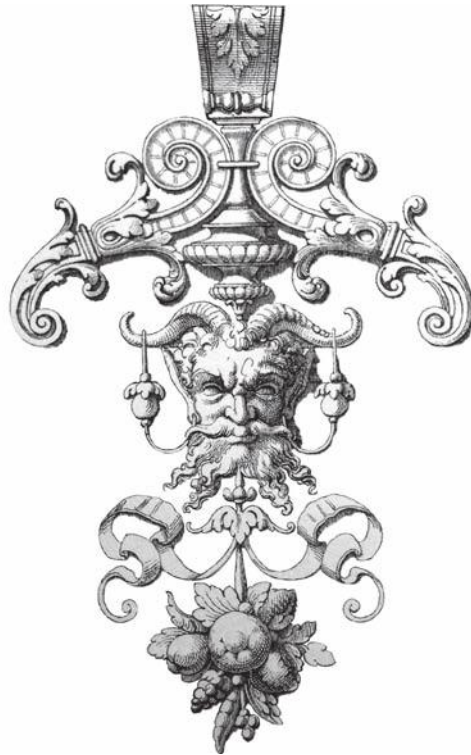


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Table of Contents

Research Articles

9 In Memoriam—Tom Regnier 1950-2020

A tribute to the former president of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship who passed away this spring.

11 From the Editor—Oxford Gains Academic Acceptance

Since 2018 three books by academics have appeared under the imprint of academic publishers, the authors of which accept Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, as the real author of the Shakespeare canon. This represents a breakthrough with the scholarly community in the US and UK, which previously censored publication of any research by professional scholars that acknowledges Oxford as Shakespeare.

15 Was the Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth Shakespeare's First Play?

by Ramon Jiménez

Ramon Jimenez's monograph demonstrates that the anonymous play, *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, was actually Shakespeare's first play. A detailed presentation employing historical, theatrical and literary evidence, Jimenez's case should compel literary historians to identify Shakespeare as the author of the play and lead to a scholarly reassessment of the consensus that Shakespeare did not revise and enlarge upon his early works throughout his career.

49 Calgreyhounds and the First Folios of Jonson and Shakespeare

by Michael Hyde

Michael Hyde examines an unusual piece of contemporary evidence: the use of heraldry and its emblems in the published works of Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare. In his paper, Hyde seeks to determine if the unique use of calgreyhounds by the 13th, 15th and 16th Earls of Oxford—and its presence in the First Folios of Jonson and Shakespeare—implies that Jonson and the Herbert brothers employed a visual piece of evidence that points to the 17th Earl of Oxford as the real Shakespeare.

- 65 Is Falstaff a Portrait of the Historical Henry VIII??**
by Richard Waugaman
Dr. Waugaman delves into Shakespeare’s dramatic methodology of using real life models for communicating to a wide variety of contemporary audiences, including the Queen, in *1 and 2 Henry IV*. In his paper, he investigates whether the comic figure of Sir John Falstaff was based mostly on King Henry VIII, Elizabeth’s father.
- 79 Was Shakespeare Don Quixote (or was He a Jacobean Dramatist)?**
by Sky Gilbert
Was Oxford a medievalist who employed rhetoric in his plays and poems as first propounded by the ancient Greek philosopher Hermogenes? Gilbert here examines Shakespeare’s philosophical position in light of the evolving spirit of the age: “Shakespeare dared to align himself with a point of view that was in danger of becoming anachronistic. His work was the aesthetic personification of an old, romantic world order that was reluctantly giving way to a new, more pragmatic one, and he waged a valiant, passionate final crusade in the name of medieval rhetoric and chivalry.”
- 103 Comparisons of Oxford’s Poetry with Shakespeare’s: Five Letters from J. Thomas Looney to *The New Age* (1920–1921) and *The Outlook* (1921)**
by James Warren
Five letters from J.T. Looney published in the British press during the early 1920s expand upon Looney’s evidence as to why Oxford’s poetry and Shakespeare’s are so similar in vocabulary, theme and philosophy. These letters were unknown to modern scholars until they were recently re-discovered by historian James Warren in the British Library.

121 Is Ben Jonson's *De Shakespeare Nostrati* A Portrayal of Edward de Vere?

by Andrew Crider

A psychologist demonstrates how Ben Jonson's memoir of William Shakespeare actually refers to Edward de Vere after examining the many differences in their biographies and personal psychologies.

131 The Latin Inscription on the Stratford Shakespeare Monument Unraveled

by Jack Goldstone

This paper by Professor Goldstone explicates how the Latin inscription on the Shakespeare monument in Stratford-on-Avon was deliberately designed to convey covert truths to the educated.

Book Reviews

- 141 **Shakespeare Beyond Science**
by Sky Gilbert
Reviewed by Warren Hope
- 145 **Who Wrote That?**
by Donald Ostrowski
Reviewed by Ramon Jiménez
- 155 **The Rational Shakespeare**
by Michael Wainwright
Reviewed by Michael Dudley
- 165 **The New Field of Shakespeare Authorship Studies:**
My Shakespeare, by William Leahy (ed.)
The New Oxford Shakespeare, by Gary Taylor et al (eds.)
John Florio: The Man Who Was Shakespeare, by Lamberto Tassinari
Le Vrai Shakespeare, by Chaunes
Reviewed by Don Rubin
- 181 **Early Shakespeare Authorship Doubts**
by Bryan Wildenthal
Reviewed by Chris Pannell
- 187 **Honour Killing in Shakespeare**
by Loraine Fletcher
Reviewed by Ligneus



In Memoriam: Thomas Regnier (1950-2020)

Sadly, the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship has lost one of its leaders, Thomas Regnier, who passed away in Plantation, Florida on April 14 after contracting the coronavirus. During his extensive involvement in the Oxfordian movement, Tom served as Chairman of its Communications Committee, as website editor, as a Board Director and, for four years, as President of the SOF. In 2016 he was named Oxfordian of the Year.

A signal achievement of Tom's tenure was establishing an annual research program funded by grants so that Oxfordian scholars could conduct primary research at the world's leading archives and libraries, from the British Library and Oxford University, to the French National Library and numerous archives in Italy.

As Communications Director, Tom transformed the SOF website into the gateway for all Oxfordian publications, from the early newsletters of the British and American Oxford societies, to private publications such as *The Elizabethan Review*, to more recent SOF efforts such as the *Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship Newsletter*, *Brief Chronicles*, and *The Oxfordian*. This made the SOF website the primary research tool for Oxfordian scholars interested in the Shakespeare authorship question.

Moreover, Tom took a leading role in the reunification of the American Oxfordian movement in 2013 with the merger of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and the Shakespeare Fellowship to form the present SOF.



In Memoriam: Thomas Regnier

Tom also contributed chapters to the books *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* (2013) and *Contested Year* (2016), and published articles and essays on the Shakespeare Authorship Question in *The Oxfordian*, *Brief Chronicles*, *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, and on the SOF website.

Tom's professional career was equally impressive. As an attorney practicing civil and criminal law, Tom won appeals in the Florida Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit, and all five of Florida's District Courts of Appeal. What's more, for five years he operated his own legal firm, Tom Regnier Appeals.

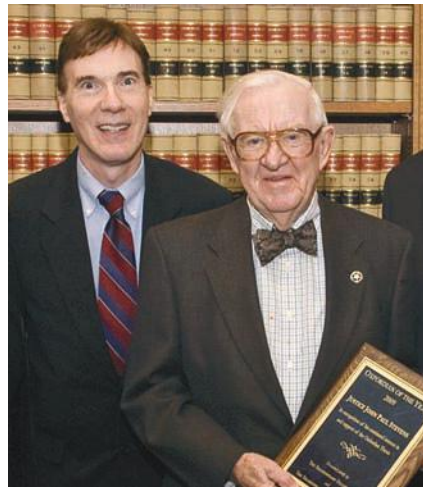
Tom earned his J.D. *summa cum laude* from the University of Miami School of Law and his LL.M. from Columbia Law School, where he was designated a Harlan F. Stone Scholar in recognition of his "superior scholarship." He also served as a judicial law clerk for the Honorable Melvia Green in Florida's Third District Court of Appeal and for the Honorable Harry Leinenweber in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Tom did more than practice the law. He taught as an adjunct professor at the University of Miami School of Law and at Chicago's John Marshall Law School, and his law review articles appeared in the *NYU Journal of Legislation & Public Policy*, *Santa Clara Law Review*, *UMKC Law Review*, and the *Akron Law Review*, among others.

Integrating both of his lifelong passions, Tom taught a course on "Shakespeare and the Law" at University of Miami School of Law and spoke on Shakespeare's legal knowledge at conferences around the United States. In 2016, his talk on "Hamlet and the Law of Homicide" was chosen as one of the inaugural speeches in the Dade County Bar Association's Thurgood Marshall Distinguished Lecture Series.

Tom was politically active in the Libertarian Party of Florida, where he served a term as the organization's state secretary and vice chairman. In 1997–98, Tom managed the Libertarian Party's successful campaign to achieve equal ballot access for minor parties in Florida by amending the state constitution.

To those who knew him personally, Tom was a joy to be with, for his brilliant mind was complemented by a sweet, gentle soul and a delightful sense of humor. We salute his extraordinary life. May it serve all of us in the future.



Thomas Regnier with Justice John Paul Stevens, November 12, 2009, Washington DC, courtesy of Steve Petteway, collection of the Supreme Court of the United States.

From the Editor:

The Oxfordian Hypothesis Gains Academic Acceptance

by Gary Goldstein

The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the publication of J. Thomas Looney’s revolutionary book on the authorship—“*Shakespeare*” *Identified in Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford*. At the same time, the movement can take enormous pride in celebrating a seminal advance: academic publication of Oxfordian research in Canada, Great Britain and the United States for the first time.

Since the authorship of the Shakespeare canon is primarily an intellectual endeavor, the key audience for the issue is the scholarly community in academia, though the theater world also plays a key role as modern-day interpreters of Shakespeare’s 400-year-old corpus.

Honor of place belongs to Palgrave Macmillan for bringing out Michael Wainwright’s book, *The Rational Shakespeare: Peter Ramus, Edward de Vere, and the Question of Authorship*, in 2018, the first published by an academic press that lays out the case for Edward de Vere as the real Shakespeare—and how that transforms our understanding of the plays. Equally important are the author’s bona fides: Wainwright is Associate Lecturer of English and Honorary Research Associate at Royal Holloway, University of London. His previous monographs include *Darwin and Faulkner’s Novels: Evolution and Southern Fiction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), *Toward a Sociobiological Hermeneutic* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), and *Game Theory and Postwar American Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Palgrave Macmillan describes *The Real Shakespeare* as an examination of “William Shakespeare’s rationality from a Ramist perspective, linking that examination to the leading intellectuals of late humanism, and extending those links to the life of Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford. The application to Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets of a game-theoretic hermeneutic, an interpretive approach that Ramism suggests but ultimately evades, strengthens these connections in further supporting the Oxfordian answer to the question of Shakespearean authorship.”

According to the World Catalog of Libraries, the Wainwright book can be found in 150 university libraries in 16 countries, an indication of the subject matter’s growing importance to academics worldwide.

In the United States this year, Cornell University Press published Harvard scholar Don Ostrowski’s book, *Who Wrote That? Authorship Controversies from Moses to Sholokhov*, in Kindle, paperback and hardcover editions. Using Moses, *Analects* of Confucius, the *Secret Gospel of Mark*, Abelard and Heloise, the *Compendium of Chronicles*, Rashid al-Din, William Shakespeare, Prince Andrei Kurbskii, James Macpherson, and Mikhail Sholokov, Ostrowski presents historical and literary evidence in nine cases over the past 2,500 years in an attempt to determine the true authorship of each. In a lengthy chapter on Shakespeare, Ostrowski positively compares the evidence for the 17th Earl of Oxford versus William Shaksper of Stratford as the true author of the Shakespeare canon. To date, 133 libraries in 12 countries stock the book.

Like Wainwright, Ostrowski is an instructor and scholar at a leading university: Research Advisor in the Social Sciences and Lecturer in History at Harvard University’s Extension School. He is also author of more than 150 publications, including his edition of *The Pověst vremennykh lét [Tale of Bygone Years]*, which received the Early Slavic Studies Association Award for Distinguished Scholarship.

A third book by an academic that posits Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford as the true Shakespeare is *Shakespeare Beyond Science: When Poetry Was the World*, published this autumn by Guernica Editions. The author is Sky Gilbert, Professor of English and Theater at the University of Guelph in Canada, who also is an award-winning playwright and novelist as well as a published poet.

Gilbert’s argument is that Oxford was a medievalist who employed rhetoric in his plays and poems as propounded by the ancient Greek philosopher Hermogenes. In an essay published in this issue of *The Oxfordian*, he describes Shakespeare’s intellectual position in light of the evolving spirit of the age: “Shakespeare dared to align himself with a point of view that was in danger of becoming anachronistic. His work was the aesthetic personification of an old, romantic world order that was reluctantly giving way to a new, more pragmatic one, and he waged a valiant, passionate final crusade in the name of medieval rhetoric and chivalry.”

To judge the scholarly achievement of each author, please consult the reviews of all three books in this issue of *The Oxfordian*.

Equally important is the scholarship in Ramon Jiménez's monograph published in this issue, an effort which demonstrates that the anonymous play *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* was actually Shakespeare's first play. A highly detailed presentation employing historical, theatrical and literary evidence, Jiménez's case should compel literary historians to identify Shakespeare as the author of the play and reassess the consensus that Shakespeare did not revise and enlarge upon his early works throughout his career.

Along with these signal achievements is the appearance of new information on J. Thomas Looney and his works recently discovered by independent researcher James Warren—unpublished articles, previously “lost” letters and other data that enlarge the scope of Looney's case for Oxford. Indeed, we are proud to publish five letters by Looney from British journals that defend a crucial part of his literary evidence: the similarity in vocabulary, theme and method of Oxford's early poetry in comparison with Shakespeare's mature work.

Dr. Richard Waugaman delves into Shakespeare's dramatic methodology of using real-life models for communicating to various audiences, including the Queen, in *1 and 2 Henry IV*, investigating whether the comic figure of Sir John Falstaff was based mostly on King Henry VIII, Elizabeth's father.

In “Calgreyhounds and the First Folios of Jonson and Shakespeare,” Michael Hyde examines an entirely different piece of contemporary evidence: the use of heraldry and its emblems in the published works of Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare. In his paper, Hyde seeks to determine if the unique use of calgreyhounds by the 13th, 15th and 16th Earls of Oxford—and their presence in the First Folios of Jonson and Shakespeare—implies that Jonson and the Herbert brothers employed a visual piece of evidence that points to the 17th Earl of Oxford as the real Shakespeare.

I have chosen to reprint two articles in this issue for their evidentiary value, the first from the Spring 2012 issue of *Shakespeare Matters* by Professor Jack Goldstone on the true meaning of the Stratford monument's Latin inscription. The second paper is from the Summer 2015 issue of *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* by Professor Emeritus Andrew Crider on which “Shakespeare” was profiled by Ben Jonson in his memoirs. The Goldstone article reveals the subtle methodology employed for the Shakespeare “cover-up” as applied to the funerary monument in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford. Crider's paper examines whether Ben Jonson's *De Shakespeare Nostrati* is actually a profile of Edward de Vere, based upon the individual psychologies of de Vere and Shakspeare revealed in their biographies.

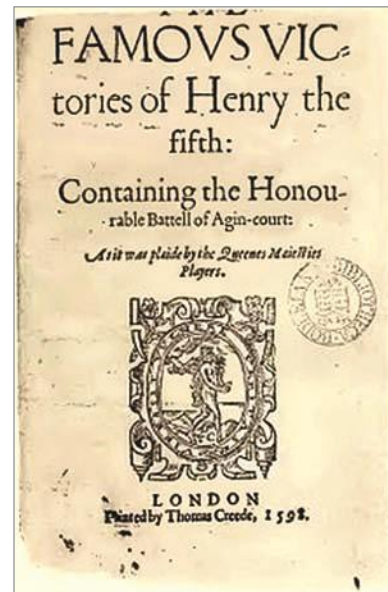


Was The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth Shakespeare's First Play?

by Ramon Jiménez

Since its publication in 1598, the short, anonymous history play *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* has been ignored by nearly all scholars of Elizabethan drama, and roundly disparaged by those who took any notice of it. Except for a single scholar or two, no effort has been made to ascertain its author, its composition date or its subsequent influence. But there is substantial historical, theatrical and literary evidence that it was written by the author of the Shakespeare canon, and that he wrote it in the early 1560s, while still in his teens.

Despite the youth of the author, *Famous Victories* is the most important play to be composed during the first decade of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. It has been called the earliest extant history play to be performed in England, and the first to use the dramatic device of alternating comic scenes and scenes with historical characters (McMillin and MacLean 89; Adams 667; Ribner 74). As such, it is more rightly called a farce within a history play.



Was *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* Shakespeare's First Play?

The play is also significant in that Shakespeare based his finest history plays—*1 and 2 Henry IV*, and *Henry V*—on the structure, plot and historic period of *Famous Victories*. These elements in the play align almost exactly with those of Shakespeare's Prince Hal trilogy, except that each episode in the anonymous play has been rewritten and expanded, and many new ones added. Shakespeare also retained the dramatic device of alternating comic scenes with those containing characters from English history, an innovation that first appeared in *Famous Victories* (Ribner 74).

Famous Victories is historically significant in that it is the earliest extant play that can be attributed to Shakespeare. It is also noteworthy for being the first play other than straightforward comedies to include an important comic subplot, and to pursue that plot throughout the play in alternating scenes. There are nine scenes in *Famous Victories* devoted entirely to the comic subplot (1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 17, 19), eight scenes based on historical events (3, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 20), and three scenes where there is some combination of the two (5, 6, 9). Another feature in the play is the garbled syntax and mispronunciation of English by foreigners, an unusual dramatic device at the time *Famous Victories* was written.

The play is set in the second decade of the fifteenth century, ending with the invasion and defeat of France by Henry V, and the Treaty of Troyes in May 1420. Among the more than forty speaking characters are a dozen comics who cluster around the young Prince Hal, including Sir John Oldcastle (also known as "Jockey"), Ned Poins and Mistress Cobbler. Another prominent character is Richard de Vere, eleventh Earl of Oxford, a close advisor to both kings.

Famous Victories has a poor reputation among literary scholars. It has been described as "crude," "primitive," "almost imbecilic," a "decrepit pot-boiler" and as "a medley of nonsense and ribaldry" (quoted in Pitcher at 5). One succinct judgment was made by J. A. Symonds, who called it "a piece of uncouth, but honest old English upholstery" (378). Its stylistic shortcomings are readily apparent. Another critic called it "heavily formulaic" with "poor verbal quality and abrupt and jerky action" (Maguire 250–51). Repeated ques-

Ramon Jiménez is the author of two books on Julius Caesar and the Roman Republic, *Caesar Against the Celts* and *Caesar Against Rome*, both book club selections. A lifelong Oxfordian since reading *This Star of England* in his last year of high school, Jiménez has published more than thirty articles and reviews in *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* and *The Oxfordian*. His particular interest has been to demonstrate that several anonymous plays, none attributed to Shakespeare, were actually Oxford's earliest versions of seven canonical plays. He published the evidence for this claim in *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship* in 2018. Jiménez has a degree in English from UCLA and lives in Berkeley, California.

tions are used to establish identity, place and situation, and there is a total lack of subtlety and nuance. The play is replete with empty oaths, redundant declarations and observations that refer to action already in progress. Confusing stage directions and speech prefixes and abrupt dialogue suggest a novice playwright.

Nevertheless, *Famous Victories* must have been a popular play. Reissued in 1617, it was one of the few anonymous plays, other than Shakespeare's, that were printed more than once. Its prose has been described as "forceful and straightforward, close to the language of the common folk, and easy and conversational in tone..." (Clemen 194–95). "For all its acknowledgement of the horror of war there is nothing in *Henry V* that catches the stench of a battlefield so acutely as the scene in *Famous Victories* in which one of the clowns steals shoes from dead French soldiers" (Leggatt 16). There are only three speeches that exceed twenty lines, and the plot moves at a rapid tempo. The comic subplot is well-integrated with the main plot in the first half, but then disintegrates into unrelated episodes. The characters do not develop, except that Prince Hal suddenly ceases his bad behavior and abandons his riotous comrades once he becomes King, just as he does in *2 Henry IV*.

The Plot

Famous Victories opens early in 1413, as Prince Hal and his companions, Sir John Oldcastle, Ned Poins, Cutbert Cutter and Tom, have just ambushed and robbed two of the King's receivers of a thousand pounds at Gads Hill in Kent. A second robbery, of two carriers, is then committed at the same location by Cutter. The four then retire to celebrate at an "old tavern in Eastcheap." After "a bloody fray" at the tavern, the Sheriff arrives and arrests them all, including Prince Hal.

At court the following day, the Lord Chief Justice finds the thief, Cutbert Cutter, guilty of robbing the carriers, and says he must be executed. Prince Hal, who has already been released, objects to the verdict and demands that "my man" be freed. When the Justice refuses, the Prince "gives him a box on the ear," and the Justice commits him to the Fleet. After another comic scene, Prince Hal is free again and, impatient to wear the crown himself, visits his father, the King, who is ill and severely distressed with his son's behavior. After enduring a tearful rebuke by the King, Prince Hal repents of all his bad behavior, calling himself "an unworthy son for so good a father," and vows to abandon his "vile and reprobate" companions. Before they part, he begs forgiveness and proclaims that he is "born new again," as the King pardons him.

Two comic scenes later, Henry IV is on his deathbed in the Jerusalem Chamber in Westminster Abbey when Prince Hal enters, finds him asleep and, thinking him dead, takes the crown and leaves. When the King awakens

Was *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* Shakespeare's First Play?

and finds the crown missing, he sends the Earl of Oxford to find it. When Oxford returns with the Prince and the crown, the King rebukes his son, who declares himself unworthy, and again begs forgiveness. The King quickly pardons him, puts the crown in his son's hands, and dies.

Sir John Oldcastle and his companions greet the new King Henry V with great familiarity, but he urges them to change their way of life as he has his, and then orders them to keep a distance of ten miles from him. The remaining scenes of the play focus on Henry's negotiations with French diplomats, and subsequent invasion of France, interspersed with three comic episodes on the battlefield of Agincourt. Henry V defeats the French and, as he demands the French throne, proposes marriage to Katherine, the French King's daughter. In the final scene, which takes place in May 1420, Henry is designated heir to the throne of France, and his coming marriage to Katherine is announced.

Famous Victories and the Prince Hal Plays

Among Shakespeare scholars, there are roughly four opinions about the relationship between *Famous Victories* and the Prince Hal trilogy:

1. *Famous Victories* is a garbled or abridged version of an earlier play or plays about Prince Hal that was also a source of Shakespeare's trilogy.
2. *Famous Victories* was itself derived from Shakespeare's trilogy—either by memorial reconstruction, or by deliberate abridgement or “dumbing down” for the public theater, or for a provincial production.
3. *Famous Victories* was by another playwright and was a source for Shakespeare's Prince Hal trilogy.
4. Shakespeare wrote *Famous Victories* himself at an early age, and later expanded it into his trilogy. It is this position that is supported in the pages that follow.

Most orthodox scholars contend that *Famous Victories* was by another playwright, and was a source for Shakespeare's Prince Hal trilogy, but there is no agreement about that playwright's identity. Scholars also differ widely about how much Shakespeare used *Famous Victories*. Some say his use was minor, and that his principal source was Rafael Holinshed's *Chronicles*, published in 1577 and reissued in an expanded version in 1587 (Chambers, *William Shakespeare* 1:383, 395; Norwich 139). But many others, such as Geoffrey Bullough, say his debt was substantial (4:167–68), and John Dover Wilson wrote that “a very intimate connection of some kind exists between Shakespeare's plays and this old text” (“Origins” 3). David Scott Kastan wrote that Shakespeare “found the focus of the play [*1 Henry IV*] in the anonymous *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*” (342).

In the most recent Arden edition of *2 Henry IV* (2016), James C. Bulman calls *Famous Victories* “enormously influential on Shakespeare’s Henry IV plays,” and devotes half-a-dozen pages to detailing the incidents and language that he took from it (14–15, 128–33). In 1954 an obscure American scholar, Ephraim Everitt, attributed *Famous Victories* to Shakespeare, but supplied only general evidence (171–72). Seven years later, Seymour M. Pitcher published a full-scale study of the play, attributing it to Shakespeare and describing in detail its similarity to the Prince Hal plays. His findings are a major source for this introduction.

The connections between *Famous Victories* and the Prince Hal plays are legion, and range from structure and plot to characters, and from language and style to dramatic devices.

Structure and Plot

The fifty-seven scenes in the three Prince Hal plays are a natural expansion of the twenty scenes in *Famous Victories*. The first scene of *Famous Victories* matches the second scene of *1 Henry IV*, and the last scene of *Famous Victories*, in which Henry V woos the French Princess Katherine, matches the last scene in *Henry V*, in which he does the same thing. Thus, the anonymous play might be seen as a rudimentary skeleton within the full body of the trilogy.

The following plot elements occur in both *Famous Victories* and in the Prince Hal trilogy:¹

- the robbery of the King’s receivers at Gads Hill in Kent (*Famous Victories*, sc. 1; *1 Henry IV* II.ii).
- the meeting of the robbers in an Eastcheap tavern (*Famous Victories*, sc. 2; *1 Henry IV* II.iv).
- Prince Hal’s “box on the ear” of the Chief Justice (*Famous Victories*, sc. 4; referred to in *2 Henry IV*, I.ii.52–53 and I.ii.187–88).
- the Chief Justice’s commitment of Prince Hal to prison (*Famous Victories*, sc. 4; referred to in *2 Henry IV* at I.ii.52–53 and V.ii.67–79).
- the Prince’s visit to his sick father (*Famous Victories*, sc. 6; *1 Henry IV* III.ii).
- the reconciliation of the newly-crowned King Henry V with the Chief Justice (*Famous Victories*, sc. 9; *2 Henry IV* V.ii.101–39).
- Prince Hal’s former comic companions expecting favors from the new King (*Famous Victories*, Scs. 5 and 9; *2 Henry IV* V.iii.120–35).
- the new King’s rejection of his former companions (*Famous Victories*, sc. 9; *2 Henry IV* V.v.46–70).

Was *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* Shakespeare's First Play?

- the rigorous defense of Henry's right to the crown of France by the Archbishop of Canterbury (*Famous Victories*, sc. 9; *Henry V* I.ii.33–95.).
- the gift of tennis balls from the Dolphin (*Famous Victories*, sc. 9; *Henry V* I.ii.259).
- Henry's reply that he will respond with balls of brass and iron—gunstones (cannon balls) in *Henry V* (*Famous Victories*, sc. 9; *Henry V* I.ii.281–85).
- the episode of forced military recruitment (*Famous Victories*, sc. 10; 2 *Henry IV* III.ii).
- the overconfidence of the French about the coming conflict with England (*Famous Victories*, scs. 11 and 13; *Henry V* II.iv.14–28).
- the refusal of the French King to allow his son, the Dolphin, to fight at Agincourt (*Famous Victories*, sc. 11; *Henry V* III.v.64).
- Derick's encounter with a French soldier (*Famous Victories*, sc. 17; Pistol's in *Henry V* IV.iv.).
- the comics' conversation on the battlefield about returning to England (*Famous Victories*, sc. 19; *Henry V* V.i).
- the courting of the French Princess Katherine by the victorious Henry V (*Famous Victories*, scs. 18 and 20; *Henry V* V.ii.99–277).

Not only are all these plot elements common to *Famous Victories* and the Prince Hal plays, they all occur roughly in the same order. One additional similarity between *Famous Victories* and *Henry V* is the complete absence of the historical Henry V's second campaign in France from 1417 to 1420. As one scholar put it, "Shakespeare's trilogy emulates the stagecraft" and follows "exactly the contour" of *Famous Victories* (Clare 113).

Besides the plot elements listed above, there are several dozen specific details of action and characterization that appear in both *Famous Victories* and in Shakespeare's trilogy. For example, the character "Gads Hill" involved in the robbery; Gads Hill as the place of the robbery; the Chief Justice's defense of his sending the Prince to prison; the meetings between Henry V and the French herald; the defiant Henry V telling the French herald that his only ransom will be his worthless dead body; Henry V's assurance that the French Ambassador may speak his mind; Henry V's naming of the battle after the nearby castle; and Henry V's requirement of an oath of fealty from the Duke of Burgundy. The French Captain's claim that the English soldier is lost without "his warm bed and stale drink" (*Famous Victories*, sc. 13) is echoed at III.vii in *Henry V*, where the Duke of Orleans and the Constable of France assure each other that the English cannot fight without beef.

The key interaction between Henry IV and his son is structured in the same way in the *Henry IV* plays as it is in *Famous Victories*. In both versions, Prince Hal reassures his father that he has reformed himself and abandoned his previous misbehavior. But then, in scene 8 of *Famous Victories*, and in IV.v of *2 Henry IV*, he takes the crown from his sleeping father's pillow and leaves the chamber. When the King awakens, he is alarmed that the crown is gone and sends Oxford in *Famous Victories*, Warwick in *2 Henry IV*, to find it. In both plays, Prince Hal is found with the crown and brought back to his father's chamber, where he delivers a lengthy speech of apology and repentance and is immediately forgiven by the King. Again, not only are all these specific details common to both, they occur in the same order.

In addition to the above similarities, there are several incidents and passages of dialogue attributed to historical characters in Shakespeare's Prince Hal trilogy for which there is little or no evidence in the more than twenty historical chronicles available at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. However, many of them appear in *Famous Victories*—the most notable being the scene in which Henry woos the French princess Katherine in the last act of *Henry V*.

The most important structural similarity among the four plays is the alternation of comic scenes with those based on historical events. Twelve of the twenty scenes in *Famous Victories* are fully or partially populated by comics. A comic subplot reappears in each of the plays in the canonical trilogy, nineteen of the fifty-seven scenes in the three plays being fully occupied by comics, and eight others containing some comic material, an arrangement very much like that in *Famous Victories*. But the six canonical history plays that Shakespeare wrote after completing *Famous Victories* contain no comic subplots, and just a handful of humorous lines. This is further support for the claim that the playwright took *Famous Victories* as his source and template for the Prince Hal trilogy.²

Characters

Nearly all the characters in *Famous Victories* reappear in the same roles in one or more of the Prince Hal plays, including seven of the eight English officials and aristocrats, and five of the six French nobility, including King Charles VI, his son the "Dolphin" and Princess Katherine. The Archbishop of Bourges is replaced by an unnamed secular Ambassador.

Most of the comic characters are carried over, and several are exactly duplicated. For the most part, the characters who reappear in the Prince Hal plays say and do the same things that they say and do in *Famous Victories*. The most prominent comic characters in *Famous Victories* who reappear in the Prince Hal plays are Ned (Edward Poins in *1* and *2 Henry IV*), Mistress Coblentz (Mistress Quickly in *1* and *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*), and the Sir John

Oldcastle and Derick characters, who are combined and transformed into Sir John Falstaff. As the main character in all four plays, Prince Hal's interaction in *Famous Victories* with his comic companions, with his generals, with the French royalty and nobility, and with Princess Katherine are in large part duplicated, but greatly enhanced and enlarged, in the Folio trilogy.³

The interactions between Prince Hal and his father in *1 Henry IV* (III.ii) and in *2 Henry IV* (IV.v) are the same as in scenes 6 and 8 of *Famous Victories*, except that Shakespeare rewrote them as extended conversations. But most of the details remain—the music that soothes the King, the King dozing as the Prince takes the crown, the repentance of the Prince as he weeps and returns it, and his promise to safeguard it when he is king. In the words of one editor, “The death-bed scene, above all, shows a kinship [with *Famous Victories*] of conception and even of phrasing, though not of quality.”⁴

Henry V's cousin, Edward, Duke of York, appears briefly in scenes 9 and 12 of *Famous Victories*. In scene 12, he requests and is granted command of the vanguard at Agincourt, and three scenes later is reported as a casualty of the battle. In his only two lines in *Henry V* (IV.iii.129–30), he makes the same request, and is later reported killed in IV.viii. Henry V's uncle, Thomas Beaufort, whom he created Duke of Exeter after Agincourt, speaks only four lines in *Famous Victories*, but his role is greatly expanded in *Henry V*.

Richard de Vere, eleventh Earl of Oxford. Aside from the Lord Chief Justice and the two Henrys, the eleventh Earl of Oxford speaks more than any other historical character—eighteen times in seven scenes. He is the first historical character to speak, except for Prince Hal, and he speaks only to Henry IV or to Prince Hal, who is crowned King between the eighth and ninth scenes. More than that, in *Famous Victories* de Vere has been elevated to the place of principal counselor to both Henrys, even though the chronicles report that York, Exeter and the Earl of Westmoreland acted in that capacity. Oxford is beside Henry IV in the most intimate moments between the King and his son. In scenes 3 and 5, he is with the King when the Sheriff and the Mayor arrive, and with him when Prince Hal arrives in his “cloak so full of needles.” In scene 8, he and Exeter enter the Jerusalem Chamber while the King is sleeping, after Prince Hal has left with the crown. When the King awakens, Oxford exits and returns with the Prince and the crown, and listens while the Prince explains himself and returns the crown. With Exeter and Prince Hal, he is at the King's bedside when he dies.

Oxford remains as close to the new King Henry V as he had to his father. In scene 9, he is beside him when he admonishes Ned, Tom and Oldcastle to change their behavior, and bans them from his presence. At the King's request, he gives his advice to invade France rather than Scotland, advice the King follows. Two years later, on the field at Agincourt, Oxford asks the King to “give me the vanguard in the battle,” but Henry has already assigned

it to his uncle, the Duke of York. In scene 14, he advises the King on the enemy's strength, and then offers to take charge of the archers, a request that the King grants—"With all my heart, my good Lord of Oxford." He is again at his side at the end of the battle, when the King shouts, "our swords are almost drunk with French blood," after which Oxford informs him that more than 12,000 French have been slain.

None of these actions or conversations are reported in any chronicle. Oxford has been placed in an entirely unhistorical role created for him by the playwright. In fact, the eleventh Earl of Oxford is mentioned only twice in Hall's *Chronicle*, the principal source of the play, and only once by Holinshed. Neither writer assigns to him any of the actions he takes or words he speaks in the play, except to say that he was present when Henry landed in France and was with him at Agincourt.⁵ This is the first appearance of an Earl of Oxford in any play, but he is the only English aristocrat in *Famous Victories* who is entirely absent from all the Prince Hal plays.

Sir John Falstaff. Of the ten comics in *Famous Victories*, Shakespeare combined two—Sir John Oldcastle and Derick—to create Sir John Falstaff, his most memorable comic figure. Derick appears in six scenes and speaks more than 170 lines in *Famous Victories*, but he and Oldcastle never appear in the same scene, suggesting to some scholars that they were played by the same person (Fiehler 25; Bevington 32). Between them, they appear in nine of the play's twenty scenes, and display the same characteristics, say many of the same things, and interact with other characters in the same way, as Falstaff in the two *Henry IV* plays. The Oldcastle/Derick character bears the same relationship to Prince Hal in *Famous Victories* that Falstaff bears to him in Shakespeare's revisions. In the words of one scholar, "A superficial examination of the two plays [*Famous Victories* and *1 Henry IV*] will show that in each we have a swaggering soldier, in service against his will, aggressive when his enemies are unarmed, and in flight when they are armed; in each he is a coward, braggart, glutton, thief, rogue, clown and parasite; in each he has the same monumental unblushing effrontery and loves a jest even at his own expense" (Monaghan 358). Furthermore, in *Famous Victories* Sir John Oldcastle is a close companion of Prince Hal, and tends to lead him into mischief, the same role played by Falstaff in the *Henry IV* plays. As Robert Weimann suggests, if Kemp acted the part of Falstaff, "he must have done so in much the same way as Tarlton had played Derick in the Chief Justice scene in *Famous Victories*" (191).

As described above, the Oldcastle of *Famous Victories* and Falstaff in II.ii of *1 Henry IV* both participate with several others in a robbery on Gads Hill, although in the latter play Falstaff and three others are then robbed by Ned Poins and Prince Hal. In Shakespeare's revision, Prince Hal and his companions then exchange accounts in an Eastcheap tavern about the two robberies that have just taken place. Falstaff claims that after he and the others robbed

Was *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* Shakespeare's First Play?

the King's receivers, he was set upon by eleven men, and that he drove off seven of them. Prince Hal replies that only he and Poins assaulted Falstaff and his three companions, and that Falstaff fled without a fight. He accuses Falstaff of hacking his sword to make it look as if he used it to defend himself, and Peto later confirms it. Bardolph reports that Falstaff told them to "tickle our noses with spear-grass, to make them bleed" (II.iv). In scene 19 of *Famous Victories*, Derick's boasts and tricks on the battlefield of Agincourt are nearly identical with those of Falstaff after he and his companions have been robbed by Poins and Prince Hal in *1 Henry IV*. Derick brags to John Cobbler that he was "four or five times slain" and that he was called "the bloody soldier amongst them all" because "Every day when I went into the field I would take a straw and thrust it into my nose and make my nose bleed..."

In a conversation with Oldcastle in scene 5 of *Famous Victories*, Prince Hal notes the prevalence "nowadays" of prisons, hanging and whippings, and adds "But I tell you, sirs, when I am King we shall have no such things" (14–15). In *1 Henry IV*, Falstaff asks of Prince Hal, "Shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king?" Hal's reply suggests that hangings will be rare (I.ii.56–65). Both Oldcastle in *Famous Victories* (scene 5) and Falstaff in *1 Henry IV* (I.ii) expect that they will prosper when Prince Hal becomes king. Both welcome King Henry's death, but both are among the group that is rejected by the new King Henry.



From George Cruikshank's illustrations for a book entitled *The Life of Sir John Falstaff*, published in 1858, "Falstaff, enacting the part of the king".

In scene 7 of *Famous Victories*, Derick complains bitterly about the meal prepared for him by Mistress Cobbler and calls her a knave and a whore. They clash again in scene 10 and physically assault each other. In Act III of *1 Henry IV*, Falstaff and Mistress Quickly argue at length about money he owes her for food and wine. He calls her “Dame Partlet,” a traditional name for a scolding woman, questions her honesty, and suggests that she is a prostitute (III.iii).

Some scholars have attempted to associate Falstaff with one or the other of two historical figures who were prominent in early 15th-century England. The historical Sir John Oldcastle was a friend of Henry V but turned against him and against the Catholic establishment of England and embraced Lollardy, a religious and political movement that advocated a major reform of Western Christianity. In 1408 he married Joan de la Pole, fourth Baroness Cobham, and in consequence, bore the nominal title of Lord Cobham. In 1414 he led a Lollard rebellion that was easily put down and after being excommunicated, imprisoned and then escaping, he was eventually recaptured, tried, and convicted of treason and heresy. He suffered an especially gruesome execution in 1417, being hanged in chains and burnt (Corbin and Sedge 2–6). By the mid-16th century, he was among the pantheon of Protestant martyrs, and was depicted as such in an adulatory biography by John Bale in 1544 (1–59) and in John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* in 1563 (3:321–401).

The record is clear that in his revision and expansion of *Famous Victories*, Shakespeare retained the name Oldcastle in *1 Henry IV* (Taylor, “Richard James” 341). But the prevailing opinion is that he was pressured to change it by a person “descended from his title,” ostensibly William Brooke, tenth Lord Cobham, who was a favorite of Elizabeth and, for a short time, in 1596–97, her Lord Chamberlain. The connection between Oldcastle and William Brooke was extremely tenuous, however, the former being the stepfather of the great-great-great-grandmother of the latter (Gibson 102). Some assert that the pressure came from prominent Elizabethan Protestants, who were outraged at Shakespeare’s portrayal of one of their revered heroes (Corbin and Sedge 9–12; Pendleton 66). The latter claim is more likely, since the appearance of Oldcastle on the stage in two popular plays—*Famous Victories* and *1 Henry IV*—prompted at least two responses in defense of him—*Sir John Oldcastle* (1600), written by Michael Drayton and others, and a poem by John Weever, *The Mirror of Martyrs* (1601).

The other historical character who has been linked to Falstaff was Sir John Fastolf (1380–1459), a soldier and landowner who accompanied Henry V during his wars in France, fought at Agincourt, and was made a Knight of the Garter in 1426. In mid-career he was accused of cowardice after losing a

battle against the French but was eventually exonerated. A Sir John Fastolfe appears briefly in *1 Henry VI*, where he is depicted as a coward (III.ii.105–08), but there is otherwise no description of him. Neither of these men resembles the fat comic and faux soldier in Shakespeare's plays.

In light of the evidence presented in "The Date," below, it is hard to imagine a teenage Oxford, raised as a Protestant, deliberately satirizing a 15th century Protestant martyr. It may be that the slightly humorous name "Oldcastle" appealed to him as a name for his slightly humorous knight/comic. He appears in only one scene and speaks only eight lines in *Famous Victories*. (Under the name "Jockey," colloquial for "John," he speaks only another twenty-three lines.) This thinly drawn portrait of the double-named Oldcastle/Jockey character can hardly be called a serious satire, or even a recognizable portrait, of Sir John Oldcastle. It suggests confusion or carelessness on the part of the author, rather than purpose.

It may be that Oxford came across the name "Fastolf" and found that by rearranging the letters he would have a perfect name for a failing or retreating soldier, a soldier whose staff or banner is falling. And in *1 Henry IV*, he took the opportunity to flesh out, as it were, a portrait of a *miles gloriosus*, a boastful, cowardly, sometime soldier—a stock comic character who appeared first in Greek drama, and then in the Latin comedies of Plautus and Terence. Both Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* and Terence's *Eunuchus* contained *miles gloriosus* (swaggering soldier) characters, and both were performed on Elizabethan stages, *Eunuchus* at Queens' College, Cambridge in 1564 (Smith 58) and *Miles Gloriosus* before Queen Elizabeth in January 1565 by the Children of Westminster (Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage* 3:20). On the basis of these facts, it is clear that Falstaff is not a historical figure, but a character derived from a composite of Sir John Oldcastle and Derick in *Famous Victories* (Satin 215, n. 2; Bullough 4:171).

Edward Pains. The Edward Pains of the two *Henry IV* plays is identical with the Ned of *Famous Victories*. In all three plays, Prince Hal repeatedly calls him "Ned," and in both *Famous Victories* and *1 Henry IV* they carry out a robbery together at Gads Hill. In *Famous Victories*, they are joined by Tom and Sir John Oldcastle in a robbery of the King's receivers. In *1 Henry IV*, after Oldcastle/Falstaff and three others have robbed and bound the "travelers," Pains and the Prince rob them.⁶ In all three plays, Pains speaks familiarly to Prince Hal and is his closest companion.

In scene 9 of *Famous Victories*, Pains suggests to the new King Henry V that he does not grieve over his father's death. Henry then admonishes him to "mend thy manners," and tells him that he must "change" in the same way as *he* has. In a long conversation between them in *2 Henry IV*, Pains calls the new King a hypocrite for pretending to grieve over his father's illness.

Henry responds coolly and suggests that it is the “vile company” of Falstaff and Poins that has caused him to appear unmoved by his father’s illness (II.ii.28–55).

Although a Poins family was prominent in the early fifteenth century, no member of it was a close associate of Prince Hal either before or after he became Henry V. The Poins of the Shakespeare plays is a replica of the Poins of *Famous Victories*, and neither is a historical character.

Mistress Quickly. The literary ancestor of the Mistress Quickly in the two *Henry IV* plays is Mistress Cobbler, the wife of John Cobbler in *Famous Victories*. Both women are members of the group of comics associated with Prince Hal before and after he becomes King. In scene 7 of *Famous Victories*, Mistress Cobbler engages in the dispute described above over a meal with Derick. Mistress Quickly has a similar dispute with Falstaff about the bill for his food and wine in *1 Henry IV* (III.iii.65–82). In all three plays, the Oldcastle/Derick/Falstaff character insults and slanders the woman who has served him food. In scene 10 of *Famous Victories*, after Derick and Mistress Cobbler have assaulted each other, he threatens to “clap the law” on her back, and suggests to the recruiting Captain that he “press her for a soldier.” In *2 Henry IV*, Mistress Quickly attempts to have Falstaff arrested for debt, and they exchange mutual threats (II.i).

It is clear that Shakespeare has, in the two *Henry IV* plays, simply re-used and renamed the female foil to the Oldcastle/Derick character in *Famous Victories*. He has broadened her role considerably and made her a more believable character, but retained her behavior, her language and her relationship with the fat knight.

Ralph Mouldy and Francis Feeble. James C. Bulman called attention to two characters in *Famous Victories* who might have inspired a scene and contributed to the behavior of two comics in Shakespeare’s revision (133). In scene 10 of *Famous Victories*, “a captain conscripts two clowns for the wars in France, one of whom, John Cobbler, like Mouldy in *2 Henry IV*, claims that he has too much to do, and begs to be allowed to stay at home, while the other, Derick, like Feeble in the same play, is willing to do his patriotic duty” (III.ii).

Language and Dramatic Devices

Individual words and phrases, images, ideas and dramatic devices in *Famous Victories* reappear throughout Shakespeare’s three Prince Hal plays, and in most cases they are associated with the same character or situation as in the earlier play. Nor are they limited to one type of character. They appear in the conversations among the comics; in Henry IV’s comments about his illness

Was *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* Shakespeare's First Play?

and his seizure of the crown; in Henry V's response to the Dauphin's gift of tennis balls; in his remarks on the battlefield in France; in his triumphal scene in the French court; and in the scenes in which he courts Katherine, the daughter of Charles VI.

The text of *Famous Victories* is almost entirely in prose. In the six earliest history plays in the accepted canon (the first tetralogy, *Richard II* and *King John*), Shakespeare wrote primarily in verse—prose accounting for no more than seventeen per cent of the lines in *2 Henry VI*, and less or none in the other five. But in the three Prince Hal plays, prose accounts for forty-seven, fifty-three and forty per cent, respectively, of each play's total lines (Campbell and Quinn 932). These facts supply further evidence that in composing the Prince Hal plays Shakespeare worked from a copy of *Famous Victories*, and largely returned to his earlier use of prose.

An unusual dramatic device that Shakespeare introduced in *Famous Victories*—a parodic re-enactment of an earlier episode, reappears in *1 Henry IV*. After receiving a box on the ear from the Prince in scene 4, the Lord Chief Justice commits him to the Fleet (116–50). Later in the scene, Derick and John Cobbler re-enact the exchange, including the box on the ear, John Cobbler taking the part of the Lord Chief Justice, and Derick that of Prince Hal. They follow this with another thirty or so lines of comic banter before exiting the stage.

Shakespeare omitted this particular episode from *1 Henry IV* when he rewrote *Famous Victories*, merely referring to, but not dramatizing, the box on the ear. But in its place, at the same point in the story, he inserted a comic dialogue between Prince Hal and Falstaff to “practice an answer” to King Henry's expected interrogation of the Prince. In II.iv, Falstaff takes the role of King Henry as he reproves his son for his bad behavior, and at the same time remarks upon the “cheerful look” and “noble carriage” of a certain corpulent companion of his (II.iv.376–82). They eventually exchange places and continue the drollery until they are interrupted by the Sheriff (383–481).

A similar scene appears in III.vi of *King Lear*, when Lear, Edgar and the Fool prepare to stage a mock trial of Goneril and Regan. The connection among the plays is evidenced by strikingly similar language in all three scenes. Half-a-dozen words—*justice/justicer, sit, chair, took/taken, cushion, stand, joined stool*—appear in two or more of them. The device of characters in a play pretending to take different roles, which Shakespeare introduced in his earliest play, was something that he repeatedly used throughout the canon.

Another distinctive device in *Famous Victories* is the garbled syntax and mispronunciation of English by foreigners. Scene 13 consists entirely of a comical conversation among three French soldiers, a drummer, and a Captain. Although the Captain speaks perfect English, the others misuse *me* for *I*,

sh for *ch* and *t* for *th*. Shakespeare re-used this device several times in *Henry V*, first in a similar exchange among four soldiers in Henry's army about the tactics of siege warfare that becomes a celebration of the comic mispronunciation of English (III.ii). Two scenes later (III.iv) Princess Katherine and her servant Agnes engage in a dialogue in which Katherine's misunderstanding and mispronunciation of English culminate in a bilingual sexual pun. Again, in V.ii, she attempts a conversation in English with Henry V in which her mispronunciation of English reaches its comic zenith.

The Author

Nearly all scholars of the period insist that the author of *Famous Victories* is unknown, but several have proposed such authors as Richard Tarlton, who performed in the play (Fleay 67; Hopkinson viii–ix), Henry Evans (Scoufos 179) and Robert Greene (Brockbank 150). But none of these scholars provided more than perfunctory evidence. H.D. Sykes concluded that *Famous Victories* and the prose scenes in *The Taming of a Shrew* had a common author—Samuel Rowley (49–78). But both plays date to the 1560s, and Rowley appears to have been born about 1570.

In 1928, *The Review of English Studies* published an article by B.M. Ward in which he suggested that the play was written late in 1574 by Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, who was repeatedly cited as an outstanding playwright, but whose name is not associated with a single play. He argued that Oxford wrote the play “as a Court masque” that he “presented to the Queen” a few months after he had secretly and without her permission traveled to the continent, where it was rumored that he planned to join an insurrection. An angry Queen sent one of her pensioners to bring him back, and he returned after about a month. Further associating the play with this episode, Ward also suggested that Oxford wrote *Famous Victories* as an act of contrition, and portrayed himself as Prince Hal, who had misbehaved and defied his father, then repented and was forgiven. As it happened, Oxford met with the Queen and was forgiven.

Ward based his claim of Oxford's authorship on two striking features of the play—the unduly prominent role of the historically obscure eleventh Earl of Oxford, and the parallel between the two robberies in the play at Gads Hill near Rochester and a similar attack on the same highway by three of Oxford's servants in May 1573.⁷ Although he was among the most prominent and active Oxfordians of the time, Ward did not, in this article, claim that Oxford wrote the Shakespeare canon, nor did he assign *Famous Victories* to Shakespeare. Oxfordian scholars E.T. Clark (9–10) and Charlton Ogburn (423–25) subsequently endorsed his claim and agreed with his date. The evidence that he wrote it some ten years earlier is supplied in the next section.

Was *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* Shakespeare's First Play?

Edward de Vere was brought up in a family with a long history of theatrical activities, beginning as early as 1490. His grandfather, the fifteenth Earl, employed the Protestant convert and dramatist John Bale (1495–1563) to write more than a dozen plays for him in the early 1530s (Harris 75). The sixteenth Earl, John de Vere, patronized the Earl of Oxford's Men, a playing company that flourished from the 1540s until about 1563. The seventeenth Earl revived the company in 1580, and it played at court and in the provinces until 1602 (Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage* 2:99–102).

Tutored privately in the home of the scholar and diplomat Sir Thomas Smith from the age of four, de Vere entered Queens' College, Cambridge in October 1558 at the age of eight. In September 1562, on the death of his father, the twelve-year-old was removed from his family's castle in rural Essex and placed in wardship at the London home of William Cecil, Master of the Wards and Queen Elizabeth's Secretary of State.

The strongest evidence that Oxford wrote *Famous Victories* lies in his demonstrated authorship of the subsequent Shakespeare canon. In brief, the case for Oxford as the author of that canon is comprised of four lines of evidence:

- Oxford's contemporaries publicly praised his skill as a poet and a playwright throughout his life, but no play or playlist bears his name.
- Oxford's biography is incorporated in the Shakespeare plays in terms of incident, plot and characterization.
- Oxford's early poetry is used in the Shakespeare canon, and the language in Oxford's private letters can be found throughout the poems and plays.
- Oxford's travels to France and Italy are reflected in a dozen Shakespeare plays in terms of geography, language and culture.

The details of this evidence can be found in any of the half-dozen treatments of the authorship question, the most complete being Ogburn's *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. Further evidence of Oxford's authorship of *Famous Victories* appears below. But aside from Seymour Pitcher and the critic Eric Sams (180), no orthodox Shakespeare scholars accept *Famous Victories* as a Shakespeare play. In *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*, Irving Ribner wrote that "the suggestion... that the play represents an early work by William Shakespeare need scarcely be taken seriously" (68). Samuel Schoenbaum called it "a preposterous thesis" (167). But neither scholar offered any rebuttal to the evidence for Shakespeare's authorship, nor any evidence for another author.

The Date

The earliest surviving evidence of the existence of *Famous Victories* is a sentence in Thomas Nashe's pamphlet *Pierce Penilesse*, published in 1592:

what a glorious thing it is to have Henrie the fifth represented on the Stage, leading the French king prisoner, and forcing both him and the Dolphin to swear fealty. (87–88)

The reference is to the final scene in *Famous Victories*, in which Henry V, having been victorious at Agincourt, demands that all the French nobles “be sworn to be true to me.” Some scholars claim that the reference must have been to a different play because in both Quartos of *Famous Victories* it was the Duke of Burgundy, not the French king who was forced to swear fealty to Henry V (Morgan 5, 11; Taylor, ed. *Henry V* 4). Others agree that the reference is to *Famous Victories*, but that Nashe simply misremembered the characters.

Two pages later, Nashe praised “Tarlton, Ned Allen, Knell, Bentlie,” suggesting that the play he saw was a performance of *Famous Victories* staged by the Queen's Men at the Bull Inn in Bishopsgate. This performance is referred to in a passage in the 1611 edition of *Tarlton's Jestes* (quoted by Pitcher at 180–81) that contains an anecdote about Tarlton playing the Lord Chief Justice and Derick, and William Knell playing Henry V, in “a play of Henry the Fifth.” Since Knell died in June 1587 and Tarlton in 1588, the performance can be safely dated to the spring of 1587 or earlier.

Thomas Creede registered *Famous Victories* in 1594 and printed it in 1598, but there is no direct evidence of the play's composition date. The date I propose—1562–63—is based on statements of Oxford's contemporaries about his creative activities and level of education, and on the location of the play with respect to the remainder of the Shakespeare canon.

In a June 1563 letter to Cecil, Oxford's tutor, Laurence Nowell, wrote, “I clearly see that my work for the Earl of Oxford cannot much longer be required,” suggesting that the Anglo-Saxon scholar could teach the thirteen-year-old nothing more (Ward, *Seventeenth Earl* 20). In March of the following year, Oxford's uncle, Arthur Golding, dedicated one of his translations to him. Among other complimentary remarks, Golding praised him for his “desire... to read, peruse and communicate with others, as well, the histories of ancient times, and things done long ago... and that not without a certain pregnancy of wit and ripeness of understanding” (Chiljan 6–7). Since Oxford was neither a teacher of history nor a writer of historical chronicles, this suggests that the teenager was writing dramatizations of history for the entertainment of others.

Was *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* Shakespeare's First Play?

We also know that Oxford was writing competent poetry before the age of sixteen, some of which was published at the time, and is still anthologized today (Ogburn 585). Such precocity is unusual, but not unheard of. There are many examples of substantial literary works produced by teenagers. For instance, Madame de Staël wrote a play, *The Inconveniences of Parisian Life*, at age twelve. Both Victor Hugo and Alfred Tennyson wrote five-act plays at age fourteen. Tennyson's play—*The Devil and the Lady*—an imitation of an Elizabethan comedy, is the same length as *Famous Victories*. When it was finally published in 1930, *The Times* reviewer called it “astonishingly mature.”⁸ So, it is entirely believable that Oxford was capable of writing *Famous Victories* in his early teen years.

The remaining evidence for a composition date in the early 1560s is the place of *Famous Victories* in the chronology of the entire Shakespeare canon.

The fourteen-year difference between Oxford's birth date (1550) and that of the traditional candidate, Shaksper of Stratford (1564), requires that the orthodox dating scheme be modified accordingly. A convenient starting point is the composition date of the three Prince Hal plays, the third being *Henry V*, Shakespeare's last history play except *Henry VIII*. The orthodox date for the composition of *Henry V* is 1599, and for the *Henry IV* plays, the two preceding years, that is, about midway through the alleged author's playwrighting career.⁹ It is based on a purported reference to the anticipated return of the Earl of Essex from a campaign in Ireland in the summer of 1599.¹⁰ Nearly all modern scholars also agree that the six remaining history plays (the first tetralogy, *King John* and *Richard II*), *Titus Andronicus*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and nine other plays set in Italy, France and Navarre, were all written *before* the Prince Hal plays.¹¹ Most Oxfordian and other revisionist scholars are in general agreement with this sequence, but dispute the dating.

In 2001 and 2016, I published evidence refuting the 1599 date for *Henry V*, and demonstrating that Oxford wrote it in 1583–84, and that the reference was actually to the anticipated return from Ireland of Sir Thomas Butler in the spring of 1584,



Thomas Butler, 10th Earl of Ormond (1531-1614) in three-quarter armor, by Steven van der Meulen, in the National Portrait Gallery.

after having crushed the most serious Irish rebellion of Elizabeth's reign.¹² A backdating of *Henry V* to 1583–84 necessitates a realignment of the entire canon about fifteen years earlier, and moves composition dates of at least fifteen plays to the years prior to 1581. It seems highly likely that Oxford wrote some of those plays before 1570.¹³

In *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship* (2018), I published evidence and advanced the argument that five anonymous plays performed during Queen Elizabeth's reign were written by the author of the Shakespeare canon, and were probably his first efforts at dramatic writing. Just as he later rewrote *Famous Victories*, Oxford rewrote four other early plays—*The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*, *The Troublesome Reign of John*, *The Taming of a Shrew* and *King Leir*—ten to thirty years after his first versions. Two of the revised versions appeared first in individual quartos, all of them in the First Folio, all of them under nearly identical titles and with nearly the same plots and casts. All five of these anonymous plays are the obvious work of a novice playwright, *Famous Victories* being the shortest and poorest, and most likely the earliest.

Four of the five anonymous plays have concrete links to the Earl of Oxford, and can be dated, on the basis of those links, to the six or seven years of his juvenile period. The paucity of legal issues and legal language in each of them is convincing evidence, but not the only evidence, that he wrote them before his exposure to the law and the language of the law at Gray's Inn, which began in 1567. The fifth play, *King Leir*, is replete with legal terms and concepts, as are all of those in the orthodox canon, but is so similar to the other four in terms of its simple characters and prosaic plot that it clearly belongs in the same period, but near the end of it. The fictional episode of the Falconbridge family in *The Troublesome Reign of John* is an obvious reflection of an incident in 1563, when Oxford was accused of bastardy, and threatened with the loss of his patrimony. The revision and relocation of the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew* to Italy and to Padua are closely connected to Oxford's visit to that country and to Padua. In two of the plays, *Famous Victories* and *True Tragedy*, the role of the Earl of Oxford has been unhistorically expanded and glorified—a sign of the youthful hubris and pride of the author, a practice that he abandoned thereafter.¹⁴

It is probable that *Famous Victories* was performed shortly after it was written, most likely at a private house, or perhaps at court. The Queen was well-acquainted with him by this time, and she was known for her fondness for the drama.

The Sources

The historical plot and historical characters in *Famous Victories* are based largely on published and unpublished chronicles. Scholars and editors of the

play have routinely identified the chronicles of Edward Hall (1548), John Stow (1565) and Raphael Holinshed (1577) as those sources. But considering the evidence for the date given above, both Stow's and Holinshed's *Chronicles* were written and published too late to supply source material for *Famous Victories*.

With only a few exceptions, all the historical details in the play can be found in Edward Hall's *Chronicle*, first published in 1548.¹⁵ The play's title echoes the title of Hall's third chapter—"The Victorious Acts of King Henry the Fifth." Some of the details about the Prince's behavior are reported in earlier chronicles, such as the courtroom episode in scene 4, in which Prince Hal demands the release of his servant, then strikes the Chief Justice, and is then sent to the Fleet, but the account is much fuller and more specific in Hall's *Chronicle*. Modern historians discount this and similar stories about the Prince's behavior as legendary or greatly exaggerated, but acknowledge that they were widely believed and based on "common fame."¹⁶ But true, false, or exaggerated, Oxford used many of them in *Famous Victories*, and retained most of them in his revision.



Posthumous portrait of King Henry V (1386-1422) in the National Portrait Gallery.

Oxford also made use of a Latin history of the reign of Henry V, *Vita Henrici Quinti*, written by Tito Livio dei Frulovisi, an Italian historian who traveled in England in the 1430s. Although this work remained in manuscript until 1716, it was used by both John Stow in the 1560s and Rafael Holinshed in the 1570s, but apparently not by Hall. Among the several details in *Famous Victories* that appeared in Livio's history is the "cloak so full of needles" that Sir John Oldcastle mentions in scene 5.¹⁷ This refers to the occasion when Prince Hal wore a "gown-of-needles" when he visited his father at Westminster Palace. The most commonly accepted explanation of this incident is that it is based on a medieval custom at Queen's College, Oxford, in which needles with silk thread were handed out to students at Christmas so that they could mend their gowns, the intended purpose being to encourage them to be thrifty. Although some scholars discount the story or dispute its origin, it was widely believed, and was interpreted by 16th-century chroniclers as a sign of the Prince's sincere contrition for his unruliness, and his desire

for reconciliation with his father (Romotsky 157). But in *Famous Victories*, where the gown is changed into a cloak, Shakespeare presents it as a sign of the Prince's irritation about his lengthy wait for the crown. "Why, man, 'tis a sign that I stand upon thorns, till the crown be on my head," he declares to Oldcastle in scene 5. But in front of King Henry in the very next scene, Prince Hal dramatically reverses his attitude, begs pardon of his father, and repudiates the cloak—"And this ruffianly cloak, I here tear from my back, and sacrifice it to the devil, which is master of all mischief." His change of mind and repentance of his unruly behavior, perhaps symbolized by the cloak of needles episode, constitute the crux of the play. In his revision, Shakespeare omitted any mention of the cloak of needles, but retained Prince Hal's dramatic reversal of attitude.

Another significant incident in the play, the "bloody fray" in the tavern in Eastcheap in scene 2, can be found in several of the *Chronicles of London*, a series of accounts of events in the capital that was begun in the earliest years of the reign of Henry IV (Kingsford, *Chronicles* viii). One was the so-called *Register of Mayors*, unfortunately lost, which "was clearly a fuller London Chronicle than any of those now extant" (Kingsford, *Early Biographies* 88).

Oxford had access to numerous books and manuscripts in the substantial library of Sir Thomas Smith and in that of Sir William Cecil, in whose household he was tutored and boarded between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. Numerous works in both libraries have been identified as sources of Shakespeare's plays.¹⁸ There were also repeated exchanges of manuscripts among John Stow, William Cecil and Archbishop Matthew Parker, the latter an avid collector of books and manuscripts, especially histories.¹⁹ Parker, in fact, owned the dedication copy of Tito Livio's *Vita Henrici Quinti*, mentioned above, a manuscript now in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge (Rundle 1113).

As previously noted, several scholars have cited Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577, 1587) as a source of historical details in *Famous Victories*. In 1928, B.M. Ward examined the "incidents and phrases" in the play that also appeared in the first edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and found that in every case but one they had appeared previously in Edward Hall's *Chronicle*, first published in 1548 ("Famous Victories" 278–81). The single exception that Ward identified is an eight-line speech by the Duke of Burgundy in the last scene that is a somewhat condensed reiteration of a paragraph in Holinshed. The speech appears in a longer conversation among Henry V, Charles VI and the Duke of Burgundy, and contains Burgundy's swearing of fealty to Henry V.

However, as Ward pointed out, "Holinshed's authority (quoted by him in the margin) was the Latin history of the reign of King Henry V written by Titus Livius," *Vita Henrici Quinti* ("Famous Victories" 280). Thus, the manuscript

containing this incident, and several other incidents in *Famous Victories*, was in circulation in the mid-sixteenth century and available to chroniclers and to the playwright. Ward also identified “five instances of phrases in the play” that appeared in Hall's *Chronicle*, but not in Holinshed's (279). According to Andrew Gurr, [*Famous Victories*] “certainly uses Hall and not Holinshed” (ed. *Henry V* 235).

The idea that *Famous Victories* was a garbled version of an earlier play or plays about Prince Hal has been advanced by Andrew Cairncross, John Dover Wilson, Gary Taylor and others. “A piracy of the loose type” is the phrase used by Cairncross (144, 148). Taylor considered *Famous Victories* a “memorially reconstructed” play that “debases” an earlier play on the same subject (ed. *Henry V* 4 n.3, 28). In the opinion of John Dover Wilson, *Famous Victories* was a memorial reconstruction of a “highly-abridged and much degraded version” of two other plays about Henry IV and V “written in the eighties” and owned by the Queen's Men. He surmised that the company, in dire straits during the plague years of 1592–94, sold the plays, and that they were subsequently “reported from memory,” combined into one, and published as *Famous Victories* (ed. *Henry V* 116–17). Needless to say, there is no trace of the unknown play or plays preceding *Famous Victories*, nor of their unknown author and, as Gary Taylor admitted, “this is all speculation” (ed. *Henry V* 4 n.3). E.M.W. Tillyard made the unusual, if not unique, suggestion that *Famous Victories* “may well be an abridgement—a kind of dramatic Lamb's Tale—of Shakespeare's early plays on Henry IV and Henry V” (174).²⁰ These “early plays” of Shakespeare fall into the same category as those imagined by Taylor and Wilson, that is, no trace of them can be found. Although Q1 of *Famous Victories* was printed in dingy black letter and contains numerous typographical errors, it comprises a continuous text that does not suggest an abridgement, a reconstruction or a conflation of two other plays.

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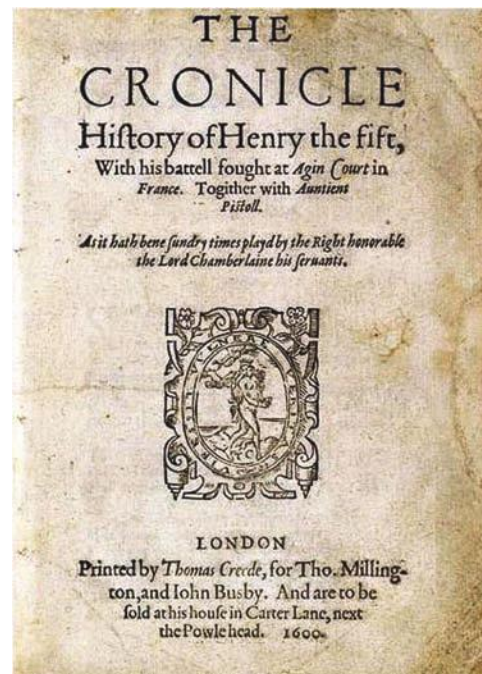
Thomas Creede (c. 1554–1616) registered *Famous Victories* in 1594 and printed it in 1598, in both cases absent an author's name (STC 13072). According to its title page, it had been performed by the Queen's Men, although that company had ceased to exist before either date. In their analyses of the typesetting, both Williams (32–33) and Yamada (192–94) concluded that Creede himself was the principal compositor. The two remaining copies of this Quarto are held by the Bodleian and Huntington Libraries. An early editor of the play speculated that Creede printed an issue at the time of registration, but no copies survive from such a printing (Hopkinson, i).

Although Thomas Creede printed more than thirty different plays during his twenty-five-year career, only eight were by Shakespeare, including two that are as yet unrecognized—*Famous Victories* and *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*. His assignment of authors' names was irregular, at best. On the title pages of three of his editions of *Richard III* (Q2, 1598; Q4, 1605; Q5, 1612), the author's name was hyphenated as "Shake-speare." (On Quartos 3, 4 and 5, the author's name was preceded by the phrase "Newly augmented by.") His editions of *Romeo and Juliet* (1599) and *Henry V* (1600, 1602) bore no author's name. In 1605, he attached Shakespeare's name to *The London Prodigal*.²¹ By 1598, half-a-dozen Shakespeare plays had been printed anonymously, including *The History of Henrie the fourth*, and it was not until that year that any play appeared with Shakespeare's name on it.²²

Creede worked primarily as a "trade printer" of manuscripts owned by publishers who financed the printing and then sold the books in their shops. He also printed manuscripts for himself, manuscripts that he possessed the rights to print and publish. *Famous Victories* was the only Shakespeare play that he did not print for someone else, indicating that he owned the manuscript (Yamada 241).²³ This conclusion is supported by entries in the Stationers' Register in 1594 recording sales to Thomas Creede of several plays belonging to the Queen's Men, including *Famous Victories*, *Selimus* and *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third* (Arber 2:306, 309).

By the time he obtained the manuscript of *Famous Victories* in 1594, Thomas Creede was well aware of the Earl of Oxford and his literary patronage. During his seven-year apprenticeship to Thomas East, his master had printed several works dedicated to Oxford, including John Farmer's *Plainsong (Diverse and sundry ways)*, and half-a-dozen editions of Lyly's *Euphues and his England*. When Creede set up his own business in 1593, one of the first books he printed was a re-issue of Robert Greene's *Gwydonius, The Card of Fancie*, which was also dedicated to Oxford.

In 1600, Creede printed Q1 of *Henry V* for Thomas Middleton and John Busby, who apparently had obtained the manuscript. This transaction



was “unregistered,” but “copyright was established by a transfer in the same year to Thomas Pavier,” for whom Creede published Q2 in 1602 (Arber 3:63; Chambers, *William Shakespeare* 1:130). The texts of both Quartos are about half the length of the First Folio versions. In his edition of *The First Quarto of Henry V*, Andrew Gurr stated that “The quarto of *Henry V* was not entered for printing in the Stationers’ Register in 1600, because Thomas Creede had already entered his copy for *The Famous Victories* back in 1594” (*First Quarto* 6). This treatment of the two plays suggests that they were considered to be the same, or at least written by the same author.

In 1617, Barnard Alsop, who had recently become Creede’s partner, issued a second Quarto of *Famous Victories*, the title page on this edition indicating that it had been performed by the King’s Men.²⁴ Of the two issues of Q2 (STC 13073 and STC 13074), both published in 1617, five copies of the former, and three of the latter are extant (Hanabusa xviii). Although there are hundreds of changes in the text of Q2, both corrections and additional errors, they are nearly all typographical variants. Q2 was printed in roman type, black letter being obsolete by then.

Conclusions

The historical, theatrical and literary evidence detailed above demonstrates that *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* was written in the early 1560s by the author of the Shakespeare canon—Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford. On the available evidence, he wrote it while still in his early teens, and living in the London home of William Cecil as a ward of the court. The play marked a turning point in the evolution of English drama in that it may have been the earliest extant history play to be performed in the country, and the first to use the dramatic device of alternating comic and historical scenes. It was almost certainly the first play to portray the heroic Henry V, and to dramatize his sudden conversion from an impatient prankster and braggart to a masterful ruler who took to arms and crushed the army of France at Agincourt. At the play’s celebratory ending, Henry is betrothed to the French King’s daughter, and named the inheritor of the French crown.

Even more significant is *Famous Victories*’ place at the outset of the world’s most illustrious dramatic canon. With its simplified history and farcical subplot, the play stands as a genuine precursor of the brilliant histories and comedies that Oxford produced during the next forty years. Numerous phrases, dramatic devices and plot elements in *Famous Victories* reappear in later canonical plays besides the Prince Hal plays, such as *Macbeth*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Julius Caesar*, *Richard III*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.²⁵

Famous Victories and its transformation into the Prince Hal trilogy was also the first example of at least a dozen major revisions of his first efforts that Oxford undertook, some more than once, such as *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *King Lear*, even to his last decade. Nearly every play in the canon bears evidence of authorial revision.

It is hard to imagine another important literary work that has been as ill-treated by scholars as *Famous Victories*. The play has not only been misattributed or declared anonymous, it has been misdated by more than twenty years, and its substantial influence minimized or dismissed entirely. But the wealth of evidence of its date and authorship, as well as the insights it supplies into the earliest dramatic practices of the author of the Shakespeare canon may well be decisive in the effort to reveal him.

Endnotes

1. All quotations from the orthodox canon of Shakespeare's plays and poems are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. 1997, G. Blakemore Evans, et al., (eds.).
2. Geoffrey Bullough summarizes many of the similarities described in this section (4:347–49).
3. Quarto editions of each of the three Prince Hal plays were issued before their appearance in the Folio, each about half as long as the Folio texts.
4. Humphries, (ed.). *King Henry IV, Part II*, xl–xli, with additional details.
5. Ward, “Famous Victories” 282; Corbin and Sedge 146. Andrew Gurr wrote that the prominence of the Earl of Oxford throughout the play is “one of its minor peculiarities” (ed., *Henry V* 229).
6. Although the victims are called “travellers,” the text makes clear that they are the King's receivers (II.ii.42–43), as in *Famous Victories*.
7. Ward (287–94). Two of William Cecil's servants reported the attack. They also claimed that they were pursued by Oxford's men, who “besett oure lodgyng” (Ward 285).
8. De Ayala and Guéno 38, 72; Tennyson i.
9. These are the dates in three frequently cited chronologies, those of Chambers (*William Shakespeare* 1:246–50), Wintersdorf (164–65), and G. B. Evans et al (77–87).
10. Chambers (*William Shakespeare* 1.148), Taylor (*Henry V* 4–5), Craik (1–2), Evans et al (83).
11. *The Taming of the Shrew, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Merchant of Venice, Romeo and Juliet, All's Well that Ends Well, Love's Labor's Lost, Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.
12. “‘Rebellion broachéd on his Sword’: New Evidence of an Early Date for *Henry V*” and “An Evening at the Cockpit: Further Evidence of an Early Date for *Henry V*.” Also, chapter 1 of *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship*.

13. It should be noted here that all composition dates proposed are for the earliest versions of the play. Many of the extant texts have been revised, some substantially, by Oxford or others.
14. This evidence is detailed in individual chapters in *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship*.
15. Although the actual title of Edward Hall's work is *The union of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancastre and Yorke*, it is routinely referred to as Hall's *Chronicle*.
16. Mowat 70–85; See also: Kingsford, "English Historical Literature" 263; Allmand 58; Solly-Flood 47–71, 145–52.
17. The text and sources of the *Vita Henrici Quinti* can be found in Kingsford's *The First English Life*.
18. Many of them are listed in the articles by Jolly and O'Brien.
19. Crankshaw and Gillespie.
20. Elsewhere in his study of Shakespeare's history plays, Tillyard suggested that *The Troublesome Reign of John*, another anonymous play of the period, may have been Shakespeare's first version of *King John* (248–49).
21. Details of all Shakespeare, and related, plays are best seen in Bartlett.
22. The title page of *Lochrine* (1595) bore the words "Newly set forth, overseen and corrected, By W. S." (Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage* 4:28.) Although *Lochrine* appeared in the Third and Fourth Folios, modern scholars do not consider it a Shakespeare play.
23. The title pages of *True Tragedy* (1594) and Q4 of *Richard III* (1605) indicate that they "are to be sold" by other stationers.
24. E.K. Chambers disputed this claim: "obviously the King's men never acted it, *Henry V* being in existence" (*Elizabethan Stage* 2:202 n. 2.). P. A. Daniel also doubted that "the King's Men... would have retained this poor stuff in their repertoire" (ed. *Famous Victories* v). R. L. Knutson is another doubter (212). But Andrew Gurr suggested that the play passed from the Queen's Men to the Chamberlain's Men, later the King's Men, when the two companies merged in 1594 (*Shakespeare Company, 1594–1642* 25).
25. These are detailed in chapter 1 of *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship*.

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Was *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* Shakespeare's First Play?



Calgreyhounds and the First Folios of Jonson and Shakespeare

by Michael Hyde

The late Robert Brazil's research into the printing and publishing history of the Shakespeare quartos in his *Edward de Vere and the Shakespeare Printers* (2010) offers intriguing insights into the true authorship of the canon. Brazil found signs of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, throughout the quartos and in the First Folio by focusing on title pages and their printing emblems. One such discovery occurred when he pursued the Green Man emblem and its uses in Thomas Watson's *Hekatompathia* (1582) which was "dedicated to Oxford, edited by Oxford, and probably paid for by him" (169). He correctly notes that the *Hekatompathia* is "the acknowledged source for plot elements in Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Measure for Measure*." He calls this discovery "smoking gun territory" and we learn why when he compares this title page woodcut of Watson's work of 1582 with emblems that appear on both the dedication and the catalogue pages of the preface to the Shakespeare First Folio of 1623 (FF).

He states, "Incredibly, this emblem in the First Folio of Shakespeare is modeled on an emblem that first appeared in an Oxford related publication, *Hekatompathia*, of 1582... the emblem on *Hekatompathia* is nearly identical to the Folio Woodcut" (211). He continues, "if you compare the two cuts closely, you will see that they are not the same exact design, and the later emblem completes what is missing in the Original." That is, the 1582 woodcut shows "only the heads of the calgreyhounds" facing inwards in the lower right and left corners, while the Folio pages show the full animals, including their antlers, greyhound bodies, curled tails and claws.

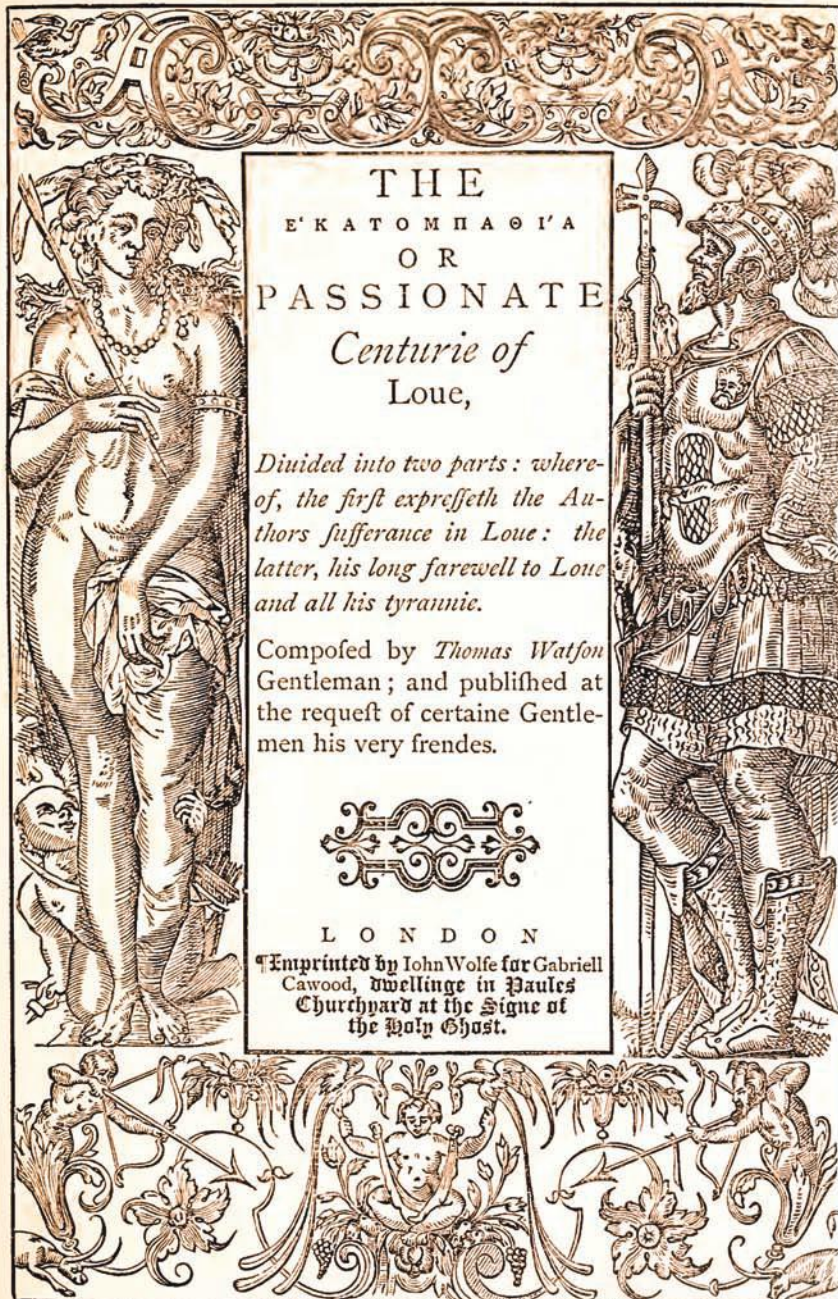


Figure 1: Thomas Watson's Hekatompathia (1582), dedicated to Oxford.

I include the title page of the *Hekatompathia* (Figure 1) and four pages in FF, including the title page of *The Tempest* and the prologue page of *2 Henry IV* (Epilogue). This printer's woodcut emblem is manifested in the play texts of FF and not just the preface (see Figure 2, page 52).

As noted, Brazil finds the emblem with the completed calgreyhound beasts appearing on both the dedication page to the “Incomparable Brethren” (the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery) as well on the catalogue page of the “severall Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies contained in this Volume.” The FF only uses the bottom panel from the title page of *Hekatompathia* with the facing archers, the seated naked boy with branches sprouting from his head, and the calgreyhounds in the corners. There is no top ornamental scroll nor is there the large central image of a naked Venus holding an arrow—with Cupid at her feet—facing Mars dressed in full armor holding a sword as in the *Hekatompathia*.

A New Discovery

I can now add a new find to Brazil's discoveries and the two play text pages with the Wolfe emblem—an emblem with the brace of complete calgreyhound beasts also appears in Ben Jonson's 1616 First Folio on the prologue page to *Every Man in His Humour* (see Figure 3, page 53). The tracing of the ownership of the woodcut emblem from John Wolfe to the printing of Jonson's First Folio is straightforward. Wolfe became a close associate after 1591 of John Windet (see Wikipedia), who succeeded Wolfe as City Printer and, after Wolfe's death in 1601, took charge of administering Wolfe's estate. Wolfe passed on his printing ornaments and devices to Windet as early as 1594 when Wolfe stopped printing and focused on publishing. Windet had taken William Stansby as his apprentice as early as 1590; by 1597 Stansby was a freeman and member of the Stationers' Company—it is Stansby who was the printer in 1616 of Jonson's Folio works, carefully edited by Jonson.

Michael Hyde graduated magna cum laude in English from Harvard in 1969 and earned his Master's in English from Tufts University (1974). His doctorate in English from Tufts (1978) was a study of the poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley titled “The Poet's Creative Word.” He has taught English at Tufts, Wellesley College, Harvard Extension School, University of Massachusetts (Boston and Lowell campuses). Mike became intrigued by the Shakespeare authorship question after reading Mark Anderson's “Shakespeare” By Another Name.

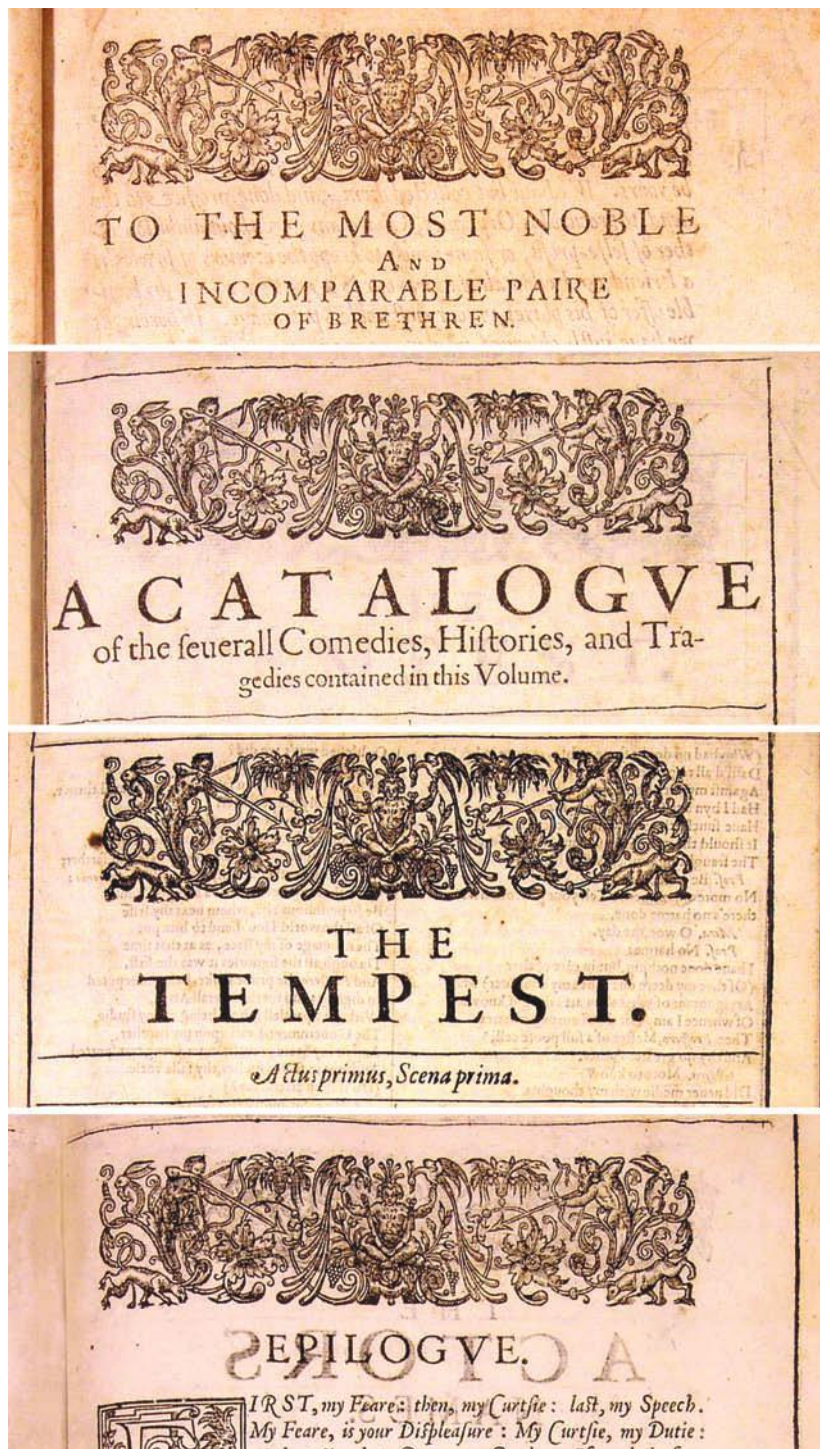


Figure 2: Four pages from the First Folio with woodcuts that included calgreyhounds: A) Two Noble Kinsmen, B) the catalogue page, C) The Tempest, and D) 2 Henry IV Epilogue.

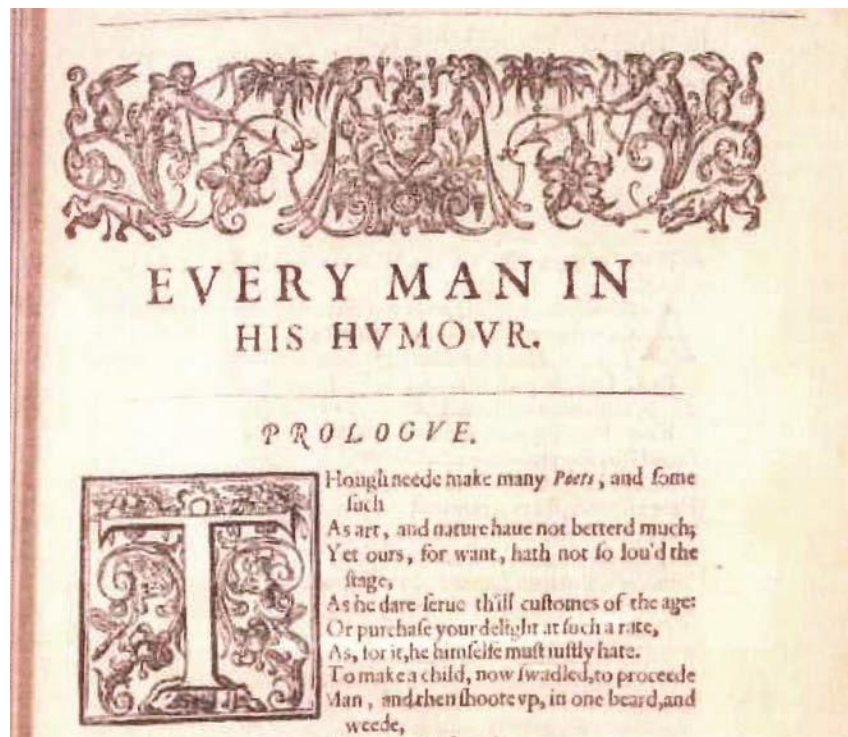


Figure 3: Ben Jonson's 1616 First Folio, showing the Prologue page to *Every Man in His Humour*.

Stansby took over Windet's shop at Cross Keys in 1610, and in 1611 inherited Windet's copyrights.

In addition, Wolfe's emblem reappears in the *Archaio-Ploutos* printed by the Jaggards in 1619, above "The Peroration Or Epilogue of the Whole Worke" (Ch. 24, 543). As Roger Stritmatter observed in his updated article on the *Archaio* in *Brief Chronicles* in 2016 with its *Minority Report on the Shakespeare First Folio*, "many of the same typographical devices which appeared four years later" (90) in the 1623 FF are found throughout the *Archaio*. We now specifically include the calgreyhound emblem. Stritmatter also argues convincingly that Susan Vere "is the primary dedicatee of the volume" (91). This claim finds support as we follow the trail of the calgreyhound emblem below.

First, we have the Wolfe emblem appearing on the title page and dedication to Edward de Vere of Watson's *Hekatompathia* in 1582. Next we move to the prologue of Jonson's 1616 Folio version of *Every Man in His Humour*, and thence from Stansby to Jaggard for use on the peroration page of the *Archaio* in 1619—and lastly four pages of the First Folio in 1623. In order by date, these works were dedicated to Edward de Vere, William Camden (Jonson's mentor and Clarenceux of the College of Heralds), Philip Herbert and Susan

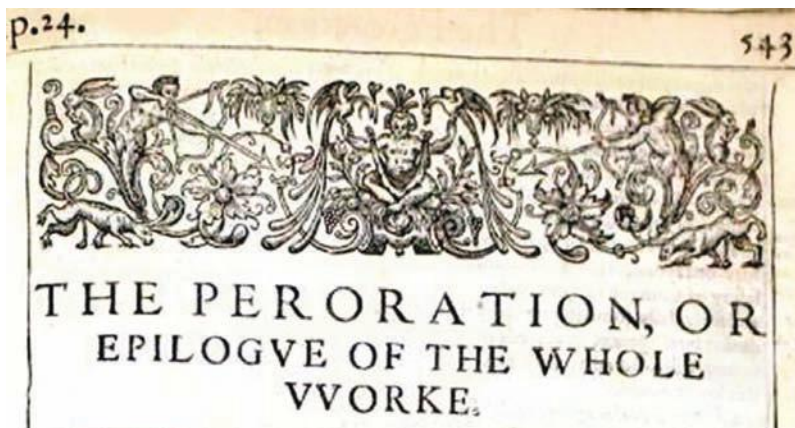


Figure 4: Wolfe's emblem in the *Archaio-Ploutos* printed by the Jaggards in 1619 (Cb. 24, 543).

Vere, and ultimately William and Philip Herbert in the FF preface. The Vere family is involved as dedicatee in three of these four usages, and Ben Jonson in his folio dedicated his Epigram CIV to Susan de Vere.

The extant *Hekatompathia* manuscript in the British Library does not contain the calgreyhound emblem (British Lib. Harley MS 3287). Dana F. Sutton observes in the introduction to his online electronic version (@philological.bham.ac.uk/Watson/hekatompattia), “It is cause of astonishment that no previous editor of *Hekatompathia* consulted this manuscript.” Sutton is not certain if this was the copy or manuscript that passed privately from Watson to various readers in 1580 and 1581—such as Edward de Vere and Sir George Buck, later Master of Revels (1610–1623) when the FF was being printed. Sutton also convincingly shows that Watson himself authored the headnotes and endnotes to the “Passionate Century” not de Vere, as was first suggested by Edward Arber in 1870. Watson cites his other works in the various passions and is clearly himself a “fictive author” who “warmed myself at a fictitious hearth.” The Harley MS is in the same hand as several other MS works by Watson in the British Library, including the “Artificiosae Memoriae.”

Various Green Man emblems appear some thirty times in the printed book, but the page with calgreyhounds at the bottom just once—on the title page of the work itself—followed by the dedication page to Edward de Vere. The cut-off greyhound heads with antlers result from cutting the woodblock to squeeze into the type bed; evidently the calgreyhound block was a late addition intended as a tribute to de Vere.

The one full-length study of Wolfe's printing career, by Clifford Chalmers Huffman in 1988 titled *Elizabethan Impressions*, demonstrates that Wolfe himself was very creative in his “decorative arabesques... each poem set on

its own page... filling empty spaces with ornamental woodcuts.” Wolfe’s initial London foray into printing involved almost entirely his importing Italian works printed both in the original and in translation, emerging “as the printer par excellence of Italian texts.” Huffman states that Wolfe “created a cultural role for himself by publishing Machiavelli in Italian” in 1587. Wolfe even invented his own fictitious Roman printer, calling himself “Antoniello degli Antonielli,” who sought “notorious or out-of-the way texts” like the *Hekatompathia*, his first English printed work but one with an extensive Italianate provenance. Watson was the perfect poet for Wolfe, who had printed his translation of the *Antigone* into Latin in 1581. Watson’s 100 love “passions” contain numerous renderings and paraphrases from Petrarch, twelve translations from Serafino, and another thirteen from Strozza, Firenzuola, Parabosco and French poets, notably Ronsard. Edward de Vere was the perfect patron for Watson and Wolfe given his reputation as the Italianate Earl who sponsored other significant Italian translations into both Latin and English from authors such as Giralamo Cardano and Baldasare Castiglioni.

I believe that the calgreyhound emblem in *Hekatompathia* was Wolfe’s creation, possibly with help from John Lyly, who was de Vere’s secretary at this time. Lyly’s own letter to Watson—“to the Author his friend”—is part of the prefatory material to *Hekatompathia*. There was no emblem book in English until that of Geoffrey Whitney in 1586, so Wolfe made his own adaptation of the de Vere calgreyhound—but from what source I cannot identify. Huffman describes Wolfe’s own “very distinctive printer’s device of a flowering palm tree with serpents and toads near the roots,” but this emblem does not appear in the original *Hekatompathia* manuscript or printed book—only later in the Machiavelli and other Italian printing jobs. This implies that Wolfe himself added the calgreyhound images which were intended as a tribute to the patronage of de Vere.

Oxford’s Involvement in *Hekatompathia*

Brazil’s claim that “standard scholars of Watson have conceded that Vere wrote the witty editorial introductions throughout the book” (169) is erroneous. He did not have the advantage of Sutton’s discovery of manuscripts in Watson’s hand in Harley MS 3287, which were not posted until November 29, 2010. Watson himself states in his address to the Friendly Reader, “Yet for once I hope thou wilt respect of my travaile in penning these love passions or for pitie of my paines in suffering them (although but supposed).” Yet, as Watson acknowledges, de Vere had “favorably perused” and urged publication as for Bedingfield and others, but de Vere’s role was primarily his enthusiastic patronage and financial support. It is worth noting with Sutton that the manuscript version is already dedicated to de Vere, as is the printed work, so no late changes occurred in the commentaries on each passion.

Seal of John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford



Arms of John de Vere, 15th Earl of Oxford as shown on his tomb.

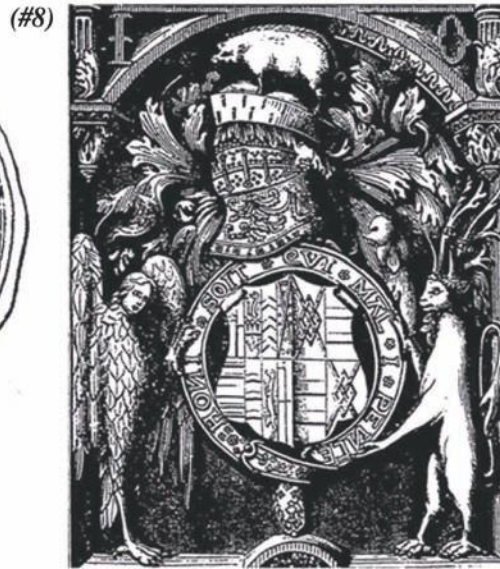


Figure 5: Brazil's 2006 Shakespeare Matters article, "Oxford's Heraldry Explained," shows all calgreyhounds rampant. Reprinted here are parts 7 and 8 from Figure Two.

As Sutton states of Wolfe's work, "Hence the printer has conscientiously attempted to imitate design decisions made by the author."

The calgreyhound emblems are another story. Here it should be noted that Wolfe's calgreyhounds are horizontal moving figures, evidently in hunting mode with heads to the ground, as if following a scent. In heraldry, beasts can be presented in numerous positions: rampant, passant, guardant, trippant, regardant, and the one Wolfe used—courant. The previous images of the de Vere calgreyhounds discussed by Brazil in his 2006 *Shakespeare Matters* article, "Oxford's Heraldry Explained," provide figures which are all rampant, often used as supporters for a larger heraldic display. See Figure 5 above, with the seal of the 13th Earl John and the black marble tomb of the 15th Earl and his wife. These are the images cited and reproduced by heralds Colin Cole and Robyn Dennys in their *Dragonlore* article of 2003 which states "perhaps the most extraordinary of all these Tudor oddities" of mythical beasts is the calgreyhound image drawn from the contemporary seal of the Veres dating to 13th Earl John.

The Connecting Link

We have traced the literary trail of the calgreyhound emblem, moving from the Jonson Folio of 1616 to the Jaggards in the *Archaio Ploutos*. Jonson is

also a link in this chain with the Jaggards as ghost editor of the Shakespeare First Folio—despite the orthodox Stratfordian claim that Heminges and Condell were the FF editors. Jonson’s extensive role in the Shakespeare FF begins with his “Address to the Reader” on page one, discussing the Droeshut engraving of Shakespeare, and his lengthy poem to the “Memory” of Shakespeare. He would have recognized and approved the calgreyhound emblems on the dedication & catalogue pages of FF, as he had himself used the emblem in his 1616 Folio.

Indeed, Jonson’s efforts as a meticulous and demanding editor of his own Folio in 1616 strongly argue his having a greater editorial role in Shakespeare’s FF. Jonson biographer David Riggs bluntly asserts Jonson’s key role in the Shakespeare FF as a “triumph of sorts for Jonson”: “Moreover, the men who prepared the folio for the press (and Jonson may well have been one of them) remade Shakespeare in Jonson’s image” (276). As we have seen, this image includes reuse of the calgreyhound emblem from Jonson’s Folio on the prologue page of his play, *Every Man In His Humour* and the four FF usages by Isaac Jaggard.

The use of Wolfe’s emblems continued after FF, although they appear not to have been used from 1582 until the Jonson Folio in 1616. I have checked the A and B quartos of *2 Henry IV* first published in 1600, and they do not feature these Wolfe woodcut prints on the preface pages. Of course, *The Tempest* had never been printed until FF in 1623, so there is no quarto to investigate. Neither the 1660 Third Folio nor the 1685 Fourth Folio contain these woodcut emblems with the calgreyhounds. But the 1632 Second Folio is a different and more fascinating story.

The Second Folio features six uses of the Wolfe/Stansby woodblock, with two more being added to the prefatory pages. The two uses in the text on the first page of *The Tempest* and epilogue page of *2 Henry IV* are the same. The two woodblock imprints added in the preface are as follows: “On Worthy Master Shakespeare and his Poems” signed I. M. S. (John Smethwick); and “Upon the Effigies of my worthy Friend, the Author, Master William Shakespeare and his Workes,” which contains on the same page the beginning of Milton’s anonymous “An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramaticke Poet, W. Shakespeare.” Also note that the next page squeezes together “The Workes of William Shakespeare” on the same page with “The Names of the Principall Actors,” which had been separate pages in FF.

Isaac Jaggard died in 1627, so it was Robert Allot who obtained the copyright from Edward Blount to the FF plays of Shakespeare in 1630. Allot hired Thomas Cotes as printer; hence the title page inscriptions of the Second Folio state clearly “printed by Thomas Cotes for Robert Allot.” While Allot is regarded as the prime mover in the 1632 Folio, it is probable that it was Cotes and his compositors who chose to make the extra use of the Wolfe

woodcut blocks with the calgreyhounds. The Wolfe woodcuts were striking enough to attract the attention of Cotes, who would use them several times in the Second Folio.

William Jaggard had printed for Edward Topsell in 1607 and 1608 two books whose illustrations of monsters and rare beasts became famous: *History of Four Footed Beasts*, and *History of Serpents*. The beasts and monsters in the gallery include the Gorgon, the Sphinx, the Manticore, the Lamia, a Winged Dragon, a Unicorn, and a dog-like creature called Another Monster. There is a “Gray-hound,” but no calgreyhound like Wolfe’s in these works. Clearly the Jaggards and Cotes were attracted by the mythical calgreyhound beast acquired from Wolfe/Stansby and chose it to use as the key emblem in both the First and Second Folios.

We are now in a position to ask whether Brazil’s claim for the calgreyhound emblems in FF is truly a “smoking gun,” supporting Edward de Vere as author of the Shakespeare canon. Brazil had noted the calgreyhound as early as October 1999 in his article “Unpacking the Merry Wives.”

The Testimony of *Merry Wives of Windsor*

Brazil adds these comments to the dialogue of Page and Slender and Shallow concerning Page’s greyhound being “outrun on Cotsall”:

this little bit of banter has nothing to do with the plot... [but] the language and the symbols are intriguing. A special greyhound, a ‘Caleygreyhound,’ was an heraldic symbol used by the earlier Earls of Oxford up to the sixteenth Earl, but was never used by Edward de Vere. His predecessors, the Earls John, often used arms with Calgreyhounds as supporters (Dennys 153). The arms of Edward, the seventeenth Earl, feature a Blue Boar and a Harpy as supporters (Ogburn 439). It may be that Oxford was prevented from using the Calgreyhounds because of the loss of certain properties and/or titles, such as Keeper of the Forest of Essex, which may have been associated with these heraldic animals.

Brazil provides a similar reference to the calgreyhound in *Printers*:

The calgreyhound is a mythical animal that is found in British Heraldry in one place only. The Calgreyhound was used in the arms of the 13th–16th Earls of Oxford. For some reason Edward de Vere ceased using the calgreyhounds personally; but their appearance in the emblems of *Hekatompathia*, which is dedicated to Oxford... and in the First Folio strongly suggests an intentional symbolic reference. The presence of the Calgreyhounds was recently noted as well by British researcher Christopher Bird. (211–212)

I have verified Brazil's 2010 comments on the 13th, 15th, and 16th Earls of Oxford and their use of calgreyhound emblems. Wikipedia echoes Brazil in these terms: "The de Vere family, who were the Earls of Oxford, used the calgreyhound in their coat of arms in the 15th and 16th centuries.... The calgreyhound is described consistently as having the head of a wildcat, the torso of a deer or antelope, antlers or horns, the hind legs of a lion or ox, and its tail like a lion or poodle." These statements are from the journal *Dragonlore* published on All Fool's Day 2003 as referenced above—a calgreyhound rampant fitting exactly this description. The cut-off heads of the calgreyhounds on the title page of *Hekatompathia* and the four pages of the full woodblock in FF are so far the only known uses of the calgreyhound heraldic emblem for Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford—even if Wolfe was the maker of the woodcut.

Probably the best known de Vere family emblem is the calgreyhound on the black marble tomb of John de Vere, 15th Earl of Oxford, in St. Nicholas Church near Castle Hedingham—there in the village church awaiting any curious tourist. Figure 5 shows the full seal of the 13th Earl—the great hero of Bosworth—with two facing calgreyhounds as supporters of the helmet stand and the blue boar atop the emblem. The 13th Earl's seal is the first known usage of the calgreyhound in de Vere heraldry.



Figure 6: A part of a 1571 manuscript showing the shield of the 16th Earl, father of Edward de Vere.

On page 19 of the *Shakespeare Matters* article, Brazil continues with what he dubs the "St. Albans genealogy of de Vere... a unique manuscript roll formerly in the possession of the modern Dukes of St. Albans." The manuscript dates to 1571 and is today in the private collection of Queen Elizabeth II. It was created, claims Brazil, in 1571–1572 as a celebratory commemorative tribute to the wedding of Anne Cecil and Edward de Vere—possibly, one wonders, by Lord Burghley, who could easily have done so with the College of Heralds. The shield of the 16th Earl, father of Edward de Vere, is a 21-coat device that "is supported by two calgreyhounds and crested with a blue boar."

Brazil believes that "the 16th Earl was the first Vere to bear these exact 21 coats." There is also in the St Albans manuscript an abbreviated version of the shield with sixteen coats which "given the context can only be that of the 16th or the 17th Earl."

Brazil concludes by contrasting Edward de Vere, who “never seemed to use the calgreyhound of 13th Earl John who left to his descendants a treasure of chattels with calgreyhound ornamentation... inherited by Edward de Vere which does include a tapestry with a hunting scene and greyhounds but makes no mention of calgreyhound devices.” One wonders if de Vere chose in his emblems from 1574 to 1580 not to use the calgreyhound rampant of the St. Albans manuscript because he wanted to honor, with his own personal choices, the heraldic designs of his ancestors, not a new design created by Burghley? Or Brazil may have been correct in 1999 by wondering if de Vere’s loss of the Waltham/Essex Forest prevented his heraldic use of the calgreyhound?

Missing Evidence in the First Folio

This would seem to argue from Brazil’s own research that the calgreyhound emblems in FF are not a “smoking gun” for de Vere’s authorship of the canon. However, it was Brazil, according to Katherine Chiljan, who first observed that the Shaksper family arms are inexplicably absent from the First Folio. Her endnote states “in 2005... the absence of the Shakespeare arms in the First Folio preface was pinpointed by Brazil in the online scholarly discussion group ElizaForum” (140). If we combine the manifest presence of the brace of calgreyhounds used on four pages of FF—transported from Watson in 1582, Jonson’s Folio in 1616, and the *Archaio Ploutos* peroration in 1619—with Brazil’s questioning the missing arms of Shaksper in FF, we do have a serious challenge to Stratfordian orthodoxy. Why? Because we have unearthed intriguing evidence from heraldry which helps to deconstruct the Stratford narrative and, conversely, adds weight to alternative readings of the traditional myth, based on empirical data.

Leah Marcus herself noted that the Droeshut image in the Preface to FF:

has no frame, no ornamental borders.... Nor does the title page include the allegorical figures and devices that might be expected to surround the engraved image of the author in a volume of such size and costliness and which were included in a number of other volumes printed by William Jaggard. (*Puzzling Shakespeare*, 2)

She adds that such volumes as the 1616 Folio Works of King James I often show “highly personalized mottoes and emblems” (3)—ignoring or failing to notice the four uses of the calgreyhound from *Hekatompathia*, also used by Jonson in his 1616 Folio and in the *Archaio Ploutos* as we have shown. Jonson’s own 1616 Folio and the *Archaio* do provide the elaborate ornamentation and borders that Marcus finds missing in FF.

Furthermore, the Shaksper arms were easily available to Jonson or the Jagards, obtainable from the nearby College of Heraldry as the Folger's Heather Wolfe has recently shown us. She found in May 2016 the manuscript entitled "Promptuarium Armorum ('Storehouse of Arms') compiled by William Smith, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant... between 1602 and 1616." She shows us the sketches that led to the completed coat of arms for the Shaksper family that we are familiar with today—yellow shield, spear sinister, and falcon crest. But Wolfe fails to mention what is actually printed in FF—Wolfe's brace of calgreyhound emblems—and ignores what is not included, the Shaksper family coat of arms granted in 1596.

To echo Leah Marcus, it is especially puzzling that the controversial hard-won coat of arms of John/William Shaksper obtained between 1596–1599 was not blazoned in the First Folio. Otherwise, Will Shaksper could never have styled himself as "gent." on legal documents after 1601—which he did in a property deed for the Globe Theater in October 1601, one month after John's death. Nor could he have been described as "gentle" Shakespeare by several contributors to the First Folio's preface—most notably Ben Jonson in his poem to his beloved's memory. Instead, we have the unique calgreyhound emblem appearing on key pages of the First Folio, with its unique ancestry from Edward de Vere and the Earls of Oxford.

I believe Ben Jonson had to use ambiguous evidence because the patrons of the First Folio—the Herbert Family—wanted to sever de Vere from the plays and poems while still supporting the Protestant Patriot Party during the Spanish Marriage Crisis, which was only resolved in autumn 1623 (Johnston 95ff). It's why Jonson described the author as the "Sweet Swan of Avon," but separated it from the other biographical clue in FF—"thy Stratford monument." The entire Jonson encomium and the images included in the FF—or left out—add up to a brilliant job of strategic deception.

Indeed, only the cognoscenti would know that the calgreyhounds were used by the de Vere Earls of Oxford, a very small number of people within the English nobility. It's a very detailed circumstantial case but, in the end, the Herbert brothers controlled the Shakespeare cover-up. They were determined to defend their caste and protect their noble families from exposure and embarrassment even as they, at long last, released and published the plays, but not the poems and sonnets, of William Shakespeare.

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Is Falstaff a Portrait of the Historical Henry VIII?

by Richard Waugaman, M.D.

In her 2019 book *This Is Shakespeare*, Emma Smith offers us a wonderful portrayal of Falstaff and his trademark morbid obesity. As she observes, “Falstaff’s fatness is the most thoroughgoing physical designation we ever get in Shakespeare” (117). Smith asks, “What made Falstaff so compelling?” (115). Smith does not have a satisfactory answer to her question.¹ In this article, I suggest one plausible solution.²

My thesis is that Queen Elizabeth was always the most salient member of Edward de Vere’s audience, and that the 17th Earl of Oxford always wrote with her in mind. As context for my conjecture that he intended Falstaff to remind her and her courtiers of aspects of her father, King Henry VIII (1491–1547), note that the recently exhumed skeleton of the historical King Richard III showed he had mild scoliosis (sideways curvature of the spine) that was not severe enough to limit his fighting ability as a soldier. The prominent hunchback displayed by Oxford’s Richard III, by contrast, encouraged Elizabethan audiences to think of Robert Cecil, Oxford’s powerful brother-in-law who served as a member of the Privy Council from 1591 and also as Secretary of State from 1596.

As M.G. Aune describes this particular political allusion:

Richard’s crooked back indicates a moral crookedness, his withered arm the perversion of his actions. The toad metaphors suggest...a lower, toxic form of life. The moral deformity that the crooked back symbolized in Cecil and Richard was ruthless ambition. That ambition drove Richard to murder and betrayal and it brought wealth and power, as well as opprobrium and animosity, to Robert Cecil.... (26–7)

Setting the Stage

We need to examine the severe deterioration of Henry VIII's personality after a brain injury since it coincided with his massive, Falstaffian weight gain. The role of Henry VIII's 1536 traumatic brain injury (TBI) in the gradual deterioration of his personality has received some scholarly attention. But, to my knowledge, it has not yet been connected with his morbid (that is, severe) obesity. Yet severe hyperphagia, or uncontrollably compulsive over-eating, is a possible consequence of severe head injuries. Some 27% of patients with severe head injuries have eating disturbances; perhaps 3% have persistent, severe overeating, presumably due to damage to the frontal lobes of the brain (Das et al.).

A 2010 study concluded that, rarely, “Morbid hunger or persistent *hyperphagia* (overeating) is a relatively rare but potentially life-threatening complication of acquired brain injury.... [It leads to] potentially life-threatening health risks to the patient, primarily around weight control and fluid balance, and risks of *aggression* toward professional and family carers” (Rowell et al., 1044; emphasis added). In these days of widespread severe obesity in the United States, we may not realize how unusual it was during the Tudor period. Despite the advice of his physicians, the older Henry VIII could not curb his overeating.

In 1527, the king injured a foot playing court tennis, receiving a wound in his leg, possibly the first occurrence of the skin ulcers that were to plague him off and on for years. He was reportedly six feet two inches in height. His successive suits of armor suggest that, in his 20s, his waist was only 32 inches and he weighed about 210 pounds. By 44, though, he needed a hoist to mount his horse. Late in life, his waist increased to 52 inches and his weight nearly doubled, to as much as 390 pounds. Obesity commonly has many interacting causes. Forced inactivity due to his injuries that never



Field armor of Henry VIII, 1544, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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fully healed was clearly a factor for Henry VIII. Eating as a source of pleasure and lack of self-restraint were presumably additional causes.

Henry was knocked off his horse while jousting in January of 1536 (when the future Queen Elizabeth [1533–1603] was about 28 months old). His fully armored horse fell on top of him, knocking him unconscious for some two hours. The longer the period of unconsciousness after a concussion, the greater and more lasting the brain injury tends to be. His legs may have been broken in the fall, as well. Five days later, his wife Anne Boleyn (1500–1536) miscarried a male child, a mishap she blamed on having been afraid for the king’s life. The king, however, interpreted her miscarriage as a sign that God did not intend for him to have a male heir, as though all his feelings of guilt were activated by this sequence of events. He suffered from frequent migraine headaches afterwards (Hutchinson), and became “increasingly unpredictable, irascible and cruel” (Chalmers et al, 515). In fact, four months after his jousting accident, he ordered his wife Anne Boleyn to be beheaded. She was the first of his wives to be executed. Two months later, in July 1536, Elizabeth was declared illegitimate. She is said to have noticed the change in how she was then treated, remarking precociously, “how hap it yesterday Lady Princess and today but Lady Elizabeth?” (ODNB entry on Henry VIII).

Queen Elizabeth would have had many reasons for imagining that her father was a better man when he was younger, in the years before her birth. Sigmund Freud’s theory of the “family romance” posits that we commonly imagine as children that we were adopted, so we can believe our real parents were much better and more prominent people, such as royalty. Queen Elizabeth’s actual father was a king, of course, but she would have heard stories about what he was like when he was young and not brain injured.

Enter Kate the Shrew

Next, I will elaborate on possible connections between the fictional character of Kate at the end of *Taming of the Shrew* and another story involving Henry VIII, a near-death experience that Queen Elizabeth’s stepmother Katherine Parr (1512–1548) shrewdly survived. My goal is to build on the connection I mentioned earlier between Oxford’s Richard III and Robert Cecil, helping us read Oxford’s plays for topical allusions to Tudor court history.

As Katherine’s husband Henry VIII was nearing the end of his life, conservative courtiers feared that the more religiously reformist, evangelical Katherine would undermine their power following the king’s death. So, they plotted to have her executed as a heretic. King Henry, increasingly irritated by his wife’s assertiveness, especially about religious matters, agreed with their plan to have him bring up a controversial theological issue with his wife. Since she always disagreed with him about such questions, soldiers would be nearby,

Is Falstaff a Portrait of the Historical Henry VIII?

prepared to arrest Parr on grounds of treason when she disagreed with the King. According to John Foxe, and fortunately for Parr, a royal physician warned her of the plan, and advised that, whatever her husband said the next day, she should agree with him. When she did so, the King was puzzled, and reminded her that she had always argued with him about such debates in the past. She explained that she had done so in the past only because he was in nearly constant pain, and she thought a good argument would distract him from his pain. She added that, just as God created Eve to obey Adam, so should all wives obey their husbands. King Henry turned his anger on his concealed soldiers, ordering them to leave. And so, Katherine kept her head.

This story is described in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry on Katherine Parr by Susan E. James. She speculates that this may be the meaning of Kate's puzzling turnabout at the end of *The Taming of the Shrew*, when she inexplicably acts like a docile, submissive wife. James believes that Shakespeare may have had Kate deliberately echo Parr's words to King Henry VIII when Parr "submitted all her spiritual and worldly wisdom to her husband's guidance" to avoid entrapment and the charge of treason (ODNB 904).

According to James, Shakespeare decided to use this scene in one of his plays to speak directly to Queen Elizabeth, and to courtiers who knew this story. James thus helps shape a new paradigm for thinking about Oxford's creative process. Oxford made the Queen feel understood by reminding her of a pivotal event from her childhood (she was thirteen at the time), when her beloved stepmother nearly suffered the same fate as her mother, Anne Boleyn, ten years earlier. Given Oxford's creative genius, it is likely that some other matter that was current when the play was written was also being alluded to, such as warning the Queen to avoid bad advice from her courtiers.

Part of Oxford's methodology was his unsurpassed skill in creating multiple layers of conscious and unconscious associations, which enhance our pleasure as we experience and learn to tolerate complexity. He may have heard of Dante's four-fold method of literary interpretation in his letter to Can Grande della Scala: literal; allegorical; moral; and anagogical (that is, predictions of the future). Medieval biblical scholarship also emphasized four co-existing categories of interpretation: literal or historical; typological, connecting the New Testament with Old Testament prophecies; moral; and anagogical. Given Oxford's deep interest in and multiple annotations of his Geneva Bible, it is likely that this traditional acknowledgment of complexity of meaning in the Bible influenced the complex design of his dramatic works.

James' theory does not supplant but merely supplements other explanations for Kate's apparent character change. In fact, the existence of alternate meanings would have helped Oxford conceal the connection with Katherine Parr from the general public who were attending his plays at the Globe. For

Oxford to effectively conceal his authorship, he needed the cover of deniability for any of his topical allusions to court politics. An excellent example is the Gads Hill robbery of Treasury agents by Prince Hal and Falstaff in *1 Henry IV*, and its parallel with an actual Gads Hill robbery committed by Oxford's servants in 1573, also of Treasury agents. A court audience would have grasped this allusion, while commoners would probably have overlooked it, as do most modern audiences.

How Fat was Falstaff?

Let us return to Falstaff and his infamous corpulence.³ Could it possibly allude to the notoriously corpulent king?⁴ True, we know that Sir John Oldcastle and Sir John Fastolf have been proposed as the real-life models for Falstaff, and that Falstaff also resembles Chaucer's Wife of Bath in some respects. But a single fictional character can easily allude to more than one actual person. The need to have some cover story for Falstaff's character is understandable if Oxford was creating a complex caricature of the Queen's rotund father.

Queen Elizabeth had watched her father become more and more obese during her childhood and early adolescence. She may have sometimes been the target of his worsening temper during her childhood (he died when she was thirteen). We would expect her to have felt keen ambivalence toward the father who was God's anointed king, but who also had her mother executed. There is a tradition that the Queen especially liked Falstaff, among Oxford's dramatic characters.⁵ Falstaff is a charismatic character, for many reasons. But, like Falstaff's belly, the fat jokes about him overflow.

Falstaff tells Pistol in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, "I am in the waist two yards about" (I.iii.46), even greater than Henry VIII's 52-inch waist. By 1547, one informant said "the king was much grown of his body and...he could not go up and down stairs and was let up and down by a device."⁶ "Trams" were built to help him get about (Chamberlin 210). If he was too obese and lame to walk, it is unlikely he could get up from a supine or seated position without assistance. Perhaps as a subtle allusion to the king's disability, the only time the word 'lever' occurs in Shakespeare is when Falstaff is told to lie on the ground just before the Gads Hill robbery, and he memorably retorts, "Have you any levers to lift me up again, being down?" (*1 Henry IV* II.ii.34)⁷



Falstaff, engraved by Hogarth, 1799.

Is Falstaff a Portrait of the Historical Henry VIII?

How do we know that Falstaff was fat? Because Oxford tells us so repeatedly: “fat Falstaff”; “fat knight” (repeated three times); “this same fat rogue”; “the fat villain”; “an old fat man”; “a gross fat man”; “this fat man”; “ye fat paunch”; “that fat belly”; “ye fat guts”; “so fat a deer”; etc. Falstaff was also called “wool sack”; “you whoreson round man”; “gross as a mountain”; “thou whoreson, obscene, greasy tallow-catch”; “this huge hill of flesh”; “my sweet creature of bombast”; “a tun [barrel] of a man”; and “that stuff’d cloak-bag of guts.” While playing Prince Hal’s father, Falstaff speaks of himself as “corpulent,” the only time that word appears in Shakespeare’s works; so Falstaff ‘owns’ the word. Falstaff also refers to his “round belly.”⁸ Oxford ensures that we cannot think of Falstaff without picturing him as obese.

Yet, like Henry VIII, Falstaff was not always fat. He explains to Prince Hal in *1 Henry IV*, “when I was about thy years, Hal, I was not an eagle’s talon in the waist” (II.iv.1315). He blames his later obesity on “sighing and grief” (ibid.).

Queen Elizabeth was born after her father’s health began to fail, and she would have consciously remembered him after his head injury led to his morbid obesity. Oxford had the empathic genius to perceive the many strands of her mixed feelings about her father, and to activate them all in a way that made her feel understood. The implicit connections between Falstaff and the Queen’s father may have allowed her to vent some of her once dangerous anger toward her father through humor. Similarly, the healing power of psychoanalysis owes much to creating a safe environment for the patient to voice feelings that were once dangerous to express.

A Psychological Analysis

Psychoanalysts regularly observe that people are confounded by unresolved internal conflicts. Ambivalence toward a parent that is both dearly loved but also sometimes loathed is a frequent source of neurotic conflicts and symptoms. In fact, Freud’s description of the Oedipus Complex is more subtle in crucial ways than it is commonly portrayed. The young girl may want to replace her mother and have her father all to herself, but the neurotic conflict that ensues is precisely because the girl loves her mother more than any other woman. By the same token, the young Elizabeth may have loved and admired her father before all other men, but also hated him for killing her mother: this may have led to lifelong, unresolved internal conflicts, which Oxford hoped to help heal through some degree of catharsis.

The psychoanalyst Philip Bromberg (57; also Waugaman and Korn, 2014) has perceptively commented that the most emotionally intense moments for readers of literature or play audiences come when the author succeeds in bringing together two intense emotions that are usually kept far apart.

Profound sadness and hilarious humor exemplify such a juxtaposition. Bromberg believes this can be “therapeutic” because it helps reconcile two warring feelings.

What other similarities might Falstaff share with Henry VIII? Both are larger than life, literally and figuratively. With his typical hyperbole, Harold Bloom claims Falstaff is “the most intelligent person in all of literature” (quoted in Smith 119). C.L. Barber also writes of Falstaff that “an intelligence of the highest order is expressed...it is not always clear whether the intelligence is Falstaff’s or the dramatist’s” (quoted in Hamlin 270). So, it would be a mistake to regard Falstaff simply as a buffoon.

More Historical Evidence

Comments by Thomas More and Erasmus suggest that King Henry VIII was nourished on philosophy and the Nine Muses (*ODNB* entry on Henry VIII⁹). He spoke French and Latin fluently; was well read; and was fascinated with scientific instruments, maps, and astronomy. His library eventually included some 1,500 books and manuscripts, many of which were annotated.

“He could dominate any gathering and was extrovert, affable, and charming” (*ODNB* entry on Henry). Such a description also matches Falstaff. Smith adds that “one reading of the play sees him as an alternative father figure [for Prince Hal] providing the human affection so lacking from the cold, troubled king [i.e., Henry IV]” (119). As Smith observes, Falstaff makes a strikingly grandiose claim when he claims to represent “all the world”: “Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world” (*1 Henry IV*, II.v.485).

Another probable parallel with Queen Elizabeth’s father is the developmental trajectory of each man. The older Henry VIII deteriorated physically and psychologically from the man he once was. In 1536, the very year of the king’s head injury, the largest peacetime revolt in English history took place. In that context, Reginald Pole wrote to Henry VIII:

You have squandered a huge treasure [Henry was to die in debt]; you have made a laughing-stock of the nobility; you have never loved the people; you have pestered and robbed the clergy in every possible way; and lately you have destroyed the best men in your kingdom [Bishop John Fisher and Sir Thomas More], not like a human being, but like a wild beast [*ODNB*].

The king’s “Egoism was compounded by falsity and deceit...Henry was very much the *faux bonhomme*” (*ODNB* entry on Henry). Henry “executed more English notables than any other monarch before or since.... Linked to this was the king’s ability to deny reality, an obstinate conviction that facts

Is Falstaff a Portrait of the Historical Henry VIII?

were as he understood or wanted to understand them and not as they were” (ODNB). Falstaff famously ignores reality when convenient. For example, he hilariously lies about what took place during the Gads Hill robbery.

The historian Eric Ives reports that recent scholarship has mostly been critical of Henry, as a man with “monumental selfishness...disguised by highly effective propaganda” (ODNB entry on Henry VIII). His religious “reform” was “driven by lust and greed.” We can certainly say that Falstaff is “driven by lust and greed” as well.

In Oxford’s plays, we see Falstaff only after he has sunk to the bottom of a long decline. Given his rank and the loyalty of Prince Hal and his other friends, one assumes Falstaff was once a less degenerate character, at least more outwardly valiant in war rather than a comic coward; more honest and less criminal. Falstaff’s own “monumental selfishness” is often in evidence, as when he cynically drafts as soldiers men who are likely to die on the battlefield for his personal enrichment. He later admits that “not three of my hundred and fifty [soldiers] left alive” (1 *Henry IV*, V.iii.38).

Is Falstaff learned, as was Henry VIII? He cites a Latin phrase (“*ecce signum*”) meaning “behold the truth”; and another (“*memento mori*”) meaning “a reminder of death.” He refers to King Cambyses, possibly alluding to an earlier play by Thomas Preston. He claims to have read Galen (2 *Henry IV*, I.ii). He makes repeated biblical allusions, which Hannibal Hamlin has studied in some detail, saying that “Falstaff’s language is peppered with biblicisms” (242, especially 234–70). Naseem Shaheen states that Falstaff provides nearly half of the 55 biblical allusions in 1 *Henry IV* (Hamlin 237). Hamlin notes the “obvious indebtedness of Falstaff’s biblical style to the style...in the Marprelate tracts” (242). In 2 *Henry IV*, Falstaff uses a hendiadys that Hamlin points out is from Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians (and also occurs in Philippians): “rouse up *fear and trembling*” (261).

Is Falstaff deceitful? Falstaff would come across as a repulsively pathological liar were it not for his self-awareness and humor. He speaks euphemistically of his many flaws, but in an appealingly transparent sort of way. As in I.ii.33 (1 *Henry IV*), when he asked not to be called thief, but rather “Diana’s foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon...under whose countenance we steal.” Or later in that scene when he claims that robbery is his “vocation, Hal; ‘tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation” (117) [playing on the religious connotation of ‘vocation’].

Is Falstaff, like Henry VIII, financially irresponsible? “I am as poor as Job, my lord, but not so patient,” he says (2 *Henry IV*, I.ii.144). Page alludes to this line when he asks of Falstaff in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, “And as poor as Job?” (V.v.164).¹⁰ We hear repeatedly that Falstaff does not repay his debts,

but instead makes deceitful excuses, such as falsely claiming that he was robbed at an Eastcheap tavern. He is painfully disappointed in his hopes that, once crowned, Prince Hal will reward him with a lucrative position at court.

A moment that may have especially stirred Queen Elizabeth's memories of her father is when Falstaff impersonates a king—Henry IV. Four times in that play, Falstaff says to Prince Hal, “When thou art king.” That may have reminded the Queen of wondering as a child if she would later replace her father on the throne. She may have identified with Prince Hal, as he submits to his ersatz “father.” To the extent that the madcap Prince Hal also represents the temperamental Oxford, such an identification might implicitly have made her more sympathetic with this appealing but troublesome earl. Moreover, the Queen would have been reminded of the 1,000 pound annuity she granted Oxford (from 1586 to 1603) for each of the six times “a thousand pound[s]” is mentioned in this play. (The character of an earlier Earl of Oxford in *Richard III* says “Every man’s conscience is a *thousand* swords” [V.ii.17]).

Smith makes the intriguingly evocative point that, “It is almost as if [Falstaff] operates in a different world from the other characters” (127). Although Smith says “he is not really a historical figure” (127), Falstaff’s mystique may instead arise from precisely the opposite—that he evokes for Elizabeth and courtiers the essential traits of the older Henry VIII.

One possible parallel with Henry VIII is bathetic. Due to the older king’s infirmities, numerous medical personnel took charge of his medical treatment. “The physicians’ role was to monitor Henry’s health, *measuring his urine* against his fluid intake and examining his stools” (Weir, 475; emphasis added). Recall that Falstaff, in something of a non sequitur, asks his page, “what says the doctor to my water [urine]?” (*2 Henry IV*, I.ii.1).

I wonder if Oxford hints at a connection between Falstaff and Henry VIII when he memorably banishes Falstaff after Henry V is crowned—

I know thee not, old man...
I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,¹¹
 So surfeit-swell’d, so old, and so profane;
 But being awak’d, I do despise my dream.
 (*2 Henry IV*, V.v.49; emphasis added)

Yes, we could take these words as alluding solely to Prince Hal’s relationship with Falstaff. However, “I have long dreamt” induces a dreamy sort of mental state in the audience, allowing us to receive a subliminal message about another “such a kind of man” who is obese, old, profane, and despised—the Queen’s late father.

Is Falstaff a Portrait of the Historical Henry VIII?

We can assume that Oxford had access to personal details about Henry VIII since many courtiers from his reign were still alive to pass along such knowledge. We need only recall that Oxford's father, the 16th Earl, could easily have imparted such knowledge to his son before he became a royal ward at the age of 12. Or William Cecil, who served in Parliament under Henry VIII and was the son of a minor courtier to Henry—and became Oxford's guardian when he was orphaned at 12.

Finally, how would Oxford possibly dare to remind Queen Elizabeth of unsavory aspects of her father in the displaced character of Falstaff? Freud and many subsequent psychoanalysts have acknowledged Shakespeare's unparalleled insights into human psychology. Every person who watches or reads a Shakespeare play has an opportunity to experience this. Every courtier craved the Queen's favor; Oxford was no exception. Indeed, he was described as one of her favorites when he was in his 20s. Oxford understood psychology well enough to grasp how deeply every person longs to be understood, especially in areas of their own most severe and partly unconscious psychological conflicts.¹²

As a psychoanalyst, this is something I take for granted. It is a daily experience for me to observe that patients seek psychological treatment, and continue pursuing it, because they crave to feel understood by someone who is non-judgmental toward them. The more troubling and conflicted their life experiences, the more it means to have such experiences known and understood by someone who wants to render assistance. So, I would posit that Oxford knew the Queen well enough to discern her sharply conflicted feelings about her father. Such conflicts are life-long in many people, often becoming even more troublesome after the death of such a parent. In addition, being monarch meant taking her father's place, leading to conflictual identifications with him. Psychoanalysts define psychological health as attaining more adaptive "compromise formations" that reconcile both sides of a person's conflicts,



Falstaff, *oil painting by Eduard von Grützner, 1904.*

including one's loving and hateful feelings toward someone else. I contend that this is just what Oxford did in creating the character of Falstaff. In addition, the Queen may have found it cathartic that everyone who encountered the character Falstaff received a taste of the legendary king who was her father.

What of Falstaff's banishment from court once Henry V is crowned? If I am correct that Falstaff was created partly to remind the Queen of her father, would she have felt this was too insulting to her father's memory? It is complex—as with Malvolio's mistreatment in *Twelfth Night*, Oxford leads the audience to feel more sympathy for Falstaff precisely when he is publicly humiliated. Whatever Falstaff's faults—and he has many—he is a character who invites affection.

I hope to have made a plausible case that the fictional character of Falstaff was designed to allude to the historical Henry VIII. One benefit of the Oxfordian hypothesis is that Oxfordian researchers have many more opportunities than orthodox Shakespeareans to speculate over the topical allusions in the Shakespeare canon regarding the political dynamics of the Queen and her court.

Endnotes

1. The next four paragraphs appear, in a slightly different version, in Waugaman, *Notes & Queries* 66(3):374–375 (2019).
2. On April 26, 2011, I posted on Hardy Cook’s Shakspeare listserv, “I am curious how others feel about the possibility that Shakespeare’s Falstaff spoofed not just Sir John Oldcastle, but was more subtly and subversively aimed at memories of the aging Henry VIII.” Then, on September 9, 2018, I asked on the same listserv, “has anyone raised the question as to whether all the fat jokes about Falstaff might be subtle allusions to Henry VIII?” Four days later, Sir Brian Vickers replied in a personal email, “Thanks for that interesting piece on ‘Henry VIII and Falstaff.’ I hope you’ll send it to N&Q [*Notes and Queries*].” When I wrote to Vickers a few months later that *Notes and Queries* accepted only the part of my article on Henry’s brain injury, but not the possible connection with Falstaff, Vickers replied, “I’m glad to hear that N&Q has taken on the first part of your article, at least. Hope you find a home for the rest.” Naturally, I recount this story because it is especially heartening as an Oxfordian to feel encouraged by a prominent Shakespeare scholar.
3. My descriptions of Falstaff come from the two *Henry IV* plays.
4. Richard Dutton maintains that Shakespeare’s plays “were staged at court far more frequently in his lifetime than those of any other dramatist” (viii). If Dutton is correct, it enhances the possibility that Falstaff was also intended to have a special meaning for Queen Elizabeth.
5. Two independent sources claim that Shakespeare revived Falstaff at the insistence of Elizabeth. John Dennis, a literary critic who adapted *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1702, asserted, “I know very well that it hath pleased one of the greatest queens that ever was in the world.... This comedy was written at her command, and by her direction, and she was so eager to see it acted that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days; and was afterwards, as tradition tells us, very well pleased at the representation.” Moreover, Nicholas Rowe, in his *Life of Shakespeare* (1709), reports that the Queen “was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of *Henry IV* that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love.”

6. Allegedly reported by the Duke of Norfolk to his mistress, Elizabeth Holland; quoted in Hutchinson, p. 149.
7. At the time, a “litter” already referred to a contrivance with poles to carry someone on attendants’ shoulders. So it may have been another subtle allusion to Henry VIII when Falstaff says, “I do here walk before thee like a sow that hath oerwhelm’d all her *litter* but one” (*II Henry IV*, I.ii.11–12). Falstaff also refers to himself as lame: “’Tis no matter if I do *halt*” (*Ibid*, I.ii.245).
8. Please consult any Shakespeare concordance for act, scene, and line numbers, when I have not given them.
9. Written by English historian Eric W. Ives. Unless otherwise specified, quotations are from this ODNB entry.
10. “He is as poor as Job” also occurs as the translation of “Lui é povero come Job” in John Florio’s 1578 *Florio his firste fruities*, a bilingual Italian/English book.
11. According to *Early English Books Online*, the phrase “such a kind of man” is first used in a 1562 English translation of Machiavelli’s *The Art of War*. The context is apt—the author is advising rulers not to keep members of the army employed in peacetime, but suggests sending them away from court, to avoid such soldiers becoming “corrupt.”
12. One of his favorite psalms seems to have been Psalm 103, which he marked with a pointing hand, and which is one literary source for Sonnet 103. It includes the phrase “all the secrets of my heart.”

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Was Shakespeare Don Quixote (Or Was He a Jacobean Dramatist)?

by Sky Gilbert

Shakespeare was a fiercely anachronistic figure. He lived at a cultural turning point of monumental importance. Why does a writer whose work is largely incomprehensible to so many at first sight—because it is written in the often obscure and dense syntax of early modern rhetoric—still manage to obsess us? It is not just Shakespeare’s rhetorical skill or his psychological insight that separates him from the rest; his work was created at a particular point in time when a fundamental aesthetic debate was pitting poets against each other. Shakespeare dared to align himself with a point of view that was in danger of becoming anachronistic. His work was the aesthetic personification of an old, romantic world order that was reluctantly giving way to a new, more pragmatic one, and he waged a valiant, passionate final crusade in the name of medieval rhetoric and chivalry. Shakespeare’s prodigious talent aside, this is the principal key to the irresistible urgency and mystery of Shakespeare’s work.

Double Falsehood—Shakespeare’s “Jacobean” Work?

Consider the recent scholarly debate over *Double Falsehood*. Clearly inspired by a chapter of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, *Double Falsehood* was published and produced by Lewis Theobald in London in 1727. Theobald claimed it was an adaptation of *Cardenio* by William Shakespeare and John Fletcher. The actual text for the legendary *Cardenio* has never surfaced, but *Cardenio* is referred to in the accounts of the King’s Men in 1613 and in The Stationers’ Register

in 1653—in which a scribbled entry attributes authorship to Fletcher—with “and Shakespear” added later. In *The Quest for Cardenio*, Breann Hammond (one of the contributors to *The Quest for Cardenio* and also the editor of the Arden version of *Double Falsehood*) asserts that Shakespeare collaborated on three plays after 1612: *Henry VIII*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *Cardenio*. However, the notion that Shakespeare wrote plays well into the Jacobean era is not supported by a close examination of his rhetorical style and thematic obsessions. His sensibility was far from Jacobean; rather, it was Elizabethan, even verging on medieval.

However, Gary Taylor, Hammond, and the other defenders of *Double Falsehood* in *The Quest for Cardenio* are not interested in Shakespeare’s rhetoric or his thematic obsessions. They use stylometrics to advance their arguments. Stylometrics collects statistical information on word usage extrapolated from digital databases to support arguments for authorship. For example, in *The Quest for Cardenio*, Taylor makes much of the pronunciation of the word “aspect” in relationship to *Double Falsehood*, quoting an 18th century Shakespearean scholar: “Farmer noted that, ‘The word Aspect, you perceive, is here accented on the first Syllable, which... was never the case in the time of Shakespeare’” (38). Taylor triumphantly contradicts this, apparently because Farmer “did not have access to databases” (38). He missed the fact that “Cyril Tourneur indisputably used the modern accentuation in 1609” (38). Later, Taylor dismisses his own conclusion, saying: “One word, or phrase, does not in itself establish an eighteenth-century origin” (39). But “nevertheless, we can clearly identify idioms in *Double Falsehood* that could not have belonged to the 1613 play” (40). Pages and pages of sometimes contradictory and stupefyingly boring stylometrics follow. Recently in the *The New Yorker* magazine, Taylor said he changes his mind constantly when presented with stylometric evidence: “If you’re an empiricist, when you get new data, you change your mind... Unlike politicians, it’s a good thing for a scholar to be a flip-flopper” (Pollack-Pelzner).

Call me old-fashioned for wishing to differentiate the forest from the trees, but in this case, the trees are stylometric discussions of Shakespeare, and the forest consists of the two paradigms that pervaded medieval life and

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Shakespeare's work: rhetoric and chivalry. In most of Europe, it was twilight for these medieval tropes. However, Shakespeare's tenacity in unabashedly adoring them marks his work with a singular intensity. And speculation about whether Theobald's *Double Falsehood* was an 18th century adaptation of a play by Shakespeare must necessarily involve these facts.

It's relatively easy to make a superficially convincing, if not persuasive, argument for *Double Falsehood* as an adaptation of a lost play by Shakespeare, as there is no so-called "Ur text" to compare it to. The writers in *The Quest for Cardenio* take advantage of the fact that the work has three proposed authors—Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Theobald (their supposed later adapter). On the face of it, *Double Falsehood* is a very uninspiring play, but it does, in certain aspects at least, seem "Shakespeare-esque." However, if the play's structure is faulty and/or un-Shakespearean, Theobald's defenders can say, "well the structure was probably imagined by Fletcher," and if a speech isn't up to the usual Shakespearean poetic standard, they can say, "that part was obviously written by Theobald." Hammond's essay in *The Quest for Cardenio* assures us that "the play is a rattling good yarn, largely plot-driven though not entirely lacking the pensive metaphorically dense soliloquies for which Shakespeare is best known. There are, as I point out in the edition, lesions that must have been filled in earlier versions" (75). So, the poetry we normally associate with Shakespeare is missing because Theobald chose to cut it. But might a "rattlingly good yarn" better describe a TV episode of *Law and Order* than *Troilus and Cressida*?

Theobald and Pope versus "Old Rhetoric"

Theobald is part of the 18th century tradition famous for its "re-imaginings" of Shakespeare, which includes Alexander Pope and David Garrick. Yet that is not enough context to produce a rewarding analysis of *Double Falsehood*. What is missing in *The Quest for Cardenio* is a judicious consideration of the literary biography of Lewis Theobald. For instance, Hammond's introduction to the Arden version of *Double Falsehood* mentions that Theobald obtained a royal license for an adaptation of Shakespeare. Hammond rationalizes: "would Theobald have knowingly sold a forgery by means of a signed and legal document?" (17). In fact, Theobald had a reputation as a forger; he had been accused of forgery not once but twice: once by a Henry Mesteyer, and once by William Warburton. Mesteyer claimed that he had given Theobald his own play to read and Theobald had passed it off as his own. Hammond mentions these forgery accusations yet somehow concludes that Theobald's "career does not suggest he was a likely forger" (75). Yet Theobald's scholarly work on Shakespeare points in exactly that direction.

Theobald discovered Shakespeare at a time when The Royal Society (1660) had ushered in a new attitude to language that was fundamentally opposed to

the rhetorical style of Shakespeare's work. It was one of the first western "scientific" organizations (Isaac Newton was a member) dedicated to practical experiment as a testing ground for facts. Their motto—*nullius in verba*, roughly translated as "take nobody's word for it"—says it all. The most important subject in the medieval classical trivium—grammar—taught medieval students that the world must be studied through poetry, not via a microscope and scientific experimentation. The world could not just be read like a book; in fact, it *was* one. But the Royal Society believed that the scientific revolution could only occur if the human imagination was controlled. Richard Nate suggests that "The early modern scientists' distrust of the imagination has almost become a commonplace" (412).

In the 18th century, theorists like Addison and Corbin Morris criticized the use of the fundamental rhetorical devices like metaphor and simile. David Garrick had a disdain for quibbles, i.e. puns, and cleared his Shakespeare adaptations of them. Ramus' (1515–1572) rhetorical teachings were all the rage in early modern graduate schools, and became the norm in the 17th century. Ong describes Ramus' definition of a poem: "An oration or poem stripped down to its essentials is a string of definitions and divisions somehow or other operating through syllogisms" (192). The onerous task assumed by Ramus, the Royal Society, and many 18th century adapters of Shakespeare was to clear away the frippery, allusions, and, ultimately, the *illusory nature* of dense rhetoric, and penetrate to the moral lesson that lay hidden beneath.

The quarrel between Alexander Pope and Lewis Theobald was between two men who disagreed only on exactly how to clarify Shakespeare's text and clear it of moral ambiguity. (This quarrel had its basis in the larger conflict between the "polite wits," exemplified by Jonathan Swift and Pope, and the academicians like Richard Bentley and Theobald. The polite wits viewed the academics as boring and lifeless; the academicians deemed the poets inexact.) The influence of the bitter enmity between Pope and Theobald cannot be overestimated. In 1725 Pope published *The Works of Shakespear*, which featured his own heavily edited versions of Shakespeare's plays. In 1726 Theobald published *Shakespeare Restored*, in response, correcting what he clearly thought were Pope's errors. He published his adaptation of *Cardenio*, *Double Falsehood* in 1727. Pope responded to this "double whammy" with another edition of Shakespeare's works in which, surprisingly, he acknowledged the use of Theobald's corrections. The civility was short-lived, however, as Pope went on to create an enormously successful satire of Theobald called *The Dunciad*, published in three different editions from 1728 to 1743. In response, Theobald issued his *own* complete edition of Shakespeare's work (1733), which was based on Pope's edition of Shakespeare. But Theobald's revenge was that, unlike Pope, he didn't acknowledge his debt to his rival. Theobald's 1733 edition of Shakespeare ultimately became the basis of Malone's enormously influential Shakespeare edition in 1790. Thus, the

Shakespeare texts we know today had their origins in the bitter feud between two 18th century interpreter-adapters who collaborated while simultaneously hating each other. The intensity of this quarrel alone might be proof enough that Theobald had enough of a grudge against Pope to forge an adaptation of Shakespeare.

Pope and Theobald attempted to cleanse and clarify Shakespeare's work in very different ways. David Wheeler quotes Warburton, a friend and editor of Pope's, who says that Shakespeare's "architecture" has "nobler apartments though we are often conducted to them by odd and uncouth passages. Nor does the whole fail to strike us with greater reverence, though the parts are childish, ill-placed and unequal to its grandeur" (442). Pope used an aesthetic frame to display the "grandeur" of Shakespeare by separating the noble passages from the ignoble ones. Theobald, in contrast, used scholarly exegesis to replace all language that was "confusing" or "unworthy" of Shakespeare with words he thought more suitable.

In *Shakespeare Restored*, Theobald says: "where Shakespeare has yet through all his editions labored flat nonsense and invisible darkness I can with the addition or alteration of a single letter, or two, give him both sense and sentiment" (vi). He will correct what was before "absurd, unintelligible, and intricate" (v). He applies a quotation from *Hamlet* to Shakespeare's work, comparing it to "an unweeded garden that grows to seed" (I.ii.139–41). (Note that in this metaphor weeds are evil, revealing Theobald's moralistic intent.) Some of Theobald's edits still appear in modern editions of *Hamlet*; doubtless they make clearer the confusion caused by warring quartos. But his demand for clarity at times radically alters the polysemous nature of the text. For instance, Theobald changes Laertes' phrase "sanctity of the kingdom" to "sanity of the kingdom" (in most modern editions the phrase now reads as "health and safety of the kingdom"). Sanctity—unlike sanity—implies the religious and perhaps holy nature of a feudal royal marriage, the subject of Laertes' speech. In choices like this Theobald favors clear literal meaning over allusion.

In addition, this detailed parsing of Shakespeare's word usage was the ideal preparation for someone planning to forge a play in Shakespeare's style. Shakespeare's tendency to use parts of speech interchangeably is mentioned in *Shakespeare Restored*: "I shall only shew by a few instances that it is familiar to him to make verbs out of adjectives" (11). Hammond, in his introduction to the *Double Falsehood*, refers to an instance where a noun is used as a verb as particularly Shakespearean: "Kenneth Muir, for example, points to the use of the word 'heir' in the opening scene" (49). But this is not proof that Shakespeare wrote *Double Falsehood*, it is instead evidence that Theobald carefully analyzed Shakespeare's style in *Shakespeare Restored*, and applied his unique literary research in service of his forgery.

Was Shakespeare Don Quixote or was He a Jacobean Dramatist?

There are several instances in *Double Falsehood* where Theobald appears to be trying desperately to imitate passages in Shakespeare with little success. At one point Henriquez demands music:

Strike up my masters
But touch the strings with a religious softness
Teach sound to languish through the nights dull ear
Til melancholy start from her lazy couch
And carelessness convert her attention. (I.iii.10–14)

This sounds Shakespearean because it is a ham-handed imitation of the justly famous and memorable “if music be the food of love play on.” In another instance, Hammond highlights an ode to friendship in *Double Falsehood* as typically Shakespearean:

Is there a treachery like this in baseness
Recorded anywhere? It is the deepest,
None but itself can be its parallel - And from a friend profess'd
Friendship? Why, 'tis
A word forever maimed. In human nature
It was a thing the noblest. (III.i.15–20)

This ponderous declaration of a “philosophy of friendship” is a pale imitation of the heart wrenching admissions made humbly and naturally by Shakespeare’s male characters in dialogue with their friends in *Two Gentleman of Verona*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Winter’s Tale*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and many other plays. Consider for example, when Bassanio says to Antonio:

I married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself
But life itself, my wife, and all the world
Are not with me esteemed above thy life. (IV.i.282–83)

Or when Solanio says of Antonio’s feelings for Bassiano, quite simply “I think he only loves the world for him” (II.viii.50). Theobald’s clumsy imitation of Shakespeare’s eloquence was ridiculed by Pope, who claimed Shakespeare would not write a phrase as banal as “none but itself can be its parallel.” But ultimately however, the goal of the interpretative battles between these two fiercely competitive Shakespeare obsessives was to shoehorn Shakespeare’s work into the new theory of a leaner, more modern rhetoric favored by Petrus Ramus.

Shakespeare's Style versus Cervantes

The particular phrase “none but itself can be its parallel” has the rhythm of a Shakespearean paradox, and yet barely qualifies as one. Shakespeare's rhetorical style is uniquely recognizable and very different from other Elizabethan writers. Even orthodox scholars are now beginning to accept the notion that rhetorical skill—and most of all rhetorical learning—is an essential element of Shakespeare's work. One recent example of a renewed interest in Shakespearean rhetoric is Quentin Skinner's *Forensic Shakespeare*. You will find here a slightly different view from Skinner's. It appears to me that Shakespeare was more influenced by the Greek rhetorician Hermogenes than the Roman rhetorician Cicero. But it's pleasing to see that even the most conservative and established scholars are finally recognizing that a better understanding of Elizabethan rhetoric can only lead to a better understanding of Shakespeare.

Though Shakespeare's rhetorical style is not difficult to distinguish from the style of other early modern writers; there is little of it in *Double Falsehood*. There are four characteristics that distinguish Shakespeare's style from that of his contemporaries. He is fond of odd syntax, and particularly fond of long sentences that begin with subordinate clauses and delay the subject of the sentence to its end. He cannot resist two things; first, thoughtful paradox and second, wordplay: puns, alliteration, and a euphuistic balance in sentence structure. More than anything he cannot resist those paradoxes which play on the contrast between art and truth, form and content, beauty and evil, outside and inside. But what truly distinguishes Shakespeare's writing from his contemporaries are the sudden changes in rhetorical decorum. For not only does a Shakespearean scene often veer suddenly from comedy to drama, but characters leap from grandiose complex metaphors to concise, colloquial expression *within a single speech*. It is my opinion that Shakespeare was well acquainted with the Greek rhetorician Hermogenes. Hermogenes specialized in a style of writing that mixed many styles. This was directly in opposition to the Ciceronian ideal of using only one style of writing at a time, employed by most of Shakespeare's contemporaries.

The dense, flexible, obscure, euphuistic style of Shakespearean rhetoric would have been considered “old style” by 1600. Ramus, whose philosophy diminished rhetoric and strengthened dialectics (what we now call science), was on the side of plain speech. Philip Sidney championed his teachings in England. And Ramus' arguments for poetry as moral tool were taken up in Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy*. In the great English rhetorical quarrel of the late 16th century, Gabriel Harvey, Sir Philip Sidney, and the Puritans were on one side, arguing for clear poetic diction. On the other side were Thomas

Was Shakespeare Don Quixote or was He a Jacobean Dramatist?

Nashe, John Lyly, and the 17th Earl of Oxford—who I and many others think was the real Shakespeare. Nashe, Lyly, and Oxford held the old “grammatical” position, that poetry is magical and deliberately obscure. McLuhan tells us, “The fight between Nashe and Harvey seems to have its origin in the argument between Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford and Sidney in 1579. Spenser was Ramistic in theology and rhetoric like Sidney, versus the Italianate Earl of Oxford, who was an obvious mark for puritans. Lyly sided with Greene and Nashe against the Ramistic Harvey. Sidney’s secretary was a Ramist—Sir William Temple. Oxford’s secretary was the patrist old-style Lyly” (210).

Cervantes, whose work was the inspiration for *Double Falsehood*, was, unlike Shakespeare, a disciple of the new rhetoric. Even if Shakespeare had read *Don Quixote* he would have found very little inspiration there. Thomas Nashe was on the side of the old rhetoric, and a comparison between his defense of dense rhetoric—and Cervantes’ dismissal of it—says it all. In *The Anatomy of Absurdity* Nashe teaches: “I account of Poetrie, as of a more hidden and divine kind of Philosophy, enwrapped in blind Fables and dark stories...in Poems, the things that are most profitable are shrouded under Fables that are most obscure” (36–37). In Cervantes’ novel, the narrator’s friend summarizes the author’s new and very different approach to style:

And since this book of yours is only concerned to destroy the authority and influence that chivalry enjoy in the world and among the general public, there isn’t any need to go begging maxims from philosophers, counsel from the holy scripture, fables from poets, clauses from rhetoricians, or miracles from the saints, but rather attempt using expressive, decorous and well-ordered words in a straightforward way to write sentences that are both harmonious and witty, depicting what is in your mind to the best of your ability, setting out your ideas without complicating or obscuring them (16).

Cervantes and Shakespeare occupy fundamentally opposing rhetorical positions.

The rhetorical style of *Double Falsehood* is essentially the same as *Don Quixote* (though of course Cervantes is a much better writer than Lewis Theobald). Nevertheless, Hammond, in his introduction to the play, makes claims that Proteus’ soliloquy in *Two Gentleman of Verona* is “very close in dramatic content and function to that of Henriquez in 2.1 of *Double Falsehood*” (7). It is certainly true that they have a similar subject—being caught between the love of two women and the possible loss of a friend—but the resemblance ends there. Theobald’s Henriquez offers pretentious, unpoetic moralizing:

Oh, that a man could reason down this fever in the blood,
Or soothe in words the tumult of his heart!

Then, Julio, I might indeed be thy friend. They, they only should condemn me, Who, born devoid of passion have never prov'd the fierce disputes of virtue and desire
While they who, like me, the loose escapes of youthful nature known, must wink at mine, indulgent of their own. (II.i.52–61)

Proteus is also caught in the same throes of romantic desire, but instead offers seductive wordplay climaxing in a troubling paradox:

I cannot leave to love,
and yet I do;
But there I leave to love where I should love,
Julia I lose and Valentine I lose.
If I keep them, I needs must lose myself.
If I lose them, thus find I by their loss: for Valentine, myself, for Julia,
Sylvia. (IV.i.17–22)

Henriquez' thinking is not fundamentally paradoxical, he clearly is asking for forgiveness for a hateful act, the rape of Violante. Proteus, on the other hand, offers a complex paradox: true love means the loss of a friend but the discovery of himself. The clear moralizing tone of Theobald's poetry and prose is in direct contrast to the euphuistic rhetorical flourishes that dominate Shakespeare's style.

Shakespeare's View of Women

However, when Shakespeare began writing in the last half of the 16th century, there were two revolutions going on. One was rhetorical, and the other was socio-economic. At roughly the same time rhetoric moved from obscure poetry to plain speech, Elizabethan culture was leaving chivalry behind. Shakespeare's women are fundamentally treated as chivalric women, as damsels in distress; and one of Shakespeare's obsessions is the careful examination of the psychology of women who have been raped. But in *Double Falsehood*, Henriquez excuses his rape of Violante as a youthful indiscretion that most men might understand, and Violante seems merely embarrassed:

Whom shall I look upon with a blush?
There's not a maid whose eye with virgin gaze
Pierces not to my guilt. (II.ii.1–3)

She then waxes melodramatic, but ponders only exile, not suicide:

The tomb of my own honour, a dark mansion
For death alone to dwell in....The way I go
As yet I know not—sorrow be my guide. (II.ii.35–46)

Later, after hiding as a boy, she dramatically reveals herself to Henriquez, and somehow (it's not really clear how) definitively confirms his guilt. But she still marries him, despite his heinous act and offensive apology: "Virtuous Violante—Too good for me—dare you still love a man so faithless as I am?" (V.ii.211–13). After this, Violante is silent, never to be heard from again.

It is true that there are several instances in which women are threatened with rape in Shakespeare's comedies and are treated relatively lightly. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, for instance, Proteus attempts to rape Sylvia. However, the situation is hardly as dire as Violante's, not only because the rape does not occur, but because Valentine witnesses the act and is available to rescue her from the start. Also, Sylvia does not marry her attacker as Violante does.

But when rape actually occurs in Shakespeare's work, he takes it very seriously—in precisely the opposite way Theobald does—by blessing the victim with boundless eloquence. After Lavinia is raped in *Titus Andronicus*, Demetrius and Chiron cut off her tongue and her hands, which might seem like a potent enough comment on the violence done to her. But Lavinia also "aestheticizes" her rape by turning it into a performance. She attempts to act out her rape for father, utilizing Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Deborah Willis quotes Mary Laughlin Fawcett: "her silence after her humiliation appears to be a development, an increase in eloquence, rather than a stopping or reversal" (43). Titus then stages the actual murder of the raped Lavinia in front of the woman who ordered it. As Willis says: "yet in a peculiar way Titus seems to be critiquing the ideology of rape in staging the murder of Lavinia for Saturninus and Tamora.... It is a defiant act of mastery that 'returns' dishonour back to them and reveals the brutality of Rome's own assumption about appropriate responses to rape" (49–50).

Shakespeare's attitude to rape is fully on display in *The Rape of Lucrece*, and the poem is thus as radical now as it was then. A third of *The Rape of Lucrece* is consumed by Lucrece's response to her rape, which is articulated by Shakespeare with remarkable psychological insight. Unlike Violante, Lucrece's agonizing journey takes her through approximately 11 stages of grief that are marked by torturous indecision. Initially she wants to rip off her flesh, then she curses the night, then she blames herself, then she curses chance, opportunity, and time, and finally Tarquin, the man who raped her. Then she opines "this helpless smoke of words does me no right" and decides "the remedy is to...let forth my soul defiled by blood" (298). However, she can't find a knife, and waffles between life and death, finally deciding to kill herself, because "my shame is dead, my honour is reborn" (306). She says a raped woman is not evil "no more than wax should be accounted evil when stamped with the semblance of the devil" (309), and "proud lords to blame, make weak-made women tenants to their shame" (310).

Lucrece's rape is also aestheticized by Shakespeare and this aestheticization only increases our horror. In a classic moment of rhetorical ekphrasis Lucrece compares her own plight to a painted rendering of the sacking of Troy. The truth of the depiction is confirmed by her reference to it as "lifeless life" (316). As Judith Dundas suggests, Shakespeare uses Lucrece's critique of the painting to make us forget that she is a character in a poem, making her suffering more real. The painting, after all, has "has less claim upon our feelings than the suffering of the heroine...we forget that Lucrece and her tragedy are just as illusory as the painting of Troy" (14). By highlighting the painter's deceitful technical skill Shakespeare seduces us with poetry, while keeping an ambivalent, paradoxical, meta-distance from art. The fact that Shakespeare blesses both Lavinia and Lucrece with an agonized and detailed elegance of style is related to the chivalric notion that it is the job of the knight to protect the lady; most of Shakespeare's heroines can be viewed through this lens.

Chivalry and the Courtier in Elizabethan England

At times, Shakespeare refers directly to chivalric memes. At the height of her agony Lucrece muses on the eminent return of her husband Collatine: "Knights by their oathes should right poor ladies' harms" (331). Shakespeare loved chivalry; perhaps it would be more accurate to say that *he was chivalry*; that his life and work existed within that romantic paradigm. He is not singular, as a writer, for this love of chivalry in age of its decline (he shared this with Philip Sidney), but Shakespeare brought the trope of popular chivalric romance psychological, political, and tragic depth. Lucrece, like Lavinia and Ophelia and so many of Shakespeare's female victims, is "a damsel in distress" because she is a good woman who is relentlessly tortured by an evil man. This is an archetypal character in medieval chivalric romance.

The first books printed in England by William Caxton (1476) were *The Book of Order and Chivalry* by Raymon Lull and Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. The social structure in England was no longer feudal, as Queen Elizabeth ruled the country and her nobles were obligated to bow to her. But the nostalgic appeal of chivalric romance still had a furious hold on the public's attention. As Francis Yates tells us: "though feudalism as a working, social, or military structure was extinct, its forms were still the vehicle of living emotions" (108). She also mentions that Lull, in *The Book of Order and Chivalry*, advises "that public jousts or tourney should be heard regularly...this will cause gentlemen to resort to the ancient customs of chivalry" (107). This resurrection of the old romances had political utility. After the British conversion to Protestantism the public yearned for the "Pope's holidays." Yates says the Accession Day Tilts—a royal event involving chivalric competitions and rituals performed for the queen—"bridged religious gaps" (110). Edward de Vere participated in the tilts at least four times, according to biographer

Was Shakespeare Don Quixote or was He a Jacobean Dramatist?

Mark Anderson. Catholics and Protestants alike could enjoy the new holidays together without acrimony. Yates concludes “the chivalrous formula suited the aristocratic structure of Elizabethan society; it was the vehicle for the expression of its hopes and fears” (111).

The courtier is an icon image of the chivalric warrior/knight transformed into an Elizabethan knight/poet. In the early modern period, the transformation of the romantic concept of brave warrior into the similarly romantic (but somewhat different) trope of thoughtful aesthete was a necessary element of the social revolution from feudal state to commercial nation. A major force in this development was Castiglione’s *The Art of the Courtier*. Susan Gaylard describes Castiglione as “a nobleman or cavalier writing in an age in which the medieval chivalric ideal was alive only in the pages of literature. In place of the self-determining, arms-bearing knight, were men obliged to entertain lords and ladies at court with speeches, music, poetry, and the occasional chivalric spectacle” (2). Jennifer Goodman tells us that “Castiglione’s book represents a major shift of medieval knight to the cultivated Renaissance gentleman...[although] his ideals still overlap to some extent with those of Ramon Lull” (33).

Scholars have long acknowledged Shakespeare’s debt to Castiglione, noting that Hamlet seems to be modeled after Castiglione’s courtier ideal. Jonathan Dewald says: “In *Hamlet* conversation mainly traps the unwary...everyone understands that court life demands careful self-control, the ability to conceal one’s inner thoughts. European nobles regarded the court with a mixture of excitement and anxiety” (127). Hamlet is a noble, learned, artistic courtier poised between action and contemplation, who must guard his thoughts while confronting unmitigated evil. Mark Rose says that when Claudius poisoned Hamlet’s father he “in effect poisoned chivalry” (299)—and thus Hamlet, like a virtuous medieval knight, sets out to defend it. Mark Anderson offers Edward de Vere’s introduction to the first English translation of *The Book of the Courtier*, where de Vere makes it clear that, for him, the early modern courtier has much in common with Lull’s romantic ideal of the perfect knight:

For what more difficult, more noble, or more magnificent task has anyone ever undertaken than our author Castiglione, who has drawn for us the figure and model of a courtier, a work to which nothing can be added, in which there is no redundant word, a portrait which we shall recognize as that of the highest and most perfect type of man. And so, although nature herself has made nothing perfect in every detail, yet the manners of men exceed in dignity that with which nature has endowed them; and he who surpasses others has here surpassed himself, and has even out done nature which by no one has ever been surpassed (52).

De Vere's conception of nature is akin to Hamlet's. For Shakespeare, nature did not mean reality, but an artistic improvement upon it. His plays and poems offer countless displays of the power that art has not only to mimic but ultimately supersede nature. To Shakespeare art is more real than reality. As David Haley suggests, when Hamlet speaks of 'holding a mirror up to nature:' "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" (34).

It is important to differentiate Shakespeare's concept of reality—which was actually artistic truth—from the notion of reality that was found in a post-chivalric, scientific era. Reality, by the year 1600, was beginning to be defined by a scientific study of the world around us. The confessional nature of Hamlet's soliloquies led some to label the play a precursor of the modern realist novel. But what Shakespeare offered was not realism. His consummate skill is to create the illusion of truthful psychological observation through dense, sometimes obscure metaphorical poetry; to create a fiction that is better and worse than ours but *seems* real. Haley quotes Berger: "The Renaissance glass was invested with idiomatic and prismatic powers deriving from the interpretative activity of the human mind. Its exclusiveness was therefore seized as a guarantee of the mind's freedom from the tyranny of the actual world" (35). Even when Shakespeare's poetry points to the deceptiveness of art, as when Touchstone says "the truest poetry is the most feigning"—this meta-theatricalness leads us back, as does Lucrece's appreciation of the Trojan War painting, to appreciation of the mysterious truth of poetry. Shakespeare's Elizabethan chivalry was expressed not only in his treatment of female characters, or his medieval rhetorical style, but in his attitude to reality and 'realism.'

Contrasting Shakespeare with Cervantes

It was Cervantes, not Shakespeare, who wrote the precursor of the modern "realistic" novel. The sensibility of the man who created *Don Quixote* was the very opposite of the sensibility of the man who created *Hamlet*. Shakespeare's characters and situations are steeped in fantasy, myth, improbability and magic that nevertheless deceive us with their perceived truthfulness. Cervantes, on the other hand, creates characters and situations in which the falsity of fantasy is relentlessly juxtaposed against reality. Shakespeare never destroys the fourth wall; Cervantes consistently does so. Cervantes is always present, as author, and often digresses in a quirky personal way that pulls us out of the work. Shakespeare is completely invisible in his plays and poems; the purpose seems to be to make us forget he exists. In the sonnets, the

Was Shakespeare Don Quixote or was He a Jacobean Dramatist?

author/narrator is a character so mysterious and mythic that he seems simultaneously both real and unreal. This simultaneity is key. All of Shakespeare's (sometimes honestly admitted) deceptions are in the cause of myth, fantasy, and story; he never actually stands outside the chivalric episteme.

Shakespeare romanticized the knight errant, luring us into believing in his world. Macbeth, Lear, Othello, Antony, Coriolanus and Hamlet are all failed knights, but they are not touching laughingstocks like Don Quixote; they are tragic heroes in a consistently chivalric universe. And their plight leads us to understand deeper truths. Cervantes' satire, in contrast, leads us only to one deeper truth: that knights are self-deceiving anachronisms. The wider implication is a moral one: that it is man's sad plight to ignore reality. Don Quixote imagines that he is fighting dragons but in fact he is fighting windmills; he imagines he is rescuing damsels in distress but his beloved Dulcinea is a woman of decidedly loose morals. None of his bumbling chivalric interventions into the real world have any real effects. Cervantes critique of chivalric fiction wishes to free us from the dangerous entrapment of poetry and fiction; he is essentially anti-poetry, and anti-fantasy. No matter how critical Shakespeare is of art or illusion, he never removes us completely from it.

The character Falstaff, a true comic knight errant, comes closest of all Shakespeare's characters to Don Quixote. But perhaps Shakespeare arrived at this character because, as Mark Rose suggests, "the Henry plays are about the end of chivalry" (298). And Falstaff, unlike Don Quixote, is blessed with a tragic eloquence, because Shakespeare cannot quite bear to leave the beautiful, noble, chivalric world behind. As Roberto Gonzales Echevarria notes in his introduction to *Don Quixote*, Cervantes "began to see how myths could be deflated with injections of real life and real life ennobled in mythical robes" (xii). Whereas according to Mark Rose, what Shakespeare did was "convert the material of Elizabethan romance into tragedy" (311).

Shakespeare's World versus Jonson's and Beaumont's

In the context of his fellow playwrights, Shakespeare's allegiance to chivalric values appears old-fashioned. Rose quotes Jonson's masque *Prince Henry's Barriers*: "Jonson's plays look forward in a way that Shakespeare's, with their marvels, anachronisms, and freedoms of time and place, do not."

These were bold stories of our Arthur's age;
But here are other acts, another stage
A scene appears, it is not as then:
No giants, dwarfs or monster here, but men. (308)

In contrast, Shakespeare's heroes are explicitly giants, as in Cleopatra's description of Antony:

His legs bestride the ocean; his reared arm created the world
His voice was propertyed
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
He was as rattling as thunder. (V.ii.81–85)

Jacobean playwrights like Jonson and Beaumont, who followed Shakespeare but were so unlike him, are concerned not with poetry and chivalry, but with real people in more modern situations, and with a critique of human vice (much in the style of *Don Quixote*).

Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607) is in fact the theatrical equivalent of *Don Quixote*. It's crypto-Brechtian 'alienation of the audience' exemplifies the kind of play *Don Quixote* would be if it were not a novel. This groundbreaking work, written like Cervantes' novel on the cusp of the 16th and 17th centuries, displays a revolutionary new attitude to rhetoric and chivalric romance. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, unlike Shakespeare's comedies—and like Jonson's—has a clear satiric point never obscured by Shakespearean fable.

Significantly, Beaumont's first theatrical venture, delivered at Gray's Inn a few years before *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, was a comic critique of the old rhetoric in the form of a faux grammar lecture. What's interesting about the performance is that, as Zitner tells us: "Beaumont's oration follows the plan of the famous Latin grammar by William Lyly, the grandfather of John Lyly" (9). John Lyly was Edward de Vere's secretary, and a devotee of the florid style so despised by Sidney and Harvey. In this satire of old-style rhetoric Beaumont (quoted by Whitting) mentions the Greek rhetorician whom I consider to be Shakespeare's mentor—Hermogenes—and then proceeds with his parody of Lyly's overly ornate, euphuistic style. He makes fun of an unnamed poet who executes "prosodical speeches with certain grammatical flourishes pick'd out of euphuies and his England as Apelles the painter, Hermogines the musician, or Cicero" (410). This places Beaumont firmly in the Ramistic plain speech camp, focusing his satire on Lyly, Nashe, the Earl of Oxford, and other old-style rhetoricians.

Because of the similarity of its theme to that of *Don Quixote*, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is assumed to have been influenced by the novel, which, though not translated into English by Shelton until 1611, is thought to have been earlier circulated in manuscript form. Succinctly summarized, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, like *Don Quixote*, juxtaposes reality and fantasy. The real

Was Shakespeare Don Quixote or was He a Jacobean Dramatist?

is exemplified by a lowly grocer and his wife, who have come to see a play, called *The London Merchant*, which—though overflowing with middle class detail—bores them with the falsity of its fantasy. The couple wish instead to see a chivalric romance acted out by their favorite grocer’s apprentice Rafe. Rafe, for all his fantastical speechifying, is rooted in the real; he is a comic figure embodying a hilarious bumbling satire of romantic fakery, i.e. chivalry.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle references Shakespeare even more explicitly than Beaumont’s Grammar Lecture. Rafe first appears quoting *Henry IV*. This situates his performance within the old-fashioned, post-1600 ridiculous genre of romance:

By heaven methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale fac’d moon,
or dive into the bottom of the sea,
Where never fathomed line touch’d any ground
and pluck up drown’d honour from the lake of hell. (3–4)

Later, his ‘Freudian slip’ is to suggest Rafe act out a scenario called Rafe and Lucrece.

Rafe, like Shakespeare, believes telling chivalric tales requires a high poetic style, pointing out that horses must be referred to as palfrey because “there are no such courteous and well-spoken knights of this [i.e. the present] age... one [woman] that Rosiclear would have called ‘right beauteous damsel’ they call ‘damned bitch’” (73). The Prologue affirms the author’s allegiance to the modern clear, plain rhetoric, warning us that the play will:

fly far from hence
All private taxes, immodest phrases,
Whate’er may but show like vicious
For wicked mirth never true pleasure brings,
But honest minds are pleased with honest things. (61)

The content of the play was as radical for its time as the style. Rafe’s chivalric moniker “knight of the burning pestle” is a dirty joke. Burning pestle was Jacobean slang for a penis inflamed by venereal rot. Thus, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* drags Castiglione’s vision of the perfect, virtuous knight from his pedestal. The episodic plot involves the grocer and his wife inventing new scenarios for Rafe to perform. For example, they suggest that Knight Rafe travel to Moldavia and fall in love with a princess. But in his real life Rafe is involved with a lowly serving maid, so the fantasy princess must bid him ‘adieu,’ which she regrets, as she had hoped to visit England and try British liquor.

Zitner suggests that *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* fed the public's nostalgia for an earlier time—one that was impossible to take seriously, because of the transition from feudalism to capitalism: “both courts and civic ceremony were heavily medievalist in tone and imagery, and the manners and ideals they embodied had the nostalgic attractiveness of clearer and more salted imperative than those imposed by an increasingly complex commercial society” (30). Zitner confirms the anti-Shakespearean dramaturgy of the play: “Beaumont undercuts the idea of stage illusion itself” (36). Zitner says (quoting Robert M. Adams) “the play accepts the stage as a fraud and a conventional fraud at that, and attacks fantasy as preposterous.” In contrast, chivalry, myth, fantasy, fable, fairies, imagined cities, ghosts, old school rhetorical poetry, and bewitching theatrical illusion... these are the elements that constitute Shakespeare's aesthetic. It's hard to imagine Shakespeare challenging the tropes he held so dearly or juxtaposing them against “dull reality.” Mark Rose sums it up: Shakespeare “was not ready to write anti-Romances like *Don Quixote* or *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*” (310).

The Two Noble Kinsmen

In terms of Shakespeare's medieval rhetoric and chivalric aesthetic, none of his plays seems so singularly marked by his personal obsessions, or seem more like a freakish fairy tale to us today, than *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Arguably, it is one of Shakespeare's strangest creations; perhaps that's why it has only lately been embraced by scholars. But no play is more relevant to a discussion of *Double Falsehood*. Both *Cardenio* (the play *Double Falsehood* is supposedly based on) and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* are allegedly collaborations between Fletcher and Shakespeare, and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* appeared the same year as *Cardenio* in 1613.

How does *Double Falsehood*, a play whose authorship is debatable, differ from *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, confirmed by most scholars to be, at the very least, partially written by Shakespeare? Act 1 and Act 5 of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* are replete with the seductive, dense, obscure style associated with Shakespeare's late work, a style starkly absent from *Double Falsehood*. But there is another significant difference. *Double Falsehood* is alleged to have been inspired by *Don Quixote*; a novel with a sensibility precisely the opposite of Shakespeare's. *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, on the other hand, is steeped in Shakespeare's obsession with chivalry, and therefore somewhat incomprehensible to audiences today.

These two nearly identical knights seem wildly improbable characters to a modern eye. They are Greek warriors who, anachronistically, abide strictly by the moral code of feudal England. They personify the essence of Castiglione's courtier—beautiful on the outside and the inside—in other words,

Was Shakespeare Don Quixote or was He a Jacobean Dramatist?

perfect. They are so unbelievably brave, eloquent, polite and stoic that they are capable of turning even the direst situation into an inspiring one; if ever there were sunny optimists, it would be these two. When they are jailed by Theseus, Arcite keeps a stiff upper lip:

Let us think this prison holy sanctuary
To keep us from corruption of worse men...
What worthy blessing
Can be but our imaginations
May make it ours? (II.ii.70–77)

Even as Palamon is being led to the scaffold he looks on the bright side. If he *must* die, it is a good thing, because:

we prevent
The loathsome misery of age, beguile
The gout and rheum that in lag hours attend
For grey approachers; we come towards the gods
Young and unwrapped... (V.iv.6–10)

This is unimaginable courage in the face of imminent death.

Yet it is in their display of the chivalric virtue of courtesy that would seem to a modern audience most ridiculous. When they discover they are in love with the same woman (Emilia), they agree to fight to the death to see who will ultimately win her. Yet they dress each other for mortal combat with astonishing politeness and care:

ARCITE. I'll arm you first.
PALAMON. Do. Pray then tell me, cousin
Where gott'st thou this good armour?
ARCITE. (arming Palamon) 'Tis the Duke's,
And to say true, I stole it. Do I pinch you?
PALAMON. No.
ARCITE. Is't not too heavy?
PALAMON. I have worn a lighter,
But I shall make it serve. (III.vi.45–54)

A few seconds later they are promising to kill each other, but of course, again politely:

PALAMON. I warrant thee, I'll strike home.
ARCITE. Do, and spare not.
I'll give thee cause, sweet cousin. (III.vi.65–67)

The two young men not only confront each of the vile circumstances that comes their way with courtesy and good cheer, but they exemplify every single chivalric virtue, managing to pity those who deserve it, and to be fiercely, unwaveringly loyal to each other—and to the woman (Emilia) they both love.

This chivalric menage-a-trois has befuddled critics for centuries. For the two young men appear to be as much in love with each other as with Emilia. In prison, Arcite says:

We are an endless mine to one another;
We are one another's wife, ever begetting
New births of love. (II.ii.79–81)

This could possibly be excused, as it often is, by a poet's penchant for poetic hyperbole, and, anyway, this passage is attributed to Fletcher, not Shakespeare. But in Act 5, when Arcite is dying from an accident that occurs after defeating Palamon in battle (and nearly sending him to the gallows), Palamon rushes to his side: "I am Palamon, / one that yet loves thee dying" (V.iv.88).

In contrast, the two cousins' love for Emilia is suspect. They fall in love with her simultaneously at first sight (love at first sight is a trope common in chivalric romance). More significantly, their obsession with her opens what seems, at first, to be an incurable rift between the two young men. Palamon attacks Arcite: "thou liest, and art / a very thief in love," (III.i.39–40) and Arcite later retorts: "Kinsman you might as well / Speak this and act it in your glass as to / His ear which now disdains you" (III.i.69–71). Their love for Emilia makes the two kinsmen suddenly seem less noble. They not only betray their friendship but their truths; each accuses the other of deception.

Not only does their love for Emilia seem less pure than their love for each other, Emilia's feelings are also suspect. As they are both alike in virtue, she can only differentiate them physically, but still cannot choose one over the other. So, she curses herself: "that having two fair gauds of equal sweetness, / cannot distinguish but must cry for both!" (IV.ii.53–54). And if that is not sufficient evidence of the superficiality of her feelings, the stage directions indicate that when she complains of this amorous dilemma she is gazing at their portraits. For Shakespeare, obsession with a portrait of a lover is often the sign of a sensual, not a spiritual response. As John Vyvyan points out, when Proteus demands a portrait of Sylvia in *Two Gentleman of Verona*, "he is in the condition Castiglione calls 'wandering in vanity' due to 'the falsehood of the senses'" (71).

Castiglione is the key to understanding the love of the two warriors in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. He demanded the perfect courtier be not only handsome, a perfect speaker, and a perfect warrior, but in addition, Castiglione's

ideal knight was required to achieve the highest spiritual awareness. For Castiglione, as John Vyvyan tells us, love was the Neoplatonic path to the realm of pure spirit. It began with a kiss and ended at a union with God. In between were various stages. The lover must “keep alwaies fast in his minde, that the bodie is a most diverse thing from beautie” (54). Realizing that he then “beholde no more the particular beautie of one woman, but a universal” (55), then beauty is “seene with the the eyes of the minde” (56). Finally, the lover “seeth the heavenly beauty” (56) which means, he essentially sees God, and “thus the soule kindled in the most holy fire of true heavenly love, fleeth to couple her selfe with the nature of Angels” (57). For Horatio, Hamlet represents Castiglione’s ideal courtier, as when Hamlet dies, Horatio’s epitaph is “flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.”

So, what does Castiglione’s ideal of Neoplatonic love have to do with *The Two Noble Kinsmen*? It was problematic for Elizabethans that heterosexual love inevitably involved sex. Thus, women were blamed, or to be more accurate, their *physical beauty* was blamed, for sexualizing love. As Stephen Orgel says of the Elizabethan ban on female actors: “Behind the outrage of public modesty is a real fear of women’s sexuality, and more specifically, of its power to evoke men’s sexuality” (17). This is one aspect of Shakespeare’s metaphorical obsession, with the “inside and outside” —with “the serpent hiding in the flowers” (a reference to the evil sexuality of Eve). But it’s important to note that in Neoplatonism—and consequently in all of Shakespeare’s work—this attitude is not so much puritanical as careful. The Neoplatonic notion was not necessarily that sex was evil, or that women were evil, but that women offered a temptation that could lead to evil if men were subsumed by lust. One had to be careful of physical attraction, as even just a kiss could lead to fetishizing a woman’s body rather than discovering the pathway to God. For Shakespeare and the Neoplatonists, physical beauty offers either a road to enlightenment or the trail to degradation. The question is, how can one be sure to take the right road?

In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, as in much of Shakespeare’s work, the love of one man for another is equivalent to the highest stage of Neoplatonic love because it is assumed that homosexuality does not exist. This makes the play strange to us because the physical beauty of both noble kinsmen is praised over and over by everyone, including Theseus. Then the two confirm their love in prison, on the battlefield, and in death. In order to make sense of all this, it must be viewed through the lens of Castiglione’s Neoplatonism. At the center of this drama is the possibility that the noble cousins will be lured from their higher love for each other by physical love for Emilia.

Another woman in the play is associated with physical love. The Jailer’s Daughter is driven mad by the beauty of Palamon. Her father the Jailer quotes her mad rant: “Palamon fair Palamon’ / And ‘Palamon was a tall

young man” (IV.i.81–82). The Doctor who treats her suggests her Wooer pretends to be Palamon because “It is falsehood she is in, which is with falsehoods to be combatted” (IV.iii.87–88). Thus, both the leading female characters in the play (Emilia and the Jailer’s Daughter) are associated with the lying trick of physical beauty. Lest Shakespeare be blamed for the cultural prejudices of his day, it’s important to remember that Emilia is enjoying a Neoplatonic affair with one of her best female friends, Flavia: “the true love ‘tween maid and maid may be / more than in sex dividual” (I.i.81–82). Any love but heterosexual love thus holds the possibility of divine purity.

Was Shakespeare Don Quixote?

Shakespeare’s attitude to lust was, from the beginning to the end, Neoplatonic. Roger Stritmatter gives us Edward de Vere’s poem, “The Lively Lark Stretched Forth Her Wing” written in 1576, when de Vere was 26 years old, which speaks of a

knight,
Clad in colour carnation fair;
I did value this gentle wight,
Of him I did his name inquire.
He sighed, and said he was desire. (85)

De Vere walks hand in hand with the knight clad in fair colors; it appears that they are—like the two noble kinsmen—engaged in some sort of Neoplatonic affair. But the “knight who is desire” says, “Desire can have no greater pain / Than for to see another man / That he desireth to obtain” (85). This sentiment is perhaps expressed more succinctly by Shakespeare much later in *The Sonnets*, when Shakespeare labels lust “th’ expense of spirit in a waste of shame” (639).

Shakespeare was obsessed with chivalry. Mark Rose says: “not just Othello’s imagination but, I would suggest, Shakespeare’s own, is informed by the patterns of chivalric romance” (295). He adds, “One might interpret Othello as a kind of tragic *Don Quixote*, a play in which Shakespeare explores the ways in which a romanticizing imagination can lead to a devastating error” (295). From the beginning of his life to the end, Shakespeare was fixed on the notion of the medieval knight’s aspiration to virtue, as well as on the complexities and obscurities of medieval rhetoric. If we turn away from stylometrics and deeply examine his obsession with rhetoric and chivalry, it’s clear Shakespeare was not a Jacobean playwright but an Elizabethan (or even a medieval) one.

Was Shakespeare Don Quixote? Would he have been, for the poets who followed him in Jacobean England, the epitome of a knight errant, devoted

Was Shakespeare Don Quixote or was He a Jacobean Dramatist?

to a tragic quest to maintain a dense medieval rhetoric, shrouded in fable and mystery—along with the values of chivalric romance? Mark Rose compares Shakespeare’s tragic aesthetic quest to that of Don Quixote. Shakespeare sought to extol poetry in the ancient grammatical and rhetorical manner, as not simply beautiful in a superficial way, but as the holy truth incarnate. He sought to return to a pre-Renaissance aesthetic where poetry was more real than reality:

The cosmos is a single vast text, and knowledge is a form of interpretation, a matter of reading the mystic signatures written in things.... (Don Quixote) seeks to re-establish a world of magical resemblances; his entire journey is a quest for similitudes... the Renaissance cosmos has dissolved. In its place the empire of fact is emerging, and language is retreating into a special domain, literature (309).

The sadness is that after *Don Quixote*, poetry was depleted, it became just a suspect representation, not a magical world itself. Ironically, Shakespeare’s allegiance to an earlier medieval era—and his lack of connection with the Jacobean era—adds immeasurably to the prophetic urgency of his work. His work points us to a world where, like today, we only have an elegiac relationship to high rhetoric and chivalric romance.

Gary Taylor in *The Quest for Cardenio* tells us that Edmund Gayton wrote the first study of *Don Quixote* in English in 1659, a year before the foundation of the Royal Society and its rejection of poetry in favor of reality. In his study, Gayton labelled Don Quixote “the Shakespeare of La Mancha” (309). Gary Taylor asks, “Why should Gayton think of Shakespeare, rather than any other playwright, in relation to Quixote?” (36).

Cervantes was apparently in Naples in 1575, at the same time that the Earl of Oxford—a twenty-five year old, dreamy, boastful, young knight—was challenging the citizens of the city of Palermo, Sicily to a medieval style joust for the honor of Queen Elizabeth. In her film *Nothing is Truer than Truth* Cheryl Eagan-Donovan suggests that Cervantes may have been a witness or heard via the grapevine of de Vere’s exploits, which so closely resemble those of Don Quixote.

The term ‘the Shakespeare of La Mancha’ does not originate from the idea that Shakespeare might have had a hand in the Cervantes-inspired play *Double Falsehood*. Shakespeare was ‘the man of La Mancha’ because he belonged to another world—one that was disappearing even during his own lifetime—a world where he was still willing to heroically shake his spear for rhetoric and chivalry, and defend them to the death.

Shakespeare WAS Don Quixote.

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Comparisons of Oxford's Poetry with Shakespeare's:

Five Letters from J. Thomas Looney to *The New Age* (1920-1921) and *The Outlook* (1921)

Introduction and annotations by James A. Warren

Five letters by J. Thomas Looney addressing the similarities and differences between Oxford's early poems and those generally regarded as "Shakespeare's" were part of a cache of Looney's papers discovered in 2019, seventy-five years after his death. It is perhaps appropriate to explain just how the papers came to light before addressing the content of the letters.

Early in 2019, Kathryn Sharpe, Chair of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship's "*Shakespeare Identified* 100th Anniversary Committee, asked Alan Bodell, J. Thomas Looney's grandson, if he had any more photographs of his grandfather that he would be willing to share with the Fellowship in addition to those he had already sent. He responded that he didn't think he did, but there was one place he had not yet checked, an old desk in the attic of his house.

A week later he contacted Kathryn to say that he had found additional photos of his grandfather, and discovered a cache of hundreds of his grandfather's papers that he hadn't known about. And so were discovered, seventy-five years after his death, the only known surviving papers of the man who wrote "*Shakespeare Identified*."

These papers had an interesting history. They had survived in that desk drawer in that unheated attic in Looney's grandson's house in southern Scotland for more than fifty years, ever since he and his wife had purchased it in

1968. Before then the desk sat in his mother's house—Looney's daughter's house—for sixteen years. And for eight years before that, the desk had been in the house of his widow, Elizabeth Looney, the same house where Looney had written his book.

These newly discovered papers were only a small fraction of the materials Looney had accumulated during his decades of research into the authorship question and the correspondence he had carried on with countless people interested in Edward de Vere's authorship. But they are all that is left, and we must be immensely grateful that they have come to light.

Kathryn Sharpe had introduced me to Alan Bodell at the same time she asked him about the photographs, and I had corresponded with him about my research into his grandfather's work. When I mentioned the excitement the discovery of his grandfather's papers had generated among Oxfordian scholars, he invited me to review them in his home. Then he added that "you would be very welcome to do what you wish with them." Since he didn't feel comfortable mailing such irreplaceable items, I decided to travel to Scotland to meet him and to retrieve the papers in person.

At the end of June 2019, I flew to London and then drove up to Scotland to meet Alan and his daughter Helen. We had an enjoyable visit together before going out for lunch at an outdoor restaurant near the Teviot River. After we returned to their house, Alan brought out a big box full of his grandfather's papers. As I looked through its contents, I recognized some of the materials, such as a few issues of the *Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter* and articles from *The Bookman's Journal*, but most of the documents consisted of articles, correspondence and handwritten manuscripts I had never seen before—even though I had spent the past four years researching the early years of the Oxfordian movement.

I found that the cache of papers consisted of 386 items totaling about 1,940 pages. About half of it was Oxfordian in nature and half related to personal

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or Positivist matters that had occupied Looney's thoughts earlier in his life. The Oxfordian materials included 249 items totaling 1,017 pages, consisting of:

- 36 clippings (10 by Looney)
- 145 letters (5 by Looney)
- 43 handwritten articles or fragments totaling 200 (small) pages (all by Looney)
- A copy of *The Poems of Edward de Vere* with handwritten notes in the margins
- 24 other items

Included in the 36 clippings were five letters that Looney had sent to two publications in response to reviews they had published of his books. Three of the letters were to *The New Age*, where they formed part of a seven-part exchange of views initiated by R.H.C.'s review of Looney first book, "*Shakespeare*" *Identified* (1920). The other two letters were to *The Outlook: A Weekly Review of Politics, Art, Literature and Finance*, where they formed two parts of a four-part exchange of views launched by Solomon Eagle's review of his second book, *The Poems of Edward de Vere* (1921).

Interestingly, both reviewers had used pseudonyms. R.H.C. was actually Alfred R. Orage, editor of *The New Age*, a weekly newsmagazine noted for its influence in literature and the arts. Solomon Eagle was the pen name of John Collins Squire, editor of *The Observer*. Looney and Squire were to engage each other again two years later when Squire's review of Col. Bernard R. Ward's *The Mystery of "Mr. W. H."* was answered by Looney.¹

Both reviews, and the following exchanges of letters in both publications, address the similarities and differences between the early poems of Edward de Vere and those of "Shakespeare." Looney cites "identity of conception" and "parallels in phrasing" in support of his belief that the two bodies of work came from the same pen. The differences between them were just what should be expected, he explains, given two factors that he presents. The first is that Oxford's



Looney's papers as I began to sort them out.

early poems were for the most part “hasty ephemeral products of his dilettante courtier days,” and as such would surely differ from “Shakespeare’s,” which “had undergone a lengthy process of most exacting revision and vast enrichment.”

The second factor, even more decisive, is “historical.”

It was absolutely impossible for the greatest genius to have produced, in 1576, literature at all resembling, either in form or quality, the work which came from Shakespeare’s pen eighteen years later, [because, Looney explains] in the whole history of England there never has been, and there never can be again, anything like the phenomenally rapid expansion, that took place at that time, in literary craftsmanship, and even in the English language itself... The rich veins of phrase and figure created by two abnormal decades of national poetical enthusiasm, the intense stimulus given to many phases of intellectual interest, the free and even licentious probing of life and human nature, furnished the ’nineties with literary powers and possibilities far beyond the highest hopes of the ’seventies.²

So, for reasons both personal and historical, the differences between Oxford’s early work and his later work, now known as “Shakespeare’s,” are similar in, and differ in, just those ways that scholars should expect. But it’s best for Looney himself to explain it all further.



J. Thomas Looney—R.H.C. Published Correspondence in <i>The New Age</i>		
1920, December 2	R.H.C.	“Readers & Writers” [Review of “ <i>Shakespeare</i> ” Identified], Vol. 28/5: 55–56
1920, December 23	J. Thomas Looney R.H.C.	“Readers & Writers” [Letter], Vol. 28/8: 91–92. “Readers & Writers” [Reply to Looney], Vol. 28/8: 92.
1921, January 20	J. Thomas Looney R.H.C.	“Readers & Writers” [Letter], Vol. 28/12: 139. “Readers & Writers” [Reply to Looney], Vol. 28/12: 139.
1921, January 27	R.H.C.	“Readers & Writers” [Additional reply to Looney], Vol. 28/13: 155–56.
1921, February 17	J. Thomas Looney	“Shakespeare Identified” [Letter], Vol. 28/16: 192.
J. Thomas Looney—Solomon Eagle Correspondence in <i>The Outlook</i>		
1921, March 12	Solomon Eagle	“Mr. Looney and Lord Oxford,” Vol. 47/1206: 231.
1921, June 25	J. Thomas Looney	“Shakespeare, Lord Oxford, Solomon Eagle and Mr. Looney” [Letter], Vol. 47/1221: 543–44.
1921, July 2	Solomon Eagle	“The Critic at Large,” Vol. 48/1223: 15.
1921, July 16	J. Thomas Looney	“Mr. Looney Replies” [Letter], Vol. 48/1225: 58–59.

LETTERS IN *THE NEW AGE*

“Readers and Writers,”³ *The New Age*, vol. 28/8: 91–92. (December 23, 1920)

Readers and Writers

SIR, Most of my critics have been writers acquainted with all the leading facts of the Shakespeare controversy, who have yet been able to preserve a steadfast orthodoxy. From them I feel separated as by a wall of *constitutional* mental difference—not of knowledge or of capacity—against which argument would be unavailing. My critic in *THE NEW AGE* (December 2) stands, however, in a totally different relationship, both to the problem and to my researches. He rejects alike the Stratfordian and the Baconian theory: and is therefore predisposed to adopt a reasonable alternative; he frankly admits that the general mass of my evidence is “striking,” but he feels obliged to reject the De Vere solution absolutely on very definite grounds. He presents, therefore, a case which calls for a serious answer.

Difficulties, of course, are bound to appear in any proposed solution, however true. A secrecy deliberately planned by one of the most ingenious of minds might have proved forever impenetrable, and the true author's claims might have been set aside explicitly on the ground of difficulties of his own devising. To explain away objections must, therefore, form part of any solution; my own wonder has been that in Oxford's case the difficulties have turned out to be so few and so easily disposed of.

The insuperable obstacle in "R.H.C.'s" opinion is that the poetry left by Edward de Vere makes it clear that "Edward de Vere could not have possibly written a single true Shakespeare line."

Let me say, first, that when many distinct lines of evidence, involving a vast accumulation of details, all support in a "striking" way a given solution to any problem, whilst one point raises a difficulty, *the presumption is against the one*; and not until that one point has been exhaustively investigated, and the matter placed beyond dispute, is it sound wisdom, or scientific, to set aside "for ever and ever" a conclusion otherwise so well supported?

For such an investigation in this case certain things are necessary: it is necessary to know the poetry of Edward de Vere as a whole; it is necessary to have "a canon" of Edward de Vere; and it is necessary to have "a canon of Shakespeare." It is necessary to know whether a given passage was written at the age of 15 or 50; whether during the conventional period of the early court poets, or the vigorous realistic period of the later dramatic poets; and, whether it was written before or after the writer had passed through his stimulating experiences in the Bohemian world of Elizabethan drama. As little or none of this material is as yet available, a definite rejection of all the other evidence on the grounds of poetic incompatibility is at any rate premature and places the whole issue at the mercy of mere caprice. Shakespearean matters have certainly proved how elusive and capricious may be these estimates of literary values; and whilst "R.H.C." rejects de Vere unreservedly on poetic grounds, other competent literary men have not only praised the poetry in terms appropriate to Shakespeare, but have gone as far as to admit that the poetry is "such as Shakespeare might have written." ⁴

The instances of parallel passages which "R.H.C." quotes are, however, instructive. Because of their identity of *conception*, and as parts of an argument on the "haggard," I have placed together two passages, one from Edward de Vere's poem on Women, and the other from Shakespeare's *Othello*. One is from a lyric poem, the other from a drama; one deals in generalities, the other is a passionate explosion; one was in print many years before a single line was published under Shakespeare's name, the other is usually dated about the time of Oxford's death. From every point of view, then, a difference of *metrical* treatment was not only to be expected but was actually required.

Yet it is on this precise ground of metrical difference that the de Vere work is rejected as un-Shakespearean. Moreover, the change from the metrical smoothness of the one to the more rugged and forceful diction of the other is a common poetic evolution, very marked in Shakespeare.

It is with *Venus* and *Lucrece*—although even these were published much later than Oxford's poem—that the last should have been compared metrically. If the reader will first memorize Oxford's poem (*Golden Treasury*)⁵ and then read *Venus*, which is in the identical meter, he will probably feel that, if the Shakespeare plays were not in Oxford, neither were they in the author of *Venus and Adonis*. It is, indeed, the phenomenal expansion which took place in Shakespeare's genius as he passed from pure lyric to drama that amazes us; and no canon of Shakespeare which does not begin with the clear recognition of this can be of any service to us. As then the reader proceeds with *Venus* he will be interested to find himself rubbing up against parallel lines like these:

(Oxford): "To play with fools, O! what a fool was I."
 (Shakespeare): "O! Jove, quoth she, how much a fool was I."
 (Oxford): "Till weary of their wiles ourselves we ease."
 (Shakespeare): "Thus weary of the world away she lies."

When he has analysed the latter parallel letter by letter, syllable by syllable, and phrase by phrase, he may be able to judge whether or not the music of Oxford's poems moves in unison with the early Shakespeare lyrics. When, moreover, he has the whole of Oxford's acknowledged verses before him—which we hope to issue shortly—he will hardly be able to read Shakespeare's lyrics and early dramas for five minutes without meeting with something reminiscent of Oxford. Yet many of these verses of Oxford's were never published and have only been rescued in modern times from private manuscripts. I give one example just noticed in an interval with writing the above.

(Oxford): "Therefore, go, go, go—importune me no more."
 (M.S. Miscellany.)
 (Shakespeare): "Therefore, be gone, solicit me no more."
 (*Two Gent.*, V.4.)

Venus and Adonis, as the first work published under Shakespeare's name, is, certainly, of fundamental importance in any scientific investigation of our problem; and as my critic twice refers to an outstanding passage in this poem as being in the sonnets—a slip which, no doubt, anyone might have made—it is evident at any rate that the lyric question has not yet been sufficiently studied to justify the unqualified rejection of a mass of "striking" biographical evidence, and the summary dismissal of Edward de Vere.

J. THOMAS LOONEY



“Readers and Writers,”⁶ *The New Age*, vol. 28/12: 138–39. (January 20, 1921)

Readers and Writers

Sir, The reply of “R.H.C.” to my letter in the *NEW AGE* (December 23) furnishes distinctly new and important material, from the negative point of view, respecting the bearing of Oxford's poetry upon the question of Shakespearean authorship. For the first time this issue has been moved from the realm of literary empiricism and placed upon a basis of measurable fact. As this is precisely what has long been wanted, I am naturally anxious that the matter should be taken up seriously and thoroughly tested. The line, “Till weary of their wiles *ourselves we ease*,” is quoted as a typical example of “de Vere's characteristic habit of inversion,” and is contrasted with “Shakespeare's profound respect for the natural or spoken order of words... Shakespeare would have written:

Till weary of their wiles *we ease ourselves*.”

Here, then, we have a clearly defined issue.

First, we notice that it is at the end of a rhymed line that Oxford's inversion occurs. In other positions he never inverts a reflexive clause; in this case the obvious purpose is to place the verb “ease” at the end of the line to rhyme with “please.” Is this un-Shakespearean?

I have most carefully examined many thousands of Shakespeare's line terminations, rhymed and blank verse alike, and in the recognized Shakespeare work *I have not found a single example of a rhymed line ending in a reflexive pronoun*—single examples in the non-Shakespearean work of *Pericles* and *Timon* only serve to emphasize the Shakespeare rule.

Whenever the spoken order of words would have placed a reflexive pronoun at the end of the line, and so hampered the rhyme, Shakespeare invariably inverts the natural order. He does, that is, precisely what “R.H.C.” charges against Oxford; he adapts his words to poetic form instead of adapting the form to natural rhythm.

De Vere has two such inversions in the 520 lines of his recognized work; in Shakespeare's *Venus* I have counted five such inversions in the 1,200 lines; in *Lucrece* 11 inversions in the 1,855 lines; in the *Sonnets* 13 clear inversions and two others modified in the 2,156 lines. In addition, there are two examples in the *Sonnets* of inversions at the beginnings of lines (S. 87 and 80); so that “Shakespeare” is, in this, more un-Shakespearean than Oxford.

Venus (stanza 189): Two glasses where herself herself beheld.
Lucrece (stanza 23): For himself he must himself forsake.
 Sonnet 47: The heart in love, with sighs himself doth smother.

From the figures I have given it will be seen that the proportion is fairly even throughout.

I have similarly examined the other forms of inversion employed by de Vere. Nearly all are due to the exigencies of rhyme, and all are adequately represented in the lyric work of Shakespeare: particularly in *Lucrece* and the *Sonnets*. They are very unevenly distributed; but the general frequency is about equal in the two sets. Contrary to expectations, *Venus* has fewer in proportion than *Lucrece*, and the *Sonnets* have most. The proportion in the de Vere poems is about that in *Lucrece*. It is impossible to represent things adequately by quotations; but if the reader will devote an hour or two to the study specially of the Verb endings in the middle section of *Lucrece* (from stanza 16 onwards) and count those verbs that are preceded by their Accusatives, he will probably come to feel that Oxford's habit of inversion has a value even for the positive side of the question.

I have but one example because of its interest from other points of view.

Oxford: If care or skill could conquer vain desire,
 Or Reason's reins *my strong affection stay*.
Lucrece (stanza 72): But nothing can *affection's course control*,
 Or stop the headlong fury of his speed.

The whole conception, imagery, and workmanship are so similar that they might easily have been taken for two parts of one poem; and in this case the parallel is actually strengthened by a common inversion of the natural or spoken order of words.

"R.H.C.'s" objection to de Vere's expressions "go, go, go," as being weaker than Shakespeare's "be gone," in the parallel passage, is due to the disadvantage of his having only my quotation by him at the time of writing. For Oxford's "go, go, go" occurs as part of a refrain of a type not uncommon in Shakespeare's songs. Moreover, in an earlier part of the play in which the parallel passage occurs (*Two Gent.*) there actually occurs the expression, "Go, go, be gone."

The natural directness and strength of Shakespeare's expression belong in a peculiar degree to his dramatic blank verse; and the contrast it presents to the inversions of his rhymed verse only emphasizes the insufficiency of evidence resting upon literary style alone. Literary subject to the influence of fashion;

and in the work of several contemporary poets I find a larger proportion of inversions than in the de Vere and Shakespeare lyrics. It is of first importance, therefore, to get beneath verbal forms to underlying mental correspondences; and it is here that the de Vere case is especially strong. There is nothing rarer in poetry, or more indicative of mental constitution; and nothing more distinctive of "Shakespeare," than what Professor Courthope calls, in Edward de Vere, his "studied concinnity of style."⁷ No better example of how ideas all hang on to one another could be suggested than the poem on Women in the *Golden Treasury*; nor can I find in the whole of Elizabethan poetry another lyric which, if freed from the limitations of lyric, and presented as blank verse as "R.H.C." has dealt with one of its lines, would have been more readily "accepted as Shakespeare's without a qualm."

J. Thomas Looney.



"Shakespeare Identified,"⁸ *The New Age*, vol. 28/16: 192. (February 17, 1921)

Readers and Writers

Sir, I wish to thank you for the opportunity you so readily granted me of replying to some of "R.H.C.'s" remarks upon the earl of Oxford's poetry. It is to me a matter of very keen regret that your space will not permit a continuance of the controversy. Perhaps, however, you may be able to find room for placing the following facts before your readers.

Of the 520 lines of Oxford's recognized verse 222 were published in 1576, when he was but twenty-six years of age, and before his literary and dramatic career had begun; 226 lines, much of it belonging evidently to the same early period, have been gathered together in recent years from miscellaneous pieces of MS. never prepared for publication. The trifling remainder had become the prey of collectors during his lifetime. It is certain, therefore, that most of what is known as Oxford's poetry was written at least 17 years before a single "Shakespeare" line was published; and it is highly probable that the whole of it belongs to about the same time.

After 1580 his real literary career began. In 1589 he is spoken of as the chief of some writers whose doings could not "be found out or made known." In 1593 Shakespeare's *Venus* made his appearance; and up to the present there has been nothing whatever to show for Oxford's literary period.

J. Thomas Looney.



LETTERS IN *THE OUTLOOK*

“Shakespeare, Lord Oxford, Solomon Eagle and Mr. Looney,”⁹
The Outlook: A Weekly Review of Politics, Art, Literature and Finance,
 vol. 47/1221: 543–44. (June 25, 1921)

SHAKESPEARE, LORD OXFORD,
 SOLOMON EAGLE AND MR. LOONEY.

TO THE EDITOR OF *THE OUTLOOK*

Sir, Those who have only a limited leisure in which to serve the causes they espouse must frequently be content to do things when they can, not when they would. I hope, therefore, it may not appear belated if I offer now some comment upon the very pleasing and open-minded criticism of my Shakespeare research published in your columns on March 12th. The theme itself is, certainly, of more than passing interest.

Let me say at once that it is quite impossible to associate Solomon Eagle with those who are resolved to oppose my views at any cost, or who, possibly because of the strength of the case itself, prefer to attack its hapless advocate. I welcome specially his confession: “The day on which Mr. Looney satisfied my cool reason that Lord Oxford wrote these poems would be one of the happiest in my life.” The indifference to the issue professed by some of the critics seldom rings true; for everybody interested in literature knows that the general adoption of any of the solutions offered to this problem would be one of the biggest events in literary history. Moreover, the adoption of the De Vere solution, particularly, would revolutionize Shakespeare study, by converting the great dramas into the most directly personal literature.

To make the best use of your space, however, I shall confine myself to your contributor’s principal objection; the only real difficulty, I hold, that has, so far, been urged by competent writers:

I am quite unshaken in my belief that Oxford did not write Shakespeare.... What slight weakening there may have been on my part... disappeared when I was confronted with Oxford’s...poetry.

The difference in age, he considers, will not account for the difference in the work: Oxford was 26 (in 1576) when, so far as can be judged, he sanctioned

for once the publication of verses above his own initials; he was 43 when the first Shakespeare poem, and 47 when the first plays were published—an interval quite adequate, in view of his circumstances, for the unfolding of quite unsuspected gifts. There are, however, other very decisive factors in the problem, and I question whether a single one of my critics has weighed these carefully.

The 1576 poems were a contribution to a poetic miscellany, published just at the time of the incidents in Oxford's life to which his verses apparently refer. Most of the others are fugitive poems of the "occasional" type, salvaged in modern times from old defective manuscripts. All, therefore, are almost certainly the hasty ephemeral product of his dilettante courtier days, before, possibly, the thought of producing enduring literature had even entered his mind; and what negligent stuff might not have survived in consequence! Thirteen years later, even, Puttenham represents him as seriously occupied with literary work which could not "be found out or made known."

On the other hand, recent Shakespeare study tends to show that the great writings had undergone a lengthy process of most exacting revision and vast enrichment. The point cannot be fully elaborated here, and, therefore, I would urge a careful weighing of Professor Raleigh's words on this subject.¹⁰ The enormous gulf which may separate the extempore from the finished work of the same writer is common knowledge; and verse, especially, offers scope for transforming beyond recognition, when the poet, freed from the difficult tasks of initial conception, is able to concentrate a refreshed mind upon the improvement of his expression. In addition to what Professor Raleigh says respecting the two plays, *The Taming of a Shrew* (pub. anon. 1594) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (Shakespeare Folio 1623), I have exhaustively compared the phrasing, and I feel convinced that both are substantially from the same pen; but what an extraordinary faculty, for making literary transformation of his earlier work, is disclosed!

Again, it is very necessary to consider the great change in Oxford's life after 1576. From Court life he plunged into the strange Bohemian world (with all its rough contact with naked human realities) in which the materials of the later Elizabethan literature and drama were elaborated. This was "Shakespeare's" school, and who shall fix the limits of what an original mind might have learnt in it? The Oxford verses were written before he entered that school, and Shakespeare work after his education had been completed.

By far the most important considerations, however, are historical; and these are not recondite, but may be gathered from any text-book of literature history (say, Stopford Brook's *Primer*, Ch. IV).¹¹ An hour spent seriously in this study will, I am sure, convince most people, that it was absolutely impossible

for the greatest genius to have produced, in 1576, literature at all resembling, either in form or quality, the work which came from Shakespeare's pen eighteen years later. And, conversely, it was equally impossible for Shakespeare, whoever he was, to have sent forth, in his special period, the same type of work as he might have produced even ten years before. In the whole history of England there never has been, and there never can be again, anything like the phenomenally rapid expansion, that took place at that time, in literary craftsmanship, and even in the English language itself. The copious vocabulary wielded by Shakespeare with such marvelous effect in the nineties did not so much as exist in the seventies. The opulence of new words and the passing into currency of new variations and inflexions, not only modified all literary structure, and energized expression, but was itself the symptom and the reagent of a strenuous mental activity. The rich veins of phrase and figure created by two abnormal decades of national poetical enthusiasm, the intense stimulus given to many phases of intellectual interest, the free and even licentious probing of life and human nature, furnished the 'nineties with literary powers and possibilities far beyond the highest hopes of the 'seventies.

With the exception of the translations made by Oxford's own tutor, Arthur Golding, the English books by which, all authorities agree, the mind of "Shakespeare" was chiefly influenced, had not yet appeared. Holinshed's *Chronicles* and North's *Plutarch*, which inspired and guided his work in history, were not published till 1578 and 1579. They were followed closely by Lyly's and Spenser's first works; and, not till some years later, by the special band of poets and dramatists of whose combined labors "Shakespeare's" work is the summary and consummation. These things illustrate the utter futility of any test based upon literary values which does not take full account of the historic factor.

Once, however, the historic position is clearly grasped, I doubt whether any expert judge of evidence would be willing to set aside, solely on grounds of poetic disparity, the extraordinary evidence supporting the claims of Edward de Vere. An eminent English statistician, who has studied the case, I am assured on the best authority, "regards the cumulative evidence as convincingly strong."¹² The extraordinary thing is that, despite the magnitude of inevitable difference, the poetry supplies its own distinctive quota of positive evidence. So much that is characteristic of Oxford's writing, even of his defects, is reflected in the Shakespeare work that a literary scholar and research expert writes to me:

You have made the most important discovery *re* the Shakespeare literature that has yet come to light; for here, in De Vere, is a poet

who, if not Shakespeare, was Shakespeare's *model*, and exercised indubitably the most profound influence on his style and thought.¹³

Yet several of Oxford's poems that have left traces in Shakespeare then existed only in private manuscripts.

Yours, etc.,
J. Thomas Looney.



"Mr. Looney Replies,"¹⁴ *The Outlook*, vol. 48/1225: 58–59. (July 16, 1921)

CORRESPONDENCE
MR. LOONEY REPLIES.
TO THE EDITOR OF *THE OUTLOOK*

Sir, My present object is not so much to continue the controversy with Solomon Eagle respecting Edward de Vere's poetry as to correct an inadvertent misrepresentation of my attitude towards the question, on a point which goes to the root of the problem of Shakespeare identification. He remarks:

My main point was that Oxford's poetry was distinctly un-Shakespearean. And at long last Mr. Looney seems to admit this. He no longer produces passages to show resemblance. His argument now is all the other way. He is concerned to show that Oxford's verses were bound to be *unlike* Shakespeare's.... What is this but an admission that the poems are so unlike Shakespeare's that they ought never to have been dragged into the discussion.

The change of front here imputed to me is wholly imaginary and is misleading both as regards my recent letter in *The Outlook*, and, less excusably, what I have most explicitly stated in my books. From the first I have made it quite plain, as any student of the problem was bound to do, that the problem raised by Oxford's poetry involved, throughout, the concurrent consideration of both resemblances and differences. The line of argument in my letter, far from being new, appears in all its essentials in my first book. One or two sentences from this will suffice:

A special caution.... It will still be necessary to distinguish between his work as Edward de Vere and his work as Shakespeare.... How vast may be the difference between a man's early and his later literary

style.... We must not expect to find Oxford ranked spontaneously with Shakespeare.... Another very important fact...a very marked change had come over English literature as a whole. (Dean Church's description of the great Elizabethan transition is then quoted.)¹⁵ Such a change we must expect to find reflected in his writings.... The Shakespeare work...represents the triumph of his matured conceptions over his youthful compliance and conventional standards. (*"Shakespeare" Identified*, 157–62)¹⁶

It is only after thus premising the inevitable differences, and indicating precisely those causes emphasized in my recent letter, that I proceed to trace and collect persisting and characteristic resemblances. Any student of personal identity problems will recognize this as the course proper to the investigations. Identity cannot, of course, be established by harping upon differences; and, therefore, my special task required that the main effort should be directed to the correspondences; and it is this to which Solomon Eagle refers.

So much for the past. My letter of June 25th, on the other hand, made no pretense of stating the positive evidence of literary identity. It was an answer given to a specific objection based upon the *recognized difference* between the two writings, and, as such, aimed at being at any rate relevant to the issue Solomon Eagle had raised. It was the only relevant answer that could be given; whilst the quoting of similar passages would have been wholly irrelevant. To construe this as an abandonment of the "resemblance" evidence is not only unwarranted but seems to imply a misconception of the whole process of identification. Let me indicate this briefly.

However vast the change in a person's outlook, equipment, and style of expression, he carries forward into this journeyman work distinctive marks of his prentice hand. The unconscious association of ideas, the recurrent trains of thought and phraseology, constitute a fatality from which he can never wholly free himself. In works as far asunder as the poles he may betray himself by unsuspected self-imitation, and the multiplication of these likenesses amid unlikeness may ultimately furnish a body of practically irresistible proof. The working out of such resemblances is a task of patient, discriminating research, the precise value of which can only be estimated when the results are viewed in the aggregate. There is no way, however, in which this can be represented in a letter, and so I can only refer your readers to what I have written elsewhere, assuring them at the same time that, far from abandoning this department of evidence, I find it ever increasing in volume. Perhaps, however, you may be able to afford me space for a single illustration of this principle of resemblance in difference, with associated conceptions and phrasing.

Comparisons of Oxford's Poetry with Shakespeare's

In 1576 Oxford wrote a poem in which the closing stanza takes the form of a malediction:

And let her feel the power of all your might,
And let her have her most desire with speed,
And let her pine away both day and night,
And let her moan and none lament her need,
And let all those that shall her see,
Despise her state and pity me.

In 1594 Shakespeare published his *Lucrece*, in which one set of verses again winds up with a malediction in the identical manner:

Let him have time to tear his curlèd hair,
Let him have time against himself to rave,
Let him have time of Time's help to despair,
Let him have time to live a loathèd slave –
Let him have time a beggar's arts to crave.
And times to see one that by alms doth live
Disdain to him disdainèd scraps to give.

Now I have spent much time in searching Elizabethan poetry for another example, so far without success. The resemblance is manifest; but so, also, is the difference, as one would naturally expect, both from the dates and also because the former stanza is taken from what is probably the weakest and hastiest of Oxford's poems. Oxford's succession of "ands," however, has its counterpart in another stanza in *Lucrece*. Now comes the striking fact. In the stanza immediately preceding that from *Lucrece* there occurs the line:

To make him moan but pity not his moans,

which is almost identical with Oxford's line:

And let her moan and none lament her need.

In this case, however, it is the Shakespeare line that is the weaker.

Yours, etc.,
J. Thomas Looney.



Endnotes

1. J. Thomas Looney, "The Oxford Movement" [Letter], *Hackney Spectator*, April 13, 1923, p. 8. The letter was reprinted in "*Shakespeare*" *Revealed: The Collected Articles and Published Letters of J. Thomas Looney*. James A. Warren, (ed.). Cary, NC: Veritas Publications. 2019.
2. J. Thomas Looney, "Shakespeare, Lord Oxford, Solomon Eagle and Mr. Looney" [letter] *The Outlook*, June 25, 1921, p. 543–55. That letter was reprinted in "*Shakespeare*" *Revealed*. The other four letters printed here have never been reprinted.
3. A letter written in response to R.H.C.'s December 2, 1920 review of "*Shakespeare*" *Identified: "Readers and Writers,"* *The New Age*, vol. 28/5: 55–56.
4. In "*Shakespeare*" *Identified* (2018, p. 259), Looney quoted Rev. Ronald Bayne using a similar phrase:

“[One of] Munday’s plays is a humble variation of the dramatic type of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and we find in [another of Munday’s plays] *phrases that may have rested in the mind of Shakespeare.*”

Rev. Ronald Bayne, "Lesser Elizabethan Dramatists," in *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. 5, Chapter 13, pp. 315–16, 317, 318 (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1907).

On page 279 Looney himself uses the exact phrase he quotes in this article. Regarding Lyly’s lyrics, he writes, although “we may hesitate to affirm definitively that they are from the same pen as the lyrics of ‘Shakespeare,’ no one who knows the best of them will hesitate to say that they are such as ‘Shakespeare’ might have written.”
5. *Palgrave’s Golden Treasury* is an anthology of British poetry compiled by Francis Turner Palgrave in 1861. There are many editions and reprintings.
6. A letter written in response to R.H.C.’s December 23, 1920 reply, "Readers and Writers," *The New Age*, vol. 28/8: 91–92.
7. W. J. Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vol. II, pp. 311-12, quoted in "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*, p. 122 (2018).

Comparisons of Oxford's Poetry with Shakespeare's

8. A letter written in response to R.H.C.'s January 20 and 27 replies, "Readers and Writers," *The New Age*, vol. 28/12: 139 and vol. 28/13: 155–56.
9. A letter written in response to Solomon Eagle's March 12, 1921 review of "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*, "Mr. Looney and Lord Oxford," *The Outlook*, Vol. 47/1206: 231.
10. Sir Walter Raleigh, *Shakespeare* [in the *English Men of Letters* series edited by Raleigh], pp. 110-14. London: Macmillan and Co., 1906.
11. Stopford A. Brooke, *English Literature*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1880. Republished in 1891 in the "Literature Primers" series of books. Chapter IV in both editions is titled "From 1559 to 1603."
12. I am unable to determine who the statistician was or who conveyed the statement to Looney.
13. I am unable to identify the scholar.
14. A letter written in response to Solomon Eagle's July 2 reply, "The Critic at Large," *The Outlook*, vol. 48/1223: 15.
15. Looney's reference is to Richard W. Church, *Spenser*, pp. 34, 35. London: Macmillan and Co., 1879.
16. Looney's reference is to the 1920 Cecil Palmer edition of "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*. The corresponding pages in all four U.S. editions are 127–29.

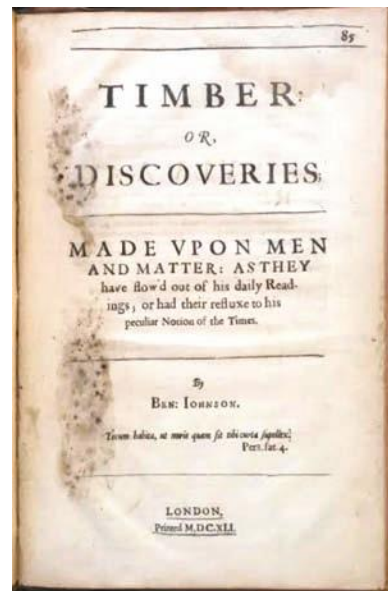
Is Ben Jonson's De Shakespeare Nostrati A Portrayal of Edward de Vere?

by Andrew Crider

Ben Jonson's *De Shakespeare Nostrati* is usually regarded as a brief remembrance of William Shakspere of Stratford. Yet the person described by Jonson corresponds poorly with what we know from other sources of the life and character of William of Stratford. On the other hand, Jonson's remembrance is fully consistent with the colorful biography of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Jonson described Shakespeare as an open, creative individual whose writing and conduct suffered from a lack of self-discipline. We have no evidence that either openness or poor self-discipline characterized Mr. Shakspere, but both qualities are major themes in de Vere's biography.

Jonson's Portrayal

Nostrati was probably composed in the early 1630s and subsequently published posthumously in *Timber, or Discoveries* (1641). The notebook is devoted largely to Jonson's translations and accompanying commentary from classical authors. The translations are largely unattributed and interwoven with Jonson's own elaborations on such subjects



as statecraft, oratory, liberal studies, and literary matters (Donaldson 13–15). *Nostrati* is a one paragraph depiction of Shakespeare that appears in a more general discussion about good and poor writing. The paragraph has a three-part structure beginning with (1) a critique of Shakespeare's writing; moving to (2) an apologia in which Jonson assures the reader of his fondness for Shakespeare the man; and ending with (3) a generalization of the initial literary critique to a broader character assessment, as follows:

(1) I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare that in his writing, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, Would he have blotted a thousand: which they thought a malevolent speech. I have not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by wherein he most faulted, and to justify mine own candour, (2) for I loved the man and do honour his memory (on this side idolatry) as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, (3) wherein he flowed with that facility that sometime it was necessary he should be stopped: Sufflaminatus erat, as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power: would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter, as when he said, in the person of Caesar, one speaking to him: Caesar thou dost me wrong he replied: Caesar did never wrong but with just cause, and such like, which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned (Walker 52).

The first segment of *Nostrati* hinges on an indirect reference to a well-known line from the preface to the First Folio of the collected plays (1623). Although the preface appeared over the names of two players, John Heminges and Henry Condell, it is almost certainly the work of Jonson himself (Donaldson 371–74; Price 170–71). The line reads: “His mind and hand went together: and what he thought he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.” Now in *Nostrati*, Jonson informs the reader that his comment was not meant to be taken at face value,

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but rather was intended as an ironic criticism of Shakespeare's writing. Thus, Jonson's reply to the players: "Would he have blotted a thousand." Rather than an occasion for praise, the notion of insufficient blotting is used by Jonson to suggest an undisciplined writer whose work wanted editing, as in the self-editing of one's immediate thoughts or the de facto editing of a written draft.

Jonson does not specify which aspects of Shakespeare's work required blotting, but we know he adhered to classical hallmarks of artful writing including simplicity, concision, moderation, and balance (Honigman 96–99; Walker 14). Elsewhere in *Discoveries* he writes: "the learned use ever election (selection) and a mean (moderation), they look back to what they intended at first, and make all an even and proportioned body." But in reading Shakespeare he was likely to find complexity, ostentation, and a fondness for word repetition, alliterative phrasing, punning wordplay, and run-on lines (Smith), few if any of which had a place in Jonson's critical theory and all thereby at risk of blotting. Shakespeare broke too many of Johnson's rules, and Jonson was not pleased.

Jonson's blunt appraisal of Shakespeare's writing is quickly followed by the second segment in which he denies any animosity toward the man himself. On the contrary, he claims to have known and admired Shakespeare, whom he praises as candid, open-minded, liberal, imaginative, creative, and sensitive. These separate characterizations point to a more general psychological trait: they are correlated markers of one pole of the bipolar personality dimension of Openness to Experience, which contrasts a relatively artistic temperament to a relatively pragmatic one (Widiger and Costa). A high degree of Openness is associated with creative endeavors, unconventional thinking, affective sensitivity, and permissive values; a low degree of Openness is associated with pragmatic interests and endeavors, conventional thinking, constricted affect, and traditional values. Openness to Experience incorporates these opposing characteristics into a broad personality trait, as implicitly recognized in Jonson's deft assessment.

The third segment of *Nostrati* is based on an anecdote from Seneca's *Controversiae* regarding the Roman orator Haterius who, once engaged in his topic, was unable to bring it to a conclusion. Just as Augustus remarked that Haterius "needs a brake," so Jonson remarks that "Shakespeare flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary that he should be stopped." And just as Seneca's text provides an example of Haterius' eventual fall into foolish remarks, so Jonson recounts Shakespeare's laughable misquote of a line from *Julius Caesar* as a consequence of his rambling verbosity. Jonson thus uses Seneca's anecdote to make a transition from his initial comments on Shakespeare's undisciplined writing to a broader comment on his public behavior, from a literary critique to a more general characterization of the man: "His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too."

In sum, Jonson portrays Shakespeare as a man of an “open and free nature” who had difficulty controlling both his written work and his person. But who was this man? Current orthodox opinion aligns him with William Shakspeare of Stratford. On the other hand, skeptics of the orthodox position tend to favor Edward de Vere as the author of the Shakespeare canon. The question can be addressed by examining the biographies of each man to determine which of them most closely mirrors Jonson's two themes of openness and self-discipline.

Openness to Experience: de Vere vs. Shakspere

The young Oxford excelled at aristocratic pastimes such as fencing, dancing, and jousting and might have become a court favorite save for his open disposition, which he expressed with flamboyant mannerisms, foppish dress, and a general indifference to courtly convention. As a more orthodox contemporary wrote to a friend: “It were a great pity he should not go straight, there be so many good things in him” (Whalen 127). Biographer Mark Anderson makes much the same observation in rather more colorful language: “A year in Italy had transformed de Vere, twenty-six-year-old chronic pain in the ass, into a chronic pain in the ass with an astonishing capacity for court comedy” (125).

But de Vere's unconventionality was matched by his creative flair as a musician, poet and deviser of court entertainments. According to his DNB entry, “...he evidenced a genuine interest in music and wrote verse of much lyric beauty” (Nelson DNB). Similar sentiments were expressed by his contemporaries: both Webbe in *Discourse of English Poetry* (1586) and Puttenham in *Art of Poesy* (1589) ranked de Vere foremost among a number of talented courtier poets. Puttenham further praised the interludes and comedies written by de Vere during his years at court, while Meres (*Palladis Tamia*, 1598) gave him pride of place in a group of writers “best for comedy amongst us.”

In the 1580s, de Vere became closely involved with the London theater and literary world. He was patron of two companies of players, Oxford's Boys centered at Blackfriar's and Oxford's Men, largely a touring company in the provinces. In addition, he was known as a friend, employer, or patron of Edmund Spenser, John Lyly, Anthony Munday, Thomas Nashe, and Robert Greene among leading writers of the day. Little is known of his literary undertakings following his second marriage in 1591, but there can be no doubt of his sustained involvement with poetry, playwriting and the stage. It is quite plausible that de Vere adopted William Shakespeare as a pen name in the early 1590s to shield his aristocratic identity when writing for the general public.

In contrast, we have no evidence of openness or creative accomplishment on the part of William Shakspere. Although he was a shareholder and possibly

a player in the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later the King's Men), as well as part owner of the Globe theater from 1599, these roles are not evidence for openness, nor do they speak to a literary career. Indeed, we have no record of any written work by William of Stratford, save for six scratchy and inconsistently spelled signatures. Diana Price's biography of Shakspeare includes her telling study of "paper trails" attesting to the literary careers of twenty-four Elizabethan and Jacobean writers, plus Shakspeare (301–05). Price gathered information for each person on ten categories of evidence, such as having been paid to write, having been the author or recipient of commendatory verses or epistles, and receiving notice as a writer at death. With one exception, the number of paper trails ranged from a perfect ten (Ben Jonson) to a low of three (John Webster), with a median of six. The exception? William Shakspeare, who failed to achieve a single paper trail pointing to a literary career.

Shakspeare's last will also disappoints anyone looking for even a hint of artistic sensibility. The document is a dreary, overbearing set of instructions for the distribution of his considerable assets, down to the second-best bed and a silver gilt bowl. Absent is any mention of books, manuscripts, published work, notebooks, or correspondence, nor any reference to musical instruments, paintings, or art of any kind (Cutting 183–84). One searches in vain for signs of an artistic tendency or creative accomplishment in Mr. Shakspeare's biography.

Self-discipline: de Vere vs. Shakspeare

Although often charming and generous, de Vere could also be brusque, impulsive and tactless (Sobran 133). As a young courtier he attracted comment by curtly refusing the Queen's repeated request to dance before visiting dignitaries and barely avoided a duel with Sir Philip Sidney after imperiously ordering Sidney off a tennis court. De Vere may have had reason to assert his aristocratic prerogatives in court circles, but his manner of doing so did not serve his long-term interests, and it tarnished his reputation.

Jonson portrays Shakespeare as an undisciplined raconteur who often needed to be stopped in case he "fell into those things, could not escape laughter." We have a remarkably similar anecdote regarding de Vere. In 1581 Charles Arundell denounced de Vere as a liar on the grounds that he repeatedly embellished his role in certain military adventures during his stay in Italy. Arundell wrote of one such occurrence:

This lie is very rife with him, and in it he glories greatly. Diversely hath he told it, and when he enters into it, he can hardly out, which hath made such sport as often have I been driven to rise from his table laughing (Anderson 167).

Although Arundell's attempts at defamation came to naught, de Vere was often the agent of his own undoing owing to an apparent indifference to contemplating the possible negative consequences of his actions. A telling example is found in de Vere's lengthy affair with Anne Vavasour, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen, even though liaisons between members of the court and the Queen's female attendants were prohibited. Vavasour became pregnant, but a scandal was avoided when she miscarried in early 1580. By the summer, however, she again conceived, carrying the child she named Edward Vere to term in 1581. The Queen, furious at the deception, sent mother, child, and father to the Tower of London for several weeks. Oxford was in addition banished from court for two years, suffering a grave loss of position, influence, and occupation as a deviser of court entertainments. To cap off his humiliation, Vavasour took up with her jailer, Sir Henry Lee (Anderson 161–65; 172–74).

The self-defeating behavior seen in the Vavasour incident was repeated many times in the course of de Vere's adult life, as seen particularly in his turbulent first marriage, his poorly considered, losing investments in attempts to discover a northwest passage to the Far East, and in an extravagant spending spree to the point of depleting his vast inheritance. This unfortunate history echoes Jonson's portrayal of a man whose gifts were compromised by deficient self-discipline.

William Shakspeare's father was an ambitious man. He married well, became a member of the Stratford governing elite, and petitioned for (but was denied) a gentleman's coat of arms. But John Shakspeare's fortunes began to decline when William was a boy. He defaulted on debts, was cited for illegal trading in wool, and avoided public places for fear of being summoned to court (Feldman 2–3). Son William was also an ambitious man. He pursued a business career to become a wealthy member of the Stratford gentry through judicious investments in his acting company, the Globe theater, real estate in Stratford and London, and income-producing land in the environs of Stratford. He reapplied for, and was granted, the coat of arms denied his father. Indeed, Williams's career can be read as a successful endeavor to reverse his family's disgrace and, at an early age, settle into a comfortable bourgeois existence in Stratford. This life trajectory suggests considerable self-discipline marked by goal setting, deliberate planning, and long-term persistence.

Unlike de Vere, Mr. Shakspeare was also skillful at keeping his money. He often sued for the collection of even small debts and avoided taxes when possible. In 1597 and again in 1598, he defaulted on occasional personal property taxes levied by Parliament. Both defaults were reported to the local sheriff for remedial action, but at some point during this period Shakspeare moved to a different jurisdiction south of the Thames. There is no record that the taxes were ever paid. It is implausible that the two defaults were due

to lack of forethought on the part of Shakspeare, a successful businessman sensitive to financial issues. The infractions appear to have been deliberate and purposeful (Crider 205–06).

Some of Shakspeare’s acquaintances found him rather too ambitious. Robert Greene in *Groatsworth of Wit* (1592) warned his fellow writers away from “an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers,” implying that Shakspeare was appropriating the work of others for his own purposes without permission or payment (Feldman 98–99). Jonson himself, in the play *Every Man Out Of His Humour* (1600), offered a scathing satire of Shakspeare as a pretentious and obtuse social climber “so enamored of the name of a gentleman that he will have it though he buys it.” Shakspeare’s character Soligardo enjoys being in the company of witty people but is oblivious to being the butt of their sarcastic humor. When Soligardo proudly shows his associates his newly acquired coat of arms in Act 3, scene 1, complete with a headless boar rampant in the crest, one responds sotto voce...”a swine without a head, without brain, wit, anything, indeed, ramping to gentility.” This is not the Shakespeare described in *Nostrati*.

Final Comments

Jonson gives us two leads for deciphering the person behind the *Nostrati* Shakespeare: He was at once an open personality and a man whose gifts were compromised by poor self-discipline. The ambitious, entrepreneurial, and successful Mr. Shakspeare is an unlikely candidate for either of these characterizations. On the other hand, the biography of Edward de Vere—poet, dramatist, and self-defeating eccentric—offers ample evidence for both. While Mr. Shakspeare is certainly not the focus of Jonson’s vignette, it is of course hypothetically possible that Jonson had some other open and undisciplined poet-playwright besides de Vere in mind. If so, that person has yet to be identified.

Jonson’s motivation for writing *Nostrati* is a matter of conjecture. One possibility is that he was reminded of Shakespeare on reading or rereading Seneca’s anecdote about Haterius, although this would not explain the initial literary critique. Or perhaps Jonson wanted to set the record straight regarding the First Folio nonsense about the absence of blots and Shakespeare’s ability to pour forth perfectly phrased lines without effort or amendment. Unsophisticated readers may have taken the



Ben Jonson (c. 1617), by Abraham Blyenberch, at the National Portrait Gallery, London.

passage literally, and fellow writers may have been offended by the caricature of their craft. *Nostrati* may be Jonson's revision of the First Folio preface without any admission of having written it.

Or perhaps Jonson, in his private notebook, wished to think through, even resolve, his ambivalence toward Shakespeare. As a critic he strongly objected to aspects of Shakespeare's writing; as the putative editor of the First Folio he could not have been indifferent to the monumental achievement it represented. Jonson's ambivalence is expressed in several yes-but constructions throughout *Nostrati*: "I loved the man—on this side idolatry; he flowed with that facility—necessary he should be stopped; wit was in his own power—would the rule of it had been so too; his vices—his virtues." Jonson attempts a resolution of sorts in the final sentence, borrowed directly from Seneca: "There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned." The ambivalence does not entirely disappear, but it was as far as Jonson cared to go.

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The Latin Inscription on the Stratford Shakespeare Monument Unraveled

by Jack A. Goldstone

The Shakespeare monument in Stratford-upon-Avon is frequently cited as one of the clearest pieces of evidence that William Shakspeare of Stratford was the author of the Shakespeare poems and plays. It was likely erected just before 1623, at the same time that the First Folio was being prepared for publication. Nina Green has argued that Ben Jonson, who authored an impressive dedication to Shakespeare for the First Folio, was also the author of the monument inscription, noting a large number of phrases or usages in the Folio dedication and other epigraphs by Jonson similar to the English portion of the monument inscription.

Certainly, the placement of the monument in the Stratford cemetery near Shakspeare's grave, and the inscription itself, seem clearly designed to identify the Stratford Shakspeare as the author of the works of Shakespeare. Most significantly, the first line of the Latin portion of the inscription lauds the person

Shakespeare funerary monument in the Holy Trinity Church located at Stratford-upon-Avon.



buried there as being “Judicio Pylium” (a Pylian in judgment, comparing him to King Nestor of Pylos), “Genio Socratem” (a Socrates in genius), and “Arte Maronem” (in artistry a Maro—evidently comparing him to Publius Vergilius Maro, better known today as Virgil). Such high praise seems to fit precisely the master story teller and poet who created the Shakespeare canon.

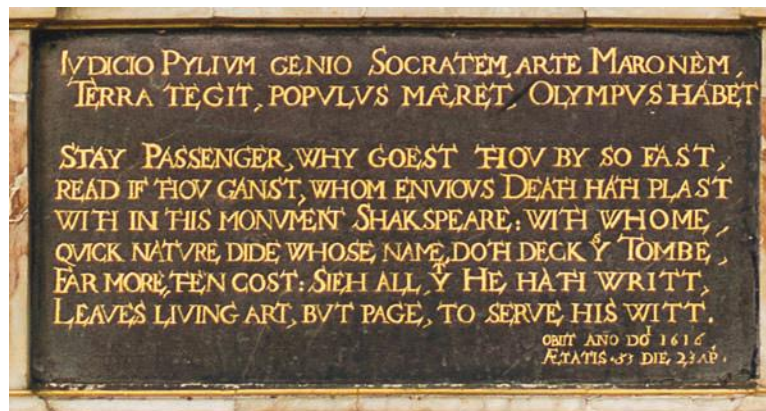
In fact, however, these are unusual choices as comparators to shower praise on Shakespeare. Nestor was hardly the most wise or talented judge known to the Renaissance; he was mostly known for exercises of judgment that led to bad outcomes. His most consequential advice was telling Achilles’ companion Patroclus to disguise himself as Achilles, the Greeks’ greatest warrior. This ill-advised ruse leads to Patroclus’ death at the hands of Hector. In book XI of the *Iliad*, Nestor tells Patroclus: “And let him give you his own fine armor to wear in war so the Trojans might take you for him, Patroclus...” (Fagles 323, emphasis in original). The most famous judgment of King Nestor of Pylos was advice to disguise oneself as someone of far greater ability.



The fight for the body of Patroclus from the Iliad (National Archaeological Museum, Athens).

Similarly, the “genius of Socrates” is an odd plaudit for a master poet and playwright, as Socrates never wrote a line himself, as far as is known, and did not create any plays or poetry. Indeed, according to Plato, Socrates would ban poets from his ideal republic. In *The Republic*, Socrates makes a distinction between poetry (including plays), which he demeans as presenting a twice-removed imitation of reality, and true reality, which is accessible only through philosophy. To Socrates, poetry is a misleading deception, presenting a world shaped by the gods of Olympus and full of misleading but compelling figures; poets should be driven out so that the wisdom of philosophy may hold unchallenged sway. How can this viewpoint be identified with the author of the most compelling poetry and dramas in the English language? Why not compare Shakespeare to one of the master philosophers of antiquity whose written works showed a deep appreciation of poetry and nature—Aristotle, or one of the famous ancient playwrights such as Sophocles or Euripides—as Jonson explicitly does in his dedication in the First Folio? The “genius

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The Inscription on the Shakespeare Monument. The first two lines, in Latin, are the subject of this article.

of Socrates” was to gain immortal fame not for anything he ever wrote, but solely for standing as the front man for another author (Plato) whose words, put into the mouth of Socrates, made the latter famous.

Thus, the first two phrases in this part of the Stratford monument are best understood as saying “disguised as a person of greater ability, and famous for words written and put in his mouth by another.” In contrast, the third comparison seems clear: “Arte Maronem” compares Shakespeare to the most famous epic poet of Latin antiquity, Vergilius Publius Maro (known to us as Virgil), author of the *The Eclogues*, *The Georgics*, and *The Aeneid*. Or does it? Again, however, it is an odd comparison, as Virgil was a leading pastoral poet and at the time was most often compared to Shakespeare’s rivals, Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser. The latter authors were far more famous for their achievements in the field of pastoral poetry than Shakespeare—indeed Spenser has been dubbed “England’s Virgil.” Sidney had written a famous pastoral poem called *Arcadia*, while Spenser wrote a pastoral called *The Shepherdes Calendar*, and explicitly took Virgil as the model for his masterpiece, *The Faerie Queene*. Why choose an ancient poet more identified with Shakespeare’s chief rivals than with Shakespeare himself for the latter’s final praise?

However, another “Maro” was known during the Renaissance. That was the medieval writer Virgilius Maro, known as “Grammaticus” (the Grammarian). This Maro was known for two works, the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae*, that were parodies of scholarly writings. They were cast in the form of late classical grammatical texts and claimed to be based on the expertise of ancient grammar authorities; but, in fact, they were filled with outlandish tales and references that were obviously mistaken or were deliberate twists or inventions presented as facts. *The Epitomae* and *Epistolae* based their authority on citations from a host of authentic sounding classical authors whose names appear nowhere else, and on quotes that similarly appear in no other sources.

Those truly familiar with the classical canon would recognize these as clever fabrications by someone with knowledge of the major classical and patristic works. Maro's works thus appear to have been a form of medieval scholastic humor, an inside joke for accomplished scholars to appreciate. Thus, the words "in Art, a Maro," if actually referring to Virgilius Maro the Grammarian, could be interpreted as, "using the arts of outlandish claims and false attribution to claim authority and authorship, even though all educated readers would recognize such use as fraudulent."

Of course, Maro the Grammarian was fairly obscure. Why would one think that "Maro" in the inscription referred to Maro Grammaticus rather than the far better-known figure of Virgil? The answer may lie in an observation made eighty years ago by E.K. Chambers. He noted that the Latin inscription contains an obvious, yet inexplicable, grammatical error in the first line. The two Latin lines take the form of a heroic couplet, but as Chambers observed, the meter is wrong: the second word has a long vowel in its second syllable, and so should the fourth word; but the "o" in "Socratem" is a short vowel.



*Ben Jonson, poet, playwright—
and mastermind behind the
Shakespeare hoax?*

In Chambers' words, "It was no very accurate scholar who shortened the first vowel of 'Socratem'" (Chambers 183). The obvious choice would be "genio Sophoclem," a comparison to the genius of the ancient playwright Sophocles. The long "o" in "Sophoclem" would make it a grammatically correct choice (as was pointed out to me by Roger Stritmatter). Moreover, Jonson explicitly compared Shakespeare to Sophocles in his dedication to the First Folio; if Jonson was also the author of the monument inscription, why not use the reference here as well? But what better way would signal that this "Maro" was "The Grammarian" than to deliberately include in the same line a clear error in Latin grammar?

Jonson, who prided himself on his mastery of Latin and Greek literature, was himself a grammarian as well as a playwright and poet, and published a book titled *English Grammar* in 1640. Is it mere coincidence that a noted grammarian might have authored an inscription that pointed to a classical author known as "the Grammarian?" A reference to the art of Maro the Grammarian would be a clear message that the classical inscription on the Stratford monument was itself an "inside joke" for the truly learned.

The three phrases are now completely matched, and clear in intent. To someone familiar with Nestor, Socrates, and Virgil only by their general reputation and without any detailed knowledge of their writings or of the more obscure Maro the Grammarian, the epigraph may appear as high praise. However,

to someone intimately familiar with the classics and the actual judgments of Nestor, the philosophy of Socrates, and the existence of Maro the Gram-marian, the three phrases were skillfully chosen to convey the opposite meaning—“here lies someone who disguised himself as someone who was his better; who gained fame through the words of another author placed in his mouth; and who made outlandish claims that were obviously false to those who knew their texts.”

The second line of the Latin inscription is similarly ambiguous. It reads “Ter-ra Tegit, Populus Maeret, Olympus Habet.” This is conventionally translated as, “The earth buries him, the people mourn him, and Olympus (heaven) possesses him.” That is a passable translation, provided one supplies the missing pronoun “eum,” meaning “him,” for Shakespeare. But that pronoun is missing, suggesting other possible meanings. For example, the missing object of the verb phrases could be the translation of the Latin verb “tego/tegit”—to cover or protect, especially if one also translates the Latin word “maereo/maeret” not simply as “mourns” but as “is bereaved of.” The passage then would translate into English as “The earth covers [the truth], the people are bereaved [of the truth], Olympus possesses [the truth].”

Why consider this meaning, which would again point to someone other than the Stratfordian Shakspere as being buried there? The use of the term “Olympus” is a marker that something is wrong with the usual interpretation. After all, Olympus was the abode of gods, not poets; none of the famous poets or playwrights of antiquity ended up there. In classical literature, the final resting place for the most virtuous and blessed mortals was Elysium, not Olympus, or for a privileged few, elevation to the stars as a constellation. Why say that Olympus now possesses Shakespeare? To a classicist, it would make no sense. If what is meant is heaven, then the Latin word, as used in the Lord’s Prayer, is *caelis*. If Shakespeare is to be raised on high, why not put him in heaven, or in the stars (astra)? In the First Folio, Jonson does just that, saying of Shakespeare that “I see thee... made a Constellation there. Shine forth, thou Starre of Poets...” So, Jonson would certainly know that placing Shakespeare in Olympus after his death would be an error.

But Olympus was the abode of the Muses, and Hesiod begins his *Theogeny* with a famous hymn to the Muses that contains this passage in lines 22 ff.:

They, the Muses, once taught Hesiod beautiful song, while he was shepherding his flocks on holy Mount Helicon; these goddesses of Olympus, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus first of all spoke this word to me, “Oh, you shepherds of the fields, base and lowly things, little more than bellies, we know how to tell many falsehoods that seem like truths but we also know, when we so desire, *how to utter the absolute truth.*” Thus, they spoke, the fluent daughters of great Zeus. (My emphasis.)

Similarly, there is another famous reference to the Muses in the *Iliad*, Book II—in the first verse of that work that explicitly places them in Olympus: “Sing to me now, you Muses who hold the halls of Olympus. You are goddesses, you are everywhere, *you know all things*—all we hear is the distant ring of glory, *we know nothing*...” (Fagles 115). Shakespeare was frequently identified with the Muses; indeed, Jonson invokes the Muses no less than four times in his First Folio dedication, although none of the invocations place Shakespeare with the Muses after his death. The use of “Olympus” in the inscription therefore could well point to the Muses, who were famous for knowing truths that ordinary people knew not, who “know how to tell many falsehoods that seem like truths” but also “know, when we so desire, how to utter the absolute truth.” If this allusion is correct, then the Latin inscription suggests that the monument itself bears “falsehoods that seem like truths” but also, for those who know and desire it, will “utter the absolute truth.”

Thus deciphered, for those familiar with classical literature in detail, the inscription on the Stratford monument reads:

Here lies someone who disguised himself as someone who was his better; someone who gained fame through the words of another author placed in his mouth; and who made outlandish claims that were obviously false to those who knew their texts. The earth covers [the truth], the people are bereaved [of the truth], Olympus [the Muses, who live there] possesses [the truth].

Of course, the author of the inscription could hardly state things so plainly on a monument located at the gravesite of the Stratford Shakspeare, if the intent was to continue to protect the identity of the true author and perpetuate the belief that the Stratford Shakspeare was the author. However, for those with a reasonable knowledge of classical literature, the message is specific in its allusions and has a meaning opposite to the usual translation, one that is cleverly disguised in words of apparent praise and wrapped in “falsehoods that seem like truths.”

The various anomalies in the Latin inscription are so many and so specific as to be quite puzzling. Why compare Shakespeare the author to Nestor, whose judgments had such mixed results? Why compare him to Socrates, who would ban poets, especially when doing so introduces a grammatical error, and a grammatically correct choice, Sophocles, had already been employed by Jonson in his dedication? Why say Olympus now holds Shakespeare, when that is incorrect according to the classical conception of where great mortals are taken after death (either to Elysium or elevated to the stars, a figure Jonson correctly employs in his Folio dedication)?

In short, either the inscription was composed by a Latin hack, who couldn't frame a grammatically correct couplet, didn't appreciate the inappropriateness of the Nestor and Socrates references, and didn't know that Olympus was for gods only, or it was composed by a Latin scholar who deliberately chose these references and purposely inserted a schoolboy grammar error in the meter of the first line so that, if there were any confusion whether "Maro" referred to Publius Vergilius Maro the poet or Virgilius Maro the Grammarian, it practically shouts "the Grammarian."

If Jonson was the author of the inscription, as Green suggests, then these anomalies are inconceivable as chance. Moreover, Nestor, Socrates, Maro and Olympus are all remarkable for their absence from Jonson's dedication in the First Folio. Not only are neither Nestor nor Socrates mentioned in Jonson's dedication (which includes a long list of famous people, past and contemporary, with whom the virtues of Shakespeare are compared), the one classical poet or playwright surprisingly omitted by Jonson in his dedication, which names Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Terence, Plautus, Pacuvius, and Accius (a noted grammarian as well as poet) is Virgil. In fact, none of the six prefatory dedications in the First Folio mentions Virgil (nor his surname, Maro).

The choices of Nestor, Socrates, and Maro were therefore not only unconventional and linked to very specific meanings to those familiar with classical literature, they also seem to have been specifically chosen to distinguish the person "praised" in the monument inscription from the one praised by Jonson in his First Folio dedication, as the names on the monument do not appear in the lengthy list of paragons cited by Jonson.

This interpretation of the Latin portion of the monument inscription does not point to a particular alternative author of the Shakespeare canon (although Oxfordians will note that the motto of the Oxford crest—"Nothing truer than truth"—offers another basis for reading "truth" as the missing word in the second line of the inscription). However, it offers a plausible solution to the oddities in the inscription and makes it clear that the monument's Latin inscription should not be taken at face value to testify to the Stratford Shakspeare being the author "Shakespeare." It requires no great stretch of interpretation of the Latin verse to suggest otherwise—indeed the inscription powerfully alludes to the opposite being the buried or hidden truth.

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Book Reviews





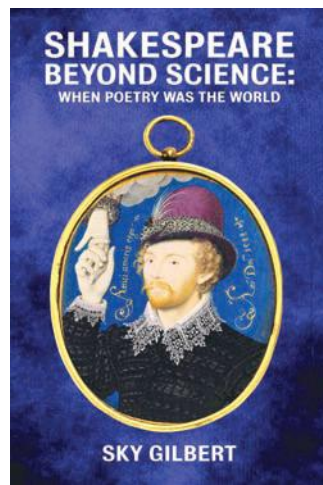
Shakespeare the Post-Structuralist?

Reviewed by Warren Hope

Shakespeare Beyond Science: When Poetry Was the World. *By Sky Gilbert.*
Guernica Editions, 2020, 200 pages (paperback \$17.95)

“We all know art is not truth, it is a lie which makes us realize a truth.”
—Pablo Picasso

Sky Gilbert’s *Shakespeare Beyond Science* is a lively, energetic, and entertaining performance designed to persuade academics to take a different approach to Shakespeare. His starting point seems to be Marshall McLuhan’s doctoral dissertation, “The Classical Trivium,” in which McLuhan apparently argues that the tennis court quarrel between the Earl of Oxford and Sir Philip Sidney primarily reflects a literary antagonism. Oxford is seen as standing for the older Grammarians, students of rhetoric who emphasized the imaginative self-sufficiency of language, while Sidney is pictured as standing for followers of the French philosopher Petrus Ramus, who saw language as reflecting the physical world and thus limited rhetoric in a way that led to the scientific method and a wish for accurate rather than poetic language. More, McLuhan apparently argues that this conflict erupted again in the 1590s through the pamphlet war conducted by Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey, with Nashe aligned with Oxford and Harvey aligned with Sidney. Gilbert argues that this conflict was eventually won by the Ramusians and their allies who opposed the theater, leading to a decline in Shakespeare’s popularity and acceptance.



One result of this approach is that Gilbert does not treat the Shakespeare authorship question in the usual way. He does not make a case for Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, as Shakespeare so much as show that Oxford is more likely to be Shakespeare than the man from Stratford is because of his attitude toward language and his world view—an outlook that was already becoming old-fashioned in his own time. In part this position is related by Gilbert to Bardolatry—the worship of Shakespeare as a kind of godling who is very much like everybody else, a conventional figure who is unlike any other great writer in the annals of the human race. Gilbert argues that a highly educated nobleman with Feudal leanings who was charged with committing sodomy by his political enemies and ended in disgrace is much more likely to be Shakespeare than the Stratfordian hounder of debtors and hoarder of grain. For Gilbert, Shakespeare’s identity is secondary to what Shakespeare thought and wrote—but the misidentification of the author can keep us from seeing what he thought and wrote.

Gilbert gives a good deal of weight to Gabriel Harvey’s address to the Earl of Oxford, emphasizing that while Harvey praises Oxford’s poetry he calls on him to throw aside the pen and devote himself to something useful—like war. Gilbert urges that this emphasis on the “useful” is of a piece with the rise in Ramusian thought—the idea that education should be practical and pragmatic, rather than artistic or poetic. As a novelist, poet, and playwright as well as a scholar and professor, Gilbert uses this opportunity to glance aside at the insistence on the vocational aspect of higher education in our own time. No doubt in part this insistence supports the notion in the academy that Shakespearean studies are themselves impractical and irrelevant. The implicit argument is that Shakespearean studies are in need of a new justification and a new approach. Gilbert’s emphasis on rhetoric, on style, is meant to point the way to that new approach.

Johannes Sturm, the educator Oxford visited in Germany in 1575, prepared Greek and Latin editions of the treatises of Hermogenes of Tarsus, a student of oratory who was praised and honored by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Gilbert argues that the work of Hermogenes was for Shakespeare a “godsend.” He even describes Hermogenes as Shakespeare’s “teacher.” One treatise by Hermogenes describes seven types of style, and Gilbert is able to use these to produce a new and thoughtful explication of Hamlet’s famous

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“To be or not to be” speech. While it is certainly possible that the speech could have been written without the author’s knowledge of Hermogenes’ treatise, familiarity with that treatise by a critic certainly sheds new light on the speech. This passage of Gilbert’s text constitutes one example of how he would like to see Shakespearean studies evolve.

Similarly, Gilbert devotes a good deal of space to a discussion of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* because of the play’s concentration on language. While he makes relatively little of the possibility that Gabriel Harvey, Thomas Nashe, and Sir Philip Sidney provide models for characters in the play, he makes much of Shakespeare’s attitude toward language—arguing that the poet at once praises language yet remains skeptical of it. This argument culminates in the view that Shakespeare recognizes poetry as a kind of lying while also recognizing that it is our only way of getting at truth. Gilbert argues that this view deepens over the years so that the praise to some extent subsides and the skepticism becomes more pronounced in *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*. If Gilbert’s essay is too brief to provide a thorough discussion of this interesting take on Shakespeare’s plays, it does provide a basis for further study and criticism. Once again, Gilbert’s text provides an example of and a basis for a new approach to Shakespearean studies.

It might be thought that for a short book Gilbert has already covered a great deal of ground, but he goes further by suggesting that we are again at a point of a shifting paradigm. If the rise of the scientific method and the desire for an accurate use of language culminated in the Enlightenment, Einstein’s theory of relativity and modern semiotics serve to undermine those dominant characteristics of the Enlightenment. Gilbert suggests that the post-structuralists, mostly French thinkers who follow Saussure—Roland Barthes, Derrida, and Foucault—have once again freed language from its dependence on “reality” by arguing that language is arbitrary, that is, that there is no rational or necessary relationship between the word and the object, the signifier and the signified. Similarly, if the scientific method is dependent on the study of nature, the real, physical world, by the use of the senses, the validity of that method is diminished if Einstein is right and perceptions vary from perceiver to perceiver. In other words, the certainty that was the basis for the world view of the Enlightenment has been undermined to such an extent in the twentieth century that Shakespeare’s view of language takes on a new relevance. Wordplay, puns, the use of antitheses, doubtful or multiple meanings, imaginings and fantasies, poetry itself can be seen as the sources of fictions—lies—that provide us with the only sense of truth we can know.

Gilbert’s essay can cover so much ground in a short space and in a lively way because it is a rhetorical performance rather than a logical, rational argument. In this way, he makes his form and content one. The enthusiasm and passion

of the author leads the reader to wish to accept the author's assertions and positions. In the end, truth is in a way based on faith rather than on demonstrable facts. Still, it is hard not to wish for a few more qualifications or considerations of history. The essay relies heavily on the Oxfordian theory but never mentions J. Thomas Looney. The essay details the transformation from the early Renaissance in England to the Enlightenment but never mentions the Civil War, the beheading of Charles I, or the Protectorate under Cromwell. The tennis court quarrel between Oxford and Sidney could certainly have reflected a literary antagonism, but it could also have been a matter of precedence, politics, and religion. Gabriel Harvey certainly was associated with Sidney, but is it fair to make Thomas Nashe an antagonist of Sidney when he wrote the Preface to the first (posthumous and pirated) edition of Sidney's sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella*, and is described by a recent British scholar, Georgia Brown, as the first Elizabethan critic to recognize the significance of Sidney's work?

Sky Gilbert does an excellent job of throwing academic students of Shakespeare a lifeline, but he does so in a way that relies so heavily on the history of rhetoric and style that it could be strengthened by other academics with other interests. It will be interesting to see if they will grab this lifeline or continue to perform their boring rituals sacred to the cult of Stratford on Avon. In any case, Sky Gilbert's essay should send all lovers of Shakespeare back to the texts with freshly peeled eyes.

Authorship Controversies Over the Millennia

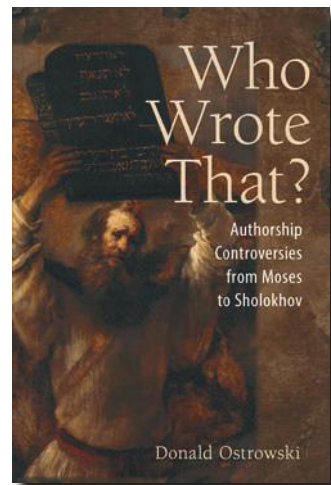
Reviewed by Ramon Jiménez

Who Wrote That? Authorship Controversies from Moses to Sholokhov.
By Donald Ostrowski. Cornell University Press, 2020, 288 pages,
(hardcover \$115, paperback \$24.95 and Kindle \$9.59).

In *Who Wrote That?*, Harvard historian Donald Ostrowski devotes only a single chapter to the Shakespeare authorship question, but this intriguing examination of nine authorship controversies spanning nearly two millennia is bound to introduce the subject to a much wider audience, and to increase its legitimacy as a topic of discussion. The result is a rigorous and fascinating investigation of alleged authors from Moses and Confucius to Abelard and Heloise, Shakespeare and an obscure Bolshevik journalist, among others.

Along the way, Ostrowski discusses the multitude of factors and circumstances, as many as twenty, that come into play in the process of author attribution. These include:

handwriting analysis, computer-assisted stylometrics, profiling of the author, historical context, affects of dating, watermarks and paper, accuracy of detail, development of the author's style, linguistic features, confirmation bias, collaboration and group authorship, gender prejudice, "silo scholarship," the alphabet the author used, supportive documents, forgery, qualifications of the investigator, loss of original manuscripts, author motivation, revision or addition by others.



Most of these we have already encountered in the one hundred years since J. Thomas Looney revealed the true author of the Shakespeare canon in *“Shakespeare” Identified in Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford*.

Throughout *Who Wrote That?*, Ostrowski also considers various principles of authorship attribution, such as the claim that the alleged author could not have produced specific details in his work unless he had personally observed them. He supplies a vivid example from his own experience that such claims are not always valid.

The clichés and empty phrases in many authorship arguments are another target of Ostrowski’s censure, such as the phrase “defies common sense,” which is nothing more than a subjective opinion. Another misleading phrase is “the simplest solution.” More often than not, “the simplest solution” is a “logical fallacy known as *ad ignorantiam*—a specific assertion must be true because we don’t know that it isn’t true.” An example of the fallacy of *ad ignorantiam* is the conclusion that “UFOs must be spaceships with extra-terrestrials in them because these unidentified flying objects have not been identified as anything else.”

Allotting an entire chapter to each authorship question, Ostrowski includes numerous citations of the various scholars participating in each dispute, and gives a fair hearing to every alleged author, with a detailed account of the arguments for and against each one. Only two authors were alive to defend their work, the rest being long dead when questions arose about them and, in the case of Moses, the questions were not only about his authorship of the Pentateuch, but about his name, and his actual existence. Doubts about his sole authorship of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible and of the Christian Old Testament first appeared in the sixth century AD. According to Ostrowski, “By the late nineteenth century, the scholarly consensus began to turn against Moses being the author of any part of it.” At about the same time, some scholars began to question whether Moses was a historical person at all, or simply a mythical figure of Hebrew folklore.

His name is a puzzle because it has meanings in both the Hebrew and Egyptian languages that relate to the story in Exodus of the Pharaoh’s daughter who plucked him from the Nile. “She named him Moses ‘because I drew him

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out [Hebrew: *mashab*] of the water’ (Ex. 2:10).” But the name also means “child” in ancient Egyptian, so the writer of *Exodus* may simply have constructed the tale to give the name a Hebrew meaning.

Questions also arose about the alphabet Moses used. The Pentateuch has come to us in Hebrew, but the earliest evidence of Hebrew lettering dates only to the tenth century BC. It would not have reached the Israelites until after they had arrived in Canaan, by which time Moses had died. He may have written his text earlier, in Egyptian demotic, a script that he certainly knew, that may later have been translated into Hebrew, but, as Ostrowski points out, “thus far no one has found any evidence in the text of Egyptian linguistic influence.”

Besides the questions relating to the person Moses, there remain serious doubts about his single authorship of the Pentateuch. Several features of the text militate against the theory—duplication of parts of the narrative, internal contradictions, chronological anachronisms, diverse literary styles, and shifts and interruptions in the narrative. “This observation led to the supposition that a large part of the Pentateuch was made up of two equal narratives that had been stitched together—the J (Yahwist) and the E (Elohist) narratives. But J and E did not account for all of the Pentateuch, so a P (Priestly) narrative and a D (Deuteronomy) narrative were also supposed.” Some skeptics also doubt the entire story of Moses and the exodus because neither he nor the Jewish exodus from Egypt are specifically cited in ancient Egyptian writings.

This catalogue of doubts and questions has led to the rejection of Mosaic authorship, a conclusion that is now “the standard view in the scholarship.” Even so, as late as 1987, conservative historian Paul Johnson wrote that such skepticism has been “carried to the point of fanaticism,” a charge all too familiar to Oxfordians.

The authenticity of the so-called *Analects* of Confucius is another controversy that continues to this day. “The oldest copies (albeit incomplete) of the *Analects* are two handwritten versions made on bamboo strips dated to the half century before Christ.” These copies and the next-oldest copy were discovered only in the late twentieth century. Modern scholars are in general agreement that a group of random sayings attached in one way or another to Confucius, who lived from 551 to 479 BC, became a stand-alone text in its own right in the period of the Han dynasty (202 BC–9 AD). The claim that the *Analects* was a record of the actual sayings of Confucius recorded by his disciples was first advanced about the time of Christ, and was not challenged until approximately 800 AD. Proponents and opponents have argued the claim ever since, and as recently as 2017 it was again challenged. Doubtters argue that none, or only some, of the *Analects* date from the time of Confucius, and that they are an “accretion text,” that is, compiled by various writers at different times during the several hundred years after his death.

Ostrowski concludes that “Although it is possible that the sayings of Confucius were at least in part written down or passed on orally by his disciples and/or disciples of his disciples, we do not have direct evidence to make that assertion with any degree of certainty.”

The ill-fated love story of Heloise and Abelard, which played out over two decades in the early 1100s, was relatively unknown until it appeared in the lengthy poem *Roman de la Rose*, started by Guillaume de Lorris and finished by Jean de Meun in late thirteenth-century France. In his section, de Meun devoted just 72 lines to the story and, at the same time, announced that he had found and translated from Latin into French fifteen letters that the pair had exchanged more than a century earlier. Following the publication of the letters in several European languages in the seventeenth century, the couple came to be revered as the apotheosis of tragic lovers. Villon, Rousseau and Pope all recounted or referred to their story in their works. By the nineteenth century, their gravesite at Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris had become a popular tourist attraction. (Mark Twain visited the site in the 1860s, and mentioned them in *The Innocents Abroad*.) But by that time, scholars had begun to question the authenticity of the letters that de Meun claimed he had translated. It transpired that no original manuscripts of the letters existed, only copies prepared more than one hundred years later. Although the prevailing opinion today is that they are genuine, assertions continued to be made as recently as 1988 that they had all been written by Abelard or by various third persons, including Jean de Meun himself.

The authorship controversy involving the eighteenth-century Scottish poet James Macpherson was unusual, if not unique, in that he was alive to defend himself and the positions of the customary disputants were reversed. In the early 1760s, Macpherson published three volumes of poetry that he claimed were his translations of old Gaelic verse by the legendary Scottish bard Ossian. Almost immediately his claims were questioned, and in the ensuing debate skeptics maintained that he had written the poetry himself, while he insisted that he was *not* the author. The works became internationally popular and attracted widespread attention, including that of such well-known figures as Samuel Johnson, David Hume and Horace Walpole, all of whom expressed doubts about Macpherson’s claims. Critics found evidence in Macpherson’s poetry of the influence of literary works published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that would not have been available to an early Scottish bard. In addition, Irish scholars accused Macpherson of plagiarism when they noticed similarities between genuine Irish Gaelic works and his Ossian cycle. Macpherson never produced any manuscripts, and within a few decades scholarly opinion turned decidedly against him. Nevertheless, his claims have been defended well into the twenty-first century, and some critics accorded him a measure of literary distinction for producing in his own right

a body of genuine Gaelic poetry. He was buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

The question of the alleged Secret Gospel of Mark has puzzled Biblical scholars since 1973, when an American scholar of Hebrew published an eighteenth-century transcript of a letter written by Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215) that he found in a Greek Orthodox monastery near Jerusalem. The transcript, which he photographed, but which has since disappeared, contained fragments of the text of the Greek gospel of Mark that are “different from the canonical Gospel we have.” This ongoing dispute, which is about the authenticity of both the transcript and the letter, involves handwriting analysis, charges of forgery and linguistic anachronisms.

Three of the more obscure authorship disputes in *Who Wrote That?* involve manuscripts as diverse as “the first world history”; the letters allegedly exchanged between Tsar Ivan IV, “the Terrible,” and Prince Andrei Kurbskii; and a lengthy novel about Russia’s Don River region that earned its alleged writer a Nobel Prize in 1965. In each of these cases, Ostrowski supplies us with a thorough historical background that ranges from the thirteenth century Mongol empire of Chinggis Khan to the Soviet Union of the 1930s, when the country was controlled by Joseph Stalin.

All of these controversies—and apparently there are many more—have stimulated vigorous scholarly debates about the evidence, the methods for evaluating it, and the conclusions reached. In every one of them, Ostrowski points out the faulty methodology, circular reasoning and examples of begging the question that litter the arguments on either side. These are especially frequent in the controversy about the Shakespeare canon. In none of them is the issue treated with the disdain and ridicule that permeates the Shakespeare authorship question.

Scholarly articles and letters continue to appear in the leading journals in the relevant fields of study, even in the oldest disputes, but with one exception—the Shakespeare authorship question.

“Shakespeare—An Extensive and Impressive Superstructure of Conjecture”

Oxfordian scholars will take heart in the more than thirty pages that Ostrowski devotes to the Shakespeare authorship question. To begin, he proposes a “thought experiment,” in which we try to identify the author of an anonymous “body of literary work comprising forty plays, several narrative poems, and a collection of sonnets. We do not know who wrote them, but there are two candidates.” He then lists, in less than 500 words, some three

dozen facts about the two candidates under consideration. The facts detail, on the one hand, the multiple connections between a highly educated, playwriting nobleman (Candidate 1) and the works in question. On the other hand, the facts about Candidate 2, a commoner from a provincial village, reveal the total absence of connections between him and any type of writing. Ostrowski then states: “If you are an established scholar in the field of English literature, the probability is you would attribute the body of works to Candidate 2, the provincial of questionable literacy. In contrast, those who question the traditional attribution to Candidate 2 tend to be actors, writers, Supreme Court justices, and amateur scholars. The holding of Candidate 2 as the author seems to be a matter of faith among the adherents, a faith that is based on a similarity in names and reinforced by the academic establishment that has constructed an extensive and impressive superstructure of conjecture.”

A single entry in a catalog of important people, Michael H. Hart’s *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*, was the trigger for Ostrowski’s interest in the Shakespeare authorship question. It was Hart’s declaration, in his second edition, that he had changed his mind about the author of the Shakespeare canon that caused Ostrowski to “stop following the crowd on this matter and look at the evidence myself.” The result is a searching investigation of each aspect of the question, in which Ostrowski outlines in impartial language the Stratfordian and Oxfordian positions and the evidence for each. An example is his conclusion about contemporary references to the author of the canon, and to William of Stratford: “All the contemporary testimony we have about Shakespeare as a writer is impersonal—that is, based solely on his plays and poetry. All the contemporary evidence we have about William of Stratford that is personal never mentions him as a poet or playwright.”

Here are his remarks on the important issue of a paper trail: “A paper trail is highly relevant especially for this period in European history.” He calls its absence in the case of Shakespeare “not just extremely odd but even bizarre.” “This absence of contemporary evidence is a correct use of the *argumentum ex silentio*,” another tool in attribution studies. Citing Richard Roe’s research, Ostrowski catalogues in half a page the multiple and convincing details in the Shakespeare plays of places, social customs and contemporary topography in Italy that have proved to be accurate. “The simplest coherent explanation that fits the evidence in regard to the Italian plays is that the author had spent some time in Italy.”

Ostrowski also addresses the issue of autobiographical evidence in the plays and poems, first asserted by Looney, who identified eighteen general and special characteristics of the author. After quoting several scholars, such as

James Shapiro, Helen Vendler, and Marjorie Garber, who dismiss the idea that any such evidence can be gleaned from the Shakespeare canon, and other academics who find it to be essential to understanding it, Ostrowski makes the following statement: “If one cannot use the life of an author as a means to understand their work, then we are eliminating one of the most important scholarly tools at our disposal—namely, historical analysis.” He adds that, “Such profiling on the basis of the written texts is a methodologically legitimate way to proceed....” His message is clear. Any authorship question is a historical question and requires a historical method to answer it.

Dating the plays is an especially thorny issue in that no firm composition date for any Shakespeare play is known with certainty, so any particular proposed dating scheme might automatically exclude an authorial candidate. This is the case with the orthodox dating scheme, proposed by E.K. Chambers in 1930, which starts in 1589 or so and extends to 1613, thus eliminating Oxford as the author.

On this issue, Ostrowski takes the Oxfordian position: “The problem with the traditional chronology is that the dating of particular plays has been done so specifically to fit the life span of William of Stratford. This dating argument, thus, is circular.” He prefers a method using the dating parameters for each play—earliest possible date and latest possible date—such as those in Kevin Gilvary’s *Dating Shakespeare’s Plays* (2009), which he reviewed in *Brief Chronicles* in 2011.

Ostrowski is well-versed on the question of Shakespearean authorship, citing Oxfordian scholars’ research on a range of issues, including the hyphenated name “Shake-speare,” the actual meaning of “sweet swan of Avon,” the annotations in Oxford’s Geneva Bible, the use of the Strachey letter to date *The Tempest*, the breadth of reading displayed by the canon’s author, the absence of Shakespeare sources after 1604, and the identification of people and events in Oxford’s life with those in, for instance, *Hamlet* and *All’s Well That Ends Well*.

In the case of *Hamlet*, Ostrowski lists the differences that Alan Nelson sees between the play’s plot and characters, and the events and people in Oxford’s life, but adds the warning: “Fiction does not have to coincide exactly with the autobiographical reality it seeks to portray.” He then points to the ludicrous attempts by orthodox scholars to connect the name “Hamlet” to residents of Stratford, when the name obviously derives from the play’s source. As for *All’s Well That Ends Well*, to claim that there is no connection between the play and Edward de Vere’s life “would require resorting to extraordinary coincidences as an explanation.”

The presence or absence of Shakespeare's name on play quartos, and their place as part of the accepted canon, is another subject that Ostrowski addresses. Some plays in the First Folio are apparently only included with weak evidence, being relegated by orthodox scholars to collaborations with others. In his table of First Folio plays, it seems that Ostrowski accepts the claims of Brian Vickers, Gary Taylor and others that plays such as *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Timon of Athens* and *Measure for Measure* were partially written by Thomas Middleton, and that the three *Henry VI* plays were collaborations with Christopher Marlowe and an anonymous third playwright. Moreover, in his list of Shakespeare apocrypha he omits *The Taming of a Shrew*, *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*, *King Leir* and *Thomas of Woodstock*—all of which have been assigned to Shakespeare by revisionist scholars during the last twenty-five years.

Under the heading "Stylometrics," Ostrowski points out a methodological flaw in one study that is almost always present in stylometric analyses by orthodox scholars:

From 1987 to 1990, professors Ward Y. Elliott and Robert J. Valenza conducted a study at Claremont McKenna College in which they looked at fifty-eight "full and partial Shakespeare claimants," as listed by *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare*. They submitted the verses of the Shakespearean corpus and the writings of thirty-seven of the claimants to stylometric analysis. Their explanation for not analyzing the verses of all fifty-eight is that "[t]he remaining twenty-one claimants have left no known poems or plays to test." They concluded that no similarity exists between the poetry of Shakespeare and that of his contemporaries, so none of them, including Edward de Vere, could have been the author of Shakespeare's corpus. Somewhat significantly, neither they nor the *Encyclopedia* included William of Stratford among the claimants. If they had, he would have been listed as claimant number 59, and he would have fallen into the category of claimants who "have left no known poems or plays to test." Thus, he would have failed the test to being included. By not including William of Stratford as one of their claimants, but then concluding he was the author, they are committing the fallacy of the circular proof (or assuming the conclusion).

The same types of flaws occur in comparisons by orthodox scholars of the punctuation and spelling in Oxford's letters with those in the plays. In the former case, the investigators failed to take into account the changing nature of English punctuation during the Elizabethan period. As regards Alan Nelson's finding that Oxford's spelling was different from that in the

plays, Ostrowski makes the point that Nelson did not “take his analysis to the logical next step, which is to compare the spelling in the plays attributed to Shakespeare with the spelling in the letters of other Elizabethan writers.” Nor did he compare it to the spelling in the letters of William of Stratford, for the obvious reason that not a single letter by William exists.

In short, Ostrowski’s chapter on Shakespeare is all but a legal brief for the Oxfordian argument in that it raises question after question about the methods and conclusions of orthodox Shakespeare scholars, and supplies fact after fact that support Oxford’s authorship of the Shakespeare canon. As an epigraph to his chapter on Shakespeare, Ostrowski quotes from an interview with James Shapiro, one of the least charming Stratfordians. This professor of English at Columbia University said that he would fail any student who raised the question of who wrote Shakespeare. Beyond his even-handed analysis of the controversy, Ostrowski’s wide-ranging book might well motivate some influential scholars, editors or publishers to ask the same question.



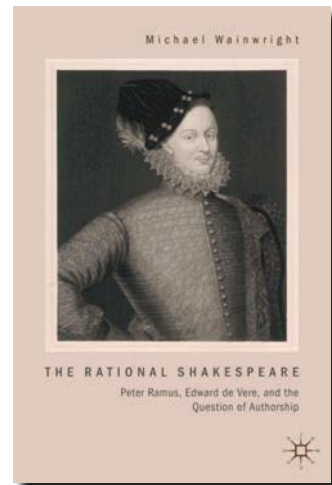
Was Shakespeare a Ramist?

Reviewed by Michael Dudley

The Rational Shakespeare: Peter Ramus, Edward de Vere, and the Question of Authorship. By Michael Wainwright. Palgrave Macmillan 2018 (324 pp.) in hardcover, paperback and Kindle.

The question regarding the authorship of the Works of Shakespeare has for generations been dismissed by most of the intelligentsia as patent nonsense or a conspiracy theory—in short, as highly irrational—with a correspondingly dim view of its proponents’ intelligence and sanity.

It is therefore singularly refreshing and impressive that a scholarly work that acknowledges Edward de Vere as Shakespeare should be entirely premised on an exploration of rationalism, not only in terms of the worldview apparent in the Shakespeare canon, but as a structured argument unto itself. More remarkable still is that such a study should be released by a major academic publisher, Palgrave Macmillan. With *The Rational Shakespeare*, scholar Michael Wainwright presents a carefully crafted intellectual history of the poet-playwright by focusing on the extent to which he and those around him may have been influenced by the ideas of the 16th Century French humanist, Petrus Ramus.



Shakespeare scholarship is, of course, replete with studies concerning the influences of other writers and intellects—both ancient and contemporary—on the canon. Given that nothing whatever is known of the education, intellectual life or reading habits (if any) of the presumed author, William

Was Shakespeare a Ramist?

Shakespeare of Stratford-Upon-Avon, most of these studies must, of necessity, confine themselves to purely intertextual readings, rather than biographical ones.

Most recently, for example, Jonathan Bate in his *How the Classics Made Shakespeare* (2019) finds extensive evidence in the texts that Shakespeare was steeped in the work of Greek and Roman writers such as Plutarch, Terence, Livy, Cicero and of course Ovid, but embellishes his analysis with fanciful imaginings of how the Bard would have encountered them as a boy at Stratford's grammar school. On the other hand—and in sharp contrast—Roger Stritmatter's dissertation on the influence of the Geneva Bible on Edward de Vere (2003) goes exponentially further by not only demonstrating the significant influence of that version of the Bible in Shakespeare's works, but establishing an actual chain of provenance linking a heavily annotated copy of this Bible to its owner, author Edward de Vere.

The Rational Shakespeare falls somewhere between these two: Wainwright sees Ramus' thought reflected (if mostly critiqued) in the plays and in the choices made by their characters, and establishes the philosopher's influence on those who, in turn, would mentor Oxford. What he attempts is, therefore, exceedingly rare in the Shakespeare literature: connecting Shakespeare both textually *and* biographically to another writer. Wainwright places Oxford and his personal influences within a knowable, documented and personally interconnected scholarly milieu, and, in so doing, constructs an intellectual biography of Shakespeare not otherwise possible under the Stratford myth.

Wainwright's basis of analysis is the life, writings and ideas of Petrus Ramus (1515–1572), the iconoclastic humanist philosopher and pedagogue whose school of thought—Ramism—found widespread acceptance in English Universities, as well as on the continent. Infamously slain during the 1572 St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of Huguenots in Paris, Ramus was a leading intellect whose reforms overturned centuries of slavish secular and religious adherence to the rigid rhetoric of Aristotle.

Where Aristotle distinguished between invention and judgment in rhetorical practices, Ramus saw them as inseparable, arguing instead for a dialectic that included both. Along with grammar and rhetoric, dialectic formed for Ramus

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an essential *trivium* for purposes of pedagogy. As a dialectician, however, Ramus was, in Wainwright's words, "self-defeating," for Ramus preferred one-way didacticism aimed at persuasion, rather than a discourse between intellectual equals (149). Ramus also rejected the extraneousness of scholasticism, which required students to learn a great deal of rote knowledge of little practical value, in favor of an emphasis on a return to first principles.

More significant for Wainwright's purposes was Ramus' use of decision tree diagrams to illustrate rational thought processes and strategy—a form of proto-logic from which, he proposes, game theory would eventually derive. As Wainwright explains, modern game theory is a body of concepts originating in the work of mathematician John von Neumann (1903–57) and economist Oskar Morgenstern (1902–1977). These explored problems of coordination between individuals, in which agents face strategic options for dealing with various situations, all the while anticipating others' moves, knowing that opponents are facing the same strategic choices and that all must deal with the outcome of those decisions. Wainwright sees these forces at work in the situations with which many of Shakespeare's characters must contend, and locates in the plays evidence for games such as "two-choice, two-player scenarios, and the social dilemmas of Deadlock, the Prisoner's Dilemma, the Assurance Game (or Stag Hunt), and Chicken" (108–09).

Wainwright (who teaches at Royal Holloway, University of London) has previously used game theory as an analytical framework for the study of literature in several monographs for Palgrave Macmillan, including *Faulkner's Gamble: Chess and Literature* (2011), *Game Theory and Minorities in American Literature* (2016) and *Game Theory and Postwar American Literature* (2016). Here Wainwright doesn't just use game theory to explore the actions of literary characters: rather, he argues that the presence and centrality of Ramist thought—and by extension, game theory—in the Shakespeare canon is central to resolving the authorship question:

[Shakespeare] possessed a natural faculty trained at once in logical procedure and its attendant rhetoric. A critical appreciation of Ramism underpinned that training. Shakespeare follows the Ramist promotion of rationalism but does so reservedly. He explicitly admonishes the inappropriate and the excessive application of Ramism by implicitly charging Ramus with these methodological faults. This censure, which concerns Ramus's fundamental approach to the coordination of human relations, required a profound understanding of Ramism; such a necessity impinges on the question of Shakespearean authorship; this requirement points to the author's educational and personal profiles, and that indication favors the Oxfordian case (288–89).

Was Shakespeare a Ramist?

It is worth noting that Wainwright is something of an iconoclast himself as regards Ramus, who is largely dismissed by most scholars today, citing Ramus' lack of creativity and originality (Sellberg 2006/2016). More specifically, Wainwright's view of the significance of Ramus' influence on Shakespeare is shared by few other scholars, Clara Mazziio being an exception. Part of his agenda in arguing for Shakespeare's debt to Ramus, then, would seem to be to urge a reappraisal of the philosopher.

He explains how Ramism found a particularly receptive audience at Oxford University in the generation before de Vere, where Ramus was required reading for young fellow classmates Thomas Smith and William Cecil, both of whom would go on to "cast long shadows over Edward de Vere" (87). As Oxfordians are aware, Smith would tutor young Oxford starting at age four before his pupil became a ward of the state in Cecil's house when the boy was twelve. Accordingly, argues Wainwright, Oxford would have been thoroughly acquainted with Ramism. What's more, the intellectual milieu in Italy when Oxford travelled there as a young man was also thoroughly Ramist.

Yet, according to Wainwright, Oxford was a skeptical Ramist: as revealed in the Shakespeare works, Oxford largely eschewed Ramus' one-way didacticism for dialectic between engaged, knowing speakers. Still, Wainwright claims that the actions of Shakespeare's characters reveal the extent to which Oxford was familiar with Ramus' theories of decision-making. Given the known connections between Ramus, Smith and Cecil, and the apparent presence in Shakespeare's writings of Ramist thought, Wainwright posits that this intellectual debt makes Oxford's candidacy much more compelling than that of William Shakspere of Stratford.

To develop this argument, *The Rational Shakespeare* is divided into three sections. The first consists of an overview of Ramus' life, his views on logic and the tenets of Ramism before examining his influence on Smith and Cecil. In Chapter 3, "Peter Ramus, Edward de Vere, and the Basis of Logic," Wainwright explores the extent to which Cecil and Smith were familiar with Ramus (Smith actually met him), and thus extended Ramist principles into their writing, pedagogy and supervision of young Oxford. In fact, Smith and Cecil were leading members of Elizabeth's government during Oxford's minority—Smith as Ambassador to France (1562-66) as well as Member of Parliament and even Privy Councilor, while Cecil served as Secretary of State twice: during 1550-53 and 1558-1572. Thus, Oxford would be motivated to read Ramus in Cecil's library to discover how his two powerful guardians thought politically.

Shakspere, by contrast, would have had no such acquaintance, either at home or at grammar school—even if he had attended it. This is particularly the

case as regards Oxford's trained reason (or as Ramus put it, *ratio artificiosa*) when all Shakspeare's partisans can claim for him is his natural reason (*ratio naturalis*).

In Section 2, Wainwright introduces Ramus' logic—specifically decision-tree diagrams as a way of mapping strategic choices—and its connections to modern game theory as set out by Neumann and Morgenstern in their 1944 book, *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour*. Game theory describes how self-interested players and bankers (or rule-setting authorities) in facing dilemmas develop strategies in order to seek utility and remuneration, by dealing with temptations, seeking mutualism, coping with defections, and avoiding punishments. In a clever rhetorical turn, Wainwright uses Chapter 7, “The Banker and His Player,” to demonstrate his methodology by interpreting Oxford's life itself through the lens of game theory, with Cecil as Lord High Treasurer from 1572 to 1598, and practitioner of high politics as Privy Councilor, against whom Oxford as a “player” must devise various risk-taking gambits and stratagems.

Section 3 comprises the core of Wainwright's analysis by demonstrating how Ramist thought—or more accurately, Shakespeare's apparent attitude towards it—may be found in *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Hamlet*, *King John*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *King Henry V*.

Love's Labour's Lost is set at the court of Navarre; Ramus attended the College of Navarre. The courtly “Academe” in the play may therefore be referencing Ramist education. Furthermore, the schoolmaster Holofernes is not just a caricature of the Ramist Cecil, but Wainwright concurs with Mazzio that Holofernes' sterile efforts to logically reinterpret poetry, as well as the main characters' intellectual detachment from their presumed readers, both critique Ramus.

Shakespeare again famously parodies Cecil in *Hamlet* in the form of Polonius, whose pedantic attempts at logic lead an exasperated Queen Gertrude to tell him, “More matter with less art” (II.ii). Yet, it is in the character of Hamlet himself and his quandary that Wainwright sees the fullest expression of Ramism:

The maximal language of a singular mind reaches its high point in English literature with Prince Hamlet, Shakespeare's greatest dialectical pedant, whose inner reasoning suits the decision trees and matrices that game theorists so often employ. Present and future predicaments, coordinative and otherwise, plague the prince. While fostering thoughts of his coordinative relations with King Claudius, on the one hand, and the coordinative relations between King Claudius and Queen Gertrude, on the other, as well as considering the relays between

these interrelated but disconnected relations, the prince considers the question of a decisive solution. He does not discuss this question with an interlocutor. As with Ramist rhetoric at its most withdrawn, no speaker-auditor framework aids invention; instead, the prince's vision emerges from a dialectical monologue (165).

The events in *King John*—which in reality involved Oxford's ancestor Robert de Vere, Third Earl of Oxford—are in Wainwright's interpretation dominated by games of Deadlock and the Prisoner's Dilemma: Players King John and King Philip and their respective statesmen engage in cost-benefit analysis regarding their battle for Angiers, realizing that the machinations of statecraft are under their own rational control, and not God's. With these opposing armies in deadlock, the character of the Citizen acts as powerbroker—or banker—refusing to take sides. The Bastard, meanwhile, tempts the Kings with the Prisoner's Dilemma: confederation between them and defection against Angiers, which would remove the Citizen as powerbroker, until the Citizen proposes a different kind of mutualism: a dynastic marriage between the royal families.

Wainwright next devotes two chapters to *Antony and Cleopatra*, outlining how the social dilemma in the play illustrates an Assurance Game (or Stag Hunt), in which all are mutually joined in the same endeavor and must cooperate to achieve their ends, with the caveat that collective failure can lead to mistrust or even violence. Here Antony and Cleopatra are allied in their quest to wrest control of the Roman Republic from Octavius and Lepidus, but distrust, perceived betrayals and successive defections lead to their downfalls and deaths.

Henry V is the subject of the final two chapters, explaining Henry's challenge to King Charles VI and the Dauphin to reclaim English lands in France as a game of Chicken—again, historical events in which another de Vere ancestor, the Eleventh Earl of Oxford, played a significant role. Over the course of the play, Henry seeks in game theoretic terms both payoff and utility from his campaign, before settling on mutual cooperation in marrying Princess Katherine and unifying their two countries.

Throughout Wainwright draws parallels between these plays and Edward de Vere's personal life and the social, political and strategic contexts in which he was operating, e.g., his relationships with Queen Elizabeth and William Cecil, his marriage to Cecil's daughter Anne, his rivalry with Sir Philip Sidney, and his freedom through the "Policy of Plays," as Thomas Nashe publicly described it, to exercise his art.

As an explicitly Oxfordian text, *The Rational Shakespeare* benefits enormously from Wainwright's reliance on other Oxfordian scholars, including Mark

Alexander, Katherine Chiljan, Tom Regnier, Roger Stritmatter, Hank Whittemore and Richard Waugaman, authors whom most conventional Shakespeare scholars fastidiously eschew, but whose insights add a tremendous degree of verisimilitude here. In this regard, the book is a refreshingly grounded one in a field otherwise traditionally dominated by conjecture.

At the same time—and consistent with most conventional Shakespeare biographers—Wainwright not infrequently resorts to speculation himself, for example musing that “Oxford *must have* brought his well-rounded judgment of Ramism to bear...” (208); or that “Oxford’s education *undoubtedly* provided the Ramist necessity of highly skilled instruction...” (74); that “de Vere *would have* discovered the complex relationship between logic, cognition, and rhetoric that Ramism suggests” (43); or that “wariness *surely* informed Edward de Vere’s attitude toward Ramism” (77); or that “[Ramus] decisions trees *would have* been familiar to the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford” (110) [italics added].

In short, the linkages Wainwright suggest existed between Ramus and Oxford just don’t seem as compelling as those he actually documents between the philosopher and Smith and Cecil. He cannot, for example, show a chain of possession between one of Ramus’ works and Edward de Vere, as does Roger Stritmatter (2003) with the Geneva Bible. The closest he gets in this regard is inferring that, because Ramus and Oxford were both friends with mathematician and astrologer John Dee, Oxford would have been acquainted with Ramism.

As well, Wainwright’s use of game theory diagrams and formulas—as well as his prose style—can be rather impenetrable at times for the non-specialist, as when he states that

The trope of hypallage, as a turning too far, stands alongside metaphors and catachresis in forging improbable links between systematic units of language.... Like the more complex hypallage of hyperbaton, each instance of metonymy resists Ramus’s method, effectively establishing a game of Chicken that pits the polyvalent against the univocal (263).

Wainwright’s erudition is certainly impressive and his use of a game theory lens to analyze Shakespeare’s plays yields some fascinating interpretations as well as insights into Oxford’s life. Yet, owing to several significant discontinuities, *The Rational Shakespeare* fails to entirely convince the reader of its central assertion: that the Oxfordian authorship claim is bolstered by an understanding of Edward de Vere’s knowledge of Ramism.

Was Shakespeare a Ramist?

The first discontinuity is that the evidence for Oxford's acquaintance with Ramism is rather circumstantial when compared to that of either Thomas Smith or William Cecil; while we learn that Burghley possessed Ramus' writings in his library—where Oxford as a ward would likely have encountered them—Wainwright presents no direct evidence that Oxford himself actually read or owned them. Oxford's Ramism is, as a result, more assumed than realized.

The second—as Wainwright acknowledges in the conclusion—is the fact that Ramus “approached but never effectively broached” theories of game strategy which would emerge 300 years later (289). This does beg the question of the extent to which locating in such meticulous detail the descriptive tenets of game theory (players, bankers, defections, etc.) in the plays bears on the authorship question, when Oxford (or Ramus, for that matter) would have had no possible knowledge of them. The third discontinuity emerges from the second, in that the progenitors of game theory themselves, Neumann and Morgenstern, don't so much as mention Ramus in their seminal book, *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour* (1944/1953). As a result, the inheritance game theory derived from Ramus seems incommensurately established by Wainwright, given its primacy here.

It therefore seems reasonable to ask: does not the structure of the main argument constitute something of an unwarranted conflation—basing the case for Oxford on the presence of Ramism in the Shakespeare canon, and then presenting as evidence tenets from an entirely different (and only tangentially related) body of thought?

The Rational Shakespeare is an ambitious and challenging book, and it does reward the determined reader with some original insights as well as its excellent integration of both Oxfordian and mainstream scholarship. However, because the book's central logical assertions are insufficiently supported and interconnected, they weaken somewhat its author's own aspirations to rationality.

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Was Shakespeare a Ramist?



The New Field of Shakespeare Authorship Studies

by Don Rubin

My Shakespeare, William Leahy (ed.), Edward Everett Root, 2018

The New Oxford Shakespeare, Gary Taylor et al (eds.), Oxford University Press, 2018

John Florio: The Man Who Was Shakespeare, Lamberto Tassinari, Giano Books, 2009

Le Vrai Shakespeare, Chaunes, Independent Publisher, 2018

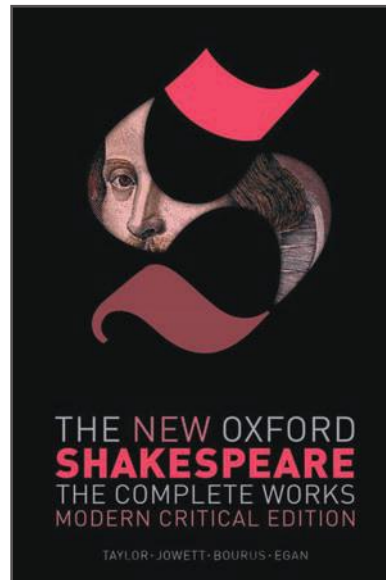
The final chapter of the recent volume *My Shakespeare*—a series of essays about the Shakespeare Authorship Question edited by Professor William Leahy of Brunel University in London—is written by Leahy himself and is provocatively entitled “My (amalgamated) Shakespeare.” His conclusion has raised the ire of many in academe but Leahy—a noted Shakespeare scholar and a Vice-President of Brunel—is himself academe personified and his argument is based in part on the work of numerous other academics, some of whom actually edit Shakespeare volumes for Oxford University Press.

Leahy states: “the authorship of the plays and poems traditionally attributed to Shakespeare of Stratford is an enormously complex issue, rife with uncertainty and ambiguity... it is a field in which it is difficult to speak with any

kind of authority” (Leahy 204). In short, with numerous leading academics behind him, he is arguing that no one can any longer be sure who wrote the plays of Shakespeare. One can only say they were written by numerous hands, meaning that the traditional assumptions based primarily on the First Folio now must once again be thrown into question. To quote former cleric James Carroll about God, “Settled ideas are forever on their way to being unsettled” (June 2019 *The Atlantic*).

A New Group Theory of Authorship

In fact, Leahy has long thought Shakespeare was not just a fancy spelling of the name of the businessman from Stratford—Shakespeare—but a pseudonym. With publication in 2017 of Oxford University Press’s multi-volume edition of *Shakespeare’s Works* (including one volume focusing on authorship issues), Leahy now thinks his view has been totally justified. Indeed, the editors of the OUP volumes—Professors Gary Taylor et al—have themselves made the claim that the works of Shakespeare were created by multiple authors. Shakespeare, according to Taylor and friends, was not simply a “he” but rather a “they,” and that all of them agreed to share the name Shakespeare the same way designers at fashion houses work under the aegis of a single name like Dior or Givenchy.



So, who were the core members of the Shakespeare Workshop? For the Oxford scholars, they included apparently Richard Barnfield, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Nashe, George Peele, Walter Raleigh and a handful of others not so well-known. Added in are two other names

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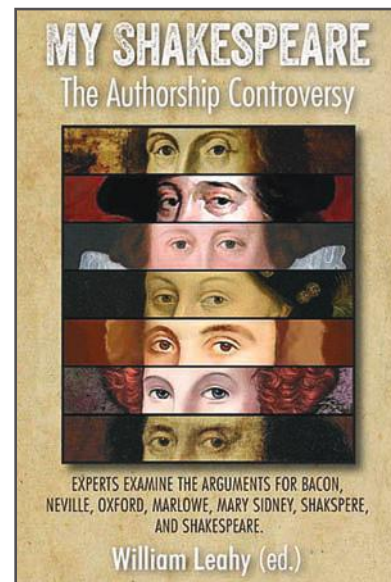
that are not specifically identified by Taylor—someone identified simply as “Anonymous” within the group and someone who may well have already used the name “William Shakespeare” on other works like *Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece* and 154 sonnets. In short, this is the new group theory of Professor Taylor et al at Oxford.

The question here is whether one of these two unidentified people might be Edward de Vere? And might the other even be Will Shakspere of Stratford?

There are other names, of course. Based on Professor Leahy’s contribution to the argument in *My Shakespeare*, his authorship list would certainly include Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, called by his contemporaries “the best” of the Court writers. It would also include the philosopher Francis Bacon; the diplomat and courtier Henry Neville, Ambassador to France during this time; and the Countess of Pembroke, Mary Sidney Herbert. Marlowe is also on Leahy’s list of possibilities, as is Will Shakspere.

The problem for Professors Leahy and Taylor is that they just don’t know who was the “key” author in this fascinating Elizabethan “whodunit.” Moreover, Leahy seems convinced that we never really will know. Hence his belief is that the Authorship Question is now not so much a quest for some particular 16th century person’s identity as much as it is a “field” for examination, a new field that needs to be seriously recognized by academe, a legitimate field of study that should include scholars in many disciplines including theatre, literature, history and the law.

So have we just experienced a paradigm shift? I certainly believe that new evidence really is overturning the prevailing authorship framework. It is significant, and it has not been given enough attention by most of us interested in the authorship question in the last three or four years. There are certainly implications here even for teachers with intellectual integrity and theatre people only casually interested in this period. As teachers, for example, what do we now tell our students? What year do we tell them that Shakespeare, whoever he or she was, was born? As theatre producers, what do we tell our audiences about the author when a play by “Shakespeare” is produced? That “he” was born in Stratford-upon-Avon? How and when do we say that the whole Bardic biography is now being contested?



The truth is that most people will continue to prefer to accept the official story of the Stratford Birthplace Trust: there once was a man from Stratford who came from an illiterate family but who was a genius born whole from some Medusa's head already knowing the law so well that he could make in-jokes about legal issues in the plays, was born knowing foreign languages that were not taught in the schools, that despite his low birth and lack of money growing up that he knew everything by intellectual osmosis about aristocratic sports like falconry, tennis and the royal court, and that he knew quotidian details about France and especially Italy by standing around taverns listening to tales told by boastful sailors.

Or do we finally start suggesting to our students that the contested name Shakespeare may well have been a pseudonym? And then, once we open up that issue to new generations, surely we then need to take the next step and tell them who might have actually been behind the spear—or the many “who's” who now seem to be populating what Leahy argues persuasively should be a whole new and exciting field: Authorship Studies.

Let's examine some of these many “who's” currently being proposed as the author.

Professors Taylor et al have employed computer stylometrics to identify a variety of authors on the plays. It is thanks to this still controversial method that they compare the signed writings by people such as Middleton, Nashe, Raleigh and Marlowe with large portions of the “Shakespeare” plays. What we do *not* know, of course, is who actually wrote the parts still credited by OUP to that unknown person who actually used the name “Shakespeare.” And we certainly don't know who Taylor's “Anonymous” really was.

Taylor says he doesn't try to make these identifications because the larger sections of the plays don't seem to be written by anyone who left us anything to compare the dramatic works with. For instance, it is clear we have no plays “signed” by de Vere. What we have is some signed youthful poetry by him but not enough from a later period that can be accurately identified through Taylor's stylometrics. Nor do we have any writing by Will Shakspeare other than a handful of nearly illegible signatures on legal documents, such as his will. Not a letter to this wife. Not a letter to his theatre colleagues or his company in London.

What we do have is the First Folio, which appeared seven years after Shakspeare's death in which the editor—Ben Jonson—informs readers that, if they wish to know who the author really was, look not to the engraved picture of the man in the book—another piece of contested evidence—but to the writings themselves, created by a person Jonson simply calls “the Sweet Swan of Avon.”

Enter Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke

Wasn't Mary Herbert's symbol the swan? Wasn't she referred to as the sweet swan? That's one of the arguments made in Professor Leahy's biographically-centered volume, which helpfully examines the major authorship candidates. The reference to the Avon, it is assumed, must be to the Avon River running through Stratford-upon-Avon. But numerous scholars have pointed out that "avon" simply means "river," while Elizabethan scholar Alexander Waugh has published a paper showing that Queen Elizabeth enjoyed many of her Shakespearean theatrical entertainments at Hampton Court Palace in Richmond, 12 miles southwest of London on the River Thames. Moreover, "Hampton Court was called 'Avon' as a shortening of the Celtic-Roman name 'Avondunum' meaning a fortified place (dunum) by a river (avon), which the common people by corruption called Hampton" (Waugh 100). In addition, swans, it is known, were an oft-used symbol for poets generally. So, the sobriquet Sweet Swan of Avon, according to Waugh, is simply one of Jonson's many coded references to the "poet" whose works often premiered before the court at Avon, a poet Waugh identifies as Edward de Vere in his own persuasive essay in Professor Leahy's book.

The chapter on Mary Herbert in Leahy's volume is by the scholar Robin Williams, author of an earlier book entitled *Sweet Swan of Avon*. It portrays a woman who, after Elizabeth herself, was surely the most well-educated and brilliant woman in England. Connected by family ties to the Dudleys, particularly to the Queen's long-time lover Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who was her uncle, Mary Sidney was sister to the greatest poet of the early Tudor period, Philip Sidney, and mother of William and Philip Herbert, to whom the First Folio was dedicated. The Sidney, Dudley, and Herbert families composed one of the most powerful familial nexuses in the realm. They "controlled vast holdings... equalling about two-thirds of the land under Elizabeth's rule." Indeed, "Shakespeare's ten British history plays are filled with historical figures from the... family pedigree" (Williams 139).

The home that Mary Sidney and her husband, the Earl of Pembroke, established at Wilton House "became a base away from London for the Herberts, Dudleys and Sidneys" (*My Shakespeare*, Williams 140) as well as a literary salon for numerous writers including Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, Sir John Davies and Samuel Daniel, whose brother-in-law was John Florio. Educated at home, Mary Sidney spoke Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, probably Greek and some Hebrew. She was trained in poetry, rhetoric, history and the classics, had, like many women of the time, medical training, dabbled in alchemy, played the lute, virginals, and apparently the violin, and composed music. Her mother's friends included the five Cooke sisters, "who were among the first generation of female humanist scholars. Her mother's closest friend was Mildred Cooke, herself married to William Cecil, the Queen's

Secretary of State and then her Lord Treasurer. Another good friend, Anne Cooke, was the mother of Sir Francis Bacon (*My Shakespeare*, Williams 141). What an assembly of extraordinarily educated and powerful women. Add Mary Sidney into the authorship question and you are adding another whole world of writers.

In terms of theatre, virtually all the known companies of the period played for the Sidney and Pembroke families. The Pembrokes, like the Dudleys, sponsored their own acting troupes and the Sidney family even had their own jester. Mary Sidney was also acknowledged as a writer. In her own religious poetry—the only form women were expected or allowed to write in at this time—“she used 126 different verse forms.” She was also “the first woman to publish a play in English, *Antonie*, a translation from the French of a closet drama meant to be read aloud in a noble household” (*My Shakespeare*, Williams 146). She is even noted in Francis Meres’ 1598 *Palladis Tamia* as “a most delicate poet...comparable to Sappho as the Tenth Muse” (*My Shakespeare*, Williams 147).

Like Shakespeare, she also invented new words in English, including “feathery,” “heart-broke,” and “head-on” as well as compound adjectives such as “brain-sick” and “angel-like” (*My Shakespeare*, Williams 147). She and her brother Philip also encouraged writers to publish their works, not so common earlier, helping to create “a print-based literary culture” (*My Shakespeare*, Williams 148).

Then there are her two sons—William Herbert, the Earl of Pembroke, and Philip, Earl of Montgomery, the latter such a favorite of James I that he kissed the king on the lips at one public ceremony rather than on the hand. This was the incomparable duo behind publication of the First Folio. In 1604, six months after Edward de Vere died, it was also Philip who married Susan Vere, Edward’s youngest daughter. The morning after their wedding, James (quoted in a letter from Dudley Carleton) apparently “spent a good time in or upon their bed” (*My Shakespeare*, Williams 154). Why did they have to wait until after de Vere’s death to marry? Edward hated Philip Herbert’s uncle, Sir Philip Sidney, “one of those the Earl of Oxford said he wanted to kill” (*My Shakespeare*, Williams 156).

Simply by being a woman—even so famous a woman—it becomes manifestly clear why she herself might actually prefer to write for the public under a pseudonym. But could Mary Sidney Herbert have written three dozen plays as Shakespeare without anyone else discovering her secret? Based on text alone, I have serious doubts that she could actually be the poet behind so many bawdy references in the poetry and the plays, from being “pricked out” in the sonnets to Malvolio’s encomium to his lady’s C’s, U’s ‘n’ T’s in *Twelfth Night*. Leahy, for the record, considers her as part of the new field, while Taylor does not mention her.

More Candidates: Shakspere, Bacon and Neville

Considered by Leahy only tangentially, but by the more orthodox Taylor et al more seriously, is Will Shakspere himself. In Leahy's volume, Shakspere's cause is challenged by the independent American scholar Diana Price. In her essay, "A Conjectural Narrative," she continues to maintain that there is no contemporary evidence for him as a writer, but does argue that William of Stratford clearly was a good businessman, and that he does deserve a place in the field because he appears to have made a profitable career buying and selling popular play-texts—including those of "Shakespeare." Moreover, it was through his dramatic brokerage work that he eventually became an investor in the company that was most closely associated with the plays of Shakespeare. Yet Shakspere himself, Price makes clear, is never suggested as actually being the writer "Shakespeare," nor did he himself ever make that claim.

The other essays in Leahy's collection put forth the standard candidates, including Marlowe, Bacon and Henry Neville. The Marlowe position by British scholar Ros Barber is well argued, but it is still skewed by a conspiracy theory, in which Marlowe's death was faked for political reasons since he worked as a spy for Sir Francis Walsingham. He is then sent off to Italy, where he lived out the remainder of his life in protective custody while writing and sending the results—all the plays of "Shakespeare"—back to London under that pseudonym. A key point is that after his ostensible death in 1593, Marlowe's name is never again attached to a piece of writing, so something has clearly happened, while the name Shakespeare only begins to appear after 1593. It also does much to explain themes of exile and the appearance of Italy and its geography and culture in so many of the plays. But I don't believe the government would go to these lengths to protect the life of a supposed political asset at that time, no less cooperate with that person—a commoner—in the secret transport of his stage plays back to England.

The Henry Neville argument is perhaps the weakest in the Leahy volume. Certainly, Neville's biographical dates (1562–1615) fit the period plus he was an educated aristocrat who traveled widely in Europe. In addition, he knew the law, knew Southampton, and knew music because he played the lute. And his father was a "keen falconer" (Leahy 114). Unfortunately, there is no proof that Neville ever actually wrote a play or even attended the theatre. There are some personal annotations in volumes of plays that he owned. An example of the dubiousness of this argument is the assertion that the plays may have been written by Neville because, "There are twenty members of the Neville family either on stage or mentioned in *Richard III*" (Leahy 133). But was he known as a poet or playwright? No.

The case for Sir Francis Bacon is based upon Sir Francis's extraordinary erudition, his world view and his proximity to the court. But even Professor Taylor's stylometrics and the ready availability of Baconian writings are not persuasive. Barry Clarke says little more in theatrical support of his argument than that Bacon was a "producer for the Inns of Court acting companies" (Leahy 168) and that he produced "two masques at Whitehall" in 1612-13 (Leahy 186).

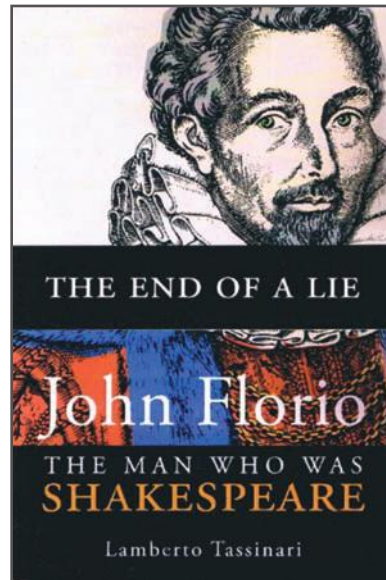
The Case for John Florio as Shakespeare

There is one other claimant not mentioned by either Taylor or Leahy, but whom I have been investigating recently because there has been much coverage about him in both France and Quebec—John Florio. Interest in Florio's life and a claim by several scholars that he is the name behind the pseudonym has, in fact, been revived in the last decade by the francophone authorship community.

It must be noted here that virtually no one since the 1930s has paid more than passing attention to Florio, a London-based 16th century teacher of Italian, known primarily as editor of the first Italian-English dictionary and as the first translator of Montaigne from French into English. It was in 1932 that Elizabethan scholar Frances Yates

published a fine life of Florio with Cambridge University Press called *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England*. She ended her nearly 400-page study with a three-page chapter saying that her next project would be an examination of the relationship between Florio and Shakespeare because there had to have been one. The parallels in the writing, she said, from Shakespeare's use of the compound word form known as hendiadys to the ideas of Montaigne found in the Bard's plays absolutely requires further examination. Would that Professor Yates had done so, but she did not, and virtually no one else chose to examine the relationship between Florio and Shakespeare in the intervening 90 years.

About ten years ago, a new Florio champion appeared—Italian scholar Lamberto Tassinari. He went even further than Yates in his work and began arguing publicly that Florio was in fact the "true" Shakespeare. Born in Italy and since 1981 a resident of Montreal, Tassinari, like Florio, taught Italian language and literature. As well, he founded an intercultural journal called *ViceVersa*. Most people, of course, assume that Florio was born in Italy,



but according to Yates and others, Florio was actually born in England in 1553. His father, Michael Angelo Florio, was born in Italy and later immigrated to England. A man of faith who chose the church for a career, Florio Sr. became fascinated by the ideas of Luther and other Protestant thinkers. Hauled before the Inquisition and jailed for 27 months for his heretical views, he left Rome shortly thereafter and lived for various periods in a variety of northern Italian cities where his views, including supporting polygamy, were more tolerated. Eventually the elder Florio, a skilled linguist, made his way to Switzerland, then to France and ultimately to England where Protestantism was taking hold.

Yates and others write of the numerous immigrant community churches in London in the mid-16th century, particularly with the help of England's new Puritan aristocracy. Robert Dudley as Earl of Leicester personally encouraged several of these foreign churches, as did the young and well-connected William Cecil. Thanks to Cecil in particular, the elder Florio became minister at one of these immigrant churches in about 1550. In early 1553, however, Pastor Florio was charged with fornication with a member of his congregation. When the woman was found to be pregnant, the awkward situation was resolved when Florio Sr. married her. Later that year, a son was born and baptised Giovanni, or John to the English. Though no name comes down to us for John's mother, it is assumed that she was also an Italian immigrant. As a result of this scandal, Michael Angelo Florio lost his pastorate and had to earn a living simply teaching Italian.

By 1556, Protestant politics turned once again in England as Queen Mary was determined to restore Catholicism to the country. For Michael Angelo Florio, his wife and young son, this meant another exile, through France and then back to Switzerland. So, growing up, young John—English by birth but Italian by culture—found himself in a rich multi-lingual environment, one in which he learned to speak Italian as his mother tongue, English as his step-mother tongue, French, German and Latin. When Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558, Protestantism was reinstated and numerous emigres returned. At the age of 13 in 1566, young John Florio found himself back in London but now on his own.

Fluent in five languages, along with Hebrew and a little Greek, Florio parlayed them into a strong teaching career using some of his father's connections. Italy, of course, was perceived as the source of the Renaissance, and anyone who wanted to advance socially had to speak at least modestly proficient Italian. William Cecil was certainly quite fluent, as were Robert Dudley and Elizabeth herself. The young Florio used such connections to work in numerous wealthy homes as an Italian tutor, eventually making his way to Oxford in the employ of one young aristocrat studying there. In Oxford, he met and befriended the poet Samuel Daniel, whose sister he would later

marry. It was also Daniel who would connect Florio to Mary Sidney and the Wilton Circle. It was also at Oxford that Florio would meet the itinerant magus, Copernican philosopher, and religious freethinker Giordano Bruno who, though not a linguist, was obviously pleased to meet another Italian who could translate for him.

Eventually offered a job back in London working as a tri-lingual translator for the French Ambassador (French, English and Italian) and as tutor for the Ambassador's wife and daughter, Florio again comes into the orbit of Bruno. Unable to find a job as a professor in Oxford, Bruno is invited to move into the French Embassy as the Ambassador's resident philosopher and intellectual celebrity. Without much English, Bruno was dependent on the talents of John Florio to act as his interpreter at the many aristocratic homes, where his daring ideas were considered at worst amusing and at best visionary. In fact most English scholars, particularly its churchmen, simply couldn't wait to refute Bruno's notions about the universe, astronomy, astrology, and especially his ideas about Rosicrucianism, an ancient belief system also known as Hermetic philosophy rooted in Egyptian mysticism, man's place in the new Copernican universe, and about free love. In such wide-ranging debates, Bruno, never a diplomat, engaged British scholars with insults and anger. When they returned his verbal abuse, he suggested that the English were ill-educated boors living in Plato's cave. Little wonder that Bruno eventually decided to leave England, ending up back in Italy, where he was burned at the stake after failing to convince the Italian Inquisition that he possessed the true meaning of the Cross.

Florio, however, remained in London, where he flourished in English high society despite agreeing with Bruno that most Englishmen were uncultured and boorish with no real abilities in foreign languages and little patience for foreign customs. Over the next decades, Florio, while also serving as one of Walsingham's many spies, would put together a series of Italian-English dictionaries which included amusing dialogues as examples of how the words could be used in conversation. One such dialogue is between a young man named John (clearly Florio) and a young man about town called Henry (assumed to be Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton). Florio knew the Earl of Southampton and Oxford, Lord Burghley, Sir Francis Walsingham, Ben Jonson and the Wilton Circle.

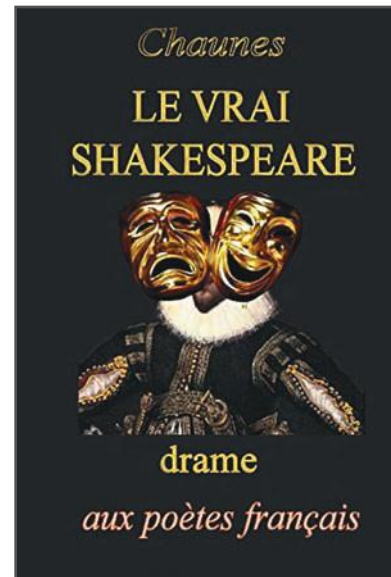
Could Florio have been the real Shakespeare, as Tassinari argues in his 2009 book, *John Florio: The Man Who Was Shakespeare?* Could Florio have been Mr. Anonymous in the Shakespeare Workshop? He had the Italian background that Shakespeare employed in at least a dozen plays. He had the requisite language skills of a Shakespeare and had shown them off in his dictionaries, dialogues and volumes of proverbs translated from Italian to English to French. He clearly had the contacts with the courtly elite.

Indeed, several major papers written in recent years in France have proposed Florio as Shakespeare. A major authorship conference was held this past year at New Sorbonne University, Paris, with Tassinari's 380-page book as the primary research source. Translated into French in 2016 by Michel Väis, a noted theatre critic in Montreal and Secretary-General of the International Association of Theatre Critics, the volume was received warmly by the French press.

And in 2018, a play was written about Florio by a respected and well-known poet-scientist named Jean-Patrick Connerade under his pen name Chaunes. In it, Florio is identified without qualification as the author of the plays of Shakespeare. Entitled *Le vrai Shakespeare* (*The True Shakespeare*) the play, which I have read in French, is dedicated to Lamberto Tassinari, "l'homme par qui Florio est arrivé" (the man through whom Florio has arrived).

Chaunes is not a superficial scholar. He has been awarded the Académie Française's Heredia Prize, the Maison de Poésie's Paul Verlaine Prize and the French Poetry Society's Prix Victor Hugo. In his professional life, he is an internationally decorated astronomer and the author of numerous volumes in science and philosophy. In 2018 he was awarded the World Prize for Humanism.

Le Vrai Shakespeare is itself fiction—a rather old-fashioned five-act play which shows Florio as the leader of a group of spies, including Ben Jonson and Christopher Marlowe, all working for Sir Francis Walsingham. Their collective goal is to find a way to combat all the pamphlets being published about both the Tudors and the royal succession. Florio suggests they do not write more pamphlets but use the new popular art form of theatre to show the Tudors in a positive light. Walsingham is intrigued by this idea and agrees to it, but only on condition that the identities of the authors be hidden lest the plays be traced back to the crown. Walsingham then proposes that the name of the theatre's playbroker, Shakspere, be used as the author of these plays. The writers finally agree to this plan when they realize that no one would ever believe Shakspere actually wrote the plays because he is illiterate. But they do insist on using a more elegant version of his name: Shake-Speare. The play is a flashback from 1604 when Florio, older and poorer, is living in Fulham. A Danish courtier named Rosenkrants arrives in Fulham looking for



the author of *Hamlet*, whom he says is libeling him, his cousin Guildensterne and the whole Danish court. He wants to stop its performance.

Clearly catching this French poet-astronomer's attention were the philosophical ideas about geo-heliocentrism put forth by the 16th century Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe that had been floating in astrological as well as astronomical circles in the mid-16th century. As Chaunes puts it in a long introduction to the play:

The opposition between a geocentric universe and a heliocentric one... composes one of the grand scientific issues of the period, an issue that specifically dominated the thinking of Italian-born Giordano Bruno, a Copernican who followed Galileo into this huge area... Among those who actually took note of the Tychonian model was Shakespeare. In *Troilus and Cressida*, using the voice of Ulysses... he proclaimed this model of the universe loudly and strongly... (Chaunes iii–iv)

Connerade then quotes a speech making reference to “the glorious planet Sol” in Act 1, scene 3 of *Troilus*, and notes that “the exact same unusual phrase ‘planet sol’ appears as well in the dictionary of John Florio, who apparently had also become a Tychonian” (Chaunes iv). Connerade explains that two cousins of Tycho named Rosenkrantz and Guildensterne were received by Queen Elizabeth at court and several courtiers noted they were “exceedingly close.” He asks if the Bard could have heard about the visit of this “apparently homosexual couple, these inseparable cousins at this time?” (Chaunes v)

He asks further if Shakespeare's knowledge of Judaism could “have come from the fact that John Florio's grandfather was a Jewish converso,” helping us to “understand his secret sympathy for both Shylock and the situation of European Jewry” (Chaunes, vi–vii).

Noting the astronomical references in *Julius Caesar* and *Lear*, as well as a reference in Sonnet 14 (“And yet methinks I have astronomy”), Connerade concludes that in Shakespeare's “knowledge of the classical Greek theatre and his free usage of Greek dramatic conventions, one finds core connections between the dramatist and the Man from Fulham, John Florio... the true Shakespeare. To bring this idea to certainty, one must look forward to a time when Florio specialists [like Lamberto Tassinari] will be able to supply the final proofs” (Chaunes xii).

I have issues with Connerade because most of what he argues for Florio can also be argued on behalf of de Vere, who had many opportunities to hear Bruno's theories and who might have attended court for the visit of the Danish delegation.

I must also note several papers I have read from authorship conferences in France over the last three years featuring Florio discussions, and much material that has appeared in French newspapers such as *Le Monde* about him.

My own sense is that Tassinari and Väis are mistaken in their theory that Florio is the author of the plays of Shakespeare. First, those plays must have taken a significant amount of time to write and Florio, not a wealthy man (as Yates tells us and Tassinari acknowledges), needed to earn a regular income from teaching and translating. Any free time would have been directed toward his own English-Italian dictionaries, his books of proverbs and his translation of Montaigne. He, like Queen Elizabeth herself, who has also on occasion been proposed as Shakespeare, could simply not have had the time to write the plays as a sideline.

Second, there is absolutely no evidence that connects Florio to the writing of even a single play. Dialogues were the closest he ever came to writing an actual drama. No one during his life—unlike de Vere—ever stated he was the best for comedies or tragedies or any stage work in fact. He was a writer of tourist dialogues for his dictionaries, dialogues which reveal much about daily life in Tudor England but nothing that comes close to verse, iambic or otherwise.

Finally, Florio, like his friend Ben Jonson and others in the Wilton Circle, was a devout classicist who wrote often of the failures of British dramatists to create what he called “right” tragedies and “right” comedies—plays that followed the classical unities, plays that did not mix genres, plays that did not blend high and low society the way that Shakespeare’s did. Florio would never have created such plays himself because he did not approve of Shakespeare’s looseness of form and mixing of genres. The Wilton Circle argued for elegance, classical style and structure and involved classical-leaning writers who worked in that direction.

Was Florio an influence on Shakespeare? Absolutely. There are too many verbal flourishes in the Florio style, too many words that Florio used in his translations and dialogues or words even *invented* by him not to have had influence on the Bard. Perhaps there was even direct contact with the writer or writers of the “Shakespeare” works given Florio’s closeness to Henry Wriothesley, dedicatee of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*.

That said, there is no evidence that Florio ever had contact of any sort with William of Stratford.

On the other hand, Florio had regular contact with several writers proposed as co-authors of the works by Taylor and Leahy, including the Wilton Circle group and Edward de Vere. Many of these people were freethinkers, and

Florio could certainly have been a connecting link between them. The fact is that, like his father, John Florio was talented at ingratiating himself with the aristocracy and he loved talking to writers about language. And the Wilton Group was certainly the one that he and his good friend Ben Jonson were closest to. Given all this historical reality, I for one would certainly eliminate Florio as the Bard on both biographical and literary grounds.

Conclusions

As for the real identity of the author using the “Shakespeare” pseudonym, I still think that de Vere was the actual core of it all, the final arbiter and the corporate hallmark of the works published under that name. But the research of people like Gary Taylor and open-minded scholars like Bill Leahy is certainly providing convincing evidence that de Vere probably did work closely with many other writers, including some of those named in the new Oxford edition by Taylor and in Leahy’s *My Shakespeare*.

Let me end by saying that I certainly support Leahy’s call for the authorship question to be viewed not so much as the search for a single individual but, rather, as the beginning of a whole new academic field of research, one that will reveal, in the decades ahead—like Brecht and the creation of his plays, like Michelangelo and his art studios, like Yves St. Laurent and his dozens of collegial designers—that at the center of all these great works was the mind of a single genius like Edward de Vere, along with the hands of many others.

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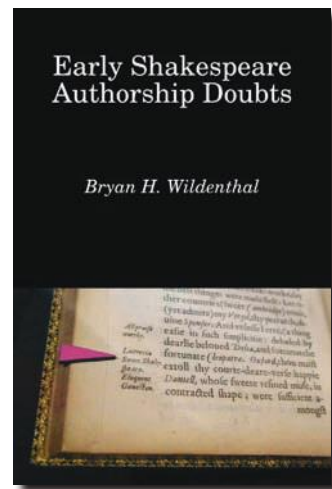
Early Shakespeare Authorship Doubts

Reviewed by Chris Pannell

Early Shakespeare Authorship Doubts. By Bryan H. Wildenthal. Zindabad Press, 2019, 412 pages (hardcover \$43, or paperback \$26.95).

Often, the evidence of early doubts about the authorship of poems and plays by Shakespeare has been examined in passing by authorship skeptics. Instead, the lengthier books about the Shakespeare Authorship Question and Oxfordian theory usually address the larger questions in the authorship debate, such as:

- the mysterious *Sonnets*;
- *Hamlet* as a revelation of the author and his position at court;
- the relationship between de Vere's travels in Europe and references in the Italian plays;
- the links between Edward de Vere's education and the knowledge of Greek and Latin languages—and the medical, scientific, and legal expertise—demonstrated in the plays.



But taken collectively, early doubts about the authorship of the plays and the poems that would form what we understand as the Shakespeare canon began in 1589. They are richly deserving of our attention. Bryan H. Wildenthal's well-written book helps us focus on them and thereby see how important these early authorship doubts are to the case against William Shakspeare of

Stratford. In short, we have a Shakespeare authorship question prior to 1616. With thirty items of evidence, Wildenthal argues against the notion that Shakspere of Stratford was the author of the body of literature known as Shakespeare.

This book's longest section—Part 4: A Survey of Authorship Doubts Before 1616—gives us the core of the thesis. First, we begin with introductory comments in three parts.

- Part 1: The Stratfordian Theory of Shakespeare Authorship and the Denial of Early Doubts as the Central Stratfordian Claim
- Part 2: The Central Stratfordian Claim: Did Doubts Not Arise Until the 1850s?
- Part 3: Refuting the Central Claim: Doubts Arose by the Early 1590s

Wildenthal sets the scene with his view of the problem in Stratford.

The dominant “Stratfordian” theory concerning the Shakespeare Authorship Question (SAQ) is that the literary works credited to “William Shakespeare”... were written (at least mainly) by William Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon (1564-1616). In defense of that proposition, Stratfordians make various supporting arguments, of which the two most important may be summarized as the “ample early evidence” claim and the “no early doubts” claim (1).

He challenges in particular the “no early doubts” claim.

Not nearly enough has been written about this... nor about the fascinating evidence it denies. Julia Cleve aptly described “this all-too-familiar claim” as a “stock Stratfordian meme.” It is often the most emphatic and reflexive response to those who propose other authorship candidates.... (2).

Wildenthal's introductions treat a number of important, but relatively tangential issues, perhaps in order to sweep them away. Most of the first three parts

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explain and dissolve weak arguments by orthodox academics such as Stanley Wells and James Shapiro:

Orthodox scholars often try to have it both ways by making broad assertions that seem to imply there is ample early evidence for the Stratfordian theory. But they also, without blushing too much at the inconsistency, deploy an alternative fallback claim: even if the early evidence for Shakspeare's authorship is very sparse, well, it was a long time ago, that's typical for surviving records of the time, and we have even less contemporaneous evidence documenting the careers of other writers of that era.

The latter fallback claim is a blatantly false diversionary tactic. It has been resoundingly disproven. As Diana Price demonstrated in her 2001 book, we have *far less* contemporaneous and *personally identifying* evidence of Shakspeare's supposed literary career than for other Elizabethan or Jacobean writers, most of whom were much less important, yet somehow much better documented. In fact, we have almost none before 1623. It is not even remotely a close call (5).

It is in the nature of writing about the authorship question that one must deal with many pre-existing assumptions, inaccuracies, and misleading arguments.

Wildenthal is a gifted writer and meticulous compiler of both the skeptical and orthodox arguments. He addresses two of the main arguing points between investigators of the SAQ and defenders of the authorship status quo. On the discrepancies between the spelling of the Stratford man's last name and the name of the public author (i.e., Shakespeare), Wildenthal says Stratfordians' refusal to even argue the problem [of the name] is Orwellian.

It is hypocritical of Stratfordians to criticize non-Stratfordians for sometimes overemphasizing the spelling issues. Orthodox writers themselves place heavy emphasis on the purported identity of the Stratfordian and authorial names, while often... rewriting the historical record by harmonizing the spellings to fit their theory.

One cannot help but recall the goal of "Newspeak" in George Orwell's *1984*—to make it difficult (if not literally impossible) to articulate or even think unorthodox thoughts (46).

He illuminates the contradiction in the Stratfordian argument between the numerous anonymous publications that would many years later be credited

to William Shakespeare and the Stratfordian claim that the Stratford man was keen to make his fortune from writing.

As John Shahan has noted, the unfolding of Shakespeare's literary career seems strange. The name [William Shakespeare] first appeared after dedications (not on the title pages) of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), which became wildly popular best-sellers. During the next four years, six Shakespeare plays were published—but only anonymously. Then suddenly, in 1598, Frances Meres identified “Shakespeare” in print as a playwright, listing twelve plays, and they started getting published under that name—but not always. For many years after 1598, several were still published anonymously, even a few of his most popular (such as *Henry V* and *Romeo and Juliet*). Then the First Folio was published in 1623, seven years after Shakspeare of Stratford died, containing thirty-six plays, half of which had never before appeared in print...

How does this fit logically with the Stratfordian theory that the author was a commoner seeking fame and fortune under his own true name? Why did he not cash in on the success of his early poems and use his name consistently thereafter? (55-56).

After sixty-five pages of introduction, we arrive at the main body of the book, Part Four, “A Survey of Authorship Doubts Before 1616.” Wildenthal cautions us he has limited himself to thirty items of evidence and that these are “published indications of doubt.” Readers are assured, “I have not strained to divide them up to artificially increase their number. On the contrary I have lumped them together quite a bit.” He treats the evidence chronologically: beginning with Thomas Nashe, Preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589) and ending with Christopher Brooke, *The Ghost of Richard III* (1614).

Some of the evidence bends easily to his purposes. He begins with Nashe's reference to a play called *Hamlet* as early as 1589. This has always been a massive challenge to the Stratfordian chronology because William of Stratford was only twenty-five in 1589.

Orthodox scholars have long been uncomfortable with the idea that Shakspeare of Stratford wrote *Hamlet* by 1589, three years before the first (very shaky) evidence said to place him in the London theatre scene, and a full six years before the next piece of evidence to that effect. It all seems dubious, to say the least, that young Shakspeare... still in Stratford as of 1587, had not only written some version of *Hamlet* by then but had become well enough known in London and university literary circles as “English Seneca” to be referred to allusively that way and not by his actual name (69).

The second of the early doubts is embedded in *Groatsworth of Wit*, published with the authorial name “Robert Greene” in 1592. The Shakespeare authorship argument centers on how to interpret this key passage:

Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tyger’s heart wrapped in a Player’s hid*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. (45–46)

There’s no doubt that *Groatsworth of Wit* has drawn a lot of attention from both sides of the SAQ. Wildenthal devotes forty-one pages to it. He undercuts the Stratfordian claim that the passage supports the orthodox authorship. He also argues that it is an indication of early doubt about William of Stratford’s connection to the early plays—in this case, *Henry VI, Part 3*.

Other early doubts take less time to establish. The Nashe/Harvey “pamphlet war” gets twenty-four pages and Wildenthal’s clear presentation of what might, in lesser hands, be a tangled narrative, is most welcome.

Several of the authorship doubts were unknown to me: for instance:

- (#6) Thomas Heywood’s poem *Oenone and Paris* as a parody which suggests a reason one should doubt the authorship of *Venus and Adonis*.
- (#7) a letter by William Covell, accompanying the anonymous publication of *Polimanteia* in 1595.
- (#23) William Barkstead’s *Myrrha, the Mother of Adonis*.

The other lengthy section is the twenty pages devoted to evidence of doubt voiced prior to 1616 by Ben Jonson, including his poem *Poet-Ape* and the characters of “Sogliardo” and “Puntavarlo” in *Every Man Out of His Humour*. To these relatively well-known doubts, Wildenthal suggests Jonson’s epigrams (e.g., *On Don Surly*) also deserve attention and his footnotes in this section explore these ideas.

The book spends more than a few pages on orthodox scholars who have belittled the SAQ and misled the public over the real significance of many early authorship doubts. Terry Ross and David Kathman come in for several challenges from Wildenthal as do Edmondson and Wells, Alan Nelson, James Shapiro, Jonathan Bate, and Tom Reedy. (This is by no means a complete list of Wildenthal’s opponents. The jousting between Stratfordians and authorship skeptics has been very active since the 1984 publication of Charlton Ogburn’s *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*.)

Wildenthal's detailed approach will be helpful to scholars who would follow in his footsteps. Tracing the sources is remarkably easy and he must be praised for his encyclopedic knowledge of who said what—where and when—and whether it is significant, helpful or simply misleading. The footnotes are copious, detailed, and very well sourced. The footnotes also have the benefit of enabling Wildenthal to park authorship issues that are not early authorship doubts away from the main body of his text.

As with the introductions in three parts, the book offers two conclusions:

1) The extended final Doubt (#30) reads much like a conclusion of the book's true thesis: to examine thirty of the most compelling early doubts. Doubt #30 is augmented by a consideration of five "indications" in the decade between 1605 and 1615 that the true author of Shakespearean works was already dead. Readers can pursue this sub-thesis fully by reviewing Doubts 22, 23, 24, 29, and 30.

2) The section which follows—titled Conclusion—ranges over a variety of topics including:

- a new paradigm for considering early authorship doubts,
- a reframing of the history of Shakespearean studies (the Early Authorship Era, the Stratfordian Era, the Baconian Era, the Oxfordian Era),
- a refutation of the Conspiracy Charge and the Snobbery Slander,
- a discussion that touches on the frustrations of name-calling in the SAQ, and
- Wildenthal's statement of why the Authorship Question matters.

In the end, the breadth of the Shakespeare Authorship Question looms on-stage behind the deliberate efforts of the author to adhere to his carefully curated early authorship doubts. This book is a fine examination of those doubts. Wildenthal has produced an energetic and scholarly book and made a contribution that authorship skeptics were sorely in need of—one that deserves a place in every Shakespearean's library.

What Price Honour?

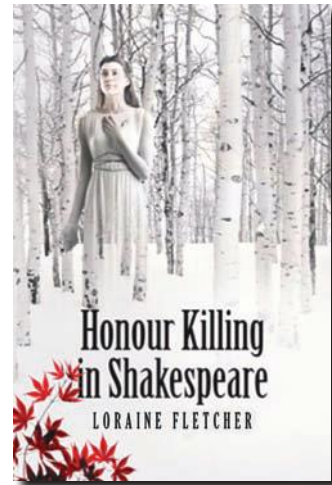
Reviewed by Ligneus

Honour Killing in Shakespeare. By Loraine Fletcher. Greenwich Exchange, 2019. 350 pages (\$26.46 paperback).

In *Honour Killing in Shakespeare*, Loraine Fletcher opens our eyes to how many Shakespearean plots and plays are rooted in misogyny. “Attempted or successful honour killings form the plots of a surprising number of Shakespeare’s plays,” she announces in the first sentence of the introduction. Desdemona’s death in *Othello* at the hands of her husband comes immediately to mind, of course. Less obvious is Hero’s faked death in *Much Ado About Nothing*, which is an honour killing on a par with Othello’s murder of his wife, as far as Claudio and Don John are concerned.

“The honour killing in *Cymbeline* is in respect easier to define than in *Othello*: there’s no racism mixed up in the slanderer’s or the honour killer’s misogynies,” asserts Fletcher. In *Romeo and Juliet*, she, too, fakes her death to avoid being forced to marry Paris and suffer marital rape. In *The Winter’s Tale*, Leontes believes Hermione, his loyal wife, committed adultery with his friend, so she must suffer. Hermia in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is condemned by her father, Aegeus, to marry Demetrius (the man she does not love) or die.

Measure for Measure, *All’s Well That Ends Well*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*... Fletcher dissects play after play and leaves no doubt that their author felt



compelled to visit and revisit the theme of female faithfulness. But do those plays reflect the playwright's misogyny? Or was he only showing us the misogynistic world he lived in? Fletcher admires the strong and capable women she sees in the plays and can't condemn their creator. She concludes: "Shakespeare wrote... to entertain.... [H]is plays are not reflections but indictments of misogyny, [which helped bring about] a slow shift towards enlightenment."

Honour Killing in Shakespeare is also a delight to read. Here is what she writes after spending most of a page meticulously and efficiently laying out the plots in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

For many readers, this summary will feel like taking a sledgehammer to a cobweb, reducing Shakespeare's greatest comedy to a Human Resources pamphlet about how to define gender discrimination and sexual assault on your company's day and night shift.... But it's only stripping it down to its bare bones that we can begin to see its geometrical elegance and how it works.

Fletcher then spends 24 pages explaining the play's geometrical elegance in words that do justice to the play.

Her approach to the other plays is equally as good. Her insights reflect a modern woman who is deeply read in the plays. This is not a Me-Too reaction to the Bard but a thoughtful addition to existing scholarship.

The question of who wrote the plays, of course, does not arise. But would her book have been different if she had been open to the possibility that someone else wrote the plays instead of William Shakspeare? After all, isn't the search for the true author founded on the belief that the understanding of the literature is enhanced by knowing who the author was? The dissatisfaction caused by being told the son of a glover from Stratford-upon-Avon is the author has driven many people to look elsewhere for the actual author. This search is ongoing, but it seems that we are in the process of confirming that the true author was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. Other candidates appear from time to time but lack any record of having been playwrights or poets or being able to write with the genius shown by the Bard.

One might think that the authorship question should not intrude into a review of a book on misogyny in the plays attributed to Shakespeare, but its

Ligneus is the pseudonym of a writer currently at work on a novel about the Earl of Oxford and the authorship of the Shakespeare canon.

absence takes away from an otherwise excellent work. Looking over Fletcher's shoulder as she sifts through the plays, I was reminded of how many times I have been reading something written by a Shakespearean scholar and realized that a vital link had been missed because the scholar was steeped in the belief that William Shakspeare wrote the plays. Listen to C.S. Lewis puzzle over the first few sonnets, before finally concluding: "What man in the whole world, except a father or potential father-in-law, cares whether any other man gets married" (*English Literature in the 16th Century—Excluding Drama*, 503–04). Professor Lewis was exasperated because he knew he could not follow his logic and consider whether William Shakspeare could be the father of the Earl of Southampton. On the other hand, had Professor Lewis been open to the possibility that the Earl of Oxford was the author of the plays and sonnets, and that some believe Oxford was the father of the Earl of Southampton, sonnets urging Southampton to marry would suddenly not seem so far-fetched.

Similarly, Fletcher's readings of the plays may have been altered if she knew that the Earl of Oxford's wife had cheated on him while he was in Italy, and that he was talked out of leaving her because he was told he had *unknowingly* slept with her the night before he left? If Fletcher began to consider that Oxford might be the author of the plays, wouldn't she have been interested in mining Oxford's life to try to find out where the author found the women in his plays? Where did he get Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*? Was it Anne Vavasour? Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*: was he thinking of Ann Cecil? Ann again when he wrote Ophelia into *Hamlet*? Did he know a Portia? A Desdemona? A Lady Macbeth?

The excellence of Fletcher's book only whets the appetite for a second edition that will incorporate the Earl of Oxford into our understanding of the women and plots in the plays. But even without the authorship question shaping Fletcher's arguments, *Honour Killing in Shakespeare* is a worthwhile addition to any library. Fletcher may not recognize that *All's Well That Ends Well* is about Oxford being forced to marry someone beneath him, or wonder how Shakespeare could have escaped punishment for writing *Venus and Adonis*, but, even without addressing the links between the Earl of Oxford and the plays, Fletcher has written an engaging book well worth its price for what it discloses of the misogyny that does indeed drive many a plot in the plays some people still attribute to William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon.

What Price Honour?

