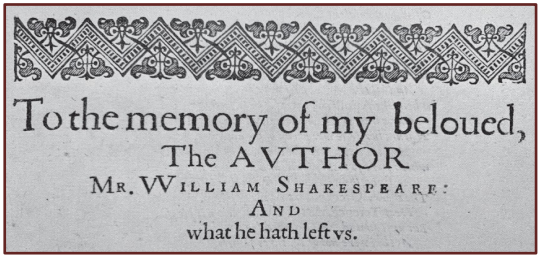
Alexander Waugh at The Charterhouse
Ben Jonson's Encomium to Shakespeare


To the memory of my beloued,
The AVTHOR
Mr. William Shakespeare:
And
what he hath left vs.

Reported by Rosemary Loughlin

Alexander Waugh's presentation left the audience, frankly, bowled over – it was symphonic in its content and format. We were all grabbing the sandwiches like they were gin & tonics in the immediately succeeding lunch, in a bid to process the sensations that arose after such a detailed and intricate exposition of evidence for Edward de Vere in the very wording of the First Folio prefatory material: Alexander's research is written up as an essay in *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Volume 37, Issue 2, Summer 2023, p.255–68 entitled 'My Beloved the AVTHOR': The Subtext of Ben Jonson's First Folio Encomium to William Shakespeare.

I felt as if I were a lucky random bystander getting some space in the public gallery of a courtroom, with the most outstanding barrister laying out new evidence for Edward de Vere as Shakespeare. Or witnessing a fiery and gifted conductor doing a stupendous job in unveiling the premiere of a great symphony. In order to appreciate the enthusiastic response, applause, laughter and even surprise at some of the revelations, please watch it again on Alexander's YouTube channel or on our new DVS channel: https://www.youtube.com//@TheDeVereSociety

The First Movement comprises Exposition, Development and Recapitulation.

Exposition

Alexander began by introducing Ben Jonson's Encomium to Shakespeare in the First Folio as 'the most powerful poem in the English language.' He added 'I'm going to give it an unapologetic Oxfordian spin.' His speech was interspersed by

readings of the poem by **Sir Derek Jacobi, Richard Clifford, Annabel Leventon** and **Costa Chard.**

Development

Ben Jonson, numbers and Horace

Alexander reminded us that Ben Jonson was a 'big player of double meanings, numbers and classical allusions' and that he was known by contemporaries as 'Prince of Numbers' (Jasper Mayne, 1638) and 'Great Soul of Numbers' (William Cartwright, 1638). He noted that Jonson was also known as 'Horace the Second' (Thomas Dekker, 1660), 'Our English Horace' (Henry Chettle, 1603) and 'The Horace of our times and his' (Lord Herbert of Cherbury, 1638). As he bluntly put it 'you need to understand the connection with numbers and Horace to get what this poem is about'.

Abraham Holland

He reminded us of Ben Jonson's friendship with Abraham Holland (this is very important!). Verses by Abraham Holland under a portrait of Ben Jonson done between 1623 and 1626 state 'Behold the image of Jonson! Sacred high priest of the divine inspiration of the Muses, recent vindicator of buried genius', a clear reference to Jonson's First Folio preface to Shakespeare.

Ben Jonson did not suffer fools gladly! Alexander noted how highly Ben Jonson thought of himself, pointing to his use of the term 'Workes' in the title page to 'The Workes of Benjamin Jonson'. According to the epistle of James in the New Testament, 'workes' are an expression of faith! So, Ben Jonson displayed a certain arrogance. At the bottom of the title page Jonson writes (quoting from *Satires of Horace,* 1.10. 73–4), 'I do not labour for the crowd to admire me, I am content with a few readers.' In fact, Jonson goes further, as Horace injuncts to Lucius, 'Do not labour for the crowd to admire me'. A few pages later John Seldon, a great friend of Jonson, writes, 'Let Palaemon write his songs for the crowds in the street. You like to delight the ears of the learned, those of the few.'

Another great friend of Jonson was Henry Reynolds who wrote in *Mysthomystes* (1632) that 'High and Mysticall matters should be riddles and enigmatical knots be kept inviolate from the prophane Multitude …'

More on the importance of numbers: Alexander further quotes from Reynolds in *Mysthomystes* that, '[Verses] remain lost to us that read and understand them not for want merely of the knowledge of that Art of Numbers that should unlocke and explain Mysticall meanings to us.'

Alexander, on the importance that John Dee viewed numbers, quotes his *Elements* (1570), where he said,

> May we be led upward by degrees, so informing our rude Imagination toward the conceiving of Numbers absolutely that at length we may be able to finde the number of our owne name gloriously exemplified and registered in the booke of the Trinitie most blessed and eternal.
>
> (Preface to works of Euclid)

Next there was mention of the book *Triumphal Forms* (1970) by Alastair Fowler, which gives lots of examples of poets choosing the exact number of lines for their poems – it's a way of linking number to subject matter. For example, the poem by George Chapman called 'Hymn to Our Saviour on the Cross', which has 300 lines. In Greek isopsephy (i.e. Greek version gematria), Tau (the cross) is represented by 300.

1740

Fans of Alexander's YouTube channel are very aware of his discoveries around the number 1740. Turning to the title of Jonson's First Folio poem, Alexander notes that this is exactly 17 words: 'To the memory of my beloved /The AUTHOR /Mr. William Shakespeare /And what he hath left us.' Underneath that title are 40 rhyming couplets. He reminds us how Edward de Vere chose 1740 as his unique number. (For further information, see Alexander's video entitled 'The incalculable genius of John Dee'). He also demonstrated how 1740 is embedded in Edward de Vere's signature!

Number 1740 reflected in the pseudonym and elsewhere

In the name 'William Shakespeare', as appears in the title materials in the First Folio, Alexander notes how the 'W' is actually expressed as a double V, i.e. 'VV'. He notes that there is no 'W' in the Latin alphabet. Double V in Latin gematria is two '20s', which is 40. Leaving aside the 'VV', the rest of the name, i.e. 'illiam Shakespeare' is 17 letters. And, even cleverer, Illium is Troy, and it was at Troy

that the patron goddess of plays Pallas Athena shook her spear to enable Achilles to slay Hector. And to top all that the VV actually reflects Vere's motto, *vero nihil verius* (with 'nothing' between the double V!)

Alexander notes that de Vere loved the 1740 signature. He signed himself in a pamphlet to John Lyly 'Yours at an houres warning Double V.' 'At an houres warning' is 17 letters and 'Double V' is 40! And in *Hamlet*, the titular character's last line in the First Folio is 'The rest is silence. OOOO' with the stage direction 'dyes': 17 characters and 4 zeros signifies the 40 – 1740 dies.

Pointing to an early drawing of the Shakespeare monument in Westminster Abbey erected in the year 1740, Alexander noted that this monument used to have 17 spears in front of it. The manner in which Shakespeare is standing with the positioning of his right arm and his crossed legs, look like a '4 X', making 4 multiplied by the 4 'Ts' marking the beginning of the first four lines of the inscription to which he is pointing: '**T**he Cloud cupt Tow'rs/ **T**he Gorgeous Palaces/ **T**he Solemn Temples,/ **T**he Great Globe itself.' giving us, of course, 40! And Alexander pointed to the strange act of taking the 'e' out of 'Towers' to make the first line contain 17 letters.

'1740' to be found in the *Venus & Adonis* dedication and First Folio:

- the highly decorated capital R (R is 17th letter of Latin Gematria), and
- the signature 'Your Honors in all dutie, William Shakespeare.' which contains 40 characters.

If you look at the wording above Ben Jonson's poem in the First Folio there is the 'R. VV', i.e. 1740:

- the 'VV' followed by 'illiam Shakespeare', i.e. 1740
- the gematria on 'The AVTHOR' is 98, and 9 + 8 = 17.

The words under it 'Mr. VVilliam Shakespeare And what he hath left vs.' are 40 letters! Alexander asks, what is the point of interspersing the words 'The AVTHOR' (which is almost double the size of the words underneath) between

'To the memory of my beloued,' and 'Mr. William Shakespeare', unless he is trying to separate the author from the name.

Recapitulation

So, our reading of Jonson's poem, if we want to understand what it is actually saying, must be done in the knowledge of the importance and influence of numbers, Horace, Holland, '1740' and Jonson's penchant for cryptic allusions for the eyes of 'the learned'.

Moving to the 'second movement', Alexander applied the above principles to Ben Jonson's poem. He divided it into segments according to '17' and '40' – he noted where Jonson received source material for various lines and he unraveled some of Jonson's cryptic allusions. There were lines 1 to 17, lines 17 to 40, lines 41 to 65 and then the final 17 lines.

Second movement

Lines 1 – 17

These were recited melodiously by Sir Derek Jacobi. Alexander refers to the first 17 lines of Jonson's poem (it is only on line 17 that Jonson writes 'I, therefore will begin'), describing them as *'a recusatio',* after Horace. He notes that Horace was famous for his refusals. The Emperor Augustus was furious with Horace and asked him to write about him as a familiar man and not just an icon who is emperor. He asked Horace to write about a recent military success he had. Instead, Horace writes an epistle (in verse) to Augustus in which he refuses to speak of him as a familiar man or mention his victory and instead talks about plays. So, what might Ben Jonson be 'refusing'?

It is clear from the lines that Jonson has no intention of praising Shakespeare's name. What would go wrong if he were to praise his name? Well, there are three dangers connected with the three monkeys of 'hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil' fame.

1. Those of seeliest ignorance will mistake a real sound for an echo;
2. Those with blind affection will end up groping in the dark. Alexander points out that Jonson elsewhere has written about ignorance: 'Ignorance is the darkner of man's life … the common confounder of

Truth with which a man goes groping in the darke, no otherwise than he were blind' (Ben Jonson, *Discoveries*, II, 801–6);

3. Those of crafty malice will build up his name deliberately so as to sink the real author.

Alexander refers back to Ben Jonson's *Discoveries'* (II, 534–6) where he states 'Without Truth all the actions of mankind are craft, malice or what you will rather than Wisdom'. It's important to note that at this point on the YouTube upload of Alexander's presentation, he interjects to note that he should have commented here that Jonson's three reasons for not praising the name Shakespeare are all connected to truth and if we are looking for the true name of the author, that is of course de Vere. He cited sources in this regard, being a poem in Latin that de Vere is thought to have written to his wife when he thought she was lying to him in 1576, along with praise by Antony Munday and Cambridge don Gabriel Harvey, all three pieces full of 'ver' stemmed words. He notes Jonson's strange remark in the First Folio poem comparing the three vices of 'seeliest Ignorance', 'blinde Affection' and 'crafty Malice' to a 'Baud, or Whore', reflecting Horace who said 'As a matron and whore differ in temper and tone, so will the friend be distinct from the faithless flatterer.' (Horace, Epistle to Lollius. I. XVIII)

Lines 17 to 40

Following a lyrical reading by Annabel Leventon, Alexander noted the line 'Thou are a monument without a tombe', which Jonson comes back to at the end of the poem. With respect to the lines about Marlowe, Lyly and Kyd (outshined by Shakespeare), Alexander notes that Oxfordians have often pointed out that they did not write anything after 1593 when the Shakespeare name came out. They were prominent in the 1580s when Oxford was patron to about six theatre companies; John Lyly was his secretary, along with Munday. Alexander argues (elsewhere – see 'Was Christopher Marlowe Shakespeare's servant?') that Oxford was also the patron to Kyd and Marlowe. He notes how Robert Greene said of Oxford that he was 'A favourer and fosterer of learning to whom all scholars flock' and that Thomas Nashe said, 'All poor scholars acknowledge him as their patron, providitore and supporter, for there cannot be a threadbare cloak sooner peep forth but he straight presses it to be an outbrother of his bounty'. There is a letter

from Thomas Kyd saying he worked together with Christopher Marlowe for a Lord writing plays. Thomas Kyd said 'Never could my Lord endure [Marlowe's] name or sight when he had learned of his conditions' (i.e. being an atheist).

The sun is the outshiner, the patron and they are 'disproportion'd muses'. Alexander notes how numerous contemporaries all likened Oxford to Apollo.

He noted how Oxford was at the forefront of an anti-scholastic movement to get Latin and Greek out of the English language; in Europe this movement was headed by Ramus. Alexander writes more on this subject in his article 'That Famous Persecutor of Priscian: Oxford, Shakespeare and the Repurification of English' in the April 2020 *DVS Newsletter* (reproduced in the limited edition recently published *Great Oxford* box set). So, 'Although thou hadst small Latine and less Greeke' looks like a reference to Oxford not putting a lot of that in his works.

Third movement

Alexander now moves on to the third segment from Line 41, beginning 'Triumph my Britain' down to line 65 'And such wert thou', **lines expressively rendered by Costa Chard.** Alexander notes on line 17 of this segment (being line 57 of the poem) the reference to 'My Gentle Shakespeare', 'gentle' referring to 'well born', belonging to a family of position, originally used synonymously with 'noble'. He noted the lines about 'Nature' versus 'Art', essential to the aesthetic philosophy of Edward de Vere and referred to the preface he wrote to the Latin translation of *The Courtier* by Baldassare Castiglione. From Castiglione, de Vere derived his very specific philosophy – that through your art you can surpass others and by surpassing others you surpass yourself and by surpassing yourself you surpass nature. In 1578 Gabriel Harvey predicted the same of Edward de Vere. In 1571 Oxford said. 'Although Nature herself has made nothing perfect in every detail, yet the fashion or manners of men exceed in dignity that with which Nature has endowed them'. Note all this in the context of the line 'For though the Poets matter, Nature be, /His Art doth give the fashion.'

The final 17 lines of Jonson's poem **were rhapsodically delivered by Richard Clifford,** beginning 'Looke how the father's face…', Alexander notes that 'lines' often in Shakespeare can refer to hereditary lines.

He referred to 'Sweet Swan of Avon' and his 2014 write up about this in *The Oxfordian* which indicates Hampton Court Palace (also known as 'Avon') on the bank of the Thames, much to Stratfordians' chagrin. This is where 'Eliza and our James' went to see Shakespeare plays! So, 'Sweet Swan of Avon' refers to a courtier poet.

Fourth Movement

In a stellar final rollicking, Alexander delivered his killer blow to the cult of Stratfordianism. The last lines of the encomium refer to Shakespeare being made into a 'constellation' – many scholars have said it must be Cygnus because that appears in the same sentence as 'Sweet Swan of Avon'.

Alexander quoted from Horace, *Odes* II.20, 'The Poet Prophesies his own Immortality', where Horace metamorphoses into a swan vowing to leave behind no trace – the second (this time cryptic) allusion to there being no tomb for Shakespeare.

The fact that Jonson calls Shakespeare a 'constellation' and then also a 'star' in the very next line is 'bizarre' says Alexander: how can something be a constellation and a star at the same time? But, of course, Alexander proffers an explanation, pointing out that Jonson was not stupid, so we need to search for what star Jonson might be referring to.

Looking at the lines 'Shine forth, thou Starre of Poets, and with rage, /Or influence, chide, or cheere the drooping Stage', Alexander notes that 'stage' is a time-honoured word for 'world'; 'since thy flight from hence' refers to Shakespeare's death. This star has been shining day and night on the world since Shakespeare's death. In Jonson's mind this star had to have some connection with Cygnus.

Alexander showed us a Rosicrucian styled picture that 'Ben Jonson knew very well indeed' because he describes it in detail in a masque he wrote called *The Fortunate Isles*. On the top left and right are two stars – the one on the right passes through Cygnus and the one on the left through Ophyacus, also known as Serpentaria. The words *'Vide Amini'*, meaning 'may you be perceived' shine forth from each star. Just below the snake of Serpentaria appears the date 1604.

Edward de Vere was buried in July 1604. Less than three months after Edward

was buried a new star appeared in the sky known as Keppler's Supernova, or Keppler 1604. It was major news at the time, being visible by day and by night. Keppler wrote about it in a book called *de STELLA NOVA* and he linked it to a star that appeared earlier in 1574, the star in Cygnus. Keppler's Super Nova is in the foot of Serpentaria. The star came 'by no accident but by God's purpose using his rules of astrology to exalt humans who are dependent upon him and to inform them of his opinions'. (Keppler)

So, what we have are:

- a star that was said to criticise and influence the World;
- a new star that first appeared after Shakespeare's death;
- a star that was visible both by night and by day;
- a star that in Jonson's mind had some connection to Cygnus.

In a final compelling blow of orchestral proportions, Alexander shows us a contemporary collaboration of all this. Coming back to Abraham Holland, a few years after the First Folio, he wrote: *An elegie upon the Death of the right Noble and Magnanimous HENRIE, Earl of Oxford, Viscount Bulbec, etc.* (incidentally 18 words, mimicking the 17 words in Jonson's title to his encomium). Holland writes:

> VVhat Starre was wanting in the Skie?/what place
> To be supplied anew, what empty space
> That requir'd Oxford? Was some Light growne dim,
> Some Starre Decrepit that suborned Him
> To darke the Earth by his Departure? Sure.
> [...]
> He shines a better MARS, a brighter Starre?
> Or like a new Orion doth he stand
> In Christall Maile, and a bright blade in's hand
> an Armed Constellation, while the Quire
> Of Pyrrhick dancers, with reflecte fire
> Glitter on him? Or like a comets rage
> Strikes he amazement on the trembling age.

Just like the reference in Jonson's prefatory poem to Shakespeare being a star and a constellation, here in Holland's dedication we see the 18th Earl being referred to

as 'a brighter Starre? Or like a new Orion' and then a few lines later as 'an Armed Constellation'! Do the words 'a bright blade in's hand' recall any lines in Ben Jonson's poem? (hint, hint, to do with 'shaking a lance').

And then 'He shines a better MARS, a brighter Starre?… like a Comets rage /Strikes he amazement on the trembling age?' recalling Jonson's 'Shine forth, thou Starre of Poets, and with rage, /Or influence, chide or cheere the drooping Stage;'!

What more is there to be said? A presentation that left the room electrified and giving a standing ovation.

~☆~

Thomas Regnier Veritas Award
presented to Alexander Waugh by Earl Showerman

Earl Showerman said that he came here not to cure Alexander of his 40 delusions with 17 cures, nor as the first Earl of Ashland from over the pond, home of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, but as the President of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship to confer upon **Alexander Waugh** the **Thomas Regnier Veritas Award**. He explained for those who may not know who Tom was, that he was a former President of the SOF, an attorney, scholar of the first order, who passed away in the early months of the covid-19 epidemic – so the SOF developed an award to confer upon those who worked and lived as Tom Regnier did in supporting the whole question of the Shakespeare attribution. Adding 'congratulations' to Alexander, he read out the following:

> **The Veritas Award** was conceived in response to the untimely death of one of our own on April 14, 2020 – Tom Regnier – actor, attorney, and prominent champion of the Oxfordian movement. Tom not only worked tirelessly behind the scenes to promote our mission via words from his keyboard; he used his theatrical training and lawyer's wit to present our case on stage in the unforgiving glare of public limelight. To honor his unique contributions to the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship, this award is presented to Oxfordians who best demonstrate through their creative endeavors, dogged scholarship, and overall tenacity the potential to make a lasting impact on the history of the Authorship Question. Our Veritas Award recipients truly represent the best of "the mark and glass, copy and book"* fashioned by Tom Regnier. **Henry IV, Part 2*, II.iii.