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From the Editor

Expanding the Canon

by Gary Goldstein

The lead article in last year's issue by Dr. Waugaman posed the question: was Edward de Vere the real translator of the 1567 version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*? Dr. Waugaman had good reason for investigating whether the 17th Earl of Oxford had translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses* given that W.E. Buckley in 1882 referred to a statement by the English literary antiquary Thomas Coxeter (1689-1747): "Oxford was said by Coxeter to have translated Ovid, which would connect him with Narcissus, but no one has ever seen his Ovid."

Besides the unique doubling of vowels used in de Vere's private letters and the Golding translation of *Metamorphoses*, what impressed me is the extent to which de Vere, like "Golding" and Shakespeare, used alliteration and hendiadys, often in the same line. In de Vere's signed early poetry, particularly in the 1576 collection, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, I found additional examples of this unique combination of poetic techniques using Dr. Waugaman's methodology.

Dr. Waugaman noted that de Vere was ridiculed for the excessive alliteration in his early signed poetry; and that one finds the same profusion of alliteration in the "Golding" translation of Ovid. The professor pointed to the "w" sound, which is repeated seven times in "The wonted weight was from the Waine, the which they well did wot" (Ovid, Book II, 212). De Vere mimicked this same alliterative sound in his poem, "Care and Disappointment": "Thus like a woeful wight I wove the web of woe." I then discovered that de Vere played upon the "w" sound and combined it with hendiadys in his poem,

“Love Compared to a Tennis Play”:

Which hath Sir Argus’ hundred eyes, wherewith to watch and pry
The Fault wherewith fifteen is lost is want of wit and sense.

I encountered the same preference for integrating alliteration and hendiadys in other de Vere poems, such as “Reason and Affection”: “A slavish smith of rude and rascal race,” as well as, “That with the careful culver climbs the worn and withered tree,” from “Care and Disappointment.”

Of course, de Vere also employed hendiadys in his poetry without alliteration, as in “Love and Antagonism”: “She is my joy, she is my care and woe.” Also, in “What Cunning Can Express”:

Heaven pictured in her face
Doth promise joy and grace

When added to the weight of evidence presented in Dr. Waugaman’s paper, I can state with confidence that the English translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in 1565-67 can be added to the Shakespeare canon.

With the same scholarly assurance, we can now add five hitherto anonymous Elizabethan plays to the Shakespeare *oeuvre*—like the Ovid translation, these represent Shakespeare’s juvenilia. I am referring to the compelling study by Ramon Jiménez of five anonymous plays which he ascribes to Shakespeare in his book, *Shakespeare’s Apprenticeship* (McFarland, 2018).

Three histories, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*, and *The Troublesome Reign of John*; a comedy, *The Taming of a Shrew*; and a romance, *King Leir*, are considered anonymous products of the Elizabethan stage. The Bard transformed them into the plays that bear nearly identical titles. Indeed, each play is strikingly similar to its canonical counterpart in terms of structure, plot and cast, though the texts were entirely rewritten.

Using historical, theatrical and literary evidence, Jiménez shows how de Vere revised and updated these early dramatic efforts and recreated them as *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *King John*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *King Lear*.

In short, two Oxfordian researchers have significantly expanded the boundaries of the Shakespeare canon. The quality of Jiménez’s scholarship has already been acknowledged by university librarians throughout the US, with Yale, Stanford, Notre Dame, and UC Berkeley stocking the book, along with Duke, New York University and the Folger Library. At the same time, Dr. Waugaman’s paper has been forwarded to British and American academics with an interest in the Golding translation of *Metamorphoses*.

Key to the scholarship of Waugaman and Jiménez is their insight that Shakespeare revisited his early works as a mature poet and dramatist. Shakespeare was not a plagiarist, as many orthodox experts maintain, nor a frequent

collaborator, as the compilers of the 2017 Oxford University edition of the canon assert. He was a frequent reviser of his own work, often revealed by the topical allusions that populate the plays from different periods of the era, but also to Shakespeare's penchant for amending earlier ideas and language, revisions that are always carefully worked out.

Traditional scholars of the period have recently concurred in this assessment. Professor Richard Dutton in *Shakespeare, Court Dramatist* (Oxford UP, 2016) concludes that:

the multiple states of so many of the [Shakespeare] texts actually offer us significant insights.... That is because, in my view, many of the differences are of Shakespeare's own making, the results of revising his own works. That claim would have seemed unexceptionable to Alexander Pope and other editors of Shakespeare in the 18th century. Since then, however, it has often ranked as heresy in influential editorial circles, where it was long an article of faith that he did not change his texts once he completed them.... Scholars these days are less certain about this. (Preface, vii-viii)

Moreover, a new book by John Kerrigan entitled *Shakespeare's Originality* (Oxford UP 2018), was reviewed in the April 2018 issue of *The New Criterion* by Paul Dean, a British critic, who summed up the professor's case the same way:

Furthermore—I would say crucially—we now recognize that one of the most important Shakespeare sources is Shakespeare himself, who constantly revisited and reworked his previous plays.

This key re-discovery will direct more Shakespeareans to confront this question: how did the traditional Shakespeare revise his own work over time when he had so little time in which to do it? The query leads us to the integrity of the standard Shakespeare chronology, still set between 1590 and 1613, initially proposed by Sir E.K. Chambers in 1930. As Peter Moore noted in a monograph on the Shakespeare chronology, nearly every scholarly authority of the dating issue agrees that Chambers' dates are too late, yet those dates still stand.

This chronology compels Shakespeare to be a frenetic writer, generating two plays a year and thus leaving him no time with which to revise earlier work. And yet the quartos published during Shakespeare's life constantly refer to revised plays. As Mr. Jiménez notes in his book, fifteen quartos of six plays bore such phrases as “newly corrected,” “newly augmented,” “amended” or “enlarged” on their title pages. In her study, *Revising Shakespeare*, Grace Ioppolo concludes that Shakespeare substantially revised all eight plays of the two tetralogies.

It is a miracle to have a self-taught provincial genius become the greatest poet-playwright in the Western World; it is another miracle to have this

person rewrite his own work when he is generating double the standard work output over a 23-year period.

When orthodox scholars of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods acknowledge this contradiction, they will finally see the numerous topical allusions covering a 30-year period which permeate the canon. Why would Shakespeare allude to seriously outdated events, such as the 1572 massacre of Huguenots in Paris (*Macbeth*), or the 1578-79 literary fad of Euphuism (*Love's Labor's Lost*) or the 1580 earthquake in England (*Romeo and Juliet*), or the 1588-89 publication of the Martin Mar-prelate pamphlets (*As You Like It*), when the theater depends on successfully engaging its audiences with the most current events? It is a bedrock principle of theatrical practice that outdated allusions on stage are unable to connect with a general audience's personal memories and, thus, would guarantee commercial failure.

The presence of topical allusions in the canon that were outdated by the 1590s and 1600s represent objective theatrical evidence that Shakespeare had originally written the plays much earlier than the traditional chronology would have us believe. That orthodox experts have refused to investigate this aspect of the historical evidence embedded in the plays demonstrates the intellectual terror that has paralyzed the Shakespeare establishment for four hundred years.

For those who doubt the modern relevance of Shakespeare's political acumen, I recommend reading columnist Kevin Williamson's interpretation of *Coriolanus* for insight into the public behavior of people on social media in his short article, "Vile Garlands," in *National Review* magazine. Go here for the article: <https://www.nationalreview.com/2019/01/twitter-mobs-perils-of-public-life/>

For this issue of *The Oxfordian*, I have chosen two articles to reprint from another source: one from the Spring 2019 issue of *Critical Stages Journal* by Professor of English Luke Prodromou, detailing how and why he became a doubter of the traditional author of the Shakespeare canon, and a second from the Winter 2018-19 issue of the same journal by this editor, showing how an Oxfordian authorship changes the way the plays can be produced to recover the author's original intent for modern audiences.

The Prodromou essay was written in response to the Special Authorship Issue of *Critical Stages*, which demonstrates that the controversial subject of "who wrote Shakespeare?" is still generating genuine debate among academics. The second is my detailed response to the one question posed by every theatre professional who has considered the relevance of the Shakespeare authorship question: how does it change the way I produce the plays? While the textual scholarship of Shakespeare is vital, we need to admit that Shakespeare lives on in the modern world through his dramatic works. Ultimately, he, and they, will live or die on stage.

The Shakespeare Authorship Debate Continued: Uncertainties and Mysteries

by Luke Prodromou

This essay is a response to the fascinating collection of articles on the Shakespeare Authorship Question that appeared in the Winter 2019 issue of the journal *Critical Stages* (critical-stages.org/18/). Read together, those articles not only confirm that there really is a case for reasonable doubt about the Stratford man as the author of the works; they also suggest that pursuing this question can actually be an effective critical tool for a better understanding of those works.

As a graduate of the Shakespeare Institute, Birmingham, I have often wondered, from a scholarly point of view, why the eddies under Clopton Bridge in Stratford have seemed to arouse more curiosity as evidence linking the man from Stratford to the plays and poems of “Shakespeare” than do the growing number of details of a historical or cultural nature, which seem to me more enlightening. Scrutinizing Shakespearean texts for evidence of the author’s possible links to glove-making has consumed more scholarly energy than the abundant indications that our elusive author seems to have actually known Italy and Italian culture at first-hand and Elizabethan court life with an insider’s confidence.

Even Stratfordian scholars have noticed that “the extent and loudness of the documentary silence are startling” (Worden, 2006: 24). Indeed, the challenge of teasing out an explanation for this startling silence has been left to non-Stratfordians like Diana Price (see her volume, excerpted in *CS* 18,

Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography, 2012). This then is my attempt to make a modest contribution to an understanding of the significance of the silence to Shakespeare's unique status as our greatest and yet most elusive writer.

Let me begin by saying a few words about my own discovery of Shakespeare and, subsequently, my own contacts with the authorship controversy. I am a Greek Cypriot by birth, but I attended primary and secondary school in Great Britain, where I was introduced to the plays of Shakespeare by reading *Julius Caesar* at the age of 15. For me, it was an epiphany.

Living in Birmingham at that point, I soon became a regular pilgrim to Stratford, just down the road. I simply wanted to find more of this magic potion. I looked for the magic there and on the Stratford stage, where I would “with a greedy ear devour up the discourse” of the comedies, histories and tragedies. I looked for it in the streets of Stratford itself, and especially along Henley Street and under Clopton Bridge. I still remember the thrill of imagining that the eddies of the river Avon, seen from the bridge, were the same eddies that the young Shakespeare of Stratford gazed at, when he wasn't busy helping his dad in the family glove-making business or studying Ovid for school. Shakespeare himself was my Ovid, transforming life into something rich and strange.



Stratford staging of John Shakespeare's workshop as a glove maker, by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

I also looked for Shakespeare's magic in countless biographies of the poor lad who left Stratford—pursued apparently by accusations of deer-poaching—to

Dr. Luke Prodromou earned his BA from Bristol University in English, an MA from Birmingham University in Shakespeare Studies, a Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language from Leeds University, and a PhD from Nottingham University. His PhD dissertation was published as *English as Lingua Franca: A Corpus-based Analysis* (Continuum, 2010). For many years he taught Shakespeare at the University of Thessaloniki in Greece. He is the author with Lindsay Clandfield of the award-winning *Dealing with Difficulties* and numerous textbooks for students. Currently, he manages literature courses for Spanish teachers on English Literature and Drama and teaches on the MA TESOL at Sheffield University/City College in Thessaloniki. He performs Shakespeare and other texts with the English Language Voice Theatre, an international, collaborative ELT theatre for teachers and students.

make his fortune in London, holding horses outside the theatres until his big break and then taking the London stage by storm with his Marlovian *Henry VI* plays—all this to the chagrin of rival playwrights, university graduates all, envious of this mere actor who could write better than they could.

Soon, the biographies told me, he was writing courtly comedies for exclusive coterie audiences, as well as for the public stage. When the plague struck in the 1590s, he produced brilliant lyric poetry, outdoing even his courtly predecessors such as Sir Philip Sidney. The evidence showed me that he dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* to his theatre-loving patron, the Earl of Southampton, who must have paid him significant sums, and he even wrote a sonnet sequence inspired, most probably, by the same young and beautiful patron.

It all ends, of course with William's death, an event that, strangely, went unremarked, and with his published will and testament, which left absolutely no trace of the great writer's skill and with no evidence of any kind, directly or indirectly, that he had ever owned or even read a book or written as much as a nursery rhyme for his (illiterate) daughters.

Yet despite this last disappointment, I couldn't stop looking for him. I continued my personal pilgrimage by working on a Master of Arts in Shakespeare Studies at the Shakespeare Institute in Birmingham under the tutorial guidance of Professor Stanley Wells and numerous other distinguished Shakespeare scholars. Bliss it was to be at such a prestigious institute, one devoted to the exclusive study of every aspect of the great man's work—but to be doing it there in Warwickshire, less than an hour from the Birthplace, well, that was very heaven.

An Inadequate Biography

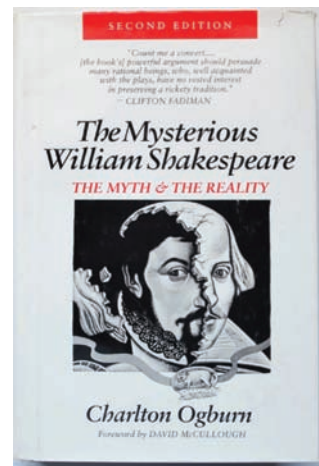
A few years later, with my MA thesis on *Timon of Athens* (by Shakespeare and Middleton!) in hand, I went out into the world with a will to teach the works and life of Shakespeare to future generations. As a lecturer for the British Council and at the University of Thessaloniki in Greece, I taught the Shakespearean rags-to-riches narrative enthusiastically along with the rest of the documentary paraphernalia I had inherited about the man from Stratford.

I must admit that the biographies were particularly boring for my students. They found little of interest in the life and neither did I. Biographies of Shakespeare were all, without exception, potted histories of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages and there was little, if any, light thrown on the link between the man and his work. The specific life-story part was more or less left out, as there wasn't really anything substantial to report or, as in many cases, it was simply made up or imagined—as Stephen Greenblatt admitted when

he wrote his own biography of Shakespeare called *Will in the World* in 2004. The fact is, the creative imagination of a biographer can be much more interesting than the humdrum church records of birth, marriage and death of an Elizabethan author.

Without conviction, I dutifully regurgitated the scraps from such biographies to my students and moved on, with much relief, to the excitement of reading, analyzing and performing the plays. After all, the play's the thing, just as the poem is the thing. Not the life of the writer, be he Shakespeare or T.S. Eliot.

I first started what felt like sacrilegious doubting when I stumbled on Charlton Ogburn's 1984 study, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, in a bookshop while looking for yet another Stratfordian biography to bore myself with. Ogburn's book reignited a curiosity in me for all things Shakespeare. I started to read and even re-read Shakespeariana of all kinds, from both sides of the discussion. Thus, my fascination with the special section of CS 18 on the authorship controversy.



So, the real question for me is: what is lost when we avoid and even demonize research on any topic, especially one as significant as the Shakespeare authorship? Much important research has already been done by a surprising number of fine scholars—including historians and lawyers, professions interested in actually turning up facts—which has thrown light on the gaps and contradictions in the many so-called biographies. Yet this scholarly research is considered somehow taboo by academia. Perhaps we prefer to preserve our scholarly innocence or even our vested professional interests, but at the same time, we must acknowledge that we are failing to follow trails that may be relevant to the origin and meaning of the works we love.

Moreover, traditional Shakespeare scholars, in rejecting even a possible case for reasonable doubt, often engage in extremely tortuous arguments, evasions and distortions to keep a wall of such taboos in place, thus betraying their supposed professional *raison d'être*: scholarly impartiality and the pursuit of truth.

Let me offer a few examples of data that has made me personally think skeptically about the official story, and then try and provide an explanation as to the apparent lack of curiosity about these facts shown by academia. As someone who graduated from the Shakespeare Institute—surely the heart of the Stratfordian academic establishment—I am puzzled by the sheer lack of curiosity on the part of mainstream Shakespeare scholars in the fascinating details thrown up, often serendipitously, by the skeptics.

For example, the man from Stratford never seems to be where we would expect him to be in terms of the historical and cultural implications of the plays and poems; on the other hand, we do see him turning up in places we would not expect to find him were he the man behind these texts. Any evidence we have for the actual existence of the Stratford man as Writer (as opposed to him as Man-of-the-Theatre) always seems to be hedged with both doubts and ambiguities. He is both silent and invisible.

Thus, if it is true, as most Stratfordians say, that the Lord Chamberlain's Men were investigated for performing *Richard II* just before the Earl of Essex's botched *coup* against Queen Elizabeth in 1601, where was Shakespeare the author during these investigations? (See Worden, 2006 for a dissenting voice on whether Shakespeare's play is, in fact, the one referred to in the documentary records.)

And if, as Stanley Wells—the dean of Stratfordian scholars—suggests, Shakespeare is “our first great literary commuter” (Wells 37), what is he doing commuting back and forth to Stratford, managing his property, grain and real estate businesses, when he is supposed to be in London working for a theatre company by writing a very large number of plays in a very short time?

If we take a date in Shakespeare's career at random—say 1596—we find Shakespeare, literally, all over the place. His son Hamnet dies and is buried in Stratford in August; in London, he moves from Bishopsgate to Southwark, and is pursued for 5 shillings in taxes; a writ is issued in Southwark for William and three others to keep the peace; while in Stratford he is making investments and shopping around to buy a new house. At this same time, he is completing the *Sonnets* and is writing several plays (depending on which of the many conflicting chronologies we take, they would include *King John*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Henry IV part 1*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*).

He is also in London pursuing a gentleman's coat of arms at this time which, as Duncan-Jones observes: “is a strange sequence of events...just after the death of the only child who could carry his name” (Duncan-Jones, 2001:91). Shakespeare's busy life in both London and Stratford has always impressed me. But where did he find the *time*?

Another question. In Quarto 1 of *Hamlet* (Q1), Polonius is named “Corambis,” which echoes the family motto of the most powerful man in England: Lord Burghley, William Cecil, the Prime Minister of the day. In other intriguing respects, too, Burghley seems to be the inspiration behind the character of the “rash, intruding fool” who gets stabbed behind the arras. But if this were the case, one would not expect the working-class actor-writer William of Stratford to have dared lampoon Lord Burghley in this way—and to get away with it! So what's going on here? What's “Corambis” doing in Q1?

Question three. One would certainly have expected the writer Shakespeare to be present at his own death in 1616! Yet the passing of the most prolific writer of the age goes by unnoticed: nobody said anything in writing to mark his death. We would expect to find a trace at least, if not clear footprints, of this giant of the English literary Renaissance, in the dead “Shakespeare’s” last will and testament. But in that most personal of documents, he left “not a rack behind.”

What we find in Duncan Jones’s brilliant *Ungentle Shakespeare* is a much different character than what we would expect—a Shakespeare immersed in the Elizabethan/Jacobean underworld and a tight-fisted usurer in partnership with the woman-beater and pimp, George Wilkins. Surely this is not the same man who created Rosalind and Beatrice, the same man who wrote with Ovid, Plutarch, Montaigne and Castiglione on his desk. Where was that Shakespeare?

I really wonder why there aren’t more such questions being asked by University English Departments. Don’t they want to know? And are they not curious about *how* we know what we know? Yes, Stratfordians *have* demonstrated some interest in the authorship question but only to try and refute it or attack it (see Edmondson and Wells, 2013). In a nutshell, they explain the so-called “incongruities” in the official narrative by applying two broad strategies: first, they demonstrate that Shakespeare’s education in the Stratford grammar-school which they assume he attended, without evidence, was perfectly adequate to the task of producing the works we know; second, they attribute Shakespeare’s remarkable achievements simply to “genius.”

Some of their arguments are certainly substantial and I do take many of them seriously, but others are little more than vague and circumstantial. The fact is, Doubters have tried to engage with them many times, in numerous publications (samples are available in *Critical Stages* 16). But these arguments are rarely answered directly and even more rarely with actual evidence.

An Epistemological Puzzle

Let me put some flesh on this epistemological puzzle by referring specifically to one of the articles in *Critical Stages*, the only one in French, “Pourquoi John Florio, alias Shakespeare,” written by the Secretary-General of the International Association of Theatre Critics, Michel Vaïs. In that article, we learn that Florio, the great Elizabethan scholar, teacher and lexicographer, left in his will a considerable treasure of books to William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, one of the dedicatees and sponsors (the other was his brother) of the First Folio (“on apprendà qui il lègue ce trésor: à William Herbert, troisième comte de Pembroke, dédicataire et commanditaire du *First Folio*”).

Certainly, William Herbert is himself well-known and is often seen as a serious candidate for being the so-called Fair Youth of the *Sonnets*: W.H. He was

also the son of Mary Sidney (later the Countess of Pembroke) who was herself the sister of Sir Philip Sidney. Florio's gift of books to Herbert confirms his proximity to the Sidney/Pembroke circle, either as a tutor or as one who sought patronage from the Sidney family by dedicating many of his works to members of the group.

Vaïs tells us further that Lamberto Tassinari, an Italian-Canadian scholar, is now arguing that Florio himself was the man behind the works of Shakespeare. Leaving aside for the moment the whole idea of Florio-as-Shakespeare, let's note in this the appearance of the Sidney circle in the Shakespeare authorship narrative and continue with our puzzle, hoping, as Polonius puts it, by indirections to find directions out.

In a recent interpretation of *Love's Labour's Lost*, a play I have always felt was somehow at the heart of the Shakespeare authorship mystery, H.R. Woudhuysen, (editor of the Arden Shakespeare, 1998) explores the fascinating links between this comedy and the work of Sir Philip Sidney. He refers to Sidney as the "presiding spirit" behind the play and says that it seems to be written "as if Shakespeare were replying to Sidney....and as Coleridge observed ... imitating Sidney's style" (Woudhuysen, 1998:6).

Indeed, a work by Sidney that Woudhuysen feels Shakespeare drew on in writing *Love's Labours Lost*, called *The Lady of May*, was actually unpublished at the time Shakespeare would have needed to consult it and therefore, "Shakespeare could only have read Sidney's text in manuscript." This occurrence of sources or written influences on Shakespeare, which only those who had access to the original manuscripts could have known about, is actually a motif running through the whole Shakespeare puzzle. Shakespeare, in *Love's Labours Lost*, says Woudhuysen, seems to be showing off his skill in turning into drama "the stuff out of which Sidney's life and art were made."

But why would the Stratford man, the hard-nosed businessman and practical man of theatre, choose to write about the life and culture of Sidney and his circle, which would be obscure to anybody but members of that circle? And where would he get such material from (not to mention his ability to obtain detailed information on the Elizabethan and French courts that also appears in *Love's Labours Lost*)? Mainstream criticism says the play is saturated with such stuff. Indeed, where did William of Stratford get it?

Because the official Stratfordian narrative doesn't lend itself to any easy explanation, traditionalists simply ascribe it to the vagaries of a common literary background that Shakespeare must have shared with his fellow writers. Then they move on to trails that can more easily be linked with their man: those eddies under Clopton bridge, the birth and death of a son named Hamnet, the significance of Shakespeare's second-best bed mentioned in the will, and so on. So Woudhuysen, aware of the incongruity, then reminds

us that “Shakespeare did not need to be part of [the Sidney circle] to write about its life” (Woudhuysden, 1998:6).

Indeed reader, “discern’st thou aught in that”? We may discern at least the legitimacy of asking the kind of questions raised by non-Stratfordians regarding the implausibility of some of the traditional biographers.

The next piece in my own authorship puzzle has to do with the work of an unorthodox Stratfordian named Penny McCarthy. In her fascinating *Pseudonymous Shakespeare*, she does something few Stratfordian analysts have ever done—she puts forward, in an empirically-driven manner, an explanation for where William of Stratford might have gotten his inside knowledge of the court, and a plausible, if not wholly convincing, rationale for why Shakespeare might have chosen subject matter inspired by the Sidney circle and written it in a style which may be a response to Sidney’s work.

McCarthy’s rich and complex data can’t easily be bound in a nutshell, but the core of her book provides intriguing “evidence” for the Stratford man’s back-story, his juvenilia and “lost years.” In an ingenious reading of various pseudonymous writings, McCarthy believes she has located the young poet in the Sidney circle where, she hypothesizes, he was educated not only as a poet but in the Italian language and the life of the court. McCarthy sensibly sees the culture of the Elizabethan court not only in the milieu of the monarch in London but in the houses of great lords such as Sidney to whose faction, she argues, young Shakespeare might have belonged (McCarthy, 2006: 22-23).

If McCarthy’s hypothesis could be proven correct, it would go a long way toward explaining the gaps and inconsistencies in the work of traditional Shakespeare biography and would provide support for Walt Whitman’s intuition that the plays are shaped by the world view not of a working man from Stratford but by “the medieval aristocracy” and the many “wolfish earls” jockeying for power throughout Elizabeth’s reign.

In this spirit of untrammelled and serendipitous searching for meaning, let me add one more piece to my Shakespearean puzzle, this time from the anti-Stratfordian side of the wall. This item is more outlandish than the rest but has fascinating points in common with the previous pieces. Could a woman have written Shakespeare?

The scholar Robin Williams in her study, *Sweet Swan of Avon*, wrote one of the most eccentric books in the whole authorship saga. In her 300-page analysis, she argues that the works of “Shakespeare” were actually written by a woman. This is the kind of claim that the orthodox find easy to dismiss and ridicule. Williams’s claim, however, may look less ridiculous when that “woman-as-Shakespeare” turns out to be the aforementioned Mary Sidney Herbert,

Countess of Pembroke. The Sidneys and the Herberts do indeed seem to be constantly appearing in the Shakespeare story, whether in employing John Florio, or in the writing of *Love's Labour's Lost* and the *Sonnets* or with the publication of the First Folio.



In traditional biographies, Mary Sidney always has a walk-on part. She is also mentioned as the author of a letter in which she refers to meeting “the man Shakespeare.” If this letter ever existed, then it is one of the few items of written evidence from contemporary sources that indicates that anyone had ever met the writer or actor in the flesh. In this (sadly, lost) letter, Mary is said to have written to her son (Philip Herbert, later Earl of Montgomery and dedicatee of the First Folio) telling him that “the man Shakespeare” was visiting the Pembroke family at their country house in Wilton on the occasion of a performance of *As You Like It* to entertain King James.

Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke; (1561–1621) by Nicholas Hilliard.

The Need for Cultural Context

My point here is not to prove or disprove the existence of the letter or even to argue the merits of Mary Sidney as the author of Shakespeare’s plays and poems. It is to underline the serendipitous light that can be cast not only on the life of our elusive author, but on the rich cultural context which seems to have shaped the works. In addition, Mary Sidney, like several alternative candidates for the authorship, always seems to be where you would expect Shakespeare to be, whereas William of Stratford is always, like Eliot’s Macavity the cat, disappearing from the scene of the crime, leaving no trace behind.

Mary Sidney, though, like some of the other alternative candidates for the authorship, is often, directly or indirectly, at the scene of the plays’ and poems’ matrix of references: reading the right books, knowing the right people, involved in the events that shape the texts. So many of Shakespeare’s sources are on her bookshelf or that of her brother Sir Philip, texts which, we are often told, “Shakespeare” would have had to have read in manuscript. Indeed, many were dedicated to her or her brother (Williams, 2006: 97-113). Her friends, relatives and protégés actually sound like a roll-call of the characters who appear in conventional Stratfordian biographies: Philip Sidney himself, William Herbert and his brother Philip, Essex and Leicester, John Davis of Hereford, Samuel Daniel, Arthur Golding, John Dee...the list goes on.

Let me round off my visit to the Sidneys at their Wilton home with a final example of this pattern of coincidences from Williams' *Sweet Swan of Avon*. Here are Hamlet's memories of Yorick, the court jester:

I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? Your gambols? Your songs? Your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? (*Hamlet*, V.i)

If Yorick, as many Stratfordians suggest, was inspired by the real-life Richard Tarlton, clown of the Queen's Men and servant of the Earl of Leicester (Mary Herbert's uncle), then we find this amazing lady once again, in the right place at the right time, in the great houses of the aristocracy, watching plays or roaring with laughter as the court jester worked his magic.

What all this means is not that I am convinced that Mary Sidney wrote all or indeed any part of Shakespeare's work; I am an agnostic in these matters. I do, however, believe, that all the writings on the authorship question, especially those that try to base their hypothesis on data from the historical and cultural record of the times, throw light, often inadvertently, on the circumstances which seem, by general consensus, to have shaped the works.

That is, while I am not convinced we have yet really found the true author of Shakespeare's plays, I do find the milieu in which these alternative candidates lived often contains uncanny echoes of the plays and poems which need to be explored further by scholars of the period.

What these many pieces of the puzzle I have proposed here have in common is certainly the shaping influence of an aristocratic coterie on the works of the great author.

This is not a new viewpoint: the anti-Stratfordian argument has, since Thomas Looney's *Shakespeare Identified*, probably even earlier with the Baconian tradition, located the solution to the mystery of the authorship in the Elizabethan court. In this respect, the anti-Stratfordians, the doubters, have provided a service to all lovers of Shakespeare's works, irrespective of which side of the fence they sit. McCarthy, writing from a mainstream scholarly position, has the generosity to acknowledge that the authorship skeptics are certainly asking some of the right questions. As she put it:

I think their doubts about the consensus story—doubts about Shakespeare's education, knowledge of things Italian and sympathy with the aristocratic viewpoint—were justified (McCarthy, 2006:226).

This open-mindedness seems to me to be very much in the spirit of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition's online Declaration of Reasonable Doubt that many thousands have already signed. It is arguably the best way forward for confirming or contradicting the traditional attribution of authorship. Beyond the debate surrounding the identity of the author, which many people, scholarly and otherwise, say doesn't really matter—"the play's the thing"—I feel the exploration of the puzzle, however "flat-earthish" it might seem at times—helps us to throw light on the actual contexts in which the plays were written and thus, potentially, can increase our knowledge of the plays themselves and the historical, personal and cultural matrix in which they were written.

Scholarly Engagement

I would like here to go on to explore something more arcane—what I will call the scholarly deficit in this area—that strange lack of curiosity in academic circles about the evident mismatch between the man from Stratford and the works themselves. I believe it is this lack of scholarly engagement with our greatest literary puzzle which most directly leads to a tendency to distort the little data we have about the author.

I am sure that many scholars of the period are familiar with Robert Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* (1592), a modest work which commands almost universal agreement now that William of Stratford (and not say, the actors Richard Burbage or Edward Alleyn) was in fact the "upstart crow" accused of plagiarism, theft and taking advantage of playwrights through moneylending practices. But the follow-up text by one Henry Chettle, *Kind-Hearts Dream* (1592), has provoked contradictory reactions from establishment and independent scholars alike.

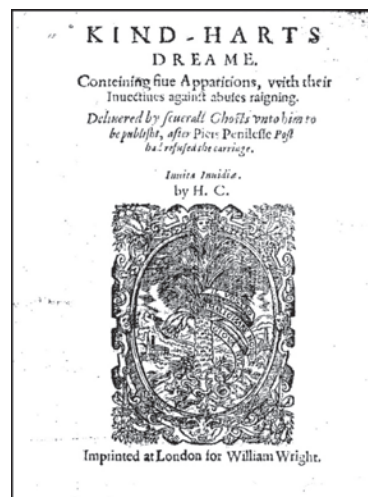
The question here is did Chettle apologize to Shakespeare following Greene's attack on him? The answer to this has far-reaching implications for the whole authorship question and for academia's stance on this issue. Greene's initial accusations show a Shakespeare perfectly consistent with Duncan-Jones's "ungentle" portrait: a plagiarist and usurer; a snapper-up, for paltry sums, of other people's plays, which he would revise and then appropriate for himself. Apparently, he was the person who would submit these texts—the property of the Lord Chamberlain's Men—to the Stationer's Register.

This would certainly explain why so many plays, Shakespearean and non-Shakespearean, appeared at the time with his name on the cover. It is a picture of the Stratford man as theatre manager and playbroker and it is a portrait clearly painted by scholar Diana Price in *Critical Stages* 18.

In looking at Greene's slanderous accusations and Chettle's so-called apology, glaring inconsistencies begin to appear. In order for readers to judge this controversy for themselves, we need to recall that Greene warns three playwrights about the actor-writer-usurer-playbroker—in a word, this con-man—who is referred to as “the upstart crow...beautified with our feathers.” Greene tells these three fellow playwrights to avoid this “Shake-scene” like the plague. He says specifically:

there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tiger's heart wrapped in a Players hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Iohannes factotum, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. O that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses: & let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions. I know the best husband of you all will never prove an Usurer, and the kindest of them all will never seek you a kind nurse: yet whilst you may, seek you better Masters; for it is pity men of such rare wits, should be subject to the pleasure of such rude grooms.

There is near-universal consensus that in this attack, Greene made the first written reference to William of Stratford, now apparently a London man of the theatre. The problem is with the conventional Stratfordian claim that, in the same year, 1592, Henry Chettle, who was involved in some way in the publication of Greene's pamphlet—perhaps even as its author—takes the opportunity in his *Kind Heart's Dream* to apologize to Shakespeare and to the Stratford man's supporters. These latter include a number of important people such as aristocrats and members of the Privy Council. In this debate is actually born the “tradition” that Shakespeare was a polite, gentle man of great literary talent, with friends in high places who was simply being maligned by jealous rivals, the University-educated playwrights like Greene himself and wits such as Nashe, Marlowe and Peele (often identified as the three playwrights Greene was writing to).



Title page of Kind Hearts Dream by Henry Chettle.

But, contrary to orthodox scholarship, even a cursory reading of the original makes it clear that Chettle was not apologizing to Shakespeare at all but to two of the three playwrights to whom Greene's pamphlet was addressed.

Even Jonathan Bate, another leading Stratfordian scholar, identifies the traditional misreading of the text:

Chettle says that those who have taken offence are one or two of the playwrights to whom Greene's remarks were addressed and Shakespeare was not one of those (Bate: 2008).

Bate argues the apology was to Peele, not to Shakespeare. To confirm what Bate says, I quote some of Chettle's text:

About three months since died M. Robert Greene, leaving many papers in sundry booksellers' hands, among other *his Groatworth of Wit*, in which a letter written to divers play-makers is offensively by one or two of them taken, and because on the dead they cannot be avenged, they willfully forge in their conceits a living author....With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted, and with one of them I care not if I never be. The other, whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that, as I have moderated the heat of living writers and might have used my own discretion (especially in such a case, the author being dead), that I did not. I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanor no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes. Besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art.

I assume the reader has not found any reference to the upstart crow and can only see references to the playwrights addressed by Greene. Yet from the beginning of the Shakespeare biographical industry to the present day, biographers continue to misrepresent what Chettle says to perpetuate the myth that Shakespeare was not only an outstanding writer but one who had a reputation for being civil, and cultivated, of impeccable credentials, whom influential aristocratic and government figures rushed to defend when he was accused (perhaps unfairly) of being a con-man.

An early believer in the non-existent apology was the prolific Shakespeare scholar, F.E. Halliday:

There had been numerous appreciative references to "friendly Shakespeare" and his work since the time of Henry Chettle's apology for Greene's attack at the beginning of his career (Halliday, 1957: 1).

From a book putting forward the case for Shakespeare and aiming to "end the authorship question":

Chettle wrote an apology...the two playwrights likely to take offense would have been Marlowe and Shakespeare—Chettle has had a

courteous conversation with the second (Shakespeare)...the phrase “quality he professes” which was often attached to actors identifies the polite second actor as Shakespeare...perhaps Shakespeare was nettled by the charge of usury which is why Chettle certifies his uprightness of dealing and his honesty... (McCrea 2005: 37-38).

From the otherwise totally reliable linguist and modern encyclopedist, David Crystal:

Chettle...apologizes for not moderating the attack on Shakespeare and adds a unique character note of his own: civil demeanor, divers of worship, uprightness of dealing, honesty, facetious writing that approves his art... (Crystal and Crystal, 2005: 19).

From the Stratford Birthplace Trust:

Chettle apologized... “divers of worship” (noblemen) called on Chettle and demanded an explanation for the “scurrilous” charges against Shakespeare...they can only have been noblemen from either the Privy Council or Cecil House or from Southampton himself (Weiss, 2007: 156-157).

From the doyen of Stratfordian scholars and my teacher at the Shakespeare Institute, Stanley Wells:

Chettle published *Kind Heart's Dream* with a preface in which he offered an apology for not having ... toned down the criticism (Wells, 2013: 73).

Most worrying perhaps of all, is the entry in the online *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

Chettle prepared for posthumous publication Greene's *Groats-Worth of Wit* (1592), with its reference to Shakespeare as an “upstart Crow,” but offered Shakespeare compliments and an olive branch in his own *Kind-Hearts Dream* (1592).

I could go on adding examples of the pretty obvious misreading of Chettle adopted by most traditional biographers (e.g. Bryson, 2007:84; Ellis 2012: 5-6). The point is that the error has passed into Shakespearean mythology and has shaped the way the world sees the greatest writer in the English language. The fraud is transformed into a budding Bard. The scholarly *faux pas* is, therefore, a wake-up call to the consequences of failing to do our jobs properly as academics and researchers. The truth is obscured and the truth matters.

One of the most highly-regarded of Shakespeare biographers, the restrained and scholarly Park Honan, is so carried away by the misreading of Chettle

that he writes with such a careless, unempirical, abandon that, if he were a first-year student of English, his paper would be covered in red marks, but Honan gets away with it because he is a reputable scholar. Honan paints a detailed picture of the man Shakespeare as if he knew him personally:

an agreeable, cautious person; not eccentric, picturesque or attention-seeking after rehearsals...modest and unpretentious...he believed in stability...he had a tendency to agree with the views of James I... he was characterized by emotional conservatism...he coveted the normalcy of being a group-member... (Honan: 1999).

It is from standard biographies such as Honan's that we have inherited the image of Shakespeare as a gentle, sweet, mild-mannered genius who was favored by important establishment figures. But the lack of data on the life of Shakespeare the writer, and the mismatch between the little we know about the life of the Stratford man in relation to the brilliant works, has shaped in important ways how we see the nature of his literary skills and even the nature of literary genius itself.

The Nature of Genius

The fact is, when Stratfordians are confronted with the incongruity between the life of the Stratford man and the words on the page, the response is usually, "well, that's the nature of genius." The roots of this view of genius as *immanent* rather than *empirical*—or based on experience—can be found in Shakespeare's contemporaries Jonson and Beaumont, for example; but they reach fruition in the Romantic movement, which has shaped in significant ways how we see not only Shakespeare's genius but also the artist and the role of the imagination.

Beginning with Jonson's "small Latin and less Greek" and Beaumont's describing Shakespeare as writing "by the dim light of Nature," we have the seeds of a tradition which sees Shakespeare as a gifted but relatively unsophisticated writer, of limited education, who wrote simply through inspiration and intuition. There is no sense, in this particular view of writing, of the processing and transformation of lived experience, because we simply do not have much of that experience to go by—and what little we do have bears hardly any relation to the works themselves—excepting the eddies-under-Clopton Bridge approach.

This disconnect between experience and inspiration became a source of intellectual significance for Romantics such as Coleridge and Hazlitt who, in turn, influenced Keats who, in turn, influenced us. I would argue that the idea of Shakespeare's so-called genius—a view which has dominated our thinking for the last two centuries—is inseparable from the significantly

incomplete view we have of who the man actually was. The Romantics tried to make sense of his achievement and they tried to integrate it with their own world-view.

As we know, the Romantic literary movement as spearheaded by Coleridge and Wordsworth, challenged the empirical approach to the mind and prioritized instead the power of nature and the inherent capacities of the imagination. Coleridge, in fact, argued for the importance of perception over facts. He saw the imagination as the sole sovereign creative power, a gift of nature, and he felt it was best illustrated in the impersonal genius of Shakespeare:

it is easy to clothe imaginary beings with our own thoughts and feelings...but to send ourselves out of ourselves to think ourselves into the thoughts and feelings of beings in circumstances wholly and strangely different from our own...who has achieved it? Perhaps only Shakespeare.(Coleridge, quoted in Holmes, 2005: 326)

Hazlitt echoes Coleridge in seeing Shakespeare as a chameleon—and an invisible one at that—and develops further the idea of Shakespeare as some sort of exemplar of universality, a being oddly detached from the real world.

He was nothing...the great distinction of Shakespeare's genius was its virtually including the genius of all the great men of his age...the peculiarity of Shakespeare's mind was that it contained a universe of thought and feeling (Hazlitt, 1970: 273).

Shakespeare, says Hazlitt, was Everyman. Someone without an ego, “the least egotist that it was possible to be.”

John Keats's theory of the creative imagination is also consistent with and nurtured by the view of the author as an impersonal force of nature who obliterates all individuality as he or she becomes the people, the circumstances and natural phenomena of their poetry.

What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth...whether it existed before or not (Keats, quoted in Roe, 2012, 186).

Othello, Lear or Viola, of course, “did not exist before” in the life of the Stratford man, argues Keats, but only in the imagination of the poet who created them. Shakespeare's imagination is, therefore, like “Adam's dream—he awoke and found it truth.”

Keats says:

Shakespeare was “capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason...with a great poet

the sense of beauty obliterates all consideration...the poetical character has no self..." (Keats in Roe, 2012: 201)

My argument is that Shakespeare's mysterious invisibility was not only consistent with the view of inspiration expounded by Coleridge, Hazlitt and Keats, but actually helped to shape their understanding of *their own genius*. It, in turn, helped to shape our modern perception of Shakespeare. Indeed, the poetic text as something distinct and apart from the life of the author became a fundamental principle in the development of Practical Criticism in the 20th century, which says literary criticism is the search for universal human values through a careful scrutiny of *only the words on the page*.

For all intents and purposes, my own B.A. in English at Bristol certainly had as its working paradigm such practical criticism. This actively discouraged any resort to external biographical or historical knowledge in making sense of the text. We were not to confuse the poem with its origins by referring to personal, biographical information. This was particularly so with Shakespeare because of the mismatch between the man and the work. Any sort of biographical approach would, indeed, have been not only confusing but hopelessly unproductive.

However, things are different now. After post-modernism, our options for exploring meaning have become multiple and hybrid, admitting a kind of historical approach, though the place of biography is still considered largely taboo in the shaping of discourse. But at the end of the day, the view of Shakespeare as universal genius, someone standing aloof from the politics of his time—a being who gave us our view of what it means to be human for all time—has to be examined, even politically.

...the Right has tended to maintain that Shakespeare was above political commitment, that he subscribed only to timeless truths...truths which conservatives will always recognize... (Worden, 2006: 27).

In contrast to Sidney, Jonson or Milton—whom we comfortably read in terms of the beliefs and concerns of their time and place, and how their personal experiences shaped their engagement with those concerns—we seem to think that with Shakespeare it is perfectly natural to see him as a universal Everyman, everywhere and nowhere at once, but whose personal experience is irrelevant to his work.

This restricted view of Shakespeare's unique status as a myriad-minded impersonal genius has clearly shaped the very way we read creative texts. T.S. Eliot argued this very powerfully:

the man and the poet...are two different entities. The poet has no personality of his own....The experiences or impressions which are

obviously autobiographical may be of great interest to the writer himself, but not to his readers.
(Eliot, 1920: Tradition and the Individual Talent)

Joyce, too, has suggested that:

The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.
(Joyce, 1916: *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*)

I have tried to show that the critical thread that runs from Jonson to Joyce has its roots in our relative ignorance of who Shakespeare was. His genius seems embedded in his silence and invisibility. In this respect, I think the Shakespeare Authorship Question has certainly enhanced our way of seeing Shakespeare. For this reason alone, such investigations are valuable. By trying to place the author of the Shakespearean plays and poems in the contexts and currents of his times, I think we enrich our understanding and appreciation of the content of these works on multiple levels.

Most importantly, our view of the nature of his creative genius would shift from the Romantic-cum-modernist view of the impersonal, disembodied genius, conjuring characters and situations out of thin air, to one where creativity, at least to a significant degree, is a process of transforming lived experience. We would, in short, be challenging the tradition that sees Shakespeare as “detached from the squabbles of his time” (Shell, 2019: 11) and seeing him, instead, as engaging critically with the political and religious debates that so pre-occupied his contemporaries.

Today, 50 years after first looking into Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, I still find the works of the Bard—indeed whoever they were—more miraculous than ever. As for the man from Stratford, I think he may or may not have been responsible for the 37 or more plays attributed to him. In this area, I would call myself an authorship skeptic or agnostic. I am still curious to know why William of Stratford died with no contemporary mentioning his death in writing and why he himself, in his last will and testament, did not refer, in any way whatsoever, directly or indirectly, to his writing.

As a researcher who was trained to collect and examine data critically, I do feel I have an academic obligation to ask questions: I know one thing, said Socrates, and that is that I know nothing. Thus, I think I owe it to the writer who has been a source of infinite delight in all we see around us to be curious and critical about his works and what shaped them.

That said, let me note that I have never been concerned about Shakespeare's social class—whatever it was and whoever he was. If he was from the working classes, fine. I do not believe that only aristocrats can write like angels! I would be perfectly happy if the traditional rags-to-riches narrative did prevail beyond reasonable doubt (and thus added possibilities to my own modest roots). Yet, with the Stratford man, there is this strange, persistent non-alignment between the life and the work.

At the end of the day, sheer human curiosity makes us want to know more about the authors of our favorite texts. Like Auden, I really would like to know “what kind of guy inhabits” Shakespeare's poetics.

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Why Was Edward de Vere Defamed on Stage—and His Death Unnoticed?

by Katherine Chiljan

Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, died on June 24, 1604. To our knowledge, there was neither public recognition of his death nor notice made in personal letters or diaries. His funeral, if one occurred, went unremarked. Putting aside his greatness as the poet-playwright “William Shakespeare,” his pen name, Oxford was one of the most senior nobles in the land and the Lord Great Chamberlain of England. During his life, numerous authors dedicated 27 books on diverse subjects to Oxford; of these authors, seven were still alive at the time of his death,¹ including John Lyly and Anthony Munday, his former secretaries who were also dramatists. Moreover, despite the various scandals that touched him, Oxford remained an important courtier throughout his life: Queen Elizabeth granted him a £1,000 annuity in 1586 for no stated reason—an extraordinary gesture for the frugal monarch—and King James continued this annuity after he ascended the throne in 1603. Why, then, the silence after Oxford had died?

Could the answer be *because* he was a poet and playwright? Although such activity was considered a *déclassé* or even fantastical hobby for a nobleman, recognition *after death* would have been socially acceptable. For example, the courtier poet Sir Philip Sidney (d. 1586) had no creative works published in his lifetime, but his pastoral novel, *Arcadia*, was published four years after his death, with Sidney’s full name on the title page. Three years after that, Sidney’s sister, the Countess of Pembroke, published her own version of it.

Some of Oxford/Shakespeare's plays were printed while he was alive, but either no author was named or they featured the pen name; these early editions, however, were most likely pirated, as evidenced by the imperfect to bad condition of the texts.² Conversely, his narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*, were most certainly authorized, as each work had clean texts and featured a dedication letter signed by the great author, albeit with the pen name.

Nearly 20 years after his death, Oxford was still not credited for his plays: the First Folio (1623), which featured 36 Shakespeare plays, was printed *without* Oxford's real name (only his pen name), and included a portrait of the author that was not a depiction of him. This, and the mention of "Avon" and "Stratford monument" in the preface, served to connect the great author with William Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon. The Folio was dedicated to Oxford's son-in-law, Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, and his brother, William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, the apparent sponsors of the publication. It appears that they wished to permanently divorce Oxford's name from his life's work. It may be significant that none of Oxford's grandsons or great-grandsons were named "Edward"—only his illegitimate son by Anne Vavasour.

The lack of memorials about Oxford's death near the time of its occurrence, in print or in manuscript, implies that he was either generally disliked or there was a fear to do so. It appears that both points contributed to this universal silence.

The most pervasive type of fear is political fear; this certainly applied to Shakespeare and can be demonstrated. For seven consecutive years, from 1593 to 1600, Shakespeare's poems and plays were published; this steady stream abruptly stopped in 1601, the year of the Essex Rebellion (February 8). Convicted of treason, the Earl of Essex was beheaded, and his co-conspirator, the 3rd Earl of Southampton, was imprisoned in the Tower of London after being sentenced to death. Shakespeare's association with Southampton was well known: he had dedicated two poems to him, and some believed he was the Fair Youth of Shakespeare's sonnets, which were circulating in manuscript prior to the rebellion. In addition, Essex's supporters had sponsored a

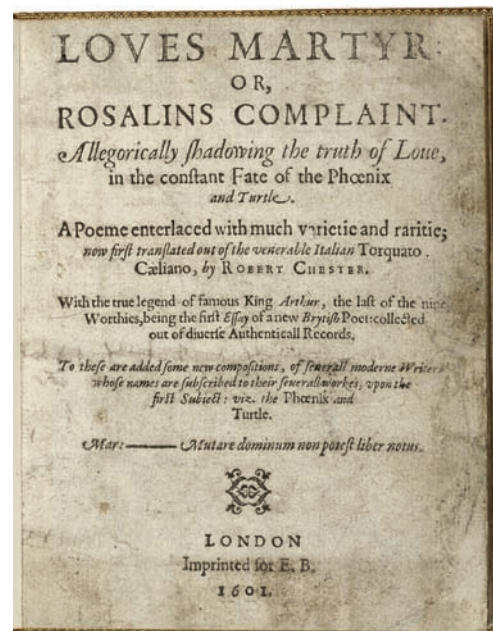
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performance of Shakespeare's drama *Richard II* on the eve of the rebellion; the play was chosen precisely because it depicted the deposition of a monarch, apparently intended for Queen Elizabeth. It is no wonder publishers avoided printing Shakespeare that year. It is also notable that three books were dedicated to the Earl of Oxford in 1599, but none thereafter.

Another political reason for silence at Oxford/Shakespeare's death was his view of the succession: Oxford's candidate was not King James of Scotland, who eventually succeeded Queen Elizabeth. Only days before the queen's decease, the Earl of Lincoln met a "great nobleman" who resided in Hackney, i.e., Oxford, who discussed the possibility of Lord Hastings as the successor. The great nobleman "also inveighed much against the nation of the Scots," said Lincoln.³ This incident, however, occurred at a private party, so how could the public at large know that Oxford/Shakespeare did not initially support the King of Scotland for the English throne? Answer: his verses in *Love's Martyr* (1601), the one exception to the Shakespeare suppression of 1601.

Love's Martyr (1601)

Written by Robert Chester, *Love's Martyr: or, Rosalins complaint*, was a poetical allegory about Queen Elizabeth and the succession; it was published in 1601. The queen, supposedly childless, was then in her late sixties, yet she adamantly refused to name or even discuss her successor. Chester's story is about the Phoenix—a recognized symbol of Queen Elizabeth employed throughout her reign—and her quest to find a mate and produce offspring. The traditional phoenix legend—a bird of extraordinary beauty that renews itself by self-immolation every 500 years—had nothing to do with such a quest. The symbolism applying to Queen Elizabeth, therefore, was unmistakable and obvious.



In the verse below, Chester reports that the Phoenix was successful; she paired with a turtle dove and "Another princely *Phoenix*" was born.

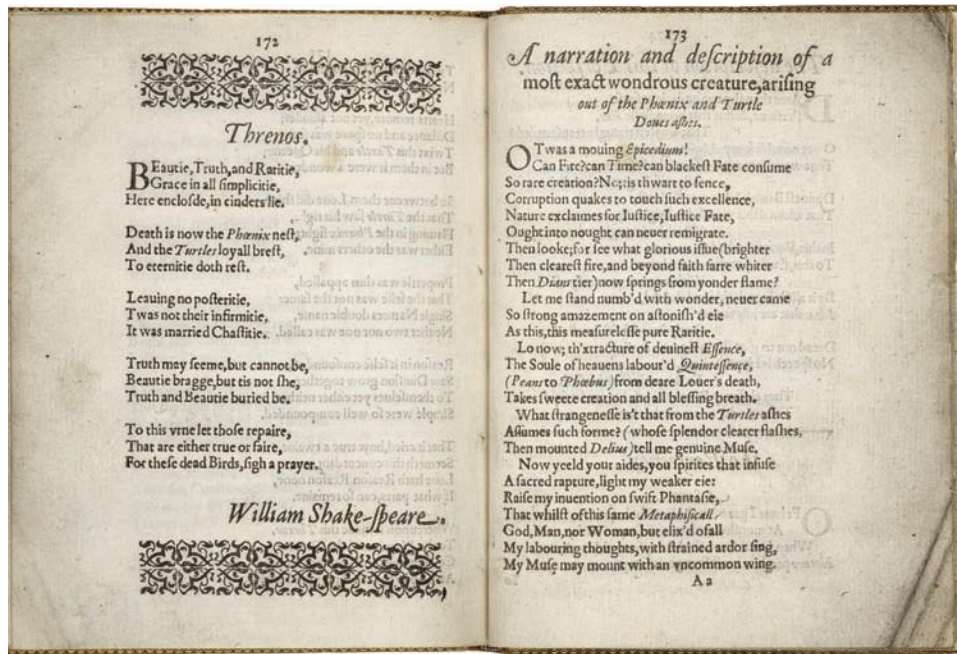
From the sweet fire of perfumed wood,
Another princely *Phoenix* upright stood:

Whose feathers purified did yield more light,
 Than her late burned mother out of sight,
 And in her heart rests a perpetual love,
 Sprung from the bosom of the *Turtle-Dove*.
Long may the new uprising bird increase...
 [sig. S3 verso, or p. 118] (underlines added)

In contemporary symbolism, a prince of the Phoenix would translate as “a son of Queen Elizabeth.” Chester referred to the child as “her,” apparently extending the concept of a female phoenix to the child. Chester also may have wanted to obscure the child’s identity, just as he tried to detach himself from his own work by calling *Love’s Martyr* a translation of “the venerable Italian *Torquato Caeliano*”—an author who never existed.

Whether or not Chester’s belief was actually true—that the queen did have a living child that could succeed her—Chester believed it. Oxford/Shakespeare evidently believed it too, as seen in his poems in *Love’s Martyr*, which appeared in the book’s second section, *Diverse Poetical Essays on the former Subject; viz: the Turtle and Phoenix*.

Oxford/Shakespeare’s first poem described the Phoenix’s funeral, and the love between the turtle dove and the Phoenix, described as “his Queen.” The second poem, titled “Threnos” (lamentation), referred to the Phoenix as “Beauty,” the turtle dove as “Truth,” and a third person as “Rarity.”



Threnos.

Beauty, Truth, and Rarity,
 Grace in all simplicity,
 Here enclos'd, in cinders lie.
 Death is now the *Phoenix* nest,
 And the *Turtle*'s loyal breast,
 To eternity doth rest.
 Leaving no posterity....
 'Twas not their infirmity,
 It was married Chastity.
 Truth may seem, but cannot be,
 Beauty brag, but 'tis not she,
 Truth and Beauty buried be...
 [sig. Z4 verso, or p. 172]

"Beauty" and "Beauty's Rose" were words directly applied to Queen Elizabeth by other authors multiple times;⁴ "Truth" was likely meant to represent Oxford, as his surname, Vere, means "truly" in Latin; and "Rarity" is their supposed child ("Another princely *Phoenix*," in Chester's words). "Beauty, Truth, and Rarity" were characterized in line 2 as "Grace in all simplicity." Grace denotes high nobility and royalty.

Oxford/Shakespeare's two verses in *Love's Martyr* were an imagined scenario after Queen Elizabeth's death should she not accept her child as successor. In his view, "Beauty, Truth, and Rarity" will lie "in cinders," and Phoenix/Queen Elizabeth will leave "no posterity...." These verses have bewildered commentators for centuries due to their wholesale acceptance of the Tudor propaganda that Elizabeth I was truly a "Virgin Queen."

With these verses in mind, one can see that Beauty/Queen Elizabeth also appeared in Shakespeare's sonnets, and in the same context. The first two lines of Sonnet 1 entreat the Fair Youth to have children, "That thereby beauty's *Rose* might never die": the Fair Youth is the "Rose" of "beauty"/Queen Elizabeth, her supposed royal child.⁵ In Sonnet 101, "truth and beauty" on the Fair Youth "depends," and in Sonnet 14, "truth and beauty shall together thrive" should the Fair Youth have children, otherwise his "end" will be "Truth and Beauty's doom and date." Oxford/Shakespeare's appeal to the Fair Youth to marry and sire children, therefore, was an appeal for the survival of the Tudor dynasty. Similarly, Chester in *Love's Martyr* hoped for the "increase" of the "new uprising bird" (as cited above).

Ben Jonson, George Chapman and John Marston also contributed poems to *Diverse Poetical Essays* on the same theme, that the Phoenix was a woman,

i.e., Queen Elizabeth, that the turtle dove was a man, and that they produced a child. One unsigned verse declared it no “fable”:

The Phoenix Analyz’d.

Now, after all, let no man
Receive it for a Fable,
If a *Bird* so amiable,
Do turn into a Woman.

Or (by our *Turtle’s* Augur)
That Nature’s fairest Creature,
Prove of his *Mistress* Feature,
But a bare *Type* and *Figure*.
[sig. Bb1 verso, or p. 182] (underlines added)

“*Nature’s fairest Creature*”—the Phoenix and turtle dove’s child—evidently alluded to the Fair Youth of Shakespeare’s sonnets, who was male. (Unlike Chester, none of the poets in *Diverse Poetical Essays* applied a masculine or feminine pronoun to the new “princely *Phoenix*” in their verses.) This phrase was obviously taken from Shakespeare’s Sonnet 1, line 1, which addressed the Fair Youth: “From fairest creatures we desire increase....”

All contributors to *Love’s Martyr* thus advertised their position on the succession. Surprisingly, none of them were prosecuted for touching upon this taboo topic—perhaps Oxford’s high rank and closeness with the queen served as protection. *Love’s Martyr*, however, was evidently suppressed⁶ and possibly inspired a parliamentary bill that year “prohibiting the writing and publishing of books about the title to the crown of this realm....” (Hume 65).

King James was definitely not Elizabeth’s child, but he succeeded her after her death in March 1603. Why would anyone want to acknowledge Oxford/Shakespeare’s death the following year, or praise him for his outstanding contribution to literature, knowing that he did not originally support the new monarch, as displayed in *Love’s Martyr*? Oxford/Shakespeare’s circulating sonnets, which lauded the Fair Youth in royal terms, further exposed his mind about the succession. Fifteen months into James’s English reign, praise of Oxford/Shakespeare, therefore, could have been perceived as treasonous.

Soon after Elizabeth’s death, however, Oxford’s name appeared on a printed document, with other highly positioned men, that proclaimed King James of Scotland as her successor.⁷ James showed Oxford favor by extending Elizabeth’s £1000 annuity to him and by allowing him to reclaim custody of lands previously taken by the Crown (Anderson 353), but this was not common knowledge. Evidently the fact that Oxford, whom the literary world knew was Shakespeare, did not *initially* support James, stuck. Adding to this,

Oxford was defamed before and shortly after his death through an important medium of the age, the public theater.

Satiro-mastix: The Untrussing of the Humorous Poet (1601)

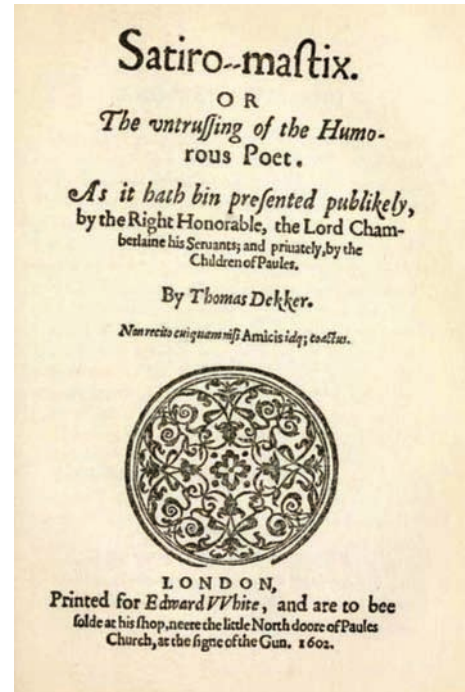
The first of two plays that defamed Oxford/Shakespeare was *Satiro-mastix, The Untrussing of the Humorous Poet*, by Thomas Dekker. It was written and performed in 1601, the same year as *Love's Martyr*. Dekker's comedy was mostly the skewering of Ben Jonson, the "Humorous Poet" of the title;⁸ it was his revenge for Jonson's play *Poetaster or The Arraignment*, in which Dekker and another writer, John Marston, were put on trial through the characters Demetrius and Crispinus. Dekker employed these same names in *Satiro-mastix*, ensuring audience understanding that it was his retort to Jonson's play.

In *Satiro-mastix*, Jonson—via his character, Horace—is condemned for his satirical poetry ("Satiro-mastix" means hostility to satirists). His "coat" of satire is "untrussed" (removed) and a wreath of "stinging nettles" is put on his head "to Crown his stinging wit." This is Horace's "reward" for believing that all poets are "Poet-Apes"—imitators of poets—except for him. (Horace had used this term to describe Crispinus and Demetrius in *Poetaster*).

Immediately after the "Poet-Apes" line, Crispinus turns to King William Rufus, who was presiding over the trial. The king, in the following passage, is called "Learning's true Maecenas" (a famous patron in the time of Augustus Caesar), "Poesy's king," and "sweet-William":

CRISPINUS

That fearful wreath [of nettles], this honor is your [Horace/Jonson's] due,
All Poets shall be Poet-Apes but you;
 Thanks (*Learning's true Maecenas, Poesy's king*)
 [i.e., King William Rufus]
 Thanks for that gracious ear, which you have lent,
 To this most tedious, most rude argument.



Why Was Edward de Vere Defamed on Stage—and His Death Unnoticed?

KING WILLIAM RUFUS

Our spirits have well been feasted; he whose pen [i.e., Horace/Jonson's]
Draws both corrupt, and clear blood from all men:
(Careless what vein he pricks) let him not rave,
When his own sides are struck, blows, blows do crave.

CAPTAIN TUCCA

Kings-truce, my noble Herb-a-grace; my Princely sweet-William...
[5.2; sigs. M1 verso-M2, STC 6521] (underlines added)

Unlike the historical King William Rufus,⁹ son of William the Conqueror, the play's King William Rufus was evidently a poet ("Poesy's king"). Suitably, most of the king's lines are in blank verse. The king was also called "Princely sweet-William." Sweet-William may allude to a flower of that name (Penniman 445), but "William" suggests "William Shakespeare," and "sweet" and "honey" were words contemporaries used to praise Shakespeare's works.¹⁰ Shakespeare was also considered a king of poets: in 1595, he had "the most victorious pen," and in 1623, he was called "*Poet's King*."¹¹ *Satiro-mastix* also alludes to Shakespeare's works, by my count, in twenty-three instances. As Horace, Demetrius and Crispinus represented living authors in both *Poetaster* and *Satiro-mastix*, it follows that "Poesy's king," King William Rufus, similarly represented a living author, i.e., William Shakespeare.¹² Interestingly, gossip was recorded by John Manningham about Shakespeare referring to himself as William the Conqueror in early 1602, the year *Satiro-mastix* was printed (Simpson 416).

Rufus means red-haired in Latin, so in English, King William Rufus translates as "King William the Redhead." If King William Rufus was meant to portray William Shakespeare, then in Dekker's mind, Shakespeare was highly ranked, had red hair, was a patron of scholars, and was an excellent poet. This accurately portrays the 17th Earl of Oxford. By naming this character after an English king with French-Norman blood, Dekker was further alluding to Oxford/Shakespeare's early ancestors.

The Defamatory Subplot

Dekker's portrayal of King William Rufus/Oxford, however, was not all laudatory. *Satiro-mastix* opens upon the wedding of Sir Walter Terill with the king in attendance. Taken by the bride's beauty, the king compels the groom to forfeit to him his wedding night. At the banquet, the bride's father observes:

SIR QUINTILIAN

...The King's exceeding merry at the banquet,
He makes the Bride blush with his merry words
That run into her ears; ah, he is a wanton... [3.1. sig E3 verso]

Later, the king calls for a chair so the beautiful bride can sit with him under the canopy of state, “like pleasure’s Queen” (5.2). The king orders music to start in anticipation of the lady’s presence, which “ushers” in him “the spirit of Love.”

KING WILLIAM RUFUS

Sound Music, thou sweet suitor to the air,
Now woo the air again this is the hour,
Writ in the Calendar of time, this hour
Music shall spend, the next and next the Bride;
Her tongue will read the Music-Lecture:...

Now, the spirit of Love ushers my blood.
[5.2; sig. K4] (underline added)

Music also inspired the “spirit of love” for Duke Orsino in Shakespeare’s comedy *Twelfth Night* (1.1).

Masked gentlemen in black clothes carry the bride, also masked, in a chair to the king. The king and the wedding guests are horrified when her mask is removed—she is dead. She had taken poison—the “physic against lust” (5.1)—to preserve her chastity through death. Calling the king a “Tyrant,” the groom reveals the king’s salacious intentions to all at the party.

SIR WALTER TERILL

...in brief,
He [the king] tainted her chaste ears; she yet unknown,
His breath was treason, though his words were none.
Treason to her and me, he dar’d me then,
(Under the covert of a flattering smile,
To bring her where she is, not as she is,
Alive for lust, not dead for Chastity:
[5.2, sig. L1] (underlines added)

Humiliated, the king repents, and says to the groom:

KING WILLIAM RUFUS

...mine own guilt,
Speaks more within me than thy tongue contains;
Thy sorrow is my shame...
[5.2, sig. L1 verso]

Suddenly, the bride awakens—it was a sleeping potion, not poison, that had made her appear dead. A young bride who takes a potion to feign death recalls *Romeo and Juliet* (Ogburn 1044). And Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet* apparently influenced this scene, as the bride's "Masque of Death" (Bednarz, *Shakespeare*, 223) fulfilled Hamlet's words:

PRINCE HAMLET

...guilty creatures sitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions. [*Hamlet*, 2.2]

Through the character King William Rufus in *Satiro-mastix*, the Earl of Oxford/Shakespeare was praised as a great poet and patron, but also a "wanton," and a "tyrant" who acknowledged, and expressed guilt for, his lustful nature. This much was conveyed in only two scenes of the entire play (2.1, 5.2). Adding insult to injury, *Satiro-mastix* was performed on multiple occasions, being "presented publicly" and "privately" by two different acting companies, according to the 1602 title page, and was printed *twice* that year.

Satiro-mastix and *Love's Martyr*

Dekker's choice of Sir Walter Terill as the king's adversary in *Satiro-mastix* was no accident, as the historic Sir Walter Terill shot the arrow that killed the historic King William Rufus. Apparently, Dekker's aim was character assassination, not only of Ben Jonson, but of Oxford/Shakespeare. Was it only coincidence then that both "victims" were contributors to *Love's Martyr*?

Another coincidence is that both works featured a Welsh knight: Sir John Salusbury and Sir Vaughn ap Rees. Sir John was the dedicatee of *Diverse Poetical Essays* in *Love's Martyr*, which included verses by Jonson; Sir Vaughn was a character in *Satiro-mastix* who patronized Horace/Jonson to write verses. Sir Vaughn's mispronunciation of words and odd speech were mocked in the play, in one instance by the king; he defended himself by saying that his words "have neither felonies nor treasons about them, I hope" (2.1), seemingly hinting at Sir John Salusbury's association with *Love's Martyr*. Intriguingly, Sir Walter Terill twice applied the term "treason" to King William Rufus (see above passage) instead of the more appropriate term, adultery.

The print debut of *Love's Martyr* and the writing of *Satiro-mastix* occurred close to one another. *Love's Martyr* was released sometime between mid-June and circa October 1601.¹³ Dekker was still writing *Satiro-mastix* as of August 14, 1601, the registration date of *The Whipping of the Satire*, which was mentioned in the play (5.2). *Satiro-mastix* was completed before

November 11, 1601, when it was registered. The Stationers' Company, however, would only allow the play to be printed after receiving "license" by the ecclesiastical authorities—apparently, the text was initially found to be controversial or problematic (Bednarz, *Notes and Queries*, 220-1). *Satiro-mastix* did get printed the following year.

Dekker's apparent mockery of people involved with *Love's Martyr*—i.e., Oxford/Shakespeare, Jonson and Salusbury¹⁴—indicates that *Satiro-mastix* likely postdated it. If so, then Dekker cribbed a line from Jonson's poem, *Epos*, in *Love's Martyr*: "Turtles can chastely die" (line 74); Dekker wrote in *Satiro-mastix* (5.1), "let me chastely die" (Klaue 214).

The *Ho* Plays

Dekker defamed the Earl of Oxford in a second play *Westward Ho*, co-authored by John Webster. It was performed in 1604, probably "before Christmas."¹⁵ If so, then the play must have been written before early December, to give time for the actors to prepare, which equates to no more than five months after Oxford's death. Oxford's character is even more identifiable, and was put in a subplot nearly exact to that in *Satiro-mastix*. It was a pointed, shameless and virulent attack on the late earl.

The play's antagonist is an older gray-haired gentleman called "Earl"; he is "a man of honor," a "lord," and a "Courtier"; the courtier, Earl of Oxford, was age 54 at his death. Earl "hath been a Tilter this twenty year"; Oxford was a champion tilter (joust) in the 1570s and early 1580s. It has been noted that "tilter" had sexual connotations during this period (Hoy 2:164), but the word may have had a double—and a triple—meaning as "tilter" also suggested spear shaking, i.e., "Shakespeare."

Earl's love of music is emphasized in the play, and he employed musicians; Oxford was praised as having more musical talent than some professionals,¹⁶ and he patronized a company of musicians (Nelson 248), as well as composers, such as Robert Hales and William Byrd (Chiljan).

Earl carries a longtime passion for a younger married lady, Mistress Justiniano, and sends her expensive presents via the bawd, Mistress Birdlime. Through her, he entices the lady to visit him, and when she does, begs her to throw over her husband and live with him. The enticement is timely, as her husband, the Italian merchant Justiniano, tells her that he is bankrupt (a lie meant to test his wife's fidelity).

The lady that Earl loves has read "the Italian Courtier," a reference to Baldassare Castiglione's popular book, *The Courtier*; Oxford was fond of this book, too, since he contributed a prefatory letter to a Latin translation by Bartholomew Clerke in 1571. By 1603, this book was in its sixth edition.

Why Was Edward de Vere Defamed on Stage—and His Death Unnoticed?

Like King William Rufus in *Satiro-mastix*, Earl in *Westward Ho* waxes poetical about music as he anticipates another meeting with the lady he loves, and orders his musicians to start playing:

Go, let music
Charm with her excellent voice an awful silence
Through all this building, that her sphery soul
May (on the wings of Air) in thousand forms
Invisibly fly, yet be enjoy'd. Away.
[4.2, sigs. F2 verso- F3]

In the lines that follow, servants chat about Earl drawing “strange Characters” and conjuring:

SERVANT 1

Does my Lord mean to Conjure that he draws these strange
Characters [?]

SERVANT 2

He does: but we shall see neither the Spirit that rises, nor the Circle it
rises in.

SERVANT 3

’Twould make our hair stand up on end if we should, come fools come,
meddle not with his matters, Lords may do anything. [4.2, sig. F3]

Dramatist Oxford/Shakespeare certainly conjured up or created characters, some “strange” (like Caliban in *The Tempest*), but more likely these lines were meant to imply he dabbled in witchcraft. It is true that John Dee, who reputedly summoned up angels and spirits, claimed acquaintance with Oxford (Ward 50), and Henry Howard, while under interrogation for treason, said that Oxford “could conjure” (Nelson 58). Outside of this, no evidence shows Oxford practiced witchcraft. The servants’ gossip about Earl was gratuitous, as it had nothing to do with the story.

Earl’s excitement to meet the lady again was tempered by despair of his own lust, which he says would “Turn her into a devil”:

EARL

...Her body is the Chariot of my soul,
Her eyes my body’s light, which if I want [lack],
Life wants, or if possess, I undo her;
Turn her into a devil, whom I adore,
By scorching her with the hot steam of lust.
’Tis but a minute’s pleasure: and the sin

Scarce acted is repented. Shun it then:
 O he that can Abstain, is more than man!
 Tush. Resolv'st thou to do ill: be not precise
 Who writes of *Virtue* best, are slaves to vice.
 What's bad I follow, yet I see what's good.
 [4.2, sigs. F3-F3 verso] (underlines added)

The above speech resembles Shakespeare's sonnet about lust (Hoy 2:223), which "leads men to this hell."

Th' expense of Spirit in a waste of shame
 Is lust in action, and till action, lust
 Is perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight
 ...
 Mad in pursuit and in possession so,
 Had, having, and in quest to have extreme,
 A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
 Before a joy proposed, behind a dream.
 All this the world well knows yet none knows well,
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.
 [Sonnet 129] (underlines added)

Earl's passion for the younger married Mistress Justiniano parallels Oxford's passion for Anne Vavasour, his mistress, who was about ten years younger than he. Vavasour was almost certainly the Dark Lady of Shakespeare's sonnets, whom the great author loved and lusted after, and who was similarly younger than the poet. Oxford's affair with Vavasour occurred circa 1579–81, but likely was rekindled after the death of Oxford's first wife in 1588, a time when Vavasour was married. Interestingly, Mistress Justiniano's eye color is described as "black" (1.2), like that of Vavasour (in her portrait by De Critz) and that of the Dark Lady (Sonnet 132).

With the exception of practicing witchcraft, the above characteristics of Earl in *Westward Ho* fit the 17th Earl of Oxford. In addition, Earl has a poetic bent, and speaks in blank verse, unlike the other characters. In one passage, Earl relates that he has watched Mistress Justiniano's windows at "early Sun" to catch a glimpse of her:

EARL
 ...A thousand mornings with the early Sun,
 Mine eyes have from your windows watch'd to steal
 Brightness from those... [2.2, sig. C3 verso]

These lines are reminiscent of *Romeo and Juliet* (2.2), when Romeo likened Juliet to the dawn as she emerged on her balcony:

ROMEO

...But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

“That Plague,” Earl

When Justiniano learns his wife will meet Earl again, he forms a plot: it is he who comes at the appointed time, masked and wearing a jeweled gown that Earl had gifted his wife. When Justiniano removes his mask, Earl is bewildered, thinking “her” a sorceress, and threatens to kill “her.”

Calling Earl an “unseasonable Lecher,” Justiniano declares himself the lady’s husband, and then reveals her lifeless body behind a curtain. Justiniano admits that he poisoned her, but says it was Earl’s “lust” that “there strikes her dead.” This is exactly what happened in *Satiro-mastix*. When Earl calls for his servants to capture Justiniano, three “citizens” enter the scene and see the corpse. Justiniano explains to them that he gave her “Strong poison” to save her from “that plague,” Earl:

...that plague [i.e., Earl],
This fleshly [lascivious] Lord: he doted on my wife,
He would have wrought on her and play’d on me.
But to pare off these brims, I cut off her,
And gull’d him with this lie, that you [i.e., Earl] had hands
Dipp’d in her blood with mine...
[4.2, sig. F4 verso]

Justiniano further explains his motives:

...but this I did,
That his [Earl’s] stain’d age and name might not be hid.
My Act (though vild) [vile] the world shall crown as just,
I shall die clear, when he [Earl] lives soil’d with lust:
[4.2, sigs. F4 verso-G1]

Justiniano murdered his wife so that Earl’s “stain’d age and name might not be hid” (a line that seemingly reacted to Shakespeare’s sonnet 72, “My name be buried where my body is, / And live no more to shame nor me nor you”). Earl “lives soil’d with lust” and Justiniano wanted “the world” to know it. Seconds later, it is revealed that Justiniano’s wife was not murdered: it was all a charade. She awakens, and Justiniano tells Earl:

See, *Lucrece* is not slain... [4.2, sig. G1]

Earl is humiliated, and penitently rebukes himself:

...Mine own shame strikes me dumb...
 The jewels which I gave you: wear: your fortunes,
 I'll raise on golden Pillars: fare you well,
 Lust in old age like burnt straw, does even choke
 The kindlers, and consumes, in stinking Smoke. [4.3, sig. G1]

Earl exits. Justiniano congratulates his wife for fooling Earl,

this grave, this wicked elder... [4.2, sig. G1]

and tells her

...if all the great Turks' Concubines were but like thee...
 [4.2, sig. G1 verso]

Likening Earl to "the great Turks" is another hint that the 17th Earl of Oxford was meant, as "Turk" was Queen Elizabeth's pet name for him. "Lucrece" obviously invoked Shakespeare's poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, a further clue that Earl was Oxford/Shakespeare; it also subtly insinuated that he is like Prince Tarquin, the rapist of Lucrece.

After this scene, Earl is not mentioned again in the play; allusions to Shakespeare, however, follow, including "mad *Hamlet*," "midsummer night," and "every inch of flesh" ("every inch a king," *King Lear*). Earl's story is a subplot of *Westward Ho*; the main plot, as some critics have noted, resembles Shakespeare's comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.¹⁷ At least twenty Shakespeare allusions can be found in *Westward Ho*.

Earl appears in only two scenes (2.2 and 4.2) in *Westward Ho*. It is thought that Dekker alone wrote them based on a study of parallel passages in his other works (Pierce 44-51, 60-3). Dekker, therefore, quite candidly stated his purpose for "Earl" Oxford's defamation: so his "stain'd age and name might not be hid." He wanted Oxford's immorality to live after him, despite admitting that the disparagement was vile ("vild"). Dekker's choice of the word "stain" may have been intentional, as this was the word Oxford/Shakespeare used to address his own infidelity:

...If I have ranged,
 Like him that travels I return again,
 Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
 So that myself bring water for my stain...
 [Sonnet 109]

To recap the 17th Earl of Oxford's calumny in *Westward Ho*: an older gentleman, an earl, is lustful, practices witchcraft, wants to break up a marriage and commit adultery. These lines further denigrated Oxford:

"I wonder lust could hang at such white hairs"	[sig. C3 verso]
"I could not love this old man"	[sig. C4 verso]
"thou unseasonable lecher"	[sig. F1]
"What's bad I [Earl] follow"	[sig. F3 verso]
"that plague, /This fleshly Lord"	[sig. F4 verso]
"his stain'd age and name"	[sig. F4 verso]
"this grave, this wicked elder"	[sig. G1]
[Earl] "lives soil'd with lust"	[sig. G1]

Westward Ho was registered for publication to H. Rocket on March 2, 1605, which was only a few months after its debut performance. The first surviving edition, however, is dated 1607, and was printed by William Jaggard for John Hodgets. The evident delay in publishing may have been caused by the excising of controversial material, which would explain the text's disjointed nature.¹⁸ The title page said the play "hath been diverse times acted by the Children of Paul's," which means that by 1607 hundreds of Londoners had seen Oxford's defamation. Those who recognized Earl as the late Earl of Oxford may have thought twice about eulogizing him. Three well-known dramatists, however, did not stay silent.

Eastward Ho!

It is well accepted that *Eastward Ho*, a comedy written by Ben Jonson, George Chapman and John Marston, was an answer to *Westward Ho*. The stage debut of *Westward Ho* was late 1604, and *Eastward Ho* was written between January and March 1605 (ODNB, George Chapman). The reason for *Eastward Ho*'s nearly instant composition, however, has never been adequately explained. In my view, it is obvious: *Eastward Ho* specifically reacted to *Westward Ho*'s defamatory portrayal of the 17th Earl of Oxford, and its authors hurried to counteract it with a complimentary one. Thomas Dekker's earlier anti-Oxford play *Satiro-mastix* was also targeted, as one of its characters, Peter Flash, believed to represent Dekker, evidently reincarnated as the bounder Sir Petronel Flash in *Eastward Ho*.¹⁹

In contrast with the lust-driven Earl in *Westward Ho*, Oxford/Shakespeare's character in *Eastward Ho* is Touchstone, a morally upright husband, citizen and goldsmith. "Touchstone" is a verb and noun construct like "Shake-speare." His first name is William. Touchstone's apprentice, Quicksilver, calls his master "Sweet Touchstone" (2.1); contemporaries often called Shakespeare or his works "sweet" (Oxford/Shakespeare's character in *Satiro-mastix*, King

William Rufus, was called “sweet-William”). Touchstone and Oxford both had daughters (two and three respectively).

Uncharacteristic of most goldsmiths of the period, William Touchstone is well read and often breaks out into verse, which suggests that Touchstone’s real craft was poetry, not crafting gold pieces. If so, then his apprentices were actually aspiring writers, which would make the “bad” apprentice, Quicksilver, representative of Dekker. Touchstone fires Quicksilver, disgusted by his insults and drunkenness. Later in the play, Quicksilver is imprisoned and reforms, then reconciles with Touchstone by reading a verse he wrote about repentance.

Touchstone’s “good” apprentice is “Golding,” a name associated with Oxford: his uncle, Arthur Golding, a noted Latin scholar, is believed to have tutored Oxford as a juvenile and dedicated two published translations to him. Moreover, Golding’s translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, published in 1565 and 1567 when supposedly he was tutoring Oxford, greatly influenced Shakespeare.

For seasoned playgoers, “Touchstone” would have immediately brought to mind the character of the same name in Shakespeare’s comedy *As You Like It*. Shakespeare’s Touchstone, a courtier-clown, figuratively tells William—a simple young man born in the Forest of Arden—that he, Touchstone, is the great author “William Shakespeare” (not the unlearned rustic with a similar name):

TOUCHSTONE [*to William*]

...For all your Writers do consent, that *ipse* is he: now you are not *ipse*,
for I am he. [*As You Like It*, 5.1] (underline added)

Touchstone’s self-revelation undoubtedly inspired the name for Oxford/Shakespeare’s character in *Eastward Ho*.

Although “Shakespeare” was never mentioned in *Eastward Ho*, his presence was invoked throughout the play, with (by my count) twenty-five allusions to nine different Shakespeare plays (most found by orthodox scholars). For example, a drunken Quicksilver blurts out famous lines from contemporary plays, mimicking Pistol in the tavern scene in *2 Henry IV* (2.4). Touchstone parodies Hamlet’s line “I am but mad north northwest” (*Hamlet*, 2.2), with “Do we not know north-north-east? North-east-and-by-east? East-and-by-north? Nor plain eastward?” (*Eastward Ho*, 4.2). In another scene, Touchstone’s daughter Gertrude sings Ophelia’s song about her dead father in *Hamlet*:

GERTRUDE

*His head as white as milk,
All flaxen was his hair:
But now he is dead,*

Why Was Edward de Vere Defamed on Stage—and His Death Unnoticed?

*And laid in his Bed,
And never will come again.*

God be at your labor. [*Eastward Ho*, 3.2, sig. D4] (underlines added)

Ophelia's song in *Hamlet* (4.5):

*And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.
His beard was white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll [head];
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan;
God ha' mercy on his soul!*

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' you!
(underlines added)

Gertrude's song in *Eastward Ho* was unrelated to the plot, and she started singing it as soon as her father, William Touchstone, entered the room; the song is one of eight allusions to *Hamlet* in this scene (3.2), including a minor character named Hamlet. With this perspective, one can view Gertrude's song as a veiled memorial to Shakespeare, the father of *Hamlet*. The great author's recent death would also explain *Eastward Ho*'s paraphrase—in two instances—of Hamlet's remark about his mother's quick remarriage after his father's death:

...the funeral baked meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
[*Hamlet*, 1.2]

Below are the two paraphrases in *Eastward Ho*:

...that the cold meat left at your wedding might, serve to furnish their
Nuptial table. [*Eastward Ho*, 3.2, sig. D3v]

the superfluity and cold meat left at their Nuptials, will with bounty
furnish ours. [*Eastward Ho*, 2.1, sig. B4v]

In addition, Gertrude's sister, Mildred, entered the room with Touchstone, and she was holding rosemary; this not only reinforces the allusion to Ophelia, as she picked rosemary prior to singing her song (Horwich 227), but rosemary branches were customarily placed on top of coffins.²⁰

Furthermore, collaboration of such prominent writers as Jonson, Marston and Chapman on one play was unusual (Van Fossen 2), which supports the idea that they had united for a purpose: to counteract *Westward Ho*'s awful portrayal of Oxford/Shakespeare, and to memorialize him. Presumably, they knew him, as they were joint contributors to *Love's Martyr* four years earlier. The second, expanded quarto of *Hamlet* was published in late 1604/early 1605, which *Eastward Ho*'s authors had undoubtedly thoroughly read and used for their play.

Eastward Ho likely debuted on the public stage between mid-March and mid-June 1605 (Petter xxiii), evidently without incident. The text received license to print on September 4, 1605, but shortly after its publication, the government took offense. Jonson and Chapman were jailed that same month, and they were threatened with mutilation, a punishment for sedition (Donaldson, 207-08). About four to six weeks later, they were released. Critics today believe their arrest was caused by the play's references to the Scots, but the excised material is hardly offensive (oddly, a cameo appearance of King James was not excised). Despite the government's furor, *Eastward Ho* was printed three times in 1605, which was unprecedented. And the play was not banned. In fact, it was performed at least twice after the incident, once for the royal court in 1614.

In my view, it was not *Eastward Ho*'s text that caused the problem, it was Jonson, Chapman and Marston's previous involvement in *Love's Martyr*; evidently, *Eastward Ho*'s authors were unknown until their names were blazoned across the 1605 title page. Perhaps *Eastward Ho* was a convenient excuse to punish these authors for their contributions to *Love's Martyr*, to ensure their silence about a hidden heir of Queen Elizabeth, and to dissuade them from writing again about Oxford/Shakespeare in a positive light. Apparently, the revelation of *Eastward Ho*'s authors was tantamount to declaring that the play was about him. Authorities evidently preferred a wholesale blackout of eulogies for, or discussion about, Oxford/Shakespeare.

Tellingly, Dekker and Webster were untouched by the authorities after their character assassination of Oxford in *Westward Ho*. To the contrary, soon after *Eastward Ho* was produced, these authors responded with another play, *Northward Ho*. It appears, however, that this last play in the *Ho* series was devoid of controversial or defamatory material. Perhaps Dekker and Webster merely wished to profit on the notoriety that arose from *Eastward Ho*.

Dekker's Motivation

What motivated Thomas Dekker to twice malign a nobleman whose dramas he knew so well and evidently had admired? To understand Dekker, the words of Ben Jonson should be considered. Demetrius in Jonson's play,

Why Was Edward de Vere Defamed on Stage—and His Death Unnoticed?

Poetaster, is commonly accepted as representative of Dekker. An actor says that Demetrius/Dekker was hired “to abuse Horace,” i.e., Jonson, “in a Play”:

HISTRIO

...one *Demetrius* [Dekker], a *dresser* of Plays about the Town, here; we have hir'd him to abuse *Horace*, and bring him in, in a Play, with all his Gallants...

CAPT. TUCCA

...Can thy Author [i.e., Demetrius/Dekker] do it impudently enough?

HISTRIO

O, I warrant you, Captain: and spitefully enough too; he [Demetrius/Dekker] has one of the most overflowing villainous wits, in *Rome*: He will slander any Man that breathes; If he disgust him.
[*Poetaster* (3.4), sigs. F3 verso-F4, 1602 edition] (underlines added)

For hire, Demetrius/Dekker could “slander any Man that breathes,” according to Jonson. At the close of *Poetaster*, Demetrius/Dekker was “indicted” for “calumny.”

A very likely motivation for Dekker’s slander of Oxford was his persistent financial problems. He served time in debtor’s prison in 1598, 1599, and finally for a seven-year period (1612-1619) (ODNB Thomas Dekker). Quick-silver, the bad apprentice in *Eastward Ho* who likely represented Dekker, also went to debtor’s prison. Being constantly in debt certainly made Dekker vulnerable to accepting bribes.

Dekker may have known Oxford. It is believed that Dekker helped write *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall*,²¹ a play performed “sundry times” by Oxford’s acting company (according to the 1600 title page). In addition, Dekker’s *Satiro-mastix* (4.2) alluded to *The History of George Scanderbeg*, a play also performed by Oxford’s “servants,” as noted in the Stationers’ Register.²²

Who Wanted to Slander Oxford?

It would not be surprising if Sir Robert Cecil, principal secretary to Queen Elizabeth (and later to King James), was found responsible for hiring Dekker to slander Oxford on the London stage. During this period, many linked Cecil, who had curvature of the spine, with the hunchbacked villain, Richard III, in Shakespeare’s history play *Richard III*, even though it had been written at least a decade earlier. And Cecil’s late father, Lord Burghley, had been lampooned as the character Corambis/Polonius in *Hamlet*,

published in 1603 and 1604/05. For Cecil, execrating Oxford in a play would be appropriate revenge.

More importantly, depicting Oxford as immoral would also reflect on his political views, which were displayed in *Love's Martyr*. Oxford/Shakespeare's choice of successor to Queen Elizabeth was her natural child. Those who were privileged enough to view Shakespeare's sonnets, then circulating in manuscript, may well have connected this child with the Fair Youth. Before the Essex Rebellion, Cecil apparently favored the Spanish Infanta-Archduchess Isabella as the queen's successor. After the Earl of Essex revealed this at his treason trial, Cecil turned to the King of Scotland.

In 1601, Jonson was questioned by the Lord Chief Justice about his play, *Poetaster*; that Dekker was not questioned for *Satiro-mastix*, his reply to *Poetaster*, further suggests that Dekker had support of highly placed people. Dekker and Webster were not prosecuted for defaming Oxford in *Westward Ho*, yet two of the authors of *Eastward Ho*, which depicted Oxford/Shakespeare in a positive light, *were* prosecuted. This implies that "authority," like Cecil, was behind Dekker and Webster. It had to have been a powerful official like Cecil to allow the slander of a highly ranked nobleman without repercussion.

Cecil likely knew, or knew of, Dekker as three of his plays were performed for the royal court between 1599 and 1601.²³ Significantly, Dekker was back in debtor's prison in late 1612, about six months after Cecil had died (he owed £40 to the father of his co-author, Webster) (*ODNB* Dekker). Was it merely coincidence that Oxford's first eulogy in print occurred after Cecil's death?²⁴

CLERMONT

I over-took, coming from Italy,
 In Germany, a great and famous earl
 Of England, the most goodly-fashion'd man
 I ever saw; from head to foot in form
 Rare and most absolute; he had a face
 Like one of the most ancient honor'd Romans,
 From whence his noblest family was derived;
 He was beside of spirit passing great,
 Valiant, and learn'd, and liberal as the sun,
Spoke and writ sweetly, or of learned subjects,
 Or of the discipline of public weals;
 And 'twas the Earl of Oxford...
 [*Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (3.4), pub. 1613]
 (underline added)

Oxford "Spoke and writ sweetly," wrote George Chapman, co-author of *Eastward Ho*. A "sweet" writer obviously suggested Shakespeare.

Conclusions

The late 1604 play *Westward Ho* featured a subplot with a character named Earl that bore a strong resemblance to Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Although co-authored with John Webster, Dekker evidently wrote the subplot in question, which portrayed the recently deceased Oxford in an unsavory light. A similar Oxford-like character appeared in Dekker's earlier play *Satiro-mastix* (1601) with a similar subplot; both Oxford characters had licentious and immoral inclinations. Incidental to both plays, these subplots were seemingly incorporated with the clear intent to slander.

Such criticism of an artist beloved by many in the literary community inspired a backlash, i.e., the play *Eastward Ho* by Jonson, Marston and Chapman. In direct opposition to Dekker's *Satiro-mastix* and *Westward Ho*, their Oxford character was moral and industrious. Master craftsman Touchstone, who has a penchant for poetry, and whose name mimics that of Shakespeare's courtier-clown in *As You Like It*—combined with numerous Shakespeare allusions in the play—makes it clear that he represented the great author. Gertrude in *Eastward Ho* singing Ophelia's song in *Hamlet* about the death of her father, who was alive and well throughout the play, and other hints, indicate the play was not only a defense of Oxford/Shakespeare, but a memorial to the "father" of *Hamlet*. This adds a new dimension to what Dekker termed "that terrible *Poetomachia*, lately commenced between *Horace the second*, and a band of lean-witted *Poetasters*" in *Satiro-mastix*'s preface. What began as caviling between Marston, Dekker and Jonson morphed into attacks on, and defense of, Oxford/Shakespeare.

Dekker's slander of Oxford/Shakespeare in two plays was probably calculated to undermine the latter's standing and authority due to his view on the succession, which was publicly laid bare by his involvement with *Love's Martyr*. This allegorical fiction, published in the second half of 1601, alluded to a direct and living heir of Queen Elizabeth. A similar theme can be found in the sonnets of Shakespeare, which were then circulating in manuscript. Oxford/Shakespeare's position did not agree with that of Secretary of State Sir Robert Cecil, who, soon after the Essex Rebellion, plotted on behalf of King James VI of Scotland, despite the fact that foreign-born James was legally unqualified to rule England. Cecil, therefore, may have been behind the theatrical propaganda against Oxford.

The plethora of Shakespeare allusions in *Satiro-mastix* and *Westward Ho* betrays Dekker's deep familiarity with his works, and presumably, admiration. Dekker's money problems certainly made him susceptible to "slander any Man" in a play—that is, for a good price.

Perhaps penitent for his involvement in *Westward Ho*, John Webster praised *Eastward Ho* writers Chapman and Jonson in the first edition of *The White Devil* (1612). “*Shake-speare*” was also praised, his name placed before that of Dekker, Webster’s former collaborator.²⁵

The public non-recognition of Oxford/Shakespeare’s death can be summed up as follows: during his lifetime, Oxford did not want recognition as a poet-dramatist to protect his illustrious family name. After death, however, such recognition would have been acceptable. This did not happen for Oxford because it was generally known that he supported a hidden child of Queen Elizabeth as her successor, as allegorically advertised in *Love’s Martyr* and in his circulating sonnets. As Oxford died only 15 months after James, King of Scotland, had succeeded to the English throne, political fear overwhelmed the need to praise him or to associate him with the great author “William Shakespeare.” In addition, Oxford’s defamation as an immoral lecher in two popular comedies by Thomas Dekker—triggered by *Love’s Martyr*, and possibly funded by Sir Robert Cecil—further dampened enthusiasm to laud the greatest author of the age. The near suppression of praise or recognition of Oxford, the true Shakespeare, persisted to at least 1640, when an anonymous author wrote, “*Shake-speare* we must be silent in thy praise” (*Wits Recreations*).

Endnotes

1. The seven authors who had dedicated books to the Earl of Oxford still living in 1604: Arthur Golding (d. 1606), *The Histories of Trogus Pompeius* (1564), *The Psalms of David and others* (1571); Thomas Bedingfield (d. 1613), *Cardanus Comfort* (1573); Thomas Twyne (d. 1613), *The Breviary of Britain* (1573); George Baker (d. 1612), *The Composition or Making of the Most Excellent and Precious Oil called Oleum magistrale* (1574), *The Practice of the New and Old Physic* (1599); Anthony Munday (d. 1633), *The Mirror of Mutability* (1579), *Zelauto* (1580), *Palmerin d'Oliva*, parts 1 and 2 (1588); John Lyly (d. 1606), *Euphues and His England* (1580); Henry Lok (alive as of 1606), *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (1597).
2. The first edition of *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), published by John Danter/Edward Allde, was called a “monstrous theft” by the author(s) of *Return from Parnassus, Part 1* (circa 1599-1600). *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1598-99), a collection of Shakespeare’s poems, was an unauthorized edition by William Jaggard, according to Thomas Heywood in *An Apology for Actors* (1612).
3. See transcript by Nina Green, “Letter and report dated 10 October 1603 from Sir John Peyton to Sir Robert Cecil...” (TNA SP 14/4/14, ff. 27-9), www.oxford-shakespeare.com/.
4. The story of Desire and Lady Beauty, as told in royal Christmas entertainments of 1561/62, allegorized the wish of the Earl of Leicester (Desire) to marry Queen Elizabeth (Beauty). It was followed by a masque with “Beauty’s dames,” presumably the queen’s attendants (Gerard Legh, *The Accedens of Armory*, 1562). In January 1581, Sir Philip Sidney allegorized Queen Elizabeth as Perfect Beauty in tiltyard entertainments (“The Fortress of Perfect Beauty”), as related by Henry Goldwel in *A Brief Declaration of the Shews, Devices, Speeches, and Inventions...* (STC 11990). In 1599, Queen Elizabeth was called “Beauty’s rose” (Sir John Davies, *Hymns of Astraea in Acrostic Verse*, Hymn 7), and in 1602 was openly addressed as “Beauty’s rose” in verses at Harefield Place, home of Sir Thomas Egerton (Mary C. Erler, “Sir John Davies and the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth,” *Modern Philology*, vol. 84, no. 4, May 1987, p. 362).
5. “Rose” may be a pun on “Wriothesley,” the surname of the 3rd Earl of Southampton, who was almost certainly the Fair Youth of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

6. Of the four surviving copies of *Love's Martyr* (1601), only one is complete, held by the Folger Shakespeare Library. The other three were tampered with: one has the date sliced off the title page; one has pages missing from the front and back; and one copy's title page was replaced with an entirely different one, with a changed title and date. See Chiljan, "The Importance of *Love's Martyr* in the Shakespeare Authorship Question," *Brief Chronicles*, vol. 4 (2012-13).
The printer of *Love's Martyr*, Richard Field, was evidently unaffected by his involvement with the work, but the same may not be true for the publisher, Edward Blount. *Love's Martyr* was Blount's sole publication in 1601, and he published no books in 1602—an anomaly, as Blount otherwise published books each year from 1597 to 1640. Field's name did not appear on *Love's Martyr's* title page, but Blount's initials did. Later, Blount would publish (with William and Isaac Jaggard) Shakespeare's First Folio (1623).
7. *Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to call to his mercy out of this transitory life our sovereign lady...1603* (STC 8298).
8. Jonson had authored the two "Humor" comedies, *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) and *Every Man out of His Humour* (1599). *Satiro-mastix* was registered as "the untrussing of the humorous poet," and this was also the running title of the printed edition; evidently, "Satiro-mastix" was a late addition to the title. Edward Pudsey noted it as "Vntruss: of ye Poet. Dekker" [verso 42] (Juliet M. Gowan, *An Edition of Edward Pudsey's Commonplace Book (c. 1600-1615)*, 1967, vol. 1, p. 326).
9. William II, who reigned in England 1087-1100.
10. "Lucrecia Sweet Shakspeare," W. Covell, *Polimanteia* (1595); "Honey-tongued Shakspeare," Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* (1598); "Honey-tong'd Shakspeare" and his characters' "sug'red tongues," John Weever, *Epigrams in the oldest cut* (1599); "And Shakspeare thou, whose honey-flowing vein," Richard Barnfield, *The Encomion of Lady Pecunia: or the praise of money* (1598); "sweet Mr. Shakspeare" was said twice in *The Return to Parnassus, Part 1* (c. 1599-1600); "Sweet Swan of *Avon!*," Ben Jonson's elegy to Shakespeare (First Folio, 1623).
11. Poem addressed to the Earl of Southampton by Gervase Markham in *The Most Honorable Tragedy of Sir Richard Grinville, Knight* (1595); eulogy of Shakespeare by Hugh Holland, First Folio (1623).
12. Author Michael Drayton may also have been portrayed as Asinius Bubo; critics have noted that "asinus bubo" in Latin, "Ass owl," probably referred to Drayton's poem, *The Owl*. Dekker may have named this character after Asinius Lupo ("ass wolf" in Latin) in *Poetaster*.

13. *Love's Martyr's* release was certainly after June 14, 1601, the day Sir John Salusbury was knighted; the parliamentary bill making it illegal for the writing or publishing of books about the succession was proposed circa October 1601, as noted by Hume.
14. Sir Vaughn in *Satiro-mastix* also fails in his love suit to the widow, Mistress Miniver.
15. That *Westward Ho's* stage debut was “before Christmas” is based on a passage in Dekker and Webster's subsequent play *Northward Ho* (1605), as noted by F.G. Fleay (*A Biographical Chronicle of The English Drama*, London, 1891, vol. 2, p. 270):

DOLL

What then? marry then is the wind come about, and for those poor wenches that before Christmas fled Westward with bag and baggage, come now sailing amongst the lee shore with a Northerly wind... [1.2, sig. B1 verso, stc 6539] (underline added)

Westward Ho was still being written late September 1604 due to mention of “the book of the siege of Ostend” (4.2), i.e., *A True History of the Memorable Siege of Ostend* (a translation by Edward Grimeston, registered on September 20, 1604, STC 18895).

16. In his dedication to the 17th Earl of Oxford, John Farmer wrote: “using this science [i.e., music] as a recreation, your Lordship has overgone most of them that make it a profession” (*The First Set of English Madrigals*, 1599).
17. In *Westward Ho*, three married men visit the prostitute, Luce; in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, three men vie for the hand of Anne Page. In *Westward Ho*, the wives of the three married men flirt with three London men, with no intention of having affairs; in *Merry Wives*, two wives pretend to flirt with Falstaff, who tries to court them. “Brentford” and “Hungarian” are mentioned in both plays. See also Rebecca Olson, “Revising Jealousy in “The Merry Wives of Windsor,”” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, vol. 25, 2012, pp. 184-85.

Westward Ho was also inspired by the fiction *Westward for Smelts* (written circa 1603), in which women tell stories on their boat trip going westward (from London to Brentford). The phrases, “westward for smelts” (2.3), “westward smelts” (5.3), and “catch smelts” (4.3) all occurred in *Westward Ho*.

18. Regarding *Westward Ho*, Mary Hunt wrote, “The Earl scenes are not well dovetailed into the intrigue drama...” (*Thomas Dekker: A Study*, Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1911, p. 107). *Westward Ho* was called “one of the most incoherent plays in Elizabethan drama” (Thomas Marc Parrott and Robert Hamilton Ball, *A Short View of Elizabethan Drama*, New York, 1958, p. 109).
19. My thanks to Professor Roger Stritmatter for suggesting the possible connection between the two characters.
20. In *Romeo and Juliet* (4.5), Friar Laurence says to Juliet’s father, “Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary /On this fair corse” [i.e., Juliet’s].
21. This play’s title was possibly based on a line in *Romeo and Juliet* (1.1).
22. *Scanderbeg* was registered for publication on July 3, 1601, but no printed editions have survived.
23. December 27, 1599, *Old Fortunatus*; January 1, 1600, *The Gentle Craft* (later titled, *The Shoemaker’s Holiday*); 1601, *Phaeton*.
24. Oxford was eulogized within a tribute to his daughter, Susan Vere, Countess of Montgomery in *Ourania* (published in 1606); Oxford’s full name, however, was not given, only “Earl,” “Oxonian line,” and “Vera” (referring to Susan). Oxford’s learning, generosity, and jousting prowess were mentioned, but not his writing. Author N.B. (Nicholas Breton or Nathaniel Baxter) was evidently in Oxford’s entourage during his 1575-76 continental tour.
25. “Detraction is the sworn friend to ignorance: For mine own part, I have ever truly cherished my good opinion of other men’s worthy Labors, especially of that full and heightened style of Master Chapman. The labor’d and understanding works of Master Johnson: the no less worthy composures of the both worthily excellent Master *Beaumont* and Master *Fletcher*: and lastly (without wrong last to be named), the right happy and copious industry of M. Shake-speare, M. Dekker, and M. Heywood, wishing what I write may be read by their light...” (“To the Reader,” *The White Devil*, STC 25178) (underlines added).

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Why Was Edward de Vere Defamed on Stage—and His Death Unnoticed?



What Role Did the Herbert Family Play in the Shakespeare Cover-Up?

by Bruce Johnston

In 1920 John Thomas Looney revealed the profound literary and personal enmity between Philip Sidney and Edward de Vere (Looney, ed. Warren, 122, 145, 180, 212–13, 242–52). Over the next century dozens of Oxfordian scholars further documented the breadth, depth and details of that conflict. This essay integrates that extensive scholarship and shows the Herbert family's motives for continuing de Vere's anonymity as Shakespeare after his death in 1604, while covering up and misattributing the authorship of the Shakespeare canon in their 1623 play collection known as the First Folio.

Edward de Vere vs. Robert Dudley and Philip Sidney

Edward de Vere's enmity for Philip Sidney had deep roots, for it began with wounds inflicted by Sidney's uncle—Robert Dudley—on de Vere when he was twelve years old.

In 1562 a financially destitute Robert Dudley was listed as a supervisor in the last will of Edward's father, John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford, just months before the Earl's sudden, unexpected death (Green 41–95). Enabled by Queen Elizabeth and William Cecil, Master of the Court of Wards, the Court farmed out the fruits of Edward's encumbered properties to Dudley (Cutting 105–118). These actions triggered what Roger Stritmatter called “perhaps the greatest, potentially most destructive schism within the English aristocracy”



Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, c. 1564. In the background are the devices of the Order of Saint Michael and the Order of the Garter.

(“Spenser’s ‘Perfect Pattern’ 12). In short, Dudley enriched himself from the execution of de Vere’s father’s will. Nina Green concludes her analysis of the situation thus: “The primary beneficiary—in fact almost the only real beneficiary—of the 16th Earl’s death was Sir Robert Dudley” (53). Thus Dudley, the earliest spoiler of de Vere’s wealth, became in the latter’s imagination the Machiavellian Claudius to de Vere’s Hamlet.

In Elizabeth’s court de Vere was befriended and mentored by Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, who became a surrogate father to him (Anderson 42–3; Ogburn 469). Sussex had a pre-existing “long and bitter feud” with Dudley, a “war to the knife” that fed Vere’s animus toward Dudley and his nephew

Philip (Ward 48). Andrew Gurr cites Dudley’s company as receiving “a patent of May 10, 1574 (*Shakespearian Stage* 30). This was the first royal patent for a company of adult players.” Today such a grant would more accurately be called a license. The Leicester and Oxford theater companies soon competed, using Christmas court festivities as “emblems of their own power” (Gurr 28).

The de Vere and Dudley-Sidney factions also quarreled over the Queen’s proposed marriage to the French Duke d’Alençon in 1579. Philip Sidney brashly opposed the French marriage in a letter to the Queen that became public (Jiménez 90–91). Elizabeth’s subsequent anger compelled Sidney to withdraw from court to Wilton House and his sister Mary. Rusticated from court, Sidney honed his literary skills by converting *Psalms* into rhyming English; prescribing stage and poetry rules; and composing a prose pastoral romance, a masque and a Petrarchan sonnet cycle.

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On a personal level, Sidney took offense easily and often and challenges ensued. Aside from Sidney's tennis court quarrel with de Vere, also in 1579, Sidney also sought but was denied duels with: (i) his father's startled secretary; (ii) Sir Thomas Butler, a court ally of both de Vere and the Earl of Sussex; and (iii) the author of the book *Leicester's Commonwealth*.

In 1584–5 the *Leicester's Commonwealth* libel alleged scores of poisonings, property theft, duplicities and treasonous plots by Dudley. From nearly 200 pages of anonymous text, Sidney indignantly answered a trivial item. As Sidney tediously explicated Dudley's lineage, he added a gratuitous, albeit factual, insult to one of Oxford's ancestors. Sidney addressed none of the topical accusations against Dudley, but called the libel's author a liar and demanded an answer and a duel. Nina Green concluded that *Leicester's Commonwealth* and related documents share content and stylistic features with Oxford's writings (<http://www.oxfordshakespeare.com/leicester.html>). Richard Whalen also sees de Vere as a plausible *Commonwealth* author (26).



Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586).

In 1585 Dudley recalled de Vere from his Lowlands military assignment, replacing him with nephew Philip as Master of Horse. An impatient Sidney sought to carry war “into the bowels of Spain” (Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, 280). Before his death Sidney variously engaged Elizabeth, Sir Francis Walsingham and Dudley in foreign policy disputes (272, 280–93). After arming himself fashionably but foolishly for the Zutphen battlefield, Sidney later lost his horse and took a musket ball in his unarmored thigh, from which he died of gangrene. He quickly became a Protestant martyr and war hero. Indeed, Sidney's unprecedented London public funeral was delayed nearly three months, allegedly to arrange and finance the spectacle.¹

De Vere and Dudley sparred again as England awaited the Spanish Armada in July 1588, when Oxford refused a post under Leicester's command and returned to London (Ward 288–93). Dudley died soon thereafter and was succeeded by Robert Sidney, younger brother of Philip, as Earl of Leicester. After Dudley died, Mary Sidney Herbert became the guardian of brother

Philip's writings and legacy. With her personal mission and Herbert-Pembroke wealth, she attracted writers who admired Philip and advanced his ideas. She fought those who tarnished her brother's legacy with pirate publications or literary "barbarism" (Hannay *Phoenix*, 121).

After the passing of Sidney and Dudley, Oxford wrote and revised plays for another 16 years, which displayed his formidable will and skill to take revenge, on stage and page, against Philip Sidney and Robert Dudley.



Mary Herbert née Sidney
(1561–1621), by Nicholas
Hilliard, c. 1590

De Vere's Fury of Revenge

Oxford's volatility and quick temper were legendary and even found their way into his poetry (Ogburn 598; Anderson 226). Looney cited de Vere's "fury of revenge" in the poem below as noteworthy (*Poems*, Miller 582). Sidney biographer Duncan-Jones ranks de Vere's poem below as "an expression of murderous rage...unique in the period" (Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, 166–7).

Fain would I sing, but fury makes me fret,
And rage hath sworn to seek revenge of wrong.
My mazed mind to malice so is set
As death shall daunt my deadly dolours long;
 Patience perforce is such a pinching pain
 As die I will, or [before I] suffer wrong again.
I am no sot, to suffer such abuse
As doth bereave my heart of his delight,
Nor will I feign myself to such a use
With calm content to suffer such despite.
 No quiet sleep shall once possess mine eye
 Till wit have wrought his will on injury.
My heart shall fail, and hand shall lose his force,
But some device shall pay despite his due;
And fury shall consume my careful corse
Or raze the ground whereon my sorrow grew.
 Lo, thus in rage of ruthful mind refused,
 I rest revenged of whom I am abused.

Whether Vere's intensity sprang from authorial genius or something more primal, shielded by the protective mask of anonymity, is a fair question.

Looney observed (*The Oxfordian* 19, 156):

Truly great dramatic literature can only come from the pens of writers who are accustomed to look closely into their own souls and make free use of their secret experiences; it may be doubted whether a single line of living literature ever came from pure imagination or mere dramatic pose.

More evidence of Vere's volatility is revealed in the 1595 poetic reference to "Tilting under [the Black] Frieries" liberties. This alluded to brawling street fights between the servants of de Vere (Romeo) and his Knyvet-Howard-Arundel (Capulet) enemies in London during the 1580s. (Sir Thomas Kynvet was the uncle of Anne Vavasour, Oxford's mistress and mother of his illegitimate son, Edward.) The 1582–85 fights caused several deaths and the permanent laming of de Vere (Stritmatter, *Cabiers Élisabéthains*, 37–40). With his tournament and dancing revels thereby curtailed, de Vere had the time and motive to craft dramatic revenge. Further, Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* provided Vere with fresh, pointed "abuses" to counter.

Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*

Philip Sidney wrote *The Defence of Poesy* circa 1581, which circulated in manuscript before his sister Mary printed it in 1595.² In it, Sidney savaged the forms and contents of Oxford's court stagecraft.

He favored didactic poetry, prose and plays that advanced virtue and virtuous behavior; his goal was "to teach and delight" (*Major Works* 221–2). Sidney also demanded neoclassical unities of time, place and plot on stage; he belittled the genre mixing of de Vere's court plays, e.g., comedy in tragedies. Sidney labeled mixed genres as "gross absurdities" and "doltishness" (244). Sidney also disparaged these features of de Vere's plays: rhyming, mixing prose and verse and placing clowns on stage with kings (Jiménez 90–104).

De Vere's earliest court plays appealed to Elizabeth's love of comedy. But Sidney (245) disliked laughter that lacked "delightful teaching," "laughter at sinful things," and "to jest at strangers because they speak not English so well as we do." Oxford's proteges John Lyly and Robert Greene reveled in Euphuism, but Sidney labeled Euphuist texts "absurd" and "tedious prattling" (247); he derided being "rhymed to death" (250).

Moreover, Sidney in *Defence* skewered writers of histories, claiming that they wrote of "passions...and the many particulars of battles of which no man could affirm" and put "long orations...in the mouths of great kings and captains, which it is certain they never pronounced" (*Defence* 214). Measured by the quartos printed in his lifetime Oxford wrote mostly histories—over 20 in

total. Elizabeth's £1,000 annuity to Oxford, initiated in 1586 and lasting 18 years, may have included tacit remuneration for writing and revising patriotic histories that steeled England for its inevitable hostilities with Spain (Cutting 83–103; Goldstein 77–113; Whittemore 114–117).

Focusing on contemporary English poetry, Sidney expressly criticized *Hekatompathia* by Thomas Watson. The sonnet collection, published in 1582 and dedicated to de Vere, contained explanatory notes likely written by de Vere (Whittemore 94–6). By criticizing *Hekatompathia*, Sidney thereby panned de Vere.

In *Defence of Poesy*, Sidney prescribed what he thought “poesy” should be, whether in plays, poems, prose, fiction, or songs. What enduring literature did Philip himself create in his short lifetime? Sidney's only stage work (the *Lady of May* masque) and his rhymed, versified *Psalms* (created mostly by sister Mary) quickly were lost to obscurity. Aside from miscellaneous poems, Sidney's two enduring creations were his *Astrophel and Stella* sonnets and *Arcadia* prose romance; both were pirated, published prematurely and later edited and republished by sister Mary.

Sidney's Pirated Publications

The first printed quartos of Sidney's prose romance *Arcadia* (1590) and the *Astrophel and Stella* sonnets (1591) were unauthorized. Both pirated publications occurred without editing and approval from Mary Sidney Herbert—who viewed both *Arcadia* and *Astrophel* as her property. I think those two publications represented explosive warnings of the Herbert family's vulnerability to myriad manuscripts held by an unknowable array of friends, enemies, poets, and publishers. The capture and control of texts and publishing rights would be executed methodically and masterfully by Mary's two sons before they rebranded Oxford's play canon to a provincial actor from Stratford-on-Avon.

The Thomas Nashe preface to the 1591 *Astrophel* pirate edition contained fawning hyperbole of the Sidney-Herbert family along with off-color metaphors. The quarto concluded with poems by Thomas Campion, Samuel Daniel and Oxford himself. This *Astrophel* edition was soon withdrawn and replaced by publisher Newman with revisions that excluded Nashe's preface and the poems of others (Hannay, *Phoenix* 69; Brennan 56).

In his Petrarchan sonnet cycle *Astrophel* Sidney idolized a married woman named Penelope Devereux Rich, whose father was the 1st Earl of Essex. Her sexual and marital scandals soon became looming embarrassments for the Sidney, Herbert, Devereux and Walsingham families (Moore, “Stella Coverup”). In several plays, Oxford ridicules histrionic sonnet writing by

self-absorbed males. In *Henry V* the haughty, preening Dauphin (another likely satire of Sidney) considers writing a sonnet to his horse before the imminent carnage of Agincourt. His stunned French military officers view this horse-sonnet musing as “effeminate” narcissism (Jiménez 100). When Oxford revised *Love’s Labour’s Lost* he again satirized courtiers who wrote overwrought sonnets, with Berowne likening lovesick courtiers to “minstrels” and jugglers (IV. 3.156).

In 1898 the renowned Shakespeare scholar Sir Sidney Lee wrote that for Philip Sidney: “Petrarch, Ronsard and Desportes inspired the majority of Sidney’s efforts, and his addresses to abstractions like sleep, the moon, his muse, grief or lust are almost verbatim translations from the French” (444). Oxford’s 1609 *Sonnets* differs starkly from Sidney’s. Indeed, the 1997 Arden edition states that Shakespeare’s sonnets are “in important respects both anti-Petrarchan and anti-Sidneian” (*Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, ed. Duncan-Jones, 46).³

Venus and Adonis and Lucrece

Only anonymously or behind a pseudonym could de Vere deflect Sidney’s pointed, personal insults that circulated in manuscript and advanced to public print in Sidney’s *Defence of Poesy*. Thus came the two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), employing for the first time de Vere’s invented verb-noun pseudonym—“Shakespeare.”

Richard Lester shows how de Vere’s dedication of *Venus* to Henry Wriothesley alluded to Sidney’s “old” *Arcadia* dedication to his sister Mary and followed Oxford’s prior confrontations with Sidney (67–72).

Oxford’s poem mocked Sidney personally, first by reversing the personalities of Sidney’s *Astrophel* principals. Instead of the frustrated, pining Astrophel male pursuing a retreating Stella, de Vere portrays Venus as a sexually aggressive goddess who is refused repeatedly by an immature, androgynous Adonis. Rejecting the urgent entreaties for sex and love from Venus, the narcissist “boy” prefers hunting and horses. Although Sir Philip eschewed harming animals, he yearned to hunt and do battle with Spain’s Lowlands forces. While Adonis lives he is called “boy” as often (nine times) as he is by name. The word “boy” obviously evokes *Boyet*—the Sidney character in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. The bonneted boy’s rutting horse makes wiser career decisions than does Adonis. Moreover, the ignored procreation pleas of Venus echo Oxford’s entreaties to the Earl of Southampton in his sonnets.

Adding poetic injury to insult, de Vere also ridiculed Sidney’s odd simile in *Defence* where Philip compared good poetry to fine horses and horsemanship. Adonis loses his horse, as did Sidney before his mortal battlefield wound.

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Oxford's 11-stanza equine subplot in *V&A* is elegant and knowledgeable about horses (*Poems* 1.258–324). Between lines 289–94 Vere also alludes to Sidney's notion in *Defence* that poets should exceed Nature, a concept that Hamlet disputes.

A wild boar, dominant in Oxford's heraldry, slays Adonis. The imagery of the feral beast “nuzzling” in the flank of Adonis while “sheath[ing] unaware the tusk in his soft groin” is unforgettable (l. 1105–16). Oxford ironically describes here the literary wound he is administering to Sidney. The seasonal purple flower honoring Adonis—a piteous bequest from the mournful Venus—suggests the robe of nobility and immortality that was bestowed on Sidney in his dramatic, expensive funeral in London. Edmund Spenser's eulogy for Sidney (not printed until 1595) likely influenced de Vere's poem. Spenser describes Sidney as wounded by a Beast, mourned by his Love (which in Spenser represents Stella/Penelope Rich instead of Philip's wife, Frances Walsingham) and finally is transformed into a flower that changes from red to blue—thus traversing the color spectrum of purple.

The Sidney-Herbert camp surely understood *V&A*'s many implied ties to Sir Philip. Oxford's complex overlay of allegory counterpoint, like the musical polyphony of William Byrd and Thomas Tallis, pervades his poetry and his plays. Roger Stritmatter shows how *Venus and Adonis* also evokes Elizabeth and de Vere, respectively, in his paper “Case in Verse” (171–219).⁴

Venus and Adonis remains a riveting poetic achievement in which Vere advanced the following arguments: (i) he urged Southampton to behave and choose in life the opposite of the narcissists Adonis/Sidney/Essex; (ii) he set his own rules for dramatic allegorical poetry spiced with Renaissance pornography; (iii) he wrote a classically inspired narrative poem that was a dish of cold, vengeful poetry that overwhelmed Sidney's “idle” toys; (iv) he launched his topical “Shakespeare” pseudonym that alluded to public praise from Sidney acolyte Gabriel Harvey.⁵ But with that pseudonym de Vere miscalculated, for *Willobie His Avis* turned de Vere's visor as transparent as the failed disguises of his Muscovites in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The *Rape of Lucrece* in 1594 offered another intimate dedication to Southampton by “Shakespeare.” What's more, de Vere's unmistakable literary fingerprints in *Lucrece* included source material from Ovid (*Fasti*); rapacious imagery and allusions to sex, body parts, licentious appetites, the seizing of Troy and predators stalking their prey; and literary ties to the rapes and revenges of Lavinia and Philomena in *Titus Andronicus* and *Metamorphoses*.

The prose argument of *Lucrece* describes how avarice and pillage by Tarquin generated political anarchy and thus toppled a monarchy. De Vere's graver lesson in *Lucrece* (for Southampton but also for Elizabeth and the Cecils) was

that usurpers of humans, property and public honor could shred the hierarchies of order and degree, thereby handing the empire to its consuls and commoners.

In *Lucrece* a Machiavellian miscreant calculates, stalks, and rapes a married woman, then steals away. Which prideful, scheming Elizabethan had a reputation for intimidation and seizing the wealth of others? Two prime suspects were relatives of Philip Sidney, the first being his uncle, Robert Dudley. A second Tarquin prospect was Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex—Dudley's stepson. Devereux inherited Philip's Zutphen sword and soon thereafter married Sidney's widow. Devereux also became Southampton's political mentor at court. Tarquin's excessive pride gave him the nickname *Superbus*—super ego—a trait in Elizabeth's court ascribed to both Dudley and Essex. Tarquin also shared with Dudley ("Lucrece," *Poems*, l. 530) an alleged expertise in poisons and how to mask them. The Achilles reference (l. 1424) evokes the Achilles/Dudley parallel that de Vere embedded in his *Troilus and Cressida* allegory. Insofar as the "super ego" villain of *Lucrece* reminded readers of Dudley or Devereux (and his sister Penelope) those connections would cause public embarrassment to the Sidney-Herberts.

In his two narrative poems Oxford violated the constraints of Sidney's *Defence* precepts in ways that tarnished the hagiography of Philip that Mary Sidney Herbert devotedly toiled to promote. *Willobie His Avis* would soon make her task even more difficult.

Willobie His Avis

In 1594 a salacious allegorical poem entitled *Willobie His Avis* was published. It provided the social context necessary for leading readers directly to Edward de Vere, the pseudonymous author "William Shakespeare."

Two prominent Elizabethans were exposed in *Avis*. Oxfordian scholars identify the two males in *Avis*'s lurid love triangle as: (i) de Vere/Shakespeare—an older, married "actor" with the initials W.S.; and (ii) Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton—a youth tutored by W.S. to woo the now-married former mistress of W.S. This *Avis* scenario resembled the lurid triangle in de Vere's *Sonnets* that were circulating in manuscript during the 1590s and printed in 1609.

By hyphenating "Shake-speare," the 1594 *Avis* text signaled to the general public that this name was a pseudonym. *Avis* thus poisoned the "William Shakespeare" name for Oxford, and also signaled to rogue publishers, printers and plagiarists that they might pirate the plays and poetry of de Vere and perhaps face manageable risks.

Avisa may have been published by design to injure de Vere and Southampton (Chiljan, *Suppressed*, 233–41; Prechter, 135–67; Hamill, 130–147). Whoever the poem's actual author, the collateral damage from *Avisa* potentially would be significant for many patricians, from the Cecils and Herberts to Queen Elizabeth herself.⁶ *Avisa* was banned by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London in 1599.

How might the Sidney-Herberts counter this exposure of Oxford as Shakespeare? One remedy would be the complete decontextualization of de Vere's canon, a goal that required access to and control of both the unpublished manuscripts and already published texts of Oxford's plays. For the Herberts that quest perhaps began in 1597 and advanced materially in 1604, when Mary Herbert's son Philip wed de Vere's daughter Susan, thereby opening a future path to play text control.

Problem Plays for the Sidney-Dudley-Herberts

More than 30 quartos of Oxford's canonic and apocryphal plays had been published by the time of his death in 1604 (Gilvary 490), yet few if any of them had been authorized by de Vere (Chiljan, *Suppressed*, Chapter 2). The troubling content of these printed quartos for the Sidney-Herberts, and the added risks of de Vere's unpublished play texts are illustrated among the problem plays discussed below. Such plays variously contain: (i) disturbing portrayals of Philip Sidney or his uncle Robert Dudley; (ii) injustice and political chaos caused by duplicitous seizures of estates or crowns; (iii) gross violations of Sidney's *Defence* precepts; and (iv) related dangers for the Herberts, Cecils or the Elizabethan Court.

The problem plays described below are illustrative, not exhaustive. Other plays also contained topical plot items or characters that put Herbert forebears and various prominent Elizabethans at risk if de Vere's authorship were known. Such plays include *Richard III*⁷ and *Cymbeline*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *As You Like It*, *Taming of A* [and *The*] *Shrew*, *Troublesome Raigne* and *King John*, *Anthony and Cleopatra* and apocryphal "War of the Roses" quartos that were staged by Lord Pembroke's Servants.

***Titus Andronicus*.** De Vere's *Titus* integrated Ovidian and Senecan barbarism where body parts and classical time, place and plot unities were serially dismembered. The 1594 and 1600 *Titus* quarto title pages both expressly endangered the Herberts' reputation, for they announced to history that Henry Herbert's "Pembroke" servants staged *Titus*—a popular, dystopian bloodbath that disemboweled Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* rules.

Could Mary Sidney Herbert allow history to remember that *Titus* was staged by the players of Lord Pembroke, her own husband, the father of her

“Incomparable Paire” of sons? Could she permit her grandchildren to learn that their two grandfathers, the Earls of Oxford and Pembroke, had enabled this Senecan savagery to soil the public stages? Whom would an indignant Sir Philip have challenged to a duel? The 1623 decontextualization imposed by the Herberts’ First Folio project answered all three questions.

Richard II. Lands and estates are seized and political anarchy ensues. A king is deposed, humiliated, imprisoned, and then murdered on stage. Much stage rhyming occurs—something that Sidney derided. Gardening clowns (III.4) share the stage with and instruct the queen. The word “gage” (glove) is spoken 12 times in this play (“engaged” three more times) during fiery duel challenges. Act V.1 contains six hilarious, glove-slamming duel challenges that the Crown vetoes, at which modern audiences still roar with laughter. We can also laugh with the knowledge of Sidney’s many rash, forbidden duel challenges that de Vere satirizes. Act 5, scene 3 similarly engages in near farce by making fun of speaking French with a king on stage. Oxford’s history thus minces Sidney and his *Defence of Poesy* principles.

Famous Victories of Henry V. Oxford’s apocryphal, juvenile history-comedy likely triggered many of Philip Sidney’s attacks in *Defence of Poesy* (Jiménez 31–108). No direct evidence exists: (i) that Philip Sidney attended productions of *Famous Victories* (or the 1579 *Double Masques* of the *Knights* and *Amazons*); (ii) that those three works were the beginnings of *Henry V* and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*; or (iii) that de Vere acquired a manuscript of *Defense of Poesy* before its 1595 publication. But myriad written documents and public behavior amount to compelling circumstantial evidence for all three conjectures. Thus, Jiménez concludes that Sidney critiqued *Famous Victories* in *Defence* (91) and that Vere accessed a manuscript copy of *Defence* “in the early 1580s” (93).

Famous Victories mixes theater genres and commingles clowns with kings so that undignified royal behavior is placed center stage. Oxford redoubled the rebukes to Sidney when he expanded *Famous Victories* into their three *Folio* plays. For example, *Henry V* adds a chorus that makes sarcastic apologies for the upcoming time and place disunities and begs theater audiences to use their imagination as scenes are changed on stage. Oxford also included French and English language jokes and bawdy innuendo wholly at odds with Sidney’s prim *Defence* stage rules.

Loves’ Labour’s Lost. In 1579 two masques (of *Amazons* and *Knights*) played at court (Clark 107). Rima Greenhill explains how de Vere enhanced these early proto-comedies with layers of topical allusions such as Russian and French marriage politics, Euphuism, the Nashe-Harvey literary wars, etc. (113–35). Indeed, scholars have labored for four centuries to uncover all of *LLL*’s dense tapestry of puns, allusions and topical enigmas.

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Oxford ridicules Philip Sidney in *LLL* as the character Boyet—a preening, gossipy Frenchman whom Berowne (de Vere) accuses of plagiarizing others' words. De Vere has Boyet recite flowery, Euphuist vocabulary (which Sidney detested) penned by an impoverished knight (which Sidney was) who cites variations on the word “truth” (de Vere's motto) four times in three lines along with Sidney's *Defence* word for tragedy, “commiseration,” while reading from a letter that is misdelivered (as Sidney did with a Dudley letter) to Rosaline instead of to the wanton Jaquenetta⁸—who is already pregnant by a bawdy clown who mingles with and jokes on stage with royalty. This offensive stagecraft was surely intentional. Orthodox sources acknowledge *LLL*'s many violations of Sidney's *Defence* precepts (*Arden LLL* 1998, 2–6).

LLL also satirizes pedantic erudition. Holofernes spouts tedious Latinizations and long rhapsodies of synonyms and subordinate clauses—thereby ridiculing the affectations of Sidney supporter Gabriel Harvey, professor of rhetoric at Cambridge University. Yet de Vere grants to the clown Costard the longest word (and in Latin) in the entire Shakespeare canon: “*honorificabilitudinitatibus*” (V.1.40).

Another key allusion to Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* occurs in *LLL* when the witty Rosaline says (II.1.74–5) that Berowne speaks so well: “That aged ears play truant at his tales/And younger hearings are quite ravished.” Oxford's homage to a poet reworks and versifies Sidney's prose in *Defence* that the best poet “cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner” (*Major Works*, l. 609–10).

***Twelfth Night*.** Performed in 1602 at Middle Temple but unpublished until the First Folio in 1623, the play satirizes Sidney's didactic virtue and piety in the character of Sir Andrew Aguecheek. The identification is twofold: Philip Sidney was born on St. Andrew's Day, while a bout with smallpox had given him an “agued” cheek. He is a romantically awkward narcissist and braggart who capers on stage like an Elizabethan clown. Aguecheek also issues a challenge to a duel, then flees from a female duelist who (dressed as a young man) timidly brandishes a sword. The regal Lady Olivia, like Mary Sidney Herbert, is in deep mourning for a recently deceased brother. Olivia is captivated by a dashing young man; for Mary Sidney in real life this was Dr. Matthew Lister (Hannay 191, 201). Sir Toby Belch evokes Peregrine Bertie, a Dudley-Sidney ally and de Vere's brother-in-law. French and English words are hilariously garbled.

Yet Oxford lampooned a more powerful courtier in the play—Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor of England from 1587–91.

“I may command where I adore,” Malvolio reads in a fabricated letter in *Twelfth Night*, assuming it is addressed to him by the rich countess Olivia,

whom he slavishly serves as both steward and hopeful lover. The letter is signed “The Fortunate Unhappy”—echoing the Latin pen name *Si Fortunatus Infoelix*, which appears on numerous poems in the 1573 poetry anthology, *A Hundred Sundry Flowers*. That it was a posy of Hatton was confirmed by his contemporary, Gabriel Harvey. In his copy of the 1576 reprint of *A Hundred Sundry Flowers*, Harvey wrote in the margin, “Fortunatus infoelix, lately a posy of Sir Christopher Hatton” (Anderson 69).

Queen Elizabeth made Hatton the Captain of her Bodyguard in 1572. At thirty-two, tall and handsome, Hatton had attracted the Queen with his dancing. Hatton was infatuated with the Queen, whose nickname for him was “mutton” or “sheep,” whereas Oxford was the “boar” because of the boar on his coat of arms. During the summer of 1573, when Hatton became ill, Elizabeth sent him to Spa in Belgium; he wrote to her using those nicknames to express his jealousy over Oxford.

In 1577 the Queen knighted Hatton and made him a member of her Privy Council. In a 1580 letter to Elizabeth, Hatton wrote, “It is a gracious favour, most dear and welcome to me. Reserve it to the Sheep [i.e., Hatton himself]. He hath no tooth to bite, where the Boar’s [Oxford’s] tusk may both raze and tear.” He signed the letter, “Your Majesty’s Sheep and most bound vassal” (Anderson 153).

This brings us back to the play on Hatton’s pen name as “The Fortunate Unhappy” that appears in the letter Malvolio reads in *Twelfth Night*, believing it was written to him by Olivia. In the comedy, Olivia’s uncle Sir Toby Belch refers to Malvolio as a “rascally sheep-biter”—echoing Hatton’s letter to the Queen (154).

Finally, Maria’s letter to Malvolio suggests that wearing yellow stockings will empower Malvolio in his love suit for Olivia—which points to Hatton since his coat of arms bore a golden hind.

The Merry Wives of Windsor. This comedy targets Sidney and Dudley with its biting topical plot—the courtship of Anne Cecil. A thin and impoverished young man named Slender (Sidney) with a bullying uncle Shallow (Dudley) seeks but loses the hand in marriage of Anne (Anne Cecil), who instead marries Fenton (de Vere). As Looney pointed out in 1922, Fenton is described with such precision that all the references to him also apply to Oxford: “Great of birth,” “his state gall’d with expense,” “his riots,” “his wild societies,” “he capers, he dances, he writes verses,” “he kept company with the wild prince and Pains” (“New Evidence” 89). At the same time, Charles Vere states that Shakespeare’s characterization of Slender clearly applies to Sidney: his humorlessness, his slender physique and history of ill

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health, his clichéd and trite use of language, insecurity over his family lineage, his dependence on the wealth and word of his uncle (“Sir Philip Sidney” 5).

In addition, the character of the Welshman Hugh Evans rehearses children for the masque that ends the play, thereby mirroring Henry Evans, the Blackfriars manager of Oxford’s Boys. J. Thomas Looney (“New Evidence” 79–93), Ruth Miller (*Oxfordian Vistas*, 2, 161–76) and Charles Vere (3–10) all noted the play’s deep biographical ties to de Vere and Sidney.

Hamlet. Many scholars see Dudley as Claudius to Oxford’s autobiographical Hamlet. Claudius is a usurping adulterer who seduces a Queen, poisons his brother/king, steals his crown, seizes his estate and displaces the rightful young heir. In the bloody finale, Claudius poisons his queen and Hamlet before the dying heir poisons the villainous usurper. Richard Whalen concludes that:

Leicester’s notorious reputation as a poisoner and using henchmen to carry out his murderous poisonings are fundamental to the plot of *Hamlet*. . . . Oxford may well have felt the ancient desire to avenge the death of his father by killing Leicester and also felt the artistic compulsion to work through these conflicted emotions by writing *Hamlet* (22, 38).

Insofar as Claudius mirrors Dudley, Laertes evokes Sidney—a dueling Francophile hothead whose aggression and bravado enable his own death. Oxford also rebukes Philip Sidney with Hamlet’s famous advice to the players: that poets, playwrights and actors must “hold a mirror up to nature,” not seek to surpass nature, as Sidney advises in *Defence of Poesy*.⁹ Ridiculing two prominent Elizabethans at once, Oxford has the tedious Polonius (William Cecil) list all possible mixed-genre drama categories (II. 2) that violated Sidney’s fussy classical unities.

Topical allusions to the Cecils go far beyond this. Oxford’s father-in-law, Lord Burghley, wrote out a set of precepts (“Towards thy superiors be humble yet generous; with thine equals familiar yet respective”) strongly reminiscent of the advice Polonius gives to Laertes (“Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar. . .”). Other precepts also echoed the advice of Polonius. For example, Burghley writes that, “Neither borrow of a neighbor or of a friend, but of a stranger, whose paying for it thou shalt hear no more of it. . . . Trust not any man with thy life credit, or estate.” Compare with Polonius: “Neither a borrower nor a lender be; for loan oft loses both itself and friend and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.”

Burghley’s *Precepts*, intended for the use of his son Robert, was published in 1618. *Hamlet* first appeared in quarto in 1603. Edmund K. Chambers, one of

the leading Shakespeare scholars of the twentieth century, offered the following explanation: “Conceivably Shakespeare knew a pocket manuscript.” A more likely explanation is that Oxford, being Burghley’s ward and then son-in-law, had easy access to the original manuscript.

In Act II, Polonius sends Reynaldo to spy on Laertes in Paris, possibly to catch him “drinking, fencing, swearing, quarreling,” or “falling out at tennis.” In real life Burghley’s older son, Thomas Cecil, did go to Paris, but Burghley somehow received information, through a secret channel, of Thomas’s “inordinate love of...dice and cards.” Oxford, of course, did have a real “falling out at tennis” in 1579 at Court with Philip Sidney.

The King’s counselor, Polonius (Burghley), is stabbed and killed by Hamlet while spying on the Prince. Burghley, of course, was Elizabeth’s lifelong senior counselor, serving as Secretary of State from 1557 to 1572, then as Lord Treasurer from 1572 to 1598.

Troilus and Cressida. The play is a nihilistic, dystopian anti-Sidneian history-tragedy-comedy that satirized several prominent Elizabethans (see <https://public.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/shakespeare/t&c1.html> by Michael Delahoyde). Does the character of Pandarus ridicule William Cecil? The Achilles character upended Sidney’s *Defence of Poesy* hierarchies that ranked heroic verse as the best possible poetry subset and expressly named Achilles as first among warriors meriting such poetic treatment (*Major Works* 231). But Oxford transforms Achilles into a volatile, arrogant, self-absorbed brute. Anti-hero Achilles cowardly unleashes his demonic Myrmidons to encircle and butcher an unarmed, helpless Hector, whose corpse is then defiled by Achilles. The senior Ogburns and Eva Turner Clark saw in Achilles the moody bully Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Similarly, the taunting, brash Patroclus evokes Philip Sidney’s brash, fatally armored battlefield demise in the Netherlands.

The Herberts and Edward de Vere

De Vere’s animus for Philip Sidney apparently bypassed Henry Herbert, 2nd Earl of Pembroke, his wife Mary and their issue. Henry’s Pembroke’s players staged at least three of Oxford’s plays: *The Taming of a Shrew*, *Titus Andronicus* and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (Brennan 94–5). Another indication that de Vere’s enmity toward Sidney and Dudley did not attach to Mary Sidney Herbert is that Oxford gave her a flattering portrayal as Lady Olivia in *Twelfth Night*.

With her deep reverence for her brother, Mary Sidney became guardian, defender and executor of his writings and legacy. In the late 1580s, she began editing his manuscripts and faced numerous difficulties in controlling the

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content and printing of Sidney's four major works. Philip's Puritanical stage rules in *Defence* were already superseded by the robust post-*Tamburlaine* London theater scene. Sidney's 150 *Psalm* adaptations were only a quarter complete.¹⁰ Finally, *Astrophel* and *Arcadia* both faced challenges of ownership, propriety, editing and publishing.

Mary Sidney ultimately drew criticism for bowdlerizing Philip's works (altering a rape scenario in "old" *Arcadia*) and for "trying to supplant" or "strike a blow against Shakespeare" (Hannay, *Phoenix* 120–1; *DLB*, Mary Sidney Herbert, 191). Indeed, she did both but in her own circumspect and indirect ways.¹¹ Mary's elder son William, tutored by Samuel Daniel and herself, was taught how "he was the family's heir to the mantle of the famous dead hero" Philip Sidney (Waller 140–1) and "to emulate his uncle's example" (Brennan 76).

More significantly, both Herbert brothers pursued Oxford's daughters in marriage. In 1597, Henry Herbert (Mary's husband) negotiated with Lord Treasurer Cecil for the marriage of son William to de Vere's middle daughter Bridget—a marriage for which de Vere expressed approval (Anderson 314). But negotiations failed due to financial demands by Cecil. Younger brother Philip Herbert, who quickly became a favorite of King James (Hannay 123; Hughes 95, n.25), later successfully courted Oxford's youngest daughter, Susan. In December 1604 Crown Prince Henry walked Susan de Vere to Whitehall chapel where a delighted King James presented Susan to wed Philip Herbert. Further illuminating these Herbert-Oxford marital dynamics, Roger Stritmatter explains how a 1619 book entitled *ARXAIO-PLOUTOS*, from the Jaggard publishing house, dedicated to Susan de Vere and her husband, identified them as the key to the Herberts' grand possession of unpublished de Vere playscripts. In the dedication, the pair is described as owners of an orchard, whose fruits "are all yours, and whosoever else shall taste of them, do enioy such freedome but by your favor." These stewards are therefore urged to "bestow how, and when you list [i.e., please]" ("Bestow" 18–19). Jaggard would go on to publish the First Folio in 1623.



Philip Herbert, 4th Earl of Pembroke, in the robes of the Order of the Garter c. 1615.

Concurrent with the 1604–5 Christmas celebrations and the Vere-Herbert marriage, King James attended a series of plays written by or related to Oxford. The 1623 short titles of these plays were: *Merchant of Venice* (played twice), *Othello*¹², *Comedy of Errors*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Measure for Measure* and *Henry V*. Staged as well was Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of his Humour*, a comedy with a character, Sogliardo, whose motto is "Not Without Mustard," which directly ridiculed the Stratford Shakspeare by reference to the coat of arms that Shakspeare had recently acquired for himself bearing the motto *Non Sans Droit*, or "Not Without Right." The Revels account lists "Shaxberd" the playwright for each de Vere play that listed an author. Orthodox scholars suggest various reasons for the five distinct "Shaxberd" Revels entries.¹³ "Berd" is a Frisian/Middle English noun that glosses as "beard"—a disguise—ergo: *Shaks disguise* (Farina 39).

Since this royal festival of plays exudes Sidney-Vere frictions and authorship challenges, why would the Herberts and Robert Cecil have presented them to King James? Perhaps it demonstrated to James and Queen Anne the potential risks that de Vere's plays presented to the Crown, thereby giving the Stuarts ocular proof that Oxford must remain disguised by the "beard" of Stratford's Shakspeare.

As the two Herbert brothers amassed Jacobean titles and power, they captured positions at Court that permitted them to reign over de Vere's entire canon of plays. William Herbert refused several higher positions from King James in order to become Lord Chamberlain in 1615 (Miller, *Oxfordian Vistas* 2:6–17). William served as Lord Chamberlain until 1626, refusing to relinquish the title until James permitted brother Philip to succeed him. Philip Herbert proceeded to serve as Lord Chamberlain from 1626 to 1641. Meanwhile William had arranged for his cousin Sir Henry Herbert to operate as Master of Revels from 1623 to 1641 and again from 1660 to 1673 (Ogburn, 217; Brennan 139).

With control of playscripts, archives and theater stagings owned by The King's Men, the Herberts could shape the future of each Oxford play. History shows that the Herberts chose to erase Oxford as playwright by strategically defining his play canon and transferring de Vere's narrative poem pseudonym to *Guilliermus Shakspeare*—i.e., to William Shakspeare of Stratford.¹⁴ As the target for reassigning most of the play canon, William Shakspeare was a phonetically useful London theater name known to the Herbert family. Orthodox scholars conjecture that Shakspeare and Richard Burbage briefly shared a theater with, or joined the acting company of, Henry Herbert, 2nd Earl of Pembroke (Mary Sidney's husband) before joining The Chamberlain's Men (Manley and MacLean 301–4; Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites* 28; Gurr, *Shakespeare Company* 17–19).

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The Herbert family's goal of protecting the reputation of Philip Sidney, among other members of the nobility, later would mesh with and advance the brothers' commitment to preserve England's Protestant religion and to oppose the marriage of Prince Charles to the Catholic daughter of Spain's King Philip III (Stritmatter, "Lesser Latin" Part 1, 18–22; Dickson, *Bardgate* 2011, 115–6 and *Bardgate* 2016, 73).

Despite her essential role in the Herbert family's procurement of Oxford's literary legacy, Susan Vere's prominence in Wilton House diminished over time. Bonner Cutting demonstrates that Susan's figure in the massive Van Dyke painting of the Pembroke family is now misidentified as Anne Clifford, Philip's second wife (173–95). Nor was Lady Clifford apparently a fan of the Herberts' 1623 First Folio (Cutting 151–72). Perhaps her disdain stemmed from how Oxford in *3 Henry VI* portrayed Anne's ancestor, Clifford, as the vengeful, ruthless killer of the unarmed York youth Rutland.

A Chronology of Pivotal Events

- 1597—Shakspere buys a large Stratford house for £60 or more. That same year marriage negotiations failed for William Herbert (age 17) and Bridget Vere, Oxford's middle daughter.
- 1598—Lord Treasurer William Cecil dies, and several quartos are published listing William Shakespeare on the title page as dramatist for the first time.
- 1601—Henry Herbert dies. Most Pembroke wealth and property passes to William Herbert, age 20. The gateway to Herbert literary patronage shifts to William from his mother Mary.
- 1602—Shakspere of Stratford buys nearby land for £320 (Ogburn 783).
- 1601–3—Elizabeth commutes Southampton's sentence of death to life imprisonment after his Essex Rebellion conviction. After his coronation in 1603, King James frees Southampton.
- 1604—Edward de Vere dies.
- 1605—Shakspere purchases Stratford parish tithes for £440 (Ogburn 784).
- 1609—*Shake-speare's Sonnets* are published and quickly suppressed. The “*Shake-speare*” hyphenation rebrands the name as a pseudonym.
- 1610—Philip Herbert and Henry Wriothesley engage in a heated, racquet-throwing tennis-court argument (Chiljan, *Suppressed*, 324–5). King James forbids their duel. Echoes of Philip Sidney and Oxford's tennis court quarrel from 30 years earlier.
- 1612—young Crown Prince Henry, a committed Protestant, dies unexpectedly of typhoid fever.
- 1612—Robert Cecil dies. Stratford's Shakspere invests £140 (Price 18) in the Blackfriars Gatehouse.¹⁵
- 1614—Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, dies.
- 1615—William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, becomes Lord Chamberlain, giving him control over King's Men texts. Pembroke remains Chamberlain until his brother Philip succeeds him as Lord Chamberlain from 1626 to 1641.

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1621—Mary Sidney Herbert dies.

1621–23—the Earls of Southampton and Oxford were variously imprisoned during the Spanish Marriage crisis.

1623—the Spanish Marriage negotiations collapse.

1623—the First Folio is published. Actors John Hemminges and Henry Condell proclaimed assembly of this 36-play Shakespeare collection was derived from their “True Originall Copies.” The play collection was dedicated to William and Philip Herbert.

In the First Folio, Ben Jonson’s masterful encomium to the “Sweet Swan of Avon” ambiguously embraced three Shakespeare constituents: (i) author Edward de Vere in Hampton Court [known to contemporaries as “Avon”] (Waugh 97–103); (ii) actor *Guillermus Shakspeare*, Stratford-on-Avon’s folio “beard;” and (iii) Mary Sidney Herbert of Wilton House, located on a different Avon river (Dickson, 2011, 108–9).

1624–5—the “Two Most Noble Henries” die. Henry Wriothesley and his son James allegedly were the victims of fever in the Lowlands in 1624. Henry de Vere, 18th Earl of Oxford, reportedly dies on the battlefield in 1625. No autopsies were conducted, and no state funerals or hero worship followed.

1626—Philip Herbert succeeds brother William as Lord Chamberlain—thereby maintaining Herbert control over the London theaters and licensing of plays until 1641.

1630—all of Edward de Vere’s offspring are dead by this time..

1723—Westminster Abbey’s Poets’ Corner still had no monument to Ben Jonson. A Jonson monument is finally placed in a Poets’ Corner aisle by the first of a new line of the Earls of Oxford, the Harleys.

Conclusions

Scholars have long sought explanations for why Edward de Vere's authorship of the Shakespeare canon continued to be anonymous after his 1604 death.¹⁶ Building on a century of Oxfordian research and scholarship, this essay shows why the Herbert-Pembroke family as early as the 1590s had powerful motives to shield their relatives from Oxford's ridicule and public embarrassment by permanently concealing de Vere as author of the Shakespeare canon.

Throughout their lives, Edward de Vere and Philip Sidney were personal, literary and political enemies, starting with Sidney losing the hand of Anne Cecil in marriage to Oxford.¹⁷ Further, Sidney detested Oxford's early court plays such as the early versions of *Henry V* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, then criticized Oxford and issued didactic stage and poetry rules in his posthumous *Defence of Poesy*. In response, Oxford in his dramas took satiric revenge on the Sidney-Dudley family.

Moreover, in two narrative poems de Vere flouted Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* rules with his own literary philosophy along with caustic barbs at Sidney and Dudley. *Venus & Adonis* allegorically mocked Sidney as a narcissist boy who esteemed hunting and horses but fled carnal embrace from Love's Goddess. The "graver labour" *Lucrece* darkened de Vere's themes of lust, chastity, and death by adding predation, rape, revenge, suicide and political anarchy. *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* displayed de Vere's poetic and dramatic genius and defied Sidney's pious, moralizing literary views. But the 1594 *Willobie His Avis* libel revealed Oxford as a published author and flagged "William Shakespeare" as his pseudonym, thereby dangerously contextualizing de Vere's plays and poems. Indeed, it would take until 1598 for the name William Shakespeare to be printed on a title page of a Shakespeare drama.

By Oxford's death in 1604, more than 30 play quartos bearing the name of William Shakespeare were in print. Many plays lampooned Philip Sidney or his uncle Robert Dudley. Equally important, other prominent Elizabethans who were directly ridiculed or collaterally endangered by de Vere's plays included William Cecil, Lord Burghley and his son, Sir Robert Cecil; Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton; Lady Penelope Rich; William Brooke, Baron Cobham; Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton; Sir Peregrine Bertie; Sir Francis Walsingham; Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Christopher Hatton. Many of these men occupied powerful positions—from Secretary of State (the Cecils and Walsingham) and Lord Treasurer (Burghley), to Lord Chancellor (Hatton). Even de Vere's own offspring, not to mention the monarchs Elizabeth and James, risked embarrassment were Oxford to be formally recognized as Shakespeare.

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The extended Sidney-Herbert families thus had compelling personal and political motives to banish de Vere permanently as Shakespeare. In King James' regime the Herbert brothers methodically sought, seized and retained the power to do just that. The Herberts opened their path to controlling unpublished de Vere playscripts by marrying a de Vere daughter in 1604. The brothers then sought and for over two decades retained the most powerful oversight position for theater and publishing in King James' regime: that of Lord Chamberlain.

The Herberts' Shakespeare project was inspired by the chaos of the Spanish Marriage crisis and its pro-Protestant resolution. Armed with the original play texts along with publishing and Revels control, the Herberts in 1623 severed Edward de Vere's authorship from his plays—an outcome collectively serving the Herberts' family legacy along with religious and political interests. Many other parodied nobles and royals were collaterally rescued at the same time.

Thus, Herbert family wealth and political power succeeded in (i) enshrining Philip Sidney; (ii) covering up Philip's "Stella" muse; (iii) covering up William Herbert's trysts and two illegitimate children with his first cousin, Mary Wroth—the daughter of his mother's brother Robert Sidney (Waller); (iv) catching the young Susan Vere (Stritmatter) and then making her disappear from Herbert family history (Cutting); and (v) enabling the 1623 substitution of William Shakspeare as the Shakespeare canon author.

In their own poets' duel, the Houses of Oxford and Sidney engaged in lifelong combat. Sidney was fatally wounded in battle and soon mourned and exalted nationally as a war hero and poet. Edward de Vere was interred unceremoniously. He now rests perhaps in Westminster Abbey anonymously, or entombed beside his widow Elizabeth Trentham, or his corpse is lost (Anderson 357–8). Mary Sidney Herbert was likely a seminal force in promoting her brother's literary and martial acclaim above his tangible accomplishments and creative talents; and motivating her two "Incomparable" sons to strip the Shakespeare authorship from Oxford. Those two missions profoundly reshaped English and world culture.

Endnotes

1. Some viewed Philip Sidney's long funeral delay as a calculated Crown decision to distract public attention away from the execution of Mary Queen of Scots (Looney, ed. Warren, 295–6). Sidney died £6000 in debt. The burden for settling Sidney's estate and financing his funeral reportedly fell to his father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham. See a multimedia artwork display commemorating Sidney's funeral at <http://michaelharrison.ws/sidney/>. See Duncan-Jones (*Courtier Poet*, 308–39) for 32 still plates of the funeral procession.
2. The 1589 *Arte of English Poesy* suggests that its anonymous author either had a manuscript copy, or had been alerted to some of the contents, of Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*. See *Arte's* praise instead of debasement of history writers (First Book Chapter XIX); recognition of an iterative relationship between poets and other disciplines, instead of Sidney's static hierarchy (First Book Chapters III and IV); and analyses of whether a poet should reflect or “surpass” nature (Third Book Chapter XXV). Dr. Richard Waugaman in *Newly Discovered Works* supports Oxford as the author of *Arte*.
3. Their two sonnet cycles have aged far differently. Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* showcases frustrated male desire, self-pity, histrionic mood swings, metric experiments and Petrarchan conceits. Duncan-Jones views *Astrophel's* Song X as a “masturbatory fantasy” (*Courtier Poet*, 239), a feature that, if true, apparently escaped Mary Sidney. In contrast, Shakespeare's *Sonnets* are filled with haunting imagery, sophisticated ideas, poetic depth, human drama, real sincerity. De Vere also embedded sonnets in his dramas, such as *Romeo and Juliet*. Upon their first meeting in Act One, the lovers exchange quatrains and complete each other's rhymes and lines. Their introduction sonnet endures as a dramatic, breathtaking on-stage metaphor of love and consummation where form and content mesh.
4. Several plays (*Henry V*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Troilus and Cressida*) are *palimpsest* texts (Anderson 124), where de Vere made extensive revisions to his original texts, sometimes resulting in a counterpoint of characters, themes, imagery and allegories. Here is a conjectured division of *Venus and Adoni*: poem begun before 1586 (the year of Sidney's death and de Vere's £1000 annuity) reflected Oxford's failing personal bond with Elizabeth, her broken promises of favor, his succession concerns. *Venus*

revisions after 1586 added and integrated de Vere's revenge for Philip Sidney affronts and de Vere's entreaties to Southampton about eschewing both Sidney and Essex as role models. Would the Archbishop of Canterbury (Anderson 267) have approved for print de Vere's earliest text had it portrayed too candidly a young, sexually aggressive Elizabeth with her imperious personality? Probably not—but a revised (“palimpsest”) poem text published in 1593 enabled credible denial of both allegories. As Roger Stritmatter concludes: “the text is defensible only because it can be construed in all kinds of creative ways other than the interpretation offered here. Poets themselves must take refuge from censorious authorities in such creative misconstruction” (*Case in Verse* 337).

5. Among the highly personal, topical bases for de Vere's pseudonym are:
(i) Gabriel Harvey's 1578 public observation in Latin that de Vere's countenance “shakes a spear;” (ii) de Vere's success in the tiltyard; and (iii) the spear-bearing Greek goddess of wit and war, Pallas Athena Minerva. See <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ezk1B-airWI>—Katherine Chiljan's 2015 presentation at the Ashland, Oregon, Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Conference.
6. Oxfordians debate the identity of the Avisia/Dark Lady to be wooed by the youth. See e.g. on You Tube:
(i) Alexander Waugh re Penelope Rich: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6l70pqqQEY> ;
(ii) John Hamill re Antonio Perez and Penelope Rich: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cI1HNp4KU2Q>; and
(iii) an October 2018 Dark Lady debate: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTUdEktvvB4&list=PLidycjiCwGljyFt57Od85VEje1RERd-JT_. If either the mistress of *Avisia* or Dark Lady of the *Sonnets* were Penelope Devereux Rich, then the Sidney-Herbert families faced literary threats to the hagiography of Philip Sidney crafted by his sister Mary. See Peter Moore's “Stella Coverup.”
7. By illustration, de Vere portrayed King Richard III as an ambitious, scheming, hunchbacked tyrant blending the worst of the two Roberts—Dudley and Cecil.
8. Don Armado yearns to write a sonnet folio to Jaquenetta, a flirty peasant pregnant by another man. The word *jaquenetta* in colloquial vulgar French denotes a mobile “toilet”—something serving the common use of the community. De Vere thereby ridicules Sidney's overwrought Petrarchan *Astrophel* sonnets and songs for which his muse, Penelope Devereux Rich, became an Elizabethan scandal—a connection that the Sidney-Herbert descendants surely wanted to suppress.

9. A fundamental dispute between de Vere and Sidney centered on the concept of Nature. Sidney in *Defence* claimed that the poet could and should seek to exceed “nature” (Sidney, *Major Works*, 216, italics added):

Only the poet,...lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect *another nature*, in making things either *better than nature* bringeth forth, *or quite anew, forms such as never were in nature*.... Nature *never* set forth the earth in so such rich tapestry as divers poets have done.... Her [nature’s] world is *brazen*, the poets only deliver a golden.

Should “brazen” Nature be censored? De Vere thought otherwise. Speaking through Prince Hamlet he famously sought to “hold the mirror up to nature”—to show us truth whether it is brutal and ugly or good and beautiful.

10. Consider this contrast of the Sidney treatment of literary content and form. Philip Sidney’s *Defence of Poesy* precepts derided “being rhymed to death” with trivial content in the Euphuistic style. Yet Philip concurrently viewed the text of the *Psalms*, i.e., the sacred word of God to the Hebrew King David, as suitable text for alteration by inserting rhymes and English metric forms. Philip’s sister Mary apparently agreed. Moreover, in her *Psalms* editing, Mary also engaged in “expanding metaphors and descriptions present in the original Hebrew,” thereby incorporating “her experiences at Elizabeth’s court, as well as female experiences of marriage and childbirth” (DLB, Mary Sidney Herbert. ed. Hannay 187).
11. Philip Sidney’s *Defence of Poesy* ranked the Continental literary page over the dynamic British stage. With a similar bent for derivative translated verse, Mary Sidney translated Robert Garnier’s poem into her 1592 *Antonius*—a cerebral, low-action, high-interiority blank verse poem that advanced the French neo-Senecan “closet drama.” Herbert family tutor and acolyte Samuel Daniel followed her with his rhyming 1594 *Cleopatra* and “War of the Roses” poems (published 1595–1623)—thereby countering de Vere’s theatrical sensualities and action, and promoting their poetic pages over his dynamic stages.
12. The plot of *Merchant of Venice* suddenly had ironic topical echoes in James’ court: a handsome young man with an older, wealthy male companion suddenly sought traditional marriage with a charming woman he newly loves. *Othello* contained two characters of potential interest to James’ court circle. Cassio has been likened to Philip Sidney. Iago has been likened to crypto-Catholic Henry Howard (Ogburn 563, 569), an arch enemy of Oxford who was resurrected from two decades of dishonor and poverty by Robert Cecil and then elevated to court prominence by King James.

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13. See: Schoenbaum, *Compact Documentary*, 252–3. See also screens 3–4 from: <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/exhibition/document/account-edmund-tylney-master-revels-listing-plays-performed-year-1604-5>. The notion that James' Revels scribe for five different account entries would add a hard *d* consonant to a "speer" sound in order to achieve phonetic accuracy for the Stratford Shakspeare, allegedly at his peak popularity and therefore well known, strains credulity.
14. There is sound logic in the exclusion of several de Vere works by the Herberts in the First Folio. Although *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* satirized the Sidney-Dudley-Herbert families, these poems were perhaps best defused indirectly by express decontextualization of the "William Shakespeare" pseudonym for the plays. Likewise excluded were the already suppressed 1609 *Sonnets* that might embarrass Southampton, the Oxford/Herbert descendants and the Herberts' Protestant cause. Among de Vere's excluded anonymous plays, *Edward III* disparaged the Scots and thereby insulted King James.
15. Four investments by Shakspeare between 1597 and 1613 total nearly £1000, an extraordinary sum for a London theater person. Peter Dickson cites an estimated annual Pembroke income of £22,000 (*Bardgate*, 2011, 111) from which a £1000 payoff paid out over 17 years would have been a pittance.
16. Government support for maintaining de Vere's anonymity from 1604 to 1614 likely came from the dual presence of Robert Cecil (Richard Gloucester) and Henry Howard (Iago, Aaron) in the court of King James. Cecil had secretly engaged Howard in his succession negotiations with James prior to Elizabeth's death (Robinson 85). Neither the Protestant Cecil nor crypto-Catholic Howard faction wanted Oxford to be revealed as Shakespeare.
17. In 1920 J. Thomas Looney in "*Shakespeare*" *Identified* first outlined the Sidney-Oxford literary animus, followed by Eva Turner Clark and Ruth Loyd Miller (*Oxfordian Vistas*, 2, 166–76). Ramon Jiménez detailed specific literary conflicts among the *Famous Victories* plays in *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship* (90–104). Gerit Quealy described the literary Sidney-Oxford barbs at Shakespeare Oxford conferences in Washington, D.C. (2011), Toronto (2013) and in a 2014 *DeVere Society Newsletter*.

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Catching the Flood: River Navigation from the Adige to the Po in Shakespeare's Italy

by Catherine Hatinguais

Lance, away, away! Aboard!
Thy master is shipped, and thou art to post after with oars.
What's the matter? Why weep'st thou, man?
Away, ass, you'll lose the tide, if you tarry any longer.
(...)
Tut, man, I mean thou'lt lose the flood, and,
in losing the flood, lose thy voyage, and,
in losing thy voyage, lose thy master, and, in losing thy master,
lose thy service, and, in losing thy service—
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
(II.3.31–34, 39–42)

Pantino's outburst in Act II scene 3 of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, where he scolds Lance for missing the boat taking Proteus from Verona to Milan, has often been cited by Stratfordian commentators, from Sidney Lee in 1907¹ to Andrew Dickson in 2016 as a “geographical howler” (Dickson's words), evidence of Shakespeare's ignorance of Italy. Both cities are landlocked and it is therefore ludicrous to have characters in the play sailing from one to the other—and there are no tides in Verona! When confronted with the conclusions of other researchers,² who have shown that Shakespeare must have known the country first-hand and been aware of the prevalence of river navigation in Northern Italy, orthodox commentators change tack and dismiss those findings as irrelevant and superflu-

ous since Shakespeare's Italy is purely imaginary anyway, a setting adopted for "mere creative convenience" (Dickson). The same commentators maintain that in this humorous exchange and the many water images in Acts I and II, Shakespeare was conflating a fictitious Verona with London and the river Thames' tidal effects (Perry 34, 36), intent on evoking the departure of sea vessels familiar to his English audience.

Elsewhere the commentators fault Shakespeare—in contrast to travelers like Moryson, Montaigne and Coryat—for not even mentioning Verona's Arena and other well-known tourist landmarks³ (Carroll 76). This omission, readers are led to conclude, can only mean that Shakespeare did not see them and confirm that he did not actually travel in Italy.⁴

Yet what if Pantino's flood refers to something very real? What if Shakespeare simply picked up on the Adige's centrality in Verona's history and economic life and left aside the more obvious tourist highlights? What would sixteenth century travelers⁵ have seen if they had focused their interest on the river and its traffic, instead of the Arena? What would have struck English travelers in Northern Italy as different from river navigation in England?

As we will see, there were major differences. For one, civil authorities in Northern Italy exercised a much tighter control on the use of navigable rivers because the Adige and the Po carried vital international trade over long distances, whereas in England non-tidal rivers—smaller, shorter and carrying exclusively local traffic—were in the hands of private landowners and mill operators. Second, by the sixteenth century the waterways infrastructure in Italy was highly sophisticated: it included trained rivers and man-made canals, dams and locks operated by publicly mandated professionals, specialized services in major river ports, tollgates and garrisoned customs towers, and regular passenger boat service between the main trading cities of Northern Italy.

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In fact, the existence of canals, some of which archeologists have dated back to the Etruscans, is documented since Roman times, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to present times.

Today's visitors to Verona will find an ancient and beautiful city, but one terminally estranged from the river that for centuries gave it life—and sometimes inflicted death and destruction. Standing on one of its bridges, looking down at the deserted waters of the Adige, they will struggle to picture the bustling boat traffic that once was the economic lifeblood of this port city and of towns all the way up in the Trentino and beyond, and all the way down to the *città di Rialto*,⁶ Venice.

What scenes would a sixteenth century traveler have witnessed on the banks of the Adige, where the two massive Lungadige embankments now stand, bare and forbidding? What cityscape would any visitor have seen before the fatal date of 1882, the year of the catastrophic flood which caused Verona to finally turn its back on the river? Finally, what would it have been like to sail from Verona to Venice, Padua, Milan or Ferrara?

Brief History of Verona's Settlement

Already settled in Neolithic times and long inhabited by early tribes, the village which would grow into Verona was originally situated in the foothills of the Veronese pre-Alps (presently *Colle San Pietro*), on the left bank of the Adige. With the Etruscans (700 to 100 BCE) and later the Romans, the heart of the settlement gradually moved to the right bank, enfolded within a large meander of the river on the north and east and a ring of fortifications to the west and south. Over the centuries, a succession of new fortifications were built further out of the original nucleus (Gray 7–13) to accommodate the growing population. In 1405 Verona came under Venetian rule. By the sixteenth century, within its newly modernized defensive walls and bastions completed between 1530 and 1561, the city, with its 50,000 inhabitants, was flourishing—a prosperity directly linked to the river traffic passing through its tollgates and customs houses (Faccioli 102).

The Adige trade—*La via d'acqua atesina*

Trade in the Po region (map 1) is well documented already in Roman times but certainly dates back further, at least to the Bronze Age, when the “Amber Road”—from Jutland to the Adriatic—is known to have followed the Adige (Bagolini 172). There are also archeological traces of Etruscan trade along the river (Patitucci Uggeri 32). After the fall of the Roman empire, roads



Map 1: by Paolo Forlani (1574). The upper and middle Adige, from Trento to the Castagnaro. Verona is in the center, Mantua in the lower left, Legnago in the lower right. The Po river is at the bottom. The dotted lines radiating from Verona represent the main (mostly Roman) roads. (Mappa del territorio veronese di Paolo Forlani, BCVR, Stampe 4.a.1)

were no longer properly maintained, and formerly settled and cultivated land reverted to marshland and woodland (L. Scola Gagliardi 17). As a result, traders of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance generally preferred waterways to insecure or impassable roads, which often were little more than mule tracks in the mountains and waterlogged paths in the marshes (Orlando, “Governo delle acque” 253; Zamboni 25) where the locals had to walk on stilts (Montaigne 182).⁷ In the Veneto itself, a region including the Padovano, Veronese and Polesine, the dense network of rivers, tributaries and distributaries, marshes and ponds, man-made drainage, irrigation and navigation canals⁸ offered easy passage for narrow, flat-bottomed boats, whose varied shapes and sizes were dictated by local traditions and conditions.

From Germany, Flanders or England the goods were transported all the way to Bronzolo, just below Bolzano, where the river Adige became navigable or at least floatable,⁹ and were loaded on timber rafts to be carried downstream to Verona; on the upper Adige (figure 1), rafts¹⁰ were preferred to the large flat-bottomed boats used downstream, in the plain, because they were essentially unsinkable and, with their small draft, rarely ran aground in the fast-flowing but shallow river (Beggio, “Navigazione” 544–545).

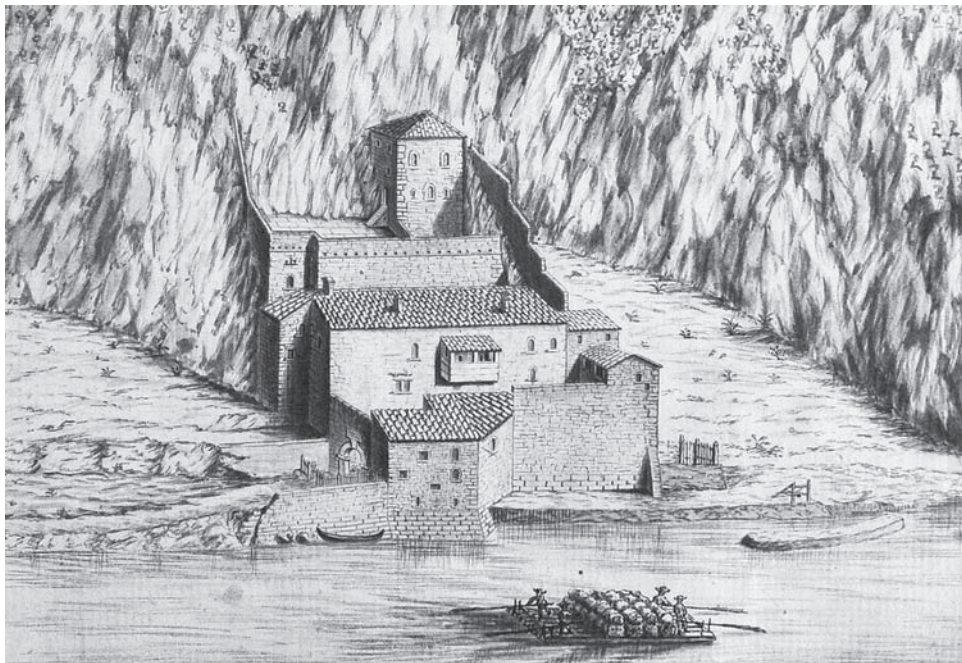


Figure 1: *Eighteenth century view of La Crovara, a fortified checkpoint upstream of Verona. A timber raft is traveling down to Verona. Both river crafts and travelers on foot and horseback would have had to report to the garrison. (La Crovara, BCVR Stampe 2.a.226, foglio 30)*

In Verona, cargoes of leather, iron, textiles, stone, cereals, honey, wax, oil, wine, figs and many other products (Rösch 6–7; Faccioli 36) were loaded onto boats to Venice and elsewhere. In return, precious spices and other goods from the Orient, as well as the no less precious salt, traveled upstream from Venice on boats towed by hired teams of oxen, horses, or even laborers. From Verona, merchants could also take the land routes to Milan or to the Brenner Pass and sell their wares at fairs and markets throughout Lombardy and Western Europe (Zamboni 25). In other words, for centuries Verona was at the center of an extensive web of international and regional commercial exchanges between Germany, Flanders, Venice and the Orient, and Lombardy and the Po valley (Rossini 148), which used a combination of both land routes and waterways (Orlando, “Governo delle acque” 255).

It is only with improvement of the road network and the advent of the railways in the nineteenth century that river navigation on the Adige, and elsewhere in Northern Italy, finally disappeared (Turato et al. 24; Gorfer 217) and, with it, a way of life and a unique landscape.

Since the Middle Ages, local authorities all over the Veneto mandated land-owners, who then directed their tenants, to build, monitor and maintain earthen embankments and dikes, with their towing paths running on top. The main ports had their professional teams of stevedores, customs and health officials, their well-guarded storehouses and travelers’ hostels. Not so the more primitive or improvised landings which served to connect agricultural estates or small roads and footpaths to the “water highway,” as the Adige was once described (Orlando, “Governo delle acque” 255). Near settlements were normally found wharves and piers, slipways and small boatyards (Mainardi 78), bridges, tollgates and fortified customs checkpoints with their chains barring the river and their garrisons who, besides manning the borders against often hostile neighbors, also patrolled the waters in light boats in pursuit of smugglers and thieves (Zamboni 30).

The locals operated ferries, consisting of boats or small rafts. They ran towing relay stations (Mainardi 52–55) and their adjacent inns, stables and haylofts, located at regular intervals, every 12 miles or so, all along the waterways; they kept those navigable by removing obstacles and newly deposited sandbanks, building groins and wooden palisades, putting in gabions and fascines to protect the banks from the scouring of the current (Ministero 23–24). This was a vast and sophisticated infrastructure, demanding constant attention and expense from the authorities (Orlando, “Governo delle acque” 280–281), and from the sharecroppers, weeks of back-breaking labor the results of which were always at the mercy of the next flood.

After reaching Legnago, about 35 miles southeast of Verona, the Adige's riverbed became raised (Crugnola 72) due to the slowing down of the current and the resulting increase in sediment deposition. From Legnago onwards, therefore, two massive levees were built on both sides of the Adige to try to keep its seasonal spates contained, without much success. Breaches in the Adige's sandy embankments regularly caused the flooding of any area of the surrounding countryside which lay below the level of the river. Only the fields and settlements located on ancient alluvial ridges remained above water. At best, the breaches could be repaired as soon as the river level went down. At worst, their devastating consequences were felt for decades or even centuries.

The lower Adige had a history of violent avulsions which radically altered its course and its surroundings (map 2): the *Rotta della Cucca*, in the sixth century CE, redirected the course of the river southward. The *Rotta del Pinzone* in the tenth century, at Badia Polesine, compelled the inhabitants to cut a lasting channel, known as the Adigetto, using in part the bed of an ancient—possibly Etruscan—canal, in order to collect and drain the flood-waters. The *Rotta di Castagnaro*, in the fifteenth century, which remained opened for four centuries, diverted so much water from the Adige that it made the mighty river barely navigable in times of drought and turned the area north of the Tartaro, the *Valli Veronesi*, into a swamp, a paradise for hunters, fishermen and smugglers (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 35), until it was slowly reclaimed for agriculture starting in the nineteenth century.

Today the fields of the lower Adige and the Po delta, neatly rectangular and cut by straight canals and well-disciplined rivers, give the misleading impression that the land has always been solid, drained and cultivated (Brugnoli 797). In fact, it might be more accurate to try and picture the area, in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as a patchwork of wetlands and islands—the name of the easternmost region, “Polesine,” likely means “many islands” (Bocchi, *Trattato geografico* 282). Some patches were thickly wooded; some were grazing meadows or rice paddies; some were covered in reeds, some cultivated and planted with orchards and mulberry trees; some settled since Roman times, some reclaimed more recently (Gugliemini 337n1). The riverbed itself, with its deep meanders and wide floodplain, was also full of islands (Gugliemini 51n2). In the surrounding countryside, the multiple drainage channels, whether private or public (R. Scola Gagliardi, “Sistema idrografico” 35) were sometimes not so much dug into dry ground as they were into shallow standing water.



Map 2: Detail of map by Gian Battista Aleotti (1612). The lower Adige (top), Tartaro-Canalbiano and Po rivers flowing east. The Po Grande is in the middle, the Po di Volano at the bottom. Top left corner: mouth of the Adige. Top right, downstream of Legnago: the Castagnaro, Malopera and Adigetto distributaries splitting off the Adige. The Scortico and Polesella canals run north-south. (Renaissance Exploration Map Collection of the Stanford Libraries, <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/renaissance-exploration/catalog/ky903wt8709>)

Verona's Cityscape in the Sixteenth Century

The landscape of the river Adige and its plain has thus been radically transformed—if slowly at first—by land reclamation schemes executed from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries (Brugnoli 797).

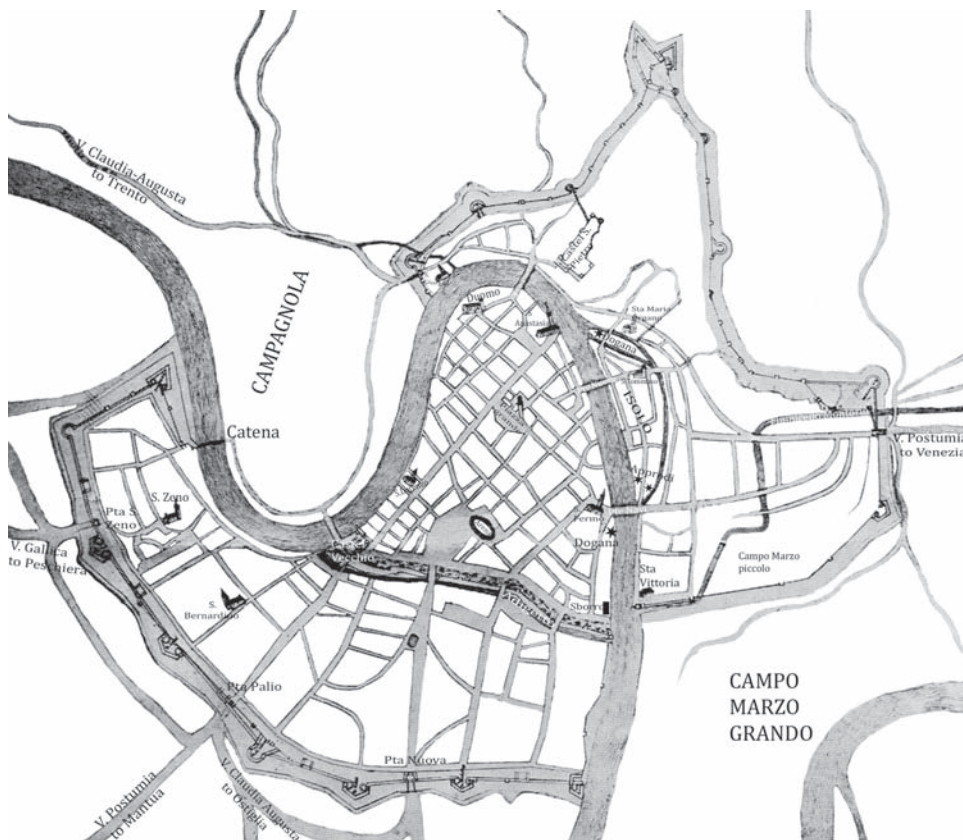
In contrast, Verona's architectural features along the river long remained largely unchanged between the Renaissance and the end of the nineteenth century. For sure, its bridges, regularly destroyed by floods, were rebuilt, and so were its fortifications destroyed by Napoleon in 1801–02 and rebuilt by the Austrians thirty years later (Gray 14). In the heart of the city, some houses, palaces and churches were built, others demolished (Brugnoli 146, 192, 262), and the more transient wooden shacks dismantled. But the cityscape along the Adige would have been instantly recognizable to a time traveler until 1882 (figure 2).

In the sixteenth century, when you walked north along the western fortifications, you would see the various city gates, *Porta Nuova*, *Porta Palio*, *Porta San Zeno*, the dry moat at your feet and, further out, cultivated fields cleared of tree groves and buildings since 1518: it is the *spianata*, a vast, vacant space where advancing assailants would have to face the crossfire of the city defenders (Rossini 148; Associazione). You could follow the traffic of carts, horses, mules and people on the old Roman roads below; they all converged on Verona: the *Via Gallica* from Peschiera, the *Via Postumia* from Mantua, the *Via Claudia-Augusta* from Ostiglia.



Figure 2: *The Adige enters Verona. Upper left: the chain and tower La Catena; an irrigation waterwheel; horses towing a burchio upstream, just past the Ponte Castelvevchio; and a descending timber raft. Bottom: the western fortifications with the Porta Palio. (Detail from Verona città celebrima of Paolo Ligozzini (1620), BCVr, Stampe 1.b.18)*

Standing at the northernmost *Bastion di Spagna*, you overlooked the swift and copious river Adige, coming down from the northwest along a series of deep meanders and entering the city at the *Catena*; the tollgate's heavy chain barred the river and forced the captains of boats and rafts to report to the city officials stationed in the tower (Laureti 312) and to pay a fee before being allowed to enter the city. Farther down river was the strategically placed *Castel Vecchio* and its bridge to the *Campagnola*, another *spianata* to the northwest of the city center, cultivated and irrigated by large vertical bucket water-wheels dipping in the river current (map 3). At the foot of the *Castel Vecchio* was the entrance to a small urban canal called the Adigetto, which ran lazily, and slowly silting up, for roughly a mile just outside the old medieval curtain wall before rejoining the Adige further downstream, across from the *Porta Vittoria* (Brugnoli 776; Lorgna 429–430).



Map 3: *Verona (second half of the sixteenth century) with its four bridges; two river customs houses (Dogana d'Isolo and Dogana Ponte Navi); the sborrio and landings (approdi); its fortifications to the southwest and the northeast; and the main trade roads. (Composite map by the author)*

Travelers, pilgrims, and merchants traveling by land from northern Europe through Innsbruck and the Brenner Pass followed the road along the Isarck and then the Adige, stopping at one of the many inns located in the river ports like Bressanone, Bolzano and Bronzolo, Trento or Borghetto, which welcomed both local boatmen and visiting foreigners. Travelers on foot and horseback arrived from the north by the *Via Claudia-Augusta* and would reach the city at the *Porta San Giorgio*, in the foothills on the left side of the river; there they would have to show their health certificates, perhaps submit to a search of their personal effects, and pay a fee before they could enter the city. Fynes Moryson (Hughes 119, 129) and Montaigne (161) both complained about the bureaucratic controls, searches, petty hassles and multiple tolls and fees imposed by every Italian city-state they passed through, which fast drained a traveler's purse and patience. Verona does not seem to have been the worst offender in this regard.

After a quick visit of Verona's highlights, i.e. the *Castel Vecchio*, the *Arena*, half-ruined but still used for jousting, public entertainments and punishments (Montaigne 159–162), sixteenth century tourists like Montaigne could decide to ride east through the *Porta Vescovo*, onto the *Via Postumia*; in a few days they would reach Vincenza and Padua and could then sail down the Brenta, or walk or ride to Lizza Fusina, at the edge of the Venetian lagoon where they could board a gondola (Montaigne 162–166).

Or they could decide to stay a while longer in Verona and explore the city, with its opulent public buildings and private palaces; its gardens and fountains; its elegant market places echoing with the voices of the snake-oil merchants, the music of the traveling gypsies, the sallies of the street players and laughter of the onlookers (Hughes 463, 465); and its busy bridges over the river.

Linger on the *Ponte Pietra*, look upstream toward San Giorgio and you would see the large timber rafts, loaded with barrels, crates, bundles, sacks and baskets (Faccioli 44), with the occasional passengers coming back perhaps from the famous Bolzano fairs, along with the baggage that land travelers sometimes entrusted to the *radaroli* for a fee (Montaigne 153). The wide and sturdy platforms of trunks, planks and logs tied together by strips of willow (Beggio, "Navigazione" 548) were deftly maneuvered by their drivers, four or more in number, who, placed at each corner, pushed and pulled on their long oars to direct their raft and avoid colliding with any of the many obstacles in their path: the waterwheels used for irrigation or for powering workshops,¹¹ the floating mills¹² moored some distance away from the banks and the many boats big and small (Turato et al. 162–166, 177) all traveling on the same stretch of river.

After passing under the bridge, timber rafts would bear left and take a side canal (Zamboni 130). They would moor near the *Dogana d'Isolo*, one of Verona's five customs houses,¹³ where they would be unloaded. Their cargoes would be inspected and registered, the cargo lists and health certificates checked (Beggio, "Navigazione" 507; Zamboni 127–128) and the appropriate taxes would be assessed (Zamboni 87). If the health officials had been notified by their network of informants abroad of an epidemic of plague in northern Europe, the bundles would be immediately carried away on carts by specialized porters (Zamboni 123–124) and stored for a time in the *sborro* (quarantine warehouse) where they would be fumigated (Faccioli 94–95).

As for sick travelers, if they were let in at all, they were sent downstream to the Lazaretto outside the city limits (Hughes 460).¹⁴ The rafts, free of their cargo, would then be floated down to one of the sawmills located on the canals of Isolo and be dismantled, the boles debarked and processed into timber for construction and the logs cut for firewood (Brugnoli 778). As for the raft drivers, they would head to their guild's headquarters located nearby, at Santa Maria in Organo, for a well-deserved rest before they walked all the way back to their assigned landing spot for their next trip downriver.

Look from the *Ponte Pietra* upstream or downstream and note how the houses are built directly on the river, their feet in the water, so to speak. Some have their own steps or slipway: they are perhaps former "inns" which until the fourteenth century were reserved for foreign merchants and gave them, inside their walls, the legal protection and guidance of a resident mediator fluent in their language, and which fulfilled the legal and fiscal roles later played by the customs houses (Faccioli 44–45, 91–93). Other houses even have arcades or porticoes opening on the water (figure 3), and smaller boats can enter straight from the river into their basements and be loaded and unloaded there. Internal staircases gave access to the apartments on the floors above (Brugnoli 760). Overall, this architecture looks and functions very much like Venice (Brugnoli 776).

Note how the current has deposited gravel and sand near the banks: wash-erwomen, children, fishermen, sand diggers, rowing boats of course, cattle even, can be observed on those small urban beaches. These are easily accessible from all the narrow alleyways (Lorgna 433) which wind their ways between the buildings and open out onto the river, and from the small squares, small harbors and landings which dot the banks (Brugnoli 756–758). Combined with the many drainage pipes whose outlets are left permanently open, without sluice doors, these picturesque features of the city are also its weakness: when the river is swollen, these become entry points for the water to swamp the city (Lorgna 435, 437).



Figure 3: *Verona (nineteenth century), looking downstream. As in Venice, the buildings' arcades open on the water. Left corner: the entrance to the side canal where the Dogana d'Isolo stood. Across: floating mills and Santa Anastasia. By the mid-1800s river traffic had already declined. (M.Moro, "S.Anastasia", BCVr, Stampe 2.b.77)*

Navigating the Adige

Every year the Adige experiences two periods of floods (Crugnola 16).¹⁵ The spring flood resulting from the melting of the Alpine snows is fairly predictable and rises slowly (unless there is a concurrent episode of *Scirocco*, a warm wind from the southeast, or of heavy rains). It starts in March–April, peaks in June–July and tapers off into September, and usually offers conditions favorable for navigation: a faster flow and increased water depth to clear the shallows (Beggio, “Navigazione” 536). After a few weeks of relatively lower waters in August and September, a series of autumn floods arrive in October, caused by torrential rains. These floods are unpredictable, swift, violent and short, one or two days at most (Menna 96); they have historically proven to be the most destructive.

Foolish would be the captain who would risk riding the river at this time and losing his boat, crew and cargo to a submerged and invisible palisade, tree or dike, to the floating debris, to one of the many floating mills tugging precariously at their moorings along the bank, to a churning current that erases all traces of navigable channels and all familiar landmarks. Winter (November–March) is a time of low waters, when precipitations over the Alps are stored on the slopes in the form of snow, and when narrower channels, newly formed sandbanks and reduced depth make navigation difficult and

slow: a *burchio* could easily run aground and have to be partly unloaded onto the “lighter” boat it usually towed behind (Turato et al. 159; Beggio, “Navigazione” 487–489), before it could be freed from the shoal and reloaded on the other side.

A trip downstream from Verona to Venice (figure 4) that would take about eight days in the spring and summer would take ten or more in the winter months (Beggio, “Navigazione” 536). For ascending boats, dependent on the availability and stamina of ox or horse teams, the trip upstream from Cavanella (first stop on the river after leaving the Venetian lagoon) to Verona was always slower: it took from 13 to 17 days depending on the season. Boatmen who took less time were entitled to get a bonus from the merchants who hired them; those who took more had to pay a penalty (Zamboni 88).

As early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, documents mention a *burchio di volta*, a regularly scheduled water coach shuttling between Verona and Venice; it carried passengers, the post and small parcels, and departed several times a week.¹⁶ This service, assigned in turn to all boatmen registered with the authorities, stopped at all the settlements along the Adige. The documents make it clear that it was an old institution (Zamboni 89), so we can safely state that it was already operating in the sixteenth century if not before. It would therefore have been available to Edward de Vere in 1575–76 if he chose the water route between Verona and Venice at any point during his peregrinations in Northern Italy.



Figure 4: *The Adige leaves Verona. Upper left: the Ponte delle Navi, with its central tower. Under the second boat, the building of the Dogana (customs house) and to its left, the boat landing. Downriver: three floating mills, then the chain of the Porta Vittoria. Across the center, the Medieval curtain wall; bottom: Renaissance fortifications. (Detail from Verona città celebrima of Paolo Ligozzi (1620), BCVR, Stampe 1.b.18)*

To leave for Venice, Ferrara or Milan by boat, you would embark from the vicinity of the *Ponte delle Navi*, the fourth and last of Verona's bridges. First built of wood in the ninth century, destroyed by floods and rebuilt several times since then, it was near the main river landing and another customs house which included facilities for inspecting, warehousing and fumigating (Zamboni 130) the cargoes from Venice, Ferrara and other cities of the Po valley arriving by water (figure 5). The bridge long included an imposing tower (finally destroyed by the 1757 flood) and four arches; the three closest to the right bank, by the *Dogana*, spanned the Adige proper, the fourth straddled the outlet of the smaller canal *Acqua morta*. A ramp ran down from the bridge to the landings at the tip of Isolo, another popular loading spot for boats departing south.

Compared to navigation on the Po, navigation on the Adige was notoriously treacherous. It was said by boatmen that “who knows how to navigate the Adige has nothing to fear from any other river” (Mainardi 124) because of its twisting meanders, shifting channels and uneven water depth. It had also long been tightly regulated (Orlando, “Governo delle acque” 289–290). By the sixteenth century, the boatmen's guild (Faccioli 24–31) had lost the monopoly it had exercised since the Middle Ages (Faccioli 82–83) and with it the power to decide who was entitled to join the corporation and who was qualified—after a long apprenticeship—to captain a boat and ply the river. Newcomers,



Figure 5: *Verona (early eighteenth century). Looking upstream to Ponte delle Navi. Left: the Dogana Ponte delle Navi. Right: the arch straddling the canal Acqua morta of Isolo. (Veduta verso il Ponte delle Navi, BCVR, Stampe 1.g.223)*

attracted by the prospect of quick gains in the expanding river trade, did not always abide by the old rules set up by the guild and, as a consequence of this ruthless competition, many *burchieri* were reduced to poverty and the maintenance of the rivers and canals suffered, making navigation more difficult and dangerous (Faccioli 68–69).

The old discipline had included many obligations mostly designed to ensure a smooth and safe navigation—some regarding the relations between boatmen and drivers of horse teams, others the good care of dikes and towing paths (Orlando, “Governo delle acque” 292), mutual aid in case of accident or wreck (Faccioli 68); the prohibition to sail after sunset, to overload a boat beyond its statutory weight, to change agreed-upon sailing dates, to load outside the city; the duty to pay all tolls and taxes, to clear the channels of all the obstacles they may encounter, and for the helmsmen to shout the obligatory three warnings to the mill operator to give him time to get out of the way by pulling his floating mill closer to shore, or to grab a long pole to push away the boat as it went by (Zamboni 75–76).

Until Zevio, deep meanders, twisting channels, numerous gravel islands and swift current made the river perilous to navigate (figure 6). Further down-

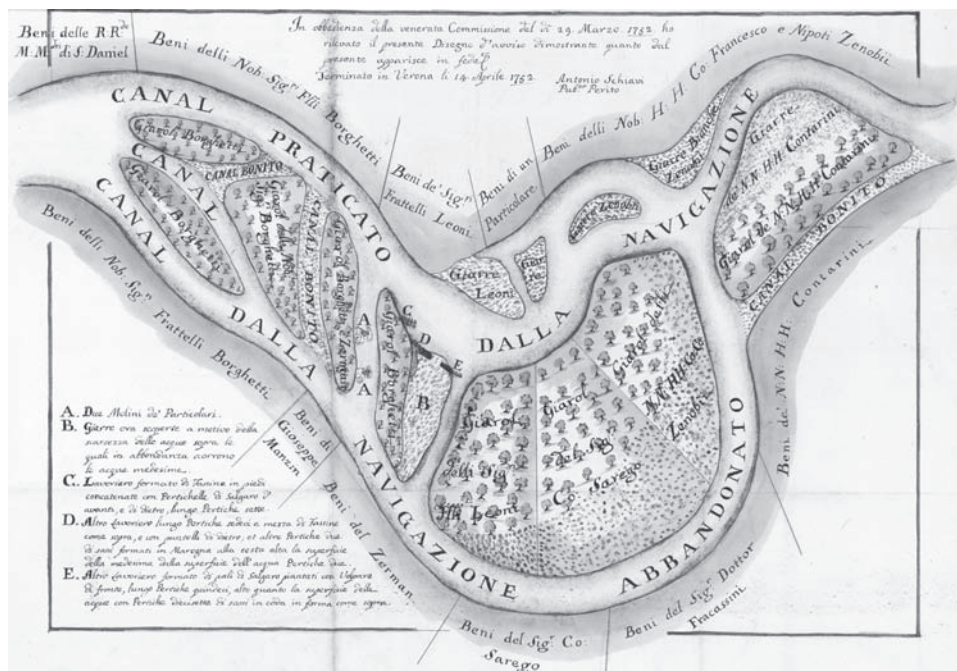


Figure 6: *Drawing of Antonio Schiavi (1752). Meander in the Adige just south of Verona, with its islands claimed by local landowners; floating mills (A); three wooden groins (C, D, E) constraining the flow in the navigable channel. Bottom: an abandoned navigation channel. (ASVe, Archivio proprio Giovanni Poleni, b.17, tomo III [Adige], c. 239)*

stream, the river slowed down somewhat and cut through marshlands and rice paddies, and on higher ground, mulberry plantations or poplar groves (Brugnoli 779–782). Starting around Legnago, where the riverbed began to rise markedly above the surrounding countryside, the flow was constrained between high man-made banks which continued all the way to the Adriatic.

If everything went well, the captain of a boat traveling downstream, carried by the sole current of “ordinary waters,” could expect to cover the approximately 12 miles from Verona to Zevio at 3 to 6 miles an hour and the 23 miles from Zevio to Legnago at 1 to 4 miles an hour (Bocchi, “Adige” 25:329; Crugnola 92, table 1). This means that leaving Verona at dawn, he would reach the imposing fortress of Legnago-Porto, straddling the Adige 35 miles downstream (figure 7), in about 8 hours (less if the wind was favorable or the Adige ran in spate), arriving easily before sunset when all navigation ceased. At worst it would take about 20 hours, requiring at least one stop overnight between Verona and Legnago, possibly in Ronca or Albaredo. In light of these different speeds of travel, it made sense for a captain to try to catch the faster current of a river in spate (Berg, personal communication)—as long as it wasn’t one of the Adige’s violent and treacherous floods.

In Legnago, he would encounter floating mills, the customary chain across the river, a wooden bridge (a section of which could be raised to allow boats through), the docks (Brugnoli 794) and the usual official checkpoint. He could spend the night at one of the inns in town or, more likely, sleep onboard. The following day, depending on where his goods or passengers



Figure 7: *The Adige enters the fortified town of Legnago-Porto (eighteenth century). Left: the towing path; the wooden groins (pennelli) protecting the levee. Beyond lies Porto. Right: floating mills and Legnago. Across the river, the chain (lowered) and further downstream, the wooden bridge. (Veduta di Legnago, BCVR, Stampe 2.a.226, foglio 32)*

were going, Venice, Padua, Ferrara or Milan—where Shakespeare tells us Proteus is headed—the captain would have a choice of courses.

The route to Venice would be fairly straightforward, as it entailed simply sailing down the Adige, past Badia, Boara, Cavarzere and Cavanella, taking the Canal di Valle north until you met the Canal Pontelongo and entered the lagoon across from Brondolo, in the Chioggia lagoon. From there it took another day to reach Venice proper (Beggio, “Navigazione” 536).

The route to Padua also started as a trip down the Adige, turning left (i.e. north) at the *Rotta Sabadina*, up the canals Vighizzolo and Santa Catterina to Este, and from there up the Battaglia canal to Padua.

The route to Ferrara meant following the Adige down to Badia; there you took the Adigetto, a distributary on the right of the Adige; after passing through a palisaded entrance, you sailed past Lendinara, and upon reaching Villanova del Ghebbo took the Scortico (also called Gaibo) canal south until you met the Tartaro-Canalbianco. After going down the Canalbianco for a short while, you took another canal, la *Fossa Polesella*, and traveled south until you reached the Po Grande (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 14). You then had to travel west on the Po Grande, i.e. upstream, until Ficarolo and then turn left, sailing downstream on the *Po di Volano* to Ferrara (Cavallari, personal communication).

What about Milan? Here the historical picture regarding the possible itineraries from Legnago to Lombardy gets more complicated.

History of Connections between the Adige and Po

The *Valli Veronesi*: Roe’s Problematic Connection

The idea of linking the Po with the Adige to facilitate trade between Venice or Verona and Lombardy is in fact an old one—it usually involved the marshlands known as the *Valli Grandi Veronesi e Ostigliesi*, between the Adige and the Po, i.e. between Legnago and Ostiglia. The presence of wetlands north of Ostiglia is documented since antiquity and are mentioned by Tacitus and Pliny (Morin 135), but their extent was greatly enlarged following the *Rotta di Castagnaro*, traditionally dated 1438, when the backed-up waters of the Tartaro, which were prevented by the new distributary from draining freely to the east into the Adriatic, created a vast malarial swamp, which started almost at Legnago’s gates and stretched all the way to the Po (Brugnoli 796). The area was intersected by four waterways running roughly northwest to southeast: the *Scolo Nicesola*—an ancient and large drainage channel running for a time parallel to the Adige (R. Scola Gagliardi, “Sistema idrografico” 35)—the *Menago*, the *Sanuda* and the *Tregnone*, all flowing into the Tartaro river. A

maze of wooded patches, reed beds, rice paddies, meadows and cultivated fields, it was criss-crossed by numerous channels known only to hunters and smugglers (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 23, 35).

This area would seem like an obvious place to create a navigable connection: it would be enough to dig a short canal between some point on the Adige and the nearby Nicesola, and then follow the latter down to the Tartaro. But its strategic location in the borderlands between Ferrara, Mantua and Venice's *Terrafirma* meant that Venice saw the area also as a buffer, its wildness a natural protection against invaders, and she therefore never attempted to fully reclaim the land for agriculture (R. Scola Gagliardi 14). Venetian ambivalence regarding the potential risks and benefits of such a navigable canal may partly explain the intermittent and precarious character of the connection throughout history.

As early as 1191, a treaty between Verona and Mantua included a plan for a navigable canal linking the two rivers, from the edge of Mantuan territory on the Po to Salvaterra on the Adigetto. It would have allowed Mantuans to reach the Adriatic while bypassing Ferrara's controls and taxes. The canal was never cut (Zamboni 33).

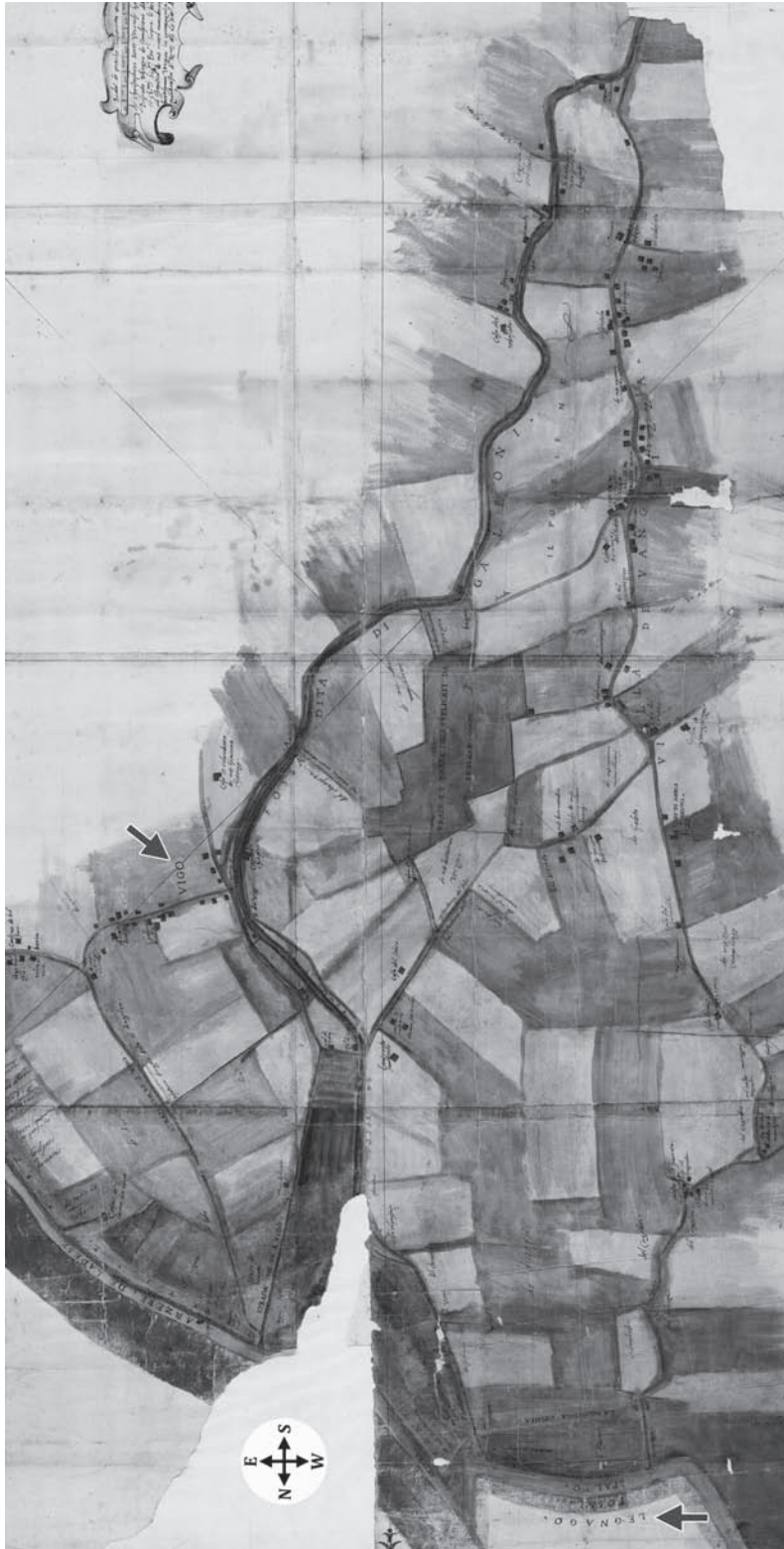
In thirteenth century documents, there is mention of a navigable canal opening on the bank of the Adige, about three miles south of Legnago; it was born of a breach in the Adige's right levee at a place named Cervionus, the exact location of which is still disputed by historians, but where Verona is known to have built a wooden fortress in 1278 (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 15).

During the war between Ferrara and Venice (1308–13), the Ferrarese blocked all Venetian shipping from the Po; in response, Venice, looking to divert to the Adige its trade with Lombardy, signed in 1310 a secret treaty with Verona under which Verona undertook to dig a new navigation canal on its territory, connecting Adige and Tartaro (map 4). This avoided the entire stretch of the Po controlled by Ferrara. This canal was indeed dug and used; but it soon fell into disrepair after Venice had to promise Ferrara, in their 1313 peace treaty, that its traders would no longer use it, on pain of confiscation of their boats and cargoes (Orlando, "Viabilità fluviale" 111–112; Zamboni 34–35; Rösch 20–24). Rösch argues (25) that this abandoned 1310 canal is the one shown on a map from the 1470s connecting Legnago to the Tartaro. In contrast, Remo Scola Gagliardi (*Navigazione* 12), describing the same map, indicates that the line drawn between Legnago and Tartaro represents a canal cut later, in the early fifteenth century, by Gian Galeazzo Visconti, then in control of Verona.¹⁷ In any case, in 1482 this canal was filled in by order of the Council of Ten who worried that the canal made Legnago too vulnerable to an attack by an army coming from the Po. Legnago thus remained without a connection to the Tartaro until the mid-eighteenth century (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 17).



Map 4: from the late 1470s or early 1480s. Veronese territory. Verona is in the upper left quadrant, Legnago in the upper right, Mantua at the bottom, the Po along the right edge. Despite the distortions in scale and orientation, a canal is clearly shown connecting Legnago to the Tartaro at La Crocetta, labeled “fossa fexe far el ducha de milan,” thus dating it between 1387 and 1402. In 1482 this canal was filled in for military reasons. Upper right: the (much fainter) Castagnaro. Lower right: the Tartarello branching out from the Tartaro at Bastion San Michele; the Tartarello was used for navigation before the Fosssetta mantovana was dug (end of the fifteenth century). At Tor de mezo, the Tartarello meets the straight line running from Ostiglia (extreme right) to Ponte Molino (on the Tartaro branch); this line likely represents the Via Claudia Augusta to Verona and/or the parallel Fossa d’Ostiglia. (ASVe, Scuola di S. Maria della Carità, b. 36, n. 2530)

Another map of the area by Cristoforo Sorte (map 5), dated 1562, tantalizingly shows a “Fossa dita di Galeoni” running near Vigo, just south of Legnago, to the Adige. Unfortunately, the map is torn in two crucial places: both its possible connections to the Adige and to the Nichesola are missing. It is unclear whether this *Fossa di Galeoni* is the same canal as the *Rupta Cervionus*



Map 5: by Cristoforo Sorte (1562). Fossa dita di Galeoni (Fosso di Vico). East is up. Legnago is at the lower left edge and the Adige runs in the upper left corner. The connections (if any) of the Fossa to the Adige or the Nicesola are missing. This fossa could be the remnant of the Rupta Cervionus (thirteenth century) or of the canal dug by Verona for Venice in 1310 and then abandoned after 1313. Bertazzolo proposed (early seventeenth century) to use the Fosso di Vico to re-create the lost connection between Adige and Tartaro. (ASVe, Provveditori sopra Beni inculti Rotolo 70, Mappe n. 61a, disegno 3)

mentioned in documents of the late 1200s (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 15) or is the truncated remnant of the one dug in 1310 by Verona.

The strongest evidence that no navigation canal between Legnago and Tartaro survived at the end of the sixteenth century is the series of proposals, made at that time and later, to create one. For example, a project was formally presented to the Venetian senate in the 1580s to reactivate the connection between Legnago and Ostiglia; it went nowhere (Pollo 49). In 1598, a proposal made by the Mantuan engineer Bertazzolo to dig a canal connecting directly Adige and Tartaro via the Nichesola was received very coolly by the Venetians and nothing came of it (Togliani, “I Bertazzolo” 581; “Chiusa di Governolo” 256). Twenty years later the situation still had not changed: a project designed in 1616–1624 by the same Bertazzolo (map 6) also contemplated the creation of a canal¹⁸ from Governolo (on the Mincio river, before it reaches the Po) to the Adige, south of Legnago; it would have reused and enlarged whatever was left of the *Fosso di Vico* (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 15). Venice rejected the proposal. In 1632 Aleotti wrote (290) that the Mantuans were trying to evade taxes that Ferrara levied at Ponte Lagoscuro (on the Po Grande) by opening a waterway that could take their boats from Ostiglia to the Tartaro, and via the Nichesola to Legnago and from there to the Adige and Venice. Clearly the project hadn’t been yet executed by 1632.

From the fragmentary picture left by early cartographers¹⁹ and from various archives, Italian historians have begun to reconstruct the complex chronology of all the hydraulic works executed over the centuries in this rather small area (the distance from Legnago to the Tartaro is under eight miles), and to identify their location and function.²⁰ In the Po and lower Adige region, ditches and canals were constantly cut, redirected, embanked, filled in, made to flow over or under a river, and merged into abandoned beds. The resulting bewildering hydrography is a testimony to the courage, resilience and endless labor of the inhabitants of the Po basin over three millennia and a challenge to historians of the region.

Crucially, we should not make the mistake of assuming that because one particular waterway is present on a seventeenth or eighteenth century map, it was already there in the sixteenth century, and, more specifically, in the narrow date range (1575–76) of interest to Oxfordians. Nor should we assume that because a water feature was documented in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, it was still there in the sixteenth; or if it did survive, that it had retained the same scope and function.

What we do know is that only at the end of the eighteenth century (1762–80) was a navigable canal finally built between the *Ponte Fior di Rosa*, at Legnago, and the Tartaro, called the *Naviglio di Legnago* (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 20). The *Naviglio di Legnago* claimed in parts the ancient bed of the Nichesola and was fed by water drawn from the Adige (R. Scola Gagliardi,



Map 6: Detail of a map by Bertazzolo (1616) of his projected connection between Tartaro and Adige. South is up. Lower left corner: Legnago and the Adige. Upper right: the Po and Ostiglia. The Tartaro snakes in between the two. Stippled areas: marshlands. On the right the straight Fossa grande d'Hostiglia (vertical line) and Fossetta d'Hostiglia (horizontal line) are clearly seen, among other drainage canals. On the left is the surviving Fosso di Vico (ending close to the embankment of the Adige) that Bertazzolo was planning to enlarge and connect to the Adige at Vigo. The adjacent text reads: "Fossetta da Vico alla rosta nella quale si deve fare la navigazione quando non si voglia pero far quella della Nichesola et che non si voglia fare il sostegno vicino a Legnago" ("Waterway from Vigo to the dam, to be used for the navigation canal if one doesn't want to use the Nichesola nor build a lock close to Legnago"). Bertazzolo was apparently aware of Venice's reluctance to connect Legnago directly to its neighbors' navigable network. (ASVc, raccolta Terkutz, disegno 3)

palisade constructed at its entrance, the *Bova di Badia*, rebuilt and upgraded in 1603 with stone walls and a sluice door (Bocchi, *Trattato geografico* 221; Crugola 79–81). This waterway is part of the route from Legnago to Ferrara which we detailed above: a boat would enter the Adigetto at the *Bova*, sail past Lendinara to Villanova del Ghebbo and there take the Scortico canal south down to the Tartaro-Canalbianco (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 14); follow the Canalbianco east for a short while and then take the canal *Fossa Polesella* south, and at Polesella, enter the Po.

The Castagnaro

This distributary, *Diversivo di Castagnaro*, was born of the catastrophic and apparently deliberate breach²¹ of the right embankment of the Adige in 1438 (Averone 147–148; Silvestri 102–103), a few miles downstream from Legnago. Over the ensuing decades the new water course was slowly embanked and contained, and a succession of hydraulic works were built at its entrance to better regulate its flow. But it was left open, for both economic and hydrological reasons: it offered a convenient way to travel from the Adige to the Po (Puppi 349–350), and it diverted some of the seasonal floodwaters of the Adige, thus relieving pressure on the levees further downstream.

By 1504, private landowners had already built many weirs across the Castagnaro to power their mills. The Venetian authorities ordered that all those small private weirs be dismantled, thus removing obstacles to navigation, and that two large ones be built at the entrance of the distributary in order to slow down and reduce the amount of water that the Castagnaro, because of its steeper slope, captured from the Chirola (as the old Adige came to be called) (Paleocapa 8–9). At the same location, a wooden palisade was also built to direct enough water into the Chirola to keep the old river navigable (Zendrini 1:153–154). Between 1545 and 1561 additional work was done at the entrance with three goals in mind: to reduce the width of the entrance thanks to two wing dams,²² to better hold back the incoming waters with a large dam or weir made of wooden gabions filled with stones and secured to the riverbed by piles, and to retain a deeper channel, closed by a sluice door, to allow for navigation (Paleocapa 14–15). These hydraulic works had to be raised several times in the following decades because the entrance kept silting up, but they otherwise remained unchanged until the end of the seventeenth century or beginning of the eighteenth.²³ Until then the Castagnaro was therefore open for trade with Lombardy all year round (Bocchi, *Trattato geografico* 413). In fact Aleotti (414), writing in the early seventeenth century based on information gathered in 1600, mentions the traffic that “comes down from Verona [through the Castagnaro entrance] and that, via the *Fossa Polesella* and the Po river travel to and from Lombardy,” confirming the importance of the itinerary Adige-Castagnaro-Tartaro-*Fossa Polesella*-Po to Lombardy at the end of the sixteenth century.

Sailing at dawn from Verona under favorable conditions, it would take a boat 9 to 10 hours to reach the entrance to the Castagnaro, arriving long before dusk in midsummer, when navigation ceased for the night. Once a boat reached the confluence of the Castagnaro and the Tartaro near Canda, its captain had two options. One involved turning left, down the Tartaro-Canalbiano until he reached Arqua at the head of the *Fossa Polesella*, then turning right into said Fossa, where he would join the great traffic of boats converging from Verona and Venice to go to Ferrara and Bologna (Aleotti 404). All would enter the Po at Polesella, as had been the custom of boatmen since the mid-1400s (Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 14).

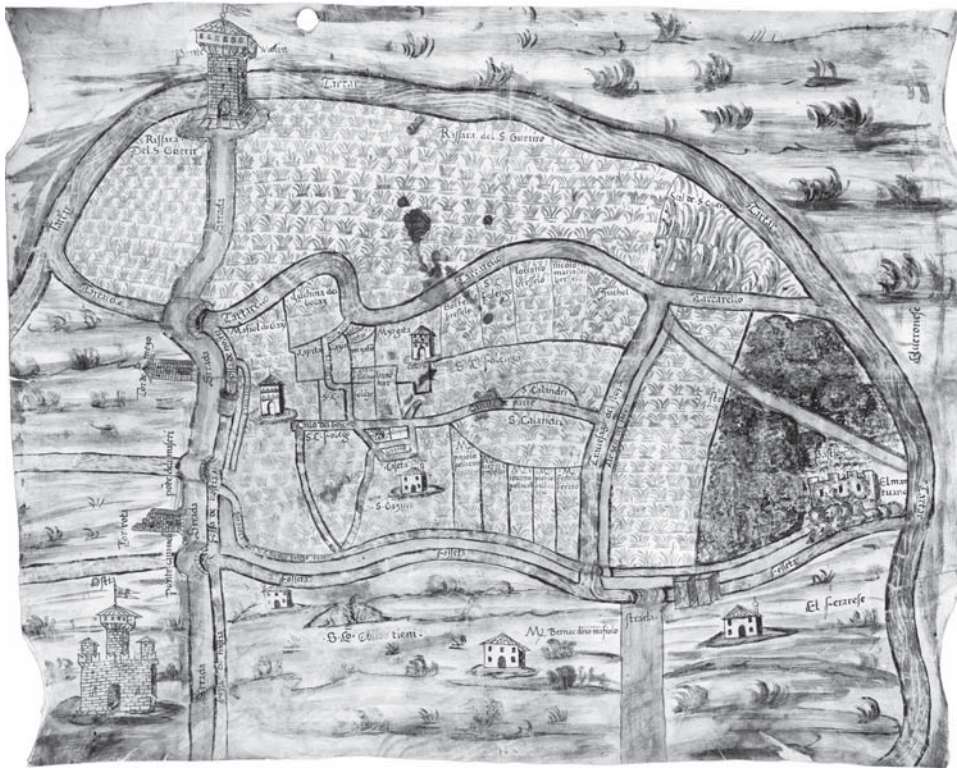
The other option was shorter but more tortuous, and involved turning right and sailing west, up the Tartaro—stopping on the way for inspection at Bastion della Crocetta (aka Torretta veneziana), a Venetian tollgate (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 35)—until the boat reached Bastion San Michele, a customs checkpoint at the border between the Veneto and Mantuan territories (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 33). It would then take the *Fossetta mantovana*, ordered cut by the Gonzagas at the very end of the 1400s, up to the junction with the *Fossa d'Ostiglia*, a navigable canal already documented in the ninth century under the name *Fossa Olobia* (R. Scola Gagliardi, *Navigazione* 14–15). It would then sail down the *Fossa* all the way to Ostiglia, and after passing through the lock of Ostiglia, would enter the Po. From there, the boat had to be towed upstream, towards Milan. In other words, Roe's description (54, 58) of this leg of the itinerary, i.e. Tartaro-*Fossetta mantovana*-*Fossa d'Ostiglia* to the Po is correct and historically documented (map 8).

As we see from this brief survey, there were several possible and well-documented itineraries to choose from when trying to go from the Adige to the Po, some longer than others, some easier in certain seasons than others, some insecure in times of political tensions between neighboring states.

Losing the Flood, Catching the Flood

Leaving aside the humorous wordplay in Act II, scenes 2 and 3 *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, can we determine whether Shakespeare may have been alluding to an actual phenomenon he would have observed while in Verona and the Veneto, when he wrote of “losing the tide” and “losing the flood?”

Magri (100) proposed that Shakespeare was referring to one of the Adige's sudden floods, “rising rapidly within a few hours.”²⁴ Her description would seem to apply to the autumn floods—sudden, hazardous but short-lived—more readily than to the long spring and summer floods (Menna 96). As we have seen, boatmen do appreciate the increased speed and clearance afforded by a swollen river. Yet they might have been reluctant to start their journey



Map 8: (late fifteenth century) The area between the Tartaro and Po rivers. Upper third: the Tartaro river and its branch, the Tartarello; right: the fortified Bastion (San Michelle); lower third: the Fossetta mantovana, meeting the Fossa de Hostia (Ostiglia) at the Tor rota (ruined tower). Left: the Fossa and the road to Verona ("Strada" also called Via Claudia-Augusta) run jointly north-south, from Ostiglia to Pontemolino. Note the agricultural canals, bridges, rice paddies, farmhouses and dovecote towers. (ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga, b. 90, c. 49)

before they knew whether the rising water was going to become a raging flood capable of wrecking their boat (Berg, personal communication). In the fall especially, they might be tempted to wait until it peaked and time their launch just as the tail end of the flood began. A river's floodwaters always recede much more slowly than they rose (Vernon-Harcourt 1:11). If the Adige's waters rose to flood stage in a few hours, they would fall in one or two days.

In Magri's scenario, the reason for the hurry implied in Shakespeare's text would be the need for Lance to leave before the end of a short autumn flood. But assuming—as the text indicates—that Proteus boarded his ship just a few moments before Lance reached the landing,²⁵ there would still be ample time for him to ride the tail end of the spate in a rowing boat and catch up

with the departed ship. In the case of the spring flood, the waters were slower to rise and even slower to recede (a matter of days and weeks, respectively), so there would be even less need to hurry. Something does not quite add up to Magri's explanation for Pantino's urgent call for Lance not to delay.

In contrast, Roe (53) thinks the phrase alludes to the "turning" of a pound lock, the process by which water is raised and lowered in a modern lock, slowly lifting or dropping the "locking" boats along with it (Casciani-Wood). He also suggests that those locks were turned at specific times, on a known schedule. Roe is onto something.

Pound Locks, Flash Locks and the Adige

When we hear the word "lock" nowadays, we immediately picture a pound lock, a rectangular basin made of stone walls, closed at both ends by two strong miter gates, filled in and emptied slowly by the opening and closing of the "paddles," i.e. smaller openings set in the miter gates that control the flow of water into and out of the pound. This slow and deliberate process minimizes the churn to which boats are subjected and relieves the pressure on the miter gates so that they can be easily opened. This ingenious machinery²⁶ allows boats to safely overcome high "falls" between the higher and the lower reaches of a river or canal by eliminating the dangerous rush of water such a fall creates; moreover, it saves water in drier regions or in seasons when it is scarce.²⁷

As a copious river, meandering in a raised bed through a low, flat plain and prone to massive floods, the lower Adige was unsuitable for this kind of hydraulic work to be built across its course. But we do know that most, if not all, the entrances of canals and distributaries splitting off the Adige were protected against erosion and the influx of floodwaters. They were regulated by hydraulic works of one kind or another (Guglielmini 304, 306, 310) using a variety of "locks," with a combination of side buttresses, weirs, navigation channels, sluice-doors or gates (figure 9).

Before the very costly pound locks were progressively introduced across Italy and Europe between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, a much more primitive and ancient method of navigation was universally used, "intermittent navigation" or "navigation by flashing" (Cuënot 3–4; Mas, *Rivières canalisées* 3–4; Lombardini 166; Nazzani 232). At intervals along a waterway, its flow was slowed down and the water level in the upper reach was raised by a dam or weir built across the riverbed; a gap or deeper channel was preserved in the weir, reserved for navigation (Berg, *Pertuis*, 14–21; Lagrene 2:19; Willan 87–88). This gap could be left wide open and the water running freely where and when it was abundant (Robertson 40–41). But in times of low waters, the channel was closed by a wide variety of contraptions or sluice doors. A "plank staunch" was made of a series of horizontal beams.

In order to close the gate these beams were driven, one on top of another, into vertical grooves set on either side of the channel (Lagrene 2:23–24); to open it, they were lifted one by one by hooks, an arduous and rather slow process. A “needle sluice” used vertical pieces of wood, the needles kept in place by water pressure against a stone or wooden sill at the bottom of the riverbed and a swinging beam stretching above and across the current (figure 8). When the beam was released and swung clear of the channel the needles would yield and be carried away by the current; each was attached by a rope so they could later be easily retrieved (Lagrene 2:21–23; Paleo-capá 29). There were also systems using paddles and rymers, a variant of

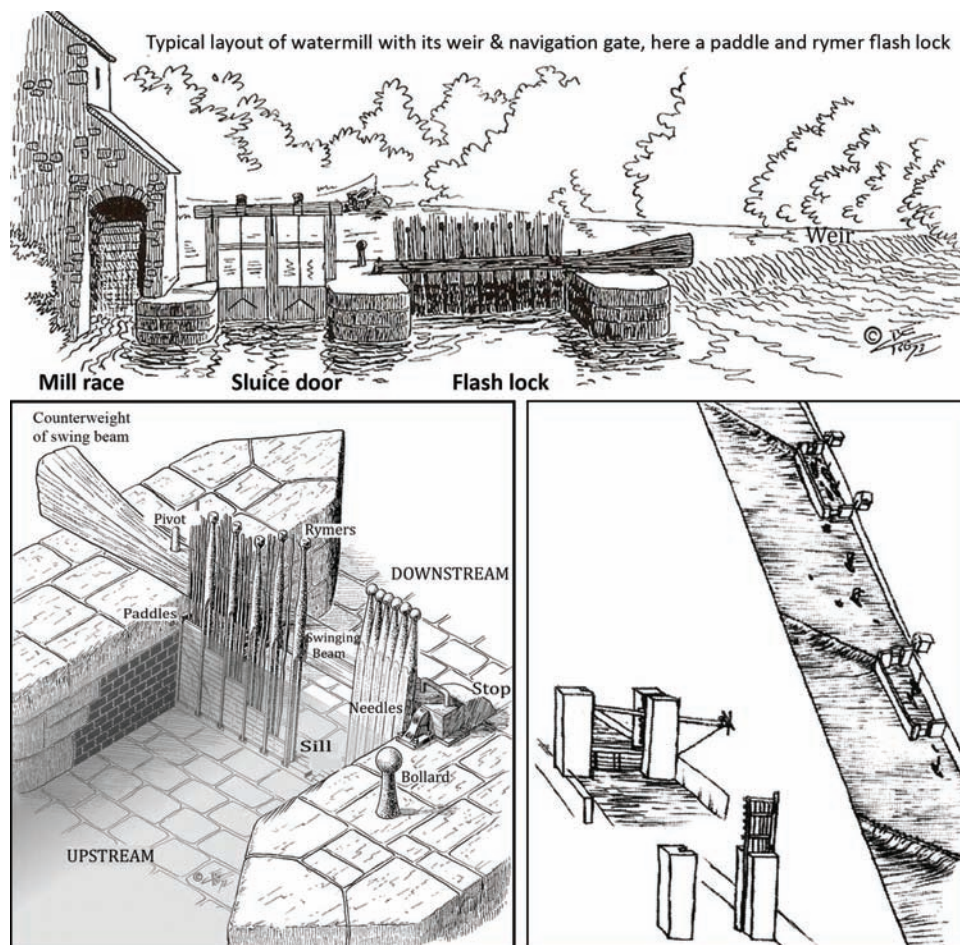


Figure 8: Flash locks. Above: flash lock associated with a watermill (© Charles Berg). Below, left: two alternative closing systems: the needle lock (right) and the paddle-and-rymer lock (left). (© Charles Berg). Below, right: Da Vinci's notional sketch of a series of weirs and transitional pound locks, and of bascule doors. (Berg, *Du pertuis à l'écluse* 53)

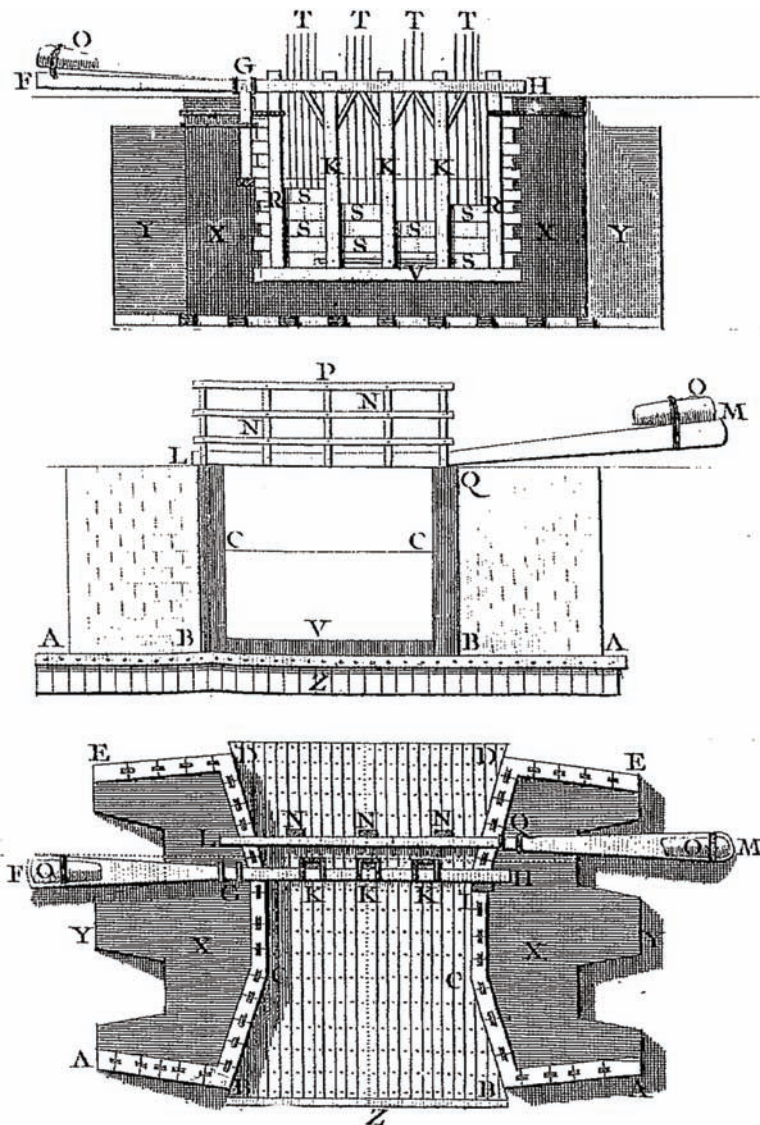


Figure 9: Three views of the same flash lock. One of the two counter-weighted (O) swing beams serves as the working bridge (LQ) for the lock keeper. From the other (GH) hang the three vertical “needles” (K) against which the paddles (S) are set. Once the paddles were all removed and the swing beam released, it would pivot out of the way of the passing boats. (Bélidor 4:344)

the needle sluice (Paget-Tomlinson 49), vertically rising doors lifted with ropes and capstans (Bélidor 54). Those openings, with their ingenious but dangerous mechanisms for holding back the flow and releasing it all at once when needed, were called flash locks.²⁸

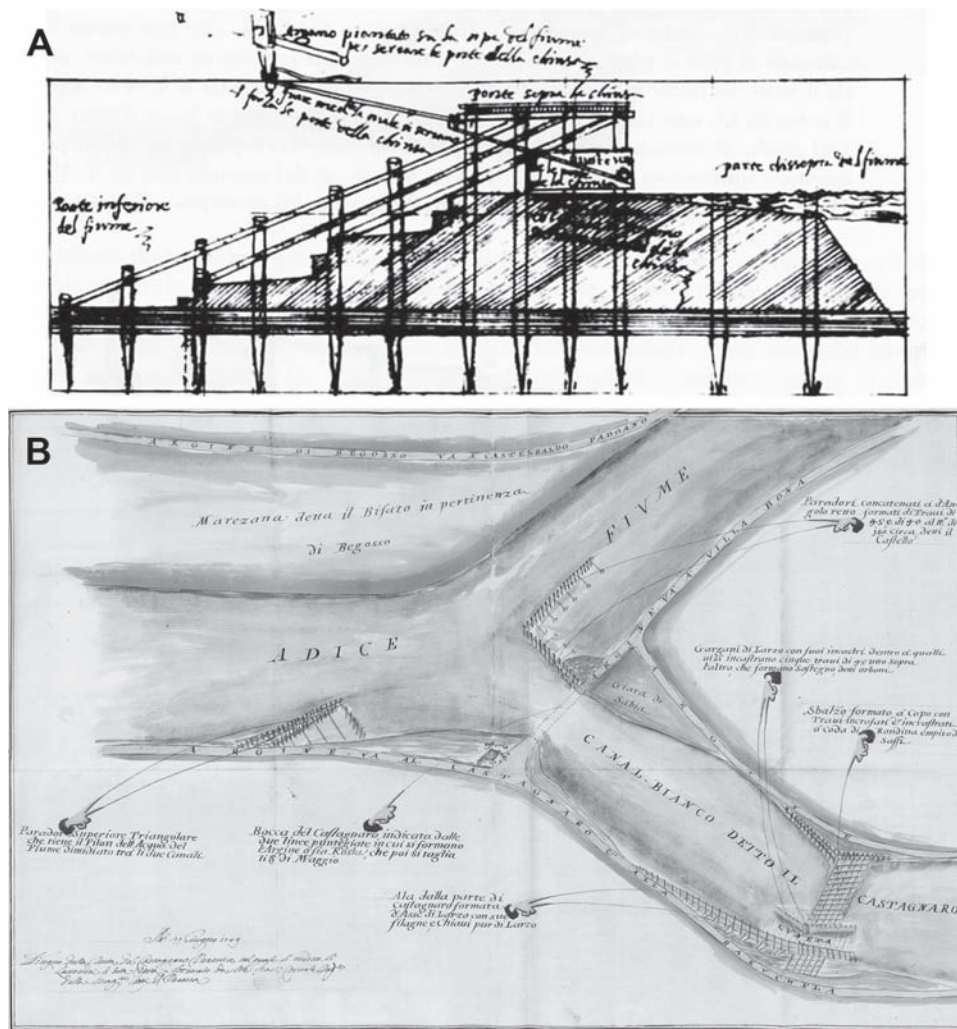
Scheduled Flashes and Pantino's "Flood"

"Navigation by flashes" required boats traveling down river to gather in a basin or roadstead immediately upstream of the weir (or downstream if traveling up river), and to wait for the gate to be opened by the lock keeper.²⁹ Once the lock was opened, the captains had to steer their boats, one after another, into the current and through the gate, to be carried downstream by the suddenly rushing water without hitting the sides of the lock, the other boats before it, or the banks below the weir. It took great skill, a cool head, and luck to get through safely. Perilous and wasteful of water, this type of navigation had nevertheless the advantage of allowing ten to twelve boats to go through a lock at one time, whereas the pound lock could only accommodate two or three per "turning," a much slower process overall (Willan 93). "Intermittent navigation by flashes," known since antiquity, was progressively replaced by "continuous navigation" with the use of pound locks, but did not disappear until the nineteenth century.³⁰

The flash, this powerful but rather brief rush of water, is invariably defined, whether in English, French or Italian, by hydraulic engineers and by river boatmen alike, as an "artificial flood," created deliberately to benefit navigation (Paget-Tomlinson 50; Robertson 41;³¹ Mas, *Rivières à courant libre* 110; Mas, *Rivières canalisées* 3; Berg, *Lexique*; Museo; Mainardi 90–91). In the Veneto, it was called *la butà* or *il buttà* (Lombardini 166, Nazzani 232). This practice is well documented for several canals of Lombardy (the Martesana) and of the Veneto, notably the Battaglia, the Este-Monselice, the Cagnola, and the Scortico canals. Moreover, for all these canals, *the butà operated on a regular schedule*, usually twice a week (Collegio 21–24; Ministero 12; Mainardi 90; Turato et al. 34, 167; Bocchi, *Trattato geografico* 228; Frisi 456). *Missing the scheduled opening time would mean having to wait several days for the next one.*

We have seen that a weir and navigation channel was built at the entrance of the Castagnaro in 1545 (Paleocapa 14) to ensure that this distributary did not capture too much of the Adige's flow and to keep the Adige navigable in times of low waters. We also know that after 1561, the water gate included a *panconatura*, some kind of staunch door (Paleocapa 15), unfortunately left undescribed. A much later drawing, dated 1749 (map 9, A & B, page 32), depicts the vertical grooves which normally would receive the horizontal beams of a plank staunch across the navigation channel. In 1632 this closing mechanism, whatever it was then, was controlled by a lock keeper (Aleotti 414) and, in all likelihood, had been since Venice ordered the works to be executed in the mid-sixteenth century.

Whether it was opened on demand or on a regular schedule I have not been able to establish.³² We can infer from Paleocapa's detailed analysis of the



Map 9A: Cross-section of the rosta (dam) at the head of the Castagnaro in 1600 (Aleotti 414). Water from the Adige comes from the right. The floodgates of the lock on top of the dam are operated by a capstan. The navigation gate is not visible.

Map 9B: Map view (1749) of the rosta and navigation channel (cunetta), closed by five thick planks (travi) dropped into vertical grooves. The dotted lines across the entrance indicate where—in the eighteenth century—the earthen dike was rebuilt every November. Two wooden palisades (paradori) direct water into the Adige. (ASVe, Archivio proprio Giovanni Poleni, b.22, tomo VIII, c.50)

Castagnaro's interaction with the Adige and from Guglielmini's description of regulated canals (310–311) that the practice may have varied according to necessity. In times of peak flood, we know it was left wide open to divert part of the waters of the Adige into the Castagnaro and relieve the pressure on the Adige's levees downstream; but at those times navigation may have

been interrupted for safety reasons. In times of ordinary high waters, it probably could have been opened on demand since water was abundant enough both to keep the Adige navigable and to supply flashes, as needed, for the Castagnaro. However, in times of lower waters, it would have made sense to open it only on schedule to save water for the Adige. This is, however, only informed speculation. The documentation I had access to is unfortunately silent on this particular point and does not allow me to state with certainty that the sluice gate at the head of the Castagnaro, one of the two possible water courses Proteus could have taken to get to Milan, worked on a schedule.

The entrance to the Scortico canal located on the alternate route to Milan, i.e. via the Adigetto, was also regulated by a lock. Described as a “lock with two openings and a door made of horizontal beams” (Bocchi, *Trattato geografico* 228),³³ this seems to have been a flash lock closed with a plank staunch. This lock, whatever its precise design was, did indeed operate on a weekly schedule: it is known, at least in 1598, to have been opened every Wednesday evening and closed every Thursday evening, *interrupting navigation until the following week* (Bocchi, *Trattato geografico* 228). It is likely to have already been the practice earlier in the sixteenth century.

In this context, the sense of urgency that Pantino expresses on Verona’s river landing begins to make sense. Lance had to catch up with his master’s boat in a hurry because after it had gone through the flash lock at the appointed opening time, it would be out of reach once the lock was closed and navigation interrupted for the next few days. *Lance would be left behind, stranded on the wrong side of the dam while his master sailed on to Milan without him.*

Conclusions

It is impossible for us to know exactly how much Shakespeare, while traveling in the Veneto, witnessed or experienced of the river travel described above. Navigation by flashing was used throughout Europe, including England. But before it be argued that Shakespeare was merely conflating what he knew of this navigation method on the upper Thames with an imagined Italian river, recall that in the sixteenth century, English non-tidal rivers were in private hands, along with their weirs and locks, and as a consequence, flashes were granted to watermen at the mill owners’ discretion, not on a publicly advertised schedule as in Italy. In England in the sixteenth century there was no trace of a system of regular, scheduled openings such as existed in Italy, where navigation on the Adige and the Po, which were crucial international trade routes, was by economic necessity more regimented³⁴ than in England.

Roe’s suggestion that “flood” in Act II, scene 3 of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* referred not so much to a seasonal swelling of the Adige river itself,

but rather to a more localized and controlled rush of water, is very plausible in view of the hydraulic works and navigation methods used in the Veneto in the sixteenth century. However, we need to add the important correction that “flood” cannot refer to a modern pound lock’s turning, as he thought (53), since pound locks are precisely designed to avoid any rush of water. But the term applies perfectly to the flash or artificial flood created on purpose at a flash lock by the sudden opening of a staunch, such as were often found at the entrance of canals or distributaries off the Adige.

Roe’s observation (40) that “tide” still had connotations in the sixteenth century of “time,” “opportune or critical moment,” “appointed hour” as per the Oxford English Dictionary, led him to suggest that Lance was about to miss an event of limited duration, the “flood,” which was supposed to occur at an appointed time and known in advance to bargemen. This interpretation perfectly fits the practice documented for a number of canals in the Veneto, where the gates at the entrances of regulated canals were open for navigation once or twice a week and then closed after a few hours.

Taking this scene of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* seriously instead of dismissing it as a “howler,” and researching the possible implications to their logical conclusions, allows us to state, against his critics, that Shakespeare knew precisely what he was writing about. It is clear that river traffic in Northern Italy, notably between Verona and Milan, was not only possible but intense, well organized and highly regulated. Navigation by flashes, practiced since antiquity through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance until the nineteenth century, involved creating artificial floods by opening navigation gates, usually following a bi-weekly schedule. This common and well-documented practice accounts for the otherwise puzzling phrase “missing the flood.” By deepening our understanding of the conditions, methods and routes of navigation between the Adige and Po in the sixteenth century, we have thus shown that, beyond what may have been Shakespeare’s poetic intentions, there is a very real river landscape that provided him with just one more thread to weave into his story.

Acknowledgments

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Archivio di Stato di Mantova (email dated 12 April 2019):

- Territorio tra Tartaro e Po (fine Quattrocento): *ASMn, Archivio Gonzaga, b. 90, c. 49.*

Charles Berg (April 2019):

- Typical layout of mill with weir.
- Needle and paddle-and-rymer flash locks.

Endnotes

1. In *Great Englishmen of the sixteenth century*: “To Italy—especially to cities of Northern Italy, like Venice, Padua, Verona, Mantua, and Milan—Shakespeare makes frequent and familiar reference, and he supplies many a realistic portrayal of Italian life and sentiment. But the fact that he represents Valentine in *The Two Gentlemen* (I.i.71) as traveling from Verona to Milan (both inland cities) by sea, and the fact that Prospero in *The Tempest* embarks in a ship at the gates of Milan (I. ii.129–44) renders it almost impossible that he could have gathered his knowledge of Northern Italy from personal observation. Shakespeare doubtless owed all his knowledge of Italy to the verbal reports of traveled friends and to Italian books, the contents of which he had a rare power of assimilating and vitalising” (299).

The same error continues to infect commentary in languages other than English. For example, the notes to the latest edition (2013) of Shakespeare’s complete works in French in the prestigious La Pléiade collection decry his “géographie fantaisiste qui fait voyager Valentin et Protée de Vérone à Milan par la voie maritime, en profitant de la marée pour la mise à flot du navire.”

2. Sullivan (223–228) who was the first to use Italian sources—with devastating effect—to counter the traditional story, accusing the commentators of outright “carelessness,” Lambin (56–57), Grillo (141–144), Roe (49–58), Kreiler and Magri (101–102) have all argued persuasively that Shakespeare clearly refers to river navigation and not to a sea voyage when he sends Lance’s master on a boat from Verona to Milan.
3. These are precisely the details most likely to be mentioned in the travel books and tavern conversations that are supposed to be Shakespeare’s only sources for “local color” in his Italian plays. Why would an untraveled author, eager for his audience to recall these popular travel accounts, then neglect to mention in his plays the well-known tourist highlights they would have read or heard about?
4. There is no evidence that Will Shakspeare of Stratford ever left England, no documentary trace that he received permission to do so, no letters or documents from people who might have traveled with him. In contrast, Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford is known to have traveled through France and Italy from January 1575 to April 1576. Other authorship candidates are believed to have traveled outside England as well.

5. Stymied by the patchy documentation, Oxfordian scholars disagree on the exact itinerary that Edward de Vere followed (once he left Sturmius in Strasburg on April 26, 1575 and Germany sometime in May) in order to reach Venice by the end of May. Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn Jr. (83–84) have him skirt Milan, go by road to Lake Garda and the upper Adige, and on to Verona. B.M. Ward (105) lists the well-documented dates and places him in Padua and then Venice in May, offering no further conjecture regarding his possible itinerary. Charlton Ogburn Jr. (543–544) suggests that de Vere navigated up the Rhine to Basel, then passed through Lake Constance and, in order to avoid the Duchy of Milan altogether, crossed the Alps either at the Reschen-Scheideck Pass or at the more heavily traveled Brenner pass; and finally descended the Adige and once in Trento, headed east to the Piave and Padua. Mark Anderson (79–80) proposes Basel, Lake Constance, the St. Gotthard Pass, the outskirts of Milan, then sailing “on a canal, then a network of rivers to Verona” and a two-day trip to Venice, presumably on horseback. At this remove and short of discovering new documents, it is impossible to know with certainty. But we can be reasonably sure that he did visit Verona at some point during his stay in Italy.
6. From *Rivoalto*, name (until the eleventh century) of the original settlement on a group of islands in the lagoon. When referring to Venice as a center of trade, historians often call her the “emporio realtino” (Fanfani), “storehouse of the Rialto.”
7. Montaigne (182) describes a “pais plein et tres fertile, difficile aus jans de pied en tamps de fange, d’autant que le pais de Lombardie est fort gras, et puis les chemins etant fermés de fossés de tous costés, ils n’ont de quoy se garantir de la boue à cartier de maniere que plusieurs du pais marchent à tout ces petites échasses d’un demy pied de haut” (“a populated and fertile country, difficult for people traveling on foot during mud season, especially since Lombardy’s soil is very clayey and the paths are surrounded by ditches everywhere, so that many local people, in order to avoid the thick mud, walk around on small stilts, that are half a foot high”).
8. Cozza and Grillo state (Ministero 10–11) that in Italy, contrary to the rest of Europe, canals were designed for multiple purposes. This needs to be clarified slightly. While navigation canals were indeed used to drain the surrounding countryside and to convey water for irrigation to agricultural estates on their route, many drainage and irrigation ditches were probably too shallow or too narrow to accommodate the larger *burchi*. Smaller skiffs, however, would likely have taken advantage of these local

waterways to bring in the harvest. The profusion of terms designating waterways in Northern Italy can be disconcerting at first. *Scolo*, *scolador* and *dugale* designate drainage canals; *condotto*, *seriola*, *cavo*, an irrigation canal; *fossa*, *fosso*, *fossetta*, larger or ancient canals; *naviglio*, a navigation canal; *taglio*, a man-made cut-off canal; *rotta*, a breach in the levees and the distributary created by it. Because waterways often have—by design or by custom—multiple purposes, one often cannot infer their role simply from their name.

9. A river is said to become “floatable” when it can convey at first loose tree trunks and logs and, further down, proper rafts. A floatable river can become “navigable” further downstream still, when boats can use its current without undue risk of running aground or being smashed and sunk. All navigable rivers are floatable but not all floatable rivers are also navigable (Vernon-Harcourt 1:64).
10. Rafts were built (Mainardi 47–52) in specialized yards along the river during seasonal low waters (in winter) and launched only when the river had risen enough. The trunks, tied together by ropes made of willow, were organized so that the ones intended for the farthest destination on the route were placed in the lower layer of the raft (Beggio, “Navigazione” 544–548). They were left with their bark on to protect them from water, scrapes and shocks. The rafts could reach 16 to 23 feet in width and 65 to 131 feet in length (Faccioli 2) and were dismantled upon arrival (Beggio, “Navigazione” 485). Several crews of drivers, all experts at riding and reading the river, would work in relays. One crew would hand over the raft to the next crew at predesignated stops, before heading back upriver on foot. Bridges being few and far between, smaller rafts were commonly used as ferries to carry people, horses, cattle and goods across rivers (Beggio, “Navigazione” 544).
11. Besides the flour and rice mills, “various kinds of machinery and plant were powered by water: mills, paper works, fulling and spinning machinery for the silk industry; hammers and bellows used in working iron; mechanical wood saws and presses for flax oil” (Ciriaco 47).
12. The *mulini natanti*, known in English as floating mills, ship mills or boat mills (Decker), were a common feature in Verona, the lower Adige and the Po until the nineteenth century. Whereas watermills built in stone could be found on the banks of smaller streams and canals in the Veneto, only boat mills were allowed on the Adige itself (Beggio, “Navigazione” 549). With their large vertical paddlewheel and their small cabin sheltering the millstones and engine, they floated on three wooden pontoons

and were anchored or tied to the bank by ropes. They were associated with a house and storeroom built on land (Beggio, “Navigazione” 554). They could only be moved a few yards up or downstream and closer or farther from the bank but were otherwise obligated to remain in their allotted stretch (*ariale*) of river (Mainardi 43–46). They numbered 400 in the nineteenth century. For a full history and description see Beggio, *Mulini natanti*.

13. The *Dogana d’Isolo* processed all merchandise coming down river from northern Europe. The *Dogana Ponte delle Navi* processed goods coming upriver from Venice and the Adriatic. Both remained in use until the eighteenth century.
14. Hughes (460) quotes Moryson’s observation: “They are carefull to avoyde infection of the plague, and to that purpose in euery Citty haue magistrates for health. So as in tymes of danger when any Citty in or neere Italy is infected, travelers cannot passe by land, except they bring a bolletino or certificate of their health from the place whence they come, and otherwise must make la quarantana or tryall of forty dayes for their health, in a lazaretto or hospitall for that purpose.”
15. Italian has, understandably, a rich terminology regarding rivers, floods and navigation: *Piena*, *Gonfięzza*, *Escrescenza*, which refer to the swelling or rise of a river, whether destructive or not; *Esondazione*, *Inondazione*, *Allagamento* which refer to the flooding of a city or the countryside; *Straripamento*, the overtopping of a bank or dike; *Rotta*, a breach in the levees but also the resulting distributary. *Impaludamento*, the long-term effect of flooding which turns a region into marshland. The Venetian dialect adds its own specific terms: *Monta*, *Colma*, (rising water), *Dosana* (falling water), *Aqua colonbina* (tail end of a spate), *Brentana* (impetuous rush), *Turbion* (sudden and violent rise), *Corentiva* (strong and fast current), *Molente* (stretch where the current suddenly slows down once past an obstacle), *Spiasera* (navigable channel), *Filon* (deepest part of a river or thalweg), *Fiumera* (long and large channel), *Mandracio* (It. Mandracchio, a sheltered area where boats can lie safely and wait to be loaded or unloaded by lighters, to form a convoy, to enter a lock, etc., before starting on the next leg of their journey, i.e. a roadstead) (Turato et al. 159–203).
16. Fynes Moryson mentions taking a similar water coach, a “Barke which weekly passeth betwixt Venice and Ferrara” during his 1594 Italian travels (Sullivan 228).

17. Puppi (350) concurs and quotes the label designating the said canal on that map, as stating: “*fossa fexe far el ducha de milan*” (i.e. Gian Galeazzo Visconti, master of Verona from 1387 to 1402).
18. It would have taken the following route: down the Mincio from Mantua to the Po; down the Po to Ostiglia; along the *Fossa d’Ostiglia* and the *Fossetta mantovana* to Bastion San Michele; down the Tartaro to the Nichesola confluence at Bastion della Crocetta; up the Nichesola and east along an existing canal, on to the Adige through a new lock to be built about half a mile south of Legnago (Supino 449; Togliani 584, note 206).
19. Many historical maps have now been digitized and can be consulted online on the website of the Italian State Archives: <http://www.icar.beniculturali.it/index.php?id=89>
20. The remarkable study published by Morin and R. Scola Gagliardi in 1993 on precisely this area, although mostly focused on hydraulic works designed for agriculture, has thankfully begun to clarify the situation. Remo Scola Gagliardi’s 2014 study of the navigation between Adige and Po through the *Valli Veronesi* is also invaluable.
21. During a war between Venice and its neighbors, Gian Francesco Gonzaga, Marquess of Mantua, is said to have driven his fleet from Ostiglia to the Tartaro, crossed the swamps (i.e. the *Valli Veronesi*) and breached the banks of the Adige in two places (Castagnaro and Malopera, roughly five and eight miles, respectively, downstream from Legnago), to enable his ships to get access to the river and attack the Venetians. Some authors question the tradition and argue that the two breaches were present since the twelfth century and were simply enlarged in 1438 as the result of a powerful flood (Morin 135). Whatever the cause, the result was the same: the waters of the Adige rushed into the breach, flooding the countryside all the way to Adria. Starved of a large part (calculated at between two-thirds and four-fifths) of its waters (Paleocapa 14), the old Adige became hardly navigable and even lost its name for a while, to become *la Fossa Chirola* in fifteenth and sixteenth century documents. Without sustained human intervention, the Castagnaro would simply have become the main course of the Adige (Paleocapa 8).
22. Wing dams or spur dikes are structures in wood, rocks, or nowadays cement, used to partially close a river channel (US Army Corps of Engineers 5–12). Judging from the stated purpose of the two *castelli di travi* mentioned in official documents of the time, it seems they would be called today “wing dams” in English.

23. This is when it was decided to close the Castagnaro on a seasonal basis: a large earthen dike was built to bar its entrance every year on November 11, at the beginning of the seasonal low waters, and it was dug open every year on May 8, when the spring floods arrived (Paleocapa 17–18). The Castagnaro was not closed, completely and permanently, until 1838.
24. She also says that the records indicate a flood in 1575 and 1576. Yet Menna (96) does not list those two dates among the years recorded for their memorable floods. We can therefore assume that the floods of 1575 and 1576 were within the expected, normal bounds of the seasonal swelling of the Adige.
25. Even allowing for poetic license, we cannot imagine that it would be physically possible for Lance, straining at his oars, to make up for more than an hour of delay.
26. In Europe, the use of miter gates and paddles in pound locks dates back to the fifteenth century in Milan (Willan 88). However, the use of a basin closed at both ends by a vertically raised door (guillotine gate) or by a sliding door, is much older. Aleotti includes a drawing (405) of such a transitional design used at the Polesella lock as late as 1637.
27. The pound lock is best adapted to the shallow, upstream stretches of fast-moving rivers where it solves the seasonal problem of insufficient depth for navigation, and to canals where the supply of water needed to keep them navigable is deficient. The canals around the Venetian lagoon did not have more than one or two, except the Brenta (Vernon-Hartcourt 2:499).
28. In old documents, the word “lock” should never be assumed to refer to a pound lock (Willan 87, 92; Robertson 47). In fact, chances are that what is meant is a “simple lock” “half-lock” or “flash lock.” The same confusion exists in Italian regarding the exact meaning of *chiusa*, *sostegno* or *chiavica* in old documents (Supino 441). Aleotti (414–415) for example labels *sostegno* and *chiusa* illustrations of what are clearly flash locks. For a clear and illustrated history (in French) of the evolution from the flash lock, via the turf-sided lock, to the pound lock, see Berg, *Du pertuis à l'écluse*.
29. Because this system was very wasteful of water, the next “flash” had to wait, once the gate was closed again, for the water to rise again behind the dam and sluice, which could take from a few hours to a few days.
30. A few flash locks survive to this day and have been restored in heritage sites in England and France.

31. Robertson also calls flashing “the *tide* in the affairs of bargemen” (40), but his statement is ambiguous and given without any further context or explanation. Navigation by flashes was widely used in England (Paget-Tomlinson 49, 51), where the opening of the weirs’ gates was left at the discretion of their private owners, who extorted exorbitant fees from bargemen for the privilege. This rather informal arrangement led to endless conflicts between boatmen, sometimes detained at a closed weir for weeks on end, and the weir owners, anxious to hoard the water to power their mills. In England, “a non-tidal river belonged to the riparian owners and was private property as much as the land itself” (Willan 22). As a result, boatmen were left at the mercy of private weir and mill owners who decided when (or whether) to open their sluice gates for waiting boats and at what price.
32. Aleotti (414), based on a letter and drawing he received from a Venetian engineer, dated 1600, describes the *rosta di Castagnaro* as an “Opera di legname sì, ma tale che trattiene et ammette *a volontà di chi n’ha cura* la navigazione delle merci che da Verona scendono per la Fossa Policella e per la Fuosa nel Po per andare et tornare di Lombardia...” (“a wooden construction for sure, but *one which allows those in charge of it to hold back or to let pass at will* the traffic that comes down from Verona and that, via the *Fossa Polesella* and the Po river travel to and from Lombardy”). It is clear that the decision to open or close the passage is left to the lock keepers officially assigned to its operation, not to the boatmen.
33. “All’incile di questo canale coll’Adigetto esisteva nel 1598 un sostegno detto del Ghebbo, a due luci con panconatura orizzontale, che veniva aperto per la navigazione il mercoledì sera d’ogni settimana, e si chiudeva il giovedì pur a sera”(Bocchi, *Trattato geografico* 228). (“At the entrance of this [the Gaibo] canal, there was in 1598 a dam called the Ghebbo, which had two openings with gates made of horizontal beams and which was opened for navigation every Wednesday evening and closed every Thursday, also in the evening”).
34. Another sign that river navigation in England was less developed and less formally organized than in Italy or France (Willan 121, 127) is the fact that while the boatmen’s trade in Verona had long been regulated by guilds and detailed statutes, English bargemen, “except for the watermen and lightermen in London, were not organized in companies or regulated by Act.” (Willan 109)

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Shakespeare's "Idle Hours" in Historical Context

by Robert Detobel

Hartmann von Aue (c. 1160-70 to 1210 -20) was a German author who published poetry in the last decade of the 12th and the first decade of the 13th century, his romances being written in the Middle High German of the time. Nothing is known about Hartmann besides what he reports in his romances. In the preface to *Der Arme Heinrich* (Poor Henry, c. 1190), he provides some information about himself:

Ein ritter sô gelêret was
daz er an den buochen lass
waz er dar an geschriben vant:
der was Hartman enant,
dienstman was er zOuwe

The literal English translation omits the rhyme:

A knight so learned was,
that he read in books,
what he therein found written.
He was called Hartmann,
Serving man at Aue

This information looks rather trivial but is not. To begin with, a knight who could read and write—who was literate—was the exception in



Hartmann von Aue, idealized Miniature in the Codex Manesse, fol. 184v, around 1300 (Wikimedia commons)

the 12th century, when the majority of the aristocracy was illiterate and even hostile to learning. A "dienstman" was a serving man, the equivalent of a vassal who was a knight, and a member of the lower nobility.

Hartmann von Aue states in the preface to another of his romances, *Ywain* (c. 1200):

Ein rîter, der gelêret was
unde ez an den buochen las,
swenner sîne stunde
niht baz bewenden kunde,
daz er ouch tihtennes pflac

A knight who learned was,
And from the books did read,
When he had no better use for his hours,
also wrote poems.

And so, in poetic meter, Hartman von Aue reveals that knights as a class wrote poems when "he had no better use for his hours"—during their idle hours.

The serving man, like the vassal, was committed to the service of a lord and was engaged under oath "to prefer the obligations promised to the lord before any other activities" (Bloch 207). In exchange, the lord offered the vassal protection and the possession of lands. Activities that were not an essential part of these services were restricted to leisure time. Reading and writing literature were such non-essential activities. Everything beyond military duty was considered derogatory to the special role of the warrior class. By emphasizing that he wrote poetry during his leisure hours, Hartmann von Aue tells us writing poetry was not his normal business, confirming that he was a member of the aristocracy. Only weapons counted, and neither writing nor learning played a role in the life of a knight. Learning was the primary function of another social class: the clergy.

Robert Detobel of Germany (1939-2018) was a professional translator of books in French, German, Dutch and English. Over the course of several decades, he conducted research on the Shakespeare authorship issue, publishing papers in the *SOS Newsletter* as well as the peer-reviewed journals *The Elizabethan Review*, *Brief Chronicles* and *The Oxfordian*. In addition, he presented his scholarship at the annual conferences of the *Shakespeare Oxford Society* and *Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship*. Moreover, he was the co-founder and co-editor of the German journal, *Neues Shakespeare Journal*, and is the author of the book, *Shakespeare, the Concealed Poet*, published privately in 2010.

According to the English diplomat and writer, Richard Pace (c. 1482-1536): “It becomes the sons of gentlemen...to blow the horn nicely, to hunt skillfully, and elegantly to carry and train a hawk.... Rather my son should hang, than be learned” (preface).

Why this glimpse into the Middle Ages? Does it offer insight into the works of Shakespeare? I think it does. In 1965 Peter Laslett published the book, *The World We Have Lost*. The tenor of his work is that modern generations have developed theories about the past that on closer scrutiny have proven to be wrong. Accordingly, present interpretations are often misguided by what might be called “reverse anachronisms”—projections of our own preconceived modern worldviews into a remote past.

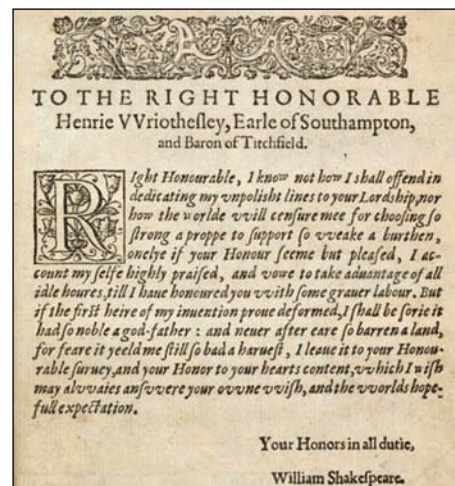
A look back into the Middle Ages—400 years before the time of Shakespeare—may therefore offer knowledge about how the behavior of an aristocrat in 1600 should be correctly interpreted. Thus, we are trying not to look back into the past, but to start from an even earlier period and look into the then-future.

One key factor should be emphasized: the transformation of the feudal system of the Middle Ages in Western Europe into the courtly system of the 16th century still left many rules for the aristocracy unchanged. For example, a sovereign still left parts of his country, including its residents, to his military followers for their material supply. Thus, the relationship of the monarch to members of the warrior class who were pledged to him remained the same.

Hartman von Aue wrote poems during his “idle hours.” So, four centuries later, did Sir Philip Sidney, according to the dedication of the *Arcadia* to his sister, the Countess of Pembroke: “Here now have you...this idle work of mine” (Sidney 3). As did William Shakespeare, according to the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to the Earl of Southampton:

I account myself highly praised,
and vow to take advantage of all
idle hours, till I have honoured
you with some graver labour
(Oxford Shakespeare, 173).

Von Aue telling his readers that he wrote poetry “when he had no better use for his hours” sounds eerily familiar to Shakespeare’s message to Southampton in the dedication to *Venus and Adonis*: that he will “take advantage of all of idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour.” Are



these writers, whether intentionally or not, giving their audience details about their social status and the social norms shaping their behaviors?

Shakespeare's contemporary Gabriel Harvey (1552-1631) evidently thought so. A professor of rhetoric at Cambridge University, he highlighted the phrase in his pamphlet *Pierce's Supererogation*, which appeared the same year as *Venus and Adonis*: "I write only at idle hours that I dedicate to *Idle Hours*."

In his essay, "The Stella Cover-Up," Peter R. Moore describes this situation with remarkable accuracy:

If "William Shakespeare" was, as many of us believe, the 17th Earl of Oxford, one implication seems inescapable: Oxford's contemporaries—courtiers, writers, and theatre people—must have maintained a remarkable conspiracy of silence. We can go further. The silence must have been maintained well into the next generation, long after Oxford was dead. At first glance, this seems implausible. Moreover, orthodox Stratfordians scoff at the idea of so extensive a cover-up (312).

Answering this problem means understanding what being a member of the aristocracy in the 16th and 17th centuries entailed. It means understanding the genuinely inherent risk in modern times of falling victim to reverse anachronisms when trying to understand social and political issues in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The 16th century Italian Count Annibale di Romei designated himself as "gentil'umo"—"gentleman." In *The Arte of English Poesie*, published in 1589, George Puttenham refers to the Earl of Oxford as "that noble gentleman" (61). Many people may regard that as a contradiction in terms, accustomed as they are to understanding such terms as *knight* and *gentleman* exclusively as designations of bare social stratification. Although this is not inaccurate, it is wrong in many cases.

The class of people that the English courtier and writer Henry Peacham had in mind when he published *The Complete Gentleman* (1622) were those of noble birth. Both terms could and did also refer to a certain lifestyle and were not compatible with the formal nomenclatures. A gentleman in the socio-cultural sense was not the same as a titled gentleman in the formal social hierarchy. Those who adhere to the traditional authorship theory might maintain that William of Stratford reached the status of a gentleman and that all is applicable to him. That is a misunderstanding. A great danger lies therein, in that modern readers, confronted with the oscillating meaning of terms derived from eras long past, will adopt to just one definition. It will then appear that referring to an earl as a knight or gentleman is extremely deprecatory, while in fact it might be complimentary.

Since the time of Hartmann von Aue, the image of the “ideal knight” from the chivalrous literature had undergone a transformation. Probably the strongest stimulus came from the Italian Count Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529), who published *The Book of the Courtier* in Venice in 1528 after serving as a member of the Duke of Urbino’s court. The “ideal knight” was replaced by Castiglione’s “ideal courtier.” Castiglione had much less to say about arms than about letters, although he still adhered to the opinion that arms mattered more than letters.

So I wish our courtier to be well built, with finely proportioned members, and I would have him demonstrate strength and lightness and suppleness and be good at all the physical exercises befitting a warrior (61).



Title page from “*The Book of the Courtier*” by Count Baldassare Castiglione

And though he should strive for perfection in the “sciences”—that is, in all kinds of arts: literature, music, painting and learning in general—he should always maintain that these are secondary activities.

To make no mistake at all, the courtier should, on the contrary, when he knows the praises he receives are deserved, not assent to them too openly nor let them pass without some protest. Rather he should tend to disclaim them modestly, always giving the impression that arms are, as indeed they should be, his chief profession, and that all his other fine accomplishments serve merely as adornments... (91-2)

Finally, Castiglione insists that this perfection should not be pursued as an end in itself:

For...the end of the perfect courtier...is, to win for himself the mind and favour of the prince he serves that he can and always will tell him the truth about all he needs to know, without fear or risk of displeasing him (284).

This new aristocrat—the courtier—is no longer the uncivilized 9th-century warrior, nor the 12th–13th-century serving man and knight, Hartmann von Aue, although some continuity is recognizable. The loyalty is no longer due to an overlord but to *the* overlord—the prince or monarch. The courtier’s prime function is still the military function, at least nominally, but to this is

added the service of the commonwealth (Hexter 14ff). It is revealing that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, wrote an Introduction in Latin to the Latin translation of *The Courtier* in 1572, for it signals the earl's acceptance of the book's principles of the new courtier.

In 1531, just three years after initial publication of *The Book of the Courtier*, Sir Thomas Elyot (1490 -1546) published his *Book of the Governor*. Elyot drew mainly on Cicero's *De officiis* (*On Duties*).

"Governor" here means "political leader," namely he who should participate in the government of the realm. Like Castiglione's courtier, Elyot's governor should be learned and skilful in several arts. However, he qualifies his counsel by insisting that skills such as painting, music and playing games should be reserved to leisure hours and never practiced before the eyes of the vulgar.

Another who only took to literary production in his "idle hours" was the French aristocrat, dramatist, and poet, Georges de Scudéry (1601-1667). In 1629, he published his play *Ligdamon et Lidias* and wrote in the preface:

...thinking to be but a soldier I found myself a poet...poetry is only a delightful pastime to me, not a serious occupation; if I am rhyming, then it is because I do not know what else to do and the only purpose of this kind of work is my private contentment; and far from being mercenary, the printer and the actors can witness to the fact that I sold them nothing, which at any rate they cannot pay for (Magendie, 60-1).

Scudéry's statement has the value of an affirmation of his social rank, a statement also hidden in Heminges and Condell's preface dedication of the First Folio to the Earls of Montgomery and Pembroke: "We have...done an office...without ambition either of selfe-profit, or fame" (Complete Works xxiv).

Ultimately, the disowning of one's works is a form of *sprezzatura*. *Sprezzatura* originally meant just that. "Sprezzatura was not, literally speaking, a new word at all, but rather a new sense given to an old word, the basic meaning of which was 'setting no price on'" (Burke, 31).

Sprezzatura was described by Baldassare Castiglione as an ability to make even strenuous acts seem easy and effortless. In *The Book of the Courtier*, he describes *sprezzatura* as an essential characteristic of a perfect courtier and always recommends that one should use a certain kind of nonchalance which conceals art and testifies that what one does apparently comes effortlessly, almost without thinking about it.

The concept of *sprezzatura* describes key aspects of aristocrats' code of conduct. Above all, writing activities were only allowed during idle hours. But idle hours were not the only condition; there was a more important one: the stigma of print. Undoubtedly a stigma of print existed as late as the mid-16th century. It functioned for purely literary works, but not for religious works or generally for works considered to possess an educational value.

A contemporary of Shakespeare's, John Selden (1584-1654), addressed the issue:

'Tis ridiculous for a Lord to print verses, 'tis well enough to make them to please himself but to make them publick is foolish. If a man in a private Chamber twirles his Band string, or playes with a Rushe to please himselfe, 'tis well enough, but if hee should goe into Fleet streete & sett upon a stall & twirle his bandstring or play with a Rush, then all the boyes in the streete would laugh att him (96).

The solution was anonymity, and pseudonyms were therefore respected. Pseudonyms were also used to escape the dangers of censorship. In the Elizabethan era, for example, attorney John Stubbs and playwright Ben Jonson were severely punished for their public texts, the former having his right hand cut off for publishing *The Gaping Gulf*, the latter being jailed for the play *The Isle of Dogs*. Both were commoners. On the other hand, the literary works of the noblemen Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard, Thomas Vaux, Edward Dyer, Philip Sidney, Fulke Greville and Walter Raleigh were printed only after their deaths. In the same vein, the noble contributors to the courtly lyric anthologies *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557, *The Paradyse of daynty devises*, 1576, *Phoenix Nest*, 1593, and *England's Helicon*, 1600, published anonymously or signed their poems with their initials.

Indeed, given that anonymity or use of a pseudonym frequently implied the author's aim to be recognized as behaving like a gentleman, unveiling the author's name could constitute an offence by denying him that status. It should be stressed that a gentleman in the sociocultural sense, referring to a certain lifestyle, was not the same as a titled gentleman in the formal social hierarchy.

Accordingly, the rules of the social game in courtly societies operated as a built-in barrier against identifying noblemen-authors by their names. The concept of the social taboo is much more appropriate—the social taboo of not naming in print something to which a certain person did not overtly commit himself. Social taboos do not need a powerful executive to implement; rather, they are self-executing by members of the caste.

One vital difference between society in the 16th and 17th centuries and society in our own time concerns the economic ethos. This vital difference is admirably described by Norbert Elias, a noted German sociologist, and merits citation:

In societies in which the status-consumption ethos predominates, the mere preservation of the existing social position of the family depends on the ability to make the cost of maintaining one's household and one's expenditure match one's social rank. Anyone who cannot maintain an appearance befitting his rank loses the respect of his society. In the incessant race for status and prestige he falls behind his rivals and runs the risk of being both ruined and eliminated from the social life of his status group (66-7).

This is a correlation that may be difficult to apprehend in our own time—social prestige and status depended *not* on accumulating wealth, but on spending it.

We find this confirmed by the noted English diplomat and scholar, Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577), in his *De Republica Anglorum*,

...and in Englande no man is created barron, excepte he may dispend of yearly revenue, one thousand poundes or one thousand markes at the least (21).

In England a man was considered a member of the peerage, the "nobilitas maior" in Sir Thomas Smith's words, if he could spend at least £1,000 per year. In June 1586, the Earl of Oxford received a grant of £1,000. There were extremely few peers who received such a huge annuity. According to Lawrence Stone:

The only substantial grants were the £1,000 a year given to the Lords President of the Councils of the North and Wales to augment their grossly inadequate official salaries and to cover the cost of maintaining a suitable establishment, and the £1,000 a year for the Earl of Oxford.... (419).

However, Lawrence Stone overlooked one other substantial grant and only one: that to William Shakespeare. According to Vicar John Ward of Stratford, he had heard "that...Mr. Shakespeare...supplied the stage with 2 plays every year, and for that had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of a 1,000*l.* a year" (entry in his diary—c. 1662) (Chambers 2, 249).

Chambers comments on Ward's entries in his diary: "There is no reason to reject this report"; nonetheless, he classifies John Ward's entries under "The Shakespeare Mythos." He gives no reason for doing so, but the reason is not

difficult to see: the incredible spending at a rate of £1,000 a year. However, if the Earl of Oxford is Shakespeare, then this is no mythos but a documented reality. The first half of Ward's entry reads:

Mr. Shakespeare was a natural wit, without any art at all; he frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford (Chambers 2, 249).

This certainly refers to William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon. Is the information on the spending of the £1,000 unreliable? We should not reject it too hastily on overly formal grounds. Somehow, Ward must have heard something about the true author. Even if it was only a rumor, it is still highly significant that in addition to information about Oxford/Shakespeare appears information on the literary front, William Shakspeare. We do not know from whom Ward had heard that Shakespeare wrote two plays a year, for which he received an allowance allowing him to spend at the rate of £1,000 a year. The hypothesis that I favor is that we have to deal with information that circulated verbally only. In short, the official "suppression" or "eradication" of Oxford's biography was restricted to the written word and was not completely successful in the oral domain.

We may think of this annuity as a trade-off. Could it be that Oxford was given the opportunity to spend in accordance with his rank, while on the other hand the Queen could require that he not associate his name with any activity incompatible with this rank, the writing of plays partly destined for the public theatre? Could it be that these two aspects are not mutually exclusive and are only two sides of the same coin? Anyway, it would have been a bargain, conceived as a pact between the Queen and Oxford. In his letter of 25 June 1586 to Burghley, one day before the grant became official, Oxford wrote:

...for being now almost at a point to taste that good which her Majesty shall determine, yet am I as one that hath long besieged a fort and not able to compass the end or reap the fruit of his travail, being forced to levy his siege for want of munition (ff 49-50).

Mark Anderson wrote in *Shakespeare by Another Name*: "However, the bargain was a Faustian one...." (xxxii). It was Faustian in the sense that it was final and irreversible—it could never be undone, not even after his death. The Earls of Montgomery and Pembroke and their families would never be able to call the author by his true name because the social taboo would not allow it. It would be a betrayal of one of their class and thus a betrayal of their class itself.

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A Reassessment of the French Influence in Shakespeare

by Elisabeth Waugaman

The great English actor, David Garrick, grandson of French Huguenot refugees, resurrected Shakespeare's works and assured his immortality by organizing the first Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769, describing the playwright as "the god of our idolatry" (England 129).

The source of Shakespeare's genius, however, has long been disputed by scholars. In 1776, in "An Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare," Richard Farmer maintained that "Shakespeare was nurtured by Nature and his own tongue," (Farmer 94)—"his studies were most demonstratively confined to Nature and his own Language" (110). Farmer insists the French in the plays—indeed, entire scenes—were added later by another hand (Farmer 96-97). He notes that Michael Drayton, Sir John Denham, and Thomas Fuller are in agreement that Shakespeare was a natural genius (Farmer 5), in contrast to Alexander Pope, Lewis Theobald, John Warburton, and John Upton, who highlight Shakespeare's learning (Farmer 5-6). In 1792, the fashionable portrait painter George Romney chose to depict Shakespeare's birth as a nativity scene in which the baby Shakespeare is attended by Nature and the Passions. (The painting is now displayed at the Folger Library in Washington, D.C.) Thus, beginning with the resurrection of Shakespeare's works in the late 1700s, there has been scholarly disagreement concerning Shakespeare's education.

In *Cursory Remarks on Shakespeare and on Certain French and Italian Poets, principally Tragedians* (1776), William Richardson observes that the English have a tendency to deny any foreign influence in their literature despite their desire for foreign goods “for the ornament of our persons, for the luxury of our tables” (Richardson vi). Noting that he will be condemned for it, Richardson examines Italian and French influences in Shakespeare’s works. The assessments of William Richardson, Alexander Pope, Theobald Warburton, and John Upton, however, did not stem the tide of the natural genius theory. Considering the long-standing hostilities between England and France in the 1700s, the Seven Years War, the Wars of the First and Second Coalition, and the 18th century English struggle against foreign influences, especially French, the Romantic rejection of any French influences in Shakespeare’s work is not surprising.

At the height of the Romantic Era, in the highly influential book, *On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History*, a collection of lectures delivered by Thomas Carlyle in 1840, Shakespeare is described as “the free gift of Nature” (121), “a rallying-sign and bond of brotherhood for all Saxondom” (294). “Yes, this Shakespeare is ours; we produced him, we speak and think by him; we are of one blood and kind with him” (133). Not only is Shakespeare the incarnation of “Saxondom,” he is also “beatified” (101). Carlyle says, “Shakespeare and Dante are Saints of Poetry...*canonized*, so that it is impiety to meddle with them” (101). Shakespeare is “an unconscious intellect” (152); “those dramas of his grew up out of Nature (152); “But call it worship, call it what you will (...),” (157).

By the 1840s, Shakespeare had become widely regarded as a religious icon inspired by Nature, a representation of Saxondom not to be meddled with. What does this strange prohibition against meddling mean? Is meddling anything that endangers the concept of Shakespeare as an incarnation of Saxondom? This prohibition casts a long shadow which still stifles scholarly research into the foreign influences in Shakespeare’s works. Yet without understanding the foreign influences in Shakespeare’s *oeuvre*, we can never understand Shakespeare’s place in the Renaissance, whose ideal was all-encompassing knowledge between cultures and fields of studies.

In 1857, the American writer Delia Bacon published *The Philosophy of the Plays of William Shakespeare*, with a foreword by Nathaniel Hawthorne, asserting that Montaigne had a significant impact on the philosophy of

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Francis Bacon and the set of aristocrats she advocated as the real authors of the plays—Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Thomas Lord Buckhurst, Sir Henry Lord Paget, Edward Earl of Oxford (lv), and others who were all members of an aristocratic group Delia Bacon refers to as Raleigh's School (li). As members of the nobility, all these candidates would be fluent in French. This concept of group authorship anticipated current thinking about the authorship of the plays by 150 years. However, Delia Bacon's unedited, stream-of-consciousness style of writing resulted in the rejection of her ideas until recently.

Using textual analysis in his erudite "1910 study, *The French Renaissance in England*, Sidney Lee, the leading Shakespeare expert of his generation, proved not only that the Bard knew French but that French writers directly influenced Shakespeare. In 1919, in *Sous le Masque de William Shakespeare: William Stanley VI^e Comte de Derby*, the French Renaissance scholar Abel Lefranc maintained that Shakespeare's knowledge of the French court and its secrets, French geography, and Shakespeare's erudition all indicate that William of Stratford could not be the author for "toute personne dont le jugement est resté libre..." [for anyone with an open mind] (xiii). In 1920, in "*Shakespeare*" *Identified in Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, J. Thomas Looney maintained like Le Franc that the plays reveal a fount of erudition and familiarity with French court life, events in France, French geography and literature that cannot be credibly reconciled with the life of Shakspear of Stratford-on-Avon. Because Shakspear never developed a consistent signature, the Shakspear spelling, which he used the most frequently, will be used when referring to the merchant while Shakespeare will be used when discussing the author.

By 1920 three books written by an American, a Frenchman, and an Englishman all proposed that Shakespeare was actually a Renaissance man influenced by the art and erudition of France as well as Italy. In short, Shakespeare was a towering Renaissance figure who had assimilated European Renaissance culture and raised it to its apogee in his plays and poetry. Yet most English-speaking scholars ignored these studies; for them, Shakespeare remained a Romantic symbol of divinely inspired English Nature. A generation later came the vogue of "New Criticism," which divorced the work of art from its author's life, leading to the literary phenomenon of "the death of the author," and making any interest in the author and his biography not only superfluous but passé.

In 1962, Abel Lefranc's protege, Georges Lambin, published his landmark study, *Voyages de Shakespeare en France et en Italie*, a detailed work in which he presents not only Shakespeare's familiarity with French and Italian geography, but also his intimate knowledge of court intrigues in both countries. The

latter included suppressed stories not printed until after Shakespeare's death, as well as lessons on geography to explain previously misidentified locations. Lambin predicted that his book would be ignored by Shakespeare scholars because of their refusal to consider foreign influences in Shakespeare (17). Regrettably, he was correct.

In addition to idolization, "Saxon" cultural identity, and New Criticism came another cultural barrier to scholarly inquiry from academia itself. In 1962, William H. Whyte, Jr. coined the term "groupthink"—"a rationalized conformity" that maintains "group values" are "right and good," "guided almost totally by the whims and prejudices of the group," resulting in increasingly subservient Americans who "embrace groupthink as the road to security." In 1972, Irving Joes observed that groupthink "overrides realistic appraisal of alternative courses of action and also dehumanizes other groups" (Waugaman). In a 2009 study, "Groupthink in Academia: Majoritarian Departmental Politics and the Professional Pyramid," Daniel Klein and Carlotta Stern observe that scholars are less likely to engage with colleagues whose work threatens their own; and shockingly, that academics are less likely to revise their views after the age of twenty-five or thirty, gradually producing ideological uniformity. Since disagreement with accepted academic thought threatens the entire academic hierarchy, scholarly thinking becomes circular. The authors then provide a shocking list of discoveries that were discounted for years in the sciences, from genetics and the viral transmission of cancer to continental drift and DNA research. Shakespeare studies could easily be added to this list.

The traditional theory that Shakespeare was ignorant of French makes perfect sense considering what we know about Shakspear's life, which did not offer him a means of obtaining a sophisticated knowledge of French, French literature, and social events as revealed in the plays. More generally, by the 16th century, the average Englishman knew little or no French. Indeed, the English populace's failure to understand French is attested to in the 1362 Statue of Pleading, which decreed cases would be pleaded in the courts in English because the general populace no longer understood French (Ormrod 755). By the end of the 14th century, the gentry and the bourgeoisie retained only a minimal amount of French for administrative and accounting purposes (Ormrod 754). By the end of the 14th century, French was only spoken by the elite—the royal family, the central administration, senior judiciary, and a portion of the high nobility (Owen 754). According to Diana Price's study of historical documents of the Elizabethan period, there is nothing in Shakespeare's mercantile records, or any other records, to indicate Shakspear had any knowledge of French. (Price, personal communication). Access to French books by the general population was very limited; by the mid-15th

century, French books were a rare commodity found only in the homes of the upper aristocracy.

Considering the state of spoken French and access to French texts, Christopher Mulvey, Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Winchester, a trustee for The English Project, makes a startling statement in “SHAKESPEARE: A French Poet?”: “The vast majority of Shakespeare’s vocabulary comes from French. More profoundly, much of the grammar and the syntax of Shakespeare’s language comes from French” (Mulvey). Professor Mulvey’s observation should give us pause considering the state of spoken French in England and the limited access to French books at the time.

It is all the more shocking, then, to acknowledge that Shakespeare is the only Elizabethan dramatist who wrote at length in a foreign language. George Watson rightly observes, “The French scenes in *Henry V* are surprising: not just that Shakespeare could write them, but that he should expect a London audience in 1599 to understand them” (Watson). Indeed, very few members of a typical London audience would have understood Shakespeare’s French, which suggests that Shakespeare included so much French in his plays and sonnets because he was writing primarily for the nobility—otherwise, including French was pointless. Watson further maintains that Shakespeare was “a conscious linguist.”

A striking example of the academic refusal to admit the possible influence of foreign sources in Shakespeare is the theory of the *Ur-Hamlet*. Like the Romantics, orthodox Shakespeare experts steadfastly assert Shakspear could only read English or Latin. This assumption makes perfect sense considering what we know of Shakspear’s life; however, it created an unsurmountable problem concerning *Hamlet*, which was undeniably inspired by Belleforêt’s *Histoires Tragiques* (1559), not translated into English until 1608, well after Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* had been published in 1603 and 1604. The awkward problem of an untranslated French source for Shakspear, illiterate in French, led to the theory of the *Ur-Hamlet*, an earlier Hamlet which Shakespeare wrote based on “a lost translation” by Thomas Kyd that must have existed because the theory made it feasible for Shakspear to read the French source in English. It is only recently that traditional academics have begun to abandon the theory of the *Ur-Hamlet*.

Philological Evidence in French Sources

How extensive was Shakespeare’s knowledge of French? Was it non-existent or just basic, as orthodox experts maintain, or was it actually sophisticated? Finally, to what extent does it permeate his works? Sidney Lee observes that Shakespeare gave the use of French words a new vogue; moreover, that

Shakespeare employs French vocabulary when there are English words that could otherwise be used: “sans” for “without” in *Hamlet*, “sans eyes, sans teeth” in *As You Like It*; “gouts (Fr. gouttes: drops) of blood” on the dagger over which Macbeth hallucinates.

In some cases, Shakespeare’s French was adopted into English, as with mal content. Shakespeare uses the ending –ure, based on the French ending –eur, for example, re/join/dure, ron/dure—“more liberally than any contemporary English writer” according to Sidney Lee (244-45). Shakespeare is also fond of words ending in –ance, such as abidance. He coins individual English words based on French: omittance, deracinate, encave, rejoindure, exposture, rumourer (Lee, 245). He creates puns that require a knowledge of French—Le Foot (foutre/fuck) & le Coun (gown/cunt)” in *Henry V* (Billings 202-05); the Protestant Charbon (chaire bonne) and the Papist Poyson (fish) (Easy 106) in *All’s Well that Ends Well*; Holofernes (fesses/arse) , posteriors (arses) of the day, culled (cul/arse), chose (pudendum) (Rubinstein xvi).

Sidney Lee also notes the influence of the French poets of the Pléiade in Shakespeare’s creation of new words and the specific use of “double epithets,” which Shakespeare uses frequently (Lee 248). Many of Shakespeare’s double epithets are still used today, such as “snow-white” and “health-giving.” Honneyman observes that nearly two-thirds of Shakespeare’s sonnets have “vestigial remains of the continental octave” (38) as found in Sonnets 29, 44, 62, 153, and occasional, but startling, use of French words with their French as opposed to their English meanings, which are different: “travail” to mean “workmanship” as opposed to “difficult work” in Sonnet 79.

In these instances, it appears that Shakespeare is playing with the French and English meanings of vocabulary because he was writing for a noble audience who were fluent in French. Honneyman observes that the Sonnets have more French words used in the correct French sense than can be found in any English writer’s work. The “vestigial remains of the continental octave” as well as imagery, vocabulary, and stylistic devices drawn from the Pléiade poets indicate that whoever wrote the Sonnets was steeped in the French sonnet tradition.

Orthodox experts have long insisted that Shakespeare read Montaigne in Florio’s translation rather than the original French. In “The Bourn Identity: *Hamlet* and the French of Montaigne’s *Essais*,” Travis Williams observes, however, that Shakespeare uses Montaigne’s French word “bourn,” not Florio’s English translation “boundary.” It is, therefore, strange to insist Shakespeare did not read Montaigne in French, especially because Shakespeare has a marked fondness for the word “bourn” and proceeds to use it throughout his works. The following table will help readers visualize Shakespeare’s extensive and varied use of French throughout the canon.

TABLE 1: Shakespeare's Use of French**(1) Use of French Words:****a) French words used in their French meaning, but never Anglicized:**

- foison (harvest), sans (without), carcanet (diminutive of carcan meaning necklace), antres (see “antres vast and deserts idle” in *Othello* I.3), scimeurs (escrimeurs) (Lee 244).
- Shakespeare uses the French word “bourn,” which Florio translates to “boundary” (Williams 254-8).
- “gouts of blood” (Hamlet II.i.625)—“the only use of ‘gouts of blood’ before or since *Hamlet*,” from the French ‘gouttes’ ” (Lee 244).

b) French words Anglicized:

- mal content—used for the first time in *Love's Labor's Lost*, III.i.185 (Ogburn 194).

(2) Use of –ure ending (equivalent to French words ending in –eur): e.g. rondure, defeature, rejoindure, etc.—Shakespeare uses these words “more liberally than any contemporary” (Lee 245).

(3) Use of –ance ending: appliance, noyance, suppliance, quittance, portance, cognizance, appurtenance, esperance, grievance, etc.

(4) Coining New Words based on French:

- omittance, abidance, rejoindure (Lee 245).
- deracinate, encave, plantage, rejoindure, suraddition, exposture, legitimation (Richard Waugaman: email 4/18/2017)
- prophetic, control, confin'd, mortal (as adjectives), eclipse, augur, incertainties, balmy (all from Sonnet 107), potions, limbecks, applying, sphere, distraction, rebuked (Nosworthy 42)

(5) Influence of the French Pléiade:**a) Vocabulary:**

- Othello tells Desdemona of “antres vast, ” (vast, mysterious places: cf: *antre*, *Petit Robert* 69). “Antres”: frequently in the Latinized vocabulary of the Pléiade. Very rare English usage (Lee 244).
- “scimeurs”—a unique Anglicization of “escrimeurs” (fencers). *Es-crimeur* was a neologism invented by the Pléiade poet Ronsard (Lee 52).
- “tirra-lirra” from Ronsard's tire-lire for the bird's song (Lee 245).

b) Double-epithets—one of best-known innovations of the Pléiade, based on Homer, using two words, specifically. Usage spread to England. Shakespeare: snow-white, health-giving, low-spirited (Lee 249).

TABLE 1: Shakespeare’s use of French (continued)
<p>(6) French Words used with their French as opposed to their English meaning:</p> <p>David Honeyman notes words that Shakespeare used with their French, not their English, meanings: embassage (Sonnet 26); “the region cloud” (Sonnet 33 région: meaning celestial or of the sky); travail (Sonnet 79: with French meaning of “workmanship” rather than English meaning of “difficult effort”); reserve (Sonnet 85: with French meaning of preserve/ make permanent); impeacht (Sonnet 125: from the French empêcher); pain (Sonnet 141: with French meaning of “punishment,” not English meaning of “pain”); Sidney Lee notes great morning (grand matin) instead of “broad daylight” used twice (245).</p>
<p>(7) Puns—Shakespeare was fond of puns based on French: <i>Henry V</i>: le foot & le coun; <i>All’s Well</i> Charbon (Chair bonne) the Puritan and old Poysam (Poison) the Papist. <i>Love’s Labor’s Lost</i>: Holofernes (fesses/arse), Posteriors (arses) of the day, culled (cul/arse), chose (pudendum) (Rubenstein, xvi).</p>

Since 1914 several books have examined the full spectrum of Shakespeare’s sources. The most recent, *Shakespeare’s Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare’s Sources*, published in 2016, includes approximately 175 sources. Diana Price notes that, unfortunately, the author follows the traditional academic mold: “traditional scholars minimize the influence of a French source if there is an English translation” (Price 254).

Table 2 lists French sources within the Shakespeare cannon.

TABLE 2: French sources for Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets
<i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i> (1595): <i>Huon de Bordeaux</i> , 13th century, provides the name Obéron (translated by Sir John Bouchier, Lord Berner, 1534).
<i>All’s Well That Ends Well</i> (1604-05): Antoine le Maçon, <i>Décameron ou cent Nouvelles de Boccace</i> (1569); Symphorien Champier, <i>La vie Bayard</i> , Belleforest, <i>La pastorale amovrese</i> , Marguerite de Valois, <i>Mémoires</i> (Hillman).
<i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i> (1606): Robert Garnier, <i>Marc Antoine</i> (1578); Étienne Jodelle, <i>Cléopâtre Captive</i> (performed 1552, published 1574), Nicolas de Montreux, Jacques Amyot, <i>Vies parallèles des homes illustres</i> (1559-1565), translated by Thomas North (1579).
<i>As You Like It</i> (1599): poetry of Maurice Scève (Kaston and Vickers 165-6).
<i>Hamlet</i> (1600): Belleforest, <i>Histoires Tragiques</i> (1568); L’Histoire d’Hélène Tournon, not published until 1628.
<i>Henry V</i> (1599): <i>L’Hostellerie</i> .
<i>Henry VI, Part I</i> (1591) <i>Le Roziier Historial de France</i> (1522), <i>Les Grandes Chroniques de France</i> , <i>Chroniques de Britaigne</i> .

TABLE 2: French sources for Shakespeare's plays & sonnets (continued)

<i>King Lear</i> (1605): <i>Le garçon et l'aveugle</i> , oldest surviving French farce.
<i>Love's Labor Lost</i> (1598): Pierre de la Primaudaye, <i>L'Académie française</i> (1577), <i>L'Histoire d'Hélène de Tournon</i> (no translation available).
<i>Macbeth</i> (1606): Pierre Le Loyer Seigneur de la Brosse, <i>Discours et histories des spectres</i> .
<i>Measure for Measure</i> (1604): <i>Histoires Tragiques</i> , Belleforêt; <i>Histoires admirables et mémorables de notre temps</i> , Goulart. "A Discourse on Life and Death," Plessis-Mornay, Philippe du, (Sieur de Marlay), translated by Mary Sidney (1592) influenced the Duke's "Be absolute for death" speech (3.1.5-41) (source: <i>Shakespeare's Books</i>).
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , (1598): Belleforêt, <i>Histoires Tragiques</i> (no translation available).
<i>Othello</i> (1604): <i>Hecatommiti</i> (1565), Cinthio, Giovanni Battista Giraldi. No translation. Gabriel Chappuys, French translation (1583). In <i>Othello</i> , critics have noted direct verbal echoes of both Chappuys's French and Cinthio's Italian.
<i>Richard II</i> (1592): Froissart; Jean Créton, <i>Chronique de la traison et mort de Richard II</i> (1401), an eye-witness's account of the death of Richard II "Callirée," Ronsard (1573).
<i>Taming of the Shrew</i> (1593): <i>Livre pour l'enseignement de ses filles du Chevalier de la Tour Landry</i> (1372): translation, 1483; <i>La Comédie des Supposés</i> , La Guisade by Pierre Matthieu (1589).
<i>Sonnets</i> (1609): Pléiade poets (Ronsard, Jodelle), <i>Cymbeline</i> (1609): the Old French miracle play, <i>Miracle de Nostre Dame, comment osten, roy d'Espaigne; perdi sa terre</i> and its probable source <i>Le Roman du roi</i> (also in Boccaccio's story in the <i>Decameron</i> II,9, no translation until 1620).
<i>The Winter's Tale</i> (1610): <i>Théon et Obéron</i> .
<i>The Tempest</i> (1611): <i>Essais</i> , Montaigne, (Williams provides proof Shakespeare read Montaigne in French), Roman History Plays: Jacques Amyot's French translation of Plutarch's <i>Lives</i> .
<i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> (1594): Antoine Le Maçon's translation of the <i>Decameron</i> , the French edition of Montemayor's <i>Diana</i> (1582). <i>Diana</i> was only translated into English in 1598 (<i>Dictionary</i> II, 1123).

In addition to these sources, Hillman adds the influence of Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas, diplomatic correspondence, and political tracts. Hillman's research has led some Shakespeare scholars to conclude that it "affirms Shakespeare's proficiency in French" (Williams 358) and that "knowledge of French material can illuminate Renaissance English texts" (Haynes). Moreover, that "Hillman calls decisively into question any narrow Anglocentric view of Shakespeare" (Maskell 288).

Faced with recent discoveries of an increasing number of French sources, some untranslated, traditional Shakespeare scholars have sought to explain how Shakspear could have learned French. Price notes that academics now assume Shakspear hired French tutors during the lost years (1585-92) or studied French when he roomed for a year with the Mountjoys, a French Huguenot family in London. However, as Price observes, the problem with the Mountjoy theory is that Shakespeare had already written several plays influenced by French sources, including *Henry V* and *Hamlet*, before Shakspear went to live with the Mountjoys (Price 255). Even the duration of “the lost years” must be questioned because recent scholarship indicates that *Hamlet* and the *Henry* plays were written much earlier than previously thought (Price 278). Other orthodox scholars speculate that Shakspear was employed by noblemen and thereby gained access to their libraries where he could have learned French.

This list of French sources proves beyond a doubt that Shakespeare was deeply immersed in French language and culture. As Sidney Lee observed more than a century ago, “The matter and manner of French prose helped to mold Elizabethan thought and expression.... Familiarity with the themes of French prose—with the theology of Calvin, the ribald sagacity of Rabelais, the classical idealism of Amyot, the worldly ethics of Montaigne—signally helped to draw Elizabethan minds into the main currents of European thought and culture” (Lee 179).

Evidence for an Aristocratic Author

Unlike Shakspear of Stratford, Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, had an outstanding education in French as a ward of Lord Burghley, receiving two hours of French instruction every day (Anderson 21-22). By the age of thirteen, he could write fluently in French, as a letter from him addressed to Lord Burghley demonstrates (Fowler 1-2; also see Appendix). When he was nineteen, de Vere ordered a copy of Plutarch’s works in French (Anderson 41). When he was twenty-five, de Vere traveled to Paris and was introduced to King Henry III, Marguerite Valois, and Catherine de Médici, among others, then continued on through France to Italy (Anderson 74-75). At age forty-five, de Vere received a letter in French from King Henry IV of France, thanking him for his diplomatic efforts at Elizabeth’s court (Henry IV).

One of the more important studies to address the French influence in Shakespeare’s works is Hugh Richmond’s *Puritans and Libertines: Anglo-French Literary Relations in the Reformation*. Like Lefranc, Richmond observes that Shakespeare modeled his protagonists in *Love’s Labor’s Lost* on historical men and women with a wealth of detail that makes it difficult to imagine how Shakespeare could have accurately assembled so many historical characters at the right place and time. Shakespeare describes their physical and psycho-



King Henry III, Marguerite Valois, and Catherine de Médici

logical traits, their favorite pastimes, their quirks and relationships, including references to time spent together in other places, even a depiction of the Russians who visited the Elizabethan court (Richmond 301-339).

Though *LLL* was first published in quarto in 1598, we know from its title page that this was a revised version, “newly corrected and augmented.” As Felicia Londre points out, “Numerous internal references point to 1578 as the initial date of composition...” (Londre 5). “Of the internal evidence, most compelling is the fact that Euphuism—of which *Love’s Labor’s Lost* is universally acknowledged to be a textbook example—was a courtly fad in 1578-79, and even a year or so later the play’s witticisms and in-jokes about that linguistic affectation among members of the court would have been quite stale” (Londre 6). This is corroborated by the external evidence that *The Double Maske: A Maske of Amasons and A Maske of Knights* was presented at Elizabeth’s court on 11 January 1579 to honor the French envoy Simier, whose coming had been announced three months earlier. The *Double Maske* was described in the records of the Court Revels as “an entertainment in imitation of a tournament between six ladies and a like number of gentlemen who surrendered to them” (Londre 5).

In the play, Shakespeare describes Catherine and her *escadron volant*, “the flying squadron,” a carefully picked group of the most intelligent, charming ladies of her court, whose assignments were to solicit information, to distract, and to sow discord when necessary. Catherine used them to spread disinformation, to hinder or to hasten political and social intrigues. In *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, she successfully deploys them to distract Navarre and his lords from their ultimate goal, just as she employed the *escadron volant* historically (Richmond 336).

Of the meeting of the king and his courtiers with Catherine’s ladies, Richmond says, “if Henri de Navarre had not fought (and almost lost) the Battle



Ball at the court of Henry III of France, circa 1580

of the Sexes mounted by Catherine de Médici's *escadron volant*, Shakespeare would probably not have initiated the fascinating series of dynamic heroines which starts with the princess and her ladies in *Love's Labor's Lost* and lends verisimilitude of detail to figures like Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra" (Richmond 372). In other words, Shakespeare is clearly depicting people and events of which he had personal experience. For example, the king opens *Love's Labor's Lost* (1595) by stating, "Our court shall be a little Academe" (*LLL* I.1.13). Shakespeare thus knew about the introduction of academies into the French court, initiated by Ronsard to help with the education of Charles IX, the first being established by 1574. This concept was expanded by others, including the court of Navarre, where it is recreated in *Love's Labor's Lost* as an in-depth representation of the highly educated culture of the French court.

Richmond observes that the repartee between French characters in the play can be traced back to *l'amour courtois* of the Middle Ages. It is in this spirit that Shakespeare depicts men and women playing a game of wits in which women are not subservient to men. Moreover, the abrupt ending of the play, which has been condemned by critics, mirrors what actually happened when Catherine de Medici had to leave abruptly because of the sudden death of her son.

Richmond emphasizes that, "there can be no doubt the play deals with negotiations begun at Nérac in 1578" (302). In addition, "It is Shakespeare's genius to have copied, not invented such psychologies" (Richmond, 338). Once we not only understand all this intellectually but also sense it emotionally, we are left to speculate about the true dating of the play, which appears from its many topical allusions to have been written much earlier than its traditional dating of the mid-1590s.

The extent of the French influence in Shakespeare's plays is just beginning to be recognized. For example, Peter Moore found that *Love's Labor's Lost* is not the only play in which Shakespeare incorporates topical allusions from French politics and society, allusions that demonstrate an intimate knowledge of local events. He notes that *Comedy of Errors* is dated to 1592-93 by E.K. Chambers, who calls it Shakespeare's fifth play. Yet Act III, scene 2 has this curious exchange:

Antipholus: Where France?
 Dromio: In her forehead; armed and reverted, making war against her heir.

In 1584, Henry III of France lost his brother and heir, whereupon his brother-in-law and cousin, Henry de Bourbon, King of Navarre, became heir to the throne of France. When Navarre rejected the King's demand in December 1586 to convert to Catholicism, the Catholic armies massed against Navarre from mid-1587 until December 1588, when Henry III had his ally, the Duke of Guise, murdered. The Catholic armies then turned against the King. This situation continued until Henry III was assassinated in August 1589, whereupon Henry of Navarre became Henry IV of France. Thus, France was at war with its heir from mid-1587 to 1588. Only someone with a sophisticated knowledge of French politics could make this distinction with such a simple line. (Moore 174-5)

An equally subtle reference to French royal behavior is included in *2 Henry VI*, where the character of William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk and lover of Queen Margaret, is beheaded in Act IV, scene 1. In scene 4, Margaret brings his head to a conference at the palace, where she weeps over and embraces it. This is often been used as an example of Shakespeare's ignorance of royal deportment. Yet there was a story dating from 1574 that was the likely source of this incident. In that year the French Court was convulsed by a treason plot, which resulted in the beheading of two figures—Joseph de la Mole and Hannibal de Cocconas. These men were the lovers of Margaret Valois, Queen of Navarre, and the Duchess of Nevers. A few hours after the executions the heads disappeared, and it was said that Margaret's chamberlain brought them to the two ladies, who "wept over them that night and then had them embalmed and placed in jeweled caskets" (Moore 246-7). Whether the story is true is not at issue; the point is that it was told, and its similarity to *2 Henry VI* is striking. In both cases there is a French queen named Margaret who receives the head of her decapitated lover in order to weep over it. Then there is the resemblance between the names de la Mole and de la Pole. Finally, de la Mole actually visited Elizabeth's court in 1572 on an embassy, and Elizabeth intervened on his behalf in 1574, albeit unsuccessfully. Oxford was at Elizabeth's court in 1572 and then visited the French court in the

spring of 1575, being well placed to hear the story of Queen Margaret and de la Mole.

The most recent scholar to clearly demonstrate that Shakespeare not only knew French but was inspired by French sources is Richard Hillman. In *French Origins of English Tragedy*, Hillman compares early French dramas with Shakespeare's plays, yet never questions how Shakespeare could have read Jodelle, a minor Pléiade poet who composed the first modern French tragedy, *Cléopâtre Captive*. In "The Bourn Identity: *Hamlet* and the French of Montaigne's *Essais*," Travis Williams demonstrates that Shakespeare had read Montaigne in French. In 2009, Edward Wheatley discovered a new source for *King Lear* in *Le garçon et l'aveugle*, the oldest surviving French farce.

More orthodox scholars now agree that Shakespeare knew French and Italian because it is becoming increasingly impossible to deny that Shakespeare's works reveal a profound knowledge of their language and literature, including French court masques, unpublished papers, and local topography.

Investigating Shakespeare's foreign sources is key to discovering the scope of his creative genius. I believe he consulted as many different sources as possible because each source offered him a slightly different prism of insight. He then integrated these stories with the events of his day in allegories that reflected the social and political tensions current in Elizabethan culture. When we add this complexity to the medieval and Renaissance concept of seeing multiple levels of meaning in a text—the literal, the allegorical, historical, and the spiritual—the dizzying complexity of Shakespeare's work can begin to be fully appreciated.

As Ben Johnson tells us, Shakespeare was the "soul of the age"—a mirror into the complex world of Renaissance thought. This psychological and cultural complexity helps explain why Shakespeare's works are still so popular. Shakespeare's plays, even his comedies, always leave us with an odd feeling of malaise because, as with the Rubin's vase image, we sense the different realities, the "both/and" as opposed to "the either/or."

Shakespeare's love-hate relationship with French is so important because it is a source of energizing tension that permeates his work. David Steinsaltz maintains he was haunted by the shadow of the Norman Conquest, and so continually employs effeminizing references to the French in the plays as a psychological weapon to assuage the shame of national defeat, the original narcissistic wound, compounded by England's failure to hold onto its French territories.

In Shakespeare's day, French public affairs were a continuing political issue between 1560 and 1581 given Elizabeth's four French suitors, and from 1562–1598 as a result of the French religious civil war, which mirrored

what was happening in England. Shakespeare's history plays portray the French-English encounter overtly; however, this tense literary relationship continues throughout all of Shakespeare's works in what scholars have described as "the anxiety of influence" (Martin and Melehy 3). Shakespeare lived in a world of dual ancestry that was reflected not only in English history and law, but in English language and art. This paradoxical love-hate theme runs throughout the Shakespeare canon.

Conclusions

Recent authorship theory in academia has returned to a group process first advocated by Delia Bacon in the 19th century. The new hypothesis, recently propounded by the editors of the Oxford University Press edition of the canon (2017), posits that Shakespeare was a producer-writer passing play manuscripts around a circle of intimates in a collaborative effort. As this is becoming the consensus of many mainstream academics, proponents of an alternate authorship should be welcomed into the academic debate.

For Shakespeare scholars to refuse to open the discussion to other authorship candidates, some of whom are now proposed as part of Shakespeare's writing group, shows that academia prefers a conspiracy theory on a grand scale (multiple authors working in collaboration) as opposed to a conspiracy theory on a small scale (a single author). Alternative authorship theories have never been accepted by Stratfordian academics because there was no paper trail, no direct evidence of authorship. There is no contemporary paper trail for Shakspear as a writer (Price 311-13), and no paper trail for a group of Elizabethan writers circulating manuscripts, which seems even more improbable than having no paper trail for one author. These studies also fail to consider the shared vocabulary, colloquialisms, and political aims of a small group of writers spending much of their time with one another.

With regards to the Shakespeare authorship question, the French have a similar experience with anonymity that should be helpful in approaching the Shakespeare conundrum. Often described as the French Shakespeare, Molière employed a *nom de plume* in writing all his plays because he did not wish to use his real name, Poquelin, for fear of tarnishing his family reputation. Other French playwrights commenting on social matters also employed a *nom de plume*, thereby demonstrating that the need for literary concealment was not just a phenomenon restricted to England.

More in-depth studies of Shakespeare's French and the influence of the French Renaissance upon his works clearly are needed. However, the area that has received the least attention is the impact of French poetry on Shakespeare's sonnets and long poems, and it is time for a book that investigates this area with the scholarship that it deserves.

Appendix 1:

Letter by Edward de Vere, written at age thirteen, to Lord Burghley

August 23, 1563

Monsieur treshonorable

Monsieur j'ay receu voz lettres, plaines d'humanite et courtoysje, & fort re-semblantes a vostre grand'amour et singuliere affection enuers moy. comme vrais enfans dueument procreez d'une telle mere. pour la quelle je me trouue de jour en jour plus tenu a v. h. Voz bons admonestemens pour l'obseruation du bon ordre selon voz appointemens, je me delibere (dieu aidant) de garder en toute diligence comme chose que je cognois et considere tendre especialement a mon propre bien et profit, usant en cela l'aduis et autorite de ceux qui sont aupres de moy. la discretion desquels i'estime si grande (s'il me conuient parler quelque chose a leur advange) qui non seulement ilz se porteront selon qu'un tel temps le requiert, ains que plus est feront tant que je me gouverne selon que vous aves ordonne et commande. Quant a l'ordre de mon estude pour ce que il requiert un long discours a l'expliquer par le menu, et le temps est court a ceste heure, je vous prie affectueusement m'en excuser pour le present. vous asseurant que par le premier passant je le vous ferai seavoir bien au long. Cependant je prie a dieu vous donner sante.

Edward Oxinford

(Translation by William Plumer Fowler)

My very honorable Sir

Sir, I have received your letters, full of humanity and courtesy, and strongly resembling your great love and singular affection towards me, like true children duly procreated of such a mother, for whom I find myself from day to day more bound to your honor. Your good admonishments for the observance of good order according to your appointed rules I am resolved (God aiding) to keep with all diligence, as a thing that I may know and consider to tend especially to my own good and profit, using therein the advice and authority of those who are near me, whose discretion I esteem so great (if it is convenient to me to say something to their advantage) that not only will they comport themselves according as a given time requires it, but will as well do what is more, as long as I govern myself as you have ordered and commanded. As to the order of my study, because it requires a long discourse to explain it in detail, and the time is short at this hour, I pray you affectionately to excuse me therefrom for the present, assuring you that by the first passer-by I shall make it known to you at full length. In the meantime, I pray to God to give you health.

Edward Oxinford

Appendix 2

The “Lomenie” referred to in the letter was Antoine de Lomenie, the French Ambassador to England at the time. Henry of Navarre became King of Navarre in 1572 and King Henry IV in 1589.

Lettre du Roy a Monsieur
Le Grand Chambellan d’Angleterre
Monsieur le Grand Chambellan.

Je vous fais ce mot par Lomenie que j’envoie vers la Royne ma bonne soeur pour les affaires qui concernent le bien de ses affaires et les miennes, pour vous faire savoir le contentement que j’ai des bons offices que vous m’avez rendu auprès d’Elle, lesquels je vous prie de continuer et croire que j’aurai toujours fort agreable de m’en revancher et ce qui s’offrira pour votre satisfaction particuliere, ainsi que j’ai charge ledit de Lomenie de vous dire, lequel je vous prie croire comme moi momo qui prie Dieu vous avoit Monsieur Le Grand Chambellan en sa garde.

Ce 5 Octobre a Paris.

Signo Henry, et au dessus est ecrit a Monsieur le Grand Chambellan d’Angleterre

(Translation by Craig Huston)

Letter from the King to the
Lord Great Chamberlain of England
Lord Great Chamberlain,

I am having this note brought to you by Lomenie whom I send before the Queen my good sister with respect to the matters which concern the well being of her affairs and of mine, in order to inform you of the satisfaction I feel for the good offices you have performed on my behalf in her presence, which I beg you to continue and believe that I will always consider it a great pleasure to reciprocate in whatever might bring about your personal satisfaction, as I have charged the said Lomenie to tell you, whom I pray you to believe as myself, who prays God to keep you, Lord Great Chamberlain, in his care.

This 5th of October at Paris. [1595]

Signed Henry, and above is written to the Lord Great Chamberlain of England.

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The Politics of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford

by Richard Malim and Robert Detobel

My correspondence with Robert Detobel of Germany includes a draft paper entitled, “Some Conjectures on the Anonymous Author of a Speech Held in Parliament of 1597–8,” which he did not finish before he passed away in autumn 2018. We believe there is a strong case that the author of the speech is Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550–1604).

The speech and its ambience are broadly commented upon by J. E. Neale, the respected historian of Elizabeth’s reign (II, 335–351). In a footnote he indicates that the manuscript does not contain any overt clue to the author’s identity, adding that he is not “inclined to think that he was Robert Cecil” (342). Indeed, at least one technical objection can be raised to Cecil’s authorship from Neale’s own remark in another footnote (349), where he refers to a document filed at Hatfield as MS 56/83 being in the hand of a secretary of Cecil’s (the speech being in a different handwriting). It is likely to have been the brief of a speech Robert Cecil intended to make on the first day of the relevant Parliamentary session—Nov. 5th 1597. However, this argument against Cecil’s authorship is far from being as conclusive as the impassioned tone of the speech, which is difficult to match to Cecil’s character.



Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford

The Historical Background

A long period of more than 20 years of decent harvests in England ended in 1594. In the preceding year, the faction of landowners supporting enclosures had succeeded in having an Act passed that greatly relaxed the procedures, whereby they were able to “enclose” the former common lands on which peasants and small landowners tilled their crops and grazed their own animals, and to take over these lands for the very lucrative sheep and wool trades. The consequence was that widespread rural unemployment and starvation were further exacerbated. The harvest failures beginning in 1594 called into question the general benefit of enclosures, incorporating the general debate as to whether tillage (agriculture, crop-growing) or large-scale pasture (of sheep for wool, in effect, trade) should be the basic source of wealth or social balance of the realm. By 1597 the matter had become urgent, and in the first session of the 1597–8 Parliament, Francis Bacon himself led off the debates with a motion against enclosures.

By 1597 one of the great champions of restoring tillage and turning enclosed pastures back into arable land was Robert Cecil, a member of the Privy Council who had become Secretary of State the previous year. Neale quotes him as exclaiming: “Whosoever doth not maintain the plough, destroys the Kingdom” (343), and this was evidently the view of the Privy Council and government in backing Bacon and his motion. Cecil was led, no doubt, in part by fear that rioting (already in evidence locally by 1596) might grow into *jacqueries* or more widespread peasants’ revolts like the Cade rebellion of 1450 and the



*Sir Robert Cecil (1563–1612),
1st Earl of Salisbury, by John de Critz
the elder*

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Robert Detobel appears in the current issue of *The Oxfordian* with his paper, “*Shakespeare’s Idle Hours in Historical Context*.”

1381 Peasants' Revolt, but also by a concern to maintain the old feudal ideas of hospitality, i.e. "the maintaining of an open house" (Neale 349).

Bacon's motion to the House of Commons on 5 November 1597 initiated the main legislative work of the session, with his motion against enclosures and depopulation of towns and houses of husbandry, and for the maintenance of tillage. At the core of his arguments there is the same assertion as in Cecil's requirement that "the plough" be maintained as the kingdom's main source of wealth. "Enclosures cause depopulation, and that in turn produces idleness [non-productivity], decay of tillage, decrease in charity, charge in maintaining the poor, and finally the impoverishment of the Realm....The eye of experience is a sure eye; but the eye of wisdom is the quick-sighted eye. By experience we daily see that no-one regards as shameful what is profitable to himself; and therefore there is almost no conscience in destroying the savour of our life—bread, I mean" (Neale 338). Thus, the state has to care for the whole, and to take steps to achieve the absence of "idleness," i.e. non-productivity, and this is the battleground. On the one hand, Cecil and Bacon held that idleness was the direct result of enclosures, the opposition made up of the new owners of the former common land. On the other hand, those traders and manufacturers who benefited (backed by an extreme Puritan element not necessarily swayed by mere economic considerations) saw the cause of the current situation as the "horrible abuses of idle and vagrant persons," based upon something sinful in their personal spiritual states which prevented them from being able to make ends meet, as well as the vicious anti-poor legislation.

The House of Commons accepted the Bacon motion and appointed a committee to discuss it, but we have no record of the precise sittings and proceeding of the committee or committees involved. The committee first met on November 14th and adjourned to the next day, presumably for a fuller attendance to what would today be called the floor of the House. The procedures of these committees are not recorded, but one can surmise that the Speaker to whom the speeches were addressed presided over the larger committee. There is a 1589 record of a Committee on a Bill where it appears members of the Lords and Commons debated it together before referring it on (Elton 249). This is the point in 1597 at which Oxford might have personally addressed the Speaker with the anonymous speech on this Bill.

Bacon's motion became a Bill, which was in Committee by November 21st.

The Anonymous Speaker

The manuscript of the anonymous speech is simply endorsed "1597," with some cataloguing references. Oxford could have made it himself to the enlarged Committee on November 15th or sometime after when the enlarged Committee sat on the second reading. As a member of the House of Lords

(though not an elected member of the House of Commons), he could not have made it in the House of Commons, but he could have supplied it as a brief to a member. Another problem might arise as to the identity of that member. However, a mere anonymous brief or even an unused speech would not necessarily be preserved: we have not been able to track down anything similar.

We think Cecil appreciated his brother-in-law's gifts of exposition, presentation and oratory and therefore employed him to write or deliver the speech. He could not possibly, with his father still alive, give any credit to the author—and that might be his own excuse for not doing so. Indeed, association with the debased Earl of Oxford might be politically a bad idea. We note that after Lord Burghley's death in August 1598, Cecil apparently did not stand in the way of publication of Francis Meres's revelatory *Palladis Tamia*, which publicly praised Oxford as the first among 17 playwrights as “the best for comedy amongst us,” or of plays with the previously banned “William Shakespeare” ascription on the quarto title pages.

However, if Oxford did deliver the speech, Cecil might seek to show that Oxford did it without encouragement or employment. Otherwise, the search for an explanation for the anonymity is without any leads at all, save that a clearly written version in Secretary hand is carefully preserved in the Hatfield archives.

The Speech Itself

There is no need to print the entire speech, especially where the technical legal elements in it are obscured by problems of transcription from the manuscript. These passages are passed over and words in square brackets represent our informed speculations of the original meaning. We are also responsible for the punctuation. So it begins:

If it please you, Mr. Speaker: the first motion that sounded in this place in reminder of a lamentation for dispeopling the realm and disinheriting (as it were) the poor of their labour which is their living, by converting tillage into pasturage, seemed to gratify the affections of the honourable Senate, as (carried with general applause) they all condescended not to desire, nor barely to propound, nor simply to prepare but effectually to provide and apply some present remedy.

[This seems to justify the case for stating the speech was not given to the House of Commons by a member. The speaker does seem to be a member as he speaks of “the (rather than “this”) honourable Senate” as a body in which he is concerned, and of its members as “they,” rather than “we.” However, he does talk below of the Speaker exhibiting the Bill to “our second view”: perhaps this indicates a further presentation to an enlarged Committee to which Oxford might have access.]

This sore cannot thereby be affected, but by the suppressing of these enclosures, which spring from a bad root, spread unto worse mischiefs and against the best rules of religion, policy and humanity.

First if we truly survey the security of our country, we find that swelling pride engendered the first motion [on] this kind of enclosure, and deceitful covetousness does too swiftly second it, for when men in taking by their sight a true account of their estates do see them far outcast by others, and so far short of their...desires [corruptly seek to] her Majestie to [resolve] this war of inequality.

[There seems to be some sort of question whereby the enclosure entrepreneurs swapped their land for Crown lands, to which Oxford may be referring.]

Now if they could compass the increase of their own strength in the compassion of others want and could satiate their...appetite, in the affirmation of any Christian law, they might more easily pass over their travails without either murmur of the poor or censure of the wise.

But since their pride cannot be sated but by oppression, and this oppression is such of a kind as drives not only the poor to discomfort, but draws them to decay, leaving their life not only destitute but desperate [i.e. *despairing*] of relief, it is fit that the course of these enclosures should be corrected, and the earth again laid open to the bounty of the wonted [harvest], that the common waste may be seen to flourish and the common people be furnished with the fruit of their husbandry.

In the remembrance of the first [injunction], that ever came to man from the mouth of God, not to [obstruct] the blessing to have the earth fruitful, joined with the cross and correction of labour to have the earth tilled; so as the promise of increase, which is the general desire of us all, and bring several contentment to us all, was but conditional that the earth should proportion the abundance according to man's employment in his duty.

But when the law of property whereby man could say, "That is mine", supplanting the love of our neighbour, supplied it with another three-fold love of money, of pleasure, and of ourselves, then [that love] springing from the love of money scratched all, [and] solely arising from the law of pleasure, swallowed all, and self-love stepping in to back the other, appropriated all so entirely to the self, as it hindered the participation of [benefit] to others for profit and pleasure, as they be divided and made less,...

This makes men, laying aside the yoke of the commandments: “thy abundance and thy...thou shall not keep back, and thy neighbour of the fruit of the ground thou shalt not defraud” [*see Leviticus 19, 13*], this makes [men] to [enfold] the whole commodity of the earth to themselves, that because pastures maintained with less charge and returneth with more gain than doth tillage; therefore [from] gentlemen they will become graziers, factors for the butchers; and because tillage in their own hands yields more private profit than dispersed into the lands of many, from gentlemen they will become ploughmen, grinders of the poor; whereby learning not from the [experience] of Cain, they yet strive to bring the punishment of Cain upon their younger and weaker brethren to make them vagabonds and renegades upon the earth.

And to give yet, Mr. Speaker, the better edge of encouragement to us all we shall [dissuade them from...], and shutting up themselves in these [errors], as it [scars] and blemishes the truth of their religion; so doth it seem as deep a wound to the pretended trust of their [faith]”.

[Then our speaker turns to the solutions open to Solomon, the ancient Athenians and the Romans, and the social benefits of the pre-enclosures economic settlement, not least the peaceful attitude of the tillers, concluding that the husbandman is the least likely to be disaffected against the state.]

Thereby, it being an action of moderate exercising [of] the body, there is none that passes their days with fewer cares, nor run their race with full strength, fitter to do her Majesties [service], upon some small training, than the husbandman. Whereupon Socrates was wont to say that the plough is the seed of soldiers.

Now the benefit of tillage is seen in these two: first that in [the provision and supply and bread] which is the fruit and flower of tillage, are comprehended the necessities of this life; and there was no other judgment given against Jerusalem but only that the staff of bread should be broken; for the Lord well knows that no realm,...populous in itself, can either long have joy in the streets or content in the state, where there grows a cleanness of teeth through scarcity of bread [*see Amos 4, 6*].

Secondly, where other trades have their security and limit wherein they return their profit, [men’s labour is] to profit none such as wear silks, [but that of] the shepherd, none such as deal with mutton [*i.e. wool dealers*]. Husbandry returns her profit even to the Prince, and is without limitation breaking forth as the sun, from whose beams every particular person receives comfort.

Now, if it please you, Mr. Speaker, is neither the commandment given that [destroys] tillage, nor the commodity seen in the use of the tillage can prevail anything with them that [enfold] the earth into their hands, yet if [even] they had but the sight of nature to [repent] themselves or know but the law of numbers to report their brother, they would undertake [still] to swallow all, and that none should be [prosperous] in the field but they.

For all being birds of the same feather,... with him that [hath made] up his trade highest, it is strange that men can be so unnatural as to shake off the poor as if they were not part of the body, and that because we live not in a savage land where wolves can devour sheep, therefore we shall be known to live in a more bountiful land where sheep shall devour men.



Frontispiece to Simonds D'Ewes, 'Journals of All the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth' (1682)

And how can they think long to thrive or flourish in this course, but at length the sight of the poor shall astonish them and the curses of the poor shall overtake them [*here follows a Biblical proverb too mangled in the manuscript for transcription*].

But now if these wrongs should be reversed and all...and curses of the poor should be removed, and a full pacification should be made between the Parish's gentlemen and the...countrymen, it has pleased you, Mr. Speaker, to exhibit this bill to our second view, as a complete remedy. I will not say that it [is] worse than the disease, but this: you may truly say it is too weak for the disease.

[There follows a long legal and technical dissertation on the defects of the Bill and possible improvements to circumvent those who were apparently already geared up to defeat or circumvent it.]

Thus have I in much imperfections shown my desire and affection to this bill. [Would] I had, M. Speaker, the ability to persuade peace that may pass on such easy conditions should never be debated, much less denied.

A law framed out of personal affections of men will never tend to the general good of all, and if...one may put in a caution to save his own pastures it will never prove a law of restraint, but rather of [destruction of] liberty.

The eyes of the poor are on this Parliament, grave and sad for the want they yet suffer. The eyes of the poor do importune much, standing like reeds shaking in every corner of the land. This place is the epitome of the [whole realm].

The trust of the poor committed to us, whose person we do supply, doth challenge our further [responsibility] for their relief. This has been the inscription of many bills. In our forwardness...From single-heartedness, we can now [well effect this Bill on the poor] by leading their hands to the plough and leaving the [result] to God to sit now in judgment over our....And there is now such sound trial of a true heart as to stoop with Zacchaeus to the law of restitution, and therefore as this bill entered at first with a short prayer, “God speed the plough”, so now I wish it end with such success as the plough may speed the poor.”

Shakespearean Correspondences

As a young poet, Oxford showed his interest in agricultural economy by writing a poem titled, “The Labouring Man That Tills the Fertile Soil,” which prefaced the 1573 English translation of *Cardanus Comforte*. In it, Oxford demonstrated his concerns for the farmer or laborer who is dedicated to providing sustenance from the earth, exemplified in the first four lines.

The labouring man that tills the fertile soil,
And reaps the harvest fruit, hath not indeed
The gain, but pain; and if for all his toil
He gets the straw, the lord will have the seed. (Sobran 233)

More to the point are the vocabulary and phrasing in the Parliament speech which share precise linguistic parallels with the language of the Shakespeare canon. It is the sheer volume of these correspondences in a single speech which, to us, is persuasive (several are taken from passages in the speech not reproduced above):

“censure of the wise”—compare with “censure me in your wisdom”—*Julius Caesar* III.ii.16, and “wisest censure”—*Othello*, II.iii.186;

“to make them vagabonds and renegades upon the earth”—compare with “vagabonds, rascals and runaways”—*Richard III*, V.v.46 ;

“thus did the former law-makers overslip...”—see *Rape of Lucrece* l.1576: “...hath overslipped her thought”;

“Epitome”: in *Coriolanus* (V.ii.67) this word means the miniscule version of him (i.e. Coriolanus’ son);

“Single-heartedness”—compare with “I speak it with a single heart” in *Henry VIII*, V.ii.72 (usually thought to be from the Fletcher addition);

“my desire and affection to this bill”, “the cross and correction of labour;” and “cunning and skilful offenders shall altogether slip the collar...”—note the repeated use of hendiadys, a device which occurs 300 times in Shakespeare’s works (Wright 168);

“dispeopling the realm”; and “disinheriting the poor of their labour”—note the recourse to gerunds, another hallmark of Shakespeare, who shows a proclivity for neologisms beginning with “un-” and with “dis-” (Salmon 79);

“proportion the abundance”—note the use of “proportion” as a verb, an example of Shakespeare’s fondness for interchanging parts of speech;

We view the last four paragraphs as showing the touch of the master, finishing with another Greek apposition, and from them take:

“Forwardness”: five uses in the canon.

Oxford’s Views on Economics

In the effort to identify the author, we have attempted to place the anonymous speech in its historical context and to trace the language used to Shakespeare himself. While this is a compelling line of evidence, our effort fails if we cannot also align the ethos behind the speech. We do have one advantage: the speech has as its base the author’s unvarnished economic and political credo, and so where a passage in the works of Shakespeare matches (or, if from an early reference, tends towards) the mature view of the author, that serves as evidence in favor of Oxford as the author. In contrast, so often the critic faced with a speech which might be construed as Shakespeare’s personal view, for example, of women, has to bear in mind (however many times the same view is repeated) that the view expressed is merely that of the characters in the plays, behind which the author and his true opinion may be sheltering.

We should start with the very early play *2 Henry VI* (Act IV, scene ix), where Sir Alexander Iden is peaceably walking in his garden with five companions:

Lord, who would live turmoil-ed in the Court
And enjoy such quiet walks as these?
This small inheritance my father left me
Contenteth me, and worth a monarchy.
I seek not to wax great by others' wanting
Or gather wealth I care not with what envy;
Sufficeth that I have maintains my state,
And sends the poor well-pleas-ed from my gate.

Cade is on the run after the collapse of his rebellion and, starving, has grubbed a few vegetables. He now kneels up:

"A villain, thou wilt betray me and get a thousand crowns of the king by carrying my head to him," and then insults and challenges Iden.

But Iden answers:

Why, rude companion, whatsoe'er thou be,
I know thee not. Why then should I betray thee?
Is it not enough to break into my garden?

The inference is that, if Cade had not trespassed and spoken poorly of Iden, Iden would have sent him "well pleas-ed from his gate," properly fed and watered. After another exchange, Iden says:

Nay, it shall ne'er be said while England stands
That Alexander Iden, an esquire of Kent,
Took odds to combat a poor, famished man.

However, Cade the proud leader cannot abase himself and so Iden triumphs in the subsequent fight, kills Cade and claims his reward. From this early play, this seems to be the idealistic view of the young Oxford of the landowning class: the squire walks in his garden providing employment, in serious discussion with his friends, and behaving charitably towards beggars at his gate. At the same time, he is ready to repel trespassers and serve the state in the tasks of Law and Order.

The mature Oxford has to reckon that the system has broken down: Iden is not looking forward; he is looking backward towards a never-existed Merry England, perhaps to progress in some Utopian future reduced to an absurdity by the Montaigne-like speeches of Gonzalo in *The Tempest* II.i. The "modern" society of 1590s England has to deal with the consequences of enclosures, and the supporters of that procedure are its resolute defenders. In the draft of a speech, an opponent maintains his Christian credentials which the anonymous speech impugns: "I have...thought it necessary first, by way of

protestation, to declare myself a religious Christian to my God, a true lover of my country, and charitably affected to the poor” (Neale 339).

Oxford feeds into *Henry V* in IV.iii:

O, that we now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do no work today. 16–18

Hawkes suggests that the reference to “ten thousand” is taken from a contemporary estimate of the unemployed and starving beggar population in the 1570s, but modern scholarship maintains the figure is far too low, and Oxford with his reference to “*one* ten thousand” agrees (92). Hawkes suggests that some became semi-criminal pedlars—tinkers and petty traders like Autolycus in *The Winter’s Tale*. The wage economy was in its infancy, so opportunities for permanent employment were limited, though the rise of part-time employment is noted (Hawkes 99). On behalf of the deprived unemployed, Cade declares class war and the young Oxford, perhaps sympathetic in part, gives him lines of memorable poetry in 2 *Henry VI*. That play, along with *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar*, depicts the mob as an uncontrollable monster: Cade loses control of it, and it kills the blameless poet Cinna. Indeed, it might be said that Oxford slides the complaints of Cade’s followers in the mid-14th century into those of their landless deprived successors in the 1590s so as to make a contemporary political point in the play.

Oxford recognizes in these plays and *King Lear* the poor’s desperate state and lack of culpability for the situation. Certainly, *Timon of Athens* proclaims a self-evident truth, as when Timon says:

Twinned brothers of one womb,
Whose procreation residence and birth
Scarce is dividant, touch them with several fortunes [*each has his own particular luck*]
The greater scorns the lesser. Not nature,
To whom all sores lay siege, can bear great fortune [*Nature, subjected to corruptions, cannot give birth of itself to great fortune*]
But by contempt of nature.
It is the pasture lards the brother’s sides [*the encloser becomes fat*]
The want that makes him lean.
His sembable, yea, himself, Timon disdains.
Destruction fang mankind. Earth yield me roots. [*he digs*]
Who seeks for better of thee, sauce his palate
With thy most operant poison...”
[*Timon curses those who wish more gain from Earth than roots, i.e. enclosurers*]
IV.iii.3–10, 22–25

Oxford is a long way from being a universal suffrage democrat, but in the speech, the speaker recognizes that the poor, uprooted by enclosures and with insufficient wage-labor jobs available, must have their interests represented, and this was a view which Cecil, Bacon and Elizabeth's Privy Council recognized. But the speaker has to urge, convince, and overcome an opposition rooted in its own godliness. To that end, he cannot simply repeat the language of Timon: his objective must be to put lead in the government's pencil to make certain that the final Act does afford some protection to the poor as well as check the enclosurers, but (astutely) not to preach, or try to induce a better political attitude, which might be considered provocative to the Bill's opponents and inspire them to vote it down.

With that caveat, we can demonstrate sufficient common political attitude between the creator of the play's protagonist Timon and the anonymous speaker. To that add the linguistic parallels and the extrinsic circumstances of the delivery of the speech and its custody. Given all this, we can justify the conclusion that the dramatist and the speaker are the same individual. In logic, the question who else the speaker might be produces nothing to dispute that conclusion.

It is instructive from this direction to look at the late career of William Shakspeare in Stratford, a sometime wool dealer like the Clown in the *Winter's Tale* IV.iii, who became involved with friends in the Coombe family in an enclosure scheme. His role is somewhat ambiguous, as no doubt he was anxious to protect his tithes investment, and equally, Oxford would have thought that attitude somewhat sordid. Honan deals in detail with this episode (386ff). Consider the mental hernia suffered by Hawkes: "He was personally involved in acrimonious struggles over enclosure, and was fined for hoarding corn in time of dearth. In class terms, Shakespeare was an upwardly mobile bourgeois *with a strong ideological loyalty to feudalism*" (36). Also, "*Despite his biographical investment in nascent capitalism,*" (177). He must have been in a class of just himself. The total breakdown in logic of the orthodox expert's attempts to bind Shakspeare's biography to the political attitude displayed in the plays is wonderfully illustrated.

Author's Note

With the gracious permission of the Marquess of Salisbury we have been supplied with a copy of the original English Secretary script from the Hatfield House archives, rendered into print by Jane Greatorex, without whose expertise this effort would not have progressed.

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Who was the Model for the Butcher of Ashford in 2 Henry VI?

by Warren Hope

Some of Shakespeare's most famous lines have been torn from their original contexts and then taken on lives of their own, often quoted in completely inappropriate circumstances by people who have neither read the plays nor seen performances of them. One of the most controversial lines of this type is from the fourth act of the second part of *Henry VI* and reads, "The first thing we do let's kill all the lawyers." Dick the Butcher, one of the followers of Jack Cade, the rebel, pronounces the line.

At one point, Cade refers to Dick as "the Butcher of Ashford." Although Ashford is in Kent—some people argue it was Cade's hometown—the description suggests to my ear "the butcher of Stratford," the trade assigned to William Shakspeare by some of his earliest biographers. Is it possible that Shakespeare, that is, Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, used William Shakspeare of Stratford as a model for Dick the Butcher of Ashford in the second part of *Henry VI*?

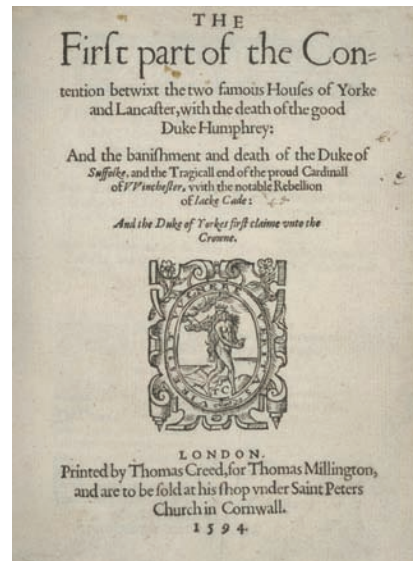
The year 1592 seems to have been a pivotal one in the history of the Elizabethan stage. Henslowe recorded in his diary a number of performances of *Henry VI* at The Rose in the first half of that year, before plague caused the theaters to close in the summer. Most scholars who have considered the issue concur that Henslowe is most likely referring to performances of one or more parts of Shakespeare's *Henry VI*. They also conclude it is likely that the plays were performed by Lord Strange's Men or a combination of

those players with The Admiral's Men. This combined troupe contained not only Henslowe's son-in-law, Edward Alleyn, one of the great tragedians of the age, but also others who were eventually incorporated into the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the company that has become commonly known as Shakespeare's company.

Bronson Feldman has made a case for the likely hypothesis that the Earl of Oxford gave William Shakspeare his start in the theater by attaching the recent arrival from Stratford to Oxford's company of players (Feldman 99). Feldman's case reads in part:

He [Oxford] got the young fellow a place in his company at the Curtain, where Shakespeare's plays are known to have been memorably performed, and tried out his abilities in different functions and roles. Theatrical tradition, reported by Rowe, declares that the "top of his performance" as an actor was in the mummery of Hamlet's Ghost. He was far more successful in the commercial affairs of the theatre, apparently collecting a large stock of play-apparel which he rented or sold at whimsical prices, and doing the same with stage manuscripts. He may have marched with the two hundred proud players, arrayed in silk, whom the spy Maliverny Catlin described in January 1587, parading the streets of London with the livery of Leicester, Oxford, the Lord Admiral, and other magnates.

As time passed, Shakspeare's career advanced. The earliest documentary evidence we have of William Shakspeare in London comes from his attempt to recoup a loan of seven pounds he made to John Clayton in 1592 (Price 3). This loan is one of the earliest signs that Shakspeare engaged in usury and thus supports those anti-Stratfordians who argue that the passages in Robert Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* that have been taken to be an attack on Shakespeare as a playwright are in fact an attack on Shakspeare—as a usurer, play



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broker, and jack of all profitable trades. It will be remembered that Greene or, as some argue, Henry Chettle, parodied a line from *3 Henry VI* as part of that attack, a fact often used to try to date the composition of the plays.

The success and power of those performances have been attested by no less a contemporary authority than Thomas Nash in his pamphlet, *Pierce Penniless*, published in London in 1592. Nash writes: “How would it have joyed brave Talbot, the terror of the French, to think that after he had lain two hundred years in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage and have his bones embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least (at several times) who in the tragedian that represents his person imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.”

This statement by Nash on the power and purpose of the history plays is frequently cited, but scholars tend to neglect the fact that he goes on to defend those plays against people who opposed them: “I will defend it against any collian or club-fisted usurer of them all, there is no immortality can be given a man on earth like unto plays. What talk I to them of immortality, that are the only underminers of honor, and do envy any man that is not sprung up by a base broker like themselves. They care not if all the ancient houses were rooted out....” (Collian was equivalent to “rascal.”)

Nash goes on to say that “club-fisted” usurers of this type consider all art to be nothing but vanity and he associates them with the Protestant and republican seekers for liberty in the Low Countries, a movement never whole-heartedly supported by the Queen and some factions at Court, but often joined by English adventurers and the unemployed of London. In other words, Nash identifies an attitude toward money as the difference between those who support or oppose plays that appeal to patriotism from an aristocratic point of view. He claims those who care for nothing but “filthy lucre” ask what they get from the tributes to deceased nobility that are depicted on the stage. This animosity of the low-born for the high-born that Nash describes, perfectly reflects Shakespeare’s depiction of the motivations of Jack Cade and his followers for whom Dick the Butcher of Ashford is a kind of mouthpiece.

Dick’s arrival on stage with Cade and his followers is announced by the dialogue of two otherwise anonymous Rebels.

Second Rebel: I see them! I see them! There’s Best’s son, the tanner of Wingham—

First Rebel: He shall have the skins of our enemies to make dog’s leather of.

Second Rebel: And Dick the butcher—

First Rebel: Then is sin struck down like an ox, and iniquity’s throat cut like a calf.

(IV.2.23–29)

Who was the Model for the Butcher of Ashford in *2 Henry VI*?

The name of the first man seen, Best, necessarily raises issues associated with the nature of goodness and quality. Editors of the play indicate *dog's leather* was the kind used to make gloves. As a result, this ghastly idea of making gloves out of the skins of enemies is associated with John Shakspeare, Will's father, who is often described as a glover and at times used a sign based on a glover's tool rather than a cross when a signature was required. More to the point, though, John Aubrey, born ten years after the death of Will Shakspeare but an early collector of anecdotes and information about him, in his *Brief Lives* describes Shakspeare this way: "His father was a Butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he kill'd a Calfe he would do it in high style, and made a speech" (Aubrey 115).

Will's memorable way of killing a calf seems to have been the basis for Shakespeare's similes when Dick of Ashford makes his entrance.

The concern about goodness is enforced by the comparisons, that sin is like an ox and iniquity is like a calf. Both ox and calf—these two forms of disgraceful or immoral behavior—are eliminated by Dick's practicing his craft, doing his job. If the calf can be associated with Will Shakspeare, it is no great stretch to associate the Ox with Oxford. The relationship between the two is based on age and potency—an ox is a male calf that has been neutered and grown mature. In 1592, Shakspeare was twenty-eight; Oxford forty-two. Both celebrated birthdays in April. Will Shakspeare cut the throat of the iniquity that led him to flee Stratford while simultaneously striking down the sin that caused Oxford to hide himself behind a mask, a pen name. After all, the elimination of iniquity and sin demands sacrifice.

Aubrey also describes the youthful Will Shakspeare as a "natural witt." This aspect of his character is admirably displayed by Dick the Butcher's running commentary or witty translation of Jack Cade's speech. A few examples.

Cade: We, John Cade, so termed of our supposed father—
Butcher (*To his fellows*): Or rather of stealing a cade of herrings.
(IV.2.33–35)

Cade is engaged in trying to establish a false lineage, giving himself noble ancestors, hence his use of "supposed father." But Dick quickly turns Cade's name into the nickname of a thief. A "cade" is a barrel. The emphasis is on identity and how it can be distorted by the use and interpretation of names. The speech continues:

Cade: My father was a Mortimer—
Butcher (*To his fellows*): He was an honest man and a bricklayer.
Cade: My mother a Plantagenet—
Butcher (*To his fellows*): I knew her well, she was a mid-wife.

Cade: My wife descended of the Lacys—
 Butcher (*To his fellows*): She was indeed a peddler's daughter and sold
 many laces.
 (IV. 2. 41–47)

Dick's practice of mocking the grandiose claims of his leader for the pleasure of his fellows is at first general but becomes specific when Cade mentions his wife's descent in IV.2.40. One of the traditions about the life of William of Stratford that became exceedingly popular in the nineteenth century was that Will left Stratford because Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote Park in Warwickshire sought to punish him for poaching, stealing rabbits or sheep or deer. In response, Will is said to have composed a lampoon, punning on the name Lucy the same way Dick puns on the name Lacy.



Some scholars, such as Georg Gervinus (1863) and Henry Glass (1899), seriously argued the following was the first poem Shakespeare wrote:

A parliament member, a justice of peace,
 At home a poor scarecrow, at London an ass,
 If lousy is Lucy as some folks miscall it
 Then Lucy is lousy whatever befall it.

While we can certainly agree with those scholars (Sir Sidney Lee, 1899) who now argue there is no evidence that this was written by Shakespeare, it could well be an expression of Will Shakspeare's "natural witt"—and it is not hard to imagine it being rattled off in conversation by a character like Dick the Butcher. Lucy was a member of Parliament in 1585 and had been knighted years before by the Earl of Leicester. He was also a magistrate for Warwickshire and a Protestant who harassed local Catholics in the area near Stratford.

The Queen visited Charlecote Park in 1572 and it is likely that Oxford was in her party since he was a senior member of the nobility. He and Fulke Greville staged a mock battle with forts and fireworks to entertain the Queen and the Court at Warwick Castle on the Avon in August of that year (Ward 70-71). In this mock battle, Oxford no doubt stood for the faction at court that gathered around Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, which opposed the Queen's potential marriage to her favorite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, while Fulke Greville, the friend of Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew, stood for the Leicester faction. Warwick Castle was the seat of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, Leicester's brother. Since Leicester knighted Lucy, Lucy would have been seen as a supporter of the Leicester faction in Warwick-

Who was the Model for the Butcher of Ashford in *2 Henry VI*?

shire and in Parliament. Oxford's own Catholic sympathies would have been stirred by Lucy's attacks on local Catholics, including members of the Arden family, relatives of Will Shakspeare.

A final example:

Cade: I am able to endure much—
Butcher (*To his fellows*): No question of that for I have seen him
whipped three market days together.
(IV.2.60–63)

In the late seventeenth century, the Gloucestershire clergyman Richard Davies recorded the following rumor: "Shakespeare was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir-----Lucy who oft had him whipped and sometimes imprisoned and at last mad[e] him fly his native country to his great advancement" (Schoenbaum 79). Nicholas Rowe, who is now thought of as Shakespeare's first biographer, used this anecdote and connected it with the Lousy Lucy lampoon. Given this context, it seems likely that the Clerk of Chatham in the above scene from *2 Henry VI* is meant to stand for Sir Thomas Lucy, the Master of Charlecote. The Clerk of Chatham tells Cade and his mob, "Sir, I thank God I have been so well brought up that I can write my name." Cade's followers respond, "He hath confessed—away with him! He is a villain and a traitor." Cade instructs his followers to take the Clerk of Chatham away and "hang him with his pen and inkhorn about his neck" (IV.2.109–112).

It is in the midst of this topsy-turvy world, this populism gone mad, that Cade describes his communist, utopian vision: "there shall be no money. All shall eat and drink on my score, and I will apparel them in all one livery that they may agree like brothers, and worship their lord." This vision could well represent Oxford's wish to see rival troupes of players combine under a single patron and perhaps forecasts the formation of the Lord Chamberlain's players. In any case, it is in response to this statement of Cade's that Dick the Butcher of Ashford makes his modest proposal: "The first thing we do let's kill all the lawyers" (IV.2. 79-81). The Clerk of Chatham is the first symbol of the rule of law to be killed.

This pivotal period in the history of the Elizabethan stage was also a pivotal period in Oxford's life. He remarried in 1591 to the former Elizabeth Trentham and finally produced a male heir in 1592 named Henry who eventually became the 18th Earl of Oxford. He therefore had crucial reasons to wish to protect his reputation. The time must have been ripe for his adoption of a *nom de guerre* and it seems likely that the characterization of Dick the Butcher of Ashford is a dramatic celebration of the link between Shakespeare and Shakspeare. In the year after Henslowe records the performances of Henry VI at The Rose in 1592, the name William Shakespeare appears for the first

time in connection with literature at the bottom of the elegant dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to the Earl of Southampton. Scholars continue to puzzle over that dedication, with its reference to the “first heir of my invention.” Charles Wisner Barrell long ago showed that Thomas Nash in his Epistle Dedicatory to his pamphlet, *Strange News*, published in 1593, addressed the Earl of Oxford as “Gentle Master William,” a prolific writer of lyrics as well as an excessively generous patron (Barrell 49). In 1594, the first quarto of *Henry VI* was listed in the Stationers’ Register and published anonymously. It is now generally considered the kind of text that was generated from the memories of players who had appeared in it. The Lord Chamberlain’s Company was organized that same year.

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Transforming Productions of Shakespeare's Plays

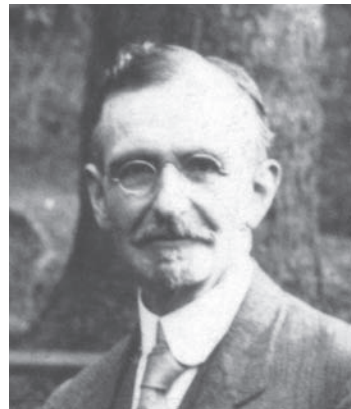
by Gary Goldstein

When one accepts the traditional author of the Shakespeare canon—let's call him William of Stratford—both scholars and theatre professionals begin with a blank slate on which to impose their own ideas about the author's original intent. That is, if the Bard was a self-tutored genius from the provinces with no access to Elizabeth's Court, his plays are simply imaginative displays of wit by a working-class author, designed to amuse a general public. They are fantasies, in effect, of society and politics in England and Italy.

Thus, the crux of this paper: how does the authorship debate change the way in which the plays can be produced for modern audiences if the true Shakespeare was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, and if the plays were written 20 years earlier and then revised?

That was the question Michael Miller, Dean of the graduate theatre program at New York University, asked me a generation ago after reading an essay on the authorship written by U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens (Stevens 1373). I would like to answer that question now.

This particular alternate case—that an aristocrat from Elizabeth's Court wrote the Shakespeare plays under a pseudonym—was introduced in 1920 by English scholar J.T. Looney in his book, *'Shakespeare' Identified in Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford*.



John Thomas Looney

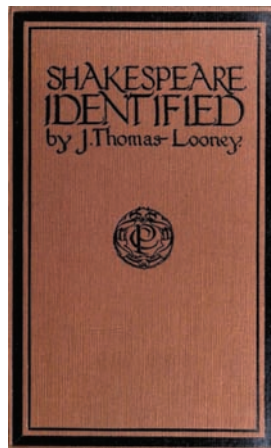
Looney's contention was that the plays take on a different perspective if the true author was the Earl of Oxford (1550-1604). Clearly, they were designed

to entertain as well as educate all levels of Elizabethan society: from performances at the Royal Court, to the upscale private Blackfriars Theatre seating 800 spectators, to the two enormous public theatres each seating 2,500 theatregoers.

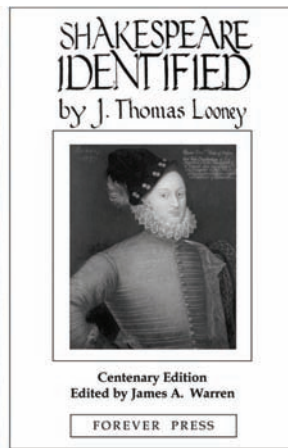
If we accept this new identity of an aristocratic author who lived at the apex of Elizabethan society, the plays can then be examined as ambitious dramas on the political crises facing the Elizabethan state: the English and Scottish royal successions, the 19-year war with Spain, the French civil war, and internal dissension by English Puritans. What's more, the numerous plays set in Italy and France may be viewed as the dramatist's lifelong effort to transplant the Renaissance culture of Europe into England through the stage. Indeed, Oxford visited France and Italy for 15 months while there is no evidence that William of Stratford ever left England.

At the same time, Oxfordians contend that the Shakespeare plays are intensely personal. That is, the works grow out of an individual life, which influences the way the plays are viewed and read. With-

out that there is the sense they are all just "words, words, words" and this becomes dismissive in an age when few people recognize what Ben Hecht called "a magnificent march of words."



First edition



Centenary edition

A key line of evidence in arguing the case for Edward de Vere focuses on the numerous parallels in the Shakespeare canon with his biography. Like Hamlet, Oxford was captured by pirates off the coast of Denmark; like Bertram in *All's Well* he was a ward of state; like Timon in *Timon of Athens* he was a bankrupt; like Prince Hal and his merry band in *Henry IV* both Oxford and his servants robbed Treasury agents on the same road, Gad's Hill; like the servants of the Montagues and Capulets in *Romeo and Juliet*, the servants of Oxford and of Sir Thomas Knyvet fought and killed each other in the streets of London; like Bassanio in *Merchant of Venice* he lost 3,000

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pounds on seafaring investments; like King Lear he was the father of three daughters, two married and one unmarried.

Does knowing these personal echoes increase a modern audience's understanding of any Shakespeare play? Or rather, does knowing the author's human psychology enhance the emotional intensity of our modern theatrical experience?

Confining ourselves just to the play of *Hamlet*, we find numerous personal allusions to Oxford's life throughout the text, as Tom Bethell pointed out in the October 1991 issue of *The Atlantic*:

- His father-in-law, Lord Burghley, wrote out a set of precepts ("Towards thy superiors be humble yet generous; with thine equals familiar yet respective") strongly reminiscent of the advice Polonius gives to Laertes ("Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar..."). Other precepts also echoed the advice of Polonius. For example, Burghley writes that, "Neither borrow of a neighbor or of a friend, but of a stranger, whose paying for it thou shalt hear no more of it ... Trust not any man with thy life credit, or estate." Compare with Polonius: "Neither a borrower nor a lender be; for loan oft loses both itself and friend, and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."



William Cecil,
Lord Burghley

Burghley's *Precepts*, intended for the use of his son Robert, was published in 1618. *Hamlet* first appeared in quarto in 1603. Edmund K. Chambers, one of the leading Shakespeare scholars of the twentieth century, offered the following explanation: "Conceivably Shakespeare knew a pocket manuscript." A more likely explanation is that Oxford, being Burghley's son-in-law from 1571 to 1588, had easy access to the original manuscript.

- In Act II, Polonius sends Reynaldo to spy on Laertes in Paris, possibly catching him "drinking, fencing, swearing, quarreling," or "falling out at tennis." In real life Burghley's older son, Thomas Cecil, did go to Paris, whence the well-informed Burghley somehow received information, through a secret channel, of Thomas's "inordinate love of... dice and cards." Oxford, incidentally, did have a real "falling out at tennis"—not a widely practiced sport in those days—in 1579 at Court with Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Leicester's nephew.
- In Act II, Scene 2 Hamlet makes a cryptic remark to Guildenstern:
Hamlet: But my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.
Guildenstern: In what, my dear lord?"

Hamlet: I am but mad north-northwest: when the wind is southerly,
I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Hamlet's answer is a topical allusion to Elizabethan attempts to discover a North West passage to China from 1577 to 1585. In the second and third Martin Frobisher voyages of 1577 and 1578, for example, the Earl of Oxford invested and lost more than 3,000 pounds. In 1581, Oxford invested another 500 pounds in Edward Fenton's North West voyage. Although this expedition was a failure too, in 1584 Oxford became a shareholder in a new company known as "The Colleagues of the Fellowship for the Discovery of the North West Passage," which fitted out an expedition in 1585 under Captain John Davis. Oxford truly was "mad" north-north-west.

- Oxford and Hamlet are similar figures, courtiers and Renaissance men of varied accomplishments; both were scholars, athletes, and poets. Many critics have noted Hamlet's resemblance to Castiglione's beau ideal in *The Courtier*. At the age of twenty-one, Oxford wrote a Latin introduction to a translation of this book. What's more, both Oxford and Hamlet were patrons of play-acting companies.
- In 1573 Oxford contributed a preface to an English translation of *Cardanas Comfort*, a book of consoling advice which the orthodox scholar Hardin Craig called "Hamlet's book." The book includes passages from which Hamlet's soliloquy was surely taken ("What should we account of death to be resembled to anything better than sleep.... We are assured not only to sleep, but also to die....").
- Hamlet's trusted friend is Horatio. Oxford's most trusted relative was the general, Sir Horace Vere, called Horatio in some documents (and so named by the *Dictionary of National Biography*).
- Polonius is stabbed and killed by Hamlet while spying on him. When he was 17 years of age, Oxford accidentally stabbed and killed a servant of Burghley's (possibly another of Burghley's spies) at Burghley's house. At the coroner's inquest the next day, a jury found that the servant was drunk and had caused his own death. Burghley later recorded the event in his diary:
"Thomas Brinknell, an under-cook, was hurt by the Earl of Oxford at Cecil House, whereof he died, and by a verdict found *felo de se* with [Brinknell] running upon a point of a fence sword of the said Earl" (Nelson 47).

Burghley also later wrote that, "I did my best to have the jury find the death of a poor man whom he killed in my house to be found *se defendendo*." (Cecil II, 170) Whether Oxford's act was premeditated, provoked, accidental, or done in self-defense, he faced a penalty ranging from death (if it were

murder) to imprisonment for up to a year (if it were manslaughter) to loss of personal property (if it were accident or self-defense). De Vere escaped all of these through legal hairsplitting.

Oxford likely was satirizing the legal fictions that saved his own neck when he had the gravediggers in *Hamlet* discuss the legal rules of self-defense:

Second Clown [Gravedigger]...The crowner hath sat on her, and
finds it Christian burial.
First Clown. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own
defense?
Second Clown. Why, 'tis found so.
First Clown. It must be *se offendendo*, it cannot be else.

Attorney Tom Regnier has analyzed the scene as follows:

The first gravedigger means “se defendendo,” or self-defense, not “se offendendo,” but here the lower-class characters misstate the law, as they usually do in Shakespeare’s plays. The idea that one could drown oneself “in self-defense” (presumably to prevent oneself from killing oneself) is as zany a piece of illogic as to think that a man would commit suicide by running into another man’s sword. It is also a parody on legal treatises of the time that analyzed suicide by the same formulae as homicide while completely ignoring that in suicide the “murderer” and “victim” were the same person (Regnier 116).

In other words, the author of *Hamlet*—Shakespeare’s most autobiographical play—integrated a host of biographical parallels between Oxford’s life and that of Hamlet’s by design, but none that connect the life of William of Stratford to the play. Would modern audiences find that this personal subtext adds value to their understanding and enjoyment of the drama? I think it would.

Modern Strategies for Updating the Plays

Perhaps the first principle for directors is deciding whether to present the plays unedited. In commenting upon the drama of *Hamlet*, theatre director and visual artist Gordon Craig thought Shakespeare revised and enlarged the play for the Second Quarto’s publication with the goal of transforming the piece into a dramatic novel. And that this method was also applied by Shakespeare to the rest of the canon when he chose to publish the playscripts. If this is the case, then the entire canon may already be one step removed from the author’s original conception.

Indeed, the Second Quarto version of *Hamlet* is 50 percent longer than the First and thus unworkable as a stage production, running to four hours and losing its dramatic coherence with the author’s multiple digressions, most

of which do not advance the plot or add to characterization. Anyone who doubts this can decide for themselves after watching Sir Derek Jacobi's performance in the best full-length version of *Hamlet* on DVD, the 1980 Royal Shakespeare Company production.

The great American director and actor of Shakespeare's works, Orson Welles, concurred in this interpretation, for he aggressively edited the texts in preparing the plays for stage and film over a 30-year career. This began with his stage production of *Julius Caesar* in 1937, continued with his versions of *Macbeth* and *Othello* for TV and film, and ended with his 1966 movie, *Chimes*



Julius Caesar (1937)

at Midnight, an amalgam of *Henry IV Parts I and II*, *Henry V* and *Merry Wives*, by focusing on Falstaff's relationship with Prince Hal. Welles did not add a word to the screenplay; he simply edited out extraneous material that detracted from the dramatic action to accommodate the two-hour structure of a commercial film.

At this point let us review other methods which directors can employ in making Shakespeare relevant for 21st century audiences.

As a result of William of Stratford's anemic biography, modern directors are unable to provide their audiences with greater insight into the author's psychology, and instead choose to experiment with casting to incorporate the latest social fashions. For example, they substitute the gender of a protagonist to see if greater social insight can be achieved by having a male sensibility re-filtered through a different sexual persona. A recent success in this regard was the casting of Helen Mirren as Propsera [sic] in Julie Taymor's movie version of *The Tempest*. However, such inspired casting, which relies mostly on the strengths of an individual talent, often fails when the method is extended to gender-switch all roles or cast the entire play with just a single race. Such radical re-casting has usually confused audiences because it violates too many assumptions integral to the characters' motivations as originally conceived by the author. Often, the play becomes a modern joke employing irony as a means of integrating the latest sociological currents.

I think a more effective way is finding a modern analogue for each of the cultural elements in the play being produced. For example, the 1972 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, directed by A.J. Antoon, set the action not in Renaissance Sicily but in 1900 America at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War.



That decision allowed Antoon to use the full panoply of *fin de siècle* popular culture in the production: the orchestra played ragtime music; his choreographer used One-Step dances; his costume designer dressed the actors and actresses in seersucker suits, straw boaters and floor-length Victorian dresses; and his set designer staged the action in saloons, drawing rooms, and gazebos. It even enabled Antoon to begin the play by having the actors march onto stage through the audience dressed in Army uniforms to the brass band accompaniment of a John Philip Sousa march.

By centering the play in the Gay Nineties, the director also could make excellent use of minor cultural archetypes, which fleshed out Shakespeare's lesser characters for a modern American audience and ensured immediate social recognition. An example of this was having Dogberry perform his slapstick interrogations as a Keystone Cop in dress uniform while wagging his baton behind his back.

The resonance achieved by integrating this local knowledge of 1890's America created a commercial success that reached national audiences: the play ran for three months in the Winter Garden Theatre, which seats 1,500 people, and was then televised nationally by CBS-TV to an audience of 20 million, and finally produced as a commercial video. The theatrical production was effective enough to attract the attendance of President Nixon.

Of course, in addition to a modern-dress staging, or even a modern language production, there is yet another option: the modern ideas interpretation. *Julius Caesar* becomes Mussolini; *King Lear*, absurdist despair; *The Tempest*, an allegory of colonialism. Great actors are especially susceptible to this: Lawrence Olivier made Hamlet a Freudian study and Coriolanus a fascist.

By updating the period or centering the play in a specific social or political era, directors may well dispense with the mystery of discovering the author's original intent. If they choose to center the action in the Elizabethan period, however, then the ability to reveal authorial intent becomes vital.

The Theatrical Value of Topical Allusions

I propose another method that can achieve theatrical relevance—charting the numerous topical allusions in Shakespeare's *oeuvre*. The goal here, of course, is to create a more intense theatrical experience for modern audiences. My argument is that topical allusions would show audiences a new sense of application by connecting a play with both Elizabethan history and a particular life.

Let me illustrate how the concept can be executed using several plays from the canon. Obviously, the extensive ringing of the bell in *Macbeth* was chosen by the author for its dramatic impact. By following Shakespeare's directions,

the bell functions only as a signal to Macbeth from his wife. As *E Notes* describes it:

In Act II, Scene 1, the ringing of the bell is the sign that tells Macbeth it is time for him to go and kill Duncan. The plan is that his wife will ring the bell when it is safe for him to go and commit the murder. She will do this when the chamberlains are safely asleep (E-Notes).

Yet Shakespeare chose this inspired auditory device to intensify the effect on English audiences because it paralleled a contemporary political event: the massacre of 10,000 Huguenots attending the 1572 wedding of Margaret of Valois to the Huguenot leader, Henry of Navarre, in Paris, apparently on the order of her mother, Catherine de Medici. As *Wikipedia* succinctly notes:

It seems probable that a signal was given by ringing bells for matins (between midnight and dawn) at the church of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, near the Louvre, which was the parish church of the kings of France (Wikipedia).

Indeed, Macbeth comments on the compelling nature of the bell's sound:

[A bell rings]

Macbeth: I go, and it is done. The bell invites me.

Clearly, Shakespeare's Elizabethan audiences felt the visceral terror of the impending murder of Duncan by recalling the massacre of innocents in Paris due to the country's religious civil war, also carried out as a betrayal of aristocratic hospitality.

Shakespeare used the public ringing of bells to achieve a totally different effect in the comedy of *Twelfth Night*, understood especially by those who lived in London.

In Act V, Scene I the Clown makes the following opaque statement, at least to modern audiences:

Primo, secondo, tertio, is a good play; and the old saying is, the third pays for all: the triplex, sir, is a good tripping measure; or the bells of St. Bennet, sir, may put you in mind; one, two, three.

Hugh Holland and Ruth Loyd Miller discovered that the reference to the three bells was not to bells from one church of St. Bennet but from three different churches all named St. Bennet, described in John Stow's *Survey of London*. The three churches were called St. Bennet Fynke, the Parish Church of St. Bennet, and St. Bennet Hude.

What made the reference a multi-layered joke for its London audiences was that the three churches were so located as to form an equilateral triangle, within which were inns where plays were performed. What the Clown was saying is, “When you hear the bells, let that put you in mind to come to the play.” From these inns, the bells from the three St. Bennet churches would be clearly audible from three directions.

There were yet more elements to Shakespeare’s joke. In this short speech, the Clown speaks several times of units of three. The triplex he mentions is primarily a musical term, meaning triple time. The “tripping” is a dance that was often a feature of plays that London churchmen complained about. Finally, for Shakespeare’s playgoers, the triple sound of which the Clown speaks had a special meaning: after the third sound of the trumpets at the theatre came the prologue to the play. Thus, the sound of the trumpets was a warning to those at the theatre that the play was about to begin. It was likely a jibe at the churchmen that the bells of St. Bennet can also put people in mind of the theatre. Since City authorities tried to suppress the production of plays on Sunday afternoons in 1574, but were not successful until 1581, this particular allusion referred to a particular time period. After 1581, the bells of St. Bennet would put theatre goers in mind of church, not of plays and tripping.

Shakespeare and the Puritans

Shakespeare even embeds a topical allusion in a comedy that refers to a religious controversy in England. In Act V, Scene I of *As You Like It*, Shakespeare clearly puns on a Puritan scandal that began after the defeat of the Spanish Armada—the publication of the seven Martin Mar-prelate pamphlets from October 1588 to September 1589 by a pseudonymous author. All seven pamphlets attacked the prelates of the Anglican church for corruption in the name of Puritan principles. Shakespeare has Audrey and Touchstone allude to this:

Audrey: Faith, the priest was good enough, for all the old gentleman’s saying.

Touchstone: A most wicked Sir Oliver, Audrey, a most vile Mar-text. [sic]

These pamphlets, it appears, were even “found in the corners of chambers at Court”:

and when a prohibition issued that no one should carry about them any of the Mar-prelate pamphlets on pain of punishment, the Earl of Essex observed to the Queen, ‘What then is to become of me?’ drawing one of these pamphlets out of his bosom and presenting it to her (Disraeli).

In a 1589 pamphlet, Elizabethan playwright John Lyly openly acknowledged this use of the stage to comment upon social and political issues, for he “remarks that a Marprelate play, ‘if it be showed at Pauls...will cost you four pence’” (Gair 88-89).

Lyly, however, was not a Puritan writer or sympathizer. As E.K. Chambers states, Lyly and other dramatists were hired by the Church of England to counter the pseudonymous Puritan attacks with plays of their own:

The state is brought into the church and vices make play of church matters, said one episcopalian writer...[Francis] Bacon also condemned this “immodest and deformed manner of writing lately entertained, whereby matters of religion are handled in the Style of the stage.” But before long, the vigor of the attack drove the Bishops to seek on their side for an equally effective retort. They hired writers, including Lyly and Thomas Nashe; and these not only answered Martin [Mar-prelate] in his own vein, but also made use of the theatres for what must have been the congenial task of producing scurrilous plays against him (Chambers I: 294).

A Welsh preacher named John Penry was arrested four years later, in 1593, as their author and printer, then tried and sentenced to death for sedition.

Sometimes the allusions were a fusion of the personal and the political. In *Titus Andronicus*, Marcus first sees Lavinia after the Goth brothers have chopped off her hands and ripped out her tongue. Marcus laments the loss of Lavinia's musical abilities: “O, had the monster seen those lily hands / tremble like aspen leaves upon a lute” (2.4).

Then, in Act Three, Aaron enters with the message for Titus that if he cuts off one of his own hands, the Emperor will spare his sons. Marcus and Lucius argue that they should sacrifice their hands, but while Titus sends them off for an axe, he gets Aaron to cut off his hand.

These dismemberments were publicly meted out to members of Oxford's family circle. Oxford's first cousin, Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk, was beheaded for treason in June 1572, when Oxford was 22 years old. Further, in November 1579, the husband of Oxford's other first cousin, Anne Vere, the unfortunately named John Stubbs, had his right hand publicly amputated for writing a pamphlet (*The Gaping Gulf*) critical of the Queen's proposed marriage to the French Duke of Alençon and therefore judged seditious.

In an even more personal vein, Oxford incorporated a criminal act that doubled as a topical allusion to those in know at Court.

Madcap Lords and *1 Henry IV*

On May 20-21, 1573, three of Oxford's servants helped him carry out an elaborate prank involving the robbery of two of the Earl's former employees, lying in wait for them at Gad's Hill, by the highway between Rochester and Gravesend. The two men were traveling on state business for Oxford's father-in-law William Cecil, England's Lord Treasurer, carrying money intended for the Exchequer.

The former associates of Oxford who were robbed, William Faunt and John Wotton, later submitted a complaint to the Lord Treasurer endorsed "May 1573 from Gravesend." After referring to the Earl's "raging demeanor" toward them, they recall "riding peacefully by the highway from Gravesend to Rochester" when

three cavaliers charged with bullets discharged at us by three of my Lord of Oxford's men ... who lay privily in a ditch awaiting our coming with full intent to murder us; yet (notwithstanding they all discharging upon us so near that my saddle having the girths broken fell with myself from the horse and a bullet within half a foot of me) it pleased God to deliver us from that determined mischief; whereupon they mounted on horseback and fled towards London with all possible speed (Whittemore 45-48).

In 1580, when John Stow published the first edition of his *Chronicles of England*, he reported that more than a century earlier Prince Hal "would wait in disguised array for his own receivers, and distress them of their money: and sometimes at such enterprises both he and his company were surely beaten: and when his receivers made to him their complaints, how they were robbed in their coming unto him, he would give them discharge of so much money as they had lost, and besides that, they should not depart from him without great rewards for their trouble and vexation."

As Hank Whittemore pointed out in his examination of the incident:

During the 1580s the Queen's Men performed *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, an anonymous play that was a forerunner of Shakespeare's royal histories, where Prince Hal and his friends carry out the same prank in the same place: the highway near Gad's Hill between Rochester and Gravesend, and the money is also intended for the Exchequer (Whittemore 45-48).

No such escapade by Prince Hal (much less one at Gad's Hill) appears in any of the historical sources.

Shakespeare adopted the Gad's Hill episode in *Famous Victories* for one scene in *Henry the Fourth Part One*. In act two, scene two, Falstaff and three of Prince Hal's other companions from the Boar's Head Tavern hold up and rob some travelers bearing "money of the king's ... on the way to the king's Exchequer," on the highway near Gad's Hill between Rochester and Gravesend—just as in *Famous Victories*, performed in the 1580s, and just as in the real-life episode involving Oxford and his men in 1573.

The Resonance of *King Lear*

Oxford had three daughters named Elizabeth, Bridget and Susan. When Oxford passed away in 1604, two of them were already married, leaving his youngest, Susan, like Cordelia, without a husband. This real-life situation, with its echo in *King Lear*, very likely prompted the following incident, according to Warren Hope, writing in the autumn 1997 issue of *The Elizabethan Review*.

A couplet recorded in the Diary of John Manningham had been used as part of court entertainment before the Queen at the home of Sir Thomas Egerton in the summer of 1602. Ladies of the court drew lots and each gift was accompanied by a couplet. Sir John Davies, who previously wrote ten sonnets celebrating the 1595 marriage of Oxford's daughter, Elizabeth Vere, and William Stanley, Lord Derby, wrote the couplet.

Blank: LA [DY] Susan Vere
Nothing's your lott, that's more then
can be told
For nothing is more precious then gold.

The couplet clearly indicates that Lady Susan Vere is the recipient of a priceless gift—one that is both "more then can be told" and "more precious then gold," a very special kind of "nothing" indeed. The couplet is in fact a riddle, awarding Susan Vere an inexpressible and precious gift that merely appears to be "nothing." What could that be? A look at the text of *King Lear* unravels the riddle.

In the first scene of *King Lear*, the scene which precipitates the action of the play, a kind of drawing of lots takes place. Lear divides his kingdom and announces the dowries



Countess of Montgomery, Susan Herbert (née de Vere) played a part in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Queens* in 1609. This illustration shows the costume of Queen Tomyris of the Massagetai.

to be awarded to his three daughters. He gives equal portions of the realm to Goneril and Reagan and their respective husbands, Albany and Cornwall. He reserves the largest portion of the kingdom for his youngest daughter, the unmarried Cordelia. To be awarded this portion, she is to declare publicly her love for her father in terms that will please him—no doubt by renouncing marriage in her father’s lifetime. The dialogue, beginning with the words of Lear, begins:

Lear: What can you say to draw
 A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak

Cordelia: Nothing, my lord.

Lear: Nothing?

Cordelia. Nothing.

Lear: Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.

Cordelia: Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
 My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty
 According to my bond, no more nor less.

Lear: How, how, Cordelia? Mend your speech a little
 Lest you mar your fortunes.

 ...

Lear: But goes thy heart with this?

Cordelia: Ay, my good Lord.

Lear: So young, and so untender?

Cordelia: So young, my Lord, and true.

Lear: Let it be so, thy truth then be thy dower!

This dialogue solves the riddle of the couplet John Davies wrote for Susan Vere in 1602, when she was fifteen and unmarried. Truth, a pun on her family name and a reference to the motto used by her father, *Vero Nihil Verius*, or nothing truer than truth, is the “nothing” that is at once “more then can be told” and “more precious then gold.” Poor as he was, Oxford provided his youngest daughter with a priceless dowry, his name, truth, that is the point of Davies’ couplet and the kind of Elizabethan compliment and in-joke that the Queen and courtiers at Harefield would have understood and appreciated.

Unlike Cordelia, Susan Vere did not marry in her father’s lifetime. She eventually married Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, one of



*Philip Herbert,
4th Earl of Pembroke
and 1st Earl of Montgomery*

the “incomparable paire of brethren” to whom the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays was dedicated. Perhaps we only now begin to glimpse the actual value of the “nothing” Susan Vere inherited from her father, the truth contained in Shakespeare's plays.

In Conclusion

My method seeks to reattach the visceral memory of personal experience for modern audiences by reassembling for them the canon's contemporary allusions. Modern actors may not choose to perform their roles differently, but audience members would still be able to bring their new knowledge of the era and the author to the various roles and overall dramatic action. In short, it would enable audiences to become a more active part of the theatrical experience. Of course, directors would need to flesh out the allusions in the plays sufficiently for the technique to be effective.

Directors can also use their Playbill programs to educate audiences—before the play is performed—about the play's social and political context and the personal references that Shakespeare incorporates throughout the text. In the same way, the printed insert in most DVD cases can function as a program for movie buyers before they view the film on television. Through the mechanism of print, then, the dramatic action which resonated for Shakespeare's original audiences may be rediscovered by modern ones.

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Edward de Vere and the Psychology of Creativity

by Andrew Crider

A great vulnerability of the orthodox position on the Shakespeare authorship question is its inability to explain how William Shakspere of Stratford-on-Avon acquired the sophisticated knowledge revealed in the Shakespearean canon, ranging broadly from the law to seamanship, from courtly mores to the geography of northern Italy. In the absence of evidence for the requisite education or experience, orthodox commentators typically characterize William of Stratford as a genius with an innate talent for the creation of imagined realities, rendering education and experience unnecessary. But this rhetorical strategy is little more than a pseudo explanation that impedes our understanding of the actual sources of creative eminence.

Conceptualizing genius as innate talent fails on several counts. First of all, it suggests an ineffable quality of mind regarded as ultimately unknowable, a point of view that substitutes one mystery for another while excluding the possibility of further inquiry. In addition, the notion of innate talent would seem to imply the operation of genetic influences, but the exact nature of these influences or evidence for their heritability are left unspecified. Finally, the term lends itself to a circular argument in which innate talent is said to explain creative accomplishment, while the accomplishment is taken as evidence of innate talent. In sum, we learn nothing about the sources of eminent creativity by invoking the notion of genius as innate talent.

A far more defensible conceptualization of genius is as a public accolade bestowed on an individual to acknowledge eminently creative accomplishment,

most often in artistic or scientific domains. The accomplishment must be seen as both novel and unanticipated, shattering old paradigms and offering entirely new perspectives on the domain of endeavor in question. Because there is no metric for measuring degrees of creative accomplishment, the designation of genius necessarily depends on a social consensus regarding the impact of the creative product. Thus, a receptive audience is central to the accolade of genius (Csikszentmihalyi 533–545).

4 Psychological Factors Associated with Significant Creativity:

1. Dedicated preparation
2. Convergent vs Divergent thinking
3. Openness to experience
4. Bipolar disorder

Regarding genius as a social consensus rather than as a mysterious quality of mind opens the way for investigating the developmental, cognitive, and personal factors associated with creative accomplishment. In the following exposition I discuss four psychological factors associated with significant

creativity that are pertinent to the Shakespeare authorship question: dedicated preparation, convergent versus divergent thinking, openness to experience, and bipolar disorder. I also point out their correspondence or lack thereof to the biographies of Edward de Vere and William Shakspere. My aim is to demonstrate that the psychology of creativity provides strong circumstantial evidence in favor of de Vere as the author of the Shakespeare canon. Wider discussions of the creative process can be found in Dean Keith Simonton's *Origins of Genius* (1999) and his edited *Wiley Handbook of Genius* (2014).

Dedicated Preparation

Many of those we have dubbed geniuses have protested that their creative accomplishments were not the result of the unfolding of innate talent but rather the outcome of a long period of dedicated engagement with their field of endeavor. Consider the cases of Mozart and Michelangelo.

In a letter to his father the adult Mozart wrote: "People make a great mistake who think that my art has come easily to me. Nobody has devoted so much

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart painted by Barbara Kraft in 1819, Wikimedia.



Portrait of Michelangelo at 60 by Jacopino del Conte after 1535, Wikimedia.

time and thought to compositions as I.” Mozart began his study of music under his father’s tutelage at about the age of five. His first seven piano concertos, written between the ages of 11 to 16, were primarily modifications or arrangements of the works of other composers. Musicologists consider his Piano Concerto #9, written at age 21 after some 15 years of study, to be his first masterpiece (Howe 3).

Michelangelo’s 1499 *Pietà* of the seated Mary holding the crucified Jesus across her lap was immediately acclaimed a masterpiece. But the sculptor himself was more circumspect: “If people knew how hard I had to work to gain my mastery, it would not seem so wonderful at all” (Shenk 57). Michelangelo was apprenticed to a painter at age 13 and subsequently studied sculpture under the patronage of Lorenzo de Medici. While still in his teens he produced a number of promising sculptures on commission. But it was not until age 24, fully 11 years after beginning his apprenticeship, that he produced his first masterpiece (Coyle 65).

These and many similar anecdotes have recently led to a good deal of research on the so-called ten year rule, which holds that highly creative accomplishment requires a decade or more of prior intense immersion in one’s area of endeavor. This generalization stems from the work of J. R. Hayes (135–145), who examined the biographies of a large number of acclaimed painters, composers, and poets to determine the amount of elapsed time between the beginning of their careers and the production of their first masterpiece. He found that regardless of the area of endeavor, these artists required ten or

more years of sustained, effortful engagement in their profession before producing their first celebrated work. Similar studies have found the same to be true of the developmental history of highly creative individuals in a variety of domains, including writers, sculptors, mathematicians, scientists and chess players, among others (Weisberg 139–165).

The investigations initiated by Hayes are particularly significant because they do not concern creative individuals in general, but rather only those who are regarded as geniuses because of the impact of their contributions. The data show that even members of this rarefied group require many years of dedicated apprenticeship in order to develop the skills underlying their mature work. Eminently creative accomplishment emerges out of years of application and perfection of skills rather than in a flash of inspiration.

Upon his return from Italy in 1576, Edward de Vere became engaged in writing and producing entertainments for a courtly audience (Anderson 123–25); he also published eight poems in the anthology, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, in 1576 under the initials E.O. Thus, it is interesting to note that knowledgeable commentators first took public notice of his poetry and entertainments approximately ten years later. In 1586, William Webbe in his *Discourse of English Poetry*, extolled de Vere's skill in what he called "the devices of poetry." This sentiment was repeated three years later by George Puttenham in *The Art of English Poesy*, who in addition explicitly praised de Vere's interludes and comedies. However, de Vere's apprenticeship may well have begun many years prior to his first productions at court. Ramon Jiménez (2018) makes the compelling case that five anonymous plays outside the Shakespeare canon were written as early as de Vere's adolescence and later rewritten by him as the canonical *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Richard III*, *King John*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Tragedy of King Lear*. Such a lengthy apprenticeship would be consistent with the high degree of dedicated preparation required to produce the masterpieces of the Shakespeare canon.

Mr. Shakspeare's biography gives no hint of a corresponding period of dedicated apprenticeship. Rather, traditional Shakespeare experts would have us believe that he appeared in London in the late 1580s and immediately began to produce fully formed plays and epic poems starting in 1590, apparently arising *ex nihilo*. This theory contradicts all we have discovered about the long incubation of creative accomplishment and illustrates the circularity of attributing the canon to Mr. Shakspeare's supposed innate talent and then explaining this innate talent by referencing to the canon.

Convergent and Divergent Thinking

Convergent thinking is the process by which we retrieve information from long term memory to provide correct answers to factual questions, e.g.,

What is the distance between New York and London? What is the name of the country formerly known as East Pakistan? This information is acquired both through personal experience and the more formal means of didactic education. Individual differences in convergent thinking ability are reliably measured with I.Q. tests, which can be regarded as assessments of differences in the knowledge and cognitive skills underlying academic achievement. In addition to their use in predicting school and college grades, intelligence tests are also moderately helpful in predicting real world outcomes, such as workplace achievement and occupational leadership.

The development of intelligence tests in the early twentieth century led psychologists to speculate that eminently creative accomplishment could be accounted for in terms of very high intellectual ability. However, this hypothesis was convincingly laid to rest in a multi-decade longitudinal study of 1,500 adolescents selected on the basis of unusually high IQ test scores. Although most of this group went on to lead successful, often exemplary, lives, few if any scaled the heights of creative eminence (Terman). Ironically, two candidates from the original group who were excluded from the study on the grounds of having insufficiently high IQs went on to win Nobel prizes.

We now understand that highly creative people typically have high IQs but having a high IQ does not fully explain their creativity. For example, the average IQ of research scientists, mathematicians, and architects place them above 98% of the general population. Within each group, however, there is no difference in average IQ between its most and least creative members (Steptoe 123). Thus, eminently creative individuals tend to be highly intelligent, but only a subset of highly intelligent people are eminently creative. High level creative accomplishment requires a cognitive ability in addition to intelligence, that is, divergent thinking.

Divergent thinking is the process of generating novel solutions to problems lacking answers. For example, how can we design an aircraft to fly from New York to London in less than one hour? How can we write an engaging musical about Alexander Hamilton? Such questions require associating ideas or images in novel ways that provide a useful solution to the problem at hand. As succinctly expressed by the French mathematician Poincaré a century ago: “To create consists of making new combinations of associated elements which are useful” (286).

The process of generating novel ideas can be illustrated with a hypothetical word association test in which a subject is asked to respond to the word *foot* with as many related words as come to mind. The subject might begin with a few high probability, or strong, associations, e.g., *toe*, *leg*, *walk*, which are simultaneously predictable and uninteresting. As the number of responses increase, they become more divergent, that is, weaker and more remotely related to the stimulus word, as with *print*, *bridge*, and *inch*. A final series of

even more highly divergent responses such as *bed*, *mouth*, *bill*, and *big* are increasingly novel, idiosyncratic, and thought provoking. Thus, as the associations to *foot* become weaker, they become less predictable and increasingly novel.

To summarize, the distinction between convergent and divergent thinking provides a model for describing the cognitive basis of novelty generation. Convergent thinking ability, or intelligence, provides an extensive mental store of ideas and images that divergent thinking draws upon to uncover low probability associations. Novel ideas can of course be merely odd or even bizarre. Novelty must be deemed useful to some purpose to be considered truly creative.

Abundant evidence testifies to Edward de Vere's educational attainment and intellectual acumen. As a ward of the court he was tutored by leading scholars of the day, had multi-year access to Lord Burghley's vast library, and studied at Cambridge and the Inns of Court. He read, wrote, and spoke Latin and French, most likely read Greek, and at a minimum read both Italian and Spanish (Fox 95). During his early years at court he became a favorite of the Queen due to his multiple talents (Anderson 67) and was later described in a play by fellow dramatist George Chapman as ... "of spirit passing great/ Valiant and learn'd, and liberal as the sun." (Chapman III.4.84). His equally astute divergent thinking ability is confirmed by the published acclaim of his peers for both his poetry and his court comedies; 27 books published by admirers were dedicated to him (Whittemore 97–99). In sum, de Vere was undeniably a man of vast learning and artistic accomplishment.

In stark contrast, we have no records testifying to William Shakspeare's education or quality of mind. He may or may not have attended grammar school, which in any case would not have provided him with a classical education. His biography is absent a single document written in his hand, and his last will contains no mention of books, manuscripts, publications, or correspondence, nor any reference to musical instruments, paintings, or art of any kind. Six extant signatures do survive, but their unsteady quality suggests he may have been illiterate, as were his parents and his children. Mr. Shakspeare was clearly devoid of intellectual or artistic inclinations, although orthodox commentators often employ the circular argument that his genius explains the Shakespeare canon, while the canon is taken as evidence of his genius. (Crider *Brief Chronicles* 201–212).

Openness to Experience

Eminently creative individuals typically display a deep interest in a variety of undertakings outside of their central domain of accomplishment. Thus Benjamin Franklin, often regarded as America's first genius, was renowned

as a printer, publisher, author, inventor, scientist, civic leader, statesman, and diplomat. Thomas Jefferson, in addition to his eminence as a statesman, was a student of philosophy, religion, architecture, agriculture, and archeology (McCrae and Greenberg). Such polymaths are said to be *Open to Experience*, a disposition to seek novelty and complexity and to pursue associations between apparently disparate domains of endeavor. As William James colorfully described the flow of divergent thinking among the highly creative:

Instead of thoughts of concrete things patiently following one another in a beaten track of habitual suggestion, we have the most abrupt cross-cuts and transitions from one idea to another, the most rarefied abstractions and discriminations, the most unheard of combinations of elements... (Simonton 28).

In addition to unusually wide interests and talents, open individuals are intellectually curious, lead active fantasy lives, and are drawn to poetry, music, and art. Not surprisingly, self-report questionnaires or peer ratings of openness predict individual differences in divergent thinking ability, as well as differences in creative accomplishment *per se* (McCrae and Greenberg 222–243). In contrast, a low degree of openness is associated with affective restraint, pragmatic interests, and traditional values (Widiger and Costa).

High openness is typically associated with a relentless determination to prevail in one's creative endeavors despite the costs involved. When asked for his advice about painting, William Turner replied: "The only secret I have got is damned hard work." Newton, Darwin, and Einstein all testified to the mentally draining exertion required to achieve their scientific breakthroughs (Howe 186). Such anecdotes are consistent with the ten-year rule of dedicated preparation prerequisite to creative eminence: Whereas the ten-year rule speaks to the development of skills over many years, the notion of relentless determination addresses the effortful cognitive activity required to transform these skills into creative outcomes.

Edward de Vere epitomized the open personality. In addition to his lifelong commitment to music, poetry and all things theatrical, his interests included athletics, dancing, jousting, foreign travel, seamanship, military service, the law, and a lifestyle both courtly and bohemian, all of which echo throughout the Shakespeare canon. The acclaim of his contemporaries for both his poetry and theatrical productions additionally testify to his wit and creativity. Although we have no documentation of a possible determination to succeed at all costs, we can at a minimum acknowledge de Vere's intense commitment to his art that prevailed from adolescence, through his years at court and among his bohemian friends, and during his reclusive last decade coinciding with the advent of "Shake-speare".

We have no evidence of openness or creative accomplishment on the part of William Shakspeare. Rather, he pursued a business career to become a wealthy member of the Stratford gentry through judicious investments in an acting company, the Globe theater, real estate in Stratford and London, and income-producing land in the environs of Stratford. This life trajectory suggests considerable deliberate planning and long-term persistence, but these are not characteristics of openness, nor do they speak to a literary career. One searches in vain for signs of wide interests or artistic inclination in Mr. Shakspeare's biography. Indeed, his career can be read as a successful endeavor to acquire sufficient wealth in order to settle, at an early age, into a conventional and comfortable bourgeois existence in Stratford (Crider 19–22).

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder takes two forms. In bipolar I disorder, the individual experiences episodes of both clinical depression and mania, in no predictable sequence and with no predictable length of remission between episodes. Clinical depression is diagnosed by such symptoms as negative mood, low energy, diminished ability to think or concentrate, feelings of worthlessness, and thoughts of death and dying. Symptoms of mania include an expansive positive mood that can abruptly turn irritable, high energy, decreased need for sleep, grandiosity, verbosity, racing thoughts, and impulsive, reckless behavior. A diagnosis of bipolar I disorder is made when manic symptoms are severe enough to cause impairments in social or occupational functioning. In bipolar II disorder the individual experiences episodes of clinical depression and episodes of *hypomania*, in which the manic symptoms are attenuated and do not entail any impairment in social or occupational functioning.

Over the past thirty years numerous studies have consistently found that eminently creative individuals, as well as those in creative occupations, have disproportionally high rates of bipolar disorder, particularly when milder hypomanic symptoms are considered. This research was initiated by two frequently cited small scale studies. The first, a study of writers attending the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop, found that 43% of this group, as compared with 10% of a control group, had a history of bipolar disorder, particularly bipolar II disorder. Those with a history of unipolar depression without manic episodes did not differ from the control group (Andreasen 1288–92). In the second study Kay Redfield Jamison interviewed a group of distinguished artists, writers and poets, finding that a large percentage of them experienced hypomanic symptoms during periods of creative endeavor (Jamison 125–134). A more recent large-scale study, involving 300,000 individuals, employed Swedish population records to examine the likelihood of holding a creative occupation, such as writer, artist, or scientist, among those with a history of bipolar disorder, unipolar depression, or schizophrenia.

Compared with a control group, those who had experienced some form of bipolar disorder were overrepresented in the more creative occupations. No such overrepresentation was found among those with a history of unipolar depression or schizophrenia (Kyaga 373–79). It is now evident that there is a relationship between bipolar disorder, particularly bipolar II disorder, and creative endeavor but no such relationship with other major psychiatric conditions.

The relationship between bipolar disorder and creative endeavor is mediated at least in part by the elevated, expansive mood of hypomania. Everyday positive mood tends to disinhibit thoughts, feelings, and behavior that we otherwise expend mental effort to ignore or suppress, thereby broadening attention to both external events and mental activity. In addition, positive mood promotes divergent thinking by stimulating novel associations among ideas and images. When ordinary positive mood is elevated to hypomanic excitement, these shifts towards creative thinking are greatly amplified (Johnson 1–12).

Of course, not all creative individuals will have experienced bipolar disorder, and not all those with a history of bipolar disorder are creative. Nevertheless, milder forms of mania often contribute to creative outcomes. Thus, it is not unreasonable to look for indications of both depression and hypomania in the life and work of Edward de Vere.

Depression. In an article originally published a half century ago and more recently reprinted in the 2016 *Oxfordian*, the distinguished British psychiatrist Eliot Slater asserted that the author of *Shake-Speare's Sonnets* had experienced an intense but transient episode of clinical depression (160–63). Slater examined the first 126 sonnets (excluding the Dark Lady sonnets) to determine if the intensity of the distress so clearly articulated by the poet was consistent with our contemporary understanding of depression. Slater found such evidence in a sizable number of the sonnets, which he discussed in terms of five frequently occurring symptoms:

- 1) Insomnia, e.g., *When day's oppression is not eased by night/ But day by night and night by day oppressed...* (Sonnet 28)
- 2) Depressed Mood, e.g., *Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief/ Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss...* (Sonnet 34)
- 3) Diminished Ability to Think, e.g., *Why is my verse so barren of new pride? So far from variation or quick change?* (Sonnet 76)
- 4) Feelings of Worthlessness, e.g., *When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes, I all alone beweep my outcast state...* (Sonnet 29)
- 5) Thoughts of Death, e.g., *No longer mourn for me when I am dead/ Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell/ Give warning to the world that I am fled/ From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell.* (Sonnet 71)

By my reading of the first 126 sonnets, three show evidence of insomnia, ten evidence of depressed mood, seven evidence of diminished ability to think, while feelings of worthlessness and thoughts of death are each seen in eleven sonnets.

Slater's approach to the sonnets assumes that they are, at least in part, autobiographical. This supposition is bolstered by Slater's further observation that the intensity of Shakespeare's depression followed a predictable course, beginning with an abrupt onset at sonnets 28 and 29 with complaints of insomnia, then increasing in intensity until reaching a nadir at sonnet 71 (*No longer mourn for me when I am dead...*) and then gradually diminishing in fits and starts. By Sonnet 112, the poet was able to distance himself from his late illness: *For what care I who calls me well or ill...* At Sonnet 115 he proclaims: *Those lines that I before have writ do lie...* In sum, the despair so evident in the sonnets resolves into a depressive episode with many of the same symptoms and the same time course recognized today in the current *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*. It is not plausible that Shakespeare intentionally planned a sonnet sequence to mimic our twenty-first century understanding of the time course of clinical depression. Slater's astute observation in turn supports the case for an autobiographical approach to the sonnets.

The sonnets reveal that their author experienced at least one episode of clinical depression. It is likely that this was one of a series of such occurrences. That is, individuals who have experienced a depressive episode are likely to have had a prior history of depression and to be at high risk for subsequent such episodes. Assuming that *Shakespeare* is a pseudonym for Edward de Vere, there is good reason to believe that a psychiatric approach to de Vere's biography will reveal further evidence of depressive episodes over the course of his lifetime.

Hypomania. Edward de Vere is often described as flamboyant, unconventional, extravagant, histrionic, impulsive, and reckless. These colloquial depictions are highly similar to the symptoms of hypomania (Whalen 125-29). The essential component of a hypomanic episode is the expansive mood, which often carries with it involvement in pleasurable activities with a high potential for painful consequences. The following well known events in de Vere's biography are described in a manner that highlights the association of expansive mood with negative outcomes.

In 1572 de Vere accompanied the Queen on a progress to Warwickshire, where he orchestrated a production of a mock battle in the courtyard of Warwick Castle. Two opposing forts were built, one commanded by de Vere and the second by a fellow courtier, each consisting of a large number of

soldiers. The choreographed battle consisted of raids by one fort on the other, often with the use of battering rams. Muskets were fired, as were mortars shooting firebombs in the air, all making for great drama, thundering noise, and much excitement. A commentator who witnessed the event wrote that the Queen took “great pleasure” in the spectacle, although some of the townspeople were terrified (Nelson 85). The performance might have ended when de Vere’s troops destroyed the opposing fort with a fireball. Yet he took it too far. Fireballs continued to be shot in the air, many flying over the castle walls to land on streets, yards, and houses in the adjacent town. One house burned to the ground and at least four others were set on fire. It was pure luck that nobody died. Thus, an extravagant entertainment degenerated into near tragedy due to de Vere’s inability or unwillingness to disengage from the excitement he had created (Nelson 85).

A similar event occurred in 1581 at a tilting competition in Westminster, also attended by the Queen. De Vere was positioned in an elaborately decorated tent standing next to a tree entirely painted in gold: trunk, branches, and leaves, with twelve gilt lances placed nearby. At the appointed moment, de Vere emerged from the tent clad in gilt armor and sat under the golden tree as a page read his prepared speech to the Queen. The speech explained that the tree was the *Tree of the Sun*, and de Vere was the *Knight of the Tree of the Sun*, and further implied that Elizabeth personified the tree’s majesty, while Oxford was the champion willing to live or die in her defense. De Vere thus converted an athletic contest into a grand drama with himself in the lead role. When he won the tournament by breaking all twelve gilt lances against his opponents, the excited crowd rushed to the tent and tree, tearing both of them in pieces for souvenirs. A section of the bleachers gave way, injuring many and killing several (Nelson 262–64). Again, de Vere’s flamboyant behavior had stirred an audience but produced chaos.

Then there is the Gads Hill caper, in which two of de Vere’s former servants—now employed as servants of the Lord Treasurer, William Cecil (de Vere’s father-in-law)—were accosted by three of de Vere’s men near Gravesend, southeast of London. As the two rode by, de Vere’s men leapt from a ditch and raced toward them, shouting and discharging their muskets. Fortunately, no one was injured, although one of the two fell from his horse. As de Vere’s men quickly headed back to London, the victims took refuge in Gravesend, where they wrote to Burghley to ask for protection. The escapade ended poorly when the three assailants were sent to prison. Clearly the attack was orchestrated by de Vere, and one wonders if he were not there observing the spectacle (Anderson 66).

Although further investigation of de Vere’s biography through the lens of bipolar disorder is indicated, these three examples of histrionic behavior

leading to painful consequences are consistent with hypomanic excitement. When these examples are considered along with the evidence for episodic depression in the Sonnets, a plausible case can be made for a diagnosis of bipolar II disorder.

Final Comments

The notion of genius considered as a social accolade is inherently vague, subject as it is to the vicissitudes of time and public opinion. But this lack of precision does not preclude the identification of eminently creative individuals via such operational criteria as frequency of mention in the literature of the relevant field, peer acclaim, or the receipt of honorific prizes. This approach has revealed associations of creative accomplishment with such personal and life history characteristics as a lengthy period of dedicated apprenticeship, high convergent and divergent thinking ability, an open disposition, and bipolar II disorder. These characteristics are amply apparent in Edward de Vere's biography but noticeably absent in that of William Shakspeare.

The coherence of de Vere's biography with our understanding of the sources of eminent creativity adds to the vast amount of circumstantial evidence adduced by Oxfordians in favor of de Vere as the author of the Shakespeare canon. The quality of this evidence stands in stark contrast to the empty invocation of innate talent on the part of orthodox scholars to explain Mr. Shakspeare's supposed authorship. As Mark Anderson concludes in his definitive biography of de Vere: "In the final analysis, repatriating Edward de Vere's life to the Shakespeare canon—replaces the incomprehensible mystery of a deified genius with a comprehensible—if still incomparable—man..." (380).

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Nicholas Hilliard's Portraits of the Elizabethan Court

a hand or eye
By Hilliard drawn is worth a history
By a worse painter made
“The Storm”
John Donne

Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619) was an English goldsmith and limner best known for his many portrait miniatures of members of the courts of Elizabeth I and James I. He mostly painted oval miniatures of just two to three inches, but also some larger cabinet miniatures up to ten inches tall, and at least two famous half-length panel portraits of Queen Elizabeth, one of which—the Pelican Portrait—is reproduced on the front cover.

From our 21st Century perspective, his paintings exemplify the visual image of Elizabethan England. As an artist he was conservative by European standards, but his paintings are superbly executed and have a freshness and charm that has ensured his continuing reputation as the central artistic figure of the Elizabethan age—the only English painter whose work reflects, in its delicate microcosm, the world of Shakespeare’s plays.

His images preserve the faces of the Queen, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Philip Sidney, the Earls of Essex, Leicester and Oxford, Lord Burghley and other aristocrats. Hilliard said in his book, *The Arte of Limning*: “It is for the service of noble persons very meet, in small volumes, in private manner, for them to have the portraits and pictures of themselves, their peers, or any other foreign persons which are of interest to them.”

Hilliard's miniatures have a jewel-like quality likely because he trained and worked initially as a goldsmith; in fact, they were made to be worn like jewels and set into locket, or kept in drawers, reflecting their nature as romantic keepsakes.

Hilliard said that one of the features of the portrait miniature was secrecy, to preserve faces "in private manner." It is this sense of spying on a private self, an image intended to be seen by one recipient rather than by the world, that gives miniature portraits their fascination. We are allowed into the secret intrigues and passions of the deceased.

For those interested in the world of Shakespeare, Hilliard's visual record of the leading figures of the period are a fascinating way of imagining the English Renaissance—from Elizabeth I to the courtiers who interacted with the 17th Earl of Oxford as part of his social milieu.

By the standards of the flat icon-like Tudor paintings, Hilliard's style was more delicate, slightly better modelled even if still predominantly free of heavy shadow. They reflect the continental techniques which he learned during his travels to France. He painted with more skill in miniature than many contemporary British artists did in full-sized paintings. Further, his pieces were completed in watercolor on vellum, a more difficult medium



Nicholas Hilliard, self-portrait, 1577, watercolour on vellum, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

to handle than oils because mistakes cannot be easily rectified. Hilliard was an admirer of the great painter Hans Holbein and his delicate technique and wrote that "Holbein's manner of limning (painting) I have ever imitated and hold it for the best." Queen Elizabeth, it seems, was not a fan of excessive *chiaroscuro*.

The typical price for a miniature seems to have been £3—which compares well with prices charged by Cornelis Ketel in the 1570s of £1 for a head-and-shoulders portrait and £5 for a full-length picture. A portrait of the Earl of Northumberland cost £3 in 1586. Hilliard's pupils included Isaac Oliver and Rowland Lockey, but he appears to have given lessons to amateurs as well.

After his return from France, he lived and worked in a house in Gutter Lane near Cheapside from 1579 to 1613. Art historian Roy Strong describes the opening of the shop as “a revolution” which soon broadened the clientele for miniatures from the Court to the gentry, and by the end of the century to wealthy city merchants.

His normal technique was to paint the whole face in the presence of the sitter in at least two sittings. He kept a number of prepared flesh-colored blanks ready, in different shades, to save time in laying the “carnation” ground. He then painted the outlines of the features very faintly with a “pencil,” actually a very fine pointed squirrel-hair brush, before filling these out by faint hatchings. He added to the techniques available, especially for clothes and jewels, often exploiting the tiny shadows cast by thick dots of paint to give a three-dimensionality to pearls and lace. A few half-finished miniatures give a good idea of his working technique.

His style shows little development after the 1570s, while his pupil Isaac Oliver became a competitor starting in the 1590s, having developed a more modern style than his master and being better at perspective drawing, though he could not match Hilliard in freshness and psychological penetration.



The Armada Jewel. A locket enclosing a miniature of Elizabeth I by Nicholas Hilliard, circa 1595. According to tradition, it was given by the queen to Sir Thomas Heneage.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Hilliard continued to work as a goldsmith and produced some spectacular “picture boxes” or jeweled lockets for miniatures, worn round the neck, such as the Lyte Jewel, which was given by James I to the courtier Thomas Lyte in 1610. Other prominent examples of his craft include the *Armada Jewel*, given by Elizabeth to Sir Thomas Heneage, and the *Drake Pendant*, given to Sir Francis Drake. As part of the cult of the Virgin Queen, courtiers were expected to wear the Queen’s likeness, at least at Court. Elizabeth herself had a collection of miniatures locked in a cabinet in her bedroom, wrapped in paper and labelled, with the one labelled “My Lord’s picture” containing a portrait of the Earl of Leicester.

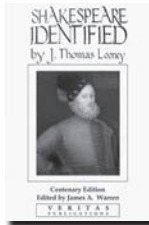
By far the largest collection of Hilliard’s work is held by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, while the National Portrait Gallery and British Museum own other portraits.



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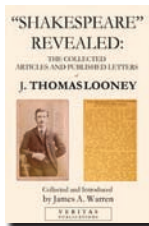
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J. Thomas Looney
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Centenary Edition Edited by James A. Warren

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After publishing *"Shakespeare" Identified*, J. Thomas Looney wrote dozens of shorter pieces—fifty-three, all told—to rebut critics of his book and to further substantiate the validity of the Oxfordian claim. Only a handful of these pieces have ever been reprinted, and, in fact, only eleven of them were even known of two years ago. This book brings all of them—articles and published letters, "old" and newly-discovered—together for the first time. \$20.00



Esther Singleton
Shakespearian Fantasias: Adventures in the Fourth Dimension (1929/2019)
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Esther Singleton's delightful novel takes readers on flights of fancy as they accompany the narrator, a woman from the twentieth century, who mysteriously finds herself transplanted into the worlds of many of Shakespeare's comedies. *Shakespearian Fantasias* was Singleton's only novel. She completed it during the final year of her life, and described it as "the best work that I have ever done, and the most original." \$14.00



James A. Warren
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"An assured and surprisingly gripping tale about the perils of ideological conformity." — Kirkus Reviews

Pity university literature professor Alan Fernwood. His life is turned upside down during the eleven weeks of the summer term as he discovers that much of what he had thought was true, isn't. Further complicating matters is Alan's relationship with the bewitching Amelia Mai. They and other characters ask themselves and each other how it is possible to know anything—a subject, a person, or, most important of all, what we should do right now, at this particular moment, in this unique set of circumstances. And along the way, Alan and the students in his Summer Shakespeare Seminar find much of relevance in Shakespeare's plays for those living in the world today. \$15.00

Book Reviews





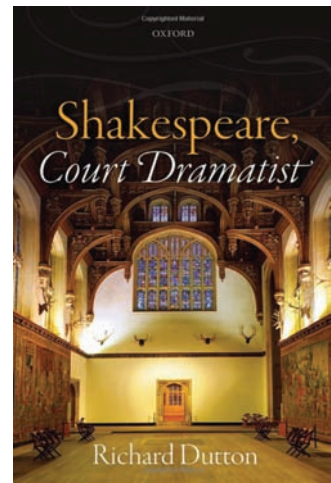
Shakespeare, Court Dramatist

Reviewed by Ramon Jiménez

Shakespeare, Court Dramatist. By Richard Dutton. Oxford University Press, 2018, 336 pages (Hardcover \$30.05, Paperback, reprint \$27.95).

In *Shakespeare, Court Dramatist*, Richard Dutton has assembled the evidence and advanced the argument that Shakespeare wrote for Elizabeth I and her court, a fact that most Oxfordians have been aware of for some decades. Briefly, "...court performance stood at the center of Shakespeare's professional life." But, Dutton asserts, before he wrote for the courts of Elizabeth and James I, Shakespeare wrote for the public stage. The twenty or so shorter Quarto versions of his plays, and the unknown others that have not survived, were intended for performance in London's playhouses, and the longer Folio texts were "most likely" his revised versions for presentation at the court.

Dutton also expands on the prevailing view that Shakespeare was a working dramatist, claiming that he "wrote to order and within the busy, demanding schedule of professional theater." As their "ordinary poet," he "almost certainly" had a contract with the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1594 that required him to produce perhaps two plays a year, and to revise his plays, and those of others, for court performance. There is no record of Shakespeare being paid for writing or revising a play, although such records exist for several other playwrights. But on the title pages of fifteen quartos of six of his plays, some



sort of revision or correction is indicated, half of which names Shakespeare as the reviser.

In line with his theory, Dutton questions various explanations for the fact that many of Shakespeare's plays exist in two or more significantly different states, some of which were only half as long as the First Folio versions. For no other playwright of the period are there multiple versions of so many plays. Beginning with the earliest serious Shakespeare criticism, scholars have argued over the reasons for, and circumstances surrounding, these alternate texts. Did they predate or postdate the Folio versions? Are they memorial reconstructions by actors, or stenographic transcriptions of performances? Or are they deliberate condensations of the longer versions and, if so, by whom were they produced? Dutton's answer is that these shorter and simpler texts preceded the Folio versions, and that they were actors' reconstructions of Shakespeare's first versions, intended for the public theaters.

In the first half of this lengthy book, Dutton describes the evolution of the performance of dramatic entertainments for the court during the reigns of Elizabeth and James. This involves a detailed account of the functions of the Revels Office, the institution responsible for all types of diversions at the court, and of the various Masters of the Revels—Sir Thomas Cawarden, who was appointed to the Office by Henry VIII in 1544; Edmund Tilney, who served from 1578 to 1610; and Sir George Buc, who occupied the position from 1610 until his death in 1622. Dutton supplies the evidence that until the late 1570s, the Revels Office arranged, supervised and financed dramatic entertainments for the court (primarily masques) that were largely staffed and performed by courtiers and their attendants. "No professionals were employed." The costs of these productions, which were elaborately and expensively staged, were borne entirely by the Revels Office and thus by the Exchequer. By the time that Edmund Tilney became Master of the Office in 1578, the outlay for these productions had become so high that he was charged with reforming the process and substantially reducing its expenses.

Over the next three decades, as various playing companies mounted hundreds of plays in the proliferating public theaters, Tilney transformed the Revels Office into a screening body to which companies brought their plays for audition, censoring, revision and rehearsal for performance at court. The costs of the scenery, the props and the wardrobe were contracted out, so to speak, to the playing companies themselves, who were then paid a standard

Ramon Jiménez *is an independent historian focusing on Ancient Rome and Renaissance England. He is the author of Shakespeare's Apprenticeship (McFarland, 2018) as well as two books on the Roman republic (Caesar Against the Celts and Caesar Against Rome), and has published more than twenty book reviews and articles on Shakespeare and his works.*

fee for their performances. In 1581, Tilney was given a special commission to oversee all players, playing companies and “playing places” in London, its liberties, and elsewhere in the country as a means of “reinforcing his ability to provide entertainments of suitable quality and cost at court.” It was in this context, according to Dutton, that Shakespeare was required to expand and refine his Quarto versions to produce the Folio texts that were then staged at court. These longer versions, with their more complex plots, lengthier speeches and sophisticated language, were specifically intended for the court, where candles allowed an evening performance and a longer playing time. Dutton thinks it likely that virtually every play that Shakespeare wrote was performed at court, some several times.

In the second half of the book, Dutton examines in detail six sets of plays to support his claim. His examples are the short Quarto versions of *2 and 3 Henry VI*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry V*. In his view, these texts were intended for the public stage, and preceded the revised Folio texts. In his scenario, Shakespeare first composed versions of these plays that were performed on the public stage; those versions were reconstructed by actors and then printed. “Each is, in its own way, a poorly reported version of that early play; it does not derive closely from an authorial manuscript, but in my view was probably transmitted (at least in part) by actors who performed in it, though in the case of *Hamlet* shorthand may have played its part.” The “good” versions, the Folio texts, “all derive directly from authorial manuscripts or written versions based closely upon them.” He cites various scholars, early and late, who agree with him, but in this regard, he is in conflict with the majority of modern editors and critics who maintain that the Quarto versions of these plays were in most cases derived either legitimately or clandestinely from the longer Folio versions, and were subsequently performed in public theaters.

The disagreement between Samuel Johnson and Edmond Malone in the eighteenth century about the relationships between *2 and 3 Henry VI* and the five Quartos associated with them (four of them anonymous) has persisted into modern times, although, as Dutton admits, the majority of present-day critics consider the Quartos of *The First Part of the Contention* and *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York* to be derived in some way from the Folio texts. Dutton disagrees, and maintains the precedence of the Quartos. He describes passages in the Quartos that are “in no sense a misremembered or misreported account of what appears in the folio.” He cites previous research that detects a correlation between historical events and details in the Quartos and those in Edward Hall’s *Chronicle* (1548, 1550), and a similar correlation between events and details in the Folio texts and those in Raphael Holinshed’s later *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577, 1587). He does not dispute that all four plays are Shakespeare’s compositions.

Quarto 1 of *Romeo and Juliet* is only three-quarters the length of the other three Quartos and the Folio text; Dutton describes it as “an earlier, hastier, less reflective version of the play.” But it is almost unanimously regarded by modern day scholars and editors as a bad, or memorially reconstructed, version derived in some way from Quarto 2. But again Dutton disagrees, claiming that Quarto 1 was Shakespeare’s first version, and that Quarto 2 is a “psychologically more acute” revision for a court performance. His principal reasons are the more nuanced, complex and convincing roles of Juliet and Friar Laurence in Quarto 2, which have been “entirely rewritten,” and the “rethinking” of the role of the clown, Will Kempe. In this case, his claim is supported by the fact that on the title pages of Quartos 2 (1599), 3 (1609) and 4 (n. d.) of *Romeo and Juliet*, the phrase “Newly corrected, augmented, and amended” appears, but no name is given. On the title pages of some copies of Quarto 4, “Written by W. Shake-speare” precedes the “Newly corrected” phrase. (The Folio text is based on Quarto 3.) On the other hand, there is no record of a court performance of the play.

Dutton is on firmer ground, although still in disagreement with most scholars, when he declares that Quarto 1 of *Hamlet* was Shakespeare’s first version and Quarto 2 a revision of it. He suggests that this revision was made with “the expectation of presenting the vastly expanded play at the court of Fortinbras himself, James I.” One of his arguments for this late date (1603/4) is his interpretation of the revised “explanation of why the players are travelling” in II.ii of Quarto 2. Gone are the references to “the humour of children” and “little eyases” in Quarto 1, and in place of them is the remark by Rosencraus (*sic*) that “I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.” (The “little eyases” phrase reappears in the Folio text.) Dutton interprets “inhibition” as meaning “a ban on playing,” referring to the temporary closing of the theaters by the Privy Council in March 1603, and “innovation” as referring to the “new regime” of James that began the next month. There is no question that the texts of Quarto 2 and the Folio are too long to be played in a public theater, but Dutton would have found his task much easier if he had consulted Margrethe Jolly’s *The First Two Quartos of Hamlet* (2015), which clearly demonstrates that Quarto 1 was Shakespeare’s first version.

The 1620-line Quarto 1 of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1602) has for many decades been widely regarded as one of the worst Quartos to be derived from a First Folio text (2729 lines). Quoting W. W. Greg, E. K. Chambers called it a “mere perversion” of the Folio text, and referred to the obvious presence of a “reporter,” who revealed himself in every scene, bringing “gross corruption, constant mutilation, meaningless inversion and clumsy transposition.” For the majority of scholars, this opinion has not changed, although in the 1990s a movement arose that questioned the concept of bad quartos, especially those created by memorial reconstruction. But no one

seems to have a satisfactory explanation for the claim on the Quarto title page that it had been performed “before her Majesty and elsewhere.” As Dutton reports, virtually all editors have assumed that this performance “was something much closer to F than to Q1.” His own explanation is that it was “a very poor rendition of something else, now lost.” He goes on to claim that Shakespeare, “working under Tilney’s direction,” transformed that “lost” version into what we find in the First Folio, for a performance at James’s court in 1604. Neither of these explanations is convincing and it is not likely that either can ever be proved. Unfortunately, a “lost” play or a version of it is a regular recourse for theories that can’t otherwise be explained.

In the case of the four editions of *Henry V*, Dutton argues that Shakespeare first wrote the shorter version that we find in Q1, printed in 1600, and based it squarely on the anonymous *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, which was printed in 1598. The two texts are similar in that each supplies a simple and short narrative of Henry V’s invasion of France, his victory at Agincourt, and his engagement to Katherine, daughter of the defeated French King. They are almost the same length, that is, about half the length of the Folio text, *Famous Victories* being only eighty or so lines shorter than Q1. Quartos 2 and 3, printed in 1602 and 1608, are based on Q1 with only minor changes. He dates the much longer Folio text to 1602.

On the other hand, as Dutton admits, eight prominent modern editors, from J. H. Walter in 1954 to Andrew Gurr in 2000, assert that the Folio text of *Henry V* was Shakespeare’s original and that the Quarto version was derived from it. The shortened and simplified text, requiring no more than two hours on stage, was more suitable for the public theater and for touring purposes. They confidently date the Folio premier between 1599 and 1602, and locate it at the Globe or the Curtain, neither of which could have been a court venue.

To bring in a third explanation, my own research collected in *Shakespeare’s Apprenticeship* (2018) demonstrates that the sequence of the *Henry V* editions was different from that of the other five pairs in Dutton’s study. I contend that the Folio text, which the author completed in 1583/84, was his revision of the latter half of his own *Famous Victories*, which he had composed many years earlier. The short Quarto, republished twice, was then derived from the Folio text, shortened and simplified for performance in public theaters. Shakespeare’s obvious re-use of characters, plot elements and dramatic devices from *Famous Victories* when he constructed the three-play Henriad makes it clear that he was revising his own play. His substantial use of prose in the trilogy, virtually absent from his other history plays, is another indication that he was revising the all-prose text of *Famous Victories*. Dutton, of course, is not alone in his failure to realize this. Nearly all modern scholars have refused to acknowledge that several anonymous plays, which are nearly identical to Shakespeare’s canonical plays in terms of characters, plots and

dramatic devices, are actually his first versions of these plays. To do so would put in great jeopardy the largely circular dating scheme they have constructed for their village candidate. And it would strongly suggest that he was not the author.

Despite these shortcomings, Dutton's theory is a forward step toward the revelation of that author. His conclusion that the Folio texts were intended for the monarch and the court is much closer to the truth than the notion that Shakespeare was primarily a playwright of the people and wrote for the public stage. Dutton also delivers a blow to the notions of widespread memorial reconstruction, piracy and "foul papers" that were promoted by the New Bibliographers. He also strengthens the evidence that Shakespeare revised nearly all his plays, some more than once. And, finally, he hardly mentions collaboration at all, and in one instance questions the claim of Brian Vickers and others that *Pericles* was a collaboration between Shakespeare and George Wilkins.

But Dutton and the other orthodox scholars still have to explain how an unlettered commoner from the Midlands knew so much about the court that he was able to portray individual courtiers and administration officials, and comment on their foibles and their quarrels. That he escaped censure and punishment for this is also unexplained. Another mystery is the lack of alternate versions of other playwrights' texts. Dutton admits that "The plays of no other dramatist have survived in so many varied states." He can cite only a dozen entries out of hundreds in *Henslowe's Diary* that refer to revisions or additions of some kind, only five of which were "for the court" (see pp. 100–01). As we know, *Henslowe's Diary*, skimpy and limited as it is, contains the names of twenty different playwrights and more than half-a-dozen playing companies, including the Queen's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men. The name of Shakespeare is absent from that *Diary*.

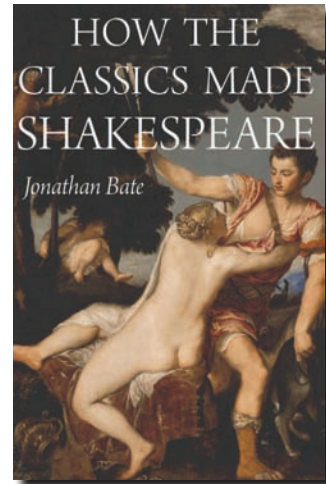
Shakespeare, Court Dramatist is a highly-detailed and meticulously argued theory that a hard-working Shakespeare essentially prepared two versions of his plays, one for the public and then one for the court. It offers a simple answer to a centuries-old puzzle. As such, it merits serious consideration by both orthodox and revisionist scholars, but it is not likely to be embraced by either. Nevertheless, the scope and depth of Dutton's research is impressive. Despite its length and complexity, the book has attracted more than half-a-dozen reviews, and is likely to continue to attract commentary for years to come.

How the Classics Made Shakespeare

Reviewed by Earl Showerman

How the Classics Made Shakespeare. By Jonathan Bate. Princeton University Press 2019, 384 pages (hardcover \$16.93, Kindle \$15.72).

The promotional literature accompanying Jonathan Bate's latest contribution to literary studies asserts that "Shakespeare was steeped in the classics. Shaped by his grammar school education in Roman literature, history, and rhetoric, he moved to London, a city that modeled itself on ancient Rome." That Shakespeare employed "the conventions and forms of classical drama, and read deeply in Ovid, Virgil, and Seneca" is hardly breaking news, nor is it surprising that perhaps "more than any other influence, the classics made Shakespeare the writer he became." No sensible reader would argue against the premise that "Shakespeare's supreme valuation of the force of imagination was honed by the classical tradition and designed as a defense of poetry and theater in a hostile world of emergent Puritanism" or how Shakespeare has become "our modern classic...playing much the same role for us as the Greek and Roman classics did for him..." In Bates' concluding words, "He is our singular classic."



How the Classics Made Shakespeare grew from a series of Lectures in the Classical Tradition at the Warburg Institute of the University of London in 2013. There are 14 distinct chapters, plus over 70 pages of citations, notes, and an

appendix, “The Elizabethan Virgil.” The central argument Bate develops is that classical authors endowed Shakespeare with a unique way of thinking, with a special intelligence.

His memory, knowledge, and skillfulness were honed by classical ways of thinking: the art of rhetoric, the recourse to mythological exemplars, the desire to improvise within the constraints of literary genre, the ethical and patriotic imperatives, the consciousness of the economy of artistic patronage, the love of debate, the delight in images (7).

So far so good. Predictably, *How the Classics Made Shakespeare* has garnered a number of favorable reviews from nationally recognized literary critics, including Elizabeth Winkler, whose article on the Shakespeare authorship in the June *Atlantic* has provoked hostile responses from defenders of tradition. However, there is a glaring deficiency, an inexplicable sin of omission, which belies the “Classic” title, which is the absence of any acknowledgement by Bate of the role Greek drama played in the author’s creative, poetic imagination. Limiting his discourse to the influence of Roman cultural production clearly diminishes the value of Bate’s claim to have explored how Shakespeare “owned” the classical canon.

In *Shakespeare & Classical Antiquity* (2013), Colin Burrow wrote that Shakespeare “almost certainly never read Sophocles or Euripides (let alone the much more difficult Aeschylus) in Greek,” and that he learned about Greek drama indirectly through North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*. Bate has previously written that Ovid “taught Shakespeare everything he needed to know about Greek drama,” and, like Burrow, seems not to have considered the work of many scholars over the past century who have written commendably well on this subject.

The other area of Bate’s book that warrants criticism is the claims of prodigious learning in the Latin classics that Shakespeare would have encountered in the King Edward’s Grammar School in Stratford-upon-Avon, where “he was taught the art of memory and the skills of a writer.”

Earl Showerman graduated from Harvard College and the University of Michigan Medical School, then practiced emergency medicine in Oregon for over thirty years. A longtime patron of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, after retiring from medicine in 2003, he enrolled at Southern Oregon University to study Shakespeare. Over the past decade Earl has presented a series of papers at authorship conferences and published on the topic of Shakespeare’s “Greater Greek.” He is the executive producer of Mignarda’s recording, *My Lord of Oxenford’s Maske*, wrote the chapter on Shakespeare’s medical knowledge in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?*, and is past president of the Shakespeare Fellowship.

Terence introduced him to comedy and scenic structure, Virgil to the heroic idiom, Horace to lyrical, occasional, and satirical poetry, and Tully (Cicero) to thoughtful reflection upon ethics, politics, and public duty. These classic authors, together with the more dangerous figure of Ovid, were formative of his thinking (9).

Bate asserts, without citation, that “dramatization of scenes from classical myth and history was a common schoolroom task” and that Shakespeare would have been read Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*, Livy’s *History of Rome*, Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Lives*, Tacitus, Suetonius, Lucretius and Juvenal.

This book argues that Shakespeare was almost always Ovidian, more often than is usually supposed Horatian, sometimes Ciceronian, occasionally Tacitean, an interesting mix of Senecan and anti-Senecan, and, I suggest, strikingly anti-Virgilian—insofar as Virgilian meant “epic” or “heroic” (15).

Whatever he means with his ranking of influences, Bate insightfully notes that Shakespeare’s classical fabling “was profoundly *anti-heroic* because it was constantly attuned to the force of sexual desire.” He also notes that, despite Shakespeare’s lack of a university education, very early in his writing career, he would appeal to a wide variety of audiences: to Oxbridge undergraduates (with *Venus and Adonis*), a spectacular tragedy for both public and private audiences (*Titus Andronicus*), a self-consciously classic comedy for the Inns of Court (*The Comedy of Errors*), and a popular chronicle history (*1 Henry VI*). No scholar would disagree with Bate’s assertions about the profound influence of Ovid on Shakespeare.

Before he read Plutarch, he read Ovid, the author of whose work he found the things that made him a poet and a dramatist: magic, myth, metamorphosis, rendered with playfulness, verbal dexterity, and generic promiscuity. . . . Ovidian strangeness and wonder weave a golden thread that runs all the way through his career. . . . Ovid was the master who taught Shakespeare that what makes great literary art is extreme human passion (11).

Then there are his several references to Richard Roe’s allegedly “error-ridden” *Shakespeare Guide to Italy*—but Bate never presents a single instance of evidence of those notorious “errors.” Worse are his pedagogical assertions regarding the comprehensiveness of English grammar school classical education.

The opening lines of Mantuan’s first eclogue were among Shakespeare’s first encounters with poetry. Later in his education, Mantuan

would also have been used as the starting point for his instruction in poetic scansion, and the art of prosodic composition (85).

An inventory of the 16th century curricula of four English grammar schools, St. Bees, Rotherham, Zouch, and Harrow, listed in Steven Steinberg's book, *I Come to Bury Shakespeare* (2013), demonstrates only one edition of Mantuan between the four schools. Further, only two of the four had editions of Ovid, Terence, and Horace. While three of the four schools had editions of Cicero and Virgil's *Aeneid*, only one in four had an edition of Plautus, Juvenal, or Livy. The commonplace fantasy that Shakespeare's grammar school education was the equivalent of a present-day graduate degree in classics is based on circular argument, not documentary evidence. Shakespearean echoes of classical authors cannot be explained by grammar school curricula.

Bate does comment extensively on Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*, William Webbe's *A Discourse of English Poetry*, and Francis Mere's *Palladis Tamia* ("Meres liked to think in eights"), but he fails to acknowledge the Earl of Oxford's literary and dramatic patronage even once. According to Bate, *An Ethiopian History* by Heliodorus was translated into English "when Shakespeare was a child," and was "sometimes considered the first 'novel,' it exercised a huge influence on Renaissance adventure-writing in both verse and prose." He nowhere mentions that Thomas Underdown was the translator and the volume was dedicated to the 17th Earl of Oxford.

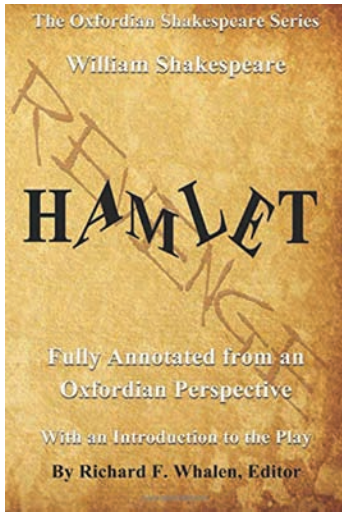
The most valuable lesson I gained from Bate's book was his development of the importance of Horace, who was "to the Elizabethans what Shakespeare became to the English in later generations: a collection of memorable phrases and quotations..." Bate even goes so far as to praise the literary achievements of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517–1547). Surrey not only translated two books of Virgil's *Aeneid* using blank verse, but also Horace's "Ode to Licinius," which was published in 1557 in a popular collection, *Tottel's Miscellany*. Surrey and Thomas Wyatt became known as the "Fathers of the English Sonnet." Although Bate is loath to mention it, Surrey was also the 17th Earl of Oxford's uncle.

Although he devotes an entire chapter to "The Labours of Hercules," Bate makes not one mention that the final scenes of *The Winter's Tale* and *Much Ado about Nothing* were influenced by Euripides' tragicomedy, *The Alceste*, where Hercules recovers the queen from Death. Bate himself has written on this theory in other publications, and many contemporary scholars have proposed as much. Although Bate is very impressed by the influence of Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus*, he overlooks the widely recognized mocking reference to John Studley's translation of Seneca's tragedy in Bottom's doggerel poem following his claim, "I could play 'ercles rarely."

Overall, Jonathan Bate's highly acclaimed book, *How the Classics Made Shakespeare*, is a worthy read for scholars interested in the inspiration and literary heritage Shakespeare gained from the Latin canon, and especially how Shakespeare "wrote against the ancients" and feminized the masculine Roman culture. However, this is only half the story of the classical inheritance. Bate's intentional, complete neglect of any reference to the influence of Greek drama on Shakespeare is his most glaring failure. His claims that grammar school curricula were robust in Latin titles is based on textual evidence Shakespeare knew the classical sources, not from a review of Elizabethan school book inventories, which tells a very different story. Perhaps Professor Bate wants his readers to take seriously the notion that reading Cicero was not a requirement, that "this was an influence transmitted by osmosis as well as by education." Now let that one sink in, my fellow skeptics.

Ever wonder what an Oxfordian edition of a Shakespeare play would look like?

Try the Oxfordian edition of *Hamlet* (2018), a play that the Stratfordians call “enigmatic and” “problematic,” but which makes perfect sense and wonderful entertainment when read with the understanding that it was written by the Earl of Oxford.



Edited by Richard F. Whalen with Jack Shuttleworth, chairman emeritus of the English department at the U.S. Air Force Academy, *Hamlet* is the latest of four plays so far in the Oxfordian Shakespeare Series, following the second edition of *Macbeth*, also edited by Whalen, general editor and publisher of the series; *Othello*, edited by Ren Draya of Blackburn University and by Whalen; and *Anthony and Cleopatra*, edited by Michael Delahoyde of Washington State University.

All four plays are available at Amazon.com.



The Poems of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, and the Shakespeare Question

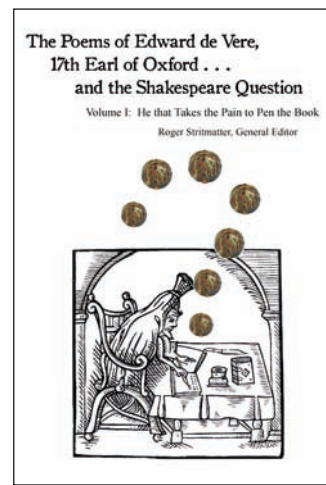
Reviewed by William Boyle

The Poems of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford...and the Shakespeare Question: Volume I: He that Takes the Pain to Pen the Book.

Ed. Roger Stritmatter PhD. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2019, 226 pages (paperback \$11.99).

The *Poems of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford and the Shakespeare Question* is a book that is overdue. While J. T. Looney published an edition (*The Poems of Edward de Vere*, 1921) one year after “*Shakespeare*” Identified, there have been just three more editions in the past one hundred years, by Professor Steven May (1980), Katherine Chiljan (1998) and Kurt Kreiler (2013), all of which contained different sets of poems since the primary problem in collecting the poems of Edward de Vere is deciding which Elizabethan poems are actually his.

Thus, the decision of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship to sponsor this new collection under the general editorship of Professor Roger Stritmatter is an important one, and Volume 1—*He That Takes the Pain to Pen the Book*—does not disappoint. On page 3 of the introduction the editors (Stritmatter and Bryan Wildenthal, listed as the Special Editor for Volume I) write, “In Volume 1 are twenty-one ‘canonical’ poems published or extant in MS copies attributed to the 17th Earl of Oxford. The attribution of sixteen of these poems has generally been accepted for many decades...” It is further noted that such attributions date back to the 19th century with Hannah (1870) and Grossart (1872), both of whose positive commentaries are important since Oxford had not yet been identified as Shakespeare.



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The provenance of the twenty-one poems all date from Oxford's early years (through the 1570s), over which there is broad agreement that they are Oxford's and, thus, represent Shakespeare's juvenilia. The volume also includes two original essays. The first is the introductory "Oxford's Poems and the Authorship Question," and "A Methodological Afterward," both co-written by Dr. Stritmatter and Bryan Wildenthal and focusing on establishing the poems' connections to Oxford and their correspondences to the Shakespeare canon. In addition, two other previously published essays on Oxford's poems (Gary Goldstein's Spring 2017 *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* article, "Assessing the Linguistic Evidence for Oxford" and Robert Prechter's 2012 *The Oxfordian* essay, "Verse Parallels between Oxford and Shakespeare") are included. Moreover, there is an extensive bibliography of standard works employing primary and secondary sources, and several appendices of related poems and literary problems.

It should be noted that Volume II, scheduled for publication in late 2019, will include a broad selection of poems that represent Oxford's mature efforts, some of which are still in dispute. The editors write: "Vol. II reproduces 85 English and two Latin poems (with translations) written by de Vere, that were either published anonymously or under one of several pseudonyms or were mistakenly identified as the work of his contemporaries" (5). Volume II was not yet published when this review was written, but the introduction does refer to it several times, which causes some confusion about points being made, or at least the desire to go look something up, but then realize it is not yet available.

At the heart of Volume I (see 27–154) are the twenty-one early poems. Each is presented in a separate chapter with extended notes on sources, attributions, parallels to Shakespeare's plays and poems, and, finally, notes on where else they have been discussed by other scholars or editors, such as Professor Steven May in his landmark 1980 study ("The Poems of Edward De Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl

William Boyle, a retired librarian, graduated from Lake Forest College (BA, English) and SUNY-Albany (MA, Library Science). In the 1990s he founded and managed websites on the authorship question, including the *Shakespeare Oxford Society Home Page* in 1995, and *The Ever Reader* in 1996. He then served as editor of the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* from 1996–2001 and *Shakespeare Matters* from 2001–2005. In 2006 he founded the *New England Shakespeare Oxford Library* (www.shakespeareoxfordlibrary.org), which manages the *Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources (SOAR)* catalog-database of Shakespeare authorship materials and publishes authorship-related books through its *Forever Press imprint*.

of Essex” in *Studies in Philology*, 77:5, 1980). Each poem is presented with a numeric designation, from E.O. 1 to E.O. 21, to assist readers in identification and for ease of reference.

Volume I, by itself, functions as a reference work that assembles a number of loose editorial threads that were left unresolved by scholars over the past century. In all, it brings together in one place materials spanning a century of scholarship, and for that alone is invaluable.

The poem analyses cover ground both familiar and new. There is the “haggard hawk” metaphor that Looney discovered in 1920 in E.O. 9 (“The Trickling Tears That Fall Along My Cheeks”) and E.O. 20 (“If Woman Could be Fair and Yet Not Fond”) as a significant statement about female character. Also, the “damask rose” imagery (in E.O.14, “These Beauties Make Me Die,” and E.O. 17, “Sitting Alone Upon My Thoughts”) and its relation to the War of the Roses, the seeming and not seeming in E.O. 5, “I am not as I seem to be,” a number of significant parallels in E.O. 1 (“The Labouring Man that Tills the Fertile Soil,” from *Cardanus Comforte*) related to work and sacrifice, the famous and elegant statement that “My Mind to me a Kingdom Is” (E.O. 18, with thanks to Steven May, who attributed this poem to Oxford in his 1980 study).

Anyone who has been following the Oxfordian case will be familiar with a number of these poems and their parallels, plus the surrounding arguments, and will find them fascinating. Newcomers could well be surprised at the wealth of detail and wonder how there can be any doubt about the relationship between Oxford and Shakespeare, or any doubt about Oxford’s skill as a poet, duly noted in the 19th century, but dismissed in the 20th once he was publicly identified as Shakespeare.

At the same time, the four essays contain much commentary, some controversy, and some news. As noted, there are two essays republished (Goldstein, 2017, and Prechter, 2012), and two new essays by co-editors Stritmatter and Wildenthal. All cover much of the history of the poems’ role in the authorship debate, and Oxford’s role in the development of Elizabethan poetry.

In addition, Prof. Stritmatter was interviewed in the podcast *Don’t Quill the Messenger* (June 5, 2019) about the book and made several important statements about the scope and purpose of the whole enterprise, which I think should be incorporated into subsequent editions of this book. The most notable of these are: “This book was written to disprove the claim...that there is absolutely nothing in the Earl of Oxford’s poetry that connects him to Shakespeare...This is a patent falsehood. We can argue about how much is enough...about what do these patterns really mean...[that they may result from] a ‘shared speech community.’ But the argument that you cannot make, without becoming a fool, is that there is no connection here” (26:20).

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This is a blunt yet accurate statement. However, if we turn to Goldstein's 2017 article we find the redoubtable Steven May (who has commented on Oxford's poems for almost 40 years, with his 1980 monograph, his 1991 book, *Elizabethan Courtier Poets*, and his 2004 *Tennessee Law Review* article, always denying any connections between Oxford and Shakespeare) now stating, in a March 2017 communication with Goldstein, that if there are any parallels between Oxford and Shakespeare, we must consider that Oxford's "poems were in print and were therefore available for Shakespeare to plagiarize" (160). This illustrates, in a nutshell, the problem with debating the authorship with orthodox experts: there is always a new answer to preserve the status quo, no matter how absurd.

Meanwhile, the editors' introductory essay explores some of the larger issues and evidence raised by Oxford's poems, evidence that drives a Steven May to such extremes as above. Much evidence is presented that illustrates Oxford's role in the development of Elizabethan lyric poetry, in terms of both style—his use of anaphora, anadiplosis, antithesis, hendiadys—and in the unique uses of words, contrasts, repetition, etc. There is also much made of vocabulary analysis using the EEBO (Early English Books Online) database to find out how often certain words and phrases were used throughout the Elizabethan era. A number of examples are given along with several charts. But after publication, authorship critics complained that the editors had used a truncated version of EEBO; thus, all the numbers presented were inaccurate. In the *Don't Quill the Messenger* podcast this problem was acknowledged, and it was announced that a second edition of the book is scheduled, with new numbers and revised text. Stritmatter remarked, "the number of problems in searching EEBO is pretty significant" (19:14).

However, the EEBO material, all presented upfront in this introductory essay, was more a distraction than a revelation. It is in the latter part of this essay that the most compelling evidence is introduced, especially with the section on a 1953 study by Albert Feuillerat (*Composition of Shakespeare's Plays*) in which the author states that his list of eight foundational elements "will enable us to define what properly characterizes Shakespeare's poetic style (page 17 in *Poems*, citing page 59 in Feuillerat). Interestingly, Stritmatter in *Don't Quill the Messenger*, notes the importance of Feuillerat, and wonders why no one has mentioned him in any of the reviews he had seen to date (17:20). All eight of Feuillerat's criteria for Shakespearean style are present in Oxford's poems, which represents a critical piece of authorship evidence. Hopefully, in a revised edition, Feuillerat will be given more prominence.

That brings me to the one shortcoming of this edition: the entire issue of biography and autobiography in this book is secondary to its discussion of authorship, and in the details of forensic analysis of linguistics and literary

sources. This makes sense, up to a point. But the authorship debate is very much about the relationship of the author to what he writes, and therefore biography matters in determining literary identity. While biography/autobiography is not ignored in this study, it is skewed and selectively invoked. In the *Quill* interview Stritmatter states:

the ethos of the Shakespearean sonnet is a tendency towards autobiography and self-disclosure...[in a voice of realism]...which convey the impression of sometimes being a direct translation of the author's own experience through the poem on paper. (10:20) ...the language [in the poems] is one step closer to autobiography than it is in the plays. (11:00)

However, the number of instances of biography or autobiography in Oxford's early poems are presented only in passing. Given the prevalence in authorship studies that connect Oxford's life with the Shakespeare canon, especially the *Sonnets*, it would seem that once one has linked his early poems to Shakespeare—and much of the evidence in this book does just that—there remains the vital matter of determining the story that Oxford's poems are telling. May in his 1980 study makes a remarkable statement: "The absence of personal feeling in these works is, of course, characteristic of much Elizabethan love poetry, and must be understood in terms of Oxford's poetic intentions, which were more structural and rhetorical than sentimental (1980, 13)." Such thoughts well suit an academic seeking to minimize Oxford's case for authorship, but scholarly analysis needs to delve much deeper.

In the *Quill* interview (37:00+) Stritmatter mentions the significance of Oxford's 1575–1576 trip to Italy and the subsequent separation from his first wife, Anne Cecil, remarking that *Rape of Lucrece* and *Cymbeline* are examples of "Oxford coping with this." There is a reference in *Poems* (180) to several poems of a "daringly autobiographical character" that will appear in Volume II. However, one thing apparent in Volume I is a section (see 180–181) where reference is made to the "stigma of print" theory of why Oxford chose anonymity in his lifetime, and why that anonymity continued after he passed. Ruth Loyd Miller is quoted from her 1975 edition of Looney (1: 559) that Oxford's use of his real name in publishing the English translation of *Cardanus Comforte* was a "daring departure from Elizabethan social norms" that earned him attacks as being "phantasticall, light headed, and what next?"

The editors then state that such views "undoubtedly account for a large portion of the angst expressed in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, where the speaker in several (71–76, 102) admits his shameful transgression of Elizabethan societal norms regarding aristocratic publishing and—much worse—slumming in the public theatres."

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That is one interpretation, but not the only one. If we are to venture into this territory at all, then it must be all the way and as thoroughly presented as the pros and cons of which poems are actually Oxford's, and which lines and words do or do not align with Shakespeare's lines and words. So, then, where is Queen Elizabeth? Based on Volume I, she is absent, and one would have no clue that she and Oxford even knew each other. Consider that the one acknowledged Oxford poem that is also a Shakespearean-style sonnet ("Love Thy Choice" in Looney [1921], "Who Taught Thee First To Sigh" [E.O. 15] in *Poems*) is discussed by Ogburn (*TMWS* 512–513) and Whittemore (*100 Reasons* 54) as certainly about Elizabeth, along with what that tells us. Such discussions merit some place in any consideration of Oxford's early poems.

In a final irony regarding Oxford's early poetry and biography, Stritmatter remarks in the *Quill* interview (38:30) that "we still don't know everything that de Vere was writing when he was younger...." But in June 2019 attention was called (on the Facebook discussion group "ShakesVere") to an article by Robert Prechter ("Oxford's Final Love Letters to Queen Elizabeth") in the spring 2015 *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* about poems he had found in an obscure publication (*A Gorgeous Gallery, of gallant inventions*, 1578), three of which would clearly appear to be the young Edward de Vere writing to none other than Queen Elizabeth (called "Elizera" by the anonymous poet) about the relationship which they had. No one took much notice of this article at the time, but Stritmatter posted on "ShakesVere" (June 27, 2019) that these poems "definitely belong in Volume II" along with the later and disputed poems. When it appears, I hope there will be some discussion of what else of Oxford's youthful poetry was either to or about Elizabeth.

The story of Oxford's youthful poetry is far from over, and there is much yet to learn and debate. Kudos to the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship in sponsoring the publication of *The Poems of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford... and the Shakespeare Question*, and to co-editors Roger Stritmatter and Bryan Wildenthal for their work in bringing out Volume I.

Looney's Lost Labours

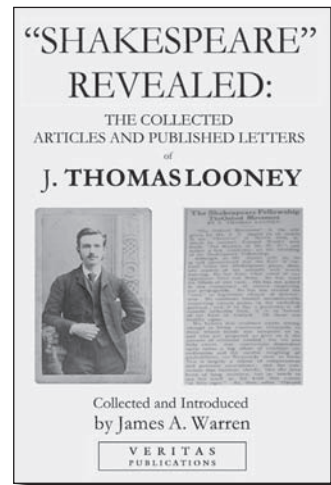
Reviewed by Michael Delahoyde

“Shakespeare” Revealed: The Collected Articles and Published Letters of J. Thomas Looney. Ed. James A. Warren. Veritas Publications, 2019. 312 pages. (Paperback \$20.00).

J. Thomas Looney (1870-1944), the English schoolteacher who first identified Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, as the true poet-playwright behind the pen-name “Shakespeare,” wrote, “I was well aware...that I was exposing myself to as severe an ordeal as any writer has been called upon to face” (17). We near the hundredth anniversary of this statement and of its referent: Looney’s magnum opus, *“Shakespeare” Identified* (1920), and his *The Poems of Edward de Vere* published soon afterwards. Reading so much more now from Looney is always engaging, somewhat enraging, and ultimately inspirational.

The founder of Oxfordianism seemed to have largely retreated from the fray after publishing his game-changing work. Until recently, we knew of only eleven subsequent pieces written by Looney concerning the Shakespeare Authorship Question, and therefore inherited an impression that he was a shy man who had quickly, perhaps even sheepishly, withdrawn from the controversy.

With more of the meticulous, tireless industriousness that has given us perpetually updated editions of the *Index to Oxfordian Publications* and a centenary edition of Looney’s *“Shakespeare” Identified*—unredacted, and with



savvy editorial choices that amend obsolete practices in spacing, punctuation, and font in order to increase readability—James A. Warren has tracked down, rediscovered, and retrieved more than forty additional lost writings by Looney and restored some articles of his that Warren came to realize had been too freely edited or cut in previous publication form (57). Warren's archival sleuthing has now shown that with letters to the editors of various publications and in articles concerning his continued research into Oxford, Looney was actually diligent in assuring that his work was not misrepresented and distorted by detractors. Warren has restored not only lost documents to the record but also a significant degree of dignity to one maligned, like the Earl of Oxford and many of us all: one whom Warren has come to revere, so to speak, as “mild-mannered on the outside, perhaps, but with a spine of steel inside” (iv). I would say the same of James Warren himself, whose type of dynamism was long ago characterized by Looney in appreciating those involved in intense historical research:

Painstaking workers, official and unofficial students, have toiled in regions of dust and mould, to pierce mists of imaginative traditions, and to come face to face with the realities of the past in its contemporary documents and formal records. The contents of long neglected archives, in obsolete writing undecipherable to the ordinary reader, have been microscopically examined, summarized, indexed, and placed within reach of the more general student; and this material has furnished tests that have given the *coup de grace* to more than one cherished illusion (279).

Clearly inspirational—especially to this reviewer in terms of archival success. One hopes that Warren enjoyed the realization that his enterprise was not dissimilar to Looney's own in discovering the fuller biographical picture of their respective subjects. This work is illuminating as to the history of the authorship debate, and Looney's own words are also inspirational. However, any open-minded reader will also be dismayed at what these letters show us: that nearly one hundred years later, the debate seems to have progressed not a step. That is, the very same assortment of orthodox arguments, dismissals, and tactics used today were already faced and addressed by the stalwart Looney.

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For example, it becomes clear that mockery of his name, from which Professor Jonathan Bate could not refrain in last year's debate with Alexander Waugh, has perpetuated itself from the start. Admirably, Looney brushes off such idiocy with eloquent dignity, acknowledging that one reviewer had not been too harsh, "Excepting a silly thrust at my hapless patronym" (150). Effective British Jeeves-speak, what?

Not just the "attitude of somewhat supercilious mockery towards all 'heretics'" (181), Looney also faced immediate dismissal by critics who did not even read his book. He defends his detection that one detractor "hurled intolerant denunciations 'at my work' without having read it" (21) since "It will be noticed that he even takes me to task...for saying something contrary to what I had repeated with an almost wearisome reiteration" (23) (that is, the dating of the sonnets). "If Mr. Robertson had even taken the trouble to read the whole of the sentence from which he quotes he could not have so misrepresented me.... The public may accept this as a fair specimen of Mr. Robertson's knowledge of the contents of my work" (47). Indulge this reviewer to point out that the first and nastiest commentator on my critical edition of *Anthony and Cleopatra* on Amazon.com accused me of even getting "Antony's" name wrong, indicating that he hadn't even read the *cover* of the book, where one of several explanations for that choice can be found. I suppose it is a bitter comfort to find that we suffer the same irresponsible contentiousness as did Looney.

He found his ideas dismissed out of hand on the grounds that they were recapitulations of Baconian arguments, so he specified how some of his arguments were as anti-Baconian as they were anti-Stratfordian (33). He took to task critics delivering cowardly cheap shots and employing cheesy tactics. When he received a rejection to a letter he had written to correct glaring errors in a review ridiculing a book by the early Oxfordian, Colonel Ward, Looney wittily wrote, "A familiar couplet assures to a certain class of combatant the privilege of 'fighting another day'; and therefore the editor of *The Church Times* has apparently qualified for future frays" (176). Like many of us, he encountered "the kind of argumentation one associates with political maneuvering rather than a serious quest for the truth on great issues and it makes one suspect that [the attacker] is not very easy in his own mind about the case" (271). And Looney is generous of spirit yet adamant in viewing the matter from the opposing side: "To admit now that the Shakespeare problem is a reality would convict their class of incompetency, and entail personal retractions to which average human nature is unequal" (181).

So, cascade all the familiar suspect objections: for example, the Stratfordian insistence that some Shakespeare works are written after Oxford's death. Looney asserts, as do many of us, *ad nauseam*, that dates of first recorded performances are not dates of composition (180); that "so clearly does the year 1604 mark a crisis in matters Shakespearean that several authorities give

this as the date of the Stratford actor's retirement to Stratford" (43). That early retirement is untenable for a creative artist at the height of his career: absurd in the case for Shakspeare and worse for Bacon and Derby who lived so much longer than de Vere (236; cf. 19).

Looney long ago tried to drive home the point that while spelling was indeed flexible at the time, pronunciation always distinguished the short "a" sound (minus the middle "e") in the Stratford family's records: "Shaxper or Shag-sper" (290), but not "Shakespeare."

Looney long ago addressed the criticism that de Vere's poetry is too inferior to that of Shakespeare (35ff) with all the counter-arguments that we are still offering, including the poetic and thematic resemblances specifically of Oxford to Shakespeare, especially in the E.O. poem "Loss of His Good Name" (46).

Looney extends material covered in *"Shakespeare" Identified* with additional connections between Oxford's life and the Shakespeare plays, including the rivalry with Philip Sidney captured in *Merry Wives* (122ff), "the revolting crisis" in *All's Well* (the bed-trick played on Bertram) matching Oxford's experience (66-69), the Christo Vary implications in the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew* (253ff), and the revised *The Taming of the Shrew* parallels (262). Looney notes orthodox admissions such as that Shakespeare "utterly missed what a knowledge of the middle classes would have given him" (172). On *Hamlet*, having "long been suspected of being the author's work of special self-revelation" (62), Looney finds that one nineteenth-century orthodox critic identified "Polonius, Laertes, and Ophelia [with] Lord Burghley, Robert Cecil, and Anne Cecil (Lady Oxford)" (147) but inconceivably missed the Earl as the star at the center of this constellation of characters. The autobiographical case for the Shakespeare works and especially *Hamlet* has been so strong that for a while the desperate Stratfordian defense was that maybe Oxford furnished William of Stratford with biographical material for the plays (61). Though this be madness, yet there is desperation in't.

Alternately attacked with the assertion that parallelisms between the author and Shakespearean characters might be made for anyone, Looney avers, "It has been impossible to do anything of the kind for either William Shakespeare or Francis Bacon" (46; cf. 49-50). He does not let unfounded dismissals slide by. He eloquently writes that, "Truly great dramatic literature can only come from the pens of writers who are accustomed to look closely into their own souls and make free use of their secret experiences; and it may be doubted whether a single line of living literature ever came from pure imagination or mere dramatic pose" (274). Then he puts out calls for further research on a variety of topics (15, 53, 226) infinitely more engaging from the Oxfordian perspective than any "musty mortgage deeds, property conveyances, dubious signatures, or malt and money dealings" (77).

Looney faced the attempted *ad hominem* dismissals by critics disparaging his academic background, just as most Oxfordians do today: ironic, since *we* are also typically called snobs by these elitists. But Looney calmly explains, “Beginning the researches, not with the academic dry-as-dust intimacy with Shakespeare, but with the kind of knowledge possessed by an admiring reader, whose chief interests lie elsewhere, I found that all the facts of Oxford’s life fell naturally and spontaneously into their place in relation to the outstanding personae of the plays” (49). If we point to authorship doubters “who have shown a familiarity with Elizabethan literature, we shall be told that none are ‘men of letters.’ If we point to men of letters who have adopted heretical views on Shakespeare we shall be told that they knew nothing of Elizabethan literature” (181).

For one accused of not being an adequate scholar of the Elizabethan age (48), Looney brings forth more informed realism than the fantasy land surmised into history by the Stratfordians. The literary context for “the greatest English poet in the making” (77), Looney realizes, situates Oxford within the court poetry milieu and connects him with his poet uncle Henry Howard (87) and with the inferior Sidney and Lyly (93ff). Looney contrasts Bacon and Shakespeare as “such polar temperamental differences” that not even a “literary partnership” (169) would have been viable. He addresses Greene’s notorious mention of “Shakescene,” which even if referring to Shakspeare only shows contempt (180). Looney already recognized that Ben Jonson was “the strongest plank in the Stratfordian platform” (42) and deconstructs Jonson’s posthumous testimony (180): “Was the comradeship a reality or a much belated pretense?” (247); did he cooperate with Shakspeare, or was he scheming with those concealing the true author (288)? Jonson, shows Looney, said “too much to avoid the implication of warm friendship, too little to justify it” (251).

Looney long ago addressed the mysterious 1609 publication of the *Sonnets* (197), and dismantled the myth about the First Folio: for example, no publishers could get hold of manuscripts, but two actors could (198)? All in all, while asserting that “Circumstantial evidence cannot accumulate forever without at some point issuing in proof” (62; cf. 228), Looney provided the mountain of it that should have been more than adequate to have changed literary history’s verdict.

As to the perennial assertion trotted out when the Stratfordians have lost on every other point of debate, one recently voiced by David Tennant on television that it doesn’t matter who wrote the plays, Looney already countered years ago: “Doubtless ‘The play’s the thing’; but these, I am convinced, will never be fully understood apart from the personality of the man who has left a permanent record and monument of himself in the great ‘Shakespeare’ dramas” (11). Looney captured what I believe is the experience all Oxfordians have had: “We are convinced that once the readers of ‘Shakespeare’ have

the career and personality of the Earl of Oxford in their minds, they will find our great masterpieces pulsating with a new and living interest" (75).

His most ingenious and effective expression of the Oxfordian perspective is the way Looney synthesizes the problematic, simultaneous phenomena in literary history: Oxford, the "‘best for comedy’...is the only dramatist mentioned by any of these authorities no trace of whose plays can be found. The two outstanding mysteries of Elizabethan drama are, in fact, the Oxford mystery and the Shakespeare mystery; and these, as we see, fit into and explain one another" (200-201; cf. 89). Looney continued crafting this powerful expression of his thesis, "convinced that all, and more than all, the facts necessary for the solution of the Shakespeare problem, both on its negative and its positive side, are already known" (210). Soon he grew eloquent in his concision: "Oxford is a first-class poet, nearly the whole of whose poems are missing; ‘Shakespeare’s poems are first-class verses whose author is missing’" (221). "What, then, are the probabilities that Oxford is the missing author of the ‘Shakespeare’ plays; that the ‘Shakespeare’ plays are Oxford’s ‘lost’ dramas; that the two outstanding mysteries of Elizabethan drama have a common solution?" (218).

As I indicate, it is to me both outrageous and discouraging that Looney alone did not accomplish what so many of us are still striving for, and yet, he maintained hope and conveys it in re-encouraging words: "The future,...I am confident, is ours. Only let us have the matter properly examined by men who are more anxious for truth than for the defense of their own over-confident past dogmatism" (51-52; cf. 100).

We can also close with one more iteration of what I consider Looney’s best summation, and his final words of encouragement:

we possess a set of invaluable dramas, a literature in itself, quite divorced from its producer: plays without their author.... [Meanwhile,] there lived and labored strenuously, if somewhat secretly,...one of the greatest dramatic geniuses known amongst men, divorced for centuries afterwards from his writings: an author without his plays.

[R]esearch workers...can therefore set themselves no more honorable task than to draw him from his obscurity and reunite him with his creations in the mind and affections of mankind (294-295).

We soon-to-be centennials can persist, energized by these and many other until-now lost words of J. Thomas Looney, rediscovered and brought before us by James Warren.

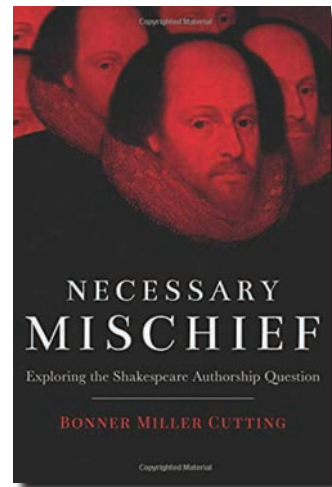
Necessary Mischief: Exploring the Shakespeare Authorship Question

Reviewed by Michael Dudley

Necessary Mischief: Exploring the Shakespeare Authorship Question.
By Bonner Miller Cutting. Minos Publishing, 2018, 270 pages, (paperback \$12).

Read the dust jacket of almost any “biography” of Shakespeare and one quickly realizes that it is a convention—almost to the point of cliché—for such books to claim they will “place the author within the context of his times.” For example, Katherine Duncan-Jones’ *Ungentle Shakespeare* (2001) aims to “replace the image of the lonely genius with one of Shakespeare as deeply involved, even enmired, in the geographical, social and literary context of his time,” while Dennis Kay’s *William Shakespeare: His Life and Times* (1995) “demonstrates that an appreciation of the extraordinary genius of Shakespeare can only be enriched and deepened by an awareness of his life and career in the context of his times.”

More recently, Lois Potter’s *The Life of William Shakespeare: A Critical Biography* (2012) was described as a “wide-ranging exploration of Shakespeare’s life and works focusing on often neglected literary and historical contexts.” A necessary conceit, of course: the paucity of relevant historical records forces the would-be biographer to pad out their word count with descriptions of contemporary London, Elizabethan politics and stagecraft in the place of actual biographical information. That this approach is generally billed as somehow novel is all the more remarkable.



With *Necessary Mischief*, Bonner Miller Cutting puts all such claims to shame by actually placing key biographical aspects of both Oxford and William Shakspeare into their relevant historical contexts, and in so doing masterfully undermines the orthodox mythology. From the Stratfordian's epically disappointing will to contemporary political censorship to the system of wardship to Oxford's £1000 Royal annuity, Cutting brilliantly exposes the fatal inadequacies of the traditional case and the disingenuousness of most conventional Shakespeare biography and scholarship.

Cutting is an independent scholar, having published extensively in peer-reviewed journals and presented at numerous conferences and events. Indeed, all of the chapters in *Mischief* were previously printed in *Brief Chronicles*, *The Oxfordian*, and *Shakespeare Matters* as well as Shahan's and Waugh's 2013 book, *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?*. Nevertheless, gathering them together in this handsome trade paperback from Minos Publishing rewards the reader not only by showcasing Cutting's meticulous scholarship but demonstrating how incredibly important—when done properly—historical context is to the Shakespeare authorship question, rather than as filler in a work of largely fictive biography.

The book and its constitutive chapters are well-organized. The progression of topics—from the shibboleths of Stratfordianism to the life and legacy of Edward de Vere—is logical and satisfying, given the distinct provenance of each chapter. In the introduction, Cutting offers a narrative of her research journey; and since each chapter was a separate and original work of research, they are methodically constructed with extensive explanatory notes. The book includes two appendices: the complete text of Shakspeare's Last Will and Testament, and the titles of the books displayed in the Appleby Triptych featuring Lady Anne Clifford (the subject of Chapter 8).

Her first chapter, "A Contest of Wills" is a response to James Shapiro's 2010 book, *Contested Will*. Cutting's purpose here isn't so much to rebut Shapiro's arguments as to illustrate the fatuousness of most critical reviews of the book, as well as to reiterate the strength of J.T. Looney's methodology, which Shapiro attempted unsuccessfully to throw into ill repute.

Chapter 2, "Shakespeare's Will Considered too Curiously" is where the strength of Cutting's scholarship truly shines. Where orthodox scholars have tried all kinds of rhetorical sleights-of-hand to dismiss the glaring lacunae in Shakspeare's will, Cutting instead spent months examining approximately 3,000 wills prepared by or for Elizabethan gentlemen. She finds that, had Shakspeare indeed been the highly educated and well-read author of the *Works*, his will would have more likely resembled the ones she found from

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educated men who made explicit provisions for their books as well as the necessary equipment and furniture to support a literate life, i.e., desks and bookshelves.

Chapter 3, “Alas, Poor Anne: The Second-Best Bed in Historical Context” takes on the most notorious aspect of the will, Shakspeare’s apparent disregard for his wife. Again, where orthodox scholars have undermined their intellectual reputation to excuse or even put a positive spin on the passage bestowing Anne his “second best bed,” Cutting examines conventional bequests and the laws of property and dower rights—in an age when women had no rights to any property whatsoever—to demonstrate that William of Stratford made no provisions for his wife to ensure her survival. While this argument does not support claims of authorship per se, it still significantly deflates the standard mythology and clarifies the nature of Shakspeare’s marriage to Anne Hathaway.

Next, Cutting researches one of the more vexing questions in Shakespeare scholarship: how did the author get away with depictions that routinely sent other writers to prison or the torture chamber? In Chapter 4, “Let the Punishment Fit the Crime,” she examines the legal practices of censorship in Elizabethan England, and the extent to which other authors such as Marlowe, Kyd and Nash were accused of heresy or sedition. Shakespeare stands out among his peers for coming under absolutely no scrutiny for his unflattering depiction of court figures on stage, such as the Cecils in *Hamlet* and Sir Philip Sidney in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and for a performance of *Richard II* used to foment public support for the Essex Rebellion—a singular fact that should have long since directed mainstream scholars to identify an alternative author.

Chapter 5, “Evermore in Subjection,” is perhaps the purest expression of Cutting’s approach, in that it does not concern Shakespeare at all but rather presents a fascinating and disturbing history of the feudal and fundamentally corrupt institution of wardship in Tudor England. Under the system, sons of the nobility who were orphaned before their majority became wards of the Monarch, who would not only assume control of the lands and property the son would inherit, but direct the young man’s marriage as well. Through the Court of Wards, a system of profiteering arose in which these wardships would be auctioned off, representing a bizarre state of affairs in which the aristocracy exploited members of its own class. Sir William Cecil became Master of the Court of Wards in 1561, where he would make himself fabulously wealthy for the next thirty-seven years, after which Queen Elizabeth would appoint his son Robert to the post, giving the Cecil family control of the system for half a century. The 12-year old Edward de Vere would, of course, become one of Burghley’s first wards, a fact raised only in the final sentence of the chapter.

Unfortunately, Chapter 6, “What’s Past is Prologue: The Consequences of the 17th Earl of Oxford’s Wardship,” isn’t a very satisfying follow up. Instead of recounting Oxford’s wardship and its impacts throughout his life, it is comprised of two halves that serve distinctly different purposes: the first speculates briefly about how Oxford’s wardship might have motivated him to write the canon, while the second half traces the development and erection of the Westminster church monument in 1741 at the direction of a descendent of his guardian, William Cecil. It is not entirely clear on its own terms how the statue constitutes a consequence of Oxford’s wardship as such. It is in disconnects like this where the book’s origin in reprinting papers from journals becomes something of a shortcoming.

Chapter 7, “A Sufficient Warrant,” examines Oxford’s £1000 annuity, initiated by Queen Elizabeth in 1586 and renewed by King James in 1603 until Oxford’s death the following year. Orthodox critics have tried for decades to dismiss this 18-year grant (worth almost \$18,000,000 in today’s currency) as merely an act of ill-advised generosity towards an extravagant, wasted earl unable to finance his own upkeep so as to maintain appearances. However, Cutting looks at other established ways Queen Elizabeth might have accomplished this (if this indeed had been her goal), and finds there were many, such as assigning him various government offices, land grants or monopolies on trade. Elizabeth did, in fact, allow him to marry the wealthy heiress Elizabeth Trentham, which also should have sufficed. An examination of other contemporary warrants shows that, once more, Oxford was involved in something unique and secret.

Cutting then moves in Chapter 8 from matters more traditionally associated with Oxford’s authorship to consider a painting made nearly half a century after Oxford’s death. In “Lady Anne’s Missing First Folio,” Cutting examines the compelling fact that the *Appleby Triptych* depicting Lady Anne Clifford and family at three stages of her life—and 50 of her favorite books—does not include a copy of the First Folio. This is especially odd not just because it would have been a prized volume in any library of the time, but that Clifford was the second wife of Philip Herbert, 4th Earl of Pembroke—previously married to Oxford’s daughter Susan, who had passed away in 1629—and one of the “incomparable paire of brethren” to whom the First Folio was dedicated. Once more, the context of the times holds the likely answer: during the English Civil War (1642-1651) when the painting was composed, the aristocracy were threatened along with the monarchy, and those such as Lady Anne who were knowledgeable about the Shakespeare enterprise knew that the plays were politically problematic, as they depicted the Queen and aristocrats in her Court. Cutting reasons that a political calculus on Lady Anne’s part led her to believe it would be wiser to leave the First Folio out of her painting and hope that posterity would forget about its existence.

Chapter 9 also considers the mystery behind another work of art purported to depict Lady Anne Clifford. Yet for Cutting, this is a case of “A Countess Transformed”: that the painting by Van Dyck of the Pembroke family composed in 1740 actually depicts Lady Susan Vere, a supposition also shared by some art historians as well as early antiquarians and art catalogers. Yet, Cutting shows that a shift in opinion took place during the 19th and 20th Centuries, in which the figure is assumed to be Lady Clifford. By comparing other portraits of the respective ladies and in consideration of the ethereal treatment of the figure—who is not attired in contemporary dress consistent with the other sitters—Cutting believes that Lady Susan Vere is here portrayed posthumously. Yet Cutting is not done: as is her method, she then turns to other existing examples of portraiture from the era depicting different sitters from across time—or the phenomenon of chronological incongruity—and finds that it is not uncommon. Finally, she speculates (as have others) that the attempted erasure of Susan Vere from the records was a deliberate act by Pembroke’s descendants, again owing to the politically problematic connections with Oxford/Shakespeare.

In the final chapter, “She Will Not be a Mother,” Cutting tackles the most contentious debate among the current generation of Oxfordians, the “Seymour Prince Tudor theory,” which holds that Oxford was the illegitimate son of a teenaged Elizabeth Tudor and Thomas Seymour, Lord High Admiral of England. An examination of the records convinces her that the young princess (who was out of the public eye for months) could well have become pregnant and delivered a child in 1548, but that dates and circumstances make it highly unlikely that this child would have been Edward de Vere.

The strength of Cutting’s collection—and it is a considerable one—is that it shows the extent to which the Shakespeare authorship question is an historiographic, rather than strictly literary, matter: that the unfathomable persistence of the Stratford mythology is owed to a culture of narrow, circular and self-referential inquiry by literary scholars rather than a genuine engagement with the historical record.

At the same time, the book does suffer somewhat for being a collection rather than a monograph. There is—as would be expected—a not entirely coherent approach to the covered topics, and chapters that would under monographic conditions naturally build upon or refer to previous or related ones don’t do so sufficiently—the two wardship and Lady Clifford chapters being prime examples. More rigorous editing might have worked to integrate these disparate parts together more seamlessly.

The book’s title also bears closer examination, for its meaning is not explicitly stated or referred to anywhere in the text apart from the prefatory pages,

where it is taken from one of Edward de Vere's letters in which he describes the selling of his lands to fund his travels in Italy as "necessary mischief." Our contemporary colloquial sense of *mischief* lends it an almost endearing air even as it describes improper activities. Legally, of course, it denotes far more grave actions leading to harm to person or property. In Shakespeare's works, however, we read of mischief in association with acts of war and violence, something unfortunate and arising from ill intentions: the Earl of Warwick in *1 Henry VI* warns Winchester against further action by pointing out "what mischief and what murder too hath been enacted through [his] enmity" [III, 1]. Most notably, Lady Macbeth summons the "spirits who tend on mortal thoughts" to "take [her] milk for gall" as they "wait on nature's mischief" (I, 5). With this choice of title Cutting seems to be undertaking something darker than her subtitle—"Exploring the Shakespeare Authorship Question"—suggests. Does she think her scholarly interventions constitute an act of violence against the edifice of orthodoxy, something regrettable but necessary?

If so, then we can definitely declare "mischief managed." Cutting's keen scholarship demonstrates that, when we genuinely and critically examine the "context of the times," two corresponding things become patently obvious: the lackluster documented life of William Shakspeare is so contrary to what is known of genuine men of letters of the age that it is utterly impossible to mistake it for such; and that the place of Edward de Vere in Elizabethan society and politics was so extraordinary—indeed, unique—that his authorship of the canon becomes the only logical explanation.

Early Shakespeare

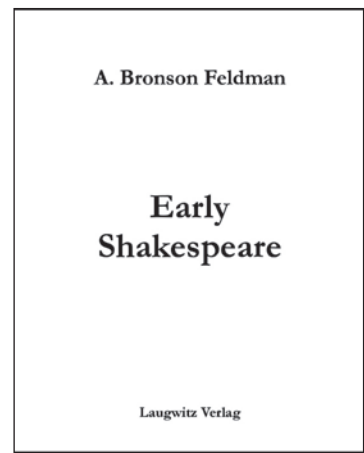
Reviewed by Richard M. Waugaman and
Elisabeth P. Waugaman

Early Shakespeare. By Bronson Feldman. Edited by Warren Hope. Buchholz, Germany: Laugwitz Verlag, 2019. 573 pages. (Kindle Edition \$7.99).
(Printed copies can be ordered via amazon.de or by sending a direct order to the publisher (verlag@laugwitz.de) with payment via PayPal.)

Abraham Bronson Feldman (1914-1982) was fortunate in his friends for they ensured his 1977 mimeographed book, *Hamlet Himself*, was finally published in 2010. Feldman planned to publish the present book in 1982—a quarter of it was in galley proofs—but his death that year prevented him from doing so. We are therefore indebted to Warren Hope for seeing this book to publication, and to Dr. Uwe Laugwitz and his publishing firm for making it available.

Any review of the book has to bear in mind that not only was Feldman unable to revise the manuscript, but his editor had no authorial feedback as to how to revise it, leading to much repetitiousness. Like Turkey's Meander River, Feldman wanders—from one fascinating idea to another. Feldman sometimes lapses into a flippant tone in describing traditional scholars and the merchant Shakspeare, which detracts from his invaluable book. Descending to tit for tat, rather than relying on the evidence, is not a good strategy in academics.

Feldman lets well-researched historical events guide his narration. This historical lens provides more information than readers interested primarily in the plays will need. The sheer volume of historical information Feldman refers to is amazing, often based on his archival investigations. But it can



sometimes overwhelm the reader, especially considering that he wrote this book before most of these historical sources were readily available. Because Feldman lets history be his guide in his commentary on the plays, the reader is presented with a vast amount of history that Feldman eventually connects with the plays, so that the plays become secondary to the historical details. If Feldman wrote his book primarily for historians who specialize in the topics he covers, there would be no problem. But if he wrote it for general readers, it is another matter. He seemed to write primarily for fellow Oxfordians, who do not need to be convinced that Oxford wrote Shakespeare. Orthodox scholars should therefore begin with other books, such as those by Mark Anderson, Joseph Sobran, and Richard Whalen. If Feldman had let the plays be his guide, filling in the history as needed rather than vice versa, a better balance between the two would have been maintained.

Feldman earned his Ph.D. in Literature from the University of Pennsylvania, with a dissertation on Tudor drama. Feldman makes many cogent observations about Oxford's father-in-law, Lord Burghley; one of Feldman's teachers wrote a biography of Burghley. After his later training as a clinical psychoanalyst, Feldman combined an academic career with practicing psychoanalysis. He published at least eight articles on Shakespeare in psychoanalytic journals, and a total of roughly 100 articles in all. To our knowledge, he was the first psychoanalyst to take seriously Freud's suggestion that we re-examine Shakespeare's works with the knowledge that they were written by Oxford. That is just what he does with Shakespeare's first ten plays in the present book (hence the title). For example, he plausibly speculates that Oxford "conducted himself as if he moved perpetually before a mirror or a proscenium" (174), always ready to transmute his life into art. He seems put off by Oxford's gargantuan narcissism, which is understandable.

Reviewing Feldman's 1959 book *The Unconscious in History* for *The Psychoanalytic Review*,¹ Edmund Weil said "Dr. Feldman is a genuine liberal with great erudition in the fields of history, philology, political economy, and psychoanalysis [not to mention Shakespeare]" (126). Weil understates, if anything, Feldman's prodigious scholarship in an unusually wide variety of fields. As a result, Feldman can make connections that would elude others. For example, he helps illuminate Oxford's "conversation" with the many classical sources of his early plays.

Although Feldman became an Oxfordian at age 18, and his openly Oxfordian articles date back as early as 1947, he had to suppress his heretical authorship opinion to get some of his work published in mainstream journals. Unfortunately, this is a familiar story. For example, B.M. Ward's publisher would not allow him to voice his opinion that Oxford wrote Shakespeare in his biography

of Oxford in 1928. Some of us still publish in mainstream journals under the implicit or explicit understanding that we will censor our authorship views.

How did these restrictions affect Feldman's writings? In his first chapter, he says "I intend to steer clear of questions of biography" (12). He thus misses an opportunity to link a passage he quotes from *Comedy of Errors* with a 1576 letter from Oxford to Burghley. Erotes says "He that commands me to *mine own content*/ Commends me to the thing I cannot get" (I.2.33-34). In Oxford's angry 1576 letter, he notoriously stated, "For always I have, and will still, prefer *mine own content* before others'..." That phrase will not appear in EEBO until 1588—yet another example of a striking parallel between Oxford's letters and Shakespeare's works.² Chapter 2 is openly Oxfordian and speculates that Oxford wrote "The History of Error," performed at court in 1577. This chapter offers fascinating parallels between details of the plot and Oxford's life experiences. As convincing as many of Feldman's surmises are here, he mistakes some of his speculations for facts—e.g., "Beyond question, he failed" (68). That is, Oxford failed to have the "adultery of his dreams" in Venice, and secretly converted to Catholicism out of guilt, since the woman he had sex with stood for his mother. Really? Throughout the book, Feldman alternates between such grating false certainty and more modestly convincing surmises.

Sometimes it is a bit confusing for an Oxfordian reader, not knowing if Feldman is truly linking the life of William Shakspeare with a given play, or if he is cleverly speaking of Shakspeare in a sort of code that really refers to Oxford (e.g., "after the unjust divorce of his wife," 48). Our own experience is that some of our thinking about links with Oxford becomes blunted when we are not allowed to express such thoughts in print.

And what of Feldman's psychoanalytic perspective? What does it contribute to our understanding of Oxford's works? More than anything else, it restores the inherent psychoanalytic interest in the particular life story that lies behind given works of literature. This should be a no-brainer for psychoanalysts, but our profession has been remarkably submissive to "authority" in accepting the traditional author, despite the glaring inconsistencies between his documented life and the Shakespeare canon. Beyond this fundamentally vital use of a psychoanalytic perspective, Feldman's particular analytic theories as they are applied to the works will appeal to some readers more than to others. He was a product of his time, when analysts tended to make authoritative pronouncements about unconscious meanings, claims that today may seem too theory-driven, rather than evidence-driven (e.g., "My replies to these problems, to which our analysis *inevitably* leads..." [46; our emphasis]). Yet Feldman makes plausible formulations when he speculates about ways in

which Oxford used his plays to help acknowledge and try to understand his personal—and public—foibles.

Feldman received his analytic training from Theodore Reik, a brilliant, intuitive follower of Freud (his 1948 book, *Listening with the Third Ear*, remains popular). Reik himself had a strong interest in literature—his psychology Ph.D. dissertation was on Flaubert, and his 1952 book *The Secret Self* consisted of literary criticism of Shakespeare and other writers. Feldman departs from his Reik in using academically inflected jargon, which can be off-putting (e.g., “the paternal ganglion of his superego,” 47; “paternal procreant,” 300; “egolatry,” 308; “manustrupation,” 358; “attempted to sever her virgin zone,” 372; “collegiate craniums,” (for Stratfordian scholars, repeatedly). Reik could use his patients’ reactions to his intuitive interpretations to test their validity; Feldman had no such checks on his intuitions about Shakespeare.

I think of an eloquent warning offered in 1959 by Gordon R. Smith of Penn State’s English department. He prophetically predicted the declining prestige of psychoanalytic studies of literature: “But of psychoanalytic approaches to literature in general, I’d like to emphasize that analysis is an exceedingly sharp knife: like a scalpel in the hands of an anatomist, it can reveal concealed structure or destroy it, as the user pays heed to his material or ignores it and hacks away. The latter kind of analysis is not an interdisciplinary contribution: *it’s a raid into foreign territory which may only become more hostile to psychoanalysis the oftener such raids occur*” (227-28; emphasis added).³

Feldman cites Eva Turner Clark as often as he cites Looney, usually in agreement. But when his opinion differs from hers, he claims that “she sadly erred” (374 and elsewhere), rather than admit more humbly that their opinions differ. We were pleased that he cites the anonymous poem, “A Letter written by a young gentlewoman” (215). He discovered that this poem was about Oxford’s trip to Italy, and his wife’s reactions to it. However, he fails to consider the possibility that the poem was written by Oxford himself (cf. Waugaman, 2015).⁴ There are other anonymous or possibly allonymous works that he mentions, without considering the possibility that they may have been written by “early” Oxford (e.g., *The Arte of English Poesie*; the “Golding” translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*; the commentaries of “E.K.” in Spenser’s *The Shepherd’s Calendar*).

Feldman not only relates characters in the play to actual historical figures, but also provides, at times, startling analysis of subliminal messages the plays present in an era of extreme censorship. In the King of Navarre’s search for scholarship as opposed to valor in *Loves Labors Lost*, Feldman sees one of the earliest English endeavors “for the principles of freedom from both church and state” (336). Feldman continues to trace the theme of secrecy

and lying throughout the play, thus highlighting the play's subversive dimension: the battle against suppression (377-378).

Feldman also masterfully describes the relationship of various authors to Oxford and gives credit to French academics, which is rarely done in Shakespeare studies. He notes that the French scholar Albert Feuillerat was among the first to observe the important literary influence of Oxford's literary circle on John Lyly (351) as well as noting multiple links with Philip Sidney. Feldman also refers to the vast erudition of Abel Lefranc's study of Shakespeare's plays.

In discussing Berowne, Feldman artfully moves from the historical French character to the English character he alludes to between the lines—i.e., Oxford. Feldman further notes that the French princess has qualities that bring to mind Queen Elizabeth herself, so that the play reflects not only what is happening in the French court, but also what is happening in the Elizabethan court—a mirroring that Shakespeare employs throughout his plays because the history, culture, and language of the two countries are so intertwined, in an ongoing love-hate relationship that continues to this very day. Feldman introduced us to wonderful comments by Walter Pater about “something of self-portraiture” in some of Shakespeare's characters,” with Berowne in *LLL* being “perhaps the most striking of this group” (361). He cites a similar comment by Coleridge.

Feldman regrets our relative neglect of the connections between music and Shakespeare. He quotes John Farmer's moving dedication of his 1599 madrigal collection to Oxford. I wish Feldman could have known that Farmer's use of the word “outstrip[ped]” in this dedication was one of the first uses of the word in EEBO; the very first was in the 1567 translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that some of us believe is the work of Oxford.

Despite a plethora of historical information that can at times overwhelm the subject matter of the plays and a somewhat eccentric tone, Bronson Feldman's *Early Shakespeare* is an invaluable addition to the study of Shakespeare's plays and understanding their historical and literary context. Oxfordians will be in Warren Hope's debt for this valuable resource.

Endnotes

1. *The Psychoanalytic Review*. 47A:1:126–127, 1960.
2. William Plumer Fowler noted the parallel, but he failed to recognize its full significance, since he lacked access to EEBO.
3. “Shakespeare and Freudian Interpretations,” *American Imago* 16:3, 225–229.
4. Richard M. Waugaman, “A 1578 Poem about de Vere’s Trip to Italy,” *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* 51:2. 1, 27–32.



Short Book Reviews

Hamlet, an Oxfordian Critical Edition

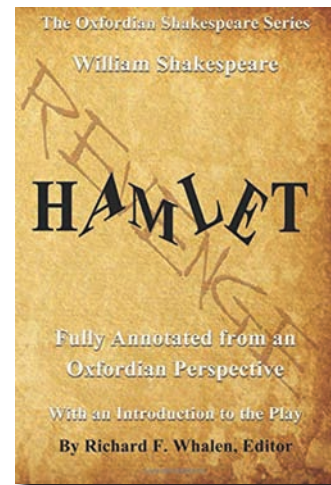
Reviewed by Gary Goldstein

Hamlet, an Oxfordian Critical Edition. Editor: Richard Whalen, Breezeway Books, 2018, (Paperback, 342 pages, \$14.99, Kindle \$5.99)

Richard Whalen's critical edition of *Hamlet*, assisted by Professor Emeritus of English Jack Shuttleworth (Brigadier, ret., USAF), attempts to provide dramaturgs, directors and actors with an Oxfordian perspective of the greatest of Shakespeare's plays, with extensive annotations efficiently conveyed by the editor. Two examples will illustrate:

Falling out at tennis (II.i.59).

Quarreling about tennis, a sport of the aristocracy. Oxford confronted Sir Philip Sidney in September 1579 at the royal tennis court in Queen Elizabeth's palace, Whitehall, and they quarreled over who had priority to use the court. The dispute, which included insults, later went all the way to the queen, who noted that the Earl of Oxford outranked Sidney. Standard editions of *Hamlet* make no reference to Polonius' unusual reference to court tennis and the



quarrel, which a court audience might be expected to recognize and appreciate, but not something Shakspeare would have known about.

But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading. (II.ii.168).

No doubt a book, which traditional scholarship has long suggested is meant to be *Cardanus Comforte* (1573), which had a strong influence on *Hamlet's* author. What they never say is that it was dedicated to Oxford, who contributed a prefatory letter to the translator and a poem to the reader, and who commissioned publication of the book.

The most compelling contribution in this edition is the essay by Whalen on “Hamlet’s Sources and Influences,” in particular the evidence that Oxford was the likely (teenage) author of the play, *Horestes*, published in 1567 by one John Pickeryng and performed at Elizabeth’s Court that same year. Moreover, Whalen demonstrates that the dramatic arc that connects *Horestes* with the plays *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet* does so in a way that reveals Shakespeare’s evolutionary development as an artist.

In addition to the essay on Hamlet’s sources, Whalen summarizes the published research of astrophysicist Peter Usher of Penn State University regarding the many references to astronomy in the play. Finally, the edition includes an Introduction to the play along with a select and annotated Bibliography.

In his annotations, Whalen sometimes fails to include available evidence that would clinch his argument. For example, in II.ii.3 (see page 112), Whalen writes that, “In three letters to Burghley, he [Oxford] protested against Burghley’s use of informers.” Yet Whalen fails to quote from even one letter to prove his assertion. Similarly, he refers to the introduction in 1576 by scientist Thomas Digges of the concept of infinite space but does not quote the original text itself to show how Shakespeare adapted Digges’ idea in his play. He also tends to generalize in his descriptions, such as writing that Robert Cecil was Elizabeth’s “chief minister” instead of being a member of her Privy Council and Secretary of State since 1597.

Hopefully, an academic or commercial theater will decide to utilize this edition in order to recreate Shakespeare’s original vision of what is the greatest tragedy in the English language.

This is the fourth annotated edition of the major tragedies under Whalen’s editorial direction, the previous three being *Macbeth* (Whalen) and *Othello* (play editor Ren Draya) and *Anthony and Cleopatra* (play editor Michael Delahoyde). Plans call for critical editions of *The Tempest*, *Henry the Fifth* and *Love’s Labor’s Lost*.

Hamlet's Elsinore Revisited (2nd edition)

Reviewed by Gary Goldstein

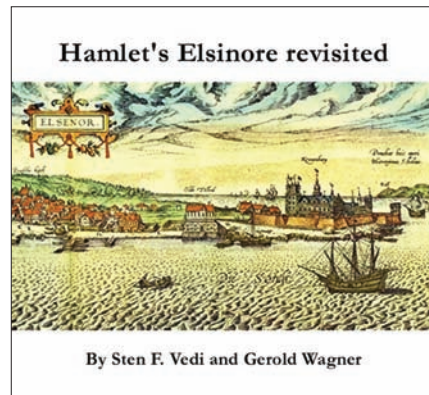
Hamlet's Elsinore Revisited (2nd edition). By Sten F. Vedi and Gerold Wagner. Verlag Langwitz, 2018 (Kindle \$4.00, 160 pages).

The latest book about *Hamlet* offers new information about the likely contemporary model for Polonius besides the Elizabethan politician, William Cecil, and thus adds to our knowledge about Shakespeare's technique of using multiple sources to create his dramatic characters.

As for the play itself, the authors state upfront that, "There appear to be two messages in *Hamlet*, first to show what would have become of a gifted prince who was the heir to the throne, second that also a prince or young aristocrat should be allowed to perform on a public stage without being ostracized for it."

The value of the book is their discovery linking the character Polonius in *Hamlet* and an actual gentleman of Poland named Henrik Ramel (1550-1610), Chief Secretary of the German Chancellery with Frederick II of Denmark, first revealed in Lord Willoughby's report to the Queen from his Embassy to Denmark in 1582 (*A Brief Narration of My Lord Willoughby's Embassy into Denmark 1582 Written by His Own Hand*). Lord Willoughby, of course, was Peregrine Bertie, brother-in-law of Edward de Vere. Thus, the Earl of Oxford likely had access to the details of this diplomatic mission and of the major figures at the Danish Court, including the minister in charge of foreign affairs for the Danish king.

Indeed, Sir Thomas Bodley in 1584, as emissary to the Danish Court, would later write that, "Ramelius was a man of good understanding, learned and



well affected.” In 1586 the Danish king would send Ramel to England as head of a diplomatic mission, and he is described in Holinshed’s *Chronicles* as “A gentleman ... of goodly personage, somewhat corpulent and of sanguine complexion: very eloquent likewise and learned...” More to the point, Ramel was known as “Polonius” and thus gave Oxford the opportunity to point to a character outside English nobility in case anyone should take offense at the satire of William Cecil, his father-in-law and the Lord Great Treasurer.

The book also offers a rich visual portfolio of color maps and engravings of contemporary Denmark and Kronberg Castle, thus immersing readers into the environment of the Elizabethan era in a multiplicity of ways.

Shakespeare Identified— Centennial Anniversary Edition

Reviewed by Warren Hope

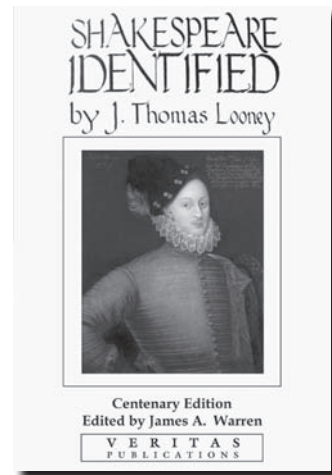
Shakespeare Identified—Centennial Anniversary Edition.

*By J. Thomas Looney, Editor: James Warren, Veritas Publications, 2019,
(Paperback, 516 pages, \$23.00).*

No matter what view of the subject one takes, it is clear that Looney's book revolutionized the study of Shakespeare. He actually set out to determine and show just what is meant by the adjective "Shakespearean." As a result, he has shown that the outlook of the poet and playwright comes from the top of the society and culture of his time, that he was an innovator and influence on others rather than a plagiarist and patcher of the work of others, and he has established that the writer is marked by an epigrammatic style. What this result should have caused is a reevaluation and rewriting of the history of the literature of the English Renaissance.

People who read this book with an open mind—whether they are convinced by Looney's luminous argument or not—will never be able to think of Shakespeare in the same way again. Now that Looney's work is reaching its hundredth anniversary, it is high time for his book to circulate widely and finally reach a mass of open-minded readers.

James Warren has made this a beautiful, thoughtful edition and deserves a great deal of credit. This particular edition has been reset in new typography for enhanced legibility, has added footnotes, references and a Bibliography, plus an editor's Introduction. A superb addition to the library of theater professionals and Shakespeare aficionados. If the Oxford theory is unfamiliar to you, take Hamlet's advice and "as a stranger give it welcome."



Shakespearian Fantasias

Reviewed by Warren Hope

Shakespearian Fantasias: Adventures in the Fourth Dimension. By Esther Singleton, Veritas Publications, 2019, (Paperback, 280 pages, \$14.00).

Esther Singleton's *Shakespearian Fantasias* reminds us that, as recently as the first half of the last century, literature was an integral part of life rather than an esoteric specialty kept alive by an academic support system. She was able to make her way in the world as a writer—a journalist and an author of books who was capable of the highest degree of scholarship while remaining readable and relatively popular. What motivated her seems to be a love of Shakespeare's works—reportedly she could recite whole sections of the plays and sonnets at will.

Her lifelong devotion to Shakespeare took a twist about 1924 when she became one of the first Americans to become convinced by J. Thomas Looney's arguments in his *Shakespeare Identified* (1920) that Edward de Vere, the seventeenth earl of Oxford, was the true author behind the pen name William Shakespeare. Singleton's way of absorbing this change was to realize how it increased her appreciation for and understanding of Shakespeare's work.



It was that realization and the gratitude it caused in her that appears as the impulse behind this book. She retells in clear and charming prose excerpts from some of the plays but works into her retellings not only facts of the Earl of Oxford's life but also poems by Oxford. The result is not an argument or an attempt to persuade, but rather a literary demonstration that Oxford's life fits Shakespeare's work the way a hand fits a glove. Anyone interested in Shakespeare is indebted to editor James Warren for making this pleasant and attractive book available once again after its initial private publication in 1928.

Movie Review





Anthony Hopkins in King Lear

Reviewed by Charles Boyle

King Lear. BBC-TV (2018), 1:55 hours. Prime Video from Amazon.

King Lear continues to attract modern interpreters: the latest movie version of *King Lear*, starring Anthony Hopkins in the title role, was produced and broadcast by the BBC in 2018 and is available as a Prime Video from Amazon.

Director Richard Eyre, who also provided the screenplay, has edited it down to just under two hours, but that's only one of the problems with this production. Such severe editing itself leads to problems of trading off a tightening of the plot lines, especially the parallel stories of Lear and his daughters and Gloucester and his sons, that is, figurative blindness vs. literal blindness, etc. It also comes at the expense of individual characters, especially the Fool, for the Fool's lines are cut to a bare minimum. When added to the fact that he disappears by the middle of the play, he winds up being there, yet not being there. Moreover, he is played by Karl Johnson as an old man, not a youth, and certainly not as Lear's alter-ego. In his scenes he looks like someone who has wandered into the wrong room. Of course, all the humor that surrounds his exchanges with Lear has vanished. It reminded



me of Laurence Olivier's decision to cut Rosencrantz and Guildenstern from his staging of *Hamlet*; yes, the basic plot is not affected much, but much is lost.

Still, *King Lear* is all about Lear, the role of a lifetime. So, what do we get from Anthony Hopkins, one of the best actors of his generation? In his illustrious career he has played Lear, also played Sir in *The Dresser* (about an actor who plays Lear), and was the star twenty years ago in what many consider one of the better adaptations of Shakespeare to film, Julie Taymor's *Titus*. On the DVD commentary for *Titus*, Hopkins shared his thoughts on Shakespeare and stage acting. He doesn't much like either, which is why he announced his retirement from the stage in 1989, shortly after playing Lear. In an interview with *The New York Times* (9/26/2018) he said:

I think there was and still is probably something in me that balked against the dark "seriousness" of everything to do with acting.... A problem of my own creation was a feeling of alienation, not being up to the mark, not educated—all that mishmash of insecurity.

It was that experience that helped drive him to his decision to retire from the stage—and from Shakespeare. He found film much more enjoyable. Interestingly, it was his appearance in a 2015 television production of *The Dresser* that led him back to playing Lear, and also had him working with Eyre, who eventually convinced him to do this *King Lear*.

Yet his performance here made me think he still hasn't warmed up, decades later, to either Shakespeare or the stage. While many major critics raved over this production of *King Lear* and Hopkins, I was left cold. One reviewer on the IMDb website summed it up perfectly: "Hopkins performance has two gears—scenery chewing and shouty scenery chewing." It is a one note performance and not a very good note. At times I couldn't help thinking he was falling back on Hannibal Lecter and Titus Andronicus.

The performances around him are, in my estimation, also not very good. Both Emma Thompson as Goneril and Emily Watson as Regan, two very good actresses, give one note performances also. These two women are supposed to be princesses, real princesses, in regal gowns. In this production, from the beginning, they look as if they were a couple of housewives. The depths into which these people are soon to fall don't truly resonate if there are no heights from which to fall.

Charles Boyle is an actor, writer and independent researcher based in Boston. He is author of *Another Hamlet: Leslie Howard (2013)*, has published articles and reviews on the *Shakespeare Authorship Question* in *The Elizabethan Review*, *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, and *Shakespeare Matters*, and has presented at the annual conference of the *Shakespeare Association of America*.

Finally, then, we have Cordelia, played by Florence Pugh, the character whose actions drive the whole play. One of the most interesting things I derived from this production was Lear's famous line, cradling the dead Cordelia: "My poor fool is hanged." Cordelia is shown with a rope around her neck, clearly harkening back to the line from Lear earlier that he came upon rebels hanging her, tried to save her, but failed. So, this production has chosen to make it crystal clear that Cordelia is the hung fool.

This is of some note since many critics over the years have considered that the "hung" fool is in fact The Fool, even that the lines "my poor fool is hanged" can be taken as a self-reference in which Lear is acknowledging that he (also a fool) has learned a lesson. In any event, for the line to recall The Fool, we would need a production that made much more of The Fool than this one did. So the line is spoken but doesn't resonate at all. Not to mention that the whole final scene is, in my opinion, botched. First Goneril's and Regan's bodies are brought out on carts, then Cordelia's, also on a cart, wrapped in what looks like a body bag. When the bag is pulled back, we can see the rope around her neck. Lear does not enter carrying her and he never really cradles her.

Nonetheless, I have been among those who thought the fool line really was meant to recall The Fool and his relationship to the foolish Lear, so the prospect of the fool clearly being the "hung" Cordelia was intriguing—especially considering the unmistakable presence of The Fool in the first half of the play. But when considered within the context of the choices made in *this* production of *King Lear*, I realized this was actually just another poor decision by Eyre, since he had already thrown away the Fool in Acts I and II, and thus no resonance could occur at the end. To top it off, he did in fact make a decision to reference the Fool later in the play. When Lear is wandering about mad, pushing a shopping cart around an abandoned mall, he is wearing the same hat (a fedora) that the Fool wore. But that's a gimmick, not an insight.

That's the story of this production—a lack of insight. All of Shakespeare's plays, whether they are comedy, drama or history, are permeated with humor. It's one of the reasons we consider Shakespeare to be the greatest playwright we know. In this play the most humorous person is the Fool—and I would argue, the most important, because he is, in fact, Lear's conscience. He should be someone young (Lear mostly addresses the Fool as "Boy"), yet wise beyond his age. In this production he is just an old fool, off to the side, with half his dialogue gone, leaving the rest meaningless.

Finally, we should turn our attention to the subject of the authorship. For Oxfordians, who have a real life lived in Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, some plays are "easy" to draw parallels to, such as *Hamlet* (autobiography), the history plays (commentary on government and succession), the

early court comedies (the Queen is the audience), etc. However, *Lear* stands apart from all these. The exact parallels are not as clear. In *This Star of England* for example, the senior Ogburns noted:

King Lear more broadly than any other of Shakespeare's dramas is a synthesis of history, emotionally vivified personal experience, and philosophy, fused in the depths of the poet's creative imagination, and expressed in the strange medley of fact and symbolism which is peculiar to dreams (1137).

One example of this "strange medley of fact and symbolism" is the complete absence of a Queen *Lear*. This anomaly, like the questions surrounding the Fool, has been commented on in Shakespearean scholarship for centuries. In the 19th century there was even a play called *King Lear's Wife* which attempted to offer an explanation. It has always struck me that an answer may also be found in the pre-Christian era setting of the play, since one way to look at the question of the missing Queen (and the psychological complexities of the play) is to see *Lear* as both husband and father to his daughters, i.e. incest, a practice more accepted in cultures outside Christianity. In such a household who needs a Queen? But that issue is a big problem in any discussions of *Lear*, since no one wants to hear about it in either authorship camp (Stratfordian or anti-Stratfordian) given what it may be hinting about the author.

Yet such complexities have been discussed in mainstream scholarship, such as Mark Taylor's *Shakespeare's Darker Purpose*. In one interesting observation about *Lear* and his daughter Cordelia, he writes:

At the beginning of *King Lear* Daddy's little girl is leaving home, and though he must accept that development, he cannot. ... He wants his candidates for his son-in-law [Burgundy and the King of France] to know that he is keeping what he is giving them. ... [So] *Lear* introduces his plan to divide the kingdom with the words, "Meantime we shall express our darker purpose" (76).

In other words, Taylor argues, the "divide the kingdom" ploy is just *Lear*'s way to get his daughter trapped into doing what he knows she will do (defy him), thus giving him an excuse to disinherit her and deprive her of marriage to another. Of course, this does get deep into the weeds in terms of what's going on with *Lear* and Cordelia (and, for that matter, perhaps, with the author Shakespeare and his life). Mainstream thinkers of all stripes generally do not want to go there, yet *Lear* and Cordelia truly represent the essence of the play. Their respective actions in Act I are the predicate for all that follows.

Staying with Cordelia for a moment, let's examine what Anthony Hopkins had to say in several of the interviews he did for the *King Lear* press tour:

I think Lear is afraid of the feminine—in himself and in his daughters. I think he treated Cordelia like a tomboy, a chip off the old block, and when she rejects him, I think it releases something in him. He rampages through the rest of the play until he ends up on skid row.
(*The New York Times*, Sept. 26, 2018)

In an interview on *Amanpour & Co.* (PBS, Sept. 28, 2018), he adds this commentary on Lear:

He only loves one creature, and that's his daughter Cordelia, who, I believe, in childbirth, my wife, who was killed in childbirth, gave birth to her, so I treated her like a boy, gave her a sword and bow and arrow and fought with her so she was like a boy to me.

In both instances Hopkins is talking about how he, as an actor, needs to have some back story in mind to help him develop his performance. But without any story at all to draw on from Stratfordians, anything goes. This whole notion of Cordelia's mother dying in childbirth is simply made up. Yet his comments reveal that he knows there must have been a significant history out of which Shakespeare's *King Lear*—and its key relationship of father and daughter—grew. The question then arises, just how far apart are Hopkins' musings and Mark Taylor's analysis? I'd say, not much.

These complexities and contradictions are why we keep returning to Shakespeare's plays over and over again. For those interested in the authorship, especially Oxfordians, the *King Lear* story is, as the Ogburns noted, "a synthesis of history [and] emotionally vivified personal experience." It is, as they also note, most like a dream, which means that while analysis must be done, getting at what is really taking place is not easy. Yet, like a dream, the story certainly didn't come from nowhere, and it most certainly must have meant something to the author, just like any dream any of us ever had is uniquely ours and not someone else's.

I had long wondered how a three-hour play can be produced in just under two hours. Interestingly, there is an earlier example of a severely edited production of *King Lear*. In 1953 Orson Welles starred in a 73-minute television version of the play that was broadcast live on *Omnibus* (and available on DVD as *Omnibus: King Lear*). A look at this production, directed by Peter Brook and Andrew McCullough, demonstrated there is an interesting way to do it, one I thought was superior to what Eyre has attempted in his production. What Brook and McCullough did was to eliminate almost entirely the

secondary plot involving Gloucester and his sons and concentrate all their power on Lear and his three daughters. The Fool remains prominent and central. What I saw was that you could tell one story more fully and accurately rather than two stories in summary and less clearly.

In the end this latest movie version of *King Lear* simply lacked the true spirit of Shakespeare.

