



The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter



Volume 46: No. 2

"Done to death by slanderous tongue / Was the hero that here lies." *Much Ado About Nothing*.

August 2010

Why Is There No History of Henry VII?

Robin Fox

Shakespeare wrote a play for Henry IV (two parts), Henry V (one part), Henry VI (three parts), and even Henry VIII. Why did he not write one for Henry VII? The man who was to become Henry VII appears at the end of *Richard III* as Henry Tudor, Duke of Richmond, the Lancastrian candidate for the throne, who beat the evil Yorkist Richard at the battle of Bosworth in 1485. This ended the Wars of the Roses and started the brilliant Tudor dynasty. So why didn't Henry Tudor merit a play of his own? The author clearly had deep Lancastrian sympathies and his portrayal of Richard III is about as biased as a dramatic portrait can get. It would seem he had an agenda to promote the Lancastrian and Tudor cause. So why not celebrate the glorious reign of the first Tudor with at least a one-part drama? It could be of course that he did and it has been lost. But there may be good reasons to think the omission was deliberate.

Shakespeare's source for the history plays, Ralph Holinshed's *Chronicles of the History of England*, in the 1587 edition that he used, covers Henry's reign adequately. Bernard André, the blind tutor of Henry's son Prince Arthur, had written a life of his master, which started the stream of anti-Yorkist Tudor propaganda. Polydore Vergil in his *Anglica Historia* in 1534 produced what became the official pro-Tudor history very flattering to Henry. Shakespeare's contemporary, Francis Bacon, in 1622 published the first great biography of an English king, his *History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh*. The material was there, the public demand for history plays was there, the general urge to write pro-Tudor dramatic propaganda was there, but for some reason the bard skipped this king

in the chronological sequence of Henrys.

We cannot get inside God's memory so we can only conjecture the reasons for the omission. The writer of the Shakespeare plays was a monarchical romantic with a decidedly feudal view of the divine right of kings, and of the rightfulness of the feudal order of society. His history plays are about kings and nobles and their ladies and their courts, and their dynastic quarrels and personal love affairs. Even in the comedies, the social hierarchy remains intact. The trading or middle classes do not play any part in the affairs of state and, as in *The Taming of the Shrew* or

The Merry Wives of Windsor, they are fit only for comedy. His merchants in Venice are the grandees of the Venetian city-state. Othello is a prince and a general. The Jewish moneylender Shylock may (or may not) be sympathetically portrayed, but he remains an outsider: the Doge and his grandees rule Venice.

Shakespeare's is a rigidly hierarchical world where the old aristocracy runs things and plays its games of government and power interspersed with wit and romance. His kings, of whom Henry V is the epitome, should be just and wise and rule fairly, but they also should rule absolutely. The lower orders are universally buffoons and are in there for light relief or downright villainy. They may sometimes be generously portrayed, like the common soldiers in *Henry V*, but they are never even remotely in command or ever shown to be capable of anything but supporting roles and slapstick. In the comedies, those below stairs can outwit the upstairs characters, as with Maria in *Twelfth Night* for example, but this does not touch on the ordering of society; Malvolio is nothing more than a steward,

and the Duke still rules in Illyria.

The kings in particular are warriors and power brokers, and it is their exploits in these departments that are his subject matter. Henry V seems to have exhausted, for him, the possibilities of a hero king in England. Henry VI was a pawn and went mad. His play is about the Wars of the Roses, with its cast of power hungry noblemen seeking to control the crown, and the villainous rebels like Jack Cade, who sought to usurp royal power, but even then only by falsely claiming royal descent. Evil rulers can be driven from power, but by the responsible among the nobility and those with legitimate claims, not by upstart commoners trying to pass as royalty. *Richard III* was a continuation of this theme, and as far as the author was concerned, with Richard's death the matter ended. Henry Tudor's victory was hailed as a rightful triumph for the House of Lancaster, and then left to rest.

Henry Tudor, as king, was not the stuff to excite a playwright like the author of the histories. Henry was so efficient and capable that apart from two minor rebellions he ruled without challenge. He married Elizabeth of York thus uniting the warring houses, and married his daughter to James IV of Scotland setting the scene for the eventual union of the kingdoms. He lives in memory almost wholly for his compassionate treatment of the rebel Lambert Simnel.

Henry recognized that the boy was simply a tool, and having defeated the rebellion he pardoned him and put him to work as a spit turner in the royal kitchen.

He cleverly managed Parliament and taxation, and filled the chronically empty royal coffers, which left his surviving
(cont'd on p. 2)

Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

Published quarterly by the
Shakespeare Oxford Society
P.O. Box 808
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
ISSN 1525-6863

EDITOR:

Michael Egan

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE:

Matthew Cossolotto, Chair

Brian Bechtold

James Boyd

Katherine Chiljan

Frank Davis

John Hamill, *ex officio*

Michael Egan, *ex officio*

Ramon Jiménez

Richard Joyrich

James Sherwood

Richard Smiley, *Webmaster*

Tel: (914) 962-1717

Fax: (914) 245-9713

Email: sosoffice@optonline.net

www.shakespeare-oxford.com

shakespeareoxfordsociety.wordpress.com

All contents copyright © 2010

Shakespeare Oxford Society.

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Michael Egan Associates

PRINTING St. Martin de Porres Lay

Dominicans,

New Hope, Kentucky

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

John Hamill, President

Richard Joyrich, 1st VP

Matthew Cossolotto, 2nd VP

Virginia Hyde, Secretary

Susan Grimes Width, Treasurer

Brian Bechtold

James Boyd

Joan Leon

Michael Pisapia

James Sherwood

Richard Smiley

LIFETIME HONORARY TRUSTEE

Charles Boyle

The SOS Newsletter welcomes research articles, book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate, validated by peer review. Assignment of copyright is required for publication. The views of contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Shakespeare Oxford Society as a literary and educational organization. All contents copyright ©2010 Shakespeare Oxford Society.

son, Henry VIII, a very rich boy indeed. He expanded the system of Justices of the Peace which persists to this day, and which put the administration of justice into the hands of volunteer gentry responsible to the Crown. He reorganized the royal household as the basis of administration, and some of their titles are still used for ministers of the crown. He preferred royal marriages to royal wars and dealt brilliant diplomatic deals with the Pope, the Emperor and the continental powers, which brought peace and prosperity to England after years of failure and devastation. As the common verdict has it, he may not have been a great king, but he was an astonishingly successful one.

I would even like to claim him as the first truly modern king: a realist and a pragmatist. He had to change a country run by rival mafia families (after the Wars of the Roses and the failure of feudalism had brutalized them) into a country of citizens responsible to a central bureaucracy under the king and his appointed ministers. He preferred that these ministers not be nobles, or only nobles that he created, and drew from the ranks of burghers and lawyers, and churchmen that he favored. The old formula we learned in school was accurate: "King and Town versus Castle." Tudor towns and their tradesmen expanded round churches and cathedrals with their attached Grammar Schools. Castles fell into disuse and were domesticated into residences or were replaced by country houses. Efficiency, and direct dependence on the monarch, became more important than nobility in the governance of England.

Bureaucratic efficiency is not, however, the stuff of which great and especially tragic drama is made. Henry had a colorful sex life, and while being a good husband and father (feeling deeply the loss of his

eldest son, Arthur, and his wife) he is said to have slept with three hundred women, getting two hundred seventy-three of them pregnant. There is also a tale that during his exile he worked for five years as a male prostitute. These may have been Yorkist slanders, but slander never stopped Shakespeare in the other cases. However, it was not good material for a pro-Tudor propagandist.

Despite the possibly scandalous tidbits, Henry was a sober, private king, concerned with the details of government. He kept in fact a quite cultivated and lively court as befitted a Renaissance prince, but he was not given to public appearances and pandering to the people. There were no royal "progressions" around the country

as with Elizabeth. And in this he pushed further than did any of his predecessors the use of "new men" who were, unlike the old aristocrats, loyal directly to him and owed their livelihoods and advancement to him. Such men included Richard Fox (no known relative) the son of a humble yeoman who rose to be Bishop of Winchester, Lord Privy Seal, founder of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and

godfather to the future Henry VIII. In 1497 he had been master at the school of the Guild of the Holy Cross in Stratford on Avon.

This I think is the crux of the neglect by Shakespeare. Henry made it his goal to curb and restrict the power of the old nobility and did it supremely well. We had to wait until Louis XIV in France to see such another successful attempt. He pushed laws through Parliament to restrict the use of liveried retainers – in effect abolishing the private armies the nobles had routinely kept in the past. He let them keep their titles and high-sounding offices ("Lord Great Chamberlain" etc) but he hemmed them in with taxes and



King Henry VII as a Young Man
(From the *Receuil d'Arras*)

*This I think is the
crux of the neglect by
Shakespeare. Henry
made it his goal to
curb and restrict
the power of the old
nobility and did it
supremely well. We had
to wait until Louis XIV
in France to see such
another successful
attempt.*

required of them bonds that ruthlessly penalized disloyalty. A measure of his success is that his son succeeded him without challenge, something unheard of in the past. But in all this he represented the wave of the future, of the dominance of the rule of law and the centrality of trade that spelled the beginning of the end of feudal society with its rigid hierarchies and its familial loyalties.

The old order lingered, but a new order was taking over that meant the emergence of a new class eager for its share of governance. Scan Cunningham (2007) in his excellent history of Henry VII, shows in detail how this worked. Henry had been isolated from the English aristocracy during his years in exile, and he tended therefore to rely less on the noble courtiers, many of whom were of suspect loyalty, and more and more on the new men. He ruled through the royal council and around it gathered “managing committees” that constituted “a core of executives and common lawyers gathered permanently at Westminster.” He created very few new titles of nobility, but knighted many commoners like, Empson Poynings and Bray, who became his closest advisers. These new men foreshadowed Wolsey, Cecil, Cromwell and Walsingham, and Henry made their fortunes entirely dependent on himself in what Cunningham describes as “a purely professional relationship created to streamline policy, and one that made Henry’s new men more accountable and easier to supervise.” He created, in

effect, an efficient, central, meritocratic bureaucracy, and in doing so reduced the powers of the aristocracy, which continued to “shine at court” but was less likely to try to usurp royal power.

The newly authenticated play of *Richard II, Part One*, formerly known as *Thomas of Woodstock*, (Egan, 2006) is overtly concerned with exactly this issue: the use by the king of the new men of the educated middle class, and the usurpation by them of the power of the old nobility. There is not a shadow of a question where the author’s sympathies lie. Again his portrait of the new men is a caricature of greed and villainy, and is contrasted with the sense of duty and obligation of the old nobility. This theme carries over into *Richard II* proper with Bagot, Bushy and Green – the “caterpillars of the commonwealth.” Cunningham cites an interesting play promoted by Cardinal John Morton. Morton was Henry VII’s Wolsey, and among other things raised Thomas More whose *History of King Richard III* (1557) was a deep influence on the Shakespeare play. The play here in question was Henry Medwall’s *Fulgus and Lucrece*, “performed before courtiers” in 1497. Medwall (another new man) was Morton’s chaplain, and his plot turns on the struggle between a nobleman and a commoner for the hand of an heiress. In the end, says Cunningham, it is the hard-working commoner rather than the shallow and arrogant nobleman who gets the girl. This deserves further study, and I can think of no such conflict or outcome in any Shakespeare play.

Lawrence Stone (1965) has shown the aristocracy to have been “in crisis” during the Tudor period. Its power was being eroded; its lands were being sold to the tradesmen. (In the end Oxford’s Grammar School at Earl’s Colne passed to a grocer.) Shakespeare looked eternally backwards to the feudal society that was his ideal of governance; but he saw what was coming. So he just kept silent about the man who more than anyone helped to usher in the new world order: the order of pragmatism, efficiency, bureaucracy, meritocracy and contract: the modern world as we know it. He did not write *Henry VII*. Yet Shakespeare was caught

in a trap here because he was himself an almost prototypical part of that new world.

If he was indeed the Grammar School boy from Stratford-on-Avon that is claimed, then he was an end-product of the process that was geared to the production of the new men he seemed to despise. He was not an aristocrat but a meritocrat; he was one of the new men who made his own way to success. He was a son of the trading classes aspiring to a coat of arms and the ranks of the gentry. He should have reveled in the memory of Henry VII.

Above all, he would have been a product of the Grammar School system that was itself a conscious product of the policy of educating these new men. This conscious state policy was a confluence of the twin influence of the Renaissance revival of classical learning, and the Protestant Reformation that brought the bible to all believers and the Calvinist work ethic to life in general.

These two powerful forces were crossed with rising nationalism and the desire to have a literate middle class to

*If Shakespeare was
indeed the Grammar
School boy from
Stratford-on-Avon that
is claimed, then he
was an end-product
of the process that
was geared to the
production of the new
men he seemed to
despise. He was not
an aristocrat but a
meritocrat; he was one
of the new men who
made his own way to
success. He was a son
of the trading classes
aspiring to a coat of
arms and the ranks of
the gentry.*

increase the national wealth and power. How did a child of this surge of modernization come to have the obvious reactionary political and cultural biases we see in the plays? The matter is complicated, or perhaps, as is the case with so many authorship puzzles, simplified, by the "mysterious nobleman" theory, which would have Shakespeare as a front man for Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. There is no need to spell out the evidence for Oxford to this audience. One relevant matter for our immediate purposes is that his ancestor, the 13th Earl, was Henry Tudor's main supporter and appears as such at the end of *Richard III*. In his campaign against the power of the nobles, Henry VII is said to have turned on his supporter, the 13th Earl, and levied a huge fine against him for having more liveried retainers than the king himself. This,

according to the story, started the decline in the fortunes of the Oxford earldom.

Some observers, like Charlton Ogburn (1984), think this is a very good reason why there is no play of *Henry VII*. The omission was Oxford's revenge for the attack on the finances of his lineage! This whole story originated with Francis Bacon, and Cunningham finds no other reference to it and thinks there is no basis for it.

Henry needed these loyal noblemen as much as he needed the new men, but the promotion of the latter, and their central part in all future forms of government, certainly dug into the privileges of the former. As Cunningham puts it: "Something deeply important to the long-term development of England's ruling structures occurred during Henry VII's reign." This disruption of the feudal order was obviously something that the author of

the plays seemed to feel personally and disliked at some profound level. It could well have been the basis for the Earl of Oxford's reluctance to grant the first Tudor monarch his own play.

Note: This is re-working of material that was for length reasons cut from my article "Shakespeare, Oxford and the Grammar School Question" in *The Oxfordian*, Vol. 11, pp. 111-136. 2009 (q.v.)

Works Cited

- Cunningham, Scan, 2007. *Henry VII*. New York: Routledge.
- Egan, Michael, 2006. *The Tragedy of Richard II Part One: A Newly Authenticated Play by William Shakespeare*. 4 Vols. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Ogburn, Charlton, 1984. *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. New York: Dodd Mead.
- Stone, Laurence, 1965. *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

From the President of the Shakespeare Oxford Society

John Hamill



These are exciting times for those interested in the Shakespeare Authorship Question. There is a growing interest in the subject in academia and elsewhere, as we can tell from the books that keep coming out. And we will soon have a new movie, *Anonymous*, that addresses the issue face on. The movie will not only be controversial within academia, since it presents Oxford as the author of Shakespeare's works, it will be controversial among Oxfordians.

Why? Because Oxford is presented as the illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth, and later her lover. Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton, is presented as their illegitimate child. According to the movie, this is the reason why Oxford used an alias, and why it was maintained after his death. The movie ignores the rival theory—that Oxford and Southampton were lovers, not father and son. This sexual liaison would also be a strong reason for the families to maintain the alias after Oxford's death. The movie will certainly create much controversy and

focus greatly increased public attention on the Shakespeare Authorship Question. The Society will need to respond not just to attacks from academia, but to the public at large, about the numerous questions surrounding the authorship issue. I am hoping that we can make the most of this opportunity. In order to make a strong and active response to the controversy, we will need additional funding from our supporters. This will be a critical opportunity—one that we cannot afford to miss.

Thanks again to those of you who have renewed your membership recently or who have made an additional contribution to the SOS. We are trying to add to our resources to cover basic expenses and to create a new grant program for researchers who are investigating the Authorship Question. I know these are difficult economic times for many of us, but even a small contribution will add to our ability to advance the argument that Edward de Vere is the true Shakespeare. Our goal this year is to

raise \$20,000 to finance the Society's educational and publishing activities, as well as the upcoming research proposals. We still have a way to go to reach this goal. Please join me in supporting this effort, and please contact me on ideas about how the Society can best direct its energies and resources: hamillx@pacbell.net. I look forward to hearing from you.

In addition, I hope that most of you will join us at the upcoming Joint SOS/SF Ashland Authorship Conference, from Sept 16th to 19th, in Ashland, Oregon. It should be an exciting and educational experience. We will have many exceptional papers and speakers, including live renaissance musical entertainment. Of course, we will also have the opportunity to see several plays performed by the acclaimed Oregon Shakespeare Festival—*The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, and *Henry IV, Part I*.

Hope to see you there!

Henry V by Olivier and Branagh: Enhancing Artistic Vision Through Technology

Johanna Krout Tabin

Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh present different visions of Shakespeare's *Henry V*. My topic here is the different cinematic techniques with which each gained artistic success. So that it will be possible to follow how film enabled them to carry out their visions, a brief summary of Shakespeare's Henry might be helpful. Henry V is a link in his history series about the crowned heads of England. It is preceded by *Henry IV Parts I and II*. The young Prince Hal appears in the latter plays. He consorts with Falstaff and generally exemplifies the flaming youth of the 15th Century. By the end of Part II, however, he denounces Falstaff to separate himself from his playboy days and prepares himself to become a king. Shakespeare sketches in this background in *Henry V*, but for modern audiences, less informed about English history, Olivier and Branagh at times return to the material of the Henry IV plays.

To make the action easier to follow, even for Elizabethan audiences closer to Henry V's time than are we, Shakespeare borrows the Greek device of a Chorus who provides a running commentary. He uses only one voice, however. This narrator opens the play and reappears at pivotal moments to help the audience make connections. Shakespeare's usual richness of character and ideas give wide range for possible emphases and interpretations. Henry V is straining for greatness, but his youthful inner struggles with his right to be king, his wishes to be as any man, the harsh decisions a king might feel he must make and yet his recognition of the horrors of war and war's aftermath, even the relationship between holding the throne and the complexities of his father's example—all of this and more is in the text.

Before we meet Henry, we see the Archbishop of Canterbury and a bishop plotting how to get back lands belonging to the Church in France and the fortune they are losing because the French rule there. They plot to convince the new young king that an old document gives him priority

of rule. An insulting gesture by the French galvanizes Henry into believing it was his right and duty to dethrone France's present king. Counterpoint to the enthusiasm of the nobles for such an adventure, we meet former rousting companions of Prince Hal for a view of how the humbler folk feel, thinking of the spoils of war there might be for them, too. It is also a chance to bring in the death of the heartbroken Falstaff.

Another glimpse of Henry's character in dealing with an assassination plot is set on shipboard and precedes his landing in France. In the meantime, Henry refuses a French compromise that offered the hand of the king's daughter, Katharine, plus a couple of meaningless dukedoms. A short siege at Harfleur starts with Henry's "Once more into the breach, dear friends" ending with the famous "For God, Harry, England and St. George!" He threatens the mayor of Harfleur with the most terrible destruction if he does not yield. The mayor yields because the French forces are not ready to support him. Henry then instructs his men to be kind to their captives. The French attempt once more to stave off Henry's actions and ask for the amount he would expect for his ransom. Once more showing his character, Henry spurns the idea. He also lets Mountjoy, the French spokesman, know that he recognizes the man's quality.

Hard fighting along the way results in an exhausted English force that must prepare for a showdown battle the next day at Agincourt. Shakespeare switches the audience to the French. Katharine charmingly beginning to learn English. The French leaders in the next scene are preoccupied with displays of confidence. They will lead a force much greater than Henry's. (Shakespeare makes it 3 to 1; Branagh 5 to 1; the French at the time 10 to 1). The dauphin dwells on the magnificence of his horse.



Olivier's Henry V: a hero for a country at war

By contrast, Henry uses the night to make his secret walk among his men, building up their morale, identifying with the humblest of them, but grappling with his right as king to bring this battle while trying to still his conflicts over being his father's son.

An excursion on the way to Agincourt reveals once again Henry's character. An old playmate, Bardolph, is apprehended for stealing from a church and Henry

In 1943, the English were almost alone in fighting the Nazis. Henry V was a perfect vehicle for strengthening morale. Olivier was able to assemble a magnificent cast, with art and music direction to match, but no appropriate director was available. He took on the task of starring in and directing the picture, in itself a challenging feat.

sees his hanging as necessary. He uses the occasion once more to state that when "lenity and cruelty play for the sameland, lenity is the winner." The battle for the land has not yet been won, however.

The stage does not allow for the enactment of the great battle when dawn breaks, so the Chorus must again ask for our imaginations and tell of the action. Henry is not sure at the end of the day who has won. Mountjoy returns to ask for permission to bury the French dead. Learning that the English have lost only 529 men to the French loss of ten thousand, Henry wearily gives credit to God. History records that the two main factors which enabled this amazing result were that the ground was soaked from October rain, making the movements of the horses of the French labored; and the heavily weighted armored French were easily toppled. The English longbow-men effectively pierced the French armor with their arrows from a distance. It is an interesting aside that almost all of the French were knights and nobles, who sent possibly supportive commoners away because they felt no need for them. Henry's former low-life companions, however, feature prominently in his fighting force.

The Battle of Agincourt was the last in which knights dominated the action. Henry V proved that ordinary men inexpensively armed could defeat them.

The final act of this play is worthy of the old Hollywood movies, a happy ending for all. Henry successfully woos Katharine and becomes heir to the French throne while the French king remains on his throne for the rest of his life. The narrator is a spoilsport, however, because the last lines foretell of the early death of Henry V. His infant son's inept guardians lose France once again and put England into turmoil. But that is for another play.

Laurence Olivier produced his version in 1943, a time when the English were almost alone in fighting the Nazis. *Henry V* was a perfect vehicle for strengthening

morale. Olivier was able to assemble a magnificent cast, with art and music direction to match, but no appropriate director was available. He took on the task of starring in and directing the picture, in itself a challenging feat.

The opening frame presents the play as if one were looking at an announcement from Elizabethan times. The camera then shows a model of London of the time as seen by aerial view, swooping over the Thames, finding the old Globe Theater and its flapping flag to indicate a performance, and then zooming down into the middle of the roofless enclosure where most of the eager audience gathered.

Olivier said that he wanted to bring the modern audience into the story first by confining them to the old Globe theater. This setting let them get acquainted slowly



Branagh's *Henry V*: War is Hell

with Shakespeare's language. Broad comic touches were added to put them in the mood of boisterous 17th-century viewers and thereby to take away any feeling of Shakespeare being a musty and archaic relic—to be revered but not enjoyed. Then fading a staged shipboard scene into a realistic countryside, he accomplished the contrast to give the modern audience a sense of release and participation.

The musical score by William Walton atmospherically incorporated songs from the 15th Century which helped to develop the action. The *Book of Hours*, an illustrated calendar, was the only medieval artwork he could find during the war, but it was enough to inspire creation of the

visual atmosphere of Henry's time. The blocking of the actors showed sensitivity honed by stagecraft, especially when many actors were in a scene. Stills of the shots resembled the groupings of people in the *Book of Hours*, but Olivier maintained a fluidity of action that prevented any stiltedness.

Another production challenge was to find metal armor for the battle scenes. Much of the old armor had been melted down for the new war effort. The appearance of metal was accomplished through painted wood, bright colors juxtaposed to keep the eye away from close inspection. Technicolor was just newly available and Olivier took full advantage of it.

To maintain the effects he wanted, however, was tricky because the rushes came through only in fuzzy black and white. This alone makes one appreciate the editing. Even a transition back to the Old Globe at the very end seems smooth and fitting from that standpoint.

Olivier's Henry strides into the story, every inch a king. Shakespeare gives him heroic words to declaim. Olivier backs the cameras away from himself at these moments, making his intensity and volume appropriate.

From over 3000 lines in the original script, Olivier used only about half. The movie is still over two hours long. The cuts mostly eliminated matter that would appeal solely to the Elizabethan audience or reflect Shakespeare's use of intermittent scenes to give comic relief or broaden the scope of the characters or vary the pace of the action. The interesting cuts are those that eliminated signs of harshness in Henry. Olivier does not include the scene where Henry assents in magisterial manner to Bardolph's hanging. In another instance, when Henry threatens the mayor of Harfleur, Shakespeare details the kinds of destructiveness and villainy troops were well known to display in victory. Olivier uses only Henry's speech after the collapse of Harfleur, in which he directs his men to be kind to the

vanquished. A hero for the 20th century must not display the cruelty of England's 20th-Century foes, the Nazis. Although bright color suffuses the film, the screen is darkened for Henry's nighttime visit to his men before the battle at Agincourt. His face is hooded and one can barely see the weary and troubled men who fear they will surely die the next day. This scene is what I remembered from my first viewing of the picture in 1944. Here the camera is close to each speaker, adding to the sense of intimacy that Henry achieves with his soldiers.

Morning light bursts brightly on the field before Agincourt. Olivier chose to emphasize the overwhelming odds against the English. A wide shot fills the eye with magnificent French armor glinting in the sun, horses pawing for action. The camera focuses on the horses—one memorable moment reflects their passage through a clear pool. The English bowmen can be seen, but there is also a quality of guerrilla tactics, Englishmen leaping upon the French from tree branches.

The soggy terrain traps the French as much as the English defeat them. Olivier had no help from Shakespeare for depicting the battle. He studied Sergei Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*, produced six years earlier for an interestingly similar purpose. The Soviet Union was afraid of attack by Germany. In the 13th Century, a Russian leader threw back Teutonic knights who tried to overrun Russia. The film was to remind the Russian people that Nevsky, representing them, had defeated heavily armed Germans once before. (A sidelight is that the propaganda aspect was modified. Eisenstein had placed Nazi symbols on the knights—but by the time of the picture's release, the possibility of a German-Soviet pact was paramount and the swastikas had to be removed.) Olivier was taken with how Eisenstein dramatized the power of the enemy horde. He added his own remarkable technique, however, to the long shots intermingled with close-ups. He constructed a half-mile track on which the camera dollies could follow the movement of men and horses as they rode toward the English. Walton's music thundered in accompaniment. The effect was intimidating. The English line,

nervous but steadfast, stood poised until Henry finally gave the hand signal for the arrows to fly. Olivier shows the arrows flying into the air and then hitting their targets. The scene is interrupted when Henry is told of the French bringing their frustration to the English camp, ripping the tents and killing the boys waiting there. Henry says he was not angry in France until then. Olivier takes him to the field where he furiously engages in single combat with the Constable of France, unhorsing and killing him.

Henry's giving God due for the victory fades into the promised long march toward Calais and home, singing hymns.

*Olivier uses only
Henry's speech
after the collapse of
Harfleur; in which he
directs his men to be
kind to the vanquished.
A hero for the 20th
century must not
display the cruelty of
England's 20th-century
foes, the Nazis.*

Olivier cuts back to a French assembly where he hands negotiations over to his counselors and takes on the wooing of Katharine. The final shot is of their wedding pose. This is the only false note for me in the whole film. The close-up of the bride shows a boy in makeup and wig, and sure enough we are back at the Globe for the finale. At the beginning, there was backstage footage at the Globe during which boys were donning women's costumes and wigs.

After the wedding tableau, the camera follows the removal of the performance flag, moving into the sky for another shot of old London. Olivier once told Anthony Hopkins to be sure to go to the end of the line, but I wish he had not chosen to take us back to the Globe with that bit of symmetry.

From his first days as a professional actor, Branagh sought to play Henry V.

This is a great role for a talented young actor. In bringing this play to the screen seven years later, he obviously profited from a study of Olivier's masterpiece. His Chorus/Narrator walks through an empty soundstage rather than an Elizabethan theater, much the same as Olivier's responding to the Narrator/Chorus' appealing to the imagination of the viewer for creating the illusion of the story.

This similarity is not so important, however, as Branagh's original dramatic opening. The credits are played against a black background. Suddenly, a match is struck. Its glow illuminates the face of the Narrator/Chorus. Reminiscent for Chicagoans of the old Goodman Theater, which proclaimed above the proscenium arch: "We can but bring the faggots. You must set the flame," Shakespeare's Chorus reminds us of the limitations of even modern film theater. Wishing for a muse of fire, Chorus calls on us to meet the players with our imaginations. A fat candle continues the glow from fire, now showing three-quarter faces of the conspiratorial Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely. They plot their scheme in hushed voices. Branagh uses quick cuts to move the play along, mostly following Shakespeare's ordering of scenes, which allows great scope, however, for the settings of them. The next cut takes us to the nobles waiting for the king. The same palette of dim amber tones from candle light gives us what feels like a realistic sense of the atmosphere of a 15th-Century council room of a king. Doors open at the far end and backlight enables us to see the form of the king moving ponderously toward the throne.

The camera provides a close-up of his face, which we finally see as he begins to speak. He is looking for the Archbishop of Canterbury, who quickly enters.

The Archbishop goes tediously over the laws of succession to justify Henry's invasion of France. Olivier gets us through this by adding some slapstick which the viewers in the Globe theater enjoy uproariously. Branagh uses close-ups of the attending nobles' faces as the Archbishop strides up and down trying to engage their help with the king. Henry speaks quietly, almost menacingly, as he

warns the Archbishop of the seriousness of the decision.

Henry's inner spirit is Branagh's focus. Communicating through action is not adequate. Branagh makes sure he is readily understood by the modern audience by having mastered what he calls the "consonant bite." Each consonant is uttered crisply. Without exaggerating his sounds, his enunciation slows the words just enough for the unaccustomed ear to understand what is being said. He trained his cast to do the same, which makes listening to Shakespeare seem to be a natural experience.

Branagh's interest in character extends to the minor roles. This becomes clear in his use of flashbacks three times, all of them involving Henry's history as Prince Hal and the denizens of lower life who were his friends. Like Olivier, he borrows from *Henry IV*, but to a greater extent. Scenes from the Falstaff days come to the old companions as they hear that Falstaff is dying of a broken heart. They also hear again Prince Hal's disavowal of Falstaff from the conclusion of 2 *Henry IV*. Like Olivier, Branagh includes Falstaff's pleading with the new king not to reject him. The third flashback occurs as Branagh's Henry remembers his fond amusement at Bardolph's antics, ending with his friend's ironically prescient request that Hal not to hang him after he becomes king.

Hal responds ambiguously that it will be Bardolph who will cause his own hanging. The close-up of King Henry's face when Bardolph does hang shows his effort to be true to his responsibility and not give in to emotion.

The brilliant use of close-ups is Branagh's style for much of the film. It makes for subtlety—and humanity—in portrayals even of minor characters.

There are also only three dissolves in the film, the first on Judi Dench's face as Mistress Quickly is thinking about her men going off to war, the camera staying with her as the editing shifts to the soldiers. The other two dissolves are for stretching maps across the screen to show the path the English are taking, and then back to the men as they trudge along.

Branagh's handling of the Battle of Agincourt reminds one more of Kurusawa

than Eisenstein. He does not declaim the St Crispin's Day speech as Olivier does. The camera stays close to him speaking just above conversational level.

Branagh follows Shakespeare's language when someone asks for Henry and is told that the king is taking his place with his soldiers. The French gallop close to the English who stand behind pointed stakes slanted forward as a defense against cavalry. The music raises excitement as we watch. A voice-over gives the command for the bowmen to release their arrows.

Olivier indicates that this happens more than once but Branagh sends flight after flight to rain down on the French. Now the music shifts to a minor key, an amazing note of sadness that underscores the rest of the battle. Henry is in the vanguard of the English who attack the bewildered French.

The brilliant use of close-ups is Branagh's style for much of the film. It makes for subtlety—and humanity—in portrayals even of minor characters.

Even in the midst of the battle, the camera finds the faces of the combatants. Men can be recognized who have spoken at various times during the action, heightening the sense of the tragedy of war. The fighting is vigorous and unlike Olivier's. At the end of it, this Henry is covered with blood and mud. His exhaustion and confusion are apparent when Mountjoy tells him the English have won the day. Olivier follows Shakespeare in showing the march to Calais, the men singing prayers. Branagh inserts a long wordless scene, the camera moving over the survivors as they make their way through the field, picking up bodies, tenderly laying them down when sorted for burial. One man starts the *Non nobis* and soon a background chorus takes up the prayer as the men perform their sad duty.

Music amplifies the scene of grief. A

pool of water is colored red. The camera must film through thickets at places, the men visible in the twilight further obscured by smoke that still lingers. This innovation is part of why Branagh's version is considered to be anti-war. The whole film is true, however, to all the emotions Shakespeare gives to Henry, including moments of fury, cruelty in the name of duty, tenderness and compassion. The breadth of expression in a war film must force the cost of war upon a viewer. The battlefield scene concludes with a close-up of Henry's face, at first stunned but gradually, as the realization of victory dawns, a slight smile is discernible.

The camera cuts quickly to the French council room with both sides entering it. In the final frame, Henry gracefully joins hands with Katharine, both facing the camera.

Derek Jacobi's Chorus closes the door upon them and quotes the epilogue Olivier left out.

It is easy to understand why Olivier did so. His purpose in bringing Henry V's story to the screen was similar to Shakespeare's writing it, as the Chorus reminds the audience of Elizabeth's new adventure in Ireland. The Elizabethan audience likely knew the rest of the story, but there was no reason to inform the English of 1943 about it.

Olivier gives us a heroic and accomplished Henry V. Branagh provides a king in the making, a psychological study of how the king comes into his own as a man as well as a ruler. These contrasting masterpieces could not have been achieved but for the miracles that are possible with the tools of the cinema.



Stephanie Hopkins Hughes

Over the years, the Shakespeare authorship argument has moved from one candidate to another, starting with Bacon in the late 19th century, then to Marlowe (1895), then to Oxford (1920). Perhaps due to a gradual weakening of the Stratford scenario, today almost anyone in the 16th century who left evidence of travels to France or Italy, or published something, or was ever mentioned in some connection with the London Stage has a book, or at least a website, where he or she is touted as the real Shakespeare. Hopefully this is simply a phase in the long slow turn away from the Stratford myth, first conjured up by Ben Jonson for the King's Men in 1623.

As it stands at the moment, there are six candidates who have inspired at least one book, some several (William hundreds, Bacon dozens), and whose credentials are currently being furiously hashed over online and in print. Just going by what I get from Google alerts, blogs and comments, book reviews, etc., I'd say that Oxford remains in the lead with Bacon second, Marlowe third, and trailing but still with some interest, Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, Emilia Bassano Lanier, and William Stanley, sixth earl of Derby. Of all the advocates for these six candidates, I know of none but myself who is advocating for *all of*

The Big Six Candidates

Stephanie Hopkins Hughes

them. It's been my view for some time now that all of them (minus Derby and plus Philip Sidney) belong in the pantheon of heroes when it comes to the cultural phenomenon known as the English Literary Renaissance, but not as contributors to the Shakespeare canon. All (but Derby) wrote their own stuff in their own particular styles. What's caused so much confusion and misunderstanding is that three of them, Oxford, Bacon, and Mary Sidney, published some or most of what they wrote under other names.

As for the group theory, i.e., that all of these gifted writers had a hand in some or all of Shakespeare's plays,



Sir Francis Bacon

what genius level creator would, or even could, share the agonies and ecstasies of creation, particularly at the subliminal level at which these masterpieces operate? Elizabethans were fond of the metaphor that compared the creation of a work of literature to a mother bearing a child. Like all mothers, literary mothers need support (editors, publishers, and agents today; in Shakespeare's time: secretaries, printers, and patrons), but as with the mothers of human offspring, the creation and polishing of a great writer's mental offspring always was and always will be a solitary experience, inseminated by a muse perhaps, but developed in secret collaboration with no one but the writer's own soul. Nevertheless, it's true that other hands are evident in some of Shakespeare's plays, particularly the weaker ones. I tend to accept Brian Vickers's argument in his *Shakespeare Co-author* that George



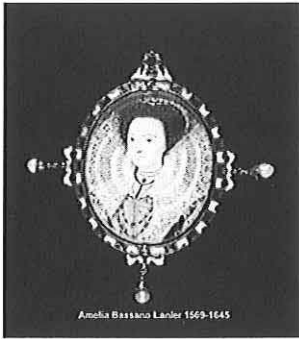
Peele wrote some of *Titus Andronicus*, though where Vickers posits collaboration between Stratford and Peele, I see *Titus* as one of Oxford's earliest plays, written in his teens as an exercise in Senecan tragedy, the kind that was popular at the time, then revised during the *Fisher's Folly* period by Peele for the Queen's Men or some other company. Of all the plays it shows the least connection with Oxford's personal life.

Vickers's use of the term "co-author" suggests the kind of collaboration shared by Gilbert and Sullivan or Rogers and Hammerstein. Although I respect his ear and his conclusion that there are two hands at work on these lesser plays, since he refuses to acknowledge the anti-Stratfordian thesis that stand-ins were used, he doesn't deal with the possibility that Wilkins, who is firmly in the camp of those Elizabethans who lack a writer's biography, was a name used by an upmarket Jacobean who felt it necessary to hide his (or her) identity. (I am equally suspicious of John Fletcher.) And because Vickers refuses to consider the Oxfordian thesis, with its corollary of weak early



Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke

versions rewritten during Oxford's mature "Shakespeare" period, he can't deal with the likelihood that the "other hand," the one that doesn't "sound like" Shakespeare, was in fact Shakespeare's own juvenile effort, later turned over to Peele, Oxford having lost interest in it. Finally, once Oxford was dead, the acting companies, eager to capitalize as much as possible on anything he ever wrote, had some of his earliest plays revised by Jacobean. The King's Men had *The Two Noble Kinsmen*



Amelia Bassano Lanier 1569-1645

revised, possibly by Fletcher (as claimed), while Philip Henslowe had *The Spanish Tragedy* revised by Ben Jonson. And, as trained scholars have shown, editors did make changes of various sorts to the plays before the First Folio was published in 1623. But while those who were most likely to have had hand in editing Oxford's plays were themselves members of this group of artists (I propose Mary Sidney and Francis Bacon), the sum total of their editing could never have approached a level that could be considered *co-authoring*. What I am advocating is a group theory, not for the creation of *Shakespeare*, but for the creation of the *English Fourth Estate*, including the London Stage and the English periodical press, and the start to the long tradition of English literature, the outpouring of poetry and novels for which the English have been lauded ever since. Each of these six writers created their own canons, some under their own names, some under the names of proxies. Of these six, five are now the leading candidates for authorship of the Shakespeare canon. The sixth, Philip Sidney, would certainly be on that list had he not died

too early (and too publicly) to be included. There is a seventh, Sir Walter Raleigh, who's got to be considered for his great literary gifts, but the fog that surrounds so many of the works of this period is still too thick around him to see clearly enough where he fits in. Putting the pieces together, what I see is a group of artists, much like the one in the 19th century that created the first important style in painting that can be considered modern art, the French Impressionists, a group of painters of very differing styles, more or less forced to band together to show their work when they were rejected by the Royal Academy. Much like our ELR crew, the basic group consisted of five men and one woman (Monet, Renoir, Pissaro, Sisley, Degas and Berthe Morisot). No revolution, whether cultural or political, can succeed without a handful of energetic (reckless?) individuals in positions to make things happen, and it seems that six is often the magic number. Sometimes they work together, sometimes they just arrive at the same place at the same time. Think of the six original members of the Austin High gang in the twenties, the early six in the Bebop of the forties (Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Ray Brown, Milt Jackson, Kenny Clarke, John Lewis), the Beatles in the sixties (four plus the ghosts of Brian Epstein and Pete Best), the six members of Monty Python in the seventies. At other times they arrive one after the other, with periods of overlap, like the big three of the Italian Literary Renaissance: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, or the big three of 17th-century French drama: Corneille, Moliere, and Racine.

There are other such groups, usually with a large fringe of lesser doers (*makers*, as they were known then, from the Greek



Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford

poirein) and their fans, linked not only by the styles they adopted, but also by their relationships with each other. Artists, scientists, engineers and cooks—all *creators*—make the best critics and most stimulating rivals for each other. They not only make the most discriminating audiences for each other, they are good at reevaluating their predecessors, as Alexander Pope in his time and Coleridge in his, did for Shakespeare.

The leader of this particular group of *makers*, and the oldest, was the Earl of Oxford. Arranged around him were the three who had the most influence on him during his pre-Shakespeare years, and he on them: Philip Sidney, his junior by four years; Francis Bacon, his junior by eleven years; and Christopher Marlowe, his junior by fourteen years. He was influenced by the women, Mary and Emilia, but not until his final period, the one we call Shakespeare.

Reprinted with kind permission from <http://politicworm.com/>

Theories of Authorship

Richard F. Whalen

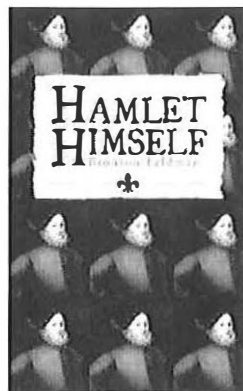
The Shakespeare Controversy: An Analysis of the Authorship Theories. Second Edition by Warren Hope and Kim Holston. Jefferson NC: McFarland & Company, 2009.

This second edition of Hope and Holston's *The Shakespeare Controversy* expands and brings up to date their selective survey and analysis of the literature on the authorship issue over the past 280 years. Well-written and well-researched, this book is not only an entertaining, good read but also a valuable reference work. At the outset, the authors state that they are Oxfordians and "...what we track in this book are the efforts of a number of people which culminated in that recognition of Shakespeare's identity, and the consequences, thus far, of that recognition....Our aim is to be critically selective, not exhaustive." To cover the years since their first edition, published in 1992, the authors have added three chapters and extended their "Chronological Annotated Bibliography" with selected books and articles published in the past seventeen years.

In the first of the new chapters, the authors expand on works treated briefly in their first edition. They devote five pages to an admiring review of *Hamlet Himself* (1997), Bronson Feldman's booklet published in 1977 that is out of print and almost impossible to find. The first edition gave Feldman four paragraphs. They follow with reports on the 1987 debate before three justices of the Supreme Court of the United States and the Frontline Public Broadcasting System television program on the authorship controversy, "The Shakespeare Mystery," that was first broadcast in 1989.

The second new chapter, "The Stratfordian Response," contains new, post-1991 material, including books by Irvin Matus, an independent researcher, and by Alan Nelson, an English professor emeritus. The authors devote five pages to Matus's earnestly Stratfordian *Shakespeare In Fact* (1994), a book rarely cited by Oxfordians today. In the end, they say, Matus aims "to urge 'the

actor's Shakespeare' at the expense of 'the scholar's Shakespeare.'" Alan Nelson's anti-Oxfordian, archival biography of the earl of Oxford, *Monstrous Adversary* (2003), gets four pages, mostly on Nelson's handling of three minor characters in Oxford's life, George Brown, Orazio Coquo and William Hunnis. "His book," say Hope and Holston, "is a piece of propaganda posing as scholarship."



The third of the three new chapters reports on the work of various contemporary researchers of various persuasions. They include Peter Moore on the circumstances and votes for Oxford for membership in the Knights of the Garter, *The Lame Storyteller, Poor and Despised*; Daphne Pearson on Oxford's inherited income, "*Edward de Vere (1550-1604)*"; Roger Stritmatter's dissertation on Oxford's Bible, *The Marginalia of Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible*; Elliott Baker's shortened edition of Delia Bacon's book, *Shakespeare's Philosophy Unfolded*; Diana Price's biography of Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*; William Rubinstein and Brenda James's case for Henry Neville, *The Truth Will Out*; Robin Williams case for Mary Sidney, *Sweet Swan of Avon*; Mark Anderson's detailed and fully annotated biography of Oxford, *Shakespeare by Another Name*; and Bill Bryson's informal, popular defense of the Stratford man, *Shakespeare: The World as Stage*.

Two of the chapters carried forward

from the first edition are valuable essays on important early figures in the authorship controversy. They are the book's opening chapter on Delia Bacon, the often unfairly maligned first Groupist, followed by a chapter on Mark Twain, quoted at length, and Walt Whitman with his friend William O'Connor.

The flamboyant, Baconian cryptologist Ignatius Donnelly gets a twelve-page chapter. The skeptic Henry James shares a chapter with Joseph Skipsey, the disillusioned custodian of the Stratford Birthplace. Grouped together in the next chapter are the respected anti-Stratfordian George Greenwood and two writers they call "rebels:" Samuel Butler and Frank Harris, who are not often heard from. Then comes one chapter entitled "Many Candidates: Marlowe, Rutland, Derby, and So On," and an excellent, full chapter on J. Thomas Looney's life and ground-breaking identification of Oxford as Shakespeare.

The last of the original, pre-1991 chapters covers works of numerous researchers and witnesses, including John Galsworthy, B. R. Ward and his son B. M. Ward, Gerald Rendall, Eva Turner Clark, Charles Wisner Barrell, S. Schoenbaum, Percy Allen, Gerald W. Phillips, Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, and Ruth Loyd Miller. For whatever reason, Clark, the Ogburns and Miller—major, influential Oxfordian authors—are not treated as fully as some of the more obscure writers. It is of course impossible to include every book and article or do justice to any of the writers in a short survey of the immense literature on the authorship controversy by Oxfordians, Stratfordians and others. In most cases, but not all, Hope and Holston select one or two aspects of the writer's work for discussion, instead of providing a generalized summary of each. This makes it more interesting reading but at the expense of a more comprehensive, if brief, description of the work.

They do an admirable job, however, of weaving together claims by Stratfordians and Oxfordians, showing the back-and-

forth of the debate over the centuries. They have little patience for most Stratfordian claims. The "Chronological Annotated Bibliography" picks up in November 1991 with "The Nose Job," an episode from the TV program, *Seinfeld*. (A landlord contends that "Shakespeare was an imposter.") The longest entries from 1991 to 2008 are on books by Ian Wilson, Irving Matus, John Michell, Joseph Sobran, Jonathan Bate, Diana Price, William Rubinstein, Rodney Bolt (a conjectural Marlovian),

The book's idiosyncrasies and the sidelights that caught the authors' attention are a large part of its appeal. The book's achievement, the result of an incredible amount of reading and thoughtful interpretation, is impressive.

Mark Anderson, Scott McCrae, and Robin Williams. The extended chronology also includes entries on the *Harper's Magazine* (April 1999) collection "The Ghost of Shakespeare" that includes five articles by Stratfordians and five by Oxfordians, and *The Tennessee Law Review* Vol. 72, No. 1 (Fall 2004) devoted to the authorship debate. (Full disclosure: This reviewer's books and articles are included.)

Readers new to the book and its organization would do well to start with the chapters on Delia Bacon, Whitman, Twain and Looney; then browse here and there; and then keep the volume handy as a reference tool, consulting the index to find information on a specific author. Hope and Holston are especially good on biographical background.

Oxfordian readers will find anomalies. Some notable works receive scant attention while some obscure works are treated at length. Some bibliographic entries seem less than consequential. Major authors are covered in both chapter narratives

and annotated bibliographic entries that sometimes run to several hundred words, so both should be consulted. Missing are many of the more significant Oxfordian research papers published in the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, the *De Vere Society Newsletter*, *Shakespeare Matters*, *The Oxfordian* annual journal, and the book *Great Oxford*, published in 2004 by the De Vere Society.

The chronological sequence is unusual for a bibliography. Rarely will readers have occasion to seek works published in a specific year.

Nor does the sequence of entries convey any particular insights. But these are quibbles. The authors state at the outset that they do not aim to be exhaustive. The book's idiosyncrasies and the sidelights that caught the authors' attention are a large part of its appeal. The book's achievement, the result of an incredible

amount of reading and thoughtful interpretation, is impressive. Warren Hope and Kim Holston have produced a worthy, if quite selective, survey of an immense subject—280 years of literature on the Shakespeare authorship controversy in 227 pages.

Suggested further reading:

Shakespeare's Philosophy Unfolded, by Delia Bacon.

Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography, by Diana Price.

The Truth Will Out, by William Rubinstein and Brenda James.

Sweet Swan of Avon, by Robin Williams.

Shakespeare by Another Name, by Mark Anderson.

Shakespeare: The World as Stage, by Bill Bryson. Chapter 9 including Bronson Feldman critique.

MALICE AFORETHOUGHT: THE KILLING OF A UNIQUE GENIUS

by Paul Altrocchi, MD

MALICE AFORETHOUGHT:

The Killing of
A Unique Genius



Paul Hemenway Altrocchi

Shakespeare authorship mystery solved. Dastardly crime of authoricide—the premeditated assassination of Edward de Vere's life story and literary creativity—described with cerebral sparkle and spine-tingling suspense which only a neurologist can properly convey! 395 pages.

To order from Xlibris
easiest = by email: orders@xlibris.com

Refer to book #64218.

Or telephone 1-888-795-4274.

Softcover: \$19.99 Hardcover: \$29.99

Also available from Amazon.com

A Letter to the Editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*

letters@the-tls.co.uk May 5, 2010
Dear Sir,

We suggest that your readers were ill-served by Charles Nicholl's review of James Shapiro's *Contested Will* in your April 21 issue. By concentrating on the lunatic fringe of those who doubt Shakespeare's authorship of the *Collected Works*, Nicholl gives the impression that questioning the customary ascription is indeed to be psychologically unbalanced. Every field has its extremists. We are not among them. There is a long, respectable and sober tradition concerned with the evident contradictions between the achievement of the *Collected Works* and what is known about Shakespeare of Stratford. None of it has to do with hidden ciphers and cryptograms. Anyone wishing to find out more about what "anti-Stratfordians" really think is invited to review our annual publication, *The Oxfordian*, recently described by William Niederkorn as "the best American academic journal covering the authorship question." Contact us online at the Shakespeare Oxford Society website and we'll be happy to mail out a complimentary copy.

As for Shapiro's book, it suffers from an embarrassing lack of scholarship. Worse, it does not reflect the most recent evidence provided by "anti-Stratfordians". Shapiro does not even attempt to address the myriad of issues that have been raised concerning the authorship question. He assumes from the start that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare, which literally begs the question he pretends to answer. By focusing on why people think someone else may have written the plays, Shapiro again turns a very real question into a pathology. In fact it's a deadly serious, highly important academic matter. Shapiro should call his book *Uncontested Will*.

Shapiro's main procedural objection rests upon the claim that it is illicit to read a writer, especially Shakespeare, from his work. Yet that's exactly what he himself does in his earlier book, *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*. Of course a writer's life is reflected in his/her art. The question is, which parts come directly from experience, which are imaginatively transformed and which are pure invention? Because it's hard to

tell the difference, the easy way out (the road taken by Shapiro in *Contested Will*) is to say that it should not be attempted.

Basically, *Contested Will* is a failure. The authorship question remains unresolved. We invite true scholars to objectively review the data accumulated since T.J. Looney's seminal "*Shakespeare Identified*" in 1920, and join in the discussion. They'll discover a series of thrilling possibilities illuminating countless enigmas, large and small, in the work of our greatest poet-playwright. To resolve the Shakespeare authorship mystery once and for all, the Shakespeare Oxford Society has called for the creation of an independent, blue-ribbon commission composed of distinguished, internationally recognized experts in relevant fields, including historians, biographers, jurists, and other writers and scholars.

Sincerely,

John Hamill,

President, and The Board of Trustees of
The Shakespeare Oxford Society

Note: The *TLS* declined to publish this letter.



Panel discusses Authorship Question with Classical Theatre Lab in West Hollywood

John Shahan

On Tuesday, July 13, the Classical Theatre Lab hosted a panel discussion of the Authorship Question at the West Hollywood Community Center in Plummer Park. Alexander Wells, an actor and current director of the Lab, asked Carole Sue Lipman of the LA-based Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable to organize the panel, reprising an event held three years ago.

Panelists included Carole Sue, who gave a brief overview of the more prominent authorship candidates (Bacon, Marlowe and De Vere, plus newer candidate Sir Henry Neville and Amelia Bassano Lanier); John Shahan, chairman of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition, who presented the case for reasonable doubt about the Stratford man, as well as the case for Oxford; writer-producer Alex Ayers, who presented the case for Christopher Marlowe, highlighting the circumstances

of his death and connection to Shakespeare's publishers; and Louis Fantasia, currently director of "Shakespeare at the Huntington," the teacher-training institute at the Huntington Library, who defended William Shakspeare of Stratford with his usual good humor, insisting that one need not be a Klingon to write *Star Trek*.

About forty people involved with the Classical Theatre Lab attended the informal event. Following the opening ten-minute presentations, panelists first asked each other questions, and then took questions from the floor. The audience was clearly fascinated by the topic. Some were already aware of it, but many clearly were not. John Shahan brought copies of the Declaration of Reasonable Doubt, plus Ramon Jimenez' recent article in *The Oxfordian*, "The Case for Oxford Revisited," as handouts. "It's difficult to communicate much in such a short time,"



John Shahan, Chairman of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition, has big doubts.

Shahan said, "but they could see we were excited about the topic, so some might be motivated to look into it." Of course they will hear a lot about it when Roland Emmerich's feature film *Anonymous* comes out next year, portraying Oxford as Shakespeare, and as Queen Elizabeth's son and lover.

Fulke Greville

Derran Charlton

During early February this year I notified Phaeton that a radar scan on the ornate monument to Fulke Greville which stands in the Chapter House of the Collegiate Church of St. Mary, Warwick, had revealed three "box-like" objects sealed within.

Professor James Stevens Curl, Cambridge University, stated: "Until we look inside we cannot know for sure what it is. What is absolutely certain is that the size, cost and magnificence are intended to speak to us. There are plenty of clues about what it might be, and they suggest this is an incredibly exciting find."

The discovery has resulted in great excitement, with academics positing that the boxes may contain the holy-grail of English dramatic history, possibly an original manuscript of a Shakespearean play.

In a major development during early February, Chancellor Stephen Eyre of

the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Coventry, granted permission for an endoscope to be used to examine the monument. A stringent set of conditions have stipulated that the work must be carried out within the next few months. However, those involved expect the work to begin, almost certainly, within the next six weeks. That is by mid-March.

Fulke spent the equivalent of £300,000 on his monument, but his body was placed in the crypt below the church - not in the monument itself. Ben Jonson referred to his friend William Shakespeare as "a monument without a tombe": a precise description of Greville's monument.

According to a mid-17th century biography Greville wished to be known to posterity under no other notions than of "Shakespeare's master".

I informed Phaeton: "I do not think that non-Oxfordians are aware of Greville's

connections with E.O. We will have to wait and see."

It is now almost mid-August (six months since I quoted the above) and I have not seen any updates from the authorities.

Being more than fascinated I contacted the official website <http://www.masterofshakspeare.com/index.htm> on two occasions. Sadly, without reply. I will try again shortly. Lovely Dorna Bewley, completing her Masters in "Oxfordianism" has also twice requested official updates, without acknowledgement.

Something drastic appears to have happened to cause such silence. Surely the investigations have now been completed!



Fulke Greville

Oxford and Evolution

A new academic journal appeared in late 2009 from the State University of New York Press (Albany NY): *The Evolutionary Review: Art, Science, Culture*, edited by Alice Andrews and John Carroll.

In its first issue (Vol. 1, pp. 135-7) it carried a review by Robin Fox of Marcus Nordlund's *Shakespeare and the Nature of Love: Literature, Culture, Evolution* (Northwestern U.P. 2007.) Nordlund uses a biocultural, evolutionary approach to understanding love in *Titus Andronicus*, *Coriolanus*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *All's Well That Ends Well* (with a glance at *A Winter's Tale*.) Towards the end of a highly favorable review, Fox slips in this paragraph.

"The biographical approach is currently out in literary analysis, but I can't help noticing that there are zero correspondences between the life of William Shakespeare of Stratford and the characters in these plays (or any of the others.) There are, however, numerous and often quite specific correlations with the life of Edward de Vere, the most plausible alternative candidate. In his youth he was Bertram, his dark jealousy was Othello's (and he had his own Iago), in his old age he was Lear (with the three daughters) and in between he was most definitely Hamlet, even down to the pirates. A study of these correspondences might throw as much light on the plays as does Nordlund's biocultural analysis."

He concludes that Nordlund's book is "...the best read on Shakespeare (whoever he was) and also on the nature of biocultural analysis that I have seen in a long time." R. F.

A Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I was looking over your site on Shakespeare and I am disappointed that you modernise the spelling. My problem with your choice to do so is that it is not fair on anyone attempting to understand Shakespeare the way Shakespeare was meant to be understood. I have just finished a 600,000 word book on deciphering Shakespeare and there is nobody on this planet who is anywhere near the truth of understanding what Shakespeare stood for.

It has taken me several years to come to the bottom of Shakespeare and let me tell you—there is no such person—Shakespeare is a made-up name—it comes from the Greek god Ares – the answer to Shakespeare's riddle *to be or not to be*. The work is full of riddles and you have to start with the Sonnets before the plays. The present tense of to be is I, am, are—Shakespeare wanted unity so make it plural—Ares—the Greek god of war—also known as the shaker of spears. Spear is the old word for spirit. You start off with Mars, the Roman god of war but all answers go back to Greek. The first play to look at is *The Tempest*—the song in *The Tempest* is where the Bee Sucks, there suck I – now see the small words within and run the sounds – Here, the bee sucks – here the basics and here suck I—hair/us/I—heresy. The answer to the riddle within this song is the Holy Book. The great ornament of the time was the King James Version—believe me—you have to read it—that's why Shakespeare took from Raphael Holinshed—Chronicles, why we have Acts, Romans, Numbers so leave the Roman numerals—they are needed. Now that you understand and for further proof Mars is the first god mentioned in the Sonnets— now have a look at all the play lists—the characters...

For the first clue to understand Shakespeare—go to Sonnet XXX work out the riddle—cancel the woe, lose a moan—fore bemoaned moan—for beed—for bead— for Bede—the first English historian who wrote about St Cuthbert and this is the start of your journey—that's if you really want the answers...By the way, Delia Bacon was

on the right track—Mr WH is (not as Oscar Wilde thought)—Walter Raleigh—see altar rail within. I have completed the cipher and yes, Edward de Vere is mentioned—the answer Shakespeare takes you to is in Sonnet XVII but you will never understand it until you have all the facts as Shakespeare wanted you to have them—the clue is in the last two words of the Sonnet—My Rhyme—myrrh—y—me. Don't jump to conclusions—myrrh is the clue—a gift from one of the Three Wise Men—and it comes from the Arabic word meaning bitter. Who would have known that? Why give a gift like that—there's always a reason—remember, this is heresy. Shakespeare would have been burned to death, only the last heretic was burned in 1612—he made it through that...

Kim Core

ANNOUNCING the first
Oxfordian edition of

William Shakespeare's
Othello

With an introduction and line notes
from an Oxfordian perspective
By Ren Draya of Blackburn College
and Richard F. Whalen,
Co-General Editor
of the Oxfordian Shakespeare Series

From Horatio Editions—Llumina
Press. Available direct from Llumina
for \$16.95

Credit-card orders 9a-4p (ET)
Or by telephone at 866 229 9244
Or at www.Llumina.com/store/Othello
Or via email to Orders@Llumina.com

Othello is the second play in the
Oxfordian Shakespeare Series,
following *Macbeth* (2007).
Forthcoming are editions
of *Hamlet* and
Anthony and Cleopatra.

Obituaries: Robert Brazil and Verily Anderson

On July the Oxfordian cause tragically lost two of its best researchers/writers. Robert Brazil and Verily Anderson will be sorely missed.

Robert Brazil

Robert was a dedicated researcher who self-published two fine books. The first, five years ago, was about the Shakespeare publishers most closely linked to his works. The second, three years later, concerned Angel Day's *The English Secretary* (1586). Day of course was one of Oxford's secretaries, and his book was dedicated repeatedly to him through half-a-dozen editions (including a Part Two in the early 1590s).

Robert was also an accomplished musician, as he demonstrated at the 2005 White Plains joint conference, playing an acoustic guitar and singing in a well-trained voice. He maintained Elizaforum, an email blog, and an excellent webpage featuring transcriptions of key documents and books by Barb Flues (<http://www.elizabethanauthors.com/sac101.htm>). In these contexts Robert was a tough representative of his own opinions. Many Oxfordians are proud to have called him their friend.

Verily Anderson

Verily Anderson's book *The De Veres of Castle Hedingham* was an oft-consulted source. She was a most convivial lady with a strong English accent. Many will remember her and the late Father Francis Edwards for their readiness to reply to correspondence in the old snail-mail days. Verily's comments were always encouraging and supportive.

Robert and Verily were stalwarts of the Oxfordian movement. Their work advanced his cause, contributing irrefutable evidence and enduring insights which will always be cited.

Derran Charlton writes:

It is with the deepest regret that I notify readers of the Newsletter of the passing from nature to eternity of Verily Anderson Paget, aged 95.

Verily died at home, in her own bed, of a suspected heart-attack.

I was speaking to her only the day before. Verily was as fit as a fiddle. She explained that during her upcoming medical her doctor would "probably congratulate her on her excellent good health!"

Verily was extremely robust, always travelling abroad. She recently returned home from singing with her local choir at the Hermitage, Russia. Prince Charles awarded her a cycling award for her charitable works, and Charlton Ogburn, Jr., gave her the Charlton Ogburn award for her many contributions to Oxfordianism. One of Verily's many enthusiasms in life was to walk her guide-dog Alfie, most days, half-a-mile down the drive to Templewood, and through her glorious ancient woodlands.

Verily must have been the oldest surviving Oxfordian, having been introduced to the cause by her first husband over 70 years ago; in fact her beloved husband, a playwright, poet, player, and play-producer had been a close friend and ardent supporter of John Thomas Looney (1870-1944).

Verily's close friends ranged from Royalty, the Queen and her family, Princess Diana, Princes William and Harry named in honor of William Shakespeare and King Henry V. Her immediate relations included archbishops, statesmen, military leaders, lords lieutenant, poets laureate, international musicians, winners of Victoria Crosses, and Noble Peace Prizes. Her second husband, Paul Paget, was the Surveyor of St. Paul's—a position held originally by Sir Christopher Wren. He was also the restorer of many of Wren's churches following the 1939 war. Her first-cousin was Scot of the Antarctic.

Charles Darwin was her great-great-great uncle and Florence Nightingale was a great-great-great aunt. One of her cousins, now living in Castle Hedingham, owned the Elizabethan manor-house that originally belonged to Horatio Vere, at Tilbury Juxta-Clare. Her ancestors included the Duchess of Derby, as portrayed in the film *The Duchess*. Verily's traceable family history dated from 932.

Verily, together with Sir Derek Jacobi, were the joint-Patrons of the D.V.S. She was also a prolific writer, having written 53 published books and films, including her Oxfordian endeavor *The de Veres of Castle Hedingham*.

Only two days ago, she told me that she had just completed her 53rd book *A History of Herstmonceaux Castle* (where she had lived following the war) for the University of Canada.

Verily leaves four daughters and a son, Edward, who was deliberately named in honor of Edward de Vere and christened in the same 1563 church in Stoke Newington where Edward's son Henry had been christened.

Her sudden death has come as a tremendous shock to all who were truly blessed by her extraordinary life and personality.

A true Renaissance Lady has passed away. We are all deeply inspired and most grateful for her life.

Hank Whittimore writes:

At one point in the early 1990's Robbie lived across the river from my town of Nyack NY, in Tarrytown, and we'd take the train down to Grand Central together and walk over to the Public Library on Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street. Once we were set on finding out if Oxford had skipped town in 1604 and got to the Isle of Man--much fun, reading about the legend of an Elizabethan nobleman who lived out his days there, and reading of Elizabeth, Countess of Derby, becoming governor (?) of the Island at some point.

Early on Robbie wrote up a thick book proposal about “the royal story” of Shakespeare, filled with PT scenarios. Of course he later dropped that and, much, much later than that, blasted my book *The Monument* on elizaforum (and probably elsewhere :-). He knew that his criticisms might hurt but could not disturb our friendship and, in fact, we laughed a lot about our differences. At the White Plains conference a few years ago, he surprised me with some unsolicited compliments, for which I’ll always be grateful.

I should explain that in my life Robert was one of those friends who tell the truth about the way he thought about things and spoke it to your face. He did not care for polite avoidance of the truth of what he felt or knew. And for me this was a source of merriment. One night I drove from Nyack to where he had moved, about an hour and a half north, and there was a terrible storm, but we got to a restaurant he knew, and I recall that much of our talk was not about Shakespeare but about writing and publishing and, in particular, some short stories he was writing or had written. We also talked about acting on stage and, as I recall, more recently he appeared upstate in a community theatre production of *The Tempest*—which Marie probably knows about.

I am one of the many proud owners of an inscribed copy of *The True Story of the Shakespeare Publications, Volume One: Edward de Vere & the Shakespeare Printers*, by Robert Sean Brazil, copyright 1999. And of course we have the remarkable Elizabethan Authors site that he and Barb Flues created, not to mention elizaforum, and his site with various images, as well as his many written contributions for the Oxfordian publications over the years.

I’ll always savor Gary Goldstein’s remark: “He was this bearded wonder of energy, talk, and drama. He was ambitious to do things—to get not just the research out into circulation but to provide everyone with the literary context of the entire era so that redundancy of effort could be avoided for Oxfordian scholars.” That gets it right.

Back in April 1, 2010, addressing Roger Stritmatter on Elizaforum, Robbie wrote in part: “I have no idea why it is

my peculiar fate in life to be the pin that goes around bursting balloons, but this is too often the case.” He also wrote, “And let it not be said that I am simply the person who says, ‘NO,’” as he went on to demonstrate this by sharing some new information he had gotten by long and diligent research before raising his hand.

He worked like hell at this stuff. He was different than the mainstream (whatever that might be!) and he knew it and he was not about to change for anything or anyone. The truth made him laugh and I recall, laughing with him, that Edward de Vere would have enjoyed his lack of b.s. and found him good company. I miss him.

***Shakespeare Oxford
Society
and
Shakespeare Fellowship
Joint Authorship
Conference
September 16-19 2010
Ashland, Oregon***

***For conference information
and registration, visit
the Shakespeare Oxford
Society website.***

***The Merchant of Venice,
Hamlet and Henry IV, Part
One will be playing at
the Oregon Shakespeare
Festival***

Report of the 14th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Conference

Richard Joyrich

The 14th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Conference convened at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon this last April.

Day One

First up was Mark Goggin on "The Case for Bacon as the Author of *Julius Caesar*", which focused on the play's underlying symbolism and allusions of the play and how it is all about using rhetoric for persuasion. Of course Bacon, who wrote more than any writer at the time about the psychology of decision making, was a master of rhetoric.

Second, we heard from the brother-and-sister team of Dr. Bruce Thompson and Claudia Thompson in a talk entitled "Shakespeare on the Orient Express." It was delivered in tandem, with each taking turns to read. The significance of this became clear later. Taking their cue Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, in which none of the twelve suspects alone possesses motive, means, and opportunity, Hercule Poirot discovers that they all did it. The Thompsons conclude that the works of Shakespeare were not all written by the same person.

Next, Dr. Peter Macintosh spoke on "Dating Shakespeare's 'Late Plays': *Coriolanus*." Macintosh showed that the traditional dating of *Coriolanus* to 1608 (or at least to after 1605) cannot be sustained. He concluded that the play could be dated anytime from 1598 to 1609. Thus de Vere cannot be ruled out as its author.

An 80-minute DVD feature about Marlowe's death followed. It took the form of a "mock inquest" into whether his death on May 30, 1593 was an accident, a murder to prevent him from testifying in court the next day, or a scheme to fake his death. Three real barristers presented each case, cross-examining actors in the roles of the people involved. A "jury" of about 70 then gave its verdict. The murder for political reasons won, followed by the fake-death story. Only 11 people on the jury believed the "official" story that Marlowe was accidentally killed.

Day Two

The second day featured Dr. Ren Draya on "The Three Queens of Hamlet,"—Gertrude, the Player Queen, and Queen Hecuba. According to Dr Draya, The Player Queen represents Hamlet/Oxford's ideal Mother figure and True Loyal Wife. Gertrude is also a mother/wife figure but flawed since there remain questions about her complicity in the murder of Hamlet's father and even in the death of Ophelia.

Next came Dr. Michael Delahoyde, on "Oxford Wrote Richard the Second, Know Ye Not That?" With his usual flair for the dramatic and the humorous, Dr. Delahoyde explained how "perspectivart" in the Renaissance used artistic tricks to cause illusions of depth and other "hidden" images. He showed that Oxford could easily have seen such paintings during his continental travels. Similarly, the plays of Shakespeare have many layers and perspectives. *Richard II* contains parallels to, and symbolically representations of Oxford and Elizabeth. Delahoyde added that there are several subtle allusions to Chaucer in the play, and also elsewhere in Shakespeare.

After a break, Richard Whalen spoke on "The Tragi-Comedy of *Othello*: A Link to Oxford the Dramatist," an expanded version of a talk he gave at the SOS/SF Conference last October.

Whalen's theme was the paradoxical use of Commedia dell'arte techniques in *Othello*, supposedly a tragedy. Commedia dell'arte, a form of theater which was at its heyday in Italy during the late 1570s when Oxford was on his continental tour, consists of spontaneous improvisation using stock situations and characters, all of which have certain defined characteristics and ways of behavior. Whalen pointed out their close resemblance to many characters in *Othello*.

For Oxfordians, the notable thing is that a form of Commedia dell'arte had been performed in England during the 1560s and 1570s, but not (with one exception, at court in 1602) during the

supposed writing career of William of Stratford. De Vere of course could have seen Commedia in Italy while he was there. Good evidence places him in the audience at a specific performance.

The afternoon began with a rousing romp by Dr. Daniel Wright and Bill Boyle ("An Authorship Initiative of Unparalleled Magnitude: Opening up the SARC to the Whole") through the wonders of the Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre at Concordia. "Associate Scholars" can access the online databases of literary and other scholarly information that until now only university libraries offered.

Kevin Gilvary, of the de Vere Society UK next spoke on "On the Date and Authorship of *The Contention*..." As an editor of the de Vere Society's "dating project," Kevin was able to show that the Henry VI plays (his specialty) almost certainly first appeared in their Quarto versions, and were then revised for the 1623 Folio.

The next question is whether Shakespeare's main source was the Holinshed edition of 1577 or the 2nd edition (slightly different) of 1587, an important difference if you're interested in the dating question. According to Kevin, Shakespeare used Hall's *Union of the Two Houses...* (1548-1550) as his main source.

The afternoon ended with Dr. Earl Showerman on "Shakespeare and the Queen's Farcical Dalliance with Alencon", an elaboration of his research on Shakespeare's Greek sources. According to Earl, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a Herculean anti-hero, while the play itself is a political allegory about Elizabeth I's marriage negotiations with Alencon.

Day Three

The third day of the Conference (Saturday) began with a presentation by Charles Boyle on "The Court of Queen Elizabeth in Shakespeare". Originally intended for presentation at the 1996 SOS Conference, it was postponed after Charles suffered a stroke right in the

hotel. Since then he has been continued his interested in the authorship question and has contributed papers to multiple conferences, mostly been read by his brother William.

Now Charles felt well enough to present it himself. He spoke eloquently of the many Oxfordian allusions in several plays, including *As You Like It*, *Midsummer's Night's Dream*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Twelfth Night*, *Henry IV Part II*, and *Hamlet*.

After a break William Boyle described his work "Building a Shakespeare Authorship Database: What's In, What's Out and Who Decides?" A professional librarian, Bill has been working on an online resource he calls SOAR (Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources) which is a part of his New England Shakespeare Authorship Library (www.shakespeareoxfordlibrary.org). It currently contains 200 records. Some links are available only to SARC scholars (see above).

The next presentation was "Com-manded by the Motion of Thine Eyes: Shakespeare and the Dark Lady," by Hank Whittemore. The talk was divided into four parts, each discussing one of four "named persons" in the sonnets and its dedication. Hank's conclusions were that "Onlie Begetter" refers to the person who inspired the Sonnets, the Earl of Southampton, not (as some scholars say) the one who procured the sonnets for the publisher Thorpe; the "Better Sprit" (or the Rival Poet in sonnets 77-86) is the pseudonym Shakespeare, which Oxford had to use and which threatened to (and did) eclipse him; "Suborned Informer" (from Sonnet 125) is "Time" and not a person at all; and finally "My Mistress" is of course Queen Elizabeth.

After lunch Charles Beauclerk delivered his keynote address on "Shakespeare's Lost Kingdom." The message was similar to the one presented at the Wednesday launch Beauclerk's new book, that Oxford was the son of Queen Elizabeth and also the father (with the Queen) of Southampton. Shakespeare plays were written largely to assuage Oxford's personal trauma and identity crises, and also to try to affect the way Elizabeth ruled and prepared for her successor.

A remarkable presentation by Alan Green followed. Entitled "The Holy Trinity Solution: John Dee's Master Key Unites the Sonnet's Dedication with the Stratford Monument and Gravestone Inscriptions," Alan described a complex master code involving the church's dedications and inscriptions. Combined with John Dee's *Enochian Tables* these reveal a specific place in Holy Trinity Church where something "very important" is hidden. It turns out to be under one of the four consecration crosses on the altar of the church.

Next was a panel discussion on "A Declaration of Reasonable Theorizing". Charles Beauclerk, William Boyle, Dan Wright and Hank Whittemore urged us all to "get along" and respect others' conclusions or theories without necessarily agreeing with them. There was some spirited discussion, but nothing really was resolved in my opinion.

The Awards

Later that evening attendees enjoyed the Awards Banquet, held on the main floor of the George R. White Library and Learning Center at Concordia.

Several awards were given. The annual SARC Award for Artistic Excellence went to Chris Coleman, the Artistic Director of the Portland Center Stage. Awards for Scholarly Excellence were given to Michael Delahoyde and (in absentia) to Stephanie Hopkins Hughes and a Spanish Oxfordian scholar, Jose Carrillo de Albornoz Fabregas. A Special Award was presented to Charles Boyle for his many contributions (he got a standing ovation).

The Final Day

Sunday began with another panel discussion, this time featuring Paul Nicholson and Chris Carter. The subject was "The Importance of Knowing Shakespeare for Dramatizing the Plays." Nicholson is the Executive Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Carter, as noted earlier, is the Artistic Director of Portland Center Stage.

Following a short break, William J. Ray spoke on "Rollett in Reverse: Objective Evidence That Edward de Vere Wrote the Sonnets." Ray expanded on the last

part of the phrase "the forth", pointing out that Vere=Vier=Four/Forth/Forty was a key numerical concept, corroborated by the second sonnet ("When forty winters..."), and the extraordinary high incidence of Four in the Shakespeare canon.

Jacob Hughes spoken next on "Chaucer Lost and Found in Shakespeare's Histories," a follow-up on a presentation given last year. It is known that Shakespeare used Chaucer as source in at least two plays (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*), and Chaucer seems a reference in the name Sir Topas in *Twelfth Night*. Jacob focused mostly on allusions to Chaucer in the History plays, particularly in the character Falstaff.

The final presentation was by Frank Davis on "Shakespeare: A New Look at the Claim for His Literacy," elaborating his work on the signatures of actors and writers during Shakespearean times. All of the actors and writers in Henslowe's diary could write their names well. These signatures were compared to the six illegible signatures by Shakespeare.

Summing Up

With that the Conference formally ended. Overall it was a very enjoyable and informative. A good variety of topics was presented, all increasing (to varying extents) the case for Oxford's authorship and the further understanding of the "Shakespearean Age". Even presentations focusing on other authorship candidates served to shore up the case for Oxford in my opinion.

Stratford, Cooperstown and Myth

Richard F. Whalen

What do Stratford-on-Avon and Cooperstown, New York, have in common?

Famous towns in rural settings, yes. But more than that, both of them owe their fame and prosperity to appealing and enduring myths.

The Stratford myth is well-known to Oxfordians, but the Cooperstown myth that baseball was invented in that bucolic, upstate New York town by Abner Doubleday is almost as far-reaching. And the parallels between the two myths are striking.

Both towns are far from any metropolitan center, but thanks to appealing and enduring myths both have become major tourist attractions and vacation destinations, both renowned for their supposed celebrities—William Shakespeare and Abner Doubleday.

To endure and prosper, myths need historic artifacts, celebrations, historic sites, statues, institutions, continuing activities, and underlying and captivating stories.

And heroes.

Abner Doubleday is the hero of the Cooperstown myth. He is supposed to have laid out the first baseball field in a pasture in 1839 when he was in his teens. A centennial plaque mounted there in 1939 says: "Doubleday Field, Birthplace of Baseball." Doubleday had been nominated by a boyhood friend in Cooperstown, a mining engineer out West who wrote in a letter decades later that he saw Doubleday lay out a diamond in Cooperstown and write out rules for the game.

But Doubleday was not from Cooperstown. He was born in Ballston Spa, New York, and schooled in Auburn N.Y. and then in Cooperstown but only for a few years. He went to West Point and became a decorated Civil War general and career military officer. He was at West Point in 1839 when he was supposed to be in Cooperstown inventing baseball. He never returned to Cooperstown, and although he left copious memoirs and diaries, they never mention baseball. No

records say he invented baseball, and he never claimed to have done so.

William Shakspeare is the hero for the Stratford myth. No records, however, show that Shakspeare of Stratford wrote anything at all, much less the works of Shakespeare.

Nordid he ever claim to have written them.

Myths also need historic artifacts. Cooperstown's Baseball Hall of Fame boasts a soft, misshapen, small ball found in a farmer's trunk in the 1930s, a ball that the townsfolk soon came to believe was Doubleday's baseball. Stratford-on-Avon claims to have "the original cradle of the Bardic canon itself—his birthroom," which has been "re-displayed," according to the Stratford web site.

Myths need celebrations. The Cooperstown myth was ratified by the Centennial of Baseball celebration at Cooperstown in 1939, a week-long event with parades, speeches, an Old-Timers game, an NBC radio broadcast from Cooperstown, and appearances by thirty-six major league players, including Babe Ruth. Thousands of baseball fans arrived on a special train, but rain forced postponement of the opening day events. (The doubts of a few sports columnists in New York City went unheeded.)

The defining celebration for the Stratford myth was the rain-drenched Stratford Jubilee in 1769, with banquets, choral works, a costumed ball, a horse race, a display of various items presumably owned by the presumed Bard, a bardolatrous oration by David Garrick, but no rain checks and no performances of any Shakespeare plays. The continuing celebrations for the Stratford myth are performances of Shakespeare plays in the Royal Shakespeare Theater and the "international occasion" for laying birthday flowers at the no-name gravestone in Trinity Church.

Myths need dedicated supporters and the endorsement of notable figures. The Cooperstown myth had the support

of the merchants, property owners and civic leaders of the town, the major league baseball teams and the endorsement of Congress and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Stratford myth had its civic boosters and the support of eminent professors in the Shakespeare establishment, such as Stanley Wells, chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Myths need historic sites: In Cooperstown it's Doubleday Field, originally Phinney's field; in Stratford it's the Birthplace, a building which is "preserved intact," originally the home of the Shakspeare family.

Myths need statues. Cooperstown has a wax museum in the Baseball Hall of Fame. Stratford has the monument in Trinity Church with the effigy of a writer, "Shakspeare," although the original effigy depicted a wool merchant before it was altered to fit the Stratford myth.

Myths need institutions (and entertainments). Cooperstown has the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, featuring plaques for members, the wax museum and a "Virtual Reality Batting Cage." Stratford has the Birthplace, Anne Hathaway's house, the schoolroom, and "The Falstaff Experience," a "ghost haunted . . . sinister," scary experience, apparently a veritable funhouse of horrors.

Myths need continuing activities. Cooperstown has the Baseball Writers of America elect new members to the Hall of Fame annually. Stratford has an annual season of plays at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

Myths need an underlying and appealing theme for the general public. Cooperstown bills itself as the birthplace of the All-American game invented by a schoolboy for schoolboys in a vacant field in rural, upstate New York. Stratford bills itself as the rural birthplace of the commoner who supposedly went to grammar school there, became a universal genius and wrote the works of Shakespeare.

And, inevitably, myths have their skeptics and debunkers. Hoboken, New

Jersey, argues that Alexander Cartwright founded the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club and invented the first organized baseball game with a diamond and rules in 1845 in Hoboken, New Jersey, across the Hudson River from Manhattan. The fourteen players all came from New York. The challenges to the Stratford myth began in earnest in the mid-1800s and have continued into the 21st century.

Myths can be vulnerable, and the Cooperstown myth may be eroding. In 1986, the mayor of Hoboken objected to New York State's plan to put "Birthplace of Baseball" on its auto license plates. As a compromise, the state made it special vanity plate for an extra fee. In 2005, the library director at the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum told a reporter for *The Saratogian* in Ballston Spa, New York, where Doubleday was born, that

"It's all part of American mythology and folklore, like Paul Bunyan and John Henry, but folklore is an important part of the American story." Stanley Wells, chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, has not (yet) suggested that the story of the Stratford man as Shakespeare may be part of British mythology and folklore, but there are significant signs of some erosion to the well-entrenched Stratford myth.

Select Bibliography

Chafets, Zev. "Baseball's Invented Eden," in *This Week* of August 7, 2009 (40-1). An article drawn from his book *Cooperstown Confidential: Heroes, Rogues and the Inside Story of the Baseball Hall of Fame*. Bloomsbury, 2009. Jon Greenberg of the Cape Cod Shakespeare-Oxford group spotted Chafets' article and recognized the parallels between the bogus baseball birthplace and

the Stratford myth.

Post, Paul. Article in *The Saratogian* of 3 April 2005. Accessed in the entry for General Abner Doubleday on the Arlington Cemetery web site.

Schoenbaum, S. *Shakespeare's Lives: New Edition*. Oxford, 1991. For the Shakespeare Jubilee, see pp. 104-10; for 'Relics and Associations,' pp. 46-9.

Stratford-Upon-Avon web site for the Birthplace and other information on statues, theaters, entertainments and events.

Vlasich, James A. *A Legend for the Legendary: The Origin of the Baseball Hall of Fame*. Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1990. A thoroughly researched book on the legend of Cooperstown as the birthplace of baseball. He is professor of history at the Southern Utah University.

(Whalen most recently is co-editor with Ren Draya of Blackburn College of the Oxfordian edition of *Othello*.)



Become Part of the Oxfordian Movement

**Join the Shakespeare Oxford Society, founded in 1957,
and receive the quarterly Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter.**

Membership Categories:

_____ Basic and Student Memberships (\$50.00 U.S./Canada; \$65.00 foreign) include a subscription to the quarterly Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter and eligibility to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

_____ Regular Membership (\$65.00 U.S./Canada; \$80.00 foreign) also includes a subscription to the annual research journal *The Oxfordian*.

_____ Family Membership (\$100.00 U.S./Canada; \$115.00 foreign) is a Regular Membership for two individuals at the same address, both of whom are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

Name of Additional Family Member: _____

_____ Sponsor (\$125.00 U.S./Canada; \$140.00 foreign)

_____ Contributor (\$250 U.S./Canada/foreign)

_____ Benefactor (\$1000+ U.S./Canada/foreign)

Name and Address of Library: _____

NOTE: Sponsor, Contributor, Patron, and Benefactor Memberships are contributory memberships that can include an additional Family member residing at the same address and a one-year subscription as a gift to a library of your choice. All members in good standing of the Society are eligible to run for election and to serve as members of the Board of Trustees.

Please check below the type of payment (U.S. Dollars only):

Check Money Order

Credit Card: American Express MasterCard Visa

Name (as it appears on card): _____

Card number: _____

Exp. date: _____

Signature: _____

Please direct questions about membership, or about an application already sent to us, to the attention of Richard Joyrich using the SOS email or mailing address (or, on the on-line membership page, click on the link, Richard Joyrich, Membership Officer).

Shakespeare Oxford Society
P.O. Box 808
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598-0808
Phone: 914-962-1717
Fax: 914-245-9713
Email: sosoffice@optonline.net

