

Shakespeare Authorship Conference

Denver, Colorado

Sept. 26-29, 2024



SHAKESPEARE
OXFORD FELLOWSHIP

**Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship
2024 Denver Conference September 26-29
PROGRAM**

(All times shown are US Mountain Time)

Thursday, September 26

11:30 **SOF registration desk opens at the Denver Hyatt Centric**

Session One

1:00-1:15 **Welcome: Earl Showerman, SOF President**

Announcements and Session Introductions:

Tom Woosnam, Conference Chair

1:15-2:00 **Tom Townsend: “Finding Shakespeare From An Historical Perspective”**
An Authorship 101 Introduction

2:00-2:30 **Shelly Maycock: “The 1604 Question and More”**

2:30-3:00 **Ron Roffel: “How the Physical Construction of the First Folio
Provides Clues to the Identity of the Real Author of the Plays” (Video)**

3:00-3:20 *Refreshment break*

Session Two

Introductions: Earl Showerman

3:20-4:05 **Lisa Quattrochi-Knight: “A *Theory of Mind* Approach
To Understanding the Sonnets”**

4:05-4:50 **David W. Richardson: “The Literary Battle
in the First Published Works of Shakespeare”**

4:50-5:30 **Matt Hutchinson: “Penelope Rich as the Central Muse
of the Elizabethan Sonnet Sequence” (Video)**

5:30-5:45 **Tribute to Alexander Waugh and /Sonnet 17 in song (Phoebe Nir)**

6:00-7:30 **Welcome Reception**

Friday September 27

Session Three

Introductions: Alex McNeil

- 9:40- 9:45** **Welcome and Announcements**
- 9:45-10:30** **Christopher Carolan: “A Comparable Pair” (Video)**
- 10:30-11:15** **Bonner Cutting: “Hiding in Plain Sight: Ben Jonson
and the Editors of the First Folio” (Video)**
- 11:15-11:35** ***Refreshment Break***
- 11:35-11:55** **Roger Stritmatter: “Introducing the new Brief Chronicles
Volume on Ben Jonson”**
- 11:55-12:40** **Daniel Cowan: “Edward de Vere and the Renaissance Art of Memory”**
- 12:40 to 2:40** **Lunch (*on own*)**

Session Four

Introductions: Don Rubin

- 2:40-3:10** **Oxfordian Jeopardy! – Host: Alex McNeil**
- 3:10-3:55** **Michael Dudley: “Something ‘Wicked’ This Way Comes – Towards
A Metaunderstanding of the Shakespeare Authorship Debate” (Video)**
- 3:55-4:40** **Jonathan S. Jackson: “The Moral and Spiritual Vision of Edward de Vere”**
- 4:40-5:25** **Sky Gilbert: “Shakespeare at Palazzo Te”**
- 7:00** ***Hamlet* at the Denver Performing Arts Center (by paid ticket admission)**

Saturday September 28

8:30-9:45 Annual General Meeting (SOF Members Only*)

(* *Not livestreamed. SOF members will have received a Zoom invitation*)

9:45-10:05 *Refreshment break*

Session Five:

Introductions: Brent Evans

10:05-10:50 Dorothea Dickerman: “Upholding and Raising the Ancient and Most Honorable House – Elizabeth Trentham and What She Tells Us About Shakespeare”

10:50-11:35 Earl Showerman: “From Horestes to Hamlet: Topical Allegories Relevant to the Abdication and Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots”

11:35-12:35 “The Denver *Hamlet*” A panel discussion about the production with Chris Coleman (director), Leean Kim Torske (dramaturg) and Brian Vaughn (Claudius).

Moderator: Don Rubin

12:35-2:30 Lunch (*on own*)

Session Six:

Introductions: Dorothea Dickerman

2:30-3:15 William S. Niederkorn: “Discoveries in a Secular Tour of *The Tempest*”

3:15-4:00 Rima Greenhill: “Oxford—His Russia”

4:00-4:45 Katherine Chiljan: “Oxford’s Religious Portraits”

4:45- 5:05 Phoebe Nir: “Who is Michael Drayton’s Unnamed ‘vertuous friend’?”

Dinner On Own

Sunday September 29

Session Seven:

Introductions: Bob Meyers

- 9:00-9:30** **Ralph McDonald: “Bacon’s Hand, Oxford’s Drama”**
- 9:30-10:05** **Robert Prechter: “What Pieces, If Any, Did the Earl of Oxford
Contribute to the Christopher Marlowe Canon?”**
- 10:05-10:50** **Cheryl Eagan-Donovan: “Katharine Eggar: A Forgotten Heroine”**
- 10:50-11:10** ***Refreshment Break***
- 11:10-11:50** **Michael Delahoyde: “Nothing” (Video)**
- 11:50-12:35** **Roger Stritmatter: “Theatre and Theatricality in the Audley End
Annotations”**
- 12:35-12:50** **Awards and Announcements:**
- Earl Showerman will announce the Tom Regnier Veritas Award**
 - Cheryl Eagan-Donovan will announce the 2024 Oxfordian of Year**
 - Bob Meyers will announce the location of the 2025 conference**
- 1:00-2:30** ***Closing Banquet***
- (Program subject to change)**

Paper Abstracts and Biographies

Alphabetical by last name of presenter/session host



Christopher Carolan

Paper: “A Comparable Pair” (Video)

Abstract: In this paper, I examine two authorship allusions: the first being the character of Sparkish (an anagram of “shakspir”) in William Wycherley’s *The Country Wife* (1675). The second is the actual word “sparkish” used by Roger l’Estrange in his 1693 version of *Aesop’s Fables*, a word with affinities to Greene’s use of the name “shake-scene” in his *Groatsworth of Wit*. Let me note here that l’Estrange was the crown’s official censor at the time of Wycherley’s plays. I will not rehash discussions of the debated identity of ‘shake-scene’ but will instead focus on these two newly identified allusions. Let me say here as well that when an earlier version of this paper was submitted to the UK’s De Vere Society in 2022, it was argued that the l’Estrange entry was not a reference to Shakespeare. Obviously, I disagree.

Bio: Chris Carolan, a longtime Oxfordian, is a financial analyst.



Katherine Chiljan

Paper: “Oxford’s Religious Portraits”

Abstract: Two 16th-century paintings and one etching have come to light, which I believe are portraits of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, demonstrating his interest in Christianity and mortality. One of the paintings is an allegory showing a young courtier, identified in the 1980s as Oxford, surrounded by Psalm excerpts in what looks like a theatrical setting. In addition, at the painting’s center, is a verse with a Christian message, likely written by Oxford. Five versions of the painting are known to exist, one with a tradition of royal provenance. The other 16th-century painting is a fragment of an altarpiece that was auctioned in London. The main figure, at prayer, is anonymous; I will show why I think it is Oxford in the late 1590s. A 16th-century etching, which shows an aristocrat writing, was likely based on a portrait miniature, now lost. It has shades of *Hamlet*. Next to him is a quote about death from a Protestant martyr. Its artist made engraved portraits of Queen Elizabeth, and Sir Henry Brooke, 8th Baron Cobham. I will note specific details

about the three images along with comments by Oxford’s contemporaries indicating that he himself was a religious person.

Bio: Katherine Chiljan is an independent scholar who has published several articles about the 17th Earl of Oxford, and wrote the Anti-Stratfordian book, *Shakespeare Suppressed* (2011, 2016), which earned her an award for distinguished scholarship at Concordia University, Portland. She also contributed to *Contested Year* (2016), which revealed errors made by an orthodox professor in his book about *King Lear*. She is currently a board member of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition. She has been a regular speaker at SOF conferences.



Chris Coleman

Panelist, “The Denver *Hamlet*”

Bio: Director of the production of *Hamlet* (being seen during this week’s conference at the Denver Center Theatre Company), Chris Coleman is a signatory to the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition’s Declaration of Reasonable Doubt. Passionate about the connection between stories and community, he joined the Denver Center Theatre Company as Artistic Director in November of 2017 and has directed numerous productions for the company including *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *Rubicon*, *A Little Night Music*, *Hotter Than Egypt*, *Rattlesnake Kate*, *A Doll’s House*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Oklahoma!*. Previously, Chris served as Artistic Director for Portland Center Stage in Oregon for 18 years. Under his leadership, PCS renovated the city’s historic Armory into a new home, saw annual attendance nearly double, workshopped 52 new plays that went on to productions at over 100 theaters around the US and UK, and became a national leader in how theaters engage with their community.



Daniel Cowan

Paper: “Edward de Vere and the Renaissance Art of Memory”

*Proceed to cherish thy surpassing carminical art of
memory with full cups (as thou dost)...*

— Thomas Nashe

Abstract: This paper argues that Edward de Vere practised the “art of memory,” and that this art was an important component of de Vere's artistic method. The “art of memory” is a suite of mnemonic techniques deriving from classical Greece and Rome, which continued to be refined

and augmented in medieval and early modern Europe. Its central technique, the “method of loci” or the “memory palace”, involves visualizing mnemonic images at locations throughout physical spaces, such as familiar buildings or gardens. Some key practitioners in the history of this art were the Greek lyric poet Simonides of Ceos, Cicero, and St. Thomas Aquinas.

In the 16th century, two prominent figures devised new “art of memory” systems, and broadened contemporary understandings of the capacity of the art. Giulio Camillo, a Venetian philosopher involved in the circles of figures like Titian and Pietro Arentino, constructed a physical “memory theatre” in the 1520s - 30s. His designs, published in *l’Idea del Teatro* (1550), continued to be a lively point of discussion in Venetian intellectual academies throughout the 1570s, spanning de Vere’s residence in Venice. Camillo’s theatre embodied a new Renaissance iteration of the art, incorporating the texts of Cicero into a framework of classical myth, Platonic philosophy, and Kabbalistic associations marking it as distinct from classical and medieval applications of the art.

Giordano Bruno also developed a novel system of memory, involving rotating, concentric wheels of letters, influenced by the medieval Catalan philosopher, Ramon Llull. Bruno lived in England from 1583-85, presenting his philosophy at Oxford, teaching his “art of memory,” and establishing himself as an influence among English intellectuals, including Philip Sidney and John Florio. Details of his thought and life also seem to be incorporated into several Shakespeare works, such as *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *Hamlet*.

Bio: I have had a long-standing interest in the art of memory, at first learning and experimenting with modern mnemonic systems. I later learned about the rich intellectual history of the practice, having come across Frances Yates’s *The Art of Memory* in college. I received a BA in History and English, from the University of Manitoba. I became interested in the authorship question in 2018 after reading Margo Anderson’s ‘*Shakespeare*’ *By Another Name*. I have spent most of my career working as a chef and a tradesperson.



Bonner Miller Cutting

**Paper: “Hiding in Plain Sight:
Ben Jonson and the Editors of Shakespeare’s First Folio” (Video)**

Abstract: When the Folger Shakespeare Library took an exhibit of Shakespeare’s *First Folios* on tour in 2016, there was not a single mention of Ben Jonson as its editor, or any notice taken of Jonson in the Folger display. Orthodox Stratfordians often state that the 1623 First Folio was edited by two actors, John Heminges and Henry Condell, who had been in the King’s Men acting company (formerly the Lord Chamberlain’s Men). This assertion is based on the Introduction to the First Folio in which the actors’ names appear beneath some of the printed matter. It escapes Stratfordian notice that, as early as the 18th century, the eminent Shakespearean editor George

Steevens showed that the actors' supposed tributes to Shakespeare were taken from Ben Jonson's own writing and from the ancients Horace and Pliny, both of whom exerted much influence on Jonson (Riggs, 73-78, 313). Katherine Chiljan supplies more details about this in her book *Shakespeare Suppressed*, clearly setting out the similar passages that support Jonson as the writer of the actor's "letters" (144-154). In this talk, I will explore the role of Ben Jonson as the Folio's editor, bringing new information to the discussion.

Bio: Bonner Miller Cutting graduated from Tulane University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, and has a Master of Music degree from McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana, where she also served as an adjunct faculty member. She lectures frequently on the Shakespeare authorship question at conferences, book clubs, and community groups. In her book *Necessary Mischief: Exploring the Shakespeare Authorship Question* (2018), she revealed new information on ten authorship-related subjects, including the Last Will and Testament of William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon and the £1,000 annuity that Queen Elizabeth I gave to Edward de Vere (17th Earl of Oxford). Videos of six of Bonner's lectures are posted on the [SOF YouTube channel](#), and interviews with her about the Stratford man's will are available in podcasts. A featured speaker at the SOF celebration of the centennial of Looney's 1920 book in Washington DC, Bonner is a long-time Board member of the organization. She also serves on the Board of Directors and as Secretary of the [Shakespeare Authorship Coalition](#), which sponsors the "[Declaration of Reasonable Doubt](#)." She is a member of the SOF's Conference Committee, its Research Grants Committee and its Video Contest Committees. She was elected by the Board as Secretary in 2021.



Michael Delahoyde

Paper: "Nothing" (Video)

Abstract: No other word in the entire Shakespeare canon may be more rife with significance than, paradoxically, "nothing." The word occurs over 640 times in the plays alone. In this paper (presented via video) I will discuss the key significant occurrences and many implications of "nothing" and its variants – "naught" (which appears over 90 times), "nought" (over 40), and "O" (countless). This last connects to the so-called "bawdy O" – a female sexual symbol, the "no thing," that Hamlet rudely says lies "between maids' legs." Initially seeming like a dismissive title, *Much Ado About Nothing*, especially characterizing the concerns about what Hero may be getting up to, exploits the pun.

But there are so many other "nothings" in the plays: Lear's "Nothing will come of nothing"; Richard II's waffling about turning over the crown: "Aye, no, no, aye; for I must nothing be" – which actually appears in the First Folio as "I, no, no, I" (=I know no "I"?).

It would seem that "no thing" or "naught" or "O" was in Oxford's mind from an early age when he self-identified as the poet E.O. and subsequently renamed numerous characters with the Italianate "-io" suffix, turning Romeus to Romeo and Claudius to Claudio. In Italian, Io is the first person singular pronoun, I. It

is pronounced “E.O.” And Hamlet’s last words are not “the rest is silence but “O, o, o, o”: a final signing off with Oxford’s Elizabethan court code number, 4 0’s.

Ultimately, he came to believe that his identity would be erased, that he himself would become “a thing of naught,” a nothing, like Richard II. But fortunately, he broke through to a divine realization: that ridding oneself of the ego, the “I” – becoming as nothing, O – is also the way to enlightenment.

Bio: Michael Delahoyde is a Professor of English in his 32nd non-tenured year at Washington State University. He teaches Shakespeare, Mythology, interdisciplinary arts and humanities courses. He earned undergraduate degrees in English, Music, and Education at Vassar College in his hometown of Poughkeepsie, New York, and his Ph.D. in English Literature at the University of Michigan. He has published articles on Chaucer, dinosaur films, children's toys, and meat ads, but mostly on Oxford as Shakespeare during the current century. He has served as Senior Editor for the MLA journal, *The Rocky Mountain Review*, for 14 years and as Managing Editor of *Brief Chronicles*. He has conducted archival research in Italy thanks to SOF project grants, and has produced Oxfordian editions of *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Twelfth Night*. He is currently host of SOF’s video series *Shakespeare Illuminated* in which he explores the Shakespeare canon and its connections to Oxford. An audio biography is available at <https://michaeldelahoyde.org/about/>



Dorothea Dickerman

Introductions: Session Six

Paper: “Upholding and Raising the Ancient and Most Honorable House: Elizabeth Trentham and What She Tells Us About Shakespeare”

To Robert Cecil, the right honorable Lord High Treasurer of England:

As concerning the debt of eight pounds for subsidy demanded of the said Countess of Oxenford, she is willing to pay the same as your Lordship shall appoint, only she desireth that she may be discharged . . . because her name is mistaken as ‘Anne’ for ‘Elizabeth.’

Abstract: Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, married two women who could not be more different from one another. Although they were each born commoners and both died Countesses of Oxford, almost no one could have mistaken Elizabeth Trentham, his second wife, for Anne Cecil, his first. Examples of Elizabeth Trentham’s wit, business savvy and self-confidence, as displayed in the above letter to her late husband’s most powerful enemy, are evident throughout her life. Although regarded as “fair,” “a worthy saint,” possessed of “excellence rare” by her contemporaries, these characteristics would only get a woman so far under early modern English law and custom. Elizabeth Trentham seemed equally at ease at the center of Renaissance real estate deals as she was merrily tweaking, among other prominent men, Lord High Treasurer Robert Cecil, acknowledged to be the most dangerous man in England, for his failure to distinguish her name from that of his own deceased sister.

This paper will take a deep dive into the life and legacy of Elizabeth Trentham, Oxford’s second wife, discussing her roots in the English midlands, the ten years she spent as a maid-of-honor in the court of Queen Elizabeth, the quality of her mind and her character, their romance, her determination to, in her words, “uphold and raise” Oxford’s “house” and his real estate portfolio, their marriage during the years Oxford polished what has come to us as the Shakespeare canon and the years after June 23, 1604, until her death in late December 1612. I will also explore characters based on her in Shakespeare’s plays and explain why, without Elizabeth Trentham, there would be no Shakespeare.

Bio: Dorothea Dickerman retired as a partner from a 34-year career in a thousand-lawyer international law firm to research and write on the Shakespeare Authorship Question. Using her legal skills, primary source historical and literary documents, and her travels to locations where Oxford lived and visited, she focuses on giving context to his life, to the Shakespeare canon, and to Tudor law, history, politics and personalities. Her foreign language skills include Italian, French and rusty Latin.

A prior speaker at SOF conferences, a Blue Boar Tavern participant and a podcast guest on Oxfordian topics, Dorothea also serves as a trustee of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. She is currently working on a series of Elizabethan historical novels. She has a BA from Amherst College *summa cum laude* in English and Political Science and a JD from the University of Chicago Law School.



Michael Dudley

Paper: “Something ‘Wicked’ This Way Comes: Towards a Meta-understanding of the Shakespeare Authorship Debate” (*Video*)

Abstract: It's generally underappreciated that the Shakespeare Authorship debate isn't just a disagreement among scholars regarding authorial attribution: it's actually a multi-dimensional epistemological and sociological phenomenon resulting from the complex interplay of (on the one hand) of many of our sensemaking institutions (the academy, journalism, the publishing industry, systems of public education, popular culture, etc.) and our own knowledge- and belief-formation practices on the other. As such, it can be defined in multiple ways by various constituencies, and is, as a result, widely misunderstood, mischaracterized, and marginalized.

At the same time, these complexities are exacerbated by factors external to the debate: an increasingly chilled climate for academic freedom; the corrosive effects of social media on public discourse; and the vociferous social justice imperatives to “disrupt and dismantle” Shakespeare and eliminate his work from the curriculum—all of which renders discussing these matters not only extremely challenging but urgently important. In the political sciences, these sorts of complex, difficult-to-define problems are often described as ‘wicked,’ in that they lack a single shared understanding, may be symptoms of other problems, are viewed by different stakeholders in terms of divergent value systems, and are unresolvable to everyone's satisfaction because any potential solutions will derive from one's framing of the problem in the first place.

One of the consequences of a wicked problem is that any single, proposed unitary vision—or comprehensive doctrine—aimed at answering the problem will inevitably conflict with the beliefs and worldviews of others. Yet, the asserted “natural genius and imagination” of William Shakespeare is just that: an unfalsifiable and metaphysical—indeed, quasi-religious—belief which presumes some form of extra-Earthly agency and posits the playwright to be (in the words of Harold Bloom) a “mortal God.” What should *ceteris paribus* have always been a reasonable, evidence-based debate over attribution has become instead a seemingly intractable and emotionally-charged impasse regarding fundamental cultural values.

Based on my 2023 Cambridge Scholars book *The Shakespeare Authorship Question and Philosophy: Knowledge, Rhetoric, Identity* (and its companion podcast), this 30-minute video presentation will set out these social, epistemological, and institutional dimensions to establish a “metaunderstanding” (an understanding *of* our understanding) of the true scope of the authorship debate—in particular the institutional intransigence against it—as a “wicked” problem. With this foundation established, the presentation will then seek to chart a reasonable, dialogical path forwards, premised on the need to distinguish between our knowledge claims, and our own identities as knowers.

Bio: Michael Dudley is an academic librarian at the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada, where he has collection and instruction responsibilities in history, theatre and film. He is the author of numerous articles on the authorship question that have been published in *Brief Chronicles* and *The Oxfordian*, as well as in mainstream publications such as the 2020 book *Teaching and Learning Practices for Academic Freedom*. Most recently, he co-authored (along with Bill Boyle and Catherine Hatinguais) a paper on library subject headings concerning the SAQ that was published in *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly*, a leading library science

journal. Many of his talks may be found on the SOF's YouTube channel. His latest book, *Epistemology and the Shakespeare Authorship Question: Theoretical Perspectives and Approaches* was published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.



Cheryl Eagan-Donovan

Paper: “Katharine Eggar: A Forgotten Heroine”

Abstract: Katherine Eggar (1874-1961) was a classically trained pianist and composer, a feminist, and Shakespeare archivist. Her talk, “The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford as Musician, Poet, and Controller of the Queen’s Revels,” presented to the Royal Musical Association in 1935 introduced me to her work. I soon discovered that she had also conducted extensive research for a book on Oxford as Shakespeare. To learn more, I visited a collection of her archival material at the Senate House Library at the University of London, where I began viewing the materials she had compiled and the correspondence she engaged in with other scholars. In her notes for a November 1951 Poetry Society Debate, she wrote, “Edward de Vere the 17th Earl of Oxford has been made a mere effigy, a puppet by historians....I want to bring him to life.” I became intrigued by why she never completed that book and also why her important work has been all but forgotten. In this paper, I hope to bring new attention to her work.

Bio: Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, MFA, is a writer, director, and producer whose documentary, [*Nothing Is Truer than Truth*](#), premiered on Hulu in 2019, is now available on Amazon Prime in the US and Canada, and has been released in Europe and the rest of the world as *Shakespeare: The Man Behind the Name*. The 2019 Oxfordian of the Year, Cheryl has served on the Boards of Directors of Women in Film and Video New England, The Next Door Theater, and the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship.

Her debut documentary, *All Kindsa Girls*, screened at festivals and art house theaters in London, Toronto and throughout the U.S. A frequent lecturer at conferences, she has published articles about screenwriting and film in journals and magazines, has appeared on several podcast series, and serves as a manuscript consultant for screenwriters and producers. She is currently working on a book for screenwriters, *Shakespeare Auteur: Creating Authentic Characters for the Screen*.

Cheryl has also interviewed filmmakers from around the world for film festivals, awards programs, at conferences, and for magazine features. She teaches writing, film, and literature at Lesley University, Northeastern University, and Grub Street Center for Creative Writing in Boston. She also provides script consultations for screenwriters and producers, and has been a judge for several screenwriting contests and fellowships.

She is currently at work on a new documentary film project about Edward de Vere.



Brent Evans

Introductions: Session Five

Bio: Brent has a master's degree in Asian History from the University of Pennsylvania and two additional years of intensive Japanese language study at International Christian University in Tokyo. He is currently researching primary documents for a reassessment of the life of Delia Bacon. A member of the UK De Vere Society as well as the SOF, he and his wife Patty have visited numerous Oxfordian sites including Hampton Court Palace, Castle Hedingham and St. Stephen's Chapel in Bures.



Sky Gilbert

Paper: “Shakespeare at Palazzo Te”

Abstract: Shakespeare makes only one mention of a contemporary visual artist in his plays, and that is Giulio Romano in *The Winter's Tale*. Why? The fact that scholars have not pursued this clue to Shakespeare's sensibility reveals a serious lack of rigour. Palazzo Te in Mantua, was designed by Romano as a 'pleasure palace' for Frederico II Gonzaga and his mistress in 1535. Romano is famous for changing the focus of Italian painting from religious subjects to erotic ones. Could this be why scholars ignore Shakespeare's mention of him? Perhaps Shakespeare had a deep affinity for Romano's scandalous work? The entire architecture of Palazzo Te — as well as the many erotic paintings there — attempt, in the mannerist style, to challenge traditional rules of classical painting. Similarly, Shakespeare, the writer, challenged the rules of traditional tragedy and invented new genres. But mostly, the mannerist artist seeks to unsettle—to make us question our fixed, objective view of the world, instead encouraging us to understand that life, morality and truth itself can be looked at in many different ways. Ignoring Shakespeare's

connection to Romano— most certainly inspired by his visit to Italy — means misunderstanding the foundation of his radical aesthetic, and innovative worldview.

Bio: Sky Gilbert is a poet, novelist, playwright, filmmaker, theatre director, and professor emeritus of theatre and creative writing at the University of Guelph. He was co-founder of Toronto’s Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and was its artistic director for 17 years. He has had more than 40 plays produced, and has written seven critically acclaimed novels and three award-winning poetry collections. There is a street in Toronto named after him: ‘Sky Gilbert Lane.’ He is currently working on his third book, *Shakespeare’s Effeminacy*, a scholarly analysis of the attitudes to sex and sexuality that pervade Shakespeare’s work.



Rima Greenhill

Paper: “Oxford: His Russia”

Abstract: In my book *Shakespeare, Elizabeth and Ivan: The Role of Russian-English Relations in Love’s Labours Lost*, although I mentioned the Earl of Oxford several times, I intentionally did not address the issue of authorship, avoiding it, in the hope of finding new converts to Oxfordianism among the Stratfordians and the general public. Now that the book has been on the market for almost a year, it’s time to connect the true author to the references to Russia I found in the play.

We know of the Earl of Oxford’s links to the French court, but who served as a source of knowledge about Russia? This presentation will attempt to demonstrate the Earl of Oxford’s exposure to Russian affairs from his early childhood, all through his teenage years spent at Cecil House, and all through his adult life, both in and out of court. I will discuss various 16th-century written sources the author could draw on about Russia, which were only accessible to the Queen and a select few, and identify the English envoys to Russia, the members of the Muscovy Company and the leading courtiers that could have acted as a direct source of information.

Bio: Rima Greenhill has an MA and a PhD in Russian Language and Literature from University College, London. A senior lecturer in the Department of Slavonic Languages and Literatures at Stanford University, she has lectured widely on Shakespeare in the Slavic world and has spoken at numerous SOF conferences. Her book, *Shakespeare, Elizabeth and Ivan: The Role of English-Russian Relations in ‘Love’s Labours Lost’* was published by McFarland.



Matt Hutchinson

Paper: “Penelope Rich as the Central Muse of the Elizabethan

Sonnet Sequence” (Video)

Abstract: The (likely) unauthorized publication of Philip Sidney’s sonnet sequence *Astrophel and Stella* in 1591 led to an explosion of about two dozen sonnet cycles, many published within the next few years. Today Penelope Rich, the older sister of the Earl of Essex, is seen as "Stella" of Sidney's sequence and many also accept her as "Diana" of Henry Constable's *Diana* sonnet sequence. In this paper, I argue that Philip Sidney’s muse, Penelope Rich, was in fact the inspiration behind this outburst of sonneteering, both from multiple allusions to her within the sequences themselves, and also the biographical background of the sonneteers, most of whom can be linked to the Essex circle.

Bio: Matt Hutchinson is a doctoral student on the SAQ and has had numerous monographs and articles published in *The Oxfordian* and the *Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Newsletter*, including *The Slippery Slope of Shakspeare's Signatures, When did "Shakespeare" Die?* and *Nabokov, Shakespeare and the Earl of Oxford*. He has also had articles and reviews published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* newspapers. He lives in Australia.



Jonathan S. Jackson

Photo:Peggy Sirota

Paper: “The Moral and Spiritual Vision of Edward de Vere”

Abstract: In this presentation, I will take a closer look at the spiritual influences of Edward de Vere and their presence in the works of Shakespeare. With de Vere’s depth of knowledge, multilingual capabilities and historical interests -- all of which transcended his cultural milieu -- what other religious traditions might have inspired the 17th Earl of Oxford? Specifically, I will suggest, based on Shakespeare’s body of work and the letters and poems of de Vere, that Greek Orthodox Christianity has much in common with the poet’s spiritual vision. Eastern Christianity remains the most poetical and art-affirming of Christian traditions, developing an ethos that is

much closer to the spirit of Shakespeare than seen in the western Churches. Was there significant influence from this earlier Christian tradition that helped the poet transcend the most polemical elements of the Catholic-Protestant conflict?

Many-- including J. Thomas Looney -- have stated that the works of Shakespeare transcend the 16th Century Protestant-Catholic struggle, with striking moments of spiritual insight oftentimes offering a more poetical and mystical expression of faith than what was readily accessible in England at the time. Shakespeare's wrestling with conscience, for instance, is not puritanical; it carries the spirit of a poet -- there is nuance, subtly, exceptions, divine economy and paradox.

Significantly, on December 24, 1581, a religious work of St. John Chrysostom, *Upon the Epistle to the Ephesians*, was published and dedicated to Oxford's wife, Anne Cecil. St. John Chrysostom is one of the most revered Fathers of Greek Orthodox Christianity. De Vere's knowledge of Ancient Greek would have made it possible for him to become acquainted not only with Greek philosophers and pagan literature, but also with the Greek Fathers of Christianity, even those not yet translated into English. The dedication of Chrysostom is evidence that de Vere and Anne had some familiarity with Eastern Christian thought. In addition to this, while living in Venice, it is known that de Vere attended the Greek Orthodox Church and sent a Greek New Testament to Anne as a gift.

I will also look closely at neglected passages from Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* and how they express a spiritual ethos much aligned with the works of Shakespeare and Eastern Christian thought. In other words, within Christendom (the world in which Edward de Vere lived and wrote) there is a *third door* to consider, which has been neglected within the realm of the Authorship Question.

Bio: Jonathan S. Jackson is a multi-dimensional artist: an actor, musician, author, filmmaker and lecturer. His life in the arts began at the age of eleven as an actor on *General Hospital*, where his performances garnered him five Emmy Awards. After many years working in feature films such as *Tuck Everlasting* and *Insomnia*, he starred in the renowned drama *Nashville* for six seasons. This is his second SOF Conference.



Shelly Maycock

Paper: "The 1604 Question and More"

Abstract: The argument goes on that Edward de Vere could not have written the works he did because he died in 1604 and numerous Shakespeare works appeared after that date. Indeed, it is one of the attacks made on Elizabeth Winkler's book in which she explores the arguments on this issue made by scholar Roger Stritmatter. Yes, de Vere did die that year, despite odd Oxfordian notions to the contrary. And thereafter there were no more revised play manuscripts and no more new works. But many works written before 1604 were released and played which is to say that Stratfordian play datings have long been disputed. This paper will explore this and other issues related to the 1604 issue.

Bio: Shelly Maycock is an instructor in the Department of English at Virginia Tech. She has an MA in Creative Writing from Hollins University and a second MA in English Literature from Virginia Tech. Her principal areas of research are in English Composition and Rhetoric, English and American Literature, Business Writing and Shakespeare. She has spoken at several SOF conferences.



Ralph McDonald

Paper: “Bacon’s Hand, Oxford’s Drama)”

Abstract: Robert Cecil, Ben Jonson, and Francis Bacon have been called the powerful Elizabethans most responsible for molding a spurious Shakespeare narrative. “These three men” say Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, “are, in our belief, fundamentally responsible for the great hoax which has done such incalculable discredit to the true William Shakespeare.”

Of the three, Cecil was motivated from power within the Elizabethan and Stuart governments. Jonson's role, though controversial, is also much investigated as both rival and promoter of “Shakespeare.” But Bacon, with his secure founding position in English science, remains enigmatic. If he didn't write the plays, what *was* his role? His relationship with the 17th Earl of Oxford is little known. The relationship between the two, some claim, is a family relationship that has been suppressed. The two clearly brush into one another through political events such as the downfall of the Earl of Essex.

This paper looks to evidence available from primary sources. It makes use of ‘genealogical tracks’ (Foucault) from Bacon's letters written at the time of the downfall of Essex as published in the 17th century, the compilation of Gabriel Bedell and Thomas Collins *Cabala* (1653, and the enlarged edition 1691) Also considered are Bacon's flat declarations, “...though I am not a poet...”, as well as his allegoric use of artful adornment, such “second level” messaging as Alexander Waugh (2023) finds explicated in Castiglione's *Courtier* (1528). As well, I touch on tantalizing evidence that the *Cabala* helps bring to light, specifically the tracks of Buckingham in Madrid.

Bio: Ralph McDonald graduated with honors from Western Oregon College with majors in English and Philosophy. A book conservator and period book restorer specializing in 16th-through 19th-century English binding, he has restored numerous Elizabethan volumes and is currently rebinding in period leather the scarce 16-Folio “Copious Archaeological Annotated” Halliwell-Phillipps “Shakespeare” edition (1853 to 1865) which was limited to 75 copies.

He has taught comparative literature, continental philosophy and semiotics at the Free University sponsored by the student body of the University of Oregon. He is published in *The American Journal of Semiotics*. He became an Oxfordian in 2001 after reading Roger Stritmatter’s “The Marginalia of Edward de Vere’s Geneva Bible.”



Alex McNeil

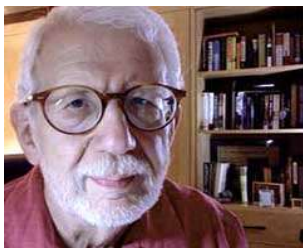
Introductions: Session Three

Host of “Oxfordian Jeopardy!”

Using a Jeopardy-style template on a projection screen, this will be set up just like the game show with two rounds of six categories, each with five questions of ascending difficulty. Contestants will be playing in volunteer teams (up to eight teams can play). And there will be Oxfordian prizes.

Oxfordian Jeopardy was last played at the SOF’s 2018 conference in Oakland.

Bio: Alex McNeil is a former president of the Shakespeare Fellowship and was editor of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* for ten years. His video talk, “Shakespeare Authorship 101” is one of the SOF’s most popular downloads. A graduate of Yale and Boston College Law School, he is a retired lawyer.



Bob Meyers

Introductions: Session Seven

Bio: Bob Meyers served for 21 years at the National Press Foundation, including 19 years as president and chief operating officer. He also worked as a reporter at the *Washington Post*, including on its Pulitzer Prize-winning Watergate investigation, and as an editor at the *San Diego Union*. Bob also served as director of the Harvard Journalism Fellowship for Advanced Studies in Public Health.

He has been a freelance writer for *Newsweek*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Columbia Journalism Review*, among other publications. He is the author of two books, one of which won the American Medical Writers Association Award for Excellence in Biomedical Writing. Bob has edited the popular “How I Became an Oxfordian” essay series on the SOF website since 2015 and moderated the Looney SOF Centennial Symposium at the National Press Club. He was elected as the third President of the unified SOF at the organization’s Annual Meeting in 2021. He previously served on the Editorial Board of *The Oxfordian*. His interviews with newsmakers regularly appear on the SOF website.



William S. Niederkorn

Paper: “Discoveries in a Secular Tour of *The Tempest*”

Abstract: In discussion of the Shakespeare authorship question, Oxfordians have heard the analogy between pulling a loose thread in a knitted garment, causing it to completely unravel, and ineluctably examining a loose brick of the inherited tradition, precipitating the collapse of a whole edifice of scholarly endeavor. Textual analysis of plays in the First Folio – the first Shakespeare catalogue -- repeatedly demonstrates this progression.

My paper begins at the beginning with the Comedies, with the first play in that 1623 tome, *The Tempest*, and several discoveries manifest themselves. A major one concerns the dating of the play. For over two centuries *The Tempest* has almost invariably been placed last in the chronology of the Shakespeare comedies. The evidence this paper details shows that it should be placed first.

Textual analysis of *The Tempest* suggests that it was first produced for the wedding of Ferdinando Stanley and Alice Spencer in 1579 and that it was the first comedy created by Edward de Vere. The adjustment of its date from 1609-11 to 1579 leads to another equally astonishing conclusion, concerning the still vexed question of *Bermoothes*. Rectifying the date of *The Tempest* to 1579 rules out *Bermudas* as the meaning of *Bermoothes* because England had scant knowledge of the Bermudas until decades later. So the playwright could not possibly have meant to convey *Bermudas* with *Bermoothes*, and the play’s first audience would never have understood it as such. The absurdity of the traditional view is shown in recounting how the Bermuda theory progressed from a wild guess to an absolute certainty in the pronouncements of

18th century Shakespeare editors, perpetuating Jacobean playwright's misunderstanding of the term.

Research shows that the cognate of *Bermoothes* most likely intended is the German *Wermut* (plural *Wermutes*), French *Vermouth* (plural *Vermouthes*), Spanish *Vermut* (plural *Vermutes*), meaning *wormwood*, the herb associated with absinthe and vermouth. *Bermoothes* is mentioned by Ariel in *The Tempest* to convey to Prospero the location where he has hidden the ship of the king of Naples – in the deep Nooke to which Prospero once summoned him at midnight to gather dew, not from Bermuda, but from wormwood in the Nooke, *from something present in the place to which he was summoned*. *Note*: This talk is a condensed version of the second volume of my book, *Shakespeare Discoveries*, which will be available at the conference.

Bio: William S. Niederkorn reported Shakespeare news in *The New York Times* from 2002 to 2009, critiqued Shakespeare scholarship in *The Brooklyn Rail* from 2009 to 2013, and has since been writing and researching independently. Like 18th-century editors, he focuses on interpreting the catalogue of plays of 1623 and the pamphlets of poems and plays printed earlier for his *Shakespeare Discoveries: A Secular Tour of the Works*. Besides volume 1 on *Venus and Adonis*, published in 2023, and volume 2 on *The Tempest*, he has substantially completed *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Comedy of Errors*, and plans to continue through as much of the Shakespeare oeuvre as world and time allows. A lifetime member of the Dramatists Guild, he is also a playwright, performer, poet, artist and composer of jazz, underground rock and classical music.



Phoebe Nir

Paper: “Who is Michael Drayton’s Unnamed “vertuous friend?”

Abstract: Michael Drayton suffered a catastrophic and permanent professional setback after his 1603 publication *To the Maiestie of King James: A gratulatorie poem* failed to win the ascendant monarch’s favor. Scholarship has been muddled on the question of why this seemingly laudatory poem drew such ire from the King and criticism of Drayton’s political writings, claiming that works such as *The Owle*, *The Moone-Calfe* and *Poly-Olbion* are “sluggish and dull,” and demonstrate “no talent.” Today, many scholars accept that Drayton’s lack of success under James can be accounted for by the simple fact that he was a mediocre writer, or perhaps that he was simply oblivious to social and political mores.

However, an examination of Drayton’s full corpus reveals a covert narrative of political martyrdom. Years after the *Majestie of King James* fiasco, Drayton proudly asserts that he willingly sacrificed his status in favor of personal integrity, “when cowardice had tied up every tongue/ and all stood silent.” To the end of his days, Drayton retained the high regard of his fellow poets, particularly Ben Jonson, whose epitaph for Drayton in Westminster Abbey’s Poets

Corner exhorts the marble to “let thy readers know what they and what their children owe to Drayton's name... protect his memry, and preserve his storye”.

In this talk, I briefly reconstruct Drayton’s fall from grace from an Oxfordian perspective, identifying the subversive political message in *To the Majestie of King James*, and the reference to Shakespeare in *The Owle*. The paper will culminate in a proposal that the “vertuous friend that’s dead” whom Drayton alludes to in his address to Master George Sandys might just be Edward de Vere.

Bio: Phoebe Nir holds degrees from Brown University and NYU, and has contributed pieces to *The Oxfordian*, the *Shakespeare Oxford ewnletter*, and the *De Vere Society Newsletter*. She is currently developing her numerous educational videos on TikTok and YouTube (as @phoebe_devere) into a documentary series. Her feature film *Eco Village* premiered at the Rotterdam Festival this past winter and will be seen in US theaters in late 2024.



Robert Prechter

Paper: “What Pieces, If Any, Did the Earl of Oxford Contribute to the Christopher Marlowe Canon?”

Abstract: The Christopher Marlowe canon comprises fifteen works. Two of the plays came after his death and are not recorded as having been staged earlier. Both show strong signs of Shakespeare’s manner. A statistical test supports the case that Oxford wrote one of these plays and contributed heavily to the other. A third play in Marlowe’s name was augmented, according to scholars, by an unknown contributor, who also may have been Oxford. Distinct differences between the styles of Shakespeare and Marlowe are explored and demonstrated. Orthodox critics’ assessments are cited to support each case.

Bio: Robert Prechter has written 25 Oxfordian articles and papers. He is author of an online set of books titled *Oxford’s Voices* (oxfordsvoices.com) which explores Elizabethan-era authorship.

In the business world, he is known for developing a theory of social causality called socionomics and for applying R.N. Elliott’s hierarchical-fractal model of financial pricing. Prechter has authored 20 books on finance, including a New York Times best seller. He has presented socionomic theory to academic conferences and universities including the London School of Economics, the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, Georgia Tech and MIT. Prechter and colleagues have written three academic papers on finance. Their paper, “Social Mood, Stock Market Performance and U.S. Presidential Elections” (2012), was the third most downloaded paper on the Social Science Research Network that year.



Lisa Quattrocki-Knight

Paper: “A *Theory of Mind* approach to understanding the sonnets:

Was Philip Sidney the fair youth of the first 126 Shakespearean sonnets?”

Abstract: The sonnets have perplexed Shakespearean scholars for centuries and have added to the Shakespeare authorship mystery. Using a “Theory of Mind” approach, this paper constructs a psychological profile for the author of the first 126 sonnets, and to a lesser extent, the fair youth. The resemblance between these psychological profiles and a collection of letters written from 1573-1581 suggests the French Humanist scholar and Protestant reformer, Hubert Languet, authored the sonnets and sent them to the much younger Philip Sidney as expressions of his complicated feelings. A textual comparison between the letters and the sonnets strengthens the identification and provides insight into some particularly inaccessible sonnets. The broadened understanding of the sonnets provided by this hypothesis helps support the claim that Hubert Languet authored these works.

The reasons against such a hypothesis are many, the first and most damning is that Languet did not know English. As a Frenchman who worked in a variety of European Courts, he spoke and wrote almost exclusively in Latin. This deficit, however, could be reconciled by suggesting the author of the plays translated the sonnets from Latin into English. Such a translation could have imbued the sonnets with the voice of the playwright.

Finally, the paper explores how the identity of Hubert Languet as author, and Philip Sidney as fair youth, can inform our understanding of the Shakespeare authorship question. Although the hypothesis relies on speculation and conjecture, it generates a possible, if improbable, comprehensive theory to explain the Shakespeare canon.

Bio: I have been affiliated with the faculty at the Harvard Medical School in the Department of Psychiatry for the past 30 years. I am hoping to continue the long tradition of psychiatrists, beginning with Sigmund Freud himself, of questioning Shakespeare’s identity. Integrating multiple disciplines has been a continual theme in my life. I have a medical doctorate (MD) and a PhD in neuroscience from Yale, but no other academic credentials to support my literary scholarship other than a long interest in integrating the sciences and the humanities, and a Stratfordian father who taught “the works” at Ohio University. I myself attended Stanford University, completing an undergraduate degree in Human Biology and writing a thesis on Leonardo da Vinci.



David W. Richardson

Paper: “The Literary Battle Over the First Published Works of William Shakespeare”

Abstract: This paper will review literary and historical evidence that connects the first published works of William Shakespeare with a battle over the literary and political legacy of Philip Sidney (including the right to publish his works), a battle waged between Mary and her circle and a group of writers associated with Oxford and Southampton during the years 1591 to 1594. Through Thomas Nashe this conflict became entangled with the Harvey-Nashe pamphlet war, which becomes a key source of evidence about the emergence of the author Shakespeare. The Labeo satires of Hall and Marston refer to this conflict and Shakespeare's early works in ways that provide additional information about the authorship question. Some parts of this story are well known to Oxfordians, indeed, play important roles in Oxfordian theory. Other parts appear to have escaped attention because they do not obviously involve either Oxford or Shakespeare, but are more related to Mary Sidney and her circle. I believe bringing these ideas together can clarify a number of issues critical to the authorship question though it may not resolve it in favor of any specific candidate. As such I trust it will represent a constructive engagement over evidence that concerns both Sidney and Oxford. I should note that one of the reasons I so enjoyed the New Orleans conference was that many of the papers explored the intersection between Oxford, Philip Sidney and the Herberts. Questions around these relationships have also been raised in recent Blue Boar Tavern discussions. As a Sidney scholar who has broadly engaged with Oxfordian research I believe I may be uniquely positioned to offer some insights on some of these issues.

Bio: Professionally, I am a game theory economist and econometrician who provides data analytics and marketing strategy to large and mid-sized companies. I have a PhD in Management Science and have taught those subjects to graduate business students for many years.

Although I believe Mary Sidney was the primary author of the works I appreciate the works of the Oxfordian community and participate in a number of active Oxfordian groups online which seem to value my contributions. Post-Stratfordians always talk about how they really welcome all views and just want to get to the truth, but I really dismissed that as mostly lip service to contrast with the orthodox intolerance for alternative ideas. I could not have been more welcomed or encouraged when I attended my first SOF conference in New Orleans (even when I outed myself and offered Sidneian interpretations of Oxfordian scholarship).



Ron Roffel

Paper: “How the Physical Construction of the First Folio Provides

Clues to the Identity of the Real Author of the Plays” (Video)

Abstract: This is an abridged version of my video “Solving Some First Folio Enigmas” plus important material from “The Secret Heart of the First Folio.” My presentation seeks to establish that an anomaly of the physical structure of the First Folio alludes to a specific page in the 1591 edition of John Dee’s book *Monas Hieroglyphica* and theorem 20: “The Quaternity is Concealed Within the Ternary.” The structure in turn relates to dozens of very simple puzzles hidden in plain sight in the Folio’s Catalogue of Plays (table of contents).

I argue that these puzzles solve key enigmas in the book which have vexed scholars for generations, such as why *Troilus and Cressida* is not listed in the Catalogue, why each section begins on page 1, and why *Henry V* is on page 69 rather than 101. The answers to those and other crucial questions are, surprisingly, partially found in Roman history. And they all relate back to the physical anomaly in the book. The anomalous section in the First Folio also hides an extremely simple puzzle clearly identifying the real author of the plays. Everything fits together like gears in a watch pointing to Edward de Vere as the hidden playwright.

Bio: I was introduced to the works of Shakespeare in the mid-1980s while working toward my undergraduate degree in what is now Communication Studies from the University of Calgary. To earn my degree I took a year-long course in Shakespeare studying under Dr. James Black a graduate of the Shakespeare Institute. I later earned a two-year diploma in Library Technology from SAIT Polytechnic in Calgary. For the past three years, I have been an active participant in the Oberon Shakespeare study group in Michigan. I have two papers published -- “Sweet Swan of Stratford? Not Necessarily So” and “The How and Why of the Coverup: My Two Cents” – published in the Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter. There are also some 90 videos on my YouTube channel that deal exclusively with the SAQ.



Don Rubin

Introductions: Session Four

Moderator: Panel on The Denver Hamlet featuring director Chris Coleman, dramaturg Leean Kim Torske and actor Brian Vaughn.

Bio: Don Rubin is a longtime member of the SOF Board of Trustees and Professor Emeritus at Toronto's York University where he taught theatre and dramatic literature for more than four decades as well as courses on the authorship question. Series editor of Routledge's six-volume *World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre*, he edited an 80-page special section on the SAQ for the Paris-based theatre webjournal *Critical Stages* and in 2023 edited a 160-page special issue of the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* on the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

He studied theatre at Hofstra University, where he played as an actor on John Cranford Adams' reconstruction of the Globe stage and worked with Shakespeare scholar Bernard Beckerman, author of *Shakespeare at the Globe*. His earliest productions of Shakespeare were seen at the American Shakespeare Theater in Stratford, Conn., and he was a member of the University of Bridgeport's Shakespeare Institute.

Theatre columnist and critic for the *New Haven Register*, the *Toronto Star* and CBC Radio (where he worked for two years with Alex Trebek), he has served as President of the Canadian Theatre Critics Association, the Canadian Centre of the International Theatre Institute and Toronto's African Theatre Ensemble. He has edited some 60 volumes of theatre writings, including 32 issues of the quarterly journal *Canadian Theatre Review* and the standard volume *Canadian Theatre History: Selected Readings*. He is Managing Editor and Book Review Editor of *Critical Stages* (critical-stages.org) and a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the *The Oxfordian*.



Earl Showerman

Introductions: Session Two

Paper: “*Horestes to Hamlet: Political Allegories Relevant to the Abdication and Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots*”

Abstract: This presentation will focus attention on the topicality of two English dramas to the political crises connected with the abdication and later execution of Mary Queen of Scots. Marie Axton and David Bevington have confirmed that the Tudor hybrid interlude *Horestes*, performed at the English court during the holiday festival of 1567-8, was topical of the detention and abdication of Mary Queen of Scots in July of 1567. Mary was widely believed to have conspired with her lover, the 4th Earl of Bothwell, to assassinate her husband, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley in February 1567. Three months later, the Scots Queen married Bothwell but was imprisoned and deposed soon after.

Bevington describes this as the “most agonizing political issue” of the time. In the Parliament of 1572, Richard Gallys compared Mary to Clytemnestra as a “killer of her husband and an adulterer.” In my previous study, *Orestes and Hamlet: Myth to Masterpiece* (2004), I looked further at the previous century of scholarship that proved Shakespeare’s tragedy was influenced by Orestes’ dramas of Aeschylus and Euripides. Bevington also linked *Horestes* to the political drama of Mary Queen of Scots and saw a close correspondence in Mary’s actions and plot in *Hamlet*. In another study, “Hamlet and the Darnley Murder” (1921), Lillian Winstanley presented an astonishing array of additional intertextual clues in building associations between the plot, allusions and dramaturgy in *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare’s first *Hamlet* can be dated to 1589 based on the references to “English Seneca” who “will afford you whole Hamlets -- I should say handfuls of tragical speeches,” -- in Thomas Nashe’s introduction to Robert Greene’s *Menophon* of that year. This establishes a credible timeline for a topical interpretation of a tragedy that presents a case of murderous treason and justifiable regicide. As William Cecil was principally responsible for the decades-long campaign against Queen Mary, representing him and his family in *Hamlet* adds a personal allegorical element as his daughter, Anne Cecil de Vere, died in June 1588.

Even Geoffrey Bullough has suggested that *Hamlet* would be topical of Mary Queen of Scots’ trial and execution, and it is noteworthy that the Earl of Oxford served as a commissioner at Mary’s trial. Oxfordians tend to interpret Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* as autobiographical (which it is), but a review of the historical context of the crises caused by Mary Queen of Scots and of the dramatic productions that scholars have identified as political allegories also bears serious consideration.

Bio: Dr. Earl Showerman, president of the SOF, graduated from Harvard College and the University of Michigan Medical School, and practiced emergency medicine in southern Oregon for 30 years. After retiring in 2003, he enrolled at Southern Oregon University (SOU) to study Shakespeare. Over the past two decades he has presented and published scholarly papers on a variety of topics, including the Greek dramatic sources of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *The Winter’s Tale*, *Pericles*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Timon of Athens*, and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In 2012, he presented the keynote address on the playwright’s medical knowledge at the Shakespearean Authorship Trust Conference in London. Over the past decade he has taught a series of courses on Shakespeare and the authorship question at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Southern Oregon University, is the author of a chapter on Shakespeare’s medical knowledge in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* (2013), and contributed three essays to *Know-It-All Shakespeare* (2017), edited by Ros Barber. He is the executive producer of the first collection of songs related to Edward de Vere, *My Lord of Oxenford’s Mask*, by the lute duet Mignarda (2006).



Roger Stritmatter

1 -- Paper: “Theatres and Theatricality in the Audley End Annotations”

Abstract: My ongoing study of the annotations in six books at the library at Audley End in Essex, UK – as reported on in the De Vere Society and SOF newsletters -- now confirms that the annotator is not Sir Henry Neville as originally suspected but rather Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Indeed, the 2023 issue of the *Journal of Forensic Document Examination* -- the widely respected international journal and the flagship publication of the Association of Forensic Document Examiners – has now published a 58-page forensic study of the annotations, concluding that they are definitely not in Neville’s handwriting and almost certainly are, instead, in the handwriting of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

While laws, politics, wars, marriages, battles, etymologies, and portents make up most of the annotations in these books, a significant grouping of them, directly or indirectly, relate to dramatic or theatrical ideas or incidents. These include theatres, theatre craft, characters, speeches, actors, “call and response” patterns, theories of character, and stage directions. This paper will cover material never before assembled in one presentation, and will move through major highlights of this material. Included will be original photographs from two research trips to Audley End in 2022 and 2023.

2-- Introduction to Brief Chronicles’ new Ben Jonson Volume

Edited by Roger and ready for publication, this new SOF volume will include essays by George Greenwood, Richard Malim, Lansdowne Goldsworthy, Ted Story, Gerald Rendall, Alexander Waugh, Nina Green and Gabriel Ready as well as an introduction by Stritmatter.

Bio: Roger Stritmatter is a professor of Humanities at Coppin State University and was the editor of the journal *Brief Chronicles* from 2009 to 2016. He was a founder of one of the predecessor organizations of the SOF, the Shakespeare Fellowship. Educated at Evergreen State College (BA, 1981) and the New School for Social Research (MA, 1988), he was awarded a Ph.D. in 2001 in comparative literature from the University of Massachusetts Amherst on the basis of a study of 1,043 marked passages found in Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible, which is now owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library. He has edited numerous books on the authorship question. He edits the SOF’s book publication series, also called Brief Chronicles.



Leean Kim Torske

Panelist, “The Denver *Hamlet*”

Bio: Leean Kim Torske is the Director of Literary Programs for the Denver Center Theatre Company and dramaturg for *Hamlet* as well as previous productions such as *Cowboys and East Indians*, *Emma*, and *A Little Night Music*. Previously, Leean served as the Literary Manager and Casting Associate at Northlight Theatre, Director of the Russ Tutterow Fellowship at Chicago Dramatists, and a publicist and discussion facilitator at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. As a freelance dramaturg and theatre artist, she worked with theatres throughout the Chicagoland area including A Red Orchid Theatre, Congo Square Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, and others.

|



Tom Townsend

Paper: “Finding Shakespeare from an Historical Perspective”

An Authorship 101 Introduction

Abstract: Our true Shakespeare: who was this person? Clearly someone with superior intelligence, a person immensely well educated and one phenomenally literate. An incomparable genius to be sure, but even geniuses need exposure to the subjects they are proficient in. Those who support the Stratford man as the true author cannot explain how he learned about law, about Italy, about so many subjects not taught in 16th century schools. They maintain their traditional conjectures with dubious evidence and minimal historical data. Thanks to computers and databases, however, new data is becoming available all the time meaning that the history of this period is still not yet completely known.

This updated ‘Authorship 101’ presentation is based on much of this recent historical data and seeks to demonstrate that the name “Shakespeare” was in fact a pseudonym used by Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. It explains why he was unable to use his own name on the plays, poems, and sonnets. I particularly show how de Vere’s education --by excellent tutors such as Sir Thomas Smith, Lawerance Nowell, and Arthur Golding – along with his indispensably critical father-in-law, William Cecil, exerted a powerful influence on his entire life.

Bio: For 35 years Tom has been researching Elizabethan history and the Shakespeare Authorship Question. He has presented at past SOF Conferences as well as for several general audiences in the Seattle area. He was previously Director of Consumer Insights for a large

advertising agency. He holds a master's degree from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.



Brian Vaughn

Panelist: “The Denver *Hamlet*”

Bio: A veteran actor, Brian is currently playing Claudius in the Denver Center for the Performing Arts’ production of *Hamlet*. For many years, he was the Artistic Director of the Utah Shakespeare Festival. He was previously seen at DCPA in *A Christmas Carol*, on Broadway and in the national tour of *Beetlejuice the Musical* and in multiple productions as an actor and director at the Utah Shakespeare Festival. He was a Resident Company Member for 13 seasons at the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Arizona Theatre Company, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Red Bull Theatre, Renaissance Theatreworks, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Nevada Conservatory Theatre, Northlight Theatre, PCPA, Skylight Music Theatre and the South Coast Rep.



Tom Woosnam, Conference Chair

Introductions: Session One

Bio: Tom Woosnam was born in England, where he earned his BSc in physics from Imperial College, London. After teaching in Chile he received his MA from Stanford in 1976 and taught high school physics and math in California before retiring with his wife Julia to Ashland, Oregon, in 2019. His avocation is acting. He has performed in over 60 amateur and professional productions, including seven Oxfordian plays. About his fascination with the Shakespeare authorship question, Tom has stated: “It’s all about the data.” He adds that this is “also a subject that disdains authority as the ultimate arbiter of truth. We’ve all noticed that the case for Oxford attracts a large number of people whose jobs center around evidence — lawyers, judges, engineers, scientists, and others. I am no different.” Tom was elected to a three-year term on the Board of Trustees at the Annual Meeting in 2021.

Special Thanks.

A most sincere thank you to SOF's webmaster Jennifer Newton directing us all from afar, to all our technical and support people on the ground, and especially to our videographer and livestream director Ethan Hill. Thank you to our Denver-based people who let us use their addresses and garages in advance.

Thanks also to the SOF Conference Committee for their many meetings to plan these events: Bonner Miller Cutting, John Hamill, Richard Joyrich, Alex McNeil, Don Rubin, Earl Showerman and Tom Woosnam (Conference Chair).

Thank you speakers and registrants for coming.

And special thanks to all the members of the SOF Board – especially our retiring President, Earl Showerman -- who supported the work at every step.

Tribute To The Earl Of Oxford

Sonnet #17

William Shakespeare

Composed by Phoebe Nir
Arranged by Bonner Miller Cutting

Who will be - lieve my verse in time to come if it were

4
fill'd with your most high de-serts though yet hea - ven knows 'tis but as a tomb which

8
half your part - s If I could
hides your life and shows not

12
write the beau-ty of your eyes And in fresh num-bers num-ber all your gra - ces The

16
age to come would say this po - et lies
such heav-enly tou-ches ne're touch'd earth-ly

2

19

Musical notation for measures 19-22. The treble clef staff contains the melody, and the bass clef staff contains the accompaniment. The lyrics are: "So should my pa - pers yell-owed with their fa - ces".

23

Musical notation for measures 23-25. The treble clef staff contains the melody, and the bass clef staff contains the accompaniment. The lyrics are: "age be scorned by old men of less truth than tongue and your true".

26

Musical notation for measures 26-28. The treble clef staff contains the melody, and the bass clef staff contains the accompaniment. The lyrics are: "rights be term'd a po - ets rage and stret - ched me - ter".

29

a tempo

Musical notation for measures 29-31. The treble clef staff contains the melody, and the bass clef staff contains the accompaniment. The lyrics are: "of an an - tique song but were some child of yours a - live that time you should live".

32

Musical notation for measures 32-35. The treble clef staff contains the melody, and the bass clef staff contains the accompaniment. The lyrics are: "twice in it and in my rhyme were some child of yours a - live that time".

you

36

The musical score consists of two staves. The upper staff is for the voice, and the lower staff is for the piano accompaniment. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The voice part has a melody that includes a slur over the words 'in my rhyme'. The lyrics are: 'should live twice in it and in my rhyme'.

should live twice in it and

in my rhyme