



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

Vol. 61, No. 4

Published by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship

Fall 2025

Presentations, Performances and Pizza in New Haven

by Virginia Evans, Tom Goff, Tom Harrigan, Heidi Jansch and Alex McNeil



The 2025 SOF Annual Conference delivered unique experiences for the attendees, with opportunities to tour Yale's Beinecke Rare Book Library, where we could actually touch First Folios, or the Yale Center for British Art, with illustrations from the 1500s.



Much thanks to Ellie Slotkin for arranging tours to the Beinecke Rare Book Library (above) and Yale Center for British Art (below).



Photos by Lucinda Foulke



Meeting old friends & making new at the Thursday reception: (above left) Julia Woosnam, Amanda Hinds, Jack Shuttleworth, Amanda Eliasch & Hank Whittemore; (above right) Lindy Burnham & Bonner Miller Cutting; (below left) Cheryl Eagan-Donovan & Heidi Jannsch; (below right) Brent Evans, Ken Gray, Alex & Jill McNeil.



This year's annual Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Conference began on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at the Omni Hotel in New Haven, Connecticut, as conference organizer Don Rubin, welcomed participants attending in person and virtually. SOF President Brent Evans then outlined the extensive array of projects that the organization is undertaking, including producing videos and other materials for teachers, playgoers and anyone who loves Shakespeare; funding research; expanding membership and fundraising; and redesigning the website. He noted that volunteer help was being

sought for these initiatives and reminded attendees that the origin of the word "fellowship" in the organization's title referred to someone who invested property for a purpose—a partner creating a shared interest. He impressed upon listeners that in a world of much toxic online communication, our ability to maintain a spirit of open inquiry, even in the face of disagreement, would keep us from descending into unbecoming conduct, and that a respect for our shared purpose was in keeping with our individual and collective commitment to that purpose.

(Continued on p. 10)

The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

Published quarterly by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, P. O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466-0083,
www.ShakespeareOxfordFellowship.org.



The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to investigating the Shakespeare Authorship Question and disseminating the evidence that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550–1604), is the true author of the poems and plays written under the pseudonym “William Shakespeare.”

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship pursues its mission by supporting research, educational and scholarly initiatives, annual conferences, website and social media, and by publishing this Newsletter and an annual scholarly journal, *The Oxfordian*.

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship was formed in 2013 when the Shakespeare Oxford Society, founded in 1957, and the Shakespeare Fellowship, founded in 2001, united to form a single organization. Dues, grants and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

TRUSTEES

Brent Evans, President; Education & Outreach Chair
Bonner Miller Cutting, Vice President; Nominations Chair
Eva Varelas, Treasurer; Finance Chair
Tom Townsend, Secretary; Membership & Fundraising Chair

Dorothea Dickerman, Trustee; Online Communications Chair
Jonathan Jackson, Trustee
Bob Meyers, Trustee; Print Communications Chair
Phoebe Nir, Trustee
Bryan H. Wildenthal, Trustee; Website Content Editor

Articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items of interest to the Shakespeare Oxfordian community are welcome. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. As provided in the bylaws, “The conferences, publications, and other educational projects of the Fellowship will be open forums for all aspects of the Oxfordian theory of authorship.”

Heidi Jansch, Newsletter editor: newsletter@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org

Lucinda S. Foulke, Newsletter layout & design; Alex McNeil, Editor Emeritus

Advertising Rates: \$120 for full page, \$80 for half-page, \$50 for quarter-page.

Printed by Minuteman Press, Waltham, MA © 2026 by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship

From the President

Fellowship. The word derives from an old Norse word “felagi,” which means “one who puts down property for a common purpose.” Felagi came from “feh,” meaning money or cattle and “lag” (lodge), meaning the act of laying. Old English borrowed from Old Norse to form the word “Feologa,” which meant a partner. Middle English added “scip” to form “Feolagscip” (Feh-oh-lodge-skip). Say it fast and you’ll hear “fellowship,” the condition of being a fellow, a partner or companion.

There’s no gendered context here. Our use of that term says we are a community of interest, an association with a common purpose. We Oxfordians often disagree with one another (as we should!) about particular points of scholarship and interpretation, but in this spirit of open inquiry, we must remember our common purpose. Let’s always rise above the toxicity we observe today in the digital world, in the clickbait we see on our phones, and in the political infighting we see among politicians. By staying respectful and striving together in this fellowship, we can accomplish great things!

And we are!

We have four new board members joining the Board of Trustees this year: Phoebe Nir, Jonathan Jackson, Eva Varelas and Bryan H. Wildenthal (now serving in place of Tom Woosnam, who recently stepped down from the board). All are multitalented, energetic and enthusiastic and will work hard to make our Fellowship the best it can be.

New SOF activities and committees are popping up all over. Other SOF volunteers are joining with your board of trustees to work on new and dynamic videos. Each will be designed to serve triple purposes: 1) educating students, 2) enticing new members through our outreach efforts, and 3) engaging our members and YouTube viewers with entertaining and edifying new content.

Together, your Board of Trustees is working to strengthen SOF internal operations. Each of our nine trustees is entrusted with a particular area of responsibility and authority to ensure we will meet our goals. Collectively, we’re working on the following tasks:

- Ensuring we follow fiscal and financial management best practices

- Updating our digital support tools to make our website perform better
- Consolidating our internal assets such as board and committee reports, minutes, publication layouts, photos and other intellectual property in a safe, cloud-based location
- Creating new content for our weekly email news to members and other subscribers
- Contracting with professional, transparent web management and videography vendors to ensure reliable support at expected budgeted cost
- Planning new and exciting future conference venues

As for outreach, we now offer ready-to-use, downloadable teaching materials on our website for anyone to use. We will be promoting those educational aids at the National Council of Teachers Convention in Denver just before Thanksgiving. Tens of thousands of secondary level English teachers will see our advertisement in the convention magazine while many of the 8,000 attendees will stop by our booth to talk to us and go home with books and materials about Edward de Vere and the authorship question. You can check out these

teachers' resources yourself under the "Discover Shakespeare" tab on our homepage.

We are also expanding our advertising campaign in Shakespeare theaters throughout North America. We're starting with the largest ones such as the Stratford Festival in Ontario (with a potential viewership of 360,000 playgoers), the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (400,000 playgoers), Atlanta Shakespeare Company (52,000 patrons), and the American Shakespeare Company in Virginia (39,000 patrons). With the help of a SOF volunteer subcommittee dedicated to this project, we're branching out to much smaller "Shakespeare in the Park" type companies as well. These free summer productions are where we'll catch the attention of a different set of playgoers: teens, college students, and families with kids.

We are doing a lot and intend to do more! But please remember, the SOF's sole source of funds comes from you, our members. Our new monthly giving option makes it convenient to do at <https://shakespeare-oxfordfellowship.org/donate-to-sof/>.

Your membership and generous donations make all this possible! Thank you.

— Brent Evans

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

This is in response to "The Monument: Then and Now: An Interview with Hank Whittemore," in the Summer 2025 issue of the *Newsletter*.

With the publication of a new edition of his book *The Monument*, Hank continues to argue that *Shakespeare's Sonnets* reveal that Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, was the illegitimate son of Edward de Vere and Elizabeth I and the legitimate heir to the throne. Leaving aside the fact that a secret royal bastard wouldn't have been regarded as a prince, or a legitimate heir to the throne (per Thomas Regnier's article on Tudor Succession Law in *Brief Chronicles IV*), the Southampton Prince Tudor theory is contradicted by documentary evidence that Hank fails to address, either in *The Monument* or in his *Newsletter* interview.

Even before the publication of *The Monument* in 2005, Oxfordian researcher Christopher Paul published a definitive refutation of both the theory that Oxford was the son of Queen Elizabeth and the PT theory that

Southampton was the son of Oxford and the Queen in his 2002 TOX article, "The Prince Tudor Dilemma: Hip Thesis, Hypothesis, or Old Wives' Tale?" After 23 years, no PT theorist has written a rebuttal to Christopher Paul's article.

Even just one inconvenient fact can be enough to invalidate a theory, and in the case of the Southampton PT theory there are several such inconvenient facts. Here are three of them:

In 1575, before leaving on his continental tour, Oxford wrote an indenture in which he said who he was and identifying his family members, including the statement that he "hathe not anye yssue of his boddye as yett borne." Why would he have issued such a clear denial if, in fact, he had a son by Queen Elizabeth, born in 1573? To explain this away, PT theorists must claim that Oxford was either unaware that he had a son by the Queen, or that he was lying. As Chris Paul states, this indenture "flatly refutes every aspect of the various PT theories." The fact that the indenture is unsigned is irrelevant because Oxford clearly wrote it himself.

One PT theorist (not Hank) responded, “What would anyone expect de Vere to say if he had fathered a child by the Queen? [Such matters] were subjects of the greatest sensitivity..., and public discussion of them was punishable by death.” The answer is simple: One would expect he would have said *nothing* about such a child, rather than denying its existence in a legal document, disowning it. Oxford was clever enough to know that he did not have to lie; he could simply have said that he and his wife had no children yet and let it go at that. That would have met the requirements of the indenture and been sufficient. It was unnecessary to make a general statement that he had no issue of his body yet born, but he did. Oxford’s own words directly contradict the PT theory, and there is no reason to doubt what he wrote.

Second, what Paul called “perhaps the most compelling evidence for Henry Wriothesley’s blood relationship to the Countess of Southampton” is a letter from Henry Howard to the Earl of Essex of November 12, 1598. In this letter Howard quotes the dowager Countess of Southampton as saying that her son “sprang” from her, meaning that he was her biological child. Henry Howard’s letter recounts a conversation he had with Mary Browne about her son being upset that she meant to marry William Harvey, a marriage Wriothesley opposed. The key passage in the letter to Robert Devereaux, 2nd Earl of Essex, reads as follows:

My lady told me that [she]...hoped her son would look for no account of her proceedings in the course of marriage that made her so great a stranger to [him].... She said that children by the laws of God [owed] duty to their parents, not parents to those that sprang of them. Nature bound her to love, but nature...bound him both to love and reverence. (64–65)

Here is Christopher Paul’s assessment of this letter:

While the Countess’s remarks are secondhand, we may feel certain...that Howard has embellished neither her intention nor her meaning.... What must be dealt with here is...a contemporary account of the Countess herself claiming that the third Earl owed her...respect because he “sprang” from her and that the love which bound them to each other was derived from “nature.” “Nature,” in the sense the Countess was using it, derives

from the Latin *natura* or *natus*, meaning “nativity,” “born,” or “blood-relationship” and that it was...such a blood-relationship that made her “his own.”

One might propose that Henry Howard is only paraphrasing Mary Browne’s words, but this isn’t supported by his account. He begins with “She said,” meaning he meant to provide an accurate account. He did not say anything like Mary Browne “said words to the effect that.” And the account is detailed and specific, with the entire sentence elaborating on one idea. If the countess did not say that her son owed her respect for this reason, what reason did she give? It’s hard to imagine what else she might have said that would have made sense.

The word “sprang” is so specific that it is unlikely Howard would have paraphrased using that word unless she said something so similar that it hardly matters. It certainly does not sound as if she said he owed her duty because she raised him as her son when he was not. Paul also notes that Henry Howard and the Earl of Essex were among the most likely to know if Wriothesley was the son of Elizabeth, not the son of Mary Browne. It is therefore unlikely that Henry Howard would have paraphrased Mary Browne in a way that affirmed a mother-son biological relationship that he knew did not exist. That argument doesn’t work.

Third, of the many extant letters affirming that Wriothesley was the son of Mary Browne, Christopher Paul writes:

While it’s possible that terms such as “mother” and “son” could be exchanged between members of a non-biological relationship, it seems unlikely in this case, based on the nature and frequency of their use in all extant correspondence between or about Mary, Countess of Southampton, and Henry, the third Earl, especially as these documents so often incorporate reference to the Queen. (58)

As an example, Paul cites a letter from Mary Browne to Robert Cecil, seemingly steeped in motherly affection, as she pleads for Southampton’s life while he was in the Tower in 1601:

God of heaven knows I can scarce hold my hand steady to write, and less hold steady in my heart how to write, only for what I know, which is to pray mercy to my miserable son. Good Mr.

Secretary, let the bitter passion of a perplexed mother move you to plead for her only son.... Nothing is fitter than her [the Queen's] safety, nor any virtue can better become her place and power than mercy, which let my prayer move you to beg for me, and God move her Majesty to grant the most sorrowful and afflicted mother. (58)

It makes no sense that Mary Browne, Countess of Southampton, would beg for the Queen's mercy for her son in such terms if, in fact, the Queen was Henry's mother and not herself.

The point here is that the documentary evidence consistently shows that Mary Browne was the biological mother of Henry Wriothesley. This should be regarded as an established fact. She repeatedly claimed him as her son, and she comes across as entirely credible. In 1575, Oxford denied in a legal document having any issue. There is no reason to doubt his words.

These documents are devastating to the Prince Tudor theory. So how do PT theorists deal with them? By ignoring them, not replying to Chris Paul's article, not referring to it in their own publications, and keeping their followers in the dark about evidence that contradicts their theory. Oxfordians rightly complain when Stratfordians ignore evidence that does not support their theory, and it is incumbent on us to do better in arguing for our own theories.

The fact that PT theorists, after all this time, continue to ignore the powerful evidence that contradicts their theory, rather than addressing it head on, strongly suggests that they are unable to do so in any credible way. The occasion of the publication of a 20th anniversary edition of *The Monument* provided an opportunity to address all evidence and arguments that have been raised against it. That Hank Whittemore chose not to do so is disappointing and telling.

The time has come for Oxfordians to recognize that the Prince Tudor theory is not credible. Serious scholars will never be convinced of its validity with this kind of evidence against it. It is false, and the sooner we put this issue, which has deeply divided our movement for so long behind us, the sooner we can get on with the business of promoting Edward de Vere.

Sincerely yours,
John M. Shahan
Davis, CA

Hank Whittemore Replies to John Shahan:

Each of these "silver bullets" is intended to pierce the Prince Tudor hypothesis (that Southampton was the unacknowledged son of Oxford and Elizabeth) and to shatter its entire edifice with a single shot. (The Oxfordian theory itself has been the target of many silver bullets—the earl "died too early" to write certain plays, etc.) As John Shahan puts it, "Even just one inconvenient fact can be enough to invalidate a theory."

Well, good luck with that.

The Monument theory views the Sonnets as a real-life diary or "royal chronicle" of poems from Oxford to Southampton (the "fair youth," unacknowledged heir to the throne) and Elizabeth (the dark lady) as events proceed unrelentingly to her Majesty's death in 1603 and the succession of James. The nicknames "fair youth" and "dark lady" are nowhere to be found in the Sonnets; in the context of poetry, I believe the adjective "fair" means "royal" and that the "darkness" of the Queen refers to her all-powerful, negative view of Southampton following his arrest as a traitor for the Essex Rebellion of February 8, 1601.

The question is how to interpret any facts behind the hypothesis of Southampton as the unacknowledged son of Oxford and Elizabeth; and John cites three silver bullets intended to smash the whole of it:

1. *The Indenture (early 1575)*

Edward de Vere was in his mid-twenties and champing at the bit to make his long-anticipated Continental tour and drink in the waning European Renaissance. If in fact the Queen had given birth to a son by him the year before, only to react with scorching royal fury, Oxford would have been justifiably terrified. ("But out alack, he was but one hour mine, the region cloud [Regina's dark cloud of shame] hath masked him from me now" - Sonnet 33.11-12.) A signed indenture was necessary to gain the Queen's permission for Oxford's journey; and sure, he could have "said nothing" rather than deny having fathered any child, but would his *complete silence* satisfy the furious monarch?

2. *Howard's Letter to Essex (1598)*

Henry Howard is possibly the most manipulative, untrustworthy, devious, ambitious character in this historical landscape. He will work his way in 1601 to become a main participant in Secretary Cecil's "secret correspondence" with King James to assure



the Scottish monarch that he will succeed Elizabeth without opposition much less civil war. Writing to Essex in 1598, knowing that the popular military earl has the Queen's most intimate attention, he quotes Mary Browne saying that Henry Wriothesely now in his mid-twenties, "sprang" from her at birth. Why, in a letter to Elizabeth's current favorite, would Howard go into such detail about this woman's conversation?

That this was such a big issue for these two men should alert us. It sounds as if Howard is deliberately wishing it to be conveyed, through Essex, to both Elizabeth and Cecil (who, as James will write, "is king there, in effect"). Currently Cecil holds the power to control the looming succession and fears any attempt by Essex and/or Southampton to remove that grip on the wheels of power. If Southampton is (or even might be) an unacknowledged prince, the Secretary needs to know of these over-the-top statements by the Dowager Countess that he "sprang" from her loins. (In other words, she can be trusted.)

Based on the second Earl of Southampton's later statements accusing his wife of adultery, it appears she had begun an affair while he was in the Tower and gave birth to her lover's son on October 6, 1573. And later, the son of Oxford and the Queen would have been a "changeling boy" raised as Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton—a scenario that would account for persistent local gossip that he was the "second" son of Mary Browne.

3. *Mary Browne's Letter to Cecil (1601)*

The Dowager Countess lets Cecil know she is fully committed to her testimony that the imprisoned Earl is her natural son. What we know is that she has complained that Southampton was "never kind to me," perhaps ironically using a word that also indicates kindred. In any case, there is some mystery about this son born just a little more than five months after the Second Earl's release from his "close imprisonment" for eighteen months in the Tower—i.e., he never had any conjugal visit.

Such a visit had to happen in January 1573 to allow nine months of pregnancy, but by February 14, he was still complaining about his isolation. In March his father-in-law (Montague) was allowed to visit him while under supervision. Given that his daughter was obviously pregnant, Montague met with his son-in-law to inform him of the facts and arrange his release

without scandal. The Queen was still infuriated with the Second Earl for having questioned his allegiance to her (rather than to the Pope); he was finally liberated on May 1, 1573, and allowed to see his wife for the first time since his imprisonment a year and a half earlier.

The Second Earl will eventually banish the Countess from his life and prevent her from seeing the boy, also accusing her of adultery.



Dear Editor,

This is in response to your article with Hank Whittemore in the Summer 2025 issue of the *Newsletter* titled "The Monument: Then and Now: An Interview with Hank Whittemore."

You did a nice interview on Hank commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the publication of his book *The Monument*. Neither of you, however, emphasized that his theory that Southampton was the son of Queen Elizabeth and Oxford (Prince Tudor Theory 1) is very controversial. There is another expansion to the theory adding that Oxford was also the son of Queen Elizabeth (Prince Tudor 2). The theory is based largely on subjective literary interpretations of the Sonnets with which many Oxfordians disagree. No documentary evidence supports either version of the theory, and much documentary evidence contradicts it. I have written several letters over the years to the *Newsletter* calling attention to the lack of documentary evidence for the theory and have done presentations about it at SOF conferences and at Concordia University. As far as I know, no one has refuted my position.

In Chapter XI of my book, *The Secret Shakespeare Sex Scandals* (2022), I offer a detailed review of the PT Theory, and no one has refuted it, either. And it is not just my analysis; I quote J.T. Looney, Diana Price, Bonner Miller Cutting, Christopher Paul, Nina Green, Richard Whalen, and others who say that not only is there no evidence to support the PT Theory, but the extant evidence contradicts it. I would add that Alexander Waugh worked closely with me in the preparation of my book, including this chapter.

PT theorists also claim that Queen Elizabeth was the Dark Lady of the Sonnets, which is another logical stretch. As I point out in my book, if Queen Elizabeth was the Dark Lady of the sonnets, how can one explain the author's references to her in Sonnet 137 as "the

bay where all men ride” and “the wide world’s common place?” These extremely insulting descriptions would be treasonous if addressed to the Queen. Is this an accurate description of Queen Elizabeth? Would Oxford have characterized the Queen in such terms?

Evidence revealed over the last century repeatedly confirms Looney’s anti-PT stance. Let’s stay on the path Looney outlined: go back to the facts, rather than relying so heavily on subjective literary interpretations.

John Hamill
San Francisco, CA



Hank Whittemore Replies to John Hamill:

John Hamill has set forth his case in a book and in more than a few papers and conferences. I believe his case is motivated by a sincere view that the Sonnets are all about a love triangle involving the sexual relations between an older man (Oxford, the poet) and a younger man (Southampton) and their extraordinary subservience to a dominating woman (the dark lady) who has enormous sexual power over them. In this scenario the identity of the woman has flipped from Emelia Lanier to Anne Vavasour to Elizabeth Trentham to Penelope Rich, as if each woman can somehow fit into the real-life story within the Sonnets, until Oxford cries out to her at last:

And all my honest faith in thee is lost –
For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,
Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy,
And to enlighten thee gave eyes to blindness,
Or made them swear against the thing they see.
(152.8–12)

There was only one woman to whom Edward de Vere could have written those heart-breaking lines—only Queen Elizabeth, the “absolute monarch” whom Oxford had served with the deepest commitment from 1562, when he was twelve, until her death in 1603. This is a man whose soul has been shattered; he has tried to follow his own motto “*Nothing Truer than Truth*” only to be forced by his powerful sovereign to betray himself:

For I have sworn thee fair: more perjured eye,
To swear against the truth so foul a lie. (152.13–14)

This is a real-life tragedy set within the context of the waning Tudor dynasty, set down in pain for “eyes not yet created” (81.10).

It is all conveyed by poetry, with metaphors often revolving around the highly sexualized Queen at the center of her royal court filled with ambitious, intensely competitive males. This exclusive domain was the source of patronage and preferment for a chosen few, so it’s no wonder that Edmund Spenser could describe courtiers as male sex organs (i.e., rising and falling penises) in *Mother Hubbard’s Tale*:

Save that which common is, and known to all,
That Courtiers, as the tide, do rise and fall.
(613–614)

Oxford creates his own version near the end of the “dark lady” sequence:

No want of conscience hold it that I call
Her love, for whose dear love I rise and fall.
(151.13–14)

This sexual allusion may well have been a popular metaphor among males seeking patronage or preferment from the all-powerful goddess who presides over the royal court.

Oxford’s reference to her Majesty in Sonnet 137 as “the bay where all men ride” is his own sexual metaphor, expressing that her royal presence is where all subjects must go to possibly gain their wishes. His description of Elizabeth and the court as “the wide world’s common place” is both another sexual metaphor and a reference in 1601 to the Tower of London, where Southampton has been reduced to commoner status along with the other prisoners.

Stratfordians have had little choice but to view only the surface meanings of the Sonnets, and to assume that the real-life story involves a triangular sexual relationship among the older man, the younger man, and the tyrannical woman. Oxfordians, however, have powerful reasons to look beneath and beyond the poetical surface. The Sonnets comprise a political account of the waning Tudor dynasty for posterity.

The myth of Elizabeth as “the Virgin Queen” is just as powerful and enduring as the myth of the Stratfordian Shakespeare; in fact, they are dependent upon each other. Only Edward de Vere can shatter these two intertwining myths and lead the rest of the world, at long last, to the truth of his lifelong, glorious, ultimately losing campaign as a consummate artist to steer his nation from the disastrous lures of corruption and deceit.

What's the News?



Roger Stritmatter Receives Inaugural Alexander Waugh Award

At the De Vere Society's Autumn Meeting on October 25, 2025, Dr. Roger Stritmatter became the first recipient of the Alexander Waugh Award. Jan Scheffer introduced the award and Eliza Waugh (Alexander's widow) presented it to Roger "in recognition of the enormous contribution he has made to Oxfordian scholarship, for which we are all greatly indebted."

The award celebrated Roger's many accomplishments including his thesis on the Marginalia in Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible, his work as founder and general editor of the *Brief Chronicles* Book Series, his collaboration with Alexander Waugh on the *Shakespeare Allusion Book* (now in its final stage of editing) and his recent research on the Audley End annotations.

The DVS Board created the award in acknowledgement of Alexander Waugh's many and varied accomplishments for the Oxfordian movement. The award is meant to both recognize Oxfordian achievements and encourage continued research. Each year the award will be given to "an individual who shows a particular commitment to advancing people's understanding of De Vere as the true author, either through original and rigorous research or through writing, education, performance, or public engagement." Congratulations to Roger on receiving this great honor!



An Actor's Deep Dive into Shylock, with Oxfordian Perspective

by William S. Niederkorn

On Thursday, October 23, 2025, I attended the opening night performance of *Playing Shylock* at the Polonsky Shakespeare Center, an Off-Broadway theater in Brooklyn, New York. The show is a solo performance by the distinguished actor, director and writer Saul Rubinek.

In the context of an actor coping with cancellation of a production of *The Merchant of Venice* because of concerns about its antisemitism, Rubinek recounts his family's harrowing history in Nazi-occupied Poland, its aftermath, and their life in the theater. While most of the work concerns the controversial ramifications of the role of Shylock from a Jewish actor's point of view, Rubinek also fully endorses Edward de Vere as the playwright, referencing de Vere's sojourn in Venice and opportunity to become familiar with the Ghetto and a Jewish banker on which to model the character.

After his performance I introduced myself and conversed with Rubinek and he spoke of consulting with Roger Stritmatter on the authorship. It was great



Saul Rubinek, the star of *Playing Shylock* with William Niederkorn and Yolanda Hawkins.

to see such a tour-de-force performance and to hear the Oxfordian position articulated accurately and in detail. I highly recommend getting to Brooklyn to see it if you have the chance.

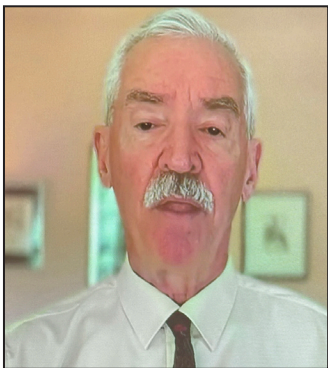
SOF Annual Conference (continued from page 2)

Day 1 – Thursday, September 18

Session One: Hosted by Phoebe Nir

In the conference’s first presentation, “Prophets Without Honor,” **Bob Meyers** and **Richard Waugaman** addressed the issue of suppression of new ideas and sounded the call for open-minded, scientific-like investigation. Meyers gave historical examples of major discoveries that ultimately had immense impact but which took some time to be accepted, including Galileo’s heliocentric model, Alfred Wegener’s theory of continental drift and Thomas Looney’s theory that Edward de Vere was the writer Shakespeare. Like the others cited, Looney employed a scientific method of inquiry, starting with a question, doing the research, coming up with a hypothesis, experimenting and then analyzing the result.

Waugaman then commented on the response provoked by such challenges to accepted facts or authorities. Galileo’s heliocentric universe displaced humans from the center of the universe and doing so wounded our self-importance. Wegener was called a “mere meteorologist” who had no explanation for the phenomenon he was proposing. Citing Thomas Kuhn’s work on paradigm shifts in science, Waugaman noted that a new theory goes through three phases: first ridicule, then indifference, and finally acceptance. The phase of ridicule includes circular reasoning on the part of those attacking the theory, name-calling, and a retreat into groupthink. The covert deification of the Stratford man’s story of rising from a modest birth to an exalted level through hard work and innate genius becomes a form of social control, a replacement for institutional

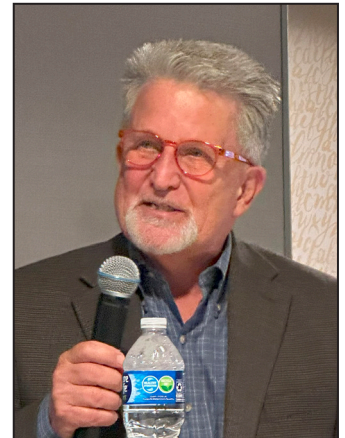


religion. It is a dreamlike narrative, quite the opposite of Edward de Vere’s high birth, outstanding education and downward life trajectory.

Brent Evans’s keynote presentation “Delia Bacon: Genius or Madwoman” focused on Delia Bacon, the first person in the modern era to publicly reject the romantic notion of a solitary genius and develop an alternative theory of Shakespeare’s authorship with her *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded* (1857). Although Bacon’s accomplishments included dazzling audiences with her lectures, beating Edgar Allan Poe in a short story contest, and writing a play for the actress Ellen Tree, her book was immediately panned. Her presence in Stratford-on-Avon was not welcomed, and its mayor had her committed. From there, she was taken back to the United States, where her brother had her placed in an asylum.

The betrayal of Nathaniel Hawthorne, both in the introduction to her book and in letters to her brother about her sanity, could well have left her dejected. Evans also noted that having suffered malaria as a young woman, it is possible that her troubles were caused by the ingestion of calomel (mercury chloride) used to treat that disease and as a sedative in cases of “insanity.” Its negative effects are known to modern medicine. Whatever the case, this brilliant mind was lost to her generation, although she provided inspiration to Baconian theorists and later to one J. Thomas Looney.

In “Decrypting de Vere: Anagrams and the Friedman Conditions,” **Sean Phillips** presented the Friedman conditions as a clear and cogent means for assessing the validity of encrypted messages. These conditions include the following: the solution must be grammatical and



meaningful; it must follow clear and unambiguous rules; and it must be the only possible solution. Keyed acrostic messages rely on the structure of the text for decoding.

In two examples of a hidden author's name, the first letters of sections or paragraphs spell out the coded accreditation. Anagrams, examples of unkeyed transcriptions, do not have this type of solution but are signaled instead by an anomaly in the text, a "signpost" indicating that a hidden meaning is present. For example, Sonnets 153 and 154 seem tacked onto the sequence and are simply not very good, which makes them a "signpost" text, containing an anagram which the author is inviting readers to decode and find, in the final rather obtuse two lines, "Vere wrote these, alas if a clown stole Vere [Truth] too." The key is found in the immediately preceding statement, "This by that I prove." Phillips claimed that the coded message comments on the text in which it is found and includes the author's known meta-signature, making this a valid, if complex, decryption. His final example comes from the "problem" play *Measure for Measure*. In the pivotal scene of the trial of Isabella, she asks the Duke to "make the truth [Vere] appeare, where it seemes hid." The Duke's reply, "Many that are not mad have sure more lacke of reason," can be decoded as "My name does rant at a shaker of lances. Amour Vere. EO." Phillips granted that finding these cryptograms might make him seem mad, but that the Freidmans' strict regulations bolster the reading of what was a common Elizabethan practice.

Matt Hutchinson's paper, "Did Mary Sidney Play a Role in Suppressing Oxford's Authorship of *Venus and Adonis*?" proposed an intricate argument for answering "yes" to this question. Two works by Gabriel Harvey that appeared soon after the publication of *Venus and Adonis* allude to de Vere, using the term "bull-bear." This bull-bear has been muzzled by a "Gentlewoman rare," whom Hutchinson identifies as Mary Sidney. Harvey was entrenched in the Sidney circle and even looked to Mary Sidney to support him in his controversy with Thomas Nashe.

Hutchinson suggests the "Phoenix quill" of the "Gentlewoman rare" likely alludes to Mary Sidney rather than Queen Elizabeth. The former was so often linked to the phoenix that her modern biographer titled her work *Philip's Phoenix*. In *Pierces Supererogation*,

attacking Oxford, it is implied that the Gentlewoman may have written an earlier version of a Shakespeare play, and Hutchinson suggests this to be the original version of *Love's Labors Lost*. He also sees Armado of *Love's Labors Lost* as a clownish version of de Vere and Moth, his sidekick, as Nashe. The Sidney circle's deep involvement with both the Muscovite Company and Henry of Navarre could also have been significant. In other writings, Harvey's allusions indicate that he was aware that the name Shakespeare was a pseudonym. If Mary Sidney was responsible for "muzzling" the author in 1593, as the mother of the "incomparable paire of brethren" of the First Folio, she was possibly still working behind the scenes, so to speak, thirty years later.

In "First Folio Foolery: Spotlight on Countess Mary Sidney Herbert and Lady Mary Sidney Wroth" **Joella Werlin** highlighted the involvement of the Herbert family in the production of the First Folio. Werlin suggested that some form of covenant with the Bodleian Library was attached to their magnificent gift of the Folio, one that would keep secret the circumstances and author of that publication. Beginning with Thomas Looney's doubts about the authorship of some of the plays, Werlin proposed that both Mary Sidney and her niece Mary Wroth could have contributed significantly to their writing—with Mary Sidney's *Antonius* a possible source for de Vere, her family's background corresponding with elements in the histories, and some characters and scenes in the plays bearing comparison with Mary Sidney's life.

The day's final presentation, **Patricia Keeney's** "Edward de Vere and the Mythic Mind," provided a lyrical evocation of the emotional torture a secret Tudor Prince might have



endured. Keeney’s imaginative version was a tribute to Charles Beauclerk’s *Shakespeare’s Lost Kingdom* (2010), in which the poet’s royal muse was also his ruler and the keeper of the secret of his birth. In this gripping recitation, the poet played out his truth, ripping the goddess veil from the virgin myth, finding creative release from the torture of not knowing his identity as a royal cast-off son. His kingdom is one of writers, where William Cecil exacts his pound of flesh in impoverishing the poet. Southampton, the bargaining chip in the politics of succession, ravishes the court, and the poet writes Southampton’s story as that of the sun, a living myth. The poet and the imperial bully Queen separate their stories, but the dazzling myth of de Vere’s lost kingdom survives and rises above its shipwreck to sing down to our age.

After Thursday’s presentations, attendees had a chance to mingle and enjoy refreshments at a welcome reception in the Omni Hotel (see page 2).

Day 2 – Friday, September 19

Session Two: Hosted by Cheryl Eagan-Donovan

Shelly Maycock led the Friday morning session with “Charlotte Armstrong’s Solution of the First Folio Epigram.” Maycock presented the results of research she and Roger Stritmatter have conducted into the life and writings of suspense writer Charlotte Armstrong. Within the context of her final novel, *Seven Seats to the Moon*, published in 1969—also the year of her passing—Armstrong presented a solution to Ben Jonson’s curious First Folio epigram “To the Reader.” As Stritmatter has shown in past presentations, the message revealed in numerically key poetic feet in the epigram seems to be “Ver had his wit, Ver writ his booke.”



Included among Armstrong’s notes is her own handwritten metrical analysis of Jonson’s epigram. Considering Armstrong’s longtime interest in Shakespeare, including the authorship issue, and

her demonstrated strong encryption skills, Maycock proposed it is likely that Armstrong herself discovered the solution which she then presented in *Seven Seats*. If so, these present efforts are a welcome step in shedding light on an important contribution by Armstrong to the Oxfordian claim.

Next up was **William Niederkorn** with “Bombshells, from Miranda to Mistress Quickly.” Niederkorn provided an update on his multi-volume series, *Shakespeare Discoveries: A Secular Tour of the Works*. Following his earlier volumes on *Venus and Adonis* and *The Tempest*, the next two in the series are *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He finds the treatment of women in *Merry Wives* to be more progressive than that in *Tempest* and *Two Gentlemen*.



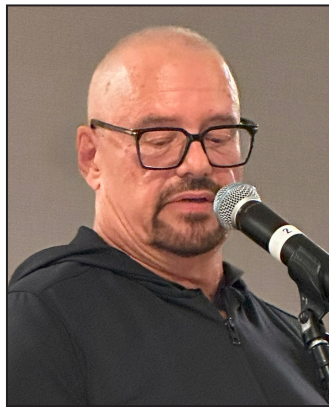
By employing textual analysis of the 1602 and 1623 texts, Niederkorn suggests that the principal playwright of *Merry Wives* might be William Shaksper of Stratford. He sees the Folio text as strongly marked by Ben Jonson’s editorial hand, including in its disparaging treatment of the character William. He also highlights the importance of contributions made by the actors themselves, finding that some parts of the plays are based on their improvisations.

Rima Greenhill then presented “The Daughter of the Russian Emperor: Who Were Hermione’s Parents?” She illustrated how *The Winter’s Tale*, like *Love’s Labours Lost*, draws on knowledge accessible to few concerning latter 16th-century English-Russian diplomatic and trade relations. Edward de Vere knew individuals highly placed on the English side, including Thomas Randolph and Sir Jerome Horsey, whose experiences in these matters seem clearly alluded to in *Winter’s Tale*.



Greenhill has also translated certain sections of a confidential report sent by Russian envoy Fyodor Pisemsky back to Tsar Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible). The report detailed the envoy's negotiations with Queen Elizabeth concerning a possible marriage between Ivan and Lady Mary Hastings. (Ivan had previously expressed interest in marrying the Queen.) Elizabeth is seen in this report in an interesting exchange questioning the envoy closely about the practices for marriage for daughters of a Russian sovereign.

In “Shakespeare and the Women of the Intronati” **Sky Gilbert** gave a lively talk on the Intronati of Siena, Italy, one of the intellectual and artistic “academies” that dotted the Italian peninsula during the Renaissance. The Intronati were special among such Neoplatonic salon circles, coerced into gently subversive liveliness by the day's politics, as Siena's ruling class was ousted by forces of the Holy Roman Empire, thus turning them toward arts and arcane knowledge. Intronati playwrighting efforts are typified by two comedies, *Il Sacrificio*, in which noblemen forswear all contact with women (sound familiar?) and *Gl'Ingranati* (*The Deceived*), long known to prefigure *Twelfth Night*. *The Deceived*, in which a cross-dressing woman (a proto-Viola with a lost twin brother to find) pursues her well-born love interest, is essentially an apology to women, as the Intronati were interested in equivalent status for men and women, relatively open expression of sexual desire and, for the times, rather gender-fluid behaviors. Flirtation and verbal play rather than reasoned dialogue were the norms.



Collaboration flourished: once credited to the Intronati's Alessandro Piccolomini, whom Oxford may have met, *The Deceived* is actually a group effort, performed in Carnival season. Oxford wrote a letter from Siena two days before *Il Sacrificio* would likely have been performed there, and he'd have been eager to read *The Deceived*, as the play was a sensation throughout continental Europe. Gilbert will soon publish *Shakespeare's Effeminacy*, his third Oxford-supportive book, which will include a chapter on the Intronati movement.

Eminent psychiatrist **Lisa Quattrocki-Knight** gave “Comedies, Political Context, and Theory of Mind: Redating the Plays,” an absorbing presentation on “theory of mind,” a technique to understand others' mental states or perspectives. She applied mind theory to the noble-men-sponsors of players performing at Queen Elizabeth's court, with the nobles aiming to influence the Queen's foreign policies and other important choices. Quattrocki-Knight focused on Oxford's troupes and his efforts to sway Elizabeth's marital plans, especially when the French duke François D'Alençon was the prospective suitor.



Here, theory of mind postulates that the Queen was *the* audience for the comedies presented at her court, and in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and other comedies, “Shakespeare” is speaking, with plausibly deniable firmness, to her. As *Taming's* Kate, a woman older than Petruchio (like Elizabeth vis-à-vis Alençon) resists her suitor's brashness yet succumbs to his whirlwind courtship, sacrificing her autonomy, Elizabeth may have discerned Oxford's urging to reject Alençon's proposal and preserve her monarchy. Kisses, many times mentioned in the play, refer to Elizabeth's kiss, publicly pressed on the French duke's lips at one juncture.

Using the dating yardsticks of *terminus post quem* (earliest possible date of performance after the composition) and *terminus ante quem* (latest possible date by which the play must have been composed), Quattrocki-Knight's proposed new date for the *Taming* is precise: between November 21, 1581 (date of “The Kiss”), and June, 1584, when Alençon died. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* can also be redated by her method, encompassing Robert “Robin” Dudley's amorous efforts during Elizabeth's 1575 progress to Kenilworth; the work of Alençon's chosen envoy Simier (to her a charming “monkey” or “ape” rumored to have bewitched her with love potions); and the abortive Somerville plot on her life, resulting in a redating to October 1583 - June 1584. Puck's, or Robin's final speech in the play may be “Robin Dudley's” regretful

apology for Elizabeth’s and his estrangement. This method provides a remarkable new lens through which to spy Oxford’s political insinuations.

The final presentation of the Friday session was **Michael Delahoyde’s** video presentation on “Oxford’s Backwards.” Delahoyde cast new light on particular verbal stumbles, logical conundrums, and intentional misdirections by “Shakespeare’s” comic characters and other personages in the plays, typically unnoticed by critics. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, the love-besotted Benedick compares his previous railing against marriage—and conversion to his newly elated state—to a youngster’s delight in his meat turning to elderly disgust: the exact reverse order of what he should say! More easily spotted paradoxes abound: Troilus, disillusioned by Cressida’s defection to Diomedes, cries, “This is and is not Cressid.” Might Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” read “and” instead of “or?”

Such convolutions of reality may reflect Oxford’s Italian travels, which find him inspecting Giulio Romano’s frescoes, with outward-jutting architectural pilasters (and a three-dimensional stallion) that turn flat on a closer look. Renaissance “perspective” paintings—in which indecipherable blobs of pigment, viewed at an angle, become the artists’ added symbols, impossible to unsee—have their equivalents in Shakespeare. Note *Twelfth Night’s* comment on twins Viola/Cesario and Sebastian, viewed together—“A natural perspective, that is and is not.”

Delahoyde mentioned *Henry the Fifth’s* Saint Crispin’s Day speech, conventionally a rousing battle cry. But in a “Backwards” lens, might we note that the two “Crispin” saints honored on that feast day, shoemakers much like Henry’s common soldiers, were martyrs? At “Backwards” level, is Henry exhorting his troops to expect their own slaughter? In another example in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Agrippa “spontaneously” touts a proposed marriage between Anthony and Octavia, then blurts to Anthony that his

speech was *rehearsed*—coached by his manipulative master, Octavius Caesar.

Following Session 2, attendees enjoyed a **New Haven Pizza Party** lunch break, a walking tour of the Yale campus and a visit to either Yale’s Beinecke Rare Book Library or the Yale Center for British Art.

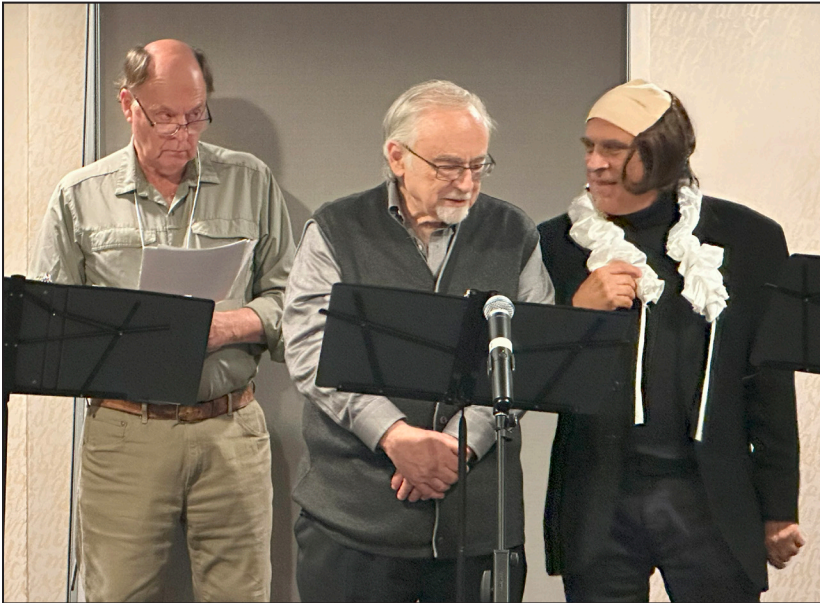
Later in the evening an entertaining end to the day’s activities was provided with performances of Ron Destro’s *Shakespeareary* (a tongue-in-cheek authorship 101 reading with Destro, Tom Woosman and Don Rubin) and Carla Kissane’s *Petty Tyrant: A Shakespeare Cabaret*.



An SOF group with their Yale guide, starting on a walking tour of campus.



Admiring the outstanding portrait collection—at the Yale Center for British art. Image by Annette Vise.



Ron Destro's *Shakespeareacy: The SAQ for Absolute Beginners*, *Lazy Louts* and *Knotty-Pated Knaves*, with Tom Woosnam as Edward de Vere, Don Rubin as The Scholar and Ron Destro as William Shakspeare.



Carla Kissane's one-woman show: *Petty Tyrant: A Shakespeare Cabaret*, which she has performed in the US and Europe.

Day 3: Saturday, September 20

Session Three: Hosted by Dorothea Dickerman

Elisabeth Waugaman presented first on “The Role of Women in 1 Henry VI: A Psychological Mirror.” She noted that, starting in the late 1400s, many European countries were ruled by women, including England for fifty years. *Henry VI Part 1* is considered the first English history play, and many scholars think it may have been Shakespeare’s first play, though far from his best. A major character in it is, of course, Joan of Arc, whom the playwright depicts as a complex character. Is she saintly or demonic? She’s a cross-dresser and a warrior and the playwright uses mannerism to force the audience to question what it sees. Waugaman compared Joan of Arc in her armor to Queen Elizabeth’s appearance at Tilbury in 1588, where the monarch arrived on horseback, wearing a white gown, a steel cuirass and a plumed helmet and delivered a rousing speech urging her troops to repel the Spanish.

It is known that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was with Elizabeth shortly before her appearance at Tilbury. Given that Oxford was betrayed by his mother and his sister during his youth, did Oxford

harbor a deep distrust of women? Waugaman posed the question, “Does the image of cross-dressing in Shakespeare’s work reflect the complexity of characters as crossing psychic borders in ways men do not always understand?”

Continuing on a similar theme, Cheryl Eagan-Donovan discussed “Shakespeare and Transphobia.” She noted that in recent years many scholars and theater companies have embraced the idea of “Queer Shakespeare” (e.g., the 2024 book *Straight Acting: The Many Queer Lives of William Shakespeare* by Will Tosh, head of research at Shakespeare’s Globe in London). Eagan-Donovan pointed out how many plays involve cross-dressing as a major theme, including *Twelfth Night*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Edward de Vere spent quite a bit of time in Venice in 1575–76, and would have been enthralled by its Carnival, with all of its norm-defying customs, including cross-dressing and the opportunities



to perform in public as someone else. Eagan-Donovan thoughtfully described the current-day backlash against transgendered persons and the attempts to stifle freedom of speech and expression. “[F]ear of the unknown or [the] misunderstood fuels violence,” she concluded, “and only a concerted attempt to confront and allay that fear can lead to true respect and acceptance.”

Making his twentieth SOF Conference presentation, **Earl Showerman** spoke on “Parallel Lives of Shakespeare’s Helena and Oxford’s Anne.” Helena is a central character in *All’s Well That Ends Well*. Showerman believes that the work, which he called “Shakespeare’s Miracle play,” was likely written shortly after the death of Oxford’s first wife, Anne Cecil, in 1588 at age 31, and that it may have been staged c. 1590–92. Helena and Anne have much in common: they are interested in medicine (medical “empiricists”), they write poetry, they are close to their mothers, they are regarded as spiritual persons, and, perhaps most coincidentally, both had participated (or in Anne’s case, was rumored to have) in the “bed trick” (i.e., the husband thinks he’s having a dalliance with a paramour, but in fact his wife has arranged to be in the bed instead). Helena has four soliloquies in *AWTW*, the most of any of Shakespeare’s female characters, and Showerman sees the play as a memorial or apologia to Oxford’s late wife. Showerman cited Ted Hughes, who wrote that “Maybe no other play reflects such a direct examination by Shakespeare of his own conscience... [Helena] incarnates the new spiritualized level from which Shakespeare conducts his correction of his own outgrown ego....”

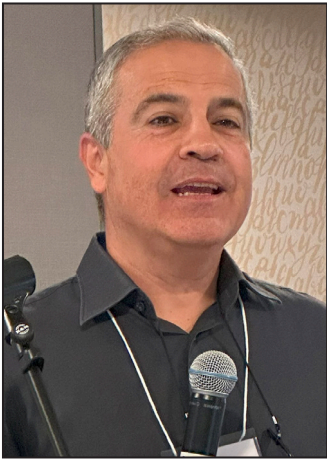
In “Is There a Southampton Problem?” **Bonner Miller Cutting** re-examined the question of the parentage of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton. Was he the natural son of the second Earl, also named Henry (1545–1581), and his wife, Mary Berowne (1552–1607), or was he the son of Queen Elizabeth and Edward de Vere (the Prince Tudor/ Dynastic Succession Theory)? The second Earl was five years old when



his father died, and he became a ward of William More of Loseley. Guardians usually dictated their wards’ marriages; More arranged for the second Earl to wed in 1556, when he was twenty and Mary Berowne was thirteen. The second earl was confined in the Tower of London from 1571 to May 1573. The third earl was born October 6, 1573, which suggests he was conceived in January of that year. Was Mary able to visit her husband? Cutting answers yes, having unearthed a petition from Mary in July 1572 asking to visit her husband. It was presented to Lord Sussex on the Privy Council, who was a powerful advocate and also her cousin. In a letter from February 1573, the second Earl indicates he had spoken with his wife. Another document, dated June 16, 1573, states that Mary had been “detained by sickness, which being once gone” (possibly suggesting morning sickness) and uses the phrase “notwithstanding her condition” (suggesting pregnancy). On October 6, 1573, the second Earl (still in custody, but now at Cowdray) wrote of the news of the delivery of a “goodley boy.”

John Hamill followed with “Penelope Rich Exposed by Marston as the Dark Lady” in which he analyzed a 1598 work, *The Scourge of Villainy: Three Books of Satires*. Published under a pseudonym but attributed to John Marston, it contains an allusion to a writer “whose silent name one letter bounds.” Oxfordians believe that this person is Edward de Vere, whose “silent name” is the Shakespeare alias and whose name begins and ends with the letter “e.” Hamill cited more allusions to Oxford and Shakespeare in the book, including one in which the credit for work done by an “ox” is usurped by a fool, and another linking Penelope Rich to Shakespeare’s “dark lady.” According to Hamill, Shakespeare’s Sonnet 128 is key. Turning to Ben Jonson’s *Every Man Out of His Humour* (pub. 1599), Hamill suggests that the characters Fastidious Brisk and Saviolina are based on Oxford and Penelope Rich, respectively.

The third session’s final presentation was given by **Nic Panagopolous**, an assistant professor of English Literature and Culture at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. In “The Socratic Component of Hamlet,” he traced the long and divergent track of Shakespeare’s philosophical interests, finding that “all roads lead back to Plato.” Focusing on *Hamlet*, Panagopolous cited the line, “Seems, madam? Nay it



is, I know not ‘seems’” as an echo of Plato. Polonius fits Plato’s definition of a tyrant.

Professor Panagopolous states that Jonson’s reference to Shakespeare having “small Latin and less Greek” has long been misconstrued, and Panagopolous noted that Oxford had access to Greek writers in the library of his guardian, William Cecil, and that Mildred Cecil, William’s wife, was an accomplished Greek translator. The book *Cardanus Comforte*, the translation of which Oxford underwrote and which is often identified as the book Hamlet is reading in Act 2, scene 2, contains thirty-one references to Socrates. Panagopolous also noted that Hamlet’s “antic disposition” can be seen as a Socratic *elenchus* (a method of logical refutation) used by Hamlet to test the prejudices of other characters. Finally, in the “Hamlet-Socrates-Oxford triangle,” Panagopolous raised the question whether Oxford died by suicide.

Annual Awards Luncheon

Following the morning session, registrants attended a luncheon which featured the third annual performance of “Who Will Believe My Verse in Time to Come? Sonnet 17” by the Ox-Tones, accompanied on piano by Bonner Miller Cutting.

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan then presented the 2025 Oxfordian of the Year award to Earl Showerman and Bonner Miller Cutting presented the Tom Regnier Veritas Award to Richard Joyrich (see pages 20–21 for award and acceptance comments).

Phoebe Nir shared a trailer of the upcoming docu-series “Edward de Vere: The Man Who Was Shakespeare,” which will feature exclusive interviews with Oxfordians, and viewers were then treated to a trailer of Amanda Eliasch’s “The Truth Will Out: A documentary by Amanda Eliasch and Hector Abaunza about the hidden truths behind Shakespeare.”

The location and dates of the 2026 annual conference were revealed to be the Grand Hyatt in Seattle, Washington, from September 24–27, 2026.



The Ox-Tones perform “Who Will Believe My Verse in Time to Come? Sonnet 17,” music composed by Phoebe Nir and arranged by Bonner Miller Cutting, who accompanied the singers on keyboard.

Session Four: Hosted by Bonner Cutting

The final session of presentations opened with “Determining the True Female Pioneers of Creative Writing in English,” where **Robert Prechter** aimed to identify the first women who published original, secular, creative writing (poetry, plays or prose fiction) in English. Presenting a list of recognized women writers from



1350 to 1650, Prechter initially disqualified translators, writers in Latin and unidentified female writers. He then proposed seven false attributions to female writers, attributing Margaret Tyler’s *Mirror of Knight-hood* to Henry Howard, Anne Vavasor’s *Echo* poem to Edward de Vere, Anne Cecil’s *Pandora* poems to John Soowthern, Jane Anger’s work to Nicholas Breton, Mary Sidney’s “The dolefull lay of Clorinda” to Edmund Spenser and the play *Antonius* to Edward de Vere. Finally, Prechter proposed that Elizabeth Tanfield Cary’s *Tragedy of Mariam* was written by Edward de Vere and given as a gift to the Cary family.

Prechter concluded that the three female writers who truly deserve to be celebrated for pioneering original poetry, plays and prose fiction in English include Isabella Whitney (the first female to publish a significant body of original, secular poetry and the only female to publish during the Elizabethan era), Emilia Bassano Lanier (who could be considered the first published feminist in England with her “Eve’s Apologie in Defense of Women”) and Lady Mary Wroth (whose *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania* was the first known prose romance written by an English woman).

In “Nicholas Hilliard’s Shakespeare Portrait” **Margo Anderson** deciphered a 437-year-old puzzle in an examination of the enigmatic miniature “Unknown Man Clasp-



a Hand from a Cloud.” Revealing that nine potential sitters have been proposed over the years (including the Earl of Essex, Anthony Jenkinson, Sir John Hawkins, Lord Thomas Howard, Lord William Howard, Sir George Carew, Arthur Dudley, Shakespeare and Edward de Vere) Anderson noted that the case for the sitter being de Vere is stronger than we have appreciated. Translating the baffling motto, “*Attici amoris ergo*” as “therefore of the love of Atticus,” Anderson explained that Elizabethans would have known “Atticus” referred to Titus Pomponius, a close friend of Cicero who, like Edward de Vere, had married into a powerful family and whose wife had died leaving a young daughter behind. This association would suggest the hand from the clouds represented Anne Cecil’s spirit, with the translation meaning;

[Because of the departed, let us speak] of the bereaved love of Atticus.

In this interpretation, the image and motto commemorate Anne Cecil, the deceased wife of Edward de Vere in an effort to console the widower. Since 1586 also saw the beginning of the £1000 annuity that the Queen granted to Oxford, Anderson explained that a second meaning could be a financial or pecuniary interpretation; as in *[Because of the gratuity, let us speak] therefore of the patronage of Atticus*, where Hilliard may have painted the miniature as a “calling card” in order to solicit future commissions from the seventeenth Earl. Hilliard may therefore have intended three tiers of meaning; consoling a widower, commemorating the annuity and humbly offering himself to de Vere’s future patronage.



In “Shakespeare’s Sister: Mary de Vere” **Dorothea Dickerman** proposed that Edward de Vere’s younger sister, Mary, has been overlooked as the model for several Shakespearean heroines. While touching on *Twelfth Night*’s shipwreck as mirroring Oxford’s and Mary’s childhood together, Dickerman highlighted



Mary’s clever manipulation of her brother to secure her marriage to Peregrine Bertie (like Imogen in *Cymbeline*) and setting up the Duchess of Suffolk to present Elizabeth Vere as his daughter (like Paulina in *Winter’s Tale*). But it is Mary’s extraordinary heroism during the Armada years when her husband led England’s troops in France and the Netherlands that Dickerman says confirms Mary as the inspiration for Lady Percy in *Henry IV, Part 1*, Desdemona in *Othello* and Katerina in *Taming of the Shrew*, including an explanation of Katherina’s enigmatic closing speech in its historical context.

In the final presentation of the conference, **Roger Stritmatter** examined “Shakespeare’s Women in the Audley End Annotations.” As he had previously established by modern forensic methods in an article in the *Journal of Forensic Document Examination* (2023), Stritmatter presented many of the annotations made



by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, in books now housed at Audley End. These books include notes in Latin and Greek on as many as thirty-four major and minor characters in *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and concern many elements of plot, dramatic action, themes, and literary motifs in the two plays. Stritmatter reviewed the notes pertaining to the female Shakespeare characters of Cleopatra, Portia, Fulvia, and Octavia, and concluded that far from the “small Latin and lesse Greek” misunderstanding from Jonson’s encomium in the First Folio, the author of the Shakespeare plays actually had “much Latin and greater Greek.”

Day Four: Sunday, September 21 — Annual General Meeting

The SOF Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday morning (see meeting minutes on page 26) and the conference concluded. Before leaving New Haven, however, attendees were invited to visit the gravesite of Connecticut authorship pioneer Delia Bacon at the Grove Street Cemetery (see page 24).



Earl Showerman Awarded 2025 Oxfordian of the Year

Earl Showerman, MD, longtime scholar, teacher, and former SOF President, was honored on September 20, 2025, as Oxfordian of the Year. The award was conferred by the SOF at the end of our Annual Conference in New Haven, Connecticut.

Dr. Showerman has published many important articles focusing on Shakespeare's apparent knowledge of ancient Greek drama, culminating this year in his landmark book, *Shakespeare's Greater Greek*. A graduate of Harvard College and the University of Michigan Medical School, and an emergency room physician for many years, he has also applied his medical knowledge to study that of the author "Shakespeare." He contributed a chapter on that subject to the anthology *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* (2013).

Cheryl Eagan-Donovan, 2019 Oxfordian of the Year, made the announcement on behalf of a committee composed of other past honorees, which selects each year's recipient independently of the SOF President and Board of Trustees. The award recognizes contributions to the Oxfordian movement over many years, not limited to any specific recent achievement.

Cheryl hailed Earl as "a member of our community whose leadership and efforts...are extraordinary, an individual who has worked tirelessly to contribute to the wealth of scholarship...and someone who we all consider not just a respected colleague but a true

friend." Other committee members added their own enthusiastic praise.

Earl responded by thanking the committee and "the community of Oxfordians who have made the [SOF] what it is today—a vibrant, creative, strategic, and enduring educational organization. To be included among the ranks of our luminaries," he said, mentioning past Oxfordians of the Year and invoking Homer, "is far beyond what I ever imagined possible at the outset of this decades-long Odyssey."

Cheryl noted this year's choice was easy given Earl's stature as a scholar, his teaching, lecturing, and writing, and his outreach to people in the theatrical world. A longtime southern Oregon resident, dubbed by many "the Earl of Ashland," he has sustained a productive engagement with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, as well as Southern Oregon University and its Hannon Library.

Earl quoted a line from the poem, *Ithaca*, by Cavafy (translated from the original Greek) which reflects his own journey: "When you set out for Ithaca, ask that your way be long, full of adventure, full of instruction."

He continues to actively research, write, and lecture, including a talk, "Parallel Lives of Shakespeare's Helena and Oxford's Anne," delivered at the conference just hours before he accepted the award.



Brent Evans accepts the Oxfordian of the Year award for Earl Showerman.

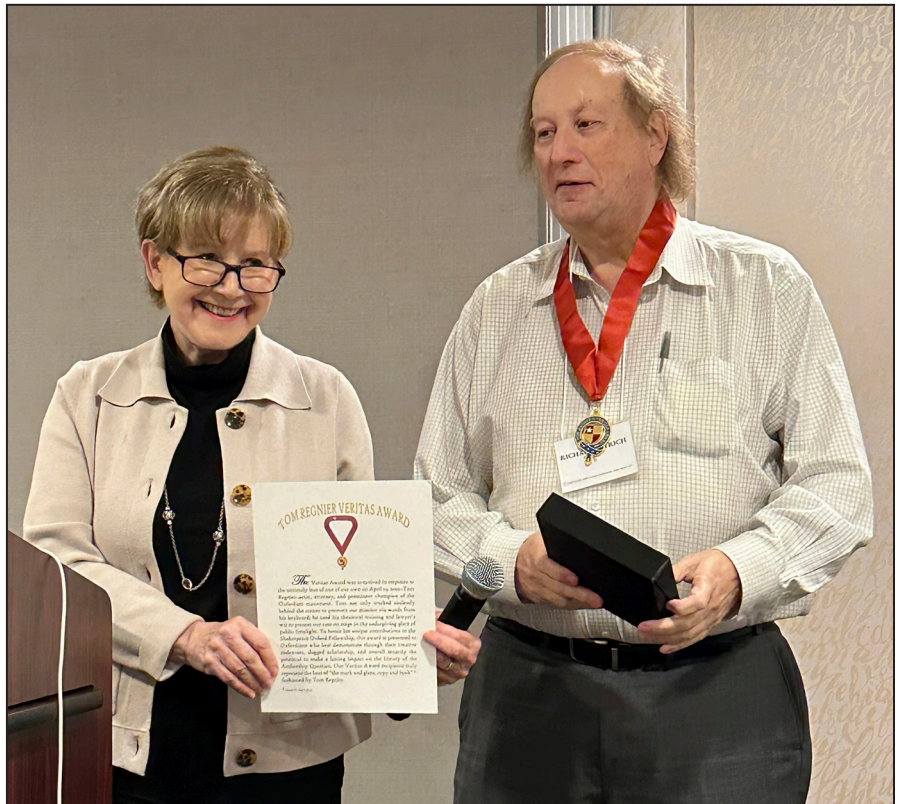
Richard Joyrich Receives Tom Regnier Veritas Award

During the Awards Luncheon held on Saturday, September 20, Bonner Miller Cutting announced the latest recipient of the Tom Regnier Veritas Award to be Richard Joyrich with the following proclamation:

“The Tom Regnier Veritas Award was developed in response to the untimely loss of one of our own on April 14, 2020. Tom Regnier was an actor, an attorney and a prominent champion of the Oxfordian movement. He not only worked tirelessly behind the scenes to promote our mission, but he also used his theatrical training and lawyer’s wit to present our case on the stage in the unforgiving glare of public limelight. To honor Tom’s unique contributions to the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, this award is presented to Oxfordians who have made a lasting impact in the history of the authorship question through their extensive endeavors, dogged scholarship, and overall tenacity.

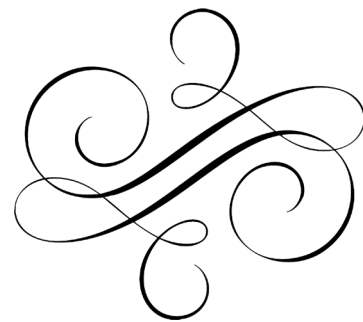
“Our Veritas Award recipients truly represent the best of ‘the mark and glass, copy and book’—continuing the tradition inspired by Tom Regnier. Today, we have chosen another recipient who is so very worthy of this special award. Today’s recipient has been a member of the organization (initially the Shakespeare Oxford Society) since the 1990s. We understand that he has attended every conference since that time. He served as President of the SOS until just before the time of the merger of the two authorship organizations in 2014. Working with the tech support personnel at the conferences, he is always available to help the speakers and uses his own computer to get everyone set up for their presentations.

“Richard Joyrich was instrumental in establishing the Oberon SOS group in 1997. When it began, Barbara Burris was President, he was Vice-President and Tom Townsend was the Treasurer. At the beginning of the pandemic (when groups were closing down meetings), Richard wanted to keep the Oberon meetings



going and started using the ‘new’ Zoom technology. Under his leadership, the Oberon membership has continued to grow and is now reaching fifty members. Richard Joyrich practices medicine in the Detroit area, where he is a specialist in radiology.

“It is my honor and privilege to present the Tom Regnier Veritas Award to Dr. Richard Joyrich.”



From the Archives: SOF Data Preservation Committee’s Major Efforts in 2025

by Kathryn Sharpe

Collection Development Policy

This year, Michael Dudley led the development of the SOF Data Preservation Committee Collection Development Policy. This policy outlines the goals of NESOL and SOAR, including stakeholders and audience, and defines the scope of materials to be collected, indexed, and retained. The policy’s purpose is to establish parameters and principles for the DPC’s collection-related activities (e.g., source neutrality), affirm the relationship of NESOL and SOAR to the SOF, and lay the groundwork for future development, including potential physical locations for collected materials to be accessible to user communities.

Connecting NESOL, SOAR, and the Internet Archive

With 2025 funding from the SOF, Bill Boyle cataloged all the complete books in the Hess Collection. This project was his primary activity and resulted in the Hess Collection being 85–90% processed. The work revealed that nearly two-thirds of the titles are already in the Internet Archive, available for online access and borrowing.

Bill will request a grant renewal in 2026 to:

- 1) finalize the Hess Project (what still remains are photocopies of parts of books, printouts from various websites and search results on the internet, and a variety of printouts and handwritten notes of other research material);
- 2) complete cataloging the Wright Collection (approximately 400 titles remaining); and
- 3) finish the analysis of the Nina Green authorship site (600 document transcript records to be cataloged and added to the 1,220 records uploaded to SOAR in 2024).

Collecting Oral Histories

Renee Euchner conducted two Zoom interviews with Bonner Miller Cutting regarding her Oxfordian parents, and Bonner plans to share copies of some of her parents’ correspondence. Renee has conducted five extensive discussions (two this year, three in previous

years) with Barbara Burris about the Ashbourne portrait, her novel in progress about the Ashbourne, and a new study of the First Folio.

Other interviews Renee conducted this year include Linda Theil via Zoom and Ren Draya via Zoom and phone, both with audio and transcript forms. Ren is sharing copies of her speeches and articles and is seeking communications with Richard Whalen’s family. For the remainder of the year, Renee hopes to contact and interview former SOF presidents as well as author Robert Prechter. She also is identifying and tracking the locations of researcher archives.

Preserving Oxfordian Archives

Committee members corresponded with Oxfordians and/or their families regarding the dispersal of their personal archives, including Richard Whalen, Earl Showerman, Richard Kennedy (see details below), Michael Delahoyde and Barbara Burris. Barbara is targeting the SOF for her archives but is retaining all materials for now. Michael Delahoyde is reviewing his office archives and will send older research to the DPC for preservation.

Archiving Richard Kennedy’s Materials

With supervision in several areas from Renee, Caroline Bauman joined the DPC and began working as Richard Kennedy’s archivist this fall. She obtained a signed Informed Consent agreement from Kennedy, moved his books, periodicals, and papers from his home to an improved warehouse location under her control. She also copied his computer files related to Authorship to a thumb drive, then to cloud storage.

Since Richard’s passing on July 24, she has maintained a good relationship with his two sons and has acquired more original files from his home. Before his passing, she secured Kennedy’s written agreement to publish a book of his Authorship works. They created a sample Table of Contents, and he reviewed an Introduction she wrote. She collected his oral history in the form of notes from their conversations, as he was not interested in being “interviewed” or taped. She wrote an “in memoriam” for the SOF newsletter.

Richard Kennedy was deeply interested in the DPC's work and in finding a permanent home for his materials where they could be accessed by young people. He made Caroline promise to work on that and on cataloging his collection. All the activities described above are ongoing.

Keeping Minutes

With the availability of AI Companion as a tool in Zoom, Terry Deer, as Data Preservation Committee secretary, is investigating its use in support of the minutes for each DPC meeting. AI Companion is useful in summarizing the meetings and in creating lists of action items for each committee member, though the uneven reporting of acronyms, personal names, and other discussion items limit its use in creating a reliable record. Nevertheless, the AI notes help to double-check and streamline traditional note taking.

Future Plans

The DPC plans to continue to work on all these areas in the future and supporting Bill Boyle's efforts remains a top priority.

Elevate your research results by quickly searching [SOAR](https://soarcat.com) (Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources) at soarcat.com, an independent database of most Oxfordian publications since the 1920s!

You will find a century's worth of articles, essays, papers, book reviews, and news reports that have been published about the Oxfordian movement and the Shakespeare authorship debate, including coverage of almost all newsletter and journal articles in publications of the SOF and its predecessor organizations.



SHAKESPEARE OXFORD FELLOWSHIP LIFETIME MEMBERS

Anonymous in honor of Ruth
Loyd Miller
Paul Arnold
Ben and Simi August
John Milnes Baker
Charles Beauclerk
Carey Behel
Mary Berkowitz
James & Patricia Bonner
Lindy Burnham
Mick Clarke
George & Janine Cornecelli
Bonner & Jack Cutting
Michael Delahoyde
Dorothea Dickerman & Richard
Becker
Brent Evans & Patty Henson
Virginia Evans
Lucinda & Richard Foulke
Robert Fowler
Richard Furno
Margit & Reinhard Greiling
John Hamill & Jose Caratini

Catherine Hatinguais & Susana
Maggi
Charlotte Hughes & Christopher
Combs
Michael Hyde
Lawrence Jacobsen
Philip Jalbert
Richard Joyrich
Regina Kapetanaki
Jo Anne & David Kelch
Lynne & Michael Kositsky
Kevin Lance
Stephen Larsen
Frank Lawler
Eric & Lauren Luczkow
Deborah Mahan
Patrick & Mary McKeown
Alex & Jill McNeil
Robert Meyers
Sally Mosher
James & Sally Newell
Richard Phillips, Jr.
Robert R. Prechter, Jr.

John & Flinn Rauck
Cynthia & Steven Rickman
Michele Roberge in memory of
David Birney
Mary E. Ross
Don Rubin & Patricia Keeney
Paula Sharzer
Earl Showerman
Jack M. Shuttleworth & Patricia
Cruser
Mike, Liz, Spencer & Graham
Stepniewski
Nancy Stewart
Roger Stritmatter & Shelly
Maycock
David Taylor
Linda Madge Thomas
Tom & Joy Townsend
Richard & Elisabeth Waugaman
Joella Werlin
Edmund Wilkinson
Julia Woosnam

Visit to the Grave of Delia Salter Bacon, a Fitting Finale

by Shelly Maycock

On a beautiful, early fall Sunday following three days of Oxfordian talks and performances, the new SOF President, Brent Evans, led a group of us on a pilgrimage across the Yale Campus to visit Delia Salter Bacon's grave. Our band of congenial, friendly spirits ventured through the old campus to the august Grove Street Cemetery. Founded in 1797, the cemetery is the final resting place of some of the earliest of New Haven's denizens. Our group passed by the graves of Noah Webster, Eli Whitney and Roger Sherman (co-drafter and signer of the Declaration of Independence) before arriving at the graves of Delia and her family situated in the shade of a more recent evergreen.

Our knowledge of Delia Bacon's biography had been greatly enhanced by Brent's scholarly conference presentation on the preceding Thursday, and many were moved to share tributes to honor Delia's memory. I read the poem here included that I composed for the occasion, Eva Varelas offered the ancient Christian supplication for divine compassion and forgiveness, *Kyrie Eleison*, Phoebe Nir shared the *Mourner's Kaddish* in Hebrew, and Carla Kissane recited an ancient Vedic hymn text from the *Krishna Yajurveda*. Some left the lasting remembrance testament of pebbles around Delia's gravestone.

We met a knowledgeable tour guide, Yale Professor Dr. Henry G. Dove, who filled us in on the history of the cemetery as we returned to the gatehouse and parted ways. It seemed an appropriate end to our gathering in New Haven to celebrate such a lively mind, resting there beneath a humble granite cross among the shaded mausoleums and stones.

For Delia Salter Bacon

New Haven, Connecticut
September 21, 2025

Learned and rare, Delia, please pardon
Our interrupting you here where you rest,
Below the mosses, lichens and needles.
We mourn that you found yourself
Halted at the heights of truth, when you sought
To discover Shakespeare's true course.
But we happy few have ventured here
To find where and how you endure,
The unmindful haunts of professors--

Boys who fear your bright mind so,
That they too, even now, come to mock
And nettle your mossy rest--
How they fear their loss of favorite toys.
But ours is a free-er visitation today,
To hope that your spirit hears
Our remembrance, our gratitude, our prayers:
That our reverences and studies may make amend
And your, now our, awareness can ascend.





Minutes of the Annual General Meeting — September 21, 2025

by Tom Townsend

Call to Order: interim president, Brent Evans

In attendance: SOF Board of Trustees in attendance: Brent Evans, Bonner Cutting, Dorothea Dickerman, Tom Woosnam, Rick Foulke, Eva Varelas, Phoebe Nir, Tom Townsend (Bob Meyers, Jonathan Jackson, absent). Also present were numerous SOF members attending the New Haven Conference.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MONTH’S MEETING: *Dispensed with at this meeting*

Nominations Committee Chair: Bonner

Bonner presented to the Trustees and Members the nomination of Brent Evans for a one-year term as president. Dorothea seconded this motion. The subsequent voice vote by members in attendance was unanimous in favor of Brent as President. Bonner then named the following as continuing and new Trustees to the BOT: Eva Varelas, Phoebe Nir, Jonathan Jackson and Tom Townsend, all for a three-year term. These nominations were all seconded by Dorothea. The voice vote by members in attendance was unanimous in favor of having these current and new members serve on the BOT.

Brent Evans, now the new SOF President, spoke about his vision for the future of the SOF:

- a. The Membership during the first year of Brent’s tenure went from a level of less than 350 to nearly 600 members
- b. We created redundancy in Trustees’ roles and responsibilities to ensure the continued smooth operation of our affairs.
- c. We now use a professional web-services company, which has saved us money and made everything related to web posting, communications, and outreach much easier.
- d. We have invigorated our membership and fundraising efforts.
- e. We are paying strict attention to financial best practices.
- f. We are consciously trying to diversify our board with new, talented members and ensure smooth leadership succession.

New Features:

- a. Our website now features a host of downloadable, ready-to-use materials for high school teachers to use to introduce Shakespeare and the Authorship Question in their classrooms.

- b. This coming year (2026), our Outreach will continue by advertising in several Shakespeare playbills, most notably the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. This festival reaches over 360,000 playgoers a year.
- c. Further, SOF BOT is now working closely with the De Vere Society.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Online Communications Committee:

Dorothea Dickerman spoke about the success of the Blue Boar Tavern Authorship program: Currently, BBT has 200,000 YouTube views; Alex McNeil’s “Shakespeare Authorship 101” has 45,000 YouTube views. There is new SOF advertising on YouTube thanks to Phoebe. Further, we will start to develop short videos on YouTube.

Web Administration Committee:

Tom Woosnam said he liked posting from the SOF archives. This allows him to post more frequently and keep members engaged. He, with other Trustees, has begun to discuss which elements should be on SOF’s new website. He further stressed the importance for all Trustees to be able to back up one another’s roles and responsibilities on the Board.

Finance Committee:

Rick Foulke spoke about the financial health of the SOF. He noted in the SOF Statement of Financial Position, as of the end of 2024, the total net worth of the SOF was \$306,000.

Membership & Fundraising Committee:

Tom Townsend reiterated one of Brent’s original points that membership is now closing in on 600 persons. Donations, thus far in 2025, were almost \$21,000. However, most donations come later each year. He stressed the essential nature of donations to the SOF.

Conference Committee:

Don Rubin spoke about the expenses of Conferences, not just facilities, but also food. Additionally, Tech Services is a significant contributor to costs.

Data preservation committee:

Bill Boyle from the Data Preservation Committee spoke about his role in preserving Oxfordian books and articles. In turn, these become part of a website, Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources (SOAR). He spoke about the extensive work that went into this project and thanked the SOF for funding it.

NEXT AGM BUSINESS MEETING:

September 24–27, 2026, Seattle, Washington

Book Reviews

Earl Showerman, MD. *Shakespeare's Greater Greek: An Exploration of Greek Drama, Epic & History in the Works of Shakespeare*
Greater Greek Group, 2025; 348 pages
(Paperback \$24.00)

Reviewed by Michael Delahoyde

Well-known, well-respected, and well-liked Oxfordian Earl Showerman declares, “It is time we resurrect our awareness of just how old and deeply ingrained are the mythopoetic lines of our living dramatic arts” (224). He has done this for us in his *Shakespeare's Greater Greek*, a large collection of his articles from 2004 to 2025 published in *The Oxfordian*, *Brief Chronicles*, and other scholarly sources, all tracing Shakespeare's deep knowledge of Greek and Latin works as demonstrable sources and inspirations for his plays.

The Classical Studies department where students learned Greek and Roman history and literature was once an obligatory fixture of universities. Somehow, their mission fell out of favor, and English and History departments divided up the classes along with those plaster busts of Tiberius et al. Ironically, Shakespeare played a part in the usurpation. No need for *hic haec hoc* or all Gaul being divided into some number of parts; just have the kids read *Julius Caesar* and we're good.

An era of academic specialization arose, initially bringing on a couple generations of Early English Literature specialists, who still edited and researched everything from *Beowulf* to Malory. They were followed by micro-specialists: hence Chaucerians in offices down the hall from Shakespeareans. And thus, bridging specialty topics became increasingly impossible. “Generalists” were jacks of all too many trades and considered experts in none and certainly had better not even dream of tenure.

One's best teacher is sometimes oneself. My two favorite topics/classes have been Shakespeare and Mythology, neither of which I had had more than any superficial training in, or even exposure to, but rather was thrust into at the point of English Department emergencies. Earl Showerman similarly confesses that his “decades of professional practice as an emergency



physician and medical editor, hardly prepared me for what would inspire me in retirement[:] the study of the literature and history of Elizabethan England and the classics of ancient Greece and Rome” (9). “I am not an academically trained Shakespeare or classics scholar, versed in Latin and ancient Greek” (12). Yet with decades of reading, thinking,

and recognizing connections, Showerman has offered countless presentations and articles on Shakespeare's knowledge of Greek and Roman literature, catapulting himself into the position as the world's leading Oxfordian authority on what most Stratfordians today, needing relentlessly to dumb down Shakespeare, consider impossible: the playwright's knowledge of ancient sources not at the time translated into English.

Here is the root of the problem. Ben Jonson used the phrase “small Latin and less Greeke” in reference to Shakespeare's experience, and Stratfordians align this with the grain merchant's naturally modest education to render him comfortably dumb. Showerman provides Roger Stritmatter's explanation: Jonson in context is essentially saying that *even if you had had little Latin and even less Greek, still...* (337)—reversing the implications by acknowledging Shakespeare's (Oxford's) classical knowledge.

Although Showerman's work focuses on the evidence in the plays of Shakespeare's more than considerable absorption of the sources, along the way we read many of the head-smackingly ridiculous Stratfordian explanations for *apparent* but, they must insist, illusory connections between Shakespeare and Greek plays. For example, from North's translation of Plutarch, Shakespeare “divined the true spirit of Greek Tragedy” (qtd. 17). Cool! Hey, wasn't there some media frenzy a few years ago when they discovered a crack pipe in the

Stratford dirt or something? Keep digging. There's got to be a Ouija board in there too.

Jonathan Bate, who invites all to laugh uproariously that the founder of Oxfordianism was named Looney—how hilariously original—explains, “there is no doubt [Shakespeare] derived a Euripidean spirit from Ovid. Euripides taught Ovid what Ovid taught Shakespeare” (qtd. 195), and “Cicero was an influence transmitted by osmosis as well as by education” (Bate, qtd. 335). Another “scholar” is more mystical, pointing to “a vast subconscious solidarity and continuity, lasting from age to age among the poets and playwrights” (44). Still another sprains our brains with the eureka revelation that “Having ‘lesse Greek’ could therefore have enabled [Shakespeare] to appear to understand more about Greek tragedy” than by reading Aeschylus and Euripides (qtd. 17–18). Wow That's Freaky? But really, one needn't wrench one's cerebrum for such explanations when, as the Martindales point out, Shakespeare could have gotten all his classical knowledge by “observing puppets at fairs” (qtd. 192). Showerman no doubt delights in quoting such desperate contortions but is too polite to use terms such as “dizzily moronic.” Not me, though.

As for the claims made for the Stratford Graduate Sch—hold on—the Stratford Grammar School, the one-room schoolhouse that sons of all ages might attend when it wasn't lamb-birthing season and which lacked a well-attended extracurricular afterschool falconry club, Showerman sums up the Stratfordian circular argument: “that grammar school curricula were robust in Latin titles is based on textual evidence Shakespeare knew the classical sources, not from a review of Elizabethan school book inventories” (335).

Oh, and those six shaky signatures? According to another Stratfordian, probably syphilis (299).

Much more joyful are the discoveries Showerman lays out, proving Shakespeare's “Greater Greek.” His research is superhuman, and we worry about his pulmonary health from spending so many days and weeks in the dustiest cellars in whatever library he locates the works by every scholar of the last two centuries who has held forth about the plays and the classical echoes.

One mega-masterpiece in two parts pinpoints the influences on *Hamlet* of the Greek revenge story of Orestes and of the Tudor classical interlude *Horestes*, published in 1567, concerning a son's need to avenge the death of his father. One angle on this constellation

of characters suggests a political allegory with Mary, Queen of Scots (as Clytemnestra), in cahoots with the Earl of Bothwell (as Aegisthus) involved in the murder of her husband Darnley (as Agamemnon) (57f). Perhaps even more impressive classical connections are found to make sense of otherwise inexplicable elements in the play. Hamlet's enigmatic utterance, “I eat the air, promise-crammed” (3.2.85–86), refers to Pliny the Elder's crediting chameleons with the same survival talent (37). Also in *Hamlet*, surely we've all wondered if a reaction to a play constitutes damning evidence of a guilty conscience that will hold up in a court of law, but the scholar Theobald notes that Plutarch reported such confirming incidents (38).

Most of us know, but not general Shakespeareans who ought to be interested in the subject, the explanations for “Corambis” as a quarto's name for Polonius, and Hamlet's seemingly insane identification of Polonius as a “fishmonger” (76–77). Even beyond strictly Oxfordian consensus has been the identity of “Hamlet's book,” which he is reading when approached by Polonius and which aligns with his general philosophy: *Cardanus Comforte*. Showerman puts forth another candidate, Juvenal's *Tenth Satire*, and quotes the startling parallels (84ff). No need, I would say, to declare out with the old. When is Shakespeare not drawing on, indeed doing, at least two things at once?

Macbeth's indebtedness to Greek tragedy includes not just the killing of a character offstage (Duncan), nor the anxiety shared by Clytemnestra and Lady Macbeth over a “damned spot” (102). Always a baffling incident, thought even to indicate a bungled revision, why does Rosse tell Macduff his family is fine, then later in the discussion acknowledge their slaughter? In Euripides's *Troades*, a similar happy report is delivered at first to Hecuba before the murderous truth is revealed (94).

We know that like the title character in *Timon of Athens*, the Earl of Oxford was also extravagant in commissioning jewelry (152); but now we read that the names of 18 out of 19 characters in the play come from Plutarch (136). Golding's 1564 translation of a Justin work was the first book ever dedicated to nephew Edward de Vere (164) and serves as a source for *Titus Andronicus*. Further connections are countless.

Have you ever read a work of scholarship that gets you jazzed enough to go read a Euripides play? Check out Showerman's demonstrations of Euripides's *Alcestis* on *The Winter's Tale* and *Much Ado About Nothing*,

in all of which we find women restored from the dead (193). References to Hercules in *Much Ado* make sense especially of Don Pedro's self-congratulatory match-making anticipation, since only in *Alceste* does Hercules unite separated lovers (240).

Showerman includes reviews he has written on books concerning Shakespeare and classical antiquity, and, no surprise, these works all widely miss the mark, while his own masterpiece here? Bullseye! Opponents unseated. First prize in the tournament goes to the Earl of Ashland.



Stephen Greenblatt. *Dark Renaissance: The Dangerous Times and Fatal Genius of Shakespeare's Greatest Rival*

**Norton, 2025; 352 pages
(Hardcover \$28.99, Kindle \$14.99)**

Reviewed by Jack Shuttleworth

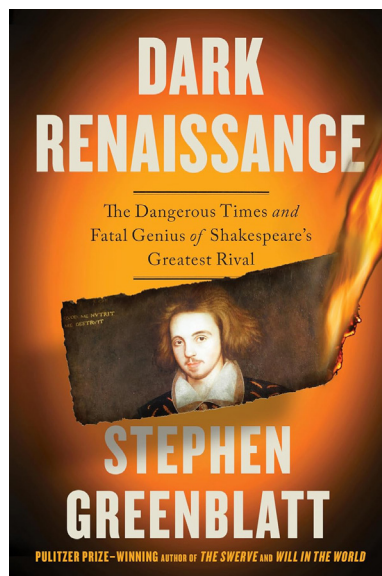
That the stories in this book are gracefully, even excitingly presented, revealing extensive research and speculative details of Christopher Marlowe's life, should come as no surprise to anyone who has read Professor Greenblatt's earlier works, such as *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*. What does surprise is the remarkable similarity he presents in the backgrounds of Marlowe and William Shaksper (the presumed Shakespeare) of Stratford. Marlowe was born in February 1564, Shaksper two months later in April, both of middling yeoman-class parents who were moderately successful and were themselves illiterate. Even more surprising is the account of Marlowe's influence on Shakespeare the playwright discussed below. Somehow young Kit Marlowe was admitted to the King's School, Canterbury, in December 1578 at age fourteen having gained a scholarship, though where or how he learned to read and impress the headmaster is unknown. Of course, no one knows the extent of the Stratford boy's education or literacy.

In December 1580, Marlowe at age sixteen entered Cambridge with a full scholarship where he remained for four years, studying theology, Greek and Roman

classics. He received his B.A., followed by three more years of intermittent residence and study. He was awarded an M.A. in 1587 after intervention by the Queen's Privy Council, whose members acknowledged his service to the State. That unspecified service would account for some extended absences when he likely served as an agent for Secretary Walsingham in France seeking Catholic plotters against Elizabeth's Protestant rule. According to Greenblatt, Marlowe "had already tried his hand at playwriting, aided perhaps by his Cambridge friend Thomas Nashe, and the results were promising. In the year [1587] he came to London, their play, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, was performed at Norwich and Ipswich by a children's company" (115). Greenblatt explains that Marlowe's playwriting apparently continued, citing 1587–88, for *Tamburlaine* followed by *The Jew of Malta*; both attained popular success, each published a few years later. Greenblatt does note that it was about that same year William Shaksper of Stratford was legendarily gaining public attention by holding horses before theatre performances (116).

Attempts to link Marlowe and the Stratford man grow increasingly speculative and improbable as the story continues. Greenblatt speculates that Marlowe "Perhaps...spent a little time reading a chronicle history of the turbulent reign of the ill-fated Henry VI before he agreed that it could make for interesting theater. He would then have found himself in a room with one or probably two other playwrights. One of them remains unknown; it might have been Thomas Kyd with whom he would eventually share a room. The other playwright in the room was William Shakespeare" (112). This assertion as fact is, of course, pure speculation. Despite the similarity

in ages, it seems most unlikely that the worldly M.A. from Cambridge would entertain the idea of consulting the provincial, uneducated Stratford man. Nevertheless, Greenblatt later notes "a growing scholarly consensus that the trilogy...of the three parts of Henry VI...were in fact collaboratively written" (143). That consensus, of course, is among conventional Stratfordian professors trapped in an outdated myth, unable because of Malone's dating to consider it Shakespeare's juvenilia and willfully ignorant of Oxfordian research into the



author's identity. Ramon Jiménez's *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship* argues with extensive textual evidence that at least five of the history plays were first written as early as 1567, before the seventeen-year-old Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, entered Gray's Inn (300). Likewise, Richard Malim in *The Earl of Oxford and the Making of Shakespeare* traces the early history plays to the 1570s before Oxford had any legal training and before his continental travel. Among other details, he points out

one matter which is significant: the treatment of de Vere's ancestors. There is no doubt that in the reign of Richard II an unaffected dramatist would conceive Robert, the ninth Earl of Oxford, as the villain of the piece...and his influence would continue in the later play *Richard II*. He is not mentioned, as no doubt being a disgrace to the author's family. Conversely, in *Famous Victories*, his successor Richard, the eleventh earl, plays such an overbearing part that when the play was revised and divided...the role was cut altogether.... This consistent glorification of his predecessors and suppression of negative matter can only lead to the conclusion that the writer was the seventeenth Earl of Oxford." (115–16)

Furthermore, scholars of all persuasions recognize that Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the 1560s English translation which is attributed to Arthur Golding, had a profound and lasting effect on Shakespeare's work. Given the theological basis of Arthur Golding's thirty-six other translations, the entertaining, imaginative, erotic English verse of Ovid's classic was most likely the work of Golding's precocious teenage nephew Edward de Vere, done while Golding was reportedly his tutor in the London household of William Cecil. The first four books of *Metamorphoses* appeared in 1564, the remainder completed in 1567. The title pages indicate Cecil House (1564) and de Vere's Barwick Hall (Essex) for the 1567 edition, clearly tying them to de Vere. They are totally unlike any of the Calvinistic translations Arthur Golding otherwise published over his thirty-three years of writing. Ovid's translations and the early versions of the history plays happened while both Shaksper and Marlowe were aged two to four, still in diapers or short pants.

Although he acknowledges that "The chronology of Marlowe's works and, to some extent, of the events in his life is unclear and often highly contested" (293), Greenblatt sees Marlowe's life and aspirations reflected

in the ambitious, daring central figures of his plays: Dido, Tamburlaine, or Faustus rise from a lowly class to supreme power. But as Greenblatt makes clear in *Will in the World*, no trace of Shaksper's life can be clearly connected to the plays of Shakespeare. As he acknowledged to Elizabeth Winkler (*Shakespeare was a Woman and Other Heresies*), it took forty years of academic work to "grapple with the difficulty of making the connections between the man and his works" (320) and "to fill in the blanks with what you can't know but you can try to speculate about" (321). He speculates throughout this book that Marlowe inspired Shakespeare; for example, "the dramatic representation of a powerful, complex inner life, largely through the intimacy of the soliloquy...in *Doctor Faustus* emerged on stage for the first time...Shakespeare was watching its astonishing emergence. It was from *Doctor Faustus* that the author of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* learned how it could be done" (236). Note, however, that such soliloquies appeared in *2 Henry VI*, *3 Henry VI*, and *Richard III* long before *Faustus*. Earlier versions of both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* each with soliloquies antedated *Faustus*.

If one understands that Edward de Vere adopted the pseudonym William Shakespeare with the publication of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 after having written and published plays anonymously for twenty years or so, then it becomes clear that Greenblatt has the influence absolutely backward: Marlowe was the younger contemporary of the real Shakespeare who, fourteen years his senior with years of juvenilia and poetic experience before Marlowe made it to London, showed Marlowe how to reveal character with a soliloquy and how to manage dramatic entrances and exits. Greenblatt recognizes Shakespeare as "the supreme master of...distributed personhood—he was immensely present in young Hamlet...the Ghost of old Hamlet" and many other characters, contrasting him with Marlowe, whose "title characters take up most of the air" (253). As brilliant as Marlowe's explosive plays were, as dynamic as their central characters, they remain rarely staged, while de Vere's Shakespeare works continue being performed worldwide.

Greenblatt's *Dark Renaissance*, however brilliantly written and well researched, is wrong in its conclusion that "Shakespeare was the recipient of Marlowe's gifts" (284); instead, Marlowe benefited from "the expressive power of the English language" that de Vere revolutionized in the 1570s and '80s.

James A. Warren (ed.). *Shakespeare Discussed: The Shakespeare Correspondence of J. Thomas Looney and Other Oxfordian Scholars 1920—1945*

**Veritas Publications, 2025; 592 pages
(Paperback \$27.00)**

Reviewed by Tom Goff

Thanks to editor James A. Warren, *Shakespeare Discussed* collects the surviving letters of early Oxfordians over the first twenty-five years of our revolutionary Shakespeare studies movement. This much-needed compendium includes many letters to and from educator John Thomas Looney, who first revealed Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, as “Shakespeare.” For such a large and varied collection, a brief review should summarize important highlights.

Shakespeare Discussed documents Looney’s interactions with Oxfordians (plus Baconians and other authorship skeptics), displaying his courtesy, scientific rigor, enjoyment of correspondence—and reclusiveness. Looney, though an introvert, readily defended core convictions. His 1938 letter to Sigmund Freud, who admired Looney’s groundbreaking “*Shakespeare*” *Identified*, welcomes Dr. Freud, a Jewish refugee, to England, hoping to interest him in Positivist philosophy (blending humanism and scientific principle). Read carefully, this credo should silence innuendos from at least one famed Stratfordian that Looney was antisemitic or anti-democratic.

Now we can chart Looney’s ongoing discoveries about Oxford-“Shakespeare” and reader responses in “real time.” Looney corresponds with publisher Cecil Palmer (who vigorously promoted “*Shakespeare*” *Identified* yet cheated Looney of all proceeds).

Warren provides letters from Colonel Bernard R. Ward, founder-organizer of the Shakespeare Fellowship

(busily researching, networking, suggesting new lines of inquiry, and securing outlets for Oxfordian articles); interactions between Looney and Katharine Eggar (the largest extant correspondence); reactions to Looney’s work from Margaret L. Knapp; and exchanges with stalwart anti-Stratfordian Sir George Greenwood.

Eggar queries Palmer “if Mr. J. Thomas Looney, author of ‘Shakespeare’ Identified could and would be willing to give a lecture on the subject of his book:”

If that is so, you will excuse my having to ask further—Is he a good speaker? And would he be a good-tempered champion of the claim which is sure to be hotly challenged in discussion?

[February, 1922?]

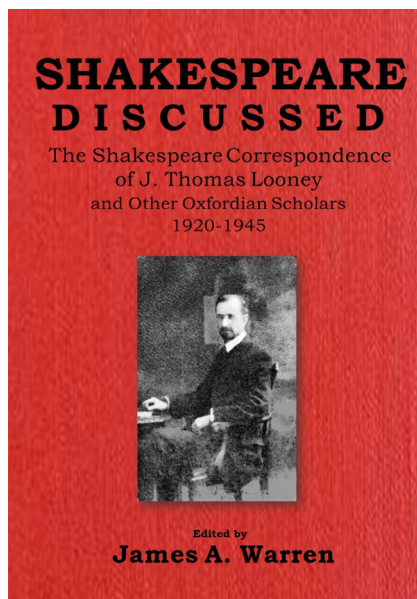
Good temper was among Looney’s graces, but he gave no public talks. In contrast, Eggar, an intrepid public speaker, would contribute articles, pamphlets, and numerous talks, plus a book (still unpublished!) to Oxford’s cause. Here, Looney conveys how deeply he appreciates Eggar:

[On Eggar’s “Oxford and the Queen’s Revels:”] You seem to carry investigation into the wonderful phenomenon of Elizabethan dramatic literature right to its roots, as it has never been done before. For the first time we see the seed and seedling stages of a great tree that all other writers have pretended to use as a kind of miraculous sudden appearance of a full-grown plant of huge dimensions.

Looney alludes to Ralph Waldo Emerson’s perception that Walt Whitman’s 1855 *Leaves of Grass* implied “a long foreground somewhere.” Linking de Vere to the Revels Office, Eggar helps illuminate “Shakespeare’s” foreground. In May, 1925, she surmises Looney is making new discoveries:

This has been my own experience since writing to you, and I could not possibly in a letter tell you of my many discoveries—but shall like to correct one mistake which invalidates a good deal of the paper I sent you, with regard to Vere’s relations with [Philip] Sidney. Far from being rivals or enemies, they were the closest of friends, and Vere in the Peushurst [?] circle was “Dyer”...¹

Is Eggar implying that, despite Oxford’s and Sidney’s tennis court argument, or the earl’s lampoons of



Sidney, they eventually reconciled? Identifying Oxford as [Sir Edward] “Dyer” and, apparently, as “Euphues,” Eggar anticipates Robert Prechter’s conception of Oxford’s *Voices* (pseudonyms, including allonyms besides “William Shake-speare”). The Looney-Eggar partnership operates in both directions: Looney ponders how precocious young Oxford, alongside uncle Arthur Golding, might have composed “Arthur Brooke’s” *Romeus and Juliet*.

Correspondent Margaret Knapp terms Oxford, appropriately, “an ear-minded man.” In June, 1921, she notes that King Lear’s protest against daughter Regan’s intent to “scant my sizes” is couched in Cambridge student slang, predating Stratfordian Frederick Boas’s 1923 remarks on Cambridge jargon in the Shakespeare canon.² Knapp also finds an unsigned letter, recognizably Oxford’s, in a biography of Christopher Hatton.

Eva Turner Clark congratulates Dr. Gerald Rendall on his *Shake-speare: Handwriting and Spelling*, proving Oxford’s orthography harmonizes with “Shake-speare’s” *Sonnets*. Charles Wisner Barrell and Father Charles Sidney de Vere Beauclerk substantiate Oxford as the original sitter in multiple altered “Shakespeare” portraits.

A fierce dispute erupts over what Warren calls the “Why?” question: Why did Oxford’s family, or the authorities, wish his authorship of Shakespeare’s works kept secret, not only during his lifetime but long after his death? Dissatisfied with the simple argument that a reputation as a playwright would disgrace a courtier, Captain Bernard M. Ward³ and Percy Allen suggested Queen Elizabeth had borne, by Oxford, a child—whose claim to the throne might disrupt Elizabeth’s regime, even entangle future royals in civil war. Better to suppress our “Shakespeare’s” troubled history, perhaps forever.

Other Oxfordians, however, including Looney and Eggar, believed scandal-mongering about Elizabeth might hinder the Fellowship’s quest for public respect. Evidently, Gerald Rendall was vitriolic about the “Elizabeth-Son” theory (Warren terms it the Dynastic Succession Theory).

These Dynastic Succession arguments are the book’s emotional high point: heated disputation, phrased with politesse (usually). Looney, addressing Percy Allen, believes the burden of proof rests on Allen, who cannot obligate opponents to disprove the new theory. Surely his approach will replace scientific investigation with unsavory debaters’ tactics.

Allen the debater responds. This passage deserves full quotation:

You describe your own attitude toward theories as “detached” and “in accord with the positive evidence”; to which I answer that the attitude of any investigator worthy of the name must be “detached,” and my own attitude has always been so “detached” that, through a sequence of some 20 to 25 years, I have, very slowly, and by constant brooding over the evidence, been brought round from orthodoxy to agnosticism, then very nearly to Baconianism, thence to Oxfordianism, thence, very gradually, to the topical interpretation of the plays, developed in book after book; thence, very slowly and reluctantly, to the belief—gradually concurred in also by Ward—that only in Oxford’s relation with the Queen would the final solution of the problem be found. Is this process too swift for your liking, and not sufficiently “detached”; will you argue that I should have taken not 25 but 50 years before you could acquit me of too rash a partisanship!

Encompassing quarrels, reconciliations, optimism—unluckily premature—for our cause’s ultimate triumph, good Fellowship and all, *Shakespeare Discussed* complements other must-read books. First came *Shakespeare Revolutionized* (2021), Warren’s account of how Looney discovered the real “Shake-speare” and birthed a radical movement, reenvisioning the playwright’s world. Second, *Shakespeare Investigated* (2021), the collected early articles of the Shakespeare Fellowship. With *Shakespeare Discussed*, James Warren has achieved a grand Oxfordian trilogy.⁴

Endnotes

1. Eggar refers to the Penshurst circle, and estate, of Sir Robert Sidney, which inspired a Ben Jonson poem. (At times, rapid cursive handwriting frustrates the careful editor!)
2. In *Shakespeare & the Universities*. De Vere was tutored by Cambridge luminary Sir Thomas Smith and attended Cambridge as well.
3. Colonel Ward’s son, Oxford’s biographer.
4. Or even a tetralogy—counting Warren’s 2018 edition of “*Shakespeare*” *Identified!*

Turner's Watercolor of Oxford's Home

by Katherine Chiljan

The renowned English artist Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851) made a watercolor and pencil rendering of Brooke House, the 17th Earl of Oxford's home in his later years (then called King's Place). On July 2, 2025, it was auctioned at Christie's London, and sold for £17,640.¹ The watercolor, 9 x 7 inches, shows a portion of the 15th-century mansion that had an oct-angular turret (one of two) on which was a sundial (see fig. 1 on page 35). It is a beautiful 18th-century snapshot of the house, that, 150 years later, would become a war casualty, and then demolished (1954–55). In 1976, the watercolor was exhibited at London's Victoria & Albert Museum.²

Christies dated the watercolor circa 1794, when Turner was about age 19. Brooke House was then a private mental home (from 1759 until 1940) and was managed by Dr. Thomas Monro from 1791 onward (succeeding his father, Dr. John Monro). Dr. Monro (1759–1833), who owned a large art collection, was a patron of Turner and other young artists; he would invite them into his London house and pay them for creating watercolors at the so-called "Monro Academy." Monro and his friends would also take them on outdoor sketching trips.³

It is a good possibility that Brooke House was the site of one these trips. There is also a Monro family tradition, according to Turner's biographer, Franny Moyle, that Turner's mother, Mary, was treated at Brooke House in the 1790s. Moyle also stated that Turner's Brooke House drawings are still in the Monro family.⁴

Turner was baptized in May 1775, but his birth date is unknown. Moyle writes that Turner "later claimed he shared a birthday with William Shakespeare on 23 April."⁵ He also went by his middle name, "William." According to Charles Swinburne's biography, Turner was dubbed the "Shakespeare of landscape" by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809–92).⁶

Two of Turner's paintings feature Shakespeare characters. In 1828, while in Rome, Turner made an imaginary portrait of the character Jessica, from *The Merchant of Venice* (Petworth House and Park, West Sussex). In 1836, he made a landscape of Venice, titled *Juliet and her Nurse* (private collection); these two *Romeo and Juliet* characters are shown diminutively on the painting's right side, standing in a balcony watching fireworks at St. Mark's Square (the play puts them only in Verona).

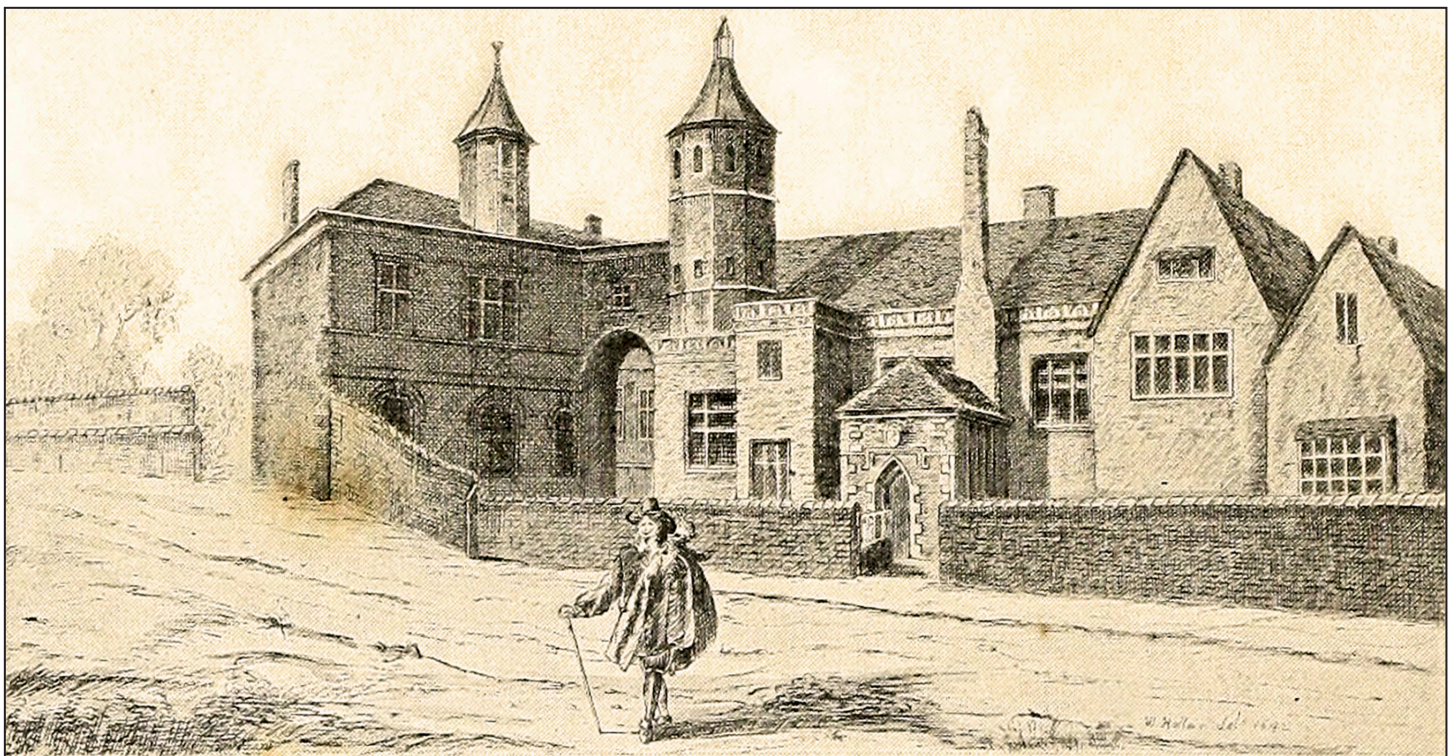


Figure 2: Brooke House by Wenceslaus Hollar, 1642, from Mann's *Brooke House*, 1904, plate 1.

In 1833, Turner made sketches of Stratford-upon-Avon (now at Tate, London), including the Stratford Monument in Holy Trinity church, which was made into an engraving by John Horsburgh (fig. 3A, fig 3B); published in Edinburgh in 1834, it was used as the frontispiece to volume 6 of *Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* Turner’s artistic license turned the wall effigy’s head to its right (seemingly looking at the four ladies standing at ground level below), replaced its simple collar with a thick ruff, changed the upper garment (which looks more like the one in Droeshout’s engraving but with larger buttons), and transformed the short, upturned mustache into a longer drooping one. Too bad that Turner was unaware that he had drawn the home of the real Shakespeare, Brooke House, decades earlier.

Another artist drew both Brooke House and the Stratford Monument—Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–77). Born in Prague, Hollar immigrated to England in Dec. 1636, in service of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel.⁷



Figure 3A: John Horsburgh’s 1834 engraving of the Stratford Monument, based on Turner’s 1833 sketch.

In 1642, Hollar made an engraving of Brooke House’s exterior from the northeast, showing its two turrets (see fig. 2 on page 33); he also engraved its chapel’s interior (showing two floor graves), and Ralph de Elryngton’s tomb.⁸ Hollar’s engraving of the Stratford Monument, the earliest known, was based on Sir William Dugdale’s 1634 drawing and published in Dugdale’s *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656). Another early watercolor of Brooke House, the southeast view, was made by Jean Baptiste Claude Chatelain (1710–71), now at the London Museum, dated 1741–60. In addition, Chatelain made pen and ink drawings of Brooke House and the Old St. John’s Church, Hackney (called Hackney Church), showing the St. Augustine Tower, both dated ca. 1750 (Royal Academy of Arts, London).

Endnotes

1. Christie’s, *Old Masters to Modern Day Sale: Paintings, Drawings, Sculpture*, London, 2 July 2025, lot 171.
2. Victoria & Albert Museum, *Dr Thomas Monro (1759–1833) and the Monro Academy*, London, February–May 1976, no. 69.
3. Abell, Mora. *Doctor Thomas Monro, Physician, Patron and Painter*, Trafford Publishing, Victoria, British Columbia, 2009, introduction.
4. Moyle, Franny. *Turner: The Extraordinary Life and Momentous Times of J.M.W. Turner*, Penguin Press, New York, NY, 2016, 84.
5. *Ibid*, 19, 452 (note 1).
6. Swinburne, Charles Alfred. *Life and Work of J.M.W. Turner, R.A.*, London, 1902, 48.
7. Godfrey, Richard T. *Wenceslaus Hollar: a Bohemian Artist in England*, New Haven, CT, 1994, xi.
8. Mann, Ernest A. *Brooke House, Hackney*, London, 1904, plates 1, 6.



Figure 3B: The Stratford Effigy, cropped.

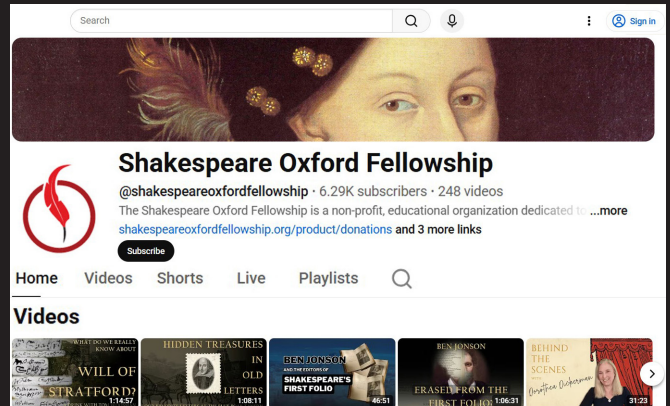


Figure 1: Brooke House, Hackney, by Joseph Mallord William Turner, Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images.

In This Issue:

2025 SOF Conference Report 1
 From the President..... 3
 Letters to the Editor..... 4
 What’s the News? 9
 2025 SOF Oxfordian of the Year Award 20
 2025 SOF Veritas Award 21
 From the Archives 22
 Visit to the Grave of Delia Salter Bacon..... 24
 Annual General Meeting Minutes 26
 Review: Shakespeare’s Greater Greek 27
 Review: Dark Renaissance 29
 Review: Shakespeare Discussed: The Shakespeare Correspondence of J. Thomas Looney and Other Oxfordian Scholars 1920-1945..... 31
 Turner’s Watercolor of Oxford’s Home..... 33

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship YouTube channel now has over 200 videos and more than 6,000 subscribers!



To see the many playlists of content available including past SOF conference videos, Blue Boar Tavern episodes, interviews, classic video contest submissions and more, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/@shakespeareoxfordfellowship>

Great Books a Click Away!

- ▶ Are you looking for all the important research on the First Folio?
- ▶ Heard about a popular new book suggesting *Shakespeare Was a Woman* but can’t find it?
- ▶ Going to a new production of *Twelfth Night* and want the Oxfordian interpretation?
- ▶ Need ideas to stimulate your students for this year’s discussion on Shakespeare?

We have links to all the books you’ve been looking for & more!

<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/shakespeare-authorship-books/>

