



The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter



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"The mind, once expanded to the dimensions of a larger idea, never returns to its original size." Oliver W. Holmes

Winter 2003

Authorship Question on Shakespeare's Doorstep Shakespeare's Globe in London to Host Authorship Conference

By Gerit Quealy

On June 14 and 15, 2003, the question of who wrote the immortal works of the Shakespeare canon will take center stage at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. Although the authorship question has long been explored by groups backing a particular candidate, it has largely been ignored or dismissed by those in the Shakespeare community, whether it be academics or those in the theater world. Which is why bringing the question of authorship to what is considered the epicenter of Shakespearean interest is a landmark event.

Mark Rylance, artistic director of the Globe since it opened in 1995, has never made a secret of his predilection for exploring the question. The fact that he was appointed to this position, with his opinions well known to the Board of the International Shakespeare Globe Center (ISGC), was a feat in itself. And the tremendous success of the venue over the ensuing years has borne out their confidence in his abilities to helm the venture.

Mr. Rylance's introduction to the question is reminiscent of Al Pacino's film, *Looking for Richard*, in a humorous scene in which the actor derives little inspiration from a visit to the Birthplace. In the RSC's 1988-89 season, Mr. Rylance was performing Hamlet and Romeo in Stratford and was very excited by the prospect of being in the great man's environs. Finding little inspiration in the area, a friend introduced him to aspects of the Baconian theory, which did

(cont'd on p. 3)

Dating the Ashbourne Portrait

Oxfordian Evidence and Recent Lab Analysis Suggests 1597

By Katherine Chiljan

The Ashbourne Portrait, with the sitter's contemplative stare, the elegant gold-embossed book and skull, the latter two suggestive of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and *Hamlet*, was first proposed as a portrait of Shakespeare by Clement Kingston in 1847. One century later, Charles Barrell proved with x-ray technology that the sitter's forehead and ruff had been overpainted to better resemble the conventional image of Shakespeare. Since the 1700s, several Elizabethan and Jacobean paintings had been altered in a similar way for the same reason. The Barrell x-rays also revealed a coat of arms was painted out and the inscription had been changed to reflect the vital statistics of the Stratford Shakespeare, who in 1611 would have been 47.¹

Barrell's report, published in *Scientific American* in 1940, exposed the Shakespeare attribution as false, and revealed the actual sitter to be Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. As a result of his well-publicized findings, the Ashbourne's owner, the Folger Shakespeare Library, lapsed into silence until 1979, when it declared that the portrait was of Hugh Hamersley, later Lord Mayor of London.² The Folger's reasons:

the presence of a numeral 2 beneath the far right numeral 1 in the "1611" inscription, making it actually 1612, and the fact that Hamersley was 47 in 1612; Hamersley's coat of arms was similar to the one on the portrait; and the partial presence of "Amore," a word in Hamersley's motto. Yet Hamersley's coat of arms was not granted until 1614, two years after the portrait is supposedly dated, and the pres-

ence of either "Amore" or a numeral 2 is still unsubstantiated. Moreover, the Folger has never established the artist of the Ashbourne, nor determined the artist's nationality,³ and never scientifically dated the canvas or paint to a specific year—elements that would help identify the sitter.

But Barrell's x-rays cannot be ignored. The most problematic element

in Barrell's report regarding the Hamersley attribution is the presence of the initials "CK" on the portrait, the known signature of Dutch artist Cornelius Ketel. The x-ray photos very clearly showed these initials in the *Scientific American* article.⁴ Yet it is nearly impossible Ketel was painting in 1612 because "probably in 1610, but certainly

(cont'd on p. 12)



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The Ashbourne Portrait

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Prospero's Island

By John Barton

In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Prospero's enchanted island is described in considerable detail. Allowing for artistic license and the possible combination in the author's imagination of elements chosen from various sources, there may have been an attempt to endow it with a real location; we may reasonably consider whether the island of Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban was based on some actual place. Indeed, there has been speculation in print, over the centuries, as to which island Shakespeare may have had in mind when detailing the isle's peculiar qualities. The orthodox opinion promotes the proposition that Bermuda, and published reports of a shipwreck there, were the playwright's inspiration.¹ The aim of this essay is to identify and describe a unique solution to the puzzle of the natural setting of the island in *The Tempest*.

For a start, Prospero's island stands in sharp contrast to any known Italian island; the plot clearly indicates that its location is meant to be far from Italy. In several of his plays, Shakespeare shows an intimate knowledge of Italy and its various cities such as Milan, Venice and Verona. This familiarity, according to the

orthodox explanation, was gleaned secondhand from conversation with contemporary travelers and through reading travel books. But the island of Prospero's exile lies in a region that is cold and bleak, totally different and far-removed from the warm civilizations of the Mediterranean.

From 24 passages in the play alluding to this island, some remarkably detailed, it appears that the island is surrounded by foul mud-flats. Its water is salt and brackish, apart from a fresh-water well; it is cold, windy, its sea tempestuous; the wild things growing there include mushrooms, berries, scamels (limpets), filberts, crabs, broom, briars and furzes. Also mentioned in the play are sheep, wheat, rye, barley, vetches, and oats. The sands are described as yellow, the shore sterile and rock-hard. There are nettles, docks, mallows, stinking bogs, fens and cowslips. The isle is "almost inaccessible" and features a "strong-based promontory."

Here, follow some relevant quotes from the play:

(cont'd on p. 4)



Prospero's island is surrounded by foul mud-flats, and cold, windy, sterile shores.

Globe Conference (cont'd from cover)

a great deal more to inspire and inform him than the conventional story had done. Mr. Rylance remains a loyal member of the Friends of Bacon today—a testament to his personal integrity—while interested and excited by the illumination of the works that other theories provide. In fact, for the production of *Hamlet* in the 2000 season, with Mr. Rylance in the title role, he had the company rehearse at Hatfield House and used many aspects of the Earl of Oxford's story to inform the plot and characterizations.

Given Mr. Rylance's interest in the question, holding a conference at the Globe seems a natural next step in the evolution of the debate. But there are several factors that make it a unique event, primarily the fact that conferences have generally been held by those focusing on and promoting a particular candidate, thereby gleaned attendance primarily from those already committed to supporting that candidate. A conference at the Globe gives exploration of the question a greater legitimacy and introduces it to a far wider audience who may never have even heard about the controversy.

The decision to hold a Conference at the Globe came quite recently in a February meeting of the Shakespeare Authorship Trust, of which Mr. Rylance is the chair. The Shakespeare Authorship Trust (SAT) has been in existence "since the 1920s," says Leonard Holihan, one of the seven trustees of the SAT. Its present incarnation is based at the Globe, and there are plans to move the SAT library, as well as the De Vere Society library, from its present location at Otley Hall in Suffolk, to a dedicated space at the Globe Theatre Center later this year. This will mean greater access, not only for those already interested in the authorship debate, but for those newly initiated to the fact that there is a question.

As stated in the Globe's pamphlet, the Shakespeare Authorship Trust is an "agnostic" organization "dedicated to open and friendly inquiry into the question" of authorship. The idea for the Conference came about as a way to raise the profile of the SAT, Holihan explains and he is quite excited about the possibil-

ities an Authorship Conference at Shakespeare's Globe invites, noting that the authorship question "straddles the ocean," but here it "is on Shakespeare's doorstep."

Although the event focuses on the authorship itself, it incorporates a focus on *Richard II* and the motives behind writing the play by the leading candidates for authorship, beginning with the Earl of Oxford and including Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, and of course, William Shakspeare of Stratford. This dovetails nicely with the theme for the season, Regime Change, which begins with *RII*, Mr. Rylance in the title role, and including *Richard III*, *Dido*, *Queen of Carthage* and *Edward II* (both by Christopher Marlowe) and *Taming of the Shrew*. The theme, further accentuating Mr. Rylance's savvy, appropriately reflects current world events.

William Rubinstein, Professor of History and Fellow of the Royal Historical Society; The University of Wales-Aberystwyth, and author of the well received, if controversial, article in 2001's *History Today* magazine (and presenter at the Edward de Vere Studies Conference at Concordia University in Portland, OR) will be the keynote speaker. Other speakers include Charles Beauclerk, former President of the SOS, on Oxford; Peter Dawkins, of the Francis Bacon Research Trust; and Mike Frohnsdorff, of the Marlowe Society.

Oxfordians should be well pleased with the elevation the authorship question gains by a forum on the question conducted at Shakespeare's Globe. With the ongoing health in attendance Oxfordian events have seen, the added cache of favorable media coverage, and recent events at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC—last year's debate on January 29 and this year's April 19 event focusing on Edward de Vere as the leading viable candidate—as well as the upcoming SOS Annual Conference in New York City, the Oxfordian movement takes the lead in focus and cutting edge research regarding this issue.

The conference, officially held in the Balcony Room, will be chaired by Mr. Rylance. The fee is £95, non-inclusive of theater tickets. Those wishing to attend can call 011-44-(0)207-902-1500, 011-44-(0)207-401-9919 or book online at www.ticketselect.co.uk.

Call For Papers

For the Shakespeare Oxford Society's 27th Annual Conference, members are invited to submit papers (30-45 minutes in length) for presentation in New York City, October 23-36, 2003.

The conference theme is "Performance and Publishing." Suggested topics: characters, language, themes from Shakespeare plays—how knowledge of the author illuminates the text; analyses of period theater companies or court revels; Elizabethan publication process; theater ownership rights, dating of plays. Papers including the 400th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's death (2003) or acknowledging St. Crispin's Day, such as Oxford's military activities, as this conference falls on October 25, are most welcome, as are all "smoking guns."

We welcome scholars from other fields who can add to the study of Oxford's role in Elizabethan society. Direct inquiries/ submissions to Gerit Quealy, 698 West End Ave., 11B, New York, NY, 10025. Telephone: 212-678-0006. E-mail: MissGQ@aol.com. Final submission deadline is June 15, 2003; topic outlines are urged well prior to that date.

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Prospero's Island (cont'd from p. 2)

CALIBAN.

And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,

The **fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile**. ... Act I sc. 2

ARIEL'S SONG.

Come unto these **yellow sands**,
And then take hands; ... Act I sc. 2

PROSPERO.

Follow me.

Speak not you for him; he's a traitor.

Come;

I'll manacle thy neck and feet together.

Sea-water shalt thou drink; thy food shall be

The fresh-brook mussels, wither'd roots, and husks

Wherein the acorn cradled. Follow.
Act I sc. 2

CALIBAN.

I prithee let me bring thee where crabs grow;

And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts;

Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how

To snare the nimble marmoset; I'll bring thee

To clust'ring filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee

Young scamels from the rock. Wilt thou go with me? Act II sc. 2

ARIEL.

... they prick'd their ears, Advanc'd their eyelids, lifted up their noses

As they smelt music; so I charm'd their ears, That calf-like they my lowing follow'd through **Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss, and thorns,**

Which ent' red their frail shins. At last I left them

I' th' filthy mantled pool beyond your cell,

There dancing up to th' chins, that the foul lake

O'erstunk their feet. Act IV sc. 1

Shakespeare's geographical and horticultural descriptions suggest an actual place, and one that would be more at home among the British Isles than the Mediterranean or Atlantic. Yes, the author could have simply made up these details, but the descriptions are specific and allu-

sive; Shakespeare supplies much detail that is largely irrelevant to the plot, but effective and evocative.

If we assume Shakespeare was recalling personal knowledge of an actual English island, then the description does not match the conditions of the well-known islands of the west and south coasts, and certainly not the tropical

Scillies, rocky

Lundy, or the

well-populated

Isle of Wight.

Rather, the

descriptions of

Prospero's isle

fit admirably

with features

found on the

east coast of

England, and in

particular,

Mersea Island,

in Essex, just

off the coast,

near Colchester.

Mersea measures roughly two-by-five miles and sits in the estuaries of the rivers Colne and Blackwater, surrounded by oozy pungent mud. Now a yachting center, it has been famous since Roman times for its fine oysters. But before 1900 it was very sparsely inhabited.

All of the other descriptions in *The Tempest* apply well: the drinking water is brackish and salt, having the highest natural fluoride content for the British Isles.² And there is indeed an ancient fresh-water (artesian) well known as St. Peter's well. The 7th century church at nearby Bradwell is also called St. Peter's. The isle is almost inaccessible, being connected by a single road to the mainland, the Roman "Strood." At high tide this causeway becomes submerged, and no traffic can cross it.

In Act I of *The Tempest* (line 71 in the First Folio), there is an interesting happenstance of language as Gonzalo, when the boat first strikes the island, shouts "Mercy on us! – we split; we split!" Mersea was indeed on them. Further, the word "mercy" is used rather frequently in this play, at least nine times, if a "merciful" is included.

There are several possible etymological unpackings of the name Mersea, but they are all related to "mer," the sea, and pertain to water. Old English merse and marsh are possible sources, referring to low-lying wetlands. A mere was a well or pool, or a large body of water. So Mersea Island is "the island of the marsh" or "the island of the waters."

Very little is known of Shakespeare of Stratford's travels either within England or beyond, apart from a few documents to connect him with some London addresses. Nevertheless, Mersea lies on the opposite coast to

Stratford-on-Avon. However, Mersea Island is situated just off the coast in the county Essex, lying only 20 miles southwest of Castle Hedingham, birthplace and ancestral home of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Mersea is only 14 miles from Earls' Colne, the now vanished Priory that housed the De Vere ancestral vaults. Mersea is the nearest island to these places, and a likely spot for the earl to have visited. There are mentions in the Shakespeare plays of several nearby Essex villages, hundreds of miles from Stratford: for example, Manningtree (*I Henry IV* Act II, 4, 458), and Mile-End (*All's Well That Ends Well* Act IV, 3, 302); and Oxford owned a house at Wivenhoe.

My connection with Mersea Island is not entirely academic; I was born there in 1931 and grew up on that isolated and desolate place, with its otherworldly yellow beaches. My early memories are of gleaning all day in the wheat fields to get chicken food (eggs were precious in wartime). At places on the beach, wild and lonely, where I daily walked the dog, were high clay cliffs bearing semi-fossil

(cont'd on p. 9)



Depicting Prospero's Island according to characters and descriptions in The Tempest

Twelfth Night in Siena

By William Farina

Christopher Paul's provocative article on the "Seven Ages of Man" (*Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Summer 2002) is an ideal precedent for discussing Edward de Vere in Siena. The following material was first presented in November 2001 during the Chicago Oxford Society's ongoing "Snippets of Shakespeare" series, our introductory slide shows to each work in the canon, as seen through an Oxfordian lens.

Siena was obviously an important city to Shakespeare. As pointed out in the "Seven Ages" article, there is a strong visual connection between the speech of Jaques in *As You Like It* (II. vii) and mosaic artwork in the Siena Duomo.¹ To see these mosaics in person is indeed a memorable experience; in fact, the entire old city has changed little since De Vere was there 427 years ago.² Siena also figures in *All's Well That Ends Well*, as Bertram runs off to fight for the Florentines in one of that city's periodic wars against the Sieneze. When the French King remarks, "The Florentines and Senoys are by th' ears" (I.ii), he is repeating a very real Tuscan proverb.³ And Siena, not Verona, is the locus of historical events supposedly forming the basis for *Romeo and Juliet*.⁴ In *Cymbeline*, there is a gratuitous allusion to the Duke of Siena (IV. ii). Even the original source for *The Merry Wives of Windsor* – Giovanni Fiorentino's *Il Pecorone* – places events in Siena.⁵ There appears to be a strong connection between Siena and *Twelfth Night*, long noted by orthodox scholars, but apparently unremarked upon by Oxfordians.⁶

The basic plot of *Twelfth Night* goes back to Plautus and the ancients; however, many scholars agree Shakespeare's primary source was the 16th century *commedia erudite* known as *Gl'Ingannati* (The Deceived) and its prologue companion piece *Il Sacrificio* (The Sacrifice) – usually printed and performed together. These were written and produced by the *Accademia degl' Intronati* (Academy of the Astounded), a group of anonymous

Sieneze noblemen, and were first produced and published during the 1530s.⁷ *Gl'Ingannati* was a very popular play – perhaps the most popular play to come out of Siena. Variations of the story subsequently proliferated across Europe, although a true and complete English translation did not appear until the 20th century.⁸ Siena, similar to other northern Italian cultural centers, had its own academy for the performing arts, helping give rise to modern drama during the Renaissance.

Like *Twelfth Night*, *Gl'Ingannati* deals with a brother and sister who are accidentally separated and later reunited. The sister must disguise herself as a boy and pay court to a lady in the name of her master whom she loves herself. Later, the brother and sister are mistaken for each other, and eventually, the brother and the lady get together, as do his sister and her master.⁹ As Fabian in *Twelfth Night* would say, "an improbable fiction" (III. iv). By contrast, the prologue piece *Il Sacrificio* is a short, allegorical farce in which the characters renounce love and pay mock sacrificial homage to Minerva, the Roman spear-shaker goddess of wisdom and warfare.¹⁰ During this time in Italy, the first serious archeological excavations for ancient statuary were yielding remarkable discoveries. Members of the *Intronati* likely would have been familiar with these discoveries and possibly inspired to create the ceremonial devotion to the image of Minerva as a result. *Il Sacrificio* also has a character named "Malevolti" whom some see as a forerunner to Shakespeare's Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*.¹¹

Twelfth Night refers to the evening of January 5/6 – the night before the Christian Feast of the Epiphany, or the secular Feast of Fools, as it was also known during Elizabethan times. The holiday was a carryover from pagan times, associated with carnival mood and licentious behavior.¹² *Gl'Ingannati-Il Sacrificio* was affiliated with the same festival. Shakespeare's play makes no

allusions to *Twelfth Night*, other than the title, leading to much speculation on the origins of the work, although the connection to the Sieneze plays has provided satisfactory explanation for many, such as Bullough.¹³ The frontispiece for a 1569 edition (today in the Newberry Library in Chicago) advertises itself specifically in this context. The subtitle, prologue and text all refer to carnival entertainment for the eve of the Feast of the Epiphany or *Twelfth Night*.¹⁴

De Vere's Siena letter to Lord Burghley is dated January 3, 1575-6, which is "Tenth Night," two days before *Twelfth Night*. While no proof yet has surfaced to support the claim, it does not seem too far a stretch to say De Vere may have been in town on January 4 and 5 (the climactic nights of the festival) and may have witnessed performances of Siena's most popular plays. *Il Sacrificio*, the prologue piece, was typically performed on Eleventh Night (January 4/5), and *Gl'Ingannati* on the following evening of *Twelfth Night* (January 5/6).¹⁵ If De Vere did attend, he would have seen the mock sacrificial homage to the spear-shaker goddess Minerva that was an integral part of this entertainment. He may have also been exposed to the anonymous, group-work ethic of the *Intronati*, possibly even meeting their leader, the nobleman playwright Allesandro Piccolomini.¹⁶

De Vere's connection with *Twelfth Night* has a suggestive aftermath. Francis Peck, in *Desiderata Curiosa* (1732), proposed publishing "a pleasant conceit of Vere, Earl of Oxford, discontented at the rising of a mean gentleman in the English court circa 1580." Many Oxfordians believe Peck is referring to a mysterious manuscript that was an early version of *Twelfth Night*, and that the "mean gentleman" caricatured in the work was De Vere's common-born rival Christopher Hatton.¹⁷ If true, this "pleasant conceit" probably set the stage for a publication appearing shortly afterwards (See "Revisiting the Date of *Twelfth Night*" by

(cont'd on p. 6)

Twelfth Night (cont'd from p. 5)

Dr. Frank Davis in the Fall, 2000 issue of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*).

In February 1581 an English prose retelling on *Gl'Ingannati* was published. This was *Apollonius and Silla* by Barnabe Riche, taken from his *Farewell to Military Profession*, a work dedicated to none other than Riche's patron, Christopher Hatton. Scholars, some uncomfortable with Shakespeare's ability to draw directly upon yet-to-be-translat-

*"Many Oxfordians
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ed, non-English material, cite Riche as a source for *Twelfth Night*, rather than *Gl'Ingannati-Il Sacrificio*.¹⁸ In this same book (*Farewell to Military Profession*), Riche gives a bizarre account of an unnamed English nobleman, whose description fits De Vere in every detail, engaged in what could be interpreted as a public cross-dressing incident. According to Riche, this nobleman appeared on horseback in the streets of London wearing very effeminate French attire, possibly to lampoon the Queen's latest French suitor, Francois de Valois and his retinue, who were in England at that time.¹⁹ This remarkable anecdote comes from a follower of the same man (Hatton) who may have been satirized as Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, and from an author (Riche) often cited as an English source for the play. It appears the old De Vere-Hatton rivalry continues to this very day as a debate over Shakespeare's original source material.

Notes

1. This correlation is reminiscent of the close relationship between the description given in Shakespeare's *Lucrece* of murals depicting the fall of Troy, and similar murals by Giulio

Romano found in the Trojan Apartments of the Palazzo Ducale of Mantua; also between Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis and the highly idiosyncratic treatment of the subject by Titian; also between Shakespeare's Ghost in *Hamlet* and Titian's portrait of the Duke of Urbino.

2. De Vere's letter from Siena to William Cecil is dated January 3, 1576 (Ogburn, p. 549). This document is the first true testament of De Vere's financial difficulties that were to plague him for the rest of his life.

3. "Si pigliano per gli orrecchi" – they have each other by the ears.

4. Elements of the story go back to ancient times, but the first modern version is told by Masuccio di Salerno in his *Il Novellino* (1476). Masuccio sets the tale in Siena, claiming it is based on "true" events (Complete Shakespeare, Vol. 1, pp. 155).

5. (Bullough, p. 19). *Merry Wives* is one of only two non-history plays by Shakespeare (the other being *King Lear*) set entirely in England.

6. Curiously, Oxfordians seem to be the only ones who do not comment upon it. See Bullough, pp. 270-275, Herrick, p. 98, and Radcliff-Umstead, pp. 195-201, among others.

7. These were first performed in 1531 and first published in 1537 (Bullough, pp. 269-285). See also *Five Comedies*, p. 195.

8. Some of these include *Gl'Inganni* (1562) by Nicolo Secchi and *Gl'Inganni* (1592) by Curzio Gonzaga, both in Italian, *Les Abuses* (1543) by Charles Estienne in French, *Los Enganos* (1567) by Lope de Rueda in Spanish, and *Laelia* (performed 1595), anonymous in Latin. Prose versions are found in *Novelliere* (1554) by Matteo Bandello in Italian, *Histoires Tragiques* (1579) by Pierre de Belleforest in French, and *Apollonius and Silla* (1581) by Barnabe Riche in English (Bullough, p. 270).

9. These are some of the similarities. There are also profound differences between *Gl'Ingannati* and *Twelfth Night* (Radcliff-Umstead, p. 273). See also Bullough, pp. 270-275.

10. The title refers to the enacted ceremony, a trademark of the Intronati (Radcliff-Umstead, p. 196-197).

11. For clarification, Malevolti is a character in *Il Sacrificio*, not *Gl'Ingannati*. (Complete Shakespeare, p. Vol. 2, p. 234).

12. Church leaders, both Protestant and Catholic, disapproved of these secular associations and made some attempt to suppress them (Riverside, pp. 438).

13. Leslie Hotson's theory of an English per-

formance in honor of the visiting Don Virginio Orsino on *Twelfth Night*, 1602, also has been advanced (Bullough, pp. 269). See also Riverside, p. 437.

14. The frontispiece reads "Il Sacrificio, Comedia de gli Intronati, celebrato ne i giuochi d'un carnovali in Siena." Other editions have similar advertisements.

15. (Bullough, pp. 271). See also Arden Shakespeare, p. xxxvii. There has been some confusion because the titles of these companion plays are often used interchangeably.

16. (Radcliff-Umstead, p. 201). It would have been natural for the Siennese nobility to roll out the carpet for De Vere, as a visiting English nobleman with rumored Catholic sympathies.

17. (Ogburn p. 633). Hatton's star had risen fast at Court, thanks to athletic good looks, an obsequious willingness to please, and newly acquired wealth beyond his wildest dreams, the result of timely investments in the successful piracy expeditions of Francis Drake.

18. Bullough implies Shakespeare was influenced by the Siennese plays via *Apollonius and Silla* (Bullough, p. 277).

19. This is the speculation of Ogburn, not of Riche. The latter relates the incident very discreetly (Ogburn, pp. 633-634).

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Oxfordian News

Trevor-Roper, Elizabethan Scholar, Dies

Mr. Hugh Trevor-Roper, the British historian who detailed the last days of Adolf Hitler, died on January 26, 2003, at age 89. Mr. Trevor-Roper was also Lord Dacre of Glanton, and extraordinarily knowledgeable about all aspects of British history, politics, religion, and culture. He was the author of dozens of books, some best-sellers, such as *The Last Days of Hitler* (1947). The book was based on the investigations that he carried out personally as an officer with British Intelligence during WWII.

Mr. Trevor-Roper, who was at one time Regius Professor of History at Oxford University, wrote extensively on the Elizabethan era, and was one of the earliest mainstream historians to express skepticism about the Stratfordian theory of the authorship of the Shakespeare canon. In his article, "What's in a Name?" in the November, 1962, issue of *Réalités*, he wrote that although Shakespeare of Stratford had "been subjected to the greatest battery of organized research that has ever been directed upon a single person," this "greatest of all Englishmen ... still remains so close a mystery that even his identity can still be doubted."

The basis of Mr. Trevor-Roper's skepticism was the lack of evidence that Shakespeare of Stratford ever wrote any-

the Droeshout portrait, Mr. Trevor-Roper wrote, "The unskillful artist has presented the blank face of a country oaf."

Mr. Trevor-Roper said he believed Shakespeare's identity would be found in the author's own writings, and that regarding him as an untutored natural genius was fantasy. "On the contrary, we realize that he was highly educated, even erudite ... He is clearly familiar, in an easy, assured manner, with the wide learning of his time and had the general intellectual formation of a cultivated man of the Renaissance."

From this perception, Mr. Trevor-Roper concluded, "A cultured, sophisticated aristocrat, fascinated alike by the comedy and tragedy of human life, but unquestioning in his social and religious conservatism – such is the outward character revealed by Shakespeare's works."

A better one-sentence description of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, could hardly be written. The world of letters, and Oxfordians everywhere, will miss Hugh Trevor-Roper.

"Shakespeare and the Stars" Event

The Chicago Oxford Society will host a special event, "Shakespeare and the Stars," to mark the group's third anniversary on Saturday, May 17, 2003, at the Adler Planetarium, 1300 South Lake Shore Dr., Chicago. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Peter Usher, Professor Emeritus of Astronomy at Penn State University.

Dr. Usher's presentation, "*Hamlet: A Cosmic Allegory*," will address the numerous allusions in Shakespeare's play to the contemporary debate between adherents of the Copernican and Ptolemaic theories. The program begins at 11 a.m. in the Planetarium classroom near the south entrance. A question-and-answer session will follow. After a lunch break, at 1 p.m., COS Director William Farina will give a slide presentation titled, "Snippets of Shakespeare: Lear, Oxford and the Heavens," also followed by a discussion period.

A staged reading of *King Lear* will be presented by The Shakespeare Project of Chicago at 2 p.m. the following day at the Artistic Home, 1420 West Irving Park Road, Chicago. Admission to Saturday's event is free for COS members (\$5 for non-members), but admission to the Planetarium and lunch is the responsibility of attendees. The Planetarium is accessible via Chicago Public Transit, the free trolley system, or automobile (all-day parking is available in the south lot for \$10).

— Robert Brazil

Tudor "Angel" Coins Found Under Spitalfields Priory

A rare hoard of gold "angel" coins was unearthed last year on the grounds of a medieval hospital and priory, according to *The Telegraph*. Angel coins were not only currency; they were valued by Britons of the Tudor era for their alleged power to ward off evil.

Seven specimens of these gold 16th century coins were dug up in excavations of the grounds of a former priory in

(cont'd on p. 8)

Trevor-Roper "was one of the earliest mainstream historians to express skepticism about the Stratfordian theory"

thing. "During his lifetime nobody claimed to know him. Not a single tribute was paid to him at his death. As far as the records go, he was uneducated, had no literary friends, possessed at his death no books, and could not write." Regarding

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Oxfordian News (cont'd from p. 7)

Spitalfields, London.

The coins were apparently buried shortly before Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries. Archaeologists are puzzled over why the gold angels were abandoned at the priory and hospital of St. Mary Spital. Hazel Forsyth, of the Museum of London where the coins are now on display, said: "It could have been

that they were used for clinical purposes in the hospital. Gold was used in the preparation of some treatments. It is also possible that the coins were someone's life savings and that they were temporarily stored in the floor for safety. The owner may have died before retrieving them. These were extraordinarily rare. Only one gold angel has been found before by archaeologists in London, so to find seven is extraordinary."

The first angels were issued in the 1460s by Edward IV, replacing the noble. Originally they were worth about 33 pence and received the name from the design on the obverse, which featured the Arch-angel St. Michael trampling a dragon.

Two passages in Shakespeare's plays mention the angel coin. In *Merchant of Venice* Act II, Scene 7, the Prince of Morocco says to Portia:

Or shall I think in silver she's immur'd,
Being ten times undervalued to tried
gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in
England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamp'd in gold; but that's insculp'd
upon.

In *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act II, Scene 2, while bantering with Falstaff, Mistress Quickly says: "I had myself twenty angels given me this morning; but I defy all angels, in any such sort, as they say, but in the way of honesty." In the



"Angel" coins valued for alleged power to ward off evil.

obscure dedicatory epistle in Thomas Nashe's *Strange Newes*, 1592, there is a mention of a "Blue Boar in the Spittle."

By what soever thy visage holdeth most pretious I beseech thee, by John Davies soule and the blew Bore in the Spittle I conjure thee, to draw out thy purse and give me nothing for the dedication of my Pamphlet.

Researcher John Rollett has suggested a connection between this allusion and the old Spitalfields district. In London, "Spital" referred to the general area of the old priory and hospital of St. Mary, founded in 1197, on Bishopsgate Street, and the hospital's fields between Bishopsgate and Whitechapel Road. The famous Blue Boar Tavern was an inn on Whitechapel Road, in the Spital district, and just within the limits (Barrs) of the City. The Boar's Head Inn Theatre was just 25 yards down the road, but outside the Barrs, and therefore free of the jurisdiction of the City of London. In the early 1600s Oxford and Worcester's Men received a unique patent from the Queen for their combined troupe to play the Boar's Head. The famed theater could hold one thousand theatergoers. Although the original locations of the Blue Boar Inn and the Boar's Head Inn Theatre are known, not a splinter remains of the former buildings themselves.

—Robert Brazil

Weir Talks

Tudor historian Alison Weir will be

one of several guest speakers scheduled to give talks after English Heritage tours to historical sites in England. Weir has written several royal biography best-sellers, including Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, and Mary, Queen of Scots. This year's schedule is: May 18, Kennil-

worth Castle (subject: Elizabethan England); May 20, Richmond Museum, Surrey; June 13-14, Chaucer Hotel, Canterbury (subject: Henry VIII); June 19-20, White Swan, Alnwick (subject: War of the Roses); June 22-23, Moore Place, Apsley Guise, near Bedford (subject: Elizabeth I); July 19-21, Harrogate (subject: Monasticism); July 26, Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire (subject: Mary, Queen of Scots); July 31, Carlisle Castle, Cumbria (subject: Picts, Priors and Prisoners).

Weir is currently working on a biography on the wife of Edward II, entitled, *Isabella, the She-wolf of France*. For more information, contact the English Heritage website, www.english-heritage.org.uk, and follow these headings: Places to Visit and Events; English Heritage Events; Tours Through Time. The English Heritage telephone number in England, 0845 1212863.

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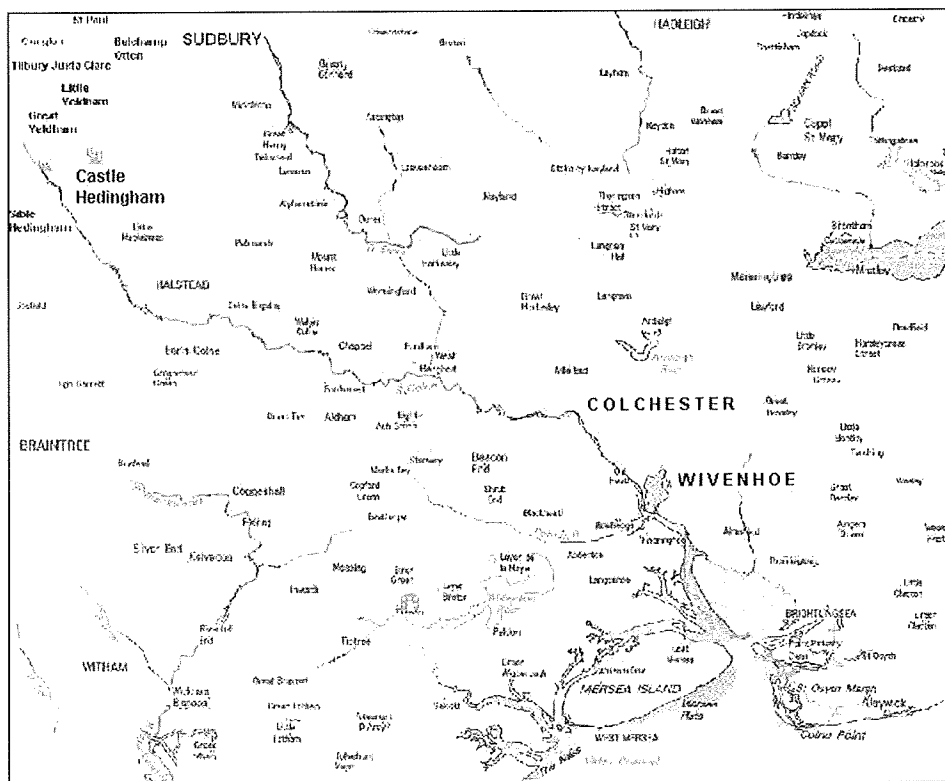
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Prospero's Island (cont'd from p. 4)

animal bones I collected. I also bred butterflies and moths. The water on Mersea is indeed brackish and very hard, and furs up pipes and kettles. My father was a

inhabitant were immortalized by Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, known to the world as the composer of "Onward Christian Soldiers." Baring-Gould's



Mersea Island is just off the Essex coast, 20 miles southwest of Castle Hedingham, Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford's, birthplace and ancestral home

motor mechanic, later a storeman. We were a middleclass family, and over a period of 24 years lived on Mersea at four houses. One was on Yorick Road (named I believe after a Bishop of Zanzibar, for some reason), and another, on Mill Road, called Oxford House (no idea why). I recall flags and bunting on the balcony for the 1935 Jubilee of George V, and also watching the Coronation of George VI on a very early greenish "television machine." In the summers there were Regattas, gymkhanas, flower shows in tents, Russian Cossacks performing on horses. During the war the island had 866 air-raid alerts, and was hit by no fewer than 323 bombs; incredibly, there were no deaths, though two of my school-friends were killed venturing onto the mined beaches to shoot rabbits.

Mersea Island often has provided literary inspiration. The island and its

Victorian classic novel *Mehala* disguises the name Mersea, and is filled with island gossip. Baring-Gould is also remembered as the author of *Lives of the Saints*, and over 100 books on ghouls, werewolves, fishing, and numerous hymns! Most of his children were born (and buried) there. His hymn, "Now the Day Is Over," is reputed to have been composed in Mersea to suit the six chimes of West Mersea church bells. West Mersea church was dedicated to St. Peter (in the seventh or early eighth century) and later to St. Paul also; it was built on Roman foundations. Records on the island date from about 1584. There was once a Benedictine Priory on the island, the charter dated 1046, plus Roman remains of a lighthouse and a pre-historic earthen barrow.

Just across the sea from Mersea, three miles away and easily visible, is the

pre-Augustinian Church of St. Peter ad murum, at Bradwell. After I left, they built Britain's first nuclear power station nearby. The sand beaches are yellow, the seas choppy and noisy, many wild birds of marshland, and winkles, oysters (cultivated there), shrimp, cuttle-fish, boat-shells, scallops, mussels. There was much piracy in the 17th and 18th centuries, with a tunnel to Ray Island discovered while I lived there, though little about it documented. Marsh plants and mosquitoes in plenty, and very cold winters – one year the sea froze, and there was pack-ice on the beach, and aurora borealis. If Oxford saw an aurora over Mersea, the lights might have inspired the dance of Ariel and the spirits. Occasionally whales were stranded. Seals with oddly human-like faces are to this day often seen sunning on the Strood, and were perhaps partial inspiration for the man-fish Caliban.

I suggest this unique geographical setting in Essex, the nearest ocean island to Wivenhoe and Castle Hedingham and other De Vere homes, an island virtually uninhabited in the 16th century, was the physical setting for Shakespeare's most optimistic and stirring play, *The Tempest*.

Notes

1. In the 20th century, the challenge presented to the orthodoxy by the Oxford theory is probably responsible for their strong advocacy of the William Strachey report of 1609, concerning the wreck of the Sea Venture in Bermuda, as the inspiration for *The Tempest*.

(notes cont'd on p. 23)



Seals with odd, human-like faces can still be found on the Strood on Mersea Island. The creatures may have inspired the man-fish Caliban.

*It is generally accepted Shakespeare invented approximately 2,000 words for the English language, a point used in authorship arguments to prove Shakespeare was exceptionally educated. The following list is excerpted from Michael Macrone's national bestseller, *Brush Up Your Shakespeare!* The work was first published in 1990 by HarperCollins (U.S.), and later by Ebury Press in the U.K.; a second, expanded edition followed in 2000.*

Reprinted with permission by Michael Macrone and Michael Cader.

“Household Words”

Common and Uncommon Words Coined by Shakespeare ... an excerpt from *Brush Up Your Shakespeare!*

By Michael Macrone

It's not always impossible to know who first coined a word – and not much easier to know who first wrote it down. But here's a partial list of the words for which Shakespeare is the first authority the *Oxford English Dictionary* could find. Some words predate the first citation in the *OED*, even in its second edition. In a few cases, Shakespeare was the first to have used the word in at least one of its modern senses; these words are marked with a bullet. All verbs are in the infinitive form – that is, the “to” form (“to belly,” “to overstink,” etc.). Where there might otherwise be confusion over the part of speech, I have spelled it out.

A

abstemious
Academe
accessible
accommodation (a variation of “accommodations”)
addiction (Shakespeare meant “tendency”)
admirable [earlier than *OED*]
aerial (Shakespeare meant “of the air”)
airless
amazement
anchovy
arch-villain
to arouse
assassination
auspicious

B

bachelorship (“bachelorhood”)
to barber
barefaced
baseless
basta! (first use in English)

batty (Shakespeare meant “bat-like”)
beachy (“beach-covered”)
to bedabble
to bedazzle
bedroom (Shakespeare meant “room in bed”)
to behowl
to belly (“to swell”)
belongings
to bemad
to bemonster
to besmirch
to bet
to bethump
to bewhore
birthplace
black-faced
to blanket
bloodstained
bloodsucking
blusterer
bodikins (“little bodies”)
boggler (“slow-poke”; “stickler”)
bold-faced
bottled (Shakespeare meant “bottle-shaped”)
braggartism
brisky
broomstaff (“broom-handle”)
budger (“one who budges”)
bullyrook (“pal”)
bum-bailie (term of contempt for a bailiff)
bump (as a noun)
buzzer (Shakespeare meant “tattle-tale”)

C

to cake
candle holder
to canopy
to castigate
•to cater (as “to purvey food”)
catlike
to champion
to channel (Shakespeare meant

“to form a channel”)
characterless
•cheap (in the pejorative sense: “flimsy,” “vulgar”)
cheese-paring
chimney-top
choppy (Shakespeare meant “chapped”)
churchlike
circumstantial
clodpoll (“blockhead”)
cloyment
clyster pipe (“enema tube”)
cold-blooded
coldhearted
compact (the noun: “agreement”)
to comply
to compromise (Shakespeare meant “to agree”)
consanguineous
control (the noun)
coppernose (“a kind of acne”)
countless
courtship
•to cow (as “to intimidate”)
to crank (Shakespeare meant “to reel about” – “to come cranking in” is his coinage)
critical
cross-gartered
cruelhearted
to cudgel

D

Dalmatian [earlier than *OED*]
to dapple
dauntless
dawn (the noun)
day's work
death's-head
defeat (the noun)
to denote
depository (“trustee”)
to deracinate
dewdrop
dexterously (Shakespeare spelled it

“dexteriously”
 to discandy (“melt”)
 disgraceful (Shakespeare meant
 “unbecoming”)
 to dishearten
 to dislocate
 distasteful (Shakespeare meant
 “showing disgust”)
 distracted (Shakespeare meant “crazed”)
 distrustful
 dog-weary
 doit (a Dutch coin: “a pittance”)
 [earlier than *OED*]
 domineering
 downstairs
 drollery
 droplet
 dry-nurse
 duteous
 to dwindle

E

East Indies
 to educate
 to elbow
 embrace (the noun)
 employer
 employment
 to enclog (“to hinder”)
 enfranchisement (Shakespeare didn’t
 have voting rights in mind)
 engagement [earlier than *OED*]
 to enmesh
 enrapt
 to ensnare
 to enthrone
 epileptic
 equivocal
 eventful
 excitement (Shakespeare meant
 “incitement”)
 expedience
 expertness
 exposure
 exsufflicate (“puffed up”)
 eyeball
 eyebeam
 eyedrop (Shakespeare meant “tear”)
 eyewink

F

fair-faced
 fairyland
 fanged
 fantastico (“someone prone to
 fantasies”)
 fap (“intoxicated”)
 farmhouse
 far-off
 fashionable

fashionmonger [earlier than *OED*]
 fathomless (Shakespeare meant
 “too huge to be encircled by
 one’s arms”)
 fat-witted
 featureless (Shakespeare meant “ugly”)
 fiendlike
 to film (Shakespeare meant “to
 film over”)
 to fishify (“turn into fish”)
 fitful
 fixture (Shakespeare meant “fixing”
 or “setting firmly in place”)
 flapdragon (a raisin soaked in brandy
 and set aflame)
 fleer (as a noun: “sneer”)
 fleshment (“the excitement of a
 first success”)
 flirt-gill (a “floozy”)
 •flowery (as we use it to mean
 “full of florid expressions”)
 fly-bitten
 footfall
 foot landraker (“footpad”)
 foppish
 foregone
 fortune-teller
 to forward (“to advance”)
 foster-nurse
 foul-mouthed
 fount
 Franciscan
 freezing (as an adjective)
 fretful
 frugal
 fubbed off (“fobbed off”)
 full-grown [earlier than *OED*]
 fullhearted
 futurity

G

gallantry (Shakespeare meant
 “gallant people”)
 garden house
 generous (Shakespeare meant
 “gentle, noble, fair”)
 gentlefolk
 glow (as a noun)
 to glutton
 to gnarl
 go-between
 to gossip (Shakespeare meant
 “to make oneself at home like a
 gossip that is – a kindred spirit
 or fast friend”)
 grass plot
 gravel-blind (“almost stone-blind”)
 gray-eyed
 green-eyed
 grief-shot (“sorrow-stricken”)
 grime (as a noun)

to grovel
 •gust (as “a wind-blast”)

H

half-blooded
 to hand (Shakespeare meant “to handle”)
 to happy (“to gladden”)
 heartsore
 hedge-pig
 hell-born
 to hinge
 hint (the noun)
 hobnail (the noun)
 hodge-pudding (“a pudding of various
 ingredients”)
 •homely (in the sense of “ugly”)
 honey-tongued
 hornbook (“alphabet tablet”)
 hostile
 hot-blooded
 howl (the noun)
 to humor
 hunchbacked [“bunch-back’d” in
 earliest edition]
 hurly (“commotion”)
 to hurry

I

idle-headed
 ill-tempered
 ill-used
 impartial
 to impede
 implorator (“solicitor”)
 import (the noun: “importance,
 “significance”)
 inaudible
 inauspicious
 indirection
 indistinguishable
 inducement
 informal (Shakespeare seems to have
 meant “unformed” or “irresolute”)
 to inhearse (“load into a hearse”)
 to inlay
 to instate (Shakespeare, who spelled it
 “enstate,” meant “to endow”)
 inventorially (“in detail”)
 investment (Shakespeare meant
 “a piece of clothing”)
 invitation
 invulnerable

J

jaded (Shakespeare seems to have
 meant “contemptible”)
 juiced (“juicy”)

(cont’d on p. 24)

Ashbourne (cont'd from front page)

by 1613, the painter became completely paralyzed"⁵; he died in 1616. Also damaging to the Hamersley attribution is the sitter's elegant costume of velvet and satin, the dress gauntlet he holds, the fancy sword belt, the gold signet ring on his thumb, and the ruff, which apparently was later shortened and simplified to be appropriate for the commoner Shakespeare. Such rich garments and accoutrements are indicative only of nobility or those of high rank. In 1612, Hamersley was a mere merchant, a member of the Haberdashers' Company; he was knighted in 1628 after his one-year service as Lord Mayor. All these factors are enough to rest the Hamersley-attribution case.

But there is more: the sitter, with his auburn hair, light beard, and rosy cheeks, resembles the known portraits of the Earl of Oxford, and Ketel's biographer and contemporary, Carl van Mander, wrote that Ketel had in fact painted Oxford and "many other important members of the nobility, with their wives and children. Some of these portraits were life-size and full length."⁶ The Ashbourne sitter is life size, and is three-quarter length.

Van Mander's commentary is corroborated by the eighteenth century art historian, George Vertue, who wrote in his notebooks of a "Picture of Earl of Oxford in temp Eliza Regina painted by C. Ketel in possession Countess Dowager of Strafford at whole length. A fine picture in Yorkshire."⁷ Oxford's great granddaughter had married the Earl of Strafford in 1655; the family seat, Wentworth Woodhouse, is located in Yorkshire. In turn, this evidence was confirmed by Derran Charlton, who discovered that an "at length" portrait of Oxford⁸ was listed in the 1696 will of William, second Earl of Strafford. Charlton then compared the "heirloom" paintings listed this will with a 1772 inventory list.⁹ Oxford's portrait was missing, but a new listing was a three-quarter length portrait of "Shakespeare." It is possible then, that when Kingston discovered the portrait in 1847, it was already known as Shakespeare. Kingston lived in Ashbourne, a town only 40 miles from Wentworth Woodhouse. This area is also where Oxford's in-laws, the Trenthams of

Rochester Abbey, had lived, and their coat of arms also resembles the one covered in the picture. Evidence for the sitter's identity, therefore, weighs heavily in Oxford's favor.

With Oxford established as the sitter, the portrait's true date may be better



CORNELIUS KETEL, GOUDANUS.
*Primus hic à Luca Leidano pictor habetur
 Goudanus, Batavi gloria uterque soli.
 Quam bene conveniant, docuit, Pic tura, Poësis:
 Quæ pinxit, prius hic finxerat ingenio.*

Cornelius Ketel

determined. This perspective, combined with new evidence from a recent analysis of the portrait by the Canadian Conservation Institute, could suggest the Ashbourne was painted in 1597. Barbara Burris, in several articles in *Shakespeare Matters*,¹⁰ has accomplished outstanding research on the Ashbourne, documenting its restoration and confirming Barrell's original work, although her ca. 1580 dating is unlikely.

Burris' refutation of the Folger's 1612 date depends primarily on the sitter's wrist ruffs, which she states were passé after 1583. Yet the Marcus Gheeraedts portrait of Oxford, dated ca. 1586, clearly shows him wearing wrist ruffs, passé or not. To get around this, she claimed the

Gheeraedts portrait is not of the 17th Earl, but of the 16th Earl, also because of costume dating. Hers is not a new proposition, but still an unlikely one: this picture was attributed to Gheeraedts since at least the 1930s, and Christie's sold the portrait in 1979 as by Marcus Gheeraedts, presumably the younger, as the elder was primarily a book illustrator. Both the elder and younger Gheeraedts lived in Bruges until they moved to London in 1568, *six years after the 16th Earl of Oxford had died*.

The younger Gheeraedts worked exclusively as a portrait painter with a commission as early as 1582, the year he made a portrait of Oxford's sister-in-law, Elizabeth Cecil.¹¹ With numerous existing portraits by Gheeraedts the younger, art experts should easily confirm this attribution. Curiously, George Vertue wrote of a Shakespeare portrait painted in oil by 1595, "I suppose by Mar. Garrard,"¹² and in 1827, Abraham Wivell stated it "has frequently been reported that Mark Garrard had painted Shakespeare, but nobody knows whence it originated."¹³

Furthermore, John Rollett took notice of a ca. 1610 portrait of Sir Edward Cecil, later Viscount Wimbledon, wearing "what are undoubtedly wrist ruffs ... and removes (unfortunately) one of the cornerstones of Barbara Burris' argument."¹⁴ Burris later explained Cecil was wearing wrist ruffles, which resemble wrist ruffs at some angles. This could also mean the Ashbourne sitter was wearing wrist ruffles. Either way, dating the Ashbourne to ca. 1580 primarily on costume is insufficient evidence. There appear then to be two portraits of Oxford in which he is wearing supposedly out-of-date clothing; we can only speculate that Oxford either would not be bound by fashion, or these particular fashions were not considered out of date at the time.

Simple observation shows if the Ashbourne sitter is Oxford, he could not possibly be about age 30, as proposed. Beyond the fact that the sitter's hairline was deliberately raised, his sagging eyelids indicate a middle-aged person, and his black attire is not reflective of the young courtier known at that time to

dress in flamboyant Italian and French style. One need only compare the Welbeck portrait of Oxford, age 25, with the Ashbourne to see many more than four or five years had passed between the two sittings. Also, the sitter, with his arm resting on the skull, appears to be con-

gers alone – without a brush – and the following year, with his toes. “These experiments with finger and foot painting were probably related to some form of rheumatic disease, which made it difficult for Ketel to use a brush.”¹⁵ These factors suggest the portrait was executed from

Katherine de Vere, Oxford’s sister (figure at right), and similar eye color and curly auburn hair. The Chiljan portrait, therefore, is the definitive portrait of Oxford circa 1580. Although they do carry a resemblance, the Ashbourne sitter is clearly much older than that of the



Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, 1581 (Chiljan)

templating death – for a 30 year old?

If this Oxford portrait was rendered ca. 1580, why would it feature what appears to be the Trentham coat of arms, as Barrell’s x-rays suggest? In 1580 Oxford was married to Anne Cecil, so adding the Trentham arms on this picture at a later time would be inappropriate and in bad taste. Barrell explained that in Elizabethan times, when a peer married an heiress, it was customary to bear her family’s coat of arms. Oxford married Elizabeth Trentham ca. 1592, making it highly unlikely the portrait was rendered before this time. Ketel was certainly in full use of his skills throughout the 1590s, as large group portraits he rendered during this period still survive. By 1599, however, Ketel was painting with his fin-

1592 to 1598. Historically, full-length portraits and the use of canvas to facilitate life-size renderings proliferated during the 1590s.

The strongest evidence against the ca. 1580 dating is the fact that we have a portrait of Oxford dated at that exact time (according to Christie’s), which I recently discovered. As explained in two previous articles in the *Shakespeare-Oxford Newsletter*,¹⁶ facial characteristics, age, clothing, the way he wore rings, and provenance all point to Oxford as the sitter of “Portrait of a Gentleman”; further validation is the fact that in 1581 Queen Elizabeth gave Oxford a hat from her wardrobe of the exact description the sitter is wearing. Also, there is an extraordinary resemblance of this sitter with



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Katherine de Vere, Lady Windsor, 1567

Chiljan, and from this evidence alone cannot be dated as Burris proposes. Moreover, this resemblance is further proof that Oxford is the Ashbourne sitter.

Finally, one must take into account the recent analysis of the Ashbourne by the Canadian Conservation Institute. Paint samples were taken from three spots: the letter S in “Suae,” the mask on the book, and the last digit in “1611.” The latter two were chemically determined to be later additions, but the letter S in “Suae” was original, a lead-tin yellow “most frequently used in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and has never been found in a painting done after 1750.”¹⁷ Then, it can be argued the entire first line of the inscription

(cont’d on p. 14)

Ashbourne (cont'd from p. 13)

("Aetatis Suae 47") was original, and the entire second line ("A° : 1611") was un-original. The abbreviated A° for *anno* is depicted without the *domini* or an abbreviation, and with a colon – an abnormal handling of the date, which also suggests that the entire second line is bogus. If that is the case, then the sitter was 47 years old, and if he's Oxford, then the portrait was rendered in 1597.

In conclusion, based on an Oxfordian approach to dating the Ashbourne portrait and new analysis by the Canadian Conservation Institute, evidence points to 1597 when Oxford was age 47. But the ultimate conclusion will be reached when all portions of the inscription are analyzed for originality, the portrait's date is determined scientifically, and Ketel experts confirm the artist attribution. Although reclaiming the Ashbourne as a portrait of Oxford should have no bearing on the Shakespeare authorship question, more than curious is the choice by Oxford to be portrayed with items so suggestive of *Hamlet* and *Shakespeare's Sonnets*.

Notes

1. Barrell, Charles W., "Identifying 'Shakespeare,'" *Scientific American*, January, 1940, and May, 1940.
2. Pressly, William L., *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 1, Spring, 1993.
3. The portrait is attributed to "Anonymous"



By Permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library

The Ashbourne Portrait

(William Pressly, *A Catalogue of Paintings in the Folger Shakespeare Library*, Yale University Press, 1993, p. 299). In the May, 1910 edition of *The Connoisseur* (p. 42), M. H. Spielmann, F.S.A., believed the Ashbourne was either by a Flemish or Dutch painter.

4. The statement made in a letter written by Giles Dawson, director of the Folger, that Barrell's x-ray photos may have been "doctored up" inspired a lawsuit, and resulted in a public apology made to Barrell by Dawson in 1948 (citation 13 below, p. 219). The CCI report denies the presence of the "CK" initials, as did a still unpublished examination of

the portrait at the National Gallery of Art made in 1948-49; Burris claims portions of initials can still be made out. How the initials faded a decade after Barrell's x-rays were taken is yet to be explained.

5. *The Dictionary of Art*, Jane Turner, ed., vol. 17, Macmillan, 1996, p. 924.
6. Wall, Constant van de, *Dutch and Flemish Painters*, Translation: Schilderboeck (Carl van Mander, 1604), 1969, p. 332.
7. British Museum Additional Ms. 23068, p. 18; BM Add. 23069, p. 6b. Anne, Dowager Countess of Strafford, was the wife of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, of the second creation.
8. "The Earl of Oxford my wife's great grandfather at length." (Wentwood Woodhouse MS, Sheffield Archives).
9. Sheffield Archives, WWM, A1204, part 1, fol. 25.
10. *Shakespeare Matters*, Fall, 2001; Winter, 2002; Spring, 2002; Fall, 2002.
11. Cust, Lionel, "Marcus Gheeraedts," *The Third Annual Volume of the Walpole Society 1913-1914*, A.J. Finberg, ed., 1914 (reprinted 1969), p. 44.
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13. Looney, J., *Shakespeare Identified*, Ruth L. Miller, ed., vol. 2, 1975, p. 409.
14. *Shakespeare Matters*, Summer, 2002. See the Cecil portrait in *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England*, Karen Hearn, ed., Rizzoli, New York, 1996, p. 203.
15. *The Dictionary of Art*, p. 924.
16. *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Winter, 1997; Summer, 1998.
17. Corbeil, Marie-Claude and Powell, Jeremy, "Scientific Examination of The Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare/Sir Hugh Hamersley for the Folger Shakespeare Library," October 11, 2002, p. 3.

The CCI Report on Ashbourne Portrait: Scientific Analysis Raises More Questions Than Answers

By Katherine Chiljan

On October 11, 2002, the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) of Ottawa published a nine-page analysis of the Ashbourne Portrait,* made at the behest of the Folger Shakespeare Library. CCI is the same lab that recently analyzed the controversial Sanders Portrait, claimed to be of Shakespeare. CCI's stated goal was to use photographic and radiographic methods to identify changes made to the Ashbourne; specifically research would focus on the portrait's inscription and yellow-painted areas, which Charles Barrell had suggested were later additions in his own x-ray analysis of the portrait, published in *Scientific American* in 1940.

The recent report stated it used x-radiography, infrared photography, infrared reflectography, and ultraviolet-induced fluorescence photography, but where the latter two were applied was not mentioned. The portrait's ruff, forehead, and inscription were explored but not the coat of arms, and exactly which parts underwent which methodological scrutiny remains unclear. Six spots were microscopically examined: on the inscription, the letter S in "Suae" and the far right numeral 1 in "1611," and the gold spots on the thumb ring, gauntlet embroidery, book-cover design and mask. Only three areas – the letter S, numeral 1, and mask – were analyzed chemically.

The report confirmed Barrell's finding that the sitter's hair had been painted over, presumably to lengthen the forehead. But how many centimeters or inches of hair had been covered was not addressed. Readers may wonder why, during the portrait's restoration, the coat of arms was uncovered, but not the over-painted hair.

Regarding the initials CK, which Barrell's x-rays clearly located near the coat of arms, the report stated: "No such

monogram was observed on the CCI x-radiograph." Were they also not observed by microscope examination, infrared photography, or other means? The CCI report did not specify. Even William Pressly, in *A Catalogue of Paintings in*

See Cover Story: "Dating the Ashbourne Portrait"

the Folger Shakespeare Library (1993), mentioned the initials as "faintly visible."

The report stated that infrared and x-radiograph photography showed that the ruff was not observed to be originally twice as large as the one depicted, as Barrell had asserted. The original ruff may not have been twice as large, but was it found to be any larger? Again, the report leaves the question unanswered. The crudely executed "simplification" of the ruff, so obvious to the naked eye and observed as early as 1910 (M. H. Spielmann, *The Connoisseur*) as seeming to be by another hand, was also not addressed.

The report stated x-radiography found neither perforations on the canvas nor "ghostly remnants" of an original inscription, as asserted by Barrell. But were there observations made with infrared or microscope, etc.?

The report stated the gold color on the gauntlet embroidery and book cover design was original, which was untested. The report agreed with Barrell that the mask of comedy and crossed spears on the book cover were not original, but did not disclose what was underneath them. Apparently contradicting Barrell, the gold of the thumb ring was found to be original, but as the ring appears to

have two shades of gold, it was not stated which gold was original; this is important because Barrell claimed that a boar's head (which would help link the sitter to the Earl of Oxford) was overpainted on the ring. The boar's head issue was altogether omitted from the report.

Chemical analyses revealed that the letter S in "Suae" was original and the numeral 1 in "1611" was unoriginal. However, the originality of the other 16 characters in the inscription was not addressed. The report also incorporates into its findings the assumption there exists a numeral 2 beneath the numeral 1 in the 1611 date. The presence of the numeral 2 has never been substantiated, and was unfortunately not addressed in this report – it was only mentioned that it seemed to have been "scraped off."

Because the CCI analysis on the Ashbourne Portrait was so limited in scope, its conclusions were for the most part inconsequential. The best analysis was in the inscription, but more of it needs examination before conclusions can be finalized. The report contradicts some of Barrell's findings, but with partial or incomplete statements, and in doing so, raises more questions than it answers. Even the report's conclusion was contradictory in its assertion "the only change in composition – currently hidden – is the raising of the sitter's hair line," then stated the mask and number 1 were additions.

In all, kudos to the Folger for commissioning a scientific analysis of the portrait. It would be helpful if such methods were applied to thoroughly examine the coat of arms, and to determine the Ashbourne's date and artist.

* The report was published online at: <http://shakespeare.folger.edu/other/CCIreport.pdf>.

Oxford and the Turk

By Robert Brazil

A legend has grown in the annals of Oxfordian literature that Queen Elizabeth called Oxford her “Turk.” The kernel of the story is given briefly in Charlton Ogburn, Jr.’s *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*: “Where Leicester was ‘the Gypsy’ to his enemies, Elizabeth called Hatton her mouton – and Oxford her ‘Turk.’” (p. 502)¹

Because of this appellation there has been speculation as to how Oxford earned the peculiar nickname. Was the allusion to a Turk from the Orient, implying Oxford was dark-complexioned, or visibly Turkish in some way? Or was it derogatory, referring to a brash young turk? In the Shakespeare plays to “turn turk” means to become a villain, spy, or deserter.² Before we tackle the interpretation, we first need to examine if there is any factual basis that, one, Oxford was called the Turk, and two, the Queen ever

Was Oxford called the Turk, and did the Queen ever refer to him as “Turk”?

referred to him as “her Turk” or “my Turk.”

It also is frequently claimed the Queen had occasion to call Oxford the “Boar.” In a mainstream book, *All the Queen’s Men, Elizabeth I and her Courtiers*, Neville Williams writes:

Hatton was however, made to feel insecure by the arrival of the young Earl of Oxford at court. Apart from De Vere’s undoubted accomplishments as dancer and in the tilt, age was on his side and he had the inestimable advantages of noble birth and a powerful patron in Burghley. For a brief season Elizabeth made him the idol of her court, even though he was married to Burghley’s daughter, and delighted “more in his personage and his dancing and valiantness than any other”; she named him “Boar,” and in time the Queen took to heart the jealous Hatton’s

advice that she should reserve her most gracious favour “to the Sheep: he hath no tooth to bite, where the Boar’s tusk may both rase and tear.” [p. 151]

When these assertions are traced to original sources, there is only one reliable witness to the court nicknames – the surviving letters of Christopher Hatton. And it appears that all re-tellings of these legends trace back to *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton, K.G.* by Sir Harris Nicolas, 1847. Nicolas offers the letters of Hatton with some commentary. There are two letters written decades apart that interest us. In the earlier one, tentatively dated to 1573, Hatton writes to the Queen:

“God bless you for ever; the branch of the sweetest bush I will wear and bear to my life’s end: God witness I feign not. It is a gracious favour, more dear and welcome unto me. Reserve it to the Sheep, he hath no tooth to bite; where the Boar’s tusk may both rase and tear.”

This passage is accurately given by B.M. Ward in *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, 1928, p. 75; this is the “Boar allusion” letter that has been widely repeated. The “Turk” passage is found in a Hatton letter, tentatively dated by Nicolas as circa 1591, though the letter itself bears no date. Hatton tended to write to the Queen when he was ill, in trouble, or both. So the undated letters are approximated, by topical/temporal reference (and illness), by Nicolas. Here is the relevant excerpt:

My profession hath been, is, and ever shall be to your Majesty, all duty within order, all reverent love without measure, and all truth without blame; insomuch as, when I shall not be found such to your Highness as Caesar sought to have his wife to himself, not only without sin, but also not to be suspected, I wish my spirit divided from my body as his spouse was from his bed. And therefore, upon yesternight’s words, I am driven to say to your Majesty, either to satisfy wrong

conceit, or to answer false report, that if the speech you used of your Turk did ever pass my pen or lips to any creature out of your Highness’ hearing but to my Lord of Burghley, (with whom I have talked both of the man and the matter,) I desire no less condemnation than as a traitor, and no more pardon than his punishment. And further, if ever I either spake or sent to the Ambassadors of France, Spain, or Scotland, or have accompanied, to my knowledge, any that confers with them, I do renounce all good from your Majesty on earth, and all grace from God in heaven.³

The best Nicolas can offer about the “Turk” is this: “‘Your Turk’ was, no doubt, one of her courtiers.”

So that appears to be all of it – the single known reference (yet) to a “Turk”-nicknamed courtier, in a letter from Hatton to the Queen. Much can be inferred from this, but it would be erroneous to say “the Queen called Oxford ‘her Turk.’” An accurate statement would be: “Hatton, in a letter to the Queen, mentions ‘the speech you used of your Turk,’ referring to an unnamed courtier.” Now what, exactly, does Hatton mean, when he says “that if the speech you used of your Turk did ever pass my pen or lips to

“Trying to understand the context of Hatton’s statement brings up several questions.”

any creature out of your Highness’ hearing but to my Lord of Burghley, (with whom I have talked both of the man and the matter,) I desire no less condemnation than as a traitor, and no more pardon than his punishment”?

Trying to understand the context of Hatton’s statement brings up several questions. First, is Hatton referring to a conversation between the Queen and the Turk that he (Hatton) overheard? In this

context Hatton is promising to the Queen he will never reveal what he heard her say to the Turk. Second, is he referring to something the Queen said *about* the Turk, outside Turk's presence but heard by Hatton? In this case, he is promising silence about the things he has heard the Queen say about the Turk. Next, it would be marvelous if Hatton were referring to something the Queen recited that was *written by the Turk*, where she was quoting him clandestinely. Considering this possibility along with the Caesar allusion, one might be inclined to fantasize a Shakespeare connection: the Queen spoke a line from *Julius Caesar* or *Anthony and Cleopatra* perhaps, in rebuke to the Turk. Finally, Hatton might be referring to something the Queen said that was *said by the Turk*, where again she was quoting him quietly, and the feared gossip would be similar to "Hatton said that the Queen said that the Turk said that"

Perhaps other interpretations or explanations are as likely as the ones above. Hatton seems to say with "yesternight's words" the incident involving the Turk's words had happened the night before. In any case, the incident involving the Turk (or the Turk's words, or the Queen's words regarding the Turk, etc.) was important enough for Hatton to make such an extravagant promise of silence.

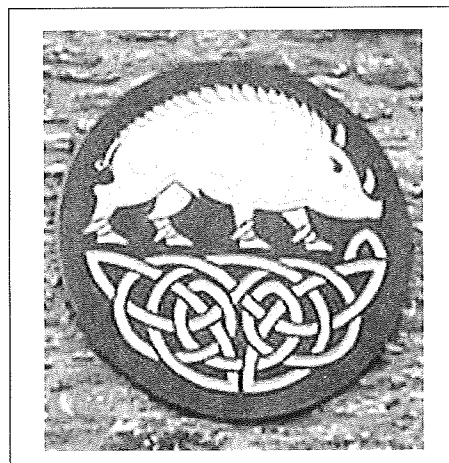
In the document collection, *Facsimiles of National Manuscripts from William the Conqueror to Queen Anne*, authors H. James and W.B. Sanders present a short list of Queen Elizabeth's pet names for her favorites, mentioning that Burghley was her Spirit, Walsingham her Moor, Leicester her Eyes, Raleigh her Water, Lady Norris her Crow, Hatton her Mutton, Sheep, and Lids. Then they say:

It is evident, from rather a melancholy letter, supposed to have been written to her Majesty by Hatton during his last illness and only a few days before his death, in 1591, that Queen Elizabeth called one of her courtiers her "Turk"; and this is conjectured by Nicolas to have

been the Earl of Leicester. This inference, however, would seem to necessitate the placing of this letter at an earlier date than that assigned to it. The letter itself is undated, and there is nothing in it to fix the exact time at which it was written.⁴

While corroboration from a source other than Hatton would be useful, I think there is enough here at least to posit that Oxford was referred to by some members of the Court as the Turk. We may venture at least the possibility that it was a nickname people used for him, perhaps in guarded conversation, if not directly to his face.

Does "the Turk" by necessity, lead to Turkey? Though Oxford did plan, or hope to travel there, and though he mentioned the country in a letter from Italy, he did



not, in fact, travel there, nor are there any particularly Turkish legends attached to his name or story. There is no corresponding testimony to suggest he favored an oriental style of dress, diet, or décor.

Yet, given that Oxford may have been actually called "the Turk," is there any possible allusive meaning for the nickname that has nothing to do with Turks, Turkey, or Moors – as variously have been suggested? Indeed, it turns out that there is a native "Turk" to the British Isles, one entirely appropriate and illuminating to our question. The ancient Celtic word for boar is *tuirc*, of which there are many exotic spellings. Here is the complete relevant entry from *A Pronouncing and Etymological Dictionary of the*

Gaelic Language by Malcolm MacLennan. Aberdeen University.

torc, n. m., gen. and pl. *tuirc*, boar; a boar and a whale; sovereign, a lord.

Irish - a' tomhas an *tuirc*, measuring the boar.

Old Irish - *torc*, a wild-boar, a lord.

Welsh - *twrch*.

Old Celtic, *torko-s*.

Moreover there is an ancient Celtic myth of a great Lordly Boar, who blazed a path from Ireland to Wales and was hunted by King Arthur, called the *Twrch Trwyth*. The name is pronounced "Turk Trueth," and the story appears in the *Mabinogion*. Thus, the name and the story were well known in the Elizabethan age.

In Ireland there are a great many place names that contain "turk," and a brief look at a few of them will give an idea of the wide distribution of the name. There is an Island off the west coast of Ireland, County Ulster, called *Inish Turk*, which means "Island of the Boar." In the old tongue it is *Inis Toirc*. Other *turk*/boar names in Ireland are *MacTurk* (from *Mac Toirc* – Son of the Boar) and *Cloonturk* (from *Cluain Toirc* – Meadow of the Boar). The modern village of *Kanturk* was called, in Gaelic, *Ceann Toirc*, The Boar's Head. Local legend has it that the last wild boar in Ireland was killed in *Kanturk*.

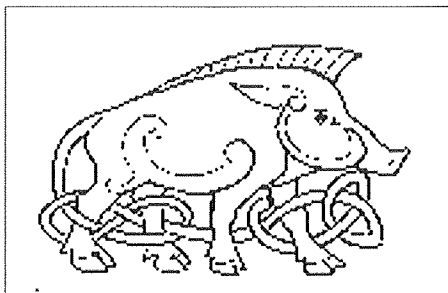
In the Arthurian cycle of stories, the hunt for the *Twrch Trwyth* is part of a series of Herculean labors the hero must endure. There is a vast literature on Arthurian legends, and this Boar-hunt myth, which has antecedent stories going back to the Calydonian Boar, is a central myth in the British Isles.⁵ This boar-hunt motif appears rather prominently in *Venus & Adonis* and, elsewhere in Shakespeare, so perhaps we have an answer already to "where does this take us?" A deep Welsh myth would have been a pipeline to Elizabeth's imagination, as she relished her Welsh family connections.

(cont'd on p. 18)

The Turk (cont'd from p. 17)

While "Twrch Trwyth" means literally Great Boar, or Giant Boar, (trwyth = giant, large, great) the second word sounds, to the English-hearing ear like "Truth" or "Trueth." It is possible that a 16th century English misreading of the Welsh name might have suggested "True Turk" or "True Boar." Alternately, as Twrch also means Lord, we have a possible pun on Lord Great [Chamberlain].⁶

Another unusual, albeit indirect, con-



firmation linking the Turk-Boar to Shakespeare is found in *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being* by Ted Hughes. On pages 11-12, in a long footnote about the mythological significance of the boar, which Hughes finds to be Shakespeare's personal icon, he writes:

In his role in this myth of the god who dies for and by the Goddess, and who is reborn to destroy her, he appears at the center of religious mysteries, and Shakespeare could have found him, in the same role, as easily in England (for instance, as the Twrch Trwyth, the terrible Boar King, who is hunted through the Celtic world in the great Welsh myth of Culhwch and Olwen) as in classical mythology.

NOTES

1. Ogburn does not adequately source this assertion; he seems to be following his parents' book, *This Star of England*, in which they also make the Turk claim, twice, but without attribution, in chapters 3 and 12.
2. The expression "turk" appears rather frequently in the Shakespeare plays. The connotation is rarely positive. Here are a few representative examples:

ROSALIND.

Why, 'tis a boisterous and a cruel style;

A style for challengers. Why, she defies me,

Like **Turk** to Christian. Women's gentle brain

Could not drop forth such giant-rude invention,

Such Ethiopie words, blacker in their effect

Than in their countenance.

As You Like It Act 4 sc 3

HAMLET.

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep:

Thus runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers – if the rest of my fortunes **turn Turk** with me – with two Provincial roses on my raz'd shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir? *Hamlet* Act 3 sc 2

Perhaps the most enigmatic Turk reference is this one:

PUCELLE.

Here's a silly-stately style indeed!

The Turk, that two and fifty kingdoms hath,

Writes not so tedious a style as this.

Him that thou magnifi'st with all these tides,

Stinking and fly-blown lies here at our feet. *I Henry Sixth* Act 4 sc 6

3. Nicolas gives the document reference as: Copy in the Harleian MSS 993, f. 75.

4. *Facsimiles of National Manuscripts from William the Conqueror to Queen Anne*. Selected under the direction of the Master of the Rolls and Photozincographed by Command of Her Majesty Queen Victoria by Colonel Sir Henry James, R. E. Volume III, ca. 1867. Introductory Notes by William Basevi Sanders. See section LXXIV.

5. There are some fascinating parallels between the legend of *Culhwch and Olwen* and the Twrch Trwyth, and the myth of the Calydonian Boar Hunt, which is part of the prelude to the story of the Trojan War. Culhwch's father was named **Celyddon** Wledig. The hero of the Greek boar hunt, Meleager, was descended from **Calydon**, the famous city's eponymous founder. Scholars believe the story was carried to the British Isles at a very early date. Completing the circle, an ancient name for Scotland is

Caledonia. See the *Mabinogion*, in various translations.

6. And we have perhaps, a new left-field interpretation of the appellation "T.T." on the *Sonnets* dedication of 1609. It's not Thomas Thorpe it's the Twrch Trwyth.

Additional Notes

•There is a very old reference to the hunt of the Twrch Trwyth in the catalogue of the *Marvels of the Island of Britain*, often appended to the *Historia Britonum* of Nennius. One copy is Harleian MSS. 3859. Nennius wrote in the 10th century.

•Ron Destro noticed Henry Howard used an analogy to a generic "Turk" while accusing Oxford of having a blasphemous attitude towards religious piety. In Howard's letter to the Queen, circa December 29, 1580, he writes, "Three sundry times, and that in diverse companies, not for disputation's sake but with advisement, he [Oxford] hath sworn that more plain reasons and examples may be vouched out of scripture for the defence of bawdry than out of all the books of Aretinus. The Turk himself speaks better both of Christ, of the Virgin, and the canon of the scriptures." Given that Howard was writing to the Queen, it would seem either he was out of the loop on Oxford's Turk nickname, or he was making a specific double-edged jab, comparing one Turk with another, or, as the date is a decade before the Hatton reference, perhaps the Turk nickname had not yet come into use.

•Another odd coincidence is that in Gabriel Harvey's famous Latin address to Oxford, which was printed in *Gratulationes Valdinenses* (1578), a reference to the Turk is just a few lines before *vultus tela vibrat*, "thy will shakes speares."

"And what if suddenly a most powerful enemy should invade our borders? If the Turk should be arming his savage hosts against us? Though the terrible war trumpet is even now sounding its blast? Thou wilt see it all; even at this very moment thou art fiercely longing for the fray. I feel it. Our whole country knows it. In thy breast is noble blood, Courage animates thy brow, Mars lives in thy tongue, Minerva strengthens thy right hand, Bellona reigns in thy body, within thee burns the fire of Mars. Thine eyes flash fire, thy will shakes spears; who would not swear that Achilles had come to life again?"

Book Review

The Dark Side of Shakespeare: An Iron-Fisted Romantic in England's Most Perilous Times

A trilogy by W. Ron Hess

(2002, Vol. I of III is 620 pgs., \$34.95,
ISBN 0-595-24777-6, www.iUniverse.com)

By Gordon C. Cyr

Ron Hess has written a fascinating, entertaining, and well-researched account of the 17th Earl of Oxford's part in Scottish, English, European, and even Asian politics during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. He begins the "Shakespearean period" in the 1570s, with almost all of the plays bearing an "origination date" within the twelve-year span of 1574-86.

The most intriguing of Hess' theories is the role played by Don Juan of Austria, natural half-brother of Philip II of Spain, in Oxford-Shakespeare's horizon. The author shows the Earl to have been a veritable "Scarlet Pimpernel" – at Court a fop with Italianate tastes, an effete but gifted poet and writer of Euphuistic comedies, skilled in the aristocratic sports (fencing, jousting, falconry, tennis), respected for his erudition, and loved by women as well as by a grateful coterie of actors, poets and writers, whom he subsidized – that is, commissioned for darker tasks. Oxford's "dark side" can be seen in

a secret life of plotting, spying, intriguing, smuggling, gunrunning (to Protestants abroad), and possibly even assassinating! The source of all these activities, Hess alleges, was the Earl's "alter ego," the aforementioned Don Juan of Austria for whose 1578 death Hess holds Oxford responsible.

Only time and further research will tell if Hess' conjectures upon the evidence prove out. If even half of them do, we are in for a radical "paradigm shift," equal to Looney's in 1920. Certainly, Hess buttresses his argument with solid scholarship and wide reading. He cites a truly staggering roster of resources: historical, political, and literary, both Stratfordian and Oxfordian, the latter including not only the usual Looney, Ward, and the Ogburns, but such almost forgotten ones as E.T. Clark and H.H. Holland, and newer ones like Stritmatter, Brazil, Moore, Davis, and many more.

Hess' book contains a large number of appendices, greatly amplifying and documenting the points in his main chapters. Standing somewhat apart is Appendix A in Volume I, comprising the late Tal Wilson's translation of Georges Lambin's *Travels of Shakespeare in France and Italy* that argues for William Stanley, sixth earl of Derby, as principal author of Shakespeare's works. Hess ably shows Lambin's arguments better fit

Derby's father-in-law, Edward de Vere, 17th earl of Oxford, than Stanley.

Not all Oxfordians (including myself) will agree with some of Hess' conclusions, particularly his views on the *Sonnets*. Hess produces no tangible evidence for adoption and use of David Honneyman's theory that early versions of these poems were translations from the French Huguenot poet D'Aubigny. But he does contrast various alternative theories, including those of Leslie Hotson, Joe Sobran, and most recently the intriguing theory by Sidney Lubow, that the key to the *Sonnets* lies in *A Lover's Complaint* and the ancient myth of "Narcissus." In the end, Hess is less interested in the *Sonnets'* meaning than in how they may offer clues for dating Shakespeare's works to the 1570s and 80s, as more ammunition for knocking-out Mr. Shakspeare's insufficient candidacy.

It's a pity the advanced copy Hess shared with me was poorly edited. Still, he assures me the published final available from www.iUniverse.com, www.BN.com, and www.Amazon.com will have been purged of its typos, graphical, grammatical, and even factual errors I observed. But even if we can't agree with him totally, Hess is not to be dismissed easily. Better yet, *The Dark Side of Shakespeare* is an undeniably scintillating read. Of course Stratfordians will hate it; good thing Hess proves their opinions simply don't count anymore.

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Book Review

Shakespearean Criticism: Excerpts from the Criticism of William Shakespeare's Plays and Poetry, from the First Published Appraisals to Current Evaluations. 68 vols. Vol. 41 edited by Michelle Lee and Dana Ramel Barnes. Detroit and London: Gale Research, 1998.

By Richard F. Whalen

The editors of this reference series of sixty-eight volumes on Shakespeare make a valiant attempt to present both sides of the controversy over his identity. In volume 41, they include excerpts from writings of John Michell, S. Schoenbaum, Charlton Ogburn, A.M. Challinor, Tom Bethell and Irvin Matus. Their short introduction is reasonably well balanced, although not without errors. They conclude that it is likely "the debate will rage

on." And they devote 80 pages to both sides of the debate.

The multi-volume series, as they call it, is evidently intended as a more popular version of the scholarly variorum editions of Shakespeare. Those editions were begun in 1803 and updated for almost two centuries as scholars produced increasingly more critical studies. The *Shakespearean Criticism* series, however, does not include the texts of Shakespeare's works.

As a reference work for high schools, colleges and public libraries, the series should be useful for students doing research papers and teachers who are not specialists in Shakespeare. The challenges for the editors have been to select the most important criticism for each of Shakespeare's works and to excerpt the most relevant and accessible sections without distorting meaning.

To be charitable, their selection of excerpts on the authorship controversy is uneven at best. As might be expected, it shows their bias for the Stratford man. For their "Overview," they chose excerpts from books by John Michell, who believes Will Shakspeare was part of a group led by Francis Bacon, and S. Schoenbaum, notorious for his scornful dismissal of the doubters or heretics without, however, addressing their arguments. Neither fairly represents the debate in recent years – hardly an overview.

Particularly unfortunate is what they selected from Michell's *Who Wrote Shakespeare?* (1996). In this excerpt, not only does he try to make the best case for the Stratford man, whom he believes was a writer in Bacon's group, he uses flawed arguments to do so. Michell grossly exaggerates the evidence. For example, he argues that in the First Folio Heminge and Condell "certified" the Stratford man's authorship and that the epitaph under the Stratford bust "records that Shakspeare was the greatest writer of his age." But anti-Stratfordians have shown the fatal flaws of both arguments.

He also says it is "a serious problem for the anti-Stratfordians" that Elizabethan theater people never disputed the Stratford man's authorship. But the theater people, whom Michell recognizes would know the truth and would have no reason to object, as the Stratford man never claimed to be the author. Michell then embraces the straw-man objection of the Stratfordians that only a most implausible conspiracy could hide the author's identity if he were not the Stratford man. And with the Stratfordians he knocks down the straw man, concluding correctly, as many agree, the author's true identity would have been "no secret at all." So it's not a "serious problem" after all.

In making the best possible case for the Stratford man as the author, seriously flawed arguments can't be used without noting the flaws. (The same goes for Oxfordian arguments.) Equally unfortunate is the editors' use of Michell's flawed arguments for the Stratford man in their introduction.

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The Shakespeare Oxford Society welcomes articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items of relevance to Shakespeare, Edward de Vere, and the Authorship Discussion.

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After this unbalanced Overview, the editors offer two excerpts for what they call, "The Case Against Shakespeare: Anti-Stratfordian Arguments." (The case, however, is not against Shakespeare, but against the Stratford man.) The first excerpt is from Charlton Ogburn's book *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality*. It is a straightforward account of the mundane facts of Shakespeare's lifetime from the documentary record. Effective for the careful reader, it is only one part of the anti-Stratfordian argument. From A.M. Challinor's *The Alternative Shakespeare: a Modern Introduction*, the editors selected his "condensed...ten key points" against the Stratford man. Effective but very brief.

The *Atlantic Monthly* articles (1991) by Tom Bethell for Oxford and Irvin Matus for the Stratford man are the source of lengthy excerpts under what they call "William Shakespeare vs. Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford," thus muddying the essential difference between Shakespeare the author, whoever he was, and Shakespeare of Stratford. Nevertheless, the excerpts are reasonably balanced. (Then follow two short excerpts addressing the claims for Francis Bacon and Christopher Marlowe.)

Confusingly, the editors conclude with writings by scholars on the other authorship controversy, that is, what belongs in the Shakespeare canon. These scholars are Gary Taylor on the poem "Shall I Die" as by Shakespeare, Donald Foster's rebuttal, and Richard Abram's claim for "W.S.'s Funeral Elegy" as by Shakespeare and a rebuttal by Katherine Duncan-Jones, plus commentary on the controversy over whether Shakespeare wrote *Henry VIII*, *King John*, and *Two Noble Kinsmen*, or parts of them.

A short list of further readings may lead students and teachers who consult this series to delve deeper into the controversy over the identity of Shakespeare. They will then realize the controversy is somewhat different from that presented by excerpts in *Shakespearean Criticism*, but at least they might be drawn into the fascinating endeavor of finding out who really wrote the works of Shakespeare.

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Book Review

The Lion Bats the Butterfly or The True and Tragick Historie of Shake-Speare
Robin Matchett (2002) James Piercemore
Books www.piercemore.ca \$24.95

By Howard Schumann

This is Will and Marc's excellent adventure, and what a tale! Conveyed with wit and imagination, *The Lion Bats the Butterfly*, a novel by Robin Matchett, involves time travel, history, literature, romance, and Shakespeare, too. Matchett not only tells a good story, he captures the look, feel, and flavor of the Elizabethan era. For the reader, it's almost like being there.

In the novel, Marc Garibaldi is a student at Oxford University in England who is working on his doctoral dissertation on the Shakespeare authorship question. He runs afoul of the staid academic establishment's tie to the myth of the Stratford actor. What it doesn't count on, however, is the gizmo. What's that, you ask? As far as I can explain, the gizmo is a device given to Marc by his friend, a

dude called Rufus, to cure his migraine headaches. It does that, but miraculously transports him to the Elizabethan age to come face to face with Queen Elizabeth, Edward de Vere, Lord Burghley and many others. Just like Bill and Ted, Marc travels back in time and returns with his characters to 2001.

The novel's premise is based on Shakespeare being Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, author of the plays and poems. Oxford was an acknowledged playwright, poet, theatrical producer, musician, dancer and literary figure of the Elizabethan era. The novel accepts the premise that Oxford was not only the son of Queen Elizabeth I, but fathered a child with her, Henry Wriothesley, to whom the *Sonnets* were dedicated. It also asserts Oxford was exiled for political reasons in 1604, the year of his presumed death, to the Isle of Man.

Here, the story picks up. Marc is transported by the gizmo to 16th century Isle of Man, and first encounters an old, exiled Oxford. Next, he is led to the discovery of an original manuscript of the

play *The Tempest*, signed by Oxford himself. Marc successfully comes back to the 21st century with the autographed original, which is sent by a recalcitrant Professor Arthur Church to the British Museum for analysis, then delivered to the Royal Archives where no record of it now exists. Marc, the determined warrior, sets out to reclaim his legacy for humanity. When he and the agent, Seamus O'Leary, cook up a deal to open the tombs of Elizabeth and Oxford to match their bones for DNA, the adventure shifts hard into high gear.

Matchett not only recreates the Elizabethan age but captures the distinct personalities of the Earl of Oxford and Queen Elizabeth I. The author gives us an involving love story that includes a 16th century poetess, a 21st century actress, a student and her twin sister, a Bosnian refugee, a British intelligence agent, and several assorted characters. I won't tell you any more except *The Lion Bats the Butterfly* soars with creativity. It can be a wild ride, and you'll very much treasure where and when it takes you.



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Prospero's Island notes (cont'd from p. 9)

In *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (1978), Kenneth Muir suggest Strachey's narrative was influenced by St. Paul's account of his own dramatic shipwreck on Malta (told in a remarkably vivid Hollywood style in Acts 27 and 28 of the New Testament). An excellent article covering this topic is "*The Tempest and the Bermuda Shipwreck of 1609*" by Peter Moore, in the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* (Summer, 1996). Other non-orthodox candidates for Prospero's Island include the volcanic Lipari Islands (Ogburn, Jr.'s choice) and the Isle of Man. Regarding the Scilly theory, all I can say is, having spent a holiday in the Scilly isles in 1950, or rather a few of the larger ones, it seems totally unlike Prospero's island. There are no mud-flats; it is semi-tropical, filled with lush vegetation and the coastal air is very bracing, not foul-smelling. The Scillies are indeed wild and craggy, and a likely place to get wrecked, but that's all. Nothing about the Scillies could be called barren. Flowers are the chief industry. They are neither brackish nor fetid, etc., all odors native to Mersea.

2. The fluoride causes mottled and crowded teeth. As a side-effect, dental cavities are rare. My first was in at age 21, and only after I left the island. Professor Oakley discovered the famous Piltdown man to be a hoax from a fluoride study of the semi-fossil bones found in Mersea's sea cliffs. When I was a young student on Mersea, my teacher put me in correspondence with Prof. Keith Oakley, of Cambridge. He was then writing a book on fossil dating by means of the degree to which calcium in bone has been replaced by fluorine,

and interested in the Mersea site, where because of this process, bones only some 30,000 years old had become very heavy (like coral!). I wish I had kept these letters, since

about 10 years later he discovered Piltdown Man to be a hoax from his method. Strangely, the Piltdown Man hoax and the Stratford Man hoax have much in common.

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*Household Words cont'd from p. 11***K**

keech ("solidified fat")
 kickie-wickie (derogatory term
 for a wife)
 kitchen-wench

L

lackluster
 ladybird
 lament
 land-rat
 to lapse
 leaky
 leapfrog
 lewdster
 loggerhead (Shakespeare meant
 "blockhead")
 lonely (Shakespeare meant "lone")
 long-legged
 love letter
 to lower (Shakespeare meant both
 "to frown, to threaten" and
 "to sink, to decline")

lustihood
 lustrous

M

madcap (as an adjective)
 madwoman [earlier than *OED*]
 majestic
 malignancy (Shakespeare meant "malign
 tendency")
 manager
 marketable
 marriage bed
 marybud ("bud of a marigold")
 mewling ("whining, whimpering")
 militarist (Shakespeare meant "soldier")
 mimic (the noun)
 misgiving (the noun: "uneasiness")
 to misquote
 mockable ("deserving ridicule")
 money's worth ["money-worth" dates
 from the fourteenth century]
 monumental
 moonbeam
 mortifying (the adjective)

motionless
 mountaineer (Shakespeare meant
 "mountain dweller")
 to muddy
 multipotent ("most mighty")
 multitudinous
 mutineer

N

nayword ("byword")
 neglect (the noun)
 to negotiate
 never-ending [earlier than *OED*]
 newsmonger
 nimble-footed
 noiseless
 nonregardance ("disregard")
 nook-shotten ("full of corners or angles")
 to numb [earlier than *OED*]

*See the Spring 2003 edition of
 Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter for
 Part II, "Household Words" O-Z*

Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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