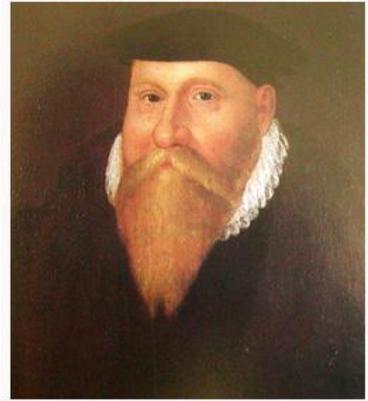


WHO WAS SIR THOMAS SMITH?

By Stephanie Hopkins Hughes

Oxfordians have long been aware that Sir Thomas Smith had an influence on the young Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford before he was swept into the royal court under the care of William Cecil, but few have explored what this may have meant to the works ascribed to William Shakespeare. We learnt of Smith as Oxford's tutor and surrogate father for the eight years preceding his removal to London from two biographies – Mary Dewar's *Sir Thomas Smith: A Tudor Intellectual in Office* (1964), and John Strype's *The Life of the*



That noble Theseus of learning
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Learned Sir Thomas Smith, Principal Secretary of State to King Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth (1698). The schedule of Oxford's studies created by Cecil seemed rather slim, consisting largely as it did of dancing, fencing, conversational French and Italian, and the kind of horsemanship required for the tilts; all skills required for a life at Court, with an hour a day given to studies in Latin and 'the other language' – French perhaps? While 20th-century Tudor historians frequently refer to the *De Republica Anglorum*, Smith's 1565 explanation of how the English system functioned at that time, or to one or two of the policy papers he had written over the years for William Cecil, they seem to have bypassed his role in the great revolution known as the Protestant Reformation – and in the education of 'William Shakespeare'.

As detailed by Dewar, Smith was born in 1513 to a humble family of Essex sheep farmers in Saffron Walden, a village a few miles west of the center of the Oxford earldom at Hedingham. Evidence of his intellectual powers having appeared by age five, by age eleven someone arranged to have him sent to nearby Cambridge University. By thirteen he was enrolled, and by his twenties he was holding classes in Greek in his rooms at Queens' College (Dewar, 13). By 28, having succeeded his tutor John Redman as Greek Orator, he'd been dubbed

‘first Regius Chair of Civil Law’ by Henry VIII, a signal honor for one so young. By 30 Smith had been appointed Vice-chancellor by the University’s conservative Catholic Chancellor, Stephen Gardiner.

Though often forgotten for his role in establishing the Church of England, Smith is still honored by economists for his brilliant and forward-thinking economic policies (Dewar, Quinn, Elton 1977). So effective was he as Vice-chancellor of the University that, according to Dewar, he has been remembered ever since for the economic policies he instituted while President of Queens’ College, Cambridge and by the University as a whole for having cleverly preserved it from the rapacity of Henry VIII’s later years (13-25).

As for politics, most impressive is how the youthful Smith became, however briefly, Secretary of State under the boy-king, Edward VI. Just days after the death of Henry VIII, Edward’s uncle, Edward Seymour – formerly Earl of Hertford, now Duke of Somerset – took Smith to live and work for him and his nine-year-old nephew at Syon House (DNB). Of all who were available to Somerset, among them the secretaries bequeathed him by Henry VIII – the experienced William Petre and the cautious William Paget – it was the youthful Smith who Somerset chose to bring to this little Court, first as his own Master of Requests, then, within a few months, Secretary to the King – in modern terms, England’s Secretary of State.

Dawn of the Reformation

It seems that, from day one, Somerset’s chief domestic goal was to turn the Protestant Reformation from the theologians’ dream it had been under Henry into a living reality. While this may not have been a matter of great personal concern to Seymour himself, who earned his reputation as a leader on the battlefield, and his role at Court as the brother of the queen who had provided Henry with his one and only male heir, it was certainly of great concern for the nine-year-old King and his beloved godfather, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, known to historians as ‘Father of the Reformation.’¹

As Somerset was well aware, lacking any drop of the blood royal himself, his hold on high office was totally dependent on his nephew’s happiness, which in turn was dependent on Cranmer’s happiness.² And because the Archbishop was

not going to be happy until he saw England converted into a fully functioning protestant nation, something that so far only a handful of small German city-states had managed to pry loose from the colossal Hapsburg Empire, that became the driving goal for Somerset's domestic policy.

It must have been Smith's reputation as a parliamentarian that, despite his youth, inspired the Protector to prefer him over Paget or Petre. Faced with the need to convince the House of Lords that reforming the Church was, if not provably the will of God, it was certainly the will of their King and his Archbishop, what Somerset and Cranmer needed was somebody willing and able to argue the bishops in the House of Lords into submission. In their blow-by-blow account, Catholic historians Francis Aidan Gasquet and Edmund Bishop demonstrate how Smith managed to accomplish this by arguments based on the early Church fathers and not a little bullying. That Smith was included in the tight little circle that ran the nation out of Syon House during the reign of Edward VI was probably partly because, unlike Paget and Petre, he had little to lose and much to gain, and so was unlikely to succumb to those members of the Council who wanted to move more cautiously with reform – or not at all.

Based on what can be constructed from the bits and pieces left by the 16th-century martyrologist John Foxe – and by 19th-century Church historians like Henry Birt, Edward Cardwell, Richard Dixon, Thomas Gee, Joseph Hoare, John Mason, T. B. Scannell, John Stoughton, Gasquet and Bishop – it was Smith (Smyth, Smythe) through whose efforts in Parliament they brought the bishops, trembling in the turbulent wake of the great institution wrecker, into accepting the heavily revised and condensed English Service provided by Cranmer. In Dewar's account of an angry three-day session between the bishops, Somerset, Cranmer and Smith, she quotes Gasquet, whose own version is provided in greater detail in Appendix V of his 1891 *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer* (395-443).

Martyrologist Foxe also provides an account of one angry exchange between Smith and Edmund Bonner, the equally combative Catholic Bishop of London, which ended with Smith sending Bonner to prison (Dewar, 174-76), where the angry bishop remained until reinstated by Queen Mary. Although both Dewar and Gasquet condemn Sir Thomas for his belligerence, what should be clear is

that it was his job to say and do what Somerset and Cranmer – concerned to preserve their dignities – could not.

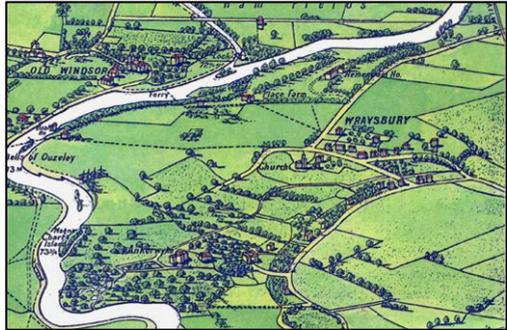
Using his much-vaunted skills as University Orator, now as MP (for Marlborough) in the Parliament that sat off and on for all five years of Edward's reign, there can be no doubt that it was Smith who got *The Book of Common Prayer* voted into Law (Pollard, 98), together with the infamous Act of Uniformity that made it a crime to perform or participate in a Catholic ceremony. As the King's Secretary, it was also his job to get the new Prayer Book published and into the hands of the terrified bishops by Midsummer 1549, a little over two years from the day he was first brought to Edward's Court by Somerset.

Sir Thomas Smith's downfall

That Easter (1549), when an astonished nation realized that the rituals of their forefathers were now illegal, and the country exploded in rebellion,³ Somerset did nothing. Apparently stunned by a reaction he had not foreseen and did not understand, he left it to the number two man on the Council, John Dudley, self-proclaimed Duke of Northumberland,⁴ to take advantage of the opportunity he'd probably been waiting for. While the newly created Earls of Bedford and Pembroke (Guy, 199) quashed most of these rebellions, Northumberland, backed by a contingent of German mercenaries, moved with exemplary speed, first to quell those outbreaks closest to London, then to overthrow the stupefied Somerset and take his place as the nation's chief executive (Elton *Reformation* 350).

Thus it was that on October 10th 1549, Sir Thomas, together with Somerset and the rest of his staff (though not the little King, nor the sacred Archbishop), found themselves in the Tower, where he and they would remain until the following February when Dudley/Northumberland released the humbled Protector, returning him and his staff to their former positions – all, that is, but the hot-tempered Sir Thomas. Six months later, Dudley elevated Smith's former understudy, William Cecil, to what had been his office of Secretary to the King, Cecil's first step on his ascent to power.

Cut adrift, Smith took advantage of a sinecure he'd acquired while with Somerset as Provost of Eton College where he established the Erasmian curriculum and reorganized its administrative policies (Dewar, 69). Meanwhile, as he waited for opportunities to develop in Westminster, Smith put his considerable energies into gutting an old priory on the Thames a few miles south of Eton that he had acquired while with Somerset, turning it into a twenty-room mansion with gardens, orchards and outbuildings (67-68). It was to this establishment, known as Ankerwycke, that Dewar reports the four-year-old de Vere (pronounced de Vayer⁵) was sent just weeks in advance of the bloodbath that Queen Mary and her new husband, Philip of Spain, son of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, were about to unleash on the protestants.



Ankerwycke near Windsor and the Thames

Four years later, when the boy king died in Cranmer's arms and Dudley (Northumberland) made his scandalous attempt to put his own son on the throne, Cecil – doubtless with the assistance of his father's backstairs crew at Court – managed to keep a place for himself under Queen Mary, where he did what he could to protect the protestants who remained in England during her bloody reign. Among these must surely have been his former teacher and mentor, with whom he placed the sole male heir to the all-important Oxford earldom, having him whisked away to safety on the eve of Mary's bloodbath. That it was Cecil who was responsible for placing the four-year-old de Vere with Smith that December (Dewar, 77) cannot yet be proven by what documentation survives but, given all that we know about Cecil's actions then and later, it is unlikely that anyone else could (or would) have bothered to hide the little boy with such speed and caution.

Five years later, with Mary's death and the accession of Elizabeth with Cecil as her Secretary of State, Smith, whose presence in France was then being

demanding by Nicholas Throckmorton (Throgmorton), Elizabeth's Ambassador to the French Court, who – stumped by having to explain the *Elizabethan Religious Settlement* – needed help from someone who knew more about it than he did (Dewar, 86). That Smith suddenly became available that September may perhaps be attributed to the death of Oxford's father, the 16th Earl of Oxford, which put his son, now a ward of the Queen, in the hands of William Cecil.

When Smith returned four years later – under a cloud for having failed to get the French to return Calais, or any of the other impossibilities with which he'd been saddled by Elizabeth – he returned to Hill Hall, where for the next six years he tended his gardens and orchards and experimented with creating Paracelsian remedies in his laboratory as he waited for another call from



Hill Hall, Theydon Mount, Essex

Cecil. In 1571, Cecil, by then Lord Burghley, wishing to move on to the more lucrative post of Lord Treasurer, brought him back in as Secretary of State, where he remained until 1576, when failing health forced him to turn the office over to his then under-Secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham. Smith died of throat cancer at Hill Hall the following year.

Sir Thomas Smith's library

In seeking how and where Oxford had acquired the level of learning displayed by Shakespeare in his poems and plays, beginning with the knowledge of English and Roman history that began to appear in plays performed by Paul's Boys for Elizabeth's winter holidays whilst he was living at Cecil House, the answer is suggested by the library list drawn up by Sir Thomas upon his return from France in 1566 – as published by Strype in 1698. (The original list, in Smith's own hand, can be found in the Old Library at Queens' College, Cambridge.) At over 400 titles, Smith's library was one of the largest in England. Most of his books were probably purchased during his two-year stint at the University of Padua in the 1540s, as he was preparing to teach Greek, Law, and Roman History to the students at Cambridge.

Sir Thomas was given to inventories. The one from 1566 recorded by Strype was necessary because, upon his return from France, he had been faced with having to rebuild a section of Hill Hall, which was threatening to collapse due to the poor quality of the mortar used for that section (Drury, 1.261). The list guaranteed that his books would be reshelved in their proper order once that section of the outer walls was repaired.

The list is divided into seven categories: *Theology* with 56 titles, *Civil Law* with 54, *History* 115, *Philosophy* 71, *Mathematics* 45, *Medicine* 21, *Grammar and Poetry* 58. There are 259 in Latin, 56 in French, 43 in Greek, 25 in Italian 25, and a mere 21 in English. The section on Medicine includes books on horticulture, reflecting his obsession with gardening and what were then the radical ideas of Paracelsus – known today as the ‘father of pharmacology’ – clearly his reason for creating laboratories separated from the main house wherein he experimented with making the medicines from the plants in his garden with which he was known to ply his associates (among them Anne Cecil for morning sickness during her first pregnancy). His section on Mathematics includes several ephemerides, indicating a professional level of expertise in astronomy and astrology.

As noted by authorship scholar Eddi Jolly in her ground-breaking article ‘Burghley’s Library’ (published in *The Oxfordian* in 2000), Cecil too owned many of the titles relevant to Shakespeare. Several of the most important of these are missing from Smith’s list, among them Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, his source for *Venus and Adonis*; Boccaccio’s *Decameron* for *A Winter’s Tale*; and Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* for *Much Ado about Nothing*. While it may be the case that Oxford first encountered these at Cecil House, it may also be that they are missing from Smith’s list in 1566 because he had given (or lent) them to his 12-year-old student when they parted in 1562 – Oxford to London, Smith to France – a gesture common to teachers when parting with a favorite student. Particularly in this case where, over their eight years together, Smith must have become as close to Oxford, as dear to him as a son, and who, despite his exalted rank, probably had very little he could call his own when he was transferred to Cecil House. Cecil was notoriously tight-fisted, and it’s clear that his wife Mildred, who had a collection of Greek books of her own, and who certainly hated Oxford later, may well have disapproved of him from the start.

Sir Thomas Smith on Shakespeare's stage

After so much time together, it would be unlikely that Oxford never based a character on Smith. He was certainly the model for Friar Lawrence, whose stirring soliloquy is the impressive introduction to Act III of *Romeo and Juliet*. As for Smith's 'meticulous, fussy mind' – Dewar's description of how he was inclined to pen notes in the margins of his books (16) – this is portrayed by the less endearing figure of Holoferness in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

But the most obvious character based on Smith comes from one of his earliest plays, *Thomas of Woodstock* (highly likely to be *Richard II Part One*) in which the Duke of Gloucester, in life one of the powerful magnificoes born to Edward III, is described by a fellow peer as someone very different from what that great figure must have been, someone strangely resembling what we know of Sir Thomas Smith. Described in the play by one of his fellow peers as 'Plain Thomas, for by'th'Rood, so all men call him for his plain dealing and his simple clothing,' to which another responds, 'Faith, my lord, his mind suits with his habit, homely and plain, both free from pride and envy,' Oxford, lacking any sense of what the real Duke was like, did as he would with other characters from history: he provided the Duke with the personality and attributes of someone well known to his Court audience; one who gave them a laugh (Hughes, 33-34).

Smith's last appearance on Shakespeare's stage was as Gonzalo in *The Tempest*. When Miranda asks her father, 'How came we ashore?' Prospero responds that they were saved by 'a noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo' who 'out of his charity ... knowing I loved my books ... furnish'd me ... with volumes that I prize above my dukedom.' What else can explain Gonzalo's ruminations on how the magical isle could be rendered productive, reflecting as it does Smith's 'last hurrah', his effort during his final term as Secretary of State to get Elizabeth to allow him to create an English colony in Northern Ireland (according to Quinn, the first hint of what would become the first and certainly one of the longest ongoing and bloodiest colonizing efforts of the English)? The last Oxford had seen of his old tutor before leaving for Italy, Smith was busy drawing up elaborate plans for how such a colony could be made productive (Dewar, 163-4; Quinn, 543-560). By the time Oxford returned in the spring of 1576, Smith's failed Irish colony must have become a matter for rude jests

among the younger generation at Court, a situation reflected in *The Tempest* by the band of mean-spirited youths who deride the self-absorbed old Gonzalo.⁶

Sir Thomas Smith's library and Shakespeare's sources

Hamlet: Smith had the Latin *Gesta Danorum* by Saxo Grammaticus, the 12th-century history of Denmark that provided Shakespeare with the semi-mythical story of Amleth, the Danish prince who escaped assassination by pretending to be mad. Shakespeare's plot follows the Danish history so closely in every respect that there can be no doubt that this was the primary source for his most famous and enduring work.

The Tempest: Among the many sources for this Shakespeare favorite is Richard Eden's 1555 *The Decades of the Newe Worlde*, his translation of Peter Martyr's 1530 tale of seafaring adventure, *De orbo novo*. That Smith had it on his list is no surprise, since Eden, author of *The Arte of Navigation*, had acquired his fascination with accounts of seafaring adventures from Sir Thomas himself whilst his student at Cambridge (Dewar, Quinn). It was Eden's *Decades* that first made known to English readers the existence of *Bermuda* which soon became their symbol for the end of the known world (Stritmatter and Kositsky). Dubbed by the seafaring Sir Walter Raleigh 'the Isle of Devils', it was quickly embellished with tales of demons who threatened passing ships with the destructive storms still associated with the area we now call the Bermuda triangle.

Another suggested source derived from Bermuda, William Strachey's *True Repository*, (Stritmatter and Kositsky) a report on the 1609 wreck of the *Sea Venture* just off its coast, while too late for Smith's library list, is closely associated with Smith himself since William Strachey Jr. was the son of Smith's father's lifelong neighbor, friend and business associate in their home town of Saffron Walden (Dewar, 9 fn, 34-5, 169). Clearly Strachey Jr. must be associated with the play in some way, but too late to have been its source.

Also listed by Smith was Sebastian Munster's *Cosmographia*, first published in Basel in 1544. Surely these six volumes, so richly illustrated with maps and woodcuts by the great Hans Holbein, had something to do with Oxford's desire to see for himself the places where so many of the stories that once fed his imagination had occurred. Among the furnishings listed in Smith's 1569

inventory of the rooms at Ankerwycke (Dewar, 68), he noted in ‘my Lordes chambre ... a hanging of cosmography’ (most likely some sort of map, painted on canvas or perhaps done in needlepoint, that depicted the world, its continents and seas; *cosmography* being a general term then for everything from the whole earth to the cosmos); it would have been the last thing little Oxford saw before falling asleep during his years at Ankerwycke.

The Comedy of Errors: Smith included several playwrights in his list of ‘Poetry and Grammar’, among them Plautus, the master of Roman comedy. Where Smith provides only a name, it probably indicates either the only work known by that author, or a collection of his best-known works, in this case the comedies for which Plautus is still famous. Among these would surely have been *The Menaechmi*, the major source for Shakespeare’s most popular comedy.

The Rape of Lucrece: While Smith did not list the source for *Venus and Adonis*, Ovid’s *The Metamorphoses*, he did have *The Fasti*, the source for Shakespeare’s ‘graver effort’. Perhaps the greater work was a parting gift, one Oxford would soon be turning into liling fourteeners.

Shakespeare’s Roman Histories: Smith had, in both Latin and the original Greek, two-volume sets of Plutarch’s *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, the acknowledged source for *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Macbeth*, *Cymbeline*, and *Timon of Athens*. Key phrases in *Julius Caesar* have been traced to *The Twelve Caesars* by the first century Roman historian *Suetonius*, also on Smith’s list.

Along with his many Latin histories of Rome, Smith also had several in Greek: *Dionysus of Halicarnasus*, whose stories go from mythical times to the first Punic war; the Jewish *Josephus*, whose history of Rome offers the perspective of a middle eastern historian from that period; and *Choniates*, who describes the latter years of the Roman empire from a Byzantine viewpoint. Of histories of Greece he had *Diodorus Siculus*, who goes from the Trojan War to the death of Alexander; *Thucydides* (a frequent text for beginning students) on the internal wars of ancient Greece; and *Xenophon* on the wars between Greece and Persia.

Shakespeare’s English Histories: The book universally credited with providing most of the material for the histories, the 1587 edition of Holinshed’s

Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland, was too late for Smith's list. But what Sir Thomas did list are all the sources from which Holinshed (pronounced Holins-hed) and others got their material: first, Edward Halle's *Union of the Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and York* (published in 1542) plus the continuation added by King's Printer Richard Grafton following Halle's death; second, Robert Fabyan's *New Chronicles of England and France*, first published in 1516 (one of the few on Smith's list in English); and finally Polydore Vergil, whose Latin *Historia Anglia* was published in 1534.

Other connections

Shakespeare's dramatic sources: In his final section, *Grammatica et Poetica*, Smith named, in Latin, the Roman playwright *Plautus*, plus, in Greek, three of the big four of Greek drama: *Sophocles*, *Euripides* and *Aristophanes*, traces of whose works in various of Shakespeare's plays have caused the orthodox no end of difficulties in attributing them to the illiterate William of Stratford.

As authorship scholar Earl Showerman has explained, Shakespeare's use of all of these can be proven in the kind of detail that cannot be denied. As Showerman notes in an abstract for his lecture at the 2013 Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship conference in Toronto on the influence of Aristophanes on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, there are dozens of leading academics who have contributed to our knowledge of Shakespeare's use of the big four of ancient Greek drama. According to Showerman, some of these 'recognized elements' derived from Euripides' *Alcestis* in the final scenes of both *The Winter's Tale* and *Much Ado about Nothing*. He notes that certain academics have 'argued that the *Oresteia* influenced the writing of *Hamlet*'; some 'that *Titus Andronicus* was indebted to both Euripides' *Hecuba* and Sophocles' *Ajax*'; some that there is 'a Sophoclean influence in *Timon of Athens*' as revealed in '*Oedipus at Colonus*'; and 'that Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* influenced *Macbeth*'. (Showerman)

Smith had Euripides, Sophocles, and Aristophanes in Greek and, although Aeschylus is missing from his list, his works may have been included in one of the comprehensive titles. In Greek he had Hesiod on the origin of the Greek gods; he had Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*; and of the earliest works of ancient

Greek poetry known to scholars, he had *Pindar* and *Theocritos*. Later poets have compared Shakespeare's singing quality to Pindar.

In his Science section (*Mathematica*) Smith had *Ptolemy* on the fundamentals of Astrology in Greek; and in Medicine he had *Dioscorides*, ancient pharmacologist, and *Nicander* on poisons. In his section on Geography he had the description of classical sites in the eastern Mediterranean by *Pausanias*, the geographical dictionary of *Stephanos*, and on the geography and peoples of the Mediterranean *Strabo*, bound, or perhaps just shelved, with the former two.

Herodotus in Italian: Universally acclaimed as the 'father of history' for his exemplary style, that Smith spelled his copy *Herodoto* tells us that it was from the same version in Italian that Oxford purchased for himself in or after 1565, bound in leather and stamped with his Boar insignia, the very copy that Oxfordian Ben August acquired at an auction in London and displayed at the SOF conference in Hartford CT in 2019. It would be hard to avoid the conclusion that Oxford favored the Italian version over the many Latin and other versions of this classic of historiography because that version was the one familiar to him from his days with Smith. Translated from Greek to Italian by Matteo Maria Boiardo, Count of Scandiago, author of *Orlando Innamorato* and member of the literary Este Court at Ferrara that so fascinated Oxford as shown by his translation of Castiglione.

Baldasare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*: Listed under *Philosophica*, Smith owned the version published in Venice in 1528 in the original Italian. In his twenties, Oxford was closely involved in publishing a translation of this famous book of Court manners into Latin in partnership with Bartholomew Clerke. Their version was clearly intended for a Continental audience since no one else had yet provided the European market with a Latin version of the Renaissance masterpiece – framed as a report on an actual conversation among members of the circle surrounding Elizabetta Gonzaga at her villa in the hills behind the ducal palace where she and her fellow courtiers had gone to escape the plague of 1507.

Guiciardini's *Historia d'Italia* in Italian: Among the many connections between Smith's library and Oxford is Smith's inclusion of the Italian *Historia d'Italia*, a history of Italy by the Florentine nobleman, Francesco Guiciardini,

published in 1539 and 1541. Due to his objective style and reliance on official papers, Gucciardini has been called the father of modern history. Oxford's own copy, bound in velvet with a silver boar stamped on its cover, is now located at the Folger library in Washington DC.

Shakespeare's religion

Of all the questions about Shakespeare, it may be his religion that has sparked the most argument. Some are convinced he was a secret Catholic, others that he adheres too closely to the official line to be anything but a protestant. It has even been argued that he was an atheist, but back when a man's beliefs were seen as basic to his identity, he must have been *something*. Was there a system that acted as the fulcrum of his plots? In what did Shakespeare believe?

That Oxford spent the better part of his childhood with a confirmed Platonist suggests that he absorbed his tutor's philosophy just as he absorbed his interests in so many other areas of thought. Smith's love of Plato is revealed in the number of titles by or about Plato, in Greek, Latin and French. He also had works by 'neoplatonists' like Macrobius, Origen, di Leonico, Pico di Mirandello, and Poliziano (Politian), some of whom strove to align Plato with Christian dogma. Although Smith, denounced by the Catholic bishops as a heretic and by the protestant reformers as a 'lukewarm' neuter, it is clear from his hefty collection of the early Church fathers that he was *interested* in religious thought, but while his writings adhere to the conventions of protestant reform, the temperament that allowed him to remain close friends with Catholics suggests that this neutrality derived from the tolerance of a confirmed Platonist. According to John Vyvyan, author of three books on the subject of Shakespeare's beliefs, it was Plato's most famous dialogues, *The Phaedo* and *The Symposium*, that lay at the heart of Shakespeare's world view. Smith had both.

The ancient phrase 'Know thyself', carved in the stones of the temple of Apollo at Delphi and quoted by Marsilio Ficino in one of his letters: 'Know thyself, [spiritual] race clothed with a mortal garment!' is reflected in Polonius's advice to Laertes 'This above all, to thine own self be true, then it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man', a perfect statement of platonic idealism.

Shadow and substance

The classic metaphor for *illusion versus reality*, can be found in almost everything Shakespeare ever wrote: *Lucrece*: ‘Love like a shadow flies when substance love pursues’; *All’s Well*: ‘Tis but the shadow of a wife you see; the name and not the thing’; *Macbeth*: ‘Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player ...’; *Hamlet*: ‘The very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream’; Puck’s epilogue in *A Midsummer Night’s Dreame*: ‘If we shadows have offended ...’ The source for this substance/shadow metaphor is ‘Plato’s Cave’ as explained in *The Republic*, a metaphorical construct in which humans, submerged in the darkness of the world, see only the *shadows* cast on the material walls that surround them by the great unchanging spiritual *substance* that blazes beyond the limits of human comprehension. Thus, our ideas, policies and religious dogmas are only the unstable reflections, inevitably wavering and distorted, of the great eternal verities – ‘moonshine on the water’, as Rosaline puts it in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.

It’s through Plato, of course, that we know about Socrates, the great teacher whose theories Plato sought to preserve. Nor can any reader of Shakespeare miss the similarity of the death of Socrates, as related by Plato in the *Phaedo*, to the death of Falstaff as related by Mistress Quickly to Bardolph, Nym and Pistol in Act II of *Henry V*. Why Shakespeare should honor the great rascal in this way is yet another of the many dilemmas bequeathed us by *the speareshaker*.

Burbage’s round Theatre:

Last but far from least is the question of Oxford’s connection to the great public stage, universally attributed to its manager, the penniless actor James Burbage. As the platform whereon Shakespeare entertained and created his immense public audience it remains at the heart of the mystery surrounding his identity. Named *The Theatre* – the first use of that now universal term for a building created solely for the purpose of entertaining a paying audience – it was not the first attempt to create such a specific stand-alone edifice, but it was the first to succeed in terms of its size, durability, location, commercial success and, most of all, its *longevity*. For the first time and for the next twenty years it provided thousands of members of the London public, every day of the week, for as little as a penny, two hours of escape from lives stressed by factors we no longer fear.

One would think that the history of such a phenomenon, rising at it did in the midst of fields alongside the most trafficked highway into and out of the City, would be enshrined in History as the first instance of the London Stage, the phenomenal forerunner of the Media, also known as the Fourth Estate of Government. If so, one would be wrong.

Also unexplained is why Burbage and his contractor, Peter Street, chose to make the Theatre *round*, a shape utterly unique at the time, at least in northern Europe, and only used twice more for theaters built shortly after. One of the first to address this conundrum was Frances Yates, who notes in her *Theatre of the World* (1969) the connection between Burbage's round theaters and the design provided by the ancient Roman architect and sound engineer *Vitruvius*, whose Chapter V on Theater Design in his famous *de Architectura* explains how, within a round room made of *wood* – which resonates, as stone or marble do not – an actor or singer can be heard by every member of the audience. While Yates fails to show where and how the uneducated Burbage could have accessed this information – since Vitruvius was available in Latin, Italian, French and Spanish but not yet in English – Oxford would certainly have known it very well, since it was the book Sir Thomas Smith relied upon while renovating Hill Hall in the 1560s (Drury 269). According to his library list of 1566, he owned copies of Vitruvius in all four languages.

End notes

1. Smith's importance to the Protestant Reformation can be seen by the fact that Strype's biography was only second after his biography of Archbishop Cranmer in the series of the six most important creators of the Protestant Reformation.
2. It seems that throughout a childhood of terrifying threats to himself and the grievous fates of those who seemed concerned for his welfare, only the Archbishop had proven to be a consistent and loving protector.
3. Protestant historians tend to downplay the religious aspect of these uprisings, claiming economic factors, but it must be noted that although longstanding economic issues may have added fuel to the fires, they were certainly not their primary cause that summer.

4. Immediately following the death of Henry VIII, the men at the top of his list of councillors to his son all gave themselves new titles: Seymour, until then Earl of Hertford, became the Duke of Somerset; John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, became the Duke of Northumberland; Henry Wriothesley became First Earl of Southampton; Sir William Herbert, First Earl of Pembroke; and Sir John Russell, First Earl of Bedford (Elton 1977, 337).
5. In a letter of July 15, 1540, from Sir Thomas Stanhope to Lord Burghley, Sir Thomas refers to Burghley's granddaughter, Oxford's daughter, Elizabeth Vere, as 'Lady Vayer' (Akrigg 32), which should tell us that Oxford's family name was not pronounced *Veer* then, nor should it be pronounced *Veer* today. Perhaps without stressing the 'y' in Vayer, de Vere would rhyme with 'bare' and 'fare'.
6. As Shakespeare's regularly updated commentary on seafaring explorations during and before his time, *The Tempest* included material reflecting Smith's copy of *de Orbe Novo*, the translation into English, by his friend and student from Cambridge days Richard Eden, of Peter Martyr's account of the first Spanish explorations of 'the New World', which included excerpts from the Spanish *History of the West Indies* (1535) by Gonzalo Fernandez Oviedo.

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Born in the US in 1938, Stephanie Hopkins Hughes began researching the Authorship Question in 1986 after reading Ogburn's *Mysterious William*. In 1995 she was chosen by the then President of the SOS, Charles Beauclerk, Earl of Burford, to create the first annual journal of authorship studies, *The Oxfordian*, which went into production in 1997, which she continued to edit until 2005. She has spoken to audiences at conferences in America and England, most notably in 2006 to an audience of backers of the New Globe Theatre, arranged by its director Mark Rylance. Since 2009 she has presented important material on the AQ on her blog, www.politicworm.com, which continues to get over 100 hits a day from readers in almost every country in the world. She has two books on Oxfordian subjects presently awaiting publication and is at work on a third.