

SHAKESPEARE OXFORD FELLOWSHIP ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
SEPTEMBER 18-21, 2025



Yale
University
Founded
in 1701

Welcome to New Haven

As we move our annual SOF conferences from east to west and north to south, we offer attendees the opportunity to hear outstanding papers from leading researchers on the authorship question and also to experience some of North America's most interesting cities. New Haven is surely one of them. With a history going back to the 1600s, the city is most well-known as home to Yale University, one of North America's oldest founded in 1701. A major east coast cultural center, New Haven also boasts three major theatres—the Shubert (long a pre-Broadway tryout venue), the itinerant Long Wharf (one of the country's leading regional theatres) and the Yale Rep (where stars such as Meryl Streep and Paul Newman learned their craft).

Without doubt, Yale provides the city with much of its cultural clout. The university is itself an architectural gem as you will see during our guided walking tour of the central campus on Friday. That will be followed by tours for you to *either* the architecturally extraordinary Beinecke Rare Book Library or the impressive collection of the Yale Center for British Art.

If you'd like a Yale memento, the nearby Yale Co-op is the place to go, a busy student venue, close to The Shops at Yale, a collection of 65 boutiques, cultural attractions and restaurants.

And speaking of restaurants, the Governor of Connecticut recently declared New Haven the pizza capital of America. New Haven-style pizza has become quite trendy, featured on both Good Morning America and the *New York Times*. Boasting a Naples-style thin crust, pizzas here (or "apizza" as they call it) are simple and pure with outstanding tomatoes and cheese. Two of the city's favorites come from Sally's and Pepe's. On Friday, before the Yale tour, we're having some delivered from both these popular restaurants so everyone in attendance can say they've tried pizza from New Haven and can judge for yourself whether it is truly the "best." Then vote (see last page).

Please note that during the conference we will also be running a Silent Auction of mostly authorship-related items. These items have been

donated and do have a real value. If you can, please bid and, if someone is outbidding you, bid again. Every bid supports the SOF's work. And we do have a credit card capability. Thanks here to Board member Eva Varelas for organizing it and thanks also to everyone who contributed an item to the auction.

If pizza is not your thing, the city also boasts dozens of medium to high-end restaurants ranging from the old-world charm of the pricey French restaurant at the Union League Café (just around the corner from our hotel...reservations needed) to numerous not-so-expensive ethnic restaurants featuring everything from Ethiopian and Thai to Mexican and Italian specialties. With a little luck, you will find in your conference bag a *Greater New Haven Visitors Guide*. It contains everything you could possibly want to know about the city.

Please note, we have also let Yale faculty and students know that we are among them this week. A few of them will be joining us in our sessions and/or may be tuning in through our Livestream broadcast of all the papers. Do say hello.

As for our location, the hotel is a stone's throw across the Green from the Yale campus. The area is generally safe but, as in any city, care should be taken if wandering alone or at night.

Special thanks to the SOF Board and especially to the Conference Committee for their hard work and time in planning all these events. This latter group includes Lyle Colombo and Bonner Cutting (Louisiana), Lucinda Foulke (Illinois), Alex McNeil (Massachusetts), Richard Joyrich (Michigan), Tom Woosnam and Earl Showerman (Oregon), John Hamill (California), and Ellie Slotkin (Pennsylvania). Many, many Zoom meetings made it all happen. Much appreciation to everyone.

Enjoy New Haven, Enjoy the conference.

***Don Rubin (from Toronto),
Conference Chair***

Schedule — Theme: Women & The Authorship Question

All sessions in the Omni Hotel College Room All times (US Eastern Daylight Time) subject to change

Thursday, September 18th (Session 1)

- 1 p.m. Welcome
Conference Chair: **Don Rubin**
SOF President: **Brent Evans**
- Session Host: **Phoebe Nir**
- 1:05-1:45 **Bob Meyers and Rick Waugaman:** “Prophets Without Honor” (video)
- 1:45-2:30 KEYNOTE PAPER: **Brent Evans:** “Was Delia Mad?”
2:30-2:35 Q & A
- 2:35-3:15 **Sean Phillips:** “Decrypting de Vere: Anagrams and the Friedman Conditions”
3:15-3:20 Q & A
3:20-3:40 *Refreshment Break*
- 3:40-4:10 **Matt Hutchinson:** “Did Mary Sidney Suppress Edward de Vere's Authorship of *Venus and Adonis*?” (video)
- 4:10-4:40 **Joella Werlin:** “First Folio Foolery—Spotlight on Countess Mary Sidney Herbert and Lady Mary Sidney Wroth”
4:40-4:55 Q & A
- 4:55-5:35 **Patricia Keeney:** “Edward de Vere and the Mythical Mind”
5:35-5:40 Q & A
5:40 *End Session 1*
5:45-7:15 *RECEPTION in hotel*
7:30-9:00 Meeting of the SOF Board

Schedule — Theme: Women & The Authorship Question

Friday, September 19th (Session 2)

— Session Host: **Cheryl Eagan-Donovan**

- 9:00-9:25 **Shelly Maycock:** “Charlotte Armstrong’s Solution to the Folio Epigram”
9:25-9:30 Q & A
- 9:30-10:10 **William S. Niederkorn:** “Bombshells, from Miranda to Mistress Quickly”
10:10-10:15 Q & A
- 10:15-10:40 **Rima Greenhill:** “The Daughter of the Russian Emperor: Who Were Hermione’s Parents?”
10:40-10:45 Q & A
- 10:45-11:05 *Refreshment Break*
- 11:05-11:45 **Sky Gilbert:** “Shakespeare and the Women of the Intronati”
11:45-11:50 Q & A
- 11:50-12:25 **Lisa Quattrocker-Knight:** “Comedies, Political Context and Theory of Mind: Redating the Plays”
12:25-12:30 Q & A
- 12:30-1:00 **Michael Delahoyde:** “Oxford’s Backwords” (Video)
- 1:00-2:00 *Lunch Break* (New Haven Pizza Party)
- 2:05-2:15 Walk to **Yale Visitors Center** (149 Elm St., directly north across New Haven Green)
- 2:15-3:00 **Walking tour of Yale campus**, ending at **A** or **B**
(check name tag for A or B)
- 3:15-5:00 **A. Guided visit at Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library***
(121 Wall St)
OR
B. Guided visit at Yale Center for British Art **
(1080 Chapel St.)
- 7:30 **Ron Destro’s Shakespearacy** (a tongue-in-cheek authorship 101 reading)
With Ron Destro, Jonathan Jackson and Don Rubin
- 8:40 **Carla Kissane’s Petty Tyrant: A Shakespeare Cabaret** (with music)
- 9:50 *End Evening Performances*

Schedule — Theme: Women & The Authorship Question

Saturday, September 20th (Session 3)

— Session Host: **Dorothea Dickerman**

- 9:00 -9:30 **Elisabeth Waugaman:** “The Role of Women in 1 Henry VI: A Psychological Mirror” (video)
- 9:30-10:05 **Cheryl Eagan-Donovan:** “Shakespeare and Transphobia”
10:05-10:10 Q & A
- 10:10-10:35 **Earl Showerman:** “Parallel Lives of Shakespeare’s Helena and Oxford’s Anne”
(video or guest reader)
- 10:35-11:10 **Bonner Cutting:** “Is There a Southampton Problem?”
11:10-11:15 Q & A
11:15-11:40 *Refreshment Break*
- 11:40-12:05 **John Hamill:** “Penelope Rich Exposed by Marston as the Dark Lady” (video)
- 12:05-12:45 **Nic Panagopoulos:** “The Socratic Component of *Hamlet*”
12:45-12:50 Q & A
12:50 p.m. *End Session 3*
- 1:00-2:30 *Awards Luncheon (for all registrants)*
Oxfordian of the Year & Veritas Award
The Oxtones: Sonnet 17 performance
Trailers: Phoebe Nir’s *Profiles* and Amanda Eliasch’s film *The Truth Will Out*
Announcement of the 2026 SOF Conference

Session 4

— Session Host: **Bonner Cutting**

- 2:30-3:10 **Robert Prechter:** “Determining True Female Pioneers of Creative Writing In English”
3:10-3:15 Q & A
- 3:15-3:40 **Margo Anderson:** “Nicholas Hilliard’s Shakespeare Portrait”
3:40-3:45 Q & A
- 3:45-4:25 **Dorothea Dickerman:** “Shakespeare’s Sister: Mary de Vere: What She Tells Us About Shakespeare”
4:25-4:30 Q & A
- 4:30-5:15 **Roger Stritmatter:** “Shakespeare’s Women in the Audley End Annotations” plus comments on the new *Brief Chronicles IX: Ben Jonson’s Unorthodox Poetics*
5:15-5:20 Q & A
5:20 *End Session 4*

Schedule — Theme: Women & The Authorship Question

Sunday, September 21st (Session 5)

10-11:30 **SOF Annual General Meeting** (Members Only).
Available by Zoom

AGENDA

- Election of new members of the Board of Trustees
- Election of the President
- Brief comments from the new President
- Treasurer's Report
- Written Reports from all SOF Committee Chairs
- Reports from editors of *The Oxfordian* and *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*
 - Special report from Bill Boyle: Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources (SOAR) and the New England Shakespeare Oxford Library (NESOL)
- Thanks to retiring members of the BOT

Coffee/tea/goodies available.

End of Conference

11:45-12:15 Informal visit to gravesite of Connecticut authorship pioneer **Delia Bacon**, in the **Grove Street Cemetery** at 227 Grove Street.
(Led by Brent Evans; please sign-up. The cemetery is a 12-minute walk or interested parties may share an Ubers for about \$3 p/p.)

If you are walking:

Exit hotel onto Temple Street

Turn left on Chapel Street

Turn right on Elm Street (walking past the Beinecke Rare Book Library)

Turn right on High Street, leading directly to the Grove Street Cemetery entrance

Coordinates: 41.3144269 – 72.9274115

** Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library is also open to the public: Mon, Tues & Thurs: 9 am-7 pm, Wed: 10 am-7 pm, Friday: 9 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday: noon-5 pm.*

*** Yale Center for British Art is also open to the public: Wednesday, Friday and Saturday: 10 pm-5 pm, Thursday: 10 am-8 pm, Sunday: 11 am-5 pm.*



Margo Anderson

“Nicholas Hilliard’s Shake-speare Portrait”

Shake-speare’s face has emerged at the centerpiece of one of the most enigmatic and enduring puzzles in Elizabethan art. And that face belongs to Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford and concealed poet behind the world’s most celebrated byline.

In 1588, the year of the Spanish Armada, the legendary Elizabethan miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard painted a heretofore unidentified, well-appointed male sitter (whose identity has been guessed at for centuries) in one of the greatest Mona Lisa-like puzzles in the history of Elizabethan art.

A man of courtly rank or attainment looks out through the ages with a mysteriously assured expression, wrapped within the kind of fleeting or stolen glance that Hilliard prided himself in capturing. The story behind this portrait reveals much about the two most elemental and powerful forces behind the scenes in de Vere’s life: His multifaceted relationships with Queen Elizabeth I and with the era’s chief ministerial family, the Cecils, are here both revealed to be on display for the ages.

The 1588 Hilliard miniature provides a unique vantage point among all other de Vere and Shake-speare portraiture and iconography of the time. The painting also visually depicts a complex, Shakespearean backstory worthy of its subject—as well as of the acclaimed Elizabethan portrait artist who set this allegory of lucre, love, and mixed allegiances into gouache.

BIO: Margo Anderson is the author of *‘Shakespeare’ by Another Name*, now celebrating its 20th year.



Bonner Miller Cutting

“Is There a Southampton Problem?”

By way of disclosure, my mother, Ruth Loyd Miller, was mentored into the Oxfordian cause by Charles W. Barrell. As he and Mrs. Barrell had no children, he entrusted to my Mom many documents including files with his research, correspondence, manuscripts and the glass plates with the images that appeared in the 1940

Scientific American article on the Ashbourne Portrait of Shakespeare. Recently, I reviewed letters from the Barrell files and found that, sometime in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Barrell had a serious falling out with Charlton and Dorothy Ogburn over what would become known as the “Southampton Prince Tudor Theory.” The Ogburns believed that the 3rd Earl of Southampton was the son of the 17th Earl of Oxford and Queen Elizabeth I. Barrell apparently strongly disagreed, and to this day, the theory has remained controversial, sadly causing division among Oxfordians.

I begin the presentation with Barrell’s letter with his thoughts on the Southampton PT Theory, and then review known facts from Southampton’s life as reported by his 20th century biographers, Charlotte Stopes and G. P. V. Akrigg. I will focus on two documents that shed light on the question: Is the 3rd Earl of Southampton the son of the 2nd Earl of Southampton and his Countess, Mary Browne? Or is he the son of the 17th Earl of Oxford and Queen Elizabeth I? I also plan to call attention to my article, “Blest Be the Tie That Un-binds” published online in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* (see JSE 37:2 Summer 2023). I offer this paper as a follow-up to my conference presentation as, in this article, I suggest what I believe is a plausible explanation for the relationship between Oxford and Southampton.

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 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 Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon and the £1,000 annuity that Queen

Elizabeth I gave to Edward de Vere (17th Earl of Oxford). Videos of many of Bonner's talks are posted on the SOF YouTube channel, and interviews with her on Oxfordian topics are available in podcasts. Bonner is a member of the Board of Trustees and secretary for the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, and also serves as secretary for the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition which sponsors the online "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt." She received the Oxfordian of the Year award for 2024.



Michael Delahoyde

"Oxford's Backwards"

I have spoken before about the influence of Italian art, especially the perspective art of Giulio Romano in Mantua, on Oxford as "Shake-speare." It may be the inspiration for another odd recurrence in the works that has gone entirely unnoticed: wordings, many quite famous, whose construction results in implications that sound backwards.

For example, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Benedick overhears that Beatrice is in love with him, hilariously rationalizes his long-standing misogyny, and, with no doubt self-congratulatory realism, anticipates an element of compromise in his otherwise extreme conversion:

I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. (II.iii.194-198)

The shift is from disdain to an enthusiastic embracing of love, but the analogy puts forth the reverse. He should be saying something like: when I was a kid I despised brussels sprouts, but now that I'm older I can't get enough of them roasted. Perhaps the inversion hints at Benedick's own strained twists of logic as he talks himself into his new persona as lover?

In *Hamlet*, as the climax of Polonius' sanctimonious precepts, he tells Laertes (and us, as audiences and scholars ever since have assumed):

This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man. (I.iii.78-80)

Polonius' construction is at best ambiguous, at worst seeming to stress the inevitability of the darkness: "the night [must follow] the day." He might instead have wanted to reverse this and emphasize the day and daylight—the darkness being transitory and temporary before the dawn; but perhaps Shakespeare hints here at Polonius' own darker side and his dismal twistedness in this hypocritical battering of advice.

More inexplicably though, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo remarks:

Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from their books,
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.
(II.ii.156-157)

What?! Perhaps love's zeal is as *intense* as the repulsion students feel about their textbooks, but shouldn't the comparison with love emphasize magnetic attraction instead? And vice versa vice with the second line? Has love addled Romeo's thinking?

Further examples of these contorted inversions can be found in Kate's final speech in *The Taming of the Shrew*, in Henry V's Crispin's Day speech, in the fairies' backfiring blessings in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *Twelfth Night* utterances regarding madness, and with extra prominence in *The Merchant of Venice* (not solely in Lancelot Gobbo's stand-up routine). Ultimately, these backwards wordings mess with our perspective, much like the Italian art that inspired Oxford and whose tricky phenomena he sought to transpose into language and theater.

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 PhD 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



Ron Destro

“Shakespearey: The SAQ for Absolute Beginners, Lazy Louts and Knotty-Pated Knaves” *A Dramatic Reading of Sorts*

At the New Orleans conference, a woman came up to me and asked if there was a good non-technical beginners book on the authorship. And since I couldn't think of one, I decided to write one. My new book is just out—*The Shakespeare Authorship Question for Absolute Beginners, Lazy Louts and Knotty-Pated Knaves*, and it concludes with a comic 60-page three-man play called *Shakespearey*, where Will Shakesper and Edward de Vere fight it out in a boisterous battle of wits in the presence of a “scholar” to prove the true identity of William Shakespeare.

This is a staged reading of the play including a short intro, the play (about 40 minutes) and then a 5–10 minute Q & A.

Thanks in advance to my other players:

Edward de Vere: **Jonathan Jackson**

The Scholar: **Don Rubin**

I will be playing Will Shakespere.

Bio: Ron Destro is a director, actor and author. A Kennedy Center award-winner, he has been a long-time doubter and is author of a de Vere connected novel called *The Starre, The Moone, The Sunne* which he launched at the SOF conference in New Orleans. His works include *The Shakespeare Masterclasses* (Routledge) and the play *Hiroshima* with an original score by Yoko Ono.



Dorothea Dickerman

“Shakespeare’s Sister: Mary de Vere. What She Tells Us About Shakespeare”

“O God, that I were a man! I would
eat his heart in the market-place.”

— Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*

In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf famously imagined “Shakespeare’s sister” as a gifted but forgotten woman whose genius was stifled by the constraints of Elizabethan society. But what if Shakespeare’s sister actually existed?

This talk will explore the life of Mary de Vere, the younger sister of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford—whom many believe to be the author behind the pen-name “William Shakespeare”—and her profound influence on her brother and his evolving portrayal of women in the Shakespearean canon.

To date, discussions about Mary, including by Oxfordians, have focused largely on her reputation for possessing a fiery temper and a sharp tongue, her rollicking wedding to Peregrine Bertie and her serving as the model for Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew*. While true, reducing Mary to a tamed shrew tells only part of her story. Her influence lasted long after the publication of the First Folio in 1623 and her death in 1624.

Through an analysis of the historical record throughout Mary’s 70-year life, her sharp wit (enough to out-wit even her brilliant brother in a battle of wills over her choice of husband), her diplomacy with foreign princes, her extraordinary financial sacrifices for country and husband, and the unwavering loyalty to family that she shared with Oxford, will be explored.

Mary was not just “Shakespeare’s sister” by blood; she was his mirror and his conscience. Her courage in the face of adversities and her determination to live on her own terms transformed Oxford’s perspective on women from the obedient Tudor role model set out for noble women, to the Shakespearean heroines we still love today. She was a living model for his evolving portrayal of strong, self-possessed female characters deserving of respect for their own intellect and agency.

In addition to *Taming of the Shrew*, we’ll find Mary Vere’s influence in *Cymbeline*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Winter’s Tale*, *Hamlet*, *Henry IV, Part I*, and *Othello*, before returning to *Taming* to examine Katherina’s enigmatic closing speech.

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.



Cheryl Eagan-Donovan

“Shakespeare and Transphobia”

Shakespeare’s experimentation with gender roles and identity in the plays and poems is well documented by traditional Stratfordian authors and respected Oxfordian scholars. Less frequently addressed are the implications of the author’s negative capability, his capacity for uncertainty, and the prevalence of indeterminacy as a theme and motif in the plays and poems.

In this talk, I examine several sources that suggest the author’s deep understanding of what we might call the trans experience. We may begin with the plays and poems as primary evidence and then proceed to secondary evidence from the author’s contemporaries.

The exploration of Shakespeare’s gender identity and its portrayal in the works is critical to understanding the present-day political backlash against trans people specifically and freedom of expression of identity in general in our world today. Instigated fear of the unknown or misunderstood fuels violence, and only a

concerted attempt to confront and allay that fear can lead to true respect and acceptance. This theme is seen in all of Shakespeare's plays and poems. Let's look closely and utilize this knowledge as a powerful weapon in the fight for justice for all.

Bio: Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, MFA, is a writer, director, and producer whose documentary, [Nothing Is Truer than Truth](#), premiered on Hulu in 2019, is available on Amazon Prime in North America, and aired on SkyArts TV in the U.K. and in New Zealand under the title *Shakespeare: The Man Behind the Name*.

The 2019 Oxfordian of the Year, Cheryl is currently researching manuscripts pertaining to Edward de Vere's life and work, and her next film project, [All the World's a Stage: Shakespeare and the Invention of Modern Theatre](#), is in post-production. 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.



Brent Evans

Keynote Paper: "Was Delia Mad?"

This paper provides an overview of Delia Bacon's life and an examination of what she actually said in her influential 19th century writings about the authorship question. What was she like? Why did so many influential people of her time—Emerson, Hawthorne, Twain and others—identify this woman from Connecticut as one of the greatest intellects of the period?

It also looks at Delia's time in England, 1853–1858, and the reception she received. Examining her last days, especially the question of whether she was really *mad* (the term used at that time) will include a review of mental health treatments available in the mid-19th century, the conditions of the Hartford Institute for the Insane, and her brother's decision to commit her. In essence, this is a reevaluation of this woman's important legacy to the SAQ.

Bio: Brent is the President of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Board of Trustees and is focused on making internal improvements and boosting the organization's fundraising, membership and outreach efforts. He is also the SOF's official liaison with the De Vere Society in the UK. Before retiring, Brent had a long career in international marketing and trade.



Sky Gilbert

"Shakespeare and the Women of the Intronati"

This is the fifth chapter of my upcoming book *Shakespeare's Effeminacy* examining sexuality in Shakespeare's plays in the context of early modern culture in Italy.

Edward de Vere traveled to Italy for a year and-a-half starting in 1575. There he discovered *The Deceived (Gl'Ingannati)*, a comedy written by a Sienese Neo-platonic academy—the Intronati—on which *Twelfth Night* was based. *The Deceived* was performed every year since 1530 when it was written. The Intronati, a secret society of sorts, consisted of a group of noblemen, and most importantly *noblewomen* who saw it, as a part of their mission, to reach out to foreign nobles travelling in Italy.

They were dedicated to "the protection of women and princes" and centered on "a new masculinity defined around intellect and rhetorical skill." The culture of The Intronati required that "the advancement of women was required for the advancement of men."

Piccolimini, who was related to the founder of The Intronati, wrote two books extolling women: *Raffaella* and *Orazione (in praise of women)* focusing on Forteguerra, a notable lesbian poet, in which Piccolimini suggests that the most rewarding love for women occurs outside marriage. Piccolimini co-authored *Il Sacrificio*, a performance on which I would propose *Loves Labors Lost* was based—which dramatized men who unsuccessfully abjure the company of women.

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

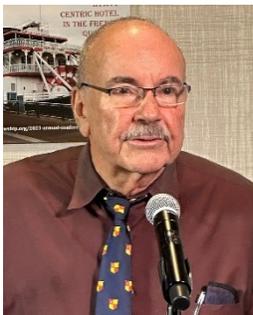
“The daughter of the Russian Emperor: Who Were Hermione’s Parents?”

The visit of the Russian envoy Fyodor Pisemsky, sent to negotiate the marriage between Ivan the Terrible and Lady Mary Hastings in 1582–1583, may offer a clue to this question. The negotiations took place behind closed doors and were so secret even Pisemsky’s secretary was not permitted into the Queen’s chamber. Pisemsky added the meeting’s details himself as a postscript to the report to Ivan the Terrible, which his secretary had otherwise written concerning their mission to London. This report has never been translated into English.

Rima’s presentation will focus on her translation of the sections of the report that pertain to Elizabeth questioning Pisemsky about the Tsar’s daughters and the fate of Lady Mary’s offspring, should such be born from this Anglo-Russian alliance.

In addition to Hermione’s words about her Russian parentage, she will address three more references to Russia in *The Winter’s Tale*, all drawing on knowledge accessible only to those close to the seat of power.

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.



John Hamill

“Penelope Rich Exposed by Marston as the ‘Dark lady’ ”

John Marston’s 1598 pamphlet *The Scourge of Villainy*, published under the pseudonym “VV. Kynsnyder” has long been seen as containing an allusion to Edward de Vere, with Charlton Ogburn Jr. noting in *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* the mysterious writer “whose silent name one letter bounds,” with Edward de Vere fitting the bill.

This talk looks at the entire document and finds many more allusions to Oxford and Shakespeare, with the mention of at least four Shakespearean works, a parable of an Ox toiling away for no recognition while an ass takes the credit, and linking Penelope Rich to Shakespeare’s “dark lady”.

Bio: John Hamill retired in 2010 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in San Francisco, where he worked as Coordinator of U.S.-Mexico Border Issues and Manager for Military Base Cleanups in California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. A native of Puerto Rico, John attended the University of Puerto Rico where he obtained his BA, and then earned his master's degree, summa cum laude, in historical geography, from the California State University in Fresno. He also attended graduate school at the University of California, Davis.

An independent scholar, John has written frequently for *The Oxfordian* and the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*. Hamill has also lectured at several Oxfordian Authorship conferences nationwide: Atlanta, Ashland Shakespeare Festival, Houston, Carmel, Ann Arbor, Hartford, Chicago, Boston, the Shakespeare Authorship Studies Conference at Concordia University in Oregon, the InterAmerican University in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable in Los Angeles. As well as his respected academic writings, John has written *Alias*, a screenplay portraying Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as the bard known as “William Shakespeare”.

John is a former President of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship (SOF) and served as President of the Shakespeare Oxford Society before its 2013 merger with the Shakespeare Fellowship, which formed the present unified SOF. He was instrumental, along with the late Tom Regnier and others, in bringing about the merger. In 2018, he was elected to the Board of Trustees and a new term as President. John was re-elected again as President in 2019 and 2020.



Matt Hutchinson

“Did Mary Sidney Suppress Edward de Vere’s Authorship of *Venus and Adonis*?”

Two of Gabriel Harvey’s 1593 pamphlets refer to an “excellent gentlewoman” who has been identified variously as Elizabeth, Amelia Bassano and Mary Sidney. In examining new allusions within the works *A New Letter of Notable Contents with a strange sonet, intituled Gorgon, or the Wonderfull Yeare*, as well as overlooked allusions in *Pierces Supererogation*, it seems likely that Harvey is saying that Mary Sidney may have played a role in suppressing Edward de Vere’s authorship of *Venus and Adonis*, and bringing in William Shakspere as a front.

Corroboration is found in an overlooked allegorical tale by Cyril Turner, *The Transformed Metamorphosis*, which also suggests Mary Sidney played a role in suppressing *V&A*. Additionally, we examine the controversial contention that Harvey may be suggesting that Mary Sidney wrote an original draft of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, which Shakespeare—Oxford—rewrote.

(Matt Hutchinson, *continued*)

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 Newsletter*, including *The Slippery Slope of Shakspere’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

Playing Edward de Vere in “Shakespearacy”

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.



Patricia Keeney

“Edward de Vere and the Mythical Mind”

Shakespeare’s Lost Kingdom: The True History of Shakespeare and Elizabeth is the title of Charles Beauclerk’s riveting 2010 biography of his aristocratic ancestor, Edward de Vere. The book tracks de Vere’s extraordinary life as the author of Shakespeare’s works, using the plays and poems themselves to do so.

Both as a long-time member of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship and as a writer myself, I have been fascinated, frustrated, confused and enthusiastic over the years as I listened to so many extraordinary papers on the authorship question at conferences while participating in often head-spinning conversations about the nature of Truth.

My own writerly instincts, however, kept calling me back to Beauclerk’s book. A passionate and poetic defense of de Vere’s rightful place as the true author whose writerly identity disappeared for centuries under the cloak of anonymity, the book compelled me ultimately with its idea of any writer being denied their rightful voice, any writer who goes unseen, unheard or unrecognized.

For me, Beauclerk throws this into sharp relief. Written with fervor and elegance, his searing account of gains and losses offers penetrating insight into the Shakespeare we all thought we knew. Beauclerk’s forensic examinations go deep, illuminating the mind of *de Vere as Shakespeare*, giving us his soul story and the fiery, transforming bond—at once sexual and existential—that bound Edward throughout his life to Queen Elizabeth.

Using Beauclerk’s vision as inspiration, I offer here my own *creative* version of what I consider to be the major mythological aspects of de Vere’s dramatic existence. No doubt, this piece requires a willing suspension of disbelief among its listeners because it begins with the well-known words: “Once upon a time...”

Bio: Canadian poet and novelist Patricia Keeney is a Lifetime Member of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. A long-time professor of English and creative writing at Toronto’s York University, she is an award-winning theatre and literary critic as well as the author of ten books of poetry and three novels. After her first authorship conference in Houston more than fifteen years ago, she visited the NASA Space Center there. Combining the two experiences, she later wrote a poem (published several times since) called “Shakespeare in Space.” It begins with the line: “Houston, we have a problem.”



Carla Kissane

Cabaret: “Petty Tyrant”

Bio: Writer-director-performer Carla Kissane is a solo performer and creator of this Shakespearean cabaret, which has been performed in the US and Europe. In 2024, she received a New York State Council on the Arts award for this solo performance which examines the Shakespearean authorship question through the lens of a female poet, trapped in poet purgatory for the crime of writing the works of William Shakespeare. Based in New York, Carla is a member of the Shakespeare Authorship Trust, and an authorship questioner.

This will be the first time she has performed this piece to anyone actually versed in the Shakespearean Authorship Question. She is very keen for responses which will make the piece of even wider interest.

Relevant links:

PETTY TYRANT webpage: <https://www.shakespeareancabaret.com/edfringe24>

2023 webpage: <https://www.shakespeareancabaret.com/pettytyrant>

Shakespearean Cabaret Media: <https://www.shakespeareancabaret.com/media>

Shakespearean Cabaret Website: <https://www.shakespeareancabaret.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/shakespeareancabaret/>



Shelly Maycock

“Charlotte Armstrong’s Solution of the First Folio Epigram”

Charlotte Armstrong appeared regularly in syndicated detective fiction magazines in the 1950s and published 28 novels, several of which became Hollywood movies (one was Marilyn Monroe’s film debut). It is my belief that she solved a cryptogram that was part of Ben Jonson’s Encomium in the First Folio and that she published her solution in one of her novels. This major contribution to the movement has been generally overlooked.

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.



Bob Meyers (with Rick Waugaman)

“Prophets Without Honor”

What do Galileo Galilei, Ignaz Semmelweis, Alfred Wegener, J. Harlan Bretz and J. Thomas Looney have in common? Each was an original thinker who applied the methods of scientific inquiry to established “facts” and was immediately ridiculed and personally humiliated, until, with the passage of time, their theories were accepted as correct. The speakers will review these stories and discuss the forces that inhibit people from discarding disproven theories.

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.*

He is a former President of the SOF.



William S. Niederkorn

“Bombshells, from Miranda to Mistress Quickly”

In *Tempest* and *Two Gentlemen*, Miranda, Julia, Lucetta and Silvia display many admirable qualities but are ultimately treated as commodities in an aristocratic social and cultural world dominated by men. *Merry Wives* in its two authoritative versions not only depicts an entirely different social stratum but also reflects progress in sexual politics, with Mistress Ford, Mistress Page, Anne Page, and Mistress Quickly merrily thwarting male hegemony.

I propose that while Oxford conceived *Tempest* and *Two Gentlemen* and did the lion’s share of their scripting, his contributions to *Merry Wives* were circumscribed. I attribute to him the invention of the character and story of Fenton and their effects on the Anne Page storyline, along with some sculpting and polishing of the rest of the 1602 script as playwright/editor.

In my analysis, the importance of contributions by "the Princippall Actors in all these Playes" briefly discussed in my volume on *The Tempest* expands with the subsequent volumes, and I entertain the possibility that the principal playwright of *Merry Wives* was none other than William Shaksper, which would justify his having a share in the alias William Shakespeare.

The evidence for this theory arises in part from a side-by-side analysis of the two texts of *Merry Wives*. Traditionally the priority has been accorded to the 1623 text, but my analysis demonstrates that the 1602 text is the original and the Folio text a write-through by Ben Jonson, in which he brazenly disparages Shaksper with the character William.

I date the first performance of *Merry Wives* to the end of the 1580s/beginning of the 1590s.

In addition, I will advance a corollary theory on the expedient use of Falstaff and his circle for the *Henry IV* plays when it became necessary to replace Oldcastle.

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. Using the textual discovery methods of 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 *Venus and Adonis* and *The Tempest*, he has substantially completed studies of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Comedy of Errors*, and plans to continue through as much of the Shakespeare oeuvre as world and time allows. A member of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship and 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

Host: Session One

Bio: Phoebe Nir holds degrees from Brown University and NYU, and has contributed pieces to *The Oxfordian*, the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, 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.



Nic Panagopoulos

“The Socratic Component of *Hamlet*”

Hamlet is Shakespeare’s most philosophical work. The protagonist, as though wishing to illustrate the Socratic maxim that “the unexamined life is not worth living” (*Apology* 38a), spends most of the play ruminating over or debating properly philosophical questions such as the character of the good ruler, the nature of justice, the strength of the passions, life after death, and the virtuous life. These are questions which are not normally explored by Nordic revenge heroes, and certainly not in such depth, but they are the staple

of Attic tragedy and its philosophic correlative, the Platonic dialogue. Shakespeare and Plato could in fact be considered colleagues, with the latter writing plays before turning to philosophy, and Socrates’ apparent collaboration with Euripides lending support to Nietzsche’s attack on the playwright for producing a fallen tragedy of words rather than a true tragedy of action—something that *Hamlet* seems to illustrate.

The implications for authorship are clear. Whereas Stratfordians attempt to dodge the question of a Shakespeare who knew Plato without speaking Greek, by referring to accessible Neoplatonic sources in Ficino and Montaigne or attributing the author’s undeniable classicism to informal chats with the University Wits in the Boar’s Head tavern, Oxford was schooled in Greek, purchased a folio edition of Plato in 1569, and also collected editions of other Greek works. Moreover, the 1573 translation of *Cardanus Comforte*, which Oxford underwrote and has traditionally been identified as “Hamlet’s book,” contains 31 separate references to Socrates, while Book 2 of Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, available in Thomas Smith’s library, provides a summary of Socrates’ life and thought. Thus, in combination with the most recent “Greek turn” in Shakespeare studies pioneered by Earl Showerman and Roger Stritmatter that has amply demonstrated the author’s familiarity with Greek history, epic, and drama, the present paper argues for an urgent re-evaluation of Ben Jonson’s sadly misconstrued “small Latin and less Greek”.

Although orthodox studies have tended to explore general links between Shakespeare’s and Plato’s political thought, or the so-called “ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy” (*Rep.* 607b), the present paper traces the specifically Socratic component of Shakespeare’s magnum opus. Not only do we find a bias towards Platonic metaphysics and ethics in Hamlet’s privileging of the spirit over the body and truth over falsehood, but his “antic disposition” is viewed as a kind of Socratic *elenchus* by which Shakespeare’s philosopher-Prince seems to test the prejudices of the other characters. We can even identify a kind of Socratic *eironia* in Hamlet’s speech which is designed not only to produce philosophically productive *aporia* in his interlocutors, but constitutes a comparable veiling of his challenge to the social order, until the truth can no longer be concealed. Thus, the present paper comes to offer philosophical support to Showerman’s *Shakespeare’s Greater Greek* (2025) while also corroborating Daryl Kaytor’s claim that, “As we grapple with the long and divergent tracks of Shakespeare’s philosophic interests, all roads of true understanding inevitably lead back to Plato”.

Bio: Nic Panagopoulos is Assistant Professor of English Literature & Culture at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. He is the author of *The Fiction of Joseph Conrad: The Influence of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche* (1998), *Heart of Darkness and The Birth of Tragedy: A Comparative Study* (2007). He has also co-edited with Maria Schoina of *The Place of Lord Byron in World History: Studies in His Life, Writings, and Influence* (2013). Besides his work on Joseph Conrad, he has published on a wide range of canonical writers (e.g. Plato, Swift, Byron, Dickens, Huxley, Orwell) using a comparative philosophical methodology. His recent articles include “Physis and Nomos in *King Lear*,” *Shakespeare and Greece*, Alison Finlay & Vassiliki Markidou, eds., Bloomsbury, 2016, pp. 115–138, and “Justice in *The Republic* and *King Lear*,” *Merope: Journal of Humanities*, Anno XXXI, no.74 (July 2021): 19–44. Although a life-long student and now passionate teacher of Shakespeare, he is a relative newcomer to the Oxford Movement, but keen to contribute to the SAQ.



Sean Phillips

“Decrypting de Vere: Anagrams and The Friedman Conditions”

In their landmark work on the subject, *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined*, William and Elizebeth Friedman debunked all known cryptographic claims of authorship within the

Shakespearean Corpus. They also established the properties to be required of any genuine claim, properties now known as the Friedman Conditions, which have been sufficient to debunk all further claims coming after their work. This paper will propose an entirely new cryptographic claim in the form of a uniquely clear and complex anagram construction, and will evaluate it against the Friedman Conditions.

Bio: Sean Phillips is a freelance epistemologist, historian, and former journalist. A self-taught expert in cryptography and the Friedman Conditions, he first presented on this subject at the 2006 joint conference run by the Shakespeare Fellowship and the Shakespeare Oxford Society in Ann Arbor. An Oxfordian for more than two decades, he lives in Boston.



Robert Prechter

“Determining True Female Pioneers of Creative Writing in English”

Scholars have cited 18 names of purported women writers from 1350 to 1650 in England. I propose that seven of them are not the authors of the celebrated material attached to their names. I identify five hidden authors, one of whom is the Earl of Oxford. I will end by proposing a proper list of women writers who truly deserve to be celebrated for pioneering original poetry, plays and prose fiction in English.

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

“Comedies, Political Context, and Theory of Mind: Redating the Plays”

Elizabethan dramatic performances frequently mirrored the political climate of the day. As Hamlet states, the plays “are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time.” (1) Earl Showerman presented a compelling example of such a reflection when describing the political allusions to Mary Queen of Scots in *Hamlet* at the SOF conference last year (2).

Hamlet also asserts “The play’s the thing Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King,” (3) suggesting that performances may have conveyed messages directly to Queen Elizabeth, aiming to influence her opinions and shape policy. Much like the threat of Mary, Queen of Scots, Queen Elizabeth’s marriage—and by extension, her foreign policy and succession plans—generated significant controversy during her reign. Though Queen Elizabeth initially engaged only superficially with marriage proposals, the possibility of a real commitment became more plausible in the 1570s, during her courtship with the youngest of the French princes, the Duc of Alençon. This courtship, which began in 1570, lasted until Alençon’s death in 1584.

As the debate over Elizabeth’s marriage and its political implications dominated the court, playwrights could animate the marriage dilemma on the stage, potentially swaying the Queen through comedies which, by definition, revolve around marriage, a central theme that preoccupied and divided many members of the Queen’s advisors during the Alençon courtship.

Oxford scholars have presented substantial evidence for re-dating many of the plays in the canon to an earlier period, most recently in an article by Matt Hutchinson. (4) Using a Theory of Mind approach, this paper identifies previously unrecognized topical allusions to the Queen’s marriage with Alençon and the tensions surrounding Elizabeth’s marriage negotiations in Shakespeare’s comedies, building on Oxfordian arguments for an earlier dating of the plays. A careful analysis of comedies such as *As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Merchant of Venice* suggest these plays may have been written during a time when Elizabeth’s potential marriage to Alençon loomed large in the hearts and minds of Elizabethans.

By examining linguistic references, character connections, and plot elements, I argue that many of Shakespeare’s comedies were likely written during the period when the prospect of Elizabeth’s marriage to the Alençon dominated the court. Such an earlier dating of the comedies provides additional evidence against the Stratfordian authorship argument and in support of candidates with knowledge of the Alençon negotiations who were active at court between 1570 and 1584.

(1) *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene 2, line 1597.

(2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEH9ATEjzAQ>

(3) *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene 2, line 1679-1680.

(4) Hutchinson, M., “When Were Shakespeare’s Plays Written? Three Major Plays as Test Cases,” *The Oxfordian*, Vol. 26, 2024. He ante-dates *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest*.

Bio: Lisa Quattrocki-Knight has been affiliated with the Harvard Medical School’s Department of Psychiatry for over 30 years and continues the long tradition of psychiatrists—beginning with Sigmund Freud—who question Shakespeare’s identity. She has a medical doctorate and a PhD in neuroscience from Yale and did her undergraduate work at Stanford where, as a Biology student, she wrote a thesis on Leonardo da Vinci. She points out that her Stratfordian father taught Shakespeare at Ohio University. She earlier presented a paper on the sonnets at the SOF’s 2024 conference in Denver.



Don Rubin
Conference Chair

Playing the Scholar in “Shakespearacy”

Bio: Don Rubin is a former actor, long-time theatre critic 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 web journal, *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 on John Cranford Adams’ reconstruction of the Globe stage and worked there with Shakespeare scholar Bernard Beckerman, author of *Shakespeare at the Globe*. A graduate of the University of Bridgeport’s Shakespeare Institute, his earliest productions of the Bard were seen at the American Shakespeare Theater in Stratford, Conn.

He has written professionally for the *New Haven Register*, the *Toronto Star* and CBC Radio (where he worked for two years with Alex Trebek), and 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*.” A long-time member of the SOF’s Board of Trustees, he is the current president of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition.



Earl Showerman

“Parallel Lives of Shakespeare’s Helena and Oxford’s Anne”

“Maybe no other play reflects such a direct examination, by Shakespeare, of his own conscience.... Shakespeare’s guilt concerning his wife would be enough to suggest the role of Helena in a scheme of self-renovation. She incarnates the new spiritualized level from which Shakespeare conducts his correction of his own outgrown ego...”

— Ted Hughes, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being* (1992)

This presentation will expand upon Hughes’ assertion in establishing numerous easily recognizable direct parallels between Shakespeare’s Helena and Oxford’s first wife, Anne. These include that they were both elevated to become countesses, enamoured of reluctant aristocrats whose households they shared since youth. Royal approval was exercised in tying the bonds of both marriages, but in both cases the grooms made their way to Italy before consummating their unions. Both Helena and Anne were recognized as successful practicing medical empirics, having each been trained by a parent deeply involved in the study of medicine. Unexpected pregnancies were reported for both women, and both as associated with the notorious bed trick. Both were also recognized for their facility as poets. Finally, a re-examination of the dating of *All’s Well* will develop the possibility that the play was written in the immediate aftermath of Anne’s passing in 1588 and would serve as a self-consciously critical apologia to the Cecil family.

In his chapter, “The She-Doctor and the Miraculous Cure of the King’s Fistula in *All’s Well that Ends Well*,” David Hoeniger provides details of the Paracelsian elements of Helena’s approach to the French

King's incurable fistula. Helena is described as "Doctor she who uses Paracelsian language in bearing a "sanctified" remedy, "fortified by divine grace."

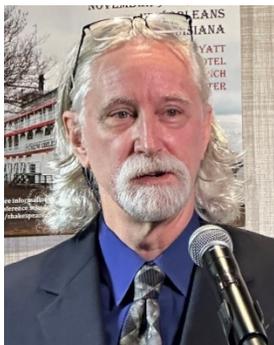
The attitude that medicine is a holy calling and the conviction that some virtuous practitioners were particularly favored by God in their skill, discoveries and cures were widespread among religious-minded physicians, surgeons, and women in Shakespeare's time. Their heaven-sent cures revealed God's love of humanity in new telling ways. This conviction was asserted with vigor by Paracelsus and his followers, who claimed that their methods and remedies were Christian, not pagan or infidel like those of traditional Greek and Arabic medicine. In Shakespeare's time, the mother of Francis Bacon, daughter of Sir Anthony Coke, and also Lady Burleigh, wife of the great statesman, were among the women similarly knowledgeable in medicine.

Hoenerger further notes that from 1570 to 1593, John Hester, "the man who would single-handedly bring Paracelsianism across the English Channel" published ten translations of Paracelsian tracts with long lists of new recipes, including two new secret medicines for the cure of fistulas in *The First Part of the Keye of Philosophie*: John Hester's first translation project was the, *Phioravantes Discourse on Surgery* (1580), which was dedicated to Earl of Oxford. Ann Cecil de Vere also received medical volume dedications from George Baker, Queen Elizabeth's surgeon and Master of the Barber Surgeons Company.

Ron Hess discovered further evidence of Cecil family medical practice. In his unpublished article, "Oxfordian Musings on Medical Matters," Hess included the text from a folio book of "Phisicke and Chirurgery" belonging to a Mr. William Pickering: "*Acoppye of all suche Medicines wherewt the noble Countisse of Oxenford most charitably, in her owne person, did manye great and notable Cures upon her poore Neighbors.*" Hess concluded that Ann Cecil, like her mother and aunt, was an "empiric" medical practitioner like Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*. George Baker dedicated his *Newe Jewell of Health* to Ann in grand language:

The *New Jewel* will make the blind to see and the lame to walk. The *New Jewel* will make the weak to become strong, and the old, crooked age appear young and lusty. This *New Jewel* will make the foul seem beautiful, and the withered faces show smooth and fair. Yea, it will heal all infirmities and cure all pains in the whole body of man.

Bio: Dr. Earl Showerman, is a past 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 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*. He is the author of a chapter on Shakespeare's medical knowledge in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* (2013), contributed three essays to *Know-It-All Shakespeare* (2017), edited by Ros Barber, and most recently self-published *Shakespeare's Greater Greek*, a compilation of 20 years of research. 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

"Shakespeare's Women in the Audley End Annotations"

Several recent SOF and Blue Boar lectures have shown that the Audley End annotations, as established by modern forensic methods in the *Journal of Forensic Document Examination* (2023), are in the handwriting of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. It was also confirmed, as first proposed by John Casson and William Rubinstein in 2016, that some of these annotations appear to have an uncanny correspondence with elements—character, plot, theme, motif, and dramatic action—of both *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

In all the Audley End books contain over 1800 separate annotations, including notes on as many as thirty-four major and minor characters in these two Shakespeare plays, as well as covering many elements of plot, dramatic action, themes, and literary motifs in them. Among them are extensive notes on Cleopatra and more cursory ones, often corresponding to aspects of their characters in the plays, on Portia, Fulvia, and Octavia.

One note (Dio 45, 329) describes Portia as the daughter of Cato and the wife of Brutus, exactly as the Portia of *Merchant* as well as *Julius Caesar* does; in another note she commits suicide herself by “swallowing fire” (*carbonem devorat*) (Dio 46, 217).

Cleopatra, with eighteen notes about her, is the most fully developed female character in the Audley End notes. A whole sequence covering key elements of dramatic action in *Antony and Cleopatra*, especially scenes 3–5: with Julius Caesar, she is “strong in beauty, grace, and pleasure” (Dio 42.169); Antony, captivated by her, comes to Egypt (48.269); the Roman Senate declares war on her and Antony (50.443); she and Antony flee from the battle of Actium (50.509); Caesar sends Thyrus with mandates to demand her surrender (51.25); she encloses herself in her monument and pretends to kill herself, provoking Antony to attempt his own suicide (51.29); Antony dies in her arms (51.31); Octavius sends the envoys Proculeius and Epaphroditus to her and they disarm her (51.33); Cleopatra, enclosing herself in her “monument” (*tumulus*) where she “pretends” (*simulat*) her own death. Antony, “hearing of this” (*qua audita*), kills himself in response to the false news. Cleopatra meets with Caesar (51.35); Cleopatra blushes when meeting with Caesar and makes eyes at him (51.35); fearing to be led in triumph at Rome, she commits suicide for real (51.39).

Over a hundred years ago, John Thomas Looney (1920), in first arguing that the plays were written by Edward de Vere also predicted that “new data may be unearthed,” leaning to “larger and truer results” (414). These notes supply the “larger and truer results” Looney anticipated.

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 PhD 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*.



Elisabeth Waugaman

“The Role of Women in *1 Henry VI*: A Psychological Mirror”

1 Henry VI is probably Shakespeare’s most misunderstood play. Is Joan of Arc a witch, or a saint, or both, or neither? Why is she described with so many contradictions? What historical comparisons does Shakespeare make between Joan and Queen Elizabeth I? Why?

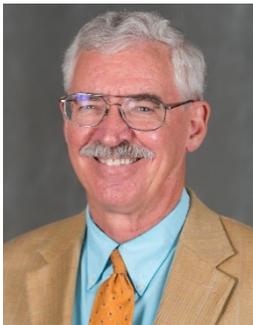
Women mentioned in the play are shrouded in mystery. Who is the Duke of Gloucester’s “proud wife”? Could it be his first wife, Jacqueline de Hainault, rather than his second wife, Eleanor of Cobham? What do the two wives reveal about the Duke? Why does the Countess of Auvergne play such a strange role—capturing Talbot, only to be captured herself? What is the point of that scene? Why does Shakespeare even bother to mention Henry VI’s brief betrothal to the daughter of the Earl of Armagnac? What ironies does Marguerite of Anjou reveal?

Joan of Arc dressed as a man. How was this influence felt in English society and did it have any lingering influence not only in English society but also in Shakespeare’s plays? What was Shakespeare saying

between the lines with these cross-dressing females inspired by Joan of Arc in what many scholars believe to be his first play?

Before he was thirteen years old, Edward de Vere was betrayed by his two closest female relatives—his mother and his sister—both of whom tried to disinherit him. One can only imagine the psychic damage of such a betrayal at such a young age. Facing that kind of psychic trauma, could females ever be trusted? Despite their supposed weaknesses, underestimating women was not only foolhardy, and shortsighted, but also dangerous. Could the complexity of Shakespeare’s female characters be inspired by Oxford’s problematic relationship with women beginning at such a young age? Does the image of cross-dressing in Shakespeare’s work reflect the complexity of women’s characters as crossing psychic borders in ways men do not always understand?

Bio: Elisabeth Waugaman has a PhD in Medieval French Literature from Duke University. She was on the faculty at Duke and The Johns Hopkins University. She was awarded the Santos-Dumont medal by the Brazilian government for her book on Alberto-Santos Dumont, *Follow Your Dreams, the Story of Alberto Santos-Dumont* and was featured at the centennial celebration of Santos-Dumont’s first flight at the Smithsonian Museum of Air and Space. She is also the author of *Women, Their Names, and the Stories They Tell*. She has published articles in “*Travel, Contact, Exchange*,” *The 34th Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum*, *The American Psychoanalyst*, *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, *The Oxfordian*, and *The Journal of Scientific Exploration*. She has blogged for *Psychology Today-on-line*, *Nameberry*, *Atlas Obscura*, and *The Freelance History Writer*. She is on the faculty of *New Directions in Writing* for the Baltimore-Washington Center for Psychoanalysis.



Rick Waugaman (with Bob Meyers)

“Prophets Without Honor”

What do Galileo Galilei, Ignaz Semmelweis, Alfred Wegener, J. Harlan Bretz and J. Thomas Looney have in common? Each was an original thinker who applied the methods of scientific inquiry to established “facts” and was immediately ridiculed and personally humiliated, until, with the passage of time, their theories were accepted as correct. The speakers will review these stories and discuss the forces that inhibit people from discarding disproven theories.

Bio: Richard M. Waugaman, MD is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Georgetown University School of Medicine, and Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland. He is a Training and Supervising Analyst, Emeritus at the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute. He majored in Philosophy at Princeton, where Walter Kaufmann supervised his senior thesis on Nietzsche and Freud. He received his MD from Duke Medical School.

Rick caught the Oxfordian bug by reading the 2002 *New York Times* article about Roger Stritmatter’s pivotal research on de Vere’s Geneva Bible. That led to Rick’s own research at the Folger Shakespeare Library. With Roger’s generous collaboration, he discovered a major new literary source for Shakespeare’s works in the marked psalms bound at the back of de Vere’s Bible, in the musical *Whole Book of Psalms*. Half of Rick’s 230 publications are on Shakespeare and the authorship question. For ten years, he has been a regular reviewer of books on Shakespeare for the mainstream *Renaissance Quarterly*. His two ebooks are *Newly Discovered works by “William Shake-Speare,” a.k.a. Edward de Vere* and *It’s Time to Re-Vere the Works of “William Shake-Speare”: A Psychoanalyst Reads the Works of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford*.



Joella Werlin

First Folio Foolery—Spotlight on Countess Mary Sidney Herbert and Lady Mary Sidney Wroth”

No matter how we parse the words or decode symbols and punctuation on the 17th century title pages of *Shake-Speares Sonnets* (1609) and *Mr. William Shakespeares /Comedies /Histories /Tragedies* (1623), it is obvious that the name “Shakespeare” is meant to fool the non-cognoscenti. Fool or no, I assert that these works conceal Shake-speares (plural!) as producers or writers and that two most directly connected were women, namely, Countess Mary Sidney Herbert, mother of the two Folio dedicatees, and her scandalously assertive niece and namesake Mary Sidney Wroth.

Consider this reality behind my plural authorship argument: Near two decades passed between the death of Edward de Vere and the earliest release of the First Folio in December 1623. Of the 36 plays in the collection, 18 were previously unpublished and ten are substantially different from earlier published versions. That leaves only eight Shakespeare plays that can retroactively satisfy claim for an “authoritative” Shakespeare imprimatur, presumed to be that of Edward de Vere. Even assuming that de Vere was the genius progenitor of *all* of the plays, somebody or somebodies had to have taken on the enormous task of choosing and completing unfinished manuscripts and editing final copy for publication.

I suggest that at least some of those eighteen plays show the hand of Countess Mary Herbert or Lady Mary Wroth. For my insights, I draw heavily on several works by Sidney family biographer Margaret P. Hannay (d.2016). Hannay, I hasten to add, never overtly reveals any suspicion that either woman wrote behind the Shakespeare pseudonym. But, in tantalizing ways, Hannay speaks about how Shakespeare appears to have been influenced by writings of Countess Mary, e.g., “Shakespeare’s *Anthony and Cleopatra* is indebted to her *Antonius* for some phrasing and for elements of characterization.” Not even Hannay can fathom biographical truth in Mary Wroth’s fantasy *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania* (1621)—title referring to the world of her close friend Susan Vere, wife of her cousin Philip Herbert—or Wroth’s earlier pastoral drama, *Love’s Victory* (1619). These works are said to expose numerous “plot devices” showing Shakespeare’s “influence,” such as that of enforced marriage. (*The Taming of the Shrew* is cited as an example.)

I assert that the “plot devices” in some plays credited to “Shakespeare” in fact originate with Mary Wroth. Oxfordians may recall that J. Thomas Looney thought *The Tempest* was so inferior that only selected passages could have been written by de Vere. I take courage from Looney to think differently about Miranda’s (or Mary’s) “O brave new world” and *Tempest*’s position as the lead play in the Folio.

Bio: Joella Werlin attended her first SOF conference in Ashland, Oregon, in 2010, having been captivated by the authorship controversy through an audiobook recording of M. Anderson’s *Shakespeare by Another Name*. For her research, she has drawn from her interest in cultural history, jobs in rare books and book publishing, fifteen years as a TV producer, and professional experience as a family historian. She recently explored the First Folio in two articles for the De Vere Society Newsletter and a DVS webinar. She holds a graduate Diploma in Social Anthropology from Oxford, enabling access to the Bodleian Library, where the Shakespeare myth appears staunchly defended.

For your entertainment

The Oxtones

On Saturday during the Awards Lunch, the SOF volunteer singers known as the Oxtones, a group led by Phoebe Nir, will be offering up their musical version of Sonnet 17. We offer the words here in case you would like to join in either onstage or from the audience. See Phoebe to participate.

Sonnet 17

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?
Though yet, heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life and shows not half your parts.

If I could write the beauty of your eyes
And in fresh numbers number all your graces
The age to come would say 'This poet lies;
Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces.'

So should my papers yellow'd with their age
Be scorn'd like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage
And stretched metre of an antique song:

But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice; in it and in my rhyme.