

Know Ye Not This Parable? The Oxford-Du Bartas Connection

James Fitzgerald



WHILE investigating the possibility that Shakespeare, and more especially, Shakespeare identified as the Earl of Oxford, might be the author of a widely anthologized anonymous song about a peddler found collected in the works of the Elizabethan lutenist and composer, John Dowland (see “Shakespeare, Oxford and ‘A Pedlar’” in *THE OXFORDIAN*, Vol. 1, Oct. 1998), I decided to pursue the use of a particular expression in the song (“orienst pearls”), knowing that nearly the same phrase, “orient pearl(s),” occurs a number of times in Shakespeare.

Needing to start somewhere, I took down Bartlett’s *Familiar Quotations* from the shelf, where I found one entry contemporary to Shakespeare for “orient pearl,” in excerpts from the works of an unfamiliar French poet, Guillaume De Saluste Seigneur Du Bartas (1544-1590) (102-03). His translator was another stranger, Josuah Sylvester. In the Du Bartas entry, fully one-half of the sum of sixteen cross-referenced citations to echoes of Du Bartas in English Literature went to Shakespeare. Of the remaining citations, all but one were posthumous, both to Oxford and the Stratford man.

Deflected now from my research into the authorship of that song, I reported my discovery to a colleague, Andrew Hannas, remarking to him my bemusement at an apparent connection between Shakespeare and this profoundly obscure French poet. His curiosity aroused, Hannas secured a microfilm copy of Sylvester’s 1605 translation of the *Semaines* of Du Bartas (STC 7095). Within the customary efflorescence of laudatory verses contributed by admiring contemporaries at the introduction, he discovered what seemed almost certainly the final poem of Edward De Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford.¹

As it turns out, it is almost surely *not* by Oxford, although Hannas and I supposed it so for several years. Written in Latin and signed “E. L. Oxon.,” it remains the case that its inner substance contains a direct and momentous statement about Oxford’s role as a “hidden” author, disguised in wordplay on Oxford’s favorite paranomastic weapon: Vere. (“Words of truth are fitting to a Vere,” remarked the Earl to his wife in a letter composed in Latin, making a pun on *verum*, the Latin “truth.”)

Who was Du Bartas?

But first, let us look back to the period when this French poet, of small interest today to any but the encarreled specialist, flourished. In England, in the 1580s, '90s, and thereafter, the most conspicuously admired among the pride of literary figures of the day was not English, but French. Guillaume De Saluste Sieur (or Seigneur) Du Bartas, was a Gascon Huguenot fighting in the service of Henry of Navarre. Du Bartas was venerated, extolled, and lionized in England for his *Semaines* (*Weeks*), an immense unfinished poem in two parts that sought to record and report in alexandrines the received sum of scientific knowledge and the history of mankind as well (Reid 226).

After his death, his Protestantism, but more tellingly, an evolution in literary taste that turned some of his characteristic poetic traits into artistic flaws, would insure his permanent decline from favor in France, and ultimately, his disappearance from the roll call of European writers who matter. In England, where his Protestantism remained a badge of honor and a less rapid evolution in taste afforded him some protection from the assaults of esthetes, the prominence of Du Bartas would persist for another generation. Sidney Lee observes that "the honors which Shakespeare's generation paid [Du Bartas] excelled those which were bestowed on any other foreign contemporary. . . . The eager greeting of Du Bartas by the Elizabethans is a curiosity in the history of literary criticism" (340).

Du Bartas had several English translators, first among them, in time and worldly exaltation, James VI of Scotland, a great enthusiast of the Frenchman. But his principle translator was the earnest Puritan, Josuah Sylvester, "a merchant turned poet," in the words of his editor, Susan Snyder (1: 4; I follow Snyder in her rendering of Sylvester's given name, *Josuah*, as it was consistently represented among contemporary sources—JF). Sylvester's translation proved popular, enjoying six editions until the seventh and final of 1641. "*The Divine Weeks*," remarks Susan Snyder, "was extravagantly admired in its own day and went into almost total eclipse after that day had passed" (1: vii). John Dryden (b. 1631) in his maturity, expressed astonishment at having admired Du Bartas and Sylvester in his youth. (*Divine Weeks* was published in 1605, 1608, 1611, 1613, 1621, 1633, and 1641. After the 1641 edition, type would not be set for it again until the edition of Alexander Grosart, published in 1880.)

James Fitzgerald is something of a plank "owner" on the good ship Oxford, having read and being persuaded by Shakespeare; the Man Behind the Name in 1963. After his military service, spent, fittingly, in intelligence, Mr. Fitzgerald would subsequently go on to acquire an M.A. in Latin Literature at Boston College. Mr. Fitzgerald alternates work in the construction industry with the teaching of Latin. He has published articles on the authorship question in the U.S. and in Germany. With this issue we welcome him to the editorial board of THE OXFORDIAN. "Know Ye Not This Parable?" is reprinted in full from a series of articles that that ran in The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter, 1997-98.

Edward Lapworth and E. L. Oxon.

Sylvester had been emitting fragments of the *Semaines* during the 1590s. At last, in 1605, a nearly complete translation was published, titled *Bartas his Devine Weekes and Workes*. At the head of *Divine Weeks* were placed ten commendatory poems composed for the occasion. Among them, the third in sequence and composed in Latin, is the poem signed “E. L. Oxon.” by Edward Lapworth, an attribution we can make with confidence, although falling short of absolute certainty. Andrew Hannas, always a shade uneasy at our attribution to Edward de Vere of the E. L. Oxon. eulogy, undertook a late sortie among the E. L.’s in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, discovering in the Lapworth entry that C. L. Kingsford, the entry’s contributor, gives the Oxon. eulogy to Lapworth without qualification. Susan Snyder hedges with “probably” by Lapworth. Snyder reports that the copy of the 1605 *Divine Weeks* (Q1; published 1605–07, and the source of the Hannas microfilm) in the Huntington Library (San Marino, CA) is missing three eulogies, by R.N. Gen., B. Jonson, and R.R. Beyond this Snyder makes no comment; one may fairly conclude that the HL *Divine Weeks* is an early printing, the three tardy eulogies added sometime later, but prior to the edition of 1608 (Q2). The Jonson and R.R. eulogies shall prove of critical importance in our investigation.

Lapworth’s poem is headed: “Iosua Silvester Anagr: Verè Os Salustij” [j = i]. The public, exoteric intent of that brilliant Latin pun was to proclaim the message that Josuah Sylvester was “truly (i.e. vere) the mouth (i.e. the voice, as translator into English) of Salustius [Du Bartas].” Lapworth’s poem was among four composed in Latin; the remaining six are in English.²

Edward Lapworth was a man of substance and accomplishment. The DNB commences his entry with a description of him as “physician and Latin poet.” He received the B.A. in 1592 and the M.A. in 1595 at Oxford. He “supplicated for the degree of M.B. and for license to practice medicine” in 1602. Both were granted in 1605. Thereafter he taught medicine and science (“natural philosophy”) at Oxford, and practiced as a physician, primarily at Bath. As a poet he would seem to have been foremost a composer of occasional verse for great events of state. He attended in his poetic function at the greatest events of state, that is, in the ceremonial of the passing and accession of crowned heads (Elizabeth and James). Lapworth was a native of Warwickshire. A certain Guidott described him as “not tall, but fat and corpulent.”

There is something puzzling about Lapworth’s choice—if in fact it was Lapworth’s choice—of “E. L. Oxon.” for his identification as the composer of that eulogy. (“E. L. Oxon.” may be inferentially expanded to *Eduardus Lapworth Oxoniae*: Edward Lapworth of Oxford.) The misattribution of the Oxon. eulogy to the Earl of Oxford in “Shakespeare, Oxford and Du Bartas” (Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter 33: 1) came about in part through the peculiar,

if chance, suitability of “E. L. Oxon.” to Oxford as well. As Andrew Hannas reasoned incorrectly but incisively in that article: “This seems an odd way to indicate the Earl of Oxford, as I interpret E[dward] L[ord] Oxon[ford] as the unabbreviated form. However, one must remember that in 1605 Edward de Vere was dead. The ‘E. Vere’ alone could be construed as his son Edward, while his son Henry would assume the title Earl of Oxford, potentially embarrassing in subsequent printings. The form given removes the ambiguity on all three counts” (Fitzgerald 11).

In addition to the Oxfordian content of Lapworth’s poem, which we shall examine below, there was also the provocative timing of the publication of *Divine Weeks* to lead one astray. Rebecca E. Pitts states that “Silvester’s [sic] completed translation of [*Divine Weeks*] was published in 1605 after having been entered in the Register of the Stationers’ Company in November, 1604” (488). Susan Snyder discerns an unexplained delay in the publication of *Divine Weeks* which, she reports, was probably translated no later than autumn, 1603. “Silvester’s printer Peter Short died in 1603, probably a plague victim. But although the epidemic had subsided by the winter of 1603-04, the promised edition did not appear until 1605.” The delay, in her view, may have been caused by copyright problems connected with the printer’s death. Snyder provides the 2 July ?1603 [sic] entry of the Stationers’ Register, which cites the *Divine Workes of the worldes birth*, but without naming Sylvester. The entry concludes, “It is under the hands of Master Hartwell and the wardens” (1: 19 and fn).

Because of the strangely long interval between the completion of *Divine Weeks* and its publication cited in the paragraph above, and the comparatively brief interval between Oxford’s recorded death from the plague in June, 1604, and the entry into the Stationers’ Register five months thereafter of *Divine Weeks* (and the Oxon. eulogy within it), one is filled with musings about concealed device. Prior to the discovery in the DNB by Andrew Hannas of the attribution of the Oxon. eulogy to Edward Lapworth, the striking timing of the 1605 publication of *Divine Weeks* in relation to Oxford’s passage from the scene and the fishy datum that only Oxford among the eulogists was certainly dead, and recently, were-taken together-too much the baited hook for this researcher not to award to Oxford the bays of authorship for “E. L. Oxon.” Although Oxford can no longer receive the attribution, the probability from the evidence cited above, that publication of *Divine Weeks* was held back until he had died, seems little diminished.

In *Shakespeare Identified*, J. T. Looney had remarked a rare rhetorical figure of Oxford’s signed work also to be found in Shakespeare: *anadiplosis*, which is the presence of a word or phrase found at the end of one line reduplicated at the beginning of the next (e.g. in Oxford, “What plague is greater than the grief of mind? / The grief of mind that eats in every vein”; and in Shakespeare, “She is so hot because the meat is cold; / The meat is cold because you come not home”). Commenting upon an eccentricity in Du Bartas, Sidney Lee observed that

“after the manner of the old *vers rapportés* [Du Bartas] has an odd habit of repeating at the opening of the second line of his couplet the last syllables or words of the first line” (336). So also do we find this device in the Lapworth eulogy at lines 3/4 (. . . ORA, / ORA . . .) and 4/5 (. . . SILVAM, / Silvas . . .). Even setting aside the pregnant content, the enigmatic signing “E. L. Oxon.,” and apart from the emphasized presence of “Vere” twice in Lapworth’s eulogy, this unusual prosodic element encompassing Shakespeare, Oxford, and Du Bartas, combined to attract the pointer of identification toward the false north of a de Vere composition.

Subsequent research by Andrew Hannas on “E. L. Oxon.” has turned up the intelligence that among the fourteen poems of Lapworth that he has examined, “Lapworth,” the surname in its entirety, is always present in the signing. Hannas reports that at the time Lapworth was active and *Divine Weeks* was being published, yet another “E. L.” at Oxford was composing occasional, poetic tributes—Edmund Lily or Edward Lilly, “theologian and Master of Balliol College, and apparently a chaplain to the Queen.” In support of the authority of C. L. Kingsford’s attribution of “E. L. Oxon.” in the DNB to Lapworth, Hannas is persuasive in close textual analysis that considerations of style and language are as strongly against Lily’s authorship of E. L. Oxon. as they are confirming of Lapworth’s (Fitzgerald 11).

In sum, can there be but one sensible conclusion—that, although he wrote the eulogy, Edward Lapworth did not wish to be identified with it, or that he was not intended to be identified with it, except with a concomitant and deliberate ambiguity? Before we examine the poem itself, we might reflect upon the circumstance that the first Latin word of the eulogy is Vere in the heading anagram. The final Latin word is Oxon[iaē], abbreviated in the naming of the author, and the toney Latinate form of the name of that university town—Oxford. Thus, and for what it is worth, the body of the text is enclosed by “Vere . . . Oxford.”

Vere Os Salustii

Here is Lapworth’s eulogy. Lines 1-14 are in elegiacs, the standard Latin meter for praise and honored remembrance. Lines 15-24 are in iambic trimeter, the customary meter for invective, censure, and, for what especially pertains to us here, satire. The translation will reveal that, superficially at least, Lapworth adhered to the classical norms. The bracketed ue of line 8 is unsupplied in the original, but understood, as -q[ue], “and.” The bracketed *atheos* of line 23 has been transliterated from the Greek orthography in which it originally appears. The line numbers in parentheses have been added to facilitate citation and discussion. The type-faces reflect similar distinctions in the original.

Iosua Silvester Anagr:

Verè Os Salustij.

- (1) OS tu SILVESTER nostro cur ore vocaris?
- (2) An quod in ORE feras Mel? Quod in Aure Mel-os?³
- (3) An quod Bartassi faciem dum pinguis et Ora,
- (4) ORA tui pariter quaelibet ora colit?
- (5) Nempe licet duram prae te fers nomine SILVAM
- (6) Silvas et salebras carmina nulla tenent:
- (7) Sed quod Athenarum COR, dux Salaminus olim
- (8) Dixit, inest libris OS[que]; vigorq[ue]; tuis.
- (9) Ergo OS esto alijs, mihi Suadae LINGUA videris;
- (10) Musis et Phoebo charus OCELLUS eris.

Ad Gallum de Bartassio iam toto Anglice donato.

- (11) Quod Gallus factus modo sit, mirare, Britannus
- (12) Galle? Novum videas, nec tamen invideas:
- (13) Silvester vester, noster Bartassius; ambo
- (14) Laude quidem gemina digni ut et ambo pari.

In detractores ad Authorem.

- (15) Taceat malevolum OS male strepentis Zoili;
- (16) Monstrum bilingue, septuplex Hydrae caput;
- (17) Dum Septimanam septies faustam canis,
- (18) Te Septimana septies faustum facit,
- (19) Quaevis, nec ulla debeat Iosuam Dies.
- (20) Nempe ORE fari Vera si licet meo,
- (21) OS ipse VERE diceris SALUSTII;
- (22) Qui si impetaris dentibus mordentibus
- (23) Impurioris ORIS, [atheos] Theon
- (24) OS non carere dentibus sciat tuum.

E. L. Oxon.

Now the translation, which strives for accuracy at the cost of literary merit in bringing across a poem of conscious obscurity. Those words capitalized or in italics reflect those similarly emphasized in the Latin. Words in quotes seem ironic or humorous in intent, as the translator (JF) perceives the poem. Numbers within parentheses indicate, as trailers, the corresponding line numbers of the Latin original. Where they do not appear singly, the Latin syntax has proven too convoluted or inspired to disentangle successfully.

How it is, O “WOODSMAN,” that you are called a “VOICE” by our voice (1)? Can it be the “Honey” that you bear upon your LIPS? Or is it the *Honied-speech* you bear unto the ear (2)?

Or are you so addressed for your portrayal of the fair POETRY of DU BARTAS (3), as he in turn honors your POETRY, of whatever sort it may be (4)?

Granted that you bear before you in your name a rough “FOREST,” (5); and granted that no [genuine] poetry is touched with Wilderness and rude speech (6).

Still, what the Salaminian leader [Themistocles] once (7) called the HEART of Athens, its power of LANGUAGE, in your MOUTH that, too, is present (8).

Therefore, to others be a VOICE; to me shall you seem the TONGUE of *Persuasion* (9), and to Phoebus and the Muses a precious DARLING shall you be (10).

To France, Du Bartas now wholly translated into English.

You marvel, Frenchman, that [Du Bartas] is now made English? Though you see something strange, yet despise it not (11,12).

Your *Sylvester*, our *Du Bartas*: worthy are they both of a like commendation, as worthy both of an equal praise (13, 14)

Against the Author’s critics:

Let it be silent, that envious MOUTH of carping Zoilus [a bitter 4th century BC critic of Homer], that monster of double tongue, that sevenfold head of Hydra (15,16).

While seven times you sing the auspicious *Week*, you seven times fortunate any week makes. Nor let any Day prove the destruction of *Josuah* (17-19).

Certainly if it permitted to speak True Things with my MOUTH (20), you yourself are TRULY called the VOICE of [DU BARTAS] (21).

If Anyone should attack you with the biting teeth (22) of a more impure MOUTH, let that offender [*atheos*, lit. “godless one”] of the Gods know, that your MOUTH is not lacking in teeth (23, 24).

We might note at the outset, and not with complete wonder, that Lapworth makes strikingly abundant use of *OS* (and therefore *O's*), employing it fourteen times in varying permutations of case and number. The poem-opening “*O*” of *OS* in line one is a titan of almost three lines height. The primary meaning of *OS* is *mouth*, but several allied meanings may attach to it, and better suit the translation, as here: *voice, speech, lips, or poetry* (as the product of the voice, or mouth).

This is a difficult poem: difficult in its language and prosody, not entirely elucidated; difficult in its message, both open and occult; difficult in its tone, both jesting and serious.

The poem begins with wordplay upon the broad pun “*Silvester*,” which is not only Josuah’s surname, but also—and worse luck for him—the Latin adjective meaning “of or pertaining to the woods.” Used as a substantive, it means *woodsman*. Lapworth goes on to toy with this conceit in “rough forest,” “wilderness,” and the “rude speech” of a woodsman (or, less politely, of a *naif*, a *rube*). One suspects that lines 11 and 12 might be paraphrased as, “My God! what will the French think?” Did Lapworth have cause for embarrassment at associating himself with *Silvester* and his translation of the *Semaines* of Du Bartas? That may have been the case if Lapworth was in esthetic and poetical harmony with deVere.

For Lapworth and *Silvester* could hardly have been more antithetical. Born in Kent, Josuah *Silvester* (1563-1618) went into the cloth business as a young man and remained in trade all his life. Susan Snyder reports that “certain tendencies of the Elizabethan middle class appear with particular emphasis, almost to caricature in *Silvester’s* Scripture-quoting, Rome-hating Protestantism” (1: 5). A. H. Upham informs us that *Silvester’s* formal schooling was limited, although it left him well grounded in French. “To the religious tone of [*Divine Weeks*],” remarks Upham, “he gives a new twist, replacing the mild and liberal Protestantism of Du Bartas by a dogmatic and uncompromising Puritanic spirit, that hardens the moralizing and places parts of the work very near the boundaries of satire” (156, 158).⁴

It would not surprise us, then, to find Lapworth subverting his own praise of *Silvester*; although, with what seems a pang of guilty compassion, he contrives in lines 7 and 8 to get Athens and Themistocles into a left-handed encomium on the “power” of *Silvester’s* verse, following it up in lines 9 and 10 with eulogistic fustian of a more conventional sort. Lines 15 to 19, which commence the iambic trimeter portion of the poem, are almost impenetrable. Are they freighted with hidden meaning, like *Finnegans Wake*? Or are they deliberate nonsense on the part of the author—also like *Finnegans Wake*?

Why Lapworth wrote the eulogy

At line 20 Lapworth suddenly turns serious; and together with line 21, the two lines compose the esoteric climax or core of the poem. Owing to the apparent wanton capriciousness of

Latin word order to the English eye, the words, where necessary, will not be examined in their Latin sequence, but in the order that best exposes the logic of the thought as it is transposed into English.

Line 20: *Nempe ORE fari Vera si licet meo*. *Nempe*: “certainly,” “to be sure.” “Used in confirmation or sarcasm” (Traupman); *si licet*: “if it is permitted”; *fari Vera*: “to speak True Things” (or “Vere Things”; that pun which is ever in the background). The flexional ending –a of *Vera* is the neuter plural (“things”) form of the adjective. *Vero Nihil Verius*, the motto of the deVeres, supports the reasonableness of the dual understanding above. *Vero Nihil Verius* can be read as “Nothing truer than Vere,” or as “Nothing truer than truth,” in the wordplay on *verum*, “truth.” The willingness of others to invoke this pun can be found, for example, in the remark of Sir George Buc that Oxford was “very learned . . . and in deed as in name *Vere Nobilis* . . . truly [vere] noble, a most noble Vere” (Buc qtd. in Ogburn 34).

ORE . . . meo: (they go together in thought) “(with) my MOUTH.” The expression is emphatic both for its orthography, and because the separated noun and adjective enclose the thought, *fari Vera si licet* (“if it is permitted to speak True/Vere Things”). Thus, in line 20, Lapworth breaks free from the laudation of Sylvester by announcing that he is about to remove the mask of convention and speak openly to the reader; else why would he have implied that heretofore his capacity to speak “True/Vere Things” had been in some way impeded?

Line 21: *OS ipse VERE diceris SALUSTII*. Line 21 is extraordinary. *OS ipse VERE* confirms the reality of a second beginning, as it exactly parallels the commencement of the poem: *OS tu SILVESTER*. Each triad is composed of: “MOUTH,” pronoun (*ipse, tu*) in the vocative case, surname in the vocative case (the grammatical case of direct address in Latin). In a discussion of the metrical scansion of line 21, Andrew Hannas observes, “As for the ‘Vere,’ here I think we see Lapworth’s subtlety in poetic technics. That is, the crucial *e* falls on the second *anceps* [a syllable which may be metrically long or short], yielding adverbial or vocative interpretations—or a resonance between the two.”

Translating lines 20 and 21, with the Latin emphases reflected in the English orthography, we read: “To be sure [with possible sarcasm], if it is permitted to speak True/Vere Things with my MOUTH, / you, VERE, yourself [*ipse*] are TRULY called the VOICE of [DU BARTAS].” We have come to a suitable place to observe how the “*ipse Vere*” phrasing also seems to echo the lines of the Clown Touchstone (“the fool that hath been a courtier”) to William the country fellow in *As You Like It*: “All your writers do consent that *ipse* is he. Now you are not *ipse*, for I am he” (V:1:42-3).

Lines 22-24: If anyone should assail you with the biting teeth (22) of a more impure mouth, let that offender [lit. “godless one”] of the Gods know that your Mouth is not lacking in teeth (23, 24). Lines 22-24 are obscure. Potential “detractors” are given fair warning

against attacking Sylvester, with the caveat that he can bite them back. Lapworth may be poking more fun at Sylvester's lack of polish again, in his mouth "not lacking in teeth." The jocularly echoic, and barbaric, *dentibus mordentibus impurioris ORIS*, supports this understanding.

Cicero, whose forensic gifts exceeded his poetic, gave to the world the immortally bad hexameter line, "*O fortunatam natam me consule Romam*," which an inspired translator, G. G. Ramsay, sank to the occasion to render as, "O happy fate for the Roman state was the date of my great Consulate" (qtd. in Hadas 138). Excluding Cicero, internal rhyme in Latin poetry is a tip-off to a non-serious or mocking intent on the part of the poet. Nevertheless, we have seen in the heading anagram and in the climactic lines 20 and 21 of the poem, that, Lapworth, under cover of the perspicuous pun *VERE*, asserts that Oxford is the voice of Du Bartas. Might Lapworth, in lines 22-24 be subtly alluding to the otherwise-throttled Oxford's lampooning of knaves and fools at Court in the Shakespeare plays? At all events, these lines remain a crux, and in particular with regard to why "*atheos*" in line 23 should have been rendered in Greek letters, while the equally Greek "*Theon*" was put in Roman.

Truly the voice of Du Bartas

What being the "voice" of Du Bartas means as Lapworth has attached it to Oxford can be clarified and refined. In terms of sheer lineage, Josuah Sylvester must forever wear the laurels as the "voice" of Du Bartas; the *Semaines* run in excess of 20,000 lines, a little longer than the *Iliad*. *Divine Weeks* is rather longer than the *Semaines*, as Sylvester freely added blocks of lineage to make *Weeks* more pertinent to the nation of Englishmen. If Oxford cannot therefore be the quantitative "voice" of Du Bartas, he must be the qualitative "voice"; that is, something Oxford wrote has caught the essence of Du Bartas. Let us suppose that Oxford is Shakespeare. Can we find, at minimum, one passage in Shakespeare that is held by a scholar of convention as supremely "Shakespearean," while yet unmistakably "Bartassian" as well in its origin? We can.

But before we do, we would profit by seeing how a Shakespeare-Du Bartas connection has been historically disabled in two ways. Du Bartas (b. 1544) and William Shakspere of Stratford (b. 1564) were of different generations, different nations, different languages, and never met. Shakspere's French is a void. Consequently the "Shakespeare" of tradition and Du Bartas can only have a mediated relationship. This gets troublesome for the Stratford attribution of authorship. For example, Sidney Lee, noting Sylvester's faithful translation of Du Bartas's account of "a goodly jennet," suggests, by way of comparison, certain apposite passages in *Venus and Adonis*, remarking that "Shakespeare probably consulted the French text" (337 fn).⁵ Yes, Shakespeare probably did.

The (false) breach between the Stratford Shakespeare and Du Bartas (false because Oxford, if he was Shakespeare, *had* French, and the two poets could well have met at least twice) is further enlarged in the centuries' interment of Du Bartas himself.⁶

Du Bartas wrote the last great epic, didactic poem in western literature, in the line of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and the two Latin epics of type, the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius and the *Georgics* of Vergil. Kurt Reichenberger describes the *Semaines* as an epic of the divine plan in the physical universe, with God the Maker as its epic hero (qtd. in Snyder 12 and fn). But it was the misfortune of Du Bartas to write it at the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour. For three hundred years and counting, no one (prescinding the scholarly specialist) in the broader sense of anyone who counts has had a natural disposition or taste for that category of literature. A consequence is that Du Bartas will tend to be overlooked by non-specialist scholars of his own era, or by scholars of an era adjoining, even as a mere name. He is barely happened upon in the *omnium gatherum* of the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, and on those rare appearances usually hyphenated with his Sullivan, Sylvester.

Now for the supremely Shakespearean and Bartassian: In "Shakespeare's French Fruits," F. W. Lever wrote an article of enormous value and interest to Oxfordians, with respect to the revelations involving VERE in Lapworth's "Oxon." eulogy (79-90).⁷ Sidney Lee stated that Shakespeare probably "consulted" the French text for his description of a horse in *Venus and Adonis*. Lever perceives an even more striking "consultation" of the (French) text (89).⁸ It is the occupational disease of source-hunters to see a bear in every bush," warns Lever. "[However,] all that Du Bartas said in praise of France might be applied to England. . . . As for the 'pearl of rich European bounds' [*O perle de l'Europe*]-how much more aptly could a jewel metaphor be applied to one's own island country! And so, in our view, the France of Du Bartas became Shakespeare's "This England."

This royall Throne of Kings, this sceptred Isle,
 This earth of Maiesty, this seate of Mars,
 This other Eden, DEMY PARADISE,
 This FORTRESSE built by Nature for herselfe,
 AGAINST INFECTION, AND THE HAND OF WARRE:
 This happy breed of men, this little world,
 This PRECIOUS STONE, SET IN THE SILUER SEA ...
 This blessed plot, this earth, this Realme, this England,
 This NURSE, this TEEMING WOMBE of Royall Kings,
 Fear'd by their breed, and famous for their birth. *Richard II* (II:1:40-46, 50-52)

[O mille et mille fois terre heureuse et feconde!
 O perle de l'Europe! ô paradis du monde!
 France je te salue, ô mere de guerriers,
 Qui jadis ont planté leurs triomphans lauriers
 Sur les rives d'Euphrate, et sanglanté leur glaive
 Où la torche du jour et se couche et se leve;
 Mere de tant d'esprits qui de sçavoir espuisent
 Egypte, Grece, Rome, et sur les doctes luisent
 Comme un jaune esclattant sur les palles couleurs,
 Sur les Phebus, et sa fleur sur les fleurs. 2nd Week, 2nd Day (2: 709-20)]

Another kind of linkage between the two poets might be an image that Shakespeare delighted in repeating, and which may originate in Du Bartas. Lever offers the following quatrain of Du Bartas on the lark and its possible offspring in Shakespeare (82). (Sylvester tran.: JF)

Du Bartas:
 La gentile Alouëtte avec son tyre-lire
 Tire l'yre à l'iré & tiri-lyrant vire
 Vers la voute du Ciel, puis son vol vers ce lieu
 Vire, & desire dire, adieu Dieu, adieu Dieu. 1st Week, 5th Day (2: 615-18)

Sylvester:
 The prettie Larke, climbing the Welkin cleere,
 Chaunts with a cheere, heere peere-I neere my Deere;
 Then stooping thence (seeming her fall to rew)
 Adiew (she saith) adiew, Deere, Deere adiew (2: 661-64)

Shakespeare:
 Ile say yon gray is not the mornings eye,
 'Tis but the pale reflex of Cinthias brow.
 Nor that is not [the] Larke whose noates do beate
 THE VAULTY HEAVEN so high above our heads. R&J: (III:5:19-22)

Haplye I thinke on thee, and then my state,
 Like to the Larke at breake of daye arising
 From sullen earth SINGS HIMNS at Heaven's gate. Sonnet XXIX (10-12)

The Larke, THAT TIRRA LYRA CHAUNTS. Winter's Tale (IV:3:9)

Note also line 853 of *Venus and Adonis*: “Lo, here the gentle lark, weary of rest.” Looking back to “La gentile Alouëtte,” we hear “La” echoed in “Lo,” find “gentile” literally translated, in parallel six-syllable blocks of verse. Nor ought we to overlook *Cymbeline*, II:3:21: “Hark, hark, the lark at Heaven’s gate sings.”

Oxford and Du Bartas wrote contemporaneously. How can we know that Du Bartas didn’t get his lark quatrain from something of Oxford’s? We can’t. But there are certain inferences we can make. A. H. Upham reports that “there is abundant evidence that, prior to the appearance of Sylvester’s translation and independent of his influence, the literary men of England were entirely familiar with this French master” (166). Thus, Du Bartas was available in books for Oxford, whereas Du Bartas would have been largely dependent on cross-channel manuscripts for his availability to an Oxford influence. Not impossible, the Oxford-to-Du Bartas influence, but less probable. Having said that, let us nevertheless concede the probability that the poets would have engaged in a correspondence.

Interlude with Aristotle

For the advocate of Oxford-as-Shakespeare, a particular speculation must eventually coalesce in consciousness: how much Du Bartas in Shakespeare would justify calling him the “voice” of Du Bartas? How much, like porridge, would be too much? How much too little? How much just right? What about instances and their numerousness, of Du Bartas to be found in other writers of the age? Whatever the niggling considerations that might be raised—and setting aside this vexed issue of quantity—as we have seen above, Du Bartas is dramatically present in Shakespeare, in the opinion of a respectable Stratfordian scholar.

Returning to Lapworth (and the root question that drives this inquiry), what was his reason for surreptitiously calling Oxford the voice of Du Bartas in a eulogy ostensibly devoted to the praise of Josuah Sylvester? Oxford’s (signed) published work is juvenilia, and long out of date by 1605. It is also meagre: one does, after all, require some minimum of quantity out of which to form an opinion on quality. In its final distillation, the essence of the dilemma of E. L. Oxon. comes down to this: the Oxford of public record is not qualified to occupy the office of the “voice” of Du Bartas, which a close reading of the Oxon. eulogy insists that he must. And it can hardly be that he might have been granted the rods of office, if he is truly the historico-literary small potatoes that he appears in the public record, as that would run counter to the point of the nicely wrought clandestinity of the E. L. Oxon. message.

If logic in its worldly applications were convincing and not merely persuasive (on occasion), Saint Anselm would fill the churches, and we would fly fearlessly and drive white knuckled. With that proviso in mind let us at least see how an application of logic-based

inquiry might clarify the welter of uncertainties infesting the preceding paragraphs. Although not strictly a true major premise, I shall treat the following statement as if it were.

X is A: Oxford is the “true voice” of Du Bartas.

I make the statement *X is A* with confidence because I maintain that a close reading of E. L. Oxon. allows no other interpretation. But candor is a virtue (although not a necessity) in a researcher, and the conclusion to which I have been compelled receives, confessedly, no support in the contemporary literature. If *X is A* is ever to be more than Anselmish words on a page, this deficiency shall have to be made good. On the strength of the scholarly revelations of F.W. Lever above, let be proposed: *Y is A*. Shakespeare is “the voice”—or, at minimum, “a voice”—of Du Bartas.

The minimalist, “a voice” statement is entirely justified on the strength of the evidence found in the Lever material. We can never successfully determine the satisfactory amount of Du Bartas in Shakespeare that would make him “the voice”; and too much of the Frenchman—another indeterminable quantity, although, like art and pornography, you may feel that you know it when you see it—begins to trivialize the statement, as it moves in the axiomatic direction of the assertion that the sun rises in the east.

Girding our loins in Robert Browning’s asseveration that a man’s reach should exceed his grasp (or what’s a heaven for?), we move to the conclusion:

X is Y: Oxford is Shakespeare.

Browning, were he among us, might object that this was not the heaven he had in mind; still, there are some for whom it will serve as its earthly, flickery shadow on the wall.

From the perspective of the heading anagram, Iosua Silvester Anagr: *Verè Os Salustii* (Josuah Sylvester, truly the voice of Du Bartas), the conclusion *X is Y* possesses merit, as it permits the continued existence of the two voices, the public and the initiate, of the Oxon. eulogy. The conclusive statement, “*X is Y:* Oxford is Shakespeare,” in no way impinges upon or abridges Sylvester’s rightful public claim to quantitative “voiceship,” as such office inheres in his being Du Bartas’s principal translator. If we recall Upham’s statement that Sylvester at times took *Divine Weeks* (unwittingly) “near the boundaries of satire,” we may conceive that Sylvester, in the estimation of Lapworth, had been barred from the qualitative voiceship because he lacked the poetic soul. It must have been for this that the eulogist mocked him. Consistent with and confirmatory of the antecedent logic, the close analysis performed earlier on E. L. Oxon. has revealed the presence of a second, parabolic voice speaking through the poem, which can be best understood by apprehending it as the qualitative voiceship in the dual valence of *vere*: “*VERE* truly [*vere*] the voice. . . .”

We have seen that the Oxford of public record has no claim to being the “voice” of Du Bartas, but that a scrupulous exegesis of E. L. Oxon. obliges that he be installed in that office. This apparently intractable paradox vanishes with the attribution of the works of Shake-

spere to Oxford. The Oxon. eulogy is now seen to function without strain at its profane and arcane levels of signification: for the two messages, a public and an occult, two voices. If Oxford is Shakespeare, we now possess the body of work upon which a qualitative judgement may be assessed. Does Shakespeare have Bartassian soul? He does in the view of Lever, exceeding, even, in soulfulness the original itself when we compare the “France” of Du Bartas with “This England” of Shakespeare. Finally, as noted above, Oxford-as-Shakespeare, provides the temporal and linguistic connection that bonds in earthly time and space the soulful union of Du Bartas and “Shakespeare.”

“Know ye not this parable?” in the parabolic nature of the Oxon. eulogy, with its two levels of truth? In 1605 the dispensation of learning was still ecclesiastical; hence our *clerisy*, an old term for the body of the formally educated, the intelligentsia, the chattering class. Its living cousins *cleric* and *clergy* also reflect the former churchly dispensation of higher learning. Such a ployplot, authoritarian, religion- and cabal-steeped age as Shakespeare’s must have created in its clerisy a human consciousness supremely capable of sustained, multi-layered, symbol-connected thought. As we go back to Du Bartas, it seems fit to add to the sum of ambiguity and uncertainty. Oxford’s being the “voice” of Du Bartas can also be understood as his being a source for Bartassian song. Thus we cannot know absolutely who first thrilled to whose lark.

Encore Du Bartas

Du Bartas, the man for whom Oxford was declared the “voice” by Edward Lapworth, was born into a merchant family, in Montford, in the region of Gascony (Holmes et al. 3 ff.). In 1564 he went to Toulouse to study the law, at which time he began to write poetry. He first published in 1574 and in 1576 entered the service of Henry of Navarre. In 1578 he published the *Premiere Semaine ou Creation du Monde*, the first half of a projected two-part *Semaines*. In 1580 he was granted a yearly pension by Navarre as a gentilhomme-servant, and probably began the composition of the *Seconde Semaine* at Bartas, his estate, during an extended lull in the religious strife between Catholic and Huguenot.

At the end of 1586, James VI of Scotland (who would become James I of England) wrote to Du Bartas, inviting him to visit the Scottish Court during the following summer. When Navarre got wind of this, he enlarged the trip into a diplomatic mission to Elizabeth and James. Du Bartas arrived in England in May, 1587, where he was received with great fervor before traveling on to Scotland. He spent his last years of military service as a “cornet of cavalry,” and died in July, 1590, at Bartas, of “general fatigue and old wounds ill-healed.”

The two poets were true contemporaries, with but six years separating the elder Du Bartas from Oxford. Their public writing careers (unpreserved Court productions and a smattering

of published poetry must count for “public” with Oxford) would have begun close together in time. In Du Bartas, Oxford may have admired the warrior-poet that he could never be. The poets could have met on at least two occasions: in 1575-76 during Oxford’s continental tour and in 1587, when Du Bartas visited England.

The *Semaines* of Du Bartas were divided into seven “Days.” Only the first *Semaine* ran the full seven days; the second was broken off incomplete at the completion of the Fourth Day, upon the death of the author. Holmes, Lyon, and Linker report without suspicion:

We can date . . . the revised edition of the *Seconde Semaine* from a letter written by Du Bartas on September 12, 1584, to Francis Bacon who was at Bordeaux. Du Bartas desired to send a message to Queen Elizabeth and he needed the advice of the English Chancellor [sic]. His friends in Paris who had seen to the printing of the *Seconde Semaine* had removed the name of an individual close to Bacon. Du Bartas promised to give this person justice in the Fifth Day of the work, which alas! has never come to light. (18, 19)

Susan Snyder points out that the letter from Du Bartas cited in HLL must have been written, not to Francis Bacon, but to his brother, Anthony, since Francis was in England at the time and involved in the pursuit of his own political ambitions (1: 15 fn). (Oxford and the Bacons were cousins by affinity. The sister of Mildred Cecil, Oxford’s mother-in-law, was married to Nicholas Bacon, father of Anthony and Francis.)

In view of its potential significance, Du Bartas’s letter would seem worthy of a look:

Je suis bien marry que quelqu’un de mes amys que vous cognoissés bien, à qui j’avois donné charge de voir à Paris ma *Seconde Semaine*, en ayt osté le nom de l’homme que vous sçavez et qui vous appartient, mais je luy garde au cinquiesme jour ung lieu honorable ainsy que vous le verrés, avec l’aide de Dieu, bien tost.

I am quite saddened that one of my friends whom you know well, and to whom I had given responsibility for my *Second Week* at Paris, has removed from it the name of the man of whom you are aware and who is connected to you; but I am holding him back for the fifth day, an honorable place as you will soon see, with the help of God. (Holmes et al. 201).

At all events, the *Seconde Semaine* remained incomplete beyond the Fourth Day at the death of Du Bartas in 1590. To whom was it that Du Bartas was prevented by that fell sergeant, Death, from paying tribute? We wish we knew.

Enter Ben Jonson

That Ben Jonson should have been absent as a eulogist from the 1605 edition of *Divine Weeks* is not surprising, as he had expressed a distaste for the work of Du Bartas. Anne Lake Prescott reports that Ben was “one of the few writers” not under the spell of Du Bartas, remarking that “Jonson was perverse enough to say that Du Bartas was not a poet ‘but a Verser, because he wrote not Fiction” (quoting William Drummond 175). There could have been no reasonable expectation for Jonson’s admiring the English reprise of the second fiddler, Sylvester, when he held that the French original of the first fiddler was defective. Thus, Jonson’s enlistment in the squad of Sylvester’s published admirers in a later publishing of the 1605 edition seems less esthetic than politic. Later Jonson withdrew even his conditioned praise of the 1605 edition when he declared that, at the time of his writing the eulogy to Sylvester, his French was not good enough for him to appreciate Sylvester’s inadequacy (Snyder 1: 20 fn).

Like Jonson’s honorific verse in the First Folio of 1623, his 14 lines to Sylvester are masterly delphic. Strongly reminiscent of elements of the Folio introductory verse, Jonson’s poem demands examination:

If to admire were to commend, my Praise
 Might then both thee, thy worke, and merit raise;
 But, as it is (the Child of Ignorance,
 And utter stranger to all ayre of France)
 How can I speake of thy great paynes, but erre:
 Since they can only Judge, that can conferre? [compare]
 Behold! The reverend Shade of BARTAS stands
 Before my thought, and (in thy right) commaunds
 That to the world I publish for him, This;
 BARTAS doth wish thy English now were His.
 So well in that are his Inventions wrought,
 As His will now be the Translation thought,
 Thine the Originall; and France shall boast
 No more those mayden glories she hath lost.

“But these wayes,” Jonson declares within the first six lines of the Folio introduction to the apostrophized Shakespeare, “Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise.” Jonson then expounds for ten lines on the perilous ease by which one may fundamentally misconceive the nature and works of Shakespeare. The Folio passage would function adequately as the gist of Jonson’s Sylvester eulogy. Next, compare in their identity of end-rhyme and professed irresolution the following lines of the Sylvester eulogy with the ensuing couplet from the First Folio:

If to admire were to commend, my Praise
Might then both thee, thy worke, and merit raise.

Or crafty Malice, might pretend this praise,
And thinke to ruine where it seem'd to raise.

Moreover it seems that Jonson continued to hear, “But, as it is (the Child of Ignorance. . . .),” in line 3 of the Sylvester poem when he wrote in line 70 of the First Folio, “As brandish’t at the eyes of Ignorance.” Observe the metathesis in “But, as / As brandish’t,” and the shared long-i sounds of “Child” and “eyes.” Between the Jonson encomiums of *Divine Weeks* and the First Folio, we observe commonality of theme in Jonson’s admitted need to praise in a manner he would not have chosen freely, and echoes of conception and language.

If we embrace Oxford as Shakespeare, and commit Jonson’s eulogy (superficially to Sylvester in the heading) to the headsman’s block, much falls into place. Suppose that in his 1605 eulogy, Jonson was moved, whether by the internal pull of loyalty and honor or by the external push of his agency in a concealed policy, to secretly apostrophize, not Sylvester, but Oxford, in his writerly office of “Shakespeare.” When it fell to Jonson eighteen or so years later in 1623 to compose his splendid, enigmatic encomium to Shakespeare, he would return—unremarkably, if this analysis has caught the truth—to the “Sylvester” eulogy for the speck of matter around which to express the nacre of the immortal First Folio eulogy.

One conscious of Occam’s razor and proposing that a eulogy to Sylvester ought to be understood as simply that—a eulogy to Sylvester—runs into a complication of his own. Why would Ben Jonson, setting out to panegyricize Shakespeare—“Soule of the Age! The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!”—resort for a fresh beginning to his 18-year-old disingenuous accolade to, by his lights, a second-rate translation of a second-rate original, which he didn’t mean anyway? If Oxford, refining the ore of Du Bartas into the golden phrases of Shakespeare, is the secret addressee of Jonson’s Sylvester eulogy, then the apparent improbability of that poem’s being the source of Jonson’s First Folio verse is accounted for.

R.R.’s poem

If Jonson’s poem should arrest us as concealed praise of Oxford, the matching late-added eulogy over R.R. (who is not otherwise identified) will engross us symmetrically as an attack on Oxford and a defense of Sylvester; something which ought not to surprise us greatly when we recall that in the Oxon eulogy Lapworth made considerable sport of Sylvester’s Du Bartas. R.R.’s poem is a work of six stanzas and 36 lines. (There is also a Latin tag beneath the poem: “*Malum patienti Lucrum*”: For the patient man the apple drops as profit.)

In Commendation of this worthie Worke.

Foole that I was; I thought in younger times,
That all the Muses had their graces sowne
In *Chaucers*, *Spencers*, and sweet *Daniels* Rimes;
(So, good seemes best, where better is unknowne)
While thus I dream't, my buisie phantasie,
Bod me awake, open mine eyes, and see

How SALUST's English Sun (our SYLVESTER)
Makes Moone and Starres to vaile; and how the *Sheaves*
Of all his *Brethren*, bowing, doo *preferre*
His *Fruites* before their Winter-shaken *Leaves*:
So much (for *Matter*, and for *Manner* too)
Hath He out-gon those that the rest out-goe:

Let *Gryll* be *Gryll*: let *Envie's* vip'rous seed
Gnaw-forth the brest which bred and fed the same;
Rest safe (sound Truth from feare is ever freed)[;]
Malice may barke, but shall not bite thy Name:
JOSUA thy Name with BARTAS name shall live,
For double life you each to other give.

But, Mother *Envie*, if this *Arras* spunne
Of *golden* threds be seene of *English* eyes,
Why then (alas) our *Cob-webs* are undone:
But She, more subtile, then religious-wise,
Hatefull, and hated, proud, and ignorant,
Pale, swolne as Toade (though customed to vaunt)

Now holds her *Peace*: but O, what Peace hath She
With *Vertue*? none: Therefore, defie her frowne.
Gainst greater force growes greater victorie:
As Camomile, the more you tread it downe,
The more it springs: *Vertue* despightfully
Used, doth use the more to fructifie,

And so do Thou, until thy *Mausole* rare
 Do fill this World with Wonderment; and, [so] that
 In *Venus* Forme no clumsie-fist may dare
 To meddle with thy Pensill and thy Plat;
 I feare [for] thy life more, till thy goale be runne,
 Then Wife [for] her Spouse, or Father feares [for] his Sonne.

In a cursory reading—which we shall repeat and render uncursory—the first two stanzas seem conventional hyperbole, in comparing Sylvester favorably to Chaucer, Spencer, and Daniel.

But now observe that a radical change in the eulogizer's state of mind, or even an incur-sive disturbance in his emotional equilibrium, takes place between the second and third stanzas, reflected in both tone and subject matter. "Let *Gryll* be *Gryll*" begins the third stanza. Susan Snyder catches in it a crib from the *Faerie Queene*: "Let *Grill* be *Grill* and have his hog-gish mind" (2: xii 87). Citing Spenser, the OED defines the term as "a quasi-proper name for a person of low tastes or lazy habits." Next the author invites *Envie* to bore its way out of the breast that has succored it. He then assures Sylvester that the bark of Malice is worse than its bite, which cannot injure his name, JOSUA. The concluding two lines of the stanza ring a change on the most common theme among the set of eulogies, that Sylvester and Du Bartas reciprocally vivify each other.

All the mouth and teeth imagery of the third stanza are best interpreted as a response to similar imagery in Lapworth's sham eulogy to Sylvester: Lapworth mentions the "envious mouth" of Zoilus (l: 15); he warns Sylvester about being attacked "by the biting teeth of a more impure Mouth" (2: 22, 23). R.R. makes of Malice a dog in describing it as barking. Like Andrew Hannas, he may recognize conceivable puns in Oxford's "cur" (l: 1), with the meanings of "why" in Latin, and "no-account dog" in English; and in "canis" (l: 17), a purely Latin pun, with the possible meanings of "dog" and "you sing," the latter its meaning in the Lapworth eulogy. And not to overlook the obvious, there is the density of 14 instances of OS, "MOUTH," in the Lapworth, a poem of 24 lines. The irony here is that the bark and bite against which R.R. warns Sylvester are in the duplicitous encomium of Edward Lapworth to Josuah Sylvester!

The first three lines of the chaotic fourth stanza contain abstruse imagery pertaining to that which is woven (*Arras*, *golden* threads, *Cob-webs*). *Arras* can only stand for some cabal, the seeing-*through* of which (for surely this is the true sense of the line) will also prove the undoing of the cabalists. The eyes which must not penetrate "this *Arras* spunne of *golden* threads" are English eyes. It is their recognition of the deception that will undo the schemers. But what is the deception? And why would R.R. muse publicly upon his misgivings concerning an undefined intrigue to which he is a party and which has hints of treason, in an age

in which authority moved savagely and ruthlessly against threats to the state? What can these lines be but self-destructive madness—miraculously published—or some unfathomed device of policy?

In any case, the theme which connects all is the author's harangue upon *Envie*, now re-imagined as Mother *Envie*. (Or does *Envie*, like Grendel, have a mother?). Some of the descriptive specifics of *Envie* seem drawn from lines of Sylvester in *Divine Weeks* wherein he speaks of "Foule squinting *Envie*" and "her Toad-like-swelling anger".. (*Second Week, First Day, "The Furies,"* 2: 659, 662). The attack spills into the fifth stanza. "Mother *Envie* . . . Now holds her *Peace*; but O, what *Peace* hath She / With *Vertue*?" "O" calls irresistibly to mind the many O's to be found in Oxford's eulogy, which themselves lead back to "Oxford"; and the pun in *Vertue* on "Vere," echoes Oxford's surname. R.R. has come to the defense of Sylvester against Lapworth's sniping at Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas. He sees Lapworth (laboring as Oxford's mouthpiece) as consumed with *Envie* at the superior rendition of Du Bartas by Sylvester. He speaks of Mother *Envie* "Now hold[ing] her *Peace*." This may be an allusion to the fact that Oxford was no longer alive at the time of publication, which may also be hinted at in "*Malum patienti Lucrum*." If nothing else, R.R. grimly triumphant, may be implying that Sylvester has, at worst, outlived Oxford.

To a contemporary reader, *Vertue* may have seemed a daring pun. It derives from the Latin *virtus*, "virtue," in its enervated modern English sense. The Latin form was composed of a root, *vir*, man, in the sense of he-man, and *-tus*, a suffix added to form an abstract noun. It really means manliness, the condition of being a *mensch*, a combination of strength, virility and morality. *Vertue*, then, in these circumstances, would have had something of the connotation of, the quality of being (the man) *Vere*. R.R. takes liberties with *Vertue* a second time, comparing it to camomile which, the more it is trodden down, "The more it springs." There is some confusion of image here; but to think that R.R. should speak of *Ver[e]tue* being "despightfully Used," is cause for a certain admiration, although he will extend the metaphor into the final stanza, where he connects it to Sylvester, the fervor of righteous retaliation ever in advance of logic and artistic judgement, in this headlong poem. (The common variant of the day, *Vertue* is also the form of the word where it is found in the original *Sonnets*. As we ease our understanding of the text with modernized spelling, we at the same time risk the loss of information contained in the original orthography.)

Taking up in excess of two stanzas, malevolent envy in its permutations constitutes the focus of the eulogy. We saw above the connections, linguistic and thematic, subsisting between Jonson's Sylvester eulogy and his First Folio panegyric to Shakespeare. If Oxford was the concealed addressee of Ben Jonson's eulogy to Sylvester, later, when Jonson looked back to it to indite the Folio verse and remembered, or chanced to examine again, or had never forgotten, the phillipic of R.R. against Oxford, he may have been moved to begin:

To draw no envy (Shakespeare) on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy Booke, and Fame.

In such fashion can Jonson's otherwise abrupt and question-begging opening be revealed and comprehended, by its insertion into a hitherto unobserved causal chain.

Joseph Sobran notes a great similarity between Jonson's Folio eulogy and a commendatory poem in *The Faerie Queene* over the pseudonymous motto "Ignoto" ("Anonymous"); the commendatory poem "sounds very much like Shakespeare," in the opinion of Charlton Ogburn and others. "Ben Jonson paraphrases it," remarks Sobran, "with deliberate echoes, in the opening lines of his 1623 Folio eulogy. . . . Jonson's sixteen-line exordium is little more than a paraphrase of the rest of Ignoto's poem" (173-74). Recognizing the fore-and-aft temporal relationship between Ignoto and Jonson, we might well find traces of the former in the latter. All the same, the proximate source is most likely Jonson's Sylvester eulogy, with the "praise-raise" end rhyme common to the Sylvester and Folio eulogies, together with the "ignorance"-terminated lines in each eulogy, trumping the Ignoto source.

In the final stanza, R.R., with two missions in mind for him, adjures Sylvester to persevere and grow stronger, like the resilient, trodden-upon chamomile. First, by doing so his literary reputation will grow so vast that his tomb will "fill this World with Wonderment." And, second, he should armor himself in renown, "[so] that / In Venus Forme no clumsie-fist may dare / To meddle with thy Pensill and thy Plat." The "meddling" of which R.R. speaks can only be, as the evidence will show, that of one writer, the Earl of Oxford by necessary implication and in respect of all that has gone before in this eulogy, interfering in some way with another writer, Josuah Sylvester. (Could it be that R.R. also believed Oxford to be the author of "E. L. Oxon.?"?)

The expression "clumsie-fist" is open to two readings. R.R. may be denigrating Oxford's excellence as a poet (in comparison to Sylvester?), or he may be pointing at the none-too-covert power-play betokened in the insertion of Lapworth's posturing eulogy among the genuine eulogies, the wolfish earl in disguise among the sheep. I find the latter interpretation more probable. (In this final stanza it seems as if Lapworth has retired behind the curtain, and Oxford has stepped or been shoved forward.)

The meddling is "In Venus Forme." As the imagery within the eulogy and the larger milieu of *Divine Weeks* limit the conflict to the field of literature, one casts about for a way *not* to understand "Venus" as an allusion to the *Venus and Adonis* of Shakespeare. Joseph Sobran observes that "from 1593 to 1598, William Shakespeare was identified in print, not as a playwright, but as the author of two splendid and popular poems: *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594)" (212). In light of Sobran's statement on the popularity of V&A and *Lucrece* in the 1590's, and the date of publication of *Divine Weeks*, 1605, one may

interpret the salacious “*Venus [?and Adonis]*” as continuing to serve R.R. for a contemptuous synecdoche of the man and his work. (But of which man, Shakespeare or Oxford?) Lest we miss his point, and to drive home with bravura the import of that potent little phrase, “In *Venus Forme*,” R.R. has composed his eulogy in the *Venus and Adonis* stanza, the “*Venus Forme*,” bearding thereby the literary lion (but which lion?) in his den.

The final two lines of the poem only add puzzlement. R.R. voices grave concern that, in publishing the *Divine Weeks*, Sylvester has aroused a deadly enemy. Sylvester had been publishing fragments of Du Bartas since 1590; what was so different now? One must suppose that in the view of R.R. the publication of the 1605 Oxon. eulogy had rendered suddenly and personally dangerous the act of translating Du Bartas. Nevertheless, to read of the life of Josuah Sylvester in Susan Snyder’s biography is to read the story of a man struggling for most of his life to provide for a growing family on slender and fluctuating means (1: 4 ff.) Surely Sylvester had more to fear from the wolf at the door than from the wolfish Earl at the door.

In all fairness, R.R.’s bitter denunciation of Oxford-in-Lapworth has merit. Lapworth’s eulogy was worse than hostile to Sylvester; it mocked him. R.R., doubtless a Puritan himself, would have filled with anger to see the decade-and-a-half of industry put forth by his co-religionist, Josuah Sylvester, made to serve the purpose of a sneering, decadent, aristocrat-poet. The supreme outrage must have reposed in Lapworth’s consigning to the butt of persiflage the huge accomplishment of Sylvester in translating 20,000 lines of rhyming French alexandrines into that many and more heroic couplets of English. In comparison to this, what had Oxford (as Shakespeare) to show but some comparatively exiguous and altered borrowings into his own works? To R.R., can the insertion of the Oxon eulogy in 1605 have but galled as the ultimate pulling of rank, taking place at the fault line of disjunctions in religion, class, literary taste, and naked power?

Oxford died in 1604. Thus, in compelling Lapworth’s eulogy on Sylvester’s printer or even more demeaning, on Sylvester himself, if it occurred so, had some agent of aristocracy or government exercised *force majeure*, and in behalf of the birth-fortunate, dissolute dead imposed an indignity upon the struggling, pious living? Not necessarily. Ruth Loyd Miller reports that Sylvester placed dedicatory epistles in the *Divine Weeks* to Susan Vere, Oxford’s daughter, and to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (292; Susan’s epistle not found in Snyder–JF). Herbert and his brother, Philip, Earl of Montgomery and husband of Susan Vere, were the “incomparable brethren” to whom the First Folio was dedicated. We cannot reject out of hand the conjecture that Sylvester may have been, if not collusive, at least not unwilling to go along.

R.R. unmasked

Let us review. In 1590, the devout Puritan, Josuah Sylvester, begins to publish translations of portions of the works of the Huguenot poet, Du Bartas (who dies in the same year). Sylvester continues to publish sporadically but steadily, until, in 1605, he publishes *Divine Weeks*, a nearly complete translation of the vast *Semaines* of Du Bartas. In the publication of 1605, one among ten encomiasts, Edward Lapworth, contributes a Latin poem of ill-defined authorship and superficial praise for Sylvester's translation. In fact, Lapworth is not too discretely dismissive of Sylvester's work, while claiming, by way of a Latin pun, that Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford (nominated by some as the living man behind the nom de plume, Shakespeare), is truly (*vere*) the voice of Du Bartas. In the course of succeeding editions, several new testifiers to the excellence of Sylvester's work are added to *Divine Weeks*, among them, in the 1611 edition, Ben Jonson and the otherwise unidentified "R.R."

Striking similarities in both language and thought point to Jonson's Sylvester eulogy as the source for his First Folio eulogy to Shakespeare. In the opening lines of the Folio eulogy, Ben reassures his dead "beloved Author" of his "ample[ness]" to "draw no envy" on his name. Such a stark, *in medias res* pledge strongly implies that Shakespeare has been subjected to public envy previously, and that the avoidance of any taint of it against Shakespeare is so important to Jonson that he begins his eulogy with two lines of envy disclaimer.

The eulogy of R.R. is an intemperate attack on Lapworth for belittling the work of Sylvester. R.R. claims that Lapworth (functioning as a kind of persona for Oxford) has been driven to deride Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas out of *Envie* (enlarged upon in two of six stanzas) for the surpassing excellence of *Divine Weeks*. The great wonder in R.R.'s eulogy is that it contains an apparent swipe at Shakespeare as well. The vehemence, or unbalance, even, of R.R.'s attack on the overweening *Envie* of Lapworth as he speaks for Oxford, for the artistry of Josuah Sylvester evokes the inference that Jonson has the eulogy of R.R. in mind when he indites the Folio introduction, or that he may even be responding to it.

If Oxford is Shakespeare, the allusions to Oxford and Shakespeare in R.R.'s poem necessarily refer to one man; and, in fact, the language of R.R.'s eulogy gives us no cause to think that there is more than one target for his indignation. If we accept Jonson's eulogy as truly intended for Sylvester, it becomes a model of insincerity, for which there is no compulsory disbarment. However, if we understand it as covertly addressed to Oxford, an Oxford who is Shakespeare, it becomes more comprehensible. For not being fraudulent, it becomes a noble composition; Jonson now is honestly extolling the lesser quantity of accomplished transformations of Du Bartas in Shakespeare, instead of having to lift up his voice with eyes rolling to commend the elephantine *Divine Weeks*. More important, it explains why Jonson returned to his faux praise of Josuah Sylvester in order to commence his moving eulogy to Shakespeare.

He didn't return to his faux praise: he honestly eulogized the same man twice, Oxford *sub rosa* in the *Divine Weeks* of 1605 and "Shakespeare" sixteen or eighteen years later, in 1623; but in neither instance would circumstances permit the identification of Oxford by name.

Such was the point reached and the inferences arrived at in trying to make sense of the Jonson and R.R. eulogies as discrete productions, and in their relationship to each other. Still, the eulogy signed R.R. remained troublesome, and not wholly revealed behind its cryptic imagery. I continued to read it and read it again. It is a bad—more precisely, it is an incoherent—poem, but primarily because it is jammed too full of thought and image for the lineage to bear the load. The elements of the poem are dynamic, but like pieces from different puzzles thrown together on a tabletop, they fit only now and again. Especially frustrating was an inability to square the chimerical farrago of stanzas 3 through 6 with the beautiful and dramatic opening, "Foole that I was"—hardly the declaration of a genuine fool—or with the striking authoritativeness in lines 2 and 3 in the remark on the Muses: Chaucer, Spencer, and Daniel (with Shakespeare, as usual, on the roster of missing persons).

Then it struck me: this is Ben Jonson, too! (Neither the *Dictionary of National Biography* nor the *Cambridge History of English Literature* offers a plausible author in a field of several "R.R." candidates.) And of course! Both poems enter *Divine Weeks*—simultaneously, perhaps—in a later publication of the 1605 edition. Jonson's 1623 Folio eulogy to Shakespeare appears to have its source in his Sylvester eulogy. Because R.R. leveled so upon *Envie* in his eulogy, and because Jonson commences the Folio eulogy directly abjuring envy, I identified Jonson's Sylvester eulogy (understood to secretly honor Oxford) as the natural source from which to derive the inditement of the First Folio eulogy. The weakness of this interpretation lay in the random and singular good luck, for Jonson, of a distraught Puritan, R.R., happening upon the scene, who wished to publish a frenzied commendation to *Divine Weeks*, and off which Jonson was able to bank his Folio introduction. In view of the apparent Oxfordian and Shakespearean referents in R.R.'s eulogy, it seems more sensible to suppose that Jonson, a professional creator of character in his own right, simply made up "R.R." and his eulogy as they fulfilled his purpose; both the Jonson and R.R. eulogies came from one mind and pen, the mind and pen of Ben Jonson.

If the eulogy over R.R. were actually by Ben Jonson, then echoes of it in form, phrase, and word might be found in the Jonson canon. Addressing first the matter of form, William Drummond recorded Jonson's declaration that couplets are "the bravest sort of verses, especially when they are broken, like hexameters." Andrew Hannas observes that:

. . . by 'broken, like hexameters' Jonson means having a principal caesura or rhetorical pause—generally near the middle of the line—in imitation of the classical dactylic hexameter, the form used for epic verse. In English such pause would be emphasized

by a comma or stronger punctuation; indeed, the medially pointed, rhymed couplet (pentameter or tetrameter) is arguably Jonson's signature verse-form. Though the "R.R." poem uses the ababcc stanza in imitation of *Venus and Adonis*, its punctuation shows at least 22 medial caesuras out of the 36 lines. As for the rhyme-form, Jonson did in fact choose the ababcc form for Epigrams VIII and XVII.⁹

Concerning word or phrase in R.R. also to be found in Jonson, two were found, both from the *Under-Woods* collection of Jonson's poems, printed posthumously in 1640 (earlier publications cannot be precluded; only Jonson's poetry was canvassed). Compare line 1, stanza 3, from the eulogy of R.R., "Let Gryll be Gryll: let *Envie's* vip'rous seed," with line 1 from *Under-Woods* 73, "Look up thou seed of envy, and still bring. . . ." Here again are the first 3 lines from stanza 4, of R.R.'s eulogy:

But Mother *Envie*, if this Arras spunne
Of *golden* threds be seene of *English* eyes,
Why then (alas) our *Cob-Webs* are undone.

Compare them with lines 3-6 below from *Under-Woods* 84.9. This poem is a lengthy segment from a very long poem (*Eupheme*) of ten parts dedicated to Lady Venetia Digby. The ninth poem was a eulogy composed for the passing of Lady Digby. It was titled, "Elegie on my muse." This work comes very near the end of *Under-Woods* and in the vicinity of poems entered with dates in the 1630's. It would appear to have been written well after the R.R. eulogy passage.

The spirit that I wrote with, and conceiv'd,
All that was good, or great in me she weav'd,
And set forth; the rest were Cobwebs fine,
Spun out in name of some of the old Nine!

Between these two passages there is, first, identity of vocabulary: *Cob-webs*-Cobwebs and spunne-Spun. Both treat as a metaphor something woven: in R.R., "this Arras spunne / of *golden* threds"; in *Under-Woods*, "All that was good, or great in me she weav'd." What the Arras represents R.R. does not reveal, although its being spun from golden threads implies something valuable or noble in nature. The inestimable value of Lady Digby's "weaving" is manifest. In conspicuous, parallel extensions of ideation, "cobwebs" represent slippages from the ideal state. In R.R., for reasons not explained, if the *golden* Arras is seen by English eyes, it may succumb to effortless destruction, like the easy ruination of the work of spiders. In *Under-Woods*, Jonson declares that verse-making *not* inspired by Lady Digby was but the work of spiders.

Lady Digby, as befits a muse, is a powerful, benignant, maternal force. So, inexplicably, is Mother *Envie*, for she is apostrophized—and rather appealed to—by R.R. What makes Mother *Envie* and her three lines so extraordinary is, apart from the tag *Envie*, the totality of their conceptual isolation from the *Envie* that went before and the *Envie* that follows. The *Envie* in the van is associated by R.R. with louts, vipers, and snapping dogs. The *Envie* that brings up the rear continues female, but R.R.'s description of her puts one more in mind of the Whore of Babylon than of the Heliconian sisters. It is difficult to countenance the notion that the Lady Digby and Mother *Envie* passages are unrelated, if substance and weight are to be assigned to textual conformities, and that consequently there exists the likelihood that both passages were written by Ben Jonson.

Since the publication of "Enter Ben Jonson" in the *Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter* (fall, 1997/winter, 1998), I have received the following critical insights from Fran Gidley of Baytown, Texas. Gidley offered a gentle reproof for the overlooking of "a rich source for commentary" in these lines of R.R.:

As Camomile, the more you tread it downe,
The more it springs: Vertue despightfully
Used, doth use the more to fructifie.

Gidley points out their unmistakable relationship to the following lines from *1 Henry IV* (II:4: 374-78) in which Falstaff assumes the role of King Henry and admonishes his "son" Prince Hal:

Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied: for though the camomile, the more it is trodden on the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted the sooner it wears.

"Falstaff's words," Gidley comments, "about camomile parody a line from one of John Lyly's *Euphues* books; so the source for 'R.R.'s' camomile Euphuism could either be Shakespeare or Lyly, or both. In Ben Jonson's First Folio commendation, 'Lily' is named as one of the poets/playwrights outshone by Shakespeare. Lyly's *Euphues and His England* was dedicated to Oxford. Hence the 'Camomile' in 'R.R.'s' verse can be seen as a further linkage to Ben Jonson, Shakespeare, and Oxford.

"I think that Ben Jonson was doing to poor Sylvester precisely what he explained how to do in his First Folio commendatory verse:

For seeliest Ignorance on these [viz. "wayes"—which
"Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise"] may light,
Which, when it sounds at best, but eccho's right...

Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
 And thinke to ruine where it seem'd to raise:
 These are, as some infamous Baud, or Whore,
 Should praise a Matron. What could hurt her more? [2: 7,8, 11-14]

“Disguised as ‘R.R.,’ he craftily concocted a perfectly wretched poem, a bawd of a poem, thinking to ruin where he seemed to raise. To the ignorant the wild hyperbole would sound like praise. But he didn’t care what they thought. This Sylvester poem was for the wise and knowing, who could catch the various allusions—and who would gleefully relish the juxtaposition of those high-flown superlatives with the homely, ridiculous, and down-right repulsive images—‘buisie phantasie,’ ‘Gryll,’ ‘vip’rous seed / Gnaw-forth the brest,’ ‘bark . . . bite,’ ‘swolne as Toade,’ (of course the humble ‘Camomile’), ‘clumsie-fist . . . meddle.’ Don’t you agree?”

I do, my sibylline correspondent!

Why Ben did it

Let us hypothesize that Ben Jonson entered the two eulogies into the 1605 *Divine Weeks* to sustain Oxford’s connection to the works of Shakespeare. Whether Jonson acted on his own or as the agent of a hidden hand, we cannot know; but his function as a sympathetic agent seems the more likely. First, we must recognize the saliency in this regard of his editorship of the First Folio. The preceding years show this office to have been an earned attainment as well as a natural one. On December 27, 1604, six months after her father’s death, Oxford’s daughter, Susan Vere, in the pinnacle of the Court season, married Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery. Among the numerous dramatic presentations at Court in the winter of 1604-05 were two masques by Ben Jonson, in one of which, Susan, her husband, and her sister, Elizabeth, Countess of Derby, performed. “This was the beginning,” remarks Ruth Loyd Miller, “of a long and intimate association between the daughters of the Earl of Oxford, and their families, and Ben Jonson, an association climaxing in 1623 with the publication of the First Folio” (6).

The publication of Lapworth’s mock eulogy to Sylvester in 1605 implies that Oxford deceased continued to retain through living agents a post mortem power. This power was exerted again in the publication of the Jonson and R.R. eulogies of uncertain date, but before 1608. May we not descry deliberate concatenation from 1605 to 1623 through the mechanism of verse eulogies? Jonson’s Folio eulogy to Shakespeare of 1623 looked back to the Jonson and R.R. eulogies of a later 1605 publication. The loopy R.R. eulogy responded to the earlier E. L. Oxon. eulogy of 1605. Was the clutch of a long-term strategy engaged with the

publication of the Oxon. eulogy of the 1605 edition of *Divine Weeks*? Was this strategy advanced in the Jonson and R.R. eulogies, to be consummated in the retro-portentousness of Jonson's introductory verse to the First Folio of Shakespeare's Works, in 1623?

Reading it now as the work of Ben Jonson, let us look again at the eulogy of R.R. What we first took for addled sincerity we may now apprehend instead as purposeful farce, and a typically brilliant delivery of Jonsonian disinformation. Jonson may have decided that he could slip past more of the unsayable in R.R.'s overwrought jumble of image and rhetoric than by composing the conventional generic soporific commendation. Jonson's exploitation of the Arras is a wondrous plait of irony and subversion, and so let us look at it again:

But, Mother *Envie*, if this Arras spunne
of *golden* threds be seene of English eyes,
Why then (alas) our *Cob-webs* are undone.

Arras occurs twelve times in Shakespeare. Two instances involve neutral references to it as an item in the physical world. The remaining ten involve *the concealment of a character behind the arras*.

Arras is a loaded word in Shakespeare. Hamlet's killing of Polonius hiding behind the arras is a famous and dramatic moment in Shakespeare's chef d'oeuvre. If Oxford is Shakespeare, then of Oxford there may be much in Hamlet, and in Polonius, much of William Cecil, Elizabeth's principal advisor for nearly all of her reign and Oxford's maddening, antipodal Puritan father-in-law—and this latter perception by a decent consent of scholars.

In a pervious and tongue-in-cheek figure—pervious, that is, to Fran Gidley's cognoscenti—did Jonson put Oxford behind the arras of “Shakespeare”? Polonius, Cecil's burlesque, dies behind the arras. Is Shakespeare also fated to die to the world behind the realpolitik-driven anonymity of the arras of “Shakespeare”?—that is, if we may apply to his creator Hamlet's assurance that plays were “the abstract and brief chronicles of the time.” The splendid irony would not have been lost on the cognoscenti that it was the vast power of the *Regnum Cecilianum*, William first and Robert his son succeeding, that could ensure the historical suppression of their louche and extravagant dramatist kinsman behind the William-visor of “Shakespeare.” In their economy of symbol the three Arras lines capture the Jonsonian dilemma: to save the works the man may have to “die”; for to preserve publicly the identity of their author is to risk the works.

In light of what Hamlet goes on to say, we do well to remember that of the thirty-six plays of the First Folio, eighteen were published there for the first time; or, to approach the situation from the half-empty humor, eighteen plays remained in danger of loss or destruction until the time of their publication. Hamlet says to Polonius: “After your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their [the players'] ill report while you live.” We may confident-

ly believe that the matchless-arriviste Puritan Cecils among others, but the Cecils preeminently, would have grimly adhered to the poet Horace's philosophy of *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*, that concerning the dead say nothing but good, in the Stalinist elimination of all and any evidence that fell within their ambit that pointed to Oxford's identity, and therefore, potentially, their own connection with "Shakespeare."

The Mother-*Envie* lines are best conceived as alluding to the peremptory political and literary necessity of keeping hidden Oxford's authorship of the works of Shakespeare. There is in those three lines the hint of intercessory edict or plea: "Do not, I beg you, presume or attempt to see through this 'golden fabric'; for if you acquire a true understanding of it, you will destroy it." Needless to say, Jonson was addressing those readers who *could* see through the arras, and telling them, in effect, "keep your mouths shut about the true weaver at the loom." (The essence of the R.R. eulogy amounted to: "Hsst, Oxford is Shakespeare—now forget what you heard!" Pity Jonson, forced to carry water in a sieve, as he struggled simultaneously to connect and disconnect Oxford with the works and name of Shakespeare.) Would not many of the powerful and literary have agonized on this exigency, all the way up to the Du Bartas-loving James I? Lapworth's eulogy in the 1605 *Divine Weeks* (in which one is now inclined to detect the influence of Jonson) would have generated some stir among the informed, necessitating this elaborate spin-doctoring by Ben Jonson.

The 1621 edition of *Divine Weeks* may have contained the source or inspiration for Ben Jonson's verse composed for the Droeshout engraving and placed on the facing page, in the First Folio. Lucy Toulmin Smith deduces that "Jonson not improbably took the conceit in his last lines from the verses appended to the portrait of Du Bartas in Sylvester's editions of 1621, etc., a work to which Jonson had contributed a commendatory poem (Ingleby 142). They run thus:

Ces traits ou front de *Scavoir & d'Esprit*
 Ne sont que du BARTAS un ombre *exterieur*.
 Le Pinçeau n'en peut plus: Mais de sa propre Plume
 Il s'est peint le *Dedans*, dans son divin *Volume*.

Englished thus:

This Map of *Vertues* in a *Muse*-full Face;
 Are but a blush of BARTAS outward part.
 The Pencil could no more: but his owne Pen
 Limns him, *with-in*, the Miracle of Men."

The related Droeshout lines of Jonson:

O, could he but have drawne his wit
 As well in brasse, as he hath hit
 His face; the Print would then surpasse
 All, that was ever writ in brasse.
 But, since he cannot, Reader, looke,
 Not on his Picture, but his Booke.

The Ingleby extract raises questions. Jonson wrote quantities of occasional poetry and would not have required either the French commendation or its English translation to prime the lyric pump. Nevertheless, that was a period which, unlike our own, did not batten upon originality as the supreme *desideratum*; Jonson may have seen these verses, found them suitable, and appropriated them. On the other hand, given the ground we have covered and what we have learned, we might do better than insist that “simplest is best.” As the icon of the physical Shakespeare, the Droeshout engraving and Jonson’s facing poem may have been for Jonson the last stop on the Du Bartas-Shakespeare connection, and therefore the cross-influence carefully thought out. Curiously, the 1621 edition of *Divine Weeks* was the first to offer a woodcut of the visage of the French poet (and a fictitious visage at that).

The Purloined Letter

Toulmin Smith remarks above in passing that Jonson had contributed a commendatory poem to *Divine Weeks*. In her exhaustive examination of *Divine Weeks* and the life of its translator, Susan Snyder does not scrutinize the eulogies for their content. Like the dust jacket tributes of the modern publishing industry, the eulogies were inserted to entice the buyer, as well as to honor the author. Hence—if read at all—the sensible disinclination to read them with serious attention, and surely a disinclination extending to editors as well; for why should they not display the same good judgement in this particularity as do the enlightened readership?

How to shelter evidence for Oxford’s authorship of the works of Shakespeare must have generated nights of meditation. To conceal insufficiently well the true authorship would risk destruction or mutilation; the plays personally and politically revelatory contents must capitulate before reputation! reputation! reputation! the immortal part of those great personages sent out on the proscenium in thespian disguise. Yet to hide too well was also to destroy. Where was there a handy place in the Jacobean world of letters to cache sensitive or explosive material where it might avoid premature exposure and where it might enjoy protection from the total annihilation that is the customary fate of the long passage of time? From the evidence examined, we may conclude that the preservation cabal chose the commendatory

verses of the immensely popular *Divine Weeks* and of the First Folio as the “drops” in which to secrete the Oxford-Shakespeare link in plain sight.

To the misfortune of the cabalists, they miscalculated; detection of the enshrouded truth has come about a long three centuries or more after their likely reckoning. Both Du Bartas and Josuah Sylvester, in reputational spate during the first two decades of the century when the Oxford-Du Bartras trail was being marked, would be in permanent decline by 1650. By that time, the very works were ceasing to be widely read, to say nothing of their encomiums. Still it remains puzzling that neither the Lapworth nor the R.R. nor the Jonson poems ever attracted attention among the pack of heterodox sleuths and investigators. To read the standard-issue encomia in *Divine Weeks* is to comprehend just how atypical and like sore thumbs are the Lapworth and Jonson productions.

To Ben Jonson we owe eternal gratitude. He was a playwright of renown, from the historical perspective, the red-ribbon dramatist of his time and maybe an even better poet, one who had the grievous misfortune to appear on the world's stage with the supreme literary glory of the ages. Jonson was beset with a captious, quarrelsome, emulous nature. As great a writer as he was, and that was very great indeed, he would never rise to the level of Shakespeare. There may have been occasions of despond when the genius of Shakespeare had Jonson contemplating bricks, mortar, and trowel. But one would like to suppose that, when it counted, he overcame his turbulent jealousy and stood steadfast, acting loyally and willingly in behalf of Oxford and Shakespeare.

Even so, the wormwood of R.R.'s poem lingers in the mind after familiarity with the eulogy has been established. Could Jonson have been giving vent to his incipient animus for Shakespeare? Ben Jonson as man and artist was instinct with *Envie*, and so, how easy for him to have conjured up the character of the outraged Puritan, even as he came to the aid of the dead and mulcted Oxford? For if, in the R.R. eulogy, the pro-Oxford artifice is carried off by means of a Puritan feint, the engine of vehemence that powers it feels genuine. The nature of his circumstances compelled the unhappy Jonson to hold an untenable ground between Oxford and Sylvester. With Oxford he shared a literary esthetic across an abyss of class. With Sylvester he shared similarity of social origin across an abyss of literary esthetic.

By way of postscript, Robert Detobel of Frankfurt, Germany, lingeringly chary of fully accepting Jonson's use of “R.R.” as a disguise of authorship (not a typical Jonson reflex!), discovered in the DNB among a field of “R.R.” also-rans, a strong candidate for the man, R.R.: Robert Radcliffe, fifth Earl of Sussex (1573-1629). Dogged and acute, Detobel dug below the stratum of the DNB where he uncovered, in W.W. Greg's *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, the truffle of intelligence that Jonson had composed, no later than 1608, a masque, *The Hue and Cry of Cupid*, for the wedding of Radcliffe's daughter, and with it the proof of a close acquaintance between the two men, a link further enhanced in Rad-

cliffe's maintenance of a company of players.

Detobel wondered aloud in correspondence whether Jonson might not have "taken over" a Radcliffe poem, or vice versa, but in the end concluded that the question was whether Radcliffe was the author or had simply lent his initials to verses by Ben Jonson. While identifying him as "a patron of men of letters," the DNB makes no mention of Radcliffe the poet. The R.R. eulogy is so evidently characteristic of Jonson that Detobel's second option seems the more acceptable: Sussex, an able soldier and bon vivant, offering up his initials in a flourish of aristocratic largesse and insouciance.¹⁰

The great amphora of "Shakespeare" lost to the world, but for shards. O rare Ben Jonson! Lacking your invincible genius for double talk in 1605 and 1623, the world might have turned out a poorer place for the human spirit to grow and thrive. _____ ☺



Notes

1 All contributions to this work by Andrew Hannas were through personal correspondence, except where otherwise noted.

2 Herewith follow Susan Snyder's identifications of the ten authors, either her own or her concurrence in the identification of another, as they appear in the Huntington Library copy of the 1605 *Divine Weeks*. A name contained within brackets is the Snyder rejection of another scholarly conjecture (2: 878 ff.).

1. "Car: Fitz-Geofridus Lati-Portensis." Charles Fitzgeoffrey, poet and clergyman [1575-1638].
2. "Io: Bo. Miles." Unidentified [Sir John Borough]
3. "E. L. Oxon." Probably Edward Lapworth [1574-1636]
4. "G. B. Cantabridg." Probably the George Burghe who received the B.A. from Cambridge
5. "Samuel Daniel." [1562-1619]
6. "G. Gay-wood." Apparently a personal friend of Sylvester's
7. "John Davies of Hereford." [1565-1618].
8. "E. G." Unidentified [Edward Guilpin]
9. "R. N." Robert Nicholson, longtime friend and patron of Sylvester
10. "R. H."

Unidentified; added later, presumably, to the 1605 edition:

11. "B. Jonson." Ben Jonson [1573-1637]
12. "R. R." Unidentified [Richard Rous]
13. "R. N. Gen." Robert Nicholson

3 "An quod in ORE feras Mel? Quod in Aure *Mel-os*?" ("Can it be the '*Honey*' that you bear upon your LIPS? Or is it the *Honied-speech* [you bear] unto the ear?") Lapworth's prosodic virtuosity rates some attention. First, we observe two parallel clauses beginning with *quod*, "because." ORE, "mouth," and Aure, "ear," are probably to be treated as homophones or near-homophones, allying the sound with the sense. *Feras*, "you bear," expressed only in the first clause, is also understood as present in the second, a customary latin economy. *Mel-os* is a non-pareil bilingual pun. As it stands, it combines "honey" and "mouth"—"honey-mouth." However, with the hyphen removed, it becomes the Greek *melos*, "song." What wonderful compression! Lapworth in one word combines that which produces, *mel-os*, and that which is produced, *melos*. There is also the beautiful chiasmic arrangement of sounds in (fer)as Mel . . . Mel-os, hence the considered restriction of *feras* to the first clause. There may also be some subtle humor in the English pun implied in "bear honey / honey bear," in light of the ensuing forest japery that Lapworth indulges in at Sylvester's expense. Interestingly, by 1597 Sylvester had completed the autobiographical *The Woodman's Bear*, an "original allegorical love poem" (Snyder 1: 14).

4 Upham devotes 73 pages to Du Bartas. In light of the strong connection perceived by the editors of Bartlett's *Quotations*, it seems astonishing that Upham does not once refer to Shakespeare.

5 Lee gives the Bartassian lines in *V&A* as 271-74, 295-98, 301-04, but does not provide the line sources in the *Semaines*, and only cites the relevant pages in the 1613 edition of *Divine Weeks*.

6 The research librarian in a local town library to whom I had addressed an inquiry pertaining to this research, turned out to have a master's degree in French medieval literature. But, to her chagrin—as she was confident that she was going to be able to help me—she had never heard of Du Bartas.

I also asked a Frenchwoman of my acquaintance, by profession a veterinarian, and so a member of the educated laity, but, more important, and like Himself, herself a native of the fractious and vaunting homeland of the gasconade, whether she had ever heard of Du Bartas. She had not, she admitted, but gamely proposed, by way of compensation, Montaigne and Racine.

⁷ “French Fruits” is a fascinating look into the mysterious life and literary production of the picaresque John Eliot (1562-?) who spent time at Oxford, then traveled on the continent for some years before returning to England. His *Ortho-Epia Gallica*, or *Eliot’s Fruits for the French*, is an early and very funny, *Berlitz*, and shows resemblances to passages in Shakespeare. So far, Eliot appears to have disappeared from the records without a trace in 1593.

⁸ The (mediating) locus consulted is John Eliot’s translation below, in “fourteeners,” of the Bartassian “France” passage. Understandably, with the Stratford man for his Shakespeare, Lever perceives Eliot’s translation as going between the “France” of Du Bartas and “This England” of Shakespeare. Oxford, born in 1550 and fluent in French, fills both the temporal and linguistic gaps of the Shakespeare of convention.

O Fruitfull France! most happie Land, happie and happie thrice!
 O pearle of rich European bounds! O earthly Paradise!
 All haile sweet soile! O France the mother of many conquering knights,
 Who planted once their glorious standards like triumphing wights
 Upon the banks of Euphrates where Titan day-torch bright
 Riseth, and bloodie swords unsheathed where Phoebus drounds his light,
 The mother of many Artist-hands whose workmanship most rare
 Dimmes Natures workes, and with her fairest flowers doth compare.
 The nurse of many learned wits who fetch their skill divine
 From Rome from Greece, from Aegypt farre, and ore the learndst shine,
 As doth the glymmering-Crimsin-dye over the darkest gray:
 Titan ore starres, or Phoebus flowers ore marigolds in May.

What relationship may have obtained between Eliot and Oxford? As Lever characterizes the bold but bookish Eliot, the two men would have seemed to enjoy an affinity of intellect and personality, and had ample time and opportunity to meet. One muses upon Eliot’s unexplained disappearance.

⁹ Epigram XVII (“To the Learned Critic”):

May others fear, fly, and traduce thy name,
 As guilty men do magistrates: glad I,
 That wish my poems a legitimate fame,
 Charge them for crown, to thy sole censure high.
 And, but a sprig of bays, given by thee,
 Shall outlive garlands, stol’n from the chaste tree.

Here only line 3 lacks a punctuated caesura; lines 1, 4, 5, and 6 are medially marked, while line 2 has a late but strong break before the last foot—AH.

¹⁰ Robert Radcliffe was the great-nephew of Thomas Radcliffe, third Earl of Sussex, Oxford’s mentor during his “greenest” years at Court. As the Queen’s Lord Chamberlain from 1574-1583, this Sussex was in charge of entertainment at Court during the years when E. T. Clark perceives Oxford first began to produce plays for the Court.

Appendix

See below for loca where Du Bartas is recognized as a (probable) source in Shakespeare (foregoing textual quotations omitted). All translations are by Josuah Sylvester, all of which have been silently corrected to the recension of Susan Snyder. All passages of Du Bartas supplied from Holmes, Lyons, and Linker. A caution: one ought to remain aware that none of the scholars cited below—that is, none except Andrew Hannas, cited above—was aware that Edward Lapworth had declared in Latin, “You, Vere, yourself, are truly the voice of Du Bartas.” Hence the perceived relationships are free from sectarian bias with regard to the Shakespeare authorship controversy.

1. H. R. D. Anders gives us this (240) from *Troilus & Cressida* (I:3:89-91):

And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
In noble eminence enthroned and sphered
Amidst the other ...

In a footnote, Anders suggests that “for a similar thought compare Du Bartas, translated by Sylvester, 1621, p. 24.”

2. John Bartlett. *Familiar Quotations*.

Du Bartas:

Le monde est un theatre, où de Dieu la puissance,
La justice, l’amour, le sçavoir, la prudence
Jouent leur personnage.

1st Week, 1st Day (2: 147-49)

Sylvester:

The World’s a stage, where God’s omnipotence
His Justice, Knowledge, Love, and Providence
Doo act their parts.

(2: 169-71)

Shakespeare:

All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.

As You Like It (II:2:139-40)

Du Bartas:

Car Nuict, tu couvres tout de ton obscur manteau.

1st Week, 1st Day (1: 518)

Sylvester:

For Night’s blacke Mantle covers all a-like.

(1: 562)

Shakespeare:

Night . . . With thy black mantle . . .

Romeo & Juliet (III:2:10, 15)

Du Bartas:

Telle que le François, qui guenon affeté
Des estrangeres moeurs, se paist de nouveauté
Et se mue, inconstant, si souvent de chemise
Que de ses vains habits la façon il desguise.

1st Week, 2nd Day (II 214-14)

Sylvester:
 Much like the French (or like ourselves their Apes),
 Who with strange habit doo disguise their shapes;
 Who loving-novels, full of affectation,
 Receive the Manners of each other Nation. (2: 221-24)

Shakespeare:
 Report of fashions in proud Italy,
 Whose manners still our tardy apish nation
 Limp after in base imitation. *Richard II* (II:1:21-23)

Du Bartas:
 Hé! Qui pourroit trouver reglement sous le ciel,
 Plus beau que celui-là nos mouches à miel. *1st Week, 5th Day* (2: 865-66)

Sylvester:
 For where's the state beneath the Firmament
 That doth excell the Bees for Government? (2: 919-20)

Shakespeare:
 For so work the honey-bees,
 Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
 the act of order to a peopled kingdom. *Henry V* (I:2:187-89)

Du Bartas:
 Mon espoir, mon amour, mon jouet, mon desir. *2nd Week, 4th Day, "La Magnificence"* (I: 438)

Sylvester:
 My hope, my hap, my Love, my Joy. (I: 486)

Shakespeare:
 My life, my joy, my food, my all the world. *King John* (III:4:103)

[The following citation appears in the Du Bartas of Bartlett, but, unlike the entries above, is not cross referenced to Shakespeare lineage. Their association with Shakespeare extracts is the author's.]

Du Bartas:
 Nous servira de plomb, de reigle, et de niveau
 Qu'il changera le tuf de nos basses pensees
 En perles d'orient. *3rd Week, 3rd Day, "La Vocation"* (II. 40-42)

Sylvester:
 [For levell, Compasse, Rule, and Squire will stand:]
 Will change the Pebbles of our pudly thought,
 To Orient Pearles. (2: 44-46)

Shakespeare:
 Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls. *Midsummer Night's Dream* (IV:1:54)

Shall come again, transformed to orient pearl. *Richard III* (IV:4:322)

The last of many doubled kisses, / This orient pearl. *Antony & Cleopatra* (I:5:41)

Bright orient pearl alack too timely shaded. *The Passionate Pilgrim* (10.3)

Being prison'd in her eye, like pearls in glass;
Yet sometimes falls an orient drop outside. *Venus and Adonis* (l: 980-81)]

3. George Greenwood states that one may see Du Bartas as a source, among Spenser, Drayton, Chester, et. al. for the boar hunt in *Venus and Adonis* (544). "He [Shakespeare] took the description of the 'ideal horse' from Du Bartas" (549; see [16] supra).

4. F. W. Lever. "Shakespeare's French Fruits." Immediately following his quotation of "This England" in *Richard II*, Lever states:

This is not the only echo of the passage. In Act I:3 of *Richard II*, where Bolingbroke takes leave of his father to go into exile, the thought of France leads Shakespeare to recur to Du Bartas's theme despite its inconsistency with the transference of the fortress-against-plague idea to England. (89-90)

. . . Suppose
Devouring pestilence hangs in our aire,
And thou art flying to a fresher clime. (I:3:284-85)

At the end of the scene Bolingbroke deliberately inverts Du Bartas's salute to France—or rather, Eliot's, in translation, for the phrase is his: "All haile sweet soile!" So that it becomes a farewell to England:

sweet soil adieu, MY MOTHER and MY NURSE, which beares me yet. . . . (I:3:306-07)

It is indeed, in a sense hitherto unperceived, the speech of a true-born Englishman. Curiously, as it is evidentially favorable, Lever omits to observe that the "mother" and "nurse" of *Richard II* are both present in Eliot's translation of Du Bartas's "France": "mother of many Artist-hands," "nurse of many learned wits." In "This England," Shakespeare shows only "this Nurse, this teeming womb." Du Bartas shows only *mere*—"mother" (twice).

5. From the Ogburn's *This Star of England* (787): "It is evident that Lord Oxford had been reading The Weeks of du Bartas; for—as he will be seen to have done in *King Lear*—he drew upon the 2d Week [First Day], The Furies, where the following passage occurs." [They are discussing *Macbeth*. One surmises that the *Lear* allusion is to the King caught in the storm on the heath.]

Sylvester:
As the heate, hidden in a Vapourie Cloud
Striving for issue with strange murmurs loud,
Like guns astuns, with round-round-rumbling thunder,
filling the aire with noyse, the earth with wunder.
So the three Sisters, the three hideous Rages,
Raise thousand stormes, leaving th' infernal stages. . . .
. . . The heads of Dragon, Dog, Ounce, Beare, and Bull,
Wolfe, Lyon, Horse (of strength and stomacke full) . . . (2: 251-56, 263-64)

Du Bartas:

Comme le feu caché dans la vapeur espresse
Marmottonne, grondant, la nue qui le presse,
Cannonne, tonne, estonne, et d'un long roulement,
Iré, fait retentir le venteux element,
Tout ainsi les trois soeurs, les trois hideuses rages,
Pour sortir de l'Enfer suscitent mille orages.

(2: 221-26)]

"In Macbeth we have the witches chant (V:1):

First Witch.	Round about the cauldron go.
Second Witch.	Eye of newt, and toe of frog, Wool of bat, and tongue of dog. Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting. lizard's leg and howlet's wing.
Third Witch.	Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf, Witches' mummy, maw and gulf. . . .

Du Bartas:

Ayant sur un seul corps la teste d'un mastif,
D'un serpent, d'un taureau, et d'un lonce felonnie,
D'un loup, d'un estalon, d'un ours, d'une lyonnie,
D'un branle de poulmon jappe, siffle, mugit . . .

(2: 232-35)]

"Another passage in "The Furies," suggestive of the wierd and terrible atmosphere of black night and foul deeds which pervades the drama, reads thus:

Sylvester:

This eccho made all hell to tremble troubled,
The drowsie Night her deep dark horrors doubled.

(2: 245-46)

Du Bartas:

Tout l'Averne à ces mots de comble en fonds trembla;
La pareusseuse Nuict ses horreurs redoubla.

(2: 215-16)]

Macbeth says (III:2:50-53):

. . . Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood;
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
While night's black agents to their preys do rouse."

In a footnote, the Ogburns remark: "Joshua Sylvester's translation was published in 1590 [sic]. Lord Oxford would, of course, already have read du Bartas in the original, since he kept au courant of French and Italian works."

On page 1019, the Ogburns cite from *Troilus & Cressida* (V:1:17 ff):

Thersites. Why his masculine whore. Now the rotten diseases of the south,
the guts-griping, ruptures, catarrhs, etc., etc. . . . take and take
again such preposterous discoveries.

In a footnote, they add: "This seems to be an elaborate paraphrase of du Bartas's [i.e. Sylvester's, as quoted] *Weeks*—"the Furies"—where a grisly and comprehensive list of diseases reads, in part:

King's-evils, Cankers, cruell Goutes, and Byles,
The Itch, the Murrain, the Alcides-griefe. (2: 476, 531)

6. Rebecca E. Pitts in "This Fell Sergeant Death" cites the following from Furness's *Variorum Edition* (1877) (323). Sergeant RITSON: the bailiff or sheriff's officer. MALONE: So in Silvester's [sic throughout] *Du Bartas*: --And Death, dread serjeant of th'eternall Judge, Comes very late to his sole-seated Lodge."--The Third Day of the first Week [ll. 1111-12], p. 30, ed. 1633. HUNTER (ii, 266): Silvester is the earlier writer, but Shakespeare's substitution of 'fell' for 'dread' shows a master hand." Pitts remarks: "Silvester's lines resemble Shakespeare's (or vice versa) only in the idea that Death is a sergeant whether 'dread' or 'fell' . . . it is almost certain *Hamlet* was in final form by 1600."

Shakespeare:
Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, Death,
Is strict in his arrest) . . . *Hamlet* (V:2:337-38)

Du Bartas:
. . . et la mort redoutee N'approche que bien tard de sa loge escartee. (2: 949-50)

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