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ESSAY

Shakespeare and Southhampton: Blest Be the Tie That Un-Binds

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HIGHLIGHTS

Shakespeare dedicated two major poetical works to Henry Wriothsley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, but 400 years of research has not found any link between this 19-year-old nobleman and the Stratford man.

ABSTRACT

The epic poem *Venus and Adonis* was the first work of Shakespeare's to be printed, yet there was no author's name on the title page. The name William Shakespeare only appeared at the end of a dedication of the poem to Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton. A year later, another epic poem was published, the 1600-line *Rape of Lucrece.* Almost as popular as *Venus and Adonis* (which was printed nine times in less than a decade), *Lucrece* went through six printings in a slightly longer time frame. Again here, the author's name was not on the title page, only appearing in yet another dedication to Southampton. Of interest, never again did "Shakespeare" (whoever he or she was) dedicate anything else to anyone else. Nevertheless, on the strength of these two remarkable dedications, Shakespearean orthodoxy has put forth that Southampton must have been Shakespeare's "patron" and possibly even the "fair youth" mentioned in *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Yet despite centuries of searching for such a connection, no evidence at all has emerged connecting Will Shakspere of Stratford with Southampton. The fact is, when *Venus and Adonis* was published in 1593, Southampton was himself only 19 years old, living on a very small income that had to be doled out to him by his guardian, William Cecil (Lord Burghley, Queen Elizabeth's Master of the Royal Wards). At this point in time, Southampton was clearly in no position to be a patron to anyone. Indeed, how would the Stratford man have even gotten to know him? It would be two more years before Southampton would reach his majority and be able to "sue for livery" – the legal process that required payment to the crown for an heir to obtain any inheritance from his deceased father's estates. This paper explores the historical circumstances of these major epic poems and what the author's personal motivation might really have been behind choosing young Southampton as dedicatee.

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INTRODUCTION

On June 12, 1593, Richard Stonley, one of the tellers of Queen Elizabeth's Exchequer, bought a copy of the recently published narrative poem *Venus and Adonis* to add to his collection of over 400 books. He rarely noted the titles of the books he owned, but he was proud enough of this particular purchase to record it in his diary.[1]

Stonley wasn't the only buyer of *Venus and Adonis*. This epic poetical work, just under 1,200 lines of verse in iambic pentameter, would be printed nine times in less than a decade, making it one of the most sensationally successful publications of the Elizabethan era.[2] *Venus and Adonis* was the first work of "Shakespeare" to be printed, yet there was no name on the title page. When the reader turned the page to open the pamphlet, the name William Shakespeare appeared at the end of the dedication to Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton (hereafter called by his title "Southampton").

A year later, another epic poem was published. With its 1,600 lines, the narrative poem, *Rape of Lucrece*, was almost as popular as *Venus and Adonis*, going through six printings in a slightly longer time frame. Again, the author's name was not on the title page, but it appeared on another dedication to Southampton.

Never again did "Shakespeare" dedicate anything else to anyone else.

However, on the strength of these two remarkable dedications, orthodoxy puts forth that Southampton is Shakespeare's "patron" and even possibly the "Fair Youth" of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. The goal of this paper is to explore the historical circumstances and the author's personal motivation behind his choice of the young Southampton as the dedicatee of the two epic works of poetry.

For all the adulation that has been directed historically to Southampton's memory based on these dedications, rarely do orthodox academics notice that Southampton was a strange choice for a patron. At 19 years old, he was still two years away from his majority when he would sue for livery and pay a fine to gain control of his estates. At this time, he was a poor ward in the household of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, living on a small "exhibition" that guardian Burghley doled out to him (Akrigg, 1968). A greater problem, however, is that "Shakespeare" – the glover's son from Stratford-upon-Avon – *never met Southampton*. There is no record of a personal friendship or any business dealing between these two historical figures.

Had Southampton died soon after the publication of *Venus and Adonis*, it might explain the absence of a traceable relationship between him and Stratford's William Shakspere. But the facts are that both men would live for 23 years until Shakspere's death in 1616, and with Southampton living another eight years thereafter. In over three decades, Southampton apparently took no notice of "Shakespeare" in any way or even memorialized the supposed author after his death.

What the dedication of *Venus and Adonis* did for Southampton's reputation, however, has been recognized by his 20th-century biographer Charlotte Stopes. She writes that the dedication "brought reflected honour to... [Shakespeare's] patron" ... and "eager aspirants crowded round the brilliant young nobleman who had proved his taste through his poet."

As for the poet, Mrs. Stopes speculates that "it raised the writer out of the rank of players and above the rank of dramatists, into the first rank of poets" (1922, p. 53). How odd, though, that Mrs. Stopes would compose such glowing accounts of patron and poet when she understood the problem inherent in the lack of a connection between them.

She admits in the Preface of her fine biography of Southampton that she set out, purposefully, to find this missing link. She spent seven years of her life cloistered in the Public Records Office in London, where she read through hundreds of thousands of documents. Despite this enormous labor, she failed to find any connection whatsoever between Southampton and Stratford's Shakspere. It must be noted that few figures from the era of early modern England have had as intense an investigation into their lives as Southampton, attention largely due to the two Shakespeare poems dedicated to him.

That said, one need not be sequestered for years in the dusty stacks of the Public Record Office to find the connection between Southampton and the 17th Earl of Oxford (hereafter called "Oxford"). It is well known that Southampton was actually engaged to marry Oxford's oldest daughter, Elizabeth. Had the marriage arrangements – called the "project of marriage" – resulted in matrimony, Southampton would have been Oxford's son-in-law. Simple as that. But a closer look will show that even this was not quite so simple.

The project of marriage between Southampton and Elizabeth Vere was brought about by William Cecil, Lord Burghley. Oxford was married to Burghley's daughter Anne Cecil, and historical records show it to have been a troubled marriage. When Anne died in June of 1588, Burghley took custody of her three surviving daughters. According to Hurstfield (1958) in *The Queen's Wards,* "No child could become the ward of someone else while his father was still alive" (p. 138). Yet this is exactly what happened to Elizabeth and her two sisters. Presumably using his power as Master of the Court of Wards and Liveries, Burghley took over the guardianship of his granddaughters while they had a living father.

Lord Burghley was a powerful figure in Queen Elizabeth's royal administration. In addition to the mastership of the Queen's wards, he dominated the Queen's Privy Council, managed the finances of England as its Lord Treasurer, and oversaw the Elizabethan network of "intelligencers" throughout England and on the continent.[3] Any of these would have been a full-time job. But the Mastership of the Court of Wards and Liveries gave him extraordinary sway over the landed classes of England when a father died, leaving a minor child to inherit his estates.[4] As the appointment of a young person's guardian was Burghley's sole decision, he received petitions from suitors who wanted to acquire a profitable wardship. Once the wardship was granted by Burghley, the guardian was entitled to income from the ward's estates (supposedly as compensation for the child's expenses) and had the right to bestow the ward in marriage (Hurstfield, 1958, pp. 134-135).

Of the three thousand young people whose destinies fell into his hands, Burghley himself kept only eight noblemen to raise in his own household. The rest he effectively sold to the highest bidder or to the petitioner of his choice. Hurstfield (1958) discusses the aristocratic youngsters who were Burghley's personal wards noting that "Burghley preferred quality to quantity" (p. 249). Shakespeare's future dedicatee is among this select group who would owe their upbringing, education, and perhaps eventual marriage to Burghley's direction.

In 1589, Elizabeth Vere was 14 years old, an age considered appropriate by Elizabethans for a husband to be selected for her. There is a note in Burghley's diary that he reviewed the names of three noblemen, two of whom were his wards, and chose Southampton, now age 16, as the most advantageous match for his granddaughter (Akrigg, 1968, p. 31). It does not appear that either of the young people were consulted.

It has been argued that the dedications of the two epic poems to Southampton are an indication of Oxford's approval of him as his future son-in-law. But in a surprising turn of events, *Southampton stoutly refused Elizabeth Vere as his future bride*.[5] Family correspondence provides the time frame when the project of marriage was initiated. Archived in the State Papers is a letter from Lord Montague, Southampton's maternal grandfather, indicating that he had met with Burghley in 1589 to discuss the marriage arrangements. Montague writes as if he is trying to promote Burghley's plans; however, it seems that Montague and his daughter, Southampton's mother, are scrambling for a way to sidestep further negotiations. The dowager Countess pleaded that her son was too young to decide on marriage to anyone (Stopes, 1922, p. 36); Burghley responded with a year of grace for Southampton to "answer resolutely" – that is, accept the proffered marriage to Elizabeth Vere (Akrigg, 1968).

In his fine article about *Venus and Adonis*, Patrick B. Murphy (2014) recognizes the "not unexpected formality of tone" in these letters but writes that "their statements appear to assist Southampton in delaying his decision, while avoiding direct confrontation with Burghley" (pp. 324-325). As it happened, the year passed with Southampton still opposed to the marriage. It seems that by then, 1591, Burghley's patience had run out.

In 1592, Southampton wrote to Burghley's secretary Michael Hickes that the estates, which were his inheritance, were threatened with "great decay and danger" (Akrigg, 1968, p. 32). A ward's property was managed by his guardian during the ward's minority, and there were many things that a guardian could do to reap a quick profit, potentially impairing the future income that the ward would receive from the property when he came of age. A guardian, for instance, could cut down the timber on the ward's property, sell the livestock, and harvest the crops – all without sufficient replanting or restocking – and allow the property to deteriorate due to inadequate maintenance. It is not clear if Burghley openly or tacitly threatened to employ any of these tactics, but from his letter to Hickes, Southampton understood that opposition to Lord Burghley's will could have consequences.

Even more serious, a publication appeared in 1591 that could reflect badly on Southampton's future as a nobleman of quality. Written in Latin verse, the poem *Narcissus* told the story from Ovid of a self-absorbed youth so smitten by self-love that he ultimately drowns as he admires his own image in a pool. What made this a problem for Southampton is the fact that the poem was dedicated to him by its author John Clapham. Clapham was a personal secretary of Lord Burghley's; moreover, Clapham served Burghley in his wardship office, where he likely had first-hand knowledge of his boss' discontent with his ward (Akrigg, 1968). Just to make sure that readers of this poem would make the connection between the narcissistic youth's disastrous self-love and Southampton, the poem was moved from Ovid's setting in ancient Greece to an island kingdom ruled by a Virgin Queen. Biographer Akrigg (1968) notes that "It would be Burghley, gratified at seeing the treatment given to the wretched young nobleman, who would supply Clapham with his reward" (p. 34). In an age when the upper aristocracy was more obsessed with status than with money, Clapham's dedication of the work to Southampton, inviting the invidious comparison with Ovid's Narcissus, was a profound insult. There is no getting around it: Burghley allowed his own secretary to publicly disgrace his ward.

In *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, Lawrence Stone (1967) de-

tails how the social system of the age "inculcated ideals of honor" in its elite. Impulsiveness in "repaying an injury, real or imagined, was a sign of spirit...regardless of the merits of the case" (p. 108). He goes on to say that "a gentleman of quality found himself under obligation to challenge an opponent for the *most trivial of verbal slips"* and the result could be bloodshed or death the next day (Stone, 1967).

Markku Peltonen (2003) expands on the English upper classes' obsession with honor in his book *The Duel in Early Modern England.* "Even a small rupture in courtesy or civil conversation could prompt a duel," as courtiers "easily took one another's words amiss" (p. 44). Far from being unheard of, it would have been almost mandatory for Southampton, upon reaching his majority three years later, to have taken the rapier, always at his side, and challenged the scholarly Clapham to a duel to avenge this affront to his honor and reputation.[6]

As the year 1592 rolled by, it seemed that project of marriage between Southampton and Elizabeth Vere was at a total impasse. Then something happened to change Burghley's mind. This change of heart may well have been precipitated by the retirement of Henry Stanley, 4th Earl of Derby, from the Privy Council sometime after his last attendance in the summer of 1591.[7] As Burghley ran the Council, he would be aware of the state of Derby's health, and Derby's permanent remove into his country estate of Lathom House in 1592 may have signaled that his health was in decline. It would hardly have been lost on Burghley that Earl Henry had two sons. More importantly, his second son, William Stanley, was unmarried.

How considerably more advantageous it would be for Elizabeth Vere to marry into the House of Derby with the possibility of someday becoming the Countess of Derby rather than the Countess of Southampton. The Stanley family was one of the oldest in England, having been established in 1385, long before the *arriviste* Wriothesleys came to prominence earlier in the Tudor century.[8] Of even greater import, Henry Stanley had married Margaret Clifford, the granddaughter of Mary Tudor (the younger sister of King Henry VIII). Thus, the 4th Earl's two sons carried the blood royal in their veins.

Nevertheless, roadblocks were expected.[9] First, Elizabeth Vere had a cloud over her because of the refusal by an earl to accept her as his spouse. As Burghley's ward, there were only two reasons for Southampton to refuse the marriage proffered by his guardian, and these reasons were based on the principle known as "disparagement." First, a guardian could not bestow his ward on someone below his social standing. That, of course, wasn't the issue. Elizabeth Vere was the daughter of an earl, making her an appropriate match for an earl according to their station in Tudor society. This brings up the second and more serious problem: there might have been something wrong with Elizabeth. The possibility that the rejection was due to a defect in her – an "imperfection" either mentally or physically – could complicate her future marriage negotiations. It was a potential issue that needed to be addressed.

By the spring of 1593, both Southampton and Elizabeth had lived through four years of haggling, and this sad chapter needed to be put behind them if they were to get on with their lives. Both young people, in fact, had been subjected to dishonor: Southampton in the dedication of *Narcissus* and Elizabeth with the cloud of disparagement from Southampton's rejection. Their reputations were sullied, possibly jeopardizing all future marriage prospects. Could this dismal state of affairs somehow be turned around?

The publishing of *Venus and Adonis*, with its dedication honoring Southampton would signal that all was forgiven. But could this single notice of respect repair the damage that had been done to him in the past four years? It would seem that the author of the poem understood the gravity of the situation, stating that the dedication to Southampton is "so strong a prop to support so weak a burden." In reality, the restoration of honor to Southampton is a strong burden; accomplishing this with a dedication of a poem is a rather "weak" way to go about it.

When reading the dedication below, notice the focus on "honour."

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
HENRIE WRIOTHESLEY

Right Honourable

I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden; only if your **Honour** seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have **honoured** you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your **honourable** survey, and your **Honour** to your heart's content, which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.

Your **Honour's** in all duty,
William Shakespeare.

In this dedication, the word "honour" appears seven times in some iteration. Southampton is addressed twice in the text directly as "your Honour" and the closing salutation reads "Your Honour's in all duty." Looking at forms of address, strictly imposed in England even to this day, it would be expected that Southampton should be addressed as "your Lordship" throughout the dedication, as he is a single time in the second line of the poem. Compared with other contemporaneous letters, the higher form of address to a nobleman is "Your Lordship" because it is restricted to the titled aristocracy. People below the aristocracy in status – judges, knights, and holders of high administrative office – may be addressed as "your honour."[10] The poet's choice of the lesser form of address would not have gone unnoticed and would emphasize the 'honourable' purpose of the dedication. It is noteworthy that the dedication of the *Rape of Lucrece*, published the following year, closes with the preferred "*Your Lordship's* in all duty." Also, Southampton is addressed, more appropriately, as "your Lordship" within the *Lucrece* text.[11]

But a complex mission is in the offing, and for the following reasons, the 17th Earl of Oxford is the only person who is positioned to repair the damage to the reputations of the two young people.

1. Oxford *is the father* of the intended bride. If the father himself is willing to overlook the rejection of his daughter's hand in marriage, then no one else should give it a second thought.
2. Furthermore, Oxford does not suffer a loss of face over the rejection because he did NOT make the marriage arrangements to start with; he lost this patriarchal prerogative when Burghley took custody of his daughters in 1588.
3. Therefore, Oxford is not responsible for the current messy situation in which Southampton has been publicly humiliated and his daughter's reputation sullied.
4. If Oxford is Shakespeare – and evidence supports his candidacy – then he is the only person on the planet who can put words on paper so that the literary community in England will take notice. This dedication to Southampton has the potential for high impact.

Presumably, the prospect of a more advantageous match for his granddaughter is what brought Burghley to relent and let Southampton off the hook. Still, a printer might consider the fate of John Stubbes and the publisher of Stubbes' pamphlet in which a policy of Burghley's was criticized. Both suffered their hands to be cut off in one of the most horrific public spectacles in the Elizabethan era.[12] What if Lord Burghley changed his mind? Publishing something closely connected to Queen Elizabeth's great minister was not without an element of danger.

The need for assurance that the poem was safe to print with the dedication to Burghley's ward may have prompted a startling anomaly with *Venus and Adonis*. When it was registered with the Stationers on April 18, 1593, it was licensed by John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The authority to license works for the Stationers' Register was among the duties of the redoubtable Archbishop; but with few exceptions, he primarily licensed works on religious subjects: sermons, theological tracks, or devotional materials.[13] As *Venus and Adonis* was a salacious poem in the genre of mythical erotica, it was far removed from religious matters. In recognizing the unique nature of this authorization, historian Akrigg (1968) remarks, "We may have lost a good story concerning Archbishop Whitgift's license" (p. 197).

Along with accolades as a literary masterwork, *Venus and Adonis* is also a masterpiece of typesetting. Described as "an attractive little book printed in handsome large type," the printing of it was nearly perfect (Akrigg, 1968). Hallett Smith points out in the *Riverside Shakespeare* that "many critics have felt that there is a strong probability that Shakespeare himself, day by day, superintended the proofreading in Field's printing house" (*Riverside Shakespeare*, p. 1719). Smith goes on to say that "At any rate, Q[uarto] 1 is printed with exceptional care." It does not occur to this professor that the man from Stratford had (by his own account) no prior experience with publications: this was, supposedly, his first effort.

Yet for once, the English professors may be right about something: *someone* went every day to Field's shop to oversee the typesetting of *Venus and Adonis*. It was a job not likely to have been done by Oxford. His health was impaired from a life-threatening injury in a duel, and he had limited experience at best with the printing process. But Oxford had spent a lifetime surrounded by scholars who had published many works of their own. His association with John Lyly is well documented. According to Nelson (2003), other proteges of Oxford included Thomas Churchyard, Abraham Fleming, Arthur Golding, Anthony Munday, and Thomas Twyne (p. 223). Any of these writers had the capabilities for the supervisory job and lived well into the next century.

Of this list, one name in particular stands out: Oxford's uncle, Arthur Golding. In a long and accomplished career as a translator, Golding had worked with most of the printing houses in London, including the Vautrollier/Field shop where *Venus and Adonis* went to press. Moreover, his translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, published

in 1565-67, are acknowledged to be the primary source for *Venus and Adonis*.[14] Thus Golding had the ideal background to shepherd "Shakespeare's" epic poem through its printing and publication.

But first, there are some questions to be answered. Arthur Golding was born in 1536, so by the early 1590s, he was elderly by the standards of Elizabethan life expectancy. Was he still in possession of his faculties and enjoying satisfactory health? The Golding family had properties in the country, and perhaps he had retired there.

A wealth of information about Golding's whereabouts is available in his biography written by Lewis Thorn Golding, a 20th-century descendant.[15] What was a serious setback in Golding's life is, for us, a happy finding: it seems that Arthur Golding was referred to Debtor's Prison at the Fleet during the 1592-93 timeframe. It is helpful to know that people of higher social status – gentlemen, knights, or titled aristocracy – were not incarcerated within the prison walls with the common criminals. As a gentleman, Golding would have been given special privileges to live in lodgings outside the prison walls in an area called the Liberty of the Fleet. It can be seen on the Agas map of Elizabethan London that this area was separated from the Blackfriars neighborhood by Ludgate Hill Street. This would seem a superfluous detail were it not for the fact that Richard Field's printing shop was located in Blackfriars right by the Ludgate. At most, Golding was living just a few blocks from the presses where *Venus and Adonis* was underway. Obviously, too, the income from gainful employment would improve his monetary position and help to mitigate his debts. It fits nicely: Oxford's uncle, Arthur Golding, is the right person at the right place and at the right time to supervise the publication of his nephew's literary work.

So, with the blessing of John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury, *Venus, and Adonis* was in the bookseller's stall in Paul's Churchyard by early June of 1593. Judging from the frequency with which new editions of *Venus and Adonis* were published in the subsequent decade, it was a spectacular success with the reading public. The narrative epic poem, the *Rape of Lucrece,* was published a year later with an even more effusive dedication to Southampton, sending a signal that all parties were pleased with the results of the previous year's publication. In the *Lucrece* dedication, the author is "assured of acceptance," no longer worried that he "will offend" and be "censured" by "the world."

It seems that the principal participants in the unfortunate marriage project were able to put it behind them and look forward to bright futures. Lord Burghley would get a prestigious and wealthy earldom for his granddaughter when she became the Countess of Derby. His descendants would be entwined with the blood royal through the marriage of the 4th Earl of Derby and Margaret Clifford, granddaughter of the sister of Henry VIII. Not incidentally, Burghley would extract a £5,000 fine from Southampton for refusing his granddaughter as his bride (Akrigg, 1968).

The two young people, Southampton and Elizabeth Vere, would be restored to their rightful places in Tudor society with a clean slate, free of any residual taint of dishonor or disparagement. Both would go on to marry according to their own wishes, fulfilling the poet's wish that Southampton pursue his "heart's content."

However, it might be suggested that the beleaguered Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the biggest winner of them all. By facilitating the process that enabled his daughter Elizabeth to actually marry the man she loved, Oxford had retrieved, to some extent, his patriarchal right to bestow her in marriage. In this, how gratifying it must have been to outshine Lord Burghley and turn around a bad situation of Burghley's own making while along the way earning the respect of his daughter. In this regard, Oxford stood to rehabilitate himself in the life of the daughter he had rejected when she was born.[16] Written several years after her marriage to the 6th Earl of Derby, Oxford's later so-called "tin letters" tell of his extended visits with Elizabeth and her husband. It appears that they were getting along well, and presumably, even the issues surrounding Elizabeth's birth had long been resolved.

With *Venus and Adonis*, Oxford would see something that he surely never hoped for in his lifetime: his poetry presented to the world, printed in a manner of which he could be proud. Best of all, he would see his literary work receive sensational public acceptance.

Some might well ask here about the motivation behind Southampton's refusal of the marriage to Elizabeth Vere. As Southampton's rejection of Oxford's daughter is the lynchpin of this article, I will certainly try to address this question. Looking in the *Dictionary of National Biography* at Southampton's family background, it becomes readily apparent that the Wriothesleys on his father's side and the Brownes on his mother's side were both steadfast Catholic families. In fact, the marriage of the 2nd Earl of Southampton to Mary Browne, the daughter of Anthony Browne, Viscount Montague, was a merger of the two most prominent Catholic families in England (Stopes, 1922).

Though rarely noticed by modern historians, British Catholics at that time certainly understood that the social system of wardship, under the mastership of the intensely Protestant Lord Burghley, was a tool that might well turn heirs of Catholic families to the Protestant faith.

In the 20th-century study, *The Catholics and Their Houses*, it is recognized that it was "the fate of Catholic heirs in this period of persecution..." to be taken away from their families and raised "in the new religion" (De Lisle & Stanford, 1995, p. 40). The mechanism for this removal and re-education was, of course, wardship with the ward's eventual marriage into the guardian's Protestant family.

It might also be asked here why Queen Elizabeth herself, a Protestant monarch, would accommodate the Catholic faith of the Southampton and Montague families. Actually, the Queen had earlier imprisoned the 2nd Earl of Southampton in the Tower for his possible complicity in the Ridolfi Plot, a supposedly Catholic plot which led to the execution of the Duke of Norfolk. But notwithstanding this issue, both families had been loyal supporters of Elizabeth's father, King Henry VIII, and loyalty counted for a lot in the Tudor court.

As for the young Southampton, once delivered as a ward into the care of Lord Burghley, he would have been required to attend Protestant services twice daily (Akrigg, 1968). Marriage with Burghley's granddaughter would ensure that Southampton's future children would be raised in the Protestant faith under Burghley's direction, not what the Catholic Lord Montague had in mind when his daughter married the 2nd Earl of Southampton. Oxford probably well understood what marriage to the Cecil family really meant.

BIOGRAPHY

Bonner Miller Cutting is a graduate of Tulane University and an independent scholar who has been dealing with Shakespeare and the Shakespeare Authorship Question most of her adult life. She is the author of dozens of major academic papers dealing with aspects of the Elizabethan period including Elizabethan wills, women's lives, and numerous aspects of the visual arts. Her major essays on the subject have been collected in the volume, *Necessary Mischief* (2018, Minos Publishing). She has presented her scholarly work in Los Angeles, in Houston, in Washington DC and at numerous academic conferences sponsored by the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship.

ENDNOTES

1 *Stonley Diaries*, Alan H. Nelson (Trans.). The manuscript of the Stonley Diaries is archived in the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. An inventory of his books, dated February 9, 1597, is now in the National Archives at Kew.

2 The publication dates of *Venus and Adonis* are provided in the *Riverside Shakespeare.* Dates within the lifetime of Stratford's Shakspere are as follows: 1593, 1594, 1595, 1596, 1599, 1599, 1602?, 1602, 1602. After the Stratford man's death in 1616, the poem continued to be republished often: 1617, 1620, 1627, 1630?, 1630, 1636. Q16, published in 1675, was the last edition in the century.

3 In his book *The History of the British Secret Service,* Richard Deacon points out that Sir Francis Walsingham, the manager of the Elizabethan spy network, sent his Intelligence reports to Lord Burghley (p. 9). Details of Burghley's direct involvement are discussed in the chapter "Tudor Cryptography and Psychological Warfare" (pp. 25-37).

4 In the unabridged *Crisis of the Aristocracy,* Lawrence Stone discusses the high mortality rates of the Tudor era, noting that "more than one in every three peers being under 21 when he inherited his title, and therefore a ward of the crown" (Clarendon Press, 1965, p. 600).

5 Commenting on Southampton's refusal, Hurstfield writes that "other refusals there undoubtably were... but they were few. Most wards accepted their fate – with good or ill grace" (pp. 142-143).

6 Peltonen expands on the cultural values of honor and the obsession of the English courtiers with conventions of politeness necessary to maintain civil courtesies. He concurs with Stone that even "the smallest deviation from the received customs of courtesy" could trigger a challenge to a duel (p. 45).

7 For more information, see Vol 21 of the *Acts of the Privy Council* (p. 404).

8 For more information about the Earls of Derby, see Barry Coward's *The Lords Stanley and the Earls of Derby* (p. 28).

9 When the 4th Earl of Derby died on September 25, 1593, his older son, Ferdinando Stanley, became the 5th Earl of Derby. Unfortunately, Ferdinando enjoyed the earldom for only 6 ½ months before his untimely death on April 16, 1594, at the age of 35. A letter from Ferdinando's widow to Robert Cecil informs us that the marriage arrangements between Elizabeth Vere and the next Earl of Derby were underway within weeks of her husband's death. Noted by Abel Lefranc in *Under the Mask of William Shakespeare,* the young dowager Countess of Derby writes on May 9, 1594, that "I learn that there exists a project of marriage between the Earl my brother-in-law and Lady Vere your niece, but I don't know at what point the news is true" (p. 90).

10 For Elizabethan letters, see Vol. II of *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, Sir Henry Ellis (Ed.).

11 Orthodox Stratfordians accept that the *Rape of Lucrece* was the author's "graver labor" in the dedication of *Ve-*

nus and Adonis, indicating that this poem was underway, if not completed, in 1593.

[12] The "barbarous sentence" is described in the biography of John Stubbes in Vol XIX of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. It was carried out with a blow from a butcher knife and mallet struck through the wrists of the writer and publisher, then the bleeding stumps were seared with a hot iron (pp. 118-119).

[13] Akrigg notes that Whitgift "signed personally" for the licensing of 162 books. Only four of these were not directly about religious subjects (p. 197).

[14] For details about the Ovid sources of *Venus and Adonis* in the Golding translation, see Vol I of Geoffrey Bullough's *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (pp. 166-173).

[15] For details of Arthur Golding in Debtors' prison, see the chapter in Louis Thorn Golding's biography (pp. 103-112).

[16] In his biography of Oxford, Bernard M. Ward discusses the troubled Oxford/Cecil marriage (pp. 121-129) and provides details about their reconciliation (pp. 232-233).

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