



The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter



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Beauty itself doth of itself persuade / The eyes of men without an orator. Lucrece 29-30

Summer 2005

Arthur Golding's First Decade of Translating: A Brief Examination

By Sam C. Saunders

Arthur Golding, maternal uncle to Edward de Vere, was born in 1536. He matriculated at Jesus College, Cambridge University, in the Easter term of 1552 and was enrolled as a fellow commoner. This was a status reserved for sons of wealthy families and required "tuition" of thirty shillings. Unfortunately, Golding's education was destined to be interrupted by the political and religious upheavals of the time. King Edward VI died in 1553 and his half-sister, Mary Tudor, became Queen of England. Having been reared in the Catholic faith, Mary married Philip II of Spain in 1554, and in 1555 repealed the Protestant Acts of Supremacy of Henry VIII.

With Mary's succession, religious turmoil became prevalent. Under Mary's order, approximately 300 prelates of the erstwhile Anglican Church were purged

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The Dark Lady and Her Bastard: An Alternative Scenario

By John Hamill

Who was the Dark Lady of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*? All efforts to identify her have been based on the premises that Shakspeare of Stratford was the author, that she had dark features, and that she and the author had an adulterous relationship. I believe these premises are wrong. If we accept Oxford as the author, we might discover a more suitable candidate for the Dark Lady—a woman who was clearly identified with Oxford at the time the Sonnets were written.

The leading candidate today for the Dark Lady, first suggested by A. L. Rowse, is Emilia Bassano Lanier. Stephanie Hughes expanded on Rowse's compelling circumstantial evidence for this, providing an Oxfordian connection (Hughes 1). Emilia was the young mistress of Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, the Lord Chamberlain, by whom she became pregnant in 1592. She promptly married court musician Alphonse Lanier, and the next year gave birth to Hunsdon's son, also named Henry. The major points of her claim are that since she was half English and half Italian Jew, she might have had "dark features," and that as mistress to Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, she would have been involved in the theater, where "Shakespeare/Oxford" would have met her. Since they also lived near each other, and "given the small size of both communities to which they belonged, that of the theater and of the Court," it is very likely that they did meet (Hughes 13). In addition, she was considered a beauty, came from a musical family, and was a very independent woman and an author in her own right.

For some Oxfordians, the best candidate for the Dark Lady is the beautiful dark-

haired and dark-eyed Anne Vavasour. She and Edward de Vere had a scandalous affair, and in March 1581 she bore his illegitimate child, also named Edward, for which they were all sent briefly to the Tower. Oxford later returned to his wife, Anne Cecil, and no more is heard of Anne Vavasour or this son in connection with Oxford. Anne Vavasour continued to have other illicit affairs, married a sea captain, and then left him in 1589 for Sir Henry Lee, with whom she lived until his death in 1610 (Ogburn 730).

However, Oxford's marriage in 1591 to the wealthy Elizabeth Trentham, one of the Queen's Maids of Honor, undermines the case for either Bassano or Vavasour as the Dark Lady. Is it possible that Oxford could have had a relationship with Emilia Bassano, the mistress of Lord Hunsdon, and the wife of Alphonse Lanier, or with Anne Vavasour, the wife of a sea captain and mistress of Sir Henry Lee, while he was courting Elizabeth Trentham, and at the same time having an affair with the Fair Youth, probably Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton? This might be juggling too many affairs at the same time, even for Oxford.

If Oxford is the author, could the Dark Lady have been Elizabeth Trentham, the woman Oxford married? We have almost no information about her personality and no description of her—only that in 1582 she is described as "fair" (Ogburn 722). We have no idea if Oxford married Elizabeth for love or for money. But from what we know of Oxford's personality, it is doubtful that he would feel forced to marry anyone he did not want to. Alan Nelson suggests that since she was "on the marriage market

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Book Review

Shakespeare by Another Name: The Life of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, the Man Who Was Shakespeare, by Mark Anderson. New York: Gotham Books, 2005, (598 pages).

By Stephanie Hopkins Hughes

At some point in the future, the summer of 2005 may be seen as a watershed in Shakespeare studies, due to the publication of Mark Anderson's biography of Edward de Vere, which makes the case for him as author of the Shakespeare canon more thoroughly and succinctly than anything that has gone before.

A trained journalist (with an M. S. in Astrophysics), Anderson presents the case for de Vere in the best tradition of his profession, moving rapidly and with remarkable adroitness from one topic to the next. The speed with which he covers his material allows him to avoid that Scylla and Charybdis of Oxfordian discourse, overemotionalism on the one hand, and an excess of argument on the other.

Journalism has given Anderson the awareness that the story *is* the argument, or at least, the *best* argument. It is certainly the foundation of every other sort of argument, since without a coherent picture of de Vere's life we can't get far in connecting him to the plays. No matter how many facts we may uncover, they require a story to give them meaning. This is a book we can give without reservation to our friends, one that will explain why we believe Oxford to be

Shakespeare while managing to communicate something of what it is about the authorship issue that has us so fascinated.

By reducing it to its basic elements, Anderson reveals the dramatic story of a genius who spent his life struggling against the constraints of rank, politics, and his own difficult nature to achieve what no one, including himself, could have realized would someday be seen as one of the major accomplishments of humankind.

Anderson does not allow his story to get bogged down with citations and scholarly disputations. Which is not to say that it is not well-documented; it is, and most thoroughly. He is diligent in presenting scholarship long past *and* recent, particularly that by Oxfordians over the past ten to fifteen years, much of it unpublished until now. Material published by the Shakespeare Oxford Society in its *Newsletter* and in *The Oxfordian* has found a place in this most important book. Anderson may have missed a few beats here and there, but they are surprisingly few, and he shows commendable care in attributing his sources. He is adept at providing the appropriate Shakespeare quotation and has a gift for painting a convincing picture in a few sentences—one that he could have put to use more often.

Anderson and his editors have also managed another difficult task in allowing the story to flow from one topic to another so as to easily inform and entertain the ordinary reader, while appending supportive material (an unusually large amount of it

(cont'd on p. 12)

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

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Sixteenth-Century Letter Writing and Its Importance to Oxfordians

By Ren Draya

Phone calls, text messaging, faxes, the U.S. Postal Service, England's Royal Mail, and the miracle of e-mail: How we humans love to communicate! Whether for business, desperation, romance, or sheer ego, as long as we have means, we communicate—we write letters. The literate, educated English and Western Europeans of the sixteenth century were no exception, and there are thousands of extant examples of their letters. Just riffling through one of my collections, I found that I was curious about—

- Luther to Pope Leo X
- Raphael to Castiglione
- Queen Elizabeth to Walsingham
- Eastland Merchants to Lord Cecil
- Gabriel Harvey to Spenser
- Kepler to Galileo

We can examine so many fascinating missives—letters to wives, to husbands, to mistresses, to children, to friends, to rivals. Scholars have traced some 2,500 letters from Erasmus alone to friends and correspondents all over Europe (Clements x). Erasmus wrote a treatise on letter-writing, proposing a number of classical models (Cicero, Pliny, and Politian, a fifteenth-century Italian humanist). From the Renaissance, we have letters in Latin, in French, in English; we have short letters, long letters; we have verse letters, hasty one-lined notes, formal or flowery letters.

Although “official” national post offices were not established until the mid-1800s, reliable—albeit makeshift—postal services in the Middle Ages were run by the courts, guilds, and universities. By the sixteenth century, European governments sponsored postal services—in part, to monitor the exchange of letters between Catholic and Reformation areas (ix). Bankers and merchants also ran mail routes—local, national, international. And, perhaps most commonly, letters were simply carried and delivered by a trusty servant.

Just as in the Classical Age, the Renaissance considered the letter an important literary genre. This seems obvious from the great numbers of letters which, although addressed to an individual, were clearly intended to be widely read. Many anthologies—epistolaries—were published, first appearing in England in the 1560s—mostly, translations from the Italian (xiii). Eddi Jolly has noted that Lord Burghley's library included several “Epistolae” collections (9). Renaissance manuals on the art of letter-writing abound. As Michael Delahoyde pointed out to me, Castiglione offered advice: if a man was “so modest that he is ashamed to declare his love, let him write it in a letter.” Castiglione suggested a lover should write his feelings with “modesty and care,” choosing words that could be “tentative and even ambiguous” in case the lady would be embarrassed by a presumptuous declaration of love! (Castiglione 267).

Quite typical of Renaissance directives on letter writing is Angel Day's *The English Secreterie* (London, 1599). Day believed that a successful letter contained a variety of standard rhetorical devices; he filled his manual with sample letters invented for a range of occasions. Day listed the general purposes of letter-writing as “to require, counsel, exhort, command, inform, commend, entreat, advertise, gratulate, or whatever purpose” (xi). The 17th Earl of Oxford's many letters certainly illustrate these modes. While we have many letters by Edward de Vere and many letters written to him, we have no samples of letters from William Shaksper of Stratford. Not one. The single example of a letter written to Shaksper is from Richard Quiney, also of Stratford, asking for money (Quiney was to marry Shaksper's daughter).

Diana Price comments, “Nearly every Shakespeare play mentions letters, so we know the dramatist considered correspondence part of everyday life, yet not one letter written by William Shakspeare survives. Documents prove that Shakspeare divided his time between London and Stratford, a situation particularly conducive to letter-writing, so this gap in his records is doubly suspicious” (128). Price quotes E.K. Chambers: “every man, not completely illiterate, commits himself during his lifetime to the writing of letters or other documents . . .” (125). By this observation, Chambers dubs the man from Stratford illiterate. It's also interesting to consider Price's “Chart of Literary Paper Trails,” in which she lists the most important and prolific late sixteenth-century writers. The paper trails include two criteria directly related to letters: that there be a record of correspondence, especially concerning literary matters; and that there be handwritten inscriptions, receipts, letters, etc. touching on literary matters (304). De Vere earns the highest marks on Price's chart; the Stratford man, zero.

For those of you interested in reading letters written by Oxford, I recommend Katherine Chiljan's collection, *Letters and Poems of Edward, Earl of Oxford*, based on Dr. Alan Nelson's excellent transcriptions. Chiljan groups de Vere's letters as follows: personal letters, the tin mining letters, and letters in literature. The first (or first extant) letter by Oxford was written in French by the thirteen-year old Oxford to his ward, William Cecil, and has quite the ring of Polonius.

For those of us on the hunt—establishing Oxford's authorship—another interesting source is William Plumer Fowler's extensive analysis of thirty-seven significant letters, showing “parallelism” in both thought and phrasing to the writings ascribed to Shakespeare. Fowler's leaps may be too tenuous, but as I looked, I wondered: does the fact that Oxford once used the phrase “After much ado . . .” (October 25, 1593, writing to Lord Burghley) mean he must also have written a play called *Much Ado About Nothing*? I wondered, because Oxford refers to a man named Barnardeux (September 6 and 17, 1596), must he also have written *Measure for Measure*—a play that mentions a character named Barnardine? I wondered,

(cont'd on p. 10)

Dark Lady (cont'd from p. 1)

for at least ten years, Elizabeth was not only far older than Anne Cecil [Oxford's first wife] had been at the time of her marriage, but far more independent. If Anne had been a dove, Elizabeth was a hawk. Oxford had met his match" (336). This is exactly the personality described in the Sonnets. The few additional facts we can glean from them conform with what little we know of Elizabeth Trentham: she was significantly younger than the author (Sonnet 138), and as a Maid of Honor, she would have been trained in music (Sonnet 128). Of course, these characteristics are also true of the other two candidates, Emilia Bassano and Anne Vavasour, and all three seem to have been very independent women. According to B. M. Ward, when her father died in 1587, Elizabeth Trentham became the executor of his considerable fortune (Angell 663).

Two distinctive qualities separate these candidates, however. The author describes the woman as "fair" in Sonnet 131, even though she is referred to by commentators as the Dark Lady because she is mentioned as "black" or "dark" in four sonnets (127, 131, 132, 147). He also repeatedly states that she is not a beauty—Sonnet 130 is the most famous example. Of the three, only Elizabeth Trentham was "fair" but probably not a beauty, which, combined with a strong demanding personality, might explain why a wealthy Maid of Honor would remain unmarried for ten years.

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel;
For well thou know'st to my dear dotting heart
Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
Yet, in good faith, some say that thee behold
Thy face hath not the power to make love groan:
To say they err I dare not be so bold,
Although I swear it to myself alone
.....
In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,
And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds. (131)

The author makes it clear that she is physically "fair," only her deeds are black, and this is how he and others slander her, by making everything about her black. She is continuously morally black. Nothing can shake this. Why? "Fair" has also traditionally been associated with "good" and "black" with "evil." Shakespeare uses it in this context in Sonnet 144:

The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman colored ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side.

In Sonnet 147, Shakespeare again spells out that it is her character that is infernally "black": "For I have sworn thee faire, and thought thee bright, / Who art as black as hell, as darke as night." She is also "black" because he contrasts her with the Fair Youth, who unlike her, is beautiful.

Though he is passionately in love, a love that is realistic and mature, he constantly reviles her in angry and insulting poetry. Thus, by his consistent description and his emotional reaction to

her, it is clear there was only one Dark Lady. Yet, he never speaks of leaving her; that does not seem to be an option. He seems to be in a bondage he cannot break. Is he married to her? Even though Stratfordian Joanna Bratten does not consider the possibility that the Dark Lady is the poet's wife, she does admit that "The love between the poet and his dark lady contains within itself the deeper and more difficult, mutually compromising, love of marriage" (1).

What is the sexual treachery that caused such an irreparable wound? Sonnets 40-42 and 133-144 speak of how the Dark Lady created the sexual triangle among them by seducing his "man right fair." Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, was nineteen in 1593. Elizabeth Trentham had a son on February 24, 1593, who was—curiously—named Henry. There had never been an Earl of Oxford named Henry. "In fact, there exists no other instance of the name Henry occurring in the de Vere, Cecil, or Trentham families" (Allen 142). In the first sonnet to the Dark Lady (127), Oxford accuses her of having a bastard: "And beauty slandered with a bastard shame," and in Sonnet 143 he calls her a wife who has a child:

Lo, as a careful housewife runs to catch
One of her feather'd creatures broke away,
Sets down her babe, and makes all swift dispatch
In pursuit of the thing she would have stay;
Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase,
Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
To follow that which flies before her face,
Not prizing her poor infant's discontent;

He claims she has betrayed him. Would he say this about someone else's wife and mistress?

Love is too young to know what conscience is,
Yet who knows not conscience is born of love?
Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,
Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove:
For, thou betraying me, I do betray
My nobler part to my gross body's treason; (151)

In his last sonnet to the Dark Lady (152), was Elizabeth Trentham the one who broke her "bed-vow," her marriage vow to him?

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
But thou art twice forsworn, to me love swearing;
In act thy bed-vow broke, and new faith torn,
In vowing new hate after new love bearing:

Thus, the circumstances of Henry de Vere's birth in 1593, and the language of the Sonnets suggest that he was none other than the son of Elizabeth Trentham and Henry Wriothesley.

Willobie his Avis

Supporting evidence for this hypothesis can be found in the accusations made in *Willobie his Avis*, an anonymous narrative poem published in 1594 in more than 500 six-line stanzas arranged in "Cantos." *Willobie* tells a story, coded in double meanings, about

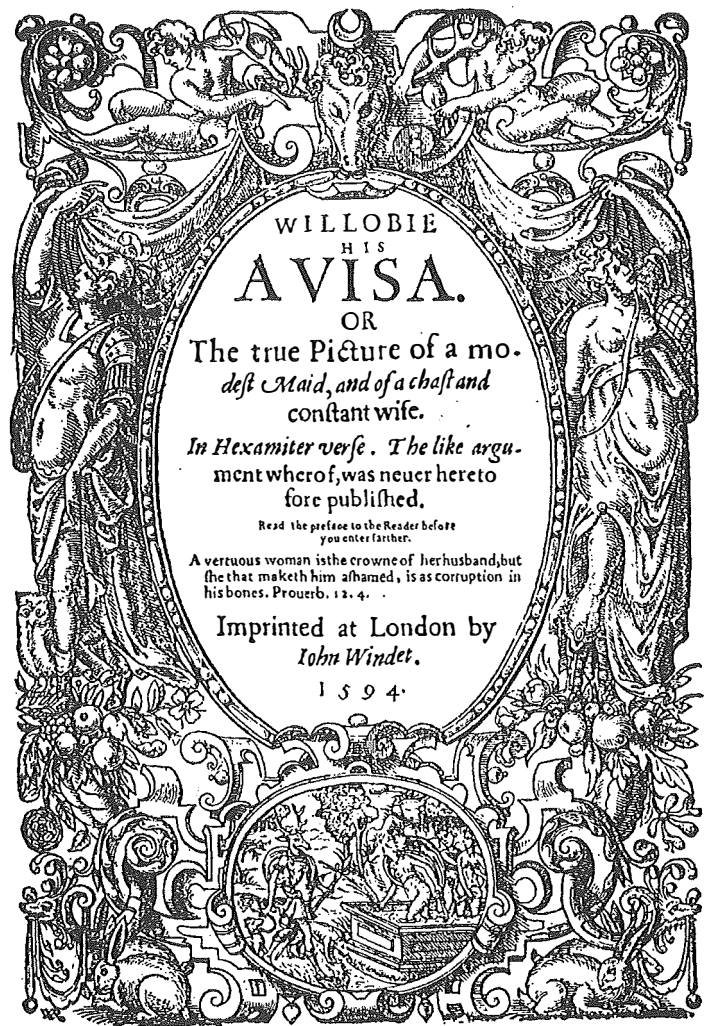
a “chaste Lady” who is pursued by several suitors, two of whom are identified as W.S. and H.W. Although it is never openly stated, notes printed in the book’s margins suggest that Avisia not only surrendered herself to both W.S. and H. W., she bore a child by a man who was not her husband. “Contemporaries must have found hidden meanings behind the poem’s bland repetitive moralizings, for *Willobie His Avisia* went through five editions in fifteen years, even though the authorities tried to suppress it in 1599” (Akrigg 216).

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Henry de Vere’s birth in 1593,
and the language of the Sonnets
suggest that he was none other
than the son of Elizabeth Trentham
and Henry Wriothesley.*

The purpose of a libelous poem of this type is to cleverly expose scandalous behavior, not conceal it. Therefore, the characters, though hidden behind initials, would have been identifiable to some readers in 1594. That they had been sufficiently prominent for a scandal about them to persist for forty years is evidenced by the re-issue of *Willobie* in 1635. Many guesses have been made about their identities, but the clues seem to have been lost to us, and no consensus has been reached. Yet, one critical clue is that *Willobie his Avisia* contains the first published mention of Shakespeare: “Yet *Tarquyne* pluckt his glistening grape, / And *Shake-speare*, paints poore *Lucrece* rape,” and thus hints that the poem was written as a parody of *Lucrece*, published four months earlier in 1594 (Sams 96-97). The initials W.S. and H.W. in *Willobie* would bring to mind the notorious and uniquely amorous dedication of *Lucrece* by Shakespeare to Southampton (Akrigg 198). Avisia is the married woman whom the two men are pursuing. Her husband is, discreetly, never identified. The question is, who was Avisia?

The cuckold’s horns decorating *Willobie’s* frontispiece, the subtitle, “The True Picture of a Modest Maid, and a Chaste and Constant Wife,” and the lampooning tone of the poem leave little doubt that it is a tale of adultery by an important woman. (This frontispiece, though created for *Willobie*, became so popular it was also later used for other books.) Pauline K. Angell, in her intriguing 1937 article, “Light on the Dark Lady: A Study of Some Elizabethan Libels,” asserts that the identity of the deceived husband is revealed in *Willobie’s* frontispiece by the crescent over the animal’s head (either a stag or ass)—the crescent being “the distinguishing mark of the Oxford crest, which is a boar set apart from all other armorial boars by the fact that a crescent is emblazoned upon it. Crescents are also emblazoned on the stars of the Oxford standard. In fact, these crescents were so thoroughly identified with Oxford that the Queen called him her Turk. And so the horned ass [or stag] embellished with a crescent [. . .] was as good as a name-plate in 1594” (653-654).

In “*Shakespeare Identified*,” J. T. Looney disclosed the same information: “Several families had the Boar as their crest; but the distinguishing mark of this one is the crescent upon the left shoulder of the animal. This is peculiar to the De Vere Crest [. . .]” (455). The fact that the crescent is used over the head of the animal, which also makes it look like horns, adds to the cuckoldry effect. In addition, the title-page states “A vertuous woman is the crown of her husband, but she who maketh him ashamed, is a corruption in his bones.” Is this spelling of “vertuous” another clue to Avisia’s husband? Remarkably, though Angell asserts that the poem is ultimately a libel on the chastity of Edward de Vere’s wife, she does



Title page of the first edition of “*Willobie his Avisia*” (1594)

not address the authorship issue. With a couple of other leads that point to Oxford, Angell exposes clues that clearly identify Avisia with Elizabeth Trentham, and two of her suitors, H. W. and W. S., with Henry Wriothesley and William Shakespeare. Thus, she concludes that *Willobie his Avisia* was an attack on Oxford, Elizabeth Trentham, Southampton and Shakespeare.

According to Angell, the following additional clues in the poem identify Avisia as Elizabeth (Eliza) Trentham:

(cont'd on p. 6)

Dark Lady(cont'd from p. 5)



Banner of Sir John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford, from an Elizabethan ms in the College of Arms.
(On a field of gold, a blue boar, charged with a silver crescent; eight silver mullets, each bearing a blue crescent.)

1. Her name—Avisa—is a made up name, and is similar to “Eliza,” a common nickname for Elizabeth. This also rules out Anne Vavasour, whose nickname was Bessie (Amphlett 116);

2. She was a Maid of Honor to the Queen. This would rule out both Emilia Bassano and the Queen herself;

3. She was born in the west of England; Elizabeth Trentham was born in Staffordshire, to the northwest of London.

4. The poem mentions the eagle-eyed bird that also appears on the eagle-eyed griffin of the Trentham coat-of-arms;

5. Her father was a mayor of a town, but not of noble stock; Trentham’s father was not a nobleman, and was twice the sheriff of Staffordshire, a similar office.

6. She was about thirty years old, and had been a Maid of Honor for ten years before she married; Elizabeth Trentham married at about the age of thirty, after ten years as a Maid of Honor.

7. She lived “in public eye,” a fair comment about a Countess in London.

Willobie contains numerous details about the theater neighborhood where Trentham and Oxford lived. “The Earl and his Countess settled in the village of Stoke Newington, [...] only a few minutes from the Shoreditch playhouses, the Theatre, and the Curtain” (Allen 142). In addition, Avisa is described as having “modest lookes and a filed tongue.” In their aggregate, these clues point to Elizabeth Trentham. They assuredly do not point to Queen Elizabeth, as G. P. V. Akrigg (217 - 219) and Barbara De Luna (5) claim in their interpretation, nor to Emilia Bassano, Anne Vavasour, or a common innkeeper’s wife from the city of Oxford, as others claim.

As for Southampton, not only are H. W. his initials, but both W. S. (Canto 55) and Avisa (Canto 64) refer to him as “Harry.” He is also called a “new actor” and “a young man and a schollar of very good hope.” H. W. ends all of his epistles to Avisa with Italian phrases, seven of which are found in John Florio’s *Giardino de Recreatione*, published in 1591 (Angell 666). We know Southampton was called “Harrye” by his family. He was praised in 1592 as brilliant in the learned arts and enthralled by the theater, and was studying Italian with Florio at that time (Angell 665-6; Sams 97-100).

But more significantly, several scholars have pointed out that the affair described in the Sonnets might be the motivating source for both *Lucrece* and *Willobie his Avisa*. A. L. Rowse asserts that “it has often been observed that *The Rape of Lucrece* parallels the Dark Lady sonnets, as *Venus and Adonis* does the earlier Southampton ones. As he said, “writer’s work reflects their experience” (Annotated II 710). *Willobie* is also seen by many scholars as “providing a clue to the relationship of the Fair Youth, Dark Lady, and poet of the Sonnets” (Campbell 948). This theory is reinforced by the fact that Avisa is called a “British Lucretia”: “Let Lucrece-Avis be thy name.” I would add that *Willobie* might also be a parody of the anonymous *The Taming of A Shrew*, also published in 1594, in which a wealthy woman with a strong character rebuffs several suitors, but finally marries.

As Eric Sams wrote, “the Sonnets ... describe just such a triangular relationship as outlined in *Willobie*, where W.S. ‘not long before had tryed the curtesy of the like passion’, (married her?) and thus date these Sonnets to 1593-94 (98). The narrator then describes W. S. as “now newly recovered of the like infection,” meaning that though W.S. had been in love with Avisa “not long before,” he was now “recovered” from the “infection” of her love. Could this be why the author dedicated a poem in 1594 to Southampton about a man raping his friend’s wife? Just as the Sonnets forgive the Fair Youth for his affair with the Dark Lady, could the amorous dedication to *Lucrece* also be the author’s confirmation of his forgiveness, and of his love for Southampton?

Angell, however, does not identify W.S. as Oxford. She admits that the portrayal of W.S. “is treated more casually than any of the

other characters, and the only distinguishing trait mentioned is that he is an old player" (666). Angell struggles to match this trait to the twenty-nine-year-old Shakspeare, but it matches Oxford perfectly. At age forty-three he had been at his trade for most of his life.

With respect to W.S. as Shakespeare, scholars have noted that two lines spoken by W.S. in *Willobie his Avis* parody lines in three Shakespeare plays that were still anonymous in 1594. But more significantly, these lines also paraphrase Sonnet 41, not published until 1609, one of the most explicit in its treatment of the affair between the Fair Youth and the Dark Lady. This indicates that the author of the *Willobie* libel seems to have known the principals quite well in 1593-94, and that this affair is the subject of the libel (Sams 95,101):

She is no Saynt, She is no Nonne,
I thinke in tyme she may be wonne. W.S. from Canto 47

She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;
She is a woman, therefore may be won. *Titus Andronicus* II. 1. 83

Was ever a woman in this humour woo'd?

*...it is very suggestive that Willobie
was republished in 1605,
the year after Oxford's death,
and again in 1609, the same year
as the Sonnets...*

Was ever woman in this humour won? *Richard III* 2. 229

She's beautiful and therefore to be woo'd;
She is a woman, therefore to be won. *1 Henry VI* V. 3. 78

Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won,
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assail'd; Sonnet 41

Scholars have also overlooked three of Oxford's published poems that seem to be paraphrased, in words and content, in Cantos 45, 47, 48 and 68 in *Willobie*:

Then should my sighs to quiet breast retire,
And shun such signs, as secret thoughts bewray.
Uncomely love, which now lurks in my breast,
Should cease my grief, through wisdom's power
oppress'd.
— Oxford: "Being in love, he complaineth"
(Chiljan 165)

So sorrows shrink in secret breast,
Attainte the heart with hotter rage,

Then griefes that are to frendes exprest,
Whose comfort may some part asswage.
— W. S., from Canto 45

The trickling teares, that fall along my cheeks,
The secret sighs that show my inward grief:
— Oxford, from "A lover rejected, complaineth"
(Chiljan 167)

Drown me with trickling tears, you wailful wights of woe
— Oxford, from "The complaint of a lover"
(Chiljan 164)

You must be secret, constant free,
Your silent sighs & triking teares,
— W. S. to H. W., from Canto 47

My trickling teares, like rivers flow
— H. W. about himself, from Canto 48

and seeing the teares trill downe his cheekes
— Avis to H. W., from Canto 68

These echoes of Oxford's poetry in *Willobie his Avis* suggest that the anonymous satirist equated W.S., the "old player," with Oxford.

Angell argues that *Willobie* implies that both Southampton and Shakespeare succeeded in their seduction of Avis/Elizabeth. But how could the commoner Shakspeare have had an affair with Elizabeth Trentham, the Countess of Oxford? Even more unlikely is De Luna's identification of Avis as Queen Elizabeth, and of W.S. as Shakespeare (107). How could Shakspeare of Stratford have had an affair with the Queen? The libel should have made much of this issue, but it doesn't. It is, of course, ludicrous that an actor would offer advice to a nobleman about how to bed the Queen.

Angell notes the passages in the H.W. section of *Willobie* that describe "a woman who brought forth a man child, a woman who was with child by whoredom, and a man who stole his neighbor's wife" (667). H. W. is presented as receiving W. S.'s endorsement of the seduction of his own mistress (wife?). *Willobie* even has W. S. play the role of procurer, actually encouraging H. W. Angell's interpretation, developed independently from the Sonnets, suggests a bizarre arrangement in which W.S. serves as a willing cuckold in favor of Southampton, who might be the father of Henry de Vere, born in 1593. Angell surmises that "It is possible that this is a neat stroke of ridicule calculated to wound the *amour propre* of the unhappy Shakespeare." (667) But why would Shakespeare be the cuckold when Oxford is the one married to Elizabeth? Is the author cynically referring to his new born heir, Henry de Vere, in the 1593 *Venus and Adonis* dedication to Southampton?: "But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a god-father, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest."

In addition, the author of *Willobie* introduces a reference to sodomy—"sins mongst the greatest sort"—in the very first Canto

(cont'd on p. 8)

Dark Lady(cont'd from p. 7)



Engraving of "the two most noble Henries" by Thomas Jenner (c1620s). In the upper corners are the mottoes and coats of arms of the Earls of Oxford and Southampton.

of the poem, "again with gratuitous irrelevance to his ostensible theme" (Sams 99):

Our English soil, to Sodom's sink
Excessive sin transformed of late,
Of foul deceit the loathsome link,
Hath worn all faith clean out of date,
The greatest sins mongst greatest sort,
Are counted now but for a sport.

Is this reference to sodomy another clue to H. W. and W. S.? Both Oxford (Nelson 213-17) and Southampton (Akrigg 181-2) were accused of sexual interest in men, and the Sonnets, especially 29, 30, 36, 72, and 121, also imply a sexual affair between them that would have disgraced them (Akrigg 236-8). With *Lucrece*, the author opened the door to slander, and his enemies took full advantage of it. Angell posits that the libels in *Willobie*, aimed at questioning the parentage of Henry de Vere, would explain its suppression while Oxford was alive. This is also the time when Oxford seems to have gone into seclusion. Could it have been because his wife had borne his lover's child? Angell claims that it is very suggestive that *Willobie* was republished in 1605, the year after Oxford's death, and again in 1609, the same year as the Sonnets: "This lends color to the theory that the libel concerned

Shakespeare's Dark Lady" (652). But, as Angell admits, "No one item in this interpretation, taken by itself, is conclusive; it is the cumulative effect which is impressive" (653).

Thus, *Willobie* independently confirms that Southampton is the Fair Youth of the Sonnets and that Elizabeth Trentham is the Dark Lady. If this is true, the bisexual affair reveals that Oxford is Shakespeare. Elizabeth Trentham was the only woman with whom Oxford is known to have had a sexual relationship at the time the Sonnets and *Willobie his Avis* were written. Yet, in his most personal and revealing poetry, Oxford never mentioned either his marriage or the birth of his son and heir, even though both these events took place during the time frame of the Sonnets. That his wife's son Henry was fathered by someone else would explain why he didn't.

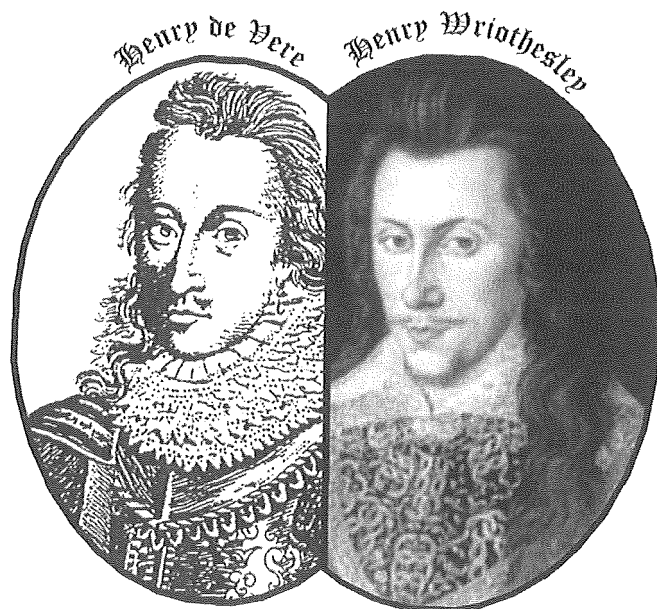
The Two Noble Henrys

The hypothesis that Elizabeth Trentham was the Dark Lady and Henry Wriothesley the father of Henry de Vere reveals the extraordinary bisexual triangle that finally explains the conflicted and abiding anguish expressed in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. It is also the key to the libel in *Willobie his Avis*, and explains the close lifetime relationship between these two noble Henrys. It might also explain why Henry de Vere did not fulfill his mother's request for a funeral monument for her and Oxford when she died in 1612, and left their remains to "oblivion" (Nelson 442).

It is curious that even though Henry Wriothesley's father was also named Henry, and Southampton had two sons (in 1605 and 1608), neither was named Henry. It may well be that the Henry in Southampton's life was Henry de Vere. The two Earls, Southampton and Henry de Vere, developed a deep personal relationship and became close political allies. It is arguable that portraits of Henry de Vere show a closer likeness to Henry Wriothesley than to Edward de Vere. In fact, the only portrait of either Henry with anyone else is of the two of them—the "Two Noble Henrys."

Once the hidden or misplaced manuscript of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, with its three-party bisexual story, found its way into print in 1609, both Henrys would have had the strongest motivation to block further publication. They may have been successful, since no further editions appeared during their lifetimes. The suppression and long neglect of the Sonnets after their first printing may have been caused by their portrayal of homosexual love. In the next edition, published in 1640, John Benson went to extraordinary lengths to disguise the homoeroticism of the original poems. To conceal the fact that the first 126 Sonnets were written to a male, Benson rearranged them, omitted some, changed a few masculine pronouns to feminine, and added spurious titles to suggest that the poet's interest was solely directed to a female (Wells 60). In the process, he obliterated the Fair Youth and any hint of a scandalous story. These changes are the strongest evidence that the implicit subjects of the first 126 Sonnets—bisexuality, adultery, and bastardy—were perceived from the beginning.

However, both Henrys were alive when Shakespeare's First Folio was finally published in 1623. If this scenario is correct, its purpose would have been to officially preserve the pseudonym, and thus bury any association of it with Edward de Vere or Henry



At left, an engraving (c 1636) by Robert Vaughn of a portrait of Henry de Vere, 18th Earl of Oxford. At right, detail from a portrait of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton by an unknown artist (c 1600).

Wriothesley. The Folio created the impression that William Shakespeare was solely a dramatist and that he lived in Stratford-upon-Avon. It is notable that the First Folio, the first comprehensive publication of Shakespeare's works, does not include, or even mention, the Sonnets, or either of the poems dedicated to Southampton, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. Ironically, it was upon these two poems dedicated to Southampton that Shakespeare's fame in the seventeenth century chiefly rested (Sobran 220).

Neither Henry could have afforded the embarrassment and dishonor of the identification of Edward de Vere as the author "William Shakespeare," especially during their serious political conflict with King James and his lover, the Duke of Buckingham. In June 1621, Henry de Vere was arrested for making "too bold a speech in behalf of the Earl of Southampton" about the King's plan for a Spanish marriage for Prince Charles (Akrigg 157). Southampton was also arrested, but both were freed after a few months. There was also a "second, more ominous imprisonment of Oxford in the Tower from April 1622 to December 1623" for allegedly stating that he wished the King were dead and for opposing the Duke of Buckingham's plan for the Spanish marriage alliance (Dickson 9). This time he was under the threat of a death sentence. A reconciliation between Southampton and Buckingham led to de Vere's release in December 1623, a month after the Folio was published. Again, this demonstrates the strength of their bond, each protecting the other.

The last anecdote we hear about the two Henrys is from the Low Countries in 1624, when they were both leading troops against Spain, just months before their deaths. An issue arose between them about who should be the commander of the English forces. Akrigg observes, "Fortunately, in an age when such an issue could provoke a major quarrel, the two earls conducted themselves moderately" (172). Rowse adds, "there was no ill will between Southampton and Oxford" (298). It was decided, with King James' concurrence, to split the command between them. It appears that their unique bond lasted all

their lives. Southampton died unexpectedly in November 1624, and Henry, the 18th Earl of Oxford, died a few months later, in 1625.

Shakespeare's First Folio was dedicated to William and Philip Herbert, the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery. These brothers were close political allies of both Henrys, and patrons of Ben Jonson, considered by many to be the "editor" of the Folio. The Lord Chamberlain, William Herbert, and later his brother Philip in the same office, were able to control the performance and publication of plays (Campbell 467). But Henry de Vere was not the only one of Oxford's children to be closely associated with the three noblemen who were the dedicatees of Shakespeare's poems and plays. Each of Oxford's three daughters had been engaged, or married, to one of these same three men: Elizabeth Vere had been "engaged" to Henry Wriothesley (Stopes 34); Bridget Vere had been engaged to William Herbert; Susan Vere married Philip Herbert, who thus became Henry de Vere's brother-in-law.

Jonson had a long history with the De Vere and Herbert families from at least 1604, when two of the sisters, Susan and Elizabeth, and their husbands, Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery and William Stanley, Earl of Derby, participated in a Jonson masque at court. Henry de Vere was also a patron and friend of Ben Jonson and, as Edward's sole male heir, may have been in control of his writings. Thus, the Veres and the Herberts were perfectly situated to publish the Folio for their own purposes, and to use Jonson in the process, since he was beholden to them.

Henry de Vere, Henry Wriothesley, Elizabeth Trentham, and their families, a strong closely-knit group allied by blood, marriage and politics, had the most to lose should Oxford be exposed as the author "Shakespeare." But they were in a unique position to safeguard the pseudonym, and prevent the scandal that could have destroyed the de Veres, Wriothesleys and Herberts. The pseudonym also protected the legitimacy of Henry de Vere as the 18th Earl and the Lord Great Chamberlain.

This is reminiscent of the successful royal cover-up of the Anthony Bacon conviction (in Navarre) for sodomy in 1587 that would have destroyed the Bacon and Cecil families, and seriously embarrassed Queen Elizabeth. Anthony and Francis Bacon were the nephews of Mildred Cooke, William Cecil's wife, and thus Anne Cecil's cousins. The King of Navarre (later Henri IV of France) personally intervened and quashed Bacon's death sentence as a favor to Queen Elizabeth and the Cecils. "All traces of this awkward affair were carefully eliminated from English records" (Rowse 1977, 46), and were unearthed only in 1974, in France, by Dame Daphne du Maurier (60-67).

If Anthony Bacon's international sex scandal could be suppressed so effectively, an eccentric Earl scripting plays under an alias could be even more easily hidden, especially if his father-in-law's political power were second only to the Queen's. When King James came to the throne, he would also not want the revelation of a homosexual relationship among his inner circle, especially since this might draw attention to his own affair with the Duke of Buckingham. Thus, the maintenance of the pseudonym benefited both rival political groups, and it seems that in this endeavor they were also entirely successful. □

(cont'd on p. 11)

Letter Writing (cont'd from p. 3)

do pairings of nouns—"his shifts and knaveries are so gross and palpable" (a phrase in a letter, January 11, 1597, to Sir Robert Cecil) and other robust phrasings indicate the same language facility of the writer of Shakespeare's plays and poems? Answering these questions calls for care. The 17th Earl of Oxford wrote letters, but the letters do not prove that Oxford wrote the plays and poems attached to the name "William Shakespeare" despite the efforts of Mr. Fowler. Do they show that Oxford was educated, that he was versed in the Renaissance art of letter-writing? Of course.¹

There's another angle for us to consider: letters that appear in the plays themselves. Most of the plays contain letters, some delivered by a messenger and some simply appearing in the hands of a recipient. I stress two key points:

1. The mere fact of letters adds weight to Oxford's identification as the true author; letters have not ever been found as part of Shaksper's possessions, nor is a single letter of his extant; but letters were a mode very familiar to de Vere).

2. The letters in the plays do serve dramatic purposes.

I found a number of provocative ideas from an article by Gary J. Scrimgeour called "The Messenger as a Dramatic Device in Shakespeare." Scrimgeour analyzes what happens when a messenger "arrives precipitately with news for a major character"—news about events which will have occurred off-stage but which will deeply affect the actions of the major character. Sometimes, the messenger thrusts a letter into a recipient's hand; at others, the messenger carries no letter and simply blurts out his message. Examples:

- In the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, a messenger announces "Your honor's players. . . are come to play a pleasant comedy" (Induction 2, 125-126). A delightful, simple way for the writer to abandon the charade of Christopher Sly as elegant Lord and direct Sly's—and the audience's—attention to the "real" play.
- At the merry conclusion of *Much Ado About Nothing*, a messenger reports, "Your brother John is ta'en in flight and brought with armed men back to Messina" (5.4. 123-124). Instead of starting the play in motion, this messenger wraps up an untidy loose end.

The history plays, of course, are necessarily cluttered with messengers carrying all sorts of missives, directives, good and bad news. (See, for example, *1 Henry IV* 4.1. 12.) The dramatic effect of letters is analogous to that of messengers: both are effective dramatic devices which allow the writer to shift action, reveal motivation, set a pace or atmosphere, or clear up plot confusions. I urge you to go through the plays, noting letters and the sheer number of "paper trails": lists, briefs, notes, letters, edicts, books, documents. A few illustrations make the point: The child Lucius in *Titus Andronicus* drops a pile of school books (4.1); Titus ties paper messages to arrows, which he shoots into the emperor's palace (4.3); in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Rude Mechanicals have a script for their mangled playlet (1.2 and 3.1), and Philostrate (5.1.41) offers a brief (a list) of the nuptial entertainments; in *Shrew*, Bianca reads love letters (3.1), Gremio scans a list of books (1.2.138); from *As You Like It*, we have the charming spectacle of

Orlando's awful verses dangling from branches in the Forest of Arden; in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lord Capulet gives his serving man a sheet of paper listing names of guests (4.2.1). Paper trails all over the place!

Letters, specifically, can be illustrated with many strong examples:

- *Much Ado About Nothing* opens with Leonato stating, "I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Aragon comes this night to Messina." The actor can brandish the letter, smile, raise an eyebrow—and an entire plot is set into motion by the clever device of a letter.
- Friar Laurence intends, in *Romeo and Juliet*, to use a letter to convey important information to the banished Romeo. The Friar reassures Juliet,

. . . Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
In the meantime, against thou shalt awake,
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift. . .
(4.1.111-114)

A simple plan which goes tragically wrong.

- One of the plays most linked to Oxford's life, *Hamlet*, contains a telling paper trail, including Claudius' letter to the King of England (ordering Hamlet's execution) and Hamlet's letter to Horatio (explaining the pirate episode).
- And Macbeth's foul—not fair—nature is revealed brilliantly through the letter he sends to his wife, his "Dearest partner of greatness" (1.5).

Several plays stand out, for me, as illustrative of the effective use of letters. While we can all chuckle at the role of letters in *Twelfth Night* and note the cynical comments of the Scrivener in *Richard III*, letters truly count in two plays. One is the sprawling, passionate tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra*, the other *The Merchant of Venice*. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the two protagonists are together when Antony receives letters with the news that his wife, Fulvia, is dead (1.3). Again, note the cleverness of this dramatic device. It allows the two lovers to respond—simultaneously—to a very loaded piece of news, demonstrating cause and effect so well. In the next scene, Octavius Caesar enters reading a letter; the news therein speaks about Antony, and the actor can report deadpan or otherwise,

". . . From Alexandria
This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes
The lamps of night in revel; is not more manlike
Than Cleopatra. . ."

(1.4.3-6)

And, toward the end of the play, Caesar again has a letter. This time his derision is obvious as he reads to his encampment at Alexandria: "He calls me boy, and chides as he had power to beat me out of Egypt. . ." (4.1.2).

Finally, let us consider *The Merchant of Venice*, a play filled with paper trails. Key letters include:

- Lorenzo receiving a letter from his beloved Jewish Jessica. The letter is tangible proof of her love:

"I know the hand. In faith, 'tis a fair hand,
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ. . ."
2.4.12-14)

- In the central scene of the play—in the midst of his happy alliance to Portia—Bassanio receives a letter from Antonio. The actor has a few moments to read it and react. Portia notes, "There are some shrewd contents in yond same paper that steals the color from Bassanio's cheek (3.2,243-244)—thus we see that Portia is deeply sensitive to his emotions; that Bassanio's friendship for Antonio is profound; that Bassanio is not capable of dissembling. All this is shown by the device of a letter.
- In the next act, the famous court scene, the Duke reads a letter from Bellario (4.1.143). Here, an actor has some choices: the letter could reveal the truth of Portia's disguise (and the audience would see a twinkle in the Duke's eyes), or the letter could indeed look so convincing that the Duke grants young Portia permission to enter and the stature she needs to win her case against Shylock.
- Once the couples are reconciled, we see Bassanio reading a letter which explains the judge and clerk's identities (5.1.266).
- Finally, at the closing moments with the two couples happily reunited, Portia gives Antonio a letter which she has carried with her. She welcomes Antonio:

"And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect. Unseal this letter soon.
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbor suddenly. . ."
(5.1.275-277)

Again, the device of a letter affords delicious choices for the actor and the director: good news ties up a complicated plot, a man's life and fortunes have been saved. But wait: that man—the merchant—is not attached to a woman. Gratiano has Nerissa, Lorenzo has Jessica, Bassanio has Portia, Antonio has. . . ? A letter. For a staging, I imagine Antonio acknowledges the good news it brings him, and expresses his gratitude to Portia. Then, does he smile, link arms with the others and also go into the villa? Does he re-read the letter, tuck it in his pocket, wave in farewell, and stand alone? The letters allow, so economically, such ambiguity and drama!

Shakespeare's plays have endured, in part, because the writer has such consummate control over the various complexities involved in presenting a story on stage. I have focused on one device: the simple and potent possibilities of letters in the plays, and on letter writing itself as an important tool in identifying Oxford as rightful author. □

Endnotes

1. Ken Kaplan argues that certain letters do indeed support the case for Oxford as the true author, pointing specifically to the 1653 prefatory letter to Thomas Bedingfield's 1573 translation of *Cardanus Comfort*. The letter's theme and sophisticated language bear our careful attention to correspondences in both the sonnets and plays. See Sobran, Appendix 4.

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Dark Lady (cont'd from p. 9)

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Anderson (cont'd from p. 2)

for a general biography) in the notes section at the back. The scholarship that has accumulated over the centuries on Shakespeare's literary sources is rich and vast, but because the true author has remained unknown, there has been nothing to connect his works with his own life. Now, as the reader follows the events and characters in Oxford's story, interwoven with each is a brief account of how and in what plays they are reflected. Although there will no doubt be more than a few disagreements over some of his connections, this hardly matters, since the sheer volume of evidence is such that the basic premise—that Oxford's life is reflected in the plays—should be sufficient to convince an unbiased general reader.

That these claims can be made at all is impressive. And so many claims! So many connections! In delving for nail-in-the-coffin evidence, Oxfordian scholars have previously provided elaborate and penetrating examinations of no more than a few such connections at a time. Here we are deluged by them, each admittedly too brief to accept at face value, but in such quantity that the few that are (or may be) incorrect seem but minor details. Let the anti-Oxfordians nitpick—they won't make much of an impression on this mountain of evidence.

Two years ago Alan Nelson published transcriptions of all known documents relating to Oxford. Now we have as close to a full account of all known scholarship on Oxford's life, both past and recent, published and unpublished, as is humanly possible to fit into 600 pages—highly compressed, it is true, but well organized and easily accessed. From now on, no Oxfordian scholar will dare to write without this book at his or her elbow. It is a remarkable feat.

Remarkable as it is, it does not mean that there is no fault to be found. In general, Anderson shows little understanding of the lives of women at that time. This is most obvious in his portrayal of Oxford's mother as wanton and uncaring. Even the most cursory study of the Court of Wards proves that the Countess would have had no control over what happened either to her son or to herself. Her letters to William Cecil show her to be intelligent, well-spoken and as

firm as a woman in her position dared to be in defending her son's interests (Nelson 38). To suggest that she showed no concern for her only son not only defies common psychology, it contradicts the known facts, while promoting as fact things not in evidence. Nor is this a mere detail. If we are to have a clear and truthful portrait of Oxford, getting his early caregivers, his parents and tutors, right is of the utmost importance.

Anderson's claim that in marrying Charles Tyrell Countess Margery married beneath herself is equally misleading. If

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anything, because she was by then the Dowager Countess of Oxford, she married *above* her birth station. The Tyrells were a large and influential Essex family of wealthy Catholic gentry. Charles's grandfather was the fifth Lord Mountjoy. Charles himself was a Queen's Gentleman Pensioner whose social importance is indicated by the list of lords and ladies of the Court to whom he bequeathed gifts of value at his death in 1570 (Nelson website). As for the accusation that she married too soon after Earl John's death, what *would* have been unusual, according to the traditions of her class, her status as a widow, and her lack of personal wealth, would have been for her to wait much longer than six months to remarry (Stone 102).

More evidence of Anderson's lack of understanding of sixteenth-century women is his statement that, immediately following her affair with Oxford and the birth of their child, Ann Vavasor plunged into a "long and passionate love affair" with Sir Henry Lee, the Queen's champion (174). No solid information about Vavasor's actions following her incarceration has yet come to light. The earliest she can be placed with

Lee with any certainty is 1589, eight years after the Queen put a stop to her affair with Oxford (Bowen 5). Forced to obey the will of the Queen, Vavasor was in no position to refuse Lee if it was he who was assigned to act as her keeper when she was released from the Tower (as has been suggested). In any case, although it's to her credit that she remained faithful until death to a man nearly thirty years her senior, neither that nor anything else in this story is remotely suggestive of "a long and passionate love affair." In addition, the accusation that de Vere "distanced himself" from Vavasor and his baby son is also without merit. Banished from the Court, imprisoned in the Tower for close to three months, then under house arrest for sometime longer, Oxford was hardly in a position to defy the Queen's order that they remain apart. If he did make efforts to see Ann and the baby, would he have let anyone know about it?

New Insights into Oxford's Life and the Shakespeare Plays

On the other hand, Anderson is to be credited for some important new information, for instance, Burghley's attempts to give Oxford the dowry promised him for his marriage to Anne Cecil by means of a secret gift from the Spanish Crown (67), and the suggestion that the purported £15,000 Spanish dowry was the source of the funds that Oxford told Howard he had stashed on the continent, with which he would support himself and Vavasor following their elopement. Very nice.

A particularly noteworthy insight is his connection of King Claudius's cry, "Give me some light!" in *Hamlet*, following the play within a play, with an incident that occurred during the 1564 commencement exercises at Cambridge, during which the Queen walked out of a rude anti-Catholic satire performed at night by students. When all the torch-bearers followed the Queen, the rest of the audience, no doubt including the teenaged Oxford, were forced to find their way in the dark (31).

Anderson does an excellent job of merging the scholarship of Richard Roe and Noemi Magri into his account of Oxford's year on the Continent, in some cases adding important insights of his own.

For instance, by placing Oxford in Siena at the same time as the annual production by the renowned playwright Piccolomini of the comedy *Gli' Ingannati* (102), he connects Oxford with *Twelfth Night*, for which the play has long been accepted as a source. His detailed suggestion that Ragusa on the coast of Dalmatia was the true model for Illyria seems likely to be adopted without question.

Some of the identifications of Shakespeare characters with Oxford's friends, family and enemies are persuasive, others not so much. Among the former would be his identification of the Duchess of Suffolk as Pauline in *The Winter's Tale*. Less convincing is Sir Philip Sidney as the original of Cassio, or the Earl of Essex as Coriolanus, while Queen Elizabeth as Cressida and Anne Cecil as Juliet seem little short of absurd. (Most absurd of all is William of Stratford as Costard.)

Nothing could be more solid than the long-accepted connection between Polonius, who has his son Laertes spied upon while abroad at school, and William Cecil, who had his son Thomas spied upon while in Paris. But to identify Falstaff with the Puritan warrior martyr, Sir John Oldcastle, is a mistake. Shakespeare had named his aging clown "Oldcastle" early on, not because there was the slightest resemblance between their characters (there wasn't), but because for some reason he wanted to tease Oldcastle's descendants, the Cobhams. When they objected, he switched to another hero of the late Middle Ages, Sir John Fastolfe, who was no clown either, but who had no descendants to complain and whose slightly altered name made a superb pun on the author's name: Shake-spear—Fall-staff.

Although it makes sense that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was revised to entertain the Court at the 1594 wedding of the Countess of Southampton to Sir Thomas Heneage, Anderson's identification of Egeus as Oxford seems weak. Surely it is Burghley who is Egeus. In 1594, Burghley's insistence that his granddaughter, Oxford's daughter Elizabeth, marry Henry Wriothesley, the son of the bride, is reflected in the determination of Egeus that his daughter Hermia marry Demetrius, who, like Wriothesley, is not interested. If anyone

in the play represents Oxford it would surely be Oberon, King of Faeryland, i.e., the magical world of the theater.

Anderson's insight into the timing of *Much Ado About Nothing* (1582-3) is persuasive, as is his argument that Don John represents the Earl of Leicester. The suggestion that the Dogberry-Verges report is a satire on the Howard-Arundel libels is brilliant. The suggestion that the anonymous play, *Agamemnon and Ulysses*, which is dated shortly before Oxford left for the Lowlands, is an early version of *Troilus and Cressida*, also seems persuasive, as is his insight that the pig-headed Agamemnon represents Leicester, while the reasonable Ulysses represents Oxford.

Oxford as Antony? Right—but the 55-year-old Elizabeth (1588) as Cleopatra? Not likely. Essential to the *Antony and Cleopatra* story is the obsessive and destructive passion that causes their downfall, unlike Oxford and Elizabeth, neither of whom was harmed by their association (quite the reverse). So it's unlikely that Shakespeare had Elizabeth in mind when he portrayed the sexy and volatile Egyptian, though he may have been content to let her think so. The frequent suggestion that she is another portrait of the woman who inspired the Dark Lady sonnets seems more likely to be true.

Despite the occasional misstep, this voluminous collection of Shakespeare-Oxford connections remains convincing for the most part. But Anderson would perhaps have done better to stick to the solid ground of biography, history, geography, and Shakespeare's known works, and steer clear of the murky swamps where Oxford's "minions" tend to blend identities with the University Wits. Although much work has been done on the likelihood that Oxford was the true author of early works published under the names of his friends and secretaries, Anderson prefers to follow the orthodox line, while indulging his wit at their expense. John Lyly and George Peele may no longer be admired today, but why term their efforts to write works of art, or at least entertainments worthy of an educated royal audience, as "cranking out works of preening fluff"? Had Anderson actually read Robert Greene, he would be less eager to tag him a "euphuistic hack." Those who

have actually read Greene's "convoluted rhetoric" usually find that his work sounds too much like early Shakespeare to be so lightly dismissed. However, in a book that is bent on covering as much ground in as little space as possible, Anderson's treatment of these obscure literary episodes won't cause a ripple in the mind of the ordinary reader.

A Matter of Style

The more important caveat (and it is only a caveat) is Anderson's style. Although, as already mentioned, he does a bangup job of *telling* the story, I wish that he could have left himself out of it to a greater extent. Along with these sixteenth-century figures we're so eager to see brought to life, there's always another figure present, Anderson himself, in modern dress, smirking and gesturing as if to say, "don't take them too seriously." We know that he is able to let the story tell itself because he does just that throughout one entire section, that of Oxford's travels in France and Italy. For some reason, there he is able to get his tongue out of his cheek for pages on end. But back it goes as soon as de Vere returns to England. There's no harm in a wry, personal twist now and then, but rounding off almost every paragraph?

Anderson's fondness for over-the-top modifiers tends to turn his subjects into caricatures. Anne Vavasor, described in sources as "witty" acquires a "razor tongue"; Oxford's pride is "gargantuan"; Burghley is "ruthless," Essex "mewling," Hatton "humorless" and "mawkish." These might be all right if there were also descriptions to qualify their strong and mostly negative effect, but there aren't. Even Oxford comes off badly. Is Anderson being ironic when he refers to him as Burghley's "ingrate son-in-law," the Queen's "flaky play puppet," a "cruel and bitter man"? If so, it's hard to tell.

For some reason Anderson diminishes the impact of one of his most interesting revelations—evidence of Oxford's possible contact with Don John of Austria and involvement in an incipient battle between the aristocrats and the arrivistes in Genoa, which he later characterizes as "imagined" and "a drunken yarn." No doubt Oxford's

(cont'd on p. 14)

Anderson (cont'd from p. 13)

"backfriends" in London believed that's all it was, but one benefit of four hundred years of access to documents is that we now know there was probably truth to the story, as Anderson himself has already shown us on pages 91-2.

He does it again when he suggests that Shakespeare produced his final masterpieces with the "assistance and input" from "friends, relatives, and secretaries" (123), thus in one abrupt stroke knocking his own thesis off-kilter, while at the same time seeming to question the very foundation of Shakespeare's accomplishment. Lacking any documentary support, why suggest such a thing?

Somehow even more disturbing is his interpretation of Nashe's term "pottle pot patron" (a description of Oxford) as "drunkard patron" (59). Surely what Nashe had in mind was someone who was no longer the kind of bread-and-butter patron who could provide a poor scholar with a living income—someone who, having lost his own source of income, could pay for nothing more than the refreshment at an occasional convivial get-together. If Anderson believes that Oxford was Shakespeare, his suggestion, repeated in several places, that he was a drunkard, is absurd. No drunkard ever achieved what Shakespeare achieved.

Anderson could have used a thesaurus more often. The word "florid" became as annoying to this reader as a fly in the room. We could also do without so much "uproarious," "riotous," "infamous," "overweening," and "cloying." To refer to the brilliant, impoverished and notoriously disdainful Raleigh as a "nouveaux riche

landowner, florid and flattering," suggests that Anderson spent little or no time researching this fascinating poet and brave adventurer. And if the fourth Earl of Worcester was, as Anderson paints him, a "social climber" (343), then so was everyone else at Elizabeth's Court, including Oxford.

The writers of Fisher's Folly are termed "wags, scribblers and rakehells." What Greene referred to as "study at the shrine of de Vere's courtesy," and Spenser as "the love of the Heliconian imps," Anderson terms "wild times and drunken escapades." If we're to believe him, we must wonder how these "wags" and "scribblers" ever took enough time from their carousing to create the art of the English Renaissance. Is he being ironic? Is he being ironic when he calls Shakespeare's works "degenerate and blood-stained"?

For four hundred years readers have been fascinated with the Court of Elizabeth and eager for information about it, partly because of its success—did it not set England on the road to glory?—but mainly because of the glamour that to this day emanates from the great Queen herself. To this day we are fascinated by the still pale face surrounded by one gorgeous costume after another, each a magnificent work of fabric art, fabulous with lace, gold, jewels and pearls, framed by the splendor of Tudor palaces and knot gardens, as recorded in painting after painting and reproduced in book after book. To draw undue attention to the Queen's rotting teeth and bad breath is not only unfair to one of the genuine earth-bound goddesses of all time, it's counterproductive.

That the Queen, and by extension, her

Court, was dazzling is a fact of history. That it was all due to wigs and perfume is unlikely, and if Anderson succeeds too well in diminishing Oxford, Raleigh, Essex, the Queen and the rest of them, he stands to lose the very thing he hopes to capture, the interest of the reader in search of the magic of Elizabethan romance.

For there *is* magic in this story, *genuine* magic, of the sort that helped, if not always to finance, certainly to inspire, men like Shakespeare and Bacon, Byrd and Dowland, Drake and Raleigh, Gilbert and Hariot. It is foolish to waste the opportunity to win readers by drawing them into the mystery that connects Oxford, her greatest courtier, and Shakespeare, England's greatest artistic genius.

But such scholarly quibbles cannot begin to diminish the achievement of this tremendously important book. To have distilled ten long years of study and hundreds of references into 600 tightly-knit and easily-read pages is an accomplishment to be proud of. The book is a thoroughly absorbing account that will, one hopes, thrill thousands of readers still seeking the truth about Shakespeare. □

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The “court gossip” of Francis Osborne

By Nina Green

The miscellaneous writer Francis Osborne (1593-1659) is known chiefly for his *Advice to a Son* (1656) and his *Historical Memoirs on the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James* (1658).¹

The *Historical Memoirs* have been characterized as supplying “much attractive court gossip.”² One of the stories involves Philip Herbert (1584-1650), Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, who had been dead for some eight years when the book was published. According to Osborne, a Scottish courtier named Ramsay struck Herbert in the face with a riding-crop at a horse-race at Croydon in 1607. Herbert did not retaliate and, in consequence, in Osborne’s words, had:

nothing left to testify his manhood but a beard and children by the daughter of that last great Earl of Oxford whose lady was brought to his bed under the notion of his mistress, and from such a virtuous deceit she is said to proceed.³

The reader cannot help being taken aback at Osborne’s scornful reference to Philip Herbert, particularly since in his youth Osborne had been Master of Horse to Philip Herbert’s brother, William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke.⁴ Osborne’s parenthetical comment about Oxford is also surprising. It is odd to find this seemingly improbable story circulating so long after the deaths of Anne Cecil (d.1588), Oxford (d.1604) and their daughter, Susan Vere (d.1629).

Since Osborne was not an eyewitness to many of the events he describes, a question naturally arises as to the reliability of his report of the incident at Croydon, and his parenthetical comment about Oxford.

The reliability of Osborne’s report of the incident at Croydon

One aspect of Osborne’s account is clearly inaccurate. Osborne claims that in appreciation of Philip Herbert’s restraint in not retaliating against the Scot who had struck him, King James made Herbert “a Knight, a Baron, a Viscount, and an Earl in one day.” As Lever points out, however, this is “utter nonsense as Philip had been Baron Herbert of Shurland and Earl of Montgomery for some two years at this time [and] . . . was never a Viscount.”⁵ In fairness to Osborne, though, it should be recalled that King James did shower honours on Philip Herbert, who was a favourite from the beginning of the reign, and Osborne’s comment may have been a deliberate exaggeration designed to highlight that fact.

On the other hand, Osborne’s family connections suggest that he was likely to have been well informed about the Herberts. His family was related by marriage to the Cecils, who were now closely linked to the Herberts through the marriage of Susan Vere and Philip Herbert in 1604.

Francis Osborne was the youngest son of Sir John Osborne (1552-1628) of Chicksands Priory in Shefford in Bedfordshire. His grandfather, Peter Osborne (1521-1592), from Latchingdon in Essex, had a successful career in London, enjoying the confidence

of three monarchs—King Henry VIII, his son Edward VI and, later, Queen Elizabeth. Osborne was Treasurer’s Remembrancer in the time of Henry VIII, and Keeper of the Privy Purse to Edward VI. During Elizabeth’s reign he was considered something of an authority on finance, and a number of his letters to Lord Burghley on financial matters are still extant. His influence on public affairs can be gauged from the fact that he was, inter alia, a deputy-governor of the Mineral and Battery Works, a commissioner appointed to settle disputes with Portugal, an assistant-governor of Lincoln’s Inn, an executor of the will of Archbishop Matthew Parker, a Member of Parliament, and an Ecclesiastical High Commissioner. Peter Osborne’s wife, Anne Blythe (d.1615), was the daughter of Dr. John Blythe, first Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge.⁶ Dr. Blythe’s wife, Alice Cheke, was the sister of Sir John Cheke, first Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge, and tutor to Edward VI. Another sister, Mary Cheke, was the first wife of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and the mother of Burghley’s son, Thomas Cecil (1542-1623), Earl of Exeter.

Francis Osborne’s grandmother was thus a niece of Lord Burghley’s first wife, Mary Cheke, and these Cecil/Osborne family connections were further strengthened by later intermarriage with the Cokes of Norfolk. Thomas Cecil’s daughter Elizabeth married, as her second husband, Lord Chief Justice Sir Edward Coke (1549-1633), and the Lord Chief Justice’s sister Elizabeth was married to Francis Osborne’s uncle Richard.

These family connections, and Francis Osborne’s employment in his youth as William Herbert’s Master of Horse, suggest that Francis Osborne’s account of the incident at the horse-race at Croydon can be accepted as generally reliable, even though Osborne may not have been an eyewitness, and even though he exaggerated the alleged rewards bestowed on Philip Herbert by King James.

The reliability of Osborne’s comment about Oxford

Osborne’s account of the incident involving Oxford falls clearly into the category of “court gossip” since Susan Vere was born on May 26, 1587, six years before Osborne’s own birth. The story is thus one which must have been circulating for over a decade before Osborne picked it up.

After allowing for this fact, however, three observations can be made. In the first place, the story seems to have been well known since Osborne refers to it parenthetically, taking for granted that it will not be new to his readers. Secondly, as we have seen, Osborne was part of the Cecil/Herbert circle. If the story had been utterly discredited in that circle, it is unlikely that Osborne would have mentioned it. His acceptance of the story thus suggests that those in the Cecil/Herbert circle did not entirely reject it. Thirdly, Osborne was a man of pronounced moral and ethical views. In his account of the incident at Croydon he touches on the reputations of a number of individuals and on the morality of the court itself. On

(cont’d on p. 16)

Osborne (cont'd from p. 15)

the one hand, he has high praise for Philip Herbert's mother Mary, Countess of Pembroke, the sister of Sir Philip Sidney. On the other, he has nothing but scorn for Philip Herbert. King James and the frivolity of the court fare little better at his hands. Yet he refers to Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, as 'the last great Earl of Oxford'. The remark is made in a way which indicates Osborne's confidence that his readers share his view. Osborne's comment is thus a valuable indication of Oxford's reputation some 50 years after his death, and refutes the hasty judgments made by a number of 20th century historians.

What is to be made, however, of the bizarre story that Oxford's wife Anne Cecil "was brought to his bed under the notion of his mistress"? If the story is not merely unfounded gossip, it must, as Charlton Ogburn has suggested, relate to the birth of Oxford and Anne Cecil's eldest daughter, Elizabeth Vere, in 1575.⁷ During the latter part of 1574, Oxford seems to have spent little time with his wife, and from February 1575 to April 1576 he was travelling on the continent. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was born on 2 July 1575, while he was away on his travels. On his return, Oxford was given information which convinced him that the child was not his, and he refused for some years to live with his wife. Eventually, in December 1581, Oxford and Anne Cecil were reconciled. By that time, however, the damage had long since been done. Elizabeth Vere's legitimacy had been brought into question by Anne Cecil herself in the earliest stages of her pregnancy, and openly speculated upon by the Queen,⁸ and by Oxford's refusal to live with his wife on his return to England. When Oxford and Anne Cecil began to live together again as man and wife in late December 1581 it was necessary to attempt to repair the damage done to Elizabeth Vere's reputation. As Ogburn suggests, the story of Oxford's wife being brought to his bed under the guise of his mistress, and a daughter being born to them as a result, was probably a fiction invented to put gossip to rest and to establish Elizabeth Vere's legitimacy. Over time the story became accepted, and by Osborne's day it had been transferred from the birth of Elizabeth Vere to the birth of her sister Susan.

Did Oxford himself believe the story? It seems unlikely. But as Ogburn suggests, he made use of it in *All's Well That Ends Well*, and in *Measure For Measure*.⁹

Endnote

In *The Herberts of Wilton*, Tresham Lever gives the following account of the incident at Croydon:

In view of their rapid rise to fame and fortune it is perhaps not altogether surprising that the Herberts - and particularly the choleric younger brother - should have been involved in many quarrels during the reign of King James. The first recorded — and the best known — is told by a certain Francis Osborne, who in his youth had been attached to the household of Lord Pembroke and became his master of the horse. Half a century later he showed his gratitude by telling the world that in 1607, whilst attending Croydon races, his former employer's brother had been rendered ridiculous by being switched in the face by a Scottish courtier, John Ramsay, Viscount Haddington, later to

become Earl of Holderness. There were many Scottish race-goers at the meeting, and in view of the ill-feeling that existed between them and the English, the air was at once electric. For a moment it looked as if the English might take advantage of an ugly situation to draw together and raise the incident to the status of a national quarrel. Had they done so there might have been much bloodshed that afternoon on Croydon heath. But the day was saved by Philip Herbert, who did not strike back, so that, according to Osborne, 'there was nothing spilt but the reputation of a gentleman'; and his mother, he tells us, 'tore her hair at the report of her son's dishonour'. The outcome of this affair was the banishment of the offending Scot from Court, which, the malicious Osborne tells us, could have been but 'a poor satisfaction to Herbert, that was left nothing to testify his manhood but a beard and children'.

The admittedly unreliable Osborne also states that the King rewarded Philip for his passive part in the affair by making him a Knight, a Baron, a Viscount and an Earl all in one day; but this is utter nonsense as Philip had been Baron Herbert of Shurland and Earl of Montgomery for some two years at this time. Incidentally, he was never a Viscount. □

Footnotes

¹ Osborne's volume on the reigns of Elizabeth and James is often confusingly referred to by the subtitle of the second half, i.e. *Traditional Memoirs on the Reign of King James*.

² *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 14, p. 1180.

³ Scott, Walter, ed., *The Secret History of the Court of James the First*, Edinburgh: Ballantyne, 1811, pp. 504-9, at p. 509.

⁴ *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 14, p. 1179.

⁵ Lever, Tresham, *The Herberts of Wilton*, London: John Murray, 1967, p. 82.

⁶ *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 14, p. 1186.

⁷ Ogburn, Charlton, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, 1992, p. 576.

⁸ See issue # 25 of the *Edward De Vere Newsletter* at www.oxford-shakespeare.com.

⁹ Ogburn, p. 576.

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The Grandsire Phrase in *Romeo and Juliet*

By Derran Charlton and John Barton

During my [Derran Charlton] recent talk in Atlanta, "Edward de Vere, Shakspeare, and the Trussell family of Billesley Hall, Warwickshire", I briefly mentioned that I was fascinated by the implications of the "Grandsire phrase" in *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Scene iv, ll. 35-43:

Romeo. A torch for me, let wantons light of heart 35
Tickle the sencelesse rushes with their heels:
For I am proverb'd with a Grandsier Phrase,
Ile be a Candle-holder and looke on,
The game was nere so faire, and I am done.

Mercutio. Tut, duns the Mouse, the Constables owne word, 40
If thou art dun, wee le draw thee from the mire.
Or save your reverence loue wherein thou stickest
Up to the eares, come we burn day-light ho.¹

Long ago Percy Allen noted the word "Trussell" [tressel, trisell]² was a name for a "Candle-holder".³ Likewise, the references to "done/dun" probably refer to the father of Oxford's grand-sire whose name was "Dunn". John Dunn, a great-great grandparent of Oxford (born circa 1431, died 1503), married Elizabeth Hastings. I suggested that whilst Shakespeare/Oxford "played" on the names of his immediate grandsires, the Trussells, he also extended his thoughts into the immediately following words of Mercutio. John Barton, an Oxfordian from New Zealand, posted similar information

on the Phaeton internet discussion group a few years ago, but little constructive reaction ensued. This was most unfortunate as I feel that his earlier proposals are important and deserve recognition: hence this short article.

I found it difficult to explain the meaning of this passage until I realized that the word "Mouse" is spelt with a capital "M" – as if in a surname. Likewise, "Constable" is spelt with a capital "C". My source for the text was the Norton facsimile of the First Folio, which is based on the Folger Library's original copies. To confirm this capitalization, I checked my 1866 facsimile of the British Museum's copy of the 1623 Folio. Intriguingly, both "Mouse" and "Constable" are capitalized.⁴

As this fact appeared to be remarkable, I mentioned it to Christopher Paul, at whose home I was visiting. Equally intrigued, Chris checked Morris Palmer Tilley's *Dictionary of Proverbs in the 16th and 17th Centuries* with the result:

"Duns the mouse"

(A play on the word "done.") 1600 Sir J. Oldcastle, s.E3v: Dunne is the mowse. 1603 CHETTLE, DECKER, and HAUGHTON, Patient Grissill, s.A3: Yet don is the mouse, lie still. 1605 Lond. Prod., s.E3v. 1607 DEKKER AND WEBSTER West. Ho V i, s.H2v: Serjeant Ambush, as th' art an honest fellow, scowte in some back roome, till the

(cont'd on p. 18)



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Grandsire (cont'd from p. 17)

watch-word be given for sallying forth. – Duns the mouse. 1609 Every Woman in Her Hum., s.G3v: If mine Host say the word, the Mouse shall be dun. 1611 DAV. Epig., no.97: Dunne is the mouse (they say). 1620 J.C. Two Mer. Milk-Maids I ii, s.B4v: Why then `tis done, and dun`s the Mouse, and undone all the Courtiers. C1630 PARKER Excel. New Med.l.42 in Roxb.Bal., I 153: I`le say no more but dun`s the mouse. (176)

The “Mouse” allusion could refer to Alice Philippa Camoys (possibly pronounced “Camouse” by the Elizabethans). Alice (a third-generation grandsire of Oxford) married Leonard Hastings. Alice was the grandmother of Margaret Dunn (born in 1472); hence the expression “Duns the Mouse” has a cogent meaning. Mercutio`s saying “dun`s the mouse” instead of the more obvious “the mouse is dun” seems to hint at Alice Camoys as grandmother of Margaret Dunn. A further possible allusion is through Isabella de Malsours, wife of Richard Trussell, on the grounds of the similarity of *sours* to the French *souris* meaning “mouse”. To H.K. Kennedy-Skipton belongs the credit for discovering that the 17th Earl had a Trussell grandmother, Elizabeth Trussell, whose father, or grandfather, was Sir John “Dun.”⁵

Moreover, John Barton notes, “As for ‘Duns the mouse’, surely

this is nonsense (unless the ‘mouse’ is Oxford`s grandsire Alice Camoys). Why not ‘Duns the horse’? No one draws a mouse out of a mire. Dun had been a cart-horse since Chaucer at least where we find: ‘Sires, what? Dun is in the mire’ from *Prologue to the Maunciple`s Tale*. The odds against chance for this tiny *Romeo and Juliet* passage containing these allusions (with its pointed references to the ‘grandsire phrase’) appear to me to be almost astronomical.”

The case for Sergeaux (also one of Oxford`s grandsires) as “Constable” is firmer according to John Barton. Alice Sergeaux married Richard de Vere, the 11th Earl in 1416/17, and was the mother of Robert de Vere, who married Jean (also referred to as Joan) Courtenay. More pertinently, at least two of Oxford`s direct ancestors occupied the unique position of Lord High Constable of England: Humphrey VIII de Bohun (1276-1321), husband of Elizabeth Plantagenet, and Roger Mortimer (1328-1359), great-grandfather of Alice Camoys and husband of Philippa de Montagu. John Tiptoft (1427-1470) and John de Vere (1442-1512) were both Lord High Constables closely related to Oxford.

Concentrating on Oxford`s grandparents, great-grandparents, 2nd and 3rd great grandparents, we have these names:

Grandparents:	Vere, Trussell, Golding, Towe
Great grandparents:	Kilrington, Don (Dunn)
2 nd great grandparents:	Courtenay, Kene, Hastings

(cont'd on p. 23)

Table 1. Possible Allusions to Oxford`s Ancestors

Ancestor	Connection	Word in Passage	Line #
John de Vere	Vere homophone	faire	39
	verbum (Latin homophone)	word	40
	never → E. Vere	nere (ne're)	39
	Ver(e) prob'd	proverb'd	37
Elizabeth Trussell	trissell synonym	Candle-holder	38
John Golding	Oreilles (French) → auris		
	(Latin) → aurum (Latin) →		
	or (French) → gold (English)	eares (ears)	43
Elizabeth Towe	“drag, tow homophone”	draw	41
Margaret Don	homophone	done	39
Joan Courtenay	coeur (French) → courage	heart	35
Elizabeth Hastings	substantively = rushings; rush = haste	rushes	36
Alice Sargeaux	sergent (French) → sergeant	Constable	40
Philippa L Arcedekne	sir reverent (Q1 variant) →		
	reverent sir (name often		
	spelled and derived from		
	Archdeacon)	reverence	42
Elizabeth Burley	“grand (French) → big, burly”	Grandsier	37
Joan Scudamore	amore (Latin)	loue (love)	42
Alice Camoys	moys homophone	Mouse	40

Bringing Oxford in from the Margins/Marshes: A New Stratfordianism

By Stuart Marlow

The authorship debate is as much about revising historical interpretation as it is about individual identity. Deceased writers' images are mostly projections of an assumed personality or organizing intelligence. Biographers often trawl the minutiae of authors' lives for every possible clue as to the person behind the text. In Shakespeare's case this has evolved into nothing less than a sanitized mythological construct of legendary proportions. To combat this, the historical contexts in which texts, characters, and locations appear, must form the focus of any media representation. This is key in investigating the Oxfordian case, as the politics behind de Vere's attempts to reinvent himself went well beyond the date of his official death.

For example, the general post-First Folio acceptance of Shakespeare as the author has been in part due to simplistic readings of Ben Jonson's and Leonard Digges's renowned dedications, which by now of course have been dissected ad infinitum. In Jonson's case, however, one fundamental misinterpretation seems to have become canon law.

*To the memory of my beloved, The AUTHOR
Mr. William Shakespeare And what he hath
left us. (Ben Jonson)*

Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still while thy book doth live
And we have wits to read and praise to give.
That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses,
I mean with great, but disproportion'd Muses,
For if I thought my judgment were of years,
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
And tell how far thou didst our **Lyly** outshine,
Or sporting **Kyd**, or **Marlowe's** mighty line.
And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek,
From thence to **honour** thee, I would not seek
For names; but call forth thund'ring {AE}schylus,
Euripides and Sophocles to us;
[Emphasis added, modern spelling]

The misreading of the expression **from thence** has led to endless speculations upon the limited level of Latin and Greek William of Stratford might have received at a small provincial grammar school. To expose the flaw in this reading, one need look no further than the Oxford dictionary:

Thence *adv.* 1. From that place or there... 4 From that, as a source, origin or cause, from those premises or data; *therefrom*. Also preceded by *from*. 1652. (OED.)

With *Greek* linked to *Latin* by the conjunction *and*, the contextual meaning is clearly *therefrom*, alluding to the level of Latin and

Greek scholarship attributable to fellow playwrights and collaborators (Thomas Kyd, John Lyly, and Christopher Marlowe) as being more limited than Shakespeare's. Furthermore, these names were linked to schools of rational thinkers whose activities were closely monitored by government agents. Fear and betrayal from within the heart of de Vere's literary coterie led to the torture and death of Kyd, as well as to the mysterious murder of Marlowe in the company of three known informers. By 1593 under Walsingham and Burghley, Elizabethan persecution of dissidents had become no less severe than the Marian persecutions. In this context, the case of the Stratford martyrs suggests allusions to both Jonson's 'monument without a tomb' and Digges's reference to Stratford.

...when that stone is rent
And Time dissolves thy Stratford Monument,
Here we alive shall view thee still. This Booke
When brasse and marble fade, shall make thee looke
Fresh to all ages...

First Folio Dedication (Leonard Digges)

Digges's reference here may well allude to the parish located in the marshlands east of London, which straddles the boundaries of Hackney and Stratford-atte-Bow, in which de Vere was presumably interred. The 1703 map of Stepney preserved in Mile-End-Library still refers to the area as Bow Marshes, in Stratford-atte-Bow. This area is historically significant both in terms of political geography and as a trope. For example, until a memorial was erected in 1878, Stratford itself represented a "monument without a tomb" to 13 of the victims listed in Fox's List of Martyrs.

Mary I's attempts to return the country to Roman Catholicism were responsible for the death of many protestants, among them 13 men and women who were burned at the stake at Stratford in June 1556. A memorial to them was erected over 300 years later in 1878. The gothic structure in St. John's Churchyard (Stratford) opposite the main church entrance lists all 13 martyrs by name. (Peter Ath)

It is within this context that the circle of thinkers who belonged to de Vere's coterie becomes particularly interesting. Poet Leonard Digges's grandfather (also named Leonard), a mathematician and scientist, became a victim of the Marian purges against heresy and very nearly became one of its martyrs. Grandfather Leonard and father Thomas Digges jointly initiated the development of reflecting and refracting telescopes. Leonard Digges was an Oxford graduate mathematician who published several works that fell foul of papal orthodoxy. Leonard had been sentenced to death in 1554 for

(cont'd on p. 20)

New Stratfordianism (cont'd from p. 19)

opposing the Marian regime, but the penalty was reduced to confiscation of the family estates and a debilitating spell in prison. It was none other than John Dee who then encouraged and coached Thomas Digges after his father's death in 1599. Thomas Digges thus managed to continue and develop his father's mathematical and scientific work under Elizabeth. This involved translating and publicizing the heliocentric theories of Copernicus, whose discoveries on the movements of the planets and the make up of the stars, so unpalatable to Papal orthodoxy, form the basis of modern astronomy. They also find a clear reference in Hamlet, when Polonius cites a poem written by Hamlet to Ophelia:

Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move
Doubt truth to be liar
But never doubt I love. (Hamlet 2.2)

Although de Vere's name is now recorded on the family tombstone in Westminster Abbey as befitted the Oxford ancestral line, Digges's Stratford reference could be read as an ironic comparison between Stratford Will's monument and de Vere's. As David Roper has indicated:

Digges then becomes totally pluralistic with his terminology. "*When that stone is rent*", he says, referring still to Shakespeare's "*Tombe*", "*And Time dissolves thy Stratford Monument.*" This is the first mention of any direct link between Shakespeare and Stratford. It also contradicts Jonson's earlier statement—"Thou art a Monument, *without* a tombe," (line 22). It would appear that the effort to make statements apply to two very different men is causing contradictions to emerge. But, Digges's reference to Stratford is also ambiguous, because Stratford le Bow lies just to the north of the Isle of Dogs, on the River Lea, below and adjacent to Hackney, which was then the centre of the largest parish in Middlesex. (Roper)

The links between Essex Stratford and the avant-garde ideas alluded to in Shakespeare's work thus embody a significant field of reference. As James I likely knew who wrote the Shakespeare canon, the First Folio's publishers were faced with a serious dilemma. James's regime was in serious trouble. At the head of any rebellion, would have been Henry de Vere, the 18th Earl of Oxford. Towards the end of his reign James's approval rating was virtually non-existent. His apparent bending to the will of the Spanish Court had put him on a par with 'Bloody Mary' (whose persecution of Protestants and rational dissenters had placed Stratford-le-Bow within the canon of martyrdom), and the opposition—both open and clandestine—threatened the whole institution of the Stuart monarchy, not to mention monarchical power itself. Given that Edward's son Henry de Vere was imprisoned for sedition and the King was deeply hostile to the Oxford dynasty, any attempt too obviously promoting Edward de Vere as the Bard could have resulted in the confiscation and probable destruction of the works. On the other hand, delaying the project any longer would have risked losing the eclectic compilation of documents that had required

so much editing. How then was the identity of the author to be dealt with? Accrediting the rather elusive actor and trader from Stratford would have been both misleading and counterproductive.

If de Vere were the author of the works, the First folio project must in some way have alluded to an Oxfordian Stratford or Stratfords. This could have been the pathetic unmarked marshland grave of a bankrupt aristocrat. There is indeed a strong ironic comparison with the graves of more astute "lower caste" actor-managers like William of Stratford and Edward Alleyn, who had bought considerable homes and had had conventional burials. The historical weight attached to Essex Stratford, as opposed to the location of William of Stratford's grave, may shift the emphasis in reading Digges to *thy Stratford Monument*, thus alluding to de Vere Shakespeare rather than Shakspeare.

Thus the nature of references to a "monument without a tomb" and "Stratford monument" assumes a whole new significance. William of Stratford's original grave was known to Digges's mother, Anne. The widowed Anne Digges remarried Stratford area lawyer Thomas Russell, who oversaw William of Stratford's will. That Digges, whose stepfather made no mention of a link, wrote no tribute to Shakespeare as an author in 1616 serves to challenge any simplistic interpretation of Stratford in the Digges tribute as a reference to Stratford-on-Avon.

Within the context of Essex Stratford and the de Vere dynasty's misfortunes, there is yet another link. The Vere family had suffered brutal seizures of assets under the Yorkists, as well as under Henry VIII. In the Elizabethan era, land-seizure by rival factions was being displaced by the idea of land as a commodity. Inherited rights and obligations of landowners and peasants in the old feudal sense were being eroded. John de Vere, the 16th Earl of Oxford, was known for his traditional sense of responsibility towards tenants. On the other hand, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and Lord Burghley did more than simply take advantage of young Edward de Vere's wardship status by ruthlessly exploiting his estates in his name. They embodied a rising generation of commercial owners who abandoned traditional obligations to the poor by turning them off profitable estates through the Enclosure Acts. Edward de Vere was caught in the middle of an age where the long feudal struggle for the control of assets in terms of land was reaching a climax. During the period between 1470 and the 1604 loss of hereditary estates in the area Essex Stratford had been particularly poignant for the de Vere family. In terms of direct dispossession of ancestral lands, one especially significant case is the fate of Elizabeth, the 12th Earl of Oxford's wife. Further Stratford links are recorded in the following account of the downturn in Elizabeth's fortunes, before Henry VII finally put an end to the catastrophic level of Yorkist-Lancastrian feuding:

Knowing her to be a staunch supporter of Henry VI, Edward IV had Elizabeth confined in a convent, Bromley Priory, at Stratford-le-Bow. This was a small Benedictine house with less than 12 nuns. Unsatisfied with all the Earl's lands and a good portion of Warwick's, Richard of Gloucester was determined to have those which the old lady held as well. Shortly after Christmas in early 1472

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and executed (see Fox). The treatment in 1555 of the body of Martin Bucer, a German-born Reformer at Cambridge, illustrates the intensity of rancor. Though interred four years, his body was dragged from its grave, tried for heresy, condemned, and burned at the stake (see L. Golding). The universities were not immune from upheaval. Changes in their curricula were so offensive to Golding's Protestant religious scruples that he left college after three years without obtaining a degree. But on Mary's death in 1558, her sister Elizabeth I became Queen and, during the next few years, reestablished the Anglican Church while overtly aiding the Protestant cause in both Scotland and the Low Countries.

During the religious conflicts that subsequently rent England, Golding's strong Protestantism kept him at work on the Protestant side. He ultimately became the most voluminous translator of the Elizabethan Era. He is best known today for his translations of Caesar's *Commentaries* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but in his own day his reputation was principally as a translator of John Calvin's many sermons and "postils" (i.e., glosses or notes) to the Scriptures. Most of Golding's literary works consisted of translations; he completed only two original works, both in prose. While Golding's translation of *Metamorphoses* contains much that is original—the translation is far from literal—his role in that work is at question here.

It has been maintained by some Oxfordians that both the language and subject matter of *Metamorphoses* were at extreme variance with Golding's religion-centered translations. To borrow a phrase from Thomas Jefferson (in another context), one might say the translation in relation to the others was "as distinguishable as

diamonds in a dunghill" (see Church). A new edition of his translation of *Metamorphoses*, edited and annotated by Madeleine Forey, was published in 2001.

During my examination of the list of Golding's publications, as given in Louis T. Golding's biography (which contains a "corrected" timetable), something struck me. How did he have time to perform the difficult translation of Ovid into English meter when he was simultaneously engaged in his religious translations?

Let us suppose his self-discipline was similar to that of Ernest Hemingway, who spent only and always four hours a day working at his desk. After some reflection I presumed Golding had a translation rate for French that was 25 percent higher than for Latin and his rate of translation into English verse was 3/8 that of his translation rate into prose (1/2 seemed too high, while 1/4 seemed too low; Golding published only one poem other than *Metamorphoses*). Considering his mundane and quotidian priestly duties, he had an average translation rate (here is the pivotal but reasonable assumption) of 360 pages per year when translating Latin prose into English. (Due to several factors, I assumed a somewhat higher rate of 450 pages per year for octavo texts.)

I chose this number by reducing the length of time it took me as a student to comprehend and translate Latin into English, and then compose acceptable prose. In the sixteenth century, there was also the additional requirement of "making a fair copy" with quill-pen and ink. I thought Golding could do the latter no faster than I. Table 1 depicts the year of completion and the estimated time for completion of Golding's translations during 1562-70.

Let's presume that Golding accomplished his tasks singly and

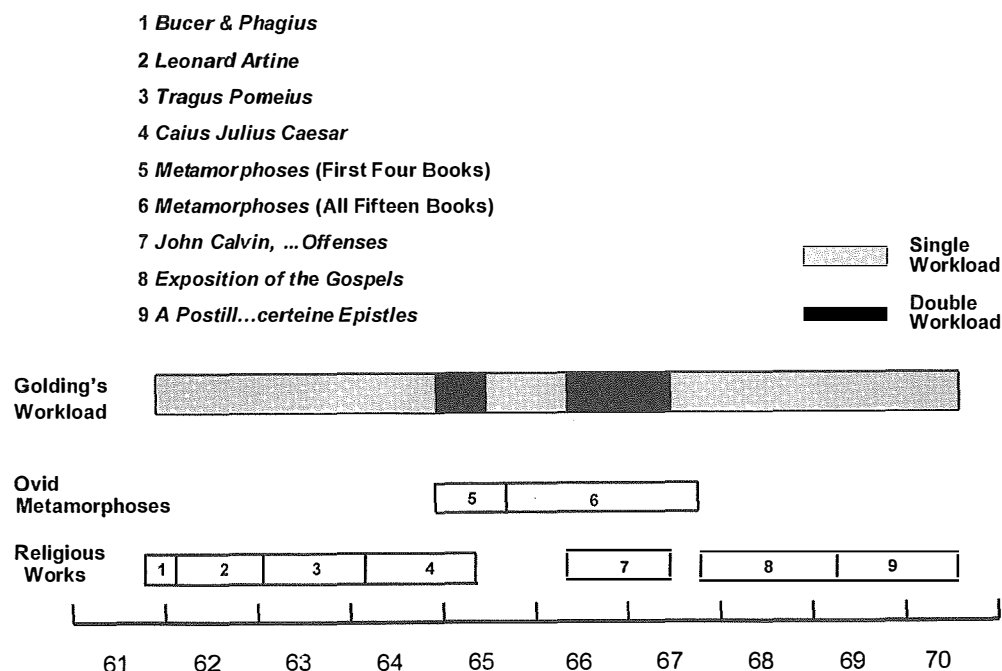
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Table 1. Golding's Translations (1562-70): Publication Dates and Estimated Times for Completion

Item	Title and Difficulty	Date and Preparation Time	
1	<i>A brief treatise concerning the burnynge of Bucer & Phagius</i> Latin prose into English 112 quarto pages	1562	4 months
2	<i>The history of Leonard artine concerning the Warres...</i> Latin prose into English 360 quarto pages	1563	12 months
3	<i>Thabridgement of the History of Tragus Pompeius</i> Latin prose into English 400 quarto pages	1564	13 months
4	<i>The eight books of Caius Iulius Caesar & his Martial...</i> Latin prose into English 544 octavo pages	1565	14+ months
5	<i>The Fyrst Fower Books of P. Ovidius Naso's work</i> Latin verse into English metre 106 quarto pages	1565	9+ months
	Nothing published this year	1566	
6	<i>The XV Books of P. Ovidius Naso entytled Metamorphosis</i> Latin verse into English metre "400 quarto pages, 294 remaining"	1567	26 months
7	"A Little Book, by John Calvin,...concerning Offences..." Latin prose into English 420 quarto pages	1567	14 months
	Nothing published this year	1568	
8	"A Postill, or Exposition of the Gospels, read in the Churches..." French prose into English 690 quarto pages	1569	18 months
9	"A Postil, or orderly disposing of certeine Epistles..." Latin prose into English 489 quarto pages	1570	16 months

Translations (cont'd from p. 21)

Figure 1. Golding's Works of Translation (1561-70)



linearly, and that his estimated rate of translation varied slightly with the subject matter. The month of publication is not known; nor is the delay between completion and publication dates. Figure 1 illustrates how these translation tasks might have been fit into the time available.

The endpoints of the blocks representing each translation are constrained only by the year of publication, as shown in Table 1. The blocks representing the time frame for each project are placed so as to minimize the overlap of the Ovid blocks and the blocks representing the religious works. An implicit assumption is that the religious blocks are themselves constrained so that they do not overlap. This doesn't yield a unique solution to the placement of the blocks, but nearly so. The key point is that there is no way to schedule these projects without at least an approximate 18 month (total) period of overlap where Golding's workload would be twice that assumed for his normal translation rate. Note that a slight decrease in the translation rate would exhaust the time available in the decade and thereby increase the period of overlap. No reasonable increase in translation rate, however, can prevent Golding from having a double-load, *unless someone else translated Ovid*. □

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Grandsire (cont'd from p. 19)

3rd great grandparents: Sergeaux, L'Arcedekne, Burley, Chichley/Chichelle, Scudamore, Camoys

The possible allusions to them are shown in Table 1. □

Endnotes

1. The text follows the First Folio; line numbering as in most modern editions.
2. According to the OED, "Trussel" is an alternate spelling for "trestle" as is "trustle". One meaning is given as a candle-holder of a church.
3. Charlton Ogburn, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, 1984, 712.
4. In The Norton Facsimile of the First Folio (673) the words "Mouse" and "Constable" are both capitalized. In Quartos 1 through 5, held by the British Library, the word "mouse" is spelt in the diminutive form, whilst the word "Constable" is capitalized. Facsimiles of the quartos may be accessed at www.bl.uk/treasures/Shakespeare/homepage.html.
5. Kennedy-Skipton's research is described in his letter to the editor on page 2 of the Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter, dated March 30, 1971.

The Relative Size of Shakespeare's Vocabulary

By Wayne Shore

At first glance, compelling evidence for Oxford's authorship seems within reach. If, as is widely believed, Shakespeare's vocabulary was really vastly superior to that of any other contemporaneous author, all one would need to do is establish that Oxford's vocabulary was equally superior. It's as if witnesses report that the perpetrator of a crime is 14 feet tall, and all you have to do is find someone who matches that height.

That's not the way it has turned out. This investigation of the size of Shakespeare's vocabulary and its implications for authorship starts with the assumption Shakespeare did, in fact, have a superior vocabulary. McCrum et al. state that "...Shakespeare had one of the largest vocabularies of any English writer, some 30,000 words" (103). Slater reports: "It has been said, for instance, that Shakespeare has a larger vocabulary than Milton" (20). Others have claimed that Shakespeare's vocabulary was double, or even triple, that of Milton's.

Some Oxfordians believe that this is a point in favor of Oxford's candidacy, as it is easier to explain Oxford's opportunities to acquire a superior vocabulary than to explain the same for Shakespeare.

This paper contends that both of these beliefs are wrong. That is, Shakespeare's vocabulary was *not* significantly superior to that of any contemporaneous author (or Milton), and if it were, it would not necessarily constitute an argument against Shakespeare's candidacy. In fact, if Shakespeare's vocabulary were vastly superior, one could develop this fact into an argument *in favor* of Shakespeare's candidacy.

To understand this, it is necessary to examine the relationship of the number of different words used as it relates to text length. It is helpful to define *types* and *tokens*. *Types* refers to distinct words, and *tokens* refers to total words, including repeats. If you write a 1000-word essay, you write a 1000-token essay. Your essay will include many common words that are used more than once. Discounting the repeated words, your essay may contain, say, 500 types, counting, for example *the* just once, instead of the 50 times it was used.

The number of types (different words) that an author uses is a function of the number of tokens used. But as the text gets longer (i.e., more tokens) the increase in types is not proportionate. Instead, the number of types increases only at an ever-decreasing rate; the rate of increase of types is less than the rate of increase in tokens. The relationship of the number of types to the number of tokens generally looks as shown (notionally) in Figure 1.

To suppose that Shakespeare's vocabulary was double that of another author, such as Milton, is to assume that supporting evidence would reveal itself in a type-token ratio like the one (again notional) in Figure 2.

No such evidence, as shown in Figure 2, exists. To account for the mistake that has led some to believe Shakespeare's vocabulary is vastly superior, refer to Figure 3.

The mistake is in comparing Shakespeare's end point with Milton's end point, while not taking into account that Shakespeare's end point is based on many more tokens than Milton's.

Figure 1. Relationship between Types and Tokens

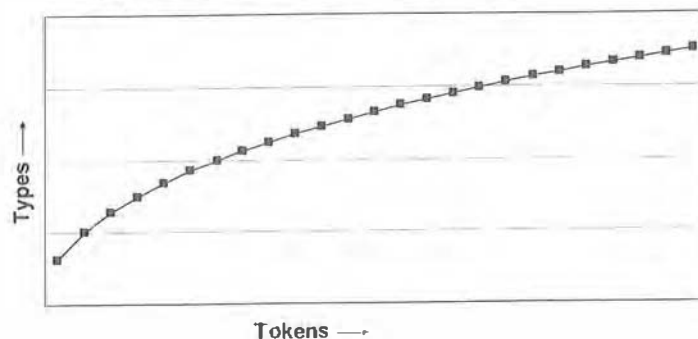


Figure 2. Relationship Between Types and Tokens

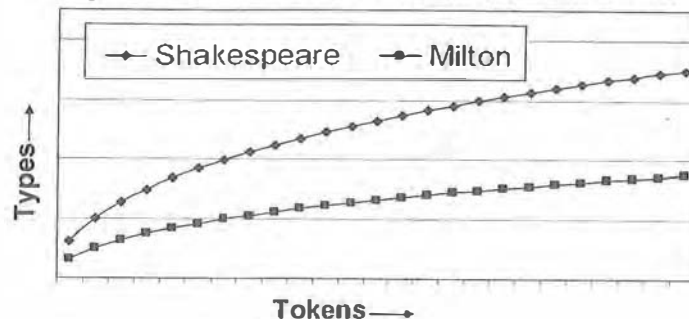
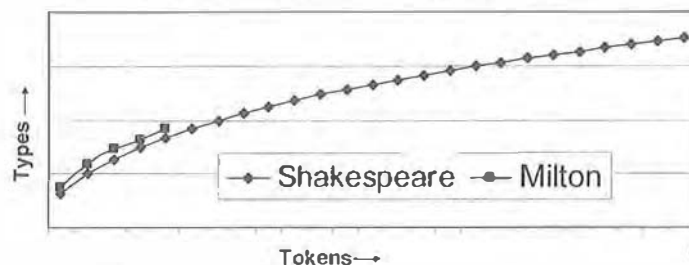


Figure 3. Relationship between Types and Tokens



Figures 1-3 show hypothetical data just to show the relationship between types and tokens, and how that can reveal differences in authors' vocabularies. When examining actual data, many rules

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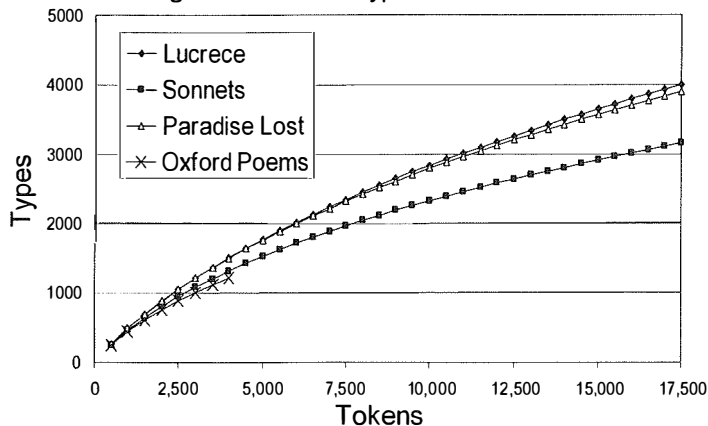
Shakespeare's Vocabulary (cont'd from p. 23)

can be used to determine what counts as a distinct word. One may or may not count plural forms as distinct from singular forms, and likewise for the various verb tenses and different forms of the same word (e.g., amazed and amaz'd). Another decision is whether to count proper nouns. The important point is to apply the same rules to all authors being examined.

Figure 4 shows some actual data for *Paradise Lost*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, Shakespeare's Sonnets, and Oxford's poetry.

The Rape of Lucrece and *Paradise Lost* show the same level of vocabulary richness. The Sonnets are at a somewhat lower level, with Oxford's poetry being just a bit lower than the Sonnets.

Figure 4. Actual Type/Token Data



Some inferences can be drawn from the data in Figure 4. The vocabulary richness exhibited in *Rape of Lucrece* is very similar to that of *Paradise Lost*. Therefore, vocabulary richness does not distinguish between Shakespeare and Milton. Second, vocabulary richness differs notably between *Rape of Lucrece* and the Sonnets, indicating some variation in vocabulary richness within Shakespeare's works. (An examination of Shakespeare's plays, not reported here, shows a wide range of vocabulary richness among them.)

Oxford's poetry has a vocabulary richness only slightly below that of the Sonnets, but that does not constitute evidence for or against his candidacy, as it is to be expected that many poets show similar richness. It's possible that Oxford's poetry trails the Sonnets due to Oxford's youth when he authored his poems, but that doesn't affect the evidence that vocabulary richness is not a useful way to identify the authors discussed here.

Some Oxfordians may be disappointed to learn that Shakespeare's vocabulary was not vastly superior, based on the theory that a superior vocabulary makes Oxford a more likely candidate than Shakspeare. The disappointment is misguided, however. True, Oxford is more likely to have a vocabulary superior to Shakspeare based on education and opportunities to learn. It would be reasonable to assume that someone with Oxford's background would have a vocabulary slightly or somewhat superior to a person with Shakspeare's background. But the notion that Shakespeare's vocabulary was vastly superior to Milton's changes the character of that notion. We have just seen some hypothetical and real data, but now let's just reflect on the notion that Shakespeare's vocabulary

was vastly superior to other authors, say twice as great as sometimes claimed. We might note that such superiority doesn't occur in nature. The fastest miler is a bit under four minutes, but there is no two-minute miler. The tallest basketball player is about seven feet, but we don't see a 14-footer. Natural variation is typically distributed around a normal curve, with second place near first place.

So, what if Shakespeare's vocabulary was in fact demonstrably twice that of other authors? We would have a phenomenon we couldn't explain. It would be as a preternatural event—a miracle. Once the inexplicable is accepted, it's only a short step to add the also inexplicable theory that a person of Shakspeare's background was the author of the plays and poems.

In summary, there is no probative evidence that Shakespeare's vocabulary was especially superior. Moreover, the inferred size of an author's vocabulary based on type-to-token ratio has not been shown to be an indicator of authorship.

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New Stratfordianism (cont'd from p. 20)

Richard and his servants burst in and falsely claimed that Edward IV had given him custody of her person and lands. She was forced to hand over the keys to her coffers and then taken to Sir Thomas Vaughan's house in Stepney. Here, under threat of imprisonment and placed in jeopardy of her life, she was forced to agree to sign over all her estates and possessions.... Stripped of her possessions, she was then returned to Bromley Priory. (Amos 4)

In *The Oxfordian Vol. 7*, the indications of either a suicide scandal or a staged 'missing presumed dead' style disappearance have been tantalizingly demonstrated by Robert Detobel and Christopher Paul. The Earl would be unique in being the only high-ranking nobleman without either a funeral or a tomb. Although the main indications are that the blurring of the edges of an official death of whatever nature was strategically planned to protect the eleven-year-old eighteenth Earl Henry from the deprivations of wardship, there may have been equally compelling if somewhat eccentric artistic reasons. Given the deeply metaphorical modes of reference employed by Elizabethan and Jacobean radicals, the use of Stratford as a trope is a rhetorical device that cannot be dismissed. □

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