

Oxford's friend, Arthur Throckmorton:

a personal link with William Shakspere of Stratford

by Jan Cole

Arthur Throckmorton (1558-1626) was the second son of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton (1515-1571) of Coughton Court, near Alcester in Warwickshire (about 8 miles northwest of Stratford-upon-Avon). It was to Nicholas that the secretary, Somers, wrote a letter in 1562 mentioning the 16th Earl of Oxford's death and that he had left 'a son about twelve years old.' Nicholas's term as ambassador to France overlapped with and followed that of Oxford's first tutor, Sir Thomas Smith (d.1577), and this connection would have been significant when Arthur first met Oxford at court in the late 1570s. As a second son Arthur would not normally have inherited, but because his elder brother, William, was either mentally impaired or disabled in some way, Arthur did inherit lands, notably at Paulerspury in Northamptonshire, where he eventually developed his own house and estate, and at Alderminster in Warwickshire (about 4 miles south of Stratford-upon-Avon).¹

In London he eventually took control of the Throckmorton town house in Leadenhall Street, near Aldgate (about a ¼ mile from Oxford's house at Fisher's Folly), close to St Katherine Cree church where his father was buried in 1571 and where he buried his mother in 1587. He also leased or rented a house in Mile End, east of Aldgate, which would eventually prove useful in 1591-92 when his sister, Elizabeth (secretly married to and pregnant by Walter Raleigh) stayed there to give birth to her first son.

Throckmorton - Trussell - Arden - Shakespeare links

Throckmorton - Trussell - Vere - Trentham links

The Throckmortons were a very large Catholic family whose country seat was (and still is) Coughton Court. Arthur's first cousin, Mary Throckmorton (1531-1603), daughter of his uncle, Robert Throckmorton (1513-1581) married Edward Arden (executed for treason in 1583) of Park Hall, Castle Bromwich (about 18 miles north of Stratford). This Mary Arden was the second cousin of her husband's father, William Arden. A minor relative was Robert Arden (d.1556) of Wilmcote (3 miles north of Stratford), whose daughter, another Mary Arden, married John Shakespeare and became the mother of William Shakespeare in 1564.

Mary's grandfather, Thomas Arden, may also have married a Throckmorton, which would make Shakespeare's mother a second cousin to Arthur

Throckmorton. Shakespeare's maternal grandfather, Robert Arden married twice, and his first wife, by whom he had all his children, is now thought to have been a Trussell of Billesley (just west of Wilmcote) and related to the Elizabeth Trussell (d.1527) who was Oxford's paternal grandmother. This notion arises from the fact that the names of Robert Arden, Thomas Trussell and Robert Throckmorton all appear on a deed respecting land in Snitterfield.²

Another interesting connection is Arthur's link with the Trentham family through the marriage of his first cousin, Anne Throckmorton, with Ralph Sheldon. Their daughter, Katherine Sheldon, married Francis Trentham, who became Oxford's brother-in-law when Oxford married Elizabeth

Trentham, in 1591 – two years before the name ‘William Shake-speare’ first appeared in print as a poet.

And there is a later Throckmorton-Vere connection. Oxford’s first cousin, Horatio de Vere, married Mary Tracy (1581-1671) who died at the great age of 90, and was buried in Castle Hedingham. She was the daughter of Sir John Tracy and Ann Throckmorton of Toddington in Gloucestershire (about 12 miles south west of Stratford-upon-Avon). Horatio married late in 1607, but it’s reasonable to assume that the families already knew each other.

Through his family and his lands in Alderminster, Arthur also knew the Underhills and the Russells who were family associates of Shakespeare in Stratford.

Arthur and his sister Elizabeth were Protestants, as was their Puritan cousin, Job Throckmorton (d.1601) of Haseley (4 miles northwest of Warwick), who wrote some of the ‘Martin Marprelate’ anti-clerical tracts in 1588. Another Catholic cousin, Francis Throckmorton (executed in 1584) gave his name to the Throckmorton Plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth. However, Arthur remained in touch with his Catholic relatives at Coughton Court and made visits to them, and to his estate in Alderminster, and in 1583, when his first cousin Mary was in London with her husband Edward Arden for their trial, Arthur almost certainly visited her in prison.

Arthur was educated at Magdalen College, University of Oxford, matriculating in 1571, where he was a contemporary of John Lyly (BA 1573). He first appeared at Court in 1575 at the age of seventeen, when Oxford was on his continental tour. In September 1576 he joined Sir Amyas Paulet's embassy in the Netherlands, but returned to England in 1577. In 1578 Arthur became a soldier in the Netherlands under Sir John Norris. Among

the troops were men known to Oxford - Thomas Churchyard, George Gascoigne (both soldier-poets) and Rowland Yorke, who became one of Oxford’s servants.³

In 1579, Arthur received his first Court commission, which was to escort Jean Simier, the French envoy for the duc d’Alençon, into London for his master’s marriage negotiations with Queen Elizabeth. In this year Arthur was in contact with the Duchess of Suffolk, mother of Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, who had married Oxford’s sister, Mary de Vere, in 1577. He also knew ‘Lord Windsor’ who was Francis, the 20-year-old son of Oxford’s half-sister, Katherine Vere, who had married Edward, 3rd Lord Windsor (d. 1574). Both of these families lived near the Barbican in the northwest corner of the city of London. He was also in contact with his uncle John Throckmorton (d.1580), father of the traitor, Francis.

His uncle John had married Margaret (or Elizabeth?) Puttenham, the sister of George Puttenham (d.1590), the reputed author of *The Arte of English Poesy* (1589), dedicated to William Cecil. He also knew Owen Hopton (d.1595), Lieutenant of the Tower of London, a useful contact in respect of the many friends (including Oxford) and family who became prisoners there. In December 1579, Arthur received his second commission, which was to meet Sir Amias Paulet at Rochester, returning from his two-year embassy in France.

In January and February of 1580 Arthur made several entries in his diary that relate to Oxford. In early January Arthur had ‘spoken ill against’ the Earl of Leicester. This was probably about the French royal marriage negotiations. Leicester and Philip Sidney were against it, but the Earl of Sussex and Oxford were in favour of it, and the entries suggest that Arthur sided with Oxford on this and also during the aftermath of Oxford’s quarrel with Sidney on the tennis-court in August 1579.

1580

- 27 Jan. - ‘My Lord of Oxford writ a challenge to P.S.’ [Note: Oxford’s challenge to duel with Sidney.]
- 28 Jan. - ‘I supped with my Lord Oxford’ [Note: an evening meal in Oxford’s chambers at Court or possibly at Fisher’s Folly.]
- 29 Jan. - ‘My Lord Oxford [was] commanded to keep his chamber by the Queen’.
- 4 Feb.- ‘I writ to my Lord of Leicester’
- 5 Feb.- ‘I was commanded to keep to my chamber by the Lord Chamberlain’ [i.e. Earl of Sussex].

6 Feb.- 'I writ a letter to my Lord Chamberlain'

10 Feb.- 'I spoke with my Lord Chamberlain' [Note: he spoke again with Sussex on 'Shrove Monday'.]

11 Feb.- 'My Lord of Oxford released'

These entries show that Arthur supported Oxford and was instrumental, through appeals to Sussex, in regaining his liberty at court at this time. Over the next few months the friendship no doubt continued as Arthur made preparations for his own continental tour. They must have spoken together about Italy, and Arthur would have gained much from Oxford's experience abroad.

Like all young courtiers abroad, Arthur would have had instructions from Francis Walsingham to note anything and anyone whom he suspected of plotting treason against Queen Elizabeth. Indeed, as a member of a prominent Catholic family, Arthur himself was almost certainly acting as an agent throughout the 1580s. He travelled with William Ashby (d.1593) who was an agent for Walsingham in Scotland in 1589. One of the more interesting features of his tour is the large amount of books he bought, which he left to Magdalen College Library, where they remain today. The following is a brief account of his tour (for comparison with what we know of Oxford's travels):

Arthur's Continental Tour

1580-82

29 July 1580 - sailed from Gravesend to Flushing; by wagon to Dordrecht, Nijmegen and Dusseldorf on the Rhine.

24 August - wrote letters; to Germany through Bonn, Coblenz, Mainz and Frankfurt; at the famous book fair he buys a Dutch-French-Latin dictionary, Terence in Latin and Slavonic, and other books in Latin and German.

7 Sept - stays in Nuremberg for three weeks; meets up with Robert Sidney and Henry Neville; received letters from England.

12 Sept - notes a comet in the east; buys Ptolemy's *Geography* and *Almagesti*, Sacrobosco *On the Sphere*, and Garccus' *De Tempore*.

Nov. to 7 April **1581** - spends five months in Prague with Robert Sidney and Neville; buys Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars*, Euclid, Piccolomini *On the*

Sphere of the World and the Fixed Stars (1540), Vitruvius *On Architecture*, and Horace with Lambini's commentary (1577).

March 1581 - sent letters home to the Queen, to Lord Oxford, Lord Windsor, Lady Stafford, and to his mother and sister, Elizabeth.

8 April - from Prague to Vienna by coach; spends five weeks in Vienna, where he met the prefect of Archduke Maxmilian's court and the chancellor to Duke Ernest; dined with Don Cristoforo de Guevara with whom he played tennis; visited the emperor's garden; buys Cicero's *Offices* with commentary; orders a silver and gilt chain 'wherein was engraven *Fleurs, fleurissz toujours*, my name and the year 1581'.

20 April - left Vienna for Italy via Friesach, Villach (28 May), Pinzano, then ferry to Spilenberg; Correliano and Treviso (2-3 June), to Padua (4 June) where he stayed 'in John Bassano's house'; buys Piccolomino's *Natural Philosophy* which he inscribed '7 June 1581 a Padova'; learned to play the lute with Bergamasco and took lessons in Italian.

19 June - by boat to Venice; met Giacomo Guicciardini from Florence; bought Livy's *Decades* and Josephus in Italian; met up with other Englishmen; took lute lessons with Romano and learnt to write an Italian hand; made astronomical observations; visited Monselice and the baths of St Helena at Battaglia; left via Porto di Malamocco.

16 Sept - arrived at Porto di Chioggia (45 miles); by boat on the river Po to Francolin (40 miles).

18 Sept - by coach to Ferrara (5 miles) and La Scala (16 miles).

19 Sept - Bologna to Loiano (15 miles) and Firenzuola.

20 Sept - arrived in Florence; dined with Lorenzo Guicciardini at his country palace; bought genealogies of the Medici, d'Este and house of Austria; Scardeoni's *De Antiquitate Urbis Patavii* and Buoninsegni's *Historia Fiorentina*, both

inscribed '23 Sept 1581'; took lute lessons singing lessons from Vincenzo Galileo.

7 Oct - met and dined with Anthony Standen (agent).

19 Oct – took rooms near San Pietro Maggiore in the house of a priest; Archduke Maximilian visits Florence; met members of the families of Guicciardini, Piccolomini, Salviati, Santa Fiori and Bentivoglio.

17 Dec – travelled to Empoli and Pisa; by horse to Lerici via San Lorenzo, then to the coast at Recco.

2 Jan **1582** - to Genoa, Alessandria and Turin (7 Jan)

9 Jan - crossed the Alps at Mont Cenis pass into France.

13 Jan - in Lyons, where he stayed at 'The Three Kings' and 'The Black Angel' where he met Anthony Bacon (agent); Lyons to Rouanne, then by boat to Orleans.

26 Jan - arrived in Paris; stayed at 'The Swan' in the Place Maubert; stayed with Henry Cobham, English ambassador (1579-83).

30 Jan – by horse to Amiens, Abbeyville and Boulogne, where he took ship for Dover; by road to Rochester where he crossed paths with Queen Elizabeth, Leicester and a large entourage who were conducting the duc d'Alençon over to Flanders. In the entourage were Philip Sidney, Frederick Windsor, Peregrine Bertie, Edward Hoby, Fulke Greville and Walter Raleigh.

Back in London, Arthur did not receive his luggage from Italy until September, some nine months after he left! Clearly, Arthur wrote and received letters several times during his tour, including the letter he wrote to Oxford in March 1581, which has not survived. It is possible that Oxford returned the correspondence in letters that have also disappeared.

London 1582 to 1585

It would be reasonable to assume that, on his return to London in February 1582, Arthur would have resumed contact with Oxford, sharing his experience and knowledge and the books he'd brought back with him. In addition to those already mentioned, he possessed the following books in the 1580s:

- Ramusio's *Navigazione e Viaggi*
- Ariosto
- New Testament in Italian
- Garimberto's *Concetti*
- Pomponius Mela's geography in Italian
- Boccaccio's *Decameron* in Italian
- Giordano Bruno's *Dialogues* [Bruno was in London in 1583]
- Copernicus' astronomy
- Tycho Brahe's astronomy

The last two books in this list show that Arthur's knowledge of astronomy was being updated. He would have known that Oxford's brother-in-law, Peregrine Bertie, would be ambassador to Denmark from July to September 1582 and was in contact there with Tycho Brahe, who had an observatory on an island opposite the castle at Elsinore.

While Arthur was abroad, Oxford had experienced further troubles, having spent four months in the Tower over his impregnation of Anne Vavasour - whose baby was born in March 1581, the month Arthur wrote to Oxford from Prague - and a further period under house arrest because of the street quarrels with Knyvett. If Arthur had been in England, he would have no doubt been a great support to him during this time. On the literary side, however, Oxford had received important dedications of works, notably Thomas Watson's *Hekatompathia* (1582), a sequence of poems largely translated or paraphrased from French and Italian originals.

In regard to the theatre, the first history plays were being written for performance by the Queen's Men: *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (c.1583) was followed by *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, *The True Tragedy of Richard III* and *King Leir*. Arthur noted in his diary that he saw plays at both The Theatre and the Blackfriars in December 1583, and it is possible that he went in Oxford's company and saw some of these plays.

Arthur's Stratford connections

In the autumn of 1582 Arthur set out to visit family members in Oxford and Warwickshire, staying first with his uncle Anthony at Chastleton.

After this, he stayed with his cousin, Thomas Underhill, at Ettington (5 ½ miles southeast of Stratford), whose daughter, Mary (d.1590), married her cousin William, the son of the William Underhill (d.1570) of Idlicote, who leased lands in Warwickshire from Thomas Throckmorton, and who had purchased New Place in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1567. Mary's husband, William Underhill Jr. (d.1597), became a ward of the crown in 1570, the wardship purchased the following year by Sir Christopher Hatton, whose sister, Dorothy, was William junior's stepmother. Another son, Hercules Underhill (b.1581) would confirm the sale of New Place to William Shakespeare (which he had bought in 1597 from an intermediate owner) in 1602.⁴ Another son, Lewis Underhill, became a haberdasher in London c.1607.

Arthur went to inspect his estate at Alderminster (two miles south of Stratford) and received rents there. He then travelled a few miles west to stay at Coughton Court with his cousin Thomas, and then much farther north to Haseley where he saw his cousin, Job Throckmorton.

It is possible that, while in Alderminster, Arthur rode on a further two miles to visit his second cousin, Mary Shakespeare (then about 45 years old), in Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon. Her 18-year-old son, William, married 26-year-old Anne Hathaway (already pregnant with their first child, Susannah) in November 1582, around the time of Arthur's visit. At the very least, Arthur could have heard news about the Shakespeare family from his cousin, Thomas Underhill, or from his steward at Alderminster.

Chronologically, we can add here that at some time between September 1583 and September 1584 Oxford's Men performed in Stratford-upon-Avon. [Mulryne, 2014]. In 1585 Arthur again received rents from Alderminster via Sir Henry Berkeley, who became the stepfather of Thomas Russell (b.1579), who, some thirty-five years later, would be named as an overseer and beneficiary of Shakespeare's will. In 1603 Thomas Russell married Agnes Digges and became the stepfather of Leonard Digges, who twenty years later wrote a verse for the First Folio. Thomas's older brother, John Russell (1552-1593) had married Arthur's first cousin, Elizabeth, and eventually became connected by this marriage to the Trentham family, Oxford's new in-laws from 1591.

There are clearly some interesting connections here, and it seems that Arthur knew all of the people around Stratford who became closely connected with William Shakespeare between the 1590s until his death in 1616.

Two Catholic cousins on trial in London

In 1583 matters came to head for Arthur's first cousin, Mary, and her husband, Edward Arden. Arden was indicted in Warwick for plotting against the life of the Queen, as was Mary, their son-in-law, John Somerville, and Hugh Hall, a chaplain they maintained in the disguise of a gardener at Park Hall. Somerville, who was said to be weak-minded, was incensed over the treatment of Mary, Queen of Scots, and openly uttered threats against Queen Elizabeth. He was arrested and when put on the rack implicated the others in a conspiracy to assassinate the queen. They were all arrested and taken to London, to stand trial in the Guildhall on 16 December, 1583. Edward was convicted, chiefly on the evidence of Hugh Hall, and was executed at Smithfield on 30 December, 1583. Somerville, who was also condemned to die on the same day, was found hanging in his cell the day before Mary Arden and Hall were released.

It is generally thought that Arden was the victim of his son-in-law's plot. He died protesting his innocence and declaring that his only crime was the profession of the Catholic faith. William Dugdale, quoting from Camden's *Annals of Queen Elizabeth* attributed Arden's prosecution to the malice of the Earl of Leicester, whose displeasure he had incurred by open criticism. Arthur had been in the same position in 1580. Whatever the details, it is probable that Arthur visited Mary in prison and that his relationship with Walsingham was instrumental to her release. If so, there was a further opportunity to hear news, if she had it, of their Stratford cousins, the Arden-Shakespeare family.⁵ Mary survived until 1603, but it is not clear whether she remained in London or returned to Warwickshire.

At the same time, Arthur's cousin, Francis Throckmorton, was much more deeply involved in a plot involving a combined French and Spanish invasion of England to topple Queen Elizabeth and place Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne. He was

acting as a courier in the Spanish embassy and was under Walsingham's surveillance. Also involved were Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, Henry Howard and Charles Arundel - the latter two the libellers of Oxford in 1580. Francis and Henry Howard were arrested in early November 1583 and Francis's house at Paul's Wharf searched. A list of conspirators was found, together with an itinerary for safe landing places in England. Francis was sent to the Tower, put to the rack on 16 November and confessed. Charles Arundel escaped to Paris.

In January 1584 the Spanish ambassador, Mendoza, was expelled from England; he had bribed Henry Howard and Charles Arundel into becoming agents for Spain. Henry Percy committed suicide in the Tower and Philip Arundel remained in the Tower for a further eleven years until his execution. Francis was put on trial on 21 May and finally executed at Tyburn on 10 July 1584. As pamphlets were published with the Throckmorton name all over them, this was a difficult time for Arthur. He was friendly with his cousin without compromising his own Protestant integrity. But having Catholic cousins who made life difficult for him by association was an experience he shared with Oxford.⁶

Later connections with Oxford's family

Arthur's sister, Elizabeth, had been appointed maid-of-honour to Queen Elizabeth in November 1584, where eventually she would meet Walter Raleigh and father his child. Arthur married Anne Lucas of Colchester in July 1586 and spent the early part of his married life with her family there, afterwards developing his own estates at Paulerspury and helping to raise his daughters.

In his diary for 7 February 1587 he noted the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots and the bonfires made in London in celebration of her death. On 9 February he visited 'Lord Pembroke' (Henry Herbert) at his London house of Barnard's Castle. Later he noted the repayment of £100 loan to Peregrine Bertie. He bought a copy of Turner's *English Herball* and wrote some fascinating notes about how he arranged his books in his library. Strangely, there is no mention of the Spanish Armada of 1588 in the diary. Arthur visited the Earl

of Essex at Wanstead in May 1592 and noted on 17 November (Accession Day) that 'the Queen spake to me and made me to kiss her hand'. Two days later he learnt of his sister's marriage to Walter Raleigh and, like everyone else involved, kept it secret from the queen, but noted in his diary the progress of her disgrace and his own growing relationship with his brother-in-law.

Meanwhile, Oxford seems largely to have retired from the court after 1593 and had moved to Stoke Newington and then Hackney, but two years later an important social event brought them together. In January 1595, Arthur wrote to Robert Cecil about a forthcoming entertainment in which he wanted to take part by presenting a jewel - 'a ruby like a heart placed in a coronet' - to Queen Elizabeth as part of a masque. This was the *Masque of the Nine Muses*, written by Sir John Davies and presented at the wedding of Oxford's daughter, Elizabeth, to William Stanley, Earl of Derby. Part of the text (the *Epithalamium*) was preserved in the commonplace book of Leweston Fitzjames of the Middle Temple.⁷

Many scholars believe that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was written for these festivities, which were attended by Queen Elizabeth and the whole royal Court.

Was Oxford present? Although there would be rumours in 1595 that 'My Lord Oxford is dead', surely he was present at the beginning of the year for the wedding of his eldest daughter at which his friend, Arthur, presented a ruby to the queen, and for which Davies' penned lines extolling the family virtues encapsulated in de Vere's daughter:

*And you sweet Lady, virtue's noble fair,
Whom when I name your grandsire, father, mother,
Of all whose excellencies you are heir,
I then extol and praise above all other.
Your famous Ancestors' eternal names
My diamond pen in adamant shall write,
And I will spread your own young loving fames
As far as Phæbus spreads his glorious light.*⁸

The following year, Sir John Davies published his famous long poem, *Orchestra, a Poem of Dancing* (1596), in which, like several other authors of the

time, he alluded to an unnamed, concealed poet (in a list of named English poets):

*O! that I had Homer's abundant vein,
I would hereof another Ilias make!
Or else the man of Mantua's charmed brain, [Virgil]
In whose large throat great Jove the thunder spake!
O! that I could old Geoffrey's muse awake, [Chaucer]
Or borrow Colin's fair heroic style, [Spenser]
Or smooth my rhymes with Delia's servant's file! [Daniel]
O! could I, sweet companion, sing like you,
Which of a shadow, under a shadow sing! [concealed poet]
...
Yet Astrophel might one for all suffice, [Sidney]
Whose supple muse chameleon-like doth change
Into all forms of excellent device...

So might the swallow, whose swift muse doth range
Through rare Ideas and inventions strange,
And ever doth enjoy her joyful spring,
And sweeter than the nightingale doth sing,
O! that I might that singing swallow hear, [concealed poet]
To whom I owe my service and my love! with allusions to
His sugared tunes would so enchant mine ear, [i. e.
Shakespeare's]
And in my mind such sacred fury move, [sonnets]
As I should knock at heaven's great gate above
With my proud rhymes; while of this heavenly state
I do aspire the shadow to relate.*

In 1596 Arthur joined Raleigh and Essex in the successful attack against the Spanish at Cadiz and was knighted for his services. The young John Donne was with them, writing his earliest poetry at this time. Arthur's brother, Nicholas, would marry Mary More, the sister of Anne More, who would marry John Donne in 1601, so that Donne also became a kinsman of Arthur and Elizabeth. Elizabeth later established a house at Mitcham, where Donne was resident from 1605-1609, and remained close to Donne and his family into the 1620s. They are also connected through Donne's patron, Henry Wootton, whose

son Thomas would eventually marry Arthur's daughter, Mary.

In 1612, Elizabeth Raleigh sent her young son, Wat, to Paris and Antwerp with Ben Jonson for a brief continental tour, which places Arthur in Jonson's milieu, where he had likely been since the late 1590s and certainly since 1604 when Jonson began to take a prominent role in court entertainments.

Unfortunately, Arthur's diary does not cover the year 1604, when Oxford died. The third volume of the diary opens in September 1609 and a little later Arthur noted that he has received a letter from Thomas Russell. A map of Arthur's manor of Alderminster was being made, but when Arthur sent a servant over he came back with the news that Thomas Russell was away from home 'and where his wife [is] I know not' (as noted above, the Russells were friends of the Shakespeare family, and Thomas became an overseer of Shakespeare's will).

Arthur was now a successful country knight with a prosperous sheep-farming estate at Paulerspury. He made occasional visits to London and in 1610 bought John Donne's *Pseudomartyr* and various 'playbooks' including Shakespeare quartos. On 17 August King James and his entourage visited Grafton and Prince Henry came over to Paulerspury. Arthur noted that 'My Lord of Montgomery killed a buck in my park and supped here' and on 20 August that 'My Lords of Pembroke and Montgomery dined here and killed three bucks.' These were of course, William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, 'the incomparable brethren' who would become dedicatees of the First Folio. Philip had married Oxford's youngest daughter, Susan, in December 1604. Whether Susan was also present on this progress and visited her father's old friend, Arthur, at Paulerspury is unclear, but probable.

Oxford's Men and the Queen's Men in Stratford

Theatrical historians show much discrepancy with regard to whether and when Oxford's Men visited Stratford-upon-Avon. Different books and websites say different things. In 1926 a Stratford researcher, E.I. Fripp, said they were there in 1584.

However, today The *Records of Early English Drama* website has no such record. However, the latest work to study the Stratford Guildhall records has restored their appearance there, citing the record of 'my Lord of Oxford's players' from the records that cover September 1583 to September 1584. Other troupes visiting Stratford were Worcester's Men (six times between 1580 and 1584), Essex's Men (in 1583-84 and 1587), Berkeley's Men (in 1582-83), Stafford's Men (in 1587) and the Queen's Men (in 1587) - the latter troupe possibly including Richard Tarlton and John Dutton (who had been in Oxford's Men 1580 to 1583) in a repertory that may have included *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*.⁹ So, conceivably, the young Shakespeare could have made contact with any of these actors and companies. The most likely candidate is the Queen's Men in 1587, which included John Dutton. And it's equally conceivable that Shakespeare used his kinsman, Arthur Throckmorton, as his contact with the Queen's Men and the London theatre.

An interesting authorship point has been made about the Queen's Men, that, whereas the Admiral's Men had Marlowe as their main dramatist, and the King's Men had Shakespeare as theirs, 'the company that dominated the English theatrical world between 1583 and the early 1590s cannot be associated with an equivalent author.'¹⁰ More than half of their known plays were anonymous: *Chyomon and Clamydes*, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, *King Leir*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John* and *The True Tragedy of Richard III*. Of course, Oxfordians claim that this anonymous dramatist was Edward de Vere, who only after 1598 used the name 'Shakespeare'.

Conclusion

In Oxford's biography, Arthur Throckmorton represents a rare and supportive friend, the only one we know about so far. Unfortunately, his diary consists largely of one-line entries and does not reveal the depth or longevity of the friendship with Oxford. Arthur knew not only the de Veres of Hedingham and the Shakespeares of Stratford but also through his court connections many prominent authors of the time, including Thomas Churchyard, George Gascoigne, Philip Sidney, Fulke Greville, Edward Dyer, George Puttenham, Edmund Spenser, Walter Raleigh, Ben Jonson, Sir John Davies, John Donne and others.

As second cousin to Shakespeare's mother and as landowner of Alderminster, he knew several people who figured in Shakespeare's life, and so is a significant link between Shakespeare and the Earl of Oxford. Indeed, Arthur may have been the person who introduced Shakespeare to the London theatre and, at all events, was certainly in a position to have acted as a go-between or mediator between William Shakespeare and Oxford in the 1590s and beyond.

Note on Arthur's books

Arthur left most of his books to Magdalen College Library, Oxford, on whose website some of them can be viewed. Some of these were continental imprints acquired on his travels. Unfortunately, his wife was given the pick of his English books - including Shakespeare's first quartos - and she took them all...

History of Magdalen College Library at www.magd.ox.ac.uk

Note on AT's diary

It is astonishing that the diary of Arthur Throckmorton has never been properly edited, annotated and published, as it is the fullest diary of its time for its social and domestic history and covers many important people and events. The manuscript diary, written in English in a legible Italian hand with occasional French and Italian phrases, was discovered post-1945 in Boughton Place, Boughton Malherbe, Kent, the home of his son-in-law, Thomas Wotton, the son of Sir Edward Wotton (1568-1639), ambassador to Venice, scholar and polymath. In 1608 Thomas had married Arthur's second daughter, Mary (1591-1658), who inherited some of her father's personal effects, as Arthur had four daughters but no sons. The diary consists of three books covering the years 1578-1583, 1583-1596 and 1609-1613. It was deposited in Canterbury Cathedral Archives and referenced as CCA-U85/38/14. It is available for inspection: contact Mrs Cressida Williams: archives@canterbury-cathedral.org.

I have not consulted the diary, which may contain further references to Oxford and his family that were not used by A.L. Rowse when he studied it in 1961 for his book *Raleigh and the Throckmortons*, which reproduced pages from the diary between pages 160 and 161. ■

Notes

1. Queen Elizabeth had granted the manor of Alderminster to Arthur's father in 1560. In 1596 Arthur settled the manor on his wife Anne, with contingent remainders successively to his son-in-law, Sir Thomas Wotton, husband to Mary, Arthur's eldest daughter [British History Online].
2. I am grateful to Charles Graves for these relationship details. Charles has paid attention to the genealogical relationship between Oxford and Shakespeare via the Billesley (just south of Wilmcote) branch of the Trussell family (Oxford's grandfather John, 15th Earl of Oxford, married Elizabeth Trussell). This would imply that Oxford and Arthur Throckmorton were *both* distant cousins of Shakespeare, and provides a family link between Oxford and Shakespeare. It also makes it possible that Arthur introduced Shakespeare to the theatre in London, and perhaps to the Earl of Oxford.
3. Information regarding Arthur Throckmorton and his diary citations are taken from Rowse, A.L. *Raleigh and the Throckmortons* (1962)
4. Schoenbaum, S. *William Shakespeare: a documentary life* (1987), pp.232-234. Schoenbaum has Hercules Underhill confirming the sale of New Place to Shakespeare in 1599. This is probably too early (Hercules was born in 1581). The Wikipedia entry for Hercules Underhill gives the date of confirmation as 1602. See also Nina Green's website for Underhill probate 1597 PROB.11/90/176.
5. A.L. Rowse (1962) does not say whether Arthur made entries in his diary about the trial and execution of Edward Arden or about Mary's release, or about Francis Throckmorton's involvement in treason.
6. For a full account of the Throckmorton plot see Alford, S. *The Watchers: a Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I* (2012), ch. 10 and 11. Arthur made entries in his diary on 7 November relating to the arrest of his cousin, Francis. See Bossy, J. *Under the Molehill: an Elizabethan Spy Story* (2001), pp.79n, 80n, 84.
7. Brink, J.R. The Masque of the Nine Muses: Sir John Davies' unpublished 'Epithalamion' and the Belphoebe-Ruby episode [in Spenser's *Faerie Queen*], *Review of English Studies*, vol.23, no.92 (1972), pp.445-454. Brink cites Arthur Throckmorton's letter and relates it to *FQ* IV.viii.6 where Timias [Raleigh] places a heart-shaped ruby round the neck of a dove [Arthur Throckmorton as peacemaker] and sends it to Belphoebe [Queen Elizabeth], after which Timias is 'received again to former favour's state'.
8. Krueger, R. (ed), *The Poems of Sir John Davies* (1975), p.220
9. Mulryne, J.R.(ed), *The Guild and Guildhall Buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford: Society, Religion, School and Stage* (2014); McMillin, S. and Maclean, S-B., *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (1998)
10. Ostrovich, H. et al (eds), *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603* (2009)

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