horn.

The artistic director of the Stratford production was John Hirsch, and he succeeded wonderfully in giving it a point of view. It opened with Dickensian urchins ironically singing “In spring time” on a bitterly cold winter’s night. The fascist nature of Duke Frederick’s regime is established immediately as the beggars are cleared off by the police, just prior to Orlando’s entrance. Graeme Campbell’s Frederick, with his flat face, black eyebrows, meringue of white hair, and curiously metallic voice is a memorable villain. His henchmen are dressed in bemedalled black uniforms, and when Oliver is dragged in for questioning, the blood on his face and his shirt tells you that the interrogation methods used were not gentle. This is comedy with a dark side.

*Video Bard’s Conjecture:* When several video versions of a Shakespeare comedy are available, the most entertaining version will be based on a stage production.

One can speculate on the reasons for this. One of them is certainly the nature of the preparation for a stage play compared with that for a filmed production. The play is an event, presented as a whole in real time; filmed productions occur as a process, accumulated shot by shot, scene by scene over several (or many) days. Stage actors are oriented toward working as an ensemble, working with fellow actors during the rehearsal period, and *with the audience* during the performance period.

I also suggest that a stage play, with live actors and an audience, is watched with a different *mental model* than a video. The viewer is aware that the actors are trying to please the audience, and that the audience is responding, ideally with pleasure and appreciation, but possibly with boredom or hostility—the actors and audience are joined in a feedback loop, involved in a human transaction. When watching a video, the viewer is of course *intellectually* aware that she is watching actors performing, but the subconscious mental model is different: at some level every story seen on a flat screen tends to be interpreted as a documentary. With the mental model for a live play, the criterion for success is, “Have these actors achieved a rhythm of speeches, actions and ideas that pleases the audience?” For a filmed piece, the criterion is “Do I believe in the reality of what’s being

*(Continued on page 36)*

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*Marprelate review (continued from page 27)*  
of the Oxford theory.

## References

1. Leland Carlson, *Martin Marprelate, Gentleman: Master Job Throckmorton Laid Open in All His Colors* (San Marino, Huntington Library Press, 1981). 8.
2. Martin's sobriquet incidentally furnishes the original for the Puritan hedge-priest Sir Oliver Martext in *As you Like It* who performs the marriage of William to Audrey over the vociferous objections of the authorial satirist Touchstone, a passage thought by Alex McNeil ("Come Sweet Audrey, We Must be Married, Or We Must Live in Bawdry," unpublished manuscript, presented at the 23rd annual SOS conference in Newton MA, November 11-14, 1999), among others, to be a satirical allegory of the alienation of the Shakespeare corpus, symbolized in the figure of Audrey, to the Stratford William.
3. *The Works of Thomas Nashe, Edited From the Original Texts by Roland McKerrow* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1910) I:59.
4. An accessible, searchable transcript of the three pamphlets is now available online at <http://www3.telus.net/oxford>.
5. In Appleton, lvii
6. The one feeble attempt to propose an alternative theory of Pasquill's identity of which I am aware is a G.R. Hibbard's claim that Pasquill is "the face of Mr. Punch, but the voice is the voice of Bancroft," *Thomas Nashe: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 39.
7. McKerrow op. cit. I: 211.
8. McKerrow Ibid. I : 212.
9. For the argument identifying Euphues as a sobriquet of Oxford—Harvey sometimes applies it also to John Lyly, author of the Euphues novels—see Charlton Ogburn, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (1984, 673-75) or Roger Stritmatter, *Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible* (2001, 104). The Euphues quote may be found in Alexander Grosart's *Works of Gabriel Harvey* (1884, II: 213).
10. 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," writes McKerrow, op. cit. V:73.
11. Carlson op. cit. 24.

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*Video Bard (continued from page 35)* shown?" Thus an actor in a filmed play has a different set of tools than a stage actor: a close-up can reveal extremely subtle emotions expressed with the eyes alone (unreadable in a stage performance), but if the rhythm of the lines calls for boisterous or exaggerated behavior, the effect may be "stagy" and unconvincing.

The director of the Stratford production reviewed above is apparently aware of this effect, and takes pains to show us that we are at a live theatrical event—trumpets invite us into the theatre, the camera pans over the rows of fellow audience members, etc. He coaxes us into choosing the appropriate mental model, so that when Touchstone emphasizes a bawdy line with a honk from his horn, or when Audrey seats herself immodestly, we react with laughter rather than disbelief. No wonder the Touchstone in the BBC production is so pallid and forgettable—he's surrounded by real trees and real buildings, so he has to be "real" (that is, "normal"), and all he can do is recite his lines. But Shakespeare was writing for the *stage*, for the live-audience experience—he meant for the lines to be delivered by a larger-than-life character, and when they are not, they lose their savor.

It will be interesting to see if the *Video Bard's* conjecture holds up as we explore further productions in the Shakespearean canon.

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