



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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New Evidence of Oxford in Venice

by Michael Delahoyde, Ph.D.
with Coleen Moriarty

Having received one of the first SOF research grants, this past summer I was able to find archival documents that begin to fill in the gap regarding the Earl of Oxford's whereabouts in the spring/summer of 1575. I also have become an Aperol spritz addict. Grazie, Italia.

I have long held the notion that although Lord Burghley and his son Robert Cecil destroyed the English court's paper trail connecting Edward de Vere to "Shake-speare," the Italian-culture-vulture Earl would have made and maintained his connections, at least through an agent or secretary such as Anthony Munday, to the northern Italian centers of the arts, particularly Mantua and Venice, which not only inspired elements in the plays of Oxford/

Shakespeare but featured the innovative musical productivity that inspired the "Transalpina" rise of the English madrigal. Although his absorption of all things theatrical while in Italy would have been essentially experiential, his zeal for and work in music would have required possession of scores; arranging to have these prepared or purchased for him would likely have required documentation, which, if surviving, would until now have been overlooked.

Much Oxfordian research points towards Mantua, where Oxford almost certainly stayed as a guest of the ruling ducal family, the Gonzagas; saw the artworks and architecture of Giulio Romano; and (what has not been

(Continued on page 29)



From the President: Striding into 2016

The SOF is involved in many exciting projects right now. I'd like to highlight a few:

Matching Funds Support Oxfordian Research

Be sure to read Michael Delahoyde's fascinating recounting (starting on page 1 of this newsletter) of his discoveries in the Venice archives, supported by a grant from the SOF's 2014 Research Grant Program. Professor Delahoyde and his co-researcher, Coleen Moriarty, will be returning to Italy this summer with the help of a grant from the SOF's 2015 Research Grant Program to see what else they can find. And what about the 2016 RGP? In this issue, we announce the rules for the 2016 program (pp. 18-19) and invite you to apply for a grant or help us raise the money to fund additional research on the Shakespeare Authorship Question. This year, the SOF has set aside \$10,000 as matching funds for the RGP. A generous grant from the Joe W. & Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation helped make these matching funds possible. The matching funds mean that the power of your donation is doubled—if you donate \$100, the RGP receives \$200; if you donate \$500, the RGP receives \$1,000.

We've already gotten off to a great start because our members earmarked about \$4,000 toward the RGP as part of our end-of-the-year fundraising drive. That means that with the matching funds, we already have \$8,000 for 2016. If you, our members, donate only another \$6,000, that amount plus the matching funds will bring us up to our goal of \$20,000 for the year. We welcome all donations, large or small. Please use the special insert enclosed in this newsletter to make a donation, of whatever amount you can afford, to the Research Grant Program. Or you may donate on our website (shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org) by choosing "Donate" from the menu bar and then clicking on "Research Grant Fund." Please do what you can to help us bring additional evidence of Oxford's authorship to light.

2016 SOF Conference in Boston and Ashland Summer Session

Our 2016 conference will take place November 3-6 at the Boston Marriott in Newton, Massachusetts. Information on hotel reservations and conference registration can be found on page 20. You may register on our website by choosing "Conference" from the menu bar and then clicking on "Registration." Hurry because hotel reservations are going fast. If you missed the excitement of the 2015 conference in Ashland, do not miss this conference.

The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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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 two annual scholarly journals, *The Oxfordian* and *Brief Chronicles*.

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.

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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."

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And if you liked the Ashland conference, a limited number of participants will be able to return to Ashland for a special summer session August 2-5, taught by Professors Michael Delahoyde and Roger Stritmatter. Earl Showerman, who organized the Ashland conference, is in charge of this one too, so of course it will be a wonderful experience. See page 5 of this newsletter for details.

Folger First Folio Tour

As reported in our last newsletter, the Folger Shakespeare Library is now involved in a year-long process to display copies of the First Folio in all fifty states. The SOF sees this as an opportunity to promote doubt about the traditional Stratfordian theory by pointing out the numerous ambiguities in the First Folio. Members of the SOF and other doubters are encouraged to attend the First Folio exhibitions in their areas. If you would like to know more about how you can help, contact the SOF's First Folio Committee by sending an email to info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org.

How Did You Become an Oxfordian?

Bob Meyers, President Emeritus of the National Press Foundation, has been asking SOF members how they became Oxfordians. The resulting essays, edited by Bob, appear once a week on the SOF website and are automatically sent to our entire email list. This series has received many favorable comments from our members. If you aren't on our email list, you can go to the SOF home page and fill in your information under "Subscribe" in the right-hand column. You will

receive a confirmatory email. Be sure to click on the link provided in the email to ensure that you are on the list.

If you haven't yet submitted your "How I Became an Oxfordian" essay, you may send your submission (500 words or less in an editable form such as a Word document), along with a digital photo of yourself to info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org. Please also include a sentence about yourself (e.g., "John J. Smith is a businessman in San Francisco").

More to Come

After having a small deficit of \$400 at the end of 2014, the SOF ended 2015 with a healthy surplus in the thousands. Exact figures are not confirmed yet, but we will tell you more details in the next newsletter. We plan to use some of this surplus to expand our outreach efforts and have created a committee to look into further ways to promote our message. We have also formed a speakers bureau committee so that people who want to hear an introductory lecture on the authorship question will be able to locate speakers in their area who can provide this service. By the time you read this message, I will have given such a talk at the North Palm Beach Library on February 11. Look for more information in the future in our website and newsletter.

Many thanks to all of you whose membership, donations, and volunteer work helped the SOF have an excellent year in 2015!

Tom Regnier, President

Shakespeare Identified Centennial Publication Project: Request for papers for all SOF publications

The editors of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship print publications, in conjunction with the 2020 centennial celebration of the publication of J. Thomas Looney's *Shakespeare Identified in Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, extend an invitation to researchers to submit articles on the topics of:

- J. Thomas Looney,
- his life,
- his book *Shakespeare Identified*,
- the publication of his book,
- and subsequent response to that publication.

The editors will determine whether any specific article fits the topic criteria. Submissions will be accepted from now until January 1, 2019. Articles on this topic that are published by SOF publications in the period between 2014-2020 will be eligible for inclusion in a Shakespeare Identified Centennial Compendium that the SOF hopes to publish during the centennial year, 2020.

Submissions may be made to:

- Chris Pannell, editor, *The Oxfordian* at cpannell3@cogeco.ca

- Michael Delahoyde, managing editor, *Brief Chronicles*, (with General Editor Roger Stritmatter) at delahoyd@wsu.edu
- Alex McNeil, editor, *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* at alex@amcneil.com

When submitting material, please include the words "Shakespeare Identified Centennial" in the subject line of the email that carries your attachment. Also include that phrase somewhere on the title page, or first page of the submitted article.

The editors will select papers for consideration to be published in one of three SOF publications (*Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, *Brief Chronicles* or *The Oxfordian*) at their discretion during the years 2016-2019. The editors will determine which publication will publish each article, according to the needs of the publication and its editorial board.

General criteria: *Newsletter*—up to 3,000 words; *Brief Chronicles*—up to 5,000 words; *The Oxfordian*—up to 10,000 words.



What's the News?

Contested Year Now Available

As noted in the last issue of the *Newsletter*, James Shapiro's newest book, *The Year of Lear: Shakespeare in 1606* (UK title: *1606: William Shakespeare and the Year of Lear*), was published in October 2015. It is reviewed in this issue (see page 8). We also noted that a team of Oxfordians was hard at work on its own book responding to Shapiro. That book, *Contested Year: Errors, Omissions and Unsupported Statements in James Shapiro's The Year of Lear*, is now available on Amazon.com, Amazon.ca, and Amazon.co.uk. It is available only as an ebook, and the American edition will cost only 99 cents.

Edited by Mark Anderson, Alexander Waugh and Alex McNeil, *Contested Year* is a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the Shapiro book, pointing out his numerous mistakes, misstatements, and suppositions-as-facts. It provides ample reasons to challenge Shapiro's core arguments that *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra* had to have been written in 1605-06. In addition to the editors, fifteen notable Oxfordian scholars contributed to *Contested Year*: C.V. Berney, Christopher Carolan, Katherine Chiljan, Jan Cole, Michael Delahoyde, Robert Detobel, Walter Hurst, Lynne Kositsky, John Lavendoski, Richard Malim, Tom Regnier, John Shahan, Earl Showerman, Steven Steinburg, and Roger Stritmatter.

Peter Sturrock Again Discusses Authorship Question in New Book

In his new book, *Late Night Thoughts About Science*, Peter A. Sturrock again raises the Shakespeare Authorship Question as an area worthy of serious academic consideration. Sturrock, emeritus professor of physics and applied physics at Stanford University, previously tackled the subject in his 2013 book, *AKA Shakespeare—A Scientific Approach to the Authorship Question* (see *Newsletter*, 50:2, Spring 2014).

In *Late Night Thoughts About Science*, Sturrock turns his attention to "fifteen questions to which I do not have answers, to which I would like to have answers." His list is an eclectic one; there is a chapter each on ball lightning, the Allais Effect (concerning pendulums), low energy nuclear reactions, beta decays, precognition, clairvoyance, remote viewing, psychokinesis, anomalous healing, out of body experiences, reincarnation, UFOs, crop circles, and the Tunguska explosion of 1908. Most mainstream scientists and psychologists do not deem these topics worthy of serious discussion, dismissing them examples of "pseudo-science," "junk science" or even quackery. But Sturrock cites intriguing evidence

(and lists his sources) to support his view that they are phenomena which have not been satisfactorily explained and merit further study.

The fifteenth, and final, subject Sturrock raises is "The Shakespeare Authorship Question." Noting that this subject, unlike its predecessors, is outside of science, Sturrock asks, "Can we use scientific thinking to help clarify the issue? Why not?" First, he wisely clarifies his terminology by using "Shake-Speare" to refer to the author and "Shakspeare" to refer to the man from Stratford. He then discusses the Sonnets dedication, citing the late John Rollett's findings (a) that the typographical layout suggested at 6-2-4 pattern, which, if followed by counting the actual words of the dedication, yielded "These Sonnets All By Ever" (referring to Edward de Vere), and (b) that in certain equidistant letter spacing patterns the names "Henry" and "Wriothesley" (referring to the 3rd Earl of Southampton) were embedded. Sturrock also cites Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*, which "gives strong evidence that Shakspeare was not Shakespeare."

In his final chapter, "Late-Night Reflections," Sturrock looks more generally at the approach of the scientific community to "a new and puzzling result or observation." If it is not compatible with established theory, "a scientist's instinctive reaction is to reject the new information." And so it is elsewhere. "It is interesting," he writes, "to see a parallel between the scientific community that refuses to recognize that there are questions that it refuses to recognize, and the orthodox Shakespeare community that refuses to recognize that there is an authorship issue that it refuses to recognize."

Late Night Thoughts About Science is a highly readable book. Each chapter is brief, and the arguments are laid out in clear terms that a non-scientist can easily grasp. It is available on Amazon.com, as is his previous book, *AKA Shakespeare*.

Book Owned by Oxford Sold at Auction

At a Sotheby's auction in late 2015, Edward de Vere's copy of an Italian translation of Herodotus was sold to an anonymous online bidder. Sotheby's had estimated that the volume, which featured the de Vere family boar in gold on the front cover, would sell for \$1500-3000. The winning bid was \$7000, to which was added a hefty buyer's premium, bringing the total sale price to \$8750. The book was printed in Venice in 1565, and is titled *Herodoto Halicarnaseo Historico delle Guerre de Greci et de Persi*. After de Vere's death the book was in the possession of the Berkeley family, and eventually came into the collection of Robert S. Pirie.

One can't help wondering whether de Vere purchased the work while he was in Venice in 1575-76, and had it bound with the family crest after he returned home.

Oxfordians Meet Folger Director at First Folio Tour Kickoff Event

by Shelly Maycock

On January 6, as William Camarinos's guest, I attended the preview of *The Gravedigger's Tale* at the Folger Shakespeare Library's kickoff for the 2016 First Folio tour. This portable dramatic vignette, directed by Robert Richmond and performed by Louis Butelli, will be presented at some of the First Folio tour venues. As the gravedigger, Butelli dramatizes Hamlet's story, reciting from the soliloquies and tossing around old bones, including the inevitable skull. The piece encourages some audience participation, all of which made it fun and quite engaging.

At the reception that followed, Bill and I had a chance to speak to the Folger Director, Dr. Michael Witmore. We had a very cordial conversation, and I was glad for the opportunity to talk with him. Bill informed Witmore that I had recently done research at the Folger, and he asked me about it. I told him I had researched the Library's history of neutrality for an article that will appear in the next *Brief Chronicles*.

Witmore spoke candidly and explained that he has directed the library staff to be completely neutral in working with researchers of authorship topics, which is true and to his credit. The Folger librarians have indeed been helpful and polite when Oxfordians have done research there. This past summer, the Folger's Head of Research, Georgiana Zeigler, exhibited genuine professionalism in assisting Roger Stritmatter with more work on Oxford's Geneva Bible. The staff was very helpful when I asked to see Henry Clay Folger's last will and testament and the manuscript of Esther Singleton's Oxfordian novel, *A Shakespeare Fantasia*.

Since I had learned about the Folger's founding, I could remind Witmore that Folger himself had clearly never intended any bias in the library's collections. Folger's will states plainly that the library's purpose is the study "of Shakespeare," without stipulating any candidate. However, I told him that while the library proclaims its neutrality toward conducting research, it would also be better if they would stop ignoring the products of authorship research, i.e., the evidence our scholars have discovered even in the Folger holdings.

Witmore replied that he has yet to find any of this research convincing, and countered that we need to gain wider acceptance of our claims through publishing in peer-reviewed journals. I reminded him that that is difficult when we are locked out of said journals, and when few orthodox scholars read what we do publish. But I was delighted that he told me he had been reading Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*. We agreed that it would be good to follow up on her work, which he encouraged me to do.

Witmore did demonstrate that the Folger Library can be welcoming to us, a forward step. He also agreed that the

authorship question generates additional interest in Shakespeare, which is a good thing. That was about all we had time for, which in retrospect was more than I had anticipated.

Our exchange showed Witmore as a great diplomat; however, in the light of recent practices, I do not see the Folger Shakespeare Library dramatically changing its stance in the near future. After all, Folger publicists have recently proclaimed that William of Stratford wrote Shakespeare. They could do more by welcoming us to conferences and by helping our scholarship to gain more serious consideration by informed peers. It remains the unfortunate reality that most Stratfordian scholars know little about Oxfordian scholarship. But as I said on Facebook, we need to keep working on them, and we shall. Witmore asked me to send him my article, which will happen when we send him the next volume of *Brief Chronicles* that showcases Oxfordian research on the First Folio.

2016 Ashland Summer Seminar Announced

Following the success of its 2015 Annual Conference, the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship will for the first time sponsor a summer seminar in authorship studies in Ashland, Oregon, from August 1-5, 2016. It will focus on the Shakespeare plays in production at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival this season: *Timon of Athens* (shown on Aug. 2), *The Winter's Tale* (Aug. 3), *Hamlet* (Aug. 4) and *Twelfth Night* (Aug. 5). Discounted group tickets have been reserved for these shows for seminar participants and guests.

The 2016 SOF summer seminar will be taught by two of our finest authorship champions, Professor Michael Delahoyde of Washington State University and Professor Roger Stritmatter of Coppin State University. Dr. Delahoyde graduated from Vassar College, earned his graduate degrees at the University of Michigan, focusing on Chaucer in his Ph.D. dissertation, and has taught Shakespeare and interdisciplinary humanities courses for 23 years. He currently serves as managing editor of *Brief Chronicles*. In 2015, thanks to a research grant from the SOF, he and colleague Coleen Moriarty made an Oxfordian discovery in the archives of northern Italy which was presented at the Ashland Authorship Conference (see article in this issue). Dr. Stritmatter holds a Master's Degree in Anthropology from the New School for Social Research and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Massachusetts. His 2001 dissertation, *The Marginal Annotations of Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible*, was nominated for the Bernheimer Award. Dr. Stritmatter has published in academic and popular contexts, including *Notes and Queries* and *Review of English Studies*, and is co-author of *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare's The Tempest* (2013). He is the former editor of *Shakespeare Matters*, and currently serves as general editor of *Brief Chronicles*.

The seminar will include an opening reception on the evening of August 1, followed by daily sessions at the Hannon Library of Southern Oregon University. The Margery Bailey Collection of Hannon Library includes over 7,000 Shakespeare titles, including numerous early Folio editions. Local transfers between the library and OSF theatres will be provided by the seminar organizers.

Registration and discounted OSF theatre ticket packages for the four-day program will soon be available on the SOF website. The registration fee of \$250 includes the opening reception and four deli lunches. The four-play ticket package for seminar participants and guests is an additional \$250; individual play tickets may also be purchased for \$70 each. A minimum of ten participants in the seminar is required to secure the discounted OSF group theatre ticket order. Group order theatre tickets for all four plays are guaranteed for the first fifteen seminar registrants.

For further information and to secure advanced registration, contact Earl Showerman at earlees@charter.net. For information on accommodations in Ashland, select the Plan Your Trip tab on the OSF website: <https://www.osfashland.org/>.

There's Even a Herd Mentality Among Physicists

In a recent issue of *Skeptical* (vol. 20:3, 2015), George Michael reviewed a new book, *Our Mathematical Universe: My Quest for the Ultimate Nature of Reality*, by Max Tegmark. In it, Tegmark “propounds an astounding theory—viz., ultimately our physical reality is fundamentally a mathematical structure”—that particles and space itself have only mathematical properties.

Tegmark is now a professor at MIT, where, one presumes, he can freely discuss and pursue his theory. But that wasn't always the case. Reviewer Michael notes that:

Much to his dismay, Tegmark discovered during his career that a conformist herd mentality typified many physicists, who though paying lip service to thinking outside the box, were in practice loath to challenge authority and orthodoxy. As a consequence, he faced a professional conundrum. He had fallen in love with physics because he was attracted to big questions, but if he followed his heart, then his “next job would be at McDonald's.” As a compromise, he pursued a “Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde Strategy.” As he explains, when authority figures in the physics community asked about his work, he transformed into the respectable Dr. Jekyll and told

them that he worked on mainstream topics in cosmology involving lots of measurements and numbers. But secretly, he pursued the ultimate nature of reality.

Obviously, the herd mentality permeates many, if not most, areas of academia. One wonders whether there are English Department faculty members who are Dr. Jekylls to their superiors, faithfully toeing the Stratford line, but who are secretly continuing to learn more about the authorship question and beginning, at least in their own minds, to question orthodoxy. The existence of such secret doubters was even suggested back in 2007, when journalist William Niederkorn found, from a survey he had sent to over 200 academics who taught Shakespeare courses at accredited universities, that 18% of them had at least some doubt about the traditional attribution (see *Shakespeare Matters*, Fall 2007, p. 6). And that was more than eight years ago!



Corrections

Katherine Chiljan has kindly called to our attention a few corrections that need to be made in connection with the report of her presentation at the 2015 SOF Conference in Ashland, Oregon (Fall 2015 issue, pp. 27-28):

- (1) Chiljan stated that Pallas Athena is traditionally depicted “holding,” not “brandishing, or shaking,” a spear
- (2) In the *Shepherd's Calendar*, “E.K.” was possibly the first person to refer in print to “spear shaking” in connection with Pallas Athena (she “shaked her speare” at Vulcan), not that he used “spear shaking” or “spear writing”
- (3) the reference to “Shake-scene” in *Greenes Groatsworth of Wit* may refer to actor Edward Alleyn, not to Shakspeare of Stratford, a point she developed more fully in her 2011 book, *Shakespeare Suppressed*.

We regret the misstatements.

In Memoriam

Dr. John Rollett

It was with great sadness that authorship doubters on both sides of the Atlantic learned of Dr. John Rollett's passing on 31st October. Our sincere condolences are offered to John's family in England.

Rollett studied physics at Trinity College, Cambridge, and received a Ph.D. from the University of London. He worked for many years as a research scientist at British Telecommunications, and held several patents.

In 1964 John read Leslie Hotson's book, *Mr. W.H.*, in which Hotson identified the Fair Youth of the Sonnets as one William Hatcliffe. Although he was originally convinced of Hotson's theory, he began his own analysis of the Sonnets dedication page in 1967. What immediately stood out to Rollett was the typographical layout of the page, which suggested three triangles of six, two and four lines respectively. Applying a 6-2-4 word counting pattern to the text, the words of the dedication yielded "These Sonnets All By Ever." Not having heard of Edward de Vere at this point, he didn't think much of his "solution." But once he learned that de Vere was a leading alternative authorship candidate, his interest was revived, as "E. Vere" was eerily close to "Ever." After reading Charlton Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, Rollett then analyzed the 144 letters in the dedication text to see if there might be some kind of cipher. In a 15-letter-wide array, he found the name "HENRY" embedded in a vertical column; and in an 18-by-8-letter grid, he found the letter sequences "WR," "IOTH," and "ESLEY" in three vertical columns. Henry Wriothesley, of course, is the name of the 3rd Earl of Southampton, who is considered by many scholars (traditional and non-traditional) to be the dedicatee of the Sonnets. Rollett calculated the odds of those four names and name fragments appearing by chance in such an array was 1 in 20 million. At this point Rollett had finally become an authorship doubter.

In fairness, however, it must be noted that Rollett subsequently disavowed his Sonnets dedication findings, though he remained convinced that Shakspeare of Stratford did not write the plays and poems. Rollett brought to his own investigations into the topic the scholarly skills and the analytical approach of his profession as a research scientist. Initially he supported the case for Oxford, and many in the De Vere Society recall his riveting talk about the Sonnets dedication page. This became one of his contributions to *Great Oxford* (and to *The Oxfordian* vol. II, 1999). He also contributed to *Dating Shakespeare's Plays* and to *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* In the latter he examined the peculiar engraving Martin Droeshout produced for the First Folio, drawing attention to the two sleeves, meticulously drawn as two left ones; his chapter

was adapted into a video, "The Impossible Doublet," produced by the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition and narrated by Debbie Radcliffe (available on the SAC website and at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCQt4pOMUqc>). He also wrote several entries for *Notes and Queries*, for his research interests were wide and embraced historical references and morphological minutiae, as well as printing, engraving, and stylistic characteristics.

It was probably Rollett's analysis of Shakespeare's and Oxford's respective uses of function words like *sith*, *sithence*, and *do* that ultimately steered him away from the belief that Oxford wrote the plays, and stimulated his exploration of other possible authors. In recent years he had become a strong advocate for William Stanley as the author of the canon, culminating in his 2015 book, *William Stanley as Shakespeare: Evidence of Authorship by the Sixth Earl of Derby* (see review, p. 11). Indeed, as an Associate of the Shakespeare Authorship Trust, John was the principal champion of Stanley. One of the arguments John put forward for this derived from the enhanced role of the Clifford and Stanley families in two of the *Henry VI* plays, and particularly in *Richard III*, something also noted by the traditional scholar Ian Wilson (in *Shakespeare: the Evidence*).

There is so much John will be warmly remembered



Shakespeare's singular doublet

for. He has spoken at Oxfordian and authorship meetings on both sides of the Atlantic. Every time his expositions have been delivered with crystal clarity and good humor. He has consistently and generously shared his research and his findings, and has gently indicated alternative views or approaches when his own discoveries suggest more careful interpretation of the facts might be wise. His breadth of knowledge in the field was formidable, while he himself was a charming gentleman, one esteemed and greatly appreciated by all who knew him. His family has lost a devoted husband, brother and father, and authorship investigators have lost a very fine, kindly scholar.

[Eddi Jolly contributed to this obituary.]



BOOK REVIEWS

The Shapiro Method

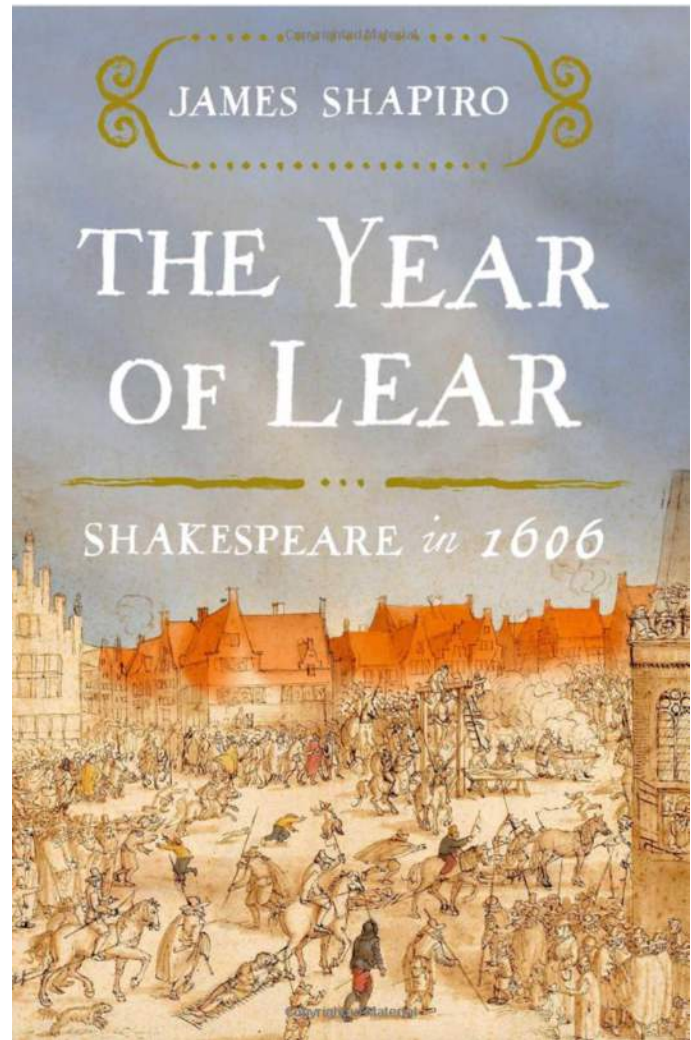
The Year of Lear: Shakespeare in 1606
by James Shapiro (Simon & Schuster, 2015)

Reviewed by William Boyle

Professor James Shapiro's latest book, *The Year of Lear: Shakespeare in 1606*, is his third in the last ten years on the Shakespeare authorship debate. Some in the mainstream Shakespeare studies community might argue that only the second of those three books, *Contested Will*, is concerned with the authorship debate. But those of us in the Oxfordian community know better, since the true agenda of both of his “Year in the Life” books (*1599: A Year in the Life of Shakespeare*, and *The Year of Lear: Shakespeare in 1606*) is as much about the authorship of Shakespeare as *Contested Will*. In his latest book Shapiro posits that Shakespeare wrote three full-length plays (*King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*) back to back within one year (1606, and in that order, as his “Note on Dating the Plays” claims), all against the backdrop of the Gunpowder Plot of November 1605 and its aftermath.

While *The Year of Lear* is eminently readable and chock full of interesting information and anecdotes, it is also chock full of misleading information, misleading speculation, and outright error. The Oxfordian community has already responded to this in the just published ebook (*Contested Year: Errors, Omissions and Unsupported Statements in James Shapiro's The Year of Lear: Shakespeare in 1606*) edited by Alexander Waugh, Mark Anderson, and Alex McNeil (available now on Kindle). It includes commentary on each chapter in *The Year of Lear* from seventeen prominent Oxfordian scholars.

Contested Year gives many examples of the simple mistakes that Shapiro makes (for example, getting names, dates, ranks and titles wrong), but it also delves deeply into the real subtext of his book, which is to establish Shakespeare as a writer who was in touch with his times and who was as much a Jacobean (i.e., alive and working after 1604) as an Elizabethan figure. The cornerstone of the latter argument can be found in how Shapiro decides to deal with the play *King Lear*, which preceded Shakespeare's *King Lear* and about which there is universal agreement that Shakespeare based his *King Lear* upon it. This original play clearly dates back to the early 1590s (if not earlier) and, as such, presents many problems for how Shapiro wishes to present his argument. So the story he presents is that, since this original *King Lear* was first published in 1605, Shakespeare “must have” purchased a copy at that time



(Shapiro has him walking down the street one day and going into a bookshop!), and within six months he wrote his *King Lear*. And as he was writing it, one of the most famous events in English history occurred, the Gunpowder Plot of November 1605.

In fact, the second most important part of *The Year of Lear* is the Gunpowder Plot, an infamous event remembered to this day (Guy Fawkes, November 5th). It is well documented that the Jesuit doctrine of equivocation (generally defined as “the use of ambiguous language to conceal the truth or to avoid committing oneself”—a necessary, useful skill in a totalitarian state that hunts down Catholics) was front and center in this saga, as much on trial as the individuals who plotted to place gunpowder under the Parliament. Tom Regnier addresses Shapiro's chapter on equivocation and makes further observations on the flaws in Shapiro's use of this historical fact, and how he overstates its supposed “newness” in 1606, when the doctrine had been around, and had been employed, for more than twenty years.

“Equivocation” is also the linchpin by which Shapiro (following in the footsteps of many before him) places

the composition of *Macbeth* in 1606, immediately following *King Lear*. Shapiro relies on the famous Porter's speech and its riffs on "equivocation," and the notion that the Scottish King James was being flattered (and even alluded to) in a play about Scottish kings, notwithstanding its bloody alterations of succession. Finally, Shapiro assures his readers that Shakespeare was working on *Antony and Cleopatra* even as he finished *Macbeth*, which would place it also in 1606. He presents his A&C argument as Shakespeare belatedly finishing a sequel to *Julius Caesar* (which he dates to 1599). The sequel is "belated" because the Antony and Cleopatra love story could have been seen in the late 1590s as alluding to Queen Elizabeth and the fallen Earl of Essex, seemingly a dangerous move back then, but not so dangerous in 1606, in an "altered political landscape." All of Shapiro's dating evidence is tenuous, and is rebutted in *Contested Year*.

But *King Lear* and the Gunpowder Plot lie at the center of *The Year of Lear*. In the longest chapter in *Contested Year*, Dr. Roger Stritmatter takes on these issues—the original composition dates of *King Lear* and *King Lear*, the doctrine of equivocation in history and in Shakespeare, and the Gunpowder Plot—and deftly demonstrates the serious flaws in Shapiro's analysis. He also calls attention to a significant position Shapiro takes in his own telling of the Gunpowder Plot story:

Shapiro speaks of "selective official account[s]," of evidence being "suppressed or destroyed," and of an artificial rebellion staged by the Cecil government "to advance the ends of the state, especially the suppression of England's Catholics" (US/102; UK/119). Shapiro is actually supporting as plausible the idea, long familiar to independent historians like Francis Edwards, that Cecil's Jacobean government staged a "conspiracy" to frame England's Catholics, with historical implications that are still not yet fully understood. Shapiro's daring is admirable, if not foolhardy. Apparently it does not occur to him that such speculations compromise his otherwise inflexible opposition to the "conspiracy theory" that the authorship of Shakespeare's plays is in doubt. If the Jacobean state could pull off a gambit like this, using the Gunpowder Plot to frame its political enemies, and making a false story of the event stick for more than four hundred years, it should hardly be controversial, given the appropriate circumstances and personalities, to suggest that a similar "conspiracy" could have existed with respect to Shakespeare. Alas, a reader will search Shapiro's book in vain for any self-awareness of such contradictions. (*Contested Year*, p. 46)

In his comments, Stritmatter refers to the "Cecil government," but Shapiro does not use Cecil's name at all anywhere in his book ("Cecil" is not even in the index). Instead, Robert Cecil is always referred to as

"Salisbury" (i.e., the Earl of Salisbury, a title bestowed upon him by King James in 1605). Even in his telling of Father Southwell's capture and torture in 1592, Shapiro refers to "the future Earl of Salisbury" rather than saying "Robert Cecil." This struck me as odd, as of an author paying strict attention to his agenda, which in this case is a "post-Elizabethan, post-1604 Shakespeare" ... so, no "Robert Cecils" allowed here. Even on the few occasions when reference is made to the Essex Rebellion (another key historical event that occurred almost five years before the Gunpowder Plot, and involved Robert Cecil and Shakespeare), no reference is made at all to Cecil's role in that event, nor to his more important secret role of bringing James to the throne. This too is odd, as Shapiro relates in some detail the Ben Jonson masque of January 5, 1606, celebrating the marriage of Essex's son Robert (now the 3rd Earl of Essex) and Frances Howard as a form of peace reconciliation; the performance was followed the next evening by a second part of the masque (*Barriers*) in which actual Essex Rebellion survivors did battle with those who had subdued them in 1601, in what amounted to a symbolic restaging of the rebellion in terms of a battle over Truth, Virginity, Marriage and Sacrifice. I was intrigued, and wondered what the real subtext might have been in both masques. But Shapiro, who can be very selective in his telling of a story, had no further comment.

Still, beyond the numerous factual errors, dating problems and selective telling of history that plague *The Year of Lear*, there exists the larger issue of whether an authorship debate agenda is in play, and what that may portend for the future of the Shakespeare authorship debate. As luck would have it, amidst all the reviews of *The Year of Lear* published last fall, there was an extremely interesting interview with Shapiro (published online in *The Daily Beast*, December 13, 2015) in which novelist Arthur Phillips talks with Shapiro about the issue of Shakespeare biographies, and how can one ever get to "know Shakespeare." It is worth exploring here to get an idea of what Shapiro is up to in this book and in his two earlier ones. Phillips prefaces his first question by stating:

I see the importance, and the great pleasure, of your work like this: for people who want to know something about Shakespeare himself, about who we was and what he was thinking, there had been until now two unsatisfactory methods. One is limited and by now probably exhausted; the other was flawed from the start. The limited method was the biographical method. We only have a small amount of verifiable detail about his life, and so we look to it to explain the man who wrote the place. We hope that we could understand the word better if we look hard at the biographical details.... The other way we have ... of knowing him was, I think, doomed from the beginning, a method that doesn't work on Shakespeare and doesn't really work on any writer

of fiction or drama, and that is looking for the truth of the writer in his plays.

Phillips gushingly continues with a remarkable explanation, and a great summing up, of what Shapiro has been doing with his three recent books:

I think you've forged an entirely new way of seeing him. It seems like in 1599 and now in *The Year of Lear* that you broke through these two flawed methods and found something new, a much more plausible way of understanding the man. The Shapiro method goes like this: in a given year in London everybody would've **known** and reacted to certain facts, to the talk of the town. Everyone **knew** about the plague numbers or the recent executions or the news from Ireland or the inconceivably evil and fast terrorist attack that was thwarted and we **know**, from good old biographical research, that Shakespeare was in a given place of the given time and would've **known** all this too, and then you can look at his [plays] that you **know** [were] written in that [same] year and say, "this is the material that was going into his head, this is what he was living with that year ... , and this in turn is the material that was coming out of his quill..." (emphasis added).

"And happily," Shapiro responds, "He didn't make up his own stories. He's always rewriting someone else's story." (Happily?) What we now have is an overview of all the ins and outs and problems of Shakespeare studies within the Shakespeare authorship debate over decades, if not centuries. It is centered, of course, on what is "known," and how do we "know" what we "know"? The second part of the problem of "knowing Shakespeare" ("looking for the truth of the writer in his plays," as Phillips puts it) has been the ground zero of the authorship debate from the beginning. Disagreement over this point has driven the debate since the 19th century, especially since the emergence of the Oxfordian thesis in 1920 and its re-emergence in the mid-1980s.

So introducing the notion of the "Shapiro Method" as the solution to this problem, and praising books like *The Year of Lear* (and 1599) as examples of it, is remarkable. What Phillips seems to be saying here (with Shapiro agreeing with him), is that the solution to a long-standing problem is here, and it works! All one has to do is analyze the documented history of a given year, and then lay it alongside a detailed analysis of a play "known" (and there's the rub) to have been written in that same year (e.g., *Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*). The result will then be some new understanding of Shakespeare.

Exactly how this is any different from the eternal debate over the relationship between an author and his work remains, in my view, unclear. It seems to me that the

"Shapiro Method" is not really new at all, and that it is flawed in the same way that Stratfordian scholarship has been flawed for centuries; by not having the right person identified as Shakespeare, any speculation about what Shakespeare was "thinking" or "why" he was writing will still come out wrong. One is reminded of the old cliché about computers: "Garbage in, garbage out." Nonetheless to see it touted by Phillips as something new and important is telling, and the avalanche of glowing reviews for *The Year of Lear* confirms that.

In truth, I enjoyed parts of *The Year of Lear*. Shapiro is an excellent writer, and can marshal myriad facts into a compelling narrative. The stories of the Montague letter forewarning the Gunpowder Plot, of "equivocation" and Jesuits, of Father Southwell's capture in 1592 and Father Garnett's interrogation in 1606, etc.—all are interesting and at times thought-provoking. I particularly liked some of his commentary on the plays, as when he writes of *Lear* (and the ways that Shakespeare changed it from *Leir*):

In Shakespeare's hand "nothing" becomes a touchstone—and the idea of nothingness and negation is philosophically central to the play from start to finish.

Shapiro gives us another full page on "nothingness" and *Lear*. On the very next page we have his description of Cordelia's death scene in Lear's arms (in *Leir* she doesn't die). There we learn that when Lear says "My poor Fool is hanged," it may also be some sort of commentary on the relationship between the comedic actor Robert Armin (playing the Fool) and the tragedian actor Burbage (playing Lear), an inside joke that only the actor Shakespeare "might" think to include. This is a strange observation to make here, but typical of the mixed bag of scholarship and bold speculation that permeates *The Year of Lear*.

In the end, though, I finally thought to myself, wouldn't it be easier to just pack up and leave Stratford, and join those of us who've been understanding Shakespeare for a long time through *bona fide* historical context (which is what the whole authorship debate is about), and are loving it? In short, isn't it easier to leave behind the strained association of Shakespeare and the Gunpowder Plot (which struck me as a sort of "imitation Oxfordian" effort on Shapiro's part, reaching for an association of Shakespeare and political danger where there is none), and go for the real thing (e.g., Shakespeare and the Essex Rebellion, where the facts are there and the danger was real). When one looks at what Shapiro has done (focusing on the years 1599 and 1606), it is clear he'd prefer to skip 1601, the year of *Richard II* and a dangerous deposition scene, and 1604, the year of *Hamlet*.

Once you get out of Stratford, for just one example, your view of who and what Shakespeare's fools really represent will change (invariably they're all the author himself, from Touchstone to Feste to Lear's Fool, etc.). And the actor Robert Armin? Shortly before this very time, he was about to "take my journey (to wait on the right honorable good Lord my Master whom I serve) to Hackney." Once you've got the right Shakespeare as part of your history *all* the pieces fall right into place, and understanding Shakespeare becomes a reality.

**William Stanley as Shakespeare:
Evidence of Authorship by the Sixth Earl of Derby
by John M. Rollett (2015, www.mcfarlandpub.com)**

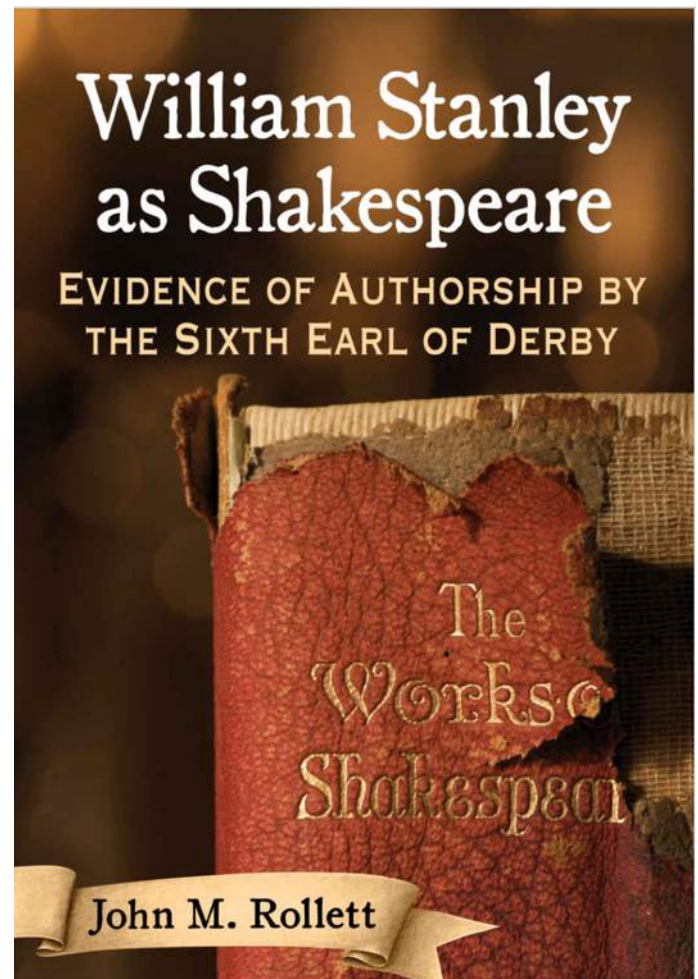
Reviewed by W. Ron Hess

Finally, a competent English language author-researcher has tried to revitalize the moribund Derby theory, likely the next best anti-Stratfordian theory to Oxfordianism. William Stanley, the 6th Earl of Derby (1561-1642), was the son-in-law of the 17th Earl of Oxford. Because of that kinship, Oxfordians benefit from nearly every legitimate discovery that the Derbyites have made, and to some extent they benefit from ours. Most particularly, evidence that Derby was literate enough to have continued his father-in-law's efforts to collect, edit, and preserve literary works originally written in the 1570s and 1580s (but that did not appear in print until the 1590s and 1600s) would help Oxfordians understand and explain literary events that occurred after 1604, the year Oxford died. Virtually every mainstream scholar confidently asserts that Oxford "died too soon" to have authored some of Shakespeare works. If one believes that some Shakespeare works were written after 1604, the notion that "Derby could have continued the effort" comes to mind. But do we really need Derbyism? The argument that Oxford died too soon ignores the scores of allusions in each play to personalities and affairs, foreign and domestic, including detailed travel information, that show Shakespeare was well acquainted with France and Italy of the 1570s, when Derby, Bacon, and Will of Stratford were still teenagers or preteens. Which should trump which? "Died too soon" (but posthumously assisted by relatives and friends), or "born too late" (having to rely on "osmosis" or "natural genius" for many detailed experiences)?¹

From the beginning, the Oxfordian and Derbyite movements have had a symbiotic relationship. Indeed, in the 1920s Abel Lefranc, the founder of Derbyism, and J. Thomas Looney, the founder of Oxfordianism, cofounded and chaired (with Sir Granville George Greenwood) the original Shakespeare Fellowship. It continued to World War II, when opposition to the Stratfordian case was

smothered by histrionics about Shakespeare being an "average sort of guy," whom all the "Tommies" fighting Hitler could relate to, and both movements essentially went dormant.

In 1956 A.J. Evans, in *Shakespeare's Magic Circle*, bravely attempted to continue the Fellowship's spirit with his "group" approach, with Derby as a "Mastermind," wherein "Bacon, Oxford, Rutland, Derby and several of that distinguished group of aristocratic scholars, linguists and poets formed...an important part in bringing the plays to their full glory." (Perhaps it didn't help that the end panel of the dust jacket contained several advertisements, including *Palmistry for Everyone* and *The Hamster Handbook*.) It was one of the first anti-Stratfordian books that I ever read. Evans's ecumenical approach still affects my own thinking, because no single candidate has a flawless case, and all candidates benefit by presuming that they were the "Mastermind" in a group of collaborative authors and powerful sympathetic allies. Even Stratfordian scholars have to fall back on bizarre alliances (e.g., bisexuality or hidden Catholicism) in accounting for some of the many deficits in their candidate.



An attempt to revive Derbyism by British chemistry professor A.W. Titherley in at least three books (1939, 1952, 1961) fell apart chiefly because of two factors: (1) Titherley, a notable scientist, may have been an excellent researcher, but he was not very good at including useful citations to what he had found about Derby; and (2) like many other anti-Stratfordian proponents, Titherley succumbed to the absurd notion that poet-playwright Shakespeare was a master at ciphers, which only a 20th century “genius” could detect (essentially “proving” the Bard was a codemaker). In his *Shakespeare: New Side Lights (Overt and Covert)* (1961), Titherley presented an elaborate multistep mathematical code (or “Messages in Cipher,” as one of his section headings was titled) which reduced the Bard’s poetry and prose to simplistic allusions to Derby and his family, but in a way that can best be understood by watching the recent film *A Beautiful Mind*. This nonsense effectively ruined the Derbyite movement for the English-speaking world, because nearly all of the rest of Derbyite literature has been in French, and the French have never actually much cared who wrote Shakespeare’s works.

So, nearly a century after Dr. Lefranc originated Derbyism, a worthy attempt was made by the late Dr. John Rollett. Rollett himself was formerly an Oxfordian, and wrote numerous articles for Oxfordian publications between 1996 and 2007. There is much to recommend in his book, particularly his apparent desire to distance himself from his Derbyite predecessors. But the flip side is that he exhibited a similar distaste about Oxfordian literature as well (Rollett might have benefited from reading my discussion of Derby’s purported travels in Vol. II, Appendix D, of *The Dark Side of Shakespeare*), even to the point of including, as his Appendix A, “Oxford Eliminated.”

In that appendix (pp. 151-158), Rollett listed “six reasons for eliminating him [Oxford] from the authorship, three concerned with writing habits, and three cases where the sonnets do not match up with details of Oxford’s life.” The first three reasons are unconvincing comparisons of spellings and usages in Oxford’s handwritten letters to Shakespeare’s printed works (as typeset and spelled by printers and compositors beyond the author’s control). The fourth reason is that the text of the first seventeen sonnets doesn’t fit Oxford’s biography, if we assume they were written c. 1591 to promote a Wriothesley-Vere betrothal. That “reason” disappears completely if we assume, as I do, that those sonnets were in fact a revamping of some of Thomas Sackville’s lost sonnets sequence that was praised in 1560, when the hottest issue before England and much of the rest of Europe was the marriage of Queen Elizabeth, Sackville’s second cousin. I have suggested elsewhere that Sackville was Shakespeare’s literary mentor and that Sackville and Oxford collaborated as early as 1571 and as late as 1593. The fifth reason unconvincingly denies that Oxford could have “borne the canopy” (Sonnet 125) because “he was of

far too high a status ever to have done so” (156). The final reason links Sonnet 126 to the first seventeen, and if we find his reasoning for those unsatisfactory, this one falls even more flat.

Throughout the book, Rollett’s treatment was deprived of much that he did not fully grasp from our modern literature. And, of course, some of the strongest points about Derby as a Shakespeare candidate depend on that “osmosis” from our candidate, even if Rollett didn’t care to recognize or admit it. For example, although Derby’s travels abroad took place in the 1580s, Rollett had no problem assuming that he absorbed important 1570s travel details from other travelers, such as his father, brother and future father-in-law. Even though Derby has no extant literary works to his credit, Rollett (like all Derbyites) assumed he did produce them, because of the literary activities and patronage of his close relatives (including his father-in-law). Similar to the Stratfordian view of Will Shakspeare as a blank slate upon which anything can be written, the Derbyite view of their candidate’s foundational years (1582-87) sees him as a sort of “traveling sponge” who went to Rome, Moscow, Egypt, the Holy Land; dueled in Madrid; was imprisoned in Constantinople; lived off of carrots and beets as part of the Davis expedition to Greenland; spent a year in Holland; passed through Paris a few times; and somehow acquired detailed knowledge of places like Milan, Florence, and Scotland, though there is no evidence he ever visited them.² Like earlier Derbyites, Rollett asserts (p. 47) that Derby traveled to Paris and Navarre in 1582-84 (with little evidence for the latter, although it “may” have been so), and accompanied his father on the latter’s 1585 trip to Paris as envoy from the Queen. No solid evidence is given that William Stanley was actually there; Derbyites don’t seem to realize that Derby likely was estranged from his father on religious grounds at that time, and most likely was in Rome as a trainee for Jesuit infiltration. Because his brother Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange, was patron of England’s foremost play company in the late 1580s and early 1590s, Derby is simply assumed by his adherents to have been writing plays for that company, which in spring 1594 would become the “Lord Chamberlain’s Men” company, with a “William Shakespeare” listed nearly from its beginning as a recipient of money for court performances.³

Rollett made many original observations on the available evidence, some of which he discovered himself or revived from neglected earlier anti-Stratfordians. That is not to say that his arguments in favor of Derby as Shakespeare are compelling, but bringing our attention to other details and arguments can’t help but improve our theory. In some cases he failed to give adequate citations,⁴ and in others his zeal led him to make demonstrably false statements.⁵

Rollett also saw himself as a codebreaker along the lines of Titherley, even though, as noted, he was embarrassed by him.⁶ Like nearly all such codebreakers,



William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby
(1561–1642)

he briefly noted William and Betty Friedman's 1957 *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined*, and yet, like his predecessors, he showed little evidence of having actually read and understood that masterpiece. My online article #15 (<http://home.earthlink.net/~beornshall/index.html/id26.html>) lists the nine principles that the Friedmans, the leading experts of their time on cryptography, established for evaluating purported ciphers and other code systems. In my estimation, Rollett's system, like all other Shakespeare "code systems," violates each of them. The worst infractions concern "choices" that users must make to arrive at each codebreaker's end results. For example, when a text is used with "Mr." or has a hyphen in it, how should the solver proceed? For the first, Rollett devoted two spaces; for the second he pretended it didn't exist, just letting it magically float in between the two letters he wanted us to concentrate on. That leads to lack of consistency, where self-set rules or procedures are often violated during the decryption process. Inconsistency, of course, violates any presumption that the "coded message" was deliberate.

As my above-cited article #15 stated, Rollett's entire approach was little more than a variation of "Bible

Codes" (aka Equidistant Lateral Sequencing, or ELS). These were invented by occultist Jewish fanatics in the early 20th century to "prove" that the Torah and the Cabala book of demons were "divinely prophetic" when their Hebrew script is rearranged in different columns and intersections. Critics have shown that the same methodology can be applied to almost any written work, in any language or era, demonstrating, for example, that it works quite well for Melville's *Moby-Dick*. Despite that criticism, or perhaps because of it, recent proponents have tried to demonstrate that ELS (or "Bible Code") ciphers really have existed in all sorts of centuries and languages, even though no evidence can be cited for their actual use. That is proof by circular reasoning. Of all the examples that Rollett pretended were similar to the code that he claimed to have "found" in the dedication to "Mr. W.H.ALL." in the 1609 *Sonnets*, the closest match is actually a 1641 code used by an Anglican bishop at the beginning of the English Civil Wars. But in that code there were no deviations from the prescribed rules; columns didn't have to be rearranged, and the reader was not asked to make any subjective decisions. Rollett's "discovery" did nothing of the sort, instead skipping arbitrarily from column to column, leaving names split between disjoined columns, asking the reader to rearrange columns, ignoring intermediate nonsensical text, and requiring a tremendous amount of guesswork by users to get his results. The fact that he devoted so much of his otherwise admirable book to such codes is unfortunate.

Nonetheless, we need to overlook Rollett's manifest flaws in order to seriously examine the many worthwhile observations that he made, many of them troublesome for our cause. If we can't stand up to a Derbyite (who was a former Oxfordian to boot), how can we stand up to Stratfordians? And in the end, "osmosis" does actually tie Derbyism and Oxfordianism together, despite Rollett's obvious chagrin about it. Though we may be puzzled by Rollett's abandoning the Oxfordian cause in favor of a clearly inferior candidate such as Derby, and though we may differ with many of his conclusions, we can still thank Dr. John Rollett for gifting us with his insights as he neared the end of his life.

Endnotes

- ¹ Scores of "early dating allusions" to the 1570s and early 1580s in every Shakespeare play are catalogued in Kevin Gilvary's 2010 *Dating Shakespeare's Plays: A Critical Review of the Evidence*, which has recently been updated. To an even greater extent they are listed in my 2003 Vol. II (Appendix B, pp. 187-300) to *The Dark Side of Shakespeare*, which cites to my 2002 Vol. I (esp. Chapters 4-5 and Appendix A). All three books draw on earlier Oxfordian and other anti-Stratfordian literature. For travel evidence about Shakespeare, my Vol. I,

Appendix A, is an authorized full translation of Georges Lambin's *Voyages des Shakespeare en France et en Italie* (1962) which compares well with Vol. II's Appendix C on the travels of the 17th Earl of Oxford (1574-76), and with Appendix D on the purported travels of the 6th Earl of Derby (1582-87 and 1600). I demonstrated in chapter 2 of Vol. I, among all reasonable Shakespeare candidates, only Oxford is known to have been to Milan and Florence, the two cities about which Shakespeare curiously provided the greatest degree of accurate detail.

² My translation of Lefranc's *Voyages* shows detailed allusions to Paris surroundings, Northern Italy, Milan, and Florence of the 1570s. Also see my 2003 Vol. II, Appendix D, for the complete text of *Sir William Stanley's Garland*, a partly fabulous account in verse published in 1814 of Derby's life and travels up to c. 1610. In my Appendix A (2002), I conceded that the 6th Earl of Derby "may" have in some ways influenced Shakespeare for five plays: *Loves Labours Lost*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *The Tempest*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, mostly from travel details that may match his purported itinerary. But analogous clues that say "Derby was here" in the remaining 31 or 32 plays are hard to find. In contrast, I demonstrated in other chapters and appendices that there were scores of congruences in every play to Oxford's life and travels.

³ A March 1595 record listed Shakespeare and others receiving payment for a Christmas season Chamberlains Men performance at Court in December of 1594. Strange's, or Derby's, Company had dissolved in early 1594 after the unexpected death of Ferdinando, the 5th Earl. Most of the Strange's Men actors would appear in April 1594 as among the Chamberlain's Men. Rollett appropriately cited these facts from the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. But it should be noted is that the playhouses had been shut down between 1592 and 1594 due to plague in London, so lacking a venue, Strange's Men was already headed for dissolution. It took the patronship of Lord Chamberlain Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, to revivify the English stage, initially through commissioning revisions of "old plays." Only in 1598 did Shakespeare's name get associated with dramatic works rather than poetry. James J. Marino's *Owning William Shakespeare: The King's Men and their intellectual property* (2011) brilliantly argues that use of Shakespeare's name was less about authorship than it was a way in which the Chamberlain's Men would anchor its ownership of the best playbooks in its repertoire.

⁴ For example, Rollett stated (p. 47), "William [Stanley] is thought to have occupied the years 1576 to 1582 studying at Gray's Inn...to which his father had enrolled him at age two; here he would have met

Francis Bacon." No footnote or explanation was given. Moreover, Bacon was in Paris from 1576 to 1579 and was omitted from his disapproving father's will in 1579; thus, it is unlikely that Bacon was "met" by Stanley at Gray's Inn (an expensive law school to attend). Moreover, Joseph Foster's *The Register of Admissions to Gray's Inn, 1521-1889* (1889) shows nothing to corroborate Rollett's assertion. Derby did take rooms at Grays Inn in 1589, so he may have studied there unofficially.

⁵ For example, Rollett stated (p. 5), "An excellent introduction to the authorship question is the book by the late John Michell, *Who Wrote Shakespeare?...*" which is true enough. But Rollett continued with the demonstrably false, "and it so happened that he appeared to favor Stanley." Rollett confessed a few sentences later that Michell ultimately opted for Bacon as the most likely authorship candidate, and Rollett admitted in an endnote that, "A major difficulty with William Stanley as an authorship candidate derives from the fact that he left no poetry signed with his name...." Shouldn't the problem of Derby's lack of literary output have merited a full chapter in Rollett's book, rather than being relegated to an endnote? In fact, Michell was a hardcore Baconian who saw Bacon as "Mastermind" for "Shake-speare's" works plus his own works, including some inferior inputs from collaborative others like Oxford and Derby. Michell devoted nearly half of his book to Bacon, only twenty-eight pages to the Oxfordian case (in which his only negative point was the standard "Oxford died too soon"), and only twenty-one pages to Derby's case, in which he voiced appropriate skepticism given the lack of extant literary output from Derby. Within those few pages, Michell spent nearly as much space on Derby's brother Ferdinando and his friend Dr. John Dee as he did on Derby.

⁶ In 1997, when Rollett was still an Oxfordian, he proposed an ingenious but controversial "solution" to the Sonnets dedication, suggesting that the typographical arrangement was three inverted triangles of six, two and four lines, that the 6-2-4 pattern corresponded to the number of letters in "Edward de Vere," and that by applying that counting pattern to the words of the dedication, one gets "These Sonnets All By Ever." I fear that Rollett's "solution" borders on circular reasoning, i.e., that in order to derive meaning from the apparent 6-2-4 line pattern, one must assume that it is intended to depict Oxford. As always, the task of the codebreaker is to demonstrate deliberateness and certainty, and Rollett never met the reasonable standards expected the Friedmans and their modern colleagues.

***The Case for Edward de Vere* by Geoffrey Eyre
(Mardle Publications, 2015, 251 pp.)**

Reviewed by Chris Pannell

The Case for Edward de Vere by Geoffrey Eyre opens with an Author's Note, which in part reads: "This short study is written in non-academic language as a fair-minded introduction to the case for Edward de Vere as Shakespeare." The "fair-minded" part must refer to the deeply flawed Oxford biography *Monstrous Adversary* by Alan Nelson (2003). Aside from a few quotations, Alan Nelson and Geoffrey Eyre do not intersect. And Eyre's language is accessible and easy to follow.

While *The Case for Edward de Vere* is not strictly a biography, it certainly is de Vere's story, with generous servings of English and European history added. Like many Oxfordian books, this one links de Vere to the works of Shakespeare, and though the title implies the author will make the case that Edward de Vere is the man behind Shakespeare, it's also clear Geoffrey Eyre considers the case has been already made by Oxfordians before him. There's no talk of a *prima facie* case or other legalisms, in the manner of Charlton Ogburn, Jr., in *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*—a book in which Ogburn famously

brought retrograde Stratfordians into the light, for the purpose of cross-examination of their ideas, tactics, and often, ignorance.

While Ogburn devoted half of his book's 891 pages to taking down the man from Stratford, Geoffrey Eyre spends a mere seven pages of his much shorter work to explaining why William Shakspere makes a poor candidate for the authorship of those plays and poems.

Eyre adds a context for de Vere's life; he often takes time to address the religious, political, and societal issues that were larger than de Vere, such as the decline of feudalism and the English nobility in the 1500s and the compensating centralization of power in the hands of Europe's monarchs and their ministers. He does not chase down as many of the interesting correspondences between Oxford and local events as have other biographers, but there are enough of those to make the case and Eyre keeps things simple for the novice reader. He takes a longer, and perhaps wider, view that begins with this summary of the advancement of the English language during the political-religious events of the period:

The Church of England under Edward the VI in 1547, and Elizabeth I from 1558, struggled to survive in this time of political and religious convulsion. Latin was the international language of scholarship but its close association with Catholicism presented difficulties for a Protestant ruling establishment. The practical advantages of using English to promote the English church accelerated it from a mainly spoken to a written language. University grammarians began to standardize the spelling and structure of English, and to refine its pronunciation. Among these great scholars were Roger Ascham, John Cheke, William Cecil, and Thomas Smith. The cultural self-awareness and patriotism generated by this ambitious undertaking advanced the English language sufficiently to begin replacing Latin as the formal medium of communication.

This position was achieved with remarkable speed. The English of the early Tudors is barely comprehensible today but by the second half of Queen Elizabeth's reign, from the 1580s onward, it began to flourish as a fully-fledged literary language capable of almost infinite expressiveness. This was when the first plays now known to be by William Shakespeare, or earlier versions of them, began to appear. (7)

Eyre reminds us of the political dimensions of Oxford's childhood, and the rest of his life as well. Here, for example, is his description of how Queen Mary's reign affected de Vere's family, and his infancy and boyhood:

The infant nobleman was born into troubled times. The feudal system of governance which had endured

**THE CASE FOR
Edward de Vere
AS SHAKESPEARE**



Geoffrey Eyre

for some seven centuries was slowly breaking down as the rapid population growth in the cities of Northern Europe gathered pace. Aided by print technology, the universities began advocating more modern methods of regulating these large urban societies Commercially driven maritime exploration had opened up the world and the Reformation had changed forever the way in which religion could be taught and practised .

* * * *

Such profound changes were subject to the occasional setback and the early death of the staunchly Protestant King Edward VI in 1553 ushered in his elder half-sister Mary Tudor, whose devotion to the Catholic religion directly affected the education and upbringing of the infant Edward de Vere. Mary was based at Framlingham Castle in Suffolk when the young king died at the age of sixteen. Until then she had enjoyed popular support in East Anglia but her extremist views soon became evident, as did the severity with which she would prosecute them against high profile Protestants.

* * * *

John de Vere, himself a Protestant, was compromised by his obligations as the Lord Lieutenant of Essex to support the sovereign in these early stages, and he did so, at the same time invoking his hereditary right to the office of the Lord Great Chamberlain, which had lapsed. This was granted by the new Queen . . . John de Vere duly carried the sword of state at her coronation on 30th November 1553. . . . Four days later, Queen Mary introduced legislation to repeal all the religious laws passed by her predecessor, Edward VI.

To remain a Protestant ran the risk of being accused of sedition and treason. Starting in February 1555 some two hundred and eighty leading Protestants, sixty of them women, were executed in the next three years, mostly burned to death. John Rogers, who had made a translation of the Bible into English, was the first to die at the stake during Mary's reign. On 4th February, 1555 he was 'tested by fire' at Smithfield. The names of Mary's victims were later listed in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of the English martyrs* published in 1563. (14-15)

Eyre handles the older Vere family history with the same clarity, suggesting why de Vere wrote so many English history plays and taking us beyond the assumption that these were written at the behest of Queen Elizabeth for propaganda or for rallying the populace at the time of the Spanish Armada:

The Vere ancestors came over with [William] the Conqueror. They survived the Battle of Hastings in 1066, and when Aubrey de Vere was created the 1st earl of Oxford in 1142 a dynasty was founded that

would last 561 years. . . . The historian Lord Macaulay described them [in 1848] as 'the longest and most illustrious line of nobles that England has seen.' Robert, the 3rd earl was one of the signatories to the Magna Carta in 1215. John, the 7th earl fought at Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356). Robert, the 9th earl was closely associated with his cousin Richard II, who showered him with estates and titles, including Duke of Ireland.

Richard de Vere, the 11th earl (1385-1417) commanded the archers at Agincourt in 1415, or at least he did according to *Famous Victories of Henry Fifth* That the 11th earl was written out of later versions could be attributed to the author's increasing need for anonymity. (137)

Taken as a whole, *The Case for Edward de Vere* cites sufficient parallels between de Vere's life and the Shakespeare works to whet the reader's appetite for other Oxfordian books that trace more of those connections. The scope of this book takes us from the Battle of Hastings to events around the publication of the *Frist Folio* in 1623. Eyre includes the pan-European view when necessary. He takes in the rise of Europe's Protestantism, from Luther onwards, the rapid linguistic developments in English from 1540 to 1590, the wars of religion, and the political and dynastic rivalries of Europe's ruling families. For the novice reader this is a valid and valuable approach.

The Case for Edward de Vere is not too strict about chronology, though an early chapter is called the "Formative Years" and the final one is called "Death and Legacy." Eyre gracefully sidesteps the most obvious polemics of the authorship question, such as the Prince Tudor theory and other authorship candidates. After "Formative Years" the chapter titles, as indicative of the structure, become thematic: e.g., "Continental Travels," "A Reader of Books," "Insolvency," and "Medicine and Medication."

The only drawback to the thematic approach is that certain key moments in de Vere's life are raised repeatedly. The "disastrous marriage" to Anne Cecil is referenced over and over; it is not confined to Chapter Six (titled "Marriage to Anne Cecil") where one expects it. William Cecil, too, feels like a constant presence in this book and looms even larger than he usually does in books about Oxford. The strength of the thematic approach is that we linger on the key points relatively longer. The context of Oxford's life shows that his name—for all its prestige—was both an asset and a limitation on his career.

Issues like the use of a pen name are dealt with ease and confidence. The chapters titled "Violence" (about Oxford's various feuds) and "Armed Conflict" (about the civil and dynastic wars preceding de Vere's birth) are particularly informative. There is much we take for granted when we do not follow up our reading of literature with some study of history. I enjoyed Eyre's

ability to distill historical matters to their essence and to give context to de Vere's place in long-running rivalries. We see how he was not infrequently outshone by others and by things beyond his control:

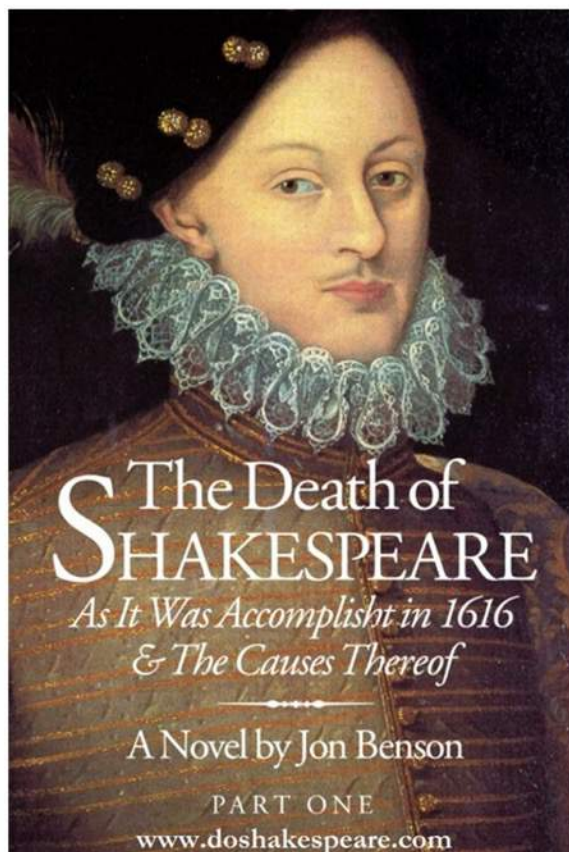
As a military family, bound to the service of sovereign and country, their [Vere family's] tradition was proudly upheld, though alas, not by Lord Edward. The two sons of his Uncle Geoffrey provided the nation with its most renowned soldiers, Sir Horace Vere and his younger brother Sir Francis Vere. They were involved for most of their adult lives in the Netherlands Wars of Independence, [and] fought against the might of the Spanish Hapsburgs and their army. This lasted for almost eighty years before ultimately ending in victory for the Dutch. (138)

We often hear Oxfordians speak of the need for historians to be involved—that the literature professors are often uninterested in the historical context of the Shakespeare works. Eyre has responded positively to this need; for his ability to synthesize English history and cultural movements in Elizabeth's time, this book is to be valued.

For example, this description of Lord Burghley takes us far beyond his usual roles as the model for the character Polonius, de Vere's problematic father-in-law, and Master of the Court of Wards:

Cecil viewed the old nobility in the north, and their fondness for the "true religion" as a serious threat to the crown. He prosecuted the war [The Northern Rebellion, 1569-70] with unrelenting vigour, driving on the Earl of Sussex and his commanders to confront the forces of the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland with all the military might available, and when this was successful, insisted on the brutal suppression which followed. Conyers Read [Burghley's biographer] identifies this as the decisive moment in Elizabeth's hold on power which was never again challenged from within her kingdom. It also consolidated Burghley's position as the Queen's most trusted and reliable advisor. Factions within the court had earlier tried to have him removed from office but his ministerial primacy lasted until his death in 1598. As one of the new breed of university men, who had risen through merit, loyalty and diligence, he exerted his authority over the aristocrats who had conspired to bring him down. (139)

For those who might be overwhelmed by the complexity and potential demands of Oxfordian studies, Eyre's *The Case for Edward de Vere* can be recommended as a worthwhile point of entry. Eyre builds on the work of prior scholars and brings a much-needed historical view to the plays and poems we call Shakespeare's.



Advertisement

The Death of Shakespeare - Part One, shows how the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford partnered with William Shakespeare to write the plays we love so much.

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SHAKESPEARE

OXFORD FELLOWSHIP

Help Bring the Truth to Light by Supporting the SOF Research Grant Program!

We hope the article by Michael Delahoyde starting on page one of this newsletter demonstrates the value of the SOF Research Grant Program. Delahoyde and research associate Coleen Moriarty, using an SOF research grant, explored a number of 16th century archives in northern Italy. As luck would have it, on their last day in Venice they found a document signed by Edward de Vere. This previously unknown document proves Oxford's whereabouts in the summer of 1575, his interest in art, and suggests that other documents signed by him or referring to him are to be found in these archives. Delahoyde and Moriarty will return to northern Italy for another exploration of archives this summer with a second SOF research grant.

Another grant recipient, John Lavendoski, has uncovered a 16th century map that proves the existence of a water route from Milan to Venice. Stratfordian scholars have for years scoffed at Shakespeare for thinking that one could travel from Milan to Venice by boat, but Shakespeare was right! And Roger Stritmatter, our third grant recipient, has confirmed that there are notations in a 16th century Seneca manuscript that are likely to be by de Vere, meaning that this longer term research project is worthy of additional study.

Our goal this year is to have \$20,000 to award as grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$20,000. The RGP has already received \$4,000 from members as part of our annual donations solicitation. The SOF once again will provide up to \$10,000 in matching funds. A generous grant from the Joe W. & Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation helped make these matching funds possible. Therefore, we need only another \$6,000 in donations to reach \$20,000 with the matching funds.

DONATE TODAY! Use the form below to pay by check or credit card, or go online: shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org (Click on "Donate" on the Menu Bar, then "Research Grant Fund.")

Thank you! John Hamill, Chair, Research Grant Program

☐ **Check Enclosed.** Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____
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SHAKESPEARE OXFORD FELLOWSHIP, P.O. BOX 66083, AUBURNDALE MA 02466

Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship 2016 Research Grant Program

Summary of Major Points

The purpose of this grant program is to promote new research about Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford: new research about his biography, his literary life, and evidence for, and supporting evidence for, his case as the true author of the Shakespeare canon.

The plan for 2016 is to award \$20,000 in grants depending on the amount of money raised.

- Funds will be raised from membership and friends.
- Approximately two to four grants are envisioned, amounts depending on project proposals submitted.
- Grant recipients must be (or become) members of SOF to receive funds.
- Financial need will be taken into account if noted on the application.
- New unpublished applicants will be preferred to encourage new researchers.
- In addition to basic purpose (see Rules 2 and 3 below), applicants and the SOF Board may suggest topics or activities that they are interested in.
- **Proposals will be accepted through July 31, 2016**, with the Selection Committee's decision announced by August 31, 2016.
- Members of the Selection Committee for this third round are: Katherine Chiljan, Bonner Cutting, Ramon Jiménez, John Hamill and Don Rubin.

Grant Program Rules

1. The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship intends to make two to four cash grants to scholars and researchers for the purpose of developing new knowledge about the 17th Earl of Oxford, and new knowledge that advances his case for the Shakespeare Authorship. Members of this RGP committee and of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Board of Trustees are not eligible for consideration for a grant.
2. Grant applicants must focus on a specific topic for research, not general research. Applicants must outline a specific plan of action, identify the expected results, and how this will advance Oxfordian and Shakespeare Authorship studies. Applicants must have pre-researched the topic, feeling confident of expected results. Applicants must already have information about the archives involved, verified access to use them, know the time when the archives are open, etc. If archives are in a foreign language (Latin, Italian, etc.), competence is required. Applicants are advised that proposals for "outreach" activities (i.e., efforts to bring the authorship issue to academic, youth, or other communities) will not be funded under the Research Grant Program. Such proposals should be directed to the SOF's Outreach Committee (see announcement on page 28).
3. A successful grant application will propose one or more of the following:
 - a. Examination of a neglected or previously unknown archive, library or document that might lead to a discovery of importance about the 17th Earl of Oxford and his case for the Shakespeare Authorship.
 - b. Research that will identify a previously unknown person or place mentioned in the Shakespeare canon that is related to the 17th Earl of Oxford, and that will support his case for the Shakespeare Authorship.
 - c. Examples of specific research projects follow:
 - Search for surviving letters of Oxford's secretary, Antony Munday (or John Lyly, Sturmius of Germany, et al.) and examine them for new information about Oxford.
 - Research in archives of Italian cities for existing letters of Baptista Nigrone and Pasquino Spinola, who helped with Oxford's finances during his European tour.
 - New research on actor/author Robert Armin, who possibly referred to Oxford when he wrote that he would "take my journey (to wait on the right honorable good Lord my Master whom I serve) to Hackney."
 - Research in a private library in the United Kingdom that may have a connection with the Earl of Oxford or his descendants for documents hitherto unknown.
 - New research on the founder of Oxfordianism, J.T. Looney, for the centennial celebration.
 - d. Projects not recommended are: research based on cryptograms, ciphers, stylometry or computer analysis.
4. Grants will not be made to finance a student's degree program unless they meet one or more of the above criteria.
5. Grant funds may be used for travel, materials, fees and, where appropriate, living expenses.
6. Each applicant must describe the process and methods of his or her research project and explain how it meets one or more of the criteria listed above.

7. Each applicant must specify the amounts requested for travel, materials, fees, and living expenses, where appropriate, and why they are necessary. Awards will not cover salaries or personal stipends for the principal investigator. 8. Each applicant must be a member in good standing of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship in order to receive funds.
9. Proposals will be judged by a selection committee appointed by the SOF President, made up of individuals who are familiar with Oxfordian and Shakespeare Authorship studies.
10. Grants will be financed by specific donations to the Program, to a maximum of \$20,000.
11. The grant proposal period will run for five months, after which the Fellowship will announce the successful applicants. The donation period will run indefinitely.
12. Depending on the amount raised, the Fellowship will make one or more grants of \$2,000 to \$20,000.
13. Grantees will be expected to complete their research within nine months of receiving their grant award and submit a written report to the SOF Board of Trustees within the following three months. A summary of the project will be published in one of the SOF publications whether or not the project achieved the expected results. The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship will announce the names of the grantees in the newsletter along with the amount of the award, and either the title of the research grant or the general subject matter (in case confidentiality is necessary).
14. Grantees will be encouraged to submit papers of their research to mainstream journals. If this is unsuccessful, the Fellowship will consider such papers for one of its publications.
15. Applications should be submitted to John Hamill at hamillx@pacbell.net.

Instructions for submission

1. Submit by email to John Hamill at hamillx@pacbell.net.
2. 12-point type, double spaced, four-page maximum narrative. We will not accept submittals of more than four pages.
3. Grant funds are limited; the SOF prefers to give the grant to a person who would not be able to do the project as well, or at all, without it. The SOF grant may only partially fund your project; in that case will you be able to find the other funds needed or reduce the scale

of the project? SOF grants will range from \$2,000 to \$20,000.

Contents of four-page narrative

1. Name of Applicant(s). (Please asterisk* principal researcher.)
2. Address of Principal Applicant
3. E-MAIL of Principal Applicant
4. Short Title of Research Project
5. Amount Sought from SOF
6. Description of Project (1,000 words maximum)
7. Ideal Outcome (200 words maximum)
8. Why you believe this can be achieved (500 words maximum)
9. Activities you expect to undertake with this grant (200 words maximum)
10. Background of Principal Researcher (500 words maximum)
11. Name, Background and Function of Other Researchers(s)
12. Are you a member of SOF? If not, are you willing to join SOF if you are given a grant and allow SOF to announce the Short Title of this grant?
13. How will realization of this application be affected if SOF can only give you, for example, 50% of what you are seeking?
14. Itemized Budget
(Total amounts for each and brief explanations)
 - Travel
 - Accommodation
 - Meals
 - Other

Total Sought (Should agree with Question 5 Above): _____

Please submit your application by July 31, 2016, to John Hamill, Chair, Research Grants Committee, Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship at the following e-mail: hamillx@pacbell.net

Criteria (50 points total)

- 35 points—research hypothesis and plan
- 7 points—background of applicant
- 4 points—need
- 4 points—new researcher (applicant has not yet published a Shakespeare Authorship article).

Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship 2016 Annual Conference

When and Where

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship announces the upcoming Annual Conference, to be held from **Thursday, November 3, to Sunday, November 6, 2016, at the Boston Marriott Newton**, located at 2345 Commonwealth Ave., Newton, MA 02466.

Considering that our favorite authorship candidate is the 17th Earl of Oxford, it is appropriate that we will be holding our 2016 conference at the same hotel where we held the conference seventeen years ago in 1999 (although the hotel has been remodeled since then).

A limited number of guest rooms have been arranged at a conference rate of \$139 per night (single or double), plus applicable taxes. This rate is available beginning on Wednesday, November 2. This guest rate will include free overnight parking at the hotel as well as free Internet access. Reservations for these rooms are now being accepted.

You may make your reservation by calling 800-228-9290 or 617-969-1000 and mentioning the SOF Fall Conference. You can also reserve online by going to the SOF website

(www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org), choosing "Conference" from the menu bar, and clicking on "Registration," where there is a link to the hotel website.

Attempts will be made to add more rooms to the conference block if more are needed, but this is subject to hotel room availability. So if you are unable to secure a room when you call the hotel you may want to try again at a later date. When we are able to secure more rooms, we will inform our email list.

Conference registrants may want (or need) to stay in other nearby hotels. There are several hotels in Waltham, MA (about 10 minutes away) along I-95 and in Natick and Framingham, MA along I-90. There is free parking at the Boston Marriott Newton for conference attendees who are staying elsewhere.

The conference registration fee for the 2016 Conference will be \$225 for SOF members and \$250 for non-members. You may now register online at shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/2016-sof-conference.

Proposals for papers are now being accepted (see below) and details of the Conference program and agenda will be announced when they are available.

Please plan on attending what I am sure will be a very exciting and informative event.

— Richard Joyrich, SOF Conference Committee Chair

Call for Papers

The Program Committee of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship has formulated **guidelines** for paper submissions for the 2016 annual conference in Newton, MA. The goal of the guidelines is to encourage submission of papers that address specific, current challenges in the Shakespeare authorship debate. Proposals that address the topics listed below will be given preference:

- Legitimization of the SAQ in academia, in secondary education, and with the media.
- Deficiencies in the traditional attribution of authorship with a focus on the abundance of erudition and rare sources manifest in the Shakespeare canon (Shakespeare's familiarity with Italy; his Latin, Greek, Italian, French, and Spanish languages; his knowledge of music, law, history, medicine, military and nautical terms, etc.).
- Revelations about Oxford's life (or another candidate's) that support his authorship of the Shakespeare canon, including new documentary discoveries, new interpretation of documents or literary works that affect authorship, Shakespeare characters that relate to Oxford's biography (e.g., William Cecil/Polonius in *Hamlet*), new facts on Oxford's travel, education, books, and connections, or new dating of a play or poem.
- Historical information relevant to the SAQ and/or people of the era with literary, theatrical, political or social relevance to the Shakespeare canon, Oxford, or Shakespeare of Stratford (e.g., Jonson, Southampton, Essex).

Most presentations should be designed to be delivered in forty-five minutes, including time for questions and answers. Presenters are expected to register for the annual conference and participate actively in the proceedings. Proposals submitted by members of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, De Vere Society, or other Shakespeare-related educational institutions will be given special consideration in the selection process.

The committee looks forward to receiving your proposals for this year's conference. Proposals should be 100-300 words in length and sent by email to any of the following Program Committee members. Submission deadline for proposals is August 1, 2016.

Bonner Cutting - jandbcutting@comcast.net
 John Hamill - hamillx@pacbell.net
 Don Rubin - drubin@yorku.ca
 Earl Showerman - earlees@charter.net

Further Curiosities of *Cymbeline*

by C. V. Berney

[This is the second of a two-part article. – Ed.]

In a previous paper¹ I discussed connections between Posthumus Leonatus, the “hero” of Shakespeare’s play *Cymbeline*, and the historical Henry Tudor, victor of Bosworth Field (and thus Henry VII), who was born posthumously (i.e., after the death of his father). Recognition of this connection greatly clarifies the play, revealing a layer of reference to 15th century history, including Welsh references, and the identification of Imogen with Elizabeth of York, who married Henry VII. On rereading Charles Beauclerk’s powerful and illuminating book, *Shakespeare’s Lost Kingdom*, I find that this Oxfordian author was also aware of the play’s Tudorian subtext. Beauclerk writes:

In *Cymbeline*, which can be read as a symbolic history of Britain, Shakespeare’s special myth of kingship fuses implicitly with the Tudor conception of its rights in the kingdom. The play’s hero, Posthumus Leonatus, after a period of exile on the Continent, returns to Britain via Milford Haven in Wales (the place where Henry Tudor landed his invasion force in 1485).²

It is a sad commentary on the quality of orthodox scholarship that, to my knowledge, not one establishment writer comments on this essential layer of meaning in *Cymbeline* (even though the Author* keeps nudging the reader with obsessively repeated references to Milford Haven). Stratfordian scholars are presumably of normal intelligence (I hear that they dress themselves, and can eat with knife and fork), but in spite of 400 years of study, they don’t know when the plays were written or what they’re about.

I begin this paper with comment on a couple of free-standing issues—the legal status of the bond between Imogen and Posthumus, and an expository comment on the latter’s education—and then move on to some deeper curiosities hinted at in the text of the play.

Were Imogen and Posthumus married? In the introductory exchange beginning the play, the First Gentleman says of Imogen “[She] hath referred herself unto a poor but worthy gentleman. She’s wedded, her husband banish’d, she imprisoned. . . .” Later, referring to Posthumus, he says “and he that hath her I mean, that married her. . . .” Posthumus refers to himself as “husband” (1.1.96) and to Imogen as “wife” (5.5.226). Imogen calls Posthumus “husband” (1.6.3) and twice describes herself as “wedded” (1.6.2 and 5.5.261). Posthumus has been banished—he travels to Rome, but

Imogen remains in England; wouldn’t we expect a wife to accompany him? And how can Cloten approach her as if she’s still available for marriage (2.3.111-124)?

The answer is scattered through several speeches.

Posthumus: I will remain the loyall’st husband that did e’er plight troth. (1.1.95-96)

Iachimo: Give me your pardon. I have spoke this to know if your affiance were deeply rooted. (1.6.162-164)

Queen [of Pisanio]: . . . the agent for his master, and the remembrancer of her to hold the hand-fast to her lord. (1.5.76-78)

Posthumus and Imogen have “plighted their troth,” that is, have entered a precontract, a promise to marry each other, also known as a “hand-fast.” Alison Weir explains:

English sources mention . . . a precontract, a promise before witnesses to marry; once it was cemented by sexual intercourse, it became as binding in the eyes of the Church as marriage. By the fourteenth century, the Church had reluctantly allowed that such clandestine marriages—with no calling of banns or blessing by a priest at the church door—were valid, but only if the promise had been made before two witnesses, which the law required. In practice, many couples considered themselves married on the basis of a promise alone. . . .³

Posthumus specifically states that their troth-plight was unconsummated⁴ and there is no mention of any witnesses, so Cloten—so wrong in his assessment of his prowess as a swordsman—is right on the money when he says to Imogen:

The contract you pretend with that base wretch, . . . it is no contract, none; and though it be allowed in meaner parties . . . to knit their souls . . . in self-figur’d knot, yet you are curbed from that enlargement by the consequence o’ th’ crown, and must not foil the precious note of it with a base slave. . . . (2.3.114-122)

Cloten is quite justified in pursuing Imogen to gain the crown—her contract with Posthumus can easily be

* I’m deliberately capitalizing the word to emphasize that the true creator of the work is Oxford writing as “Shakespeare.”

untied by Authority.

Posthumus's Education. We return to the exposition at the beginning of the play. The First Gentleman speaks of Posthumus's childhood:

... The King he takes the babe
To his protection, calls him Posthumus Leonatus,
Breeds him and makes him of his bedchamber,
Puts to him all the learnings that his time
Could make him the receiver of, which he took,
As we do air, fast as 'twas minist' red,
And in 's spring became a harvest; liv'd in court
(Which rare it is to do) most praised, most lov'd,
A sample to the youngest, to th' more mature
A glass that feated them, and to the graver
A child that guided dotards. To his mistress
(For whom he now is banish'd), her own price
Proclaims how she esteem'd him; and his virtue
By her election may be truly read,
What kind of man he is. (1.1.40-54)

This rosy description of a brilliant childhood fits Henry Tudor, but not perfectly. Henry was four years old in 1461 when Edward IV took the throne. The child was placed in the care of William Herbert, a staunch Yorkist, and was raised in Raglan Castle, in southeast Wales, where he was tutored by the noted scholar Andreas Scotus. Scotus gave his pupil good marks, saying "he had never seen a child so quick in learning."⁵

But Henry's education was interrupted several times. In 1469 his guardian was executed for treason by the rebel Warwick, and in 1470 the boy was reclaimed by his uncle, Jasper Tudor. After the Lancastrian defeat at the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, Jasper fled to Brittany, taking Henry with him. In later life Henry complained that "from the time he was five years old he had been either a fugitive or a captive."⁵ Though he was well educated, he never had an opportunity to shine at court.

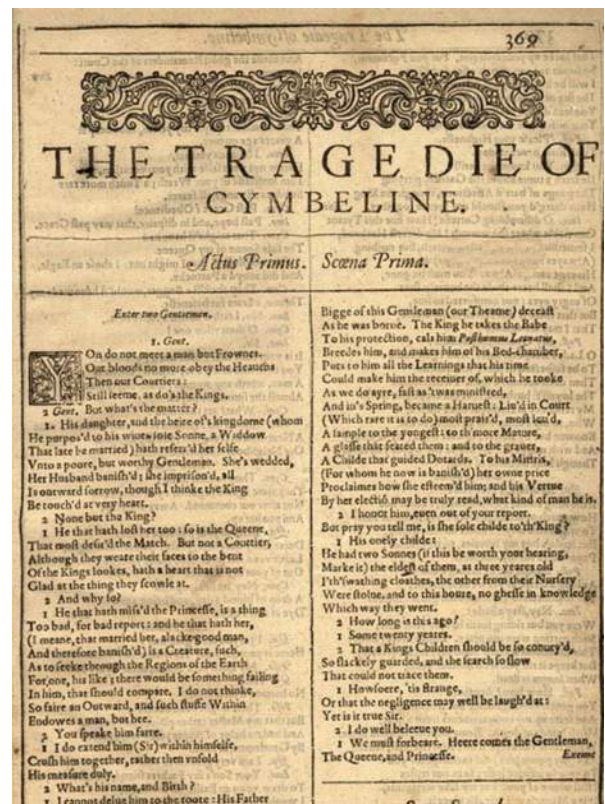
But we know someone who did. Edward de Vere was twelve years old when his father died, and he was made the ward of court official William Cecil. He was tutored by the preeminent scholars of the time: Thomas Smith, horticulturalist John Gerard, Latinist Arthur Golding, and Lawrence Nowell, who when his charge was thirteen, wrote "I clearly see that my work for the Earl of Oxford cannot be much longer required."⁶ The passage from *Cymbeline* quoted above describes its subject as "a sample [example] to the youngest, to th' more mature a glass that feated them," reminding us of a certain Prince of Denmark who was "the glass of fashion and the mould of form."⁷ I conclude that the passage was intended to refer at least as much to Posthumus as Oxford as to Posthumus as Henry Tudor. The Author has subtly supported this conclusion by seeding the passage with *ver* words: "spring" (Latin *ver*), "virtue" (spelled

vertue in the First Folio), "truly" (Latin *vero*), and "glass" (French *verre*).

The Villain. Like the historical Edward IV, the fictional Cymbeline has married a widow who is interested in the advancement of her male relatives, in this case her son, Cloten. He woos Imogen (2.3) and she rejects him. Humiliated, Cloten vows revenge in a speech so savage it was expurgated from the BBC film of the play:

Even there, [at Milford Haven] thou villain Posthumus, will I kill thee. . . . She said upon a time (the bitterness of it I now belch from my heart) that she held the very garment of Posthumus in more respect than my noble and natural person, together with the adornment of my qualities. With that suit upon my back will I ravish her; first kill him and in her eyes; there shall she see my valor, which will then be a torment to her contempt. He on the ground, my speech of insultment ended on his dead body, and when my lust hath din'd (which, as I say, to vex her I will execute in the clothes that she so prais'd), to the court I'll knock her back, foot her home again. She hath despis'd me rejoicingly, and I'll be merry in my revenge. (3.5.130-145)

In my previous paper¹ I gave reasons for associating Cloten with François, duc d'Alençon, who wooed Queen Elizabeth in the period 1578-81, and is widely regarded as one of the most loathsome figures in history.



The Raw Nerve. After the death of Edward IV in 1483, his brother usurped the throne, styling himself Richard III. As the extent of his tyranny became clear, even staunch Yorkists began to look around for candidates to replace Richard. Margaret Beaufort, Henry's mother, could not rule, being a woman, but as the great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt, she had royal (Lancastrian) blood—thus, so did Henry. At some point Margaret suggested that Henry marry Elizabeth of York, the beautiful daughter of the popular Edward IV, thus uniting the warring houses and ensuring peace for coming generations.⁸ This idea was greeted with great enthusiasm, and Henry, exiled in Brittany, promised that if he gained the throne he would do so.

After his victory at Bosworth, Henry did become king, and his claim to the throne rested on three legs: (1) *Descent*—This leg was a bit wobbly, since some of his ancestors were tainted by bastardy; (2) *Conquest*—Though his defeat of Richard was decisive, Henry preferred to be seen as a legitimate king who had disposed of a usurper; (3) *Marriage*—Henry had welcomed the swell of support he received when he promised to marry Edward's daughter, but after Bosworth he became very sensitive to the idea that the people would regard him as "king consort"—someone who wore the crown not in his own right, but because he had married the princess. The idea that the crown was *his* (not his wife's) became an obsession with him, so finally (in this context) "he would not endure any mention of the Lady Elizabeth."⁹

In the light of this circumstance, the last five lines of the First Gentleman's speech acquire a curious pungency:

[To his mistress]
(For whom he now is banished), her own price
Proclaims how she esteem'd him, *and his virtue*
By her election may be truly read,
What kind of man he is. (Emphasis added)

"By her election"—(dramatically) Imogen's choice of Posthumus as husband, or (historically) Elizabeth of York's ascension to the conjugal throne? ("Both" is an acceptable answer.) Are these lines innocuous praise of Posthumus, or is the Author mischievously probing Henry Tudor's raw nerve about his right to the throne? Perhaps there are other passages that will help us decide.

Later in Act I, Cymbeline upbraids his daughter for affiancing herself to a commoner:

Cymbeline: Thou took'st a beggar, would have
made my throne a seat for baseness.

Imogen: No, I rather added a lustre to it.
(1.1.141-143)

Again the ambiguity—does *Cymbeline's daughter* mean that Posthumus's worthiness adds lustre to the

throne, or does *Edward IV's daughter* mean that she (by marrying Henry Tudor) validates Tudor's claim? Iachimo's statement on this subject is less equivocal:

This matter of marrying his king's daughter, wherein
he must be weigh'd rather by her value than his own,
words him, I doubt not, a great deal from the
matter.¹⁰ (1.4.14-17)

I think we must consider the possibility that the Author is deliberately taunting Henry VII about his advantageous marriage. Of course, it's preposterous to think that a glover's son from a rural village would dare taunt even a dead king. But it's not so preposterous if the Author was a scion of the oldest noble family in England, whose ancestor, the 13th Earl of Oxford, had been the military leader and strategist who won the victory at Bosworth Field that put Henry on the throne.¹¹

The "Heroism" of Posthumus. All through the play, various characters—starting with the First Gentleman (1.1) and ending with Iachimo (5.5)—tell us what a virtuous, upstanding prince of a fellow Posthumus is. But what are his acts? His goodbye to Imogen is relatively harmless, but once he gets to Rome he makes an insane wager with Iachimo, a man he has just met, and a professed womanizer. Iachimo proposes to seduce Imogen, so Posthumus gives him a letter of introduction that stops just short of saying "This is my best buddy, please go to bed with him."¹² Imogen wisely rejects Iachimo's advances, but returning to Rome, the cad claims to have been successful. Posthumus retains his faith in his fiancée's chastity during Iachimo's description of her bedchamber, but loses it when the Italian produces a bracelet—the Briton's parting gift to Imogen. And then when Iachimo describes a mole on the girl's left breast, Posthumus goes berserk, threatening violence to both Iachimo and Imogen:

[to Iachimo]
If you will swear you have not done't, you lie,
And I will kill thee if thou dost deny
Thou'st made me cuckold. . . .
O that I had her here, to tear her limb-meal!
I will go there and do't, i' th' court, before
Her father, I'll do something—
(2.4.144-149)

The next scene (2.5) is Posthumus's virulent diatribe against all women (to paraphrase: "*This mess isn't my fault—it's because women are evil*").¹³ It is closely followed by the scene (3.2) in which Posthumus's faithful servant Pisanio reads the letter commanding him to murder Imogen as revenge for her supposed adultery. (The previous philosophical unconcern of Scene 1.4—"if . . . you have prevail'd, I am no further your enemy; she

is not worth our debate,” seems utterly to have vanished.)

Our hero is then offstage until the first scene of Act 5, when he receives the bloody cloth sent him by Pisanio as “proof” of Imogen’s supposed murder. There’s a glimmer of remorse, but, characteristically, he lays the blame on Pisanio (“Every good servant does not all commands . . .”). He changes into British peasant garb and fights valiantly against the invading Romans. After the British victory he slips back into Roman-style clothes, and is then taken prisoner. In jail, he yearns for death, but seems to have regained a philosophical calm.

The final scene of the play is like the dénouement of a Poirot detective story—all the characters are brought together, all secrets are revealed, all mysteries explained. Posthumus is there, as is transgendered Imogen, disguised as the page Fidele. Iachimo confesses that he duped Posthumus, who responds with a wild, self-lacerating speech that ends

... every villain
Be called Posthumus Leonatus and
Be villainy less than ’twas! O Imogen!
My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,
Imogen, Imogen!
(5.5.223-227)

Imogen rushes to his side, to assure him that she is alive—“Peace, my lord, hear, hear”—and he responds by savagely striking her, snarling “Shall’s have a play of this? Thou scornful page,/ There lie thy part.”

It’s a stunning moment. What’s going on here? Why this brutal response to an unoffending page? Can it be that Posthumus is as rotten as Cloten? Well, they wear the same clothes, and if you chop the head off one of them, he can’t be distinguished from the other, even by his fiancée. Is the Author suggesting a parallel between the historical avatars of Posthumus and Cloten—namely Henry Tudor and François, duc d’Alençon? Each was a prince who sailed from France, seeking to wed a princess named Elizabeth. Each had a strong-willed mother, politically astute, who schemed to put her son on the English throne.¹⁴ As noted,¹ Henry Tudor was literally posthumous, having been born three months after his father’s death. Alençon was functionally posthumous, being only four years old when his father died.¹⁵ I find that the parallels are striking; no wonder it’s hard to tell them apart!

What does the Author think of Henry Tudor? First Fact: From Edward III (ca. 1350) to Henry VIII (ca. 1530), the Shakespearean canon contains at least one eponymic play for each of the kings of England, with three exceptions: Edward IV, Edward V and Henry VII (aka Henry Tudor). Edward IV appears extensively in *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*. Edward V was one of the “Princes in the Tower” who disappeared during the reign of Richard Crookback—he was never actually crowned.

Henry Tudor appears briefly in *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III* (where he is called Richmond), *but he never gets a play of his own.*

Second Fact: Returning to the play *Cymbeline*, from Act 2 on, Posthumus—the character identified with Henry Tudor—acts more like a villain than a hero, threatening violence, ordering a servant to murder his fiancée, making speeches of “remorse” that seem designed to make him the center of attention, and finally, brutally striking the innocent “page” who is really the aforesaid fiancée.

Third Fact: Not only is Posthumus villainous in his own right, he has a mystic connection with the villainous Cloten (see above). Not for nothing does Guiderius exclaim “Double villain!” as he prepares to chop off Cloten’s head (4.2.89).

Consideration of these three facts leads me to believe that the Author—Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford—profoundly disliked Henry VII, to the extent that he not only denies him his own play, but casts him (thinly disguised) as a self-involved fool in a fictional play, and there makes him the doppelgänger of an avowed villain. This conclusion forms an interesting contrast with the establishment view that Shakespeare was a Tudor propagandist who smeared Richard III to make the Tudors look good.

What is the cause of this intense dislike? The honest answer is: I don’t know. However, it would be irresponsible of me to lead you this far without at least a suggestion. Keep in mind that the latter days of Henry Tudor’s reign were marred by his obsession with raking in more and more cash, and that the military leader responsible for Henry’s success at Bosworth Field was John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford.¹¹ Francis Bacon recounts the following anecdote concerning a visit by Henry VII to the Earl at Castle Hedingham:

There remains to this day a report that the King was on a time entertained by the Earl of Oxford (that was his principal servant both for war and peace) nobly and sumptuously, at his castle at Henningham. And at the King’s going away, the Earl’s servants stood in a seemly manner in their livery coats with cognisances, ranged on both sides, and made the King a lane. The King called the Earl to him and said, ‘My lord, I have heard much of your hospitality, but I see it is greater than the speech. These handsome gentlemen and yeomen that I see on both sides of me are (sure) your menial servants.’ The Earl smiled and said, ‘It may please your grace, that were not for mine ease. They are most of them my retainers that are come to do me service at such a time as this; and chiefly to see your grace.’ The King started a little, and said, ‘By my faith (my lord) I thank you for my good cheer, but I may not endure to have my laws broken in my sight. My attorney must speak with you.’ And it is part of the report, that the Earl

compounded no less than 15,000 marks.¹⁶

In modern terms, the Earl of Oxford, who had won the kingdom for Henry and had just feasted him “nobly and sumptuously,” was fined £10,000 for exceeding the number of retainers allowed by the Crown.

If you want to explore the Author’s feelings about ingratitude, read *Timon of Athens*. Here’s a sample: “I am rapt and cannot cover the monstrous bulk of this ingratitude with any size of words” (5.1.64-66).

- 1 C.V. Berney, “*Cymbeline: the Hidden History Play*,” *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* 51.3 (Fall 2015), 18-21.
- 2 Charles Beauclerk, *Shakespeare’s Lost Kingdom* (Grove, 2010), 234.
- 3 Alison Weir, *Elizabeth of York* (Ballantine, 2013), 86.
- 4 Posthumus says of Imogen “I am her adorer, not her friend” (1.4.69). The *Riverside* edition glosses “friend” as “lover, i.e., paramour.” Later, convinced that Iachimo has bedded her, Posthumus wails “Me of my lawful pleasure she restrain’d, and pray’d me oft forbearance . . .” (2.5.9-10).
- 5 Weir, 37.
- 6 Charlton Ogburn, Jr., *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (EPM Publications, 1984), 435-441.
- 7 *Hamlet* 3.1.153.
- 8 Weir, 100.

- 9 Francis Bacon, *The History of the Reign of King Henry VII* (Hesperus, 2007; first published 1622), 11.
- 10 The 1974 *Riverside* editor glosses the phrase “words him . . . from the matter” as “causes him to be described in terms very wide of the truth” (1525). But the part that strikes the eye is “he must be weigh’d rather by her value than his own.”
- 11 Peter Hammond, *Richard III and the Bosworth Campaign* (Pen & Sword, 2010), 35, 87, 99.
- 12 The letter reads “He [Iachimo] is one of the noblest note, to whose kindnesses I am most infinitely tied. Reflect upon him accordingly, as you value your trust—Leonatus.” (1.6.22-25)
- 13 The most interesting line in this speech comes when Posthumus fantasizes about Iachimo’s supposed encounter with Imogen: “Perchance he spoke not, but like a full-acorn’d boar, a German one, cried ‘O!’ and mounted . . .” (2.5.15-17). The boar was a feature of the Oxford family crest (‘O!’), but why a German one?
- 14 Henry Tudor’s mother was Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby. Alençon’s mother was Catherine de’ Medici, Dowager Queen of France.
- 15 Alençon was born 18 March 1555. His father, Henri II of France, died (from a wound sustained in a jousting match) on 10 July 1559.
- 16 Bacon, 146-147.

Hidden in Plain Sight: The Author Responds

by Peter Rush

In his review of my book, *Hidden in Plain Sight—The True History Revealed in Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, James Norwood took me to task on a number of issues (*Newsletter*, Fall 2015, pp. 15-17). I’d like to take this opportunity to explain more fully what I actually had set out to do in the book, and thereby respond, directly or indirectly, to Norwood’s points.

I was inspired and guided by the work of Hank Whittemore in finally “solving,” so he and I believe, the riddle of *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*. While his 2005 book, *The Monument*, presents his discoveries in great detail, I felt that a different manner of presentation could more persuasively demonstrate how the new paradigm that he discerned is derivable from the texts of the sonnets themselves.

First, I felt it important to show that the state of Stratfordian commentary on the *Sonnets* is inconsistent, self-contradictory and unproductive. I chose Stephen

Booth, Colin Burrow, Katherine Duncan-Jones and John Kerrigan as exemplars, but any orthodox commentator will do. I was very glad to see that Norwood agreed with me. As he wrote, “It is useful to have so many glosses of these scholars on display, as they clearly demonstrate the limitations of the academicians who are starting on the premise that William Shakspeare of Stratford is the author. . . . To avoid the embarrassing topic of biography, the academicians resort to such abstract and generalized analysis that it becomes virtually meaningless.” Indeed, on the basis of Stratfordian commentary alone, it should be obvious that a new authorship paradigm (as well as a new *Sonnets* paradigm) is needed.

In the first paragraph of his review, Norwood quoted from A.L. Rowse, who, in his 1964 edition of the *Sonnets*, stated that the “proper method” for understanding the poems “was an historical one.... [T]o take each poem. . . line by line. . . watching for every piece of internal information and for its coherence with what is happening in the external world....” I did cite Rowse, and commended his stated approach, in my book. However, Rowse himself seems not to have followed his own “method,” as he identified only four

external events that he believed were referred to in four sonnets (25, 86, 107 and 124), which he dated to 1592-1594. Neither Whittemore nor I followed Rowse's stated approach, but (perhaps ironically) we did follow his actual approach. We searched for what I call "anchor" references that clearly related to historical events; it was crucial to find at least one such "anchor" in order to be able to discover the historical *context* in which the narrative story line that is the true substance of all the sonnets takes place. Whittemore found only one, in Sonnet 107, but it proved sufficient to locate the central sequence of sonnets in their historical context.

My methodology was to use a forensic approach. Forensic experts start from clues that are the easiest to understand, using them to help unravel other clues that are initially harder to understand, which then leads to being able to interpret yet more obscure clues, until finally a coherent picture emerges. In the *Sonnets*, the most direct clue is the "anchor" reference in Sonnet 107, which a majority of all commentators (Stratfordian and Oxfordian) concur is about the accession of James I in April 1603, and the release of Southampton from the Tower; in my view, it is the *only* independently verifiable "historical" match-up in the work.

Whittemore's first unique point of departure was to ask what should have been an obvious follow-up question: If 107 is about Southampton's release, is there a sonnet that refers to the date he was arrested two years earlier? The abrupt change in tone from airiness to blackness that occurs between Sonnets 26 and 27 told Whittemore that Sonnet 27 must have been written on that occasion. From that it follows (1) that Sonnets 27-126 form a group of exactly 100 sonnets; (2) that Sonnets 27-106 all pertain to the period of Southampton's imprisonment, and (3) that Sonnets 1-126 are in chronological order. Every subsequent insight was derived from seeing 27-106 as "prison sonnets." With that *new context*—the new paradigm that Whittemore discovered—everything else became discoverable, clue by clue. Part III of my book presents the evidence that permitted Whittemore to unravel every clue until the full, true, story emerged.

Norwood wrote that I engaged "in detailed textual analysis of the Sonnets as applied to the Prince Tudor theory...." However, neither Whittemore nor I started with the so-called "Prince Tudor theory." We sought to let the sonnets themselves guide us where they will. Our *conclusion* that Southampton was Oxford's son by Elizabeth emerged as the only explanation that could account for what so many of the sonnets seemed to be saying. Such a reading is highly productive, for when the sonnets are read in this light, a great many lines that defy explanation under all alternative theories suddenly appear to read almost as an open book. This is an

empirical approach, which is how any new theory or paradigm is properly tested—how well does it explain things that cannot be explained under the old theory? If it resolves that which cannot be resolved under prevailing theories, and accounts for all, or nearly all, known facts about the subject matter, the new theory or paradigm can replace the old, at least until it is found inadequate and a better one is discovered. Part IV applies the new paradigm established in Part III to more than sixty additional sonnets, resolving hundreds of lines previously hard (if not impossible) to make sense of.

My methodology, following Whittemore's lead, was simply to take the sonnets to mean what they say. This meant first of all *not* trying to "explain away" the numerous lines that didn't make sense or that didn't fit the prevailing presumption of a triangular love relationship between poet, young man and unidentified woman—the standard Stratfordian interpretation (that, ironically, many Oxfordians concur with). Such lines, containing what I termed "anomalies," provided Whittemore the very clues needed to unravel the true meaning of the sonnets. Analyzing them led to the discovery that the sonnets were written on two levels at the same time, a surface reading which suggested a three-way romantic relationship (albeit with huge gaps where that interpretation made little sense), and the deeper, true level which told the story that Whittemore discovered, rooted in the history of the last years of Elizabeth's reign.

The key to understanding the two levels was Whittemore's identification of a score or so of "key" words that, throughout the Sonnets, had one meaning at the surface level, and an entirely different one at the deeper level. Reading "beauty" to mean "royal blood" in the first seventeen sonnets, or seeing "true" as a reference to Oxford, are two such examples. Admittedly, these "word translations" (Norwood's term) are "debatable," as Norwood wrote, but he did not cite any examples, or reasons to debate my justifications for them. We make no claim to having conclusively determined what every sonnet means, only that we believe we have identified the correct context or paradigm, and applied that as best we have been able. We welcome debate on any of our readings, showing where it appears inadequate or off-track.

Norwood did "debate" one important reading, which was not an example of a "word translation," but rather the meaning of "misprision" in Sonnet 87, which Whittemore and I read to mean "misprision of treason." He noted that there were other contemporary meanings for "misprision," but again, he declined to provide an example of one. Research by Bill Boyle and others shows, I believe convincingly, that our reading *is* accurate in this context, that "misprision" specifically

refers to the commutation of a sentence from the capital offense of treason to the lesser, non-capital offense of misprision of treason. Such a commutation perfectly describes what appears to have occurred in Southampton's case.

As Norwood noted, citing a survey taken at the 2014 Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship conference, there is a "gaping chasm. . . with regard to the "Tudor topic." But I believe Whittemore's thesis has helped to bridge the gap, even though it remains wide. Before Whittemore, only a small minority of Oxfordians held a favorable view of the topic, based mainly on isolated passages from the sonnets and Shakespeare's other poems. Since Whittemore's first presentation of his thesis in 2000, which shows that reading the sonnet collection as a unified whole provides a far stronger basis for the "Prince Tudor" theory, support for this view has grown to where opinion in the 2014 survey is divided almost evenly.

Norwood faults my presentation on the ground that corroboration is lacking for what Whittemore and I believe the sonnets are really about. No doubt the absence of "external" evidence also lies behind the reluctance of many Oxfordians to seriously consider the new thesis. Norwood also objects that "history is written from documentary and eyewitness evidence, as opposed to works of literature." But we need look no farther than Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* to recognize that literature written by a first-hand participant to history can not only contain much history, but can be the sole source of some historical information. Elizabeth's England was arguably the most efficient police state prior to that of Stalin, where much documentary information was destroyed, such that it is not at all out of the question that a piece of literature such as the *Sonnets*, written by an intimate of the Court, could be the sole source for certain information.

It must be noted that the "no corroboration" argument is the main retort from the Stratfordian camp against Oxford being Shakespeare. Pretty much all of the "evidence" that Oxfordians have amassed is of a literary, not a documentary, nature. I ask readers to apply the same yardstick to my book as they do to the broader case for Oxford, and allow themselves to examine the case I make for each step in my presentation and judge the soundness of each. I welcome all comment on anything in the book, provided only that it responds to what I have presented, not from prejudgment of my conclusions.

Finally, Norwood's suggestion that Whittemore and I approach the sonnets as history *per se* is not accurate. Rather, we sought to find the historical *context* underlying them. It was in the course of pursuing this contextualization that Whittemore found strong reasons to believe that buried in some of the sonnets were answers to a number of historical questions for which

satisfactory answers do not otherwise exist. This is largely due to the fact that "history" is written by the winners, and in Shakespeare's England the winners were the Cecils, who almost certainly expunged much from the documentary record. Among the questions to which the *Sonnets* may hold the only available "documentary" evidence are the following: Why was Southampton's life spared after his treason conviction, and what document recorded the commutation of his death sentence? Who was the real "Shakespeare," and why was he never identified? Why were the *Sonnets* published in 1609, five years after Oxford's death? And why did the publication attract no notice, at a time when "Shakespeare" was still a popular author? Our conclusion is that the collection of 154 poems was not written for dramatic purposes or to please an audience. As the author tells us repeatedly in the work, it was written for posterity, against the backdrop of the behind-the-scenes dynastic struggle that occupied the closing years of Elizabeth's life and reign.

[Peter Rush's *Hidden in Plain Sight—The True History Revealed in Shakespeare's Sonnets* is available at amazon.com.]



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Reaching Out to SOF Members for Outreach Projects

The SOF's new Outreach Committee is interested in hearing from people in the organization with new ideas for promoting both the Authorship Question and the Oxfordian Theory to new audiences. The focus can be on students, on educators or even on those who have not yet learned that there is reasonable doubt. There may also be a long-term PR campaign.

For this first go-round, a total of \$5,000 has been made available by the SOF Board to support innovative projects.

The Outreach Committee (Tom Regnier [chair], Joan Leon, Don Rubin, John Hamill, Justin Borrow, and James Warren) has chosen as its first project a contest to see who can make the best short video on the authorship question. Cash prizes will be awarded. Details will be announced shortly. We hope to promote this on the Internet and attract many young people and perhaps end up with one or more videos that can go viral.

Additional funds remain for other innovative projects that can also be seen as spreading the word. Anyone interested in applying for outreach funding is asked to submit a letter of application of no more than two pages to info@shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org.

The letter should identify what your project is in some detail and who is applying (that is, who will be responsible for accepting funding and reporting on the project). The project must be completed during the calendar year 2016, and a report must be submitted to the SOF within twelve months of receipt of funds. All winning projects will be announced in the SOF Newsletter. The committee is assuming that most projects will be fall in the \$200 to \$2,000 range.

As well, the Outreach Committee is considering the possibility of entering into a longer-term public relations agreement with someone (hopefully a member of SOF already) to promote the work of SOF generally. Anyone with some public relations experience is asked to submit a proposal for ways that SOF can reach both the press and a wider public. This will be an ongoing project for the Outreach Committee. Initial PR proposals should be modest in cost as new money will need to be found. Clearly budgeted PR plans of one to three years will be considered most seriously.

So make a video. Think outreach. Think PR. There may be some funding in it or even a cash prize. **Applications accepted until September 30, 2016.**

Two Poems by Thomas Goff

And Someday, Maybe, the Title

(for Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, forced to renounce all title to the authorship of the Shakespeare plays)

"Sometimes the title is the last to come."

—observation often stated by poet James Merrill

Sometimes the title is the last to come.
What need have you of title? Every day,
from lightning lines you gave us our ears hum.

Just think: "To the manner born," "Husband, I come."
Snatches, like "things nothing worth"; "give o'er the play."
Sometimes the title is the last to come
or the first to go. So intricately dumb,
you dispensed with lands and power as one sells plate,
but you gave us those lightning lines, and our ears hum.

Your rod can reach still darker, deeper to plumb
than world exists to be thrust through while time remains.
Sometimes the title is the last to come,

but come it must someday, as truth must enter, sun
stunningly crowbar the grate of the dungeon brain.
The ears you gave those lightning lines still hum

and buzz: King Lear with mad self-knowledge numb,
that old busybody by the Dane's sword slain,
yet sometimes the title is the last to come.

The everlasting title taken from
you, we would restore—but that, you did convey.
Though lightning lines of yours make our ears hum,
sometimes the title is the last to come.

[Here follows a sonnet knavishly rhymed, in which Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, bewaileth his inability, by high birth and impolitic disclosure of politics, to claim what plays he hath writ, under the pen name William Shakespeare: whereupon cometh a Stratford man, Will Shakspeare, under whose seeming authorship, the plays are published. In this limping sonnet is the true author's name, spelled in a manner as may chance with courtiers, which do both rise and fall.]

Look Under My Shakespeare Name

Evil stars in bad courses blast me dead,
Desiring silenced all that I work for.
Whatever I ache to speak, they chide me no:
A partless actor must all speech leave off,
Resentful-mute. What my love stood upon,
Designs of an English stage, in me alone
Originate, yet to one who signs his X,
X or what scribble he can make, must go
Eternal lines and name. This comes as dread
Nonsuits the great who rise and rule, yet fear
Faint semblances which satire out loud—la!—
Oily deceits and policies they speak low.
Reward avoids players and plays that lend the grand
Dark mirrors of darker deeds, that they may see.

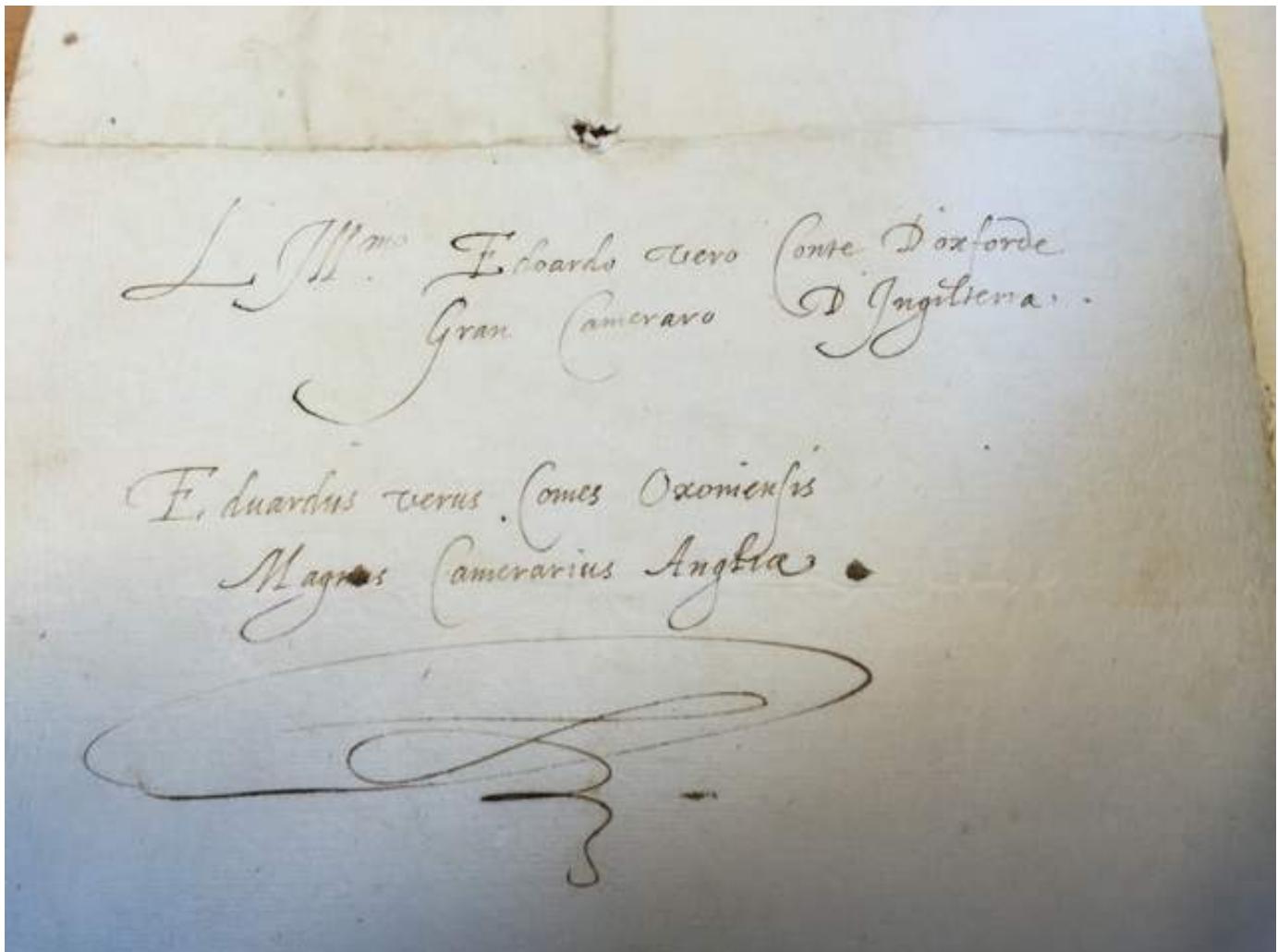
(New Evidence of Oxford in Venice, cont. from p. 1)

much explored) experienced a musical renaissance in the form of Italian madrigals by such luminaries as de Wert and Marenzio, who worked in the service of the Gonzagas during the latter half of the sixteenth century.

I was armed with what I thought were the holdings of the Mantuan archive, catalogued (hard to say how thoroughly or responsibly) in *L'Archivio di Gonzaga di Castiglione delle Stiviere* (1961), where letters from “diverse” people from the sixteenth century onwards are indexed. Assuming that the late Oxfordian Italian scholar Noemi Magri (if not others) must have perused the relevant *buste* (envelopes or containers) pertaining to Gonzaga connections with English correspondents, I wondered if there were other locations in the archive—perhaps “Affari Economici”—that have been ignored because previous searches had focused on Oxford’s 1575 visit, rather than on his need to make and maintain cultural connections beyond the theater. Descriptions of many *buste* in the index end with intriguing phrases that

translate roughly to “and other miscellaneous documents.”

Oxford’s experiences of Italian theater would have been transformative, and he would have absorbed what he needed to transform English theater in turn. But music is another matter, one that few Oxfordians have pursued. There are reasons to believe that Oxford was instrumental, as it were, in the flourishing of the English madrigal, the late sixteenth-century creative burst other than “Shake-speare” that finally gave England a “renaissance.” *The First Set of English Madrigals* is dedicated to de Vere with John Farmer’s insistence that although Oxford’s involvement in music seems to be “a recreation, your Lordship have overgone most of them that make it a profession.” Bonner Cutting recently pointed me towards a reference to the 1584/85 account of payment by the City Chamberlains to “the Erle of Oxfordes musytians.” Like references to Oxford as being “best for comedy,” these indications of musical



Oxford’s signature in Italian and Latin to the Consiglio

achievement should make us wonder what materials of Oxford's someone like Farmer had access to, how Oxford supplied music for his own musicians, and where he found his sources and influences. Thus I decided not just to search for evidence of Oxford's presence in 1575. Considering the likelihood that he would have wanted to maintain connection with a center of the arts such as Mantua after his travels, and maintain access to musical treasures that continued being generated there, I wondered if I might turn up documents previously unrecognized as connected to de Vere and that would have survived the Cecils' paper purge.

My backup plan was to locate the most relevant archives in Venice, where the primary music publishing houses were located (see "Music and Monkeys in de Vere's Venice," *Shakespeare Matters* 5.4 [Summer 2006]). Requests, receipts, other documents indicating that "un gentiluomo inglese" sought to purchase the latest book of madrigals were what I was after. But of course my eyes would be open to any other Oxford/Shakespeare traces.

My lifelong friend and sometime collaborator, Coleen Moriarty, now an Oxfordian, was able to join me in Italy. An official letter of introduction from Washington State University allowed initiation of the registration process, and our combined team skills—linguistic, research talents, work modes of focus and productivity—streamlined efficiency in mastering the intricate indexing, bureaucratic, and procedural systems of both the Mantua and Venice archives. We were able to examine many more *buste* (which turn out to be boxes, actually, tied in very old cloth ribbons) of sixteenth-century documents than would have been possible individually. However, I grossly underestimated the needed time for the process, and we extended our stay to a month. I repeatedly emailed back to the US, "Sell all my lands!" To my dismay and my joy, I also realized that I had grossly underestimated the size of the goldmine awaiting exploration. How, with my index of the almost three hundred *buste*, were we to account for a reference elsewhere to *buste* #2243?

Holy parmigiano-reggiano! There are mountains of archival materials. The Gonzagas were the hoarders of the sixteenth century. In the end, after our discovery, we realized that the archives are far less explored than Oxfordians are aware. There is simply too much, and the task is almost debilitatingly daunting. But we were able to take pride in becoming an efficient team and realizing that nothing could really have prepared us sufficiently for the work: we learned archival research by doing it. We found very interesting documents and letters with fascinating and elaborate doodles, some signed by Guglielmo Gonzaga, the head of the family when Oxford was in Italy. So we could be returning home feeling as if we ourselves were now valuable Oxfordian resources, at least.

Furthermore, coincidence upon coincidence grew to the point of bizarre for us. Our seemingly random online selection of an apartment in Mantua (the only one that featured a piano) yielded an accidental angel in the form of our miraculously resourceful hostess, Elisabetta Gavioli. First, I could deduce from the Wifi password that she was born the same year as both Coleen and I. She happens to be an English teacher, like me, and told us she was to be taking her students to the US, to New York, in the fall. When one is from New York State, one can detect something very subtle in the voice of another saying "New York"—something about not wanting to waste the time saying "New York, but not New York City." We detected the nuance and asked where in New York, and she responded that it was upstate and we wouldn't know the place: near Poughkeepsie. Both Coleen and I were born, grew up, and went to school together in Poughkeepsie. Connected by birth year, now birthplace. What are the odds?

Because Elisabetta teaches English to Italian high school students, I had the surprise opportunity to present my show on the Shakespeare Authorship Question at her invitation—in the original English—to her classes. Thus, we were able to serve as goodwill ambassadors for the Oxfordian cause in Mantua, and to fire up a number of young people lucky enough to be living at ground zero.

It gets better. As many Oxfordians know, I have published and presented on the connections between Shakespeare's *Lucrece* and the Giulio Romano paintings of Trojan War scenes in the Sala di Troia at the Palazzo Ducale. Clearly, that was a must-see in Mantua; when purchasing our tickets we were asked if we wanted to see the "palazzo" and/or the "castello." I said that I didn't know, that I most imperatively needed to see the Sala di Troia. "Oh, non, non, non: chiusa" – closed to the public due to the earthquake over two years ago! (How is it I was never told?) The rest of the palazzo was lovely, but disappointing, until we told Saint Elisabetta. With a couple of phone calls, she quickly had us connected to Stephano L'Occaso, director of art for the Palazzo Ducale, who escorted us on a private showing of the Sala di Troia on a morning where the light was streaming in, allowing us to get more glorious photos than are otherwise available anywhere. Stepping into the room was an overwhelming experience; one is completely surrounded by colorful, dramatic Trojan War scenes matching Shakespeare's descriptions in *Lucrece*. Signior L'Occaso, despite my crazed enthusiasm, remains a skeptic but admits he "would love to know that 'Shakespeare' slept here."

The next coincidence was learning that Elisabetta not only had known the foremost Mantuan Oxfordian, the late Noemi Magri, as someone involved in the Shakespeare Authorship Question, but Magri served as her mentor when Elisabetta was starting out as a teacher. Even better, Elisabetta's partner, Claudio Fraccari, is a

personal friend of the world's leading scholar on Mantuan history, Giancarlo Malacarne, with whom we dined and who has helped us contextualize our eventual discoveries, with Elisabetta serving as two-way translator.

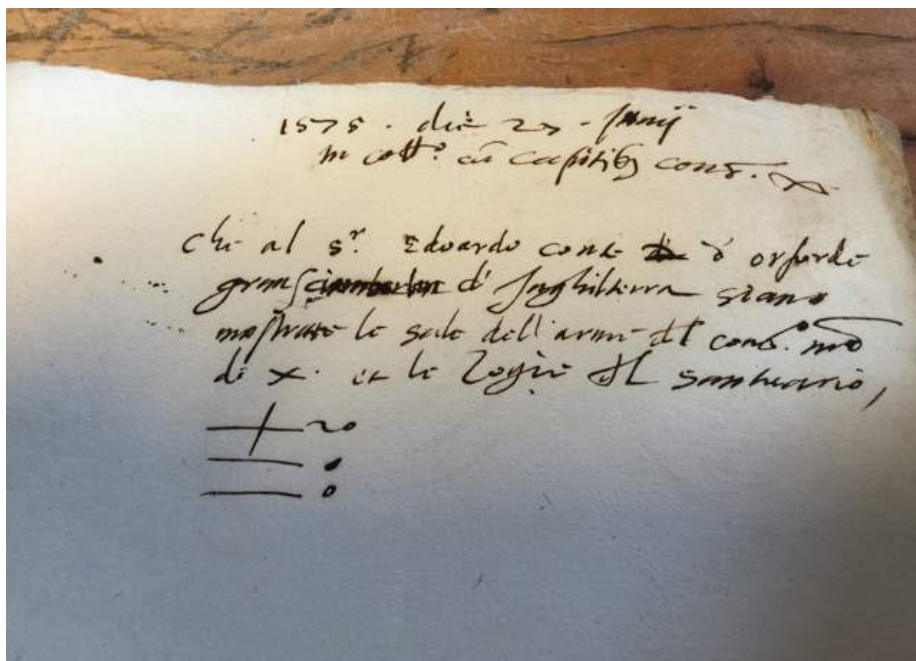
Toward the end of our stay, we returned from Mantua to Venice. We decided to find out at least where that archive was located, get ourselves registered for whenever we might return in the future, and see how the system works by checking out just a few *buste*. The most immediate index listed documents related to the Consiglio dei Dieci (Council of Ten), a Venetian governmental bureau originally established to judge and condemn traitors. Coleen leapt at the *buste* containing *secreti* documents (how secret can they be if they're indexed that way?). I chose a generic collection, #76, because it focused on 1575 and because '76 was an interesting year for the two of us.

My heart sank a little: the stack of documents was an arm's length high, and I just wanted to enjoy our last afternoon in Italy. But, here we go again: skim, flip, skim, flip, skim....

About a third of the way through the stack, I saw the name "Eduardo," which was interesting, since that would have been a guy with the Italian version of the name of our man. And this fellow was a "Conte," too. Oh, um, and "d'Oxforde," and from "Inghilterra" (England). Well, well. Lord Oxford. There you are. Cue the lute.

People have asked me what the discovery experience felt like. All I can say is that even though we had by now spent a month looking for anything, even far less significant, the moment itself was absolutely quiet and still. I called Coleen over and slowly showed her the "Eduardo, Conte d'Oxforde." Because I was so calm, it took her a moment to realize that this was it, at last. Apparently, she did not have the same experience. Here is her description of those moments:

"Quiet," my Great-Aunt Fanny! Michael has always been somewhat ethereal. So for him, the stage directions for the eureka moment may well have been: "Cue lute music. Let the madrigal begin." But for me, with the signatures swimming into sharp focus from the murky depths of bursting *buste*, my heartbeat cranked up like an over-amplified bass, and above the roar floated the most insistent melody line: "Oxford is *in* the building. Thump-thump." Yet surely we can agree, adrenaline is in the rush of the beholder.



Scribal notice of Oxford's petition

The mutual adrenaline rush came when we realized we desperately had to get photos of these pages in the closing hour of the archive on our last day in Italy.

My first concern was why Oxford would be going up before the Council of Ten, a pretty fierce board. Did he involve himself with the wrong courtesan? Or had the Council diminished in importance and he was just seeking a building permit? With some help from our Italian archival experts, we worked out a translation that answers the question.

What we found is a scribal document, a kind of cover page, translating thus:

1575 —day 27—June

In the meeting with the heads of the Council of X
That to signore Eduardo Count of Oxforde[,] Great
Chamberlain of England[,] let be shown the
chambers of arms of our Council of X and the places
of sanctuary.

Beneath this petition is recorded the result of the Council's vote. The Earl of Oxford is apparently so awesome that he received unanimous approval in the form of twenty votes from a council of ten! Well, actually, the Council would sometimes have included extra Venetians and the Doge.

My pile of documents included other similar pages, sometimes with accompanying letters for the Council to peruse. In this case, only one other small partial document was enclosed, but it was a glorious one. After a month of looking at globby scribal scrawl, here was a

graceful, whisper-thin handwriting, an elegant and decorated pair of signatures, one in Italian and one in Latin, by “The most illustrious” (he does not say modest) “Edoardo Vero Conte D’oxforde Gran Cameraro D’Ingilterra / Eduardus Verus Comus Oxoniensus Magnus Camerarius Anglia.” A large gasp filled the room when we presented the image of this at the SOF conference in Ashland: there is something immediately breathtaking in the appearance of the handwriting, something very present and authentic in the signatures of someone who combined artistry with identity and who took conscious pride in presenting himself dramatically through his pen.

What we formerly knew about Oxford abroad contained a large gap: he had reached Venice by mid-May 1575, where the theatrical season would have lasted to July. But until September, when he is again in Venice, Oxford’s whereabouts have been a mystery. B.M. Ward reported in his biography of Oxford that a letter-writer detached from Oxford’s group some time later didn’t know if he had gone to Greece or was still in Italy. Mark Anderson suspects he visited Greece in the summer, but this is based on the lament that “No ... records have been discovered detailing de Vere’s movements during the summer of 1575” (Anderson 85). With this new archival discovery, we can now declare this statement obsolete.

The next question is why was Oxford seeking access to the secret chambers in the Doge’s palace where the Consiglio dei Dieci met? Did he want to observe the bureaucratic processes of the Venetian government in order to provide accuracy in Act I, scene iii, of *Othello*? Wrong!

Just the previous day Coleen and I had toured the Doge’s palace and seen these no-longer-secret chambers, but we had no idea how relevant that experience would turn out to be. But even by this time, dizzy from our month of art-drunkenness, the experience of entering these rooms is overwhelming, just like entering the Sala di Troia had been. We surmise that what Oxford wanted was the similar intoxication of being surrounded by the glorious artworks covering the walls and ceilings of these private halls: paintings by Veronese, Zelotti, Aliense, and other Italian Renaissance masters.

I am currently researching the artworks to see (like Adonis’s cap appearing only in the painting in Titian’s home and in Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*) if there are specific connections between the art Oxford saw in the Doge’s palace and references in Shakespeare works.

There exist many times more sixteenth-century haystacks than we thought, but we have found the first needles. The SOF has awarded us a second research grant so that we can return for what we are confident will be further discoveries next spring and summer. In addition to the two archives in which we are already registered, we will also investigate the music history holdings of the Marciana Library in Venice. We hope to develop further the goodwill mission of a Shakespeare-Oxfordian fellowship in Mantua, building on the expressed hope of

locals involved in history, art, theater, film, and English language education that we find evidence that Shakespeare did indeed sleep here, drawing clear inspiration from Mantua’s cultural treasures. Last summer, we found locals willing to engage the Shakespeare Authorship Question and the attention of interested tour groups and other visitors that such engagement might attract. We hope to further this multifaceted cultural fellowship in Mantua and possibly pursue setting up another sympathetic cultural network in Venice, with the help of our initial contacts.

Having to leave Italy felt tragic, especially so when thinking about Oxford loving it so much and leaving it, returning to the rotten Elizabethan court in culturally impoverished England where he himself would supply a renaissance. It must have been like landing in Newark. Vulgar. We are indeed fortunate that we will be able to return to Italy and pick up the trail in 2016, thanks to the generous SOF research grant award. It is thoroughly heartbreaking that Oxford was never able to get back to Italy.

If in fact he didn’t...

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