
The Elizabethan Review

(1935), Armstrong (1946), Clemen (1951) and Hankins (1958).

Works Cited

- Edward A. Armstrong, *Shakespeare's Imagination: A Study of the Psychology of Association and Inspiration*. London, 1946.
- Thomas Carter, *Shakespeare and Holy Scripture*. London, 1905.
- W.H. Clemen, *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery*. London, 1951.
- Roland Mushat Frye, *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine*. 1963.
- John Erskine Hankins, *Shakespeare's Derived Imagery*. 1953.
- John Thomas Looney, "Shakespeare" Identified in *Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*. 1975.
- Peter Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background*. 1973.
- *Biblical Influences in Shakespeare's Great Tragedies*. 1987.
- Richmond Noble, *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge*. 1953; 1970.
- Charlton Ogburn, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality*. 1984.
- Naseeb Shaheen, *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Tragedies*. 1987.
- *Biblical References in Shakespeare's Histories*. 1989.
- "Shakespeare's Knowledge of the Bible—How Acquired," *Shakespeare Survey* (1988), 201-214.
- Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us*. Cambridge, 1935.
- Walter Whiter, *A Specimen of A Commentary on Shakespeare*. London, 1794; 1967.

The Man Who Was Shakespeare by Charlton Ogburn, Jr. 1995

Reviewed by Gary Goldstein.

This is a serious though not scholarly publication that attempts to synopsise Mr. Ogburn's much larger, 892-page book, also recently published by EPM Publications in McLean, Virginia. While the present 94-page pamphlet lays out the essence of Mr. Ogburn's argument, it contains many of the same drawbacks as the book from which it is derived.

To start, Ogburn has not included full references for his sources. His attributions sometimes include an author, at other times only the title of a book or article (without distinguishing between the two) and rarely a publisher or year. Nor does he differentiate between private manuscripts or published works. In fact, Ogburn often dispenses with evidence altogether and advances mere assertions as arguments. For example:

The play *Edward the Second* was, it seems clear, derived from a draft by

Edward de Vere turned over to be completed by Christopher Marlowe, who would seem to have been a protege of his and to whom the play is generally attributed, though it is quite out of line with his other works. Stratfordians have it that the play's similarity to Shakespeare's early historical dramas shows how the greater writer was indebted to the lesser. (29n).

The double assertion of Marlowe being de Vere's protege and of de Vere being the initial author of the play, *Edward II*, is never backed up with more than what is set out above.

Yet another assertion that Ogburn advances concerns de Vere being the true author of a long poem usually attributed to one Arthur Brooke.

...I am emboldened to embrace the proposition that *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, a "childish" poem as Marchette Chute terms it, one derived from an Italian romance and clearly the basis of Shakespeare's play, was the work of the 12-year-old Edward, composed in the aftermath of [Queen] Elizabeth's visit. The poem was published, in 1562, as by Arthur Brooke, it is true, but Brooke seems to be known for little else than drowning the next year; and George Turberville, who recorded the event, described the author of *The Tragical History* as a "dainty Babe" who on "Pallas' dug...did chew." (30)

It seems that Ogburn did not read or has not remembered some pertinent biographical information about Arthur Brooke published by Sir E.K. Chambers. Pat Dooley and Diana Price have. Writing on the Internet on 27 July 1995 (on the Oxfordian bulletin board, evermore@shakespeare.oxford.lm.com), they effectively refute this contention by pointing to an Arthur Brooke that, in 1562, was recognized by his peers for being a writer of "plays and shows."

Oxfordians have gone along with Ogburn's thesis that Arthur Brooke was one of Oxford's early pseudonyms. However, according to E.K. Chambers, in 1562, an Arthur Brooke was "admitted to the Inner Temple without fee 'in consideration of certain plays and shows at Christmas last set forth by him' (Inderwick, Inner Temple records, i, 219)."

It's important to note here that other Oxfordians do not go along with this position, and many others, that Ogburn has chosen to propagate, most prominent of which is the Royal Heir theory, which states that Henry Wriothely, Earl of Southampton, was the issue of the 17th Earl of Oxford and Queen Elizabeth, and, therefore, heir to Elizabethan's crown.

A more serious matter, however, is Ogburn's contention that literature itself can be used as factual or historical evidence.

The testimony of *Willobie [His Avis]* comports with other evidence that [Queen] Elizabeth and Oxford were lovers. This includes certain of Shakespeare's Sonnets, the innuendos of *Venus & Adonis*, and the

only interpretation, I believe, to be drawn from the love between Sylvia and Valentine in *Two Gentlemen From Verona* (which may well be seen as meaning two gentlemen of one Vere). (41)

While Mr. Ogburn has been busy transforming literature into news, he seems to have lost sight of recent research being conducted in the field. A case in point arises when Ogburn examines the musical authorship of pieces bearing the Earl of Oxford's title:

There is an *Earl of Oxford's March*, said to be by William Byrd (1543-1623), and an *Earl of Oxford's Galliard*, now lost and of unknown authorship, possibly of Oxford's own. (72)

The lost *Galliard* to which Ogburn refers was discovered several years ago by Professor Ross Duffin of Case Western Reserve University, whose findings were presented at the Shakespeare-Oxford Society annual meeting in 1992. Professor Duffin found the *Galliard* in a John Dowland lute manuscript at the Folger Shakespeare Library (V.b.280, "A commonplace book of songs and dances for the lute, ca. 1600"), maintaining that the Earl of Oxford was not the composer but the patron who requested and paid for its composition.

A larger issue, of course, is the whole question of determining authorship, for which one must have at least a single composition as a standard against which to measure and evaluate unattributed compositions (musical or literary). Since the Earl of Oxford has never been credited with writing a single musical composition, there simply is no way to attribute anonymous or pseudonymous scores to Oxford.

Finally, weakening his overall argument substantially, Ogburn has chosen to imitate the bad habit of orthodox academicians by continually employing qualifying phrases to bridge gaps in his evidence. The range is impressive and includes: "undoubtedly," "we may imagine," "we may suppose," "can scarcely be doubted," "presumably," "must have been," "we may be altogether certain," "I should guess," "it cannot have been long before," "it may be a fair guess," "I think we may be permitted to surmise," "it is hard not to believe," "rumor has it," "it leaves scant doubt," and so on.

All this may indicate that Ogburn's restatement of the Oxfordian case, originally made by J. Thomas Looney in *"Shakespeare" Identified in Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford* (1920), itself needs major revision and rethinking.

I must end, however, by acknowledging a general indebtedness to Charlton Ogburn, first for popularizing the Oxfordian hypothesis and, second, for so ably debating Stratfordians when no one else was dealing with the Shakespeare Authorship Issue in either the academic or popular culture.