With the Sonnets now solved...

is the debate resolved?

By William Boyle

In the 395 years since the 1609 quarto of Shakespeare's Sonnets was published more than 1,800 books have been written about them. The biggest problem in achieving an understanding has been that most of the authors have had the wrong Shakespeare, which immediately precluded ever determining the actual circumstances under which they were written. Even among Oxfordians (who assume of course that they do have the correct author) the Sonnets have been a contentious conundrum, with various Oxfordian authors over the years going in various directions searching for the ever-elusive “correct” answer to the Sonnet enigma.

It has occurred to me in recent years that there is perhaps something that almost everyone involved in Shakespeare studies (Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians alike) could agree on — first, that there must be a correct answer to the enigma, and, second, that it must be comprised of three components: 1) the correct author, 2) the correct Fair Youth and Dark Lady, and 3) the correct context of time and circumstance that led to their creation. Most of us are quite familiar with the debates over Who is the author?, Who is the Fair Youth? and Who is the Dark Lady? But this last component — What is the correct context?— has eluded everyone who has ever tackled the Sonnets. Many commentators and theorists have gone right from the Who into creating, rather than finding, a historical context into which the Who might fit.

However, I now believe that this heretofore elusive historical context has been found, and that with it in place reading and understanding the Sonnets is transformed. It is a theory that was

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1601: “authorize thy trespass with compare...”

By Hank Whittemore

This column ordinarily looks at contemporary events of a given year in the life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, and the present chapter focusing on 1601 is no exception. This time, however, we also draw upon the collection entitled Shakespeare's Sonnets, first printed in 1609, as a genuine historical and political document that complements and supplements the official record. In doing so the column introduces some of the themes and data compiled in my forthcoming book The Monument, a new edition of the Sonnets that sets forth (for the first time, we believe) a coherent explanation of the form and content of the 154 consecutively numbered verses.

Some of the themes are these:

• The Monument: The Sonnets comprise a “monument” of verse written and constructed by Oxford for Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, to be preserved for posterity.
• The Living Record: The monument contains “the living record” of Southampton in the form of a diary of real events unfolding in real time by the calendar.
• The 100-Sonnet Center: The carefully designed structure contains a sequence of precisely 100 sonnets (27-126) positioned at the exact center.
• The Entrance: Oxford explains his form and structure in a pair of unique instructional sonnets (76-77) at the exact midpoint of the central 100-sonnet sequence, serving as the entrance into the monument.
• The Invention: Edward de Vere records this chronicle by

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Sonnets solved (continued from page one)
first postulated by Hank Whittemore in
1999, outlined in his article “Dynastic Di-
ary” in the Summer 1999 Shakespeare Ox-
ford Newsletter, presented in part at the
1999 Shakespeare Oxford Society Confer-
ence in Newton (MA), and again at the
Shakespeare Fellowship Conference in
Cambridge (MA) in October 2002.

So, while the theory itself has been
“out there” and available “piecemeal” for
fifty years, the book Whittemore has been
working on has not been ready for publica-
tion until now. (See the ad on page 21 for
details about the book and how to order a
copy.) To my knowledge, none of the
previous 1,800 books on the Sonnets
(including those by Stephen Booth, Helen
Vendler and Katherine Duncan-Jones)
even comes close to the breadth and depth
of Whittemore’s analysis—an analysis that
glosses each and every word in each and
every sonnet. And only one—Gerald
Massey’s 1866 Shakespeare’s Sonnets
Never Before Interpreted—gets close to
the true historical context.

**Essex Rebellion is the context**

Briefly, his theory is that all 154 son-
ets are in authorial order, that nearly all
were written or rewritten in the last three
years of Oxford’s life, that they are ad-
dressed to the Fair Youth Southampton
and the Dark Lady Queen Elizabeth, and
they are concerned almost exclusively with
the politics and aftermath of the Essex
Rebellion—its purpose, its disastrous fail-
ure, the treason trial, Southampton’s death
sentence, his reprieve from the death sen-
tence, his eventual release from prison
and pardon, the poet’s observations on
their shared guilt and shared shame over
Southampton’s “crime,” the poet’s bitter-
sweet advice and admonitions on how
Southampton should now live his “sec-
ond” life, and finally—in the Dark Lady
sequence—his bitter (without the sweet)
raze at their mutual betrayal by Elizabeth.
It’s all politics, mixed in with the personal
views of the writer and expressed through
the grand language and philosophy we all
know as “Shakespearean.”

The “Year in the Life” column in this
issue of Shakespeare Matters (see page
one) incorporates this Sonnet theory into
Part I of his analysis and commentary of
the year 1601—the year of the Essex
Rebellion. Those familiar with previous au-
thorship publications from Whittemore
know that he believes that Southampton
was seen by Oxford as a royal son who
deserved to succeed Queen Elizabeth. This
theory—aka the “Prince Tudor” theory—
has been a schism in Oxfordian circles
since the 1930s, nearly as old as the move-
ment itself. When “Dynastic Diary” was
published in 1999, the opening sentence
read, “I wish to present a structure for
Shake-speares Sonnets based on the hypo-
thesis that Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl
of Southampton, was the son of Edward
de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford and Queen
Elizabeth.”

In hindsight both Whittemore and I
(who was then the editor of the Shake-
ppeare Oxford Newsletter) agree that this
opening sentence was a big mistake, be-
cause it actually shortchanged the real
nature of his breakthrough theory, waving
the red flag of Prince Tudor controversy in
everyone’s face before delving into what his
breakthrough thinking on the authorial
structure of the 1609 quarto was all about.

The quarto structure is, simply, a
chronological sequence that tells a story, the
most significant sequence being the 100
sonnets from 27 to 126, which turn out to
be a perfect match with actual historical
events as they occurred between Feb. 8,
1601, and April 28, 1603. This middle
sequence is both the center and center-
piece of the 1609 quarto. The rest of the
structure is comprised of the first 26 son-
ets (17 on the Fair Youth and marriage,
plus nine others dated 1592-1600), the
last 26 (all Dark Lady), plus the final two
“Bath” sonnets (153 and 154—which
virtually all sonnet commentators have seen
as separate and seemingly “added on” for
some reason to the sequence of 152). Ev-
everything is explained in much greater de-
tail in The Monument.

I’d like to explain why I have come to
believe that the Whittemore solution to
the Sonnets is absolutely correct, and to
share some insights into how I have viewed
the Sonnets over the 25 years I’ve been an
Oxfordian, and how the Whittemore solu-
tion has made crystal clear what was once
mysterious and opaque.

In short, once one has 1) the correct
author (Oxfordians do), 2) the correct Fair
Youth and Dark Lady (Southampton and
Queen Elizabeth), and, finally, 3) the all-
important correct historical context, then
reading the Sonnets becomes as clear and
uncomplicated as reading a signed, dated
letter to a known addressee about the
events of the day. In this case, of course,
the “events of the day” are “your crime,
your trial, your death sentence, your an-
guish, my attempts to save you, I have
saved you! She has betrayed us both, and
now we both must live in this new post-
crime world, and here’s my advice on how
you should now live your second life.” It’s
that easy.

**Language is the key**

The key to understanding Whittemore’s
“Monument” theory of the Sonnets form
and content can be found in the language
of the Sonnets, and in the extensive re-
search that has been done to gloss each
event and uncover not just the standard
dictionary definitions of these
words, but—as no one else has ever done—
what these words meant to Shakespeare.
And where else to look for what a word
meant to Shakespeare than in his plays—
specifically, his chronicle plays of English
royal history? This may seem like an as-
toundingly simple proposition, and surely,
one may ask, someone, somewhere over
the past two centuries had thought to do
it. But, so far as we know, no one ever has.

Given this new semantic context, one
finds that the language of the sonnets
begins to reveal real answers to the time
and place of their references and as to the
nature of the relationship between the
poet and the youth. The most important
observation about the large picture that
comes out of this new context and analysis
is that the oft-acknowledged wealth of
legal terms used in the sonnets can now be
seen as directly tied to their primary sub-
ject matter—the criminal offense, trial,
death sentence, reprieve and release of the
Fair Youth. Another well-known sonnet
theme—shame and guilt—can now also
be seen as direct commentary on the shame
and guilt of the youth’s criminal offense
on Feb. 8, 1601—a shame and guilt that
the poet takes to be as much his own as the
youth’s.

In considering the Sonnets in light of
this proposed Essex Rebellion context, I
believe that there are two extremely im-
portant words to focus on: “trespass” and
“fault,” words which appear in six of the
Fair Youth sonnets—“trespass” twice and
“fault” eight times. These words are gen-
erally glossed as an “offense” of some sort,
usually personal and most likely sexual
(e.g., “sensual fault” in Sonnet 35). They
have in turn been linked up to words such
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Sonnets solved (cont' from p. 11) as "shame" and "guilt" to help create theories about hot love triangles, bed trysts and homosexual encounters.

Robert Giroux in his 1982 The Book Known as Q (p. 22) about Sonnet 35 (in which both words appear) that "something serious has occurred, but the language of the poem is unspecific and open to many interpretations." He continues that "it may have been a crisis over the young man's seduction by the poet's mistress." Without the correct historical context, Joseph Sobran in Alias Shakespeare (1997) also goes astray with his homosexual theory of the relationship between the poet and the youth, though interestingly— he does make note (p. 201) of the wealth of legal terminology used in the sonnets, but then has nothing to say about why such language might be so prevalent in a series of love sonnets. Joseph Pequigney's Such is My Love (1985) is another example of analysis that creates rather than finds a context, resulting in another theory having to do with homosexuality and the "shame" and "guilt" that must go along with it.

But when one looks closely at Elizabethan history and Shakespeare's texts, one finds that the words "trespass" and "fault" are both associated closely with "crimes," in particular crimes against the state— treason. Shakespeare especially, in his history plays, uses the words "trespass" and "trespass" interchangeably. For example, in 1 Henry VI (II.i.v.92-94) we find...

And by his treason stand'st thou attainted, corrupted, and exempt from jury? His trespass yet lives guilty in thy blood.

Just as important as Shakespeare's usage is the fact that, as documented in Prof. John Bellamy's 1979 The Tudor Law of Treason, offenses such as "trespass" had, under a century of Tudor rule, slowly become equated with "treason." On page 20 Bellamy writes about the 1517 riots in London directed against foreigners, which the state then, in acting against some of the rioters, treated as high treason against the king in disposing of the cases (13 were convicted of treason, and then hanged, drawn and quartered). Bellamy notes:

In the fifteenth century disturbances of the type which occurred in 1517 would probably have dealt with as riot (which was trespass) ...

The case for the meaning of "fault" is much easier. Southampton himself spoke of his "fault" in writing to the Privy Council begging for mercy sometime in late February or early March 1601, and when King James sent a message ahead to London in April 1603 ordering Southampton's release, he wrote that, "the late Queen our Sister, notwithstanding his fault toward her, was moved to exempt [him] from the stroke of justice."

Once one understands that "trespass" and "fault" are both words that can refer to treason, then the Sonnets in which they appear are transformed. In particular, reading "trespass = treason" in Sonnets 35 and 120 has enormous significance for understanding the real subject matter of both these sonnets and the entire middle sequence of 100 sonnets. Equally important is how the meaning of other words in other sonnets suddenly becomes clearer.

Foremost among such other words is "misprision" in Sonnet 87, glossed by all commentators for two centuries as a "misunderstanding" of some sort (which is, correctly, one of its definitions and usages). But in the Elizabethan era there existed a legal concept that had been carefully refined over a century of Tudor rule: "misprision of treason." Misprision of treason was defined as a crime just short of treason (i.e., having known of treason and having failed to stop it and/or report it to the authorities). Where a treason conviction meant the death penalty, a finding of "misprision of treason" meant life in prison and loss of all titles and properties. Again, Bellamy's book is important in understanding how these legal concepts evolved under a century of Tudor rule as the state consolidated its power by expanding the concept of "crimes against the state."

The difference between the two charges (treason vs. misprision of treason) became a subject of life and death, cat and mouse game played between the authoritarian state and its subjects. Two of the most well-known trials of the era have treason vs. misprision of treason at their center: Sir Thomas More in the mid-1530s, and Sir Walter Raleigh in 1603-1604. In both cases charges against each man swung back and forth between misprision of treason and treason, finally ending for both in treason convictions and death.

In the case of Raleigh, he was convicted of treason in 1604, which was then commuted to misprision— prosecutor Sir Edward Coke having said that a conviction for misprision of treason was all he had been going for anyway. Then, incredibly, his original 1604 treason conviction was resurrected in 1618 for the sole purpose of disposing of him as a political sop to King Philip of Spain!

In looking at the Sonnet's story of the Poet Shakespeare/Oxford and the Fair Youth Southampton this gloss is of great significance because the entire meaning of Sonnet 87 really hinges on this one word— misprision. As Tudor law operated, the legal basis for sparing Southampton's life had to have been a commutation from treason to misprision of treason—from death to life in prison and loss of all titles and property. Yet there is no official record of such a legal finding, and Southampton's major biographers (Stopes, Rowe and Akrigg) can only say that "he was spared." But it is interesting to note that Rowe does state flatly that "there was almost a conspiracy between the Queen and Cecil to save [him]," and a little later he says, "Southampton's life had really been saved by Cecil" (p. 164, Shakespeare's Southampton).

So when Shakespeare writes in Sonnet 87 "thy great gift, upon misprision growing," what he is really saying is that your life has been saved, and now your "great gift"— a second life— must "grow upon"
the foundation of your “misprision of treason” commutation. We should also note here that Shakespeare himself, in Sonnet 68, directly refers to this second life (“to live a second life on second head”). In discussing this interpretation of Sonnet 87 over the past five years with fellow Oxfordians it has been said, in rebuttal, “well, who says ‘thy great gift’ means ‘life’? Couldn’t it be a reference similar to ‘Thy gift, thy tables’ (Sonnet 122)?”

As it turns out, Sir Walter Raleigh himself used the same phrase in the same circumstances just a few years later. In a 1604 letter to the Privy Council (as cited in Martin Hume’s 1926 Sir Walter Raleigh, p. 199) pleading for his life following his treason conviction (i.e., in effect pleading to get commuted from treason to misprision of treason) Raleigh writes, “For a greater gift none can give, or receive, than life...” It’s enough to make me think that he may have even seen Sonnet 87 or some version of it.

These are just a few observations—based on just three words—on what the Sonnets are really all about; and as can be seen, it’s a story about the real life and death situation of the moment, without even having to consider the more contentious matter of the precise relationship between the poet Shakespeare/Oxford and the condemned youth Southampton.

The case for authorial order

Another important matter in understanding the Sonnets that all commentators have struggled with, and none have solved until Whittemore, is whether they are in authorial order. In reconsidering all these sonnets over the past five years in light of the Monument theory I noted in particular one sonnet sequence that is as meaningless and opaque as can be—until one understands the context within they were written and what historical events are being referenced.

I am speaking here of Sonnets 63 to 67, a sequence which also covers several important moments in my own evolution as an Oxfordian. It was 25 years ago, while reading Sonnet 66 (having just finished reading Ogubin’s 1962 Shakespeare: the Man Behind the Name), that I looked up and said, “Oh my God, they’re real.”—an Oxfordian epiphany from which I’ve never looked back. “They’re real.” Indeed. That describes the entire authorship debate, the plays, the poems, the Hamlet-Shakespeare-Oxford comparisons—all of it. Yet I never understood how real the Sonnets were until April 1999, when Whittemore was trying gamely to explain his new theory to me. For a while I wasn’t getting it, but kept nodding agreeably, figuring sooner or later I would get it or Hank would give up. And then suddenly, we were looking at Sonnet 63 and the lines

For such a time do I now fortify,
Against confounding age’s cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love’s beauty, though my lover’s life.
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

And just as suddenly I got it. I saw in my mind a picture of Southampton being led to the block, about to have the “confounding [Elizabethan] age’s cruel knife [the headsman’s ax]” cut his “life” [head] off, even as the poet, picturing the same thing and “fortifying” himself through his writing, swears he shall never be cut from memory because “he ... still green” [he shall live forever] in “these black lines” [my verse]. This is certainly not the la-de-da, lovey-dovey stuff that all too many Shakespeare commentators (Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians) usually speak of. This was real life and death anguish as it must have really happened—as both Southampton and Shakespeare must have experienced it: a day-by-day countdown to his execution.

But only in recent years have I come to appreciate how these sonnets (63 and 66) fall right in line with those surrounding them and form a coherent sequence. In fact the brief sequence from Sonnets 63 to 67 can only be understood to makesense if one considers them to document what we know happened in March 1601. Therefore, they must be in authorial order, which is the cornerstone of Whittemore’s entire thesis. “How so?” the wary reader may at this point be asking.

Well, the real events of March 1601 were that Southampton was scheduled to be beheaded, and that at the last moment he wasn’t. Instead he began serving a life sentence, stripped of all titles and property. In Sonnets 63 to 65 we find the same theme of the poet anticipating the youth’s death and swearing he shall live on in my verse. Abruptly, we then come to Sonnet 66, in which the poet now says “I’m so depressed I wish I were dead, but I can’t go, because then I’d be leaving you behind.” It’s the reverse of what he has just been saying in the previous three sonnets.

Now here’s the kicker. In Sonnet 67 the poet begins by asking

Ah, wherefore with infection should he live
And with his presence grace impyety.
That sin by him advantage should achieve
And lace itself with his society?

There is no further talk of the youth dying—only talk of why should he have to live this way (67), that he has “a second life on second head” (68), that he “dost grow common” (69), that he should be grateful for his great gift [life] and build on it (87), and how he should now live [this second life] (e.g., Sonnet 94). Consider how the actual events of March 1601—the impending doom followed by the sudden moment when he is reprieved—match these sonnets. In real time there had to have been the anguish leading up to the expected execution, followed by mixed feelings of depression (66) and resignation (67) to the reprieve and the new reality of serving a life sentence. Sonnet 67 ends by remarking on “these last [days] so bad.” And what could have been so bad as what the two of them—poet and youth—had just

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Sonnets solved (continued from page 13)

lived through? What other known historical context could even come close to making sense of the emotions expressed in this sequence from Sonnets 63-67?

Sonnets as historical evidence

Next, I want to touch on the historical implications of the Monument theory. Eighty years ago, Thomas Looney predicted that, if he was right, future scholarship would find new information that would fit the Oxfordian hypothesis and none that would displace it. In that same spirit I believe that the five years spent since the publication of "Dynastic Diary" in the Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter have proven that point. The book Whittemore is now publishing has greatly enhanced (for both of us) our appreciation of the basic correctness of his thesis, and along with it has come the realization that something we once only suspected is, in fact, absolutely true: the Sonnets are not just anything to be found in the Calendar of State Papers. In fact, in some instances the Sonnets provide historical information that exists nowhere else (e.g., "mistrision" in Sonnet 87).

For another example, let's take a look at Sonnet 120. Here, even after spending years immersed in this new point of view about the sonnets, and having talked with Whittemore for hundreds if not thousands of hours about them, it was only last summer (2003) that I had yet another Oxfordian epiphany. It came while looking up the word "rascal" in the dictionary on Hank's back porch (another story for another day), and on the opposite page my eyes noticed the word "ransom: payment made for release from captivity." I immediately thought of the couplet in Sonnet 120, and then we both read the entire sonnet together. Remember, in this sonnet the poet recalls "our night of woe" and how he "once suffered in your crime." He concludes with the couplet:

But that your trespass now becomes a fee,
Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

Note that the all-important word "trespass" recurs, referring undoubtedly to the "treason" Southampton committed on February 8, 1601, a point further reinforced by the poet's bemoaning in the sonnet about "once [suffering] in your crime." So, in keeping with the thesis that everything in the middle sequence of 100 sonnets is real and related to the Essex Rebellion and its aftermath, what are we to make of this final couplet? The answer, I think, is obvious. The poet is saying to the youth that your crime has become a "fee" [price] that we both must pay—in the form of a ransom, a payment for release from captivity. Such a deal could have only been negotiated with Robert Cecil and approved by the Queen.

It should be noted here that Whittemore's current draft at that time did have the "payment-release" meaning glossed, but for both of us there was a sudden realization that the Sonnet 120 couplet could well be, in itself, the whole authorship mystery encapsulated in two lines. The import of this for both Shakespeare and Shakespeare authorship studies cannot be overstated, because what we then realized was that the "price" [i.e. "ransom," "fee"] that the poet must have paid was not just to give up all title to his works, but in fact, to give up everything, even his name and his place in history.

This in turn would then explain the certainty that is spoken of in Sonnets 72 ("My name be buried where my body is") and 81 ("I, once gone, to all the world must die"). This certainty about his anonymity has always been a puzzle, even for Oxfordians. Was it his choice, or someone else's imposed upon him? But now, seen in this new context of a deal to save Southampton—of a ransom paid—then everything becomes clear. It was imposed. His certainty is that of someone who has signed a contract from which there can be no turning back.

As we noted earlier, even orthodox scholar A.L. Rowe concluded that Cecil alone saved Southampton's life. But left out by Rowe (and by Stopes and Akrigg) is any reason why, just because the kid was young, pretty and had long hair? Because his wife and mother wrote such wonderful, pleasing letters? Because Southampton's own letters to Cecil and the Privy Council were so damn good? No good reason for the sparing of Southampton has ever been offered. But, outside of Shakespeare authorship circles, it has never been seen as an important question even to ask—let alone to answer.

It should also be noted here that it is a well-documented fact that the payment of "ransom and fine" was routine for prisoners in this era as a means to mitigate their sentences or avoid imprisonment altogether. Records show that the majority of Essex Rebellion conspirators did in fact pay "rasons and fines." Charles Danvers even offered to pay £10,000 to escape his death sentence, but was turned down! But for Southampton there is no record of any ransom or fine paid as part of the process by which he was reprieved from his death sentence. No record, that is, until now, and our new view of Sonnet 120 as historical evidence.

So then, what we have here could well be the literary ground zero of the entire Shakespeare authorship mystery. The mystery is the result of the ransom paid to save Southampton's life—a ransom paid by the poet Oxford/Shakespeare not in cash, but as a political deal. And a deal being a deal, especially in England where under the Official Secrets Act a secret is a secret forever, the mystery about who Shakespeare really was endures to this day.

"Such virtue hath my pen"

But Oxford/Shakespeare had no intention of going quietly into that good night of oblivion. He still had his pen, and I am sure that he spent his final days rewriting and refining much, with a keen eye on his new situation. His top priority would certainly have been writing and carefully planning the sonnet sequence, but I think that an accompanying plan would have been to sprinkle the plays with as many clues, final comments and parting shots as possible (surely he had always been given to name clues and puns, but now that the end was near and—if we are right—a deal convincing him to oblivion was in place, then name clues and puns were all he had left).

Thus it may be, for example, that certain scenes in As You Like It (e.g., railing at the interloper William in V.i, or talking with Jaques in I.iii) were either written or carefully rewritten post-1601 to remind posterity that: "When a man's verse cannot be understood ... it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room" (Marlowe references aside, might there have been an actual "little room" in March 1601, with just a desperate Oxford and a smug Cecil in it?). Or perhaps he inserted the incredibly inflammatory "Hast thou a daughter" and "Jeptah" ex-
changes with Polonius in Hamlet (II.ii), implying that your daughter’s pregnancy is like maggots in a dead dog—lovely thought, but had it ever really been performed at court, in front of Cecil and the Queen?). Or perhaps the ultra-bitter dark comedy Troilus and Cressida was finished, in which Polonius has now morphed into Pandarus, who has the final line in the play: “I'll ... bequeath you my diseases” (perhaps a parting shot at the Celsis—father and son—depicting the father saying to posterity, “Meet my son”?).

How he actually spent his final years is pure speculation, but I can’t help but think that Oxford—who bragged in Sonnet 107 that “Death [now] subscribed [to him]” because he would live on in his verse—must have been busy putting his affairs and his verse in order—to ensure just that.

A theory in progress

Finally, it is only in recent weeks as I prepared this essay that I had yet again another evolutionary moment in my thinking on the Sonnets and the all important question: “Just how real are they?” Over these last five years Whittome and I have had innumerable conversations about the implications of his theory and just what the Sonnets are telling us if they are—as contended—historical testimony. It has been an intriguing process of focusing on key words and phrases and mulling on possibilities. So what occurred to me in these recent weeks is one more step on a journey that it is hoped all Oxfordians will soon take—to take the Sonnets as true, historical testimony and to see where that leads. As Whittome and I have already found, analysis of the Sonnets from this new perspective consistently comes up with significant fits between the text and the known history of the period (e.g., “trespass,” “fault,” “misprision” and “ransom”).

So, in this instance what occurred to me was a possible answer to what the second half of that final line in sonnet 120 (“...yours must ransom me.”) might be about, for it does seem to say that Southampton is expected to ransom Oxford. For a while I wondered what captivity was Oxford in that he needed to be ransomed. And then it came to me: he was “captive good attending captain III [i.e., Cecil]” (Sonnet 66), and would remain so until “released.” He was a captive of his fate, his anonymity. And a release from that captivity would only come if his verse could someday be understood (Touchstone’s line in AYLI), which in turn could only come about if the author’s true identity—and true story—became known.

Sending hidden messages

It was the publication of the 1609 quarto that launched what we now know was a carefully crafted message in a bottle to posterity. Without the quarto, the entire state of Shakespeare studies and biography (including the authorship debate) would be vastly different. We must remember that its publication was undoubtedly suppressed and there were no subsequent printings. There was not even any contemporaneous discussion about them, in an age obsessed with discussing who likes which poet and poetry. Only 13 copies survived, and without them all we’d know of Shakespeare’s sonnets would be the 1640 John Benson version, which in effect butchered the original and obliterates what we now know was the carefully planned structure of the whole. Without the 1609 quarto there would be no such thing as Shake-speares Sonnets as we know them.

The quarto was published in spring 1609 (registered on May 20th), almost simultaneously with the quarto of Troilus & Cressida. Both works contain enigmatic introductions with “never” and “ever” in play (the “Never Writer to an Ever Reader” in T&C and the Sonnet dedication—correctly deciphered by John Rollett—revealing the hidden message, “These sonnets all by ever”). But what good are hidden messages unless they are sent?

Even with the political risks that had to have been involved in defying the “grand possessors,” I have now come to think that Southampton must have been behind the publication of both; it was the “fee” he knew he had to pay to release the poet and his verse from oblivion, the ransom that had to be paid in exchange for the ransom paid to save his life.

Further, if the theory about there being a deal to save him is correct, then his fulfillment of the request to “ransom me” (cf. Hamlet to Horatio: “tell my story”) would be more than just taking a risk—it would be actually violating that deal. But duty called, just as it had once called Hamlet to release his father from purgatory.

Whittemore notes in The Monument (citing Akrigg’s Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton, p. 144-145) that in the summer of 1609 King James, while visiting Southampton at Beaulieu, apparently panicked and guards were called out. One of the first known instances of a James “panic” occurred on June 24, 1604—the day of Oxford’s death—when Southampton and other Essex Rebellion survivors were arrested, held overnight, and then released the next day, with no official record as to why they were arrested in the first place. These two “panics” provide uncanny parallels in considering to what extent political danger may have surrounded the Southampton-Shakespeare-Oxford connections.

After 1609 there were no new Shakespeare publications for 14 years. And when the First Folio was published in 1623, it made no mention of any Shakespeare poetry, and certainly not the 1609 quarto of Shake-speares Sonnets. Troilus and Cressida only made it in at the last minute and is not listed in the table of contents. The Folio is full of obfuscation about the true author, where 14 years earlier both 1609 publications cried out, “It was ever.”

It’s taken 400 years—perhaps longer than anyone back then would have dared guess—but we are now close. With the mystery of the Sonnets now solved, that ransom will soon be paid in full, and Oxford shall at last be released.
THE MONUMENT

“The Little Love-God”
153-154
(2 sonnets)

“Lord of My Love”
127———— 126
(26 sonnets)

“My Lovely Boy”
27———— 126
(100 sonnets)

126———— 26
(26 sonnets)

Figure 1

THE MONUMENT

The invention

Upon and/or revised some previous writings, but nonetheless fashioned and arranged them to correspond with Henry Wriothesley’s imprisonment. From the time of the Rebellion onward, setting down the most intense outpouring of sustained poetic confession the world has known, he tried to make sure future generations would be able to comprehend his role and how—by paying “ransom” for the life, freedom and pardon of Southampton—he agreed to bury his identity as Shakespeare.

Immediately following the prison segment is Sonnet 107, known as the “dating” verse because of its topical allusions. Here Oxford celebrates the liberation of his “true love” after he had been “supposed as forfeit to a confined doom” in the Tower. Now at the peak of his artistic powers and maturity, 53-year-old Edward de Vere opens Sonnet 107 with a single, sweeping sentence of four lines:

27 Essex Rebellion Feb 8, 1601
97 First Anniversary Feb 8, 1602
104 Second Anniversary Feb 8, 1603

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Year Life (cont’d from p. 1) an “invention” or special language (created in response to a repressive regime that has “tongue-tied” his art) that acts to conceal yet reveal the true story being told.

- Love and Time: The key words of the invention, which convey one image on the surface while simultaneously recording the progress of an entirely different topic, are “Love,” representing Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, and “Time,” representing Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth I of England.

- The Timeline: The chronological timeline of Southampton’s living record is literally the ever-dwindling organic Time left in the life and reign of the Queen, leading to her death and the royal succession (the way time itself was measured in regnal years and other writers, including Oxford, referred to “her Majesty’s time”), followed by the days leading to Elizabeth’s funeral that brought the Tudor dynasty to its official conclusion.

The opening Fair Youth series (1-126)—in which “time” appears on 78 occasions (but nowhere in the final 28 sonnets)—is divided into two distinct parts. The first segment (1-26) spans the years 1590-1600 and comes to an abrupt end; but the second segment (27-126), which is also the 100-verse sequence at the center of the monument, comprises the heart of Shakespeare’s Sonnets. This is where the real action is. Here, in effect, is a book of 100 chapters beginning with Sonnet 27 on February 8, 1601 (in response to Southampton’s immediate imprisonment for the Essex Rebellion), and continuing to Sonnet 125 upon the funeral of Elizabeth on April 28, 1603 (when the Tudor dynasty officially ended), with Sonnet 126 in farewell.

Precedents for a 100-sonnet sequence include the 100 poems scattered within the anonymous collection A Hundredth Sundry Flowres in 1573, with which Oxford has been associated, and the 100 consecutively numbered verses of Hekatompathia or The Passionate Century of Love, which Thomas Watson dedicated to Oxford in 1582.

This extraordinary 100-verse core sequence is itself divided into two parts:

- The Prison Years: The first 80 sonnets (27-106) cover the two years and two months that Southampton spent in the Tower of London, from the night of February 8, 1601 to his last night of confinement on April 9, 1603. The final Days: The final 20 verses (107-126) commence with the liberation of Southampton by King James on April 10, 1603 (107), and continue with exactly 20 sonnets for 20 days—until the “envoy” of Sonnet 126 that abruptly follows the Queen’s funeral on April 28, 1603.

In terms of the monument as a whole, the sequence of 100 chronological verses begins to emerge when Sonnets 153-154 about “The Little Love-God” are recognized as the epilogue or prologue of the collection. The remaining 152 sonnets contain the Fair Youth series (1-126) and the Dark Lady series (127-152), with Sonnet 126 to “My Lovely Boy” as the “envoy” ending the first series. But the structure of the monument also includes Sonnet 26 to “Lord of My Love” as an envoy, so that Sonnets 26 and 126 bring discrete segments to their conclusions. The result is a three-part design (Figure 1) that includes the 100-sonnet central sequence; and a closer view (Figure 2) shows how these 100 verses are divided into two sections of 80 and 20 sonnets.

All 80 “prison” verses (more than half the total of 154 sonnets!) are addressed to Southampton in the Tower for two years and two months. Oxford undoubtedly drew
Not mine own fears nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.

Southampton has gained his liberty
because of the recent death of Elizabeth,
known as Cynthia or Diana, goddess of the
Moon, whose mortal body has succumbed
although her eternal self, as a divinely
ordained monarch, will endure. The
Queen’s death on March 24, 1603, has led
to the swift proclamation that James of
Scotland will be crowned King of England
amid domestic peace rather than the civil
war around succession to the throne that
had been so widely predicted and feared:

The mortal Moon hath her eclipse endured,
And the sad Augurs mock their own presage,
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,
And peace proclaims Olives of endless age.

But the most rewarding result is that,
on orders sent by James five days earlier
from Edinburgh to London, 29-year-old
Southampton has walked back through
Traitor’s Gate into the sunshine of restored
freedom and honor.

“My love looks fresh,” Oxford declares
of Henry Wriothesley, while claiming his
own triumph over death through this private
diary:

Now with the drops of his most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and death to me
subscribers,
Since spite of him I’ll live in this poor
rhyme,
While he insults o’er dull and speechless
tribes.

Finally Oxford reaffirms his commit-
ment to preserve Southampton within
this monument of verse. Recalling the
late Queen as a “tyrant” who had kept the
young earl as a prisoner, he alludes to
plans for Elizabeth’s body to be laid tem-
porarily near the great brass tomb in
Westminster Abbey of her grandfather Henry
VII, who founded the Tudor dynasty in 1485:

And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants’ crests and tombs of brass are spent.

All events recorded in the 100-sonnet
sequence lead up to, and then away from,
the high point of Southampton’s libera-
tion on April 10, 1603.

In 1866 Gerald Massey offered the first
persuasive identification of Southampton
as the poet’s “true love” of Sonnet 107:

We may rest assured that Shakespeare
was one of the first to greet his ‘dear boy’
over whose errors he had grieved, and
upon whose imprudent unselfishness he
had looked with tears, half of sorrow, and
half of pride. He had loved him as a father
loves a son ... and he now welcomed him
from the gloom of a prison on his way to a
palace and the smile of a monarch. 1

Most scholars continue to agree with
the dating in relation to Elizabeth’s death
and the accession of James in the spring of
1603. G. P. V. Akrigg recalls in 1968 how
H. C. Beeching proclaimed 107 the only
verse “that can be dated with absolute
certainty” and declared it must belong to
1603. Akrigg recounts his own experience
of coming to the “sudden complete convic-
tion” that it refers to spring 1603 “almost
as if it had the date visibly branded on it,”
adding: “This is what Shakespeare had to
say to Southampton upon his release from
imprisonment.” 2

Editor G. Blakemore Evans writes in
1996 that “the majority of recent critics
strongly favors 1603 as the most likely
date,” adding: “Indeed, the case for 1603
(or a little later) is so brilliantly presented
by Kerrigan that one is dangerously
tempted to cry ‘Q. E. D.’” 3

Kerrigan’s final words are emphasized
to show how close he comes to perceiving
the chronological framework revealed by
the structure and language of the monu-
ment. One thing this view of 107 “implies
for the dating of the sequence [i.e., the Fair
Youth series of 1-126]” is that the diary
must extend at least to April 10, 1603; but
afar more crucial implication, once these
sonnets are viewed as chapters of a cohe-
sive narrative story, is that all the preced-
ing 80 verses have been recording events
during Southampton’s incarceration and
leading up to this dramatic high point
when he gains his freedom from the Tower.

Another implication is that, just as only
Henry Wriothesley can be the Fair Youth of
the Sonnets, the powerful, deceitful, tyran-
anical Dark Lady who held him captive
during 1601-1603 can only be Oxford’s
(Continued on page 18)
Year in the Life (continued from page 17) and Southampton's sovereign Mistress, Queen Elizabeth I of England. In addition, as no other writers in England were seeking or competing publicly for Shakespeare's attention during his imprisonment, the so-called Rival Poet of the Sonnets can only be the printed name "Shakespeare" with which Henry Wriothesley was uniquely associated.

This column narrows the focus to key events of 1601 within just the first 20 entries (27-46) during Southampton's captivity, with the diary of the Fair Youth series (Figure 3.) contributing to the evidence:

**January 9: Southampton Attacked**

Lord Gray, supporting Secretary Robert Cecil, attacks Southampton in the street. The earl draws his sword in combat, but his houseboy has a hand lopped off.

**February 2: Southampton Leads**

A committee at Drury House headed by Southampton plans a palace coup to remove Cecil from power and gain access to Elizabeth.

**February 3: Southampton Demands**

When others question the plans to seize the Court at Whitehall, Southampton shouts back: "Then we shall resolve upon nothing, and it is now three months or more since we first undertook this!"

**February 6: Shakespeare's Company**

Conspirators bribe the Lord Chamberlain's Men into staging Richard II, to rouse support by showing how King Richard II handed over his crown in 1399 to Bolingbroke, who became Henry IV of England. Essex and Southampton intend to remove Cecil and gain access to Elizabeth, now in her 68th year.

**February 7: Richard II Performed**

Shakespeare's acting company stages the play at the Globe as followers of Essex and Southampton cheer the scenes of an English monarch losing his crown. Oxford may have added the powerful deposition scene (not printed until 1608) to help their cause, as Massey in 1866 suggested that "at the pressing solicitations of Southampton, the drama of King Richard II was altered by Shakespeare on purpose to be played sedulously, with the deposition scene newly added!" The evidence, he argued, is that "if Shakespeare was not hand-in-glove with the Essex faction, he fought on their side pen-in-hand." In the new scene Richard gives up the throne with Bolingbroke in his presence, which is what Essex and Southampton hope to persuade the aging Elizabeth to do:

- With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
- With mine own hands I give away my crown,
- With mine own tongue I deny my sacred state,
- With mine own breath I release all duteous oaths.

It appears informers for Cecil helped get Richard II performed on this day, to trigger the revolt prematurely. Now the Secretary sends an emissary ordering Essex to face the Council at Court, sending him into confusion even as he refuses. During dinner with Southampton and others, the earl expresses confidence that the Sheriff of London will supply a 1000 men in support, but this appears to be disinformation planted by a Cecil agent.

**February 8: The Rebellion**

The revolt begins after the Crown sends officials to Essex House and the conspirators hold them captive, already an offense against the state. Essex sets off in panic to find the Sheriff along with Southampton and 300 men, insufficiently armed, who follow him through the streets as he cries: "For the Queen! For the Queen! A plot is laid for my life!" Confused citizens stay behind windows and doors; none of the Sheriff's support emerges; and well-prepared agents under Cecil's orders already enter the city gates proclaiming Essex and his cohorts as traitors.

With all routes to the Palace blocked, and after fighting with bloodshed, Essex returns home to find the Crown prisoners have been released. Government officials surround the house and demand surrender.

"To whom should we yield?" Southampton retorts. "Our adversaries? That would be to run upon our ruin! Or to the Queen? That would be to confess ourselves guilty! But yet if the Lord Admiral will give us hostages for our security, we will appear before the Queen! If not, we are every one of us fully resolved to lose our lives fighting!"

At ten this evening Essex and Southampton fall on their knees and deliver up their swords. They are taken first to Lambeth and then carried by boat to the Tower after midnight; and Oxford records in Sonnet 27 that, in the darkness, his thoughts "intend a zealous pilgrimage" to Southampton, who appears in "my soul's imaginary sight" as a "shadow" transformed into "a jewel (hung in ghastly night)" that "makes black night beauteous, and her old face new."

So begins the 100-sonnet sequence, the first 60 verses corresponding with the first 60 days and nights of Southampton's imprisonment, as Oxford indicates this pace in 28 by recording that "day doth daily draw my sorrows longer" and "night doth nightly make grief's length seem stronger." Identifying with the younger earl's plight, he records in 29 that he himself is "in disgrace with Fortune [the Queen] and men's eyes" in the same way Southampton is suffering in the Tower.

**February 11: Summons to the Sessions**

Oxford records in 30 that the Privy Council will summon him to the Sessions or treason trial of Essex and Southampton, to sit as highest-ranking earl on the tribunal of peers who will judge them:

When to the Sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past...

("Summon a session," King Leontes commands in The Winter's Tale, 2.3.200, calling for it in 3.2.1 as a "sessions")

Southampton, facing death, is "precious friends hid in death's stateless night" and in 31 he becomes the "grave where buried love doth live." The first words of the next verse to him ("If thou survive") indicate his expected execution while 33 refers to the "stain" he has brought upon himself.

Oxford records his personal sorrow in 34, writing of Southampton as the sun that driest the "rain" (tears) on "my storm-beaten face" but "cures not the disgrace" of the crime, for which he, Oxford, will pay by sacrificing himself (i.e., his identity) in the spirit of Christ paying with his life for the sins of mankind:

Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief;
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss,
Th'offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's loss.

(Southampton writes to the Privy Council)
Oxford follows with the particular information that a "rich" price or fine will be paid to "ransom" the younger earl for his "ill deeds" against the state:

Ah, but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich, and ransom all ill deeds.

(Oxford himself in 35 of "authorizing" Southampton’s “trespass” or treason by “compare” or by dramatizing the deposition of Richard II:)

All men make faults, and even I, in this,
Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,
Excusing these sins more than these sins are.

(In his letter to the Council noted above, Southampton refers to his “faults”; when James orders him released in April 1603, the king notes that “the late Queen our Sister, notwithstanding his fault toward her, was moved to exempt [him] from the stroke of justice.” The plays of royal history are filled with “fault” for treason: “Their faults are open,” the King declares of traitors in Henry V, 2.2.142, adding: “Arrest them to the answer of the law.”)

Oxford goes on to record that behind the scenes he is counterbalancing the younger earl’s “sensual fault” or willful, riotous crime with “sense” or lawful reason: First he must do his duty to the state as an “adverse party” or judge at the trial, which will mean finding him guilty and condemning him to death; but he is also his “advocate” or legal defender entering a “lawful plea” or argument (to Cecil) on Southampton’s behalf and against himself:

For thy sensual fault I bring in sense,
Thy adverse party is thy Advocate,
And ‘gainst myself a lawful plea commence
(William Cecil Lord Burghley had equated “sensual” with “wilful” in writing of Catholic traitors: “I favor no sensual and willful Recusants.” The second line above is glossed as “Your legal opponent is also your legal defender” by Duncan-Jones. “I never did incense his Majesty against the Duke of Clarence, but have been an earnest advocate to plead for him” – Richard III, 1.3.85–87) 12

Oxford refers to his “sins” and before submitting to the axe at his execution, Essex will call the Rebellion “this my last sin, this great, this bloody, this crying, this infectious sin...”) 14

and to subvert the government. 14 Oxford in 36 announces terms of the “ransom” he will pay to save Southampton from execution:

I may not ever-more acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame

Because he has linked Henry Wriothesley (and him alone) to “Shakespeare” by the public dedications of Venus and Adonis in 1593 and Lucrece in 1594, hemust sever all ties to him and never claim credit for works attributed to Shakespeare. On the eve of the trial, Oxford likens himself in 37 to a “decreep’t father” looking upon “his active child” and tells Southampton, using his own lameness as metaphor:

So I, made lame by Fortune’s
[Elizabeth’s] dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth.

February 19: The Trial

Oxford sits silently on the tribunal as Attorney General Edward Coke prosecutes for the Crown with vicious help from Francis Bacon, during a daylong travesty of justice the outcome of which has been preordained.

When J. Thomas Looney presented his evidence in 1920 that Oxford wrote the Shakespeare poems and plays, this historic event took on huge significance:

It is clear, from the point of view of the problem of Shakespearean authorship, that the famous trial of the Earl of Essex assumes quite a thrilling interest. Standing before the judges was the only living personality that Shakespeare has openly connected with the issue of his works, and towards whom he has publicly expressed affection: Henry Wriothesley. The most powerful force at working in seeking to bring about the destruction of the accused was the possessor of the greatest intellect that has appeared in English philosophy: one to whom in modern times has actually been attributed the authorship of Shakespeare’s plays – Francis Bacon. And sitting on the benches amongst the judges (Continued on page 20)
Henry Wriothesley's confinement in the Tower also explains the prolonged "absence" of Oxford and Southampton from each other:

Things Removed (31), O Absence (39), When I Am Sometime Absent From Thy Heart (41), Where Thou Art (41), Injurious Distance (44), Where Thou Dost Stay (44), Removed From Thee (44), Present-Absent (45), Where Thou Art (51), The Bitterness of Absence (57), Where You May Be (57), Where You Are (57), Th'imprisoned Absence Of Your Liberty (58), Where You List (58), Thou Dost Wake Elsewhere (61), All Away (75), Be Absent From Thy Walks (89), How Like a Winter Hath My Absence Been From Thee (97), This Time Removed (97), And Thou Away (97), You Away (98)...

Oxford is forced to find Southampton guilty and condemn him to death. Reacting to the "pain" of the trial in 38, he refers to "these curious [anxious] days" being recorded:

If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

The sacrifice of his link to Southampton proceeds in 39 with instructions to "let us divided live." By his crime the younger earl has stolen himself from both England and Oxford, who tells him in 40: "I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief." He warns him in 41 that "still temptation follows where thou art" [in the Tower] and to avoid those who would "lead thee in their riot even there" by urging new revolt. (Belamy notes how Attorney General Coke's success "in getting various popular echoes [anxious] days...

Meanwhile Oxford notes in 45 that messengers are riding back and forth between the Tower and his home [in Hackney] to bring news of Southampton's health battles, which, according to the Council, "he hath had before his trouble":

By those swift messengers returned from thee
Who even but now come back again assured
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me.
(Whereas we do understand that the Earl of Southampton, by reason of the continuance of his quarter ague, hath a swelling in his legs and other parts" -- the Privy Council to John Peyton, Lieutenant of the Tower, March 22, 1601).

In Sonnet 46 Oxford pulls out all stops to convey the nature of this private diary as a document of contemporary political history. He recreates the trial itself, writing in 43, again reflecting the daily pace of his diary (and the daily nature of Southampton's prison life), "and nights bright days when dreams do show thee me."

February 25: Execution of Essex

Essex is beheaded and Oxford writes to Southampton in 44 of their "heavy tears, badges of either's woe." If he could do so, he would fly with his thoughts to "the place" where Southampton is confined:

As soon as think the place where he would be

And although his reference to "the place" might appear to be a casual one, in fact he uses a term commonly employed to signify the Tower:

"You both shall be led from hence to the place from whence you came" -- the Lord High Steward to Essex and Southampton at trial's end; "The safety of the place under my charge" -- John Peyton, Lieutenant of the Tower; "Because the place is unwholesome" -- King James, ordering Southampton's release; "I do not like the Tower, of any place" -- Richard III, 3.1.68

"All days are nights to see till I see thee," he writes in 43, again reflecting the daily pace of his diary (and the daily nature of Southampton's prison life), "and nights bright days when dreams do show thee me."
on thy part”; he will pledge in 57 to “watch the clock for you”; and, in 58, suffering through this “imprisoned absence of your liberty,” he will assure Henry Wriothesley that, by agreeing with the ransom to be paid for his life, “to you it doth belong yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.” Oxford is working with his brother-in-law Robert Cecil, who now has all power over the government, to produce a “better judgment” in the form of “misprision” of treason, whereby once James is crowned Southampton will gain his release from the Tower along with a royal pardon for his crimes. The announcement that his “great gift” of life will grow anew is to be made in Sonnet 87:

So thy great gift upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgment making.

This column will continue the story in upcoming editions of Shakespeare Matters while further describing elements of the solution to the Sonnets as set forth in The Monument. Meanwhile we are reminded of a prediction by Hyder Rollins in 1944:

The question when the sonnets were written is in many respects the most important of all the unanswerable questions they pose. If it could be answered definitely and finally, there might be some chance of establishing to general satisfaction the identity of the friend, the dark woman and the rival poet (supposing that all were real individuals); of deciding what contemporary sources Shakespeare did or did not use; and even of determining whether the order of Q is the author’s or not. In the past and at the present, such a solution has been and remains an idle dream.\

We also recall Sir George Greenwood’s declaration of 1908: “The real problem of the Sonnets is to find out who ‘Shakespeare’ was. That done, it might be possible to make the crooked straight and the rough places plain— but not till then.” And to this we add his further comment that, by the same token, “If we could only know who wrote the Sonnets we should know the true Shakespeare.”

**Endnotes:**


6. Massey, op. cit., 107; and in *The Secret Drama of Shakespeare’s Sonnets Unfolded*, 1872, the new Supplement to the 1866 edition, p. 51.

7. The first quarto of Richard II was registered in 1597. The deposition scene (IV.1.154-318) was printed first in the fourth quarto in 1608. Most editors use the scene as it appears in the Folio of 1623.

8. The culprit appears to have been Lord Montaigle, who arranged for the Richard II performance but was never put on trial; Massey, Supplement, op. cit., 51.

9. The author may have been Sir Henry Neville. See Camden, Annales, op. cit., 17, recounting that Neville was “shunning the name of an Informer” while among the conspirators at Drury House.

10. In Sonnet 34 the second “loss” is usually emended to “cross.”


16. Also indicted on the same charges are Rutland and Sandys; see Akrigg, op. cit., 120.


