The Shakespeare OXFORD Newsletter

Vol. 41: No. 1 *I had rather seal my lips, than, to my peril,/Speak that which is not.* – Antony and Cleopatra Winter 2005

28th Annual SOS Conference in Atlanta

Welcome and Keynote

On October 28-31, the Shakespeare Oxford Society held its 28th Annual Conference at the Doubletree Inn in the Buckhead district of Atlanta, Georgia. The Society's president, **Frank Davis** of Savannah, Georgia, officially opened the conference by welcoming members and other attendees to the vibrant and dynamic city of Atlanta. He noted that the city holds an important place and time for Oxford/Shakespeare enthusiasts. Not only is this year the 400th anniversary of the death of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, it is also the 20th anniversary of the publication of Charlton Ogburn Jr.'s book *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*. Davis mentioned that Ogburn had grown up in Atlanta and Savannah and had left his and his mother's books and literary manuscripts to the library at Emory University in Atlanta. Davis recounted highlights of Charlton's biography and stressed the significance of his work to the Oxfordian enterprise. On a personal note Davis said, "I consider the five years that I knew him to be an important junction in my life."

Joe Sobran, in his keynote address to the annual conference, focused on Elizabethan era sonnet cycles that he has identified as Shakespearean and quite possibly written by Oxford (see adjoining article).

Eyewitnesses

In "Shakespeare in Stratford and London: Five More Eyewitnesses Who Saw Nothing," **Ramon Jiménez** described four men and one woman who must have known Shakespeare of Stratford personally, or met his daughter, Susanna. They all left notebooks, letters or diaries, but none of them ever mentioned William Shakespeare of Stratford, or gave any hint that they connected him with the well-known playwright of the same name (see article, p. 3).

A Murder as Foreshadow to *Hamlet*

Completing the morning's program was a two-part presentation—"The Death of the 16th Earl of Oxford: Murder Most Foul?"—by Atlanta researcher, writer, and actor **Christopher Paul**. It opened with a riveting six-minute video of Paul, wearing the mail and crown of King Hamlet's Ghost and intoning his lines from the first act of *Hamlet*.

Citing a series of documents, Paul then drew a connection between the murder of King Hamlet in the play and the death of

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Before He Was Shakespeare
Part One

By Joseph Sobran

Late in 1996, I reached a startling conclusion. While finishing my book *Alias Shakespeare*, I became convinced that Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was not only the author we know as William Shakespeare, but that he'd also written other works under other guises. It began with a single, long-forgotten sonnet.

The Phaeton Sonnet

In 1591 a short, charming poem—the "Phaeton" sonnet—appeared under the title "Phaeton to His Friend Florio" as a commendatory poem in John Florio's book *Second Fruits*.

Nobody has ever identified the author with any certainty, but some scholars have suspected he was Shakespeare. I think a line-by-line study proves Shakespeare's authorship—provided we understand that "Shakespeare" was the Earl of Oxford. In other words, "Phaeton" was a pen name Oxford used before he adopted the more famous pen name "Shakespeare." Once again we clear up a Shakespearean mystery by positing Oxford's authorship.

Here is the poem, with Shakespearean parallels I've noticed (especially from the 1609 Sonnets):

PHAETON TO HIS FRIEND FLORIO

Sweet friend, whose name agrees with thy increase,
How fit a rival art thou of the spring!
For when each branch hath left his flourishing,
And green-locked summer's shady pleasures cease,
She makes the winter's storms repose in peace
And spends her franchise on each living thing:
The daisies sprout, the little birds do sing,
Herbs, gums, and plants do vaunt of their release.
So when that all our English wits lay dead
(Except the laurel that is ever green)
Thou with thy fruits our barrenness o'erspread
And set thy flowery pleasance to be seen.
Such fruits, such flowerets of morality
Were ne'er before brought out of Italy.

Phaeton. The name Phaeton is found in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 2. Phaeton, the son of Phoebus Apollo, insists on driving his father's chariot, only to scorch the earth and fall to his death. (Shakespeare refers to the Phaeton story five times in his plays.)

(cont'd on p. 13)

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The Newsletter welcomes research articles, book reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be reasonably concise and, when appropriate, validated by peer review. The views of contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Shakespeare Oxford Society as a literary and educational organization.

President's Letter

Good News to the Oxfordian World! The Shakespeare Oxford Society is on the march. The long-lingering issue between the Society and Bill Boyle is settled. Board members involved in this over the past few years expressed their relief in Atlanta, and their regret, that there was such a delay.

The Board has a new face, with some familiar faces and new looks following the election held at the recent conference. As president I'll answer your emails from: *Jazsherwood@aol.com.*

Letters to the Editor of this newsletter are welcome and should be addressed to Board member Dr. James Brooks (email: *jamesb99@aol.com),* interim editor with former Board member Ramon Jiménez (email: *ramjim@cwnet.com).* They will read, cut and paste for a limited time until a new editor can be found. Applications for the editorship are also welcome at the same above addresses.

First Vice President is Wayne Shore (email: *wayne@OTCORP.com),* who also heads the Education Committee. This is an outreach to academics and scholars of all persuasions, be they Stratfordian, Baconian, Marlovian, or simply agnostic skeptics and critical thinkers (if such qualities can be simple). The Education Committee goal is for the Society to sponsor events bringing scholars of diverse perspectives together to discuss a single issue. An example in past years would have been "Examining the Elegy of 1612." But as we know, Oxfordian Richard Kennedy proved to authorship professionals that Shakespeare did not write it in 1612. John Ford did. And so the potentially fatal document to the Oxfordian proposition was rendered void, removed from new editions of Shakespeare's Collected Works, and thus Edward de Vere continues his conquest of doubt undeterred. If you are a teacher or independent researcher, this is your committee. Others already helping Wayne are Pidge Sexton and Brian Bechtold.

Second Vice President is Matthew Cossolotto, the Society press and media contact. He also heads the Speaker's Bureau and has packets and information based on some delightful experiences with presenting the Oxfordian issue to high schools and encourages you to contact him (email: *Matthew@ovations.com)* for bringing such an event to your community, or a press release to your local paper.

Membership and Fundraising chair is former Society president Randall Sherman. He needs volunteers. If time and the spirit hang heavy on your hands, pitching in a bit might be the remedy. If you have not given the Society your email address, please send a note to him at *rsherman@newventureresearch.com.*

When everyone's email address is in the database, your Society will be able to issue bulletins, notices, announcements and serve you better in a timely manner with less time required by the volunteer members helping connect with you. So, friends, to keep ahead don't fall behind: send your online address to Randall or Matthew, pronto.

Virginia Hyde is the new Treasurer, a volunteer task that consumes many a thankless hour, so we'll not print her email address, but questions concerning finances can be addressed to your president. I'll do my best to answer.

Joe Peel served the treasurer's position tirelessly and with a dedication matched by none, but he will now enjoy some time off, though not completely. Joe served as the Society's unofficial executive director. He now is special assistant to the president, who can be quoted as deeply appreciative.

Former President Dr. Frank Davis has accepted responsibility for the Publications Committee. In addition to the Newsletter interim editors, Frank will also welcome member articles, letters and comments at *davisfm@bellsouth.net.*

Returning to the Board after one year and several years of absence, respectively, are attorneys Michael Pisapia and Elliot Stone.

John Hamill, whose articles on Shakespeare in Italy have contributed so much to readers and conference goers, continues on the Board with a serene disposition toward resolving all issues. He is the ombudsman of the Board.

Sue Sybersma is the Recording Secretary. With her years of generous

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Shakespeare in Stratford and London: Five More Eyewitnesses Who Saw Nothing

By Ramon Jiménez

In an article in this Newsletter two years ago I described four men who knew William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon—William Camden, Michael Drayton, Thomas Greene, and John Hall—and a fifth, James Cooke, who met his daughter, Susanna Hall (SO Newsletter 38:4 Fall 2002). All five left us published books, poems, letters, notebooks, or diaries, some of which referred directly to events or people in Stratford. At least three of them, and possibly all of them, were aware of plays and poems published under the name of one of the country's leading playwrights, William Shakespeare. Yet none of these men—it is fair to call them eyewitnesses—made any connection between this playwright and the man with the identical name living in their midst.

This article presents four more men and one woman who fall into a similar category. Four of these five can be placed in close physical proximity to Shakespeare of Stratford and almost certainly were personally acquainted with him. The fifth, Queen Henrietta Maria, was a guest of Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna, in her Stratford home, New Place. Each of the five left us plays, poems, letters, notebooks, or diaries—in several of which the name of the playwright William Shakespeare appears. Yet none of the five in any of their writings left any hint that they connected the playwright with the person of the same name in Stratford.

Fulke Greville

Sir Fulke Greville, later Lord Brooke, whose family had lived near Stratford for more than two hundred years (Rees *Greville* 10) must have known the Shakespeare family. He was born in 1554 at Beauchamp Court, less than ten miles from Stratford, in the vicinity of Snitterfield, the home of Richard Shakespeare, grandfather of William. He was related to the Ardens, the family of Shakespeare's mother. And he displayed on his coat-of-arms the arms of the Arden family, just as William Shakespeare displayed them on his (Adams 451).

Fulke Greville was a man of importance in Warwickshire. In 1592 he, Sir Thomas Lucy, and five others were appointed to a Commission to report on those who were refusing to attend church. In September of that year, the Commission reported to the Privy Council that nine men in the parish of

Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke 1554-1628

Stratford-upon-Avon had not attended church at least once a month. Among the nine was John Shakespeare, father of William (M. Eccles 33).

Throughout his life Greville sought preferment at court, and eventually became Chancellor of the Exchequer and Treasurer of the Navy. On the death of his father in 1606, Greville was appointed to the office his father had held—Recorder of Warwick and Stratford, and remained in it until his death in 1628. In this position he could hardly have been unaware of the Shakespeare family.

Fulke Greville was also a serious poet and dramatist. During the late 1570s he composed a cycle of 109 poems, forty-one of which were sonnets, and two decades later wrote three history plays. But he was one of those courtiers who disdained appearance in print, and in fact refused to allow any publication of his work while he was alive. He even destroyed one of his plays after the Essex Rebellion—it was called *Antony and Cleopatra*—because he feared that his characters Antony, Cleopatra, and Caesar might be construed as portraits of Essex, Queen Elizabeth, and Robert Cecil. The only work of his that appeared during his lifetime was an unauthorized printing of his play *Mustapha* in 1609. This was the same year that a book called *Shake-speare's Sonnets* was published—probably without the permission of its author, supposedly his neighbor down the road.

The indefatigable chronicler of Shakespeare's contemporaries, Charlotte Stopes, wrote: "It is always considered strange that such a man should not have mentioned Shakespeare"

Greville preferred the company of poets and philosophers, and his closest friends were the poets Edward Dyer and Philip Sidney. Greville was also acquainted with John Florio, Edmund Spenser, and Ben Jonson. Another poet and playwright, William Davenant, who claimed to be a godson, or maybe a son, of William Shakespeare, entered Greville's household as a page when he was eighteen (ODNB). Greville corresponded with the poet and playwright George Chapman (Crundell 137), who was mentioned by Francis Meres in 1598, as was William Shakespeare, as one of the best English playwrights. Greville was a patron of Samuel Daniel, the poet and playwright from nearby Somerset. Daniel

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dedicated "Musophilus," probably his finest poem, to Fulke Greville in 1599. Both Chapman and Daniel were about the same age and from the same class as William Shakespeare of Stratford.

Greville's plays have never been performed, and he is best known today for his biography of Philip Sidney, in which he wrote about himself and their twenty-year friendship. This relationship has been called more than platonic by several historians (Duncan-Jones *Sidney* 240; Stone 654). Despite his dozens of love sonnets to a vaguely-identified woman, Fulke Greville never married. Sidney waited until he was twenty-nine, and then married a woman who was not the subject of his famous series of love poems *Astrophel and Stella.*

A number of letters both to and from Fulke Greville have survived. Yet nowhere in any of Fulke Greville's reminiscences or in the letters he wrote or received, is there any mention of the well-known poet and playwright, William Shakespeare, who supposedly lived a few miles away.[1] The indefatigable chronicler of Shakespeare's contemporaries, Charlotte Stopes, wrote: "It is always considered strange that such a man should not have mentioned Shakespeare" (171). Fulke Greville has been described as "one of the leaders of the movement for the introduction of Renaissance Culture into England" (Whitfield 366). Yet so far as we know, Greville never made any connection between the resident of the nearby town and the dramatist who bore the identical name, and who, more than any other, used Renaissance literary sources for his plays—William Shakespeare.

Edward Pudsey

Another eyewitness who must have known William Shakespeare of Stratford was an obscure theatergoer named Edward Pudsey who was perhaps only the second individual we know of to write out passages from a Shakespeare play. Very little is known about Edward Pudsey, except that he was born in Derbyshire in 1573 and died in 1613 at Tewkesbury, about 25 miles from Stratford (ODNB). There is a 1591 record of a Pudsey family living at Langley, about five miles from Stratford, and only three miles from Park Hall, the home of the Ardens, parents of John Shakespeare's wife Mary (Savage vi). In 1888 scholars were fortunate to discover his commonplace book in the form of a ninety-page manuscript that he had inscribed "Edward Pudsey's Booke."[2] In it he had copied passages from a variety of literary works in the fields of history, philosophy and current events — as well as from contemporary plays. The dates entered in the manuscript range from 1600 to 1612, the year before Pudsey died. Besides passages from Machiavelli, Thomas More, Francis Bacon, and others, Pudsey carefully transcribed selections from twenty-two contemporary plays—four by Ben Jonson, three by Marston, seven from Dekker, Lyly, Nashe, Chapman, and Heywood. And eight by William Shakespeare (ODNB).

Thus, it is probable that Edward Pudsey had access to now-lost manuscripts or quartos of Othello *and* Hamlet*, or had seen the plays and wrote down the dialogue in 1600 or earlier.*

The extracts from *Hamlet* and *Othello* are especially interesting because of their variations from the printed versions. The quotation from *Hamlet* is slightly different from the 1604 Quarto and the 1623 Folio. The quotation from *Othello* contains lines that do not appear in the Quarto, which was not published until 1622. After the *Othello* quotation, Pudsey wrote the letters "sh," a reasonably clear indication that he knew that the play was by William Shakespeare. The English scholar who examined the Notebook asserted that the quotations from *Othello* and *Hamlet* were written in a section that she dated no later than 1600 (Rees *Shakespeare* 331). Thus, it is probable that Edward Pudsey had access to now-lost manuscripts or quartos of *Othello* and *Hamlet*, or had seen the plays and wrote down the dialogue in 1600 or earlier.

But nowhere in the hundreds of entries in Edward Pudsey's commonplace book is there any indication that he was aware that the playwright whose words he so carefully copied lived in nearby Stratford-upon-Avon.

Queen Henrietta Maria 1609-1669

Queen Henrietta Maria

Our third eyewitness is Henrietta Maria, the fifteen-year-old daughter of King Henry IV of France and Marie de Médicis, who, by arrangement, became the wife and Queen of Charles I soon after his coronation as King of England in 1625. The new American colony of Maryland, founded in 1632, was given its name in honor of Henrietta Maria.

Both Charles and Queen Henrietta were theater buffs and enthusiastic patrons of the drama. King Charles even collaborated on a play with James Shirley in the 1630s, and was so fond of Shakespeare that he kept a copy of the Second Folio by his bedside. In this copy are found the alternative titles he assigned to several of the plays, such as "Pyramus and Thisbe" for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and "Malvolio" for *Twelfth Night* (Birrell 45). To the Puritans, who executed Charles in 1649, his dissolute character was exemplified by his love of plays. One Puritan pamphlet asserted that he would have succeeded as king "had he studied scripture half so much as he did Ben Jonson or Shakespeare" (Campbell 107).

Queen Henrietta was also an amateur playwright, and even more enamored of the stage than her husband. She was the first

English monarch to attend a performance in a public playhouse, and enjoyed performing the leading roles in her own masques at the Court — behavior that shocked the English public (Campbell 312). According to Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells, the word "actress" was first used in reference to her (187). In her masque *Tempe Restored* (1632), professional women singers took the stage for the first time in England. Joining her on the stage on many occasions were several of her ladies-in-waiting, including Beatrice, the Countess of Oxford, wife of the 19th Earl, Robert de Vere (Marshall 75).

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In 1642 Charles and his Parliament reached an impasse over taxes, and when he attempted to arrest five members, the Parliament was moved to authorize an army, and the Civil War broke out. The Queen was in Holland at the time, but she quickly began rounding up support for the Royalist army. Early the next year she landed in Yorkshire with a large supply of ammunition she had solicited on the continent. From there she journeyed south to relieve her husband who was in the field with his army near Oxford. Traveling on horseback, the "Generalissima," as she called herself, reached Warwickshire in early July, and on the 11th arrived in Stratford-upon-Avon at the head of an army of three thousand foot, thirty companies of horse and dragoons, six pieces of artillery, and 150 wagons (Plowden 100).

The records of the Stratford Corporation document the visit of Queen Henrietta Maria and the substantial expense it incurred to provide a banquet for her (Fox 24). Although specific records of it are lacking, scholars accept a tradition that the Queen stayed two nights at New Place, then the home of William Shakespeare's daughter Susanna, and her daughter Elizabeth and son-in-law Thomas Nash (Lee 509; Schoenbaum 305).

Queen Henrietta was an exceptional letter-writer. Hundreds of her letters to her husband, her nephew Prince Rupert, and others have been collected and printed. But none of the letters she wrote before or after her visit to Stratford contains any mention of her stay at New Place, or any indication that she had met the daughter and granddaughter of the famous playwright whom she emulated and whom her husband venerated.

What could be the explanation for this? There are records of at least two visitors to the Holy Trinity Church by 1643, where the statue of William Shakespeare had been installed more than twenty years earlier. But if Queen Henrietta walked over to the church to see the memorial to the famous playwright, she never wrote about it. One explanation might be that she knew that the Stratford Shakespeare was a myth. A decade earlier she had been closely associated with Beatrice, the Countess of Oxford, and her husband, Robert de Vere, the 19th Earl. She also knew Ben Jonson, the artificer of the First Folio, who was still writing masques for the Court in the 1630s. Any one of the three might have told her the secret about the aristocrat who concealed his writings by adopting a commoner's name as his pseudonym. Any one of them might have told her that she would find nothing about the playwright Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Further evidence suggests there were no playwrights living in Stratford-upon-Avon. It is well known that during the thirty years between 1568 and 1597 numerous playing companies visited and performed in Stratford. But by the end of this period the Puritan officeholders in the town finally attained their objective of banning all performances of plays and interludes. In 1602 the Corporation of Stratford ordered that a fine of ten shillings be imposed on any official who gave permission for any type of play to be performed in any city building, or any inn or house in the borough. This in a year that five or six plays by Shakespeare, their alleged townsman, were performed in London.[3] In 1612, just four years before their neighbor's death, this fine was increased to ten pounds. In 1622, when work on the great First Folio was in progress, the Stratford Corporation paid the King's Players the sum of six shillings not to play in the Town Hall (Fox 143-4). Surely by 1622, some thirty years after his name had first appeared in print, the people of Stratford would have been aware that one of England's greatest poets and playwrights had been born, raised, and then retired in their own town. That is, if such a thing were actually true.

Philip Henslowe

Our fourth eyewitness was a London businessman who decided to build a playhouse and then became a successful theatrical entrepreneur. Philip Henslowe and his partner had operated the Rose Theater for about four years before he began, in 1592, making entries in an old notebook about his theater and the companies that played in it, primarily the Admiral's Men (Foakes xv). The resulting 242-page manuscript, now called Henslowe's Diary, is one of the most precious documents in English theatrical history.

Nowhere in the list of dozens of actors and twenty-eight playwrights in Henslowe's Diary do we find the name of William Shakespeare.

The Diary is a goldmine of references to plays, playhouses, and playing companies in London, and mentions the name of just about everybody who was anybody in the Elizabethan theater in the 1590s. Although Henslowe kept his Diary on and off for less than ten years, we can find in it, or in other Henslowe manuscripts, the names of 280 different plays, about 240 of which have

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entirely disappeared. The names of fully 170 of these plays would be totally unknown today, except for their mention in Henslowe's Diary (Bentley 15). The Diary contains reports of performances at the Rose by all the major playing companies of the time. There are also dozens of actors named, and no less than twenty-seven playwrights.

In his Diary Philip Henslowe recorded the loans he made to playwrights and the amounts he paid them for manuscripts. Among the playwrights mentioned are the familiar names of Chapman, Dekker, Drayton, Jonson, Marston, and Webster. There are also some unfamiliar names, such as William Bird, Robert Daborne, and Wentworth Smith. But there is one familiar name that is missing. Nowhere in the list of dozens of actors and twenty-eight playwrights in Henslowe's Diary do we find the name of William Shakespeare.

It might be objected that Henslowe also failed to mention several other familiar playwrights—such as Beaumont, Fletcher, Ford, Lyly, Kyd, Marlowe, Greene, and Peele. But there are good reasons for these omissions. Beaumont, Fletcher, and Ford didn't begin writing plays until after the period of Henslowe's Diary. Marlowe and Greene died within a year of the first entry in the Diary; Kyd died a year later, and Lyly and Peele wrote their last plays in 1593 and 1594.

Admittedly, Shakespeare is supposed to have been an actor, playwright, and sharer in the Chamberlain's Men company, which played in the Globe Theater, the principal competitor of Henslowe's Rose Theater. But the Globe and the Rose theaters were situated very near each other, and Henslowe had to walk past the Globe every day on his way to work (C. Eccles 69). His Diary contains many transactions with actors and playwrights associated with the Chamberlain's Men, and his entries for June 1594 record that the Chamberlain's Men and the Admiral's Men performed more than a dozen plays together for him at the Newington Butts theater about a mile away (Campbell 583). It was during this period that William Shakespeare was acting with the Chamberlain's Men, according to most orthodox scholars (Campbell 102).

If Shakespeare really were the busy actor and playwright we are told he was, then Henslowe would surely have known him, and mentioned him somewhere in his Diary. But although Henslowe mentions several Shakespeare plays that were performed in his theater, he never mentions the name of the man who wrote them and who was supposedly producing them exactly 100 yards away.

Edward Alleyn

Our last eyewitness is Edward Alleyn, the most distinguished actor on the Elizabethan stage. He was also a book and playbook collector, and a playwright (Wraight 211-19). He was born about two years after William Shakespeare of Stratford and came from the same class. His father was an innkeeper, and Alleyn was still in his teens when he began acting on the stage. Though most famous for his roles in Marlowe's plays, he also must have acted in several of the Shakespeare plays performed at the Rose, such as *Titus Andronicus* and *Henry VI* (Carson 68). In 1592 he married Philip Henslowe's stepdaughter and entered the theater business with his father-in-law. In 1600 Alleyn and Henslowe built a new theater north of the city, the Fortune, modeled on the Globe and built by the same contractor (C. Eccles 72).

Edward Alleyn also kept a diary that survives, along with many of his letters and papers. They reveal that he had a large circle of acquaintances throughout and beyond the theater world that included aristocrats, clergymen, and businessmen, as well as men in his own profession, such as John Heminges, one of the alleged editors of the First Folio. In his edition of Edward Alleyn's *Memoirs* (1841), John Payne Collier printed several references that Alleyn made to Shakespeare and to his plays, but they have all been judged forgeries (Chambers II, 386-90). The alleged reference by Alleyn to Shakespeare that has puzzled scholars the most is one that Collier claimed he found on the back of a letter written to Alleyn in June, 1609. There, Alleyn supposedly recorded a list of purchases under the heading "Howshowld stuff,"—at the end of which are the words "a book. Shaksper sonetts 5d." Although this letter has been lost, the entry was accepted as genuine by Rollins (II, 54) and Freeman (II, 1142), but rejected as a forgery by Race (113) and Duncan-Jones (*Sonnets* 7). But forgery or genuine, it fails to suggest a connection with William Shakespeare of Stratford.

It is impossible to believe that Edward Alleyn, who was at the center of the Elizabethan stage community for more than thirty-five years, would not have met the alleged actor and leading playwright William Shakespeare, and made some allusion to him in his letters or diary.

A Verdict

To sum up: we have the literary remains of ten different people, eight of whom must have come into contact with William Shakespeare of Stratford—or should have if he were the actor and playwright we are told he was—and two who met his daughter Susanna. If two or three of these ten eyewitnesses had failed to associate the well-known playwright with the man with the same name in Stratford, it would not be worth mentioning. But none of these ten, all of whom left extensive written records, apparently connected the man, or the daughter of the man, they met with the well-known playwright.

We can be sure that if any one of these ten people had, just once, referred to William Shakespeare of Stratford as a playwright, or if his name had appeared in Henslowe's Diary, just once, as being paid for a play, then those who reject the Stratford theory would have a lot of explaining to do. In fact, there is no record of anyone associating Shakespeare of Stratford with playwrighting or any other kind of writing until the questionable front matter of the First Folio seven years after his death. Instead, the facts support the argument that the name Shakespeare was the pseudonym of a concealed author who did not write for money, did not sell his plays to playing companies or publishers, and was indifferent to their appearance in print.

The silence of the ten eyewitnesses is mute testimony that Shakespeare of Stratford had no hand in the creation of the Shakespeare canon—he was not guilty. The silence of orthodox critics in the face of this evidence—a crime against scholarship and against the truth—does not merit the same verdict. ❑

Endnotes

1. In *Statesmen and Favourites of England since the Reformation* (1665), David Lloyd asserted that Greville wished to be "known to posterity" as "Shakespear's and Ben Johnson's master." But he cited no evidence to support the claim, and it is generally considered to be a fabrication. See Chambers II, 250.
2. Bodleian Library MS. Poet. d.3
3. *Hamlet, Twelfth Night, The Merry Wives of Windsor, All's Well that Ends Well, Richard III, Richard II.*

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(cont'd from p. 2)

reporting in the Newsletter, chairing the conference in Stratford, Ontario a few years ago and otherwise volunteering, she is now also the president's conscientious counselor.

Richard Smiley remains on the Board while moving from Juneau, Alaska, to Vancouver, Washington, this winter.

There was a healthy voter turnout by absentee ballot and attendance at the Atlanta general meeting of close to one quarter of the membership. That was good, but we live in a land of the free-to-choose, so more is better, always.

In closing I want to thank the sixty donors over the past three years who have closed the gap between dues and operating expenses, a gap of about sixty percent. Some have given as much as $10,000 and wish to remain like the man they support—unknown. Many have given $25, $50 and $100 donations. Those contributions are deeply appreciated by every member who reads and enjoys The Newsletter and *The Oxfordian.* They are the stuff of reality.

I hope you will join the willing givers.

A closing note: Saturday, 9 a.m., October 23, 2004, came and went unremarkably. For several hundred years throughout the middle ages, that was a date known as the beginning of creation and this most recent anniversary was year 6000 in that version of world history. But like so many other "facts," it was corrected a few centuries ago. Only weeks ago, anthropologists in North Carolina uncovered human remnants dating back 50,000 years, changing the history of mankind in North America by over 40,000 years. I can only wonder when, not if, a certain author will become another change in the endless list of our world's improving knowledge.

And that's our good news!

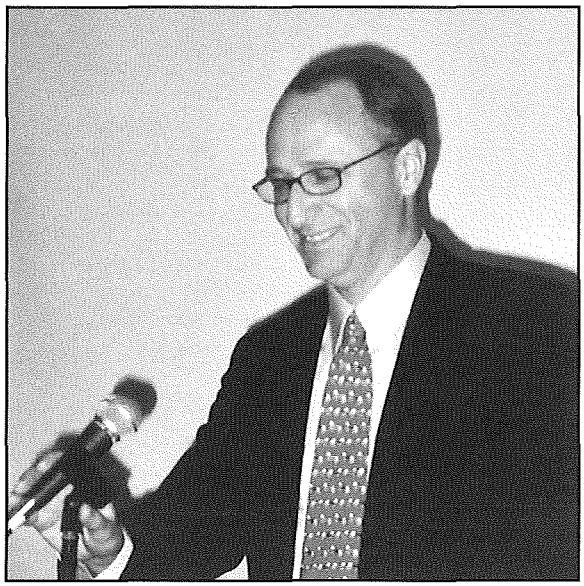
— *James Sherwood*

Shakespeare's "Last Will" Sonnets

Twelve Poems Convey the Poet's Dying Wishes

By Matthew Cossolotto

Since its publication in 1609, *Shake-speares Sonnets* has been shrouded in mystery. Nobody knows for sure just when these remarkable, enigmatic poems were written, whether the author approved of the publication, or even whether the sonnets appear in the exact order he intended. Nor is there any certainty about the identities of the "Fair Youth," the so-called "Dark Lady" or the "Rival Poet." This short paper will not attempt to resolve those long-standing mysteries. My focus, instead, addresses a more fundamental issue: Whether the sonnets might provide some clues to the identity of the author himself.



Matthew Cossolotto

During a careful re-reading of the Sonnets, I experienced a definite "aha" moment when I came across this famous line in Sonnet 72: "My name be buried where my body is." A compelling possibility suddenly crossed my mind: What if some of the Sonnets actually convey the poet's dying wishes? (Note: All Sonnet quotations contained in this article come from Stephen Booth's edition.)

The idea struck me that perhaps Oxford's missing will and "Shakespeare's" longed-for poetic farewell—absent from the Stratford man's will—have been right under our noses all along, in the form of what I call Shakespeare's "Last Will" Sonnets. I believe this group of twelve sonnets (22, 32, 55, 63, 66, 81, 107, 146, 71 - 74) essentially conveys the poet's dying wishes. These dying wishes boil down to two: First the poet wants—and fully expects—to remain anonymous after his death, and secondly, he wishes to bestow a kind of poetic immortality on his "beloved."

Some of the "Last Will" Sonnets seem to set the stage for the poet's death, focusing on the ravages of his advancing age. All twelve poems have a melancholy, "summing up" or "remembrance-of-things-past" quality. Simple common sense then leads us to at least entertain the notion that the poet composed these particular "Last Will" Sonnets very close to the end of his life, possibly within a year or two before he died. This assertion, if accepted, has enormous implications for the authorship question.

Though the precise dates of composition have not been established, current "scholarly consensus" maintains that most of the sonnets were written between 1593 and 1600. (See Barnet, for example.) Many commentators believe that Sonnet 107 contains topical allusions to historical events of 1603/04. Few scholars seem to think that any of the sonnets were written after 1603 or 1604. But the only thing we know without any fear of contradiction is that none of the Sonnets were written *after* their publication in 1609. In 1593 William Shakspere of Stratford turned 29 years old; in comparison, Edward de Vere was 43. This 14-year age gap between Shakspere and Oxford is noteworthy, an important piece of evidence in our examination of the "Last Will" Sonnets.

That William of Stratford died in 1616, seven years after the publication of *Shake-speare's Sonnets*, is also of utmost significance to the authorship debate. If, as I suggest, several Sonnets were written a year or two *before* the poet's death, it's impossible to accept William of Stratford as the poet. The best the traditional theory can do is to argue that their candidate wrote some of these "Last Will" Sonnets in 1607 or 1608, just prior to the publication of the Sonnets in 1609—a dating theory that has received few adherents. So, in the traditional authorship theory we're confronted with a perplexing gap of perhaps 10 to 15 years between composition of the Sonnets, including my proposed "Last Will" Sonnets, and the death of William of Stratford in 1616.

Imminent Death: the Key to the Last Will Sonnets

Here is my thesis stated as succinctly as I can: The "Last Will" Sonnets set down below contain the poet's dying wishes expressed at a time when he is anticipating his imminent death.

After scouring various editions of the *Sonnets* for several months, I was startled to see that my "imminent death" idea actually receives dramatic support from a surprising source. Katherine Duncan-Jones, a noted Stratfordian, identifies at least six sonnets that deal with the poet's "aging and impending death." As it turns out, the six "impending death" sonnets cited by Duncan-Jones form the core of my twelve "Last Will" Sonnets.

Duncan-Jones offers the following insightful comments about one of these six sonnets, Sonnet 146 (*Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth):*

> Addressing his soul, the speaker questions the rich and expensive adornments it bestows on the earth, or body, in which it is housed, exhorting it to prepare for death by consuming spiritual riches and repudiating earthly ones. ... As far as the religious connotations go, the sonnet is perhaps not quite so extraordinary as has been claimed, but can be linked with other sonnets on the

> speaker's *aging and impending death*, such as 63, 71, 73-74 and 81. (408, my emphasis)

So here we have a renowned Stratfordian scholar openly identifying a group of sonnets that deal with the "aging and impending death" of the poet. Oddly, she excludes from her list Sonnet 72, which contains the line "My name be buried where my body is." Left unaddressed by Duncan-Jones is the obvious question: Why would a relatively youthful William of Stratford write about his "aging and impending death" so many years before he was either old or near death? It's all but impossible, I submit, to reconcile these six "impending death" sonnets—and the larger group of "Last Will" Sonnets I've identified—with the traditional Stratfordian biography. *No* evidence exists indicating the death of William of Stratford was impending or imminent when the Sonnets were written, even if written as late as 1609.

Examine these lines in Sonnet 63: "Against my love shall be *as I am now,/With time's injurious hand crushed and o'erworn*" (my emphasis). Note the wording: "as I am now … crushed and o'erworn." It's hard to mistake the author's meaning. And it's even harder to imagine that a relatively youthful, thirty-something William of Stratford wrote those words. Granted, life expectancy was much shorter in those days, but we know from *As You Like It* that "Shakespeare" was well aware of the "Seven Ages of Man." You have to make a real effort to persuade yourself that he is projecting into the future in the sonnets and not writing about his own advancing age, in the present tense, at the time of composition.

Another case in point is Sonnet 30 (*When to the sessions of sweet silent thought*). While this poem does not refer explicitly to the poet's death or his dying wishes, I believe Sonnet 30 sets the stage for the "Last Will" Sonnets and is closely linked thematically to them. Sonnet 30 eloquently captures the poet's melancholic, "summing up" mood and is therefore well worth reviewing as a preamble to the "Last Will" Sonnets. It's difficult to avoid the conclusion that this poem was also written in the very final stages of the poet's life.

Sonnet 30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,
And moan th'expense of many a vanished sight.
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

Yet, during the period when most scholars believe this sonnet was written, everything in Shakspere's life is coming up roses, you might say. His Sonnet 30 is plainly not the poem of a relatively young poet at the dawn of a triumphal literary and theatrical career—as the traditional biographies would have us believe. Shakspere's situation contrasts sharply with that of the reclusive and apparently ailing Earl of Oxford in the years immediately before and after 1600. Indeed, so many of the sonnets have a decidedly Oxfordian quality, dealing as they do with a poet bemoaning his advancing age, lamenting his "outcast state" (Sonnet 29) and complaining that his "name receives a brand" (Sonnet 111).

Shakespeare's "Last Will" Sonnets

For readers who have already studied the Sonnets in detail, I encourage you to read this collection of "Last Will" Sonnets afresh as if you've never seen them before. I have rearranged them from the original 1609 order to reflect my view of the sequence in which they were written. Other chronologies are possible, but I believe sonnets 71 to 74 represent the poet's "final" sequence with which he effectively bequeaths all of the Sonnets to his beloved. As you review these sonnets (some excerpted), notice just how closely these poems, given their obsession with the subject of advancing age and approaching death, are linked thematically.

(My emphasis throughout)

Sonnet 22 (1st quatrain, couplet)

My glass shall not persuade me I am old
So long as youth and thou are of one date,
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
Then look I death my days should expiate.
……
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain,
Thou gav'st me thine not to give back again.

Sonnet 32 (1st quatrain, couplet)

If thou survive my well-contented day,
When that churl death my bones with dust shall cover,
And shalt by fortune once more re-survey
These poor rude lines of *thy deceasèd lover,*
……..
But since he died, and poets better prove,
Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love.

Sonnet 55 (1st and 3rd quatrains, couplet)

Not marble nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this pow'rful rhyme,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
……
'Gainst death and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Ev'n in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgement that your self arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

(cont'd on p. 10)

(cont'd from p. 9)

Sonnet 63

Against my love shall be *as I am now,*
With time's injurious hand crushed and o'erworn;
When hours have drained his blood and filled his brow
With lines and wrinkles, when his youthful morn
Hath traveled on to age's steepy night,
And all those beauties whereof now he's king,
Are vanishing, or vanished out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring –
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life.
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

Katherine Duncan-Jones says this about Sonnet 63: "Anticipating a time when the fair youth will be as old and decrepit as he is now, the speaker makes provision against the youth's loss of beauty by preserving it in poetry." (236 [my emphasis]) This is an amazing admission. What evidence is there to suggest that William of Stratford was "old and decrepit" around the year 1600 or at *any* time before 1609 when the sonnets were published? Clearly there must be some mistake here, a case of mistaken identity perhaps.

Sonnet 66 (ll. 1, 13-14)

Tired with all these, *for restful death I cry*:
.....
Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that to die, I leave my love alone.

Duncan-Jones says this about Sonnet 66: "Weary of the hypocrisy and corruption of the age he lives in, the speaker longs for death, restrained only by the thought of abandoning his love" (242 [my emphasis]).

Sonnet 81

Or I shall live, your epitaph to make,
Or you survive *when I in earth am rotten,*
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die.
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombèd in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead,
You still shall live — such virtue hath my pen —
Where breath most breathes, ev'n in the mouths of men.

To quote Katherine Duncan-Jones again: "... the speaker anticipates his death, but this time includes the possibility that his friend may pre-decease him. When the poet dies, he will be quickly forgotten; but when the youth dies, he will continue to live as the subject-matter of the poet's verse." (272 [my emphasis]) *The poet's wish to bestow a kind of poetic immortality on his "beloved" is plainly evident in lines 5 and 9.*

Sonnet 107 (3rd quatrain, couplet)

Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, *and death to me subscribes*,
Since spite of him I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes.
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

Duncan-Jones claims that the topical allusions in this sonnet "seem to conform best to the death of Elizabeth I and the accession of James I in March to April 1603, followed by James's coronation and progress through the City of London in March 1604." (324) I would only note here that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, reportedly died on June 24, 1604, at the age of 54. William of Stratford, meanwhile, turned 40 in 1604 and would live another twelve years.

Sonnet 146

Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth,
. . . *[My sinful earth?]* these rebel pow'rs that thee array,
.....
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? *Is this thy body's end?*
.....
So shalt thou feed on death, that feeds on men,
And death once dead, there's no more dying then.

"Is this thy body's end?" We're clearly dealing here with a sentiment about the poet's imminent demise, a theme, as we have seen, that links it with other sonnets in the "Last Will" group that also portend the speaker's aging and impending death (63, 71, 73, 74 and 81). Also note the repeated phrase "My sinful earth" at the beginning of line 2 as it appeared in the first publication of the Sonnets, an anomaly that has received considerable speculation by scholars. Booth's edition omits the phrase from line 2, leaving an odd blank space. If, as I suggest, this sonnet is one of the last composed before the death of the poet, perhaps he simply did not complete this particular poem before he died. This odd repetition may simply have been the printer's way of filling an awkward blank space. If so, it could be another argument for posthumous publication. It certainly argues against authorial supervision of the publication even if it were only a compositor's error, as some scholars suggest.

Now we turn to a group of four sonnets—71 through 74—that I maintain are most likely, given their content and unambiguous meaning, the final group of sonnets written by "Shakespeare." Here the poet clearly pleads for anonymity. (Though such a wish may be difficult for us to understand today, it was perhaps reasonable for a writer facing unique circumstances and pressures of a different era.)

It's impossible, however, to square this repeated plea for oblivion with the reality that "William Shakespeare" is already a famous, indeed a celebrated, playwright and poet.

Sonnet 71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world with vildest worms to dwell.
Nay, if you read this line, *remember not*
The hand that writ it, for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O if, I say, you look upon this verse,
When I, perhaps, compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love ev'n with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me *after I am gone.*

Here's what Duncan-Jones says about Sonnet 71: "Anticipating the aftermath of his death … the poet implores the youth to forget him quickly, and to forget even that he was the author of the sonnets, so that he would not be compromised by association with the dead poet." (252)

Sonnet 72

O lest the world should task you to recite
What merit lived in me that you should love,
After my death, dear love, forget me quite,
For you in me can nothing worthy prove;
Unless you would devise some virtuous lie
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceasèd I
Than niggard truth would willingly impart.
O lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me nor you.
For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

The poet wants (and fully expects) to remain anonymous after his death. The poet's clear, unambiguous wishes are revealed in line 11. Duncan-Jones comments: "Continues from the end of the preceding sonnet, with another plea for oblivion which functions as a reminder. If the young man is pressed to say what virtues his dead friend had, he should not lie on his behalf, but suppress the recollection of him." (254 [my emphasis]) Note that Duncan-Jones is silent on the most dramatic line in this sonnet ("My name be buried where my body is"); nor does she explain what was so shameful or scandalous about Shakespeare's popular and famous name.

Sonnet 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

Note that last line again: "To love that well which thou must leave ere long." "Ere long" is not ambiguous; it means "before long" or "soon." Again, this suggests "imminent" death, and not something that's going to occur in the distant future. Also, the sonnet "explores the young man's perception of the poet's decrepitude through a series of images of decay …" (Duncan-Jones 256) Again, we have an admission by a Stratfordian that the poet is dealing with his own "decrepitude" at a time when William of Stratford is relatively youthful, apparently in good health, and at the height of "Shakespeare's" fame and glory.

In case you're wondering whether Duncan-Jones claims that the sonnets are not autobiographical (the astonishing consensus of many traditional scholars), consider this revealing assertion: "Since Shakespeare was bald, a visual analogy may be implied between an almost-leafless tree and an almost-hairless head …" (256) Duncan-Jones is perfectly capable of trying to link the imagery of these sonnets to the life of William Shakspere, even if that means ignoring so many glaringly inconsistent images and grasping at a few meager strands of thinning hair.

Now we come to Sonnet 74, the final "Last Will" Sonnet. I believe this just may be the last sonnet written by "Shakespeare." I say that because its purpose appears to be the bequeathing of the Sonnets to the "beloved."

Sonnet 74

But be contented *when that fell arrest*
Without all bail shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
The very part was consecrate to thee:
The earth can have but earth, which is his due;
My spirit is thine, the better part of me.
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The prey of worms, my body being dead,
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
Too base of these to be rememb'red:

(cont'd on p. 12)

(cont'd from p. 11)

> The worth of that is that which it contains,
> And that is this, *and this with thee remains.*

The images here are unmistakable. Unless we think Shakespeare was inexplicably living in a morbid fantasy world while composing these poems, we must take these words and images seriously. They are decidedly funereal. Terms like "consecrate" … "for memorial" … "prey of worms" … "my body being dead" … "the better part of me" … "the earth can have but earth" … "and this with thee remains" are difficult to misinterpret or, given the time they were supposedly written, to connect to the Stratfordian biography.

Implications for the Traditional Theory

The interpretation I suggest for the "Last Will" Sonnets carries substantial negative implications for the Stratfordian position. The most glaring problems with William of Stratford as the poet are the following:

- While the poet wishes to immortalize his "beloved" (Sonnets 55, 81, 107), he fails to name or otherwise identify him in the Sonnets. Nor is there a dedication to the volume of poems, as in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, to serve the purpose. Because Shakspere was alive in 1609, he could have clarified matters—at least to some degree—but inexplicably chose not to.

- Perhaps the 1609 edition was unauthorized. But the Stratford man lived another seven years after publication. He had ample opportunity to lift the veil on the identity of his beloved but did not.

- The poet could also have cleared up the Fair Youth mystery in his 1616 will. But his will is silent on this subject.

- The poet expects his name to be buried with his body (Sonnet 72). The appearance of his name emblazoned on the title page works against this desire. Could Shakspere have been so indifferent, or out-of-the-loop, during the process of publishing the poems?

- The theme of "impending death" for poems written circa 1600—and certainly no later than 1609—is inconsistent with the death of the Stratford man in 1616.

The inherent contradictions discussed in the foregoing observations can be substantially resolved. Let me posit a theory with Edward de Vere as the true poet. I think the subject and recipient of many of theses verses, together with the poet's family, endeavored to honor Oxford's dying wishes as best they could. Oxford's immediate family—including two influential sons-in-law, the Earls of Montgomery and Derby, and his powerful brother-in-law, Robert Cecil—was well positioned to honor Oxford's dying wish for anonymity while preserving his peerless works for posterity. They had to deal, however, with the tension between the poet's desire for anonymity and the wish to ensure the beloved's immortality.

The family was partially successful. Arranging for posthumous—Oxford died in 1604—publication of the Sonnets in 1609 (perhaps as a tribute to Oxford) without having the real name of the poet attached to them achieved the poet's "my name be buried" wish. While this preserved the "immortal" verses, the beloved himself apparently could not be clearly identified, for whatever personal or political reasons; we'll probably never know exactly why.

Oxford's death in 1604 is consistent with the "impending death" theme and also explains why the author could not clear up confusion surrounding the identity of the Fair Youth after the Sonnets were first published. Moreover, it accords with Diana Price's observation on the publisher's use of the term "our ever-living poet" in his 1609 dedication:

> An 'ever-living' poet is a dead poet. The adjective is synonymous with the term 'immortal' and is used to describe deities, nonhuman entities, or dead persons. Donald W. Foster researched the term extensively but failed to find 'any instance of ever-living used in a Renaissance text to describe a living mortal, including, even, panegyrics on Queen Elizabeth.' (145)

The "Last Will Sonnets" are abundantly clear: they point to the 17th Earl of Oxford and away from William Shakspere from Stratford-on-Avon as the true Bard. ❑

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(cont'd from p. 1)

Line 1 *Sweet friend.* This illustrates a typical Shakespearean endearment, as in *sweet love* (76, 79), *thy sweet-beloved name* (89), *fair friend* (114), *sweet boy* (108), *my lovely boy* (126), *thy sweet self* (126), *my sweet' st friend* (133), etc. (Shakespeare uses the word *sweet* 72 times in the Sonnets, and nearly a thousand times in his works as a whole.)

1 *whose name agrees.* Robert Giroux notes that this phrase calls to mind John of Gaunt's cry "O how that name *befits* my composition!" in *Richard II* (2.1.78). Shakespeare often remarks or plays on the aptness of names, as when Henry V ironically tells the blustering Ancient Pistol that his name "sorts well with your fierceness" (*Henry V*, 4.1.64). In *Titus Andronicus* Lavinia tells "barbarous Tamora" that "no name *fits* thy nature but thy own" (2.3.119). In *Cymbeline* Lucius tells "Fidele" (who is Imogen in disguise): "Thy name well *fits* thy faith, thy faith thy name" (4.2.383). At the end of the same play the Soothsayer says:

> Thou, Leonatus, art the lion's whelp.
> The apt and *fit* construction of thy name,
> Being *leo-natus*, doth import so much.
> (5.6.444-6)

Notice too that the word *fit*, which I have italicized in these examples, appears in the second line of Phaeton's sonnet.

1 *thy increase.* It is typical of Shakespeare to use *increase* as a noun and to rhyme on it. As a matter of fact the very first line of Sonnet 1 ends with it: "From fairest creatures we desire *increase*." The word is almost the poet's trademark: "Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and *increase*" (11), "When I perceive that men as plants *increase*" (15 [though here for once it is a verb]), "The teeming autumn, big with rich *increase*" (97). He often uses the word in his other works, as in *Venus and Adonis*:

> Upon the earth's *increase* why shouldst thou feed,
> Unless the earth with thy *increase* be fed?
> (169-70)

Equally characteristic is *3 Henry VI*: "And that thy summer bred us no *increase*" (2.2.164, [which—see below—links *increase* to *summer*]). Compare Hamlet's "*increase* of appetite" and Lear's "organs of *increase*."

2 *How fit a rival art thou of the spring.* This line bears witness to its author first in its syntax (Shakespeare often begins an exclamatory or declaratory clause or sentence with "how," using this form 14 times in the Sonnets alone) and, more important, in likening his friend to a season: "only herald to the gaudy spring" (1). Just as the Phaeton sonnet and Shakespeare's Sonnet 1 both end their first lines with *increase*, so the Phaeton sonnet and Sonnet 1 both rhyme on *spring*. The most famous similitude between the poet's friend and a season is of course Sonnet 18: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" Seasonal images and analogies dominate many of the Sonnets; e.g. 97:

> How like a winter hath my absence been
> From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
> (1-2)

3 *For when each branch hath left his flourishing. Richard II* gives us "One *flourishing branch* of his most royal root" (1.2.18). The word *flourish* also occurs in Sonnet 60. And "each branch" has a close match in "every bough" (102)—no great coincidence, but the sort of thing we should expect if Phaeton and Shakespeare are the same poet.

4 *And green-locked summer's shady pleasures cease.* Compare Sonnet 18: "Shall I compare thee to a *summer's* day?" See also "Making no *summer* of another's *green*" (68); "The *summer's* flower is to the summer *sweet*" (94); "For *summer* and his *pleasures* wait on thee" (97); and this quatrain from 12:

> When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
> Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
> And *summer's green* all girded up in sheaves,
> Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard.
> (5-8)

Trees that are *barren of leaves* implies *branches* that have *left their flourishing*, and *canopy* against *heat* implies *shade*. *Beard* also suggests *locks*. The Phaeton sonnet shows the same subtle patterns of association and imagery we find in Shakespeare. The Sonnets use *shade*, *shady*, and *shadow* 16 times. And when Shakespeare mentions *locks*, he often specifies their color (*yellow*, *gory*, *grey*, *golden*, *browny*).

5 *She makes the winter's storms repose in peace.* Compare the line "Against the *stormy* gusts of *winter's* day" (13)—another interesting little similarity. Likewise, the occurrence of *repose* in Sonnets 27 and 50 (2, 3, respectively).

6 *And spends her franchise on each living thing.* Shakespeare loves to blend legal and commercial language with seasonal imagery and with the language of love. (The Sonnets contain more than 200 legal terms.) One of the most pertinent passages comes in 4:

> Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou *spend*
> Upon thyself thy beauty's *legacy*?
> Nature's *bequest* gives nothing, but doth *lend*,
> And, being *frank*, she lends to those are *free*.
> (1-4)

The word *spend* occurs 14 times in the Sonnets, not to mention the related words *expense*, *thrift*, *waste*, *consume*, and so forth. Spending a *franchise* and spending a *legacy* are kindred ideas, as the word *frank*, cognate with *franchise*, underscores. Shakespeare uses the legal term *franchise* and its variants about twenty times in all his works, a remarkable number. *Venus* uses *enfranchising* as a metaphor at 369, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* has *enfranchise* within two lines of the name *Phaeton*! (3.1.156). (For extended legal metaphors, see Sonnets 4, 13, 30, 35, 46, 49, 58, 87, 134, 136, 146, and 152.)

6 *each living thing.* This phrase, in its position and function here, reminds us of Sonnet 98:

(cont'd on p. 14)

(cont'd from p. 13)

From you have I been absent in the *spring*,
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth *in every thing.*
(1-3)

The epithet *proud-pied April* has several resemblances to *green-lock'd summer*: A season is personified with a compound word that describes its coloring. And *April* in this sonnet, like *spring* in Phaeton's, vivifies all living things.

7 *the little birds do sing.* Shakespeare is particularly fond of the simple image of little birds singing: "When birds do sing,/Hey ding a ding ding!" There are dozens of examples in the plays. In the Sonnets we find several: "Upon those boughs . . . where late *the sweet birds sang*" (73), "And thou away, the very *birds are mute*" (97), "the *lays of birds*" (98), not to mention such variants as "*Philomel* in *summer's* front doth *sing*" (102). Commonplace as this image may seem, not every poet uses it; it seems too naive for Marlowe or Jonson, for example.

8 *Herbs, gums, and plants do vaunt of their release. Romeo and Juliet* offers a parallel in *plants, herbs, stones* (2.3.16). Even more striking is the brilliant image of plants exulting in spring: we find the same image again in Sonnet 15, where "men as *plants* increase . . . [and] *vaunt* in their youthful sap"! *Venus* offers "*Herbs* for their smell, and sappy *plants* to bear" (165). And *release* suggests 87's "The charter of thy worth gives thee *releasing*." Its legal overtones also recall *summer's lease* (18) and other uses of *lease* in the Sonnets. *Venus and Adonis* rhymes *increasing* and *releasing* (254-6).

9 *So when that all our English wits lay dead.* The phrase faintly echoes *Henry V*: "Or close the wall up with our English dead" (3.1.2).

10, 12 *green, seen.* Shakespeare rhymes *green* and *seen* in four different sonnets.

11-14 *fruits, barrenness, pleasance, Italy.* The antonym of *increase*, barrenness is a theme of the Sonnets, which use the word *barren* six times. I have already quoted "*barren* of leaves" (12). And in Shakespeare, *barren* is often accompanied by *fruit*. Compare *Venus*, where *fruitless chastity* (751) is followed by *barren dearth* (754). Or see *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where a *barren sister* is imagined chanting hymns to *the cold fruitless moon* (1.1.72-3). What is more, Phaeton's association of *fruit* and *pleasance* with *Italy* in the concluding section of this poem calls up several passages in Shakespeare. *Lucrece* yields us *barren skill* (81) and, four stanzas later, *fruitful Italy* (107). *The Taming of the Shrew* gives us

fruitful Lombardy,
The *pleasant* garden of great *Italy.*
(1.1.3-4)

In *Antony and Cleopatra*, Cleopatra greets the messenger from Rome:

O, from *Italy!*
Ram thou thy *fruitful* tidings in mine ears,
That long time have been *barren.*
(2.5.23-5)

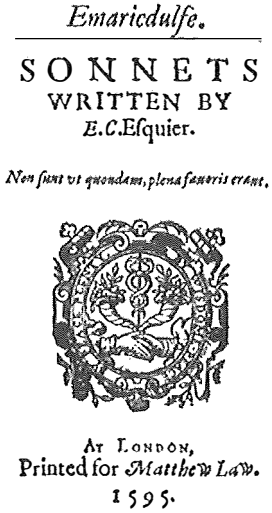
11 *o'erspread.* Shakespeare is fond of the prefix *o'er;* the Sonnets give us *o'ercharg'd, o'ergreen, o'erpress'd, o'ersnow'd, o'ersways*, and *o'erworn.* (The plays offer such coinages as *o'erwrastling* and *o'erstunk*!)

12 *thy flowery pleasance.* Shakespeare is extremely sensitive to vegetation. The Sonnets mention roses, violets, lilies, marjoram, marigold, buds, blooms, sap, thorns, fruit, olives, boughs, leaves, forests, apples, meadows, sheaves, cankers, and weeds. The words *flower* and *pleasure* appear in the Sonnets about a dozen times each.

13-14 *Such fruits, such flowerets . . . Were ne'er before.* Compare the syntax of 17: "*Such* heavenly touches *ne'er* touched earthly faces." Shakespeare often doubles *such*: "*Such* wretched hands *such* wretched blood should spill" (*The Rape of Lucrece*, 999); "*such* patchery, *such* juggling, and *such* knavery" (*Troilus and Cressida*, 2.3.71); "O, *such* another sleep, that I might see/But *such* another man!" (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 5.2.77); "*Such* seething brains,/*Such* shaping fantasies" (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* 5.1.4-5); "*such* ferret and *such* fiery eyes" (*Julius Caesar*, 1.2.186).

13-14 *morality . . . Italy.* The rather lame rhyme of the final couplet is not out of character for Shakespeare's sonnets, whose endings are often weak. And sometimes he is content with pairs of words that end with *-y*, as in Sonnets 40 (*poverty* with *injury*) and 55 (*enmity* with *posterity*). And the poem's affection for things Italian is typical of Shakespeare.

The Phaeton sonnet should be studiously compared with Sonnets 1, 5, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 54, 68, 73, 97, 98, 102, and 103 for theme, style, sentiment, imagery, vocabulary, rhyme patterns, and other affinities. Sonnets 97 and 98 are surely the work of the same hand that wrote the Phaeton sonnet, which they echo in the words *winter, pleasure, bareness, summer's, increase, decease, fruit, birds, sing, spring, sweet, flowers, shadow,* and so forth.


Emaricdulfe.

SONNETS
WRITTEN BY
E.C. Esquier.

Non sunt vt quondam, plena fauoris erant.

At London,
Printed for *Matthew Law.*
1595.

The chief objection to Shakespeare's authorship has been its early date, 1591, which is hard to square with the conventional dating of Shakespeare's career. Sir Edmund Chambers and others have argued that it is too early. And maybe it is—if "Shakespeare" was the Stratford man. But Oxford was Shakespeare: the problem vanishes. By 1591 Oxford was a noted poet and playwright.

Needless to say, the addition of even a single sonnet to the Shakespeare canon should be of great literary interest. But as I would soon learn, this is only the beginning. Yet the scholars have been blind to far greater news.

The Mystery of *Emaricdulfe*

For reasons of space, I had to drop a chapter on "Phaeton" from my book. But the poem raised an

urgent question: What else had Oxford written before he adopted his famous pen name? I decided to search, starting with other sonnets of unknown authorship.

I thought I might have to undertake long research; I found my first clues within a few minutes.

Checking through a couple of poetry anthologies in my personal library, I soon found a few sonnets, author unknown, from an Elizabethan sonnet cycle oddly titled *Emaricdulfe*, published in 1595. The author was identified only as "E.C., Esquire." But if Oxford was Phaeton, why couldn't he have been E.C. as well?

Days later the Library of Congress yielded me the complete text of *Emaricdulfe* (see Holger M. Klein, ed., *English and Scottish Sonnet Sequences of the Renaissance*, Olms, 1984), and an hour with the 40 sonnets was enough to convince me that Shakespeare—that is, Oxford—had indeed written it. I was amazed, ecstatic.

The style, though erratic, was sufficient. But there also were details that had close matches in the Shakespeare works. The more I studied the poems, the more Shakespearean parallels I found. Eventually I identified more than 200—about five per sonnet, or one every three lines!

The 24th of the 40 sonnets was even more thick with Shakespeare echoes than Phaeton's:

> Oft have I heard honey-tongu'd ladies speak,
> Striving their amorous courtiers to enchant,
> And from their nectar lips such sweet words break,
> As neither art nor heavenly skill did want. 4
> But when Emaricdulfe gins to discourse,
> Her words are more than well-tun'd harmony,
> And every sentence of a greater force
> Than Mermaids' song, or Sirens' sorcery; 8
> And if to hear her speak, Laertes' heir
> The wise Ulysses liv'd us now among,
> From her sweet words he could not stop his ear,
> As from the Sirens' and the Mermaids' song; 12
> And had she in the Sirens' place but stood,
> Her heavenly voice had drown'd him in the flood.

Obviously Emaricdulfe is a code name. Though these poems are highly stylized in the Petrarchan tradition and far from realistic, there would be no need for a code name if the lady they describe weren't a real person. She is apparently a lady of the court (possibly Elizabeth I herself), and her admirers are courtiers. Presumably the author is a courtier too. This, of course, suggests Oxford; it can hardly be William of Stratford (who in any case would not be writing anonymously if he were the author).

But if the author is the poet we know as Shakespeare, and if he was writing anonymously, "Shakespeare" very likely was not his real name either. If he was a courtier, he was probably Oxford. In the future I'll offer additional proof of this. For now I'll content myself with showing only that "E.C." and "Shakespeare" were the same poet.

Let's begin with Shakespearean parallels in the poem cited above, displayed in Table 1:

(cont'd on p. 16)

Table 1. Shakespearean Parallels in *Emaricdulfe* Sonnet 24

Emaricdulfe		Shakespeare	
Line	Phrase	Parallel	Work
1	honey-tongu'd	honey tongued Boyet	Love's Labour's Lost
2, 5, 6	enchant, discourse harmony	Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear	Venus and Adonis
		of such enchanting presence and discourse	Comedy of Errors
3	from their nectar lips	such nectar from his lips	Venus and Adonis
6	well-tun'd harmony	well-tuned horns	Titus Andronicus
		well-tuned warble	The Rape of Lucrece
		well-tuned sounds	Sonnet 8
8, 12, 14	Mermaids…Sirens… drowned	I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall	Henry VI, Part 3
		O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note/To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears. Sing, siren, for thyself.	Comedy of Errors
9	And if to hear her speak	I love to hear her speak	Sonnet 130
9 - 10	Laertes' heir The wise Ulysses	wise Laertes' son	Titus Andronicus
11 -12	stop his ear…Mermaid's song	I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song	Comedy of Errors
		As if some mermaid did their ears entice	The Rape of Lucrece
		Bewitching like the wanton mermaid's song	Venus and Adonis
13 - 14	And had she in the Siren' place but stood, Her heavenly voice had drown'd him in the flood.	That had Narcissus seen her as she stood, Self-love had never drown'd him in the flood	The Rape of Lucrece

(cont'd from p. 15)

And note this rhyme pattern in another sonnet of *Emaricdulfe*, and compare a quatrain from *Lucrece*:

Emaricdulfe
O Lust, of sacred love the foul corrupter,
Usurper of her heavenly dignity,
Folly's first child, good counsel's interrupter,
Foster'd by sloth, first step to infamy.

Lucrece
Her house is sack'd, her quiet interrupted,
Her mansion batter'd by the enemy;
Her sacred temple spotted, spoil'd, corrupted,
Grossly ingirt with daring infamy.
(1170-1173)

Also compare the first quatrain with *Venus*: "…love to heaven is fled, / Since sweating lust on earth usurp'd his name" (793-794).

The style and themes are equally Shakespearean; these lines, with their wistful reflection on beauty and mortality, would be at home among the 1609 Sonnets:

O foolish nature, why didst thou create
A thing so fair, if fairness be neglected?
But fairest things be subject unto fate,
And in the end are by the fates rejected.

If any doubt remains, consider some parallel lines and phrases from E.C. and Shakespeare (Table 2).

E.C. and Shakespeare use numerous identical (or nearly) phrases:

cruel death	sweet repose
virtue's nest	golden slumber
holy fire	the world's report
endless date	suffer shipwreck
golden tresses	princely beauty
lily hand	ten times happy
snow-white	outward graces
true constancy	the golden sun
well-deserving	sacred beauty
honey sweet	modest Diana
honey breath	rich(est) treasure
weal and woe	high(er) pitch
hell-born	the whistling wind
rich jewel(s)	change this (his) hue
true type(s)	virtuous monument(s)
several graces	my (un)yielding heart
pretty action	love-kindled (-ing)
deep unrest	heavenly gift(s)

And all this is the short list. Coincidence, copying, influence, plagiarism, and so forth are, I think, out of the question. Only one poet commanded this style.

The evidence could hardly be more conclusive. Yet no scholar has even noticed these parallels, which have been lying in plain sight for four centuries. It's one of the most astounding oversights in the history of literary scholarship.

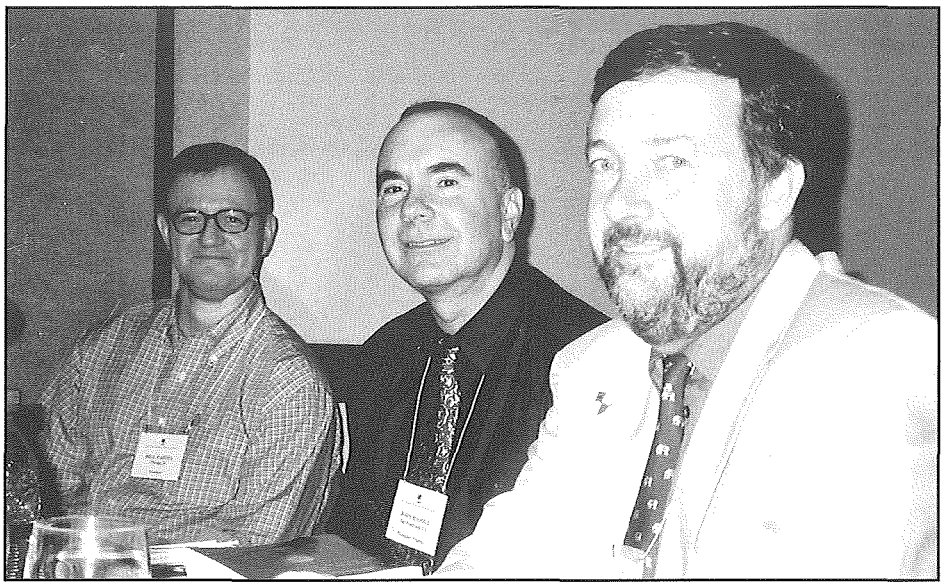
How could it happen? Simple. Most of the scholars have never taken the Shakespeare authorship question seriously. And by the same token, they've never questioned other Elizabethan authorship attributions.

And so this treasure was left to me, courtesy of those countless academic scholars who, rejecting as absurd the possibility that Oxford was "Shakespeare," therefore never paused to wonder whether other works from the same golden quill, under other guises, were waiting to be noticed. ❑

Table 2. Other *Emaricdulfe* — Shakespeare Parallels

Emaricdulfe	Shakespeare
A beauteous issue of a beauteous sire	Sweet issue of a more sweet-smelling mother
	When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear
Fair-springing branch sprung of a hopeful stock	That from his loins no hopeful branch might spring
For nature of the gods is to be merciful	Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods? Draw near them in being merciful
The stars that spangle heaven with glistering beauty	What stars do spangle with such beauty
to yield them coward captives	The coward captive vanquished doth yield
a ship on Neptune's back	o'er green Neptune's back With ships made cities
True badge of faith	the badge of faith to prove true
So pure a chest pure treasure may contain	Some purer chest to close a purer mind
in her heart enthroned	enthroned in the hearts of kings
	enthroned in your dear heart
eyes that gaze upon thy beauty	an eye to gaze on beauty
my heart's deep grief and sorrow	grief and sorrow still embrace his heart
love-lacking Vesta	love-lacking vestals
love-choking lust	choked by unresisted lust
high house of fame	house of fame
heavenly mould	moulds from heaven
bastard of nature	nature's bastards
in wealthy nature's scorn	in scorn of nature
heavenly shape	shape of heaven
plough the seas	plough'st the foam
christen anew	new-christened
love's purity	purity in love
chaste vows	vowed chaste life
Juno for state	queen of state, Great Juno
so sweet a saint	sweet saint
there all enraged	here all enraged
death's ebon gates	death's ebon dart

(cont'd from p. 1)



Panel on Italy: From left to right Bill Farina, John Hamill, Kevin Gilvary

John, Edward de Vere's father, in August 1562. In an Indenture he drew up just two months before his death, John de Vere referred to possible children yet to be born to him and his wife, and personally enrolled this Indenture in the Court of Chancery on July 5. Around the same time, he was actively serving as a Justice of the Peace in the county of Essex. Letters and documents in June and July referred to John de Vere's intention to attend Queen Elizabeth on her impending visit to Mary, Queen of Scots. In late July, John de Vere prepared a will and appointed the Duke of Norfolk and Robert Dudley (later Earl of Leicester) as supervisors. He died just six days later of unexplained causes, and his entire estate came into the control of Dudley, who subsequently profited greatly from it. Paul pointed out that John de Vere's actions in the weeks before his death were not those of a sick man and that his sudden death after making Dudley his executor was too suspicious to be called a coincidence.

Finally, Paul offered a moving rendition of Claudius's "prayer" monologue from Hamlet, having theorized earlier that Dudley would have been Oxford's real-life model for this character. Additionally, Paul offered evidence that the so-called "St. Alban's Portrait" of Edward de Vere was most probably a portrait of John de Vere, the 16th Earl of Oxford.

The Italian Connection

In his introduction to the panel discussion, "The Italian Connection," **Bill Farina** stated that its main thrust would be to confirm that Shakespeare had an astonishingly detailed and accurate knowledge of Italy. He added that during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, before refuting the Oxfordian theory became an obsession, many orthodox scholars, especially those who had been there themselves, were struck by Shakespeare's extraordinary knowledge of Italy. Many have even postulated that the man from Stratford may have traveled there.

Kevin Gilvary, a member of the panel, began by describing the Italian literary traditions drawn upon by the author of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Since nearly all critics date the play to the early 1590s, when the most important sources were not available in English, it is unlikely William Shakespeare of Stratford could have written the play. The case for Edward de Vere as the author is much easier to make because of the opportunities he had to personally observe these literary traditions during his extensive tour of Italy in 1575-76.

Shakespeare's Italian comedies were influenced by two Italian theatrical traditions—the *Commedia Erudita* or "Learned Comedy" and the *Commedia dell'Arte*, a type of improvisational street theater. Characteristics of these traditions that appear in *TGV* include a generic name that gives a clue to character, a contrast between age and youth, mistaken identities, a tangle of love interest, the interplay of masters and servants, daring escapes, and a reunited family.

TGV also contains elements of the older Romantic and Pastoral traditions originating in the literature of classical Greece and Rome. Romantic elements include a long separation of lovers, their unflinching fidelity, an intricate plot with stories within stories, and concealed identities. Pastoral elements in *TGV* are hopeless love, deceit, repentance with a magnanimous pardon, and finally a joyful marriage. The name of the heroine, Silvia, is derived from the Latin *silva*, meaning woodland, and the play's confusions are resolved in the forest.

Gilvary pointed out that although most of the play draws on comedy, pastoral and romance for its treatment of love, its main theme is the conflict between love and friendship. Valentine's renunciation of Silvia out of friendship for Proteus is part of the traditional story. What is different in Shakespeare's *TGV* is that the offer is not accepted, apparently out of deference to the lady—a rejection of the code of medieval friendship in favor of romantic love.

John Hamill followed with a colorful PowerPoint presentation—"Did Shakespeare Go to Mantua?" He provided graphic evidence of the author's accurate knowledge of Mantua and its art works, making it all but certain that he visited the city. Hamill identified at least eight specific references to Mantua in Shakespeare's plays and poems. Although no documentation currently exists that Oxford visited Mantua, the city is on the main road and in close proximity to the other six cities in northern Italy that he did visit during his eleven-month tour of the country in 1575-76. The playwright's knowledge of the Italian language and his familiarity with places that were probably accessible only to wealthy travelers support the argument that he was actually Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford.

Hamill observed that prominent orthodox scholars—Stanley Wells, Stephen

(cont'd on p. 18)

(cont'd from p. 17)

Orgel, Alan Nelson, and Steven May—try to explain the lack of evidence of Italian travel by William Shakespeare of Stratford by asserting that the dramatist's knowledge of Italy and Italian art was faulty and obtained second-hand. But Hamill amply demonstrated, using factual sources and his own photographs, that the playwright's references to the geography, art works, history, and customs of Italy are not only accurate to the last detail, but almost certainly were the result of direct observation.

In particular, language and imagery in *The Winter's Tale*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Venus and Adonis*, and *The Rape of Lucrece* have been traced to the sculpture and murals of Giulio Romano in Mantua's Ducal Palace and Palazzo Te, and elsewhere. Although Romano was revered in his own time, his reputation today is that of a third-rate artist. However, Hamill's research, including his remarkable photographs of Romano's statuary and massive murals, confirms that he merits not only more attention as a Renaissance master but also as a key figure in the search for the sources of Shakespeare's Italian references and classical imagery.

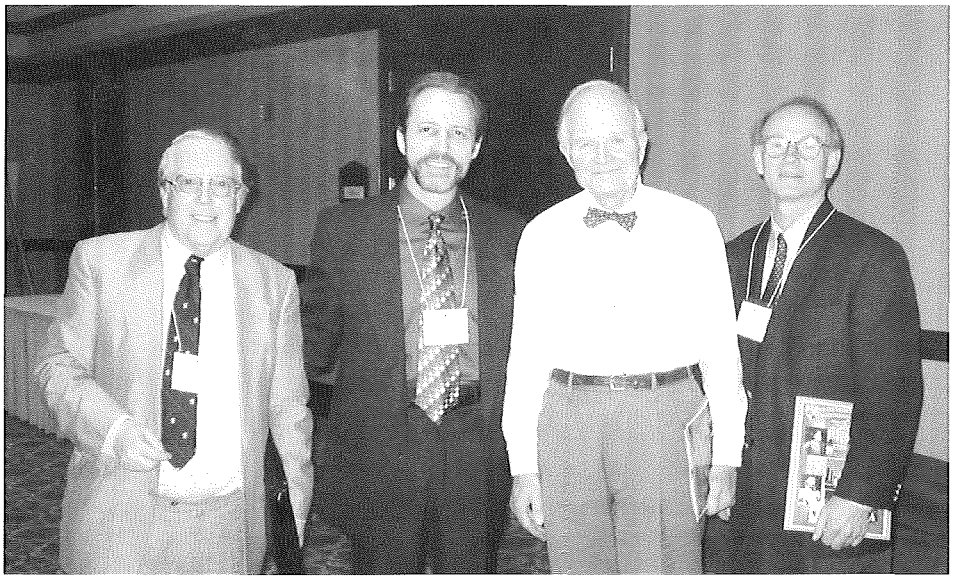
Bill Farina concluded the panel's presentation with a wide-ranging survey of the subject of Shakespeare and Italy, illustrated with two dozen slides of maps, architecture, paintings, and Italian locales in Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare's numerous references to geographic details throughout Italy have proved to be accurate, and his vivid verbal portraits of particular figures, such as Venus and Adonis, appear to be based on specific works of art, such as Titian's painting *Venus and Adonis*—works that could only be seen in Italy.

Farina summarized the two-thousand-year history of theater in Italy using photographs of the ancient Teatro Romano in Verona, the Teatro Olympico in Vicenza—the first permanent indoor theater in Europe—and the Teatro Globo in Rome, a newly-constructed replica of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

Lastly, Farina pointed out the contrast between the details of Venetian life found in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and those in Ben Jonson's *Volpone*. Shakespeare's are natural, unobtrusive, and not derogatory. Jonson's appear to be taken from books and deprecate all things Italian, from food and wine to husbands and serving girls.

The Psalms, Shakespeare, and Oxford

James Brooks presented his analysis of the extent to which the markings of the Psalms in Oxford's Bible match the references and allusions to the Psalms in Shakespeare's plays. Oxford marked the Psalms primarily with icon-like drawings of a pointing hand in the margin or gutter in the Sternhold & Hopkins Metrical Psalms that was bound with the Geneva Bible. Brooks assessed the extent of the overlap with Shakespeare's use of the Psalms using statistical methods incorporating comparisons with Marlowe's plays, Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and Bacon's complete works as a control. He showed that 15 of the 21 psalms marked by Oxford are primary references for passages in Shakespeare's plays, a result that would occur by chance with very low probability: 0.001. In contrast, the comparisons showed that the overlap between Shakespeare's references to the Psalms and those of Bacon, Spenser, and Marlowe were consistent with the random hypothesis; the overlap between Oxford's markings and these three authors was also consistent with the random hypothesis. While this outcome is highly favorable to the Oxfordian view of the authorship question, Brooks noted that this in itself was insufficient to conclude that Oxford in fact wrote the plays attributed to Shakespeare, but that the results certainly justified additional quantitative analysis of the other markings in Oxford's Bible.



From left to right: Derran Charlton, Chris Paul, Jim Hardigg, Joe Peel

Alternative Stratfords, Alternative Bards

Stuart Marlow spoke on the problem of searching for the real Shakespeare, a task made more difficult, he noted, by the Disneyfication of Stratford. Absent a smoking gun to settle the authorship question, Stuart suggested two means of making progress, the first being the use of carefully researched media presentations aimed at familiarizing the public with the Oxfordian case. He then treated the conference attendees to a showing of his and his students' effort along this line, a television documentary project "Looking for the Real Shakespeare." Secondly, Marlow suggested a fresh look at the referential and political significance of the Stratfords east of London and the Wilton Estate of Stratford-sub-Castle as more plausible than Stratford-on-Avon as locations associated with the Bard. Marlow believes this might well reveal evidence undermining the current Stratfordian paradigm.

Friday Night at the Theater

Many attendees spent a delightful Friday evening at the Shakespeare Tavern dinner theater. Following a convivial repast—the menu included English pub fare and an ample selection of ales—the Shakespearean players treated the audience to a stirring performance of *Richard II*, authored by, according to the playbill (who can doubt it?), none other than Edward de Vere. Others traveled to nearby Oglethorpe University and saw the Georgia Shakespeare Festival players in a thrilling performance of *Macbeth* in their new and intimate theater in the Conant Performing Arts Center.

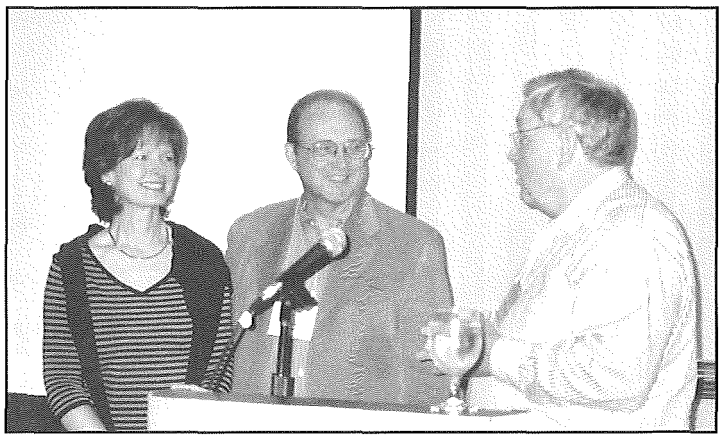
The Bard and the Bench

Professor **Robert Peterson** recently came to the attention of Oxfordians through his attendance at a conference on the authorship question at the University of Tennessee's law school. Professor Peterson's informative and highly entertaining talk on "The Bard and the Bench" gave conference attendees a *tour d'horizon* of references from the canon as they have appeared over the years in legal opinions, arguments, and decisions. In a sidelight, Prof. Peterson told of his research into Star Chamber proceedings and his discovery that someone, when found guilty of an offense, was sentenced to write a play! His essay introducing his database of Shakespearean references can be found at 39 Santa Clara Law Review 789.

Murder and Burial

Bill Farina illustrated his remarks on *Macbeth* with more than three dozen slides of photographs, engravings, and title pages from the Elizabethan era and from 20th century archives. Drawing on a variety of sources, including Richard Whalen's recent article in *The Oxfordian*, Farina reviewed the disagreement between orthodox scholars, who date *Macbeth* to 1606 or later, and Oxfordians, who suggest it was written by Edward de Vere as early as 1568 and later revised. Farina focused on the experiences and opportunities available to de Vere that he might have drawn upon to write *Macbeth*, such as his service in Lord Radcliffe's army in Scotland in 1570 and his probable access to the Stewart Chronicle, another likely source for the play.

Stephanie Hughes, editor of *The Oxfordian,* spoke briefly about her recent visit to Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey. She suggested the possibility that Ben Jonson's comment—that Chaucer, Spenser and Beaumont need not move over to make room for Shakespeare—might have been intended to be taken in the opposite sense; in other words, that Shakespeare (i.e. Oxford) should be buried in Poet's Corner where he belonged, or perhaps that he had already been buried there, as stated by his cousin, Percival Golding. Hughes also described the five articles in the 7th annual issue of *The Oxfordian*, which had just been published.



Newly Elected President Jim Sherwood thanks Judy and Frank Davis for their contributions to the Society.

Saturday Luncheon Speaker Surprise

On Saturday morning, **Dr. Frederick Marcus** dropped by unexpectedly. He had read Joe Sobran's book, *Alias Shakespeare*, and wanted to meet the author. Dr. Marcus, a visiting scholar on the faculty of Emory University in the department of Philosophy, graciously accepted Frank Davis's impromptu invitation to make some remarks at the Saturday luncheon on his academic approach to inductive logic, as applied to the authorship question in his Platonic philosophy course. In the course, the students conduct a case study of Edward de Vere as the author of works attributed to Shakespeare. They use inductive reasoning to explore what facts, taken in context, support a case for de Vere and what facts refute this case. The course is one of the most popular in a group required for graduation at Emory.

Theories on the Sonnets

Matt Cossolotto's presentation focused on the fundamental issue of whether the Sonnets are autobiographical and might provide some clues as to the identity of the author. Cossolotto identified 12 sonnets he terms the "Last Will" sonnets. He believes they serve three purposes: a summing up of the poet's lifetime of woes and regrets, a farewell to the poet's "beloved," and a vehicle for the poet's dying wishes. Furthermore, Cossolotto argued these sonnets were written at a time when the poet was anticipating his imminent death (see article on p. 8).

W. Ron Hess outlined his theory that the 1584 *Pandora*, dedicated to Oxford, played a role in the origination of the Sonnets by providing an underlying Euphues meaning or theme. He argued that the "Beloved Youth" of the Sonnets represented Oxford as Euphues, the heroic embodiment of the new English language that Oxford and his circle were celebrating in the 1570s and early-80s. Hess pointed out the clue for this idea (derived in part from Sid Lubow's Ovidian Echo and Narcissus approach to interpreting the Sonnets) can be found in the *Pandora* sonnets by Soothern, which he believes is a pseudonym for Oxford (Sooth = truth; so, Soothern → of truth → de Vere). Hess stated that all the themes in Shakespeare's Sonnets can be found in *Pandora*, as well as in other sources such as Ovid, Petrarch, Surrey, Du Bellay, and Ronsard. His handout showed a number of examples in the Sonnets in which "Euphues" or some similar term could be substituted for the "thee" or "my love" types of phrases conventionally thought to identify the "Beloved Youth." They still retain a cogent

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meaning, and, therefore, lead him to conclude that *Pandora* was an early precursor to the Sonnets.

The Sonnets Examined

The Sonnets Panel proved a highlight of the Atlanta Conference. Oxfordians Joseph Sobran and Hank Whittemore exchanged views, opinions, and theories with Stratfordians Steven May and Paul Voss. Dr. Daniel Wright skillfully and unobtrusively moderated the discussion. Dr. Wright made it clear from the outset that he conceived the panel much like an after-dinner meeting (with brandy snifters in hand?) of four experts in a comfortable room eager to engage in a spirited, though friendly, conversation on the Sonnets. This approach succeeded magnificently: each of the panelists presented his view effectively, time was evenly allocated to all, and the audience thoroughly enjoyed the intellectual give-and-take of four outstanding experts.

Dr. Wright asked each of panelists a different question, which ensured coverage of a diverse range of topics. Not surprising, however, much of the ensuing discourse devolved to the longstanding controversy among scholars as to whether the Sonnets are autobiographical, and if so what do they tell us about the poet, and—of interest to Oxfordians—the question of who penned these enigmatic verses.

Dr. Voss, a self-confessed neophyte concerning the authorship issue, outlined a simplified view of Shakespearean orthodoxy. Citing dozens of title pages appearing during the life of the Stratford man, he argued that each title page typically displayed five factual points, none of which have been found by years of prior scholarship to be incorrect or refuted, not the date, the publisher, the printer, the title, or the place where the work was sold. Consequently, he sees no reason to question the identification of Shakespeare, the fellow from Stratford-on-Avon, as the legitimate author. His utter belief in "what you see" and "things are as they seem" reflects the strong reliance of orthodox scholars on documentary evidence, a view quite familiar to Oxfordians in past encounters with them in debating the authorship question. This approach often leaves Oxfordians with the impression that Stratfordians are reluctant to inquire more deeply and skeptically beyond the surface "facts."

Dr. May advanced a more complex version of the Sonnets. His remarks were well meant, lacking any contentious tone and he continued to express his appreciation of Oxford as a colorful figure. Nonetheless, the key point Dr. May stressed with great conviction was that the poetry we know to be Oxford's (written when Oxford was in his teens and early-20s and thus considered "juvenilia" by Oxfordians) is simply "common," not extraordinary, and certainly devoid of any indication of latent genius. This opinion, he stated, was formed through decades of studying poetry of the Elizabethan era. Dr. May eluded the question of why so many of Oxford's contemporaries lavished their praise on his talent.

In contrast to the Stratfordians on the panel, **Hank Whittemore** and **Joe Sobran** firmly believe the Sonnets are strongly autobiographical. Sobran noted a number of correspondences to Oxford's life in the Sonnets: references to his lameness, his age and social status, his sense of disgrace, and the use of legal phraseology, for example. Moreover, the tone in many of the sonnets depicting a lack of hope and regret over a life that is irreparably ruined is hardly consistent with the notion of a brilliant, successful young playwright/poet from Stratford. Sobran sees additional evidence for Oxford as the sonneteer in the prefatory letter he wrote for Thomas Bedingfield's translation of *Cardanus Comfort*; Sobran detects in the letter a large number of distinct lexical similarities to the Sonnets, more than one would reasonably deem coincidental. In response to Dr. May's argument concerning Oxford's early verse, Sobran echoed his keynote address to the conference in which he stated that a number of anonymous collections of sonnets were likely Oxford's work as were others published under pseudonyms. He reiterated the view he offered in his successful book *Alias Shakespeare* that Oxford and the young friend in the Sonnets were homosexual lovers.

Hank Whittemore expressed an equally strong conviction of the autobiographical nature of the Sonnets and their connection to specific historical events relevant to Edward de Vere. "We cannot fail to be struck," says Whittemore, "by the intense emotional feelings expressed in the Sonnets; this is a real story." He gave an impassioned plea for understanding "the story" in the sonnets, for following the facts in a chronological and easily understood Oxfordian line. He outlined his theory, as presented in his new book, *The Monument*, that the form and content of the Sonnets supply the historical context of the relationship between Oxford and Henry Wriothesley, the 3rd Earl of Southampton. Whittemore believes the centrally positioned Sonnets 27 to 126 comprise a "monument" constructed by Oxford for Wriothesley that forms in effect a diary of events that unfolded from the time of Wriothesley's imprisonment following the Essex rebellion in February 1601 to the funeral of Elizabeth I on April 28, 1603.

The audience experienced a stimulating "debate" with a clear winner: the Sonnets.

Banquet Talk

Longtime Oxfordian **Gordon Cyr** entertained the audience with reminiscences about three outstanding men who were his colleagues in the SOS during the early 1970s—Richard C. Horn, Abraham Bronson Feldman, and Charlton Ogburn Jr.

Genealogical Research

Derran Charlton's Sunday morning talk drew upon his research on the Shakespeare and Trussell families in Warwickshire and on the ancestors of Edward de Vere. Charlton investigated the records of churches near the Trussells' Billesley Hall estate. He noted that a hollow space beneath the floor of one of the churches had been discovered to contain a box-like container or chest, the contents of which have yet to be examined by anyone. Charlton also made reference to *Romeo and Juliet* (I.iv.35-43) in connection with his genealogical research. The capitalizations of Candleholder, Mouses, and Constable in the First Folio's text led him to realize they may represent surnames. In these and other phrases in the passage, Charlton offered possible identifications with about a dozen of Oxford's grandparents, great-grandparents, and second- and third-generation great-grandparents.

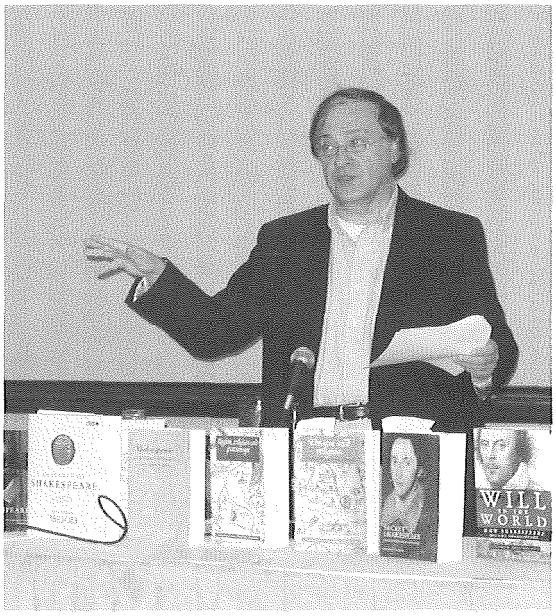
Stratfordian Crisis

Peter Dickson reviewed the latest developments within the Stratfordian community: the increasingly contentious dispute between orthodox scholars and those who are convinced that the incumbent Bard led a clandestine or double life as a secret Roman Catholic. He noted that the momentum of the Catholic Bard movement has strengthened since late 2003 with the appearance of six new books. They reflect the growing disagreement between Stratfordians about how one could ever reconcile the crypto-Catholic Stratford man with the non-sectarian nature of the works. Opposing this oncoming "Tsunami wave," as Dickson put it, are such orthodox establishment scholars as Stanley Wells and Katherine Duncan-Jones who insist such reconciliation is impossible. He described Stephen Greenblatt's new high-profile book on Shakespeare's life not so much as a fierce counterattack against the Catholic Bard paradigm, but as an effort to obscure the fissures between the two camps.

Dickson emphasized the fatal implications for the Stratfordian position stemming from the conflict, which he sees as arising from sharp divisions over three main substantive questions: whether the character of the literary works rule out an author with an abiding attachment to outlawed Roman Catholicism, whether the Stratford man in his youth really acquired polish and patronage while a tutor in households of aristocratic Catholic families in Lancashire, and finally, whether his personal character becomes less admirable if he was a Catholic who betrayed his family and friends' religious heritage and sold out for fame and fortune to become the senior professional dramatist at the Elizabethan-Jacobean courts.

Teachers' Panel

Author and publicist **Matthew Cossolotto** opened the Teachers' Panel with a parody of the soliloquy—"To Be(lieve) or Not To Be(lieve) That Is The Question"—to make the point that teachers and speakers in classrooms should make Shakespeare presentations both informative and entertaining. He proposed an SOS Speakers Bureau to alert the public to doubts about the traditional biography, and to provide reasons to consider Oxford as the author.



Peter Dickson

Speakers would encourage critical thinking and try to open minds without being dogmatic or inflexible. Cossolotto presented four reasons why Shakespeare lovers should embrace the authorship question: a search for truth is valuable in its own right; simple justice—if the wrong man has been given credit, the mistake should be corrected; a fascinating literary mystery worth investigating; and identifying the correct author will enhance understanding and appreciation of poems and plays.

Oxfordian researcher **Pidge Sexton** described her proposed Teacher's Packets for teaching the Shakespeare plays in a new and different way. The technique involves students writing a personal allegory. Elements of this experience will then be related to works already studied. Once these tools are in place, the exercise will then move to studying Shakespeare. Each individual packet will focus on one particular play, and will contain research and writing projects, as well as biographical material on Oxford pertaining to that play. The packets will also contain student handouts and complete annotations for the teacher. Sexton is seeking funding sources for this project, and welcomes any support or suggestions at: *pidge4@mindspring.com.*

Concordia University English Professor **Dan Wright** declared that a true appreciation and understanding of Shakespeare requires recognizing his perspective and his purpose. After learning about the true author and his circumstances, it becomes much easier for students to understand Shakespeare. Some anti-Stratfordians insist that Shakespeare's works contain embedded codes and arcane constructs that require maps, guidebooks and Gnostic-like intuition to understand. But given the correct context, it is no more difficult to comprehend Shakespeare than it is to discern the targets of Charles Dickens' Christian social criticism or to recognize in *The Importance of Being Earnest* many of the particulars of Oscar Wilde's closeted homosexual life. Armed with a broad biography of Oxford and the history, personages, and issues of the Elizabethan era, most students will quickly find that Shakespeare is well within their interpretive grasp.

Savannah College of Art and Design Professor **Lew Tate** made the point that he is privileged to teach Shakespeare and always tries to promote discussion of Oxford and the broader authorship issue. He emphasized that teaching about Oxford is essential to understanding Shakespeare and that teaching Shakespeare is not complete without a study of the authorship issue. He distributed a 20-day "Oxford Syllabus," detailing the books, plays, and discussion points he uses to illustrate biographical and other links between Oxford and the Shakespeare canon.

—*The Editors* ❑

Where in the World is Will? C-SPAN Interviews Stephen Greenblatt

Stephen Greenblatt's *Will in the World* is the latest volume to be added to the sagging shelf of Shakespeare biographies. As expected, it adds not a single fact to the record, but has spawned dozens of reviews and several interviews with the youngish Harvard humanities professor, who is suddenly in the media limelight. The most extensive interview—by host Brian Lamb—was broadcast on C-SPAN's "Booknotes" last November 14th.

Lamb first asked, "What did you write about Shakespeare that others haven't?" Greenblatt replied, "I've tried to bring Shakespeare back into the world, in the world he lived in and in our world. I've tried to take the traces that he left, little chicken scratchings, really, in the sand, and make a human being out of them." But only twice in this ten-thousand-word conversation does Greenblatt even try to relate the human being from Stratford to anything in the Shakespeare canon, and both examples tax the credulity of anyone familiar with the subject.

First, Greenblatt revives the old speculation that Shakespeare of Stratford watched the execution of the alleged poisoner Dr. Roderigo Lopez in 1594, and in the same year attended a revival of Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta,* though evidence he did either is absent. According to Greenblatt, the reaction of the crowd—the laughter at Lopez' dying words—stimulated Shakespeare to write sympathetically about a Jew in *The Merchant of Venice* as "a response" to Marlowe's anti-semitic *The Jew of Malta.*

The other connection that Greenblatt sees is between the death of Shakespeare's son Hamnet in 1596 and his *Hamlet,* written in 1601. Never mind that, as Greenblatt admits, "after the death of Hamnet Shakespeare, his father went on to write plays like *Much Ado About Nothing* or *Merry Wives of Windsor* or A*s You Like It*—that is to say, light-hearted, happy plays with lots of laughter, joy, happy marriages." Never mind that "the play that he inherited was a revenge story about a son taking vengeance for the murder of his father." Greenblatt says that "Shakespeare freighted that story with extraordinary weight, extraordinary material about mourning and grief and loss and what your relationship is with dead people, whether they can speak to you any longer, whether they live in some other place or simply have been erased forever. And that weight, that extraordinary weight, I think, can be traced back to the experience of this loss." It may strike some as a desperate leap—from the death of Shakespeare's son to the death of Hamlet's father, but this is the best Greenblatt can do to find a source for Hamlet in the biography of the "human being from Stratford."

He is no more convincing on the authorship question, the second, and perhaps the silliest, question Lamb put to him: "What's your reaction when you read about professors that say he didn't even exist?" Greenblatt's answer: "People have a lot of strange ideas about a lot of things, Brian. I mean, in the case of Shakespeare, he left a lot of records. He was famous in his own time as a playwright, and it would require a conspiracy theory quite of an extraordinary magnitude to cover his tracks." This is an answer worthy of a politician: first, avoid the question; second, pick a convenient straw man; third, use a buzz phrase to demolish it.

(cont'd on p. 24)

Obituary for Eric Sams

By Frank Davis

On Wednesday, September 22, 2004, the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, reported the death of Eric Sams at the age of 76—"Eric Sams, musicologist and literary scholar, born May 3, 1926; died September 13, 2004." He was described as "exceptional both as a musicologist, specializing in German lieder, and as a Shakespeare scholar." Like Charlton Ogburn Jr., Sams served in the Intelligence Corps during WW II, where he excelled in detailed analysis. This trait he carried on to his later Shakespeare studies.

Sams was born in London and educated at Westcliff school for boys where he won a major scholarship to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, when he was only 16. After the war, Sams completed his studies reading modern languages, French and German. Following graduation, he entered civil service and became a principal officer in the Department of Employment. Edward Greenfield of *The Guardian* goes on to report "Sams met his wife, Enid Tidmarsh, when he was still serving in the Intelligence Corps, marrying her in 1952. A pianist and teacher, she died in 2002. They are survived by their sons Richard, a leading chess player and Japanese scholar, and Jeremy, the well-known composer, translator and theatre-director."

Sams wrote several books on music including *The Songs of Hugo Wolf* (1961) and *The Songs of Robert Schumann* (1969). This was followed by a book on Brahms's songs in 1972. Sams's first major publication regarding Shakespeare came in 1985 with an annotated edition of *Edmund Ironside*. In 1995, he published *The Real Shakespeare*, subtitled *Retrieving the Early Years 1564-1594*. Sams postulated that Shakespeare began writing plays in the mid-1580s!

Then in 1996 came Sams's *Shakespeare's Edward III*. As I was preparing for a presentation on Edward III, I spent a lot of time reviewing Sams's book. The first proposal of the Shakespeare attribution of this play was made in 1760 by Edward Capell who was largely ignored. *Edward III* has now been accepted by many, but not all, orthodox scholars as belonging to the Shakespeare canon, largely a result of the effort of Eric Sams. In 1998, the play was finally added to the New Cambridge edition of Shakespeare's works.

No, Eric Sams was not a professed Oxfordian, but he could have been. Sams, in defending his thesis regarding the attribution of *Edward III*, made some remarkable statements that Oxfordians will appreciate. The following from his edition of *Edward III* are but a few examples:

> To admit an entire new play, however, is to admit previous prejudice. In Academia, furthermore, what is not known is not knowledge. (1)

> The modern professional mind-set still views every variant version of any Shakespeare play, or any unfamiliar style, as the work of anyone but Shakespeare himself. (1)

> But the unanswerable point has been made (most recently in Sams 1995a) that all these conjectures are just literary inventions emanating from the elitist attitudes of the 1920 Oxbridge that still dominate orthodox scholarship world-wide. (1-2)

> The tide of current orthodoxy is sluggishly on the turn. At least one professional (Honigmann 1982, 90;1985) has cogently contended that Shakespeare wrote his first plays long before the accepted date of c. 1590, his twenty-sixth year. (2)

> Before long, all the modern 'collaborators', 'plagiarists' and 'memorial reconstructors' will be seen as the unevidenced and unnecessary entities they are. One single hand is enough explanation. (2)

Another example of Sams's polemical style comes from a 1988 article: "The layman can only marvel at modern Shakespeare methodology, which is devoted to deducing historical fact from literary opinion." (Sams, *Notes* 41)

Furthermore, the following comments regarding the "determination of attribution" should particularly interest Oxfordians:

> First, the standard of proof required should be that of civil cases, namely a preponderance of probability.... Secondly, the procedure should also resemble a court of law admitting circumstantial evidence, whence accurate inference 'tends to become easier as the number of established facts grows and as they point, ineluctably, to the same conclusion... Thirdly, the jurors' mind-set needs to be neutral or they cannot properly address themselves to the matters of fact that they are required to consider. (Sams, Edward III 161)

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(cont'd from p. 22)

Even ignoring the many conspiracies that have succeeded (the murders of Caesar and of Lincoln come to mind), it would not have taken much of one to conceal the authorship of forty or so plays among the hundreds of Elizabethan plays, most of which, in fact, remain anonymous, even today. But the answer satisfied Lamb, and that was the end of the authorship discussion.

Only one reservation crept into Greenblatt's paean to the Stratford man—the way he treated his wife. On the subject of the will, he says "And between the lines is written that he gives to his wife his second best bed. If that isn't an insult, I don't know quite what is." And then: ". . . in effect, his whole married life he spent apart from his wife."

Greenblatt did articulate one nice image of the Sonnets—describing them as "curtained rooms, and there are more and more diaphanous curtains around them. And you sort of look through the curtain, you think you see someone doing something somewhere back in there, but you can't be sure who it is or what they're doing."

Greenblatt doesn't know it, but there's a lot more going on behind the curtains than he thinks. As it is, the interview revealed a familiar figure—another biographer exclaiming over the protean genius of Shakespeare, but unable to reconcile it, or even connect it, to anyone or anything in Stratford.

The text of the interview can be seen at *www.booknotes.org.*

— Ramon Jiménez ❑

Math Professor Leads New Seattle Chapter

The Shakespeare Oxford Society of Seattle is off to a great start with twenty-four members on its mailing list, and more than a dozen joining each of the monthly discussions.

Recently, the group has heard from Michael Brame, professor of linguistics at the University of Washington and author, with Galina Popova, of *Shakespeare's Fingerprints*; and from Allan Armstrong, an actor with the Seattle Shakespeare Company, who has delivered passages from the plays. Armstrong is an Oxfordian, and his theater company's brochure says that "Shakespeare's works may actually have been written by Edward de Vere."

So far, the group has discussed *Love's Labour's Lost*, several of the history plays, and Stephen Greenblatt's recent imaginary biography of the Stratford man as the poet-dramatist.

Founded last August by Sam C. Saunders, professor emeritus of mathematics at Washington State University, the group meets at the Kirkland Community/Senior Center on the second Monday of the month from 10 a.m. to noon.

Saunders has used his math skills to demonstrate that Shakespeare knew the odds in Hamlet's duel—subtle, complex odds that commentators have not understood. He also resolved a long-running, arithmetical dispute for the Cape Cod Oxfordian group by demonstrating that the odds against any given lad in Stratford completing eight years in the school there were about sixteen to one. Not every Stratford boy went to the school.

For each meeting, Saunders mails notices with suggestions for discussion and "homework assignments," but no quizzes. The group's manifesto: "Our meetings are informal but all attendees are encouraged to participate; no officers, no by-laws, no dues, and no voting except where to go to lunch afterwards. All talk of politics or religion later than the 16th century is banned. We encourage people to attend who will do a bit of study and are capable of raising novel interpretations sparking either outrage or applause or both."

James Sherwood, president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, congratulated Saunders and the Seattle group on their successful launch. "We want to encourage such groups everywhere," he said. "From all we hear, they are stimulating, enlightening and fun. Anyone who wants to start an Oxfordian discussion group should contact Sam Saunders (*smru@Comcast.net*), Frank Davis (*davisfm@bellsouth.net*), and/or Richard Whalen (*rfw@capecod.net*) for tips on how to get started." *– Richard F. Whalen*

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CONTENTS