
OXMYTHS: SECTION IV

The 'myths' below are found in various Oxfordian publications.

MYTH: Hasti-vibrans ('spear-shaker') was the sobriquet of the goddess Pallas Athena.

The term 'hasti-vibrans' was first coined as a Latinization of the name Shakespeare by Thomas Fuller in his 1662 *Worthies of Warwickshire*. The goddess Pallas Athena was never known as 'hasti-vibrans'.

References:

(1) E-mail message of July 21, 2000 from Terry Ross.

MYTH: Pallas Athena was the patron of the theatre.

Pallas Athena was not the patron of the theatre. However, the 'scribae' (dramatic poets) and 'histriones' (actors) obtained a right of meeting in the Aventine temple of Pallas Athena's Roman counterpart, Minerva, in the year 207 B.C.

References:

(1) *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed.

(2) E-mail message of July 21, 2000 from Terry Ross.

(3) E-mail message of August 25, 2000 from Robert Detobel, after having checked the Pauli *Reallexicon* and other sources.

MYTH: The hyphenated name 'Shake-speare' first appears in a work by Shakespeare.

The first instance of the hyphenated name Shake-speare occurs in *Willobie His Avisia* (1594).

References:

(1) De Luna, Barbara N. *The Queen declined; An interpretation of Willobie His Avisia with the text of the original edition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970, p.128.

MYTH: In his marginalia, Gabriel Harvey referred to Oxford as 'Axiophilus'.

It was Gabriel Harvey's habit to refer to himself by a variety of personae in marginalia he wrote in books in his personal library. These personae included Angelus Furius, Anonymus, Chrysotechnus, Eudromus, Euscopus, Eutrapelus and Axiophilus. Axiophilus is Harvey's name for himself as a 'writer or lover of worthy poetry'.

Stern, Virginia. *Gabriel Harvey; His life, marginalia and library*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, p.126.

MYTH: John Florio's personal familiarity with Italy enabled him to assist both Shakespeare and Jonson with details of Italian geography.

There is no historical evidence that John Florio was in Italy at any time during his life.

(1) Yates, Frances A. *John Florio; The life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.21.

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) 'Spring', 'well', *Oxford English dictionary, second edition, on compact disc*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

MYTH: 'Willy' was a generic term for 'poet' in the Elizabeth period.

There is no evidence of this.

References:

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

MYTH: Elizabethan actors were called 'crows'.

There is no evidence of this.

References:

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

MYTH: Will Kempe and Edward Alleyn were playwrights.

There is no evidence of this.

MYTH: Queen Hermione's opening words in her trial in *The Winter's Tale* are identical to Edmund Campion's opening words in his 1581 treason trial.

There is no resemblance whatever between Edmund Campion's opening words at his 1581 treason trial, and Queen Hermione's opening words in her trial in *The Winter's Tale* at 3/2/22ff.

References:

Howell, T.B. *A complete collection of state trials and proceedings for high treason and other crimes and misdemeanors from the earliest period to the year 1783*. 21 vols. London: T.C. Hansard, 1816, vol. 1, p.1050.

MYTH: There was a London district called the 'Bermoothes' during Oxford's lifetime.

There is no evidence of this. The first mention of a London district called the 'Bermoothes' is in *Bartholomew Fair* in 1614 (if indeed the reference in the play is to a London district, which is not entirely clear).

MYTH: The use of the past tense in Barksted's *Mirrha*, *The Mother Of Adonis* proves that Shakespeare was dead in 1607.

The use of the past tense in reference to Shakespeare in Barksted's *Mirrha* (1607) in the lines 'His song was worthie merrit, Shakspeare hee/ sung the faire blossome, thou the withered tree' can be interpreted in more than one way. It may imply that Shakespeare, the author of *Venus and Adonis* is dead. However, it may also be a mere

acknowledgement of the fact that *Venus and Adonis* was written before Barksted's *Mirrha*.

References:

(1) Kathman, Dr. David and Terry Ross. "Barksted and Shakespeare", posted on the Shakespeare Authorship Page website at <http://www.clark.net/tross/ws/barksted.html>.

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 Britannia, 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.