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Cover image: "*A Collage of Shakespeare Candidates*" (from left to right) — Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford (image: Public Domain); Sir Francis Bacon (image: Public Domain); Will Shakspere from Stratford (image: Public Domain); Christopher Marlowe (image: Public Domain); and William Stanley, the Earl of Derby (image: Wikimedia).

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

Speaking of Shakespeare: A Note on the Special Issue

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Welcome to this Special Issue—approximately a year in the making—that addresses an intriguing historical controversy known as the Shakespeare Authorship Question. We thank Professor Don Rubin for taking the lead as Guest Editor, a role that involved enticing top authorities in this domain to contribute their latest arguments and ideas, coordinating various administrative tasks, and facilitating the peer review process.

The authors represented here are primarily literary scholars who insisted on presenting their material in a way that they deemed the most readable and impactful. Therefore, the *Journal* allowed the authors' to use their most familiar referencing style versus strictly adopting our standard APA format. We emphasize that their alternative styles have substantially different requirements for citation and references compared to APA, but we consider this lenience as an experiment in bridging two academic cultures with different approaches to writing papers.

Note that all the works here were peer-reviewed for accuracy and suitability of the content, as well as copyedited per standard *JSE* normal procedures with the help of Ramsés D'León. However, finalization of the articles (including the extent to which authors heeded the Managing Editor's suggestions for APA-related edits) was deemed optional, and ultimately the decision of the Guest Editor in consultation with the literary authors.

The *JSE* editorial team agreed to these key accommodations because this Special Issue constitutes an important "time capsule." Indeed, this is perhaps the last time that these Shakespeare experts will come together in this manner to offer frontier scientists and general academics alike a primer on the question of who wrote the monumental works traditionally attributed to "William Shakspeare" of Stratford-Upon-Avon. However, it is important to note that the *Journal* neither claims that this historical figure definitely was not the author, nor officially endorses any of the perspectives presented here. Our goal in publishing this collection of papers is simply to increase awareness of this literary mystery, as well as buttress its legitimacy as a topic of study and future research within mainstream academia.

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Journal of Scientific Exploration
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GUEST EDITORIAL

Introduction to the Special Issue: The Shakespeare Authorship Question-Alternative Mappings

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To be or not to be truthful. To be or not to be on the right side of history. To read and take seriously the research of others (even those you distrust) or to close your eyes to new discoveries and attack blindly those who might have an alternative view. To prefer an inspirational tale to historical fact or to do some of your own forensic examinations of tales you've been told.

These are the questions the scholarly world has always had to deal with. Think of Galileo and the Church. In Brecht's play about Galileo, this man of science was simply *shown* the instruments of torture and he himself quickly backed down from what he knew was scientific fact. And even with Galileo, it took the Church 500 years to acknowledge that he was right and they were wrong, to apologize to him. That is, a belief rooted in a preferred story was able to keep Truth at bay. Five hundred years is a long time to wait for an apology.

This special issue of the *Journal for Scientific Exploration* suggests that a similar evidentiary problem has existed for some four centuries in the field of literature given that the gatekeepers of that field – mostly literature scholars of high repute – have generally refused to look at the evidence. Such refusal would certainly suggest that respected scholars in other fields need to become involved if Truth is not to be victimized again.

The issue: because a high-ranking English aristocrat used a pseudonym for his literary work during his lifetime to protect himself and his family from social disapproval and political danger (a pseudonym that wound up enriching another man with a similar-sounding name) scholars today continue to refuse to examine 16th century reality and give the rightful author his due. If this were a relatively obscure author, we would no doubt say who cares and let it all slip into the historical waste bin. But because it concerns the greatest writer who ever lived – one William Shakespeare – it might seem incumbent upon the academy to lead the way here in correcting the story and demand that Truth be called by its name once again.

The argument here has been compromised and complicated by the fact that the town in England where the wrongly-credited man grew up -- Stratford-upon-Avon -- has now become one of the UK's largest and most lucrative tourist centers bringing millions of pounds into the town's coffers annually and allowing the charity that runs it all – the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust – to fund scholars who, wittingly or unwittingly, maintain the attractive rags to riches story they tell. They also argue that questioning the authorship in any way is heresy and a conspiracy theory, something aberrant and evil that could only be argued by people who are anti-Shakespeareans.

That is to say, rather than challenging the research, it is the researchers themselves who they attack. If one doubts this, check with your own favorite university and see whether what is called the Shakespeare Authorship Question (the SAQ) is even discussed in any detail in literature-based courses that include the works of Shakespeare.

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And woe to any young scholar publicly interested in the SAQ who seeks tenure at his or her institution. Even contributing to a book on the subject will unleash those devout believers who often without even reading the evidence call for the heretics to be excommunicated from the academy (denied tenure) and shunned by the community.

That just ain't nice. And it ain't a healthy situation for any intellectual community. Is there another area of knowledge so disallowed in academe?

A few facts: the author who writing under the pseudonymous name William Shakespeare was clearly extraordinarily well-educated. This is an author who knew law as intimately as a lawyer, knew theatre as if he had grown up with it, medical theory as a physician, music as a musician, the military as an officer, heraldry as a titled aristocrat, hawking as a man of means, Italy as one who lived there for an extended period of time and France as a royal visitor. He also spoke a wide range of languages including many not taught in 16th century provincial grammar schools.

On the other side of the coin, we know that the man still credited with the work came from an illiterate family, may not have been able to sign his own name on documents, never taught his own daughters to read or write, had at most a grade school education, and, as far as anyone knows, never studied any of the aforementioned subjects, never spoke a foreign language and never left England. Does this sound like he should even be a candidate for Greatest Writer in the World? Even a genius needs some real world experience.

But why does it even matter more than four centuries later? We have the works. Surely that's enough. But Truth does matter. And if we continue to get Shakespeare's truth wrong we run the risk of getting an important slice of history wrong; if we get Shakespeare wrong, we get the literary rock of the world totally wrong. Whatever our field, whatever our background, we all want to see Truth win out in the end.

Hence this special issue of *JSE* which dares to look at this centuries-old question that simply won't go away. The answer proposed here by this alternative mapping takes us from the land of What We Think We Know to the less-known land of What We Should Probably Know, from the stultifying life of Stratford's Will Shakspere (as he and his family pronounced and spelled the name) to the riveting life of England's ranking aristocrat, the 17th Earl of Oxford, Edward de Vere.

Is this all a new idea? Traditional Stratfordian scholars argue that the authorship question only emerged in the 19th century when the Romantics created a new interest in the biographies of artists. But authorship doubters like American Professors Roger Stritmatter and Brian Wildenthal and the brilliant British independent scholar Alexander Waugh have traced such allusions back to the same period in which the Shakespeare works were actually created. Indeed, most of these allusions were themselves carefully rooted in coded language, *double entendre* and even anagrams (all popular pastimes in the period), each offering credible deniability to the writers.

Indeed, there were real reasons for them to use pseudonyms. The court of Elizabeth I was deeply rooted in secrecy and spying because of religious issues and the royal succession. Anyone who dared to write about it ran the real risk of winding up in prison, being tortured, having one's hands literally cut off or, in some cases, even losing their lives. That court-- celebrated for its support of the arts -- has also been compared to the contemporary court of North Korea's Kim Jung-Un. It was not a court to mess with.

As one example of saying two things at the same time, there is the First Folio, that expensive volume which brought together 36 of the Bard's plays (18 for the first time). We all know what the Bard allegedly looked like from the full-page portrait found in that volume. But examined closely and combined with a close reading of Ben Jonson's poem of praise (an encomium) to Shakespeare, we find some credibility gaps. No laurels for the supposed poet, no identifying family crest, no birth and death dates. The portrait itself is also not flattering. A man with a bulbous head, wearing a jacket with two left sleeves and a curious thin line around the subject's neck looking suspiciously like the outline of a mask. Who is behind the mask? Then there are Jonson's words suggesting that this portrait -- though 'cut' for Shakespeare -- is not an image of the author. He goes on to say that we should look away from this strange portrait if we really wish to know who the author was. Jonson says we will only find him in his words. Is this then a put-down by Ben Jonson of the young artist who created the image? Or is it suggesting something larger, something more curious? Is there another author behind the peculiar public face?

Such an alternative reading of the encomium is, for many, nonsensical. But this is only one of very many such examples and oddities. Alexander Waugh notes many more in his powerful essay on the encomium included in this volume.

But again, who really cares? Does the true identity of someone long gone really matter? In the end, we will probably find just another dead white male. Or does it? Does it really matter who George Washington or Abraham Lincoln actually were? We know what they did. Does knowing about their lives really throw light on their historical actions? If we were to learn that a black man wrote

the plays of Arthur Miller, would it change the works, interpretations of those works?

Certainly this question of authorial identity mattered to other writers -- Walt Whitman, Henry James and Mark Twain, to name just three who all questioned the attribution. It mattered as well to Sigmund Freud, Charlie Chaplin and even Helen Keller. It mattered to artists such as Tyrone Guthrie (founding Artistic Director of Canada's Stratford Festival) and to Orson Welles. It matters still to actors such as Derek Jacobi and Mark Rylance (the first Artistic Director of the rebuilt Globe Theatre in London). And it seems to matter to some 5000 others who have signed an online document well-worth reading called The Declaration of Reasonable Doubt About the Identity of William Shakespeare (doubtaboutwill.org) which asks for scholars to admit their doubt publicly and encourage academia to take up the question.

This special volume also asks anyone who thinks seriously – indeed, anyone who merely thinks – to take a dip into literary authorship doubt and ultimately make their own judgement into the validity of the question. Does the fact mean anything that Will of Stratford himself never once in his life claimed to be the author? Indeed, no one in his field or his family ever acknowledged him as an author either during his lifetime or after. Nor did he even make such a claim in his will. If he didn't say he was the author, why do we?

As former *Washington Post* journalist Bob Meyers notes in his opening essay for this volume, tradition and authority stood in the way of not only Galileo but in our own time scientists such as Alfred Wegener, Ignaz Semmelweis and J. Harlan Bretz in their attempts to speak truth about, respectively, tectonic plates, the impact of germs on childbirth, and land erosion, found themselves attacked and ridiculed. The fact that the 20th century scholar who first identified the real Shakespeare happened to have the last name Looney is surely good for a laugh but the fact is J. Thomas Looney's pioneering research has led the way in this contested field for more than a century.

For just the biographical facts and whether there are enough of them to link the Stratford man to the title, you are directed to Kevin Gilvary's provocative essay on what has come to be called *biografiction*. This is followed by Ramon Jimenez' forensic examination of people who should have known the Stratford man as an author both in Stratford (where Will returned a wealthy man in his 40s and apparently never again wrote a word) and in London. Unfortunately, no one during his lifetime seemed at all aware of him as a writer. And when he died, no one in either London or Stratford took any notice. This is odd indeed. Famous writers were almost always eulogized.

In another revealing essay, this one by independent scholar Bonner Miller Cutting, no connection can be found between the Stratford man and the 19-year-old aristocrat Henry Wriothseley who will become the 3rd Earl of Southampton when he turns 21. In 1593-'94, it turns out, William Shakespeare dedicated two sexually-soaked epic poems to him – *Venus and Adonis* and a year later *The Rape of Lucrece*. Yet the two apparently never met. Interestingly, the Earl of Oxford met the Earl of Southampton on many occasions even discussing the possibility of Southampton marrying Oxford's daughter. So who is more likely to have written the dedications?

Elisabeth Waugaman's essay, "Shakespeare and the French Lens," continues the expansion of this authorial mapping; in this case, the author's extraordinary familiarity with the French court and political events going on across the Channel. Yet we know the man from Stratford neither studied French nor ever visited France. So how could plays such as *Love's Labour's Lost* be so *au courant* with events there and why are so many characters in the play that are recognizable portraits of real French aristocrats and royalty.

Greek philosophy and the influence of Greek drama on Shakespeare's plays is also discussed in this issue. The Earl of Oxford, we find out, knew the ancient plays and classic poetry -- his uncle was Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey (1516/17-1547) who along with Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced the Petrarchan sonnet into English, establishing the form Shakespeare's sonnets are written in. His Latin master was Arthur Golding, the man credited with the first English translation of Ovid, a long-recognized source for much in the Shakespearean canon. Oxford's classical education included studies in languages such as Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French and Italian. Earl Showerman looks at why the author's Greek drama references have been generally ignored by Strafordian scholars.

In another classically linked essay, the Canadian writer and scholar Sky Gilbert takes the question of Shakespeare's sources even further suggesting that the Bard's own epistemology was deeply influenced by the Greek philosopher Gorgias who put forth that art creates its own reality. Was Shakespeare ultimately following in that arcane philosophical tradition? Would the man from Stratford have even heard of Gorgias?

Another point. We know that the author William Shakespeare wrote at least 37 plays, two long poems of over a thousand lines each in iambic pentameter, 154 sonnets and a variety of other poems. This amount of work represents another credibility problem for those who wish to fit this vast quantity of creative work into the Stratford man's 17 years of supposed residence in London (1593-1610). As any playwright will admit, it is a virtual

impossibility to create that amount of work in such a limited amount of time. This is, of course, why Stratfordian scholars are forced once again to fall back on the notion of genius.

Scholar Katherine Chiljan, however, has been digging deeper and she suggests that the traditional dating of the plays is really not to be trusted. Supported by important work of Ramon Jimenez and Kevin Gilvary, Chiljan presents evidence that some of the plays date back to the 1560s when they were first produced in Elizabeth's court, sometimes under different names and in alternative versions. That is to say, if these researchers turn out to be correct, we will finally have documentation about Shakespeare's long missing juvenilia and even some early drafts to examine.

That said, it must also be noted that Will of Stratford was only born in 1564 and even geniuses probably need to get out of grade school before writing about history, love, marriage, and battles between the sexes. That is, Chiljan posits that Will of Stratford was simply too young to have written those earlier versions played before the Queen herself.

A final essay in this special collection is about what the works themselves reveal about the pseudonymous author William Shakespeare. Hank Whittemore – author of a volume called *100 Reasons Why Edward de Vere Was Shakespeare* as well as author of an extraordinary study of Shakespeare's Sonnets called *The Monument* – argues here that works of genuine art almost always stem from life experience and acquired knowledge. Yes, whoever wrote the works was clearly a genius. But the author was also a flesh and blood person and for Whittemore, the alternative map points clearly to Edward de Vere as that person.

My hope is that this volume can be just a beginning of your own rethinking on the Shakespeare Authorship Question. But wherever you ultimately come down on the issue, it is in the end less important than that such alternative ideas are at least *considered* and that the research of fellow scholars is at least explored when an issue of importance is being so seriously contested.

BIOGRAPHY

Don Rubin is Professor Emeritus of dramatic literature and theatre at Toronto's York University. A teacher for more than four decades, his fields of expertise include Theatre History, Modern Theatre, Aesthetics and Criticism, Shakespeare and the Authorship Question and specialties in both Canadian and African theatre and drama. Editor of Routledge's six-volume *World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre* and the standard volume, *Canadian Theatre History: Selected Readings*, he served for many years as President of the Canadian Centre of UNESCO's International Theatre Institute, President of the Canadian Centre of the International Association of Theatre Critics, President of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition and President of the African Theatre Ensemble of Toronto. He has edited some 60 volumes of theatre research and published more than 1500 articles and essays on theatre.

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ESSAY

Prophets Without Honor: From Galileo to Looney

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HIGHLIGHTS

History shows that new ideas in Shakespeare studies-as with broader academia and science-often upset or threaten those whose careers depend on maintaining the status quo.

ABSTRACT

There are many ideas in the annals of science that were once ridiculed because they deviated from established "truth," only to be rehabilitated with the passage of time. Among them: Galileo (1564-1642), punished by the Pope with house arrest for challenging the Ptolemaic theory -- a theory taught by Aristotle -- that the sun revolves around the earth; Alfred Wegener (1880-1930), who developed the theory of the movement of continental drift (later known as tectonic plates), to explain why matching prehistoric fossils could be found in places such as Europe and South America, with no known land bridges connecting them; J. Harlan Bretz (1882-1981) who showed that only cataclysmic floods could explain erosion and land formation in the Pacific Northwest, rather than the then-current theory of gradualism and "uniformitarianism." Senior scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey in 1927 humiliated him in public; Ignaz Semelweiss (1818-1865) observed that the incidence of "childbed fever" could be significantly reduced by the use of hand disinfectant in obstetrical clinics, c. 1847. He could not provide a medical explanation beyond his observation that maternal mortality was reduced to only 1% when hand washing with disinfectant was used. He was ridiculed for going against received medical practice and committed to an asylum by colleagues after supposedly suffering a nervous breakdown. There he was beaten by guards and died from an untreated gangrenous wound. It was not until Louis Pasteur confirmed the germ theory of disease and Joseph Lister showed the benefits of surgery using hygienic methods that his life-saving observations were credited. One can add to this list the name of J. Thomas Looney (1870-1944) who began researching the question of whether the name "Shakespeare" could be a pseudonym and, if so, who the author really was. Basing his work on attributes in the plays that might match little-known poets of the Elizabethan era with the real author, he identified Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as the man responsible in his book *Shakespeare Identified* published in 1920. Criticized almost immediately, his research has nevertheless stood the test of time, with more and more people worldwide now arguing for Oxford in a debate that continues unabated. This paper looks at these personal histories as well as the psychology of why "authorities" feel a need to immediately reject challenges to established positions.

KEYWORDS

Shakespeare, Shakespeare Authorship Question, Shakespeare Identified Edward de Vere, J.T. Looney, Authority.

INTRODUCTION

Why are some scientific ideas mocked when they are presented, only to be accepted after the passage of time? Why are other ideas accepted at face value? Why are some ideas, based on evidence, never accepted? What role does the personality and academic training of the original presenter play in ultimate acceptance or rejection?

Among those whose life's work fit this description are the Italian astronomer-mathematician Galileo Galilei, the Hungarian medical doctor Ignaz Semmelweis, the German climatologist-geophysicist-meteorologist and polar researcher Alfred Wegener, the American geologist J. Harlan Bretz and the British literary scholar J. Thomas Looney.

All were skeptical observers, practitioners of rigorous inquiry whose ideas were initially ridiculed by so-called experts in the field yet later, for the most part, accepted.

Why?

Perhaps there is an answer to be found in even a brief examination of the lives of these innovative thinkers:

Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) lived in an age when the principles of science – provable and verifiable observations that could be replicated – had not yet been established. In 1580, at the age of 16, he enrolled for a medical degree at the University of Pisa, which he did not complete, because he had discovered mathematics, a subject that was to consume his life. He worked as a tutor and as a professor, teaching both mathematics and engineering. In 1609 he heard about an invention called a *spyglass*, obtained one, and improved on it to make his own celestial discoveries. These involved motion, trajectories, comets, and views of the mountains on the moon.

A prolific author, he famously wrote in 1623 in *The Assayer* that the book of nature was written in the language of mathematics. A lovely image but not a wise decision in Italy, where the teaching of the Church – all is God's creation -- remained absolute. The Church's position was that the planets, including the sun, revolved around the stationary earth, an immutable truth articulated by Ptolemy. Galileo's book was referred to the Inquisition, which declined to prosecute.

However, in that same year, a friend, Maffeo Barberini, was elected as Pope Urban VIII, which may have given Galileo a shield against prosecution. Galileo's next work was *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems,* which were Ptolemaic and Copernican (with the sun at the center of the universe). Galileo's text seemed to favor the Copernican system.

This heresy proved too much for the judges of the Inquisition to ignore. This time, he had to fall to his knees and recant. He did so and was sentenced to one day in prison and then home arrest for the remaining eight years of his life. (It is thought that his friend, the Pope, played a role in securing the sentence.)

Galileo continued his research, however, seeking verifiable information: for work on gravity, he used pulleys and sloping boards; for work on the movement of celestial bodies, he developed a refined and powerful telescope. *He sought out the evidence for his theories.*

Galileo's problem was not his scientific accuracy but what the powerful Church *thought* of his scientific conclusions. The Church had to reject his findings because they challenged their worldview. He had to state, on his knees, that he was "suspect of heresy." Not of heresy itself but of the *suspicion* of heresy. A nice Jesuitical distinction when your friend is the Pope who will let you work at home.

The Church banned the study of his work for more than 200 years until 1835. But the story wasn't over: In 1979, the Church opened an investigation into that original inquiry and declared, in 1992, that Galileo had been right all along. It was some 500 years late, but better late than never.

Ignaz Semmelweis (1818-1865) was born in what is today Hungary. Having recently graduated from a medical school in Vienna, in 1847, he was given an appointment as an assistant in obstetrics in a large hospital. It quickly became clear to him that women who were delivered by male physicians and male medical students had a 13-18% rate of post-delivery mortality, much higher than that of women delivered by female midwives or midwife trainees. The affected women were said to have contracted *puerperal*, or childbed, fever. The cause was unknown.

One of the things that Semmelweis noticed was that the male physicians routinely handled corpses, then moved on to delivering babies. (Refrigerated units

Figure 1 Postage stamp of Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis, 1818–1865.

for corpses did not exist, nor did closed rooms or other sanitary environments.) By contrast, midwives were not permitted to perform any medical functions except those limited to midwifery.

Semmelweis theorized that diseases, or what today we would call "germs," could be resident in or on the corpses and could be transferred to the male physician's hands and then to the women giving birth. Handwashing was not practiced, and gloves were not used. Midwives did not handle corpses.

Semmelweis put into place what, in effect, was a controlled experiment, with some physicians conducting themselves as usual and others washing their hands and instruments before approaching their patients. Instances of childbed fever dropped in all patients seen by doctors who washed their hands or who did not handle corpses.

Semmelweis could not provide a medical explanation beyond his observation that maternal mortality was reduced to only 1% when hand washing with disinfectant was used. Nevertheless, his medical appointment was not renewed. He went home to Hungary and, in other medical posts, insisted on handwashing, often haranguing his superiors. He was ridiculed for going against received medical practice and committed to an asylum by colleagues after supposedly suffering a nervous breakdown. There he may have been beaten by guards and died from an untreated gangrenous wound.

It was not until Louis Pasteur confirmed the germ theory of disease in 1861 and Joseph Lister showed the benefits of surgery using hygienic methods that Semmelweis' life-saving observations were finally credited.

Alfred Wegener (1880-1930) switched fields as Galileo had, leaving astronomy to work as a meteorologist. He believed deeply in first-hand observations. To study the flow of air masses, he and his brother used weather balloons and later rode in hot air balloons; in 1906, he set a record time aloft of more than 52 hours.

In 1906 Wegener made the first of four trips to Greenland, always seeking accurate measurements through weather balloons and other means. He began wondering why the edges of various continents (as depicted on printed maps -- for example, South America and Africa) seemed to fit into each other. He also saw that similar fossils and rocks could be found on both continents, although there were no known land bridges between them.

Wegener theorized that at one time, there had been a supercontinent made up of a land mass that split apart. He coined the term "Pangaea" to describe this continent. He hypothesized that there was a geological force which pushed the continents away from the poles and towards the equator. In 1912 he presented his first theory of what he called "continental drift" in a lecture at the Senckenberg Museum in Frankfurt am Main. His theories were largely ignored or mocked. He was not a trained geologist, and a large majority of geologists were vigorously opposed to his ideas coming from someone outside their discipline. Geologists said his theory of the *cause* of continental drift was unlikely and discounted evidence of similar fossil remains found thousands of miles apart. He died in 1930 on his fourth Greenland expedition while trying to resupply a remote camp, where temperatures often dropped to -60 degrees Celsius (-76 degrees Fahrenheit).

It was not for another 30 years, into the 1960s, with the development of powerful lasers and other measuring tools, that his theory could be accepted. Now called "plate tectonics," it holds that the continents float on a fluid mantle bed. Wegener, ignored for so long, is now the acknowledged father of that theory.

J. Harlan Bretz (1882 – 1981), trained as a geologist and with a doctorate from the University of Chicago, speculated that only cataclysmic floods could explain erosion and unusual land formations in the Pacific Northwest. Bretz had hiked in the region for years and seen with his own eyes its deep gorges and sinuous cuts in the terrain. He felt that the then-current theory of gradualism and "uniformitarianism" (in which changes occur through incremental, steady, and uninterrupted forces) could not explain what he saw. The geological establishment thought otherwise.

Bretz published papers beginning as early as 1923, arguing that massive flooding provided the energy needed to cut through rock and schist. In 1925 he dubbed the area the Spokane Floods; few were interested.

In 1927 senior scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey humiliated him at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of Washington. Opponents of Bretz claimed

Figure 2. *Spokane Floods*

with all the certainty of the ignorant that formations on Earth had gradually evolved and were not the result of cataclysmic events. As it happened, a government scientist at that meeting, Joseph T. Pardee, had been thinking along the same lines but had kept quiet because of his government position. They began to collaborate.

The fact was, however, that there was no conclusive proof for the theory – until 1996, when an ice dam in Iceland burst, causing considerable devastation in the valley below. The devastation was captured on film. The mechanism for creating the unusual features in the Pacific Northwest landscape was identical to Bretz and Pardee's hypothesis– a thick ice dam blocking waters in a lake finally gives way. Bretz was alive to see his theory proven and accepted.

J. Thomas Looney (1870-1944) had been teaching Shakespeare for many years to pre-college students in England when he decided he could no longer teach the traditional biography of William Shakespeare – a glover's son, poorly educated, who hobnobs with royalty, works as an actor, leaves London at the height of his powers and then retires to Stratford to sell grain. Looney didn't believe the standard biography and suggested that his students not believe it either.

Looney knew that London in 1600 was comprised of a hierarchical society of no more than 200,000 people. Royalty was on top, followed by nobles, then the merchant and business classes, peasants, farmers, etc. Education was spotty, and upward mobility was nearly impossible. And the Queen could be ruthless to critics. (The right-handed author of a pamphlet she didn't like had his right hand cut off.) How could this *commoner* from provincial Stratford-upon-Avon have surmounted all these obstacles to write the great canon?

In 1915 Looney began a five-year research effort to learn what he could about the author, freed from the moss and tangled ivy of history. Based on the evidence of information displayed in the plays and poems, he compiled a list of characteristics the author must have possessed: knowledge of literature, art and the law; ability to read and speak multiple common and arcane languages; wide travel experience; and knowledge of chivalry and for-royals-only sports such as falconry and jousting, among many others.

He looked at the output of all the minor poets at the time and sought to match them to his own list of required proficiencies. The only viable candidate who emerged from Looney's analysis was Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, whose noble lineage dated back to 1066, and the Norman Conquest. Then Looney researched de Vere in the *Dictionary of National Biography,* where he found support for his authorship theory in de Vere's life. The evidence included a documented and exceptional education in not only the classics but also in languages, art, and law; training in gentlemanly and chivalric pursuits; and extended travels in France and Italy. Looney felt he had his man.

The result of Looney's inquiry was the 1920 publication by Cecil Palmer in London of '*Shakespeare' Identified in Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford.*[1] This was the first mention of de Vere in connection with the works so long attributed to the Stratford man. Criticized almost immediately, and ever since, Looney's work has, however, stood the test of time. More than one hundred years of independent research have confirmed the multiple points of convergence between de Vere's life and prominent, particular elements in the works attributed to Shakespeare.

For example: the orphaned de Vere at age 12 became the ward of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, the Queen's principal secretary (read Polonius), whose daughter Anne (read Ophelia) married de Vere (read Hamlet). De Vere also lived for over a year in Venice (more than a dozen Shakespeare plays were set in Italy), and street scenes and artwork found there were incorporated into the plays and poems. Only in the version of the Titian painting of Venus and Adonis that hung in the Doge's palace in Venice does Adonis wear a cap. That cap, or "bonnet," is actually mentioned in Shakespeare's long poem *Venus and Adonis*. Only an author who had viewed that singular painting could have described that singular and unusual detail.

Myriad additional lines supporting de Vere as the author have now been drawn by scholars in a variety of fields (most of them, interestingly, from fields outside of literature). So was the name *Shake-speare* (as it was most often spelled on the works themselves) a pseudonym?

Looney's conclusions, however, were severely attacked (his Manx name made him a particularly easy target for ridicule). That is -- recalling the examples of Galileo, Semmelweis, Wegener, and Bretz -- his work was attacked not because it was inaccurate but because it challenged received belief by so-called experts.

Traditionalists -- and especially many who were professionally connected to Stratford-upon-Avon – asked (and continue today to ask) who is this J.T. Looney, this secondary school teacher, to be rejecting the long-accepted teachings of erudite literature professors?

In fact, Looney's meticulous research launched a worldwide movement of scholarly skeptics, people who argue for a more factually-based approach to the life of the man called Shakespeare. Looney's refreshing approach to the works has given permission for others to take a new look at what has been known for years.

Fact: Will Shakspere (as his name was spelled) of Stratford -upon-Avon died in 1616. If this man were re-

ally the "soul of the age," as Ben Jonson said in 1623 in the *First Folio,* why were there no eulogies, no national mourning, no immediate monuments ordered to be built, no rushing to the press of any of his works, no broadsheets published lamenting his passing? All this was done for other much lesser writers. If the Stratford man was so important, what happened here?

Fact: Many in the 16th century seem to have known even then that the authorship attribution was a fake. Scholar Bryan H. Wildenthal has compiled more than 30 separate writings dating before the Stratford man's death that "express or indicate authorship doubts." (Wildenthal, 2019)

Fact: The Stratford man's own son-in-law, a physician who kept a diary of the prominent patients he treated, does not even mention him. And scholar Diana Price has shown that not a scrap of paper exists that connects him to the writing of plays or poems.[2]

Fact: The first tribute bust in the Stratford church shows the supposed writer with his hands on a bag of sheep's wool-- not something most writers use for support. The bust-- perhaps of the Stratford man's glover father -- was redone later to add a pen and make it appear more like a writer.

Indeed, the evidence list goes on and on concerning Stratford Will's total invisibility as an *author*.

So how did the Stratford man get to become "Shakespeare"? And why? These are the real questions.

It was not until 1769 – almost 150 years after the Stratford man's death – that the actor David Garrick decided to organize a "Shakespeare Jubilee" in Stratford-upon-Avon. It was the first such event of its kind and had the potential to make Garrick a lot of money. Carriages were hired, accommodations were secured, scenes from Shakespeare plays were presented before those attending (though no full plays were performed), and people walked around in costumes. Unfortunately, it rained heavily during the Jubilee, and mud was the principal product. (Deelman, 1964)

But it was with this unusual event that the idea of somehow sanctifying the glover's son and, by association, the town of Stratford was born, making it an emblem of national identity, something that quickly took root in the English consciousness. In an age where Commerce and Industry were the real pillars of striving and success, Will Shakspere of Stratford was adopted as a guy just like us – a common man battling against the restrictive powers that be, a man struggling to achieve note where he could, a regular guy anyone could have a pint with. He was everything everyone wanted to be. Just don't let his lack of credentials get in the way.

There had certainly been other names suggested as the real author – by the 19th century, the favorites were Francis Bacon and Christopher Marlowe; in 1918, the French scholar Abel Lefranc persuasively argued for William Stanley, the sixth Earl of Derby in his volume *Sous le masque de Shakespeare.* But it was J.T. Looney's 1920 volume that shook the ground most effectively in arguing the real Shakespeare was Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, the highest-ranking nobleman in all of England.

A brilliantly-argued volume, his *Shakespeare Discovered* not only put Oxford in the public eye for the first time, but subsequent research has kept him there ever since. If only traditional literary scholars would read it, they too might well be convinced.

What questions does all this 20th and 21st-century scholarship actually answer?

Why Would a Nobleman Like Edward De Vere Keep His Name Off the Plays and Poems?

It was the custom of the time for artistic 'work' by nobles to be done and published anonymously. To do otherwise was seen as *declassé*. It was also often safer since they were usually writing, sometimes critically, about members of their own class.

Why Are There No Papers Showing De Vere as Author of the Plays?

It is believed by many that his father-in-law, William Cecil (Lord Burghley), the most powerful politician in Elizabethan England, erased him from the public record out of vengeance or spite. There are, however, business letters de Vere wrote to Burghley, written in an exceedingly fluid style echoing his extraordinary education and travels.

Couldn't William Shakespeare Have Traveled to Italy on His Own to Research the Plays?

Travel outside England during this period required the Queen's permission. There is no record that Shakespeare ever applied for permission to travel or was ever granted permission. Travel was also expensive and dangerous – one had to travel with bodyguards and enough money to support a travel group. American attorney Richard Paul Roe (2011) spent more than a decade researching references to people and places found in the plays set in Italy. He traveled up highways that had once been canals; he located churches mentioned in passing, and he found buildings long thought lost. His book, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy,* is stunning. He does not identify any specific authorial candidate, but he does make it clear that the author must have had on-site experience. De Vere lived in Italy, principally Venice, for more than a year.

Couldn't Will of Stratford Have Just Been a Genius?

Geniuses can create, but even geniuses need to have knowledge. A genius could not read, write or speak classical Greek if he were not somehow exposed to it. Because books were not widely available to the Stratford man, even an auto-didact, a polymath with great intellectual facility, would not have been able to produce the works without real access to classics, history, art, music, languages, the law, and poetry. De Vere had wide access to innumerable books (even rare and foreign ones) as well as to private tutors. All of this is well documented. (See especially Anderson, 2005 and Ogburn, 1984.) Will of Stratford had no such access.

Why Has All This Research Been Ignored?

Skeptics today not only have to deal with the religious nature of Bardolatry ("I *believe* that the Stratford man wrote Shakespeare and *belief* is enough. End of discussion"), but they also have to confront what might be called the Shakespeare Industrial Complex (SIC). The SIC is comprised of more than 50,000 books published about Shakespeare and Stratford, as well as more than 50 major Shakespeare festivals taking place around the world, staging hundreds of productions by the Bard annually. Most people feel they know enough.

As well, research in favor of almost any idea supporting the Stratford man as the author that is put forward by financially interested organizations like the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (located in Stratford-upon-Avon) or even the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. has the possibility of being financially supported by those same or similar organizations. Anyone looking into the SIC from the outside would simply not know that any question exists. That said, scholars in the field should be reading a much wider range of materials, especially those concerning the authorship. Generally, though, they do not.

Putting it another way, 'Shakespeare' has become a brand, and that brand has become part of not only the cultural inheritance of humanity but also the *business* of humanity. More than a decade ago, Gareth Howell, an international attorney based in Washington, D.C., who consulted for the World Bank and the United Nations, sought to define the financial extent of that brand in England alone. He found that in 2013, 817,500 people visited Stratford-upon-Avon spending some $513 million (the town's largest source of revenue). He also found that the Birthplace Trust's income that year was itself some $15 million. He noted that the Trust also had its own ongoing endowment, which was then at $34 million.[3]

Clearly, encouraging the idea that the name 'Shakespeare' was a pseudonym would challenge not only received wisdom but would also threaten the professional status and even the livelihoods of innumerable academics. It could also possibly interrupt the free flow of money within and to these established financial enterprises.

Yet accumulating evidence is on the side of the doubters, some emerging from the use of new computer tools (the most recent Oxford University Press edition of the *Works,* for example, included an entire volume on the authorship though the Stratford man was still seen as primary).

No doubt the carefully crafted Stratford myth will take decades more before being swept away by facts, facts brought to light by the pioneering work of a still barely recognized scholar like J.T. Looney. Galileo waited 500 years. Looney has some years left to catch up. But he will.

BIOGRAPHY

Bob Meyers led the National Press Foundation for 20 years and expanded its topic-based outreach to thousands of American and international journalists. He was director of a journalism fellowship at the Harvard School of Public Health and worked on the Watergate investigation that was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. He is the author of two books with medical themes.

ENDNOTES

[1] An American edition was published by the New York firm of Duell, Sloan, and Pearce but not until 1949. In 2018, a centenary edition was edited by James A. Warren and published by Forever Press. Warren edited a new edition of the Looney book in 2019, which was published by the Cary, North Carolina company Veritas.

[2] Included in the volume is a chart of characteristics that could reasonably be expected of a writer in the Elizabethan period (examples: # 4 – evidence of having been paid to write; # 8 – having been personally referred to as a writer; # 10 – notice of being a writer at death). She then looked at 25 writers to see how they stacked up. Ben Jonson had evidence in each of the categories; 24 of the 25 had evidence in at least three categories. The only name that had no association with writing, with the London writing scene, or any other category was William Shakespeare. Price followed up her chart with a detailed set of references for each of the conclusions.

[3] Howell's presentation of his findings was made on May 19, 2016, at the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC. For more on Howell, see https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2017/07/title-204264-en.html.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J_Harlen_Bretz

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https://www.goacta.org/news-item/study_top_universities_dropping_shakespeare_requirement/
https://onepagebooks.com/pages/shakespeare-festivals
https://www.google.com/search?q=shakespeare+in+high+school%3F&oq=shakespeare+in+high+school%3F&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i22i30l9.6702j1j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

More on J. Thomas Looney:

John Thomas Looney was a teacher (or master) at an elementary school in Low Fell, Gateshead, County Durham. Assigned to teach *The Merchant of Venice* for several years in a row in the 1910s, he recounts in the preface to *Shakespeare Identified* that repeating the play "induced a peculiar sense of intimacy with the mind and disposition of its author and his outlook on life." None of what he knew of the traditional author matched what he felt the actual author must have had – experience in travel, knowledge of business, finance, money, etc. Over time he became convinced that the problem of the authorship "has been left primarily in the hands of literary men, whereas the solution required the application of methods of research which are not, strictly speaking, literary methods." After the publication of *Shakespeare Identified*, he co-founded in 1922 a group in England with Sir George Greenwood, The Shakespeare Fellowship, to research the subject. His work was also taken seriously in France, Germany, and latterly in the U.S. and Canada. A biography of Looney is being prepared by authorship historian and independent scholar James A.Warren.

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ESSAY

Demythologizing Shakespeare: What We Really Know About the Man from Stratford

Kevin Gilvary

HIGHLIGHTS

Unlike other noted authors and dramatists of the period, the Stratford man left no notes, journals, letters, or manuscripts, nor did he ever claim to be an author of any kind in his will.

ABSTRACT

The works of Shakespeare have been justly celebrated since they first appeared in print, especially with the publication of the First Folio in 1623. However, the contemporary records concerning Will Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon -- the man credited with writing the works of William Shakespeare -- show that most of what is said or "known" about the man from Stratford is simply undocumented. Will left no notes, no journals, no letters, no manuscripts, no personal comments about anyone, and no literary or educational bequests in his will. The question arises: did he ever write anything? This essay surveys the records and finds that the sparsely documented records concerning William of Stratford make it difficult to accept that he was the true author of the great works.[1]

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INTRODUCTION

In 1910, George Bernard Shaw famously remarked: "Everything we know about Shakespeare can be put into a half-hour sketch."[2]. Most biographers to some extent recognize this lack of documentation. Two eminent Oxford academics devote a chapter to the myth that "We don't know much about Shakespeare's life." For them, however, "it is not true to say that the records are scant" (Maguire & Smith 2012, p. 106). After a brief review of what is known, they state: "We lack comparable information for many of Shakespeare's Elizabethan and Jacobean contemporaries" (Maguire & Smith 2012, p. 107). This may be true, but biographers of Shakespeare are not attempting a series of life studies about early modern dramatists, but one study of one particular writer. There exist contemporary records which are reviewed below, but they do not confirm that William of Stratford ever wrote anything.

Moreover, the comparison with Ben Jonson is instructive. According to his acclaimed biographer, Ian Donaldson, Ben Jonson wrote and received many letters which have survived; he had lengthy conversations on literary matters with William Drummond of Hawthornden, who kept detailed notes in his journal which survive; Jonson published poems and prose which were personal about himself, his family and his friends. He wrote introductions

in his own person to his published works. We know exact details about Jonson's patrons, his travels, his hosts, his library and his personal grief. Despite all this documentation, Ian Donaldson states that biographical materials for Jonson's life can only be known "imperfectly and in part." He adds that "Jonson's life is mainly a matter of gaps, interspersed by fragments of knowledge" (Donaldson 2011, 8-9).

Such wide-ranging documentation exists for Jonson but not for Shakespeare. American literary scholar David Bevington (2010) sums up the comparison:

> A central problem is that Shakespeare wrote essentially nothing about himself. Unlike Ben Jonson (2010), his younger contemporary, who loudly proclaimed in prologues, manifestos, essays, and private conversations his opinions on the arts and writers from antiquity down to the Renaissance, and who has left us vivid testimonials of his feelings about the death of a son, about his wife, "a shrew, but honest", about his conversion to Catholicism, and much more, Shakespeare has left us his plays and poems (Bevington, 2010 p. 3).

Bevington and Donaldson are echoing the great Shakespearean scholar Samuel Schoenbaum who conducted a historical survey of Shakespearean biographies and concluded on a pessimistic note:

> Perhaps we should despair of ever bridging the vertiginous expanse between the sublimity of the subject and the mundane inconsequence of the documentary record (Schoenbaum 1970, 767).

In an attempt to counteract this adverse judgment, Schoenbaum published his own account as *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (1975). In this monumental volume, 218 documents are presented in facsimile, arranged around a cradle-to-grave account of his life. However, about a quarter, just 56 of the documents cited, are contemporary records alluding to Will Shakspere of Stratford (Gilvary 2018, 121). These documents give a framework to the life but do not indicate a literary career. The remaining documents – ten pre-date Will's birth in 1564, 60 are contemporary but do not reference Will, and 92 come from after his death in 1616 – are contextual (Gilvary 2018, 120-128). Perhaps we are unable to discover any links between the great works and the meagre record because there were no links. We might frame this as a question: what evidence can we adduce that William of Stratford was the author of the works attributed to the name of Shakespeare?

DID WILLIAM OF STRATFORD WRITE ANYTHING?

To answer this more fully, we must review the contemporary references to this man. Beginning with the entries in the Register of the Holy Trinity Church at Stratford, we find that the family name is usually spelt 'Shakspere' (on thirteen out of nineteen instances between 1562 and 1616 according to Chambers 1930, ii. 1-18). Furthermore, it is essential to distinguish references to 'Shakespeare' as a man from Stratford with the first name William and to 'Shakespeare' as a collection of great works of drama and poetry.

Many individual documents are available on websites, especially *Shakespeare Documented* www.shakespearedocumented.org. In general, this website provides immediate access to a wide range of materials. Most entries here offer an image and a transcription of the document. However, each entry begins with a reviewer's personal explanation of the record. That is to say, the reviewer is giving *interpretation* before showing *evidence*. Moreover, many of the documents (for example those cited by Schoenbaum in *William Shakespeare, a Documentary Life* (1975) turn out to be more context than document -- detailing topics such as the Shakspere family in Stratford or information about the theatres of the period in London. Because websites can be ephemeral, I generally refer to E. K. Chambers *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (1930, 2 volumes). For the records at Stratford which mention William by name, about thirty in total, I refer to Robert Bearman (*Shakespeare in the Stratford Records* 1994) as *SSR*, and for the London records held at The National Archives at Kew, I refer to David Thomas (*Shakespeare in the Public Records* 1985) as *PRO*. [3]

SHAKESPEARE IN THE STRATFORD RECORDS

The documents in Stratford are listed below in Table 1 with references to Bearman's list which merely indicate William Shakespeare's growing prosperity in his purchase of property (*SSR* 2, *SSR* 8, *SSR* 14) and his standing as an affluent citizen of Stratford (*SSR* 29). There is no record of William from his baptism in 1564 (SSR 1a) until the issue of a marriage licence at the age of eighteen (Chambers 1930 ii. 41). Thus every reference to his childhood, youth or education is entirely speculative.[4] William might even have spent his childhood elsewhere, as argued by Honigmann (1985).

More important is the absence of any personal records, such as letters, journals or notes, that would give

any indication of his thoughts or experiences of his life in Stratford (Gilvary 2018, 21-22). There are only passing references to him by his fellow townsmen concerning finance and property: a possible loan (*SSR* 3) the improvement of the highway (*SSR* 23), and the possible enclosure of land (*SSR* 29). There is no contemporary reference to William Shakespeare as a man. Independent scholar Ramón Jiménez (2013) describes in detail ten contemporaries who left journals and must have known Will or his family. These ten contemporary eye-witnesses never connect Will with the life of a writer or authoring the works of Shakespeare.[5] The absence of any personal letters written by him or on his behalf is astonishing when one considers that the plays mention over 100 letters.[6]

The most significant gap in the Stratford records is the lack of any reference to him as a writer. The epitaphs in the Holy Trinity Church do not mention him as such (WS ii. 181-85). William does not claim to be a writer in his last will and testament (WS ii. 169-181). Nor does his will mention anything literary: no manuscripts of eighteen or so unpublished plays, no books owned, no books borrowed and no reference to any other literary figure. He did not remember the Stratford School in his will nor any of the Stratford schoolmasters. There is only one reference in the will to suggest involvement in the theatre: an interlinear addition mentioning the bequests to Hemmings, Burbage and Condell (*WS* ii. 172). This is also the only evidence among the Stratford documents that Shakespeare ever travelled outside Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

WILLIAM IN THE LONDON RECORDS

There are about 35 hand-written documents at The National Archives in London. David Thomas (1985) has presented transcriptions of public records in London which mention Will (see Table 2, where documents are cited as *PRO*). William is mentioned in the third of three documents (1596-1602) concerning his father's application for a coat of arms. These records are important for detailing John Shakspere's career in Stratford and his family background, but add no knowledge to William's career. The third document dated 1602 cites a complaint against Sir William Dethick, the Garter King-of-Arms, and his associate William Camden (Clarenceux King-of-Arms). In this complaint, William is described as "y^{e} player", not as a poet or playwright (*WS* ii. 18-31).

The account of Sir George Hume, Master of the Great Wardrobe records the issue of red cloth to over a thousand members of the royal household for the Coronation of King James on 15 March 1604 (*PRO* 17). Among those individuals listed were the nine "Players" of the king, including William Shakespeare as well as ten of the Queen's Company, and nine of Prince Henry's Company (Chambers 1930, ii. 73). This record does not indicate that Shakspere was a writer, merely that he was one of twenty eight players among three playing companies. The next record of William in London does not occur for another eight years. In 1612, William was mentioned as present in London in the lawsuit Belott v Mountjoy (*PRO* 25). Shakespeare was called as a witness to certain dowry arrangements. His name occurs eighteen times (Chambers 1930, ii. 90-95). The relevant documents have been transcribed and contextualised by Charles Nicholl (2007). He made his deposition on 11 May 1612 in Westminster Hall but was unable to recall any of the arrangements. David Thomas states that the case of Bellott v. Mountjoy show William involved in "pleasantly mundane domestic events and squabbles" (Thomas 1985, 30) but they do not give any indication that he was a poet or a playwright. In fact, none of the public records in London indicate that he was known as any kind of author (Gilvary 2018, 40-42).

ALLUSIONS IN PRINT

Another category of witness consists of literary allusions by writers in print. These references indicate no personal knowledge of the author known as "Shakespeare" but attest to his growing reputation as a printed poet. The earliest allusion in London is taken to be in Robert Greene's *Groats-worth of Wit* (1592, STC 12245), in which Shakespeare is assumed to be the object of Greene's abuse. However, the allusion is ambiguous: Shakespeare is not actually named. The reference might be to an actor, a writer, or a company member. The straightforward interpretation of the phrase an "upstart crow beautified by our feathers" (sig. F1v-F2r) is a complaint against a writer (Shakespeare) who has plagiarised the work of others.

Perhaps the most important allusion to William Shakespeare as author was made in print by Francis Meres in his 333-page commonplace book, *Palladis Tamia* (1598, STC 17834). In this guidebook, he compares about seventy contemporary writers with classical and European authors (Chambers 1930: ii. 193-5). Meres obviously could not have been acquainted with all of them as he only lived in London for about two years (Kathman, 2004). Meres refers to "Shakespeare" nine times but without stating a first name, suggesting that he was not personally acquainted with him. In his book, Meres names 12 plays, which indicate that these works were known although one of them, *Love's Labour's Won,* has not been identified with certainty. It is not clear whether he had seen these plays acted or, as if he only knew of these plays from written sources. Meres does tell us of the existence of Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends, &c,"

(pages 281-2, signatures Oo1 verso and Oo2 recto; Chambers 1930, vol. ii 193-195). *Shake-speare's Sonnets* were not published for another 11 years. That said, we hear nothing about who those friends were or about any sonnets from other sources. In short, Meres does not seem to have had any direct acquaintance with the author, only with his works.

Other printed allusions refer to Shakespeare as a published poet from 1593 (e.g. *Willobie his Avisa,* 1594, STC 25755) and then to plays that were only published under his name from 1598 (See Table 4). In 1599, we find the poet John Weever in his published *Epigrams* (1599, STC 25224), paying homage to "Honie-tong'd Shakespeare" (book iv no. 22) but again, this is only a reference to the author, not the person. In this epigram Weever shows no special interest in or knowledge of the person Shakespeare and mentions him in one epigram of out of 160. (Honigmann, 1987)

Ben Jonson (1572-1637) was a younger contemporary of William and makes more comments about Shakespeare than any other writer (Chambers 1930: ii. 202-11) but these amount to very little and are inconsequential. Out of the 133 epigrams in the 1616 folio edition of his *Works* (STC 14751), Jonson did not dedicate a single epigram to Shakespeare, implying that the two poet-playwrights did not have any kind of close relationship. The few opinions which Jonson expressed about Shakespeare were contradictory. Jonson was publicly fulsome in writing the commendatory verses in the First Folio of 1623 (Chambers 1930 ii. 207-209), but this may well have been feigned. Jonson began the practice of the literary puff, according to Franklyn B. Williams Jr. (1966). And Jonson became the most prolific writer of literary commendatations in the Jacobean period, writing commendations for thirty printed works (not counting his own). So Jonson's commendatory verses to the First Folio amounts to a literary puff for which he was likely to have been paid (Gilvary 2018, 188-194).

But Jonson was privately dismissive when conversing with William Drummond on his visit to Scotland in 1619.[7] According to Drummond:

- He said, Shakespear wanted Arte (Patterson 1923, 5).

- for in one of his Plays he brought in a Number of Men, saying they had suffered Ship-wrack in Bohemia, where there is no Sea near by 100 Miles (Patterson 1923, 20).

The reproach "that Shakespear wanted Arte" is usually linked with Jonson's more famous suggestion that Shakespeare had "small Latine and lesse Greeke" in the commendatory poem to the First Folio (*v*. 31, Chambers 1930, ii. 208). These instances are only documented after Will's death in 1616. Perhaps the most surprising observation is how few comments Jonson makes about Shakespeare.

Overall, Chambers (1930: ii. 186-237) quotes and discusses 53 contemporary allusions to Shakespeare between 1590-1640 showing that an author called "Shakespeare" was well-known but these allusions are not personal adding nothing to our knowledge of the author. From the very limited testimony of contemporary witnesses, we gain no insight at all into Will's character or personality. Nor do we gain any understanding of Will's literary career beyond the fact that some plays and poems attributed to William Shakespeare were well-known and celebrated.

LITERARY AND THEATRICAL RECORDS 1593-1634

The literary and theatrical records which concern Shakspere as an actor and sharer in the Lord Chamberlain's / King's Men and as the author the great works derive mainly from the title pages of plays and poems, the Stationers' Register (SR) and the Revels Accounts.[8]

A document of great importance for the Elizabethan theatre, misleadingly called *Henslowe's Diary,* sheds no light on Will's career.[9] This is actually an account book maintained meticulously by the theatre owner, Philip Henslowe during the late 1580s and 1590s (see Foakes, 2002, intro. pp. xvi-xvii). In this book, which comprises 242 folio sheets, Henslowe records payments to playwrights, actors, costume makers, carpenters, and the Master of Revels. Henslowe also recorded his takings from individual performances at the Rose Theatre. Henslowe names 27 playwrights but never mentions Shakespeare as one of them (Carson, 2010: pp. 54-66). Henslowe lists seven plays with Shakespearean titles, but does not record any payments for them (Carson 2010, 67-79). This reveals much about the practices in the Elizabethan theatre but tells us nothing about Shakespeare. By contrast, Ben Jonson is frequently mentioned in the volume, *e.g.,* for a loan of £4 in July 1597, which Henslowe paid to Jonson as a co-author of various plays (Carson 2010, p. 32).

The title pages of published poems (see Table 4) ascribe a name "William Shake-speare" (or a variant spelling) on fifteen different plays, two narrative poems and two collections of poems. The name "William Shakespeare" is first associated as the author of a literary work with the publication of the narrative poem *Venus & Adonis* in 1593. The name does not appear on the title page but

below a dedication to the Earl of Southampton. The same arrangement is used on all subsequent editions (1594, 1595 (?), 1596, 1599, 1602, and 1617). This pattern is repeated the following year with the publication of *Lucrece* and in subsequent editions (1598, 1600, 1607, and 1616). In 1599, a collection of poems published under the title *The Passionate Pilgrim* was ascribed to W. Shakespeare. In 1609, a collection of 154 sonnets was published entitled *Shake-speares Sonnets*, but the author is not named in the conventional manner.

ATTRIBUTION OF THE TITLE PAGES

The title pages of plays usually offer useful information about plays in the following arrangement: title (sometimes with an outline of the plot); playing company (but not always) and occasionally venues; author (increasingly during the 1590s); sometimes for a later edition whether the text was corrected or augmented; place, date and printer of the work. The name "William Shake-speare" (or a variant spelling) appears on the title page of fourteen different plays during his lifetime (see Table 4). At least two of these plays were falsely attributed to William of Stratford: *The London Prodigal* in 1605 (Sharpe 2013, 679-704) and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* in 1608 (Sharpe 2013, 704-10). The name was first used in 1598 for reprints of *Richard II* and *Richard III* and for the earliest version of *Love's Labour's Lost.* This name appeared on the title pages of fourteen plays published in his lifetime. In 1623, the massive First Folio (1623) was published, containing 36 plays set in double columns in about 900 pages.

Despite the fact that there is an ascription of an author, these title pages in print are not strictly primary sources as they have been mediated by the stationer who arranged for their publication. For many, the Folio edition is the strongest proof that the man from Stratford was the great author. However, as we have seen, there is nothing in contemporary records of his life that actually confirms his status as an author of any kind, and from at least the 19th century, many have come to doubt the Folio's apparent literary attributions. Moreover, unlike the publications of Ben Jonson (especially his *Works* of 1616), there is no personal testimony either by William Shakespeare or about him (Bevington, 2010 p. 3). Thus these ascriptions give an initial indication of the author of the works, but not an absolute identification as to who composed them.

Some of these are widely considered to be false attributions. We may also note here that the name Shakespeare was attached to a poetry collection entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599; 1612) which contain poems known to have been composed by other writers (Chambers 1930.i. 547-48). After William's death but before the publication of the First Folio, two more plays were falsely attributed to William Shakespeare: *Sir John Oldcastle* in 1619 (Sharpe 2013, 725-727) and *The Troublesome Reign of King John* in 1622 (Vickers 2004; Forker 2011).[10] Thus the name "William Shake-speare" (or a variant spelling) was a major selling point, a kind of brand from the 1590s through the rest of his life and beyond. How far it was used as a brand-name i.e. a pseudonym for other writers, remains to be established.[11]

THE STATIONERS' REGISTER

The Stationers' Register is described in detail by Chambers (1930: i. 126-138). In total there are about thirty-four entries which refer to plays of Shakespeare but there are only four references to Shakespeare as an author in his lifetime. Edward Arber noted "the first time our great poet's name appears in these Registers" on 23 August 1600 "Two bookes. the one called Muche a Doo about nothinge. Th[e] other the second parte of the history of kinge henry the iiijth with the humours of Sir John Fallstaff: Wrytten by master Shakespere *xijd.*" (Register C, f.63v; Arber iii. 170). The next entry refers to the publication of *King Lear.* "A booke called. Master william Shakespeare his historye of Kinge Lear as yt was played before the kinges maiestie at Whitehall vppon Sainct Stephens night [26 December] at Christmas Last [1607] by his maiesties servantes playinge vsually at the globe on the Banksyde *vjd.*" (Register C, f.161v; Arber: iii. 366). A second concerns the Sonnets in 1609: "a booke called Shakespeares sonnettes *vjd*." (Register C, f.183v; Arber: iii. 410).

On 2 May 1608 the following erroneous entry was made: "A booke Called A yorkshire Tragedy written by Wylliam Shakespere vjd." (Register C, f.167r; Arber: iii. 377). Although the entry states that the play was written by Shakespeare, most scholars now accept the play was composed by Thomas Middleton (Sharpe 2013, 704-10).

On 8 November 1623, seven years after William's death, there was a large entry concerning the publication of plays not previously published. The collection of thirty six plays is known as the First Folio (STC 22273). The entry was made in Register D of the Stationers' Company as "M^{r} William Shakespeers Comedyes Histories, and Tragedyes" listing sixteen plays as "not formerly entred to other men" (Register D, p. 69; Arber iv. 107). Overall, these entries in the Stationers' Register say nothing personal about the author, simply the name attached to the publication of the works.

REVEL'S ACCOUNTS

Late in 1605, Edmund Tylney, Master of the Revels, submitted accounts for 1604–5 in a book which survives

(Chambers 1930: ii, 331-2; Thomas 1985, doc. 21). Other account books only survive as summaries. Tylney refers to 15 court performances, including two masques with music. Four of the plays performed were recorded as by "Shaxberd". The Revels Book of 1611–12 records that the court saw only two of Shakespeare's plays, without naming the author (Thomas 1985, doc. 22).

SHARES IN THE GLOBE

Shakespeare's role as a sharer in the Globe from 1599 onwards is described in detail by Chambers (1930: ii. 52-71). Wickham *et al.* (2000) provide useful transcriptions and discussion. The post-mortem inventory of Sir Thomas Brend, dated May 1599, states that the Globe theatre was *in occupacione Willielmi Shakespeare et aliorum* "occupied by William Shakespeare and others" (*PRO* 10; Chambers 1930: ii. 67). Further details emerge from an affidavit in the case Witter v. Heminges and Condell in 1619 (*PRO* 12), and affidavits by Cuthbert Burbage in 1635 (*PRO* 13; Chambers 1930: ii. 65-71). Since Shakspere makes no specific mention of shares in the Globe or the Blackfriars in his will, he must have sold his shares by 1610 (Chambers 1930: ii. 64-5). David Thomas (*PRO* 17) has calculated that Will's income as a sharer in the Globe was £40 per annum over a decade from 1599, and a combined income from the Globe and the Blackfriars Theatre for two or three years in the 1610s at £80 - £90 p.a. Bearman states a slightly higher estimate for the combined income during the early 1600s at approximately £200 p.a. (Bearman 2016, 145).

Such income was not enough to cover the cost of purchasing property in Stratford. According to Chambers, Shakespeare spent £960 for property: £60 on New Place in 1597 (*SSR* 2), £320 on land at Old Stratford in 1602 (*SSR* 8), £440 on a share in the tithes in 1605 (*SSR* 14), and £140 on the Blackfriars gatehouse in 1613 (*PRO* 26). These disbursements indicate considerable outlays and well beyond any earnings that Will might have made as a playwright as the average payment for a play in Henslowe's Diary in the 1590s was no more than £7 (Bearman 2016, p. 50). Nor could he have derived such income from his position as a sharer in the Chamberlain's/King's Men (Bearman 2016, pp. 145-54). The mystery remains as to how he derived his income.

CONCLUSION

Due to a clear absence of documents, it is not possible to construct a literary biography of William of Stratford, that is, a narrative account of a life as a writer. Only a small number of townsmen refer to Will in letters or business notes and none of these offer the least suggestion as to the character, personality or appearance of the man. The allusions to Shakespeare as a writer are to a name associated with printed texts, not to an author.

Moreover, there are three glaring sets of 'lost years' in the surviving records for Will:

1. regarding his childhood and youth from baptism in 1564 (*SSR* 1a) to the issue of a marriage licence when he was eighteen (Chambers 1930: ii. 41). During this period we have no idea of his education or literary influences.
2. his early adulthood from the birth of his twin children in 1585 when he was twenty (*SSR* 1c) until he was paid as a member of the Chamberlain's Men at the age of thirty (*PRO* 2). During this period, we have no idea how he could ever have become a writer.
3. his maturity in London (aged 40 to 48) from the issue of red cloth for the King's Coronation in 1604 (*PRO* 17) until he is summoned as a witness in the Bellott-Mountjoy case in 1612 (*PRO* 25). During this period he should have been at the peak of his powers and his fame. Yet there is no trace that he was even in London at this time.

The extant records simply do not indicate that Will Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon was any kind of an author. The Stratford records indicate only that he was a provincial man of increasing affluence. The literary and theatrical records attest to Will's involvement with the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later the King's Men) and as a sharer at the Globe. But the allusions in print to "Shakespeare" as an author only indicate that the name had been associated with plays and poems. These allusions in print do not connect with the man from Stratford.

This realization that Will left no notes, no journals, no letters, no manuscripts, no personal comments about anyone, and no literary or educational bequests in his will, not only precludes the possibility of writing his life story but must also raise the larger question: did he ever actually write anything at all?

BIOGRAPHY

Kevin Gilvary has a BA and MA in Classics, an MA in Applied Linguistics (University of Southampton) and a PhD from Brunel University in London. His 2015 doctoral thesis entitled *Shakespearean Biografiction* was adapted and published by Routledge in 2018 as *The Fictional Lives of Shakespeare*. He was the editor of, and major contributor to, *Dating Shakespeare's Plays: A Critical Review of the Evidence* (2010, Parapress).

ENDNOTES

[1] This essay is based on Chapter 2 of my *Fictional Lives of Shakespeare* (2018). Other critical accounts of the documentation for William Shakspere of Stratford include Diana Price *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography: New Evidence of an Authorship Problem.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press (2001); David Ellis *That Man Shakespeare: Icon of Modern Culture*. Mountfield, East Sussex: Helm International (2005); David Ellis "*Biographical Uncertainty* and Shakespeare." *Essays in Criticism* 55, (2005) 193-208; David Ellis *The Truth about William Shakespeare: Fact, Fiction and Modern Biographies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (2012). Especially comprehensive is Tony Pointon *The Man who was NEVER Shakespeare*. Parapress. (2012).

[2] G. B. Shaw's thorough and devastating review of Frank Harris's play (*Shakespeare and his Love*, 1910) appeared in *The Nation* 8, 24 December; repr. in *Bernard Shaw's Book Reviews*, ed. Brian Tyson (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996 ii., 240-254)

[3] References to documents concerning Will of Stratford are cited as *WS* with reference to E.K. Chambers's two-volume *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (1930). This work remains lucid, accessible and comprehensive; modern scholars continue to refer to Chambers. Many individual records can be accessed online at the Shakespeare Documented website. Other documentary collections include a two volume study by B. Roland Lewis *The Shakespeare documents: Facsimiles, transliterations, translations & commentary*. Stanford (1940). Caroline Loomis *William Shakespeare: A documentary volume*. Gale Group (2002). Among encyclopedias, especially helpful is Oscar J. Campbell & E. G. Quinn *The Reader's Encyclopaedia of Shakespeare.* MJF Books (1964). Also noteworthy is Michael Dobson & Sir Stanley Wells *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare.* Oxford (2001). However, none of these collections offer an overview of the documents such as is made herein.

[4] Samuel Schoenbaum (1977) makes many unfounded assertions about Will's education: that Will spent his childhood in Stratford (no evidence), where "we need not doubt that Shakespeare received a grammar school education" (1977, p.63). The phrase "we need not doubt" simply indicates the absence of any direct evidence. He adds that Will "was lucky to have the King's School at Stratford-upon-Avon. It was an excellent institution of its kind, better than most rural grammar schools" (1977, p.65). By contrast Chambers mentions the school only briefly, just four times in the opening chapter (1930, i. pp. 3-11). Levi Fox (1984) outlines what little is known in a short pamphlet of 23 pages entitled "The Early History of King Edward VI School", Dugdale Society.

[5] In his article, Ramón Jiménez (2013) describes the following ten contemporaries who did not link William to the great works: the historian William Camden, the poet Michael Drayton, the lawyer Thomas Greene, his son-in-law the doctor John Hall, James Cooke, the lawyer Sir Fulke Greville, Edward Pudsey, Queen Henrietta Maria, the theatre manager Philip Henslowe, and the famous actor Edward Alleyn.

[6] Alan Stewart in *Shakespeare's Letters* Oxford (2008) analyzes 111 letters in over thirty plays which serve a wide variety of dramatic reasons.

[7] Jonson's conversations were recorded by William Drummond in his notebook at their meetings in 1619. These notes were published as "Informations to William Drummond of Hawthornden" by John *Sage & Thomas Ruddiman in The Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden:* Scotland: James Watson (1711). The notebook appears in a modern edition by R. F. Patterson, ed. *Ben Jonson's conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden*. London: Blackie & Sons (1923).

[8] E. K. Chambers deals comprehensively with literary and theatrical records in volume II of *William Shakespeare: a Study of Facts and Problems* (1930). Transcriptions of documents concerning the Lord Chamberlain's Men/ King's Men can be found in Wickham, Glynne, Herbert Berry & William Ingram, eds., *English Professional Theatre, 1530-1660*. Cambridge University Press (2000). The few records concerning Will as a member of these companies have been usefully collected in C. D., Wilson, F. P., Greg, W. W., & Jenkins, H. (1962) *Dramatic Records in the Declared Accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber*. Malone Society. For a narrative, and at times speculative, account of the Lord Chamberlain's Men/ King's Men, see Andrew Gurr's misleadingly titled, *The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642.* Cambridge (2004).

[9] There is a modern edition with very helpful notes by R. A. Foakes (ed.) (2002) *Henslowe's Diary*. Cambridge. There is interesting discussions in Neil Carson (2011). *Companion to Henslowe's Diary*. Cambridge.

[10] Both Brian Vickers (in 'The Troublesome Reign, George Peele, and the Date of King John' in *Words that count*, ed. Brian Boyd, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004: 78-116) and Charles Forker (ed., *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011) make the case that *The Troublesome Reign* was by another dramatist, George Peele, and was used as a source text for Shakespeare's *King John* and that it was not a variant or early version.

[11] Peter Kirwan in *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) has examined in detail the texts which are thought to have used the name "William Shakespeare" pseudonymously. He further deals with other plays which were published with initials suggestive of William Shakespeare but were also misattributions: *Locrine* "by W.S." (1595, STC 21528), *Thomas Lord Cromwell* "by W.S." (1613, STC 21533), and *The Puritan* "by W.S." (1607, STC 21531).

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STC A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English books printed abroad 1475-1640. Second edition, revised and enlarged, begun by W. A. Jackson and F. S. Ferguson, completed by K. F. Pantzer. London: The Bibliographical Society. Vol. I (A-H). 1986. Vol. II (I-Z). 1976. Vol. III (Indexes, addenda, corrigenda). 1991. London, Bibliographic Society.

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APPENDIX: THE RECORDS FOR WILLIAM OF STRATFORD

The following documents the mention of the name William Shakespeare in records dated between 1564 and 1616: in total there are about 80 contemporary manuscript references. There are also 18 printed references.

References:

WS Chambers. E. K. *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*. 2 vols (1930)
PRO Thomas, D. *Shakespeare in the Public Records*. Document Numbers (1964)
SSR Bearman, Robert. 1994. *Shakespeare in the Stratford Records* (1994).

Table 1: Shakespeare in the Stratford Records

Robert Bearman (*SSR*) states that there are 30 or 31 documents in Stratford which refer by name to William Shakespeare up until his burial. There are also two allusions in the Worcester Diocesan Register.

1564	Baptism 'Guliemus filius Johannes Shakspere' Holy Trinity Church, Stratford (*SSR* 1a).
1582	Licence for Marriage for 'Willelmum Shaxpere' to Anna Whately; Surety for Marriage for 'Willm Shagspere' to Anne Hathawey; Bishop of Worcester's Register (*WS* ii. 41).
1583	Baptism of Susanna 'daughter to William Shakspere' (*SSR* 1b)
1585	Baptism of Hamnet & Judeth 'sonne & daughter to William Shakspere' (*SSR* 1c)
1596	Burial, Hamnet filius 'William Shakspere'. Holy Trinity Church, Stratford (*SSR* 1d).
1597	Purchase of New Place for £60 from William Underhill (*SSR* 2).
1597	Stratford Corporation Payment for stone to 'Mr. Shakespere' [? father or son] (*SSR* 31)
1598	Letter from Abraham Sturley to Richard Quiney about 'Mr. Shaksper' (*SSR* 3)
1598	Stratforde Burrowghe, noate of corn and malt: 'Wm. Shackespere. x [10] quaerts' (*SSR* 4).
1598	Letter to 'Wm. Shackespere' from Richard Quiney requesting loan of £30 (*SSR* 5).
1598	Letter from Adrian Quiney to his son, Richard Quiney about 'M^{r} Sha' (*SSR* 6).
1598	Letter from Abraham Sturley to Richard Quiney about our countriman 'M^{r} Wm Shak' (*SSR* 7).
1601	Will of Thomas Whittington calls Anne Shaxspere, 'wyf unto Mr. Wyllyam Shaxspere' (*WS* ii. 42)
1602	conveyance of 107 acres of arable land and 20 acres of pasture to 'William Shakespeare' from William and John Combe (*SSR* 8).
1602	counterpart of document of conveyance of 107 acres of arable land (*SSR* 9)
1602	Transfer of cottage in Chapel Lane, Stratford from Walter Getley to Shakespeare (*SSR* 10)
1604	Survey of Rowington Manor confirms 'William Shakespere lykewise holdeth there one cottage' (*WS* ii. 112).
1604	Stratford Court of Record: 'Willielmus Shexpere' sued the apothecary Philip Rogers (*SSR* 11).
1605	Assignment of an interest in a lease of Tithe Lands to 'William Shakespear' from Ralph Hubaude (*SSR* 12).
1605	Ralph Hubaud's Bond of £80 with 'Willielmo Shakespear' (*SSR* 13).
1605	Draft of assignment of an interest in a lease of Tithe Lands from Ralph Hubaude (*SSR* 14).
1606	Inventory of Ralph Hubaud's property showing 'Mr. Shakspre' owed xx*li* (*Calendar of Worcester Wills*)
1606	Survey of Rowington shows 'Willielmus tenet . . . domum mansionalem' (*WS* ii. 112)
1608-9	Court of Record for Stratford (seven documents). Addenbrooke suit (*SSR* 15-21)
1609	Conveyance of a Property adjoining a property of Shakespeare in Henley Street (*SSR* 22)
1611	Shakespeare's name added to List of 71 Contributors to a Highways Bill (*SSR* 23).
1611	Draft Bill of Complaint confirms Shakespeare's lease of the tithes of Stratford (*SSR* 24).
1611	Inventory of goods of Robert Johnson states he held a barn of "Mr Shaxper" (*WS* ii. 32).
1612	Survey of Stratford Corporation records Shakespeare as tithe tenant (*SSR* 25)
1613	Conveyance of property in Henley Street, next to a property of Shakespeare (*SSR* 26).
1614	Thomas Greene notes M^{r} Shakspeare among Freeholders in Oldstratford and Welcombe (*SSR* 27).
1614	Welcombe Enclosure: covenant with William Replingham (*SSR* 28).
1614	Thomas Greene refers four times in his notes to Shakspere (*SSR* 29).
1614	Grant for entertaining a preacher (*WS* ii. 153)
1603-16	Endorsement on lease of a barn beside Mr William Shaxpeare's property (*SSR* 30).
1616	Burial of 'Will. Shakspere, Gent' (*SSR* 1e).

Table 2: William of Stratford in Official London Records

There are about 25 documents in London which mention William Shakespeare in his lifetime. Thomas lists 28 documents held in the PRO (now The National Archives), but two of these do not mention him by name and four date from after his death.

1588-9	Court of King's Bench: William cited as legal heir in Bill of Complaint about Estate at Wilmecote: (*PRO* 1).
1595	15 April. Treasurer of the Queen's Chamber paid £20 to "**Willm Kempe** Willm Shakespeare & Richarde Burbage seruaunt*es* to the Lord Chamb*er*leyne" (*PRO* 2).
1596	Court of King's Bench: "William Shakspere" bound over in in Writ of Attachment made by Francis Langley (*PRO* 3).
1597	Purchase of New Place by "Willielmus Shakespeare" from Thomas Underhill (*PRO* 9).
1597	"William Shackspere" listed among tax defaulters in St. Helen's Parish, Bishopsgate (*PRO* 4).
1598	"Willelmus Shakespeare" listed as tax defaulter in St. Helen's Parish, Bishopsgate (*PRO* 5).
1599	"Willelmus Shakepeare" listed as tax defaulter in Bishopsgate (*PRO* 6).
1599	Shakespeare listed as tax defaulter in St. Helen's Parish, Bishopsgate (*PRO* 7).
1599	Thomas Brend's post-mortem inventory mentions "Shakespeare" at the Globe (*PRO* 10).
1600	"Willelmus Shakspeare" in Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer as tax defaulter (*PRO* 8).
1600	Stationers' Register: 'Henry iiij . . . written by Mr Shakespere' (*WS* i. 377).
1602	Confirmation that "Willielmum Shakespeare" purchased New Place in 1597 (*PRO* 14).
1602	York Herald mentions "Shakespear y^{e} Player by Garter" in a complaint about issuing of arms (*WS* ii. 22).
1603	Warrant for Letters Patent: "Wilielmum Shakespeare" was listed as one of King's Men (*PRO* 15).
1603	Letters Patent: "Wilielmum Shakespeare" listed as one of King's Men (*PRO* 16).
1604	Master of the Great Wardrobe grants red cloth to "William Shakespeare" and others (*PRO* 17).
1604	Survey of Rowington lists "William Shakespere" as property holder (*PRO* 18).
1604-5	Revels's Accounts mentions "Shaxberd" as the author in connection with performance of four plays at court (*PRO* 21).
1605	Augustine Phillips bequeaths 30*s*. "to my ffellowe william Shakespeare" (*WS* ii. 73).
1606	Exchequer, Land Revenue lists Shakespeare as property holder in Stratford (*PRO* 19).
1607	Stationers' Register: "Master William Shakespeare his historye of Kynge Lear" (*WS* i. 463).
1608	Stationers' Register: "A Yorkshire Tragedy by Wylliam Shakespere" (*WS* i. 535).
1609	Stationers' Register: "a booke called Shakespeares sonnettes" (*WS* i. 556).
1610	Confirmation of land purchase by "Shakespere" from William and John Combe in 1602 (*PRO* 24).
1611-2	Revels' Accounts mentions two plays of Shakespeare but not him by name (*PRO* 22).
1612	Bellott-Mountjoy Case: Shakespeare is mentioned 18 times in 25 documents (*PRO* 25).
1613	Payment for an Impresa to a Mr. Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 153).
1613	Purchase of Blackfriars Gatehouse for £140; mortgaged to Henry Walker (*PRO* 26).
1613	Bequest of five pounds by John Combe to M^{r} William Shackspere (*WS* ii. 127)
1615	King's Bench. Shakespeare mentioned as Sharer in Globe in case Ostler v Heminges (*PRO* 11).
1615	Mentioned in Bill of Complaint by Sir Thomas Bendish regarding Blackfriars (*PRO* 27).
1616	Last will and testament of William Shackspeare (*PRO* 28).
1617	Court Roll of Rowington confirms transfer of property to Susanna and John Hall (*PRO* 20).
1619-20	Court of Requests mentions Shakespeare in case Witter v. Heminges and Condell (seven documents, *PRO* 12).
1632	Court of Requests: Cuthbert Burbage mentions Shakespeare as sharer in the Globe (*WS* ii. 67).
1635	Lord Chamberlain's Department. Cuthbert Burbage mentions Shakespeare (*PRO* 13).
1636-7	Warrants from Lord Chamberlain mentions three plays of Shakespeare, but not him by name (*PRO* 23).

Table 3: Unofficial, Manuscript References to Shakespeare

In addition to the six unofficial, manuscript references listed in the Stratford section, there are about ten unofficial, hand-written references to Shakespeare in his lifetime.

1593	H. B. in *Willobie His Avisa* refers to Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 191).
1598-1603	Northumberland Manuscript contains unsigned scribbles, mentioning Shakespeare on various occasions (*WS* ii 196-7)
1598-1601	Gabriel Harvey in a manuscript note in a copy of Speght's translation of *Chaucer* (1598) mentions Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 196).
1599-1601	*The Returne from Parnassus* I and II mentions Shakspeare nine times (*WS* ii. 199-201).
1599-1605	"W. Shakespear" mentioned in an anonymous manuscript note in *The Pinner of Wakefield,* attributed to Robert Greene (*WS* ii. 201).
1601	Francis Davison's note in *Catalog of the Poems contayned in Englands Helicon* (*WS* i. 372).
1602	John Manningham in his diary reports an anecdote about Burbage and Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 212).
1613-35	Leonard Digges in a manuscript note in a copy of Lope de Vega's *Rimas* mentions Shakespeare (Morgan 1963, pp 118-120).
1614	William Drummond mentions Shakespeare (from notes published in 1711, *WS* ii. 220).
1615	F. B. [Francis Beaumont] in a poem to Ben Jonson mentions Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 222).
1618-21	Edmund Bolton lists Shakespeare in his manuscript for *Hypercritica* (*WS* ii. 225).
1616-33	William Basses's poem on the death of Wm Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 226).

Table 4: Printed References to Shakespeare

There are about 18 named references to Shakespeare in print until the end of 1616.

1592	Possible allusion by the name 'shake-scene' in Robert Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* (*WS* ii. 188).
1595	Thomas Covell in *Polimanteia* refers to 'sweet Shak-speare' (*WS* ii. 193).
1598	Richard Barnfield in *A Remembrance of Some English Poets* mentions Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 195).
1598	Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia* mentions Shakespeare among many other writers (*WS* ii. 193-195).
1599	John Weever dedicates one epigram (out of 160) to 'Honie-tong'd *Shakespeare*' (*WS* ii.199).
1600	John Bodenham mentions William Shakespeare once in his Epistle to *Bel-vedere or The Garden of the Muses* (*WS* ii, 211).
1600-4	Anthony Scoloker in *Daiphantus, or the Passions of Love* refers to 'friendly Shake-speare's tragedies' (*WS* ii 214).
1603	In *A Mourneful Dittie, entituled Elizabeths Losse* (by Henry Chettle?) 'Shakspeare, Johnson, Greene' are criticised for not lamenting the death of Elizabeth (*WS* ii.212-3).
1603-1625	I. C.[John Cooke] in *Epigrames* lists Shakespeare with Johnson and Greene (*WS* ii. 212).
1605	William Camden (1551-1623) in *Remaines of a greater Worke concerning Britaine* mentions William Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 215).
1607	William Barksted in *Myrrha* mentions 'Shakspeare' (*WS* ii. 216).
1612	John Webster in his *Epistle to The White Devil* mentions 'Shake-speare' among others (*WS* ii. 218).
1614	Richard Carew on the *Excellencie of the English Tongue* mentions 'Shakespheare' (*WS* ii. 219).
1614	Thomas Freeman in *Runne and a Great Cost* writes a sonnet to Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 220).
1615	Edmund Howes in his continuation of Stow's *Annals* mentions Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 221).
1615	Thomas Porter in his book of epigrams mentions Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 222).
1616	In *The workes of Beniamin Ionson*, 'Will. Shakespeare' is listed among the actors for *Every Man in his Humour* and 'Will. Shake-Speare' for *Sejanus* (*WS* ii. 71).
1620	John Taylor in *The Praise of Hemp-seed* mentions Shakespeare (*WS* ii. 226).

Table 5 List of Plays and Poems Attributed in Print to Shakespeare

STC *A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English books printed abroad* 1475-1640. Second edition, revised and enlarged, begun by W. A. Jackson and F. S. Ferguson, completed by K. F. Pantzer. London: The Bibliographical Society. Vol. I (A-H). 1986. Vol. II (I-Z). 1976. Vol. III (Indexes, addenda, corrigenda). 1991.

Year	Edn	Title	Attribution	STC
1593	**Q1**	*Venus and Adonis*	William Shakespeare	22354
1594	**Q2**	*Venus and Adonis*	William Shakespeare	22355
	O1	*Lucrece*	William Shakespeare	22345
1595		-		
1596	**Q3**	*Venus and Adonis*	William Shakespeare	22357
1597		-		
1598	**Q1**	*Lucrece*	William Shakespeare	22346
	Q	*Love's Labours Lost*	W. Shakespere	22294
	Q2	*1 Henry IV*	W. Shake-speare	22280
	Q2, **Q3**	*Richard II*	William Shake-speare	222308/9
	Q2	*Richard III*	William Shake-speare	222315
1599	**Q4**	*Venus and Adonis*	William Shakespeare	22358
	Q3	*1 Henry IV*	W. Shakespeare	22280
	O1,O2	*Passionate Pilgrim*	W. Shakespere	22342
1600	**Q2, Q3**	*Lucrece*	William Shakespeare	22347/8
	Q1	*2 Henry IV,*	W. Shakespeare	22288
	Q1	*Midsummer Night's Dream,*	William Shakespeare	22302
	Q1	*Merchant of Venice*	William Shakespeare	22296
	Q	*Much Ado*	William Shakespeare	22304
1601		-		
1602	**Q5**	*Venus and Adonis*	William Shakespeare	22359
	Q1	*Merry Wives,*	William Shakespeare	22299
	Q3	*Richard III*	William Shakespeare	22316
1603	**Q1**	*Hamlet*	William Shake-speare	22275
1604	**Q2**	*Hamlet*	William Shakespeare	22276
	Q3	*1 Henry IV*	W. Shake-speare	22282
1605	**Q4**	*Richard III*	William Shake-speare	22317
	Q	*The London Prodigal*	William Shakespeare	22333
1606		-		
1607	**Q6**	*Venus and Adonis*	William Shakespeare	22360
	Q4	*Lucrece*	William Shakespeare	22349
1608	**Q7**	*Venus and Adonis*	William Shakespeare	22360a
	Q1	*History of King Lear*	William Shake-speare	22292
	Q4	*Richard II*	W. Shakespeare	22310
	Q5	*1 Henry IV*	W. Shake-speare	22283
	Q1	*A Yorkshire Tragedy*	W. Shakspeare	22340
1609	**Q**	*Sonnets*	Shake-speare	22353
	Q1	*Troilus,*	William Shakespeare	22232
	Q1, **Q2**	*Pericles*	William Shakespeare	22334
1610	**Q8**	*Venus and Adonis*	William Shakespeare	22360b
1611	**Q3**	*Hamlet,*	William Shakespeare	22277
	Q3	*Pericles*	William Shakespeare	22334
	Q2	*King John*	W. Sh.	14646
1612	**Q5**	*Richard III*	W. Shake-speare	22318
	O3	*Passionate Pilgrim*	W. Shakespere	22343
1613	**Q6**	*1 Henry IV*	W. Shake-speare	22284
1614		-		
1615	**Q5**	*Richard II*	William Shake-speare	22312
1616	**Q5**	*Lucrece*	William Shakespeare	22350
1617	**Q9**	*Venus and Adonis*	William Shakespeare	22361
1618		-		
1619	**Q3**	*Contention*	William Shakespeare	26101
	Q3	*True Tragedie*	William Shakespeare	26101
	Q4	*Pericles*	William Shakespeare	22334
	Q2	*Merry Wives*	W. Shakespeare	22300
	Q2	*Merchant*	W. Shakespeare	22297
	Q2	*King Lear*	William Shake-speare	22293
	Q2	*MN Dream*	W. Shakespeare	22303
	Q2	*A Yorkshire Tragedy*	W. Shakespeare	22341
	Q2	*Sir John Oldcastle*	William Shakespeare	18796
1620	**Q10**	*Venus and Adonis*	William Shakespeare	22362
1621		-		
1622	**Q4**	*Hamlet*	William Shakespeare	22278
	Q1	*Othello,*	William Shakespeare	22305
	Q6	*Richard III*	W. Shake-speare	22319
	Q7	*1 Henry IV*	W. Shake-speare	22285
	Q3	*King John*	W. Shakespeare	14647
1623	F1	First Folio (36 plays)	William Shakespeare	22273

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ESSAY

The Shakespeare Authorship Question: A Forensic Examination

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HIGHLIGHTS

The search for a link between the world's most famous writer, William Shakespeare, and the litigious businessman from Stratford-upon-Avon, Will Shakspere, has been ongoing for centuries, but no one has yet found any evidence that they were the same person.

ABSTRACT

Most authorship disputes are between rival authors, between two or more writers for whom there is conflicting evidence within the works themselves, or conflicting testimony from others about who exactly composed what. The Shakespeare Authorship Question, however, is quite different. It is based on assumptions about the supposed author's life, on a stunning absence of testimony by people who actually knew him, as well as silence by the author himself. That is, the traditional attribution is based on a *lack* of direct knowledge. Despite centuries of intense research and investigation, no credible evidence from his actual lifetime has emerged linking Will Shakspere of Stratford to the illustrious dramatic canon of the author who wrote under the pseudonym William Shakespeare. One major aspect of this search has been attempts by scholars to find individuals among Shakspere's family, friends, and co-workers who spoke of him as a writer. It turns out that no one who lived and worked during the Stratford man's dates ever did. Nor did he or any member of his family or his descendants ever claim that he was a writer. There is simply no contemporary record of anyone mentioning him in connection with playwriting. Even among the few literary men who were personally acquainted with him – poet and playwright Michael Drayton and historian William Camden to name two -- neither ever mentioned him as a writer in their accounts of prominent men from the county of Warwickshire. Other residents of the Stratford area -- some of whom were quite familiar with the London theatrical scene -- never referred to him at all, much less as a dramatist. This included the theatergoer Edward Pudsey and the poet and playwright Fulke Greville, also Warwickshire residents. Dr. John Hall, who married Shakspere's daughter Susanna in 1607, practiced medicine in Stratford for 30 years and wrote about his most interesting patients, never mentioned his father-in-law as a writer. This absence of direct knowledge and this absence of living testimony is unique in the history of authorship disputes. This article looks in detail at the silences of those around the Stratford man, people who should have mentioned his writing but didn't, and ask what part such silence should play in knowledge formation.

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INTRODUCTION

> Of all the immortal geniuses of literature, none is personally so elusive as William Shakespeare. It is exasperating and almost incredible that he should be so. After all, he lived in the full daylight of the English Renaissance, in the well-documented reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. . . . He was connected with some of the best-known figures in the most conspicuous court in English history. Since his death, and particularly in the last century, he has been subjected to the greatest battery of organized research that has ever been directed upon a single person. And yet the greatest of all Englishmen, after this tremendous inquisition, still remains so close a mystery that even his identity can still be doubted.
>
> *Hugh Trevor-Roper,*
> *Regius Professor of Modern History,*
> *Oxford University*

Authorship disputes typically involve two or more rival claimants to a work or body of work in which there is conflicting evidence of authorship, or about which there is conflicting testimony from others about who was the actual author. There is usually evidence of some kind on both sides of the dispute. However, the controversy about the authorship of the Shakespeare canon, now more than 400 years old, is quite different. It became a subject of public discussion in the 18th century and continues today because the traditional attribution to William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon is not based on facts, testimony, or documentation but on assumptions about the supposed author that are unsupported by any credible evidence.

Despite centuries of intense research and investigation, no such evidence from Stratford, London, or elsewhere has emerged associating the provincial businessman with the plays and poems that were published under the pseudonym "William Shakespeare." In fact, the traditional attribution has prevailed despite the substantial evidence that the Stratford man had nothing to do with playwriting or poetry and that there is no documentation that he ever wrote anything.

No one who knew him associated him with writing, nor did he ever claim to be a writer. This absence of evidence, what amounts to total silence, is almost unique in the history of authorship disputes, and is highly unusual in serious controversies of any kind. Questions about the real identity of the author "Shakespeare" arose in the Elizabethan dramatic community as early as 1593 and 1594, when the name first appeared in print. Over the ensuing decades, numerous poets, playwrights, and others repeatedly hinted that there was an unknown writer behind the Shakespeare name who could not be revealed.[1] Although these questions continued to be asked over generations to come, and numerous different answers proposed, editors, scholars, and publishers have accepted and enforced a tradition that a businessman in Stratford-upon-Avon named William Shakspere was the author of the world's most illustrious dramatic canon.[2] The origin of this disputed tradition is unknown, but it seems to have developed as references to the Stratford man as the author began to appear in the 1620s and 1630s, years after his death. It was not until 1920 when J. Thomas Looney published '*Shakespeare' Identified in Edward de Vere the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, that the actual author was revealed.

Stratford-upon-Avon

The surviving records pertaining to William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon (1564-1616) indicate that he was a grain dealer and moneylender who invested in real estate in his village in rural Warwickshire. At no time during his lifetime and for several years afterward were there any references to him as a playwright or a writer of any kind. Neither Shakspere nor any member of his family, nor any of his descendants, ever claimed that he was a writer, and there is no record of any of them mentioning plays or playwriting. Nor is there any evidence that William Shakspere of Stratford attended the court of Queen Elizabeth or consorted with the wealthy or the nobility, as the author of the plays obviously did.

The records of the Stratford grammar school during his school-age years are lost, but his biographers claim that he would have received an advanced grammar school education. There is no record that he attended any of the Inns of Court or universities in England, nor any evidence that he traveled beyond Stratford and London. He married at age 18 to a woman six years older who was already pregnant with their daughter, Susanna. Three years later, in 1585, his wife bore him twins, whom he named Hamnet and Judith, after neighbors of the family. It appears that about this time, he traveled to London, but his activities for the next six or seven years, the so-called "lost years," are unknown.

His parents, John and Mary, were unable to sign their names, and his daughter Judith signed with a mark. His eldest daughter, Susanna, was barely able to sign her name (Thompson, 1916; Price, 2000). The only handwriting alleged to be that of William Shakspere are six signatures on legal documents, all dated in the last four years of his

life, including three on his will. They are all written in a shaky script and all spelled differently. Several are not completely finished. The authenticity of all six signatures has come into question, the claim being made that some or all of them were written by a lawyer or a lawyer's clerk. More than one expert has concluded that those on the will were not written by the person who wrote the other three, most likely a law clerk (Thomas, 1985; Jenkinson, 1922). If any of them were actually written by Shakspere of Stratford, they indicate that he was, at best, unaccustomed to signing his name. At worst, they suggest that he was unable to write cursive script, and is therefore disqualified as the author of the Shakespeare works. It should be noted here that almost all major authors of the period used cursive script.

In this context, it is notable that Shakspere's friend and neighbor Richard Quiney, who was about seven years older than the alleged playwright, was the author of the only extant letter written to him—a letter of more than a hundred words that he wrote in October 1598. It is an appeal for a guarantee of a loan of £30, and is signed "Yowres in all kyndness Ryc. Quyney." In the words of paleographer Sir E. Maunde Thompson, " . . . one is struck with the excellence of the small but legible . . . handwriting in the English style."[3] A letter to this same Richard Quiney, sent to him in London by his father Adrian, dated January 1598, is also extant.

In his article on handwriting in 16th century England, Thompson (1916, pp. 295-296) also cited a Stratford deed of 1610 that "bears three admirable signatures of Shakespeare's fellow townsmen." These facts demonstrate that Shakspere's neighbors and fellow businessmen were able to sign their names, and even write competent letters, and that his parents and children were unable to do the same. On the other hand, Shakspere's younger brother, a haberdasher, signed his name "Gilbart Shakspere" in "a neat Italian hand" as a witness two years before his death in 1612, at the age of 45 (Eccles, 1963). These facts are further evidence that the claim that Shakspere of Stratford authored the Shakespeare works, or even a single play, is therefore almost impossible to believe.

In Shakspere's own will, which filled three pages and was most likely written by a clerk, he mentioned no books, papers, or manuscripts, nor did he refer to a theater, a playbook, or a play. The reference in his will to the actors Burbage, Heminges, and Condell of the King's Men seem to be a later interpolation. In any case, the will language only connects him to these men as an actor, and makes no mention of the writing of plays or poems. Although it is documented that he owned small fractions of shares in the Globe and Blackfriars theaters, his will mentions no such shares, and there is no record that his heirs received them or any payments for them. The legal records concerning the ownership of shares in the two theaters being incomplete and unclear, Shakespeare scholar E. K. Chambers (1930, Vol. 2, pp. 67-68) surmised that Shakspere must have sold his holdings in the decade before he died.

Biographers of Shakespeare assert that he made his living by selling his plays, but at the time of his death in 1616, at least 19 Shakespeare plays, over half the total, had never been published. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Shakspere of Stratford ever sold a play to an acting company or that he or his seven siblings—he had three brothers and four sisters—or any of his descendants ever sought payment for the publication of a play or poem. Documents in Stratford indicate that Shakspere most likely earned his living by trading in commodities and investing in real estate. He also loaned money to his fellow townsmen, several of whom he sued for repayment of small debts.

What is striking is the refusal of nearly all traditional Shakespeare scholars to acknowledge this total absence of evidence that the Stratford man wrote anything. Nor have they undertaken a serious search for the actual author. Those scholars and authorship skeptics who have engaged in such a search have failed to find anyone among Shakspere's family, friends, or acquaintances in Stratford who spoke or wrote of him as a writer. Nor did anyone in London or elsewhere who lived at the time he did ever refer to him as a writer. Nor did he or any member of his family or his descendants, ever claim that he was a writer. There is simply no contemporary record of anyone mentioning him in connection with any kind of writing. This is especially puzzling because several prominent literary men in Warwickshire must have known William Shakspere, who was one of Stratford's wealthiest residents.

Two contemporary writers, Michael Drayton and William Camden, failed to mention the alleged playwright in the descriptions of Warwickshire that they published in the decade after the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603. Drayton was an important poet and dramatist who published *Poly-Olbion*, a cultural and geographical history of England, in a series of songs that included literary notes and stories about each county. In it were references to Chaucer, to Spenser, and to other English poets. But in his description of Warwickshire, Drayton failed to mention Shakespeare, even though by 1612, the name "William Shakespeare" was well-known as one of England's leading playwrights. Nor did Drayton's rough map (1961, Vol. 4, pp. 274-275) of the county include the town of Stratford. This is a perplexing omission, considering that Drayton lived only about 25 miles from Stratford, and is known to have regularly visited literary friends in the area. Some

critics have even found the influence of Shakespeare in Drayton's poetry (Campbell & Quinn, 1966).

In his lengthy history of England, *Britannia* (1586), the historian William Camden (1551-1623) described Stratford-upon-Avon as ". . . beholden for all the beauty that it hath to two men there bred and brought up, namely, John of Stratford Archbishop of Canterburie, who built the church, and Sir Hugh Clopton Maior of London, who over Avon made a stone bridge supported with foureteene arches . . ." In the same paragraph, Camden called attention to George Carew, Baron Clopton, who lived nearby and was active in the town's affairs (Vol. 2, p. 445). Elsewhere in *Britannia*, Camden noted that the poet Philip Sidney had a home in Kent. But there is no mention of the well-known poet and playwright, William Shakespeare, who had been born and raised in Stratford, whose family still lived there, and who by this date had returned there to live in one of the grandest houses in town. We know that Camden was familiar with literary and theatrical affairs because he was a friend of Michael Drayton (Newdigate, 1961), and he noted in his diary the deaths of the actor Richard Burbage and the poet and playwright Samuel Daniel in 1619. He made no such note on the death, in April 1616, of Shakspere of Stratford. This is an even more striking omission because Camden revered poets, had several poet friends, and wrote poetry himself.[4]

There is good evidence that Camden was familiar with the dramatic works and poetry of William Shakespeare. In 1605, he published *Remains Concerning Britain*, a series of essays on English history, English names, and the English language. In it, he listed 11 English poets and playwrights who he thought would be admired by future generations—in other words, the best writers of his time. Among the 11 were six playwrights, including Jonson, Chapman, Drayton, Daniel, Marston, and William Shakespeare (Camden, 1984, pp. 287, 294).

There is also good evidence that Camden was personally acquainted with William Shakspere and his father, John. In 1597, Queen Elizabeth appointed Camden to the post of Clarenceaux King of Arms, one of the two officials in the College of Arms who approved applications for coats of arms. In 1599, John Shakspere, applied to the College to have his existing coat of arms impaled, or joined, with the arms of his wife's family, the Ardens of Wilmcote (Chambers, 1930, Vol. 2, pp.18-32). Some scholars have asserted that Will Shakspere made this application for his father, but there is no evidence of that. What is likely is that William paid the substantial fee that accompanied the application.

The record shows that Camden and his colleague William Dethick approved the modification that John Shakspere sought. However, in 1602 another official in the College brought a complaint against Camden and Dethick that they had granted coats of arms improperly to 23 ineligible men, one of whom was John Shakspere. Camden and Dethick defended their actions, but there is no record of the outcome of the matter. John Shakspere's coat of arms, minus the Arden impalement, later appeared on the monument in Holy Trinity Church, discussed below. Because of this unusual complaint, Camden had good reason to remember John Shakspere's application.[5] Thus, it is very probable that Camden had met both father and son. At the least, he knew who they were and where they lived. This well-documented evidence indicates that even though Camden mentioned playwrights and poets in his books and in his diary, and was personally acquainted with Shakspere of Stratford, he never connected him with the writer on his list of the best English poets.

Drayton and Camden were not alone in their failure to recognize the Stratford man as a playwright. Several other residents of the village and its environs, some of whom were familiar with the London theatrical scene, never referred to him at all, much less as a dramatist. The theatergoer Edward Pudsey, who lived only 25 miles from Stratford, left to his heirs a commonplace book in which he had copied passages from 22 contemporary plays––four by Ben Jonson, three by Marston, seven by Dekker, Lyly, Nashe, Chapman, and Heywood, and eight by William Shakespeare. One English scholar who examined the manuscript asserted that the quotations from *Othello* and *Hamlet* were written in a section that she dated no later than 1600 (Rees, 1992). Thus, it is likely that Edward Pudsey had access to now-lost quartos of *Othello and Hamlet* or had seen the plays and written down the dialogue by that date. But nowhere in the hundreds of entries in what is now called "Edward Pudsey's Book" is there any indication that he was aware that the playwright whose words he copied so carefully lived in nearby Stratford-upon-Avon.

The dramatist and poet, Sir Fulke Greville, later Lord Brooke, whose family had lived at Beauchamp Court, less than ten miles from Stratford for more than 200 years, must also have known the Shakspere family. In 1592, he was appointed to a commission to report on those who refused to attend church. The commission reported to the Privy Council that nine men in the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon had not attended church at least once a month. Among the nine was John Shakspere, father of William (Eccles, 1963). On the death of his father in 1606, Greville was appointed to the office his father had held––Recorder of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon. In this position, he could hardly have been unaware of the Shakspere family. A number of letters both to and from Greville have survived. Yet, nowhere in any of his reminis-

cences, or in the letters he wrote or received, is there any mention of the well-known poet and playwright, William Shakespeare, who supposedly lived a few miles away. A leading Shakespeare scholar, Stopes (1907), wrote: "It is . . . considered strange that such a man should not have mentioned Shakespeare" (p. 171).

Another resident of Stratford, Dr. John Hall, married Shakspere's daughter Susanna in 1607 and practiced medicine in the borough for 30 years. On the death of his father-in-law in 1616, Dr. Hall, his wife, and their eight-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, moved into New Place with William Shakspere's widow, Anne. A few years after Dr. Hall's death in 1635, it came to light that he had kept hundreds of anecdotal records about his patients and their ailments––records that have excited the curiosity of both literary and medical scholars. In his notebooks, he described dozens of his patients and their illnesses, including his wife and daughter. He also mentioned the Vicar of Stratford and various noblemen and their families, as well as the poet Michael Drayton.

In his notes about one patient, Thomas Holyoak, Dr. Hall wrote that Thomas's father, Francis, had compiled a Latin-English dictionary. He described John Trapp, a minister and the schoolmaster of the Stratford Grammar School, as being noted for "his remarkable piety and learning, second to none" (Joseph, 1964, pp. 47, 94). Hall once treated Michael Drayton for a fever and even noted that he was an excellent poet (Lane, 1996). But nowhere in Dr. Hall's notebooks is there any mention of his father-in-law, William Shakspere. This, of course, has vexed and puzzled scholars. Dr. Hall surely treated his wife's father during the decade they lived within minutes of each other, a decade in which William Shakespeare was known as one of the leading playwrights in England. Why wouldn't he record any treatment of William Shakspere and mention his literary achievements as he had those of Michael Drayton and Francis Holyoake? It is reasonable to expect that Dr. John Hall would have noted his treatment of William Shakspere during the ten years he knew him––if he thought he had done something of note. It is indeed strange that he should have neglected to include any record of his treating his supposedly famous father-in-law. Ms. Stopes called it "the one great failure of his life" (1901, p. 82).

However, the most telling failure to mention Shakspere as a writer or playwright is that of Thomas Greene, the Town Clerk of Stratford, a published poet, and so close a friend of Shakspere's that he and his family lived in the Shakspere household at New Place for many months during 1609 and 1610 (Schoenbaum, 1991). More than that, Greene named two of his children, William and Anne, most likely after the Shaksperes. Greene and Shakspere were not only good friends, the two of them also made joint investments in real estate and once collaborated as plaintiffs in a lawsuit. In his personal records, Greene mentioned Shakspere several times, but only in connection with the Welcombe land enclosure matter, referring to him as "my Cosen Shakspeare" (Chambers, 1930, Vol. 2, pp. 142-143). As a frequent visitor to London and a published poet himself, Greene must have been aware of the celebrated poet William Shakespeare, but he never connected him with the man he knew so intimately in Stratford. It is hardly credible that none of the men mentioned here would have recognized the Shakspere they knew in Stratford as the famous playwright, if they had thought that he was the same person. Nor did any other resident of Stratford ever refer to their fellow townsman Shakspere as a writer of any kind.

Further evidence suggests that about the time that Shakespeare's plays began to appear in print in the 1590s, performances of plays were not only unwelcome in Stratford, they were actually prohibited throughout the borough. It is well-documented that between 1568 and 1597, numerous playing companies visited and performed there. But by the end of this period, the Puritan officeholders there finally attained their objective of banning all performances of plays and interludes.

In 1602, the Corporation of Stratford ordered that a fine of ten shillings be imposed on any official who gave permission for any type of play to be performed in any city building, or in any inn or house in the borough. This, in a year that at least six plays by Shakespeare, their alleged townsman, were being performed on public stages in London. In 1612, just four years before their neighbor's death, this fine was increased to £10. The last payment for a performance of a Shakespeare play in Stratford was made in 1597, just as the first Shakespeare plays were being published in London. Nearly 150 years would pass before another of his plays would be performed in the town (Fox, 1953, pp. 140-144).

Unlike other playwrights and poets, such as Philip Sidney and Francis Beaumont, who were widely mourned and given elaborate funerals, there were no public notices or eulogies of Shakspere of Stratford when he died in 1616.[6] The first eulogies of the playwright were published seven years later, in the *First Folio*, and were addressed to "William Shakespeare," the name that appeared on the title pages of his plays, not to the Stratford man. But by then, the hostility of Shakspere's fellow townsmen to performances of Shakespeare's plays, or any plays, had reached its acme. In 1622, when work on the First Folio was in progress, the Stratford Corporation paid the King's Players the sum of six shillings *not* to play in the Town Hall. Surely by 1622, nearly 30 years after his name had

first appeared in print, the people of Stratford would have been aware that one of England's greatest poets and playwrights had been born, raised, and then retired in their own town. That is, if such a thing were actually true.

Another example of the dearth of evidence connecting William Shakspere of Stratford with the Shakespeare works was noticed and deplored in 1821 by Edmond Malone, the first genuine scholar of Shakespeare and an early editor of his complete works. In a 2000-word preamble to his *The Life of Shakspeare*,[7] Malone expressed astonishment at the near-total absence of any facts, recollections, or other information about the alleged author of the Shakespeare works who had supposedly lived in Stratford. He cited more than a dozen poets, patrons, publishers, biographers, and other literary men, some of whom lived only a few miles from Stratford, who failed to visit the town, interview those who knew him, or otherwise conduct any investigation of his personal life or activities. Malone pointed out that several descendants of the Stratford man—his widow, his daughter, his son-in-law, and his granddaughter—all lived decades after his death, but no one ever sought them out for details about their supposedly famous relative.

Malone wrote that "the negligence and inattention of our English writers, after the Restoration, to the history of the celebrated men who preceded them, can never be mentioned without surprise and indignation. If Suetonius and Plutarch had been equally uncurious, some of the most valuable remains of the ancient world would have been lost to posterity" (Malone & Boswell, 1821, pp. 11-12). This lack of interest, or even curiosity, about the life of the Stratford businessman and alleged playwright by all but a pair of casual biographers, Nicholas Rowe and Thomas Fuller, suggests that none of them associated him with the playwright, William Shakespeare.

Attributes of the Playright

Numerous scholars have combed Shakespeare's works for evidence of the author's interests, knowledge, and experiences, resulting in several clear conclusions. These reveal a well-educated intellectual with wide-ranging interests and particular competence in a number of distinct areas. The historian Hugh Trevor-Roper (1962) described Shakespeare as a "cultured, sophisticated aristocrat, fascinated alike by the comedy and tragedy of human life, but unquestioning in his social and religious conservatism" (p. 42).

It is common knowledge that the author was fluent in French and conversant enough in Spanish, Italian, and Welsh to include words and dialogue in those languages frequently in his plays (Crystal & Crystal, 2002). In addition, his use of untranslated works in Latin and Greek, as well as his frequent use of words, and creation of words derived from those languages, attest to his competence in both (Theobald, 1909; Werth, 2002). There is not the slightest evidence that William Shakspere of Stratford was familiar with any foreign language.

An analysis of the legal terms, concepts, and procedures occurring in Shakespeare's works conclusively demonstrates that the author had an extensive and accurate knowledge of the law. He used more than 200 legal terms and legal concepts in numerous ways—as case references, as similes and metaphors, images, examples, and even puns—with an aptness and accuracy that cannot be questioned (Alexander, 2001). Again, there is no evidence that Shakspere of Stratford attended any of the Elizabethan law schools—the Inns of Court, or that he ever worked in a law office.

The author of the plays was also familiar with the latest medical theories and practices, as well as the processes and anatomy of the human body. Scholars have identified hundreds of medical references in his plays and poems, many of them major references in which he used an image or a metaphor. He was especially prolific in his use of imagery to describe illness (mental and physical), injury, and disease—far more so than his fellow dramatists. He was aware of the major medical controversy of the time between the adherents of Galen and those of Paracelsus, and referred to both authorities in *All's Well That Ends Well* (Act II. Scene iii. 12). Moreover, it appears that his medical references were not random, irrelevant or inappropriate, but reflected the most advanced opinions at the time (Showerman, 2012).

Another distinctive characteristic of the playwright was his obvious interest and competence in music. In the words of the music scholar W. Barclay Squire (1916), "In no author are musical allusions more frequent than in Shakespeare" (p. 32). In the plays and poems, there are hundreds of images, metaphors, and passages relating to music, as well as numerous ballads, love songs, folk songs, and drinking songs. The playwright demonstrated a clear technical knowledge of musical theory and practice, and alluded repeatedly to musicians, to instruments, to musical terms, and even to notes.

Shakespeare's intimate knowledge of military affairs was noticed in the mid-19th century, and has more recently been fully documented. According to the compiler of a dictionary of his military language, Shakespeare possessed "an extraordinarily detailed knowledge of warfare, both ancient and modern" (Edelman, 2000, p. 1). Nearly all the history plays, as well as *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Troilus and Cressida*, are set in a place and time of armed conflict, and numerous obscure military analogies

and references appear throughout the canon. Several of Shakespeare's most enduring characters are soldiers or ex-soldiers, most notably the *faux* soldier, Sir John Falstaff. The author's knowledge of the sea and seamanship is just as striking and comprehensive. According to naval officer A. F. Falconer, there is a "surprisingly extensive and exact use of the technical terms belonging to sailing, anchor work, sounding, ship construction, navigation, gunnery, and swimming," adding that "Shakespeare does not invent sea terms and never misuses them" (1965, vii). There is no evidence that Shakspere of Stratford ever served in the military or that he undertook a sea voyage of any kind.

It is also well-known that the author displayed an extraordinary range of knowledge of such other subjects as botany, cosmology, jousting, hawking, religion, philosophy, and courtly manners. There is nothing in Shakspere of Stratford's biography that indicates any interest or experience in these subjects or how he might have acquired such detailed knowledge of them. The author was clearly a keen reader of poetry and prose, foreign and English, both contemporary and classical. Scholars have identified hundreds of plays, poems, novels, histories, etc., by dozens of authors that he referred to, quoted, or used as sources (Gillespie, 2001). In the lengthy will of Shakspere of Stratford, there are numerous bequests of personal possessions and household items, but no mention of a library, a bookcase, or a single book (Cutting, 2009).

One of the most striking features of Shakespeare's plays is the author's preoccupation with the language, literature, and social customs of Italy. It is well-known that Elizabethan imaginative literature, especially its drama, was heavily indebted to Italian sources and models, such as the commedia dell' arte, and made regular use of such devices from Italian drama as the chorus, ghosts of great men, the dumb show and the play within the play (Grillo, 1949). To no other writer does this apply more than Shakespeare. More than a dozen of his plays are partially or wholly set in contemporary or ancient Italy, and many are derived from Italian plays or novels.

Scholars have repeatedly documented Shakespeare's unexplained familiarity with the geography, social life, and local details of many places in Italy, especially northern Italy. "When we consider that in the north of Italy he reveals a . . . profound knowledge of Milan, Bergamo, Verona, Mantua, Padua and Venice, the very limitation of the poet's notion of geography proves that he derived his information from an actual journey through Italy and not from books" (Grillo, 1949). American Richard Roe, in his *The Shakespeare Guide To Italy* (2010, pp. 87-115), and Italian scholar Noemi Magri have identified the locales and documented the accuracy of numerous details in several plays, including *The Taming of the Shrew, Two Gentlemen of Verona* ("No Errors in Shakespeare, 1988, pp. 9-22") and *The Merchant of Venice* ("Places in Shakespeare, 2003, pp. 6-14").

Nor was Shakespeare's knowledge of Italy limited to details of geography and local custom. It is clear that he directly observed and was profoundly affected by Italian painting and sculpture, and used several specific works—murals, sculptures, and paintings—as the bases for incidents, characters, and imagery. For instance, the language and imagery in *The Winter's Tale*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* have been traced to the sculpture and murals of Giulio Romano in Mantua's Ducal Palace and Palazzo Te, and elsewhere in the same city (Hamill, 2003). But there is nothing in the biography of William Shakspere of Stratford that suggests an interest in or knowledge of anything in Italy, nor is there any evidence that he traveled to Italy or to any foreign country. Traditional scholars admit these facts, but speculate that he acquired his knowledge of the language and other details about the country from Italian merchant travelers in various London taverns. For Shakspere to have learned such details in casual conversation is clearly hard to believe.

The collection of poems titled *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, apparently written during the 1590s but not published until 1609, contains a story of a middle-aged man's affection for a younger man, whom he urges to marry and have a son. The young man is widely believed by scholars of all stripes to be Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton, a prominent nobleman less than ten years younger than the Stratford man. This same Henry Wriothesley was the object of the unusual and intensely ardent dedications of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* that appeared over the name William Shakespeare in 1593 and 1594. Stratfordian scholars have been unable to explain this alleged personal relationship between a commoner from the provinces and an Earl who spent most of his early life in and around the royal court, an exceptional rarity in class-conscious Elizabethan England. There is, in fact, no evidence that they ever met or corresponded, nor is there any record of anyone associating them with one another. The only conclusion to be drawn is that there was no such relationship because the Stratford man was clearly not the playwright who wrote under the pseudonym Shakespeare.

Although the name William Shakespeare first appeared in print in 1593 and on numerous printed plays during the next two decades, it was not until 1623, in the prefatory material to the First Folio, that an alleged connection between the dramatist Shakespeare and William Shakspere of Stratford appeared in print. In his short encomium to the playwright in the Folio, Leonard Digges alluded to "thy *Stratford* Moniment" [sic], the single in-

stance in the first collection of the Shakespeare plays in which the playwright was associated with the village of Stratford.[8] Digges was apparently referring to the marble monument in Stratford's Holy Trinity Church, in which a half-length limestone bust rests in a central arch flanked by Corinthian columns supporting a cornice. On a tablet below the bust, a cryptic eight-line inscription has been carved, in which the figure is associated with Nestor, Socrates, Vergil, and Mount Olympus.[9] Obviously, by 1623 the effort was underway to link the Stratford businessman to Shakespeare, the playwright.

The monument remains in place today, but its original appearance, the identity of the person depicted, and the meaning of the inscription have been the subjects of numerous conflicting claims and interpretations. Recent scholarship has confirmed that the bust in today's Holy Trinity Church in Stratford bears little relation to the original figure. "The edifice seems to have been repaired, modified, beautified, whitewashed, repainted or, in various ways, tampered with on at least eight occasions between 1649 and 1861" (Waugh, 2015, para. 2). Evidence of this is a sketch of the monument made in or about 1634 by Warwickshire antiquarian Sir William Dugdale, and now in the possession of his lineal descendant. The sketch depicts an ape-like figure of a man with melancholic features entirely unlike those of the present-day bust. He is shown clutching a sack of some kind, suggesting a commercial wool or grain broker, and not, as in the current monument, a benign and cheerful gentleman wielding a quill and a sheet of paper over a cushion. Considering these facts, it has been proposed that the bust originally depicted Shakspere's father, John (1537-1601), and was later modified to represent his son, a pillow being substituted for the sack, and a quill and a sheet of paper added to suggest a writer (Kennedy, 2005/2006).

But the fact remains that there is no record of anyone in Warwickshire linking Shakspere of Stratford to the canon of Shakespeare plays and poems until years after his death in 1616, and the monument in Holy Trinity Church, whenever it was constructed, and whomever it depicted, is questionable evidence that he was the playwright. This is obviously the reason that the bust and inscription have been ignored or dismissed as irrelevant by traditional Shakespeare scholars, including such prominent ones as Stephen Greenblatt, Michael Wood, Park Honan, and Stanley Wells (Whalen, 2005). Nevertheless, the ambiguities and contradictions surrounding the monument continue unresolved, and remain an integral part of the argument that the Stratford man had nothing to do with the creation of Shakespeare's works. That argument is even stronger in London.

London

Repeated examinations of the documents of the Elizabethan theater have unearthed nothing that supports the theory of the Stratford man's authorship of the Shakespeare plays and poems. We know that he lived in London because his name appears in delinquent tax records there, and in other documents as an actor and theater company shareholder, but not as a playwright. Notices and records of the actual playwright Shakespeare are absent. This is especially striking in the most comprehensive record of the public theater in Elizabethan London—Henslowe's Diary.

The successful theatrical entrepreneur Philip Henslowe and his business partner, Edward Alleyn, had operated the Rose Theater for about four years before he began, in 1592, making entries in a notebook about his theater and the acting companies that played in it, primarily the Admiral's Men (Foakes, 2002). The surviving 242-page manuscript, now called Henslowe's Diary, contains reports of performances of plays by all the major playwrights of the time, including more than half-a-dozen by Shakespeare.

Throughout the Diary, appear the names of dozens of actors and no less than 27 playwrights. In his Diary, Henslowe also kept records of the loans he made to playwrights, and of the amounts he paid them for manuscripts. Among those mentioned are the familiar names of Chapman, Dekker, Drayton, Jonson, Marston, and Webster. There are also some unfamiliar names, such as William Bird, Robert Daborne, and Wentworth Smith. But there is one familiar name that is missing. Nowhere in the list of dozens of actors and playwrights in Henslowe's Diary do we find the name of William Shakespeare. This is further evidence that the actual playwright successfully concealed his identity behind a pseudonym, and that he was not among the coterie of working playwrights who were dependent on their earnings for their livelihoods.

If the man from Stratford were really the playwright that he is alleged to be, he certainly would have met Edward Alleyn, the manager and leader of the Admiral's Men and the most distinguished actor on the Elizabethan stage. Alleyn was most famous for his roles in Marlowe's plays, but he also must have acted in several of the Shakespeare plays that were performed at the Rose, such as *Titus Andronicus* and *Henry VI* (Carson, 1988). Edward Alleyn also kept a diary that survives, along with many of his letters and papers. They reveal that he had a large circle of acquaintances throughout and beyond the theater world that included aristocrats, clergymen, and businessmen, as well as men in his own profession, such as John Heminges, one of the alleged editors of the First

Folio. But nowhere in Alleyn's diary or letters that have survived does the name William Shakespeare appear. It is impossible to believe that Edward Alleyn, who was at the center of the Elizabethan stage community for more than 35 years, would not have met and at least commented on the leading playwright of the period and made some allusion to him in his letters or diary. But the Stratford man makes no such appearance.

Another Elizabethan of note, Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639), a diplomat and poet, was also a prolific writer of letters during the entire lifetime of Shakspere of Stratford. His many correspondents included his nephew, Sir Edmund Bacon, as well as Sir Francis Bacon and John Donne. Among his published works was *Reliquiae Wottonianae, or A Collection of Lives, Letters, Poems, with Characters of Sundry Personages*, which included extensive allusions to the wits and writers of his time. Yet, nowhere in Wotton's letters or in his allusions to contemporary writers do we find the name of William Shakespeare. Even in his detailed account of the burning of the Globe Theatre in 1613, during a performance of Shakespeare's *All is True* (*Henry VIII*), Wotton never mentions the playwright, an omission suggesting that the name Shakespeare was a pseudonym.

The failure of any of these men to refer to the celebrated and prolific playwright, whose poems and plays were selling in London's bookshops, and whose plays were repeatedly performed at court and on London stages, supports the hypothesis that "William Shakespeare" was the *nom de plume* that concealed the identity of the actual poet and dramatist, and that continued to hide it from readers, playgoers, and scholars for hundreds of years.

Personal links between the Shakspere of Stratford and playwrights and poets of his day are also entirely absent. A survey of literary and personal records left by 25 Elizabethan and Jacobean writers revealed that all but one of them had left records, including letters, manuscripts, payments for writing, etc., that evidenced their profession. The exception was William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon, who left no records of any kind that indicated he was a writer of plays or anything at all (Price, 2000).

This lack of even a hint of any sort of writing led one leading Shakespeare biographer to write:

> Perhaps we should despair of ever bridging the vertiginous expanse between the sublimity of the subject and the mundane inconsequence of the documentary record. What would we not give for a single personal letter, one page of a diary! (Schoenbaum, 1991).

Another Stratfordian scholar and editor went even further: "Shakespeare . . . is authorial dark matter, absent from his writing and from historical record to an extraordinary degree . . ." but went on to assert that doubt about the Stratford man as the author Shakespeare was a "bizarrely widespread belief" (Bate et al., 2013, p. 641). Although this is true of the fake Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon, there is substantial evidence in the plays and poems, and documents from the period, to link the Shakespeare works to a now-identified aristocrat who concealed himself from the public behind a pseudonym.

Serious doubts about, and outright denials of, the Stratford man's authorship of the canon commenced even before his death and have continued to the present day. In the 18th and 19th centuries, several writers, such as Herbert Lawrence, Benjamin Disraeli, and W. H. Smith, published their suspicions about the traditional attribution (Ogburn, 1992). The Scottish antiquarian, George Chalmers, wrote: "What is known of Shakspeare in his private character, in his friendships, in his amusements, in his closet, in his family, *is nowhere before us*" (Hart, 1848, p .215).

American authors were hardly less doubtful. Ralph Waldo Emerson was one of the earliest to record his skepticism when he asserted, in 1854, that the Stratfordian narrative was improbable, and that the identity of the writer posed "the first of all literary problems" (Deese, 1986, p.114). Walt Whitman (1948) suggested that the author was an aristocrat—"one of the 'wolfish earls' so plenteous in the plays themselves, or some born descendant and knower . . ." (Vol. 2, p. 404). Henry James was " . . . 'sort of' haunted by the conviction that the divine William is the biggest and most successful fraud ever practised on a patient world" (Lubbock, 1920, Vol. 1, p. 424), and even wrote a short story about a couple who were put "in charge of the Shakespeare house," but after six months found that "they could not stand the 'humbug.'" [10]

Repeated remarks in his letters to friends and in his speeches leave no doubt that Sigmund Freud believed that "The name *William Shakespeare* is very certainly a pseudonym, behind which a great mysterious stranger [*ein grosser Unbekannter*] is hidden" (Freud et al., 1966-1974, Vol. 23; p. 192). Freud read Looney's '*Shakespeare' Identified* in 1923, and in 1938, after his emigration to London, he and Looney exchanged admiring letters. To the consternation of his biographer and fellow psychiatrists, Freud insisted on making these contrarian views public, and added references to his conviction in several of his books, including his autobiography (Holland, 1966, 56-58; Looney, 1920, Vol. 2, pp. 264-273).

One of the most fervent and persistent disparagers of the Stratford man was Mark Twain, who registered his

disbelief in him in several of his works, and published a satirical essay on the subject, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* the year before he died. He described the Shakespeare mythos as a "colossal skeleton brontosaur that stands fifty-seven feet long and sixteen feet high in the Natural History Museum . . . We had nine bones, and we built the rest of him out of plaster of paris. We ran short of plaster of paris, or we'd have built a brontosaur that could sit down beside the Stratford Shakespeare and none but an expert could tell which was biggest or contained the most plaster" (1909, Chap. IV).

The parade of authorship doubters has continued into the 21st century. Prominent authors, all lovers of Shakespeare, including Charles Dickens, John Greenleaf Whittier, Thomas Hardy, and John Buchan, could not believe that the Stratford businessman had anything to do with the Shakespeare canon. More recently, James Joyce, Orson Welles, John Galsworthy, Charlie Chaplin, John Gielgud, David McCullough, Michael York, Vanessa Redgrave, Derek Jacobi, Jeremy Irons, and Mark Rylance are among the many writers and actors who do not accept William Shakspere of Stratford as the dramatist. Since 1986, five Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court—Harry A. Blackmun, Sandra Day O'Connor, Lewis F. Powell Jr., Antonin Scalia, and John Paul Stevens—have also rejected the Stratfordian theory, of whom three (Blackmun, Scalia, and Stevens) have declared themselves supporters of Oxford. (Wildenthal, 2019)

Nevertheless, the Stratfordian myth persists, and is routinely perpetuated in the literature departments of universities, in academic journals, and in publishing houses all over the world. The significant research revealing that the man from Stratford was not the author has been consistently rejected, disparaged, or simply ignored by these keepers of a bogus tradition. Only when the veil of credulity and self-deception is lifted from the eyes of these scholars will Shakespeare's audience be assured of his rightful identity.

BIOGRAPHY

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ENDNOTES

1 These are described in detail in Part IV in Wildenthal (2019).

2 On his christening and marriage documents, and other legal documents in Warwickshire, as well as in his almost illegible purported signatures, his name is spelled "Shakspere."

3 Thompson (1916, p. 295). The letter was never sent and was found among Quiney's papers. It is printed in Chambers (1930, Vol. 2, p. 102). Richard Quiney's son Thomas married Shakspere's daughter, Judith, in 1616.

4 Camden's Diary appeared in *Camdeni Vitae*, a life of Camden published in 1691 by Thomas Smith. The Diary is online at http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/diary/contents.html where the entries can be seen in the months of March and October under the year 1619 [Accessed 5 June 2021].

5 The episode is fully covered in Schoenbaum (1991, pp. 227-232).

6 Mark Twain remarked that " . . . there wouldn't be any occasion to remember him after he had been dead a week" (2015, Vol. 3, p. 304).

7 The *Life* appeared in (Vol. 2, pp. 1-287) of *The Plays and Poems of William Shakspeare*, Edmond Malone and James Boswell, (Eds.), 1821.

8 In his 22-line poem, Digges used the hyphenated name Shake-speare three times, hinting at a pseudonym. The poem is printed in Chambers (1930, Vol. 2, pp. 231-232).

9 None of these references is particularly relevant to the playwright Shakespeare. See Waugh's explanation.

10 The story "The Birthplace" (1903) is described further in Ogburn (1987, p. 54).

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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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Shakespeare and the French Lens

ESSAY

HIGHLIGHTS

The author of Shakespeare's plays clearly knew the French language, history, and court, but the Stratford man seems neither to have visited France, studied French in a provincial school, nor had any direct contact with French aristocracy.

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ABSTRACT

Academic studies of Shakespeare in Great Britain and France present the historian with startling contrasts. Beginning in the late 18th century, the English debated the extent of his knowledge and eventually turned the poet-playwright into a national hero and secular saint. When Thomas Carlyle published in 1840 *On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History*, he actually stated that Shakespeare was "an unconscious intellect" whose dramas "grew up out of Nature." Carlyle's book was an incredible success, deifying the uneducated and untraveled man from Stratford, making him a religious Anglo-Saxon icon never to be questioned. Some had their doubts. In France in 1918, Professor Abel Lefranc, a renowned Renaissance scholar and member of the Académie française, published *Sous le masque de William Shakespeare*, a volume that tried to prove "to all those with an open mind" that the author William Shakespeare could not have been Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon. Among his reasons: William Shakespeare knew France, the French aristocracy and French history too well. Leaving aside the author's missing paper trail, inconceivable for the "soul of the age," Lefranc examined Shakespeare's works in extraordinary detail and revealed just how political they were and how often they subtly commented on a much wider European culture and politics. Shakespeare's *oeuvre*, he argued, was not limited to the Anglo-Saxon world but was actually multi-national and deeply influenced by France. English scholars did not handle this French questioning of Shakespeare so well. Indeed, with only a few exceptions, Lefranc's work was ignored in the Anglo-Saxon world. Lefranc argued that the plays needed to be re-examined as creations for the Elizabethan court, making clear references to what was actually happening in France at the time. This essay argues that the significance of Shakespeare's knowledge of French courtly politics and culture should not be underestimated because there are no records that the man from Stratford ever left England or knew French. That is, once the profound French influence is recognized in Shakespeare's plays, the man from Stratford could not have been the author.

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The Academic Tradition

Academia does not always accept new ideas willingly. Notable discoveries have been met with ridicule in such fields as genetics, cancer transmission and continental drift to name just three. That is, academics are not free from Group Think -- especially when reputations are going to be lost because accepted theories are disproven (see my own 2016 essay in *Psychology Today*). Research can be ignored, as in the case of Reus' discovery of tumor-inducing viruses because Reus was an MD, not a physiologist; or as in the case of Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, who was mocked because of his theory about Black Holes.

Imagine then what could happen to anyone who suggests that Shakespeare wasn't simply a "gift of Nature," (Carlyle, 142); and that furthermore, it is is "impiety to meddle" (101) with Shakespeare as the enormously popular Carlyle insisted in *Heroes and Hero-worship*: "Call it worship...call it what you will" (108). Carlyle's admonition of not "meddling" with but "worship"-ing Shakespeare has been strictly adhered to: doubters are denigrated as imbeciles, lunatics, quacks, snobs, elitists, and have even been compared to "holocaust deniers." As a result, Stratfordian journals and conferences regularly refuse to accept submissions that address the authorship question.

The fact is, Shakspere and his brothers were all pulled out of school to help with their father's business and neither Will's parents nor his children were able to write anything more than their signatures, something typical of village life in those times. Will also grew up with almost no exposure to European languages, culture, and politics. That said, in reading the works ascribed to him, we discover that they are deeply imbued with a knowledge of French and contain a pan-European worldview that actually includes a very detailed knowledge of European courtly politics, suppressed scandals, and even minor French historical figures. How Will could have picked up such an impressive knowledge of a language barely heard in Stratford and how he created more new words based on French than any other English author of his day (Lee, p. 245), as well as knowledge about secret political negotiations, suppressed scandals, and minor French historical figures is totally unexplainable. There are certainly no records of him having ever been at a French court. We do not even have letters written to him, or even any letters from him as there are for virtually all other established writers of the period. (Price, 5). That is to say, there is no paper trail for Will Shakspere as a writer. What we do have, on the other hand, is a paper trail for him as a businessman.

Having no records for Will indicating either knowledge of French or travel abroad surely creates unresolvable problems because so many of the plays by 'Shakespeare' are set in France or Italy and reveal an astonishing knowledge of both those languages and the places in which the plays are set. Certainly the lack of knowledge of French on the part of Shakspere poses a problem even for *Hamlet*, which was itself based on a French source not translated into English until 1608, well after the Shakespeare *Hamlet* was published in 1603.

This latter problem actually gave rise to a complicated theory which surmised that the author Shakespeare must have seen a play about *Hamlet* written by a playwright who could read French—probably Thomas Kyd. This theory maintained that Shakspere of Stratford was so inspired that he then wrote his own *Hamlet*. And Kyd's original *Hamlet*? Supposedly, this earlier Ur-*Hamlet* was lost forever -- with no record of any presentation or publication of it apparently recorded. This is clearly fantasy but essential for creating plausibility for the Stratford man as the author, one small example of mythologizing that we find in so many Shakespeare biographies (books which Mark Twain described in his own response, *Is Shakespeare Dead*, to brontosaurus skeletons "fifty-seven feet long and sixteen feet high" and composed of only "nine bones" all covered with barrels and barrels of plaster (p. 49)-- i.e. an imaginary skeleton covered up so thoroughly that the trickery cannot be seen.

Scholars have certainly long been puzzled by finding so much French in Shakespeare's works partly because London audiences of the 16th century would for the most part not understand French. As scholar George Watson has observed, "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." One must assume therefore that the French in Shakespeare's plays was, at least initially, intended for an audience that *could* understand it. The only such English audience to fit this definition at that time was, of course, the upper aristocracy and those in academia. (Ormond, p. 785) Shakespeare, it should be noted here, was the only Elizabethan author to write at length in French. Why? Precisely because he was writing for the upper aristocracy -- Queen Elizabeth and her court, people with really good French. For example, the English lesson in *Henry V* between the French Princess Catherine and her maid is a seemingly innocent language lesson, but thanks to the bilingual puns written by this supposedly non-French-speaking writer, it becomes a scene that is actually hiding one of the most salacious dialogues in all of Shakespeare.

Traditional scholars have also long maintained that Shakespeare must have read Montaigne in John Florio's English translation, not in the original French because, again, the man from Stratford did not know French. Travis

Williams observes, however, that Shakespeare must have read Montaigne in the original because, for example, in his work he uses Montaigne's French word *bourn*, rather than Florio's English translation "boundary." Indeed, Shakespeare showed a marked fondness for the word bourn and used it repeatedly in his work.

In *Shakespeare's Sonnets and the Court of Navarre*, Honneyman observes that in the sonnets, Shakespeare even uses French words with their French, rather than their English meanings, which are sometimes quite different: [e.g. *travail* used by Shakespeare to mean "workmanship" in sonnet 79 as opposed to meaning "difficult work" [Honneyman, 41]. Shakespeare, in fact, plays with both meanings of the word, precisely because he is writing for a high-ranking noble audience which understood both the French and the English and would, therefore, enjoy his wordplay. Honneyman concludes that The "vestigial remains of the continental octave" [38] as well as imagery, vocabulary, and stylistic devices drawn from the [French language] Plèiade poets indicate that whoever wrote the Sonnets was steeped in the French sonnet tradition.

Love's Labour's Lost: The French Influence

University of Tours Professor Richard Hillman, whose work has not received the attention it deserves, has many books and articles studying the French influence in Shakespeare. Hillman's research has, in fact, 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, 265). "Hillman calls decisively into question any narrow Anglo-centric view of Shakespeare" (Maskell, 289). Scholars have proven the author Shakespeare not only knew French but several other languages as well and must have had access to an extraordinary number of books which were only to be found in the libraries of the upper aristocracy, wealthy academics, or university libraries.

As for the possibility the name Shake-speare (as it was often spelled) was a pseudonym, one might note here that even the French author Jean-Baptiste Poquelin wrote his many plays under the pseudonym Molière. Understanding that, the idea that Shakespeare could also be a pseudonym should not really seem so far-fetched. Like Shakespeare, Molière also wrote plays that mocked the powerful, something which got Molière into trouble with the authorities on several occasions. In Shakespeare's case, he escaped the kind of authoritarian crackdowns that so many of his contemporaries suffered, despite the fact that his plays were so often political. A pseudonym clearly helped protect him (and other authors) addressing sensitive subjects. More on this common Renaissance practice can be found in Marcy North's useful book *The Anonymous Renaissance* (2003).

Turning now to *Love's Labour's Lost*, a work not so often performed because it is seen as overwrought and perhaps too detached from reality, we will be able to clearly see this French influence in Shakespeare's practice. Certainly, traditional academics have often criticized Shakespeare for this play -- trying to write about a world he apparently knew nothing about -- the French court. Others have challenged that view. One such challenger was the great French scholar of the early 20th century Abel Lefranc. Over a century ago, this expert on the Renaissance observed that Shakespeare must have been fluent in French because he regularly made bilingual puns, particularly in this play. In Act III, Armando and Moth play with the similarity of sound between the words *envoy* and *goose* (the French word for goose is *oie*). Without knowing this verbal link, the introduction of "goose" in the scene makes no sense (Lefranc, 60). That is, only members of the audience familiar with French would understand why the word goose was even introduced. Lefranc also notes, in the same discussion, the use of *sans* and *capon*. He highlights the extended pun on the French word *branle* "a brawl," combining it with the dance *branle*, which Moth describes humorously. The dance *branle* was, in fact, Marguerite de Valois' favorite.

In addition to such bilingual wordplay, Shakespeare also reveals in the play a knowledge of the 16th-century French writer François Rabelais. Rabelais had earlier created a character called Bragmardo, a braggart, a character found in Love's Labour's Lost as Armando. Rabelais also earlier created a pedant named Holofernes, as does Shakespeare in the play, possibly a caricature of the French author de Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas. (Honneyman, 9). Scholars also see an echo of Rabelais in *Love's Labour's Lost's* longest word -- *honorificabilitudinitatibus*. This is actually a medieval word meaning "the state or position of being able to achieve honors" and an allusion to Rabelais' longest word -- *antipericatametaanaparcircumvolutiorectumgustpoops*, a teasing scatological reference to his mocking of excessive Latinisms. It should also be noted here that Rabelais was not translated into English until the 17th century. So did Shakespeare know French?

Love's Labour's Lost: Characters

Traditional Shakespeare scholars have ignored *Sous le Masque de William Shakespeare* by Abel Lefranc when it was first published in 1918. Some still ignore this important volume which is a loss because in it this respected member of the Académie française examines how *Love's*

Labour Lost actually re-enacts the historical negotiations in France between the Protestant Henry of Navarre and the Catholic Marguerite of Valois regarding their marriage. To put the play in its historical context, six days after the wedding of this young couple in 1572, the St. Bartholomew Massacre took place in which thousands of French Protestants -- the Huguenots -- were slaughtered on the streets of Paris and throughout France. Henry, the 19-year-old groom, suddenly found himself a French prisoner. Four years later, in 1576, with the help of Marguerite, he escaped, but the couple remained separated for another two years until the Queen Mother, Catherine de Médici, traveled with her daughter Marguerite and an entourage of the most beautiful and savvy noblewomen of the French court to meet with Henry to solve the religious and dowry issues.

The female entourage had been selected by Catherine for their wit, intelligence, and beauty. They were referred to as the "*escadron volant*" -- the flying squadron, an ironic military term. Catherine also regularly used this royal entourage as spies, and they were, in fact, extremely successful in ferreting out useful information and, therefore, in helping to advance or thwart political agendas. *Love's Labour's Lost* illustrates perfectly how *l'escadron volant* distracted many noblemen from their plans, in this case, a plan to devote themselves to academic studies. Historically, the squad was attempting to distract the king and his court from figuring out ("studying") how to organize the Protestant Huguenots into a coherent resistance. The immediate goal, of course, was to reunite Protestant Henry and Catholic Marguerite and ultimately to forge peace between French Catholics and Protestants.

The French referred to these negotiations as *la Guerre des Amants*, the Lovers' War. When the Treaty of Fléix was eventually drawn up, it was actually referred to in French as *La Traité des Amants*, The Lovers' Treaty. Shakespeare's play *Love's Labour's Lost* (along with the lost companion play *Love's Labour's Won*) mirror these French monikers.

Navarre's initial refusal in the play to receive the entourage at his castle represents what actually happened when the two religious factions could not agree on where to meet. Eventually, the town of Nérac was chosen, and Nérac is the setting for the play. Looking at the characters in the play, we also find real people. Navarre, for instance, is obviously King Henry of Navarre, who would later become King Henry IV of France. Some academics have argued against this reading because Navarre's name in the play is actually Ferdinand. But this is easily answered: because it was against the law to present a living monarch onstage, Shakespeare could not use the king's real name.

There are other names also changed slightly for the stage. Longaville in the play is Henry I of Orléans, Duke of Longueville, a member of the so-called *Malcontents*. Another nobleman is Dumaine, whose name mirrors that of Charles, Duke of Mayenne. Mayenne was a member of the League and later a *Politique*, one historically interested in maintaining a strong monarchy, which would, in turn, maintain his own family's status and power. Henry later rewarded de Mayenne richly for his support. Shakespeare reveals an extraordinary knowledge of the intricate political maneuvering between the various political factions in France at the time.

Another lord in the play is the charming Berowne, based on Charles de Gontaut, Baron de Biron. Biron/Berowne was, in life, an enormously charismatic figure called "the thunderbolt of France." Unfortunately, he was never satisfied with Henry's largesse, and despite being a close friend, Biron often mocked the king as Berowne does in the play. The real Henry forgave Biron for his initial act of treachery but not his later one for which he was beheaded. Berowne's fall in the play clearly mirrors Biron's fall in life. (Richmond, 319).

French scholars also identify numerous minor characters with historical figures. Don Adriano de Armado is a caricature of Agrippa d'Aubigné. Like Armado, Agrippa was responsible for court entertainment. He was socially awkward like Armado and both spoke Spanish.

Moth is based on Bertrand de Salignac Fénélon, Seigneur de la Mothe, the French ambassador to England from 1570 to 1574 and again in 1583. (Moth makes a second appearance in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, apparently written when Seigneur de la Mothe was in England to participate in marriage negotiations between Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Alençon.)

Lefranc sees in Holofernes a representation of Guillaume de Salluste, seigneur du Bartas, a Protestant author with a very ornate style. (Honneyman, 9). Du Bartas was a highly regarded French poet of the late 16th century who influenced Sidney and Spencer and was highly esteemed by James I.

Marcadé in the play, the one who announces the king's death, is based on the Duke of Mercadé, (Lefranc, 60) and Boyet represents Antoine de Boyet, who was Henry of Navarre's treasurer as he is in the play (Lefranc, 60). Lefranc also believes that Boyet is a disguised caricature of Guy du Faur de Pribac, master of the Paris academy, who dared to flirt with Marguerite de Valois only to be brutally rejected like Boyet. Katherine calls him "an old love monger," and Maria mocks him as "Cupid's grandfather" (Act II). Boyet was in his 50s when he declared his love for the young Marguerite, who was apparently horrified. (Lefranc, *Les Elements francais*, 420).

Richmond identifies Katherine as Catherine de Bourbon, the sister of Henry of Navarre, and Maria as Marie de

Bourbon, Duchesse d'Estouteville. Of the play's many real characters, Richmond says, "It is Shakespeare's genius to have copied, not invented, such psychologies" (Richmond, 338) -- a truly startling statement from one of England's major traditional Shakespeare scholars.

Shakespeare was also apparently quite familiar with an astonishing number of historical French aristocrats of major and minor importance. If the author is copying, not inventing, these psychologies, this suggests Shakespeare was very familiar with the highest levels of French society. And with no records that the Stratford man was ever in France, such intimate knowledge of the French court, its personalities, and private negotiations is absolutely inexplicable.

Lefranc also observes that Henry of Navarre was known for writing along the edges of his letters once the page was full, just as the King of Navarre does in the play (Lefranc, 63). As well, Navarre was known to be a great equestrian, and the play references this same prodigious skill (Lefranc, 65-66). Even the lovely park of Nérac is described along with the time the courtiers spent there when negotiations were concluded for each day, as were the formal entertainments like masques with the appearance of Moscovites. Russians had been in the news at the time because of the catastrophic Tartar invasions of 1570-'72 and their ongoing war between Christianity and Islam. Without a doubt, *Love's Labour's Lost* mirrors these historical characters, their activities, and even the latest continental events of the day.

Love's Labour's Lost: Politics

Having familiarized ourselves with the play's characters and who they represent, let us now ponder what actually transpires in the play. It opens with the King's desire to establish "a little academe" within his court. The concept of an academy at court seems a mystery to traditional scholars who look for an English source but ignore the fact that poet Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585) established just such an academy, a group of the greatest French intellects in science, religion, and the arts to educate Charles IX and Henri III through discussion. Ronsard introduced this idea to the French court in 1562, where it continued and eventually developed into the Académie française.

Such an academy at the court had a very serious goal -- that of creating an enlightened sovereign who could rule wisely. Not surprisingly, other French nobles went back to their own provincial courts and established their own similar academies. It is Agrippa D'Aubigné (1552-1630) who informs us that even the town of Nérac had its own academy, which included many impressive thinkers, including Montaigne. Jolly also points out the influence of Pierre de la Primaudaye's book *L'Académie Française* (1577). That book describes the formation of an academy to educate four young Frenchmen over a period of four years. Their intellectual endeavors turn out to have been interrupted by the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572, which ends their studies as they depart to serve their king.

Considering the impressive knowledge of French politics and literary sources of the period, it is clear that Love's Labour's Lost is not simply an amusing exercise by an English writer but a fascinating historical mirror, a conceit veiling real historical dilemmas with potentially disastrous reverberations for England, the greatest of which was a religious civil war like the one in France.

As for the flirting that takes place in the play with the masked French princesses, as well as Jaquenetta's pregnancy, both these elements hint at the libertine atmosphere of Henry's court during Catherine's visit with the flying squadron as well as Henry of Navarre's own reputation as a *Vert Gallant* (a womanizer). As such, the opening lines of the play spoken by Navarre in search of a life of monastic constraints would have greatly amused the English court, whose members would have immediately noticed the discrepancy between the monk-like and studious Navarre portrayed on stage and the real French king of Navarre whose reputation was known. Jaquenetta's pregnancy also mirrors the pregnancy of the 13-year-old "La Fosseuse" one of Marguerite's ladies in waiting, impregnated by none other than Henry himself, a scandal which could only be hinted at on the stage.

The opening sentences clearly set the tone for the many clashes in this play between words and reality, one of the major themes. The numerous court dalliances obviously belie the tense negotiations in the war-torn country, making the characters appear somewhat absurd in their indulgent self-centeredness. This ultimate masking of the characters portrays not only the formal masque entertainments at Nérac but also parodies the fact that the French were frequently masked at court, something intended in reality to make life a bit safer since mortal enemies, Protestant and Catholic, were constantly crossing paths with dueling factions. Ultimately, the contrast between the play's fantasy world in Nérac and the historical reality is really quite breathtaking and hints, centuries ahead of its time, at a kind of comedy of the absurd in which stage characters are clearly divorced from reality.

The play also has references to Marguerite's actual visit to the city of Brabant just before her trip to Nérac. In Act II, Biron asks Rosaline, "Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?" Rosaline answers the question with the same question. Before arriving in Nérac, Marguerite really

was in Brabant to help her brother Alençon politically and to settle his portion of her dowry. Marguerite's Brabant trip was officially described as a trip to the baths, however, rather than as a diplomatic mission to gather support for Alençon as king of Brabant -- a title he desperately needed to enhance his courtship of Queen Elizabeth. Shakespeare uses such mirroring to reflect the complicated political activity going on in both France and England.

A second reference to Marguerite's trip to Brabant occurs in Act V when Katherine refers to the fact that one of her ladies-in-waiting died tragically of a broken heart -- a shocking story that was not made public until Marguerite de Valois/Navarre's *Mémoires* were published in 1628, long after the play was first performed in 1597. (Shakespeare alludes to this story again in *Hamlet* in Ophelia's burial scene.)

This unexpected death foreshadows the unexpected death of the King at the end of the play that postpones the lovers' flirtations, which are suddenly changed from games to duties as reality sets in. Shakespeare uses the events in France in his play to serve as a warning for what could happen in England. Because Queen Elizabeth I had not chosen an heir, there were enormous risks of conflict between Protestants and Catholics, just as the death of the King of France posed this same risk. All this was a lesson for Queen Elizabeth not to wait to pick her successor.

The play ends with a play within a play, which presents "The Nine Worthies." This is yet another historical reference to Marguerite's stay in Nérac. Henry of Navarre had a collection of nine tapestries depicting the Nine Worthies. We know from the historical records that all nine tapestries were moved from Henry's castle at Pau to his castle in Nérac for Marguerite's visit (Lefranc, 425, *Les èlèments francais*). The lords mock the Worthies just as the ladies mocked the lords when mortality suddenly crashes the party with the announcement of the king's death.

The play's ending has been criticized as artificial; however, once again, it mirrors what happened historically. We don't know why, but Marguerite left with her ladies-in-waiting—probably because one of them, La Fosseuse, impregnated by Henry, was making life difficult, and her relationship with Henry was deteriorating, as we now know from her 1628 *Mémoires*. Shakespeare mirrors this pregnancy with Jacquenetta's. The play's allusion to the death of the king refers to Alençon, Marguerite's beloved brother, who died in 1584, who was briefly King of Brabant. King Henry III died in 1589. Shakespeare clearly telescopes history to make it more dramatic.

What is the political message of *Love's Labour's Lost*? The sudden death of the King stops love's labours. The play is a gentle reminder to Queen Elizabeth that England, like France, needs stability -- a plan for the future of the kingdom because a king (or queen) can die unexpectedly. These historical and political messages are tightly linked to the spiritual message of the play -- our days are numbered, and we best not be distracted and unprepared -- especially the ruler upon whom the country depends.

The first Queen Elizabeth never made plans for her succession. The older she got, the more dire this situation became because it threatened England with a religious war to determine whether the successor would be Protestant or Catholic. France faced the same dilemma when Henry of Navarre, a Protestant, became King: to have peace, Henry converted. England was transferred to the Catholic James VI of Scotland without religious warfare, but religious warfare did come to England later. Shakespeare was clearly prescient.

Love's Labour's Lost is the only play in which Shakespeare presented living, historical figures so clearly, barely disguising their actual names. Why did he choose to set all his other plays in an historical past or fantasy? Perhaps because he was both banned from presenting contemporary individuals on stage and because he realized historical distance allowed an audience more freedom to make their own interpretations.

For the record, the historical events in Nérac took place between 1578 and 1582, with Alençon's death occurring in 1584. According to the traditional dating system offered by most Stratfordian scholars, the play was first performed in 1597, 15 or so years after the events depicted in the play. Immediately, we see can see a problem. Based on the assumption that because the play was published in 1598 and presented to the Queen at Christmas, it must have been written in 1597. When academic honesty prevails in such discussions, the words "or even earlier" are added. But after 15 years, the play's events would be so far in the past they would really have lost any historical immediacy. Scholars not so locked into the Stratford man's dates have shown that most of the plays were probably developed over time, even with title changes for political or other reasons.

Why all the emphasis on politics? In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare tells us that plays are of utmost political importance, not once, but twice. *Hamlet* says: "they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time" (Act II, ii, pp. 550-551); and again in Act III, he says the actors should show "the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure, " (Act III, ii, p. 25). Here, Shakespeare tells us how important the politics of the day are for understanding his plays. Today, we marvel at the psychological depths of Shakespeare's characters, forgetting that they were also created to reflect the historical struggles of the day through a veil of fantasy. This layering of history and

fiction, past and present, creates their complexity.

The continuing effort to analyze Shakespeare's plays based on what Shakspere of Stratford could have known is really no longer tenable. Recent stylometric analyses of the play indicate that some parts were probably written by different authors. Lefranc had a much more credible theory in 1918: he believed that other writers might have simply updated the author's plays for later performances. Certainly, if we simply let the plays speak for themselves, they reveal a stunning knowledge of history, even suppressed stories from across the channel.

Enriching Our Understanding of Shakespeare

Understanding the importance of the continental influence in Shakespeare's work also allows us to understand fully the Renaissance dimensions of the oeuvre. The Renaissance was "a rebirth" which opened up English literature not only to the ancients but also to cultural developments throughout Europe. Shakespeare was well aware of the cultural awakening in Italy, not only literary but also theatrical and artistic. He was also well aware of the political challenges facing Europe. Problem plays like *Measure for Measure, All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Love's Labour's Lost* regain their resonance when put into their historical contexts. Even a play like *Hamlet*, about which so much has been written, is greatly enriched when studied from historical and political aspects as academics such Richard Hillman have done. These studies have not gotten the attention they deserve because the political sophistication they reveal makes it clear *Hamlet* was written by someone with access to the innermost workings of Queen Elizabeth's court.

If we want to understand why Shakespeare was such a great author, why his characters are so complex, and why he is still able to enthrall us centuries after he created his masterpieces, we need to listen to what he tells us himself -- how he created his masterpieces and how we are to relate to them. They truly are the "brief chronicles" of their times as well as works inspired by the medieval allegorical tradition, which sought multiple levels of meaning. Dante termed this complexity the literal, allegorical, and anagogic (spiritual) interpretations. Shakespeare was deeply conscious of these multiple dimensions -- these prisms -- as he created his plays and poems. To understand them more fully, we also need to know, as *Hamlet* says, "the very age and body of the time."

[*N.B. The author highly recommends Frank Lawler's recent translation of Abel Lefranc's Behind the Mask of William Shakespeare for anyone wishing to further pursue the French influence on the Bard. The volume is published by Veritas*.]

BIOGRAPHY

Elisabeth P. Waugaman is a faculty member in the New Directions writing program at the Washington Center for Psychoanalysis. She wrote and illustrated her first book, *Follow Your Dreams*, which won the Santos Dumont Medal from the Brazilian government. Her second book is *Women, Their Names, & the Stories They Tell: Where We've Been, Where we Are, Where We Are Going* (2010, Vox Femina Press). She did graduate work at Princeton and obtained her PhD in medieval French literature from Duke, has taught at Duke and at Johns Hopkins Universities and blogged for *Psychology Today*. She now works full-time on French scholarship and Shakespeare.

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APPENDIX

Some French sources for Shakespeare's plays and sonnets. *This list is based on the work of Stuart Gillespie with updates:*

--***A Midsummer Night's Dream*** (1595): *Huon de Bordeaux,* 13th century, provides the name *Obéron* (translated by Sir John Bourchier, Lord Berner, 1534).

--***All's Well That Ends Well*** (1604-05): Antoine le Maçon, Décaméron ou cent *Nouvelles de Boccace* (1569); Symphorien Champier, *La vie du preux chevalier Bayard* (circa 1525); François de Belleforest, *La Pyrénée ou La pastorale amovrese* (1571); Marguerite de Valois, *Mémoires* (1628).

--***Antony and Cleopatra*** (1606): Robert Garnier, Marc Antoine (1578); Étienne Jodelle, *Cléopatre Captive* (performed 1552, published 1574); Nicolas de Montreux and Jacques Amyot, *Vies parallèles des hommes illustres* (1559-1565), translated by Thomas North (1579).

--***As You Like It*** (1599): poetry of Maurice Scève (Kaston and Vickers, pp. 165-166).

--***Hamlet*** (1600): Belleforest, *Histoires Tragiques* (1568); *L'Histoire d'Hélène Tournon*, not published until 1628.

--***Henry V*** (1599): L'Hostelerie.

--***Henry VI, Part I*** (1591) *Le Rozier Historial de France* (1522), *Les Grandes Chroniques de France, Chroniques de Britaigne.*

--***King Lear*** (1605): Le garçon et l'aveugle, oldest surviving French farce.

--***Love's Labour's Lost*** (1598): Pierre de la Primaudaye, L'Académie française (1577); *L'Histoire d'Hélène de Tournon* (no translation available).

--***Macbeth*** (1606): Pierre Le Loyer Seigneur de la Brosse, *Discours et histories des spectres; François de Belleforest, Histoires Tragiques* (no translation available).

--***Measure for Measure*** (1604): François de Belleforest, Histoires Tragiques; Goulart, Histoires admirables et mémorables de notre temps; Philippe de Mornay (seigneur du Plessis-Mornay), "Excellent discours de la vier et de la mort," (A Discourse on Life and Death), translated by Mary Sidney (1592) influenced the Duke's "Be absolute for death" speech in *Measure for Measure* (3.1.5-41) (source: Shakespeare's Books).

--***Much Ado About Nothing*** (1598): Belleforest, *Histoires Tragiques* (no translation available).

--***Othello*** (1604): Giovanni Battista Giraldi Cinthio, *Hecatommithi* (1565), translated into French by Gabriel Chappuys (1583). In *Othello*, critics have noted direct verbal echoes of both Chappuys's French and Cinthio's Italian.

--***Richard II*** (1592): Jean Créton Froissart, *Chronique de la traison et mort de Richard II* (1401), an eye-witness's account of the death of Richard II ; Ronsard, "Callirée" (1573).

--T***aming of the Shrew*** (1593): *Livre pour l'enseignement de ses filles du Chevalier de la Tour Landry* (1372): translation, 1483; L*a Comédie des Supposés; La Guisiade* by Pierre Matthieu (1589).

--***Cymbeline*** (1609): the Old French miracle play, *Miracle de Nostre Dame, comment ostes, roy d'Eespaigne; perdi sa terre* and its probable source *Le Roman du roi* (also in Boccaccio's story in the Decameron II, 9, no translation until 1620).

--***The Winter's Tale*** (1610): *Théon et Obéron*.

--***The Tempest*** (1611): *Essais*, Montaigne, (Williams provides proof Shakespeare read Montaigne in French).

--**Roman History Plays**: Jacques Amyot's French translation of *Plutarch's Lives: La vie des hommes illustres grecs et romains* (1559).

--***Two Gentlemen of Verona*** (1594): Antoine Le Maçon's translation of *The Decameron*: the French edition of Montemayor's *Diana* (1582), which was only translated into English in 1598.

--***Sonnets*** (1609): see the Pléiade poets such as Ronsard and Jodelle.

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ESSAY

A Century of Scholarly Neglect: Shakespeare and Greek Drama

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HIGHLIGHTS

Poet Ben Jonson claimed that Shakespeare knew "small Latin and less Greek," yet it seems that the author actually knew much Greek and was familiar with many of the ancient Greek tragedies. The Stratford man arguably had no access to learning the language or to these ancient works, many of which were not translated into English during his lifetime.

ABSTRACT

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a number of Shakespeare scholars, including Israel Gollancz (1894), H.R.D. Anders (1904), J. Churton Collins (1904), and Gilbert Murray (1914) wrote convincingly of Shakespeare's debt to classical Greek drama. However, in the century since, most scholars and editors have repeatedly held that Shakespeare was not familiar with Greek drama. In Classical Mythology in Shakespeare (1903), Robert Kilburn Root expressed the opinion on Shakespeare's 'lesse Greek' that presaged this enduring dismissal: "It is at any rate certain that he nowhere alludes to any characters or episodes of Greek drama, that they extended no influence whatsoever on his conception of mythology." (p. 6) This century-long consensus against Attic dramatic influence was reinforced by A.D. Nutall, who wrote, "that Shakespeare was cut off from Greek poetry and drama is probably a bleak truth that we should accept." (Nutall, 2004, p.210) Scholars have preferred to maintain that Plutarch or Ovid were Shakespeare's surrogate literary mediators for the playwright's adaptations from Greek myth and theatre. Other scholars, however, have questioned these assumptions, including Laurie Maguire, who observed that "invoking Shakespeare's imagined conversations in the Mermaid tavern is not a methodology likely to convince skeptics that Shakespeare knew Greek drama." (p. 98) This near-universal rejection of Greek drama as Shakespeare sources have profound philological implications. Indeed, this essay argues that the proscription against recognizing the Attic canon as an influence in Shakespeare has been driven by the belief that Will Shakspere of Stratford had, at most, an education that was Latin-based. The examples show that the real author had to have been exposed to both the Greek language and the Greek dramatists. Evidence for alternative candidates, including Edward de Vere, shows that many were schooled in Greek and that some even collected and supported translations of Greek works. It is my contention that Shakespeare's dramatic imagination was actually fired by the Greeks, and Shakespeare research has clearly suffered from a century of denial.

KEYWORDS

Shakespeare, Shakespeare Authorship Question, Greek drama, Shakespeare's "less Greek", Edward de Vere

INTRODUCTION

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a number of Shakespeare scholars, including Israel Gollancz (1894), H.R.D. Anders (1904), and J. Churton Collins (1904), as well as Greek scholar Gilbert Murray (1914), wrote convincingly of Shakespeare's debt to classical Greek drama. However, in the century since, most scholars and editors have repeatedly held that Shakespeare was evidently not familiar with Greek drama. In *Classical Mythology in Shakespeare* (1903), Robert Kilburn Root expressed the opinion on Shakespeare's 'lesse Greek' that presaged this enduring dismissal: "It is at any rate certain that he nowhere alludes to any characters or episodes of Greek drama, that they extended no influence whatsoever on his conception of mythology" (p. 6).

This century-long consensus against Attic dramatic influence has been reinforced in the 21st century by Shakespeare critics A.D. Nutall (2004), Michael Silk (2004), and Colin Burrow (2013). Tradition-bound scholars have more often maintained that Seneca, Plutarch, or Ovid were Shakespeare's surrogate literary mediators for his apparent adaptations from Greek myth. However, Shakespeare's imagined conversations with university wits in London pubs are not likely to convince critics that Shakespeare knew, and adapted to his own purposes, elements from Greek drama.

The century-long, near-universal rejection of the dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides as Shakespeare sources has profound epistemological implications as the proscription against the intertextual influence of the Attic canon has been driven by the knowledge that grammar school education in the 16th century was Latin-based, and that published translations of Greek tragedies were extremely rare. Perhaps more problematic yet is the possibility that the attribution challenge posed by alternative candidates, including Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, who was schooled in Greek, and collected and supported translations of Greek editions, could legitimately challenge the traditional narrative of authorship. The recent theory of co-authorship of the Shakespeare canon is at least partially driven by the philological evidence of these untranslated Greek sources.

Despite the consensus ranging from Root to Burrow, the textual and dramaturgic resonances between Greek tragedy and Shakespeare has long been the subject of scholarly interest. In *Attic and Elizabethan Tragedy* (1908), Laughlan Maclean Watt perceptively identified the analogous dramatic flowering in historical context that equally suits the Golden Age of Athens and the Elizabethan eras:

> Perhaps in all the history of the fluctuation, conflict, and yearning of the world, there are not recorded any periods more fraught with influences, environments, and provocations of greatness than in the age in which Attic Tragedy rose and flourished, and that in which the genius of the Elizabethan era found its highest utterance on the English Tragic stage. (p. 2)

Watt's detailed comparative analysis of ancient Greek and Elizabethan drama posits a number of remarkable similarities between these traditions, that "irony of fate" was strong in both traditions, and that in Aeschylus and Shakespeare evil was overcome by good, and that Sophocles and Shakespeare shared a "pride of race, deep sympathetic insight, and knowledge of humanity unexcelled, bringing them often into contact, one with another.... both in spirit aristocratic..." (p. 345). Watt, however, never argued that Shakespeare might have been directly inspired by Greek tragedy, or that his plays and poems included specific textual connections to these dramas. Perhaps Watt's reluctance to make such an assertion was tempered by the prevailing scholarly opinion as expressed by his contemporary Robert Root.

In *Shakespeare's England*, John Edwin Sandys asserted that any proposed textual parallels "...have failed to carry conviction with calm and cautious critics. They have been justly regarded either as 'no more than curious accidents – proof of consanguinity of spirit, not of any indebtedness on Shakespeare's part' or as due to the 'general literary and theatrical tradition' that had reached the Elizabethan dramatists 'through Seneca'"(p. 265). Seventy-five years later, critical opinion remained absolute in its skepticism. In *Shakespeare and the Uses of Antiquity*, Michelle and Charles Martindale (1990) similarly argued that the difficulty in translating Greek dramatic poetry and the absence of scholarly interest in this question has undermined the viability of any such claim:

> Any Greek language Shakespeare had would not have been sufficient to allow him to read the extremely taxing poetry of the fifth century B.C. Renaissance culture remained primarily Latin-based;...Moreover, despite all efforts, no one has succeeded in producing one single piece of evidence from the plays to make any such debt certain, or even particularly likely. (p. 41)

This discounting of Attic dramatic influence was reinforced again more recently in *Shakespeare and the Classics*, an essay collection edited by Charles Martindale and A.B. Taylor (2004). In "Action at a distance: Shakespeare and the Greeks", A.D. Nuttall wrote:

> That Shakespeare was cut off from Greek poetry and drama is probably a bleak truth that we should accept. A case can be made – and has been made – for Shakespeare's having some knowledge of certain Greek plays, such as Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Orestes, Alcestis,* and *Hecuba*, by way of available Latin versions, but this, surely, is an area in which the faint occasional echoes mean less than the circumambient silence. When we consider how hungrily Shakespeare feeds upon Ovid, learning from him or extending him at every turn, it becomes more evident that he cannot, in any serious sense, have found his way to Euripides. (p. 210)

In the book's succeeding chapter, "Shakespeare and Greek Tragedy: Strange Relationship", Michael Silk ironically admits that there are numerous "unmistakable" commonalities between Shakespeare and the Greeks, but simply echoes the platitudes of accepted authority: "There is no reason to suppose that Shakespeare ever encountered any of the Greek tragedians, either in the original language or otherwise" (Silk, 2004, p. 241).

Several critics have maintained that Shakespeare learned the conventions and plots of Greek drama by way of Thomas North's translation of *Plutarch's Parallel Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* (1579). In S*hakespeare and the Classics*, J. A. K. Thompson (1952) wrote that he was "content with throwing out the suggestion that, through the medium of North's *Plutarch*, Shakespeare divined the true spirit of Greek Tragedy" (p. 250).

The reception of Thompson's suggestion that Plutarch was the surrogate literary mediator for the Shakespeare adoptions from Greek drama was reinforced most recently by Oxford University Senior Fellow Colin Burrow in *Shakespeare and Classical Antiquity*. Burrow (2013) includes extended chapters on Virgil, Ovid, Roman Comedy, Seneca, and Plutarch as sources for Shakespeare, but rejects the possibility that Shakespeare was influenced directly by the dramatic literature of 5th-century Athens:

> Shakespeare almost certainly never read Sophocles or Euripides (let alone the much more difficult Aeschylus) in Greek, and yet he managed to write tragedies which invite comparison with those authors. He did so despite the limitations of his classical knowledge and perhaps in part because of them. He read Plutarch in North's translation rather than reading Sophocles in Greek. This means that he read a direct, clear statement about the relationship between divine promptings and human actions rather than plays in which complex thoughts about the interrelationship between human and divine agency were buried implicitly within a drama. Having 'less Greek' could therefore have enabled him to appear to understand more about Greek tragedy, and its complex mingling of voluntary actions and divine promptings, than he would have done if he had actually been able to work his way through Aeschylus and Euripides in the first place. (p. 247)

A century-old tradition of scholarship also exists, however, which engaged the question of Greek tragedy and tragicomedy being directly connected to a number of Shakespeare's dramas. J. Churton Collins was the first 20th-century critic to take this broader view. In *Studies in Shakespeare*, Collins (1904) identified a number of 16th-century Latin translations of the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides that were published on the Continent, and he asserted that it was "improbable, almost to the point of being incredible, that Shakespeare should not have had the curiosity to turn to them" (p. 41).

Other 20th-century critics who have investigated this question include renowned Greek scholar Gilbert Murray, and Shakespeare scholars Jan Kott and Louise Schleiner, who have all argued convincingly that Aeschylus' *Oresteia* influenced *Hamlet*.[1] Inga Stina-Ewbank has proposed that Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* was a source for *Macbeth*, and others have similarly identified Greek dramatic elements in that play.[2] Jonathan Bate, Sarah Dewar-Watson, and Claire McEachern have all acknowledged that Euripides' tragicomedy *Alcestis* influenced the final scenes of both *The Winter's Tale* and *Much Ado about Nothing*.[3] George Stevens, J.A.K. Thompson, and Emrys Jones have argued that *Titus Andronicus* was indebted to Euripides' *Hecuba* and Sophocles' *Ajax*, while A.D. Nuttall has detected evidence that Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* influenced *Timon of Athens*. However, like so many before him, Nutall is obliged to refer to his insightful comparative analysis as only pressing an analogy.

Oxford University Professor Laurie Maguire (2007) has contextualized the embarrassing argument over Shakespeare's knowledge of Euripides in *Shakespeare's Names*:

> Reluctant to argue that Shakespeare's grammar-school Greek could read Euripides, critics resort to social supposition to argue their case. Charles and Michelle Martindale suggest that 'five minutes conversation with a friend could have given Shakespeare all he needed to know'

> as does Nutall: 'If we suppose what is simply probable, that he (Shakespeare) talked in pubs to Ben Jonson and others....' I agree with these suppositions, as it happens, but invoking the Mermaid tavern is not a methodology likely to convince skeptics that Shakespeare knew Greek drama. (p. 98)

Maguire devoted six pages to examining the availability in England of Continental editions of Latin and Italian translations of Euripides' plays. London printers evidently lacked the expertise to print parallel Latin and Greek texts of high quality. Citing contemporaneous literature that alluded to or quoted Euripides in dramas, sermons, political treatises, and commonplace books, Maguire concluded, "The availability of parallel-text editions with clear Latin translations and explanatory apparatus made it easy for anyone with an interest to read Euripides" (p. 103-104).

However, it should be noted that continental translations of the dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles were quite rare and therefore difficult to establish as Shakespearean sources. In *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500-1700*, Bruce Smith (1998) states:

> In the same period, there were, to be sure, eighteen translations of the plays of Sophocles, but they were concentrated almost exclusively on only three plays, *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*, and *Electra*. By 1600, there was not even one translation of a play by Aeschylus in Italian, French, English, German, or Spanish. (p. 203)

Professor Root's century-old opinion has recently come under challenge on multiple fronts. For 21st-century Shakespeare authorship studies, this may well represent a philological Achilles heel to the traditional attribution. No one has contextualized this cognitive dissonance better than Andrew Werth, whose 2002 paper, "Shakespeare's 'Lesse Greek'" deftly exposed one of the great lacunae in Renaissance scholarship: the near-complete absence of published studies of Shakespeare's indebtedness to Greek dramatic literature. Werth provided numerous examples and critical commentaries that support the conclusion that Shakespeare drew directly from Greek epic and drama, and noted how scholars have often expressed conflicted opinions over the significance of these intriguing textual echoes. Published in *The Oxfordian V*, Werth's arguments have been cited by no less authority than Professor Stanley Wells, who praised Werth's insights during a speech to the World Shakespeare Congress in 2011.[4]

Brooklyn College Professor Tanya Pollard has most recently explored this question, citing Werth, as well as several of my articles in her study, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages*. Pollard's (2017) review departs radically from the traditional narrative by showing how ancient Greek drama exerted a powerful, but essentially uncharted influence on Renaissance England's dramatic landscape:

> Identified with the origins of theatrical performance, and represented especially by passionate female figures, these newly visible Greek plays challenged early modern writers to reimagine the affective possibilities of tragedy, comedy, and the emerging hybrid genre of tragicomedy. (p. 2)

Pollard insightfully identifies the Greek sources of Shakespeare's distinctive adaptations of comedy, ones that emphasized affecting audiences through the performance of female passions, which contrasts with satiric playwrights like Jonson, Middleton, and Marston, whose comedies most often featured male protagonists seeking revenge or usurpation:

> Plays such as *Comedy of Errors* and *Twelfth Night* depart from their Plautine models with Greek-inflected settings, and allusions to Greek prose fictions and lamenting female figures.... In *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Pericles*, and *The Winter's Tale*, suffering female figures evoke Alcestis by reviving triumphantly after apparent death, drawing on self-consciously Greek female institutions such as the Delphic Oracle and the Temple of Diana at Ephesus. (Pollard, 2017, p. 22)

Besides detailing Shakespeare's reinvention of Euripidean representations of Hecuba, Iphigenia, and Alcestis, Pollard provides extensive evidence of Greek fluency among the 'university wits', as well as 60 pages of appendices of Continental publications and translations of Greek plays during the 16th century. However, Pollard does not extend arguments posed by Murray, Collins, Kott, or Schleiner regarding the evidence of Shakespeare's debt to Aeschylus or Sophocles in writing his tragedies.

This century-long controversy has profound implications regarding the very origins of dramatic art and the superimposed blinders of literary biography on these philological considerations. The following discourse will undertake to review the scholarship affirming that Shakespeare's mythopoetic imagination was fired by the Greek example. That he incorporated numerous plots, themes,

dramaturgy, allusions, tropes, allegory, and words taken from the Greek canon is credible and worthy of detailed, play-by-play investigations. The following dramas have attracted the most scholarly attention.

Hamlet

For a Nordic tragedy, *Hamlet* encompasses a profusion of classical allusions in the text, with repeated references to Hercules and Alexander the Great. The themes of royal assassination, inherited fate, ghostly visitation, intergenerational murder, tainted food and wine, violated sanctuary, and maimed burial rites woven into *Hamlet* exactly echo the tragic narratives of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. No scholar has better explicated these analogs than Gilbert Murray, whose brilliant 1914 Shakespeare lecture to the British Academy, *Hamlet, and Orestes: A Study in Traditional Types*, identified many remarkable similarities between Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Euripides' *Orestes* dramas, and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*:

> There are first the broad similarities of situation between what we may call the original sagas on both sides; that is, the general story of Orestes and Hamlet, respectively. But secondly, there is something much more remarkable; when these sagas were worked up into tragedies, quite independently and on very different lines, by great dramatists of Greece and England, not only do most of the old similarities remain, but a number of new similarities are developed. That is, Aeschylus, Euripides, and Shakespeare are strikingly similar in certain points which do not occur at all in Saxo or Ambales or the Greek epic. (p. 14)

Murray was England's foremost Greek scholar during the first half of the 20th century and is credited with numerous translations of Attic dramas and the revival of classical Greek theatre in London. Murray stopped short of claiming that Shakespeare was directly influenced by Greek tragedy, repeating the old saw that "all critics" have opposed this theory. As an alternative explanation, Murray proposed there exists a set of universal principles particular to tragedy that help explain these anomalies:

> Are we thrown back then, on a much broader and simpler though rather terrifying hypothesis, that the field of tragedy is by nature so limited that these similarities are inevitable?... I do not think that in itself it is enough to explain those close and detailed and fundamental similarities as those we are considering... there must be a connection somewhere. (p. 15)

Over the century since Murray published his remarkable insights, other scholars have confirmed his judgment. Another Greek specialist, H. D. F. Kitto[5], has also identified Greek dramatic elements in *Hamlet*. In 1990, the *Shakespeare Quarterly* published Professor Louise Schleiner's detailed analysis, which went further than any other 20th-century critic in proposing a direct influence of Aeschylus' trilogy on *Hamlet*, mediated through one of the continental Latin translations:

> I am convinced that at least some passages of Euripides' Orestes and Aeschylus' *Oresteia* ... by some means influenced *Hamlet*. The concrete theatrical similarities between the Shakespearean and Aeschylean graveyard scenes and between the roles of Horatio and Pylades ... are, in my view, too close to be coincidental. Furthermore, the churchyard scene of *Hamlet* does not occur in any of the play's known sources or analogs: if it was not a sheer invention ... it has some source not yet identified. (Schleiner, p. 30)

Schleiner proposed several possible sources of Latin translations of Aeschylus, including the Saint-Revy edition (Basel, 1555) and the Vettori Aeschylus editions published by Henri Estienne (Paris, 1557, 1567). She noted that Ben Jonson owned a copy of the Saint-Revy *Oresteia* in 1614:

> ... The Greek subtext of *Hamlet*, if such it is, will not only help account for the rebirth of full-fledged tragedy after 2,000 years, it will also clarify Horatio's role and correct our century's overemphasis on oedipal qualities in *Hamlet*. For Shakespeare's Hamlet is much more a version – even a purposive revision – of Orestes than Oedipus. Hamlet is at no risk of marrying or having sex with his mother. He is at considerable risk of killing her. (Schleiner, pp. 36-37)

Martin Mueller has most recently advanced the notion of a direct connection in his recognition of how *Hamlet* engages the legacy of ancient tragedy through a web of allusive ties to Orestes-centered dramas. Mueller (1997) also insightfully notes that Shakespeare's contemporaries left literary evidence that they thought of *Hamlet* as an Orestes-inspired play:

> In Thomas Heywood's *The Iron Age* (1611), a dramatization of the Orestes myth, we find a closet

> scene between Orestes and Clytemnestra. Further, *The Tragedy of Orestes*, Written by Thomas Goffe, Master of Arts, and Students of Christ Church in Oxford and Acted by the Students of the Same House in 1616, while full of Shakespearean echoes in general, reads at times like a *Hamlet* cento. It is evident that Heywood and Goffe saw Orestes as Hamlet because they had seen Hamlet as Orestes. (Mueller, p. 27)

All this to say, there is literary evidence that Shakespeare's contemporaries appreciated his use of Greek drama in writing this greatly admired tragedy, and that 20th-century Greek scholars recognized numerous analogs. The question arises about why the possibility of Greek influences has never been fully addressed by editors of modern editions of *Hamlet*.

Macbeth

The chilling, supernatural world of *Macbeth* similarly echoes elements featured in the *Oresteia*, but Aeschylus' trilogy, as a direct source for *Macbeth*, has never received the critical attention bestowed on *Hamlet*. Remarkably, one early scholar recognized that of the entire canon, "*Macbeth* most resembles a Greek tragedy"[6], and J. A. K. Thompson (1952) even noted this close association in *Shakespeare and the Classics*:

> *Macbeth* is, in many respects, the most classical of all Shakespeare's plays. It employs more powerfully and overtly than any other, the method of tragic irony, which gets its effects by working on the foreknowledge of the audience – here communicated by the Witches -.... And the killing of Duncan is, in the Greek manner, done off stage. (p. 119)

In his detailed commentaries on the sources of *Macbeth*, however, Thompson ignored the Greek tragedies, and focused primarily on Seneca's *Hercules Furens* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as more likely to have been Shakespeare sources.

Thompson is not the only scholar to identify analogs to Greek tragedy in *Macbeth* and then drop further investigation. In *Shakespeare Survey 19: Macbeth*, general editor Kenneth Muir (1966) wrote that "*Macbeth* has long been considered one of Shakespeare's most sublime plays, if only because of the analogs between it and Greek tragedies" (p. 5). Muir's essay collection included insightful commentaries by Arthur McGhee on "*Macbeth* and the Furies".

Among the early critical opinions linking *Macbeth* to the *Oresteia* that are cited in Horace Howard Furness' *Variorum* edition (1873, 1903) was one expressed by Lord Campbell (Lord High Chancellor of England and author of *Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements Reconsidered*, 1859). Campbell determined that *Macbeth* reminded him of Aeschylus primarily because both playwrights employed conceptions too bold for easy representation:

> In the grandeur of tragedy, *Macbeth* has no parallel, until we go back to *The Prometheus and The Furies* of the Attic stage. I could produce ... innumerable instances of striking similarity between the metaphorical mintage of Shakespeare's and Aeschylus's style - a similarity, both in beauty and in the fault of excess, that, unless the contrary had been proved, would lead me to suspect our great dramatist to have been a studious Greek scholar. But their resemblance arose only from the consanguinity of nature. (Furness, p. 480)

Of all 20th-century Shakespeare scholars, J. Churton Collins provided the most detailed consideration of a direct link between *Macbeth* and Aeschylus' trilogy. Citing a number of potential inter-textual echoes to Greek tragedy, Collins (1904) noted these similarities in characterization:

> Clytemnestra in *The Agamemnon* might well be the archetype of Lady Macbeth. Both possessed by one idea are, till its achievement, the incarnations of a murderous purpose. In both, the motive impulses are from the sexual affections. Both, without pity and without scruple, have nerves of steel and wills of iron before which their husband and paramour cower in admiring awe, and yet in both beats the women's heart; and the fine touches which Aeschylus brings this out may well have arrested Shakespeare's attention. The profound hypocrisy of the one in her speech to Agamemnon answers to that of the other in her speeches to Duncan. (pp. 72-73)

Collins described how the build-up to Duncan's murder and the murder itself, with Lady Macbeth waiting in suspense outside the King's chamber, have a "strong generic resemblance to the catastrophes of the *Choephoroe* (*Libation Bearers*), the *Electra* (of Sophocles) and the *Orestes* (of Euripides)" (p. 73).

Collins was aware that the works of Aeschylus had never been published in England, and simply accepted

that for his later plays, "we must assume that instinct led Shakespeare to the Greek conception of the scope and functions of tragedy and that by a certain natural affinity, he caught also the accent and tone as well as some of the most striking characteristics of Greek tragedy" (p. 87). Despite the intriguing possibilities proposed by Collins, only a handful of Shakespeare scholars have continued to explore various dramatic elements that link the Scottish play to Greek tragedy.

In *Ethical Aspects of Tragedy*, Laura Jepsen (1971) compared *Macbeth* and the *Oresteia* and focused on the principle of "poetic justice" and the tension between individual responsibility and hereditary guilt as defining the heroic struggle. "Like Aristotle, the Greek tragedians and Shakespeare generally conceive of a universe in which standards of morality are absolute" (p. 6). Jepsen argued that the guilty conscience assailing Macbeth was akin to Nemesis, which furiously pursued Clytemnestra, and she also notes that both characters never showed a sign of repentance. Macbeth is at "the end, deceived by the witch's prophecies, but like Clytemnestra calling for the battle-axe, he dies defiantly presenting his shield" (p. 31). While Jepsen presented a detailed comparative analysis of the plots, characters, and ethics of these two tragedies, she never contended that Aeschylus directly influenced Shakespeare.

In *Tragedy: Shakespeare and the Greek Example*, Professor Adrian Poole (1987) noted that Aeschylean tragedy is uniquely rich in the "power to represent fear, its symptoms, sources, objects and consequences. *Macbeth* is in this sense Shakespeare's most Aeschylean tragedy" (p. 15)[7]. Poole accurately portrayed the restless confusion and insomnia from painful memories that possessed the characters of both the *Oresteia* and *Macbeth*, giving rise to a "vertiginous apprehension". Poole noted that Lady Macbeth, like Clytemnestra, "exhibits an astonishing self-control, a violent seizure of language through which she seeks to control herself and others" (p. 19).

Poole's analysis even included a recognition of the similarities of the dramatic situations of the avenging sons, Orestes and Malcolm, and he goes so far as to suggest that the English Siwards (Earls) in *Macbeth* serve as the equivalent of Aeschylus' *Pylades*, as "guarantors of a justice whose source lies elsewhere, beyond the confines of natural corruption" (p. 49). However, Professor Poole, like so many scholars beforehand, stops short of ever making the radical proposal that Shakespeare drew directly from Aeschylus.

Despite these obvious parallels in plot, dramaturgy, characterization, and supernatural terror, no current edition of *Macbeth* suggests Aeschylus as a possible source. The images, allusions, and thematic parallels that connect these tragedies are summarized in my article, "Shakespeare's Greater Greek: *Macbeth* and Aeschylus' *Oresteia*" (*Brief Chronicles 3*, 2011). The arguments therein concern parallels related to the fatal "trammel net", the dramaturgy of bloody knives, ghostly visitation, night terrors, the "damned spot", poisoned breast imagery, avian augury, and the Weird Sisters as latter-day Furies. I believe these all represent new textual and thematic evidence which draws Shakespeare ever closer to Aeschylus than previously recognized, and establishes *Macbeth* as Shakespeare's closest representation of Attic tragedy.

Finally, in a recent report, "'Striking too short at Greeks': The Transmission of *Agamemnon* to the English Renaissance Stage", Professor Inga-Stina Ewbank (2005) remarks on the "eclecticism of Shakespeare's inter-textualizing" included her "growing sense that Shakespeare learned from the Aeschylean chorus, with its intimate (and totally un-Senecan) connection with the house and the city" (p. 51). Ewbank's commentaries trace the history of neoclassical representations of Aeschylus' characters. According to Ewbank, the Saint-Revy translation appears to have been the version of Aeschylus commonly read by humanists on the Continent and in England. Importantly, the Saint-Revy edition was based on an incomplete manuscript which compressed the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers* into one play in which Agamemnon never appears as a character.[8]

Professor Ewbank also recognizes that Thomas Goffe's *The Tragedie of Orestes* (1616) revealed another recognizable connection between Shakespeare and Aeschylus. Ewbank (2005) noted that in Goffe's drama, "Aegisthus and Clitemnestra become like the Macbeths: he invokes the 'sable wings' of Night and Clitemnestra 'unsexes' herself, and together they stab Agamemnon in his bed.... Orestes, meditating on his father's skull, Hamlet-fashion, finds assurance in a Macbeth-like visit to an Enchantress and three witches who produce, to the accompaniment of '*Infernall Musique*', a dumb show of Aegisthus and Clitemnestra '*with their bloody daggers*' killing Agamemnon." (Ewbank, p. 49)

Ewbank fails, though, to satisfactorily answer questions of how, in 1616, Goffe incorporated dramatic elements later found in *Macbeth*, which was not published until seven years later in the First Folio. Nonetheless, her conclusion sounds a positive note regarding the potential here: "We need to know more about the part played by Greek texts in Elizabethan and Jacobean literary culture, but evidence seems to mount up that some form of first-hand contact with Aeschylus has left traces in Shakespeare's dramatic imagination" (Ewbank, p. 52).

Timon of Athens

Compared to other Shakespeare plays, *Timon of Athens* is an austere and static drama, almost completely lacking in action. In his annotated bibliography, John Ruszkiewicz notes the generically mixed qualities of *Timon*, "a play conceived as tragedy, but incorporating elements of morality, comedy, farce, satire, masque and pageant:" (Ruszkiewicz, 1986, xviii). Opinion has been mostly critical of *Timon*, although G. Wilson Knight praised this drama as being tremendous, of universal tragic significance. That we have a text at all is remarkable as some editors have concluded it was never intended for publication, being mysteriously inserted in the place of *Troilus and Cressida* in the First Folio. That there were no designations for acts or scenes in the Folio text is also evidence to view *Timon* is unique.

The potential co-authorship of *Timon* with Thomas Middleton has been embraced by a number of scholars, although there is still considerable uncertainty over the date of composition based on performance records or allusions to a dramatic production. While there were a number of English literary allusions to *Timon* during the latter 16th century, none specifically refer to a Timon drama except one: William Warner's reference to the Athenian misanthrope in *Syrinx or A Sevenfold History* (1584). From "To the Reader":

> And yet, let his coy prophetess presage hard events in her cell, let the Athenian misanthropos [printed in Greek characters] or man-hater bite on the stage, or the Sinopian cynic bark with the stationer; yet, in Pan his Syrinx, will I pipe at the least to myself.[9]

Warner's "coy prophetess" is most likely an allusion to Cassandra, the seer who rejected Apollo and became Agamemnon's ill-fated slave at the end of the Trojan War. This passage is quite possibly a reference to a character in the lost drama, *History of Agamemnon and Ulisses*, performed at court in December 1584 by the Earl of Oxford's Boys. In *English Dramatic Companies*, 1558-1642, J. T. Murray speculates that this play "may have been written by the Earl of Oxford himself, for he was reckoned by Puttenham and Meres among 'the best for comedy' of his time" Murray, J. (p. 345).

Warner's reference to the "Sinopian cynic" is clearly a reference to the 5th-century Greek cynic philosopher, Diogenes, a character in John Lyly's *Campaspe*, which was also staged by Oxford's Boys during the same court revels in 1584. *Campaspe* was published later that same year, thus the allusion to the "stationer". The "Athenian *misanthropos*" biting on the stage is almost certainly an allusion to a contemporary presentation of a Timon drama. Warner's letter opens the door to the possibility of topical and allegorical interpretations of Shakespeare's *Timon* that relates to the events in the Earl of Oxford's life in the early 1580s.

A significant dispute exists over the acknowledged sources of *Timon*. Scholars readily accept Plutarch's *Life of Marcus Antonius* and Lucian's dialogue, *Timon The Misanthrope*, as primary sources, but controversy continues over the part played by an unpublished, anonymous manuscript of a Timon satire, *MS Timon*, possibly written for the Inns of Court or a university audience. *MS Timon* was published for the first time in 1842 by Alexander Dyce. H. J. Oliver has effectively argued that it is hard to understand how Shakespeare could have known this unpublished academic comedy, and Muriel C. Bradbrook has interpreted it to be more likely a derivative parody of Shakespeare's tragedy.

Oxford editor John Jowett noted that neither Plutarch nor Lucian embodied the bleak cynicism found in Shakespeare's tragedy, and that Timon's pessimism seems to belong to a "more complex textual field", one that depicts, he notes, the economic ruin of the nobility. Shakespeare radically recast Timon in the mold of a classical tragic hero, and did so by adapting the dramatic structure, poetics, dramaturgy, and allegory inherent to Greek tragedy. A.D. Nuttall, author of *Shakespeare the Thinker* (2007), noted that in Timon, "Shakespeare dramatized inhumanity in such a way as to reflect the stiff archaic formalism of Greek tragedy and employed expressions that are a clear expression of irony, running at full Sophoclean strength" (p. 42).

Shakespeare's *Timon* possesses a three-part structure that parallels the traditional Greek tragic trilogy. Rolf Soellner has insightfully suggested that *Timon* follows the tripartite design offered by Renaissance humanists: protasis, epitasis, catastrophe. The Folio text of *Timon* does not include act or scene divisions, but the play explores three distinct, progressively darker dramatic moods, all of approximate equal length. I have labeled these divisions: "Prodigal Timon" (Act I plus the Masque of the Amazons), "Timon's Misfortune" (Acts II, III, and IV Scenes 1 and 2), and "Timon's Fury" (Act IV Scene 3 and Act V). Nuttall (2004) seems to agree as regards Act IV of *Timon*, noting that the structure and character of the scene is "astonishingly Greek".

> We have the pattern of the humiliated Hero, apart from society, in a wild place. To him come, in succession, various figures to upbraid him or (more important) to solicit his aid. It is a pattern

> of great power in Sophocles, strong in Aeschylus, less strong in Euripides. In *Oedipus at Colonus* the protagonist, blind, filthy, and ragged, is visited in turn by Theseus, Creon, and Polynices, who wishes to raze Thebes to the earth in vengeance for the wrong he has suffered. Oedipus, for all his strange aura of sanctity, is more like Timon than one expects. He embraces his own wretchedness and curses those who have wronged him. (Nuttall, 2004, p. 107).

Nuttall identified three plays with a structure similar to the final part of *Timon of Athens*: Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Philoctetes*, and Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*. In each of these three Greek tragedies, a betrayed and wounded hero survives in a desolate wilderness, but is pursued by needy visitors. Of *Timon*'s succession of supplicants, Nuttall wrote, "We seem to have traveled back to the earliest period of Greek drama, in which the 'second actor' has not yet been invented and where...the same speaker came forward to address the audience in a succession of different masks" (p. 89).

Many critics, including A.D. Nuttall, Maurice Charney, G. Wilson Knight, H.J. Oliver, and James Bulman, have noted this tragedy's unprecedented use of Greek-like choric passages. The term "gods" also appears more often in this play than any other Shakespeare work, another characteristic of Greek drama. Shakespeare's *Timon* begins in the Greek fashion with an oracle, which Adrian Poole noted creates an "apprehension of temporal convergence at once fearful and hopeful", and was "characteristically Sophoclean". Further, Timon dies off-stage, and his death is reported by a messenger, also fitting the classical Greek model. Timon's excess of bitter emotion to the point of madness is a theme that is often incorporated in Attic tragedy. James Bulman and Frank Kermode have both argued that, of all the plays of Shakespeare, *Timon* most closely adheres to an Aristotelian moral scheme. Critics have also commented on how Timon employs Greek versification, especially *stichomythia*, and cannibalistic imagery, another characteristic of Attic tragedy.

Timon of Athens presents a matrix of Greek dramatic elements that imbue the tragedy's plot, characterization, poetics, ethics, imagery, and dramaturgy with a classical aura. A.D. Nuttall's brilliant deductions about the similarities between Shakespeare's *Timon* and Sophocles' *Oedipus* are particularly important, though Nuttall is obliged to disclaim Shakespeare's knowledge of this untranslated tragedy. Shakespeare's *Timon* is the playwright's most Sophoclean creation, both in the hubris of his prodigality and the cynicism of his misanthropy. Timon's fury-driven death in the wilderness comes without the benefit of self-reflection. A Renaissance adaptation of Greek tragedy, *Timon* is a self-consciously literate creation, one which adapts a mosaic of Greek sources that would most likely have been appreciated only by a well-educated audience.

Oxfordian biographers have strongly suggested that *Timon* is a political allegory, one specifically reflecting Edward de Vere's financial and social misfortunes in the early 1580's, when the Timon drama was performed.[10] That de Vere was the archetypal bankrupt patrician who wasted a fortune to end up as a Queen's pensioner reinforces the claim that Timon is ultimately about the economic ruin of the author and that Timon's dramatic flaws may well reflect Oxford's emotional condition at a very low point in his life. E.K. Chambers believed that Shakespeare wrote *Timon* under conditions of mental and perhaps physical stress, that he had a breakdown.

How closely Timon fits the mold of the Earl of Oxford during this period is remarkable. Timon's patronage of the Poet and Painter reflects Oxford's support of many writers. Having received a dozen literary dedications by 1580, Oxford sat for at least two paintings, the Welbeck and Ashbourne portraits. Like Oxford, Timon supported the performing arts in the *Masque of the Amazons*, a device that may mirror the *Masque of Amazons* performed before Queen Elizabeth and the French ambassador in 1578. Timon's even claims the troupe 'Entertain'd me with my own device' (I.2.146). At this time, Oxford himself was supporting two theatre groups, Oxford's Men and Oxford's Boys, and he was also known to have written interludes and performed before the Queen.

The Winter's Tale

Critics have long recognized that the plot of *The Winter's Tale* is derived primarily from Robert Greene's 1588 romance, *Pandosto, The Triumph of Time*. While there are many verbal echoes from *Pandosto* in Shakespeare, the difference between Greene's tragic prose novella and Shakespeare's romance are as striking as are the many similarities. Shakespeare seems once again to have structured his drama as a classic Greek trilogy: first as tragedy in Sicily, marked by Leontes' escalating murderous jealousy, climaxing with the death of Mamillius and the disappearance of Hermione; second as a Bohemian romantic pastoral ending with the elopement of Florizel and Perdita; and third in scenes of reconciliation in Sicily that conclude with the reanimation of Hermione. G. Wilson Knight has reverentially referred to the statue scene as "the most strikingly conceived and profoundly penetrating moment in English literature".

The classical names of the characters, largely adopted from Plutarch's *Lives*, the preeminence of Apollo, the

themes of extreme jealousy, attempted regicide and infanticide, and the mysterious resurrection of the queen after 16 years absence all point to sources from the classics. Nineteenth-century Shakespeare scholars, including W. W. Lloyd in 1856, Israel Gollancz in 1894, A. E. Haigh in 1856, and H. R. D. Anders in 1904 all recognized Euripides' *Alcestis* as the primary source for the statue scene, but during the 20th-century, acknowledgment of this connection essentially disappeared. Of recent editions, only the 1963 Arden includes a brief footnote. Most scholars now would consider Ovid's Pygmalion story from *The Metamorphoses* as the primary source of the reanimation of the statue of Hermione.

What is noteworthy but overlooked by most critics is the preeminence of Apollo in both *The Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale*. The few references to Apollo in Greene's *Pandosto* are traditional appeals to the god, unlike *The Winter's Tale*, where there are an overabundance of allusions to him or his oracle. In Euripides' *Alcestis*, Apollo delivers the prologue, then argues with Death over the fate of Queen Alcestis and prophesizes the possibility of her rescue. Apollo is also featured through two songs of the *Alcestis* chorus.

Although Apollo does not appear on stage, the extent to which Shakespeare has invested his play with manifold aspects of the god is detailed by David Bergeron in his article "The Apollo Mission in *The Winter's Tale*" (1995): "Of the 29 references to Apollo in his canon, 13 come in *The Winter's Tale*.... Only in [this] romance does Shakespeare refer to Apollo's power as an oracle" (p. 362). Shakespeare includes a detailed description of the sacred temple at Delphos, and the oracle itself is presented with great pomp formally during the Queen's trial. In the scene of Hermione's resurrection, Paulina's mastery as a priestess of Apollo is consummate. The mystical tone of her speeches, combined with the effects of the music and the "many singularities" of art, epitomizes the spirit of Apollo, according to Bergeron (1995):

> We recall that traditions link Apollo to the Nine Muses, to music and art. Paulina creates a complete Apollonian moment at her house where music, art, and theatre interconnect at a propitious time. Like Romano and like Apollo, Paulina sculpts his experience to produce mystery, wonder, faith, and eventually catharsis. (Bergeron, 1995, p. 377)

While doubt that Shakespeare would have had access to Greek or Latin editions of *The Alcestis* made 20th-century scholars reluctant to claim that Shakespeare knew Euripides' drama, over a century ago a handful of classically-trained scholars took notice of the remarkable similarities between the statue scene and the final scene of Euripides' tragicomedy. A.E. Haigh's comparative analysis in his book, *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks* (1896), detailed many parallels between *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale*:

> Every critic has admired the pathos and dramatic effect of the final scene, in which Alcestis is brought back disguised as a stranger, and received at first with reluctance, until she is gradually recognized. Two points in the scene deserve notice. The first is the curious resemblance to the conclusion of *The Winter's Tale*, where Leontes is taken to see, as he imagines, the statue of his dead wife and finds instead the living Hermione. Second, is the silence of Alcestis after her return from the grave. The silence is due not to theatrical exigencies and the absence of a third actor, as some critics have supposed, but to the deliberate choice of the poet. For one who has just been restored from the darkness of the tomb, no form of words could be as appropriate as the mute and half-dazed torpor in which she stands (p. 285).

A century later, however, in *Shakespeare and the Uses of Antiquity*, Michelle, and Charles Martindale dismiss these similarities as merely "fortuitous" The dramaturgical elements in *Alcestis* that bear a resemblance to Shakespeare's romance, however, go well beyond the parallels of a mysterious return of a presumed dead queen and her restoration to a grieving husband. Music and prayerful thanks conclude both dramas. In both plays, the queens are described with the same idealized language ("sacred lady", "blessed spirit", "peerless", "the best and dearest"); and both are honored by tombs that are described in their respective dramas as sacred shrines, monuments that bear evidence of their husbands' shame.

Although Alcestis does not return to Admetus in the form of a statue, Euripides' King promises to have a lifelike statue made of her: "Your image, carven by the skilled hands of artists, shall be laid in our marriage-bed; I shall clasp it, and my hands shall cling to it and I shall speak your name and so, not having you, shall think I have my dear wife in my arms––a cold delight, I know, but it will lighten the burden of my days" (Oates and O'Neill, 1938, p. 688).

Alcestis was the ancient model of wifely goodness. Depicted in Plato's *Symposium* as the ultimate example of altruism, she was also the subject of Chaucer's lengthy prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*, where, married to the God of Love, she counsels the poet to write of the great women of antiquity. Shakespeare seems to have

picked up where Chaucer left off. Standing on the shoulders of Euripides, Plato, and Chaucer, he brings to modern life this ancient figure of feminine goodness. So compelling is the emotional effect of the statue scene that during the 19th century, it was known to have been performed quite frequently as a stand-alone scene, often as a prelude to other dramas. Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* is a paean to Apollo, populated by a dramatis personae named symbolically for famous 4th and 5th-century Greek heroes, and concluding with a miraculous restoration of an Alcestis-like figure of loving goodness.

What many 19th-century scholars understood about Shakespeare's knowledge of Euripides' drama has been disregarded for too long. Sarah Dewar-Watson, in her 2009 *Shakespeare Quarterly* article, "*The Alcestis* and the Statue scene in *The Winter's Tale*," offered a renewed acknowledgment of what earlier scholars recognized as Shakespeare's inspiration for what is arguably the most revered scene in the entire canon.

Much Ado About Nothing

While there were a number of early scholars who recognized Shakespeare's debt to Euripides' *Alcestis* for the statue scene, ironically, no critic argued for the possibility that the concluding scenes of *Much Ado About Nothing* were similarly influenced by Euripides' tragicomedy. Two Shakespeare editors, however, have recently published works that recognized the distinctly Euripidean dramaturgy in the last act of *Much Ado*. Jonathan Bate and Claire McEachern have both posited that *Much Ado*'s final scene is also likely based on Euripides' tragi-comedy. McEachern's introductory commentaries in the 2006 Arden edition notes that Shakespeare's dramaturgy in the marriage scene is much closer to Euripides' depiction in *Alcestis* than to Bandello's story, which is the primary source of the Hero-Claudio plot:

> Unlike Sir Timbreo, but like Admetus, Claudio must accept his second bride without seeing her face...and forces him to have faith where once he lacked it. Hero's mock funeral, in turn, recalls and prefigures other of Shakespeare's mock deaths, such as Juliet's or Helena's, or Hermione's, in which heroines undergo a trial passage to the underworld. Euripides' *Alcestis* is also structurally similar to *Much Ado* in its use of comic scenes (those of Hercules' drunken festivities during the heroine's funeral) to counterpoint the apparent tragedy and hint at the comic ending to come. (McEachern, pp. 21-22)

Jonathan Bate also posits that Alcestis was a possible Shakespeare source in his essay, "Dying to Live in *Much Ado About Nothing*" (1994). Although he neglects to cite or quote any of the older scholarship on T*he Winter's Tale*, Bate is notably the first modern Shakespeare scholar to make this claim for *Much Ado*:

> One way of putting it would be to say that *The Winter's Tale*, with its hinged tragi-comic structure, is the logical conclusion of Shakespeare's work. That play is certainly the fully matured reworking of *Much Ado*.... The ultimate "source" for the Hero plot of *Much Ado* is a Greek myth, that of *Alcestis*. (p. 79)

Bate refers to this moment as the very heart of the play. To him, Hero's apparent death and silence are reminiscent of her classical namesake, Leander's Hero, who drowns herself rather than live without her beloved. According to Bate, Hero is probably named as a representative of Ovid's *Heroides*, the catalog of the worthy women of antiquity who were betrayed and abandoned by their husbands and lovers:

> The Hero and the other heroines of the *Heroides* are essentially tragic figures; in that Ovidian text, there are no second chances. *Much Ado* is more in a romance mold, and this suggests a generic link with Euripides' *Alcestis*. The latter was a kind of transcended tragedy; it was performed in the position usually held by the comic satyr-play, as fourth in a group of dramas, following and in some senses defusing or providing relief from three tragedies. It is a potential tragedy but with last-minute relief. Life is heightened because of the process of going through death: the pattern is that of many works in the romance tradition and of several of Shakespeare's later comedies--*Much Ado*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*. (Bate, 1994, p. 83)

Bate asserts that *Alcestis* may not be the primary source of the Hero plot, but Euripides' heroine nonetheless serves as a "powerful, mythic prototype" for women who are silenced by a temporary consignment to the grave:

> As in *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *The Winter's Tale*, the actual death of the myth is replaced by a self-conscious stage trick. Theophanies like that of Apollo and super-human interventions like that of Herakles are replaced by domesti-

> cated divine agents: the Friar's scheme, Helena's self-contrived devices, Paulina's priestess-like art. Silence is not given a mythico-religious cause but becomes a psychological and social reality. (p. 81)

In Ovid's *Heroides*, the heroines often refer to their tombs, and several of them inscribe their own epitaph. Bate notes that "The epitaph and tomb scene makes Hero recognizable as one of the *Heroides*. Her name makes this link: it sets up a prototype that can be recognized by the audience" (Bate, 1994, p. 82). Bate's argument on the symbolic significance of Hero's name is relevant, but he inexplicably fails to note the distinct parallels between the Chorus near the conclusion of *Alcestis* and the tomb rites of Act 5 of *Much Ado*. In Euripides' drama, the Chorus sings its lamentation that neither knowledge of "Orphic symbols" nor "the herbs given by Phoebus to the children of Asclepius" avails against man's mortality, that Fate's "fierce will knows not gentleness". The last stanza of this Chorus serves as a paean to Alcestis, the "blessed spirit", and includes expressions suggestive of Shakespeare's epitaph and song dedicated to Hero:

> Ah!
> Let the grave of your spouse
> Be no more counted as a tomb,
> But revered as the Gods,
> And greeted by all who pass by!
> The wanderer shall turn from his path,
> Saying: 'She died for her lord:
> A blessed spirit she is now.
> Hail, O sacred lady, be our friend!'
> Thus shall men speak of her.
> (lines. 986-1005)[11]

The tomb scene in *Much Ado* is very short, only 33 lines long, and half of the lines comprise the epitaph and dirge. This very solemn scene concludes with Don Pedro's description of dawn in an allusion to Apollo, "the wheels of Phoebus" (5.3.26), who is preeminent in *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale*. Hero's epitaph, remarkably, sounds very much like the *Alcestis* Chorus in that both proclaim the particular sacrifices of the deceased women, which merits their fame:

> Done to death by slanderous tongues
> Was the Hero that here lies:
> Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
> Gives her fame which never dies:
> So the life that died with shame,
> Lives in death with glorious fame. (5.3.3-8)

As soon as the epitaph is sung, Claudio calls for music and this "solemn hymn":

> Pardon, goddess of the night,
> Those that slew thy virgin knight,
> For the which with songs of woe
> Round about her tomb we go.
> Midnight, assist our moan,
> Help us sigh and groan,
> Heavily, heavily.
> Graves yawn and yield your dead,
> Till death be uttered
> Heavily, heavily. (5.3.12-21)

If Claudio is modeled after Euripides' *Admetus*, whose contrition and shame is well developed, then his vow of an annual visit to Hero's monument must be serious. The "goddess of the night" here is an allusion to Diana, goddess of the moon and of chastity. Greek choruses danced when they sang, often circling in unison and alternating directions with each stanza. The First Folio edition of *Much Ado* substituted the words "Heavenly, heavenly" for line 21, which could certainly be an allusion to the possibility of resurrection. Both the tomb scene in *Much Ado* and the Chorus in *Alcestis* reflect a sober, melancholic pathos. Both are immediately followed by joyful reunions with mysteriously veiled women returned from the grave.

Neither Bate nor McEachern commented on another potential Euripidean element in Shakespeare's comedy, the four allusions to Hercules. In Euripides' *Alcestis*, Hercules is first made ridiculous through a drunken burlesque, and then redeems himself by performing the role of *deus ex machin*a. The allusions to Hercules in *Much Ado* suggest that Shakespeare was not only familiar with Euripides's treatment of Hercules, but also with other untranslated, non-dramatic sources, including Homer's *Iliad* and *Lucian*.

In *Much Ado*, the first allusion to Hercules identifies him as a matchmaker. Don Pedro swears to "undertake one of Hercules' labors, which is to bring Signor Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into 'a mountain' of affection th'one to th'other" (2.2). Don Pedro's image very likely references Euripides' drama, where Hercules grapples with Death to save Queen Alcestis and return her to the living, veiled, like Hero, to conceal her identity. Importantly, this episode is the only one among Hercules' many labors, adventures, and romances in which he performs such a matchmaking duty.

Euripides's Hercules is portrayed quite satirically in *Alcestis*. Following a series of pathetic scenes centered on death and grief, Hercules staggers drunkenly on stage,

raving about the blessings of wine and perfections of Aphrodite, unwittingly offending the horrified servants of the grieving household. In this regard, Euripides' Hercules is similar to Shakespeare's Benedick, who is made a literal fool for love by Don Pedro's campaign. Later Benedick will be dispatched by Beatrice, who invokes Hercules to get him to agree to risk death and challenge Claudio in order to restore Hero's honor.

Shakespeare alluded to Hercules 35 times in his dramas, far more often than any other classic hero. In this, he followed the example of many classical poets. These Herculean narratives, depicting a hero in his struggle against supernatural forces, inspired many Renaissance writers. As an archetypal tragic hero, Hercules provided the personal template for doomed characters found in Marlowe, Chapman, and Shakespeare. In *The Herculean Hero*, Eugene Waith (1962) made a compelling case for interpreting Coriolanus and Mark Antony as tragic heroes closely identified with Hercules. Waith focused exclusively on the tragic Hercules as a Renaissance model. It seems quite likely that Euripides' Hercules also provided a template for comedic excess, exhibited by Shakespeare's romantic Hero, Benedick, in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

Shakespeare's Greater Greek and the Authorship Challenge

In *Attic and Elizabethan Tragedy*, Laughlin Mclean Watt (1908) proclaimed that there has been no period of history more conducive to "provocations of greatness" than in the ages of Attic and Elizabethan tragedy, that the "grandeur, depth, and breadth" of the literary production of both of these eras "took up the most momentous questions – life, death, God, man, judgment, and all the huge ethical shadows that, on the skirts of these, haunt men's being and conduct" (p. 2). Watt's assertions underline the cultural significance of recognizing the profound imprint Greek dramatic literature had on Shakespeare's creative imagination. The mythopoetic narratives of the Greek playwrights have endured over 2,500 years, inspiring Shakespearean adaptation and modern translation through such 20th-century tragedians as Eugene O'Neill, T.S. Eliot, and Arthur Miller.[12]

The primary reason scholars have avoided establishing philological connections between the Greeks and Shakespeare seems to relate most directly to the enduring legacy of Jonson's ironic reference in the First Folio to Shakespeare's "lesse Greek", the limitations imposed by Shakespearean biography and the deficiencies of 16th century English grammar school education in the Greek classics, as well as the dearth of available editions of Greek dramas or Latin translations in England. The enduring assumption was that English Renaissance culture was Latin-based and that Attic tragedy had not influenced the English stage. However, literary evidence of intertextual connections of structure, plot, imagery, theme, trope, allegory, dramaturgy, and topicality presented here directly challenges this established belief. To have overlooked the myriad connections between Shakespeare and the Greeks is to have missed a critical link in the great chain of dramatic genius.

In 2014 the Center for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies at the University of York in the U.K. sponsored a day-long colloquium on "Greek Texts and the Early Modern Stage", which explored the impact of the Greek canon on Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The colloquium website noted: "Greek provokes strong associations for a number of reasons: its controversial associations with Erasmus, Protestantism, and heresy; the specter of democratic governance; the rebirth of interest in Galenic medicine; the pervasive influence of Greek culture on Latin literature; and the identification of Greece with the origins of theatre."

In the abstract of her paper, "*Hamlet* and the Ghost of Sophocles," Sarah Dewar-Watson argued that the verbal echoes of Sophocles' *Antigone in Hamlet* suggested Shakespeare was familiar with the anthology of seven Greek plays, *Tragediae selectae Aeschyli*, *Sophoclis*, *Euripidis*, published in Paris in 1567 by Henri Estienne. The edition included Latin translations of *Antigone*, *Hecuba*, *Alcestis*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis*.[13] Nonetheless, Oxford University's Colin Burrow (2013) maintained Plutarch as Shakespeare's primary source for understanding the conventions of Greek theatre, while Jonathan Bate expressed similar feelings that Ovid, not Plutarch, mediated Shakespeare's Greek: "...it cannot be proved that Shakespeare knew any of the plays of Euripides. But there is no doubt that he derived a Euripidean spirit from Ovid. Euripides taught Ovid what Ovid taught Shakespeare: the art of tragicomedy..." (p. 239). But no real conclusion was reached as to why the subject had been ignored for so long. There is obviously much work yet to be done here.

In *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, C.L. Barber (1959) argued that "once Shakespeare finds his own distinctive style, he is more Aristophanic than any other great English comic dramatist, despite the fact that the accepted educated models and theories when he started to write were Terrentian and Plautine" (p. 3). There is evidence that *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare's one Athenian comedy, reflects numerous elements that are recognizably based on Greek Old Comedy and was arguably directly influenced by Aristophanes' masterpiece, *The Birds*.[14]

According to David Bevington's Arden edition, *Troilus and Cressida* incorporates imagery that references a num-

ber of untranslated passages from Homer's *Iliad*. Other scholars have reported that *Troilus and Cressida* echos passages from Sophocles' *Ajax* as well as Euripides' *Phoenissiae*. Richard Grant White (1886) and J. Churton Collins (1904) made a compelling case for Ulysses' eye metaphor speech in 3.3 to have been based on another untranslated Greek work, the *First Alcibiades* of Plato, which James Hanford called "the closest parallel between Plato and Shakespeare ever brought forward." Others have noted how *Cymbeline* and *Pericles* arguably incorporate elements adapted from Euripides' tragicomedies, *Ion* and *Iphigenia at Taurus*.

The only recently published works that systematically examine the Greek canon for elements incorporated by Shakespeare are by Greek scholars Myron Stagman and Tanya Pollard (2017). In his 430-page book, *Shakespeare's Greek Drama Secret*, Stagman argued that there are many unmediated textual correspondences between Greek dramas and the plays of Shakespeare, and that Shakespeare's achievement was unique precisely because of his mastery of Attic drama. Stagman cataloged many potential textual connections between Shakespeare and the Greeks, and he speculated that the poet's education must have included readings from Homer, Lucian, Pindar, and the Athenian playwrights.

Tanya Pollard's (2017) Bainton Award-winning book, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages*, represents a breakthrough among tenured Shakespeare scholars as the first in-depth examination in over a century of the evidence that Shakespeare was profoundly influenced by Euripides.

The long-held reticence to address fully the question of Greek dramatic sources, may also be at least partly related to the Shakespeare authorship question and specifically to Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford, as the primary alternative candidate. Oxford had an outstanding classical education and would have had access to the texts of Attic tragedies during his youth through his tutor, Cambridge University Greek orator, Sir Thomas Smith. Smith was obviously familiar with the conventions and texts of the classical theatre as he sponsored Greek productions of both *Plutus* (1536) and *Peace* (1546) of Aristophanes at Cambridge University.

De Vere also had access to continental editions of Greek texts for nearly a decade while he lived at Cecil House, where he was in close contact with England's leading translators: Arthur Golding (Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 1567), George Gascoigne (Euripides' *Phoenissiae*, 1572), and Arthur Hall (the first ten books of Homer's *Iliad*, 1581). Smith and Cecil possessed Greek editions of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Plato in their personal libraries. Mildred Cecil, Oxford's mother-in-law, was herself an accomplished Greek translator. John Strype (quoting Roger Ascham) wrote that "Mildred Cecil spoke and understood Greek as easily as she spoke English." The inventory of her Greek editions makes clear that de Vere certainly had ready access to the Attic tragedians.

Add to this the fact that the Earl attended the Greek Church when he lived in Venice during his Italian travels in 1575 and was accompanied there by Nathaniel Baxter, Sir Phillip Sidney's Greek tutor. Thus, throughout his early life, Oxford was surrounded by scholars well-versed in the Greek canon. That Oxford acquired editions of Plutarch's *Lives* and Plato in folio editions in 1569 and received the dedication to Thomas Underdown's highly influential English translation of *Heliodorus* adds to the evidence of Edward de Vere's fascination with Greek literature. There is irony in the idea that Oxford's claim to the name Shakespeare may have been adversely influenced by the intellectual vigor of Shakespeare studies simply because of the fact that he is a far superior candidate as regards the creation of dramas based on Greek sources.

Nonetheless – and putting that question aside for the moment -- the collective evidence presented here would arguably confirm that Shakespeare (whoever he or she was) certainly was part of the mythopoetic lineage of dramatists that stretches from Aeschylus to our own day.

BIOGRAPHY

Earl Showerman, M.D. is an honors graduate of Harvard College and the University of Michigan Medical School and has presented and published scholarly papers on the Greek dramatic sources in a number of Shakespeare's plays. He has taught a series of courses on Shakespeare and the authorship question at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Southern Oregon University, and is the author of a chapter on Shakespeare's medical knowledge in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt? Exposing an Industry in Denial* (2013/2016, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform). He also contributed to *Know-It-All Shakespeare* (2017, Wellfleet Press). He is the current President of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship and a past Trustee of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition.

ENDNOTES

1 See Showerman, E. (2004). "Orestes to Hamlet: Myth to Masterpiece", *The Oxfordian VII*

2 See Showerman, E. (2011). "Shakespeare's Greater Greek: *Macbeth* and the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus", *Brief Chronicles* Vol. 3

3 See Showerman, E. (2019). "Shakespeare's Many Much Ado's: Alcestis, Hercules and *Love's Labour's Wonne*", originally published in *Brief Chronicles* Vol. 1 (2009).

Reprinted in *Shakespeare Criticism Vol. 141*, Gale, Cengage Learning.

[4] Stanley Wells cited "Shakespeare's 'Lesse Greek'" in a presentation to the World Shakespeare Congress in Prague in July 2011. Werth's identification of the untranslated *Greek Anthology* as the source for *Sonnets 153* and *154* impressed Wells, who commented that Werth should not be condemned for being an Oxfordian.

[5] Kitto, H.D.F. (1956). *Form and meaning in drama: A study of six Greek plays and Hamlet.* Methuen.

[6] Wheeler, T. (1990). *Macbeth: An annotated bibliography* Garland Publishing. Francis Glasson published "Did Shakespeare read Aeschylus?" in the *London Quarterly and Holborn Review,* 173 (1948) 57-66. "Glasson points to eight examples of *Macbeth* and Aeschylus' *Choephori*. Some are verbal, some based on similar situations (e.g., Orestes' knocking on the door of Aegisthus' house and the delayed response of the servant). Having surveyed the scholarship and evidence for and against Shakespeare's knowledge of Greek (Aeschylus had not been translated into English, and the Latin translation does not resemble *Macbeth* as much as the Greek original), Glasson concludes that the question posed by his title cannot be answered definitively. But he points out that, of all Shakespeare's plays, *Macbeth* most resembles a Greek tragedy."

[7] Poole, A. (1987). *Tragedy, Shakespeare and the Greek Example* Basil Blackwell, 15. Chapter 2, "'The Initiate Fear': Aeschylus, Shakespeare" (15-53), includes an extended discussion of the similarities in the representation of prophecy, fear, and the inevitability of suffering in the *Oresteia* and *Macbeth*. Poole also co-edited *The Oxford Book of Classical Verse in Translation*.

[8] Ewbank, 39. Lines 311-1066 and 1160-1673 are missing from Aeschylus' original text of the *Agamemnon* in the Saint-Revy edition.

[9] Warner, W. (1950). *Syrinx or A Sevenfold History*, ed. Wallace A. Bacon. Northwestern University Press, "To the reader"

[10] Anderson, M. (2005). *Shakespeare by another name: The life of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, the man who wrote Shakespeare*, Chapter 7. "Fortune's Dearest Spite" (1582-1585), 184. "Exile and banishment also figure prominently in a second Shake-speare play that comments on the events of 1582. *Timon of Athens* charts the downward spiral of a man who cannot manage power, money, or responsibility."

[11] Bate, J. (1994). "Dying to Live in Much Ado about Nothing." *In Surprised by Scenes: Essays in Honor of Professor Yasunai Takahashi*, edited by Yasunari Takada Kenkyusha, pp 69-85.

[12] Euripides. *Alcestis*. Trans. Richard Aldington in *The Complete Greek Drama*. ed. Whitney J. Oates and Eugene O'Neill Jr.. Random House, 709–710. Subsequent quotations from *Alcestis* included.

[13] Sarah Dewar-Watson, "Hamlet and the Ghost of Sophocles" Abstract: "There is growing recognition of Hamlet's particular engagement with Greek tragic sources (e.g., Schleiner, 1990). Most recently, Tanya Pollard has highlighted the significance of Watson's *Antigone* (1581) for our reading of the play. This paper argues for further intertextual relationships between *Hamlet* and Sophocles' *Antigone*. In *Hamlet* I.v, the Ghost protests that he died without due preparation for death: that he died 'Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd' (I.v.77). This line recalls Teiresias' description of the corpse of Polyneices corpse as 'ἄμοιρον, ἀκτέριστον, ἀνόσιον' (*Antigone*, 1071). In both cases, there is a distinctive use of tricolon, the privative prefix, and an emphasis on the absence of ritual elements which should properly accompany death. Significantly, the obvious source for Shakespeare's reading of the *Antigone* – Watson's translation – does not render this phrase very closely. I suggest that the apparent verbal echo in *Hamlet* takes us to a parallel text anthology, *Tragœdiae selectæ Aeschyli, Sophoclis, Euripidis* (1567). The Greek text of the Antigone contains a facing translation by George Rataller. This volume contains three Greek tragedies (Erasmus' *Hecuba* and *Iphigeneia* and Buchanan's *Alcestis*), which Shakespeare is believed to have known. My claim that Shakespeare knew this Greek-Latin edition of the *Antigone* does not displace Watson's translation from view. Watson may well have prompted Shakespeare to read other versions of the text. The implications of the textual link I am positing suggest that we need to look in a more extended way at this volume of seven plays and its possible influence on Shakespeare, and looking beyond the verbal reminiscence which I am positing, I argue that *Hamlet*'s debt to the *Antigone* is pervasive. Sophocles' play, I suggest, provides a key stimulus for Hamlet's exploration of moral questions concerning what the living owe the dead."

[14] See Showerman, E. (2015). "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Shakespeare's Aristophanic Comedy" *Brief Chronicles* Vol 6, 107-136.

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ESSAY

Shakespeare's Epistemology and the Problem of Truth

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HIGHLIGHTS

"A work of art creates its own reality." This notion—rooted in the ideas of the Greek philosopher Gorgias—is at the center of Shakespeare's knowledge formation, but Gorgias' ideas were simply unavailable to the Stratford man.

ABSTRACT

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines epistemology as "the philosophical study of the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge." What, according to Shakespeare, was the origin of human knowledge? Various critics have attempted to understand Shakespeare's epistemology, but most have ignored the blatant evidence in the plays that Shakespeare was, in fact, somewhat obsessed with epistemology. Digging deeper, it would seem that his attitude to the subject was informed by his readings of obscure Greek and Roman philosophers, especially Gorgias. But given that the man from Stratford apparently could not read Greek (it was not taught in 16th-century provincial schools), how could he have been able to read these theoretical and scholarly works? In this essay, I argue that the first Greek sophist, Gorgias, whose work is often associated with the skepticism delivered to early modern England by Sextus Empiricus, was a huge influence on the true author. I show that during the Enlightenment, there was an intellectual war between early scientists who studied nature and the ancient faithful who studied God. Shakespeare neatly skirted this dilemma by focusing on the possibility that art might itself created its own reality — one that was not immutable 'truth' in the traditional sense but rather a very mutable fiction that must always necessarily be viewed with suspicion. In the modern world, with the advent of 'fake news' — and a new and unsettling relativity concerning facts — Shakespeare's bold experiment in epistemology becomes startlingly relevant.

KEYWORDS

Shakespeare, Shakespeare Authorship Question, Gorgias, Epistemology, Sophists.

INTRODUCTION

At the sunny end of Oscar Wilde's classic comedy, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Jack has satisfied Lady Bracknell's expectations for what is required of a young husband, and is finally given permission to marry Gwendolyn. But he panics. All along, Gwendolyn has stipulated that she cannot marry a man who is not named Earnest. And as Jack has recently discovered that his name is not Jack — and that he is named after his dead father — he frantically searches the army lists for his father's name. He soon discovers that all along, his name has been Ernest: "I always told you, Gwendolyn my name was Ernest, didn't I? Well, it is Ernest, after all. I mean it naturally is Ernest" (Wilde, 1899, p. 151).

Jack is not the only character in the play to find his dearest fantasies have become reality. When Algernon proposes to Cecily, she informs him that although he is

not aware of it, he has proposed to her already: "You silly boy! Of course. We have been engaged for the last three months" (Wilde, 1899, p. 87). When he inquires exactly when he proposed, she explains: "On the 14th of February last. Worn out by your entire ignorance of my existence, I determined to end the matter one way or the other, and after a long struggle with myself I accepted you under this dear old tree here" (Wilde, 1899, p. 88). So, although in reality we can touch, see, taste, hear, and smell, Cecily has never met Algernon — he has proposed to her in a fantasy which she believes to be true, mainly because she has chronicled it in her diary.

What strange epistemology is this, where fantasy becomes reality? But Wilde's whimsies have much in common with Shakespeare's epistemology.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines epistemology as "the philosophical study of the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge."(Encyclopedia Brittanica, 2023) How do we come to know the world? How do we know what is true? How do we come to name that truth and classify it? First, it's important to look at Shakespeare's epistemology in the context of his time because early modern epistemology resembled medieval epistemology more than our own; it was built less on science than poetry. In order to understand how the Elizabethans came to know the world, it is necessary (but nearly impossible) to understand the two central subjects of the classical trivium — grammar and rhetoric.

Early modern 'grammar' was not merely — as it is today — the study of sentence structure, nouns, and pronouns. Grammarians conceived of the world as a book written by God which could only be interpreted by poets. Media guru Marshall McLuhan described it this way: "The whole of nature was a book which he [Adam] could read with ease. He lost his ability to read this language of nature as a result of the fall ... the business of arts however, to recover the knowledge of that language which once man held by nature" (McLuhan, 2006, p. 16). McLuhan then goes on to quote 14th-century philosopher Salutati: "we must study poetry because scripture employs the modes of poetry. Since we can have no concept of God, we can have no words in which to speak to him or of him, we must therefore fashion a language based on his work. Only the most excellent mode will do, and this is poetry" (McLuhan, 2006, p. 158).

David Haley suggests that when early modern writers referred to reality, they were not necessarily speaking of what we know in modern scientific terms as reality today, but instead, the reality created by art. For instance, there are many references to nature in Shakespeare, but these do not necessarily mean 'nature' as we know it today. Haley (1993) says that when Hamlet references "to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature" (Shakespeare, 2012, p.137) — "The nature Hamlet means is not the physical realized world ... investigated by modern science or naturalistic novelists. Rather 'nature' refers to what becomes apparent only in the mirror. Nature has no discernible feature (shape) until the dramatic mirror creates it" (Haley, 1993, p. 34).

Similarly, what early modern rhetoricians spoke of was not so much informed by what they observed about the world or its mechanisms, but instead, what was stored in the rhetorician's memory (which was an important element of rhetoric). To create their speeches, poems, and dissertations, poets and rhetoricians accessed items stored there. This technique was called 'inventio'. This all sounds very odd to us. In fact, McLuhan (2006) suggests that, as we live in a scientific world — devoted to microscopes and telescopes, experimentation, argumentation, and proof, it's nearly impossible to understand early modern education: "We inevitably are attempting to deal with the complex and sophisticated intellectual disciplines provided by the trivium in the terms of the naïve literary and linguistic culture of our own day." (McLuhan, 2006, p. 105)

When and how did the Western world come to value science over art as a perceptual tool? It was during Shakespeare's lifetime that the philosopher Petrus Ramus revolutionized epistemology by moving 'inventio' from rhetoric to dialectics (the third subject in the classical trivium). Dialectics went on to become what we now know as modern science. As Miller (1939) says, Ramus yanked 'inventio' into the real, perceived world: "Hence Ramus use of 'invention' in the 'etymological' sense, to mean 'coming upon' or 'laying open to view' not as creating or devising." (Miller, 1939?, p. 148) And Miller quotes Ramus: "Ideas are not what they are 'because I discern them; but they are existing, and therefore I discern them.' A concept is not floating in the brain 'a meer fantasme or fantastical thing'" (Miller, 1939, p. 148). With this new concept of invention, Ramus could plant the seeds for what is now known as the scientific method.

These pedagogical models from the early modern period set the scene for Shakespeare's epistemology. But we must go beyond them, if only because Shakespeare himself did. Unfortunately, although modern critics tackling Shakespeare's epistemology get very close to identifying his approach, they seem frightened to identify it. This is not only because Shakespeare's approach is very alien to the modern scientific method but because it points to lesser-known Greek and Roman philosophers whose work is considered radical even today. Our epistemological forbears — Plato and Aristotle — believed that reality is stable, identifiable, and unchangeable. Shakespeare did

not.

Stratfordian scholars assume that because it is likely that the grain merchant from Stratford named 'Shakspere' attended a 16th-century public school, he was also likely exposed to Greek and Roman classical writers like Livy, Plutarch, and Ovid. After all, even the poorest and most ill-educated schoolboys learned from copying Greek and Roman models. But the 'Man from Stratford' would not have had access to more obscure sources, especially those which were not translated into English and not taught in public school. So those critics who write about Shakespeare's epistemology — though they get dangerously close to understanding Shakespeare's work — stop before they can fully comprehend it, as such musings might lead them to imagine a much more educated bard — i.e., Edward de Vere. The Earl of Oxford, after all, was not only the recipient of an outstanding humanist education typical for noblemen of his time, but he had access to one of the most extensive libraries in England — owned by his guardian William Cecil, Lord Burleigh.

Thus critic Eric P. Levy (2000) comments on *Hamlet's* encounter with epistemology, concluding Hamlet is paralyzed by his discovery of ignorance: "The problem of knowing in *Hamlet* is complicated by the intrinsic limitations of the cognitive faculty" (Levy, 2000, p. 197) ..." and "against this background of cognitive inquiry a more important epistemological development unfolds: a ripening awareness of that which cannot be known" (Levy, 2000, p. 205). Levy quotes Kierkegaard for whom "the epistemological task is....'to understand more and more that there is something which cannot be understood'" (Levy, 2000, p. 205). At this point — instead of looking for ideas from Greek and Roman philosophy that might shed light on Hamlet's situation— Levy labels Hamlet's restless thinking as the ubiquitous 'tragic flaw;' Hamlet is not 'stoic' enough to control his relentless thinking.

Similarly, Alexander Dunlop (2020) notes that the word 'know' appears more than 77 times in Hamlet. Hamlet's epistemological quest "is how we can know the real essence of people" (Dunlop, 2020, p. 206). But Hamlet's difficulties in perception appear immediately — when his father's Ghost tells Hamlet that he was murdered. However, as this testimony comes from a ghost — who can be heard only by Hamlet: "the appearance of the ghost compels acknowledgment, within the context of the play, of dimensions of life that transcend normal experiential observation" (Dunlop, 2020, p. 208). It seems as if Dunlop might stumble on Shakespeare's epistemology later when he observes, "Shakespeare valorizes the passion of faith over the calculation of reason ... the principle is distinctly unmodern; epistemologically, in privileging moral intuition over empirical verification" (Dunlop, 2020, p. 230). But-- probably because Shakespeare's lack of modernity is clearly in opposition to familiar Aristotelian models -- Dunlop leaves it there.

Another theatrical scholar, Eric C. Brown, starts out promisingly. He notes philosophical correspondences between Marlowe's Faust and Shakespeare's *Love's Labours Lost*, positing that in both plays, "scholastic learning becomes little more than a literary corpse" (Brown, 2003, p. 23). Taking a step beyond Dunlop and Levy, Brown suggests that Shakespeare harbored a prejudice against modern science. He mentions Berowne's satire of astronomy in *Love's Labours Lost*: "These earthly godfathers of heavenly lights,/ who give a name to every fixed star,/ Have no more profit from their shining nights / than those that walk and wot not what they are." (Shakespeare, 1996, p. 13). Brown also observes Berowne's "resistance to the most fundamental precedent, that of naming" (Brown 2002 2003?, pp. 24-25). Indeed, it seems that Berowne's criticism of astronomers is almost 'anti-epistemological.'

Brown then points to an 'anti-Aristotelian' line from *The Taming of the Shrew* "Let us be no stoics nor no stocks I pray / or so devote to Aristotle's cheques / As Ovid be an outcast quite abjured" (Shakespeare, 2010, p. 161). It is dangerous to quote Shakespeare's characters' opinions on any given subject, as other Shakespearean characters may contradict them. At any rate, Brown goes no further than mentioning the possibility of a Shakespearean resistance to Aristotle. And he ends with the somewhat ineffectual, paradoxical notion that Shakespeare wrote "a text that seems simultaneously to revere and revile it's past" (Brown, 2003, p. 37)

It's a shame that these critics can go no further, for a closer examination of Shakespeare's style points to his philosophical bent. Shakespeare is obsessed with synesthesia; he often uses it as a metaphor — even when it seems gratuitous to do so. Synesthesia is a neurological condition in which people find their senses are connected. For instance, a synaesthete might see colors when they hear musical notes. Shakespeare has a tendency to confuse sensory observation in the same manner, casting doubt on the reliability of perception. When Hamlet confronts his mother, he cast critiques her ability to perceive reality:

> What devil was't
> That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
> Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
> Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
> Or but a sickly part of one true sense
> Could not so mope." (Shakespeare, 2012, p. 175)

Shakespeare is quite fond of this metaphor. Bottom

famously — and comically — conflates the senses when he attempts to describe the experience of his dream: "The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was" (Shakespeare, 2010, p. 61). In *Love's Labours Lost*, Boyet says of the lovesick Navarre that his confession of love is spoken through his eyes: "I have only made a mouth of his eye / By adding a tongue which I know will not lie." (Shakespeare, 1996, p 59.).

All this suggests Shakespeare is quite willing — even eager — to question our sensory apparatus. Some of Shakespeare's characters even believe that love is a kind of 'sixth sense' that outperforms the others. In *Love's Labours Lost* Berowne (who is often thought to be a stand-in for the author himself) suggests that love is a better teacher than any of the senses — "A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind. / A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound.... Love's feeling is more soft and soft and sensible / Than are the tender horns of cockled snails." (Shakespeare, 1996, p. 131). This sentiment is echoed in Shakespeare's famous poem when Venus says of Adonis: "Say that the sense of feeling were bereft me, / And that I could not see, nor hear, nor touch, / And nothing but the very smell were left me, / Yet would my love to thee be still as much;"(Shakespeare, 2002 p. 199) Why this studied disregard for traditional perception?

Shakespeare is more interested in the 'ineffable' than the 'observable.' This is confirmed by his evident admiration for the early modern philosopher Cardeno. Scholars have long noted the correspondences between Bedington's translation of Cardeno's *De consolatione* (called in English *Cardanus Comforte*) and Hamlet's 'to be or not to be.' Significantly, the young Edward de Vere wrote an introduction to *Cardanus Comforte* at age 23. Though Cardeno was a skilled mathematician whose theories are still relevant today, he also was, as Giglioni (2010) says — "a sort of late medieval ghost hunter, who apparently spent a large part of his life investigating the life and mores of demons and other aerial creatures using all the scientific means at his disposal (optics, astrology, medicine)" (Giglioni, 2010, p. 471).

The original of Cardano's *De subtilitate* was likely available to Edward de Vere but certainly not likely available to Will Shakespere in provincial Stratford. In his introduction to the English translation of *De subtilitate*, J. M. Forrester says, "The bulk of the work can be seen as a miscellany of phenomena which Cardano sees as exposing the inability of Aristotle's neat system to account for all things" (Forrester, 2013, xiv). Forrester (2013) quotes Cardano's definition of *subtilitatas*: "the feature (*ratio quaedam*) by which things that can be sensed are grasped with difficulty by the senses, and things that can be understood are grasped with difficulty by the intellect" (Forrester, 2013, p. xv). It was not so much that Shakespeare believed that truth and knowledge were a matter of faith as that he was deeply interested in those truths which are more elusive, i.e., that evade both careful observation and the rigors of 'factual' investigation. In other words, to quote Hamlet: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 67).

If Shakespeare did not trust his senses, or learned books, or Aristotelian epistemology, how did he pursue truth? Was he even interested in it? The answer lies in the work of the Greek rhetorician Gorgias. There are two reasons to connect Shakespeare and Gorgias. One is the astounding similarity between their literary styles. But there are also uncanny resemblances between Shakespeare's work and the work of John Lyly — who was a disciple of Gorgias (Lyly and Shakespeare also share similar thematic concerns). To further cement the connection between Gorgias, Lyly, and Shakespeare, there is a historical link between Shakespeare and Lyly. That link is Edward de Vere: John Lyly was Edward de Vere's secretary.

But even if this were not true, the work of these two poets is similar enough to conclude they worked in tandem. As I argued in an earlier essay, "Was Shakespeare a Euphuist?" both writers are singularly and extravagantly obsessed with paradox, both are very conscious not only of the meaning of words but of the sound of them, and both are terribly sensitive to subtle poetic resonances that are less obvious than rhyme (slant rhyme, alliteration, and balanced sentences). Barish thinks that Lyly's work was — for whatever reason — a literary experiment in a style that Shakespeare was later to perfect: "a style that needed only the further flexibility and modulation brought to it by Shakespeare to become an ideal dramatic prose" (Barish, 1956, p. 35).

It's true that critics have long been reluctant to associate Shakespeare and Lyly. Lyly's 'euphuistic' style has been associated with 'effeminacy' and dismissed as superficial. Andy Kesson's recent book (2014) on Lyly suggests "in the 18th century Lyly is repeatedly described as an infection or disease for which Shakespeare was the cure" (Kesson, 2014, p. 5) because if Lyly's work can be dismissed as effeminate, then Shakespeare's might be too. Thus: "the denigration of Lyly's work in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has been an important part of the formation of the Elizabethan canon" (Kesson, 2014, p. 205). But recently, scholars have begun to take note of the similarities between Shakespeare and Lyly.

Assuming the connection between Shakespeare and Lyly, what is the link between Lyly and Gorgias? C.

S. Lewis (1959) said of Lyly: "So far as the elements are concerned, we are indeed embarrassed with too many ancestors rather than too few: those who inquire most learnedly find themselves driven back and back till they reach Gorgias" (Lewis, 1959, pp. 312-313). Furthermore, Feuillerat (in his book on Lyly) speaks of the early modern influence of Gorgias on Renaissance writers:

> Among the writers I have mentioned, there is one who, from the first, in England, enjoyed an unusual vogue: Isocrates. The works of the Athenian rhetorician were imposed by royal decree as subjects of study in the Universities... One could then with sufficient accuracy, assign Isocrates the honor of having taught the usage of the so-called figures of Gorgias. (Feuillerat, 1968, pp. 462-63)

So, who was Gorgias? Gorgias was one of the first and the most famous sophists — known mainly today by classical scholars for being reviled by Plato in the Socratic dialogue that bears his name. Aristotle, too, detested Gorgias, dismissing him — in the manner of Plato — as a dangerous liar and flatterer. There is good reason for their resentment as Gorgias was singularly dedicated to ridiculing the philosophers which not only preceded but anticipated the theories of Plato and Aristotle — they were called the 'Eleatics': Parmenides, Zeno, and Melissus.

Broadly speaking, Greek philosophy — though divided into many schools, primarily featured two opposing conceptions of reality. The Eleatics saw reality as fixed and immutable, whereas the various philosophies inspired by Heraclitus saw reality as unstable and unknowable. Stern reminds us Heraclitus famously said, "you can't step twice into the same river" (Stern, 1991, p. 579), emphasizing that everything in life changes so persistently that it is impossible to speak of what reality is at any given moment. Plato and Aristotle (though they approach reality in somewhat different ways) both believed that there is 'a truth' somewhere. Aristotle believed that reality was what was observed by the senses, while Plato believed the reality we perceive is only a glimpse of the true one. But for both philosophers, there was nevertheless a 'there' there. The philosophy of Skepticism (and its many attendant philosophies (including Sophism, Epicureanism, and Atomism), on the other hand, held that since the reality was not identifiable or easily understood, we must content ourselves with the notion that what we know as reality is merely an appearance — and then set about enjoying it.

Gorgias' work was translated into Latin by the skeptical Roman philosopher Sextus Empiricus. Schiappa (1997) quotes Sextus Empiricus, who speaks of Gorgias in the "treatise in which he discusses thinkers who 'abolish the criterion' of truth" (Schiappa, 1997, p. 15). Sextus Empiricus was the great Roman advocate for the Greek skeptic Pyhrro, and the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* states that "the Pyrrhonian skeptic has the skill of finding for every argument an equal and opposing argument, a skill whose employment will bring about a suspension of judgment on any issue which is considered by the skeptic, and ultimately, tranquility." Although the Skeptics accept that there are certain practical contingencies that must be accepted (i.e., the fire is hot, it is raining outside) — for pragmatic reasons — any 'ultimate' or more profound truth is arguable. (For instance, if it is raining now, it may stop, if the fire is hot, it may cool down.) Sextus' attitude to truth was very different from the attitudes of Plato and Aristotle, as he held there should be no dogma, only questions.

The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* also tells us that a student of the skeptical Atomist Democritus (Anaarchus of Abdera) "likened existing things to a stage painting," (Morrison, 2019) and was even quoted as saying, "all the world's a stage painting" (Morrison, 2019). This phrase bears a remarkable resemblance to Jacques oft-quoted line from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*: "all the worlds a stage" (Shakepseare, 1997, p. 146). Shakespeare was a Skeptic, and Skepticism formed the basis for Sophism, which stood in direct opposition to the eleatic philosophy that laid the foundation for Plato and Aristotle, and eventually, the Enlightenment. How do we know that Shakespeare was a skeptical Sophist? Shakespeare's fondness for perceptual confusion matches a fundamental principle of skeptical thought (explained by Pawlita here): "The skeptics' argumentative repertoire.... emphasizes that sensory perception cannot provide a basis for certain knowledge" (Pawlita, 2018, p. 81). In other words, the Skeptic questions the epistemological power of the senses, questioning their ability to reveal not only what is good and beautiful but what is true.

But this is not the only reason for associating Shakespeare and Gorgias. A close examination of Gorgias' work — and his attitude to poetry and performance — reveal startling similarities. There are only four extant works by Gorgias, and all are relatively short, and it is somewhat impossible to understand the impact they may have had in the 5th century B.C. by simply reading them on a page — partially because they offer dense wordplay in Greek that is difficult to translate. But more significantly, they were 'performed' (quite sublimely apparently, according to accounts at the time) by Gorgias, who was not only a poet but an actor. Two of Gorgias' works are particularly relevant to Shakespeare: *On Being or the Non-Existent* and

The Encomium of Helen.

In *On Being or the Non-Existent*, Gorgias satirizes the epistemological theories of the eleatic philosophers Parmenides and Melissus. Kerferd (1955) summarizes Gorgias' essay: "Nothing is. If it is, it is unknowable. If it is, and is knowable, it cannot be communicated to others, "'because' neither being nor not being exist" (Kerferd, 1955, pp. 5-6). Gorgias' philosophical satire presents us with an extremely reasonable treatise. In other words, he employs the syllogisms used by the eleatic philosophers to come to an impossible conclusion — one the Eleatics would have hated — because, paradoxically, Gorgias utilizes logic to craft an unassailable critique of the proposition that reality is stable and immutable.

On Being or the Non-existent is very unpleasant to read in translation, as it is a series of dense arguments made to justify a conclusion which most of us might find useless —that 'nothing exists.' There is no 'passion' in it, in the sense that the logic is ruthless and is, to some degree, devoid of surmise, wish, or even observation. The essay/poem is nearly mathematical in its precision. But that is Gorgias point; that reason can be used to justify anything, and that the tool which the Eleatics — and later Plato and Aristotle — used, which was reason, can make an eloquent argument in favor of anything, including the seemingly ludicrous notion that there is no such thing as reality. Reason is a fundamentally flawed tool because anything can be argued into anything.

It's important to take Gorgias seriously in On Being and the *Non-Existent*, for though he is parodying the Eleatics, he is also articulating the principle on which his epistemology is based. Gorgias' alternative notion of truth was that reality is created in the mind. It would not be inappropriate to quote Hamlet here without mentioning: "for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so" (Shakespeare, 2006, p 466.). Gorgias took Hamlet's supposition a little further, saying, in effect, that 'nothing is true but thinking makes it true.'

This is not the only instance in which Hamlet seems to be quoting Gorgias. Though Hamlet's famous monologue is rightly interpreted as a man musing on the possibility of suicide, Hamlet's opening question vibrates with ontological implications. Kerferd gives us this translation of a passage from *On Being or the Non-Existent*: "it is not possible to be or not to be. For he says, if Not-To-Be is Not-To-Be, then Not-Being would be no less than Being. For Not-Being is Not-Being and Being is Being, so things no more are then not" (Kerfered, 1955, p. 15). Here Gorgias argues that *neither* being nor not-being exist and, as such, equates them — in the sense of being equally possible — or impossible — ideas.

The idea that, in his famous speech, Hamlet might be talking about -- not only suicide but ontology and/or epistemology -- may seem arbitrary. But Shakespeare's odd, seemingly irrelevant wordplay on the concept of 'being' is not simply ornamental or superficial. In fact, it holds the key to the connection between Gorgias' work and Shakespeare's. This is not only because the idea of 'not being' would be summarily dismissed by the Eleatics and Aristotelian philosophy, so Shakespeare would have necessarily had to have read Gorgias in order to speak of it. More than that, such wordplay is an essential aspect of the work of Shakespeare and Gorgias, who were both obsessed with the philosophical implications of the polysemous nature of language.

On Nature or The Non-Existent (like all of Gorgias' work) is an essay in the form of a poem. It overflows with wordplay. One example would be Gorgias' conclusion, mentioned by Schiappa (1997): "'Nothing exists,' could be interpreted in two ways.' Nothing, in this context, is ambiguous... The difference is a matter of emphasis. One can say either that 'Nothing *exists*'... or that "*Nothing* exists" (Schiappa, 1997, pp. 25-26). In other words, Gorgias might be simply telling us there is a thing called 'nothing,' or he might be making the much more pessimistic statement that the whole world is 'nothing.' This final conclusion is a rhetorical figure called amphiboly (an example of 'false reasoning' that, predictably, Aristotle rejects in his *Sophistical Refutations*).

Plato and Aristotle rejected Gorgias' work because they thought he was more interested in style than in content and because they believed he cultivated complex and unique styles of speaking so that he could manipulate his audiences. But scholar Scott Consigny (2001) is convinced that Gorgias was obsessed with excessively complex figurative language because he believed it was the only way to accurately represent an unrepresentable world: "Gorgias relentlessly experiments with the style of utterance in the hope of producing genuine novelty, because language can never accurately imitate what is real...[and he] liked words that were strange, provincial, archaic or obsolete, and that require a glossary in order to be understood" (Consigny, 2001, p. 158).

That is to say, Shakespeare and Gorgias share several semantic obsessions. Shakespeare not only invented more than 1700 words, but he was — like Gorgias — inordinately fond of compound words and epithets. A list of compound words invented by Shakespeare includes (but is not limited to) dew-drop, earth-bound, full-hearted, high-blown, lack-luster, lily-livered, made-up, rope-trick (appropriately meaning *rhetoric*), sad-eyed, sea-change, snail-paced, and time-honored. Shakespeare's long list of epithets includes these two from *Romeo and Juliet*: "star-crossed lovers" (Shakespeare, 2022, p. 1) and "death-

marked love" (Shakespeare, 2022, p. 1) — both used to refer to tragic romance. Then there is the character of Gadshill in *Henry IV Part One*, who differentiates between his true friends and: "mad mustachio purple-hued maltworms" (Shakespeare, 1994, p. 54).

Consigny thinks that Gorgias fondness for paradox has a philosophical basis too. The five 'antithetical' figures of language favored by Gorgias and Shakespeare include paradox itself — as well as 'likeness of sound,' which is found in slant rhyme, as well as alliteration, repetition, puns, and the arrangement of words in nearly equal periods. Consigny (quoting Untersteiner) says Gorgias' use of paradox "creates a simulacrum of the antithesis inherent in the nature of things thereby conveying through poetry what cannot be portrayed logically ... [he is] circumventing the impossibility of rational communication of the tragic nature of things by using an antithetical style" (Consigny, 2001, p. 80). Shakespeare and Gorgias both wish — as James Baldwin expresses it — "to defeat all labels and complicate all battles by insisting on the human riddle." (Baldwin, 1964) The sad contradiction of our existence is that we live only to die. No understanding of this can come from reasoning in ordinary non-figurative language; but the constant piling of paradox upon paradox may eventually leave us with an approximate notion of the extremity of the human condition.

Going further, Lyle Johnstone (2006) thinks that Gorgias invented new words and exhaustingly utilized paradoxical figures in order to create another reality with language: "Gorgias' ostensible denial of objective reality as existent, knowable, or communicable had the effect of privileging speech itself as ontogenic (creating 'existence') and epistemic (creating knowledge)" (Johnstone, 2006, p. 271). Not only does Gorgias create the reality of our tenuous existence through paradox, but -- according to Consigny -- Gorgias conceived that "rather than antedating language, the very idea of what is 'real' emerges only within the specific discourses in which we use it" (Consigny, 2006, p. 80). In other words, speaking about the world is the only way to understand it.

Shakespeare (2005) references this notion in *Titus Andronicus*. Titus is tricked into cutting off his own hand. Suddenly he no longer wishes to say the word 'hands' because — without the word — there would be no such thing as hands: "O, handle not the theme, to talk of hands.... / As if we should forget we had no hands / If Marcus did not name the word of hands" (Shakespeare, 2005, pp. 114-115). When a fly appears, Marcus swings at it with his knife, and Titus calls this a "deed of death done on the innocent" (Shakespeare, 2005, p.115), but when Marcus tells Titus the fly is black, Titus suddenly changes his tune. And the reality of the fly: "Yet, I think, we are not brought so low, / But that between us we can kill a fly / That comes in likeness of a coal-black Moor" (Shakespeare, 2005, p. 117). The fly has no corporeal reality; it is whatever is assumed in speech. This is the fundamental principle behind all of Gorgias work; that the reality that we live in is created most purely and appropriately by poetry.

How does art create reality? In *The Encomium of Helen*, Gorgias suggests that Helen was persuaded by Paris to love him, and that this was a kind of rape, because not only are words exceedingly hypnotic — but they are, in themselves, a kind of violence. For Gorgias, words are dangerous magic. As Johnstone notes, he gives "proof to the opinion [doxa] of [his] hearers': the 'agency of words' rests upon their power to 'beguile... and persuade... and alter [the soul] by witchcraft'... a potency that 'is comparable to the power of drugs over the nature of bodies'" (Johnstone, 2006, p. 276). And, as Johnstone also notes, It is in The Encomium of Helen that Gorgias says that "the one who... is willingly deceived is 'wiser' (*sophoteros*) than the undeceived" (Johnstone, 2006, p. 278).

This sentence, in fact, is the key to both Gorgias' work and Shakespeare's. The word 'willingly' is especially important. In viewing a play -- or in the case of Gorgias, when watching a sophist perform a poem -- one gives consent to believe (or not believe) in what is being presented. When we do believe what we see, it is called 'suspension of disbelief' because, for the moment, we enjoy the work we give ourselves over to another reality. But Gorgias would have had us always remember that what we are watching is an illusion created by him, and one of the ways he reminds us is to constantly call attention — in a 'performative' way — to the artificiality of his language and to its virtuosity. Generally speaking, Gorgias' performances of his poems were apparently often quite funny — filled with witty, adroit, hypnotic wordplay.

In addition, they were parodic. Consigny (2001) says "Gorgias' texts mock themselves as well as other texts" (Consigny, 2001, p. 174). Each of his texts parodied a certain style of speech — a certain rhetorical approach — from philosophical treatise to funeral oration, from impassioned plea to legal defense. And Gorgias "exaggerates the tropes of the genre in ways that render his text even more artificial than others in the genre" (Consigny, 2001, p. 172). Gorgias' Epitaphios is "an imitation of the orations delivered by Athenian citizens selected by the city itself" (Consigny, 2001, p. 172). Gorgias' In Palamedes is using so many legal tropes that he draws attention to the use of the tropes themselves" (Consigny, 2001, p. 174). Gorgias' parodic style was announced by the choice of such unlikely subjects for his defenses, as: "by praising Helen of Troy, Gorgias is announcing his work as parodic"

(Consigy, 2001, p. 174).

But Consigny's summary (2001) of Gorgias style makes it clear that Gorgia's 'tongue in cheek' approach had a very serious intent:

> Gorgias' style may best be characterized as 'parodic' in that he adapts to the conventions of diverse discourses while playfully drawing attention to the conventions of those discourses and the rhetoricity of every text .... he foregrounds the conventions of the discourse in order to expose the strategies his foundationalist rivals use to deceive audiences into believing that their arguments or texts are objectively valid ... he deconstructs the assertions by self-effacing Eleatic philosophers who present themselves as speaking the voice of reason .... By displaying the rhetoricity of every text, he shows his audience that all arguments including his own are contingent, situated fabrications that are 'true' only insofar as they are endorsed by specific audiences. (Consigny, 2001 p. 30)

Shakespeare, like Gorgias, was not so much preaching the gospel of any particular philosophy. He was, instead, a paradoxical sophist dedicated to emphasizing the rhetoricity of all philosophy. Consider that during the restoration, critics like Thomas Rymer labeled Othello a comedy— mainly because of the unlikely fancy that a 'moor' could be the subject of pathos. It was not until 150 years after Shakespeare's death that his work came to be accepted and praised by the general public. This delay was partly due to Shakespeare's fondness for genre mixing; his comedies are full of tragedy; his tragedies are full of comedy — and the romances and 'problem plays' resist genre classification altogether. Almost all of Shakespeare's tragic figures — when considered in the context of his time — are unlikely candidates for high tragedy. *Antony and Cleopatra*, for instance, would have been viewed by an Elizabethan audience as the tale of an effeminate man emasculated by a whore; hardly a suitable subject for catharsis.

This is not to suggest that Shakespeare's plays and Gorgias' poems did not have a serious or ennobling intent. But even today, audiences have difficulty understanding Shakespeare's attitude to his own characters. This is why the plays still remain controversial. What is the message of *The Merchant of Venice*? Is Shylock painted as evil — in an antisemitic fashion — or has Shakespeare created a sympathetic portrait of a character who is part of an oppressed minority? Is Caliban a racist stereotype, or has Shakespeare managed the sensitive portrayal of an Indigenous victim? And remember that whatever evil his characters do, Shakespeare gifts them all with sensuous, gorgeous, sensitive, and insightful poetry.

It may be easier to understand Shakespeare's project by viewing it in the context of the Greek concept of the 'agon.' The Greek word means an assembly of people, but it also means a kind of game, a contest. Consigny (2001) quotes Nietzsche's definition of agon: "to perceive all matters of the intellect, of life's seriousness, of necessities, even of danger, as play" (Consigny, 2001` p. 74). Gorgias work reminds us, over and over that" We must not "forget that there will always be alternative ways of construing the situation" (Consigny, 2001, p. 92).

This was what the early Sophists did. They traveled about *lecturing* (that is, performing poems in a dense poetical style), trying to persuade viewers not only of what was good or bad but what was real or true. Gorgias could persuade people that nothing was real, or that Helen was innocent of wrongdoing. And the key is — like so many other aspects of Athenian culture — the *rhetorician* presented his proposals in the context of a game or competition. It was up to the audience to choose their own reality while all the time exercising their critical faculties. As good Athenian citizens, they were expected to be staunchly critical of each rhetorician's vision. Even more importantly, they were to be forever aware that what they had chosen as today's reality was ultimately a fiction -- not the immutable truth discovered through dialectical argument, by an aging, wise -- yet humble -- patriarch like Socrates. No. It was *fiction*, a lie; one that might at any moment be replaced by another lie, presented on another day, by another, more persuasive rhetoric.

Shakespeare's characters are like these sophistic rhetors. We are meant to do exactly what we end up doing; that is to argue about the realities each character creates with their rhetoric. So, when Richard II eulogizes himself before his death, weaving the reality of his tragic, undeserved victimhood through elegiac poetry, we are free to see him as he imagines himself — or, conversely, we can vote against that interpretation and view Richard II as an effete, decadent, deluded despot.

Plato and Aristotle were so threatened by the Sophists that they tried to diminish Gorgias' success by labeling him a liar. Similarly, early modern anti-theatricalists in England (some of them puritans) took up this ancient anti-poetry crusade, often quoting Plato's critique of art in The Republic. Shakespeare -- perhaps in response to this, and in defense of Gorgias -- says that art does not only create reality, but art is more real than reality and is, in fact, *a kind of 'better reality*.

There are many seemingly random references in the Shakespeare plays that suggest not only that art is a lie,

that it is not only as 'real' as life, but that it is actually a welcome improvement. Touchstone, for instance, suggests to Audrey that the best poetry is the most 'lying' poetry: "No, truly, for the truest poetry is the most feigning, and lovers are given to poetry, and what they swear in poetry may be said as lovers they do feign" (Shakespeare, 1997, p. 119). Poetry is simply the language of lovers; a derivation of that lie. Similarly, Shakespeare references Ovid's story of Pygmalion in *The Winter's Tale*. In Ovid's telling of the myth, a man creates a statue of the most beautiful and virtuous woman in the world, who comes to life when she kisses him. In *The Winter's Tale*, the statue of the dead Hermione is infused with her spirit so that she can be reunited with her husband Leontes. Hermione died — presumably from grief — after her husband accused her of wrongdoing. But the sculptor has created a better Hermione, one with the same virtues as the real, deceased Hermione but cured of debilitating shame.

Pliny's tale of Zeuxis tells of a legendary Greek painter. He created such a realistic rendering of grapes on the vine that hungry birds pecked at it for food. In Venus and Adonis, the goddess's frustrated desire is compared to the plight of Zeuxis' birds, and Adonis' beauty becomes a painting that has come to pulsing life: "E'en so she languisheth in her mishaps / As those poor birds that helpless berries saw" (Shakespeare, 2002, 207). Lucrece — in Shakespeare's narrative poem of the same name — praises the artist for surpassing reality when she speaks of a tapestry depicting the story of Helen of Troy, saying: "a thousand lamentable objects there / In scorn of Nature, Art gave lifeless life" (Shakespeare, 2002, p.316). And again, in Venus and Adonis, Shakespeare praises a real horse for looking like a painting of a horse: "Look, when a painter would surpass the life, / In limning out a well-proportion'd steed, / His art with nature's workmanship at strife, / As if the dead the living should exceed; /So did this horse excel a common one, / In shape, in courage, colour, pace and bone." (Shakespeare, 2002, 191)

It is not surprising that the idea of art surpassing reality with a beautiful lie was frightening -- especially to many puritans in the post-early-modern era. In 1642 Richard Carpenter published an anti-Catholic treatise -- *Experience, Historie, and Divinitie*. Carpenter's theme -- favored by 16th century English Protestants -- was that music, vestments, and ritual (and the Latin tongue itself) were Catholic agents of deception. The Catholic artist Michelangelo created works for the papacy that were amazingly lifelike. Land tells us that Carpenter not only suggests that Michelangelo's depiction of the dying Christ "fools ignorant Catholics into believing they see life itself" (Land, 2006) but goes on to imply that Michelangelo tortured and killed the young man who modeled for him — "but he had the skill and genius required to resurrect the young man in his drawing. By virtue of the excellence of his art Michelangelo was allowed to escape punishment." (Land, 2006)

This apocryphal tale refused to disappear. Land tells us the Sicilian painter Sussino said Michelangelo "used real nails to fix some poor man to a board and .... then pierced his heart with a lance in order to paint a Crucifixion." (Land, 2006) (In his novel *Justine*, de Sade refers to the same story.) "The importance of the tale" says Land "is not so much that Michelangelo murdered a man, but that the artist had no conscience and was therefore free of remorse .... [the] typically Catholic Michelangelo considered his art — particularly the lifelike representation of nature — more important than the life of his model, and, in a sense, more important than nature itself." (Land, 2006) Land also reveals that Carpenter said art "will deceive you, with excuses, glosses, pretences, professions, expressions, accusations. And he that suffers himself to be deceived by another is his foole." (Land, 2006)

On the contrary, Shakespeare and the Sophists believed that the one who gives himself up willingly to deception is the wisest man of all. Shakespeare and Gorgias are lying to their audience — and both, I posit, would admit it — but they are lying only to remind us again and again that everyone lies constantly. As Trevor McNeely (2004) says, the message of Shakespeare's work is not in the ideas a character expresses at any given moment. Instead, Shakespeare's entire oeuvre reminds us over and over again "that we can build a perfectly satisfactory reality on thin air and never think to question it" (McNeely, 2004, p. 121).

This is because Shakespeare and the Sophists realized that all language is, in effect, a lie. Consigny (2001) quotes Nietzsche, who said that for Sophists— "tropes or figures of speech are not 'occasionally added to words but constitute their most proper nature'...What is usually called language is actually all figuration" (Cosigny, 2001, p. 77). What this means is that we can't talk about anything without lying, and it is the job of the artist to remind people of this — one of the only facts we can be sure of.

Like Gorgias and Shakespeare, the French philosopher Foucault believed that all language is fiction. But we do the post-structuralists (and Shakespeare) a great disservice if we blame them for the present obliteration of truth. Politicians on both the left and the right today continue to assure us that they have 'the truth' and the other side are liars. But blaming post-structuralism for the supposed devaluation of truth is not the answer. This blame is related to the false context into which the work of post-structuralism is placed. They are not philosophers (as is so often assumed) but poetical liars — like Gorgias

and Shakespeare. Foucault himself said that his work was all fiction (it is a little-known fact that Foucault started out as a novelist). And the work of the most famous post-structuralists (Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida) is, I think, closer to sophistic poetry than it is to scientific 'truth.'

All this talk of lies may, in fact, seem like playing with fire in our 'post-truth' age. We are told that the answer is, instead, to abandon fiction for truth and to embrace the newest, freshest foundationalist philosophers when they posit that notions of right and wrong are self-evident and clearly enduring and that reality never changes. Gorgias and Shakespeare, on the other hand, would posit that it makes more sense to distrust the man who says that there are immutable truths, especially if he claims he is in possession of them.

Similarly, just as there are many versions of science, and many versions of fake news, there is also 'historicism,' i.e., many versions of history. The methodology I am proposing here, Shakespeare's epistemology if you will, is that only through careful examination of any art (including poetry) can ever find the truth. My truth is that **truth is not immutable**.

In his book *Shakespeare's Fingerprints*, Brame (2002) makes an eloquent argument that easily traceable stylistic touches In Shakespeare's writing ultimately reveal that the true author really is Edward de Vere. Some of these touches may have been deliberate attempts on de Vere's part to hint at his identity, whereas others may simply have been unconscious semantic quirks that point us in that direction. Brame believes Edward de Vere is deliberately revealing his true identity when he says, in Sonnet 76: "Why write I still all one, ever the same, / And keep invention in a noted weed, / That every word doth almost tell my name, Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?" (Brame, 2002, p. 533). Brame says that in the phrase — 'every word doth almost tell my name' — Edward de Vere is revealing, through wordplay (i.e., through a pun), that he is the real Shakespeare: "The word every truly tells the author's name, if that name is Edward de Vere, or in abbreviated format E.Vere" (Brame, 2002, p. 34).

But what if de Vere is saying much more than that? What if he is saying: '*You will find me in my work*.' I am enough of an aesthete to prefer to look for his true identity — not through his actions, his personal history, or the history of his time — but in his art. Because I believe art is where we will find 'the answer' to Shakespeare's identity, as well.

When I was much younger, I had the privilege of meeting Harry Hay. The name may not be familiar to everyone — but Harry Hay was a very important man — arguably the instigator of the modern gay liberation movement. He founded the Mattachine Society in 1950 when it was still a crime to be 'out of the closet' in the United States. Harry Hay was an artist and aesthete, and his comrades-in-arms were two gay men who went on to be quite famous artists (designer Rudi Gernreich and actor Will Greer). Hay was also a communist, and he founded gay liberation on principles that were ultimately rejected by more conservative modern gay rights activists. In 1979 Hay founded the 'Radical Fairies,' a group that believed gay men are spiritual aesthetes and gifted wise men, who through their art and intuition, could save the world.

I was a great admirer of Harry Hay then, and so it was with some surprise that I happened upon him (in the mid '80s) in a restaurant in Provincetown. I recognized Hay immediately by his 'hippie-esque' garb (headband, profuse necklaces, etc.) and because he was accompanied by his ubiquitous lover, John. I knew this would be a once-in-a-lifetime chance and that I had to approach my idol. (I was perhaps 35 at the time, he would have been about 75). I walked up to him and introduced myself. Hay told me that he had come to Provincetown to protest gay marriage. He also said that I wouldn't agree with him. I told him that I did agree with him (which was true). Then a strange thing happened, Harry flirted with me.

Or perhaps it wasn't so strange at all. After all, I got the feeling that he had flirted with men many times before, so perhaps it was just very strange to me. He went on to explain why he was not married to his lover John Burnside (who nevertheless was his partner for many, many years). He said (and I am, of course, paraphrasing), "I have been with John for a very long time and we love each other very much. But we would never get married. And you know why? Because at any moment, another man might come along, and that man might replace John, and I might run off with him. Another beautiful man. A man, perhaps like" — and he gazed around the room theatrically until his eyes returned to me — 'like, well, you." I tried to receive the compliment gracefully, but I was also a bit embarrassed. The encounter didn't last much longer than that. I politely said goodbye and went on my way.

Looking back on that meeting, it strikes me that it was a very Shakespearean moment. What this gay witch doctor — whose life was infused with and dedicated to — magic, art, and spiritualism, was trying to tell me was that his love for his partner was not an immutable truth. Rather, it was a kind of belief, and one which he held very dear. But it was also true that this cherished belief, on which he had founded his life, could be challenged at any time by a better 'argument' made by a better man.

If one can understand why this particular kind of 'belief' matters — in other words, why it is necessary to treat

even our most valued truths with necessary skepticism — that we must accept all facts as contingent; then I think one will understand Shakespeare's epistemology clearly and that we will, someday, 'solve' the problem of truth. Because nowadays -- for me certainly -- it is only poetry that can save the world. In art, we will find -- to quote the Rolling Stones -- perhaps not everything we want — but what we undoubtedly need.

BIOGRAPHY

Sky Gilbert is a poet, novelist, playwright, filmmaker, theatre director, and professor of theatre and creative writing at the University of Guelph in Canada. He was co-founder of Toronto's Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and was its artistic director for 17 years. He has had more than 40 plays produced, has written eight novels, three award-winning poetry collections and several volumes of Shakespeare criticism. There is a street in Toronto named after him: 'Sky Gilbert Lane.'

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ESSAY

The Queen's Favorite Unknown Dramatist: Were There Other Royal Plays By Shakespeare? A Research Inquiry

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HIGHLIGHTS

Shakespeare's plays might be misdated; research suggests that many were written for production in the court of Queen Elizabeth I, 20 or more years earlier than traditionally assumed and a time when the Stratford man was still a child.

ABSTRACT

Surviving records of Queen Elizabeth's revels briefly list performance dates, expenses, and sometimes titles of plays and masques that she had seen. Evidence suggests that, sometimes under titles different from the ones we know, the queen viewed at least 18 different Shakespeare plays – about half the canon – clearly proving him as her favorite dramatist. The most obvious example is royal performances of *The History of Error* in 1577 and 1583, and Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*. King James, Elizabeth's successor, saw at least 17 Shakespeare plays. Yet no evidence exists that either monarch knew, met or corresponded with anyone named William Shakespeare. And no one in the court of either Elizabeth or James ever claimed to have known William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon during his lifetime or had anything to say when he died. This blankness supports the notion that the name was a pseudonym for someone wishing to remain publicly anonymous. This essay – and its attached research inquiry – examines the plays and masques performed at Elizabeth's court and suggests that many of them were actually Shakespeare plays. If so, then they precede traditional Shakespeare play composition dates by a decade or more, which, in many cases, would invalidate the Stratford man's authorship, and favor the idea that the true author was writing anonymously.

KEYWORDS

Shakespeare, Shakespeare Authorship Question, Queen Elizabeth I and Shakespeare, Royal plays and masques, Shakespeare chronology.

INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's plays were favorites of both Queen Elizabeth I and her successor, King James I, according to Ben Jonson in the First Folio (1623). James viewed at least 17 that we can identify,[1] but how many and which did Elizabeth see? Early printed editions vouch for her having viewed *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and in 1601 she knew that a "tragedy" about Richard II allegorized her, i.e., *Richard II*, but surely Elizabeth saw more than three Shakespeare plays if James saw 17.

If Shakespeare's early biographer, Nicholas Rowe, was correct that "Queen Elizabeth had several of his Plays Acted before her," (Rowe, 1709, viii-ix) then some might have appeared under different titles. King James, for instance, saw "Caesar's Tragedy" (*Julius Caesar*), "The Moor of Venice" (*Othello*), and "The Hotspurr" (*Henry IV-Part 1*).

Various records of private entertainments made for the

queen and her court survive – listing performance dates, expenses and sometimes the entertainment's title. Several of these titles, dated 1562 to 1584, could be construed as a Shakespeare play. This short essay and its extended charts of reference (for those who want more forensic proofs) argue exactly this case.

The problem with trying to reclaim these royal plays as Shakespeare's under different titles is that their performance dates fall outside of the supposed writing career of William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon, i.e., circa 1590 to circa 1613. No solid evidence, however, actually dates any Shakespeare play.

Moreover, two contemporaries implied that "Shakespeare" (whoever he was) was writing in the late 1570s and the 1580s. Edmund Spenser, in his poem, *Tears of the Muses* (*Complaints*, 1591), bemoaned the theater of his later years for its vulgarity, and its absence of "sweet delights of learning's treasure" (line 175), nostalgically recalling "pleasant Willy's" plays of "joy and jolly merriment" (lines 208-9) – all descriptive of Shakespeare. "Large streams of honey and sweet nectar" (line 218) flowed from Willy's hand, wrote Spenser, a metaphor that contemporaries frequently applied to Shakespeare. Spenser's "pleasant Willy" is "the man, whom Nature self had made /To mock herself, and Truth to imitate" (lines 205-6), a clear allusion to Hamlet's advice to the players:

> to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. (*Hamlet*, 3.2)

Spenser resided in Ireland from August 1580 until 1589, thus dating "pleasant Willy's" plays to the 1570s when William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon (b. 1564) was still a child. In addition, the l'envoy to Thomas Edwards's poem, *Narcissus* (1595), referred to *Venus and Adonis*'s author, i.e., Shakespeare, as "one whose power floweth far," (line 52) having a "bewitching pen" (line 55) and "golden art" (line 59). "He differs much from men / Tilting under Friaries" (lines 57-8). "Friaries" referred to London's Blackfriars Theater, which was open from 1576 to 1583, but closed 1584 to 1600. Tilting is spear-shaking (jousting), thus a pun on the author's surname. Even here, the Stratford man would have been in his teens and unlikely to have been living in London.

By revisiting the revels records *without* the constraining biography of the Stratford man, it appears that Queen Elizabeth viewed at least 18 Shakespeare plays, more than double John Lyly's seven court comedies that she saw. If the tradition recorded in 1709 was true that "Elizabeth was so well pleased" with the Falstaff character in both parts of *Henry IV* that she "commanded" a new play with Falstaff in love, (Rowe, 1709, I, viii-ix) resulting in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, then she saw 20 Shakespeare plays. If these early anonymous court plays were actually Shakespeare's, then the real author was writing much earlier than is traditionally assumed, and these earlier dates, if correct, would disqualify the Stratford man as their creator.

What follows is an inquiry, a survey of plays and masques performed before Queen Elizabeth, most considered lost, with titles clearly suggestive of plays by Shakespeare. As these entertainments (with perhaps one exception) precede the traditional dating of Shakespeare's plays, I offer supporting evidence of unusual word clusters and phrases in Shakespeare's plays found in earlier works by other authors; traditional scholars view Shakespeare as the borrower but it could have been the reverse. The three accepted Shakespeare plays viewed by Elizabeth are also included in the chart below, along with evidence of earlier dating.

Several of these works were first claimed as earlier Shakespeare by Eva Turner Clark in *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays* (1931). For the record, traditional Shakespeare play dating (shown in brackets) is based on the work of E. K. Chambers, (1963, *I*, 270-1) along with Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor's *William Shakespeare: A textual companion* (1997, 109-34). All quotes use modern spelling, and underlines are added for emphasis.

A REASONABLE CONCLUSION

If the royal entertainments given in this paper were indeed Shakespeare's under different titles, then one must conclude that the great author composed them initially for the queen's entertainment and not for the public theater, as orthodoxy believes. Thirty non-public Shakespeare performances were cited in E. K. Chambers's *Elizabethan Stage* (1923), and only 12 public ones; and the five Shakespeare plays that featured a "play within a play" were made for royal or aristocratic characters (Whalen, 7-9).

Shakespeare himself inferred that *Henry V*'s audience was royal: "Can this Cock-pit hold / The vasty fields of France?" (1. prologue). The Cockpit, located on Whitehall Palace's grounds, was used as a private royal theater (Jiménez, 15-17).

Moreover, Shakespeare's sobriquet, "Sweet Swan of Avon," coined by Ben Jonson in the First Folio, could be interpreted as "The sweet poet of Hampton Court Palace," because Hampton Court, where royal entertainments occurred, was also known as Avon (Waugh, 100), and poets were often termed "swans." And history shows that Shakespeare had friends in high places. As one example,

the Archbishop of Canterbury (John Whitgift), the queen's close advisor, personally approved the printing of Shakespeare's long poem, *Venus and Adonis* (1593).

Furthermore, Shakespeare's history play, *Richard II*, which showed an English king's deposition, was publicly played for hire the day before the Earl of Essex's attempted *coup d'état* in 1601. Afterward, the acting company was questioned by authorities, but not the play's author. This strongly suggests the true author had royal protection. In addition, a small detail of the Wilton Diptych – a 14th century royal possession – was described in *Richard II* (Gilvary, 220), an object only accessible to those with the queen's favor.

Some Shakespeare plays were also performed at universities (*Hamlet* at Oxford and Cambridge), law societies (*The Comedy of Errors* at Gray's Inn, *Twelfth Night* at Middle Temple), and private homes (*Richard II* at Sir Robert Cecil's house in 1597, *Titus Andronicus* at John Harington's Rutland estate in 1596).[2] Thus, in addition to the Elizabethan court, wealthy and titled people, as well as the brightest students, saw some Shakespeare plays. But as far as is known, none of these people indicated that they had met or corresponded with this most popular author – an exceptional absence, since the queen and her courtiers knew other writers. For example, in 1577, poet/dramatist George Gascoigne presented his manuscript, *The Grief of Joy*, personally to Elizabeth, thanking her for her "undeserved favor" (Pigman, 2010); and Gascoigne's surviving letters show similar acquaintance with the Earl of Kent, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Grey of Wilton, and Viscount Montagu.

Personal letters to the queen and her minister, Lord Burghley, also survive from authors such as John Lyly, Edmund Spenser and George Peele, (Horne, 105) and the queen even granted Spenser a £50 annuity. Yet, the 3rd Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare's two long poems were personally dedicated, apparently never met the Stratford man.

Clearly, some other author was writing anonymously, or under the name "William Shakespeare" (starting in 1593), long before the Stratford man arrived on the scene. If so, then all Shakespeare play dating needs reconsideration to incorporate the existence of so many Shakespeare-sounding productions that had apparently attracted royal attention in preceding decades.

THE INQUIRY EVIDENCE IN DETAIL

A Masque of Julius Caesar (1562) [Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, usually dated circa 1599-1600]

On the night of February 1, 1562, Henry Machyn recorded a spectacle in the London streets where a multitude of masquers, drummers, trumpet players, torch carriers, and Julius Caesar, were walking to Queen Elizabeth's court (Nichols, 276):

> The first day of February at night was the goodliest masket [masque] came out of London that ever was seen, of a C and D [150] gorgeously beseen, and a C. [100] chains of gold, and as for trumpets and drums, and as for torchlight a 200, and so to the court, and diverse goodly men of arms in gilt harness, and Julius Caesar played. [*Note:* "played" was added later by another hand].

As the solely identified character, Julius Caesar was presumably the royal masque's theme – his first English dramatic treatment. Coincidently, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* opened with Caesar and his train walking through streets with crowds making "Holiday to see Caesar, and to rejoice in his Triumph."

Orthodoxy dates Shakespeare's play circa 1599-1600, yet tantalizing literary evidence could link it to the royal masque. In November 1562, Arthur Brooke's poem, *Romeus and Juliet*, was published. A friar tells a "weeping" Romeus that "manly reason is quite from off thy mind outchased"; the friar stood in doubt if Romeus "a man or woman wert, or else a brutish beast." (Rolfe, *Romeo and Juliet*, 190) In *Julius Caesar*, Mark Antony, with eyes "red as fire with weeping," chides men for not mourning Caesar's death, that they have "lost their reason" and that their "judgment" has "fled to brutish beasts" (3.2). George Gascoigne's 1566 play, *Supposes*, included the phrase, "is Greek to me" (1.1), which Shakespeare made famous in *Julius Caesar*; it also appeared in Robert Greene's circa 1590 play, *The Scottish History of James the Fourth* (4.2), (Dorsch, 22).

In 1582, *Caesar Murdered* ("Caesaris interfecti") was performed at Christ Church Hall at Oxford University (Elliott & Nelson, 180). The text is lost, but presumably, it dramatized Julius Caesar's murder, like Shakespeare's tragedy. Long assumed a Latin play, no direct evidence confirms it. Only an epilogue in Latin, written by Richard Eades, survives; in the translation below, Eades moralized on *Caesar Murdered*, mentioning Caesar, Brutus, Cassius, and Antony, all characters in Shakespeare's play.

> The Epilogue of *Caesar Murdered*, as the piece went on the stage when it was acted at Christ Church, Oxford, which epilogue was both written and spoken on the stage by Master Richard Eedes. Caesar triumphed forcibly over the Republic; Brutus over Caesar. The former could do no more, the latter wished for nothing more; neither of

> them was more at fault than the other. There is something for me to praise in both; there is something in both for me to regard as vicious. It was evil that Caesar seized the Republic; good that he seized it without slaughter or bloodshed. Brutus acted rightly when he restored its liberty; but wickedly when he thought to restore it by killing Caesar. The former's moderation in victory almost veiled the vileness of his crime; the ungrateful cruelty of the latter darkened the glory of his achievement. The former behaved admirably in the worst, the latter reprehensibly in the best, of causes.
>
> Men were not lacking who as if they had applied firebrands, inflamed these illustrious heroes, the one eager for power, the other for liberty. Antony placed his kindling fire under Caesar; Cassius did so to Brutus. Just as Antony longed for the royal diadem while offering it to Caesar, so Caesar refused it while longing for it. What he wanted, Brutus wanted intensely; Cassius excessively. Cassius was as much the better General as Brutus was the better Man; in one Force was greater, in the other Virtue. You would prefer to have Brutus as a friend, but you would fear more to have Cassius as an enemy. The former hated tyranny, the latter the tyrant. Caesar's fate seems just if he consider his tyranny, but unjust if we consider the man he was. But the Gods do not suffer tyrants, however excellent they be; and to Caesar it was given as if in reward for so much virtue that he might see, but not avoid, his ruin. (Bullough, V 194-5)

Eades was not necessarily the play's author, as his specific works are unknown. For most of the 1570s, Eades was a Christ Church student, and thereafter, a preacher. In 1583, he was elected a university proctor (Goodwin, 2004). Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (3.2) mentioned a university play in which Julius Caesar was murdered. Polonius says, "I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me." Shakespeare's historically inaccurate detail – Caesar was murdered in the Curia of Pompey, not in the Capitol – was repeated in his *Julius Caesar*.

Caesar Murdered was part of "a festival of plays" performed at Oxford's colleges of Christ Church, St. John's and Magdalen in February 1582 (Finnis & Martin, 391-4). Humphrey Laurence's 1582 Latin sermon in *De Fermento Vitando* recalled them:

> And I think you will have seen and noted this in the plays of yours I mentioned: there Love's fire was so manifest, so uncontrolled, as to seem not love but bitterness, not fervor but madness. Don't you remember Euclio like this about his pot [of gold] ... Antony like this about his Cleopatra, Alexander about his eunuch Bagoas, Philarchus about his Phaedra, Meleager about his Atalanta, Plautus's Menechmus about the harlot Erotes, and Oedipus even about his mother, Jocasta; and Julius Caesar so in love with power that for the sake of it he thought he could violate oaths and any other kind of right? (Finnis & Martin, 392)

Besides Julius Caesar, Laurence mentioned a festival play about Anthony's intense love for Cleopatra, which describes Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, supposedly written decades later. Two Shakespeare plays, therefore, may have already been written, and admired, by 1582.

Nicholas Breton's 1577 phrase, "the man ... Hath done her wrong, without just cause" (*A Flourish Upon Fancy*), parallels *Julius Caesar*'s "Know, Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause" (3.1), (Dorsch, 65). In context of sleeping youths before a battle, "leaden mace" occurred in Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (I.4. 44) and in *Julius Caesar* (4.3), (Bayley, 288). The first three books of Spenser's epic were completed as early as 1582 (Hadfield, 2021). The image of blood dropping from heaven in Christopher Marlowe's circa 1587 play: *Tamburlaine the Great, Part 2* (4.1), also occurred in *Julius Caesar* (2.2), (Furness, 1913, p. 114). In Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* (circa 1593), the Duke of Guise's response to a death threat is, "Yet Caesar shall go forth;" after his fatal attack, he says, "Thus Caesar did go forth" (3.2). In *Julius Caesar*, Caesar ignores his wife's ominous dream, saying, "Caesar shall forth" and "Yet Caesar shall go forth" (3.2); shortly thereafter, he is murdered (Bakeless, 85). Four public performances of *Caesar* were noted in Philip Henslowe's diary, December 1594 to March 1595 (Greg, 19 -22).

Palamon and Arcite (1566) [*The Two Noble Kinsman*, usually dated circa 1612-1614]

On September 2 and 4, 1566, Queen Elizabeth viewed a student performance of *Palamon and Arcite* at Oxford University. Palamon and Arcite are characters in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, attributed to William Shakespeare and John Fletcher in the 1634 edition. Orthodoxy's circa 1612-14 dating accommodates both the supposed Shakespeare and his younger co-author despite the prologue's reference to a single writer, and a text unlike Shakespeare's late plays.

Although the 1566 play was credited to Richard Edwards, who died shortly after the performance, it has a

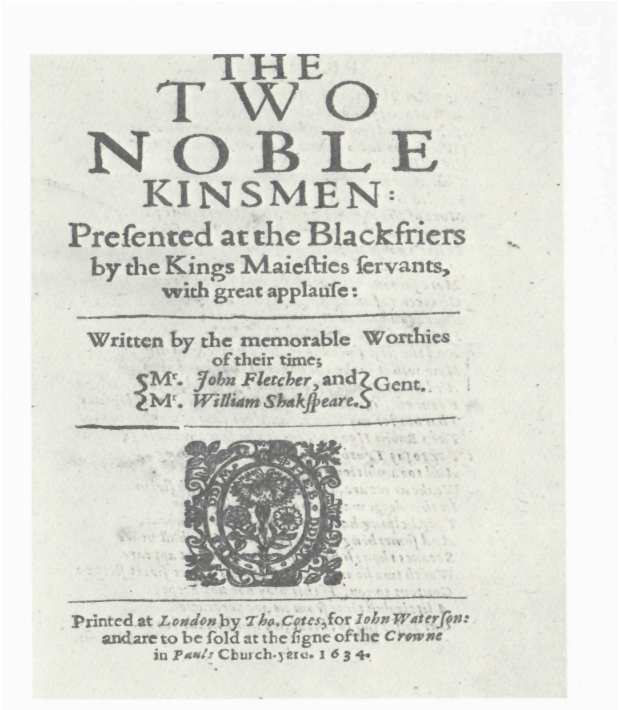
link with *The Two Noble Kinsmen*'s prologue:

> If this play do not keep,
> A little dull time from us, we perceive
> Our losses fall so thick, we must needs leave.

English professor, Paul Bertram, considered "Our losses" as an "allusion to some public misfortune that befell the acting company," (Bertram, 288) but no satisfactory explanation has been found. The 1566 play certainly experienced misfortune: shortly before the performance, a crowded staircase in Christ Church Hall had collapsed, killing three people and injuring five (Elliott, 1988, 226). It did not stop the show, so mention of it before the play commenced would have been expected.

The two plays are linked in another way. In *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (5.4), Palamon, after learning that he has been spared from execution, says: "Can that be, / When *Venus* I have said is false?" Nowhere in the play did he berate the goddess, but he did so in the 1566 play: eyewitness John Bereblock, fellow of Exeter College, wrote that Palamon prayed to Venus to win his duel with Arcite for Emilia's hand in marriage. After losing, Palamon "casts reproaches upon Venus, saying that he had served her from infancy and that now she had neither desire nor power to help him." (Durand, 1905, 511)

In addition, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* had "strong signs" of being written for an indoor theater, and required "a most expensive and lavish production ..." (Bertram, 292, 294) The 1566 play was indoors, and its rich appointments


THE
TWO
NOBLE
KINSMEN:
Presented at the Blackfriers
by the Kings Maiesties servants,
with great applause:
Written by the memorable Worthies
of their time;
Mr. John Fletcher, and Gent.
Mr. William Shakspeare.
Printed at London by Tho. Cotes, for John Waterson:
and are to be sold at the signe of the Crowne
in Pauls Church-yard. 1634.

were confirmed by Bereblock: "Nothing, now, more costly or magnificent could be imagined than its staging and arrangement." (Durand, 1905, 504)

The 1566 play's ending was met with "a tremendous shout and clapping of hands." (Durand, 361) Even during rehearsals, it pleased "certain courtiers" in attendance, saying "it far surpassed" Richard Edwards's previous play, *Damon and Pithias*, "then the which nothing could be better." (Bradner, 29) The queen herself favorably critiqued the play. She praised the boy actor who played Emilia for "singing sweetly," (Elliott, 1997, 72) and rewarded him with gold coins ("angels"). She also had allowed the late King Edward's garments to be used in the performance.

That *Palamon and Arcite*, the first play performed before royalty at Oxford University, (Elliott, 1988) never saw print is "strange," wrote Leicester Bradner, "especially when we remember that there were two Elizabethan editions of *Damon and Pithias*" (Bradner, 80). It was also the first dramatization of "The Knight's Tale" from Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. *The Two Noble Kinsmen* suits the 1566 play, but the traditional Shakespeare, then two years old, nixes any connection for orthodoxy.

The Two Noble Kinsmen's lines are found in literature far earlier than orthodoxy's circa 1612-14 dating. Edmund Spenser's line in *The Faerie Queene* (1590), "O who does know the bent of women's fantasy?" (I. 4. 24), parallels *The Two Noble Kinsmen*'s (4.2), "Oh who can find the bent of woman's fancy?" (Potter, 273) Both excerpts concerned unseemly but attractive features in young men. In Christopher Marlowe's circa 1593 translation of *Hero and Leander*, Leander's neck "surpass'd /The white of Pelops' shoulder: I could tell ye, /How smooth his breast was" (Sestaid, 1, lines 64-6), (Potter, 272). In *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (4.2), Arcite's brow is "Smoother than *Pelops* Shoulder?"

In 1594, three public performances of "Palaman and Arsett," and one of "Palamon" (Greg, 19-20) appear in showman Philip Henslowe's diary – possibly the 1566 play revived. In 1597, a surviving fragment from the 1566 play, Emelia's song (British Museum Additional MS 26,737), was printed in *The Arbor of Amorous Devices* ("A Ladies complaint for the loss of her Love"). In 1606, Barnabe Barnes (*Four Books of Offices*) wrote:

> [war] putteth the titles of all right, and just honor in execution. It is the noble corrector of all prodigal states, a skillful bloodletter against all dangerous obstructions and pleurisies of peace ... [p. 161]

Arcite's prayer to Mars, the Roman war god, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (5.1): (Bertram, 258)

O Great Corrector of enormous times,
Shaker of o'er-rank States, thou grand decider
Of dusty, and old titles, that heal'st with blood
The earth when it is sick, and cur'st the world
O' th' pleurisy of people;

The Two Noble Kinsmen's links to the innovative and popular 1566 play suggest the two were the same one by Shakespeare, initially in collaboration with Richard Edwards (Edwards's poem, "In Commendation of Music," was quoted in *Romeo and Juliet*). *The Two Noble Kinsmen* also shared characters with those in Shakespeare's early comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Theseus, Duke of Athens, and his Amazonian bride, Hippolyta, whose sister is *Kinsmen*'s heroine, Emilia. The 1566 play's full manuscript probably did not survive, and decades later, John Fletcher (born in 1579) filled in the gaps, thus his name on the 1634 title page, the only instance of Shakespeare sharing author credit (Fletcher also wrote a sequel to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, i.e., *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed*). *The Two Noble Kinsmen*'s "earliest direct notice" was made by Sir George Buc, Master of the Revels, on a reverse page of his manuscript, *The History of Richard the Third* (1619), (Chambers, 1925, 480). The play was known as "Palemon" as late as 1614, as mentioned in Ben Jonson's play, *Bartholomew Fair*.

Tragedy of the King of Scots (1567-1568) [*Tragedy of Macbeth*, usually dated circa 1605-1606]

Tragedy of the king of Scots was among several entertainments presented to Queen Elizabeth from July 14, 1567 to March 3, 1568. Properties included "the Palace of prosperity Scotland and a great Castle on th'other side …" (Steele, 34) The court play's theme was highly topical: in February 1567, the 21-year-old Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, consort of Mary, Queen of Scots – called King by many contemporaries – was assassinated. Mary's evident complicity with the alleged murderer, James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell (according to a Scottish Act of Parliament), forced her abdication on July 24, 1567. Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* is an historical fiction about the 11th century Scottish king, Macbeth, Thane of Cawdor, who murders King Duncan of Scotland to usurp the throne.

Lilian Winstanley's *Macbeth, King Lear and Contemporary History* (1922) notes parallels between the murders of king consort Darnley and *Macbeth*'s King Duncan. Two contemporary sources said that an ill Darnley went to Kirk of Field, where the murder took place, because it was "a place of good air" (Melville, 78) and "wholesome air" (*The Copy of a Letter*, 32). In *Macbeth* (1.6), King Duncan visits Macbeth's castle, where he would be murdered, saying "the air /Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself /Unto our gentle senses." Queen Mary and Bothwell conversed shortly before the murder, as do Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. King Duncan was murdered at night in bed, as were his two servants; consort Darnley and two servants were murdered at night. A sketch of Darnley's murder scene (National Archives, MPF 1/366) made for Queen Elizabeth's councilor, Sir William Cecil, showed Darnley and a servant dead in their night clothes in a field near his lodgings, evidently strangled and dragged there, with a dagger pointed toward the two dead bodies; in Macbeth's hallucination (3.4), a dagger leads him toward King Duncan. Bothwell was immediately accused of Darnley's murder and was put to trial, pressed by Darnley's father, the Earl of Lennox; in *Macbeth* (3.6), Lord Lennox airs his suspicions about Macbeth regarding King Duncan's murder. Both Bothwell and Macbeth get away with their crimes, temporarily.

In the "Answer of the Lords of Scotland to [English ambassador, Sir Nicholas] Throckmorton" (July 21, 1567), Bothwell was described as a "notorious tyrant" and a "bloody tyrant"; (Crosby, 291-2) Macbeth is called "tyrant" fifteen times in the play. The March 27, 1567 letter of Sir William Drury to Sir William Cecil noted that, since Darnley's death, Queen Mary "has been for the most part either melancholy or sickly," (Crosby, 198) and in Drury's May 20, 1567 letter to Cecil, that she had "falling sickness," i.e., epilepsy, "and has been of late troubled therewith"; (Crosby, 235) others noted she was suicidal. Similarly, in *Macbeth*, after King Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth is sickly and melancholy, and Winstanley suggested her sleepwalking was an epileptic trance; after Lady Macbeth's death, the doctor implied she had taken her own life. None of these details about the historical Macbeth are found in Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1577), noted Winstanley, Shakespeare's supposed source for the play.

Orthodoxy dates *Macbeth* circa 1605-06. A play about a Scottish king's murder at this time would hardly be welcoming to the then newly ascended Scottish king of England, James I, son of Mary, Queen of Scots; also, it was not among the known seventeen Shakespeare plays that he viewed. James would have undoubtedly found repugnant the correspondences between the real and the fictional murders. The play, therefore, was more likely written during Elizabeth's reign, and when it was topical. Several "too early" allusions support this idea.

Macbeth's lines, "The raven himself is hoarse /That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan" (1.4) and "It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman" (2.2), appeared in John Lyly's 1584 play, *Sapho and Phao*: "I mistrust her not:

for that the owl hath not shrieked at the window, or the night Raven croaked, both being fatal" (3.3), (Dent, 1981, 200). *Macbeth*'s phrase, "My mind she has mated [i.e., bewildered], and amazed my sight" (5.2), was echoed in *An Herbal for the Bible* (1587): "... the minds and consciences of the godly be therewith sometime marvelously mated and amazed" (p. 253). "Mated and amazed" also appeared in Christopher Marlowe's circa 1587 play, *Tamburlaine the Great, Part 1* (1.1), (Muir, 1977, p. 146). In Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1595), a character utters, "A sorry sight," upon discovery of a "headless lady" (V.1.14); in *Macbeth* (2.2), after committing murder, Macbeth looks at his bloody hands and says, "This is a sorry sight." (Malone et al, XI, 98) In the anonymous play, *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), a character fears that "the very stones" of the street (3.4) will betray her as a murderer; likewise, in *Macbeth* (2.1), just before King Duncan's murder, Macbeth asks the earth not to hear his steps, "for fear /The very stones prate of my whereabout ..." (Malone et al, 1801 XI, 94)

Actor William Kemp's book, *Nine Days Wonder* (1600), mentions "a penny Poet" whose first work was a story stolen from *Macbeth*:

> ... a penny Poet whose first making was the miserable stolen story of Macdoel, or Macdobeth, or Macsomewhat: for I am sure a Mac it was, though I never had the maw [stomach] to see it. [sig. D3v]

Coming from an actor, "to see it" implies the "stolen story" was dramatic (Furness, *Macbeth,* 360). Kemp did not have the stomach ("maw") to see it, presumably due to its resemblance to Shakespeare's bloody play. *Macbeth* (1.3) mentions the master of the ship, *The Tiger*, "to Aleppo gone." Such a journey occurred in 1583, as noted in Richard Hakluyt's 1589 book, *Principal Navigations* (p. 231): *The Tiger* sailed from London to Tripolis, and then passengers caravanned to Aleppo (Furness, *Macbeth,* 32). *The Tiger* was also mentioned in Shakespeare's comedy, *Twelfth Night*.

The cumulative evidence suggests that *Tragedy of the king of Scots* was written by Shakespeare, inspired by the recent murder of Mary, Queen of Scots's consort, and was subsequently retitled, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. The playwright evidently had access to State intelligence to be aware of otherwise unpublished details about Darnley's murder, and Queen Mary's mental state, so soon after the murder had occurred. Interestingly, in May 1567, "an interlude of boys" was performed at the royal castle in Stirling, Scotland about "the manner of the King's [Darnley's] death and the arraignment of the Earl [Bothwell]," according to Sir William Drury; (Crosby, 230-1) he added that Bothwell believed the interlude's "devisers" were Scottish nobles. Bothwell's character was hanged in the interlude, and the actor playing him barely survived his time in the noose. News of the interlude may have also inspired the court play.

Ajax and Ulysses (1572) *The History of Agamemnon and Ulysses* (1584) [*Troilus and Cressida*, usually dated circa 1601-1602]

Queen Elizabeth viewed *Ajax and Ulysses* on January 1, 1572, and *The History of Agamemnon and Ulysses* on December 27, 1584, (Steele, 40, 91) both plays presumed lost. Ajax, Ulysses, and Agamemnon, however, are all ancient Greek characters in Shakespeare's play, *Troilus and Cressida*. During a lull in their war with Troy, Ulysses indirectly baits war hero, Achilles, to accept Trojan prince Hector's challenge to a duel by encouraging the lesser warrior, Ajax. Agamemnon supports Ulysses's scheme, hoping to entice a withdrawn Achilles back into the war. This storyline has little intersection with the play's other major plot, the love story of the Trojans, Troilus and Cressida. Both plots have equal weight in the play, thus the "lost" revels play titles are just as fit as *Troilus and Cressida*. Moreover, none of these characters were singled out for mention in *Troilus and Cressida*'s prologue.

Orthodox dating for *Troilus and Cressida* is circa 1601-02. Two plays, however, hint that Shakespeare's play existed long before this date: (1) the December 30, 1582 court play, *A History of Love and Fortune*, (Steele, 1926) later published as *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, featured a play-within-a-play called "the show of Troilus and Cressida." (Rollins, 1917, 389) Among the gods watching it, Mercury says:

> Behold, how Troilus and Cressida
> Cries out on Love, that framed their decay.

(2) *Histrio-mastix*, dated circa 1589-91, (Knutson, 96) parodies a scene from Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* in another play-within-a-play, with the Troilus actor punning on Shakespeare's name:

> Behold, behold thy garter blue
> Thy knight his valiant elbow wears,
> That when he shakes his furious Speare
> The foe, in shivering fearful sort
> May lay him down in death to snort ... [Act 2]

The Cressida actor gives a "skreene" (scarf) to Troilus, saying "Within thy helmet put the same"; Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida exchange a sleeve and glove. Also, a

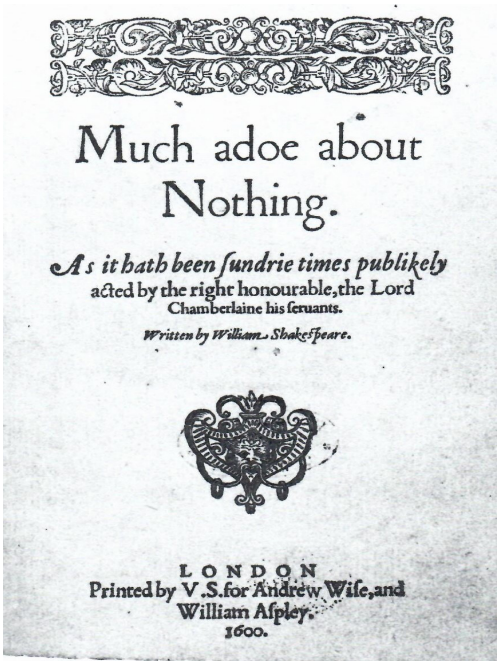
character named "Prologue" in *Histrio-mastix* introduces the play-within-a-play, like in Shakespeare's play ("hither am I come /A prologue arm'd").

Nine "too early" allusions to *Troilus and Cressida* follow:

1. John Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578): "such idle heads should be scoffed with addle answers" (p. 73) and "to be an addle egg, as an idle bird" (Letter to the "Gentlemen Scholars of Oxford") compares with *Troilus and Cressida* (1.2), "If you love an addle egg as well as you love an idle head, you would eat chickens i' the shell." (Tilley, 134).
2. Edmund Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579), "To be Wise and eke to Love, /Is granted scarce to Gods above" (March) and *Troilus and Cressida* (3.2), "for to be wise and love /Exceeds man's might; that dwells with gods above." (Malone, 1794, 82).
3. Christopher Marlowe's play, *Tamburlaine the Great, Part 2* (circa 1587), "the axle-tree of heaven" (1.1),
4. John Davies's *Orchestra or a Poem of Dancing* (1594), "The Axle tree of Heav'n" (stanza 36),
5. George Chapman's *The Seven Books of the Iliads of Homer* (1598), "the Axle-tree, about which heaven hath his motion" (Epistle Dedicatory), all compare with *Troilus and Cressida*'s "strong as the axle-tree / On which heaven rides" (1.3), (Robertson 1913, 407-8).
6. In Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (circa 1588), the "face" of Helen of Troy "launched a thousand ships," and in *Troilus and Cressida* (2.1), Helen of Troy's "price hath launch'd above a thousand ships." (Logan 15).
7. John Lyly's play, *Mother Bombie*, employs the phrase, "set all on hazard," like *Troilus and Cressida*'s "Sets all on hazard" (prologue), (Dent, 1981, 49).
8. "Spirits of sense" occurs three times in John Davies's poem, "Of the Soul of Man," in *Nosce Teipsum* (written 1592, pp. 46, 48), and "spirit of sense" occurs twice in *Troilus and Cressida* (1.1, 3.1), (Robertson, 1913, 189-90).
9. Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1595), "this wallet at your back" (VI, 8.23), and *Troilus and Cressida*'s, "this wallet at his back" (3.3), (Deighton, 1932, 117).

Troilus and Cressida's first edition (1609) had two issues with different title pages – one implying the play never saw public performance, and the other indicating a Globe Theater performance. The former would be true if the play were privately performed before the Globe's existence (1599). If both court plays were early versions of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, then it was Shakespeare's second dramatization of Chaucer (i.e., *Troilus and Criseyde*), the first being *Palamon and Arcite* (1566).

Panecia (1574)


Much adoe about Nothing.

As it hath been ſundrie times publikely acted by the right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his ſeruants.

Written by William Shakeſpeare.

LONDON
Printed by V.S. for Andrew Wiſe, and William Aſpley.
1600.

A History of Ariodante and Genevora (1583) [*Much Ado About Nothing*, usually dated circa 1598-1599]

A history of Ariodante and Genevora was presented to Queen Elizabeth on February 12, 1583 (Steele, 88). These names derived from Ludovico Ariosto's 1516 poem, *Orlando Furioso* (Canto 5), which was one of Shakespeare's plot sources for *Much Ado About Nothing*: Hero/Genevora is accused of infidelity by her lover Claudio/Ariodante, who is made to believe by false testimony that she was seen with another man at her bedroom window; Claudio/Ariodante then rejects her.

A similar plot occurs with the lovers, Timbreo and Fenicia, in Matteo Bandello's *La Prima Parte de le Novelle* (1554), also Shakespeare's source, especially for the "simulated death and revival of the wronged heroine," the setting in Messina, and character names, Leonato and Don Pedro (Ogburn & Ogburn, 480). An earlier royal play, *Panecia,* shown in December 1574, (Steele, 1926) was likely a misspelling of Fenicia, thus a play based on Bandello's story. *A history of Ariodante and Genevora* had props that were "new prepared and employed," (Feuillerat, 350) which suggests a revival of an older play, i.e., *Panecia* (Fenicia).

Orthodoxy dates *Much Ado About Nothing* circa 1598-99. A "too early" allusion occurs in George Pettie's *A Petite Palace of Pettie, his Pleasure* (1576), "he may think I love him deeply, though I hate him deadly" (p. 68), which is close to *Much Ado About Nothing*'s line: "if she /did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly" (5.1), (Tilley, 333). Regarding good health, the phrase, "as sound as a bell," in Thomas Newton's 1576 translation, *The Touchstone of Complexions* (p. 109 verso), occurs in *Much Ado About*

Nothing (3.2), (Macrone, 206). "Much ado about nothing" occurred in John Whitgift's *The Defense of the answer to the Admonition against the reply of T.C.* (1574) and in John Stockwood's *A Sermon Preached at Paul's Cross on Barthelmew Day* (1578), (Dent 1981, 45).

In John Lyly's fiction, *Euphues and His England* (1580), a Sienese nobleman sizes up a gentlewoman's beauty and stature:

> I know not how I should commend your beauty, because it is somewhat too brown, nor your stature being somewhat too low, & of your wit I cannot judge. [p. 30]

In *Much Ado About Nothing* (1.1), a Paduan nobleman sizes up a gentlewoman's beauty and stature: (Rushton, 1871, 103-4)

> Why i' faith methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise ...

George Pettie's *The Civil Conversation of Mr. Steeven Guazzo* (1580) included the phrase, "when time and place served" (Book 1), echoed in *Much Ado About Nothing* (5.1):"and when time and place shall serve." (Dent, 1981, 194) In 1592, Thomas Nashe wrote about his own character in *Strange News*:

> For the order of my life, it is as civil as a civil orange ... [sig. L4]

In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Beatrice comments on Claudio's character: (McKerrow & Wilson, 24)

> The count [Claudio] is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil, count, as civil as an orange ... [2.1]

"Civil" punned on the Spanish city, "Seville," presumably the source for oranges.

1575 Sketch of *Titus Andronicus* [*Titus Andronicus*, usually dated circa 1592-1594]

A 16th century manuscript features a sketch of a scene from Shakespeare's tragedy, *Titus Andronicus*, along with corresponding text excerpts. Latin abbreviations comprised the date, called a chronogram, interpreted as 1594 or 1595; this fits neatly with Shakespeare orthodoxy's circa 1592-94 for the play's composition, but ignores dramatist Ben Jonson's remark that the play was 25 to 30 years old in 1614 (*Bartholomew Fair*, induction), i.e., circa 1584-89. The manuscript is signed, "Henricus Peacham," assumed as Henry Peacham the Younger (1578-circa 1644), a teacher, author and illustrator. David Roper, however, discovered that the chronogram actually represented 1575, (Roper, 1) and that Peacham's father, the *elder* Henry Peacham (1547-1634), a scholar and author, was the document's maker.

This dating coincides with Queen Elizabeth's June 1575 visit to Hatfield Palace, Herefordshire, a royal property; the elder Peacham was then a church curate located very near to it (North Mimms parish). *Titus Andronicus* may have been played during her visit there, or while she stayed at Lord Burghley's house, Theobalds (about 9 miles away), which preceded her Hatfield visit (May 24 to June 6). The Peacham manuscript derived from the papers of Sir Michael Hicks, one of Burghley's secretaries (now at Longleat House, Somerset). The manuscript's slight textual differences with the play's first printed edition (1594), (Chambers, 1944, 58-9) and the inclusion of an extra character in the depicted scene (Campbell and Quinn, 466-7) suggests subsequent revision of the play performed 19 years earlier.

George Peele was apparently familiar with *Titus Andronicus*; in his poem, *The Tale of Troy*, dated circa 1580, (Barbour, 2004) Ajax refers to Odysseus as "wise Laertes son" (p. 17), which echoes *Titus Andronicus*'s line, "wise Laertes's son /Did graciously plead for his [i.e., Ajax's] funerals" (1.1), (Sampley, 492). In the same work, Cressida was called "that changing piece" (p. 15), which Lavinia was called in *Titus Andronicus* (1.1), (Wilson, 107). *Titus Andronicus*'s phrase, "Laden with honor's spoils" (1.1) appeared in Peele's 1589 poem, *An Eclogue Gratulatory ... Earl of Essex* (Robertson, 1924, 185). In Peele's 1591 poem, *Descensus Astraea*, "gallop the zodiac" was used in his passage about Queen Elizabeth's ascension to the throne; (Baldwin, 7) *Titus Andronicus* (2.1) uses the same metaphor for the "new-made empress" of Rome, Tamora. In Peele's play, *The Battle of Alcazar*, dated circa 1588, (Edelman, 19) the Moor says, "The fatal poison of my swelling heart" (2.3); Aaron the Moor in *Titus Andronicus* says, "The venomous malice of my swelling heart" (5.3), (Robertson, 1924, 185). During April 1592 and January 1593, "Titus & Vespacia" saw ten public performances, as noted in Philip Henslowe's diary; it was probably Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, as Titus's son, Lucius, was called Vespasianus in the play's German version in 1620 (Halliday, 654).

The History of Error (1577) *A history of fferrar* (1583) [*The Comedy of Errors*, usually dated circa

1592-1594]

On January 1, 1577, the queen watched *The history of Error*, (Steele, 61) a title obviously suggestive of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*. Solid references to Shakespeare's play varied the title: "a Comedy of Errors" in 1594 (*Gesta Grayorum*, 1688), "his Errors" in 1598 (Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia*), and "the play of Errors" in 1604-05 (Campbell & Quinn, 683). An example of a slightly altered court play title is "A History of Love and Fortune" (1582), later printed as *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* (1589), (Halliday, 529-30).

A history of fferrar appeared at court on January 6, 1583 (Steele, 87). Some interpret "fferrar" as poet George Ferrers, but revels records generally did not name authors. With no known character named "Ferrar," the scribe likely conflated "of Error." In addition, the 1583 play had "diverse new things," implying an older play's properties had been updated.

Orthodox dating for Shakespeare's comedy is circa 1592-94, but allusions to it appear in the 1580s. *The Comedy of Errors*'s line, "Far from her nest the lapwing cries away" (4.2), resembles John Lyly's line in *Euphues and His England* (1580), "the Lapwing, who fearing her young ones to be destroyed by passengers, flyeth with a false cry far from their nest" (dedication letter), (Foakes, lxviii) and Robert Greene's line in *Morando the Tritameron of Love* (1584), "and with the Lapwing to cry farthest of from her nest ..." George Pettie's phrase in *The Civil Conversation of Mr. Steeven Guazzo* (1580), "drunk of Circe's cup" (Book 2), is also found in *The Comedy of Errors* (5.1), (Sullivan, xlix). In Lyly's circa 1588 play, *Mother Bombie* (5.3), "catch cold on our feet" and "Dromio" are one line apart, and in Shakespeare's play, Dromio says, "lest he catch cold on 's feet" (3.1). *Mother Bombie* (5.2) and *The Comedy of Errors* contain the exact phrases, "There's a time for all things" (2.2) and "I thought to have asked you" (3.1). In *Arden of Feversham* (circa 1591), a "knave" is described as "lean faced," "hollow eyed," and "threadbare" – the exact words describing a "villain" in *The Comedy of Errors* (5.1), (Jacob, vi).

The History of the Solitary Knight (1577) *A pastoral or history of A Greek Maid* (1579) [*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, usually dated circa 1607-1610]

On February 17, 1577, Queen Elizabeth saw *The History of the Solitary knight* (Steele, 63). Clark determined this was Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, whose title character came to hate mankind and turned hermit, but its properties of "certain Armor with a base and Targets" (Feuillerat, 275) were inapplicable to *Timon of Athens*' plot; also, Timon was a lord, and never called a knight in the play. *The History of the Solitary knight* is more descriptive of Shakespeare's play, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, in which Pericles, shipwrecked in a foreign land, competes in the king's tournament; he is called the "Sixth Knight," "stranger knight," and "knight of Tyre" ("knight" appears over forty times in the play). *Pericles* was based on a tale in John Gower's 14th century book, *Confessio Amantis*, in which "Apollonius, the prince of Tire" was described as "A young, a fresh, a lusty knight" (Book 8). Shakespeare's Pericles wins the tournament and marries the king's daughter. He became solitary when his wife died during childbirth; he then placed his infant daughter with friends in another land, and returned to Tyre. Fourteen years later, Pericles attempted to retrieve her, but was told she had died.

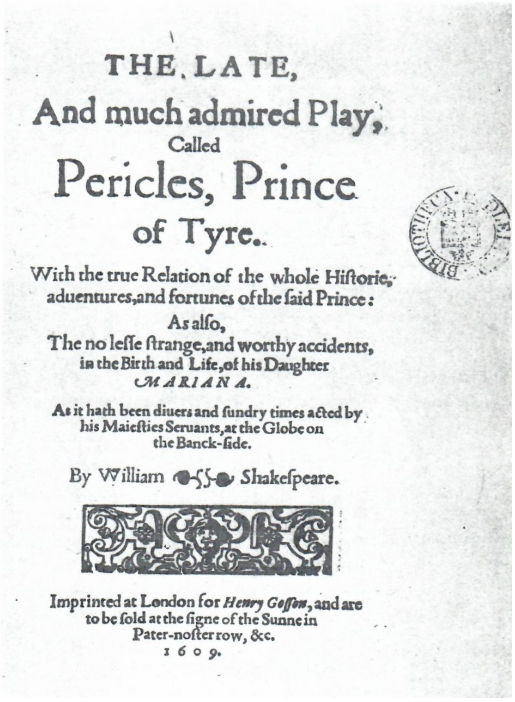
Orthodoxy dates *Pericles* circa 1607-10. Laurence Twine's *The Pattern of Painful Adventures*, registered in 1576, retold Gower's tale and contained a line parallel with Shakespeare's play not found in Gower:

> ... king *Antiochus*, which builded the goodly city of Antiochia in Syria, and called it after his own name, as the chiefest seat ... [Chapter 1]

Pericles (1. Prologue):

> ... This Antioch, then, Antiochus the Great Built up, this city, for his chiefest seat: The fairest in all Syria ...

Another court play, *A pastoral or history of A Greek maid*, was shown on January 4, 1579 (Steele, 72). Clark


THE LATE,
And much admired Play,
Called
Pericles, Prince of Tyre.
With the true Relation of the whole Hiſtorie, aduentures, and fortunes of the ſaid Prince:
As alſo,
The no leſſe ſtrange, and worthy accidents, in the Birth and Life, of his Daughter
MARIANA.
As it hath been diuers and ſundry times acted by his Maieſties Seruants, at the Globe on the Banck-ſide.
By William Shakeſpeare.
Imprinted at London for Henry Goſſon, and are to be ſold at the ſigne of the Sunne in Pater-noſter row, &c.
1609.

viewed this as Shakespeare's *Pericles* (Clark, 56) as Marina, Pericles's daughter, was kidnapped and sold to a brothel in the Greek city of Mytilene. She called herself "maid" three times in the play, and others called her "maid" and "maid of Mytilene" (5.1). Marina also merited special mention on *Pericles*'s 1609 title page: "The no less strange, and worthy accidents, in the Birth and Life, of his Daughter Mariana [i.e., Marina]." *A Greek maid* required three yards of gray cloth to make "A fisherman's coat"; (Feuillerat, 295) in *Pericles*, fishermen clothe and feed Pericles after a shipwreck.

In *Pericles* (2.2), knights displayed their shields' mottoes to Princess Thaisa; after the tournament, they danced with ladies in King Simonides's court. These same events occurred in *Masque of knights*, an entertainment performed before Elizabeth on January 11, 1579, which was one week after *A Greek Maid*:

> A masque of knights all likewise in Armour complete ... murrions [soldiers' hats] upon their heads ... with feathers in the tops ... large Baldrics [chains] about their necks of black gold tinsel ... truncheons in their hands gilt and gilded shields with a posey written on every of them ... the Knights had danced A while with Ladies before her Majesty ... (Feuillerat, 287)

Prince Pyrocles was a character in Sir Philip Sidney's circa 1582 novel, *Arcadia*, and like Shakespeare's Prince Pericles, was shipwrecked in a foreign country. Furthermore, both works used a metaphor about a woman sewing. Sidney's woman "wounds" and "beheads" the material (Book 3), and Shakespeare's Marina "wounds" and "hurts" it (4. prologue), (Hoeniger, 993). *Arcadia*'s line, "The senate house of the planets was at no time so set, for the decreeing of perfection in a man" (Book 2), mimics *Pericles*'s line: "The senate-house of planets all did sit, /To knit in her their best perfections" (1.1). *Arcadia*'s "asking advice of no other thought but of faithfulness and courage" (Book 3), mirrors *Pericles*'s "Nor ask advice of any other thought /But faithfulness and courage" (1.1), (Deighton, 1907, 11).

John Lyly's line in *Euphues and His England* (1580), "the Torch turned downward, is extinguished with the self-same wax which was the cause of his light" (p. 18), parallels *Pericles* (2.2), where a motto on a knight's shield is described as "A burning torch that's turned upside down; /The word, *Qui me alit, me extinguit*." (Hoeniger, 55). The same Latin motto, and a burning torch pictured below it, appeared in Geffrey Whitney's 1586 book, *A Choice of Emblems* (p. 183). Another page in Whitney's book shows a hand from a cloud testing a gold coin upon a touchstone, and above it, "*Sic spectanda fides*" (p. 139); (Hoeniger, 56) in *Pericles* (2.2), the fifth jouster's device is:

> an hand environed with clouds,
> Holding out gold that's by the touchstone tried;
> The motto thus, *Sic spectanda fides*.

Luke Hutton's *The Black Dog of Newgate* (1596) the has phrase, "A prize, a prize in a buckram bag! A prize! Half-part," which compares with Pirate 2's line in *Pericles* (4.1), "A prize! a prize!," and Pirate 3's line, "Half-part, mates, half-part!" (Hoeniger 107) Thomas Wright's 1601 book title, *The Passions of the Mind*, appeared as a phrase in *Pericles* (1.4), both concerning psychology. The unusual phrase, "th'ostent [show] of war" ("Genius Loci," lines 1-4), in Thomas Dekker's *The Magnificent Entertainment: Given to King James* (1604), also appears in *Pericles* (1.2), (Deighton, 1907, 20). John Day's play, *Law-Tricks, or Who would have thought it*, dated circa 1604 (Chambers, 1923, 285-6), features line parallels with *Pericles*: (Hoeniger, 173).

Law-Tricks (1.2):

> **Joculo:**
> ... but Madam, do you remember what a multitude of fishes we saw at Sea? and I do wonder how they can all live by one another.
>
> **Emilia:**
> Why fool, as men do on the Land; the great ones eat up the little ones ... [sig. B3]

Pericles (2.1):

> **Fisherman 3:**
> ... Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea.
>
> **Fisherman 1:**
> Why, as men do a-land; the great ones eat up the little ones;

Law-Tricks (Act 2):

> **Adam:**
> I knew one of that faculty [a lawyer] in one term eat up a whole Town, Church, Steeple and all.
>
> **Julio:**
> I wonder the Bells rung not all in his belly. [sig C3 verso]

Pericles (2.1):

> **Fisherman 1:**

> ... Such whales have I heard on o' the land, who never leave gaping till they've swallowed the whole parish, church, steeple, bells and all ...
>
> **Fisherman 3:**
> ... Because he should have swallowed me too; and when I had been in his belly, I would have kept such a jangling of the bells.

The History of Titus and Gisippus (1577)
A History of the Duke of Milan and the Marquis of Mantua (1579)
The History of Felix and Philiomena (1585)
[*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, usually dated circa 1590-1595]

Queen Elizabeth viewed *The history of Titus and Gisippus* on February 19, 1577 (Steele, 65). These character names appeared in a story in Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Book Named The Governour* (1534). Gisippus, upon learning that his best friend, Titus, is desperately in love with his fiancée, Sophronia, willingly hands her over to him. This parallels Shakespeare's plot in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in which Valentine surrenders his beloved, Silvia, to his best friend, Proteus.

On December 26, 1579, the queen viewed *A history of the Duke of Milan and the Marquis of Mantua*, (Steele, 77) a title also descriptive of Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in which the Duke of Milan banishes Valentine after attempting elopement with his daughter. Valentine then encounters a group of outlaws who make him their leader; they "work" in Mantua's forest. As Mantua was a marquisate, Valentine could be described as the "outlaw" Marquis of Mantua at odds with the Duke of Milan.

Another royal play, *The history of felix and philiomena*, performed on January 3, 1585, (Steele, 91) was evidently based upon Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana Enamorada* (1542), in which Felismena, disguised as a boy, becomes page to her beloved, Don Felis (anglicized as Felix in Bartholomew Yong's 1598 translation), who employs "him" to woo Celia; a similar situation occurs in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* involving characters Julia, Proteus and Sylvia.

Orthodox dating for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is circa 1590-95; Arthur Brooke's 1562 poem, *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, echoes part of its plot. Forbidden married lovers, Romeus and Juliet, plan to meet one evening by Romeus climbing through Juliet's window with "a cords ladder" and "iron hooks" (f. 24). In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (2.4), Valentine plans to meet his secretly betrothed, Sylvia, in the evening by climbing through her window via a "ladder made of cords" and "anchoring hooks" (3.1), (Leech, 43, 60).

John Lyly's line about secret love in *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578), "the fire kept close burneth most furious," appears in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*: "Fire that's closest kept burns most of all" (1.2), (Tilley, 151). Lyly's play, *Endymion* (1578), has the line, "Love is a chameleon, which draweth nothing into the mouth but air, and nourisheth nothing in the body but lungs (3.4), (Dent, 1981, 160) which compares with *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*'s line, "Though the chameleon love can feed on the air, I am one that am nourished by my victuals" (2.1).

An History of the Cruelty of a Stepmother (1578)
[*Cymbeline*, usually dated circa 1610-1611]

On December 28, 1578, Queen Elizabeth saw *An history of the cruelty of A Stepmother* (Steele, 1926). Clark viewed this as Shakespeare's play, *Cymbeline*, because of the cruelty of Princess Imogen's step-mother, the queen. Unnamed, she was called "Step-mother" or "step-dame" three times in the play, and was "cruel to the world" and "Most cruel to herself" (5.5). She intended to murder Imogen with poison, as her elopement with Posthumous Leonatus ruined her son's chances of marrying her. The queen, however, offered to be the couple's "advocate" to "the offended" King Cymbeline – Imogen's father – who had just banished Posthumous Leonatus:

> Now be assured you shall not find me, daughter,
> After the slander of most stepmothers,
> Evil-eyed unto you ... [1.1]

After the queen exits, Imogen calls her "dissembling" and a "tyrant." Later learning of the queen's crime, King Cymbeline exclaims, "O most delicate fiend!" (5.1) Even the doctor she employs to make poison says,

> I do not like her ... I do know her spirit,
> And will not trust one of her malice with
> A drug of such damn'd nature. [1.5]

Imogen was the British king's only heir, having lost his two sons previously, "Some twenty years" (1.1). Elizabeth ascended the throne exactly twenty years before the court play's 1578 performance, after her two siblings' short reigns (Clark, 83). Four months before the court play (August 1578), Queen Elizabeth had received the French ambassador at Long Melford, near Cambridge, regarding her proposed marriage with the Duke of Alencon; in *Cymbeline*, exiled Posthumous Leonatus writes Imogen that he is "in Cambria, at Milford-Haven" (3.2). Imogen hopes to meet him there "in a day." As Milford-Haven in Cambria (Wales) is about 250 miles from London, and

Long Melford only 56 miles, Clark posited that the latter place was meant, alluding to a current event (Clark, 89-90). Interestingly, Alencon's mother, Catherine de'Medici, was proficient in knowledge of poison herbs.

Orthodoxy's circa 1610-11 dating for *Cymbeline* does not comport with numerous early literary allusions to it. George Pettie's 1580 book, *The Civil Conversation of Mr. Steeven Guazzo*, contained the uncommon line, "to tear him limb-meal" (Book 1), which appears in *Cymbeline* as "to tear her limb-meal" (2.4), (Sullivan, I). In John Lyly's 1584 play, *Campaspe*, a song is sung at the request of Sylvius: (Anders, 133)

> None but the Lark so shrill and clear.
> How at heaven's gates she claps her wings,
> The morn not waking 'til she sings.
> Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat ... [5.1]

In *Cymbeline*, a song is performed at the request of Cloten, beginning:

> Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings ... [2.3]

A phrase in Elizabeth's speech of November 12, 1586, "there were no more dependency upon us but," compares with *Cymbeline*'s "On whom there is no more dependency but" (2.3), (Maxwell & Wilson, 160-161). *Cymbeline*'s "How creeps acquaintance?" (1.4) was echoed by Robert Greene in 1592: "creep into acquaintance" (*A Quip For An Upstart Courtier*). Thomas Nashe's prologue to *Summer's Last Will* (1592), "As the Parthians fight, flying away," mimics *Cymbeline*'s "Or, like the Parthian, I shall flying fight" (1.6), (Dent, 1981, 189). Nashe's 1593 book, *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*: "I have crack'd mine eye-strings" (F4 verso); *Cymbeline* (1.4): "I would have broke mine eye-strings, crack'd them, but /To look upon him..." (Maxwell & Wilson, 142) Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603): "I'll hale these balls until my eye-strings crack, / From being pull'd and drawn to look that way" (2.3). "Jove's palace crystalline" (line 27), in Thomas Edwards's poem, *Cephalus and Procris* (registered 1593), occurs in *Cymbeline* (5.4) when Jupiter [Jove] says, "Mount, eagle, to my palace crystalline." (Dowden, 1903, 176)

William Warner's *Albion's England* (1596) included the phrase, "a Justicer upright" (p. 244), like *Cymbeline*'s "Some upright justicer!" (4.5), (Malone et al., 1801 XIX, 222). George Chapman's phrase, "corruption furnaceth the universal sighs" (dedication, *The Seven Books of the Iliads of Homer*, 1598), compares with *Cymbeline*'s "he furnaces / The thick sighs from him" (1.6), (Malone et al, 180, XIX, 52). In John Marston's *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image* (1598), Pygmalion says of his female statue, "So sweet a breath that doth perfume the air" (verse 7); in *Cymbeline*, Iachimo spies on Imogen while sleeping: "'Tis her breathing that Perfumes the chamber thus" (2.2), (Dowden, 53).

A Moral of the Marriage of Mind and Measure (1579) [*The Taming of the Shrew*, usually dated circa 1590-1594]

A Moral of the marriage of Mind and Measure was seen by Queen Elizabeth on January 1, 1579 (Steele, 71). Clark determined this was Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*: Petruchio's "marriage" to shrewish Kate was to be achieved by taking "measures" to affect her willful "mind." Kate is "proud-minded" (2.1), and says, "your betters have endured me speak my mind" (4.1). Also, in the play's final scene, the reformed Kate reveals the comedy's "Moral" to newly married ladies, that her "mind hath been as big as one of yours," advising them to act humbly towards their husbands (Clark, 99-100).

Orthodoxy dates *Taming of the Shrew* circa 1590-94. A "too early" allusion is found in George Gascoigne's play, *Supposes* (1566), which featured a character named Petrucio, (Bullough, I, 61) and a father fearing his son was harmed by a servant:

> **Philogano:**
> ... he whom I sent hither with my son to be his servant, and to give attendance on him, hath either cut his throat, or by some evil means made him away ... [4.7]

The 1575 edition's margin note, "A shrewde suppose," was next to this line, presumably referencing Shakespeare's comedy, which also had a father fearing that his son's servant "hath murdered his master" (5.1), (Morris, 284). Robert Huyck, in his November 30, 1569 deposition, used the phrase, "play the good husband at home" (*La Neufme part des reports de Sr. Edw. Coke*, 1613, part 9), which is exactly found in *Taming of the Shrew* (5.1); (Rushton, 1867, 11) it also occurred in Edward Aggas's 1588 translation, *The politic and military discourses of the Lord de La Nouve* (p. 86). Richard Edwards's 1564 play, *Damon and Pithias*, features the phrase, "Happy man be his dole" as does *Taming of the Shrew* (1.1), (Dent, 1981, 164). In George Pettie's 1576 work, *A Petite Palace of Pettie, his Pleasure* (p. 140), a woman is compared to "gorged" hawks, trained birds of prey: (Dent, 1981, 131)

> For as gorged [sated] Hawks will stoop to no lure,
> so a woman vowed already to another man ...

In *Taming of the Shrew* (4.1), Kate is compared to a "gorged" falcon, a trained bird of prey:

> **Petruchio:**
> ... My Falcon now is sharp, and passing empty,
> And til she stoop, she must not be full gorged,
> For then she never looks upon her lure.

In John Lyly's 1578 novel, *Euphues. The Anatomy of Wit*, Euphues names philosophers Aristippus and Diogenes, and then puns on Stoics: "Who so severe as the Stoics, which like stocks [posts] were moved with no melody?" In *Taming of the Shrew* (1.3), Tranio discusses "sweet philosophy" with Lucentio, mentions Aristotle, then puns on Stoics: "Let's be no Stoics, nor no stocks ..." (Rushton 1871, 2-3). Also, Euphues thinks men should not cover women's defects with nice language:

> be she never so comely call her counterfeit, be she never so straight think her crooked ... If she be well set, then call her a Boss [fat woman], if slender, a Hazel twig, if Nut-brown, as black as coal; if well colored, a painted wall; if she be pleasant, then is she a wanton; if sullen, a clown; if honest, then she is coy; [p. 43 v]

In *Taming of the Shrew* (2.1), Petruchio compliments the shrewish Kate: (Bond 1902, 254)

> I find you passing gentle:
> 'Twas told me you were rough and coy and sullen,
> And now I find report a very liar ...
> Why doth the world report that *Kate* doth limp?
> O sland'rous world: *Kate* like the hazel twig
> Is straight, and slender, and as brown in hue
> As hazel nuts, and sweeter than the kernels:

Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (1579) has the unusual phrase, "milch kine [i.e., milking cows] to the pail" ("Pelopidas"), also found in *Taming of the Shrew* (2.1), (Bond 1905, 66-7). Petruchio sings the opening line of "Where is the life that late I led" (4.1), a song mentioned in *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578) (Morris, 246). A line in Anthony Munday's *Fidele and Fortunatus* (1585), "Woo her, wed her, bed her, and use her as you list (5.2, G1 verso), is like *Taming of the Shrew*'s "woo her, wed her, and bed her, and rid the house of her" (1.1), (Dent, 1981, 257). Also, "God send him good shipping" appears in the circa 1588 play, *The Tragedy of Soliman and Perseda* (4.2), and in *Taming of the Shrew* (5.1), (Morris, 281-2).

The History of the Rape of the Second Helene (1579) [*All's Well That Ends Well*, usually dated circa 1603-1605]

On January 6, 1579, *The history of the Rape of the Second Helene* was performed before Queen Elizabeth (Steele, 72). This was possibly an early title for Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*, as Helena – called Helen several times in the play – was specifically compared to the *first* Helen, the ancient Greek beauty, Helen of Troy (1.3), (Clark, 100). Helen of Troy was raped, in the sense of seduced, by the Trojan prince, Paris. Helena's rape in *All's Well That Ends Well* was seduction by her unknowing husband, Bertram, Count of Rousillon; he had married her against his will, and left her after the ceremony. He then turned to Diana, who was warned about him and his servant: "their promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all these engines of lust, are not the things they go under; many a maid hath been seduced by them" (3.5).

To reclaim her husband, Helena comes to know Diana's widowed mother, and asks if Bertram is "soliciting" Diana "in the unlawful purpose" (3.5). The Widow replies that he indeed wishes to "Corrupt the tender honor of a maid ..." Helena then colludes with Diana, who agrees to an assignation with Bertram; in darkness, Helena takes her place in bed, so Bertram unwittingly seduces his own wife.

Orthodox dating for *All's Well That Ends Well* is circa 1603-05. John Grange's line in *The Golden Aphroditis* (1577), "As Cuckolds come by destiny, so Cuckoos sing by kind" (sig. R2), echoes *All's Well That Ends Well*'s "Your marriage comes by destiny, /Your cuckoo sings by kind" (1.3), (Hunter 24). The anonymous *Arte of English Poesy* (1589) paired a tennis ball analogy with an adage (Hunter, 65-66):

> Antanaclasis. Ye have another figure which by his nature we may call the Rebound, alluding to the tennis ball which being smitten with the racket rebounds back again ... this playeth with one word written all alike but carrying diverse senses as thus:
> The maid that soon married is, soon marred is.

All's Well That Ends Well (2.3):

> **Parolles:**
> Why, these balls bound; there's noise in it. 'Tis hard:
> A young man married is a man that's marr'd.

Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Penniless* (1592) described eight kinds of drunks, based on animals (Hunter, 115):

> the third is Swine drunk; heavy, lumpish, and sleepy ...[sig. G3v]

All's Well That Ends Well (4.3):

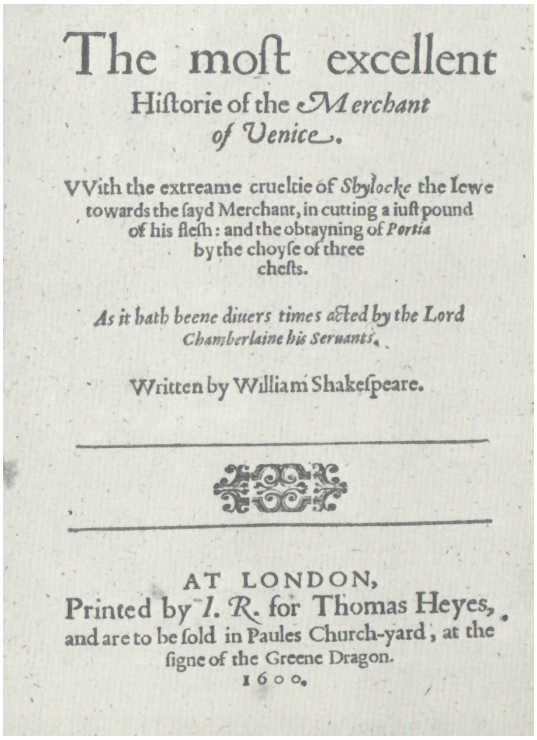
> **Parolles:**
> ... drunkenness
> is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk, and
> in his sleep he does little harm ...

On March 13, 1598, Philip Henslowe noted "Perowes suit" for actor, "Wm Sley," a likely allusion to character Parolles in *All's Well That Ends Well*; Sley was in Henslowe's employ from 1590-2, thus dating the play to this period (Gilvary, 164-65). *All's Well That Ends Well*'s unusual phrase, "monstrous desperate" (2.1), appears in John Weever's poem, "In Satyrum," in *The Whipping of the Satyre* (1601).

John Trussell's poem, *The First Rape of Fair Hellen* (1595), is suggestive of the 1579 court play's title. Trussell's work was much influenced by Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis*, and its prefatory "Sonnet" is considered a tribute to Shakespeare.

The History of Portio and Demorantes (1580) [*History of The Merchant of Venice*, usually dated circa 1596-1597]

The February 2, 1580 royal play, *The history of Portio and demorantes*, (Steele, 80) was apparently mistranscribed. "Portio" was meant as Portia, *The Merchant of Venice*'s heroine, and "demorantes" meant as "the merchants," thus *The history of Portia and the merchants* (Ogburn, 1984). In Shakespeare's play, Portia, disguised as a male lawyer, defends in court the merchant, Antonio, against Venetian Jewish moneylender, Shylock.


The moſt excellent
Hiſtorie of the Merchant of Venice.
VVith the extreame crueltie of Shylocke the Iewe towards the ſayd Merchant, in cutting a iuſt pound of his fleſh: and the obtayning of Portia by the choyſe of three cheſts.
As it hath beene diuers times acted by the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants.
Written by William Shakeſpeare.
AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for Thomas Heyes, and are to be ſold in Paules Church-yard, at the ſigne of the Greene Dragon.
1600.

Orthodox dating for Shakespeare's play is circa 1596-97. In 1579, Stephen Gosson wrote of "The Jew," a play about "the greediness of worldly choosers, and bloody minds of Usurers" (*The School of Abuse*, p. 22 verso) – a theme so descriptive of *Merchant of Venice* that some scholars think it a "lost" Shakespeare source. *The Merchant of Venice*, however, was "otherwise called The Jew of Venice," when registered in July 1598 (Arber, 122). Also in 1579, Edmund Spenser's private letter to Gabriel Harvey (later published) seems to allude to it: "He that is fast bound unto thee in more obligations than any merchant in Italy to any Jew there." (Scott, 1884, 78) John Lyly's passage about love in *Euphues and His England* (1580), (Furness, *Merchant of Venice*, 141):

> For as by Basil the Scorpion is engendered, and by means of the same herb destroyed: so love, which by time and fancy is bred in an idle head, is by time and fancy banished from the heart: or as the Salamander which being a long space nourished in the fire ... [p. 38 verso]

resembles *The Merchant of Venice*'s passage on love:

> Tell me where is fancy bred, Or in the heart, or in the head: How begot, how nourished. Reply, reply. It is engender'd in the eyes, With gazing fed, and Fancy dies ... [3.2]

A story in Robert Wilson's play, *The Three Ladies of London* (1584), echoes *The Merchant of Venice*'s plot: an Italian merchant borrows 3000 ducats from a Jewish moneylender, then defaults; a trial scene ensues. (Kathman) Robert Greene's description of an Englishman's wardrobe in *Farewell to Folly* (registered in 1587),

> I have seen an English gentleman so diffused in his suits, his doublet being for the wear of Castile, his hose for Venice, his hat for France, his cloak for Germany ...

is like Portia's assessment of an English baron in *The Merchant of Venice* (1.1): (Quiller-Couch & Wilson, 127)

> ... How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behavior everywhere.

Christopher Marlowe's play, *Dr. Faustus* (circa 1588), contained the line, "the Devil give thee good on't" (Scene 5) like in *The Merchant of Venice* (4.1): "Why then, the devil give him good of it." (Dent, 1984, 287) In Marlowe's circa 1589 play, *The Jew of Malta*, the daughter of the Jew, Barabas, recovers his hidden fortune by sneaking into their old house. While she drops moneybags down to Barabas, he exclaims: (Logan, 117-8)

> O my girl, My gold, my fortune, my felicity! ...
> O girl, O gold, O beauty, O my bliss! [2.1]

Barabas's daughter loved a Christian man. In *Merchant of Venice*, Shylock's daughter stole money and jewels from her father's house by dropping them through the window to her waiting Christian lover, and then they elope. Shylock's reaction to this news:

> My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
> Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
> Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
> [2.8]

In *The Jew of Malta*, Barabas discusses bearing the insults of Christians: (Furness, *Merchant of Venice* 46)

> I learned in Florence how to kiss my hand,
> Heave up my shoulders when they call me dog ...
> [2.3]

In *Merchant of Venice*, Shylock speaks how he bears the insults of Christians:

> Still I have borne it with a patient shrug,
> (For sufferance is the badge of all our Tribe.)
> You call me misbeliever, cutthroat dog ... [1.3]

Barabas's name may have been inspired by Shylock's comment in *Merchant of Venice* (4.1): "Would any of the stock of Barabbas /Had been her husband rather than a Christian." In 1588, *The Voyage and Travail: of M. Caesar Frederick* [i.e., Federici], *Merchant of Venice*, was Thomas Hickock's English translation of the Italian; Federici's original title *did not* include "Merchant of Venice."

"The Venetian Comedy" was noted in Henslowe's diary on August 25, 1594 (Greg, 19). *The Merchant of Venice*'s first edition (1600) included the alternative title, "The comical History of the Merchant of Venice," and the First Folio classified it as a comedy.

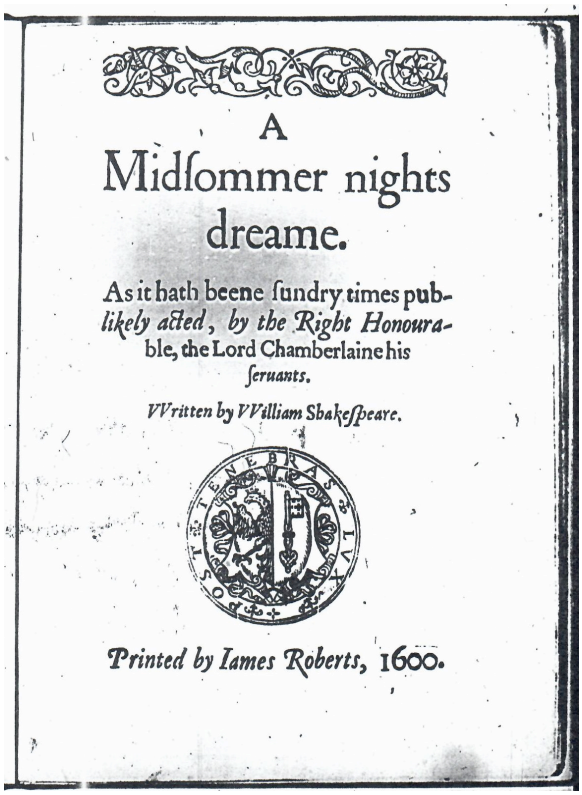
A Pastoral of Phillyda and Choryn (1584) [*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, usually dated circa 1595-1596]

A Pastoral of Phillyda and Choryn was presented before Queen Elizabeth on December 26, 1584. (Steele, 91) Phillida and Corin are associated with Oberon in Shakespeare's pastoral play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2.1):

> **Titania:** [*to Oberon*]
> Then I must be thy Lady; but I know
> When thou hast stolen away from Fairy land,
> And in the shape of *Corin*, sat all day,
> Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love,
> To amorous *Phillida*. [1600 edition, sig. B4]

Titania, Queen of Fairies, reminds Oberon, King of Fairies, that he had changed into a shepherd named Corin and wrote love verses to Phillida. An unsigned pastoral poem about Phillida and Corin appeared in *Songs and Sonnets* (1557), but *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the only known play to mention the pair. Shakespeare's Corin was Oberon, the Fairy King, transformed. If Corin and Choryn were the same character, then *A pastoral of phillyda & Choryn* may have been an early version of Shakespeare's comedy, their storyline later dropped, but their memory retained in this passage.

Phillida and Coridon, and a fairy king and queen, were part of Elizabeth's 1591 entertainment at Elvetham, Hampshire (*The Honorable Entertainment*, 1591). Elizabeth heard a song about lovers Phillida and Coridon ("The


A
Midſommer nights
dreame.
As it hath beene ſundry times pub-
likely acted, by the Right Honoura-
ble, the Lord Chamberlaine his
ſeruants.
VVritten by VVilliam Shakeſpeare.
Printed by Iames Roberts, 1600.

Plowman's Song"), and she commanded an encore; on another day, a Fairy Queen presented Elizabeth with a "chaplet" (garland) "... Given me by *Auberon*, the Fairy King." This exactly parallels *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2.1), in which Fairy Queen Titania speaks to Fairy King Oberon about "An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds ..." (Furness, *Midsommer Night's Dream*, 2).

Orthodox dating for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is circa 1595-96, but earlier royal entertainments indicate the play was known before. Shakespeare's Oberon recalled an event where he heard a mermaid singing while "on a Dolphin's back"; her "dulcet" voice calmed the waters, and "stars shot madly from their spheres," i.e., fireworks:

Oberon:
... once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a Dolphin's back
Uttering such a dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music. [2.1]

This passage was enacted during the queen's July 1575 visit at Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire, as recorded by R. L. (*A Letter*, 1578?). On one day, fireworks were "a-water and land"; on another day, the Greek sea god, Triton, appeared "upon a swimming mermaid." Arion, the musician, followed, "riding aloft upon his old friend the dolphin," and singing "a delectable ditty of a song ..." The song and "the presence of her Majesty & longing to listen had utterly damped all noise & din, the whole harmony conveyed in time, tune, & temper thus incomparably melodious ..." (pp. 42-43). George Gascoigne's "The pleasure at Kenelworth Castle" (*Whole Works*, 1587), corroborates R. L.'s account: "fireworks shewed upon the water" (p. 95), Triton addressed the queen "in likeness of a Mermaid" (p. 102), and "Protheus appeared, sitting on a Dolphin's back ... Within the which Dolphin a Consort of Music was secretly placed, the which sounded, and Proteus clearing his voice, sang ..." (p. 104).

In September 1575, at Woodstock Palace, Oxfordshire, Elizabeth watched "the Queen of the Fairy drawn with 6 children in a wagon of state"; the Fairy Queen praised Elizabeth in a speech, and presented her with a rich gown (*The Queen's Majesty's Entertainment at Woodstock*, 1585).

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2.1), Oberon recalls Cupid shooting an arrow at "a fair vestal" but it missed her.

Oberon:
... Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower ...

"A fair vestal throned by the west" and "imperial votaress" are accepted references to "virgin" Queen Elizabeth. In 1578, the queen encountered a similar scene, according to Thomas Churchyard's *A Discourse of the Queen's Majesty's entertainment in Suffolk and Norfolk* (1578), (Rolfe, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 161). In Tuesday's Device, Dame Chastity disarms Cupid and hands "Cupid's bow" to the queen,

> to learn to shoot at whom she pleased: since none could wound her highness' heart, it was meet (said Chastity) that she should do with Cupid's bow and arrows what she pleased.

In addition, Friday's Device included a dance of fairies, concluding with "The queen of Phayries" speech addressed to Queen Elizabeth.

The 13th century French poem, *Huon of Bordeaux*, featured Auberon, King of Fairies, but no Fairy Queen. Evidently, Shakespeare invented her for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, later reflected in royal entertainments of 1575, 1578 and 1591. Edmund Spenser's lengthy epic, *The Faerie Queene* (1590), came late in that sense; the title is "a misnomer," wrote Floris Delattre, as "it bears the name of a heroine who is now and then alluded to, but never actually depicted." (Delattre, 80) In his work's letter to Sir Walter Ralegh, Spenser acknowledged Queen Elizabeth as the "Faery Queene"; in 1600, Thomas Dekker addressed her as the "Dread Queen of Fairies" (prologue, *Old Fortunatus*), (Riely, 96). Interestingly, Queen Cleopatra was called "this great fairy" in *Antony and Cleopatra* (4.8).

The 1578 anthology, *Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (registered 1577) contained the poem, "The History of *Pyramus* and *Thisbie* truly translated."

... Behold (alas) this wicked cruel wall,
Whose cursed site, denyeth us perfect sight
[sig. O3 verso]

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (5.1), amateur players rehearse a play about Pyramus and Thisbe: (Brooks, 1979, 114)

> ... O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss,
> Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

The lyric, "Though Amaryllis dance in green /Like Fairy Queen," by court composer William Byrd, was featured in his *Psalms, Sonnets & Songs of Sadness and Piety* (1588), (Delattre, 69). *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s phrase, "tear a Cat" (1.2), and *Histrio-mastix*'s (circa 1589-91) "tear the Cat" (5.1) both refer to actors on stage.

John Lyly's phrase in *Mother Bombie* (circa 1588), "he is as goodly a youth as one shall see in a summer's day" (1.3), parallels *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s "Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day" (1.2), (Brooks, 2007, 24). The phrase, "the fatal sword imbrue his breast" (4.3, Chorus), in Thomas Hughes's play, *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1588), seems to imitate "Come, trusty sword; / Come, blade, my breast imbrue" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (5.1), (Corrigan, 31). Christopher Marlowe's translation, *Hero and Leander,* written by 1593, includes the line, "Thence flew Love's [Cupid's] arrow with the golden head" (1.161), like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s (1.1) "I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow, /By his best arrow with the golden head." (Brooks, 2007, 15) *The Arbor of Amorous Devices*, registered in 1594, featured a verse about birds: (Rollins, 1936, xvi)

> The Lark, the Thrush and Nightingale,
> The Linnets sweet, and eke the Turtles true,
> The chattering Pie, the Jay, and eke the Quail,
> The Throstle-Cock that was so black of hue. [Poem 3, lines 25-28]

Bottom sings a song about birds in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (3.1):

> The ouzel-cock, so black of hue,
> With orange-tawny bill,
> The throstle with his note so true,
> The wren with little quill ...
> The finch, the sparrow, and the lark ...

Love's Labour's Lost (1598) [*Love's Labour's Lost*, usually dated circa 1594-1595]

Shakespeare's comedy, *Love's Labour's Lost*, was "presented before her Highness this last Christmas," according to the 1598 edition's title page. Orthodox dating is circa 1594-95, yet allusions to the title start in 1578, with Sir Philip Sidney's masque, *The Lady of May*, presented to Queen Elizabeth in Wanstead, Essex: written within three lines are "loving labours folly" and "long lost labour." (Brooks, 1943, 510) In context of books and authors, John Florio, in *Florio His First Fruits* (1578), wrote: (Yates, 35)

> We need not speak so much of love, all books are full of love, with so many authors, that it were labour lost to speak of Love. [p. 71]

First Fruits also mentioned Holofernes, Pompey, Hercules, and Alexander, all cited in *Love's Labour's Lost*. *First Fruits*'s title page says it contains "familiar speech, merry Proverbs, witty Sentences, and golden sayings," pointing to possible Shakespeare borrowings. Florio likely saw a performance before his book's August 1578 registration. That same year, "Thrasonical" [i.e., bragging] and "discourse" appeared in one line in actor Richard Tarlton's book, *Tarleton's Tragical Treatises*, just like in *Love's Labour's Lost* (5.1), (Scott, 1896, 471).

In *Love's Labour's Lost* (5.1), character Armado was likened to Queen Elizabeth's jester, Monarcho. As Monarcho was dead by 1580, (Andersson, 2021) the reference would be untopical for circa 1594-1595. In *Alba* (1598), Robert Tofte wrote that he "once" saw *Love's Labour's Lost*, implying long ago. (Campbell & Quinn, 470) Gabriel Harvey wrote, "He often telleth me, he loveth me as himself, but out liar out, thou liest abominably in thy throat" (*Three Proper, and Witty, Familiar Letters*, 1580, p. 30), which compares with *Love's Labour's Lost* (4.3): "Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, / and lie in my throat. By heaven, I do love ..." (David, 93). And Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, completed circa 1582, has a similar phrase: "heaven, nor hell, shall keep his heart from being torn by these hands. Thou liest in thy throat" (Book 3), (David, 93). Another line parallel appears in John Lyly's 1587 play, *Endymion* (5.3): "I will not command love, for it cannot be enforced: let me entreat it." *Love's Labour's Lost* (4.1): "Shall I command thy love? I may. Shall I enforce thy love? I could. Shall I entreat thy love? I will." (Hart, 1913, 64).

A song in John Lyly's play, *Mother Bombie* (circa 1588), contains the line, "To whit to whoo, the Owl does cry" (3.4), which is like *Love's Labour's Lost*'s closing song: "Then nightly sings the staring Owl /'Tu-whit to-who.'" (Furness, *Love's Labour's Lost*, 318).

In *Love's Labour's Lost* (4.1), Armado's love letter to Jaquenetta gets wrongly delivered to the Princess, but it is read anyway. A soldier's love letter was misdelivered to Queen Elizabeth in her September 1592 entertainment at Rycot House, Oxfordshire, and was read anyway. (Hart, 1913, 61).

> ... a French page came with three other letters: the one written to the Lady Squemish, which being mistaken by a wrong superscription, was

> read before her Majesty. [*Speeches delivered to her majesty... at Ricorte*, 1592].

Both letters' style were pretentious and verbose. In 1592, Thomas Nashe wrote, "take their flesh down a button hole lower" (*Pierce Penniless*), which compares with "Master, let me take you a buttonhole lower" (5.2) in *Love's Labour's Lost*. (Dent, 1981, 190) Nashe also used the phrase, "more sacks to the Mill" (*The First Part of Pasquil's Apology*, sig. C2 verso), also found in *Love's Labour's Lost* (4.3), (Dent, 1981, 190). Samuel Daniel's lines 120-1 in *The Complaint of Rosamond* (1592):

> Ah beauty Siren, fair enchanting good,
> Sweet silent Rhetoric of persuading eyes:

compare with those in *Love's Labour's Lost* (4.3): (Law 46)

> Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye
> 'Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument,
> Persuade my heart to this false perjury?

Gabriel Harvey's *Pierce's Supererogation* (1593) alludes to Nashe's *Pierce Penniless*: "entitled Pierce, the hogshead of wit" (p. 45), which was possibly influenced by *Love's Labour's Lost*'s "Piercing a hogshead!" (4.2), (Taylor, 95, 108).

Musical Comedy on Twelfth Night (1601) [*Twelfth Night*, usually dated circa 1599-1601]

Queen Elizabeth's entertainment on Twelfth Night (i.e., January 5 or 6) 1601 was very likely Shakespeare's comedy, *Twelfth Night*. Then present was Virginio Orsini, the Italian Duke of Bracciano, whose name resembles *Twelfth Night*'s character, Orsino, Duke of Illyria. Moreover, Shakespeare's play made no reference to Twelfth Night, nor had any relevance to it, which implies that the title derived from the performance date (the play's subtitle, *What You Will*, was possibly the original title); many royal performances occurred on Twelfth Night. In addition, a manuscript found in the Duke of Northumberland's library details the Lord Chamberlain's requirements that the entertainment be a "play that shall be best furnished with rich apparel, have great variety and change of music and dances, and of a subject that may be most pleasing to her Majesty ..." (Hotson, 142) *Twelfth Night* features five songs and is set in the households of a duke and a gentlewoman. Bracciano later described the entertainment as "a mingled comedy with pieces of music and dances." (Hotson, 202) The English court had less than two weeks' notice of Bracciano's visit, so the comedy he saw was not new. Although the description of this royal musical comedy fits *Twelfth Night*, as well as orthodoxy's dating (circa 1599-1601), it gets little notice in scholarship.

John Lyly apparently knew a line from *Twelfth Night*. In his 1580 novel, *Euphues and His England*, a gentleman says to a lady:

> of your wit I cannot judge." "No," quoth she, "I believe you, for none can judge of wit, but they that have it." "Why then," quoth he, "dost thou think me a fool?" "Thought is free, my Lord," quoth she, "I will not take you at your word." [p. 30]

A similar gentleman-lady repartee occurs in *Twelfth Night*: (Scott, 1884, 471)

> **Sir Andrew Aguecheek:**
> Fair Lady, do you think you have fools in hand?
>
> **Maria:**
> Sir, I have not you by th' hand.
>
> **Sir Andrew Aguecheek:**
> Marry but you shall have, and here's my hand.
>
> **Maria:**
> Now, sir, thought is free. [1.3]

This bit also occurred in the anonymous comedy, *Common Conditions*, registered in 1576. A "Fair Lady" tells a gentleman, "Do think not you have a fool in hand" (F1 verso, undated), echoing Sir Andrew's line, "Fair lady, do you think you have fools in hand?" (Dent, 1981, 113).

George Pettie's 1580 book, *The Civil Conversation of Mr. Steeven Guazzo*: "To play the fool well, it behooveth a man first to be wise" (p. 74), echoes *Twelfth Night*'s "This fellow is wise enough to play the fool, /And to do that well craves a kind of wit" (3.1), (Luce, 95). A story in Barnabe Riche's *Riche His Farewell to Military Profession* (1581) closely corresponds *Twelfth Night*'s plot: a Duke uses his "male" page (Silla, a woman disguised) to plead his love to the noblewoman, Julina. Julina says she "charily preserved mine honor"; her counterpart, Olivia, in *Twelfth Night*, says, "And laid mine honor too unchary out" (3.4), (Lothian & Craik, xlv).

In *Twelfth Night*, Olivia's steward, Malvolio, is tricked into believing that Olivia loves him, after reading a letter signed, "The Fortunate-Unhappy" – an English translation of Sir Christopher Hatton's poetical signature, "Fortunatus infelix." Hatton held various offices for Queen Elizabeth, and was her "perpetual suitor." (MacCaffrey). So Hatton's lampooning would have been funny and relevant during the 1570s, but not so circa 1600, about a decade after his

death.

In Samuel Daniel's *Delia* (1592), the author's rejection by Delia puts him in "a hart's despair" and "My thoughts (like hounds) pursue me to my death" (Sonnet 5); in *Twelfth Night*, Duke Orsino, upon first seeing Olivia, said he "turn'd into a hart /And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds, / E'er since pursue me" (1.1), (Anders, 88). Thomas Nashe's pamphlet, *Strange News* (1592): If thou bestow'st any courtesy on me, and I do not requite it, then call me cut; *Twelfth Night*: if thou hast her not i' the end, call me cut" (2.3), (Luce, 65). "Call me cut" also occurs in George Gascoigne's 1566 play, *Supposes* (5.5).

Twelfth Night's expression, "fear no colors" (1.4), occurred in Henry Roberts's 1595 book, *The Trumpet of Fame* (p. 5), (Rolfe, *Twelfth Night*, 155) and in Thomas Nashe's *Have With You to Saffron Walden* (1596), (Furness *Twelfe Night*, 60). Henry Porter's play, *The Two Angry Women of Abingdon* (4.3), written by 1598: (Furness, 1902, *Twelfe Night*, 60):

> **Nicholas:**
> Yes, indeed, I fear no colors: change sides, Richard.
>
> **Coomes:**
> Change the gallows! I'll see thee hanged first.

The underlined phrases also occur near each other in *Twelfth Night* (1.5):

> **Maria:** (*to Clown*)
> ... my lady will hang thee for thy absence.
>
> **Clown:**
> Let her hang me: he that is well hanged in this world needs to fear no colors.

(*Two Angry Women* also has "Call me cut," 3.2.) Emanuel Forde's 1598 novel, *Parismus, the Renowned Prince of Bohemia*, features characters Olivia and Violetta, the latter a woman disguised as a male page; *Twelfth Night* features characters Olivia and Viola, the latter a woman disguised as a male page. (Lothian & Craik, xlvii)

Upon Queen Elizabeth's death in March 1603, diarist John Manningham noted a story about her and Dr. George Boleyn, who had died two months earlier:

> Mr. Francis Curle told me how one Dr. Bullein, the Queen's kinsman, had a dog which he doted on, so much that the Queen understanding of it requested he would grant her one desire, and he should have whatsoever he would ask. She demanded his dog; he gave it, and "Now, Madame," quoth he, "you promised to give me my desire." "I will," quoth she." "Then I pray you give me my dog again." (Bruce, pp. 148-149)

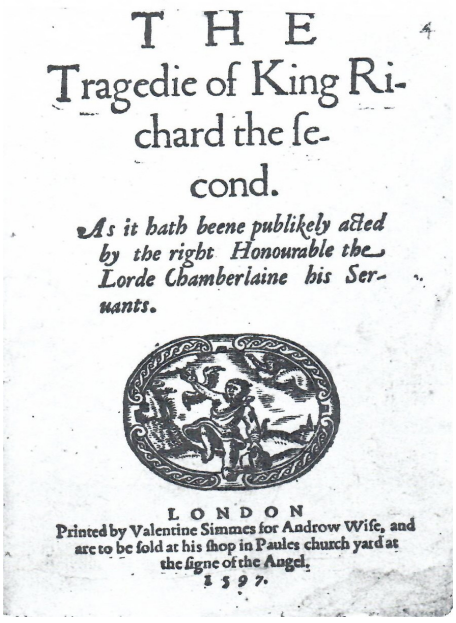
This incident was evidently recalled in *Twelfth Night* (5.1): (Rolfe, *Twelfth Night*, 209):

> **Fabian:**
> Now, as thou lovest me, let me see his letter.
>
> **Clown:**
> Good Master Fabian, grant me another request.
>
> **Fabian:**
> Anything.
>
> **Clown:**
> Do not desire to see this letter.
>
> **Fabian:**
> This is, to give a dog, and in recompense desire my dog again.

Undated, the incident could have occurred as early as 1576, when Boleyn earned his theology doctorate (Cambridge University).

A "Tragedy" of King Richard II (1601) [*The Tragedy of King Richard II*, usually dated circa 1595-1596]

In August 1601, William Lambarde, the Tower of London's keeper of records, conversed with Queen Elizabeth. He recorded her remark that a "tragedy" allegorized her as Richard II (Chambers, 1963, II, 326):


THE
Tragedie of King Richard the second.
As it hath beene publikely acted by the right Honourable the Lorde Chamberlaine his Seruants.
LONDON
Printed by Valentine Simmes for Andrew Wise, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules church yard at the signe of the Angel.
1597.

> so her Majesty fell upon the reign of King Richard II, saying, "I am Richard II. Know ye not that? ... this tragedy was played 40 times in open streets and houses."

The "tragedy" was Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second* (title of first printed edition, 1597); it was publicly performed the night before the failed Essex rebellion in February 1601. Elizabeth knew *Richard II* well enough to make a pun from the play. An undated anecdote has the queen speaking out during John Blower's sermon at White Waltham's church, near Windsor Castle: (Ure, 173):

> 'Tis said that he [Blower] never preach'd but one Sermon in his Life, which was before Queen Elizabeth; and that as he was going about to caress [endear] the Queen, he first said "My royal Queen," and a little after "My noble Queen." Upon which says the Queen "What am I ten groats worse than I was?" At which Words being balked (for he was a Man of Modesty) he could not be prevail'd with to preach any more, but he said he would always read the Homilies for the future; which accordingly he did. (Hearne, 153)

A "royal" (or rial) was a 10 shilling coin; a "noble" was worth 6 shillings 8d – a ten-groat difference. In *Richard II* (5.5), the deposed King Richard speaks to a groom:

> **Groom:**
> Hail, royal prince!
>
> **Richard II:**
> Thanks, noble peer;
> The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear.

If Blower's only sermon was the one in the queen's presence, then it likely occurred in 1577, when he became the church's vicar. The story's source is antiquary, Thomas Hearne (1678-1735); he was born in White Waltham, where his father was a parish clerk.

The play was also alluded to at the earls of Essex and Southampton's treason trial. Sir Edward Coke accused them of trying to capture the queen; when Southampton asked Coke why they would, he replied, "... how long lived King Richard the Second after he was surprised in the same manner?" (Stopes 210) Shakespeare was also quoted during Essex's sentencing: "I owe God a death"; in *Henry IV-Part 1*, before a battle, the prince tells Falstaff, "Thou owest God a death" (5.1), (Green, 214).

Conventional dating for *Richard II* is circa 1595-96. Christopher Marlowe evidently knew the play. His circa 1587 play, *Tamburlaine the Great, Part 1* (4.1), described "prancing steeds, disdainfully /With wanton paces trampling on the ground"; (Robertson, 1923, 103) this echoes *Richard II*'s line about how a horse behaved with Bolingbroke aboard: "So proudly as if he disdain'd the ground" (5.5). In Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (circa 1588), Dr. Faustus looks at Helen of Troy and says: (Logan, 27):

> Was this the face that launched a thousand ships ... [5.1]

The title character in *Richard II* looks in a mirror and repeats the phrase, "Was this the face" (4.1):

> Was this face, the face
> That every day, under his household roof,
> Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face,
> That like the sun, did make beholders wink?
> Is this the face, which fac'd so many follies,
> That was at last outfac'd by Bolingbroke?

In addition, Marlowe's line in *The Massacre at Paris* (circa 1593), "For his oaths are seldom spent in vain (line 779), parallels *Richard II*'s "Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain" (2.1), (Robertson 1923, 60). George Peele's play, *Edward I* (circa 1590): "To spoil the weed that chokes fair Cambria [Wales]!" (scene 17); *Richard II* (3.4): England "Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers chok'd up ..." (Sampley, 492)

The Merry Wives of Windsor (1602) [*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, usually dated circa 1597-1601]

The Merry Wives of Windsor was acted "before her Majesty," according to its 1602 title page. Orthodox dating is circa 1597-1601. Three earlier, supposedly lost, publicly performed plays could be Shakespeare's comedy under different titles, all noted in theater producer Phillip Henslowe's diary. (a) *The Jealous Comedy* played on January 5, 1593 (Greg, 15). *The Merry Wives of Windsor*'s subplot centers around Master Ford's jealousy of his wife; "jealous" appears 21 times in the play. (b) *The French Doctor* had fourteen performances from October 1594 to November 1596. (Greg, 19-22, 24-25, 42, 49) In *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Dr. Caius, who appears in seven scenes, is called "the French doctor" twice, and the "renowned French physician" once. Shakespeare's play "immortalized" Dr. John Caius (1510-73), a court physician. (Nutton). (c) *The French Comedy*, likely an alternative title of *The French Doctor*, saw seventeen total performances in 1595 and 1597. (Greg, 22,

24, 53-54) Henslowe's son-in-law, Edward Alleyn, sold *The French Doctor* to the Lord Admiral's Men acting company on January 18, 1602 – *the very the same day* that *Merry Wives of Windsor* was registered for publication, strongly suggesting they were the same play. (McNair, 319).

Merry Wives of Windsor contains a solid topical allusion. In August 1592, German Count Frederick of Mompelgard (1557-1608) visited the English towns of Maidenhead, Windsor, and Reading, where he was Queen Elizabeth's honored guest. (Hart, 1904, xli) Mompelgard, also spelled Mumpelgart, was heir to the Dukedom of Wurtemberg, and would succeed the following year. In the 1602 edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (4.5), a German Duke and his retinue are blamed for "cozenage" – the loss of horses at the Garter Inn.

Bardolf:
Sir here be three Gentlemen come from the Duke the Stranger sir,
Would have your horse.

Host: [*of the Garter Inn*]
The Duke, what Duke? let me speak with the Gentlemen, do they speak English? ... They have had my house a week at command, I have turned away my other guests, they shall have my horses *Bardolf*, they must come off, I'll sauce them....

Bardolf:
O Lord sir cousinage, plain cousinage.

Host:
Why man, where be my horses? Where be the Germans?

Bardolf:
Rid away with your horses:
After I came beyond Maidenhead,
They flung me in a slough of mire, & away they ran.

Doctor Caius:
Where be my Host de garter? ... Dear [there] be a Garmaine Duke come to de Court,
Has cozened all de host of Branford, And Redding ...

Sir Hugh Evans:
Where is mine Host of the garter?
Now my Host, I would desire you look you now,
To have a care of your entertainments,
For there is three sorts of cosen garmombles,
Is cosen all the Host of Maidenhead & Readings ...

[sigs. F2 verso, F4 verso]

"Garmombles" reverses two syllables in Mompelgard; Queen Elizabeth addressed Mompelgard as "my cousin" in letters, (Rye, lxii) thus "cosen garmombles." Cozen – "To deceive, dupe, beguile, impose upon" (*OED*, 2a) – punned on cousin. The phrase changed to "Cozen-Germans" in the First Folio. Horses had acute relevance to Mompelgard during his trip. On August 25, he was delayed at Oxford due to his inability of replacing post-horses, even after offering extra money. On September 2, Lord Charles Howard issued a document to Justices of the Peace, Mayors and Bailiffs, to see Mompelgard:

> furnished With post horses in his travel to the seaside ... he pay nothing for the same, for which 'tis shallbe your sufficient warrant so see that you fail not thereof at your perils. (Rye, 47)

Evidently, people were unaware that Mompelgard had free access to post horses.

The First Folio's version of this scene contained additional text. The Garter Inn's host says, "They shall have my horses, but I'll make them pay," reflecting the order that Mompelgard was not to be charged for use of horses; apparently, he had abused this privilege, outraging inn owners in several towns. Regarding the horse thieves, Bardolf says: "for so soon as I came beyond Eton, they threw me off ... like three German-devils; three *Doctor Faustuses*." Momplegard did visit Eton College, and "*Doctor Faustuses*" alluded to Christopher Marlowe's circa 1588 play, *Doctor Faustus*. The Host of the Garter Inn's whereabouts was questioned twice in the scene. Garter had special relevance for Mompelgard, who, during his trip, urged the queen to appoint him a Knight of the Garter. Shakespeare evidently knew this inside court knowledge.

John Lyly's line in *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578), "The Sun shineth upon the dunghill, and is not corrupted" (p. 6, verso), parallels *Merry Wives of Windsor*'s "Then did the sun on dunghill shine" (1.3), (Rushton 1871, 10). The line also appeared in Robert Southwell's *St. Peter's Complaint* (circa 1591): "As spotless sun doth on the dunghill shine" (stanza 56), (*Gentleman's Magazine* 42). In Lyly's play, *Endimion*, first performed on February 2, 1588, fairies sing about pinching the "mortal" Corsites: (Herford, 343)

> Pinch him, pinch him, black and blue,
> Saucy mortals must not view
> What the Queen of Stars is doing,
> Nor pry into our Fairy wooing. [4.3]

In *Merry Wives of Windsor* (5.5), fairies sing about pinching the "mortal" Falstaff:

> Pinch him, fairies, mutually
> Pinch him for his villainy
> Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,
> Till candles and starlight and moonshine be out.

Queen Elizabeth's 1582 poem, "On Monsieur's Departure": (Rolfe, *Merry Wives*, 174):

> I love and yet am forced to seem to hate ...
> My care is like my shadow in the sun,
> Follows me flying, flies when I pursue it ... [lines 2, 7-8]

Merry Wives of Windsor (2.2):

> **Ford:**
> Love like a shadow flies when substance love pursues;
> Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.

Sir Philip Sidney's line in *Astrophil and Stella* (circa 1582), "Have I caught my heav'nly jewel ...?" (Song 2), mirrors *Merry Wives of Windsor* (3.3): "Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel?" (Muir, 1963, 200)

BIOGRAPHY

Katherine Chiljan (BA History, UCLA) is an independent scholar who has studied the Shakespeare Authorship Question for over three decades. Author of *Shakespeare Suppressed: The Uncensored Truth About Shakespeare and his Works* (2011/2016, Faire Editions) described by her as a book of "evidence and explanation," Chiljan has debated the topic with English professors at the Smithsonian Institution and at the Mechanics' Institute in San Francisco. She has written numerous articles on the topic and has been interviewed about it on various radio podcasts. Based in the San Francisco area, she is a member of the Board of Directors of the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition.

ENDNOTES

1. According to the Revels account books, from 1604-05 to 1612-13 (National Archives, AO 3/908/13 and Bodleian Library Rawlinson MS A239), King James and his court viewed: *Othello*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Henry V*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest*, *Julius Caesar*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Henry IV, parts 1 and 2*. James saw *King Lear,* according to the Stationers' Register entry of November 26, 1607 (Arber, 366). *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* had a royal performance on May 20, 1619; (Campbell & Quinn, 1966) the court's 1619 Christmas season included *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Hamlet*. (Campbell & Quinn, 1966).
2. *Hamlet*, 1603 title page; "a Comedy of Errors (like to Plautus his Menechmus) was played by the Players" at Gray's Inn, December 27 or 28, 1594 (*Gesta Grayorum,* 1688); "Twelfth Night, or What you Will," played at Middle Temple on February 2, 1602; (Bruce, 1868) Sir Walter Ralegh's July 6, 1597 letter to Sir Robert Cecil, that Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, was "wonderful merry at your conceit of 'Richard the Second'"; (Edwards, 169) Jacques Petit's 1596 letter to Anthony Bacon. (Ungerer, 1961).

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ESSAY

'My Beloved the AVTHOR': The Subtext of Ben Jonson's First Folio Encomium to William Shakespeare

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HIGHLIGHTS

Did poet Ben Jonson, a master of double meanings, identify Edward de Vere as the author Shakespeare in his famous tribute poem in the historic *First Folio*?

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the ingenious hidden allusions and double meanings that Jonson embedded throughout his famous tribute 'To the Memory of my Beloved the Author Mr William Shakespeare', shedding new light on misunderstood phrases such as 'Small Latine and lesse Greeke', 'Sweet Swan of Avon', 'my gentle Shakespeare' and 'Shine forth, thou starre of Poets', which reveal by number, pun, innuendo and learned literary allusion, that Jonson was alive to the fact that "William Shakespeare" was the pseudonym of one of the Age's most revered literary patrons and concealed poets – Edward de Vere 17th Earl of Oxford.

KEYWORDS

Shakespeare, Shakespeare Authorship Question, Ben Jonson, First Folio, Edward de Vere.

INTRODUCTION

Ben Jonson's magnificent 80-line tribute to the 'memorie' of the author William Shakespeare and his literary legacy was first printed in 1623 on recto and verso of the fifth preliminary leaf of a book containing 36 plays now known as the First Folio (See Appendix for text). It was reprinted, once during Jonson's lifetime, on the eighth preliminary leaf of the Second Folio of 1632, with minor amendments to spelling and punctuation. Both editions were dedicated to his patrons, the brothers William and Philip Herbert, respectively the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery. No manuscript has survived.

While Holland (ca. 1624) responded by hailing Jonson a 'recent vindicator of buried genius', others were critical of his intentions.[1] Dryden (1693) called the poem an 'Insolent, Sparing and Invidious Panegyrick', while Malone (1816) complained of its 'clumsy sarcasm and many malevolent reflections.'[2] Had they better understood his method, and indeed the methods of many of his learned literary contemporaries, they might not have been so scathing, for it was the common practice among Tudor and early Jacobean poets to lace their lines with multiple meanings. They were emulating, with reverence, the classical poets whom Harrington (1607) wrote would 'wrap, as it were, their writings in divers and sundrie meanings which they call the sences or mysteries thereof.'[3] Beneath the surface or literal sense – usually a history of the deeds

and exploits of someone worthy of memory – was buried a moral sense or some profound truth of natural philosophy, politics or divinity. The result was high-brow literary 'allegory' which word, according to Harrington, 'Plutarch defineth to be, when one thing is told and by that another thing is understood.' J.B. Black in his comprehensive 1959 history of the Elizabethan age notes that 'the passion for [this kind of writing] was universal in the days of Shakespeare, Jonson and Fletcher: it flung itself like a creeper over the entire literary output of the period'.[4]

Jonson's contemporaries reckoned him above all others to be the master of double-meaning and Jonson himself revelled in the fact that his works were hard to understand. He deliberately wrote in an elevated, opaque and coded language that confined his readership to a small highly educated literary elite. His worldview was an arrogant one which set the poet above the ordinary man, with an attitude borrowed from his favourite poet, Horace: *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo* - 'I hate the uninitiate crowd and keep them far away' (*Odes* III. 1). The title page of Jonson's *Workes* (1616) bears another Horatian quotation: '*neque, me vt miretur turbo laboro: Contentus paucis lectoribus*' - 'I do not labour for the crowd to admire me, I am content with a few readers' (*Satires* 1.10.73-74) . In the same volume John Selden hails Jonson with the words: 'Let Palaemon write his songs for the crowds in the street...You like to delight the ears of the learned, those of the few' (3v). Those who failed to comprehend Jonson's deeper meanings were airily dismissed as the 'ignoramus crew', the 'sluggish gaping auditor', or the 'multitude whose judgements are illiterate and rude' while in this poetic tribute to Shakespeare, Jonson chides such shallow types as 'grope and urge all by chance' or assume in their 'silliest ignorance' a hollow satisfaction with that which 'when it sounds at best but eccho's right' (2.7-8).

In a posthumously published commonplace book *Discoveries* (1640) Jonson writes enigmatically of a 'Shakespeare in our fashion' whom many post-Stratfordian scholars take to mean the Warwickshire businessman-actor as distinct from the pseudonymous playwright.[5] In this single dense and confounding paragraph of 17 lines Jonson lampoons Shakespeare as a ridiculous and irrepressible gabbler, describing him in phrases lifted directly from a passage in Seneca's *Controversiae* about a ridiculous and irrepressible gabbler called Quintus Haterius. Seneca remembers Haterius as a puppet orator, who could speak only as and when directed to do so by an unnamed instructor. The 'learned few' among Jonson's readers would have recognised the classical source and understood the subtle connection between puppet Haterius and actor Shakspere 'in our fashion'.[6] They might also have noted Jonson's phrase 'I doe honour his memory (on this side idolatry)' and linked it to the sin of 'idolatry' (the setting up of false idols) in Jonson's celebrated honouring of Shakespeare memory: 'To the memorie of my beloved, Mr William Shakespeare'. In *Discoveries*, Jonson intriguingly precedes his remarks on Shakespeare with thoughts and ideas concerning falsehood and the general ignorance of those who could not distinguish a writer from a fencer or a wrestler:

> The power of liberal studies lies more hid, than that it can be wrought out by profane wits... The Writer must lie, and the gentle Reader rests happy, to heare the worthiest works misinterpreted, the clearest actions obscured; the innocent'st life traduc'd... As Euripides saith, No lye ever grows old... indeed, the multitude commend Writers, as they do Fencers, or Wrestlers. But in these things the unskilfull are deceived; nor think this only to be true in the sordid multitude, but the neater sort of our Gallants: for all are the multitude; only they differ in cloaths, not in judgment or understanding.
> (*Discoveries*, in Herford & Simpson, Vol. 8, p. 56)

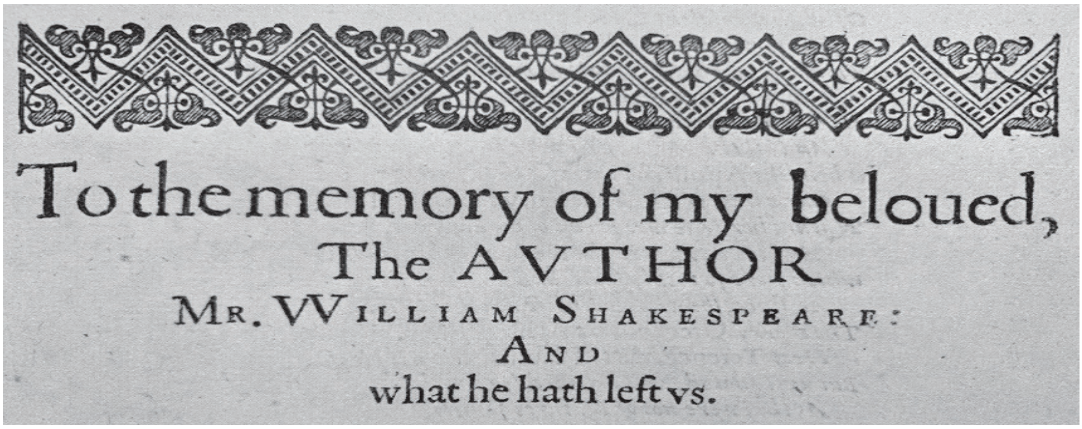
To the memory of my beloued,
The AVTHOR
Mr. William Shakespeare:
And
what he hath left vs.

Figure 1. *The odd title of Jonson's tribute.*

The Title

The title of Jonson's tribute is notable for two reasons – his description of 'The AVTHOR' as 'my beloued', and his typography. The epithet 'my beloved' has led many to assume Jonson to have been a close personal friend of William Shakspere of Stratford, nine years his senior. Greenwood (1921), however, searched in vain, finding 'nothing whatever to show that there was any real intimacy, nay, friendship between Jonson and William Shakspere' (viii), while Gilvary (2018) after careful analysis of all relevant contemporary documents concluded that 'overall, there is no firm basis for stating that Jonson and Shakespeare were ever known to each other personally... the biographers of Shakespeare have imagined a relationship, which goes far beyond the existing evidence'.[7]

As to his typography (See Figure 1), the sizing of letters was an ancient way of conveying emphasis and Jonson was known to lean over the shoulders of his compositors directing their typographical formulae in order to convey meanings above and beyond the sense of the words they were typesetting.[8] In the title to this poem the exaggerated font size and bold inking of the word 'AVTHOR' compared with the small font size and fainter inking of 'VVILLIAM SHAKESPEARE' conveys an extra-lexical messaging. Note how the A in AVTHOR is twice the size and boldness of the A in WILLIAM printed directly beneath it. Should these sizes not have been reversed so that the name was bigger and more prominent than the job description? Were the intrusive words 'The AVTHOR' even necessary? Would 'To the memory of my beloved MR WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE and what he hath left us' not have done the trick? Note how the capital 'A' of 'AND' printed below the name is also considerably larger than the capital 'A's in 'William' and 'Shakespeare'. The effect of such an unusual arrangement is to promote the 'AVTHOR', at least to the mind's eye, as one of greater importance and more beloved of Jonson, than the name - a first hint perhaps that 'William Shakespeare' is not the true name of the 'author' to whom the plays in this book are attributed.

The Refusal (lines 1-16)

Unaware, perhaps, that Jonson was emulating a well-established classical model (Meskill, 2009) protests that his opening lines constitute 'a ritual denial...one of the strangest openings in the history of panegyric'.[9] By declaration Jonson begins his poem on line 17 ('I, therefore will begin'), leaving the first eight couplets to serve as a detached exordium in the Augustan tradition of '*recusatio*' or 'refusal'. Latin authors were well practised in this popular poetic form, which aped the emperors' refusals to evoke exceptional powers (*recusatio imperii*), by putting into verse their own refusals to accept commissions from their wealthy patrons.

Perhaps the most famous example of this is to be found in Horace's verse epistle to Augustus (2.1) in which the poet refuses Augustus's commission to compose an epic song in praise of a recent military victory at the outset of which Horace artfully confuses 'the prince as poet' only to return at the end to muse on the lofty idea of 'the poet as prince'.[10] Such themes would be irrelevant to Jonson's encomium to Shakespeare were it not for the possibility of a poet and prince of the English nobility concealed behind the pen-name 'Shakespeare'.[11] There can be little doubt that Jonson had Horace's epistles in mind when he composed these lines for he closes the section by comparing the praise of Shakespeare's name to the false flattery of a respectable matron (a married woman) by a 'bawd or whore' (13-15), an idea borrowed from Horace's epistle to Lollius: 'As a matron and a whore will differ in temper and tone, so will the true friend be distinct from the faithless flatterer' (18. pp. 1-4). In *Discoveries* he complains of the effect of false flattery specifically upon noble persons: 'It is as great a spite to be praised in the wrong place and by the wrong person, as can be done to a noble nature' (ll. 173-174).

Jonson's *recusatio* is a refusal to praise the bracketed *name* of 'Shakespeare' - 'To draw no envy (Shakespeare) on thy name'. Having explained that Shakespeare's *writings* are the true and worthy object of all men's highest opinion ('all mens suffrage') , he proceeds to give three reasons why he will not praise the author's name. Each of these reasons relates to *truth* as perceived first by sight, then by hearing and lastly through speech (7-12). First he warns that praise of Shakespeare's name could lead to those of 'silliest ignorance' being unable to distinguish a true sound from a mere echo (7-8); secondly that those of 'blind affection' might be left groping through darkness in vain pursuit of truth (9-10) and finally that those of 'crafty malice' might seek to confound the truth by pretending their praise - not to extol the playwright's fame - but to ruin it (11-12). That Jonson's three reasons for not praising Shakespeare's name are each concerned with *truth* is corroborated by remarks later published in *Discoveries.* In respect of the first and second he describes 'ignorance' as the 'darkner of man's life...the common confounder of Truth with which a man goes groping in the darke, no otherwise than he were blind' (2. pp. 801-806) and, in respect of the third (concerning 'crafty malice') he writes: 'Without truth all the actions of mankind are craft, malice, or what you will, rather than Wisdom' (ll. 534-536).

Was Jonson's *recusatio* written in response to an instruction from the folio's patrons to praise the name of

Shakespeare? We may never know, but his willingness to write verses in praise of other people's names renders his refusal to do the same for Shakespeare an anomaly in need of explanation.[12]

Jonson's first four lines vow to defend Shakespeare against envy, while his remark: 'While I confesse thy writings to be such /As neither Man nor Muse, can praise too much' bears striking resemblance to lines published under the 'posy' or penname 'Ignoto' meaning 'The Unknown':

> Thus then to shew my iudgment to be such
> As can discern, of colours blacke and white,
> As alls to free my minde from enuies tuch,
> That never gives to any man his right,
> I here pronounce this workmanship is such,
> As that no pen can set it forth too much.

'The Unknown' is praising Spenser in the prefatory pages of the first edition of *The Faerie Queene* (1590). In the same edition (two pages on) Spenser hints at the identity of 'Ignoto' in lines addressed 'to the right Honourable Earle of Oxenford' in which he extols Oxford's 'long living memory' and his loving communion with the Muses while calling upon him to defend his *Faerie Queene* from 'Envy's poisonous bite'. A poem using this same posy ('Ignoto') printed in 1600 ('In Peascod Time') is assigned to Oxford by a contemporary MS at the British Library (Rawl. poet. 172, fol. 6v), while other 'Ignoto' poems from *Englands Helicon* (1600) are printed as by 'William Shakespeare' in *The Passionate Pilgrime* (1599).[13]

'My Shakespeare' (lines 17-19)

Early Modern poets were often commended by use of the possessive adjective 'our' as a way of enrolling them into a pantheon of England's national treasures, as for example 'our Chaucer' (Ascham, 1570), 'our Spenser' (Purchas, 1613), 'our Shake-speare' (Digges, 1623), 'our Fletcher, our Dunn, our Sidney, our Bacon' (Belasye, 1657). In this familiar context Jonson's double use of '*My* Shakespeare' (ll. 19 & 56) is striking, for in calling upon *his* beloved, 'Soule of the Age! ... the Wonder of our Stage!' to 'rise' he appears to be consciously distancing *his* poet, *his* beloved from '*our* Shakespeare' whose name is ignorantly, craftily or maliciously lauded by the common multitude in his *recusatio* (ll. 1-16). That Jonson's address to '*My* Shakespeare' should begin on the 17th line and proceed from the 17-word title's last line of 17 letters by leap-frogging the *recusatio*, serves to connect Jonson's Shakespeare with the number 17 in much the same way as William Covell connected this same number to Shakespeare by aligning his margent note 'Sweet Shakspeare' to a charade revealing 'our de Vere – a secret' in *Polimanteia* in 1595.[14]

His 'moniment' (lines 19-24)

As Jonson was composing his panegyric to Shakespeare, manuscript copies of an elegy (now thought to be by William Basse) were circulating privately among learned men. The opening couplets of Basse's poem called upon the interred corpses of Spenser, Beaumont and Chaucer to budge up to make room for Shakespeare's remains: 'Renowned Spenser lie a thought more nigh / To learned Beaumont, and rare Beaumont lye a little nearer Chaucer to make room / For Shakespeare in your threefold-four-fold tombe'. Cain and Connolly (2022) correctly note that Basse's poem 'places Shakespeare in what was to become known as Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey', thus aligning Basse's understanding of where Shakespeare was buried to that of other prominent 17th century authors such as Davenant (1638), Sheppard (1651), Denham (1667) and Short (1674), all of whom left written testimony to suggest that Shakespeare's true grave was not beneath the carved monument at Stratford-on-Avon but somewhere in Westminster Abbey.[15] That Shakespeare's mortal remains were hidden in an unmarked tomb ('this uncarved marble') clearly irked Basse who feared that his 'precedency' (i.e. his social rank), even in death, might prohibit acknowledgment of his burial near to Chaucer, Beaumont and Spenser.

> But if Precedencie in death doe barre
> A fourth place in your sacred Sepulcher,
> In this uncarved marble of thy owne,
> Sleep, brave Tragedian, Shakespeare, sleepe alone.

Basse's poem closes with a plea that Shakespeare should possess his tomb 'as Lord, not tenant...that unto others it may counted be / Honour hereafter to be layed by thee'. He wished for Shakespeare's 'uncarved marble' to bear witness to his name, titles and literary achievements.

Jonson, who was doubtless aware of Shakespeare's published declaration 'My name be buried where my body is' (Sonnet 72), responds directly to Basse's poem by dismissing Shakespeare's burial 'without a tombe' (l. 22) as of no concern on account of his immortal works which will remain alive so long as his 'book doth live' (l. 23). Here Jonson leans, once again, on Horace (*Odes*, Book 2,), in which the classical poet prophesises his own death and the immortality of his work, imploring his patron,

Maecenas, to 'restrain all cries and do not trouble with the empty tribute a tomb' (ll. 23-24).

The word 'moniment' – so spelled with an 'i' – is entered into George Mason's *Supplement to Johnson's Dictionary* (1801) where it is defined as an 'inscription.'[16] 'Thou art a Moniment without a Tombe' may mean that Shakespeare is remembered by an 'inscription' at Stratford-on-Avon while his body lies, as Basse hinted, at Westminster Abbey near to Beaumont, Chaucer and Spencer in an unmarked grave. Jonson must have been aware of the Stratford monument and its riddling, cryptic epitaph. Green (1989, rev. 2001). makes a compelling case that he was the author of it, while another tribute to Shakespeare from the prefatory pages of the 1623 folio affirms that 'we alive shall view thee still' when 'Time dissolves thy Stratford Moniment.[17] The word 'dissolve' in the sense of to 'decipher', 'solve' or 'figure out' is so used by Gardiner (1551) who wrote of those 'who labour with questions to *dissolve the truth* of the misterie' (p. 135), and by Beaumont and Fletcher (ca. 1616-1619) who wrote 'at last we shall *dissolve this Riddle'* (V.ii.59). The riddle on the Stratford monument to Shakespeare was 'dissolved' in 2014: 'Figure out if you can (in this monument) with whom Shakespeare is buried' or, in the precise obfuscatory words of the stone itself: 'Read if thou canst, whom envious Death hath placed, with in this monument Shakspeare:' (see Figure 2 below). The riddle's solution is to be found in the Latin couplet above: 'Earth covers the Pylean with his judgment, Socrates with his genius and Maro with his art' – respective allusions to Beaumont, Chaucer and Spencer, buried in precisely that order at Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, a few yards from where Shakespeare's marble monument was erected in 1740.[18]

Oxford, who died in June 1604, was buried at the parish church of St Augustine's Hackney, but according to his first cousin and Vere family historian, Percival Golding, his remains were, by 1619, lying at Westminster, where, to this day, no carved marble preserves his memory.[19]

Jonson (ca. 1612) compares *his* Shakespeare to John Lyly, Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe, three playwrights of the 1580s, but why does he list these three as Shakespeare's contemporaries ('if my iudgement were of yeeres') when none of them can be shown to have written a single play for stage performance after 1593, the year in which the name 'William Shakespeare' was *first* associated with literature?[20] Modern orthodoxy places the composition of all of Shakespeare's plays roughly between the years 1590 and 1614, but no single play can be assigned to a specific year without controversy.

By describing Shakespeare's peers Lyly, Kyd and Marlowe, as 'disproportn'd Muses' (26) whom he 'did outshine' Jonson casts Shakespeare in the role of Apollonian *patron* of the three lesser dramatists, for Apollo was, first and foremost, patron of the Muses and, as 'Phoebus' the embodiment of the outshining sun. Jonson corroborates this connection in line 45 when 'like Apollo he came forth to warme our ears' (l. 45). Martin Doeshout's famous engraving of Shakespeare which serves as the folio's title page, depicts the dramatist as Phoebus-Apollo brightly shining from behind the theatrical mask of a player with sun rays bursting forth on his collar.

William of Stratford, being no patron of the muses, would never be described as Phoebus-Apollo by his contemporaries. Oxford, however, was drama's most generous patron in the 1580s when Kyd, Marlowe and Lyly were in their literary prime. According to playwright Robert Greene, Oxford was a 'Maecenas ... to whom all scholars flock'. Thomas Nashe (1592) wrote in a dedication to him: 'all poor scholars acknowledge you as their patron, providitore and supporter, for there cannot be a threadbare cloak sooner peepe forth, but you strait presse it to be an outbroker of your bounty.'[21] Among the poets and playwrights to whom he served as 'providitore and supporter' in the 1580s were John Lyly, Anthony Munday, Thomas Churchyard, Thomas Watson, Thomas Nashe, Robert Greene and several others among the so-called 'university wits' - all of whom are said by Stratfordian commen-

The Patron (lines 25-30)

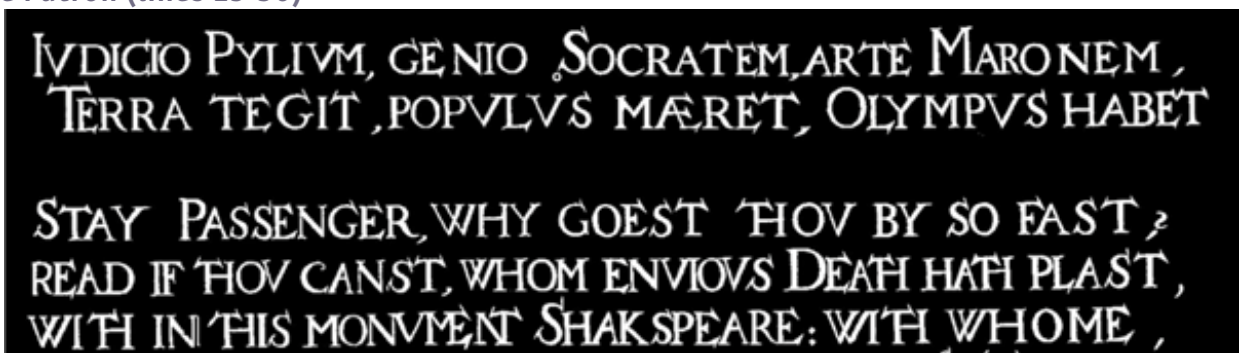

Figure 2 *The riddle in the epitaph to Shakespeare from the wall monument at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford on Avon.*

tators to have influenced Shakespeare. Marlowe's close friends Nashe and Chapman respectively described him as 'our Patron, our Phoebus' and as 'liberal as the Sun' while Oxford, who alluded to himself as an Apollo, was likewise alluded to by Spenser, Watson, Day, Lyly, Davison, Lok, Soowthern, Meres, Harvey, Coryate, Heywood and John Bodenham as Apollo. A significant body of evidence showing that Marlowe and Kyd were among the dramatists evicted from Oxford's scriptorium following a rent scandal at Mistress Juliana Penne's house at St Peters Hill in 1591 is assembled in a sleuthing paper entitled '1591 – A Watershed Year for Oxford and the English Theatre'.[22]

'Small Latine and Lesse Greeke' (lines 31-49)

In 1767, Cambridge don Richard Farmer, published an essay entitled 'On the Learning of Shakespeare' which took as its starting point Jonson's remark 'though thou hadst small Latine and lesse Greeke' to advance a theory that the playwright was ignorant of those languages and of the great body of classical literature written in them. Farmer's thesis was controversial at the time and has since spawned an industry of rebuttal. Collins (1904), Bullough (1957-1976), Werth (2002) and Bate (2019) are among many who have insisted that Shakespeare's knowledge of the Classics was considerable - far greater than that which could be garnered between the ages of 7 and 13 at the Stratford free school.[23] What then did Jonson mean by Shakespeare's 'Small Latine and Lesse Greeke'?

Jonson's works lean heavily on classical sources and formulae, both overt and veiled, while Shakespeare's learning is worn lightly as his works appear to stand in sympathy with the reforming, anti-scholastic movement which aimed to free English literature and language from pedantic classical influences, to bring an end to the habit of bulking out written English with Latinate inkhorn words and to reject the rules of rhetoric and grammar imposed on written English through centuries of misguided pedagogy. Until the 1570s deviations from the grammatical rules of Priscian, the fifth century author of *Institutiones Grammaticae* ('Institutes of Grammar'), was deemed an unacceptable breach of English linguistic manners. Wainwright (2018) identified Oxford, his father-in-law (Lord Burghley) and his tutor (Thomas Smith) as leading English followers of Petrus Ramus (1515-1572) a French humanist who campaigned against the imposition of Aristotle's unities of Time, Place and Action (as did Shakespeare) and forcefully opposed the pedantic intrusion of Priscian's Latin rules into the European vernacular languages.[24]

Oxford stood at the forefront of this movement which strove to minimise the influence of Latin and ancient Greek on English verse by discarding antiquated models while actively seeking to enrich the vernacular tongue by the reintroduction of old and obsolete English words, phrases and meters, mined from early masters such as Chaucer, Lydgate and Gower.[25] In 1592 Thomas Nashe praised Oxford as the 'famous persecutor of Priscian' entrusted to ensure that 'Chaucer bee new scourd against the day of battaile, and Terence come but in nowe and then with the snuffe of a sentence'. Within four years of making this statement Nashe confirmed that Oxford had achieved 'high fame' by his pen as the 'first in our language that repurified Poetrie from Arts pedantism, & instructed it to speak courtly'.[26]

In 1998, independent scholar Nina Green published compelling evidence revealing Oxford as the mysterious annotator of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* hidden behind the initials 'E.K', who, in 1579 railed against those English writers that 'make our English tongue a gallimaufray or hodgepodge' by 'patching up the holes with pieces and rags from other languages, borrowing here of the French, here of the Italian, everywhere from the Latine; not weighing how ill those tongues accord with themselves, but much worse with ours.'[27] That which Nashe most admired in his literary patron, his natural wit and his use of 'wonted Chaucerisms', were not however universally accepted. Philip Sidney, Oxford's social and literary rival, criticised poets reintroducing 'olde rusticke language' to 'bewtify our mother tongue' while Jonson, complained of Lucretius's efforts to reintroduce antiquated words into Latin in the first century BCE, adding 'as some do *Chaucerisms* with us, which were better expunged or banished.'[28] Gabriel Harvey (1578) publicly mocked Oxford as 'this English poet' who, while affecting the clothes and mannerisms of the Italians, insisted on 'valorous' (i.e. chivalrous or courtly) linguistic Chaucerisms: 'Stowte, Lowte, Plaine, Swayne, quoth a Lording.'[29]

In light of this literary controversy Jonson's phrase 'though thou hadst smalle Latine and lesse Greeke' may, with little intellectual strain, be transferred from the man to the anti-scholasticism of his works, as if to say: 'though you borrowed little from Latin and even less from ancient Greek authors, yet may I compare your works with the best of Latin and Greek playwrights' an interpretation which brings Jonson neatly into line with his friend Leonard Digges (1588-1635) who wrote that Shakespeare 'doth not borrow one phrase from Greekes, nor Latines imitate, nor once from vulgar Languages Translate'. Anti-scholasticism surely provides the spur to Jonson's remark that Shakespeare's natural wit leaves classical playwrights 'antiquated and deserted ... as though they were

not of nature's family' (ll. 50-54).

It was not for lack of learning in Latin and Greek that Shakespeare wrote as he did, but the result of a deliberate policy, inspired by patriotic ambition to purify the English language and pave the way for a new English literature designed to supersede the great continental literatures of France, Italy, Ancient Greece and Rome. Jonson vouches that Shakespeare has succeeded in this ambition by giving Britain 'one to showe / To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe' (ll. 41-42).

Jonson cannot have been ignorant of Oxford's public enthusiasm for Baldassare Castiglione's (1528) handbook of courtly manners, *Il Courtegiano* (*The Courtier*). In a Latin preface which appeared in no fewer than six editions between 1571 and 1612, Oxford recorded his 'highest and greatest praises' for Castiglione's work which he had 'studied with a mind full of gratitude' both in the original Italian as well as in Bartholemew Clerke's Latin translation. *The Courtier* was to Oxford the 'most noble and most magnificent task ever undertaken' . Castiglione advised the courtier to act with '*sprezzatura*' a newly coined word implying 'a certain nonchalance, so as to conceal all art and make whatever one does or says appear to be without effort and almost without any thought about it'.[30]

Following the publication of Oxford's Latin edition of *The Courtier*, the concealment of learning, skill, practice and application ('trade') in poetry became a hallmark of the English *courtier* poet. As the anonymous author of *The Arte of English Poesie* recorded in 1589:

> We do allow our courtly poet to be a dissembler only in the subtleties of his art; that is when he is most artificial [i.e. artful], so to disguise and cloak it as it may not appear, nor seem to proceed from him by any study or trade of rules, but to be natural.[31]

The courtly concealment of Oxford's poetic 'Art', was noted as early as 1579 when his aesthetic was explained as 'an arte or rather no arte, but a divine gift or heavenly instinct, not to be gotten by laboure and learning, but adorned with both'.[32] Leonard Digges (c.1623?) echoed these words when describing Shakespeare's 'Art without Art', a concept confirmed by John Warren (1640) in his reference to Shakespeare's 'learned poems' in which only those 'with true judgment can discerne his Art'.[33]

Thus Jonson, who was surely aware of all this, had multiple reasons for allowing those of 'silliest ignorance' to be misled by the phrase 'small Latine and lesse Greeke.' He was opposed to some of the aesthetic aims of the anti-scholastic movement and may have been under an obligation to deflect attention from a concealed courtier poet. Several commentators have suggested that he suffered from envy of a fellow playwright whose talents were greater and more natural than his own. Endymion Porter (c. 1628) accused Jonson and Ford of 'contriving a rape' on Shakespeare's fame 'to raise their pedant selves'.[34] It is tempting to assume that shame over his posthumous treatment of Shakespeare later inspired Jonson to write:

> It is a barbarous envy to take from those mens vertues, which because thou canst not arrive at, thou impotently despairest to imitate. Is it a crime in me that I know that, which others had not yet knowne, but from me? Or that I am the Author of many things, which never would have come in thy thought but that I taught them?' (*Discoveries,* ll. 262-267)

Nature versus Art (lines 41-70)

'To the memorie' is a poem of two halves, each of 40 lines, in which the second mirrors the first. As the opening *recusatio* had warned that historical truth would be distorted by the vulgar praises of Shakespeare's name, so the second half begins with 16 lines explaining how Britons may triumph in their erroneous notion of a Shakespeare whose literary successes were solely attributable to 'Nature' – that is, to innate and instinctive genius. From the 17th line of the second half (l. 57) Jonson presents his case against this common misconception. Proceeding from a warning that we 'must not give Nature all' (l. 55) he records how 'My gentle Shakespeare' by dint of hard work (his 'sweat') had cast his lines, like a blacksmith at a forge, 'striking the second heat upon the Muses anvile' (ll.60-61) to produce an 'art' that was hidden from those of 'blinde affection'.

Jonson explains how Shakespeare, by his 'Art', succeeded in perfecting Nature (the 'Poets matter') thus allowing his 'minde and manners' (i.e. his virtue) to shine brightly 'in his well-turned and true filed lines' (ll.67-68) - a notion that boldly reflects Oxford's words: 'although Nature herself has brought nothing to perfection in every detail, yet the manners of men exceed in dignity that with which Nature has endowed them.'[35] In Shakespeare's 'well-turned and true filed lines' Jonson may also have been alluding to hereditary 'lines' as the children of Lord Montgomery (patron and dedicatee of Shakespeare's 1623 folio) were Oxford's granddaughters and grandsons.

Shakespeare's courtly aspect is further underscored by Jonson's epithet 'My gentle Shakespeare' (l.56) reminding the reader of a noble poet who conceals his 'Art' by sprezzatura, just as he conceals his true identity from the general public. The English word 'gentle' derives from

the French gentil meaning 'high-born' or 'noble' and is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as: 'well born, belonging to a family of position, originally used synonymously with noble'.

In 1578, Cambridge don Gabriel Harvey publicly lauded Oxford's epistle from *The Courtier*. His eye had been caught by Oxford's comments on Nature and Art and by his praise of Castiglione as one who 'surpassing others has here surpassed himself, and has even outdone Nature which by no-one has ever been surpassed.'[36] Praising Oxford's style Harvey wrote that he 'testifies how much he excels in letters, being more polished and more courtly than Castiglione himself' adding that Oxford's virtue 'wondrously penetrates the aethereal orbs ... with that mind, that fire and noble heart you will surpass yourself, surpass others and your great glory will everywhere spread beyond the frozen ocean'.[37] The idea of Oxford's 'great glory' spreading, like some enormous cloak, beyond the poles, thus clothing all of Nature, is elaborated by Jonson in four skilfully written lines about Shakespeare:

> Nature her selfe was proud of his designs,
> And ioy'd to weare the dressing of his lines!
> Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
> As since, she will vouchsafe no other wit
> (ll.47-50)

In the same address Harvey, memorably compares Oxford to Pallas-Minerva, writing that his: 'will shakes spears'.[38] Jonson makes the same connection stating how every line of Shakespeare's 'seemes to shake a Lance / as brandish't at the eyes of Ignorance' (ll.69-70)'. This allusion to the spear-shaking goddess of the Greeks and Romans comes dangerously close to revealing 'William Shakespeare' as a classically inspired pseudonym, for Minerva was not only patron goddess of playwrights to the Romans, but as 'Pallas' to the Greeks (whose name derives from πάλλειν as in the 'shaking of a spear'), who, by her will, did shake the spear of Achilles at Ilium enabling him to slay Hector. By reminding his readers of Pallas-Minerva's role as patron goddess of knowledge (the divine enemy of ignorance) Jonson deftly returns them to his opening *recusatio* and his strike against those of 'silliest ignorance' who see fit to praise a name that, to the learned, stands out as an obvious classically inspired literary pseudonym (ll.1-16).[39]

'Swan of Avon' (lines 71-74)

Jonson's epithet 'Sweet Swan of Avon!' has long been used in support of Stratfordian narratives. The swan has served since the days of Horace and Virgil as the symbol of a poet and since Shakespeare's verse was lauded as 'sweet', 'honeyed', 'sugared', 'mellifluous' by his contemporaries, it has been argued that 'Sweet Swan of Avon' could refer to none other than William Shakspere of Stratford-on-Avon. This identification has not, however, remained secure as 'Avon' (the name of no fewer than seven British rivers) was shown in 2014 to have been historically and poetically applied to the palace at Hampton Court. Early Modern poets and antiquaries John Leland, William Lambarde, Raphael Holinshed, Laurence Nowell, Henry Peacham and Richard Polwhele all testified to this.[40] According to the first of these (Leland) the name 'Hampton' was a vulgar corruption of *Avondunum* (meaning 'fort by the river') while the last (Polwhele) recorded that Hampton Court is 'now a royal palace of our sovereign, which was called Avon in that it stood on the river'.[41] William Camden, whom Jonson had hailed 'most reverend head, to whom I owe all that I am in arts, all that I know'[42] left a description of Hampton Court in his antiquarian masterpiece *Britannia*:

> A Stately place for rare and glorious shew
> There is, which *Tamis* with wandring stream doth dowse;
> Times past, by name of *Avon* men it knew:
> Heere Henrie, the Eighth of that name, built an house
> So sumptuous, as that on such an one
> (Seeke through the world) the bright Sunne never shone.[43]

Neither Queen Elizabeth ('Eliza') nor King James ('Our James') ever visited a public playhouse, so there can be little doubt that the Thames-side performances of the 'Swan of Avon's' plays to which Jonson refers ('those flights upon the bankes of Thames that so did take Eliza and our James') were staged, not at the Globe, Hope, Rose, Swan or any other public Thames-side playhouse but at these monarchs' favourite theatrical venue, the Great Hall at Hampton Court ('Avon'). Thus, in the phrase 'Sweet Swan of Avon', Jonson once again skilfully alludes to Shakespeare as a courtier poet.

While no documentary evidence can be found to place William of Stratford at any time at Hampton Court, the Earl of Oxford, described by his contemporaries George Puttenham and William Webbe as 'first' among the 'Courtly makers' and as 'the most excellent' among those 'noble Lords and gentlemen in her majesties court in the rare devises of poetry' who deserved the 'highest prize' for his comedies, had multiple links with the court and with court theatre and was present at Hampton Court on numerous occasions.[44]

Another possible connection of 'Sweet Swan of Avon' with the concept of a courtly Bard takes the reader in the direction of chivalric romance, a literary form, popular from Medieval to Early Modern times, in which a noble knight errant typically sets out on a virtuous quest. This literary form was especially beloved of Oxford, who had six books of chivalric romance dedicated to him.[45] The medieval legend of the 'Knight of the Swan' concerns a mysterious knight who, arriving by river on a swan-drawn boat, vows to undertake virtuous deeds on condition that no one ask his name. Such an allusion would have no relevance to the man from Stratford, but to Oxford, the 'concealed poet' whose verses were, according to John Bodenham (1600) published under other men's names, the connection would have been pertinent.[46] In 1804 Walter Scott wrote that 'A peer of England, the Earl of Oxford, if we recollect aright, conceited himself to be descended from the doughty Knight of the Swan'. Scott's source for this tantalizing record is unknown.[47]

Astronomical Death and Transfiguration (lines 75-80)

In his last three couplets Jonson compares the deceased and ascended playwright both to a 'constellation' and to a 'starre' (ll.76-77) which is peculiar since a star cannot by its singular nature also be a constellation. Several scholars have identified the constellation to which he refers as Cygnus (the Swan) on account of the fact that Shakespeare is addressed as 'Sweet Swan' at the beginning of the sentence (l.71) and because Jonson is likely to be alluding to a Latin ode in which Horace envisaged his own death and metamorphoses into a swan vowing to leave behind no trace on earth, no monument, only his immortal verse which he hopes will benefit mankind (Horace, *Odes* II. 20).

As Jonson left sufficient clues for the reader to identify the constellation as Cygnus so, in the extended metaphor of his last four lines, he left sufficient clues to identify the star into which Shakespeare is poetically transfigured. Taking the 'stage' as a time-honoured metaphor for the 'world' he describes a bright, shining star that first appeared *after* Shakespeare's death ('since thy flight from hence') which was visible both by night and by day and which, significantly, did 'with rage or influence, chide or cheer the drooping stage' (i.e. the drooping world).

In Jonson's day the stars were viewed as 'fixed' and the appearance of a new one was an extraordinarily miraculous and portentous event. No new star appeared in the heavens following Shakspere of Stratford's death in 1616 in time for Jonson to comment upon it in 1623. Indeed no new star appeared visible to the naked eye between 1616 and 1987. However, a sensational new star appeared for the first time in October 1604. Known as 'SN 1604' or 'Kepler's Supernova' in the constellation of Serpentaria, this new star formed the subject of lectures by Galileo and of Kepler's astrological treatise, *De Stella Nova in Pede Serpentarii* (Prague, 1606). Remarkably it was visible around the world both during the day and at night for at least three weeks. Kepler believed it to have been sent by God to exhort humans and to inform them of his divine opinions. The star was noted by contemporary artists and writers of the time including Rubens, Velazquez and John Donne. In his play *Volpone*, Jonson described it as 'the New Starre full of omen'. By this spectacular allusion Jonson discreetly informs his learned followers that *his* Shakespeare died shortly before October 1604 as Kepler's supernova was first observed to 'shine forth' on 9th October 1604 just three months and three days after Oxford's burial on 6th July 1604.

With this remarkable allusion, Jonson brings to mind Oxford's words from 'Hamlet's Book' *Cardanus Comforte* (1573): 'When all things shall forsake us virtue yet will ever abide with us and when our bodies fall into the bowels of the earth, yet that shall mount with our minds into the highest heavens.'[48]

Two years after the publication of the First Folio, Abraham Holland wrote an elegy on the death of Oxford's son, Henry, 18th Earl of Oxford, which alludes to the last six lines of Jonson's poem to Shakespeare. To Holland, the vanished supernova that Jonson had compared to the risen Shakespeare was now an 'empty space' in the heavens to be 'supplied anew' . In these lines, Holland mirrors Jonson's peculiar comparison of Shakespeare to both a constellation and a star within two consecutive lines, and applies the same figurative concept that Jonson had given to Shakespeare to Oxford's successor in titles and honours, who, in direct allusion to Jonson's lines 77-78, is described as one that 'like a Comets rage / Strikes amazement on the trembling age':

> What Starre was wanting in the Skie? what place
> To be supplied anew? What empty space
> That requir'd OXFORD? Was some Light growne dim,
> Some Starre Decrepit that suborned Him
> To darke the Earth by his Departure? Sure
> The Thracian God to make his Orbe more pure
> Hath borrow'd him; where in his fiery Carre
> He shines a better MARS, a brighter Starre?
> Or like a new Orion doth he stand
> In Christall Maile, and a bright blade in's hand
> An armed Constellation, while the Quire
> Of Pyrrhick dancers, with reflecting fire

Glitter on him? Or like a Comets rage
Strikes he amazement on the trembling age?
(C3, lines 1-14)

Shakespeare's posthumous disappearance may have been inspired by Ovid, the exiled poet who confessed his life through his works into which he ultimately metamorphosed. Many books have been written by Oxfordian scholars explaining the lengths to which Oxford, ostracised from the court, confessed his scandalous life through the plays and poems ascribed to William Shakespeare. Oxford was nephew, patron and pupil of Shakespeare's favourite translator of Ovid, Arthur Golding and, according to historian Thomas Coxeter, was himself a translator of Ovid. Shakespeare's Ovidian self-eradication, his disappearance from the biographical record and his metamorphoses into a canon of lasting works can be traced though sonnets 71, 72 and 81:

'If you read this line, remember not the hand that writ it' (71);
'In me each part will be forgotten' (81);
My name be buried where my body is and live no more to shame nor me nor you' (72);
'After my death…forget me quite' (72);
'no longer mourn me when I am dead…do not so much as my poor name rehearse (71)
for I once gone to all the world must die… your monument shall be my gentle verse' (81)

Numerical Structure

Poetic lines, verses and metrical feet were known as 'numbers' in Early Modern England and as Fowler demonstrates in his ground breaking study, *Triumphal Forms* (1970), Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser and many of the finest poets of this period typically structured their verses upon significant numbers.[49] Jonson, who was known to his contemporaries as the 'Prince of Numbers', based the structural form of his encomium to Shakespeare upon the numbers 17 and 40.

In 1570, John Dee, Queen Elizabeth's mathematician, cryptologist, oracle and sage, urged readers of his 'Mathematical Preface' to 'be led upward, by degrees, toward the conceiving of numbers absolutely that at length we may be able to find the number of our own name gloriously exemplified and registered in the book of the *Trinitie* most blessed and aeternal'.[50] Oxford chose 17 and 40 as numbers that aligned his name to the Trinity, a fact that was evidently recognised by a host of contemporary authors including Covell (1595), Porter (1596), Holland (1623), Heywood (1635), Warren (1640) and Sheppard (1651).[51] The number 1740 may be decoded in four different ways from Oxford's signature (see Figure 3), once on images of Oxford's uncarved marble tomb at Hackney, on the Shakespeare monument at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the Sonnets' dedication (1609), and four times on Peter Scheemaker's marble monument to Shakespeare erected at Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey in 1740. The first appearance of Shakespeare's name in a literary context (the 1593 dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to Southampton) is book-ended by representations of 17 and 40 as are the sonnets in the editions of 1609 as well as the last words of the autobiographical Prince Hamlet in the first folio edition of 1623.[52]

In his encomium to Shakespeare, Jonson specifically marks passages in which Shakespeare is addressed in the second person and passages in which he is referred to in the third person by counts of 17 or 40 lines thereafter. His title of 17 words, which introduces the poem's 40 rhyming couplets, refers to Shakespeare in the third person ('he'). The first 40 lines of the poem are addressed to the playwright in the second person ('thee/thy'), while the second half (also comprising 40 lines) begins with Jonson's address to Britain ('Triumph, my Britaine') . By declaration the poem begins on the 17th line ('I, therefore will begin') with a sentence in which the poet pointedly addresses his subject as '*My* Shakespeare' (19). On the 17th line of the second page Jonson turns his address from Britain back to Shakespeare in the *second* person ('*Thy* Art, My gentle Shakespeare'). Including the subscript ('BEN: IONSON') Shakespeare is re-referred to in the *third* person starting from the 17th line from the end ('Looke how the fathers face Lives in *his* issue'), thus separating the two later passages in which he is addressed in the *second* person – '*Thy* Art' (line 55) and 'Sweet Swan of Avon what a sight it were to see *thee*…' (71-72) by 17 lines.

With astounding ingenuity Oxford succeeded in aligning his name, title and earldom number to the 'blessed Trinitie' using the numbers 17 and 40, while mirroring the same (40 and 17) in his chosen pseudonym. In simple gematria the letter V (the 20th letter of the Latin Roman alphabet) is 20. Double V ('VV') therefore equals 40 (there being no W in the Latin alphabet). Thus 'VVilliam Shakespeare' as printed in Jonson's title represents the number 40 followed by 17 letters 'ILLIAM SHAKESPEARE' which, as stated, ingeniously evoke associations with Pallas-Minerva (patron goddess of the playwrights) with her spear-shaking will at Ilium.

'Double V' ('VV') which contracts Oxford's motto, *Vero nihil Verius* – meaning nothing truer that Vere/Truth – is found on a Vere family seal ring (before 1578), and was used as a pseudonym subscribed to a prefatory letter in a pamphlet by Oxford's servant, John Lyly. The letter ends

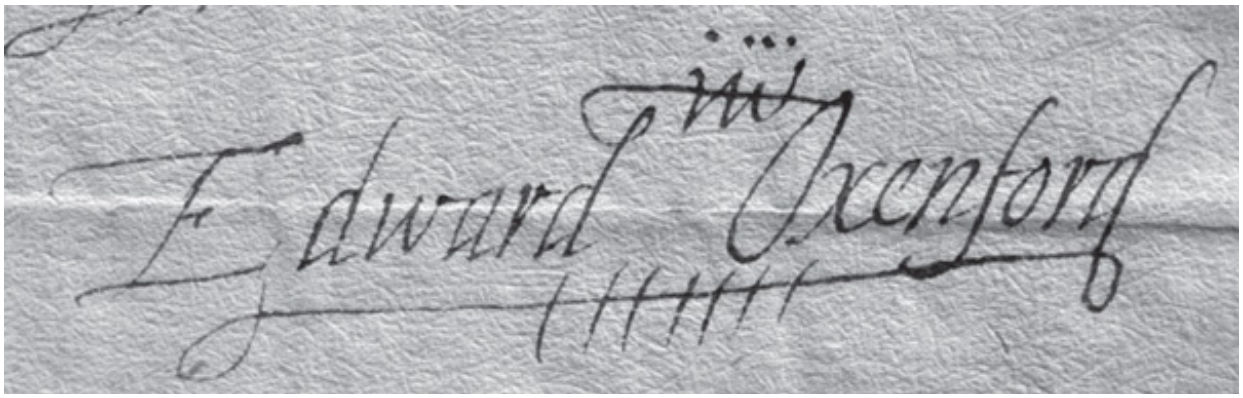

Figure. 3. *Oxford's signature contains 1740 enciphered four different ways.*

'yours at an houres warning Double V', which may be numerologically translated 'yours 1740'.

CONCLUSION

Only two elements in Jonson's multi-layered poem appear to connect the poet Shakespeare with the biography of William of Stratford – 'Swan of Avon' and 'Small Latine and Lesse Greeke' –both of which are herein shown to be of as much, if not greater, relevance to Oxford. When the poem is examined holistically it becomes clear that Jonson was playing sophisticated games with his readers. By sending those of 'silliest ignorance' off on false trails while preserving the truth of Shakespeare's identity, he was able to avoid accusations of indiscretion by withholding from the uninitiated information which his patrons (Oxford's son-in law Lord Montgomery and his brother Lord Pembroke) may have wished to keep hidden. In this way Jonson has bequeathed a stunningly cryptic and elegiac masterpiece to mankind.

BIOGRAPHY

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ENDNOTES

1 *'Vindex ingenii recens Sepulti'* is the third line of Abraham Holland's epigram to Ben Jonson captioning Robert Vaughan's celebrated engraving of his effigies (ca. 1624).

2 John Dryden (trans.) 'The Dedication', *The Satires of Decimus Junius Juvenalis Translated into English Verse* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1693), p. iii; and Edmond Malone, 'An Essay Relative to Shakespeare and Jonson', *Works of Shakespeare in Sixteen Volumes*, Vol. 1, (London, 1816), p. 269. See also Endymion Porter, 'Upon Ben Jonson and his Zany', in Boswell's *Variorum edition of Shakespeare*, Vol. 1, verse 3, (1821), p. 405; and [Alexander Brome], 'To the Readers', in *Five New Playes* by Richard Brome, (1658).

3 Sir John Harrington, 'A Preface', *Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse*, (London: John Norton and Simon Waterson,1607).

4 J. B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth* (2nd edition), (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 295.

5 Jonson sets a Latin margent note (*de Shakespeare nostrat.*) against a paragraph about Shakespeare, which is usually interpreted to mean 'apropos our countryman Shakespeare', with the word '*nostrat.*' An abbreviation of '*nostratis*' ('of our country' or 'native'). However, it may equally be intended as an abbreviation of '*nostratim*' meaning 'in our manner' hence 'apropos Shakespeare in our fashion' or 'in our way' i.e., 'the way in which the common players perceived their fellow actor'.

6 In his *Controversiae,* Seneca the Elder wrote of the orator Haterius that he 'couldn't control himself, so had to look to a freedman who would tell him to make a transition when he had been too long on a topic – and Haterius would make the transition. He would tell him to concentrate on the same subject and he would stay on it. He would tell him to speak the epilogue and he would speak it' (4.8).

7 George Greenwood, *Ben Jonson and Shakespeare*, (London: Cecil Palmer, 1921), p. viii; see also, Kevin Gilvary, *The Fictional Lives of Shakespeare*, (New York: Rout-

ledge, 2018), p. 200.

[8] David Ganz and Tom Lockwood, 'The Printing and Publishing of Ben Jonson's Works, *The Cambridge Edition of The Works of Ben Jonson* (online); see also, *Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England*, by Claire M. L. Bourne, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 77-136.

[9] Lynn S. Meskill, *Ben Jonson and Envy,* (Cambridge: The University Press, 2009), p. 36.

[10] Kirk Freudenburg, 'Recusatio as Political Theatre: Horace's Letter to Augustus', *Journal of Roman Studies*, available on CJO 2014 DOI: 10.1017/S0077543581300124X

[11] In Jonson's day an 'earl' was considered a 'prince', e.g., Gervase Markham's *Honor in his Perfection* (1624), a treatise in commendation of 'those Illustrious and Heroyicall Princes HENRY Earle of *Oxenford.* HENRY Earle of *Southampton.* ROBERT Earle of *Essex'.*

[12] Jonson's epigrams to Robert Lord Salisbury, William Lord Mounteagle, Sir Horace Vere, William Lord Pembroke, Susan Vere, Sir Edward Herbert all praise their names. His epitaph to Drayton reads: 'Doe Pious Marble Let thy Readers Knowe / What they and what their children owe / To DRAITONS name… /And when thy Ruines shall disclame / To be the Treas'rer of his NAME; / His Name, that cannot fade, shall be / An everlasting MONUMENT to thee.'

[13] An 'Ignoto' poem ('My Flocks Feed Not'), which appeared for the first time in print among Thomas Weelkes' Madrigals (1597), was published as by 'William Shakespeare' in *Passionate Pilgrime* (1599), as was the plaintive verse 'As it fell upon a day', which is was also ascribed to 'Ignoto' in *Englands Helicon* (H2).

[14] In a cryptic passage from *Polimanteia* (Cambridge, 1595) Covell set 'Sweet Shakspeare' alongside the unique hyphenated epithet 'courte-deare-verse', under the word *Oxford,* thus identifying Shakespeare as 'our de Vere – a secret'; '*Oxford*' is the 17th word from the page's end, as is 'Shakspere' when the words in the margent are also counted. See Alexander Waugh, 'A Secret Revealed – William Covell and his *Polimanteia* (1595)', (*De Vere Society Newsletter*, *20*(3), Oct. 2013), 7-10. For other contemporaries who connect Shakespeare to the number 17, see A. Waugh, YouTube lecture: 'Revealing the Number that unmasks Shakespeare'.

[15] Tom Cain and Ruth Connolly (Eds.), *The Poems of Ben Jonson*, (London: Routledge, 2022), p. 648, footnote. Additionally, John Denham ('On Abraham Cowley', 1667) and Samuel Short (*Fragmenta Carceris*, 1674) both place Shakespeare's grave in Westminster Abbey. John Davenant (*Madagascar,* 1638) warned that the eyes of Shakespeare pilgrims to Stratford would be mocked while Samuel Sheppard (Epigram 17, 1651) vowed to visit Shakespeare's tomb 'as Statius once to Maro's urne', invoking the record of Cluverius that Statius knew the true whereabouts of Virgil's tomb, at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, while others erroneously went to Pausillip, two miles north of Naples. Sheppard's poem was printed next to another explaining that he was imprisoned for revealing state secrets about Westminster.

[16] George Mason's 'MONIMENT', in *Supplement to Johnson's English Dictionary,* 1801, sites Spenser's 'round plates withouten moniment' as an example of the word being used to mean an 'inscription.' Mason states that the word can mean 'inscription' or any other form of 'memorial' or 'remembrance.' While it is true that the word 'monument' was occasionally spelled with an 'i' it is equally the case that 'moniment' meaning an 'inscription' or 'memorial' may be found spelled with a 'u', e. g., John Foxe (1583): 'I found an olde written monument'; William Fulke (1579): 'Take this as a monument or remembrance of my bodie crucified of you.' (ibid), p. 231, etc.

[17] 'Did Ben Jonson write the inscription for the Shakespeare monument in the church at Stratford upon Avon?' by Nina Green (Nov 1989), (*Edward de Vere Newsletter*, (9), revised 2001).

[18] Alexander Waugh 'Thy Stratford Moniment' – Revisited', (first published in *De Vere Society Newsletter* (Oct 2014), revised online version 2019). https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/thy-stratford-moniment-revisited/

[19] 'Of him [Oxford] of whom I will only speak what all mens voices confirme: He was a man in minde and body absolutely accomplished with honourable endowments. He died at his house at Hackney in the monthe of Junne Anno 1604 and lieth buryed at Westminster.' Percival Golding (Harl. MS 4189).

[20] Kyd's translation of Robert Garnier's French tragedy *Cornélie* (a 'closet drama' written to be read, not performed on stage) may have been made as late as 1593, but is probably older. It was entered for publication on 26 Jan. 1594 by Nicholas Ling and John Busby: 'A booke called Cornelia, Thomas Kydde beinge the Author' (Arber, 2, p. 644).

[21] Thomas Nashe, *Strange Newes* (1592), dedication to 'Apis Lapis' [Oxford]. In the original Nashe wrote 'Yea, you have been such an infinite Maecenas to learned men'; in the revised version 'you are such an infinite Maecenas' from which it may be inferred that Oxford was offended by the suggestion that his patronage of scholars had ceased altogether on account of his financial troubles.

[22] Alexander Waugh, '1591 – A Watershed Year for Oxford and the English Theatre', (*De Vere Society Newsletter*, *28*(3), July 2021), pp. 4-18.

[23] William Shaksper's attendance at the Stratford school is not supported by any contemporary evidence. Evidence of his background, purported signatures, family literacy etc, make it unlikely that he received any formal schooling in youth or thereafter. Those support-

ing the playwright's considerable classical scholarship from internal evidence include Churton J. Collins, *Studies in Shakespeare*, Westminster: Archibald Constable (1904); Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (8 vols), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul (1957-76); Andrew Werth, 'Shakespeare's "Lesse Greek"', *The Oxfordian 5* (2002), 11-29; and Jonathan Bate, *How the Classics Made Shakespeare,* Princeton University Press (2019).

[24] Michael Wainwright, *The Rational Shakespeare – Peter Ramus, Edward de Vere and the Question of Authorship,* London: Macmillan Palgrave (2018).

[25] For extensive investigation of Oxford's involvement with this movement see Alexander Waugh, 'That Famous Persecutor of Priscian' – Oxford, Shakespeare and the Repurification of English', *De Vere Society Newsletter*, *27*(2), (April 2020), 17-26.

[26] Thomas Nashe, *Have with you to Saffron Waldon*, London: John Danter (1596), p. M2v. Like many of Nashe's allusions to Oxford, this one does not name him, but internal evidence establishes him as the only courtier famed for his poetry, who was also Nashe's patron, a knight companion in tilting tournaments with Sidney, who lost the fortune of his youth. Furthermore Nashe here is referring to a person living in 1596 of whom Harvey had written condescendingly in his *Gratulationes Valdinenses* (1578), thus Detobel & Brackmann prove, by elimination, that Nashe cannot have been referring to anyone but Oxford; see Robert Detobel & Elke Brackmann "Teaching Sonnets and de Vere's Biography at School", *Brief Chronicles*, vol 6 (2016), 108-9.

[27] E.K. 'The Epistle' in Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* (1579), p. iii.

[28] Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie*, London: William Ponsonby (1595), B2^{r} & H3^{v}; Ben Jonson, 'Timber or Discoveries', in *The Workes of Beniamin Jonson*; London: Richard Meghan (1640), p. 119.

[29] Gabriel Harvey, 'Speculum Tuscanismi', *Three Proper and wittie, familiar Letters*, London: Henry Bynneman (1580).

[30] From Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (1528): a translation of '*.... per dir forse una nova parola, usar in ogni cosa una certa sprezzatura, che nasconda l'arte e dimostri ciò che si fa e dice venir fatto senza fatica e quasi senza pensarvi.*' Turin: Einaudi (1965 edition), p. 44; for Oxford's prefatory letter to *The Book of the Courtier* see notes 34 & 35 below.

[31] *The Arte of English Poesy* (anon., 1589), modern scholarly edition edited by Frank Whigham and Wayne A, Rebhorn; Ithaca: Cornell University Press (2007), p. 382.

[32] Oxford's views on poetry are laid out by 'E.K.' in the 'Argument' that prefaces the 10th Eclogue (October) of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* (1579), wherein Oxford is represented under the pastoral name of 'Cuddie'. For Oxford as 'Cuddie' see Eva Turner Clark, *The Satirical Comedy of Love's Labour's Lost*, New York: Farquhar Payson (1933) and Roger Stritmatter, 'Spenser's "Perfect Pattern of a Poet" and the 17th Earl of Oxford', *Cahiers Elisabéthains*, 77:1 (2010), 9-22. The name 'Cuddie' may have been devised as an allusion to oxen as ruminants chewing their cud. The 'Earle of Oxenforde' was called 'Ox' by Charles Arundel (1582).

[33] Poems about Shakespeare by Leonard Digges and John Warren both published for the first time in *Poems written by Wil. Shakespeare. Gent*, London: Iohn Benson (1640). Digges died in 1635. His verses were probably composed c. 1623.

[34] In Boswell's variorum edition of Shakespeare, vol. 1 (1821), p. 405, taken from *Old Ben's Light Heart made Melancholy by Young John's Melancholy Lover* (ca. 1628) no copy of which survives.

[35] Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, prefatory greeting to the reader in *Balthasaris Castilionis Comitis De Curiali sive Aulico,* London: John Daye (1571), pp. 13-14: *Atque ita, ubi natura ipsa nihil omni ex parte perfectum expoluit: hominum autem mores eum, quam tribuit natura, dignitatem pervertunt.*

[36] Ibid. p. 14: '*Castilio vicit, qui reliquos vincit et naturam superavit, quae a nemine unquam superata est.*' English translation by B. M. Ward, *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, London: John Murray (1928), p. 81.

[37] Gabriel Harvey, *Gratulationis Valdinensis*, London: Henry Binneman (1578). '*Macte animo, flammaque ista, Praenobile pectus, Te vinces, vinces alios; tua gloria passim Oceanum glacialem ultra, spatiabitur ingens.*' English translation by Thomas Hugh Jameson, *The Gratulationes Valdinenses*, Yale University dissertation (1938), p. 2.

[38] Harvey wrote of Oxford '*vultus tela vibrat*' which has caused some argument as to whether 'vultus' may be legitimately translated as 'will' rather than 'countenance'. The matter is settled however by early dictionaries. *The dictionary of syr Thomas Eliot knyght* (1528, 1542 & 1545) explains '*vultus* of olde wryters is taken for wylle', while Cooper's *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae & Britannicae* (1565) translates '*Inuito vultu ridere*. Horat. to laugh agaynst his will'.

[39] The association of Minerva as protector and inspirer of playwrights goes back to the 2nd and 3rd centuries C.E. when a society of Roman dramatists was, by imperial decree, permitted to base its headquarters and archives at the Temple of Minerva on the Aventine Hill. The 'Quinquatria', an annual festival of plays and poetical and oratorical contests, was consecrated by the Romans to Minerva. Associated with wit, eloquence, and learning, this spear-shaking goddess served as the inspirational object of appeal for many English Renaissance poets and playwrights.

[40] Alexander Waugh 'Waugh on Jonson's "Sweet Swan of Avon", *The Oxfordian 16* (2014), pp 97-103.

[41] John Leland, *Kykneion Asma-Cygneia cantio* (1545), p. 108; Richard Polwhele, *Historical Views of Devonshire*

(1793), vol 1, p. 175.

[42] Ben Jonson, Epigram 14 'To William Camden', ll.1-2 (ca. 1612)

[43] Camden's English translation from Leland's *Genethliacon* (1543) in *Britannia* (1610 English edition), p. 420; from the Latin: *'Est locus insolito rerum splendore superbus, Alluiturque vaga Tamisini fluminis mpore dictus Avona. Hic Rex Henricus taleis Octavius aedes Erexit, qualeis tot Sol aureus orbe Non vidit.'*

[44] William Webbe in his *Discourse of English Poetry* (1586) writes 'I may not omit the deserved commendations of many honourable and noble Lords and Gentlemen in Her Majesty's Court, which in the rare devices of poetry, have been and yet are most skilful; among whom the right honourable Earl of Oxford may challenge to himself the title of most excellent among the rest.' The anonymous author of *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) writes: 'And in her Majesties time that now is are sprung up another crew of Courtly makers Noble men and Gentlemen of her Majesties owne servants, who have written excellently well as it would appear if their doings could be found out and made public with the rest, of which number is first that noble Gentleman *Edward* Earle of Oxford...That for Tragedie, the Lord of Buckhurst, & Maister *Edward Ferrys* for such doings as I haue sene of theirs do deserue the hyest price: The Earl of Oxford and Maister *Edwardes* of her Maiesties Chappell for Comedy and Enterlude'

[45] *Palmerin of England,* I & II (1581-7), *Palmerin D'Oliva,* I & II (1588) and *Primaleon,* I & II (1595), were all dedicated to Oxford, though the last two dedications were later changed.

[46] 'Edward Earle of Oxenforde' is listed among five other courtier poets whose verses were published 'under other personages writings' on the 5th preliminary page of John Bodenham's *Bel-vedere* published by Hugh Astley (1600). Knight-errant or Paladin romances originally dedicated to Oxford include two volumes of *Palmerin of England* (1581-87), two volumes of *Palmerin de Oliva* (1588) and two volumes of *Primaleon* (1595).

[47] Celeste Turner, *Anthony Mundy: an Elizabethan Man of Letters*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), pp. 42-43.

[48] Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, 'To my loving frende Thomas Bedingfield', *Cardanus Comforte*, (London: Thomas Marshe, 1573), A4^{r}.

[49] Alastair Fowler, *Triumphal Forms – Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry*, (Cambridge University Press, 1970).

[50] John Dee, preface to Henry Billingsley's translation of *The Elements of Geometrie of the most auncient Philosopher Euclide, (*London: John Daye, 1570), p. ii.

[51] For explanations as to how and why Edward de Vere chose 17 and 40 to align the number of his name with the Holy Trinity see Alexander Waugh, 'The Incalculable Genius of John Dee', YouTube lecture, (2021). The connection between Oxford-Shakespeare and 17 40 is examined in a great many of Waugh's YouTube lectures including 'What's in a Name? – Shakespeare's Question applied to Shakespeare', (2021), 'William Covell Knew...', (2018), 'Scandal at the Abbey', (2019), 'Francis Meres Knew...' and 'John Warren Knew...', (2017), while the phenomenon is also extensively covered by John Anthony in his YouTube lectures including his 'Shakespeare and 1740', (2020) and 'Shakespeare by 1740 and R.T.', (2021).

[52] The dedication of *Venus and Adonis,* (1593) is all in Italic script but for the two elements that begin and end it – an illuminated 'R' at the start (17 in the Latin alphabet) and a subscript of 40 characters at the end: 'Your Honors in all dutie, William Shakespeare.' Hamlet's last words in the *First Folio*, (1623) printed as 17 characters ('The rest is silence.), followed by 4 Os, thus 'The rest is silence. o, o, o, o. *dyes'* may be enumerated as '1740 dies' For *Hamlet* as an autobiographical play about the Earl of Oxford see Eva Turner Clark, Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays' (1974 edition), pp. 634-679.

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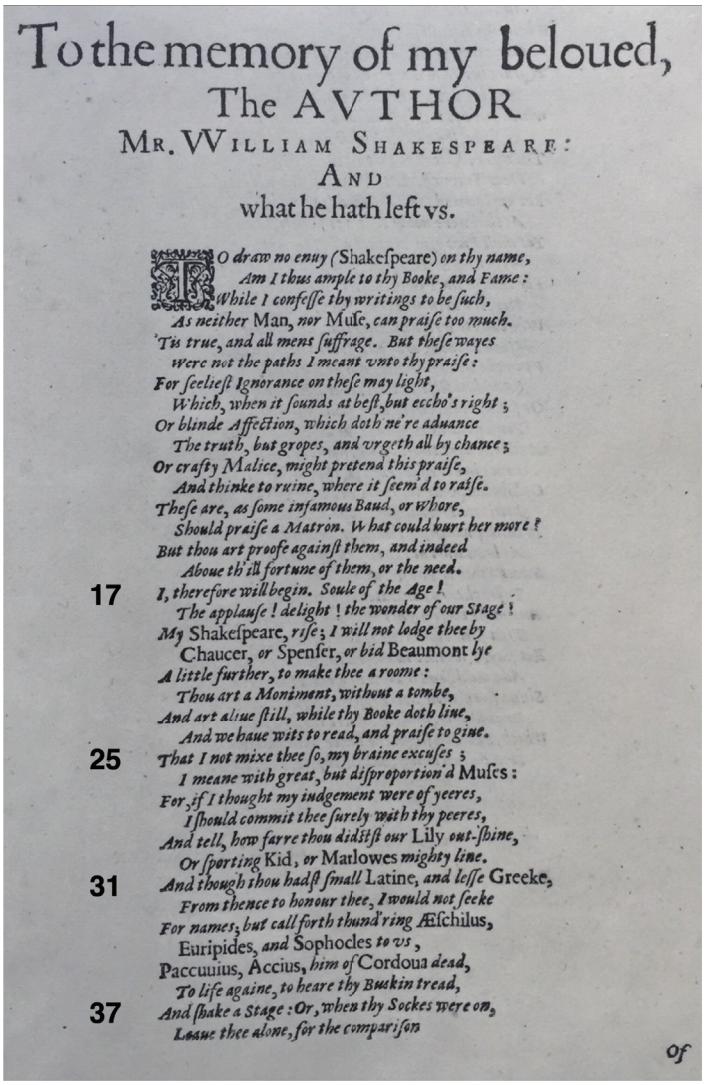
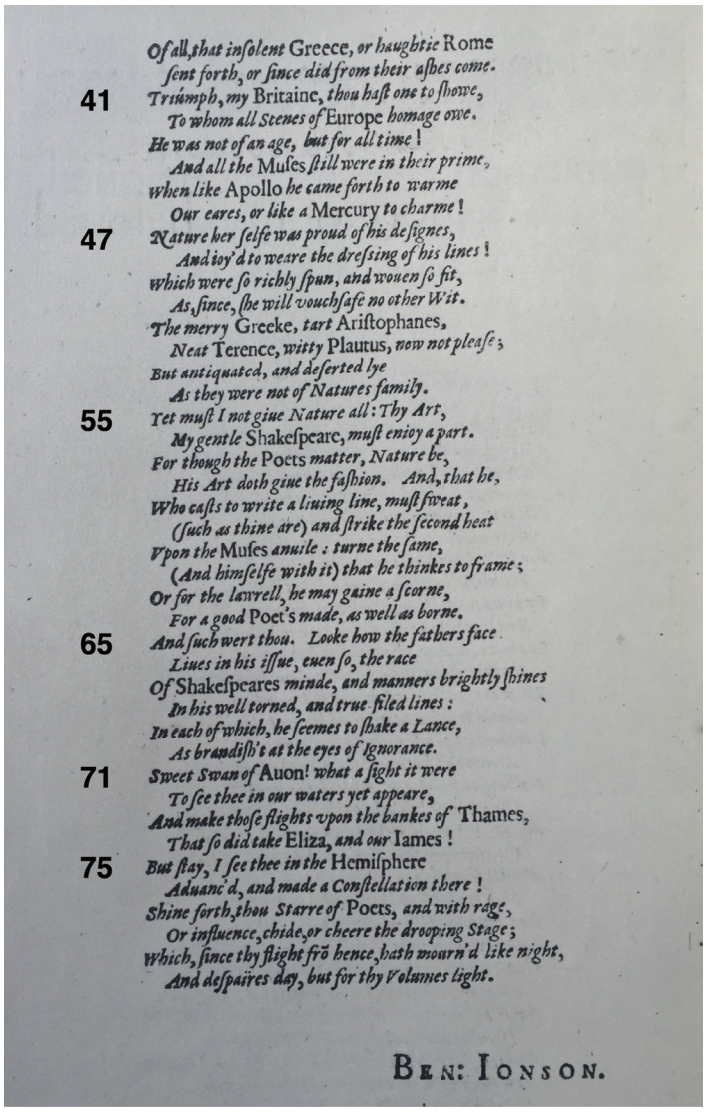
APPENDIX: THE POEM AS FIRST PRINTED



To the memory of my beloued,
The AVTHOR
MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE:
AND
what he hath left vs.

TO draw no enuy (Shakespeare) on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy Booke, and Fame:
While I confesse thy writings to be such,
As neither Man, nor Muse, can praise too much.
'Tis true, and all mens suffrage. But these wayes
Were not the paths I meant vnto thy praise:
For seelyest Ignorance on these may light,
Which, when it sounds at best, but eccho's right;
Or blinde Affection, which doth ne're aduance
The truth, but gropes, and vrgeth all by chance;
Or crafty Malice, might pretend this praise,
And thinke to ruine, where it seem'd to raise.
These are, as some infamous Baud, or Whore,
Should praise a Matron. What could hurt her more?
But thou art proofe against them, and indeed
Aboue th'ill fortune of them, or the need.
I, therefore will begin. Soule of the Age!
The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!
My Shakespeare, rise; I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lye
A little further, to make thee a roome:
Thou art a Monument, without a tombe,
And art aliue still, while thy Booke doth liue,
And we haue wits to read, and praise to giue.
That I not mixe thee so, my braine excuses;
I meane with great, but disproportion'd Muses:
For, if I thought my iudgement were of yeeres,
I should commit thee surely with thy peeres,
And tell, how farre thou didst'st our Lily out-shine,
Or sporting Kid, or Marlowes mighty line.
And though thou hadst small Latine, and lesse Greeke,
From thence to honour thee, I would not seeke
For names; but call forth thund'ring Æschilus,
Euripides, and Sophocles to vs,
Paccuuius, Accius, him of Cordoua dead,
To life againe, to heare thy Buskin tread,
And shake a Stage: Or, when thy Sockes were on,
Leaue thee alone, for the comparison

of



Of all, that insolent Greece, or haughtie Rome
sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
Triumph, my Britaine, thou hast one to showe,
To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When like Apollo he came forth to warme
Our eares, or like a Mercury to charme!
Nature her selfe was proud of his designes,
And ioy'd to weare the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun, and wouen so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other Wit.
The merry Greeke, tart Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;
But antiquated, and deserted lye
As they were not of Natures family.
Yet must I not giue Nature all: Thy Art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enioy a part.
For though the Poets matter, Nature be,
His Art doth giue the fashion. And, that he,
Who casts to write a liuing line, must sweat,
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
Vpon the Muses anuile: turne the same,
(And himselfe with it) that he thinkes to frame;
Or for the lawrell, he may gaine a scorne,
For a good Poet's made, as well as borne.
And such wert thou. Looke how the fathers face
Liues in his issue, euen so, the race
Of Shakespeares minde, and manners brightly shines
In his well torned, and true filed lines:
In each of which, he seemes to shake a Lance,
As brandish't at the eyes of Ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Auon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appeare,
And make those flights vpon the bankes of Thames,
That so did take Eliza, and our Iames!
But stay, I see thee in the Hemisphere
Aduanc'd, and made a Constellation there!
Shine forth, thou Starre of Poets, and with rage,
Or influence, chide, or cheere the drooping Stage;
Which, since thy flight frō hence, hath mourn'd like night,
And despaires day, but for thy Volumes light.

BEN: IONSON.

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Anomalistics and Frontier Science

ESSAY

To Be or Not To Be a Genius: The Argument for Acquired Knowledge and Life Experience

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HIGHLIGHTS

The life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, strongly matches the works of Shakespeare and thus suggests an autobiographical connection.

ABSTRACT

The personal attitudes and experiences of the greatest authors are usually reflected in their works, a phenomenon that gives literary biography its rich potential for new revelations and insights. Within this premise, the Shakespearean poems and plays appear to reflect the viewpoint and education of a high-ranking Elizabethan nobleman of vast experience and deep learning. In fact, many aspects of the life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, appear to be closely mirrored by the title character of *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Both the Earl and the Prince are each on intimate terms with a female monarch; each is involved with the daughter of the Queen's chief minister; each brings actors to perform at the royal court; and while the author of *Hamlet* demonstrably referred to classics of the Italian Renaissance-- *The Courtier* and *Cardanus' Comforte* -- Oxford himself sponsored publications of both these works in England. The specific focus of this essay is on aspects of such "special knowledge" within the Shakespearean works, special knowledge that has no specific connection to the life of the man from Stratford but which was deeply imbued in the life of Edward de Vere. Cited here will be details of the author's connections to France and the French language; to the unique culture and geography of Italy; to the literature and drama of ancient Greece; to legal terminology and intricacies of the law; his proximity to persons and places of state power; to his military expertise; his medical knowledge; his intimacy with the sea and seamanship; to astronomy; to music; horses and horsemanship; heraldry; and to plants gardens and gardening. Such experiences and knowledge was possessed by the Earl of Oxford, and it is contrasted here with the paucity of similar experience and learning in the life of Will Shakspere of Stratford. The evidence clearly suggests that it was Edward de Vere using the pseudonym William Shakespeare rather than Will Shakspere who actually was behind the Bard's work.

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INTRODUCTION

The personal experiences, knowledge, and attitudes of the greatest writers are usually reflected, directly or indirectly, in their works, a phenomenon that gives literary biography its rich potential for insights into the links between an author's life and works. Within this premise, the works of William Shakespeare appear to reflect the experience, learning, knowledge, and attitudes of a high-ranking Elizabethan nobleman of vast experience and deep learning from books, formal education, and from life.

In 1920, when the British schoolmaster J. Thomas Looney identified "Shakespeare" as the pen name of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), he cited multiple aspects of Oxford's life that appear to be reflected in the author's works, and he repeated the long-standing critical consensus that the play *Hamlet* and its title character was "a special and direct dramatic self-revelation" of the author.

> It is this personal factor, doubtless that has given to the drama that intense vitality and realism which makes its words and phrases grip the mind ... It is this fact of Hamlet representing the dramatist himself which also makes him stand out from all Shakespeare's characters as an interpreter of the motives of human actions. Into no other character has the author put an equal measure of his own distinctive powers of insight into human nature."
> (J.T. Looney, Warren edition, pp. 393-94)

Looney saw that Oxford stood in virtually the same relation to the English court as Hamlet stands in relation to the Court of Denmark, that is, he was the highest-ranking earl at the physical center of the monarch's absolute power:

> Oxford, of course, was not a prince of royal blood: but then there were no princes of royal blood at the English court, and the Earl of Oxford, in his younger years, was the nearest approach to a royal prince that the English court could boast ... And when it is remembered that noblemen of inferior standing to Oxford were, in those days, contemplating the possibility of sharing royal honors, either with Elizabeth or her possible successor, the Queen of Scotland, for the dramatist to represent himself as a royal prince was no extravagant self-aggrandizement.
> (Looney, Warren ed., pp. 395-396)

FIGURE 1. A bust of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, sculpted by American artist Paula Slater on commission by Ben August. Image copyright August Group, L.L.C. Used by permission.

These are some short versions of the connections:

- In the play, Hamlet is the son of Queen Gertrude of Denmark. As a royal ward, Oxford was technically the son of Queen Elizabeth of England.

- Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, is engaged to Ophelia, daughter of Polonius, the king's chief minister. Edward de Vere was engaged to Anne Cecil, the young daughter of William Cecil (Lord Burghley), the queen's chief minister.

- Hamlet brings actors to the Danish court and writes lines for them. Oxford was the patron of several Elizabethan theatre companies and was himself a playwright, regarded as the "best for comedy" in the English court by Francis Meres in his volume *Palladis Tamia* (1598).

- The author of Hamlet demonstrably drew from two classics of the Italian Renaissance – Il *Cortegiano, or The Courtier* by Baldesar Castiglione (1478-1529), and *De Consolatione* (*Cardanus' Comforte*) by Jerome Cardan (1501-'76) – while Oxford, during his early twenties in 1572-'73, sponsored translations and publications of both works. In the case of *The Courtier*, he contributed a Latin preface in which he cited "the protection of that authority," the Queen.

What follows is a survey of some areas of "special knowledge" acquired through reading and studies as well as life experience, displayed by whoever the author of the Shakespearean works really was, along with suspiciously similar acquired knowledge and experience that we know

was acquired by Edward de Vere.

Power

Traditional biographies of William Shakespeare – meaning Will Shakspere of Stratford -- necessarily place him far from the royal court, but the dramatist writes consistently from the vantage point of an insider, one who knows how and when the levers of power are used. Edward de Vere lived at the heart of Elizabethan political life from at least age 12 at the London home of William Cecil, the most powerful man in England. In 1571, when he turned 21, he entered the House of Lords, continuing in the Queen's highest favor for another decade.

In late 1580 he discovered that some of his high-ranking Catholic friends or associates were involved in a plot to overthrow Elizabeth, and he accused them of conspiracy to commit treason. He knew these men of power—their thoughts and emotions, their fears, as they took him into their confidence and eventually tipped their hand. One thinks here of an excerpt from *Julius Caesar*:

> Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar,
> I have not slept.
> Between the acting of a dreadful thing
> And the first motion, all the interim is
> Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:
> The genius and the mortal instruments
> Are then in council; and the state of man,
> Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
> The nature of an insurrection. (II.1. 61-69)

De Vere had close-up knowledge of power and real-life political intrigues of the kind to be found not just in *Julius Caesar* but also in *King John, Henry V, Richard II, Richard III, Macbeth, King Lear, Hamlet*, and many other Shakespeare plays. After the 1588 defeat of the Spanish Armada, Oxford left court life, and over the next decades, poems and plays began appearing by an unknown and invisible author named "Shakespeare," someone who possessed remarkably keen knowledge of the real uses of power.

Mark Alexander writes in his online presentation of "curious connections" between Oxford and Shakespeare that "Oxford had frequent access to court, an insider's experience with Elizabeth, the machinations of foreign heads of states and ambassadors, and fawning courtiers."

The Earl saw power manifested in a variety of corruptions. Furthermore, being raised as a ward in Cecil's household, and given his noble position, Oxford would have been exposed to the absolute center of England's power.

Theatre scholar Alvin B. Kernan says, "Of all the major writers in the Western literary tradition, there is none who deals so consistently and so profoundly with political matters as Shakespeare.

> He wrote almost exclusively of courts and aristocratic life; and matters of state, of law, of kingship, and of dynastic succession are always prominent parts of his dramatic matter. This is true even in his comedies ... but it is even more obviously true in Shakespeare's history plays, and in his tragedies, where the political issues are the very substance of the plays, and where crucial matters of state are explored with remarkable precision and in great depth. (Kernan, p. 47)

Tim Spiekerman observes in his 2001 work on the "political realism" of the great dramatist that:

> all ten of Shakespeare's English history plays are named after politicians. And they're all about the same thing: who gets to rule....The plots are political plots (literally plots) ... assassination, treason, civil war, foreign conquest....If ambition seems to be a universal aspect of political life, so too does the concept of 'legitimacy,' which is the most salient theme of the English history plays. At stake in these plays is the question not only of who will rule, but of who is supposed to rule ... Legitimacy, that is the proper acquisition and use of political power, will remain a problem so long as the desire for power arises in those who shouldn't have it. (Spiekerman, pp. 3, 5)

Others agree, including Irving Ribner:

> The dominant political question which produced the history plays ... was the terms of political obedience...Under what conditions, if ever, was rebellion against a lawful monarch justified? (Ribner, p. 318)

"Shakespeare was anything but a writer of commonplace entertainments or an indifferent recorder of history," notes American scholar Daniel Wright.

> He was, instead, an informed commentator on the contemporary political scene, an expositor of political conviction and an advocate for policy that, often enough, contravened or challenged government—which is to say 'Cecilian'— philos-

ophy and practice. (Wright, p. 155)

The noted Elizabethan historian A.L. Rowse says of Edward de Vere:

> The 17th Earl of Oxford was, as the numbering shows, immensely aristocratic, and this was the clue to his career. In an Elizabethan society full of new and upcoming men, some of them at the very top, like the Bacons and Cecils—the Boleyns themselves, from whom the Queen descended, were a new family -- the Oxford earldom stood out as the oldest in the land. He was the premier earl and, as hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain, took his place on the right hand of the Queen and bore the sword of state before her. (Rowse, p. 75)

So the question has to be: how did the author William Shakespeare gain his intricate, deep knowledge of power and his perceptive insights into the powerful? The Oxfordian answer is that from early boyhood, he was living within that world as both observer and participant. It was a world that he would recreate in his plays with skill and imagination based not on guesswork or genius but on his own personal experience.

The Law and Legal Matters

"In Shakespeare's multiple personalities, there is none in which he appears more naturally and to better advantage than in the role of the lawyer," attorney Edward J. White wrote in 1911.

> If true that all dramatic writing is but a form of autobiography, then the immortal Shakespeare must, at some time in his life, have studied law. [It is apparent] that he had a natural inclination toward the law, for otherwise the legal comparisons and terms would not have come so naturally to him, in expressing the emotions and giving vent to the imaginative flights of poetry...almost every play, as well as the sonnets, display great legal learning and accurate knowledge, not only of legal terms, but of the science and philosophy of the law, as well... This is not the learning of the lawyer's clerk, either, but that of the scientific lawyer, thoroughly acquainted with the remedies and rights of persons and of the rules governing the ownership and alienation of property. The sonnets and poems as well are as replete with law terms and legal illustrations and similes as if they were written by one deeply learned in the science of the rights of litigants. (White, pp. 7-9)

Supporting this view, Charlton Ogburn wrote in 1984:

> Any intelligent writer can acquire knowledge of a subject and serve it up as required [but it is] something else to have been so immersed in a subject and to have assimilated it so thoroughly that it has become part of one's nature, shaping one's view of the world, coming forward spontaneously to prompt or complete a thought or supply an image or analogy." (Ogburn, p. 296)
>
> The plays and poems of Shakespeare supply ample evidence that their author not only had a very extensive and accurate knowledge of law, but also that he was well acquainted with the manners and customs of members of the Inns of Court and with legal life generally. (Ogburn, p. 301)

Earlier in the 20th century, Sir George Greenwood wrote that "at every turn and point at which the author required a metaphor, simile, or illustration, his mind ever turned first to the law." Greenwood went on to quote Lord Penzance, who had said of the great poet-dramatist:

> He seems almost to have thought in legal phrases ... his knowledge of law protruded itself on all occasions, appropriate or inappropriate, and mingled itself with strains of thought widely divergent from forensic subjects. To acquire a perfect familiarity with legal principles, and an accurate and ready use of technical terms and phrases not only of the conveyancer's office but of the pleader's chambers and the Courts at Westminster, nothing short of employment in some career involving constant contact with legal questions and general legal work would be required. (Greenwood, pp. 111-112)

Lord Penzance also said that Shakespeare's knowledge of the law was

> so perfect and intimate that he was never incorrect and never at fault ... At every turn and point at which the author required a metaphor, simile, or illustration, his mind ever turned first to the law. He seems almost to have thought in legal phrases...." (Brown, p. 90)

In their 2000 study, *Shakespeare's Legal Language: A*

Dictionary, B.J. and Mary Sokol analyzed the plays in detail and said:

> of the 37 Shakespeare plays considered in this Dictionary, 35 contain the word 'judge' and 35 the word 'justice' ... Reference to a trial appears one or more times in 25 of Shakespeare's plays, and many contain or describe trial scenes... Shakespeare's use of legal language was not always very serious, and certainly not always straightforward. He frequently employed legal ideas and terminology metaphorically or in symbolic contexts, especially in his lyric or narrative poems ... It is our view, derived from cumulative evidence, that ... Shakespeare shows a quite precise and mainly serious interest in the capacity of legal language to convey matters of social, moral, and intellectual substance. (Sokol and Sokol, pp. 1-3)

That said, there is not a shred of evidence to support the idea that Will Shakspere of Stratford was ever educated beyond grammar school (if he even attended school at all), much less to a university or law school.

Mark Twain argued only somewhat humorously that Will could certainly not have written Shakespeare's works because the man who wrote them had to be totally familiar with the laws and the law courts, and law proceedings "and lawyer talk, and lawyer-ways – and if Shakespeare was possessed of the infinitely-divided stardust that constituted this vast wealth, how did he get it, and where, and when?" He goes on:

> a man can't handle glibly and easily and comfortably and successfully the argot of a trade at which he has not personally served. He will make mistakes; he will not, and cannot, get the trade-phrasings precisely and exactly right; and the moment he departs, by even a shade, from a common trade form, the reader who has served that trade will know the writer hasn't. (Twain, pp. 14-16)

We know that Edward de Vere, on the other hand, was 17 when he entered Gray's Inn to study law. We know, too that throughout his life he was deeply involved in legal issues involving both his earldom and the royal court. Indeed, he sat on the juries at the treason trials of the Duke of Norfolk in 1572, of Mary Queen of Scots in 1586, and of the Earls of Essex and Southampton in 1601.

Traditional Stratfordian scholars usually assert that the author Shakespeare didn't really demonstrate any exceptional knowledge of the law while at the same time they struggle to explain how he "shows a quite precise and mainly serious interest in the capacity of legal language to convey matters of social, moral, and intellectual substance." (Sokol and Sokol, 3)

Scholar Katherine Chiljan quotes from one of Oxford's many letters in which he shows his familiarity with the law and with legal terms:

> But now the ground whereon I lay my suit being so just and reasonable ... to conceive of the just desire I make of this suit ... so by-fold that justice could not dispense any farther ...The matter after it had received many crosses, many inventions of delay, yet at length hath been heard before all the Judges—judges I say both unlawful, and lawful ... For counsel, I have such lawyers, and the best that I can get as are to be had in London, who have advised me for my best course ... [to Queen Elizabeth]: And because your Majesty upon a bare information could not be so well satisfied of every particular as by lawful testimony & examination of credible witnesses upon oath. (Oxford in Chiljan, pp. 135-147)

De Vere actually attended the House of Lords on 44 occasions during nine different sessions between 1571 and 1601. In the sessions from 1585 onward, he was appointed as a judge, one of the "receivers and triers of petitions from Gascony and other lands beyond the seas and from the islands." In 1586 he was part of a committee appointed to recommend to Elizabeth the guilt or innocence and sentencing of Mary Queen of Scots.

In Sonnet 46, Shakespeare describes just such a trial by jury:

> Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war
> How to divide the conquest of thy sight;
> Mine eye, my heart thy picture's sight would bar
> My heart, mine eye the freedom of that right;
> My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie
> A closet never pierced with crystal eyes,
> But the defendant doth that plea deny,
> And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
> To 'cide this title is impaneled
> A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart,
> And by their verdict is determined
> The clear eyes' moiety, and thy dear heart's part:
> As thus, mine eyes' due is thy outward part,
> And my heart's right, their inward love of heart.

Even scholars working within the Stratfordian tra-

dition have occasionally speculated that "Shakespeare" must have been a lawyer or have worked in a law office. Obviously, the fact that Oxford was himself a lawyer does not prove he was the great author, but it is one more important piece of circumstantial evidence in his favor.

The Italianate Englishman

If the case for Edward de Vere as William Shakespeare does finally gain popular acceptance, not the least reason will be the overwhelming evidence within the works that the author had traveled widely in Italy and must have lived in Venice for a time. Such was the Italian experience of 25-year old Oxford in 1575, when he was welcomed in one city palace after another as an illustrious dignitary from the English court—a young, high-born nobleman absorbing Venice, Verona, and numerous other Italian cities along with its people and the Italian renaissance generally. Indeed, it was the dramatic work set in Italy that inspired J.T. Looney's search for a credible Shakespeare in the first place:

> For several years in succession, I had been called upon to go through repeated courses of reading in one play, namely *The Merchant of Venice*. This long-continued familiarity with the contents of one play induced a peculiar sense of intimacy with the mind and disposition of its author and his outlook upon life. The personality which seemed to run through the pages of the drama I felt to be altogether out of relationship with what was taught of the reputed author and the ascertained facts of his career. (Looney, Warren edition, p. 2)

He continues, comparing de Vere's travels with Will of Stratford's:

> The Stratford Shakspere was untraveled, having moved from his native place to London when a young man, and then as a successful middle-aged man of business, he returned to Stratford to attend to his lands and houses. This play, on the contrary, bespeaks a writer who knew Italy at first hand and was touched with the life and spirit of the country. Again, the play suggested an author with no great respect for money and business methods, but rather one to whom material possessions would be an encumbrance to be easily and lightly disposed of: at any rate one who was by no means of an acquisitive disposition. (Looney, Warren edition, p. 2)

One authorship doubter whose work implicitly questioned the traditional Stratfordian narrative was the American Richard Roe. In his volume, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* (2012) Roe offered up the research he did over 25 years traveling the length and breadth of Italy on what his publisher aptly described as "a literary quest of unparalleled significance." Speaking of "Shakespeare" in relation to the prime location of *The Merchant of Venice*, Roe wrote:

> In the latter part of the sixteenth century, the gifted English playwright arrived in the beating heart of this Venetian empire: the legendary city of Venice. He moved about noting its structured society, its centuries-old government of laws, its traditions, its culture, and its disciplines. He carefully considered and investigated its engines of banking and commerce. He explored its harbors and canals and its streets and squares. He saw the flash of its pageants, its parties and celebrations; and he looked deeply into the Venetian soul. Then, with a skill that has never been equaled, he wrote a story that has a happy ending for all its characters save one, about whom a grief endures and always will: a deathless tragedy. (Roe, p. 115)

De Vere's travels, in fact, skirted Spanish-controlled Milan before navigating by canal and a network of rivers on a 120-mile journey to Verona. His travels took him to Padua, Mantua, Pisa, Florence, Siena, Naples, Florence, Messina, Palermo and elsewhere, from his base in Venice. If de Vere were the author, the result was ten plays set in whole or in part in Italy: *Romeo and Juliet, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Taming of the Shrew, The Merchant of Venice, Othello, A Midsummer Night's Dream, All's Well That Ends Well, Much Ado About Nothing, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest*, which opens aboard a ship in the Mediterranean somewhere between North Africa and Italy.

Compare this to only one play -- *The Merry Wives of Windsor* -- set in England. Why? The logical answer is that "Shakespeare," whoever he was, must have fallen in love with Italy. But it would seem difficult to fall in love with a country without ever visiting it. It is argued that, in fact, de Vere "brought the European Renaissance back to England" when he returned in 1576 after 15 months of European travel (He also spent time in France and Germany). On his return, he became the quintessential "Italianate Englishman," wearing "new-fangled" clothes of the latest styles.

He also brought back richly embroidered, perfumed

Italian gloves for Queen Elizabeth, who delighted in them. The gloves, in fact, became all the rage among the great ladies of the time. The earl also returned home with a perfumed leather jerkin (a close-fitting, sleeveless jacket) and "sweet bags" with costly washes and perfumes, and for many years after, it was called the Earl of Oxford's perfume." (Orgel & Braunmuller, p. 868b)

It was soon after Oxford's return that his personal secretary and stage manager, John Lyly, published two novels about an Italian traveler -- *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and his England* (1580). The latter was dedicated to de Vere, who apparently supervised the writing of both books comprising what can be called "the first English novel." In the following decade, "Shakespeare" would demonstrate what was termed Lyly's influence upon his plays.

Roe argues in the preface to his volume on Shakespeare's Italy that:

> There is a secret Italy hidden in the plays of Shakespeare. It is an ingeniously-described Italy that has neither been recognized, nor even suspected—not in four hundred years—save by a curious few. It is exact; it is detailed; and it is brilliant.

He adds that the descriptions are in "challenging detail" and "nearly all their locations" can be found there to this day. Whoever wrote them "had a personal interest in that country equal to the interest in his own." The places and things in Italy to which Shakespeare alludes or that he says "reveal themselves to be singularly unique to that one country." His familiarity with Italy's "specific details, history, geography, unique cultural aspects, places and things, practices and propensities....is, quite simply, astonishing." (Roe, pp. 1-5)

As an example, Roe takes the reader directly to Verona, the setting for *Romeo and Juliet*, and recounts a trip to search for sycamore trees that "Shakespeare" located "just outside the western wall" as "remnants of a grove that had flourished in that one place for centuries." The trees are described in the opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet*.

> Where underneath the grove of sycamore
> That westward rooteth from the city's side (I.1. 120-121)

The fact is there are no sycamore trees in any of the known source materials for the play. They were deliberately put in this spot by Shakespeare himself. Roe described his search in the old city of Verona with his driver taking him to the Viale Cristoforo Colombo. Turning south onto the Viale Colonnello Galliano, the boulevard where he had earlier glimpsed trees but had no idea what kind they were. His car crept along the Viale and came to a halt. And there were sycamores at the very same spot where "Shakespeare" said they were. How did the playwright know this "unnoted and unimportant but literal truth" about Verona? Clearly, he had deliberately "dropped an odd little stone about a real grove of trees into the pool of his powerful drama" (Roe, pp. 7-10)

In sum, Roe made many similar discoveries, which collectively, demonstrate Shakespeare's depth of knowledge and personal experience of Italy. All of these comprise more circumstantial evidence that Oxford, not Will Shakspere of Stratford, could have been the great poet-dramatist.

Commedia dell'arte

Scholars identify at least a dozen Shakespeare plays influenced by the Italian form of dramatic performance known as Commedia dell'arte, with its stock characters and improvised skits that were often bawdy and satiric. The list includes *Love's Labour's Lost, The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew, Twelfth Night, and Much Ado About Nothing*. The same scholars, however, cannot plausibly explain how "Shakespeare" became so familiar with this "comedy of art" performed by troupes of traveling players in Italy, a form virtually unknown in England when he was supposedly writing the plays.

In 1956, Julia Cooley Altrocchi discovered in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, a book called *Dell'Arte Rappresentativa Premeditata ed all'Improviso* or Dramatic Art by Rote and Extemporaneous Performance (1699) and subsequently reported that there was a

> long section...devoted to the stock character of Graziano, the talkative Bolognese 'doctor' who tells long tales and never stops for breath. With little schooling and without a medical degree, he blabs endlessly, often in Latin, impressing everyone until he is always shown to be a quack. One of his famous recitals is the so-called 'Tirade of the Tournament' (Tirata della Giostra) in which the actor rattles off the names of 20 or 30 knights and ladies, their titles and countries of origin, the color and trappings of their horses, the color and devices of their garments and shields, and the events that befell each one on the field of tourney. Even the ladies took part in this hypothetical tournament." (Altrocchi, J.C., Ruth Lloyd Miller edition, pp. 134-135)

To Altrocchi's surprise, the book offered a specific example of such a long and hilarious "tirade" -- with a reference to Oxford himself. Included in the tirade was the following speech:

> I found myself ambassador of my illustrious country of Bologna at the court of the Emperor Polidor of Trebizond and attending the great tournament celebrating his marriage to Irene, Empress of Constantinople. Present were many great worthies: Basil, King of Zelconda; Doralba, Princess of Dacia; Arcont, vaivode of Moldavia; Arileus, heir of Denmark; Isuf, Pasha of Aleppo; Fatima, Sultan of Persia; Elmond, *Milord of Oxfort*. (emphasis added, Altrocchi; Clark: ed. pp.134-135)

Here, in a book published in Naples at the end of the 17th century, was an apparent reference to Edward de Vere, mentioned by his earldom title as "Elmond Milord d'Oxfort," within the speech of a stock character in a skit ("Tirata della Giostra" or "Tirade of the Joust" performed by members of the Commedia dell'arte.

Altrocchi continued:

> With his outgoing nature, his innate acting ability which would later manifest itself so impressively before the Queen, would he have consorted in friendly fashion with the finest improvisators in the world? Otherwise, why was he given a place in the Doctor's exuberant oration? Wouldn't it have been known that he was a tournament champion in 1571 in England at the young age of 21? Wasn't Graziano paying him a form of personal tribute as an honored guest?

The "Doctor" in his tirade, reports that "Milord of Oxfort" rode a faun-colored horse named Oltramarin ("Beyond the Sea") and wore a violet-colored costume while carrying a large sword. "In this Tirata," Altrocchi reports, "Milord of Oxfort, amusingly enough, tilted against Alvilda, Countess of Edemburg, who was mounted on a dapplegray, and was armed with a Frankish lance while robed in lemon color. In the end, Edward and Alvilda, alas, threw one another simultaneously off their horses, both landing face down in the dust!" She concludes that Oxford must have been "well and very companionably known" at presentations of the Commedia dell'arte while in Venice for many weeks during 1575. He was recognized as being a good sport as a well as a good sportsman," not to mention having "so resilient a sense of humor that he could be introduced into a skit and, with impunity, be described as meeting a woman in tilt and being un-horsed and rolled to the ground with her in the encounter! (Altrocchi; Clark: p. 135)

If Oxford witnessed commedia performances, among them may have been this skit in which the actor playing Doctor Graziano, perhaps knowing the earl was in the audience, suddenly paid him a public tribute by improvising a "tirade" that included him by name.

In their 2011 Oxfordian edition of *Othello*, Ren Draya and Richard Whalen comment on the surprising evidence that even this painful tragedy is strongly influenced by Commedia dell'arte. They indicate, for example, how the opening of the tragedy can (and probably should be) played for laughs, with Iago (the scheming Zanni of the Commedia skits) and Roderigo (the witless, rejected suitor) waking up Brabantio (the foolish, old Pantalone) to taunt him with lewd suggestions that his daughter, Desdemona (the innocent), is having sex with Othello in a bestial way after they have eloped -- the stuff of a satirical burlesque.

"If the influence of commedia dell'arte on the composition of *Othello* were to be seriously considered and explained by editors of the play," Whalen writes in the Oxfordian journal *Brief Chronicles*,

> readers and theatergoers might well enjoy a greatly enhanced appreciation of the author's intention and design for this disorienting comedy gone wrong. The perplexing aspects of the comedy throughout *The Tragedy of Othello* would disappear. The mystery of Iago's evil and his motivation would be dispelled. Othello's naive inability to see through Iago's lies and scheming would make sense.
>
> With a more realistic understanding of the play, *Othello* could be read and performed as the author probably intended, as a bitter, satirical comedy with a disturbing, frustrating, tragic ending that denies the audience its expected catharsis -- a play inspired by satirical commedia dell'arte performances in Italy, instead of a romantic tragedy about a jealous military hero, who is black, and his aristocratic Venetian bride, who is white ... one of the greatest commentaries exposing the folly of mankind through laughter and the abrupt shift to the tragic shock of two murders and a suicide at the climax of the play. (Whalen, p. 99)

As Whalen points out, the commedia dell'arte was at

the height of its popularity in Italy during the very same period when Oxford traveled there in 1575-'76, making his home base in Venice. The leading troupes performed for Italian dukes and princes, who were usually also their patrons, and they often played in public squares or theaters. The difficulty Stratfordian scholars have in accounting for commedia dell'arte elements in Othello creates "a biographical conundrum." How could

> the dramatist, without ever setting foot outside England...have acquired enough knowledge to appreciate its improvisational nature? There are no records of commedia dell'arte performances in England from the 1580s into the early 1600s, when he [Shakspere of Stratford] was supposed to be writing the plays, except for one command performance by a visiting troupe for Queen Elizabeth in 1602. (Whalen, p. 94)

It should be added here for historical accuracy that there were commedia performances in England during the 1570s, but at that time, Will of Stratford was between the ages of six and twelve. Edward de Vere was in his twenties at that time and enjoying her Majesty's highest favor.

Military Matters

"Warfare is everywhere in Shakespeare," Charles Edelman writes in the introduction to *Shakespeare's Military Language: A Dictionary*, "and the military action in many of Shakespeare's plays, and the military imagery in all his plays and poems, show that he possessed an extraordinarily detailed knowledge of warfare, both ancient and modern."

Edelman provides a comprehensive account of Shakespeare's portrayal of military life, tactics, and technology and explores how the plays comment upon military incidents and personalities of the Elizabethan era. How do Stratfordian biographers assume Will of Stratford accumulated such "extraordinarily detailed knowledge" of warfare and military matters? Clearly, it is through automatic assimilation by which all intricacies are miraculously absorbed into the very fiber of Will's being and are then translated into the dialogue and characters in his plays. Edelman writes that it is often thought that Shakespeare took a "haphazard approach" to the details and language of military life and warfare, but he argues otherwise in many of his entries.

Another researcher, C.W. Barrell, suggests that

> The author of *Othello* and the great historical plays beginning with *King John* and ending, say, with *3 Henry VI*, expresses the courtier-soldier's point of view too clearly and naturally and displays far too familiar a grasp of military methods, objectives and colloquialisms not to have acquired this knowledge through serious study plus firsthand experience of the arts of war. No such study and experience can be documented in the career of the Stratford native.... Oxford's personal familiarity with the subject can be categorically documented; and this is particularly true in respect to 'Shakespeare's' fund of military information." (quoted in Altrocchi/Whittemore, p. 191)

At issue is "information" as opposed to innate genius—the former term defined by the *Random House Dictionary* as knowledge "communicated or received concerning particular facts or circumstances," or otherwise "gained through study, research, instruction and experience." The great author's information about military life was, however, not genetically inherited; it was acquired. He draws upon his wealth of information spontaneously, during the white heat of composition, and employs it for various purposes the way an artist will mix paints on his canvas.

On and on come the military terms in plays such as *2 Henry IV*, for example, with words such as alarum, ancient, archer, beacon, beaver, besonian, blank, bounce, bullet, Caesar's thrasonical brag, caliver, captain, chamber, charge, cavalier, chivalry, coat and corporal.

How did the Earl of Oxford acquire this information? One can start with his cousins Horatio and Francis Vere, known as the "Fighting Veres" and for their exploits as soldiers. Indeed, they may have been the models for the similarly named soldiers Horatio and Francisco in *Hamlet*. Add to this Oxford's brother-in-law, Peregrine Bertie (Lord Willoughby d'Eresby) who devoted his life to the political and military service of Queen Elizabeth.

More specifically,

- When the Northern Rebellion by powerful Catholic earls began in November 1569, Oxford, then 19, requested military service, which was granted in the spring of 1570 when he served under the Earl of Sussex. The chief action he would have seen was the siege of Hume Castle, whose defenders surrendered to avoid any further bombardment—an episode that calls to mind the siege of Harfleur by Henry the Fifth.

- Oxford was a champion at tilting, winning his first tournament at the Whitehall in May 1571, perform-

ing "far above expectation of the world" in front of Queen Elizabeth and the royal court. Giles Fletcher of King's College, Cambridge, wrote in Latin (as translated by Ward), that he blazed his way "with fiery energy," ... adding that Oxford presented "a mimicry of war" as he "controlled his foaming steed with a light rein and, armed with a long spear, rides to the encounter.... 'Tis thus that martial spirits pass through their apprenticeship in war ...The country sees in thee both a leader pre-eminent in war, and a skillful man-at-arms.... (Hatfield MSS. Cal. XIII, 109; quoted in Ward, 60)

- A decade later, in January 1581, Oxford prevailed as champion of his second and final jousting tournament at the Whitehall tiltyard. (Ogburn, p. 775)

- *The Defence of Militarie Profession* by Geffrey Gates was published in 1579. A volume "wherein is eloquently shewed the due commendation of Martiall prowess" the volume sought to prove "how necessary the exercise of Armes is for this our age." It was dedicated by Gates "To the Right honourable Edward de Vere, Earle of Oxenford," adding that the book came "under the shield of your noble favour and judgment." Ogburn comments that "it may be supposed that the Earl encouraged and arranged for its publication." (Ogburn: 599) The publisher, John Harrison, would later issue *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and *The Rape of Lucrece* in 1594, the first appearance in print of the name "William Shakespeare", with both narrative poems apparently having been personally overseen by the poet.

- On 25 June 1585, Oxford wrote to Burghley asking for a loan to help in his suit for a military command in the Netherlands in England's impending war with Spain. In this letter, he launched into a Shakespearean string of military metaphors, writing, "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." (Lansdowne MSS., 50.22; Fowler, p. 342)

- "Munition" was not a common word at the time, but Shakespeare used it more than once, as when Gloucester in *Henry VI, Pt. 1* declares, "I'll to the Tower with all the haste I can to view the artillery and munition" (I1.167-168)

- Later in 1585, Oxford was commissioned to command a company of horse in the Low Countries. (Ward: 252) In 1850, William J. Thorne wrote in *Notes and Queries* that the intimate knowledge of military affairs displayed in Shakespeare's plays shows that the poet had seen military service specifically in the Low Countries. (Edelman, p. 1)

- Oxford was reported among the many "honourable personages" in the summer of 1588 who "were suddenly embarked, committing themselves unto the present chance of war" when the Spanish Armada arrived on its mission to crush England. Oxford's ship was apparently disabled, because he went directly home for his armor, and even his enemy Leicester reported that "he seems most willing to hazard his life in this quarrel." (Ogburn, p. 704)

The very life of Oxford provides a plausible answer to the question of how "Shakespeare" acquired his military knowledge.

> In September 1572, after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of Protestants in France, Oxford wrote to Burghley saying he would be eager to serve the queen on the Continent: "I had rather serve there than at home where yet some honour were to be got; if there be any setting forth to sea, to which service I bear most affection, I shall desire your Lordship to give me and get me that favour and credit, that I might make one. Which if there be no such intention, then I shall be most willing to be employed on the seacoasts, to be in a readiness with my countrymen against any invasion." (Landsdowne MSS., 14.84; Fowler, p. 97)

Indeed, Edward de Vere never lost his eagerness to serve as a military man, always connecting that activity with honor. It is easy to imagine him composing *Hamlet* and having Ophelia cry out:

> O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
> The expectancy and rose of the fair state (III.2.150-153)

De Vere was all that and much more.

The Sea and Seamanship

Lieutenant Commander Alexander Falconer, a naval officer during World War II and a professional sailor

steeped in the history of seamanship and navigation, completed two books that were largely ignored when they were published: *Shakespeare and the Sea* (1964) and *A Glossary of Shakespeare's Sea and Naval Terms including Gunnery* (1965). Falconer brings firsthand knowledge and experience to an investigation of Shakespeare's use of seafaring terms and situations involving the sea. He concludes that the poet-dramatist possessed detailed, accurate knowledge of naval matters and was well informed about storms, shipwrecks, pirates, voyages of exploration, and navigation:

> Shakespeare's interest in the navy and the sea held him throughout his life. The greatest of dramatists remained profoundly impressed and influenced by the greatest naval tradition the world had seen. The manning and running of royal ships and the ceremony observed in them; the duties of officers and seamen and their characteristics, qualities and ways; strategy and the principles of sea warfare, gunnery, grappling and boarding are all known to him; so, too, are the main types of ship, their build, rigging, masts, sails, anchors and cables. The sea itself in its varied working, tides, waves, currents, storms, and calms, never goes out of his work. He draws on all this knowledge with great ease and readiness, not only in making incidents and characters true to life but in nautical imagery and figures of speech." (Falconer, *Shakespeare and the Sea*, xii)

Falconer notes that in the opening scene of *The Tempest*, when the ship is wrecked in a storm, Shakespeare took care for details. He

> could not have written a scene of this kind without taking great pains to grasp completely how a ship beset with these difficulties would have to be handled. He had not only worked out a series of maneuvers but has made exact use of the professional language of seamanship, knowing that if this were not strictly used aboard ship, the seamen would not know what they were required to do ... He could not have come by this knowledge from books, for there were no works on seamanship in his day. (Falconer, pp. 39-41)

Shakespeare's exact use of naval and maritime language, along with his intimate knowledge of the sea and seamanship, cannot be explained by anything in the documented life of the man from Stratford. Traditional scholars generally fail to notice the Bard's experience at sea because they know that the Stratford man never once left dry land. As Paul Altrocchi writes:

> Closed minds automatically blockade new information which conflicts with their own beliefs, preventing highly persuasive evidence from entering their brains for evaluation, Oxfordians believe with conviction that Stratfordianism represents a classic example of the common human tendency to stick tenaciously with conventional wisdom, preventing much more logical and coherent newer theories and facts from being given a fair hearing. (Altrocchi, Paul: *Ideational Changes*, p. 27)

The sea was there in 1572 when Oxford wrote to Burghley, in reaction to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of Protestants in France, offering to help defend England in any way he could. "If there be any setting forth to sea, to which service I bear most affection," he wrote, "I shall desire your Lordship to give me and get me that favor...." (Fowler: 97). And further, the earl crossed the Channel to France in 1575, and while returning to England in April 1576, he was captured by pirates in the Channel and nearly killed, a situation reported in *Hamlet*.

Oxford also had his own ship, the Edward Bonaventure, which he had contributed to Captain Edward Fenton's expedition to the Spanish Main in 1582. In June 1588, with the Armada on its way, Oxford prepared to take the Bonaventure into battle; although the English defeated the great fleet, it appears his ship became disabled. In 1589, a poem (apparently, but not certainly, by Oxford's secretary Lyly) envisioned the Earl standing on the hatch-cover of the Bonaventure, literally breathing fire, that element instilled within him by the goddess Pallas Athena, the spear-shaker:

> De Vere ... like warlike Mars upon the hatches stands.
> His tusked Boar 'gan foam for inward ire
> While Pallas filled his breast with fire...
> (Ward, p. 291)

In the *Shakespearean Authorship Review* of Autumn 1965, I.L.M. McGeoch, examined Falconer's volume *Shakespeare and the Sea* and noted "only those who actually served at sea could acquire a profound knowledge of the practice of seamanship and the correct meaning and use of the terms proper to the working of ships. That Shakespeare possessed such a profound knowledge is instanced many times." (Altrocchi, Whittemore, Vol. 5: 170-172)

Shakespeare's Medical Knowledge

In his edition of the Shakespeare sonnets, Stephen Booth reproduces the title page of T*he New Jewell of Health*, wherein is contained the most excellent Secrets of Physic and Philosophy, divided into four Books by the surgeon George Baker, published in 1576. Booth presents an illustration of the doctor's important book in connection with Sonnet 119, which builds upon metaphors and analogies from alchemy and medicine, opening with these two lines:

> What potions have I drunk of siren tears,
> distilled from limbecks foul as hell within . . .

"Shakespeare" knew about the "distillations" of waters, oils, and balms as set forth by Dr. Baker, whose book has been long considered a key source for the Bard's interest in alchemy as well as the full range of medical knowledge at the time. Baker, who would become surgeon to Queen Elizabeth, was the personal physician of de Vere and dedicated *The New Jewel of Health* to the Earl's wife Anne Cecil. Baker had dedicated his first book, *Olenum Magistrale* (1574), to de Vere himself, and in 1599 dedicated his *Practice of the New and Old Physic* to the earl as well. Baker was part of the household of de Vere, whose patronage helped to make it possible for this medical pioneer to write his books in the first place.

This is one example of how Shakespeare's remarkable knowledge of medicine is mirrored by Oxford's own connection to the leading medical experts and advances of his time, not only in England but also on the Continent. If Baker had just once treated Will of Stratford for a cut finger, upholders of the Stratford faith would, no doubt, have devoted entire books to that medical incident and its influences upon Shakespeare's writings. On the other hand, Booth uses a full page to illustrate The *New Jewell of Health* in connection with Shakespeare's sonnets, but never indicates that Baker dedicated that very book to Oxford's wife nor does he mention that the doctor dedicated two other books to the Earl of Oxford himself. (Booth, p. 399)

He was tutored during childhood by Sir Thomas Smith, the scholar and future diplomat known for his interest in diseases, alchemy and therapeutic botanicals. As well, Oxford had access to William Cecil's library with some 200 books on alchemy and medical topics and then, in his twenties, he lived next door to Bedlam Hospital, a source of firsthand knowledge about patients suffering from mental illness.

That is to say, Oxford's life forms a picture that can truly deepen perceptions of the Bard's plays and poems. Earl Showerman, M.D., points out that the Shakespeare plays contain "over 700 medical references to practically all the diseases and drugs" that were known by the year 1600, along with "knowledge of anatomy, physiology, surgery, obstetrics, public health, aging, forensics, neurology and mental disorders," not to mention "detailed knowledge of syphilis." He quotes from R.R. Simpson's 1962 volume *Shakespeare and Medicine* which says that the poet-dramatist demonstrates "not only an astute knowledge of medical affairs, but also a keen sense of the correct use of that knowledge"—a sign that he was well acquainted with the medical literature of his day.

Another work, *The Medical Mind of Shakespeare* (1986) by Aubrey Kail, argues that the Bard's plays "bear witness to profound knowledge of contemporary physiology and psychology" and that the author "employed medical terms in a manner which would have been beyond the powers of any ordinary playwright or physician." Oxfordian researcher, Frank M. Davis, M.D., writes that in Shakespeare's time, "true medical literature, like medicine itself, was still in its infancy...[and] the vast majority of medical works were [only] published in Latin or Greek."

Davis finds it especially remarkable that Shakespeare refers in three plays to the inner lining of the covering of the brain and spinal cord, the pia mater.

> Knowledge of this relatively obscure part of anatomy could only mean that Shakespeare had either studied anatomy or read medical literature ... Even more striking to me as a neurosurgeon is his acquaintance with the relationship of the third ventricle with memory.... a possible source was Thomas Vicary's *Anatomy of the Body of Man* (1548), which refers to the third ventricle as the 'ventricle of memory'—a phrase used in *Love's Labour's Lost*, when the pedant Holofernes states that his various gifts of the mind 'are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of the pia mater ...' (IV.2.68-69).

One can, of course, add here the Bard's knowledge of blood circulation. William Harvey's 'discovery' was announced in 1616 but "Shakespeare" was likely aware of it long before then. There are, in fact, at least "nine significant references to the circulation or flowing of blood in Shakespeare plays." Davis notes that England was far behind the advances in medical technology taking place on the Continent. Most of the great doctors and teachers were based at the University of Padua, then the center for medical learning; others studied there before returning to their hometowns to practice medicine.

Oxford, touring the cities of Europe in 1575, visited

Padua at least once, probably twice. "With the background in pharmacology gained from his years with Sir Thomas Smith," says Davis, "it seems unlikely that Oxford would have visited Padua without attempting to discover the latest developments in 'physic''. Indeed, in 1574, the Renaissance doctor Fabricius had discovered "the valves in veins responsible for keeping the blood flowing in one direction toward the heart....Fabricius was the first to bring this important discovery to light." Even if Oxford had never met Fabricius in person, says Davis, it is easy to imagine that the great teacher's 1574 discovery of those valves, along with other topics related to the circulation of the blood, "would have been an ongoing staple of conversation among the students and faculty at the time of Oxford's visit."

Horses and Horsemanship

When J.T. Looney began his search for the author that led to *'Shakespeare' Identified* in 1920, he listed 18 characteristics based on the poems and plays that the great author—whoever he was—must have possessed. Among them were: "an enthusiast for Italy; a follower of sport (including falconry); a lover of music." Much later, after discovering Oxford, he realized "a grave omission" in his list of characteristics was that of horses and horsemanship: "We find there is more in Shakespeare about horses than upon almost any subject outside human nature. Indeed we feel tempted to say that Shakespeare brings them within the sphere of human nature."

An example:

Benedick:
Sir, your wit ambles well; it goes easily.
—*Much Ado About Nothing* (V.1.135)

Rosalind:
Time travels in divers paces, with divers persons: I'll tell you who Time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal.
—*As You Like It* (III.2.301-304)

Looney continues:

> There is, of course, his intimate knowledge of different kinds of horses, their physical peculiarities, all the details which go to form a good or a bad specimen of a given variety, almost a veterinary's knowledge of their diseases and their treatment....But over and above all this there is a peculiar handling of the theme which raises a horse almost to the level of a being with a moral nature .... Not only did Oxford learn to ride, but, in those days when horsemanship was much more in vogue than it will probably ever be again, and when great skill was attained in horse-management, he was among those who excelled, particularly in tilts and tourneys, receiving special marks of royal appreciation of his skill. Horsemanship was, therefore, a very pronounced interest of his.(Warren edition, pp. 206-207)

We know that de Vere's father was the owner of valuable horses in the stable of the family estate at Castle Hedingham in Essex. In his first will, made in 1552, his father listed "ten geldings; nags with saddles, bridles and all things pertaining to them." In his final will (1562), the 16th earl bequeathed "one of my great horses" to each of several friends.

In September 1562, following the death of his father, 12-year-old Edward de Vere "came riding out of Essex" to begin his wardship "with seven score horse all in black; through London and Chepe and Ludgate, and so to Temple Bar," as noted in *Machyn's Diary*. Clearly, he knew his horses. About a dozen distinct breeds were in England during Oxford's lifetime, the most popular for riding being Turkey, Barb, Neapolitan, and Spanish Jennet. Of all of them, the Barbary horse or Barb "was undoubtedly the great author's favorite," writes A. Forbes Sieverking, adding, "With such affection and intimacy does he dwell upon its merits that it is probable that the poet at one time possessed a roan Barb"

It may well be that the Bard actually owned a roan Barb, but probably only if the author was the Earl of Oxford. The Barb was a special breed from northern Africa, an expensive riding horse known for its fiery temperament and stamina. It was highly prized by the Italians, their noble families established large racing stables making it truly a horse for kings.

Hotspur:
Hath Butler brought those horses from the sheriff?

Servant:
One horse, my lord, he brought even now.

Hotspur:
What horse? A roan, a crop-ear, is it not?

Servant:
It is, my lord.

Hotspur:
That roan shall be my throne. (*1 Henry IV*.2.3.66-70)

We know that Henry VIII had purchased Barbary horses from Frederico Gonzago of Mantua and that private owners in England used the Barbs to what came to be called thoroughbreds. In the 14th century Richard II owned a roan Barb, as "Shakespeare" wrote in the play bearing that king's name. When he is in prison after his crown has been taken by Bolingbroke, who is now Henry IV, the Groom tells him:

O, how it yearned my heart when I beheld
In London streets, that coronation day,
When Bolingbroke rode on Roan Barbary,
That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,
That horse that I so carefully have dressed!
(5.5.76-80)

First Bolingbroke took his crown ... now his horse! Richard cannot conceal his suffering:

Richard:
Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,
How went he under him?

Groom:
So proudly as if he disdained the ground.

This is too much for Richard. His own horse has betrayed him.

Richard:
That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand –
This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.
Would he not stumble? Would he not fall down,
Since pride must have a fall, and break the neck
Of that proud man that did usurp his back?

There are additional passages referencing "Barbary" horses in *Hamlet*, in which the king wagers six Barbary horses against six French rapiers and poniards on the prince's ability to win the fencing match with Laertes, and in *Othello*, when Iago describes Othello as a Barbary horse, rakishly alluding to the Barbary's Moorish origins and, also, to the practice of breeding one to an English mare.

A favorite Shakespearean passage about horses is to be found in *Venus and Adonis* in which, Looney wrote, "a mere animal instinct is raised in horses to the dignity of a complex and exalted human passion."

A breeding jennet, lusty, young, and proud,
Adonis' trampling courser doth espy,
And forth she rushes, snorts, and neighs aloud.
The strong-necked steed, being tied unto a tree,
Breaketh his rein, and to her straight goes he.
Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,
And now his woven girths he breaks asunder.
The bearing earth with his hard hoof he wounds,
Whose hollow womb resounds like heaven's thunder;
The iron bit he crusheth 'tween his teeth,
Controlling what he was controlled with... (Venus and Adonis, pp. 260-270)

The full scene comprises 59 lines (260-318), leaving no doubt that the poet must have been an expert horseman.

Astronomy and the Universe

In 1584, John Soowthern, a Frenchman writing under that pen name while in the household of "Dever" (Edward de Vere) referred to the "seven turning flames of the sky" in his poem *Pandora* to indicate the sun, the moon and the five known planets. According to Soowthern, the Earl was an expert in the exciting but politically dangerous field of astronomy, which was threatening to overturn the old conception of the cosmos and even upend the old relationships of man to himself, to the world and to God.

In the opening lines of Sonnet 14, Shakespeare wrote:

Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck,
And yet methinks I have Astronomy.

Shakespeare is not speaking of astrological fortune-telling here or of superstitions. He is not writing about the making of predictions such as that used by Queen Elizabeth to choose the luckiest and most balmy date for her coronation:

But not to tell of good or evil luck...
Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality,
Or say with Princes if it shall go well.
By oft predict that I in heaven find...
(Sonnet 14, 3-4; 7-8)

On the contrary, by "astronomy" he was referring to that revolutionary science in 16th century England that

was being studied in secret, notably by the group (later called the School of Night) whose members included Walter Raleigh, Christopher Marlowe, George Chapman, the mathematician Thomas Harriot and de Vere himself. Oxford had studied astronomy from boyhood in the 1550s with his tutor Thomas Smith, and in the 1560s with John Dee. The latter was not only the Queen's astrologer, but also a serious mathematician and geographer; because of the book *De Revolutionibus* (1543) by Polish mathematician-astronomer Nicholas Copernicus, these English scholars understood that a great change of paradigm was underway. The perception of the universe was in the process of drastic change, but also undergoing upheaval was the social-religious-political order itself, which even Hamlet was reluctant to mention aloud:

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
> (1.5, 169-170)

Such free-thinking men were moving from the old Ptolemaic model of the earth at the center of the universe to the revolutionary Copernican model, by which the Sun is at rest, or motionless, near the center of the Universe, and the Earth, spinning on its axis once daily, revolves annually around the Sun, as Hamlet writes to Ophelia:

> Doubt thou the stars are fire,
> Doubt that the sun doth move,
> Doubt truth to be a liar,
> But never doubt I love –
> (II.2.116-119)

When Oxford was 23 in 1573, the English mathematician and astronomer Thomas Digges (1546-'95) published a treatise on a supernova, or exploding star, seen in the sky the year before. In this work dedicated to Lord Burghley, Oxford's father-in-law, Digges includes warm praise for the Copernican hypothesis. Burghley and spymaster Francis Walsingham, who made it their business to develop intelligence in defense of the realm, were keenly interested in a new-fangled device called a "perspective" glass or telescope, which enabled astronomers to see farther into space. In fact, such new devices would help to quickly spot the warships of the Spanish Armada upon their arrival, playing a significant role in England's victory in 1588.

In 1582, when Watson dedicated his volume *Hekatompathia* to Oxford, thanking him for his help editing the manuscript and getting it into print, his sequence of 100 consecutively numbered "passions" or sonnets contained the first known description of the Milky Way as a collection of discrete stars rather than a single mass. Watson was preceding Galileo's published discovery in 1610 by nearly 30 years.

In the same year, Elizabeth sent Oxford's brother-in-law, Lord Willoughby, on a mission to the Danish court. During that extended visit, Willoughby met with Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe, who, in 1572, had made precise observations of the inexplicably brilliant star that became known as "Tycho's Supernova"—a celestial phenomenon which traditionally-trained scientists could not explain. The playwright Shakespeare, however, would describe it in the night sky over Denmark:

> Last night of all,
> When yon same star that's westward from the pole
> Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
> Where it now burns...
> Bernardo, *Hamlet* (I.1. 35-38)

"Tycho's Supernova" confirmed the presence of a growing scientific understanding of the dynamic universe, as opposed to the prevailing Ptolemaic system, which posited that all heavenly bodies were unchanging and firmly fixed in place.

In June of 1583 the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno arrived in England and delivered lectures at Oxford University, contradicting the university's continuing dogma that every object in the universe orbited a centrally positioned earth. The free-thinking Bruno preached in favor of the Copernican solar system and proposed that the sun was just another star moving in space. Inevitably, the university academics rebuked him.

"Oxford University and Giordano Bruno were celestial bodies in opposition," de Vere biographer Mark Anderson notes:

> The university preached the ancient geocentric theories of Aristotle and Ptolemy. Every object in the heavens, it was said, orbited the earth, and the earth occupied the center of the universe. Bruno advanced the heresies that "the stars, contrary to fixed church doctrine, are free-floating objects in a fluid celestial firmament; that the universe is infinite, leaving no room for a physical heaven or hell; and that elements in the universe [called 'monads'] contain a divine spark at the root of life itself. Even the dust from which we are made contains this spark. (Anderson, 196)

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the center.
Polonius in *Hamlet* (II.2, 157-159)

Oxford would be launching into *Hamlet* in the late 1570s or early 1580s, just when discussions of the new ideas about the heavens were accelerating in England. The prince is a student at the University of Wittenberg in Germany, a major center for Copernican theory, a place Bruno went on to teach, a university where he could freely voice his bold ideas. In 1593, however, Bruno was imprisoned, and in 1600 the Roman Inquisition burned him at the stake for heresy.

According to Peter Usher, Professor Emeritus of Astronomy and Astrophysics at Pennsylvania State University, *Hamlet* is:

> an allegorical description of the competition between two cosmological models. On one side is the heliocentric universe of Copernicus being taught at Wittenberg and personified by Hamlet; on the other is the old geocentric order, personified by Claudius, so named for the ancient astronomer Claudius Ptolemy. (Usher, *Prener Review*: pp. 157-158)

Claudius:
How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Hamlet:
Not so, my lord. I am too much in the Sun.
(I.2. 66-67)

Hamlet deserves by blood to be king, the royal sun at the center. According to the new astronomy of Copernicus and the sun-centered universe of Digges, the prince belongs on the throne at the center of the realm. As such, he is dangerous to the stability of the old hierarchy and, therefore, poses a direct threat to Claudius and Gertrude.

Horatio:
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.
(I.1. 69)

Hamlet:
The time is out of joint. O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right!
(I.5.191-192)

Within the cosmological allegory, the play is full of allusions to this struggle between the old and new structures. "The idea of a rotating and revolving earth was counter-intuitive to most people and contrary to established religious and scientific doctrine," Peter Usher writes. When Claudius and Gertrude express their desire that Hamlet not return to Wittenberg, they do so by saying that such a course is "most retrograde to our desire"—an astronomical term for contrary motion, that is, the prince's motion away from them and toward the Copernican cosmology as taught at Wittenberg—the same place where Martin Luther had initiated the Protestant Reformation that was also disrupting the traditional order in England. (Usher, *Prener Review*: pp. 157-158)

Scientists have observed that Shakespeare's record of astronomical knowledge, and his references to major celestial events, ceases by mid-1604, the year of Oxford's death. Will of Stratford, however, would live until 1616 --long enough, if he were really "Shakespeare," to continue to record momentous events such as the discovery of sunspots and of Jupiter's moons, or other significant celestial phenomena and developments in astronomical science. But the plays of Shakespeare say nothing about any of the astronomical observations occurring between 1604 and 1616.

Music and Musical Knowledge

Music is pervasive in Shakespeare's works. According to British Museum scholar scholar W. Barclay Squire in his study *Shakespeare's England*, some 170 passages include the words "music" or "musical" or "musician." (p. 22).

Listen to Lorenzo from *Merchant of Venice* on the subject:

> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
> Here will we sit and let the sounds of music creep
> in our ears.
> Soft stillness and the night become the touches
> of sweet harmony.
> Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold!
> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubins.
> Such harmony is in immortal souls
> (V.1. 54-63)

Shakespeare also uses the word "sing" in various forms no less than 247 times. And, again according to Squire, some 40 passages deal with musical instruments. He includes or alludes to the texts of well over a hundred songs. In addition to the numerous stage directions for music and sound effects, his dramatic and poetical work

is permeated with specific references to more than 300 musical terms.

Again, Lorenzo in *Merchant*:

> The man that hath no music in himself
> Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils:
> The motions of his spirit are dull as night
> And his affections dark as Erebus.
> Let no such man be trusted.
> Mark the music!
> (V.1. 83-88)

De Vere was associated with music from his teenage years at Cambridge and Oxford, long before he gained the highest favor of Queen Elizabeth, becoming a favorite dance partner and apparently performing for her on both the lute and the virginals. Early on he was associated with Richard Edwards, Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, who is credited with compiling *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576), which includes at least eight of Oxford's early poems that actually appear to be song lyrics.

He also maintained a company of adult actors and one of choir boys, who sang as well as performed stage works. Documents from the 1580s indicate he patronized a traveling company known as The Earl of Oxford's Musicians. As well, Oxford was the patron of celebrated madrigalist John Farmer, de Vere was involved from about 1572 onward in musical activities at court with composer William Byrd, one of the greatest musicians England ever produced. It appears he was Byrd's patron as well. The Earl's own accomplishments in the field were also praised by professional musicians. (Ogburn, pp. 720, 750; Anderson: 65-66)

Shakespeare was "far in advance of his contemporaries" in terms of musical references, says Squire, although his education in that field, "wherever it was acquired," had been "strictly on the lines of the polyphonic school a teaching that all parts of a composition must fit equally into the whole, as expressed by the tragic king in *Richard II*:

> **Richard:**
> Music, do I hear?
> Ha, ha! Keep time. How sour sweet music is
> When time is broke and no proportion kept!
> (V.5. 41-43)

Such a passage "cannot be understood without some knowledge of the elaborate system of proportions inherited by Elizabethan composers from the earlier English school," Squire observes. It is "remarkable that the musical terms of the plays should be so consistently those of the old school of polyphony." Why is that remarkable? Because, during the last half of the 1590s, a new style of musical arrangement replaced the old one, yet the great dramatist was apparently unaware of it. "This change dates from about the year 1597," Squire writes, unable to conceal his bafflement, "yet in all the plays which Shakespeare produced from then [on], no allusion to the 'new music' can be discovered." (Squire, p. 16)

This would be baffling indeed if the author had been Will Shakspere of Stratford, who, within the traditional time frame, still had the best part of his career in front of him. In that case, he surely would have incorporated the "new school" of music into his plays. But in the Oxfordian view, de Vere had finished writing the early versions of virtually all his plays by 1589, which easily explains why "Shakespeare" failed to embrace a musical revolution that began almost a decade later. And the evidence shows exactly that, although not in the way that Stratfordian history would have it.

For example, one can look at the case of William Byrd who was past 50 when he moved from London in about 1593 to the small town of Stondon Massey, Essex, where he lived the rest of his life. According to the traditional biography, The Stratford man was just then getting started, so on that basis alone he and the great composer would never have met each other. De Vere, on the other hand, was in his early twenties and enjoying royal favor in 1572 when Byrd was named a gentleman of the Chapel Royal and began to work for Queen Elizabeth as organist, singer, and composer.

The evidence suggests "an association between Byrd and Oxford of at least ten years," states musician Sally Mosher, who adds that they "were both at the court of Elizabeth I from about 1572 on .... Both were involved in activities that provided music for the court; and during this period, Oxford saved Byrd from possible bankruptcy by selling a certain property to Byrd's brother."

The Chapel Royal itself consisted of two dozen male singers and organists who would provide church music for the royal household. They usually remained with the Queen as part of her entourage, which often included Oxford himself, as she traveled from palace to palace. "The likelihood is strong," Mosher writes, "that both Oxford and the Queen would have played these pieces [on lute and virginal keyboard] by the composer whom both had patronized." One of Byrd's compositions, *The Earl of Oxford's March*, "has been preserved in at least four versions," she reports, and "it was clearly well-known during the period."

As a ranking Earl, Oxford had his own "tucket" or musical signature announcing his arrival at certain events.

The tune at the heart of *The March* "has all the earmarks of such a tucket," Mosher suggests, adding, Byrd worked Oxford's tucket into a musical setting that called up visions of battle." Indeed, she says,

> The Shakespeare plays are full of tuckets...In *Othello*, when Iago hears 'Othello's trumpets,' it means that he recognizes Othello by his tucket. The brief and open-ended tune that introduces *Oxford's March* has all the earmarks of this kind of semi-military identification . . . Oxford, a veteran of real military action by the time he and Byrd met, would have known the military calls in use and could have supplied them to Byrd.
> (Mosher, pp. 43-52)

Byrd also composed music for Oxford's poem "If Women Could be Fair," included in a 1588 collection of Byrd's vocal works. Still another example of their collaboration involves "My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is," a poem attributed to Oxford and published in Byrd's *Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs of Sadness and Piety* (1588).

"This poem is one of the true masterpieces of the Elizabethan era," *Harper's Magazine* notes, adding it is "understandable on many levels: as a sanctuary of conscience, as a statement of Calvinist precepts, as a dissertation on contentment, as a praise of the powers of imagination and invention. William Byrd's setting of the Oxford poem is one of the finest English art songs of the Elizabethan era."

As well, John Farmer dedicated his most important work, *The First Set of English Madrigals* (1599), to "my very good Lord and Master, Edward Devere Earle of Oxenford," praising his "judgment in Musicke" and declaring that "using this science as a recreation, your Lordship have overgone most of them that make it a profession."

This is high praise indeed for Oxford, to whom Farmer had also dedicated his previous work, *Plainsong Diverse & Sundry* (1591), telling the Earl he presented it to him because he knew "your Lordship's great affection to this noble science."

"Nothing is more astonishing in the whole history of music than the story of the English school of madrigal composers," writes Michael Delahoyde, Professor of English at Washington State University, noting that the adapter of the earlier *The First Set of Italian Madrigals Englished*, (1590) was Thomas Watson, who had dedicated *Hekatompathia, or the Passionate Century of Love* (1582) to de Vere, his patron. Included in that 1590 songbook are "two excellent Madrigals of Master William Byrd, composed after the Italian vaine, at the request of the sayd Thomas Watson."

One sees here that Oxford is clearly connected both personally and professionally to Farmer, Byrd and Watson as well as to his own company of musicians. And many of his youthful poems also seem to be lyrics for songs. Oxford may well have also been a driving force behind the rise of the English Madrigal School.

Heraldry

Two books devoted entirely to Shakespeare's knowledge and treatment of heraldry are *The Heraldry of Shakespeare: A Commentary with Annotations* (1930) by Guy Cadogan Rothery and *Shakespeare's Heraldry* (1950) by Charles Wilfred Scott-Giles. Taken together, they show that the Bard knew a great deal about coats of arms, blazons, charges, fields, escutcheons (shields), crests, badges, hatchments (panels), and gules (red markings or tinctures). Indeed, his considerable knowledge about heraldry is an integral part of his thought process.

He uses heraldic terms in spontaneous, natural ways, often metaphorically, making his descriptions more vivid while stirring and enriching our emotions. Take, for example, the word badge, which in heraldry is an emblem indicating allegiance to some family or property. Shakespeare uses it literally, of course, but also metaphorically: Falstaff in *2 Henry IV* speaks of "the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice" (4.3.103-104); King Ferdinand in *Love's Labour's Lost* cries out, "Black is the badge of hell" (4.3.250); Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* talks about "bearing the badge of faith" (III.2.127); Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* declares, "Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge" (1.1.122); and in Sonnet 44 the poet refers to "heavy tears, badges of either's woe." Surely this author was:

> a proud nobleman for whom hereditary titles, shields and symbols were everyday aspects of his environment. Conceived out of the fullest heat and pulse of European feudalism -- personifying in unparallel'd ways the medieval aristocracy, its towering spirit of ruthless and gigantic caste, with its own peculiar air and arrogance (no mere imitation) -- only one of the 'wolfish earls' so plenteous in the plays themselves, or some born descendant and knower, might seem to be the true author of those amazing works -- works in some respects greater than anything else in recorded literature. (Whitman: "November Boughs")

From early boyhood, de Vere had been steeped in the history of his line which dated dating back 500 years to William the Conqueror. The heraldry of his ancestors, as

well as that of other noble families, became part of his vocabulary.

Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* extends the metaphor of two bodies sharing the same heart by presenting the image of a husband and wife's impaled arms: "So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart; two of the first, like coats in heraldry, due but to one and crowned with one crest" (3.2).

Another example of "Shakespeare" thinking and writing in heraldic terms occurs in the opening scene of *Henry VI, Pt.1* at the funeral of Henry V at Westminster Abbey. A messenger warns the English against taking recent victories for granted, describing setbacks in France as the "cropping" or cutting out of the French quarters in the royal arms of England: "Awake, awake, English nobility! Let not sloth dim your honors new-begot: cropped are the flower-deluces in your arms! Of England's coat one half is cut away!" (I.1. 78-81)

England's coat of arms presented flower-de-luces or fleur-de-lis, the emblem of French royalty, quartered with Britain's symbolic lions. Cropping the two French quarters would cut away half the English arms—a vivid description of England's losses in France.

"The Vere arms changed repeatedly over many generations," researcher Robert Brazil notes, adding that details of Oxford's arms had "numerous documented precedents" consisting not only of drawings but also the "blazonry" or descriptions of shields in precise heraldic language, using only words. "Through the science of blazon, infinitely complex visual material is described in such a precise way that one can accurately reproduce full color arms with dozens of complex coats, based on the words of the blazon alone." (Brazil, pp. 11, 50)

At his family's estate, Castle Hedingham in Essex, the young earl would obviously have studied the seals and tombs of his ancestors. He, after all, was a child of the waning feudal aristocracy who would inherit the title of Lord Great Chamberlain of England. To assert the rights and rankings of his Vere identity, he would need exact knowledge of his family's five centuries of history to "blazon" or describe it in words. "Shakespeare" uses "blazon" just as we might expect it to be employed by someone of de Vere's background. Mistress Quickly, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, employs the word in a burst of heraldic imagery:

> About, about; search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out ... Each fair installment, coat, and several crest, with loyal blazon, evermore be blest!"
> (V.5, 54-55; 62-63)

From the same pen comes "blazon" in a variety of metaphorical contexts:

- I'faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true.
  Much Ado About Nothing (II.1. 279)

- Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions and spirit do give thee five-fold blazon.
  Twelfth Night (I.5. 281-282)

- But this eternal blazon must not be to ears of flesh and blood.
  Hamlet (I..5. 21-22)

In Sonnet 106, the poet uses "blazon" in the context of accounts of medieval chivalry, writing of "beauty making beautiful old rhyme, / In praise of Ladies dead and lovely Knights," followed by: "Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best, / Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow, / I see their antique Pen would have expressed/ Even such a beauty as you master now." (106. Lines 3-8)

In *Hamlet*, the prince tells the players that a speech he "chiefly loved" was the one that Virgil's Aeneas delivers to Dido, Queen of Carthage, about the fall of Troy. Before the first player can begin to recite it, however, Hamlet delivers 13 lines from memory -- describing how Pyrrhus, son of the Greek hero Achilles, had black arms while hiding inside the Trojan horse, but then his arms became drenched in the red blood of whole families that were slaughtered.

The story would have had even greater impact upon aristocratic members of the audience who knew the bloody tale was being told in heraldic terms, each one italicized here:

> The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose *sable* arms,
> Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
> When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
> Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared
> With *heraldry* more dismal. Head to foot
> Now is he total *gules*, horridly *tricked*.
> (*Hamlet* II, 2. 392-397)

Even *Lucrece* (1594), the second publication signed by "Shakespeare," is filled with heraldic imagery:

> But beauty, in that white entitled
> From Venus' doves, doth challenge that fair field...
> This heraldry in Lucrece's face was seen...
> (lines 57-58; 64)

Robert Brazil in essays in *The Oxfordian*, (1999, pp.

117-37) and *Shakespeare Matters*, (spring 2006, pp. 15-25) notes that previous Earls of Oxford had employed a special greyhound as a heraldic symbol, but that Edward de Vere had stopped using it. That said, in the opening scene of *Merry Wives of Windsor*, which begins and ends with humorous dialogue involving heraldry, there is a line (unrelated to anything else) about a "fallow" greyhound, one that is no longer used:

Page:
I am glad to see you, good Master Slender.

Slender:
How does your fallow greyhound, sir?
(1.1.81-82)

In this "throwaway" exchange, is de Vere pointing to his own heraldic history?

Gardens and Gardening

> One occupation, one point of view, above all others, is naturally his, that of a gardener: watching, preserving, tending, and caring for growing things, especially flowers and fruit. All through his plays he thinks most easily and readily of human life and action in the terms of a gardener ... it is ever present in Shakespeare's thought and imagination, so that nearly all his characters share in it. (Spurgeon, p. 86)

When de Vere's father died, the 12-year old Edward became a ward of Queen Elizabeth and for the next nine years he lived at the London home of William Cecil. "One of the chief features of Cecil House was its garden," the scholar B.M. Ward wrote in 1928. "The grounds in which the house stood must have covered many acres, and were more extensive than those of any of the other private homes in Westminster. John Gerard would become Sir William Cecil's gardener for 20 years (1578-1597); and Sir William himself evidently took a great pride in his garden.... Cecil imbued his sons and the royal wards under his charge with his own keenness in horticulture." (Ward, p. 12)

Referring to Cecil's country seat of Theobalds, Charlton Ogburn writes that gardens "were laid out on three sides of the mansion by the same John Gerard ... (author of *The Herball, or General Historie of Plants*, 1597). Trees and shrubs seen rarely if at all in Britain were imported from abroad. The gardens were widely known in Europe." (481).

In fact, gardening runs all through Shakespeare's language. And Oxford's.

O, what pity is it
That he [the King] had not so trimm'd and dress'd his land
As we this garden! We at time of year
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees,
Lest, being over-proud in sap and blood,
With too much riches it confound itself:
Had he done so to great and growing men,
They might have lived to bear and he to taste
Their fruits of duty: superfluous branches
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live:
Had he done so, himself had borne the crown,
Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down.
(*Richard II* , II.4. 36-66)

The gardener sows the seeds, whereof flowers do grow,
And others yet do gather them that took less pain I know.
So I the pleasant grape have pulled from the vine,
And yet I languish in great thirst, while others drink the wine.
(Oxford, *Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1576)

O thou weed,
Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet
That the sense aches at thee....

When I have plucked the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It must needs wither: I'll smell it on the tree.
(*Othello*, IV.2 67-69; V.2. 13-15)

Oxford wrote a prefatory letter (preface) to *Cardanus' Comfort* when it was translated into English by Thomas Bedingfield and published in 1573. In it he shows his deep connection to growing and gardening once again:

> What doth avail the tree unless it yield fruit unto another? What doth avail the rose unless another took pleasure in the smell? Why should this tree be accounted better than that tree, but for the goodness of his fruit? Why should this vine be better than that vine, unless it brought forth a better grape than the other? Why should this rose be better esteemed than that rose, unless in pleasantness of smell it far surpassed the other rose? And so it is in all other things as well as in man.

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.
The manchet fine falls not unto his share,
On coarsest cheat, his hungry stomach feeds.
The landlord doth possess the finest fare,
He pulls the flowers, the other plucks but weeds.

Clearly, Oxford was uniquely positioned to assume the point of view of the gardener, as well as to acquire the love and knowledge of seeds, plants, flowers and trees exhibited in the works of Shakespeare.

A Conclusion

Based on the matching interests and shared points of view exhibited by both the author William Shakespeare and Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, it seems more than possible – indeed likely -- that they were one and the same person, William Shakespeare becoming Oxford's pen name. Yes, this evidence is circumstantial to be sure, but circumstantial evidence itself is often used as proof even in courts of law.

It was certainly something J.T. Looney acknowledged at the outset of his seminal volume, *'Shakespeare' Identified in Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford*. As he put it:

> What then is the usual common-sense method of searching for an unknown man who has performed some particular piece of work? It is simply to examine closely the work itself, to draw from the examination as definite a conception as possible of the man who did it, and then to go and look for a man who answers to the supposed description....
>
> We rely in such cases very largely upon what is called circumstantial evidence; mistakenly supposed by some to be evidence of an inferior order, but in practice the most reliable form of proof we have. Such evidence may at first be of the most shadowy description; but as we proceed in the work of gathering together facts and reducing them to order, as we hazard our guesses and weigh probabilities, as we subject our theories to all available tests, we find that the case at last either breaks down or becomes confirmed by such an accumulation of support that doubt is no longer possible.
>
> The predominating element in what we call circumstantial evidence is that of coincidences. A few coincidences we may treat as simply interesting; a number of coincidences we regard as remarkable; a vast accumulation of extraordinary coincidences we accept as conclusive proof. And when the case has reached this stage, we look upon the matter as finally settled... (Looney; Warren edition, p. 80)

More than a century after Looney's identification of Oxford, the question of whether Edward de Vere is the true author of the Shakespearean works remains far from settled in the court of public opinion. A major reason, I suggest, is that the accumulated evidence, along with the many "coincidental" similarities between de Vere and "Shakespeare," have yet to be examined seriously by traditional scholars who remain stubbornly committed to the Stratfordian story. That work remains for new generations.

BIOGRAPHY

Hank Whittemore is an independent scholar and an award-winning author based in New York with more than a dozen nonfiction books and one novel to his credit. These include *The Monument* (2005, Meadow Geese Press), a major study of the Shakespearean sonnets, for which he received the Excellence in Scholarship Award from the Shakespeare Authorship Studies Centre at Concordia University in Portland. Oregon, and *100 Reasons Shake-speare was the Earl of Oxford* (2016, Forever Press).

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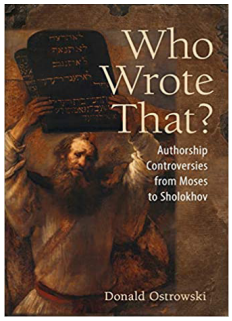
Anomalistics and Frontier Science

BOOK REVIEW

Who Wrote That? Authorship Controversies from Moses to Sholokhov

Allison Richards*



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In the world of literary scholarship, few topics have generated as much debate and fascination as the question of authorship. From ancient texts through the early modern period to the present day, numerous literary creations have found themselves embroiled in disputes surrounding their true authors—and, if concealed, the true authors' reasons for concealment. It is within this rich context of historical inquiries that Donald Ostrowski's *Who Wrote That?* finds its place, diving into the turbulent waters of authorship controversies—as the book's subtitle says—"from Moses to Sholokhov."

It is clearly presumed that the book's readership already knows from the surname alone that Sholokhov refers to the Soviet writer Mikhail Sholokhov, author of the epic, four-volume novel *Quiet Flows the Don*. (This reviewer, it must be admitted, was not familiar with the 1965 Nobel Prize winner before encountering Ostrowski's book.) Which is to say that even before reaching the book's title page, the reader knows there's already a selection process at work.

One of the book's obvious strengths lies in its methodical and systematic approach to each of the controversies it explores. Ostrowski employs a balanced tone, steering clear of sweeping claims or exaggerated assertions that could undermine the scholarly value of his work. Instead, he presents a meticulous analysis of historical evidence, almost to a fault, carefully dissecting the arguments put forth by various scholars and proponents of different authorship theories.

Who Wrote That? specifically begins with a discussion of authorship controversies surrounding ancient religious texts, including the Torah/Pentateuch, the Confucian Analects, and the Secret Gospel of Mark. Ostrowski illuminates the complex dynamics behind these debates, acknowledging the historical and cultural factors that contribute to the uncertainties surrounding the authorship of these works. By establishing a foundation rooted in ancient literature, the book lays the groundwork for readers to situate more modern nuances of later controversies.

As the narrative progresses, Ostrowski guides readers through additional disputes, including the medieval French letters of Abelard and Heloise, and the works attributed to Russian Prince Andrei Kurbskii. Each chapter carefully examines the historical, linguistic, and stylistic evidence at hand, shedding light on the complexities surrounding these texts and their authors. Ostrowski's measured tone allows readers to navigate these controversies—although he does at times descend into such extensive technical detail in a few case studies that can undermine his overall stated drive toward increasing accessibility of authorship studies generally. (For example, in a book devoting 33 pages to the Shakespeare question, see below, Ostrowski devotes half that page-length into an exhaustive he-said-she-said within the scholarly history of the chronicles and letters of the Persian historian Rashid al-Din.) At his best—and the obscurantist al-Din deep dive is more the exception than the rule in this otherwise generally accessible

book—Ostrowski contextualizes notable authorship controversies throughout literary history.

But the elephant in the room is arguably Ostrowski's chapter on the biggest and most notorious authorship question in the English-speaking world—that of the works conventionally attributed to the actor William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon. By situating the discussion of the Shakespeare question in the midst of so many other disputed texts, Ostrowski all but invites readers to view the debate surrounding the Bard's works as part of a broader pattern rather than a unique anomaly.

While Ostrowski acknowledges the social stigma attached to the Shakespeare authorship question, he presents a range of theories and arguments that have emerged in Shakespeare authorship studies over the years. By engaging with the historical context of Elizabethan literature, Ostrowski provides readers with a lens through which to view the skepticism surrounding the conventional Stratfordian theory. While not attempting to offer a definitive resolution, *Who Wrote That?* serves as a valuable resource for scholars interested in understanding the extraordinary breadth of the debate.

It is worth noting that Ostrowski intentionally excludes other larger authorship controversies, including that of Homer and the Roman playwright Terence. In acknowledging this limitation, Ostrowski says in his Introduction that he wanted to ensure his text could remain focused and concise. Although arguably, by including Shakespeare among a range of more obscure disputed texts, Ostrowski tips his hand a bit. Perhaps it is the prominence of the Shakespeare debate compared to the obscurity of the others in *Who Wrote That?* but Ostrowski's Shakespeare chapter does feel a bit intentionally downplayed and understated by contrast—like Prince Hal among the common soldiers, offering a little touch of Harry in the night.

In terms of style, *Who Wrote That?* strikes a careful balance between accessibility and scholarly rigor. The book's prose is generally clear, avoiding excessive jargon and complex sentence structures that can hinder broader comprehension. While the book's intended readership seems to be professional and semi-professional scholars in the humanities, Ostrowski's writing allows a wider scholarly audience to engage with the material and appreciate the meticulous research behind each chapter's authorship question.

In conclusion, Donald Ostrowski's *Who Wrote That?*, stands as a meticulous academic work, deserving recognition for its careful approach and dedication to providing historical context to a range of disputed authorships. By offering a measured analysis of these diverse controversies throughout literary history, Ostrowski successfully contextualizes the debate surrounding Shakespeare's works within a broader framework.

While, at times its arcane remit could limit the breadth of the book's readership, its academic rigor and balanced tone make it an invaluable resource for those interested in exploring the intricacies of authorship disputes across the ages.

ENDNOTE

***Allison Richards** is an independent scholar and longtime Shakespeare authorship researcher who resides in Massachusetts. Note that this name is a pseudonym being used with the express knowledge and permission of the *Journal* in order to protect the author's professional status and wellbeing. At least one peer-reviewed journal (i.e., *Journal of Controversial Ideas*) openly advocates for this practice to combat the culture of fear and self-censorship that manifests in some academic circles, and many professional communities or associations likewise allow pen names for related reasons (see e.g., https://peterbates.org.uk/home/garden-shed/can-authors-use-a-pseudonym/). The present author is not unaware of the irony of the present situation. Please direct any correspondence concerning this review to Don Rubin (drubin@yorku.ca).

Journal of Scientific Exploration
Anomalistics and Frontier Science

BOOK REVIEW

Shakespeare's Knowledge of Astronomy and the Birth of Modern Cosmology

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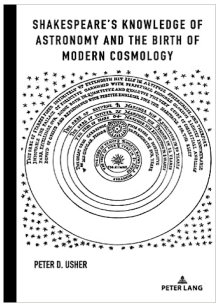

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Peter Usher's book joins the recent genre of scientific evidence gleaned from their own profession and is now aimed at shedding fresh light on a man who lived a literary life in the shadows. An entire library might be needed to house the books that have since been written in a vain attempt to provide the light missing between the resident wool merchant of Stratford-upon-Avon and the 884,647 words written by William Shakespeare. With close to 7,000 books already occupying the shelves in the Library of Congress in Washington, it is clear that literature abhors a vacuum no less than nature does: especially when faced with the absence of any substantial record existing between Shakespeare's work and the genius who wrote them.

Lord Dacre of Glanton, Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, Regius Professor of History at Oxford, made this clear when referring to Shakespeare. "[P]articularly in the last century (i.e. 19th), he has been subjected to the greatest battery of organized research that has ever been directed upon a single person. Armies of scholars, formidably equipped, have examined all the documents which could possibly contain at least a mention of Shakespeare's name . . . And yet the greatest of all Englishmen, after this tremendous inquisition, still remains so close to a mystery that even his identity can still be doubted"[1]. To which one internationally best-selling author, Bill Bryson, added in his *Shakespeare*. "By the time he is first mentioned in print as a playwright, in 1592, his life was already more than half over. For the rest, he is a kind of literary equivalent of an electron – forever there and not there."[2]

It is against this background that Peter D. Usher, Emeritus Professor at Pennsylvania University and author of three books on Shakespeare and astronomy, has explained in his own words: "The central thesis of this book is that Shakespeare knew of the various cosmological models of the Universe extant during his writing career, which contradicts the common belief that he fails to take account of contemporary developments in astronomy and cosmology" (p. 21).

The book commences by introducing readers to an efficient primer on the early state of astronomy when studies of the night sky were made by the naked eye from Earth's position at the center of the Universe. Although this was backed by common sense, astrology, the universities, Aristotle and the clergy, it was interrupted by Nicholas Copernicus' heliocentric system, *De Revolutionibus*; published in 1543 by the Lutheran mathematician G. J. von Lauchen (Rheticus) of Wittenberg University; having dedicated it to Pope Paul III. Two years later, the Pope convened the Council of Trent to condemn Protestant heresies and confirm Catholic doctrine. By 1563, this had become the cornerstone of Catholic doctrine and, later, an obstacle to Galileo's telescopic discoveries at the turn of the new century.

The author's quest is, therefore, to look back in time and seek evidence of Shake-

speare having embraced this 'New Astrology' as it filtered into the poet's life and his contemporaries. To what effect did it have, if any, upon his mind so as to suggest it as relevant vocabulary for a play he had in mind? By the closing decades of the 16th century, it had certainly become a legitimate exercise to seek for possible references to these celestial advances in the traditional way people were beginning to think about the sun and the stars. And so Usher has commenced his search in earnest with *Hamlet*, Shakespeare's major tragedy, for which he devoted four chapters.

Most interesting is the supernova SN 1572, which became visible in the November night sky that year. It would certainly have drawn attention to English astronomers: such as John Dee and especially the Digges' family, which enjoy an important place in the evidence accumulated by the author. Usher associates several of their members with *Hamlet*. It is, therefore, this star, he believes, that is referred to by watchers on the ramparts of Elsinore when Bernardo reports: "When yond same star that's westward from the pole / Had made its course t'illume that part of heaven / Where now it burns." (p. 36, Table 3.2). Usher then joins with James Joyce, whom he credits with uniting this "New Star" with SN 1572 in his 1922 novel *Ulysses.*

Shakespeare's interest in nature is well known as a means of analogy to human events, and November 1572 makes a good choice for dating Hamlet's encounter with the ghost of his father, since it falls in line with the approach of Advent. "Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated ... And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad." (p. 29)[4] Shakespeare does indeed slip in occasional words to describe mundane events with astronomical language. He did this when referring to Hamlet having traveled from Wittenberg University to Elsinore and his intention to return as "most retrograde". Added to this, Claudius complains that Hamlet's stubbornness shows "a will most incorrect to heaven" (p. 31)[5] which he repeats as "a fault to heaven".[6] The fault being a reference to the imperfection of the perfect circles around which the planets are meant to travel according to Aristotle's philosophy and its influence on the Church. So far, this provides good evidence for Shakespeare's interest in astronomy, but notwithstanding the fact that these words are also found in astrology, which caused Elizabeth I to summon Thomas Allen, a mathematician and astrologer, for his advice concerning the appearance of SN 1572.

One must also remember that the Star of Bethlehem came under the heading of astrology when it made a similar appearance at the birth of Jesus, with ramifications for King Herod. Thus, five years later, when the Great Comet of 1577 passed close to Earth, it caused a prolific outburst of literature and argument. But Peter Usher's aim is to advance Shakespeare into the community of those persuaded by the 'New Astronomy', for which Copernicus's heliocentric planetary system was gaining support in England, although not without dissent from the Church and its own astronomers. In particular, Christopher Clavius, a Jesuit mathematician attached to the Vatican. He was also Director of Advanced Instruction and Research at the Academy of Mathematics until 1610. Although doubting the heliocentric system, he acknowledged the flaws in Ptolemy's geocentric explanation. But the social, political, and religious unrest in England at that time, during which Shakespeare's patriotic *Histories* played their part in generating national support for both monarchy and country, is not touched upon in the book. It thus tends to leave a noticeable gap between Shakespeare's illiterate family background and Peter Usher's attempt to raise him to the educated level of discussing the 'New Astronomy' with members of the Digges family. The difficulty becomes more acute with Usher's display of the day-by-day diary of events in *Hamlet* (p. 36). This matches perfectly with the first appearance of the "New Star" SN 1572. The snag is, however, the time gap. Shakespeare was only eight years old in 1572. Whereas unlike Mozart at that age, who by then was an accomplished pianist with compositions to his name, Shakespeare had yet to become acquainted with a pen. No doubt Usher, having realized this potential weakness himself, sought to resolve the situation by adding to the questions that surround Shakespeare as having been the play's author. To achieve greater support for his thesis, he turns to the reputation of Leonard Digges (father of Thomas) as the author of *Hamlet* (p. 148). This, of course, redirects attention of the book away from explaining how Shakespeare came to know so much about astronomy, when having lived in a rural environment, divorced from any known connexion with men of letters. If Digges were the author of the Shakespeare canon, it would certainly explain any references that were made to the new astronomy. The book, therefore, becomes one in which the author's aim has become twofold. By seeking quotations from the plays of Shakespeare that appeal to an acquaintance with the heliocentric system put forward by Copernicus, it would also provide a salient step towards promoting Leonard Digges as a person qualified in astronomy to have been Shakespeare.

There is certainly no doubt that Shakespeare looked to the heavens for analogy, for he refers to it in excess of twenty times. It especially occurs in the analogy made to Digges' illustration (p. 16): when Lorenzo says to Jessica: "how the floor of heaven is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold: / There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st / But in his motion like an angel sings"[7]. This certainly has the making of a contender for the author's

aim. Then again, when Hamlet remarks to Horatio. "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt in your philosophy"[8] he may have had the new astronomy in mind; even though the topic was a reference to the ghost of his father. But Shakespeare does, more than once, refer to the stars and even the cosmos. *Hamlet* is again the source with his response to Rosencrantz (p. 50). "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams"[9] (p. 50). This reference to 'infinite space' became (and still is) a contentious issue that was promoted by Giordano Bruno, a contemporary of Shakespeare. Bruno had proposed that stars were centers of their own solar systems. For teaching this, he was eventually accused of blasphemy by the Inquisition; it having contradicted Roman Catholic doctrine, and he died at the stake in 1600.

Leonard Digges' son Thomas, a mathematician and cosmologist like Bruno, had also promoted the idea of an infinite universe in 1576 by extending Copernicus' orbit of stars to infinite space. Shakespeare refers to Digges' vision of infinite stars in *Julius Caesar,* which is exlemplifed by*:* "The skies are paint'd with unnumber'd sparks, / They are all fire and every one doth shine"[10] But it is another of the author's several choices from *Cymbeline*; which he treats as a characterized version of astronomical events that occurred between 1537 and 1612 (p. 104). One can understand the familiarity retained by celestial events in a professional astronomer's mind and how they can be personalized into characters of a play according to favorable circumstances. But the comparison Usher makes is not unique. For this Shakespearian drama has the potential of greater appeal to those familiar with William Cecil, Lord Burghley. In many respects, he was as powerful as Cymbeline, and with a storyline to match on a one-to-one basis. This presents a problem to an astronomical simile.

Burghley had married twice, with children by both wives: two sons who left home and a virtuous daughter whom he wished to marry to a young man of his choosing. Burghley was also the guardian of three boys whom he brought up in his household. One of these young men he chose to become the husband of his daughter. But she refused her father's choice and instead fell in love with another of the trio, whom she quickly married: much to the annoyance of her father. Before their marriage was consummated, her husband took leave and sailed away, but was spied upon during his absence abroad. Upon returning, he was told his wife had been unfaithful to him. This brief *précis* forms the background for Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*. Burghley is *the King*; Anne Cecil is *Imogen*; Philip Sidney, Edward Manners, and Edward de Vere are the adopted trio; Sidney is *Cloten*, spurned by Imogen; de Vere is *Leonatus Posthumus*, whom she marries.

In the heavily censored world of Shakespeare's England, it would be naïve to believe these comparisons would go unnoticed. Writers of anything considered anti-establishment were quickly punished: either by torture, imprisonment, mutilation, or even banishment. The author of Cymbeline – not to mention other of Shakespeare's plays where similar comparisons are made: especially *Hamlet* – managed to live a charmed life having escaped these punishments. It has therefore been inferred by many that any search for the poet and dramatist who used Shakespeare as a pen name has only one solution; namely Lord Burghley's son in law and the father of his grandchildren: Edward de Vere. Who but he could have repeatedly violated, without redress, the censorship imposed by the most powerful man in England?

This is not to deny Peter Usher's excellent command of the New Astronomy's relationship with Shakespeare, nor the evidence that exists to pursue this line of thought. His book is furnished with tables and illustrations, and a glossary to reinforce his argument. It is also well researched by orthodox literature relating to Shakespeare. There is little room for doubt that England's greatest dramatist was sufficiently versed in the ideas of Copernicus, as well as Thomas Digges' expansion of the heliocentric system to include 'infinite space', and quite possibly evidence from 'spy glasses' as an early form of the telescope. Although the evidence for Digges as the author Shakespeare, while being necessary to pursue as evidential, it is not sufficient; and falls some way short of other names worthy of Shakespeare's laurels.

Usher's discomfort with having complimented Shakespeare with up-to-date knowledge of the New Astronomy, yet without the assurance of who he was actually addressing, is given thought in his final chapter. There, he correctly cites the puzzle that surrounds Shakespeare's original monument in Stratford as that of a merchant, with pen in hand. Presumably, to write his next invoice for the supply of wool resting beneath his pen. There is also his tomb beneath his bust, cursing anyone who dares move his body. (Someone certainly did, for his grave is empty). Both the monument and the tombstone contain a united cryptogram, initialed by Ben Jonson, confirming Shakespeare as a "scamp", and vowing de Vere was the true poet. Usher also refers to Sonnet 80 (in fact 76), in which the poet admitted: "every word doth almost tell (fel in the original) my name." It does! Because that word 'every' almost spells E Vere. Oxford had also encoded: "Lo E de Vere" between "My name" and "My argument"; which was endorsed by his secretary: "I, T. Nashe". This information, together with the same message and much more by different writers, including Leonard Digges, appeared in Vol. 31 No. 4 in 2017 of the J.S.E. It also appeared

alongside another thoroughly researched appraisal using Bayesian probability theory by Emeritus Professor Peter Sturrock. This discredited 'Shakespeare the man' as a writer by a probability value of "one chance in 100,000." Were it not for the *cancel culture* that prevails against the 17th Earl of Oxford at university level, where fear of admitting the truth safeguards the reputations of those who would otherwise be discredited. It also acts as an impasse. Those affected understandably prefer to remain entranced by the passion of their devotion to the 'Bard of Stratford-upon-Avon': lest they awake as *Titania* did from her Mid-Summer Night's Dream; where she too had fallen passionately in love; only to discover upon opening her eyes that her love had been directed at an ass.

In conclusion, Peter Usher's book makes an interesting read. But I came away thinking his change of direction midway as he began to gather his evidence and entertain second thoughts about how Shakespeare's identity had tended to overshadow the importance of what he first set out to achieve.

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4 Ibid. (1.1. 158-61).

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Journal of Scientific Exploration
Anomalistics and Frontier Science

BOOK REVIEW

Shakespeare was a Woman and Other Heresies

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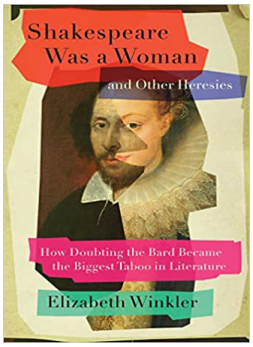

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"Who has the authority to determine the truth about the past?"

So begins this brilliant, groundbreaking look into what its author, former *Wall Street Journal* and *Atlantic* writer Elizabeth Winkler, calls the *Biggest Taboo in Literature* – questioning the authorship of William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon.

In 2019, Winkler wrote an article for *the Atlantic*, "Was Shakespeare a Woman?" The response was swift and vicious: "Shakespeare derangement syndrome", "conspiracism", "neurotic fantasies", a comparison to Holocaust denial, Obama birthers, and anti-vaxxers. Shakespearean scholar James Shapiro said, "I hope Winkler abandons her authorship fantasies" and offered to improve her understanding of Shakespeare by attending a performance of New York City's Shakespeare in the Park with her. Perhaps the most revealing comment came from Sir Stanley Wells, honorary President of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, "It is immoral to question history and to take credit away from William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon"(p. 18).

But clearly, Winkler doesn't take away credit, she simply explores the basic question of *how* William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon wrote plays and poems without leaving behind any unambiguous primary source evidence of having done so. The non-posthumous historical records for Shakspere (sic), which is the name as recorded in his baptism entry, and Shakspeare on the plaque on the wall of Holy Trinity Church in Stratford, are comprised of some 70+ documents from the life of a businessman who had no connection whatsoever to poetry or drama. Literary success leaves a paper trail, and in the absence of such, it is far from immoral to ask how the businessman became the greatest writer of all time.

This is not a book that will convince true believers, including those of Mary Sidney and Emilia Bassano, that their candidate is The One, and Winkler doesn't intend it to. It is, however, *the* book to read for pulling back the green curtain of the Stratford Industrial Complex - The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, publishing houses, university English departments, The Folger Library, and legacy media.

Writing in a fluid, down-to-earth, light, and engaging style, Winkler tells a story of evidentiary common sense in the face of a refusal to acknowledge anything but infallibly received wisdom.

From the book's title, I had thought that the premise of Shakespeare being a woman would have appeared early on, but Winkler takes her time to build the case. She begins by addressing *The Taboo* and its unspoken threat to academics: questioning Shakespeare's authorship is the third rail; don't touch it if you want an academic career.

But why?

Winkler presents evidence for why there is doubt: the spelling of the name, the ambiguity of the prefatory material for the 1623 First Folio of collected plays, no mention by his family or friends that he was an author, the complete lack of contemporary

references to the man from Stratford as anything other than a businessman, actor, or family man, the contemporary indications in print that the plays weren't by him, the historical fiction from his biographers. All this is familiar ground to Authorship Doubters, but essential groundwork for readers new to the topic.

In chapter six, "Aberration and the Academy", Winkler shows The Taboo as coming from the rise of the English Department during a period of great social upheaval in the nineteenth century.

To the ruling classes, England's unrest at that time was connected to the loosening of the hold of Christianity, the unifier of classes and social order by way of its pathway to order and salvation. It was believed possible at this time that a version of the French Revolution could arrive on Albion's shores, and if so, what was to be done about it? And concurrently, what was to be done to pacify the increasing numbers of women agitating for education?

The answer to both questions was to institute state-regulated education based on the new discipline of English literature, its purpose being to unify social classes by offering the kind of pride and moral guidance found within it.

And whom to have at its center? William Shakespeare, of course.

Winkler goes on, "The working classes needed to be made to feel that they, too, were the inheritors of England's literary heritage...This is how the institution of English began: as moral guidance for the restless masses; as imperialist propaganda; as nationalist liturgy...And the story of Shakespeare, enshrined in the early days of the discipline, has been repeated and repeated into our own time, passed down as a sacred unalterable creed." (pp. 169-171).

Winkler quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson, "An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man", Shakespeare in this case. She goes on to say, "... religions define themselves by a set of beliefs, but they also define themselves against a set of heresies." (p. 151).

Enter stage right The Taboo: every reference to a man called William Shakespeare (or Shakspeare, Shakspere, Shaxspere, Shackspere, Shagspere, et al.) must, *de facto*, be a reference to the author William Shakespeare. To even question this is heresy. This reviewer had first-hand experience when he asked a Folger librarian why the name in the baptism registry was spelled on their website as "Shakespeare" when the facsimile of the original entry in the secretary's hand, just above it, showed it was spelled "Shakspere". The Folger answer was that they 'modernize the spelling'; or in other words, through its insertion of a medial 'e' and an extra 'a', the Folger transforms a successful Elizabethan businessman into the most venerated writer of all time. If the greatest Shakespeare library in the world uses this logic, it's no wonder others follow.

If anyone stands as the living face of The Taboo it is Sir Stanley Wells, who agreed, reluctantly, to be interviewed by Winkler. During their conversation, she was dumbfounded by the shallowness of Wells' knowledge of basic Shakespearean facts. Reading about it was jaw-dropping. Regarding the first use of Shake-speare by a third party and the first appearance of the name with a hyphen in 1594, Wells, a recognized world authority, replied that he had never studied it (p. 173). When she asked why in his chapter on allusions to Shakespeare, Wells had omitted the 1628 Thomas Vicars allusion about "that poet who takes his name from shaking and spear" he said he didn't remember it and then referred to it as some sort of joke. To three or four more questions along similar lines, Wells could not come up with a reasoned response. When asked about the views of arguably England's most accomplished Shakespearean actors, Derek Jacobi and Mark Rylance, both of them Doubters, he said, "They're both bonkers." (p. 176)

Turning to James Shapiro, another Shakespearean cleric, Winkler tried to take up his offer of seeing a Shakespeare production with him, but he declined, citing the pressure of writing his new book. She did manage to speak to Harvard scholar Stephen Greenblatt, author of the 2004 *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare,* and asked him if it was possible to say, 'I *know* Shakespeare wrote the works.' He brushed off the question with, "These epistemological questions are above my pay grade" (p.321).

Winkler also interviewed Stratfordian expert Marjorie Garber, a retired Harvard professor who, unlike many of her peers, has never written a biography of Shakespeare. Their four-hour conversation was maddeningly frustrating for Winkler because Garber is a postmodernist, meaning she believes the author of any work is irrelevant, that only the text matters, and knowledge of the author's life adds nothing to it. (There goes my broader understanding of *The Crucible*, then.)

And so it goes. "The problem isn't the evidence but getting people to listen to the evidence." Winkler quotes from Charlton Ogburn, author of *The Mysterious William Shakespeare* (p. 215).

Several chapters of Winkler's book take on who the author(s) might be. Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, received the lion's share of her attention primarily because there is so much documented circumstantial evidence for his authorship compared to so little undocumented circumstantial evidence for the Stratford

man's claim. A second reason for taking de Vere's claim seriously is the way in which he emerged as a candidate. He was put forward by John Thomas Looney in his 1920 book *Shakespeare Identified*. Looney started with a blank slate and identified 18 likely characteristics of the author by reading the works (at this point, I will lose all post-modernists). Assuming that the name was a pseudonym (not unreasonable since it's been estimated that up to 80 percent of Elizabethan writings were pseudonymous or anonymous), he read Elizabethan poetry, looking for Shakespeare-like poems, and found one written by Edward de Vere, a man unknown to him but whose life matched every one of the 18 characteristics Looney had deduced.

The other candidates Winkler investigates, including Christopher Marlowe and Francis Bacon, emerged not so much from a scientific method approach like Looney's, but rather from a sense that, based on contemporaneous evidence, this person *feels right*. I hasten to add that this is not an invalidation since inductive and deductive reasoning are both valid tools for uncovering the truth and as there is no smoking gun, one cannot prove anyone is *not* the author; that is, in the absence of corroborating evidence, one cannot prove a negative. The best that can be done in such circumstances is to debate which candidate has the better argument in his or her favor.

Francis Bacon is not a serious candidate these days except for Baconians, but I found Ros Barber's championing of Christopher Marlowe to be excellent.

The idea that the author "Was a Woman" comes late in the book for candidates Mary Sidney and Emilia Bassano with Penelope Rich appearing as the possible Dark Lady of the Sonnets. The arguments for them are extremely well made in the context of the idea that Shakespeare's plays were probably co-authored, which is where Winkler's book took me in the end. Single author adherents, especially those of the Stratford man, will bristle at the thought, but they would do well to take note of Winkler's final chapter, "Negative Capability." From John Keats in 1817, "[S]everal things dove-tailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously – I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." (p. 318)

Easily said, but we're not going to see it applied after academia has, I predict, savaged this book. Expect "high-octane emotion and very low facts" from the reviewers that journals and publishing houses consult in their effort to hide from the religious mob they don't want to turn on them.

I also predict these to be some of their rebuttals:

His name was on the plays. *(A correct statement is: "During the lifetime of William Shakspere there was a dramatist and poet publishing under the name of William Shakespeare.")*

There are thousands of references to Shakespeare as a writer. *(True, but all are posthumous, and not one of them gives any personal information about him; all of them are impersonal, such as play reviews and commentary on style.)*

William Basse wrote a poem entitled "On Mr. Wm. Shakespeare, he dyed in April 1616". *(It wasn't entitled as such, and the poem was first published in 1633, ten years after the First Folio made the Stratford connection which means it's not personal evidence, but simply a repetition of what was thought of as a fact.)*

We don't have information about lots of poet dramatists of the time. *(Diana Price, in her brilliant book Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography, demolishes that argument by providing paper trails for 24 contemporary authors with primary source evidence for each one.)*

The First Folio says Stratford on Avon. *(No, it doesn't. The prefatory material says Avon on one page and Stratford a few pages later. There are many Stratford's in England and Avon was the name given to Hampton Court Palace, the site of many Court performances of plays, including those of Shakespeare.)*

In the First Folio Heminges and Condell refer to "...a friend as was our Shakespeare...". *(Indeed, they do, but they also lie when they state the plays are "...offered to you cured and perfect of their limbs..." when in fact, over 1700 revisions had to be made in the Second Folio in 1632. They regret Shakespeare was not alive to oversee the printing of his plays, but Shakspere was very much alive and presumably able to do so after his retirement in 1610 or 1611. Add to this that many scholars doubt that Heminges and Condell even wrote the dedicatory letter given how much of it paralleled the work of Ben Jonson.)*

And that's how it's likely to play out in the Amazon one-star reviews. My advice is to recognize the *ad hominem* ("If you can't win on facts, attack the source") and read this book. It's a page-turner set to become a classic of clear-headed reasoning, referred to for years to come.

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COMMENTARY

Further Information on the Shakespeare Authorship Question

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Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.
Charles W. Eliot, *The Happy Life* (1896, p. 26)

At the time of this writing, a Google Scholar search of the term "Shakespeare Authorship Question" (SAQ) returned 264,000 results. These range from reasonably impartial papers in peer-reviewed journals [e.g., Leigh, R. J., Casson, J., & Ewald, D. (2019). A scientific approach to the Shakespeare authorship question. *Sage Open*, *9 (1)*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018823465] to passionate arguments that define academic books like *The Case for Shakespeare: The End of the Authorship Question* (McCrea, 2005). But despite the bold claim of McCrea's subtitle, this Special Issue arguably shows that the SAQ matter is far from settled. We therefore hope that readers unfamiliar with the topic will be intrigued enough to seek out more information and perhaps even support education efforts or new research in this area. Note that there are several organizations indeed dedicated to these purposes (see below for details).

Moreover, the Guest Editor has specially compiled a recommended reading list for us. Teachers usually create such lists for their students as part of assignments, to help them engage with a topic more deeply, or simply to promote the habit of reading. It is true that the process or criteria used to select the most relevant entries is highly subjective, but the idea is to highlight resources that give a balanced primer on a subject and appeal to different learning styles [see e.g., Stokes, P., & Martin, L. (2008). Reading lists: A study of tutor and student perceptions, expectations and realities. *Studies in Higher Education*, *33*, 113–125. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070801915874]. The following list was designed—not as a comprehensive overview of SAQ material— but as an entry point for interested individuals. Many of the recommended titles that follow are described by their own subtitles. However, the Guest Editor has included further annotation where there is no subtitle or where an additional comment seemed useful.

MAJOR SAQ-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

De Vere Society (UK based):	deveresociety.co.uk
International Marlowe-Shakespeare Society (UK based):	marloweshakespeare.info
Shakespeare Authorship Coalition (SAC) (US based):	doubtaboutwill.org
Shakespeare Authorship Trust (UK based):	shakespeareanauthorshiptrust.org
Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship (SOF) (US & Canada):	shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org

THE CASE FOR THE HISTORICAL MAN FROM STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Edmondson, P., & Wells, S. (2013). *Shakespeare beyond doubt: Evidence, argument, controversy.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139084352 [A collection of essays by two leading Stratfordians attempting to end the Authorship Question by ignoring most of the evidence. This volume was answered by the Shahan-Waugh volume (also on this list) with a similar title.]

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COMMENTARY

"Think Again" - Editor-in-Chief's Epilogue to the SAQ Special Issue

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JSE's editorial team extends its heartfelt thanks to our Guest Editor Don Rubin for his tremendous vision and support with co-creating this Special Issue. Although both *Brief Chronicles: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Authorship Studies* and *The Oxfordian* faithfully publish peer-reviewed research on the Shakespeare Authorship Question (SAQ), the various contributors featured herein agreed to help promote the visibility and further scrutiny of this important controversy to a wider audience of academics. Some members of our affiliated organization, the Society for Scientific Exploration, have likewise published their own SAQ studies (e.g., Sturrock, 2010; Sturrock & Erickson, 2020) to encourage our astute readership to critically examine the historical information and literary outputs associated with this deeply elusive historical figure. These are enormously important endeavors because the SAQ is a sobering case study of the very real and immediate threats to academic freedom (Dudley, 2020). But make no mistake, anyone who assumes that there is consensus among well-informed scholars about the true identity of "Shakespeare" should think again.

Think again is a famous idiom that sounds like something our acclaimed English writer could have coined. But it is aptly fitting in this context because it denotes what someone "believes or expects" is not actually true or will not happen (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). And it is standard practice for academics to "think again" about important events. For instance, consider another legendary topic in history and contemporary story-telling—the Knights Templar, aka, the Poor Knights of the Temple of King Solomon. Despite the infamous arrests and charges of heresy against the order, a document known as the Chinon Parchment was found in 2001 in the Vatican's archives that revealed the Templars were, in fact, exonerated by the Catholic Church in 1312 (cf. Vatican Library, 2007). Although clearing them of heresy, Pope Clement curiously still ordered that the Order be disbanded. The Chinon Parchment had been rediscovered by Barbara Frale (2004), a Vatican historian who worked in the Secret Archives. She apparently stumbled across the document in a box containing other papers, having been lost for centuries after it was incorrectly cataloged.

Modern society has similarly faced history-making "confusions or collusions" that had lasting effects on public policy or mainstream consciousness, such as the Tuskegee medical experiments (Baker et al., 2005), Watergate U.S. Presidency scandal (Morgan, 1996), or the RussiaGate hoax (Marmura, 2020). Sociopolitical machinations can also be innocuous or benevolent. As an example, readers might be interested to learn that the U.S. arguably had its first female president when Edith Wilson surreptitiously made most of the executive decisions after her husband, Woodrow Wilson, suffered a debilitating stroke towards the end of his tenure (Hazelgrove, 2016). Other controversies are currently looming that will undoubtedly further shape the historical record and societal reactions to it, such as questions about the media's role in censorship (Roberts,

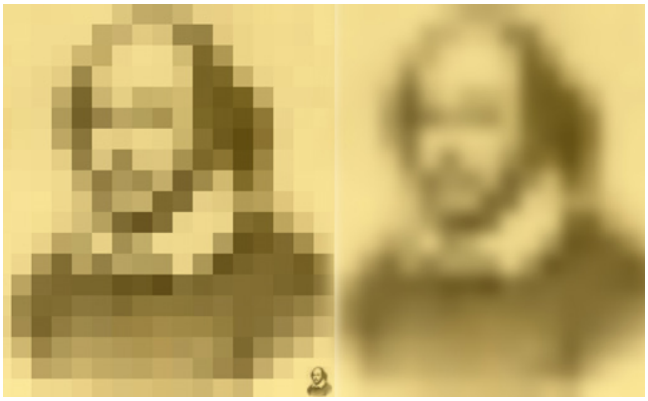

FIGURE 1. "The closer you look at the Man from Stratford, the murkier the evidence gets for his assumed literary prowess." Used with permission: opticalillusion.net ©

2020) or disinformation campaigns with hot-button news (Taibbi, 2023), polemical efforts to recast American history (Oakes, 2021), and the hampering of serious debate about the lab leak theory of COVID-19 (Kopp, 2022). Perhaps it is unrealistically optimistic to hope that such battles between competing historical narratives will always be settled by the robust analysis of existing information and any new evidence, especially with regards to highly controversial or disputed events. This sentiment equally applies to the myriad of issues underpinning the SAQ.

To be sure, historical records do not serve merely to document past thoughts and ideas; sometimes they affect future insights and knowledge by allowing researchers to revisit, reassess, or reject long-held assumptions—as per the aftermath of Chinon Parchment or the Church's apology for its erroneous claims about Galileo which Rubin (2023) discussed in his Introduction to our Special Issue. This intellectual practice of critical reflection is *not* controversial. Indeed, Krasner (2019) explained that "The ability to revise and update historical narratives—historical revisionism—is necessary, as historians must always review current theories and ensure they are supported by evidence…Historical revisionism allows different (and often subjugated) perspectives to be heard and considered" (p. 15). We, therefore, hope that this Special Issue underscores for historians and other academics the many good scholarly reasons to revisit widely-held assumptions about the identity and motivations of the artist known as "Shakespeare." Simply put, the historical record matters.

But there are certainly more than just cold, hard facts at stake. Context enhances knowledge and understanding, so Shakespeare's "identity" transcends a mere forensic question about a lone individual. Particularly, the SAQ might well represent the most dramatic and impactful example of the old and occasional practice of using pseudonyms (or pen names) in literature (e.g., Ezell, 1994; Finn, 2016; Tonra, 2014) — a ploy also adopted by famous authors like *Samuel Clemens* ("Mark Twain"), *Mary Anne Evans* ("George Eliot"), and *Stephen King* ("Richard Bachman"). Sometimes we are even dealing with "layers" of pen names, as with *Joanne Rowling*, aka "J. K. Rowling" aka "Robert Galbraith." Many different motivations can underlie alter-ego type behavior (e.g., having a hidden identity, a secondary personality, or a secret life being led in addition to a normal life), which is a fascinating phenomenon worthy itself of study (see, e.g., Houran et al., 2022). Moreover, grasping the background and psychology of the person ultimately confirmed as "Shakespeare" should offer profound insights about the manifestation of genius-level talent and whether artistic or scientific prodigy is wholly biological or open to cultivation (see, e.g., Andreasen, 2006; Limb & Braun, 2008; Lubinski et al., 2014).

Dispassionate evaluation of the available evidence arguably supports both the academic legitimacy and value of the SAQ debate. It is not wild speculation that the conditions or context surrounding the production of "Shakespeare's" monumental works is more complex or nuanced than suggested by orthodox history. The conjectures of the contributing authors to this Special Issue could be entirely wrong or partially right; there is no shortage of complementary or mutually-exclusive scenarios to consider. And there is also an apparently steady supply of eager and responsible researchers ready to join the SAQ quest. What we lack is a broadly tolerant environment in higher education that financially and morally supports the search for historical evidence to resolve definitively the ambiguities and discrepancies at the heart of the controversy (cf. the Shakespeare Authorship Coalition's "Declaration of Reasonable Doubt:" https://doubtaboutwill.org/declaration). Still, investigations endure by those who use science and evidence to advance the discussion around this difficult topic despite outright scorn and hostility. Key advancements or breakthroughs with the SAQ might be slow-going but are seemingly inevitable. Just maybe tucked away in some forgotten or overlooked archive, maverick historians or literary scholars with sharp eyes and open minds will discover the Shakespeare-equivalent to the Chinon Parchment and, in that moment, stir all admirers of the "Sweet Swan of Avon" to think again.

Good night, good night!

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