An Alternate Solution to the Funeral *Elegy*

Richard Desper

Dramatic new evidence bearing on the Shakespeare authorship question was recently reported by Donald Foster[1] in the form of a poem, "A Funeral *Elegy f*or Master William Peter", originally published in 1612 by T. Thorpe.[2] Foster has cited this poem as definitive evidence upholding the tradition that the body of work published under the name "William Shakespeare"[3] was indeed written by the glovemaker's son from Stratford-upon-Avon. Foster's thesis is twofold. First, although Thorpe identified the author only as "W. S.", Foster's computer analysis of the poem, in comparison with other works of the Shakespeare canon, resulted in a positive identification. Second, Foster cites the date of publication (1612) and its association with the death of a person in that year as evidence against the proposal that the Shakespeare canon was instead written by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, who died in 1604. While conceding the "plainness" of the *Elegy* (in comparison to the Sonnets, for instance), Foster maintained that the similarities between Shakespeare's works and the *Elegy* cannot be due to deliberate imitation of Shakespeare's style by another writer. Seconding Foster, Prof. Lars Engle[4] acknowledged that, while the *Elegy* was written quickly, as was *Merry Wives of Windsor,* it still was the work of "William Shakespeare".

In response, Oxfordian scholars have cited numerous discrepancies in Foster's argument. Sobran[5] points out that the ostensible subject of the poem, William Peter, had been married for three years at the time of his death, while *Elegy* eulogizes its subject as someone who had been

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married for nine years. Sobran also notes that the *Elegy* speaks of its subject as a devoted father, while the historical William Peter died without issue. Sobran argues that the time from the January death of William Peter to the date of registration of the *Elegy* by Thorpe is remarkably short for the poem's composition. Foster's thesis requires a scenario in which the news of William Peter's January 25 death in Exeter traveled over 150 miles from Exeter to Stratford-upon-Avon, where the author wrote the 578-line *Elegy*, and then sent it another 150 miles to Thorpe in London—all within three weeks. In addition, Sobran notes that the author of the *Elegy* refers to himself as being in his youth. This could not apply to the forty-seven year old William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon in January, 1612. Sobran's theory is that the poem was written well before 1612, and that Thomas Thorpe was in possession of it when he heard of the death of a man named Peter in 1612. Knowing it was the work of the author of the Shakespeare canon, including the Sonnets which Thorpe had published in 1609, he took the opportunity to profit from the *Elegy* by using Peter's 1612 death as a fitting occasion for publishing the poem.

The important point of Foster's argument is that the *Elegy* constitutes a work both written and published in 1612 about a particular event occurring at that time, and identifiable as written by the author of the Shakespeare canon. The reasoning is that until one settles the authorship question, the only written works which can be historically ascribed to William of Stratford are half a dozen signatures. Connecting the *Elegy*, or any other newly discovered work, to the Shakespeare canon does not, of itself, constitute evidence of authorship; it merely adds another item to the works of Shakespeare, whoever he might be. To argue otherwise would be to presume the predicate. Furthermore, publication of the *Elegy* well after Oxford's death does not, *of itself*, disqualify Oxford as the true author "William Shakespeare". If one were to follow this type of argument to its logical conclusion, then the existence of *All's Well*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Two Gentlemen*, and *Coriolanus*, first printed in 1623 in the First Folio and unknown to history before that date, would disqualify the Stratford Shakespere (who died in 1616) as the playwright. Thus, one must either disqualify both Oxford and Shakspere, or concede that literary works may have existed years before their publication

The crucial point is whether the *Elegy* was written on the occasion of the death of someone in 1612 or in reference to an earlier death. Sobran has shown that doubts may be raised with regards to the contents of the poem *vis-à-vis* the known facts of William Peter, supposedly the subject of the poem. Our task here shall be to demonstrate that the *Elegy* refers to the an actual death which occurred well before 1612. We shall identify that person and show how the known historical facts

about his life and death mesh perfectly with the contents of the *Elegy*. This shall confirm Sobran's argument that the *Elegy* printed by Thorpe in 1612 was actually written decades before. Additionally, we shall show that this person was alluded to repeatedly in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night. Finally, it shall be shown that the revelations of the author of the *Elegy* about himself also mesh with our historical knowledge of the 17th Earl of Oxford at the time the *Elegy* was written.

We are willing to stipulate that Foster is correct in attributing the *Elegy* to Shakespearean authorship, but shall take the *Elegy* as yet further evidence that the Earl of Oxford is the true author of the Shakespeare canon, writing a tribute to the Catholic martyr, Edmund Campion. Such an interpretation is consistent with the contents of the poem and the histories of Oxford and Campion.

The major points supporting such an interpretation are as follows.

First and foremost are the references to a spouse of nine years, and of fatherhood (511-513, 526), which do not fit the known life of William Peter at all, but which figuratively fit the life of Father Edmund Campion.

Second are the references to a death by martyrdom (179-184, 318-320, 321-324, 367-370, 391-396, 535-536). While the authors of elegies do often succumb to hyperbole and exaggeration in their praise of the deceased, there are limits of taste, beyond which the praise rings untrue. The level of expression of the departed's martyrdom, particularly in 367-370, where his death is compared to that of Jesus Christ, hardly accords with the life and death of William Peter.

Third are the references to the departed as a condemned man, one under sentence of death (34-35, 157, 249-268, 535-536,). Most telling is line 157: "The many hours till the day of doom", which suggests the interval between a judicial sentence and its execution. These "hours" have no meaning with regard to the violent death of William Peter, who had no foreknowledge of his death.

Fourth are the occasions (48, 159) in which it is noted that the body of the departed would not lie in a tomb. For Edmund Campion, law provided that his drawn and quartered body should not be accorded burial; thus there is no tomb at which his admirers could remember him. On the other hand, there is no reason to believe that William Peter was not accorded burial.

Fifth are those allusions to the Catholic religion of the departed (318-320), and to the figurative meaning of his name as a "Champion" of that faith. The foremost fact of the life of Edmund Campion is that he was a Roman Catholic; the same cannot be said of William Peter.

Sixth are those references by the author of the *Elegy* to his own "youth" (558-60). Such references are hardly appropriate in terms of the forty-seven year old William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon in

1612, the year of William Peter's death. However, the term would be appropriate for Edward de Vere in the time frame 1581-83, when he was in his early thirties.

With regard to Oxfordian authorship, we note that Oxford's fall from favor (including banishment from Court) between 1581 and 1583 fully accords with the remarks (137-148, 565-572) of the author of the *Elegy* about himself, and with certain of Shakespeare's sonnets (33-38, 71-72, 111-112, 121), in which the poet alludes to his own damaged reputation. Abrams calls attention to the parallels between these sonnets and the various lines in the *Elegy* in which the author remarks on the shame attached to his name, and comments that the *Elegy* is "an odd forum for an author to be discussing such matters". Indeed, such remarks would seem to be *non sequiturs* in an *Elegy* written by the gentleman from Stratford-upon-Avon in 1612 about William Peter. They are quite appropriate, however, for the Earl of Oxford to incorporate into a poem written circa 1581-83 about Edmund Campion.

This writer has demonstrated that *Twelfth Night, or What You Will,* is more than the greatest jewel of comedy of the Elizabethan era (see *ER,* 3:1). The spirit of *Twelfth Night* is that of a season when (to quote Feste, IV.i.9) "Nothing that is so is so"; when meanings are turned inside out. Thus, in the midst of this boisterous, rollicking comedy, it can be argued that the author has inserted a poignant salute to the Catholic priest and martyr, Edmund Campion:[6] ...as the old hermit of Prague, that never saw pen and ink, very wittily said to a niece of King Gorboduc, 'That that is is'; so I, being master Parson, am master Parson; for what is 'that' but 'that', and 'is' but 'is'?" (Iv.ii.15-19). The concept that this speech contains deliberate allusions to Edmund Campion, particularly to his 1580-81 mission to England, has been discussed in detail and shall only be alluded to here. The earlier discussion was written without reference to the authorship question.

The historical record of meetings between the Earl of Oxford and Edmund Campion is limited to a single occasion: the State Visit of Queen Elizabeth and her court to Oxford University, from August 31 to September 5 , 1566. Campion, the university's brilliant young star, made an excellent impression on Elizabeth, expostulating publicly[7] before her on matters of science and philosophy. He would have been twenty-six years of age at the time. At that same visit, the sixteen-year-old Edward de Vere, ward of the Queen since his father's death four years earlier, due to become Seventeenth Earl of Oxford at his majority, was awarded[8] the degree Master of Arts. De Vere had been educated by illustrious tutors (most notably his uncle, Arthur Golding, famed for his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) at Cecil House, the London home of his guardian, William Cecil, later to become Lord Burghley. Thus de Vere's residence as a scholar at Oxford may have been of quite

limited duration. Nonetheless, both Campion and De Vere were present for the six-day royal visit. Consequently, the sixteen-year-old Edward de Vere had both occasion and opportunity to meet and befriend the twenty-six-year-old Edmund Campion. Whether the two actually met and formed a friendship is not contained in the historical record of this event.

The following lines in the text of the *Elegy* display the poem's numerous associations to the life and death of Edmund Campion.

" ... time ... Abridged the circuit of his hopeful days" (1-2). Campion, after a promising career at Oxford University, was executed (December 1, 1581)[9] at the untimely age of forty-one.

"What memorable monument can last / Whereon to build his never-blemished name / But his own worth, wherein his life was graced" (5-7). Campion had been convicted of and executed for treason, a verdict for which history has pronounced him blameless.[10] In particular, Campion was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church in 1970, which amounts to official ecclesiastical recognition that he died in a state of grace. Many Catholics of the Elizabethan era held the same opinion.

"A life free from such stains as follies are, / Ill recompensed only in his end" (19-20). Campion was innocent yet condemned. See Sonnet 121 ("Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed") also for the theme of a good man unjustly perceived of as evil.

" ... he had / Warrant enough in his own innocence" (34-35). Allusion to the death warrant under which the innocent Campion was executed.

"But death to such gives unremembered graves" (48). Particularly for one executed by hanging, drawing, and quartering. The remains are not accorded any kind of respectful burial; instead, they are divided up and disposed of to several different destinations, as was the custom of the day.[11] There is no grave, marked or unmarked, for those who died as Campion died.

"His younger years ... did yield again the crop / Of education, bettered in his truth" (51-54). Campion was the shining star of academic excellence in his Oxford days, honored by the Queen during her 1566 visit to the University, and supported financially by her favorite, the Earl of Leicester.[12] Campion had even been chosen to deliver the eulogy on the death of Leicester's first wife, Amy Robsart, in 1562.

" ... a temple, in whose precious white / Sat reason by religion oversswayed / Teaching his other senses, with delight / how piety and zeal should be obeyed" (59-62). Campion's religious conscience rendered him unable to make the appropriate gestures of adherence to the established church; he resigned his post at Oxford in 1569.

"He from the happy knowledge of the wise / Draws virtue to reprove secured fools / and shuns the glad sleights of ensnaring vice / To spend his spring days in sacred schools" (71-74). Campion's studies of the fathers of the Church led him to eschew the path of security of his promising Oxford career for Catholic universities abroad, at Douai, Rome, then Prague, as novice, priest and professor.

"Not ... / Courting opinion with unfit disguise / Affecting fashions" (91-93). Campion's nature made it difficult for him to trim his sails to political expectations, forcing him to leave Oxford.

"Unburthened conscience, unfeigned piety" (124). In exile, Campion, relieved of the pressure to conform to doctrines he could not affirm (e.g. that the sovereign was the Supreme Head of the Church in England) was free to follow his conscience in religious matters.

"Though I, rewarded with some sadder taste / Of knowing shame, by feeling it have proved / My country's thankless misconstruction cast / Upon my name and credit" (137-140). At the time of Campion's 1580-81 mission to England, the Earl of Oxford was embroiled in two controversies. In the first of these, Oxford, in the Christmas 1580 season, confessed himself to have been a secret Catholic, publicly broke with Rome, and named as fellow Catholics his first cousin Lord Henry Howard and two others. Howard counterattacked strenuously with denial and *ad hominem* arguments against Oxford's veracity and reputation. Note the use of "shame", connoting disgrace or disrepute, rather than "guilt", connoting culpability for offensive conduct. The entire Oxford-Howard episode remains somewhat a riddle to this day, and Oxford no doubt felt misunderstood at the time.

"... to enbane / My reputation with a witless sin" (143-144). Refers to Oxford's second controversy of this time period. Anne Vavasour, lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth, bore an illegitimate son (March 1581) and named as his father Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford.[13] For this offense, Oxford was first lodged in the Tower for several months, then banished from court until 1583. Note the word "sin", implying culpability, rather than mere "shame".

"Yet time, the father of unblushing truth, / May one day lay ope malice which hath crossed it, / And right the hopes of my endangered youth, / Purchasing credit in the place I lost it" (145-148). A clue to the date of the *Elegy*: before Oxford's 1583 return to court, but obviously after Campion's death in December, 1581. As to how Oxford eventually "purchased credit" to return to court after *l'affaire Vavasour*: he reconciled with his wife, Lord Burghley's daughter, *nee* Anne Cecil, after seven years estrangement; Anne bore him a son in May, 1583, who survived only a day or two. Shortly after, the Queen, perhaps seeing this as tangible evidence of

Oxford's reformation, and feeling sympathy for the bereaved pair, turned a kind ear to petitions from Anne's father, Lord Burghley, and from Sir Walter Raleigh, and re-admitted Oxford to Court. Note also the association of Time as the revealer of Truth, a dominant motif in *The Winter's Tale*, which has been previously cited as an autobiographical work of Oxford.[14]

"The many hours till the day of doom" (157). Refers to Campion's wait of several days while under sentence of death. Cannot be reconciled to the violent death of William Peter in 1612, since he had no foreknowledge of his impending death.

"For should he lie obscured without a tomb" (159). Again, refers to the manner of disposition (without a tomb) of Campion's body after his execution.

"Time would to time his honesty commend" (160). History will exonerate Campion. Borne out in fact: see remarks on (5-7).

"And I here to thy memorable worth, / In this last act of friendship, sacrifice / My love to thee, which I could not set forth / In any other habit of disguise.... And I confess my love was too remiss / That had not made thee know how much I prized thee, / But that mine error was, as yet it is, / To think love best in silence ... He is steady / Who seems less than he is in open show ... I took this task upon me, / To register with mine unhappy pen / Such duties as it owes to thy desert" (205-226). Oxford expresses his regret that he could not have spoken out on Campion's behalf during Campion's imprisonment, trial, and execution. In Oxford's defense, one should recall that Oxford was himself in disgrace at this point in time, having been banished from Court. Oxford himself was released[15] from the Tower of London only six weeks before Campion was lodged[16] there. Knowing full well that his voice would do Campion no good, Oxford maintained silence on the subject, resolving instead to pay his tribute to Campion in writing for a later day.

"... wherein to tell / What more thou didst deserve than in thy name, / And free thee from the scandal of such senses ... So in his mischief is the world accursed: / It picks out matter to inform the worst. ... The text of malice ... As 'tis by seeming reason underpropped" (249-268). Campion died a traitor's death, in apparent disgrace, his name ruined if one were judge by the same light as did his prosecutors. The author has set out to undo this disgrace, to free Campion's name to posterity from the disgrace attached to it, as Campion would have done for the author. Hardly applies to the William Peter of 1612: it is a misfortune to die in a violent drunken quarrel, but not a disgrace of this nature.

"Ruling the little ordered commonwealth / Of his own self, with honor to the law / That gave peace to his bread, bread to his health; ...

wherein he joyed / A monarchy of comfort's government" (294-299). Portrays the self-content of a man who knows himself and is faithful to his own conscience. The "bread" could well refer to the bread which Campion, as a priest, offered in peace in the celebration of the Catholic mass. This is immediately followed by —

"For in the vineyard of heaven-favored leaning / Where he was double-honored in degree, / His observation and discreet discerning / Had taught him in both fortunes to be free" (301-304). First the "vineyard" allusion to the wine of the Catholic mass, then the "double-honored in degree" allusion to Campion's two academic degrees (BA and MA), and finally, allusion to Campion's exercise of a free conscience.

"... In all respects of trial, to unlock / His bosom and his store, which did declare / That Christ was his, and he was friendship's rock" (318-320). First, an allusion to Campion's trial, in which he presented an eloquent and steadfast statement of his religious faith. "Friendship's rock" is no doubt an allusion to Peter, the rock upon the Christian church was founded, and perhaps to the "Thou art Peter" phrase (MT 16:18-19) which forms the basis of Papal claims for authority according to the doctrine of the apostolic succession. With regard to Edmund Campion, there is a more specific connection, for on the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, June 29th, 1580, shortly after his arrival in England, he preached on this text before a large audience in the hall of Lord Norrey's house.[17]

"A rock of friendship figures in his name, / Foreshowing what he was, and what should be, / Most true presage, and he discharged the same / In every act of perfect amity." (321-324). "Figures" indicates that his name is to be examined for figurative content: that name is Campion, the Champion, the Protector, the Defender of the Faith. Note also that there are two specific allusions to a "champion of the church" in the Shakespeare canon, in a single scene in "King John" (III.i.255,267), where the English Crown is in conflict with the Papacy.

"Thus he, who to the universal lapse / Gave sweet redemption, offering up his blood / to conquer death by death, and loose the traps / Of hell" (367-370). Taking the "universal lapse" to be original sin, this passage would seem to be making reference to the death of Jesus Christ, thus drawing a parallel between his death and that of Campion. The William Peter of 1612 hardly rates such acclaim.

"Those saints before the everlasting throne ... from earth hence have not gone / All to their joys in quiet on their beds, / But tasted of the sour-bitter scourge / Of torture and affliction" (391-396). In general, this compares Campion to earlier Christian martyrs. Specifically, it also refers to Campion's racking[18] which he endured at the

time of his 1581 imprisonment.

"Let then the false suggestions of the froward, / Building large castles in the empty air, / By suppositions fond and thoughts untoward ... Rebound gross arguments upon their heart" (399-403). Refers to the "Conferences"[19] of September-October 1581, in which leading churchmen of England sought to refute and discredit Campion intellectually with little success.

"His being but a private man in rank / (And yet not ranked beneath a gentleman)" (431-432). Campion was born a commoner, yet his ordination as a priest would have conferred upon him a status equivalent to that of a gentleman. Thus a priest is accorded the title "Don" in Latin countries, and "Sir" in the plays of "William Shakespeare".

"...he dies but once, but doubly lives, / Once in his proper self, then in his name" (495-496). Campion has a second life inasmuch as his name lives on after his death. Can this also be said of the hitherto unremembered William Peter?

"Amongst them all, she who those nine of years / Lived fellow to his counsels and his bed / Hath the most share in loss" (511-513). She is the Catholic Church, whom Campion embraced from his exile in 1572 to his death in 1581. Again, a figurative, not a literal, interpretation. The nine years matches the interval 1572-1581, not the much briefer period of William Peter's marriage.

"As he was both an husband and a father" (526). A priest conferred with holy orders is considered married to the church, and his title is "Father". Again, figurative, not literal.

"His due deserts, this sentence on him gives, / 'He died in life, yet in his death he lives.'" (535-536). Ironic use of "sentence" as both the sentence of judgment of the court and the judgment of posterity. The content of line 536 joins the two meanings: he died as a result of the sentence of the court, yet his name lives in the minds of men as a martyr.

"Learning my days of youth so to prevent / As not to be cast down by them again);" (559-560). Refers to Oxford's relative youth compared to Campion. Oxford was ten years younger than Campion, and age 31 at the time of Campion's death.

"... banished in th' exile / Of dim misfortune, has none other prop / Whereon to lean and rest itself the while / But the weak comfort of the hapless, 'hope.' / And hope must in despite of fearful change / Play in the strongest closet of my breast". (565-570). Reflects the Earl of Oxford's status — banished from the Court of Queen Elizabeth but hoping for the lifting of that mark of disgrace — at the time of writing of the poem.

"And court opinion in my deep'st unrest" (572). A pun on "court

opinion". In its first meaning, the author, in his unrest, courts the good opinion of others. As its second meaning, the Royal court's opinion of him, as expressed by the Queen's banishment, is the source of his deepest sorrow.

"Long may thy worthiness thy name advance / Amongst the virtuous and deserving most, / Who herein hast forever happy proved" (575-577). While the average elegy may figuratively nominate the departed for sainthood, in this instance, the author is extending a literal nomination for sainthood. Many are "worthy", "virtuous", and "deserving", of course; but a saint has also died in a state of grace and may be counted among the company of saints in heaven. The author declares the departed to be "forever happy proved", i.e. assuredly in heaven, which amounts, in canon law, to the imputation of sainthood to him.

The Religious and Political Dilemma of Elizabethan Catholics

That the Earl of Oxford, who himself abjured the Roman Catholic Church in December, 1580, is being proposed as the author of an *Elegy* for a Catholic martyr need not form a contradiction. Oxford could well have become disillusioned with Roman Catholicism, while maintaining a personal respect and admiration for Edmund Campion.

In retrospect one may raise questions as to the wisdom (as well as the morality) of papal policy *vis-à-vis* England at this point in time. The policy comprised military intervention, as exemplified by the abortive Smerwick invasion of Ireland in 1580.[20] Papal policy also encompassed the endorsement of assassination,[21] first appearing in the Sega / Como correspondence of 1580. Papal policy also included the dispatching of Edmund Campion on his exclusively religious and nonpolitical mission of 1580-81. In short, rather than choosing between subversion, military intervention, or nonviolent mission activity, the papacy chose all three. It should be no surprise that, under the circumstances, the English government placed little stock in Campion's protestation of nonpolitical intention. Quite possibly, Campion knew that this would be the case from the day[22] he was called from Prague to return to England.

Indeed, Oxford and Campion share similarities in their attitudes towards tradition. To both, the history of past generations is treated with respect, and looked to for insights into proper and righteous behavior. When it comes to the eventual conflict between Church and Crown, the two part ways, but reluctantly, each following the path accorded the highest in his personal priorities. For Oxford, seventeenth of his line, his oath to his Sovereign would be given first place. For

Campion, his conscience would come down on the side of Church instead.

Shakespearean Attribution of the *Elegy*

Scholars on both sides of the authorship issue have raised objections to the attribution of the *Elegy* to the author of the Shakespeare canon. Stanley Wells has summarized the arguments on this issue recently[23] in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and a number of controversies have been raised in this area. For instance, Wells cites factual difficulties, notably its lack of specificity, as a weakness of the poem:

> "The praise of the murdered man is almost all generalized. We learn practically nothing about him, and when the writer does refer directly to the victim's life he gets it wrong."

However, if identifying the subject of the poem to be Campion, the reason for the poem's lack of specificity becomes evident. The author of the *Elegy* deals openly and fully in terms of his feelings for his subject, but, in deference to the political realities of the day, omits factual details which would readily identify the subject to the Elizabethan public. The government of England had executed Campion as a traitor, and would not take kindly to a poem extolling him as a martyr, even from the hand of the ranking earl of England.

Foster himself expressed reservations with his attribution, finding (NY Times, Jan. 14, 1996) that the poem was not so figurative or filled with word-play as is characteristic of Shakespeare. However, when the author and subject are properly identified, both figurative language and word-play are evident.

Both Duncan-Jones and Vickers have found the author of the *Elegy* to be overly modest about his intellectual abilities, compared to those of his friend, as he discharges his vow to memorialize his friend:

> "But here I trust I have discharged now / (Fair lovely branch too soon cut off) to thee, / My constant and irrefragable vow, / As had it chanc't thou might'st have done to me . . . / But that no merit strong enough of mine, / had yielded store to thy well-abled quill / Whereby t' enroll my name, as this of thine, / How s'ere enriched by thy plenteous skill. (233-240)"

They argue that this modesty compared to the writing abilities of the fallen friend is inappropriate for the established poet William Shakespeare of 1612 *vis-à-vis* the obscure William Peter. This affirmation of modesty is more appropriate when affirmed in 1581-83 by the

Earl of Oxford *vis-à-vis* the renowned Oxford scholar, Edmund Campion.

Conclusions

The Shakespeare authorship question is as much an historical question as a literary one, and the focus in this article has been on historical association rather than literary analysis. A much better fit with regard to the historical record is obtained if one identifies the subject of the poem as Edmund Campion. Furthermore, a fit is also obtained in terms of what the author reveals about himself in the *Elegy*, such as his position of disgrace at the time of the subject's death, and the historical record of the Earl of Oxford.

Others have taken yet a third view, proposing that the author of the *Elegy* was someone other than Shakespeare. Thus, John Ford has been advanced as a possible author of the *Elegy*, arguing, in part, that the quality of the verse in the *Elegy* does not measure up to Shakespearean standards. Foster's chief supporter, Richard Abrams, responds to such arguments in a recent *Times Literary Supplement* article thusly:

> "These are large claims . . . the question of style is likely to arise repeatedly . . . as readers turn to, and then impatiently turn away from, the poem's often ponderous verse. The *Elegy* is unquestionably a difficult poem. It may be guilty of "sameness, tediousness . . . elaborate obscurity", the charge brought to bear not last week against the elegy, but by Wordsworth against the Sonnets, which he ultimately came to read as the key with which Shakespeare unlocked his heart. . . 'Tedious and repetitious' the *Elegy* may also be, in Professor Wells' words; but the poem is not without its secrets, and it will not yield these up to careless reading." [24]

The present writer sees these words as particularly appropriate, not only in the context of establishing attribution of the *Elegy* to the author of the Shakespeare canon, but also in establishing Edward de Vere as the actual identity of that author.

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Stanley Wells, "In Memory of Master William Peter", *Times Literary Supplement,* Jan. 26, 1996, p. 28.

Notes

1. While Foster suggested the possibility of Shakespearean authorship of the *Elegy* as early as 1989, he, along with his chief supporter, Richard Abrams, strongly advocated this position first in April 1995, in a presentation before the Shakespeare Association of America. A general discussion of the subject was held at the Feb. 9, 1996 conference at UCLA. See also Abrams' article in the *Time Literary Supplement*, Feb. 9, 1996, and Foster's letter in the Mar. 27, 1996 TLS. Opposing views by fellow scholars have been voiced by Katherine Duncan-Jones adn by Brian Vickers in TLS.
2. Foster's text of the *Elegy* is available on-line via the World Wide Web; see Works Consulted.
3. For the purpose of this paper, the name "William Shakespeare" is intended to connote the author of the Shakespeare canon.
4. Both Engle and Professor Robert Watson spoke in support of Foster's thesis at the Feb. 9, 1996 conference on the subject held at UCLA.
5. Joseph Sobran, see above.
6. Desper, "Allusions to Edmund Campion in Twelth Night," see above.
7. Waugh, 11-13.
8. Ward, 27. Waugh, 8. Ogubrn, 772.
9. Waugh, 225.
10. *DNB*, III, 850-854; The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1973, 4, 721; Allen, 16-20; More, 100; Edwards, 20; Simpson, 279-313.
11. The directions of the Lord Chief Justice for the dispositon of Campion's remains are quoted by Waugh, 222, and do not bear repeating here.
12. Waugh, 7-14.
13. Ogburn, 646.
14. Desper and Vezzoli, see above.
15. Oxford's release from the Tower of London took place on June 8, 1581 (Ogburn, 646).
16. Campion was lodged in the Tower only July 22, 1581. (Waugh, 179-81)
17. Waugh, 125-26.
18. Waugh, 194, 206, 209, 216.
19. Ogburn, 638.
20. See Meyer, 266-275; see also Appendix XVIII, 489-91.
21. When Campion was called at Prague to go on his mission to England, a fellow priest inscribed above Campion's door "P. Edmundus Campianus Martyr." (Waugh, 90)
22. See Wells' *TLS* article referenced above.
23. See Abrams' *TLS* article referenced above.