



**ALTHOUGH** there's been a great deal of news on the Authorship front this year, the most important event may well be the publication of an article on the sources of *The Tempest* in *The Review of English Studies*, the prestigious literary journal out of Oxford University (see page 167). Authors Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky could write a book on the various forms of resistance they've met in their efforts over the past two years to get their articles on *The Tempest* published in mainstream journals and their lectures accepted at mainstream conferences. That they've had success, not only with *RES*, but also subsequently with *Shakespeare Yearbook*, says something about the quality of their scholarship and clarity of presentation, and, not least, about their persistence. It took months of passing the first article from one reader/reviewer to another before a decision was made to publish it. A reviewer in another journal, for example, wrote of their second article: "It's not hard to discern that there's an anti-Stratfordian agenda driving this move to knock out the Strachey letter"; ending with "I don't like the unspoken agenda driving it."

This is not the kind of success that trumpets from the rooftops, but it is the kind that, over time, will see more doors opening to Oxfordian scholarship, more venues for articles, and the kind of gradual acceptance, if not of Oxford, at least of the Authorship Question, that will eventually lead to its exploration by scholars with the kind of time and money that major universities can provide. That Brunell University in London and Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, have added Masters programs in Authorship Studies to their programs brings added impetus. A crack has appeared in the wall of the citadel and nothing now can prevent it from widening.

What, exactly, has this article on *The Tempest* accomplished? As the reviewer already quoted was quick to note, by moving the necessary date of origin back from 1611—a date based on the Stratfordian notion that the origin of play must have been the William Strachey letter—possibly far back, Stritmatter and Kositsky have effectively destroyed the most common complaint leveled at the authorship thesis, i.e., that Oxford could not have been Shakespeare because "some" of his plays—*The Tempest* always foremost—"are known" to have been written after his death in 1604. With this support knocked out from under the "Oxford died too soon" argument, it will be interesting to see what their fallback position becomes.

As a followup, journalist Richard Whalen takes a quick look at *The Tempest* and eleven other plays that Stratfordians routinely claim were written too late to be by Oxford, dismissing them one by one with broad but decisive strokes.

**I**N this issue Oxfordians take close looks at two of the most important, yet, currently, least regarded sources of Shakespeare's themes and language: the Greek classics and the Bible. Interest in the Greek sources of Shakespeare's works faded in the early twentieth century, largely because scholars were forced to limit their thinking to fit the confines of the Stratford grammar school education. The reasons for their disregard of the Bible are less obvious. Why would Shakespeare (whoever he was) not have been just as steeped in biblical language and imagery as the rest of his fellow Englishmen? There have been excellent scholars of Shakespeare's biblical knowledge, but they have remained essentially apart from most mainstream criticism. Both may be due to the compartmentalization of university studies—the Classics relegated to the Classics departments, the Bible to Theology—and to the increasing secularization of western thought in general, brought about chiefly by developments in Science. There's nothing wrong with secularization; it has helped to bring an end to the religious wars that raged throughout the European Middle Ages and Renaissance—and that continue to rage in other parts of the world. But when in our search for the sources of Renaissance literary themes and styles we ignore the Bible—and the myths that were the religions of ancient cultures—we lose our way. As any trip through a museum will show, religious feeling of all kinds has been the ground from which all great art first took root.

Carl Caruso asks us to consider the extent to which Shakespeare owed his learning to the Bible. Too often we forget the extent to which the Bible ruled Elizabethan life, that it was only with Elizabeth that the Reformation finally emerged in full force and lasting duration, or that the Reformation was founded on the notion that everyone had the right (if not the duty) to read the word of God in their own native language. We need to be reminded that this right was then reinforced by the creation of hundreds of schools that taught Latin, the language of the Old Testament, and some Greek, the language of the New, in other words, that English literacy was a direct result of the publication of the Bible in English. We who focus on the literature of the period, the poetry and plays, whether in English or translation, are often unaware that such works constitute something between five and ten percent of everything that was published during this period, all the rest being sermons or other religious works. By the time Shakespeare reached out to the public on the stages of the Theater and the Globe, the English had seen two generations of Bible readers reach maturity. In addition, as Caruso notes, every man, woman, and child above a certain age had the Bible stories and language drummed into them as regular attendance at an Anglican Church was required by law.

Caruso's article also reminds us that Shakespeare was, first and foremost, a poet. Poets choose words that evoke as well as inform. For instance, if I refer in print to someone as "mad, bad, and dangerous to know," those who know Lord Byron's story will sense an atmosphere of Regency romanticism that paragraphs of description couldn't provide. By means of a term here, a reference there, Shakespeare was adept at rousing realms of response, religious as well as strictly literary, in the minds and hearts of his audience.

While Caruso deals with his knowledge of the Bible, Earl Showerman discusses Shakespeare's knowledge of the ancient Greeks. Through a de-tailed analysis of the characters, language, and imagery that connect *The Winter's Tale* to the *Alcestis* of Euripides, he questions the automatic rejection by twentieth-century academics of any deep or pervasive influence on Shakespeare by the Greeks.



*Life-sized full-color statue of Anne Cecil on the Cecil tomb in Westminster Abbey.*

That so many of the neologisms attributed to Shakespeare are derived from Greek should have discouraged this misperception, but nothing can discourage the will to *not know*.

It should be noted that the portion of Smith's 1566 library list that he labelled *Grammatica et Poetica* included a copy of "Euripides" in Greek (we know that it was in Greek because he wrote the title in Greek) (Strype 280\*). That it contained the *Alcestis* is next to certain as it's most unlikely that any collection of Euripides's plays at this time would have been without it. The transformations in *A Winter's Tale*—of Hermione from woman to statue, and back to woman, and of Leontes from a decent man to one besotted with murderous jealousy, and back again—echo the theme of metamorphosis that so fascinated Shakespeare, notably in the plot of *Much Ado*, where Hero, unjustly accused of lechery, seems (to Claudio) to die and be reborn in much the same manner as *Alcestis*.

It would be difficult not to see a connection between these scenes and the tomb of Oxford's wife, Anne Cecil, in Westminster Abbey. This elaborate structure, built by her father for his wife and daughters (he himself is buried in a chapel at Burghley House while his son Robert is buried at Hatfield), still features a full-length life-sized cast bronze statue of Anne painted in full color, lying on her back, eyes open, hands poised on her chest in prayer. Assuming that the statue's unusually realistic face did resemble Anne, consider what effect a life-sized, full color statue of his dead wife would have had on a remorseful and imaginative Oxford upon entering the dimly-lit chapel in the great sanctuary? It would not be surprising if it inspired a deep desire to see her wife rise from her long sleep, to embrace her, and cry out like Leontes: "Today we have changed the past for a better life!" But that kind of magic is possible only in our dreams. And on the stage.

\* Editorial Works cited on page 178.

**J**UST to show that we're not exclusive, this issue includes material by four writers who can't (yet) be considered members of the Oxfordian community. Ward Elliott, whose response to the Shahan/Whalen article in the 2006 issue appears in this issue, is obviously not an Oxfordian nor about to become one anytime soon. Nan Prener, who reviews Peter Usher's new book on Hamlet's awareness of the Copernican thesis, is a writer of short stories with an interest in science for whom Usher's book has been the kind of side door introduction to the authorship issue that has brought so many to investigate the question in more depth. Usher himself is a scientist who came to Oxford through his interest in the origins of the Copernican Revolution in English history and his lifelong interest in Shakespeare.

Then there is Prof. Michael Egan of the University of Hawaii, whose investigation into correspondances that link the early anonymous play *Thomas of Woodstock* (a.k.a. *1 Richard II*), and *Richard II* (a.k.a. *2 Richard II*), led to the exhaustive four-volume work published in 2006. Confronted by the wall of indifference that is the fate of any creative and honest scholar whose work challenges Stratfordian dogma (we think in particular of Eric Sams), we hope that Egan finds with us the kind of reception that his scholarship deserves. Although the idea that *Woodstock* must have been Shakespeare's precursor to *Richard II* has been suggested before, Egan's exhaustive and meticulous scholarship has moved it from theory to fact.

Although Egan makes no reference to Oxford, Oxfordians will be interested that a connection to Oxford can (again) be established from his childhood years with Sir Thomas Smith. As Prof. Egan explains, if *Woodstock* was a "prequel" (placed earlier in time but actually written later) to *Richard II*, its anonymous author "apparently created the whole of Woodstock's bluff personality from Gaunt's passing observation [in *Richard II*] that his brother was a 'plain, well-meaning soul . . . .' [But] Woodstock's blunt good nature is entirely irrelevant to the plot of *Richard II* where his only role is to be murderously done away with by the king" (see page 47). Egan's point is that it makes little sense to see *RII* as the earlier play, since the description by Gaunt of his brother, Thomas of Woodstock (a.k.a. Duke of Gloucester), is far more likely to have been derived from the play in which he was a leading character than the other way round.

Like most Shakespearians, Egan too is perplexed by the "plain, well-meaning" character of the playwright's version of Gloucester. Where did the authors (or author) of the two plays get their (his) unique version of the murderous Duke of history? As I explained in a lecture before a performance of *Thomas of Woodstock* at the 2001 SOS conference in Carmel, California, the correspondences between the character of Oxford's tutor, Sir Thomas Smith and the character of the Thomas of Woodstock created by the anonymous playwright are too many and too precise to be a coincidence. Woodstock's gruff honesty, his penny-pinching, and his distaste for expensive clothing are details that Oxford's contemporaries would recognize immediately as those of Master Secretary Smith.

**S**AM Saunders, a retired math professor from Washington State University, gives us a fascinating insight into the wager offered by Claudius in Act V Scene 2 of *Hamlet*. Where William of Stratford might have learned the art of fencing remains unknown, but Oxford certainly had every opportunity, having purchased fencing equipment in 1570, inflicted a deadly wound on a bystander during a practise session when he was seventeen, and defended himself in the “brabbles and frays” that, like the street fight that killed Mercutio, may have left him lame for life.

Saunders shows that the kind of knowledge required for Hamlet’s wager was to be found in a book by the great mathematician Jerome Cardan. Smith had three of Cardan’s books on the shelves of his personal library (Strype 278-9), though not the particular one that Saunders discusses. He did, however, own the one that, as Saunders points out, Hamlet might have been reading in Act II Scene 2—*de Subtilitate Rerum* (278).

**T**o the list of articles published in THE OXFORDIAN over the past decade, articles that promote the likelihood that earlier works of anonymous or questionable attribution, should be considered as possible early efforts by the young de Vere, we now add Robert Prechter’s consideration of what could be his earliest published work. We may never get beyond a list of such works as possibilities, or even probabilities, but without suggestions like this one, we will never be able to do the kind of word study that can bring real results. Before we can get real results, as compared with those based on Stratfordian parameters, we must begin with a list of well-vetted early works. Out of these will come the questions; out of the questions will come the answers.

**F**INALLY there is Prof. George Swan of North Carolina Tech, who may be an Oxfordian by now (he hasn’t said), but was certainly not when he first saw a connection between the plot of the Jacobean comedy, *A Woman’s Prize*, and the life of Edward de Vere. Oxfordians may be uncomfortable with Swan’s idea that the pathetic protagonist of *A Woman’s Prize* could be our poet, but Swan, whose image of Oxford has been based on the versions of Oxford put forth by Nelson and Pearson, has chosen (somewhat unfairly) to quote only those speeches of Maria that villify Petruchio, ignoring others such as this response to his perplexed inquiry in Act I Scene 3:

so far I am from making these the ends I aim at,  
 These idle outward things, these womens fears,  
 were I yet unmarried, free to choose,  
 through all the tribes of Man I’d take Petruchio  
 in his shirt, with one ten-groat [piece] to pay the priest,  
 before the best man living or the ablest  
 ones that ever leap’d out of Lancashire . . . . (554-8).

It seems Maria loves the old reprobate, and is only giving him a hard time to teach him a lesson. As she declares, her method is to do to him exactly what he (Petruccio) once did to his first wife (Katherine) in *Taming of the Shrew*, that is, torment him into respecting her and behaving himself, at least in public. Shakespeare's *Shrew* is a tour de farce based on two well-known anti-feminist tropes: a folk tale known to folklorists as *The Morell's Skin* (or "That's One") and the metaphor that compares a wilful wife to an untamed hawk (a commonplace but one that Shakespeare was fond of). Turning the metaphor around, in Scene 2 (lines 295-305) Maria proclaims herself as a free as a haggard hawk, i.e., a bird that's matured in the wild and so remains difficult to train.

As Swan points out, the characteristics of the Petruccio of *The Woman's Prize* are based in large part on those of Shakespeare's character. But there are characteristics of the Petruccio of *The Prize* that aren't required by the character in *Shrew*. Neither plot requires that Petruccio be poor, so why does Maria say, when feeling sorry about their quarrel: "I am sure thou art good, I know thou art honest, a handsome hurtless man, a loving man, though never a penny with him" (1816-18). Who was this "handsome, hurtless, loving man" who never had a penny? Petruccio of *The Prize* complains about the way he's being treated: "You mistake me. I urge not service from you, nor obedience in way of duty, but of love, and credit; All I expect is but a noble care of what I have brought you, and of what I am, and what our name may be" (1780-85), a comment not necessary to the plot of *The Prize*, but one that was certainly true of Oxford, who brought Elizabeth Trentham and her family his name and his earldom. And although it was standard for a man of property to guarantee his bride a "jointure," an estate that's hers in the event of his death, according to Maria this man had "never a penny," yet he comments to his friend Sophocles, (who it would seem from this was Maria's brother, or some other close male relative) when asked "Tell me one thing truly, do you love her?" reponds, "I would I did not—upon that condition I passed thee half my land." (1650-3); Oxford having signed his remaining properties over to Francis Threntham, his wife's brother (Crick online), supposedly to avoid having them appropriated by his creditors.

There's no argument about the fact that the author of *The Woman's Prize* based this play on Shakespeare's *Shrew*. Still, it's worth pointing out that there are several quotes of at least three famous lines from Shakespeare. At one point the furious Petruccio growls: "something I'll do; but what it is I know not" (1220), echoing Lear's: "I will do such things—what they are yet I know not—but they shall be the terrors of the earth" (2.4.290-92). When Petruccio, about to leave for Europe, asks, "How's the wind?" Maria answers: "For France—'tis very fair;" reminding us, and her audience, of the lines that open Act II Scene 2 of *Henry V*. And at the end, Petruccio urges old Moroso to allow his daughter to marry young Rowland with: "There's now no remedy you see, be willing; For to be, or not to be, he must have the wench." It seems that that these lines were already famous in the early seventeenth century.

Swan's thesis, however, is not without problems. It's extremely unlikely that a

young and untried playwright like John Fletcher, or his acting company, would dare to satirize a great lord so rudely, or have had the egegius bad taste to do it so soon after his death. Despite his troubles with health and finances, Oxford was still one of the premiere earls of England, nor would either branch of his powerful family have taken kindly to this kind of treatment. Swan sees this and does his best to finesse it, but his response is weak.

However, if, as we are bold to suggest, it was not the youthful Fletcher who wrote the play but Oxford's longtime antagonist, Lady Mary Sidney, whose place within the inner circle of Court writers meant that she knew who wrote *Taming of the Shrew*, and why, then Fletcher's foolhardiness vanishes as an issue. (The play remained anonymous until it was published in a Beaumont and Fletcher collection in 1647, long after both were dead.) If anyone was positioned to pull off such a satire in 1604 it would have been Mary, whose sons had just become the apples of the new King's eye. It would also explain the play's ultra-feminist tone, so unusual from a man at that time as to be impossible.

And if, as we even more recklessly suggest, Oxford was still alive when the play was first performed in the fall of 1604, no longer heartlessly rude, it becomes an extremely clever spoof of a situation that must have caused a good deal of gossip. As Swan points out, the tricks that Maria plays on Petruchio echo, not events in *Shrew*, but events in Oxford's life that brought him opprobrium. That in his twenties he had left his pregnant wife to spend a year on his own in Italy is satirized by Maria encouraging Petruchio to leave for Europe, the sooner the better. What Swan doesn't mention is that the third and final trick, Petruchio's attempt to call up Maria's sympathy by pretending to be dead, had no precursor in Oxford's life. That is, unless he was, in fact, still alive in the autumn of 1604, and was only pretending to be dead.

Whatever these minor points, that the Petruchio of *A Woman's Prize* was, as Swan argues, intended as a satire on the Earl of Oxford, we find too compelling to dismiss. And that whoever wrote *The Woman's Prize* created a Petruchio based on Oxford, would seem to be a powerful argument for Oxford's authorship of *Taming of the Shrew*.

Out of courtesy we are also publishing Ward Elliott's response to the article by John Shahan and Richard Whalen in the 2006 issue of THE OXFORDIAN.

As this is our tenth anniversary issue of THE OXFORDIAN, we wish to acknowledge the help of our excellent Editorial Board, the publications committee of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, our capable and knowledgeable assistants: News editor Gary Goldstein and Editorial Assistant Una Mason, our printer for all ten years, Eagle Graphics in Malden, Mass. Thanks too to all those who painstakingly researched and wrote the articles we've had the honor of ushering into print, many of them breaking new ground in this immensely varied and complicated study. Such were the difficulties we faced at the start that we had no idea that we would actually make it to a second, a third, a fourth, much less a tenth edition of this journal, and for this we are grateful to the Board of Trustees of the SOS who have stood behind us for ten years, encouraging us to seek out

writers and to encourage those we discovered at work on important aspects of the authorship question to write up their research and not “murder it” by leaving it in a drawer (pace Oxford to Bedingfield). The conferences, SOS, SF and Concordia, have been signal contributors to this effort, as have listservs where scholars occasionally discuss their work.

Sadly, this is also my farewell issue as Editor. Much as I’ve enjoyed these years, I have a book to finish and so must say farewell to THE OXFORDIAN. In departing I have some to thank personally: in particular, Charles Beauclerk, who appointed me editor in 1995; Dan Wright and Bill Boyle, who were both so helpful during the early years; Frank Davis, President of the Society and then Chairman of the Publications Committee, for his patience and willingness to work through difficult decisions; and most recently Matthew Cossolotto and Virginia Hyde, currently and respectively President and Treasurer of the SOS, and John Hamill, present Chairman of the Publications Committee. Plaudits also to Richard Whalen and Chris Paul for their long time support and willingness to respond to queries above and beyond the call of duty. Without you (all) there would have been no journal. Thanks for an exciting and enlightening ten years. 🍷