Column
A year in the life
By Hank Whittemore

1601 (III): "On better judgment making..."

"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted *forty days and forty nights*, he was afterward hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word that proceedeth* out of the mouth of God." – Matthew, 3.17-4.4

That *every word* doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth, and where they did *proceed*. Sonnet 76, lines 7-8

We continue the life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, by drawing upon the "hymns" or "prayers" of *Shake-Speares Sonnets* as a "monument" to preserve "the living record" of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, for posterity.[1] The chronicle contains exactly 100 central entries from Sonnet 27 upon the Essex Rebellion on February 8, 1601, to Sonnet 126, the envoy immediately following Queen Elizabeth's funeral on April 28, 1603; and when the first forty entries of this crucial sequence are placed side by side with the first forty days and nights of Southampton's imprisonment in the Tower of London, they conclude with Sonnet 66 on March 19, 1601, when Oxford expresses his emotional exhaustion in response to word at last that Queen Elizabeth has stopped the younger earl's execution.[2]

Southampton stood trial for treason with Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex on February 19, 1601, and both were condemned to death. Essex was beheaded just six days later; two of his supporters were executed on March 13 and two others followed to their deaths on the 18th, with dozens remaining in the Tower and other prisons. Southampton had led the planning to remove Robert Cecil from his power over the Queen and his ability to control the succession, but now his fate was in the Secretary's hands and his own death was still expected to come next.

Londoners would gather each morning at Tower Hill until at least March 25, drawn by "a rumor that Southampton was to be executed there that day," but they were disappointed because "the decision had already been made to commute his sentence to imprisonment."[3] Virtually all historians have assumed that Elizabeth actually signed or issued such an order, in response to Cecil's pleading, but the government made no announcement and left no record of it. Meanwhile, the story that unfolds in the Sonnets is far from benign: the Secretary was keeping Southampton alive to hold him hostage in the Tower, thereby blackmailing Oxford into helping him engineer the peaceful succession of James of Scotland. Southampton would go free only after that goal had been attained; and because Oxford could neither predict when the succession would occur nor forecast the outcome, setting down the truth in the Sonnets would have afforded him some release from the tension that would continue for more than two years.

Having learned that Southampton has been reprieved, Oxford records a virtual suicide note in Sonnet 66, which has been likened to Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy: [4]

Tir'd with all these, for restful death I
cry

The grievances he lists can be comprehended in specific terms only within the real-life context of this contemporary history, just as the wrongs cited by Hamlet can be grasped only within the dramatic context of the play. Now, for example, Oxford can be seen as referring to the limping, swaying figure of the hunchbacked Secretary, who "disabled" Essex and Southampton:

And strength by limping sway disabled

He can be perceived as referring to Cecil as the "authority" who has forced him to remain silent while writing privately and indirectly in these verses:

And art made tongue-tied by authority

He can also be viewed as referring to Southampton as the "captive" of Cecil, who has become the "Captain" of state and holds the power of life or death over him:

And captive good attending Captain ill

Oxford is portraying a struggle between "good" and "ill," with the Secretary as the Biblical devil who has driven him to this suicidal frame of mind over the past forty days and forty nights of mounting suspense. He concludes Sonnet 66 by declaring his preference would be death if, by dying, he wouldn't have to abandon Southampton:

Tir'd with all these, from these would I
be gone,
Save that to die, I leave my love alone.

Alone, that is, in the Tower and without his continued help.

Meanwhile, Oxford is recording the same story in the Dark Lady series. In parallel with (but in contrast to) his suicidal reaction in Sonnet 66, he expresses gratitude to Elizabeth in Sonnet 145 for sparing Southampton's life; and in this context, a verse often deemed "unworthy" of Shakespeare suddenly makes perfect sense as, for example, he states directly that the Queen extended her sovereign mercy:

Straight in her heart did mercy come

He also records in Sonnet 145 that Elizabeth has altered her imperial "hate" to "love" by saving Southampton's life, which Oxford equates with his own:

I hate from hate away she threw,
And saved my life, saying, not you.

Sonnets 66-67 are at the center of the eighty-sonnet sequence recording Southampton's long confinement in the Tower from the night of February 8, 1601, following the Rebellion, to April 9, 1603, the night before his release. The transition from one verse to the other is a dramatic, unexpected leap, from relief over the

sparing of Henry Wriothesley's life to grief and anger over the circumstances under which he now must continue to live. And just as Essex called his crime "this infectious sin" before submitting himself to the executioner's axe, Oxford complains in Sonnet 67 that Southampton must continue to "live" with "infection" or criminals in the Tower and thereby "grace" their "sin" with his "presence" among them:

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

Southampton has escaped beheading "to live a second life on second head," in the words of Sonnet 68; but the Queen still chooses to "store" him in her prison-fortress, where he is reduced to the status of a commoner, as Oxford notes in Sonnet 69: "Thou dost common grow."

"His earldom had, of course, been lost through his attainder," Akrigg writes, "and he was now plain Henry Wriothesley. Although the lands which he had transferred to trustees by a deed of uses were apparently beyond the reach of the Crown, all his other possessions were forfeit."[5]

On March 23, the Council under Cecil's direction instructs Sir John Peyton, Lieutenant of the Tower: "Whereas we do understand that the Earl of Southampton, by reason of the continuance of his quartern ague, hath a swelling in his legs and other parts, you may admit Doctor Paddy, who is acquainted with the state of his body, in your presence to have access unto him, and to confer with him for those things that shall be fit for his health"—the same illness that had caused Oxford to write about Southampton's "fair health" in Sonnet 45. Now Cecil needs to keep the younger earl alive, however, to ensure Oxford's continued support; but he is not about to trust Southampton, so even the doctor may not visit him unless Peyton is present. [6]

Having avoided execution, Southampton in Sonnet 70 has "passed by the ambush of younger days," though he remains "suspect of ill" or a suspect-traitor. Thinking of the possibility that he himself might die before Southampton can be liberated, Oxford instructs him in Sonnet 71: "No longer mourn for me when I am dead … Nay, if you read this line, remember not the hand that writ it." They must deny even knowing each other: "O if (I say) you look upon this verse, when I (perhaps) compounded am with clay, do not so much as my poor name rehearse."

Having dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* to Southampton and linked him uniquely to "Shakespeare," Oxford cannot reveal his authorship. Also, having allowed *Richard II* to be performed at the Globe on the eve of the Rebellion, he too easily could have been charged with having committed treason; and therefore he too must pay a form of penance.

"Having avoided execution, Southampton in Sonnet 70 has 'passed by the ambush of younger days,' though he remains 'suspect of ill,' or a suspect-traitor."

"After my death, dear love, forget me quite," he instructs in Sonnet 72. "My name be buried where my body is, and live no more to shame nor me nor you."

In Sonnet 73, a magnificent funeral dirge about "bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang," Oxford refers to the same "dead birds" of *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, also a funeral dirge, to be published this year under the Shakespeare name. According to the bargain with Cecil, the truth of his political support for Essex and Southampton must be buried.[7]

He anticipates the "fell arrest" of his own death "without all bail," alluding in Sonnet 74 to Southampton's actual arrest without bail. But while Oxford is recreating the younger earl's life in the Sonnets, he cannot avoid including his own for posterity as well: "My life hath in this line some interest, which for memorial still with thee shall stay … My spirit is thine, the better part of me." Southampton is "to my thoughts as food to life," he adds in Sonnet 75. "Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day, or gluttoning on all, or all away," he concludes, indicating the "day by day" entries of this diary while Henry Wriothesley is "away" in the Tower.[8]

The Invention

Sonnet 76 is the fiftieth sonnet, marking the fiftieth day of Southampton's imprisonment since the Rebellion; and together with Sonnet 77 it's positioned at the exact midpoint of the 100-sonnet center, where Oxford explains his "invention" or special language for this chronicle. Speaking as the parent of the poems, he likens "my verse" to a womb that has become "barren" of new growth for Southampton; yet he continues without "variation" or "quick change" (quickening in the womb) to record events "with the time" without any new "methods" other than this one, which involves "compounds" of words akin to chemical mixtures in alchemy:

> Why is my verse so barren of new pride?
> So far from variation or quick change?
> Why with the time do I not glance aside
> To new-found methods, and to compounds strange?

His method or "invention" employs the "noted weed" or familiar garb of poetry, enabling literally "every word" to "almost tell" (conceal yet also reveal) his "name" (E. Ver), while recording Southampton's life from his "birth" to where it has managed to "proceed" or be reborn in each new entry of the womb:

> Why write I still all one, ever the same,
> And keep invention in a noted weed,
> That every word doth almost tell my name,
> Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?

The top line above demonstrates his invention with just five words:

- **All One** = Southampton, his motto *One for All, All for One*
- **Ever the Same** = Elizabeth, her motto *Ever the Same*

Edward de Vere includes himself ("ever") as he writes "still" or constantly about "all one, ever the same" or

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Southampton and Elizabeth, but this consistent subject matter is further compressed into the main topic, which is Southampton and Love:

> O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
> And you and love are still my argument.

The Sonnets record the "Love" of Southampton in its struggle to survive in relation to the dwindling "Time" of Elizabeth's life, leading inevitably to her death and England's date with succession, which will also bring the diary to its end. This ongoing battle is severely restricted; therefore, to maintain an appearance of variety, he keeps "dressing old words new" or using different words to say the same thing:

> So all my best is dressing old words new,
> Spending again what is already spent.

He concludes by picturing Southampton as "the Sun" whose "daily" rebirth – in the Tower, and in the Sonnets – is "telling" the recorded story:

> For as the Sun is daily new and old,
> So is my love still telling what is told.

Because Southampton's life informs the diary, Oxford transfers paternity of "this book" of the private verses to the younger earl in Sonnet 77, so it is now "thy book" containing "those children nursed, delivered from thy brain." The bargain for Southampton's eventual freedom with a royal pardon requires Oxford to sacrifice his own identity as "Shakespeare" (the so-called Rival Poet), who is able to express himself openly. "Every *Alien* pen hath got my use," he states in Sonnet 78, referring to his own ("E. Ver's") pen name; and he confirms Southampton as the "onlie begetter" of the private verses: "Yet be most proud of that which I compile, whose influence is thine, and born of thee."

His sacrifice continues in Sonnet 79 as "now my gracious numbered are decayed, and my sick Muse doth give another place." The one permanently taking his place on Southampton's behalf is the "worthier pen" of "Shakespeare" on the published page. As Oxford fades from view, the pseudonym rises in his place: "O how I faint when I of you do write, knowing a better spirit doth use your name," he continues to Southampton in Sonnet 80, "and in the praise thereof spends all his might to make me tongue-tied speaking of your fame."

Southampton's link to "Shakespeare" ensures his own immortality and Oxford's oblivion in the eyes of their contemporaries: "Your name from hence immortal life shall have," he writes in Sonnet 81, "though I (once gone) to all the world must die." But the truth of Southampton's life will survive in the Sonnets for future generations of readers: "Your monument shall be my gentle verse, which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read." Confirming that his pen name is the rival, Oxford refers in Sonnet 82 to "the *dedicated words* [public dedications] which *writers* ["Shakespeare"] use of their *fair subject* [Southampton], blessing *every book* [E. Ver's books of narrative poems]."

"For Southampton to eventually be pardoned, Oxford silently takes the blame (and pays the ransom or price) for the treason of which Henry Wriothesley was found guilty..."

For Southampton to eventually be pardoned, Oxford silently takes the blame (and pays the ransom or price) for the treason of which Henry Wriothesley was found guilty: "This silence for my sin you did impute," he tells him in Sonnet 83, "which shall be most my glory, being dumb." Referring to his public persona as Shakespeare as well as to himself as the author of the Sonnets, he adds to the younger earl: "There lives more life in one of your fair eyes than *both your poets* can in praise devise." The Shakespeare name is Oxford's "counterpart" of the "lease" (as in "the lease of my true love" in Sonnet 107) by which he maintains his relationship to Southampton: "And such a counterpart shall fame his wit," he states in Sonnet 84, "making his style admired everywhere." Oxford's "tongue-tied Muse" is confined to these unpublished sonnets, while "Shakespeare" flourishes publicly "in polished form of well-refined pen," he states in Sonnet 85; but he hopes Southampton will respect him "for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect."

The so-called Rival Poet sequence ends with Sonnet 86, wherein Oxford declares his own pen name "did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse, making their *tomb* [the monument of the Sonnets] the *womb* wherein they grew." He adds: "Was it his [Shakespeare's] spirit, by spirits taught to write above a mortal pitch that struck me dead?" The answer is yes; and addressing Southampton, he adds that "when your countenance filled up his line, then lacked I matter, that enfeebled mine."[9]

April 8: James & The Tower

King James writes to his ambassadors now in England, the Earl of Mar and Edward Bruce, directing them to give "full assurance" of his favor "especially to Master Secretary [Cecil], who is king there in effect."[10] He also tells them to "renew and confirm" their friendship with Peyton, who has charge of Southampton and other Rebellion conspirators in the Tower.[11]

April 9: "Misprision"

"Farewell," Oxford begins Sonnet 87, indicating that the day-by-day entries of his diary have abruptly ended. From here on, for the next two years of Southampton's imprisonment through the night of April 9, 1603, he will continue writing to him, but at a much slower pace.

Now he supplies information that fails to appear in the official record, by indicating that the verdict against Southampton has been reduced from treason to "misprision" of treason, "an offence or misdemeanor akin to treason or felony, but involving a lesser degree of guilt, and not liable to the capital penalty." This "better judgment" has provided legal ground for sparing Southampton's life and will enable James, in the event of his succession, to legally grant him a pardon:[12]

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

Edward de Vere and Henry Wriothesley must remain apart, at least in the eyes of the contemporary world; and future readers will be left to ponder the conclusion of this sonnet:

Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter:
In sleep a King, but waking no such matter.

April 21: Bacon's Declaration

An anonymous book is published under the title: "A DECLARATION of the Practices and Treasons attempted and committed by *Robert* late Earle of *Essex* and his Complices, against her Majestie and her Kingdoms, and of the proceedings as well at the Arraignments and Convictions of the said late Earle, and his adherents, as after: *Together with the very Confessions* and other parts of the Evidences themselves, word for word taken out of the Originals."

The work will be attributed to Francis Bacon, who wrote it at the command of the Queen; and she, along with Cecil and other Council members, have carefully edited the manuscript before its printing. It seems that Elizabeth commanded the first copies to be suppressed so that all mentions of "My Lord of Essex" could be changed to simply "Essex" or "the late Earl of Essex."

In his account of the trial, Bacon mentions the historical case of Richard II, noting that Bolinbroke (the future Henry IV) presented himself before the King with "humble reverences," but in the end that monarch was "deposed and put to death" – charging, in effect, that Essex and Southampton would have done the same to Elizabeth.

Bacon also refers to the "judgment" or verdict (the word used in Sonnet 87): "Upon all which evidence," he writes, "both the Earles were found guilty of Treason by all the several voices of every one of the Peers, and so received judgment."

Early May: "Kindness & Kindred"

Writing to Cecil about his bid for the Presidency of Wales, Oxford uses a tone of affection that far exceeds the dictates of this subject matter – perhaps, between the lines, also thanking his ex-brother-in-law for helping to save Southampton from execution.

"My very good brother," he writes, "I have received from Henry Lok your most kind message, which I so effectually embrace, that what for the old love I have borne you … Wherefore not as a stranger but in the old style, I do assure you that you shall have no faster friend & well wisher unto you than myself either in kindness, which I find beyond mine expectation in you; or in kindred, whereby none is nearer allied than myself," he continues, alluding to the Rebellion only once by admitting he cannot "so well urge mine own business to her Majesty" during "these troublesome times" and therefore he must depend on the Secretary, to whom he signs off "in all kindness and kindred" – calling to mind Hamlet's remark about Claudius, in another context: "A little more than kin, and less than kind."[13]

"Little Cecil trips up and down / He rules both Court and Crown / With his brother Burghley clown / In his great fox-furred gown / With the long proclamation / He swore he saved the town / Is it not likely!"

May 10: Public Libels

The Lords of the Council express anger at actors depicting real individuals in an "obscure" way that nonetheless identifies them: "Certain players at the Curtain in Moorfields do represent in their interlude the persons of some gentlemen of good desert and quality that are yet alive, under obscure manner but yet in such sort that all the hearers may take notice both of the matter and the persons that are meant thereby. All are to be examined."[14]

Not at all obscure, however, are widespread public libels against Cecil, who is "much hated in England by reason of the fresh bleeding of that universally beloved Earl of Essex." One libel is a printed ballad, sung in streets and taverns, which includes:

"Little Cecil trips up and down/ He rules both Court and Crown/ With his brother Burghley clown/ In his great fox-furred gown/ With the long proclamation/ He swore he saved the town/ Is it not likely!" [15]

May 11: "Hater of Ceremonies"

Oxford thanks Cecil as his "very well beloved friend and brother" for helping to further his bid to be made President of Wales. In view of his "kindness to me" as well as their family alliance, he finds no reason but to make "especial account" of him "before all others." He is glad "to find an especial friend constant and assured in your word, which thing I vow to God to acknowledge to you in all faith, kindness and love" and "in whatsoever I may stand you in stead (which according to mine estate now is little, but in goodwill very great), I will acknowledge with all alacrity and well-wishing perform, and this I both speak and write unto you from my heart."

Oxford refers to the "friendship which you have done me above thanks, which I will freely impart to you at my coming to the Court, which I think shall be tomorrow, by the grace of God; till which time, as a hater of ceremonies, I will refer all other thanks and observations, which in me are as far from ordinary accomplishments as my thankful acceptance of this your friendly and brotherly office is near my heart simple and unfeigned…"[16]

May: Secret Correspondence

James writes clandestinely to Cecil about the succession. By prearrangement, he refers to him as "10" and signs off as "Your most loving and assured friend, 30." The King assures Cecil he "never had any dealing" with Essex that "was not most honorable and avowable," declaring that "in all times hereafter, the suspicion or disgracing of 10 shall touch 30 as near as 10." Once he rules England, he will bestow "as great and greater favor upon 10 as his predecessor [Elizabeth] doth bestow upon him." Cecil "may rest assured" of the King's "constant love and secrecy."[17] Upon receiving this letter, Cecil meets with Mar and Bruce, who set off to bring his warm

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response back to Edinburgh.

May 27: "Ransom & Fine"

John Chamberlain writes to Dudley Carlton about the aftermath of the Rebellion, saying he expects that "there shall be no more blood drawn in this cause." One reason is that the Council has created a commission "to ransom and fine the Lords and Gentlemen that were in the action." (These fines include: Rutland, £30,000; Bedford, £20,000, down a list of prisoners allowed to buy their freedom; but Rutland's ransom will be reduced to £20,000 and the other fines accordingly.)

No such "ransom" may be paid by Southampton, who is still listed by the authorities as "condemned to death." [18] Instead, as Oxford has implied in Sonnet 34, the imprisoned earl can "ransom all ill deeds" only by fulfilling Cecil's demands. Both must remain silent about their relationship; and behind the scenes, Oxford will do what he can to support the Secretary's effort to bring James to the throne.[19]

June: "30" to "10"

James writes again as "30" to Cecil, addressing him as "Right trusty and well-beloved 10." Having received the Secretary's vows of affection and loyalty, the King admits it was "continually beaten in my ears" that Cecil held "unquenchable malice against me," so he couldn't trust him. James will keep these discussions from the Queen to avoid her "jealousy" and will "rule all my actions for advancing of my lawful future hopes by your advice, even as ye were one of my own councilors already."[20]

James also indicates his complete faith in the infamous Lord Henry Howard, whose presence in the secret correspondence as code number "3" has been thrust upon Cecil. In 1581, Howard responded to Oxford's treason charges with wild accusations in return; and now, two decades later, the same would-be traitor is playing a crucial role in determining England's future. The Secretary's biographer Handover writes of him in the harshest light:

> "It was regrettable that Cecil had to make Howard his chief confidant for the next two years … No man was more fitted for conspiracy, no man so venomous against those he hated, or so obsequious to those he hoped to make his friends. His mind, remarkable for its great learning, was so perverted that in a bawdy and outspoken age he wrapped up his filthy imputations in Latin and ascribed them to ancient authors. Not only was he impure in thought and deed, but he lacked a grain of loving kindness, of nobility of mind or generosity of heart. Few men have been so purposely bent upon destroying the fellowship of man.
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> "Nothing good could come from Henry Howard; unless to be consistently loyal to Cecil because it served his own ends may be accounted a virtue. That loyalty was to serve Cecil well in the difficult and secret business that he had in hand. But Henry Howard could touch nothing that he did not corrupt; and he touched Cecil."[22]

"Both must remain silent about their relationship; and behind the scenes, Oxford will do what he can to support the Secretary's effort to bring James to the throne."

June 30: Danvers Escheat

Oxford writes a memorandum about his attempts to gain lands forfeited to the state by Charles Danvers, who was executed in March for his role in the Essex Rebellion. Soon afterward, the Queen told Cecil she was granting her interest in the Danvers lands to Oxford, who now sets forth on a long, torturous and ultimately losing effort to recover them.[21]

July 15: Siege of Ostend

Archduke Albert of Austria (married to Isabella, daughter of Philip II of Spain) begins his attempt to capture Ostend, a small Dutch coastal town that has been fortified since 1583 because of its strategic value against Spanish forces in the Netherlands war. The siege will become infamous for the heroism and endurance of participants on both sides (Oxford's cousin, Sir Francis Vere, is leading the English army in support) as well as for the amount of bloodshed during this "long carnival of death" (costing some 70,000 lives on the enemy side) to continue for more than three years until the surrender of Ostend on September 20, 1604.

It seems likely that Hamlet is referring to this siege when, at the end of Act Four, he castigates himself for his inability to act "while to my shame I see the imminent death of twenty thousand men that, for a fantasy and trick of fame, go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot that whereon the numbers cannot try the cause, which is not tomb enough and continent to hide the slain [i.e., the town was too small to contain the armies fighting over it]."

August 4: "I am Richard"

The Queen invites the noted historian William Lambarde, 65, whom she appointed in January as Keeper of the Records at the Tower of London, to present his digest to her at Greenwich Palace. As he will record in writing soon afterward, Elizabeth receives him in her Privy Chamber and opens the book. "You shall see that I can read," she quips before going over the listed items, reading some aloud and commanding the antiquary to explain various terms. He expounds on several meanings, to her satisfaction. The Queen tells him "that she would be a scholar in her age and thought it no scorn to learn during her life, being of the mind of that philosopher who in his last years began with the Greek alphabet."

Elizabeth comes to the pages related to Richard II, who was deposed by Bolinbroke in 1399, and blurts out: "I am Richard the Second, know ye not that?"

Lambarde assumes, no doubt correctly, that Her Majesty is referring to the fact that Essex was regarded as a Bolinbroke and that, during most of her reign, Elizabeth herself had been compared to the deposed monarch. "Such a wicked imagination was determined and attempted by a most unkind Gentleman," the antiquary replies, adding that Essex was "the most adorned creature that ever your Majesty made."

"He that will forget God will also forget his benefactors," the Queen snaps back,

but now it appears she has been thinking of play *Richard II* by Shakespeare (with its censored deposition scene) and how the Essex-Southampton faction had attended private performances prior to its staging at the Globe on the eve of the Rebellion. "This tragedy was played forty times in open streets and houses!" she exclaims.

Their discussion of the Tower records resumes, but then the Queen returns to the subject of Richard II and demands whether Lamarde has "seen any true picture or lively representation of his countenance and person."

"None but such as be in common hands," he replies.

"Lord Lumley, a lover of antiquities," Elizabeth says, "discovered it fastened on the backside of a door of a base room, which he presented unto me, praying, with my good leave, that I might put it in order with the Ancestors and Successors. I will command Thomas Knyvet, Keeper of my House and Gallery at Westminster, to shew it unto thee."

Without doubt the Queen is haunted by Richard the Second. Suddenly, for her, past and present have merged; distinctions between reality and art are blurred; and the circumstances of this year are mirrored by historical scenes of the king on stage and portraits of him on canvas. Meanwhile, Elizabeth surely knows that Oxford brought Richard's tragedy to life in the play and that, in turn, he must have sanctioned Southampton's use of it for the Rebellion: "Authorizing thy trespass with compare," as he put it in Sonnet 35.

The Queen is now speaking to the man she has put in charge of the records stored in the Tower, the very place where Southampton continues to languish—and we can only imagine the images bouncing off each other in her mind, as she and Lambarde continue to pour over this royal scrapbook that leads, inexorably, from then to now.[23]

Endnotes:

[1] Sonnet 55, lines 7-12: "Nor *Mars* his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn/ The living record of your memory;/ 'Gainst death and all obliviou enmity/ Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room/ Even in the eyes of all posterity/ That wear this world out to the ending doom."

[2] Oxford uses the numerical sequence of Sonnets 27 to 66, in conjunction with the calendar, to inform us that March 19, 1601 is the date of the Queen's decision to spare Southampton. As an insider at Court, he obviously learned information as soon as possible, earlier than outsiders learned it; and because of this numbering of the Sonnets, we now have the exact date of the reprieve, which can be determined by no other historical document.

[3] Akrigg, G. P. V., *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968); referred to hereafter as "Akrigg *Biography*," p. 131.

[4] Tucker, T. G., *The Sonnets of Shakespeare* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1924), p. 141, noting that some of Shakespeare's complaints in Sonnet 66 "appear again" in Hamlet's soliloquy; Duncan-Jones, Katherine, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Arden Shakespeare, 1997), p. 242: "The cataloque of eleven wrongs [in Sonnet 66] is analogous to the sevenfold catalogue in Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' speech, though it is fear of 'something after death,' not of deserting his love, that restrains Hamlet." She adds: "This despairing poem is probably located where it is by design. Multiples of six have adverse connotations, alluding to the biblical 'beast' associated with universal corruption."

[5] Akrigg *Biography*, op. cit., p.131.

[6] Stopes, Charlotte Carmichael, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton* (New York: AMS Press, 1969, from the edition of 1922), p. 224.

[7] The printed author's name for *The Phoenix and the Turtle* is hyphenated as "William Shake-speare".

[8] The phrase "all, or all away" reflects Southampton's motto *Ung par Tout, Tout par Ung* or *One for All, All for One*; "all" is used 118 times in the Sonnets; the total, including various forms (alone, alike, etc.), is 216 times; and "one" is used 42 times.

[9] The lines in Sonnet 86 echo Touchstone's speech to William in *As You Like It*, 5.1.40-43: "For it is a figure in rhetoric that drink, being pour'd out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one doth empty the other; for all your writers do consent that *ipse* is he: now, you are not *ipse*, for I am he." (In both the sonnet and the play, Oxford is referring to his identity as author of the Shakespeare works.)

[10] Handover, P. M., *The Second Cecil* (Great Britain: Eyre & Spottisoode, 1959), p. 238; James believed (as Essex had charged) that Cecil had supported the Infanta of Spain in succession to Elizabeth; the truth of the matter has never been resolved.

[11] Akrigg, G. P. V., *Letters of King James VI & I*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 175; referred to hereafter as "Akrigg *Letters*."

[12] Oxford English Dictionary: *Misprision of Treason*:

[13] Chiljan, Katherine, *Letters and Poems of Edward, Earl of Oxford*, 1998, p. 65

[14] Stopes, op. cit., 242.

[15] Stopes, op. cit., p. 235; among others lampooned were (apparently) George Carey, Lord Chamberlain Hunsdon; the Earl of Bedford; Lord Gray; and Walter Raleigh; the "much hated" quote about Cecil is from Weldon, Sir Anthony, *Secret History of the Court of James the First*, 1817, p. 10.

[16] Chiljan, op. cit., p. 66.

[17] Akrigg *Letters*, op. cit., pp. 178-180.

[18] Stopes, op. cit., p. 234.

[19] Stopes, op. cit., p. 233.

[20] Akrigg *Letters*, op. cit., pp.180-183.

[21] Ward, B. M., *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford* (London: John Murry, 1928) p. 337, quoting Oxford to Robert Cecil on March 22, 1602: "It is now a year since Her Majesty granted me her interest in Danvers' escheat…"

[22] Handover, op. cit., p. 240.

[23] Lambarde's testimony is reprinted by Coyle, Martin, ed., *William Shakespeare: Richard II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 19-20.