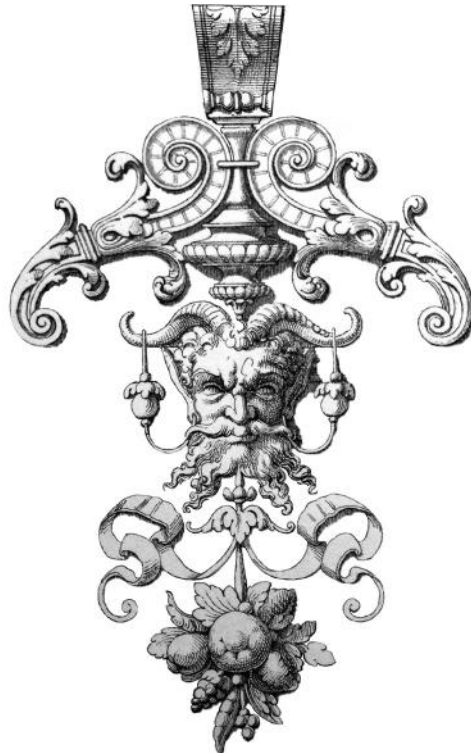


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Back Cover image: *Sir Philip Sidney* (18th century or after, based on a work circa 1576) in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Wikimedia Commons.

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- 31 John Lyly and the Marprelate Controversy: Innovation, Inhibition, and the 1589 Hamlet**
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by Kevin Gilvary

The longstanding rivalry between Sir Philip Sidney and Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, runs deeper than many scholars of early modern literature have hitherto considered: as suitors for Anne Cecil, as renowned poets, and as court rivals. Sidney was even parodied in the plays of Shakespeare as Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*, as Slender in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and as the Dauphin in *Henry V*. Sidney’s *Defence of Poesie* (or *Apologie for Poetry*) was a work of profound literary criticism, the earliest such work in English. Sidney’s criticism clearly relates to many of Shakespeare’s plays, which emphatically follow different precepts. While Sidney’s analysis of poetry has been very influential, his complaints about the theatre have been ignored. The standard narratives, casting Sidney as the heroic figure, soldier and courtier and poet, with Oxford as the spendthrift, eccentric, inferior poet, need a far more nuanced treatment.

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by William S. Niederkorn

Astrophel and Stella by Philip Sidney was first printed in 1591, a year after publication of his other major literary work, *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*. Both works were published posthumously. Prefacing the 1591 book, titled *Syr P.S. His Astrophel and Stella*, are a dedicatory letter signed Thomas Newman and a letter to the reader signed Thomas Nashe. They are followed by *Astrophel and Stella* in 107 fourteen-line sonnet stanzas. Next are 10 poems by Sidney that extend the *Astrophel and Stella* theme. Following Sidney’s works are an introductory sonnet and 27 more sonnets by Samuel Daniel, five cantos signed “Content,” a poem titled *Megliora*—and finally a poem with the heading “*Finis E.O.*” This is a newly discovered poem by Edward de Vere, who signed off on eight poems as E.O. in *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, published in 1576.

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by Robert R. Prechter, Jr.

According to the author, the name *Thomas Nashe* does not refer to a real writer. Rather it denotes a biographical construct purporting to represent a real writer. A variety of scholars have proposed that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, wrote

under pseudonyms and allonyms. They include Arthur Brooke: *Romeus and Juliet*, 1562; Arthur Golding: *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, 1565/1567; John Lyly: *Euphues* novels, plays, 1578–1593; Robert Greene: novels, pamphlets, plays, 1580–1592; William Shakespeare: poems, plays; 1593–1623. Should Thomas Nashe, whose literary oeuvre was composed during 1589–1600, be added to that list? Evidence suggests that the answer is yes.

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by Connie J. Beane

Based on topical allusions in *Macbeth*, the author proposes the play be redated to the period 1592–97, which serves to refute the contention that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, could not have been the author, since it places the composition of the play firmly within his lifetime. The orthodox chronology, as proposed by E.K. Chambers in 1930, places *Macbeth's* composition in 1606, two years after de Vere's death in 1604.

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by John Hamill, Matt Hutchinson and Alexander Waugh

Robert Prechter's article "Avisa: Queen Elizabeth or Penelope Rich?" published in *The Oxfordian* 25 strives to demonstrate that John Hamill's argument for Penelope Rich as the wife 'Avisa' in the anonymous 1594 pamphlet *Willobie His Avisa* is misplaced and the work is a straightforward paean to the unmarried Queen Elizabeth. The authors attempt to show that Prechter is incorrect and that *Willobie* is not about Queen Elizabeth, but was an intended libel against the promiscuous courtier and sister of the Earl of Essex, Lady Penelope Rich.

- 277 A Response to the Rebuttal—Avisa: Queen Elizabeth or Penelope Rich?**
 by Robert R. Prechter, Jr.
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