



# The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter



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## Winter Books

### AN AMAZING YEAR FOR OXFORDIANS

Despite the damp squib *Anonymous* disappointingly proved to be, we are currently passing through an extraordinary period in authorship studies. More than a dozen first-rate books have recently appeared, in some cases building upon earlier investigations. Each in its own way contributes a solid section to what, in an earlier newsletter, we called the Wall of Evidence—the mounting pile of documented data leading to the inescapable conclusion that Shakspere of Stratford and Shakespeare the author of the plays and poems could never be the same man.

Picking apart the matrix of facts, half-truths, suppositions and ingrained beliefs which constitutes the conventional view is no easy matter. Confronted with the uncomfortable, orthodox scholars literally close their eyes and ears—they really don't want to hear about it. Then they repeat their traditional mantras in increasingly loud tones. *Singula ne referam*, as Ovid puts it in his *Tristia*, “not to give instances,” but the attitudinally deaf are legion and notorious.

Yet what's remarkable about the non-Stratfordian studies appearing in the last year or so is that in almost all cases their results cannot be ignored. The grounds of the debate are shifting, and the momentum is on our side. At the very least scholars maintaining the traditional ascription of *The Collected Works* are increasingly forced to re-examine their assumptions and the truths they hold to be self-evident. Many of these have literally become untenable.

Continued Page 4

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A Touching Donation Story

Dear Editor:

**N**ew member C.L. registered for the conference last week and also made a \$25 donation. After sending her the donation acknowledgment letter, she informed me her father and both brothers also plan to attend partly to honor their mother who passed last year. Her email to Pres. Richard Joyrich is below.

Sincerely

*Lora Cossolotto*, SOS Office

Dear Mr. Joyrich,

I make my gift in honor of my mother, Anne Bush Lemp, who died last year and whose obituary mentioned her long-time belief that the 17th Earl of Oxford is the true author of the works attributed to Shakespeare. I will be joined at this year's conference by my father (who's attended before) and both of my brothers!

Cheers,

C.L.

P.S. I don't expect any recognition of this memorial gift but thought you'd enjoy hearing how the Oxfordian thing is passing down the generations. :)

### **The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter**

**welcomes letters from readers on  
any aspect of Shakespeare or  
Renaissance Drama.**

**Send your comments to  
drmichaelegan@yahoo.com**

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P.O. Box 808  
Yorktown Heights  
New York 10598

Tel: 914 962 1717  
Fax: 914 245 9713  
sosoffice@optonline.net  
www.shakespeare-oxford.com

### **Editor**

Michael Egan  
drmichaelegan@yahoo.com

### **Publications Committee**

Brian Bechtold  
Jim Boyd, *chair*  
Katherine Chiljan  
Frank Davis  
Robin Fox  
John Hamill  
Ramon Jiménez  
Richard Joyrich  
Richard Smiley

### **Printer**

Eagle Graphics, Inc  
cbenger@eaglegraphicsprinters.com

Original research, reviews, commentary, reports, obituaries, photos and other items of interest to the Shakespeare Oxfordian community are welcome. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the SOS or its members.

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER Big Bequest to SOS

*Richard Joyrich*

I'm pleased to announce that a former member, Mr. T. Robert Chapman, has made a substantial bequest to the Society. Mr. Chapman, a long-time resident of Los Angeles who died in 1997, stipulated in his will that on the death of his heir an amount equal to 5% of his estate be given to the SOS as an unrestricted bequest. Now that heir has died and Trust officials have contacted the Society and reported the gift. The funds will be used to continue the Society's programs and activities that focus attention on, and support research into, the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

A bequest of this type—a percentage of assets after other obligations have been met—is a simple and easy way to support the Society and to further its objective to reveal the 17th Earl of Oxford as the actual author of the Shakespeare canon. Supporters are encouraged to consider this option. For more information about how you can help, please see *SOS Legacy Gift Campaign*, p. 28.

### **Cause for Optimism**

It continues to be an exciting time for the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the inquiry into the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

There has been the publication of many new books on the subject. Many of these are reviewed in this issue. Numerous websites, blogs, and other media outlets have been started, or those already in existence have enjoyed increasing exposure and attracted more and more "followers."

The movie *Anonymous*, while not achieving quite the widespread release and acclamation we might have wished it to have, still

has had a major impact (at least in academic circles). This will no doubt continue now that the movie has been released on DVD (and even made a brief appearance during the recent Academy Awards show—having been nominated for its costuming).

I, and others in our Society, have been contacted to provide speakers and other types of assistance in various debates and presentations at high schools, colleges, and other venues.

### **Upcoming Conferences**

I will be attending an authorship conference on April 7 at York University in Toronto, which will include representatives of the main authorship candidates (including William of Stratford).

The 16th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference will be convening at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon from April 12-14 and has already been attracting much media attention.

In addition, plans are already underway for the next SF/SOS Joint Conference in Pasadena, California from October 18-21. Watch for details in upcoming newsletters as well as on the websites for the two organizations.

Many ideas have been put forward as to how we can continue to get our "message" out. However, these all require the support of our members and friends in the form of contributions and increasing membership numbers.

The membership of our organization is growing, but we must still do better. You all can play a big part in this by offering your friends and acquaintances a half-price membership using our "Recruit-A-Member" program. In addition, please renew your *own* membership for 2102 if you have not already done so. You can see if your membership is current by checking the address label on this newsletter.

As I mentioned in the last Newsletter, our

Board of Trustees maintains several committees which are open for all members to join. Please let me know if you would like to serve on a committee or if you have any suggestions for improving the Society. In addition, please consider becoming a Board member yourself at the next election to be held during our Conference in October.

As we approach the end of a century of Oxfordian research, it has become obvious that the final exposure of this colossal literary hoax will be the work of several generations. The Shakespeare Oxford Society—founded more than 50 years ago—is the leading international organization devoted to the exposure of the Stratfordian myth.

I am pleased at the momentum we are now enjoying in engaging the public in a new appreciation of the works of William Shakespeare. Let's all work together to keep it going.



### Winter Books Continued

## Shakespeare in Italy

**Richard Paul Roe:** *The*

*Shakespeare Guide to Italy: Retracing the Bard's Unknown Travels* (Harper Perennial 2011)

Thanks to the work of Oxfordian scholars, recognizing Shakespeare's intimate knowledge of Italy, Italian culture and even its language is now a key issue and a test of conventional scholarly integrity. In this sense it is the Achilles heel of the Stratfordian case. The man clearly spoke fluent Italian—perhaps as well as a native, according to bilingual scholars (see below). To take only the most obvious case, Cinthio's *Gli Hecatommithi* (1565), the principal source for *Othello*, was never

translated in Elizabethan/Jacobean times. There was a French version by Gabriel Chappuy (1584) but strikingly the verbal echoes in *Othello* are closer to the Italian original. In *The Earl of Oxford and the Making of 'Shakespeare'*, reviewed below, Richard Malim demonstrates for instance that Othello's "Give me ocular proof!" (III. iii.360) echoes Cinthio rather than Chappuy. He also notes the influence, among other Italian writers, of Machiavelli, Dovisi, Ariosto and Cecchi.

The man who was to become Shakespeare also clearly traveled through France, picking up demotic French as he went (see for example, *Henry V*, III.iv), and then continued unhurriedly through northern Italy, the natural entry point into that country. In a word, he was a tourist. A core set of his later works is of course located somewhere in Tuscany and all are filled with the kind of detail that could only come from first-hand experience. Shakespeare's towns for instance are not interchangeable, Big Italian City, as it were, but full of rich, specific detail reflecting actual urban locales. These include the names and sites of minor churches, forgotten groves and graves, architectural landmarks like sculpted doorways, and unique topographical features. Such knowledge can only be acquired at first-hand.

This proposition, together with some remarkable illustrations (photographic and literary), are at the heart of Richard Roe's outstanding study, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*. A bitter-sweet triumph, since the author passed away almost at the moment of its publication, the book represents two decades of meticulous and, I'm happy to add, delightful research. Rarely in Shakespeare studies can there have been a scholarly project more rewarding in its riches and yet more agreeable in its pursuit. Taking Shakespeare at his word, Roe traveled Italy, patiently following up every specific reference,

implicit or explicit, in the plays. And he found, contrary to orthodox belief, that Shakespeare knew exactly what he was talking about when it came to Italy, and especially its northern city-states.

Roe's examples are completely convincing. Like the good attorney that he was, he opens his case with an irrefutable and revealing instance: the location of a sycamore

grove fleetingly alluded to in *Romeo and Juliet*. Early in the play Benvolio tells Lady Montague that he has just seen Romeo "underneath the grove of sycamore / That westward rooteth from [Verona's] side." No one before Roe ever thought to look for it, assuming the reference to be vague and fictional. But the scrupulous researcher sought and almost miraculously found Romeo's sycamore grove, precisely on the west side of Verona. Roe was in a sense the first to tread where the Bard himself had trod four centuries before—the first to see the place and know it for the first time.

And so with all Shakespeare's other Italian details, dismissed by orthodox scholars as imaginary or just plain wrong. Or if right, the result of some unrecorded tavern encounter with a group of drunken sailors possessed of amazing observational and

recollective powers.

The extent of this willful, one might almost say culpable, critical ignorance is best exemplified by the orthodox scholar Oliver Kramm, who waves Roe's book aside while proudly confessing that he hasn't actually read it. Nor does he have to: he already knows the sun revolves around the earth, so why look though some kind of stupid

Oxfordian telescope?

I will make an educated guess that this particular retired lawyer will nowhere in his research deal with the conundrum that Old Gobbo, in *The Merchant of Venice*, has a horse—in Venice—and that Milan is described in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* as a port city ...It doesn't really matter if Shakespeare was an Italian traveler. If he were, though, we haven't been able to find his foot-prints. Nor, I predict, has the lawyer from Pasadena.<sup>1</sup>

But Old Gobbo of course does not keep a horse in the city of canals—in fact, he doesn't even live there. What he tells us is that he has a "fill horse" or plow animal

on his farm *outside* Venice—Kramm's use of italics is catching—whence he has come with a basket of goodies for his son.

Moreover, Roe overwhelmingly establishes that land-locked Milan and many

### Books Reviewed

**Richard Paul Roe:** *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy: Retracing the Bard's Unknown Travels* (Harper Perennial 2011)

**Lamberto Tassinari:** *John Florio: The Man Who Was Shakespeare* (Gianno Books 2009)

**Ren Draya and Richard Whalen** (eds.): *William Shakespeare: Othello The Moor of Venice* (Horatio Editions Lumina Press 2010)

**Richard Malim:** *The Earl of Oxford and the Making of "Shakespeare": The Literary Life of Edward de Vere in Context* (McFraland & Co. 2012)

**A.J. Pointon:** *The Man Who was Never Shakespeare: The Theft of William Shakespere's Identity* (Parapress 2011)

**Katherine Chiljan:** *Shakespeare Suppressed: The Uncensored Truth about Shakespeare and His Works: A Book of Evidence and Explanation* (Faire Editions 2011)

**Paul Altrocchi and Hank Whittemore** (eds.): *The Great Shakespeare Hoax* (iUniverse 2009)

**Sabrina Feldman:** *The Apocryphal William Shakespeare: Book One of 'A Third Way' Shakespeare Authorship Scenario*

(www.dogearpublishing.net and Amazon.com)

<sup>1</sup>[http://oliverkamm.typepad.com/blog/2006/11/shakespeare\\_fal.html](http://oliverkamm.typepad.com/blog/2006/11/shakespeare_fal.html)

another inland Italian town did indeed possess ports, as they were called, linked to the sea by a series of now-obliterated (or in some cases still existing) canals. In the case of the Milanese, boats could sail right up to the city gates, named the *Porta Ticinese*. Its remains can be seen to this day, and until the mid 20th century, as Roe reminds us, Milan was still considered one of Italy's principal maritime ports.

The same holds true of Padua, Mantua and most significantly Verona, lesser ports than Milan, but still accessible by the Fossa and La Fosetta canals.

Roe's discoveries instantly explain how Valentine and Proteus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* apparently transport their ships more than 18 miles by water across dry land, an "error" reflexively mocked by pre-Roevian critics whenever Shakespeare's knowledge of Italy is mentioned.

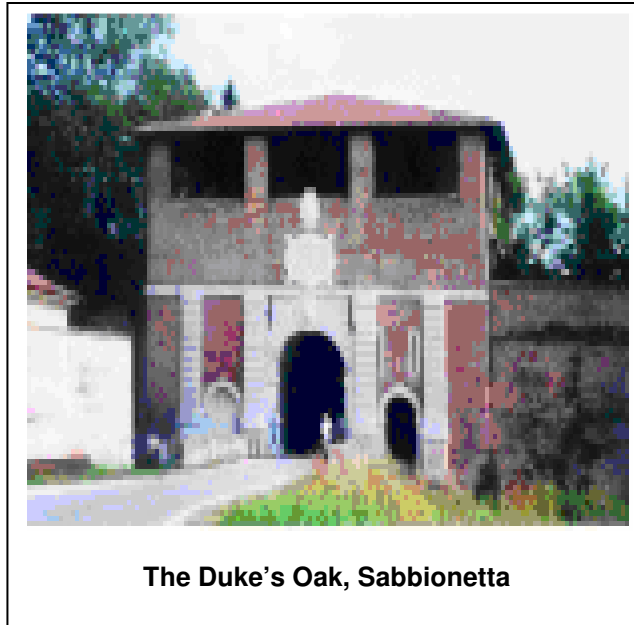
Kramm describes his ignorant guesses as "educated." To which we reply, quite so. This is the kind of misinformation that sometimes passes for education in the academies—the knee-jerk repetition of convenient untruths.

The revolution in Shakespeare studies Roe's discoveries implies may be gleaned by citing Stratfordian scholar Harry Levin, a more substantial figure than Kramm but just as poorly educated. Shakespeare obviously never visited Italy, Levin remarks (*Shakespeare's Italy*, 1997, p. 398), since his "sketchy geographical patchwork is evident when his gentlemen of Verona travel by water to Milan." But as we have seen, in fact

they could and they did.

*The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* is full of clarifying nuggets of this sort. A further instance: Roe's researches reveal the true location of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It's not Greek Athens, as the traditional stage directions apparently indicate, but the provincial Italian town of Sabbionetta, known in its day as "Little Athens" after the obsessive Hellenic interests of its Duke and his entourage. Readers will remember of course that Shakespeare's Athens, unlike the actual

Greek city state, is run by a Duke, the legendary Theseus. Roe clinches his case by discovering in Sabbionetta *il Quercia dei Duca*, "the Duke's Oak," precisely the place where Quince and the rude mechanicals first meet to rehearse *Pyramis and Thisbe*. Nor is it a tree (a reve-



The Duke's Oak, Sabbionetta

lation that should influence all future productions of the play) but a short passageway through Sabbionetta's town walls leading to an oak forest. That's quite a detail for a group of mug-pounding sailors to recall!

Either way, thanks to Roe, we may now reasonably identify the real-life site of the great comedy's main action.

The idea of walking through Titania's wood—by moonlight?—which Shakespeare enthusiasts may now do, is almost too enchanting to contemplate. The SOS should organize annual "Roe Tours" retracing his and Oxford's steps.

Roe does not record the feelings that

likely overwhelmed him when he understood what he had discovered—or recovered. But he must have known in his scholarly soul that his work would rock the Shakespeare world.

Readers of this landmark study will all have their favorite revelations. Ours—to take a last example—is Roe’s identification of Prospero’s island as Vulcano, off the coast of Sicily and the most southern of the Aeolian islands. Among other things, it reclassifies *The Tempest*, along with *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, as yet another Italian play. It’s also important because some recent productions, most memorably the RSC version starring Sir Patrick Stewart (Ann Arbor, 2007), absurdly situate Prospero’s island somewhere near the Arctic. On the contrary, it’s hot and almost lunar in appearance—a volcanic rock full of craters and steamy vents.

Roe must be right because so many of Vulcano’s geographic and topographical details echo the world of *The Tempest*. Among them are its “yellow sands,” the sulphurous surface referred to by Ariel—the sulphur from Vulcano’s bubbling springs and fissures coats everything with a mustardy dust—and the equally “filthy-mantled pool” of IV.i. The “scamels” or sea birds mentioned in II.ii, still flourish there. One can see how visiting an environment like this might fire the imagination of a Shakespeare. What a place to set a play!

It also turns out that in the local Italian dialect—this is a discovery of major literary importance—“Caliban” means “outcast or pariah,” and “Ariel” a “mischievous air or water spirit.” Roe even identifies Vulcano’s *Grotto del Cavallo* as the “deep nook” where Ariel hides the ship. These are remarkable discoveries and we may well wonder how long it will be before establishment scholars grudgingly acknowledge them.

We need only add that despite Roe’s impeccable Oxfordian credentials—he and

his wife of course funded the Roe Shakespeare Authorship Research Center at Concordia University—*The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* never overtly makes the case for Oxford. It doesn’t have to: we all know of the earl’s famous Continental journey 1575-6, and especially his travels through France and around Tuscany. Instead, Roe quietly leaves his evidence on the table and implicitly challenges Shakespeare scholars everywhere to deal with it.

They will have to. This is a game-changing book, exactly the kind of advance Looney predicted in 1920.

### Dealing With It

There are several possible responses to Roe’s new data, all of which have been canvassed. First, the ongoing but now stuttering claim that Shakespeare’s Italian geography remains shaky. This position can no longer be maintained except as an article of faith.

The second orthodox response—a major revision, of course—is to simply concede the point. Shakespere of Stratford must have visited Italy after all, we just don’t know about it. But then, so the argument disingenuously continues, there’s a whole lot about Shakespere/Shakespeare we don’t know, including his whereabouts during those famous “lost years,” 1585-92. Maybe he visited Italy then?

Unfortunately for the cleanliness of Roe’s implicit case concerning Oxford, there is some evidence to support the possibility of a William Shakespere in Italy 1585-7. In 2009 three mysterious signatures were discovered at the Venerable English College in Rome. The first two read: *Arthurus Stratfordus Wigomniensis 1585*, and *Gulielmus Clerkae Stratfordiensis 1589*. According to Father Andrew Headon of the Vatican, these could translate as “[King?] Arthur’s compatriot from Stratford in the diocese of Worcester,” and “William the clerk from Stratford.” A

third signature from 1587 reads *Shfordus Cestriensis*, which Father Andrew suggests might stand for “Sh[akespeare] from [Strat]ford in the diocese of Chester.”

There are of course some difficulties with these signatures. First, they’re highly ambiguous, and second, they don’t resemble the attested Shakespeare signatures attached to his famous will. Third, two different and incorrect dioceses are noted: Worcester and Chester.

These data have not been widely publicized among conventional scholars, partly because of the above uncertainties but also because they support the notion that the young Shakespere may well have been a Catholic. According to the Vatican’s *L’Osservatore Romano*, in an article interestingly headlined, “More Catholic than Anonymous,” while Shakespeare’s identity “is the matter of debate his religious faith is not.” But this is not the current party line among conventional Shakespeareans.

Non-Stratfordians however also resist the signatures’ implications because they apparently do place a clerkly William from Stratford in Italy at some point during Shakespere’s lost years, muddying the issue and detracting from what seems like a clinching argument against his authorship of the plays.

Our view, however, is that even if Shakespere of Stratford did secretly visit the Vatican as part of some dangerous Catholic pilgrimage—and that’s a lot to build on three ambiguous signatures—this does not increase the chances that he authored the plays and poems.

In a word, Rome is not Tuscany. What Roe’s data do make clear is that whoever he was, the author of the plays enjoyed a long, luxurious tour through France and Italy. He was also important enough to have been hosted by wealthy local dignitaries—appropriate for an earl, unlikely for a commoner. His travels took in the all the sights, together

with the works of famous artists like Giulio Romano. He was familiar with the canal system. Afterwards he journeyed as far south as Vulcano, probably by boat, and must also have spent some time in Rome. Perhaps it was that experience which led eventually to *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*, and by classical analogy to *Troilus and Cressida*, etc.

Such extensive and expensive touring was well beyond the resources of a provincial Warwickshire lad, even assuming a secret visit to the Vatican. Nor is there any evidence of such a northern visit—as Kramm says, his footprints are nowhere to be found. On the other hand, while not necessarily excluding other candidates, the details fit de Vere’s known travels perfectly. His footprints are found all over Italy.

## Resolute John Florio

**Lamberto Tassinari:** *John Florio: The Man Who Was Shakespeare* (Gianno Books 2009)

The third way out, and one which offers to nullify Roe’s thesis, is the suggestion that “William Shakespeare” was indeed a pseudonym, not of Oxford or Marlowe or any other Englishman or woman, but of the well-known Italianate lexicographer John Florio, who lived in and around London. According to this thesis it was he, perhaps together with his father Michel Angelo Florio, who secretly wrote the plays and poems.

This proposal underlies Lamberto Tassinari’s remarkable and challenging *John Florio: The Man Who was Shakespeare*. Tassinari is himself a *déraciné* Italian with formidable English skills. One is irresistibly tempted to observe that many Shakespearean commentators find themselves reflected



in his works—Harold Bloom and Falstaff is perhaps the most notorious instance. Tassinari is in good company.

That said, it's important to recognize the force of his evidence, which in some cases repeats and in others supplements *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*. Like Roe, whose book was published after his own, Tassinari emphasizes the author's deep knowledge and awareness of matters Italian.

He was indeed “the most Italianizing author of the period.” From this it's a short step to argue that an industriously literary individual with an Italian background was actually Shakespeare himself.

John Florio was born in London about 1553. According to Tassinari, he added more than a thousand new words to the English language, comparable to Shakespeare. He assembled the first Italian/English dictionary, *A Worlde of Wordes*, and like the author of the plays and poems was familiar with many Italian writers who had not yet been translated.

Among them was Giordano Bruno, the great Neapolitan heretic burned at the stake in 1600, and whose ideas about the cosmos appear have influenced Shakespeare. Tassinari notes that Florio and Bruno were both house guests of the French ambassador in London for more than two years (1583-1585) and that many of their works cross-reference each other.

Beyond these very solid points, however, Tassinari's case becomes increasingly speculative. It's true that as his translator, Florio had obviously read Montaigne, whose influence has been traced in Shakespeare. He also knew the Bible well and was an ac-

complished musician. Such things were however not unique to him. Nor was he the only intellectual to meet with Bruno—evidence exists establishing an equally suggestive relationship between the Italian philosopher and Oxford. One might say the same for many another authorial candidate.

Tassinari claims that Florio's publications, *First Fruits* (1578), *Second Fruits* (1591), and *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598), an-

tipiculate Shakespeare in “hundreds” of cases. But even if true—unfortunately Tassinari provides few examples by way of illustration—this does not necessarily mean identity of authorship. Shakespeare could well have borrowed words from Florio or vice versa. By the same token both men, sensitive to language, may have heard and recorded the same usages independently.

Again, Tassinari claims but does not satisfactorily establish that Shakespeare and Florio display similar

literary styles. To our ear they don't. In order to solidify this part of his case, Tassinari needs to set passages from Florio and Shakespeare side by side and carry out some old-fashioned Practical Criticism. He also repeatedly claims that computer analysis will bear him out but inexplicably fails to attempt this task.

Ironically, among the weaknesses of *John Florio: The Man Who Was Shakespeare*, is that despite the eponymous subject's unimpeachable Italian credentials, there is no record of his ever having actually visited Italy itself. This is a big hole in Tassinari's case. The best he can say is that Michel Angelo Florio was born there and that John himself “probably” visited Italy. But “probably” is



not good enough, especially unsupported, given the geographic and architectural detail we find in the plays. Frankly, Shakespeare of Stratford has a better documented claim—the Vatican signatures. Tassinari hastily adds that John

in any case had for years heard, imagined, imbibed, vivid detailed and dramatic stories from books and his father during their shared exile in Strasbourg, the Grisons and London.

But that's just a variation of the case made for Shakspere's derivative knowledge of Italy, though in his case it's vivid, detailed and dramatic stories imbibed from sailors in The Boar's Head tavern. Despite his eloquence, Tassinari's claim is not strong enough to support the authorial edifice he erects upon it. Nor is his weak explanation of why Florio would have wished to conceal his identity as the author of the plays. As an Italian, Tassinari speculates, he felt reluctant to lecture the English on their own language. So he had to masquerade as an Englishman.

Lamberto Tassinari has accomplished a great work of scholarship, but in the end his labors are likely to be seen only as an important supplement to that of critics documenting the true Bard's Italian connections. As a native Italian speaker he is able to detect a number of subtle linguistic connections between Shakespeare's English and Renaissance Italian. But if we assume Shakespeare's familiarity with Italy, we don't need to hypothesize that he was really Florio. Bilingualism works in both directions.

One needs to add too that Shakespeare did not write only Italian plays. The deeply English chronicle dramas, and *Lear* and *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, are at least as important in understanding who Shakespeare really was.

While the interaction between Florio and the man we call Shakespeare may at times have been strong and perhaps even close,

Tassinari does not, in our opinion, clinch his case.

## An Oxfordian *Othello*

**Ren Draya and Richard Whalen** (eds.):  
*William Shakespeare: Othello The Moor of Venice* (Horatio Editions Lumina Press 2010)

**A**mong Tassinari's interesting observations as a native Italian is this aside from *Othello*:

*Clown*: Why, Masters, have your instruments been born in Naples that they speak i'th' nose? (III.i.3-4)

"The orthodox," Tassinari observes, "will trot out the usual pretexts: the man from Stratford overheard some Neapolitans talking in a tavern in dockland! But the obvious truth is that this regional note is absolutely 'made in Italy'."

Ren Draya's and Richard Whalen's attractive "Oxfordian" edition of *Othello* confirms the general point. Reliably grounded in a scholarly assessment of all previous editions and equally well edited, their text is based on the 1864 Globe version (ed. Clark and Wright), which for the first time attempted to reconcile the Quarto and First Folio versions. The need for text-reconciliation in many Shakespeare plays is part of the Oxfordian case and this edition helps to support it.

Draya and Whalen regularize the punctuation and add some scene locations, but the value of their *Othello* lies more in its notes and appendices. In a series of line-by-line commentaries and supplementary essays, they make a strong case for Oxford's authorship. These include his known familiarity with matters military and, by contrast,

his deep musical knowledge. The details of his personal life, in particular his suspicions that his wife Ann had been unfaithful, are also clearly relevant.

Among indicators that he had actually been to Venice, Draya and Whalen note that about the time of Oxford's visit, ca. 1575, there was a local family, the Otelo del Moro, who were often involved in sexual scandals.

This detail, like so many others, is profoundly suggestive. It is especially so when taken in conjunction with Whalen's outstanding discussion, based on a well-regarded paper delivered at Concordia in 2009, showing that a series of references in Acts I and II establish the author's first-hand acquaintance with Famagusta Harbor and Cyprus's other military installations. This has not been noticed before by conventional critics because in their world Shakespeare never left England and thus could never have toured Cyprus. But as Whalen implies, if you don't look, you won't find.

Other well-documented appendices make the case for *Othello's* existence as early as 1593, and for the influence upon it of the Italian *commedia dell'arte*.<sup>2</sup> Among other things, the editors show how characters like Iago and Roderigo are best understood as dark versions of some of the *Commedia's* stock figures.

The point of course is that among the candidates for Shakespeare's literary crown, not excluding the Stratford man, only Oxford meets all the criteria. This includes credible experience with the *dell'arte* tradition and practice. *Othello* is thus perhaps the very first *tragedia dell'arte*—a stunning innovation, though Draya and Whalen don't make that claim. Nevertheless their edition, along with the others in this series, adds an

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<sup>2</sup> This ascription is independently supported by the late Noemi Magri in her essay on *Othello* published in Kevin Gilvary (ed): *Dating Shakespeare's Plays* (2010) reviewed in an earlier Newsletter.

absolutely necessary brick to the wall of evidence.

Without "Oxfordian" editions of this sort the case is that much weaker; with them, that much stronger.

## Oxford as Lenin

**Richard Malim:** *The Earl of Oxford and the Making of 'Shakespeare': The Literary Life of Edward de Vere in Context* (McFarland & Co. 2012)

The British scholar Richard Malim is well known in Oxfordian circles on both sides of the Atlantic. His new study, *The Earl of Oxford and the Making of 'Shakespeare'*, is among the first to take Roe's discoveries into account, together with the related work of Noemi Magri. Malim also handsomely acknowledges the influence of Mark Anderson's *Shakespeare By Another Name*.

Malim's book may be somewhat mistitled. While it is assuredly an Oxfordian text in the most traditional sense, it is less about how Oxford became Shakespeare than it is about how English became *the* world literature.

Certainly, in Malim's view, Oxford-Shakespeare played a central role in what he calls the "revolution" in English ignited in the late 1570s. According to this model, Oxford's arrival back in England in 1576 is directly comparable to Lenin's return to Russia in 1917. Malim's two central chapters are unmetaphorically titled "The Revolution in English Literature" and "The Revolution in the Theater" because that is exactly what he is claiming:

Political revolutions have a leader who emerges, and a moment when that leader

makes an entry. For example, Lenin appears after a journey from Germany in a sealed train at St Petersburg station on April 3, 1917, and the rest is recorded history...In the [English] cultural revolution nearly four hundred and fifty years ago...Oxford is that leader and his return to England [April, 1576] is that moment ...This is the “Bastille moment” for the revolution.

These are big claims and Malim goes a long way to establishing them. By his argument, Kyd, Peele, Lyly and even Marlowe, traditionally assumed to be Shakespeare’s predecessors and even role models, are in fact his contemporaries in a process of mutual learning. In many cases he was the creditor rather than the debtor artist, which contradicts the official version—see for example Jonathan Bate’s Marlowe chapter in *The Genius of Shakespeare* (1998). Equally, then, the dates of Shakespeare’s plays must be revised, and in the spirit of Kevin Gilvary’s recent *Dating Shakespeare’s Plays* (2010), Malim provides a play-by-play analysis assigning earlier dates of composition.

In our opinion, Malim’s study is marred, though not fatally, by his adherence to a version of the so-called Prince Tudor theory—“Oxford may be the father of the third earl of Southampton,” he cautiously writes, though his suggestion is that the mother was not Queen Elizabeth but the Countess of Southampton herself. There is, however, little evidence to support this claim, though the language of the early sonnets certainly resonates here. One must add that much of Malim’s case *hic et ubique* is couched in the language of possibility—“well may have been,” etc., the sort of thing we often criticize the Stratfordians for doing. Malim also speculates rather wildly that Oxford was a depressive, an alcoholic and—in Italy and later in London—a government spy. While not impossible, none of these suggestions is

satisfactorily documented.

Cavils aside, Malim’s general thesis works well. The Shakespearean revolution in English literature is pushed back half-a-dozen years or more to the late 1570s. The importance of this is that a coherent context for the re-dating of Shakespeare’s plays has now been established, and Oxford/ Shakespeare’s *avant-garde* role identified. Future histories of English Literature will need to take Malim’s analysis into account.

## Shakespeare the Man

**A.J. Pointon:** *The Man Who was Never Shakespeare: The Theft of William Shakspeare’s Identity* (Parapress 2011)

**M**alim’s book closes with a long appendix called “William Shakespeare: The Irrelevant Life,” showing how the Stratford man could never have authored the works attributed to him. This is the burden too of A.J. Pointon’s exhilarating *The Man Who was Never Shakespeare*, cunningly subtitled *The Theft of William Shakspeare’s Identity*.

Oxfordians and other non-Stratfordians will immediately appreciate the difference between the “Shakespeare” and “Shakspeare” in Pointon’s title, and understand where he is going with it. Instead of arguing that someone else wrote Shakespeare’s plays, he simply shows that it could not have been the man from Stratford.

After that, he implies, we’re on our own, though he does supply a postscript examining the credentials of the leading alternative candidates, including Oxford.

Pointon’s anti-Stratfordian case is irrefutable and one wishes it could be made more generally available to Shakespeare students

in their formative stages. In a series of chapters investigating what's certainly known about Shakspere, starting with "How the Theft of Shakspere's Identity Began," Pointon systematically works his way through every popular document, anecdote and supposition linking Shakspere to Shakespeare. His style is chatty and engaging.

As a physicist and engineer, Pointon is familiar with scientific reasoning and the proper use of data. His conclusion is that, on the available evidence, Shakspere could never have been the writer of the plays.

Pointon is particularly good at summarizing his arguments. Short chapters demolish the Stratfordian case step by step, climaxing in two detailed accounts, labeled Stage One and Stage Two, of how Shakspere's identity was appropriated and then deliberately confused with the pseudonymous author.

This is followed by a chapter called "How do we know Shakspere was not Shakespeare?" in which Pointon again restates the evidence against the Stratford man. His data include the relative absence of Warwickshire words in the plays and poems, giving the lie to a persistent Stratfordian myth; the non-existence of references to Shakspere as a poet-playwright by his contemporaries and even family members, like Dr John Hall; the fact that Shakspere never described himself as an author when applying for his famous coat-of-arms; and that the coat of arms itself, later awarded, was omitted from the First Folio frontispiece. This seems to us a very telling but generally unregarded piece of evidence: it's as though the editors are saying: "Yes, 'Shakespeare' wrote these plays, but not *that* Shakespeare."

Most of Pointon's other objections will be familiar to Oxfordians. Perhaps his best crafted argument deals with the absence of any charges against Shakspere following the notorious performance of *Richard II* on the eve of the Essex Rebellion, despite the Queen's order that its author be arrested.

Pointon's common-sense conclusion is that "Shakespeare" was a pseudonym that successfully concealed the playwright's true identity.

What we do know for sure is that Shakspere of Stratford was never arrested nor even interviewed by the authorities. So obviously no one at the time thought he could possibly be the author.

Pointon winds up his analysis by asking finally, "Who could have been writing as Shakespeare?" Under this heading he considers all the leading contenders, including Bacon, Marlowe, Derby, Mary Sidney and even Queen Elizabeth herself. Oxford of course is interrogated too, but comes off no better than Pointon's other likeliest authors, Bacon and Mary Sidney.

In the end he leaves the matter unresolved. All he desires, he says, is to pose the question. "If the search for the real Shakespeare is opened up to all scholars and aficionados, free from acrimony," Pointon concludes, "that is a consummation greatly to be wished."

## Tongue-Tied by Authority

**Katherine Chiljan:** *Shakespeare Suppressed: The Uncensored Truth about Shakespeare and His Works: A Book of Evidence and Explanation* (Faire Editions 2011)

**K**atherine Chiljan's new, tensely thoughtful study, *Shakespeare Suppressed*, is very much in the spirit of Pointon's book. One might call it the more scholarly version, since Chiljan examines in greater detail than Pointon the documents and evidence supporting the traditional ascription of the plays and poems and, like him, finds them seriously wanting. Her chapter and supporting appendix on

“too early” references to Shakespeare’s dramas are devastating—no one after this can seriously maintain the traditional dating assignments of Shakespeare’s works.

Chiljan also goes much further than Pointon. First, of course, she is an Oxfordian and takes it as given that Edward de Vere is the true author of the plays. One of her best chapters deals with “overlooked commentary about Shakespeare by his contemporaries, 1589-1614.” Other assertions are inferred on the basis of circumstantial evidence. The suppressed truths her title alludes to include the following claims, many of which are documented.

- The authorship mystery is related to the Succession issue.
- The third Earl of Southampton was de Vere’s son by Elizabeth and—as in *Anonymous*—the dramatist agreed to eternal pseudonymity so as to save his child’s life after the Essex Rebellion. Southampton and Essex were probably half-brothers, Essex being Elizabeth’s son by the Earl of Leicester.
- Oxford was aware of the unexpected confusion between Shakspere and “Shakespeare,” his pseudonym, and often satirized the Stratford man in his plays.
- After Oxford’s and Shakspere’s deaths the Earl of Pembroke deliberately fostered the confusion of identities between the author’s pseudonym and the actor-businessman from Stratford. He also helped suppress Oxford’s true identity in order to preserve James I on the throne and thus his own wealth and power.
- Southampton published the Sonnets and by so doing initiated the authorship question.

- The literary establishment colluded in de Vere’s posthumous pseudonymity because of his dangerous political connections.

- The authorship myth has been perpetuated by ignorance and self-interest to this day.

As we have noted, Chiljan successfully documents many of these startling claims. Elsewhere she draws reasonable conclusions and invites the reader to accept them. Her beginning point is the modern confusion in Shakespeare studies, which leaves what she contemptuously calls “the Shakespeare professor” ludicrously pointing in all directions at once, like the empty-headed Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz*. The task she gives herself is to bring order to this chaos.

Nor does she pull her punches. The First Folio preface is a “fraud” perpetrated by Jonson and Pembroke; the target of Greene’s famous “upstart crow” attack in *Groatsworth* is really Edward Alleyn; and in a marvelous chapter called “Conjectures and Dares” Chiljan speculates brilliantly in order to come up with the “unified solution” outlined above.

*Shakespeare Suppressed* is notable for its combative originality. Its discussions of *Willobie His Avis* and other neglected or overlooked texts, like *Cephalus and Procris* (1594), which seems to indicate a nobleman as the author of *Venus and Adonis*, are strikingly fresh. Ignored and even forgotten poems and declarations like these deserve to be interrogated further, and their implications addressed by conventional Shakespeare scholars. Chiljan’s book is a major statement and a challenge which demands a proper answer.

Michael Egan



## A Monument of Documents

**Paul Altrocchi and Hank Whittemore**  
(eds.): *The Great Shakespeare Hoax*  
(iUniverse 2009)

**T**he *Great Shakespeare Hoax*, edited by Paul Altrocchi and Hank Whittemore, is the first of five volumes organized under the title *Building the Case for Edward de Vere as Shakespeare*. In it the editors provide a valuable collection of excerpts from forty years of anti-Stratfordian commentary, beginning about 1900.

Part 1, “Growing Disbelief in The Stratford Man as Shakespeare,” comprises fifty pages of excerpts from the books and pamphlets of Sir George Greenwood (1850-1928) and a touching obituary by his daughter, Elsie. A Liberal MP and practicing attorney, Greenwood published a dozen books and monographs on the Authorship Question, most of them before the appearance of Looney’s *Shakespeare Identified* in 1920. The original Shakespeare Fellowship elected him its president on its founding in 1922, and he remained in that office until his death. There is hardly any reading experience more bracing than a few pages of Greenwood’s concise and pointed prose, as he demolishes his opponents’ arguments with deadly logic. Greenwood took on several experts of the day—J.M. Robertson, Sidney Lee, Churton Collins, M. H. Spielmann—and revealed their biases, their cir-

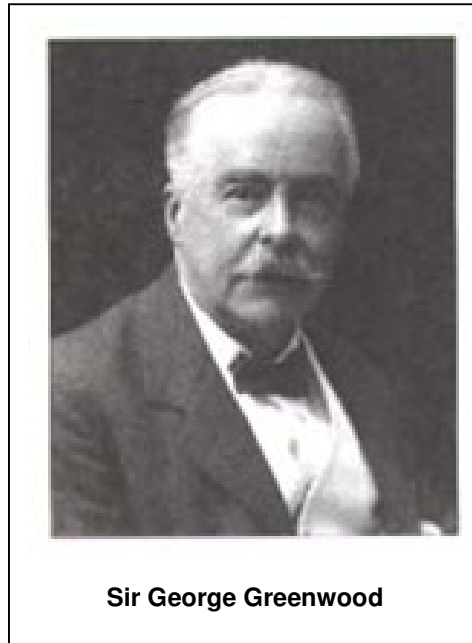
cular reasoning, and their unsupported speculations.

In Part 2, “The Breadth of Shakespeare’s Knowledge,” are eight articles and book excerpts on the individual subjects in which experts have found Shakespeare to have had a high interest and special knowledge—ornithology, horticulture, classical learning, the Bible, astronomy and medicine. Most of these pieces have been superseded by later studies, but William Theobald’s *The Classi-*

*cal Element in Shakespeare’s Plays* remains useful. There is also a short account by Eva Turner Clark of her encounter with and conversion to the Oxford argument around 1924, surely a significant event in Shakespeare authorship studies, considering the pioneering research she published over the next two decades.

Part 3 is a collection of short arguments in favor of Francis Bacon’s authorship of the Shakespeare canon. It is in

these selections, primarily from the early twentieth century, that we find the quotations and opinions of the many literary and political figures who spoke out about the Authorship Question. Emerson, Whitman, Henry James, Lowell, Whittier and Holmes in America; Tennyson, Disraeli, Coleridge, Byron and Gladstone in England—all questioned the credibility of the Stratfordian theory. It is an unfortunate paradox that since Looney’s revelations in 1920, and the developing evidence for Oxford’s authorship since, the resistance of the Stratfordian establishment has grown so fervent and pervasive that, with few exceptions, the leading non-academic literary figures of today are



**Sir George Greenwood**

silent about the most important hoax in literary history. Lastly, in an excerpt from his *Seven Shakespeares* (1931), the redoubtable Gilbert Slater characterizes both Stratfordians and Baconians as believers in miracles, the former believing that figs grow on thistles and the latter that they grow on apple trees.

Part 4 contains an interesting personal memoir of J. Thomas Looney by a lifelong friend, and excerpts from several chapters of his “*Shakespeare*” *Identified*. These describe his “method of solution” and outlines the now well-known general and specific characteristics of the author that led him to identify Edward de Vere as Shakespeare.

Part 5, “A Sudden Eruption of Oxfordian Giants,” contains excerpts from the writings of the seven most important Oxfordian scholars who followed Looney—Captain H. H. Holland, Colonel B. R. Ward and his son B. M. Ward, Percy Allen and his twin brother Ernest, Rev. Gerald Rendall, and Eva Turner Clark, all born in the last half the nineteenth century.

Captain Holland’s contribution comes from his *Shakespeare Through Oxford Glasses* (1923), the first work of Oxfordian scholarship to follow Looney’s “*Shakespeare*” *Identified*. In this selection he explicates certain topical allusions in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *All’s Well That Ends Well*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, enabling him to date the former two plays to the late 1570s, and the latter to 1591.

In an excerpt from his *The Mystery of Mr. W. H.* (1923), Colonel Ward describes his discovery in the Parish Registers of St.

John’s Church in Hackney of the record of the marriage of a William Hall to a Margery Gryffyn in August 1608. This appears to support a speculation by Sir Sidney Lee in 1898 that “W. H.” was an obscure stationer and manuscript procurer named William Hall, who was a resident of Hackney and an acquaintance of Thomas Thorpe, the presumed signer of the *Sonnets*’ dedication. Lee’s theory, which even today has been neither proven nor refuted, was that the dedication was a wedding congratulation by Thorpe to Hall, who had obtained the manuscript for him.

In a selection from his *Shakespeare’s Sonnets and Edward de Vere* (1930), the classical scholar Gerald H. Rendall asserts the autobiographical content of the sonnets and defends the theory that they were written over a period of many years and published in the order of their composition. Unfortunately, the editors

did not include the last half of Rendall’s Epilogue, in which he dismisses the claims that the “Mr. W. H.” in the dedication refers to William Herbert or Henry Wriothesley, and suggests instead William Hervey, the widower of Mary, the Dowager Countess of Southampton.

Eva Turner Clark, the founder of the American Shakespeare Fellowship (1939), is represented by an excerpt from her *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare’s Plays* (1931), in which she presented her new Oxfordian



**Eva Turner Clark 1871-1947  
Founder of the American  
Shakespeare Fellowship.**



chronology of the canon, which begins in the early 1570s and includes such anonymous plays as *Arden of Faversham* and *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*.

Fully a quarter of this anthology's pages are devoted to excerpts from three of the half-dozen books published in the 1930s by Percy Allen, the most prolific of the early Oxfordian scholars. In *The Oxford Shakespeare Case Corroborated* (1931), Allen supports Clark's chronology, agreeing that Edward de Vere's playwriting career began in 1573. In a chapter from the same book devoted to *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Allen dates the play to 1576 and discusses the topical allusions and portrayals that confirm the date. He points out, among other things, "the curious technical device that he never afterwards discarded for long of doubling his characters and presenting himself dual-wise..." Thus, both pairs of lovers—Proteus and Julia, and Valentine and Sylvia—are representations of Oxford and Queen Elizabeth. In his analysis of the conversation between Valentine and Speed about Sylvia being "deform'd," Allen supplies one of the first hints of what has become the Prince Tudor theory.

The last selection is a prefatory note to *Lord Oxford & "Shakespeare"*, a 68-page pamphlet that Percy and Ernest Allen wrote in response to a biography of Shakespeare published in 1933 by their acquaintance, the poet and dramatist John Drinkwater. In the note, Percy Allen summarizes the authorship debate during the previous decade and replies sharply against Drinkwater's dismissal of the Oxfordian argument. He also alludes again to an affair between Oxford and Elizabeth, and to "a child born, in consequence ...about the year 1574," a subject that he elaborated upon a year later in *Anne Cecil, Elizabeth & Oxford*.

It is more than likely that, some time in the future, the contents of this anthology and those of its four companions will be read as

the foundation stones of the lengthy and difficult effort to unmask the true author of the Shakespeare canon. The editors deserve our thanks for assembling and publishing these excerpts from books long out-of-print or journals no longer available. The four additional volumes in the series are available from the same publisher in soft- and hard-cover, and e-book formats. They are *Nothing Truer Than Truth*, *Shine Forth, My Name Be Buried* and *So Richly Spun*.

Ramon Jiménez

## The Case for Sackville

**Sabrina Feldman:** *The Apocryphal William Shakespeare: Book One of 'A Third Way' Shakespeare Authorship Scenario* (www.dogearpublishing.net and Amazon.com 2012)

Oxfordians often get caught in a rut by repeating and reinventing the wheels of our forebears while neglecting the much bigger picture of the Elizabethan and early Jacobean literary record, with numerous documents we rarely concern ourselves about.

We know we have "the right man," the 17th Earl of Oxford, so why should we look at anything that doesn't support our man? And we'd be right, if the Shakespeare authorship question was just a matter of identifying the "mastermind" and then a few details of how his works were passed along to his time and posterity.

But suppose our man wrote (or rather, "originated") many or most of the Shakespeare canon, but not all? Or, suppose he had collaborators or mentors who were part of a richer, more complex picture than the one we've been spoon-fed by the Ogburns, Millers, and Looney of our heritage? Plus, as always, how do we Anti-Stratfordians fit

Mr. Shaxpere of Warwickshire into our calculus? Was he merely a front-man who was almost certainly illiterate? Or was he more complex, more capable, more part of the authorship equation than we credit?

These are some of the nuances that Sabrina Feldman addresses in her *tour de force* examining literary sources from 1586 (and before) to 1637 (and beyond). In all, she highlights 81 documents/books, many of them Shakespeare apocrypha or other works little known among our general readers. In short, I highly recommend that every Oxfordian buy and read this book so that we can each realize how truly complex our favorite “literary mystery” truly is. I guarantee that each of us will learn far more than we can imagine, and many an Ox[en-ford] will be gored!

Which is not to say that we will all agree with Dr. Feldman’s reasoning and conclusions. She has her own agenda, as her subtitle hints. Her second book will examine in great detail Thomas Sackville, her chosen Shakespeare candidate (who I believe to be the “second-best candidate,” next to Oxford). More than that, she has a place for Mr. Shaxpere that Oxfordians might find puzzling. Like Diana Price’s 2001 *Shakespeare’s Unorthodox Biography*, which is one of her sources, Feldman prefers to prop up Mr. Shaxpere more than we’d feel comfortable with. On the surface, it seems to be no sin to credit him with being a usurer and play stealer, but as I said to Dr. Feldman in an e-mail, “Why prop him up by gratuitously accepting something that the Stratfordian myth *must* have? Why not just kill the snake instead?”

Feldman addresses head-on the implications of references in the plays to the 1605 “Gunpowder Plot,” which Stratfordians have long argued disqualify Oxford’s candidacy. Will we be able to come up with compelling arguments for how Oxford could have writ-

ten those few puzzling things? As Dr. Feldman delights to show us, Sackville was reasonably there when Oxford wasn’t. I have my own explanations for these difficulties, but are they convincing enough to win over other Oxfordians, let alone the rest of the world?

You owe it to yourselves to become well acquainted with this book, to find out for yourselves what I’m alluding to here. Because, in a very real sense, the viability of our Oxfordian cause hangs in the balance!

*W. Ron Hess*

## SHAKESPEARE’S ACTORS

*Carleton W. Sterling*

According to conventional wisdom, the poet and playwright who published under the name of William Shakespeare performed in plays for royal court and London public theater audiences. He possibly played the role of the Ghost in *Hamlet*. Perhaps this legend descends from a jest on the understanding that a ghost is an apparition that is not really there.

Nevertheless, William Shaksper (variously spelled) apparently profited from the theater business. A man so named was one of a trio documented as paid for performances by the Chamberlain’s Men in 1594. William’s services were apparently retained by royal officials. But no record exists of anyone paying Will for a manuscript nor of his contracting with printers or literary patrons.

In 1603, a charter issued by the newly installed King James promoted the Chamberlain’s players to King’s Men. William Shakespeare was second on the list of the

*Continued p. 20*



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*Continued from p. 18*

company's charter members.

If William Shakespeare was the pen name for Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, he was certainly not a commoner in a crew performing for groundlings and others of the lower classes. But the author of the Shakespeare brand wrote scripts for actors and placed them at multiple levels of fiction through the device of "a play within the play." Writing about actors might reveal something about the author's relations with them. Significantly, Shakespeare makes fun of actors in at least two of his best known published plays.

In *Hamlet*, the title character jokes that his fortune was so upended that he might as well "get me a fellowship in a cry of players." "Cry" is a term for a pack of hounds and so a nasty name for a company of thespians. Continuing Hamlet's joke, Horatio suggests, "Half a share," presumably worth less than a full shareholder, but Hamlet insists, "A whole one, I." If the author were a principal shareholder in the King's Men, this is good sport, joshing at himself and his fellowship. But if the author were a peer of the realm, this disdainfully mocks the likes of the acting company man with whom he is confounded.

Among *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* clownish actors, the booby-prize goes to Bottom, whose name befits his low station. In the enchanted forest, Bottom is transfigured into a jackass from the shoulders up for his rendezvous with Titania. This monstrous match gives us hilarious comedy. But Shakespeare also links actors with asses in *Hamlet*. When Polonius states, "The actors are come hither," Hamlet jests, "Then came each actor on his ass."

Hamlet welcomes his "friends" the players with mock joviality. When Polonius assures Hamlet that he will treat the players

"according to their desert," Hamlet quips, "God's bodykins, man, much better! Use every man according to his desert and who should 'scape a whipping?" In prepping the actors for the "Mousetrap" Hamlet starts with acting directions but works himself up over past experience with bad acting, concluding "they imitated humanity so abominably." One of the unnamed players placates, "I hope we have reformed indifferently with us, sir." Hamlet continues:

O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them, for there be of them that will themselves laugh to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the meantime some necessary question of the play [is] to then be considered. That's villainous and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go make you ready.  
(III.ii.40-47)

Hamlet seems to channel a playwright's grievances. But if the author were an actor might he not also reflect suffering from muddled scripts or lame dialogue?

Oscar James Campbell thinks the author wrote better plays because of his fellowship with actors so that "Shakespeare without the Chamberlain's Men would be a lesser Shakespeare." But does gratitude for the mentoring by experienced actors appear anywhere in Shakespeare's vast published work?

The acting company elevated to King's Men was certainly on Shakespeare's mind in *Hamlet*. The players did not just wander in by chance from the Danish countryside. Their path to Hamlet's castle crossed that of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who tell Hamlet that he had previously known the unnamed company of players as "the tragedians of the city."

*Continued p. 22*

## Shakespearian Character-Pairs Anagram Puzzle

Submitted by *Richard Joyrich*

Adapted from a puzzle by Mark L. Gottlieb, Mike Selinker, and Teeuwyn Woodruff published in the March 2007 issue (Volume 31, Number 2) of GAMES magazine, page 8

The names of 18 pairs of characters are hidden in the 36 words or phrases in the following table, one member in the first column of the table and the other one in the fourth column (although the pairs do not necessarily line up in the same row of the table).

The two members of each pair have some relationship with each other, such as husband and wife, family members, friends, enemies, lovers, etc.

To find the names, you must first drop a letter from one of the words or phrases, then anagram (rearrange) the remaining letters to form the name. Write the name of the character in the second (or fifth) column of the table to the right of the original word or phrase, then write the dropped letter to the right of the name in the third (or sixth) column. When finished, read down the letters in the third and sixth columns for the final answers.

EXAMPLE: From the pair of words INVENTABLE and POSTURED (which do not appear in the table) drop the B in the first word and the D in the second word and rearrange the remaining letters of the words to spell VALENTINE and PROTEUS.

|              |  |  |               |  |  |
|--------------|--|--|---------------|--|--|
| GEARED       |  |  | ANYTOWN       |  |  |
| LIMEADE      |  |  | MYTHICAL BEAD |  |  |
| LOWERING     |  |  | NICKEL BED    |  |  |
| OPERA PROS   |  |  | LONE ORB      |  |  |
| RICH TROUPE  |  |  | UNDID ME      |  |  |
| DONATION     |  |  | SO CHALKY     |  |  |
| PAROLEE ACT  |  |  | AMIGO         |  |  |
| ALOOF        |  |  | EARLS         |  |  |
| AUGMENTOR    |  |  | HAIL HOPE     |  |  |
| TABLE RICE   |  |  | TRUE GRADE    |  |  |
| HECATOMB     |  |  | TACKLE UP     |  |  |
| MAN OF DEEDS |  |  | ENRAGE        |  |  |
| I BOO AN ASS |  |  | HORSE         |  |  |
| I RELAX      |  |  | PLOTHOLE      |  |  |
| FOUL ACID    |  |  | I BALANCE     |  |  |
| ACIDULOUS    |  |  | IN A DRAMA    |  |  |
| THERMAL      |  |  | AIRPORT       |  |  |
| DATA IN IT   |  |  | A TAKEN HAIR  |  |  |

*Answers p. 26*



*Continued from p. 20*

The English referred to London as “the city.” Polonius, a dead ringer for Queen Elizabeth’s longtime chief minister William Cecil, lauds the players as “the best actors in the world” as if they were the home team. His ridiculous detailing of their performance styles (“tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scenes indivisible or poem unlimited”) satirizes the twice-listed repertoire cited in the King’s Men charter (“Commedies, tragedies, histories, Enterludes, Moralles, Pastoralls, Stageplayes, and suche”).

The most explicit link to the royal acting company appears on the title page of the 1603 edition of *Hamlet*, promising that the text is:

As it hath beene diverse times acted by his Highnesse servants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere.” (Campbell 285)

“Highnesse servants” clearly refers to the King’s Men. The players are termed “our Servuantes” in their charter from the king, and the players looked like servants when wearing the King’s livery. Withholding the formal name “King’s Men” on the 1603 title page stresses the servile status of the actors. This may be interpreted as their own modest view of their station. The statement that the company had performed *Hamlet* in multiple venues mocks the 1603 royal charter’s authorization of at-will performances anyplace “whatsoever” under the King’s rule. The claim of *Hamlet* performances throughout the realm surely was a joke at the acting company’s expense.

The members of the company profited from the end of the Elizabethan era by promptly securing royal favor. So they would be the last “cry” of players to perform an insult-laden tale of illegitimate succession, the extermination of the Danish dynasty and invasion by an opportunistic prince from the north just when a Scottish Prince and a Danish Princess became King and Queen of England.

*Hamlet* could not have been safely performed until the context of its publication had been forgotten. But it could be printed to coincide with the 1603 regime change because the English enjoyed the forbidden fruits of underground publications. One of the tricks of the trade in subversive literature is falsifying the identity of the printer to prevent the confiscation of the press and the arrest of the publishers. It’s a playful step from there to identify a play embarrassing to the royal regime as written and performed by the royal acting company.

So I think the 1603 title page presents a fictional play *outside* the play. That illuminating link to the interior plays was soon snuffed out. The publisher of the 1604 edition thought it prudent to purge the title page of the previously stated link between *Hamlet* and the Stuart King and his minions.

### **The Essex Rebellion**

I have argued that Shakespeare’s mocking of actors seems not to fit the Stratford man’s biography. If the playwright were really Oxford, class difference alone might explain his disdain for the commoner players. I argue that de Vere had a special grievance against the players linked to the Shakespeare name because of their misappropriation of one of his plays on the eve of the Essex rebellion.

The Essex rebellion cost the earl his head on Feb. 25, 1601, ending the rivalry with the court faction led by William Cecil and after his death in 1598 by his son Robert. A char-

ismatic and brave military commander on land and sea, Essex qualified as a war hero despite some botched operations. Queen Elizabeth was attracted to her second “sweet Robin” unmindful of their 33-year age difference. But fiery quarrels erupted between them as Elizabeth rebuffed Essex’s pleas for a major say in royal policy and appointments. She preferred the political judgment of the more prudent Cecils. In 1599, Essex took command of a large army of men and horses to crush rebellion in Ireland. After his campaign bogged down, the frustrated earl brokered an unauthorized truce and dashed home to burst into the Queen’s chambers uninvited to defend his actions, which were perilously close to treason.

Elizabeth cut the disobedient earl’s previously generous benefits package and imposed restrictions amounting to house arrest. The erratic earl thought shows of force on his behalf could bully Elizabeth into conceding him a leadership role in the government. His secret appeals for military backup from the English army in Ireland and the Scottish King were monitored by the network of spies and informers reporting to Cecil. Elizabeth was determined to charge the insolent earl with treason. Her advisors urged caution because of Essex’s large and fervent following. But when Essex’s armed supporters took to the streets on February 8, 1601, overwhelming counterforce was in place.

Essex’s network of spies and informers was second only to Cecil’s, and the rival intelligence operations likely overlapped in the form of double agents. Surely the earl got the word when his arrest was imminent, spurring him to the rash and self-defeating action to which he was sadly prone. Declaring the discovery of a plot by his rivals to assassinate him and open the country to in-

vasion by Spain, Essex riled up his followers at a demonstration in the streets of London. More people might have rallied to his cause had Cecil not instructed the clergy to warn parishioners to stay indoors out of harm’s way.

The protesters were urged to march on the Queen’s residence to present their grievances and impeach “corrupt” government officials. But the way to the palace was barred by royal forces reinforced by troops brought in from the countryside, and the city militia blocked escape routes. Not expecting such stout resistance, the aristocrats backing Essex were without their horses, the weapon of war that gave knights an advantage over

common foot soldiers. The insurgents’ pistols failed to blast an escape hole in the militia lines. After his page was shot dead by the return fire, Essex sought another way out. He and

his cronies commandeered boats along the riverfront to row them to his waterfront palace. Loyalist troops surrounded Essex House, whose defenders surrendered in the face of the artillery that doomed castle defenses. The malcontents seemed unprepared for battle while the loyalists were ready to rumble.

Essex’s rebellion appeared ill-conceived and hastily improvised. The government had intelligence reports of prior plotting, but what evidence of malice aforethought existed in the public domain to warrant a death sentence? Enter the players. The spokesman for the Lord Chamberlain’s Men testified that Essex’s steward paid the players 40 shillings to overcome their professed reluctance to perform *Richard II* at the Globe the evening before the uprising. So the Essex camp stood accused of a plot to promote insurrection by staging Shakespeare’s script based on the 1399 overthrow of Richard II

***Essex’s network of spies and informers was second only to Cecil’s and the rival intelligence operations likely overlapped in the form of double agents.***

by a conspiracy of nobles backing his cousin Henry Bolingbroke.

Staging this play seems a numbskull scheme to pump up an insurgency. Although Shakespeare dramatized Richard's flaws as ruler and the Bolingbroke faction's contention that the king's "crimes" against them justified regime change, the script reflects the prevailing doctrine of monarchical sovereignty. The top dog's authority over lesser men is acquired by most direct bloodline order-of-birth family succession. The hereditary nobles of the realm swear loyalty to their unitary overlord at the (preferably male) monarch's coronation. Anointing this monarch in sacred ceremony, the churchmen present the sovereign as accountable only to God. Shakespeare gave the Bishop of Carlisle an eloquent speech against deposing the legitimate monarch. Before this argument got the good bishop arrested for "treason," he predicted the deposition would ignite a horrific civil war. This prophesy comes to pass in the last scene as Henry IV hears reports of one of his cities burned by rebels and the tally of the bodies and severed heads of nobles killed resisting his rule. The dramaturge directs the assassin of Richard II to enter bearing the ex-king's coffin to present to the usurper. Henry denies his culpability but closes the play with his never filled-promise to go to the Holy Land "to wash this blood off from my guilty hand."

Would this play inspire its audience to enlist in the next day's storming of the Winter Palace? Not likely, but Elizabeth may have thought so. After the failed rebellion, she confided, "I am Richard the Second." Although more skilled at governance and public relations, she perhaps identified with the portrayal of Richard's fall at the hands of traitors ungrateful for the monarch's prior leniency and misplaced trust. Like Richard she lacked a direct heir, mak-

ing the throne vulnerable to seizure by unfriendly hands.

Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard's humiliating abdication offended Elizabeth's royal sensibilities. Having previewed the script in the mid-1590s, she banned both publication and performance of the disposition scene. In 1600, historian John Hayward was imprisoned for the remainder of her reign for publishing his take on the Bolingbroke revolution, which Hayward dedicated to Essex. So it is passing strange that players connected to the royal household would perform the forbidden scene at any price for anyone while Elizabeth ruled. Yet government investigators chose to overlook the alleged role of the players in kicking off the 1601 uprising.

The playwright also was not made to answer for his possible hand in the insurrection. His play seemed a prelude to the rebellion. His (or a similar) name was counted among the offending players. For reasons only guessed at, he had dedicated two long poems to Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, who was Essex's closest friend and convicted co-conspirator. Shakespeare's writings reveal an author suspiciously versed in conspiracies, assassinations and the rise and fall of kings and queens. Such a man would seem candidate for enhanced interrogation.

### **Fear of Shakespeare?**

Something kept the royal inquisitors from compelling the playwright's testimony. Perhaps they feared provoking a wordsmith who could speak daggers. He might contend that staging *Richard II* did not advance Essex's cause but worked to discredit it. He might mock the perverse spin put on his play and cast doubts on the actions and motives of the players.

He surely knew the play more suited to



the Essex cause: *Richard III*. Elizabeth would not identify herself with that tyrant because his 1485 death in battle against the forces of Henry Tudor put her grandfather on the throne. Book-ending five Henry histories, Shakespeare's *Richard* play depicts the origin of the War of the Roses. Richard II was the initial victim of usurpation. Richard III was the ultimate usurper. Evil Richard's disappearance of his nephews into the Tower so he could seize the throne justified Henry Tudor's rebellion that ended the cascade of usurpations and counter-revolutions dating from 1399. Shakespeare stretched the truth to recast Richard III's treachery as diabolical, denying this king any claim to rule by divine right.

One falsification shows the author's nasty side: He presents Richard as crookbacked. Linking physical deformity with moral depravity was a persisting prejudice, but at the Elizabethan court this slur struck Essex's nemesis. Robert Cecil was born stunted with curvature of the spine. As wards of the state, the dashing young earls Robert Devereaux, Henry Wriothesley, and Edward de Vere were taken into William Cecil's household, but the crippled Robert could not join in the combat sports of the other boys. Contesting in the tilt yard to pole each other off charging horses was a particularly rough sport enjoyed by hardy members of the chevalier class.

William Cecil sent his elder son and heir Thomas off to adventures in France but kept Robert closer to home as his political understudy. Robert's physical challenge was met with success in academics, government administration and parliamentary leadership. But battle-tested men from the great feudal families would disdain sissy quill pushers elevated from commoner stock. They could even equate Cecil's strategizing with the scheming manipulations dramatized in *Richard III*. Cecil's political leverage depended on keeping Elizabeth's confidence

so he was no usurper strictly speaking. But aristocrats might see usurpation in the swollen power of a government clerk and the draining down of the wealth and authority of the landed nobility. The party out of power would want to frame opposition to the sovereign's will as correcting for evil advisers. Allegations that Cecil and his allies bamboozled the Queen and plotted with the Catholic arch-enemy would muster support for Essex taking the role of the first Tudor Prince, who rose up against a wicked usurper of royal power. If played right, the actors might suggest that the Essex rebellion was directed against the deformed scheming "King Robert" and not Queen Elizabeth, suggesting that the Essex partisans sought only better ministry of the government, not the overthrow of the legitimate monarch.

### The Hoby Letter

A prior plot to confront Robert Cecil with a Shakespeare portrayal of King Richard is suggested by a document cited under the entry for Hoby, Edward in *Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*. Edward Hoby was son in law to the Lord Chamberlain with access to the Chamberlain's players. In December of 1595, the year that Queen Elizabeth appointed young Cecil Secretary of State over the objections of the Earl of Essex, who wanted that strategic post for himself, Hoby invited the rising young power behind the throne to a private dinner-theater party to view "K. Richard." Neither the playwright nor the particular Richard to be portrayed was specified, but surely the author was then published under the William Shakespeare brand, and the play was either the one that offended Elizabeth or the one that offended Robert. Robert likely smelt the bait of a mousetrap performance of *Richard III* because the invitation dated December 7 was Hoby's offer to reschedule the event for the 9th after Robert had apparently declined

the original December 8 date saying he would be out of town.

Here's a hypothesis with explanatory power: Did an Essex operative contract for the performance of *Richard III*, and the players, dropping a digit, delivered *Richard II* or say they did when they didn't? Such a double-cross would explain why the players escaped retribution for their involvement in the 1601 uprising and won the enhanced patronage of the King's Men charter in 1603.

Turnabout-is-fair-play would explain the title page of the 1603 *Hamlet* falsely citing a string of performances by the King's players that I think were offensive to the newly installed royal family.

## SOS/SF Conference Organizers Call for Papers

The Shakespeare Fellowship and The Shakespeare Oxford Society announce the Eighth Annual Joint Shakespeare Authorship Conference October 18-21, 2012.

The conference will convene at the Courtyard Pasadena Old Town by Marriott where we have secured a block of rooms and conference facilities. Reservations: 888-236-

2427. Web: <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/laxot-courtyard-los-angeles-pasadena-old-town/>.

Both sponsoring organizations are dedicated to academic excellence. Guidelines for presenters are available on-line or from the members of the program committee. Proposals should be accompanied by a brief biography and an abstract of not more than 250 words.

To submit a proposal contact Bonner Cutting (jandbcutting@comcast.net), John Hamill (hamillx@pacbell.net) or Earl Showerman (earlees@charter.net). The deadline for submissions is July 15, 2012.

The conference committee will be sending out periodic updates. The Pasadena theatre company, A Noise Within (<http://www.anoisewithin.org/>), will have a fall program in production during the authorship conference.

Last fall the company produced *Twelfth Night* and this spring it will be *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Their fall schedule will be released by June 1 at which time a group order will be secured, if the production contributes to the goals of the conference.

### Shakespearian Character Pairs Anagram Puzzle—Solution

Here is the completed table, with the proper characters listed in the second and fifth columns. Every character listed in column two can be paired with a character listed in column five. The "dropped" letters are listed in the fourth and sixth columns and spell out EDWARD EARL OF OXFORD and WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

|              |           |   |               |              |   |
|--------------|-----------|---|---------------|--------------|---|
| GEARED       | EDGAR     | E | ANYTOWN       | ANTONY       | W |
| LIMEADE      | EMELIA    | D | MYTHICAL BEAD | LADY MACBETH | I |
| LOWERING     | GONERIL   | W | NICKEL BED    | BENEDICK     | L |
| OPERA PROS   | PROSPERO  | A | LONE ORB      | OBERON       | L |
| RICH TROUPE  | PETRUCHIO | R | UNDID ME      | EDMUND       | I |
| DONATION     | ANTONIO   | D | SO CHALKY     | SHYLOCK      | A |
| PAROLEE ACT  | CLEOPATRA | E | AMIGO         | IAGO         | M |
| ALOOF        | FOOL      | A | EARLS         | LEAR         | S |
| AUGMENTOR    | MONTAGUE  | R | HAIL HOPE     | OPHELIA      | H |
| TABLE RICE   | BEATRICE  | L | TRUE GRADE    | GERTRUDE     | A |
| HECATOMB     | MACBETH   | O | TACKLE UP     | CAPULET      | K |
| MAN OF DEEDS | DESDEMONA | F | ENRAGE        | REGAN        | E |
| I BOO AN ASS | BASSANIO  | O | HORSE         | HERO         | S |
| I RELAX      | ARIEL     | X | PLOTHOLE      | OTHELLO      | P |
| FOUL ACID    | CLAUDIO   | F | I BALANCE     | CALIBAN      | E |
| ACIDULOUS    | CLAUDIUS  | O | IN A DRAMA    | MIRANDA      | A |
| THERMAL      | HAMLET    | R | AIRPORT       | PORTIA       | R |
| DATA IN IT   | TITANIA   | D | A TAKEN HAIR  | KATHARINA    | E |

## Concordia April Conference

The 16th Annual Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference will convene at Concordia University Thursday, April 12 through Saturday, April 14, 2012. The conference will feature the American premiere of *Last Will & Testament*—a film by First Folio Productions, Laura Matthias and Lisa Wilson directors, Roland Emmerich executive producer.

The university's *Vero Nihil Verius* Award for Scholarly Excellence will be conferred on Katherine Chiljan for her most recent book, *Shakespeare Suppressed: The Uncensored Truth About Shakespeare and His Works*, and on Lynne Kositsky and Professor Roger Stritmatter for their revelatory and peer-reviewed publications that dispatch orthodox insistence on a post-1610 (and hence non-Oxfordian) authorship date for *The Tempest*.

The university's *Vero Nihil Verius* Award for Distinction in the Shakespearean Arts will be conferred on Al Austin, author of *The Cottage* and host of the celebrated 1989 Frontline program on PBS, *The Shakespeare Mystery*, and on Laura Matthias and Lisa Wilson for their work in bringing to the world the exceptional film, *Last Will & Testament*.

Presenters at the conference will also include Thursday evening's agenda will feature Cheryl Eagan-Donovan on "Shakespeare's Negative Capability and De Vere's Bisexuality: Implications for Oxfordians," Cybele Gontar on "A Shakespearean Primer on the Decorative Arts," Sylvia Crowley Holmes on "Dick Roe's Italy," and Al Austin on "Something Rotten."

Friday's program will feature Dr Earl Showerman on "Shakespeare's Medicine: A 21st-Century Quest for the Author," Prof. Roger Stritmatter on "Forensic Paleography

and the Authorship Question: The Strange New Case of the Annotated Seneca," Prof. Daniel Wright on "The Lost Royal Child Recovered in Shakespeare's Plays," Prof. Michael Delahoyde on "Oxfordian *Twelfth Night* Epiphanies," and Katherine Chiljan on "The Importance of Chester's *Love's Martyr* for the Authorship Question."

Saturday's program will feature William Ray's "The Suits of Woe: Hamlet's Unquiet Soul"; Richard Whalen on "The Hybrid Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*: Greek Prophetesses as Comical Scottish Witches"; Lynne Kositsky and Prof Roger Stritmatter on "*The Tempest* and the Authorship Question: Critiquing the Critics." The afternoon's presentation will conclude with Alex McNeil "emceeding" what promises to be an exciting round of Oxfordian Jeopardy featuring students from Prof. Wright's undergraduate Shakespeare class as contestants.

Saturday evening's presentation will feature the American premiere of *Last Will & Testament*, to be followed by a panel discussion and Q&A from the press and the audience. The film's directors, Lisa Wilson and Laura Matthias (both consultants on *Anonymous*), will be in attendance to introduce the film and answer questions on it. Following the screening, they will be joined by a panel featuring Professor Daniel Wright, Professor Michael Delahoyde, Professor Roger Stritmatter, William Boyle and Hank Whittemore—all on-camera contributors to the film.

Registration for the conference is \$165. Registrations may be made on-line at the SARC website [www.authorshipstudies.org](http://www.authorshipstudies.org) or checks for \$165, made out to The Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference, may be sent to Prof. Daniel Wright, Director of the Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre, Concordia University, 2811 NE Holman Street, Portland, OR 97211-6099.



## Shakespeare Oxford Society

### The SOS Legacy Gift Campaign

#### Support Our Efforts to Promote Discussion and Research into the Authorship Question

By encouraging scholarship and discussion we will be able to demonstrate—finally—that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, was the true author of the Shakespeare canon. Please consider making a bequest to the SOS in your will or living trust. Your bequest will be a powerful and flexible way to ensure that the Oxfordian Movement will continue to grow and flourish long after your lifetime.

#### Types of Bequests

- *Outright Bequest:* A specific dollar amount, asset, or percentage of your estate.
- *Residuary Bequest:* A percentage or all of the “rest, residuary, and remainder” of your estate after all other gifts, taxes, and expenses have been taken care of.
- *Contingent Bequest:* A gift only if another event has occurred, e.g., if you outlive your spouse.
- *Life Insurance or Retirement Fund:* Name the SOS as a beneficiary.

#### Who Should Make a Legacy Gift?

Many of us who have been active in the SOS are not in the position to make a major gift during our lifetime, but a bequest is a simple way for us to do so through our estates. A gift of 1%, 5% or 10% would help ensure that the SOS can continue its work.

#### How Legacy Gifts Help the SOS

For more than 50 years the Society has hosted conferences, and supported publications, internet sites, and educational events that have stimulated increased interest in the topic, and have convinced many experts that Edward de Vere is indeed the true author of the canon. But there is still a great deal to do. Academics and vested interests almost totally ignore the new scholarship, and routinely insist that there is no question that William Shakespeare of Stratford is the author. Without the SOS and its sister organizations in the US and England, the topic would be dead. But with your help, we can continue to open minds and hearts to the reality of the Authorship Question. To ensure our ability to do this work, the Board of the SOS has undertaken a campaign to increase the Society's endowment, with the hope that it can continue its work uninterrupted by the inevitable fluctuations in dues and donations that such an organization inevitably experiences. A larger endowment will allow us to increase funding for publicity, education, research and other activities.

#### Example of Bequest

*I hereby give, devise and bequeath \$\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_(specific asset), or \_\_\_\_\_% of rest, residue and remainder of my estate to the Shakespeare Oxford Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational corporation incorporated under the laws of New York State, and with the mailing address P.O. Box 808, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598-0808.*

#### Tax Benefits

Gifts to the SOS are tax-deductible and may reduce your income taxes or estate taxes. If you would like more information, please contact Joan Leon, SOS Board Member, at 510-910-5773 or at joan.leon1@gmail.com