

OXMYTHS AND STRATMYTHS: SECTION III

The 'myths' below are arranged chronologically.

MYTH: Princess Elizabeth's overseer at Hatfield in 1549 was 'Lord Tyrwhitt'.

Sir Robert Tyrwhitt was not a lord:

[Sir Robert Tyrwhitt's] position was greatly strengthened when his cousin by marriage became Henry VIII's last Queen: it was about this time that he was knighted and by 1544 he was Catherine's master of the horse. . . .

Tyrwhitt and his wife remained in attendance on Catherine Parr after the death of Henry VIII and so became involved with her new husband Thomas Seymour. Lady Tyrwhitt witnessed Seymour's neglect of Catherine during the last year of her life, and after her death told the story to the Privy Council. Thus in January 1549 the Council, alarmed at Seymour's wooing of Princess Elizabeth, sent the Tyrwhitts to Hatfield as overseers to the princess in place of Catherine Astley and Thomas Parry, who were suspected of promoting Seymour's cause. At the Council's direction Tyrwhitt questioned the princess about Seymour while Lady Tyrwhitt plied her with 'good advices ... especially in such matters as [the Council] appointed'. Although the Tyrwhitts treated her gently Elizabeth never forgave them their part in the affair.

References:

(1) Cutting, Bonner, 'She Will Not Be A Mother: Evaluating the Seymour Prince Tudor Hypothesis', *Brief Chronicles*, Vol. III, 2011, pp. 169-99 at p. 177, available online at:

<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/briefchronicles/>

(2) Tyrwhitt, Sir Robert I (by 1504-72), of Mortlake, Surr. and Leighton Bromswold, Huntingdonshire, *History of Parliament*, at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/tyrwhitt-sir-robert-i-1504-72>

MYTH: Arthur Brooke, the author of *Romeus and Juliet*, was not a real person.

Evidence suggests that Arthur Brooke, the author of *Romeus and Juliet*, was the son of Thomas Brooke (d.1547), and died in the wreck of the *Greyhound* on 19 March 1563.

References:

(1) Will of Thomas Brooke (d.1547), PRC 32/21/72.

(2) Will of George Brooke, 9th Baron Cobham, TNA PROB 11/43/628.

(3) Will of Thomas Brooke, 8th Baron Cobham, TNA PROB 11/23/361.

(4) Green, Nina, 'Who was Arthur Brooke, Author of The tragical historye of Romeus and Juliet?', *The Oxfordian*, (October 2000), Vol. III, pp. 59-70. Note that the author erroneously states in this paper that Arthur Brooke was the son of Cranmer Brooke (living 1573), eldest son of Thomas Brooke (d.1547).

MYTH: The juror 'Randolphi Holynshedd' named in the coroner's inquest into the 1567 death of Thomas Brincknell was Lord Burghley's protégée, Raphael Holinshed.

See Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 48, 90 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WcfiqlOjEKoC&pg=PA48>

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WcfiqlOjEKoC&pg=PA90>

There are many reasons for doubting Nelson's statement:

(1) 'Randolphi' is usually taken to be the Latinized form of 'Randolph', not 'Raphael'. In the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of Holinshed's will, TNA PROB 11/63/199, his Christian name is Latinized as 'Raphaelis'.

(2) There is no evidence that Raphael Holinshed was Lord Burghley's protégée. In fact, Holinshed's dedication to Lord Burghley suggests that it was Reyner Wolfe (d.1573) to whom Lord Burghley acted as patron, not Holinshed. For the dedication, see the Holinshed Project at:

http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1577_0007

(3) According to the *ODNB*, Holinshed would have been in the employ of Reyner Wolfe (d.1573) at the time of Brincknell's death in 1567. Wolfe's printing press in Paul's Churchyard was a considerable distance from Cecil House in the Strand. As Wolfe's employee, Holinshed presumably resided with Wolfe and his family in Paul's Churchyard, as was the custom at the time.

(4) The jurors, including 'Randolphi Holynshedd', are stated to have been from the county of Middlesex, whereas Paul's Churchyard was situated in the city of London. See:

<https://www.quora.com/Is-the-area-of-City-of-London-an-actual-city-within-London>

London and Westminster were separate entities.

For Raphael Holinshed, see the *ODNB*:

Holinshed [Hollingshead], Raphael (c. 1525–1580?), historian, was the son of Ralph Holinshed or Hollingshead of Cophurst in the township of Sutton Downes, Cheshire. . . . [He] was probably in his late twenties and early thirties [when] he found employment in the London printing house of Reyner Wolfe, a committed evangelical. . . . Wolfe employed Holinshed to assist him in his grand plan to create 'a universal cosmographie', a vast historical and geographical description of the world, complete with maps.

The Chronicles that appeared in 1577 fell short not only of Wolfe's projected 'Polychronicon' but also of Holinshed's expectations and the standards of some of the contributors. Holinshed's epistle dedicatory of 1577 to William Cecil, Lord Burghley (also printed in the 1587 edition) suggests not only that Burghley may have been Wolfe's patron, but also that Holinshed was concerned that his own work might be censured for falling short of Wolfe's original conception—the 'universal cosmologie' illustrated with maps. The epistle dedicatory blames the work's relatively limited scope on Wolfe's executors, who although they brought the Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland to fruition, earned little thanks from Holinshed for their efforts.

References:

(1) TNA KB 9/619, m. 13 on this website.

MYTH: George Gascoigne was appointed poet laureate on 1 January 1576.

The first poet laureate in the modern sense was Ben Jonson, although the title seems to have been first officially given to his successor, William Davenant (appointed 1638).

References:

(1) 'Laureate', *Oxford English Dictionary*, online edition.

MYTH: Thomas Dymoke 'of Gray's Inn' served as a gentleman of the bedchamber to Henry Wriothesley (bap. 1545, d.1581), 2nd Earl of Southampton.

Thomas Dymoke of Gray's Inn lived almost a century later, circa 1660. He was a great-grandson of Sir Edward Dymoke (d.1566), champion at Queen Elizabeth's coronation.

References:

(1) Pedigree of Dymoke of Scrivelsby, *Burke's Landed Gentry*, 18th ed., Vol. I, p. 220.

MYTH: *Thomas Dymoke, who served as a gentleman of the bedchamber to Henry Wriothesley (bap. 1545, d. 1581), 2nd Earl of Southampton, was the Queen's special agent in the Earl's household, and 'not only received his orders from the Queen but also acted only in her interests'.*

Thomas Dymoke, who served as a gentleman of the bedchamber to Henry Wriothesley (bap. 1545, d. 1581), 2nd Earl of Southampton, was a Catholic recusant who was arrested in the Babington plot of 1586.

References:

(1) Questier, Michael, *Catholicism and community in early modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 64-5, available online.

MYTH: *The 3rd Earl of Southampton was a ward of Lord Burghley.*

Queen Elizabeth sold both Southampton's wardship and lands to Charles, Lord Howard of Effingham on 28 June 1582. There may have been a later transfer of Southampton's wardship and marriage (but not lands) to Lord Burghley, but if so, no record of the transfer exists.

References:

(1) Akrigg, G.P.V., *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 21-22.

(2) TNA Wards 9/157 ff. 74v-75r.

(3) Hampshire Record Office, 5M53/273.

MYTH: *Gilbert Talbot wrote to his father, the Earl of Shrewsbury, on 10 May 1574.*

This letter is erroneously assigned to Gilbert Talbot in the new Goldring edition of Nichols' *Progresses* (see below). However the letter was written by Francis Talbot, as indicated on p. 112 of Joseph Hunter's *Hallamshire* (1819) as revised by Alfred Gatty in 1869. See Gatty's transcript of the letter at:

<http://www.sheffieldhistory.co.uk/forums/topic/6108-gatty39s-version-of-hunters-hallamshire-complete/?page=4>

References:

(1) Goldring, Elizabeth, ed., *John Nichols's The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I; A New Edition of the Early Modern Sources, Vol. II 1572 to 1578*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 190-1 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=QZ-cAQAQAQBAJ&pg=PA190>

(2) Hunter, Joseph, *Hallamshire*, (London: Lackington, Hughes et al, 1819), p. 84 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ML8-AAAACAAJ&pg=PA84>

(3) Hunter, Joseph, *Hallamshire*, rev. Alfred Gatty (1869), p. 112 at:

<http://www.sheffieldhistory.co.uk/forums/topic/6108-gatty39s-version-of-hunters-hallamshire-complete/?page=4>

MYTH: Gilbert Talbot wrote to his father, the Earl of Shrewsbury, on 23 May 1574.

This letter is erroneously assigned to Gilbert Talbot in the new Goldring edition of Nichols' *Progresses* (see below). However the letter was written by Francis Talbot, as indicated on p. 112 of Joseph Hunter's *Hallamshire* (1819) as revised by Alfred Gatty in 1869. See Gatty's transcript of the letter at:

<http://www.sheffieldhistory.co.uk/forums/topic/6108-gatty39s-version-of-hunters-hallamshire-complete/?page=4>

Moreover the letter was written by Francis Talbot on **23 May 1573**, not 1574. See Gatty's note, and Nicholas, Harris, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), p. 24.

The correct date for the letter can be ascertained from the mention in it of the attack on Edinburgh Castle which took place in May 1573, and which is amply documented in the Calendar of State Papers.

See also references in immediately preceding Oxmyth.

MYTH: Rocco Bonetti purchased a lease in the Blackfriars from John Lyly in 1576.

Craig and Soper state that:

John Lyly had the lease on some rooms in the Blackfriars where William Joyner, another original member of the English Masters, had a school. In 1576 Bonetti bought the lease from Lyly and by imputation from Lyly's patron, Edward De Vere (the Earl of Oxford). Bonetti then opened his famous fencing school. . . . Silver tells us, "He caused to fairly drawn and set round his school all the Noblemen's and Gentlemen's arms who were his scholars . . . He also provided luxurious furnishings . . .

The Italian master of fence, Rocco Bonetti (d.1587), purchased his lease in the Blackfriars from John Lyly in 1583/4, not in 1576.

References:

(1) Wallace, Charles William, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1912), pp. 186-7.

(2) Folger MS L.b.37.

(3) Turner, Craig and Tony Soper, *Methods and Practice of Elizabethan Swordplay*, (Southern Illinois University, 1990), p. 17.

MYTH: Rocco Bonetti's famous fence school was in the Blackfriars.

Craig and Soper state that:

John Lyly had the lease on some rooms in the Blackfriars where William Joyner, another original member of the English Masters, had a school. In 1576 Bonetti bought the lease from Lyly and by imputation from Lyly's patron, Edward De Vere (the Earl of Oxford). Bonetti then opened his famous fencing school. . . . Silver tells us, "He caused to fairly drawn and set round his school all the Noblemen's and Gentlemen's arms who were his scholars . . . He also provided luxurious furnishings . . .

The fence school described above by George Silver, and run by Rocco Bonetti (d.1587) in his heyday as a master of fence, was in Warwick Lane, not in the Blackfrairs. See Silver's *Paradoxes of Defence*:

There were three Italian teachers of offense in my time. The first was Signior Rocco, the second was Jeronimo, that was Senior Rocco his boy, that taught gentlemen in the Black Friars, as usher for his master in stead of a man. The third was Vincentio. This Senior Rocco came into England about some thirty years past. He taught the noblemen & gentlemen of the court. He caused some of them to wear leaden soles in their shoes, the better to bring to nimbleness of the feet in their fight. He disbursed a great sum of money

for the lease of a fair house in Warwick lane, which he called his college, for he thought it great disgrace for him to keep a fence school, he being then thought to be the only famous master of the art of arms in the whole world. He caused to be fairly drawn and set round about his school all the noblemen's and gentlemen's arms that were his scholars, and hanging right under their arms their rapiers, daggers, gloves of mail and gauntlets. Also, he has benches and stools, the room being very large, for gentlemen to sit round about his school to behold his teaching. He taught none commonly under twenty, forty, fifty, or a hundred pounds. And because all things should be very necessary for the noblemen & gentlemen, he had in his school a large square table, with a green carpet, done round with a very broad rich fringe of gold, always standing upon it a very fair Standish covered with crimson velvet, with ink, pens, pen-dust, and sealing wax, and quivers of very excellent fine paper gilded, ready for the noblemen & gentlemen (upon occasion) to write their letters, being then desirous to follow their fight, to send their men to dispatch their business. And to know how the time passed, he had in one corner of his school a clock, with very fair large dial. He had within his school, a room the which was called the privy school, with many weapons therein, where he did teach his scholars his secret fight, after he had perfectly taught them their rules. He was very much beloved in the court.

References:

(1) Wallace, Charles William, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1912), pp. 186-7.

(2) Folger MS L.b.37.

(3) Turner, Craig and Tony Soper, *Methods and Practice of Elizabethan Swordplay*, (Southern Illinois University, 1990), p. 17.

(4) Silver, George, *Paradoxes of Defence*, (London: 1599)

<http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/paradoxes.html>

MYTH: Rowland Yorke killed a man with a thrust of the rapier beneath the waist.

Nelson twice makes this claim, relying on Camden's *Annales*. However Camden says nothing about Rowland Yorke killing anyone, either with a rapier or otherwise.

<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/camden/15871.html#badguys>

36. Ut Dracus et Cavendishus hoc tempore illustrem cum laude famem, ita alii duo Angli, Guilielmus Stanleius et Rowlandus Yourcus ignominiosam prodicionis infamiam sibi compararunt. Yourcus ille Londinensis, homo discincto ingenio et praecipiti audacia, suo tempore inter sicarios celebris, quod feralem illam rationem in duellis punctim petendi

summa cum audaciae admiratione primus in Angliam intulerit, cum Angli hactenus peltis armati, gladiis latoribus caesim depugnarent, et vel punctim, vel infra cingulum ferire minime virile existimarent.

<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/camden/1587e.html>

36. *As Drake and Cavendish at this time purchased great fame and commendations, so two other Englishmen, William Stanley and Rowland Yorke, procured to themselves the disgracefull infamy of treason. This Yorke was of London, a man of a dissolute disposition and desperate boldnesse, famous in his time amongst the common hacksters and swaggers, being the first that with high admiration for his boldnesse brought into England that deadly manner of foyning [thrusting] with the rapier in single fight, whereas the English till this time fought with long swords and bucklers, striking with the edge, and thought it no manly part either to foyne, or to strike beneath the girdle.*

References:

(1) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 48, 105.

(2) Camden, William, *Annales Rerum Gestarum Angliae et Hiberniae Regnante Elizabetha* (1615 and 1625) with the annotations of Sir Francis Bacon.

MYTH: Lord Burghley affixed the Great Seal to the death warrant of Mary, Queen of Scots.

The Great Seal was affixed to the death warrant of Mary, Queen of Scots by the Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Bromley.

References:

(1) Read, Conyers. *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the policy of Queen Elizabeth*. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925, vol. 3, p. 64.

MYTH: In Gratulationes Valdinenses (1578), Gabriel Harvey addressed Lord Burghley by his nickname, 'Polus'.

According to Terry Ross:

In fact, however, Harvey never uses the word "polus" in any poem in the Burghley section of Gratulationes Valdinenses, and while the word appears in other poems in the volume, it is never used as Burghley's or anyone else's nickname.

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<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/>

According to Ross, the error originated with J. Shera Atkinson in an article in April 1950 in the *Shakespeare Fellowship News-Letter*:

The Gratulationes Valdinenses of Gabriel Harvey -- the addresses of welcome delivered by him as Public Orator of Cambridge University to Queen Elizabeth and her court at Audley End in July, 1578 -- include addresses in Latin verse to Elizabeth, the Earl of Leicester, Lord Burghley, the Earl of Oxford, Christopher Hatton, Philip Sidney, and others of less importance. . . .

Following a custom which still prevails for Latin addresses of this kind, much play is made in the various addresses by means of puns on the name of the person involved. Thus the address to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, many times uses the words "Sicilides" and "Caecilius," by way of puns on "Cecil." More interesting however is the use, three times, of the word Polus -- an uncommon word, "dragged in." . . .

The use of the word suggests -- if not actual evidence -- that at that time -- 1578 -- there was a current nickname for Cecil, either Polus or something very like it. If this is so, the name Polonius, in Hamlet, was derived from it. It is generally thought that the original of Polonius was Lord Burghley.

Ogburn attributes the initial suggestion to J. Valcour Miller:

To "Pondus" may be added "Polus," which, as J. Valcour Miller points out in a striking study of the many analogies between Polonius and the Lord Treasurer, was thrice applied to Burghley by Gabriel Harvey in addressing him in his tribute at Audley End in 1578. The sobriquet, Miller explains, is from a Latin word for the pole around which the heavens turn and the axle of a wheel revolves.

Miller wrote:

Two contemporary documents record nicknames for Burghley which resemble "Polonius".

One is Gabriel Harvey's Latin address to Lord Burghley, delivered at Audley End in 1578 and printed in Gratulationes Valdinenses in which Harvey refers to Burghley three times as "Polus." . . . Therefore his use of Polus three times indicated this was a current nickname for Lord Burghley.

Ross agrees that 'Polus' was used three times in an epigram to Lord Burghley printed in *Gratulationes Valdinenses*, but points out that the epigram in question was not by Gabriel Harvey. Its author was the historian and spy, Pietro Bizzarri (born 1525, died in or after 1586), and none of Bizzarri's three uses of 'Polus' was as a name for Lord Burghley, and in fact one of the three was a Latinized version of the name of Cardinal Reginald Pole. For Pietro Bizzarri and his relationship to Lord Burghley, see the *ODNB* entry. For

Bizzarri's epigram in both Latin and English, see Jameson. For the epigram in Latin, see also Goldring.

Although it is a myth that Gabriel Harvey used Polus as a nickname for Gabriel Harvey in *Gratulationes Valdinenses* (1578), it has recently been noticed by Brian McDonald and Alexander Waugh that the word 'Polus' is used in Latin verses by George Coryat (d.1607) addressed to the Earl of Leicester and Lord Burghley:

Ejusdem Carmina ad illustrissimos Oxoniensis & Cantabrigiensis Academiae Cancellarios D. Robertum Dudleium Comitem Leicestrensem & D. Gulielmum Cecilium Dominum Burghleium, pronunciata in magna Aula Novi Collegii Oxoniensis, Astronomicè.

*Sydera qui lustrat, qui spherica corpora cernit,
In sphaera geminos cernit is esse Polos.
Arcticus est alter, Polus est antarcticus alter,
Hoc splendente Polo non micat ille Polus.
Nos tamen hîc geminos lucere videmus in urbe
Hac nostra claros stelligerosque Polos.
En micat Oxonii Polus inclytus Oxoniensis,
Dudleius nostri duxque decusque Poli.
Lucet & hac nostra Polus in urbe Cecillus,
Ut videas geminos jam simul esse Polos.
Ille Polus noster studiorum stellifer Atlas,
Hic Cantabrigii lucida stella Poli.
Quod simul hanc nostram juncti venistis ad urbem,
Quòd simul unus honor junxit utrosque Polos,
Accipite haec simili simul ô pietate Patroni,
Vivite foelices atque valetè Poli.*

In these verses 'polus' refers to the pole stars, and is not used as a name or nickname for either Leicester or Burghley. Coryat's verses appear to have been presented to Leicester and Burghley on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth's visit to Oxford University in August/September 1566, although it should be noted that the title with which Coryat's son, Thomas Coryat (1577?-1617), prefaced the verses refers to William Cecil as 'Lord Burghley', although Cecil was not created Lord Burghley until 1571. For Coryat's verses, see Dr Dana Sutton's transcript and translation on The Philological Museum website at:

<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/coryate/>

For the Latin verses, see also *Coryats Crudities* (1611), p. 397 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/posthumafragmen00corygoog#page/n418/mode/2up>

Dr Sutton's translation reads as follows:

15. THE SAME POET'S VERSES TO THE RIGHT ILLUSTRIOUS CHANCELLORS OF THE UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE, SIR ROBERT DUDLEY EARL OF LEICESTER AND SIR WILLIAM CECIL, LORD BURGHLEY, RECITED IN THE GREAT HALL OF NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND WRITTEN IN ASTRONOMICAL WISE

He who scans the stars and beholds their rounded bodies, perceives that in this sphere are a pair of poles, one the Arctic and the other the Antarctic. The one pole does not cast light within the splendid other. But we see both bright starry poles gleaming within this city of ours. See how the noble pole of Oxford shines bright, Dudley, the captain and glory of ours. And a second pole shines in our city, Cecil, so that you may see there to be two poles. The one is the star-bearing Atlas of our studies, and the other the dazzling star of the pole of Cambridge. Because you have come to this city conjoined, and because a single honor has conjoined both poles, oh, you patrons, receive this equally, written with equal piety. Live happy and thrive, you poles.

Alexander Waugh has translated the verses to Leicester and Burghley as follows:

A poem by the same author to the most distinguished Chancellors of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and William Cecil, Lord Burghley, read in the Assembly Hall of the New College in Oxford, concerning Astronomy.

*Whoever studies the heavenly bodies, whoever discerns the spherical bodies,
Sees that in the globe there are two Poles.
One is the Arctic, the other the Antarctic Pole,
When one shines the other does not.
We too can see two eminent and star-bearing Poles
Shining in this city of ours.
Behold, the famed Pole of Oxford, the Oxonian
Dudley, the leader and glory of our pole, shines out.
And Cecil too, another Pole, also shines in our city,
So that you may see both Poles together.
Our Pole is the star-bearing Atlas of studies,
While the other is the bright star of the Pole of Cambridge.
You came together to our city,
The same honour has joined both Poles together.
Hear these verses together in togetherness by the piety of our Patron,
May you live long in joy and health, o Poles.*

References:

(1) Atkinson, J. Shera, 'Polonius', in Clark, Eva Lee Turner, *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays*, 3rd ed. rev. and ed. Ruth Loyd Miller, (Jennings, Louisiana: Minos Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 668-70.

(2) Miller, J. Valcour, 'Corambis, Polonius, and The Great Lord Burghley in Hamlet', *Shakespeare Identified, Vol. II: Oxfordian Vistas*, (Jennings, Louisiana: Minos Publishing Company, 1975), pp. 430-47 at p. 432,

(3) Ogburn, Charlton, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., (McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, Inc., 1984-1992), p. 666.

(4) Hannas, Andrew, 'Gabriel Harvey and the Genesis of "William Shakespeare"', *The Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter*, Winter 1993, Volume 29, No. 1B at:

<http://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/gabriel-harvey-genesis-of-shakespeare/>.

(5) Ross, Terry, 'Oxfordian Myths: Was Burghley called 'Polus'?', Shakespeare Authorship Page at <http://www.shakespeareauthorship.com/polus.html>.

(6) Jameson, Thomas Hugh, *The Gratulationes Valdinenses of Gabriel Harvey*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1938, p. 127 (see STC 12901 on this website).

(7) 'Petri Bizari Epigramma' in Goldring, Elizabeth, ed., John Nichols's *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I: A New Edition of the Early Modern Sources*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), Vol. II, pp. 616-18.

(8) *Coryat's Crudities*, (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905), Vol. II, p. 397 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/posthumafragmen00corygoog#page/n418/mode/2up>.

(9) *ODNB* entries for George Coryate and Thomas Coryate.

MYTH: John Heminges was the regular payee for performances of the Lord Chamberlain's Men prior to 15 March 1595.

According to Kathman, Heminges was 'acting, first with Strange's Men by 1593, then with the Lord Chamberlain's Men, probably from the company's founding in 1594'. However the latter statement is supposition, as there is no documentary record establishing the date at which Heminges joined the Lord Chamberlain's Men, much less that he was the 'regular payee' for the company between its inception and 15 March 1595 as Ogburn claims.

References:

(1) Ogburn, Charlton, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., (McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, 1992), p. 66.

(2) Kathman, David, 'Grocers, Goldsmiths and Drapers: Freemen and Apprentices in the Elizabethan Theater', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp. 1-49 at p. 7:

<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/3844321?uid=2&uid=4&sid=21104723820403>

MYTH: Hand D in The Play of Sir Thomas More is in the handwriting of William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby.

It is not. No document in the handwriting of William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby, exhibits the six distinctive features of Hand D noted above.

References:

(1) Rollett, John M., *William Stanley as Shakespeare: Evidence of Authorship by the Sixth Earl of Derby*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., 2015) at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=Fq8GCAAAQBAJ&pg=PR4>

(2) Facsimile of Hand D from the Wikipedia article on the play in which the foregoing six features are clearly visible:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Sir_Thomas_More_Hand_D.jpg

MYTH: The playwright Christopher Marlowe is mentioned by name by Philip Henslowe in his Diary.

Henslowe never mentioned Christopher Marlowe in his *Diary*, just as Henslowe never mentioned William Shakespeare. According to the Freemans, the entry naming Marlowe as the author of *Tamburlaine* in Henslowe's *Diary* is an 'out-and-out' Collier forgery. Moreover *Tamburlaine* was published anonymously during Marlowe's lifetime, and was not attributed to him during his lifetime in any contemporary document. The Collier forgery in Henslowe's *Diary* is also a forgery involving Thomas Dekker, and reads:

*Pd vnto Thomas Dickers the 20 of Desember 1597
for adcyons to ffostus twentie shellinges and fyve
shellinges more for a prolog to Marloes tambelan
so in all I saye payde twentye fyve shellinges xxvs*

References:

(1) Freeman, Arthur and Janet Ing Freeman, *John Payne Collier: Scholarship and Forgery in the Nineteenth Century*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 207.

(2) Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project, fol. 19v at:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-7/019v.html>

MYTH: Thomas Heywood wrote the revisions to The Play of Sir Thomas More found in Hand B.

There has been considerable scholarly debate concerning the identification of Thomas Heywood as the reviser who wrote the Hand B additions, and there is no scholarly consensus that he was the author of the Hand B additions. See the summary by Metz.

References:

(1) Metz, Harold, 'Voice and credyt': The Scholars and *Sir Thomas More*', in Howard-Hill, T.H., ed., *Shakespeare and Sir Thomas More: Essays on the Play and its Shakespearian Interest*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 11-44 at pp. 14-15:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=VK4iIx2bTbIC&pg=PA14>

MYTH: Thomas Dekker wrote the revisions to The Play of Sir Thomas More found in Hand E.

Greg, who first identified Hand E as Dekker's, was unable to convince Sir George Warner, then Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Library, that the identification was correct. See Pollard, *infra*, p. 23 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/shakespeareshand00polluoft#page/52/mode/2up>.

Alleged samples in Dekker's hand consist of six items, two of which contain only signatures. The first of the latter is a letter in another hand containing an alleged Dekker signature, Dulwich College, MSS 1, Article 109, 1r at:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-1/Article-109/01r.html>.

The letter first appeared in Collier's *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn*, pp. 185-7, and according to the Freemans, p. 346, although there are some items in Collier's *Memoirs* which are of merit:

Inevitably, however, it is the impostures in Memoirs of Alleyn that now concern scholars and overshadow its merits. Ten of these have long been acknowledged, all but two based on physical forgeries among the Dulwich College archives.

The second item containing only a signature is in Dulwich College MSS 7, fol. 31r. The flourishes on the final 's' of 'Thomas' and the double loops on the letter 'k' in 'Dekker' are strikingly different from other alleged Dekker signatures. See:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-7/031r.html>.

Of the remaining four items, in which the hands and signatures differ markedly, the one most likely to be in Dekker's hand, called 'a good letter of Thomas Dekker' by the Freemans, *supra*, p. 345, is a letter to Edward Alleyn dated 12 September 1616. See Collier's *Memoirs*, *supra*, p. 131 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/memoirsEdwardal00collgoog#page/n138/mode/2up>

See also Dulwich College MSS 1, Article 108, 1-2 at:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-1/Article-108/01r.html>

In modern spelling, the letter reads:

To my worthy and worshipful friend, Edward Alleyn, esquire, at his house at Dulwich

Sir,

*Out of that respect which I ever carried
to your worth, now heightened by a pillar
of your own erecting, do I send these poor
testimonies of a more rich affection. I
am glad, if I be the first, that I am
the first to consecrate to memory, if at
least you so embrace it, so noble & pious
a work as this your last & worthiest is.
A passionate desire of expressing a glad-
ness to see goodness so well delivered,
having been long in labour in the world, made me thus
far to venture. And it best becomes me
to sing anything in praise of charity,
because albeit I have felt few hands
warm through that complexion, yet*

*imprisonment may make me long for
them. If anything in my eulogium or
praise of you or your noble act be
offensive, let it be excused because
I live amongst the Goths & Vandals,
where barbarousness is predominant.
Accept my will, howsoever, and me,*

Ready to do you any service,

Tho: Dekker

*King's Bench
Sept. 12
1616*

For an original spelling transcript, see Leinwand, Theodore B., *Theatre, Finance and Society in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 51 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=vH8m6ULJC1oC&pg=PA51>

In 'identifying' Hand E as Dekker's, Greg eliminated this 1616 letter of Dekker's from consideration on the ground that it was much later than the other four alleged samples of Dekker's hand considered below. However Tannenbaum, in discussing the issue of the time span between samples in connection with the comparison of the six signatures of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon to Hand D, states that if the sample is large enough, a time span of 20 years would not be significant, which implicitly calls into question Greg's elimination of Dekker's 1616 letter, although in the case of William Shakespeare's six signatures, where the sample is both quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate, a span of 20 years between samples 'may be fatal'. See pp. 185-6:

The matter of age does not, broadly speaking, affect the discussion in any way. A difference of fourteen or eighteen years (between 1594 or 1598 and 1612) in the handwriting of a person who has attained maturity, and whose handwriting habits have become fixed, does not ordinarily matter in a handwriting investigation. Even though an old man's writing may be so poor, because of tremulousness, as to be largely illegible, his writing habits are so unalterably a feature of his personality that the handwriting expert has no great difficulty in establishing its identity with specimens written at an earlier age. But when the amount of standard writing at the examiner's disposal is as inadequate, both qualitatively and quantitatively, as in our present investigation, a difference of some twenty years (assuming that I have proved Moore and the Addition to have been written in 1593) may be a fatal handicap to reaching a positive conclusion. That a penman's writing habits change in the course of years, especially if he be a person who writes much, is a well-established fact, even though under favorable conditions that is not a barrier to the establishment of his identity.

Of the three remaining samples, none of which is verifiably in Dekker's hand, the first is a receipt, purportedly written in Dekker's hand and signed by him, now catalogued as BL MS Add 30262 R (see Metz, p. 14, the facsimile and transcript in Tannenbaum, pp. 17, 222, and the entry in the British Library manuscript catalogue which states that the receipt, which contains another receipt on the reverse signed by George Chapman, was 'cut from Henslowe's *Diary*'). It reads:

1 August 1599

*Receaved by mee Thomas Dekker at the hands of mr
Phillip Hynchlow the Som{m}e of twenty Shillings to bee
payd the last of this moneth
Thomas Dekker*

A striking feature of BL MS Add 30262 R is the difference in size between the name 'Thomas Dekker' and the style in which it is written in the body of the receipt, and the size and style of the rest of the handwriting in the body of the receipt, which raises the possibility that the body of the receipt was written by someone other than Dekker, and Dekker's name was later filled in when the document was signed. If so, it is this other individual's handwriting which Greg found bore a resemblance to Hand E. A further anomaly is that in the signature, the double loops on the tops of the letter 'k' appear to have been added after the rest of the signature was written.

Two other receipts are found in Henslowe's *Diary* itself. The first of these, Dulwich Archives, MSS 7, fol. 101r, ll. 1-7, purports to be written by Dekker in what Greg describes as 'a rather ornate Italian hand'. For that reason alone it bears little resemblance to Hand E, written in what Greg calls 'an English hand'. It is signed 'Thomas Dekker', but the signature is strikingly different from the Dekker signature on fol. 31 r. It reads:

30 Die Ianuarij 1598

*Receaved by mee Thomas Dekker of Mr Phillip Hynchlow the
some of three Powndes ten shillings to be repayd vnto
Him or his Assignes vpon the last of February next ensuing
for paymant whereof I bynd mee my Hayres Executors
and Administrators
Thomas Dekker*

The second receipt, Dulwich College MSS 7, fol. 114r, ll. 1-14, purports to be written by Dekker, but is unsigned, and moreover contains a feature which would be highly unusual for someone writing his own Christian name, the abbreviation of Dekker's first name as 'Thom{a}s'. As well, the formation of the name 'Thomas Dekker' in the body of the unsigned entry is completely different from the formation of the name 'Thomas Dekker' in any of the other three documents. The receipt has been transcribed by Foakes as follows:

*Quinto die Maij. 1602.
Bee it knowne vnto all men by
theis pnte that wee Anthony
Mundy⁵⁰& Thomas Dekker 51 doe
owe vnto Phillip Hynchlay gent
the Some of five powndes of
lawfull money of England to bee
payd vnto him his executors or
assgnes vppon the xth of June
next ensuing the date hereof
In wittnes hereof herevnto
wee haue Sett or handes 52
dated this day & yere above
written
folio 114; transcribed Foakes 212*

For the reasons mentioned above, although the letter of 12 September 1616 appears to have been written by Dekker, none of the other documents can be firmly identified as being in Dekker's hand, and there is thus only one document which can legitimately be compared with the additions in Hand E found on fol. 13b of *The Play of Sir Thomas More*, of which a facsimile is provided by Greg in his 1911 edition of the play (see below). Since Greg omitted this document from consideration, and since it appears to be the only document verifiably written by Dekker, Greg's basis for identifying the Hand E additions as having been written by Dekker is far from clear.

References:

(1) Collier, John Payne, *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn, Founder of Dulwich College*, (London: Shakespeare Society, 1841), p. 186 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/memoirsEdwardal00collgoog#page/n194/mode/2up/>

(2) Freeman, Arthur and Janet Ing Freeman, *John Payne Collier: Scholarship and Forgery in the Nineteenth Century*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 346.

(3) Metz, Harold, 'Voice and credyt': The Scholars and *Sir Thomas More*', in Howard-Hill, T.H., ed., *Shakespeare and Sir Thomas More: Essays on the Play and its Shakespearian Interest*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 11-44 at p. 14:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=VK4iIx2bTbIC&pg=PA14>

(4) Tannenbaum, Samuel A., *Problems in Shakespeare's Penmanship*, (New York: The Century Co., 1927), pp. 17, 222.

(5) British Library Manuscript Catalogue entry for BL Add MS 30262 R at:

http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&doc=IAMS040-002021906&indx=7&recIds=IAMS040-002021906&recIdxs=6&elementId=6&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&dsent=0&frbg=&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&tab=local&dstmp=1437944533755&srt=rank&mode=Basic&&dum=true&v1%28freeText0%29=Dekker&vid=IAMS_VU2

(6) Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project fol. 31r, ll. 16-21:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-7/031r.html>

(7) Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project, fol. 101r, ll. 1-7 at:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-7/101r.html>

(8) Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project, fol. 114r, ll. 1-14 at:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-7/114r.html>

(9) Greg, W.W., ed., *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, (Malone Society Reprints, 1911), pp. xiii-xiv at:

<https://archive.org/stream/bookofsirthomasm00brituoft#page/n43/mode/2up>

(10) The Hand E addition is transcribed by Greg on pp. 87-8 (superscripts not reproduced below):

<https://archive.org/stream/bookofsirthomasm00brituoft#page/86/mode/2up>

Morr : what ailst thou ? art thou mad now.

Faulk. mad now ? nayles yf losse of hayre Cannot mad a man —

what Can ? I am deposde : my Crowne is taken from mee

Moore had bin better a Scowrd More ditch, than a notcht

mee thus, does hee begin sheepe sharing with Iack Faulkner?

Morr : nay & you feede this veyne Sr, fare you well.

Falk : why fare well Frost. Ile goe hang my Selfe out for the —

poll head, make a Sarcen of lack ?

Morr: thou desperate knave, for that I See the divell,

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wholy getts hold of thee.

Falk : the divells a dambd rascall

Morr : I charge thee wayte on mee no more : no more,

call mee thy mr.

Falk : why then a word mr Morris.

Morr: Ile heare no wordes, Sr fare you well.

Falk : Sbloud farewell :

Morr : why doest thou follow [you] mee:

*Falk: because Ime an Asse, doe you sett yor shavets vpon mee, & then
cast mee off? must I condole? haue the fates playd the fooles* 230

*veepes. am I theire Cutt? Now the poore Sconce is taken, must Iack
march wth bag & baggage?*

Morr: you Coxcomb.

*Falk: nay you ha poacht mee, you ha given mee a hayre, its here
here.*

*Morr : Away you kynd [foole] Asse, come Sr, dry yor eyes,
keepe yor old place & mend theis fooleryes.*

*Falk : I care not to bee tournd off, and twere a ladder, so it bee in
my humor, or the fates becon to mee ; nay pray Sr, yf the destinyes
Spin mee a fyne thred, Falkner flyes another pitch : & to* 240
*avoyd the headach, hereafter before Ile bee a hayremonger Ile
bee a whoremonger. Exeu(*

MYTH: The Falstaff-like individual referred to by Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, in a letter to Sir Robert Cecil on 17 February 1598 was Henry Brooke, 11th Baron Cobham.

The Falstaff-like individual described in pleasant and amusing terms by Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, in a letter to Sir Robert Cecil dated 17 February 1598 is said to be 27 years of age, and was born about 1571. He was therefore by definition a different person from Henry Brooke, 11th Baron Cobham, who was born 22 November 1564. Essex writes:

*I pray you commend me to my Lord of Southampton and Sir George Carew, and tell them
I do envy their engrossing of all employments both civil and martial by land and sea.*

*Here is one cried in London of 27 years of age, a round man with little hair of his head,
and that like moss, faced like a King Harry goat, of a sanguine complexion and a merry
wit. If any such be strayed into your company, I pray you have care he be sent back.*

The Falstaff-like individual described in Essex' letter of 17 February 1598 to Sir Robert Cecil was likely Sir Alexander Radcliffe (d. 15 August 1599) of Ordsall, Lancashire, who was born about 1571 and was therefore about 27 years of age in February 1598, and who at the time was in France with Sir Robert Cecil on an ultimately unsuccessful mission to dissuade Henri IV from making peace with Spain.

In another letter written to Sir Robert Cecil a week or ten days later, on 25-28 February 1598, Essex refers to an individual who is 'courting' Sir Alexander Radcliffe's sister, Margaret Radcliffe (d. 10 November 1599), as 'Sir John Falstaff':

To my honourable friend, Sir Robert Cecil, Principal Secretary and her Majesty's Ambassador to the French King

Sir, I have news of this post's going but at the instant of his departure I need say nothing to you of the intercepted letters nor of the Queen's direction to you, for that will appear by the Queen's own dispatch, but if my Lord Cobham do but let you know that which he is witness of you shall find I am very honest friend, and profess no more than I make good. I wish you all happiness and rest,

Your affectionate and assured friend,

Essex

I pray you commend me to my Lord of Southampton and Sir George Carew. I wrote to them both by one Constance, and had written now if I had any time. I pray you commend me also to Alexander Ratcliffe, and tell him for news his sister is married to Sir John Falstaff.

The individual referred to in Essex' second letter of February 25-28 1598 appears to have been Henry Brooke, 11th Baron Cobham. He is mentioned by name in the body of the same letter, and referred to in the postscript as 'Sir John Falstaff', and is known from contemporary evidence to have been courting Sir Alexander Radcliffe's sister, Margaret Radcliffe, almost a year and a half later. See a letter from Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney dated 18 August 1599:

News came thither from Ireland of the lamentable defeat our forces had at the Curlew, going to fortify Sligo, where we lost Sir Conyers Clifford, Sir Alexander Radcliffe, and many gallant men, by the baseness of the common soldiers. . . .

Mistress Radcliffe hath kept her chamber these 4 days, being somewhat troubled at my Lady Kildare's unkind using of her, which is thought to proceed from her [=Lady Kildare's] love to my Lord Cobham. As yet she hears nothing of her brother's death, and by the Queen's command it is kept from her, who is determined to break it unto her herself. Old Mrs Radcliffe takes care to beg the wardship of a third brother, left living in Ireland, of the age of 14 years. . . . Nonsuch, this Saturday noon, 18 August 1599

See also a letter from Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney dated 13 November 1599:

Mistress Radcliffe, the honorable Maid of Honor, died at Mr. Kircom's [=Kirkham's?] house in Richmond, upon Sunday last. She is much lamented. . . . Now that Mistress Radcliffe is dead, the Lady Kildare hopes that my Lord Cobham will proceed on his suit to her. Barnards Castle. 13 November 1599.

Nothing is known of Margaret Radcliffe's feelings for Henry Brooke, Lord Cobham. It seems clear, however, that he pursued her, and that the widowed Lady Kildare, whom he eventually married, was jealous.

It should be noted that immediately after his father's death on 6 March 1597, and prior to his pursuit of Margaret Radcliffe, it appears to have been taken for granted that Henry Brooke, 11th Baron Cobham, would marry Oxford's daughter, Bridget Vere. On 16 March 1597 Rowland Whyte wrote to Robert Sidney:

I am credibly informed that the Lord Cobham, who shall marry my Lord Oxford's daughter, hearing how disdainfully my Lord of Essex speaks of him in public, doth likewise protest to hate the Earl as much. What will grow of this I will export.

On 8 July 1599, the Countess of Southampton wrote to her husband, Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton:

All the news I can send you that I think will make you merry is that I read in a letter from London that Sir John Falstaff is by his mistress Dame Pintpot made father of a goodly miller's thumb, a boy that's all head and very little body, but this is a secret.

As noted above, the 'Sir John Falstaff' referred to by Essex in his letter of 25-28 February 1598 to Sir Robert Cecil appears to have been Henry Brooke, 11th Baron Cobham, who is known from contemporary evidence to have courted Sir Alexander Radcliffe's sister, Margaret Radcliffe.

It therefore follows that the 'Sir John Falstaff' referred to by the Countess of Southampton in her letter of 8 July 1599 was also Henry Brooke, 11th Baron Cobham.

References:

(1) Hotson, Leslie, *Shakespeare's Sonnets Dated*, (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949), pp. 153-6. It should be noted that Hotson erroneously states that the letter of 8 July 1599 was written by 'the Countess of Southampton . . . to her son'. It appears Hotson wrongly attributed the letter to the Dowager Countess of Southampton, Mary (nee Browne) Wriothesley.

(2) Akrigg, G.P.V., *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 248. It should be noted that Akrigg erroneously states that the letter of 25-28 February 1598 was written by Sir Robert Cecil to Essex, whereas it was clearly written by Essex to Cecil (see above).

(3) McGarr, Ben, *The Manchester Book of Days*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2013), unpagged:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=c-0TDQAAQBAJ&pg=PT241>

(4) Collins, Arthur, *Letters and Memorials of State*, Vol. II, (London: T. Osborne, 1746), pp. 30, 118, 141 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=-PoiAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA30>

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=-PoiAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA118>

and p. 141 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=-PoiAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA141>

MYTH: The 3rd Earl of Southampton is mentioned as a possible successor to the Crown in the Peyton report of 1603.

There is no reference to Southampton as a possible successor to the Crown in the Peyton report.

References:

(1) Price, Diana. "Rough winds do shake; A fresh look at the Tudor Rose theory". *The Elizabethan Review*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Autumn, 1996), p. 18.

(2) *Calendar of state papers, domestic, 1603-10*, p. 5.

(3) Sir John Peyton's letter and report regarding events in March, 1603, TNA SP14/4/14, ff. 27-29, available on this website.

MYTH: Sir Brian Annesley and his daughter, Cordelia, influenced Shakespeare's King Lear.

From the *ODNB*:

[Sir Brian Annesley] married Audrey, daughter of Robert Tyrrell of Birdbrook, Essex, who gave birth to four children: Brian, who predeceased his father, Christian, who married William, Lord Sandys, and finally Grace and Cordelia, who served the queen as maids of honour and who wed, respectively, Sir John Wildgoose and Sir William Harvey. Anslay's wife, Audrey, probably died in 1591, and, afterwards, when he suffered from senility, his youngest daughter, Cordelia, cared for him. At his death on 7 July 1604, apparently of natural causes, he named her the major beneficiary of his will, which Wildgoose unsuccessfully challenged. Irvin Matus has argued that Cordelia's well-publicized legal problems influenced the writing and popularity of Shakespeare's King Lear. Cordelia erected a monument with an inscription to her parents' memory at St Margaret's Church, Lee, Kent, where they were buried.

The assumptions that the Christian name of Cordell Annesley was 'Cordelia', and that her family situation influenced Shakespeare's *King Lear*, appear to be unfounded. In a

letter to Sir Robert Cecil dated 23 October 1603, she signs herself ‘Cordell Annesley’ (see CP 187/119), not ‘Cordelia’. Moreover her uncle, Richard Tyrrell (d.1566), appointed Sir William Cordell (d.1581), Master of the Rolls, as his executor (for his will, see TNA PROB 11/48/637). It thus seems Richard Tyrrell’s niece, Cordell Annesley, had been christened ‘Cordell’ as a compliment to Sir William Cordell, just as three nieces of Sir William Cordell had been christened Cordell as a compliment to his family surname – Cordell Bowes, Cordell Dethick, and Cordell Alington. For Sir William Cordell’s nieces, see his will, TNA PROB 11/63/590, and the will of his wife, Mary Clopton Cordell (d.1585), TNA PROB 11/68/545.

MYTH: An acrostic in the list of actors in the First Folio spells the surname ‘Stanley’, thus establishing that William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby, was the author of the Shakespeare canon.

The acrostic does not spell ‘Stanley’. The acrostic spells ‘Stenley’, a surname entirely unknown in the Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods, and a spelling never used as a variant for ‘Stanley’. In addition, earls at the time were referred to, or referred to themselves, by their titles, not by family surnames. Moreover as illustrated in an article by William Niederkorn, an acrostic spelling the surname ‘Dyer’, another authorship candidate, was found earlier in the same list of actors by Jones Harris.

References:

(1) Rollett, John M., *Shakespeare Lost and Found: Evidence for William Stanley, Sixth Earl of Derby, as the Man Behind the Mask*, (Park Road Editions, 2011).

(2) Bodleian First Folio, list of actors, at:

<http://firstfolio.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/book.html>

(3) Niederkorn, William S., ‘Shake-speare Fission’, *The Brooklyn Rail*, 5 February 2013, at:

<http://www.brooklynrail.org/2013/02/books/shake-speare-fission>