



The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter



Dedicated to Researching and Honoring the True Bard

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Report of 13th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference

by Richard Joyrich, MD

Although perhaps not as well attended as in the past, the recent Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference (SASC) at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon was among the most memorable. This was perhaps the most open of conferences with at least four alternative candidates for the author of the works ascribed to William Shakespeare (counting Edward de Vere, who still was the overwhelmingly favored candidate of the conference).

I, for one, applaud the fact that we are hearing about other



Photo credit: John Hamill

Actor Emmanuel Henreid and keynote speaker Ramon Jiménez at Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference, Concordia University, April 2009.

candidates. I think that there is always more to learn from others research and that evidence for a particular candidate can often shed light on the case for a different one.

Also, in view of 2009 being the 400th anniversary of the publication of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, the conference seemed to focus on the sonnets and other poetry of Shakespeare – a place where most people think that the answer to the authorship question will be found.

Thursday

The conference began in the evening of Thursday, April 16 with a performance by Hank Whitemore of his one-man play *Shakespeare's Treason*, a

dramatic distillation of his 900-page book on the sonnets, *The Monument*. This book basically reports Hank's theory that the sonnets (or at least most of them) can be read as a diary, with entries every day for the period of time around the Essex Rebellion – in which Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton (Oxford's son by Elizabeth according to Hank and others in the Prince Tudor camp) was involved – through the trial of Southampton, his sentence of death, and then his reprieve (to life imprisonment, instead), and then entries every year until Southampton was pardoned by James I.

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SOS President Matthew Cossolotto: Enchanted April 2009 – Big Mo for the Big O

April 2009 may well be remembered ages and ages hence – hopefully sooner – as something of a watershed month in the Shakespeare authorship mystery. With apologies to Robert Frost, the prophesy of this slightly edited stanza from “The Road Not Taken” may indeed come to pass:

*I shall be telling this with a
sigh*

*Somewhere ages and ages
hence:*

*Two **birthdays** diverged in a
month, and I—*

*I took the one less **toasted** by,
And that has made all the dif-
ference.*

Those of us who have not taken what appears to be a dead-end road to Stratford-upon-Avon, should be heartened by several developments

around April 2009. These developments put both the authorship question and the case for Oxford on the map in a big way.

We just might be seeing some big mo – as in momentum – for the Big O.

The alleged birthday of William Shakespeare is celebrated around the world on April 23. Many media outlets in many countries routinely run a “Happy Birthday Will” story. We know this is going to happen every year and we should do what we can each April to raise the authorship issue and encourage consideration of the Oxford theory.

Again this April, SOS issued a press release about the bogus “Shakespeare” birthday. Here’s a link to the press release, which was posted on our new SOS blog: “Toast But Verify” (1)

(cont'd on p. 35)

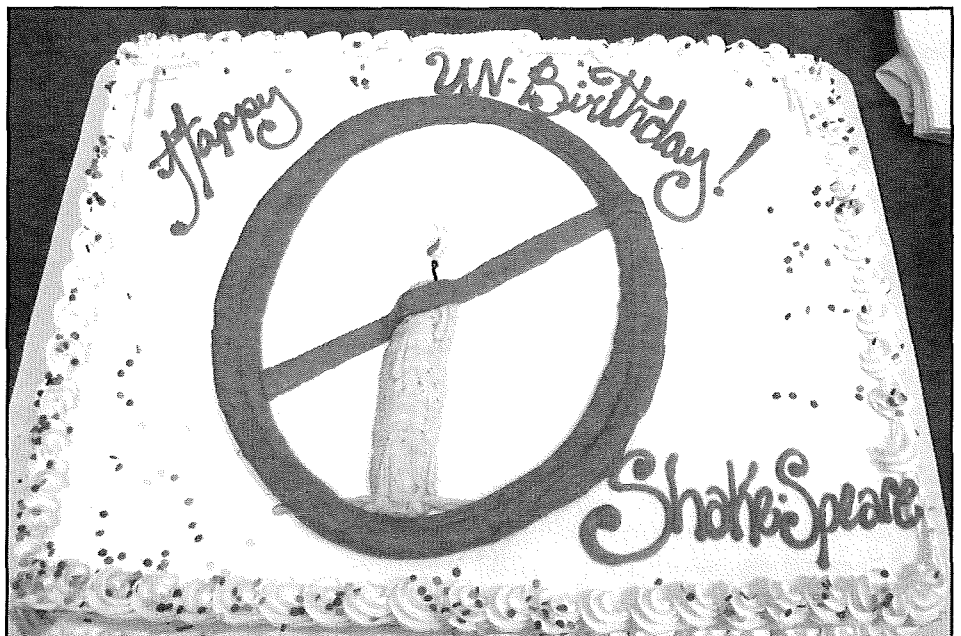


Photo credit: Linda Theil

UN-birthday cake from Oberon Shakespeare Study Group UN-birthday party April 23, 2009 in Farmington Hills, MI.

SOS Vice-president John Hamill: Publications Committee news

The Publications Committee of the Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter thanks Lew Tate for serving as Newsletter Editor for the last three years. Lew was one of our longest serving editors and did wonderful work, especially under very stressful circumstances - as all editors know.

With this issue we are excited to introduce you to Linda Theil, who has been appointed as our new Newsletter Editor. Linda Theil, is a Howell, Michigan-based journalist and communications professional. Theil's extensive career as a journalist includes writing for the *The Detroit News*, *Ann Arbor News*, and *Hour Detroit*. She is the owner of Theil Communications producing newsletters and publication materials for a wide variety of clients. For

the past several years, Theil has been active in the Oberon Shakespeare Study Group, a Michigan-based Shakespeare authorship organization. She provides editorial direction for the very informative Oberon blog.

Visit <http://oberonshakespearestudygroup.blogspot.com>. She is accepting articles, news items and media reviews for the SOS newsletter and can be reached at linda.theil@gmail.com.

One of Theil's goals as editor of the Society's newsletter is to make more effective use of electronic media, in an effort to disseminate the Society's messages much more quickly and widely. A new Shakespeare Oxford Society blog has been created at <http://shakespeareoxfordsociety.wordpress.com>.

Matthew Cossolotto, President of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, said: "We're extremely pleased to have a communica-

tions professional of Linda's caliber and extensive journalistic experience as our newsletter editor. Her background, creativity and high energy will help us get our pro-Shakespeare message out to a much wider audience."

We also want to inform you that with this issue and with the new editor, we are renumbering the volume and number of the newsletter. We believe the newsletter's date should reflect when it actually comes out. **For this reason, this issue will be Volume 45: No 1. There will be no newsletter volume 44: No 4.** Our aim is still to publish four issues a year. This is one of our highest priorities. We want to thank you for your patience and for your loyalty as we develop fresh directions that incorporate the new information technology that has evolved around us.

*John Hamill, Vice-president
Shakespeare Oxford Society*

The Repeated Words of the Sonnets

*Beauty and fair, one and other
All and ever, ever-fixed, ever-more, ever-y, every-one, every-thing, every-where
Can, Day, and date
Death and die
Gentle, gracious, grief, growth, and sweet
Hate, have, and heart, his and him, hers and her, my and you
My eyes, my heart, my rose, my self, my music, my silence
Knowledge, make, and more, mind
Above all, love
Praise and pride, self, some, and she
Time, tongue, truth - and Will and world and worth
His last Achilles' Shield graven
With a handful of breath*

from "Three Tributes for de Vere" by William Ray www.wray.net

Oxford – beyond a reasonable doubt

by R. Thomas Hunter, Ph.D.

The real news was not that Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens came down on the side of Oxfordians on the authorship issue. Justice Stevens' interest in Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford as the true author has been known for years. The real news was that it was reported by the internationally read and respected *Wall Street Journal* on the front page of its April 18-19 weekend cultural edition.

Most significant for Oxfordians, in addition to Justice Stevens' stature as a jurist and legal mind, was his clear and spirited declaration that his finding that Oxford wrote the works attributed to William Shakespeare was "beyond a reasonable doubt." Stevens didn't stop at reasonable doubt. Nor did he stop at Stratford. He went all the way to *beyond* reasonable doubt and, instead of limiting himself to finding against Stratford, went all the way to finding for Oxford.

While the *Journal* report focused on Stevens for its headline, almost as remarkable was its identification of a second Oxfordian on the Court, Justice Antonin Scalia who recalled that his position was formulated early on when "... as a child he received a monograph propounding de Vere's cause from a family friend." This brief history calls for more details and suggests a story perhaps as significant as that of Stevens for advancing the Oxfordian position.

The final count among the nine active justices on the Court is also significant for Oxfordians. According to the *Journal* article, the count included two justices outright for Oxford: Stevens and Scalia, and two for Shakspeare: Justice Anthony Kennedy and Justice Stephen Breyer. The five remaining members of the Court – if they leaned in any direction – leaned toward reasonable doubt. Three of the five had no comment for the *Wall Street Journal* and two stated they were not sure.

In other words, the United States Supreme Court today will not commit to Stratford Will by a margin of 7-2. Of the seven, two are pro Oxford "beyond a reasonable doubt" and five either have reasonable doubt about the identity of the true Shakespeare or are unwilling to speak up for the candidate from Stratford. It might be added that agreement on the issue by Stevens and Scalia, who are so frequently at opposite ideological ends of the Court, may be impressive evidence of the persuasiveness of the case for Oxford.

This situation is a remarkable turn-around from September 25, 1987 when three Justices of the Supreme Court, Stevens and Justices William Brennan and Harry Blackmun, sat on a moot court case at American University. The topic was authorship in which Oxford challenged Stratford Will as the true Shakespeare. The Justices at that time found against Oxford not because Stratford Will's case was proven but because, as the challenger, Oxford did not meet the bur-

den of proof, a matter of legal procedure more than the merit of the evidence provided in the arguments. Shakspeare did not have to prove anything because he held precedent. Legally, Oxford advocates had to make the case to unseat Stratford. The Justices felt that the evidence provided was not persuasive enough to prevail against the man so long accepted to be the author Shakespeare.

As the *Journal* reported, Justice Stevens' interest was sparked by that case. He has stated that if he knew then what he knows now, he would have found arguments for Oxford persuasive and would have found for the challenger. As it is, after the moot court case, Stevens – whose interest in Shakespeare goes back to his youth which included graduate study in English – visited The Birthplace and duly noted the absence of books, letters or any other documentation connecting Shakspeare to the works of Shakespeare. He concluded that this was persuasive evidence. This is the kind of evidence explored in great detail by studies such as Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*.

Such a methodology was detailed by Stevens in his University of Pennsylvania Law Review article, "The Shakespeare Canon of Statutory Construction," (140:4, April 1992, 1373-87) in which Stevens described how following the five canons of statutory construction led to his finding for de Vere. A model of judicial restraint, Stevens nevertheless advocated for

using supplemental sources to resolve ambiguity in legal texts. He finds such ambiguity in the six known Shaksper signatures which appear to betray a man struggling with his own name and also the apparent consistency of the soft A in Shakspere when referring to the Stratford man and the long A in Shakespeare when referring to the author. Stevens wrote that Oxfordian research on these questions is an example of the first canon of statutory construction, "Read the statute."

Stevens' discussion of the second canon of statutory construction, "Read the entire statute," focuses on reading the entire canon to understand Shakespeare's aristocratic experience, point of view, and values. The third canon, that the text be read in its contemporary context, leads Stevens to a discussion of Shakespeare's genius with language and familiarity with leading works in Latin and Greek literature, the lack of evidence that the Stratford man, as a commoner of the time, was so equipped, and the bountiful evidence that Oxford, as a nobleman, was.

The fourth canon, "Consult the legislative history," becomes relevant for Stevens as to silences with regard to legislative intent. He focuses on three silences in authorship. Where is Shaksper's library? Why does the extensive and detailed journal of his son-in-law Dr. Hall contain absolutely no reference to his accomplished father-in-law? And, most puzzling to Stevens: why was there a seven year silence

between Shakspere's death in 1616 and the appearance of the First Folio in 1623?

Stevens demonstrates Shakespeare's use of the fifth canon in *The Merchant of Venice* and in *Measure for Measure*. The fifth canon requires that judges "use a little common sense" and reject an interpretation which would produce an absurd result. While allowing that both traditionalists and Oxfordians might use the fifth

That is the nature of circumstantial evidence, no smoking gun but dozens or hundreds or even thousands of little bullets of fact, each one of which alone proves nothing but which in their entirety provide considerable ammunition against the case for Stratford.

canon in reaching their respective conclusions, Stevens finds that greater common sense and less absurdity reside on the side of the Oxfordians.

To appreciate the importance of Justice Stevens' contribution to the public case for Oxford, we need to understand the importance of his finding for Oxford "beyond a reasonable doubt." The issue here is the nature and quality of evidence. That Shakespeare authorship

is properly in the province of the lawyer was the point made by Tappan Gregory, editor-in-chief of the collection of American Bar Association Journal articles titled *Shakespeare Cross-Examination* (The Cuneo Press, Inc., Chicago, 1961). He wrote that in addition to being a literary problem, "the question of the identity of the author of the plays is also one of evidence, and therefore within the province of lawyers."

The importance of Stevens' finding from his seat on the highest court in the land, the pinnacle of our legal system, cannot be emphasized too strongly or appreciated too much. It is this point precisely that Shakespeare lovers need to understand if they are to educate themselves on the basics of the authorship issue, not to mention its finer points.

What Stevens' accomplished legal mind demonstrates is that while there is no smoking gun proving that Oxford wrote Shakespeare, there doesn't need to be. That is the nature of circumstantial evidence, no smoking gun but dozens or hundreds or even thousands of little bullets of fact, each one of which alone proves nothing but which in their entirety provide considerable ammunition against the case for Stratford.

C.K. Davis, quoting "an eminent text-writer on the law of evidence" in his *The Law in Shakespeare* (Washington Law Book Co., Washington D.C., 1883) describes how when "... each of a number of independent circumstances, or combination of circumstances, tends to the same conclusion,

the probability of the truth of the fact is necessarily greatly increased in proportion to the number of those independent circumstances." (Davis 31) Furthermore, the increase is "... not in a merely cumulative, but in a compound and multiplied, proportion." (Davis 32) The powerful conclusion is that "... coincidences... which are too close and numerous to be accounted for by accidental concurrence of fiction, must necessarily have truth for their foundation." (Davis 33)

This is roughly how circumstantial evidence works with respect to Shakespeare authorship. Any one piece of circumstantial evidence may be dismissed as coincidence or accident. For example, the recognition by both Oxfordian and traditional scholars that the character of *Hamlet's* Polonius likely derives from Lord Burghley in and of itself means nothing for authorship. But add to that the connections between what happens in *Hamlet* and the life experiences of Oxford. Further add to that the hundreds of connections from Oxford's experience to the rest of Shakespeare's plays and poems. Then add other elements such as Oxford's standing and activities in the literary community and in theater; his relationship with writers such as John Lyly and Anthony Mundy; his uncle and tutor Arthur Golding, translator of the literary work recognized as the most influential on Shakespeare; his place at court and travel to lands which became the centerpieces of Shakespeare's plays; his access to the books identified

as sources of Shakespeare's plays; and on and on.

As the separate bits of circumstantial evidence gather, they eventually reach a critical mass approaching certainty and overturning precedent. That is the basis of Justice Stevens' finding "beyond a reasonable doubt." There is too much evidence to ignore, too much to dismiss. In his view, the

Prof. Kahn is clearly not aware that her nobodies include Mark Twain, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sigmund Freud, Orson Welles, Charles Chaplin, Walt Whitman, Leo Tolstoy, Henry James, Laurence Harvey, Mark Rylance, Sir Derek Jacobi, Jeremy Irons, and even revered editor of the Shakespeare variorum editions Horace Howard Furness.

certainty of the evidence rises not only above the reasonable doubt which Oxfordians and others are asking the academic and scholarly establishment to recognize with regard to Stratford but beyond that reasonable doubt to finding for Edward de Vere.

This process is also most appropriate for finding the true author in Edward de Vere

whose motto *Vero Nihil Verius*, Nothing Truer than Truth, not only coats the history of the quest for the true author in irony but also echoes the process of research and analysis which generates the evidence that will eventually become too overwhelming for the reasonable among us to resist.

This is the abiding significance of what Justice Stevens has accomplished. He has boldly taken the Oxford case far beyond where it stood when the Supreme Court became involved in 1987. The majority of the Court has followed him to a position of at least reasonable doubt about the true identity behind the name William Shakespeare, at least one other Justice agreeing with him that the name behind William Shakespeare is Edward de Vere.

Reporter Jess Bravins and editors of the *Wall Street Journal* have not responded to inquiries concerning the publication of the story and the considerable backlash it received from defenders of William Shakespeare of Stratford-Upon-Avon. In perhaps the understatement of the day, Bravin acknowledged that the stand taken by the Supreme Court Justices "puts much of the court squarely outside mainstream academic opinion."

The article does quote traditional scholar Brown University English professor Coppelia Kahn, who is president of the Shakespeare Association of America. Prof. Kahn stated about the case for Oxford, "Nobody gives any credence to these arguments." This statement demonstrates ignorance of

the long history of research on the subject and the formidable accumulation of evidence which that research has produced.

Prof. Kahn is clearly not aware that her nobodies include Mark Twain, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sigmund Freud, Orson Welles, Charles Chaplin, Walt Whitman, Leo Tolstoy, Henry James, Laurence Harvey, Mark Rylance, Sir Derek Jacobi, Jeremy Irons, and even revered editor of the Shakespeare variorum editions Horace Howard Furness.

She is clearly not acquainted with the work of John Thomas Looney, Charles Wisner Barrell, Louis Benezet, William Plumer Fowler, B.M. Ward, the Ogburns, the Millers, Roger Stritmatter, Mark Anderson, and many others.

She is not aware that research activity concerning authorship is perhaps the most vibrant area of all of Shakespeare research, offering to become one of the most fertile sources for Shakespeare scholarship. This scholarship appeals especially to young minds open to a new appreciation and greater understanding of the true genius of Shakespeare and his work and, further, to the possibility that there is as much to discover about the plays and poems as there is about the man who wrote them.

Other reactions to the Stevens story have demonstrated ignorance even more woeful than Prof. Kahn's. These have appeared in reports in other publications after the *Journal* article appeared, in blogs, and in several letters to the editor published subsequently by the

Journal. The newspaper printed five letters against Stevens, but did not print any of the letters it received supporting Stevens and the paper for publishing the report.

All five of the hostile letters attacked the authorship issue in general with *ad hominem* attacks on Stevens and all authorship doubters, and with no arguments of substance. The letters are brilliant in their own conceit but are blissfully ignorant and uninformed. They are good examples of the know-nothing mentality that prefers "... that the media wouldn't give print space to Oxfordian elitists." They rail against "... treating this nonsense seriously." They see themselves "... like Shakespeare ... primarily self-educated and masters of intellectual material." They congratulate themselves that they have "... probed and delved with the solitary power of independent minds and found the elitists' positions wanting and negative."

All of this demonstrates what we already know – that many of the defenders of the traditional Shakespeare operate at a level not much higher than name calling and other gut reaction. This is hardly a basis for informed debate. Justyn Dillingham, the editor in chief of *The Arizona Daily Wildcat* wrote, "There is no explaining why a random man [Shakespeare] happened to possess such an awesome talent, and we don't need an explanation." This student of Shakespeare knows nothing and needs to know nothing. What such critics have in common is that what they do know is often wrong.

This is the intellectual environment of traditional Shakespeare study into which the *Wall Street Journal* either knowingly or naively entered on April 18, 2009. The world may little note nor long remember what the *Journal* reported about the authorship issue on that day, but the importance of the advance in the public consciousness cannot be overstated. It was a monumental step. At the very least, in the wake of the Stevens report, much ado has arisen in the media about authorship.

Whether the *Wall Street Journal* appreciates its accomplishment or not, the newspaper has advanced the Oxfordian position by reporting the issue to a wide audience and by choosing a proponent of eminent credibility – Justice Stevens, whose intellectual credentials are not only impressive but appropriate. This publication needs to know how gratefully the Justice Stevens story was received by the unsatisfied and how it has contributed to a greater understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare that is available to Shakespeare lovers worldwide through the authorship issue.

R. Thomas Hunter, PhD is a supervisory officer for an insurance company broker-dealer in Farmington Hills, MI and University of Michigan Hopwood Award winner. He chairs the Oberon Shakespeare Study Group, which is devoted to the greater understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare through the authorship issue and is currently engaged in the Hamlet Project.

Relevance of Shakspeare's signatures: a comparison of autographs of Shakspeare and his contemporary actors and writers

by Frank Davis, MD

Signatures of William Shakspeare of Stratford have been discussed and debated at length over the past 200 years by different experts in paleography or graphonomists often disagreeing on the signatures' authenticity. Today we are left with six signatures that are widely accepted by academia as authentic although these, too, are not without question. Some of these questions will be explored although for the purpose of this paper the six signatures will be considered as authentic. This will allow making a comparison to proven authentic signatures of a host of various players and writers, all of which were contemporary with Shakspeare.

The idea of this paper was developed from my study of Henslowe's Diary and Papers over the past year. This important collection of documents is a treasure trove of information regarding the activities and operation of the Elizabethan theater and contains many autographs of actors, writers and other personnel who signed their names to receipts for payments and loans by Henslowe. Often the receipt itself was written by the receiver or borrower, other times by Henslowe. Fortunately, these documents have been

reproduced in two works: one by R.A.Foakes and another by W.W. Greg. Greg's work also includes autographs of many others beside those found in the Henslowe documents. One of the striking features about the signatures of actors and writers found in these documents was that all of the writers and nearly all of the actors wrote their signatures using the Italian script, although some used a mixture of Italic and English script, not unusual for the time. The signatures on more important documents characteristically were more carefully written. What I saw in the reproduced documents was a stark contrast with the six alleged signatures of Shakspeare. Compare the signatures below in Figures 3-7 with the signatures of Shakspeare given in Figure 1.

Also, this study gave me the chance to look for evidence of any *illiterate* actor that might be identified. Anti-Stratfordians have often posited that Shakspeare was illiterate and therefore could not be an actor, denying the existing evidence that Shakspeare was an actor (Davis). Henslowe's Diary yields only one such case of a possible illiterate actor. F.G. Fleay reported in 1881 that Hew Davis was such an example. This case, however, is quite questionable despite Davis being listed on the Royal Historical Society's actor list of 1578-1642, probably on the basis of Fleay's report. Fleay listed page f2v of Henslowe's Diary as his source:

Lent unto Francis Henslowe the 8 of maye 1593 to laye downe for his share to the Queenes

players when they broke & went into the cuntry to playe the some offifteen pownd to be payd unto me at his retorne out of the cuntry.

I say lent

Wittnes John towne

Hew Daves &

Richard allen

Davis signed only with a mark (Fig.2). I do not believe this document warrants considering Davis an actor. Here he is only listed as a witness. Davis is mentioned on nine other occasions in the Diary but only because he was a renter of lodging from Henslowe or witnessing a receipt. Nothing else remotely suggests his being an actor. It is more likely he worked on sets or did other menial jobs for Henslowe.

It has been often correctly stated that William could have gone to the Free Grammar School in Stratford where he would have learned the "English hand." This is indeed the script in which his six signatures were created. The English hand was derived from the German Gothic form brought over with William the Conqueror.

In the sixteenth century the older English hand was giving way to the more modern Italian (Italic) hand, and the Italic hand was considered indicative of better education. In 1899 Sylvanus Urban called attention to this when he said:

Educated men who had been to the Universities or had travelled abroad were capable of employing with equal facility both the English and the Italian character, and though they

employed the former in their ordinary correspondence, they signed their names in the Italian hand. (206)

And furthermore:

Nowhere have I found a signature [i.e. Shakespeare's] so distinctly "English". (207)

Sir George Greenwood found it "extraordinary" that Shakspeare, as author of the plays and poems of Shakespeare should not have learned to write the Italian script (22)! Greenwood goes on to admonish Sidney Lee for his statement that Shakspeare "should not have taken the trouble to do so" [write in the Italian hand]. Greenwood points out that Shakespeare certainly knew the value of the art of good handwriting, quoting from *Hamlet*:

*I sat me down;
Devised a new commission;
wrote it fair
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning:
But, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service.
(5.2.35-40)*

And from *Twelfth Night*, Malvolio speaks of the forged Olivia letter:

I think we do know the sweet Roman hand. (3.4.31)

Before proceeding to the six accepted signatures, let us briefly review some important non-authentic signatures. First, in the British Library there is a copy of Florio's translation

of *Montaigne's Essays* of 1603 which contains an alleged autograph, "Willm Shakspeare." Sir Fredrick Madden, the Keeper of the Manuscripts for the Museum, purchased the book in 1837 for £140. He was alleged the greatest authority on handwriting in his day and he vouched for the authenticity of the annotation. This was also confirmed by Charles Knight, calling it an "undoubted signature" of William Shakspeare (Greenwood 3, 28). However Professor Charles Wallace (the discoverer of the Mountjoy signature) said it was "still an open question" and Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum (1888-1909) pronounced it an "undoubted forgery" (Greenwood 10). These disagreements continue throughout the ages calling into question just who are the experts. But there is more. Thompson dismisses the Florio question, then he proceeds to exclaim that the abbreviated autograph ("Wm. Sh*") found in the *Aldine Ovid's Metamorphoses* of 1502 is a "higher character" of forgery whereas Sidney Lee had said it was "a genuine autograph of the poet" (Greenwood 21) but later stated "but the genuineness of that signature is disputable" (Lee 296). The point of these few (and there are really many) examples of diverse opinions between so-called experts is that there is no certainty except in the mind of the individual. It is curious that present day Stratfordian David Kathman comments that forgeries (e.g. Ireland and Collier) "are easy to spot for a modern scholar with knowledge of Elizabethan

paleography" (2). If this is the case, one wonders why there is still so much disagreement among knowledgeable scholars over the authenticity of various signatures. For this study it would serve little purpose to discuss in detail the numerous signatures that have been discounted as forgeries.

The six currently accepted Shakspeare autographs that Tannenbaum calls "unquestioned" (vii) consist of two on documents relating to the purchase of the Blackfriar's house in March, 1613, three signatures on Shakspeare's will of 1616, and the last is the signature on the Belott vs Mountjoy deposition of May 11, 1612. This last important document was discovered in 1909 by the Americans, Dr. and Mrs. Charles Wallace, who spent years in England researching Shakespeare-related documents.

It is important to acknowledge that the question of authenticity of even some of these signatures still remains. Most telling is what has been said by Jane Cox, previous Custodian of the Wills at the Public Records Office:

It is obvious at a glance that these signatures, with the exception of the last two [referring to the two Blackfriar signatures] are not the signatures of the same man. Almost every letter is formed in a different way in each. Literate men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries developed personalized signatures much as people do today and it is unthinkable that Shakespeare did not. Which of the signatures reproduced here is

the genuine article is anybody's Guess. (24-35)

The Blackfriars Signatures (Fig. 1, a and b)

The two documents related to the purchase of the Blackfriars gatehouse by Shakspeare (and Trustees) consist of a deed (located in the Guildhall Library) for conveying the house, dated March 10, 1613, and a mortgage-deed (located in the British Library) dated March 11, 1613. Regarding the dates, Greenwood says he "has no doubts" that the transactions were actually carried out on the same day (14). The detailed description of these documents has been thoroughly described by Greenwood, Thompson, Halliwell-Phillipps and many others. Oxfordian Robert Detobel's notable article on the subject raises many questions and gives a detailed evaluation of these two signatures as well as the other signatures (<http://www.shakespearefellowship.org/virtualclassroom/stateofdebate/detobel%20signatures.htm>).

Our purpose here is of a different nature.

Signatures on his Will (Fig. 1- c,d,e)

Three signatures are found on Shakspeare's will, one each at the bottom of page one and two, with the third in the middle of the final page.

It is important to take notice of the third signature (e) on Shakspeare's will. The first part of the signature, "By Me William" appears obviously to have been written by another hand than the one that wrote

"Shaksper." This has been noted by others, including some Stratfordians. C.C. Stopes even suggested that the words "By me" may have been written by the lawyer (Tannenbaum 153). Edward Thompson postulated that Shakspeare suffered from "writer's cramps" and that "It was only when he came to the capital S ... that his hand gave way" (64-5). The question of "writer's cramps" was investigated by Ralph W. Leftwich, M.D. when he studied the signatures and compared them with 20 "recognized signs" of writer's cramp and found "unimpeachable" evidence:

Thus every one of the nineteen signs collected by me is present and I submit that a diagnosis of writer's cramp is unimpeachable. Every condition precedent, whether of age, of occupation, of chronicity, or of freedom from bodily or mental disease is fulfilled in the history of the case and every objective sign in the handwriting has been demonstrated. It should be a source of satisfaction to us that any misgivings as to Shakespeare's illiteracy have been set at rest by these investigations, for Baconians and others have been hard to argue with (37).

On the other hand, Tannenbaum (also a M.D.) says he has completely disproved that notion of "writer's cramps" (131-158). Tannenbaum says:

As a result of these [his own] studies I have, it seems to me, disproved the more or less current notion that Shakespeare suffered from "writer's cramp" during the last years of his life, and I have been able to show that his handwriting presents

no indications of chronic alcoholism or any form of acute or chronic disease of the nervous system; that he wrote both the old English (Gothic) and the new Roman scripts neatly, fluently, clearly and with average speed; that his retirement to his native town and rural activities was in all probability due to chronic disease of the heart; and that the indications are that he died from an attack of angina pectoris, a painful disease of the heart, brought on, possibly, by distress about his younger daughter's unfortunate marriage and her threatened excommunication (ix).

Here Tannenbaum has claimed the ability to recognize not only the superb character of Shakespeare's writing abilities but to diagnose his terminal medical problem, and even the very cause of his angina pectoris! I would hope that his paleographic expertise far exceeds his medical acumen because his medical assumptions have no basis in fact. I say this despite the fact that Tannenbaum was an MD. His prejudice regarding Shakespeare is quite evident, a prejudice that we see all too common in matters concerning the validation of Shakspeare as the true bard. It seems more likely that the difference in the writing could only be explained by Shakspeare's lack of writing skill, or by his being too sick – as has sometimes been suggested by other orthodoxy – which doesn't explain the similarity with the other signatures attributed to him.

As the above suggests, the sudden increase in the importance of Shakespeare's

signatures was prompted by the authorship issue that took on momentum in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Something had to be done to counter the question of literacy caused by the study of the six Shakespeare signatures. Looking at these six autographs, could it be that these six scraggly signatures actually belong to the greatest and one of the more prolific writers of the English language?

Aside from the question of Shakspeare's signatures, I will comment only briefly on the spelling of Shakspeare's name which has caused so much expenditure of print over the past years. Orthography in Elizabethan times gives great latitude for spelling as it was done phonetically. Many proper names were spelled in very different ways. In Henslowe's Diary I noted that Henslowe and others written in his Diary even spelled their own names differently at times. In his book of 1889, George Wise included a section that listed no less than 4,000 ways found in state records to spell "Shakespeare" (17-32). I respectfully disagree with the effort to attach authorship importance to the spelling of Shakspeare's name. The frequent use of the hyphen (Shake-speare) in the name of the author, however, is a different matter and may be quite relevant.

As seen in the Figures 2-8 below, it was usual for text of a note to be written in the English hand – or mixed, but the signatures were most often in the Italian hand. Almost without exception, the signers seem to make an effort to write their signature with clarity and decisiveness

– something not found in the six signatures of Shakspeare.

Signature on the Mountjoy deposition (Fig. 1,f)

This signature represents the only universally agreed upon

writing sample of the alleged immortal Bard. There seems not to be any difference of opinion among academics that this signature was without a doubt that of the man, Shakspeare, and not that of a scribe or attorney.

Shakespeare's "authentic" signatures
Fig. 1

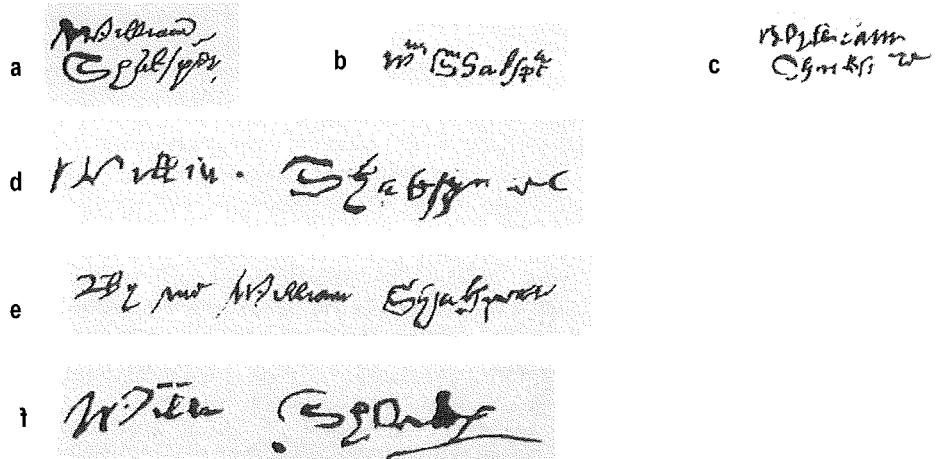
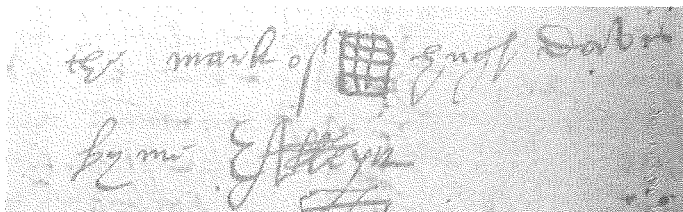
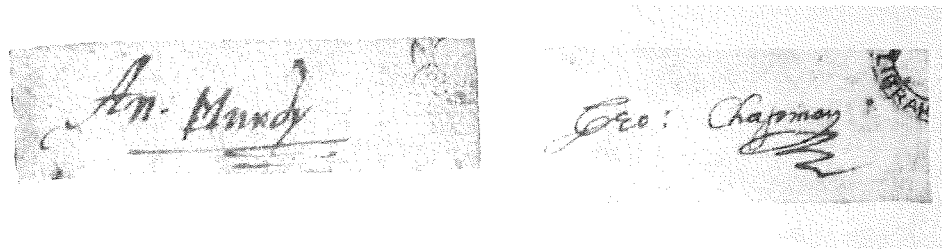


Fig. 2
"the mark of hugh Davis
by me E Alleyn"

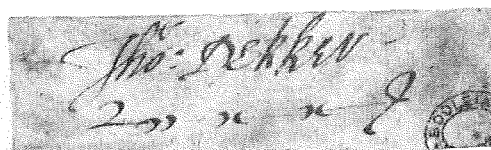


This reference to the mark of Hugh Davis was written and signed by actor E(dward) Alleyn. Note Alleyn's writing is in English secretary, but his signature is Italic.

Fig. 3



Autographs of writers Anthony Munday and George Chapman, Italic hand.



Autographs of Thomas Dekker (Italic) and Michell Drayton, cursive and pure Italic.

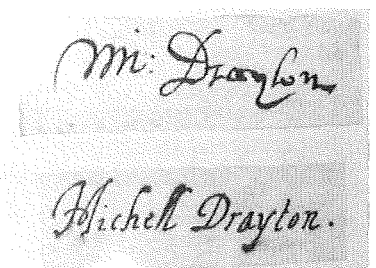
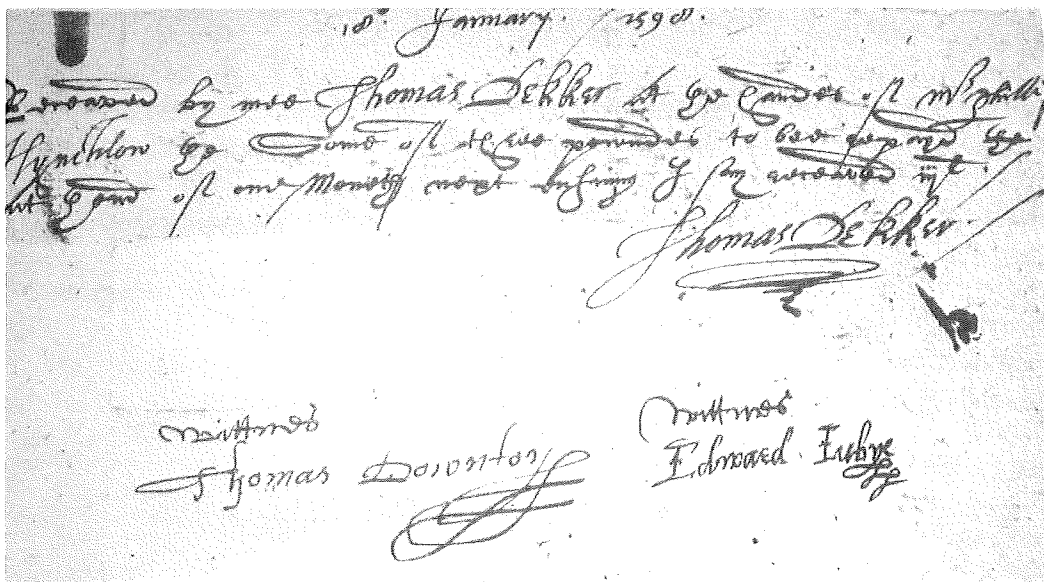
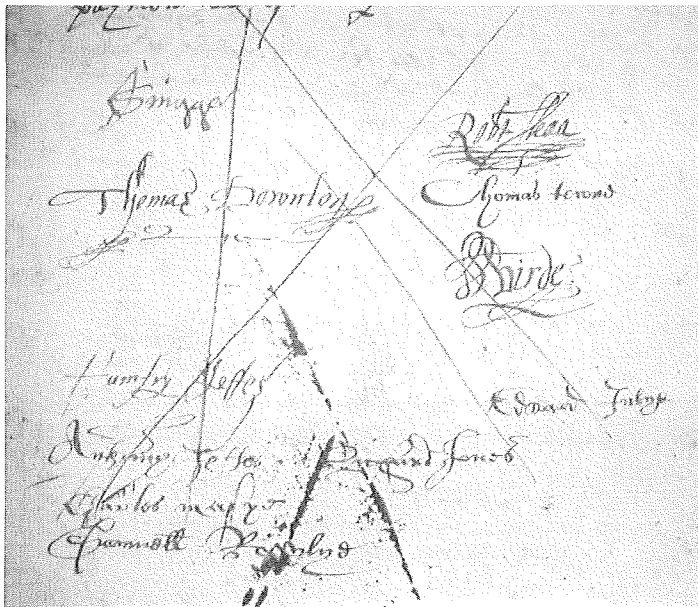


Fig. 4.



Here is the autograph of Thomas Dekker who has written his own receipt from Phillip Henslowe for three pounds in English secretary script, but signs his name in Italian form. His name, written within the note, is also in the Italic hand. Note, also, the two witnesses, Thomas Downton and Edward Juby who are both only actors, sign their names also using the Italic hand.

Fig. 5.



JSinger

Thomas Downton

Humfry Jeffes

Anthony Jeffes

Richard Jones

Charles Massye
Samuell Rowlye

Robt Shaa

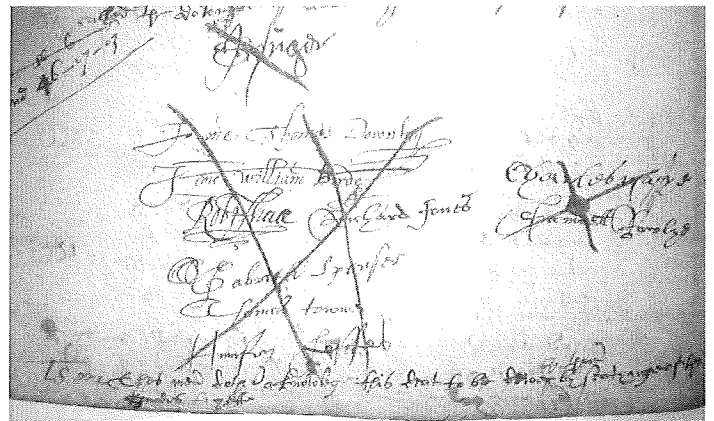
Thomas towne

WBirde

Edward Juby

These eleven autographs all belong to actors. All but Richard Jones and Charles Massye are primarily in the Italic hand.

Fig. 6.



JSinger

P [By] me Thomas Downton

P me William Birde

Robt Shaa

Gabriell Spenser

Thomas townes

Humfry Jeffes

Richard Jones

Charles massye

Samuell Rowlye

Again, all signatures are by actors. Jones, Townes and Massye use secretary hand (with some mixture) whereas all the rest are in the Italic hand.

Fig. 7.



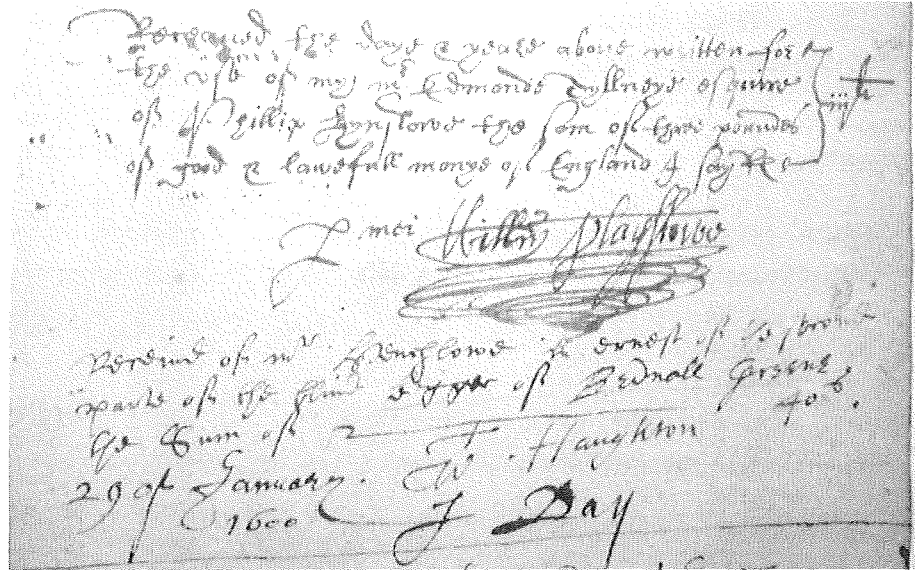
Received by us Ri Hathway, wenworth Smyth & William Haughton of Mr Hinslye the sume of forty shillinge in earneste of the play called the second pte of the sixe clothiers.

Ri Hathway
W Smyth

This receipt is in the hand of Richard Hathway, a writer. The script of the note is in a mixture of secretary/italic hand, but the signature is Italic. It is uncertain if Wentworth Smyth's signature is his own or not; Greg and Malone disagreed. It appears to me that it was probably written by Hathway.

Photo source: Greg's English Literary Autographs 1550-1650 (Oxford 1932)

Fig. 8



The first signature above is "P (per) moi (me) Will(iam) Playstowe" who was a servant of the Master of Revels, Edmund Tilney. He writes this receipt and signs with a mixed secretary/italic hand.

The second is by writers, W(illiam) Haughton and J(ohn) Day, using the Italic hand. The receipt itself was written using a mixture of secretary/italic. This was a receipt for part payment (40 shillings) for their play, *The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green*.

It is, no less, still a poorly contrived autograph despite the accolades some orthodox scholars tend to give it.

Conclusion

Evidence taken from Henslowe's Diary and Papers supports the perception that in England during the Elizabethan/Jacobean era, the time of Shakspeare, virtually all of writers and nearly all actors signed their name using the newer Italic hand, generally indicative of a higher degree of education. I found no example in all of Henslowe's Diary and Papers of the signature of a writer so poorly contrived as the six examples currently accepted as authentic Shakspeare autographs. I would point out also that Henslowe wrote and signed only in the English

(secretary) hand. We can only guess what Shakspeare's role in the Shakespeare canon might have been, but judging from the lack of a documented literary trail, can we accept that the author of these six signatures was the greatest writer of modern times? I find that unacceptable.

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A Spaniard in the Elizabethan Court: Don Antonio Pérez

by John Hamill

Newly-translated letters to members of the Elizabethan court from the flamboyant Spanish fugitive, Don Antonio Pérez, support the one-hundred-year-old claim that he was openly parodied as Don Armado in *Love's Labor's Lost*. Moreover, his reports of intrigues in the Spanish court were clearly the source of several dramatic details in the plot of *Othello*, and Pérez seems to have been vilified as Iago, an observation made in 1924 by Lilian Winstanley, and repeated by Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn. This paper will focus on Pérez's turbulent life and his connection to the Elizabethan court, and how his life stamps his role in *Othello* and *Love's Labor's Lost*, which reveals his personal impact on the playwright.

Don Antonio Pérez (1540-1611), while practically unknown today, was well-known in late sixteenth century. He is important in the fields of Elizabethan and Shakespearean studies because of his relationships with the kings of Spain and France – Philip II and Henri IV – and with Queen Elizabeth, the Earl of Essex, and Francis Bacon. Of special interest are his many letters to Essex, Southampton, Burghley, and others, some of which are translated here by me for the first time.

Charming, ambitious, witty, bisexual, unscrupulous, and always extravagantly dressed



Portrait of Antonio Pérez (1539-1611), Secretary of Felipe II; oil on canvas by Alonso Sanchez Coello (1531-1589); owned by Hospital Tavera in Toledo, Spain. Courtesy of The Bridgeman Art Library

Don Antonio Pérez became secretary to King Philip II in 1567, and later secretary of state, which placed him at the center of numerous court intrigues. In 1573 Pérez became the leader of the faction of Ana de Mendoza, Princess of Éboli, reputedly one of the King's mistresses (Cocks 41; Rowse 38). Ana was put into close relationship with Elisabeth de Valois, the Queen, to spy upon her for Philip; but the two women became fast friends. Elisabeth de Valois was the love of Philip II's life, and he had a reputation throughout Europe for his intense jealousy. Courtiers had been afraid "... to raise their eyes to the Queen's face," for fear of arousing the King's suspicions (Winstanley 96). This situation is very similar to that of *Othello*, Desdemona and Emilia in *Othello*, as will be noted later.

Philip II was also jealous of her relationship with his son, Don Carlos, Prince of Asturias, to whom she had been betrothed before the King decided he wanted her for himself. Philip believed his son Don Carlos had conspired against him and had him imprisoned. When the Prince died in 1568, Philip's enemies accused him of having ordered the murder of his own son. After the Queen died in 1568, the Princess of Éboli may have become the mistress of Antonio Pérez (Cocks 42; Ogburn 530). The story of Pérez and Éboli is remembered today because they both appeared in key roles in the fictionalized Schiller's play and Verdi's opera *Don Carlos*, where they each repeated the calumnies against Philip II.

Philip II was suspicious of everyone, especially of the in-

trigues of the bastard Don Juan de Austria, his half-brother, the victor of the Battle of Lepanto against the Turks in 1571. Antonio Pérez exploited this suspicion to his own benefit. Some time after Philip II appointed Don Juan to the governorship of the Netherlands, Pérez learned of Don Juan's secret plan to rescue Mary Queen of Scots, marry her, and so ascend to the throne of England and maybe even Spain.

This scheme constituted a threat to Philip, and Pérez at once informed the King. When Don Juan sent his secretary Escobedo to Spain in 1577 to plead for his plan to invade England, Pérez decided to get rid of him. With the King's full knowledge, Pérez succeeded in arranging the assassination of Escobedo in Madrid on March 31, 1578. It is very likely that Pérez and Éboli instigated the murder because Escobedo threatened to reveal Pérez's and Éboli's affair and their political intrigues, including the possibility that Pérez was negotiating with the Dutch rebels (Cocks 3; Rowse 39).

A few months later, on October 1, 1578, Don Juan died in the Netherlands. King Philip soon became suspicious of the motives of Pérez, realizing he had been duped and had given his assent to a murder. The murder of Escobedo had become an international scandal. The King was publicly blamed and never forgave Pérez. On 28 July 1579, Philip II ordered the arrest of Antonio Pérez and the Princess of Éboli, who were also accused of having an affair. (cont'd on p. 16)

The Letters in Spanish by Don Antonio Pérez:

A Mylord Subampton

Ningun presente se puede hazer à vna persona de tan lindo, y excelente natural, a la entrada de essa edad, como de vn trassado de la rueda de la Fortuna. Tal es esse libro, que embio à Vuestra Señoria para que viendo al ojo sus bueltas y rebueltas, y los rayos que tiene, la tema mas quando mas la tenga en la mano. Porque es muy natural de ellas no dexar miembro entero al que se enrreda en ellas.

Pérez 531

A Mylord de Essex

Yo amo, y reuerençio a V. Exç. por destino, y por fuerza natural, que son no violencia, sino los mas dulçes movimientos del alma. Y assy, aunque no me amasse Vuestra Exçellencia poseerá seguro el señorio deste animo y persona. Y es de manera ésto, que quando algo me añublasse essa gracia, le reconosciere vna obligacion extraordinaria à la tal causa. Que V. Excellencia prouasse la verdad que digo, y no importa que jufiera de aqui Vuestra Exçellencia que sitales, que à mi animo le lleua, y mueue aquella rueda natural, y que no mereçe premio. No le quiero, Señor, sino amar à Vuestra Exçellencia, y ponerme su insignia al lado yzquierdo dentro, y fuera, como aca se vsa, en señal de suyo. ... Supplico a V. Exç. no en merito mio, sino de que por su gracia me le oyò con gusto que le diga que el pobre de la Emperatriz biue, y que su resplandor le dexa, cada vez que le toca, el alma, y la persona toda llena de vida y que biuir desseo. A 16 Jun. 1594.

Pérez 529

A Mylord de Essex

Raphael Peregrino auctor desse libro me ha pedido que se le presente a Vuestra Excellencia de su parte. Obligado esta Vuestra Exçellencia à empararle, pues se lo encomienda. Que el deve sabet que a menester

padrino, pues le escoge tal. Quiça se ha fiado en el nombre sabiendo que Vuestra Excellencia es amparo de peregrinos de la Fortuna. Quiça tambien ha tenido por el nombre de peregrino à los perseguidores de pelegrinos. Del favor de Vuestra Exçellencia yo le he çertificado del temor yo le asegurado, y animado que no tema à esos, que son murmuraciones desconçertadas, como silvos que ocupan los oydos, y no los animos y perros cobardes que muerden la ropa, y no llegan à lo bivo. Vuestra Exçellencia no me tenga por adulador en nombrar le para moverle tantas vezes el nombre de Peregrino, que aunque sè que le es grato à su Piedad, la ocasion le nombra, y no la Adulacion. Però permitame que dè firmado de mi nombre que soy su Peregrino.

Pérez 530

A Mylord Burrbe

Por no parecer del todo barbaro, que buen testimonio dexo desto, no he querido embiar à Vuestra Señoria este libro sin dezirle algo. Y por que no se lo parezca tanto, le supplico que quando se acuerde de my, se acuerde que soy Peregrino, y que los peregrinos por su mala fortuna son barbaros à todos. Con todo esto yo conozco barbaros de su Naturaleza en su natural de buena ventura, sy se puede alabar della quien se queda barbaro con ella. Que al que no pule, ny perfeçiona la Buena, o mala fortuna (los dos scultores de la Naturaleza para polimento de la materia humana) le podrian excluir del genero humano, y embiarle al de las fieras. Deuen ser los tales de material baxa, y grossera. Que à estos tome entre las manos la Buena fortuna para pulirlos, y calificarlos, y la Mala à los demas, exçellente materia para sculpir y formar en ellos las figuras de las mas altas, y perfectas virtudes.

Pérez 530

Pérez remained in prison for 11 years, as did the Princess of Éboli until her death in 1592. But all efforts to extract a full confession and obtain the incriminating documents from Pérez failed. Philip II thereupon had Pérez handed over to the Inquisition.

At the dramatic trial Don Pérez was accused, among other things, of heresy and sodomy for owning a painting by Correggio – *The Rape of Ganymede* (Ungerer I, *A Spaniard* 193). This painting was commissioned by Federigo II Gonzaga of Mantua, and constitutes Correggio's most famous work on an erotic theme, depicting mythological subjects (Furlotti 143). *The Rape of Ganymede*, the first large-scale Renaissance oil painting of the subject, was painted between 1525 and 1530, about the same time that Giulio Romano (the only artist ever mentioned by Shakespeare), was working in Mantua. Correggio shows Jupiter, in the guise of an eagle, carrying the surprised, beautiful shepherd boy to his abode. During the trial of Pérez, which lasted from 1579 until 1590, his ownership of Correggio's *Ganymede* was repeatedly presented as proof of his inclination to sodomy (Rowse 40; Ungerer I, 193).

In April 1590 Pérez escaped, and for the first time, accused the King of the murder of Escobedo. He fled to Navarre in November 1591 and spent the rest of his life trying to make a living from the sale from the secrets he knew. From the court of Catherine de Bourbon at Navarre where he was well received, Pérez traveled to the

French court of Henri IV in Tours in March 1593, and there elaborated a plan for a joint campaign against Spain to be waged by France and England.

To advance these plans, Henri IV sent Pérez to England in June 1593, where he was enthusiastically received by Queen Elizabeth, who granted him several audiences (Cocks 254). In both France and in England, his talents, unique personality, and diplomatic experience – as well as his well-grounded enmity to Philip II – earned him much popularity, especially with the Earl of Essex who had already adopted a policy of war with Spain (Ungerer I, *A Spaniard* 72-73).

Pérez became a close associate of the Earl of Essex and his faction, and addressed numerous letters to them. In 1595 Don Pérez was called back to France by Henri IV. After Philip II's death in 1598, Don Pérez lost what little influence he had and failed to obtain a pardon from Philip III. Except for several trips to England in 1596 and 1604, he remained in Paris until his death in 1611, a shadow of what he had once been (Rowse 41).

Don Antonio Perez's earliest and most famous publication was a small quarto, dedicated to the earl of Essex, printed in England in late 1594, entitled *Pedazos de historia o Relaciones*, (*Pieces of History or Relations*) where he published attacks upon the Spanish monarchy, revealing the state secrets of Philip II of Spain.

His *Relaciones*, of which there are many editions, was printed

in England in Spanish by Richard Field, the first publisher and printer of Shakespeare. But Field used a forged name: León. The book seems to have been printed surreptitiously at the Queen's cost in order to avoid the wrath of Philip II (Ungerer II, *A Spaniard* 249-253). Don Pérez had completed this second augmented edition before coming to England. Though the book was translated and distributed in manuscript, it was never published in English.

The *Relaciones* – printed later in other countries – included letters of presentation and a compilation in two volumes of over 500 letters Pérez wrote in Latin and Spanish to members of the English and French nobility, though most are addressed to Essex.

Don Antonio Pérez and Othello

The main source of *Othello* dates from Cinthio's story of 1565, which was available only in Italian, and was available in English years after *Othello* was published in 1622. However, Winstanley and the senior Ogburns point out that incidents related by Don Antonio Pérez concerning King Philip II, including his extreme jealousy, seem to be the source of important details in *Othello*. While Cinthio mentions the main details, including the handkerchief incident, Pérez also relates it, but adds some changes that Shakespeare incorporated, such as the means of the murder of Desdemona including the suffocation with a pillow. The author altered Cinthio's novel in many respects, and these changes

according to Winstanley, reflect the story of the Spanish court as told by Pérez.

Pérez related: "... an exceedingly unfortunate thing happened. One of the Queen's ladies had an affair with a courtier, the Marquis del Pozzi, and indiscreetly admitted him to the royal apartments. Philip, being apprised of this and suspecting the Queen, had the Marquis watched. As ill luck would have it, the Queen had carelessly dropped her handkerchief, del Pozzi picked it up (as Cassio picked up Desdemona's), and Philip saw it in his hands" (Ogburn 531; Winstanley 96).

According to Pérez, the King then murdered the Queen with his own hands by suffocating her with a pillow, after first trying to poison her – just as in *Othello*, but not in Cinthio's novel. While not related by Pérez, Winstanley claims that Shakespeare also added the story of Emilia and her death, which closely resembles the story of Éboli and her relation to Elizabeth de Valois and her supposed murder, and that more significantly the name and character of Iago (a Spanish name) was added.

Winstanley and the Ogburns claim that *Othello* seems to be based on Philip, and his beautiful young wife, Elisabeth de Valois, was Desdemona; Iago is the cunning, unscrupulous Antonio Pérez, and Emilia is Ana de Mendoza, Princess of Éboli. The dramatist seems to have adhered very closely to Pérez's version, even though in actuality the Queen died in childbirth. Historians have

exonerated Philip of the murder of his third wife, but the people of the sixteenth century, especially in England, believed in his guilt.

The story that Philip II murdered his wife was told all over Europe by Prince William of Orange in his *Apology* of 1580, and by Pérez in his letters of the 1590s. William's *Apology*, however, did not mention the handkerchief or other details of the story — only Pérez's letters mentioned these. According to Winstanley, this information was found by H. Forneron and du Prat in their research of the Pérez files in Paris (94-98). Also, Martha Freer, Frederick Von Raumer, and Ludovic Lalanne, cite a letter by Pérez to du Vair during his stay in England that mentions these details (Freer 356).

Pérez's connections to the Elizabethan Court

While most Shakespeare and Oxford biographers don't even mention Pérez, G.V.P. Akrigg refers to him in his biography of Southampton. "Southampton became acquainted with a very unusual person, the renegade Antonio Pérez, a former Secretary of State to King Philip II of Spain, who had fled his homeland and in the spring of 1593 arrived in the English court. Witty, urbane, cunning and ingratiating, Pérez had been in the complete confidence of King Philip" (36).

Akrigg describes Don Pérez: "An ageing gallant in his fifties, surrounded by a vague aura of homosexuality, Pérez when he arrived in England impressed many people as opinionated, affected, pomp-

ous and pedantic... The full force of that charm was turned on Essex during the two years that Pérez remained in England, and Essex responded warmly" (37). Essex became the patron of Don Pérez, and hosted him in his home, as did several members of his circle (Ungerer I, *A Spaniard* 186-188).

Don Antonio Pérez thus joined the many bisexuals and homosexuals of the inner circle with whom Essex surrounded himself, such as the brothers Francis and Anthony Bacon, the Earl of Rutland, Sir Charles Danvers, Sir Anthony Standen, and particularly the young Earl of Southampton (Hamill 53).

"The exclusively male, intense and passionate forms of service which surrounded Essex, in which both Anthony and Francis Bacon were implicated until the death of the earl, could be represented in a less respectable light as a world rife with male sexual intrigue and sodomy. Lampoons, letters and intelligence reports from the period contain frequent suggestions that one or another of the rising young men is involved in some homosexual liaison or other" (Jardine and Stewart 17).

Pérez became a focal point for Spanish and Italian spy assignments for Essex. Essex's circle at Essex House became, in the 1590s, a center for "scholars, statesmen, spies, and sodomites... Indeed, of the basically homosexual orientation of the men who appear to have been Essex's closest friends and associates... there can be no doubt" (Green 150).

Thus, Pérez's "... association with the Essex circle encouraged particular interpretations of intense intimacy in which the young men lived" (Jardine and Stewart 163). Don Antonio Pérez "... throughout his life had a pronounced preference to young, well-built, good-looking foreign pages. He did not engage their services for utilitarian purposes, but hired them as an adornment of his splendid household" (Ungerer I, *A Spaniard* 193).

The leaders of the circle that Pérez joined were Essex and his loyal Southampton. It is noteworthy that there is persuasive circumstantial evidence that if Southampton is the Fair Youth of *Shake-speare's Sonnets*, the Earl of Essex is the Rival Poet (Anderson 299; Farina 234; Hamill 52; Moore 8-12).

Essex was also known as a poet and the relationship between Essex and Southampton was known to be intimate; they are clearly the models for the lovers Achilles and Patroclus in *Troilus and Cressida* (Anderson 315-316; Bloom 327; Rowse 41). Both Essex and Southampton were known to have a sexual interest in men (Akrigg 181; Hamill 51). The Pérez connection with Essex and Southampton supports the bisexual interpretation of *Shake-speare's Sonnets*.

While Don Pérez got involved with many young men in England, the sexual friendship between Pérez and Francis Bacon, 21 years his junior (1561 – 1626), is one of the most fascinating aspects of his sojourn in England. Francis, one of Essex's closest advisors,

devoted himself fully to serve Pérez. That Francis Bacon was a sodomite was well known in his time (Jardine and Stewart 163, 464).

"The two were hand in glove, coach-companions and bed-companions, so much so that it provoked Lady Bacon's desperate outcry... the old Lady, who was wont to expostulate with her two sons on their allegedly immoral behavior... objected to her son's intimacy with Pérez on moral grounds" (Ungerer I, *A Spaniard* 191).

In addition, Pérez developed an intimate, if not sexual, relationship with Anthony Bacon, Francis's older brother. Anthony and Pérez had much in common and exchanged many letters. Part of what they shared was personal knowledge of Navarre and France, were personal friends of Henri IV, and that Anthony was also accused and convicted of sodomy in France and was pardoned by Henri IV in 1587 (du Maurier 60-67; Jardine and Stewart 108-110). Anthony left for England where he sought the protection of the Earl of Essex in 1593, about the same time that Pérez arrived.

Love's Labor's Lost and Don Pérez

Akrigg, du Maurier, Rowse, and Ungerer all assert that in *Love's Labor's Lost*, Don Pérez is portrayed as Don Armado, a vain and pompous Spaniard.

Ferdinand:

*Ay, that there is. Our court, you know, is haunted
With a refined traveller of Spain;*

*A man in all the world's new fashion planted,
That hath a mint of phrases in his brain;
One whom the music of his own vain tongue
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony;
A man of complements, whom right and wrong
Have chose as umpire of their mutiny:
This child of fancy, that Armado hight,
For interim to our studies shall relate
In high-born words the worth of many a knight
From tawny Spain lost in the world's debate.
How you delight, my lords, I know not, I;
But, I protest, I love to hear him lie
And I will use him for my minstrelsy.
I.i,163-169*

"Who is this 'refined traveler of Spain', this 'man of complements'? He is our old acquaintance Antonio Pérez... By 1596 he had become completely discredited in England and when he made a brief second visit to England in that year Essex received him very coldly. Here was a person Shakespeare could safely guy knowing that his butt would be recognized and his satire appreciated by everybody in the audience" (Akrigg 210).

Pérez gained a reputation for lying, deceiving and betraying everybody associated with him.

According to Akrigg, the Pérez identification was first made by Martin Hume in his *Spanish Influence on English Literature*

in 1905, and the most extended presentation of the case is that of Robert Gittings in his *Shakespeare's Rival* in 1960 (211). DuMaurier agrees: "its fantastic Spaniard Dom Adriano de Armado – so like Signor Perez" (209, 255). Rowse states Pérez "is the man: Don Adriano de Armado, 'a fantastical Spaniard', in the private skit on the circle by its poet, *Love's Labor's Lost*" (41). Ungerer, in his biography of Pérez, mentions that "Don Adriano de Armado was in part a stage portrait of Antonio Pérez. Armado's two epistles, whose style has never been explained, are seen to be a parody" of Pérez (I, ix).

Hume (268) and Akrigg (211) believe these were additions to the play that were done just after Pérez returned to France. It seems that Pérez's knowledge of Navarre customs and personages, revealed in the play, could have been relayed to the author of *Love's Labor's Lost*. Clearly, the author of Shakespeare's works personally knew Don Antonio Pérez.

In describing Don Armado, Holofernes says:

Novi hominem tanquam te: his humour is lofty, his discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye ambitious, his gait majestic, and his general behavior vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it.

Nathaniel:

A most singular and choice epithet.

Vi.11-17

Akrigg observes that this is the only time Shakespeare uses the word *peregrinate* (211). Pérez considered himself very educated and witty, and repeatedly referred to himself as *peregrine* in his *Relations*, under the name of Raphael Peregrino. (See letter below.)

According to Akrigg, some of the Pérez related additions to the play by the author are easily spotted including the passages which emphasize the age of Don Armado:

Moth

And I (call you Armado), though senior, as an appertinent title to your old time, which we may name though.

I.ii.17-18

Armado

Now, by the salt wave of the Mediterranean, a sweet touch, a quick venue of wit! snip, snap, quick and home! it rejoiceth my intellect: true wit!

Moth

Offered by a child to an old man, which is wit-old.

Vi.1.61-66

'Wit-old' means cuckold, and Pérez was known to be betrayed by all his young lovers.

"Armado's letter read by the King of Navarre is to be seen as a burlesque of the fantastically belabored letters of compliment that Pérez sent with copies of his *Relations* to most of the dignitaries at the English court:

Great deputy, the welkin's vice-regent, and sole domi-

nator of Navarre, my soul's earth's god, and body's fostering patron"
I.i.221-223
(Akrigg 210).

This is also reminiscent of the inflated Latin titles that Pérez used to flatter Essex: Deus, lux, generator (Ungerer II, *A Spaniard* 370).

A sampling of Don Antonio Pérez's Letters

Many of the letters that Pérez wrote to members of the English and French Courts were written in Spanish, not Latin. Most educated people of the late sixteenth century could read Spanish.

"In the last decade of the sixteenth century the prominent members of the wealthy middle class, the clergy, the aristocracy, the universities, and the Inns of the Court had taken up Spanish" (Ungerer I, *A Spaniard* 70).

Letters written in Spanish by Pérez included those sent to Queen Elizabeth, Lord Burghley, and the prominent members of the Essex circle: Essex, Southampton, Lady Penelope Rich, Lettice Knollys, Charles Blount, Robert Sidney, Francis Bacon, Anthony Bacon, and others. These letters to Essex and his circle were not published until 1601, after Essex's execution (Ungerer II, *A Spaniard* 298).

"When in 1593 or 1594, Pérez published his *Relations*, or autobiography, under the name of 'Raphael Peregrino' (Raphael the Wanderer), he dedicated his book to Essex and made a point of presenting copies to

all the leading members of the Essex group. Thus it happened that Southampton received a copy of 'Peregrine's' book with a special commendatory letter" (Akrigg 37).

Pérez was known to write voluminously, and this reminds us when Armado says that in writing he is for "whole volumes in folio" (III.i.)

We know that Southampton could read Spanish because not only did Pérez write a letter to him in Spanish, but Southampton donated to the Bodleian Library almost 50 books in Spanish in 1605. It is interesting that the most valuable book brought "from the Southampton donation is the copy of the original edition of Cervantes's *Don Quixote*" (Ungerer, *Bodleian Library Record* 28). This is the earliest known copy of *Don Quixote* in England. In addition, Southampton donated Antonio Pérez's *Aphorismos de las Relaciones y Cartas primeras, y segundas*.

The following are a few letters from Pérez's *Obras y Relaciones* that I have translated, and I believe are printed here in English for the first time. They provide a contemporary insight; but more appropriately, they provide an insight to Don Antonio Pérez himself. Below is the only known letter by Don Pérez to Southampton.

To My Lord Southampton
There is no better gift that could be given to a person of such a beautiful, and excellent nature (presence), as he enters this particular age (manhood), than a reading of the wheel of Fortune. Such is the book that I send

your Lordship, so when you see the eye (axis) go round and around and the rays (spokes) it has, you will fear it (the future) more than when you have it in your hands. Because it is most natural of them to leave no limb whole whoever tangles with them (Wheel of Fortune).

It is interesting to note that William Camden in 1629 remarked of Pérez that he "... was a man of excellent wit and wisdom, who notwithstanding was so tossed up and down by fortune that he bestowed upon his Picture nothing but this motto: THE MONSTER OF FORTUNE" (Ungerer I, *A Spaniard* 1).

The following is a translation of a letter sent to Essex in 1594 as part of the presentation copies sent with the London edition of *Relaciones*.

To My Lord of Essex
I love and revere Your Excellency by destiny and by natural force, which is not violent, but are the sweetest movements of the soul. And thus, even if thou wouldst not love me, Your Excellency would surely possess the lordship of this body and soul. And it is of such manner, that should something cloud your favor, I would still recognize an extraordinary obligation to your cause. So that Your Excellency may prove the truth of what I say, it does not matter here whether you would know to where what places my soul takes you, and move that natural wheel, which does not deserve a reward. I only want, My Lord, but to love your Excellency, and place your insignia in the inside left-side, and outside, as it is used here, in allegiance

to you... I plead with Your Excellency, not on my merit, but because your grace heard me with pleasure tell you that the poor of the Empress lives, and that your glow leaves the person all full of life, each time it touches the soul, and that to live I desire. On 16 June 1594.

Hume (273) and Akrigg (211) believe that the following letter, written in 1594, clinches the Armado - Pérez identification because of the word *peregrine*. It is also curious that Pérez uses the word *God-Father* in his dedication of his *Relaciones* to Essex. This was just shortly after the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to Southampton in 1593 in which the words "it had so noble a god-father" appeared.

To My Lord of Essex
Raphael Peregrine, author of this book, has asked me to present it to Your Excellency on his behalf. Because he requests it, Your Excellency is obliged to protect him. For he should know that it deserves a God-Father, and he has picked you as such. Perhaps he has trusted in your name knowing that Your Excellency is a protector of peregrines of Fortune. Perhaps also some have taken the name of peregrine who are the persecutors of peregrines. I have confirmed to him of the favor of Your Excellency; I have assured and encouraged him to not fear your displeasure, which is like disconcerted murmurs, like the whistles that occupy the ears and not the souls, like cowardly dogs that bite the clothes and do not reach the flesh. Your Excellency, don't take me for a praiser when I select to name you time and again a Peregrine; which even though I know it is pleasing to your Piety, the

occasion selects you, not the Adulation. But, permit me, that in signing my name that I am your Peregrine.

“With the exception of Sir William Cecil all presentation copies were sent to Essexians. This was apparently done in triumph to show that he had seen the *Pedazos* through the press in spite of Cecil’s opposition. Hence the conceit elaborated in the letter that he was a ‘barbarian’ was written with tongue in cheek” (Ungerer II, *A Spaniard* 298).

*To My Lord Burghley
So as not to appear a complete barbarian, of which I leave good testimony, I have not wanted to send Your Lordship this book without telling you something. And because it may not seem much to you, I beg of you that when you think of me, remember that I am a Peregrine, and that peregrines by their bad fortune are barbaric to all. With all this, I know barbarians by their Nature which have natural good fortune, if one can praise those which remain barbarous. For he that does not refine, nor perfect the Good, or bad fortune (the two sculptors of Nature for the refinement of human matter) they could be excluded of the human genus, and sent to that of the beasts. Such are those of low and offensive matter. To these, Good fortune take between the hands to sculpt and improve, and the Bad fortune to the rest, excellent material to sculpt and form in them the figures of the highest and most perfect virtues.*

Don Antonio Pérez and Oxford

Since Pérez knew Burghley, it is very likely he knew his

son-in-law, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. Unfortunately, he did not write to Oxford but he must have met him.

“On February 5th, 1595 he attended the marriage celebrations of William Stanley, Earl of Derby, and Elizabeth de Vere, granddaughter of Lord Burghley.” (This was the wedding of Oxford’s daughter). Pérez’s presence at the wedding is confirmed by Francis Bacon’s “particular point to inquire from his brother if on that occasion Pérez had seen the Queen dance” (Ungerer I, *A Spaniard* 185-187). This is the occasion when many believe that *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was performed.

Since Francis Bacon shared rooms with Pérez at Gray’s Inn, it is likely that he was with him “during the Gray Inn’s revels, on January 7th 1595, when the Queen watched Shakespeare’s company perform the *Comedy of Errors*” (Ungerer I, *A Spaniard* 188).

Oxford was very likely at this performance. Pérez remained an admirer of theater productions throughout his life, regardless whether the plays were given in Spanish, French, Latin, or English.

Thus it was that Don Antonio Pérez, a lying, deceitful, notorious and flamboyant character, was involved with the Elizabethan court, the Essex circle, the theater, and family members close to Edward de Vere. It is undeniable that Pérez had an impact on *Othello*. And, the fact that Don Pérez seems to have been vilified in *Othello* as Iago, and

was so closely parodied as Don Armado in *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, demonstrates that the author had met him at court, clearly did not like him, and that only members of the court would understand the in-house satire (Holmes 214; Hume 270). While it is acknowledged that *Love’s Labor’s Lost* was an old play by 1596, and that possibly the character of Don Armado was originally based on Ivan the Terrible (Greenhill 9-32), the playwright could have updated the character to be topical and reflect Antonio Pérez.

These changes to *Othello* and *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, if accepted, allow us to ascribe the revision of these plays to at least 1597, after Pérez had fallen out of favor in England and had returned to France. The Pérez allusions reflect yet another detail of court life that appears in Shakespeare’s plays, revealing the author’s inside knowledge and details unlikely to be available to a commoner such as William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon.

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(cont’d on p. 23)

Alan Navarre: Oxfordian playwright

The Crown Signature, a play in three acts, by Alan Navarre, was published in April by New Theatre Publications of Cheshire, England. Navarre is a playwright and screenwriter who lives in San Luis Obispo, California.

SOS: Has the attention given the authorship debate by the *Wall Street Journal* April 18 coverage of Oxfordians Justice John Paul Stevens and Justice Antonin Scalia boosted interest in your play?

Navarre: Yes, I hope the eminent justices' opinions will boost Oxfordian momentum and swing the doors wide open for the play and film projects.

SOS: What prompted you to write *The Crown Signature*?

Navarre: Someone had to answer the historical distortionist plays and film trends. I was particularly irritated by Shekhar Kapur – the director of *Elizabeth*, the 1998 film starring Cate Blanchett – saying he hates history. Is that surreal? That's when I picked up the gauntlet.

SOS: Do you think that movies should be historically accurate?

Navarre: Hollywood says it must make only films that sell, whereas the logical inference is Hollywood

makes only films it wants the public to buy. But I feel in the current *zeitgeist* people are rejecting the "programming" of traditional media and are rediscovering critical thinking.

SOS: Does that mean you'll make money?

Navarre: Well, a long Broadway or London West End run may pay a playwright relatively well, especially if Ms. Blanchett is starring in *The Crown Signature*! But there's plenty of star power for a film and for as many stage productions as the world will bear.

SOS: Is anyone going to buy your version of historical accuracy?

Navarre: I'm encouraged by the digging and discovering that's ongoing in all areas of the authorship debate. I've had excellent correspondence from Robert Brazil and W. Ron Hess on the scholarly status of the autograph, for which I'm infinitely grateful.

SOS: Which interpretation of de Vere's signature does your play deliver?

Navarre: It isn't meant to promote an interpretation. My great hope is that Horace's principle will obtain, *dulce et utile*, both delighting audiences and raising consciousness.

SOS: Are you a proponent of the Edward VII theory of the crown signature?

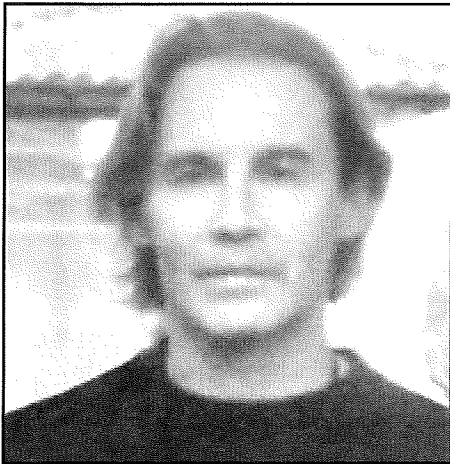
Navarre: Seeing through a glass darkly to the latter 1500s and concluding an absolute *no* or *yes* to any signature theory may be unwarranted. The truth of the past is our challenge to decipher. We're bound by the duty of *de mortuis nihil nisi bonum* – one breaches that duty to one's peril. As for *the tournaments scoring nomenclature* theory I wonder that someone of Edward Oxenford's urbanity would dabble with these jots and tittles in connection with his name to remind the Cecils of his rank. Even Oxfordian scholars who prefer this interpretation admit there's no evidence beyond a shadow of a doubt to prove what Oxford intended by the embellishment. Historically theoretically I would rather appeal to Carolly Erickson's inference: "Elizabeth . . . it was said, was seducing handsome young men. . . . Prominent among these favorites was Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford. . . . Oxford excelled at those courtly graces Elizabeth admired. . . . He was . . . the ideal partner for the queen (*The First Elizabeth*, p. 267)."

The play opens with this prologue:

The play is based on letters and other documentation of Edward de Vere 17th Earl of Oxford, Queen Elizabeth I of England, plays and poetry of William Shakespeare, and such of other pertinent historical persons and events. It is intended that the

spirit of the history portrayed is accurate and that historical facts are not distorted. Notwithstanding, the play can merely present an inferential account of the distant past.

And the leading tag line I hope will read: "Will the real Shakespeare and Elizabeth please stand up!"



Also published by New Theatre Publications, Navarre's play *The Devil's Chaplain* will premier in November 2009 at San Luis Obispo Little Theatre, in California. Navarre's screenplay *Draft Pick* is under option by Flashlight Productions, London. His several years in software development culminated in an invention, for which a U.S. patent is pending. He is currently writing and marketing several plays and screenplays, as well as attending the San Luis Obispo School of Law partly in an effort to understand the mind of the Shakespeare canon's author.

The Crown Signature

by Alan Navarre

Full-length play, in three acts;
running time: 2 hrs

Cast: five males, three females;
supernumeraries, if available

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Book fee: £6

Synopsis of the Play: The life of Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, populates many situations in the Shakespeare canon, while Oxford's education, social experience, and early plays and poetry evince the potential genius of the later works. The Crown Signature investigates Oxford's authorship connection in the light of his mysterious signing of documents and letters with flourishes designating seven crowns, implying King Edward the Seventh. Any pretension to such an act and the signer would have lost his head. Why had Queen Elizabeth allowed this? Oxford stopped using his crown signature immediately after Elizabeth's death.

(cont'd from p. 21)

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Book review:
Is It True What They Say About Shakespeare?
by Stanley Wells.
Ebington, UK:
Long Barn Books,
n.d., ca. 2008

by Richard F. Whalen

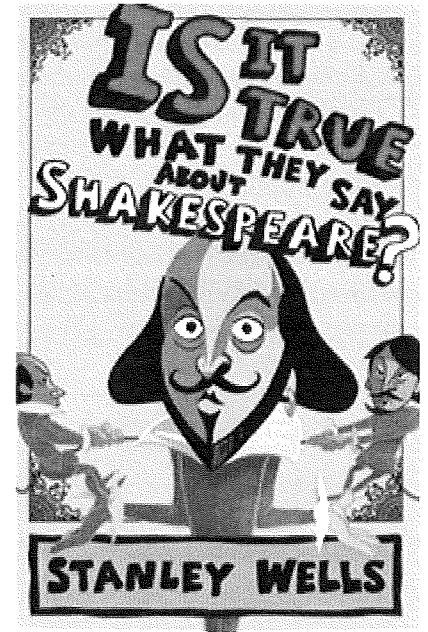
Heavyweight scholar Stanley Wells has introduced Shakespeare *lite* to the marketplace with his first book that includes the Shakespeare authorship controversy at some length – even with the cover, a bold cartoon.

Wells has long been one of the leading Stratfordian scholars. He is professor emeritus at the University of Birmingham, editor of the complete plays and poems, and chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. His purpose with this ultra-lite book is to "... examine some of the principal current beliefs, myths and legends ... in the attempt to distinguish between fact, reasonable conjecture, speculation and pure fiction."

The authorship controversy gets seven of the eighty-eight chapters in this slim volume that is aimed at the common reader. Like all the chapters, these seven are very short – just one to three pages. The chapter "Short Life of Shakespeare, the Stratfordian" is twelve pages.

We are not surprised that for Wells the Oxfordian challenge to Stratfordians does not meet his criteria for fact or reasonable conjecture.

This cover depicting the authorship controversy is the first for a Stratfordian professor's book. The two men are in a tug of war behind the Stratford man, or perhaps they are pulling him in opposite directions. Or both. Apparently, the men in the tug of war are Marlowe on the right and Oxford or Bacon on the left.



Each chapter in Wells' book poses a question, very briefly discusses the evidence and arguments, and concludes with a verdict.

For example, "Is it true. . ."

- *That he was born in Shakespeare's Birthplace? Verdict: Probably true.*
- *That he smoked cannabis? Pure fiction.*
- *That he could read/speak French? True.*
- *That he wrote a poem titled "Shall I Die"? Perfectly possible.*
- *That he portrayed himself as Hamlet? There may be a grain of truth in it.*
- *That he borrowed most of his plots? Not really true.*
- *That you can visit Shakespeare's Birthplace without leaving Japan? True (if you don't mind a reconstruction).*
- *That the earl of Oxford wrote the plays? No, not true.*

Wells asks: Is there any reason to believe that the Stratford man didn't write the plays

attributed to him? His short answer: Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare.

Wells invokes what he calls "... the overwhelming evidence from his own time that a man called William Shakespeare who came from Stratford-upon-Avon wrote the plays and poems for which he is famous."

He lists more than a dozen writers who "... referred to him by name."

Of course, they were referring to the poet-playwright of London without identifying him as the man from Stratford, whose name was spelled Shakspere there. Wells also cites the Stratford monument inscription and the First Folio prefatory matter, which Oxfordians have shown to be weak and ambiguous.

Then he asks whether it's true that the Stratford man could not have been well educated enough to have written the plays and poems. "Not true,"

is his verdict, after mentioning the excellent educational system. "There is nothing in his plays or poems," says Wells, "that could not have been written by a former grammar school boy who carried on reading after he left school."

Author of more than a dozen major works on Shakespeare, Wells of late has been giving more attention to the authorship issue and these assertions are probably his first line of defense for the general public against the Oxfordians and other non-Stratfordians.

He devotes six chapters (nine pages) to the claims for Marlowe, Bacon, Neville, Rutland, Mary Sidney and Oxford as the true author. His two pages on Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, as proposed by Robin Williams in her book *Sweet Swan of Avon*, are astonishingly sympathetic. Wells cites Mary Sidney's literary accomplishments and ends with a long excerpt from the jacket of Williams' book – without identifying it as the jacket blurb.

The blurb says Williams intends "... to provide enough documented evidence to open the inquiry into this intriguing – and entirely plausible – possibility. . . . by providing overwhelming documented evidence connecting Mary Sidney to the Shakespeare canon."

But after that final, ringing assessment by the publisher – but seemingly accepted by Wells – is it true that she wrote the works of Shakespeare? "Of course not!," is Wells' verdict.

This sympathetic but at the same time dismissive treatment of claims for Mary Sidney suggests that Wells believes she had a profound influence on the Shakespeare plays and poems. If that is truly his considered judgment, it's quite incredible that he would believe that the commoner Will Shakspeare could have been a silent partner of Lady Mary Sidney and her literary circle of aristocrats. For Oxfordians, it's much more credible that the countess may have had an important influence on the earl of Oxford, whose plays in the First Folio were dedicated to her two sons, one of whom was Oxford's son-in-law.

Dismissing Oxford as Shakespeare, Wells says that "it is ridiculous to suppose that Oxford combined writing the works of Shakespeare with a busy career as a much-travelled courtier and that he left around ten masterpieces *unperformed* (emphasis added) when he died ... to be printed under a false name over the next nine years."

Noteworthy is the fact that Wells says *unperformed*, when unwritten is the usual Strat-

fordian line. Thus, implicitly he accepts that it is not impossible that the ten plays were written before 1604, when Oxford died. Wells may not have intended that implication, but that is what he wrote.

Wells' use the pejorative term *false name* instead of pseudonym betrays an unfair bias that also denigrates Mark Twain, George Eliot and other great writers who wrote under pen names.

The sensational front cover of the book depicts the Shakespeare of the First Folio but with a baffled expression. He's being pulled in opposite directions, perhaps by Marlowe on one side and by Bacon or Oxford on the other. Hands outstretched before him, he seems to be saying, "I dunno."

Richard F. Whalen is the author of Shakespeare: Who Was He?: The Oxford Challenge to the Bard of Avon, co-editor with Professor Daniel Wright of The Oxfordian Shakespeare Series, and editor/annotator of Macbeth in the series. He is past president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and a regular contributor to the Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter.

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(Conference continued from page 1)

This was a great performance by Hank. There is no one who can recite the sonnets as he can. He has memorized them all, I think.

After the 90-minute performance, we took a short break and then reconvened for a 45-minute Q&A with Hank and with Ted Story, who was a co-writer of the play. Many good points were raised. Some people thought that the play seemed more like a lecture than a dramatic performance and were afraid that a beginner-type audience might take everything Hank said as fact, rather than the informed speculation that it is.

Hank replied that he does say at the very beginning of the piece – I will tell you a story that I believe is true. An audience member suggested that Hank make a bigger point of this disclaimer in future performances. Others in the audience then said that any student who takes what a teacher says to be gospel has not learned how to think critically.

Friday

We began on Friday at 9 a.m. with a talk by Lamberto Tassinari called “Shakespeare’s Poetry in the Words of John Florio”. Mr. Tassinari presented his theory that John Florio was the actual author of the plays attributed to William Shakespeare. Florio was an Italian of Jewish origin. His father, Michael Angelo was a Franciscan friar and then a Protestant. Florio lived in England and had an appointment at the court of James I

– I think it was Groom of the Privy Chamber.

Florio wrote the first Italian-English dictionary and is credited with introducing the most new words into English after Chaucer and Shakespeare. He had a personal library of over 340 books in Italian, Spanish, French, and English. He wrote mostly prose (and maybe one or two poems) under his own name. He was a teacher of languages. He translated Boccaccio and Montaigne – two of Shakespeare’s important source books – into English. He had literary patrons and was in the same literary circle as Ben Jonson. And, of course, the plays of Shakespeare certainly have an Italian bent.

Mr. Tassinari showed examples of parallels of Florio’s prose and the works of Shakespeare. It was a good talk, but didn’t seem to convince the audience, who were mostly Oxfordians. Some deficiencies in his argument pointed out by members of the audience were: no real evidence for Florio having written poetry and no real connection between Florio and the plays except for appearing to be an inspiration for them or his works being used as sources.

The next talk was by Dr. Peter McIntosh: “A Scientist Looks at Shakespeare’s Sonnets, Part One: Questions of Identity in Sonnets 1-126 and Part Two: Sonnets to the Dark Lady.”

Using a method similar to that used by J.T. Looney in investigating the authorship issue, Dr. McIntosh attempted

to do a scientific inquiry into what the sonnets tell us about their subject (the Fair Youth) and what they tell us about the author.

He came up with many biographical details of these individuals from the sonnets and concluded that the Fair Youth is Robert Devereux, the Second Earl of Essex and that the author is Elizabeth I. These conclusions are based on clues in the sonnets that the Fair Youth is a young man, good-looking, childless, travels overseas, and is probably a military aristocrat who communicates with the author by letters. His mother is a beauty; his father is dead; he is praised by other poets, and is a subject of a crime late in his career that also reflects badly on the author.

By the end of the sonnet sequence 1-126 the Fair Youth is dead, but lives on in the mind of the author. As for the author, there are clues that he is old and near death, is an aristocrat, and has been affected by the Fair Youth’s crime. Dr. McIntosh sees that these descriptions fit the Earl of Essex and Queen Elizabeth better than anyone else – although this view was not shared by most of the audience, feeling that Henry Wriothesely, Third Earl of Southampton and Edward de Vere fit better.

Dr McIntosh also presented some nifty wordplay using the odd dedication to the Sonnets to reveal the name: Elisabeth.

In Part Two (a much shorter part of the presentation) Dr. McIntosh explained his theory



Presenters Roger Stritmatter and Richard Whalen at Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference, Concordia University, April 2009.

about the so-called Dark Lady sonnets, 128-154. He pointed out these are not necessarily about a real Dark Lady.

Only three of these sonnets actually mention a woman who has dark characteristics. Bearing in mind the conclusions of Part One of the presentation, Dr. McIntosh concludes that the so-called Dark Lady is just another personality of the Fair Youth (i.e. Essex). There were no real comments about this part of the presentation in the Q&A that followed, but there quite a few comments – mostly negative – about Dr. McIntosh’s conclusions in Part One. He was able to handle these quite well.

After a break, we came back to hear a delightful presentation by Lynne Kositsky, titled “The Mouse and the Lion: Responses from an Orthodox Source”. This turned out to be a wonderful allegorical story that Lynne recited, relating

to orthodox reactions to the Oxfordian movement.

Then Dr. Roger Stritmatter gave his presentation, “Where in the World? Geography and Irony in *The Tempest*”. Roger presented a theory – originally proposed in the nineteenth century and then forgotten by most traditional scholars – that the setting of *The Tempest* is the island of Lampedusa just off the coast of Africa, near Tunis. This fits in well with descriptions and events in the play.

In any case, the setting of the play is obviously in the Mediterranean and not in Bermuda or anywhere else in the New World. So the theory started by Malone and Chambers that the Strachey letter about a voyage to Virginia which got shipwrecked off of Bermuda being a source for *The Tempest* makes no sense.

After lunch, we heard the Keynote Address by Ramon

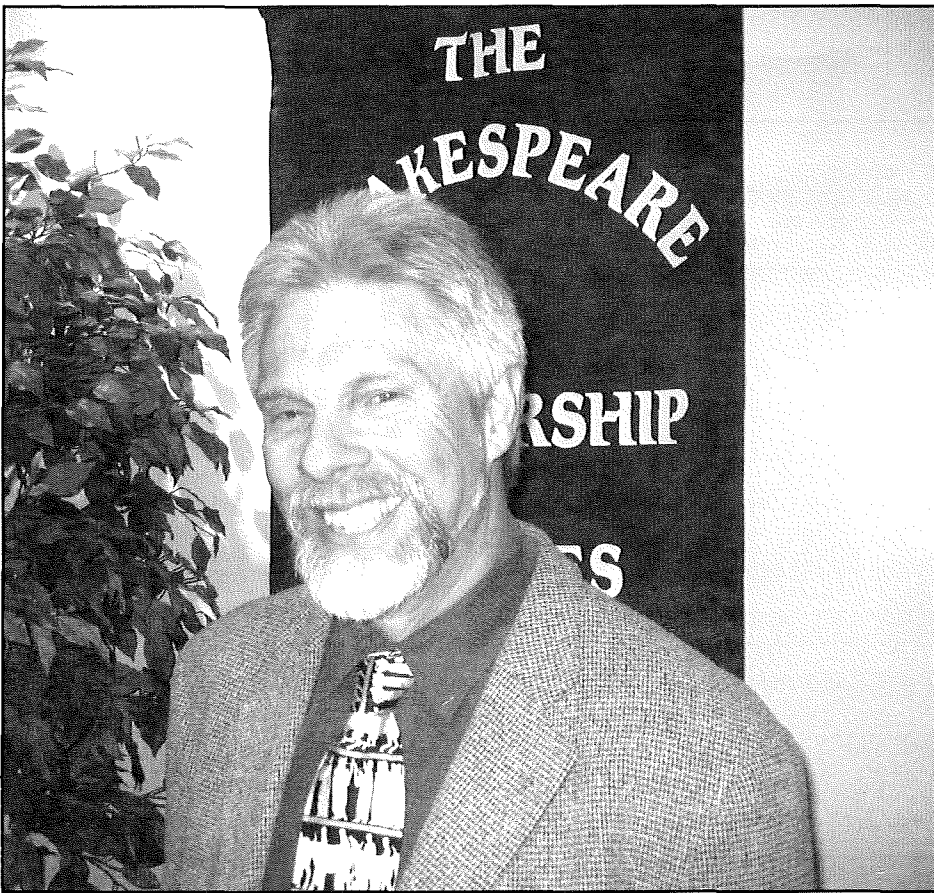
Jiménez, “The *Ur-Hamlet* and its Seven Siblings: Explorations in Shakespeare’s Dramatic Juvenilia”.

Ramon described how, in addition to inventing the idea of an *Ur-Hamlet*, orthodox scholars are finding it necessary to postulate at least seven other *Ur-* plays to explain away problems they have, even though there is no evidence of these plays having ever existed (the so-called *Ur-Hamlet* seems to exist, having apparently been performed in 1589). Oxfordians have no real problems to explain away in this regard.

The problems besetting the orthodox scholars is that there are references (and actual printings) to many plays that have very similar plots and themes as canonical Shakespeare plays – such as *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, *The Taming of A Shrew*, and *The Famous Victories of Henry V* – that were all published anonymously.

The problem is that they are arguably not good enough for Shakespeare to have written them or they were written too early. (This all assumes that we are talking about William of Stratford, of course.) So scholars have to postulate the existence of *Ur-* plays which have not survived, but which served as the source for both the anonymous plays and their canonical counterparts.

The Oxfordian view is that these anonymous plays are simply deVere’s early drafts, which he later polished into the Shakespeare plays we now know.



Presenter Earl Showerman at Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference, Concordia University, April 2009.

Then there are other Shakespearean plays which have parts which seem to be written by someone else since they are considered not good enough for Shakespeare to have written them. So, the scholars say, there must have been an *Ur*-play by someone else that Shakespeare took up but somehow didn't have time or want to finish polishing up, so he left the bad parts as they were. Again, the Oxfordian view that these plays were unfinished by deVere is easier to understand.

In total, Ramon referred to seven *Ur*-plays that scholars have imagined: the *Ur-Henry IV*, the *Ur-Henry VI, part 1*, the *Ur-Henry VIII*, the *Ur-Pericles*, the *Ur-Titus Andronicus*, the *Ur-King John*, and the *Ur-Tam-*

ing of the Shrew. As he said there is no evidence that any of these plays ever existed.

Ramon finds it ironic that the same scholars who complain about the required conspiracy to hide the concealed authorship of the plays by Edward deVere if the Oxfordian theory is correct, don't see anything wrong with requiring a conspiracy to erase any record of seven plays that were well known enough to have been used as sources for at least two different playwrights – Anonymous and Shakespeare.

Ramon's presentation was enlivened by performances of some of the parallel portions of twin plays such as *The Taming of A Shrew* and *The Taming of*

the Shrew and *The True Chronicle of King Leir* and *King Lear* by three actors: Professor Michael Egan, and Concordia students Emmanuel Henreid and Chelsea DeLoney.

Next, Earl Showerman gave another of his well-received talks about Greek sources for Shakespeare plays. This one was titled "Bottom's Dream: Herculean Farce as Political Allegory" and was an extension of the talk Earl gave at last year's conference at Concordia about references to Hercules in the plays of Shakespeare.

In this talk, full of great detail, Earl presents the view of the character of Bottom in *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* as a farcical Herculean figure and also as an allegory for Francois Hercule de Valois, Duke of Alencon, who was an early suitor for Queen Elizabeth I. Earl went through the many classical and Renaissance sources for the play as well as the allegorical parallels of Bottom and the Rude Mechanicals to Alencon and his entourage. Thus, Elizabeth and Alencon are represented by Titania and Bottom – and also as Hippolyta and Theseus – in the play.

The last presentation of the day was given by Richard Whalen, "Othello's Harbingers on Cyprus Suggest in Their Dramatic Poetry that the Dramatist Had Been There".

After first presenting evidence that the action of Acts 2-5 of *Othello* take place in the port city of Famagusta on the eastern side of the island of

Cyprus – the only deep-water port in Cyprus. Showing pictures of the fortress that was there including the battlements, Richard mentioned ten short references in Act Two of the play when Montano and others are awaiting the arrival of Othello, Iago, Desdemona, and Cassio to Cyprus.

These references indicate that the people waiting on the battlements of the fortress cannot actually see the wharf where the ships arrive – they have to send messengers back and forth to see what is going on. This is exactly the case for someone standing on the battlements of the fortress in Famagusta and seems to indicate that the author of the play had actually seen these battlements so that he could describe the situation so precisely.

We know that deVere was away on a trip to the Continent during most of 1575 and 1576 and that he visited France, Italy, and Sicily. He wrote that he intended to go to Greece and Turkey, although there is no direct evidence that he did. But there is a four-month gap (when he sent no letters) between May and mid-September 1575 when we don't know where he was.

Could he have gone to Cyprus during this time, Richard Whalen asks. It's all speculation, but it is known that England and the Ottomans had recently come to a trade agreement in 1574. Was deVere going to Cyprus (and Constantinople) on some official government mission? There's much more to be found out, it seems.

Saturday

On Saturday, we began with Professor Ren Draya on "Shakespeare's Songs, with Special Attention to *Othello*."

Dr. Draya pointed out how there are countless references to music in the plays of Shakespeare. This not only includes actual songs, but also imagery and metaphor. She mentioned that, to her knowledge, only the play *King John* lacks any metaphors or references to music.

Of course, Oxford had musical training. It is always difficult to determine the origins of the songs in Shakespeare. Some were traditional songs, some were songs which Shakespeare altered to fit the play, and some were original songs written by him.

Ren focused on the songs of *Othello*. The first one is a drinking song (actually a combination of two drinking songs) which is sung by Iago. The origins of these songs is unclear. The fact that Iago is the one who sings them shows him to be in control of the situation as he maneuvers to get Cassio drunk.

The second song is the "Willow Song" sung by Desdemona as she gets ready for bed on her last night. This appears to have been a traditional ballad, a conventional treatment of unrequited love. The song is interrupted by happenings and at one point Desdemona seems to forget a line of the song. The line she forgets (and does not sing) is "She was born to be fair aye to die for his love."

During the Q&A, Pidge Sexton pointed out that the word,

willow, could also have the connotation of a fallen woman.

Next came a combo lecture presented by Dr. Michael Delahoyde, "Lyric Poetry from Chaucer to Shakespeare", and his graduate student Jacob Hughes, "Shakespeare the Chaucerian".

Dr. Delahoyde talked about how Shakespeare/Oxford was the culminating figure in the evolution of English poetry which started with Chaucer and then progressed to Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey – Oxford's uncle – who started the use of blank verse in England and is credited with originating what would later be called the Shakespearean sonnet form.

Dr. Delahoyde then mentioned how Shakespeare was influenced by Chaucer, especially in his poetry. This goes beyond the two plays with direct sources from Chaucer – *Troilus and Cressida* from Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Two Noble Kinsman* from "The Knight's Tale" in the *Canterbury Tales* – in that Shakespeare uses some Chaucerian images and also uses Chaucer's technique of being a narrator who gets involved in the action.

Jacob Hughes gave more specific examples of this kind of thing, mentioning the Chaucerian influences on the characters of Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Feste in *Twelfth Night*, and Falstaff in the Henry IV plays.

Although Chaucer is not mentioned by name in Shakespeare – as are other influential authors such as Cicero, Ovid and

Gower – his influence is seen in many places.

Both speakers mentioned the interesting fact that orthodox scholars have tended to minimize or ignore these Chaucerian influences. This may in part be because they recognize that vernacular authors such as Chaucer were not taught in the grammar schools and so Stratford Will would not have learned it there.

Of course we have record of Oxford buying a copy of Chaucer – along with his Geneva Bible.

When we reconvened after lunch Daniel Wright interrupted the conference with the late-breaking news of the appearance (on the front page) of a *Wall Street Journal* article on how Justice Stevens and other Supreme Court justices are convinced that Oxford was the author of Shakespeare's works.

Some justices had no opinion or thought that there was reasonable doubt as to the authorship. Two justices remained with Stratford Will. Dr. Wright read the entire article out loud with cheers and jeers at appropriate places from the audience.

We then continued with Hank Whittmore on "Love Triangle or Family Triangle? A Study of Sonnets 40, 41 and 42"

Actually Hank never got to talk about Sonnets 40 and 41, but he did talk about number 42, as well as others, especially 133 and 144.

He began with the observation that the authorship question

really began after Nathan Drake identified the Fair Youth in the sonnets as Henry Wriothesley, the Third Earl of Southampton to whom Shakespeare dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece*. The problem was the difficulty, for many, to understand how a commoner could write love poems, some of which are scolding in tone, to a nobleman.

Hank laments that the Oxfordian movement is now stuck in deciding what the sonnets are really about. Everyone (or nearly everyone) agrees that there is some kind of triangle going on between the Fair Youth, the Dark Lady and the Rival Poet, but there is disagreement about whether this is a love triangle or a family triangle.

Some like Mark Anderson and John Hamill see it as a love triangle between Oxford, Elizabeth Trentham and Southampton, while others (such as Hank) see a family triangle of Oxford, Queen Elizabeth and their illegitimate son Southampton.

In the rest of the talk, Hank proceeded to give many reasons why he has come to his conclusion. Clues in the sonnets show that the author was forced to be concealed, had to submit to authority, had to adopt a penname, and had to bury his identity in deference to the Fair Youth. In Hank's view the Rival Poet is the penname, Shakespeare, that Oxford was forced to adopt.

Hank points out that the Sonnets seem to tell a story which

has a datable beginning: sonnets 1-17 written to encourage Southampton to marry Elizabeth Vere in 1591, and end: sonnet 107, in 1603, referring to both the queen's death and the release of Southampton from the Tower where he had been for two years after the failed Essex Rebellion.

Since Shakespeare/Oxford has told the beginning and the end of the story, he must also be telling the intervening story of the rebellion, the trial of Southampton, and the commuting of his death sentence. This is Hank's Monument Theory, which he has explained elsewhere, most recently in his performance on the first day of the Conference.

Bill Boyle spoke next on "Shakespeare and the Royal Prerogative: A Never-told Tale of the Poet-Philosopher King" a slightly expanded version of the talk Bill gave at the recent joint conference in White Plains, New York.

Bill mentions how there was a crisis over the succession of the English crown beginning in 1595 and lasting until the death of Elizabeth in 1603. Because it was treason to even mention the succession, there were many veiled references to it in various publications and dedications around that time. Bill went through some of these and explained how the outcome of all this was to force Essex and Southampton into the Essex Rebellion of 1601.

Bill talked about the mysterious work "Willobie His Avis" and what it might mean. He believes that Barbara Luna

solved it in 1970 by identifying Avisia as Elizabeth and the five suitors of Avisia in the poem as five suitors to marry Elizabeth.

We then heard from Professor Maurice Holland, a law professor at Oregon State University on "Misprision of Treason: A Look at Elizabethan Law in the Context of the Essex Rebellion."

The basic story that Hank and others believe is that Southampton was involved in the Essex Rebellion, was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to be executed, then his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment by recharging him with the lesser charge of misprision of treason, and that he was finally pardoned by King James I.

The reason that this occurred (again according to the theory) was that Oxford made a deal with Robert Cecil to save Southampton's life. For this, Southampton had to give up his claim to the throne as a bastard son of Elizabeth and Oxford had to hide permanently behind the mask of Shakespeare.

Speaking as a historian and a lawyer, Dr. Holland, however, said that there never was any charge of misprision of treason against Southampton, but that the queen simply wanted to spare his life – something she could do whenever she wanted – and that Southampton didn't really get a life imprisonment sentence, just that he was to be kept in the Tower "under her Majesty's pleasure" (i.e. indefinitely). He was in the Tower for two years until Elizabeth died. Would he have been

released later if Elizabeth had lived longer?

Dr. Holland explained a little about the common law definitions of misprision of treason and high treason and how statutes in Elizabeth's time expanded the common law definitions of these.

In the Q&A, Hank Whitemore disagreed with Dr. Holland's conclusions.

At this point we had to stop in order to allow enough time for everyone to get to the annual awards banquet. Thus, we were unable to listen to Dr. Daniel Wright on "Phoenix Rising: Recovering Authorial Intent in Interpreting Shakespeare's 'Phoenix and the Turtle'". Dr. Wright will save this presentation for another venue, perhaps the upcoming SOS/SF joint conference in Houston, November 5-8, 2009.

As usual, the awards banquet was held at the beautiful University Club in downtown Portland – too bad it's a little difficult to get there. The Conference Award for Artistic Excellence was given to Renee Montagne, host of National Public Radio's "Morning Edition", for her three-part series, "Who Wrote Shakespeare's Plays?" on the authorship question that aired July 2,3, 4, 2008.

An Award for Scholarly Excellence was given to Robin Williams for her book *Sweet Swan of Avon* about the case for Mary Sidney being Shakespeare. A second Award for Scholarly Excellence was given to Bill Boyle for all the work he has done in promoting the author-

ship cause as an editor, librarian, Internet presence, and now for developing the Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources (SOAR) database.

Sunday

The last day of the conference began with a very nice talk by Robin Williams on "Mary Sidney: The Sweet Swan of Avon". Robin did a very good summary of the case for Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke as the real Shakespeare. She started by pointing out that the love-like sonnets would make a lot of sense if it was a female poet writing to a young man.

Mary Sidney was a great patron of literature who ran the Wilton Circle, the most famous literary salon of the age for over two decades. She herself wrote poetry and did translations of famous classical works. She was known to have written at least one play on her own. She couldn't publish much of this during her life because she was a woman, but many of her poems and her translations were able to be published.

Robin showed an amazing list of the sources known or suspected for the Shakespeare plays and showed that Mary Sidney either was known to have them or had ready access to them. Many sources were by her brother Philip Sidney or by people close to her at home or in her literary circle.

After the death of her husband, the Second Earl of Pembroke, Mary fell in love with her physician, Dr. Matthew Lister; but of course couldn't marry

him. She later suspected him of having an affair with a cousin, Mary Wroth. Robin wonders if this could be the triangle in the Sonnets: poet=Mary Sidney, Fair Youth=Lister, and Dark Lady=Mary Wroth.

Robin suspects that the first 17 (procreation) sonnets could have been written to her brother Sidney before he died. The First Folio – dedicated to her two sons – went to press in August 1621, but production stopped in October 1621 and began again a year later. Mary died in September 1621.

All in all, she made a good presentation of the case for the countess. Although I suspect no one in the audience was moved to change their minds about their favorite authorship candidate, we were all inspired to think about things a little differently.

Next we heard from Dr. Michael Egan on “Shakespeare’s Authorship of *The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One: Evidence and its Interpretation*”.

Dr. Egan briefly summarized his case for attributing the anonymous play *Richard II, Part One* to Shakespeare. This play is usually known now as *Thomas of Woodstock*, but Dr. Egan prefers to restore the title it was given when the manuscript was discovered. The play was written in 1592, but the manuscript copy (made by a scribe, but maybe corrected by the author) was from 1605, says Dr. Egan.

There are many verbal parallels and dramatic tendencies

that link this play to the canonical works of Shakespeare. Much of Dr. Egan’s talk was about his criticisms of the methods used by a scholar named MacDonald P. Jackson to show that the play was written in 1608 by Samuel Rowley.

Having this play recognized as by Shakespeare may have some authorship implications (although Dr. Egan dismisses these). As in the canonical play *Richard II* (which Dr. Egan now refers to as *Richard II, Part II*) and in others of the history plays there is a curious white-washing of Edward de Vere’s ancestors.

Robert de Vere, Ninth Earl of Oxford – although the most important companion and advisor to King Richard II – is totally absent from both parts of the plays about him, although Robert’s wife is present in *Richard II, Part One*.

After a break, Bill Boyle and Dr. Daniel Wright presented “A ‘SOAR’ing Demonstration”.

SOAR stands for Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources and is a new online database being developed by Bill Boyle as an extension of his New England Authorship Library. The goal will be to catalog articles, journals, written source materials, and books. There will be links so that users can either get things online for free, or by being a member of the new Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre (SARC) being able to access things which are on restricted source sites such as JSTOR. Books will be able to be quickly ordered by e-mail on inter-library loan.

The project will be very labor-intensive, but Dan and Bill feel that with help from others it can be done. Bill showed a demonstration of the system using the approximately 50 items he has already added to the database. It is hoped that much progress will be made before the August 20 Grand Opening of the new Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre.

The next presentation was by Professor Sam Saunders on “Do Shake-Speare’s Sonnets Exhibit Harmonic Balance?”

This was a mathematical and statistical analysis of the sonnets to see if any useful test could be found to help determine stylistically if an unknown sonnet could be ascribed to Shakespeare. Saunders showed that the method he was testing would not work. By extension, he was denying that any kind of stylistic tests are any good without very careful attention to detail and choosing sample sizes appropriately.

The last presentation was by Alex McNeil on sonnets 153 and 154.

Alex explained how these sonnets at first glance don’t seem to fit in with the rest of the sonnet sequence. They are not written in the first person (for the most part) and are both based on a classical source – an epigram telling a story about Cupid. In fact, both sonnets are telling the same story.

Alex presented a survey of traditional scholars on views of these two sonnets. Why

are there two sonnets about the same thing? Are these sonnets connected to the other sonnets? The different opinions were interesting to hear.

The conference was now formally concluded, but many people stayed behind for a tour of the not-yet finished George R. White Library and Learning Center, being built now on the Concordia campus. This building will eventually house the Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre as well as the Northwest Center for Children's Literature. Most of the building will provide much needed library space for Concordia, classrooms, and faculty offices. It will be a beautiful, well-planned building using environmentally friendly architecture.

Richard Joyrich, MD practices Nuclear Medicine in Detroit, MI. He has been a member of SOS since 1995 and has been on the Board of Trustees since 2005. Having attended the Stratford Festival in Ontario every year since 1971 (as well as other Shakespeare festivals) Richard has seen all of plays in the traditional Shakespeare Canon at least three times.

Contact info:

Lamberto Tassinari; Montreal, Quebec: "Shakespeare's Poetry in the Words of John Florio", <http://www.johnflorio-is-shakespeare.com>, gianobooks@yahoo.com

Dr Peter McIntosh; Sydney, Australia: "A Scientist Looks at Shakespeare's Sonnets: Part One: Questions of Identity in Sonnets 1-126; Part Two: Sonnets to the Dark Lady", mcintoshpenn@tassie.net.au A pdf file of his paper is available on request.

Lynne Kositsky; Toronto, Ontario: "The Mouse and the Lion: Responses from an Orthodox Source", author of young-adult novel *A Question of Will* (Roussan, 2000), <http://www.lynnkositsky.com>

Prof Roger Stritmatter; Baltimore, Maryland: "Where in the World? Geography and Irony in *The Tempest*", rstritmatter@gmail.com, <http://faculty.coppin.edu/pages/RStritmatter>

Ramon Jiménez; Berkeley, California: "The Ur-Hamlet and its Seven Siblings: Explorations in Shakespeare's Dramatic Juvenilia", ramjim99@gmail.com

Dr Earl Showerman; Jacksonville, Oregon: "Bottom's Dream: Herculean Farce as Political Allegory", earlees@charter.net

Richard Whalen; Truro, Massachusetts: "Othello's Harbingers on Cyprus Suggest in Their Dramatic Poetry that the Dramatist Had Been There", author of *Shakespeare – Who was he?: The Oxford Challenge to the Bard of Avon* (Praeger, 1994), RFWhalen@comcast.net

Prof Ren Draya; Carlinville, Illinois: "Shakespeare's Songs, with Special Attention to Othello", ren.draya@blackburn.edu

Prof Michael Delahoyde; Pullman, Washington: "Lyric Poetry from Chaucer to Shakespeare", <http://www.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/shakespeare/index.html>, delahoyd@wsu.edu

Jacob Hughes; Pullman, Washington: "Shakespeare the Chaucerian", jacob_hughes@wsu.edu

Hank Whittemore; Nyack, New York: "Love Triangle or Family Triangle? A

Study of Sonnets 40, 41 and 42", <http://www.shakespearesmonument.com>, hankw@optonline.net

William Boyle; Boston, Massachusetts: "Shakespeare and the Royal Prerogative: A Never-told Tale of the Poet-Philosopher King and His Monarch", Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources (site address to be announced), <http://shakespeareadventure.com>, wboyle@tiac.net

Prof Maurice Holland; Eugene, Oregon: "Misprision of Treason: A Look at Elizabethan Law in the Context of the Essex Rebellion", <http://www.law.uoregon.edu/faculty/mholland>,

Prof Daniel Wright; Portland, Oregon: "Phoenix Rising: Recovering Authorial Intent in Interpreting Shakespeare's 'Phoenix and the Turtle'"

NPR "Morning Edition" host, Renee Montagne: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=92142217&sc=emaf#92144645>

Robin Williams; Santa Fe, New Mexico: "Mary Sidney: The Sweet Swan of Avon", <http://www.marysidney.com>, <http://www.theshakespearepapers.com>, Robin@TheShakespearePapers.com,

Dr Michael Egan; Honolulu, Hawaii: "Shakespeare's Authorship of *The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One: Evidence and its Interpretation*", drmichaeelegan@comcast.net

Bill Boyle: A 'SOAR'ing Demonstration, wboyle@tiac.net

Prof Sam Saunders; Kirkland, Washington: "Do Shakespeare's Sonnets Exhibit Harmonic Balance?"

Alex McNeil; Newton, Massachusetts: "Sonnets 153 and 154", alex@amcneil.com

Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre, Prof. Daniel Wright, Director <http://www.authorshipstudies.org>, dwright@cu-portland.edu, editor of *Discovering Shakespeare*, a series of papers given at the Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre conference in recent years dedicated to the memory of Isabel Holden, see <http://www.authorshipstudies.org/bookstore/index.cfm>

**SF/SOS
Joint conference
to be held
Nov. 5-8, 2009**

The Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society have announced the 2009 Joint Conference to be held November 5-8, 2009 in Houston, Texas. Conference registration is \$200. For information, check the SOS website at <http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com/?p=138>

The deadline for submission of papers is July 31, 2009. See guidelines below for more information, or check the SOS website at <http://www.shakespeare-oxford.com/?p=193>.

The conference will be held at the Doubletree Hotel located one mile from George Bush International Airport. The hotel offers complimentary airport shuttle service. A block of rooms has been reserved for November 5, 2009 - November 8, 2009. Rates begin at \$99. To register for conference rates, use the Internet link <http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/HOUAP-DT-SHP-20091105/index.jhtml>

Note: to make reservations for Wednesday or Sunday at our group rate, call Angelica at Doubletree's in-house reservations (281-848-4001). You may email her with any questions at angelica.cantu@hilton.com.

**Guidelines for
Presentation of Papers
at the 2009 Shakespeare
Fellowship/Shakespeare
Oxford Society Joint
Conference**

The Conference's two sponsoring organizations, the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship, are both organizations dedicated to academic excellence, as defined through the independent scholarship of several generations of scholars, among them J.T. Looney, B.R. and B.M. Ward, Charles Wisner Barrell, Charlton Ogburn, Jr., Ruth Loyd Miller, and Mark Anderson, among others.

The primary focus of both organizations is to consider and advance the case already argued by these and other writers identifying Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, as the true mind behind the mask of "Shakespeare." Although papers exploring alternative authorship theories (e.g., Mary Sidney, Francis Bacon, etc.) are welcome, presenters should bear in mind that conference attendees are for the most part well versed in the arguments for and against Oxford's authorship as presented in these seminal works. Those desiring an audience for alternative authorship scenarios, or writing from an orthodox "Stratfordian" perspective, should prepare themselves by carefully considering the expectations of their audience. Please weigh the arguments for Oxford's authorship and construct your own arguments in relationship to them.

Since 2009 is the 400th anniversary of the publication of *Shake-Speare's Sonnets*, the Conference encourages presentations that shed light on the Sonnets.

1) The default time slot for all presentations will be 45 minutes, with 10 minutes for questions and answers. All presentations will have a question and answer section. If you are not able to condense the essentials of your argument to a 45-minute time frame, you may request more time from the committee, but additional time will only be granted to proposals that, in the opinion of the committee, are especially deserving of more extended consideration by conference attendees.

2) Send an abstract of no more than 250 words to the committee and a brief biography before July 31, 2009.

3) If you have not previously presented at an SOS, SF, or Concordia, Oregon conference, we welcome your submission. However, you are also requested to send a draft of your presentation, either as a Word document or PowerPoint presentation, to the committee by the July 31 deadline.

4) Academic presentations, ideally construed, are acts of persuasion. It goes without saying that all papers should be grounded in a clearly identifiable thesis supported by examples or evidence. Proposals that do not fit this criteria are unlikely to be accepted for presentation.

(continued on page 36)

(Cossolotto continued from page 2)

As readers of this newsletter know, Edward de Vere's birthday happens to fall in April 12. That means when Oxford is finally recognized as the real author behind the Shakespeare works people will continue to celebrate Shakespeare's birthday in April.

Two birthdays diverged in a month, and we have celebrated the one less toasted; but this will change.

This year something unexpected happened a few days before the annual April 23 birthday celebration in Stratford-upon-Avon. It's fair to say that the annual Bard B-Day Bash was marred somewhat by an unwelcome – from the Stratfordian viewpoint – reminder that all is not quiet on the Shakespeare authorship front.

I refer to the front-page story in the *Wall Street Journal*, April 18, 2009, to a jarring headline for those of the Stratfordian persuasion: "Justice Stevens Renders an Opinion on Who Wrote Shakespeare's Plays: It Wasn't the Bard of Avon, He Says; 'Evidence Is Beyond a Reasonable Doubt'"

How refreshing to see those powerful words in print, on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*. The evidence against the Stratfordian theory "... is beyond a reasonable doubt."

Worth noting: Justice Antonin Scalia declared publicly that he, like Stevens, is an Oxfordian! It is interesting that Stevens and Scalia, whose opinions on most legal issues diverge significantly, find

themselves in agreement on the case for Oxford.

If you missed the *WSJ* article, it's well worth a careful reading. Please visit the News & Events page on the SOS website or go directly to the *WSJ*. (2)

Here's a quick rundown of other recent developments that may be seen one day as part of a major turning point in the authorship debate:

Article in the UK's *Evening Standard*, April 23, 2009:

"Shakespeare did not write his own plays, claims Sir Derek Jacobi." Both Sir Derek and Mark Rylance are referred to as signatories of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt (3). The article says both Shakespearean actors believe Shakespeare's works were written by an aristocrat. Sir Derek said he was 99.9 percent certain that the actual author was Edward de Vere. (4)

Shakespeare Authorship Coalition marks second anniversary of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt about the Identity of William Shakespeare. SAC issues April 13, 2009 press release announcing: Michael York has joined fellow actors as a Shakespeare Authorship Coalition (SAC) Patron; Seven signatories added to SAC notables list. (5)

The thirteenth annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference was held at Concordia University April 16-19, 2009 (6). For a detailed account of the conference, see Richard Joyrich's article in this newsletter. I also found Bill Boyle's blog, Shakespeare Adventure, entries on the conference very informative (7).

Oberon Shakespeare Study Group in Michigan celebrates Shakespeare's UN-Birthday on April 23. Visit the Oberon group's blog for details (8).

(continued on page 36)

URL list

- 1 <http://shakespeareoxfordsociety.wordpress.com/2009/04/14/sos-president-matt-cossolotto-toast-but-verify>
- 2 <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123998633934729551.html>
- 3 <http://doubtaboutwill.com>
- 4 <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23679831-details/Shakespeare+did+not+write+his+own+plays,+claims+Sir+Derek+Jacobi/article.do?expand=true#StartComments>
- 5 http://www.doubtaboutwill.org/press/04_13_2009
- 6 <http://www.authorshipstudies.org/conference/index.cfm>
- 7 <http://shakespeareadventure.com>
- 8 <http://oberonshakespearestudygroup.blogspot.com>
- 9 http://www.artsjournal.com/culturegrill/2009/04/who_was_shakespeare_supreme_co.html
- 10 <http://politicworm.wordpress.com>
- 11 <http://1609chronology.blogspot.com>
- 12 <http://shakespeareassonnets1609.wordpress.com>
- 13 <http://www.topnews.in/kenneth-branagh-casts-doubt-shakespeare-2161199>

Lee Rosenbaum, a blogger known as CultureGrrl, outs herself as an Oxfordian – she calls herself a deVere-ian. I found her discussion on her blog to be very interesting, especially her suggestion that “Shakespeare” was de Vere’s alter ego in the sonnets. I’ve been kicking that idea around for sometime myself (9).

A few authorship-related blogs have been launched recently – in and around April 2009: Visit Stephanie Hopkins Hughes’s Politic Worm (10); Robert Brazil’s 1609 Chronology blog (11). Also, I’m in the early stages of developing a blog dedicated to the relatively narrow – but extremely important – hypothesis that the 1609 volume of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* was published posthumously. Please visit Shakespeare’s

Sonnets 1609 (12) to offer comments and share ideas.

May 3 article in the UK’s Sunday Express – now removed from their website – included several comments that Kenneth Branagh is reported to have made in Los Angeles at the April 29 US premiere of the new PBS mystery series *Wallerstein*. Branagh is reported to have said:

There is room for reasonable doubt. De Vere is the latest and the hottest candidate. There is a convincing argument that only a nobleman like him could write of exotic settings.

A version of the report can be viewed at Top News. (13)

So there seems to be some big mo for the Big O right now. We

need to seize the public awareness initiative and build on the recent momentum. I strongly encourage members of the society to widely circulate the *WSJ* and *Evening Standard* articles to friends, relatives, media contacts, teachers, professors, clergy, neighbors and members of congress. These articles lend enormous credibility to our central messages: that the authorship question is a legitimate issue for serious discussion and the case for Oxford’s authorship is very persuasive.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support as we endeavor to fulfill our mission of researching and honoring the true Bard.

Matthew Cossolotto
President SOS

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5) If you have previously presented a topic that you believe deserves continued attention by the Oxfordian community, please consider presenting it again if you have a fresh layer of argument or evidence to present.

6) In the past, papers concerning cryptograms

and codes have proven particularly problematic within the anti-Stratfordian community. Anyone interested in presenting an argument that involves cryptological evidence will be expected to show that his or her proof fulfills the criteria for validity advanced by William F. and

Elizabeth S. Friedman’s classic *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined* (1957).

To submit a paper or for further information: contact John Hamill (hamillx@pacbell.net), Earl Showerman (earlees@charter.net), Bonner Cutting (jandbcutting@comcast.net)