



An Oxfordian Response

Stephanie Hopkins Hughes

Not so long ago there was talk about a ‘group theory,’ that the works of Shakespeare were written by a number of writers who all published under his name, or perhaps a sort of committee effort, in which a play got passed around so it could be improved by each in turn. This notion seems to have been quashed, hopefully for good. This may be the way some mediocre works get written. Certainly no great work of art was ever made by committee.

Recently the interest has shifted to finding as many candidates as possible. Articles and lecture series now focus on ‘the leading candidates,’ with Oxford assigned his portion of the discourse as though he were somehow on the same level as the rest.

Well, he isn’t. Where others may have a few contact points between their biographies and the plots, a few similarities in their works, if any, to the themes, language, and so forth, of the plays, his credentials are so vast in comparison that it seems almost absurd to have to keep pointing them out.

There is a silver lining to this cloud, as there always is. We’re learning more about other members of Oxford’s community. No, they didn’t write the plays, but they did play some part in this story, and it’s good to know what it is. Of the four other candidates discussed in the Open Forum we have one of Oxford’s lovers, one of his patrons, one of his apprentices, and one of his stand-ins. A man is known (in part) by the company he keeps, and the more we know about his company, the better we know Oxford.

William Stanley

The thing to keep in mind about William Stanley, Earl of Derby (pron. Darby), is that his candidacy arose long before J.T. Looney gave us Oxford. Since Stanley was an earl, most of the arguments based on Shakespeare’s education, his interest in noble sports, knowledge of the Court, reason for hiding his identity, etc., work as well or better for Oxford. However, that he’s an earl and that his name explains the use of the names Will or Willy are just about all there is in Derby’s favor,

since there's no evidence of his writing, which we may have to remind each other now and then, is, after all, what the authorship question is all about.

As John Raithel reminds us, we have a 1599 report that the earl was 'penning plays,' but unlike Oxford, who was publicly described as first among the best Court writers and 'best for comedy,' we have no plays by Derby, or poetry, or, if there ever were any, comments on their quality. Derby's wife (Oxford's daughter) suggested only that her husband's interest in the theater kept him 'from more prodigal courses'—no mention of writing.

So what role did William Stanley actually play in the world of Elizabethan theater? Obviously, that of a patron. As Raithel informs us, it was not known until recently (as reported by Andrew Gurr in 1996) that it was Stanley who financed the 1601 re-emergence of Paul's Boys. The world of academic Shakespeare studies is strangely blank when it comes to the role played by noble patrons in the creation and development of the London stage. They generally kept a low profile, but since without them there would have been no Elizabethan theater, it's curious that so little effort has been made to put them in the picture.

In 1596 the Burbages, at great expense, acquired property in Blackfriars where

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they created a costly new winter stage for the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Then, blocked by a petition signed by 31 residents, and lacking

their patron Lord Hunsdon, whose recent death left them without a voice on the Privy Council, the theater space (apparently) stood empty until late 1600 or early 1601 when it was put back into (private) use by a new children's company under the direction of Henry Evans.

If we can go by Hamlet's derogatory comments about 'the little eyases' (II.ii), it seems obvious that Shakespeare wasn't happy about this, so if, as now appears, it was Stanley who took the place of Hunsdon as the Burbages' patron, this action on his part could not have pleased his father-in-law. But it may have been Oxford himself who created this role for his son-in-law.

I believe that the play produced for the wedding of Elizabeth Vere to William Stanley in January 1595 was a version of *The Tempest*. There was probably at least one much earlier version, and there was certainly a later version performed at Court in 1605 (Stritmatter). But it is the version created for the Vere-Stanley wedding that provides the central relationship between Prospero (Oxford in his forties), lord of the Magical Isle (the Court Stage) and his daughter Miranda (Elizabeth Vere) and young Ferdinand (Ferdinando Stanley's brother William), with whom Miranda falls in love. Their union, blessed by Prospero, calls forth a promise to cease his magic (quit writing for the stage) and to 'bury his book' (get

rid of the plays that satirize the Court). He also intends to hand the Magical Isle over to the happy couple as a wedding gift.

By 1595, Oxford was probably much more interested in writing for the newly formed Lord Chamberlain's Men and their target audience in the West End than for the Court. He may have hoped to hand Court entertainment over to a trusted associate, leaving himself with the sole duty of writing for the adults. (It's clear the Queen preferred the children.) Later that year Roland White would write to Robert Sidney, 'some say the Earl of Oxford is dead.' So it would seem that following his daughter's wedding Oxford had made himself scarce—possibly too scarce.

Having passed along some duties to his son-in-law, Stanley, not sensitive to Oxford's needs as an artist (to write for adults, not children), takes the bit in his teeth and charges off in a direction contrary to his father-in-law's interests. Oxford's irritation with Stanley is evident in letters he wrote to Robert Cecil in 1595 and '96 (Green, *Oxford's Letters*) in which his complaints were about the Earl's treatment of his wife, but Stanley, now an earl and technically on the same social level as Oxford, may not have given a damn about the needs of either the aging Prospero or his daughter.

Shakespeare's Identity

I agree with Raithel that questions about Shakespeare's identity were probably contemporary with the publication of the quartos that bore his name, in other words, that the Authorship Question arose sooner rather than later. Because no direct statements to that effect reached print, so far as we know, we can only infer this. But surely ordinary common sense requires that, as his plays, performed by the nation's top acting company, rose in popularity in the 1590s, and the name Shakespeare began appearing on their published title pages, theater enthusiasts got interested in who was writing them and questions began to arise about the author.

If Stanley was at the forefront of play production during the period when Shakespeare's name first began to appear, he may very well have been one of those put about as the true author. It may be that Stanley, having lived for so many years in the shadow of his more talented and admired brother, was pleased by the attention, and so, like others who have sought to array themselves upstart-crow fashion in the feathers of their betters, made little effort to quell the rumor. If Oxford heard rumors that Stanley was the author, it could not have pleased him. He may have wished his own name kept quiet, but that didn't mean he was going to want someone else to get the credit, particularly someone like Stanley..

For years I've agreed with those who hold that Touchstone's exchanges with William in *As You Like It*, V.i, were aimed at William of Stratford—yet questions remain. First, the version of *As You Like It* that we have from the First Folio was

obviously written for a Court community—there's too much private Court stuff in it for it to have been written either for the public or for the West end audience—so what would be the point of creating this scene for this audience?

Second and most problematic is the dialogue, which would have been way over the Stratford grain-dealer's head, should he ever have heard it, which is unlikely, this being a play intended solely for the Court.

Thanks to Raithel's information, it now seems to me much more likely that this scene was directed at one who would have been present, along with the rest of the Court, for the production of *As You Like It* given at Wilton in August of 1603 (or

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who, if he wasn't present, would certainly have heard about it later). If the 'William' of V.i is a spear-shake at

William Stanley, every bit of dialogue makes sense. If Touchstone-Oxford was angry at William Stanley for pretending to be 'ipse,' warning him to 'be covered,' i.e. make himself less conspicuous, the kind of retaliation that he threatens to use on William might concern a courtier, but would mean nothing to a provincial grain dealer. Most likely of all is that, in typical Shakespeare style, Audrey's humble suitor represents a conflation of both Williams, both annoying Oxford at the time with efforts to make hay for themselves from his identity problem.

Shakespeare, whoever he was, may have been called various things by his fellows, not all of them polite, but surely no one would ever have called the man who created the language we speak today a 'niddicock' (nincompoop), which is how, in a letter to his wife, George Carey once referred to their brother-in-law, William Stanley (Wilson 474). It could, however, be fairly applied to the William of *As You Like It*.

Emilia Lanier

John Hudson has provided some interesting and important information about Emilia (Aemilia) Bassano Lanier (Lanier), who in recent years has taken a commanding position in Early Modern Women's Literature as the first to write in a strongly feminist voice in English and to do it well. The prologue to her *Salve Deus Rex Judeorum* (1611), is as forthright and cogent as anything written by her late 18th-century successor, Mary Wollstonecraft.

The usual arguments can be brought to bear against Hudson's thesis, but Number One has got to be that the one thing that we know for a fact that Emilia wrote hardly matches up to Shakespeare in quality. We don't need an expert telling us what's good and what isn't. Reading and comparing is something we can do for ourselves. Emilia's book, is good, but it isn't Shakespeare—it doesn't even come

close. What it does share with him is a courageous zest, a lively openness, that I believe was his gift, not just to Emilia, but also to Christopher Marlowe and John Donne and so many who followed in his footsteps.

Crossovers of style and usage are weak as anything but auxiliary evidence, since all of the candidates (who have works published in their own names) can show 'suggestive similarities' to Shakespeare. He was the big *kahuna* so it's hardly surprising that he was imitated. How else did his language spread so far and so fast? If, as we believe, Emilia was Oxford's lover in the 1590s (Hughes, *Dark Lady*), spending time with him, conversing with him, perhaps watching him write, certainly reading what he wrote, possibly even taking his dictation, of course she would be influenced.

No doubt Emilia got a much better education than most women while living with Oxford's sister-in-law, Susan Bertie, Countess of Kent, who herself got one of the best educations a woman could get at that time (from her mother, the learned Lady Russell, Dowager Duchess of Suffolk), but what is this in comparison with what Oxford

got in the eight years he spent with England's leading scholar of Greek and of Civil Law?

Is it certain (not just likely), that Emilia's mother was related to the composer Robert Johnson? Is it certain (not just possible), that Emilia was only seven when she went to live with Susan Bertie?

Even if we could accept that one of the greatest writers in the world, perhaps the greatest, could sublimate his/her true nature to the extent that a female Shakespeare would have to have write as he/she did about women, once the mask was off and she/he was able to write in her genuine female voice, that the result would be so much weaker than the writing she did in her male voice, hardly supports the view that she was Shakespeare. Read the famous antifeminist speech in the final act of *Taming of the Shrew*. Who wrote that? Not our Emilia! If there is a play remaining from this era from her hand it could be *The Yorkshire Tragedy*. It's certainly by a woman, and it's not in Mary Sidney's voice.

If the lateness of William of Stratford's biography is one of the major reasons for rejecting him as author of the Shakespeare canon, then Emilia, five years younger, is by far too late.

Finally and most damning for her candidacy is how it requires that authorship of the *Sonnets* be assigned to someone other than Shakespeare, for Emilia would hardly have portrayed herself (or any other woman for that matter) as the Dark Lady is portrayed in *Sonnets 127-152*, not to mention the impossible reversal of sex-attitude that giving her that authorship would require. Rowse, for all his faults, was right on the money when he explained her motivation in writing and publishing *Salve Deus* in 1611 as a concerted effort to prove to her community

that Shakespeare's 1609 portrayal of her was a distortion, and to show her community that her value lay elsewhere than just her sexuality.

Hudson makes some claims that require support. Is it certain (not just likely), that Emilia's mother was related to the composer Robert Johnson? Is it certain (not just possible), that Emilia was only seven when she went to live with Susan Bertie? If these are facts, they need to be documented; if surmises, then labeled as such. We read that, at one point, the Earl of Southampton was Emilia's 'next door neighbor,' a statement supported by a reference to a 1604 letter from a bishop to Robert Cecil. But the part quoted by Rowse does nothing to support Hudson (19). Does the full letter support it, and if so, in what way? If true it would make a considerable difference in projected scenarios for the background to the Sonnets.

Certainly the use of the names Bassanio in *Merchant of Venice*, of Emilia in *Othello* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*, of two of her uncles and one aunt in *The Spanish Tragedy* (Hughes 14) of her father's name in *Shrew*, and of her grandfather's name, Antonio—perhaps the most-used non-historical name throughout Shakespeare (14)—all bespeak a close relationship between Shakespeare and the Bassano family, but it hardly suggests that Emilia herself was Shakespeare.

One can hardly explain Shakespeare's knowledge of property law (Alexander) by Emilia's relationship with Hunsdon, who was not a lawyer, and who, even had he been, would probably not have spent his hours of dalliance with Emilia discussing the kind of legal knowledge displayed by Shakespeare.

Her relationship with Susan Bertie in the 1570s and '80s may well have informed her of the experiences of Susan's brother, Sir Peregrine Bertie, during his embassies to the Danish Court in the '80s and '90s. On the other hand, Bertie was Oxford's brother-in-law with whom we know he was close in the 1580s and probably long after.

Knowledge of Judaism and Hebrew texts may have been rare, as Hudson claims, but, as titles in Oxford's tutor's library list of 1566 reveal, they were not unknown to Oxford ('Sir Thomas Smith's Library List' <http://politicworm.com/articles/articles-by-shopkins-hughes>). Hudson mentions *La Celestina*, which is also on Smith's library list.

As for a satirical anti-Christian tone in either *Salve Deus* or Shakespeare claimed by Hudson, I beg to differ. What audience would either of them be addressing with such a text? In Emilia's book I hear a woman who felt despised by her fellow courtiers for her low rank, her Jewish heritage, and her sexuality, writing to defend herself to her Court community as a woman, a Christian, and an intelligent and highly educated human being.

I also see it as a spirited work of love, an English *Defense des Dames*, written partly as a gift to the women at Court who have been her benefactors, but equally as a rallying cry to the girls and younger women who need someone to tell them

that they're just as important in the grand scheme of things as their husbands, sons, and brothers.

Let's recognize Emilia for her genuine contributions to English literature and for her unbelievably courageous publication of her work under her own name. Let's give her the honor of acknowledging her for what she actually did, for, of all people, she would most have disdained to let anyone think that (like William Stanley) she would want to take credit for someone else's work, even Shakespeare's. That this great man once loved her with a passion he describes in *Antony and Cleopatra* should be enough.

Christopher Marlowe

Peter Farey makes a good case for Christopher Marlowe, that is, he makes a good case for what happened the day Marlowe died. Marlowe's death has inspired a good deal of inquiry over the years and many researchers have contributed important bits of information. I agree with Farey and the Marlovians who believe that the great poet was not actually killed, but was transported out of the country instead.

The major arguments for this are: 1) the choice of Deptford, which, as a port, may have been rowdy (and so used to violence), but equally significant, provided ships headed for Europe and the Straits of Gibraltar; 2) the hanging of John Penry the previous day in a very unusual place, an inn on the road between London and Deptford, which could have provided a corpse; and 3) the eight-to-ten hours that the killers waited before acting—waiting for what? For a ship to get ready to load? For a body to arrive by cart?

As for the appearance of the corpse, if it was naked, a rope burn around the neck could be easily covered with makeup, or, if clothed, by a collar. I read somewhere that the amount of blood flowing in and out of the brain is small compared with every other major organ. Because the brain is protected by the solid bone of the skull, the only way to stab it is through the eye-socket. Such a blow penetrates easily, killing instantly and without producing much blood. Since by the time Penry's corpse reached Deptford a stab wound would have bled very little or not at all, the eye wound could explain the lack of blood. Clearly, these 'friends' of Marlowe's were professionals.

With regard to Marlowe's style, Farey quotes Swinburne: 'He first, and he alone, guided Shakespeare into the right way of work. . . Before him there was neither genuine blank verse, nor genuine tragedy in our language.' This is nonsense and should be confronted wherever it's repeated. Blank verse was used to effect in Henry VIII's time by the Earl of Surrey, in 1561 by Thomas Sackville in *Gorboduc*, and probably by others as well. As for 'genuine tragedy,' was *The Spanish Tragedy* not genuine? Do they believe that it was Marlowe who wrote *The True Tragedy of the Duke of York* or *The True Tragedy of Richard III*?

Dating by use of enjambment is another bit of scholarly hocus pocus; there are run-on lines and feminine endings in just about everything going back to the 1560s and probably beyond. Marlowe's translations of Lucan and the *Amores* and his authorship of *Hero and Leander* rely solely on their title pages. Since none of these are noticeably in the style of his plays, it's just as likely that, following his death, these non-dramas were published under his name because, with him gone, his name was a means of getting some problematic (sexy) texts into print.

Shakespeare's fear of 'the wretch's knife' in Sonnet 74 could very well have been a reference to Marlowe's death, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it had to be Marlowe who wrote it. If written after June 1, 1593, it could have come from a writer who feared he might be headed for a similar fate. And what could have been Marlowe's purpose in writing the savage parodies of his own style we hear from Ancient Pistol in *Henry IV* and *Henry V*?

Farey provides nothing (here) but the vaguest surmise for Marlowe's possible life after Deptford. How many people knew of his existence? Where and with whom did he live? When did he die and was there any reaction? How did he connect with William

of Stratford and when and why did he decide to use his name? Lack of facts is no excuse when it comes to creating a working hypothesis; there must also be a feasible scenario.

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Most important, although Farey's answer to *how* Marlowe was eliminated makes sense, his answer to *why* does not. That Marlowe was transported rather than killed as a concession to various high-ranking patrons and fans also makes sense (a point we were raising by 1997), but what the Marlovians still fail to explain is exactly why he had to go. Farey states, 'Marlowe was apparently in desperate trouble with the Privy Council—Archbishop Whitgift in particular—and facing trial and execution.' But for what?

Curtis Bright, writing in 1996, comes closest to putting his finger on it: 'Marlowe's subversive drama was instrumental in causing his demise.' But then he hypothesizes that 'Cecilians murdered Marlowe as some kind of revenge killing for the crime of intellectual betrayal' (96), so we see that Bright too is in the dark. 'Intellectual betrayal'? What on earth does that mean?

And since somebody was obviously so set on getting rid of him, do Farey and the rest of the Marlovians really think that somehow Marlowe would be able to get away with continuing to write for the Stage without these powerful enemies (whoever they were) going after him again? Or that the actors could continue to perform his new plays without also getting into trouble? No, Marlowe's style per-

fectly reflects his nature. If he wouldn't change before they went after him, he was not likely to change afterwards.

Most disappointing, not Farey, not Nicholl, not Breight, nor anyone so far as we know, has ever defended Marlowe against the charge of spying, despite the fact, and fact it is, that there is no evidence whatsoever, no real evidence, that Marlowe ever worked for Walsingham, or anyone, as a spy.

The Marlowe Puzzle

In a series of articles and lectures in 1996-97 I sought to put the pieces of the Marlowe puzzle together in a way that made sense, finally incorporating everything in a self-published pamphlet in 1997. As is so often the case with these Shakespeare mysteries, including Oxford has helped bring clarity to the scenario, (Hughes, 'Marlowe'), but recently important information about Edward Alleyn and Francis Walsingham clarifies it even more.

I believe I can state now with a fair amount of confidence that Oxford was Marlowe's mentor during the periods that Marlowe was missing from Cambridge in 1584-87. This assigns the notions of his spying to the rubbish bin and accounts for a great deal else, including their similarities in style and phrasing. It also provides a solid background to Robert Greene's *Groatsworth* diatribes at 'Shakespeare' and the other writers. More substantial proofs remain to be discovered, but at least I can now offer a scenario that fits the big picture at most points, that brings most of the players into the picture, and that provides a secure platform for the Shakespeare era that followed directly on the heels of Marlowe's demise.

So what did happen to Marlowe? I think a case can be made for the still young and reckless (he was not yet thirty) adventurer shaking the English dust off his heels and heading east. Aware of the intellectual riches that, pouring into Europe from the Middle East through Italy and Spain, had helped inaugurate the European Renaissance, he may have craved to experience the eastern cultures more directly than by just reading books and writing plays. Like a number of homosexual writers since, men like Richard Burton, T.E. Lawrence, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Bowles and William S. Burroughs, he may also have sought a society that didn't see his brand of sexuality as a mortal sin. Sadly, we'll probably never know.

William of Stratford

I think William of Stratford is a good name for an English yeoman. I call him that partly because, having sold his family surname to the Lord Chamberlain's Men, he didn't own it anymore, and, since he didn't make it famous, by rights it should belong to the one who did. Also, the use of a single name for two individuals is the biggest hurdle we confront when attempting to explain the authorship question.

David Kathman would like to inform us how a Shakespeare scholar sees the authorship issue, but to what purpose? It's clear to us that William, when stripped of all 'perhapses' and 'possibilities,' all anecdotes, myths, and jokes that have grown like weeds in an empty lot to fill the vacuum that is the authorship of the Shakespeare canon, could not possibly be the world's greatest writer. All Kathman can do is describe to us, once again, the Shakespeare box and its contents, which we know all too well, having grown up with it. What he can't do, or won't, is meet us on our ground outside that box. And what is that? That William's background taken *in toto* (not as they prefer, one point at a time) is simply not that of a great creative writer. No great creative writer ever had such a life.

Kathman wants us to understand how the Shakespeare professional thinks, but it's clear that paid Shakespeare academics simply don't think, at least, not in any way that's ever going to resolve the plethora of Stratfordian anomalies. They begin by accepting the Stratford story, then arrange what facts may suit their version to fit the story, ignoring or fudging those that don't. This may be thinking, but it's not the kind that solves problems.

Shakespeare professionals, those who earn their living writing about Shakespeare, come to him through his text, which is where they prefer to remain. They've had to face many hurdles getting to their place in the academic hierarchy, and once in they

want to stay there. They become irritated if asked to discuss Shakespeare's identity

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because they really don't care who he was. If we say he's a cardboard man, that there's no evidence of an education, that the Droeshout is a cartoon and the history of the monument one long anomaly, they shrug, eager to get back to the lecture they're writing on the hermeneutics of gender displacement in *Cymbeline*. Although they won't state it so bluntly, they are the leading proponents of 'We have the plays, who cares who wrote them?'

The elephant in the academic living room that is the huge accumulation of anomalies we call the Authorship Question is something they've been living with all their scholastic lives, and like a family with a terrible secret, they know how to get along with each other by ignoring it. They'd prefer that the outside world not ask annoying questions, but they've learned from their respected mentors, those who gave them admittance to the insiders club of paid Shakespeare scholarship, how to field such questions. They're grateful to the Kathmans, Egans, Nelsons, and Elliotts of the world who spare them the task.

Shakespeare (the writer), though no mean scholar himself, has shown his opinion of such folks in the character of Holofernes. That's not to say that Holofernes

is a bad person or that he has nothing to offer, it's that he's simply the wrong man for this particular job. He's a Lestrade when what we need is a Sherlock Holmes, someone who can think outside the box, the one created 400 years ago by a few clever members of the Lord Chamberlain's men to protect the identity of their playwright, the goose that laid their great golden eggs.

There's no point in going through Kathman's argument point by point since none of his points actually relate to the Authorship Question. We say the Droeshout is a cartoon; they say Droeshout was a bad artist (he wasn't; look him up on the National Portrait Gallery website). We say the six signatures look like those of a six-year-old kid, they say the writer had the palsy. We say it's impossible that an entertainment genius would leave his field of endeavor in his forties right when his career was booming to return to his hometown and the business of buying and selling land; they call it 'prudent.' If this is what Kathman calls professional literary historicism, then he can have it. To quote an old New Yorker cartoon, 'I say it's spinach and I say the hell with it.'

There are all sorts of facts that both sides of this argument attempt to use to their particular advantage, but not all are of equal weight or importance. There is one, however, that stands above the rest like a literary historian's Colossus of Rhodes, a fact that renders three-quarters of Kathman's arguments simply beside the point, a fact that even those masters of disguise whose job it was to protect the Lord Chamberlain's-King's Men from such questions could not control. This is the pathetic Shakspeare signature, scrawled by what should be an obvious illiterate on six legal documents, a fact that asks the question—never answered, impossible to answer—how could someone who can't even write his own name write the 38 plays and 200 poems that created the language that we speak today? With these six illegible scrawls, William of Stratford signed the death warrant of his role as the world's greatest writer.

The English Departments can continue to postpone the moment of truth, but our turn will come, and like the subject of his works when it was finally accepted by the universities, 250 years after his death, as a subject worthy of their interest, his life will finally be brought to light by those who hold the keys to the archives.

Oxford

Finally there's the earl himself. There's no point in adding to his case as provided here, since Ramon Jiménez's presentation simply can't be improved upon. As Keats puts it: 'Truth is beauty, beauty truth.' All that remains is to point out how, with Oxford as Shakespeare, all four of the other candidates here fall easily into place as his associates.

Christopher Marlowe was Oxford's apprentice for three years at Fisher's Folly, which explains why he sounds so much like him. No doubt he would have grown

into a different voice had he been given time. But Marlowe was a hothead, and wouldn't listen to his mentor's warning.

Emilia Bassano Lanyer was Oxford's lover in the 1590s. She was born near Fisher's Folly and baptised in the church across the street. Her family lived in the neighborhood along with the Burbages, the Alleyns, and many other actors and musicians involved in the creation of the London commercial stage. Her brothers were Oxford's friends and fellow musicians, her foster mother and patron was Oxford's sister's sister-in-law, and her benefactor was Shakespeare's patron, Lord Hunsdon, whose 'bed vow' she broke when she got involved with Oxford in the early 1590s. She was his Dark Lady, his Cleopatra, his Kate the Shrew, his Rosalind.

William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby, was Oxford's son-in-law, to whom he bequeathed the Court Stage in 1595 when he married Oxford's oldest daughter. As is obvious from the first seventeen of *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, the so-called marriage sonnets, Oxford had hoped that this role of theater angel and son-in-law would be filled by the Earl of Southampton. When Southampton turned it down, it was filled by Stanley.

William of Stratford was Oxford's final stand-in, following Robert Greene (tales and poems) and Thomas Watson (Latin poems), who followed John Lyly (novels), who followed Thomas Lodge (tales), who followed Barnabe Riche (tales), who followed George Pettie (tales), who followed George Gascoigne (play translations), who followed Arthur Golding (Ovid translation), who followed Arthur Brooke (*Romeus and Juliet*). When Oxford was in need of a stand-in, having rid himself of Greene, his printer, the Stratford native, Richard Field, connected him with one of his hometown neighbors, a recusant with a large needy family, a silent chap who knew a good thing when it came his way.

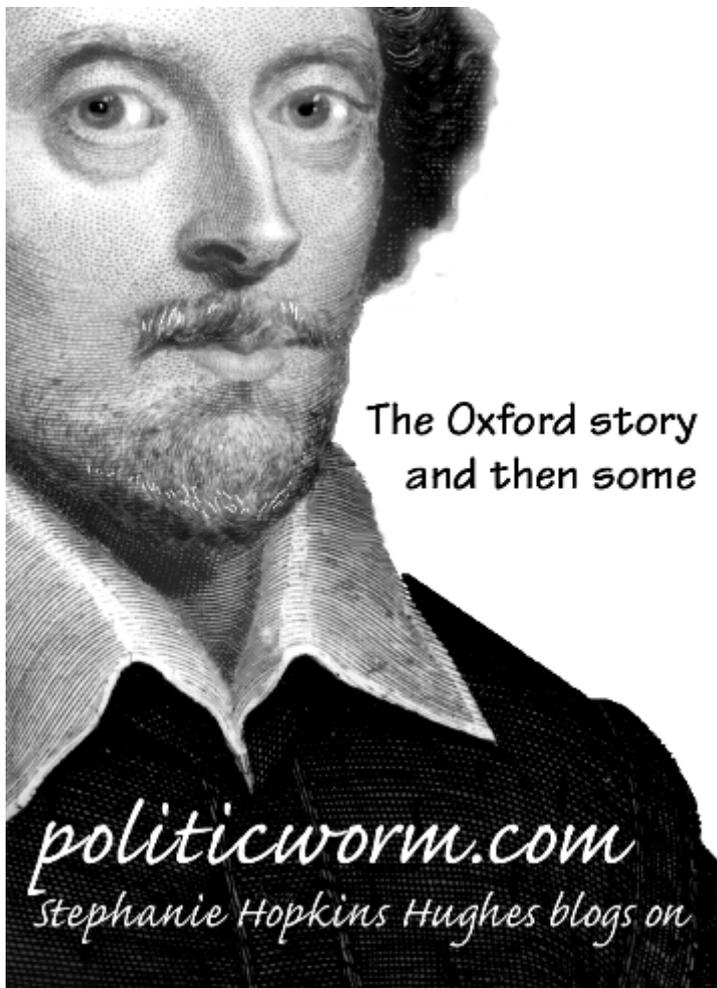
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News and calendar listings updated weekly.
Information on our annual fall conference speakers,
debates, mock trials and early-modern entertainments.
Lively discussion boards open to all-comers (some
private, for subscribers only); all threads archived.

J. Thomas Looney's *Shakespeare Identified*.
The full text (searchable)
Our news letter, *Shakespeare Matters*, online at
www.shakespearefellowship.org