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**OXMYTHS: SECTION I**

**The Oxmyths described below are arranged chronologically in terms of events in Oxford's life and the lives of members of his family. No attempt has been made here to specify the publications in which the various myths have appeared over the years. Rather, attention is focused on specific references which disprove the myth in question. Many of the manuscript references cited are available in modern spelling versions at <http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/>.**

***MYTH: Lord Burghley claimed to have been born during the Diet of Worms.***

William Cecil, Lord Burghley was born 13 September 1520. The Diet of Worms took place from January 27-May 25, 1521.

References:

(1) Stephen, Leslie and Sidney Lee, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967-8), Vol. 3, p. 1315.

(2) Hillerbrand, Hans J., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 4 vols., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Vol. 4, pp. 300-1.

***MYTH: Sir Thomas Darcy's letter of June 27, 1548 concerning the 16th Earl of Oxford's marriage is addressed to William Cecil.***

The addressee of this letter is unspecified.

References:

(1) TNA SP10/1/45, where it is incorrectly calendared under 1547.

(2) Knighton, C.S., ed., *Calendar of State Papers of the Reign of Edward VI 1547-1553*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1992), p. 14.

***MYTH: The 16th Earl's second marriage, to Margery Golding, was 'irregular'.***

There is no evidence of this. After the 16th Earl's death on 3 August 1562, in order to claim the de Vere inheritance for herself, Katherine de Vere Windsor, the 16th Earl's daughter by his first marriage to Dorothy Neville, complained in 1563 to the Archbishop

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of Canterbury that the 16th Earl had married one Joan Jockey *after* the death, circa 6 January 1548, of the 16th Earl's first wife, Dorothy Neville, and that in consequence his marriage to Margery Golding on 1 August 1548 was legally invalid. However the evidence of all witnesses who had knowledge of the matter was that the alleged marriage between the 16th Earl and Joan Jockey, if it took place at all, had occurred *before* the death the 16th Earl's first wife, Dorothy Neville. It was thus the 16th Earl's alleged marriage to Joan Jockey which would have been legally invalid, if in fact the marriage ever took place. Since the evidence of these witnesses established that Joan Jockey could never have been the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's legal wife, his marriage to Margery Golding on 1 August 1548 was not in any way legally 'irregular'. Katherine de Vere Windsor must have eventually accepted the legality of her father's second marriage. After her initial complaint to the Archbishop of Canterbury she took no further action, and the de Vere inheritance descended to the 16th Earl's children by his second marriage to Margery Golding.

References:

(1) Depositions in Huntington Library EL 5870, available on this website.

***MYTH: Lord Burghley arranged the 16th Earl of Oxford's marriage to Margery Golding.***

There is no evidence that William Cecil, later Lord Burghley, was involved in any way with the 16th Earl of Oxford's marriage to Margery Golding. The marriage was 'wrought' 'by the means of the vicar of Clare'.

References:

(1) Depositions of John Anson, Richard Enews and Thomas Knollys in Huntington Library EL 5870, available on this website.

***MYTH: Margery Golding remarried in excessive haste after the 16th Earl of Oxford's death.***

A reference by Margery Golding to Charles Tyrrell in a letter to William Cecil of 11 October 1563 could be construed to imply that Margery Golding and Charles Tyrrell were married by that date. The 16th Earl of Oxford had died more than a year before, on 3 August 1562. Remarriage more than a year after a spouse's death does not comprise 'excessive haste'.

References:

(1) Bowen, Gwynneth, 'What Happened at Hedingham and Earls Colne?', *Shakespeare Authorship Review*, No. 23 (Summer 1970), pp. 1-11, at p. 4:

<http://www.sourcetext.com/sourcebook/library/bowen/22colne1.htm>.

***MYTH: Oxford and his sister Mary were twins.***

The myth that Oxford and his sister Mary were both 14 years old in 1563, and therefore twins, arose because the phrase *minorem quatordecem annorum* is applied to both of them in Arthur Golding's petition of June 28, 1563. Louis Thorn Golding incorrectly translated the Latin as 'a minor of fourteen years', which, since the phrase is applied to both Oxford and Mary, would have made them both 14 years of age in 1563. The correct translation, however, is 'less than 14 years of age', or 'under 14 years of age', which merely means that both Oxford and Mary were under the age of 14 in 1563.

Further evidence that Oxford and Mary were not twins is found in the two extant wills of the 16th Earl of Oxford. The 1552 will of the 16th Earl contains bequests to 'Edward my son', but does not mention his daughter Mary, indicating that Mary had not yet been born. Nor does a codicil of January 28, 1554 make any mention of Mary. The first mention of the 16th Earl's daughter, Mary, is in his will of 1562.

References:

(1) Black, Henry Campbell, *Black's Law dictionary*, 4th ed. rev., (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing, 1968), p. 1148.

(2) Arthur Golding's 1563 petition regarding Oxford's legitimacy, TNA SP 12/29/8, ff. 11-12.

(3) First surviving will, dated 21 December 1552, of John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford, BL MS Stowe Charter 633-4.

(4) Second surviving will, dated 28 July 1562, of John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford, TNA PROB 11/46/247.

***MYTH: Oxford was educated in the household of Sir Thomas Smith at Ankerwyke from 1554 until the death of Queen Mary on 17 November 1558.***

The evidence adduced in support of this claim is that in inventories taken in 1561 and 1569, Sir Thomas Smith listed the contents of a chamber at Ankerwyke which he referred to as 'my Lorde's chamber'. However Andrew (1467-1543), 1st Lord Windsor, had earlier owned Ankerwyke, then known as the manor of Parnish. Henry VIII granted

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Ankerwyke to Andrew, Lord Windsor, for life in 1539, with remainder to his sons William, Edmund and Thomas. William (1498-1558), 2nd Lord Windsor, sold this manor and others to the King for £1000 in 1544. The likelihood that the designation 'my Lorde's chamber' refers to a chamber once occupied by Lord Windsor is strengthened by the fact that the date '1543', the year of Lord Windsor's death, occurs after the first items listed in that chamber in the 1569 inventory.

References:

(1) Queen's College MS 49, f. 83r and MS 83, f. 123r, available online at <http://politicworm.com/blog/>.

(2) 'Parishes: Egham', *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 3* (1911), pp. 419-427 at pp. 422-3. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42999>.

***MYTH: The eight-year-old Oxford broke the windows in his rooms at Queen's College, Cambridge, in January 1559 and again in March 1559.***

There is no evidence for this preposterous claim. The accounts recording the expenditures for windows indicate that the lead and glass put into the eight-year-old Oxford's rooms at Queen's College were for new windows in rooms which had lacked leaded glass windows prior to that time. Leaded glass windows were very expensive in the Tudor period, and few could afford them.

References:

(1) Queen's College Archives, Book I, ff. 257-9. on this website.

(2) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 23-4 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WcfiqlOjEKoC&pg=PA24>

***MYTH: Arthur Golding was Oxford's tutor.***

Although Arthur Golding lived in the Cecil household while Oxford was living there as a ward of the Queen, there is no evidence that Golding was Oxford's tutor.

***MYTH: Henry Howard reported that the Queen called Oxford a bastard.***

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The allegation that the Queen called Oxford a bastard ('that the Queen said he was a bastard, for which cause he would never love her, and leave her in the lurch one day') is found in Charles Arundel's allegations against Oxford, not in Henry Howard's allegations.

References:

(1) TNA SP 12/151/46, ff. 103-4.

***MYTH: Oxford was a ward of Lord Burghley.***

Although he resided in Lord Burghley's household from the age of 12 during his wardship, Oxford was a ward of the Queen, not a ward of Lord Burghley.

References:

(1) TNA WARD 8/13.

***MYTH: The Latin word 'ver' is related to the English word 'spring', meaning 'well', and to its old English spelling 'wyll'.***

There is no evidence of this.

References:

(1) Definitions of 'spring', 'well', in *OED*.

***MYTH: Oxford inherited income of £3500 per annum.***

The inquisition post mortem taken after the 16th Earl of Oxford's death values the annual income from the 16th Earl's estates at only £2050 per annum.

References:

(1) Inquisition post mortem dated 18 January 1563 of John de Vere, 16th earl of Oxford, TNA C 142/136/12.

(2) TNA WARD 8/13.

(3) Stone, Lawrence, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 582, 760.

***MYTH: Lord Burghley controlled Oxford's lands during Oxford's minority.***

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, controlled Oxford's lands during Oxford's minority via a grant from Queen Elizabeth dated 22 October 1563.

References:

(1) TNA WARD 8/13.

(2) Bowen, Gwynneth, 'What Happened at Hedingham and Earls Colne?', *Shakespeare Authorship Review*, No. 23 (Summer 1970), pp. 1-11 at:

<http://www.sourcetext.com/sourcebook/library/bowen/22colne1.htm>.

***MYTH: Oxford's tutor, the scholar and antiquary Laurence Nowell, owner of the sole extant manuscript copy of Beowulf, found Oxford 'intractable'.***

There is no evidence for this preposterous claim. Nowell's Latin letter written in 1563 to his master, Sir William Cecil, states matter-of-factly that since he can see that his work as Oxford's tutor will not be much longer required, he would be very appreciative if Cecil would see fit to employ him in a project he has long contemplated, the making of accurate maps of England. According to orthodox scholars, most references to Nowell term him Cecil's secretary. Nowell was at Cecil House at least as early as 1562, when he completed his transcript of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript Cotton Otho B.xi. Nowell continued at Cecil House for another four years after writing this letter. He left England for the continent in 1567 to search out medieval manuscripts in continental libraries, and died c.1570, having last been heard of at Leipzig.

References:

(1) For an English translation of Nowell's letter, see Skelton, R.A., *Saxton's Survey of England and Wales*, Imago Mundi Supplement vi (Amsterdam: Nico Israel, 1974), pp. 15-16, and BL Lansdowne 6/54, f. 135 on this website.

(2) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 39 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ax36vm1CW08C&pg=PA39>

(3) Brackman, Rebecca, 'Laurence Nowell' at:

<http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/reference/essays/laurence-nowell/>

(4) Brackman, Rebecca, *The Elizabethan Invention of Anglo-Saxon England: Laurence Nowell, William Lambarde, and the Study of Old English*, (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012), p. 12 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=GIQV89HAKa8C&pg=PA12>

(5) See also the will of Laurence Nowell, Dean of Lichfield (died c.1576), who has often been confused with Oxford's tutor, the antiquary Laurence Nowell, TNA PROB 11/59/433, and the *ODNB* article on the two Laurence Nowells.

***MYTH: The MA degrees awarded to Oxford during Queen Elizabeth's progresses to the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford in 1564 and 1566 did not recognize Oxford's scholarly accomplishments.***

Of the seventeen recipients of degrees at the University of Cambridge on 10 August 1564, only Oxford and Edward Manners (12 July 1549 – 14 April 1587), 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Rutland, were youths. Oxford was fourteen years of age at the time, while Rutland was fifteen. Of the twelve recipients of degrees at the University of Oxford on 6 September 1566, Oxford was the only youth. He was sixteen years of age. Both Oxford and Rutland were educated by private tutors. The fact that Oxford alone received degrees from both universities at a youthful age is persuasive evidence that his scholarly accomplishments were recognized by the universities.

(1) Nelson, Alan. H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 42-3, 45 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WcfiqlOjEKoC&pg=PA42>

(2) Nichols, John, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, (London: John Nichols and Son, 1823), Vol. I, p. 180-1, 188-9. There are seventeen names in the list on p. 180; however only sixteen names are listed on pp. 188-9 (William Latimer's name is omitted from the second list). See:

<https://archive.org/stream/progressespublic01nich#page/180/mode/2up>.

(3) The award of a degree to Rutland on 10 August 1564 appears to have required special consideration: 'D. Edwardus Manners, Comes Rutlandiae, qui in ea tantum statuta jurabat quae cum privilegiis non pugnans'. Nichols, *supra*, p. 189 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/progressespublic01nich#page/188/mode/2up>

(4) Oxford and Rutland were related by marriage. Rutland's mother, Margaret Neville (c.1525-1559), was the sister of Dorothy Neville (d.1548), first wife of Oxford's father. Both were the daughters of Ralph Neville (1498–1549), 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Westmorland (1498–1549), by Catherine Stafford. See TNA PROB 11/97/10.

***MYTH: Edward Manners, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Rutland, was awarded an MA degree on 6 September 1566 during Queen Elizabeth's progress to the University of Oxford.***

Rutland was not present at Oxford on 6 September 1566 when degrees were awarded:

*On 6 September 1566, Convocation ordered that as many earls, lords, and distinguished persons as the Chancellor and the committee of Convocation should determine were to be created M.A., if they accepted the offer and were admitted 'to-day before the Queen's departure.' The Earl of Rutland, however, on account of his singular benevolence to the University, was to be created M.A. at any time and anywhere.*

*7 October 1566, a committee was appointed to create the Earl of Rutland M.A.*

See Clark, Andrew, ed., *Register of the University of Oxford*, Vol. II, (1571-1622), Part I, Introductions, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887), p. 234 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/registerunivers00clargoog#page/n270/mode/2up>

It is thus unclear when, or if ever, Rutland was created M.A. at the University of Oxford, as the entry merely states that a committee was appointed on 7 October 1566 for that purpose. It is also unclear what 'benevolence' a seventeen-year-old royal ward who was not in control of his own income could have bestowed on the University of Oxford by 1566.

According to the list given in Nichols, Vol. I, p. 215, Rutland was not among those awarded degrees on 6 September 1566. It is only according to an unreliable list given in Nichols, Vol. I, p. 229, that Rutland was awarded a degree on that occasion. That list is headed 'Viri nobilitate insignes, qui Oxon. aderant'. Nichols states that Robinson relied on Harleian MS 7033. Whatever his source, Robinson's list differs markedly from the list given by Nichols on pp. 215-16. Robinson includes 10 names not listed on pp. 215-16 (those marked with an asterisk below), and omits 3 names from the list on pp. 215-16: (blank) Rogers, Comptroller; Sir Nicholas Throckmorton; and John Tamworth, esquire, of the Queen's Privy Chamber.

Marchio Northamp. \*

Comes Oxon.

Comes Sussex. \*

Comes Leicester. \*

Comes Warwic.



Comes Rutland. \*  
 Comes Hunt. \*  
 Comes Ormund.  
 Epus. Sarum. \*  
 Epus. Roff. \*  
 D.W. Howard.  
 D. Lestrangle.  
 D. Graye. \*  
 D. Patchet. \*  
 D. Russell. \*  
 D. Sheffield.  
 D. Stafford.  
 Mr. Rogers, Miles Aur.  
 Mr. Cecill, Miles Aur.  
 Mr. Knolles, Miles Aur.

Venn records that Rutland was awarded an M.A. by the University of Cambridge in 1564 on the occasion of the Queen's visit, but merely records 'M.A. (Oxford) 1566', with no mention of the Queen's visit, for the alleged degree at the University of Oxford.

The *ODNB* article on Rutland states that 'In his teenage years he accompanied Queen Elizabeth on her visit to Cambridge in 1564 where he was lodged in St John's College and made an MA'. However with respect to the alleged 1566 degree, the *ODNB* article makes no claim that the degree was awarded during the Queen's visit, stating merely that 'At Oxford in October 1566 he received an honorary degree'. Moreover no authority is cited in the *ODNB* article for the alleged 1566 degree.

It is thus clear that Rutland was not awarded an M.A. degree by the University of Oxford on 6 September 1566 during the Queen's visit. He may have been awarded an M.A. degree at some later time, but firm evidence to that effect is lacking.

#### References:

(1) Nelson, Alan. H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 45, 449 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WcfiqlOjEKoC&pg=PA45>

(2) Nichols, John, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, (London: John Nichols and Son, 1823), Vol. I, pp. 215-16 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/progressespublic01nich#page/214/mode/2up>.

(3) Nichols, John, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, (London: John Nichols and Son, 1823), Vol. I, pp. 229 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/progressespublic01nich#page/228/mode/2up>.

(4) Venn, John and J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, Vol. I, Part 3, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), p. 134 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=yIwSb9UO--cC&pg=PA134>

***MYTH: On 23 July 1567, the 17-year-old Oxford 'killed' an unarmed man, Thomas Brincknell, with a rapier.***

The coroner's report stipulates that the weapons used by Oxford and his fencing companion were fencing foils, not rapiers.

There is no evidence that Oxford 'killed' Thomas Brincknell. Lord Burghley described the incident in a note made many years later:

*Thomas Brincknell, an under-cook, was hurt by the Earl of Oxford at Cecil House, whereof he died, and by a verdict found felo-de-se, with running upon a point of a fence sword of the said Earl.*

The term 'felo-de-se' is defined in the *OED* as:

*One who 'deliberately puts an end to his own existence, or commits any unlawful malicious act, the consequence of which is his own death' (Blackstone).*

The inquest report states that on the evening of 23 July 1567 Brincknell was drunk, and fatally wounded himself by running onto the 17-year-old Oxford's foil while Oxford and Edmund Baynham, 'not intending nor having in mind injury of any person', were practicing fencing in the back yard of Cecil House in the Strand. The report employs the legal formula of the time for death caused by a person's own actions, i.e. that Brincknell caused his own death, 'not having God before his eyes, but moved & deceived by diabolic instigation' (the same legal formula is used in *Hales v. Petit*, which influenced Shakespeare's *Hamlet*). In his intoxicated condition Brincknell may have believed that Oxford and Baynham were fighting in earnest and attempted to part them, thereby sustaining a fatal injury, since severance of the femoral artery can result in death within minutes. Mercutio's death in *Romeo and Juliet* comes about in a similar way: *Why the dev'l came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.*

References:

(1) Verdict of coroner's inquest of 24 July 1567 into the death of Thomas Brincknell, TNA KB 9/619, m. 13.

(2) *OED* definitions of rapier and foil:

*rapier*

1. *a. A long, thin, sharp-pointed sword designed chiefly for thrusting.*

*foil*

1. *A light weapon used in fencing; a kind of small-sword with a blunt edge and a button at the point.*

(3) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 47-8.

***MYTH: The coroner's jury which inquired into the death of Thomas Brincknell was 'packed', and included Sir William Cecil's 'protégé', the chronicler Raphael Holinshed (see above).***

There is no evidence that the chronicler Raphael Holinshed was a member of the coroner's jury. The name given in the Latin of the original document is 'Randolphi Holynshedd'. According to Martin, 'Randolphus' is the Latinized form of the Christian names 'Randolf' and 'Randal', not the Latinized form of the Christian name 'Raphael'.

Moreover the first evidence of any connection between the chronicler Raphael Holinshed and Sir William Cecil is from a decade after the Brincknell incident, when Holinshed dedicated the first edition of his *Chronicles* to him in 1577.

References:

(1) Verdict of coroner's inquest of 24 July 1567 into the death of Thomas Brincknell, TNA KB 9/619, m. 13.

(2) Martin, Charles Trice, *The Record Interpreter*, facsimile of 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1982), p. 462.

(3) *ODNB* entry for Raphael Holinshed.

(4) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 47-8.

***MYTH: The coroner's jury which inquired into the death of Thomas Brincknell was 'packed', and included Oxford's servant, William Walter (see above).***

There is no evidence that a member of the coroner's jury was Oxford's servant at the time. The name given in the Latin of the original document is 'Willelmi Waters', not

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‘William Walter’, and the first records of William Walter as Oxford’s servant occur in 1580, thirteen years after the Brincknell incident.

References:

(1) Verdict of coroner's inquest of 24 July 1567 into the death of Thomas Brincknell, TNA KB 9/619, m. 13.

(2) TNA C 54/1080, Indenture dated 20 April 1580 between Oxford and his servant William Walter.

(3) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 47-8, 223.

***MYTH: Thomas Brincknell's property was forfeited, and he was buried in unsanctified ground (see above).***

There is no evidence of this.

References:

(1) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 47-8.

***MYTH: Thomas Brincknell, whose death was the subject of the coroner's inquest, married Agnes Harris on 8 August 1563; their first child, Quyntyn, was born 6 November 1564, and their son John, 'a chrisom child', was born posthumously on 3 November 1567 (see above).***

There is no evidence that the Thomas Brincknell who married Agnes Harris was the same person as the Thomas Brincknell whose death was the subject of the coroner’s inquest, and no evidence that the latter was either married, or had children. Moreover although a John Brincknell, ‘a chrisom child’, was buried at St Margaret’s, Westminster, on 3 November 1567, there is no evidence as to who his parents were, or that he had any connection to the Thomas Brincknell whose death was the subject of the coroner’s inquest.

It is also significant that the coroner’s inquest was taken at St Martin in the Fields, the parish in which Cecil House in the Strand was located, and that the coroner’s report also makes reference to the parish of St Clement Danes in the Strand. Since Thomas Brincknell was an undercook at Cecil House in the Strand, the assumption that

christenings, marriages and deaths in the register of the parish of St Margaret's, Westminster, had any connection with him is entirely unwarranted.

References:

(1) 'Thomas Brincknell to Agnes Harris' in Burke, Arthur Meredyth, *Memorials of St. Margaret's Church Westminster: The Parish Registers 1539-1660*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd., 1914), p. 281 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/memorialsfstmar00westrich#page/280/mode/2up>.

(2) 'Quyntyn Bryncknell s of Thomas' (altered from "Brynckley") in Burke, *supra*, p. 22 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/memorialsfstmar00westrich#page/22/mode/2up>.

(3) 'John Brinknell, c. ch.' in Burke, *supra*, p. 415 at.

<https://archive.org/stream/memorialsfstmar00westrich#page/414/mode/2up>

(4) Wheatley, Henry B., *London Past and Present*, (London: John Murray, 1891), Vol. I, p. 343 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=DljSAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA343>

(5) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 47-8, 450.

***MYTH: Oxford is the sword-bearer in the Gheeraedts engraving of a Garter procession.***

There is no firm identification of the sword-bearer. The engraving by Marcus Gheeraedts the Elder depicts Henri III of France, who was not nominated as a Garter Knight until 23 April 1575, and Maximilian II, who died on 12 October 1576. The presence of these two individuals suggests that the Garter procession depicted in the engraving dates from the period April 1575 - October 1576, that is, between Henri III's nomination and Maximilian's death. There was only a single installation of a Garter Knight during this time, the installation of Charles, Lord Howard of Effingham, on 8 May 1575. Oxford was not in England at the time. From February 1575 until April 1576 he was away from England on a continental tour.

On the other hand, Strong has drawn attention to disparities which led him to the conclusion that the engraving is merely a 'heroical device', to be 'read as an overall emblem of the Garter as an institution' rather than as the depiction of a specific Garter procession. He points out, *inter alia*, that the engraving depicts a procession at Windsor,

which was not used for Garter ceremonies after 1567 (with the exception of the ceremonies in 1572); that the Chapel choristers and officiating clergy are conspicuous by their absence; and that although the engraving was executed in 1576, the date has been altered to 1578 in a contemporary hand.

References:

(1) Cokayne, George Edward, *The Complete Peerage*, Vol. 2, Appendix B (London: St. Catherine Press, 1912), pp. 551-2.

(2) Strong, Roy, *The Cult of Elizabeth*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), pp. 169-72 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=gYEwaJfjMIEC&pg=PA169>

(3) A reproduction of the entire Gheeraedts engraving was formerly available on Robert Brazil's Oxpix website at:

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/4260/garterparade.html>. GeoCities.

The GeoCities web hosting service has been shut down; however the Oxpix site has been archived at:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20010505020137/http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/4260/garterparade.html>

***MYTH: The sword-bearer in the Gheeraedts engraving of a Garter procession is a 'little fellow'.***

The sword-bearer is approximately the same height as the other male persons depicted in the engraving.

References:

(1) Ward, B.M., *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford 1550-1604 from Contemporary Documents*, (London: John Murray, 1928), pp. 191-2, 395-6.

(2) Strong, Roy, *The Cult of Elizabeth*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), pp. 169-72 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=gYEwaJfjMIEC&pg=PA169>

(3) For a reproduction of the sword-bearer in the Gheeraedts engraving see also:

<http://landoflegendslv.com/20tudoryears/05TudorHistory/Elizabeth-I/images/garterleft.jpg>

**MYTH: Oxford was nicknamed 'Phoebus', 'Cupid', 'Will', and 'the Boar' by his contemporaries.**

There is no evidence that Oxford was nicknamed 'Phoebus', 'Cupid', or 'Will' by his contemporaries.

However Sir Christopher Hatton (c.1540-1591) may have alluded to Oxford in 1573 as 'the boar'. Illness had forced Hatton to travel to Spa, near Liege in what is now Belgium, and in a letter to the Queen Hatton alludes to himself as 'the sheep', and perhaps to Oxford as 'the boar':

*Your mutton is black. Scarcely will you know our own, so much hath this disease dashed me. I pray God you may believe my faith. . . . You are the true felicity that in this world I know or find. God bless you forever. The branch of the sweetest bush I will wear & bear to my life's end. God doth witness I feign not. It is a gracious favour, most dear & welcome unto me. Reserve it to the sheep. He hath no tooth to bite where the boar's tush may both raze and tear.*

References:

(1) British Library online catalogue entry for Add MS 15891 : 1572-1640:

"A BOOKE of Letters received by Sir Christopher Hatton, Vicechamberlayne to the Queene's Majestie, from sundry parsons, and procured by hym to be written in this same booke;" probably copied by his Secretary, Samuel Cox, many of whose own letters are inserted.

(2) Nicolas, Harris, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton* (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), pp. vi-v [sic], 2-9 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/memoirsoflifetim00nicouoft#page/n15>

and:

<https://archive.org/stream/memoirsoflifetim00nicouoft#page/28>

**MYTH: The Queen affectionately nicknamed Oxford her 'Turk'.**

Sir Christopher Hatton used the term ‘your Turk’ in a letter to the Queen which likely dates from early 1581 and which appears to reference a private conversation between Hatton and the Queen. It should be noted that the letter cannot date from later than 1584, since it refers to the Spanish ambassador, Bernardino de Mendoza, who was expelled from England in that year. According to Nicolas, p. 496, *infra*, a copy of the original letter is catalogued as Harleian MSS 993, f. 75. However according to the Harleian catalogue, Vol. III, p. 472, the letter is catalogued as Harley 6993, f. 41:

*Sir Christopher Hatton, Vice-Chamberlain to the Queen, clearing his innocence of a report that he had revealed some expression of her Majesty's to her Turk. No date.*

As noted, the letter appears to date from early 1581 when Oxford was under house arrest after having been committed to the Tower by the Queen for fathering an illegitimate son by Anne Vavasour.

As also noted, if the term ‘Turk’ in the letter was used in reference to Oxford, it would only establish that Sir Christopher Hatton used the term, not the Queen. It is possible, of course, to draw the inference from Hatton’s use of the term that the Queen had also used it during their private conversation. However if the Queen did use the term, it was not an affectionate nickname. Some contemporary quotations from the *OED*:

*a. (Applied to) any one having qualities historically attributed to Turks; a cruel, rigorous, or tyrannical person; any one behaving barbarically or savagely. Also: a bad-tempered or unmanageable person; a man who treats his wife harshly.*

1536 *Exhort. North 56 in F. J. Furnivall Ballads from MSS I. 306 Thes Sothorne turkes pervertyng owre lawe.*

1578 *J. Lyly Euphues f. 5v Was neuer any Impe so wicked & barbarous, any Turke so vile and brutish.*

See also:

1548 *Hall's Vnion: Edward IV f. ccxxxiii [He] hated hym more then a Panym, or a Turke.*

1549 *Bk. Common Prayer (STC 16267) Celebr. Holye Communion f. lii Haue mercy vpon all Jewes, Turkes, Infidels, and heretikes.*

See also:

?1592 *Trag. Solyman & Perseda sig. F1v What say these prisoners, will they turne Turke, or no?*

1604 *Shakespeare Hamlet iii. ii. 264 If the rest of my fortunes turne Turk with me.*

See also:



1598 *J. Florio Worlde of Wordes Manduco, a disguised or vglie picture vsed in shewes to make children afraid,..a turke, or a bug-beare.*

See also:

1608 *Shakespeare King Lear xi. 83 In woman out paromord the Turke .*

If the Queen did use the term ‘Turk’ in reference to Oxford in early 1581, it appears to reflect the anger which had caused her to imprison him in the Tower.

References:

(1) *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Vol. III, p. 472.

(2) Nicolas, Harris, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton* (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), pp. 496-7 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/memoirsoflifetim00nicouoft#page/496>.

(3) Brazil, Robert, ‘Oxford and the Turk’, *The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, Vol. 39, No. 1, (Winter, 2003), pp. 16-18 at:

<https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/shakespeare-oxford-newsletter/>

***MYTH: Queen Elizabeth was referring to a marriage between herself and Oxford when she said that she ‘would be ashamed to lead so young a man as Oxford to church’.***

The Queen's remark is reported in a postscript to a letter to King Charles IX of France (1550-1574) written on 20 July 1571 by the French ambassador to England, Bertrand de Salignac Fenelon, seigneur de la Mothe (1523-1589). The postscript is addressed to the King's mother, Queen Catherine de Medici. The remark was made in reference to Queen Elizabeth's proposed marriage to Henri (1551-1589), Duke of Anjou, a younger brother of King Charles IX. After Charles' death on 30 May 1574, Henri reigned as King Henri III until his assassination in 1589. Henri was born at Fontainebleau on 19 September 1551, so he was only 19 years old at the time of these marriage negotiations. Fenelon reports that he and Queen Elizabeth were discussing various matters when the Queen brought up the subject of the portrait of Henri which she had been sent. She was pleased to note that he looked mature because of the embarrassment that marriage to such a young man would bring her. Fenelon writes:

*Madame, en discourant avec la Royne d'Angleterre des choses que je mande en la lettre du Roy, nous sommes, de propos en propos, venuz à parler du pourtraict de Monseigneur vostre filz, et elle m'a dict qu'encor que ce ne soit que le créon, et que son teint n'y soit*

*que quasi tout chafouré de charbon, si ne layssoit ce visaige de monstrer beaucoup de beaulté et beaucoup de merques de dignité et de prudence; et qu'elle avoit esté bien ayse de le veoyr ainsy meur comme d'ung homme parfaict, car me vouloit dire tout librement que mal vollontiers, estant de l'eage qu'elle est, eust elle vollen estre conduit à l'esglise pour estre maryée avec ung qui se fût monstré aussi jeune comme le comte d'Oxford, et que cella n'eust peu estre sans en avoir quelque honte, et encores du regret*

*[=Madam, in discoursing with the Queen of England of the things which I send information of in the King's letter, we came, in passing from one subject to another, to speak of the portrait of Monsieur, your son, and she said to me that, although it is but a pencil drawing, and that his complexion is, as it were, all disfigured by charcoal, that does not prevent the countenance from showing a great deal of beauty and many marks of dignity and wisdom, and that she had been well pleased to see him as mature as a perfect man, because she wished to tell me very freely that not willingly, being the age that she is, would she have wanted to be brought to church to be married with one who would have looked as young as the Earl of Oxford, and that that could not have been [+done] without her experiencing some embarrassment in doing it, and moreover, some repining]*

In fact, Henri not only looked as young as the Earl of Oxford, he was actually a year and half younger than Oxford, who was born on 12 April 1550. Queen Elizabeth was born on 7 September 1533, and was thus 37 years of age when this letter was written. Although it is clear from other documents that Queen Elizabeth did not actually intend to go through with the marriage to Henri, Duke of Anjou, and that the negotiations were merely a political manoeuvre, it is nonetheless small wonder that she felt embarrassment at the prospect of public reaction to the idea that she would wed a young man half her age.

References:

(1) *Correspondance Diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac, de la Mothe Fenelon, Ambassadeur de France en Angleterre de 1568 a 1575*, 7 vols., (Paris and London, 1838-40) at iv, p.186.

(2) The letter can also be found online at:

[http://books.google.ca/books?id=oLIUAAAQAAJ&pg=PP7&lpg=PP7&dq=%22correspondance+diplomatique%22&source=bl&ots=UtrM3upXpY&sig=hepw04g2ooP6A-\\_r5mfwM-NL9Fk](http://books.google.ca/books?id=oLIUAAAQAAJ&pg=PP7&lpg=PP7&dq=%22correspondance+diplomatique%22&source=bl&ots=UtrM3upXpY&sig=hepw04g2ooP6A-_r5mfwM-NL9Fk).

**MYTH:** *Sir George Buck wrote of Oxford that 'there were certain rich and prosperous men who desired to farm a part of his earldom, who offered to pay him yearly the sum of twelve thousand pounds, and to leave to his use and occupation all castles and manor houses and wonted places of residences of the ancient earls, with all the parks and woods or forests'.*

According to Kincaid, the word ‘twelve’ is missing in the relevant passage in Sir George Buck’s manuscript *History of King Richard the Third*, and Kincaid has supplied the word ‘twelve’ from a mid-17th century scribal copy, BL Egerton 2216. It seems likely that the scribe of BL Egerton 2216 misread either the numeral ‘2’ or the word ‘two’ in Buck’s original manuscript as ‘12’ or ‘twelve’. No reliance can thus be placed on it. Moreover the figure of £12,000 per annum is a completely fantastic one, since the lands Oxford inherited from the 16th Earl were worth only £2250 in revenue a year. The ‘clear yearly value’ of the 16th Earl’s lands on 1 July 1562 when the 16th Earl entered into a contract for the marriage of his son and heir with a sister of the 3rd Earl of Huntingdon was stated to be £2000. The annual rental value of the 16th Earl’s lands in the 16th Earl’s inquisition post mortem dated 18 January 1563 totals £2187 2s 7d. WARD 8/13, a Court of Wards accounting document for the period 29 September 1563 to 29 September 1564, gives the total value of the 16th Earl’s lands as £2233 13s 7d. When Oxford sued his livery in 1572, the sum charged by the Court of Wards as the fine for his livery was £1257. According to Hurstfield, the fine for suing a special livery was slightly more than half the value of the ward’s lands.

References:

- (1) Kincaid, Arthur Noel, ed., *The History of King Richard the Third (1619) by Sir George Buck*, (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1979), p. 170.
- (2) Contract between the 16th Earl and the 3rd Earl of Huntingdon for a marriage between Oxford and a sister of the Earl of Huntingdon, HL HAP o/s Box 3(19).
- (3) 16th Earl’s inquisition post mortem, TNA C 142/136/12.
- (4) Court of Wards accounting document for the period 29 September 1563 – 29 September 1564, TNA WARD 8/13.
- (5) Payment schedule for Oxford’s fines in the Court of Wards, Cecil Papers 25/105.
- (6) Hurstfield, Joel, *The Queen’s Wards* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), pp. 172-3.

**MYTH: John Poole, while a prisoner in Newgate in July, 1587, said that ‘the Queen made love to the Earl of Oxford’.**

The statement actually made by Poole was that the Queen ‘wooded the Earl of Oxford, but he would not fall in’.

References:

(1) TNA SP 12/273/103, calendared on p. 372 of *CSP Domestic, Elizabeth 1598-1601* under the year 1599.

***MYTH: Oxford owned Havering in 1574.***

Oxford never owned the royal manor and park of Havering, and it was not until the reign of King James that Oxford regained the keepership of Waltham Forest and of the King's house and park of Havering.

References:

(1) Oxford's letter dated 7 May 1603 to Robert Cecil, CP 99/161.

***MYTH: When Queen Elizabeth dropped her glove during a performance in which Oxford was acting, Oxford retrieved her glove 'while improvising in the same metre as his interrupted speech':***

***Although engag'd on this high embassy,  
Yet stoop we to pick up our cousin's glove.***

In *This Star of England* (p. 106), Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn substituted Oxford's name for that of Shakespeare in an anecdote which appears to have originated in Oxberry's *The Actor's Budget* and Ryan's *Dramatic Table Talk*.

References:

(1) *This Star of England* at <http://www.sourcetext.com/sourcebook/Star/ch10.html>.

(2) Oxberry, William, *The Actor's Budget* (Columbian Press, 1824), p. 207, available online.

(3) Ryan, R., *Dramatic Table Talk, or Scenes, Situations & Adventures Serious & Comic in Theatrical History & Biography*, (London: John Knight and Henry Lacey, 1825), Vol. III, pp. 156-7, available online.

***MYTH: Oxford departed on his continental tour on 7 January 1575.***

Oxford left England on his continental tour on or about 7 February, 1575.

References:

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- (1) Oxford's licence to travel for one year issued in January 1575, TNA 3/1571, f.1.
- (2) Oxford's indenture dated 30 January 1575, ERO D/Drg2/25.
- (3) Letter dated 7 February 1575 from Edward Bacon to his brother Nathaniel, A. Hassall Smith (ed.), *The Papers of Nathaniel Bacon of Stiffkey*, vol. I, 1566-77, Norfolk Record Society 46 (Norwich, 1979), pp.185, 304, cited in Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 121.
- (4) Memorandum by Lord Burghley dated 10 July 1576, CP xiii, p.144 (140/15(2)), cited in Nelson, *supra*, p. 119.

***MYTH: Oxford personally wrote verses in a copy of a New Testament belonging to Anne Cecil.***

The New Testament itself is no longer extant, and the copy of the verses is not in Oxford's hand.

References:

- (1) CP 140/124.
- (2) E-mail message of 11 June 1999 from Dr. Alan Nelson.

***MYTH: Clement Parretti was an Italian banker from whom Oxford was to receive funds while in Venice.***

Clement Parrett was Oxford's servant, and appears to have been neither an Italian nor a Venetian.

References:

- (1) CP 7/106, Clement Parrett to Lord Burghley, 23 September 1575.
- (1) CRO AR/1/853, lease of Oxford's manor of Tresithney to Thomas Atkinson on 28 January 1575, witnessed by Clement Parrett.

***MYTH: While in Venice in 1575, Oxford 'took up with Virginia Padoana, a courtesan'.***

On 27 September 1587, Stephen Powle wrote to John Chamberlain from Venice mentioning that he was lodged near the residences of several well-known Venetian courtesans.

*If to be well neighboured be no small part of happiness, I may repute myself highly fortunate, for I am lodged amongst a great number of Signoras. Isabella Bellochia in the next house on my right hand and Virginia Padoana, that honoreth all our nation for my Lord of Oxford's sake, is my neighbour on the left side. Over my head hath Lodovica Gonzaga, the French King's mistress, her house. You think it peradventure preposterous in Architecture to have her lie over me? I am sorry for it, but I cannot remedy it now. Pesarmia with her sweet entertainment and brave discourse is not two canals off. Ancilla (Master Hatton's handmaid) is in the next Campo; Paulina Gonzaga is not far off; Prudencia Romana with her courtly train of French gentlemen every night goeth "a spasso" by my pergola. As for Imperia Romana, her date is out which flourished in your time. I must of force be well hallowed amongst so many Saints. But in truth, I am afraid they do condemn me of heresy for setting up so few tapers to their high altars.*

It was the custom at the time for the wives of prominent Venetians to remain secluded at home, and it was these accomplished and polished courtesans who were the female companions of wealthy and titled Venetians at public events and entertainments. It would have been difficult for Oxford, as a nobleman visiting Venice, to have avoided meeting these courtesans in the company of the men whose mistresses they were. Powle's remark about Virginia Padoana is evidence of nothing more than the fact that Virginia Padoana still remembered and admired Oxford eleven years after his visit to Venice.

It is also worth noting that Stephen Powle was the son-in-law of John Turner (d.1579), a trusted servant of John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, named as an executor in the 16th Earl's will. John Turner also held a lease of the manor of Crepping Hall from Edward de Vere (1550-1604), the 17th Earl, and left him a bequest of £40 in his will. Turner's widow, Christian, purchased two manors from Oxford, Lamarsh and Colne Wake. According to the *Dictionary of National Biography* in late 1593 Powle married John Turner's daughter, Margaret Smyth (nee Turner) 'and settled with her at Smyth Hall, Blackmore, Essex, where he lived the life of a country gentleman and served as a JP'.

#### References:

(1) Stern, Virginia F., *Sir Stephen Powle of Court and Country; Memorabilia of a Government Agent for Queen Elizabeth I, Chancery Official, and English Country Gentleman*, (Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania: Susquehanna University Press, 1992), p. 83.

(2) Transcript of Stephen Powle's letter, and of records of Virginia Padoana's transgressions of the sumptuary laws (i.e. laws regulating expenditure on dress), posted on Dr. Alan Nelson's website.

(3) ODNB entry for Sir Stephen Powle (c.1553-1630).

(4) TNA PROB 11/61/414, will of John Turner.

***MYTH: While in Venice in 1576, Oxford 'took up with' Orazio Cuoco, a Venetian choirboy, and on his return to England he 'lived with' Cuoco.***

This loaded language misrepresents Orazio Cuoco's testimony before the Inquisition in Venice on 27 August 1577. According to his testimony, Cuoco was the son of an altarist at the church of Santa Marina. While in Venice, Oxford heard Orazio sing in the choir of Santa Maria Formosa, and asked him whether he would like to go to England. Orazio sought the advice of his parents, and both parents advised him to go. While in England, he lived as a page in Oxford's household, where, along with other of Oxford's servants, he was permitted the practice of his Catholic religion. On at least one occasion, he sang before the Queen. Eventually a Milanese merchant, who feared Cuoco would lose his Catholic faith if he remained in England, gave him money to return home. On his arrival in Venice, Orazio was examined by the Inquisition to determine whether he had lived as a Catholic during his absence, and whether the English had attempted to convert him to the Protestant religion.

References:

(1) Testimony of Orazio Cuoco on 27 August 1577 before the Inquisition, Venice, Archivio di Stato: Santo Uffizio, busta 41, fasc. 'Cocco Orazio': 1577.

(1) Translation by Dr. Noemi Magri of Orazio Cuoco's testimony.

***MYTH: On 11 December 1575 Oxford received money in Venice from Pasquino Spinola.***

There does not appear to have been any individual named 'Pasquino' Spinola, and in any event the original document establishes that the person from whom Oxford received money was Pasquale Spinola (see TNA SP 70/136, ff. 113-14).

The erroneous designation of 'Pasquale' as 'Pasquino' originated with B.M. Ward:

*On December 11th Lord Oxford received his money from Pasquino Spinola at Venice, and left for Florence on the following day.*

The error was repeated by Charlton Ogburn:

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*On December 12th, says Ward, the day after receiving a remittance through Pasquino Spinola in Venice, Oxford was off for Florence.*

More recently, Alan Nelson repeated the error, and compounded it by erroneously stating that Pasquale Spinola sent money to Oxford from somewhere outside Venice, whereas Spinola, like Oxford, was in Venice at the time:

*On 11 December money sent by Pasquino Spinola reached Oxford at Venice.*

References:

(1) TNA SP 70/136, ff. 113-14.

(2) 'Elizabeth: December 1575, 11-20', Calendar of State Papers Foreign, Elizabeth, Volume 11: 1575-1577 (1880), pp. 198-206. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=73226&strquery=Oxford>.

(3) Ward, Bernard Mordaunt, *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford 1550-1604 From Contemporary Documents*, (London: John Murray), 1928), pp. 109-10.

(4) Ogburn, Charlton, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., (McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, 1992), p. 547.

(5) Nelson, Alan. H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 131.

**MYTH: Oxford was given 'a spear of sorts to shake' at a mock tournament in Italy.**

The words 'a spear of sorts to shake' do not appear in the original of Andrea Perrucci's *Dell' Arte Rappresentativa Premeditata ed all' Improvviso* (Naples, 1699) describing the mock tournament involving Oxford. The words 'a spear of sorts to shake' are descriptive commentary used by Julia Cooley Altrocchi in her article on the mock tournament.

References:

(1) Perrucci, Andrea, *Dell' Arte Rappresentativa Premeditata ed all' Improvviso* (Firenze: Edizioni Sansoni Antiquariato, 1961), pp. 201-7.

(2) Altrocchi, Julia Cooley, "Oxford and the Commedia dell' Arte", *Shakespeare Authorship Review*, No. 2 (Autumn 1959), reprinted in Clark, Eva Turner, *Hidden allusions in Shakespeare's plays* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1974) pp. 134-5.



***MYTH: The goods taken from Oxford by pirates consisted of ‘a great collection of beautiful Italian garments’.***

The phrase used by Michel de Castelnau (c.1520-1592), Sieur de Mauvissiere, in his letter to Henri III of France describing the outrage done to Oxford is ‘unne infinité de belles hardes d’Italie’. The phrase ‘belles hardes’ includes furnishings and art, as well as items of personal adornment such as jewels and clothing. Moreover Robert Beale, who was sent by the Queen and Privy Council to the Low Countries to attempt to recover the stolen goods, noted that the pirates had bribed the authorities with objects made of gold (‘golden stuff’) taken from Oxford. The translation ‘a great collection of beautiful Italian garments’ is thus misleading and inadequate.

References:

(1) PRO 31/3/27, ff. 75-8.

(2) BL Cotton MS Galba C V, ff. 252-3.

(3) Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 137 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WcfiqlOjEKoC&pg=PA137&lpg=PA137&dq=%22a+great+collection+of+beautiful+Italian+garments%22&source=bl&ots=7IMmaJhxqw&sig=YMt7j4vc7FjXCpAbDN478WGdic&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CBwQ6AEwAGoVChMIqOKThYqqyAIVDZuICh2gxAsV#v=onepage&q=%22a%20great%20collection%20of%20beautiful%20Italian%20garments%22&f=false>

(4) *Le Dictionnaire de l’Academie Francoise*, (Paris: Jean Baptiste Coignard, 1694), Vol. I, p. 555 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=kcBMAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA555>

***MYTH: Rowland Yorke was Oxford's receiver.***

There is no evidence that Rowland Yorke was ever Oxford's receiver. The receiver mentioned in Lord Burghley's note of 25 April 1576 was Edward Hubberd.

References:

(1) E-mail message of June 10, 1999 from Dr. Daphne Pearson.

(2) Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 142.

**MYTH: In 1579, in a quarrel with Sir Philip Sidney, Oxford 'threatened violence until the Queen intervened'.**

This is a misrepresentation of the evidence. According to Fulke Greville's manuscript life of Sidney, after a quarrel erupted between Sidney and Oxford at the tennis court at Whitehall while the Queen's suitor, Alencon, and the French commissioners negotiating the Queen's marriage were visiting, Sidney (who had not yet been knighted) challenged Oxford to a duel. Oxford did not respond to Sidney's challenge, but Sidney refused to let the matter rest. The Queen, forced to intervene, laid before Sidney 'the difference in degree between Earls, and Gentlemen; the respect inferiors ought to their superiors; and the necessity in Princes to maintain their own creations, as degrees descending between the peoples licentiousness, and the annoynted Sovereignty of Crowns; how the Gentlemans neglect of the Nobility taught the Peasant to insult upon both'. In short, it was Sidney, not Oxford, who threatened violence, and the Queen intervened to remind Sidney that it was not the place of a mere gentleman to challenge a member of the nobility to a duel. It is also possible that Fulke Greville's account of the tennis-court quarrel is biased against Oxford, not only because of Greville's friendship with Sidney, but also because Fulke Greville was the son of Anne Neville (d.1583), one of the daughters of Ralph Neville (1498-1549), 4th Earl of Westmorland, and thus a sister of the 16th Earl of Oxford's first wife, Dorothy Neville (d.1548), who separated from the 16th Earl several years before her death.

References:

(1) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003) pp.196-7.

(2) Entries for Ralph Neville (1498-1549), 4th Earl of Westmorland, and Fulke Greville (1554-1628), 1st Baron Brooke of Beauchamps Court, in the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*.

**MYTH: Oxford knew Giordano Bruno.**

There is no evidence of this.

**MYTH: Oxford owned the ship *Edward Bonaventure*.**

Although Oxford was interested in purchasing the *Edward Bonaventure* in October, 1581, there is no evidence that he went through with the purchase.

## References:

(1) *Edward De Vere Newsletter*, Number 2 (April 1989).

**MYTH:** *Oxford sold the manor of Battles Hall to the composer, William Byrd (1539x43–1623).*

Oxford did not sell the manor of Battles Hall to the composer, William Byrd. However Oxford did grant the composer a 31-year lease of the manor in 1574, to commence after the death of Oxford's uncle, Aubrey Vere (d.1580), who held a life estate in the manor. William Byrd made an oral agreement with William Lewin, who was acting on behalf of his brother-in-law, Anthony Luther, for the sale of the lease. Later, considering the oral agreement not binding, William Byrd transferred the lease to his brother, John Byrd. Luther obtained a verdict against Byrd in the Court of Queen's Bench, but Byrd alleged the jury was packed. The matter was then referred to arbitration, and an award in favour of Luther was handed down in December 1580. In the meantime, Oxford had sold the manor to John Byrd in April 1580.

## References:

(1) 'Stapleford Abbots: Manors', *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 4: Ongar Hundred* (1956), pp. 223-228. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=15673>

(2) TNA CP 25/2/131/1677/22ELIZIEASTER, Item 9  
Fine of 18 April 1580 by which Oxford transferred clear title to the manor of Battles Hall in Essex to John Byrd for 400 marks.

(3) TNA C 54/1093, Part 23  
Recognizance of 18 April 1580 from Oxford to John Byrd in connection with the sale of the manor of Battles Hall in which Oxford's lease to the composer, William Byrd, is mentioned.

**MYTH:** *Oxford used the modern Bolebec crest of a lion rampant shaking a broken spear.*

The Bolebec crest of the lion rampant shaking a broken spear does not date from Oxford's lifetime.

## References:

- (1) E-mail message of 15 February 1999 from John Rollett.
- (2) Papers of Canon Gerald Rendall, Liverpool University archives.
- (3) Article by Christopher Paul.

***MYTH: ‘Whenever the canopy is borne, it is borne by Knights of the Garter’, and Oxford could thus never have borne the canopy.***

This claim on the oxfraud website is an egregious error. According to the History of Parliament, the Barons of the Cinque Ports, who were not Knights of the Garter, bore the canopy over the monarch at coronations, ‘a privilege already deemed ‘ancient’ by the reign of Richard I’.

Moreover courtiers and members of Oxford and Cambridge Universities who were not Knights of the Garter bore the canopy on various occasions during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. See Rollett.

References:

- (1) <http://www.oxfraud.com/100-canopies>.
- (2) <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/constituencies/cinque-ports>.
- (3) Rollett, John, ‘Shakespeare’s Sonnet 125: Who Bore the Canopy?’, *Notes & Queries*, Vol. 258, No. 3 (September 2013), pp. 438-441, at:  
<http://nq.oxfordjournals.org/content/60/3.toc>.

***MYTH: Oxford purchased Fisher's Folly in 1584.***

Oxford purchased Fisher's Folly prior to February 24, 1580, not in 1584.

References:

- (1) Letter from Lord Henry Howard to Queen Elizabeth containing allegations against Oxford, written by Howard at the Queen's commandment shortly after 30 December 1580, BL Cotton Titus C 6, ff. 7-8.

**MYTH: Oxford turned Charles Arundel in as a Spanish secret agent in December, 1580.**

Mauvissiere's letter of 11 January 1581 to the French King says nothing of Oxford having 'turned Charles Arundel in as a Spanish secret agent'. Mauvissiere merely claims that Oxford 'proceeded to accuse his best friends . . . of having conspired against the state by having made profession of the Catholic faith'.

References:

- (1) Letter from Michel de Castelnau, Sieur de Mauvissiere, to King Henri III dated 11 January 1581 mentioning Oxford's allegations against Lord Henry Howard and Charles Arundel, BN 15973, ff. 387v-392v.
- (2) Le Laboureur, Jean, *Les memoires de Messire Michel de Castelnau*, edited by Jean Godefroy, 3 vols, Brussels, 1731.
- (3) Pollen, John Hungerford, and William MacMahon (eds.) (1919), *The Venerable Philip Howard Earl of Arundel, 1557-95*, Catholic Record Society, Vol. 21, pp. 29-30.

**MYTH: Ralph Hopton was a 'potential witness' against Oxford in 1581.**

At the time of Charles Arundel's libellous allegations against Oxford in 1581, Ralph Hopton was dead, and Arundel could safely put words into Hopton's mouth since Hopton could not be called as a witness. Alan Nelson (p. 214) is thus in error in terming Ralph Hopton a 'potential witness' against Oxford. Arundel wrote:

*Ralph Hopton, being commanded by my Lord to stay Mackwilliam in his bedchamber till he came down, wept to my Lord Harry and me, fearing lest if my Lord should deal with him as he dealt with [word crossed out in original, and word written above is illegible] in Broad Street, the matter coming out, he might be called to account for an instrument, declaring further that his heart ached to consider what he knew and what the world understood at this time, saying that once when he was my Lord's page he was about to have stabbed him with his own dagger for proffering so great a villainy.*

Ralph Hopton was a younger son of Sir Owen Hopton (d.1595), Lieutenant of the Tower, one of the five or six sons of the courtier and administrator Sir Arthur Hopton (1488–1555) of Cockfield Hall, Yoxford, Suffolk, by his second wife, Anne Owen (d. in or after 1556), the daughter of Sir Davy Owen of Cowdray, Sussex. In August 1542 Sir Owen Hopton married Anne Echingham (d.1599), one of the two daughters and coheirs of Sir Edward Echingham (d.1527), (see the *ODNB* entry for Sir Owen Hopton and the will of Sir Edward Echingham, TNA PROB 11/22/273).

According to Arundel's allegation, Hopton had at one time been Oxford's page, and a letter dated 28 June 1575 from Antonio de Guaras to Gabriel de Zayas (1526-1593), secretary to King Philip II of Spain, records that Ralph Hopton was with Oxford at that date:

*. . . the Earl left for Germany accompanied by a son of the Lieutenant of the Tower.*

According to Alan Nelson, p. 127:

*The Lieutenant of the Tower was Owen Hopton; Ralph Hopton, his son, left the party of Sir Philip Sidney (completing his tour begun in 1572), and joined Oxford's.*

Ralph Hopton's mother was born before 1527, when her father made his will, and Hopton's parents were married in 1542, which renders it very likely that Oxford and Hopton were about the same age. Alan Nelson's inference that Arundel's allegation relates to a time when Hopton was a boy and Oxford an adult is thus entirely without foundation.

Ralph Hopton was still in Oxford's service when he died in 1580. According to Collins, Ralph Hopton, 'a follower of the Earl of Oxford' and son to Sir Owen Hopton, Lieutenant of the Tower, was buried in the church of St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower in 1580. Collins appears to be following John Lodge's *The Peerage of Ireland*, p. 34. See also *The Earls of Kildare and Their Ancestors*, p. 118.

Elsewhere in their libels both Charles Arundel and Lord Henry Howard accuse Oxford of making countless outrageous statements which it is obvious Oxford did not expect anyone to take literally, and it is thus possible that Oxford said something outrageous to Hopton, but it is impossible to determine what it was, or whether Oxford expected it to be taken seriously or was merely jesting.

Moreover it is clear that Arundel does not allege that anything happened to Henry Mackwilliam (b. 15 July 1568); he merely claims that Ralph Hopton 'wept' to Howard and Arundel that he 'feared' something might happen to Mackwilliam.

It should further be noted that Charles Arundel and Lord Henry Howard's voluminous allegations against Oxford were directed to the Queen and Privy Council, yet neither the Queen nor the Council took action on any of them, from which it can be inferred that Howard and Arundel's allegations were merely libellous, and could not be supported by evidence of any kind. Oxford was in great disfavour with the Queen in 1581 for having had an illegitimate son by one of the Queen's Maids of Honour, Anne Vavasour, and had there been anything in Howard and Arundel's allegations which could have been proven against Oxford, the Queen and Privy Council would have had no reason to forbear taking action against him. This is particularly true in the case of Henry Mackwilliam, whose parents were in considerable favour with the Queen: his mother was a gentlewoman in the Queen's Privy Chamber, while his father was a gentleman pensioner and Keeper of St James Palace.

## References:

(1) TNA SP 12/151/46, ff. 103-4.

(2) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 127, 213-15, at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WcfiqlOjEKoC&pg=PA127>

(3) Lodge, John, *The Peerage of Ireland*, (Dublin: J. Leathley, 1754), Vol. I, p. 34 at:

[https://books.google.ca/books?id=z2s9AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA49&lpg=PA49&dq=%22Lodge%22+%22Earl+of+Kildare%22+%22Peerage+of+Ireland%22&source=bl&ots=v\\_7CyfIs0N&sig=RKeM0CcbxX1u2ttshHOY-L4kXiI&hl=en&sa=X&ei=FPf9VOXmHtCuogTH\\_4DQBA&ved=0CD8Q6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=%22Lodge%22%20%22Earl%20of%20Kildare%22%20%22Peerage%20of%20Ireland%22&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=z2s9AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA49&lpg=PA49&dq=%22Lodge%22+%22Earl+of+Kildare%22+%22Peerage+of+Ireland%22&source=bl&ots=v_7CyfIs0N&sig=RKeM0CcbxX1u2ttshHOY-L4kXiI&hl=en&sa=X&ei=FPf9VOXmHtCuogTH_4DQBA&ved=0CD8Q6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=%22Lodge%22%20%22Earl%20of%20Kildare%22%20%22Peerage%20of%20Ireland%22&f=false)

(4) Collins, Arthur, *The Peerage of England*, (London: W. Innys, 1756), Vol. IV, p. 472 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=I5lcAAAACAAJ&pg=PA472>

(5) Fitzgerald, Charles William, *The Earls of Kildare and Their Ancestors*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Dublin: Hodges, Smith & Co., 1858), p. 118 at

<https://archive.org/stream/earlsofkildareth00leinuoft#page/118/mode/2up>.

(6) Antonio de Guaras to Gabriel de Zayas, 24 June 1575, *CSP Spanish*, 1568-79, p. 494, at *British History Online*:

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/simancas/vol2/pp493-495>.

**MYTH:** *Charles Arundel's 1581 allegations against Oxford mention 'Rocco', an 'Italian boy'.*

Alan Nelson's statements in *Monstrous Adversary* that 'Rocco' is mentioned in Arundel's allegations (p. 213), and that 'Rocco' was 'another Italian boy' (p. 215) are entirely without foundation. Arundel wrote:

*Ralph Hopton, being commanded by my Lord to stay Mackwilliam in his bedchamber till he came down, wept to my Lord Harry and me, fearing lest if my Lord should deal with him as he dealt with [word crossed out in original, and word written above is illegible] in*

*Broad Street, the matter coming out, he might be called to account for an instrument, declaring further that his heart ached to consider what he knew and what the world understood at this time, saying that once when he was my Lord's page he was about to have stabbed him with his own dagger for proffering so great a villainy.*

Nelson inaccurately transcribes the crossed out word as 'rocho', although it is clear that since the word is written in a secretary hand, the letter cannot be an 'h'. The letter which Nelson mistakes for an 'h' may be a 'k', but nonetheless neither the crossed out word nor the word written above it is legible, a fact which Nelson fails to mention on p. 213 of *Monstrous Adversary*.

Moreover there is nothing in Arundel's statement referring to either an 'Italian' or a 'boy', and no evidence whatever for Nelson's statement on p. 215 of *Monstrous Adversary* that Arundel's allegation refers to 'another Italian boy'. The only person in England at the time who was familiarly referred to by his Christian name, 'Rocco', was the Italian master of fence, Rocco Bonetti (d.1587), who at Leicester's recommendation was granted a coat of arms by Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth by letters patent dated 14 August 1568, who married Eleanor Burbage about 1571, and who was evidently several years older than Oxford. See Siddons, *infra*, the *ODNB* article on Vincentio Saviolo, who took over Bonetti's fencing school at Bonetti's death in 1587, the article by McCollum cited below, and the will of Eleanor Burbage's brother, Robert Burbage (d.1575), TNA PROB 11/57/448.

#### References:

(1) TNA SP 12/151/46, ff. 103-4 on this website.

(2) Inaccurate transcription of crossed-out word by Alan Nelson [r<oc>ho] rocco at:

<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~ahnelson/LIBELS/libel4.html#4.2>.

(3) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), 213-15, at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WcfiqlOjEKoC&pg=PA213>

(4) Siddons, Michael Powell, *The Heraldry of Foreigners in England 1400-1700*, (London: Harleian Society, 2010), New Series, Vol. 19, pp. 38-40.

(5) McCollum, Linda Carlyle, 'The Fencing School in Blackfriars' at:

<http://home.netcom.com/~cecilymc/article1.html>.

(6) Will of Rocco Bonetti's brother-in-law, Robert Burbage (d.1575), TNA PROB 11/57/448.



***MYTH: Oxford was nicknamed 'Ox'.***

The examples of 'Ox' in Charles Arundel's allegations in the Howard/Arundel documents are merely abbreviations for 'Oxford', as, for example, 'my L of Ox', rather than a nickname.

References:

(1) TNA SP12/151/44, ff. 98-9.

***MYTH: Oxford is the man depicted in Barnabe Riche's Farewell to Military Profession (1581) as riding in the Strand wearing a French ruff, cloak and hose, and holding in his hand 'a great fan of feathers'.***

There is no evidence for this.

References:

(1) Ward, B.M., *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford 1550-1604 from Contemporary Documents*, (London: John Murray, 1928), pp. 192-4.

(2) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 228-9 at.

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ax36vm1CW08C&pg=PA228>

***MYTH: Oxford's comment about 'jacks' was made at the time of the execution of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, in 1601.***

Oxford's comment that 'they smiled to see that when jacks went up heads went down' dates from a time when 'Queen Elizabeth had advanced Raleigh', i.e. the early 1580s.

References:

(1) Bacon, Sir Francis, *Collected works*, edited by J. Spedding, R.L. Ellis, and D.D. Heath, 14 vols, London, 1857-74, vol. 7, p.124.

(2) Naunton, Robert, *Fragmenta regalia*, edited by John Cerovski (Washington, D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1985) pp.72, 103.

***MYTH: In 1585, 'disgraced and bankrupt, Oxford was called before the Queen and on a pledge of good behaviour was readmitted to court'.***

There is no evidence of this.

***MYTH: There is an extant letter of Oxford's dated 25 June 1585.***

Oxford's letter to Lord Burghley regarding an unnamed suit is endorsed 25 June 1586, not 1585.

References:

(1) BL Lansdowne 50/22, ff. 49-50.

***MYTH: The annuity of £1000 granted to Oxford in 1586 was for secret service work.***

Queen Elizabeth's Privy Seal warrant of 26 June 1586 granted Oxford an annuity of £1000 'during our pleasure or until such time as he shall be by us otherwise provided for to be in some manner relieved, at what time our pleasure is that this payment of one thousand pounds yearly to our said cousin in manner above specified shall cease'. The wording of the grant states clearly indicates that its purpose was Oxford's financial relief, not payment for secret service work. At the time, Oxford was in severe financial straits, occasioned by the Queen's actions with respect to his debt to the Court of Wards.

References:

(1) TNA E 403/2597, ff. 104v-105.

***MYTH: The annuity of £1000 was granted to Oxford in 1586 to support his theatrical activities.***

According to Justice John Paul Stevens:

*[Oxfordians] suggest that the possibility of a royal command may not be so absurd after all because Queen Elizabeth made an extraordinary grant to de Vere. Using a formula that was characteristic of special payments to member[s] of the Secret Service, on June 26, 1586, she signed a privy seal warrant granting de Vere an annuity of one thousand pounds per year for which no accounting was to be required. [FN48] This was an unusually large amount at the time and the grant continued for the remaining eighteen*

*years of de Vere's life, it having been renewed by King James. [FN49] The Queen, it appears, may have been a member of the imaginative conspiracy and for reasons of her own may have decided to patronize a gifted dramatist, who agreed to remain [anonymous] while he loyally rewrote much of the early history of Great Britain.*

As noted above, there is no evidence of this. The warrant states that the purpose of the annuity was to provide for Oxford's financial relief until he could be otherwise provided for. Moreover privy seal warrants were commonly used, and were not restricted to 'special payments to member[s] of the Secret Service'.

References:

(1) Stevens, John Paul, 'The Shakespeare Canon of Statutory Construction', *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, April 1992, available as a pdf file online at

[online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/stevens-04182009.pdf](http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/stevens-04182009.pdf).

***MYTH: Oxford's £1000 annuity was paid out of the revenues of the vacant See of Ely.***

Although Thomas Wilson, in an unpublished manuscript written in 1600, claimed that Oxford's 1586 grant of £1000 per annum was paid out of the revenues of the See of Ely, the historical evidence indicates that income from the See of Ely went into the Crown's general revenues, and that Oxford's grant was paid quarterly from the Exchequer.

References:

(1) E-mail message of 23 February 23 1999 from Dr. Daphne Wilson.

(2) Writ of Privy Seal Dormant of July 26, 1586, Roll of Issue (Privy Seal Book E. 403/2597).

***MYTH: Albert Feuillerat wrote that Oxford was 'le meilleur acteur comique de son temps'.***

This statement is attributed to Feuillerat in both editions of *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays* and in *This Star of England*. No source is provided. It is almost certain that Feuillerat actually wrote that Oxford was 'le meilleur auteur comique de son temps', relying on Puttenham's statement in *The Art of English Poesie* (1589) that Oxford deserved 'the highest prize' for 'comedy and interlude'. It would appear that Clark misread 'auteur' as 'acteur', turning the best comic author into the best comic actor.

References:

(1) Willcock, Gladys Doidge and Alice Walker, eds., *The Arte of English Poesie by George Puttenham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936, reprinted 1970), p. 63.

(2) Clark, Eva Turner, *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays; A Study of the Oxford Theory Based on the Records of the Early Court Revels and Personalities of the Times* (New York: W.F. Payson, 1931), p. 217.

(3) Miller, Ruth Loyd, ed., *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays; A Study of the Early Court Revels and Personalities of the Times by Eva Turner Clark*, 3rd ed. rev., (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1974), p. 361.

(4) Ogburn, Dorothy and Charlton, *This Star of England* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1952), p. 253.

**MYTH:** *Oxford refused a post at Harwich during the Armada invasion because he thought it 'beneath him'; Lord Burghley 'covered' for Oxford's refusal to accept this post, but his refusal to accept it resulted in his never receiving another Garter vote until the year of his death.*

There is no evidence of this.

**MYTH:** *Oxford is the 'little fellow' referred to in Nashe's Strange News (1592).*

The context in which the phrase occurs makes it clear that Nashe is referring to John Lyly, alleged author of *Pap With A Hatchet* (1589), not to Oxford:

*He that threatened to conjure up Martin's wit hath written something too in your praise, in Pap-hatchet, for all you accuse him to have courtly incensed the Earl of Oxford against you. Mark him well; he is but a little fellow, but he hath one of the best wits in England. Should he take thee in hand again (as he flieth from such inferior concertation), I prophesy that there would more gentle readers die of a merry mortality, engendered by the eternal jests he would maul thee with, than there have done of this last infection.*

References:

(1) Ward, B.M., *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford 1550-1604 from Contemporary Documents*, (London: John Murray, 1928), pp. 191-2, 395-6.

(2) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), p. 227 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ax36vm1CW08C&pg=PA227>

**MYTH: *The 'Heliconian ymps' in Spenser's 1590 sonnet to Oxford are the nine Muses.***

In Spenser's 1590 sonnet to Oxford in *The Faerie Queen*, the 'Heliconian ymps' are not the nine Muses. They are poets, the 'offspring' of the nine Muses.

References:

(1) 'Imp', *Oxford English dictionary, second edition, on compact disc*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

**MYTH: *In December 1591 Oxford married a wealthy heiress.***

Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, whom he married in November or December 1591, was not an heiress. Her brother, Francis Trentham, was heir to their father, Thomas Trentham (d.1587), and was left all his lands and tenements with the exception of certain lands left to a younger son. Under her father's will, Elizabeth Trentham was left only a marriage portion of £1000, payable at the rate of 500 marks a year for three years. See the will of Thomas Trentham:

*Also I give and bequeath unto Francis Trentham, my eldest son, all my lands, tenements, rents, reversions and hereditaments with all and singular their appurtenances whatsoever within the realm of England, to have and to hold all the said lands and all other the premises to the said Francis Trentham, my son, and to his heirs forever;*

*Saving and except that I give and bequeath unto Thomas Trentham, my younger son, all those my lands and tenements, rents and reversions in Whitgreave and Biddulph within the county of Stafford, to have and to hold the said lands and other the premises unto the said Thomas Trentham, my son, during his natural life without impeachment of waste, the remainder over unto my eldest son Francis Trentham and to his heirs forever as is aforesaid;*

*Also I will and bequeath unto Elizabeth Trentham, my eldest daughter, for her portion and preferment, the sum of one thousand pounds of lawful current money, to be paid unto her or her assigns within four years next after my decease if she be so long unmarried, and in the mean season, being unmarried as is aforesaid, I will that my executor herein named shall pay her yearly forty pounds towards her maintenance, but if it fortune my*

*said daughter to marry, then I will that my executor or his assigns shall pay unto her the said sum of one thousand pounds within three years next after her said marriage, that is to say, every of the said three years five hundred marks, and so from the time of the said marriage to be discharged of the payment of the said yearly payment of forty pounds as is aforesaid.*

Although £1000 was a not inconsiderable sum, Oxford's first wife, Anne Cecil, had brought Oxford a dowry of £3000.

References:

(1) Will of Thomas Trentham, dated 19 October 1586 and proved 4 May 1588, TNA PROB 11/72/372.

(2) Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 74, 336:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=WcfiqlOjEKoC&pg=PA74>

***MYTH: In September 1595 Oxford wrote to Sir Robert Cecil concerning 'unfavourable rumors involving his daughter'.***

Johanna Rickman writes:

*In September of 1595, Oxford was worried about unfavourable rumors involving his daughter. He asked Cecil to assist Elizabeth, give her advice, and look after her while she was at court. "You know her youth," he explained to Cecil, "and the place wherein she lives, and how much to both our houses it imports that she carry herself according to her honour." . . . One month later, Oxford was complaining of "divers injuries and wrongs" that he had sustained from Essex, but he did not elaborate on the nature of these injuries.*

Rickman has misdated the year of Oxford's letter. Oxford wrote to Cecil on 17 September 1596, not 1595. The letter is primarily concerned with the pension of £1000 a year which Elizabeth Vere's husband, William Stanley (1561-1642), 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby, had promised to assure to her. Although Oxford asked Cecil to assist his daughter with 'good advice' at court, there is no mention in the letter of 'unfavorable rumors':

*Also I am most earnestly to desire you that as you are her uncle and nearest to her next myself, that you will friendly assist her with your good advice. You know her youth and the place wherein she lives, and how much to both our houses it imports that she carry herself according to her honour. Enemies are apt to make the worst of everything, flatterers will do evil offices, and true and faithful advice will seem harsh to tender ears. But sith my fortune hath set me so far off as I cannot be at hand in this her troublesome*

*occasions, I hope you will do the good office of an uncle, and I commit unto you the authority of a parent in mine absence.*

References:

(1) Cecil Papers 44/101.

(2) Rickman, Johanna, *Love, Lust, and License in Early Modern England: Illicit Sex and the Nobility*, (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), pp. 53-4 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=E0oVNoUaEskC&pg=PA53>

***MYTH: Oxford's daughter, Elizabeth Vere, was the 'new-coined Countess' alluded to by Sir Anthony Standen in a letter written in early 1595.***

Hammer writes:

*Although the couple [i.e. Elizabeth Vere and the Earl of Derby] soon had a daughter, also named Elizabeth, the marriage initially proved to be a disaster. A passing reference by Anthony Standen to rumours about Essex and 'the newe coyned countes' suggests that Lady Derby may have been involved with Essex as early as May 1595 (LPI, MS 651, fol. 122r). This may have been one of the 'divers injuries and wrongs' which her father, the earl of Oxford, complained he had received from Essex by October 1595. The countess was clearly more interested in the delights of Court than in her husband and, by July 1596, Burghley was upset that she was even ignoring her child (PRO, SP 12/259, fol. 140r). Derby himself was frustrated that she did not behave like a dutiful wife, but he could do little to change her behaviour.*

Although Elizabeth Vere may be the woman referred to by Sir Anthony Standen in May 1595 as the 'new-coined Countess', Standen's epithet could refer to Dorothy Devereux (d.1619), who, a few months after the death of her first husband, Sir Thomas Perrot (d. February 1594), married Henry Percy (1564-1632), 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland.

References:

(1) Hammer, Paul E. J., *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, 1585-1597*, (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 321.

(2) ODNB entries for Henry Percy, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland and Sir James Perrot.

**MYTH:** *In the dedicatory epistle to *Quips Upon Questions* (1600), Robert Armin, then the chief clown with the Lord Chamberlain's Men, referred to Oxford as the 'lord' to whom he was in service.*

*Quips Upon Questions* was published in 1600 under the pseudonym 'Clunnyco de Curtanio Snuffe' (clown of the Curtain). In his edition of 1875 Ouvry assigned authorship to John Singer, but according to the Freemans this attribution originated in a Collier forgery. The work is now attributed to Robert Armin on the basis of its similarity to another tract, *Fool Upon Fool*, also published in 1600 under the same pseudonym, 'Clonnico de Curtanio Snuffe'. *Fool Upon Fool* was reissued in 1605 under the pseudonym 'Clonnico del Mondo Snuffe' (clown of the Globe). It was then reissued with additions in 1608 as *A Nest of Ninnies*, with Robert Armin's name on the title page, leading to the inference that *Quips Upon Questions* was also by Armin.

In his dedicatory epistle, the author of *Quips Upon Questions* writes:

*And though Friday be for this year Childermas Day, yet it is no such day of danger to me. Then on Tuesday I rake [sic] my journey (to wait on the Right Honourable Good Lord my Master whom I serve) to Hackney. Guard me through the Spital . . . .*

Childermas Day (28 December) fell on a Sunday in 1600, the year of publication of *Quips Upon Questions*. However it fell on a Friday in 1599, leading to the inference that the dedicatory epistle to *Quips Upon Questions* was written in late December, 1599. See the *Handbook of Dates*, pp. 87, 119.

As noted above, the title pages of *Quips Upon Questions* and *Fool Upon Fool* both state that its author was 'Clunnyco de Curtanio Snuffe', thus establishing that at the time Armin wrote the dedicatory epistle in December 1599 he was a clown at the Curtain Theatre, and that he did not join the Lord Chamberlain's Men until 1600 at the earliest.

A question then arises as to the identity of Armin's 'Right Honourable Good Lord, my Master, whom I serve', who was then at Hackney. In the Elizabethan period a man could not be in service to two lords simultaneously. If Robert Armin was the author of *Quips Upon Questions*, he could not be both Oxford's servant and the servant of the lord to whom the members of the Lord Chamberlain's Men were servants, George Carey, 2nd Baron Hunsdon, who had been appointed Lord Chamberlain of the Household on 14 April 1597. Moreover, as noted above, Armin described himself in the two tracts published in 1600 as a clown at the Curtain Theatre, establishing that he had not yet joined the Lord Chamberlain's Men, and was thus not in the service of Lord Hunsdon. Moreover George Carey, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Hunsdon, had no known association with Hackney other than the fact that his father, Henry Carey, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Hunsdon, had owned King's Place in Hackney from 1578 to 1583, when he sold it to Sir Rowland Hayward (d. 5 December 1593).

Oxford resided at King's Place in Hackney after his second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, purchased it from the executors of Sir Rowland Hayward in 1597. It is thus possible that



in late 1599 Armin was a clown at the Curtain with the acting company patronized by Oxford. It is also known that in the 1590s Armin was in the service of William Brydges (d.1602), 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Chandos. It is thus possible that Chandos may be the lord to whom Armin refers. Chandos is not known to have owned a residence in Hackney, but he may have been staying in Hackney in late December 1599.

References:

(1) Ouvry, Frederic, *Quips Upon Questions*, (London, 1875) at:

<https://archive.org/stream/quipsuponquesti00ouvrgoog#page/n9/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), Vol. I, pp. 879-80.

(3) Cheney, C.R., ed., *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History*, (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1961), pp. 87, 119.

(4) *Fool Upon Fool* (1600), unique copy, Folger Shakespeare Library

<http://emlot.kcl.ac.uk/db/record/document/440/>.

(5) Halliwell-Phillips, James Orchard, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1887), pp. 321-3 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=kG84AAAAIAAJ&pg=PA322&lpg=PA322&dq=%22Clonnico+del+Mondo%22&source=bl&ots=FiXIg8qqcD&sig=Vo43gcCCbJrFF3MIj9akZIFVXrw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=sH9vVNuiLsSbigKnpIDICw&ved=0CCIQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=%22Clonnico%20del%20Mondo%22&f=false>.

(6) Grosart, Alexander B., ed., *The Works of Robert Armin, Actor (1605-1609)*, 1880.

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=8fM7AQAAMAAJ&pg=PR14>

(7) History of Parliament entry for Sir Rowland Hayward at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/hayward-sir-rowland-1520-93>.

(8) Entry for Robert Armin (1563-1615) in the *ODNB*.

**MYTH: Oxford signed his letters with a so-called ‘crown signature’ which he dropped when King James ascended the throne in 1603.**

Diana Price demonstrated conclusively that the so-called 'crown' is not a crown, but rather a representation of an Earl's coronet. See Figures 2 and 3 on p. 15 of her article referenced below. It is not known why Oxford dropped the signature in 1603, although it seems not unreasonable to surmise that it was a diplomatic move on his part considering that King James had brought many 'new' men with him from Scotland who were not members of the nobility and who might have been antagonized by displays of rank by members of the English nobility.

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), pp. 4-23.

***MYTH: Oxford died of the plague.***

There is no evidence that Oxford died of the plague. The last death attributed to 'ye plague' in the Hackney parish register occurred at least a month before Oxford's death.

References:

(1) E-mail message of 4 August 2000 from Dr. Alan Nelson.

***MYTH: Oxford was buried in a stone coffin in the floor of Westminster Abbey's Chapel of St. John the Evangelist.***

The stone coffin in the floor of the Chapel of St. John the Evangelist near the monument to Oxford's cousins, Francis and Horatio Vere, was opened in 1913. It contained the bones of an ecclesiastic, perhaps those of Richard de Berkyng, who died in 1246.

References:

(1) Altrocchi, Paul Hemenway, 'Stone coffin underneath', *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Winter 2001), p. 19.

(2) Westlake, H.F., 'An early pewter coffin-chalice and paten found in Westminster Abbey', *Antiquaries Journal* (January 1921), pp. 56-7.

***MYTH: The 1594 stoneware vessel with a boar's head stopper at the Rosenbach Museum belonged to Oxford.***

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The boar's head stopper is firmly dateable to the 19th century, and has no connection with the 1594 stoneware vessel.

References:

(1) E-mail message of 14 April 1999 from John Foelster after personal communication with Elizabeth E. Fuller, Librarian at the Rosenbach Museum, Philadelphia.

***MYTH: Oxford held the Office of the Ewery.***

As Lord Great Chamberlain, Oxford traditionally presented water to the monarch at coronations; however, there is no evidence that he held the Office of the Ewery, which provided water, basins and ewers to the monarch on a daily basis.

References:

(1) E-mail message of 22 March 1999 from Dr. Daphne Wilson (now Pearson).

***MYTH: The 'Benezet test' contains only poetry by Oxford and Shakespeare.***

Louis P. Benezet's 'test' of Oxford/Shakespeare's poetry contains four lines from a poem entitled *Sonetto* in Robert Greene's *Menaphon* (1589).

References:

(1) Grosart, Alexander, *The life and complete works in prose and verse of Robert Greene, M.A.*, 15 vols. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), at vol. 6, p.140.

(2) Elliott, Ward E.Y. and Robert J. Valenza, "Can the Oxford Candidacy be Saved?", *The Oxfordian*, vol. 3 (October 2000), pp.71-97, at p.71.

***MYTH: The word 'ever' in Elizabethan and early Jacobean dedications and literary works is an anagram for 'Vere' and an allusion to Oxford as the author of the Shakespeare canon.***

Throughout his lifetime Oxford signed documents as 'Edward Oxenford', never as 'Edward Vere'. It is alleged by Fowler and in the Frontline documentary *The Shakespeare Mystery* that Oxford closed a holograph letter to Lord Burghley dated 18 May 1591 with a capitalized or enlarged letter 'V' in the phrase 'yowre Lordships eVer

to Command'; however in the original document (BL Lansdowne 68/6, ff. 12-13) the letter 'v' is not capitalized and is the same size as other examples of the letter 'v' which occur in the document.

Moreover, although other family members used the name 'Vere', the Earls of Oxford were almost invariably referred to as 'De Vere'. Oxford was referred to as 'Edward De Vere' in both the dedication and an acrostic poem in Anthony Munday's *The Mirror of Mutability* (STC 18276) published in 1579, and in the dedications to several other literary works.

In addition, the name 'Vere' was frequently spelled 'Veere' and in other ways for which 'ever' is not an anagram. Oxford's daughter Bridget, for example, signed a letter on 12 October 1598 as 'Bridget Veayr', and Sir Robert Cecil's secretary endorsed the letter as from 'Lady Bridgett Veere' (TNA SP 12/268/74, f. 120). In the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford's Latin inquisition post mortem (TNA C 142/136/12) dated 18 January 1563, reference is made to Oxford as 'Edwardum Veere' (the only known example of a reference to Oxford as other than 'De Vere' in his lifetime), a spelling, however, for which 'ever' is not an anagram. There is a single instance of a play on the name 'Vere' in Oxford's lifetime, the poem 'Sitting alone upon my thought in melancholy mood', in which the name 'Vere' serves as an echo at the end of four lines. However this play on the name 'Vere' is not an anagram.

#### References:

- (1) Transcript of the Frontline documentary *The Shakespeare Mystery* at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shakespeare/debates/gtedebate.html>.
- (2) Fowler, William Plumer, *Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters*, (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Peter E. Randall, 1986), p. 412.
- (3) May, Stephen W., ed., "The Poems of Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex", *Studies in Philology*, Vol. LXXVII, Number 5, (Early Winter 1980), pp. 68-73, at pp. 38-9.

#### **MYTH: Henry Peacham was tutor to the three sons of Thomas, Earl of Arundel.**

There is no evidence of this.

#### References:

- (1) Young, Alan R. *Henry Peacham*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979, pp.26, 143.

**MYTH:** *The phrase 'Menti videbor' contains sufficient letters to form the anagram 'Tibi nom de Vere' (i.e., 'thy name de Vere').*

The phrase *Mente videbor* contains insufficient letters to form the anagram *Tibi nom de Vere*; it lacks an 'i'. According to Puttenham, Elizabethan rules for anagrams permitted neither the addition nor the subtraction of letters.

(1) Puttenham, George. *The arte of English poesie*. Edited by Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p.108.

**MYTH:** *The pen shown on the title page of Henry Peacham's *Minerva Britanna* is in the process of completing an unfinished letter 'i' after the words 'Mente videbor'.*

The word *videbor* on the title page of Henry Peacham's *Minerva Britanna* (1612) is complete in itself. What appears to be an 'i' at the end of the word is merely the quill's point.

References:

(1) Magri, Noemi. "The Latin Mottoes in Peacham's *Minerva Britanna*". *The Elizabethan Review*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Spring 1999), pp.65-9.

**MYTH:** *'Videbori' and 'videboris' are Latin words.*

*Videbori* and *videboris* are not Latin words.

References:

(1) E-mail message of October 28, 1997 from Andrew Hannas.

**MYTH:** *Henry Peacham formed anagrams of the type 'Tibi nom de Vere' (i.e., 'thy name de Vere').*

Those of Peacham's anagrams which are formed from names habitually feature the name alone, with no commentary of any kind.

References:

(1) *Minerva Britanna, 1612*. Leeds: Scolar Press, 1966.

***MYTH: The dedication to Susan de Vere and Philip Herbert of the anonymous Arxaio-Ploutos is by the printer William Jaggard.***

The dedication to Susan de Vere and Philip Herbert in *Arxaio-Ploutos* (1619) is by the anonymous translator of *Arxaio-Ploutos*, not by the printer William Jaggard.

References:

(1) *Arxaio-Ploutos, containing ten following books to the former Treasury of Ancient and Modern Times*. London: William Jaggard, 1619.