



The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter



Vol.36:no.2

"Let me study so, to know the thing I am forbid to know"

Summer 2000

An emerging "crypto-Catholic" theory challenges Stratfordians

By Peter W. Dickson

Still unbeknownst to many Oxfordians, the Stratfordians are increasingly perplexed as to how to salvage the incumbent Bard in the face of the growing popularity of the thesis that he was a secret Roman Catholic, at least prior to his arrival in London, and perhaps to the end of his life, consistent with Richard Davies' observation in the 1670s, that "he dyed a papist."

The mere willingness to explore the evidence for the Shakespeare family's religious orientation was strongly discouraged or suppressed for centuries for one simple and quite powerful reason: the works of Shakespeare had become—along with the King James' Version of the Bible—a major cultural force for a nation which was strongly committed to the Protestant faith and to the "exceptionalism" of the British people in comparison to the political and religious traditions on the Continent.

Thus, the idea that the Bard might have been a crypto-Catholic at any time in his life has been totally repugnant to Shakespeare scholars for eons—from Nicholas Rowe to Edmond Malone to Sir Sidney Lee. Lee, especially, for example—given his delicate situation as a British Jew—took a hard line in the 1890s against any attempts to explore the long-taboo Catholic Question, as he also did regarding the homosexual issue, which had surfaced at that time when Oscar Wilde cited the *Sonnets* as part of his defense in a trial for committing sodomy.

These were the facts of life in terms of culture, politics, and religious traditions which only the bravest of British scholars
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The not-too-hidden key to *Minerva Britannia*

*The Latin phrase "by the mind 'I'
shall be seen" may mean just that*

By Roger Stritmatter

*Names are divine notes, and
divine notes do not signify future events;
so that events consequently must
lurk in names, which only can be
pryed into by this mystery...*

*William Camden; "Anagrams"
in Remains Concerning Britannia*



The title page to Henry Peacham's Minerva Britannia (1612) has become one of the more intriguing—and controversial—artifacts in the authorship mystery. Why does a hand write a message (Mente Videbor - "By the mind I shall be seen") from behind a curtain? Has the hand finished writing? Is the message an anagram identifying the hidden writer as de Vere? Roger Stritmatter's 1999 Society Conference presentation on these questions presents new arguments in support of an anagram solution.

Minerva Britannia, the 1612 emblem book written and illustrated by Henry Peacham, has long been considered the most sophisticated exemplar of the emblem book tradition ever published in England. As Rosemary Freeman wrote of the author in 1948:

Peacham was a man of considerable versatility of mind and his wide range of accomplishments were of a kind peculiarly well suited to the writing of emblems. Consequently his emblem books are much more fully an expression of his personality than are those of any other emblem writer: for the most part, the fashion provided a casual occupation; for Peacham it was almost a profession. (69)

Minerva, however, remains an enigma. Alan Young (1998) states that the book "has little intrinsic unity as an emblem collection, apart from its generally sustained tone of moral didacticism"—a circum-
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Reviews of Journals

Recent articles cover sculptor Giulio Romano, the 3rd Earl of Southampton as the Queen's son, and Will Shaksper's children

By Richard F. Whalen

The De Vere Society Newsletter

Giulio Romano's influence on Shakespeare and allusions to the 3rd Earl of Southampton as the son of Queen Elizabeth are described in two major articles in *The De Vere Newsletter* (July 2000).

In an extensive review of Giulio Romano's life and works, Noemi Magri argues that Shakespeare's mention of him in *The Winter's Tale* as a sculptor reveals far more than a simple awareness of the Italian artist. She describes Giulio's eminence as a painter, sculptor and architect in Mantua and finds that the playwright appreciated not only Giulio's art but his striving for realism and his "impetuous view of life."

"The few lines in *The Winter's Tale*," she says, "are more than a simple mention of an artist's name which Shakespeare 'may have picked up...from the talk of his traveled friends [as one critic contends].' The passage shows that the dramatist was familiar with Giulio Romano's works and was well aware of the basic principle of Giulio's art—painting had to be true to reality, so verisimilar as to deceive the eye."

The knowledge of Giulio shown in *The Winter's Tale* suggests to Magri that the 17th Earl of Oxford may well have visited Mantua, where Giulio worked for two decades.

In his article in the UK society newsletter, John M. Rollett cites three witnesses to support the theory that the 3rd Earl of Southampton was the son of Queen Elizabeth. At the outset, he argues that the acceptance in Spain, even by the king, that Arthur Dudley was the son of the Earl of Leicester and Queen Elizabeth indicates that unacknowledged royal births were accepted.

His three witnesses are Arthur Gawdy, George Peele, and John Sanford. Gawdy wrote in a letter that Southampton was nominated to be a Knight of the Garter at age 19, unprecedented outside the royal family for someone so youthful. George Peele's poem mentions Southampton as sharing immortality with the queen, an "extraordinary compliment," says Rollett.

Finally, John Sanford, chaplain of Magdalen College, describes Southampton, still a teenager, as "a hereditary Prince of illustrious lineage, whom as a great hero

the rich House of Southampton lawfully lays claim to as one of its own." (Rollett's translation of the Latin lines.)

Rollett concludes that the citations show that Southampton was considered by contemporaries to have a status equal to that of a son of Queen Elizabeth.

The Shakespeare Quarterly

The lead article and the final book review in *The Shakespeare Quarterly* (Summer 2000) together suggest that the Stratfordian establishment might be thinking about reviving claims that the works of Shakespeare reflect the life of the Stratford man—claims that non-Stratfordians and Oxfordians find insubstantial and forced.

In a cautiously worded, if not ambiguous, article, Professor Richard P. Wheeler of the University of Illinois, ever mindful of his colleagues' skepticism in some quarters, nevertheless suggests that the deaths of Will Shaksper's son and father influenced Shakespeare's plays.

He finds parallels of emotion in plays dated after Hamnet's death in 1596—tragedies, histories and even comedies—and evocations of Shaksper's father's death in 1601 in *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet*. "If he is not already grieving his father's death when he writes *Hamlet*, Shakespeare is watching that death approach," says Wheeler.

At another point, in a typically hedged passage, he says, "I am not trying to claim *King John* as a direct expression of Shakespeare's grief for the dead Hamnet, [but]...the play dramatizes a cluster of emotions consistent with those one might expect in a father in circumstances resembling Shakespeare's [i.e. Shaksper's] in 1596 when Hamnet died."

The allegedly post-1596 history plays, Wheeler says, are plays about sons. "[They] are marked by a group of situations in which a beloved son's or a young boy's death produces a volatile mix of parental grief, guilt, distraction, helplessness, recrimination, rage." And he speculates that the comedies "remember the dead boy in their comic actions."

Critics of all stripes may shrink from Wheeler's speculations. His criteria are so

loose, his interpretations so sweeping, and his hedgings so evasive that it's hard to take him seriously, much less grasp what he really thinks as he proposes questionable influences from Will Shaksper's life in the plays of Shakespeare.

In the same issue, Professor Roy Flannagan of Ohio State writes a breezy review of Park Honan's *Shakespeare: A Life* that alludes to the authorship controversy and tries to discern the Stratford man in Shakespeare's plays. Honan, he says, is not a Baconian or an Oxfordian. Honan's Shakespeare is "not someone other than someone named William Shakespeare." And he notes that in Honan's biography (as in all Stratfordian biographies) "Elizabeth really didn't seem to know that Shakespeare existed." Given the man he thinks was the poet/dramatist, it's no wonder he's puzzled.

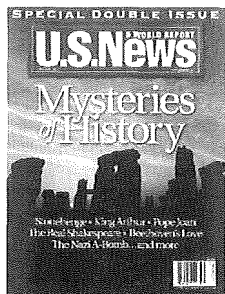
Flannagan says Honan "does much toward putting the human being back into the concept of Shakespeare." He finds "little in-jokes" in the plays for the benefit of family, hometown and fellow players. Family names like Joan, Hamnet-Hamlet and Edmund "reverberate" throughout the plays.

Shakespeare, concludes Flannagan, was a decent, well-educated, working-class man who, according to Honan, is the "quiet, unassuming, unobtrusive, careful, cautious, conservative" playwright in the "disreputable, morally suspect" theater in London. In his view, Honan discerns "recurring motifs of fiscal responsibility, moderation, cooperation, and teamwork." Apparently, neither author nor reviewer sees the inherent contradictions in their view of the Stratford man's character versus the aristocratic world-view of pride and passion found in the poems and plays of Shakespeare.

Regarding their astonishingly dull Stratfordian portrait of a "jovial actor and manager," Ralph Waldo Emerson once said succinctly: "I cannot marry the fact to his verse." Many others have agreed with that verdict, which the Stratfordians—faced with the many specific parallels between Oxford and Shakespeare's works—may be trying to reverse in order to rehabilitate their candidate.

Media Notes

US News and World Report features the Shakespeare mystery; some recent authorship encounters with William F. Buckley



"The Real Shakespeare" is promised by the cover line on *U.S. News & World Report*, and the article by Michael Satchell fulfills the promise with a solid, persuasive article for the 17th Earl of Oxford as the true author of Shakespeare's works.

The article was one of many in the magazine's double issue of July 24-31 that explored "Mysteries of History," including Stone-henge, King Arthur, Pope Joan and Beethoven's Love. Illustrating the article was the Welbeck portrait of Oxford, which took up almost a quarter page.

Satchell drew on the expertise of Charles Vere Lord Burford, former president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, and cited Professor Daniel Wright, director of the Edward de Vere Studies Conference at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon. A quote from Dr. Wright concluded the article: "These works are the mature achievements of a worldly and urbane litterateur who could not tell the world his name."

Oxfordian leanings

Writing from London, Satchell makes a strong case for Oxford. He spells the Stratford man's name "Shaksperé" throughout, distinguishing between the Stratford man and the author whose byline was "Shakespeare." He calls Shaksperé the "supposed" actor and notes that there's not a "scrap" of documentation that the "Warwickshire merchant" ever wrote anything. And he mentions the discrepancy between the near-contemporary Hollar engraving of the grain merchant and the Trinity church monument depicting a writer. No mention is made of Francis Bacon or Christopher Marlowe as candidates.

Surprisingly, Gail Kern Paster, editor of the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, the journal of the establishment, is quoted as arguing that "the only proof necessary is that Shakespeare [i.e. the Stratford man] could have written the plays and Sonnets, not that he

did." Paster lamented in the Fall 1999 issue of the *Shakespeare Quarterly* that the Stratfordians were losing the public debate, a development she found tiresome and frustrating. Now she apparently does not feel obliged to offer any evidence that the Stratford man was the author; it suffices that somehow he could have.

The *U.S. News* article summarized Oxford's qualifications as the true author, but omitted mention of the other major argument for Oxford's authorship—the many direct and specific references to his life and concerns that are found in the plays and poems. The only significant lapse in the article confused three earls: The *First Folio* was dedicated to the earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, not the earl of Southampton. *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* were dedicated to Southampton.

William F. Buckley

Another interesting story this year involved some exchanges between Society members John Cusick of Arizona, Aaron Tatum of Tennessee, and William F. Buckley, editor of *The National Review*.

As older Society members know, Buckley has been involved with the authorship story several times over the past 15 years, beginning with his *Firing Line* interview of Charlton Ogburn in 1984, publishing Joseph Sobran on the issue later in the 80s, and participating in the 1992 GTE video

conference on the authorship.

Last July Buckley's *National Review* published Cusick's letter in which he chided Buckley for having written earlier that "Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare's plays." Cusick stated in closing that, "conventional wisdom has it that William Shakespeare was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford."

Buckley's response to this (printed directly under the letter) was that "conventional wisdom" never heard of Edward de Vere. Cusick wrote in again, citing a number of recent sources (e.g. *The Columbia Encyclopedia*) that have entries for De Vere that include mentions of his possible authorship of the Shakespeare canon. To this Buckley wrote back directly to Cusick, saying "You make a nice case nicely," but said no more about Edward de Vere or Shakespeare.

In another media encounter with Buckley and the authorship question Society President Aaron Tatum saw a listing for a Buckley appearance on C-SPAN, phoned in and—after one hour on hold—was able to ask him a question. Naturally, Tatum went right to the matter of Shakespeare and Edward de Vere.

Tatum noted in his initial remarks that Buckley had mentioned the case for Oxford in some of his writings, and that he had once

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The 5th Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference **April 5th to 8th, 2001**

Robert Detobel, Editor of the Neues Shakespeare Journal, headlines a list of over 20 scholars.

The Concordia University Theatre Department will also present the premiere of the Tim Hill play, The Bubble Reputation, on the opening night of the conference.

**Registration: \$75 (conference only) or \$110 (includes Awards Banquet).
Registrations limited to first 180 (conference) and first 100 (Awards Banquet)
Send registrations to:**

**Dr. Daniel L. Wright
Edward de Vere Studies Conference
(www.deverestudies.org)
Concordia University
Portland OR 97211-6099**

Even if you're not able to attend, write in to be placed on our year-round mailing list.

News from the Folger Shakespeare Library

Ashbourne portrait now on public display; tour guides explain the library's neutral position on the authorship question

Last August it was brought to our attention by Society member John Hamill, of San Francisco, that some interesting changes have taken place in how the Folger Shakespeare Library now presents the authorship issue to the public. Hamill wrote to the newsletter about his visit to the Library in Washington, DC, last August, and in particular about one of the regularly scheduled tours that he took there on August 4th.

During this tour, Hamill tells us, the docent (the tour guide) was enumerating the research that the Library regularly undertakes. Hamill at one point asked if they did any research on the authorship issue. The docent replied that the Library does not have a position on the authorship issue which, Hamill said, took him aback.

The docent continued by stating that the library's current research on the authorship question had eliminated all contenders except the Earl of Oxford, but that they still thought that Shakespeare—i.e. William of Stratford—was the likely author.

The docent then continued to talk about the authorship issue by noting that several prominent actors such as Sir John Gielgud and Sir Derek Jacobi were Oxfordians. In relating this information, the docent emphasized again that the Library has no position on the authorship issue.

On the tour that Hamill took, he said about 15 others seemed to be aware of the controversy, even knowing that Edward de Vere was the Earl of Oxford.

The tour then continued into another room—the Founders' Room—where the Ashbourne Portrait is now on display. Hamill again found himself surprised, since this most famous putative Shakespeare-Oxford portrait had—he thought—been in storage for many years.

When questioned by Hamill, the docent was not aware of the controversy over the painting, so Hamill then related to the tour group the findings of the 1940 *Scientific American* article by Charles Wisner Barrell.



The Folger Shakespeare Library has been one of the bastions of orthodoxy on the authorship question throughout the 20th century, with the nadir of its position on the question coming in the 1950s and 60s when Director Louis B. Wright wrote blistering broadsides on the topic for newspapers, magazines, and the library's own publications.



By permission, Folger Shakespeare Library
The Ashbourne Portrait

Nobody on the tour seemed to have known about the overpainting, or that some of the evidence seemed to point to Oxford as the original sitter.

Later in August, in an email exchange with the Folger, Hamill asked if it was true that the famous Shakespeare library took no position on the authorship debate. He received an answer from Reference Librarian

Georgianna Ziegler (Ph.D.) confirming this fact. Ziegler wrote:

Thanks for writing to clarify the Folger's position on the authorship question. The docent was correct in saying that we don't take a position. As a library open to scholars, we support freedom of inquiry on any topic. Our collections include a large number of volumes from the nineteenth century onward dealing with the so-called authorship controversy. While much attention has been paid in recent years to the Earl of Oxford as a contender, we have books about Bacon, Derby, Dyer, Marlowe, Nugent, etc. as well.

More recently the newsletter made some calls to the Folger to inquire about their current policy on the authorship question, and also to inquire about the Ashbourne portrait.

Head Reference librarian Ziegler confirmed her email statements to Hamill, but also emphasized that this neutral position by the Folger was not new to her; she had been with the library for eight years, and said that this is how she has always regarded questions on the debate, and how she answers any questions about it. She could not speak, she said, for the Folger's past policies, nor pinpoint any recent moment when the policy had changed from the more strident Stratfordian days of the past.

Librarian Richard Kuhta spoke to us about the Ashbourne portrait, which indeed is now available to the public in the Founders' Room, where it was hung just last spring, following the renovation of the room. There is space for three portraits in the room; the others now hung there are the Gower portrait of Elizabeth, and a MacBeth painting.

Kuhta said the Ashbourne, which underwent a cleaning in preparation for its new public appearance, had been hanging in non-public portions of the library since at least 1989. He is still investigating where in the library it had been before then.

The Ashbourne is identified by the Folger as a portrait of London mayor Hugh Hammersley.

For some further thoughts on both the Folger and the Ashbourne, see From the Editor (p. 20).

Column
The Paradigm Shift
 Mark K. Anderson

Nero Caesar: The First Folio's Straight-Man

In previous *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletters*, Peter Dickson's work on the so-called Spanish Marriage Crisis has been highlighted—uncovering an elaborate political chess game behind the production of the Shakespeare First Folio (1623) and involving the 18th Earl of Oxford along with the Earls of Southampton, Pembroke and Montgomery. Roger Stritmatter has further argued that the placement of *Cymbeline* as the last play in the Folio was an overtly political act, concluding a strongly protestant book with a drama that finds the Romans being run out of Britain and a peace defined on British terms.

This, in fact, is what Southampton, Pembroke and Montgomery wanted. Briefly, for several years leading up to the 1623 climax, King James had vied to marry his son Charles off to the Spanish Princess Maria and thereby create a Catholic hegemony in England that could have spelled political doom for protestant factions both at court and in the countryside. For his strident opposition to the marriage, the 18th Earl was rewarded with a 16-month stay in the Tower of London, complete with the Spanish Ambassador threatening to chop off his head.

Noting no doubt that their do-or-die moment had come, Henry, Lord Oxford's, anti-Spanish marriage allies rushed a project into production that had been waiting for nearly 20 years. They undertook to publish the complete dramatic works of Henry Oxenford's father, Edward de Vere, a.k.a. "William Shake-speare." And they did so with their own propagandistic motives.

The Folio's "Incomparable Pair of Brethren" had an ideal forum to argue for a sovereign England, independent of Popish confederations or political mergers with their dreaded Roman Catholic enemy. And they didn't squander it.

By the end of 1623, the King's plans had ended in failure, the First Folio had been published and an imprisoned Earl of Oxford, once supposed as forfeit to a confined doom, was released from the Tower.

However, historians have overlooked the other side of the propaganda war. King James valued the propagandistic value of the printed word too—his own Complete

Works were published in 1616, the same year as Ben Jonson's.

As it happens, one of James' primary pieces of propaganda in the Spanish marriage also views ancient Rome as an allegori-



The title page to Nero Caesar

cal stand-in for Spain. This court-sponsored publication, in contrast to the works being published by the Anglican earls, argues for the merits of the Spanish political alliance.

On April 21, 1623, Sir Edward Conneway registered "A Booke of the life of NERO" in the Stationer's Register. In an unusual move that only draws further attention to the book, Conneway stated that *NERO* was being brought into print "by his Maiesties speciall command."

This text by the courtly sycophant Edmund Bolton, which eventually came out under the title *Nero Caesar, or Monarchie Depraved*, purports to inform the British citizenry about life under the titular Roman tyrant. Of course, Bolton's as well as the King's propagandistic purpose was not to enlighten British subjects about a distant era of the past. Rather, it had two very current objectives.

First, it reiterates the royalist mantra that even the most reprehensible monarchs must

be endured—an attempt to remind the anti-marriage agitators who really runs the show.

Indeed, it appears that the choice of Rome's most famous tyrant for the subject of Bolton's book came from on high. "Nor was there cause to trouble your sacred Majesty with any but only *Nero*," Bolton writes in his introduction to James. "For he is the man whom your most Princely detestation of his manners noted out unto me, with the proper word of his merits, *Villain*. Yet he notwithstanding (for the great advantage of truth) will teach this precious secret: *No Prince is so bad as not to make monarchy seem the best form of government.*" [Italics in original]

Second, *Nero Caesar* applies the same transformative logic as did the Folio editors who made *Cymbeline* their polemical coda. As Stuart historian Malcolm Smuts points out, *Nero* diverges at critical moments from the Roman historian who best chronicled the period, Tacitus.

"A subplot in Bolton's book dealt with the British story of Boadicea's rebellion," Smuts writes in his 1993 study "Court-Centered Politics and The Uses of Roman Historians." He continues,

Here the author's sympathies lay unequivocally with the Romans. Before the Roman conquest, Britain was filled with petty, warring states whose 'endless iniquities' and conflicts caused the inhabitants 'to fly under foreign guards to avoid oppressions at home.' The Romans brought peace and civilization, benefits which greatly outweighed the loss of a liberty that had bred disorder. Tacitus, by contrast, stated in *The Agricola* that Roman civilization had *corrupted* the ancient Britons, leading to 'provocations of vices, to sumptuous galleries and baths, and exquisite banquetings; which things the ignorant termed civility, being indeed a point of their bondage.' [Italics in original.]

In detailing "The fortune of our Contrey under NERO," in other words, Bolton rewrites history to persuade his readers how beneficial an alliance with Rome—i.e. Spain—would be.

Bolton also rails against writers who have aired the crown's dirty laundry, an all

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Dickson (Continued from page 1)

would dare challenge when looking for the deeper roots of the figure's literary genius. Scholars found it easier to see Shakespeare as an example of a Renaissance-secular humanist and more narrowly a Tudor Propagandist or English nationalist in certain plays such as *Henry V* and *Henry VIII*.

This secular perspective was so strong that mainstream scholars such as Lee, Chambers, Rowse, and Schoenbaum declined even to explore the Christian dimension of Shakespeare's literary works generally, let alone exploring the possible "crypto-Catholicism" of the author. Even Roy Bettenhouse—a Catholic himself—who edited a 500-page anthology of essays entitled *Shakespeare's Christian Dimension* (1992) down-played the sensitive secret Catholic issue in his introduction.

Roland Frye's landmark work, *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine* (1963), remains the best summary of the Establishment's view and its strong preference for a secular Bard. Frye underscored the fact that Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists did not have the freedom to use plays as vehicles for certain theological or religious statements. Although Shakespeare had a deep appreciation and knowledge of the Bible and Christian doctrine, he only drew upon that subject matter for background material and to add historical realism to his dramas. Christian themes of redemption or salvation were never the core of the dramatic action in any of his plays. Furthermore, the great tragedies and the Bard's empathy toward figures who committed suicide place him totally outside the parameters of traditional Christian doctrine, whether Protestant or Catholic.

The Revival of the Catholic Question

Given the formidable nature of the Establishment's opposition to exploring the Bard's religious orientation, when and why did the long-taboo Catholic Question be-

come admissible in scholarly circles? And why has it become in the 1990s a fashionable issue among Shakespeare biographers still operating within the framework of the Stratfordian Orthodoxy?

Prior to Ernst Honigmann's work *Shakespeare: the "lost years"* in 1985, efforts to explore the Catholic Question were very infrequent or episodic. Mostly, they cen-

have been a recusant or secret Catholic. These efforts were never very convincing, and Roland Frye and Professor Schoenbaum in the 1960s and 1970s were largely able to dismiss them as "special pleading."

Honigmann's work in 1985 reopened the issue when he revisited evidence that a young "William Shakeshaft" had been hired in the early 1580s to serve as a tutor in the households of certain aristocratic Catholic families named Houghton and Hesketh. This evidence was tempting because these families had connections with Fernando Stanley, later Earl of Derby, who had an acting company. Thus, some Stratfordians became intrigued with Honigmann's idea of placing the Stratford man during his youth in these Catholic households in the North Country as a convenient way to fill in the "lost years." Then the connection to Stanley's acting company would provide a path to get him eventually into the London theatrical world. In short, the Catholic theory, especially with this Lancastrian twist, offered a convenient way for traditional scholars to overcome the sparse biographical data and enable them to add some flesh and blood to a bare skeleton.

In the 15 years since Honigmann's work appeared, there has been a rising tide of articles and books devoted to one aspect or another of the secret Catholic theory, culminating in July 1999 with a major international conference devoted to the topic in Lancashire. Those behind this conference, Professor Richard Wilson of the University of Lancashire and local entrepreneurs who are restoring Houghton Castle, openly admit that they are seeking to break the London-Stratford monopoly on the lucrative tourism business within England associated with Shakespeare.

Furthermore, the zeal of many scholars for the secret Catholic theory expressed at the Lancashire conference imparted the air of a religious revival to the proceedings, as described by UC-Berkeley Professor Alan Nelson to this writer. However, the Lancastrian version of the Catholic theory

Excerpts from John Andrews' review of *William Shakespeare: The Man Behind the Genius*

"Holden comes across as a bold, adventurous spirit. He displays no reluctance to speculate about how *The Man Behind the Genius* found expression in the dramas posterity has ascribed to him. And in a narrative that offers intriguing conjectures on the poet's relationships with key figures in the Jesuit underground—a shadowy, perilous realm for zealots whose religious convictions could not be professed openly during the turbulent reigns of Elizabeth and James—he raises issues that are sure to be examined by more rigorous sleuths who can be depended upon to follow in his wake..... We are still in quest of a perspective that will allow us to assess the information now coming to light about the years an adolescent Shakespeare appears to have spent at a Lancashire estate notorious for its connection with dissenters who risked, and often sacrificed, their lives for a faith which the Anglican establishment was anxious to suppress. Were Shakespeare's parents recusants? Was their son, too, a clandestine Roman Catholic? And would he have remained so once he arrived in London and secured his livelihood as a professional who benefited from royal patronage? If so, how does one account for the anti-papal ideology that seems so integral to the structure of *King John*, not to mention the echoes of Reformation doctrine that many of us hear in *Hamlet*, *Henry VIII*, *Measure for Measure*, and other plays?"

These are but a few of the queries that linger for a perusal of Holden's lively, if finally less than satisfying, attempt to discern the personality behind a corpus that continues to defy any effort to pluck out the heart of the mystery."

tered around the efforts of a few American Catholics and British Jesuits to explore the last testament of the Stratford man's father, John Shakespeare, which seemed to conform to the guidelines for a Catholic-style will as formulated by Saint Carlos Borromeo earlier in the sixteenth-century. After the Second World War, a few British scholars such as Christopher Devlin and Peter W. Milward tried to find passages here and there in the literary works that might give support to the view that the author might

remains highly questionable. There were many "Shakeshafts" living in Lancashire. There is no certainty that the Stratford man in his youth was the same young man who was the tutor for the Houghtons and Hesketh families—a point which Chambers, Schoenbaum, and other mainstream scholars underscore.

Beth as it may, Harvard professor and New Historicist guru Stephen Greenblatt has been sympathetic to the exploration of the Catholic connection, and Gary Taylor embraced a non-Lancastrian version of the crypto-Catholic theory in 1994, just as—a year later—Eric Sams did in his work *The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Early Years, 1564-1594*. Greenblatt and Taylor both attended the 1999 Lancastrian Shakespeare Conference at Lancaster University.

However, the scholar who has given the biggest boost to the Catholic theory in the 1990s is Ian Wilson who—though he feels the Lancastrian connection unproven—has provided in his work *Shakespeare The Evidence* (1994) at least 14 pieces of biographical evidence to bolster the case that the Stratford man came from a family of staunch Catholics, and that he retained an affinity for the Catholic faith to the end of his life.

The impact of Wilson's book—now available in paperback—cannot be underestimated. Schoenbaum, fearing the potential impact of the Catholic theory, roundly trashed Wilson as largely a worthless amateur in a book review in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Schoenbaum even implied that Wilson was a closet anti-semitic because he did not place quotation marks about the phrase "the Lopez conspiracy." Still, Schoenbaum never even hinted to the reader that Wilson had tried to make the case that the incumbent Bard was a secret Catholic. Nor did he bother to point out that Wilson had failed to show how the literary works prove convincing evidence that the author was a crypto-Papist.

Essentially, Schoenbaum—who was well aware of the growing threat posed by the Oxfordian theory—did not wish to embrace the notion that the Stratford man was leading a double life involving concealment and deception. He apparently so much feared—in this writer's view—opening up any debate with Wilson in 1994 that he gambled that a curt dismissal would suffice and buy more time to defend the Stratfordian orthodoxy that the Bard was genuinely committed to the Anglican faith. Stanley Wells,

Dennis Kay, and Katherine Duncan-Jones are other mainstream scholars who support the Lee-Chambers-Frye-Rowse-Schoenbaum opposition to the "Bard as secret Catholic" theory.

However, a strategy of denial is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. A younger generation of New Historicist scholars—who show no fear that their research might have downside implications in the authorship debate—continue to "dig deeper" into the Stratford records which show that the Shakespeare family was indeed part of a large web of crypto-Catholics in the Warwickshire region.

Some of this scholarship has been published in the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, most notably: the D.L. Thomas and N.E. Evans essay, "John Shakespeare in the Exche-

quer" (Autumn 1984), and F.W. Brownlow's article, "John Shakespeare's Recusancy: New Light on an Old Document" in the Summer 1989 issue. No serious scholar today will contest that the incumbent Bard's parents were hard-core Catholics as opposed to those who merely conformed outwardly, the so-called Church Papists. The evidence that ties the Shakespeare family to the Catholic underground in Warwickshire and then in London, with the Stratford man's late purchase in 1613 of what Ian Wilson calls "the most notoriously Catholic property in London," the Blackfriar's Gatehouse, is too strong to ignore anymore.

In response, Park Honan in his biography, *Shakespeare A Life* (1998), tries to reformulate a position for fence-sitters on
(Continued on page 8)

Exchange of letters between John Andrews and Peter Dickson over the Catholic issue

Peter Dickson's letter to *The Washington Post* was published on August 6th, 2000 in response to Andrews' review of Holden's *William Shakespeare: the Man Behind the Genius*:

A Secret Catholic?

John Andrews' review of Anthony Holden's *William Shakespeare* is a watershed moment in the 150-year old debate about the Bard's true identity. Like many mainstream scholars since the mid-1980s, Holden adds to the growing mountain of evidence that the incumbent Bard was actually a recusant (crypto-Catholic) like his parents who had closet ties to many notorious and executed Catholics from Warwickshire (Edward Arden, John Somerville). Andrews poses tough questions: how could the Stratford man, who bought the headquarters of the Catholic underground (the Blackfriar's Gatehouse) three years before his death in 1616 and who "died a papist" according to a 17th-century commentator, have been the same Bard who championed English nationalism values during the Counter Reformation, who used Calvin's Bible almost exclusively, and who as a tragedian pushed beyond Christian traditions on such sensitive matters as suicide?

Andrews' review is very close to an official confession that continued pursuit of the long taboo issue of crypto-Catholicism will probably further widen the yawning chasm between the Stratford man and the real Bard. Resolution will only come when someone exposes the who, how,

when, and why behind the successful deception strategy that made Shakespeare's identity so secret.

Andrews' reply to Dickson in *The Washington Post* (August 27th, 2000):

Living on Bard Time

In a letter that depicts my review of Anthony Holden's *William Shakespeare* as a "watershed moment in the 150-year old debate about the Bard's true identity," Peter W. Dickson suggests that the questions I raise about Holden's portrayal of Shakespeare as a secret Catholic are "very close to an official confession" of "the yawning chasm between the Stratford man and the real Bard."

Hardly. Like others, I've yet to discern any coherence in the hypothesis that the man who gave us *Henry VI, King John, Hamlet, and Henry VIII* was a crypto-Papist. To me, this notion is almost as unconvincing as the conspiracy theory that attributes to Dickson's putative author, Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, such masterpieces as *Coriolanus, Macbeth, and The Tempest*, all of which display unmistakable evidence of having been composed long after Oxford's death in 1604. It will require a "successful deception strategy" indeed to show how Dickson's candidate for the actual Shakespeare could have written these or any of the playwright's other works.

Dickson (continued from page 7)

this explosive issue: namely, that the intriguing Lancastrian connection is not proven, but the parents were Catholic and that their son might have had a soft spot in his heart for Ye Olde Faith, which he kept under wraps as part of a general effort to conform to the Anglican Church for political reasons and to avoid any sectarian issues in his dramas.

From Honigmann to Holden (1985-2000)

Since the appearance of Park Honan's Shakespeare biography and then the major conference in Lancashire last year, there have been several noteworthy developments concerning the debate over the Catholic Question. First, Anthony Holden's biography, *William Shakespeare: the Man Behind the Genius* (2000), represents the apotheosis of Honigmann's thesis concerning the Lancastrian-Catholic Connection. Holden is a Lancastrian himself and is fully behind the effort there to re-link the Bard to his supposed roots in the North Country.

But Holden's emphasis on the Catholic dimension of the traditional Shakespeare appears strangely uneven upon closer examination. He makes even less of an effort than Ian Wilson did in 1994 to argue that the literary works contain strong passages or allusions that show a distinctly Catholic worldview. Even more surprising, Holden suggests that after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in the fall of 1588, the Stratford man saw the hand-writing on the wall, and drifted away from the staunch, though still secret, Catholicism of his parents.

Thus, Holden sees the incumbent Bard as a serious secret Catholic through barely half the period known as the "lost years." He refers to him as a "furtive papist" or as a "lapsed Catholic" who was willing to give voice finally to the name "Jesus" in the crude inscription on his own gravestone.

Simply put, Holden does not have the courage to pursue the Catholic theory beyond a certain point. He makes only a passing reference to Susan Shakespeare's appearance on the recusancy list shortly after the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. Like mainstream scholars, Holden describes the late purchase of the large Blackfriar's Gatehouse in March 1613 as purely a business transaction and the need for a place to live.

Why does Holden back off in his pursuit of the Catholic theory? We believe he stops

short because he knows in his heart that it is a hard sell when you turn to the literary texts themselves. Also, Holden probably knows it is risky to push this theory given the sensitivities within the Shakespeare Establishment, especially in Britain, and also in terms of the need to sustain unity against the anti-Stratfordians, especially Oxfordians.

Strong evidence of the Establishment's growing unease can be seen in the pro-

***"Given the formidable
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Establishment's opposition
... when and why did
the long-taboo Catholic
Question become
admissible in
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foundly ambivalent review which Holden received in *The Washington Post* (July 9th, 2000) from John Andrews, President of the Shakespeare Guild and editor of the *Everyman Shakespeare*. Andrews' book review and also the texts of an ongoing exchange of letters in this newspaper between Andrews and this writer are provided for our readers (see the boxes pages 6-7).

Andrews' review amounts to an astonishing admission that further pursuit of the Catholic theory is quite risky because of the conflict with so many of the Shakespearean dramas. In his exchange of letters, Andrews

denies that his review of Holden's work amounts to an "official confession" that the Catholic issue presents a major systemic problem for the Establishment. He then deflects attention from the topic by attacking this author as a proponent of the conspiratorial Oxfordian theory, and by engaging in the old "dating" game, i.e. citing supposed post-1604 composition dates for some plays (thus eliminating Oxford, who died in 1604); but this is a two-edge sword as far as the authorship dispute is concerned, since some mainstream scholars have re-dated other Shakespeare plays into the 1580s, which is fatal for the Stratford man.

The other development that demonstrates that the crisis in the Shakespeare Establishment is festering is the publication earlier this year of Velma Bourgeois Richmond's *Shakespeare, Catholicism, and Romance* (Continuum Books). Although she remarks that definitive proof that the Bard was a secret Catholic may never be found, Richmond is quite convinced that his staunch Catholic family background gave him a "Catholic habit of mind" which he never abandoned as a playwright. Richmond argues that this "Catholic habit of mind" can be seen most clearly in the themes and passages of certain comedies which draw upon the medieval traditions of court romance and chivalry which she maintains are more reflective of Catholic mentality or worldview than a Protestant outlook. In particular, she devotes considerable emphasis on the important role of female characters in the comedies and also the tragic role of Desdemona in *Othello*.

Richmond, however, totally ignores the history plays and the existentialist, almost nihilistic elements in some of the great tragedies which suggest Shakespeare's greater affinity for the pagan or Greek dramatists compared to Christian traditions, to say nothing more about Roman Catholicism.

In conclusion, it seems fair to state that Richmond has attempted to "backfit" as much of the canon as possible to make it consistent with the secret Catholic theory. We can expect more such efforts as long as the advocates of the Catholic theory remain intent on becoming the New Orthodoxy within the Shakespeare Establishment, and as long as others fail to show them the downside of this research for the ongoing dispute with anti-Stratfordians and Oxfordians over the Bard's true identity.

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Stritmatter (continued from page 1)

stance radically at odds with Peacham's practice in his three *Basilikon Doron* manuscripts, which "followed the tripartite division of James's book to provide a clearly defined structural basis" (xiv). Mason Tung (1997), analyzing Peacham's appropriation of traditional emblem materials from other writers, discovers a persistent habit of "indicating 'apparent' sources yet concealing the 'real' ones" and wonders "what motivates [Peacham] to play a game of 'hide and seek' with his reader?" (187).

The search for complex coherence in this puzzling work might begin with the question of why Peacham chose the title *Minerva Britanna*.¹ A rich Medieval and Renaissance emblematic tradition, rooted in the popular etymology of the name Pallas (from the Greek participle [insert here "pallas, pallentis" in Greek font] meaning to "shake" or "brandish" and the mythological traditions of the ancient world, associates the Goddess Pallas/Minerva² with the action of "shaking" (vibrans) a spear.

An abundance of evidence testifies to the prominence of this association in the artistic traditions which informed the construction of Peacham's work; emblems reproduced by Henkel and Schöne in their encyclopedic survey *Emblemata* (1953) depict Minerva as the personification of political cunning expressed in art. In this capacity she is typically portrayed with her spear—in fact, 12 out of 15 emblems illustrate her with spear in hand; paired with Ulyseus, she guides him, spear in hand, through means of her "providence"; paired with Mars her spear of "art" contrasts to his of "war"; for Achilles her spear prudently prevents his killing of Agamemnon; with Bellona, spear in hand, she defeats her war-like cousin, who paradoxically comes to the battle armed only with a fool's theatrical mask.

In numerous mythographic contexts Minerva's spear—symbolizing the activity of the mind in art and philosophy—is the defining attribute of her emblematic figure and the primary means of expressing her divine will. One pregnant testimony to the prominence of the allegorical association between Minerva and "spearshaking" even speaks of her "vibrandae... hastae"—her "needing to be brandished spear" (Henkel & Schöne 1953 1736).

This association between *Minerva* and her spear is also very evident in Elizabethan and Stuart sources. When Gabriel Harvey

toasts Edward de Vere in his 1578 Audley End encomium with the phrase "vultus tela vibrat"—"thy countenance shakes a spear," the context is Minervan; three lines earlier Minerva is described as "in dextra latitat"—concealed in de Vere's right hand. A year later in the *Shephearde's Calendar* Spenser's exegete E.K., in a footnote on Bellona, further emphasizes the proverbial, and indeed etymological, association between Pallas and "spear shaking" in his

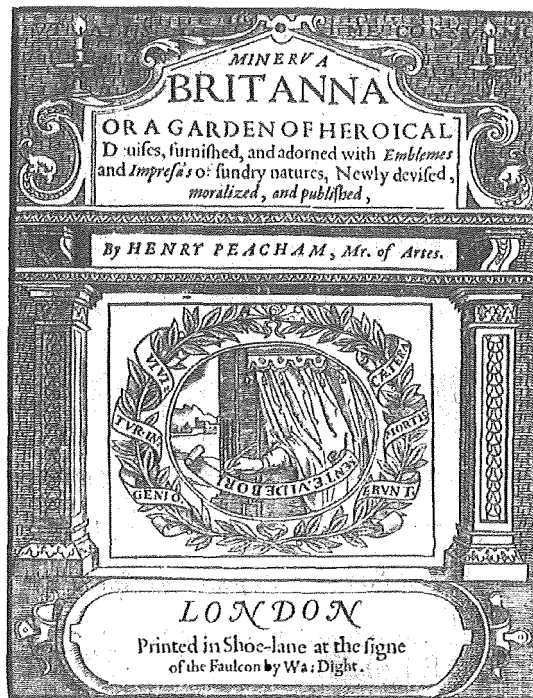


Figure 1. Title page of *Minerva Britanna* (1612) showing a hand reaching out from behind a curtain, writing the phrase *MENTE.VIDEBOR*. Note the continuing action of the pen as it appears to be starting to form the diacritic dot on a small letter i. The position of the pen rules out any chance that a period is being written.

recapitulation of the story of Minerva's birth:

Pallas, which may therefore wel be called queint for that (as Luciansaith) when Iupiter her father was in traveile of her, he caused his sonne Vulcane with his axe to hew his head. Out of which leaped forth lustely a valiant damsell armed at all poynts, whom seeing Vulcan so faire & comely, lightly leaping to her, proffered her some cortesie, which the Lady disdeigning, *shaked her speare* at him, and threatned his sauciness. (October 186-94; emphasis added)

Sixty-two years later, the association between Shakespeare and the spearshaker

Pallas is reiterated in the collection of the anonymous mythological poems included in the curious 1640 edition of *Shake-Speare's Poems*, in which the poet exhorts the bard "in thy hand the Spear of Pallas shake" (Ogburn 1984 238).

Finally, the image of Minerva's spear even features prominently in Peacham's introductory Latin verses dedicating his emblembook to Henry Stuart (1595-1612): "Undique fraxineam dum dextra viriliter hastam/Torquet, et incerto circū aëra verberat ictū./She spins (torquet) everywhere her ashen spear in her virile right hand, and all around the air reverberates with mis-aimed blow(s)."

For Stuart mythographers such as Francis Bacon, as in the Renaissance emblembook tradition, Minerva, and by implication her "spear-shaking," were associated with doctrines of political circumspection—of the political theatre indulged in by monarchs to retain the loyalty of the populace. Indeed, in his *De Sapientia Veterum*, Bacon declares that the myth of Minerva leaping from the brow of Zeus "seems to contain a great secret of state (sensus arcanum imperii continere videtur)" (Spedding 1860 XIII 62). Does Peacham's naming of his book after Minerva reflect a similar emphasis on her traditional association with the arcana governing proper conduct in statecraft?

The possibility that Peacham's *Minerva* might comment on the "Shake-speare" question—that great arcanum of the Elizabethan and Stuart monarchies—was discussed as early as 1937 by Eva Turner Clarke in her book, *The Man Who Was Shakespeare*, although Clarke was apparently not aware of the image of Minerva "spinning" her spear in Peacham's Latin verses. Clarke instead drew attention to the curious title page of *Minerva*, which illustrates a hand coming out from behind a theatrical curtain covering a "discovery space."³ The hand is in the act of writing on a scroll the words "MENTE.VIDEBOR"—"by the mind I shall be seen" (figure 1). Clarke alleged—incorrectly it transpires—that this Latin legend spelled an anagram, "TIBI NOM.⁴ DE VERE"—"thy name is de Vere." It is my intention in this article to pursue certain implications of Ms. Clarke's theory which have previously escaped notice by her critics, yet deserve the thoughtful attention of all researchers with a sincere interest in Henry Peacham's remarkable and enigmatic work.

(Continued on page 10)

Stritmatter (Continued from page 9)

Problems with Ms. Clarke's theory, by now well known among Oxfordian circles, go back to the initial publication of Clarke's book, in which the word MENTE was misspelled MENTI, a mistake which required an erratum slip to be placed in Clarke's book. A more serious—some have thought fatal—objection to Clarke's anagram solution did not surface in public until Noemi Magri's May 1999 *De Vere Society Newsletter* article, although discussed among Oxfordians in private before that time. Many concluded from this article that the alleged anagram had been demolished. One irate reader informed Phaeton (the Oxfordian Internet discussion group): "The alleged anagram, 'tibinom. de Vere,' has been shown to be without foundation, wishful thinking, illusory, mythical and ludicrous."

In my November 1999 SOS Conference lecture, "The Key to Minerva Britanna," I urged researchers to adopt a more open-minded position towards this fascinating book and the alleged anagram (see below). Although Magri's critique is undoubtedly correct it does not, in my opinion, finally settle the issue of whether there is an anagram spelling the phrase "TIB<i>NOM. DE VERE" in Peacham's book. But before examining some reasons why the alleged anagram may in fact still exist, let us consider some further reasons why Henry Peacham's testimony is highly relevant, in a more generic sense, to the authorship question.

The only extant sixteenth century manuscript of a canonical Shakespeare play is in Henry Peacham's handwriting (figure 2). This Longleat library manuscript⁶ includes some forty lines from scene I.i of *Titus Andronicus*, in which Tamora pleads before Titus to spare her first-born son. A sketch, apparently of this same scene,⁷ appears at the heading of the document. The document is in Henry Peacham's holograph—that is, it includes a dated signature, "Henricus Peacham," as well as lines of text and the drawing. Schoenbaum diffidently concedes that "the signature in the lower-left hand margin suggests that a Henry Peacham transcribed the forty lines of verse and perhaps made the drawing too" (1975 123). In fact, all things considered, the case for Peacham's transcription of the document is beyond serious doubt; although the paleographical analysis to prove the point has yet to be undertaken, both the hand and the character of the drawing are matched in Peacham's

other manuscripts such as *Basilikon Doron*⁸ or *Emblemata Varia* (c. 1622).⁹ The thundering implication of this *Titus* manuscript should not be overlooked: if any Elizabethan had reason to know Shakespeare's identity, that person was Henry Peacham.

As Peter Dickson has recently argued

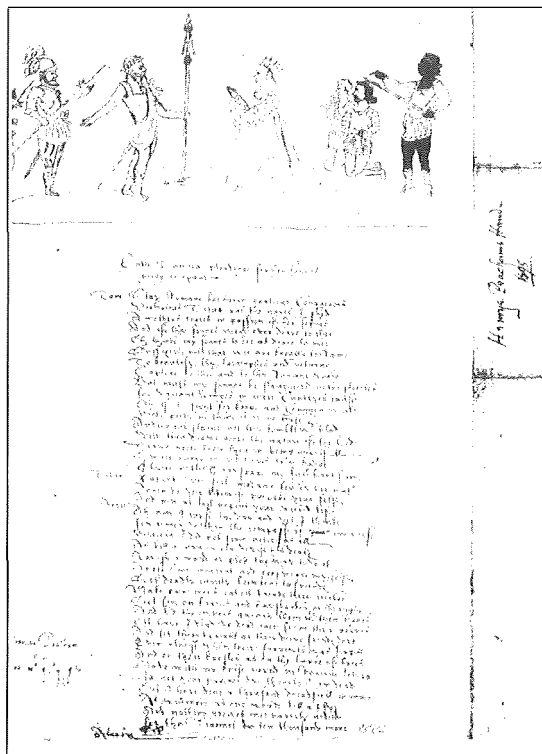


Figure 2. Henry Peacham's transcript of *Titus Andronicus*, dated 1595.

MENTE.VIDEBOR=TIB[i]NOM.DEVERE			
Letters available		Letters required	
E=3		E=3	
M=1		M=1	
I=1		I=2	
N=1		N=1	
T=1		T=1	
V=1		V=1	
B=1		B=1	
O=1		O=1	
R=1		R=1	
11		12	

Figure 3. Proof for the failure of the Clarke-Astley-Cox solution of the anagram. The phrase MENTE.VIDEBOR lacks an "i" to complete the solution

(1998), it is therefore surprising that Henry Peacham's memorial to the great writers of the Elizabethan era in *The Complete Gentleman*, published in 1622 while the 1623 "Shakespeare" first folio was in production,

fails to mention Shakespeare. It does, on the other hand, prominently mention Oxford, as the first of the great poets of the Elizabethan age. As Dickson's research has shown, moreover, this arrangement was not altered or disturbed in successive editions (1627, 1634, 1661) of this popular Stuart book:

"This glaring omission of Shakespeare's name from Peacham's list is astounding" concludes Dickson, "and in all likelihood was a deliberate exclusion because Peacham knew that Oxford and Shakespeare were the same person" (1999 8). When Peacham not only fails to mention Shakespeare in his list of great Elizabethan poets, but places the name "Earl of Oxford" where one expects to see the Bard's own name, this is *prima facie* grounds to consider his views on "Shakespeare," whether overt or covert, with careful circumspection.

Tib<i>NOM.de Vere

Eva Turner Clarke's solution to the title page enigma, as I observed in my November lecture, fails because the printed phrase "MENTEVIDEBOR" lacks the additional "i" required to spell the word "TIB<i>" in the anagram's solution (figure 3). In trying to accommodate for this fact, Clarke's enthusiastic epigone, the noted English classical scholar John Astley-Cox, committed a terrible blunder in the technical area of passive Latin verb forms. The form VIDEBOR in Peacham's inscription means "I shall be seen." It completes the ablative case of MENTE; the inscription declares that "by the mind"—that is not merely with the eyes—"I shall be seen."

Apparently, however, the pen in Peacham's drawing is in the process of writing a diacritic dot on a small i after the R in VIDEBOR. Astley-Cox accordingly proposed that the hand was completing the word VIDEBORI[S], meaning—hethought—"thou shalt be seen." Unfortunately, the verb form which Astley-Cox proposed simply does not exist. The second person singular of a second declension passive Latin verb requires a thematic vowel shift from an "o" to an "e"—i.e. from "videbor" to "videberis." Hence, Astley-Cox's proposed emendation to Ms. Clarke's solution is grammatically impossible. In pointing out the nature of this error in a recent article published in the *De Vere Society Newsletter* (3:3 5-6), Dr. Noemi Magri emphasized her conviction that other elements of the title page, specifically the content of the motto which

accompanies the two burning candles at the upper left and right hand corners of the title page, and the nature of the motto and image of the hand extending from the discovery space, lent strong credence to the hypothesis that Peacham's book is concerned with Edward de Vere:

On a semantic basis, the Latin mottoes with their corroborating visual representation of the theatre curtain might lead one to the identification of Lord Oxford. It is unmistakable that the concepts expressed in the inscriptions can rightly be applied to his life: the prohibition on publishing his works under his own name, the concealed identity, immortality reached through the works, the destructive power of Death, are themes present in all the works of Shakespeare. (6)

Thus, although Magri established the faulty grammatical premises of the belief that the phrase *MENTE VIDEBOR*[I] could yield the anagram *TIBI NOM. DE VERE*, she does endorse a connection between the book and de Vere.

In this essay I propose that *Minerva Britanna* does in fact contain an anagram of de Vere's name along the original lines proposed by Clarke, even though both Clarke and Astley-Cox failed to appreciate the subtle means Peacham devised to make the anagram operative and Magri's technical objections to the solutions they did devise are beyond contest. Let us see what can be discovered if we reconsider Clarke's solution from the point of view of a more comprehensive and structural analysis of this intriguing book.

Minerva's Anagrams

Minerva Britanna displays a dazzling preoccupation with word puzzles of various kinds—among them, prominently, anagrams. Richard Kennedy's listing of anagrams from the book (as posted on the Internet discussion group Phaeton) isolates at least 12—and this includes merely the more obvious examples. Thus, the proposition that the title page invokes an anagram—the solution of which will come about through the application of the reader's mind attempting to discern the identity of the person behind the curtain—is in itself hardly objectionable. Anagrams, as any student of the Renaissance is aware, were a popular method of expressing esoteric knowledge.

The second point to bear in mind is that Peacham's text is the most sophisticated English example of a popular—intrinsically

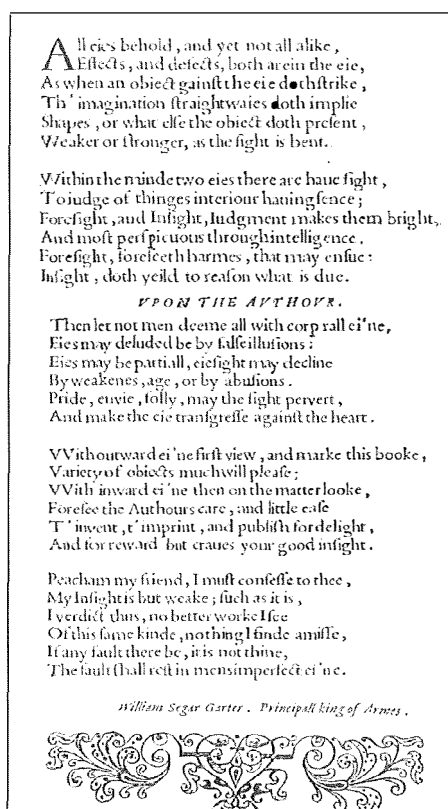


Figure 4. Garter Herald Segar's dedication poem to Minerva Britanna.

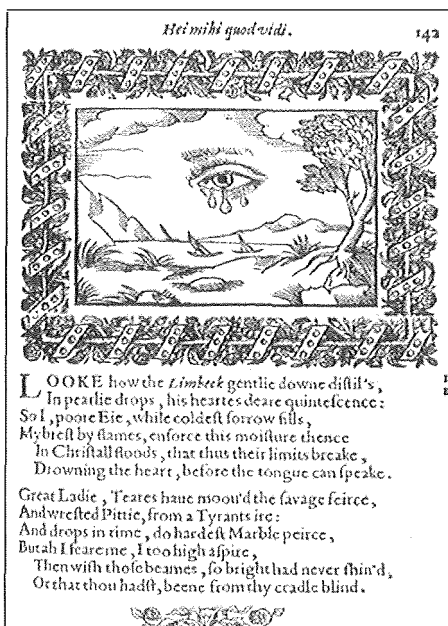


Figure 5. Peacham #142 showing the pervasive eye/I pun.

esoteric—Renaissance genre, of which literally hundreds of titles were published, in all the European vernaculars. In emblem books, visual symbols were endowed with hermetic or secret significance, often of a political as well as a moral or religious nature. As Henry Peacham himself says in his intro-

duction:

The true use [of emblems] from time to time onely hath been, Utile dulci miscere, to feede at once both the minde, and eie, by expressing mystically and doubtfully, our disposition, either to Love, Hatred, Clemencie, Iustice, Pietie, our Victories, Misfortunes, Griefes, and the like: which perhaps could not have bene openly, butto our praejudice revealed. And in truth the bearer heerein doth but as the Travailer, that changeth his Silver into Gold, carry about his affection in a narrow roome, and more safely; the valew rather bettered then abated.

The critical passage is Peacham's statement that the emblem book expresses "mystically and doubtfully...[matters] which perhaps could not have bene openly, but to our prejudice, revealed..." In other words, emblems are devices for expressing "mystically and doubtfully" the author's disposition towards controversial subjects; *MB* in turn is a text in which such "mystical" matter is conveyed, in part at least, through the discovery of anagrams.

Third, there is a pronounced emphasis, in the prefatory materials of this book, to the exacting attention which has been paid to minute elements of design, including a particular devotion to editorial correctness in every conceivable matter. We are assured, for instance, in the introductory poem of Garter Herald William Segar (figure 4), that there is, in some 212 complex pages of type, written in six different languages including Turkish, "nothing amiss." Should a reader be tempted to believe that s/he has discovered a fault in the book, that fault is not Peacham's, Segar suggests, but the reader's own.

Minerva's Eyes

Readers of Segar's poem will be struck by the repeated emphasis on the eye as the organ of vision and by the implied English language pun in which "i" and "eye" are homophones. This identity is often activated in Peacham's book, as if to emphasize that not only "eyes"—which are needed for seeing emblems—and "minds"—which are needed for understanding them—but also "i's"—a small and apparently innocuous letter of the alphabet—are needed for comprehending Peacham's message.

The pun is made explicit in Peacham's emblem #142 (figure 5), which pictures a weeping eye accompanied by the motto "Hei mihi quod vidi"/"O woe is me because

(Continued on page 12)

Strimatter (Continued from page 11)

I see”—in which the fivefold iteration of the small letter “i” in Latin and the occurrence of the first person pronoun “I” in English both function as pointed reminder of the subject under discussion. And in case any reader is tempted to miss the point, the same pun is repeated in the English verses below: “so I, poore Eie, while coldest sorrow fills. . .”

With this background in mind it is intriguing to return to the title page of *Minerva Britannia* and to Ms. Clarke’s alleged anagram: the letter which is missing from the legend to complete the phrase “TIB<i>i>NOM. DE VERE” is this same letter “i,” about which so much has been made by Peacham as well as by Minervan collaborators such as Herald Segar. Furthermore, this letter forms a homophone for the organ of sight; and the legend tells us that the man behind the curtain will be seen not by the literal eye, but by the mind—that is, by exercising the powers of insight and foresight praised by Herald Segar in his poem. Are we being instructed to search for an “i”—which would complete the anagram and reveal the identity of the man behind the curtain—elsewhere in Peacham’s book?

My November SOS lecture suggested that the answer to this question was perhaps “yes”; I drew attention to emblem #66, which contains two curious Latin phrases, one in italics and the other in Roman type: “Allah vere”/truly, Allah and “i. Deus dabit”/God will give the ‘i’ (figure 6). It should be noted that the conjunction of the italic motto “Allah vere” with the Roman type “i. Deus dabit” is peculiar. Other emblems in Peacham’s book which pair these two typefaces in the superscription, as if to provide an additional clue to the superabundance of anagrammatical meaning in Peacham’s text—all form anagrams of the names of their respective dedicatees. In twelve such examples¹⁰ the anagrammatic motto appears in Italic type and the name “mystically signified” is itself given in Roman. #66 stands unique¹¹ in Peacham’s entire book—because the relation of Italic and Roman phrases is not, at least in any self-evident sense, anagrammatic—although it is so every other case in the book. Instead of providing an anagram of a Roman typeface name, the italics here translate the Turkish phrase pictured in the emblem below with the four candles.

Since my November presentation, however, further research has clarified certain

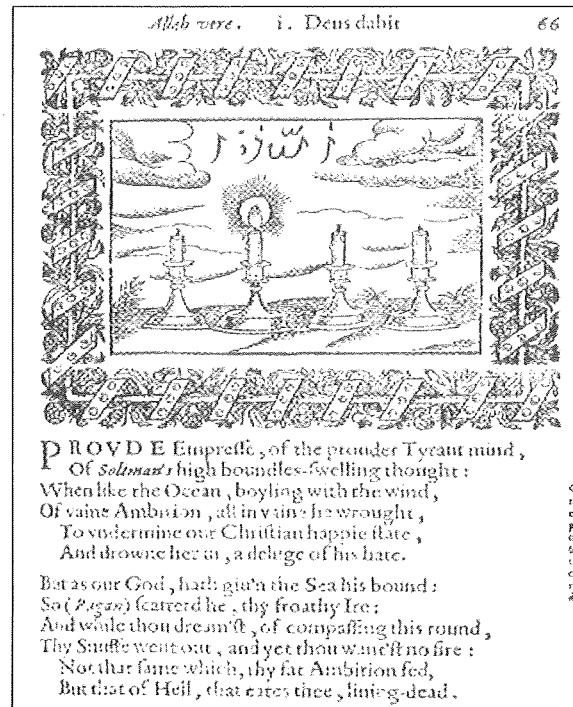


Figure 6. Peacham #66, showing the curious subscript “i. Deus dabit.” at the top of the page.

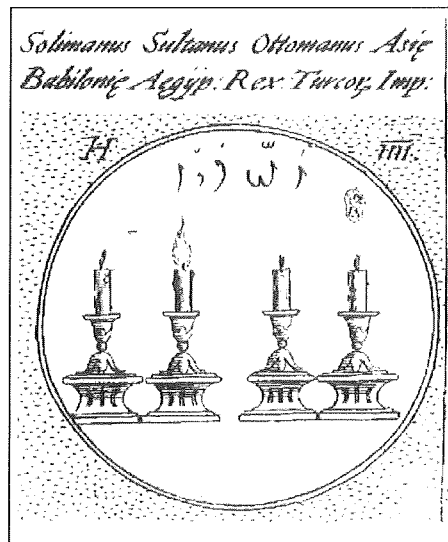


Figure 7. The source of Peacham #66 (taken from Typotius’ *Symbola*, Vol. I, table 26, page 58) with excerpt from Latin prose commentary on the Arabic.

critical points which must be considered in evaluating the hypothesis of the intentional relation of the motto “i. Deus dabit” to the *Minerva* title page. Mason Tung has identified the source of this emblem #66 in the 1601-03 emblem book of Jacob Typotius, *Symbola Divina & Human Pontificorum Imperatorum Regum* (figure 7). Tung suggests, furthermore, that Peacham’s letter “i”

abbreviates the common Latin phrase, “id est”—an established medieval/Renaissance abbreviation (Capelli 1961, 168). Curiously, however, Peacham’s source does not provide a precedent for this abbreviation. In his commentary on the emblem, which he dedicates to Solimanus Sultanus Ottomanus, Typotius clarifies the translation of the Turkish legend pictured in the emblem with the following phrase: “& inscribunt Turcica lingua, Alla vere, id est. Deus dabit. . .” “And they write, in the Turkish tongue, ‘Allah Vere’—that is to say, ‘God will give’” (see the detail in figure 7).

At first glance this discovery might seem to cast doubt on the interpretation that the phrase “i. Deus dabit” can be translated as “God will give the i.” In fact, it strengthens the original supposition in favor of this reading: Peacham’s abbreviation of “id est” to “i.”—his only significant deviation from Typotius—in fact underscores the arbitrary and premeditated character of the “i.” Why didn’t Peacham just follow Typotius and spell out the phrase, “id est?” Surely this would have been the most natural and unambiguous thing to do. There is plenty of room on the page. Yet Peacham did not follow this obvious course and the alert reader must wonder why.

I propose that Peacham modified Typotius precisely because he needed the “i.”—he needed it to create a piece of word magic, linking the “Allah vere” emblem to the title page of *Minerva Britannia* and completing the otherwise imperfect anagram.¹² Strong contextual support for this interpretation is provided by the phrase “Allah vere” itself, which could of course be translated into English as “Lord Vere.”

Another feature linking emblem #66 to the title page is the motif of the four candles, the impresa of Solimanus Ottomanus borrowed from Typotius’s book. In his title page motto—“ut alijs¹³ me consumo”—Peacham offers one possible symbolic interpretation of the candle: it is a thing which consumes itself in the service of others; it shines to provide light, and in doing so is itself consumed away to nothing. Hieroglyphically the candle might also be understood to denote the small-letter i, which it closely resembles in form. In this case, Peacham’s title page motto—“ut alijs me consumo”—could be applied also to the missing letter “i” in the legend MENTE. VIDEBOR below it. Dr. Magrit translates this motto: “Likewise I consume myself for oth-

ers." The ut—likewise—signifies that, contrary to appearances, the speaker of the motto is not, in fact, the candle. It is another who, *like the candle*, consumes himself in labor on behalf of others. The speaker could be the author Henry Peacham, but it could also be the implied "i" in the legend below, which consumes itself for the sake of maintaining the grammatical correctness of the surface string MENTE. VIDEBOR; this "i." returns only as a "gift of God" in emblem #66.

On this understanding, then, the Latin phrase "i. Deus dabit" can serve at least two complementary functions: it clarifies the meaning of the ambiguous Turkish phrase, Allah Vere—"id est, Deus dabit"—and it also provides a mystical link to the title page, supplying the "i."—the consumed candle—which is missing to form the anagram "TIBI[i] NOM. de Vere."¹⁴ In isolation the interpretation may seem absurd. In view of the numerous other Minervan symbols and word puzzles which seem to invoke the "Shakespeare" question and Edward de Vere in this book, it may seem less so.

Some readers have objected to the fact that the other letters in Peacham's title page scroll are in capital letters, while the embryonic diacritic mark—and the small letter "i." in the legend to emblem #66—imply a lower case "i," inconsistent with the rest of the legend. One can speculate why Peacham may have wished to alter the anagram in this manner, but the alteration in no way effects the plausibility of the alleged solution. Only by using the small-letter "i" could Peacham make use of the diacritic mark to imply the presence of a letter not fully present on the page and meant to be "imported," as it were, from another place in the book.¹⁵

Furthermore, as Christopher Paul Harper has insisted on the Phaeton discussion group, the diminutive character of the letter "i" underscores the moral found in emblem #57, that objects of very slight weight or, in this case, dimension, can have profound consequence.

Finally, convincing evidence for the intentional character of this design choice may be discerned elsewhere in Peacham's book: at least one author of dedicatory verses to *Minerva* was apparently aware of Peacham's cunning use of the "small i." In his dedicatory Latin verses, Thomas Hardingus comments that a just reader must consider the matter of Peacham's book "et eius et suis videns ocellulis" (B1r)—"seeing with both his own



Figure 8. Peacham's dedication to Henry Stuart, with small letter "i." as an abbreviation for id est.

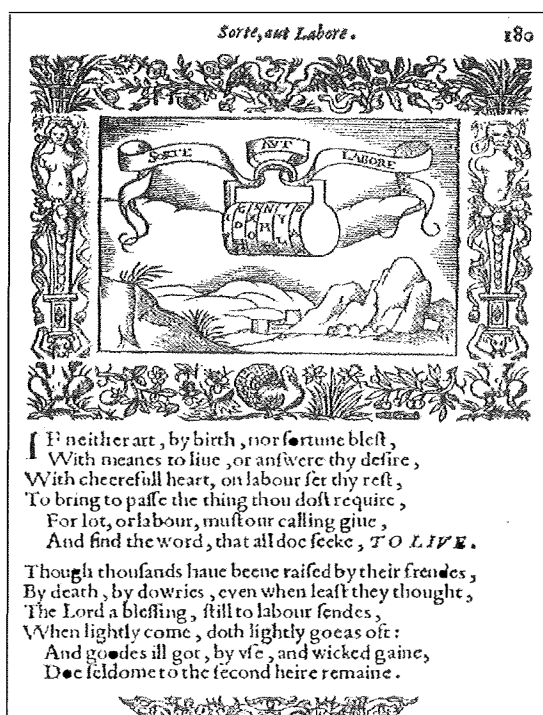


Figure 9. Peacham's cipher wheel emblem with the explicit key, *VIVERE* ("TO LIVE").

and another's little eyes"—"ocellulis" being a rare diminutive form of "ocellus." The "i" is the small thing which Peacham had to exclude from his title page in order to make

his puzzle aesthetically coherent—and "small," or rather discerning, eyes are needed to perceive its alternative location.

As it turns out, intriguing analogies to this alleged practice may be found right in Peacham's own book. Let us consider, for example, the curious dedication to Henry Stuart (figure 8). We notice here that the motto of the Prince of Wales, ICH DIEN (I serve), is given both in German (as it customarily was) and also in Latin—Servio. These two versions of the motto are linked by the small letter "i."—which is preceded and followed by a full stop. Here, as in emblem #66, the most obvious reading is that the "i." represents an abbreviation for "id est."¹⁶ It could be argued, furthermore, that here—unlike emblem #66—the abbreviation is required in order to set the entire passage in a single line of type.

According to this conservative premise we might then transcribe the line as "ICH DIEN; that is (in German), 'I serve.'" But, once more, alternative interpretations, inspired by the curious typography of the "i." placed strategically between the two verb forms and two full stops, suggest themselves to an alert reader. Another way to decode this "i" is as the first person singular English pronoun, I. If we do this, Peacham's line yields three variants on the phrase "ICH DIEN": it states the concept first in German, then in Latin, and finally states—in the English homophonic construction—"I Serv-e-o." Is this, possibly, another instance of Peacham's own stated intent to "express mystically and doubtfully" his affection for a man whose published initials were "E.O." (see, for this practice, Edwards 1576, e.g. Fol. 15)?

The "key" to *Minerva's* Cipher

Emblem #180 (figure 9) in Peacham's book depicts a cipher wheel—a state-of-the-art encoding device, much like a modern combination lock, which was used for the encoding of diplomatic secrets during the 16th century and which was for all practical purposes, at that time, an unbreakable method of enciphering secrets. Peacham apparently derived the image from a 1586 Italian emblem book, *Imprese Illustri di diversi*, by Camillo Camilli (Tung 1988 93). Peacham's reasons for including this emblem in *Minerva Britannia* are not

(Continued on page 14)

Stritmatter (continued from page 13)

known. What should be noticed, however, even on a casual reading, is that Peacham literally “gives away” a key to be used with this cipher wheel; furthermore the key contains the name “Vere.” The Latin for “the word that all do seek, TOLIVE”?

VIVERE.¹⁷

If we bracket momentarily the vexing question of Peacham’s reasons for including an image of a cipher wheel in his book, we may now turn back to the “Allah vere” emblem #66 and notice yet a third—deeply intriguing—possible interpretation of the phrase “i. Deus dabit.” The Turkish letter transcribed as the letter “v” in the phrase “Allah vere” is in fact a waw. This letter could be transcribed into the Latin alphabet as v, u or w.¹⁸ Thus we might transcribe the Turkish as the letters “v, v, e, r, e” (in which the “double u” in the English word “were” has been broken down into its two component parts). Now, let us consider what will happen if “God will give the i” to this variant transcription: it will spell “vivere”—the cipher key stated in emblem #180! Is this a mere coincidence? Perhaps so. I offer it, like other interpretations of Peacham’s word puzzles, in a spirit of speculative collaboration with both friends and critics.

Recapitulation

A brief recapitulation is in order. In this essay I have argued that *Minerva Britanna* cleverly incorporates an interlocking structure of emblematic knowledge which completes the alleged anagram, TIB<i> NOM. DEVERE—which is only implied in the title page motto MENTE. VIDE BOR—when the entire book is taken into consideration. The two complementary elements in this interlocking schema—emblems #66 and #180—interlock with one another as well as with the title page and contain references to such “de Vere” phrases as “Allah Vere” (Lord Vere) and “Vivere” (to live).¹⁹

In considering this solution, it should be emphasized that anagrams—like the symbolism of mottoes or images—are an elusive and intrinsically subjective form of evidence. Friedman and Friedman, in their classic work on cryptology in the Shakespeare question, classify anagrams as un-keyed transposi-

tion ciphers. They caution that “even when the anagram has only a few letters, there may be more than one ‘solution’; and when it has many letters there can be many ‘solutions’—all equally valid” (19). Their criteria for a

realize the intellectual seriousness of the authorship question, and acknowledge the weight of the already known evidence supporting the attribution of the “Shakespeare” works to Edward de Vere. Given that the

phrase TIB<i> NOM. DE VERE evidently comments on the emblem on Peacham’s title page, identifying by name the person obscured behind the stage curtain, the revised version of Clarke’s solution proposed in this article satisfies the criterion of relevance “in spaces.”²⁰

“Tandem Divulganda”

“The denser the medium, the more important the message,” remarked Manhattan theatre producer Ted Story after my Conference *Minerva* lecture. Whatever else one can say about *Minerva Britanna*, this book is an extraordinary instance of a narrative told in a dense medium. Consider our final emblem, #38 (figure 10)²¹: an image of a winged key with the motto “tandem divulganda”—“finally, these things must be revealed.” The nature of “these things” are elaborated in the English subscript:

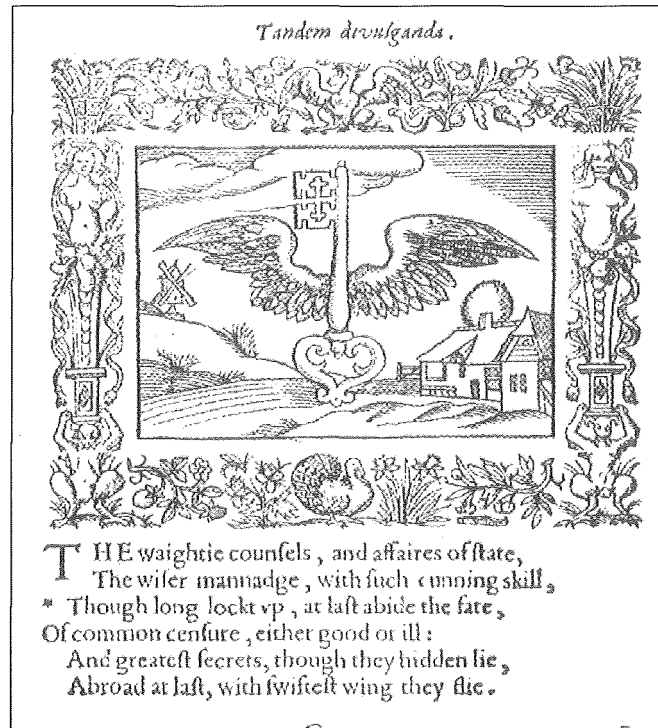


Figure 10. Peacham’s Tandem divulganda—“finally, these things must be revealed.”

valid anagram is as follows: “in order to be ‘perfect’ an anagram should not only involve a rearrangement of letters without additions or deletions; the resulting word or words should in some way comment upon the original” (92).

Critics of my solution will of course argue that it requires the “addition” of a “missing” letter—that itty-bitty “i.” which is omitted from the title page—to complete the anagram. Henry Peacham, they will say, would never have been as clever or devious as the solution of discovering this “i” on another page of the book implies. Such critics, of course, state a belief and not a fact; there is obviously no point in arguing with them. It must be conceded, on the other hand, that the solution I propose possesses the quality of intrinsic coherence which is the defining attribute of all significant scientific theorems.

As for the second criterion proposed by the Friedmans, it seems to me that the solution could not possibly be more satisfying, at least to readers advanced enough to

The waightie counsels, and affaires
of state,

The wiser mannadge, with such
cunning skill,

Though long lockt up, at last abide
the fate,

Of common censure, either good
or ill:

And greatest secrets, though they
hidden lie,

Abroad at last, with swiftest wing
they flie.

If we had any doubt that Peacham has on his mind “weighty counsels and affairs of state,” such as those Francis Bacon assures us are symbolized in the Minervan tradition, this emblem should remove those doubts. The image of the key, endowed with wings so that it can fly “abroad” to safety, where “hidden” it can await discovery by explorers of a future century, furthermore, reminds us once more of the “key” to *Minerva Britanna*: Vivere. This realization should affirm the conclusion cunning readers may already have reached on their own accord: There is much more remaining to be discovered—and written—about this enigmatic and brilliant literary work.

On the title page we were told, VIVITUR INGENIO—by wit he lives. Who is this person who shall live?—And by whose wit shall he do so? I believe a preponderance of evidence continues to support the view that this person is, in fact, Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, and that the witto which Peacham appeals is, ultimately, yours and mine.

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The writer would like to acknowledge the special assistance of two dedicated researchers, Richard Kennedy—known to some for stories such as Amy's Eyes and "The Rise and Fall of Ben Gizzard"—as one of the best American storytellers—and Christopher Paul Harper.

Dr. Reginald Foster of the Gregorian Institute of Latin also offered his kind assistance and commentary on previous drafts of this essay.

Notes:

1) Minerva is the Latin name of the originally Greek Pallas Athena, patron Goddess of Athens. Edward de Vere was regarded by more than one contemporary as possessing a "Minervan" purpose. Verses ascribed to I. L. recall de Vere's participation in the 1588 victory over the Spanish armada with the lines:

His tusked boar 'gan foam for inward ire,
While Pallas filled his breast with warlike fire.

2) Liddell and Scott (1889, 1980 588) declare that the name is "commonly deriv. from Pallo [use Greek font here], either as Brandisher of the spear:—but prob. it is an old word pallas=παλλας." It is needless to point out that the actual derivation of the word is irrelevant to the disposition of the questions raised by this inquiry; what matters is that the former etymology was widely believed in ancient and Renaissance times.

3) Peacham's title page emblem imitates the curtains used to conceal the interior of "discovery spaces" on 17th century stages—which did not use a curtain to cover a projecting proscenium as their modern counterparts do. For an early representation of an analogous curtain, see Figure 11 on this page.

4) Clarke took the word "nom." as a legitimate medieval/Renaissance abbreviation for what Edward de Vere was missing—his name or nomen, and she took *tibi* as a dative of respect or ethical dative; these inferences were grammatically and historically sound. For nom. as an abbreviation of nomen see Capelli (1961 239). Note, furthermore, that the full stop included in the printed legend "MENTE. VIDEBOR" supplies the punctuation strictly re-

quired to abbreviate "NOMEN" as "NOM."

4) It should be noted that objection has been registered to the fact that the form "DE VERE" is not Latin, while the rest of the construction is. This objection will strike students of linguistic history familiar with the rich macaronic traditions of early-modern Europe as bordering on the absurd.

6) Harley papers, i f. 159.



Figure 11. Restoration theatre engraving, with "Changeling" entering through a curtain covering the Discovery Space. Such Discovery Spaces, often covered by curtains allowing for swift entrance or exit, are well attested in English theatre by the late 16th century (Adams, from whom the above figure is excerpted, supplies an abundance of evidence supporting this conclusion); it was probably from behind such a curtain that Polonius eavesdropped in Hamlet 3.4

7) June Schlueter (for a synopsis see Heller 1999) has recently contested this common-sense interpretation, asserting that the image more closely resembles a scene from the German play, A Very Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus and the Haughty Empress. Unfortunately for adherents to the official view of Shakespeare, this interpretation fails to disassociate the manuscript from Shakespeare, since the scene copied below in Peacham's hand is manifestly from the Shakespeare play printed in the 1623 folio as by the bard.

8) Rawlinson 146; Harleian 6855, Art 13; Royal 12A LXVI.

9) Folger V.b.45.

10) Emblems illustrating this design pattern include #13 dedicated to Anne of Britain, #14 to Elisabeth Stuart, #15 to Henry IV of France #17 to Prince Henry, #19 to Robert Cecil, #35 to Thomas Chaloner, #42 to Edmund Ashfield, #92 to Mabella Colarde, #125 to Thomas Ridgeway, #166 to Nicholas White, #175 to Anna Dudley, #177 to Henry Peacham.

11) The one possible exception to this rule, emblem #130, appears to be intentionally connected in various ways to #66. This emblem, "Ad Jesum Christum opt: Max:" (to the highest lord Jesus Christ), which depicts a sacrificial lamb being slaughtered, includes an anagram in Greek of the name: ΙΕΣΟΥΣ (Jesus): ΣΥ Η ΟΙΣ (thou art that sheep). Here Peacham prints out the English translation of the Greek anagram in Roman letters, just as he prints the translation for Allah vere as deus dabit in #66. Several elements of design are however worth commenting upon. First, the expression of religious devotion to Jesus seems intentionally juxtaposed to the diatribe against Islam found in #66. The legend of emblem #130 translates a Greek phrase into its English equivalent, but that of #66 translates a Turkish phrase first into literal but apparently highly misleading English and then, for clarification, into Latin. Comparison with emblem #130 prompts the question of why Peacham does not just translate the Turkish directly into the English phrase in #66: "that is, 'God will give'." This would certainly be the most economical practice. Nor does Peacham find need to provide an explanatory id est or an i. for the reader of emblem #130. Finally, the presence of the anagram in emblem #130 actually reinforces the conviction of the possibility of an anagram associated with emblem #66: although the emblem varies the pattern noted above, in which all emblems with both Roman and Italic legends involve anagrams, it does not contradict it.

12) Christopher Paul Harper, who is undertaking an exhaustive but as-yet uncompleted inventory of the variations made by Peacham on his received sources, tells me that changes like this one appear to be invariably intentional on Peacham's part and to be related to the overall purpose and design of *Minerva Britannia*.

13) The typographical variant j for i is very common in medieval Latin since the letters are, in fact, identical in the Latin alphabet.

14) As Art Nuendorf has recently observed, the phrase MENTE VIDEBOR, exploiting the semantic potentials of translation from Latin to English, forms a pun which confirms the presence of the unseen "i" needed to the complete the anagram: "by the mind [the] 'I' shall be seen."

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Oxfordian News

Michael York entertains at Vermont Renaissance Festival; Royal Shakespeare Company's artistic director "wonders" about Shakespeare

California

The Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable begins its 2000-2001 season with a talk ("Shakespeare's Science and Italian Art") by Scott Fanning on September 23rd at the **Beverly Hills** Public Library. Their schedule for the rest of the year is:

—Dr. Daniel L. Wright on "Shakespeare's Treatment of the Earls of Oxford" and Andrew Werth on "Why Academia is Taking De Vere Seriously" (both talks on December 2nd).

—Richard Roe on "Shakespeare and Italy" (January 27th).

—Jean Seehof on "Undressing Shakespeare" (March 24th).

—Stephanie Hughes on "Emilia Bassano Lanier: New Light on the Dark Lady" (June 9th).

Contact either Alisa Beaton (310)452-7264 or Carole Sue Lipman (541)488-2475 for information.

Illinois

On July 20th, the Chicago Oxford Society held its second meeting at the Newberry Library in **Chicago**. The keynote speaker was *The Oxfordian* editor Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, whose speech "New Light on Shakespeare's Dark Lady" was well received by an audience of 27 people, which included many who had not been at the inaugural meeting in April.

Following the presentation, which included a slide show, there was a lively and extended Q&A session in which Ms. Hughes was called on to defend her theory that the Dark Lady was the Jacobean poetess Aemilia Basano Lanier, which she ably did. Lanier had originally been put forth as the Dark Lady by none other than the late Stratfordian scholar and Oxfordian nemesis, Alfred Leslie Rowse.

Lutenist Joel Span, who recently performed at the Lyric Opera in Handel's *Alcina*, entertained the group before the lecture, concluding with a rousing version of "My Lord of Oxenford's Mask." One of the at-



British actor Michael York, on hand in Vermont for the 2nd Annual Renaissance Festival, presents a signed copy of his book, *A Shakespearean Actor Prepares*, to Festival co-organizer Betty Sears as Society member Ron Destro looks on.



Stephanie Hughes (right) poses with Chicago Oxford Society founders Marion Buckley and William Farina.

tendees was Ms. Constance Charles, a long-time member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society who—to the best of our knowledge—has seniority over all Oxfordians in the Chicago area.

And, once again, several Stratfordians in attendance afterwards expressed interest in attending future COS events.

Vermont

The Second Annual Renaissance Festival, held in **Killington** from August 18th to

20th, was a great success as hundreds turned out to enjoy the Saturday "Day at the Faire" held in the Pico Ski Area—featuring such varied events as fencing, falconry, the requisite fool, and numerous lords and ladies dressed in period costumes.

On Sunday night nearly 300 turned out to enjoy British actor Michael York's one-man show *Will and I*, in which he recounts his lifetime's experiences acting Shakespeare on stage and in film. The performance was wonderful, full of anecdotes and insights, and York did squeeze in a mention or two about Oxford, and the Oxfordians in the audience. The proceeds from York's appearance were contributed to The Friends of the Oxford Library, managed by Betty Sears.

Other Shakespeare events during the weekend included several Oxfordian lectures held at the Killington Public Library, where Hank Whittemore and former Society trustee Pidge Sexton both presented lectures on the authorship question and Edward de Vere as Shakespeare. And finally, two plays—*MacBeth* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, presented by student theatre companies from schools in Pennsylvania and New York—rounded out the schedule.

For Oxfordians attending the event there was ample opportunity to meet and talk with York, who has been a Society member since 1996.

Among those on hand were Stephen Aucella, Bill Boyle, Charles Boyle, Roger Stritmatter and Isabel Holden from Massachusetts, Ron Destro from Connecticut, Lynne Kositsky, author of *A Question of Will* (who will be at the 24th Annual Conference) from Canada, and—all the way from Virginia—Mary Louise Hammersmith.

England

Twice referring to the "myth," Adrian Noble, artistic director of the Royal Shake-

speare Company in **London**, may be joining Mark Rylance, artistic director of the Globe Theatre, in doubting that William Shakespeare was really the man from Stratford-on-Avon.

Noble intimated his doubts in an article for *The New York Times* on April 23rd, the supposed birthday of the poet/dramatist. In the first paragraph he notes that the Stratford man died on the same day of the month as his birthday "as if aware of how essential a myth he would be."

He goes on to say that "the man and myth pale when compared to the legacy of his plays." Noble wonders about the meaning of the plays and says that his wonder only increases when he considers the biography of "this Elizabethan jobbing actor." Summing up, he uses the favorite phrase of agnostics: "Whoever he was, there is no doubt in my mind that he wrote all the plays attributed to him and had a hand in a few more."

Noble may have picked up his doubts about the Stratford man from the Internet, for the main point of his article seems to be: "As a Shakespeare play raises our expectations and empowers us through enhancing our understanding of the world around us, so the [Internet] Web embodies the same experience for the individual within the context of a freely communicating global village."

His colleague Mark Rylance has not hedged his doubts. He has stated publicly that he no longer believes the Stratford man was the author of the works of Shakespeare. If Noble has joined him, then the two leading directors of Shakespeare in England are agnostics on the authorship issue (and perhaps even latent Oxfordians?).

Another interesting news note comes out of **Stratford-on-Avon**. Last March 26th, the *Sunday Telegraph* reported on tourist statistics for the last 15 years in Stratford, and the numbers are, in a word, startling.

The *Telegraph* story stated that in 1985 606,624 tourists visited Stratford. By 1987 that number had dropped to 578,540. However, the figure for 1999 was a paltry 130,000—a decline of nearly 80%!

The story further reported that this 130,000 annual figure is about the same as the number of tourists who visit Lord Byron's ancestral home Newstead Abbey, which is located several hours drive from London in a remote corner of Nottinghamshire.

And so, apparently—while England slept—the paradigm had already shifted.

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15) Notably, those who claim that the legend does not contain, or rather imply, an anagram, are forced to suppress consciousness of the diacritic mark, or to pretend that it represents a period, which it manifestly does not (see figure 1; the mark is level with the topmost point on the capital letter R preceding it, a most peculiar position for a period).

16) For another example of this abbreviation in *Minerva* see emblem #30.

17) I am indebted to Richard Kennedy for this insight (personal communication to the author, October 8, 1990).

18) These letters are also substitutable in Peacham's anagram method: see #166 in which the name "Nicholas White" spells the motto "In vos hic valet."

19) Other solutions to the alleged anagram have been proposed in ephemeral contexts such as the on-line Usenet HLAS authorship discussion group. None, however, takes into consideration the unique problems posed by the "Allah vere" emblem and its possible connection to the diacritic mark in the title page legend.

20) The theory recently proposed in certain quarters that Henry Peacham is the man behind the curtain on the title page of a book which prominently bears his name as author and states the motto MENTE VIDEBOR should be regarded as one of the most implausibly laughable theories ever proposed by partisans of the orthodox view of Shakespeare.

21) For this emblem's antecedent, see Peacham's *Harleian* 3.5 (Young 1998 118).

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Book Reviews:

Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana. Julia M. Walker (ed.). (Duke University Press, 1998, 300pp., paperback)

by Alex McNeil

What Oxfordian would not be interested in a book titled *Dissing Elizabeth*? And—by and large—this book lives up to its promise. There is much food for thought here.

Dissing Elizabeth is a collection of 11 essays by contemporary academicians on various aspects of, as Walker puts it, “the contrasting rhetoric of dissent, criticism, and disrespect which permeated all aspects of Elizabeth’s life, reign, and posthumous representation.” Although the topics and events described in the book have been discussed elsewhere, they have usually been viewed as isolated incidents; Walker’s purpose in compiling this book is to show that collective opposition to the Queen was “the dark side of the Cult of Elizabeth,” and was continuous.

The 11 contributors are mainstream academics; seven are in college English departments. Predictably, you won’t find anything touching directly on the Shakespeare authorship question here. Oxford is not mentioned at all, and William Shakespeare is mentioned only twice.

The events discussed span an 80-year period from the late 1540s, when Elizabeth was a teenager, to the early 1620s, when she had been dead for two decades. They are grouped in four sections: “History and Policy” (four essays), “Pamphlets and Sermons” (two), “The Power of the Poets” (three), and “The Image of the Queen” (two). Space does not permit extensive discussion of all 11 essays; this review will concentrate on the latter two sections of the book.

Before proceeding to them, here is a brief summary of the topics covered in the first two sections. Sheila Cavanagh leads off with “The Bad Seed: Princess Elizabeth and the Seymour Incident,” a discussion of the events of 1547–48, when rumors circulated of inappropriate goings-on between Elizabeth and Thomas Seymour, who was married to Henry VIII’s widow, Catherine Parr (the teenage princess was living in Parr’s household at the time). Noting the paucity

of the historical record, Cavanagh does not speculate on what may actually have gone on, though she does conclude “that there was excessive informality between the pair.”

Historian Susan Doran addresses the question, “Why Did Elizabeth Not Marry?” Doran discards the psychological theories, as well as the arguments that marriage might have jeopardized her authority as a female monarch. In Doran’s view, during the 1560s Elizabeth “well knew that marriage and childbirth provided the best route for resolving the thorny issue of the succession.” Doran suggests that the “image of the Virgin Queen” did not begin to take shape before 1578, when Elizabeth was 45. Doran believes that if the Queen’s advisers had ever agreed upon a suitable husband for her, Elizabeth would have been hard pressed to spurn their nominee.

Christopher Highley offers a short essay on “The Royal Image in Elizabethan Ireland,” which will probably not be of much interest to Oxfordians. He demonstrates that, in general, the Irish were able to get away with more “dissing” of Elizabeth than were the English.

Historian Carole Levin writes on “Gender, Monarchy, and the Power of Seditious Words.” Comparing the nature of seditious words uttered against Henry VIII with those uttered against Elizabeth, Levin finds that the anti-Elizabeth slanders “often reflected concern over the lack of a king” and that the “upset over Elizabeth’s refusal to deal with problems of the succession manifested itself as criticism of Elizabeth as a woman ruler.” Levin recites a lengthy catalog of anti-Elizabethan sentiments, including one by Jeremy Vanhill, who opined in 1585 that he “would to god shee were dead that I might shytt on her face.” Levin also cites contemporaneous assertions that Elizabeth had children of her own, including one claim that she had four by Leicester. Implicitly, Levin gives no credence to such claims.

In “Soueraigne Lord of lordly Lady of this land,” Ilona Bell presents a detailed look at the pamphlet titled *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf whereinto England is Like to be Swallowed by an other French marriage*. A thousand copies of this anonymous work were printed in mid-1579 and were distributed immediately upon the ar-

rival in England of Francois, Duke of Anjou (later Duke of Alençon), who intended to court the Queen. In it the author expresses his objections to a proposed marriage between the two. The pamphlet caused a huge sensation; Elizabeth ordered all copies destroyed. The author’s identity was discovered—he was a lawyer, John Stubbs. His right hand was cut off by the authorities. Bell draws two conclusions from the publication of *Gaping Gulf*—a “deep-seated distrust of female rule,” and an early example of the “nascent power of print to sway public opinion and the political process.”

Peter McCullough examines an area which he regards as largely ignored today—the sermon. In “Out of Egypt,” he concludes that Richard Fletcher’s sermon, given at court shortly after the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, was intended as “a defense of the execution, a stiff rebuke of the queen’s own foolish pity, and a call for her to pursue similar policies against all other Catholics.”

That brings us to the third section of the book: “The Power of the Poets.” All three essays here are thought-provoking. In “The Pornographic Blazon 1558–1603,” Hannah Betts examines the “blazon,” or “erotic compendium of the female body,” as applied to Elizabeth during her reign. Betts’s central tenet is that the development of the blazon largely reflects the upwardly mobile aspirations of the (male) poets.

She writes: “In her creation of the role of unmarried, female monarch, Elizabeth I encouraged the dependent relationship between prince and subject to be played out as a romantic courtship. . . . [T]he expression of desire for this body became an accepted metaphor for articulating a variety of forms of social ambition.” She thus interprets the imagery of the blazon as reflecting, especially by the 1590s, “a hostile perception of Elizabethan government.”

Betts also discusses Puttenham’s *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) extensively, observing that “[i]ts central conceit involves the conflation between royal territorial dominion and the queen’s own body,” citing its “striking imagery.” Betts next discusses “the most famous blazon of Elizabeth,” the catalog of Belpheobe in Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1590), with its description of Belpheobe’s genitalia. She also notes Lodge’s *Scillaes Metamorphosis* (1589), with its

“sexually explicit catalog.”

In discussing *Venus and Adonis*, Betts notes that “Venus is emphatically nonvirginal,” but concludes that the author was implying a “satirical shifting of the parameters for the language in which court patronage was conducted.” Betts also cites Barnabe Barnes’s *Parthenophil and Parthenophe* (1593), noting “the coital pre-occupation of the text” and its overt “hostility toward virginity,” and a manuscript document, Nashe’s *Choise of Valentines* (1595), a work so explicit that it was sometimes known as “Nashe’s Dildo.” Betts finds these latter works to be as much satirical as they are erotic or pornographic. Finally, Betts notes that during Elizabeth’s last years, with their visible indications of “the queen’s growing decrepitude,” the authorities began to suppress satire of all kinds, including “politically charged erotica” such as *Caltha Poetarum* (1599), and Marston’s *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion’s Image* (1598).

In “Queen Elizabeth Compiled,” Marcy North examines the implications of anonymity in her discussion of a little-known manuscript work, known as *Henry Stanford’s Anthology*. It contains some 338 poems and prose pieces, and is believed to have been compiled by Stanford during a 30-year period spanning the end of Elizabeth’s reign and the beginning of James’s. From Stanford’s connections with the Paget and Carey families, North reasons that Stanford was able to compile “his anthology from the edge of an inner circle of courtiers and seemed to reach in and out, having access to some close-kept texts but relying just as often on a more public transmission of materials.”

According to North, Stanford was most interested in “Elizabeth’s politics and in the implications of her unmarried state.” The *Anthology* contains works in praise of Elizabeth as well as ones critical of her. Two poems stand out as highly charged, and would surely have gotten their anonymous authors, and probably Stanford himself, in trouble if they had been published. One refers to a woman, unnamed but obviously identifying Elizabeth, who “was thought so

full with wisdom... [who] taught princes how their states to weld & their ambassadors what to doe & say... [but who] hath lost her maidenhead & daughters 3 to all the world brought forth.” The other, written from the point of view of her subjects, urges her to marry: “. . . but princes wife nor mother yet thou wilt vouchsafe to be / though every name of every wight is wished unto thee. . . / But if thy constant virgins mynd such passing prayse forsake / Yet at the least regard the plaint thy pensive people make.”



This 1622 print, “Truth presents the Queen with a Lance,” is one of several images whose appearance in the early 1620s, Walker says, was part of the propaganda war over the proposed marriage of Prince Charles to the Spanish Princess Maria.

After an extensive discussion of the protections afforded by anonymity and by the private circulation of writings, and of the role and motivations of the compiler, North concludes that the “juxtaposition of anonymous texts, whether Stanford intended it or not, renders ambiguous the anthology’s statements about Queen Elizabeth and allows for the freer expression of a critical perspective, though not without some sacrifice of political impact and individual political perspective.”

In “Spenser’s Amazon Queen,” Mary Villeponteaux looks at the several representations of Elizabeth in *The Faerie Queene*, with particular focus on Britomart and Radigund. In the character of Britomart, she writes, Spenser drew attention “to Elizabeth’s refusal to play the role of wife and dynastic mother. In 1590 it was too late to urge Eliza-

beth to marry and bear children, but it was not too late to offend her by suggesting that she should have done so.” Radigund, she opines, represents “sterility;” Villeponteaux suggests that “the battle in canto 7 foregrounds the vexed issue of maternity that plagued Elizabeth’s reign and her people’s imaginations.”

The two essays in the book’s final section examine negative connotations in certain portraits of Elizabeth. In “Interpreting Anti-Elizabethan Composite Portraiture,”

Rob Content notes that, as early as 1563, Elizabeth, by way of a proclamation, expressed her displeasure at “errors and deformities” in some of her unofficial portraiture. He examines two examples of composite portraiture from Elizabeth’s reign (“composite” portraiture or imagery refers to the drawing or description of monstrous creatures).

The first is Philip Sidney’s literary description of Cupid as a “demonic composite” in his *Old Arcadia*, an unpublished work written in 1580. There a portrait of this monstrous Cupid is worn by the iconoclastic shepherd Dicus.

The second example is pictorial—a pen and ink drawing of a monstrous bird, appearing in the manuscript of William Wodwall’s unpublished poem, “Queen Elizabeth Allegorized” (usually dated to 1600). The

drawing, combining plumes, armorial spikes, and cloth ruffs, depicts “a creature of fashion [and] . . . a creature of formidably threatening weapons.”

The final essay, by the editor, Julia Walker, is one of the most interesting. In “Bones of Contention: Posthumous Images of Elizabeth and Stuart Politics,” Walker discusses two portraits of Elizabeth. Before examining them, however, Stuart observes that Elizabeth’s popularity had waned by the time of her death, and that several years elapsed before she seems to have been remembered nostalgically by her subjects. Stuart reminds us that James had her body removed “from under the altar of the Henry VII chapel in Westminster Abbey [to] . . . the marginal space of the north side,” next to her sister Mary—a place that Elizabeth would

(Continued on page 23)

Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

Published quarterly by the
Shakespeare Oxford Society
P.O. Box 263
Somerville, MA. 02143

ISSN 1525-6863

Editor: William Boyle

Editorial Board:

Mark Anderson, Charles Boyle,
Stephanie Hughes, Elisabeth Sears,
Roger Stritmatter, Richard Whalen
Dr. Daniel L. Wright

Phone: (617) 628-3411
Phone/Fax: (617) 628-4258
email: everreader@aol.com

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Shakespeare Oxford Society

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From the Editor:

The Folger's Authorship Policy

If our readers could have been looking over our shoulders these past few months, they would have been amazed at how many different ways we considered reporting on the Folger story in this issue.

From the moment member John Hamill first wrote to us in August, and we talked with other Oxfordians about this matter, the story went from a paragraph under Oxfordian News, to a half-page on page three, to the lead story on page one, and then finally back to a full page story on page four.

Why? Well, the more we looked into the supposed "new" Folger policy of neutrality on the authorship question, the more unclear it became as to just when such a policy came into being, or whether it was something that had just slowly evolved among individual staff members over the past decade or so. While there can be no doubt what the policy had been several decades ago (under Director Louis B. Wright in the 1950s and 60s, for example), the exact moment when the new "authorship neutral" Folger came into being was harder to track. Certainly not before 1984,

since Charlton Ogburn's *Mysterious William Shakespeare* featured more than a few stories about the bad old days. And, according to anecdotal evidence offered by some of our friends, even Folger visits as recently as the mid-1990s have proved problematic for some Oxfordian scholars.

But certainly that has now changed, and the Library is to be applauded for its forthright statement of taking no position on this issue, even as it continues to affirm its belief that Shakespeare (i.e. William of Stratford) wrote Shakespeare.

Clearly, a cessation of the *ad hominem* attacks on anti-Stratfordians that has marked this issue for centuries is a major stepping stone toward achieving genuine cooperation and mutual understanding about the Shakespeare phenomenon, and especially toward arriving at an answer to one overriding question—a question still unanswered by anyone, Stratfordian, Oxfordian, or other: *just exactly what did happen* four hundred years ago that turned one man into the eyes, the ears, the heart and soul of his age, and of ours?

The Ashbourne Portrait

In addition to the story of the Folger's current "neutral position" on the authorship, the other interesting development there this year is the re-appearance of the Ashbourne portrait, now on public display after years of hanging in non-public portions of the library.

This venerable painting had already been known since the 19th century as "possibly" a portrait of Shakespeare when it was acquired by the library in the 1920s. It was later identified by Charles Wisner Barrell (in his 1940 *Scientific American* article) as an overpainting of a portrait of Oxford, and then in turn became the subject of a legal battle between the Folger and Barrell in the late 1940s over Folger Curator Giles Dawson's remark in a letter that Barrell must have "doctored up" his findings.

In more recent years the portrait has rarely been on public display. In 1979 the Shakespeare Oxford Society played a key role in publicizing the story that the portrait was an overpainting of an early 17th century Mayor of London—Sir Hugh Hammersley. In 1993 the *Shakespeare*

Quarterly published an article reaffirming this conclusion, and the matter has rested there ever since, but with the Hammersley identification still unsatisfactory for many Oxfordians.

But now the Folger, in addition to making the portrait public again, has agreed to release to researchers its own set of x-rays, taken some time in the 1940s following Barrell's article, but never made available to any researchers since then. Even before the news arrived this summer about the changes at the Folger, we had been working on a major article on the Ashbourne, complete with its history and the pros and cons of the two opposing views about its provenance and just who the original sitter was beneath the overpainting (all agree that there was an overpainting of someone, for some reason, with the resulting new image then touted as being "Shakespeare").

With the chance for us to view these x-rays, we will therefore postpone this story until next year, and provide as full an analysis as possible of this intriguing chapter in the authorship story. Stay tuned.

Letters:

To the Editor:

Stratfordians are fond of leaping on any unproven proposition or minute error advanced by Oxfordians, although they are willfully blind to the egregious errors, laughably absurd conjectures and preposterous fictions advanced every day by members of their own Stratfordian camp.

It therefore is with profound satisfaction that I read Mark Alexander's superb analysis of Shakespeare's legal acumen in the last issue of the newsletter ("Shakespeare's Bad Law," *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Winter 2000). Mr. Alexander's penetrating analysis of the argumentative bilge that has been pushed down the public throat by those defenders of Shakespeare orthodoxy regarding Shakespeare's supposed ignorance of the law exposes once again the shallow and grievously flawed character of orthodoxy's claims for unschooled William of Stratford as the author of the Shakespeare canon.

For the journey is done and the summit
attained,
And the barriers fall.
Though a battle to fight for the guerdon be
gained,
The reward of it all.
(from "Prospice" by Robert Browning)

Prof. Daniel Wright, Ph.D.
Department of Humanities
Concordia University
Portland, Oregon
13 August 2000

To the Editor:

Jonathan Dixon deserves congratulations for a truly brilliant little exegesis (*Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Spring 2000) of the famous "upstart crow" passage from *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*. Dixon's essay did for me in a few sentences what pages of previous commentary were never able to do: I carefully returned to the passage in question and discovered that Dixon's theory, namely that the upstart crow only "supposes" he is able to bombast out blank verse (i.e. to write plays), supplies an understanding of the entire passage that is breathtakingly clear and not coincidentally devastating to orthodox pretensions.

Dixon's reading, furthermore, is supported by an abundance of contextual clues not discussed in his own article. The entire passage is pervaded by the imagery of deceit which Dixon discovers in his philological examination of the word supposes. Consider briefly the implications of the fact that the Greene is warning fellow playwrights about actors: "puppets...that spake from our mouths...anticks garnished in our colours." Greene's "shake-scene," in other words, is an actor, not a playwright—and he is an actor with a "tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide," "beautified in our feathers," who only supposes that he is a playwright.

Moreover, the author repeatedly associates the actor "shake-scene" with the imagery and language of appropriation: he is like the Crow in Aesop's fable who beautified himself with the plumes of other birds. Such evidence that "shake-scene" does refer to actor "Shakspeare" and that the pas-

sage destroys, rather than substantiating, the Shakespeare party-line, were known before Dixon's article, and anti-Stratfordians have of course commented upon them.

But Dixon's simple question, "what about supposes?" places them in perspective for the first time. It also provides a telling witness to the conclusion, advanced elsewhere in the Spring 2000 newsletter, that Shakespearean orthodoxy, for all its sound and fury, really doesn't exist anymore.

Roger Stritmatter
Northampton, Massachusetts
25 September 2000

To the Editor:

Kudos to Charles Boyle and Mark Anderson for tackling the troubling subject of incest, and its importance in understanding 16th century politics and Oxford's plays (*Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Winter 2000).

With respect to the possibility that Burghley impregnated his daughter, Anne Cecil, Charlton Ogburn made the most incisive comment that I've seen. After summarizing Burghley's perceived necessity for providing an Oxford heir in Oxford's absence, Ogburn writes,

...exploiting his daughter's uncommon filial submissiveness, he overcame her compunctions and resistance and brought her to accept service by another male and one of proved fertility. (Who the other was is beside the point but I imagine that if the choice was Burghley's it was governed by two necessities. First, the absolute minimum number of persons must be in on the arrangements. Secondly, the offspring, since it could not resemble a Vere, must on no account look like anyone but a Cecil. I leave it to the reader to take it from there). *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, p. 575

This is a controversial topic, and will be much debated. Just as the proposition that Southampton is the love child of Elizabeth and Oxford is referred to as the "Prince Tudor theory," it would be convenient to have a shorthand designation for the proposition that Burghley impregnated his daughter. I propose that it be called the "Chinatown scenario," after the 1974 film in which the character Noah Cross (played by gray-bearded John Huston) is revealed to have fathered a daughter/granddaughter

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Letters (continued from page 21)

by his older daughter (played by Faye Dunaway). When confronted with this fact by the private detective played by Jack Nicholson, he says with no trace of remorse,

You see, Mr. Gittes, most people never have to face the fact that, at the right time and the right place, they're capable of anything.

Chuck Berney
Watertown, Massachusetts
22 July 2000

To the Editor:

Here in the Boston area two local Shakespeareans have just published a new book (*Power Plays: Shakespeare's Lessons in Leadership and Management*, by Tina Packer and John Whitney). Packer heads the renowned Shakespeare and Co. in Lennox, Mass., while Whitney (a former president of Pathmark Supermarket) gives seminars each year to thousands of business executives.

In the promotions for this book we learn that "[the authors] convincingly and comprehensively demonstrate that no one but the beloved Bard could ever penetrate the secrets of leadership with such piercing brilliance and invaluable instruction."

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Later, after reading their promotional material I happened to hear them on a radio talk show, where they expounded on the above quotes—at great length.

Well, no, there's no direct authorship story here, except my screaming at the radio about the obvious point: how did the beloved Bard come to these penetrating secrets of leadership, if not firsthand?

As a long-time Oxfordian I can't help but marvel—each time I encounter such books—that the underlying questions about how such timeless insights were acquired by the author are never given a thought.

Beverly Creasey
Boston, Massachusetts
1 June 2000

The Blue Boar

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The Anglican Shakespeare: Elizabethan Orthodoxy in the Great Histories. By Prof. Daniel L. Wright. Item SP11. \$19.95

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Video

Firing Line interview with Charlton Ogburn, Jr. (12/11/84). William F. Buckley, host; Prof. Maurice Charney (Rutgers) represents the Stratfordian side. 1 hour, VHS. Rarely seen interview with Ogburn upon publication of *TMWS* in 1984. Item SP 27. \$35.00

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Book reviews (continued from page 19)
hardly have envied.

The bulk of Stuart's essay is devoted to the two portraits thought to have been done in 1622. Gheeraerts's "Elizabeth with Time and Death" depicts an obviously old and tired queen, her left hand "holding a neglected book and the right holding her drooping head." To Stuart it "is a deliberate revision" of the powerful 1588 Armada portrait, likely intended to further the Stuart agenda by depicting Elizabeth "as unnatural, alone, powerless and ingloriously dead."

The second portrait discussed by Stuart is the more intriguing to Oxfordians. It is an engraving by one Thomas Cecil, entitled—of all things—"Truth Presents the Queen with a Lance"! To an Oxfordian, of course, additional questions immediately abound. Is there meant to be a connection between "Truth" and "Vere"? Is the object a "Lance" or a "Spear"? Why was it made in 1622, a year before the Folio came out, and right in the middle of the Spanish Marriage Crisis? And who was Thomas Cecil—was he related to "the" Cecils? The answers to these questions must await some further research, most likely by Oxfordians. Stuart provides no comments or speculation of his own on this portrait being special in any way.

All these essays are well-researched, readable and quite informative; almost any reader will learn something that he or she

didn't already know. Each essay is thoroughly footnoted, and a 16-page list of "Secondary Works Cited" by the authors accompanies the text. This specialized bibliography on Elizabeth and her era may lead interested Oxfordians to new areas of inquiry and research.

But at the same time it must be noted that there remains a "Gaping Gulf" between mainstream academicians and Oxfordians. This is most strikingly evidenced, for example, in the interpretations given to the reports that Elizabeth bore children. No mainstream academician seems to challenge the accepted belief that Elizabeth was childless; at most, they take the position that "there's no historical record of it, so we can't know."

Therefore, in discussing such reports, they interpret them solely as reflecting anti-Protestant or anti-female points of view. In Oxfordian circles at least some are inclined to consider that these reports may have some basis in fact—that the Virgin Queen may have had children—with the most notable example of such considerations being the Prince Tudor theory (i.e., that Elizabeth and Oxford were the parents of the 3rd Earl of Southampton).

In any event, Oxfordian readers of *Dissing Elizabeth* can agree that as long as historians don't question who Shakespeare really was, they'll never get the Elizabethan or the Jacobean ages quite right.

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If this newsletter has found its way into your hands, and you're not already a member of our Society, why not consider joining us in this intriguing, exciting adventure in search of the true story behind the Shakespeare mystery? While the Shakespeare Oxford Society is certainly committed to the proposition that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, is the true Shakespeare, there is much that remains to be learned about the whole secretive world of Elizabethan politics and about how the Shakespeare authorship ruse came into being, and even more importantly, what it means for us today in the 20th Century as we complete our fourth century of living in a Western World that was created during the Elizabethan era.

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Anderson (Continued from page 5)

too appropriate criticism given that the Shakespeare First Folio will be the main printed text arguing the opposing point of view:

"For popular authors (with what good mind to principedom I cannot say) have so busied themselves to lay open the private lives of princes in their vicious or scandalous qualities (which often times do not concern the people in any point so much as not to have them laid open) that the national and public history is almost thereby utterly lost and many weighty truths have everywhere miscarried," Bolton writes.

Although it appears *Nero Caesar* never saw print until after the marriage had fallen through, the book's epistle to James notes that a manuscript had already been submitted to James in January 1623 (n.s.), halfway into the First Folio project. And only three months later, James had registered it with his own explicit blessings. (Why the book was available only in manuscript for as many months as it was—apparently coming into print only after its political currency had been superseded—is a question for future research.)

In the race to marry off the future King Charles I to Spain, both pro and con fac-

tions, it now appears, used Roman history for allegorical moralizing about the righteousness of their respective causes.

In short: If the Folio delivers the punchline, think of *Nero Caesar* as the straight-man who sets up the gag. And since its pro-Spanish marriage moral proved futile, the joke was ultimately on Bolton and his royal benefactor. Unlike the life story of the 18th earl's father, this time it was the monarch and not the allowed fool who ended up with a pie in the face.

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interviewed Ogburn (*Firing Line*, 1984). So, asked Tatum, "What is your definitive position on the 17th Earl of Oxford?"

Buckley's response was:

I don't have a definitive position. I was very much influenced by Ogburn and very much influenced by Joe Sobran who also wrote a book on it. On the other hand, how do you get around the eternal fact that Oxford died in, what '06 or '07, and *King Lear*, and I think, *Romeo [and Juliet]* appeared ... two, three, or four years later, and Shakespeare died in 1616. Now, the Oxfordians have an elaborate explanation that he wrote these but he stipulated they only be sort of eased out after sort of a lull after the appearance of his [unintelligible]. However, the etymological case, the poetic case, is very striking, by which I mean that Oxford did write like Shakespeare."

There was no chance afforded for any further dialogue with Buckley about his remarks, and the show moved on.

For those who have noted Buckley's earlier involvement with the issue over the years, the above remarks are interesting in establishing where he stands today, 15 years after first getting involved. And where he stands is, apparently, among those who still need more evidence before they'll move.

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