

# The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter



Vol. 39: No. 2 "When all is said, Dumas fils or was it Dumas pre is right, 'after God, Shakespeare created most.'" James Joyce Spring 2003

## "Shakespeare or De Vere? — That is the Question"

### Authorship Debate at the Smithsonian

By John Hamill

Following the success of its 2002 evening seminar, "Who Wrote Shakespeare," the Smithsonian Resident Associates presented on April 19, 2003 another seminar on the Shakespeare Authorship Question, titled, "Shakespeare or De Vere? — That is the Question." The all-day program was organized and moderated by William Causey, a Washington attorney and professor at Georgetown University Law Center. The panelists advocating Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford as the true Shakespeare were Joseph Sobran, author of *Alias Shakespeare*, S.O.S. trustee Katherine Chiljan, editor of *Letters and Poems of Edward, Earl of Oxford*, and W. Ron Hess, author of *The Dark Side of Shakespeare*. The Stratfordian panelists were Prof. Alan H. Nelson, author of the upcoming Oxford biography, *Monstrous Adversary*, Irwin Matus, author of *Shakespeare, In Fact*, and Prof. Steven W. May, author of *Elizabethan Courtier Poets*.

Diana Price, author of *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*, opened the seminar with an overview of the authorship issue; how it arose and why the intense debate continues. A formidable anti-Stratfordian, Price made it clear that she is not an Oxfordian but believes that both sides, Stratfordian and Oxfordian, have only a circumstantial case. Her main argument against Shakspeare of Stratford's authorship

(cont'd on p. 4)

## Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in London

### Did a Danish Writer Discover the Real Men Behind the Shakespeare Characters?

By Lowell James Swank

Hamlet's childhood friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, are among Shakespeare's most famous pairs of characters. But this inseparable couple, whom King Claudius called to the court from Wittenberg, has always been a puzzle

Rosencrantz's mother was a Gyldenstjerne.<sup>3</sup> Because of the status of these families, facts about them can be found in biographical dictionaries<sup>4</sup> and even in a modern biography of Tycho Brahe. The Brahe clan was also from the ruling class and was



#### ROSENKRANTZ OG GYLDENSTJERNE I HAMLET

Af PALLE ROSENKRANTZ.

DEN store Digter er en Skaber, de Skikkelser, han danner, lever deres Liv gennem Tiderne som de store Afdøde og præger den levende Verden, som de døde præger alt det, der lever. Hamlet, Prins af Danmark, er en historisk Realitet som Frederik den store er det, han er blot ikke afdød. Hamlet er ligesaa levende som nogen, vi hilser paa Gaden; til alle Tider vil han

er Frederik Holgersen Rosenkrantz til Rosen-vold og Stjernholm og Knud Henriksen Gyldenstjerne til Aagaard.

Og snurrikt nok, med denne Paastand indføres de to ret ubekendte, forlængst hensovede danske Adelsmænd i Shakespeare-Litteraturen for at blive staaende der. —

Saa levende er den Kreds, der samler sig om Hamlet.

Palle Rosenkrantz, and a portion of his 1910 article in GADS DANSKE MAGASIN.

to scholars. Were they created by Shakespeare and given Danish names — the only Danish names in the play — to add authenticity to the Danish setting?<sup>1</sup> Or were Hamlet's friends based on two real men? Danish records suggest that the latter is more likely. There is evidence that two historical Danish noblemen, Frederik Holgersen Rosenkrantz and Knud Henriksen Gyldenstjerne, both with the right background, were in the right place at the right time for Shakespeare to write them into roles in *Hamlet*.<sup>2</sup>

Both Frederik Rosenkrantz and Knud Gyldenstjerne were born into powerful noble families in 16<sup>th</sup> century Denmark. Their families were among a small group of wealthy ruling clans with many connections by marriage. Evidently they were cousins:

interrelated with the Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne clans. Both Frederik Rosenkrantz and Knud Gyldenstjerne were cousins of Brahe.<sup>5</sup> These sources state that Shakespeare did indeed write Frederik Rosenkrantz and Knud Gyldenstjerne into *Hamlet*, but do not give much explanation or supporting evidence for this claim.

It was Palle Rosenkrantz, a descendent of the Rosenkrantz clan, who uncovered the relevant documents about Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne and proposed that this pair was the likely source of Shakespeare's two characters. The present paper is based primarily on his 1910 article, "Rosenkrantz og Gyldenstjerne i *Hamlet*."<sup>6</sup> Material from other sources is included to fill out a picture of Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne and to

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## Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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## Good Queen Bess at the Folger

As reported in the last issue of the newsletter, the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. is holding an extensive exhibition to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's death. With the largest collection in America of items belonging or relating to the Queen, the Folger has taken this opportunity to put them to good use and present *Queen Elizabeth I, Then and Now*, on display until August 2nd.

The exhibit displays numerous engravings and woodcuts of the Queen as well as the 1579 "Sieve" portrait by George Gower, which usually hangs opposite the Ashbourne Portrait in the Founder's Room. Coins, books and bibles, such as the "Bishop's Bible," presented to the Queen by Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, are on display. This unusually large bible, printed in 1568 by Richard Jugge, features three color portrait engravings, one each of the Queen, Lord Burghley, and Sir Robert Dudley. Several letters are on display, such as one instructing the officer for "Maskes and Revelles" regarding entertainment for the queen's coronation, as well as items relating to her relationship with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Robert Devereaux, Earl of Essex, and Mary, Queen of Scots. Also featured is a modern replica of the regalia she wore in the famous Armada portrait. Gail Kern Paster, Director of the Folger, in her foreword to the exhibition catalogue, wrote, "[this] rich array of texts and objects. . . seeks to convey the wonder of Elizabeth I—her stunning, imaginative and political power. . . even as it demonstrates the political and biographical complexity of her life and times."

One of the most interesting items on display is the 1584/85 New Year's Gift Roll, one of six in the Folger collection. About 23 lines down, you can see the name Oxford, although it refers to Anne Cecil, Countess of Oxford (the earl himself does not appear on this particular Roll):

By the Countess of Oxford A  
jewel being a carcanet of gold

containing 12 pieces garnished  
with eight small sparks of rubies  
and this word, 'Durabo', of  
small pearls and knots of  
true loves of small pearl.

"Durabo," Latin for "I will endure," was a rather clever choice and an appropriate motto for the Queen. In return, written on the reverse side of the document, the Queen gave the Countess 20 ounces of gilt plate.

Also of special interest to Oxfordians is a 1602 manuscript by Sir John Davies entitled, "The Device to Entertain Her Majesty at Harefield, the House of Sir Thomas Egerton." This was Queen Elizabeth's last progress and among the seventeen lady "stars" mentioned in this device were "Lord Derby's wife" (Elizabeth de Vere), "Lady Susan Vere," "Lady Knevet," and "Mistress Vavasour." Next to each lady's name were a few lines, and Mistress Vavasour's read, "Whether you seem to weep or weep indeed, this handkerchief will stand you well in stead."

In her Acknowledgments, Georgianna Zeigler, Head of Reference at the Folger, who put together the exhibits and the catalogue, comments, "I still find that like Cleopatra, 'Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale/her infinite variety.'" How appropriate indeed. —Gerit Quealy (with thanks to Jane Lawson for transcription.)

## Most Greatly Lived

*A biographical novel of*  
*Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford,*  
*whose pen name was William Shakespeare*  
by

Paul Hemenway Altrocchi

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## A Tribute to Delia Bacon

### Much can be learned from this courageous forerunner of the authorship issue

By Carole Sue Lipman

*This article is taken from a presentation at the De Vere Studies Conference, April 13, 2003, Concordia University*

Delia Bacon and Elliott Baker are, in my opinion, both great minds and great writers who have been neglected. Elliott Baker first kindled my interest in Delia Bacon when I met him in London in 1988 via our mutual friend Charles Champlin, Arts Critic of the *Los Angeles Times*. Champlin much admired Baker who is the author of numerous novels, his first, the notable black humor classic, *A Fine Madness* (later made into a film starring Sean Connery). Baker hails from Buffalo, graduated from the University of Indiana and served in World War II. He loves baseball and gambling, and lived for several decades in London with his British wife. They are now both 80 years old and reside in Los Angeles. Just a few years ago, he was awarded the President's Medal of Excellence by Indiana University for his contributions to literature. His critics agree that Baker is a genuine and original talent. For more than 25 years he has researched aspects of the Shakespeare authorship question, and created special material on Delia Bacon. In 1999 he presented a paper to the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable entitled, "In Defense of Delia"—the inspiration and substance for this article.

My own connection to Delia Bacon is a sentimental one. It was a curiosity to me that Delia had spent her formative years in Hartford, Connecticut as I did. I grew up only a few miles from where Mark Twain's historic home still stands, across the street from Harriet Beecher Stowe's house and Delia was a protégé of her sister Catherine Beecher. More recently, while living in Ashland, Oregon I met Earl Showerman, an avid Oxfordian who introduced me to Patricia Morrison who was teaching English at the Ashland High School. Patricia is, by some amazing coincidence, a direct descendent of Delia's brother. A photo of Delia (see below) was hanging in the hallway of Patricia's Ashland home. I cannot explain how or why we both ended up in Ashland.

Delia's photo was taken in May of 1853 on the eve of her five-year quest in England to prove that William Shakespeare of Stratford could not have possibly written the plays attributed to him. According to Nathaniel Hawthorne, Delia gave "nothing less than her life" to the book he helped her publish in which she intended to convince the world that "a third-rate play-actor" had merely fronted for a secret syndicate of



*Delia theorized that the [Shakespeare] plays were "republican polemics" produced from within the courts of Queen Elizabeth and King James.*

suppressed reformers and innovators. Later she would write in reference to the Stratford Man, "What new race of Calibans are we that we should worship this monstrous incongruity."

### A Connecticut Yankee

Before Delia picked up the Shakespeare gauntlet, she won public acclaim as an author, educator and lecturer. Delia Salter Bacon was born in a log cabin in Tallmadge, Ohio on February 2, 1811, one of seven children born to David Bacon, a Calvinist minister, and Alice Parks, both of whom had early family roots in New England. When Delia was only six years old her

father died leaving them penniless and they returned to Connecticut where the family turned to the elite of Hartford's patrons in order to survive. Her oldest brother Leonard became a prominent clergyman in New Haven through a Yale sponsorship. Delia came under the care of a leading attorney who sent her to study at Catherine Beecher's Evangelical Academy. She graduated at the age of 15 and tried, though unsuccessfully, to found her own academy. Limited to teaching, she then pursued writing and at the age of twenty published *Tales of the Puritans*, three melodramatic novelettes based on real events. That same year she won the \$100 first prize from Philadelphia's *Saturday Courier* for a story entitled, "Love's Martyr." The title turned out to be tragically prophetic, but she did win the competition by besting another young literary hopeful in the contest—none other than Edgar Allan Poe.

Over time Delia achieved a kind of intellectual celebrity as a history teacher in Hartford, New Haven and New York City. She began lecturing to elite girls who had completed formal schooling and later included classes for adult women as well. Catherine Beecher recollected that, "More than a hundred ladies gathered in New Haven to learn wisdom from her lips—devoting an unusual amount of time, and paying a liberal ticket for the opportunity."

This success enabled Delia to leave her brother's crowded parsonage for a two-room suite in New Haven's fashionable Tontine Hotel, where her parlor became an evening salon for students and friends. Here she met another resident of the hotel, the handsome, wealthy and younger Reverend Alexander MacWhorter who would pursue her intellect, court her feelings, and then betray her with accusations of disgraceful conduct. Her brother Leonard tried to have MacWhorter dismissed by the church but failed. The public scandal that followed

*(cont'd on p. 16)*

*Shakespeare or De Vere (cont'd from cover)*

is that a literary biography always leaves a paper trail – not so for Shakspeare. She criticized academia for not seriously pursuing any research on the authorship issue and criticized anti-Stratfordians for lack of focus and standards, which has consequently given the movement a bad name. Price also noted that since anti-Stratfordians do not face the peer review process, orthodox scholars simply dismiss anything they write.

Price said, however, that the authorship question has made an impact. She cited as an example the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript and the “Hand D” paleography issue. A.W. Pollard stated that if Hand D were Shakespeare’s, the authorship issue would be settled – the implication being that Hand D is the only potential evidence orthodoxy has for their case. She also mentioned that Donald Foster’s attribution of *A Funeral Elegy* to Shakespeare, later disproved, was a fiasco of orthodox Shakespeare scholarship. Price believes that academia rushed to accept *A Funeral Elegy*, written after Oxford’s death, to disqualify him as Shakespeare; as a result, the retraction has become a major embarrassment for them. On the other hand, Price noted that Stratfordians, such as Matus, have also made anti-Stratfordians modify some positions. The bottom line is that both sides have to do more research, especially anti-Stratfordians, who seem to rely on Stratfordian research – a sobering thought, since no one has researched Oxford’s life more than Nelson.

At this point, Causey initiated the debate with questions of biographical evidence and its relevance to the authorship question. Almost immediately the Stratfordians attacked Oxford’s character, and the Oxfordian panel replied that this issue has no bearing on the authorship. Nelson’s standard response for solid evidence linking

Shakspeare of Stratford to literary works was that the *First Folio* said so. He also made sweeping claims that everyone pointed to Shakspeare as the author during his lifetime, and to no one else. The Oxfordian panel challenged him on these points repeatedly.

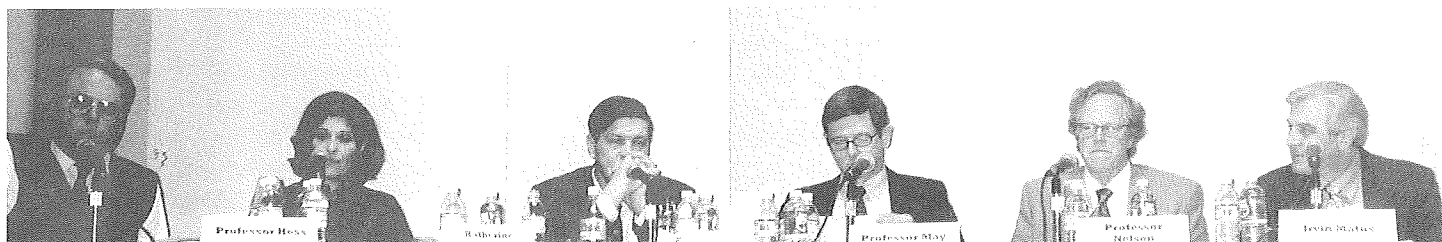
In the discussion on evidence for dating the Shakespeare plays, the Stratfordian panel used the old argument of a post-1604 dating of *The Tempest* to disqualify Oxford; that is, that Shakespeare based the play on a Bermuda shipwreck in 1609. The Oxfordians dismissed this, as there were a number of earlier Bermuda wrecks. Besides, said Chiljan, the account of the 1609 wreck was only in manuscript form during Shakspeare’s life. Sobran mentioned that the Stratfordians invented “Ur-Hamlet” – a play that supposedly preceded Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* – to help explain the disturbingly early references to this play.

Causey raised the question of computer analysis to help solve the authorship issue. May cited the Valenza and Elliott study that demonstrated of all the authors tested, Oxford’s work was the most remote from Shakespeare’s. Hess, whose expertise is computer security, responded that computers were only as sound as the knowledge of the experts who program them. He emphasized the need for more computer research, but funding is a major obstacle. Sobran disagreed, stating that computers will not solve the question because of its subjective nature.

The biggest surprise of the seminar was the denial of some fairly well-known facts by the Stratfordian panelists – facts accepted in print by their fellow scholars. For instance: (1) That Polonius in *Hamlet* is not a parody of Lord Burghley, and that there is no connection between the two. This is in sharp contrast to commentary in many editions of *Hamlet*. For example,

Stratfordian A.L. Rowse describes in great detail (*The Annotated Shakespeare*) the many ways Polonius is a parody of Lord Burghley, including physical descriptions and a comparison of Burghley’s precepts to those uttered by Polonius; (2) That it is a myth that for the nobility there existed a stigma in publishing during this period. This is in direct conflict with contemporary statements made by George Puttenham (*Arte of English Poesy*, 1589), Robert Greene (*Farewell to Folly*, 1591) and William Selden, as late as the time of Charles I; (3) That Oxford was not a man of the theater – Oxfordians’ weakest point, according to Nelson! – completely disregarding comments by Meres, Webbe, Puttenham and Peacham that Oxford was not only a playwright, but among the best; (4) That Shakespeare did not travel to Italy, and that Ben Jonson’s knowledge of it was superior to Shakespeare’s (in *Volpone*, for example), blatantly disregarding the research of such Stratfordians as Ernesto Grillo, who cite numerous examples that Shakespeare’s knowledge of Italy was extensive and firsthand. Hess provided the audience with literature outlining Oxford’s European journey, which covered most if not all of the European locations featured in the Shakespeare plays; evidence of travel outside England for Shakspeare is nonexistent. The Stratfordian panel’s denial of their own scholarship is perhaps the only tactic left them to support their assertion that there is no room for doubt that Shakspeare of Stratford is the author.

On the issue of Shakespeare being a pen name, Hess cited the *First Folio*: that two poems in the preface hyphenated the name “Shake-speare,” indicating it was a pen name. Nelson and May’s opinion was that this was inconsequential, as in one case, Thomas “Church-yard” was similarly hyphenated. Sobran responded that the



Smithsonian debate panelists, L-R: W. Ron Hess, Katherine Chiljan, Joseph Sobran; Prof. Steven May, Prof. Alan H. Nelson, Irwin Matus. (Photo credit: Karyn Sherwood.)

hyphenation argument is worthless and detracts from the main issues.

As expected, the Stratfordian panel wasn't complimentary about Oxford's extant signed poetry. Chiljan countered that many of these poems were written by age 16, citing their appearance in *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, the personal collection of Richard Edwards, who died in 1566. She then took the opportunity to cite specific examples of the numerous parallels of words and expressions that Oxford used in his letters with those of Shakespeare, examples taken from William P. Fowler's *Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters*. Nelson immediately replied, "That is an absolutely horrible book!" Sobran's wry response to Nelson's repeated use of the word "absolutely": "I wish I could be as absolutely sure of anything as he is about everything." This comment, applauded by the audience, made Nelson self-conscious about using the word and he tried to avoid it for the rest of the seminar, to only modest success. May expressed an eagerness to see solid evidence for Oxford's authorship of the canon. He added that if Oxford were shown to be Shakespeare, then he (May) would be hailed as a pioneering editor of Shakespeare's early writings and would no longer be an obscure English professor. May also made a startling assertion: that the likely source of Shakespeare's book-learning was the collection of Richard Field, the printer of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and *Rape of Lucrece*. After all, they were both from Stratford-upon-Avon and therefore must have been friends. This is a huge assumption, as is the idea that Field even had a collection of books. There is absolutely no evidence for either speculation. Hess then pointed out a connection between Oxford and Field.

For Nelson and Stratfordians in general who stress the importance of using documentary evidence, there was a great deal of speculation and assumption passed off as fact. This is alarming in a discussion of this kind as there is rarely opportunity for redress. However, one example had Nelson asserting that all the plays were the property of the King's Men because of the printing and performance record. When later questioned about the documentary evidence for this – because in fact, not all the plays

had a performance or publication record, such as *All's Well that Ends Well*, first performed in 1660, or *Two Gentleman of Verona*, first performed in 1762, so how could they have been in their property? – Nelson gave the rather muffled reply, "Uh, yes, yes, there's evidence," but did not elaborate or cite any.

In her concluding remarks, Price said that at least the avenues of discussion between the two camps are open, but we can be sure that no one changed his mind. The Shakespeare authorship question, however, is still not openly accepted by academia. The final forty-five minutes of

the seminar allowed the audience to question the panel. Most questions were directed to the Stratfordians, as the audience seemed predominantly anti-Stratfordian. The Stratfordians were therefore much on the defensive, which is a great turn of events from past debates. Overall, the discussion was informative, but even an all-day seminar was not enough time to fully present, discuss, and rebut each question. One could see panelists wanting to pursue a point, time after time, but the moderator had to move on to address the many items on the agenda. While frustrating to both the panelists and the audience, there was not a boring moment.

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## Concordia's Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference

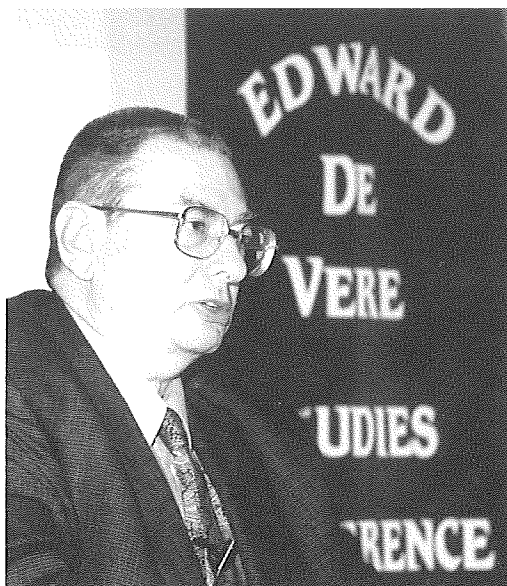
By Robert Barrett, Jr.

From its modest beginning seven years ago, Prof. Daniel Wright's Annual Edward de Vere Studies Conference at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon has blossomed into a major venue for Oxfordian scholarship in America. In 1997, fewer than 20 scholars and novitiates gathered there to discuss the brilliant and eccentric Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, true author of the Shakespeare canon. At this year's April conference, almost 200 conferees heard thirty scholars and writers from academia and beyond.

Professors Michael Brame and Galina Popova (University of Washington) opened the conference with a linguistic examination of Shakespeare. They asserted that not only did "William Shakespeare" = "Ignoto" = "E.C., Esquier," but that he was the likely author of works commonly ascribed to his contemporaries, including Arthur Brooke, George Gascoigne, George Pettie, and Edmund Spenser. Brame and Popova's thesis (published last year with the title, *Shakespeare's Fingerprints*) was developed independently from authorship considerations. Dr. Eric Altschuler argued, with scholarly support by William Jansen, that "the unknown gentleman Nicholas Yonge," an Elizabethan madrigalist with a penchant for privacy, might very well have been assisted by, if not a front for, a lyricist of Shakespearean, that is, Oxfordian, genius. The audience, convening in Saint Michael's Lutheran Church, was treated to several of the unknown gentleman's madrigals by the Pacific University Chamber Singers, directed by Professor Scott Tuomi.

A panel discussion on the authorship was featured the next day with eminent Oxfordians Richard Whalen, author of *Shakespeare: Who Was He?*; William Farina, President of the Chicago Oxford Society; and Ken Kaplan, a curriculum specialist from Doylestown, Pennsylvania. Whalen asserted that the Oxford argument is gaining recognition and acceptance, citing increased publication of novels and

articles, more exposure by college and university professors, and opinion shifts or ambivalent positions by eminent Stratfordians such as Bevington, Wells and Greer. He listed the anti-Oxfordian arguments to be overcome: (1) the post-1604 publication of the plays, (2) De Vere's reputation as an unsavory person, and (3) the improbable "conspiracy" of silence about De Vere's pseudonym. Whalen



Dr. William Rubinstein, Professor of History,  
University of Wales, Wales-Aberystwyth.

suggested that Oxfordians' greatest strengths come from (1) the number of eminent people who doubt the traditional attribution of the plays to Shakspeare-of-Avon (2) those aged 28 or younger who know nothing about the authorship controversy, and (3) the fact that nothing documents the Stratford Man as an author. Should we "beat up on" the Stratford Man?, he asked. Kaplan answered, yes, that to do so creates a mystery, and everyone loves a mystery. This lays a groundwork for further inquiry. Kaplan pronounced Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography* the most important development of the past year and asserted that Stratfordians were "disturbed" by it. Especially interesting was Kaplan's

suggestion that Stratfordians such as Katherine Duncan-Jones and Park Honan have been forced into a defensive mode by Oxfordian scholarship, and have adopted the Oxfordian approach of finding their author "in the text" – a sharp departure from their critical historicism, deconstructionism and mythologizing.

Andrew Werth delivered the keynote address on a topic that has been little researched – literary dedications. In the Elizabethan era, they usually served the purpose of securing protection. He characterized De Vere, a popular dedicatee, as a humanist patron who uniquely served as a "publisher" to other writers of the time. Werth's paper provided a valuable background to Katherine Chiljan's *Dedication Letters to the Earl of Oxford*.

Barbara Burris, in her continuing investigation into the provenance of the Ashbourne Portrait, reported that the figure's signet ring, which once depicted the emblematic drawing of a boar's head erect – associated with the De Vere family – has been erased. She also revealed that the heraldic crest of the Oxford coat of arms was changed from the depiction of a boar to that of an eagle between 1574 and 1599. On the portrait, the eagle actually appears to rise from flames, akin to a phoenix, a symbol associated with Queen Elizabeth. Burris said that the coat of arms was often used as evidence of pedigree, and suggested that the appearance of this modified crest on the Ashbourne Portrait signified that De Vere was the illegitimate issue of the rumored Thomas Seymour-Princess Elizabeth liaison of 1548. The most startling news, however, was that Professor Alan Nelson – prompted by Burris' research – has called upon the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Ashbourne's owner, to remove the identification of Hugh Hamersley as the portrait's sitter.

Reverend Prof. Matthew Becker of Concordia University offered insights about the role of the university as a non-change agent, a phenomenon Oxfordians have long



noted and deplored. Drawing on science philosopher Thomas Kuhn's 1962 study of paradigm shifts, Becker, a confirmed Oxfordian, explained that the university is resistant to heretical change, preferring to falsify ideas rather than verify them. What is needed, according to Becker, is not falsification but confirmation, extension and aggregation.

Sarah Smith came to the conference bearing news of her latest novel, *Chasing Shakespeares* (see review, p. 19), but spoke on a little-known topic: the rhetoric of letter writing, more specifically, that of Angel Day, Edward de Vere's secretary. A secretary in those days was a trusted private assistant and letter writer but, more importantly, a "holder of secrets." Smith pointed out the primacy of direct, face-to-face communications in Elizabethan times. Sermons, for example, were not so much original written works as they were written records of sermons already delivered face-to-face. Day's *The English Secretarie*, dedicated to De Vere and published in 1586, was the first book of its time about letter writing, and remained in print until 1626.

In a provocatively titled paper, "*Edmund Ironside, the English King: Edward de Vere's Second History Play*," Ramon Jiménez presented a virtual landslide of textual and contextual evidence that revealed Shakespeare as author of the anonymous play. Besides numerous allusions to the Bible, to the law, to Ovid, and to "language as language," the proliferation of compound words, prefixed words, and verbal inventiveness in the play is striking. For example, about 12% of the play's 2,500 different words were new to the language at the time, and the total number used is higher than that of any other Shakespeare play, adjusted for length, except *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. Besides citing the overwhelming evidence that Edward de Vere wrote the plays of Shakespeare, Jiménez pointed out that the historical

sources of *Ironside* were available in Lord Burghley's library, to which De Vere had access in the 1560s. He suggested that De Vere wrote the play in 1570, after returning from his first military experience in Scotland.

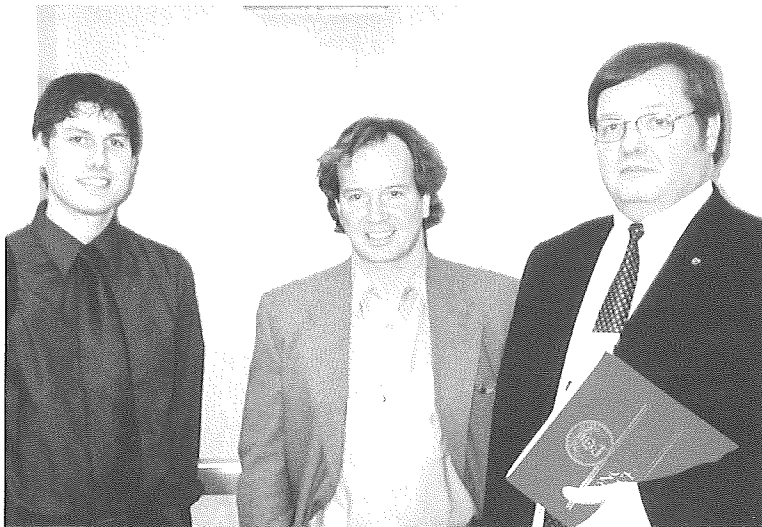
William Nieder Korn, author of the February, 2002 *New York Times* article on the authorship question, kicked off Saturday morning with an amusing and detailed account of the treatment of the authorship issue by the *Times* over the years. He was fortunate, he quipped, that the newspaper had recently added a new user program, Proteus, that searches everything printed in the *Times* since 1851. Coverage largely

rebellious, and energetic; exhibits persistent and uncompromising passion and commitment, leading to estrangement; and emerges as a writer in the 30-40 age bracket, fully developed at about 42. He explained that Edward de Vere's life is consistent with these characteristics and that the Stratford Man had no "pedigree" for genius.

Some at the conference considered Randall Sherman's paper, based on work by Robert Detobel, as "smoking gun" evidence for De Vere as Shakespeare. Although the argument is complex, it focuses on an entry in the Stationers' Register which required *The Merchant of Venice* to be approved by the "Lord Chamberlain" after licensing – which was granted July 22, 1598 – and prior to printing, which took place in 1600. Sherman asserted that this unique entry was evidence that De Vere, the Lord Chamberlain, was the author of the play. Stephanie Hopkins Hughes's talk guided the audience through the known facts about De Vere's upbringing, education, travel, children, marriages, etc., and detailed specific points of his known biography for which there is no evidence. Her biographical tour was illustrated with slides of portraits, places, and maps.

Visiting from the University of Wales-Aberystwyth, Prof. William Rubinstein's talk pointed out that some of the most important history is discovered and written by amateurs. He alleged that not a single professional historian, for example, has ever written on the assassination of John F. Kennedy. In fact, he finds an inverse relationship between historians' background and the magnitude of their achievements. A professed "agnostic" in the authorship, Rubinstein modestly noted that his article, "Who Was Shakespeare," in *History Today* (August, 2001) made that issue the second highest seller ever. (He added that the most popular issue featured his article on Jack the Ripper.) Rubinstein

(cont'd on p. 24)



From L to R: Andrew Werth, Randall Sherman, and conference organizer and founder Professor Daniel Wright.

included articles on the Baconian theory, portrait research, "discoveries," and book reviews. He regaled the audience with some of the more outrageous items, including an ode on the bust of William Shakespeare, entitled, "Oh Willie Willie Wille. . ."

The ubiquitous anti-anti-Stratfordian argument that Shakespeare was born with unique genius, incomprehensible to those less gifted, was effectively demolished by Dr. Kevin Simpson, Associate Prof. of Psychology at Concordia. Drawing on Michael Howe's *Genius Explained* (1999), Simpson described a typical genius as one who at birth has the potential for genius; has dedicated parents or a parent-line mentor; obtains lengthy training; has a prodigious capacity for work; is unconventional,

## Oxfordian News

# Portia's Destination in *The Merchant of Venice* Identified by Italian Scholar; Diana Price on NPR

### De Vere Society Report

The De Vere Society held its Annual General Meeting on May 10, 2003, at Birkbeck College, London featuring several outstanding Oxfordian papers. Dr. Noemi Magri (lecturer in English in Mantua, Italy) captivated the audience with maps and pictures of stunning Italian villas, reviewing Shakespeare's description of Portia's journey to Venice. Where was the villa Belmont? Scholars have long searched, but no suggestion matches as well as the Villa Foscari that Dr. Magri identified. It is ten miles from Venice ("twenty miles today"), allowing for Portia to travel there and back, five miles each way by coach, and five miles along the navigation channels of the Venice lagoon, from Fusina on the mainland to Venice itself. Its hall overlooks the old road, a perfect vantage for Portia to see a lamp within its hall. Overall, a thorough and meticulous examination of text, landscape and history – exactly what one would wish to find in Shakespearean scholarship.

Philip Johnson, lecturer at Barton Peveril College, Eastleigh, England, gave a paper noting how Francis Langley, a contemporary of Shaksper and linked with him in the historical records, was a profiteer, a litigious man, a "goldsmith" or moneylender, and made money through The Swan, which opened in 1595. Could members think of anyone else who made money through the theater, was litigious, and bound over to keep the peace? Kevin Gilvary returned to the subject of trying to date the plays by their proportions of prose and poetry, or rhyme, colloquialisms, and extra syllables, and how it was possible to get a different order for the dating of the plays depending on which method one used. Eddi Jolly touched upon the peculiarity of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* being known in 1598, as Meres noted, but not published till 1609, long after the sonnet craze had faded, as well as the usefulness of Lambin's book *Les Voyages de Shakespeare en France et*

*Italie* for defining just how detailed Shakespeare's knowledge was of geographical locations and historical events in France and Italy.

The final paper, "Pseudonyms and the Monument," by Christopher Dams, argued that there were three types of noms de plume: the obvious disguise, such as "disgusted of Tonbridge Wells;" the transparent disguise, such as that of "Ralph Robins on of Windsor" for George III; and the opaque, a name having no connection with the real writer's name, an example being "George Eliot," which even incorporates a gender change. "George Eliot" is still known as the author of *Middlemarch* – concluding that the latter may reflect a similarity to the name of William Shakespeare. He noted that the second line in English on the Stratford monument says, "read if thou canst, whom," positing, "Should we read 'read' as 'interpret' or 'understand,' as in Middle English?"

Chairman Brian Hicks offered a warm tribute to Christopher Dams for all his years as Honourable Secretary, commenting on how the Society had bloomed each year while under Dams's nurturing stewardship. Subsequently, Richard Malim was elected to fill the seat of Honourable Secretary. Dams then spoke on the many contributions of Treasurer Alan Robinson, who will remain the Society's bookkeeper. Kevin Gilvary was appointed editor of the Newsletter. The Chairman's report included his appreciation of the wide range of papers presented over the last year, adding these to the ever-growing list.

–Eddi Jolly

### Bloom Bloopers

On May 3, 2003, Shakespeare scholar Harold Bloom gave a live three-hour television interview for "In Depth," on CSPAN2, and answered several questions from callers from around the country. Bloom lauded Shakespeare as "the greatest of all

thinkers and all writers," and then stated that the history of an author is not important. A caller from Portland, Oregon, asked Bloom to clarify this point because the chronology in his book, *Shakespeare: Invention of the Human*, includes portions of biography. Bloom dodged the issue, saying, "The question of the origins of an author is something that, if possible, I'd like to set aside, if only because of current polemics." The same caller asked Bloom if he was a Stratfordian, which apparently flustered him, because he first answered no, and then corrected himself with an emphatic yes. Bloom immediately mentioned that Oxfordians use the term "Stratfordian," and said that these people "insist that Aubrey de Vere, the Earl of Oxford" wrote Shakespeare. Stooping to the *ad hominem* argument so dear to Stratfordians, Bloom likened Oxfordians to the Flat Earth Society and to those who believe Queen Victoria wrote the works of Lewis Carroll. "I must say these Oxfordians are very virulent and, forgive me for saying it, very crazy people indeed," said Bloom, who has written or edited books on Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mark Twain, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Not only is Bloom apparently unaware of Oxford's first name and his case for the Shakespeare authorship, but that Twain, Hawthorne and Emerson doubted the Stratford attribution.

–Katherine Chiljan

### Price on NPR

On Sunday April 27, 2003, an interview with Diana Price aired on National Public Radio, focusing on her book, *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*. Price mentioned that a purely anti-Stratfordian approach, not committing to an alternative candidate, is "easier" and offers greater initial impact than trying to shoe-horn in both a deconstruction of Mr. Shaksper and a construction of another candidate. She argued that Mr. Shaksper was a usurer and play broker, typical of several noted in that



time for affixing their names to plays written by others. Although she leaves an aura of mystery about her true Shakespeare – perhaps for dramatic effect – Price insists that Shakespeare was a nobleman. Price gave the interview while visiting Washington D.C., where she lectured at DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired) and George Mason University, Arlington, and was the keynote speaker at the Smithsonian debate (see cover story). Although Price's approach may whet the audience's appetite for the subject, it may not be enough to overthrow the Stratfordian myth in these days of sound bites.

–W. Ron Hess  
(BeornsHall@earthlink.net).

### Oxfordian Studies Seminar

"Hamlet: Shakespeare's Biography?" is this year's topic for Concordia University's second annual seminar in

Oxfordian studies, August 17-23, 2003. The play will be studied with an Oxfordian perspective, along with related topics, such as "How Does One Know When One is Reading Autobiography?" The seminar will be coordinated by Concordia's senior Professor of English, Dr. Daniel Wright, and will feature occasional guest presentations. Tuition is \$995, and includes books, campus lodging, some meals, a luncheon cruise on the Willamette River, guided tours of Portland's famous Chinese Gardens, and an evening at Powell's City of Books. Enrollment is open to all.

For more details contact:

Dr. Wright,  
Dept. of Humanities,  
Concordia University,  
Portland, OR 97211-6099  
or  
dwright@cu-portland.edu.

### Proposed Oxford Shakespeare Centre

Long-time Oxfordian Ron Destro made the front page of the *New York Sun* on May 2, 2003 with his plans for a non-profit Oxford Shakespeare Centre, which includes two theaters, a drama school, museum, library and restaurant to be built in Lower Manhattan. Destro believes this is the ideal area because it "has the atmosphere of old London." Endorsements from F. Murray Abraham, Julie Harris, Dame Glenda Jackson and Kenneth Branagh, among others, have raised awareness of his search for backers. The article briefly included Destro's plug for Oxford as the true Shakespeare, touching on Oxford's education, and a counter-quote on the authorship debate by Columbia English professor, James Shapiro: "Like roaches: It will survive nuclear destruction." Will Stratfordians ever comment on Oxford's case?



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# “Household Words”

## Common and Uncommon Words Coined by Shakespeare, Part II

by Michael Macrone

This is the second part of a list of Shakespeare-invented words compiled by Michael Macrone and featured in a chapter in his bestselling book, *Brush Up Your Shakespeare!* As Macrone explains in his work, it is “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.” Reprinted with permission by Michael Macrone and Michael Cader.

### O

obscene (Shakespeare meant “revolting”)  
ode  
to offcap (“to doff one’s cap”)  
offenseful (“sinful”)  
offenseless (“unoffending”)  
Olympian (Shakespeare meant “Olympic”)  
to operate  
opugnancy (“antagonism”)  
outbreak  
to outcrafty (“to excel in craft”; “outwit”)  
to outdare  
to outfrown  
to outgrow  
to out-Herod (“to outdo Herod in bluster”)  
to outscold  
to outsell (Shakespeare meant to exceed in value)  
to outstare  
to outswear  
to outsweeten (“to be sweeter than”)  
to out-talk  
to out-villain  
to outweigh  
overblown (Shakespeare meant “blown over”)  
to overbulk (“to surpass in bulk”)  
overcredulous  
overgrowth  
to overpay  
to overpower  
to overrate  
to over-red (“to redden over”)  
to overstink (“to stink more than”)  
overview (as a noun: Shakespeare meant “supervision”)

### P

to palate (Shakespeare meant “to relish”)  
pale-faced  
to pander  
passado (a kind of sword-thrust)  
paternal  
pauser (“one who hesitates”)  
pebbled (“pebbly”)  
pedant (Shakespeare was referring to a schoolmaster)  
pedantical  
pendulous (Shakespeare meant “hanging over”)  
to perplex  
perusal  
pignut (a sort of tuber)  
pious  
please-man (“yes-man” or “parasite”)  
plumpy (“plump”)  
posture (Shakespeare seems to have meant something like “position” or “positioning”) [earlier than *OED*]  
pouncet-box (“small box for perfumes”)  
prayerbook [earlier than *OED*]  
priceless  
profitless  
Promethean  
protester (Shakespeare meant “one who affirms”)  
published (Shakespeare meant “commonly recognized”)  
puh! (an interjection signifying disgust and/or condescension)  
to puke  
puppy-dog  
pushpin (Shakespeare was referring to a children’s game)  
on purpose

### Q

quarrelsome  
in question (as in “the \_\_\_\_ in question”)

### R

radiance  
to rant  
rascally [earlier than *OED*]  
rawboned (“very gaunt”)  
razorable (“fit to be shaved”)  
reclusive  
refractory  
reinforcement (Shakespeare meant “renewed force”)  
reliance  
remorseless  
reprieve (the noun)  
resolve (the noun)  
restoration [earlier than *OED*]  
•restraint (as “reserve”)  
retirement  
to reverb (to “re-echo”)  
revokement (“revocation”)  
revolting (Shakespeare meant “rebellious”) [earlier than *OED*]  
to reword (Shakespeare meant “re-echo” and “repeat”)  
ring carrier (“go-between”)  
ring-time (“time for exchanging rings”)  
to rival (Shakespeare meant “to compete”)  
roadway  
roguery  
rose-cheeked  
rose-lipped  
rug-headed (“shock-headed”)  
rumination  
ruttish

## S

sacrificial  
 sanctimonious  
 to sate  
 satisfying (as an adjective)  
 •savage (as “uncivilized”)  
 savagery  
 schoolboy  
 scrimer (“a fencer”)  
 scroyle (“wretch”)  
 scrubbed (Shakespeare meant “stunted”)  
 scuffle  
 seamy (“seamed”) *and* seamy side  
 (“under-side of a garment”)  
 to secure (Shakespeare meant “obtain security”)  
 self-abuse (Shakespeare meant “self-deception”)  
 semblative (“resembling”)  
 shipwrecked (Shakespeare spelled it “ship-wrackt”)  
 shooting star  
 shudder (the noun)  
 silk stocking  
 silliness  
 to sire  
 skimble-skamble (“senseless”)  
 skim milk [in quartos; “skim’d milk” in the Folio]  
 slugabed  
 to sneak  
 sneap (“snub” – as a noun and as a verb)  
 soft-hearted  
 spectacted  
 spilth (“something spilled”)  
 spleenful  
 sportive  
 to squabble  
 stealthy  
 stillborn  
 to subcontract (Shakespeare meant “to remarry”)  
 successful  
 suffocating ( the adjective )  
 to sully  
 superscript (Shakespeare meant “address written on a letter”)  
 superserviceable (“more serviceable than is necessary”)  
 to supervise (Shakespeare meant “to peruse”)  
 to swagger

## T

tanling (“someone with a tan”)  
 tardiness  
 time-honored  
 title page [earlier than *OED*]  
 tortive (“twisting”)  
 to torture  
 traditional (Shakespeare meant “tradition-bound”)  
 tranquil  
 transcendence  
 trippingly

## U

unaccommodated  
 unappeased  
 to unbosom  
 unchanging  
 unclaimed  
 •uncomfortable (in the sense “disquieting”)  
 to uncurl  
 to undervalue (Shakespeare meant “to judge as of lesser value”)  
 to undress  
 unearthly  
 uneducated  
 to unfool  
 unfrequented  
 ungoverned  
 ungrown  
 to unhand (as in the phrase “unhand me!”)  
 to unhappy  
 unhelpful  
 unhidden  
 unlicensed  
 unmitigated  
 unmusical  
 to unmuzzle  
 unpolluted  
 unpremeditated  
 unpublished (Shakespeare meant “undisclosed”)  
 unquestionable (Shakespeare meant “impatient”)  
 unquestioned  
 unreal  
 unrivaled  
 unscarred  
 unscratched  
 to unsex  
 unsolicited

unsullied  
 unswayed (Shakespeare meant “unused” and “ungoverned”)  
 untutored  
 unvarnished  
 •unwillingness (in the sense “reluctance”)  
 upstairs  
 useful  
 useless

## V

valueless  
 varied (as an adjective)  
 varletry  
 vasty  
 vulnerable

## W

watchdog  
 water drop  
 water fly  
 well-behaved  
 well-bred  
 well-educated  
 well-read  
 to widen (Shakespeare meant “to open wide”)  
 wittolly (“contentedly a cuckold”)  
 worn out (Shakespeare meant “dearly departed”)  
 wry-necked (“crook-necked”)

## Y/Z

yelping (as an adjective)  
 zany (a clown’s sidekick or a mocking mimic)

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*Rozencrantz (cont'd from cover)*

better show how suitable they are as Shakespeare's sources. Their background and movements also have a bearing on the authorship question. Because we rely on the work of Palle Rosenkrantz, we should look at his biography as well.<sup>7</sup>

### Palle Rosenkrantz

Palle (Adam Vilhelm, baron) Rosenkrantz (1867-1941) was a native of Elsinore, and an interesting character in his own right. His early career as a lawyer included District Head Clerk in Nakskov (1895-98) and Lawyer at the High Court in Copenhagen (1909). After an economic crisis in Denmark (1898), he took up a different career – writing. By 1926, he had written more than forty novels and twenty plays and had collaborated on several illustrated histories. He was a noted writer of detective stories, one of which appeared in the recent *Oxford Book of Detective Stories*.<sup>8</sup> He also did archival research into the Rosenkrantz clan. As a lawyer, novelist, playwright, detective storywriter, archivist, and member of the Rosenkrantz clan, he was the ideal person to investigate the origin of Shakespeare's Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern.

Palle Rosenkrantz was struck by the following fact. In Denmark, the Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne clans were famous and important players in several hundred years of Danish history and especially so in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, yet the worldwide fame of their names is due entirely to Shakespeare. Are the two histories of these names related? Or is this just a coincidence?

When Palle Rosenkrantz discovered the historical young noblemen Frederik Rosenkrantz and Knud Gyldenstjerne and saw how well this pair matched Shakespeare's two characters, his first thought was that this was so obvious that they must be well known. Certainly he could have expected Shakespearean scholars to know about them. But, in fact, they weren't and are still not well known.

### The Historical Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne

Frederik Holgersen Rosenkrantz (1569-1602) was the son of Holger Rosenkrantz, a wealthy and powerful member of the Rigsraad<sup>9</sup> and Governor of North Jutland.<sup>10</sup>

Holger Rosenkrantz was also one of King Frederik II's best friends<sup>11</sup> and, in fact, named his son Frederik after the King, who was also the boy's godfather. When Frederik was four, his father died and his uncle, Jørgen Rosenkrantz, who was also a member of the Rigsraad and a governor, became his guardian. (Incidentally, Palle Rosenkrantz is a descendent of Jørgen Rosenkrantz.) Niels Kaas, Frederik's second appointed guardian and the Chancellor of Copenhagen University, appointed Hans Poulsen Resen (later a noted Bishop of Zealand) to be Frederik's tutor and traveling companion in Europe. Frederik traveled with Resen for seven years (1584-91) for "study and culture."<sup>12</sup> They first enrolled in the



*Lithograph of Hamlet with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern by Eugene Delacroix.*

University at Rostock in Germany on the coast of the Baltic Sea. Founded in 1419, Rostock is the oldest university in Northern Europe. They stayed with Professor Lucas Backmeister for two years. In 1586, they traveled together with Backmeister's older son Jacob to Wittenberg. The two Latinized names Johannes Pauli Resenius and Fredericus Rosenkrancius appear in the Wittenberg register on December 8, 1586. Rosenkrantz took a masters degree at Wittenberg in 1588, and then traveled with Resen to Bremen, Padua, Siena, Rome, Sicily, and Malta. During his years abroad, Frederik returned on visits to Denmark several times.

Knud Henriksen Gyldenstjerne (1575-

1627) had a similar birthright and upbringing, but we know fewer details about him. His father, Henrik Gyldenstjerne, was an admiral, and Knud had three Rigsraader uncles named in the Willoughby Connections below. At age fifteen, Knud was sent to Rostock, where, following Rosenkrantz, he stayed with Professor Lucas Backmeister. He and Backmeister's younger son, Johannes, traveled to Wittenberg where Johannes Backmeister registered as a student. Gyldenstjerne was too young to officially enroll as a student; thus his name does not appear in the Wittenberg registration. However, Palle Rosenkrantz uncovered the significant fact that in Gyldenstjerne's preserved funeral sermon, it is stated that "he studied in Wittenberg." So both Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne were students in Wittenberg. From there Gyldenstjerne traveled to Strasbourg in Alsace for more study and also to Basel, Zurich and other "distinguished academies." Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne both returned to Denmark in October 1591. This brings us to, what is for our story, a crucial phase of their lives, which is recounted in several references.<sup>13</sup>

In 1592 Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne traveled to Scotland with Mogens Ulfeldt who was "on the King's business." Ulfeldt returned to Denmark, but Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne traveled on to England as part of a Danish legation. They were probably in England for less than a year as Rosenkrantz is listed among naval officers returning to Denmark in the spring of 1593.<sup>14</sup>

### Observations

Regarding Wittenberg, Palle Rosenkrantz discovered the significant fact that not many Danes went to study in Wittenberg. The Wittenberg registration/matriculation shows just a few Danes in the decade preceding the time of *Hamlet*. Most Danish noblemen went to Rostock and Leyden. Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne were exceptions in attending Wittenberg.

Palle Rosenkrantz concludes that cousins Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne were also very close friends. He called them "Siamese twins." As an example he cites the following episode. When Rosenkrantz disappeared in the spring of 1599 after getting into trouble from a "misadventure" – a love affair in the

court that produced a pregnancy – King Christian IV commanded a search for him at Knud Gyldenstjerne's farm. Actually, Frederik had fled Denmark. This episode set off a chain of disastrous events in Frederik's life that don't concern us here.

This is about as far as the documents (known to me) go in directly answering our initial question. From here on we have to rely on some reasonable inferences. Palle Rosenkrantz believed that during their stay in England Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne visited Elizabeth's Court in London. This seems likely since they were part of a diplomatic mission, which would normally visit the court. He further believes that Shakespeare met Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne in the court. His assumption is based on his reading of the Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern roles in *Hamlet* and his assessment of the Danish records on Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne. The similarity appeared so striking that Shakespeare could not have portrayed his characters to resemble the two Danes so closely just from hearsay or invention. For example, in the play, Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern always appeared together, seeming to complete each other's sentences and thoughts, which parallels the close relationship the actual Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne had with each other.

As characters in *Hamlet*, Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern are listed as courtiers. But Palle Rosenkrantz reads, perhaps from his Danish perspective, (in Act 2, scene 2) the king's "welcome" of them to the castle and the ensuing conversation as meaning that Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern were not courtiers, but noblemen.

Because Wittenberg was not noted at the time as a university attended by Danes,

there would be no reason for a writer to make such a connection. An Englishman would scarcely know the name. So how could Shakespeare have come to write Wittenberg into his play? That is, why did he write Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern into the play as students from Wittenberg? The question has an obvious answer if Shakespeare did meet Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne, who were the unusual rarity of former Danish students at Wittenberg.

To summarize the salient points about Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne that are relevant to a Shakespeare connection: the

of Brahe's friends and relatives, including a "Rosenkrans" and a "Gvldensternen."<sup>16</sup> This would have given him two authentic Danish names to include in *Hamlet*.<sup>17</sup> We should be mindful of this and other possible sources for Shakespeare, such as the Willoughby connection below.

If something like Hotson's scenario were the mechanism that transmitted these Danish names to Shakespeare, then we are faced with a curious coincidence. A few years before the play *Hamlet* appears with two characters bearing Danish names (1603),<sup>18</sup> there just happen to be two Danish

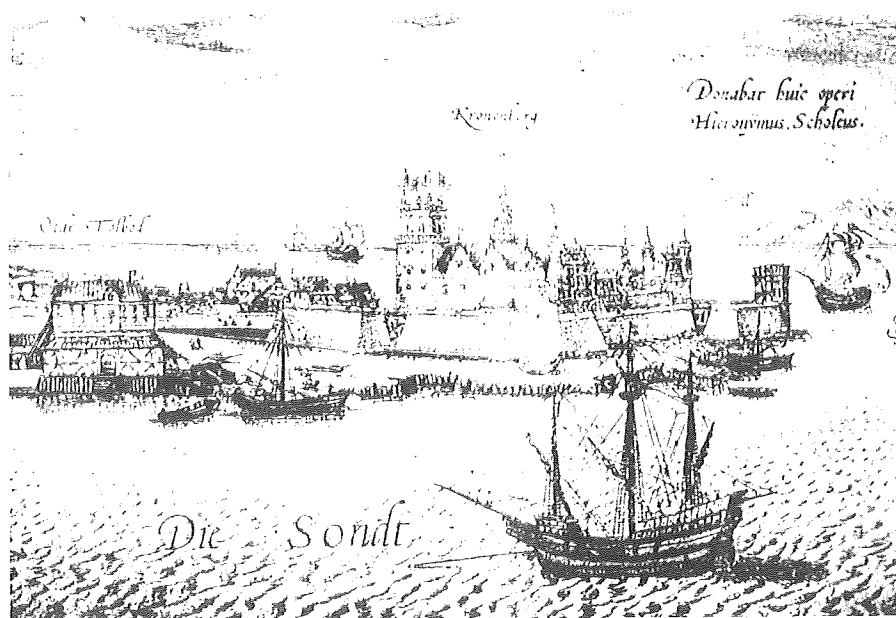
noblemen, with the same names and matching their description, visiting England in a Danish diplomatic legation. Such twists of fate are not impossible, but are they plausible? For Palle Rosenkrantz the answer is clear: Shakespeare must have met Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne, probably at the court.

This invites the question: who met Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne? Who was Shakespeare? Was it William Shaksper of Stratford or Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford? Here again, it is a question of plausibility.

Shaksper might have visited the court at that time and met Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstjerne, or met them somewhere else. But is that likely? Shaksper did not move in their world.

On the other hand, Edward de Vere was a well-educated aristocrat with European travel experience who had easy access to the court. He stood a much better chance than did Shaksper of meeting the two Danish diplomats. Palle Rosenkrantz seems unaware of any question of authorship. His only comment along this line is, "The little we know with certainty about Shakespeare does not contradict this assumption."

(cont'd on p. 14)



Kronborg Castle at Elsinore in the late 16th century.  
One of the few known sites of a Shakespeare play. From G. Braun & Franz Hogenberg,  
*Civitates orbis terrarum*, Cologne (1572-1618).

two Danes (1) Had the same names as Hamlet's friends; (2) Were young noblemen; (3) Were students in Wittenberg; (4) Were close friends; (5) Arrived in England, probably in Elizabeth's Court, a few years before the publication of *Hamlet*.

### Coincidences

We now return to the two possibilities presented in the opening paragraph. Were Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern fictional characters or were they based on real Danes? As an example of fictional characters, Leslie Hotson suggested that Shakespeare could have seen a 1586 engraved portrait of Tycho Brahe<sup>15</sup> that contained the names of sixteen

*Rozencrantz (cont'd from cover)*

### The Willoughby Connection

The author of *Hamlet* could have heard of the names Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstierne in another way. In 1577, Mary de Vere, Edward de Vere's sister, married Peregrine Bertie, later Lord Willoughby de Eresby.<sup>19</sup> In 1582, Queen Elizabeth sent Lord Willoughby, in the capacity of Ambassador, on a diplomatic mission to Denmark, where he was received at the newly constructed Kronborg Castle at Helsingør (Elsinore) by King Frederick II.<sup>20</sup> During his visit he attended a state dinner and later made a list of the other guests, one of whom, Jørgen Rosenkrantz, was an uncle and guardian of Frederik Rosenkrantz. Two other guests, Peder Gyldenstierne and Axel Gyldenstierne, were distant uncles of Knud

Sweden, was in England for three years, 1559-62, as the highest-ranking member of a diplomatic delegation to negotiate a possible marriage of Prince Eric of Sweden to Queen Elizabeth. Nicholas Guildenstern even visited Castle Hedingham, Edward de Vere's ancestral home in Essex.<sup>24</sup>

Most orthodox scholars date *Hamlet* between 1596 and 1601. But obvious references to a play of that name in 1594, 1593 and 1589 have led them to posit that an earlier play, the so-called *Ur-Hamlet*, was performed as early as 1588.<sup>25</sup> Harold Bloom even suggested that Shakespeare himself was the author of the earlier play "no later than 1589."<sup>26</sup>

From the evidence above, it is clear that Edward de Vere had ample opportunity to

2002. Lowell James Swank holds a doctorate in physics and has taught this subject at Middle East Technical University, Yale University, and the University of Maryland, College Park, where he currently resides. Semi-retired, Dr. Swank teaches part-time online for the University of Maryland, University College. He first learned of the Shakespeare authorship question from the PBS documentary, "The Shakespeare Mystery." The books of Ogburn and Looney persuaded him to the case for Oxford.

### Notes

1. Gertrud of Saxony" (1142-97) who became a Queen of Denmark. Shakespeare could also have modernized Saxo's "Grytha" or "Geruth" to Gertrude.

2. Not surprisingly the spelling of the names varies. For example, Palle Rosenkrantz writes Gyldenstjerne but most Danish documents write Gyldenstierne. The spelling also varies in the different quartos and folios. (In the First Quarto they are called Rossencraft and Gilderstone.) For the names of the play's characters, I use the spellings Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, which appear in modern editions.

3. The names Rosenkrantz ("wreath of roses") and Gyldenstierne ("golden star") were only a couple of generations old at this time. They date from 1525 when Frederick I commanded all Danish noble families to adopt family names. Frederik's grandfather, Otte Holgersen, adopted the name Rosenkrantz. The origin of the name Rosenkrantz is discussed at the web site [www.rosedalesoftware.com/genealogy/genealogy.htm](http://www.rosedalesoftware.com/genealogy/genealogy.htm).

4. *Danmarks Adels Aarbog [Annals of Danish Nobility]*, XXVII, 1910, p. 392; *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon [Danish Biographical Dictionary]*, Vol. 20, 1941, p. 65; *Norsk Biografisk Leksikon [Norwegian Biographical Dictionary]*, vol. 11, 1952, p. 550.

5. Thoren, Victor: *The Lord of Uraniborg, A Biography of Tycho Brahe*, Cambridge University Press, 1990. pp. 427-29.

6. Rosenkrantz, Palle. "Rosenkrantz og Gyldenstjerne i *Hamlet*," *Gads Danske Magasin*, 1909-1910, København, 1910, pp. 177-87.

7. *Dansk Biografisk Haandleksikon [Danish Biographical Hand Dictionary]*, Third Vol. 1926, p. 250.

8. *The Oxford Book of Detective Stories, An International Selection*, Patricia Craig (editor), Oxford University Press, 2000.

9. The Rigsrad ("Council of the Realm") consisted of twenty or so members from the most

*"Palle Rosenkrantz discovered the significant fact that not many Danes went to study in Wittenberg..."*

*Most Danish noblemen went to Rostock and Leyden.*

*Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstierne were exceptions..."*

Gyldenstierne. Corfitz Viffert, another uncle of Knud, was also present, as was Niels Kaas, the second guardian of Frederik Rosenkrantz.<sup>21</sup>

There is evidence that De Vere and Willoughby were friendly in 1582, and even that they dined together in June of that year.<sup>22</sup> In this scenario, the playwright could have seen the dinner list and chosen two names from it, or Lord Willoughby could have told him about the Danes he had dined with – as well as the place he visited, Elsinore, which is nowhere named in the sources of *Hamlet*. Another interesting fact is that one of the dinner guests, Jørgen Rosenkrantz, had also been a student at Wittenberg. Charlton Ogburn, Jr. has pointed out at least two other details in *Hamlet* that were probably supplied to Oxford by Lord Willoughby.<sup>23</sup>

The visit by Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstierne in 1592 wasn't the first time a Gyldenstierne appeared in England. Nicholas Guildenstern, the Chancellor of

become aware of the two Danish names Rosenkrantz and Gyldenstierne, and to associate them with the Danish court and castle at Elsinore. But the available documents do not permit the logical conclusion that Shakespeare met Frederik Rosenkrantz and Knud Gyldenstierne. And it is not yet clear just when the playwright set down the first version of *Hamlet*, or when he first included the two Danes in the play. But whenever he incorporated them into his acknowledged masterpiece – in the 1580s or the 1590s – his portrait of the inseparable pair has preserved their names as two of Shakespeare's best-known characters.

(I thank Peter Jangaard for help in translating some key parts of documents, and Lex Johnson for providing some translated Danish documents and for helpful comments.)

*Editor's Note: This paper is based on a talk given at the Shakespeare Oxford Society Conference in Washington D.C. in Fall,*



powerful noble families in Denmark. It advised the king, declared war, and was involved in most aspects of the affairs of state. Thoren, p. 1.

10. *Norsk Biografisk Leksikon* [Norwegian Biographical Dictionary], vol. 11, 1952, p. 550.

11. Thoren, p. 428.

12. *Scandinavians in Italy Q-R*, at [www.dkinstrom.dk/nemi/scand/siitq-r.htm](http://www.dkinstrom.dk/nemi/scand/siitq-r.htm).

13. Rosenkrantz, p. 179; *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon* [Danish Biographical Dictionary], *Norsk Biografisk Leksikon* [Norwegian Biographical Dictionary], Thoren, pp. 428-29.

14. Rosenkrantz, p. 179.

15. Hotson, Leslie. *I, William Shakespeare*, Jonathon Cape Ltd., 1937. [Exists as a reprint.]

16. The portrait is reproduced in Thoren's, *The Lord of Uraniborg, A Biography of Tycho Brahe*.

17. There is another possible connection between *Hamlet* and Tycho Brahe. Peter Usher has suggested that a discussion of the appearance of the heavens versus the reality of their makeup can be discerned in the dialogue of four of the main characters in *Hamlet*. In this interpretation, Hamlet personifies the new heliocentric model of Copernicus, Claudius personifies the geocentric model of his namesake Claudius Ptolemy, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern personify the model of Tycho Brahe. See "Advances in the Hamlet Cosmic Allegory," *The Oxfordian*, IV (2001), pp. 25-49, and "Shakespeare's Support for the New Astronomy," *The Oxfordian*, V (2002), pp. 132-146.

18. The publication date of the First Quarto of *Hamlet* was 1603. However, the date of composition and the existence of an earlier play of the same name continue to be disputed. An earlier version may have excluded Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

19. Ward, B. M. *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford 1550-1604*. London: John Murray, 1928, p. 154.

20. "Bertie, Peregrine." *Dictionary of National Biography*. 1917 ed.

21. "Peregrine Bertie's Startling Report." *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, vol. 29, no. 1A, Winter, 1993, p. 18.

22. Ward, p. 230.

23. Ogburn, Jr., Charlton. *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, McLean VA: EPM Publications, 2nd ed. 1992, p. 696.

24. Miller, Ruth Loyd: "Welcome, Guildenstern, to Castle Hedingham." Paper delivered at the 1993 SOS Conference.

25. Jolly, Eddi. "Dating Shakespeare's *Hamlet*," *The Oxfordian*, II (1999), pp. 11-24.

26. Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, New York: Riverhead Books, 1998, p. 383.

## Thoughts on Oxfordian Strategy: A High Jumping Metaphor

By John M. Shahan © 2003

We Oxfordians face a predicament in trying to resolve the authorship issue. The following metaphor may help us to understand that predicament: Imagine the authorship issue as a high jumping event at a track meet. We are in a stadium full of spectators, with many different events going on, competing for attention. Our objective is to win the high jump competition. Stratfordians are both running, and judging, this event. Most people are in the stands watching outdoor events. We compete inside a tent where few people watch. Inside, there are *two* bars that we must clear. The first, "reasonable doubt about Shakspeare," is 6 feet high. The second, "smoking gun evidence for Oxford" is 8 feet high. Under Stratfordian rules, we have to jump *both* bars at once. The bars are parallel, on pairs of poles set 3 feet apart.

We are very good high jumpers. We can easily jump 6 feet, and on a good day could jump 7 feet; but we have never jumped 8 feet. We keep trying to clear both bars at once, concentrating on the second, 8-foot bar; but the closer, 6-foot bar keeps getting in the way. As a result, we continually fail to clear *either* bar.

Each time we fail, the Stratfordians go outside and announce that, once again, the Oxfordians have failed to clear either bar. Spectators love high jumping, but will not watch if Oxfordians do not first clear 6 feet.

We sometimes try to tell the crowd that we can easily clear 6 feet, and may one day

be able to clear 8 feet; but the crowd will not listen to us. They only listen to officials who say that we will never clear either bar.

We occasionally tell the officials that the 8-foot bar is too high and that it should only be set around 7 feet. We also occasionally ask if we could be allowed to jump just the 6-foot "reasonable doubt" bar by itself. The officials always turn down both requests. Few spectators know, or care, anything about this situation; but if they did, they would think it unreasonable to have to jump both bars at once, or to have to jump 8 feet. We occasionally ask to compete outside the tent so that spectators can see what we are being forced to do; but the officials always turn this down, too. They do not want anyone to know that we can jump 6 feet.

This metaphor parallels what Stratfordians do when they refuse to debate just the case for Mr. Shakspeare, and when they deny that anything short of "smoking gun" evidence is enough to make the Oxfordian case.

We need *independent observers* to tell the spectators that we *can* clear that 6-foot "reasonable doubt" bar! If spectators ever hear this message, they will want us outside the tent so that they can see for themselves. Then, once we have their attention, we can jump the bars successively, with the higher one set near 7 feet. But as long as spectators think Oxfordians cannot clear the 6-foot bar, they will never want to see us jump.

### THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

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.

Contributions should be reasonably concise and when appropriate validated by peer review. Submissions must include the author's contact information and may be subject to editing for content and length.

**Text should be submitted in digital form to [editor@shakespeare-oxford.com](mailto:editor@shakespeare-oxford.com) and photographs and graphics should be mailed to Editor, Shakespeare Oxford Society, 1555 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C., 20036.**

*Delia Bacon (cont'd from p. 3)*

lasted six long months and greatly harmed her reputation.

### An Authorship Question Arises

It was Benjamin Silliman, a scientist at Yale who helped to put her life back together by getting his influential Boston friends to arrange a series of historical lectures that Delia gave during the winter of 1850. This seems to be when she began forming her theories about the Shakespeare plays. Delia's intensive survey of Francis Bacon's work had revealed to her concepts concerning man and society that to her mind clearly paralleled those in the Shakespeare plays. Future scholars like Hazlitt would reach similar conclusions about the ideas in Bacon and Shakespeare. Baker notes that she never claimed to be a descendent of Francis Bacon, although many make this erroneous assumption.

Delia boldly theorized that the plays were "republican polemics" produced from within the courts of Queen Elizabeth and King James. She was convinced that some of the splendid Elizabethan men within the court actually wrote the plays. She believed they were part of a conspiracy organized by Walter Raleigh, with Francis Bacon as its philosophic mentor. She included in the group Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spencer, Lords Buckhurst and Paget – and Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Baker wants it to be known that his own theories of authorship do not coincide with Delia's proposition, but he is staunch in her defense.

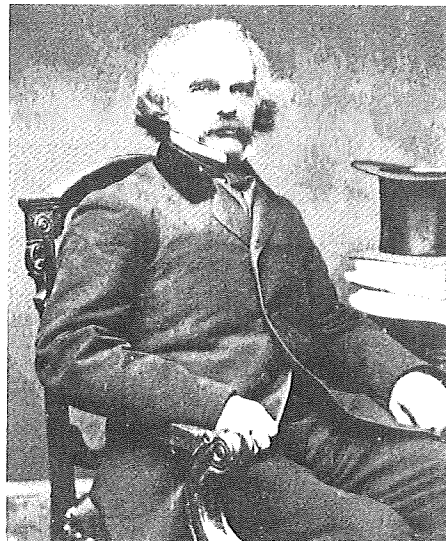
When Delia took on New York in the winter of 1852, she enjoyed great success along with other lecturing luminaries of the time such as historian George Bancroft, theologian Theodore Parker and educator Horace Mann. She attended exclusive soirees hosted by publisher George Puttnam and was labeled by the *New York Herald* as the "personification of the genius of history." As she made plans to pursue her Shakespeare theory in England, it was Ralph Waldo Emerson who thought highly enough of her *Putnam's* magazine article to encourage her to expand her convictions into a book. Before she sailed to England, he provided her with letters of introduction to Mathew Arnold, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Thomas Carlyle.

In London, it was Carlyle that welcomed

her to his home although he was "alarmed by her strange enterprise." He demanded of Delia, "Do you mean to say that all the Shakespeare scholars are wrong about the authorship and that you are going to set them straight?" She replied, "I AM. And as much as I respect you Mr. Carlyle, I must tell you that you do not know what is really in the plays if you believe that booby wrote them."

### The Lone Pursuit

Delia then went into total seclusion, barely surviving on her meager funds, totally devoted to unraveling the philosophy she'd detected in the plays. Her book is divided into three main sections: The first part concentrates on Raleigh's contributions;



*Nathaniel Hawthorne said Delia gave "nothing less than her life" to the book he helped her publish which intended to reveal that "a third-rate play-actor" was merely a front man.*

the second is devoted to Montaigne and Bacon – to their similarities of both thought and method. And although Delia referred to and quoted passages from many of the plays, she confined her argument (Part Three of her book) to only three plays: *King Lear*, *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*. What is the consistent philosophy she claimed to have found in them? The basis of her theory was that these plays contained the fourth part of Bacon's *Great Instauration*. It was conceived to consist of six parts, so that when he later wrote that he didn't have enough strength remaining to finish the sixth part, it indicated that the other five

parts were completed, although no trace of Part Four has ever been found. This section was meant to prove his philosophic dogmas by illustration, and Delia interpreted this to mean that these ideas would be illustrated on the stage. She seized on key sentences in Bacon's journals for proof, such as, "I have been content to tune the instruments of the Muses so that they be played by better hands."

Elliott Baker finds her ideas most forcefully presented in her analysis of *King Lear*. She says, "King Lear – that impersonation of absolutism is taken from the hot bath of flatteries to which he is accustomed and hurled out into a single-handed contest with the elements. In that one night's personal experience, the King takes lessons in the art of majesty, the sovereignty of mercy, and the divine right of pity. . . It is the scientific doctrine of man that is taught here, and that is – that man must be human in all his relations or cease to be."

She characterized Julius Caesar as the "most splendid and magnanimous representative of arbitrary power." Of Coriolanus she said, "Until people are instructed in the acts of self government, they are unworthy electors, certain to choose a demagogue to rule over them. . ."

Her book not yet complete, Delia ran out of money. She was desperately in need, and there was only one person she could think of who might help. And so, on May 8, 1856 she wrote to the man President Pierce had appointed the American consul at Liverpool – Nathaniel Hawthorne. Their correspondence is extensive and would make a volume in itself, but here are just a few revealing excerpts brilliantly chosen by Baker.

*Dear Mr. Hawthorne,  
I take the liberty of addressing myself to you without an introduction because you are the only one I know of, able to appreciate the position in which I find myself at this moment. My work admits publication in separate portions. But I should not dare to begin without some advice. . .*

*Dear Miss Bacon,  
I do not think myself a very fit person to advise you. However, if you really think that I can – try me.*

Dear Mr. Hawthorne,  
I thank you for your whole-hearted response. The discovery of "the philosophy of Shakespeare" is the real discovery, which I pretend to have made. I ask you to look over, quite at your leisure, a part which contains the doctrine of the work."

Dear Miss Bacon,  
I cannot refrain from saying that I think your work an admirable one. You seem to have read Bacon and Montaigne more profoundly than anybody else has read them. I feel that you have done a thing that ought to be revered and that the world is bound to hear from you. If I can contribute in any way to this good end, I shall esteem myself happy. When I see you, we can talk of this.

Dear Mr. Hawthorne,  
The reason I shrink from seeing anyone, is that I used to be somebody, whereas now I am nothing but this work, and don't wish to be. But I am perfectly harmless, and if you will let me know when you are coming, I will put on one of the dresses I wore when I made appearances in the world, and try to look as much like a survivor as the circumstances will permit.

They were to finally meet – but only once. All we know of what transpired is Hawthorne's account in his *Recollections of a Gifted Woman*. In any event, he finally succeeded in getting Delia's book published and provided an exquisite Preface, even though it was the publisher who demanded it.

However, before it was published, there is one more scene Baker feels is important to note: It was sometimes an Elizabethan custom to bury the manuscripts of famous writers in their graves. Edmund Spenser was a prime example. Just about every word he ever wrote was interred with his bones. Since nothing of Shakespeare's plays or poetry ever surfaced, Delia thought those who used his name as camouflage might have left some as a clue for posterity. She narrowed the possible hiding places to the space between the lid and ledge of the famous grave in the Holy Trinity Church and confided her plan to Hawthorne. (Baker)

Stratford-Upon-Avon, October 16, 1856

I have taken the clerk and vicar into my confidence. . . I have promised to perform the experiment without removing a particle of the stone or leaving a trace of harm, and what is very gratifying to me under the circumstances, is that neither the clerk nor the vicar appears disposed to take it for granted that I am insane. (Delia)

She never mentioned the subject again, so what took place in that darkened church that night is another mystery.

### The Published Work

In the following spring of 1857, *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakspeare Unfolded* by Delia Bacon appeared with 100 published copies in England and 500 in the United States. Delia's book, Hawthorne wrote, "fell with a dead thump at the feet of a public and has never been picked up." Even Emerson, after loyally proclaiming the book "a literary feast" confessed, "It's tragic to have such extraordinary ability made unavailable by some disproportion. . ." Her brother Leonard wrote in one of his letters, "You know perfectly well that the great world does not care a sixpence who wrote *Hamlet*."

Delia was depressed and destitute when the Stratford mayor, a physician named David Rice, pitied her plight and contacted Hawthorne who promised to pay her expenses. He put her in a private home under the care of a Mrs. Terrett, and Rice monitored her recovery. A year later, on April 13, 1858, she would return to New York harbor on the ship *America* in the care of her nephew who had stopped in London on his way back from the China Seas to retrieve his defeated aunt and bring her home to Hartford. She was taken to the Hartford Institute for Living, one of the first humane retreats for disturbed people, where she died a year later at the age of 48.

But all is not lost. More than a century later, Elliott Baker has rescued Delia Bacon with his edited version of her opus. It is true that Delia was the first to launch a scholarly attack on the Bard, but she is still the only one to be branded as mad, as if that is the reason to dismiss the entire inquiry into the authorship question. Today her mental

breakdown would simply be attributed to being overstressed, overworked and underfunded. She never did anyone any harm, and her behavior at its most extreme could only be called eccentric. So perhaps the danger she represented was not herself, but rather her book.

Yale Professor Vivian Hopkin wrote what is considered the definitive work about Delia entitled *Prodigal Puritan*. Her summation of Delia's book: "The reader is likely to lose his way in the periodic sentences, repetitions and expansive quotations. But if the reader is fair-minded, he must admit that the book as a whole is a work of power. Delia's historical thesis would provide a fine basis for a modern course in the humanities."

It is not easy reading to be sure, but Baker's abridged version practically cuts the original 600-plus pages in half. And although he has not added anything to the text, Baker includes some interesting notes in his appendix. Warren Hope, author of *The Shakespeare Controversy*, which contains one of the better chapters on Delia Bacon, wrote a personal letter to Baker stating that his new edition is "nothing less than a little miracle of editing." Thus, I appreciate the opportunity to urge each of you to read this "little miracle" for yourselves. (Editor's note: Baker's abridged edition is entitled *Shakespeare's Philosophy Unfolded* and can be ordered from *XLIBRIS* at 888-795-4274 x276 or [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com).)

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## An Interview with *Chasing Shakespeares* Author Sarah Smith

By James Sherwood

*Sarah Smith, author of three best-selling historical suspense novels, has a Ph.D. from Harvard and describes herself as a "recovering academic." Her newest mystery is Chasing Shakespeares, from Atria, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. She is on the board of the Shakespeare Fellowship, and published an article on the poem, "The Paine of Pleasure," for the 2002 edition of The Oxfordian. We caught up with her in Portland, Washington and Boston for this interview.*

**Sarah, you're an academic who became a novelist. How did that happen?**

I think I was always a novelist who didn't know it.

**How has your academic past affected your writing?**

When I do historical fiction, I try to get it right, because I know that a bad fact pushes people away from the book. And, of course, I have absolutely no illusions that a thing is true just because it's written down.

**What motivated you to do this project?**

While I was planning and writing the book, I went through a personal odyssey. When Joanna Wexler (who also converted Derek Jacobi) started loaning me books, I was just mildly intrigued, but I began to feel an itch of dissatisfaction with the biographies of Shakespeare of Stratford. What was actually happening in the man's life? As I read more, I was first devastated by the idea that the facts might be completely different, then intrigued and fascinated by all the new things one could find and feel and think. So the center of the story is that pilgrimage, that emotional devastation and rebuilding. Joe [the protagonist] is an aspiring biographer. Shakespeare is his idol, his inspiration, his family. And he finds things that force him to face the facts, or lie to himself for the rest of his life. I write to look at

something afterward and say, "I told the truth." I think I did it here.

**Joe discovers a poem you actually discovered, "The Paine of Pleasure," attributed to Anthony Munday. What was it like to find it?**

Amazing. It's hard to recapture that moment (I tried in the book) because the poem really is early, and early Elizabethan poems aren't as spectacular as later ones. But from the beginning I realized it was a big poem from a man with heart and mind and human wisdom. I thought "Shakespearean" because of the technical terminology, the interest in character and psychology, the really sweet poetry. It was only much later that I realized it could be Oxford's as well. But from the moment I found it, I knew it had to be in the book.

**Was finding the poem the moment when you decided that Oxford was Shakespeare?**

Like Diana Price, I'm very careful *not* to decide that. Based on the historical record, I had decided even earlier that the case for William Shakespeare of Stratford was weak. (Where *did* he get access to those books? Where did he get the time to read them?) And the case for Oxford is circumstantially much stronger. But I think we have to know much more. We can't write the same kind of biographies as the Stratfordians have done. When Stratford goes to London, his biographers go to Mars. They talk about the theaters and ignore the man. That's not good enough.

**Have you found anything else since you finished the book?**

There's terrific stuff in the Catholic recusant literature. Elizabethans were living in a Holocaust. I don't think most writers have paid enough attention to that, how it made duplicity and disguise central to the period.

**Did you think of writing your book as a historical novel about Oxford?**

I don't know enough! Even if we know that Oxford wrote the Shakespeare plays, there is an enormous amount of work to be done before we know how and when and why and what it all means. Besides, the story is really about Joe.

**Why aren't the academics more excited about the authorship controversy?**

I can't imagine. It's part of a long-overdue rethinking of the Elizabethan era, and there's so much exciting stuff to find.

**Is it easier to teach the Myth of Shakespeare or the Reality of Oxford?**

The myth of Shakespeare is very appealing, and it is part of the history of ideas if nothing else. But I think we'll come to see it as part of something much more complex and exciting.

**You look at primary texts the way the academic New Historicists do. Between Stratfordians and Oxfordians there are a few bridges over the moat, and more to be built. Do you notice the growing company of the curious or are the naysayers still in charge?**

The New Historicists are essentially going back to primary texts and rethinking them. As part of it, we're seeing a lot of the Shakespeare myths cleared away: Garrick's 18<sup>th</sup> century Shakespeare, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Shakespeare. And Stratfordian scholars are expanding their knowledge of what Shakespeare the playwright read and used. But they don't yet understand its relevance to the authorship controversy.

**You modeled Joe on Robert Lowell, your teacher. You admire Katherine Anne Porter. Other icons beside the Bard?**

Joe's voice, that New England drawl, is Cal Lowell's. Lowell [taught] a class at Harvard that consisted entirely of his going through the plays, reading them slowly out loud, and pausing every once

(cont'd on p. 19)

## Book Review

### **CHASING SHAKESPEARES**

a novel by Sarah Smith, 349 pages,  
Atria Books/Simon & Schuster, \$24.00.

By James Sherwood

This Oxfordian novel is Sarah Smith's fourth mystery/suspense to be published. A best-selling Harvard Ph.D. who became persuaded of merits in the authorship question a few years back, she takes us on her intellectual journey from skepticism to belief to questions about the integrity of academic inquiry and a sense of personal loss.

The narrator, Joe, a working-class scholar in the archive collection at his university finds a letter by W. Shakespeare denying he wrote the works. Together with Posy, a hotshot bombshell of mod style with superior resources, they take the document to London for authentication. They discover the Earl of Oxford's story and the pangs of doubt, disbelief and despair, both with the myth of Shakespeare and the reality of De Vere, the 16th Century vanished and modern England which has built a new world over the old, forgotten evils of the Elizabethan Age.

*Chasing Shakespeares* abounds in cameo characters of sheer delight. The aged Stratfordian scholars, Rachel and Roland Goscimer become a geriatric Romeo and Juliet at the end of long lives invested in writing a book on their man and losing each other. There is a Cecilian villain, Nicholas Bogue, complete with physical deformity and a Hollywood mogul who backs him and might make Walsingham whistle for

his supper. Finally we meet on the very site of Edward de Vere's writing colony, Fisher's Folly in Bishopsgate Road, a turbaned Mr. Singh who knows the area well, where a fish and chip shop can be found, but no sign of Shakespeare.

Scenery abounds: This modern guide to today's Stratford-on-Avon, a veritable Disneyland of bardolatry, is contrasted with a bucolic Castle Hedingham almost pristine in its aura of the untouched, unchanged spirit of Greensleaves and Elizabethan England, a seductive and alluring place as only can be evoked in an English pastoral, suggesting that today might still be yesterday there, complete with a perfect glen for lovers, while a visit to an eerie Westminster Abbey is gothically spooky. Smith's descriptions leave the contemporary reader determined to plan a journey to England with this novel in hand.

The research is accurate, present and past, with an encore appearance of the almost-vanished poem "The Paine of Pleasure," long attributed to Anthony Munday, Oxford's faithful secretary, and now reassigned to the budding, youthful authorship of De Vere which Dr. Smith presented as a paper in *The Oxfordian*.

Her straight and contemporary prose gives the novel accessibility. Many a witty word creates a friendly read that is no threat to Stratfordians. Suspense makes the pages turn. Indeed, arguing the Oxfordian thesis in this novel about academic integrity and conscience speaks to the problem of division among scholars with deep sympathy. It will surely find an audience among those who are Oxfordian skeptics or Stratfordian

diehards.

Despite dealing the cards truthfully regarding Shakespeare's historical silence and Edward de Vere's heartbreaking banishment, Smith is not fervent about either side. A meeting of the "Blue Boar Society" (members take note!) with characters familiar to all, sets pseudo-scholarship on its ear and invokes the balm of laughter. Then sleuth-like academic homework is dramatized with moments of thrilling discovery.

While Smith settles the plot, she uncovers new facts about Oxfordian authorship in *Chasing Shakespeares'* grand finale.

Perhaps the "Ah-ha!" moment is even a surprise to the author when her hero travels to the now-vanished last home of Edward de Vere in Hackney and finds a missing link, an incredible piece in the chain of custody evidence for his authorship. It is hidden in plain sight. Researchers, beware! When Smith has her favorite character declare that "God is a librarian and literature is holy" she backs it up with a renewal of faith that will satisfy any realist and scholar who is honest. The book is no fantasy and the story is the record of a spiritual odyssey that should engage Oxfordian supporters and Stratfordians equally.

As she stated recently, "I've had people come up and tell me, 'Something you wrote changed my life,' and that's a huge blessing. Whoever he was, what a blessed man Shakespeare was." This is a recommended buy to give your favorite doubting Stratfordian who says that Oxfordians all are fruitcakes. It is a novel that shows only closed minds are evil.

### *Interview (cont'd from p. 18)*

in a while to say, "That's a good line." It was splendid. I read and reread Dickens, Trollope, George Eliot for their society-wide scope. Mary Renault is an icon. . .but I read more nonfiction than fiction, to stoke the fires for what I write.

### ***Do movie studio processes give you a roadmap to Shakespearean theater collaborations?***

Movie screenwriters live in a collaborative world: five or six people working on one screenplay, uncredited

original ideas, uncredited rewrites. In the McCarthy era, "front men" often shielded the real screenwriters. One of these men just died, credited with something like 80 screenplays – and now we have no idea who wrote some of them. That's an interesting parallel.

## Obituaries

### John Louther: A Recollection

By Charles Beauclerk

*John H. Louther was a trustee of the Shakespeare Oxford Society during 1990-1991. He was responsible for organizing the Burford lecture tour, and for its great success, the Society honoured Louther with the "Oxfordian of the Year" Award in 1992. SOS members may recall Louther's frequent yellow printed postcards, brimming with news of the tour and other things Oxfordian. Born in Jamestown, Pennsylvania on April, 17, 1924, Louther had a distinguished career in journalism. He was working on an Oxfordian chronology at the time of his death, and had completed over a million and a half words.*

I first met John Louther in Washington D.C. in April 1991 following my lecture at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Such was the man's conviction, not to mention the sheer force of his personality, that within ten minutes he had convinced me that he could organise a nation-wide speaking tour to carry the Oxfordian message to schools and colleges across America. What worked for the Folger would work elsewhere. After my return to England I was inundated with postcards and telephone calls charting the progress of his ambitious scheme. He had managed to convince his fellow trustees on the board of the S.O.S. to back the tour, and was already busy arranging venues. Barely six months after the Folger talk I was on a plane to Tampa, Florida, to begin a new life as an itinerant lecturer. John had accomplished the impossible, and in double quick time. At the airport he was in ebullient mood. Listing the lectures he had arranged to date, he threw his arms out in all directions as if warding off a swarm of bees: there were talks in Florida, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Enthusiasm, one sensed, flowed in John's veins.

As a guest in his Florida home over the following eight months, I grew to have enormous respect and affection for both John and his wife Pat. I should like to

mention two outstanding qualities in the man: his generosity and his energy. Not only did John provide me with a home, but he set up an office for me in the spare room with computer, printer, phone line etc., opened a bank account and post office box for me, taught me to drive on the local roads, showed me round the neighbouring towns and villages (Tampa, St. Petersburg, Palm Harbor, Dunedin, Clearwater, Zephyrhills, Ozona, Tarpon Springs and Odessa, to name but a few), negotiated my salary with the board, and – most valiantly of all – did battle with the INS on my behalf. He was wonderful company too, enthusiastic, understanding, witty; generous both in his counsels and his encouragement. After one of my first and very worst lectures at Palm Beach Atlantic College, which was greeted with an embarrassed silence by the other board members who attended, John clapped me on the back and cried, "Great job! You really socked it to them. But, my God, were those kids brain dead or what? They just sat there like stones! There's too much money in this goddamn town!" It was a typically magnanimous assessment.

His energy, without which the tour would never have happened, had something elemental about it, and prompted Charlton Ogburn to exclaim, "Are you a man or a storm at sea?" (Mary Queen of Scots's to the Earl of Bothwell). When this cyclonic energy laid hold on him, he would work for five or six hours at a stretch, tapping furiously on his keyboard and puffing away at pungent cheap cigars. Then, after a break for dinner, he would announce his intention of "doing an all-nighter," and his wife Pat would be dispatched to stay the night with friends while he churned out hundreds – no, thousands – of letters, postcards, flyers, memoranda and God knows what else, all summoning his fellow Oxfordians to action. Often there would be a knock at my door at one or two in the morning, and a hoarse voice would ask if I wanted to go for a drive. So we'd ride down to the ocean in his open-top Dodge and end up in some dingy seaside dive, discussing our plans for the tour over

a beer or two. Then when we returned to the house with the first rays of dawn flecking the east, John would sit back down at his desk and work until breakfast. I used to joke that the "H" in John H. Louther stood for "Hurricane"; it was only later that I found out it stood for "Hammer." Hurricane or Hammer, he was loyal, energetic, inspiring: a good man to have on your side. I suspect there will be little peace for the angels.

### G. Grant Gifford

Former SOS trustee G. Grant Gifford passed away on April 27, 2003. Gifford served on the SOS board from 1997-1998, and was a founding member of the Oversight Committee, serving from 1999 until his death. "Grant was a dear friend and a wonderful contributor of his time and energy to the Oxford cause. His friendship and counsel will be sorely missed," said former SOS President Aaron Tatum. A native of Los Angeles, Gifford earned his B.A. from Occidental College and J.D. from U.C.L.A. He practiced law in downtown Los Angeles at Gifford & Dearing for 32 years, where his work included family law, foundations, and classical music contracts. He was a long-time member of The Jonathan Club and served on a number of foundation and non-profit boards, including The Huntington Library, and the Clairbourn School in San Gabriel. When asked to comment on Gifford's passing, Randall Sherman replied with a quote from *Anthony and Cleopatra*: "A rarer spirit never did steer humanity." Sherman, also a former SOS President added, "Grant was a first class fellow and friend. With his legal background and diplomatic style, he was extremely valuable as a trustee and he gave his heart to the Oxfordian cause." Gifford maintained a regimen of committing Shakespeare to memory, and was a passionate scholar of history, the Bible, and literature, and loved opera, gardening and travel. Gifford is survived by his wife of 30 years, Carolyn, his daughters Anne and Eleanor Gifford, his sister Pamela Hagan, and his mother Helen Gifford Godfrey Thornton.



# Oxford Bites the Big Apple

## The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Shakespeare-Oxford Society Conference New York City, October 23rd-26<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Plans continue to take shape for the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Shakespeare-Oxford Society conference, this year taking place in New York City, birthplace of the Society, and coinciding with St. Crispin's Day (October 25th).

The conference theme is "Performance & Publishing," with papers, panels and debates centered around these topics. The primary venue for papers and the banquet dinner on Saturday evening, October 25th, will be the National Arts Club, with special arrangements for accommodation at the Gramercy Park Hotel around the corner.

The conference begins on Thursday evening with a debate moderated by Lewis Lapham, author and editor of *Harper's* magazine (well known to Oxfordians for the April 1999 cover story, "The Ghost of Shakespeare," a fascinating print debate between five Oxfordians and five Stratfordians). Professor Alan Nelson, fresh from his research in England and with his new biography of the Earl of Oxford, *Monstrous Adversary*, will be on hand to defend his favorite position as Stratfordian-at-large, along with his co-panelist at the recent D.C. debate (see cover story), Irwin Matus, author of *Shakespeare, In Fact*. The debate takes place at Symphony Space on Upper Broadway in the Leonard Nimoy Thalia Theater. This is rather appropriate because, although not the Pallas Athena,

Thalia was one of the nine Muses, and the patron of comedy. In her hands, Thalia carried the comic mask (according to Meres, Oxford was "best for comedy") and the shepherd's staff (the name William or Willy was the pastoral name for poet).

Papers illuminating the authorship issue within the conference theme will be presented Friday and Saturday at The National Arts Club, a beautiful 19<sup>th</sup> century mansion, both a New York and a National Historic Landmark. Membership of the club has included three presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Dwight D. Eisenhower, as well as some of the most important artists and art patrons in America.

On Friday evening, Gregory Wolfe, artistic director of Moonworks, has graciously invited attendees to a dress rehearsal of their upcoming production of *Julius Caesar*. This is a unique opportunity to glimpse a New York company rehearsing a work in progress. Moonworks is a theater group that brings to life new works and allows new concepts to be explored in an open arena of creativity in their annual Shakespeare production, which weds 400-year-old texts to modern contexts. Gregory Wolfe has been acclaimed by *New York* magazine and *The New York Times* as a "power generator" who "understands that the universality of Shakespeare demands certain faithfulness to the original that must

be balanced with any 'enhancements' in the name of accessibility."

Saturday begins with the SOS Annual General meeting and ends with a Banquet dinner in the dining room of the National Arts Club. Speakers include Dr. Daniel Wright, Christopher Paul, Robert Brazil, Mark Anderson, and others. Sunday will be a true New York theater day with lively papers and panel discussions on the impact of the authorship question to the plays in performance to be held at the Producers Club, an off off-Broadway theater in the heart of Broadway; the founder started the Producers Club in 1993 to get back to his roots as an actor and a tap dancer. An Equity-approved theater, they have produced more Shakespeare than any other off off-Broadway theater, and have done *all* of his plays. James Gandolfini, of *The Sopranos*, used to hang out at the bar in the theater in its early days and was known to have been in some of the showcases.

Featured Sunday panelists include Kristin Linklater, theater chair at Columbia University, Broadway producer Edgar Lansbury, Cateen Jennings, award-winning playwright and theater professor at American University, Washington, D.C., for a day that should prove to be a lively, casual, and off-beat exploration of Shakespeare in his element. Mark your calendars and reserve early, as spaces are limited.

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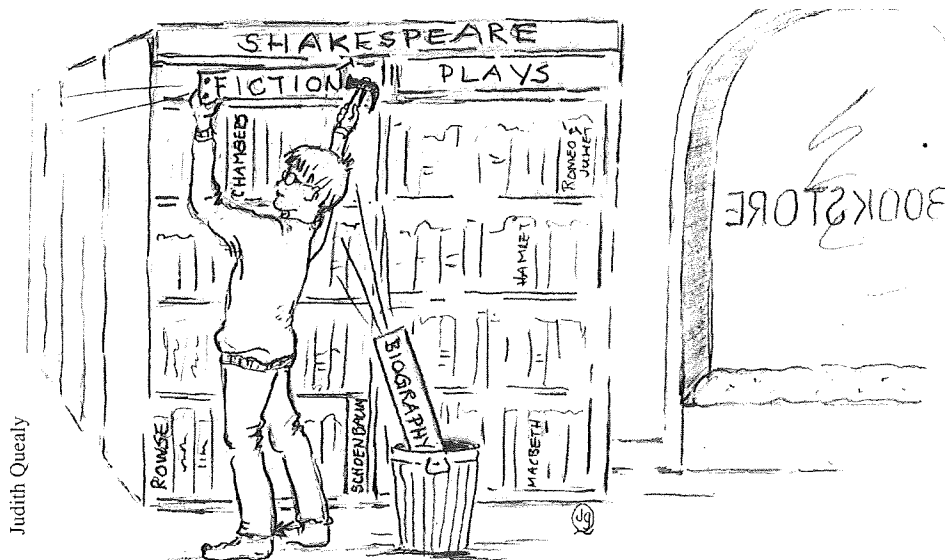
## Letter to Editor

Reading John Barton's informative and entertaining "Prospero's Island" (Winter, 2003) brought to mind a tour of Essex my wife and I undertook last year to see Edward de Vere country. After exploring deserted beaches, salt marshes, and quiet roads on Mersea Island for half a day, we drove up the southern bank of the Colne River estuary and over the bridge into the attractive riverside town of Wivenhoe – "Wifa's spur of land" in Anglo-Saxon. We knew that the De Vere family had a home overlooking the old fishing village, but we had no idea how to find it. After wandering around for a couple of hours, we started back toward Colchester, and just north of town, where another road branched off to Brightlingsea, a street sign arrested my eye. A quick u-turn brought us back to a road marked "Vere Lane." Driving a hundred feet or so along this, we came upon "Vere Close," a narrow, block-long roadway that led to what Americans call a "dead end." We were on a bluff overlooking the town and the rivermouth, and were just a bit excited as we parked and walked down the shady close, lined with handsome little houses. But we found nothing other than the two street signs to suggest a De Vere presence.

Behind the close was a large vacant field

where we noticed an old woman walking her dog. My wife asked her if she knew how the two adjacent roads came to bear the name "Vere." She answered that she wasn't sure, but she thought they were named after the man who owned the large house that used to stand on the bluff. We realized then that we were on the actual site of Wivenhoe Hall, a place the 17th Earl referred to on two occasions, the second time as "my new country Muses at Wivenhoe" in his prefatory letter to *Cardanus Comfort*. Originally built before the Conquest, the mansion had come into De Vere hands about 1420, but was taken from the family at the time of the 12th Earl's execution by Edward IV in 1461. In 1471 the property (and Castle Hedingham as well) was taken from the Earl of Oxford's widow by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, later Richard III, Shakespeare's most infamous villain. It was restored to the 13th Earl in the early 1500s and rebuilt about 1530. After refurbishing it in 1573, Edward de Vere sold it in the 1580s. In the nineteenth century, Philip Morant described it as "a large and elegant seat, having a noble gatehouse with towers of great height that served for a sea-mark." According to Verily Anderson, Wivenhoe Hall stood until 1927.

Ramon Jiménez  
Berkeley, CA



Judith Quealy

A glimpse of the future...

### The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society

is to establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, (1550-1604) as the true author of the Shakespeare works, to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication, and to foster an enhanced appreciation and enjoyment of the poems and plays.

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*Conference (cont'd from p. 7)*

believes that Stratfordian biography is a "con job," but that a "smoking gun" will be needed to effect the paradigm shift that Oxfordians want.

Powerfully demonstrating that Oxfordian scholarship is a search for truth as opposed to simple validation and self-promotion, Prof. Daniel Wright presented tentative evidence, first uncovered by Dr. John Rollett, that undermines the authorship's legendary first, great skeptic, the Reverend James Wilmot, rector of Barton-on-the-Heath, near Stratford. According to Wright, Wilmot's findings, and their reported presentation by James Corton Cowell to the imaginary Ipswich Philosophical Society, probably were fabricated by a disciple of Baconian Sir Edwin Lawrence-Durning, author of *Bacon Is Shakespeare* (1910). Wright continues to investigate what he proposes is planted evidence, which, if it proves to be so, will remove one of the givens of the authorship inquiry – that authorship skepticism dated to at least the 1780s – and expose a major oversight by Stratfordian scholars who often taunt Oxfordians for a lack of investigative, self-critical zeal and ability.

Carole Sue Lipman, President of the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable,

opened Sunday's session with a tribute to early anti-Stratfordian, Delia Bacon, and her modern-day champion and editor, Elliot Baker (see Lipman's article on p. 3). Dr. Merilee Karr spoke about the perception of Shakespeare over the centuries with respect to social class, beginning with Nicholas Rowe, his first biographer, and the diarist John Aubrey. She pointed out that as a commoner, Shakespeare was taken over by Communist theorists Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, but in the United States he never became a class issue. Dr. Paul Altrocchi discussed Shakespeare in various works by English historian William Camden, most notably, *Britannia*, which despite several editions, neglected to mention Shakespeare in his listing of famous men from Stratford-upon-Avon.

In two discussions of Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* (called just *Lucrece* until the fifth edition of 1616), Professors Ren Draya and Michael Delahoyde recounted the development of various versions of the story from its origin in the *Fasti* of Ovid. English language versions appeared in the works of John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer. Delahoyde showed slides of paintings and murals in the Trojan Room in the Ducal Palace in Mantua that

apparently inspired passages in the poem. He stated that the room was used as a guest room, and that the author must have seen it. Although there is no direct evidence that Edward de Vere visited Mantua, it is very likely that he did. Reverend John Baker discussed the 17th century Dering manuscript that features parts of Shakespeare's two Henry IV plays.

Dr. Roger Stritmatter ended Sunday's session with a review of the curious oddity of Psalm 46 in the King James Bible. Over a hundred years ago it was noticed that the 46th word from the beginning is "shake" and the 46th word from the end is "spear." The translation was completed in 1610, when Shakespeare of Stratford was 46. Although this fact has been used to support the Bacon authorship theory, Stritmatter suggested that the Earl of Oxford might have translated Psalm 46, and Psalm 45 as well, which contains the phrase "touching the King," before he died in 1604. At the end of the conference, Dr. Wright announced that the final \$4,000 had been donated or pledged toward the goal of \$10,000 to pay for the installation in Westminster Abbey of a stained-glass window memorial in honor of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

## Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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Address correction requested

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*Smithsonian Debate (cover)*

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