



# Shakespeare Matters

*"The Voice of the Shakespeare Fellowship"*

Vol.4: no.3

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

Spring 2005

## The Sonnets dedication puzzle

By Robert R. Prechter, Jr. ©2005

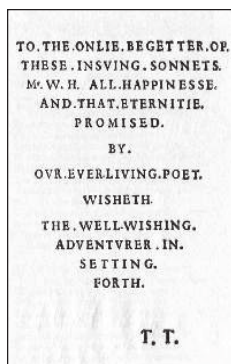


Fig. 1

The famous dedication to *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, published in 1609, has been the subject of consternation and ridicule, and several scholars have denounced it as convoluted and bombastic.

Students of the authorship question have long suspected that the odd arrangement of words, obscure meaning and bizarre syntax suggest the possibility of an encoded message. Inspired by discussions at an Oxfordian conference in 1998, I tackled the problem of the Sonnets dedication and presented a summary of some of my findings at the annual conference of the Shakespeare Oxford Society in Stratford (Ontario) in October 2000.

To summarize what I believe lies hidden in the Sonnets dedication, it contains not a code but—at least from our point of view—a puzzle. The contents of what I call the Dedication Puzzle are a list of names, including most importantly the following:

- (1) The names of the principals who got the Sonnets published.
- (2) The names of the characters in the Sonnets.
- (3) The true name of Shakespeare.
- (4) Additional names of (mostly) real people that Edward de Vere used as pseudonyms.

*(Continued on page 12)*

## The name is new, the beat goes on

*Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference meets in Portland*



*Charles Beauclerk (l) and William Cecil, 8th Marquess of Exeter, seated together at the Awards Banquet. Beauclerk, who lived in the US for 10 years actively promoting Oxford in the late 1980s and 90s, received the Distinguished Scholarship Award, while Cecil was the featured speaker at the banquet.*



*Dr. Roger Stritmatter and Fellowship President Lynne Kositsky gave a joint presentation laying out an excellent case for why the infamous "Strachey letter" is not a problem for Oxford—who died in 1604—being the author of The Tempest.*

This year's authorship conference in Portland, Oregon, would have been the 9th Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference, but instead inaugurated a new era under the name The Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference.

Conference Director Dr. Daniel Wright had decided upon the change last fall in an attempt to make the forum more inviting to scholars who were interested in the authorship debate, but who might also be reluctant to seem to commit to Oxford's authorship by attending a conference named after him.

Nonetheless, as Wright also notes, his commitment to Oxford remains as firm as ever, and the majority of papers presented continue to explore authorship issues from an Oxfordian perspective. This year's conference was a testament to the continuing Oxfordian nature of the event, and

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Letters:

To the Editor:

On my recent visit to Portland to attend the Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference, I had an opportunity to renew many old friendships and to observe the state of the debate “live” for the first time in many years. It was good to get up to speed with some of the new developments, especially Hank Whittemore’s important work on the Sonnets. His emphasis on the royalty of Shakespeare goes to the heart of the mystery to which—willy nilly—we have all become apprenticed. Now that I no longer believe that Oxford was a *de Vere* by blood, I can see clearly why the boar in Shakespeare is such a potent symbol of destruction. The boar, his *de Vere* identity, destroys his royal hopes.

More importantly, however, I can see how vital it is that we as a movement do not create our own orthodoxy, based on romantic notions of Shakespeare the Oxfordian. Too many of us seem too eager to put into port before the journey’s end in order to build castles in the sand, a mindset that panders to the Stratfordian obsession with creating schools of criticism. Instead, we would be well advised to keep to the open seas, where we can enjoy the salt spray upon our cheeks and hear the shrouds rattle in the wind. Wary of literary orthodoxies, people are more likely to respond to a call to join us on our voyage.

My view has always been that this debate will not be won on the Stratfordians’ terms, i.e., on their standards of scholarship, but on ours. Moreover, it will only be won by asserting the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, however shocking to the sensibilities of our culture. Intuition and imagination are vital components in understanding works of art which transcend the rational mind. As Yeats reminds us in his poem “The Scholars”, what on earth would the dry men do if the Roman love poet [Catullus] whom they circumscribe with their commentaries should walk their way? They would of course condemn him.

So, perhaps we should not try too hard to be Oxfordians, but dig deeply into the works to become true Shakespeareans.

Charles Beauclerk  
Hadleigh, England, UK  
15 June 2005

## 2005 Board Nominations and proposed By-Laws Amendments

As chair of the nominating committee, I am writing to advise you of the nominations for the board and President for the September 29, 2005, annual meeting of the Shakespeare Fellowship. The bylaws of the Fellowship require the nominating committee to notify the membership of its nominees for election for these positions ninety days before the annual meeting. As per the bylaws section III.C, members at their discretion may then nominate additional candidates for the board or offices by petition.

This communication is not a ballot, but a list of nominees from the nominating committee, approved by the current trustees:

**Presidency:** As you are aware, Lynne Kositsky has very ably carried on the Presidency of the Shakespeare Fellowship following the resignation of Charles Berney last November. Lynne wishes to step down from the Presidency while remaining on the board, and continuing her work with the Fellowship in other capacities.

**Nominee for President:** Ted Story, Shakespeare Fellowship Secretary, Producer/Director (New York, NY).

### Nominees for the Board:

**Lynne Kositsky** (2<sup>nd</sup> three year term)  
Award-winning Canadian writer  
(Toronto, Ont).

**Tim Holcomb** (2<sup>nd</sup> three year term)  
Founder and artistic director,  
Hampshire Shakespeare Co.  
(Amherst, Mass).

**Sarah Smith** (2<sup>nd</sup> three year term)  
Award-winning American writer  
(Brookline, MA).

**Michael Dunn** (to finish appointed term, two years) Actor, founder,  
Truebard (Pacific Palisades, CA).

**K.C. Ligon** (to finish appointed term, two years) Writer, Dialect Coach (New York, N.Y.).

Two board members, Steve Aucella and Earl Showerman, are resigning, both for personal reasons. They will continue

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The Shakespeare Fellowship  
P.O. Box 434  
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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. It is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit (Fed ID 04-3578550).

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

*Shakespeare Matters* welcomes articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate, validated by peer review. The views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Fellowship as a literary and educational organization.

to work with the Fellowship as active members. In their place the Shakespeare Fellowship Board of Trustees is nominating

**Alex McNeil** (after leave of absence, one year term). Lawyer, author, former President of the SF (Newton, MA)

**Richard Desper** (One year term) PhD, Oxfordian scholar, former Assistant Treasurer, SOS (Ayer, MA).

In addition, the nominating committee has proposed two bylaw amendments which, after discussion and approval by the existing trustees, you will be asked to approve at the general meeting. Both amendments aim to strengthen the Shakespeare Fellowship tradition of combining the best of grass roots organizational structure with a policy for maintaining a stable and viable Board of Trustees.

**Proposed amendment #1** (to section III.C of the Bylaws of the Shakespeare Fellowship):

*The nominating committee shall submit its recommendations to the trustees, who shall approve the nominations by a 2/3 majority before they are announced to the general membership.*

**Proposed amendment #2** (to section III.C of the Bylaws of the Shakespeare Fellowship):

*Nominees by petition who are elected by the general membership shall assume their seats on the board of Trustees after receiving a majority vote of confidence from a quorum of the existing Trustees.*

Thank you for your consideration of these proposals.

Roger Stritmatter, PhD  
For the Nominating Committee

(For further information about nominations by petition, you may contact me at: stritmatter24@hotmail.com)

### From the Editor

## Shakespeare in Washington DC

On page five in this issue we report on a recent press conference held at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC announcing a 6-month-long Shakespeare festival to be held in our nation's capital.

It strikes us that this long, elaborate festival is a big deal in the ongoing authorship saga, coming as it will on the heels of a major motion picture on Oxford as Shakespeare (*Soul of the Age*) that we expect will be released in late 2006, not to mention the recent push to reinvent the Stratfordian position through such books

as Michael Wood's *In Search of Shakespeare* and Stephen Greenblatt's *Will in the World*.

As we've noted before in these pages, we are in the midst of a major counter-offensive from those who would preserve the Stratford story forever—which is to say “never EVER.”

Oxfordians should mark their calendars now and not let this event unfold without some strong counter-publicity to remind everyone that you must be acquainted with Oxford to really know Shakespeare.

### Registration - Ashland Authorship Conference Ashland, Oregon, September 29-October 2, 2005 (4th Annual SF Conference).

Sponsored jointly by The Shakespeare Fellowship and The Shakespeare Oxford Society. Please complete this registration form and return it to: Shakespeare Fellowship, P.O. Box 434, Marshfield Hills, MA 02051

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional names attending on this order: \_\_\_\_\_

All-Inclusive Conference Registration (\$250): Includes morning coffee, opening Reception, two luncheons, Awards Banquet on Sunday, October 2nd, tickets to two plays (*Richard III* and *Twelfth Night*); backstage tour and First Folio viewing.

Enter my All-Inclusive Registration and additional Registrations: \_\_\_\_ x \$250.00 = \_\_\_\_

Additional Theater Tickets (\$40.00 each).

*Richard III* (Friday evening, Sept. 30th): \_\_\_\_\_ Tickets @ \$40/tkt = \_\_\_\_

*Twelfth Night* (Saturday evening, Oct. 1st): \_\_\_\_\_ Tickets @ \$40/tkt = \_\_\_\_

Other Registration Options:

All Lectures & Lunches, incl. Reception & Sunday Awards Banquet: \_\_\_\_ x \$195 = \_\_\_\_

Per Diem Rate - Lectures/No Lunches or Theater Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ x \$ 25 = \_\_\_\_

Extra Sunday Awards Banquet Tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$ 50 = \_\_\_\_

**(Free Admission for All Lectures: High School and College Students with ID)**

Please make checks payable to: Shakespeare Fellowship

Grand Total: \_\_\_\_\_ Payment: \_\_\_ Check Enclosed \_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_ MC \_\_\_ AmEx \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact the following hotels to make reservations at conference rates (\$119/night):

Main Conference Hotel: Ashland Springs Hotel: 888-795-4545 or 541-488-1700

Nearby Alternative: Plaza Inn: 888-488-0358 or 541-488-8900

For additional information, please visit our Conference Page ([http://www.shakespeare\\_fellowship.org/Conference2005.htm](http://www.shakespeare_fellowship.org/Conference2005.htm)) or call 541-899-8721 for further information.



# 2005 Ashland Authorship Conference

September 29 – October 2, 2005

The Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society are gathering together in Ashland, Oregon, home of the world-renowned Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF), for membership meetings and the jointly sponsored Ashland Authorship Conference.

Conference registration forms are posted at [www.shakespearefellowship.org](http://www.shakespearefellowship.org) and [www.shakespeare-oxford.com](http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com). One is also included in this issue on page 3. This year's conference will take place at the recently renovated historic Ashland Springs Hotel ([www.ashlandspringshotel.com](http://www.ashlandspringshotel.com)) and full registration includes tickets to *Richard III* and *Twelfth Night* as well as a backstage tour, a First Folio viewing, and presentations by noteworthy Oxfordians, members of the OSF artistic staff, and faculty from Southern Oregon University. This year the OSF will be celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Other plays that are in production during the conference include *Love's Labour's Lost*, Marlowe's *Faustus*, *Room Service*, *The Belle's Stratagem*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Gibraltar*, and *Napoli Millionaria!* For further information on the OSF

programs and plays, consult [www.osfashland.org](http://www.osfashland.org).

Presentations will include: Prof. Dan Wright on *King John*... Mark Anderson, author of *Shakespeare By Another Name*... Prof. Roger Stritmatter on Shakespeare's Bible... Thomas Regnier on *Hamlet's Law*... Lynne Kositsky on the "Voyagers," "Spanish Maze" and the *Tempest*... Stephanie Hughes on *Love's Labour's Lost*... Paul Altrocchi on *Romeus and Juliet* and the "Bermoothes"... Blair Oliver on *Romeo and Juliet*... Richard Desper on *12<sup>th</sup> Night*... Michael Dunn as Charles Dickens... Hank Whittemore, author of *The Monument*... Lew Tate on the events of 1598... Katherine Chiljan on a recently discovered Oxfordian document... Marilyn Loveless on Shakespeare's Second-Best Bed..., and Derran Charlton on "Emericdulfe."

Other speakers include Richard Whalen, who will give an overview of the Oxfordian position... Ramon Jiménez on *True Tragedy of Richard III*... John Hamill on the Dark Lady... Earl Showerman on *Orestes, Horestes, & Hamlet*... Peter Austin-Zacharias on William Cecil & de Vere ...

Mary Berkowitz on the Stratford Monument and Christopher Marlowe... Southern Oregon University professors Allen Armstrong, Kasey Mohammad, Liz Eckhart and Michael Hayes have all been invited, along with Professor Ren Draya, Matthew Cossolotto, theatre critic Bill Varble, and Michael Cecil, Lord Burghley. Presentations given by members of the OSF artistic company will include James Newcomb, who is starring in the title role in *Richard III*, and Dr. Todd Barton, longtime resident composer and music director. Renaissance music performed by the festival's own Terra Nova Consort is also included in the program.

Ashland is located in southern Oregon, midway between Portland and the Bay Area. It is a 15 minute drive from the Medford-Rogue Valley airport. Crater Lake and the spectacular Oregon coast are only 2-3 hours drive from Ashland. Questions and requests for registration information regarding the conference may be addressed to the local coordinator Earl Showerman at [earlees@charter.net](mailto:earlees@charter.net) or by mail: Ashland Authorship Conference, P.O. Box 235, Ashland, OR, 97520.

## Oxford Week in Boston

### *Sonnets and the law, Harvard and "Veritas"*

The 18th Annual Oxford Day Banquet in Boston returned to the Harvard Faculty Club, this year, but as a reception—not a dinner—that was part of a 2-day Oxford celebration.

On the day before the HFC event a reception and talk by Hank Whittemore at the Social Law Library in downtown Boston drew a large audience (approx. 60-70) that included lawyers, jurists and other interested Shakespeareans in addition to local Oxfordians.

The audience for "Unraveling History" were treated to an inspired one-hour presentation by Whittemore on his new theory (as set forth in his new book *The Monument*) about the sonnets and how this theory completely explains the abundance of legal language in the sonnets—the language relating to the Essex Rebellion Trial and its legal implications for both Fair Youth and Poet. Most on hand



*Celebrating Oxford in the Harvard Faculty Club are (l-r) Charles Boyle, Alex McNeil and Dan Wright.*

(which included a number of lawyers) were duly impressed with this thesis. Books were sold and contacts made for future events.

The following evening at the Harvard Faculty Club the theme was responding to Stephen Greenblatt's Stratfordian biogra-

phy, *Will in the World*. A smaller audience than the night before was on hand, but several of them were from the Harvard community. Greenblatt, whose office is right across the street from the Club, did not—although invited—attend.

Dr. Dan Wright joined with Mark Anderson and Hank Whittemore to give a spirited "one-two-three punch" Oxfordian response to the imaginary "veritas" of Greenblatt's Stratfordian biography. Chuck Berney served as host and moderator for the event.

With Anderson's Oxford biography *Shakespeare by Another Name* due to hit bookstores this August (and Whittemore's *The Monument* now available) Oxfordians now have much new ammunition with which to respond to those taken with—or should we say taken in by?—Prof. Greenblatt.

# A Shakespeare festival in Washington, DC

WASHINGTON, DC—At a news conference at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Dr. Gail Kern Paster, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Michael Kahn, Artistic Director of the Shakespeare Theatre, and Michael M. Kaiser, President of the Kennedy Center, announced a citywide celebration of the Bard. Shakespeare in Washington, a six-month long festival running from January-June 2007, conceived by Kaiser and curated by Kahn, is a national event, an international celebration, a feast of theater, music and dance, as well as a joyful coming together of arts, artists and audience all for a single purpose: to celebrate William Shakespeare, a man of inexhaustible talent.

In introducing the festival, Paster said, “The Folger Library began as a gift to the American people. In 2007, as we celebrate our 75th anniversary, Shakespeare will again provide the nation with a worthy gift through this landmark festival

“This celebration will give us a chance not only to visit the work of the city’s and the world’s most-performed playwright in a cultural context, but also to experience the continuing dialogue between Shakespeare and the other arts,” Kahn said. “I hope that this celebration will create an important conversation between the great works of the past and our turbulent present, and between the differing forms of expression that genius inspires.”

Shakespeare in Washington programming highlights:

- The Shakespeare Theatre will present productions of *Richard III*, directed by Michael Kahn and featuring Geraint Wyn Davies in the title role, and *Cymbeline*, its first production of the romance in its 20-year history.

- Folger Shakespeare Library will celebrate “Shakespeare in American Life,” commemorating its 75th anniversary as the home to the world’s largest Shakespeare collection. Planned programs and performances include: a major exhibition under the same title; a musical production of *Lone Star Love or The Merry Wives of Windsor, Texas* by Folger Theatre; a four-concert series of music inspired by Shakespeare and his times by the Folger Consort; a three-lecture series, Words on Will, bringing luminaries from the worlds of culture, arts, letters and enterprise to discuss Shakespeare’s influence on their lives and careers; and a wide array of outreach programs from Folger Education for Washington schools and area families.

- Washington National Opera will present Giuseppe Verdi’s great early opera *Macbeth* at the Kennedy Center Opera House from May 12



*We’re having a party, party! The Folger Shakespeare Library’s 75th Anniversary will be big.*

through June 1, 2007. General Director Plácido Domingo has cast two exceptional singer/actors in the roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, acclaimed Georgian baritone Lado Ataneli and leading Italian soprano Paoletta Marrocu, with Maestro Renato Palumbo conducting and Paolo Micciché designing and directing the new production.

- The Washington Ballet will present its highly acclaimed 7x7 series, introduced in 2004—seven world premieres, each seven minutes long, by seven innovative choreographers. The 2007 presentation of 7x7: Shakespeare will take place at the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater, where this visionary commissioning project will turn its attention to the wealth of inspiration in the works of the Bard himself. Each of the seven works presented will explore in abstraction the ideas found in Shakespeare’s diverse masterpieces.

- The National Museum of American History will co-present the Smithsonian’s Jazz Masterworks Orchestra (SJMO) in a Michael Kahn-directed production of Duke Ellington’s *Such Sweet Thunder* (also known as the Shakespearean Suite) with the Kennedy Center. As the keeper of our nation’s treasures, the museum has a variety of artifacts and activities that convey the presence of Shakespeare’s legacy in American life. During the festival, the museum will showcase its collections and produce public programs that will explore the connections between Shakespeare and American history, including lectures about the connections between the Bard and the American musical theater and Duke Ellington and Shakespeare.

- AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center will present screenings of the most accomplished screen adaptations of the Bard’s plays—from *Romeo and Juliet* to *King Lear* and *Macbeth*—by some of the world’s most distinguished screenwriters and directors.

- National Building Museum will commission teams of architects, artists, set designers,

theater professionals and lighting designers to re-imagine and design sets for Shakespeare plays. The teams’ efforts will be shown in an exhibition, tentatively titled *Reinventing the Globe: Shakespeare for the 21st Century*, to include drawings, models and computer renderings. The Museum intends to construct one or two sets on which Shakespeare plays will be presented, providing a complete thread from process to product to performance.

- Signature Theatre will present a special cabaret featuring songs from the American musical theater based on Shakespeare’s works in April 2007. Musical selections from *West Side Story* to *The Boys from Syracuse* to *Two Gentleman of Verona* will bring the musical theater’s interpretation of the Bard to life and will feature Washington’s best performers.

- The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts will present several of the world’s best in ballet, theater and opera:

- The Kirov Ballet of the Mariinsky Theatre will stage the 1940 Leonid Lavrovsky production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Set to the familiar music of Sergei Prokofiev, the ballet has a libretto by Leonid Lavrovsky, Sergei Prokofiev, Sergei Radlov and Adrian Piotrovsky, based on the tragedy by William Shakespeare.

- The Kirov Opera of the Mariinsky Theatre will stage Verdi’s opera, *Falstaff*.

- The Royal Shakespeare Company will present a work in the final year of its five-year residency.

The festival will include performances, exhibits, presentations and educational programming by the following organizations:

American Film Institute  
Corcoran Gallery of Art  
Folger Shakespeare Library and Theatre  
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Kirov Ballet and Opera  
Library of Congress  
Master Chorale of Washington  
National Building Museum  
National Portrait Gallery  
National Museum of American History  
National Symphony Orchestra  
Royal Shakespeare Company  
Shakespeare Guild  
Shakespeare Theatre  
Signature Theatre  
Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra  
Vocal Arts Society  
Washington Ballet  
The Washington Chorus  
Washington Concert Opera  
Washington National Opera  
Washington Performing Arts Society

For more information on Shakespeare in Washington, please visit [www.kennedy-center.org/shakespeare/](http://www.kennedy-center.org/shakespeare/)



# Oxfordian editions of the Shakespeare plays on the way

In a significant advance in the dissemination of Oxfordian research, the first Oxfordian editions of the more popular Shakespeare plays are being prepared for publication.

General editors of the Oxfordian Shakespeare series are Professor Daniel Wright of Concordia University and Richard Whalen, author of *Shakespeare: Who Was He?* Wright announced the launch of the series in April at the Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference at Concordia.

Six university professors are each editing one of the plays. They are:

Kathy Binns of the U. S. Air Force Academy English department, *Henry the Fifth*, which she teaches to cadets for its insights into military leadership;

Michael Delahoyde of Washington State University, *Antony and Cleopatra*, which he includes in his class for honors students on "Edward de Vere Studies;"

Ren Draya of Blackburn College,

*Othello*, which she teaches in her classes with Oxford as the author;

Felicia Londre of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, editor of *Love's Labour's Lost: Critical Essays* in the prestigious Garland Series;

Roger Stritmatter of Coppin State College with author Lynne Kositsky, *The Tempest*, the subject of their paper on its sources at the April conference at Concordia;

Prof. Daniel L. Wright, *Much Ado About Nothing*;

Richard Whalen, *Macbeth*, which is scheduled to be issued later this year.

As co-general editors, Whalen is handling the publishing aspects, while Wright focuses on excellence and balance in the content of each edition.

They described the series as similar in format (only) to the Pelican, Signet, Bantam, Folger and other single-play volumes that are intended for students and the general reader. Common to each edition is a

short opening section with a life of Oxford and commentary on his stage and the authorship controversy. Then follows an introduction to the play, including sources, influences, dating and a note on the text. Each editor will edit a nineteenth-century, public-domain play text that can be downloaded on the Internet, coordinating it with the First Folio text and quartos where appropriate, and provide line notes to the play text based on rigorous Oxfordian scholarship and the best of Stratfordian research.

According to Whalen, the new Print-on-Demand publishing technology offers a number of advantages for books like those in the Oxfordian Shakespeare Series. "It's a low-cost way to get high quality books," he said, adding that the quality will be better than many of the Stratfordian editions, "especially the Signet and Folger editions." The books will be sold on-line, through book stores that order them and at Oxfordian conferences.

## Changing of the guard at the Globe Theatre

Mark Rylance bid farewell as the Artistic Director at the Globe Theatre this past spring with productions of *The Tempest* and *Pericles*, two of the late plays in the Canon that have their own history of controversial interpretation and debate over authorship (even in mainstream circles some wonder how much of *Pericles* Shakespeare—whoever he was—actually wrote, and even Oxfordians have debated whether "our" author (Oxford) wrote all of *The Tempest*—or whether, perhaps, his son-in-law the Earl of Derby and/or First Folio editor Ben Jonson had a hand in the published text).

Recent negative reviews of both productions brought up Rylance's outspoken anti-Stratfordianism as a factor in the productions' shortcomings (he supports Bacon and is open to Oxford's involvement), all of which added up to a less-than-golden farewell for the Globe's first Artistic Director.

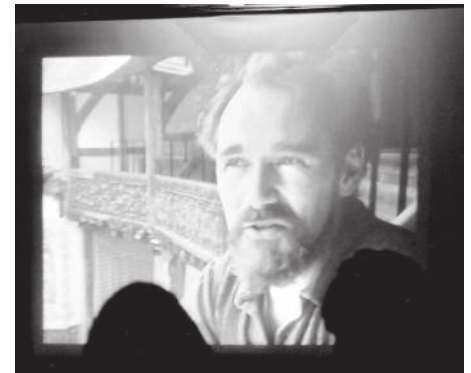
Incoming Artistic Director, Dominic Dromgoole, took some shots at Rylance's anti-Stratfordian stance in a June 1, 2005 *London Times* article ("Class war over Shakespeare's identity"): "I think all this theorising about Shakespeare is absolute

baloney ... There is a mass of historical evidence that shows there was a working-class playwright from Stratford writing the plays." Dromgoole will be publishing a book later this year supporting the working-class playwright as author.

Rylance is quoted in the same article as countering with

Undoubtedly the Stratford actor (Shakespeare) is involved in the creation of the plays because he is a shareholder in the Globe but I have not seen a convincing argument that he was capable of writing the plays ... The amount of learning in the plays has been downplayed and the opportunities that the actor Shakespeare had to learn have been played up ... Alternative theories should be weighed fairly without resort to slander of the individual proposing the theory—an all too common occurrence in the media.

So an open era of authorship debate awareness at the Globe Theatre comes to an end, clearly part of a pattern of orthodox reactionary responses to the debate. Will the Shakespeare Authorship Trust, which has met in the Globe the past two years, be allowed to continue in coming years?



Mark Rylance accepted his Distinguished Achievement in the Arts Award at the Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference via a video acceptance speech, taped inside the Globe Theatre. This was Rylance's last year as Artistic Director at the Globe, and if there was any doubt about the true feelings in the UK over his outspoken anti-Stratfordian position, it was clarified in statements by his successor, Dominic Dromgoole, and in a June 11, 2005, *London Times* article by Hannah Betts, who accuses Rylance of "biting the hand [i.e. Shakespeare's] that feeds him." Good riddance seemed to be the orthodox message to the outgoing upstart Rylance.

*Authorship conference (cont'd from page 1)*  
in fact several of the talks over the weekend were not only Oxfordian, but touched upon some of the prominent controversies within Oxfordianism—the truth about who Edward de Vere was and whether such truths are the key to the authorship mystery.

The support that Concordia University continues to give to the conference was demonstrated at the Official Opening on Friday morning, with both the President of Concordia, Charles Schlimpert, and the Dean of the College of Theology, Arts and Sciences Prof. Charles Kunert, giving welcome statements to attendees. It is their support, along with other faculty at the university (some of whom were also presenters this year), that have helped to make each conference a success since the first one in 1997.

### Bombs away

As noted, some of the papers this year went right to the heart of the debates and the controversies that exist within the Oxfordian movement.

Charles Beauclerk, back in the US for the first time in several years, spoke on *King Lear*, focusing on the play as a description of the author's inner landscape or psychology. "Psychology—or the law of the soul—should be a primary tool for determining authorship," said Beauclerk, "because the unconscious, which cannot help but tell the truth, breaks through the literary camouflage so beloved of the ingenious Elizabethans."

He placed considerable emphasis on how the theme of incest was at the core of the play, and drew parallels between the story of Oedipus, as told by Sophocles, and King Lear. By asking the question, "Why does Edgar crucify himself?" Beauclerk felt that he had opened up an unexplored dimension of the play, which touched upon one of the deepest secrets of Shakespeare's soul.

He further noted that after many years of thought on the matter, he has come to believe that Oxford was the son of Elizabeth, and that this has enormous implications for our understanding of both the authorship debate and the Shakespeare works themselves. This statement, to put it mildly, caused a stir.

Professor Wright spoke on the history plays ("An Obsession With Succession: Shakespeare, Bastards and the Ubiquity of the Crises of Legitimacy in the



Concordia University President  
Charles Schlimpert



Dean of the College of Theology, Arts  
and Sciences Charles Kunert

Canon"), exploring the topic of how and why Shakespeare selectively rewrites history and—as his talk's title suggests—pays inordinate attention to the legitimacy of succession. Wright's view is that such writing is certainly a reflection of the author's own political views, and even perhaps of his political agenda. When asked in the Q&A after his talk if the author's political agenda might be driven by the author's own identity crisis and/or his royal aspirations for his estranged son, the Earl of Southampton, Wright responded that, yes, indeed, such answers must be considered. Wright also noted that Hank Whittemore's new work on the sonnets (*The Monument*, in which it is argued that Oxford is writing to his royal son Southampton as he talks about the Essex Rebellion and what its aftermath means for both of them) has caused him to rethink these issues over the past year. He further stated that Whittemore's book is one of the most significant in Oxfordian studies, and one that all Oxfordians should read.

### More mysteries

Meanwhile, Whittemore also gave a talk over the weekend, but it was not on the sonnets. Instead he took a look at the life of Edmund Spenser, and related to his audience that he was coming to believe that we have yet another authorship problem here—and further, incredibly—that even mainstream Spenser scholars in recent years have been discussing among themselves the "problem" of Spenser's biography. There appear to be holes and unbridgeable gaps in the Spenser story, and Whittemore related how it could be that Spenser was

yet another front—or at least co-author or co-something—with Oxford/Shakespeare. This is a theory that has been broached before, most recently by Prof. Brame and Prof. Popova in their linguistics studies of Elizabethan literature (*Shakespeare's Fingerprints*).

For some, however, this is a theory gone too far. In the Q&A following the talk there were pointed questions on such theorizing about other authors of the era not being who they seemed. Can Oxfordians really expect to make any progress on the Shakespeare front if they start deconstructing all the other authors of the period (i.e., Robert Greene, John Lyly, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, Edmund Spenser, etc.)? It's an important question, with no easy answer. The authorship mystery, it seems, is inexorably intertwined with deeper mysteries about the whole Elizabethan era, its politics and its culture.

However, Whittemore's talk merely echoed what *Oxfordian* Editor Stephanie Hughes had presented the day before in her talk, "Beyond the Authorship Question: Was Shakespeare Only the Beginning?" which asked just this question about other authors and other mysteries. Her argument is that yes, it most likely is true that some authors in the Elizabethan pantheon were fronts for Oxford/Shakespeare—and perhaps for others also. Indeed, Hughes herself has written on Robert Greene being an Oxford front. What is most important, she emphasized, is that students and scholars involved in the authorship debate need to tackle this "other" authorship problem head-on as part of an overall resolution of the Shakespeare issue. Even some mainstream

(Continued on page 8)



*Authorship conference (cont'd from page 7)*  
scholars, such as Brian Vickers and his *Counterfeiting Shakespeare*, are actively engaged in textual studies that are calling into question some authorship attributions—though scholars such as Vickers are loath to have their work in any way associated with the authorship debate, or—God forbid!—appropriated by it.

The use of fronts by writers of the time was also touched upon Thursday afternoon, when the Woody Allen film *The Front* was shown, followed by a panel discussion with Hank Whittemore, William Boyle and Concordia professor Richard Hill participating. The theme of the session was, of course, politics and how political necessity is the primary factor in such arrangements.

### The Oxfordian mainstream

Most papers focused on the more traditional issues within the authorship debate, such as the flaws in Stratfordian scholarship and the clearer explanations that the Oxfordian theory can bring to understanding both Shakespeare and Elizabethan history.

Keynote speaker Dr. Michael Delahoyde addressed the implications of the Oxfordian theory directly in his talk, “The Interpretive Implications of Identifying Oxford as Shakespeare.” Delahoyde discussed the borderlands of de Vere studies, including some of his students’ interdisciplinary successes, the importance of Italy to de Vere’s music, and the apocryphal plays—especially *Lochrine*.

His talk concluded on the lighter side with a hilarious preview of the day when Oxfordians prevail, and Stratfordians are left to reminisce about the old days in song (see the sidebar on this page).

One of the most significant papers presented over the weekend led off the conference on Thursday evening. Dr. Roger Stritmatter and Fellowship President Lynne Kositsky gave a joint presentation on their researches over the past year into the sources of *The Tempest*. Their research was designed to put to rest once and for all the favorite Stratfordian argument that Oxford could not possibly be the author because *The Tempest* had to have been written after Oxford’s 1604 death, based on the parallels within the play that supposedly could only have come from two sources published in



Keynote Speaker Dr. Michael Delahoyde

## The Stratfordian Nostalgia Song

*Dr. Michael Delahoyde gave the keynote address at the 2005 Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference, held at Concordia University. At the end of his talk he suggested that even after the coming Paradigm Shift, hardcore Stratfordians will continue to dwell on the merits of their candidate. He offered a song to help them reminisce. Some representative stanzas are offered below (sung to the tune of the 1930s “My Man”):*

He can’t write his name,  
So the claim is pretty lame  
—But he’s my man.

He never owned a book,  
And how ‘bout that stupid look?  
—But he’s my man.

He never traveled far,  
Learned Italian in a bar  
—He’s my man.

He was straight, he was gay,  
He knocked up Anne Hathaway  
—That’s my man.

He grew up, I’ll agree,  
A litigious S.O.B.  
—Did my man.

A lawsuit when he was young  
Involved his father’s pile of dung  
—That’s my man!

He’s got no courtly ties,  
And the guy had two right eyes  
—But he’s Shakespeare (I’ve been told).

No one cared he was dead.  
Left his wife his second-best bed.  
—That’s so Shakespeare!

1610 (Jourdain’s *Discovery of Bermuda* and an anonymous *True Declaration of the Colony of Virginia*), and one published in 1625 (William Strachey’s *True Repertory of the Wreck and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates*, but for which it is also claimed that Strachey first described the wreck in a letter in July 1610—“The Strachey letter”—and somehow Shaksper/Shakespeare could have seen the letter before writing *The Tempest*).

As Stritmatter and Kositsky demonstrated, there are two major flaws that demolish the “Strachey letter” as a key source argument. First, it is virtually impossible that Strachey sent such a letter back to England in 1610, and further Strachey apparently plagiarized much of what he published. Even more significant, however, was their presentation of alternative sources dating from the mid-1500s that could well have provided all the requisite information and descriptive detail for the play. These sources were Richard Eden’s 1555 *Decades of the New World* and Erasmus’s 1523 “*Naufrgium / The Shipwreck*.” A detailed chart listing all the ways these works could be sources for *The Tempest* is now online on the Fellowship’s website. Stritmatter and Kositsky will be presenting more on their work at the Ashland Authorship Conference in the fall.

Mark Anderson gave a talk on his experiences in writing and researching his forthcoming (August 2005) Oxford biography *Shakespeare By Another Name*, and related some “war stores” from having taken on the task of writing an Oxford biography in the first place. The key lesson learned, he said, was that one must “leave out the [authorship] debate and just tell the story.” It is, after all, the story itself which is the best argument. Anderson also shared some of the rich detail his book contains linking Oxford’s life with both the Shakespeare canon and with other writers and writing of the time. His book, coming on the heels of Prof. Greenblatt’s flawed *Will in the World*, should prove to be a breath of fresh air.

Ramon Jiménez continued his analysis of anonymously published Elizabethan history plays that predate Shakespeare plays on the same topic—but could well be just the first drafts of Shakespeare—by examining *The Troublesome Reign of King John*. This is an especially interesting play since it features the Bastard Faulconbridge, an “ahistorical”



character created by the author. Since the character is a bastard who can't be King, yet is the son of a King and behaves like a King, it is most interesting to note that for his *King John* Shakespeare either stole this idea wholesale from *Troublesome Reign*, or else he was the author of *Troublesome Reign*, a circumstance which would all but eliminate Stratman from being Shakespeare.

Fellowship Trustee Earl Showerman gave a presentation on the Greek sources of *Hamlet* that provided yet another glimpse into the vast learning that had to be the underpinning of Shakespeare's writing. Showerman presented several charts that showed how Aeschylus's *Orestes* had numerous parallels in plot and character to *Hamlet*, providing yet another reason to doubt Stratman as the author.

Among the other presentations Prof. Ren Draya of Blackburn College in Illinois looked at Othello in her "Repetition and the Monstrous in *Othello*," Richard Whalen spoke on "*MacBeth*: An Overlooked Sub-plot Reveals Oxford's Hand," and Dr. Eric Altschuler and William Jansen reported on "Recent Stratfordian Contributions to Oxfordian Studies," a presentation which included some further observations on their continuing work into the music of the era, in particular the Elizabethan madrigal.

Finally, Stephanie Hughes, in addition to her "Beyond the Authorship Question" talk, also gave a presentation on her trip to England last year, a trip paid for with the first Conference scholarship. She reported that, unfortunately, she did not uncover any new information that would directly link Oxford to his tutor Thomas Smith at an earlier date in the 1550-60s than we presently have.

She did emphasize, however, how rewarding it was to be able to work in the British Museum and handle actual documents, plus travel the same roads and visit the same towns talked about so often. Her work will be published in the 2005 *Oxfordian*, due out this fall.

### Other than Oxford

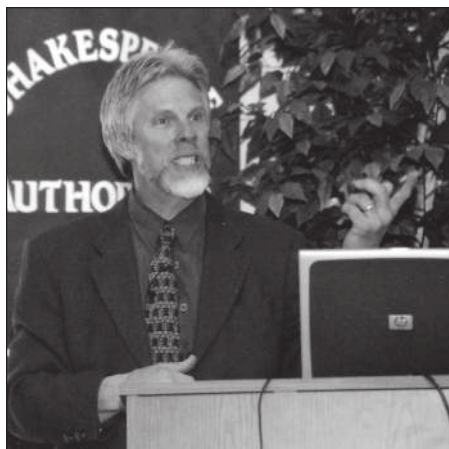
As in past years, other points of view on the authorship question were also represented over the weekend. This year attendees heard from Stratfordian Terry Ross (co-founder, along with David Kathman, of the "Shakespeare Authorship Page" website), regular attendee



Concordia Prof. Kevin Simpson



Doctoral student Dan Mackay



Fellowship Trustee Earl Showerman

Marolvian John Baker, a supporter of Mary Sidney (Countess of Pembroke), plus professors of psychology and history speaking on the larger ramifications of the debate in academic studies.

Ross, making his first appearance in Portland, spoke on the probability of Lord Buckhurst (Thomas Sackville) being a prototype for Hamlet ("The Sackville scenario: Rejecting Shakespeare Might Not Lead to Oxford"). It is

an argument that he has been promoting recently on the Fellowship's Discussion Boards, but one that, while intriguing in some of its details, does not seem persuasive to most observers.

Prof. Alan Nelson (author of *Monstrous Adversary*) was back again this year, speaking on several bits of evidence he has encountered in the past year that he believes also—as with every bit of evidence he has ever encountered—disqualify Oxford from being Shakespeare. This year he showed a slide of a 1604/05 painting of Lady Anne Clifford's library (she would one day become the Countess of Pembroke), which on close examination revealed many book titles shelved behind her (including Chaucer, Sidney, Spenser, Ovid, Daniel, the Bible—but no Shakespeare!). Nelson concludes from this that the Pembroke clan had no special interest in—nor even awareness of—the author Shakespeare.

Another tidbit Nelson presented was a 1580 letter referring to the "recent" charges and counter-charges involving Oxford and his Howard cousins (here Nelson drew no conclusions, but was just presenting another historical document of interest, in that Oxford is mentioned).

Marlovian John Baker, a conference regular, was—as always—interesting and entertaining. This year he invited attendees to consider, "Whose grave was it? The curious death of Christopher Marlowe." Baker's point was to present the case for Marlowe's not having died in 1593, so that he could then have lived on—in hiding—to be Shakespeare.

While the Marlowe factor in the Elizabethan drama scene, including his associations with Oxford and possibly with the Elizabethan secret service, is an intriguing part of the overall story, his phantom life for another forty plus years after a faked death continues to be too much of a barrier to overcome.

Pembrokian Robin Williams could not attend, so the vice-president of the Mary Sidney Society read her paper and distributed some interesting handouts to support the argument that Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke (and sister of Philip Sidney), could well be the hidden person behind the name Shakespeare. Sidney is, of course, the mother of the "incomparable brethren," dedicatees of the First Folio—the Earls of Pembroke and of Montgomery (the latter married to Susan Vere). Mary Sidney herself does

(Continued on page 10)

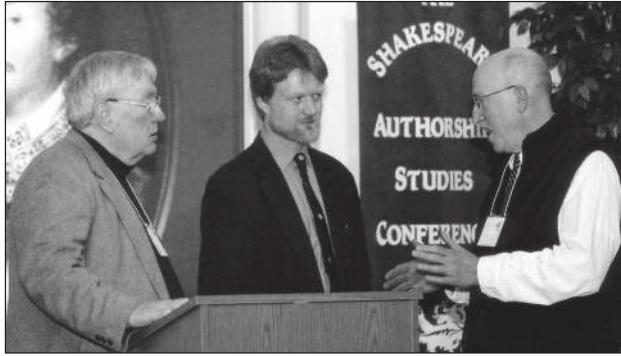
*Authorship conference (cont'd from p. 9)* have an interesting history of being a well-educated woman who gathered a salon of writers around her. The most intriguing aspect of the Pembrokian argument is the list of strong female characters that are part of the Shakespeare canon—women who defy their fathers, dress like men, make fools of men, and even lead armies (Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* and Cleopatra in *A&C*). Then there are also the virtuous women (with an emphasis from Williams on “virtuous”) who have been falsely accused of infidelity and/or dumped by an inconstant lover. All these women play important roles in the plays. The sum total of these arguments is certainly a testament to the worldliness of the true author, and just as certainly one more reason why the Stratford man—with his illiterate daughters—could not possibly be Shakespeare.

### History and psychology

Several interesting presentations were also given this year by faculty in disciplines other than literature.

Concordia Assistant Professor of European History Dr. John David Wyneken spoke on “Beyond Between the Lines: An Historian’s View of Literature as Primary Source Material.” This talk was a fascinating look at an important question, a question that is central to the authorship debate. Wyneken said that yes, indeed, literature can be considered to be a form of evidence in evaluating the history of a period and the roles of players within that period.

Concordia Prof. Kevin Simpson (Associate Professor of Psychology and Associate Director of the Conference) spoke this year on “Evidence from Psychological Theory and Research for Disputing the Conventional Attribution of the Works of Shakespeare to Will Shaksper.” His paper added to the debate in recent years by pointing out that numerous theories of psychology converge on one point—namely, that great geniuses still



*Shakespeare Oxford Society President Jim Sherwood (l) and the Rev. John Baker (r) talking with Charles Beauclerk (c).*



*Dr. Jan Sheffer (l) and Prof. Sandra Schruijer (r) re-enact a recent encounter Schruijer had with a Stratfordian.*



*Pictured at the Awards Banquet (l-r), Hank Whittmore, Michael Delahoyde and Paul Altrocchi.*



*Also at the Awards Banquet (l-r), Robert Howe, Pat Urquhart, and Norma Howe.*

have to have had rigorous childhood education and an apprenticeship of some sort before they blossom to dominate their “domain,” (i.e., their chosen field of endeavor, whether it’s the arts, science, math, etc.). Such studies also completely undercut the “magical” nature of genius as argued by many Stratfordians.

Doctoral student Dan Mackay (University of Oregon, Dept. of English) spoke on “The Genius of Coleridge,” giving an overview of how the noted 19th century English author thought of Shakespeare.

Two other academics of note—Prof. Sandra Schruijer and Dr. Jan Sheffer—were on hand from the Netherlands, where they co-sponsor an authorship conference in Utrecht (“The Dutch Conference on the Authorship Question”—the second conference is scheduled for June 16-17 in Utrecht, and among those presenting will be Prof. Daniel Wright, Mark Anderson, and Chuck Berney).

Prof. Schruijer (a professor of Organization Sciences and Organizational Psychology at the University of Utrecht) gave a fascinating overview of the nature of the authorship debate itself, and how the two sides engage each other over this contentious issue (“The Shakespeare Authorship Debate: Relational or Task Conflict?”). Her key point in this talk was emphasizing how Stratfordians and Oxfordians rarely work together on anything, but are instead engaged in oppositional debates.

Her colleague and conference co-director, Dr. Jan Sheffer (a psychiatrist at the Peter Baan Centre in Utrecht) spoke on the De Veres in the Low Countries; it was in battle in the Netherlands, after all, where the “fighting Veres” first gained their reputations, and where the 18th Earl of Oxford (Henry de Vere) and both the 3rd Earl of Southampton, Henry Wriothesley and his son (the 4th Earl) died in 1624.

Sheffer also joined with Prof. Schruijer during her talk on Friday morning to present a delightful  
(Continued on page 32)



## 2005 Shakespeare Authorship Studies Seminar

Each year, Oxfordians and their friends gather at Concordia University, in tranquil and comfortable settings, for a friendly, relaxing and intellectually stimulating week dedicated to the close study of issues relevant to our better understanding of questions that attend the Shakespeare Authorship Thesis.

Concordia University is committed to convening on its campus, each year, this one-of-a-kind forum to allow for the study and discussion, amongst Oxfordians and their friends, those issues of such expansive breadth, depth, import and consequence that conference presentations and newsletter or journal articles cannot adequately address.

This year's week-long seminar is dedicated to focusing on and sharing with one another arguments and evidence that examine the role of the author in selectively shaping the histories of Shakespeare's chronicle plays and the contours and content of the Sonnets.

The seminar will open with a get-acquainted dinner on Sunday evening, 7 August at 6:30pm. Sessions will convene on the CU campus during the week from 9:30am - 5:00pm (with breaks for lunch and occasional free time, as well as an afternoon trip to Multnomah Falls on Tuesday).

The registration fee of \$995 (checks payable to the Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference) covers the cost of the seminar week's lodging in comfortable university apartments (inclusive of linen service!), all breakfasts and lunches (including a Friday picnic), tuition and day-trip costs.

Join us for this unique event as part of your summer holiday plans. There's truly nothing like it in the world, and the opportunity to enjoy the company of Oxfordian friends for an entire week while discussing our favourite subjects in a pleasant university environment is not to be missed!

Re-live something of your student days (without the freshman hazing)!

Please write or e-mail Professor Wright ([dwright@cu-portland.edu](mailto:dwright@cu-portland.edu)) if you have questions or desire more information.



Return a copy of the form below, with your check, by 30 July, to:

Prof. Daniel Wright, Director  
The Shakespeare Authorship Studies  
Seminar  
Concordia University  
2811 NE Holman  
Portland, OR 97211-6099

### Registration Form Shakespeare Authorship Studies Seminar

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone and/or e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my check for tuition, room and meals (\$995)

I would like a private bedroom (\$95/week extra)

*Sonnets dedication (continued from page 1)*

From the simple clues embedded in the puzzle, a researcher can piece together important aspects of Shakespeare's life. The resulting inquiry has led to further information, namely that Oxford wrote under a long list of pseudonyms beginning when he was twelve. The investigation also appears to have revealed the identities of the two men who created the Dedication Puzzle, namely Thomas Thorpe, who conceived the idea, and Ben Jonson, who, I suspect, completed it.

Unlike a code, a puzzle is a construct that upon occasion can have more than one answer, so we must address the question of probability. I hope to show that while the chances of any single name appearing in a particular manner are — depending upon length — between 2 in 3 and 1 in 20, the chances of all the cited names appearing are one in a million. Therefore, while we may entertain any objection that a *particular* name appears by chance, we may not easily argue that the entire list appears by chance.

Here are the names embedded in the Dedication Puzzle that I believe are deliberately part of the construct:

- (1) Names of people who got the Sonnets published:

**William Herbert** (Earl of Montgomery, "grand possessor")  
**Philip Herbert** (Earl of Pembroke, "grand possessor")  
**Thomas Thorpe** (the publisher)

- (2) Names of people addressed in the Sonnets:

**Henry Wriothesle[y]** (Earl of Southampton)  
**Elisabeth** (the Queen)  
**Elisabeth Vernon** (Southampton's wife)  
**Emilia Bassana** (a courtier)

- (3) The true name of Shakespeare:

**Edward (de) Vere**

- (4) About a dozen of Oxford's pseudonyms (for example, Robert Greene).

The final category listed above is a topic in its own right and outside the scope of this article. But the fact of Oxford's multiple pseudonyms will figure into the analysis.

### Hints of a Puzzle

For centuries, the Sonnets publication has been a topic of speculation. The dedication (see Figure 1, page one) is cryptic, the personages addressed or alluded to in the poems are unidentified, and how Thorpe obtained the manuscript has remained a mystery. Howard Staunton, in Park Lane's *The Complete Illustrated Shakespeare*, says, "Thorpe has prefixed to his quarto...this enigmatic preamble...a dedication silly in form and very puzzling in expression..."<sup>1</sup> Anything "enigmatic" and "puzzling" from the Elizabethan era cries out for a deeper look.

Writing in the autumn 1997 issue of *The Elizabethan Review*,<sup>2</sup> Oxfordian researcher John Rollett described a possible hidden message in the dedication and a code to unlock it. He observed that the dedication is arranged in inverted pyramids of 6, 2 and 4 lines, reflecting the number of letters in the name Edward de Vere, as shown in Figure 2. When he highlighted every 6th, 2nd and 4th word, he found the message, "THESE SONNETS ALL BY EVER THE FORTH."

Though brilliantly derived, there are problems with the hidden

### Rollett's Solution, with additional observation, at right

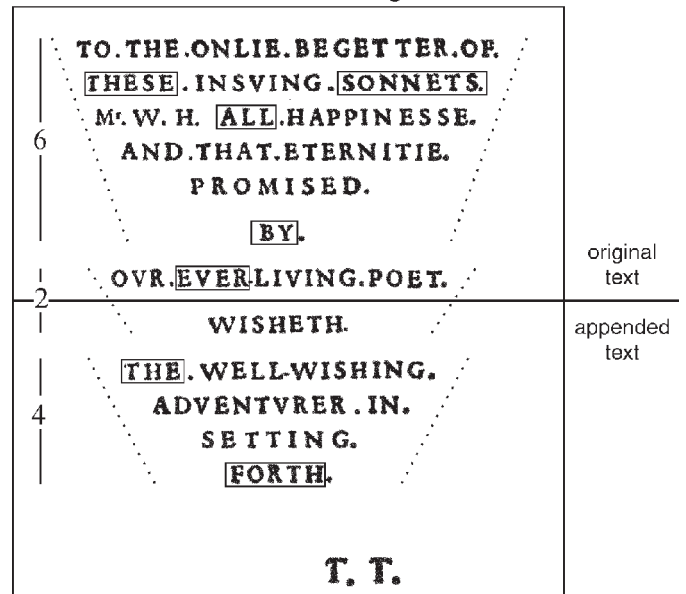


Figure 2

message that Rollet found. The words "THE FORTH" have proved a mystery. Ad hoc attempts at explanation typically take "forth" as "fourth." But "*E Vere* the fourth" would be inaccurate, as the 17<sup>th</sup> earl was not the fourth E. Vere; he was in fact the first. "Forth" is not "fourth" in the first place, and one must provide justification for presuming that the message means something other than what it says. Elizabethan spelling was often varied due to substantial reliance on phonetics, but I have yet to encounter in literature from the time the spelling "fourth" to mean "forth" or vice versa. Shakespeare consistently referred to "Henry the *Fourth*," and Ben Jonson bid him, "Shine *forth*, thou Star of Poets," indicating that when authors meant either "fourth" or "forth," they spelled it that way. Finally, there is no reason for the cryptographer — if there was one — to have added those final two words. He had already identified his particular subject, E. Ver, so further elaboration was unnecessary. Had the message read, "the Earl of Oxford," it might have required an added word or two to tell us which one out of the eighteen (up to that time) earls of Oxford he meant, but that is not the case. Thus, the justification so far offered for the two unexplained words is strained beyond acceptability.

### On the Trail

As it happens, the mystery of the stilted language of the dedication clears up the mystery of the problematic encrypted message. A close reading of the text reveals something important: Not all of it is obscure; only part of it is. Figure 2 demarcates two distinct sections. Everything through "poet" presents a concise and sensible statement (excepting "begetter," which we will discuss later), while everything after "poet" is so tortured as to be nearly nonsense. Moreover, if we decode the lines only through "poet," then the 6-2-4 encoded message is simply, "THESE SONNETS ALL BY EVER," likewise a much more concise and sensible statement. There are two strong reasons, then, to conclude that the final eight words were *added to an original composition*.

Is it possible to arrange the proposed original composition in



such a way as to convey the 6-2-4 key to the hidden message, “These sonnets all by E.Ver”? Figure 3 shows a 6-2-4 pyramid arrangement of this proposed original composition, hinting at Edward de Vere’s name and providing the key to decoding the hidden message. (We can just as easily invert the pyramids to the published style.) The three divisions in Figure 3 actually make a better presentation of the sense of the message than the longer one in the 1609 Quarto. This fact fits the deduction that the final product was the result of tampering with an original one.

TO  
THE  
ONLIE  
BEGETTER  
OF THESE  
INSUING SONNETS  
Mr WH  
ALL HAPPINESSE  
AND  
THAT  
ETERNITIE PROMISED  
BY OUR EVER-LIVING POET

Figure 3

Despite the neatness of the proposed original Sonnets dedication, the fact is that the composition does *not* stop where it seems it should have. Rather, it rambles on for another eight words of obscure meaning, thereby adding two nonsensical words (“THE FORTH”) to the otherwise satisfactory hidden message. Because the appended words mar both a sensible text *and* a clear encoded message, there must be a *purpose* behind their appearance. If so, what is it?

Rollett had wondered if the name Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, who scholars agree is the sole or the primary addressee of Sonnets 1 through 126, might somehow be encoded in the text. At first glance, it seemed impossible, as all of the required letters are there *but one*. Both “Henry” and “Wriothesley” end in *y*, but the text contains only one *y*.

With the name of the Fair Youth in mind, I went back to examining the dedication as it stood. Maybe the 6-2-4 decoder applied to letters as well as words. No, that wasn’t it. Maybe there was a global pattern of some kind, a superimposed figure that dictated where to locate the letters. No, that didn’t seem to work. Maybe marking where the letters are located would imply an image I hadn’t considered. Let’s see, here’s an H.... That expectation was wrong, but after pursuing this line of inquiry for a while, a sequence began to materialize. It was becoming apparent that there is a point within the dedication from which the letters of the name Henry Wriothesle (omitting the final *y*) appear *in order*, although they are otherwise spaced irregularly. There are also quite a few duplicate letters. Figure 4 illustrates (omitting duplicate letters) what was emerging from the mist.

This hint of order seemed to be an important clue to deconstructing what might be some kind of puzzle. Still, maybe it was just coincidence. Maybe this approach would accommodate just about any person’s name. But no, it soon became clear that certain other names cannot be spelled in this manner, including Shakespeare, Southampton and Oxford. It was even more exciting

## A Solution Emerges

TO THE ONLIE BEGETTER OF  
THESE INSUING SONNETS  
M’WH ALL HAPPINESSE  
AND THAT ETERNITIE  
PROMISED  
BY  
OUR EVER LIVING POET  
WISHETH  
THE WELL WISHING  
ADVENTURER IN  
SETTING  
FORTH

Begin here ↗

Figure 4

to realize that not even *John, James, Carl* or *Kim* appears. But H-E-N-R-Y-W-R-I-O-T-H-E-S-L-E does, fifteen necessary letters in a row. It was beginning to look as if these letters were in order for a reason.

To get a better look at how the name worked itself into the larger text, I wrote “HENRY WRIOTHESLE” vertically, attaching the original message to the column on both the left and right.

One thing was perturbing: the missing final *Y*. Finding anything less than a full name would mean that I was reading a pattern into a chance occurrence. A nearby bottle of bargain-basement *Concha y Toro* merlot triggered the right synapse, and the composer’s ending flourish suddenly appeared. The last complete word in the column is *AND*. In Spanish, the word for *and* is *y*. Now the whole name is spelled out: HENRY WRIOTHESLEY, *and its expression requires a full run through the words of the dedication.*<sup>3</sup> (See Figure 5.)

THAT  
ETER-  
NITIE  
PROMISED  
BY OUR EVER LIVING POET  
WISHETH THE WELL WISHING  
ADVENTURE R  
IN SETTING  
FORTH  
TO  
THE ONLIE BEGETTER  
OF THESE INSUING  
SONNETS M’WH  
ALL  
HAPPINESSE  
AND= [Y]

Figure 5

(Continued on page 14)

*Sonnets dedication (continued from page 13)*

### Checking the Odds of Coincidence

So we can find the final letter in Southampton's name but only through an invention. Is our invention one that the composer intended or to which he defaulted, or is it a coincidence?

For the time being, let's investigate the extent that coincidence might play in rendering the first fifteen letters in the name Henry Wriothesley in the manner we have found, omitting the *y* that is only implied. I first created a list of unique 15-letter name-based patterns (for the source, see later discussion and Endnote 7) and then checked to see how many of them appear in the dedication in the same manner. Out of 57 15-letter name sequences, 51 *do not* appear; only 6 do. So the probability of finding a single name by chance from that list is about 10 percent. This number is low enough to suggest that the appearance of HENRY WRIOTHESLE could be the result of deliberate design. That fact in turn increases the probability that the imputed *Y* is also there on purpose.

What else can we say about that possibility? Given the other Sonnet-related names that we will soon find embedded in the dedication without special wordplay, we could presume strict puzzle rules and eliminate Southampton as having anything to do with the Sonnets. If you are a devotee of William Herbert as the Youth, then you can dismiss the entry of Henry Wriothesley's name as incomplete and therefore invalid. I do not believe, however, that doing so would be intellectually honest.

Utter strictness is required only in certain aspects of a puzzle, not in its entirety, as in a code. For example, while a crossword puzzle's *design* is precise, its *definitions* are anything but. The Dedication Puzzle has rules, but we may not insist in advance on what those rules are; we can only induce them from the evidence. In a puzzle, context is crucial; one cannot solve a jigsaw or crossword puzzle without the other pieces as a guide. I am inclined to conclude that the clever way that the puzzle provides the final *Y* is a human touch that can be taken more as an indication that a person *was* involved in an embedding process than that one was not, and further, that he meant to include this name. *AND* is the only remaining word after 15 out of 16 required letters appear in a row. It rather stares you in the face. We should give this "coincidence" its due. It works so nicely in context that we would be remiss in *not* assuming significance.

There is another subtle point that works in favor of accepting the name as deliberately embedded. Without knowledge of how the puzzle was discovered, one might hastily conclude that anyone wishing to fit "Wriothesley" into it was forcing the issue. But at the outset I had no puzzle, no rules or guidelines, no issue to force at that initial point; *I was trying to find out if there was one*. The "Wriothesley" question led me to the fact of the puzzle in the first place, and this is no small matter. Had I contrived the name's appearance, then *the other logically expected names would not have panned out*, and there would have been no pack of solutions connected to the Sonnets and therefore no discovery. Knowing that Southampton was the front-runner as the Sonnets' primary addressee was the biggest clue to cracking the puzzle because I assumed, correctly or not, based upon scholars' conclusions, that if any names were to be found, his would surely be among them. If one were still to insist that 15/16ths of Henry's name is there by chance and that the implied final letter is also coincidence, we would certainly have enjoyed extraordinarily good luck in finding

that it revealed how the puzzle works.

We are subject to no imperative on this matter; the ultimate value of this investigation has trumped any care about this particular solution. But for the time being, and awaiting further comment, we may tentatively accept the idea that the whole name is there, and quite ingeniously. If we conclude that this rendition is deliberate, we need offer no excuses for the composer's abilities. He was no struggling compromiser, and he even had a sense of humor. Speaking of the puzzle's composer, who was he?

**T** **O** **T** **H** **E** **O** **N** **L** **I** **E** **B** **E** **G** **E** **T** **T** **E** **R** **O**  
**F** **O** **F** **T** **H** **E** **S** **E** **I** **N** **S** **O** **N** **N** **E** **T** **S** **O** **N** **N** **E** **T** **S**  
**M** **'** **W** **H** **A** **L** **L** **H** **A** **P** **P** **I** **N** **E** **S** **S** **E**  
**A** **N** **D** **T** **H** **A** **T** **E** **T** **E** **R** **N** **I** **T** **I** **E**  
**P** **R** **O** **M** **I** **S** **E** **D**  
**B** **Y**  
**O** **U** **R** **E** **V** **E** **R** **L** **I** **V** **I** **N** **G** **P** **O** **E** **T**

Figure 6

### Thomas Thorpe's "CIPHERING" History

Thomas Thorpe's initials, *TT*, follow the Sonnets dedication and are the only other letters on the page, implying that Thorpe wrote the dedication. I think we can show that he did, at least up to the word "POET." Observe in Figure 6 that the dedication up to that point hides the name THOMAS THORPE in the same manner that we find HENRY WRIOTHESLE except that it is expressed even more neatly, from the start to the end of the text. Indeed, in this part of the dedication, no other significant name appears in this manner. As we will see in the next article (Part 2), the probability of this name's appearance by chance is just 2.5 percent.

Its appearance would be even less likely a coincidence if we were to find that Thorpe had embedded his name in exactly this way (see Figure 6) in previous publications under his direction.

After all, if there is no such other example, we might have reason to question the entire thesis of his involvement with the dedication and perhaps also with any design behind the appearance of Southampton's name. Not only would another example confirm the method of the Dedication Puzzle but it would also answer potential objections that "no one ever saw a puzzle like this before." Of course, no one would have seen anything like this unusual puzzle before if we discover that *it was someone's personal little game*.

Let's go straight to another of Thorpe's dedications. Katherine Duncan-Jones writes, "The...most puzzling link between [Richard Barnfield's] *Cynthia* and the *Sonnets* lies in its inclusion of...a floridly over-written commendatory poem by...one 'T.T. in commendation of the Authour his worke,' whose tone of cryptic knowingness is somewhat analogous to that of Thomas Thorpe's dedication to [*Shakespeare's Sonnets*]." She concludes from "This writer's fondness for contorted word-order and somewhat awkward compound epithets"<sup>4</sup> that he is probably Thomas Thorpe. As we are about to see, this is surely the case.

The poem consists of four stanzas of seven lines each, through which we find Thorpe's name embedded seven times in succession (more when counting all permutations). I doubt that the renditions



<b>THOMAS</b>	Whylom <b>th</b> at in a sh <b>E</b> phear <b>D</b> s gray coate <b>mask</b> ed,	<b>ED</b>
<b>THO</b>	(Where <b>m</b> As <b>k</b> ed love <b>th</b> e noneage of his skill)	<b>WA</b>
<b>RPE</b>	<b>R</b> ear <b>e</b> s now his Eagle-wing <b>e</b> <b>D</b> <b>pen</b> , new task <b>e</b> d,	<b>RD</b>
<b>THO</b>	To scale <b>th</b> e by-clift Muse <b>sole</b> -pleasing hill:	
<b>M</b>	Dropping sweete Nectar poesie from his quill,	
<b>AS THORPE</b>	<b>a</b> D <b>m</b> ires fayr <b>E</b> Cynthia with his <b>ivory pen</b>	<b>DE</b>
	Fayre Cynthia lo <b>V</b> 'd, f <b>E</b> a <b>R</b> 'd, of Gods and <b>m</b> En.	<b>VERE</b>
	Down <b>E</b> sliding from that clou <b>D</b> es ore-peering mountaine:	<b>ED</b>
	Decking <b>W</b> t double gr <b>A</b> ce ye neighbor plaines,	<b>WA</b>
	<b>D</b> R <b>a</b> wes christall <b>D</b> ew, fro[m] Pegase foot-sprong fou[n]tain,	<b>RD</b>
	Whose flowre-set banks, delights, sweet choyce containes;	
	Nere yet discover'd to the country swaines:	
	Heere bu <b>D</b> thos <b>E</b> branches, which adorne his turtle,	<b>DE</b>
	With lo <b>V</b> e mad <b>E</b> ga <b>R</b> lands, of hart-bleeding Mirt <b>L</b> E.	<b>VERE</b>
	Rays'd from th <b>E</b> cyn <b>D</b> ers, of the thrice-sact towne;	<b>ED</b>
	Illions sooth-telling Sybillist appears,	
	Eclipsing Phoebus love, with scornefull frowne, <sup>6</sup>	
	<b>W</b> hose tragick end, <b>A</b> ffoo <b>R</b> Ds warme-water teares,	<b>WARD</b>
	(For pittie-wanting Pacae, none forbear <b>e</b> s,	
	Such perio <b>D</b> haps, to b <b>E</b> auties price ore-priz'd;	<b>DE</b>
	Where Ianus-faced lo <b>V</b> E, doth lu <b>R</b> k <b>E</b> disguiz'd.	<b>VERE</b>
<b>TH</b>	<b>N</b> ere-waining Cynthia yeel <b>D</b> s thee triple thanks,	<b>ED</b>
<b>OM</b>	<b>W</b> hose be <b>A</b> mes unbo <b>R</b> row <b>E</b> d darke ye wor <b>L</b> D's fair <b>E</b> eye	<b>WARD</b>
<b>AS</b>	And <b>a</b> s full stream <b>e</b> s that <b>e</b> <b>V</b> E <b>R</b> fill th <b>E</b> yr banks;	<b>VERE</b>
<b>THORPE</b>	So <b>th</b> ose rare Sonnets, where wits <b>typ</b> e doth lie,	
<b>THOMAS</b>	With Troyan N <b>ym</b> phe; doe so <b>a</b> re thy fame to <b>sk</b> ye.	
<b>THO</b>	And <b>th</b> ose, and these, contend thy Muse to rayse	
<b>RPE</b>	(Larke mou[n]ting Muse) wt more the[n] comon <b>pr</b> aise.	

Figure 7

in the middle stanzas are deliberate, since the letters in Thorpe's name are fairly common. But the dual appearance of his name in the first and final stanzas, shown in bold capital letters to the left of the poem, may be intentional, particularly in light of further evidence of his technique. Recall that among the names I find embedded in the Sonnets dedication, only Thomas Thorpe appears in the original portion of it, and in beginning-to-end order. No other names that quickly come to mind appear that way in these two stanzas.

There is more. We do not find the name of the supposed author, "Richard Barnfield" (or "Richard Barnefeilde," as it is spelled in *Cynthia*), embedded in *any* of the stanzas. Is anyone else's name embedded therein? Yes, in *every* stanza, we find the name of the man I believe to be the true author, whom the poet was careful to tell us in the very first line appears "in a shepheards gray coate *masked*."<sup>5</sup> Along with his own name, Thorpe embedded "Edward de Vere" *in order, in every one of the stanzas*, using none of the letters required for his own name. Apparently we have discovered Thomas Thorpe's personal word game.

To the left of Figure 7 are two double renditions of Thorpe's name, marked with bold, lower-case letters in the text; to the right are the renditions of Oxford's name, marked with bold, capital letters in the text. The names are shown again to the left and right of Figure 7.

Observe some regularity in the layout, as shown to the right side of Figure 7. In every case, VERE appears intact on the final line that Thorpe uses to express the name, and DE appears in the line

before it. In the first three stanzas, those words may be found on the same lines: 6 and 7. The first two stanzas have the same layout of ED/WA/RD/DE/VERE, on the same lines (1, 2, 3, 6, 7). In the last stanza, the first three lines yield EDWARD DE VERE, and the last three lines yield THOMAS THORPE, as highlighted by the underlined side notes in Figure 7.

The next task was to test the probability that these names are embedded in the text by chance. Designing a fair statistical test is not as easy as you might think. We may not test the appearance of various random strings of 12 letters, because perhaps some letters were used less frequently in the Elizabethan age. Also, words naturally lend themselves to finding other words (including names), requiring a test of words or names instead of simply random letters. To satisfy as many criteria as possible for a fair test, I began with a list of 100 names of Elizabethan writers (basically every name that I had collected in my research up to that point; see Endnote 10). I culled out each "Thomas" and "Edward" (and an "Everard" and a "Devereux"), since they are forms against which we are testing. I then removed repeated forms (such as John), including only one instance of each, so as to remove any bias of inclusion or exclusion based on the availability or lack thereof of certain strings of letters. I took the remaining names and mixed them up to remove any bias in alphabetical listing. Then I strung them together and cut them into 72 pieces of 12 letters each.<sup>7</sup> I asked a statistician with a Masters degree in applied mathematics to run a series of tests. In testing the stanzas, we disregarded the

(Continued on page 16)

*Sonnets dedication (continued from page 15)*

imputed letters in brackets and the diminutive letters following the y's.

The simplest test for the possibility that THOMAS THORPE appears by chance in the Barnfield poem is to determine the likelihood of finding any of the 12-letter test "names" embedded twice in a row in the first and final stanzas, as his is. The answer is zero. A more generous question of how many test names appear twice in a row in *any* two stanzas, we find only two (sterherberdt and nsontourneur), indicating a probability of only 2.8 percent, or one instance out of 36. These strings of letters both appear in the middle stanzas, which is less suggestive of deliberate intent than Thorpe's name's appearance in the first and last. So we would have been remarkably lucky, absent intent, to have found Thorpe's name twice in a row in any two stanzas, much less the first and last.

We next tested two prominent aspects of the appearance of EDWARD DE VERE in the poem, namely its appearance at least once in each stanza and the consistent appearance of his last name alone on one line. Here are the results using our test names:

- Test names showing up in all four stanzas: 22%, or about 1 in 5.
- Test names showing up in all four stanzas with the final four letters on a single line each time: 4.2%, or 1 in 24.
- Test names showing up in all four stanzas with the final four letters *alone* on one line (i.e., with no other required letters in the pattern earlier on that line): *zero*.
- Test names showing up in all four stanzas with the final four letters alone on the *final* line of the stanza in at least three of the four stanzas: *zero*.

We next tested the chance of finding actual names of other Elizabethan poets in this text. I checked each stanza for names from the list of Elizabethan poets given in Endnote 10. Out of those 100 names, 11 also show up at least once in each stanza.<sup>8</sup> Three of them are Thomas, and one is an Edward, though, so there are only 7 independent names. We can tentatively estimate that the chance of "Edward de Vere" showing up *somewhere* in each stanza by chance is about one in ten. "Edward de Vere" is the *only* name that shows up so that the last name is intact on one line all four times. The probability of its being there by chance in that manner is apparently less than 1 in 100. Either assumption will serve our purpose in suggesting a high probability of deliberate design.

Now we can guess why Thorpe's "tone of cryptic knowingness is somewhat analogous to that of TT's dedication to [*Shakespeare's Sonnets*]." That tone is in both places *for the same reason*, which is that he was working not only to create English sense but also to embed names according to his personal word game. He was addressing the Earl of Oxford cryptically because he knew something that he could not otherwise reveal about the "masked" man (line 1) wielding "his *ivory* (E.Ver-y) pen" (line 6). Thorpe was involved in at least two of Oxford's projects, one for Thomas Nashe in 1590 and this one for Barnfield in 1595, which made him a sensible choice for publishing the Sonnets

in 1609. With all these connections, we may perceive personal meaning in Thorpe's use of the word *our* in "our ever-living poet."

### The Same Construct Appears in the Inscription on the Stratford Monument

Sometime between 1616 (when it is dated, per Shaksper's death) and 1623 (the probable time), someone erected a monument in the Holy Trinity Church of Stratford-Upon-Avon. It showed a merchant with a sack of grain. Several decades later, someone altered it to show the man with a quill pen and a pillow. Fronting the monument is an inscription in Latin and English, as shown in Figure 8.

IVDICIO PYLIUM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM,  
TERRA TEGIT, POPULUS MAERET, OLYMPUS HABET

STAY PASSENGER, WHY GOEST THOU BY SO FAST?  
**READ IF THOU CANST**, WHOM ENVIOUS DEATH HATH  
PLAST

WITH IN THIS MONUMENT **SHAKSPEARE**: WITH WHOME,  
QUICK NATURE DIDE: WHOSE NAME, DOTH DECK YS TOMBE,  
FAR MORE, THEN COST: SIEH ALL, YT HE HATH WRITT,  
LEAVES LIVING ART, BUT PAGE, TO SERVE HIS WITT.

Figure 8

The message begins with a Latin inscription that is inappropriate to Shakespeare but can be taken as a cynical dig at Shaksper. There is more to pique the skepticism of the careful reader. The inscription does not spell Shakespeare the way that name appears in the poet's publications. It is spelled "Shakspeare," providing the *short a* sound of the first half of Shaksper's name and the *long e* sound of the second half of Shakespeare's name, as if to equivocate just enough to satisfy local people who think they are looking at monument created for Shaksper and visitors who come to see a monument to Shakespeare. The words of the inscription are evasive and non-specific, telling us naught about who "Shakspeare" was or why he had a monument. The reference to his "witt" and what he hath "writt" is similarly obscure. If one is in on the story of Shakespeare and Shaksper, one can easily read the lines as hilarious sarcasm: "All that he hath writ [*which is absolutely nothing*] leaves...but page [i.e., *an empty page*] to serve his witt."

The inscription's most intriguing words are "Read if thou canst," which is a bold challenge to look for something to read that would not be obvious to everyone. Does the layout of the inscription provide a hint of what one should find?

	<b>E D W A R D</b>	
	<u>IVDICIO PYLIUM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM,</u>	
	<u>TERRA TEGIT, POPULUS MAERET, OLYMPUS HABET</u>	
	<b>D E V E R E</b>	
	STAY PASSENGER, WHY GOEST THOU BY SO FAST?	
<b>EDWA</b>	<b>READ</b> IF THOU CANST, WHOM <b>EN</b> VIOUS <b>DE</b> ATH HATH PLAST	<b>ED</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>W</b> ITH IN THIS MONUMENT <b>SHAKSPEARE</b> : WITH WHOME,	<b>WA</b>
<b>D DE</b>	QUICK NATURE <b>D</b> IDE: WHOSE NAME, <b>D</b> OTH <b>DE</b> CK YS TOMBE,	<b>RD DE</b>
	FAR MORE, THEN COST: SIEH ALL, YT HE HATH WRITT,	
<b>VERE</b>	LEAVES LIVING ART, BUT PAGE, TO <b>SERVE</b> HIS WITT.	<b>VERE</b>

Figure 9



Observe as shown at the top of Figure 9 that the Latin words beginning the inscription comprise *twelve words*, separated into two lines of *six words each*. This layout corresponds to the six letters in each of the first and last names of Edward de Vere. The English verse is also laid out in *six lines*, reflecting the same theme. Could this layout be providing the same hint given by the twelve lines, divided 6-2-4, in the Sonnets dedication, as surmised by Rollett? Are we being entreated to seek the letters that spell the true name of Shakespeare? I think so.

In the monument's inscription, EDWARD DE VERE is embedded in the text in the same manner that we find "Thomas Thorpe" in the Sonnets' dedication, i.e., starting at the beginning of the text and ending at the end. In fact, the name is there *twice*, which makes the probability soar that it was placed there on purpose. Its appearance requires two sets of 12 sequential letters in 42 words of 178 letters.

Figure 9 shows both renderings of the name. The bold sequence derives from the first set of available letters, the underlined sequence from the second set. Aside from the double rendering, some aspects of the layout are further suggestive of deliberate design:

- (1) In both cases, "EDWARD DE" is found over three consecutive lines, a line is skipped entirely, and then "VERE" is all on one line.
- (2) "VERE" is intact on the *final* line of the inscription both times. In Thorpe's dedicatory poem to Barnfield, VERE is intact on the final line required for the name every time and on the final line of a stanza three times out of four.
- (3) The "DE" is together in both instances and on the same line (line 4).
- (4) Both times, the name appears in the order of the message and only in that order. In other words, there is no coincidental occurrence of the name starting from any point after line one and circling back through the text to that point.
- (5) The names begin not on the first line but rather with the suggestive phrase, "read if thou canst."

### Testing the Probability of Chance

If you think it would be easy to find two names embedded twice in the monument's inscription in this manner, try a little test. Give yourself the extra leeway of using all six lines of the message and look for some of your favorite names. Francis Bacon? No, it's not there even once. Roger Manners? Nope, not once. Christopher Marlowe? You can't even get "Christopher" out of it. William Stanley? No, you can't even get "William." Which means we also can't get William Shaksper, either. In fact, if you start at "Read if thou canst," you can't even get "Bill." Surely we can get just Shakespeare, since we are already given "Shakspeare" in a single word. Sorry, you can't get that, either. John Lyly? Forget it; you can't even get the first letter, J. But "Edward de Vere" is there, all 12 letters in a row, twice.

To obtain the probability of EDWARD DE VERE appearing twice in this manner by chance, we did four tests, using the 72 12-letter test names listed in Endnote 7. We were generous in using the *entire* text, not just that beginning with "Read if Thou Canst." Here are the results:

—Test names showing up in the text twice, from beginning to end, without using any of the same letters of the text: 3 out of 72,

or 4.2 percent.

—Test names showing up as above but with the final four letters on any single line each time: *one*.

—Test names showing up as above but with the final four letters on the same (much less the last) line: *zero*.

EDWARD DE VERE's special appearance has a *very* low probability of occurring by chance. We could not find a single test name out of 72 in which the final four letters, much less the entire last name, appear in the same line, much less in the last line of the text, much less when beginning with the second line, "Read if thou canst." Recall also that the prefix DE is found intact both times, on the same line. We would have to test thousands of 12-letter sequences to get an accurate statistical probability of EDWARD DE VERE appearing by chance in this manner. For now, however, we have enough information to postulate deliberate design.

I next decided to do a statistical test that would satisfy the question that the inscription appears boldly to ask, "*Canst thou read* who the real poet is?" Using all six lines of the message, I tested the inscription<sup>9</sup> for the names of 100 Elizabethan poets to see who else the poet might be.<sup>10</sup> Not a single other name appears so that the last name is intact on the final line.

Only four names show up twice somewhere in the text. One of them is Edward Dyer, which is there simply because "Edward de" has been purposely embedded there already, thereby requiring only two more letters to produce the name.<sup>11</sup> The remaining three names are *Thomas Nashe*, *Thomas Twyne* and *Thomas Watson*. "Thomas" appears compactly in full on the second line of the inscription (the same line that begins both renditions of Edward de Vere), aiding this result. As it happens, my research shows that all three of these twice-appearing names—Thomas Nashe, Thomas Twyne and Thomas Watson—are among Oxford's pseudonyms. So from a list of 100 Elizabethan poets, among the only five whose names appear twice, four are either the Earl of Oxford or one of his pseudonyms, while the fifth is a near copy of Edward de Vere, rendering it irrelevant.

Because the three Thomases share a first name, it is highly unlikely that all their names are there on purpose. We have three possible explanations: (1) They are all there by chance; (2) they result by chance as derivatives from a purposeful single embedding of the name Thomas Thorpe; (3) all three of them are there deliberately as examples of Oxford's pseudonyms; (4) one or two of them are there deliberately, and the others result by chance. If *any* of the four Thomases (including Thorpe) are there deliberately, then those remaining are probably there by chance, which means that we have *no* additional names from our list appearing twice unaided by design.

The fact that "Thomas" begins on the same line as "Edward" is suggestive of a purposeful embedding. If one of the three Thomases is there on purpose, it is probably Thomas Nashe, given evidence I have found that Nashe was Jonson's favorite among Oxford's pseudonyms.<sup>12</sup> "Thomas" appears in full on line two and "Nashe" in full on line three and on line four. If *any* of the four Thomases (including Thorpe) are there deliberately, then those remaining would be much more likely to appear, which would mean that we have *no* additional names from our list appearing twice unaided by design.

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To gain some insight into the exclusivity of this construction, we might also ask how many among the 100 names of Elizabethan poets show up at least *once*. If we eliminate from consideration all poets named Edward or Thomas, then only five independent names show up even *once*, and only *two* of those show up if we begin on line two, where Edward de Vere begins. *No name appears even once if we require the last name to be intact in the final line.* From all this, we can be secure in concluding that someone arranged the Stratford monument inscription to spell out twice the true name of Shakespeare.

To obtain the probability of finding “Edward de Vere” in *both* Thorpe’s ode to Barnfield and the Stratford monument by chance as we have, we must multiply their two probabilities together. By the most loosely construed rules of construction, that probability is .22 x .042, or 1 in 100. By the most restrictively construed rules, the probability is beyond our simple tests to compute.

I further suggest that it is not coincidence that *both* compositions produce the name “Vere” intact on the final line of the poem or stanza in five renderings. The composers seem to have done so as a rule of construction.

### Did Thorpe Do It?

We certainly must allow that some authority commissioned Thomas Thorpe to create the Stratford monument inscription, within which he once again employed his personal word game. While I recoil from the gratuitous condescension that attends mentions of Thorpe in the orthodox literature, composing for the Stratford monument does seem rather an exalted commission for one of Oxford’s occasional publishers. If it wasn’t Thorpe, it was probably someone intimately associated with Thorpe who shared or had adopted his method of hiding names in texts. Given our evidence that an original text for the Sonnets dedication was expanded beyond the requirement of neatly embedding Thorpe’s name, we may surmise that whoever created the Stratford monument inscription might also have had a hand in creating the remaining portion of the Sonnets dedication. As we will explore in a future article, the investigation ultimately leads to Ben Jonson. But for now we have a more important question to ask.

### Why Those Particular Words?

If Thorpe had successfully embedded his own name in the first part of the Sonnets dedication as was his custom, why did he or someone else add eight additional words and choose such gibberish in doing so? Only W-R-I-O was missing from Southampton’s name in a run through the original dedication. Certainly, had the composer wished to add only enough words to generate the required letters to complete Southampton’s name, he could have written a better line than “wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth.” For example, “WRITER, AUTHOR” would finish the message after “POET” well enough, i.e., “...promised by our ever-living poet, writer, author.” Two simple words such as these would simultaneously provide W-R-I-O to complete Henry’s name *and* make the hidden message read, quite sensibly, “THESE SONNETS ALL BY EVER, AUTHOR.” *Why did the composer append those particularly odd eight words instead?*

This question opened Pandora’s Box. The answer had to be that the composer’s project was much larger than embedding just a single name. That he settled for such obtuse verbiage almost

certainly meant that he had hidden other names pertinent to *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* in the message.

*Future articles will discuss a statistical analysis of the puzzle, the names of the Sonnets’ producers, the real-life characters in Shakespeare’s Sonnets and the probable role of Ben Jonson in the project.*

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### Endnotes:

1. *The Complete Illustrated Shakespeare*, ed. Howard Staunton, Park Lane, New York, 1979, p.758.
2. Rollett, John. *The Elizabethan Review*, Autumn 1997.
3. Almost the same wordplay occurs in English. The final *AND* precedes the opening word, *THAT*. The letter *Y* in those years was commonly used to stand for the Old English “thorn,” the first two letters in certain short articles beginning with *th*, such as *the*, *this* or *that*, as in “Whose beames unborrowed darke y<sup>e</sup> world’s faire eye,” which is found in Thomas Thorpe’s dedication to Barnfield. The *y* in such cases was typically followed by a tiny lower-case letter to indicate which specific article was meant. For example, *y<sup>e</sup>* denoted *the*, *y<sup>s</sup>* meant *this*, and *y<sup>t</sup>* denoted *that*. So after using all words necessary to spell “Henry Wriothesle” up to the final letter, the next words are “...AND THAT;” perhaps a clever way of approximately saying, “...AND Y.” I have no intention of arguing the deliberateness of this particular wordplay, because of its imprecision in that *Y* is not *precisely* “that” and also because using the word *THAT* in this manner requires overlapping the *H* that begins HENRY. As we will deduce, the composer did not, and indeed could not, allow such an overlap when embedding a name in the dedication.
4. Duncan-Jones, Katherine. (1998) *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*. Arden Shakespeare, p.91, 47.
5. There is a further connection between Barnfield and Oxford that will be important later when we discuss Ben Jonson.
6. There is also a very compact rendering of EDWARD DE VERE across the second and third stanzas, with EDWARD DE in lines 5 and 6 of stanza two and VERE on line 3 of stanza three. Also, there is another VERE among the three words, “ivory pen/ Fayre.” There is also an EDWARD DE ERE in the last three lines of the final stanza, with ERE on the final line, where it belongs. I can make a case that the missing V in this otherwise ideally positioned rendering is but a typesetter’s error.
7. Here are the 72 12-letter name-based patterns that we tested: MichaelDrayt, onHeywoodAch, elowLewickeF, lemingGrange, WilliamAlaba, sterHerbertD, aviesJamesMa, bbeBarnabeBa, rnesWatsonGe, rvaseMarkham, AngellDayOwe, nSackvilleMa, rkAlexanderB, oydPeeleNich, olasMarstonW, ebsterGeorge, BucCampionTa, ylorGeoffrey, GatesChurchy, ardLodgeDavi, dRowlandSamu, elDanielChri, stopherMarlo, weForsettGol, dingRobertPe, rcyWeeverFai, rfxDyerMidd, letonFerrers, EdmundBolton, AbrahamGooge, LokFraunceMo, ffettTilneyD, onnePhilipSi, dneYFulkeGre, villeDekkerJ, osephHallArt, hurBrookeCon, stableWotton, GabrielHarve, yMaryPorting, tonDeloneyFr, ancisMeresJa, sperWarnerHu, ghHollandBen, SmithMontgom, erieBretonJo, nsonTourneur, HumphreyKing, KydJohnClaph, amBlenerhass, etLaneSoowth, ernDickenson, EmiliaLanyer, TurbervilleL, ylyDeebleWhe, tstoneSouthw, ellAnthonyMu, ndayWillobie, NasheHaringt, onProctorWal, terGuilpinSp, enserRaleighB, astardWilmot, TwyneGreeneH, enryChettleM, atthewRoyden, FernandoStan, leyStillJosh, uaSylvesterR, ichardBarnfi, eldCharlesCy, rilUnderdown.
8. Here are the names found in each stanza. Shared names appearing are in bold: **Thomas** Bastard, Henry Chettle, Angell Day, Michael Drayton, **Edward** Forsett, Mary Herbert, **Thomas** Nashe, Matthew Royden, Owen Roydon, **Thomas** Watson, and Henry Wotton. None of them appears with the last name intact on one line.



9. As in the Barnfield test, I took the Ys in Ys and Yt at face value, but it does not really matter to our results, as this is only a statistical test. You are welcome to try it using “this” and “that.”
10. Here are the names I tested for inclusion in the monument inscription. Underlined names appear at least once. The dual numbers denote the number of times that name appears, from the start of the message and from line two, where Edward de Vere begins. Shared names appearing are in bold: **Thomas Achelow** (1,1), William Alabaster, Barnabe Barnes, Richard Barnfield, Thomas Bastard, Thomas Blenerhasset, Edmund Bolton, Mark Alexander Boyd, Nicholas Breton (1,0), Arthur Brooke, George Buc, Thomas Campion, George Chapman, Henry Chettle (1,0), Thomas Churchyard, John Clapham, Henry Constable, Samuel Daniel, John Davies, Angell Day, Nicholas Deeble, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Deloney, Robert Devereux, John Dickenson, John Donne, Michael Drayton, **Edward Dyer** (2,2), Richard Edwards, Edward Fairfax, George Ferrers, Abraham Fleming, **Edward Forsett** (1,1), Abraham Fraunce, Geoffrey Gates (1,0), Arthur Golding, Barnabe Googe, John Grange, Robert Greene, Fulke Greville, Everard Guilpin, Joseph Hall, John Harington, Gabriel Harvey, Mary Herbert (Sidney) (1,1), Jasper Heywood, Hugh Holland, Ben Jonson, Humphrey King, Thomas Kyd, John Lane, Emilia Lanyer (Bassana/o), Edward Lewicke, Thomas Lodge, Henry Lok, John Lyly, James Mabbe, Gervase Markham, Christopher Marlowe, John Marston, Francis Meres, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Moffett, Alexander Montgomerie, Anthony Munday, **Thomas Nashe** (2,2), George Peele, William Percy, Richard Portington, **Thomas Proctor** (1,1), Walter Raleigh (1,1), David Rowland, Samuel Rowlands, Matthew Royden, Owen Roydon, Thomas Sackville, Philip Sidney, William Smith, John Soowthern, Robert Southwell, Edmund Spenser, Fernando Stanley, William Stanley, John Still, Joshua Sylvester, John Taylor, Charles Tilney, Cyril Tourneur, George Turberville, Nicholas Turberville, **Thomas Twyne** (2,2), Thomas Underdowne, William Warner, **Thomas Watson** (2,2), John Webster, John Weever, George Whetstone, Henry Willobie, Robert Wilmot and Henry Wotton.
11. If you want to make a case that the writer meant to cite Dyer and that de Vere is there by coincidence, be my guest.
12. One might also propose that Nashe, Twyne or Watson is included deliberately because he was a writer in his own right and co-wrote the Shakespeare canon with Oxford, but the evidence strongly contraindicates this view.

### Sidebar - A Possible Decoding Device

From our point of view, finding the names hidden in the Sonnets dedication presents a puzzle. From the point of view of its creators, it probably wasn't one. Even people in on the secrets of Oxford's life might not know what to look for in any specific layout. Worse, some names can show up as artifacts unintended by the creator. Hidden messages that have no planned method of solution (this discovery notwithstanding) are unlikely ever to be read. Therefore, we should consider the possibility that there was a device for reading the secretly embedded names in such constructs. Although there could be some sort of internal decoding device, I haven't found one. What else could it be?

The layout of the dedication hints at an answer. The words are printed in *capital letters, equally spaced apart*, as if to give each letter equal status for some decoding process. The lower-case *r* in “Mr.” is disproportionately small, as if to avoid having it get in the way. I suggest that the answer may lie not within the dedication itself but in physical decoders. *Pieces of paper with holes cut out, corresponding to the letters in each embedded name*, would work just fine. Figure A shows such a page, with holes in it corresponding to certain letters in the dedication. When it is overlaid onto the dedication, one reads only THOMAS THORPE, as shown in Figure B. This idea has further application in that one could use such a device to extract the whole-word message, THESE SONNETS ALL BY

EVER, from the dedication *without* being forced to include the offending additional words, THE FORTH. So this possible answer solves two problems at once. Moreover, we can easily see how the word AND could appear in a single box, denoting the single letter Y at the end of HENRY WRIOTHESLEY and providing some amusement in the process.

This solution to the question of decoding is utter conjecture, as I have no evidence that any Elizabethans used such a device. (Such evidence may yet turn up, as I haven't sought it out.) But one can easily imagine a sheaf of perforated papers surreptitiously accompanying a copy of *Shake-speare's Sonnets* for those in on the secret. Behind closed doors, champions of the Earl of Oxford might have gotten together to enjoy the parlor game of overlaying the pages onto the dedication and reading and discussing the identities of the players in his life's story. If some agent of the Cecils or the king saw the papers, so what? “Those silly things? They are just my daughter's playtime cut-outs.”

Speaking of puzzle devices, what should we make of the periods that permeate the message? There are 28 of them, and they have no obvious function. One possibility is that they denote the number of deliberately embedded names. This series of articles lists or alludes to 21 likely inclusions. We will explore other possibilities later.

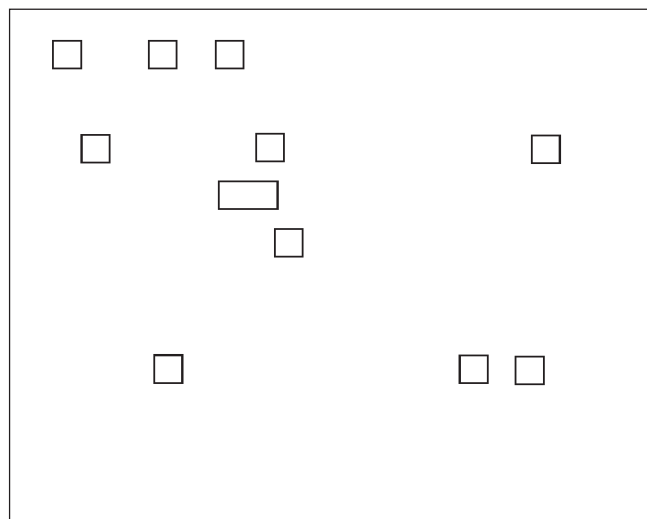


Figure A

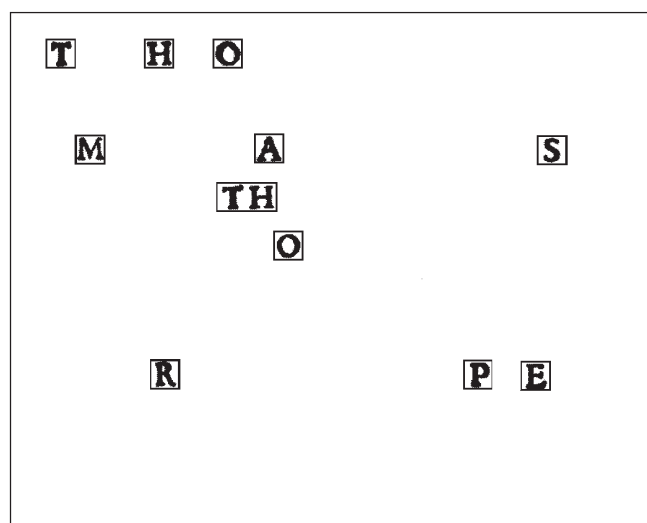


Figure B

# Robert, Earl of Essex— *Who's Your Daddy?*

By C. V. Berney

*Things are seldom what they seem,  
Skim milk masquerades as cream;  
High-lows pass as patent-leathers,  
Jackdaws strut in peacock feathers*  
—W. S. Gilbert

In 1559 Robert Dudley, later created Earl of Leicester, was the handsome, dashing courtier who was just appointed the Queen's Master of Horse.<sup>1</sup>

In 1587 Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, was the handsome, dashing courtier who was just appointed the Queen's Master of Horse.<sup>2</sup>

There are many other curious parallels between the lives of these two men.

- Both acquired power in the Elizabethan court by means of a personal relationship with the Queen.

- In May 1590, Elizabeth granted Essex the 'farm of sweet wines,' a lucrative import monopoly. The previous beneficiary of this grant was Leicester.<sup>3</sup>

- Both Leicester and Essex availed themselves freely of the sexual resources available to them. The 1584 pamphlet *Leicester's Commonwealth* says of Dudley: "Neither holdeth he any rule in his lust besides only the motion and suggestion of his own sensuality . . . What he best liketh, that he taketh as lawful for the time . . . There are not (by report) two noblewomen about her Majesty . . . whom he hath not solicited by potent ways: neither contented with this place of honor, he hath descended to seek pasture among the waiting gentlewomen of her Majesty's Great Chamber . . ." <sup>4</sup> Essex is described as indulging in "a bold pattern of promiscuity" at the Court, conducting affairs with four of the Maids of Honor at the same time, while his wife, Frances Walsingham (daughter of the spymaster and widow of the sainted Sir Philip Sidney), was pregnant.<sup>5</sup>

- Both Leicester and Essex were improvident, spending freely to maintain their positions and accumulating enormous debts. When Leicester died he owed the Queen £25,000, plus a similar amount to private creditors; in his will he noted "I have always lived above any living I had (for which I am heartily sorry)".<sup>6</sup> As for Essex, a biographer describes his preparations for the military campaign in the Netherlands: "Ignoring his existing debts, he ran up bills for the best part of £1,000 in the course of recruiting and equipping a train of some 700 gentlemen and 1,585 common soldiers to follow him into battle. In vain did his grandfather, Sir Francis Knollys, reproach him for his extravagance: "wasteful prodigality hath devoured and will consume all noble men that be willful in expenses," he warned in a long letter that pointed out that even if Essex

sold the lands that he was free to sell, he would still be hopelessly in debt.<sup>7</sup>

- Both men were put in charge of overseas military campaigns that ended disastrously. In September 1585, Elizabeth named Leicester commander of an expeditionary force to be sent to the Netherlands to help the Dutch in their struggle to overthrow the tyranny of Spain. He landed at Vlissingen on 10 December, and the Dutch received him ecstatically. He and his officers traveled from city to city, feasting "with abundant pomp" and receiving the accolades of the city officials. One author comments "Leicester was committed not so much to leading an armed force as to conducting a royal progress—in which, naturally, he was reveling."<sup>8</sup> In March 1599 Elizabeth appointed Essex commander of a force to sail to Ireland and put down the rebels led by Tyrone. Rather than engage the rebels, Essex and his party traveled from city to city, being fêted by the local English. A courtier reported Elizabeth's reaction: "The Queen is nothing satisfied with the Earl of Essex's manner of proceeding, nor likes anything that is done; but says she allows him £1000 a day to go on progress."<sup>9</sup>

Both men were said to be tall and handsome. A description of Leicester: "He had dark brown hair with a reddish tint (the tint was more pronounced in his beard and moustache), fine brown eyes, and a long prominent nose, with a bridge to it, rather like the Queen's own: she seems to like such noses, for Essex's was similar."<sup>10</sup> A description of Essex: "He was tall, long-faced, with a broad forehead from which he brushed back his fierce red hair. His nose was aristocratic, with a high bridge, almost Roman, his fingers slender but manly. When his stubble permitted he ventured to sprout a fine ginger beard and moustache."<sup>11</sup>

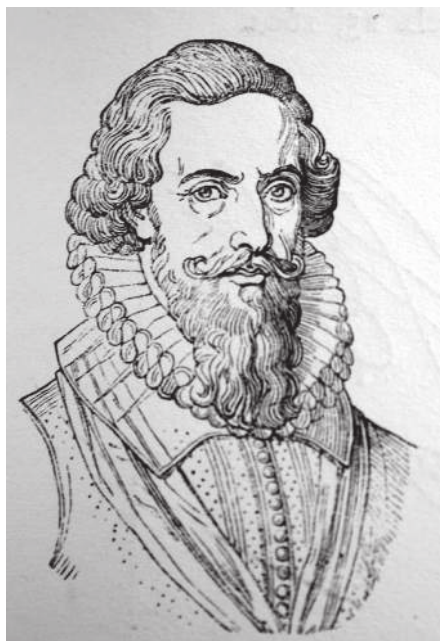
**Essex's mother.** Lettice Knollys was born in 1540. In 1561 she married Walter Devereux, then Viscount Hereford, later created 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Essex. Robert Lacey describes her as follows:

---

*"Essex was fortunate in  
having what seems  
to be the kindest  
stepfather in  
all England.  
The man could not  
be expected to do  
more for his own  
flesh and blood."*

---





Robert, Earl of Essex



A



B

The leftmost portrait is of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. One of the men labeled A or B is his biological father. Which one? You decide! Identifications are in note 20 of the End Notes.

She was a beautiful woman in the dark sullen fashion that can infuriate men with desire—and women with jealousy. She flaunted her beauty shamelessly, first to capture Walter Devereux, but soon after her marriage to capture other lovers. . . . Lettice Devereux and Leicester had met while Walter, Lettice's husband, was still alive, and through the autumn of 1565 they had carried on a wild flirtation of which Walter was most probably unaware but which infuriated Elizabeth to the point of a blazing quarrel between the Queen and her favourite.<sup>12</sup>

In July 1573 Walter Devereux embarked for Ireland at the head of an expedition to put down rebellion there. In July 1575 Leicester staged an enormous extravaganza at his country seat of Kenilworth, a last-ditch attempt to persuade Elizabeth to marry him. Unbeknownst to the Queen, Lettice was staying with him at the time. Devereux returned to England in November 1575. In December, Antonio de Guaras, a Spanish agent, reported the following:

As the thing is publicly talked of in the streets, there is no objection to my writing openly about the great enmity that exists between the Earl of Leicester and the Earl of Essex in consequence, it is said, of the fact that, while Essex was in Ireland, his wife had two children by Leicester. Great discord is expected.<sup>13</sup>

Due in large part to political pressure exerted by Leicester, Devereux was sent back to Ireland in July 1576. He died two months later under suspicious circumstances.<sup>14</sup> In 1578 Leicester married Lettice, thus becoming stepfather to Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex.

**Leicester's generosity.** When a male lion takes over a pride containing a lioness with cubs, he kills the cubs and impregnates the lioness, ensuring the primacy of his own genetic material.

Similar behavior occurs among humans: the abuse or murder of a child by a stepfather or live-in boyfriend is, sadly, an all-too-frequent occurrence. Thus it is heartwarming to note the benevolence with which Leicester, a man of many flaws, treated his stepson, Essex.

- It was Leicester who introduced Essex to the Court in 1584.
- When Leicester was planning his expedition to the Netherlands in August 1585, he appointed Essex his "general of horse," a great honor for a 19-year-old.
- Leicester rewarded Essex for his participation in a skirmish at Zutphen in September 1586 by making him a "knight banneret."
- On 11 April 1588 Essex was awarded an honorary Master of Arts at Oxford, the university of which Leicester was chancellor.<sup>15</sup>
- Leicester made Essex a major beneficiary of his will, but the property would devolve to him only after the death of his mother.<sup>16</sup> Since Essex was executed in 1601 and Lettice didn't die until 1634, the bequest did not improve Essex's financial position.

Essex was fortunate in having what seems to be the kindest stepfather in all England. The man could not be expected to do more for his own flesh and blood.

**When was Essex born?** The birth date of Robert Devereux is strangely elusive. All historians are agreed that he was born in November, but some of them say it was the 10<sup>th</sup>, others the 19<sup>th</sup>. There is an even greater divergence of opinion with regard to the year: some say 1565, others say 1566, and a third group

(Continued on page 22)

*Daddy (continued from page 21)*

(including most modern historians) opts for 1567. It is known that he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in May 1577, which makes the later date seem unlikely.<sup>17</sup> The *DNB* gives the date as 19 November 1566. If this is indeed the correct date, and if the “wild flirtation” between Lettice and Leicester in the fall of 1565 lasted (however surreptitiously) into February, it is physically possible that Leicester was in fact Essex’s biological father. Perhaps the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl suspected this. One writer notes

... Essex [Walter Devereux] had been deeply suspicious over his wife’s flirtation with the Favourite ten years before [in 1565], and particularly over the later arrival of a son, Robert, who could have been Leicester’s and for whom, perhaps in consequence, he held, according to Sir Henry Wotton, “a very cold conceit,” giving his affection to his second son, Walter.<sup>18</sup>

**Was Leicester capable of getting children?** Most assuredly so. The rumor that Lettice bore him a daughter while Walter

“To me, this  
possible blood  
relationship  
makes the  
deathbed scene  
even more  
poignant.”

Devereux was in Ireland has enough corroborative detail to be convincing.<sup>13</sup> In August 1574, Lady Douglass Sheffield, under the impression that she was married to Leicester, bore him a son, who was suggestively named “Robert Dudley.” Leicester openly acknowledged him as his heir until he tired of Lady Douglass and married Lettice; after that he was careful to refer to the younger Robert as “my base son,” to avoid giving the impression that he (Leicester) was a bigamist. Around 1579 Lettice

bore Leicester a son, again named “Robert” and given the title “Lord Denbigh.” Leicester immediately began making plans to marry his heir to the infant Arabella Stuart, who had a claim to eventual succession to the throne. He was crushed when his “royal imp” died at the age of five.

**Essex and Sidney.** Every biography of Essex tells of his touching friendship with Sir Philip Sidney, the Flower of English Knighthood. Both went with Leicester to fight the Spanish in the Low Countries, and both took part in the skirmish at Zutphen in 1586. Sidney was wounded in the leg. Gangrene set in, and he died two weeks later, bequeathing to Essex “my best sword,” and charging him to take care of his wife, Frances. Essex fulfilled this obligation by marrying her, while continuing his wicked ways with the Maids of Honor. If Leicester was Essex’s father, Essex and Sidney were more than best pals, they were *first cousins*, since Sidney’s mother was Mary Dudley, Leicester’s sister. To me, this possible blood relationship makes the deathbed scene even more poignant.

**Is there a gene for overreaching?** Leicester’s grandfather,

Edmund Dudley, was commissioned by Henry VII to raise money for the crown. Edmund did this so ruthlessly that he overreached, becoming so unpopular that when Henry VIII succeeded to the throne he had to behead Edmund to prevent rebellion. Leicester’s father, John Dudley, cunningly married his oldest son, Guildford, to Lady Jane Grey, whose ancestry made her a candidate for the crown. When Edward VI died in 1553, John proclaimed his daughter-in-law to be queen. But he had overreached; Mary Tudor had the support of the people, and John, Guildford and Lady Jane Grey were executed for high treason. Leicester’s failed expedition in the Netherlands would show him to be an overreacher even if crimes such as bigamy and serial murder<sup>14</sup> did not, but somehow he was cunning enough, or charming enough, or deep enough in the Queen’s favor to avoid paying the supreme penalty. Was Essex an overreacher? His biographer says so specifically and repeatedly,<sup>19</sup> in the last instance when discussing the “Essex rebellion” of 1601. If Robert Devereux was Robert Dudley’s natural son, he represents the fourth generation of that family to be executed for treason.

#### Endnotes:

1. *Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 1917), VI, 112. Dudley was named Master of Horse 11 January 1559.
2. Robert Lacey, *Robert, Earl of Essex* (Atheneum, 1971), 43. Lacey writes that Elizabeth made Essex Master of Horse on 18 June 1587; the *DNB* (V, 876) gives the date as 23 December 1587.
3. *DNB* V, 877.
4. *Leicester’s Commonwealth*, Dwight C. Peck, ed. (Ohio University Press, 1985), 88.
5. Arthur Gould Lee, *The Son of Leicester* (Gollancz, 1964), 93.
6. Lacey, 49.
7. Lacey, 35.
8. Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974), 267.
9. Johnson, 397.
10. Johnson, 119.
11. Lacey, 24.
12. Lacey, 15-16. This author is not a rumor-monger, but rather a rumor-squelcher. Thus when he describes the 1565 encounter between Lettice and Leicester as “a wild flirtation,” one suspects that it involved considerably more than expressive glances and whispered compliments.
13. Alison Weir, *The Life of Elizabeth I* (Ballantine, 1998), 303. Since Walter Devereux didn’t leave for Ireland until 1573, neither of the two children to which de Guaras refers could have been Robert Devereux. *Leicester’s Commonwealth* (p. 82) mentions one child, a daughter, born to Lettice while Walter was in Ireland, and says the child was raised by Lady Chandos, the wife of William Knollys, who was Lettice’s older brother and a friend of Leicester’s.
14. C. V. Berney, “Leicester’s Commonwealth: Portrait of a Serial Killer?” *Shakespeare Matters* 3.4 (Summer 2004), 22-5, 36.
15. *DNB* V, 876.
16. Lacey, 50.
17. Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Treason in Tudor England* (Princeton, 1986), 193.
18. Lee, 28.
19. Lacey, 35, 311.
20. Portrait A is of Walter Devereux, Essex’s putative father. Portrait B is of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. All three drawings are from *The Official Baronage of England* by James E. Doyle (Longmans, Green, 1886).



## Book Notes

While we have no book reviews for this issue (nor in the pipeline for our summer 2005 issue,) there are indeed new books continuing to come out that are either directly or indirectly about the authorship debate. Reviews will return in our Fall 2005 issue.

Meanwhile, here are some brief notes on four recent publications that might be of interest to our readers.

**The Case for Shakespeare**, by Scott McCrea (Praeger, 2005). The subtitle is "The end of the authorship question," and Praeger's publicity flyer proclaims it be "C.S.I. : Stratford-on-Avon." Whereas recent books such as Greenblatt's *Will in the World* and Wood's *In Search of Shakespeare* scarcely bother to mention the authorship debate, let alone Oxford, McCrea is a man on a mission, and there is no shortage of authorship commentary in his work. Those engaged in the authorship debate are dismissed as "heretics," which gives some idea of how it reads. Early returns from those who have read McCrea is that it is book that needs to be carefully analyzed by Oxfordians and responded to.

**Shadowplay**, by Clare Asquith (Public Affairs Press, 2005). The publisher's blurb for this one reads: "An utterly compelling combination of literary detection and political revelation, *Shadowplay* is the definitive expose of how Shakespeare lived through and understood the agonies of this time, and what he had to say about them." Asquith's underlying thesis is that Shakespeare was a secret Catholic, which then explains everything (as our readers know, this is the beat researcher Peter Dickson has been on for nearly 10 years now). And, as with McCrea, the subtext here is, "Authorship debate over ... we have an answer."

**Players: the Mysterious Identity of William Shakespeare**, by Bertram Fields. (Regan Books, 2005). This book, written by a Hollywood lawyer, promotes Oxford as Shakespeare and covers much of the basic ground in the debate. While there's nothing new in the book, the story here is that Fields is high profile enough to be getting plenty of interviews. He's been on CNN's *Larry King Show*, reviewed in the *Los Angeles Times*, and interviewed in the *New York Times*. Which is all to the good.

**Great Oxford: essays on the life and work of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, 1550-1604.** (Parapress Ltd., 2004). This book was published by the De Vere Society in England in 2004, under the general editorship of Richard Malim. It contains 38 essays which had either been published in the De Vere Society Newsletter or adapted by the authors for inclusion in this collection. This book is a must have for anyone interested in the authorship debate and the case for Oxford.

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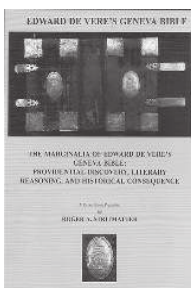
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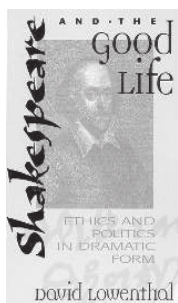
**Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible.** By Roger Stritmatter. (514 p.) The landmark Ph.D. thesis that analyzes the annotations in Oxford's Geneva Bible in light of the Shakespeare texts and Oxford's identity as Shakespeare. \$69.00



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Column  
A year in the life  
By Hank Whittemore

## 1601 (IV): “Three Winters cold...”

Shakespeare writes to the Fair Youth in Sonnet 104, “Three Winters cold have from the forests shook three summers’ pride,” indicating it’s been that long “since first I saw you fresh.” In virtually all previous commentaries, the poet is viewed as referring to three years in the 1590s since he first met the younger man, identified by the majority of critics (and also here) as Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton. In my new book *The Monument: “Shake-Speares Sonnets” by Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford*, however, the same words can be seen as referring to the three winters spent by Southampton in the Tower for his lead role in the Essex Rebellion:

Sonnet 27	Rebellion February 8, 1601
Sonnet 97	Anniversary February 8, 1602
Sonnet 104	Anniversary February 8, 1603

The result is a dramatic shift of subtext for more than half the 154 sonnets of the collection. Instead of what appears on the surface as a “love triangle” involving three fictional characters called Shakespeare, the Fair Youth and the Dark Lady, the eighty verses from Sonnet 27 to Sonnet 106 now become Oxford’s record of Southampton’s confinement until shortly after Queen Elizabeth’s death on March 24, 1603, when King James ordered his liberation and he gained his freedom on April 10, 1603. In this new framework, the darkly tragic tone of these sonnets suddenly and perfectly accords with the real circumstances of contemporary history, as Oxford reacts to them in the private entries of a diary that he will fashion into a “monument” or memorial to preserve “the living record” of Southampton:

*“Nor Mars his sword nor war’s quick fire shall burn / the living record of your memory. / ’Gainst death and all oblivious enmity / shall you pace forth! Your praise shall still find room, / even in the eyes of all*

*posterity / that wear this world out to the ending doom.”<sup>1</sup>*

**Sonnet 27** marks the night of the

---

*“...the same words*

*can be seen as*

*referring to the*

*three winters spent*

*by Southampton in*

*the Tower for his*

*lead role in the*

*Essex Rebellion...”*

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Rebellion on February 8, 1601, as Oxford attempts to rest amidst the darkness of his room, reflecting his dark emotional state following the day’s tragic events. Southampton was taken around midnight to the Queen’s royal prison; now a vision of him appears to Oxford as a “shadow” and, in his “soul’s imaginary view,” the younger earl seems to be “a jewel hung in ghastly night.” So begins a 100-sonnet central sequence with ten “chapters” of ten verses apiece until the end of Elizabeth’s reign, when, because she died without naming a blood successor, the House of Tudor ceased to exist as well. (See *Figure 1 for an overview*)

**Sonnets 27-86** represent the first six chapters of ten sonnets apiece, with sixty sonnets matching the first sixty days

(February 8 to April 8, 1601) of Southampton’s incarceration.

**Sonnets 87-106** represent two additional chapters or twenty verses covering the next two years (April 1601 to April 1603) of his purgatory in the Tower.

**Sonnet 87** begins with a single word to Southampton: “Farewell!”

Farewell, thou art too dear for my  
possessing...

“The Charter of thy worth gives thee releasing,” Oxford tells him, before indicating that the payment for his ultimate release is a pledge to bury the truth of their relationship. “My bonds in thee are all determinate,” he adds, using legal terms to record (for readers in posterity) their severing of all ties to each other; this official silence will prevent historians from answering fundamental questions:

- Why did so many members of the nobility support the Essex Rebellion?
- Why wasn’t “Shakespeare” summoned and questioned about the performance of *Richard II* by the Lord Chamberlain’s Men on the eve of the attempted coup?
- Why, after Essex and Southampton both received the death sentence and Essex went to his execution, was Southampton spared?
- Why, although all other survivors had to pay “ransoms” for their release, did Southampton gain his liberation without having to pay such a fine?<sup>2</sup>
- Why, as one of his first official acts and even before leaving Scotland, did King James send ahead orders for Southampton’s release from the Tower?

Oxford goes on to record that the “great gift” of Southampton’s life will keep “growing” because the verdict against him has been reduced to “misprision” of treason, a “better judgment” that will provide legal justification (if needed) for his liberation with a royal pardon:

So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,  
Comes home again, on better judgment  
making.

In the concluding couplet, however, he

reveals their relationship directly:

Thus have I had thee as a dream doth  
flatter:  
In sleep a King, but waking no such matter.

All his hopes of being the father of King Henry IX of England are over. And among the answers to the above questions, as recorded in the Sonnets, are these:

- That the Rebellion was aimed at determining who would control the succession;
- That in fact “Shakespeare” was called to account, in the person of Edward de Vere, who sat in judgment at the trial and then paid with his silence;
- That Oxford considered himself guilty of “authorizing thy trespass with compare” by allowing his play *Richard II* to be performed for the conspirators;<sup>3</sup>
- That in fact “ransom” for Southampton’s release was paid, by both father and son, in the forfeiture of any royal claim; and
- That King James (dealing with Oxford through Secretary Robert Cecil) agreed to this bargain soon after the trial and well before his accession to the English throne.

Anticipating Southampton’s scorn and contempt for the bargain, Oxford expresses his personal guilt in Sonnet 88, even as he pledges his continued help:

When thou shalt be disposed to set me  
light,  
And place my merit in the eye of scorn,  
Upon thy side against my self I’ll fight,  
And prove thee virtuous, though thou art  
forsworn.

Assuming that Southampton now hates him for making such a deal for his freedom, Oxford vows in the couplet of Sonnet 89 to join him by hating himself:

For thee, against my self I’ll vow debate,  
For I must ne’er love him whom thou dost  
hate

He continues in Sonnet 90:

Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now,  
Now while the world is bent my deeds to  
cross

Nonetheless he urges Southampton to avoid making the future even worse and, instead, to “linger out” or endure the consequences of his “purposed overthrow” of the Cecil-run government:

### SIXTY SONNETS

1. THE CRIME 27-36
2. THE TRIAL 37-46
3. THE PLEA 47-56
4. REPRIEVE 57-66
5. PENANCE 67-76
6. SACRIFICE 77-86

### TWENTY SONNETS

7. TEACHING 87-96
8. PROPHECY 97-106

### TWENTY SONNETS

9. CONTRACT 107-116
10. OBLATION 117-126

## THE 100-SONNET CENTER 10 CHAPTERS 10 SONNETS PER CHAPTER

*“If ten of thine ten times refigured thee”\**

### THE PRISON YEARS

#### SIXTY DAYS

- February 8, 1601 – February 17, 1601  
February 18, 1601 – February 27, 1601  
February 28, 1601 – March 9, 1601  
March 10, 1601 – March 19, 1601  
March 20, 1601 – March 29, 1601  
March 30, 1601 – April 8, 1601

#### TWO YEARS

- April 9, 1601 – January 1602  
February 8, 1601 – April 9, 1603

### THE FINAL DAYS

#### TWENTY DAYS

- April 10, 1603 – April 19, 1603  
April 20, 1603 – April 29, 1603

\* *“Ten times thy self were happier than thou art, if ten of thine ten times refigured thee; then what could death do if thou shouldst depart, leaving thee living in posterity?”* – Sonnet 6, lines 9-12

Figure 1

Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,  
To linger out a purposed overthrow

He renews his commitment to him in  
Sonnet 91:

Thy love is better than high birth to me...

In Sonnet 92 he alludes to Southampton’s new life term in prison to record that, in fact, their tie to each other can never be severed:

For term of life thou art assured mine...

In the same verse, Oxford records the sacrifice of his own “life” or identity as punishment for Southampton’s attempted “revolt” against the Crown:

Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie...

“So shall I live,” he continues in Sonnet 93, “supposing thou art true, like a deceived husband” – a man continuing to believe the truth even though the truth has

been turned to lies in “the false heart’s history”— the official history as recorded by the Elizabethan government. In this context Oxford sets down the beautiful, stately lines of Sonnet 94, instructing his son to avoid the “temptation” to use his inherited “power” and “graces” in a destructive way:

They that have the power to hurt, and will  
do none,  
That do not do the thing they most do  
show,  
Who moving others are themselves as stone,  
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow:  
They rightly do inherit heaven’s graces...

Southampton is the “basest weed” among Tudor roses, having been convicted of treason, but he will outshine all others by avoiding the “base infection” of those (in and out of the Tower) urging him to lead another revolt:

But if that flower with base infection meet,

(Continued on page 26)



*Year in the Life (continued from page 25)*

The basest weed outbraves his dignity

And so Oxford cries out, in Sonnet 95, that by his very existence Southampton turns inside-out the “shame” he has brought upon the Tudor Rose:

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the  
shame  
Which, like a canker in the fragrant Rose,  
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!

The official story about Southampton is an “ill report” that Oxford himself is rewriting for posterity in the Sonnets:

Naming thy name blesses an ill report

He continues this theme in Sonnet 96, balancing Southampton’s crime or “fault” against his royal inheritance or “grace” and deciding that he “mak’st faults graces” (turns the one into the other), adding more specifically in relation to Elizabeth:

As on the finger of a throned Queen,  
The basest Jewel will be well esteemed

He admits that Southampton has the power to lead others:

How many gazers mightst thou lead away,  
If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy  
state!

Many might still follow him against Robert Cecil; however, Oxford’s instruction is paternally firm and clear:

But do not so; I love thee in such sort,  
That thou being mine, mine is thy good  
report

His better “report” of history in the Sonnets is that Southampton is “*mine*” – recalling his letter from Paris to William Cecil, Lord Burghley in March 1575 that he hoped for “a son of *mine own*”<sup>4</sup> and echoing his lament in Sonnet 33: “But out alack, he was but one hour *mine*” as well as his insistence in Sonnet 39: “What can *mine own* praise to *mine own* self bring,/ And what is’t but *mine own*, when I praise thee?”

(Oxford wrote from Hackney to Robert Cecil on October 7, 1601, expressing gratitude for his help and adding that the real thanks would come “from me and *mine*, to be sealed up in an eternal

remembrance to yourself” – referring to the gratitude of his family members.)<sup>5</sup>

**Sonnet 97** begins a new chapter by marking the first anniversary of Southampton’s imprisonment on February 8, 1602. In the opening lines, Oxford alludes to Her Majesty’s pleasure (royal will) that has kept Southampton in the Tower, while echoing the Fleet Prison to reinforce this context:

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### ***“Sonnet 97 begins***

#### ***a new chapter***

#### ***by marking the***

#### ***first anniversary***

#### ***of Southampton’s***

#### ***imprisonment on***

#### ***February 8, 1602.”***

---

How like a Winter hath my absence been  
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!

In one of the most beautiful and sorrowful sonnets, he adds:

What freezings have I felt, what dark days  
seen!  
What old Decembers’ bareness everywhere!

He has also seen the “teeming Autumn big with rich increase,” a pointed reference to the continued growth of Southampton, in these private sonnets as well as in his own life; and then Oxford speaks of his son as an “orphan” and as “un-fathered fruit” who has lost all “hope” for the future he deserves:

Yet this abundant issue seemed to me

But hope of Orphans, and un-fathered  
fruit

Southampton remains “away” in the Tower while the truth is silent:

And thou away, the very birds are mute.

And again in Sonnet 98:

Yet seemed it Winter still, and you away...

As the Queen’s mortal body continues to run out of time (and as the Time of this diary accordingly nears its end), the Tudor Rose is also dying; and in Sonnet 99, referring to Southampton’s shame as a convicted traitor, Oxford painfully inverts Elizabeth’s motto “A Rose Without a Thorn”:

The Roses fearfully on thorns did stand,  
One blushing shame, an other white  
despair...

And now in Sonnet 100, with his “little songs” or sonnets becoming fainter, he strains to summon the strength and inspiration to keep recording his son’s life as the “time” until England’s date with succession keeps dwindling:

Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget’st  
so long  
To speak of that which gives thee all thy  
might...  
Return, forgetful Muse, and straight  
redeem  
In gentle numbers time so idly spent...  
Rise, resty Muse...  
Give my love fame faster than time wastes  
life...

He continues this effort in Sonnet 101, trying to express his own “truth” in relation to the “beauty” of the Queen that Southampton inherited:

Oh truant Muse, what shall be thy amends  
For thy neglect of truth in beauty dyed?

Oxford (“truth”) and Elizabeth (“beauty”) both depend on him – no longer as parents of a prince who deserves to wear the crown, but for the survival of this hidden royal story in the future:

Both truth and beauty on my love depends...

So he summons his strength to keep writing:

Make answer, Muse...  
Excuse not silence so, for it lies in thee  
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,  
And to be praised of ages yet to be.  
Then do thy office, Muse! I teach thee how  
To make him seem long hence, as he shows  
now.

The truth of Henry Wriothesley only “shows” itself in these private verses. As Elizabeth fades, Oxford labors under the emotional weight, making it increasingly difficult to write them, but his love for Southampton continues to bolster his inner strength in Sonnet 102:

My love is strengthened, though more  
weak in seeming;  
I love not less, though less the show  
appear...

He cannot speak publicly about this personal burden, but must continue to “hold my tongue” – echoing the testimony of Sonnet 66 that his art has been “tonguetied by authority” and using the same language as Hamlet: “But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.”<sup>6</sup>

The truth that cannot be told publicly is the constant “argument” of this chronicle, expressed in Sonnet 76 to Southampton: “And you and love are still my argument.” In the Sonnets the word “love” refers at its core to the royal blood of Henry Wriothesley. His claim by blood survives, however, only insofar as the dying Queen could still choose to name him in succession. But the ever-waning “time” of Elizabeth, guiding this diary, is now almost gone; and so Oxford groans in Sonnet 103:

Alack what poverty my Muse brings forth,  
That, having such a scope to show her  
pride,  
The argument all bare is of more worth  
Than when it hath my added praise beside.  
O blame me not if I no more can write!

Given Oxford’s vision that because of this tragedy Elizabeth and Southampton “both for my sake lay me on this cross,” we may imagine him now stumbling as Christ did,<sup>7</sup> even while concluding Sonnet 103 by defiantly praising the imprisoned earl:

For to no other pass my verses tend,  
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell.  
And more, much more than in my verse  
can sit,

Your own glass shows you, when you look  
in it.

(Note: Editor Duncan-Jones glosses “sit” as “be enthroned.”)<sup>8</sup>

**Sonnet 104** marks February 8, 1603, the second anniversary of Southampton’s imprisonment, when “Three Winters cold” have appeared since he had been “fresh” or “the world’s fresh ornament” during “the golden time” prior to the Rebellion.<sup>9</sup> Knowing that Elizabeth and her “beauty”

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**“Sonnet 104 marks**

**February 8, 1603,**

**the second**

**anniversary of**

**Southampton’s**

**imprisonment ... ‘Three**

**Winters cold’ ... since he**

**had been fresh.”**

---

or Tudor blood have almost expired, Oxford addresses future generations: “Hear this, thou age unbred, ere you were born was beauty’s summer dead.”

The Queen had left Whitehall in mid-January for Richmond Palace, as a “warm winter box to shelter her old age,” and soon in February she had taken ill. By now she could not bear the thought of being in her bed; if she slept at all, she slumped in her chair or on cushions on the floor, complaining of a terrible dryness in her mouth and insomnia. Earlier, on the journey from Whitehall to Richmond, she had told Oxford’s longtime friend Charles Howard, the Admiral: “I told you my seat has been the seat of kings, and I will have no rascal to succeed me. And who should succeed me but a king?”

Biographer Neville Williams, the Deputy Keeper of Public Records in England, writes that by itself the Queen’s outburst “has the hallmark of truth,” but he adds that “it would have been impossible for her to have continued, as the narrative of their conversation has it, by asking a further question, ‘Who but our cousin of Scotland?’” The reason is that Elizabeth “had deliberately refused to name her successor for forty-four years and she was too determined a character, even though under the shadow of death, to make a mockery now of one of her few consistencies by breaking her silence.”

“My Lord, I am tied with a chain of iron about my neck,” the Queen told Admiral Howard during the final days at Richmond. And when he tried to console his distraught monarch by saying she had never lacked courage, Elizabeth would have none of it and snapped back at him: “I am tied, I am tied, and the case is altered with me!”

“Those last days naturally gave rise to many legends, not least about the succession,” observes Williams, who believes none of them. “It would have been quite uncharacteristic of Elizabeth to have indicated James as her successor to her Councilors round her bed at Richmond,” he argues. “She could not at the end have named him, for by then she had lost all power of speech.”<sup>10</sup>

On March 21, 1603, Henry Hastings, Earl of Lincoln, was an invited dinner guest at Oxford’s home in Hackney, a few miles northwest of London. Lincoln was “extraordinarily feasted” before Oxford drew him “apart from all company” and began “to discourse with him of the impossibility of the Queen’s life, and that the nobility, being peers of the realm, were bound to take care for the common good of the state in the cause of succession.”

Pointing out that Lincoln’s great-nephew Lord Hastings was “of the blood royal,” Oxford argued they should “convey him over to France, where he should find friends that would make him a party” to come back to England and seize the throne before James could become the new sovereign. And Oxford also “inveighed much against the nation of Scots” as he “began to enter into question of His Majesty’s title” – that is, as he raised doubts about the legitimacy of the Scottish king’s claim to the English throne.

(Continued on page 28)

*Year in the Life (continued from page 27)*

Secretary Cecil had forbidden any news of the Queen's health to be made public. Elizabeth died in her sleep about 3 a.m. on March 24, 1603, just three days after Oxford made his extraordinary remarks to Lincoln, who had gone to report them to Sir John Peyton, Lieutenant of the Tower, where Southampton was in his personal charge. Both Lincoln and Peyton would later report the matter to Cecil and the Council, indicating their amazement upon seeing Oxford's signature on the Proclamation in support of James, issued later the same day. They must have been equally amazed when Oxford become part of the Great Council, which was quickly formed to help make the succession as smooth as possible.<sup>11</sup>

The truth of the incident at Hackney, as suggested first by Oxfordian scholar Nina Green, can only be that Oxford had been helping Cecil by sounding out Lincoln's own mind and testing his loyalty to James, and that he had played his part in an utterly convincing way. (It appears that Oxford had put on an act in Lord Lincoln's company as an *agent provocateur* for the government, a role he may have adopted for previous situations including the episode in 1580, when he provoked his Catholic cousins into divulging their treasonous plans against Elizabeth in support of the Pope and Spain.)

This perception of Oxford's behavior with Lincoln is further evidence that the bargain with Cecil for Southampton's life and freedom included his personal commitment to the succession of James; but given that he had "inveighed much against the nation of Scots" in such a believable manner, we may conclude that simultaneously he had been expressing his true feelings about the prospect of England falling under the rule of the "foreign" Scottish king.

**Sonnet 105** marks the death of Queen Elizabeth; but rather than pay homage to her, Oxford celebrates Southampton as "my love" – who is by no means an Idol, but a living prince (and, therefore, blessed with a royal divinity) as well as the "one" topic of this diary:

Let not my love be called Idolatry,  
Nor my beloved as an Idol show,  
Since all alike my songs and praises be  
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.

Southampton is "kind," i.e. related by kindred nature to the now deceased Elizabeth, with blood that remains (and will remain) "constant" despite the momentous changes taking place; and Oxford repeats that the Sonnets are all about this "one" person or topic without any "difference" or deviation:

Kind is my love today, tomorrow kind,  
Still constant in a wondrous excellence;  
Therefore my verse to constancy confined,  
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.

---

***"The Queen's time ran***

***out while Henry***

***Wriothesley remained***

***under Cecil's rule***

***in the Tower, so the***

***diary has become***

***'the Chronicle of***

***wasted time.'***"

---

Southampton is "fair" (royal) and "kind" (related to Elizabeth) and "true" (related to Oxford) all at the same time. This "argument" or topic of the Sonnets is an example of how the "invention" or special language of the verses keeps on "varying to other words" while continuing to record the same story. These "three themes" (echoing the biblical Trinity as well as the family triangle) exist together within the "one" person of Southampton, who lends "wondrous scope" to the words of the verses as well as to their subject matter:

Fair, kind, and true, is all my argument,  
Fair, kind, and true, varying to other words,  
And in this change is my invention spent,  
Three themes in one, which wondrous  
scope affords.

Oxford then turns to the current crisis of Elizabeth's death by concluding that, right up until "now" in this privately recorded history, the same trinity has never "kept seat" or sat on the throne in the person of the "one" prince who remains unacknowledged:

Fair, kind, and true, have often lived alone,  
Which three, till now, never kept seat in  
one.<sup>12</sup>

The bargain with Cecil and James will be carried out soon, however, with the King sending orders from Edinburgh on April 5, 1603, for Southampton to be released.

Sonnet 106 brings the "prison years" to a close with a dedicatory epistle or envoy that correlates with Henry Wriothesley's final night of confinement on April 9, 1603.

The Queen's time ran out while Henry Wriothesley remained under Cecil's rule in the Tower, so the diary has become "*the Chronicle of wasted time.*" Because of the previous bargain with Cecil and James, however, Oxford can predict that the new monarch will name Southampton as Captain of the Isle of Wight ("the fairest wights"); and also, now that Elizabeth is finally gone ("Ladies dead"), that Southampton will be made a Knight of the Garter ("lovely Knights"):<sup>13</sup>

When in the Chronicle of wasted time,  
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,  
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme  
In praise of Ladies dead and lovely Knights...

The "beauty" or Tudor blood that Southampton inherited from the Queen will continue to live in the Sonnets, as Oxford records in lines filled with poignant love and painful loss:

Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,  
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eyes, of brow,  
I see their antique Pen would have expressed  
Even such a beauty as you master now.

All the predictions of past poets have led up to this particular prediction of the Sonnets:

So all their praises are but prophecies  
Of this our time, all you prefiguring,  
And for they looked but with divining eyes,  
They had not still enough your worth to  
sing.



### The 100-Sonnet Center

The one hundred entries of the diary at the center begin with Sonnet 27 upon the Rebellion of February 8, 1601, and conclude with Sonnet 126 after the Queen's funeral on April 28, 1603. At the center stand Sonnets 76-77, where Oxford explains "my verse" and dedicates "thy book" to Southampton:

27—————76/77—————126  
(50 sonnets) (50 sonnets)

Within this central sequence are many perfect numerical-chronological designs; and each, in turn, has a key transition of the recorded story at its center.

### The 80 Prison Sonnets

The twenty-six months spent by Southampton in the Tower are recorded by eighty verses from Sonnet 27 upon the night of February 8, 1601 through Sonnet 106 upon his final prison night on April 9, 1603. At the center stand Sonnets 66-67, marking his reprieve after the first forty days on March 19, 1601:

27—————66/67—————106  
(40 sonnets) (40 sonnets)

### The First 60 Prison Days = 60 Sonnets

The most intense period consists of the first sixty days of imprisonment, from Sonnet 27 on February 8, 1601, to April 8, 1601, by which time a bargain is made with Cecil to secure Southampton's eventual release and pardon. At the center stand Sonnets 56-57, recording "this sad Interim" and pledging: "I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you":

27—————56/57—————86  
(30 sonnets) (30 sonnets)

### Two Prison Years + The Final Days = 40 Sonnets

Oxford employs twenty sonnets for the next two years in the Tower from Sonnet 87 on April 9, 1601, to Sonnet 106 on April 9, 1603; and he then uses twenty sonnets for the twenty days from Sonnet 107 marking Southampton's release on April 10, 1603 to Sonnet 126 after the Queen's funeral on April 28, 1603. At the center stand Sonnets 106-107, the transition from captivity to freedom:

87—————106/107—————126  
(20 sonnets) (20 sonnets)

*Figure 2*

Southampton will walk out of the Tower as a free man the following morning of April 10, 1603; but meanwhile, he and Oxford must observe these wondrous events in silence:

For we which now behold these present  
days  
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to  
praise.

**Sonnets 106 and 107** represent the transition from imprisonment to liberation, when Southampton in Sonnet 107 is free after being "supposed as forfeit to a confined doom" and Oxford exclaims that "my love looks fresh" again.<sup>14</sup>

**Sonnets 107-126** comprise the final

two chapters (twentyverses), matching the nineteen days from the younger earl's release to Sonnet 125, marking Elizabeth's funeral on April 28, 1603, when the Tudor dynasty officially ended, and to Oxford's final words in Sonnet 126 addressed to "my lovely Boy." (We will look at these 20 sonnets more closely in the final installment of "1601" (Part V) in the Summer 2005 issue of *SM*.)

**Sonnets 127-152** cover the Dark Lady series, revisiting the 1601-1603 prison years from the vantage point of Oxford's relationship with Elizabeth.<sup>15</sup> Oxford uses the twenty-six sonnets of this series to counterbalance the twenty-six verses of the opening series (Sonnets 1-26), with the

crucial 100-sonnet sequence centered between them.

**Sonnets 153-154** are the Epilogue but actually function as the Prologue of the diary, referring to Her Majesty's royal visit to Bath in western England in August of 1574 (with Oxford in attendance), not long after the birth of Southampton as "the Little Love-God" who had been "sleeping by a Virgin hand disarmed."<sup>16</sup>

*(See Figure 2 for an overview of the brilliant structure of the 100-sonnet center and its designs that function to preserve "the living record" of Southampton within the "monument" of the Sonnets for "eyes not yet created" in posterity.)*

*(Continued on page 32)*

*Research Notes from Chuck Berney*

# Some further thoughts on Jack the Ripper and Sir Walter Scott

## Was Jack the Ripper an important artist?

In an article in a previous issue of *Shakespeare Matters* (3.4) I discussed the accusations against Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in the book *Leicester's Commonwealth* (and elsewhere), and decided that in the three cases about which we have the most information the charges of murder by poison were very probably true. This conclusion is in marked contrast to the verdicts rendered by modern historians, who unanimously declare Leicester innocent of these crimes, relying on contemporaneous post-mortems and ignoring the fact that it wasn't until three centuries later that reliable chemical tests were developed to detect poison in bodies.

In 2002 Patricia Cornwell, a mystery author, wrote a nonfiction book entitled *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper: Case Closed* in which she laid out a detailed case indicating that the notorious killer was Walter Sickert (1860-1942), a prominent artist sometimes described as 'the father of British impressionism.' Cornwell made use of a modern investigation which compared mitochondrial DNA residues from Ripper artifacts (mocking notes sent to the police, etc.) with samples from Sickert's possessions. The DNA match was close enough to eliminate 99% of the population as suspects, but was consistent with the theory of Sickert as Ripper. In addition, some of the Ripper letters were written on expensive stationery with the watermark "A Pirie & Sons"; this was a brand that Sickert used. She also gives reasons for believing that Sickert committed a somewhat later murder in Camden Town. I found her arguments quite convincing.

The Arts Section of the London *Times* for 14 July 2004 had a spread on a new Walter Sickert retrospective exhibit at the Albert Hall Gallery in Kendall. The article emphasized Sickert's importance as an artist, commenting on how his search

for spontaneity led to dramatic images, often with a disturbing impact. It went on to quote Edward King, the director of the Gallery, as acknowledging that it has become "almost impossible to discuss Sickert without mentioning the Ripper and the Camden Town murderer," but that he has "absolutely no reason to think Sickert was either."

In my previous article I did not speculate on why modern historians are so eager to declare Leicester innocent of crimes which it's obvious—to me, anyway—he did commit. I think part of it is a desire (perhaps unconscious) to protect Elizabeth. He was her favorite for 30 years: if he was a serial murderer, what does that say about her? The Virgin Queen must be protected at all costs. This line of reasoning might be generalized beyond the Elizabethan court to be dubbed the 'One of Us' syndrome—'He's one of us, so he can't be all that bad.' Perhaps this is what we see at work in King's statement that he has "absolutely no reason" to think that Sickert was a murderer. He doesn't refute any of Cornwell's facts—he probably hasn't even read her book (Gail Kern Paster boasts of never having read Ogburn)—but he *knows* that Sickert was a member of the British art community ('one of us') and therefore couldn't possibly have been a murderer.

Those who have read Michael Brame's internet article on "the Nelson-Kathman Maneuver," will recognize that King's "absolutely no reason" is simply an intensification of Brame's observation on how unpleasant pieces of evidence are dismissed with 'Well, we just don't know for sure . . .' Both the King Ploy and the N-K Maneuver are devices for avoiding any discussion of the facts. I find the King Ploy a bit more distasteful in that there's a strong whiff of condescension involved: the implication is 'If an expert like me sees no evidence for this ridiculous assertion, how can a nobody like you expect to find any?'

If Cornwell is right (and the evidence in her book indicates that she is), then Sickert was a serial killer of the most depraved kind and *at the same time* an important

artist. If this is so, can Edward de Vere be excluded as the author of the Shakespeare canon (as Alan Nelson claims, at least by implication) because of severe character flaws? I think not.

## Was Sir Walter Scott an aristocrat?

On page 189 of *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, Charlton Ogburn writes

If Sir Walter Scott, early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, felt constrained to publish the Waverley novels anonymously for thirteen years because he considered the writing of novels beneath the dignity of his position, we may imagine how unthinkable it would have been for an Earl in Tudor England to have his name on a published poem like *Venus and Adonis* or, most monstrous of all, acknowledged his authorship of plays appearing on the public stage.

In referring to "the dignity of his position," Ogburn apparently assumes that Scott was a nobly-born aristocrat. This is not the case. Scott's father (also named Walter) was a lawyer (the son of a farmer), whose zeal for his clients and reluctance to bill them accordingly prevented him from amassing a fortune, as some of his colleagues did. His mother, Anne Rutherford, was the eldest daughter of Dr. John Rutherford, a professor at Edinburgh University and a pioneer in the clinical teaching of medicine. Scott's origins were thus distinctly middle-class.

So where did the 'Sir' come from?

The Prince Regent of Great Britain (later George IV) was an admirer of Scott's poetry. In 1813 he offered Scott the post of poet laureate, which Scott turned down, ostensibly because he felt "inadequate to the fitting discharge of the regularly recurring duty of periodical composition," but actually because it didn't pay enough to be worth the trouble. Later, in 1818, the Regent offered to confer a baronetcy on Scott. This time Scott agreed, although ill health prevented him from traveling to

London to accept the honor until 1820.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*,

The baronetage is not part of the peerage, nor is it an order of knighthood. A baronet ranks below barons, but above all knights except a knight of the garter. The baronetcy is inherited by the male heirs of a baronet.

When Scott died in 1832, the title passed to his elder son (also named Walter), but the son died childless in 1847, so the Scott baronetcy became extinct.

The rank of baronet is of relatively recent origin, having been created by James I in 1611 essentially as a fund-raising device (the honoree was expected to make a substantial donation to the Royal Treasury. Does one detect the fine hand of Robert Cecil in this?) The gothic novel (or 'sensation novel') of the 19<sup>th</sup> century regularly employed a 'bad baronet' as the villain of the tale, probably because a baronet was typically powerful enough to be a convincing menace but was not one of the nobility, belief in the benevolence of which was desirable for the sake of social stability. The dramatist William Gilbert satirized this proclivity in *Ruddigore*, his 1887 collaboration with composer Arthur Sullivan; in this work the protagonist, Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, is forced by an ancient curse to commit one crime each

day, a duty he is reluctant to fulfill ("I may be a bad Bart, but I'm not such a bad Bart as all that"). In an earlier work with a similar plot, pointedly titled *A Sensation Novel*, the bad baronet is named Sir Ruthven Glenaloon, and is forced to commit villainies by another character, the author of the eponymous novel. The name Gilbert chose is interesting: the Ruthvens were a lawless Scottish clan, the head of which in 1566 was instrumental in planning and carrying out the brutal murder of David Rizzio, Mary Stuart's secretary. 'Glenaloon' apparently derives from *Glenarvon*, a *roman à clef* by Lady Caroline Lamb in which the leading character, charismatic but unprincipled, is modeled on Lord Byron.

So if it was not social rank that compelled Scott to publish the Waverley novels anonymously, what was it? Hesketh Pearson, Scott's most opinionated (and thus most entertaining) biographer, explains it in this way:

By remaining anonymous he was able to write with less personal responsibility and more frequently than he might otherwise have done; and it saved him from the burden of discussing his work with any tactless person who wished to bother him. Also the novels might fail, and he did not care to risk losing the reputation he had already won as a poet. If on the other hand they succeeded, the curiosity aroused by their anonymity would stimulate the sales.

Finally, and herein lay the main reason for his conduct, he quoted Shylock: "It was my humour."

Scott used funds derived from the sale of his novels and poems to buy large amounts of land and to erect an immense mansion, thus founding the estate he named "Abbotsford." In 1811, when he started his land-buying spree, he wrote to a friend "Now I am a *Laird!*" The relation between Scott's social status and his literary activities was not that the former required anonymity in carrying out the latter, but rather that the success of the latter permitted an escalation of the former.

(Dr. Berney's previous articles on Sir Walter Scott have focused on clues in the Waverley novels that reveal Scott's knowledge of Edward de Vere as the author of the Shakespeare canon. These include "Sir Walter Scott as Paleo-Oxfordian [Part 1: Kenilworth I]," Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter 36.3 (Fall 2000), p. 17; "... Part 2: The Abbot," Shakespeare Matters 3.1 (Fall 2003), pp. 30-32; "... Part 3: The Monastery," Shakespeare Matters 4.1 (Fall 2004), pp. 28-30.)

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*Year in the Life* (continued from page 29)

### Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Sonnet 55, lines 7-10.
- <sup>2</sup> John Chamberlain wrote on May 27, 1601, that "there is a commission to certain of the Council to ransom and fine the Lords and Gentlemen that were in the action," referring to those in prison for the Rebellion and listing fines for Rutland, Bedford, Sandys, Mounteagle, Cromwell, Catesby, Tresham, Percies and Manners along with others. The largest fine was levied upon Rutland at £30,000, later reduced to £20,000; but Southampton is never mentioned; Stopes, Charlotte Carmichael, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton* (New York: AMS Press, 1922), pp. 233-234.
- <sup>3</sup> Sonnet 35: "All men make faults, and even I in this./ Authorizing thy trespass with compare./ Myself corrupting salving thy amiss./ Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are"—lines 5-8.
- <sup>4</sup> March 17, 1575, Cecil Papers 8.24; Chiljan, Katherine, *Letters and Poems of Edward, Earl of Oxford*, 1998, p. 17.
- <sup>5</sup> October 7, 1601, Cecil Papers 88.101; Chiljan, op. cit., p. 67.
- <sup>6</sup> *Hamlet*, 1.2.159.
- <sup>7</sup> Sonnet 42: "Both find each other, and I lose both twain./ And both for my sake lay me on this cross"—lines 11-12.
- <sup>8</sup> Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed., *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Arden, 1997), p. 316.
- <sup>9</sup> Sonnet 1: "Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament/ And only herald to the gaudy spring"—lines 9-10; Sonnet 3: "So thou through windows of thine age shall

see./ Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time"—lines 11-12.

- <sup>10</sup> Williams, Neville, *The Life and Times of Elizabeth I* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co, 1972), 214-15.
- <sup>11</sup> The Lincoln and Peyton reports are printed by Nina Green (The Oxford Authorship Site) at <http://www3.telus.net>.
- <sup>12</sup> "Kept seat" echoes the gloss of "sit" in Sonnet 103 by Duncan-Jones as "be enthroned"; see endnote 8 above; "The seat of majesty"—*Richard III*, 3.7.168.
- <sup>13</sup> Southampton will receive a royal pardon on May 16, 1603; he will be appointed Captain of the Isle of Wight on July 7, 1603 and made a Knight of the Garter on July 9, 1603.
- <sup>14</sup> Southampton is "fresh" in the period 1590-1600 covered by Sonnets 1-26; he is no longer "fresh" during the prison years 1601-1603 covered by Sonnets 27-106; and he is "fresh" again in Sonnet 107 from his release on April 10, 1603, onward.
- <sup>15</sup> Sonnets 138 and 144, revised from *The Passionate Pilgrim* of 1599, are inserted seamlessly into chronological order within the Dark Lady series.
- <sup>16</sup> Sonnet 154: "The little Love-God lying once asleep ... was sleeping by a Virgin hand disarmed"—lines 1 and 8, echoing the Ghost of Hamlet's father: "Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched"—*Hamlet*, 1.5.74.

**The Ashland Authorship Conference**  
**September 29 to October 2, 2005**  
**Don't miss it! See page 4.**

*Authorship Conference* (cont'd from p. 10) brief skit that re-enacted an encounter Schruijer recently had with a Stratfordian at a conference. The skit illustrated one of her points about how people in a debate can talk right past each other. In this case her Stratfordian friend could only respond to assertions for de Vere being Shakespeare—and therefore Hamlet—with increasingly incredulous non-sequiturs, concluding with, "Shakespeare didn't marry Anne Hathaway?!!!" It brought the house down.

### Awards Banquet

William Michael Anthony Cecil, the 8th Marquess of Exeter and a direct descendant of Lord Burghley, spoke on the many generations of the Cecil family and its long, storied history in England, beginning, of course, under Elizabeth. At the conclusion he delighted the audience by holding up a small book that he said was the actual book of precepts written by Burghley himself (i.e. "Neither a borrower nor a lender be..." etc., etc.).

Charles Beauclerk received the Distinguished Scholarship Award (and with his talk on *King Lear* earlier that day demonstrated beyond any doubt why he deserved it), and Mark Rylance received the Distinguished Achievement in the Arts Award. Rylance gave an acceptance speech via videotape (see the separate story on page 6).

The 2006 conference will be held, as usual, in early April (exact dates to be announced soon). —W. Boyle

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