# Henry Neville
## and the Works of
# Shakespeare

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*In memory*

John Casson (1951–2019)

William Rubinstein (1946–2024)

*You still shall live—such virtue hath my pen—*
*Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.*

Shakespeare, Sonnet 81

# Preface

This book presents the most important facts and evidence relating to whether Henry Neville wrote the works of Shakespeare. It combines earlier research by others and my own findings.

It emphasizes documented facts, not speculation. Whenever possible, it provides primary sources to support its assertions. Uncertainties are acknowledged where they exist.

The goal of this book is to provide a framework for further research into this question. The facts of history are immutable. With careful investigation, we should be able to determine who wrote the works of Shakespeare.

For the most part, the Audley End annotations by Henry Savile and Henry Neville are beyond the scope of this book. I have included a few examples to whet the reader's appetite.

AI systems, including ChatGPT Codex and Claude Code, were extensively used in both researching and writing this book.

Going forward, I intend to continually revise this book, adding evidence and sharpening its presentation. The latest version of this book can be found at: nevilleresearch.com.

I welcome feedback; you can contact me at kenfeinstein (at) gmail.com.

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# Previous Neville Research

Brenda James first identified Sir Henry Neville as a candidate for authorship of the works of Shakespeare. She then joined with the historian William D. "Bill" Rubinstein to write *The Truth Will Out: Unmasking the Real Shakespeare* in 2005.

John Casson was among the earliest researchers to extend James's work. He collaborated with Mark Bradbeer in 2015 on *Sir Henry Neville, Alias William Shakespeare: Authorship Evidence in the History Plays*.

Casson and Rubinstein then produced *Sir Henry Neville Was Shakespeare: The Evidence* in 2016. It remains one of the most substantial summaries of the affirmative case for Neville.

A further strand of research was developed by James Leyland and James Goding. Their 2018 book, *Who Will Believe My Verse?: The Code in Shakespeare's Sonnets*, concentrated on the *Sonnets*, their enigmatic dedication, and the possible use of coded or cryptographic structures.

David Ewald collaborated with Casson and Rubinstein on the chapter "Our Shakespeare: Henry Neville, 1562–1615" in William D. Leahy's edited collection *My Shakespeare: The Authorship Controversy*. This is one of the best summaries of known evidence for Neville's authorship.

A particular debt is owed to Gregory Thompson for his tireless archival work identifying and photographing documents relating to Henry Neville's life, and to John O'Donnell for his essential work transcribing the documents these searches have uncovered. This book would not be possible without their research.

The present book builds on the work of these researchers. Where an observation, document, parallel, or interpretation was first brought forward by one of these researchers, that contribution should be credited.

At the same time, this book is not intended merely to restate the earlier literature. It returns to primary sources wherever possible; distinguishes documented fact from inference and speculation; corrects errors that have accumulated in previous discussions; and incorporates new evidence and analytical methods unavailable to earlier investigators.

## Principal previous publications

- Brenda James and William D. Rubinstein. *The Truth Will Out: Unmasking the Real Shakespeare*. Pearson Longman, 2005. A revised paperback appeared in 2006.

- Brenda James. *Henry Neville and the Shakespeare Code*. Music for Strings, 2008.

- John Casson. *Enter Pursued by a Bear: The Unknown Plays of Shakespeare-Neville*. Music for Strings, 2009.
- John Casson. *Much Ado About Noting: Henry Neville and Shakespeare's Secret Source*. Dolman Scott, 2010. ISBN 978-1-905553-57-0.
- Brenda James. *Understanding the Invisible Shakespeare*. Cranesmere Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0-9569495-0-9.
- William D. Rubinstein. *Who Wrote Shakespeare's Plays?* Amberley Publishing, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4456-0190-8. This comparative survey considered Neville alongside other proposed authors.
- Mark Bradbeer and John Casson. *Sir Henry Neville, Alias William Shakespeare: Authorship Evidence in the History Plays*. Foreword by William D. Rubinstein. McFarland, 2015. ISBN 978-0-7864-9481-1.
- John Casson and William D. Rubinstein. *Sir Henry Neville Was Shakespeare: The Evidence*. Amberley Publishing, 2016. ISBN 978-1-4456-5466-9.
- James Leyland and James Goding. *Who Will Believe My Verse?: The Code in Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2018. ISBN 978-1-925588-67-5.
- John Casson, William D. Rubinstein, and David Ewald. "Our Shakespeare: Henry Neville, 1562–1615." In *My Shakespeare: The Authorship Controversy*, edited by William D. Leahy, 113–138. Edward Everett Root, 2018.
- R. John Leigh, John Casson, and David Ewald. "A Scientific Approach to the Shakespeare Authorship Question." *SAGE Open* 9, no. 1 (2019). DOI 10.1177/2158244018823465.

# Introduction

This book presents the case for Henry Neville as the author of Shakespeare's works. It follows his life and examines his writing alongside the plays and poems, bringing together his letters, books, family history and relations with other writers.

The argument draws its strength from the connections between these bodies of evidence. Shakespeare's most locally detailed play is set in the Windsor landscape where Neville lived and worked. The changing concerns of the plays align with the course of his travels, embassy, imprisonment and later ambitions. His surviving prose allows direct comparison with the works, while his relationships reach the patrons, poets and publishers associated with them. The book develops these arguments through documents, quotations and the findings of earlier scholars.

### Part I — Neville's Life and Work

The first nine chapters follow Neville from his Tudor family background through Oxford and four years abroad with Henry Savile. Marriage to Anne Killigrew connected him with the learned Cooke sisters, Francis Bacon and Robert Cecil. His responsibilities ranged from cannon-making at Mayfield to the Billingbear estate and his keeperships in Windsor Forest.

His reluctant embassy to France brought him to the court of Henri IV. His return from Boulogne in August 1600 coincided with the Stationers' Register's stay of three Shakespeare plays: news of his arrival reached London the night before the entry. The Essex crisis, imprisonment and release in 1603 follow, traced through his accounts, Anne's appeals and his letters. His efforts to recover his position, protect his reputation and become secretary of state occupy the remaining years. Dudley Digges's public defence of him in the Parliament of 1614 forms part of that story.

### Part II — Books, Manuscripts and Language

This part begins with the Billingbear library catalogue and surviving books at Audley End, whose annotations provide evidence of Neville's and Savile's reading. The catalogue records books used as sources for Shakespeare's works. Neville's surviving letters, confession, *Case* and *Advice* then supply material for comparison with the works. Three quantitative studies examine recurring two-word sequences, features selected from his surviving prose, and diplomatic vocabulary. The part concludes with the Northumberland manuscript and Neville's use of Tacitus.

## Part III — The Plays

The largest part of the book examines the plays against Neville's experience, reading and correspondence. Forests, furnaces and the women's letters establish the practical and intellectual life of his household. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is central to the case: its unusually detailed local setting is Neville's childhood and adult home, and its forest life belongs to the world he helped manage. The chapter sets the play's places and activities beside his documented responsibilities.

The histories bring family and politics together: John of Gaunt in *Richard II*, a revised manuscript version of William Cornwallis's *Encomium of Richard III*, dedicated to Neville, and Westmoreland's presence at Agincourt in *Henry V*. The French embassy gives particular substance to the discussions of *Henry V*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. Neville's reports of Orsino and King Sebastian, his journey through Amiens and his diplomatic language can be set beside the plays. *The Taming of the Shrew* brings another family connection into focus: Katherine Cooke, Neville's mother-in-law, addressed a Latin poem to her sister Mildred Cecil. The chapter reads it beside Bianca's Latin lesson and examines the Cooke sisters' education and the family's connections to Padua.

The tragedies and problem plays draw the argument into danger, imprisonment and reputation. *Hamlet* brings together Neville's concern for his public name, letters, seals and a young man in Paris; *Othello* compares the play's additions to Cinthio with the Venetian newsletters preserved among Neville's papers; *Measure for Measure*, prison and pardon; and *All's Well That Ends Well*, a royal promise in writing. Dover, John Chamber and reports of possession shape the *King Lear* chapter. Neville's confession and his use of Tacitus open the discussion of *Macbeth*. *Julius Caesar* examines Roman politics and liberty; Chapter 9 compares Neville's use of Plutarch with North's English and Amyot's French translations. The later chapters explore hospitality in *Timon of Athens*, Roman politics and the New River in *Coriolanus*, and diplomatic language in *Antony and Cleopatra*. *The Tempest* connects with the embassy and Virginia; *Cymbeline* with Jupiter's moons and Neville's correspondent William Lower; *Henry VIII* returns directly to his family's history.

## Part IV — The Poems and Sonnets

The poems begin with Southampton and the changing tone of the dedications to *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. The discussion also considers the Latin epigraph, the Neville motto and an annotation naming Collatinus in Neville's Dionysius.

Four chapters examine the sonnets through confinement, disability, reputation, financial bonds, friendship and the protection of a name. Sonnets 66 and 121 receive close comparisons with Neville's circumstances and writing; the chapters on bonds and the judging eye follow the language of obligation, dependence and private loyalty.

## Part V — Writers, Publication and Posterity

Humphrey Fludd connects Neville's Anglo-French correspondence with the Mountjoy household in which Shakespeare lodged: the royal trumpeter carried diplomatic letters and was Stephen Bellott's stepfather. Robert Drury, who wrote to Neville about Southampton's missing letter to himself, later became Donne's patron. The *Convivium Philosophicum* at the Mitre Tavern places Neville in a company that included John Donne and the future Folio poet Hugh Holland. Jonson's epigram to Neville is compared with the Sonnets and his addresses to Donne and Beaumont. Chamber, Fitzgeoffrey and Carleton associate Neville with the Muses; Davies's *Microcosmos* receives a separate chapter. The part closes with documented relationships connecting Neville to the Herberts, the Berkeley brothers, Thomas Russell and the Digges household. Dudley Digges, brother of the Folio poet Leonard, publicly defended Neville's right to approach the king with advice for the country's good, even without a summons.

## Part VI — After Neville's Death

The account of Neville's estate and household leads to Anne's later life and Thomas Vicars's reference to the poet who "shakes a spear." The publisher of *A King and No King* received its text from Neville's son. Philip Herbert helped that son obtain a court appointment, while William Herbert acquired the wardship of Neville's grandson. John Hales's championship of Shakespeare is examined alongside his place in Savile's scholarly circle. The family jestbook preserves the Latin spoons story; its compiler, Sir Nicholas L'Estrange, belonged to the Neville family network. Carleton's *Astrologomania*, published by the Jaggard shop in 1624, gives a further connection to the year after the First Folio. The final chapters discuss Neville's grandson, author of *The Isle of Pines*, John Casson's discovery of the Audley End sonnet, and Robert Nevile's theatrical connections with the Killigrews.

## Part VII — The Case as a Whole

"The Life and the Changing Plays" traces the sequence from classical and Italian plays through the embassy, the Essex crisis and dark tragedies, to the romances and collaborations. "The Four Dedications" argues for William Herbert as "W.H." and emphasizes Southampton's and the Herberts' patronage of Neville and his family. "The Evidence That Carries the Case" brings together Windsor, the return from France and the stayed plays, Neville's writing and books, family and literary connections, and the language studies. A brief final chapter identifies priorities for further research.

## The Appendices

The appendices provide supporting documents and additional comparisons. They include the detailed chronology of Neville's return and the August 1600 stay, the parentage tradition, concealed writing and wordplay, the Sonnets dedication's typography, and material from Field, Davies and Marston. A final collection presents further verbal and thematic parallels with their sources.

# A Note on Method

Wherever possible, this book draws on Shakespeare scholarship undertaken independently of the authorship question, asking how its findings align with the Neville hypothesis.

For instance, Anne Barton's *The Shakespearean Forest* (2017) and Randall Martin's *Shakespeare and Ecology* (2015) examine Shakespeare's knowledge of forests, land use and the demands placed on woodland. Their work gives substance to a comparison with Neville's responsibilities in Windsor Forest and his ironworks at Mayfield.[1]

Margaret Tudeau-Clayton identified a correspondence between Richard Carew's essay on the English language and Falstaff's speech in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, first in her 1999 article and then in *Shakespeare's Englishes* (2019). Neville travelled in Europe with Carew's brother George; Carew's son Richard later accompanied him to France.[2]

Jessica Dell's chapter in *Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage* (2014) connects the same play with the Windsor witchcraft cases of 1579. Her account identifies Sir Henry Neville—the ambassador's father—as the magistrate who heard Elizabeth Stile's case and committed her to Reading Gaol. Chapter 25 examines these connections in detail.[3]

Two articles on *Henry V* show the method particularly clearly. In "France in Shakespeare's Henry V" (1995), David Womersley investigates the play's relationship to the politics of France in 1599. His discussion of Elizabeth's demand for repayment from the French king cites a letter from Neville to Thomas Windebank. George R. Price's "Henry V and Germanicus" (1961) proposes Tacitus's account of Germanicus as a source for the king's night among his soldiers before Agincourt. Price's comparison gives us a specific sequence to examine alongside the evidence for Neville's engagement with Tacitus.[4]

Zachary Lesser's "Mixed Government and Mixed Marriage in *A King and No King*: Sir Henry Neville Reads Beaumont and Fletcher" (2002) examines the play in relation to debates about king and Parliament. Lesser brings Neville's political proposals into that discussion of Beaumont and Fletcher's work, focusing on political reading and manuscript transmission.[5]

These studies are valuable because their findings were developed independently of the Neville authorship case.

Dates retain the day and month of the cited witness unless a conversion is specified. Where an English year beginning on 25 March is normalized to a year beginning in January, the change is stated; this does not itself convert the date to the Gregorian calendar.

The source stories also matter: a comparison should distinguish what a play inherits from what the dramatist adds or changes. The chapters compare those changes with Neville's reading, correspondence and experience.

The Shakespeare text also requires attention to its witnesses. A wording present in a quarto may differ from the Folio, and a passage may be absent from an earlier version. Those differences are identified where they affect the comparison.

Finally, parallels need discrimination. A familiar sentiment or a broad resemblance between two lives carries little weight by itself. A distinctive expression used in the same sense, an unusual combination of actions, a specific source connection or a documented intersection of people and events deserves closer attention. Claims of verbal rarity must state the period and body of texts searched. The chapters therefore give priority to the words and circumstances themselves, so that readers can judge the strength of each comparison.

## Notes and sources

1. Anne Barton, *The Shakespearean Forest*, edited by Hester Lees-Jeffries (Cambridge University Press, 2017), especially pp. 11–12, 122–132, doi:10.1017/9781139015257; Randall Martin, *Shakespeare and Ecology* (Oxford University Press, 2015), especially chapters 1–2 and pp. 78–95, doi:10.1093/oso/9780199567027.001.0001.
2. Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, "Richard Carew, William Shakespeare, and the Politics of Translating Virgil in Early Modern England and Scotland," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 5.4 (1999), pp.507–527, especially pp.518–523, JSTOR; *Shakespeare's Englishes: Against Englishness* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp.187–189.
3. Jessica Dell, " 'A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean!': Image Magic and Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*," in Lisa Hopkins and Helen Ostovich, eds., *Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage* (Ashgate, 2014), pp. 185–201, especially pp. 186, 188–189, book.
4. David Womersley, "France in Shakespeare's Henry V," *Renaissance Studies* 9.4 (1995), 442–459, especially 450 n. 34, JSTOR; George R. Price, "Henry V and Germanicus," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 12.1 (1961), 57–60, JSTOR. Price proposes a source relationship; the comparison with Neville is developed in this book's Tacitus and *Henry V* chapters.
5. Zachary Lesser, "Mixed Government and Mixed Marriage in A King and No King: Sir Henry Neville Reads Beaumont and Fletcher," *ELH* 69.4 (2002), 947–977, especially 948–949, doi:10.1353/elh.2002.0037. The passage from father to son is Lesser's reconstruction, following C. M. Gayley.

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# Part I

Neville's Life and Work

# Family and Childhood

Chapter 1

Henry Neville's grandfather, Sir Edward Neville, was beheaded on Tower Hill on 9 December 1538 under Henry VIII.[1]

Yet on 27 October 1539, less than a year later, the king granted Sir Edward's son Henry—Neville's father—an annuity of £20 because he was the king's godson. By 1546, the last full year of Henry VIII's reign, Neville's father was serving in the Privy Chamber. The king's will left him £100 and included "Henry Nevell" among its witnesses.[2]

Neville's father was knighted under Edward VI in 1551.[3] In 1553 he signed the letters patent—a royal document intended to make Lady Jane Grey the next monarch after Edward VI, in place of Edward's half-sister Mary. He later became a Marian exile: one of the English Protestants who went abroad during Mary I's restoration of Catholicism. The traveller Thomas Hoby encountered him at Padua in August 1554.

In 1556 Mary's government sent John Brett to summon named exiles home, Neville's father among them. Reaching Venice on 16 August, Brett learned that "Sir Henry Nevell was returned into England": he was reported home while Mary was still queen. His son would visit Padua in 1581, twenty-seven years after his father's stay.[4]

The family's lands also changed hands with the monarchy. In 1551 Edward VI granted Neville's father the Billingbear estate in Berkshire and lands around Windsor. Revoked under Mary and restored early in Elizabeth's reign, this grant established Billingbear as the family seat.[5]

## In Elizabeth's confidence

Elizabeth repeatedly entrusted Neville's father with sensitive work. In October 1569, when the Duke of Norfolk was arrested over his intended marriage to Mary, Queen of Scots, she directed Sir Francis Knollys to conduct him to the Tower, with Sir Henry to assist and have charge of him. The following August, Elizabeth ordered the Tower's lieutenant and Sir Henry to move the duke to his own house at the Charterhouse for fear of plague.[6]

He was later chosen for an assignment involving Mary herself. Instructions signed by Elizabeth in January 1581 named him with Shrewsbury and Sir William Pelham for her proposed removal to Ashby-de-la-Zouch.[7] A later plan involved bringing Mary from Sheffield, where she was held in the Earl of Shrewsbury's house. In December 1583 Sir Henry told his brother-in-law Nathaniel Bacon that his journey had been deferred until spring. He and Sir

Ralph Sadler were to go “not as some think to keep her there at his house but to bring her away”.[8]

Royal instructions of March 1584 set out their intended responsibilities in detail: trustworthy gatekeepers, armed guards, night watches, searches of incoming goods and control over the delivery of letters and books. The plans changed, and John Somer eventually accompanied Sadler in Sir Henry’s place.[9]

His service also included military preparations and enforcement of the religious settlement. Earlier, in May 1560, he reported mustering 1,000 men at Reading and 1,500 at Newbury, and a shortage of armour. In 1581 the Privy Council thanked him for apprehending printers at Stonor’s Lodge, near Henley, and ordered him to send their press and papers to London. This was a clandestine Catholic press associated with the Jesuit mission: it had printed Edmund Campion’s *Rationes decem* (*Ten Reasons*), a Latin challenge to Protestant theologians.[10] His investigation of the Windsor witchcraft cases, including a suspected threat to Elizabeth through wax images, is discussed in Chapter 25.[11]

The family also appears in *Henry VIII*: the Lord Abergavenny arrested in Act 1, scene 1 represents George Neville, Sir Edward’s brother and the ambassador’s great-uncle.[12] Chapter 38, *Henry VIII: The Missing Neville*, examines this family connection further, including the omission of Sir Edward Neville from the play’s masque scene.

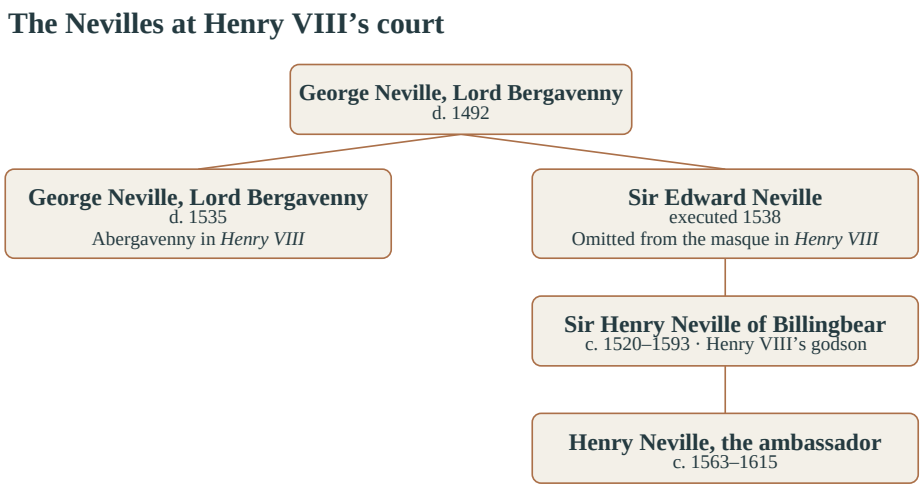



**Figure 1.1:** The Neville relationship in *Henry VIII*. George, the play’s Abergavenny, was the brother of the ambassador’s grandfather. Dates are death dates where a birth date is not given. The ambassador’s birth is approximate; his baptism is recorded in 1564.

## The Greshams

The ambassador's mother, Elizabeth Gresham, was the daughter and heir of Sir John Gresham and Frances Thwaites. This Sir John was the elder son of Sir Richard Gresham, the London merchant and lord mayor, and the brother of Sir Thomas Gresham, founder of the Royal Exchange. Sir Thomas was therefore Henry Neville's maternal great-uncle. His parents' marriage linked the Nevilles' court connections and estates with the Greshams' wealth from London trade.[5]

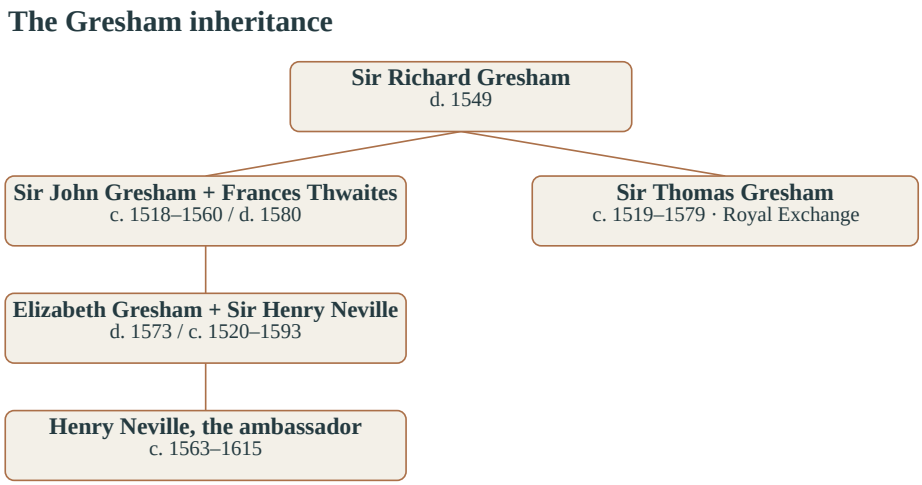



**Figure 1.2:** Henry Neville's Gresham family. Sir Thomas Gresham was his mother's uncle, not her father.

Through Sir Thomas, the family acquired Mayfield in Sussex, where Neville would later live and manufacture cannon (Chapter 3).[13]

## Blackfriars and the first playhouse

In June 1560 Neville's father leased a house in London's Blackfriars from William More. The premises had previously housed the scholar John Cheke and been used by the Revels Office, which organized court entertainments.[14]

Blackfriars was likely the family's London home before and during the construction of Billingbear House in Berkshire, whose main part Neville's father built around 1567. The London tenancy ended in March 1568, shortly afterwards.[15]

In August 1576, writing from Billingbear, Neville's father asked More to lease his former Blackfriars house to Richard Farrant, his "very friend." Farrant was

Master of the Children of Windsor Chapel and deputy at the Chapel Royal. Neville's father vouched for him: "I dare answer for him."[16]

Farrant obtained the lease in December 1576 and removed partitions to create a space for performances by his boy actors. The house became the first Blackfriars playhouse.[14]

More later complained that Farrant had turned what was supposed to be a teaching establishment into a "continual house for plays." Neville's father had thus helped Farrant secure the premises for an early London theatre: premises he had himself rented during his son's childhood.[17]

## Birth and baptism

Henry Neville was baptized at St Ann Blackfriars during his father's tenancy. The parish register records "Henry Newell," son of Sir Henry Neville, knight, under 20 May 1564.[18]

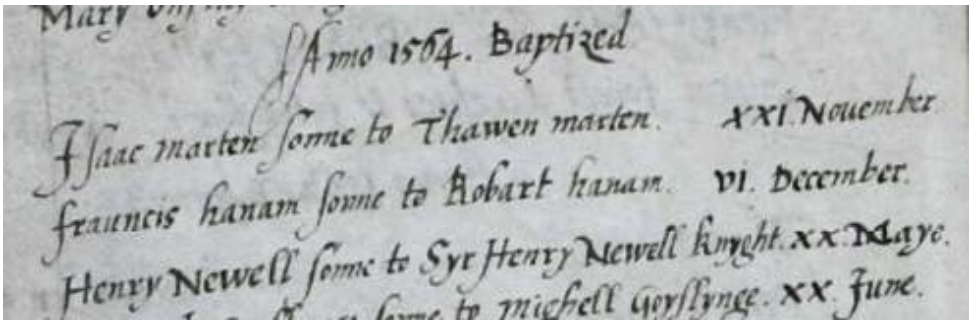

Anno 1564. Baptized
Isaac marten Sonne to Thawen marten. xxi Nouember
fraunceis hanam Sonne to Robart hanam. vi. December.
Henry Newell Sonne to Syr Henry Newell knight. xx Maye.
Sonne to michell Gerslynge. xx. June.

**Figure 1.3:** Henry Neville's baptism entry in the St Ann Blackfriars parish register, dated 20 May beneath the 1564 heading.

Several age statements, however, point to an earlier birth. His mother's funeral certificate suggests the spring of 1563, while the age given in the inquisition after Thomas Gresham's death works back to about 11 April 1563. His portrait gives thirty-six in 1599, and James Whitelocke gives fifty-two at his death in July 1615; both are consistent with a birth around 1563. The Oxford matriculation entry gives fifteen in December 1577, pointing instead to about 1562.

This book therefore uses c. April 1563. That would place his baptism about thirteen months after his birth, an interval we cannot explain.[19]

Neville may also have been Elizabeth I's godson, as historian Marion Colthorpe proposes. The royal accounts record sponsorship of "Sir Henry Nevell's child," but do not name the child.[20]

Elizabeth Gresham died in November 1573, leaving six children: Elizabeth, aged twelve; Henry, ten and a half; Edward, six; Francis, five; Katherine, three; and William, just three months old.[19]

Around May 1578, Neville's father married Elizabeth Bacon (later Lady Periam), Sir Nicholas Bacon's daughter and Francis Bacon's half-sister.[21]

## Notes and sources

1. Charles Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors*, ed. William Douglas Hamilton, I (Camden Society, 1875), p. 92, records the execution on Monday 9 December 1538. For Sir Edward's career, see "Neville, Edward (d. 1538)," *Dictionary of National Biography*. The date 8 December given in some later accounts differs from Wriothesley's contemporary chronicle. Sir Edward had accompanied Henry VIII to France, been knighted at Tournai in 1513, served in the Privy Chamber and attended the Field of the Cloth of Gold. In 1537 he helped carry the canopy at Prince Edward's baptism. He was caught in the proceedings against the Courtenay and Pole families and executed with Henry Courtenay, Marquess of Exeter, and Henry Pole, Lord Montague.

2. *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, XIV, part 2, p. 158, grant 435(44), 27 October 1539: £20 yearly because he was the king's godson. Henry VIII's will, 30 December 1546, in Thomas Rymer, *Foedera*, XV, second edition (London: J. Tonson, 1728), pp. 110–117, especially p. 117, records the £100 legacy and the witness list. See also "Neville, Sir Henry I (d. 1593)," *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1558–1603*, for Privy Chamber service. The printed calendar abstracts the grant and cites S.B.; Patent Roll, 31 Henry VIII, part 4, membrane 38. Neville's eldest son and grandson were also named Henry.

3. History of Parliament and Michael Riordan date the knighthood to 1551; Riordan gives 11 October. VCH gives 1549, citing Shaw, whose index and list are inconsistent. See History of Parliament; Riordan, "Henry VIII, privy chamber of," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, article 70825, the elder Neville's biography; VCH, Waltham St Lawrence, n. 23; Shaw, *The Knights of England*, II (1906), p. 65.

4. Thomas Hoby, *The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas Hoby*, ed. Edgar Powell (Camden Society, 1902), pp. 116–117, records the Padua company on 23 August 1554; the editor identifies Sir Henry Neville of Billingbear. For the 1553 succession instrument, see N. M. Fuidge, "Neville, Sir Henry I (d.1593)", *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1558–1603*, ed. P. W. Hasler (1981), biography and note 3. Fuidge also notes that Neville initially retained his office as master of the harriers under Mary. John Brett's account, edited by I. S. Leadam as "A Narrative of the Pursuit of English Refugees in Germany under Queen Mary," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new series 11 (1897), pp. 113–131, dates his commission to 16 June 1556 (p. 114), names Neville among its recipients (p. 115), and records what he learned on reaching Venice on 16 August (p. 129). The quotation follows that printed edition with modernized spelling. Brett reports information received, not an arrival he witnessed; the precise date and circumstances of Neville's return remain unestablished. The earlier instruction to Lord Paget is separately catalogued as Mary I's summons, 7 June 1556, Dartmouth, Rauner Library, Mss 556357. The British Library's description of the 1557 New Year's gift roll, Add MS 62525, lists Sir Henry Nevell's gift of a lute in a black silk-and-gold case and two small round pictures of Habsburg rulers. This catalogue evidence records a gift, not his personal attendance. For his son's presence at Padua in August 1581, see Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 129–131, discussed in Chapter 2. Hoby, a traveller and translator, recorded the meeting on 23 August 1554; the company included Sir John Cheke, Edward VI's former tutor, and Sir Thomas Wroth, who had served in the king's Privy Chamber. The son's 1581 stay was part of his travels with his Merton tutor Henry Savile.

5. John Ward, *The Lives of the Professors of Gresham College* (London, 1740), pp. 4–5, distinguishes the two Sir Johns and sets out Elizabeth's parentage, her marriage to Neville, and the grants to

her husband. Sir Richard → Sir John → Elizabeth → the ambassador is the direct descent; Sir Thomas was Sir John's brother. Property through Frances Thwaites should not be conflated with Sir Thomas's later testamentary provisions. Ward, p. 5, gives 22 September 1551 for the grant; the Victoria County History account gives 1552. The exact year remains to be reconciled with the Patent Roll.

6. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, 1547–1580* (1856), p. 345, 8 and 10 October 1569, vol. LIX, nos. 4, 5, 7; p. 387, 3 August 1570, vol. LXXIII, no. 5. On 10 October 1569 Sir Henry reported Norfolk's request to write to the Queen or confer with someone she sent (p. 345, no. 7).

7. British Library, Add MS 33594, ff. 5, 12–15, commissions and instructions of 16 January 1580/1.

8. Sir Henry Neville to Nathaniel Bacon, 19 December 1583, Folger MS L.d.444; *The Papers of Nathaniel Bacon of Stiffkey*, II (1983), 268–269, as quoted in Marion Colthorpe, *The Elizabethan Court Day by Day: 1583*, p. 48. The quotation follows Colthorpe's published extract; it is not a new manuscript transcription.

9. William K. Boyd, ed., *Calendar of the State Papers relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots*, VII: 1584–1585 (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1913), no. 44, 47–48, instructions dated 20 March 1583/4; introduction, xiv, records that Somer accompanied Sadler in Sir Henry's place. The instructions prescribe future arrangements, not completed acts by Neville.

10. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1547–1580*, p. 153, 24 May 1560, vol. XII, no. 30, with Stucley's corroborating report of 25 May, no. 31. John Roche Dasent, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, new series, XIII, p. 186, records the Council's thanks and orders concerning the press and papers. For Campion's book and its clandestine printing, see Museum of Oxford, "'Ten Reasons' [Rationes Decem]", exhibiting a copy from Durham University Library, Bamburgh Select.61/3.

11. Dasent, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council*, new series, XI, 20–22, 16 January 1578/9, especially p. 22. The Council suspected a threat to the Queen; the record does not establish that an actual assassination attempt occurred.

12. G. E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, revised ed., I (1910), p. 35, identifies Sir Edward as a son of George Neville, Lord Bergavenny (d. 1492), and brother of the succeeding George (d. 1535). Sir Edward's son was the elder Sir Henry of Billingbear, father of the ambassador. The great-uncle relationship follows those links. Shakespeare, *Henry VIII* 1.1, presents Abergavenny's arrest alongside Buckingham's. Titles are used without ordinal numbers, which differ between numbering conventions. George died in 1535. The play's arrest belongs to Buckingham's fall in 1521, seventeen years before Sir Edward's execution. Later chapters on the histories follow other Neville ancestors and relatives through the plays.

13. Sir Thomas Gresham's land will, 5 July 1575, in John Ward, *The Lives of the Professors of Gresham College* (1740), pp. 19–25, especially 24–25; private Act settling the inheritance, 23 Elizabeth I (1581), Appendix VI, pp. 16–27, especially 19–20. Will's Mayfield clause; Act's settlement. The Act adjusted the burdens attached to the will's provision rather than simply repeating it. See also Chapter 3, 'Marriage, Mayfield and Cannon,' for the dedication signed there in 1587 and the subsequent property transactions.

14. Albert Feuillerat, ed., *Blackfriars Records*, *The Malone Society Collections*, II, part 1 (1913), documents VII–IX, pp. 19–35, printed edition. The 1560 term begins at the Nativity of St John the Baptist, 24 June. The 1576 lease reserves a large washing room; its premises are not identical in every detail to the 1560 holding. The leases establish the property sequence without identifying an auditorium. These accounts follow Feuillerat's printed edition, not a new transcription of the deeds.

15. Feuillerat, *Blackfriars Records*, pp. 119–120, notes quoting the garden-key account, water agreement, stairs and rent records; Charles William Wallace, *The Evolution of the English Drama up*

*to Shakespeare* (Berlin, 1912), pp. 175–176, edition, More's retrospective memorandum. The latter recalls a twenty-one-year Neville lease; the 1560 instrument specifies sixty years. Its £100 repurchase figure is distinct from the rent More says he forgave. The kitchen and stairs are explicitly attributed to Neville in the later leases; their wainscot and round portal are not explicitly attributed to him as maker. For the main house at Billingbear, built about 1567 by the elder Sir Henry Neville, see "Parishes: Waltham St Lawrence," *A History of the County of Berkshire*, vol. 3 (1923), pp. 179–184, Victoria County History.

16. Sir Henry Neville the elder to William More, 27 August (1576 supplied), printed in Wallace, p. 131, with the separate Farrant application on the same page. The year is supplied by the edition's context; Neville's text gives Billingbear and 27 August. Wallace's old reference is Loseley MSS., Letters, II, no. 71; no modern replacement item number is asserted. Selected quotations modernize spelling. The reported royal progress remains uncertain in the letter itself.

17. Wallace, pp. 175–176; E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II (Oxford, 1923), pp. 493–498, Blackfriars account. Chambers supplies Farrant's offices and theatrical purpose, and reconstructs the first auditorium in the old frater. That reconstruction is distinguished from the leases' wording. The family's separate Abergavenny branch also patronized players: Chambers, II, "Lord Abergavenny's Men," records the London licence of 29 January 1572, provincial notices in 1571–72, and Ludlow in 1575–76. Their patron was Henry Neville, Lord Abergavenny (d. 1587), distinct from both Billingbear men.

18. St Ann Blackfriars baptism register, The London Archives, P69/ANN/A/001/MS04508/001 (formerly Guildhall Library MS 4508/1), under 1564; register image, image 3 of 140, left page, third entry under the 1564 heading. I thank James Leyland for supplying the register image reproduced here. John Harley, "'My Ladye Nevell' Revealed," *Music & Letters* 86, no. 1 (2005), p. 6, note 43, cites MS 4508/1 and transcribes "Henry Newell" and 20 May under that heading; article. James Peller Malcolm, *Londinium Redivivum*, II (London, 1803), p. 366, "St. Anne, Blackfriers," printed extract, agrees on the identity and date but regularizes the surname. FamilySearch catalogue 256057 identifies the register series. The full register spread has November and December before May–July under the 1564 heading; its ordering does not establish a correction to Neville's recorded date. Baptism does not establish a birth date or address.

19. Granville Leveson Gower, *Genealogy of the Family of Gresham* (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1883), pp.9–10 and 141, published documents. The funeral-certificate extract records Elizabeth's death on 7 November 1573, burial on 17 November, and Henry's age as ten and a half; George Harrison, Windsor Herald, certifies his comparison with College of Arms, Funeral Certificates I 5, f.215, on 1 June 1870. The Gresham inquisition is dated 22 March, 22 Elizabeth, and gives Henry's age on the preceding 21 March; his stated age of sixteen years, eleven months and ten days gives a calculated birth date of about 11 April 1563, not a recorded birthday. James Whitelocke, *Liber Famelicus*, ed. John Bruce (Camden Society, 1858), pp.46–47, printed memoir, gives the death on 10 July 1615 and age fifty-two. The 1599 portrait carries the age thirty-six. These last two ages allow approximately 1562/63. Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500–1714*, entry "Nevil, (Sir) Henry," p. 1057, gives the matriculation entry under 20 December 1577, aged fifteen. The interval of about thirteen months depends on accepting both the spring 1563 birth estimate and the registered baptism date; the age statements do not establish the reason for any delay. The sources disagree over the exact days: Gower's funeral-certificate extract gives death on 7 November and burial on 17 November; Ward, Lives, p. 6, transcribes the monument as 6 November, while Harley, "My Ladye Nevell," p. 5 n. 33, reports burial on 16 November 1573 from the parish register. The original register has not been checked to resolve the burial dates.

20. Constance E. B. Rye, "Queen Elizabeth's Godchildren," *The Genealogist*, new series, II (1885), pp.292–296, especially p.294, item21, printed list. Rye cites enrolled Treasurer of the Chamber

accounts, F, no.1, m.67, and explains that the table generally gives accounting periods rather than christening dates. An infant who died before the certificate was compiled, or delayed payment, cannot be excluded. Rye's extract does not explain the baptism date. Marion E. Colthorpe, *The Elizabethan Court Day by Day: 1564*, p.17, places the sponsorship beside the baptism on 20 May. Colthorpe cites the Treasurer of the Chamber's accounts with the siglum T, defined in her bibliography, p. 1; her dependence on Rye is not established. Rye's table supplies neither that day nor the child's given name. The original account's full wording remains to be examined; no claim is made that the Queen attended or that the family delayed baptism for her. Rye's 1885 article prints "Sir Henry Nevell's child" under the accounting year 29 September 1564–29 September 1565. Henry's younger siblings, according to their recorded ages, were born after that period.

21. John Harley, " 'My Ladye Nevell' Revealed," *Music & Letters* 86, no. 1 (2005), pp. 1–15, especially pp. 3–5, article. Harley places the marriage probably around May 1578 and identifies Elizabeth as the ambassador's father's third wife. She was Francis Bacon's half-sister, not his full sister. For Sir Edward Neville's execution, the 1539 date mentioned incidentally in Harley's discussion is corrected here from Wriothesley's contemporary account of 9 December 1538. Elizabeth was the widow of Sir Robert Doyley and the daughter of Sir Nicholas Bacon by his first wife, Jane Ferneley. Neville's later marriage to Anne Killigrew added another Bacon relationship: Francis Bacon was Anne's first cousin through the Cooke sisters.

# Oxford and Traveling with Savile

Chapter 2

## Oxford and departure

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Lucentio arrives in Padua to study:

> LUCENTIO
> Tranio, since for the great desire I had
> To see fair **Padua**, nursery of arts,
> [...]
> Here let us breathe and haply institute
> A **course of learning** and **ingenious studies**.
> — *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1.1[1]

Like Lucentio, Henry Neville came to Padua on his own educational journey. He matriculated at Merton College, Oxford, on 20 December 1577, but his time there was probably brief. He received a licence to travel abroad in April 1578 and began his continental journey with Savile that year. The exact departure date is unknown; the journey lasted about four years.[2,22]

Savile, his Oxford tutor, was then in his late twenties. Born in 1549, he had become a fellow of Merton in 1565 and established his reputation in mathematics and astronomy before Neville arrived. The historian of science Mordechai Feingold, in *The Mathematicians' Apprenticeship* (1984), describes him as "one of the most influential intellectual figures at Oxford in the period after 1570." His lectures of 1570–75 covered the history of Greek mathematics as well as astronomy. By the time he left England with Neville in 1578, his reputation extended beyond mathematics to scholarship more broadly.[3]

Our most detailed records of the trip cover 1580–82, when letters and a companion's diary follow the company through Germany and Central Europe into Italy. These letters connect Neville with astronomers, collectors, private libraries and the trade in books.[4]

Some records trace the young Neville's travels directly; others concern Savile. In reconstructing the journey, this book assumes that Neville generally accompanied his tutor across Europe. A record naming Savile alone does not establish that Neville was absent, though their movements were not necessarily identical at every stage.

Paris was an early destination. The historian of mathematics Robert Goulding dates Savile's meeting with Joseph Scaliger, the classical scholar and historian of ancient chronology, to 1579. Andreas Dudith later recalled that Savile had seen François Viète's *Canon mathematicus* in Paris while it was still in the author's

hands. Viète was a French mathematician whose work helped develop symbolic algebra; the *Canon* concerns trigonometry and its tables. By August 1580 Savile was corresponding with Johannes Praetorius, a mathematician and astronomer teaching at Altdorf near Nuremberg.[5]

The overview map locates the principal places mentioned in the journey. Its numbered entries give dates and distinguish Neville's recorded or scholarly placements from evidence concerning Savile or an inferred visit.

# Neville and Savile in Europe

Dated places in the continental journey · 1579–1582

- Neville: record or scholarly placement
- Savile only / Neville's presence inferred

  Grey squares: places shown for orientation

1 **Paris · 1579**
Savile meets Joseph Scaliger.

2 **Nuremberg · 10 Sept 1580**
Neville named in the diary.

3 **Prague · 12 Mar 1581**
Diary initials identify the party.

4 **Breslau · June 1581**
Neville's books left with Dudith.

5 **Vienna · June–July 1581**
The party's stated destination.

6 **Padua · July–Aug 1581**
Neville placed here by scholars.

7 **Venice · 29 Jan 1582**
Neville and Savile named together.

8 **Rome · before 27 Dec 1581**
Savile's visit; Neville inferred.

Return: Savile at Nuremberg, Apr–May 1582; Paris reports discuss the return to England, July–Sept 1582. Numbers locate places, not roads.

**Figure 2.1:** Neville and Savile in Europe, 1579–1582. The numbered entries give dates and the evidence for each location.

## The travelling company

Arthur Throckmorton (c.1557–1626), son of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, Elizabeth's former ambassador to France, kept the diary that provides our closest view of the travelling company.

On 10 September 1580, at Nuremberg, Throckmorton listed Robert Sidney, Henry Neville and Savile among his companions. The destination appears below the entry as "Noromberg."[6]

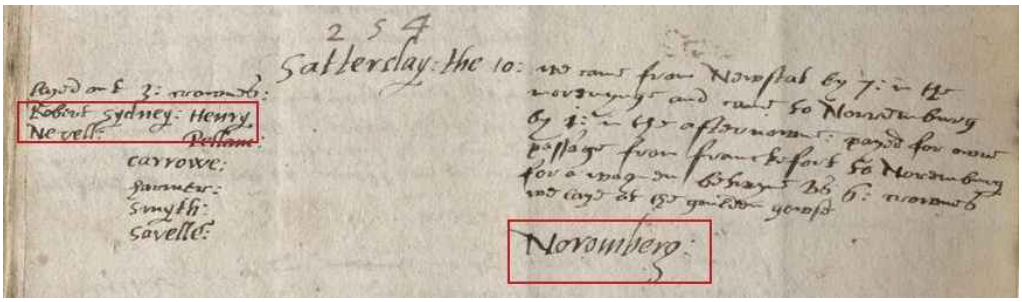



**Figure 2.2:** Throckmorton's diary, entry for 10 September 1580. Red boxes identify Robert Sidney and Henry Neville in the list at left, and Nuremberg below the entry. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, U85/38/14/1.

Neville's travelling companion Robert Sidney was the younger brother of the poet Philip Sidney. Robert joined the company in 1580 for the German journey to Prague. Writing to Robert on 18 October 1580, Philip encouraged him to remain with Savile and study alongside Neville:

> I have written to Mr Savile. I wish you kept still together; he is an excellent man; and there may, if you list, pass good exercises betwixt you and Mr Neville; there is great expectation of you both.

"List" means wish or choose. Later in the same letter, Philip sent his greeting to the company:

> Commend me to Master Neville, Master Savile, and honest Harry Whyte, and bid them be merry.[7]

Ten days later, on 28 October, their father Sir Henry Sidney wrote to Robert about Neville's father:

> There can be no greater love than of long time hath been, and yet is, between Sir Harry Neville and me, and so will continue till our lives end. Love you those we have done, and do.

In another letter, dated to late 1580 by Robert Shephard and Noel Kinnamon in their 2007 article on the Sidney family correspondence, Sir Henry welcomed Robert's friendship with the younger Neville and Savile:

> I hear you are fallen into consort and fellowship with Sir Harry Neville's son and heir, and one Master Savile. I hear of singular virtues of them both. I am glad of your familiarity with them.[7]

Robert and Philip Sidney's sister was Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, the poet and translator. Her sons were William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery—the brothers to whom Shakespeare's First Folio was dedicated in 1623. Neville's travelling companion was their uncle. Chapter 49 follows Neville's own dealings with William Herbert, including the political reconciliation he helped arrange in 1612.[7]

Robert was himself a substantial poet. His autograph notebook, now British Library Add MS 58435, contains sonnets, songs and other verse, with revisions and competing arrangements. Addressed to his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, the collection seems to have remained, as Hilton Kelliher and Katherine Duncan-Jones observe, "almost unknown outside the family circle at Penshurst and Wilton." His daughter Mary Wroth's imitations of his songs offer evidence of its life within the family. Its copying postdates the journey, but it illustrates how extensive poetic writing could circulate within a literary household while remaining scarcely visible to the wider public.[8]

George Carew (c.1556–1612), of Antony in Cornwall and later an ambassador, was travelling with Neville and Savile by September 1580, as the classical scholar Robert B. Todd records in his 1996 article "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy." Carew was the younger brother of the antiquary Richard Carew (1555–1620), author of *The Survey of Cornwall*, and uncle of Richard Carew the younger (c.1580–1643), who would accompany Neville to France. The elder Richard's writing returns in the discussion of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in Chapter 25.[9]

Carew shared Savile's mathematical interests. Jonathan Woolfson reconstructs their Italian journey from Throckmorton's diary in *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (1998), drawing out the language lessons, book purchases, manuscript work and observations of civic life that accompanied their travels.

Robert Sidney's letter of 1 November records his arrival at Prague the previous day, after a journey through Ingolstadt, Augsburg, Munich and Regensburg. The family letters establish Neville's association with Robert; the intermediate stops belong to Robert's explicit itinerary and provide the likely course of the group's movement.[10]

## Astronomy in 1581

At Breslau Savile joined the circle of Andreas Dudith, a Hungarian humanist, diplomat and former bishop who had become Protestant. Dudith was a patron and keen student of mathematical scholarship, bringing specialists into his household and seeking their help with difficult texts. In Prague, the physician

and astronomer Tadeáš Hájek, known in Latin as Thaddaeus Hagecius, was studying comets. In 1581 Hagecius published a book about comets at Görlitz, *Apodixis Physica et Mathematica de Cometis*. Its opening pages print a letter from Andreas Dudith to Hagecius, dated Breslau, 1 February 1581. Dudith praises Savile's learning in philosophy, mathematics and languages, and sends greetings from Savile and the astronomer Paul Wittich. He then asks Hagecius to greet Robert Sidney and Henry Neville on his behalf, praising the two young Englishmen for their learning and character. Wittich had spent several months with Tycho Brahe at his observatory in 1580 and was now working with Savile at Breslau (see Appendix H).[11]

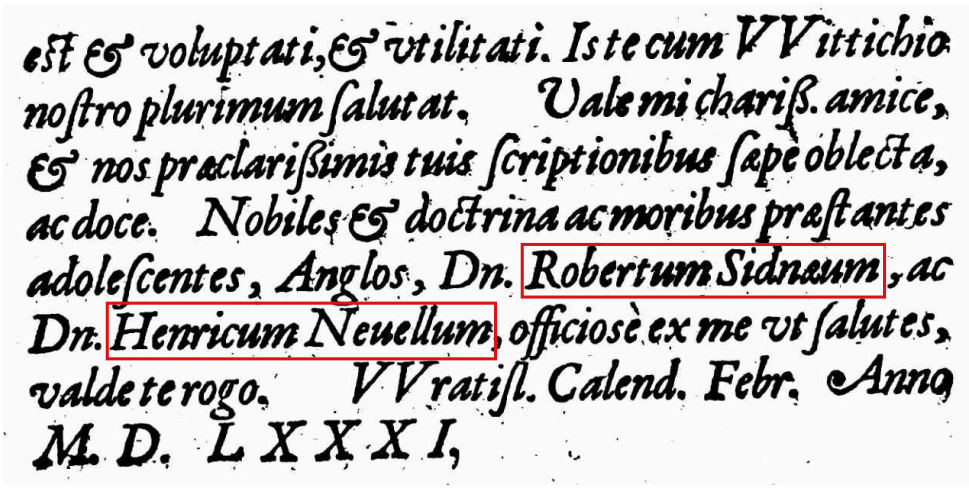

est & voluptati, & vtilitati. Is te cum VVittichio
nostro plurimum salutat. Vale mi chariß. amice,
& nos præclarißimis tuis scriptionibus sæpè oblecta,
ac doce. Nobiles & doctrina ac moribus præstantes
adolescentes, Anglos, Dn. Robertum Sidnæum, ac
Dn. Henricum Neuellum, officiosè ex me vt salutes,
valde te rogo. VVratiſl. Calend. Febr. Anno
M. D. L X X X I,

**Figure 2.3:** Closing lines of Dudith's letter to Hagecius, dated Breslau, 1 February 1581, printed at the front of Hagecius's book on comets. The passage names Robert Sidney and Henry Neville and praises their learning and character. Red boxes identify Robert Sidney and Henry Neville.

The book also contains Hagecius's own address to Dudith. Here Hagecius recalls Savile visiting while he was writing about the comet. They discussed his work, and Savile shared his own knowledge so generously that Hagecius described the visit as both pleasant and especially useful. Having examined the work, Savile could explain it to Dudith. Neville's own scholarly exchanges with Dudith emerge in the letter Dudith sent him later that year.

By early February 1581 the travellers were temporarily apart: Savile was with Dudith at Breslau, while Robert Sidney and Neville were visiting Prague. On 4 February Dudith wrote to Hájek in Prague, reporting that Savile wondered why his English companions had not written. The editors identify those companions as Sidney and Neville.[12]

Throckmorton's diary names the three companions together again on 12 March 1581: "R:S: H:N: and A:T:" — Robert Sidney, Henry Neville and Arthur Throckmorton.[13]

## Introductions to libraries: Vienna

Dudith's letters show the party preparing to move on. On 13 June 1581 he reported that Savile was getting ready to leave as soon as the English gentlemen arrived; the edition identifies them as Sidney and Neville. Nine days later Dudith wrote to Johannes Sambucus, the imperial historian and collector, introducing Savile and naming the two young men accompanying him. Dudith described Neville as coming from "the most ancient and illustrious family of the Nevilles, of the Red Rose." Both young men, he added, were learned and modest. The recommendation was intended to open Sambucus's library.[14], [15] Dudith also raised delays in publishing mathematical books from Sambucus's collection, saying Savile could explain the problem further.[15]

On 27 June Dudith reported that Savile and his companions had departed for Vienna three days earlier. Todd associates Savile and Carew with manuscript copying at Vienna in 1581, supporting the scholarly purpose of the journey without independently placing Neville there.[16] In his own letter of 18 July, Dudith was impatient for news. Where was Savile with his admired company? Why had no letter arrived? He sent greetings to Neville and asked after John Chamber, another mathematician from their English circle.[17]

## Dudith writes to Neville

On 7 August 1581 Dudith wrote from Breslau to Neville, answering a letter Neville had sent him. He addressed him as "my most noble and equally most lovable Neville"—*mi nobilissime idemque amabilissime Nevelle*—and praised his gracious and complimentary letter. Dudith then asked him to put Henry Savile to work:

> *Excita, rogo te, maiorem in modum atque acrius stimula Savile*
>
> Rouse Savile, I ask you, and urge him still more strongly to prepare something for me on the obscure passages of the ancient mathematicians, and on Copernicus, who should be compared with the ancients—or, if Wittich is to be believed, preferred to them.[18]

Copernicus had proposed a moving Earth and a Sun-centred arrangement of the planets. Dudith was asking Neville to encourage Savile's work on this comparison. Dudith also wanted instructions about books Neville had left at Breslau:

> *De libris tuis, quos hic reliquisti* (*de quo tibi magnam gratiam habeo*), *monebis quid fieri velis.*

> Concerning **your books, which you left here** (for which I am very grateful to you), you will tell me what you wish done.[18]

He asked Neville and Savile to find mathematical or philosophical works he had not seen, whether manuscripts in a library or printed books. He named works by Maurolico and Commandino and said he had long wanted to see Jean Borrel (Buteo)'s geometrical study of Noah's Ark.[18]

The books Neville had left with Dudith indicate an earlier stay at Breslau; the letter's dateline does not locate Neville there on 7 August.[19]

Dudith still missed Savile in December 1585. Writing to Hájek, he asked him to consult John Dee about finding another accomplished mathematician willing to live with him. He offered an annual salary, plentiful books and leisure: these studies needed "a companion and an encourager."[20]

## Padua and the search for books

Padua already belonged to the family's history. Thomas Hoby records arriving there on 23 August 1554 and meeting Sir Henry Neville, the ambassador's father, among the English company that included John Cheke and Thomas Wroth. Twenty-seven years before the son's arrival at Padua with Savile, his father had been in the same Italian city during Mary's reign.[21]

The younger Neville was at Padua in the summer of 1581. Will Tosh's study of Nicholas Faunt's correspondence reports that Faunt named him among the English there in a letter of 8 July. Woolfson, following Throckmorton's diary, places Neville, Savile and Carew with Throckmorton in August and the group at Ferrara, Florence and Bologna in September. These accounts suggest Neville was in Padua earlier than the August meeting, but do not establish the dates or continuity of his stay.[22]

Padua was a university city whose scholarly life extended into private houses and collections. On 10 September Dudith urged Savile, if he came to Padua, to seek the friendship of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, originally from Naples, together with Neville. He explained what Pinelli could offer:

> Besides his other possessions, he has an excellent library of books of every kind and **many manuscripts, which he will not withhold from you**.[23]

Dudith also recommended Melchior Guilandinus, director of the botanical garden. His letter records proposed visits; it does not date the travellers' arrival or departure.

Dudith had also sent greetings for Neville on 1 September, in a letter discussing objections to Copernicus.[24] Savile's dealings with Pinelli produced material results. Todd traces the copying and exchange of mathematical and philosophical manuscripts between their collections. Pinelli's scribe copied texts for Savile; Savile left work and correspondence with Pinelli.[16]

Throckmorton's diary gives the educational journey its everyday texture. At Padua he paid for Italian and lute lessons and bought Piccolomini's natural philosophy; at Venice he bought Italian versions of Livy and Josephus, and at Florence histories of the Este family and Padua. He also noted the election of the university rector by the counsellors of its twenty-three nations. These are Throckmorton's activities, illustrating the opportunities available to the travelling companions.[25]

Savile's commonplace book records a parallel interest in government, religion, commerce, revenue, warfare, foreign relations and customs. Much of its material is in Italian, drawn from histories and the reports of Venetian diplomats and travellers. Woolfson associates it with Savile's Italian travels, although some material may have reached him afterwards.[25]

The opening of *The Taming of the Shrew* belongs to this educational world. Lucentio arrives with his father's approval and his servant Tranio, whose reply ranges through Aristotle, Ovid, rhetoric, music, mathematics and metaphysics.[1] The plays' Italian geography extends further: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* sends its young men from Verona to Milan, while *Romeo and Juliet* makes Verona its centre and Mantua Romeo's place of exile.[26] Venice supplies the Venetian scenes of *The Merchant of Venice* and the opening of *Othello*.

Chapter 19 returns to Padua through Katherine Cooke, Henry Killigrew and the learned sisters of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

## Study, illness and the return from Rome

Writing to Dudith on 24 November 1581, Wolfgang Zündelin, a member of his scholarly circle, expressed concern about Savile's journey to Rome:

> I wish his journey to Rome all the more success because of the **greater danger that Englishmen face there nowadays**. He has certainly taken **every precaution that could be expected of a prudent man**.[28]

Immediately afterwards, Zündelin reported that Neville had been writing to Dudith but had been prevented by illness. He described headaches attributed to bowel obstruction and said Neville had recovered after several days; a fever had been feared. He blamed the episode on *nimiis laboribus*, excessive work, and Neville's *infinita cupiditas*, his boundless desire to learn everything. A second letter, of 1 December, reported a relapse with smallpox and fever, under the care of the physician Girolamo Donzellini.[28]

Donzellini helped Dudith obtain books as well as practising medicine, placing Neville's care within the same learned circle.

Savile certainly visited Rome during the Italian journey. On 27 December 1581 he wrote to Dudith from Venice:

> When I had returned to Venice from my journey to Rome, your letters were delivered to me.[27]

The same letter describes Arabic mathematical manuscripts he had seen at Rome, including a work attributed to Archimedes and seven books of Apollonius's *Conics*. His search for learned texts extended well beyond Padua and Venice. Neville's illness may have affected his participation; whether he accompanied Savile to Rome is unknown.[28,27]

On 29 January 1582 Dudith supplied a firm location. Savile, he told Hagecius, was now in Venice with Neville—*nunc Venetiis est cum Nevello*. Dudith missed the stimulus Savile had brought to their mathematical studies.[29]

## The journey home

**Verona and the road north.** Thomas Hoby's account of his brother's 1555 journey shows that Verona could be a stop on the road from Padua through Trent and Innsbruck. It was one possible route north for Neville and Savile, whose precise itinerary is unrecorded.[21]

On 20 April 1582, Alvise Lullini wrote to Savile from Venice, addressing the letter to him at Nuremberg. His opening describes his own stay at Verona, not Neville's presence there. He began, in translation:

> I did not long for you so impatiently while I was in **Verona** as I do now, having returned to Venice [...]

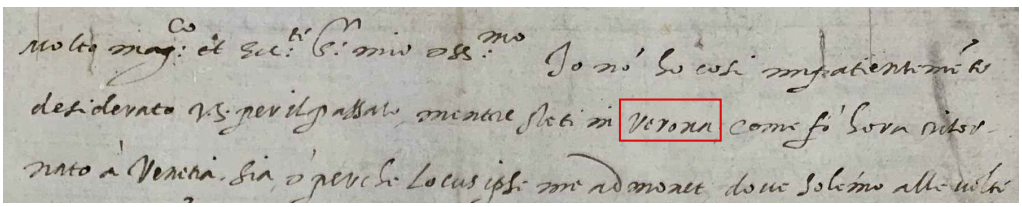


**Figure 2.4:** Opening of Alvise Lullini's letter to Henry Savile, Venice, 20 April 1582. "Verona" is boxed in red. The National Archives, SP 99/1, f. 8.

The letter recalled their delightful conversations, promised help finding rare books, and described agents in Candia sending copyists to Patmos. It closed:

> My greetings to **Mr Neville**.[30]

Savile was at Nuremberg by 15 May 1582.[31]

Writing from Paris on 29 July 1582, David Graham of Fintry named "il Signor Saviello" and "il Signor Noviello"—Savile and Neville—and reported their plan:

> They intend to go to **England within a few days**.[31]

Graham does not say where they were when he wrote.

On 21 August 1582, Sir Henry Cobham, the English ambassador in Paris, wrote to Francis Walsingham:

> There is also one Philippo Pigafetta of Vinsentia, a philosopher, who hath likewise given me to understand he desireth to go into England, being of **young Mr Nevill's acquaintance**.[32]

"Young Mr Nevill" is very likely Henry Neville, who was travelling in Europe at the time.

On 17 September, Cobham returned to Pigafetta and his connection with Neville:

> Il Signor Pigafetti, of whom I have written in my former letters to be the acquaintance of **young Mr Nevell**, is presently upon his parting towards England, together with Signor Aragon ... He hath written **a book of his long voyage passed in Turkey and Judea**, the which he desireth **her Majesty may see**.[32]

## Study with Savile: the Tacitus

An undated imperial genealogy in the Tacitus now at Audley End offers a tangible glimpse of Neville's study with Savile. In this 1574 edition, the principal hand is consistent with Neville's italic writing; darker additions attributed to Savile clarify the identity and parentage of Vipsania, Tiberius's first wife. The original "Atticus Neptis" correctly identifies her as Atticus's granddaughter; the additions supply her name, Vipsania, and her father's, "M. Agrippa." The volume contains hundreds of annotations attributed to the two men, suggesting sustained work together. The intervention is undated; Chapter 16, "Tacitus in Neville's Hands," examines Neville's use of Tacitus in his own writing.[33]

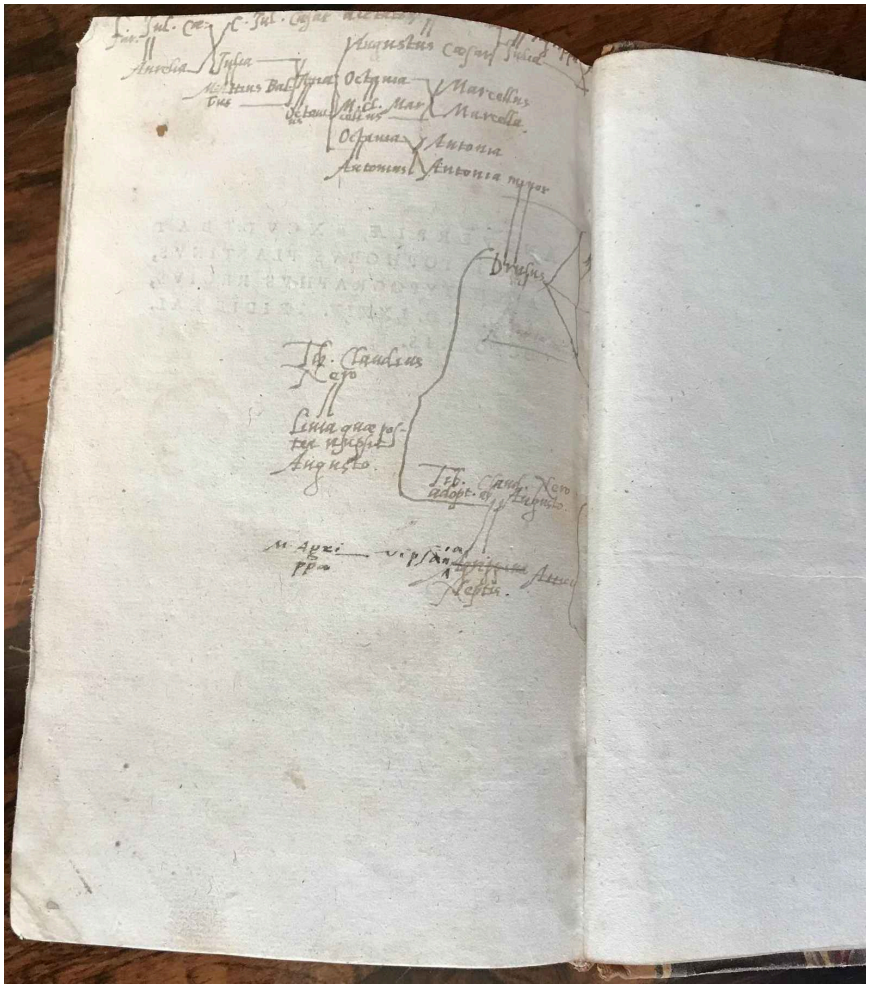



**Figure 2.5:** The rear end page of the Audley End Tacitus. Full photograph; the uppermost part of the genealogy is cut by the photograph. Source: Published photographs.

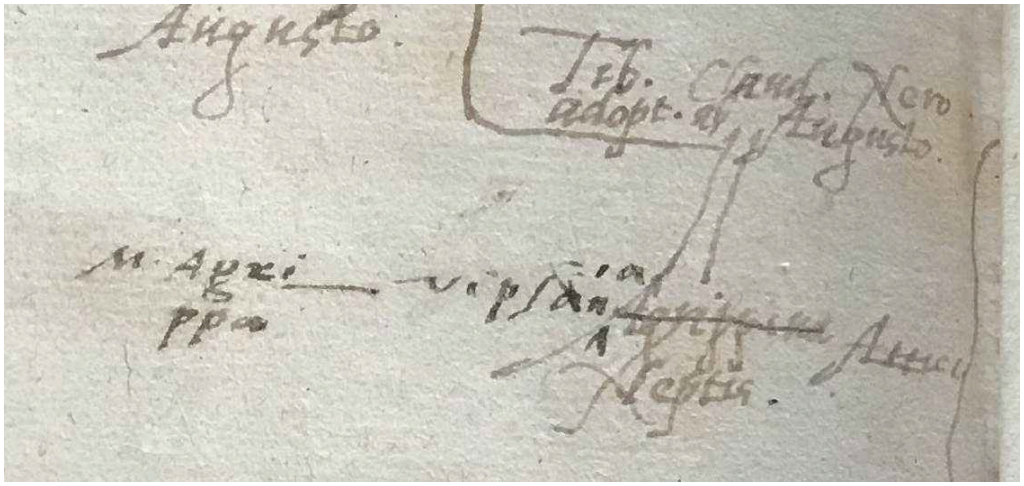


**Figure 2.6:** Detail of the cancelled entry and the additions identifying Vipsania and her father, Marcus Agrippa. Source: Published photographs.

## After the journey

In his Latin travel poem *Iter Boreale* (1583), Richard Edes names a "Nevillus" at Durham during Walsingham's return from Scotland, describing him, in Dana Sutton's translation, as "distinguished for his book-learning." This may have been Henry Neville, recently returned from his travels; the identification remains unresolved, and the reference does not establish that he accompanied Walsingham into Scotland.[34]

On 25 August 1584, Hájek wrote to Robert Sidney that his son Simeon had returned home after visiting the Sidney family. According to Robert Shephard and Noel J. Kinnamon's study of the correspondence, he also asked Robert to convey his greetings to Neville and Savile.[35]

The connection continued after the travellers returned to England. In March 1588 Savile wrote to Hugo Blotius, librarian of the imperial library in Vienna, recommending his younger brother Thomas and conveying greetings from Sidney and Neville.[36]

## Maps and dated stages

The record begins with Savile in Paris, then follows the travellers through Nuremberg and Prague to Breslau, south towards Vienna and into Italy, and back north. Letters sent from Paris also describe their planned return to England and Neville's acquaintance with Pigafetta. The overview map near the beginning shows the principal destinations. The Italian detail below and the dated guide distinguish Neville's movements from Savile's and identify the evidence for each.

# Study and books in Italy

Neville's company and Savile's recorded visits · 1581–1582

- Neville: record or scholarly placement
- Savile only / Neville's presence inferred

Grey squares: places shown for orientation

1 **Padua · July–Aug 1581**
Study with Savile and Carew.

2 **Ferrara · Sept 1581**
Woolfson places the company.

3 **Bologna · Sept 1581**
Woolfson places the company.

4 **Florence · Sept 1581**
Woolfson places the company.

5 **Pesaro · by 27 Dec 1581**
Meeting recorded by Savile.

6 **Rome · by 27 Dec 1581**
Visit recorded by Savile.

7 **Venice · Dec 1581–Jan 1582**
Neville named there on 29 Jan.

Dates identify the evidence, not the length or order of every stay.
Grey square: Verona is orientation only; Neville's visit is unproven.

**Figure 2.7:** Study and books in Italy, 1581–1582. Dates and locations follow the evidence summarized in the dated guide.

### The journey in dated stages

The stages below distinguish direct records of Neville from the movements of his companions. Some letters name him; others greet unnamed English gentlemen whom the editors identify as Neville and Sidney, as in Dudith's letters of 4 February and 23 March 1581. Records of Savile's movements alone cannot establish Neville's presence. The guide therefore distinguishes explicit naming, editorial identification and an inferred shared route.[37]

**1. 1579 · Paris.** Goulding dates Savile's meeting with Joseph Scaliger here to 1579. Dudith also recalled Savile seeing Viète's *Canon mathematicus* in Paris before publication, without dating that encounter. These records concern Savile; they do not separately name Neville.[5]

**2. 10 September 1580 · Nuremberg.** Throckmorton's diary names Robert Sidney, Henry Neville and Savile together.

**3. 12 March 1581 · Prague.** Throckmorton's diary groups "R:S: H:N: and A:T:", consistent with Robert Sidney, Henry Neville and Throckmorton himself.

**4. June 1581 · Breslau.** Dudith's letters introduce Neville and Sidney and report Savile's company leaving for Vienna on 24 June. Neville had left books with Dudith.

**5. June–July 1581 · Vienna.** The party's stated destination. Todd associates Savile and Carew's manuscript work with Vienna, but his publications give conflicting dates of 18 June and 18 July. This does not independently locate Neville.

**6. July–September 1581 · Italy.** Tosh reports Neville among the English at Padua in Faunt's letter of 8 July. Woolfson places him with Savile and Carew there in August and the group at Ferrara, Florence and Bologna in September. The duration of Neville's Padua stay is not established.[22]

**7. Before 27 December 1581 · Rome.** Savile's own letter records his Roman visit, a meeting at Pesaro, and visits to Florence, Bologna and Ferrara. Neville may have accompanied him to Rome; the letter names only Savile as the traveller.

**8. 27 December 1581 and 29 January 1582 · Venice.** Savile wrote from Venice on 27 December after returning from Rome. On 29 January Dudith reported that Savile was there with Neville.

**9. April–May 1582 · Savile in Nuremberg.** Lullini addressed his letter to Savile at Nuremberg on 20 April. Todd dates Savile's letter from Nuremberg to Pinelli to 15 May. The road north is unrecorded; Verona is a possible stop.

**10. July–September 1582 · Reports from Paris.** Graham's letter of 29 July reports Savile and Neville preparing to leave for England within days. Cobham's dispatches of 21 August and 17 September identify Pigafetta as an acquaintance of "young Mr Nevill." These Paris reports connect Neville with the intended return and Pigafetta's projected English visit, without establishing Neville's location or the date of his crossing.[38,32]

## Notes and sources

1. William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1.1, Folger Shakespeare Library, Lucentio's opening speech. The excerpt preserves the verse lineation; the ellipsis marks the omitted lines. Neville's documented visit to Padua is discussed later in this chapter.

2. For matriculation, Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, Early Series, III (Oxford, 1891), 1057. Andreas Dudith, *Epistulae*, pars VII, 1581–1589, ed. Nicolaus Szymański and Ida Radziejowska (Budapest: reciti, 2019), no. 1072, pp. 87–88, edition. Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (1998), biographical register, p. 260, entry for Henry Neville (1562–1615), citing TNA E 157/1, f. 3, for the April 1578 licence. J. R. L. Highfield, 'An Autograph Manuscript Commonplace Book of Sir Henry Savile,' *Bodleian Library Record* 7 (1963), 73–83, p. 79 nn. 3–4, records Merton's grant of 3 April 1578 for study in France and overseas, and Savile's presence in the college treasury on 14 April and 17 May (Merton College, Liber Aerarii, II, p. 39). The grant and licence are not departure records. Foster's stated age of fifteen implies a birth in approximately 1561–62, earlier than the spring 1563 estimate discussed in Chapter 1. The matriculation entry names no tutor; the evidence for Savile's role is given in the following note.

3. Roger Kuin, ed., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 1006, n. 8, identifies Neville as a former student of Savile who was accompanying him on his continental journey; the note accompanies Philip Sidney's letter to Robert Sidney of 18 October 1580. Mordechai Feingold, *The Mathematicians' Apprenticeship: Science, Universities and Society in England, 1560–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 47–48, 124–125; quotation at 124. Henry Savile and his brother Thomas both addressed Neville as their cousin: Henry in his letter of 10 May 1600 (TNA, PRO 30/50/2), and Thomas in an English note on a newsletter reverse (TNA, PRO 30/50/70/2). The probable maternal connection runs through Anne Savile, wife of Sir Henry Thwaites of Lund and daughter of Sir John Savile of Thornhill and Elizabeth Paston. Anne was probably the mother of Frances Thwaites, whose daughter Elizabeth Gresham was Neville's mother. See J. W. Clay, "The Savile Family," *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 25 (1920), 11; C. E. L., letter on royal descents, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1846, 153–154, especially 154, which describes Anne's maternity as highly probable. Henry and Thomas belonged to the Bradley branch of the Savile family. Thomas's accompanying note calls Neville his cousin. The newsletters are addressed to Thomas, carry Neville's handwritten notes, and passed into the archive from Neville's family papers. Together these establish their transmission from Thomas to Neville; Chapter 27 describes the covering note and the manuscript evidence. The precise common ancestor linking the proposed maternal line to the Bradley Saviles has not been established here.

4. Robert Shephard and Noel J. Kinnamon, "The Sidney Family Correspondence during Robert Sidney's Continental Tour, 1579–1581," *Sidney Journal* 25, nos. 1–2 (2007): 43–66, pp. 60–61; Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 129–131. For Arthur Throckmorton's parentage and surviving travel diaries, see Magdalen College, Oxford, "The Life and Library of Arthur Throckmorton" (2015), https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/blog/the-life-and-library-of-arthur-throckmorton/.

5. R. D. Goulding, 'Savile, Sir Henry (1549–1622),' Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (2004; revised 2024), sections 'European tour' and 'Savile, Scaliger, and Casaubon,' https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24737. Andreas Dudith, Epistulae, VII, ed. Nicolaus Szymański and Ida Radziejowska (Budapest: reciti, 2019), no. 1219, pp. 453–454: Dudith to Johannes Praetorius, Breslau, 12 December 1584. Translation from the Latin; the recollection does not date the meeting. Goulding discusses this letter in 'Henry Savile and the Tychonic World-System,' Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 58 (1995), p. 175 nn. 80–81. Mordechai Feingold, The Mathematicians' Apprenticeship: Science, Universities and Society in England, 1560–1640 (Cambridge, 1984), p. 127 n. 16, cites Bodleian MS Savile 108, ff. 104–105, for the August 1580 letters. Robert B. Todd, 'Henry and Thomas Savile in

Italy,' Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance 58.2 (1996), 439–444, pp. 440–441. For the scholars' identities and fields, see Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, Oxford University Press, publisher's description; J. J. O'Connor and E. F. Robertson, "François Viète," MacTutor History of Mathematics, University of St Andrews, including the account of the *Canon mathematicus* and Viète's later algebraic notation; Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, "Johann Praetorius (1537–1616)", on his teaching of mathematics and astronomy and his appointment at Altdorf in 1576.

6. Arthur Throckmorton, travel diary, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, U85/38/14/1, entry for 10 September 1580; photograph supplied by the author. See also Robert B. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy," Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance 58 (1996), pp.439–444, at p.440.

7. Robert Shephard and Noel J. Kinnamon, "The Sidney Family Correspondence during Robert Sidney's Continental Tour, 1579–1581," *Sidney Journal* 25, nos. 1–2 (2007): 43–66, especially pp. 50, 57 and 64–65; Penshurst Papers, U 1475 Z53/26 (28 October 1580), Z53/22 (composite transcript), and C7/8 (18 October 1580). Quotations modernize spelling. Their analysis separates the late-1580 material from a March 1579 letter combined with it in an eighteenth-century transcript. Margaret P. Hannay, "Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621)" (2000), The Sidney Homepage, University of Cambridge, supplies the sibling relationships and her sons' identities. For the two sons as dedicatees of the 1623 First Folio, see Folger First Folio 24. Philip's advice about Savile and Neville: Roger Kuin, ed., *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, vol. II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 1006, letter to Robert, 18 October 1580; copy, Penshurst Papers, U 1475 C7/8.

8. Hilton Kelliher and Katherine Duncan-Jones, "A Manuscript of Poems by Robert Sidney: Some Early Impressions," *British Library Journal* 1.2 (1975), pp. 107–144, especially pp. 107–108, 113–115; journal bibliography. Their tally is thirty-five complete sonnets, not sixty-six sonnets: sixty-six is the sum of the complete poems across the listed forms. The unfinished crown is discussed separately. Their 1596 proposal concerns transcription into this notebook, not the dates of composition of every poem. British Library, Add MS 58435 catalogue, records the autograph collection with revisions and the direction to the Countess of Pembroke. Peter Beal, "Robert Sidney," Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts, records full publication in 1981 and 1984. The autograph identification follows the scholars and catalogues. No evidence cited here establishes when Neville read any of these poems.

9. Robert B. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 58 (1996), pp.439–444, at p.440. Todd places Carew, Neville and Robert Sidney with Savile at Nuremberg in September 1580. This supports shared travel, without establishing that Carew left England with Neville and Savile in 1578. George Carew's identity and relationship to the elder Richard: Westminster Abbey, "Sir George Carew". W. J. Jones, "Carew, Sir George (c.1556–1612)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), as cited in the William & Mary Law Library account; Paul Hunneyball's *History of Parliament* entry gives c.1560 instead. For Richard the younger (c.1580–1643), see Historic England, Antony, list entry 1000647. For Richard the younger's own account of being sent to France with Neville to learn French, see his section in Samuel Hartlib, *The True and Readie Way to Learne the Latine Tongue* (London, 1654), pp. 45–49, especially p. 46; Wing H1002, ESTC R19399, EEBO-TCP A42982.

10. Robert B. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 58, no. 2 (1996): 439–444, p. 440; *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord De L'Isle & Dudley Preserved at Penshurst Place*, II (London: HMSO, 1934), pp. 94–96, Robert Sidney to his father, 1 November 1580.

11. Thaddaeus Hagecius ab Hayck, *Apodixis Physica et Mathematica de Cometis* (Görlitz: Ambrosius Fritsch, 1581), preliminary letter from Dudith, dated Breslau, 1 February 1581, and Hagecius's address to Dudith, sig. B2r. The praise of Savile and of Sidney and Neville has different grammatical subjects. For Wittich's visit to Tycho and his work with Savile, see Robert Goulding,

"Henry Savile and the Tychonic World-System", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 58 (1995), 152–179, pp. 155–156, 163–175; discussed more fully in Appendix H.

12. Andreas Dudith to Tadeáš Hájek, Breslau, 4 February 1581, *Epistulae*, VII, no. 1041, pp. 40–41, especially p. 41, lines 21–22 and n. 14, critical edition. Dudith reports Savile's surprise that his compatriots remain silent; the names Robert Sidney and Henry Neville, and their presence at Prague, are supplied by the editors in n. 14. The letter does not name them individually.

13. Arthur Throckmorton, diary, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, U85/38/14/1, entry headed "Sunday the 12," 12 March 1581 (1580/81 in English year reckoning), manuscript page numbered 59. The quotation reproduces the initials only; the wording of the subsequent exchange with their host requires further transcription. Hana Ferencová, "Na cestě po Evropě," *Folia Historica Bohemica* 33.1 (2018), 169–188, p. 180 nn. 55–56, prints the initials "R: S:, H: N: and A: T:". Their expansion as Robert Sidney, Henry Neville and Throckmorton is interpretative; her preceding note suggests a different expansion of R.S. Her f. 60r reference differs from the visible page number 59. Published issue.

14. Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, nos. 1055–1056, pp. 59–62. In no. 1055, the arrival is prospective; the identification of the English gentlemen is the editors', n. 15. The family description is in no. 1056, p. 62: "ex antiquissima et illustrissima Nevellorum, Rosae Rubrae, familia." Translation here; "of the Red Rose" preserves Dudith's wording.

15. Dudith to Johannes Sambucus (János Zsámboky), 22 June 1581, *Epistulae*, VII, no.1056, pp.61–62, especially p. 62; compare the books left at Breslau in no.1072, pp.87–88. The commendation is not evidence that Sambucus actually admitted the party to his library. On the proposed printing arrangements, see p. 62, lines 17–21 and nn. 6–7: "Oro te ut eos retrahas aut aliis excudendos tradas"; Dudith adds "de quo plura ex domino Savile cognosces." These are works Dudith wanted published, not an inventory of books Neville is known to have read.

16. Robert B. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 58, no. 2 (1996): 439–444, JSTOR record. Todd's 1996 article gives 18 July; his later "Geminus and the Ps.-Proclan Sphaera," *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum* VIII (2003), p. 10 n. 17, gives 18 June for Bodleian MS Savile 10, f. 117v. The subscription must be checked before choosing between them; the June date also needs reconciliation with Dudith's report of departure for Vienna on 24 June. Later entry.

17. Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, nos. 1058 and 1062, pp. 65–66, 71–72.

18. Andreas Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII: *1581–1589*, ed. Nicolaus Szymański and Ida Radziejowska (Budapest: Reciti, 2019), no. 1072, pp. 87–88,open critical edition. The edition identifies the source as Dudith's autograph draft; the account here follows the printed edition, not a fresh manuscript transcription.

19. Andreas Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII: *1581–1589*, ed. Nicolaus Szymański and Ida Radziejowska (Budapest: Reciti, 2019), no. 1072, 87–88, open edition.

20. Andreas Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII (1581–1589), ed. Nicolaus Szymański and Ida Radziejowska (Budapest: Reciti, 2019), no.1251, to Tadeáš Hájek, 20 December 1585, pp.532–534, especially p.534; critical edition. "Socio et incitatore" is translated here as "a companion and an encourager." On p.533 Dudith asks Hájek for a frank assessment of Dee's reported visions; he does not there explicitly reject them. In no.1265, dated 3 July 1587 by the editors, pp.555–556, he calls the alleged conversations with angels scarcely credible. The edition's introduction, pp.15–17, describes Dudith's role as intermediary and organizer of the mathematical discussions in his household, while distinguishing his enthusiasm from Savile's and Wittich's technical expertise. These later letters illuminate Dudith's scholarly interests and patronage; neither establishes contact between Neville and Dee.

21. Thomas Hoby, *The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas Hoby, Kt. of Bisham Abbey, Written by Himself, 1547–1564*, ed. Edgar Powell (London: Royal Historical Society, 1902), pp. 116–117 (23 August

1554 and editorial identification of Sir Henry Neville of Billingbear), 120–121 (1555 Verona visit and itinerary); complete scan. Hoby writes on p.120, with spelling modernized, "We tarried a while at Verona, as well to see the town as the country about"; the route list on p.121 is headed "My brother's journey out of Italy." Page 116 also records the incoming route through Bassano. Hoby names Wroth and Cheke in the 1555 travelling company; his account does not place either Henry Neville on that route.

22. William Patrick Tosh, *Testimonies of Affection and Dispatches of Intelligence: The Letters of Anthony Bacon, 1558–1601* (PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2013), p. 53 and n. 17, thesis, citing Nicholas Faunt to Anthony Bacon, 8 July 1581, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 647, f. 110r. Tosh paraphrases the list naming Neville; the original folio has not been inspected for this account. Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors* (1998), pp. 129–130, dates the meeting with Throckmorton to August and the group's onward travel to September. The July report precedes that meeting; the evidence does not establish an uninterrupted July–September residence. Woolfson's approximately two-month stay concerns Faunt, not Neville.

23. Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, no. 1084, pp. 116–118, especially p. 117 and nn. 10–13. Page 118 also records Zündelin and Donzellini obtaining Greek commentators for Dudith. The quoted passage is translated from p. 117, lines 22–24; "you" translates the plural *vobis*, following the recommendation that Savile and Neville approach Pinelli together.

24. Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, no. 1082, pp. 113–114.

25. Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors*, pp. 129–131. His account follows Arthur Throckmorton's contemporary diary; the purchases and lessons described here are Throckmorton's. Magdalen College, "The Life and Library of Arthur Throckmorton" (30 September 2015), reports his purchase note in Pigna's Historia de principi di Este (Ferrara, 1570), Magd. Q.11.12: bought in Florence on 23 September 1581. This independently supports Throckmorton's September presence in Florence; it does not name Neville. https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/blog/the-life-and-library-of-arthur-throckmorton/ Highfield, "Autograph Manuscript Commonplace Book," pp. 78–80, proposes 1578–85, most probably 1581–82, while allowing that some sources may have been sent to Savile after his departure.

26. Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 1.1 and 1.3; *Romeo and Juliet*, 3.3 and 5.1. The Verona reference in Lullini's letter belongs to Lullini's itinerary; it is not a Neville travel record.

27. Henry Savile to Andreas Dudith, 27 December 1581, in Andreas Dudithius, *Epistulae*, VII: *1581–1589*, ed. Nicolaus Szymański and Ida Radziejowska (Budapest: Reciti, 2019), no.1103, pp.156–158 (opening and Roman manuscripts, p.156), edition. Translation of "Cum ex itinere Romano Venetias rediissem, redditae mihi sunt tuae litterae." The edition identifies a sixteenth-century copy in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS D 243 inf., f.19r–v. Neither this letter nor Zündelin's illness reports establish that Neville and Savile separated for the Roman journey.

28. Zündelin to Dudith, 24 November 1581, in Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, no. 1100, pp. 148–150, especially p. 149. The editors quote the second report, Zündelin to Nicolaus Rehdiger, 1 December 1581, in n. 12. The attributed cause is Zündelin's contemporary explanation. The quotation concerning Rome translates p. 149, lines 39–41: "Cui Romanum iter hoc felicius evenire cupio, quo plus est Anglis hodie periculi Romae. Omnes ille quidem cautiones adhibuit, quae in hominem prudentem cadere videntur."

29. Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, no. 1115, pp. 207–209, especially p. 208, lines 18–20.

30. Alvise Lullini to Henry Savile, Venice, 20 April 1582, The National Archives, SP 99/1, f. 8; manuscript. The address on the verso names Henry Savile at Nuremberg; this establishes the intended destination, not documented receipt. The quotations are translated from the Italian manuscript; the closing reads "Saluto il Sr. Nevillo," with the title expanded in translation. Compare *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth*, XV, no. 690, p. 633.

31. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy," pp. 439–444; David Graham of Fintry to Dudith, 29 July 1582, Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, no. 1129, pp. 251–253, especially p. 252, lines 10–13.

32. Cobham to Walsingham, 21 August and 17 September 1582, TNA SP 78/8, ff.22 and 43, August manuscript, September manuscript; *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth*, XVI (1909), entry 266 and entry 339. Filippo is distinct from Marc'Antonio Pigafetta, author of the 1585 *Itinerario*. Quotations follow the manuscript passages with spelling and punctuation modernized and abbreviations expanded; Vinsentia is Vicenza. A possible identification is Pigafetta's account of his 1576–77 journey, *Viaggio da Creta in Egitto ed al Sinai*, edited by Alvise da Schio (Vicenza, 1984). Lorenza Pamato dates its composition to 1579 and its dedication to Sixtus V to 1586: *Notiziario Bibliografico* 10 (April 1992), p.28. The account's Ottoman Egypt–Sinai setting is a partial geographical match for Cobham's "Turkey and Judea." Two of Filippo's translations appear in the 1780 Billingbear catalogue: Guidobaldo del Monte's mechanics (1581) and the Emperor Leo's military treatise (1586), discussed in Chapter 10. These are distinct from the travel account described by Cobham. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, entries for *Le Mechaniche* and *Della guerra di Leone imperatore*.

33. Tacitus, *Opera*, ed. Justus Lipsius (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1574), Audley End copy, object 81038208, rear end page. Photographs and the Neville–Savile attribution are discussed by Ken Feinstein, "Part 7: Analyzing Tacitus Annotations of Henry Neville and Henry Savile", 20 December 2019, especially the end-page discussion; see also "The Audley End Tacitus and Henry Neville", 3 July 2023, for the hundreds of annotations. The teaching interpretation follows Feinstein's identification of the hands; the annotation itself is undated and is not demonstrably from the continental journey. Suetonius, *Tiberius* 7.2, identifies Tiberius's wife Agrippina as Marcus Agrippa's daughter and Atticus's granddaughter: text. The cancelled name is not transcribed here because its precise lettering remains uncertain. The photograph is reproduced in full; the uppermost portion of the genealogy is cut by the original photograph. The original description "Atticus Neptis" identifies Atticus's granddaughter; the darker additions name Vipsania and her father, "M. Agrippa." Vipsania was also called Agrippina. The correction clarifies identity and parentage rather than correcting the granddaughter relationship.

34. Richard Edes, *Iter Boreale* (1583), line 440, ed. and trans. Dana F. Sutton, *The Philological Museum*: translation, commentary, and introduction, §2, on Edes's Oxford career. Sutton tentatively suggests Henry Neville; the poem supplies no forename and does not place him in Scotland. Edes's likely acquaintance with Savile and the proposed connection with Neville's continental studies are contextual inferences, not statements made by the poem. The identification is not independently established by the History of Parliament biography.

35. Robert Shephard and Noel J. Kinnamon, "The Sidney Family Correspondence during Robert Sidney's Continental Tour, 1579–1581," *Sidney Journal* 25:1–2 (2007), p. 60 and n. 51, citing Thaddeus Hájek to Robert Sidney, 25 August 1584, De L'Isle MSS, U1475 C68. Their wording is: "He also asked Robert to give his greetings to Masters Neville and Savile." This is the scholars' report, not a quotation from the manuscript. Their further conclusion that Hájek had met Neville and Savile during the 1581 visit is an inference; the original letter has not yet been examined for this account.

36. Mordechai Feingold, *The Mathematicians' Apprenticeship: Science, Universities and Society in England, 1560–1640* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.130–131, especially p. 131 and n.45, citing Henry Savile to Hugo Blotius, 12 March 1588. This account follows Feingold's published summary; the manuscript is not newly transcribed here.

37. Sidney letters: Shephard and Kinnamon, "Sidney Family Correspondence." Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, nos. 1040, 1041, 1046, 1055, 1056, 1058, 1062, 1072, 1082, 1084, 1100, 1115 and 1129; the 1 December letter is excerpted in no. 1100, n. 12. Lullini: *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth*, XV, no. 690. The cited letters and notices include letters known through copies, print or editorial extracts, rather than solely surviving autographs.

38. Map and dated guide: Arthur Throckmorton, diary, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, U85/38/14/1, 10 September 1580 and 12 March 1581; Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII (2019), nos. 1056, 1058, 1072, 1103, 1115 and 1129 (especially pp. 65, 87–88, 156–158, 207–209, 251–253); Robert B. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 58 (1996), p. 440 and nn. 13, 15; Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors* (1998), p. 130; Lullini to Savile, 20 April 1582, TNA SP 99/1, f. 8 verso. Throckmorton's Florence purchase of 23 September 1581 is independently described by Magdalen College; it dates Throckmorton, not each companion. The map selects the principal stages discussed here rather than every intermediate stop. The dated guide follows selected episodes, not a claim that these were first visits. Pesaro, Florence, Bologna and Ferrara are named in Savile's letter of 27 December; their exact visiting dates are not supplied there. Verona's possible place on the road north is discussed above. Geography: Natural Earth shaded relief and Natural Earth, 1:10 million physical vectors (public domain) and GeoNames (CC BY), with no political boundaries or reconstructed roads. Breslau is marked as inferred from Neville's books left with Dudith, Vienna as the party's destination; the Italian placements follow the distinctions in the dated guide. Verona is a reference location, not an asserted stop by Neville.

# Marriage, Mayfield and Cannon

Chapter 3

## Marriage and a learned household

On 22 December 1584 Neville married Anne Killigrew, daughter of the diplomat Sir Henry Killigrew and Katherine Cooke. Anne's father came from the Killigrews of Arwenack in Cornwall, giving Neville a connection by marriage to an established Cornish family.[1]

Katherine and her sisters, daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, were educated in both Latin and Greek. Katherine died on 27 December 1583, almost a year before her daughter's marriage; the Cooke connection continued through her daughter Anne and Anne's surviving aunts.[2]

Katherine Cooke's sister Anne married Sir Nicholas Bacon, Elizabeth's Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. Their sons were Anthony and Francis Bacon. Sister Mildred Cooke married William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Elizabeth's chief minister; Robert Cecil was their son. Neville's wife was thus first cousin to Francis Bacon, Anthony Bacon and Robert Cecil.[2]

The sisters' learning produced work that circulated beyond the household. Anne Bacon translated John Jewel's Latin *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* into English in 1564. Mildred Cecil corresponded in learned languages and gave books to St John's College, Cambridge, including a polyglot Bible. Katherine's surviving correspondence includes a Latin appeal to Mildred as well as English letters from the Protestant preacher Edward Dering.[3]

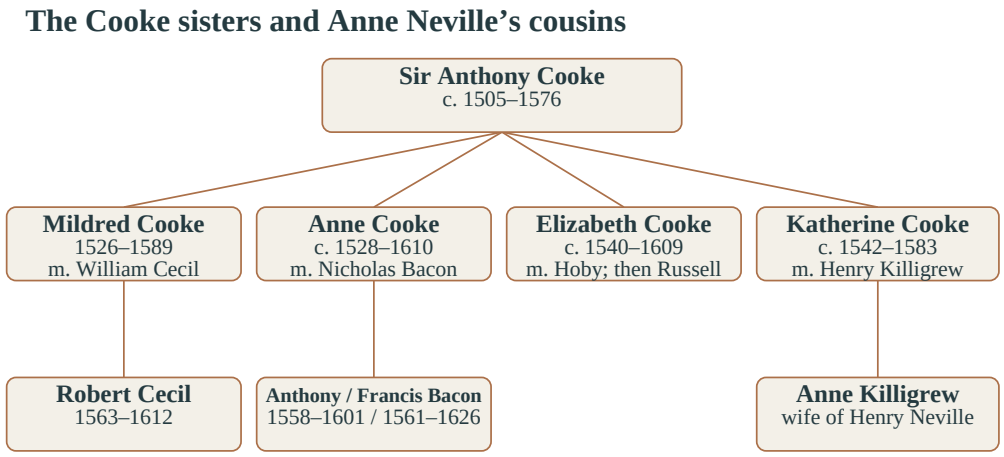



**Figure 3.1:** The Cooke sisters and Anne Neville's first cousins. Approximate birth dates are marked "c."

Chapter 19 prints Katherine's Latin poem to Mildred and compares its wit and learned family setting with *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Anne's father remained an active connection to diplomacy and the court. The marriage also established a large household of their own: Henry and Anne had at least five sons and six daughters. Chapters 6 and 7 examine Anne's letters in connection with Neville's disgrace and imprisonment.

Anne's uncle William Killigrew, a groom of Elizabeth's privy chamber, provided another connection at court.[4] His house in Lothbury was used by Anne's father and became a recurring London base for Neville, who wrote from there during Anne's illness in 1598 and while preparing for his embassy in 1599.[5], [6]

Music also belonged to Neville's wider family circle. In 1591 John Baldwin completed the keyboard manuscript known as *My Ladye Nevells Booke*, containing music by William Byrd. The Lady Nevell was Elizabeth Bacon, Neville's stepmother. John Harley's 2005 study establishes her identity through the family and heraldic evidence.[7]

Elizabeth, by then Lady Periam, also received Thomas Morley's 1595 dedication of his two-part canzonets. Morley's wife had formerly served her; five years later he published the song 'It was a lover and his lass,' sung in *As You Like It*.[8]

## Mayfield and the Weald

Neville and Anne made their home at Mayfield in Sussex. The estate came from Sir Thomas Gresham, the uncle of Neville's mother, Elizabeth Gresham. Gresham's land will devised Mayfield and Wadhurst to Neville's father and the male issue of Elizabeth; Parliament confirmed the estate to father and son in 1581.[9]

Christopher Fetherstone dedicated his 1587 translation of *A Christian and wholsom admonition directed to the Frenchmen* to Henry and Anne Neville, his "singular good friends." He dated the dedication at Mayfield on 24 June.[10]

Mayfield lies in the Weald, the wooded region of southern England between the North and South Downs, extending chiefly across Sussex, Kent and Surrey. Its iron ore, woodland for charcoal and streams for water power made it a major centre of iron production.[11]

## Land, parish and county

Neville held the right to present a clergyman to the Mayfield vicarage. On 28 April 1589 George Carleton was instituted as its perpetual vicar; the appointment record names Henry "Novell," esquire, as the lay patron.[12] Carleton was a fellow of Merton College, where Neville had studied under Henry Savile. He would later address his Latin poetry to Neville and, after Neville's death, marry Anne. Chapter 51, "Carleton, Vicars and the Jaggard Press," discusses his *Astrologomania*, published in 1624.

The estate also brought dealings with local landholders. On 20 September 1591 Neville enfranchised the holding of Richard Cade, a Mayfield yeoman, converting it from copyhold to freehold. The grant included a house, barns, gardens, orchards, land and woodland.[13]

The Cade surname had been recorded in the neighbourhood for centuries. Nearby Heathfield was where Jack Cade, the rebel dramatized in *2 Henry VI*, was captured in 1450. Hall describes Cade fleeing into Sussex before his final encounter with Alexander Iden; Holinshed explicitly places that encounter in a Sussex garden.[14] The play instead gives Cade a firmly Kentish identity. York calls him:

> I have seduced a headstrong **Kentishman**,
> **John Cade** of Ashford,
>
> — *2 Henry VI*, 3.1

The 1594 quarto already contains this description; the Folio has Cade's dying message, "Tell Kent from me, she hath lost her best man" (4.10). The play omits the Sussex flight. The Sussex setting in the chronicles belongs to Neville's own locality, where his dealings with a man named Cade are independently documented.[15]

Neville entered Parliament for New Windsor in 1584 and represented Sussex in 1589. His public responsibilities extended across the county. In 1589 he served as a subsidy commissioner, helping administer parliamentary taxation. By 1591 he was a justice of the peace, and in 1592 he became a commissioner concerned with recusancy—the refusal to attend the established church.[16]

On 5 May 1591 the Privy Council asked the lord chancellor to add "Henrie Nevel, of Mafeld, esquier" to the county's deputy lieutenants. Too few deputies were available, and their absences could prevent the service from being performed.[17] The office involved the county's military administration.

## Neville among the gunfounders

Mayfield's manor and park included a furnace for casting iron cannon.[18]

Neville's own petition to Burghley places him among the manufacturers. Recalling an order from the Earl of Warwick, Master of the Ordnance, he describes a summons:

> unto all the **gunfounders in Sussex** [...] there to understand his pleasure concerning their further continuance in that trade; whereupon the most of them appearing, and I among the rest[19]

Neville accepted quotas, official stamps and safeguards against unauthorized export, but resisted compulsory sales to merchants chosen by Warwick or his deputy. His alternative—open sales at Tower Hill under the required bonds—was initially accepted, then withdrawn. He questioned whether the restriction served "some private benefit" rather than "the public good."[19]

**Figure 3.2:** HN fireback

Late-sixteenth-century cast-iron fireback bearing HN and the Neville crossed-staples badge, possibly made at Mayfield. Victoria and Albert Museum, 11.1900. Image: Jeremy Hodgkinson, British Fireback Survey, no. 742. Catalogue and image.

Royal export privileges offered another route to market. Neville held an export grant with Robert Sackville and was probably the Henry Nevile named in a second grant with two foreign merchants; the relationship between the grants remains unresolved.[20] Chapter 4 follows the inspections, deliveries and bonds behind the trade.

## Savile's Tacitus and Essex

Neville's former tutor Henry Savile published his English Tacitus at Oxford in 1591. Its connection with Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, rests most memorably on Ben Jonson's attribution of the anonymous preface, "A.B. To the Reader." William Drummond recorded Jonson's statement in 1618–19:

> Essex wrote that Epistle or preface before the translation of the last part of Tacitus, which is A. B.[21]

Jonson's testimony concerns the preface, not Savile's separate dedication to Elizabeth. It is an important attribution, although the authorship remains disputed.

The volume combined Savile's account of Nero's fall and Galba's rise with translations of four books of Tacitus's *Histories* and the *Life of Agricola*, supported

by historical and military commentary. Its subjects included succession, civil war, the influence of advisers and the dangers facing an able servant under a jealous ruler. Savile's dedication presented history as a guide to action; the anonymous preface invited readers to learn from Rome's political disasters, ending with praise for England's peace and Elizabeth's government.[22]

The dangers of serving a jealous ruler gave the book a particular resonance for Essex. In his *Apologie*, circulated in 1600, he named Savile as a witness to his love of learning. Alexandra Gajda connects Essex's presentation of himself as a scholarly soldier undermined by court enemies with the *Agricola*, whose successful general falls under an emperor's suspicion.[23]

## Oxford in 1592

Savile's scholarly world was increasingly entangled with Essex's politics. During Elizabeth's Oxford visit in September 1592, Henry Cuffe, a Merton scholar and Regius Professor of Greek, addressed the Queen at Carfax. Henry Savile delivered an oration on whether military studies and philosophy could flourish together. At Merton, with Thomas Savile moderating, Cuffe disputed whether civil dissensions could benefit the commonwealth; Thomas praised Essex's campaigns.

A panegyric possibly delivered by George Carleton, vicar of Mayfield, likewise celebrated Essex. Carleton later dedicated its printed appearance, with the opening book of his Essex epic, to Neville in 1603. Neville's presence at the visit is not documented, but these were men whose learning and loyalties would remain important in his life.[24]

## Notes and sources

1. Thomas Finlayson Henderson, "Killigrew, Henry (d.1603)," *Dictionary of National Biography*, identifies Sir Henry as the fourth son of John Killigrew of Arwenack and Elizabeth Trewenard, and describes the Killigrews as an old Cornish family. Henderson cites the pedigree in J. L. Vivian's *Visitations of Cornwall*, pp. 268–269.

2. Gemma Allen, *The Cooke Sisters: Education, Piety and Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester University Press, 2013), introduction, for the family relationships and Katherine's death on 27 December 1583. Marion Colthorpe, *Elizabethan Court Day by Day: 1584*, p. 46, reports the marriage at St Margaret Lothbury on 22 December, distinct from the licence of 4 December recorded by Andrew Thrush's *History of Parliament* biography. Thrush supports the child count. The cousin relationships follow the three sisters' marriages and their named children.

3. Gemma Allen, ed., *The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon*, Camden Fifth Series 44 (2014), especially the early correspondence and Matthew Parker's letter prefixed to the translation of Jewel, pp. 59–61, doi:10.1017/S0960116313000225. Parker's prefatory letter states that he and Jewel compared Anne Bacon's translation with the original and approved it without alteration. The edition discusses Mildred Cecil's gift to St John's and cites British Library, Lansdowne MS 104, fol. 158r. For Katherine's correspondence and its transmission, and the sisters' learning more generally, see Allen, *Cooke Sisters* (2013). The Latin appeal survives through a later printed

transmission, rather than as a surviving autograph asserted here. The specific reference for Mildred's polyglot Bible gift is Allen, Letters, p. 56 n. 23. For the six Latin lines printed by Harington with the Cooke-family allusion, see *Orlando Furioso* (1591), commentary to book 37, p. 314.

4. Marion Colthorpe, *Elizabethan Court Day by Day*, 'Prominent Elizabethans,' p. 103, entry for William Killigrew: younger brother of Sir Henry, groom of the privy chamber by 1575, and royal visits to Hanworth in 1590, 1592, 1600 and 1601. Folger edition.

5. Edwin Freshfield, ed., *The Vestry Minute Book of the Parish of St. Margaret, Lothbury, in the City of London, 1571–1677* (London, 1887), p. 15, entry for 14 February 1582/3, recording William Killigrew's house, garden and request for passage through the churchyard; printed edition. Sir Henry Killigrew to Robert Cecil, 14 August 1596, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury*, VI (1895), p. 335, item 43.89; printed letter.

6. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 6 May 1598, Cecil Papers, Hatfield House; see also *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury*, VIII (1899), p. 158. Henry Neville to Thomas Windebank, 19 February 1598/9, research reference. Both letters bear Lothbury datelines. The letters establish his presence there on these dates; the identification of the house follows the Killigrew family records cited above. For the latter letter, see Green, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1598–1601*, pp. 163–164, vol. CCLXX, no. 42, calendar entry.

7. John Harley, "'My Ladye Nevell' Revealed," *Music & Letters* 86, no. 1 (2005), pp. 1–15, especially pp. 3–5, article. Harley places the marriage probably around May 1578 and identifies Elizabeth as the ambassador's father's third wife. She was Francis Bacon's half-sister, not his full sister. Harley explicitly credits Christopher Foley's identification, developed from findings prepared in 2003 and College of Arms research.

8. Thomas Morley, *The First Booke of Canzonets to Two Voyces* (London: Thomas Este, 1595), dedication to Lady Periam, dated 17 November 1595, Library of Congress page image. John Harley, 'My Ladye Nevell Revealed', *Music & Letters* 86.1 (2005), 1–15, identifies her as Elizabeth Bacon, formerly Lady Nevell, and connects Morley's dedication and his wife's service to her. Morley does not name the place where his wife served. Spelling in the short quotation is modernized. Thomas Morley, *The First Booke of Ayres* (London: H. Ballard for William Barley, 1600), sigs. B4v–C1r, STC 18115.5; Folger Shakespeare Library, printed song and commentary. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 5.3. The song appeared in print before the play, which was first published in the 1623 Folio.

9. John Gough Nichols and John Bruce, eds., *Wills from Doctors' Commons* (Camden Society, 1863), pp. 57–68, especially pp. 66–67, land will dated 5 July 1575; John Ward, *The Lives of the Professors of Gresham College* (London, 1740), Appendix VI, pp. 16–27, especially pp. 19–20, Act of 23 Elizabeth. The Act names Edward as the alternative if his brother Henry were dead, reserves rents and services due to the chief lords, and provides for protection against the Gresham estate's wider charges. Elizabeth supplied the family relationship; the devise and Act supplied the legal route. Public editions: Wills from Doctors' Commons, Ward.

10. Léonard Constant, *A Christian and wholsom admonition directed to the Frenchmen*, trans. Christopher Fetherstone (London: John Wolfe, 1587), STC 5154, dedication, sigs. A5r–A6r: A5r, A6r. The author is attributed to Constant and the year supplied as [1587] by STC; neither is treated as an unambiguous literal title-page statement. Folger catalogue. Fetherstone recalls the couple's many courtesies since their acquaintance began, offers the first fruits of his knowledge of French, and asks them to patronize this Protestant religious translation. He praises their zeal for God's glory. The "first fruits" are the translator's; the dedication records an existing friendship and household kindness, not a specified financial commission.

11. E. Margaretta Bell-Irving, *Mayfield: The Story of an Old Wealden Village* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1903), pp. 4–6, public scan. For the regional iron industry and its raw materials, see the High Weald National Landscape Partnership, "History", and the Wealden Iron

Research Group, "Experimental Ironmaking". The Weald is a wider region than the modern High Weald designation.

12. Clergy of the Church of England Database, appointment evidence record 53478: institution, 28 April 1589; George Carleton, MA, perpetual vicar, Maighfielde; Henry Novell, Armiger, lay "true patron." Source: Lambeth Palace Library, Whitgift's Register, vol. 1. The register itself was not inspected. For Carleton's Merton fellowship and later career, see W. R. W. Stephens, "Carleton, George (1559–1628)", *Dictionary of National Biography*. His 1603 literary address and later marriage are discussed elsewhere in this book.

13. East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office, AMS6086/33, enfranchisement for £51, 20 September 1591: Henry Nevill, lord of Mayfield manor, to Richard Cade, yeoman. Catalogue inspected; original deed not inspected. The principal holding is described as eighty acres, with other parcels listed separately; Bell-Irving, *Mayfield* (1903), p. 50, describes eighty-one acres. The transaction converted a holding already occupied by Cade into freehold, retaining specified rents and obligations.

14. E. Margaretta Bell-Irving, *Mayfield: The Story of an Old Wealden Village* (1903), pp. 50–55, scan, for the local Cade surname; I. M. W. Harvey, "Cade, John [Jack]", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), for capture at Heathfield, followed by death during conveyance to London. Cade's birthplace is uncertain; no descent of Richard Cade from Jack Cade is asserted. Edward Hall, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548), Henry VI, fol. CLXI, TCP A02595; Holinshed, *Chronicles* (1587), Henry VI, Cade's flight and capture, pp. 226–227 in the reprint.

15. 1594 quarto, 3.1 and 4.10; Folger, *2 Henry VI*, 3.1, for the block quotation; and 1623 Folio, 4.10. Stuart Hampton-Reeves, "Kent's Best Man: Radical Chorographic Consciousness and the Identity Politics of Local History in Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI", *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14.1 (2014), 63–87, especially pp. 76, 80–81, discusses the transformation into a Kentish figure. The Neville–Cade comparison was raised by Mark Bradbeer, "The Filth and Scum of Kent" (26 February 2015). The comparison here concerns geography and Neville's documented local dealings; no motive for the alteration is proposed.

16. Andrew Thrush, "NEVILLE, Sir Henry I (1564–1615), of Billingbear", *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010), family, constituency and office lists, and biography. Subsequent chapters give the particular records behind the offices, embassy and parliamentary career.

17. *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, new series, XXI, 1591, entry for 5 May, p.90, letter to the lord chancellor; Gale calendar record MC4316300024, identifying PC 2/18 f.252. Quoted from the published calendar. The entry requests addition and a new commission; it does not itself document an inspection of troops.

18. Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I (1564–1615), of Billingbear," *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629* (2010), biography, describes the Mayfield furnace and reports the April 1591 twenty-one-year monopoly with Robert Sackville. For the earlier furnace, Christopher Baker's declaration, catalogued 15 February 1574, TNA SP 12/95 f.48r, names Gresham's Mayfield furnace among those making ordnance: manuscript. The April 1591 grant is reported here on Thrush's authority; its original instrument has not been reconciled with the separate twenty-year grant of 8 November 1592, TNA LR 15/301, discussed below. The grantee's identification in that later transcript remains provisional.

19. Henry Neville to Lord Burghley, undated (filed under 1590), British Library, Lansdowne MS 65/22; manuscript images published by Ken Feinstein. See also Owen Lowe Duncan, Jr., *The Political Career of Sir Henry Neville: An Elizabethan Gentleman at the Court of James I* (Ohio State University PhD dissertation, 1974), pp. 69–71, especially p. 71, OhioLINK. Spelling modernized. Duncan cites Lansdowne 65, no.22, f.70; his preceding note 70 prints no.27 with the same folio. His longer transcription has textual differences, including a repeated "rather," not

reproduced here. An earlier dating to 1587 remains unresolved; no precise year is assigned here.

20. Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I," reports an April 1591 twenty-one-year monopoly with Robert Sackville. A separate English transcript catalogued 8 November 1592, TNA LR 15/301, names Henry Nevile, esquire, Ludolfe Englested and Giles Devisher, and licenses export of minions and falcons for twenty years through Tower Wharf, Rochester, Newhaven, Hull and Bristol. The latter details follow the catalogue, not inspection of the full transcript. For the later proposal involving Sackville, see TNA SP 12/255 f.96, State Papers Online, and Mary Anne Everett Green, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1595–1597* (1869), vol. CCLV, entry 63, p. 153 (dated "1595?"). The grants and this proposal have not yet been reconciled into a single partnership history.

21. *Notes of Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden. January, M.DC.XIX*, ed. David Laing (London: Shakespeare Society, 1842), p. 25, scan; "befor" modernized to "before." The attribution concerns "A.B. To the Reader," not the separate dedication to Elizabeth signed Henry Savile. Edmund Bolton also records the Essex attribution in *Hypercritica*: see Alexandra Gajda, "Henry Savile and the Elizabethan Court," *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* 6 (2021), pp. 32–60, especially p. 51 and n. 77, article. Jonson's report is evidence of the attribution, not conclusive proof of authorship; Mordechai Feingold, "Scholarship and Politics: Henry Savile's Tacitus and the Essex Connection," *Review of English Studies* 67 (2016), pp. 855–874, at 859, questions its reliability and the independence of Bolton's testimony, article. Laing's preface, pp. xx–xxiii, explains that Drummond's notes reach his edition through Sir Robert Sibbald's later transcript, rather than an autograph then known to him.

22. Cornelius Tacitus, *The ende of Nero and beginning of Galba. Fower bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus. The life of Agricola*, trans. and ed. Henry Savile (Oxford: Joseph Barnes for Richard Wright, 1591), dedication, sigs. ¶2r–v, and "A.B. To the Reader," ¶3r–v, with the contents of the volume; STC 23642, ESTC S117595, facsimile, TCP A13331. The A.B. preface closes by contrasting Roman miseries with Elizabeth's peace and government.

23. Savile, *Life of Agricola*, p. 263, and annotations on the *Agricola*, pp. 46–47 (separately paginated); Gajda, "Henry Savile," pp. 49, 55–57. The analysis concerns Savile's published text and its political reception.

24. Gajda, "Henry Savile," pp. 45–47 and nn. 57–58. Cuffe's question was *An dissentiones Civium sint reipublicae utiles?* The possible association of Carleton's panegyric with this visit is retained as a qualified dating, following Gajda's discussion of Sarah Knight's work.

# Billingbear and Windsor

Chapter 4

## Inheriting Billingbear

Neville's father died in January 1593, and Neville inherited Billingbear. He enlarged Billingbear with two wings.[1]

He returned to Parliament for New Windsor in 1593 and represented Liskeard in Cornwall in 1597. His marriage to Anne Killigrew had already connected him with the county through her father's family, the Killigrews of Arwenack.[1]

## County and forest office

Neville's local responsibilities extended across the county's courts, militia and royal estates. He served as a Berkshire justice of the peace from 1593 until the disgrace following the Essex rising in 1601, and was back in office by 1604. He also held the office of custos rotulorum, keeper of the county's records, before his disgrace and again by 1604, continuing to his death. He was sheriff in 1595–96 and was appointed a deputy lieutenant in 1596. He was also keeper of the house at Windsor Castle and steward of Sonning manor. His forest offices had their own dates: Sunninghill Park is recorded from 1593, while Swinley Walk and Fines Bailiwick are documented by 1607.[2]

As a justice of the peace, Neville belonged to the body of local gentlemen responsible for keeping order and administering justice through Quarter Sessions, the county courts held four times a year. Royal government in the shires depended on such unpaid gentlemen.[3]

The commission calendared on 26 October 1596 makes the militia connection specific. Henry Lord Norris and Sir William Knollys were authorized to appoint four Berkshire deputies: Sir Francis Knollys, Sir Humphrey Forster, Sir Thomas Parry and Henry Neville. Deputy lieutenants helped organize county defence, including supervising musters and checking arms. Neville thus appears within the county command structure three years after his father's death.[4]

His local influence also mattered in dealings over land. On 19 December 1606, Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, asked Neville to support a lease for his servant Turner of a farm in Wokingham. This was a lease in reversion, to take effect after the existing interest ended, and Lord Norreys had promised not to grant it without Neville's agreement. Nottingham therefore asked him to write to Norreys approving the arrangement: securing a local tenancy could depend on Neville's goodwill as well as the grantor's.[5]

## Parks, walks and deer

Forest office brought Neville into the management of land and deer around Windsor. A royal forest was a legal jurisdiction protecting the Crown's deer and their habitat, not necessarily continuous woodland.[6] A *walk* was a district assigned to a keeper; parks and smaller enclosed deer grounds could lie within it. A *bailiwick* was an officer's jurisdiction. These divisions combined responsibilities for animals and land with questions of boundaries and rights. Norden's survey later recorded disputes between neighbouring keepers who did not agree where their walks ended.[7]

Neville's connection to Sunninghill Park is recorded from 1593. In early 1599, as he prepared to leave for France, Elizabeth instructed him to arrange restrictions on killing game and deer in Mote and Sunninghill Parks during his absence. An embassy abroad therefore required arrangements for the work he was leaving at home.[8]

The fullest picture comes from John Norden's survey of 1607. It names Neville as keeper of Swinley Walk, describes Warfield Walk as reputedly his private property, and records his claim to hold Fines Bailiwick by inheritance. Fines extended northwards from Wokingham towards the Thames. Much of it was enclosed, and Neville had recently begun stocking it with red and fallow deer. These were different kinds of responsibility: the keepership of a walk, reputed private ownership, and a claim to an inherited forest office.[7]

In September 1607 his eldest son Henry received a grant *in reversion* of the keepership of Sunninghill and Mote Parks and the office of riding forester of Battles Walk: he was to succeed his father, not displace him. These offices were distinct from Fines and Swinley.[9] A riding forester was traditionally a mounted officer with a wider area to oversee.[6] A request from Robert Sackville, by then Lord Buckhurst, in August 1606 for a buck for Edward Fenner shows another side of the work: venison requested as a favour.[9]

## His father's example

Neville's father had dealt with a similar mixture of forest offences, local authority and personal obligations. On 13 April 1589 he reported to Sir William More that a masked gentleman and two companions had hunted a hind and calf at Finchampstead; keepers traced the party to an inn at Guildford, and constables became involved.[10]

An earlier letter from the Earl of Leicester to Neville's father and More, dated 26 March 1574 but probably written in 1575, called for action against dishonest keepers and indictments at Quarter Sessions. It also concerned a man who wanted an appointment to a walk nearer his home. Forest administration involved supervising officers as well as pursuing those who took deer.[11]

Keepers also received customary fees and portions of the deer, including its shoulders, as William Harrison explains in his *Description of England*.[12] These family records give practical substance to Neville's forest titles. Chapter 25 returns to this setting in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: the stolen deer, gifts of venison and the keeper's customary share of a buck belong to the world of duties and privileges described here.

## Delivering the cannon

Neville's Sussex ordnance business continued after he inherited Billingbear. To recover the bonds securing his contract, he needed to account for the guns delivered. Reports from his agents followed deliveries, inspections and the money secured against them. The delivery papers do not identify the furnace that produced every consignment: managing a contract did not mean personally making every gun.[13]

Neville's ordnance papers show the work required to turn cast guns into a completed delivery. In an August 1595 letter, Neville's agent Abraham Jones reported that Sackville's man, Thomas Balle, had inspected the pieces at Lewes. He refused two sakers, six falcons and two minions. Jones also reported that some rejected pieces were only slightly faulty at the mouth, but Balle would not take them. Acceptance depended on inspection, and rejected guns complicated the reckoning of what Neville had delivered.[14]

On 23 November 1595, Jones reported two batches of Neville's pieces now shipped: approximately 28 tons 17 hundredweight, followed by a further 22 tons 19 hundredweight. He reported more than 37 tons remaining at Lewes and also listed 26 pieces, two on carts. It is unclear whether the 26 pieces were included in that weight or additional to it. He asked for Neville's further instructions.[14]

A working copy to Robert Sackville, docketed 8 February 1596, shows how these reports supported a demand for the return of bonds. Neville set out three deliveries, including guns sent to Millhall and Lewes, giving a combined weight of 152 tons and three quarters of a hundredweight. By his reckoning, he had already supplied more than the 150 tons of the bargain. A further order for 22 tons 19 hundredweight and one quarter would bring the reckoning to 175 tons.[15]

The account was an argument about performance. Neville wanted the bonds back because he considered the required deliveries fulfilled. He referred Sackville to their agreement and their joint instructions to his cousin Edward Neville, Lord Abergavenny, who was to release the bonds in stages. The figures thus connect the physical movement of guns with the written securities behind the transaction. They record deliveries reported and instructions issued; they do not by themselves establish that every subsequent delivery occurred or that the bonds were returned.

A letter from Robert Sackville on 30 June 1597 brings price into this picture. Sending Neville the rent due at Midsummer, Sackville discussed an allowance for iron and insisted that even a purchase of a hundred tons brought him no price below £7 a ton. He offered an alternative arrangement involving sixty tons of good iron delivered at Lewes or Millhall. The letter also acknowledged Neville's offer about Mayfield, which Sackville had passed to his lord for an answer.[16] The proposed sixty-ton delivery was a negotiating option, not another completed shipment.

## Leaving Mayfield

Neville disposed of his Mayfield interests in transactions dated 1597–98. Eva Margaretta Bell-Irving's *Mayfield: The Story of an Old Wealden Village* (1903) quotes a 6 May 1598 conveyance of the manor and associated property to Thomas May for £6,387, with specified exceptions; a separate 1597 transaction concerned waste lands. The Sussex sale helped finance his purchase of lands formerly owned by Sir Henry Unton in Berkshire, the obligations he would describe to Cecil in May 1598 (Chapter 5). Berkshire became the centre of his landed responsibilities.[17]

## Billingbear and the wider landscape

### SOUTHERN ENGLAND

### BILLINGBEAR AND WINDSOR · ENLARGEMENT

◆ Principal homes ● Other places discussed

Billingbear · inherited 1593
Windsor · MP, 1593
Sonning · manor stewardship
Warfield · survey, 1607
Sunninghill · park recorded 1593
Mayfield · home by 1587; sold 1597–98
Lewes · gun deliveries, 1595–97
Newhaven · licensed port, 1592
Oxford · Merton College, 1577
London · court and Parliament

Settlement locations and the present Thames; no estate boundaries or routes.

**Figure 4.1:** Neville's southern English settings, with an enlargement of the Billingbear–Windsor area. The map locates places discussed in Chapters 1–9; it does not reconstruct property limits or travel routes.[18]

Billingbear was the centre of a life divided among land, county government, forest management and the iron business. The French embassy would take Neville away from those responsibilities; his reluctance to leave them forms part of the next chapter.

## Notes and sources

1. Andrew Thrush, "NEVILLE, Sir Henry I (1564–1615), of Billingbear", *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010), family, constituency and office lists, and biography. Subsequent chapters give the particular records behind the offices, embassy and parliamentary career. For the Cornish family connection, see Thomas Finlayson Henderson, Killigrew, Henry (d.1603), *Dictionary of National Biography*, identifying Anne's father as a son of John Killigrew of Arwenack, of an old Cornish family.

2. Andrew Thrush, 'Neville, Sir Henry I (1564–1615)', *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629* (2010), Offices Held. The biography lists keeper of the house at Windsor Castle 1593–?1601; Sunninghill Park 1593–1601 and by 1607 to death; Swinley Walk and Fines Bailiwick by 1607; Sonning by 1598–1601 and by 1603 to at least 1608; Newbury ?1593 to at least 1604. These are separate tenures, not a single uninterrupted office. Thrush lists the Berkshire deputy lieutenancy as 1596–at least 1608; that range does not resolve any interruption. For the 1596 commission, see the following note on the commission of 26 October 1596.

3. UK Parliament, "Local criminal justice", on justices' responsibility for local law and order, quarterly sessions, and their role as unpaid representatives of central government. The paragraph explains the institution; it does not assert Neville's attendance at any particular session.

4. Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1595–1597* (London, 1869), commission of lieutenancy, 26 October 1596, pp.296–297, first page and continuation. The entry is marked "Docquet." It authorizes the lieutenants to make the named men deputies; it is not a separate surviving instrument recording each appointment's execution. The Oxfordshire deputy list follows and is kept distinct. For the duties of Tudor deputy lieutenants, see the Lord-Lieutenant of Devon, "Our History", describing supervision of musters, gunpowder stores and weapons. These are institutional duties, not evidence of a particular inspection by Neville.

5. Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, to Henry Neville, Whitehall, 19 December 1606, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1/11; catalogue of the correspondence bundle. The letter asks Neville to signify his approval to Lord Norreys, who had promised not to grant the reversion without Neville's assent. The farm's name is unclear. The letter does not establish Neville's ownership of the farm or explain the legal basis of Norreys's undertaking.

6. J. Charles Cox, *The Royal Forests of England* (London: Methuen, 1905), chapters I and III, on the legal meaning of forest and the mounted general or itinerant forester, public text. The explanation of a riding forester describes the office; it does not establish Neville's personal patrol routine.

7. R. R. Tighe and J. E. Davis, *Annals of Windsor*, II (1858), pp. 28–30, printing and describing Norden's 1607 survey. The account of Fines and its stocking is on p. 30. "Reputed" and the claim to inheritance follow the survey's distinctions. The descriptions distinguish walks and enclosed parks, list their keepers, and report disputes over boundaries. This survey records conditions in 1607, not a complete list of Neville's appointments at his inheritance in 1593.

8. For Sunninghill from 1593, see Thrush's office list cited above. Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1598–1601* (1869), p. 157, "[Jan.]" 1599, abstract citing Warrant Book I, p. 36.

9. Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of James I, 1603–1610* (1857), p. 372, 29 September 1607, docquet, explicitly granting the offices to Henry Neville "in reversion after Sir Hen. Neville, his father"; Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O12/42, August 1606, letter from Lord Buckhurst to Neville requesting a buck for Edward Fenner; the catalogue describes a request, not a record of delivery.

10. Surrey History Centre, Loseley manuscripts, LM/COR/3/446, 13 April 1589, Sir Henry Neville to Sir William More. The details follow the repository's description of this damaged document.

11. Surrey History Centre, 6729/3/88, Leicester to Neville and More. The catalogue assigns 26 March 1575, explaining that the document bears 1574 and probably intends 1575.

12. William Harrison, "Of Parkes and Warrens," *Holinshed's Chronicles* (1587), I, p. 204; also *Elizabethan England: From "A Description of England"*, ed. Lothrop Withington, chapter XX, p. 207. Harrison lists money, skin, head, umbles, chine and shoulders among the keeper's customary receipts.

13. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O/23/2–5, delivery correspondence and working account discussed below; parent catalogue. These are the papers on which the statement about identified furnaces rests. For later comparative context, Howard C. Tomlinson, "Wealden Gunfounding: An Analysis of Its Demise in the Eighteenth Century," *Economic History Review* 29, no. 3 (1976), pp. 383–400, especially pp. 385, 390–395 and 398, JSTOR. This is chiefly a study of later seventeenth- and eighteenth-century production, including the Fuller works at Heathfield. It describes hollow casting, finishing and proof, skilled labour, subcontracting and transport; its later specifications, proof procedures, prices and failure rates cannot simply be assigned to Neville's period. Hollow casting and boring a gun from a solid casting must also be distinguished.

14. Abraham Jones to Henry Neville, inspection report docketed 28 August 1595, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O/23/4; the rejected-gun passages are from this letter. Jones's subsequent report of 23 November 1595, D/EN/O/23/2, distinguishes two shipments, approximately 28 tons 17 hundredweight and 22 tons 19 hundredweight, with stock remaining at Lewes; the figures do not necessarily describe separate stocks. The near-match between November's 22 tons 19 hundredweight and the February account's 22 tons 19 hundredweight 1 quarter does not establish that they are the same consignment. The parent catalogue describes correspondence concerning Neville's sale and shipment of ordnance, 1593–1597. A separate account has not been securely connected with the November letter.

15. Working copy to Robert Sackville, docketed 8 February 1595 Old Style (1596 with the year beginning in January), Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O/23/3; same parent catalogue. The opening deliveries are 44 tons 2 hundredweight 3 quarters, 28 tons 13 hundredweight, and 79 tons 5 hundredweight. At 20 hundredweight per ton and four quarters per hundredweight these total 152 tons 0 hundredweight 3 quarters; a further order for 22 tons 19 hundredweight 1 quarter was intended to bring the total to 175 tons. The sheet contains revisions and separate marginal drafts, so it should not be quoted as one clean sent letter. The final delivery location and the first bond-release threshold remain uncertain. No claim is made that all these guns came from a single furnace. For Edward's relationship to Billingbear, W. A. J. Archbold, 'Neville, Edward (d.1538),' *Dictionary of National Biography*, identifies Edward of Newton St Loe and Sir Henry of Billingbear as sons of the courtier, and the later Lord Abergavenny as the former's son. He and the ambassador were therefore first cousins. His parliamentary summons followed in 1604; the account already calls him Lord Abergavenny.

16. Robert Sackville to Henry Neville, 30 June 1597, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O/23/5, same parent catalogue. The first allowance clause is difficult to read. The account does not establish a universal market price, completion of the alternative sixty-ton delivery, or accep-

tance of the Mayfield offer. My lord is retained without adding an independently unchecked identification.

17. Eva Margaretta Bell-Irving, *Mayfield: The Story of an Old Wealden Village* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1903), pp. 159–160, public volume. The 1597 waste-land transaction and 1598 manor conveyance are distinct. Thrush gives 1597 and a total of nearly £8,800, but the two components in his note 28 sum to £7,787. The larger total remains unreconciled; the figure quoted here is Bell-Irving's stated consideration for the particular 1598 conveyance, not an aggregate sale price. For the connection with the Unton purchase, Neville to Cecil, 6 May 1598, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 60/114; HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, VIII (1899), p. 158; discussed in Chapter 5.

18. Author's map. The historical associations are documented in Chapters 1–9. Base geography: Natural Earth (public domain); settlement locations: GeoNames (CC BY). Billingbear marks the former mansion site, approximately 51.445° N, 0.807° W, as recorded in the Wikimedia Commons geographical record for Billingbear House, rather than the modern hamlet's centre. The enlarged river uses OS Open Rivers: contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026, under the Open Government Licence. The present river is supplied for orientation; the map does not establish a sixteenth-century channel, ferry location, or forest boundary. Sunninghill is the settlement, not an exact reconstruction of the park.

# The Reluctant Ambassador

Chapter 5

## Asking Cecil for a postponement

Henry Neville tried to postpone the French embassy almost a year before he left England.

On 6 May 1598, writing from Lothbury, he asked to be excused from a meeting because Anne was dangerously ill. The Queen's physicians had examined her that morning, and he feared that her last hour might be near. He appealed to Cecil "as one that hath sometimes had feeling of the like grief." If the summons concerned "the employment whereunto I was lately named," his estate presented a further obstacle: he had sold Sussex and other property to buy land formerly belonging to Sir Henry Unton in Berkshire, entering obligations exceeding £12,000 to be completed within three months. Departure would prevent him from attending to them:

> How impossible it is for me to accomplish this if I should be employed I do assuredly know. And not accomplishing it, I foresee the overthrow of my poor estate, and shall both serve her Majesty without comfort now, and be utterly disabled to serve her in any sort hereafter.
>
> I do therefore again most humbly beseech your Honour to free me at the least till Michaelmas.[1]

He offered to serve after Michaelmas, 29 September. The £12,000 concerned the land transaction, not the cost of the embassy.

His objections did not end in May. On 8 November 1598 John Chamberlain reported to Dudley Carleton that Neville was to go to France despite his remonstrances and was expected to be ready by Christmas. The resistance was known beyond the correspondence between Neville and Cecil.[2]

## Preparing to leave

Neville was to serve as Elizabeth's resident ambassador to Henri IV. An order calendared under January 1599 directed him to restrain the killing of game and deer in Mote and Sunninghill Parks, both in Windsor Forest, during his absence. The order reflects the importance of the royal hunting grounds to Elizabeth and Neville's responsibility for protecting their deer.[3]

On 17 February 1598/9 Neville asked Thomas Windebank, a clerk of the signet, to arrange a passport for five companions: Sir Jonathan Trelawny, Herbert Morley, Richard Carew the younger, Thomas Moone and the mathematician John

Chamber, a fellow of Eton College. Carew was the nephew of George Carew, Neville's companion on the earlier continental journey.[4]

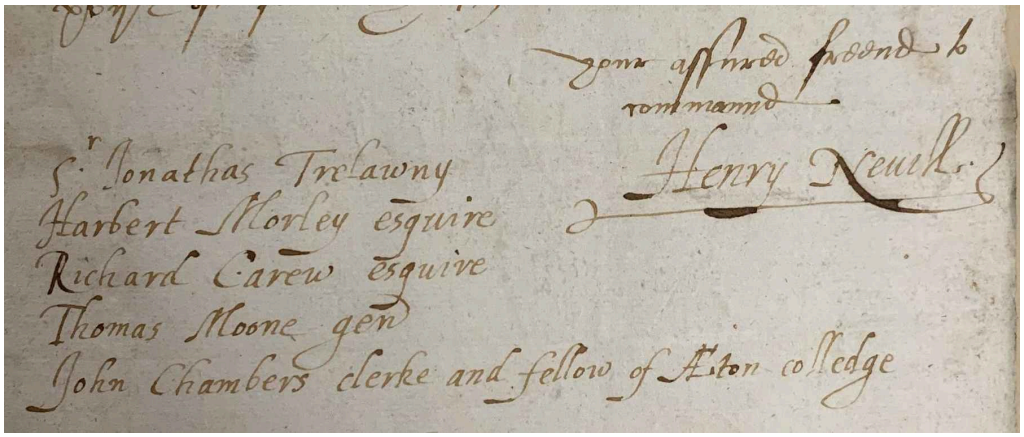



**Figure 5.1:** The five names Neville wrote out in his own handwriting for inclusion in his passport, with his signature alongside. Letter to Thomas Windebank, 17 February 1598/9. Source: manuscript photograph and John O'Donnell's transcription.

Neville also took Ralph Winwood as his secretary. An Oxford man, Winwood had studied at St John's College and become a fellow of Magdalen. He would later become Secretary of State under James I in 1614.[5] Writing to Cecil from Blois on 28 July 1599, Neville called him:

> a friend of mine, whom I entreated to come over with me in the place of my secretary

Winwood had hoped to buy a manor, but a mistaken assurance from the Solicitor and his hurried departure with Neville had prevented the purchase. Neville asked Cecil to help have it transferred to Winwood, saying he would receive the favour as thankfully as if it had been done to himself.[6]

Carew later explained why his father had sent him with Neville:

> I was sent by my father into France with Sir Henry Nevill, who was then ambassador leiger [resident ambassador] unto Henry the Fourth, that there I might learn the French tongue.[7]

On 9 April 1599 Neville was knighted at Greenwich before leaving for France as Elizabeth's ambassador to Henri IV. His later account put the land sales associated with his French employment at about £4,000, including £2,400 from part of his Yorkshire manor of Lund when he first went to France. Before his departure he received a joint tellership in the Exchequer—an office concerned with receiving and paying out royal money—with his father-in-law, Sir Henry Killigrew, to whom he assigned his share of its proceeds.[8][9]

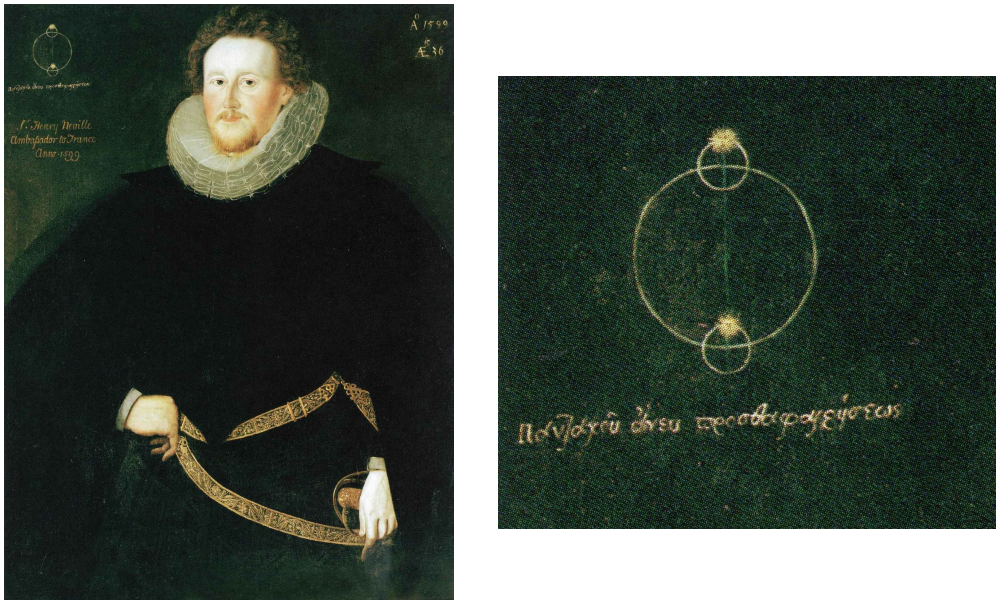



**Figure 5.2:** Henry Neville, 1599, with a close-up of the Greek inscription and astronomical diagram. Audley End; painter tentatively identified as Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger. Image: Wikimedia Commons; object identification: GrECI catalogue.

The portrait was likely painted before Neville left England for France. It carries the words "Sr Henry Neville / Ambassador to France / Anno 1599" and gives his age as thirty-six. A Greek inscription stands beside an astronomical diagram. The GrECI catalogue records the painting as oil on wood at Audley End and gives the attribution to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger with a question mark.[10]

The diagram shows the sun at apogee and perigee—its farthest and nearest points from Earth—in Ptolemy's alternative epicycle model. When the sun stands at either point, its calculated mean position and its true position coincide, so no correction, or *prosthaphaeresis*, is needed. The device thus presents Neville's appearance and true character as coinciding. The Greek inscription, "Absolutely without correction," also echoes the family motto, *Ne vile velis*.[11]

By 26 April 1599 Neville was at Dover, waiting for a wind that would let him cross the Channel. He wrote to Cecil:

> I am here attending the wind, which is directly contrary. As soon as it turns I will lose no opportunity.

The following day he was still unable to sail: "the wind is yet so contrary, and the weather so foul, as we cannot put to sea."[12]

## At the French court

Neville reached Dieppe on 2 May 1599 after almost three days at sea. With the governor and his lieutenant away, the sergeant major received him. His first report covered shipping intelligence, military preparations and customs revenues assigned to repay Elizabeth's loans. Rumours that the duke of Savoy was fortifying his frontier required checking in Paris; at Rouen he intended to question English merchants about the customs. He sent a messenger ahead to Thomas Edmondes, the experienced English diplomatic secretary, to establish the king's movements.[13]

His work combined maintaining the alliance, pursuing repayment and protecting English merchants.[14]

In his dispatch to Cecil of 15 May 1599, Neville described his arrival in Paris on 8 May. Henri was temporarily in the city, staying privately at the house of the financier Sébastien Zamet. Through Edmondes, Neville requested an audience. The king directed him to Moret, about two leagues from Fontainebleau, where the Spanish ambassador, papal nuncio, and Savoyard ambassador were lodged close together. On Sunday two French courtiers, Gondi and Lussan, escorted him to Fontainebleau. A chamber and dinner awaited him; afterward the French commander Charles de Gontaut, duke of Biron, conducted him to the king's gallery.[15]

Henri advanced two or three paces and embraced him. He told Neville that he had not moved one foot to receive the Spanish ambassador. Neville added that he had learned this comparison was true. The king's welcome established England's standing before a word of business was exchanged.

Neville delivered Elizabeth's letters and explained his charge to strengthen the alliance. Henri replied that an ambassador's character mattered: ministers could further or obstruct their masters' purposes, and he had found some English representatives much easier to deal with than others. He expected well of Neville and promised him honourable treatment.

Neville calls this his "first audience." Answering Elizabeth's concern for his safety, Henri said that if she were a man he would call himself her perfect friend; as she was, "Je me dirai son serviteur"—"I shall call myself her servant." Neville retains the French phrase within his English report, preserving a courtesy whose meaning would be less clear in translation alone.[16]

The conversation moved from attempts on the rulers' lives to the Edict of Nantes, which granted protections to French Protestants, and then to maritime trade. Neville asked for justice for English merchants whose lawsuits could cost more than their original losses. He pressed the danger that freedom from searches for French shipping might conceal enemy goods or carry arms, munitions, and grain to Spain. Henri interrupted one point with "non, non, non";

Neville recorded the interruption and resolved to seek a more definite answer at his next audience.

Henri then asked about the Earl of Essex's campaign in Ireland. Neville knew only that Essex had arrived safely, but Henri had heard that "two or three of the principal rebels" had come in and submitted to Essex. Neville admitted in his report that he was ashamed the king knew more than he did. Rather than appear ignorant, he answered that there had been a rumour and expectation of such an event. On the Scottish question he exercised a different restraint: changed circumstances made him defer the matter until he knew Elizabeth's wishes.

Neville ended the audience by urging free trade between the kingdoms. He argued:

> Those were the surest and most durable friendships, which were founded not only upon the disposition of the princes, but upon the interest of the subjects also.[14], [17]

Henri asked him to submit a written statement of his request for the council to consider.

In his dispatch from Orléans on 13 July 1599, Neville described a dispute over Elizabeth's demand for repayment. The king had promised a written answer; the French secretary of state Nicolas de Neufville, seigneur de Villeroy, then denied hearing the promise and required a written proposition. Neville supplied one. In the same negotiations he challenged wording that prohibited exports from France but left goods bought elsewhere free to reach England's enemies. Villeroy agreed to alter it. Finding discrepancies between their copies of the Treaty of Blois, Neville asked Cecil for a reliable text.[18]

## The Queen asks for court news

Elizabeth wanted more than treaties and accounts from her ambassador. In a letter sent before Neville's reply of 24 April 1600, Cecil added a royal instruction in his postscript:

> Since the writing of this letter, her Majesty hath commanded me to tell you merrily, that although you write one letter of state matters, yet she must have always one half sheet of court news and accidents.[20]

On 24 April Neville reported Henri's efforts to recover his written promise of marriage to Mademoiselle d'Entragues, discussed in Chapter 29, *All's Well That Ends Well*. She withheld both the document and her company, invoking her honour and her confessor's prohibition. According to Neville, she eventually returned the promise in exchange for pensions and ready money: "both honour and conscience have given place to profit."[21]

# The French embassy

Arrivals, audiences and dispatches · 1599–1600

**NUMBERED ENTRIES · DATES AND EVENTS**

1 **2 May 1599 · Dieppe**
Arrival after almost three days at sea.

2 **8 May 1599 · Paris**
Arrival; requests an audience with Henri IV.

3 **May 1599 · Fontainebleau / Moret**
First audience, described in the 15 May dispatch.

4 **13 July 1599 · Orléans**
Dispatch on negotiations and the Treaty of Blois.

5 **14 May 1600 · Amiens–Abbeville**
Letter dated “Between Amiens and Abbeville.”

6 **May–July 1600 · Boulogne**
Peace negotiations; letters on other employment.

Blue: recorded places. Amber: planned visit. Grey: orientation. Dates: Old Style.

**Figure 5.3:** Neville’s French embassy, 1599–1600. The dated entries distinguish arrivals, dispatches and negotiations; Rouen is an intended visit.[19]

Neville reported that the pair had resumed their relationship at Fontainebleau, adding *ut dicitur*—"as it is said." During the quarrel, however, Henri had found other company:

> But in this meantime of unkindness between them, the king was not unprovided, but had sundry haunts in this town; and among the rest within three houses of me.

The detail places Neville's Paris household startlingly close to the king's private life. He ended the report by explaining exactly why he had included it:

> These petty matters I am bold to write your Honour to give some satisfaction to the postscript of your last letter, which I therefore beseech you to interpret the best of.[21]

The same dispatch also discussed the expected arrival and dowry of the Princess of Florence.

Henri's private pursuits could also obstruct public business. On 27 April Neville warned Cecil that obtaining an audience might take at least five days. If the king came to Paris, it would be "for his secret pleasure," and "he will not be known to be here till his Council come likewise." Neville promised to press for an audience as urgently as possible. The ambassador who had been embraced so warmly at his first reception now had to work around a king who might be nearby but officially unavailable.[22]

Alongside the court gossip, Neville reported fears of renewed religious conflict. On 9 May 1600 he told Cecil that Henri was expected to spend the winter in Languedoc and Guyenne. It was feared that the king intended to support a plan to dismantle towns held by "those of the religion"—the French Protestants. Neville described the threatened consequences in theatrical language:

> Which if he do or attempt, it is like to prove the first act of the tragedy which all men expect here within short time.[23]

## Books and publication

Earlier, on 22 October 1599, Neville had written to Cecil about the French lawyer Étienne Pasquier's book against the Jesuits. The papal nuncio had blocked its printing in France. Pasquier had approached Neville to ask whether it could be printed in England with Douai or another continental place on its title page. Neville passed the question to Cecil:

> ... to know if it might not be **printed in England, though bearing the name of Douai or some other place**; I told him I would answer within this month ... I desire therefore to know what I may say unto him.[24]

During the embassy Neville also received books for onward delivery and encouraged scholarly publication.

In March 1600 Theodore Beza, the Protestant theologian in Geneva, sent Neville four copies of newly printed writings, together with a packet left by three English gentlemen who had visited him at Geneva on their way to Italy. One copy was for Neville; three were to be kept for delivery to the gentlemen in England. The author had died after entrusting the work to Beza for publication.[25]

John Chamber, the Eton fellow and mathematician in Neville's passport request, published *Barlaami Monachi Logistica* in Paris in 1600: his Latin translation of Barlaam of Calabria's mathematical writings, with explanatory notes. Its title page addresses Elizabeth; an internal poem to Neville records Neville's repeated requests that Chamber publish it:

> I need not now recount how earnestly, or how often, you asked
> that I should put his writings under the press.

Chamber credits Henry Savile with first encouraging the undertaking and Neville with helping to save it.[26] Chapter 47, "Neville Among the Muses," gives the full poem and examines its praise of Neville's learning and eloquence.[27]

In his Latin verse collection *Affaniae* (1601), the poet and clergyman Charles Fitzgeoffrey describes Richard Carew the younger (c.1580–1643) at the French court beside "Aonii ... Nevilli," Aonian Neville, and "Phaebaeumque Trelaunium," Phoebean Trelawny. These epithets associate Neville with the Muses and Trelawny with Phoebus Apollo.[28]

## Jersey and the Boulogne negotiations

In May 1600 Neville joined John Herbert, Robert Beale and Thomas Edmondes at Boulogne to negotiate peace with Spain.[29] The conference became entangled in disputes about the commissioners' authority and which sovereign's representatives should take precedence.[30] Cecil awaited "the first prologue to that comedy," suspecting that the French minister Villeroy wanted the parties to fall out at the meeting so that they would never agree.[31]

Even while ambassador, Neville was looking for another appointment. From Boulogne on 27 June 1600, during these negotiations, he wrote to Cecil about Sir Anthony Paulet's dangerous illness. Friends had urged him to seek the government of Jersey if Paulet died. Neville explained why the prospect mattered:

> The consideration of my mean estate and overgreat charge do continually summon me to embrace any occasion whereby I may hope to sustain it.

He would proceed only with Cecil's support, asking him to tell William Killigrew, Anne's paternal uncle, whether he approved the attempt. If Cecil approved, Neville begged his recommendation to Elizabeth:

> Without which I have neither hope, will, nor means, to begin or effect it.[32]

The office went to Sir Walter Ralegh: by 10 October Chamberlain was reporting that Ralegh had been to Jersey to take possession of his new government.[33]

John Packer also served as Neville's secretary in France, helping to carry news and instructions between the household and its correspondents. The life written at his death in 1649, as summarized by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, records that service; Neville's correspondence shows what the work involved.[34]

Winwood meanwhile carried on diplomatic business at the French court. On 23 July 1600 Neville told him that he was sending letters by the route Winwood had recommended in a letter carried by Packer. He urged Winwood to write frequently even at the risk of losing some: England wanted news from France.[35]

The opposing commissioners departed on 28 July. Formally, the negotiation remained open for sixty days; privately, Neville told Winwood the next day, "for my part I account this action for dissolved."[36] He told Winwood how to present the breakdown to Henri. If the belief that the talks had failed might draw Henri sooner into war with Savoy, Winwood could say, as his own opinion, that Elizabeth was so displeased with the proceedings that she would not be drawn into another conference. If Henri was already at war, Winwood should turn his language "clean the other way": finding so little assurance in France, Elizabeth might have to provide for her safety elsewhere, "at least to disburthen herself of certain enemies, seeing she finds so uncertain friends."[36] The summer ended without a peace settlement, and Neville returned to England hoping to leave the embassy altogether.

## Return to England and the stayed plays

Neville's return coincided with an intervention in the publication of Shakespeare's plays. He landed at Dover on 2 August 1600, left for London on 4 August and arrived there on 6 August.

News of his return travelled much faster. Sir Thomas Fane wrote from Dover Castle to Lord Cobham, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, on the evening Neville landed. Marked "Hast hast hast post hast," the letter left Dover at ten that night and reached London at ten the following night, 3 August: just twenty-four hours later, three days before Neville himself arrived.[37]

On 4 August—the day after the announcement reached London and the day Neville left Dover—the Stationers' Register grouped *As You Like It*, *Henry V* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, together with Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, under a single instruction: "to be staied." The previous new Shakespeare play

entered in the register had been *The Merchant of Venice*, on 22 July 1598—just over two years earlier. Three Shakespeare plays and a Jonson play were thus stayed after Neville had arrived back in England but before he reached London; news of his return was already in the city. The coincidence is extraordinary and deserves particular attention in assessing Neville's relationship to the plays.[37]

Appendix A gives the fuller documentary evidence, including the postal endorsements, the Dover–London chronology and images of the letters and register entry.

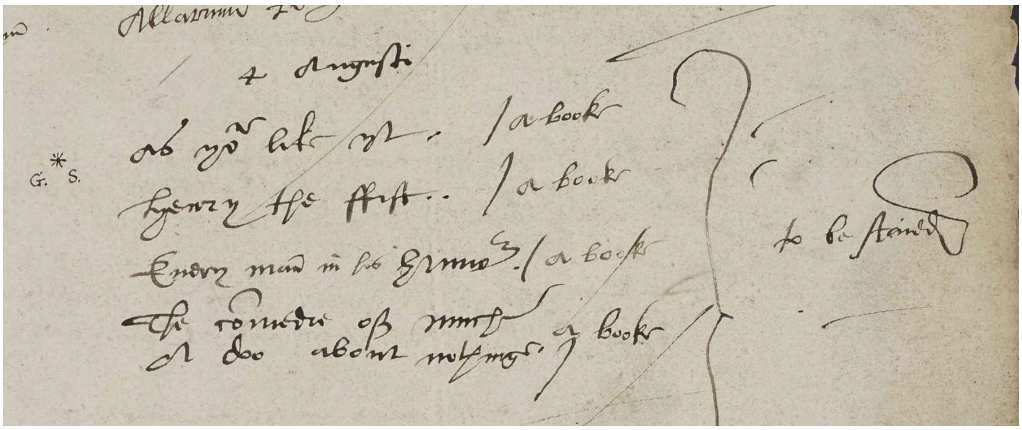


**Figure 5.4:** Stationers' Register, Liber C, flyleaf, detail: the four plays entered on 4 August 1600 under "to be staied." The date, titles and instruction are shown together. Image: Stationers' Company / Folger Shakespeare Library, Shakespeare Documented. Source and image credit.

## "Enforced to return"

Back in England after Boulogne, Neville worked to secure his discharge. On 28 August 1600 he told Winwood:

> I cannot yet be discharged of my employment, although I labour it much, but I hope in the end to prevail.

Elizabeth had received his service graciously. Neville thought that made it a suitable moment to leave, "lest the latter end should not answer to the beginning." The same letter continued to direct diplomatic business in France.[38]

By October his resistance was again court news. Chamberlain reported on 21 October that Neville was being urged to return to France but would not go unless compelled. On 2 November Neville himself told Winwood how far the dispute had gone:

> I am now at length enforced to return into my charge after long contestation, even to the extremity almost of a commitment. All I have won is a confirmation of the

> Queen's promise, that I shall but serve out my two years; which how it will be kept I know not, but I have now some more ground than I had to press it, and I leave my wife behind to solicit it.[39]

"Commitment" means committal to custody. Neville delayed setting out, hoping to avoid following the travelling French court beyond Paris.

Before he could cross the Channel, another political crisis intervened.

## Notes and sources

1. Neville to Cecil, Lothbury, 6 May 1598, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 60/114. Manuscript quotations checked against John O'Donnell's transcription; spelling, abbreviations and punctuation modernized. Compare HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, VIII (1899), p. 158, which abridges the letter and omits the Michaelmas request. The letter names only "the employment whereunto I was lately named"; identification as the forthcoming embassy is contextual.
2. John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 8 November 1598, calendared in Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1598–1601* (London, 1869), p. 118, vol. CCLXVIII, no. 108. The statement is paraphrased from the printed calendar, not presented as a manuscript quotation.
3. Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1598–1601* (London, 1869), p. 157, Queen to Henry Nevill, dated "[Jan.]" under 1599; reference "Warrant Book, I., p. 36." January is supplied editorially, no day is given, and the underlying warrant has not been inspected. The order establishes instructions, not compliance or an uninterrupted tenure.
4. Henry Neville to Thomas Windebank, 17 February 1598/9, named list following the subscription; transcription by John O'Donnell, published transcription and images. Compare Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1598–1601* (London, 1869), p. 163, vol. CCLXX, no. 40, printed abstract. The abstract names Trelawny and refers to four other gentlemen without printing their names. The letter requests licensing arrangements; it is not itself the issued passport.
5. "Winwood, Ralph," *Dictionary of National Biography* (1885–1900), entry: matriculated at St John's College, Oxford, on 20 December 1577; elected a probationer-fellow of Magdalen in 1582; appointed Secretary of State on 29 March 1614.
6. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Blois, 28 July 1599 O.S., Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), p. 81. The quotation follows the printed witness with spelling and capitalization modernized. Winwood wished to purchase the Queen's manor of Denshanger, annexed to the honour of Grafton in Northamptonshire. Neville asked Cecil to arrange for the purchase to be transferred to him for reasonable consideration, after an erroneous assurance from the solicitor and his departure with Neville had prevented him from securing it.
7. Richard Carew the younger, "The True and Ready Way to Learn the Latin Tongue," in *The True and Readie Way to Learne the Latine Tongue* (London, 1654), p. 46. This is Carew's retrospective account, not a 1599 dispatch. Spelling and capitalization modernized; the square-bracketed gloss is editorial. The preceding account describes travelling with his uncle on an embassy to the King of Poland.
8. Kirsty Wright, "Tally Sticks and Townhouses: The Exchequer of Receipt at St Stephen's", Virtual St Stephen's, 13 July 2020, on the tellers' receipt and issue of royal money.

9. Andrew Thrush, "NEVILLE, Sir Henry I (1564–1615), of Billingbear", *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010), family, constituency and office lists, and biography. Neville's estate statement, 20 July 1601, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1/6 (parent catalogue), itemizes £2,400 from the first Lund sale, £1,000 from the remainder, £330 from Wargrave land and £300 from other parcels: £4,030 in all. His later appeal rounds the burden to £4,000: HMC, *Salisbury Manuscripts*, XI (1906), p. 371. These are his retrospective figures; the total is not a single sale or a separate £1,600 transaction.

10. GrECI Project, "Portrait of Sir Henry Neville", MUSEU-HUB, record created 6 July 2024, image 042_Id_17. The attribution to Gheeraerts is questioned in the record. The catalogue dates the portrait only to 1599; completion before departure is an inference, not a documented month of execution.

11. Ken Feinstein, "The Greek Inscription on Henry Neville's Portrait: Solved!", 9 July 2021, publishing an anonymous astronomical specialist's interpretation of the inscription and diagram. Here prosthaphaeresis denotes the astronomical correction between mean and true positions, not the computational technique associated with Paul Wittich, the astronomer mentioned in Chapter 2. The shared term alone does not establish a connection between Wittich and the portrait. This account distinguishes the astronomical explanation from a diplomatic transcription of every Greek letter and from the proposed connection with the family motto. See also GrECI Project, "Portrait of Sir Henry Neville", MUSEU-HUB, 6 July 2024, for the translation and connection with the family motto.

12. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Dover, 26 and 27 April 1599, The National Archives, SP 78/43; see also Edmund Sawyer, ed., Winwood's Memorials (London, 1725), I, pp. 16–18. Quotations follow the manuscript wording with spelling and punctuation modernized. The 26 April manuscript omits "yet" before "directly contrary," which appears in the printed version. The letters establish the delay on those dates, not its total duration.

13. Neville to Robert Cecil, 27 April and 3 May 1599, Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, I (London, 1725), pp. 18–19. The ships were detained in Spain. The fleet figures are reported intelligence.

14. Neville to Cecil, 15 May 1599, Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 22–24, maritime business and conclusion. The report distinguishes the Irish conversation from the Scottish matter, which Neville deferred.

15. Neville to Cecil, 15 May 1599, Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 20–25, especially pp. 20–21 for the arrival and reception.

16. Chapter 24 compares this *serviteur* courtesy with Viola's French reply in *Twelfth Night* 3.1. Winwood, *Memorials*, I, p. 21, French courtesy; p. 24, explicit identification as the first audience. The French is retained within Neville's English account of the conversation. Contarini independently reported on 29 May 1599 that the English ambassador had been to Fontainebleau "for his first audience": Horatio F. Brown, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, IX (1897), no. 797, p. 369. This is the report's date, not the audience's.

17. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 15 May 1599 O.S., in Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp. 20–25, especially p. 24. The date is that of the dispatch, not an asserted date for the audience.

18. For Neville's Orléans dispatch of 13 July 1599 O.S., see the same volume, pp. 61–66, especially pp. 61–64 for the negotiations and p. 66 for the defective treaty copy. The English dispatch is complete on p. 66; the separate French proposition begins on p. 67. Contarini reported on 22 August 1599 that Neville, on learning Spain had requested access to Brest for its fleet, went directly to the king and obtained his promise to refuse. On 19 September he reported similar requests at Dieppe and other ports, adding that Neville had personally told him of the king's offer to assist Elizabeth if necessary: Brown, *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, IX, nos. 807 and 815, pp. 372–373, 376–377.

19. Author's map, following the dispatches and narrative cited in this chapter, and the letter of 14 May 1600 dated "Between Amiens and Abbeville," discussed in Chapter 23: Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp. 183–184. No midpoint or road is supplied for that dateline. Fontainebleau and Moret are places in Neville's account of his first audience, rather than separate datelines. Base geography: Natural Earth (public domain); settlement locations: GeoNames (CC BY).

20. Robert Cecil to Henry Neville, undated in the printed edition, Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp. 166–167, especially p. 167, postscript. The letter precedes Neville's reply of 24 April 1600 O.S. Quotations here and in the following two notes have modernized spelling and typography.

21. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 24 April 1600 O.S., Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 175–176, especially p. 176 for d'Entragues, the pensions, other haunts and explicit response to Cecil's postscript. Neville reports a pension of 6,000 crowns a year for d'Entragues, pensions of 4,000 crowns apiece for her parents, and 100,000 crowns in ready money to provide for her marriage. The Princess of Florence and her projected dowry appear on p. 175. These are Neville's reports; the printed dispatch is not independent confirmation of the alleged transactions.

22. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 27 April 1600 O.S., Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 177–178, opening paragraph on p. 177. The anticipated delay is Neville's estimate, not a record of five days actually elapsed.

23. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 9 May 1600 O.S., Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp. 179–183, quotation on p. 183. Spelling and typography modernized. The date appears at the opening on p. 179; the separate letter of 14 May begins farther down p. 183. The passage reports a feared design, introduced by "as it is feared," rather than confirming that the towns were dismantled.

24. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 22 October 1599, TNA SP 78/43, letter beginning f.374, passage f.375, manuscript record. Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp. 123–124, printed witness. Quotation follows the printed text with modernized spelling and marked omissions; emphasis added. The surviving letter does not establish that the proposal was carried out. The letter does not name the projected book. A likely candidate is Étienne Pasquier's *Le Catéchisme des Jésuites*, composed in 1599–1602 and first published at La Rochelle in 1602. See Robert Sauzet's review of Claude Sutto's critical edition, *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 201.4 (1984), p. 447.

25. Theodore Beza to Neville, Geneva, 12 March 1600, TNA PRO 30/50/2. The photographs are numbered 101–102 in the image sequence; these are not established archival page or folio numbers. The letter does not name the book or the three travellers. The request concerns four copies, one intended for Neville and three for onward delivery.

26. Barlaam, *Barlaami Monachi Logistica*, translated and annotated by John Chamber (Paris: Guillaume Auvray, 1600), Neville address, Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 4 Math 43, digitized by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, image 8. The quoted English translates two Latin lines near the close of the address. The full poem appears in Chapter 47.

27. Barlaam of Calabria, *Logistica*, trans. and ed. John Chamber (Paris: Guillaume Auvray, 1600), prefatory poem to Henry Neville. Chapter 47 gives a complete English translation of the twenty-four-line address and selected Latin passages.

28. Charles Fitzgeoffrey, *Affaniae* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1601), III.41, pp. 129–130. The verse depicts Neville with Richard Carew the younger and Trelawny at the French court. Chapter 47 discusses the text. For "Aonian" as an epithet of the Muses and things associated with them, see Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), s.v. "Aonia."

29. Elizabeth's commission, Greenwich, 10 May 1600, Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 186–187. The authority extends to the four commissioners or three of them. Their arrival is reported in the dispatch of 20 May, p. 188.

30. Commissioners to Cecil, 20 May 1600, Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 188–189, including the postscript defending the Spanish seal; compare the Latin statement of 21 May, p. 190. The dispatch records the questions referred home and the Spanish response.

31. Cecil to Neville, undated in the printed edition, Winwood, *Memorials*, I, p. 185.

32. Neville to Cecil, Boulogne, 27 June 1600, TNA SP 78/44, f. 201, manuscript record. Quoted passages checked against the photograph and John O'Donnell's transcription; spelling, abbreviations and punctuation modernized. The manuscript dateline reads 27 June; a reported catalogue date of 26 June is not followed. Neville calls William Killigrew "mine uncle Killigrew"; William was the brother of Anne's father, Sir Henry Killigrew. The letter establishes a proposed suit, not a completed application or an exchange of offices.

33. John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 10 October 1600, Green, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1598–1601*, pp. 476–477, vol. CCLXXV, no. 89. The calendar reports Ralegh's possession of the government; the underlying appointment patent has not been inspected.

34. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of the Marquess of Abergavenny, Lord Braye, G. F. Luttrell, Esq., &c.* (London, 1892), p. 174, summary of "Life and character of Mr. John Packer," dated 9 February 1648/9: printed page. The witness used here is the complete printed summary, not the underlying manuscript life.

35. Sir Henry Neville to Ralph Winwood, Boulogne, 23 July 1600, O.S., in Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), p. 231. The complete printed letter supplies the date, sender, recipient and the reference to Winwood's letter carried by Packer. The corresponding Gregorian date is 2 August 1600 New Style.

36. Commissioners to Cecil, 28 July 1600, Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 225–226; Neville to Winwood, 29 July, p. 232, including the conditional instructions about Henri and Savoy.

37. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, X (London, 1904), p. 261, Fane to Cobham, 2 August 1600, Cecil Papers 87/46, including the postal endorsements recording departure from Dover at ten at night on 2 August and arrival in London at ten at night on 3 August; p. 268, Neville to Cecil, 6 August 1600. Neville confirms his departure on Monday and arrival in London on the sixth. Stationers' Company, Liber C, flyleaf, 4 August 1600: the other plays are *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*. *As You Like It* first appeared in the 1623 Folio; see the Folger textual introduction. The return dates and the Stationers' Register entry are English-calendar dates. For the previous new Shakespeare play entered, see Stationers' Company, Liber C, f. 39v, 22 July 1598, The Merchant of Venice entry, and the Folger register chronology.

38. Neville to Ralph Winwood, London, 28 August 1600, Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp. 248–249, especially p. 249. The heading and date are on p. 248; both passages quoted here are on p. 249. Spelling and typography modernized.

39. Neville to Winwood, London, 2 November 1600, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 270–272, especially p. 271; spelling and typography modernized. For the independent report, Chamberlain to Carleton, 21 October 1600, Green, *CSPD, Elizabeth, 1598–1601*, p. 481, vol. CCLXXV, no. 100. This near-committal precedes the imprisonment following the Essex crisis.

# The Essex Crisis

Chapter 6

On 22 February 1601, Sir Thomas Fane added a postscript to his letter from Dover Castle to Sir Robert Cecil:

> While I sought to prevent his passage by sea, he on the sudden took horse, leaving his wife and children here with the gentlemen of his retinue.[1]

Henry Neville, the queen's ambassador to France, was riding back to court under Cecil's recall. Two weeks earlier, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, had risen against the government. Neville had heard a plan from the earl's associates. On 2 March he wrote out, in his own hand, an account of what they had told him and how he had answered. Much of the following reconstruction comes from that declaration: it preserves his recollection while also making his defence.[2]

Neville's declaration distinguishes the earlier plan to seize the court gate and reach the queen from the rising in London six days later.[3], [4], [5], [6]

| Date | Event | Neville's account |
|---|---|---|
| 2 February 1601 | At Drury House, Southampton and Danvers outlined a plan to seize the court gate and guard chamber so that Essex could reach the queen. | Neville heard the plan and raised objections. When Cuffe returned a day or two later, Neville said he would not approve the enterprise unless its undertakers swore to attempt nothing against the queen's person or estate. His declaration does not place Essex in the Drury House conversation. |
| 8 February 1601 | Essex and his company entered London in the rising that failed. | Neville denied advance knowledge of that Sunday's attempt and said he was at court on embassy business, remaining there to defend the queen. |

## Cuffe and foreign intelligence

Henry Cuffe, the Merton scholar introduced in Chapter 3, moved from Savile's scholarly circle into Essex's service by 1595. His journeys through France and Italy produced reports on the grand duke of Tuscany, Spanish preparations and finance, the prospect of Franco-Spanish peace, and Italian fears. He sent intelligence to Savile for transmission to Essex. In a June report he described the order explicitly: Savile first, then Essex "so far as you shall think fit." [7]

A March 1598 letter makes the connection between reporting and history explicit. Cuffe reports that the grand duke wants Elizabeth to obstruct the Franco-Spanish peace, but doubts whether the proposed means could work. Writing for his "most honourable Lord," he invokes the rule "*Nemo irascitur historico*"—no one is angry with the historian. The historian should not be blamed for the news he reports. [8]

## Reading Aristotle with Southampton

Essex also sent Cuffe to teach Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, in Paris. In a later report to Robert Cecil, Sir Thomas Arundel wrote:

> This Cuff was sent by my lord of Essex to read to my lord of Southampton in Paris, where he read Aristotle's *Politics* to him with such expositions as, I doubt, did him but little good: afterwards he read to my lord of Rutland.[9]

Southampton's own letter to Essex from Paris on 19 September 1598 confirms that he had kept Cuffe with him:

> I beseech you to impute not the stay here of your servant Mr. Cuff as his fault, for I have taken on me the boldness to hold him here until my departure.[10]

Cuffe's teaching and intelligence work connected his work in Savile's circle with Essex's political household. His book on the ages of life is discussed alongside Jaques in Chapter 23, on *As You Like It*. Chapter 27, on *Othello*, considers Rubinstein's proposed comparison between Cuffe and Iago. In 1600 Cuffe would approach Neville on Essex's behalf.

## Cuffe's approaches

More than a year before the recall, another ambassador had reported on Neville's position. Writing from France on 12 December 1599, Francesco Contarini, Venice's ambassador at the French court, told the Doge and Senate:

> The ambassador here resident, who is of the Earl's party, has had his despatches stopped for many days, and has sent his secretary in all haste to keep an eye on what is taking place in England and to put an end to such irregularities.[11]

Neville returned to London from the Boulogne negotiations in August 1600—"as I remember the sixth of August," he later wrote. Henry Cuffe, Essex's secretary, had left a message at his lodging. According to Cuffe, the earl had learned that Neville would be blamed for the breakdown of the negotiations. Neville went to court and found "no such matter but rather altogether the contrary." Cuffe maintained that the intention had existed, whatever had since changed.[2]

Cuffe was someone with whom Neville had "had long acquaintance," likely through their connections with Henry Savile and Merton College. Cuffe brought a letter from Essex asking for Neville's love and promising to hold it "as a great treasure." Neville replied with compliments and offers of service. Later, Cuffe visited Neville's house and proposed staying two or three days, but Neville had business in the Vale; they parted at Nettlebed.[12]

After the middle of October, when Neville was again in London, Cuffe urged him to visit Essex and, after Neville delayed, named a time. Glascock, the earl's servant, met Neville at about eight in the evening and took him to the study. Essex joined him half an hour or more later, asked "many questions of foreign matters," and spoke of his hopes concerning the sweet-wine import concession and his restoration to the queen's "presence and favour."[13] He conducted Neville to the back gate himself. Neville wrote that Essex had used no "undutiful speech of the queen or the state" during the visit, and that afterwards they neither spoke nor exchanged letters.[2]

Cuffe continued to call. Sometimes he offered hope about Essex's prospects; sometimes he spoke angrily. Once he quoted Lucan:

> *Arma tenenti, omnia dat qui iusta negat.*
>
> Whoever denies justice to one holding arms grants him everything.

Neville answered in French, "*tout beau*"—easy; not so fast. Cuffe said such treatment would give Essex cause to think sooner of "other courses." In Lucan, Caesar speaks these words after crossing the Rubicon.[14]

Around Christmas, Cuffe reported a supposed intention to imprison Southampton and then Essex. In January he pressed Neville to hear a proposal from Southampton and Sir Charles Danvers, assuring him that nothing would be attempted against the queen's person or estate. Neville agreed to listen on that condition. Meetings were delayed by his work with Secretary John Herbert and the French ambassador, and by private business.[2]

Neville was meanwhile preparing to resume his embassy. On 23 January he wrote to Ralph Winwood, his colleague in France:

> I look now to be dispatched forthwith, and to set forward, about the morrow after Candlemas-day. I mean to come by Rouen wheresoever I land.

At Rouen he intended to seek redress for English merchants' grievances. Candlemas fell on 2 February; he expected to leave about the following day.[15]

## Candlemas: the plan at Drury House

On Monday, 2 February 1601, Candlemas, Neville left Serjeants' Inn at about four in the afternoon. He had acknowledged a statute before the judge, Sir

Edmund Anderson, and sealed other papers. A coach passed carrying Essex, Southampton, Sir Christopher Blunt and Danvers. Neville had told Cuffe he would come that day; the men in the coach had now seen him nearby. He went to Drury House, where he met Southampton and Danvers. His account does not place Essex in that conversation.[3]

Neville wrote that he had not spoken with Southampton since the earl was a child in Lord Burghley's household. Southampton now told him that Cuffe had assured Essex of Neville's goodwill, honesty, discretion and secrecy. Essex's enemies, Southampton claimed, controlled access to the queen and prevented his grievances from reaching her. Essex would therefore approach her with enough supporters to ensure that he could not be excluded.

Southampton described forty men waiting in separate groups at the Mews, the stables near the court. When Essex and Southampton approached in a coach, these men would seize the court gate. Others already in the hall would enter the guard chamber and take the guards' halberds. Lords and supporters in the presence chamber would welcome Essex and accompany him to the queen.[3]

Neville recorded his first answer to Southampton:

> I told him it was a matter of too great weight to be suddenly digested. But for [as for] the assurance which Mr Cuffe had given of me, if he had not exceeded his commission, as I hoped he would not, being an honest man, I would perform what he had delivered from me.[2]

In the same declaration, he denied having offered his sword:

> But for offering to draw my sword in the cause, I vow before God and his angels I never offered it nor ever meant it.[2]

Among his objections, Neville invoked Tacitus:

> This was an action of the nature of those which, as Tacitus saith, *non laudantur nisi peracta*, and would be interpreted by the success.

Such actions "are not praised until accomplished." The words condense *Histories* 1.38, where Otho urges his soldiers to complete their coup against Galba.[16]

Neville raised three practical objections. Recruiting enough men would risk discovery. A closed door could stop the movement through the palace. Even if they took the gate, a force from nearby Westminster could dislodge them. Southampton and Danvers answered that their followers would assemble under another pretext and learn the purpose only that morning. Surprise and supporters inside would prevent doors being closed. Once they held the court and had "the show of the state on their side," they expected no resistance.[3]

Neville understood the aim to be the arrest of Essex's enemies and their replacement in office. For the operation as a whole, he remembered no more than

120 men being discussed. They spoke of seizing the Tower through Sir John Davies "as a matter which they could do when they would." Neville wrote that they had settled "neither the time nor any circumstance of their attempt." He could not be certain whether Parliament had been mentioned at Drury House; Cuffe spoke of it afterwards. Danvers was to visit him again, but Neville said that he never subsequently saw either Danvers or Southampton, or exchanged messages with them.[3]

## Cuffe's visit after the Drury House meeting

Within a day or two, Cuffe returned. Neville said he would not approve the enterprise unless its undertakers swore to attempt nothing against the queen's person or estate, "as they had done in the enterprise of Amboise, a precedent whereof was to be seen in the story." The French conspiracy of 1560 had sought to remove Francis II from the control of the Guise; an oath protecting king and state appeared in accounts of it.[17]

Neville also refused to act against Cecil:

> I would have no hand nor be no actor in it, because I was near allied unto him and had been beholden to him, as all the world took knowledge. And I would not **blot my reputation** to be false unto him or any man.[4]

Cuffe said they would not press him, but wanted him in the presence chamber because Essex meant to name him "to supply some place there." Neville replied that his dispatches had been signed and he would shortly leave for France. Cuffe suggested feigning sickness. Neville said he instead pressed for his money from the Exchequer, naming Mr Skinner as a witness to his efforts to obtain it.[4]

Cuffe asked Neville to sound out an unnamed minister whom Neville knew well: did the minister favour Essex, and what did he think of London's affection for the earl during his earlier troubles? Neville wrote that he had not done so and that the minister was out of town throughout. Cuffe also claimed that twenty or twenty-one of London's twenty-four aldermen were on the earl's side. Finally, he asked Neville to instruct his servants to support Essex, or at least not oppose him, if the encounter occurred at court. Neville recorded his answer and his denial together:

> Whereunto I answered very well. Which how he construed I know not. But God is my witness that I neither did it nor ever meant it. And I humbly desire that my servants, if it be thought meet, may be examined of it.[4]

## 8 February: the rising

In his history of Elizabeth's reign, William Camden describes the earlier plan as one to "seize upon the Court"; Essex was then to "fall upon his knees before the

Queen." On 7 February, after Essex was summoned to the Privy Council, the plan changed:

> Now did his design fail which had been full four months digested [worked out], and out of fear they hasten to a new. [...] He resolved therefore [...] to enter the next day, which was Sunday, with 200 gentlemen into the City [...] there to inform the aldermen and people of the causes of his coming, and to crave their aid against his adversaries. [...] If they showed themselves easy [willing], then to make himself a way unto the queen with their help.[6]

The earlier plan was to seize the court gate and reach the queen directly; the new plan sought Londoners' support first. On Sunday, 8 February, Essex and his company entered London. The rising failed. At about three the following morning, Essex and Southampton were brought to the Tower with the Earl of Rutland and Lord Sandys.[5]

During the rising, Neville said he was at court. He denied knowing in advance what Essex would do:

> I knew nothing neither of the matter, manner, time nor any circumstance of their attempt that Sunday.

He said he had gone to court that morning with Otwell Smith to speak to Cecil about the merchants' business at Rouen. He maintained that, after learning what Essex had done, he stayed until ten at night, ready to defend the queen.[5]

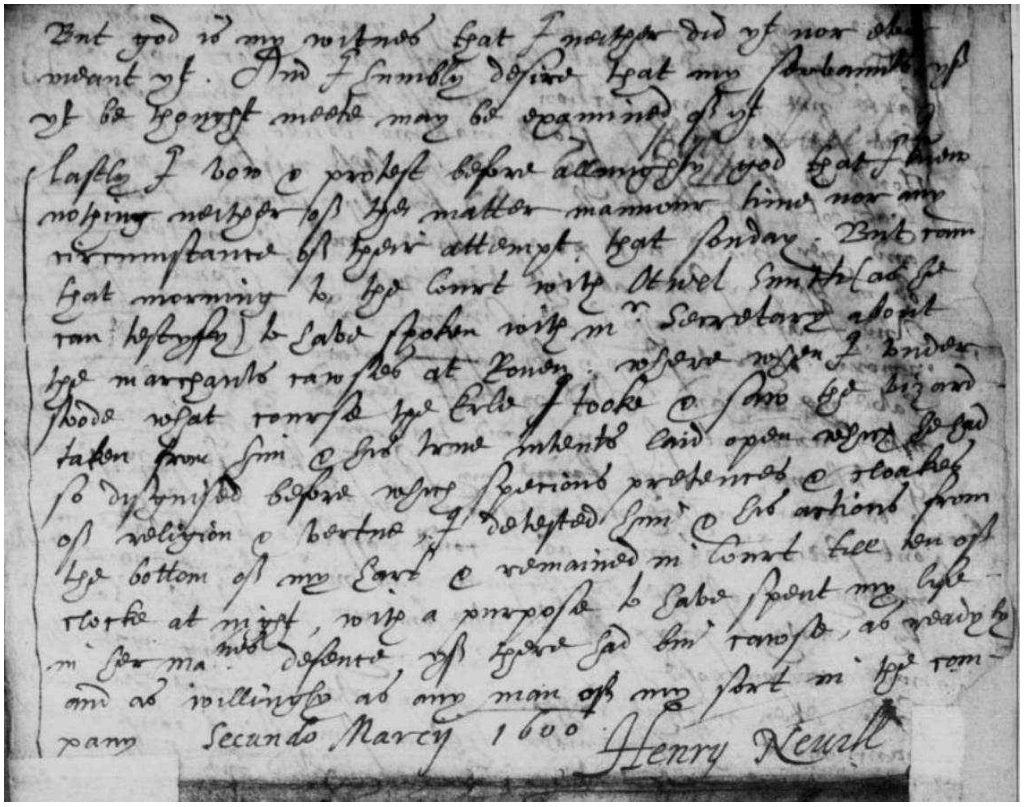


**Figure 6.1:** Detail of the final page of Henry Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, with his signature beside the date. The manuscript dates it 2 March 1600, before the English year changed on 25 March. The National Archives, SP 12/279, document beginning at f.15. Public source.

## Recalled from Dover

Neville set out on the journey to France he had been preparing since January. On 19 February he wrote to Cecil from Rochester about a passport for Mr Tiery.[18] On 22 February Fane sent the letter from Dover Castle:

> Sir Henry Neville in satisfying of your letters is posted with some three or four men to the Court to you, after whom I have sent Captain Windebank and one of my servants in post to observe him and such course as he shall take; which if the same be direct, then to pass as unknown persons; otherwise to make stay of him by force of your warrant.[1]

Neville's wife, Anne, and the children remained at Dover. On 24 February, Shrove Tuesday, the Privy Council directed her father, Sir Henry Killigrew, to receive her, put aside his displeasure against her husband and treat her with his former "countenance and comfort."[19]

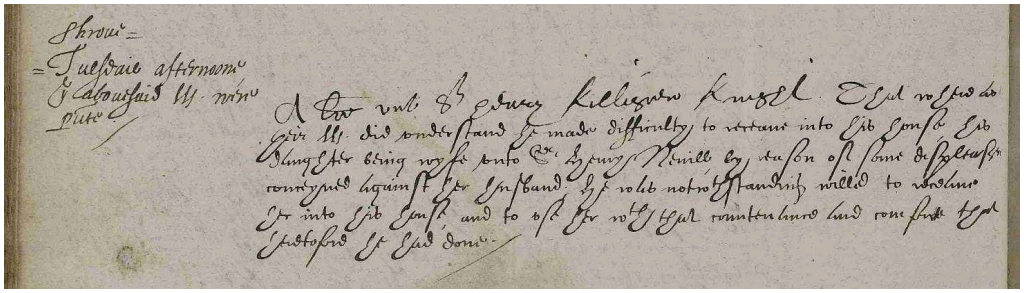


**Figure 6.2:** The Privy Council's instruction to Sir Henry Killigrew to receive his daughter with his former "countenance and comfort," 24 February 1601. Detail: The National Archives, PC 2/26, catalogued f.92. Public source.

On 25 February Essex was beheaded inside the Tower.[5]

Examined on 2 March 1601, Cuffe said that Essex had proposed Neville or Thomas Bodley as Robert Cecil's replacement as secretary. Green's calendar abstract of another examination that day records Cuffe's agreement that "the declaration of Sir Hen. Neville, of 2 March, is in substance true."[20]

At Cuffe's trial on 5 March, Neville's confession was read aloud. William Camden, who attended, recalled:

> if my memory fail me not, for I was then present and heard his confession read.[21]

By 6 March Neville was in custody at Chelsea, with Zachary Lok as his keeper. Embassy business continued. Lok reported that he had admitted Winwood's servant and sent for a cabinet of Neville's writings from Killigrew's house. Anne supplied the key. Neville selected the papers he needed in Lok's presence:

> Every till [compartment] in the cabinet was full of several writings touching his employments and private estate. All are safe in the cabinet, the key whereof he delivered presently to my keeping.

Winwood was to remain in France until the queen gave further instructions. Neville's French household was to be dissolved and its furniture and utensils sent away.[22]

## Anne's appeals and Cuffe's execution

That same day, 6 March, Anne asked Thomas Windebank, her "good friend and kind neighbour," to speak for her to Cecil, her kinsman. She had heard that Neville had lost the office of *custos rotulorum*, keeper of the county records, and that Sir Edward Norris had taken his place in the commission of peace. She appealed to Cecil's earlier kindness and asked Windebank to "polish my rough-hewn speech."[23]

On 11 March she asked permission to consult Neville about the people retained for his French employment and the settlement of household affairs. She pointed to his continuing expenses in the country. She offered to speak in his keeper's presence, adding that her deafness would make Neville speak loudly enough to be heard.[24]

Cuffe was executed in March.[25] A surviving report records his attempts to distinguish the earlier design from the action of 8 February. When he separated intention from means, Lord Grey interrupted: "This is no time for logic."

When charged on the scaffold with "seducing" Neville, Cuffe acknowledged that "he drew him into that unfortunate action" and asked his forgiveness. He also qualified his earlier claim about the aldermen: their affection for Essex had not meant that they were prepared to take arms for him.

As Cuffe continued, another interruption warned him to leave these matters and not "shorten his own time." He turned to prayer. The report records his request for pardon from God, the queen and those involved,

> but principally of Sir H. Nevill, who was drawn into trouble by him as an instrument.[25]

On 22 March the Lord Admiral, Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham, together with Cecil, authorized Lok to admit Anne privately to her husband, accompanied by no more than one or two servants. A note on the warrant records that she came that Sunday. Two days later, writing from Lothbury, she asked Cecil to weigh Neville's first fault against his earlier life and service. She reported hearing that Cuffe had cleared him at his death. That was part of her appeal, rather than the wording of the surviving scaffold report.[26]

## The declaration he did not want printed

On 22 April 1601 Neville wrote to Cecil about the expected publication of an account of the conspiracy. He asked to be mentioned sparingly and wanted his own declaration withheld—probably his declaration of 2 March. He feared that public disgrace would prevent his return to royal service.

The declaration, he explained, had been prepared in haste. Mr Browne, the Lord Admiral's servant, arrived to collect it when Neville had barely begun, with instructions to deliver it at the Tower by eleven. The previous evening some of the councillors had assured Neville that it was wanted for another purpose, rather than to be used against him. In those circumstances, he wrote:

> I omitted both matter and circumstances which would much have justified me and cleared mine intention from consent or participation in these actions.
>
> So as if it should be published in that naked sort as it is set down, it would be to my infinite disadvantage, and lay me open to the **censure of every common person**,

> even for that whereof I am **not guilty**. Therefore chiefly I desire it may not be published; or if that must needs be—as I verily hope there is no such necessity, matters being otherwise clear enough, and my knowledge of the Earl's designs being but at the second or third hand, and that only in generalities—I humbly desire that I may be permitted to revise it and to add some circumstances which I have either by word or writing already declared unto your Honours, that so the world may know the **best of me as well as the worst**.[27]

Chapters 26–27 compare his request that the world know his "best" as well as his "worst" with passages in *Hamlet* and *Othello*.

On 27 April John Packer wrote to Winwood that "our good lady," apparently Anne, had narrowly survived a grave illness and remained too weak to leave her bed. The same letter conveyed instructions from "my master" about Winwood's continued service in France, his account and payment from the sale of household goods.[28]

The contemporary chronological notes record Neville's arrival at the Tower:

> The first of May Sir Henry Nevill, late lord ambassador for France, was brought to the Tower.[29]

## Notes and sources

1. Sir Thomas Fane to Sir Robert Cecil, Dover Castle, 22 February 1600/1, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 76/100; Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, XI (London, 1906), p. 76. Quoted from the calendar text, which describes the original as a holograph with seal. The instruction to use force is conditional on Neville departing from the direct course to court.

2. Henry Neville, declaration, 2 March 1600/1, The National Archives, SP 12/279, beginning at f.15, autograph. Quotations follow John O'Donnell's transcription of the manuscript, with spelling and punctuation modernized. Supplementary calendar: Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1601–1603* (London, 1870), pp. 5–8. This declaration is distinct from the separate defence printed as "Sir Henry Nevill's Case" in Winwood's *Memorials*, I, pp. 302–304. The conversations narrated here are Neville's retrospective account.

3. Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, SP 12/279, f.15 onwards; supplementary calendar, Green, *CSPD Elizabeth 1601–1603*, pp. 6–8. Neville names Southampton and Danvers as the men who disclosed the plan, and distinguishes their discussion from Cuffe's subsequent remarks about Parliament. The recollection of Southampton in Burghley's household does not place Neville's own education there.

4. Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, SP 12/279, f.15 onwards; supplementary calendar, Green, *CSPD Elizabeth 1601–1603*, pp. 7–8. Cuffe's reported offer is "to supply some place there"; this passage does not specify Cecil's secretaryship. Bold emphasis added to the quotation about Neville's reputation.

5. Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, SP 12/279, f.15 onwards. For the rising and surrender on 8 February, the prisoners' arrival at about three on 9 February, and Essex's execution on 25 February, see the contemporary chronological notes in TNA SP 12/281, beginning at f.127, manuscript; supplementary calendar, Green, *CSPD Elizabeth 1601–1603*, pp. 89–90. For the rising and nighttime surrender on 8 February, see Camden, *Annales*, 1601, §§5–13, text.

6. William Camden, *Annales rerum Anglicarum et Hibernicarum regnante Elizabetha*, Part II (1589–1603), year 1601, §§4–5. Camden wrote the history in Latin: Part I appeared in London in 1615; Part II first appeared posthumously in the complete Leiden edition of 1625, followed by a separate London Latin edition in 1627. The quotation follows Richard Norton's English translation (London, 1630; STC 4500), as edited by Dana F. Sutton in the Philological Museum, 1601, §§4–5, with spelling and capitalization modernized, omissions marked, and editorial glosses supplied in square brackets. Norton's translation is distinct from Thomas Browne's English translation of Part II, first published in 1629 (STC 4498; USTC 3014090). For the identification of the Norton text used here, see Sutton's Introduction, §§15–17; compare the Latin, 1601, §§4–5.

7. Gajda, "Henry Savile," p. 50 and n. 74, citing Cuffe to Savile, 4/14 June 1597, Cecil Papers 52/10. The later channel also appears in Cuffe's 26 July/5 August 1598 letter to Savile or, in his absence, Edward Reynolds, Cecil Papers 72/26. These are distinct letters from the report of 4/14 March 1598. Spelling in the quoted letter is modernized. The year is disputed: Gajda and the Salisbury calendar, VII, pp. 234–235, give 1597; Paul E. J. Hammer, "The Uses of Scholarship," p. 38 n. 5, argues for June 1598 from internal evidence. The exact Savile-first wording quoted here follows Gajda, not the calendar abstract. Hammer.

8. *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House*, part VIII (London: HMSO, 1899), p. 76, Henry Cuffe to Henry Savile, 4/14 March 1598, Cecil Papers 175/2, printed page. The endorsement gives Florence and 14 March 1597 in the contemporary year style. "Nemo irascitur historico" occurs before the final report and subscription.

9. Sir Thomas Arundel to Robert Cecil, post-rebellion report, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1729, f.190r; quoted by Lisa Jardine, "'Studied for action' revisited," in *Gabriel Harvey and the History of Reading*, ed. Anthony Grafton, Nicholas Popper and William Sherman (UCL Press, 2024), p. 337 and n.28, chapter. Spelling modernized and abbreviated titles expanded. The adverse judgment on Cuffe's expositions is Arundel's. Paul E. J. Hammer, "The Uses of Scholarship: The Secretariat of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, c.1585–1601," *English Historical Review* 109 (1994), pp. 26–51, at p. 49 n.7, cautions that the dates of the readings are unclear; article.

10. Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, to the Earl of Essex, Paris, 19 September 1598, Cecil Papers 64/32; *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, VIII (1899), p. 353, printed letter. Quoted from the published text. The letter confirms their company in Paris, without specifying the subject or dates of the lessons.

11. Francesco Contarini to the Doge and Senate, Paris, 12 December 1599, in Horatio F. Brown, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, IX: 1592–1603 (London, 1897), no. 832, p. 386. Quotation follows Brown's English calendar abstract of the Italian dispatch. Contarini does not identify the secretary or who stopped the dispatches. His report of 22 January 1600 (1599 in the Venetian year style), no. 844, p. 390, adds that Elizabeth instructed the English ambassador to explain Essex's confinement as intended to make him acknowledge his fault, not destroy or ruin him.

12. Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, SP 12/279, f.15 onwards. On the earlier academic connections, see Alexandra Gajda, "Henry Savile and the Elizabethan Court," *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* 6 (2021): 32–60, article, especially pp. 49–51: Savile elected Cuffe to a Merton fellowship in 1586; Cuffe later sent intelligence to Essex through him. This does not establish that Neville and Cuffe studied together.

13. Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, SP 12/279, f.15 onwards, records Essex's hopes concerning sweet wines and restoration to the queen's presence and favour. Camden, *Annales*, 1601, §1, describes the refusal to renew the farm of wines: text.

14. Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, SP 12/279, f.15 onwards; Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1.348–349, Latin text. Translation supplied here; Latin u/v and i/j normalized. For "tout beau," see Randle

Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611), s.v., "Soft and faire, not too fast, ynough I say": entry.

15. Neville to Ralph Winwood, London, 23 January 1600/1, in Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), p. 290. Spelling modernized. Later letters of 28 and 29 January, pp. 291–292, record further delay and uncertainty about the dispatches.

16. Tacitus, *Histories* 1.38, Latin text: *nullus cunctationis locus est in eo consilio quod non potest laudari nisi peractum*—there is no room for delay in a plan which cannot be praised until it has been carried through. Neville's compressed plural wording and explanation concerning success occur in his autograph declaration, SP 12/279, f.15 onwards; see also Green, *CSPD Elizabeth 1601–1603*, p. 7. The words survive in Neville's handwriting; Chapter 31, on *Macbeth*, reproduces the passage. Identifying the passage does not identify the physical edition he used.

17. Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, SP 12/279, f.15 onwards; supplementary calendar, Green, *CSPD Elizabeth 1601–1603*, pp. 7–8. For the historical oath, see Jean de Serres, *An historical collection, of the most memorable accidents, and tragicall massacres of France* (London: Thomas Creede, 1598), pp. 63–64, STC 11275, ESTC S121331, facsimile, TCP A01160. The printed account expressly requires an oath protecting the king and the state. The TCP catalogue identifies the opening work as a translation of Serres; a later section, separately paginated, translates Pierre Matthieu. This supplies a contemporary witness to the precedent without identifying Neville's unnamed history.

18. Neville to Cecil, Rochester, 19 February 1600/1, HMC, *Salisbury Manuscripts*, XI, pp. 73–74; Fane to Cecil, 22 February, ibid., p. 76. The January correspondence establishes that the journey was planned before the rising; Fane's letter records recall and surveillance on the return, not an arrest while attempting a newly improvised escape.

19. The National Archives, PC 2/26, catalogued f.92, Council register image. The surviving witness is the register's record of the instruction, not the dispatched letter. Independent printed control: John Roche Dasent, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, New Series, XXXI, p. 179, order to Sir Henry Killigrew, Shrove Tuesday afternoon: printed edition. The sequence places this Tuesday on 24 February: the preceding session is Monday 23 February on p. 178, and the following session is also dated 24 February on p. 179. The Council directs Killigrew to receive his daughter into his own house and treat her as formerly; this is distinct from the later orders admitting her to her husband in custody. Short quotation modernizes spelling.

20. Henry Cuffe's examination, 2 March 1601, calendared in Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1601–1603* (London, 1870), p. 2, nos. 4–5, printed calendar. The quotation follows Green's calendar abstract of examination no. 4, dated 2 March; no. 5 abstracts a separate examination recording the proposed secretaryship. The proposed secretaryship is evidence of the discussion, not Neville's acceptance of a role in the rising.

21. Camden, *Annales*, Part II, year 1601, §§45 and 51, Richard Norton's English translation (London, 1630; STC 4500), as edited by Dana F. Sutton: trial and confession. Section 45 dates the trial to 5 March; §51 contains Camden's statement that he was present. The memory qualification is Camden's own. Spelling modernized. The Latin Part II was first published at Leiden in 1625; see the edition details in the earlier Camden note. Compare Latin §51.

22. Zachary Lok to Sir Robert Cecil, Chelsea, 6 March 1600/1, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XI, p. 110, Cecil Papers 77/32. The complete calendar entry is the witness used here; it describes the underlying letter as a one-page holograph with seal. The bracketed "compartment" is an editorial gloss of "till." The printed words identify writings concerning employment and private estate, not a detailed inventory or a specific filing scheme. A related undated letter from Neville to Cecil (CP 83/26; HMC, *Salisbury Manuscripts*, X, p. 371) describes Lok reading his letter to Winwood, watching him select papers and retaining his desk key. Neville also returned the queen's letters intended for France and discussed Winwood's

allowance of thirty shillings a day. The calendar's conjectural placement "[1600, c. Oct.]" is not secure enough to establish an earlier custody episode.

23. Anne Neville to Thomas Windebank, 6 March 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279 f.30, State Papers Online, MC4304680023. Spelling modernized. Office changes are presented as Anne's report.

24. Anne Neville to Thomas Windebank, 11 March 1601, TNA, SP 12/279 f.32, State Papers Online, MC4304680025. The request concerns the retained company and household costs following the end of the French employment.

25. "The speech of Mr Cuffe at his death," TNA SP 12/279, f.35, manuscript, dated 13 March 1601 in the calendar: Green, *CSPD Elizabeth 1601–1603*, no. 25, pp. 14–15. This is a report of the speech, not Cuffe's autograph. It is distinct from no. 26, "The last words of Mr Cuffe." The quoted passages have been checked against the manuscript and Green's printed report, with spelling and punctuation modernized and abbreviated personal names retained. Green omits the manuscript's "as an instrument." Camden, *Annales*, 1601, §54, gives 13 March; the separate Tower chronologies calendared by Green at pp. 88 and 90 give 9 March. The discrepancy remains unresolved. Camden.

26. Nottingham and Cecil to Zachary Lok, 22 March 1600/1, TNA PRO 30/50/4, manuscript leaf numbered 7; the note at the foot records Anne's visit. Anne Neville to Cecil, 24 March 1600/1, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 77/90; supplementary calendar, HMC, *Salisbury Manuscripts*, XI, p. 145.

27. Neville to Cecil, Chelsea, 22 April 1601, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 86/1; *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp. 175–176. Quotation follows the printed calendar, pp. 175–176. Bold emphasis added. Identification of the declaration with the March confession is probable; the letter's account of its preparation is Neville's own.

28. John Packer to Ralph Winwood, London, 27 April 1601, in Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), p. 319: printed page. The master and lady are not named in this letter; their identification is contextual. Short quotations modernize spelling and capitalization.

29. Contemporary chronological notes relating to the Essex rebellion, TNA SP 12/281, beginning at f.127, manuscript, entry for 1 May 1601; supplementary calendar, Green, *CSPD Elizabeth 1601–1603*, p. 91. The entry is in the packet catalogued under August because its record continues into that month. Spelling modernized.

# The Tower

Chapter 7

## His defence

In custody, Neville had to defend his loyalty while admitting that he had concealed a dangerous scheme. His written defence, printed as *Sir Henry Nevill's Case*, turns on that distinction:

> Although I mean not to justify myself altogether from blame, but do freely and willingly acknowledge an offence, and submit myself to her Majesty's mercy; yet my own soul witnessing to herself, that it was ever loyal and faithful to her Majesty, and consequently abhorring more than death, the imputation of that fault, and loathsome crime of falsehood and treason; I do only desire, that my fault may not be barely or nakedly censured, but examined together with all the circumstances that did accompany it [...][1]

He maintained that he had been solicited rather than initiating the plan, had objected to it and promised no participation, and was preparing to return to France. The conspirators had neither consulted him further nor summoned him on the day of the rising. He objected particularly to Essex's confession:

> How unequally (that I may not say uncharitably) my Lord dealt with me in his confession; wherein he delivered matters to charge me, but nothing to discharge me, although both alike known unto him [...][2]

Yet he could not explain away his silence. He had hoped the scheme would dissolve and recoiled from accusing a man whose standing before the catastrophe was very different from his reputation afterwards. Essex should be considered "not as he has been found since, but as he was reputed." As in his appeal to Tacitus in Chapter 6, Neville asks that his conduct be judged by what he could know before the rising, rather than by hindsight. Neville nevertheless admitted that public duty should have prevailed over his fear of private disgrace.[3]

His ability to recover now depended on petitions, friends' intervention and the terms the government would accept for his release.[4]

## Letters and appeals

Neville wrote many letters to Robert Cecil during his confinement in the Tower. Alongside requests for help with his fine and release, he wrote about his damaged reputation, his family's suffering, and his despair. Chapters 40–43 return to these letters and compare their language with the Sonnets.

Anne Neville continued to petition Cecil, her first cousin. In a letter assigned to about June 1601, she explained that sickness prevented her from coming herself; her father's age and weakness limited his help, and her uncle was absent. She had heard that the Queen was showing grace even to those involved in open action, and hoped that Neville's offence would be judged less serious:

> But howsoever, if he may but taste of the same favour that they have had, and be restored shortly unto me and his poor children, though we live poorly together all our time, I shall think myself happy [...].

She asked Cecil to remember the affection of "my good lady your mother towards us, who I am sure, if she were living, would join her request unto my suit." Mildred Cecil was Anne's aunt: Anne invoked Mildred's memory to press Cecil to act.[5]

A fine of £10,000 exceeded his depleted resources. Explaining his position to Cecil in July 1601, Neville reported losing a yearly £350 payment from the ordnance patent as well as his offices. He had already sold £4,000 of land to meet embassy costs and debts.

On 9 July 1601, he asked Cecil to preserve one judgment of him:

> Whatsoever other opinion I have deserved to lose, that you will vouchsafe still to hold me an honest man. For that is the highest title that I aspire unto.[6]

The same letter also asked permission for Anne to visit and discuss their estate and his suit.

Imprisonment left Neville with decisions he could no longer carry out freely. His estate still needed attention, and the fine required money. On 12 July 1601 the Privy Council instructed the Lieutenant of the Tower to allow Anne "free access" to her husband at convenient times. It also permitted two or three other visitors a day to confer about his business. The order expressly connected these consultations with his estate and the means of satisfying the fine. Anne had an acknowledged place in the practical work of sustaining the household during his confinement.[7]

On 25 July he pleaded for his wife and children:

> I beseech your honour therefore even for God's sake to take compassion upon my poor wife and children, and let not my folly be their utter overthrow. I wish the whole punishment might light upon myself, for I only have deserved it, and they are innocent.[8]

In a letter endorsed 4 August 1601, he described what continued royal displeasure meant to him:

> Unless I be so happy as to obtain some mitigation of that indignation which is kindled in her against me, I shall account my life but a burden unto me, and hope to be eased of it ere it be long.[9]

## Savile appeals to Cecil

Henry Cuffe, Savile's protégé and Neville's close friend, left £500 in his will to Neville or his children and asked his forgiveness as a distressed friend. He had visited Savile's Westminster lodging on 5 February 1601. This connection likely helps explain the suspicion that fell on Savile after the rising. On the morning of the rising Savile went to court; his servant was subsequently questioned and his study at Eton searched, but he was not implicated in treason. In January 1602 he was sufficiently trusted by Elizabeth and Cecil to act for Neville in negotiations for his release.[10]

In appeals assigned to 1601, Savile had also asked Cecil to help protect Neville's income. A dispute over tithes—produce owed from agricultural land—had made possession almost worthless: local pressure could prevent the corn from being carried away, stored, threshed or sold. Neville, under the queen's displeasure, needed the benefit of what was his.[11]

In negotiations over the original £10,000 fine, Neville raised his offer from £4,000 to £5,000 in March 1602. The Queen initially rejected his proposed payment terms; by 3 April she had accepted the £5,000 offer, but the required security was still disputed. The agreed sum is not a record of the amount ultimately paid, which remains uncertain. Nor did agreement bring immediate freedom: Anne was still petitioning for his release in May, and he remained confined until the change of reign in 1603.[12], [4], [13], [14]

## Anne's appeal for release

Neville's letter of 3 April 1602, which reported agreement over the fine, ended with his fear for Anne:

> [...] in respect of my poor wife, whose state I do much fear, as being overcharged with grief and sorrow, besides my troubles, with the late loss of one of her children, and the likelihood to lose another. These afflictions coming one upon another, I doubt will much endanger her weak body and mind [...].[15]

In her letter endorsed 23 May 1602, Anne asked Cecil to add to the relief he had already given her—*levamen doloris*—*finem doloris*, an end to her grief. The letter opens with a quotation from Seneca about grief silencing speech, discussed in Chapter 31. Anne made clear what would end her grief:

> I mean his deliverance out of the Tower, who by reason of his long imprisonment is much decayed in health. **I can bear the loss of anything, so I lose not him.**[13]

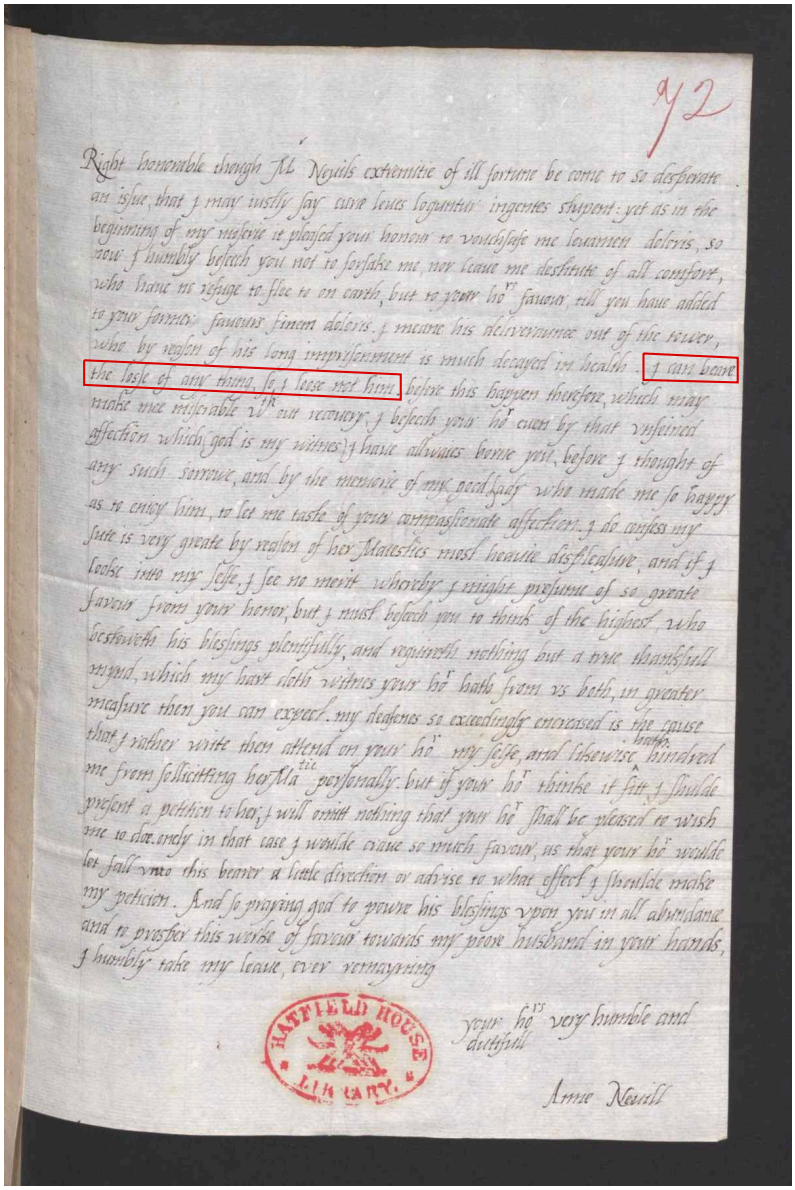



**Figure 7.1:** Anne Neville's letter to Sir Robert Cecil seeking her husband's release from the Tower. Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 93/72; endorsed 23 May 1602 according to the printed calendar. The red outlines mark "I can bear the loss of anything, so I lose not him," which runs across two lines.

Anne explained that her greatly increased deafness had kept her from attending Cecil and from approaching the Queen personally. She nevertheless offered to petition Elizabeth:

> But if your honour think it fit I should present a petition to her, I will omit nothing that your honour shall be pleased to wish me to do.

She asked him to give the bearer "a little direction or advice to what effect I should make my petition"—guidance on what it should say.[13]

## "Wipe away this blot"

Neville's plea to remain an "honest man" made his good name central to the appeal for release. On 31 July 1602 he imagined recovering it through further service, even at the cost of his life:

> And if there be no other means to **wipe away this blot** wherewith I am **soiled**, yet it is possible that if I were at liberty, I might shed so much of my **blood**, in some place where she hath occasion to use men, as might serve for a **laver for the crime** which hath made me so ugly in her eye.[16]

A laver is a means of washing. The disgrace has marked both the man and the Queen's view of him; blood shed in her service might cleanse it. This develops the "blot my reputation" of his declaration into an image of shame, service and repair. Chapters 31 and 43 examine the corresponding language of washing and staining in *Macbeth* and the Sonnets.

On 7 January 1603 Neville was still thanking Cecil that neither his errors nor the suggestions of "malignant spirits," ready to put the "worst interpretation" on them, had destroyed Cecil's favour.[17]

## Managing Billingbear from the Tower

Confinement did not stop Neville attending to the daily business of Billingbear. In a memorandum in his own hand, docketed 3 February 1602/3, he lists work on the gallery, windows, timber and stone, the little parlour's panelling and a bridge.[18] He measures rooms and calculates how much fabric is needed for their hangings.[19] Alongside these improvements come the running needs of the estate: sheep and oxen, wheat and malt, hay and fodder, fuel, poultry, brewing supplies and wine from Abingdon. He reminds himself to prepare the ponds and provide hangings for the rooms. Even while seeking release, he was organizing the house, land and supplies on which his household depended.[20]

## Release in April 1603

The change of reign brought release. Writing to Dudley Carleton on 12 April 1603, John Chamberlain set the news amid the widespread hopes of royal favour—even among poets:

> The tenth of this month the Earl of Southampton and Sir Henry Nevill were delivered out of the Tower by a warrant from the King. These bountiful beginnings raise all men's spirits and put them in great hopes, insomuch that not only Protestants,

but papists and puritans, and **the very poets with their idle pamphlets** promise themselves great part in his favour: so that to satisfy or please all, *hic labor hoc opus est* [here is the labour, here is the task]: and would be more than a man's work.[14]

## Notes and sources

1. 'Sir Henry Nevill's Case', Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 302–304. Sawyer's note on p. 302 describes the document found among Winwood's papers as entirely in Neville's hand. That is the editor's testimony; the printed edition supplies the quotations here. It does not print an exact day of composition. The Case is distinct from Neville's earlier declaration.
2. Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 302–303, the narrative and numbered circumstances. These are Neville's arguments about his conduct.
3. Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 303–304, concealment, Essex's former reputation, public duty, and the final appeal to service. The ending is quoted and summarized from the printed witness.
4. Thrush, Neville biography, confinement and fine, notes 34–37. The sum agreed is distinguished from the amount actually paid.
5. Anne Neville to Sir Robert Cecil, undated, endorsed 1601 and calendared to about June, Cecil Papers 183/117; HMC, *Salisbury*, XI, p. 259. The month remains an editorial approximation. Exact quotations follow the manuscript, with spelling and punctuation modernized; the calendar abridges the appeal and omits the absent uncle and the invocation of Cecil's mother.
6. Neville to Cecil, Tower, 9 July 1601, Cecil Papers 86/146, in HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp. 273–275, printed letter. The financial details follow the printed letter; the "honest man" passage follows the manuscript, with spelling modernized. The £350 annual patent payment and £4,000 land-sale proceeds are Neville's own account. The letter ends by asking permission for Anne to visit and discuss their estate and his suit. Anne's 24 March 1601 appeal reports hearing that Cuffe cleared Neville at his death: Cecil Papers 77/90, HMC, *Salisbury*, XI, p. 145. Chapter 6 examines that report; it is not an independent record of Cuffe's final words. Neville's July letter does not independently establish the legal mechanism by which the patent payment began.
7. *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, New Series, XXXII (1601–1604), p. 64, order of 12 July 1601 to Sir John Peyton: printed edition. The order grants permission; it is not a register of actual visits.
8. Neville to Cecil, from the Tower, 25 July 1601, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 87/20. Quotation from the manuscript, spelling modernized; also HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XI (1906), p. 300.
9. Neville to Cecil, undated, endorsed 4 August 1601, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 87/61. Quotation from the manuscript, spelling modernized; also HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp. 320–321.
10. Alexandra Gajda, "Henry Savile and the Elizabethan Court," *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* 6 (2021), pp. 32–60, at pp. 34 and 58, nn. 104–105, DOI. Gajda identifies Cuffe as Savile's protégé and documents his visit, the search and the questioning. The connection's role in arousing suspicion is an inference; the content of their conversation is unknown. Neville's letter to Cecil of 6 January 1602, Cecil Papers 84/45, documents Savile's intervention. Cuffe's will leaves £500 to Neville or his children and asks his forgiveness as a distressed friend: John Bruce, ed., *Correspondence of King James VI of Scotland with Sir Robert Cecil and Others in England* (Camden Society, 1861), Appendix VII, pp. 91–92, printed from Hatfield MSS, vol. LXXXIV, no. 1.

11. *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury Preserved at Hatfield House*, XI (London: HMSO, 1906), 564, item 90.156, and 570, item 139.213. The first is calendared as a holograph, undated and endorsed 1601; the second is undated and unsigned, endorsed "Mr. Savill," and assigned [1601?]. This account follows the printed calendar.

12. Andrew Thrush, "NEVILLE, Sir Henry I (1564–1615), of Billingbear", *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010), family, constituency and office lists, and biography. For the successive payment proposals, Neville to Cecil, 11 and 20 March and 3 April 1602, HMC, *Salisbury Manuscripts*, XII (1910), pp. 72, 80 and 95–96. The April letter reports acceptance of the sum while disputing the demand for sureties.

13. Anne Neville to Sir Robert Cecil, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 93/72; calendared in HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XII (1910), p. 164. The letter has no dateline on its recto; the calendar reports the endorsement "23 May, 1602." Quotations and Latin phrases follow the manuscript, with spelling and punctuation modernized. The calendar summarizes the release request, both spouses' health difficulties and the proposed petition to the Queen, but omits the Latin.

14. Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 12 April 1603, in Norman Egbert McClure, ed., *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, I (Philadelphia, 1939), letter 63, pp. 191–192 (quotation p. 192; spelling modernized). A government letter of 10 April independently confirms their release. See the public edition. Compare *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1603–1610*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1857), p. 2, no. 18, 10 April 1603.

15. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 3 April 1602, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 92/99, concluding paragraph. Quotation from the manuscript, with spelling and punctuation modernized; ampersands expanded. "I doubt" means "I fear." The printed calendar abridges the passage: HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XII (1910), pp. 95–96. Neither child is named in this passage; the second loss is anticipated, not confirmed.

16. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 31 July 1602, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 94/90, holograph; quotation follows John O'Donnell's transcription, with spelling and punctuation modernized, as in Chapter 31. The printed calendar abridges and changes the passage to the third person: *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury*, XII (London, 1910), p. 268. The first-person quotation is from the letter, not a conversion of that abstract.

17. Neville to Cecil, 7 January 1603 (1602 in the letter's year reckoning), Cecil Papers 91/35; *Calendar*, XII (1910), pp. 589–590.

18. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F45/1 (catalogued with D/EN/F45/2), "Remembrances," by Sir Henry Neville in his own handwriting, earlier memorandum docketed 3 February 1602 Old Style, here expressed as 1603. Public catalogue. Short extracts modernize spelling. The sheets also carry a March 1602 heading; the docket dates the memorandum, not necessarily every individual entry. Intended alterations are not proof of their completion.

19. Same memorandum, chamber measurements and calculations for wall hangings.

20. Same memorandum, provisioning and estate business: livestock, grain, fuel, poultry, brewing supplies, Abingdon wine and the ponds.

# Back in Public Life

Chapter 8

## Freedom without restoration

Neville left the Tower in April 1603. In 1604 he returned to Parliament for Berkshire and resumed local office, but he did not regain employment at court. Writing to Ralph Winwood on 16 February 1604, he distinguished accepting public service from seeking advancement:

> But withal I think it may satisfy any man's conscience, that he shuns not service imposed; and I hold no man bound to seek employments. Those of honour I know are too high for me; and if I did not know it, yet others do. To the same I have had, or meaner in that kind, I know you would not advise me: yet those I have not refused. To live in court, where *non proficere* is *deficere*, without any office, business or regard, were the next degree to idleness: what remains for me to do then, but which I do? That is, to attend the care of my private state and family, wherewith I only stand charged, and to leave the care of public affairs, unto those to whom they are committed.[1]

At court, *non proficere* was *deficere*: not to advance was to fall back. The phrase recalls an older Christian maxim about spiritual progress; Neville applied it to life at court without office, business or regard.[2] His withdrawal also had an immediate domestic cause. Earlier in the same letter he described leaving Shellingford for his other house, only for a servant to die of plague and two more to fall sick. He had been forced to disperse his household and avoid company, especially the court.[1]

Two Oxford publications of 1603 praised Neville: George Carleton's *Heroici characteres* and John Davies of Hereford's *Microcosmos*. Davies called him "discreet"; Carleton, who had served as vicar of Mayfield, addressed him in the opening poem. Chapters 47–48 examine these tributes; Chapter 47 also discusses Neville's request to move Carleton's verses away from the opening.[3,4]

Neville continued to share scholarly responsibilities with Savile. John Chamber's will of July 1604 named them executors and instructed them to print whatever remained unpublished of six works on astrology, the sphere, cosmography, geography and music. It also asked them to publish George Carleton's *Arraignment of Astrology* alongside Chamber's work on the same subject.[5] Chapter 51, "Carleton, Vicars and the Jaggard Press," connects this direction with Carleton's *Astrologomania*, printed in 1624 by the Jaggard house that had produced the First Folio the year before. Its title page says it was written nearly twenty years earlier. Oxford created Neville Master of Arts on 30 August 1605.[6]

## Parliament and the Union

Neville's absence from central office did not prevent substantial public work. He received twenty-six committee appointments in the Commons in 1604 and forty-two in the January–May 1606 session. His business included religion, trade, wardship, purveyance and the proposed Union of England and Scotland.[7]

The Union required more than a shared monarch. On 1 November 1604, writing from bed at the Star Chamber with gout, Neville asked Winwood how the provinces of the Low Countries had joined under a common ruler. What bound their assemblies together? What customs did Netherlanders pay in Spain, and Spaniards in the Netherlands? He wanted precedents the English commissioners could use.[8]

By 8 December he could report the agreed articles. Hostile and special border laws were to disappear; trade and naturalization required more careful distinctions. Those born before James's accession were to be excluded from certain political and judicial privileges even after naturalization. Neville identified eligibility for Parliament and Crown office as the most contentious issue. The negotiations touched the interests of powerful people as well as ordinary questions of customs, shipping and trade.[9]

Copies of the agreement were forbidden until Parliament met, so he sent Winwood its substance in a "short and imperfect kind."[10] The exchange shows him gathering comparative evidence and explaining a difficult settlement.

## "My husbandry in the country"

On 21 June 1605, after discussing policy toward Catholic recusants, Neville again announced his retreat:

> But I am out of my proper orb when I enter into state matters; I will therefore leave these considerations to those to whom they appertain, and think of my husbandry in the country, which puts me often in mind of that beatitude which Horace so much commends.[11]

Horace's *Beatus ille* offered an image of the man happy on his ancestral fields, away from the forum and the doors of the powerful. Neville immediately asked Winwood to keep sending news.

By 1604 he was again a Berkshire justice of the peace and keeper of the county's records. His duties also included Sonning's stewardship and responsibilities in Windsor Forest.[7]

On 30 October 1605, Neville and Sir Francis Knollys reported from Reading on their inspection of Berkshire's trained bands, both horse and foot. They found deficiencies in men and equipment, especially a shortage of armour. Since the last inspection, men had died or moved away, and others' circumstances had

changed. They allowed one month to make good the deficiencies, but explained that they could not certify the results until the men assembled again. Unless the Council ordered otherwise, that would have to wait until the days grew longer.[12]

A quarrel between a widow and her son at Twyford shows the work at a human scale. In October 1606 William Wollascott reported the widow's dissatisfaction with Neville's order settling their affairs. The widow remained liable under a mill lease and needed security that her son would maintain the mills. In January 1607 Wollascott pressed her case again, stressing her weakness and want and asking Neville to weigh it in the "balance of justice and equity." The letters leave the outcome unresolved.[13,14]

Neville could be equally determined in defending his own rights. In July 1609 Richard Staverton complained about a deer killed by a keeper named Beard. Neville was willing to believe Beard dishonest: the man had stolen from him too. But he challenged Staverton's seizure of the keeper's bow and his authority to try an offence on land Neville claimed as his free chase. He proposed dealing with Beard in his own court, demanded evidence against his other keeper, and still offered a reasonable settlement with his neighbour.[15,16]

## His children

Neville's son followed him into continental education. A September 1607 licence permitted father and son to travel with William Symondson, a fellow of Merton.[17] In a letter from Paris assigned to November 1608, the tutor, signing himself William Simondes, reported on the younger man's spending and conduct. Paris offered "many dangerous provocations" and "much corrupt company." He asked Neville to keep "many eyes upon him" and to support the tutor's control of expenditure. They lodged near the English ambassador, whose advice he hoped would reinforce the father's commands.[18]

On Good Friday 1609, shortly after returning to England and receiving a knighthood, the younger Henry was violently arrested in London. A French merchant, Peter Gaundon, accused him of piracy off the Irish coast the previous year. Henry demonstrated that he had been in Saumur when the pirates struck and was released on £1,000 bail. When Gaundon failed to pursue his Admiralty suit, he was imprisoned in the Fleet; Henry then brought proceedings against him in Star Chamber. The merchant claimed he could not afford counsel and refused to answer the complaint.[19]

The dispute continued beyond the arrest. In August Francis Bacon reported to Salisbury that a Frenchman had failed to attend as instructed and that Sir Henry Neville had sent a solicitor to pursue the cause. This appears to concern the same case. The accusation had drawn the younger Neville into a prolonged effort to defend his name, just as he was beginning married life.[20]

Neville's daughter Elizabeth had married Henry Berkeley in 1608. Henry's brother Sir Maurice Berkeley was also one of Neville's estate trustees.[21]

## Land and overseas ventures

In 1608 Sir Julius Caesar, Chancellor of the Exchequer, entrusted Neville with negotiations over Sonning's Crown tenancies, judging that "no man is fitter than you." Neville used the survey but exercised his own judgment of values.[22,23] That December Robert Wright told him that the manor might be sold and that he might secure first refusal; Neville's draft reply offered his service as the king's steward. He later heard that Sonning was to remain among the king's best lands.[24,25]

The woods also connected his landed interests with overseas trade. In August 1609 Sir Thomas Smythe thanked him for delivering one hundred loads of timber to the East India Company and asked for another hundred to finish its ships. The Company had mislaid the agreement, but accepted that Neville had fulfilled it. Smythe thanked both Neville and Anne for their hospitality.[26]

Neville's involvement in Virginia was more formal. Named to the enlarged royal council for the colonies in March 1607, he appeared in the Second Charter of May 1609 among the adventurers and on the Company's council resident in England. Southampton, Pembroke, Dudley Digges and Christopher Brooke served on the same body. Its responsibilities included appointing colonial officers and directing government.[27,28]

This placed Neville within an organization that generated and received information about Virginia, a connection important to the later discussion of *The Tempest*. It does not establish that any particular account reached his hands.

## Answering the king

Neville's county responsibilities continued to meet parliamentary business. In 1610 he served on committees concerning game and hawking, and in July joined Sir Maurice Berkeley in proposing that all members should be allowed to attend the committee considering the king's paper on defects in the commonwealth.[29]

The year's negotiations had centred on the Great Contract: a proposed permanent annual payment to the Crown in return for surrendering revenues and rights including wardship and purveyance. By the autumn the bargain was breaking down.[30]

That November, James summoned thirty members to Whitehall and asked whether they thought him short of money. Francis Bacon began answering in a manner that displeased him. The king turned to Neville and ordered him to answer according to his conscience. Neville agreed that James was in want. Did his subjects have a duty to relieve him? Neville answered:

> Where your Majesty's expense groweth by the commonwealth we are bound to maintain it, otherwise not.[31]

He reminded James that this Parliament had already granted four subsidies and seven fifteenths, both forms of taxation, yet its grievances remained unrelieved. The king demanded to hear them. Neville began with the administration of justice; when he reached the jurisdiction of the Welsh Marches, Sir Herbert Croft "took the word out of his mouth." Otherwise, according to John More's report to Winwood, Neville was thought ready to give his judgment on everything.[31]

The country gentleman who had declared himself outside his proper sphere in state matters was answering the king directly. His insistence that financial support and redress of grievances belonged together would become the basis of his proposed settlement with James—and of his renewed hopes for office.

## Notes and sources

1. Neville to Winwood, 16 February 1603/4, Winwood, *Memorials*, II, p. 17. The printed date is 16 February 1603 Old Style, expressed as 1604 in the narrative. Spelling and capitalization in the quoted passages are modernized.
2. Compare Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistolae* 254.4: "nolle proficere, non nisi deficere est" ("to refuse to advance is nothing but to fall back"; translation here), *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, VIII, ed. Jean Leclercq, C. H. Talbot and H. M. Rochais, p. 159, lines 10–12; text and source collation in the Liber Pharetrae Project, III.11.19. Bernard develops the image of running: stopping one's advance begins a decline. This establishes an earlier Christian formulation, not Neville's immediate source or a direct quotation from Bernard. Neville supplies the English copula "is" between the Latin infinitives.
3. George Carleton, *Heroici characteres* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1603), STC 4636, title and sigs. A2r–A3r, printed witness. John Davies, *Microcosmos* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1603), title and Neville sonnet. Carleton's address is one continuous poem. For his Mayfield institution on 28 April 1589, with Henry Neville as patron, see CCEd appointment record 53478.
4. George Carleton to Dudley Carleton, Nuffield, 22 October 1617, TNA SP 14/93, ff.235–236, passage f.236r, manuscript record. The passage is paraphrased from the manuscript. The book is not titled in the letter; identification with *Heroici characteres* rests on its printed Neville dedication and the context of Carleton's poems. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1611–1618* (1858), p. 489, entry 135, summarizes the letter but omits this sentence. The proposed new edition is not established as completed.
5. John Chamber, will, July 1604, TNA PROB 11/104/339. The will opens with 1 July and closes with a signing clause dated 28 July. The account summarizes the will; the uncertain expense clause following the Carleton printing direction is not included. The two anti-astrology descriptions are not securely assigned to particular surviving texts. Chamber's direction does

not establish that the named *Arraignment* is textually identical with Carleton's *Astrologomania* (1624), or that every proposed publication was completed.

6. Thrush, "Neville," baptism and university chronology; Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500–1714*, III (Oxford, 1891), p. 1057, Neville entry. For the discrepancy between Foster's matriculation age and the inferred birth chronology, see Chapter 1. Foster's parliamentary list contains namesake errors and is not followed.

7. Thrush, Neville biography, office list, accounts of the 1604, 1606, and 1610 sessions, and the supporting endnotes.

8. Neville to Winwood, 1 November 1604, Winwood, *Memorials*, II (London, 1725), p. 35. The request establishes the questions he asked, not the contents of any reply or their effect on particular articles.

9. Neville to Winwood, 8 December 1604, Winwood, *Memorials*, II, pp. 37–39. His report begins on p. 37 and explains the disputed naturalization qualifications on p. 38.

10. Winwood, *Memorials*, II, p. 38, copy prohibition and commercial report continuing onto p. 39.

11. Neville to Winwood, 21 June 1605, Winwood, *Memorials*, II, pp. 77–78. Neville names Horace and evokes his beatitude without transcribing a Latin verse. Compare Horace, *Epodes* 2.1–8, Latin text; translation of the opening phrase here.

12. Henry Neville and Francis Knollys to the Council, Reading, 30 October 1605, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 112/145; manuscript. Calendared in *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XVII (1938), p. 470, entry. The letter distinguishes the one-month undertaking to supply deficiencies from the later assembly needed to certify performance; it does not establish that the improvements were completed.

13. William Wollascott to Henry Neville, 22 October 1606, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1/10, parent catalogue. Wollascott's assessment of the widow's claims is presented as his judgment.

14. Wollascott to Neville, 20 January 1606 Old Style (1607 with the year beginning in January), D/EN/F6/1/12, same parent catalogue. Quotations modernize spelling.

15. Neville to Richard Staverton, Billingbear, 19 July 1609, Royal Berkshire Archives, within D/EN/L2/1/1, Warfield tenant-dispute papers; first and second manuscript faces. The argument is Neville's claim, not a finding that every aspect of his legal position was correct. Short quotations modernize spelling. The unnamed authority who imposed Beard is not identified here.

16. Same letter, second and third faces. The threatened proceedings and proposed accommodation do not establish a later settlement. The contemporary address supplies Staverton at New Lodge; the final dateline supplies Billingbear, 19 July 1609. The catalogue identifies the Warfield dispute bundle; the individual item number remains uncertain.

17. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1603–1610*, p. 371, licence of 24 September 1607; Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, early series, IV, p. 1357, "Simonson, William". The licence establishes permission; it does not establish that the father made the journey.

18. William Simondes to Sir Henry Neville, Paris, 24 November (1608 supplied), Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/2/4; parent catalogue. The manuscript supplies the day and month; the preceding month's Jargeau assembly supports the year. British Library, Stowe MS 170, ff.216r–217v, calendars Carew's report from Paris of 20 October 1608 about the meeting at Gorgeau. The tutor writes "your sonne", without a forename. Selected quotations modernize spelling.

19. Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry III (1588–1629)", *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1604–1629* (2010), biography and n. 16, citing STAC 8/220/18; Maurice Lee, ed., *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 1603–1624*, p. 111; *CSPD 1603–1610*, p. 535; and Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/L4. The arrest is also reported in Carleton's letter of 21 April 1609, calendared at p. 505, no. 75. The Berkshire catalogue names Peter Gandon; Gaundon is the

form in the Star Chamber record. The narrative follows Thrush's account of the proceedings; the original pleadings have not been newly transcribed here.

20. Francis Bacon to Salisbury, 10 August 1609, TNA SP 14/47, f. 124; James Spedding, ed., *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon*, IV (1868), p. 130. Bacon does not name the Frenchman; the connection with Gaundon rests on the date, the parties and the procedural circumstances.

21. The National Archives, PROB 11/126/63, registered will and probate act, 24 July 1615. Chapter 50 discusses probate administration; Chapter 53 traces the physical custody of papers. For the 1608 marriage and trusteeship from at least July 1608, see Thrush's Neville biography, paragraph on parliamentary connections; these dates do not rest on the 1615 will alone.

22. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O12/46, Julius Caesar to Henry Neville, 29 July 1608, public item record. Short manuscript extracts modernize spelling and punctuation.

23. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O12/47, Henry Neville to Julius Caesar, 24 September 1608, public item record.

24. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O12/48, Robert Wright to Henry Neville, 8 December 1608, with endorsed draft reply, public item record. The incoming letter is dated 8 December; its docket is 10 December. The reply is undated and is identified as Neville's by the catalogue and documentary context, without a new claim about its handwriting. Short extracts modernize spelling.

25. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O12/49, Sir Henry Savile junior to Henry Neville, 24 December 1608, public item record. The manuscript says Mr Chancellor; the catalogue's Lord Chancellor is an expansion. The preceding Caesar correspondence suggests the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but that identification is not supplied by the wording of this letter. The report does not identify the underlying entail instrument. The identification with Savile of Methley, the scholar's nephew, is contextual rather than established by this letter's catalogue description, which names Savile junior.

26. Thomas Smythe to Henry Neville, 10 August 1609, Royal Berkshire Archives, within D/EN/F6/1; parent catalogue. Short quotations modernize spelling. The individual item suffix remains uncertain; the date and correspondent identify the letter within the bundle.

27. Thrush, "Neville," office list and discussion of the companies and New River project. Chapters 8–9 and 36 examine the dated records and their relation to the plays. For the 1607 appointment, see Samuel M. Bemiss, ed., *The Three Charters of the Virginia Company of London* (1957), "Ordinance and Constitution, March 9, 1607," text. Appointment does not establish attendance or individual activity.

28. James I, Second Charter of Virginia, 23 May 1609, Yale Law School, Avalon Project, incorporated-name list and separate clauses establishing the resident council and its powers. The wider list includes Philip, Earl of Montgomery; the council list includes Pembroke, not Montgomery. Appointment and powers are distinct from evidence of personal activity.

29. Thrush, Neville biography, 1610 session, notes 65 and 70; *Journals of the House of Commons*, I, pp. 413, 418, 450. Dates are expressed in modern-year reckoning. The appointments are attributed here through Thrush's account.

30. Shepard Ashman Morgan, *The History of Parliamentary Taxation in England* (New York: Moffat, Yard, 1911), pp. 249–250, public text, on the proposed annual payment and surrender of revenues; Andrew Thrush, "1614: The Beginning of the Crisis of Parliaments", History of Parliament, 7 May 2014, on the failure of the Great Contract in 1610.

31. John More to Ralph Winwood, 1 December 1610, Sawyer, *Memorials*, III (London, 1725), p. 235. More dates the audience about fifteen days before his letter; his account is a contemporary report, not an official verbatim transcript.

# Counsel, Ambition and the Last Years

Chapter 9

## The secretaryship: office and a political bargain

Neville's campaign to become secretary of state was inseparable from his plan to repair relations between James and the Commons. After the failure of the Great Contract negotiations in 1610, the king needed money but distrusted Parliament. Neville believed that concessions to parliamentary grievances could restore confidence and secure a grant of taxation. Appointment as secretary would give him the authority to help carry that settlement through. His claim to office rested on diplomatic experience and, especially, the confidence of influential members of the Commons.[1]

The campaign was already under way before Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, died on 24 May 1612. Neville's supporters needed access to James through the king's favourite, Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester. The principal figures were:

| Person or group | Role in the secretaryship contest |
|---|---|
| Sir Thomas Overbury | Adviser to Rochester and Neville's intermediary in seeking access to the king. |
| Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester | James's favourite: the court connection through whom Neville's supporters worked. |
| Sir Thomas Lake | With Rochester, handled the secretary's business while James left the office vacant; supported by the Howard interest. |
| Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton | Neville's friend and an active supporter of his appointment. |
| William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke | An ally in the campaign, also involved in advising Rochester after Overbury's arrest. |
| The Howard interest | A competing court grouping favouring Lake. Northampton opposed Neville; Suffolk later sought his help for the Parliament of 1614. |

| Person or group | Role in the secretaryship contest |
|---|---|
| Sir Ralph Winwood | Neville's friend and prospective partner in office; ultimately appointed secretary in March 1614. |

Neville's route to Rochester ran through Overbury. Southampton and Pembroke supported the campaign, while Winwood, then ambassador in the Netherlands, became Neville's prospective partner in office. But the parliamentary connections that recommended Neville also counted against him. In June, Chamberlain reported James's declaration that he would "not have a secretary imposed upon him by Parliament."[2] Neville was seeking admission with a group of allies, whose combined influence the king and rival courtiers had reason to fear.[3]

## What Neville proposed

James nevertheless consulted Neville at Windsor in July 1612 and asked him to put his advice in writing. The resulting *Advice Touching the Holding of a Parliament* proposed a reconciliation: the king should redress grievances, fulfil earlier promises and stop public attacks on Parliament; the Commons would then have reason to respond generously to his financial needs. Neville offered his knowledge of members who had resisted the court, but his assurance was conditional. Without reciprocal acts of grace, "I dare promise nothing." A separate *Memorial* collected grievances for consideration.[4]

His proposal allowed the Commons to choose its own representatives for direct discussion with James, without empowering them to bind the House.[5] The political offer was substantial, but depended on James accepting changes in his dealings with Parliament as well as trusting Neville to mediate. The complete *Advice*, with selected textual variants, appears in Appendix L.

## Reading Plutarch across languages

Plutarch's *Lives*, in Thomas North's English translation, supplied much of the narrative of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*.[6] Neville's use of the same work therefore connects his reading with a major source of several Shakespeare plays. To explain the strength that visible trust between king and people could bring, he turned to Plutarch. In the *Advice*, he recalled how Antigonus received his son Demetrius while giving an audience to ambassadors.[7]

Demetrius had just returned from hunting. Still carrying his weapons, he greeted his father and sat beside him. Antigonus called the departing ambassadors back to make sure they reported the scene: a ruler who could sit com-

fortably beside his armed son was displaying the security of his power. Neville drew the moral:

> [...] a great argument of his strength and a great assurance of his safety that his son and he lived in that **confidence and concord**. If this were true in that case between the father and the son, how much more is it verified between the Prince and the people?[7]

Neville makes Parliament the equivalent of the trusted son. The king's strength would be demonstrated by admitting his people's representatives, just as Antigonus demonstrated his security by admitting Demetrius with his weapons. Plutarch supplies an argument for repairing political trust.

Neville's wording suggests that he drew on both North's English and Amyot's French Plutarch when writing his *Advice*. North had translated Amyot, but Neville's retelling combines North's English phrases with wording closer to the French:[6], [8]

| North's English | Amyot's French | Neville's *Advice* |
|---|---|---|
| "the **agreement** betwixt the father and the son together" | "la bonne **concorde & confiance** du pere au filz" | "in that **confidence and concord**" |
| "**darts in his hand**"; "**sat down by him**" | "ayant encore en la main les **iauelots**"; "il **s'asseit aupres de luy**" | "**darts in his hand**"; "**sat down by him**" |
| "a great **safety**" | "grande **asseurance**" | "a great **assurance** of his **safety**" |

Neville's "confidence and concord" corresponds to Amyot's paired ideas in reverse order, where North has the single word "agreement." His "great assurance of his safety" brings together wording corresponding to both translations. In the narrative itself he repeats North's "darts in his hand" and "sat down by him." His "arrayed in his hunting attire" also resembles Amyot's "tout ainsi comme il estoit accoustré" ("just as he was dressed"), where North says "even as he came from hunting." These correspondences strongly suggest that Neville consulted Amyot's French translation alongside North's English version. He may also have consulted Plutarch in Greek or Latin, either instead of Amyot or in addition to it. His opening, "I remember a story," is consistent with a recollection informed by more than one version.[9], [10]

## Why the appointment failed

James repeatedly delayed a decision. By late September 1612 he declared that he needed no secretary, leaving Rochester and Sir Thomas Lake to conduct the business. Marriage negotiations offering a substantial foreign dowry also held out

the prospect of money without a Parliament. Neville's parliamentary usefulness therefore did not make him indispensable. Meanwhile, the alliance supporting him was unstable: Overbury's quarrels alienated potential helpers, while the Howard interest favoured Lake.

Overbury's imprisonment in April 1613 was a serious disruption, but did not end the campaign. Neville and Pembroke advised Rochester immediately after the arrest, and Southampton was still pressing Neville's claims in August. The prison correspondence and the later scandal are discussed in Chapter 49; Appendix B examines the letter naming Neville *Similis*. Overbury died in September, depriving Neville of an important intermediary.[11] In October Neville refused a lesser office that Rochester had bought from Lord Stanhope: after being so publicly considered for the secretaryship, he would not accept an inferior post purchased for him by another subject. The public meaning of the appointment mattered as well as the employment itself.[12] Even an opponent, Northampton, reportedly described him as Southampton's "dear Damon"—a hostile allusion to their close friendship.[13]

There was one final approach in February 1614. With another Parliament in prospect, the Earl of Suffolk sought Neville's help and encouraged his expectation of the secretaryship. But James wanted Neville and his associates to prove their usefulness before receiving royal favour; Neville wanted appointment before Parliament met. Suffolk privately admitted that he was willing to deceive Neville to obtain his assistance. Neville withdrew from the contest, and Winwood was appointed on 29 March 1614.[14]

As Clayton Roberts and Owen Duncan emphasize, Neville's proposed undertaking was never put into operation. The Parliament that met in 1614 therefore did not test his plan for reconciling king and Commons.[15]

## The Parliament of 1614

Again returned for Berkshire, Neville entered the new Parliament without the office he had sought, and with his earlier advice exposed to hostile interpretation. The word *undertake* had become dangerous. In his argument it expressed conditional confidence that members would respond to better treatment. In political rumour an *undertaker* was someone promising to deliver the Commons for the king in return for advancement. His hopes for the secretaryship made that charge plausible to opponents.[15]

When his *Advice* was read in the Commons on 14 May 1614, Neville acknowledged it and explained that James had summoned him to Windsor in July 1612 to ask his opinion. Chamberlain's letter of 19 May reports that his account of the business, as intended for the good of realm and king, calmed the House and won him credit and commendation. That favourable report should stand beside Sir John Sammes's objection that such advice should have originated in

the House, and a draft Protestation to the king condemning "vain and idle" undertakers. Neville could win respect for his explanation while members rejected the presumption that a private man might manage their counsel.[16]

Dudley Digges spoke in Neville's defence during the same debate. He defended the right to offer advice to the king for the country's good, even without a royal summons:

> a private man might go and **move the King for the good of the country, uncalled**[17]

Digges supported the argument with his father Thomas's example: he had proposed projects to Elizabeth I without being summoned and had subsequently sat in Parliament without objection. Neville thus had a named defender in the Commons on the very point at issue—his right to approach the king with proposals for the public good.

The House nevertheless continued to draw on his experience. He received twenty-two committee appointments, including one on restrictions on the export of iron ordnance—a subject familiar to the former cannon manufacturer.[18]

James dissolved Parliament on 7 June 1614 without legislation or a grant of supply. Disputes over impositions—customs duties levied without parliamentary consent—had again defeated agreement between king and Commons.[19] Neville's hoped-for reconciliation remained unrealized.

## Family, friends and scholarship

His children's marriages were extending the household's connections. Katherine married Sir Richard Brooke of Norton in 1608; that October Carleton planned a visit to Neville's to greet the newly married couple.[20] On 2 May 1609 the eldest son, Henry, married Elizabeth Smythe, daughter of Sir John Smythe of Westenhanger in Kent, with a marriage portion of £3,200.[21]

Carleton's letters also catch the humour of Neville's social life. Writing from Eton on 13 January 1609, he sent two epitaphs on the "poor young Pope"—apparently the impostor recently executed in Paris for claiming to be the Pope's son—and asked Neville to show them to Sir Richard Brooke. They were, he wrote, "somewhat suitable to the entertainment of your yesterday's melancholy dinner." His closing wish gives "melancholy" an apparently ironic edge: "I know not how to wish you better than to wish you no worse all the year." Satirical verse was passing between friends and into Neville's family circle.[22]

A comic Latin poem, usually dated to September 1611, set a Sir Henry Neville among the company gathering at the Mitre, alongside John Donne, John Hoskyns, Christopher Brooke, Inigo Jones and Hugh Holland—the future First Folio poet. Zachary Lesser identifies him as Neville of Billingbear; Chapter 45 examines that identification and the alternative claim for his Abergavenny

cousin. The occasion belongs to the intersection of literary fellowship and parliamentary society in which Neville moved. [23]

The lawyer and MP James Whitelocke's diary supplies a glimpse of that life. At Christmas 1613 Neville gave him a side of a doe. At Neville's Westminster house Whitelocke renewed his acquaintance with Winwood, who had presented him for his law degree while Oxford's proctor.[24]

Henry Savile, Neville's former tutor, continued his collaborative scholarship in an eight-volume edition of the early Christian preacher John Chrysostom, published in 1610–13. It depended on librarians, manuscript seekers and collaborators across Europe. The edition reportedly cost £8,000 and was a commercial failure: publishing Chrysostom in Greek without a Latin translation left it at a disadvantage against rival editions. Shuger connects Chrysostom's treatment of poverty and grain hoarding with *King Lear* and *Coriolanus*, and explicitly notices Savile's work on both Tacitus and Chrysostom. See Chapter 34 (*Coriolanus*) and Chapter 30 (*King Lear*) for these comparisons.[25]

## Investments and provision for the family

The prospect of buying Sonning revived in August 1613, though the Crown's changing plans and Rochester's own interest made the outcome uncertain.[26], [27]

The East India Company formally admitted Neville on 31 March 1614 as a "very worthy gentleman" who might "do many good offices for the good of the Company." His timber business had already connected him with its ships; the entry now expressed a hope of useful service, without naming a particular task. In May the Company ordered half of his £800 joint-stock adventure transferred to Sir James Stonehouse.[28], [29]

Another investment lay closer to home. The New River enterprise would bring water from Chadwell and Amwell to London. Neville's agreement with Hugh Myddelton in May 1612 gave him two of the thirty-six portions remaining after the Crown's half-share. He acquired a stake in the works and their future income, with rights to accounts and obligations to meet further costs.[30], [31], [32]

He expected that income to support his family. In July 1612 his instructions for settling his affairs included "my two parts in the new cut or river." The benefit was "like to grow and increase much more in time than at the first." If debts could be met by other means, he wanted the investment preserved; the eventual surplus would benefit his sons, with one-seventh reserved to Anne for life.[33]

A later settlement, made in April 1615, likewise treated the waterwork as a resource for children and creditors. Its income could help provide for his son Richard; if obligations could be met without selling the interest, it was to pass to the eldest son. Commercial ventures and landed inheritance formed parts of the same effort to provide for those Neville would leave behind.[34]

## His last illness, will and death

On 9 February 1615, John Chamberlain wrote to Dudley Carleton that Neville had suffered a financial disappointment: a hoped-for suit concerning the spoiling of woods had been crushed. It was "but a bad medicine," Chamberlain observed, for a man with:

> three dangerous diseases upon him, that is the jaundice, the scorbut and a dropsy, which have brought him to a very weak case and will utterly overthrow him if he find not present remedy.[35]

Neville's will, dated 30 April 1615, brings Anne and their eldest son together at the centre of the household's succession. He directed that his goods, plate, cattle and household furnishings should be divided equally between them, subject to funeral expenses and particular legacies. His son Henry was to receive eight pieces of his best hangings; Anne was to keep her jewels, her coach and horses, and the linen furnishings she had caused to be made. She could remain at Billingbear for three months after his death, drawing on its provisions for herself and her family.

He also remembered his nephew Henry and niece Anne, the children of his brother Edward Neville, leaving each £50; the younger Anne was his wife's goddaughter. He made provision for his granddaughters, household servants and the poor of neighbouring parishes, and requested a modest funeral and burial beside his parents at Waltham St Lawrence.

The will's gifts of plate went to Lord Zouche, Robert Killigrew, William Borlase, Francis Moore (his lawyer and an estate trustee), Humphrey Newbury and Henry Savile, his former tutor and lifelong scholarly associate. Neville called Savile his **"most special friend and cousin"** and appointed him executor alongside Anne.[36]

The physician Théodore de Mayerne recorded Neville's condition under the heading "Sir Henry Nevill. May 14. 1615" and *Hydrops Pectoris*—dropsy of the chest. His Latin account describes an earlier attack:

> Seven months ago he was suddenly seized with a constriction of the heart and faintness, so that he was obliged to lean against a wall and support himself on nearby objects. He has been continually unwell since that time.

Mayerne also noted "continual difficulty in breathing and a dry cough." His account ends with a brief report of improvement and relapse. After a single dose of pills Neville had felt so much better that "he said he was half cured." The physician's final words are:

> After my remedies had been discontinued for a period of three weeks, he died.[37]

Neville died at Billingbear on 10 July 1615 and was buried the following day at Waltham St Lawrence.[38]

On 13 July, Chamberlain sent Carleton the news:

> Sir Henry Neville died on Monday of the scorbut, a disease easy to be cured if it be espied and taken in time, otherwise it draws on a number of other diseases, and grows incurable.[39]

Robert Sidney, Neville's companion on his continental travels more than thirty years earlier, wrote to his wife Barbara on 22 July:

> That worthy gentleman Sir Henry Nevile died the last week and hath left a great debt behind him.[40]

The probate act of 24 July records that Anne and Savile had both renounced the executorship. Administration of Neville's goods, rights and credits under the will was granted to his son Henry.[41]

Anne later married George Carleton, who had been vicar of Mayfield during the Nevilles' residence there—the poet who had addressed Henry in 1603.[42]

## Whitelocke's remembrance

Whitelocke's remembrance recalls a dangerous episode in their friendship. In 1613 Whitelocke had been imprisoned in the Fleet amid a dispute over royal authority, including objections to a commission for the navy. The "irregular commission" below is evidently that navy commission; Whitelocke says he concealed Neville's part in the opposition. His tribute joins this episode to praise of Neville and bitter judgments on his enemies:[43]

> On Monday the tenth of July, 1615, at Billingbear in the county of Berks, departed out of this life sir Henry Nevill, my true and worthy friend. He was lineally descended from Edward lord Abergavenny, fourth son of Ralph Nevill first earl of Westmerland. He was a most faithful friend unto me, *tam in adversis quam secundis*, and I dealt as well with him, for at the time I was committed to the Fleet, he was hunted after by the earl of Northampton, as the author of the opposition against that irregular commission spoken of before in the declaration of that business; but, although he was an actor in it with far greater men, yet his good lordship could never find it out, notwithstanding he caused me to be kept close prisoner and examined by the lords of the council; the truth is, he durst not name him plainly, although he aimed at him, and I had reason enough to conceal him.
>
> He was the most sufficient man for understanding of state business that was in this kingdom, and a very good scholar and a stout man, but was as ignobly and unworthily handled as ever gentleman was. Two of his enemies he saw die ignominiously before him. The treasurer Salisbury, that rotted above ground, and Northampton, that died of a gangrene in his thigh, a very rot, and left the world suspected of ill dealing toward the state. He was 52 years of age when he died.[44]

## Notes and sources

1. Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I (1564–1615), of Billingbear", in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010), biography, discussion of the secretaryship campaign, 1611–14; Clayton Roberts and Owen Duncan, "The Parliamentary Undertaking of 1614," *English Historical Review* 93 (1978), pp. 481–498, especially pp. 481–485, on the connection between advancement, concessions and parliamentary supply. A possible literary reflection of Neville's parliamentary reputation occurs in *The Parliament Fart*: "Quoth Harry the hardie looke well to each clause / As well Englands liberties as lawes." Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae, eds., *Early Stuart Libels* (2005), C1ii, lines 53–54 and note 2, identify "Harry the hardie" as possibly Sir Henry Neville; the identification is tentative. "Hardie" means bold or daring, not red-haired.

2. John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 17 June 1612, in Norman Egbert McClure, ed., *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, I (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1939), pp. 358–359. Spelling modernized. Edition.

3. Henry Neville to Ralph Winwood, Windsor, 6 September 1612, manuscript letter transcribed by John O'Donnell; printed in HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, Preserved at Montagu House, Whitehall*, I (London, 1899), pp. 111–112, printed witness. For the court-access campaign, see Jackie Watson, *Epistolary Courtiership and Dramatic Letters: Thomas Overbury and the Jacobean Playhouse* (Edinburgh University Press, 2024), chapter 2, especially pp. 68–73, 85–86.

4. Neville, 'An Advice Touching the Holding of a Parliament', in Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Disgrace of Chief-Justice Coke*, II (London, 1863), Appendix V, pp. 389–394, from State Papers, July 1613, no. 44 (now catalogued as SP 14/74, f. 84). The conditional undertaking is on p. 391. The July 1613 archival placement is distinct from James's July 1612 consultation; the narrative follows Thrush's distinction between that meeting and the subsequent composition of the paper.

5. Neville, *Advice*, Gardiner, II, p. 393.

6. Plutarch, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes*, translated by Thomas North, second edition (London, 1595), *Demetrius*, 941; Jacques Amyot, *Les vies des hommes illustres*, VI (1567), 3269–3270. The title-page wording is also recorded in the Folger catalogue. The table adds emphasis; North's spelling is modernized and long s normalized. For North's role in the Roman plays, see Folgerpedia's source list, entries for the three plays.

7. Henry Neville, "An Advice [by Sir Henry Neville] Touching the Holding of a Parliament," in Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I. to the Disgrace of Chief-Justice Coke: 1603–1616*, II (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1863), Appendix V, 389–394, especially 390. Neville's retelling follows Gardiner's printed passage, with emphasis added. Gardiner cites State Papers Domestic, lxxiv, no. 44: The National Archives, SP 14/74, ff. 84r–87v, manuscript facsimile. The manuscript confirms the key phrases compared here, including "confidence & concord" and "assurance of his safety." The story is Plutarch, *Demetrius* 3; its political application is discussed above.

8. Thomas North, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* (London, 1595), 941; Jacques Amyot, *Les vies des hommes illustres grecs et romains*, VI (1567), 3269; Gardiner, II, 390. Long s is normalized; emphasis is added. The French gloss in the discussion is supplied here.

9. Amyot, *Les vies*, VI, p. 3269; North, *Lives*, p. 941; Gardiner, II, p. 390. Amyot has "il s'asseit aupres de luy" and "ayant encore en la main les iauelots": sitting beside the father and holding the hunting weapons are present in the French too. The exact English overlaps therefore support the comparison without proving separate consultation of North. Neville omits the kiss found in both translations, adds the formal state of the audience, and specifies that the report is for the ambassadors' masters, where North has them "carry home this report."

10. Plutarch, *Vitarum parallelarum tomus tertius* (Stephanus, 1572), *Demetrius* 3, 1630–1631, Bavarian State Library facsimile; Plutarch, *Parallela* (Frankfurt: Sigismund Feyerabend, 1580), *Demetrius*, facsimile, leaf n539. The readings underlying the paraphrase are on the 1572 printed page, p. 1631, and the 1580 printed page, Archive leaf n539, in the Life of Demetrius. The Greek has two nouns, homonoia and pistis; the Latin has concordiam qualified by fidelem. These are alternative textual witnesses, not identified books used by Neville.

11. Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, to Ralph Winwood, 6 August 1613, in Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, III (London, 1725), p. 475, printed letter. Spelling and capitalization modernized. Southampton anticipates a settlement of Overbury's case; his letter does not establish that the contemplated permission to travel was granted. For the arrest, Neville and Pembroke's intervention, the prison letters and the death, see Watson, *Epistolary Courtiership and Dramatic Letters*, pp. 105–114, Letter 37, pp. 127–128, Letter 41, pp. 133–134 and n. 104, and Letters 79–80, pp. 170–172; for the murder trial, pp. 1–2. Book DOI.

12. Chamberlain to Carleton, 14 October 1613, McClure, *Letters*, I, p. 480. Chamberlain reports Rochester's purchase from Lord Stanhope and Neville's refusal; the passage is contemporary news, not an independent record of the transfer of the office. Spelling modernized. Thrush, "Neville," n. 105, cautions that the particular office offered is uncertain; it is therefore not identified here as the treasurership of the chamber.

13. Neil Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603–1625," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 39 (1989), pp. 107–124, at p. 117, describes Neville as Southampton's "dear Damon." The passage is visible on Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.3.63, f. 50v; the 1856 catalogue, I, pp. 156–157, item 24, dates the episode to November 1613 and records Southampton's anger over the failure to make his Damon secretary. Neville is identified by context and Cuddy's discussion, rather than named on this leaf. For the attribution to Northampton, John Casson, "The Earl of Southampton, Richard III, Shakespeare and Henry Neville," p. 1 and n.2, reports Northampton's November 1613 letter to Rochester and identifies Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.3.63, fol.50v, citing Brenda James and William D. Rubinstein, *The Truth Will Out* (2005), p. 246. Casson paper. For the friendship story, see Cicero, *De officiis* 3.45 (Phintias is the form of Pythias's name used there). The phrase is a description of the pair, not established here as Southampton's own form of address.

14. Thrush, "Neville", biography and notes 96–109: the September 1612 decision to leave the office vacant, marriage finance, renewed prospects after Overbury's arrest, and the February 1614 negotiations with Suffolk; Winwood's appointment, 29 March 1614.

15. Roberts and Duncan, 'Parliamentary Undertaking', especially pp. 481–482, 490–496. For Duncan's earlier treatment of the Advice and related proposals, see *The Political Career of Sir Henry Neville: An Elizabethan Gentleman at the Court of James I* (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1974), pp. 234–242, public dissertation. Roberts and Duncan place delivery of the paper at the July 1612 consultation; Thrush, note 88, places its writing afterward. That difference does not affect Neville's acknowledgment in 1614. They also differ over impositions: Thrush reports their omission as a weakness, while Roberts and Duncan discuss a compromise in the accompanying graces (pp. 486–487, 495–496). The *Advice* and the separate *Memorial* must be distinguished when comparing these accounts.

16. Chamberlain to Carleton, 19 May 1614, McClure, *Letters*, I, letter 202, pp. 530–532, edition, especially p. 531. Roberts and Duncan, p. 497, misdate this report 19 April; McClure's heading gives 19 May. For Sammes and the Commons' objection, see Thrush, biography and notes 112–114. Maija Jansson, ed., *Proceedings in Parliament 1614* (*House of Commons*) (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988), pp. 239 n. 23, 247 and 479, identifies the Protestation as a draft and records the House rising without resolving the question. The text alone does not establish adoption or delivery. Debate; draft.

17. Maija Jansson, ed., *Proceedings in Parliament 1614* (*House of Commons*), Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 172 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988), p. 246, debate of 14 May 1614. The printed page records Sir Dudley Digges's speech immediately after Mr Hoskins's defence of the king's use of his subjects' counsel and before Sir Robert Mansell's proposal to clear Neville of being an undertaker. Digges cites his father's unsolicited proposals to Elizabeth I as a precedent. The quotation follows the printed parliamentary report; "uncalled" means without being summoned.

18. Thrush, Neville biography, the 1614 session and note 114; the iron-ordnance appointment is dated 16 May.

19. James Whitelocke, *Liber Famelicus*, ed. John Bruce (Camden Society, 1858), p. 41, dates the dissolution to Tuesday, 7 June 1614. Shepard Ashman Morgan, *The History of Parliamentary Taxation in England* (1911), pp. 251–252, text, on the failure to grant supply or pass legislation; Andrew Thrush, "1614: The Beginning of the Crisis of Parliaments", History of Parliament, 7 May 2014, on the dispute over impositions.

20. Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, Eton, 26 October 1608, TNA SP 14/37, f. 72; *CSPD 1603–1610*, p. 464. Carleton names Sir Richard Brooke and Neville's daughter. For Katherine and the marriage arrangements, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/3, the 1608 Brooke correspondence; George Ormerod, *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, I (1819), pp. 500–501, Brooke of Norton pedigree.

21. Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry III", Family and Education and n. 3, gives the date, parentage and £3,200 portion. Carleton's letter to Chamberlain of 27 February 1609, TNA SP 14/43, f. 122, reports the concluded match without naming the bride; *CSPD 1603–1610*, p. 493.

22. Dudley Carleton to Henry Neville, Eton, 13 January 1608/9, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1/15, correspondence catalogue. Quoted from the manuscript, spelling modernized. Chamberlain's letters of 16 and 23 December 1608, McClure, *Letters of John Chamberlain*, I, letters 106–107, identify the Paris imposture and circulating epigrams. The epitaphs enclosed with Carleton's letter have not been recovered; the letter does not identify a play or theatrical performance. The ironic tone is a reading of the letter, not an additional documented event.

23. Zachary Lesser, "Mixed Government and Mixed Marriage in *A King and No King*: Sir Henry Neville Reads Beaumont and Fletcher," *ELH* 69.4 (2002), pp. 947–77, at p. 972 n. 13, article. Tom Cain, "Donne and the Prince d'Amour," *John Donne Journal* 14 (1995), pp. 83–111, n. 37, article text. Cain distinguishes the two Sir Henry Nevilles, notes the Birling cousin's contribution to Coryate and judges the Berkshire politician "marginally more likely." Neither the surname pun nor the title "Sir" distinguishes them. For the manuscript and probable date, see The National Archives, SP 14/66, f. 2r–v, and Neuhauser, "Sirenaicks, Guilds and a New Coryate Manuscript," pp. 34–35, DOI.

24. James Whitelocke, *Liber Famelicus*, ed. John Bruce (Camden Society, 1858), p. 32, Christmas 1613. Short extracts modernize spelling.

25. Jan Waszink, "Henry Savile's Tacitus and the English Role on the Continent: Leicester, Hotman, Lipsius," *History of European Ideas* 42.3 (2016), 303–319, at 306–307, on the Chrysostom edition and its European collaboration; Robert Proctor, *Bibliographical Essays* (London: Chiswick Press, 1905), 116, distinguishes the royal copy's volume dates, 1610–12, from the ordinary issue with its engraved title dated 1613. Debora K. Shuger, "Subversive Fathers and Suffering Subjects: Shakespeare and Christianity," in *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540–1688*, ed. Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 46–69, chapter DOI, especially pp. 49–54 and 62–64. For the absence of a Latin translation and its commercial consequences, see Thomas Roebuck, "Politics, Patronage and Medieval Scholarship: Henry Savile's Rerum Anglicarum scriptores post Bedam (1596) in Context," *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* 6 (2021), pp. 61–115, accepted manuscript, p. 48, lines 971–976. Huron Library, "Savile's Chrysostomi Opera Graece", 7 April

2021, “Short Biography and Context” and n. 2, reports the £8,000 cost on a late seventeenth-century authority and continuing difficulty selling copies, and cites R. D. Goulding’s ODNB account for competition from editions with Latin translations. “Without a Latin translation” describes the Greek works, not the language of all the editorial apparatus.

26. Sir Henry Savile junior to Henry Neville, 24 August 1613, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1, within the miscellaneous correspondence file. The proposed identification with Savile of Methley, the scholar’s nephew, remains contextual. The letter reports an opportunity and competing interests, not a completed sale.

27. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F44/1–4, Sir Henry Savile junior to Henry Neville, 26 August 1613, public catalogue. The surviving opening and final leaves are separated by a missing portion. The Sonning report is on the opening leaf; the date is on the final leaf. The difficult intervening purchase-multiple syntax is not used for a numerical calculation. The report shows an opportunity and a possible exclusion, not a completed purchase.

28. W. Noel Sainsbury, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, East Indies, China and Japan*, II (London, 1862), p. 288, no. 706, court minutes, 31 March 1614, March calendar. Quoted from the published calendar of the minutes. The entry does not specify Neville’s intended service.

29. Sainsbury, *Calendar*, II, p. 294, no. 723, court minutes, 19 May 1614, May calendar. The court orders the transfer; £400 is calculated from the printed £800 and half. This does not establish the date on which the original £800 was subscribed or paid.

30. Bernard Rudden, *The New River: A Legal History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), Appendix E, pp. 274–278, especially pp. 274–275 and the concluding definition on p. 278. Published appendix. Rudden abbreviates the opening recitals; the original indenture’s present location remains untraced in this research.

31. Rudden, *The New River*, pp. 275–278, on further calls, annual accounts and the investor’s contractual protections.

32. The agreement, sealed on 8 May 1612, acknowledged £200 already paid before sealing; 8 May is not the payment date: Bernard Rudden, *The New River: A Legal History* (1985), Appendix E, pp. 274–275, published text. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O24, includes a receipt dated 26 November 1610, docketed £200, recording a payment by Neville toward bringing water from Chadwell and Amwell to London. It is treated here as evidence of the £200 acknowledged in 1612, rather than an additional payment; the surviving documents do not explicitly reconcile the two records. Two further receipts, dated 18 May 1612 and 2 December 1613 and relating to the 8 May covenant, together document another £100. Archive catalogue. The catalogue describes the packet; the amounts and dates come from the receipts.

33. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1, instructions for conveyance of woods and payment of debts, endorsed July 1612, within the Neville correspondence and estate papers. Short extracts modernize spelling. The document contains numerous revisions; the concise account follows the legible New River clauses without supplying uncertain connecting words. The individual item suffix is omitted pending reconciliation with the numbering associated with the 1609 timber letter; the document is identified here by its contents and July 1612 endorsement.

34. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1, abstract of Neville’s feoffment dated 30 April 1615, item recorded as /19, public parent catalogue. The abstract describes the interest as two thirty-fifths, whereas the 1612 deed specifies two thirty-sixths; the difference remains unresolved.

35. John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 9 February 1614/15, in Norman Egbert McClure, ed., *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, I (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1939), p. 577. Date given as 1614 in the old-style year; 1615 here. Quotation modernizes spelling. Source.

36. The National Archives, PROB 11/126/63, registered will of Sir Henry Nevill of Billingbere, dated 30 April 1615, register f.26 and continuation: catalogue. The witnesses named in the registered copy are Henry Savile, Edward Neville (the testator’s brother), William Simonson

and William Hammond. These are copied names, not autograph signatures. Robert Killigrew appears as a friend and legatee, not an executor. The dispositions concern household goods and obligations without individually identifying literary papers.

37. Théodore de Mayerne, *Opera medica*, ed. Joseph Browne (London, 1701), pp. 198–203: heading and symptoms, p. 198; conclusion, p. 203. Translations from the printed Latin. The first quotation translates "Ante septem Menses repentè Cordis compressione & Animi deliquio correptus, ita ut parieti incumbere & Vicinis adminiculis inniti coactus fuerit. Ab eo tempore malè semper habuit." The respiratory phrase is "Perpetua spirandi difficultas & Tussis sicca"; the improvement is "ut se dimidia ex parte diceret curatum"; the conclusion is "post intermissa trium septimanarum spatio mea Remedia mortuus est." These are Mayerne's observations and account of treatment, without imposing a modern diagnosis or establishing that discontinuing treatment caused the death. The original casebook has not been collated. Source.

38. Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I (1564–1615), of Billingbear", in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010), conclusion of the biography; Whitelocke, *Liber Famelicus*, pp. 46–47, for the death at Billingbear on 10 July.

39. John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 13 July 1615, The National Archives, SP 14/81, Gale document MC4323683456, marginal note on the second body image (catalogued at f.18; the body image bears 19); McClure, *Letters*, I, pp. 607–608. Quotation follows the manuscript, with spelling modernized. "Scorbut" is Chamberlain's term for scurvy; his statement about curability is reported as his contemporary opinion. The remainder of the note, concerning the son's forest offices, is discussed in Chapter 50. Source.

40. Robert Sidney to Barbara Gamage Sidney, London, 22 July 1615, Letter 252 in Margaret P. Hannay, Noel J. Kinnamon and Michael G. Brennan, eds., *Domestic Politics and Family Absence: The Correspondence (1588–1621) of Robert Sidney, First Earl of Leicester, and Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester* (Ashgate, 2005). The edition identifies the manuscript as C81/259 and gives the cross-reference DD 5:303. Quotation follows the printed letter. Source.

41. The National Archives, PROB 11/126/63, registered will, f.26 and continuation, probate act of 24 July 1615. The act records Anne's and Savile's express renunciation and the commission to Henry Neville, the deceased's son. It gives no reason for their renunciation.

42. Chamberlain to Carleton, 30 October 1619, McClure, *Letters of John Chamberlain*, II, pp. 268–270, reports the intended marriage. Thomas Vicars's dedication to Lady Anne Nevill, "wife to the Right Reverend Father in God, George, Lord Bishop of Chichester," in Bartholomäus Keckermann, *A Manuduction to Theology* (1622), sig. A2r, establishes the marriage by that publication; these witnesses do not supply the ceremony date.

43. James Whitelocke, *Liber Famelicus*, ed. John Bruce (Camden Society, 1858), pp. 37–39, on the dispute over royal authority, the objections to the navy commission and commitment to the Fleet on 18 May 1613; pp. 46–47, on Neville's participation. These are Whitelocke's recollections; his account expressly says that Northampton's death in June 1614 made him bolder to write about his trouble.

44. James Whitelocke, *Liber Famelicus*, ed. John Bruce, Camden Society 70 (London, 1858), pp. 46–47, complete obituary of Neville; spelling modernized, wording and paragraph division retained. The Latin phrase means "in adversity as in prosperity." Whitelocke's age of fifty-two is preserved as his statement; it agrees with the approximate 1563 birth discussed in Chapter 1 rather than proving birth in the baptismal year 1564. His "fourth son" differs from the DNB's description of Edward Neville as the sixth and youngest son of Ralph Neville by Joan Beaufort. These are source differences, not silent corrections to the quotation.

# Part II

Books, Manuscripts and Language

# The Billingbear Library and Audley End

Chapter 10

## Shakespeare's source books at Billingbear

A catalogue made in 1780 of the library at Neville's family home, Billingbear, records many books used as sources for Shakespeare's plays. Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (Venice, 1580) contains the stories behind *Othello* and *Measure for Measure*. Boccaccio's *Decameron* (Venice, 1555) contains Giletta's story, adapted in *All's Well That Ends Well*, and the wager on a wife's fidelity behind *Cymbeline*.[1]

Surviving volumes allow us to look beyond the catalogue. Some bear Neville's name; others contain annotations attributed to Neville or his tutor Henry Savile. These books provide evidence of ownership and reading, while the catalogue records the broader family collection after generations of additions.[2]

The catalogue records Chaucer's *Works* (London, 1602): *Troilus and Criseyde* supplied the lovers' story in *Troilus and Cressida*, and the *Knight's Tale* supplied the plot of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. It also records Saxo Grammaticus's *Danica Historia*, or *Gesta Danorum* (Frankfurt, 1576), the original written source of the Amleth story behind *Hamlet*.[3]

Alongside them stands a substantial collection of Roman history: Livy and Dionysius on early Rome, Appian on the civil wars, and Cassius Dio on the Republic and Empire. Together they cover the historical ground of *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and the imperial world reimagined in *Titus Andronicus*. Neville's own writing also demonstrates his use of Plutarch, the principal narrative source for several plays.[4]

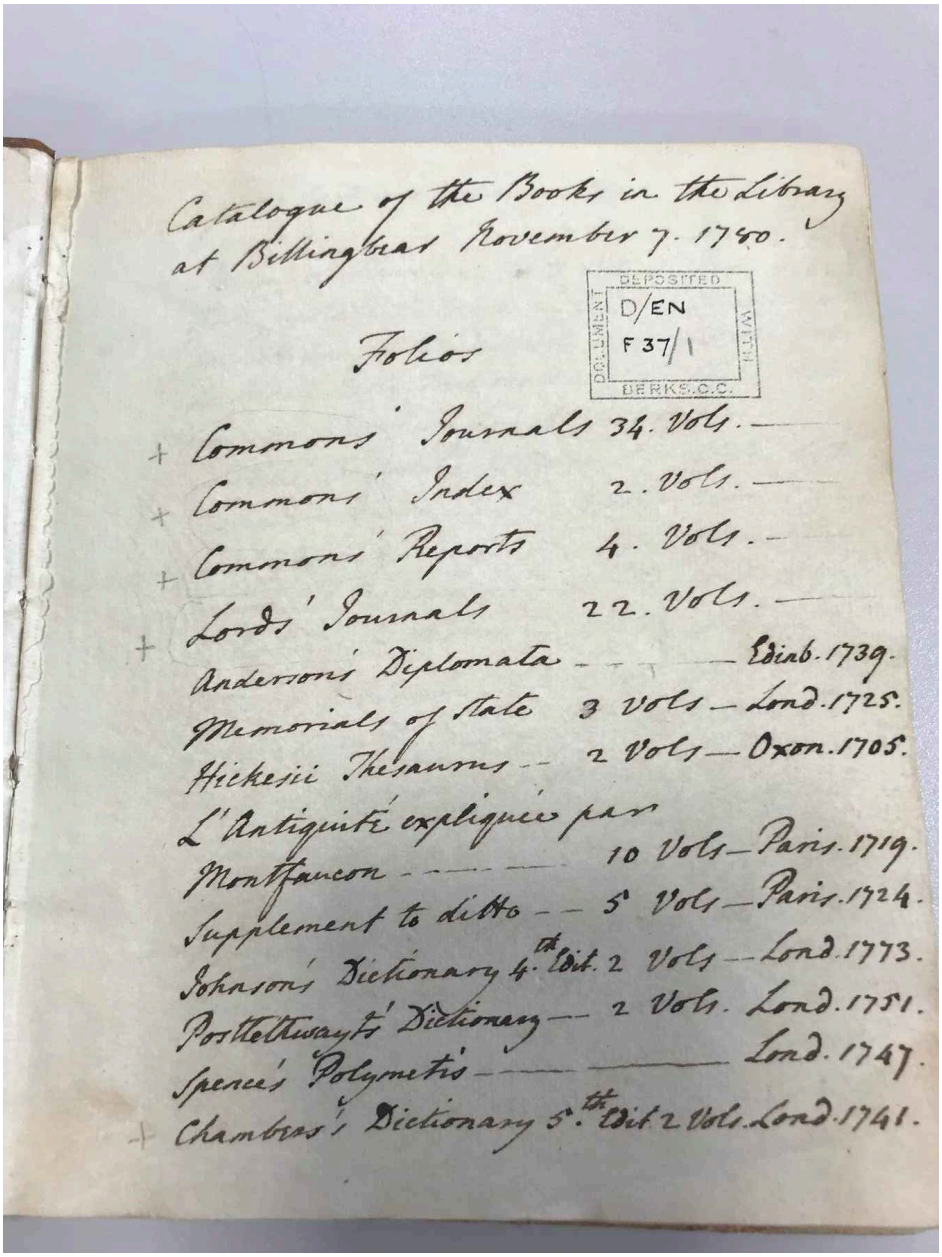



**Figure 10.1:** The complete first page of the Billingbear library catalogue, dated 7 November 1780. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1.

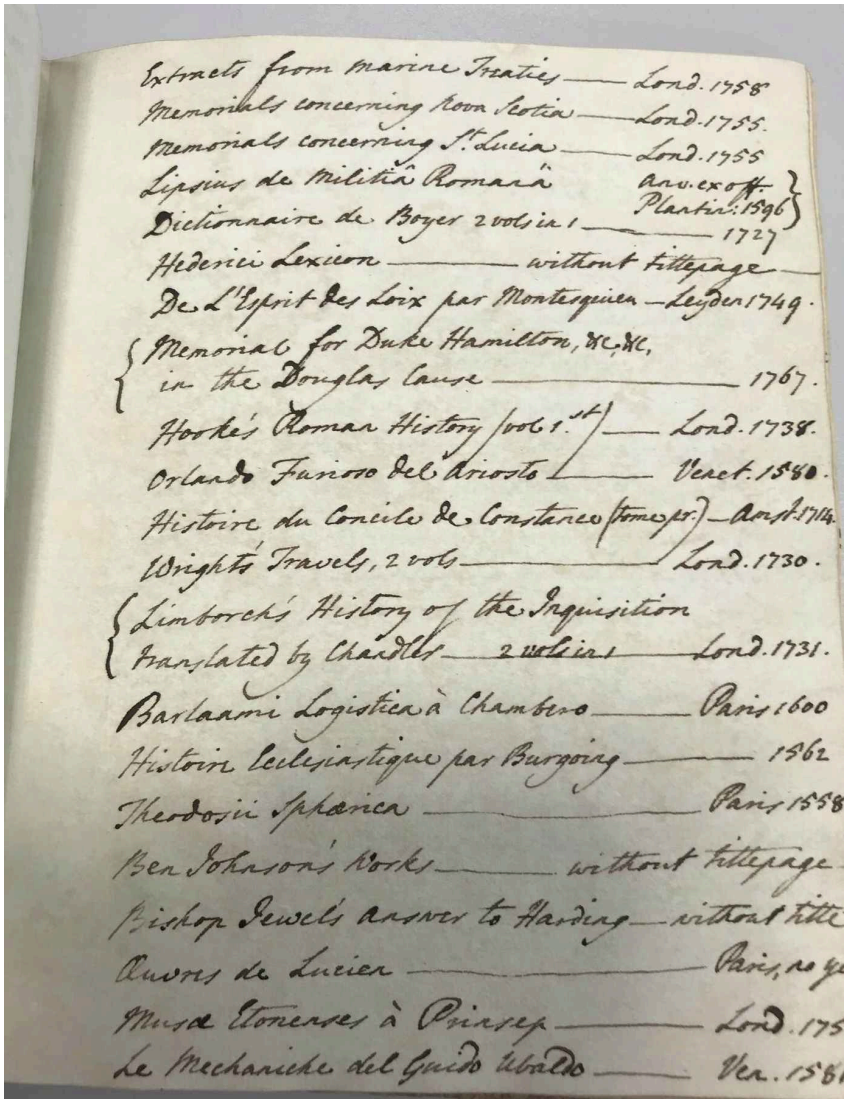



**Figure 10.2:** A catalogue leaf records Lipsius, Ariosto, Chamber's Barlaam, Theodosius and Guidobaldo's mechanics among later additions. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1.

Several catalogued books connect directly with Neville's own circle. John Chamber's Latin edition of Barlaam's *Logistica* (Paris, 1600) contains preliminary verse addressing Neville by name as ambassador to the French king and praising his gifts of expression. Chapter 47 examines that address in detail. Henry Savile, Neville's tutor, travelling companion and lifelong friend, edited the *Rerum Anglicarum scriptores* (London, 1596), a collection of medieval English historians also recorded in the catalogue.[5]

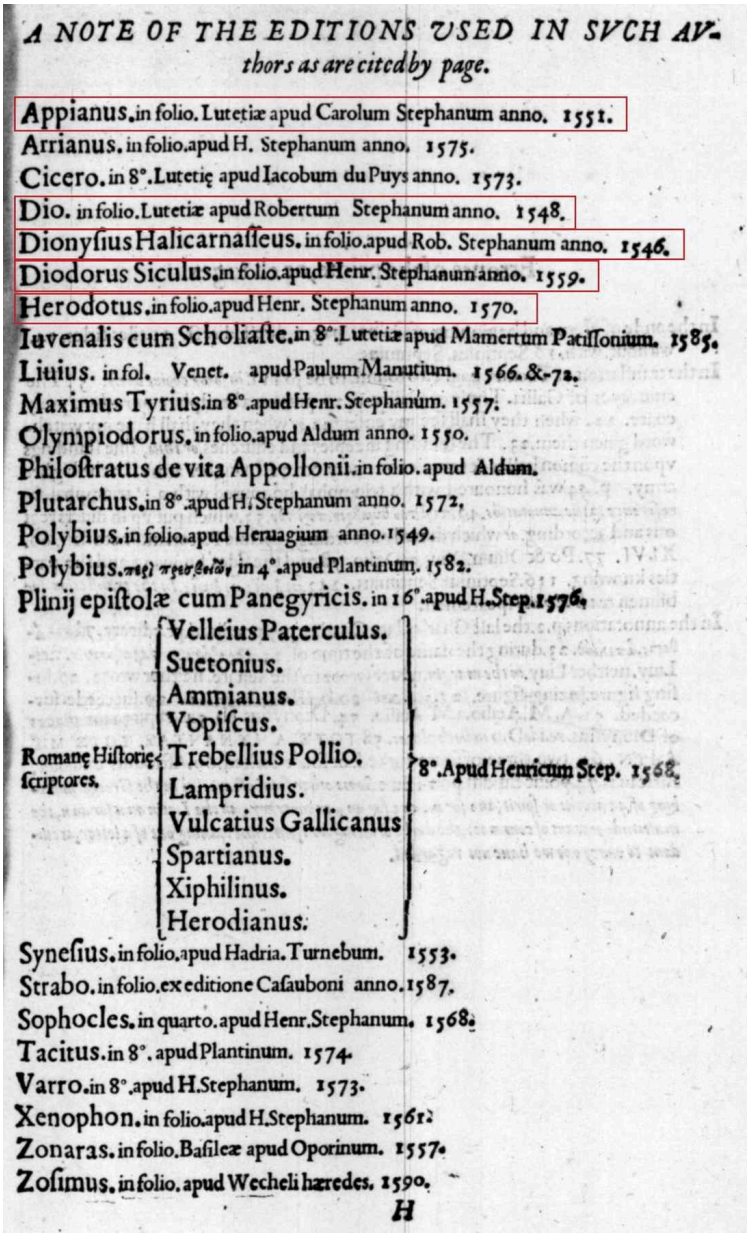
Richard Carew's *Survey of Cornwall* (London, 1602) brings another familiar family onto the shelves. His brother George travelled in Europe with Neville

and Savile; his son, also Richard, accompanied Neville to France to learn French. Two further books were translated by Filippo Pigafetta, the traveller and scholar whom Cobham described in 1582 as an acquaintance of the young Neville: Guidobaldo del Monte's *Le Mechaniche* (1581) and the Emperor Leo's treatise on military formations (1586).[6]

## The same editions Savile used

Five Greek historical works in the Billingbear catalogue match editions recorded in five of the twenty-five bibliographic entries Henry Savile listed in his 1591 Tacitus. Savile supplied "A note of the editions used in such authors as are cited by page," identifying the books behind his page references. Three of these books survive at Audley End with Savile and Neville's annotations: Appian, Cassius Dio and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.[7]

| Author | Edition recorded by both Savile and the Billingbear catalogue |
|---|---|
| Appian | Charles Estienne, Paris, 1551 |
| Cassius Dio | Robert Estienne, Paris, 1548 |
| Dionysius of Halicarnassus | Robert Estienne, Paris, 1546 |
| Diodorus Siculus | Henri Estienne, 1559 |
| Herodotus | Henri Estienne, 1570 |



A NOTE OF THE EDITIONS VSED IN SVCH AV-
thors as are citedby page.

Appianus. in folio. Lutetiæ apud Carolum Stephanum anno. 1551.
Arrianus. in folio. apud H. Stephanum anno. 1575.
Cicero. in 8°. Lutetię apud Iacobum du Puys anno. 1573.
Dio. in folio. Lutetiæ apud Robertum Stephanum anno. 1548.
Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus. in folio. apud Rob. Stephanum anno. 1546.
Diodorus Siculus. in folio. apud Henr. Stephanum anno. 1559.
Herodotus. in folio. apud Henr. Stephanum anno. 1570.
Iuvenalis cum Scholiaſte. in 8°. Lutetiæ apud Mamertum Patiſſonium. 1585.
Liuius. in fol. Venet. apud Paulum Manutium. 1566. &-72.
Maximus Tyrius. in 8°. apud Henr. Stephanum. 1557.
Olympiodorus. in folio. apud Aldum anno. 1550.
Philoſtratus de vita Appollonii. in folio. apud Aldum.
Plutarchus. in 8°. apud H. Stephanum anno. 1572.
Polybius. in folio. apud Heruagium anno. 1549.
Polybius. περὶ πρεσβειῶν, in 4°. apud Plantinum. 1582.
Plinij epiſtolæ cum Panegyricis. in 16°. apud H. Step. 1576.

Romanę Hiſtorię ſcriptores.
- Velleius Paterculus.
- Suetonius.
- Ammianus.
- Vopiſcus.
- Trebellius Pollio.
- Lampridius.
- Vulcatius Gallicanus
- Spartianus.
- Xiphilinus.
- Herodianus.

8°. Apud Henricum Step. 1568.

Syneſius. in folio. apud Hadria. Turnebum. 1553.
Strabo. in folio. ex editione Caſauboni anno. 1587.
Sophocles. in quarto. apud Henr. Stephanum. 1568.
Tacitus. in 8°. apud Plantinum. 1574.
Varro. in 8°. apud H. Stephanum. 1573.
Xenophon. in folio. apud H. Stephanum. 1561.
Zonaras. in folio. Baſileæ apud Oporinum. 1557.
Zoſimus. in folio. apud Wecheli hæredes. 1590.

H

**Figure 10.3:** Savile's "Note of the Editions" in his Tacitus (1591). Red boxes mark the five editions also recorded in the Billingbear catalogue: Appian, Dio, Dionysius, Diodorus and Herodotus.

## Savile's Greek in a Neville book

An annotated geometry book provides another direct trace of Savile's reading. The Audley End copy of Theodosius's *Sphaerics* (Paris, 1558), printed in Greek

with Jean Pena's Latin translation, contains Greek annotations in Savile's hand. A scholar who specializes in Savile's work has confirmed it.[8]

The title page bears the name "Henrye Nevell", probably not in the ambassador's own hand. It may have been written by someone identifying the owner, or by Neville's son. The Billingbear catalogue of 1780 lists the same Paris edition of Theodosius.

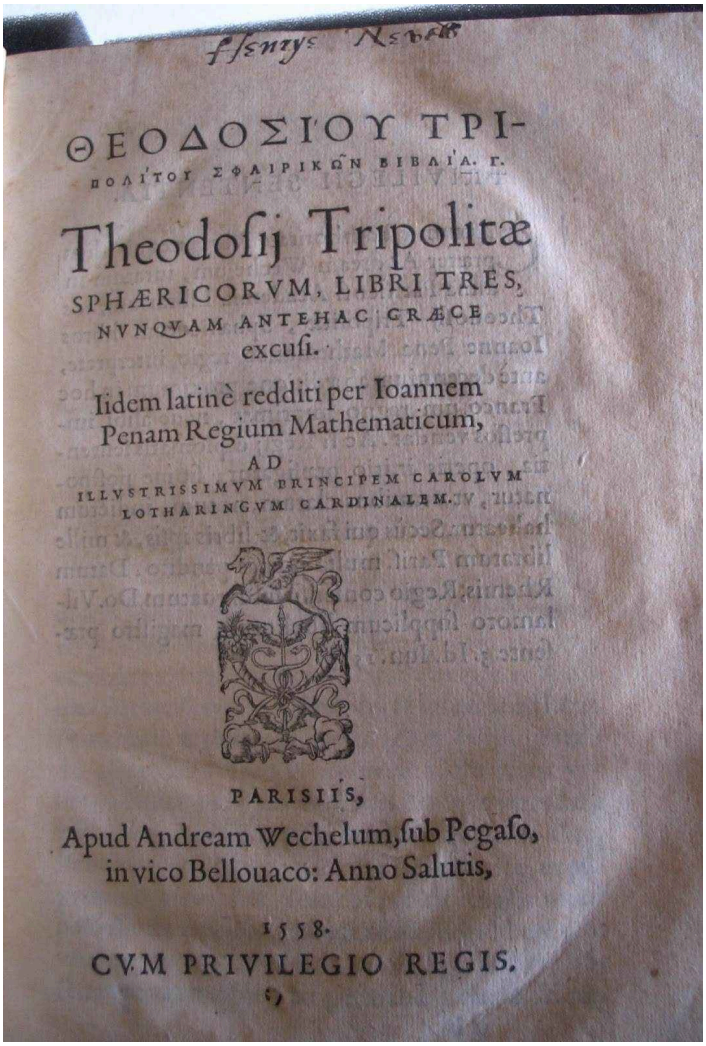



**Figure 10.4:** Theodosius's Sphaerics (Paris: André Wechel, 1558), Audley End copy. "Henrye Nevell" appears above the printed title; the inscription is not an authenticated autograph of the ambassador.

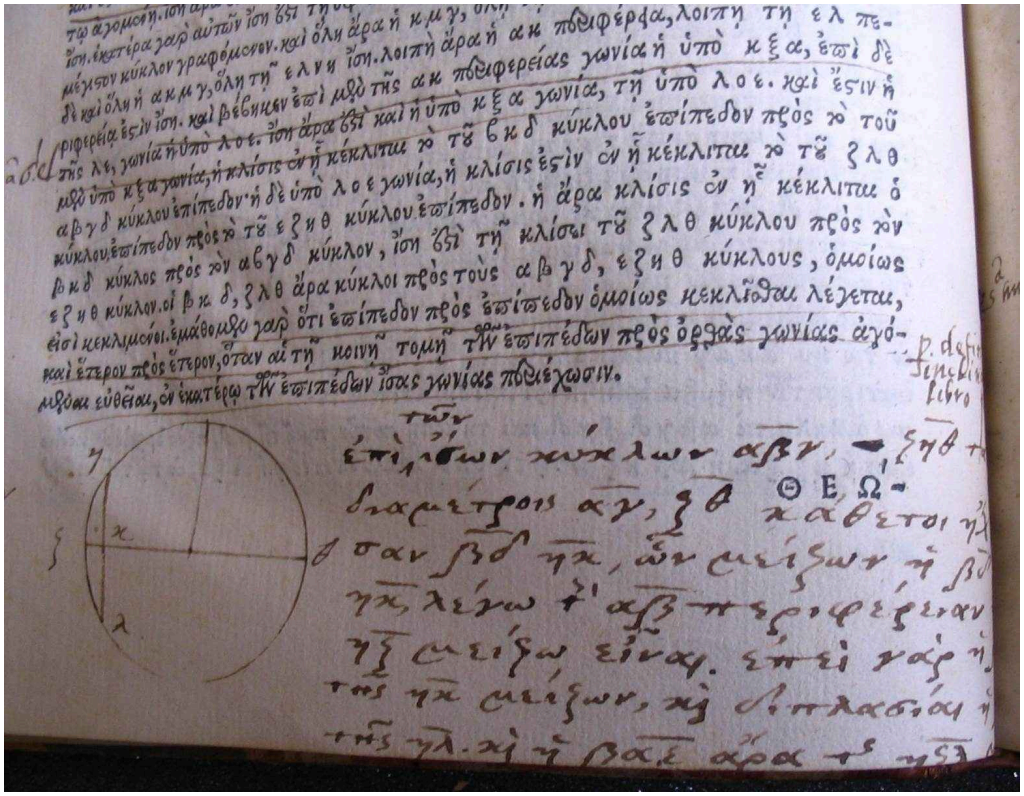


**Figure 10.5:** Greek annotation and geometrical diagram in the Audley End Theodosius (detail).

## Savile's study of Italian

Girolamo Ruscelli's *De' Commentarii della lingua italiana* adds Italian language study to this picture. Published in Venice in 1581, precisely during Neville and Savile's Italian travels, it is recorded in the Billingbear catalogue and survives at Audley End with extensive notes attributed to Henry Savile. His marginal annotations and underlining engage closely with Italian grammar, including the formation of verbs. Beside the Italian histories, poems and tales stood a detailed study of the language itself, bearing the marks of Neville's tutor's sustained attention.[9]

## The range of the collection

The early books reach well beyond the familiar literary sources. The catalogue records Machiavelli's *Prince* (1551), Bodin's *République* (1579), Paruta's *Della vita politica* (1579), Botero's *Reason of State* (1589), and Albergati's *Discorsi politici* (1602). Albergati's title expressly announces its opposition to Bodin and defence of Aristotle. The collection brought competing accounts of government onto the

same shelves. It also included Francesco Guicciardini's *History of Italy* (Venice, 1580), which survives at Audley End with Neville's annotations. Published during his continental tour, this edition was newly available when Neville and Savile travelled through Italy in 1581–82.[10]

The practical books include Giacomo di Grassi's fencing manual, *Ragione di adoprar sicuramente l'arme* (Venice, 1570), which explains attack and defence with swords and other weapons, and Carlo Tetti on fortification (1575).[10]

The catalogue also records the first edition of Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (Nuremberg, 1543), which sets out a system in which the Earth and the other planets orbit the Sun. William Gilbert's *De magnete* (London, 1600) treats magnetism through experiment and argues that the Earth itself is a great magnet, explaining the compass needle's orientation. These were major works of astronomy and natural philosophy alongside the collection's literary and historical books.[11]

The Italian literary sequence is particularly extensive:

| Work | Edition recorded |
|---|---|
| Pulci, *Morgante Maggiore* | 1551 |
| Brusantino, *Angelica innamorata* | 1553 |
| Renaldini, *Innamoramento di Ruggeretto* | Venice, 1554 |
| Boccaccio, *Decameron* | Venice, Valgrisi, 1555 |
| Tasso, *Rinaldo* | Venice, 1562 |
| Cinthio, *Hecatommithi* | Venice, 1580 |
| Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* | Venice, 1580 |
| Petrarch, with Gesualdo's commentary | 1581 |
| Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* | Venice, 1602 |
| Guarini, *Pastor Fido* | Venice, 1602[12] |

The list joins prose tales, chivalric romance, epic, lyric poetry and pastoral drama. The catalogue records these editions at Neville's family home.[10]

A comparison of the catalogue with Audley End collection records identifies 128 entries with dates through 1615, after excluding one known false-date edition. Of these, 57 have candidate Audley End matches and 71 remain unmatched. These are entries in the working comparison, not a count of books proved to have belonged personally to Neville. Some represent parts of multivolume works, and an edition match still needs the surviving copy's marks and catalogue history.[13]

The 1546 Dionysius survives at Audley End with the annotation examined in Chapters 34 and 39. Neville's note names **Ancus Martius** and **Tarquinius Collatinus** and adds sixty-two years to a chronological calculation. Ancus belongs to the Roman material discussed with *Coriolanus*; Collatinus is Lucrece's husband. Chapter 39 reproduces and transcribes the note, examines the Greek passage,

and explains why the calculation appears to require Tarquinius Priscus rather than Collatinus. The wording is preserved as written.[14]

## From Bisham to Billingbear and Audley End

Dunstan Roberts identified the signatures of Thomas Hoby, the translator of Castiglione's *Courtier*, in two books at Audley End: Renaldini's *Innamoramento di Ruggeretto*, Venice 1554, and Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Venice 1555. Both also carry Hoby's motto and an inscription dated 1554. Roberts discusses the discrepancy between that date and the Boccaccio imprint without treating either as a transcription error.[15]

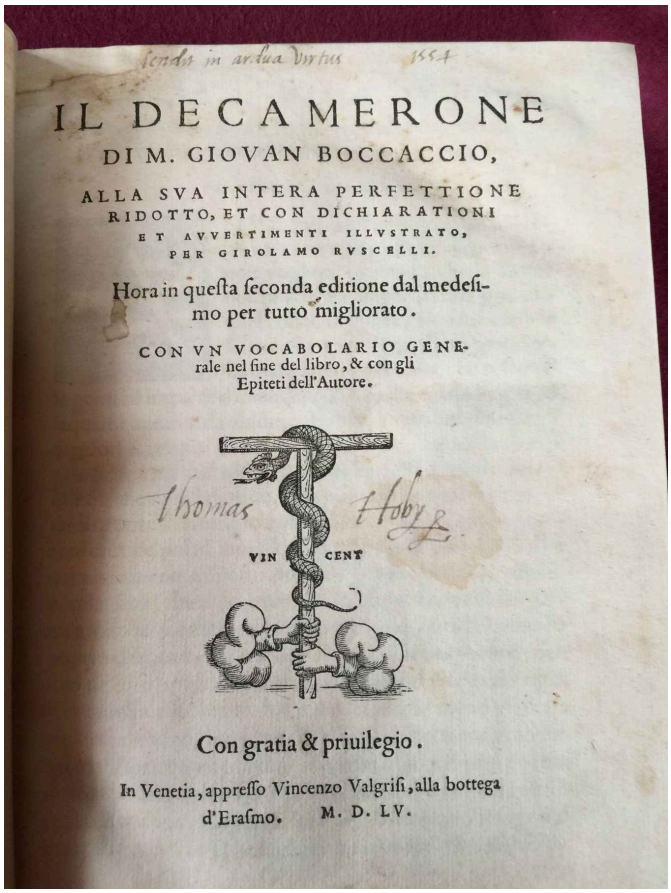



**Figure 10.6:** The Audley End *Decameron*, Venice, Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1555, with Thomas Hoby's ownership inscription and his dated motto. Audley End, inventory 81035044; private collection, on loan. Photograph reproduced in the Cambridge exhibition on Hoby.

Both editions occur in the 1780 Billingbear catalogue. The Boccaccio appears in the Audley End catalogue of 1834; both appear there in 1877. Roberts there-

fore proposes that the books reached Billingbear between Hoby's acquisition of Bisham Abbey in 1558 and the 1780 catalogue, then moved separately to Audley End. The surviving books retain an identifiable history through changes of house and binding.[16]

The family link between the houses gives that movement its setting. Richard Aldworth Neville began living at Audley End in 1797 and took possession in 1802. Books followed the family from Billingbear, possibly in more than one transfer: the two Hoby volumes first appear in the surviving Audley End catalogues at different dates.[17]

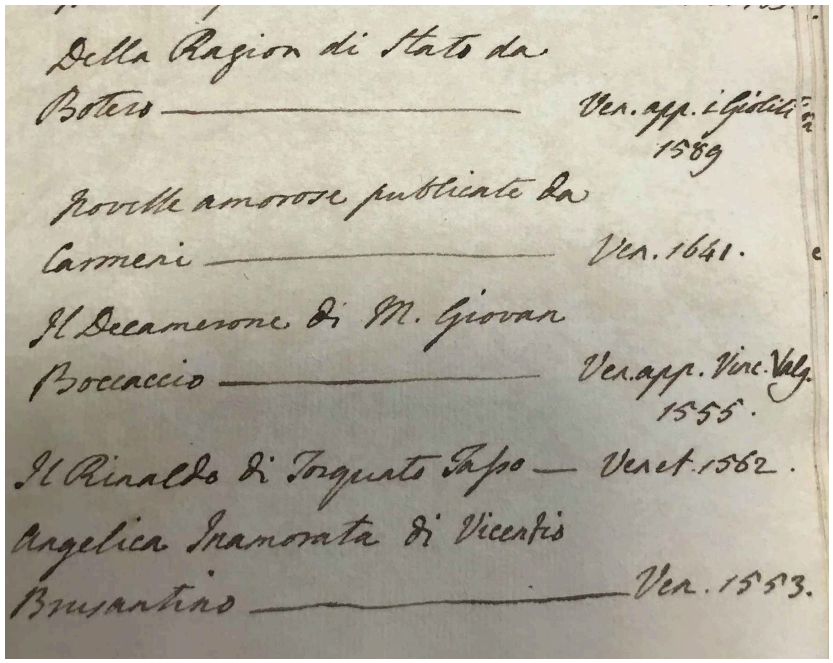



**Figure 10.7:** The Billingbear catalogue records Botero (1589), the Valgrisi *Decameron* (1555), Tasso's *Rinaldo* (1562) and Brusantino (1553). The Boccaccio entry can be compared with the surviving Audley End title page. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1.

Hoby is their earliest identified owner; their arrival at Billingbear remains undated. Hoby and Neville's father had met in Padua during the Marian exile, and their Berkshire houses, Bisham and Billingbear, stood about eight miles apart. Roberts places the two books within that documented family acquaintance, without assigning an otherwise unknown date to their transfer.[15]

Neville's familiarity with Boccaccio also left a trace in his papers. On the reverse of Italian newsletter material from 1591, received through Thomas Savile, he wrote "Alibech Alibech & Rustico," repeating the names and playing with Rustico as "Rusticuccio." They are the characters in the tenth tale of the third day of the *Decameron*, immediately after the Giletta story behind *All's Well That*

*Ends Well*. The names and Italian wordplay strongly suggest familiarity with the tale in Italian, independently of the later library catalogue.[18]

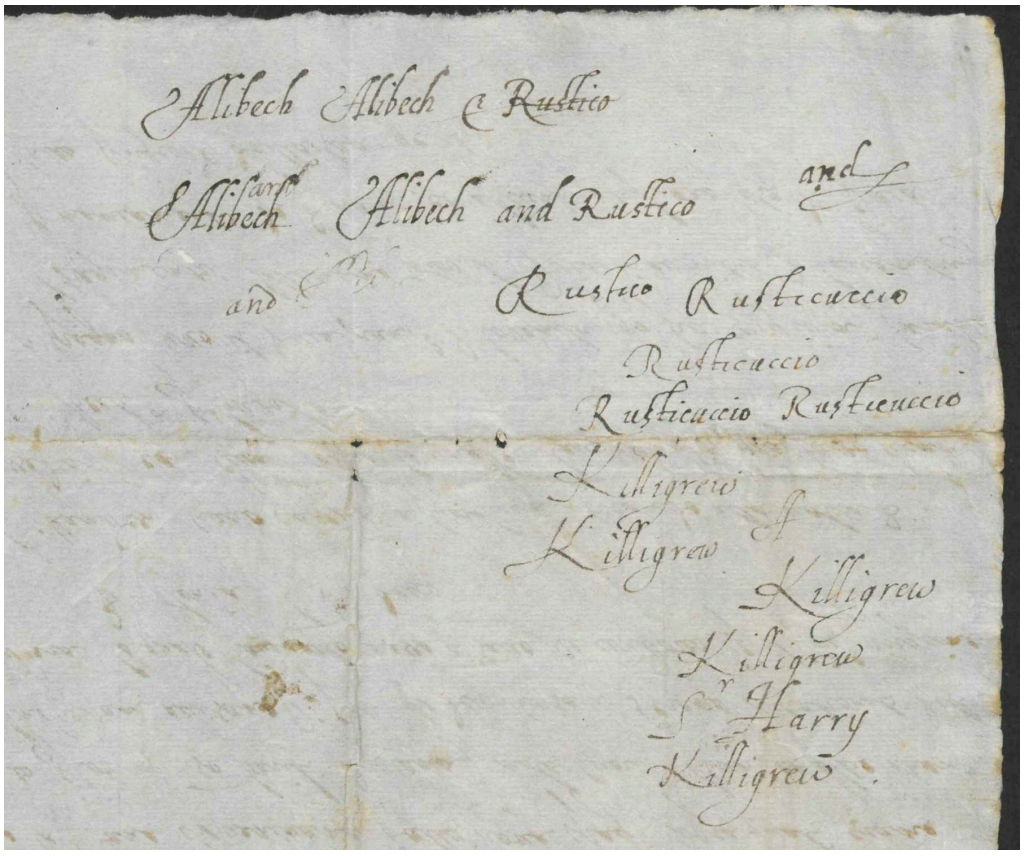



**Figure 10.8:** "Alibech," "Rustico" and "Rusticuccio," with repeated forms of "Killigrew," on the reverse of Italian newsletter material preserved among Neville's papers, 1591. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/70/2 (detail).

## The Aldine Pliny

Two volumes of an Aldine Pliny stood in the library at Billingbear. One, according to Lord Braybrooke's account of 1836, contained the autograph of Henry Neville the ambassador. The third volume was missing until Thomas Dampier, later bishop of Ely, happened upon a large-paper copy at a bookstall. He remembered the incomplete set and presented his find to the owner of Billingbear. When the books were brought together, their distinctive bindings and ornaments matched: the missing volume had come home.[19]

The set survives. The title page of its first volume, dated 1536, bears Henry Neville's name twice, in Latin and English, beneath the Aldine anchor and dolphin. Sotheby's reproduced the page when the three volumes appeared

in the Brooker sale in 2025. Braybrooke's account identifies the owner as the ambassador.[20]

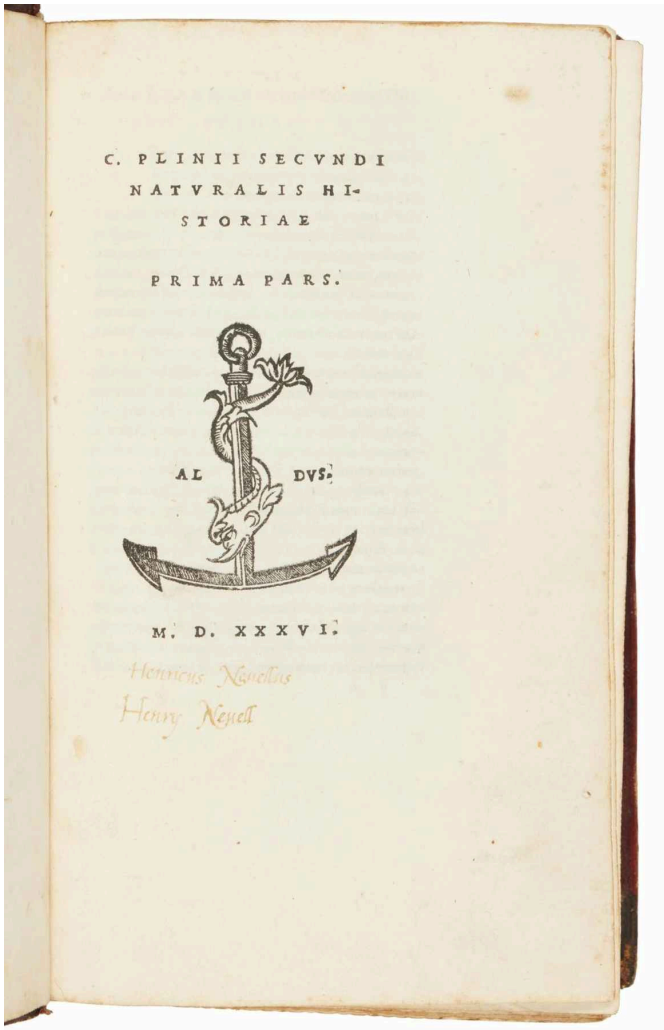



**Figure 10.9:** Title page of the first volume of Pliny's Natural History (Venice, 1536), bearing Henry Neville's name in Latin and English below the printer's device and date. Photograph: Sotheby's, Bibliotheca Brookeriana, 2025, lot 1325.

## Neville's gifts to Merton

Neville also gave books to Merton College, Oxford. Two surviving volumes bear donor inscriptions naming Henry Neville of Billingbear: Ptolemy's astronomical treatise, the Almagest, and a volume of Cassius Dio. The Ptolemy is the Greek edition printed at Basel by Johann Walder in 1538, with Theon of Alexandria's commentary. Its title-page inscription records the gift of "Henry Neville, esquire, of Billingbear."[21]

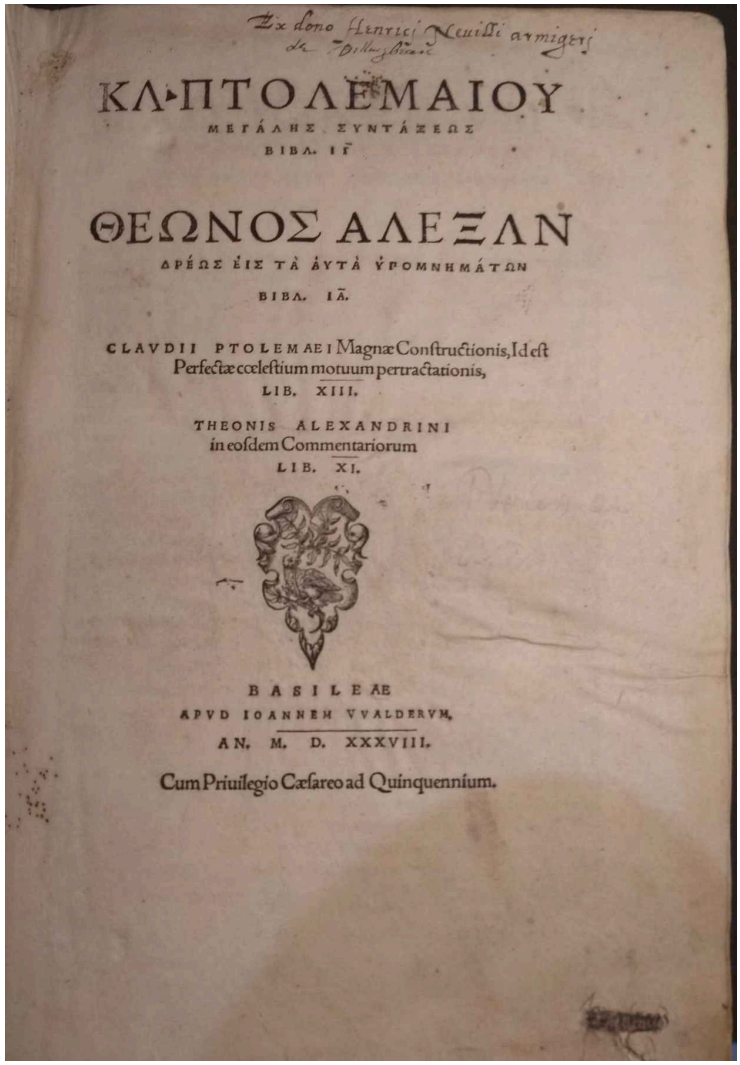



**Figure 10.10:** Ptolemy's Almagest with Theon's commentary (Basel, 1538), with the Neville donor inscription above the title. Merton College, Oxford, 32.A.4. Reproduced by permission of the Warden and Fellows of Merton College, Oxford.

## An Italian source at Billingbear

A handkerchief helps turn a Moorish commander against his wife in the Italian story that stands behind *Othello*. The 1580 Venice edition of Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, listed at Billingbear in 1780, contains that story.[22]

The same collection contains the story of Epitia, from which the corrupt magistrate's bargain reaches *Measure for Measure* through further adaptation, including Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*.[23] The Billingbear edition predates *Othello* and *Measure for Measure*.

These catalogue entries establish the books' later presence at Billingbear; their purchase dates and Neville's personal ownership remain untraced.

## Holinshed in the family

A surviving 1577 *Holinshed's Chronicles* at the University of Kansas bears William Killigrew's ownership name. The library identified him by comparing the inscriptions with signatures on a 1579 letter and a 1601 deed. William was the uncle of Neville's wife Anne. Her father, Henry Killigrew, had a separate connection with the enlarged 1587 edition: he was named among those appointed to review it.[24]

The 1577 book also names both brothers among the participants in the siege of Edinburgh Castle: Henry as Elizabeth's ambassador and William among the volunteers. Their family connection to the chronicle includes its recorded history as well as ownership and editorial review.[24]

## Notes and sources

1. D/EN/F37/1, entries for Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (1580) and the Valgrisi *Decameron* (1555). Cinthio, III.7 and VIII.5; Royal Shakespeare Company, "Othello: Dates and Sources" and "Measure for Measure: Dates and Sources". Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* is an intermediary for the latter. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, III.9 (Giletta) and II.9 (the wager); Senate House Library, "Il Decamerone". Painter transmits the Giletta story in English; *Frederyke of Jennen* belongs to the wager story's wider transmission. The identification of source stories does not require every borrowing to have been made directly from the Italian.
2. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, *Catalogue of the Books in the Library at Billingbear*, 7 November 1780, heading and dated entries; repository record. This is a later family-library catalogue, not Neville's probate inventory. Its separate entry for a Rolli *Decameron* explicitly marks 1527 as a false date: the Rolli edition is London, 1725, as described by the Morgan Library, PML41119, and Sir John Soane's Museum, 1347. It must not be counted as a sixteenth-century edition. These records identify the edition, not the present location of the Billingbear copy.
3. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, *Catalogue of the Books in the Library at Billingbear*, 7 November 1780, entries "Chaucer's Works", London, 1602, and "Saxonis Grammatici Danica Historia", 1576. For the Chaucerian sources, see Folger Shakespeare Library, "List of sources for Shakespeare's works", entries for *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. The catalogue does not identify Shakespeare's particular Chaucer edition. Saxo, *Danica Historia* (Frankfurt: Andreas Wechel, 1576), pp. 44–47; University of Tartu copy. Saxo is the ultimate narrative source, not necessarily the text consulted directly: Belleforest's retelling and an earlier play belong to the transmission discussed in David Bevington, "Hamlet: Sources and Analogues". The 1576 Saxo contains Amleth's murdered father, his uncle's marriage to the widow, concealed intelligence, and the journey carrying instructions for the prince's death. Amleth discovers and alters the instructions, turning the sentence on his companions (pp. 44–47, especially p. 47). Which version Neville read remains unknown. For Oliver Elton's translation, see *Internet Shakespeare Editions*.
4. D/EN/F37/1, entries under Livy, Dionysius, Appian, Cassius Dio and Tacitus; the editions are discussed below. Dionysius, *Roman Antiquities*, VIII, treats Coriolanus; Appian's *Civil Wars* and Dio's *Roman History* cover Caesar and Antony. *Titus Andronicus* has an invented

Roman plot, not a single historical episode reproduced from these authors. Plutarch's role in *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* is distinct from this wider historical coverage; Neville's use of the *Life of Demetrius* is examined in Chapter 9. The catalogue's Amyot Plutarch is dated 1627 and its English *Lives* 1758: neither is presented as Neville's own edition.

5. Savile's 1596 collection prints William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, Roger of Hoveden, Æthelweard and the history attributed to Ingulf, followed by a chronology. Its title announces texts recovered from old manuscripts. In his dedication to Elizabeth, Savile explains that he is making earlier writers available to those who might undertake a national history rather than writing it himself. Thomas Roebuck records that Rowland Whyte bought the collection for Robert Sidney in November 1596; Sidney's copy survives at the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies in Toronto. The book thus circulated within Savile and Neville's former travelling circle during the decade of Shakespeare's history plays. Henry Savile, *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores post Bedam praecipui* (London: G. Bishop, R. Newbery and R. Barker, 1596), title page and dedication to Elizabeth, Bavarian State Library copy. The title page supplies 1596; Waszink's 1598 date is not followed. Thomas Roebuck, "Politics, Patronage and Medieval Scholarship: Henry Savile's Rerum Anglicarum scriptores post Bedam (1596) in Context", *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* 6 (2021), 61–115, especially 62 and n. 2; Elisa Tersigni, "Henry Savile's Rerum Anglicarum scriptores post Bedam (London, 1596)", Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, University of Toronto, 23 May 2012, provenance discussion.
6. Barlaam, *Barlaami Monachi Logistica nunc primum Latinè reddita, & scholiis illustrata à Ioanne Chambero* (Paris: Guillaume Auvray, 1600), prefatory verse, address to Henry Neville; Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 4 Math 43, digitized by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, image 8. The address is contemporary evidence of Chamber's relationship to Neville. The 1780 entry is evidence of later library presence. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, entries for *Rerum Anglicarum scriptores* (London, 1596) and Carew's *Survey of Cornwall* (London, 1602). For George Carew's travels with Neville and Savile, Robert B. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 58 (1996), p. 440; for his relationship to Richard, Westminster Abbey, "Sir George Carew". Richard Carew the younger describes being sent by his father to France with Neville in Samuel Hartlib, *The True and Readie Way to Learne the Latine Tongue* (1654), pp. 45–49, especially p. 46; EEBO-TCP A42982. For Pigafetta's acquaintance with Neville, Cobham to Walsingham, 21 August and 17 September 1582, TNA SP 78/8, ff.22 and 43; *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth*, XVI, entries 266 and 339. The translator is Filippo, not Marc'Antonio Pigafetta.
7. Henry Savile, The ende of Nero and beginning of Galba (1591), "A note of the editions used in such authors as are cited by page," STC 23642, TCP A13331, Savile's edition list. Catalogue of the Books in the Library at Billingbear, 7 November 1780, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, folio-section leaves headed "Œuvres de Plutarque" and "Edit. Princ. Dionysius Halicarnasseus." Five of Savile's 25 edition entries match exactly; the table does not claim that his complete list matches. The 1780 catalogue establishes the editions then held at Billingbear, not that Savile consulted those particular physical copies. The 1548 Dio is distinct from the separately catalogued 1551 Xiphilinus epitome.
8. Theodosius, *Sphaericorum libri tres*, with the Latin translation of Jean Pena (Paris: André Wechel, 1558), Audley End copy. Ken Feinstein, "Part 5: Henry Savile's Greek Handwriting at Audley End", 15 December 2019, reproduces the title page, annotation and handwriting comparisons, and reports confirmation by a Savile specialist. The title-page inscription's hand is expressly left unidentified. For the corresponding edition in the 1780 Billingbear catalogue, see Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, entry "Theodosii Sphaerica", Paris, 1558. Neither the inscription nor the catalogue dates Savile's annotations.
9. Girolamo Ruscelli, *De' Commentarii della lingua italiana*, seven books (Venice: Damian Zenaro, 1581), title page and Audley End copy, inventory 81035061, including annotated pp. 88 and 247; digitized edition. The identification of Savile's hand is the author's, based on photographs of the annotated copy. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, *Catalogue of the Books in the Library at Billingbear*, 7 November 1780, entry "De' Commentari della Lingua Italiana del Giro-

lamo Ruscelli", Venice, 1581. For the Italian journey in 1581–82, Robert B. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 58 (1996), pp. 439–444, article, and Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (1998), discussed in Chapter 2. The publication year coincides with their travels; neither the purchase nor the annotations have been independently dated.

10. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, entries under the named authors and titles. Edition dates and languages refer to the catalogued editions. Albergati, *Dei discorsi politici libri cinque* (Rome, 1602), title; Audley End inventory 81035076. The dates are catalogue evidence, not acquisition dates. Giacomo di Grassi, *Ragione di adoprar sicuramente l'arme si da offesa, come da difesa* (Venice: Giordano Ziletti, 1570), title and contents. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, entry "Historia d'Italia di Guicciardini", Venice, 1580. For the surviving Audley End copy and its annotations, see Ken Feinstein, "Part 3: Henry Neville's Annotations in Guicciardini's The History of Italy", 10 December 2019, reproducing the catalogue entry, annotated pages and handwriting comparisons.
11. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, unpaginated catalogue: leaf containing "Chillingworths' Religion of Protestants" for Copernicus; leaf beginning "Conference between Laud and Fisher" for Gilbert. Nicolaus Copernicus, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (Nuremberg: Johann Petreius, 1543), Library of Congress copy and description; William Gilbert, *De magnete* (London: Peter Short, 1600), Smithsonian Libraries copy and description. The catalogue records these editions; it does not establish when they entered the family library.
12. Robert Greene's *Pandosto* supplies the principal story of *The Winter's Tale*. Robert Henke argues that Shakespeare's reshaping of the prose romance—tragic opening, pastoral middle and comic reconciliation—follows the three-part movement of Italian pastoral tragicomedy, the tradition to which Guarini's *Il pastor fido* belongs. Robert Henke, "The Winter's Tale and Guarinian Dramaturgy," *Comparative Drama* 27.2 (1993), opening paragraph, publicly reproduced by the journal. The argument summarized here is stated in that paragraph; it concerns dramatic form, while retaining Greene's *Pandosto* as the narrative source. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, *Catalogue of the Books in the Library at Billingbear*, 7 November 1780, entry "Il Pastor Fido del Guarini," Venice, 1602; repository record. The entry records the later family collection; it does not date the book's acquisition. The first English translation appeared in the same year, printed by Thomas Creede for Simon Waterson and dedicated to Sir Edward Dymoke, the Queen's Champion. Samuel Daniel contributed a commendatory sonnet; the translator's own sonnet calls Dymoke his kinsman, and Waterson's dedication says the translator had died. Dymoke was the nephew of Frances Dymoke, wife of Thomas Windebank—Neville's correspondent and trusted family agent. Thus the English edition's dedication leads to the family of the man to whom Neville wrote the complaint about his crowded table examined in Chapter 33 on Timon of Athens. Battista Guarini, *Il Pastor Fido: or The Faithfull Shepheard* (London: Thomas Creede for Simon Waterson, 1602), preliminaries: Daniel's sonnet, the translator's sonnet and Waterson's dedication dated 31 December 1601; STC 12415, TCP A02284, public transcription. The translator is unnamed in the book; differing later attributions are not resolved here. Walter C. Metcalfe, ed., *The Visitations of the County of Lincoln in 1562–4* (1881), p.42, Dymoke pedigree: Frances is a daughter of the elder Sir Edward Dymoke and sister of Sir Robert, father of the younger Sir Edward. The dedication does not establish a transfer of the book through Windebank to Neville.
13. Author's comparison of D/EN/F37/1 with Audley End collection descriptions. The provisional matches require object-level verification. The earlier 129/57/72 calculation included the Rolli *Decameron* under its false 1527 date; excluding that 1725 edition yields 128/57/71. Two 1616 entries and the 1618 Fenton *Guicciardini* are also excluded. No complete revalidation of every edition or earlier ownership is implied. See the Morgan and Soane edition records cited with the catalogue's false-date Rolli entry.
14. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* (Paris: Robert Estienne, 1546), Audley End copy, p.45, at 1.75. Photograph and identification: Ken Feinstein, "Part 8: Henry Neville and Henry Savile Annotations in Roman Antiquities", 16 October 2020. See Chapter 39 for the

complete transcription and comparison with the Greek text; Collatinus is retained with two Ls.

15. Dunstan Roberts, "Books Owned by Sir Thomas Hoby (1530–1566)," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 17.1 (2020), 53–66, at 53–55. Audley End inventory numbers 81035068 (Renaldini) and 81035044 (Boccaccio). Roberts describes the title-page signatures, motto, dates and later bindings. The attributions are his published findings.
16. Roberts, "Books Owned," 55–56. He distinguishes the books' appearances in the 1780, 1834 and 1877 catalogues and proposes the transmission dates. The catalogue sequence does not identify when Henry Neville personally possessed either book.
17. Braybrooke, *History of Audley End* (1836), p.53, distinguishes residence in 1797 from possession in 1802. Roberts, "Books Owned," pp.55–56, traces the books through the 1780, 1834 and 1877 catalogues; his shorthand "inherited ... in 1797" is refined here using Braybrooke's account. The residence began under a family arrangement; possession followed after the existing life interests ended.
18. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/70/2, reverse of Italian newsletter material, 1591; published manuscript images. The names refer to Boccaccio, *Decameron*, III.10. Chapter 29 discusses their proximity to Giletta's tale (III.9). The scribbles identify a tale, not the particular edition Neville read.
19. Richard, Lord Braybrooke, *The History of Audley End* (London, 1836), p.117, digitized edition. Braybrooke places the first two volumes at Billingbear, reports the ambassador's autograph in one, and recounts Dampier's recovery of the third. His estimate of the set's rarity is not used here as a modern census. Dampier was the recipient's cousin; the identification of the autograph follows Braybrooke's published account, not a new authentication.
20. Sotheby's, Bibliotheca Brookeriana: A Renaissance Library, The Aldine Collection N–Z (2025), lot 1325, Pliny, Naturalis historiae (Venice, 1535–1536), title-page photograph and provenance. Auction catalogue. The auction catalogue leaves the identification between two Henry Nevilles open; Braybrooke, The History of Audley End (1836), p.117, specifically identifies the ambassador. The photograph establishes the presence of the two names; the historical identification here follows Braybrooke.
21. Merton College, Oxford, 32.A.4 (Ptolemy and Theon, Basel: Johann Walder, 1538) and 21.DD.6 (Cassius Dio), title-page donor inscriptions. For the Ptolemy title-page photograph, see Ken Feinstein, "Annotations at Merton College, Oxford," 26 June 2023, Published photograph.
22. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, *Catalogue of the Books in the Library at Billingbear*, 7 November 1780, unpaginated, entry "Hecatommithi, overo Cento Novelle di M. Giovanbattista Giraldi Cinthio," Venice, 1580; repository record. Cinthio, *De gli Hecatommithi* (Venice, 1580), third decade, seventh tale. For the narrative relationship, see Cambridge's introduction to *Othello*, discussion of Cinthio's Moor, Ensign, Disdemona, officer and handkerchief. The catalogue entry establishes later family-library presence, not Neville's purchase or reading of the copy.
23. Royal Shakespeare Company, "Measure for Measure: Dates and Sources," describes Cinthio's Epitia story and Whetstone's 1578 English play. Cinthio is the source ancestor; the chapter does not claim that every feature of Shakespeare's play comes from the Italian tale.
24. Karen Severud Cook, "A Holinshed's Chronicles Provenance Puzzle," Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, 6 February 2018; 1577 *Chronicles*, Pryce D11. Cook compares the ownership names with Surrey History Centre 6729/1/56, 3 June 1579, and Kansas MS239:2357, 26 October 1601. Cyndia Susan Clegg, "Censorship," in *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles* (2013), 43–60, especially 45–46, quotes the Privy Council's order naming Randolph, H. Killigrew and Hammond. The review concerned the 1587 edition; William's surviving copy is the 1577 edition. Cook also identifies the list of siege participants on the verso of the Edinburgh map, following p. 1868 in volume 2. The copy's marginal annotations remain unattributed. Anne's parentage and her relationship to William are treated in the family chapter.

# Neville's Surviving Prose

Chapter 11

Neville's surviving letters show him reporting uncertain news, bargaining over trade and defending choices under pressure. His request to Cecil for time to settle his estate before the French embassy is one example of prose doing practical work. The collection reaches us unevenly, through manuscripts, copies, transcriptions and letters printed in Edmund Sawyer's edition of Winwood's papers; together they allow his language to be followed across years and correspondents.

The research collection counted on 20 September 2026 contained 169 letter records and three longer documents. Excluding headings, addresses, enclosed and separately marked quoted material, and an identified duplicate letter, it contains approximately 136,800 words: about 129,600 in the letters and 7,200 in Neville's *Case*, his confession and his *Advice*.[1,2]

This chapter describes the collection as counted on 20 September 2026; Chapter 12 now reports the bigram rerun of 3 October, after removal of the duplicate letter record. The figures reflect different dates, selections and counting rules:

| Count | Descriptive census here | Bigram study in Chapter 12 |
|---|---|---|
| Records | 169 letters + 3 documents | 165 English letters + 3 documents |
| Words counted | 136,764 normalized word tokens after the stated exclusions | 137,551 alphabetic lemma tokens under the study's selection rules |
| Parallel witnesses | Both listed; the duplicate letter counted once in the word total | Duplicate removed; one witness retained |

The bigram selection excludes three French records but retains enclosed and quoted material. It counts word tokens whose base forms contain letters, omitting purely numerical entries; the earlier census counts normalized word tokens under its stated exclusions. Both word totals count the identified duplicate letter only once.

## The shape of the surviving letters

The collection is richest during Neville's French embassy. The September census's date labels place 56 letter records in 1599 and 40 in 1600: 96 records, or 56.8 per cent of the letters. Twenty more fall in 1601. The earlier years are sparsely represented, and the later correspondence survives in smaller groups.

| Year | Records | Year | Records | Year | Records |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1590 | 1 | 1598 | 2 | 1606 | 5 |

| Year | Records | Year | Records | Year | Records |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1591 | 0 | 1599 | 56 | 1607 | 2 |
| 1592 | 0 | 1600 | 40 | 1608 | 7 |
| 1593 | 1 | 1601 | 20 | 1609 | 3 |
| 1594 | 2 | 1602 | 8 | 1610 | 0 |
| 1595 | 1 | 1603 | 1 | 1611 | 0 |
| 1596 | 0 | 1604 | 4 | 1612 | 8 |
| 1597 | 0 | 1605 | 4 | 1613 | 4 |

*Counts follow the September collection's date labels. Zero means no record in this collection, not that Neville wrote no letters that year.*

The concentration defines the comparison: an apparent habit of his language may belong particularly to embassy dispatches. Later political counsel and personal letters provide useful tests of whether that habit persists elsewhere.

The recipients show a similar concentration. Robert Cecil accounts for 106 records, Ralph Winwood for thirty and Thomas Windebank for eight. Together they receive 85.2 per cent of the letters. The other twenty-five records range across sovereigns, officials, friends and local correspondents. These figures describe the assembled collection. They cannot rank the importance of relationships whose correspondence has been lost.

## What each witness preserves

The texts reach us through several kinds of source.

Sawyer's edition appeared in 1725. Its spelling, punctuation and typography cannot establish how Neville wrote the original manuscript. The book therefore modernizes quotations from it while preserving vocabulary, syntax and meaning. A spelling claim requires the manuscript or a suitable diplomatic transcription. A handwriting identification requires examination of the manuscript image and supporting attribution evidence.

John O'Donnell's transcriptions provide the principal human-transcribed body of letters. Such a transcription can preserve forms lost in later print, including abbreviations and original spellings. Its value depends on the particular source and the work already done on it: identifying the transcriber, locating an image and checking a difficult passage are different stages.

In Paris, Neville undertook historical research for the English lawyer Dr Julius Caesar. On 7 June [1599], he explained how he had approached Caesar's question about the French Catholic League:

> I have ... not spared both to search the story which particularly doth set down the proceedings of the League, and to consult with those who now remain in Paris, whom I hold not to be ignorant in a cause of that quality, in their own commonwealth.

The written history supplied dates for Marseille's revolt and return to obedience, but Neville was dissatisfied: "that which I find doth not satisfy me." He intended to ask Villeroy, the French secretary of state, for fuller information when he next wrote or went to court.[3]

## Three longer works

The letters are accompanied by three documents that widen the view of Neville's prose. Their occasions differ, and those differences are worth preserving.

His *Case*, printed by Sawyer from a paper the editor described as entirely in Neville's own hand, reconstructs his involvement in the events surrounding the Essex rising. It gives an extended account of intention, meetings and decisions under the pressure of accusation. The separate declaration of 2 March 1601, usually called his confession, survives in the original manuscript in Neville's hand. The two documents allow us to examine how he explains conduct and judges what he had understood, intended or failed to do. They are two separate witnesses about the same crisis in Neville's life.[4]

Neville's *Advice* turns from personal defence to political counsel. It considers the king's financial difficulties and the conditions under which Parliament might offer relief. Here the writer weighs courses of action and their consequences for the relationship between king and subjects. Gardiner's printed edition provides a public text for comparison; the surviving manuscript copies require their own collation. Neville acknowledged writing the paper in the Commons on 14 May 1614. For the *Advice*, this book follows Gardiner's edition and the manuscript witnesses rather than the corpus transcription. Authorship and the readings of particular copies are separate questions.[5]

## Checking the text beneath the count

Searches use a consistent text so spelling variation does not hide a phrase. Where an identified source supplies a different original form, the collection preserves it separately. Spelling comparisons must use the appropriate source forms.[1]

## From surviving prose to comparison

The collection permits tests of a word in dated correspondence, a recurring sequence of argument, or language across recipients. Each can be rerun with the documents removed or the printed and manuscript-transcribed groups examined separately.

A result dominated by Cecil dispatches requires a different explanation from one found across private letters, diplomatic reporting and political counsel.

Chapter 12 compares recurring two-word sequences across the plays. Chapter 13 tests a set of linguistic features selected from Neville's surviving prose against

236 plays. Chapter 14 examines changes in diplomatic vocabulary around the embassy years; its selection and overlapping samples are specified there. The figures in each study refer to the corpus version and selection specified there, which may differ from the September census given here.

## Notes and sources

1. Counts were recalculated from the author's current research collection on 20 September 2026: 169 letter records and 3 document records. The word totals are 129,597 for the letters and 7,167 for the documents under the stated exclusions. They count the collection's normalized words, retaining salutations, subscriptions and reported speech; separately marked quotations are excluded. These describe the encoded collection, including its declared parallel witnesses and unresolved records, rather than a census of all surviving original letters. The principal printed source is Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I*, 3 vols. (London, 1725): volume I, volume II, volume III. The counts follow the stated source classifications; they do not certify every record's text or date. The separate 1884 witness is W. D. Macray, ed., *Beaumont Papers* (London: Nichols and Sons, 1884), pp.13–14, which supplies "[1606?]" as an editorial date and "Wednesday night" in the dateline. For the enclosed royal response subscribed De Neufville, Sawyer I, pp.87–88. That reply is excluded from the word totals, as are the separately enclosed memorials. The year and recipient tables count letter records, including the parallel witness; their date labels are not all equally certain. There are 4,289 attributes preserving original word forms and twenty-three continuation markers, used when normalization splits a source form across tokens. These are features of the edition's encoding, not additional words written by Neville. A spelling study must use the appropriate source forms and avoid counting a continuation twice.
2. The 4 June 1606 letter to Winwood survives in two records, one from Sawyer and one transcribed by John O'Donnell. Counting the identified pair once leaves 168 communications, subject to any further duplicate identifications; the word total uses O'Donnell's witness. See Sawyer, *Memorials*, II, pp. 216–217. The printed 4 June date corresponds to 14 June in the Gregorian calendar.
3. Henry Neville to Dr Julius Caesar, Paris, 7 June [1599], British Library, Lansdowne MS 148/134, f. 352. Quotation follows John O'Donnell's transcription, with spelling modernized and abbreviations expanded; the omission is marked. The manuscript dateline supplies the day and month; the year is supplied editorially. O'Donnell identifies the letter as signed by Neville but written in another hand. The particular history and Caesar's incoming question have not been identified. The letter records an intention to consult Villeroy, not a completed consultation.
4. "Sir Henry Nevill's Case," Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 302–304; Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279, f. 15, calendared in *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1601–1603*, pp. 5–8, no. 11. The confession's original is in Neville's handwriting; the text follows John O'Donnell's transcription. Full-document collation is a distinct task. The initial repair of the *Case* ending and five shorter readings added 202 encoded words at that stage; subsequent source and tokenization changes mean this is not the net change underlying the current whole-collection total. The precise composition date of the *Case* is unestablished: Sawyer's heading supplies no exact date. The analytical record uses 1601 as an inferred contextual year.
5. Neville, "An Advice Touching the Holding of a Parliament," in Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Disgrace of Chief-Justice Coke*, II (London, 1863), Appendix V, pp. 389–394. For Neville's acknowledgment in the Commons, see Clayton Roberts and Owen Duncan, "The Parliamentary Undertaking of 1614," *English Historical Review* 93, no. 368 (1978), pp. 481–498, especially p. 493, article. The book's Chapter 9 gives the fuller political context and source comparison.

# Language and the Plays

The language studies ask three connected questions: which plays resemble Neville's prose in their recurring two-word sequences; which contain the words and patterns that distinguish his writing from other correspondence; and when vocabulary associated with his embassy becomes more prominent in Shakespeare.

Chapter 12 compares bigrams by three methods. Chapter 13 tests 180 features selected from Neville's surviving prose. Chapter 14 follows a panel of diplomatic vocabulary through the plays in time. Each chapter explains what was counted, presents the results graphically, and identifies the scope of the comparison.

The comparisons reveal suggestive and meaningful affinities with Shakespeare's language. They extend the inquiry beyond individual passages to patterns across larger bodies of text. They are not definitive authorship tests: shared subjects, professional language and literary conventions can also produce similarity. The studies use overlapping material and answer different questions; their results should be read together without treating them as independent confirmations of authorship.

# The Pattern in Two-Word Sequences

Chapter 12

Shakespeare's plays occupy eight of the top ten places in the all-word bigram comparison with Neville's writing, although they make up only 36 of the 236 plays tested. A bigram is a two-word sequence, such as "I will" or "write to". Counting thousands of these combinations tests whether Neville's habitual language resembles Shakespeare's plays more closely than other contemporary drama. The three methods below compare all-word bigrams, pairs formed after filtering for frequent words, and samples of similar length.

## What was compared

The dramatic texts come from Pervez Rizvi's database of 527 early modern plays. The comparison here is limited to 236 dramatic texts dated 1590–1615: the 36 plays of the First Folio and 200 texts by other writers. *Pericles*, *Edward III* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* are excluded from both groups. Collaborative First Folio plays, including *Henry VIII*, count once as complete plays in the group statistics. The Shakespeare section of *Henry VIII* is also shown separately in the tables, using the database's division between Shakespeare and Fletcher.[1]

On Neville's side, the study used 165 English letter records and three longer documents, comprising 137,551 words after processing.[1] The question is how each play resembles Neville's collected writing, not which play resembles a single selected letter.

The comparison works with base forms of words, so that forms such as *writes* and *writing* can be counted under *write*. It therefore examines word use rather than the appearance of particular historical spellings. A pair is never made by joining the last word of one Neville document to the first word of another.

## What a two-word comparison measures

A *bigram* is a sequence of two words. In the illustrative phrase "I will write to you," the consecutive pairs are "I will," "will write," "write to" and "to you." A passage contributes many such overlapping pairs. Counting them records not just which words a writer uses, but which words repeatedly occur together.

Each text receives a frequency profile: some pairs occur often, others occasionally, and many not at all. The comparison asks how closely a play's balance of those frequencies resembles Neville's. Cosine similarity compares the relative pattern of pair frequencies, rather than raw totals. This removes the direct effect of multiplying every count by the same amount, but longer texts can still differ

because they contain more varied and more stable samples of language. Its score runs from zero for no shared pairs towards one for increasingly similar profiles; it is not a percentage of identical wording.

This differs from selecting striking verbal parallels. A rare expression can be illuminating when read in context, but these tests also count ordinary combinations. A high score can arise from many small similarities in usage without any one phrase being remarkable. The three methods vary the vocabulary and the amount of text compared, allowing us to see which results depend on those choices.

## How to read the percentages

Each play first receives a similarity score. The group comparison then pairs every Shakespeare play with every play by another writer and asks which has the higher score. With 36 Shakespeare plays and 200 others, there are 7,200 pairings. In the all-word test, the Shakespeare play scores higher in 5,894, or 81.9 per cent, of them.

Thus 81.9 per cent describes how often a Shakespeare play outranks another play in its similarity to Neville. It does not mean that 81.9 per cent of their words match, or that there is an 81.9 per cent probability of common authorship. A result of 50 per cent would mean that the two groups win equally often. The graph shows that Shakespeare's advantage remains substantial under all three methods, although it becomes smaller when the comparison is restricted to samples of common words.

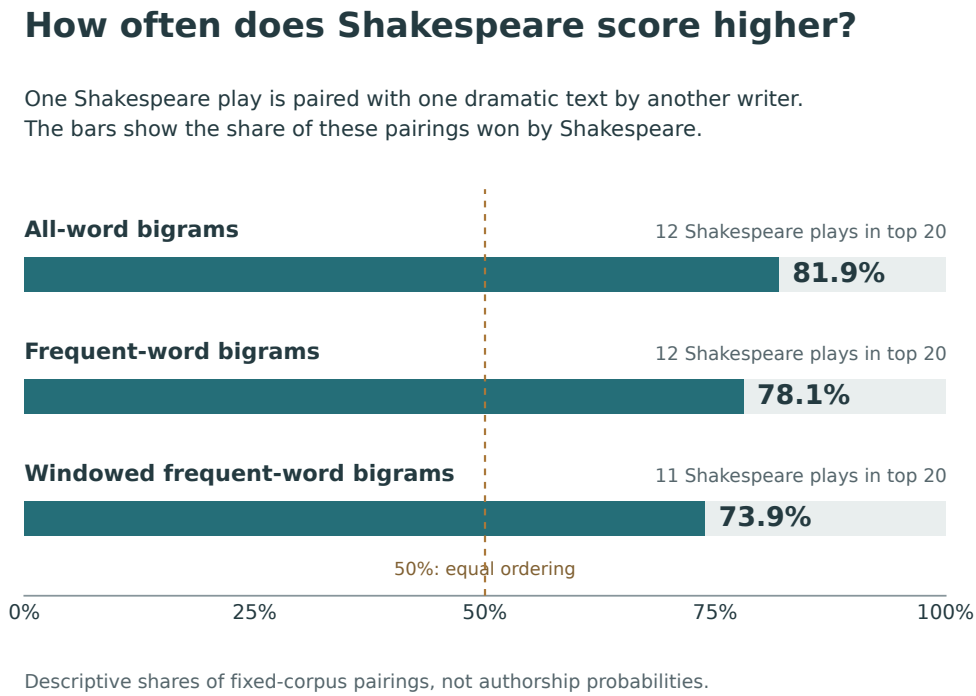



**Figure 12.1:** Shakespeare plays score higher in 81.9, 78.1 and 73.9 per cent of cross-group pairings. The dashed line marks equal ordering at 50 per cent. The first two comparisons contain 7,200 pairings each; the windowed comparison contains 6,660. These pairings reuse the same plays and are not independent observations. See note 1.

Each table contains the twenty highest-ranked complete plays plus *Henry VIII* (*Shakespeare section*), with complete plays numbered 1–20 and the supplementary section left unnumbered at its position by similarity score. Bold titles identify First Folio plays and the supplementary Shakespeare section. The section is not counted as an additional play in the percentages, group means or random-group tests.

## 1. All-word bigrams

The first method uses all eligible word pairs, without limiting the vocabulary to common words. It can therefore reflect both habitual phrasing and subject matter: correspondence about government, for example, may share vocabulary with a history play. It asks which plays most closely resemble the overall pattern of Neville's paired words.

*The Winter's Tale* ranks first among complete plays, *Henry VIII* second and *Cymbeline* third. Shakespeare plays occupy twelve of the top twenty complete-play places, although they make up only about 15.3 per cent of the 236-text compari-

son. The 81.9 per cent pairing result shows that the advantage extends beyond the plays at the very top.

| Rank | Play |
|---|---|
| 1 | ***The Winter's Tale*** |
| 2 | ***Henry VIII* (*full play*)** |
| 3 | ***Cymbeline*** |
| 4 | ***All's Well That Ends Well*** |
| 5 | *Cynthia's Revels* |
| 6 | ***Henry V*** |
| 7 | ***Henry IV, Part 2*** |
| | ***Henry VIII* (*Shakespeare section*)** |
| 8 | ***Measure for Measure*** |
| 9 | *The Royal King and the Loyal Subject* |
| 10 | ***Coriolanus*** |
| 11 | *Every Man Out of His Humour* |
| 12 | *The Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron* |
| 13 | ***Love's Labor's Lost*** |
| 14 | ***Hamlet*** |
| 15 | ***Henry IV, Part 1*** |
| 16 | ***King Lear*** |
| 17 | *1 Edward the Fourth* |
| 18 | *2 Edward the Fourth* |
| 19 | *Volpone* |
| 20 | *Every Man in His Humour* |

## 2. Frequent-word bigrams

The second method concentrates on the 200 most frequent base words in the dramatic collection's plays dated 1580–1620. The list is selected from the plays, rather than from expressions chosen because they favour Neville. It includes small grammatical words such as *and*, *of* and *to*, but also common words with substantial meaning, including *king*, *love* and *honour*.

Words outside that list are removed before the pairs are formed. This matters: two words counted as a pair may originally have had other words between them. The method tests sequences in the remaining common-word pattern, not necessarily phrases that a reader would find printed side by side. It reduces the contribution of unusual vocabulary while retaining much of the ordinary language through which writers construct their sentences.

For a simple illustration, take the invented sentence "I humbly ask you." The study's 200-word list includes *I* and *you*, but neither *humbly* nor *ask*:

| Stage | Words or pairs |
|---|---|
| Invented example | I humbly ask you |
| Ordinary adjacent pairs | I humbly; humbly ask; ask you |
| After the 200-word filter | I you (humbly and ask removed) |
| Pair now counted | I + you |

The filtered pair "I you" records the sequence left after removal; it does not claim that those words stood together in the original sentence. The same operation is applied to Neville and the plays.

*Henry VIII* ranks first among complete plays and *Henry V* second. Shakespeare plays again occupy twelve of the top twenty complete-play places and score higher in 78.1 per cent of the 7,200 pairings. Their advantage therefore survives when much of the less frequent vocabulary is removed. The result does not depend entirely on unusual shared expressions.

| Rank | Play |
|---|---|
| 1 | ***Henry VIII* (*full play*)** |
| | ***Henry VIII* (*Shakespeare section*)** |
| 2 | ***Henry V*** |
| 3 | ***Cymbeline*** |
| 4 | ***The Winter's Tale*** |
| 5 | *The Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron* |
| 6 | ***Henry IV, Part 2*** |
| 7 | *Cynthia's Revels* |
| 8 | *The Conspiracy of Charles Duke of Byron* |
| 9 | ***Coriolanus*** |
| 10 | *The Family of Love* |
| 11 | ***Henry VI, Part 2*** |
| 12 | *Sejanus His Fall* |
| 13 | ***Henry VI, Part 1*** |
| 14 | ***Macbeth*** |
| 15 | ***Love's Labor's Lost*** |
| 16 | *The Hector of Germany, or The Palsgrave, Prime Elector* |
| 17 | ***King John*** |
| 18 | ***Richard II*** |
| 19 | *Philotas* |
| 20 | *The Widow's Tears* |

## 3. Comparing passages of similar length

The third method uses the same common-word list but compares passages rather than treating each full text as one sample. A long collection of letters offers a more extensive picture of usage than a short play. Sampling reduces that imbal-

ance and asks whether the affinity remains when the amount of language being compared is more nearly alike.

The study takes fifty samples of approximately 10,000 retained words from Neville's pooled writing and uses their average pattern as the comparison profile. For each sufficiently long play, it takes fifty passages of the same size and averages their similarity scores. Plays with between 5,000 and 10,000 retained words contribute their whole text once; shorter plays are excluded. The sample size refers to words remaining after the vocabulary filter, not words on the original page. Neville's samples contain slightly fewer than 10,000 actual words because document-boundary markers occupy some sampled positions. The passages can overlap; they are repeated samples of the same works, not new independent texts.

This leaves 221 plays: 36 First Folio plays and 185 others. *Henry VIII* ranks first among complete plays, *The Winter's Tale* second and *Henry V* fifth. The separately scored Shakespeare section of *Henry VIII* comes above the full play in this method. Shakespeare takes eleven of the top twenty complete-play places and scores higher in 73.9 per cent of the 6,660 cross-group pairings. Sampling reduces the advantage but does not remove it.

| Rank | Play |
|---|---|
| | ***Henry VIII* (*Shakespeare section*)** |
| 1 | ***Henry VIII* (*full play*)** |
| 2 | ***The Winter's Tale*** |
| 3 | *The Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron* |
| 4 | *The Conspiracy of Charles Duke of Byron* |
| 5 | ***Henry V*** |
| 6 | ***Macbeth*** |
| 7 | *The Hector of Germany, or The Palsgrave, Prime Elector* |
| 8 | ***Cymbeline*** |
| 9 | *Philotas* |
| 10 | *The Family of Love* |
| 11 | ***Richard II*** |
| 12 | ***All's Well That Ends Well*** |
| 13 | ***Coriolanus*** |
| 14 | *The Atheist's Tragedy, or The Honest Man's Revenge* |
| 15 | ***Henry IV, Part 2*** |
| 16 | ***King John*** |
| 17 | ***Henry VI, Part 1*** |
| 18 | *Sejanus His Fall* |
| 19 | Thomas Heywood, *The Rape of Lucrece* |
| 20 | *1 The Troublesome Reign of King John* |

## What the pattern shows

The second graph displays every eligible complete-text score. Filled dots represent the First Folio group and open dots the comparison group; a square identifies *Henry VIII* (*full play*) and a diamond its Shakespeare section. The section is supplementary and is excluded from the group means. Shakespeare scores lie further to the right on average in every panel, but the groups overlap. Chapman's two Byron plays, for example, rank prominently in the common-word comparisons.

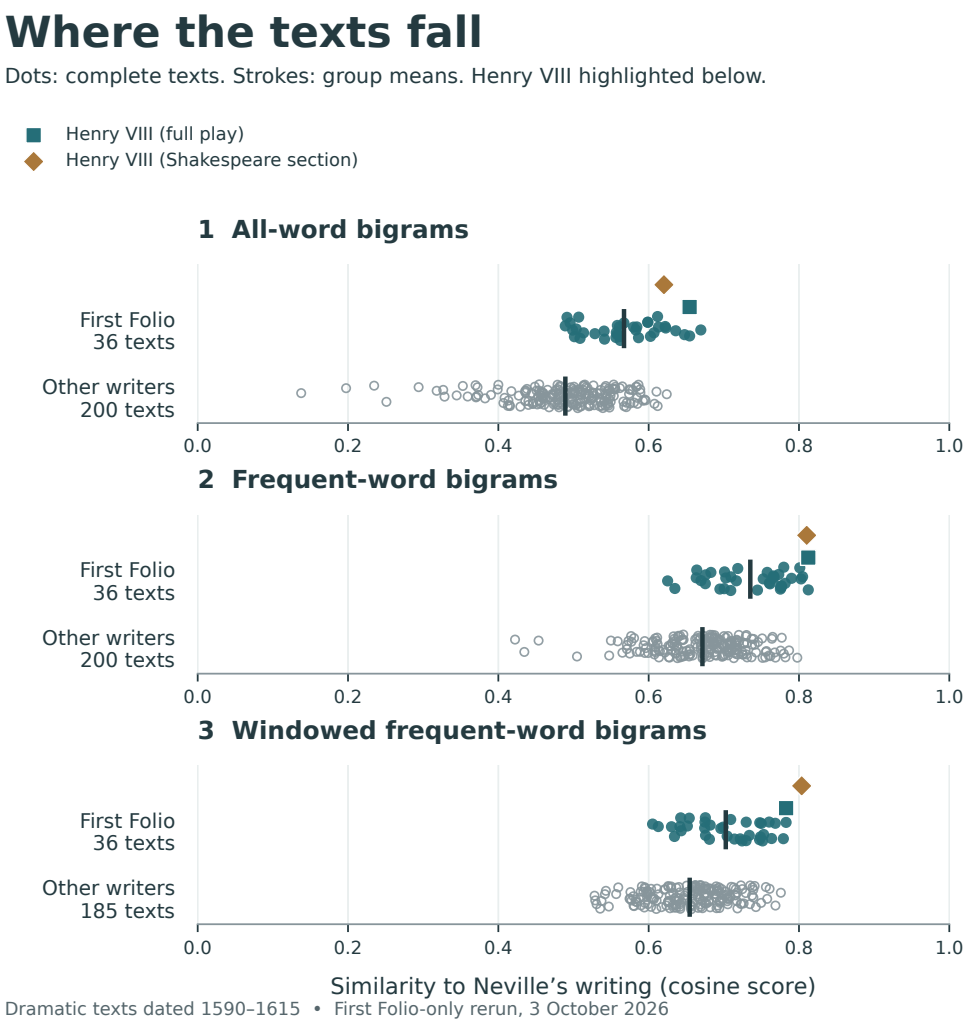



**Figure 12.2:** Every eligible complete-text record is shown: filled dots represent the 36 First Folio plays; open dots represent other writers; dark strokes mark group means. A square marks Henry VIII (full play), already included in the First Folio group, and a diamond marks Henry VIII (Shakespeare section), excluded from group means. Vertical spreading has no numerical meaning. Compare scores within each panel. See note 1.

A further test asks how unusual the Shakespeare group's high average position is. For each method, the computer selected 20,000 random groups of 36 plays from that comparison's pool. None had an average rank as high as the actual Shakespeare group. Allowing for the finite number of random draws gives a p value of about 0.00005; an adjustment for conducting three tests gives about 0.00015, or 0.015 per cent.[1]

These figures make the concentration statistically significant under this unadjusted rank-concentration test. "Unadjusted" here means that date, length and other textual differences are not controlled; the adjustment for three tests is a separate matter. Chapter 13 reports a different test that adjusts for date and length. They answer a specific question: is the Shakespeare group more highly ranked than groups formed by randomly choosing plays? They do not measure the probability that Neville wrote Shakespeare. Nor does this test hold composition date, play length and dramatic genre constant, or allow for the fact that several plays share an author. Those features can influence language and help explain why a group resembles Neville.

The three methods also share the same source material and much of the same vocabulary. Their agreement is useful evidence that the affinity survives different ways of making the comparison, but it is not three independent discoveries whose probabilities can be multiplied. The finding is a sustained resemblance in patterns of two-word usage. Establishing how distinctive that resemblance is to Neville requires comparisons with other writers' prose as well as with other dramatists' plays.

## The Confession, Case and Advice: a closer look at Hamlet

A separate comparison asks what happens when the focus narrows from Neville's collected writing to particular documents. It tests the Confession alone, then the Confession together with the Case, and finally those two defences together with the later Advice. Here the comparison pool contains 331 plays dated 1590–1630. Its wider date range means its ranks should be read within that pool, rather than as positions in the 236-play tables above.[2]

Using the frequencies of all two-word sequences, Hamlet ranks first in all three comparisons. Adding the Case and Advice therefore preserves Hamlet's leading position while broadening the Neville material under examination. Across these three document combinations, Shakespeare plays win about 77, 80 and 80 per cent of pairings with other plays. With all three documents combined, ten Shakespeare plays appear in the leading twenty.

This result depends on the kind of resemblance measured. When the test counts only distinct pairs found in no more than five plays, Hamlet no longer ranks first. Its strength here is in the overall frequency pattern, including ordinary language, rather than an exceptional total of rare verbal matches. The specific passages examined in the Hamlet chapter provide the context that a numerical ranking alone cannot supply.

Comparisons with other letter-writers help define the limit of the result. In tests using equal-sized samples of correspondence, John Chamberlain's letters also showed substantial affinity with Shakespeare: their typical cross-group pairing result was about 78.5 per cent, against 77.0 per cent for Neville's letter samples. Neville performed better on a separate measure emphasizing Shakespeare's concentration towards the top of the ranking. Neither result makes

general Shakespeare affinity unique to Neville; these letter samples also do not constitute a matched test of the Confession, Case and Advice individually.[2]

The chapter's positive finding is therefore substantial but specific. Shakespeare plays are concentrated near the top when compared with Neville's writing by the frequency of two-word sequences; several leading plays recur across the three methods, and Hamlet leads the focused document comparisons. These are suggestive patterns of linguistic affinity, to be considered alongside the documentary and verbal evidence, rather than definitive authorship identifications.

## Notes and sources

1. Rerun of 3 October 2026: 165 English letter records and three longer documents (the Confession, Case and Advice), totalling 168 analytical records and 137,551 alphabetic lemma tokens. One duplicate witness of the 4 June 1606 letter was removed; enclosed and quoted material within English-labelled records remains. French records were excluded. The earlier descriptive census in Chapter 11 uses different counting rules. The principal comparison uses 36 First Folio plays and 200 other dramatic texts dated 1590–1615; Pericles, Edward III and The Two Noble Kinsmen are excluded from scoring and from the 1580–1620 pool used to select the 200-word vocabulary. The twenty-one-entry tables comprise the top twenty complete plays plus Henry VIII's Shakespeare section; only complete texts enter group statistics. Database divisions identify 9,994 Shakespeare and 14,718 Fletcher tokens in Henry VIII; after frequent-word filtering these become 6,833 and 10,401. The section scores concatenate their assigned passages, following the original implementation. Similarity is cosine similarity of lowercased lemma-pair counts, with no pairs crossing Neville document boundaries. The windowed method averages fifty 10,000-position samples for longer texts; texts with 5,000–10,000 retained words are scored whole. Neville's profile averages fifty such samples, with boundary markers occupying some positions. Thus the section and full play are not strictly equal-length samples. A separate boundary-aware check of all possible windows at equal lengths of 3,000, 5,000 and 6,500 tokens places the Shakespeare section above the combined play and the Fletcher section under all three profiles. These overlapping windows are not independent observations. Each random-group test draws 20,000 groups of 36 complete texts: zero equalled or bettered the observed mean rank, giving add-one $p = 1/20{,}001$ and Holm-adjusted $p = .000150$ across three tests. The test assumes exchangeable labels and does not adjust for date, length, genre or shared authorship. Text sources and the database are documented by Pervez Rizvi, "Collocations and N-grams". These analyses are this book's research, not Rizvi's results; study data and scripts have not yet been publicly deposited. The database's dates and text records are used as supplied, without independently redating the plays. It includes masques, entertainments and additions as well as full-length plays.
2. The focused document comparison uses sentence- and document-bounded base-word pairs in 331 plays dated 1590–1630, with 37 in its Shakespeare group. Full bigram-frequency cosine puts Hamlet first for Confession, Confession + Case, and Confession + Case + Advice; their cross-group winning fractions are .768340, .796286 and .802078. The last combination places ten Shakespeare plays in the top twenty. Counting distinct pairs occurring in at most five candidate plays gives Ham-

let tied positions 20–37, 9–19 and 35–46 respectively. Equal-size correspondence-sample controls give median bigram winning fractions of .770 for Neville and .785 for Chamberlain; average precision, a measure emphasizing the concentration of Shakespeare plays near the top, is .310 and .275 respectively. These are controls for letter samples, not matched controls for each document combination. The play texts come from Rizvi's collection, cited in note 1. The focused pool requires at least 4,000 dialogue words and an assigned date within 1590–1630. This separate earlier study includes Pericles in its 37-play Shakespeare group and retains its original comparison pool; it has not been rerun under the principal study's new First Folio-only selection. Group statistics were recalculated from the preserved per-play scores on 28 September 2026 to correct its earlier classification; the scores and Hamlet's first-place rankings are unchanged. The comparison correspondents were processed through a shared lemma map, whereas the primary Neville samples retained their stored lemmas; normalization was therefore not identical across these controls. Its effect on small differences between correspondents remains to be tested under consistent processing.

# Testing the Affinity

Chapter 13

A study of 180 language features selected from Neville's surviving prose found a consistent advantage for the Shakespeare group across 236 plays. A Shakespeare-group play outscored a comparison play in about seven out of ten pairings. After allowing for date and length, the estimated difference was 0.44 standard deviations. It remained positive when each play was removed in turn, and when each feature was removed in turn: no single play or individually scored feature accounted for the result.[1]

The study extends the comparison beyond parallels noticed by a reader familiar with Shakespeare. It selected the language from Neville's surviving prose before scoring the plays. The result is evidence of linguistic affinity; the central question is how much that affinity reflects authorship, shared professional language or dramatic subject matter. The principal statistical test fell short of the preset significance threshold, as explained below.

## Choosing the language first

The source comparison used 165 English letters and three longer prose documents by Neville, together with 1,412 letters from the Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence, second edition. A feature had to stand out against other correspondents before it could enter the test. The three longer documents introduce a genre difference.[2]

The features included single words, consecutive phrases, and short sequences allowing intervening words. They were divided among diplomatic and epistolary language, legal and institutional language, and other lexical patterns. Each division contributed equally, as did the five feature classes within it. This prevented one abundant kind of expression from dominating the score. The selection excluded Neville's name and known transcription artifacts.

The list includes ordinary words and patterns, not just striking phrases. Actual selected features include the single word *honor*, the consecutive pair *your honor*, the consecutive phrase *the duke of*, and the ordered sequence *and … so … your … honor*. In the last example, one to three words in total may intervene while the order stays the same. These are normalized word forms used by the program, not quotations of Neville's spelling. Related forms such as *honour* and *honor* are treated alike.[3]

A phrase can therefore be common in English and still qualify if Neville uses it relatively often compared with the control letters. The question is whether the whole selected set is distributed differently across the plays. Its interest lies in that collective pattern, not in treating every occurrence of *king* or *your honor* as an individual authorship clue.

The selection program used Neville's surviving prose without loading drama or play labels. It fixed a list of 180 features and their weights before the testing program applied them to the plays; the testing program checked that the list had not changed. The updated run follows this same separation of selection and scoring. It is nevertheless a rerun of an existing study, not a fresh blind experiment: the researcher already knew the earlier play results.[3]

**Figure 13.1:** Features are selected and weighted using Neville's surviving prose, then applied to the plays. Updated analysis, 3 October 2026; see notes 2–3.

For each play, a feature counted as present or absent. Repeating it fifty times brought no more credit than using it once. A score of 0.40 means that the play contains 40 per cent of the available weighted feature credit. It does not mean that 40 per cent of its language resembles Neville, or that Neville has a 40 per cent probability of being its author.

## What the plays showed

The comparison contains the same 36 First Folio plays and 200 other plays as Chapter 12. *Pericles*, *Edward III* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* are excluded from both groups. Their average scores were 0.394 and 0.330 respectively. Shakespeare's advantage was a difference between groups, not a clean division between individual plays: *Henry VIII* had the highest complete-play score, followed closely by Chapman's *The Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron*.[4]

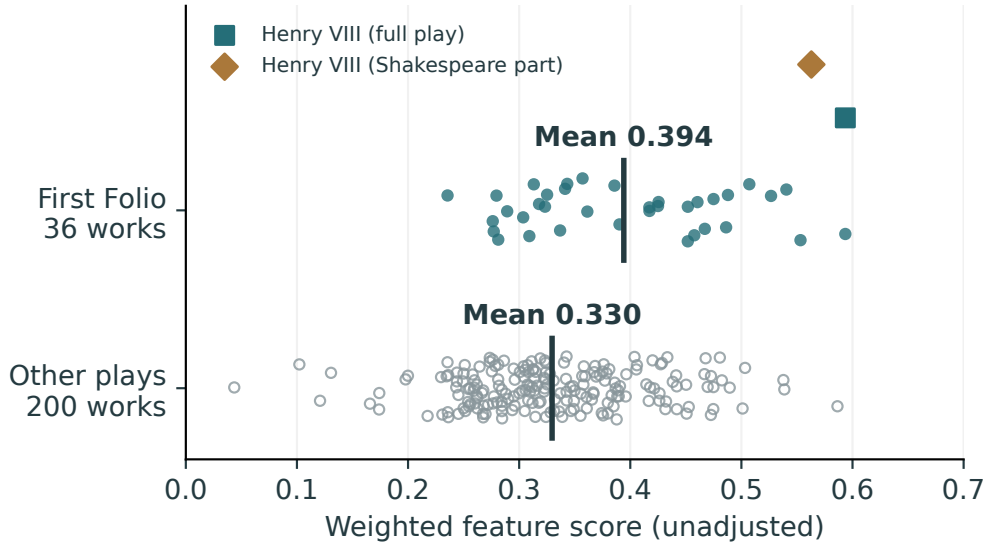



**Figure 13.2:** Each dot is one complete play; vertical strokes mark group means. A square identifies Henry VIII (full play); a diamond shows its Shakespeare part separately, excluded from group means. Scores measure weighted feature presence, not authorship probability. The distributions overlap substantially. Updated analysis; see note 4.

## The twenty highest-scoring plays

The twenty highest-scoring complete plays are numbered 1–20 below, before adjustment for date and length. *Henry VIII* (*Shakespeare part*) appears unnumbered at its score position. Bold titles identify First Folio plays and this supplementary part; the part is excluded from group statistics and model fitting, so *Henry VIII* is counted only once.

| Rank | Play | Score |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Henry VIII (full play)** | 0.5935 |
| 2 | The Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron | 0.5865 |
| | **Henry VIII (Shakespeare part)** | 0.5630 |
| 3 | **Henry V** | 0.5532 |
| 4 | **All's Well That Ends Well** | 0.5405 |
| 5 | The Hector of Germany, or The Palsgrave, Prime Elector | 0.5386 |
| 6 | When You See Me You Know Me | 0.5378 |
| 7 | **Henry VI, Part 2** | 0.5267 |
| 8 | **Richard III** | 0.5071 |
| 9 | The Conspiracy of Charles Duke of Byron | 0.5033 |
| 10 | 2 Edward the Fourth | 0.5011 |
| 11 | The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyatt | 0.4895 |
| 12 | **King Lear** | 0.4879 |
| 13 | **Hamlet** | 0.4862 |
| 14 | The Dumb Knight | 0.4824 |
| 15 | 1 Sir John Oldcastle | 0.4806 |
| 16 | **Henry IV, Part 2** | 0.4749 |
| 17 | A King and No King | 0.4748 |
| 18 | The Massacre at Paris | 0.4747 |
| 19 | The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois | 0.4726 |
| 20 | A Knack to Know a Knave | 0.4726 |

Original analysis, updated 3 October 2026; see note 4.

Eight of the top twenty plays belong to the Shakespeare group: 40 per cent of the leading twenty, against about 15 per cent of the full sample. Shakespeare is therefore substantially more prominent at the top of the ranking than his share of the sample would suggest. These are the unadjusted rankings; the model below accounts for date and length.

The main model allowed for a curved date trend and work length. The Shakespeare advantage persisted after those adjustments: 0.0327 score units, equivalent to 0.44 standard deviations. Its survival across the deletion checks shows that the pattern extends beyond any one unusually close play or feature.

The strongest standardized difference appeared in diplomatic and epistolary language: 0.45 standard deviations, compared with 0.30 for legal and institutional language and 0.29 for the remaining lexical patterns. Sequences allowing intervening words also produced larger standardized differences than exact

strings of three to five words. The strongest observed affinity thus lay in the language of correspondence and in flexible word sequences. These subsidiary comparisons did not meet the .05 threshold after adjustment for multiple testing.[5]

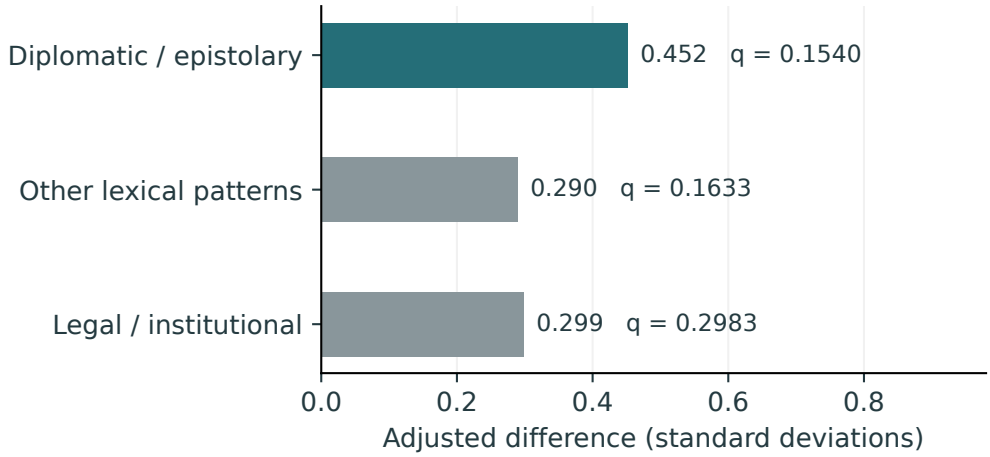



**Figure 13.3:** Diplomatic and epistolary language has the largest standardized difference. The q values adjust for three category tests; none is below .05. Updated analysis; see note 5.

The principal test compared the observed difference with 20,000 constrained reshufflings preserving date and length structure. It gave p = .1169, above the preset .05 cutoff. Under that procedure, about twelve per cent of the shuffled results matched or exceeded the observed difference. This is not the probability that the authorship hypothesis is true or false. A separate bootstrap interval was positive. It was calculated by repeatedly resampling plays within the two author groups, whereas the permutation test used reshufflings constrained by date and length. These different procedures need not give identical conclusions; the protocol assigned the primary decision to the permutation test.[6]

## How much is diplomatic language?

An additional comparison tested whether the signature recognized the language of government outside drama. It paired 719 EarlyPrint texts identified through state, diplomatic, treaty, or legal metadata with texts of similar date and length. The government-related group scored higher, especially in legal and institutional language.[7]

That result matters directly to the Neville case. The language linking his surviving prose with Shakespeare belongs in part to a documentary world he inhabited. It also leaves a live alternative explanation: dramatic treatment of diplomacy, government, and elite relationships may draw on that shared language without identifying its author. The calibration measures sensitivity to register;

it does not determine how much of the Shakespeare-group difference register explains.

Two further checks preserved the direction of the result. Excluding *Henry VIII*, *Timon of Athens* and *Titus Andronicus* reduced the standardized difference to 0.40 and gave p = 0.1867. *Pericles* was already excluded from the main comparison. Restricting the correspondence control to 1580–1620 gave an adjusted difference of 0.0360 and p = 0.0766. These are sensitivity checks, not independent replications. The main model also lacked genre and author-group adjustments, which would help assess the influence of dramatic subject matter and multiple works by the same comparison writer.[8]

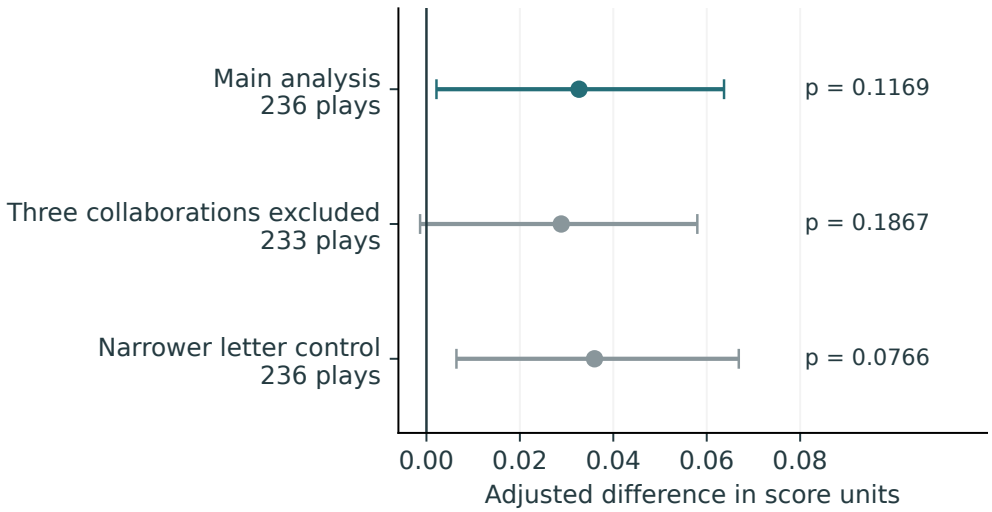



**Figure 13.4:** Dots are adjusted score differences; bars are 95% work-bootstrap intervals. The p values come from separate permutation tests. All exceed the .05 threshold. These procedures answer related questions differently; the intervals do not override the primary test. Updated analysis; see notes 6 and 8.

The earlier hand-picked parallels produced a larger effect, but Shakespeare had helped determine their selection. The value of the 180-feature study is that its program selected language from Neville's surviving prose before scoring the plays. The earlier parallels remain examples to assess individually; their larger estimate cannot replace this test.

The study establishes an observed pattern across a broad comparison set: language selected for its prominence in Neville's surviving prose occurs more strongly in the Shakespeare group, and the adjusted advantage survives every reported single-play and single-feature deletion. That is a substantive result, not merely another list of attractive quotations. It supports taking the Neville–Shakespeare linguistic relationship seriously alongside the historical evidence. The primary test did not reach the preset significance threshold, and this design

cannot decide whether authorship, professional language or dramatic subject matter explains the affinity.

## Notes and sources

1. Original analysis for this book, rerun 3 October 2026 using corpus version 26, the same deduplicated XML as Chapter 12, and the established selection and testing procedure. The adjusted coefficient is 0.0326594; divided by the residual standard deviation from the date-and-length model it is 0.443865. The unadjusted cross-group winning fraction is 0.690972. These measure different aspects of the result. This rerun changes the source corpus and restricts the play selection; it is not independent replication.
2. *Parsed Corpus of Early English Correspondence*, second edition (2022), compiled by the CEEC Project Team; annotated by Ann Taylor, Arja Nurmi, Anthony Warner, Susan Pintzuk, and Terttu Nevalainen; revised, corrected, and lemmatized by Beatrice Santorini. See the public repository and documentation. The control comprises 1,412 lemmatized letter units dated 1560–1625 and 665,762 tokens. The Neville inventory contains 171 documentary records after removal of the duplicate 1606 letter; excluding three French records leaves 168 analytical records (165 letters and three longer documents) and 138,057 normalized lemma tokens. Nested quoted and enclosed material remains. The XML and record selection are the same as Chapter 12, but this study retains its established normalization, including numerical tokens; Chapter 12's alphabetic-only count is therefore lower. Neither count is the separately defined descriptive census in Chapter 11.
3. Original analysis: 180 features in fifteen cells, formed by three language categories and five feature classes, with twelve features per cell. The classes were single lemmas, consecutive two-lemma strings, consecutive three-to-five-lemma strings, and ordered three- and four-lemma sequences omitting between one and three words in total. Positive distinctiveness weights were limited and normalized within each cell; cells contributed equally. The protocol and checksum record constitute an internal freeze, not independently verified public preregistration. In the updated run the feature set was rebuilt using the established source-side rules before rescoring the plays; all 180 selected features were retained, with slightly revised weights after deduplication. The earlier target results were already known. The illustrative features in the text are actual selected patterns, not independent historical quotations. The numerical results are original research for this book; public deposit of the full study materials remains outstanding. Some scored features overlap, so removing one feature does not remove every feature containing the same expression. The reported deletion checks concern individual features, not whole families of overlapping expressions.
4. Original work-score analysis, 236 plays dated 1590–1615: 36 First Folio plays and 200 others. Shakespeare-group mean 0.394180; comparison mean 0.329628. Henry VIII (full play) scored 0.593528; its Shakespeare part, 0.562960; The Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron, 0.586460. The supplementary part uses the database's Shakespeare division; no contiguous or skip-gram feature bridges an omitted passage. The table scores are not length-matched; the full play has more opportunities to contain a feature. Only complete plays enter the group models. The selection follows Pervez Rizvi's play catalogue, part of his *Collocations and N-grams* collection of 527 plays, with Pericles, Edward III and The Two Noble Kinsmen excluded from both groups.

The database's dates and attribution divisions are used as supplied. Rizvi identifies EarlyPrint and Folger Digital Texts as his sources. This study applies its own normalization; full text-by-text reproducibility materials remain to be deposited.

5. Rerun secondary analyses. Diplomatic/epistolary language: standardized effect 0.452, adjusted q = 0.1540; legal/institutional: 0.299, q = 0.2983; remaining lexical category: 0.290, q = 0.1633. Benjamini–Hochberg adjustment was applied within this three-test family. Ordered three- and four-word sequences had standardized effects 0.483 and 0.422, both with q = 0.1812 within the separate five-class family. The consecutive three-to-five-word class had effect 0.274, q = 0.3528. None of these adjusted secondary tests met .05; they do not replace the primary result.
6. Rerun primary analysis: score regressed on First Folio-group membership, centered year, year squared, and log token count. Freedman–Lane residual permutations operated within twenty period-and-length blocks. Of 20,000 permutations, 2,338 matched or exceeded the observed coefficient; the add-one calculation is 2,339/20,001 = 0.1169442. The 95% interval from 10,000 work resamples within groups was 0.002146–0.063705. The interval and permutation test use different procedures; the protocol assigned the primary decision to the latter. Leave-one-work coefficients ranged from 0.025345 to 0.036999; leave-one-feature coefficients from 0.031141 to 0.034180.
7. Rerun calibration using EarlyPrint: 719 metadata-selected proxy texts matched by date and length to 719 other texts. Mean paired score difference 0.059540; bootstrap 95% interval 0.051701–0.067477; two-sided sign-flip p = 0.000050. The legal/institutional component's mean difference was 0.142353. Metadata selection supplies proxies for register, rather than individually verified genre classifications.
8. Rerun sensitivity analyses. The three-work exclusion left 233 plays, including 33 First Folio plays: coefficient 0.028848, standardized effect 0.399361, p = 0.186741; work-bootstrap 95% interval -0.001361–0.057986. The narrower correspondence control produced coefficient 0.035981, standardized effect 0.494853, p = 0.076646; interval 0.006421–0.066860. Neither is an independent author-contrast replication. Supplementary Henry VIII parts do not enter these analyses.

# The Ambassador's Vocabulary

Chapter 14

Does a vocabulary chosen from Neville's surviving prose during the embassy years become more prominent in Shakespeare's works written around the same time? An ordinary term such as "passport" belonged to the business his dispatches recorded, alongside audiences, treaties, proposals and commissions. The study assembled a panel of nineteen diplomatic and administrative terms to test whether their timing in Shakespeare differed from their timing in other drama.[1]

In the selected sample, the terms rise more sharply in Shakespeare around 1599–1603 than in comparison drama. The observed pattern is clear, although the direct estimate of the difference between the two changes remains uncertain. The terms occur at broadly similar rates in the earlier Shakespeare works and comparison drama. The Shakespeare rate then rises in works assigned to 1599–1600, reaches its greatest concentration among the four selected periods in 1601–03, and falls partway back thereafter. Comparison drama changes much less.

The Shakespeare sample contains forty-one works, including three poetic units as well as plays; the comparison sample contains 203 plays. The overall rates therefore describe Shakespeare's works, while the five works in the peak period are all plays.[2]

## The rise during and after the embassy

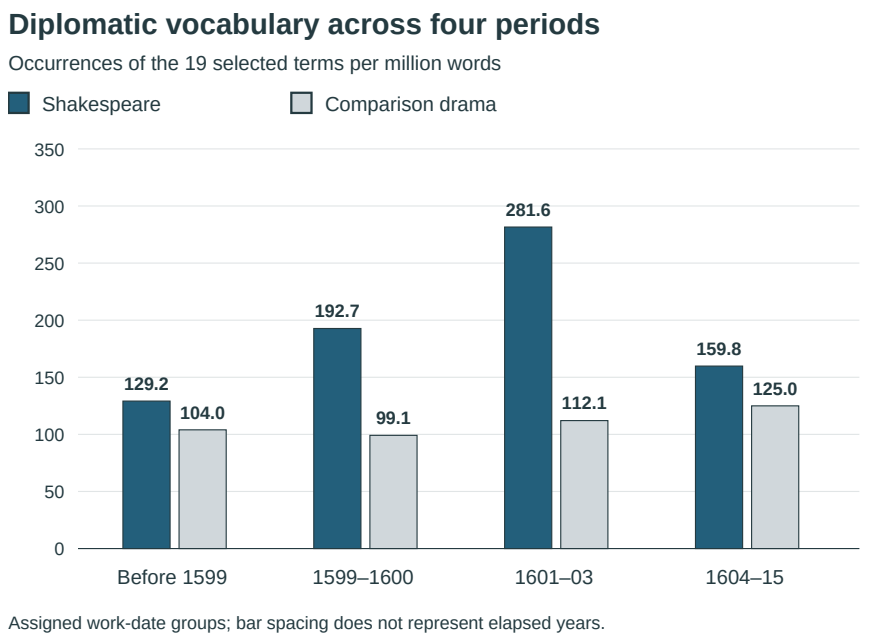



**Figure 14.1:** Diplomatic vocabulary in Shakespeare and comparison drama. Rates use the nineteen terms and assigned periods described here; study counts and sample definitions are given in notes 2–4.

| Assigned period | Shakespeare works | Shakespeare uses per million words | Comparison drama uses per million | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Before 1599 | 20 | 129.2 | 104.0 | 1.24 |
| 1599–1600 | 3 | 192.7 | 99.1 | 1.94 |
| 1601–03 | 5 | 281.6 | 112.1 | 2.51 |
| 1604–15 | 13 | 159.8 | 125.0 | 1.28 |

The five plays assigned to 1601–03 are *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *Measure for Measure*. Together they contain thirty-four occurrences of panel terms in 120,752 words of text. Their rate is 2.18 times the earlier Shakespeare rate and 2.51 times the contemporary comparison rate.[3]

## A vocabulary defined from Neville

The terms were selected from Neville's surviving prose and comparison drama, without separately consulting the target-group counts, titles or dates. Two collaborative works also occur in the comparison pool used for selection; a fully disjoint rerun is needed to test their effect. Chapter 13 asks which plays score higher against a fixed linguistic profile; this study asks when a smaller panel of vocabulary becomes more frequent. The samples overlap but are not identical, and the studies are not independent replications.

Each term had to belong to the declared diplomatic or administrative vocabulary, occur at least five times across at least five Neville documents, first appear in his surviving record in 1599 or 1600, and be at least fifteen times as frequent per word in Neville as in the comparison plays.[4]

The choice of vocabulary and thresholds belonged to an exploratory research programme. The comparison drama helped select the terms before serving as a baseline.

The full panel is: advertise, advertisement, allowance, audience, avow, commissioner, communication, difficulty, insist, mediation, memorial, negotiation, overture, parliament, passport, propose, proposition, secretary, and treaty.

These are dictionary forms, counted across spelling and inflectional variations. Some have several meanings: an audience may be a formal reception or a body of spectators. The aggregate measures a concentration of vocabulary; particular passages show how that vocabulary works in the drama. Nor does a word's first appearance in the surviving letters establish when Neville first learned or used it. The survival pattern matters: the collection described in Chapter 11 contains only seven letter records before 1599, against ninety-six in 1599–1600. Selecting first surviving uses in those two years may therefore partly select the point at which the archive becomes abundant, rather than the moment Neville acquired the vocabulary.[2]

## Dates and dramatic uses

The rise also survives several plausible changes of date. Moving *Measure for Measure* to 1604, *All's Well* after 1603, and *Hamlet* to 1600 leaves the remaining 1601–03 plays at 327.3 uses per million words. That final grouping contains only *Twelfth Night* and *Troilus and Cressida*, so it supports the direction of the change across these alternative dates, without fixing its exact year.[5]

*Troilus and Cressida* has the widest range: eight of the nineteen terms, appearing twelve times. *Hamlet* has nine occurrences across three panel terms. The difference makes *Troilus* particularly useful for examining the vocabulary in action, in scenes of council, negotiation, and prisoner exchange.

## Negotiation on stage

In *Troilus and Cressida*, the vocabulary helps conduct the business of the war. Calchas asks the Greek leaders to exchange their prisoner Antenor for his daughter Cressida. Antenor's value lies in his importance to Trojan affairs: without him, their negotiations must slow. Agamemnon approves the exchange and sends Diomedes to carry it out. Negotiation determines who can return home.[6]

Later in the same scene, Patroclus urges Achilles to act before his refusal to fight destroys his standing (*Troilus and Cressida*, 3.3):

> PATROCLUS [...]
> **Omission** to do what is necessary
> Seals a **commission** to a blank of danger,
> And danger, like an ague, subtly taints
> Even then when they sit idly in the sun.

The administrative language makes the warning precise: failing to act gives danger its authority. These two words belong to the play's broader administrative register; they are not among the nineteen terms counted in the updated test.[6]

## How well does the pattern hold?

Removing any individual term or peak-period play preserves the rise. Work-level resampling gives a 95% interval of approximately 1.48–4.03 for the peak's ratio to contemporary comparison drama, and 1.18–4.11 for its ratio to earlier Shakespeare. A stricter comparison asks whether Shakespeare's rise exceeds the change in other drama: the estimate is 2.02, but its interval, 0.91–4.48, includes no difference. The intervals remain broad because the peak contains only five plays.[7]

An exploratory calibration asked whether other panels of words concentrated in Neville's prose would show a similar rise. About 5.7% of 20,000 matched panels rose at least as sharply within Shakespeare. The observed rise exceeds most matched panels, but does not reach the conventional 5% level in this comparison. Matching was imperfect, and the exercise was designed after the original pattern had been observed.[8]

A search across the three-year windows tested found its largest concentration in 1600–02, rather than exactly 1601–03. That maximum was not unusual after allowing for the search across all eligible windows. The result supports a broad change around the embassy and its aftermath, without isolating a uniquely exceptional three-year period.[9]

The updated study also failed to establish that Shakespeare reproduced Neville's local network of word associations. Its evidence is a rise in vocabulary, not a personal linguistic fingerprint. Diplomatic language could reach a dramatist through books, news, conversation, or collaborators. The comparatively

steady rate in other drama makes a general theatrical fashion a less satisfactory explanation, while differences of genre and subject matter still require consideration.

A set of terms defined from his surviving diplomatic record becomes substantially more prominent in Shakespeare around the embassy and its aftermath. The group result complements the particular documents and passages elsewhere in the book; it asks why this change in Shakespeare's language accompanies this documented change in Neville's working life.

## Notes and sources

1. Neville's French embassy began in 1599. See Andrew Thrush, "NEVILLE, Sir Henry I (1564–1615)," *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, and Neville's dispatches in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, vol. 1 (London, 1725), especially the letter of 13 July 1599, pp. 61–66. The detailed documentary account appears in the earlier chapter on Neville's public career. First surviving word dates describe the available archive, not the acquisition of vocabulary. For the passport example, see Neville to Cecil, 27 February 1599/1600 O.S., Winwood I, p. 156, recording a passport given to Gowrie; the same page contains his later request for one for Lord Hume. This February letter belongs to 1600 in modern year reckoning.
2. For the comparison collection, see Pervez Rizvi, "Collocations and N-grams", documenting modern-spelling, lemmatized texts of 527 plays derived from EarlyPrint and Folger. This study retains 203 comparison plays assigned dates 1590–1615. The target contains 41 works and 900,402 tokens: plays and three poetic units. The 358-word *Phoenix and Turtle*, which contains no panel term, is excluded throughout, including the calibration. This is not identical to Chapter 13's dramatic sample. *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* occur in both target and comparison selections; removing them from the latter leaves the earlier three periods unchanged and changes the final period's ratio only from 1.279 to 1.273. The studies share material and should not be treated as independent replications.
3. Updated work-level counts, 16 September 2026. The four Shakespeare periods contain respectively 54, 13, 34 and 47 panel occurrences in 418,093, 67,455, 120,752 and 294,102 tokens. Comparison drama contains 39, 19, 27 and 118 plays, with 66, 39, 53 and 278 panel occurrences in 634,764, 393,359, 472,918 and 2,224,464 tokens. The peak/pre-Shakespeare ratio is 2.180036; the peak/contemporary-comparison ratio is 2.512433. These are aggregate vocabulary rates using assigned work dates, without a claim of exact composition years or identical senses in every occurrence.
4. Original analysis for this book, begun in July 2026 and rerun on 16 September 2026 using corpus version 25. The source selection used 169 English documentary records and 139,145 normalized lemma tokens, excluding three French records and an identified editorial tail. Nineteen terms satisfy the stated frequency, dispersion, first-surviving-year and enrichment gates. Of the earlier panel, commission no longer meets the fifteenfold enrichment threshold (54 occurrences; 13.2054-fold enrichment), while omission has only two instances in two documents, below both minima. Including the French records does not change the selected terms. The rate-ratio selection adds 0.5 to both corpus counts. The semantic field was curated, and the numerical rule uses Neville and comparison-drama counts without a Shakespeare-count criterion. This is an updated exploratory analysis, not externally preregistered or fully blinded research. This September run retains both witnesses of one 1606 letter and embedded quoted or enclosed material; Chapters 12–13 use later deduplicated selections, and Chapter 11's descriptive census also excludes embedded material. The record-dispersion counts therefore do not count wholly independent communications.

5. Updated targeted date sensitivity with the same nineteen terms, comparison dates fixed and *The Phoenix and Turtle* excluded. The Royal Shakespeare Company's timeline dates *Measure for Measure* to 1604, *All's Well* to 1603–06 and *Hamlet* around 1600. Moving *Measure* alone gives 312.6 uses per million in four 1601–03 plays; also placing *All's Well* after 1603 gives 315.2 in three; moving *Hamlet* to 1600 as well gives 327.3 in two, while the 1599–1600 rate becomes 225.0. The pre-1599 rate remains 129.2. These are selected boundary checks, not a complete remapping to RSC dates or new significance tests.
6. Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 3.3, Folger Through Line Numbers 1877–1895 (Calchas's request and the exchange) and 2100–2103 (Patroclus). The quotation preserves Folger's four lines and punctuation. Negotiation belongs to the selected panel; omission and commission illustrate the broader register but are excluded from the current quantitative panel. These passages are not presented as exact phrase matches with Neville. *Troilus* has twelve occurrences across eight panel terms; *Hamlet* has nine across three.
7. Updated nineteen-term work bootstrap: 20,000 resamples, seed 1599. The peak/comparison 95% interval is 1.475308–4.033447; the peak/pre-Shakespeare interval is 1.181538–4.114480. The ratio of the Shakespeare change to the comparison-drama change is 2.022578, interval 0.906613–4.476176; one denotes equal proportional changes. Leaving out each peak play gives comparison ratios from 2.071411 to 2.789416; leaving out each term gives 2.216853–2.959088. Every deletion preserves the rise within Shakespeare too. These checks use the same data and are not independent replications.
8. Updated exploratory matched-panel calibration: 41 target works, 20,000 accepted panels, seed 1599, forty nearest candidate neighbours per selected term. The internal-rise ratio is 2.180036, empirical upper-tail probability .057347; the peak/comparison ratio has probability .150192. Candidate selection and matching use current Neville frequency, document dispersion, first year and comparison-drama counts, without Shakespeare counts. Controls are drawn without duplicate terms within a panel. Matching remains imperfect: the selected panel averages 42.5 Neville occurrences per term, against a matched-panel median of 27.0. The calibration was devised after the original pattern had been observed; it is not a confirmatory authorship test.
9. Updated nineteen-term checks: the unrestricted three-year scan selects 1600–02 (three works, 24 panel occurrences in 76,139 tokens), with a rate ratio of 2.095310 against the remaining years. Across 20,000 permutations of whole-work dates, seed 1900, maximum-scan p = .380981. Windows run from 1590–92 through 1611–13, requiring at least two works inside and five outside. In a twenty-token local-network check, the selected panel gives 102 distinct-term pair events in Neville's 1599–1603 records and none in peak Shakespeare; there is no positive network similarity. For the broader 83-term diplomatic core, Shakespeare–Neville similarities at eight and twenty tokens are not exceptional against five-work samples from contemporary comparison drama (20,000 draws, seed 1603; upper-tail p = .355232 and .186691). These checks do not establish a personal pattern of local word associations.

# The Northumberland Manuscript

Chapter 15

The Northumberland manuscript is a collection of Elizabethan political and literary writings, now at Alnwick Castle; its fire-damaged outer cover leaf has attracted particular attention. The collection was found among papers at Northumberland House in London in 1867. The cover carries a contents list surrounded and overlaid by names, phrases and pen trials. Its edges are burnt and large portions are missing; much of the surviving writing is faint.[1]

William Shakespeare, Francis Bacon and the Neville name crowd this one leaf. Shakespeare's name appears repeatedly, in different forms, beside the titles of *Richard II* and *Richard III*. A passage from *The Rape of Lucrece* is written among the scribbles. Near the top are two entries I read as **Nevills**, accompanied by the Neville family's punning motto, **Ne vile velis**—"wish nothing base."[2]

In the photographs published by Folger's *Shakespeare Documented*, the densely written side is the recto, folio 46r. The verso, folio 46v, is the reverse: it carries a much smaller group of pen trials and a collection stamp, with most of the surface blank. The names, contents list and *Lucrece* passage discussed here are on the recto. Older descriptions call this opening folio 1 or page i.[3]

Read the overview through four landmarks: A, the Neville entries and motto near the upper left; B, a cluster of Shakespeare names among the lower pen trials; C, the two Richard titles near the foot of the contents list; and D, the short broken lines from *Lucrece* lower on the left. The enlarged details below supply the readings; a contents entry is not a surviving manuscript of the named play.[3,4,5,6]

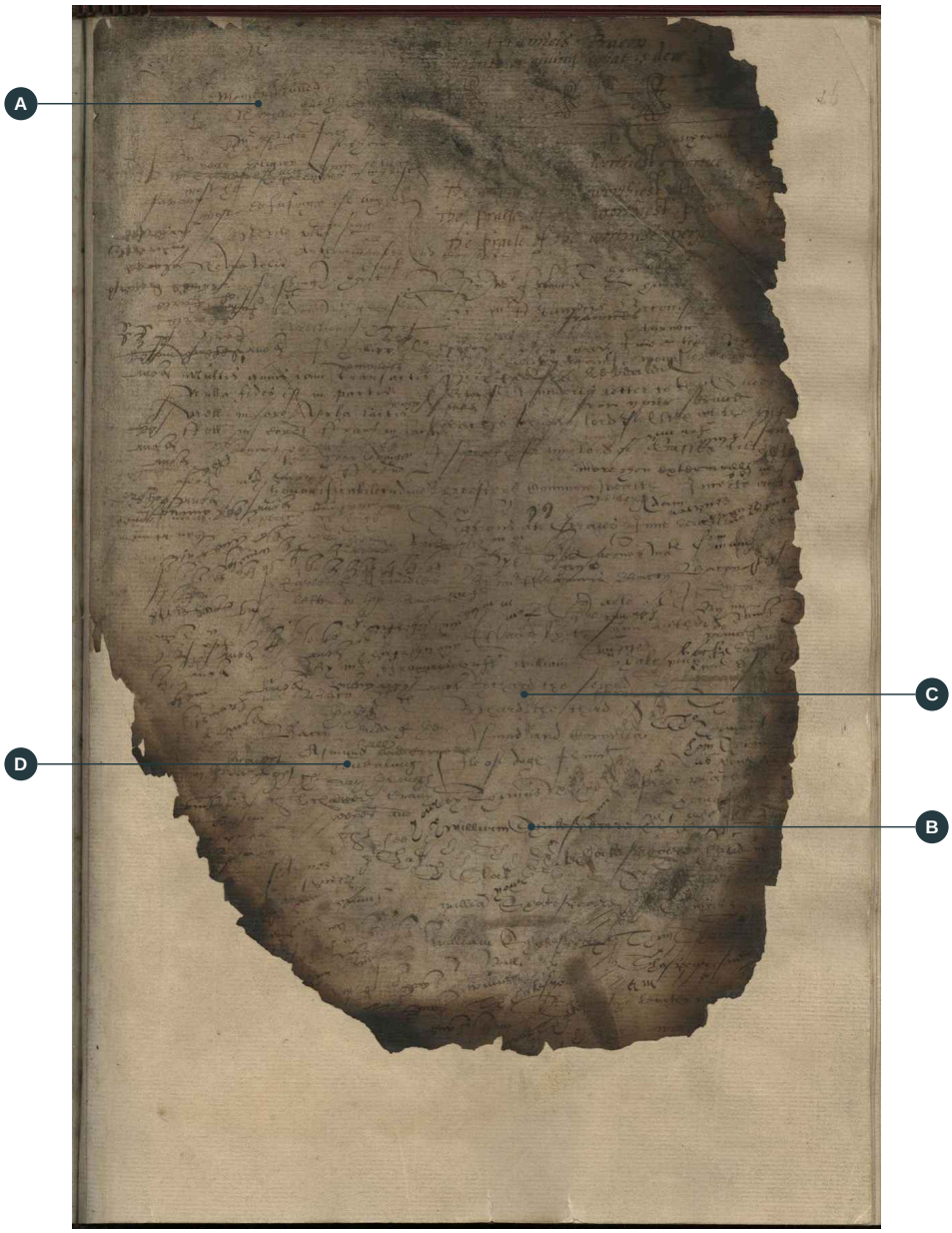



**Figure 15.1:** Reading guide to the densely written recto, DNP MS 525, f.46r. A: Neville names and motto; B: one cluster of Shakespeare names; C: the Richard II and Richard III entries; D: the Lucrece fragment. Margin letters are editorial locators; the complete photograph is retained. Photograph: Collection of the Duke of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle, via Shakespeare Documented, Folger Shakespeare Library.

## Two “Nevills” and the family motto

The two surname entries stand in the upper-left part of the recto. I read both as **Nevills**, with a final **s**; the upper occurrence is particularly faint. The manuscript’s u/v form can be rendered **Neuills**. The inverted details reproduced below make the faint strokes easier to distinguish, with red marks beneath the final letters.[7]

The final **s** permits a possessive reading—“Nevill’s”—and thus the possibility of an ownership mark. The nearby **Ne vile velis** makes the family connection explicit. The motto appears twice as well. Frank Burgoyne’s 1904 edition had already recorded two occurrences of the surname, transcribed as *Nevill*, and proposed Henry Neville as the person for whom the collection was made or to whom it belonged.[2]

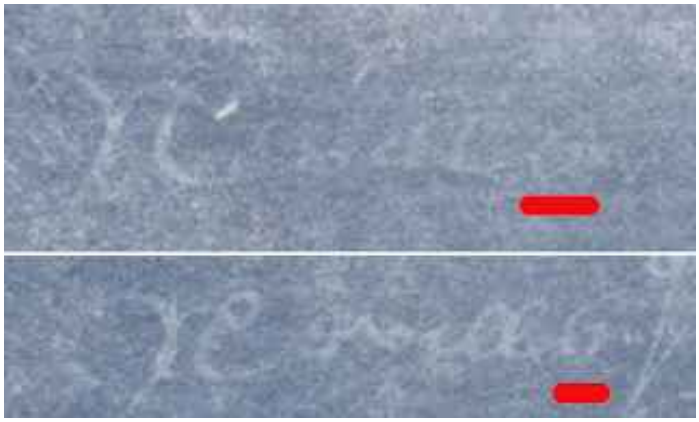


**Figure 15.2:** The two proposed Nevills readings in inverted details; red marks locate the proposed final s in each. The upper occurrence is particularly faint. Source photograph: Collection of the Duke of Northumberland, via Shakespeare Documented.

## Shakespeare, Bacon and the listed works

The names are not confined to a single heading. **William Shakespeare** recurs across the page, along with shortened forms and trials of its opening letters. **Francis Bacon**, **Bacon** and **Baco** recur too. They appear among other writing, sometimes crossed by it, and in several orientations. The formal contents list and the surrounding pen trials occupy the same sheet.[4]

Near the foot of the contents list is this sequence:

William Shakespeare
Rychard the second
Rychard the third
Asmund and Cornelia
Ile of doges frmnt
by Thomas Nashe [&] inferior plaiers

The first two titles identify Shakespeare's *Richard II* and *Richard III*. *Asmund and Cornelia*, also written elsewhere on the page, is a lost play. The next entry describes a fragment of *The Isle of Dogs* and names Thomas Nashe and "inferior players." None of these four play texts survives in the volume.[5]

The list also includes speeches for the Earl of Essex at the tilt, a speech for the Earl of Sussex, and "Orations at Gray's Inn revels." These are court and legal-house entertainments, alongside the plays. Other entries name Bacon's *Of Tribute*, his essays, *Leicester's Commonwealth*, and "Philipp against Monsieur"—Philip Sidney's letter opposing Elizabeth's proposed marriage to the French duke of Anjou. Bacon's writings, Sidney's letter and part of *Leicester's Commonwealth* remain in the collection; the contents list therefore preserves both surviving material and works now absent.[8]

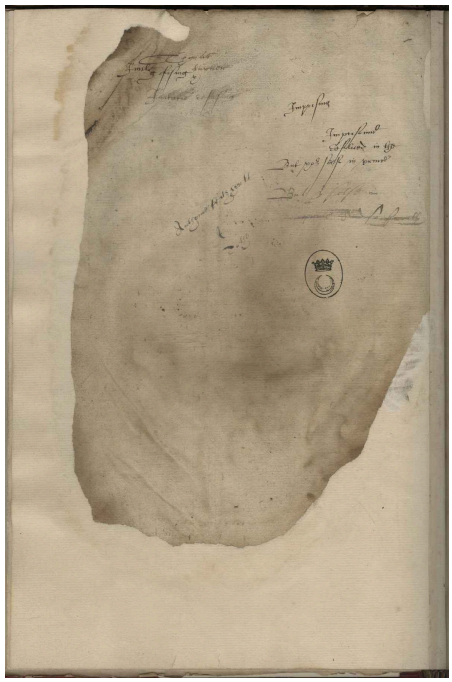


**Figure 15.3:** The reverse of the same flyleaf, f.46v. Its sparse writing contrasts with the crowded recto. Photograph: Collection of the Duke of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle, via Shakespeare Documented.

## A line from Lucrece

The flyleaf's version of a line from *The Rape of Lucrece* differs from the published poem by one conspicuous word. With spelling modernized, the manuscript reads:

> **Revealing**
> **day through**
> **every cranny**
> peeps **and**
> see
> —Northumberland manuscript, f.46r

Shakespeare's poem has:

> **Revealing day through every cranny** spies
> **And** seems to point her out where she sits weeping,
> —*The Rape of Lucrece*, lines 1086–1087

The manuscript substitutes **"peeps"** for **"spies"**. The fragment continues "and see"; "Shak" is written below. The poem was first published in 1594, placing this literary reference within a few years of the collection's usual dating, around 1597–1598.[6]

The page also has **Honorificabiletudine**, a form of the long Latin word used by Costard in *Love's Labour's Lost*, 5.1: **honorificabilitudinitatibus**. It joins the two Shakespeare play titles, the *Lucrece* fragment and the repeated names on this single surviving cover.[9]

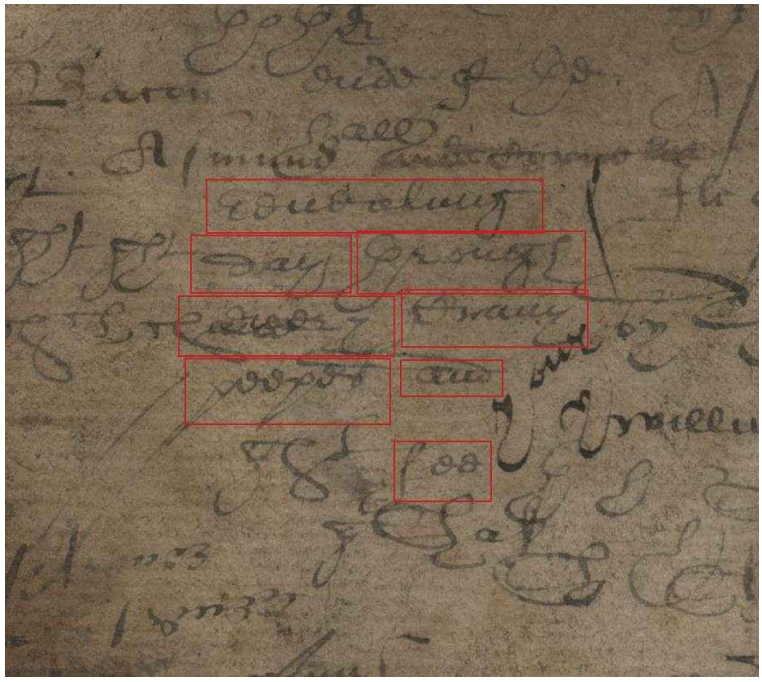


**Figure 15.4:** The Lucrece passage on the recto, enlarged from the photograph. Red boxes identify the individual words in the transcription. “Peepes” replaces the poem’s “spies”; “Shak” appears below. Source photograph: Collection of the Duke of Northumberland, via Shakespeare Documented.

## Notes and sources

1. Burgoyne, pp. ix–x, printing John Bruce’s account of the discovery and the burnt and singed papers. Bruce associated the damage with an earlier fire at Northumberland House.
2. Frank J. Burgoyne, ed., *Collotype Facsimile & Type Transcript of an Elizabethan Manuscript Preserved at Alnwick Castle, Northumberland* (London: Longmans, Green, 1904), pp. xvi–xviii and the “Modern Script Rendering of MS. Folio 1,” digitized edition. For the final-s reading, see Ken Feinstein’s 2019 discussion below. Burgoyne’s ownership suggestion is conjectural; his accompanying genealogy on p. xvi incorrectly treats Elizabeth Bacon, Neville’s stepmother, as his mother. See Chapter 1 for the family relationships.
3. *Shakespeare Documented*, “Shakespeare’s name, plays, and poems included in the Northumberland manuscript”, Alnwick Castle, DNP MS 525, ff.46r–v, c.1598. Peter Beal, *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts 1450–1700*, Alnwick Castle, MS 525, describes the damaged, window-mounted volume and dates it c.1597. The recto/verso labels here follow the modern photographic record.
4. Burgoyne, p. xvii and the “Modern Script Rendering” plate, records the repetitions of Shakespeare/William Shakespeare and Baco/Bacon/Francis Bacon, together with initials and abbreviated forms. The photograph shows the overlap and changing orientations.
5. Misha Teramura, “Asmund and Cornelia,” *Lost Plays Database*, updated 9 March 2016, “Historical Records”; Burgoyne, pp. xii–xiii. The displayed list follows Teramura, with the superscript fragment abbreviation placed on the line. The ampersand in brackets is editorial. The list may

record texts once included in the collection; the surviving volume does not contain the four plays.

6. Burgoyne, p. xvii, preserves the short manuscript lines; Beal, *CELM*, ShW 5, identifies line 1086 and part of 1087. William Shakespeare, *Lucrece*, lines 1086–1087, Folger Shakespeare Library. The manuscript quotation is modernized in spelling; its broken lineation is retained. Burgoyne suggested that "see Shak" referred to Shakespeare; CELM instead includes "and see" within the fragment of the poem's next line.
7. Ken Feinstein, "Part 1: Henry Neville, Shakespeare, and the Northumberland Manuscript," 26 October 2019, identifies the possible final s in both names and illustrates an inverted view. "Nevills" follows that reading; Burgoyne's published transcription omits the final s. The name details are enlargements of the same photograph, not independent witnesses. Ownership remains an interpretation of the entries.
8. Burgoyne, pp. xi–xiii. "Tilt" refers to a tournament; the speeches and revels entries should not all be counted as separate surviving plays. For the surviving Bacon works and Sidney's letter, see Beal, *CELM*, MS 525, entries BcF 319, BcF 310, BcF 322 and SiP 182. For the surviving *Leicester's Commonwealth* fragment, see Burgoyne, p. 75, and the facsimile plates labelled 63–90. Burgoyne describes a little less than half of the work as surviving. Beal, *CELM*, LeC 66, likewise records the incomplete copy in Alnwick Castle, MS 525, pp. 63–90.
9. Burgoyne, p. xvi, reads "Honorificabiletudine." Compare Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, 5.1. Related forms have a history before Shakespeare; the two spellings are not identical.

# Tacitus in Neville's Hands

Chapter 16

The Audley End copy of Justus Lipsius's 1574 edition of Tacitus contains hundreds of annotations by Henry Neville and Henry Savile.[1] We cannot be sure when they were written. As Chapter 2 shows, Savile appears to have clarified and supplemented Neville's imperial genealogy on the rear end page, suggesting some work during their studies together.

Neville's interest in Tacitus continued through his political career. Four surviving documents show him quoting or adapting the historian, including two of his most important writings: his confession after the Essex rebellion and his *Advice* to King James on Parliament. The table gives the Latin and an English translation; each use is examined below.

| Document | Neville's Latin and translation | Source and application |
|---|---|---|
| Letter to Robert Cecil during the French embassy, 24 September 1599 | *beneficia eo usque laeta sunt dum videntur exolvi posse; ubi multum antevenere, pro gratia odium redditur* (Benefits are welcome so long as they seem repayable; when they far exceed repayment, hatred is returned instead of gratitude)[2] | *Annals* 4.18: Tiberius's resentment of Silius's services explains the danger in Henri IV's debt to Elizabeth.[3] |
| Confession after the Essex rebellion, 2 March 1601 | *non laudantur nisi peracta* (They are not praised unless carried through). Neville adds that the action "would be interpreted by the success."[4] | *Histories* 1.38: Otho's encouragement to complete a coup becomes Neville's explanation of its danger. |
| Letter to Ralph Winwood after Neville's release, 11 March 1606 | *an hos satias ceperit cum omnia acceperint, an illos cum omnia tribuerint?* (Has weariness overtaken those who have received everything, or those who have given everything?)[5] | *Annals* 3.30: Neville reverses the order and applies the question to Dunbar's possible withdrawal. |
| *Advice* on Parliament (acknowledged 14 May 1614) | *seu bene, seu male facta premunt* (Whether done well or badly, actions weigh against him)[6] | *Histories* 1.7: the hated ruler's predicament explains James's need to restore trust. |

## When gratitude turns to hatred

Writing to Robert Cecil from Paris on 24 September 1599, during his French embassy, Neville invoked Tacitus to explain the danger in Henri IV's debt to Elizabeth:

> Besides your Honor remembreth the saying of Tacitus, *beneficia eo usque laeta sunt dum videntur exolvi posse; ubi multum antevenere, pro gratia odium redditur* (benefits are welcome so long as they seem repayable; when they far exceed repayment, hatred is returned instead of gratitude).[2]

English aid might leave the French king feeling burdened by an obligation rather than bound by thanks.

Tacitus's example was Gaius Silius, whose claim that his troops had preserved Tiberius's throne made his services intolerable to the emperor. Neville applied that account of a ruler's resentment towards a servant to the relationship between Henri IV and Elizabeth.[3]

## A coup judged by its outcome

In his confession after the Essex rising, Neville recalled his response to the proposed armed entry into the court:

> that this was an action of the nature of those which, as Tacitus saith, *non laudantur nisi peracta* (they are not praised unless carried through), and would be interpreted by the success;[4]

The source is Otho's speech to the troops in *Histories* 1.38:

> *nullus cunctationis locus est in eo consilio quod non potest laudari nisi peractum* (There is no room for hesitation in an undertaking which cannot be praised unless carried through)[4]

Neville's wording is shorter and plural, referring to a class of actions rather than a single undertaking. His English gloss makes the dependence on success explicit. Otho presents the danger as a reason to finish the coup without delay; Neville uses the same thought to expose the risk of the proposed enterprise.

## Who has had enough?

On 11 March 1606, Neville wrote to Winwood about the Earl of Dunbar's possible retirement. Dunbar had gone to Scotland:

> and hath already put away some of his officers, and intends to put away the rest, as it is thought with a purpose to retire wholly, *an hos satias ceperit cum omnia acceperint, an illos cum omnia tribuerint?* (has weariness overtaken those who have received everything, or those who have given everything?)[5]

Neville adapts *Annals* 3.30, where Tacitus considers why favour seldom lasts:

> *an satias capit aut illos cum omnia tribuerunt aut hos cum iam nihil reliquum est quod cupiant* (whether weariness overtakes either those who have given everything, or those who have nothing left to desire)[5]

Neville reverses Tacitus's order, putting the recipients first, and balances receiving everything against giving everything. Richard Grenewey's English translation of 1598 keeps Tacitus's order and the longer description of recipients with nothing left to desire.

## When every action is ill taken

Near the close of his *Advice* on Parliament, Neville explained why restoring goodwill mattered before seeking further financial support:

> whereas otherwise whiles dislikes continue *seu bene, seu male facta premunt* (whether done well or badly, actions weigh against him).[6]

The phrase comes from the early printed text of *Histories* 1.7. Tacitus's preceding words, *et inviso semel principe* (and once a ruler is hated), supply its setting.

The tag concludes an argument about James's reputation and his relations with Parliament. Any new proposal would be judged against earlier grievances.

## Macbeth and Henry V

*Macbeth*'s assassination soliloquy turns on the hope that killing Duncan might settle everything. The maxim Neville quoted in his confession makes approval depend on completion, while his English gloss turns on success. Chapter 31 places the passages together and reproduces Neville's handwritten words.[4]

In *Henry V*, the king's disguised night visit among his soldiers follows the sequence George R. Price identified in Tacitus's account of Germanicus: concealing his rank, moving through the camp at night and hearing himself praised. Chapter 22 develops that comparison.[7]

## The father and son in 3 Henry VI

In Henry Savile's 1591 translation of Tacitus's *Histories* (3.25), a soldier discovers that the enemy he has mortally wounded is his father. In *3 Henry VI*, the same sequence unfolds: the killing, the search for valuables, recognition and the grieving appeal for pardon. The table quotes the 1623 First Folio.[8]

| Sequence | Tacitus, translated by Savile (1591) | *3 Henry VI*, 2.5: First Folio (1623) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. He fatally wounds the man he is fighting. | "**having wounded him deadly**" | "This man whom hand to hand **I slew in fight**" |
| 2. He searches the body for valuables. | "going about to rifle him" | "May be possessed with some store of crowns,<br>And I that (haply) take them from him now" |
| 3. He discovers that the man is his father. | "**came into knowledge of him**" | "Who's this? Oh God! **It is my father's face**" |
| 4. He weeps and asks his father's forgiveness. | "with tears and lamentable voice he besought his father's ghost, not to impute this impiety unto him, nor abhor and detest him as a parricide" | "And pardon, father, for I knew not thee.<br>My tears shall wipe away these bloody marks" |

The central sequence already appears in *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, the 1595 octavo. The Folio includes two further points of contact with Tacitus: the son's tears and his father's having been pressed into service by his master, the Earl of Warwick. David Womersley identifies the accumulation of circumstances as the important connection. The general horror of fathers and sons killing one another was familiar; recognition while searching the body, followed by grief and an appeal for forgiveness, gives this comparison its particular force.[9]

## Notes and sources

1. Robert Sidney's annotated Tacitus at the British Library (C.142.e.13) is a copy of Lipsius's later, 1585 edition, published after his continental travels with Neville and Savile. His ownership inscription is dated 20 January 1585/6. See Joel Davis, "Robert Sidney's Marginal Comments on Tacitus and the English Campaigns in the Low Countries," *Sidney Journal* 24.1 (2006), pp. 1–

19, at p. 1, for the edition, inscription and successive layers of annotation; CELM's Robert Sidney bibliography lists the study.

2. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 24 September 1599 O.S., in *Memorials of Affairs of State*, edited by Edmund Sawyer (London, 1725), I, 106–108, especially 108. The letter explicitly names Tacitus and quotes *Annals* 4.18 in Latin. Neville's wording is retained in the block quotations; English spelling and capitalization are lightly modernized. Latin typography is normalized, including accents and long s. Parenthetical English translations accompanying the Latin are supplied here; they are not Neville's words.
3. Tacitus, *Annals* 4.18, English translation, LacusCurtius. Sejanus instigates the attack on Silius, but the maxim concerns Tiberius's reaction to Silius's claims of indispensable service.
4. Neville's autograph confession, 2 March 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279, document beginning at fol. 15, manuscript record; also printed in Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1601–1603* (London, 1870), 5–8, vol. CCLXXIX, no. 11, especially p. 7. Tacitus, *Histories* 1.38: *quod non potest laudari nisi peractum.* The quoted clause begins "that this was" in Neville's declaration; its wording is retained, with spelling modernized. His plural wording and English gloss are distinct from Tacitus's sentence. Chapter 31 reproduces the autograph witness. The Latin text of Otho's sentence is also available in *Histories* 1.38.
5. Neville to Ralph Winwood, 11 March 1605/6, Sawyer, *Memorials*, II, 198; Tacitus, *Annals* 3.30, Latin. Sawyer prints *an hoc satias ceperit cum omnia acceperint, an illos cum omnia tribuerint?* The manuscript reads *hos*, as printed in the table: Northamptonshire Archives, Montagu volume 37, second page of the letter. Sawyer's *hoc* is a discrepancy in the printed text, not the manuscript reading. The letter is dated 11 March 1605 Old Style (1605/6). The chapter gives the year as 1606, beginning the year on 1 January; the Julian day and month are not converted to the Gregorian calendar. Richard Grenewey, *The Annales of Cornelius Tacitus* (London, 1598), *Annals* 3.30, p. 73, digitized edition.
6. Neville, *Advice Touching the Holding of a Parliament*, in S. R. Gardiner, *History of England*, II (London, 1863), Appendix V, 389–394, especially 394. Tacitus, *Histories* 1.7, early printed Latin wording. *Facta premunt* occurs across the early printed tradition and does not identify a particular Lipsius edition. The passage establishes use of the Latin tag, not ownership of a surviving volume. For the acknowledgment in the Commons on 14 May 1614, see Clayton Roberts and Owen Duncan, "The Parliamentary Undertaking of 1614," *English Historical Review* 93, no. 368 (1978), pp. 481–498, at p. 493, article. For the early printed context, see *C. Cornelii Taciti libri* (Lyon, 1551), scan, image 540.
7. George R. Price, "Henry V and Germanicus," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 12.1 (1961), pp. 57–60; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.13, Grenewey (1598), p. 36; Womersley, p. 472 n. 7, on the prior dramatic convention. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 4.1. The parallel concerns the disguised night visit; broader military similarities are not added as separate evidence.
8. Tacitus, *Histories* 3.25, in Henry Savile, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba* (Oxford, 1591), p. 129, EEBO–TCP A13331. "Rifle" means plunder or search for valuables. Shakespeare, *3 Henry VI*, 2.5, First Folio (1623), p. 156, TLN 1193–1195, 1198, 1207–1208, Internet Shakespeare Editions. The table presents selected excerpts, with spelling and light punctuation modernized; verse line breaks are retained within cells. The earlier 1595 octavo, *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, QLN 995–1005, already contains the killing, search for money, recognition and pardon. The son's tears and the father's explicit conscription by Warwick occur in the Folio passage, not in the octavo. Savile's father is "called to serve" in the legion; the Folio's is "prest by his Master" (TLN 1203).
9. David J. Womersley, "3 Henry VI: Shakespeare, Tacitus, and Parricide," *Notes and Queries* 32.4 (1985), pp. 468–473, especially pp. 470–472. Womersley distinguishes a detailed circumstantial connection from verbal borrowing. His proposed dating consequence depends on accepting Savile as the route and is not adopted here. For a broader discussion of Tacitus's influence on Shakespeare's historical method, see Sonia Massai, "The artfulness of historical playwriting in Richard III: Shakespeare and English Tacitism," *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 114.1 (2024), pp. 72–85.

# Part III

The Plays

# Forests, Furnaces and Shakespeare

Chapter 17

A keeper had killed a deer, and Richard Staverton had taken his bow. Neville's reply from Billingbear on 19 July 1609 turned the quarrel into a dispute about forest boundaries and legal authority. He called his land "no **purley** but a free Chace": a purley, or purlieu, was land removed from a forest's jurisdiction but still subject to restrictions, and the distinction mattered to his claim that Staverton had no authority there.[1]

In *As You Like It* 4.3, Oliver asks for directions to a house:

> OLIVER
> Good morrow, fair ones. Pray you, if you know,
> Where in the **purlieus** of this forest stands
> A sheepcote fenced about with olive trees?
> — *As You Like It*, 4.3

The play uses the same technical vocabulary that Neville employed in defending his jurisdiction.[2]

The connection extends beyond a single word. Shakespeare's forests contain keepers, tenants, grazing rights, timber works and disputes over authority. Neville dealt with all of these. At Mayfield he also manufactured and sold cannon, bringing woodland fuel into the military economy that repeatedly enters Shakespeare's imagery.

Anne Barton's *The Shakespearean Forest* (2017) and Randall Martin's *Shakespeare and Ecology* (2015) examine these features independently of the Neville authorship question. Barton follows hunting, forest law and woodland communities; Martin connects them with agriculture, timber consumption and armaments. Read alongside Neville's documents, their studies bring a particular kind of experience into focus: the countryside as a place to administer, work and defend.[3]

## Purlieu and free chase

Barton explicitly identifies Shakespeare's purlieus as a "legal term." Martin devotes part of his discussion of Arden to the unresolved rights attached to such ground. Land could cease to be forest without becoming land upon which every former restriction had disappeared. Owners, tenants and forest officers could therefore disagree about the authority under which it should be used.[4]

Neville questioned Staverton's right to retain a known keeper's bow and insisted that the place of the offence decided the jurisdiction. If Beard, the keeper whose appointment was disputed, had killed the deer in Warfield on land held of him, Neville would call him to account in his own court. He traced that liberty through earlier grants and legal proceedings, and refused to condemn his

own chase keeper, Trigge, on an allegation alone. Chapter 8 sets out the dispute, including the dispute over Beard's appointment.[1]

Among 239 plays dated 1590–1615 in the comparison examined, five use *purlieu*. *As You Like It*, dated about 1599, is the earliest and the only one to use it literally for forest land. The later examples—*Parasitaster* (1604), *Ram Alley* (1608), *Philaster* (1609) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614)—turn it towards sexual or figurative territory. Neville's letter supplies the word in the practical legal business he regularly conducted.[5]

## Land, tenants and keepers

The practical knowledge extends to the people who make their living in the forest. Barton describes Arden's gradual disclosure of "a forest society that was there long before the arrival of the various exiles from farmland and court." There are shepherds, wage labourers, property for sale, a village and a chapel.[6]

One change from the play's principal prose source is especially revealing. In Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*, Coridon is a tenant with a cottage and land; Shakespeare's Corin is a hired worker who owns neither the sheep nor their pasture. Both Barton and Martin connect the change with the declining position of small tenants. Corin cannot offer the hungry newcomers his employer's provisions: he works on the land without controlling its resources.[7]

Neville knew land from the owner's and steward's side of these relationships. In September 1608, valuing copyholds for the king at Sonning, he reported faults in the survey and sought better information before fixing their value. His household and estate memorandum concerns sheep, wheat, barley, ponds, provisions and fuel. The productive countryside was part of his daily responsibilities, alongside the deer and hunting rights.[8]

Barton also finds the language of managed English woodland in the Roman setting of *Titus Andronicus*. Its woods contain "walks," which she describes as administrative divisions. Saturninus locates Bassianus and Lavinia in a lodge:

> SATURNINUS
> [...]
> He and his lady both are at the **lodge**
> Upon the north side of this **pleasant chase**.
> — *Titus Andronicus*, 2.3

Lodge, walk and chase belong to the organization of a hunting landscape. Neville's responsibilities included Sunninghill Park, Swinley Walk and Fines Bailiwick. These were places he helped administer, with the distinct tenures described in Chapter 4.[9, 10]

## The oak and the sawpit

*The Merry Wives of Windsor* brings this working countryside onto familiar ground. Martin calls it Shakespeare's "most locally detailed play"; Barton likewise emphasizes its precise setting. Windsor, Datchet, Frogmore and Eton belong to Neville's home landscape. Chapter 25 examines the routes and local relationships in detail.[11]

The Windsor comedy makes a timber-working site part of its final entertainment: the supposed fairies emerge from a sawpit beside Herne's oak. Martin reads the juxtaposition of living tree and timber industry against the demands upon Windsor's woods. The local details and the keeper behind the Herne legend receive their fuller treatment in Chapter 25; here their importance lies in the competing uses of the forest.[12]

Those trees faced competing demands. Glassmaking needed furnace fuel; houses needed timber and firewood; mature trees took far longer to replace than to cut down. There were efforts at renewal as well as consumption: a later petition records thirteen acres fenced and sown with acorns in Cranbourne Walk during Elizabeth's twenty-second regnal year.[13, 14]

Neville participated directly in the timber trade. In August 1609 Sir Thomas Smythe acknowledged the delivery of one hundred loads to the East India Company and asked whether Neville could provide another hundred to finish its ships. The first delivery had satisfied the Company. The request joined his estate business to shipbuilding and overseas trade.[15]

## Mayfield: woodland becomes ordnance

Martin's section "Deforestation militant" moves from timber consumption to the iron industry. He describes the royal foundry at Newbridge in Sussex, its French and English workers, the use of nearby Ashdown Forest timber, and the expansion of Wealden cannon production. His account makes the connection explicit:

> An unintended consequence of this rapid progress was the iron industry's inordinate consumption of local wood.

He follows that consumption into complaints about lost trees and habitat, and into the priority given to armaments over competing uses of fuel.[16]

### How the furnace consumed the forest

A blast furnace joined three resources: iron ore from the ground, charcoal from the woods, and water to power the bellows. Streams were dammed to form ponds; the stored water drove wheels that worked the bellows, forcing air into the furnace. The intense heat produced liquid iron. Much of it was cast into pigs for further refining at a forge, but gun founders could cast it into cannon. Neville's ordnance business belonged to this furnace industry.[17]

Its appetite for fuel was continuous. A furnace could remain in blast for long periods, so its managers needed dependable supplies of ore and charcoal. Crossley contrasts the twenty or thirty tons a year produced by a late-medieval bloomery with an annual output of about two hundred tons of pig iron that was not uncommon for a sixteenth-century blast furnace. That change in scale multiplied the demands on woodcutters, charcoal makers and carriers, as well as on the men working at the furnace.[18]

The furnace consumed wood that had already been converted into charcoal. Supplying it therefore meant organizing the cutting and coaling of woodland before the fuel reached the works. A productive furnace drew continually upon the surrounding countryside; expanding cannon production expanded those demands. The result was pressure upon the same woods that supported other local livelihoods.

Woodland supplied much more than the furnaces. Timber was needed for buildings and ships, while households and other industries competed for fuel. These uses did not all require the same trees or the same sizes of wood, but they placed competing claims on the landscape. Martin's Windsor discussion of glassmaking and his Sussex discussion of cannon manufacture belong to the same problem: profitable industries could consume woodland faster than mature trees could be replaced.

Coppicing—cutting trees back and allowing new shoots to grow from the surviving stools—provided recurring crops of fuel wood. That makes the history more specific than the disappearance of every forest. Hammersley shows that the cost of carrying fragile charcoal constrained the area an ironworks could draw upon. The critical pressure was often local: how much suitable wood could be obtained within economical reach, how quickly it regrew, and who else needed it. Managed regrowth could sustain production, but an ironmaster still had to secure that supply.[18]

### Neville's stake in the industry

Neville's own ordnance papers are substantial. An inspection reported in August 1595 rejected two sakers, six falcons and two minions. His working account to Robert Sackville in February 1596 listed deliveries amounting to more than 152 tons against a bargain for 150; another consignment would bring the total to 175 tons. The documents concern inspection, carriage, delivery and the release of bonds. The rejected pieces and the outstanding securities show how many stages separated casting a gun from completing the business.[19]

His petition to Burghley in 1590 concerns the state's regulation of the trade. Neville accepted production controls and the marking of guns but resisted being compelled to sell through designated merchants. He proposed reporting purchasers and giving security against unauthorized export. His objection was to a restriction he believed might serve private advantage under the name of

public policy. He was negotiating the terms on which England's armaments industry operated.[20]

## The furnace as an image

Shakespeare repeatedly turns the furnace's heat, breath and smoke into images of living bodies. In *Venus and Adonis*, Adonis's horse breaks loose to pursue a mare. Its excited breathing becomes the action of a furnace:

> His nostrils **drink the air**, and forth again,
> As from a **furnace**, **vapors** doth he send.
> — *Venus and Adonis*

The movement is inward and outward: air enters, heated vapour emerges. The furnace supplies a physical image of the horse's energy and desire.[21]

In *Lucrece*, the emphasis falls on the smoke. After Tarquin's assault, Lucrece addresses the darkness that concealed him:

> "O Night, thou **furnace of foul reeking smoke**,
> Let not the jealous Day behold that face
> Which underneath thy black all-hiding cloak
> Immodestly lies martyred with disgrace!
> [...]
> — *Lucrece*

Here the furnace darkens and pollutes the surrounding air. Later, the poem compares Lucrece's escaping breath with smoke from Etna or from discharged cannon. Furnace and gun provide related images for bodily distress.[21]

Jaques makes the furnace audible in the seven ages of man:

> JAQUES
> [...] And then the lover,
> **Sighing like furnace**, with a woeful ballad
> Made to his mistress' eyebrow. [...]
> — *As You Like It*, 2.7

The lover's sighing gives industrial breath a human use. Chapter 23 examines the structure of Jaques's speech and its relation to Cuffe; the detail that matters here is his choice of a furnace to make desire visible and audible. Across the poems and the play, Shakespeare draws on different features of the same process—air, heat, vapour, smoke and sound. For Neville, that process belonged to a business whose operation and fuel supply he had to understand.[22]

The *Macbeth* chapter takes the artillery comparison into destructive force and emotional strain, including Neville's description of Anne as **overcharged** with grief.

## Cannons where history has none

The cannons in *King John* belong to a period long after its early-thirteenth-century action. Martin draws attention to their prominence and explicitly contrasts the play with *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, printed in 1591, which does not give the Angers confrontation this artillery. The earlier play has a separate figurative "Cannons crack"; the difference is the sustained presence of artillery at Angers. Shakespeare puts cannon before the walls of Angers. King John says in *King John* 2.1:

> KING JOHN
> [...]
> The cannons have their bowels full of wrath,
> And ready mounted are they to spit forth
> Their **iron indignation** 'gainst your walls.
> — *King John*, 2.1

Shakespeare has brought contemporary military power into a medieval siege. Martin connects the imagery with the violence threatened against a civilian town.[23]

The artillery runs through the confrontation. When the citizens refuse to admit either army until the rival claims are settled, Philip Faulconbridge, the Bastard, proposes that England and France first combine to destroy the town:

> BASTARD
> [...]
> By east and west let France and England mount
> Their **battering cannon charged to the mouths**,
> Till their soul-fearing clamors have brawled down
> The **flinty ribs** of this contemptuous city.
> [...]
> — *King John*, 2.1

The town becomes a body broken by bombardment. The guns are mounted, charged and directed against its walls; their noise accompanies the destruction. When a citizen proposes a marriage alliance instead, the Bastard hears even the man's forceful speech as artillery:

> BASTARD, [aside]
> [...]
> What **cannoneer** begot this lusty blood?
> He speaks plain **cannon fire**, and **smoke**, and
> **bounce**.
> [...]
> — *King John*, 2.1

"Bounce" completes the report of the gun. Cannon give the scene its threats, its images of bodily violence and even its description of a voice. These repeated

uses make the artillery a sustained feature of Shakespeare's treatment of the siege.[24]

The ordnance petition of about 1590, the 1592 licence and the 1595–96 deliveries fall around the period usually assigned to *King John*. The comparison belongs here because it brings the chapter's two subjects together. Woodland fuel sustained cannon manufacture; *King John* gives those weapons a conspicuous place in a much earlier war. Neville knew the material and commercial world behind the imagery, from the supply of fuel to the inspection and sale of finished guns.

Other plays develop different aspects of that world. *Hamlet* opens amid cannon casting and shipbuilding; *Macbeth* turns the overcharged cannon into an image of destructive force. Their chapters examine the particular language and Neville documents. The Windsor chapter returns to the managed forest, while *Timon* follows Neville's wish to escape the expense of hospitality by retreating to the woods. This chapter supplies the practical setting for those comparisons: forests supported livelihoods and industries, and Neville's responsibilities placed him among the people deciding how their resources would be used.

## Notes and sources

1. Neville to Richard Staverton, 19 July 1609, Royal Berkshire Archives, Warfield tenant-dispute papers, D/EN/L2/1/1 file context; John O'Donnell's transcription. The form purley is retained; the opening short quotation is on the first body face. The threatened proceedings and proposed accommodation do not establish a later settlement. The contemporary address supplies Staverton at New Lodge; the final dateline supplies Billingbear, 19 July 1609. The catalogue identifies the Warfield dispute bundle; the individual item number remains uncertain.
2. John Cowell, *The Interpreter* (Cambridge: John Legate, 1607), entries Chase, Forest and Purlue, EarlyPrint/TCP A19476; John Manwood, *A brefe collection of the lawes of the forest* ([London, 1592?]), discussion of unlawful purlieu hunters, pp.186–187, EarlyPrint/TCP A06855. Text cited from the TCP editions. Cowell allows specially granted courts in a subject's chase, so the distinction must not be reduced to an absolute claim that chases had no courts. Manwood's qualifications explain why purlieu was not unrestricted hunting ground. Neither treatise decides the facts or title in Neville's particular dispute. Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 4.3, Folger Shakespeare Library.
3. Anne Barton, *The Shakespearean Forest* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), publisher and DOI; Randall Martin, *Shakespeare and Ecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), publisher and DOI. Both authors write within the conventional attribution to William Shakespeare. The application of their observations to Neville is the argument of this chapter.
4. Barton, pp.11–12; Martin, pp.50, 70–71. Their accounts of purlieu are read alongside Cowell and Manwood, cited in note 2, rather than treated as interchangeable technical definitions.
5. Neville to Richard Staverton, 19 July 1609, Royal Berkshire Archives, Warfield tenant-dispute papers, D/EN/L2/1/1 file context; John O'Donnell's transcription. The form purley is retained. Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 4.3. The comparison selects 239 plays dated 1590–1615 from Pervez Rizvi's *Collocations and N-grams*, using his published play catalogue and assigned dates. Within this selection, the normalized forms purlieu and purlieus occur once in each of five plays: *As You Like It*, *Parasitaster*, TCP A07077, *Ram Alley*, TCP A04881, *Philaster*, TCP A06343, and *Bartholomew Fair* in Jonson's works, TCP A04633. Public transcriptions confirm the variant forms purlues, purlews and purlewes. The assigned dates are 1599, 1604, 1608, 1609 and 1614 respectively. The four comparator passages concern Cupid's territory, a woman's sphere of attraction, sexual poaching, and the haunts of prostitutes; none locates a place in an actual

forest. This sense classification is confined to the selected texts and dates. Neville's letter is later than the play's usual 1599 date; it documents his use, not an earlier source for the play.

6. Barton, p.11. The quoted phrase describes Arden's pre-existing population.
7. Barton, p.132; Martin, pp.68–70. Both cite V. H. Skipp's work on economic and social change in Arden. Their comparisons with Lodge are attributed to them here; they do not establish that every detail of forest management originated in Shakespeare rather than in Lodge. Barton, pp.129–31, specifically discusses Lodge's lodges, rangers and walks.
8. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O12/47, Neville to Sir Julius Caesar, 24 September 1608, repository record. Neville reports using the Sonning survey to value copyholds, finding it faulty in some points, and seeking a better value for the king; Chapter 8, "Land and overseas ventures," summarizes this work. The same letter concerns the unopened Bray survey and two leases. For the separate household and estate memorandum, see Chapter 7, "Managing Billingbear from the Tower," and Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F45/1 (catalogued with D/EN/F45/2).
9. Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I (1564–1615)," *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629* (2010), "Offices Held". Sunninghill Park: 1593–1601 and by 1607 to death; Swinley Walk and Fines Bailiwick: by 1607. These were distinct tenures; see Chapter 4.
10. Barton, p.124. Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* 2.3, Folger Shakespeare Library. Omitted text is marked. The play's lodge is not called a keeper's lodge in Saturninus's quoted sentence; that description belongs to Barton's discussion.
11. Barton, pp.125–28; Martin, p.33. The short quotation is Martin's. Both discuss possible connections with the author's experience; neither documents a Neville source for the play.
12. Barton, p.127; Martin, pp.39, 47–53. Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 4.4, Folger Shakespeare Library. Martin's interpretation of the juxtaposition is identified as his reading; a sawpit's presence does not establish the purpose for which every piece of timber was cut.
13. Martin, pp.37–41, especially p.39, on glassmaking and Windsor wood supplies.
14. Martin, pp.46–47 and 50–53. John Bruce, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Charles I, 1627–1628* (1858), p.245, vol. LXX, no.44, abstracts Richard Daye's petition reporting thirteen acres fenced and sown in Elizabeth's twenty-second regnal year. Petition abstract.
15. Thomas Smythe to Henry Neville, 10 August 1609, Royal Berkshire Archives, within D/EN/F6/1; parent catalogue. The individual item number requires archival confirmation: an address photograph bears F6/1/16, while the parent catalogue does not allocate the suffixes.
16. Martin, pp.85–86; quotation from p.85. His account connects Wealden cannon manufacture with the consumption of woodland fuel.
17. Jeremy Hodgkinson, "The Wealden Iron Industry", Wealden Iron Research Group, originally published in *High Weald Anvil* (2002). The account distinguishes blast furnaces, refining forges and the development of cast-iron cannon production.
18. D. W. Crossley, "The Management of a Sixteenth-Century Ironworks," *Economic History Review*, new series, 19, no. 2 (1966), pp. 273–288, especially pp. 273–274, 278–280 and 285–288, JSTOR. The study concerns the Sidney works at Robertsbridge and Panningridge, chiefly 1541–1573. It supplies industrial context rather than evidence of Neville's personal activities. For coppice, regrowth and the cost of transporting charcoal, see G. Hammersley, "The Charcoal Iron Industry and Its Fuel, 1540–1750," *Economic History Review* 26, no. 4 (1973), pp. 593–613, especially pp. 603–610, JSTOR. Hammersley challenges a general exhaustion explanation while recognizing local pressure on accessible supplies; his estimates depend on approximate capacities, variable measures and woodland yields.
19. Abraham Jones's inspection report to Neville, docketed 28 August 1595, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O/23/4, supplies the rejected-gun passage; parent catalogue. Compare Jones to Neville, 23 November 1595, D/EN/O/23/2, which distinguishes two shipments. The near-match between November's 22 tons 19 hundredweight and the February sheet's 22 tons 19 hundredweight 1 quarter does not establish that they are the same consignment. The

catalogue describes the group as correspondence concerning Neville's sale and shipment of ordnance, 1593–1597. A separate account has not been securely connected with this letter and supplies no additional tonnage in the calculation here. Working copy to Robert Sackville, docketed 8 February 1595 Old Style (1596 with the year beginning in January), Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O/23/3; same parent catalogue. The opening deliveries are 44 tons 2 hundredweight 3 quarters, 28 tons 13 hundredweight, and 79 tons 5 hundredweight. At 20 hundredweight per ton and four quarters per hundredweight these total 152 tons 0 hundredweight 3 quarters; the additional 22 tons 19 hundredweight 1 quarter brings the total to 175 tons. The sheet contains revisions and separate marginal drafts, so it should not be quoted as one clean sent letter. The final delivery location and the first bond-release threshold remain uncertain. No claim is made that all these guns came from a single furnace.

20. Henry Neville to Lord Burghley, [1590], British Library, Lansdowne MS 65/22; manuscript images published by Ken Feinstein. See also Owen Lowe Duncan, Jr., *The Political Career of Sir Henry Neville: An Elizabethan Gentleman at the Court of James I* (Ohio State University PhD dissertation, 1974), pp.69–71, especially p.71, OhioLINK. Duncan cites Lansdowne 65, no.22, f.70; his preceding note70 prints no.27 with the same folio. His longer transcription has textual differences, including a repeated "rather," not reproduced here. The year is assigned; no day or month is claimed.

21. Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, the description of Adonis's horse; *Lucrece*, Lucrece's address to Night and the subsequent stanza beginning "This said, from her betumbled couch she starteth." Folger Shakespeare Library. The furnace imagery is compared here with the physical processes described above; the poems do not identify a particular furnace or ironworks.

22. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 2.7, Folger Shakespeare Library. The excerpt preserves the line breaks and marks the omitted portions of its first and last lines.

23. Martin, pp.21 and 82–83. Shakespeare, *King John* 2.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. The short extract is from King John's speech. Martin's stronger comparative claim about the number of cannon references across the canon is not repeated without an independent count.

24. Shakespeare, *King John*, 2.1, Folger Shakespeare Library: the Bastard's proposed joint bombardment and his response to the citizen's marriage proposal. Quotation lineation follows Folger, including the wrapped verse line before "bounce."

# Women, Books and Letters

Chapter 18

Henry Neville's wife Anne appealed for his release from the Tower in a letter endorsed 23 May 1602:

> I can bear the loss of anything, so I lose not him.[1]

Increasing deafness hindered her personal appeals to Robert Cecil and the queen. Anne was prepared to petition Elizabeth if Cecil advised it, and asked him to tell her bearer what the petition should contain. She also quoted Seneca in Latin. Chapter 7 examines her efforts during Neville's imprisonment; Chapter 31 compares the Seneca passage with *Macbeth*.

More than a year earlier, on 6 March 1600/1, Anne had written to Thomas Windebank, the clerk of the signet and their neighbour, asking him to approach Cecil after the Essex rising. She acknowledged Cecil's insistence on impartiality, then pressed the case for compassion:

> From my heart I reverence his sincerity: but love, a thing approved by God himself, covereth a multitude of infirmities.

In the same appeal she wrote **"perii quoad hoc mundum"**—"I am lost as far as this world is concerned." She ended by asking Windebank to improve its presentation:

> My trust remaineth now in you my excellent friend, that you will polish my rough-hewn speech proceeding from a mind that never knew how to dissemble.[2]

Anne's request for polish accompanies a forceful argument of her own, combining Latin, scripture and family obligation. The surviving papers of Neville's family contain women's writing about estates, marriages, religion and Parliament as well as his imprisonment.

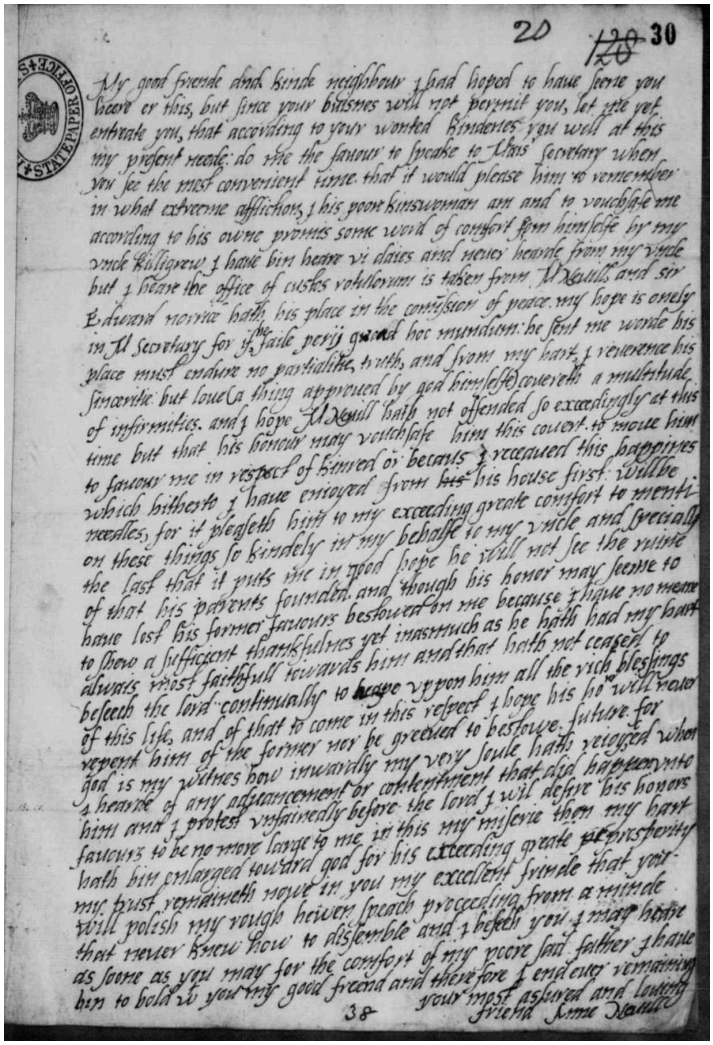


**Figure 18.1:** Anne Neville to Thomas Windebank, 6 March 1600/1. Her request to "polish my rough-hewn speech" appears near the foot of the letter. The National Archives, SP 12/279, f.30.

## Learning in Neville's family

Neville married into a family whose women translated, collected books and wrote to ministers. His wife Anne Killigrew was Katherine Cooke's daughter.[3] Katherine's sisters included Anne Bacon, the translator of John Jewel's *Apologia*, and Mildred Cecil, a donor of books to St John's College, Cambridge. Chapter 3 describes their learning and surviving work. When Anne Neville later petitioned Robert Cecil, she was addressing her first cousin: their mothers, Katherine and Mildred, were sisters.

On 22 June 1601, Anne's stepmother Jael Killigrew wrote in French to Thomas Windebank about her naturalization. Her postscript included Anne and her sister Dorothy Seymour:

> Madame Neville et ma fille Seymour retournent aussi leurs recommandations...
>
> Madame Neville and my daughter Seymour also return their greetings...[4]

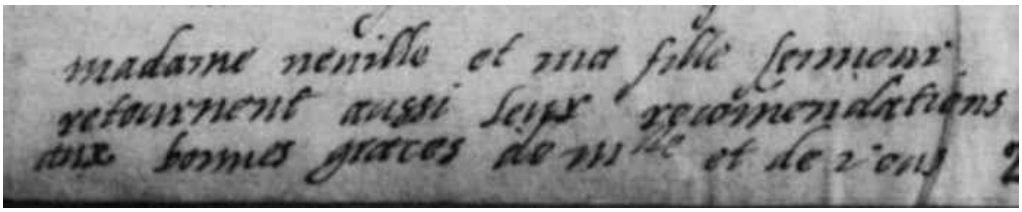


**Figure 18.2:** Postscript naming Anne Neville and Dorothy Seymour in Jael Killigrew's French letter to Thomas Windebank, 22 June 1601. The National Archives, SP 12/279, f.215 (detail).

## Estates, marriages and religion

On 3 November 1604, Neville's stepmother Elizabeth Bacon, by then Lady Periam, wrote to him from Greenland about appointing a steward. She opened "Good son" and explained that she was "not yet resolved who to make my steward." She knew that "the tenants have been badly used." Her letter also promised help to Neville and his friends:

> I desire you make this account of me, that wherein I may pleasure you or any friend of yours, you shall find me as ready as you shall wish or desire.[5]

Neville's sister Katherine, wife of Edmund Doyly of Shottisham, consulted him about a marriage for her son. Writing on 30 January, probably in 1605, she explained that she had abandoned one proposed match because the executor would not make the girl's estate clear. Another, with a daughter of Sir Robert Jermyn, raised questions about age and the provision they could afford with other children to support. She then turned to a public cause:

> Good brother, let me entreat you if by any means you can procure the liberty of a very worthy preacher here in the city of Norwich which is suspended.

The preacher was Thomas Newhouse of St Andrew's, Norwich. Katherine reported that his parishioners were willing to contribute money to obtain relief and asked whether Neville could help.[6]

Anne's sister Dorothy Killigrew Seymour also wrote about religion, family business and Parliament. In a letter of 18 January, probably 1605, she hoped Parliament's postponement would allow Neville to visit Bath for his troublesome

leg. She asked for news of a family matter in which he had helped, then expressed her fear about its outcome:

> I fear the end of this matter will be the fulfilling of the proverb that might will overcome right.

She also reported ministers losing their livings.[7]

Phyllis Rackin's *Shakespeare and Women* places such work within the substantial economic responsibilities of early modern women, including women who controlled property and managed households and estates.[8]

## "This book is mine Mary Sidney"

A fifteenth-century manuscript of John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* passed from the Neville library at Billingbear to Audley End. It had belonged to Mary Dudley Sidney (c.1530–1586), mother of Neville's travelling companion Robert Sidney, of Philip Sidney and of the poet Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke.

A faint inscription perhaps reading "Elizabeth Nevell" below Mary's ownership verse suggests that she gave the book to an Elizabeth Neville. Two possible recipients are Elizabeth Gresham Neville, Henry's mother, and Elizabeth Bacon Neville, his stepmother; Christie's proposes the latter.[9]

Mary dated her verse 28 November 1552:

> This book is mine Mary Sidney.
> If it [be] found before it be lost,
> Let them that find it of it make no boast
> In saying they found it before it was lost,
> For of such gain is like to come much pain.[10]

The verse is a book curse: the person who "finds" it before it is lost is a thief, and such gain will bring pain. Yale acquired it in 2018, and it is now Beinecke MS 1222. A panel of sixteenth-century leather, preserved in its later binding, bears her initials **"M.S."**

Philip Sidney's letters discuss Neville and Savile's studies (Chapter 2). This volume brings the Sidney family's ownership of English poetry into the surviving library from Billingbear.

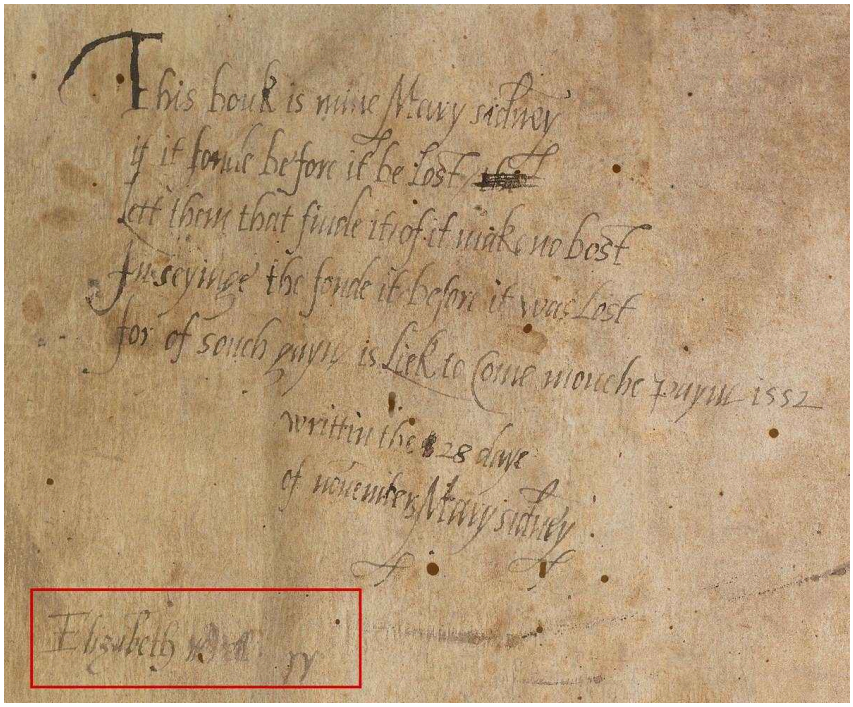



**Figure 18.3:** Mary Dudley Sidney's ownership verse and book curse, dated 28 November 1552 (detail). The faint inscription perhaps reading "Elizabeth Nevell" is boxed in red. John Lydgate, Fall of Princes, Beinecke MS 1222, preliminary leaf [ii]v. Yale University Library, image 16655103.

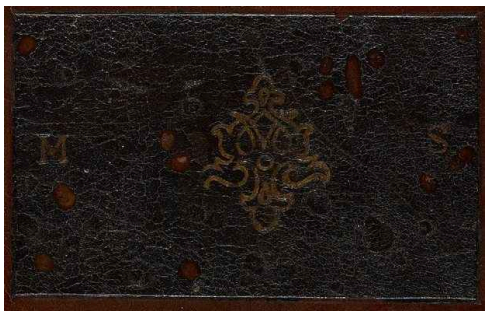



**Figure 18.4:** Mary Sidney's initials, M.S., on older leather preserved in the later binding. Beinecke MS 1222. Yale University Library, image 16655096.

## Women reading in the plays

In *Titus Andronicus* 4.1, Lavinia turns to a book when she can no longer speak. After her attackers have cut out her tongue and severed her hands, she finds the story of Philomela in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and uses it to tell her family what happened. Her father already knows her as a teacher of poetry and rhetoric to young Lucius; the scene makes her learning part of how she communicates.

TITUS
Ah, boy, Cornelia never with more care
Read to her sons than she hath read to thee
Sweet poetry and Tully's Orator.
— *Titus Andronicus* 4.1

"Tully" is Cicero: Lavinia has read rhetoric as well as poetry to the boy. Titus offers her the choice of his library. When she selects the Ovid, Lucius identifies another woman behind the book:

YOUNG LUCIUS
Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphosis.
My mother gave it me.
— *Titus Andronicus* 4.1[11]

The book passes from a mother to her son; his aunt teaches him poetry and rhetoric. Lavinia then uses its story to disclose what has been done to her, before writing her attackers' names in the sand. Sara Eaton's study examines the importance of her humanist education to this scene.[12]

In *Cymbeline*, the king's daughter Imogen reads in bed until almost midnight. Her husband, Posthumus, is away; Iachimo, who has wagered that he can seduce her, has gained admission to her bedroom hidden in a trunk. Before she falls asleep, she tells her attendant:

IMOGEN
I have read three hours then. Mine eyes are weak.
[She hands the Lady her book.]
Fold down the leaf where I have left. To bed.
Take not away the taper; leave it burning.
— *Cymbeline* 2.2[13]

When Iachimo emerges, he notices that the page is turned down at the story of Tereus and Philomela—the same story Lavinia uses to disclose her rape. Charlotte Scott examines these two scenes together in *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book*. Lavinia uses her book to make her family understand her; Imogen's reading is interrupted by an intruder who steals her bracelet and records details of her bedroom and body to fabricate evidence of adultery.[14]

Bianca's Latin lesson in *The Taming of the Shrew* 3.1 becomes a courtship conducted through pretended translations; Chapter 19 compares her wit with Katherine Cooke's Latin poem.[15] In *Hamlet* 3.1, Polonius tells Ophelia to read as cover for the encounter he and the king intend to overhear. His references to devotion suggest a religious book, though its title is not given.[16]

## Letters in women's hands

Women write, commission or read letters in at least fourteen of the thirty-eight plays surveyed here. Some letters are read onstage; others arrive already writ-

ten, or their reading is reported. They carry marriage proposals, political news, private instructions and invitations to murder.[17]

| Play | Woman and letter scene |
|---|---|
| *3 Henry VI* | Queen Margaret reads political news. (3.3) |
| *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* | Julia reads; Silvia has Valentine write her letter. (1.2; 2.1) |
| *Love's Labour's Lost* | The princess and her ladies discuss the letters they have received. (5.2) |
| *The Merchant of Venice* | Jessica writes secretly to Lorenzo. (2.3–4) |
| *The Merry Wives of Windsor* | Mistresses Page and Ford read and compare Falstaff's letters. (2.1) |
| *As You Like It* | Phoebe writes; Rosalind reads her letter. (4.3) |
| *Twelfth Night* | Maria writes in imitation of Olivia's hand. (2.3; 2.5; 5.1) |
| *Troilus and Cressida* | Cressida sends a letter to Troilus. (5.3) |
| *All's Well That Ends Well* | The Countess and Helen read Bertram's letters. (3.2) |
| *King Lear* | Goneril writes to Edmund; Cordelia's reading is reported. (4.6; 4.3) |
| *Macbeth* | Lady Macbeth reads her husband's letter. (1.5) |
| *Pericles* | Thaisa writes to her father about marrying Pericles. (2.5) |
| *Cymbeline* | Imogen reads Posthumus's letters. (1.6; 3.2; 3.4) |
| *Henry VIII* | Katherine commissions Patience to write to the king. (4.2) |

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 2.1, Mistress Page and Mistress Ford compare the love letters Falstaff has sent them. The women recognize that he has reused the same text, changing only their names:

> MISTRESS PAGE
> Letter for letter, but that the name of
> Page and Ford differs! [...]
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 2.1[18]

Their reading exposes Falstaff's method and starts their retaliation (Chapter 25).

In *Twelfth Night*, the successful forger is herself a woman. Maria, Olivia's attendant, explains how she will make Malvolio believe that his mistress loves him:

MARIA [...] I can write very like my
lady your niece; on a forgotten matter, we can
hardly make distinction of our hands.
— *Twelfth Night* 2.3[19]

When Olivia sees the forgery in *Twelfth Night* 5.1, she recognizes Maria's handwriting. The deception depends on Maria's skill in imitating her mistress's hand.

Women also direct another person's pen. In *Henry VIII* 4.2, the dying Katherine of Aragon asks her attendant Patience about a letter to the king:

KATHERINE
[...] Patience, is that letter
I caused you write yet sent away?
— *Henry VIII* 4.2[20]

Katherine gives the letter to the imperial ambassador Capuchius to deliver. Her requests concern their daughter Mary, the marriage prospects of her women and the unpaid wages of her servants.

## Notes and sources

1. Anne Neville to Sir Robert Cecil, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 93/72, endorsed 23 May 1602; quotation from the manuscript, spelling modernized. Also calendared in HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XII (1910), p.164.
2. Anne Neville to Thomas Windebank, 6 March 1600/1, The National Archives, SP 12/279, f.30; State Papers Online, Gale document MC4304680023. Quotations from the manuscript, spelling modernized. See also Mary Anne Everett Green, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1601–1603* (1870), p. 12, no. 20, for the identity, date and summary; the exact quotations remain manuscript-derived. Green also prints *perii quoad hoc mundum*: the unusual *hoc* is retained, not silently changed to *hunc*.
3. Katherine Cooke Killigrew, Anne's mother, died in 1583. William Camden wrote a Latin epitaph for her. William Camden, Latin epitaph for Katharine Killigrew, wife of Sir Henry Killigrew, British Library, Add MS 36294, f.43v (formerly cited as f.43b), undated. The British Library catalogue identifies the undated Latin epitaph at f. 43b, equivalent to 43v; no composition date is assigned here.
4. Jael Killigrew to Thomas Windebank, Lothbury, 22 June 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279, f.215. French postscript quoted with spelling and capitalization normalized; English translation supplied here. The excerpt ends before the concluding formula of commendation. Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1601–1603* (1870), pp.53–54, no.115, summarizes it: "Mrs. Neville and my daughter Seymour send remembrances." Jael was Sir Henry Killigrew's second wife and the women's stepmother; Anne and Dorothy were Katherine Cooke's daughters. Printed calendar.
5. Lady Elizabeth Periam to Sir Henry Neville, Greenland, 3 November 1604, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F44/1–4; catalogue. Quotations from the manuscript, spelling modernized. She signs herself his "loving mother in law," an expression then also used for a stepmother.
6. Katherine Doyly to Sir Henry Neville, 30 January [1604/5], Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/2/8; parent catalogue record. The dateline supplies day and month, not year; 1605 is a contextual dating. Quotation from the manuscript, spelling modernized.
7. Dorothy Seymour to Sir Henry Neville, 18 January [1604/5], Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/2/7; parent catalogue record. The year is inferred, not written. Quotation from the manuscript, spelling modernized. The parliamentary context fits the proclamation of 24

December 1604, which postponed the next session from 7 February to 3 October 1605; the letter itself gives no year. This supports the inferred context without proving the date or that Dorothy read the proclamation. Published TCP text, B12719.

8. Phyllis Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women* (Oxford University Press, 2005), chapter 2, especially pp.33–36, on property, work and household management. Rackin emphasizes the variety of women's situations and distinguishes restrictive prescriptions from the activities documented in surviving records.
9. Christie's, 11 July 2018, lot 50, provenance and binding description. The gift and identification with Elizabeth Bacon Neville are the catalogue's proposals. Its further description of the ambassador as her son is inaccurate: she was his stepmother. The faint inscription alone does not distinguish her from his mother, Elizabeth Gresham Neville. For the preserved initials, see Yale, image 16655096.
10. John Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, c.1450, Yale, Beinecke MS 1222, preliminary leaf [ii]v, Yale Digital Collections, image 16655103. Spelling and punctuation modernized; "[be]" supplied. The dated ownership verse is also transcribed in Christie's, *Valuable Books and Manuscripts*, 11 July 2018, lot 50. Yale records its purchase at that sale.
11. William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, 4.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. Cornelia was the mother of the Gracchi. The scene establishes Lavinia's reading and teaching, but does not call Ovid her favourite book.
12. Sara Eaton, "A Woman of Letters: Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*," in Shirley Nelson Garner and Madelon Sprengnether, eds., *Shakespearean Tragedy and Gender* (Indiana University Press, 1996), pp.54–74; text reproduced by eNotes. Eaton relates Lavinia's education to contemporary humanist ideals and their restrictions on learned women.
13. Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, 2.2, Folger Shakespeare Library. Iachimo identifies "The tale of Tereus" and the point "Where Philomel gave up"; the dialogue does not name the volume's author or title.
14. Charlotte Scott, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book* (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2005), chapter II, pp.25–64, especially pp.48–56; Warwick Research Archive Portal. Scott identifies Imogen's book as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and also discusses Bianca and Ophelia as readers.
15. Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, 3.1, Folger Shakespeare Library.
16. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 3.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. The devotional character of the book is inferred from Polonius's accompanying words; no particular prayer book is named.
17. The table gives a conservative minimum from the thirty-eight plays in the Folger Shakespeare texts, including the collaborative *Pericles*, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Each play counts once. Writing, commissioning and reading qualify whether enacted or explicitly established by dialogue; Maria's forgery counts under her name. The women's comments on their received letters establish their reading in *Love's Labour's Lost* 5.2. Mere receipt, carriage, preparations to write, petitions, poems and metaphorical "reading" are excluded from this letter count. The four book examples are a separate minimum, not four additional plays to add to the fourteen. Act and scene references in the table identify the evidence, not every occurrence in each play. Folger's *King Lear* combines quarto and Folio material; Cordelia's reading in 4.3 is in the quarto-only scene, but Goneril's letter in 4.6 independently qualifies the play for the count.
18. Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 2.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. The quotation is prose, as is Maria's statement from *Twelfth Night* below.
19. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 2.3 and 5.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. Olivia recognizes the forged hand as Maria's; the women's hands are similar, not literally indistinguishable in all circumstances.
20. Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, 4.2, Folger Shakespeare Library. The omitted beginning of the verse line is "Banished the kingdom." Katherine says she caused Patience to write; the scene does not establish whether she dictated every word.

# The Taming of the Shrew: Katherine, Padua and the Cooke Sisters

Chapter 19

Katherine Cooke declares war at the end of a Latin poem. The recipient is her sister Mildred, wife of William Cecil, and the cause is a man's proposed departure overseas. Bring him home, Katherine says, and Mildred is the best of sisters; let him sail and she is no sister at all. This Katherine was the mother of Anne, wife of Sir Henry Neville. She shares her name with Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Her poem adds a further point of comparison: a learned woman using sharp wit to press her wishes on those who could frustrate them.[1]

Neville married Anne Killigrew in December 1584. Katherine's sisters included Mildred Cecil, Anne Bacon and Elizabeth Hoby, later Lady Russell. Their classical learning, translations and correspondence made the Cooke family a particularly distinguished example of women's education in Elizabethan England. Katherine died on 27 December 1583, before her daughter married Neville.[2]

## Katherine's poem to Mildred Cecil

John Harington printed Katherine's six-line poem in his commentary to *Orlando Furioso* in 1591, presenting the Cooke sisters as English examples of women's learning. His marginal note explains the appeal to Mildred as a request for a kinsman's return to Cornwall and the prevention of a journey overseas; Thomas Fuller later identifies the man as Katherine's husband, Henry Killigrew.

Si mihi quem cupio cures Mildreda remitti,
Tu bona, tu melior, tu mihi sola soror:
Sin malè cessando retines, & trans mare mittis,
Tu mala, tu peior, tu mihi nulla soror.
Is si Cornubiam, tibi pax sit & omnia læta,
Sin mare Ciciliæ nuncio bella. Vale.

In English:

If you see to it, Mildred, that the man I long for is sent back to me,
You are a good sister, a better sister, my only sister.
But if by harmful delay you keep him back and send him overseas,
You are a bad sister, a worse sister, no sister to me.
If he goes to Cornwall, may you have peace and every happiness;
But if to sea, I declare war on Cecil. Farewell.

Amos C. Miller describes Katherine as a "formidable personality" and emphasizes the poem's humour. He also records Cecil's opposition to her marriage to Killigrew and Killigrew's angry response. The poem itself makes the wit visible. Its balanced lines turn praise into its opposite: good, better, only sister becomes bad, worse, no sister. Katherine makes an appeal for help sound like a declaration of war.[3]

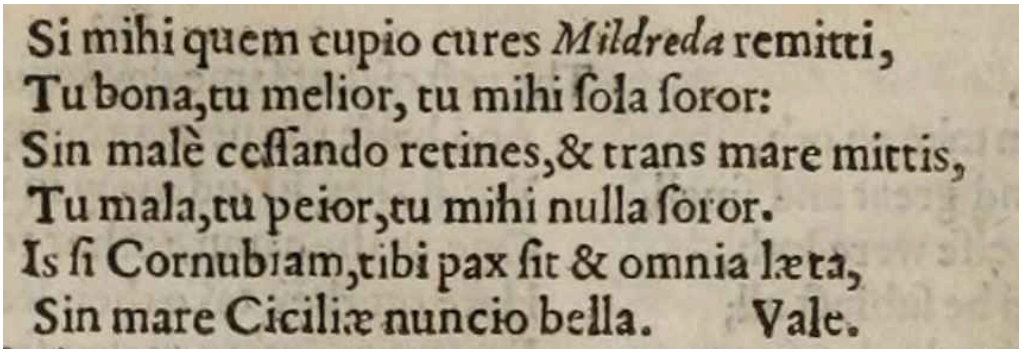

Si mihi quem cupio cures *Mildreda* remitti,
Tu bona, tu melior, tu mihi ſola ſoror:
Sin malè ceſſando retines, & trans mare mittis,
Tu mala, tu peior, tu mihi nulla ſoror.
Is ſi Cornubiam, tibi pax ſit & omnia læta,
Sin mare Ciciliæ nuncio bella. Vale.

**Figure 19.1:** Katherine Cooke (later Killigrew)'s six-line Latin poem in John Harington's Orlando Furioso (1591), p. 314 (detail).

Image source: the 1591 printed edition, p. 314.

## Books for both daughters

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Baptista is a wealthy father in Padua with two daughters: Katherine, the outspoken elder sister, and Bianca, the younger, whom several men want to marry. Baptista insists that Katherine must marry first. While Bianca's suitors wait, her lessons give them a way into the household: Lucentio poses as a Latin tutor and Hortensio as a music teacher.

Lucentio's servant Tranio meanwhile impersonates his master, presenting Baptista with gifts for the sisters' education:

> And toward the education of your daughters
> I here bestow a simple instrument
> And this small packet of **Greek and Latin books**.
> — *The Taming of the Shrew*, 2.1[4]

The Cooke sisters, too, studied both Greek and Latin. The books offered to Baptista's daughters thus recall the classical education of Katherine Cooke and her sisters.[2]

Baptista accepts the gifts and sends the tutors to both daughters. The sisters respond very differently. Hortensio reports that Katherine has struck him over the head with his lute; Bianca turns her lesson into an opportunity to answer a suitor. The shared name connects Katherine Cooke with the outspoken Kather-

ine of the play. Her poem also brings learning and a combative wit together, qualities the play develops differently through its two sisters.[4]

## Bianca answers back

During Bianca's lesson, Lucentio—using the tutor's name Cambio—reads two lines from Ovid's *Heroides*, then substitutes a declaration of love for the translation. Bianca answers through the same Latin phrases while Hortensio, calling himself Litio, tunes his instrument nearby:

> BIANCA Where left we last?
> LUCENTIO, [as Cambio] Here, madam:
> [Showing her a book.]
> Hic ibat Simois, hic est Sigeia tellus,
> Hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis.
> BIANCA Conster them.
> LUCENTIO Hic ibat, as I told you before, Simois, I am
> Lucentio, hic est, son unto Vincentio of Pisa,
> Sigeia tellus, disguised thus to get your love, Hic
> steterat, and that "Lucentio" that comes a-wooing,
> Priami, is my man Tranio, regia, bearing my port,
> celsa senis, that we might beguile the old pantaloon.
> HORTENSIO, [as Litio] Madam, my instrument's in
> tune.
> BIANCA Let's hear. [He plays.] Oh fie, the treble jars!
> LUCENTIO, [as Cambio] Spit in the hole, man, and tune
> again. [Hortensio tunes his lute again.]
> BIANCA Now let me see if I can conster it. Hic ibat
> Simois, I know you not; hic est Sigeia tellus, I trust
> you not; Hic steterat Priami, take heed he hear us
> not; regia, presume not; celsa senis, despair not.
> — *The Taming of the Shrew*, 3.1[5]

"Conster" means to construe or explain, but Bianca does not translate Ovid. She repeats the Latin phrases and inserts her own English answer between them. "Presume not" keeps Lucentio at a distance; "despair not" leaves him hope. She has understood his device and made it serve her own wishes.

Katherine Cooke composes in Latin; Bianca uses a Latin exercise as cover for a private exchange. The resemblance is in the wit with which each makes learning serve a personal negotiation. Katherine promises affection or war according to her sister's decision; Bianca combines encouragement with refusal to be rushed.

Sue Wiseman reads the lesson as a parody of schooling turned into comic seduction, emphasizing Bianca's judgment in managing courtship. The comparison with Katherine's poem gives that resourcefulness a concrete family setting for Neville: a woman whose classical learning could sharpen, rather than silence, her own demands.[5, 6]

## Anne's Latin appeals

Katherine's daughter Anne used Latin in two surviving letters: to Thomas Windebank on 6 March 1601 and to Robert Cecil in May 1602. In the latter, she quoted Seneca while pleading for Neville's release from the Tower. Katherine had appealed to Mildred Cecil for her husband; Anne appealed to Mildred's son for hers. Across two generations, mother and daughter made classical learning serve their own claims.[7] The Seneca quotation and Anne's manuscript are discussed in Chapter 31, "Macbeth: The Deed and Its Consequences."

## A family connection to Padua

Shakespeare places Katherine and her sister Bianca in Padua, where their father Baptista provides tutors and books. The city belonged to the experience of three men in Neville's family:

| Date | Visitor and family relationship | Evidence |
|---|---|---|
| 7 January 1549 | Henry Killigrew, Katherine Cooke's husband and Neville's future father-in-law. | Hoby records leaving Padua with Killigrew and Edward Murphin to see the Prince of Spain's ceremonial entry into Mantua.[8] |
| August 1554 | The elder Sir Henry Neville, the ambassador's father. | Hoby names Henry Neville among the Englishmen at Padua; his editor identifies him as the ambassador's father.[9] |
| Summer 1581 | Henry Neville, travelling with Henry Savile. | Faunt's letter of 8 July names Neville among the English at Padua, according to Tosh; Woolfson places him there with Savile in August.[9] |

Neville had visited the city himself, as had his father and his future father-in-law. Padua therefore joins the family's classical learning and Katherine's name as another specific point of contact with the play.

The name, the writing and the family's experience of Padua belong together. Katherine's poem lets us hear the wit of the woman whose daughter Neville married; Anne's letter shows Latin used within his own household to argue for his freedom. Beside Bianca's lesson and Katherine's resistance to her tutor, these documents show why the conjunction of women's learning, wit and self-assertion belongs within the discussion of Neville's family.

## Notes and sources

1. John Harington, *Orlando Furioso* (1591), commentary to book 37, p. 314. Latin follows the printed witness, with long s normalized; English is a new prose translation, arranged to correspond to the six Latin lines. Harington's marginal explanation describes the man as a kinsman; Thomas Fuller's later account identifies him as Henry Killigrew. The final line's "Ciciliæ" is rendered "Cecil" following that family context and the later English tradition. Miller, pp. 99–100, reproduces Fuller's English version and proposes autumn 1571 for the poem, while explicitly acknowledging that its date and outcome are unknown. His separate report of Killigrew's January 1572 appeal from Blois for recall because his wife was near childbirth, citing SP 70/122 f. 48, does not establish the poem's date.
2. Marion E. Colthorpe, *Elizabethan Court Day by Day*, 1584, p. 46, 22 December; Gemma Allen, *The Cooke Sisters: Education, Piety and Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester University Press, 2013), introduction. See also Colthorpe, "Court Women: Royal Household", entry for Katherine Killigrew.
3. Amos C. Miller, *Sir Henry Killigrew: Elizabethan Soldier and Diplomat* (Leicester University Press, 1963), pp. 99–100 (Folger catalogue). "Formidable personality" is Miller's characterization. On pp. 99–100 Miller quotes an April 1564 entry in Cecil's diary recording Killigrew's angry response to his opposition to the match, citing "Haynes, vol. 2, p. 755." This records opposition to Katherine's marriage; it does not establish the wedding date. The comparison with the play is developed here.
4. Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, 2.1 and 3.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. The comparison concerns women's use of classical learning in personal relationships, rather than an identification of Bianca with a particular Cooke sister.
5. Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, 3.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. The passage is continuous, including Hortensio's interruption; wording, speech prefixes and line breaks are preserved. The Latin comes from Ovid's *Heroides*, letter 1, Penelope to Ulysses. For the lesson's interplay of education and courtship, see Sue Wiseman, "Educating Shrews: Taming of the Shrew, women's education, shrew stories", *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare* 41 (2023), paragraphs 4–7. The comparison with Katherine Cooke's poem is proposed here, not by Wiseman.
6. Karen Newman, "A Modern Perspective: The Taming of the Shrew", Folger Shakespeare Library, on the taming-story tradition and Gascoigne's *Supposes* as a source for the Bianca plot. The courtship intrigue and taming story have these literary and traditional precedents. The comparison developed here concerns the women's learning and verbal resourcefulness, not a claim that the Cooke family supplied those plots.
7. Anne Neville to Thomas Windebank, 6 March 1601, TNA, SP 12/279, f. 30; Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Elizabeth, 1601–1603* (1870), p. 12, no. 20, preserving "perii quoad hoc mundum." Anne Neville to Robert Cecil, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 93/72, endorsed 23 May 1602; HMC, *Salisbury*, XII (1910), p. 164. The Latin in the second letter is read from the manuscript and omitted from the abbreviated calendar. These letters postdate the play's usual early-1590s dating; they document Anne's use of Latin within Neville's household. See Chapter 31 for the Seneca passage and its comparison with *Macbeth*.
8. Thomas Hoby, *The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas Hoby, Kt. of Bisham Abbey, Written by Himself, 1547–1564*, ed. Edgar Powell (Royal Historical Society, 1902), p. 11. Under the heading 1549, Hoby dates the departure from Padua to 7 January and the prince's entry into Mantua to 13 January. Powell's footnote identifies Killigrew as the later diplomat, Marian exile and husband of Katherine Cooke. The printed page has been checked; the original manuscript has not been collated. This passage establishes his presence in Padua before the Marian exile, not a university degree or a dated stay there during Mary's reign.
9. Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 129–131, for Neville's 1581 visit; see Chapter 2 for the itinerary and evidence. Thomas Hoby, *The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas Hoby*, ed. Edgar Powell (Royal

Historical Society, 1902), pp. 116–117, records the English company at Padua on 23 August 1554; the editor identifies Sir Henry Neville of Billingbear, the ambassador's father. William Patrick Tosh, *Testimonies of Affection and Dispatches of Intelligence: The Letters of Anthony Bacon, 1558–1601* (PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2013), p. 53 and n. 17, thesis, cites Nicholas Faunt to Anthony Bacon, 8 July 1581, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 647, f. 110r. The July report follows Tosh's account; the original folio has not been inspected here. The July and August notices do not establish the duration of Neville's stay.

# Richard II and the Neville Family

Chapter 20

## Richard II: making an ancestor a hero

Holinshed gives John of Gaunt a brief death notice; *Richard II* gives him a deathbed scene in which he speaks for England and confronts the king. Gaunt was Henry Neville's direct ancestor: his daughter Joan Beaufort married Ralph Neville, first Earl of Westmorland, and their son Edward began the Abergavenny line from which Henry Neville descended. Shakespeare makes Neville's ancestor the dying counsellor whose warning the king refuses to hear.[1]

Holinshed's notice names the house in Holborn where Gaunt died and records his burial beside Blanche at St Paul's. The chronicle subsequently describes Richard's exactions and the complaint that the kingdom had been set to farm. The play gives that indictment to Gaunt while he is still alive, turning historical commentary into the ancestor's prophetic judgment.[2]

Gaunt's importance extends beyond one celebrated speech. Despite dying early, he has the fourth-largest speaking part in the play; up to his final speech, he supplies about a quarter of its dialogue. Shakespeare gives this ancestor extraordinary room to speak.[3]

In *Richard II*, 2.1, the play first tells its audience why Gaunt's words deserve to survive him:

> GAUNT
> O, but they say the tongues of dying men
> Enforce attention like deep harmony.
> [...]
> As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last,
> Writ in remembrance more than things long past.[4]

Dying gives Gaunt's counsel urgency and the freedom to confront his king. His prophetic England speech follows:

> GAUNT [...]
> This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise,
> This fortress built by Nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea,
> [...][4]

The repeated "This" accumulates England's glories while withholding the sentence's decisive verb. When that verb finally arrives, all the magnificence becomes the subject of a humiliating transaction:

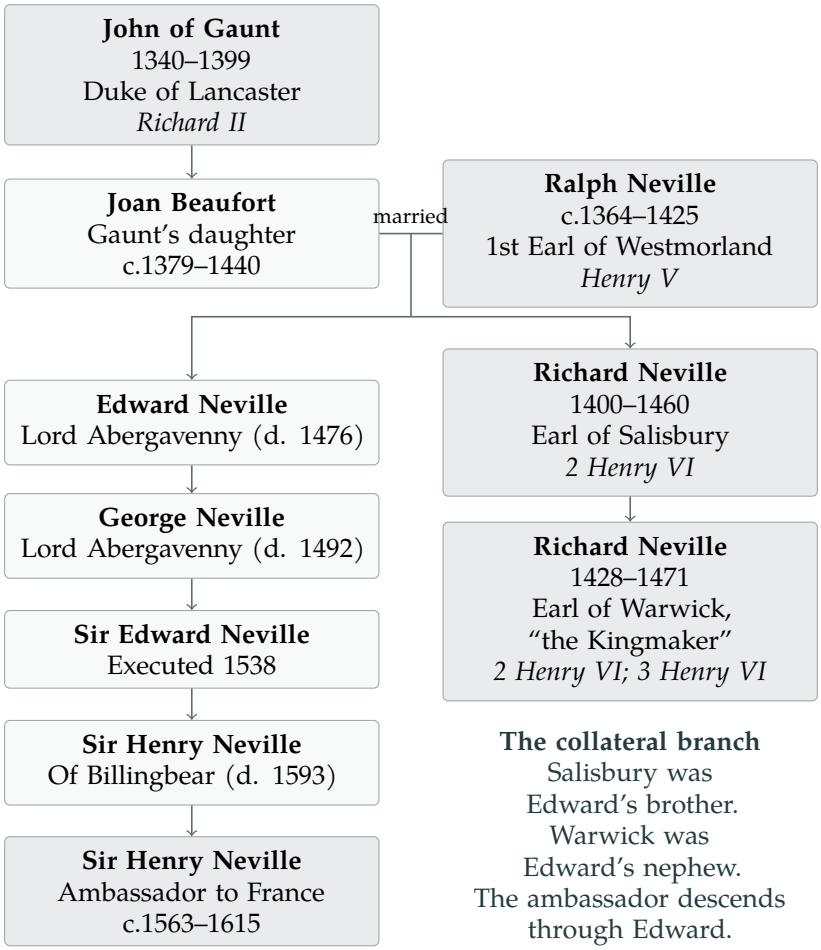
> GAUNT [...]
> This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
> Dear for her reputation through the world,
> Is now leased out—I die pronouncing it—
> Like to a tenement or pelting farm.
> England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
> Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
> Of wat'ry Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
> With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds.
> That England that was wont to conquer others
> Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.[4]

England's glories collapse into leased property; its protecting sea encloses shame. Richard has already proposed farming the realm. Gaunt turns that policy into national humiliation.[5]

When Richard arrives, Gaunt confronts him directly. The sick man diagnoses the healthy king as the one whose deathbed is the whole country. Richard threatens him; Gaunt refuses to retreat. The king's cruelty confirms the old man's judgment. After Gaunt's death, Richard seizes his property, and York protests the destruction of lawful inheritance. The play thus follows the patriotic speech with an act that proves its accusation.[4]

Already a father, counsellor and grieving brother, Gaunt becomes England's moral voice at his death. As with Westmoreland in *Henry V*, Shakespeare enlarges the role of Neville's ancestor and gives him words that define the play.

### John of Gaunt, the Neville branches, and Shakespeare




Arrows show parent to child; the marriage line joins Joan and Ralph. Edward and Salisbury were brothers; Warwick was Edward's nephew. Henry Neville descends through Edward: Salisbury and Warwick belong to the collateral branch. Gaunt and Ralph are direct ancestors. c. means approximately; d. means died.[1]

Gaunt's transformation belongs beside the changes to Westmoreland's role in *Henry V* (Chapter 22): in both plays, Shakespeare gives Neville's ancestors a larger part in the nation's history.

### The family in Henry VI

The Neville family references are already present in the 1594 quarto of *2 Henry VI*, published as *The First Part of the Contention*. Warwick declares, "The Nevilles are thy subjects to command" (2 Henry VI, 2.2); Suffolk invokes "the Nevilles' noble race" while attacking Warwick's parentage (2 Henry VI, 3.2); and Warwick

## From chronicle to stage

Two direct ancestors of Henry Neville receive different treatment on stage.

| HOLINSHED | SHAKESPEARE | NEVILLE FAMILY |
|---|---|---|
| **John of Gaunt**<br>Holinshed briefly records his death; later reports Richard's exactions. | *Richard II*, 2.1<br>Gaunt delivers the deathbed indictment of Richard and the great England speech. | Gaunt → Joan Beaufort → Edward Neville → the Abergavenny and Billingbear line. |
| **Westmoreland's location**<br>Holinshed assigns him to guard the Scottish frontier. | *Henry V*, 4.3<br>Westmoreland stands with Henry before Agincourt. | Ralph Neville, first Earl of Westmorland: husband of Joan Beaufort and direct ancestor. |
| **The wish for more men**<br>Holinshed attributes it to an unnamed member of the army. | *Henry V*, 4.3<br>Westmoreland makes the wish that prompts the St Crispin's Day speech. | The same Ralph Neville. The genealogy in Chapters 20 and 22 shows the full line. |

Paraphrases summarize the source and the plays. Sources: Holinshed, Chronicles (1587), III, pp. 496, 548, 553; Richard II 2.1; Henry V 4.3. See Chapters 22 and 20 for quotations and source images.

**Figure 20.1:** Author's diagram: history source changes. Sources and qualifications appear within the figure.

swears by "old Neville's crest" (2 Henry VI, 5.1). All three appear in that early printing as well as in the 1623 Folio.[1]

## Richard II before the Essex rising

On 7 February 1601, the day before the Essex rising, a specially requested play about Richard II was performed at the Globe. Augustine Phillips, one of the players, later testified that the company had objected because the play was old and unlikely to draw a paying audience. The men who requested it offered an additional forty shillings. Sir Gelly Meyrick's examination independently records the outing to the Globe and a play involving the killing of Richard II. Together, the examinations document the performance conventionally identified with Shakespeare's *Richard II*.[6]

Later that year, Elizabeth reportedly made the comparison herself. On 4 August 1601, while examining a catalogue of the Tower records with the antiquary William Lambarde, she reportedly declared:

> **I am Richard II, know you not that?**

Lambarde answered by referring to Essex's ingratitude. Elizabeth continued:

> He that will forget God will also forget his benefactors; **this tragedy was forty times played in open streets and houses**.[7]

In his 2013 article, Jason Scott-Warren strengthens the authenticity of this exchange through a manuscript copy sent in 1627 by Lambarde's son-in-law Thomas Godfrey to Sir Edward Dering. The remark has an early documentary history: it is not merely an anecdote first appearing in eighteenth-century print.[7]

For Neville, this political crisis was personal: Southampton and Danvers had outlined the plan to seize the court to him at Drury House on 2 February. The play about a king's deposition was revived five days later for men in that same circle. The history that honoured his ancestry had become entangled with the crisis that brought him to the Tower (Chapter 6).

## The "Parliament Sceane": 1608

In 1608, during Neville's return to political prominence, a new title page for *Richard II* advertised "new additions of the Parliament Sceane, and the deposing of King Richard." The fourth quarto was the first printed edition to include Richard's public surrender of the crown. Its advertisement made Parliament itself a selling point.[8]

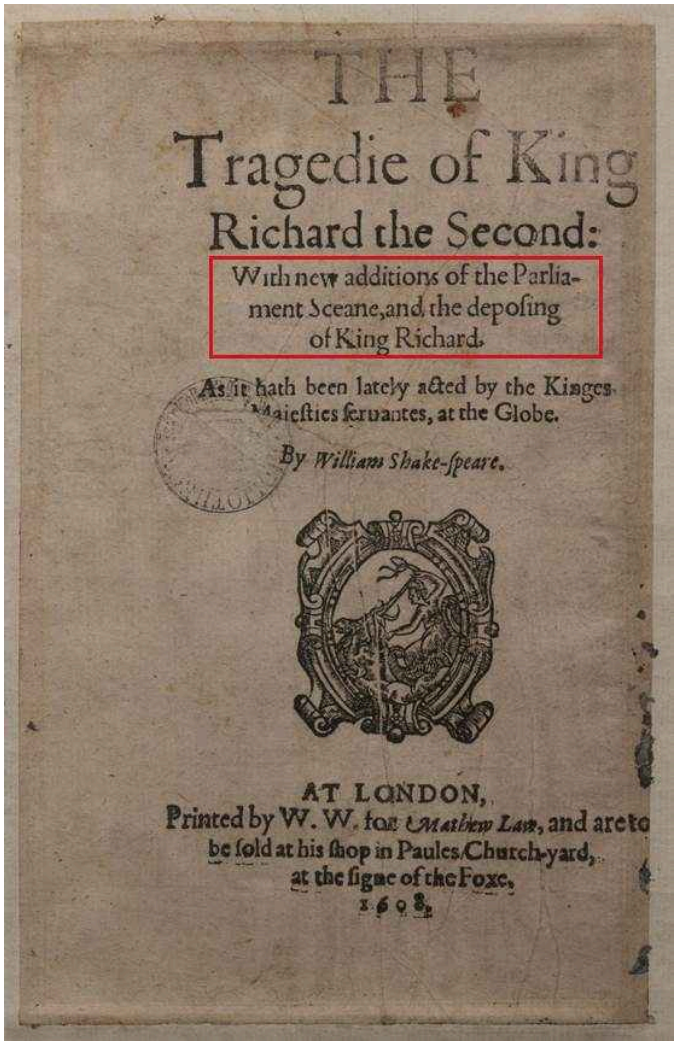

THE
Tragedie of King
Richard the Second:
With new additions of the Parliament Sceane, and the deposing of King Richard.
As it hath been lately acted by the Kinges Maiesties seruantes, at the Globe.
By William Shake-speare.
AT LONDON,
Printed by W. W. for Mathew Law, and are to be sold at his shop in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Foxe,
1608.

**Figure 20.2:** The 1608 fourth quarto of *Richard II*, reissued with a title page advertising the "Parliament Sceane" and the king's deposition. The red box marks the announcement of the Parliament scene and Richard's deposition; 1608 appears at the foot. Cropped from the original photograph. Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Arch.G d.43 (1), via *Shakespeare Documented*. CC BY-NC 4.0.

The first quarto appeared in 1597, followed by two editions in 1598. All three omit the extended passage in which Richard enters Parliament and relinquishes his crown. They do not omit the whole parliamentary scene: the surrounding action, including Carlisle's protest against judging the king, was already present. What readers gained in 1608 was the confrontation with Richard himself. The First Folio of 1623 would print a fuller, differently transmitted version of that passage.[9]

The distinction matters because "new additions" does not establish when the passage was written. It may preserve material withheld from the earlier print-

ings, or a later revision. Censorship is a substantial scholarly explanation, not a documented instruction surviving from the censor. The publication date is secure; the composition history remains disputed.[8, 10]

What makes the passage especially relevant here is the Commons' role. Richard is pressed to read accusations against his government so that his removal will seem justified. When Bolingbroke tells Northumberland to stop, Northumberland answers:

> NORTHUMBERLAND
> The commons will not then be satisfied.[11]

Bolingbroke has obtained the crown, but the demand for public justification persists. Cyndia Susan Clegg argues that the passage's political sensitivity lay particularly in its representation of parliamentary authority. Her comparison with Holinshed shows how Shakespeare compresses separate proceedings and brings the Commons' demands into the action of Richard's surrender. In the 1608 text, Northumberland's request for the commons' suit and the command to fetch Richard form one speech; the Folio assigns the command to Bolingbroke. In Clegg's reading, the quarto's allocation of these lines makes the Commons' initiative especially prominent. Clegg relates this treatment to Elizabethan controversy over Parliament's power to determine the succession.[10]

Parliament did not sit in 1608; the publication falls between the sessions of 1606–07 and 1610, during an important phase of Neville's political recovery. Elected for Berkshire in 1604, he received twenty-six committee appointments that session and forty-two in 1606. In the Union debates of 1606–07, the Commons drew on his diplomatic knowledge of France and Scotland. By 1608 his return to public business was well established, and his parliamentary connections were strengthening: his daughter Elizabeth married Sir Henry Berkeley, brother of the MP Sir Maurice Berkeley, who also became a trustee of Neville's estates. When Parliament met again in 1610, Salisbury treated Neville as one of the Commons figures whose cooperation was needed to negotiate over royal revenue and impositions.[12]

Thus the "Parliament Sceane" reached print during the years in which Neville was developing the parliamentary influence that would define his later career. The connection is more than the shared word *Parliament*. The play asks how power acquires lawful authority, what a ruler owes the realm, and whose consent can make a political settlement hold. Neville's work increasingly required him to negotiate those relationships between king and Commons. Gaunt's ignored counsel, the crisis of 1601, and the parliamentary passage advertised in 1608 give this family history a continuing political relevance.

## Notes and sources

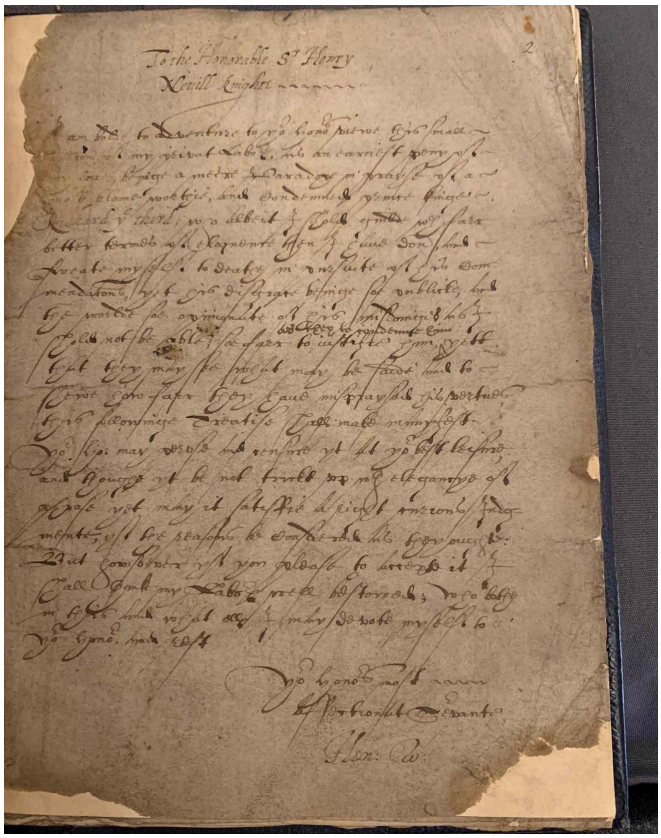
1. James Tait, "Neville, Edward (d.1476)," *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 40 (1894), biography; W. A. J. Archbold, "Neville, Edward (d.1538)," ibid., biography. The descent continues from Edward (d.1476) through George Neville (d.1492), Sir Edward Neville (executed 1538), Henry Neville of Billingbear and the ambassador. George Neville (d.1535) was Sir Edward's brother, not his father. Chart dates: John of Gaunt, 1340–1399; Joan Beaufort, c.1379–1440; Ralph Neville, c.1364–1425. See John of Gaunt, Joan Beaufort, and James Tait, "Neville, Ralph (1364–1425)". George's death in 1492 is recorded in Tait's biography of his son. The ambassador's approximate birth year follows the age evidence discussed in Chapters 1–9. Where no birth year is supplied, d. denotes the year of death. For the collateral branch, James Tait, "Neville, Richard (1400–1460)", identifies Salisbury as Ralph and Joan's son and Edward's brother; his "Neville, Richard (1428–1471)" identifies Warwick as Salisbury's son. The Neville-family speeches are in Shakespeare, 2 Henry VI, 2.2, 3.2 and 5.1; Warwick also appears in 3 Henry VI. The three Neville references occur in the 1594 quarto, The First Part of the Contention: Internet Shakespeare Editions, 2.2, 3.2, and 5.1. Short quotations in the text use modern spelling and the Folger reading text. In the crest passage, Q1 reads "my fathers age" where the Folio-based text reads "my father's badge"; the quoted words "old Neville's crest" are present in both. See also Folger's textual introduction.
2. Raphael Holinshed and others, *The Third Volume of Chronicles* (London, 1587), p. 496, Holinshed Project text, Gaunt's death, confiscation, York's response and the complaint about farming the realm. Compare Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 2.1, cited below.
3. Counts from the Folger Digital Texts edition of Richard II, 7 September 2026: a speech is a TEI speech element; words are word tokens excluding speech prefixes and stage directions. Gaunt has 28 speeches and 1,515 words; 6,146 dialogue words occur through his final speech, giving him 24.65% of that span. The whole-play word ranking places him fourth. These counts describe the allocation of dialogue in this edition.
4. Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 2.1, Folger Shakespeare. Quotations preserve Folger line breaks; ellipses mark omissions. For Gaunt's earlier scenes, see 1.1–1.3.
5. Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 1.4, Folger Shakespeare, Richard's plan to farm the royal realm and use blank charters.
6. Examinations of Augustine Phillips, 18 February 1601, TNA SP 12/278, ff. 85r–86v, and Sir Gelly Meyrick, 17 February 1601, TNA SP 12/278/78, ff. 141–142; images and transcriptions in *Shakespeare Documented*, descriptions by Alan H. Nelson. The examinations describe the subject rather than name Shakespeare as author.
7. Jason Scott-Warren, "Was Elizabeth I Richard II?: The Authenticity of Lambarde's 'Conversation' ", *The Review of English Studies* 64.264 (2013), pp. 208–230; published online in 2012. Quotations follow the early transcript printed in his appendix, with spelling, abbreviations and punctuation modernized. Godfrey's covering letter is dated 6 October 1627. "Forty times" is Elizabeth's reported expression, not a verified performance count. The conversation does not name Shakespeare. Author's accessible account of the discovery.
8. William Shakespeare, *The Tragedie of King Richard the Second* (London: W. W. for Mathew Law, 1608), fourth quarto, reissued title page, Bodleian Libraries, Arch.G d.43 (1), image and description, described by Manuel Jacquez, *Shakespeare Documented*, DOI 10.37078/658. Both title-page issues of the 1608 edition contain the deposition passage; the earlier title page does not advertise the additions. These are two issues of the fourth quarto, not separate fourth and fifth editions. The fifth quarto appeared in 1615.
9. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine, "An Introduction to This Text: Richard II", Folger Shakespeare Library. Q4 adds approximately 160 lines absent from Q1–Q3; the Folio supplies a fuller version, apparently from a different manuscript. For the parliamentary setting already present in the early quartos, see Clegg, pp. 442–444, including n. 48. The 1601 performance testimony does not establish the wording of the passage performed that day.

10. Cyndia Susan Clegg, "'By the choise and inuitation of al the realme': Richard II and Elizabethan Press Censorship", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48.4 (1997), pp. 432–448, especially pp. 437, 442–447. Clegg's argument for suppression is circumstantial, as she explicitly acknowledges; her comparison distinguishes Q4's speech assignments from the Folio's. Her discussion concerns Elizabethan succession and resistance arguments, not Neville's later parliamentary career; the connection to that career is the present chapter's interpretation.
11. Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 4.1, Folger Shakespeare. The displayed quotation follows the Folger reading text, based on the Folio for this passage. For the distinct 1608 speech assignments discussed in the text, see Clegg, pp. 442–444.
12. Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I (1564–1615)", in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (Cambridge University Press, 2010), especially the accounts of the 1604 and 1606 sessions, the Union debates, the Berkeley connection, and the July 1610 negotiations. Parliament did not sit in 1608: the date falls between the 1606–07 and 1610 sessions. The connection proposed here is to Neville's developing political career, not to a parliamentary event in that year.

# Richard III: Reputation, Dedication and the Stage

Chapter 21

A manuscript defence of Richard III is dedicated to Sir Henry Neville. The version addressed to him adds two attacks on the playwrights who helped make Richard infamous. In 1616, the year after Neville's death, Thomas Thorpe, publisher of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, published this revised version as "The Prayse of King Richard the Third."[1, 2, 3]


To the Honorable Sr Henry
Neuill Knight

Hen: W:

**Figure 21.1:** Dedication of the Encomium of Richard III to Sir Henry Neville, subscribed "Hen: W:". Photograph of British Library, Add MS 29307, dedication leaf. For a printed transcription, see Kincaid's edition, p. 33.

## A defence addressed to Neville

The manuscript opens with an unmistakable address:

> To the Honorable **Sir Henry Neuill** knight.

The writer offers his "private labours" as "an earnest penny of my love." His subject is a "most blameworthy and condemned prince," whose disgrace has become so public that even an eloquent defence can scarcely prevail. Yet he wants Neville to see "what may be said" on Richard's behalf:

> Your Honour may **peruse and censure it at your best leisure**, and though it be not tricked up with elegancy of phrase, yet may it satisfy a right curious judgment, if the reasons be considered as they ought.

"Censure" here means judge. Neville is invited to weigh the argument. The dedication ends "Your Honour's most affectionate servant, Hen: W:"; the initials have been identified by some with Henry Wotton and by others with Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. The identity remains unsettled.[1]

The essay is known as the *Encomium of Richard III*—an encomium being a work of praise. Its core text is attributed to William Cornwallis the younger. The two earlier versions preserve his dedication to John Donne, in full or abbreviated form. The Neville dedication belongs to the third version: the one that extends the attack to playwrights.[4]

## Which version was dedicated to Neville?

A. N. Kincaid's 1977 edition distinguishes three stages in the text's development. The first survives in the Chatsworth manuscript. The Rawlinson manuscript expands it with historical examples and supporting arguments. The third makes more substantial changes to its targets and political meaning. Ramsden and Kincaid call this the "British Museum version," after the manuscript dedicated to Neville, now British Library Add MS 29307.[4]

| Stage | Witnesses in Kincaid's family tree | What changes? |
|---|---|---|
| Earlier text | Chatsworth | Cornwallis's defence, dedicated to John Donne, attacks a hostile chronicler. |
| First expansion | Rawlinson | Historical examples and supporting material are added; the Donne dedication remains, with the names abbreviated. |
| Revised version | Neville manuscript; Cambridge; Huntington; two Folger manuscripts; Thorpe's 1616 print | The attack broadens to chroniclers and playwrights. A substantial new passage puts duty to country above kinship and the interests of the ruler. |

The Neville manuscript and Thorpe's print thus belong to the same revised version. Kincaid's family tree places them on separate branches descending from

a shared lost source. The other manuscripts in this group carry the same substantial revisions. One, the Cambridge copy, was owned by Humphrey Dyson in 1611: this version was circulating during Neville's lifetime, before Thorpe published it.[4]

Ramsden and Kincaid state the publication connection plainly:

> It was substantially this revised version represented by the British Museum and associated manuscripts which was to pass into print in 1616.[4]

## What the revised version added

John Casson drew attention to two theatrical references in the Neville manuscript. Kincaid's collation shows where they entered the text. The first change widens the charge by replacing one target with two. The earlier text blames a single chronicler sympathetic to the Lancastrian dynasty. The revision removes "a favourer of the Lancastrian family," makes "chronicler" plural and substitutes "and witty play-makers." The second change comes at the end of Richard's life: after recounting his death and the humiliation of his corpse, the revised essay adds that pamphlets and plays continue the injury to his name.

| Passage | Chatsworth and Rawlinson | The revised version, including Neville's manuscript and Thorpe's print |
|---|---|---|
| Who has misrepresented Richard? | "an indiscreet chronicler, a favourer of the Lancastrian family" | "indiscreet chroniclers and **witty play-makers**" |
| How does the attack continue after his death? | No reference to pamphlets or plays at this point. | A new clause complains that Richard is still made infamous in "**pamphlets and plays**." |

The first passage sets the writers' hostile accounts against Richard's "laws and actions," presented as the better witnesses to his government. The second makes the theatre an agent of continuing punishment: the king has been killed and his body abused, but his reputation is still being attacked. In the Neville manuscript it reads:

> but that we must still make him more cruel infamous in **pamphlets and plays**.

Thorpe's print preserves the same clause, reading "cruelly" for the manuscript's "cruel." The two theatrical references entered the essay at the same stage of revision; both survived into print.[2, 4]

The connection with *Richard III* is therefore more pointed than a shared historical subject. Neville is the named recipient of a defence that challenges the

dramatic making of Richard's reputation. The additions make the stage itself part of the dispute, although they do not name Shakespeare or a particular play.

## The political additions

The same revision also sharpens the essay's political argument. A substantial insertion declares that duty to one's country outweighs ties of kindred and friendship, and that the public good takes precedence over the person appointed to govern:

> the **weal public is more to be regarded**, than a person or magistrate that thereunto is ordained.

Ramsden and Kincaid read this as an intervention in the politics surrounding the Essex rising. More specifically, they suggest that the appeal to put country above kindred was directed at Neville, a kinsman of Robert Cecil whom the conspirators hoped to draw into their plans. They conjecture that "Hen. W." was Southampton; the identity remains unsettled, but their argument draws attention to the political force of the changes in the version dedicated to Neville.

The insertion is politically daring in its original setting. It invokes the public good to justify Richard's killing of the princes. Yet the inherited text also insists that subjects cannot adequately judge kings. Ramsden and Kincaid see this tension as evidence of a defence being adapted to a new political purpose. Neville was being asked to judge a work whose revisions challenged both the received portrait of Richard and the obligations owed to rulers.[5]

## Thomas Thorpe's edition, 1616

Thorpe published the revised defence as "The Prayse of King Richard the Third," the opening essay in *Essayes of Certaine Paradoxes*. His imprint supplies the date, 1616: seven years after he published the *Sonnets*, and one year after Neville died.[2, 3]

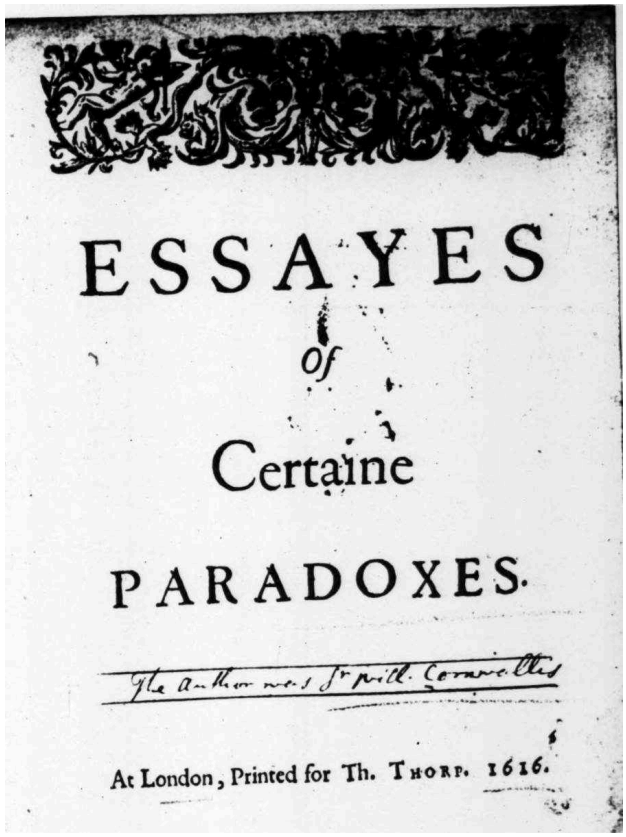
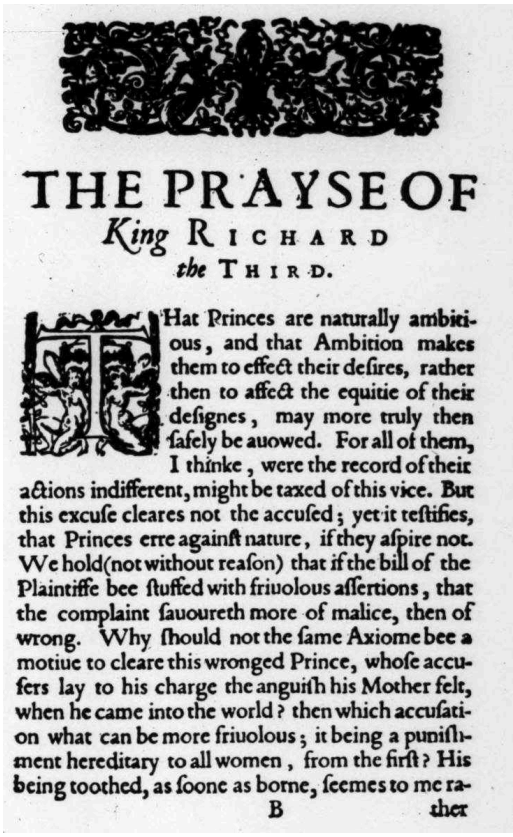



**Figure 21.2:** Title page of Essayes of Certaine Paradoxes, showing "Printed for Th. Thorp. 1616." The handwritten attribution to Cornwallis is separate from the printed title. Internet Archive, 1616 edition, title leaf.

The printed book omits the Neville dedication but preserves both attacks on theatrical representations. This is what makes the publication history significant: the publisher of the *Sonnets* brought into print the form of Richard's defence that also survives addressed to Neville.



THE PRAYSE OF
*King* RICHARD
*the* THIRD.

THat Princes are naturally ambitious, and that Ambition makes them to effect their desires, rather then to affect the equitie of their designes, may more truly then safely be auowed. For all of them, I thinke, were the record of their actions indifferent, might be taxed of this vice. But this excuse cleares not the accused; yet it testifies, that Princes erre against nature, if they aspire not. We hold (not without reason) that if the bill of the Plaintiffe bee stuffed with friuolous assertions, that the complaint sauoureth more of malice, then of wrong. Why should not the same Axiome bee a motiue to cleare this wronged Prince, whose accusers lay to his charge the anguish his Mother felt, when he came into the world? then which accusation what can be more friuolous; it being a punishment hereditary to all women, from the first? His being toothed, as soone as borne, seemes to me ra-

B ther

**Figure 21.3:** The opening of "The Prayse of King Richard the Third" in Thorpe's 1616 edition, signature B1r. Internet Archive, leaf n4.

The revised version makes its paradoxical character explicit. A paradox here is an argument that deliberately challenges received opinion: the essay even turns accusations about Richard's birth and bodily deformity into points in his favour. The earlier Chatsworth and Rawlinson versions lack the closing disclaimer. The revised version shared by Neville's manuscript and Thorpe's print adds it: "yet for all this know I hold this but a Paradox," in the printed wording. Neville's dedication also calls the work "a mere paradox." This explicit framing therefore accompanies the revision's stronger political argument and its attacks on playwrights.[4, 1]

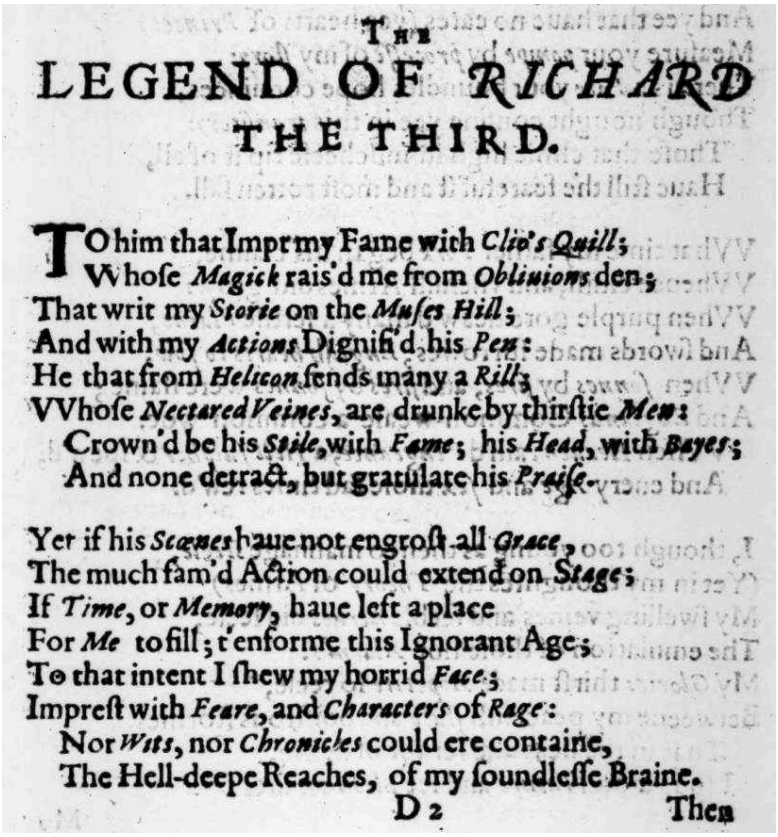
## Christopher Brooke and the unnamed dramatist

Christopher Brooke, a writer linked to Neville's political and literary circle, praised the dramatist who had put Richard III on stage. In his 1974 study of Neville's political career, the historian Owen Duncan groups Brooke and Neville with John Hoskyns and Richard Martin among the parliamentary opposition

to the court. The *Convivium Philosophicum* also lists Brooke alongside Sir Henry Neville, Donne and other members of that circle.[6]

In *The Ghost of Richard the Third* (1614), Brooke's Richard praises the writer who had already brought his story to the stage:

> To him that Impt my Fame with Clio's Quill;
> Whose Magick rais'd me from Obliuions den;
> That writ my Storie on the Muses Hill;
> And with my Actions Dignifi'd his Pen:
> He that from Helicon sends many a Rill;
> Whose Nectared Veines, are drunke by thirstie Men:
> Crown'd be his Stile, with Fame; his Head, with Bayes;
> And none detract, but gratulate his Praise.
> Yet if his **Scoenes** haue not engrost all Grace,
> The much fam'd Action could extend **on Stage**;
> If Time, or Memory, haue left a place
> For Me to fill; t'enforme this Ignorant Age;
> To that intent I shew my horrid Face;
> Imprest with Feare, and Characters of Rage:
> Nor Wits, nor Chronicles could ere containe,
> The Hell-deepe Reaches, of my soundlesse Braine.[7]



THE
LEGEND OF *RICHARD*
THE THIRD.

TO him that Impt my Fame with *Clio's Quill*;
Whoſe *Magick* rais'd me from *Oblivions* den;
That writ my *Storie* on the *Muſes Hill*;
And with my *Actions* Dignifi'd his *Pen*:
He that from *Helicon* ſends many a *Rill*;
VVhoſe *Nectared Veines*, are drunke by thirſtie *Men*:
Crown'd be his *Stile*, with *Fame*; his *Head*, with *Bayes*;
And none detract, but gratulate his *Praiſe*.

Yet if his *Scænes* haue not engroſt all *Grace*,
The much fam'd Action could extend on *Stage*;
If *Time*, or *Memory*, haue left a place
For *Me* to fill; t'enforme this Ignorant Age;
To that intent I ſhew my horrid *Face*;
Impreſt with *Feare*, and *Characters* of *Rage*:
Nor *Wits*, nor *Chronicles* could ere containe,
The Hell-deepe Reaches, of my ſoundleſſe Braine.

D 2 Then

**Figure 21.4:** Christopher Brooke's tribute to the dramatist who brought Richard III to the stage: the two stanzas. The Ghost of Richard the Third (1614), sig. D2r.

Brooke praises the dramatist who raised Richard from "Oblivions den" without naming Shakespeare. "Clio's Quill" invokes the Muse of history; Helicon, the Muses' mountain, supplies the streams of poetry. His turn from the writer's "Pen" to "Scoenes" and action "on Stage" makes the theatrical tribute explicit. A writer linked to Neville's political circle thus celebrates the author of the staged *Richard III* before offering his own continuation.[6, 7]

Brooke's poem appeared in 1614, while Neville was alive; Thorpe's *Paradoxes* followed in 1616, the year after his death. The two works adopt different rhetorical stances towards Richard's reputation: Brooke crowns the dramatist with fame and bays, while the Neville-dedicated version of the *Encomium* attacks the "witty play-makers" who helped blacken the king's name.[2, 7]

## Notes and sources

1. For the proposed identifications as Henry Wotton and Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, see Ramsden and Kincaid, introduction, pp. vi–vii. British Library, Add MS 29307, dedication of the *Encomium of Richard III*. See also the appendix transcription (p. 33) headed "Dedication of MS. Additional 29307" in William Cornwallis, *The Encomium of Richard III*, ed. A. N. Kincaid, introduction by J. A. Ramsden and A. N. Kincaid (London: Turner & Devereux, 1977), edition catalogue.

2. [William Cornwallis], *Essayes of Certaine Paradoxes* (London: printed for Thomas Thorpe, 1616), "The Prayse of King Richard the Third," beginning sig. B1r; STC 5779, ESTC S105004, TCP A19354. Complete 1616 scan; TCP text. Title and opening images are Archive leaves n0 and n4.

3. *Shake-speares Sonnets* (London: George Eld for Thomas Thorpe, 1609); first-edition witness and publication history, Shakespeare Documented.

4. Ramsden and Kincaid, *Encomium*, introduction pp. iv–x; text and apparatus pp. 15–15a and 32–32a. The earlier witnesses are Chatsworth (Hardwick MS 44) and Bodleian Rawl. D. 718. The independently collated later group comprises Cambridge St John's MS I.33, Huntington HM 199, Folger V.b.303 and V.a.132, British Library Add MS 29307, and the 1616 print. The conjectural tree (p. x) places the Neville manuscript and print on separate branches of a lost common source; it does not identify the surviving manuscript as the printer's copy. The quoted publication statement is on p. vi; Cambridge's 1611 ownership is on p. viii. Stowe 268 is an eighteenth-century copy of Folger V.a.132, excluded from independent collation. The final "Paradox" sentence is also marked as an addition on p. 32. The theatrical variants appear at pp. 15a and 32a, the latter recording "cruelly] Cruell A." Prose quotations modernize spelling while preserving that difference and the dedication's spelling of Neville's name; Brooke's verse retains printed spelling. Bold emphasis is added here and does not reproduce Kincaid's typographical apparatus. John Casson discusses the two references in "The Earl of Southampton, Richard III, Shakespeare and Henry Neville", p. 5.

5. William Cornwallis the younger, *The Encomium of Richard III*, ed. A. N. Kincaid, introduction by J. A. Ramsden and A. N. Kincaid (London: Turner & Devereux, 1977), pp. 18–20 and facing apparatus; introduction, pp. v–vii, edition record. The quotation follows Kincaid's edited text, p. 19, not a diplomatic transcription of Add MS 29307. The public-good argument is a later addition within a defence that also asserts princely privilege. The identification of "Hen. W." with Southampton and the pre-rising presentation scenario are the editors' conjectures, pp. vi–vii; the rising was in February 1601 in modern year numbering. Alison Hanham, review, *The Ricardian* 4, no. 60 (March 1978), pp. 23–26, especially pp. 25–26, review, stresses the work's paradoxical genre rather than treating its praise as straightforward rehabilitation.

6. Owen Lowe Duncan, Jr., *The Political Career of Sir Henry Neville: An Elizabethan Gentleman at the Court of James I* (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1974), pp. 227–228, OhioLINK dissertation. This is Duncan's explicit political grouping, not a contemporary statement of a private alliance. Michelle O'Callaghan, " 'Talking Politics': Tyranny, Parliament, and Christopher Brooke's *The Ghost of Richard the Third* (1614)," *The Historical Journal* 41, no. 1 (1998), pp. 97–120, especially pp. 102–106, article, gives the Convivium company and parliamentary setting. Its name-list says Sir Henry Neville; the identification with Billingbear rather than his namesake remains a separate question.

7. Christopher Brooke, *The Ghost of Richard the Third* (London: George Eld for Laurence Lisle, 1614), "The Legend of Richard the Third," sig. D2r, STC 3830, TCP A16936, printed page. The passage praises an unnamed dramatist; Shakespeare's proper name is absent. Lisle, not Thorpe, published Brooke's book.

# Henry V: Westmoreland, Tacitus and France

Chapter 22

Westmoreland should not be at Agincourt. Holinshed assigns him to guard the Scottish frontier, yet the Folio play brings him to France and gives him a prominent place beside Henry V. In 1929, Robert Boies Sharpe, reading the play's Agincourt names for compliments to Essex's circle, suggested that this addition might honour Henry Neville:

> A Sir Henry Neville ... was ambassador to France ... He was in the confidence of Southampton and took some part in the Essex plot ... Honor may have been reflected from the title of Westmoreland to the family name of Neville ...[1]

The connection is closer than a shared surname. Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland, was the ambassador's direct ancestor.

## Westmoreland at Agincourt

Holinshed leaves the earl and other captains in England "to keep the frontiers and marches of Scotland."[2]

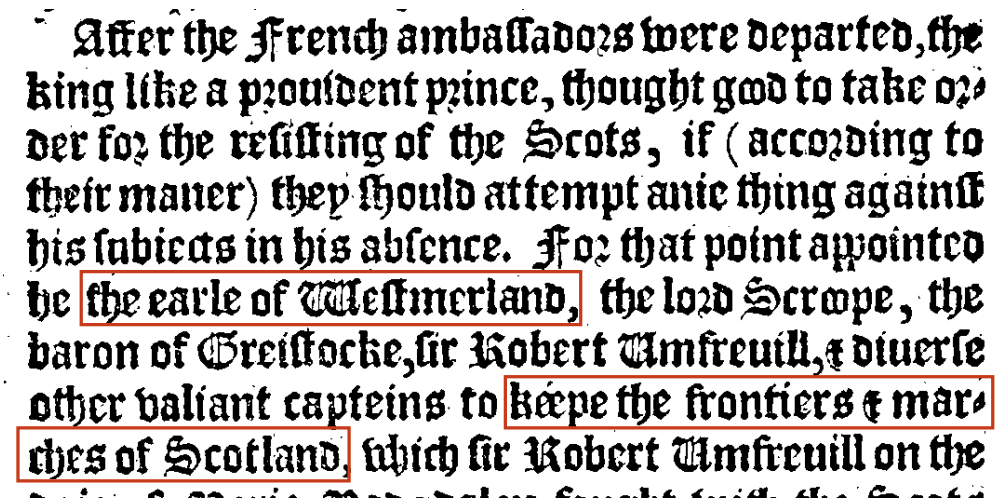

After the French ambassadors were departed, the king like a prouident prince, thought good to take order for the resisting of the Scots, if (according to their maner) they should attempt anie thing against his subiects in his absence. For that point appointed he the earle of Westmerland, the lord Scrope, the baron of Greistocke, sir Robert Umfreuill, & diuerse other valiant capteins to keepe the frontiers & marches of Scotland, which sir Robert Umfreuill on the

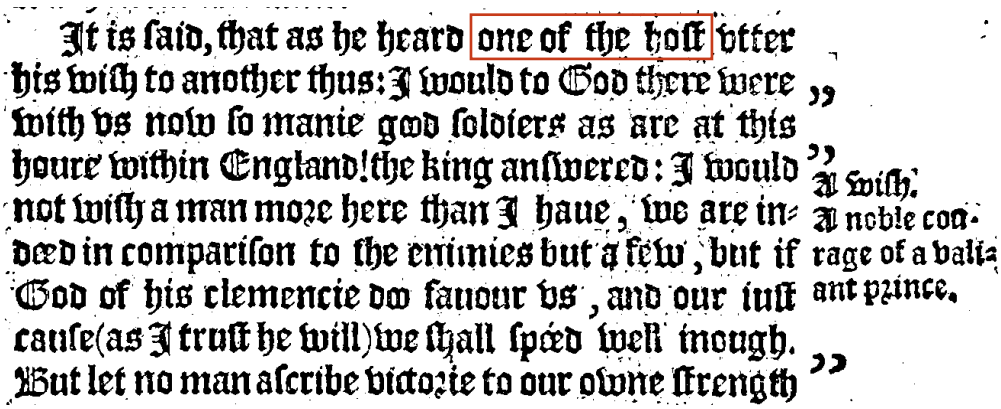
**Figure 22.1:** Holinshed, Chronicles (1587), III, p. 548, left column: Westmoreland is assigned to guard the Scottish frontier. Colored outlines added.

Holinshed also gives Westmoreland a substantial argument at the council of war: England should conquer Scotland before attempting France. The Folio assigns the corresponding warning in Act 1 to the Bishop of Ely. It gives West-

moreland a different prominence at Agincourt, where the chronicle does not place him.[3]

The play changes both his location and his role. In Holinshed, "one of the host" wishes for more English soldiers; Henry answers that he would not wish for another. The 1600 quarto assigns the wish to Warwick. In the fuller Folio text, Westmoreland prompts the St. Crispin's Day speech:

WESTMORELAND O, that we now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do no work today.
KING HENRY What's he that wishes so?
**My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin.**
If we are marked to die, we are enough
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honor.
[...]
— *Henry V*, 4.3.[4]


It is ſaid, that as he heard one of the hoſt vtter his wiſh to another thus: I would to God there were with vs now ſo manie good ſoldiers as are at this houre within England! the king anſwered: I would not wiſh a man more here than I haue, we are indeed in compariſon to the enimies but a few, but if God of his clemencie do fauour vs, and our iuſt cauſe (as I truſt he will) we ſhall ſpéd well inough. But let no man aſcribe victorie to our owne ſtrength

I wiſh.
A noble courage of a valiant prince.

**Figure 22.2:** Holinshed, Chronicles (1587), III, p. 553, right column: the wish for more soldiers belongs to "one of the host." The Folio gives it to Westmoreland. Colored outline added.

Henry repeatedly addresses Westmoreland as his cousin and entrusts him with proclaiming that anyone unwilling to fight may leave with a passport and money. After the speech, Henry asks whether he still wishes for more help. Westmoreland now wants fewer companions still:

WESTMORELAND
God's will, my liege, would you and I alone,
Without more help, could fight this royal battle!
— *Henry V*, 4.3.

Westmoreland's change of heart lets the audience hear the king's appeal to fellowship and honour take effect on Neville's ancestor.

James Whitelocke recorded the descent at his friend Neville's death on 10 July 1615:

> He was lineally descended from Edward Lord Abergavenny, fourth son of **Ralph Neville, first Earl of Westmorland**.[5]

Edward was the son of Ralph Neville and Joan Beaufort, John of Gaunt's daughter. Through them, both Westmorland in *Henry V* and Gaunt in *Richard II* were the ambassador's direct ancestors. The Neville earls of Salisbury and Warwick in *2 Henry VI* belonged to the collateral branch shown alongside his own descent in the chart. The men holding those titles in *Henry V* were from different families.[5]

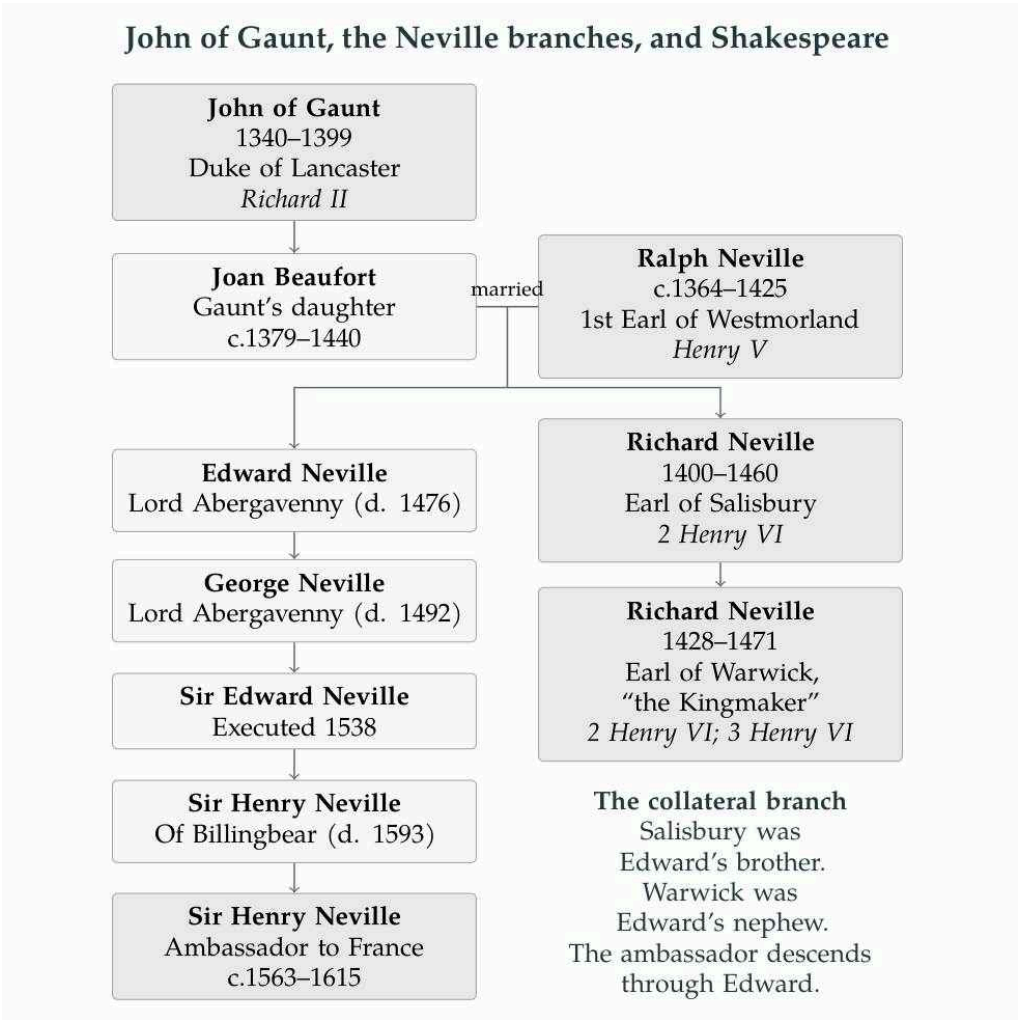



**Figure 22.3:** Author's chart: John of Gaunt, the Neville branches, and Shakespeare. Arrows show descent; the horizontal line shows marriage. The ambassador descends through Edward, Lord Abergavenny. Genealogical sources are given in the accompanying note.

The opposite change occurs in *Henry VIII*: Neville's grandfather, Sir Edward, disappears from the banquet episode in which Holinshed names him as the man Wolsey mistakes for the king. Chapter 38 examines that omission.

Chapter 20 discusses Gaunt and the wider Neville family in the histories. Appendix D examines Bradbeer and Casson's proposed "Ne'vile" wordplay in the change from the quarto's "ne'er so base" to the Folio's "ne'er so vile."

## The king among his soldiers

The night before Agincourt offers another departure from the chronicle. Henry borrows Erpingham's cloak, dismisses his companions and moves among his soldiers unrecognized. George R. Price, writing in *Shakespeare Quarterly* in 1961, proposed a source in Tacitus's account of Germanicus. He found no corresponding night visit in the Agincourt chronicles and poems he examined, including Holinshed, or in *The Famous Victories*.[6]

In *Annals* 2.13, Germanicus wants to hear what his soldiers really think before battle. He distrusts officers' reports, friends' flattery and an assembly in which a few lead and the rest applaud. Richard Grenewey's English translation, published in 1598, describes his solution:

> That their minds would be best known, when they were by themselves; not overlooked: in eating and drinking they would utter their **fear or hope**. As soon as it was **night**, going out at the Augural gate, accompanied with one alone, in secret and unknown places to the watch: casting a savage beast's skin on his back, he went from one place to another: stood **listening at the tents**: and joyeth in the **praise of himself**: some extolling the **nobility of their Captain**; ...[7]

Both commanders conceal their rank under an outer garment and move through the camp before battle to hear soldiers speak freely. Like Germanicus, Henry hears himself praised. Pistol declares:

> PISTOL The King's a **bawcock and a heart of gold**, a lad
> of life, an imp of fame, **of parents good**, of fist most
> valiant. I kiss his dirty shoe, and from heartstring I
> **love the lovely bully**. What is thy name?
> — *Henry V*, 4.1.[8]

Shakespeare then makes the encounter more difficult. Bates and Williams question the campaign and the king's responsibility for its dead. Concealing his identity allows Henry to hear criticism that rank would silence, but obliges him to answer without invoking that rank. The resemblance to Tacitus lies in the sequence—disguise, a night visit, unguarded speech and judgments of the commander—and Shakespeare develops it into an argument about the responsibilities of kingship.

Neville repeatedly used Tacitus to judge the conduct of rulers. His confession applied the historian to success and political judgment; his *Advice*, to a king's loss of goodwill. Chapter 16 examines these and two further documented uses.[9]

His tutor and travelling companion Henry Savile had translated the *Histories* in 1591. The Germanicus episode belongs to the *Annals*, translated by Grenewey in 1598 and printed to be bound with a new edition of Savile's translations.[6]

## France in 1599

In 1599, as Henry Neville began his embassy to France, *Henry V* brought Anglo-French relations onto the English stage—not only through war and royal claims, but through French dialogue, interpreters and negotiations. Neville was conducting in France the kinds of business the play dramatizes: communicating between courts, examining royal obligations and negotiating their fulfilment.[10,11]

The French dialogue gives this connection an audible presence. Katherine learns English from Alice; the Boy interprets for a captured French soldier; Henry woos the princess across the language divide.[11]

> KING HENRY O fair Katherine, if you will love me soundly with your **French heart**, I will be glad to hear you confess it brokenly with your **English tongue**. Do you like me, Kate?
> — *Henry V*, 5.2.[12]

The courtship takes place during negotiations for peace, with Katherine herself named among the articles. Henry's demands are "enscheduled briefly" for the French negotiators to examine (*Henry V*, 5.2).[12]

Neville spoke French with Henri IV and used it in negotiations with Villeroy. Two of his own revised drafts survive: a French letter to the governor of Dieppe and the English–French text of a speech and memorial to Villeroy. The printed correspondence also includes his French letter of 10 June 1599 pressing Elizabeth's demand for repayment.[13,14]

Before leaving for France, on 19 February 1599, Neville told Thomas Windebank that he was checking and copying the bonds and contracts behind Elizabeth's financial claims against the French king. He needed to "verify the **particulars of every debt**"; this would be "a chief part of my business there."[10]

David Womersley cites this very letter in his 1995 article "France in Shakespeare's Henry V." His study reads the play's fifteenth-century story against the politics of summer 1599; Neville's letter documents Elizabeth's pressure for repayment. Womersley approached the subject independently of the Neville authorship question.[15]

Womersley finds a telling combination of sympathy for France and ridicule of its court. Burgundy's lament gives the suffering country a voice:

BURGUNDY
[…]
Why that the naked, poor, and mangled peace,
Dear nurse of arts, plenties, and joyful births,
Should not in this best garden of the world,
Our fertile France, put up her lovely visage?
Alas, she hath from France too long been chased,
And all her husbandry doth lie on heaps,
Corrupting in its own fertility.
[…]
— *Henry V*, 5.2.[16]

Womersley argues that this speech has no apparent counterpart in Holinshed or *The Famous Victories*, but resembles English accounts of the French civil wars. He also reads the choice politically: recalling France's devastation pushes aside Henri IV's claims about the prosperity of his reign.

In the 1600 quarto, Bourbon appears at Agincourt where the Folio gives us the Dauphin. Womersley reads the name as pointing towards Henri IV, and relates the ridicule and the attack on the Salic Law to rumours of the French king's ambitions for the English succession.[17]

Neville's dispatches confront the difficult ally behind these anxieties. On 24 September 1599, he explained Henri's resentment of English assistance to Cecil through a maxim from Tacitus's *Annals*: benefits remain welcome while repayable, but an overwhelming obligation breeds hatred.[9] The classical historian was a tool of his diplomacy, used to explain the French king whose debts he had been sent to recover.

The fifth-act Chorus points to 1599 by imagining a triumphant return from Ireland for Elizabeth's general—the allusion to Essex that helps date the play. Events disappointed that hope. Essex returned to court on 28 September against Elizabeth's orders. On 8 October Cecil told Neville that he "was in the court before ever her Majesty knew it." The Queen had excluded him from her presence and committed him to the Lord Keeper's house.[18]

Three scholars, none arguing for Neville's authorship, bring different features of the play into his world. Sharpe names the ambassador as someone Westmoreland might honour; the Folio makes that ancestor central to the St. Crispin's Day exchange. Price's proposed source lies in a historian Neville studied and used, published in English alongside his tutor's work. Womersley's account of its French politics draws on Neville's own letter. The French dialogue adds a further connection with his work in France in 1599.

## Notes and sources

1. Robert Boies Sharpe, "We Band of Brothers," *Studies in Philology* 26.2 (1929), 166–176, especially 169 and 174–175; quotation from p. 175, with omissions marked by ellipses. His Neville discussion concerns the contemporary resonance of the title; he does not attribute the play to Neville. He also names Mountjoy, Charles Neville, sixth Earl of Westmorland, and Edmund Neville as possible contemporary connections.

2. Raphael Holinshed and continuators, *Chronicles* (London, 1587), III, 548, left column; 553, right column, STC 13569, TCP A68202. Digitized volume. Quotation spelling modernized. The Scotland assignment is also in Hall; the reproduced witness is Holinshed itself.
3. Holinshed, *Chronicles* (1587), vol. III, reign of Henry V, the council debate headed "The earle of Westmerland persuadeth the king to the conquest of Scotland," TCP A68202. The 1623 Folio gives "But there's a saying very old and true" to "Bish. Ely."; TCP A11954. The Folger reading text, 1.2, retains Ely. Editions that reassign the speech to Westmoreland make a different editorial choice. Holinshed's Westmoreland advocates a Scottish campaign, not withdrawal from warfare.
4. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 4.3, Folger Shakespeare Library. For the contrasting Warwick assignment see 1600 quarto, scene 12. The excerpts preserve Folger lineation; the concluding ellipsis marks the continuation of Henry's speech.
5. James Tait, "Neville, Edward (d.1476)," and W. A. J. Archbold, "Neville, Edward (d.1538)," *Dictionary of National Biography*, XL (1894). Together these identify Ralph and Joan's son Edward, his son George, Sir Edward, and the two Billingbear Henry Nevilles. The George who succeeded as Lord Abergavenny in the next generation was Sir Edward's brother; he is not an additional generation in this descent. James Whitelocke, *Liber Famelicus*, ed. John Bruce (London: Camden Society, 1858), p. 46, entry recording Neville's death on 10 July 1615; spelling modernized. Chart dates: John of Gaunt, 1340–1399; Joan Beaufort, c.1379–1440; Ralph Neville, c.1364–1425. See John of Gaunt, Joan Beaufort, and James Tait, "Neville, Ralph (1364–1425)". George's death in 1492 is recorded in Tait's biography of his son. The ambassador's approximate birth year follows the age evidence discussed in Chapters 1–9. Where no birth year is supplied, d. denotes the year of death. For the collateral branch, James Tait, "Neville, Richard (1400–1460)", identifies Salisbury as Ralph and Joan's son and Edward's brother; his "Neville, Richard (1428–1471)" identifies Warwick as Salisbury's son. The Neville-family speeches are in Shakespeare, 2 Henry VI, 2.2, 3.2 and 5.1; Warwick also appears in 3 Henry VI. The three Neville references occur in the 1594 quarto, The First Part of the Contention: Internet Shakespeare Editions, 2.2, 3.2, and 5.1. Short quotations in the text use modern spelling and the Folger reading text. In the crest passage, Q1 reads "my fathers age" where the Folio-based text reads "my father's badge"; the quoted words "old Neville's crest" are present in both. See also Folger's textual introduction.
6. George R. Price, "Henry V and Germanicus," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 12.1 (1961), 57–60. Price proposes a plausible source, not a demonstrated borrowing. On pp. 58–59 and n. 3 he describes Grenewey's 1598 *Annals* as printed to be bound with the new edition of Savile's translations, with separate signatures; he also discusses possible access through Essex and Southampton. David Womersley, "3 Henry VI: Shakespeare, Tacitus, and Parricide," *Notes and Queries* 32.4 (1985), 472 n. 7, notes earlier dramatic examples of disguised commanders making night rounds. The case here concerns the fuller sequence; disguise alone is not distinctive.
7. Tacitus, *The Annales of Cornelius Tacitus*, translated by Richard Grenewey (London, 1598), 36, *Annals* 2.13, STC 23644, TCP A13333; digitized edition. Spelling modernized; wording and syntax retained. Emphasis identifies the circumstances compared with the play, not an exact verbal borrowing.
8. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 4.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. Pistol's complete speech is quoted with Folger lineation.
9. Neville to Cecil, 24 September 1599, Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer (London, 1725), I, 108, citing *Annals* 4.18. Chapter 16 examines Neville's uses of Tacitus and his relationship with Savile; Chapter 31 discusses the confession's Tacitus maxim alongside *Macbeth*. Savile translated the *Histories*; Grenewey translated the *Annals* containing the Germanicus episode.
10. Henry Neville to Thomas Windebank, 19 February 1599, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1598–1601*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1869), 163–164, vol. CCLXX, no. 42, especially 164. Wording follows the calendar's modernized abstract. Year modernized; Julian day and month retained.

11. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 3.4 and 4.4, Folger Shakespeare Library.
12. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 5.2, Folger Shakespeare Library. Katherine is expressly included among the articles. Emphasis added. The 1600 quarto already contains the French lesson, ransom scene, royal wooing and settlement through written articles; see Internet Shakespeare Editions, quarto text. "French heart ... English tongue" and "enscheduled briefly" are Folio readings.
13. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/2, f. 37r–v, revised French letter to the governor of Dieppe, October 1599; f. 51r and following leaves, English–French draft of a speech and memorial to Villeroy, docketed January 1599, understood as January 1600 under the old-style year convention. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 5 October 1599 O.S., reports the imprisonment of a captain by the governor of Dieppe: Winwood, *Memorials*, I, 115–116; the January negotiations at 147–150, especially 148–149. For his conversations with Henri IV and presentation of a written memorial, Neville to Cecil, Paris, 26 May 1599 O.S., ibid., 29–31; a French proposition to the king's council is dated 21 May 1599 O.S. and printed at pp. 27–28.
14. Neville to Villeroy, Paris, 10 June 1599 New Style (31 May Old Style), printed in French under the heading "Sir Henry Neville to Monsieur Villeroy" and subscribed "Henry Neville", in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer (London, 1725), I, 43. His earlier French letter of 6 June and Villeroy's answer are printed at pp. 37–39.
15. David Womersley, "France in Shakespeare's Henry V," *Renaissance Studies* 9.4 (1995), 442–459, especially 445 and 450 n. 34. The note cites Neville to Windebank for the repayment issue. Womersley does not attribute the play to Neville.
16. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 5.2, Folger Shakespeare Library. The passage preserves Folger's lineation. For Womersley's source comparison and contemporary French context, see "France in Shakespeare's Henry V," pp. 445–448 and 458.
17. Womersley, 445–459, particularly 445–450 and 454–457. The Burgundy source comparison and the contemporary Bourbon/Salic Law interpretation are his arguments. The Bourbon–Dauphin distinction concerns the early printed versions. The 1599 topical setting does not establish that every Folio-only passage was performed in that year. The shorter 1600 quarto lacks the choruses; it was reprinted in 1602 and in 1619 with a false date of 1608. See Folger's textual introduction. Quotations here follow Folger.
18. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act 5 Chorus. Robert Cecil to Neville, 8 October 1599, Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State* (London, 1725), I, 118–119. Quotation spelling modernized. For the 28 September return to Nonsuch, see Imogen Easton, "The Great Essex Coup Plot at Nonsuch," Sutton Council Cultural Services, 28 September 2023. The date refers to his arrival at court.

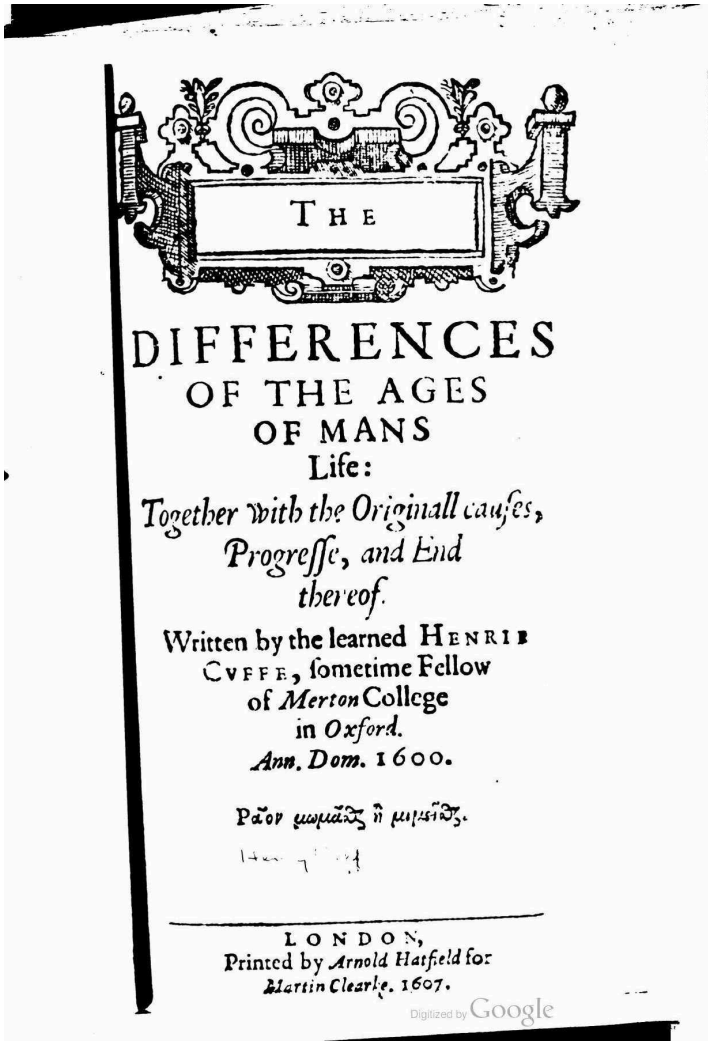
# As You Like It: Jaques and the Seven Ages

Chapter 23

Jaques turns the world around him into arguments. He divides life into seven ages, distinguishes kinds of melancholy, and asks for the degrees of the lie. That combination of learning and classification suggests a particular, ultimately tragic, figure in Neville's circle: Henry Cuffe.[1, 2]

Cuffe was Oxford's Regius Professor of Greek before becoming Essex's secretary. Henry Savile, Neville's tutor, had supported his studies and brought him to Merton. Cuffe later drew Neville into the Essex crisis.[3]

The strongest connection with Jaques is Cuffe's *The Differences of the Ages of Man's Life*. Printed in 1607, six years after his execution, its title page dates the book to 1600. As Cuffe's close associate, Neville would likely have read the work in manuscript when Cuffe was alive.[4, 5]



THE

DIFFERENCES
OF THE AGES
OF MANS
Life:
*Together with the Originall causes, Progresse, and End thereof.*
Written by the learned HENRIE CVFFE, sometime Fellow of *Merton* College in *Oxford*.
*Ann. Dom.* 1600.

Ῥᾶον μωμᾶσθαι ἢ μιμεῖσθαι.

LONDON,
Printed by *Arnold Hatfield* for *Martin Clearke*. 1607.

Digitized by Google

**Figure 23.1:** Henry Cuffe, The Differences of the Ages of Mans Life (London, 1607), title page. The writing is dated 1600; publication followed in 1607.

## The seven ages, with the sunlight removed

Alan Taylor Bradford's 1976 study in *Shakespeare Quarterly* explains how Shakespeare transforms the traditional seven ages of man. Bradford uses Cuffe to set out the planetary scheme: the seven ages follow the seven heavenly bodies, from the Moon to Saturn. At the centre stands the Sun, governing the prime of life. Cuffe describes its effect:

> our **youthful prime**, by the **Sun's lively operation**, is lifted up from base delights to a loftier and more man-like resolution and liveliness.[4]

The planetary scheme, as Cuffe describes it, gives life a flourishing middle, as desire rises into resolution and mature strength. Jaques keeps the number seven but removes that prime:

> JAQUES All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players.
> They have their exits and their entrances,
> And one man in his time plays many parts,
> His acts being **seven ages**. At first the infant,
> Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
> Then the whining schoolboy with his satchel
> And shining morning face, creeping like snail
> Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
> Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
> Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
> Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
> Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in **quarrel**,
> Seeking the bubble reputation
> Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
> In fair round belly with good capon lined,
> With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
> Full of wise saws and modern instances;
> And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
> Into the lean and slippered pantaloon
> With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
> His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
> For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
> Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
> And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
> That ends this strange eventful history,
> Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
> Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.
> — *As You Like It*, 2.7.[6]

Mars and Jupiter move forward; Saturn's decay expands into two stages, preserving the total of seven. As Bradford puts it, "**Jaques' cosmos is sunless**."[7]

| The planetary ages in Cuffe | Shakespeare's treatment in Jaques's speech |
|---|---|
| 1. Moon: moist infancy | 1. The mewling, puking infant |
| 2. Mercury: play, talk and learning | 2. The schoolboy unwilling to learn |
| 3. Venus: blossoming desire | 3. The lover sighing over his mistress |
| 4. Sun: the vigorous prime | Omitted |
| 5. Mars: courage and combat | Moved to 4: the soldier risking death for reputation |
| 6. Jupiter: gravity and steadiness | Moved to 5: the justice displaying his authority |

| The planetary ages in Cuffe | Shakespeare's treatment in Jaques's speech |
|---|---|
| 7. Saturn: decrepitude | Expanded into 6 and 7: the shrinking pantaloon, then second childishness and oblivion |

Jaques seems to be satirizing Cuffe's solemn delineation. Mercury's readiness for learning becomes a child creeping unwillingly to school. Cuffe's Mars stirs men to "a more venturous boldness in **quarrelling** combats"; Jaques's soldier is "sudden and quick in **quarrel**," spending that boldness on a reputation as insubstantial as a bubble. Jupiter's gravity dwindles into a well-fed justice's solemn appearance and stock sayings.[4, 7]

Shakespeare turns the learned scheme into an ironic character study: Jaques leaves no place for the flourishing prime in which human powers mature into something worth achieving.

## "Compounded of many simples"

Jaques's description of his own melancholy makes the comparison more specific:

> JAQUES I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which
> is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical;
> nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the
> soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's,
> which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice; nor
> the lover's, which is all these; but it is a **melancholy**
> **of mine own**, **compounded of many simples**, **extracted**
> from many objects, and indeed the sundry
> contemplation of my travels, in which my often
> rumination wraps me in a most **humorous** sadness.[1]
> — *As You Like It*, 4.1.

"Simples" are constituent ingredients. Jaques first separates melancholy into kinds, then describes his own as a mixture, its ingredients "extracted from many objects." He calls it "the sundry contemplation of my travels" and ends with "a most **humorous** sadness." The language of ingredients and humours makes his account of himself sound like an analysis of a substance.[8]

Cuffe uses the vocabulary of composition to explain the human body. He describes the body before the Fall as:

> **compounded** of the contrary natures of the four elements

He traces natural death to "contrariety in the compound," then explains that continued life depends on:

> the due and just proportionable temperature of the four first qualities, Heat, Cold, Dryness, Moisture.[9]

Here “temperature” means the balance of the qualities. Cuffe then applies this account to the bodily complexions, including melancholy:

> Lastly, **melancholy** resembling the earth and its qualities, cold and drought, both enemies to life, hasteneth the destruction of the body whereunto it is incident.[10]

Jaques turns this language of composition into a portrait of his own mind. Cuffe's melancholy belongs to the body's mixture; Jaques insists on a melancholy “of mine own,” assembled from the world he observes. His joke is more pointed because he first rejects the scholar's melancholy, then explains himself in a scholar's language of ingredients, compounds and kinds. As with the seven ages, Jaques adapts a learned account of human nature to his own outlook.

## The scholar's jokes and categories

Against that background, Jaques's Greek joke acquires a more personal point. When Amiens sings, Jaques adds a verse with the refrain “Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame.” Asked to explain it, he replies:

> AMIENS What's that “ducdame”?
> JAQUES 'Tis a **Greek invocation** to call fools into a circle. [...][11]
> — *As You Like It*, 2.5.

Jaques invents the puzzle and enjoys his companions' need for an explanation. Beside Cuffe's Greek professorship and his treatise on human ages, it contributes to the proposed portrait of a learned man making sport of his authority.

Jaques also asks Touchstone to name “the degrees of the lie,” which Touchstone sets out in seven stages. Across age, temperament and conduct, Jaques wants human experience sorted into its constituent kinds.[2]

## Underhand persuasion

Oliver claims he has secretly tried to stop Orlando from wrestling:

> OLIVER Charles, I thank thee for thy love to me, which thou shalt find I will most kindly requite. I had myself notice of my brother's purpose herein, and have by **underhand** means labored to **dissuade** him **from** it; but he is resolute. [...]
> — *As You Like It*, 1.1

Neville reports Henri IV's private pressure on the Dutch States on 24 September 1599:

> the king did **underhand dissuade** them **from** peace

Both use **“underhand”** with **“dissuade ... from”** for private persuasion.[12]

Among the EEBO-TCP texts searched through 1623, the close construction appears only in Shakespeare's First Folio. Neville's dispatch supplies a dated private use in 1599.[13]

## A clause and a voyage

Two further comparisons turn diplomatic language into comedy. In July 1599 Neville wants ships to carry both a flag and a passport, rather than either alone:

> to make the clause **copulative**, which is now disjunctive, either to flag or passport.

At the play's wedding gathering, Touchstone announces:

> TOUCHSTONE God 'ild you, sir. I desire you of the like. I
> press in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country
> **copulatives**, to swear and to forswear, according as
> marriage binds and blood breaks. [...]
> — *As You Like It*, 5.4

The word joins conditions in Neville's treaty discussion and couples in Touchstone's joke.[14]

That same July, Neville reports the Dutch fleet "**victualled** for a year." Jaques gives Touchstone's marriage a shorter allowance:

> JAQUES [...]
> [To Touchstone.] And you to wrangling, for thy
> loving voyage
> Is but for two months **victualled**.—So to your
> pleasures.
> [...]
> — *As You Like It*, 5.4

The naval expression becomes a joke about how long a marriage's supplies will last. "Victualled" occurs in only three of the 239 plays dated 1590–1615 in the collection examined.[15]

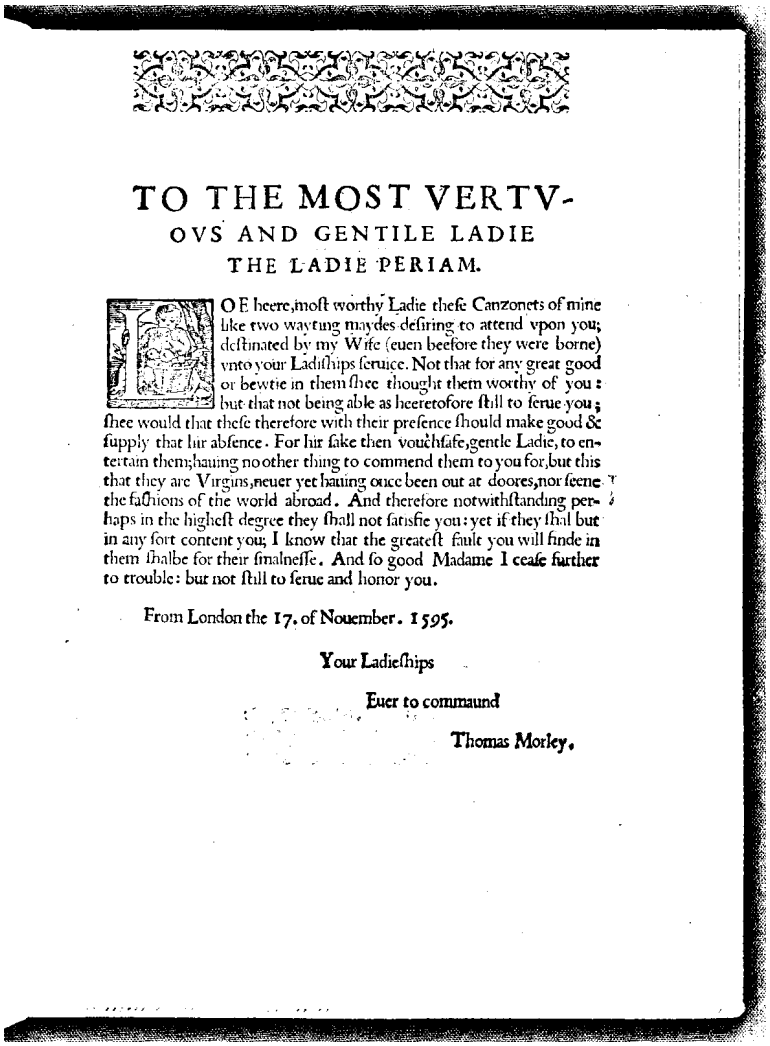
Chapter 17 examines "purlieu" alongside Neville's dispute over his free chase.

## Morley and Neville's stepmother

The play's music supplies a household connection. Thomas Morley's *First Booke of Ayres* (1600) printed "It was a lover and his lass," sung by two pages in Act 5, twenty-three years before the play appeared in print.[16]

In 1595 Morley had dedicated his *First Booke of Canzonets to Two Voyces* to Lady Periam—Elizabeth Bacon, Neville's stepmother and the Lady Nevell of Byrd's keyboard manuscript, as John Harley identifies her. Morley explains that his wife had formerly served her and had intended these pieces for her before their completion. The canzonets would take her place, "not being able as heretofore

still to serve you."[17] The composer who printed the play's song thus had a personal connection with Neville's stepmother's household.



TO THE MOST VERTV-
OVS AND GENTILE LADIE
THE LADIE PERIAM.

LOE heere,moſt worthy Ladie theſe Canzonets of mine like two wayting maydes deſiring to attend vpon you; deſtinated by my Wife (euen beefore they were borne) vnto your Ladiſhips ſeruice. Not that for any great good or bewtie in them ſhee thought them worthy of you: but that not being able as heeretofore ſtill to ſerue you; ſhee would that theſe therefore with their preſence ſhould make good & ſupply that hir abſence. For hir ſake then vouchſafe,gentle Ladie, to entertain them;hauing no other thing to commend them to you for,but this that they are Virgins,neuer yet hauing once been out at doores,nor ſeene the faſhions of the world abroad. And therefore notwithſtanding perhaps in the higheſt degree they ſhall not ſatisfie you: yet if they ſhal but in any ſort content you; I know that the greateſt fault you will finde in them ſhalbe for their ſmalneſſe. And ſo good Madame I ceaſe further to trouble: but not ſtill to ſerue and honor you.

From London the 17. of Nouember. 1595.

Your Ladieſhips

Euer to commaund

Thomas Morley.

**Figure 23.2:** Thomas Morley's dedication to Lady Periam, 17 November 1595. He explains that his wife had formerly served her. Library of Congress, The First Booke of Canzonets to Two Voyces.

## Amiens and the journey home

Amiens, the exiled duke's companion, has a name absent from Lodge's *Rosalynde* but present in Neville's French itinerary. On 14 May 1600 Neville wrote to Cecil from "Between Amiens and Abbeville," travelling from Paris to Boulogne. He joined the English peace commissioners there on 16 May; Chapter 5 describes the negotiations and maps the route.[18]

Later that summer, Neville returned from the Boulogne negotiations. He landed at Dover on 2 August, left on the fourth and reached London on the sixth. On 4 August the Stationers' Register listed *As You Like It* among four plays "to be staied." The entry gives no reason for the stay.[19]

## Notes and sources

1. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 4.1. The seven listed kinds precede Jaques's description of his own mixture.
2. Cuffe, *Differences*, pp. 113–121, TCP A19683: definition of age, bodily heat and moisture, and alternative divisions of life. The comparison concerns the procedure of definition and division. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 5.4: Touchstone supplies the degrees of the quarrel at Jaques's request.
3. Sidney Lee, "Cuff, Henry," *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 13 (1888), biography, on Savile's support, Cuffe's Greek professorship, his Essex service and his dealings with Neville during the crisis. The identification of Cuffe as a possible model for Jaques is the argument considered here.
4. Henry Cuffe, *The Differences of the Ages of Mans Life* (London: Arnold Hatfield for Martin Clearke, 1607), title page and p. 121; STC 6103, TCP A19683. Cuffe's quoted spelling and capitalization are modernized. The title dates the writing to 1600. The editor, R. M., describes the text as a transcript from an original reportedly Cuffe's own.
5. Henry Cuffe, *The Differences of the Ages of Man's Life: Together with the Originall Causes, Progresse, and End Thereof* (London: Arnold Hatfield for Martin Clearke, 1607), title page, R.M.'s dedicatory epistle, and the treatise, facsimile, Folger catalogue. The title dates the writing to 1600. R.M. reports a transcript of what he was informed was Cuffe's original; this is the editor's account of transmission. Neville's likely reading in manuscript is an inference from his close association with Cuffe, not a statement made by R.M.; the dedication does not name Neville as a reader. The title's 1600 writing date gives no month and does not establish when a manuscript could have reached him, or whether the finished treatise preceded the play.
6. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 2.7, Jaques's seven ages. The planetary interpretation follows Bradford's argument in the next note; the planets are not named in Jaques's speech.
7. Alan Taylor Bradford, "Jaques' Distortion of the Seven-Ages Paradigm," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1976), pp. 171–176, especially pp. 173–175 (the "sunless" phrase is on p. 174), JSTOR. It treats Cuffe as an example of the tradition, not as a demonstrated personal model for Jaques; that latter proposal is the argument considered here.
8. David and Ben Crystal, *Shakespeare's Words*, *As You Like It*, 4.1, gloss to "simple", defines the noun in this passage as "ingredient, element, constituent." The full Folger passage is cited above. "Humorous" invokes the humours and temperament; the comparison concerns that vocabulary, not its rarity. The reading of extraction and compounding as Jaques's explanatory method is the present comparison.
9. Cuffe, *The Differences of the Ages of Mans Life* (1607), pp. 72–76: the first block quotation is on p. 72, in his account of the original harmony of the body; the second is on p. 76, where bodily life and health depend on the proportion of the four qualities. On p. 75 he identifies "contrariety in the compound" as a cause of natural death. Facsimile; TCP A19683. Cuffe also distinguishes bodily creatures "simple as mixed" on p. 8, in a discussion of the world's duration. Printed pages 8, 72, 75 and 76 checked against the scan; spelling modernized. This is a comparison of composition and explanatory method: Cuffe does not supply Jaques's exact phrase "compounded of many simples," and his account of elemental bodily mixture is distinct from Jaques's metaphorical mixture of experiences.
10. Cuffe, *Differences* (1607), pp. 97–99, especially p. 98, facsimile, TCP A19683. The passage compares sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic constitutions in relation to length of life; it then turns to moderation of the affections. Quotation checked against the printed

page; spelling modernized. This supplies a connection in subject and explanatory vocabulary, not Jaques's exact phrase “compounded of many simples.”

11. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 2.5. The play supplies Jaques's claim that the refrain is Greek, not an independently established Greek meaning. The exchange retains Folger line breaks.
12. Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 24 September 1599 O.S., Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp. 106–108, especially p. 107. Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 1.1. Neville's spelling is modernized; Shakespeare follows Folger's wording and line breaks. The connection allows intervening words; it is not an identical continuous phrase.
13. EarlyPrint/EEBO-TCP searches, 5 October 2026: *underhand* followed within five intervening words by *dissuade* found only Shakespeare’s First Folio, TCP A11954, among texts printed through 1623. Wider searches checked both orders, up to fifty intervening words, and joined, hyphenated and separated forms, including *under hand*, *vnder hand* and variants of *dissuade* such as *disswade* and *diswade*. British History Online’s full-text phrase search for “underhand dissuade” returned just one result: William Davison to Francis Walsingham, 13 January 1579, whose published calendar reads, “I have **underhand dissuaded** the journey as of little profit.” See *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth*, vol. 13, ed. Arthur John Butler (1903), no. 512, p. 390 (BHO). The manuscript’s corresponding words, “underhand disswaded,” were checked in State Papers Online, MC4312180517, TNA, SP 83/11, letter beginning at f.55, scan 57. This is an earlier diplomatic use; the search totals describe the collections and queries examined.
14. Neville to Cecil, 18 July 1599 O.S., Sawyer I, p. 74; Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 5.4. Neville's proposed treaty requirement joins flag and passport rather than allowing either alone.
15. Neville to Cecil, Orleans, 13 July 1599 O.S., Sawyer I, pp. 61–66, quotation on p. 66; Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 5.4. Neville attributes the provisioning report to the Dutch agent. The dramatic count selects the 239 plays dated 1590–1615 in Pervez Rizvi's *Collocations and N-grams*, using his published play catalogue and assigned dates. Normalized word forms were searched and spelling variants checked. Four occurrences of victualled occur in three plays: *As You Like It*, *Patient Grissel*, TCP A20077, and *The Woman's Prize* in the Beaumont–Fletcher collection, TCP A27177. Public TCP comparators read “victualed” and “victual'd”; their contexts concern provisions. This is a count of the selected texts, not a first-use claim or a count of the noun victuals.
16. Thomas Morley, *The First Booke of Ayres* (London: H. Ballard for William Barley, 1600), sigs. B4v–C1r, STC 18115.5; Folger Shakespeare Library, printed song and commentary. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 5.3. The song appeared in print before the play, which was first published in the 1623 Folio.
17. Thomas Morley, *The First Booke of Canzonets to Two Voyces* (London: Thomas Este, 1595), dedication to Lady Periam, dated 17 November 1595, Library of Congress page image. John Harley, 'My Ladye Nevell Revealed', *Music & Letters* 86.1 (2005), 1–15, identifies her as Elizabeth Bacon, formerly Lady Nevell, and connects Morley's dedication and his wife's service to her. Morley does not name the place where his wife served. Spelling in the short quotation is modernized.
18. Neville to Cecil, 14 May 1600 O.S., Sawyer I, pp. 183–185, heading on p. 183. The heading's spelling is modernized. Shakespeare, *As You Like It* 2.1. Thomas Lodge, *Rosalynde* (1590), ed. David Bevington, Internet Shakespeare Editions. Searches of this edition return neither Amiens nor Amyens. The departure from Paris and the request for instructions appear on p. 184. The commissioners' dispatch of 20 May 1600 O.S. records the three arrivals from England at noon on 16 May and Neville's arrival that evening: Sawyer I, p. 188.
19. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, X (London, 1904), p. 261, Fane to Cobham, 2 August 1600; p. 268, Neville to Cecil, 6 August 1600. Neville confirms his departure on Monday and arrival in London on the sixth. Stationers' Company, Liber C, flyleaf, 4 August 1600: the other plays are *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*. *As You Like It* first appeared in the 1623 Folio; see the Folger textual introduction.

# Twelfth Night: The True Sebastian

Chapter 24

Within three months, Neville's letters name both Orsino and Sebastian. On 15 November 1600, writing from London, he asked whether a prisoner in Venice was the "true Sebastian," the Portuguese king believed killed in 1578. On 29 January 1601 he reported Don Virginio Orsino's visit to Elizabeth's court. The correspondence brings together two central names in *Twelfth Night* and, with Sebastian, the problem of recognizing someone thought dead.[1]

Scholars have long suggested that Shakespeare named Orsino after the visiting duke. In his 1975 study of *Twelfth Night*, Robert K. Turner Jr quotes Neville's letter when discussing the connection. The Sebastian correspondence adds a second name and a related question of identity from the same few months.[2, 3]

## The names Shakespeare chose

Barnabe Riche's "Of Apolonius and Silla" (1581) supplies the shipwrecked woman who disguises herself and serves the man she loves. The Italian comedy *Gl'Ingannati* (*The Deceived*) also has a disguised girl and returning brother: Lelia and Fabrizio, with Flaminio as the lover. Neither gives Shakespeare his pairing of Orsino and Sebastian.[4, 5]

### Orsino at Elizabeth's court

Virginio Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, visited Elizabeth's court during the Christmas season of 1600–01. He was entertained with a comedy on 6 January, Twelfth Night itself; the record does not name the play. Sarah Werner discusses the possible identification with *Twelfth Night* for the Folger Shakespeare Library.[3]

James Leyland renews Leslie Hotson's case for this date while questioning the idea that the play was built around Orsini's biography. He adds a second topical connection: Teixeira's account of King Sebastian escaping by sea, which he relates to Shakespeare's shipwrecked Sebastian. The two names, Leyland argues, could have had a particular appeal at Elizabeth's court. Leyland suggests that the short notice of Orsini's visit would still have allowed a change of name in an already substantially written play.[3]

As Leyland notes, Winwood, still in France, had already given Orsino's party a letter to Neville to help them obtain access to Elizabeth's court.[3] On 29 January 1601 Neville wrote to Winwood:

> Don Virginio **Orsino** has been here, and very graciously and honourably entertained by her Majesty; he is gone hence to the Archduke.[6]

Neville's surviving draft, with its deletions and insertions, spells the name Orsino in his own handwriting—the form Shakespeare gives his duke.[6]

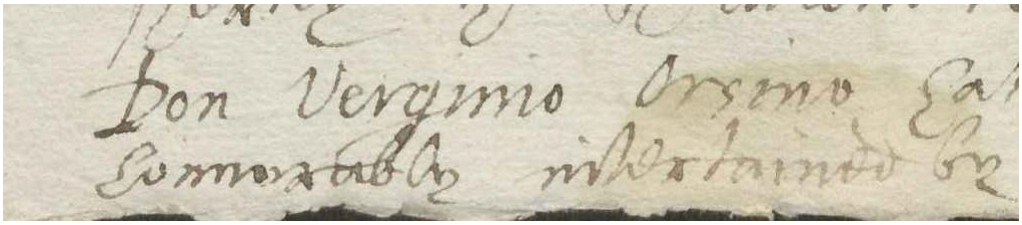


**Figure 24.1: Orsino** in Henry Neville's own handwriting, in his draft letter to Ralph Winwood, 29 January 1601. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/2, fol. 98v (detail); the letter continues on fol. 99r. The surname reads **Orsino**, as in the printed letter, p. 292.

### Who was the true Sebastian?

King Sebastian of Portugal died in battle in 1578. A claimant appeared in Venice in 1598, attracting Portuguese supporters and Spanish opposition. Franca Petrucci identifies him as the Calabrian Marco Tullio Catizone. Venice imprisoned him and expelled him in December 1600; his disputed identity had become an international affair.[7]

José Teixeira, an advocate of the claimant, wrote directly to Neville on 21 October 1600 (31 October New Style). Portuguese witnesses, he said, had identified the prisoner by bodily marks; João de Castro had confirmed the news. He urged Neville to inform Elizabeth. Luís Filipe Silvério Lima discusses the letter in his 2023 study. Teixeira also supplied the main narrative of *The Strangest Adventure* (1601), translated by the dramatist Anthony Munday.[8]

On 15 November 1600 Neville asked Winwood to investigate:

> We are full of a report, and almost of an opinion, that he which has been so long a prisoner at Venice is now discovered to be the **true Sebastian**, by many secret **tokens upon his body**, confirmed out of Portugal by those which knew him both **child and man**. I pray you inform yourself well of it, and clear us of that point if you may.[8]

Leyland connects this letter with the bodily marks in the play's recognition scene.[8] Neville was inclined to believe the report but sought confirmation.

Winwood reported the contrary on 13 January 1601: the Venetian judgement was that the man was "an imposture, a Calabrese." Neville's reply of the 23rd confirms receipt on the 21st. On 28 January he mentioned Captain Primme's journey to the "pretended Sebastian"; the next day he reported Orsino's visit.[9]

Shakespeare first introduces Sebastian under an assumed name: he tells Antonio that he has called himself Roderigo before revealing his name and family.[10] When the twins finally stand together, Antonio, who has mistaken Viola for Sebastian, asks:

ANTONIO
How have you made division of yourself?
An apple cleft in two is not more twin
Than these two creatures. **Which is Sebastian?**[10]
— *Twelfth Night*, 5.1.

Viola names their home, Messaline, and their father, also Sebastian. The twins then test their memories:

VIOLA
My father had a **mole upon his brow**.
SEBASTIAN And so had mine.
VIOLA
And died that day when Viola from her birth
Had numbered **thirteen years**.
SEBASTIAN
O, that record is lively in my soul!
He finished indeed his mortal act
That day that made my sister **thirteen years**.[10]
— *Twelfth Night*, 5.1.

The twins remember their father's mole and the age they were when he died; Neville's informants identify marks on the claimant himself. Both accounts connect bodily detail with knowledge reaching back into childhood.

Antonio's own history brings another diplomatic concern into the recognition scene. He risks arrest in Orsino's city for a sea fight against the count's galleys. Others repaid what they took to protect their trade; Antonio refused. Orsino calls him a pirate; Antonio answers as an honourable enemy.[11]

On 26 September 1599 Neville reported disputes over an English ship taken at Marseille and a French vessel seized by an English royal ship. He defended the latter seizure: the French traders had broken their king's prohibition on trade with the Catholic League. He presented the English action as service to Henri IV. In both accounts, acts of maritime violence have to be distinguished from legitimate hostility and settled through restitution.[12]

## Extorting reason

One of the strongest verbal links between Neville and *Twelfth Night* is a shared construction. On 29 June 1599 Neville asked Cecil for documentary support in seeking repayment of France's debt to Elizabeth:

> I humbly pray to have some verification attested under your Honour's hand, for I hope that with importunity I shall at last **extort** some **reason from** these men; and the more I am able to charge them with, the greater present or yearly satisfaction they must in **reason** offer.[13]

Olivia uses the same unusual construction:

OLIVIA [...]
Do not **extort** thy **reasons from** this **clause**,
For that I woo, thou therefore hast no cause;
But rather **reason** thus with **reason** fetter:
Love sought is good, but given unsought is better.[14]
— *Twelfth Night*, 3.1.

Neville seeks a reasonable settlement; Olivia resists an inference from her declaration. Both passages use "extort" followed by "some" or "thy," then "reason" or "reasons," and then "from." Both return to "reason" in the continuation.

A search of the EEBO-TCP texts in EarlyPrint found no example of this close construction printed before the First Folio of 1623.[15]

## New words at the same moment

Neville's letters of 1599–1600 contain a cluster of words that enter Shakespeare's surviving plays in *Twelfth Night* or at about the same time. Several then recur in later Shakespeare plays. The connection is chronological as well as verbal: these words were in Neville's working vocabulary during the very period in which the plays were being written.[16]

The table compares eight examples across dramatic texts assigned to 1590–1615 in Rizvi's corpus. Counts are of plays containing the word, including ordinary inflections: five plays using *abatement* means five different plays, not five repetitions. The sample contains 38 Shakespeare plays, including collaborations, and 201 other dramatic texts.[17]

| In *Twelfth Night* | Neville's letters, 1599–1600 | Shakespeare plays containing the word (of 38) | Other dramatic texts (of 201) |
|---|---|---|---|
| "**abatement** and low price" (1.1) | "**abatement** of the impositions," 26 February 1600[18] | 5: *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Cymbeline*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* | 1 |
| "Here is yet a **postscript**" (2.5) | "the **postscript** of your last letter," 24 April 1600[19] | 2: *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet* | 0 |
| "I bring no **overture**" (1.5) | "Gondi's **overture**," 19 May 1599[20] | 4: *Twelfth Night*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *King Lear*, *The Winter's Tale* | 3 |
| "an **improbable** fiction" (3.4) | "both untrue, and utterly **improbable**," 29 June 1599[21] | 1: *Twelfth Night* | 1 |
| "so **implacable**" (3.4) | "**implacable**," of the pope's hostility to Elizabeth, 29 July 1600[22] | 1: *Twelfth Night* | 2 |
| "your **misdemeanors**" (2.3) | "such **misdemeanors**," reporting Villeroy's complaint about English attacks on shipping, 2 April 1600[23] | 1: *Twelfth Night* | 4 |
| "this **clause**" (3.1) | "make the **clause** copulative, which is now disjunctive," 18 July 1599[24] | 1: *Twelfth Night* | 10 |
| "only to **exasperate** you" (3.2) | "**exasperate**," 15 November 1600, in the letter asking about the "true Sebastian"[25] | 4: *Twelfth Night*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* | 11 |

The concentration is striking. Of the six plays using *abatement* or *abatements*, five are Shakespeare's; both plays using *postscript* are his. *Overture* appears in four Shakespeare plays but only three of the much larger group of other plays. *Improbable* and *implacable* remain confined to *Twelfth Night* within Shakespeare and occur in only one and two other plays respectively. These are words Neville was using in correspondence just before or during the play's composition, some of which Shakespeare would continue to use for years.

French diplomatic business gives this vocabulary a particular setting. *Overture* and *abatement* have close French counterparts: Cotgrave's dictionary of 1611 gives *ouverture* as a proposal or opening and *abbatement* as an abatement. Neville uses the English words for a proposed royal marriage and a reduction in duties on English goods—matters at the centre of his French embassy.[26] *Misdemeanors*

also belongs to that work: it is Neville's word when reporting Villeroy's complaint about English attacks on French shipping.[23]

## A French courtesy

At his first audience with Henri IV, Neville heard a French courtesy that also appears in *Twelfth Night*. Reporting the conversation to Cecil on 15 May 1599, he records the king saying that, if Elizabeth were a man, he would call himself her perfect friend; since she was a woman, "Je me dirai **son serviteur**"—"I shall call myself her servant."

In *Twelfth Night* 3.1, Sir Andrew greets Viola in French. She answers:

> VIOLA Et vous aussi. **Votre serviteur!**
> ANDREW I hope, sir, you are, and I am yours.[27]
> — *Twelfth Night*, 3.1.

Neville's report explains the courteous language Shakespeare puts into the exchange: the offer of service belongs to the social language of French conversation.

## A priest's habit and a priest's function

Feste impersonates Sir Topas the curate to interrogate the confined Malvolio. Maria supplies gown and beard; Feste remarks as he dresses:

> FOOL Well, I'll put it on and I will dissemble myself in 't, and I would I were the first that ever dissembled in such a **gown**. [He puts on gown and beard.] I am not tall enough to become the **function** well, nor lean enough to be thought a good student, but to be said an honest man and a good housekeeper goes as fairly as to say a careful man and a great scholar. The competitors enter. [28]
> — *Twelfth Night*, 4.2.

On 16 September 1599 Neville reported a proposed agent for Spain who had been a priest before becoming Protestant and marrying. For the mission he would resume his former role:

> he will take upon him the **habit**, and for need the **function of a priest**, which will also give him credit and trust there, and means thereby to do the better service.[29]

Both passages distinguish the clothing from the "function": the work and authority of a priest. Neville's agent would use that authority to gain trust; Feste uses it to question Malvolio, turning even his sane answers about Pythagoras into grounds for continued confinement.

The costume itself proves unnecessary. Maria tells Feste:

> MARIA Thou mightst have done this without thy beard and gown. He sees thee not.[28]
> — *Twelfth Night*, 4.2.

Neville had also reported a woman induced to feign possession, writing to Cecil on 26 August 1599:

> the woman that was suborned to **counterfeit herself to be possessed with a devil**.[30]

The woman feigns possession; Malvolio's persecutors impose that diagnosis on a sane man. Both deceptions exploit religious belief, alongside the clerical impersonation described in Neville's next month's dispatch.[31]

Further close parallels appear in Chapter 28, *Measure for Measure*—religious disguise for intelligence—and Chapter 30, *King Lear*—counterfeit possession and manipulation.

## Notes and sources

1. Henry Neville to Ralph Winwood, 15 November 1600 and 29 January 1601, in Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I*, vol. I (London, 1725), pp. 273–275, 291–292. November letter; January letter. Except where otherwise stated, dates here modernize the year to begin on 1 January, without converting Julian days to Gregorian dates. Quotations from Winwood's Memorials are modernized in spelling, capitalization and punctuation, with straightforward forms such as “hath” rendered as “has.” Vocabulary, syntax and historical meaning are preserved. Sawyer's printed edition does not preserve the original manuscripts' spelling. Bold type throughout marks the terms being compared or discussed.
2. Robert K. Turner Jr, “The Text of Twelfth Night,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (Spring 1975), pp. 128–138, especially p. 134 n. 16. JSTOR. Turner cites Neville's 29 January letter in discussing the possible significance of Orsini's visit.
3. Sarah Werner, “Twelfth Night”, *The Collation*, Folger Shakespeare Library, 6 January 2015. Werner discusses the Epiphany entertainment and the possibility of identifying its unnamed comedy with Shakespeare's play. James Leyland, *New Evidence for the First Night of Twelfth Night, 6 January 1601*, Knowledge Commons, version 2, deposited 29 March 2026 (PDF copyright 2024), especially PDF pp. 3, 5–6 and 8–9, DOI. Page 3 quotes Winwood's 4 December 1600 letter referring Orsino's party to Neville. Leyland supports Hotson's proposed performance date while questioning his biographical reading of Orsino, and adds the Sebastian connection; the argument concerns topicality and performance dating, not an attribution of authorship to Neville.
4. Barnabe Riche, *Riche his Farewell to Militarie Profession* (1581), “Of Apolonius and Silla,” complete tale; EEBO-TCP A68653. Public text.
5. *Gl'Ingannati* (*The Deceived*), translated by Thomas Love Peacock (London: Chapman and Hall, 1862), dramatis personae and Act I, especially pp. 16–21. Edition. Peacock combines translation with summarized portions, as his introductory remarks explain; the edition is used here for characters and plot, not as Shakespeare's English verbal source.
6. Neville to Winwood, 29 January 1601, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 291–292, quotation p. 292. Printed witness. The letter heading is on p. 291, immediately after a separate letter dated 28 January; the heading reads “29 Jan. 1600.” Turner's date is correct. Manuscript draft: The National Archives, PRO 30/50/2, fols. 98r–99r, with the Orsino notice at the foot of fol. 98v. The manuscript has deletions and insertions and ends with a closing formula without a

signature; attribution is controlled by the corresponding letter printed under Neville's name. Ken Feinstein reproduced this manuscript detail alongside the printed letter and the First Folio in a Twitter post, 19 November 2019. The draft is in Neville's own handwriting; the corresponding printed letter independently confirms its identity. The figure uses the original photograph rather than the highlighted social-media crop.

7. Franca Petrucci, "Catizone, Marco Tullio", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 22 (1979), complete entry. This supplies the claimant's historical background and the Venetian proceedings; Neville's own reports are quoted separately.

8. Neville to Winwood, 15 November 1600, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 273–275, quotation p. 274. Printed witness. For the comparison with Sebastian and the recognition scene, see Leyland, *New Evidence*, PDF p. 8. The present discussion retains the distinction between marks on the claimant's body and the twins' memory of their father's mole. For Teixeira's letter to Neville, see Luís Filipe Silvério Lima, "Entre 'notícias estranhas' e 'rumores frescos': estatutos de veracidade e gêneros documentais na recepção inglesa do caso do Sebastião de Veneza (1598–1603)," *Clio: Revista de Pesquisa Histórica* 41.2 (2023), 138–171, p. 153 and n. 41, identifying The National Archives, SP 78/44/136, ff. 322r–v. This paragraph follows Lima's published account, not a new transcription. Its 31 October date is Gregorian (21 October in the English calendar). For Teixeira's contribution and Munday's translation, see Misha Teramura, "Sebastian, King of Portugal," *Lost Plays Database*, updated 12 May 2021, source discussion.

9. Winwood to Neville, 13 January 1601, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 289–290, quotation p. 290; Neville to Winwood, 23 January 1601, p. 290; Neville to Winwood, 28 January 1601, p. 291. Reports and acknowledgement; Primme reference. The printed heading to Winwood's letter, p. 289, explicitly dates it "Paris, 13 Jan. 1600. O.S."; it is 13 January 1601 with the year numbered from 1 January, without changing the English calendar day. The acknowledgement establishes receipt on 21 January. It does not establish that Neville commissioned Primme's journey.

10. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 5.1, Folger Shakespeare Library, ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Shakespeare quotations throughout preserve Folger wording and line divisions. For Sebastian's disclosure of his name and account of the shipwreck, see 2.1.

11. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 3.3 and 5.1, Antonio's account of repayment and the exchange over piracy.

12. Neville to Cecil, 26 September 1599, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 114–115, maritime disputes p. 114. Printed witness. The comparison concerns the conflicting descriptions and settlement of maritime seizure, rather than a shared voyage or identical legal proceeding.

13. Neville to Robert Cecil, 29 June 1599, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 53–56, quotation p. 54. Printed witness. The demand for documentation and the discussion of present or annual payment establish the financial sense of "reason."

14. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 3.1, Olivia's speech beginning with her declaration by the roses of the spring. The extract is the final four lines of that speech; the preceding line reads "Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide."

15. Fresh EarlyPrint/EEBO-TCP searches, 5 October 2026, with the comparison restricted to texts printed through 1623. The lemma pattern `[lemma="extort"][]{0,2}[lemma="reason"][lemma="from"]` located the construction in Shakespeare's First Folio (1623), TCP A11954, and no earlier printed witness. Broader searches allowed intervening words, reversed word order and spelling variants, with contexts inspected to distinguish the construction from combinations such as "extorted by reason of" and "extort without all reason." A later, looser near-parallel—not an exact match—is Josephus, *The Famous and Memorable Workes*, translated by Thomas Lodge (1602), p. 101, TCP A04680: "extort from them the cause and reason." The king of Jericho seeks to extract the spies' explanation by torture. This follows Neville's 1599 letter and the usual dating of *Twelfth Night* to around 1601; it does not repeat "reason" in the following sixty words. The first printed witness to *Twelfth Night* is later than its composition. Results describe the searchable surviving texts, not every historical use. See EarlyPrint's search documentation.

16. The chronology in Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen's RSC Shakespeare resources dates *Twelfth Night* to 1601, *Hamlet* to 1600–01, and *Troilus and Cressida* to 1601–02. The RSC's account of *Hamlet* places its writing alongside *Twelfth Night*. Their order cannot securely establish priority for *abatement/abatements* or *postscript*; *exasperate* also occurs in the approximately contemporary *Troilus and Cressida*. The remaining five table words first appear in *Twelfth Night* under this chronology of the surviving plays. This is first use within Shakespeare's plays, not first use in English.

17. Counts calculated from the dramatic texts underlying Pervez Rizvi's Collocations and N-grams, selecting the 239 records assigned creation years 1590–1615 inclusive in the play catalogue. The 38 Shakespeare records include *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*; the other 201 include masques and entertainments as well as plays. Each text counts once per word. Searches include spelling variants, plurals and ordinary verb inflections, but not distinct derivatives such as *abate* for *abatement*. Character-name references to Clause in *Beggars' Bush* are excluded. For *postscript*, a separate check included joined, spaced and hyphenated forms, plurals, *postscripte*, *postscrypt*, and Latin *post scriptum*: none added another play in the selected period. The sole other play using *abatement* is *Wit at Several Weapons*; *improbable* occurs in *Fortune by Land and Sea*, and *implacable* in *Satiromastix* and *A Woman Is a Weathercock*. Dates used to select the sample are the corpus's assigned dates. Shakespeare passages were checked against the Folger reading texts; the table gives act and scene for each *Twelfth Night* extract. Counts follow the reading texts: the First Folio's "Ouerture" in *Coriolanus* 1.9, TCP A11954, becomes "ovator" in the Folger text; retaining the Folio reading would add a fifth, later Shakespeare play for *overture*. Distinct derivatives are excluded: *implacably* occurs in *Epicoene* and *Four Plays in One*, while *Henry VIII* has the verb *misdemeaned*. The comparison group includes disputed Shakespeare collaborations such as *Edward III* and *Arden of Faversham*; the 38-play group is the conventional Folio-plus-two grouping. The date filter follows the database without silently redating texts: notably, it assigns *The Staple of News* to 1614, although Folger dates its first performance to 1626. Removing that record would reduce the comparison denominator to 200 without changing any of the eight word counts. These are counts from the selected surviving corpus, not an exhaustive census of historical usage.

18. Neville to Cecil, 26 February 1600, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, p. 155, printed witness. The printed heading gives 26 February 1599 O.S. The letter explicitly connects abatement with charges on English commodities and the Treaty of Blois.

19. Neville to Cecil, 24 April 1600 O.S., Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 175–176, quotation p. 176; the date is in the heading on p. 175. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 2.5, Malvolio reading the letter.

20. Neville to Cecil, 19 May 1599, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 26–27, quotation p. 27, printed witness; Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 1.5.

21. Neville to Cecil, 29 June 1599, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 53–54, printed witness. The judgement of the Master of Gray's reports crosses the page break; the extortion-and-reason sentence occurs later on p. 54.

22. Neville to Winwood, 29 July 1600, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 232–233, quotation p. 233, printed witness.

23. Neville to Cecil, 2 April 1600 O.S., Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 162–165, quotation p. 164; heading and date p. 162. Neville writes that Villeroy said the English made their nation infamous "for such Misdemeanors." This is Neville's English account of the conversation, not a quotation of Villeroy's French. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 2.3, Malvolio addressing Toby.

24. Neville to Cecil, 18 July 1599, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 73–75, especially p. 74, printed witness. Neville proposes requiring the king's or admiral's passport in addition to the other qualification, rather than allowing flag or passport as alternatives.

25. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 3.2; Neville to Winwood, 15 November 1600, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, p. 274, printed witness.

26. Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London: Adam Islip, 1611), s.v. "Ouverture" and "Abbatement". Cotgrave includes "a motion made" under the former and "an abatement" under the latter. The specific diplomatic applications here are established

by Neville's letters, rather than by the dictionary alone. For French correspondence exchanged in this business, see Neville to Villeroy, 6 and 10 June 1599 N.S., and Villeroy's reply of 8 June, Sawyer, I, pp. 37–39, 41. Villeroy asks for "temps competent" to enable repayment, p. 39. *Misdemeanour* has a French-derived base but is not established here as a contemporary French noun; its evidentiary value is its dated use in Neville's English report.

27. Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 15 May 1599 O.S., in Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), p. 21. The date is that of the report, not an asserted date for the audience. French spelling is modernized from the printed "Je me diray son Serviteur." Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 3.1, Sir Andrew's greeting and Viola's response.

28. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 4.2, Feste's preparation, interrogation and Maria's comment on the costume.

29. Neville to Cecil, 16 September 1599, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 102–105, quotation and the agent's background p. 104. Printed witness.

30. Neville to Cecil, 26 August 1599, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp. 94–95, quotation p. 95. Printed witness.

31. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 3.4 and 4.2, the treatment of Malvolio as possessed and the Sir Topas episode. The resemblance concerns fabricated possession and assumed religious authority; the historical woman and the fictional steward occupy different positions in the deception.

# The Merry Wives of Windsor: Neville's Windsor

Chapter 25

A dispute over deer opens *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Justice Shallow accuses Falstaff of breaking into his lodge, killing his deer and beating his men:

> SHALLOW Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broke open my lodge.
> FALSTAFF But not kissed your keeper's daughter.[1]
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.1

In the fuller Folio text, venison also brings the neighbours together.[2] Page thanks Shallow for a gift, and Shallow apologizes for its quality:

> PAGE I am glad to see your Worships well. I thank you for my **venison**, Master Shallow.
> SHALLOW Master Page, I am glad to see you. Much good do it your good heart! I wished your **venison** better; it was ill killed. How doth good Mistress Page? And I thank you always with my heart, la, with my heart.
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.1

Finally Page proposes to settle the company at dinner:

> PAGE Wife, bid these gentlemen welcome.—Come, we have a hot **venison pasty** to dinner. Come, gentlemen, I hope we shall drink down all unkindness.[3]
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.1

Venison is both the cause of the dispute and the means of restoring neighbourly relations. Neville's letter to Sir Richard Beaumont, written from Billingbear and tentatively dated 1606 by its editor, describes the same kind of exchange from inside the supplying household:

> Noble Sir,
>
> I am very sorry that it lies not in my power to send you half a **buck**; my **keepers** tell me that there is none in my **walk**; sure I am that I have not seene a **pasty of venison** of this yeere. I did adventure to send you the side of a stag which I thought might serve your turne as well if it came sweet to you, which the heate of the weather made me fearfull of. But my cooke and keeper were confident, and I caused them to take the best order for the coole conveyance of it. […][4]

Neville's keepers cannot supply the requested buck, so he sends a side of stag. He consults his cook and keeper about the heat and arranges cool transport. Like

Shallow, he couples the gift with an apology about its quality: Shallow regrets the bad kill; Neville hopes the meat will arrive sweet. The comparison reaches beyond a shared word into the obligations and practical worries of giving venison.

Randall Martin calls *Merry Wives* Shakespeare's "most locally detailed play." Its Windsor is Neville's home landscape: the town, river, castle and forest in which his family lived and held office. The case developed here rests on how that local knowledge becomes comedy—through gifts and quarrels, forest customs, household errands and public ceremony.[5]

## The work behind the comedy

Neville grew up at Billingbear, where his father built the house in 1567, and inherited it in 1593. He represented New Windsor in Parliament in 1584 and 1593 and became a freeman of the borough in 1588. His family's responsibilities reached from the estate into the town and forest.[6]

Windsor Forest was governed by forest law. A walk was a district within it; parks and rails were enclosed deer grounds. John Norden's 1607 survey names Neville as keeper of Swinley Walk, records his claim to hereditary keepership of Binfield Walk, otherwise Fines Bailiwick, and describes Warfield Walk as reputedly his private property. Much of Fines was enclosed ground which Neville had recently begun stocking with red and fallow deer.[7]

These appointments involved practical work. In January 1599 Elizabeth instructed Neville to arrange the restraint of deer-killing in Mote and Sunninghill Parks during his embassy in France. A royal grant of September 1607 records his keeperships of both parks, within Cranbourne Walk, and his riding forestership of Battles Walk—a mounted forest office—with succession to his son Henry. Requests for venison came to him: in August 1606 Lord Buckhurst asked for a buck for Edward Fenner.[8,9]

The same work had occupied Neville's father. His correspondence shows how readily deer-taking became a confrontation between gentlemen. On 13 April 1589 he reported to Sir William More that a masked gentleman and two companions had hunted a hind and calf at Finchampstead. The man refused to uncover his face. Keepers followed the party to an inn at Guildford, where blood and hair helped establish what had happened; constables became involved.[10]

Shallow's threat to take his grievance to the Council and the Star Chamber mixes anger with pride in his standing. He and his cousin Slender rehearse the titles that should make people respect him, stumbling over the official language.

> SLENDER In the county of Gloucester, **Justice of Peace** and **Coram**.
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.1

> SHALLOW Ay, Cousin Slender, and **Custalorum**.[11]
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.1

Neville was also a justice of the peace. Shallow's "Custalorum" garbles *custos rotulorum*, keeper of the county rolls—an office Neville himself held in Berkshire.[1] The joke gives the dispute a recognizable social setting: an injured gentleman invokes the dignity of his public position to reinforce a personal complaint. Neville's Warfield dispute, discussed in Chapter 8, likewise required him to distinguish the rights affected by a deer offence and who could act upon it.

## A town the plot knows how to use

Falstaff hopes to profit by wooing two prosperous married women, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page. They compare his letters, discover his double approach, and use the town and its surroundings to punish him.[12]

The first trick results in Falstaff climbing into a large basket and being covered with dirty linen. The destination is Datchet Mead, where washing is being done. Mistress Ford orders her servants to wait in the brewhouse, shoulder the basket, and carry it to the laundresses:

> MISTRESS FORD [...] be ready here hard by in the brewhouse, and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and without any pause or staggering take this basket on your shoulders. That done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry it among the whitsters in **Datchet Mead**, and there empty it in the **muddy ditch close by the Thames side**.[13]
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 3.3

The destination is a working riverside meadow. Local historian Janet Kennish locates Datchet Mead on the Windsor bank of the Thames, across from Datchet village. The old ferry connected Windsor with the route through Datchet towards Colnbrook and London. Norden's map of Windsor and the Little Park, part of the same survey, shows the ferry, park, castle, bridge and part of Eton in one connected landscape.[14]

**Figure 25.1:** John Norden's plan of Windsor and the Little Park, 1607, in a later printed reproduction. The deer and lodge occupy the park; the castle and town stand at the right, with Datchet ferry at the lower left and Windsor bridge at the lower right. The plan gives a visual setting for the comedy's journeys between household, meadow, town, and park.

Image source.

The Host keeps the would-be duellists—the French doctor Caius and the Welsh parson Evans—apart by sending parties towards Frogmore along different routes. The final trick gathers Falstaff and the disguised fairies at Herne's oak, while rival marriage plans send Anne Page's suitors towards Eton and the deanery, but Anne herself escapes to marry Fenton. Local geography supplies the machinery of both deceptions.[15, 16, 17]

The smaller details make these movements workable. Datchet Lane connects the laundry story to the town; the Petty-ward, Park-ward and Old Windsor way belong to the search for the duellists. The castle ditch and sawpit provide hiding places, and Windsor's bell supplies the midnight signal. Brentford provides the supposed wise woman of Falstaff's second disguise; Reading, Maidenhead and Colnbrook appear in the report of cheated innkeepers. The comedy knows where people work, travel, wait and hide.[18]

Even the fairies emerge from a place of work. A sawpit was used to cut timber; in the play it becomes a hiding place beside the haunted oak. Windsor's trees were a contested resource. A petition by Richard Staverton, keeper of New Lodge, complained that cutting Bray Wood and Bray Neates damaged deer breeding and threatened the lodge's supply of timber. The archive dates it before 1596.[19] The sawpit brings that working forest into the pageant, alongside Herne, whom the play describes as the ghost of a former keeper.

## Richard Carew and Falstaff's words

The play's language supplies a further connection to Neville's circle. Margaret Tudeau-Clayton identified a correspondence between Falstaff's speech and the writing of Richard Carew. She published the comparison in 1999 and developed it in *Shakespeare's Englishes* (2019).[20]

Falstaff dismisses his unwilling messengers with a string of expressions for the same command:

> FALSTAFF [...]
> Rogues, **hence**, avaunt, vanish like hailstones, go,
> **Trudge**, plod away i' th' hoof, seek shelter, **pack**!
> —*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.3.[21]

Richard Carew (1555–1620), the Cornish antiquary and author of *The Survey of Cornwall* (1602), offers a comparable list in his essay *The Excellency of the English Tongue*:

> For example, when we would be rid of one, we use to say, Be going, **trudge**, **pack**, be faring, **hence**, away, shift, and by circumlocution, rather your room than your company, let's see your back [...].[22]

Both passages pile up commands to leave. Tudeau-Clayton relates this verbal abundance to Carew's celebration of English linguistic variety, leaving open which passage echoes the other.

Carew's younger brother George travelled with Neville and Henry Savile (Chapter 2); Carew's own son, also Richard, later accompanied Neville's embassy to France to learn French (Chapter 47). Neville thus knew the family across two generations.[23]

The Billingbear catalogue of 1780 records Carew's 1602 *Survey of Cornwall*, in Neville's family library; a copy of that edition is recorded at Audley End.[24]

## Windsor's witches and Neville's father

The wives' second trick turns local suspicion into a weapon. They disguise Falstaff as the maid's elderly aunt from Brentford, whom Ford has barred from his house as a witch. Certain that he recognizes her, Ford attacks the disguised knight.

Jessica Dell proposes that the play draws on Windsor's witchcraft scandals of 1579. Dell identifies the magistrate before whom the accused widow Elizabeth Stile was brought as Sir Henry Neville, the authorial candidate's father.[25]

Two contemporary pamphlets recount the accusations: Richard Galis's *Brief Treatise* and the anonymous *Rehearsall*. The latter attributes to Stile a confession involving four red-wax figures pierced with hawthorn prickles to injure the people represented.[26]

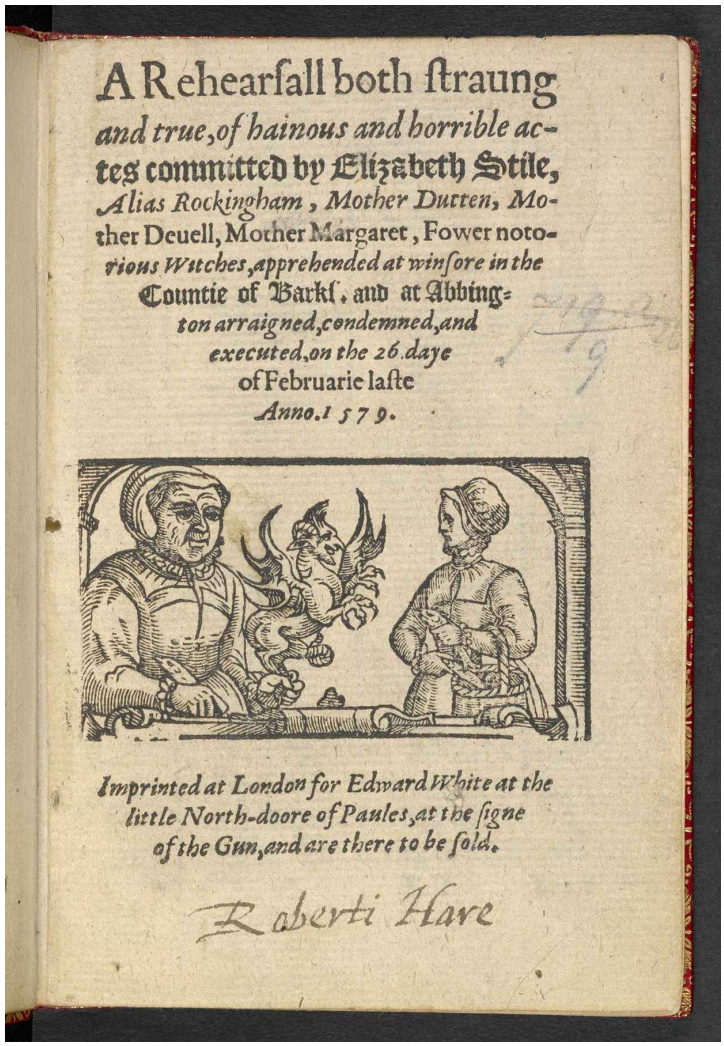

A Rehearſall both ſtraung
and true, of hainous and horrible acteg committed by Elizabeth Stile,
Alias Rockingham, Mother Dutten, Mother Deuell, Mother Margaret, Fower notorious Witches, apprehended at winſore in the Countie of Barkſ. and at Abbingston arraigned, condemned, and executed, on the 26. daye of Februarie laſte
Anno. 1579.
Imprinted at London for Edward White at the little North-doore of Paules, at the ſigne of the Gun, and are there to be ſold.
Roberti Hare

**Figure 25.2:** Title page of A Rehearsall both Straung and True (1579), one of the two Windsor witchcraft pamphlets discussed here. Its woodcut presents two women with a horned, winged demon. The title names Elizabeth Stile and the other accused women and announces their execution at Abingdon on 26 February 1579. British Library copy; STC 23267, TCP A12973.

Image source.

The allegations reached the Privy Council. On 16 January 1579 it wrote to Neville's father and the Dean of Windsor about people allegedly killed through wax images. Similar devices had recently been suspected against the Queen, so the Council directed them to investigate who had made the images and who had used them.[27] The accusations thus reached the household as both a local quarrel and an official investigation.

The accuser Richard Galis believed the women had harmed him. His pamphlet records repeated demands for punishment and his own violent pursuit of them. He consulted the elder Neville's wife, sought his intervention, and attended an examination at his lodging in Windsor Castle. The women denied witchcraft. Asked to recite the Lord's Prayer, they were instructed to learn it, the Creed and the Ten Commandments, and ordered to attend public instruction beneath the pulpit. On another occasion Galis tied a cart rope around Stile and dragged her through Windsor on market day to the elder Neville's lodging. In Galis's account, Neville and the assembled company let her escape, to his fury.[28] The other pamphlet, *A Rehearsall*, records the elder Neville's examination of Stile and her committal to Reading gaol before the assizes.[26]

Julie Stone Peters examines Galis's attempts to force proof of witchcraft in *Staging Witchcraft before the Law* (2025). Galis describes threatening four kneeling women with a cudgel unless they identified and relieved Master Handley's illness. After recounting Stile's release, he describes his own repeated beatings of suspected witches:

> [...] I would nowe one, then an other, so Ribrost with my **cudgell** (caried always about mée for the same purpose) [...][29]

In the comedy Ford believes that an old woman visiting his house practises precisely such hidden arts:

> FORD A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! Have
> I not forbid her my house? She comes of errands,
> does she? We are simple men; we do not know
> what's brought to pass under the profession of
> fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by
> th' figure, and such daubery as this is, beyond our
> element. We know nothing.—Come down, you
> witch, you hag, you! Come down, I say![30]
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 4.2

Earlier, Mistress Page anticipates the beating:

> MISTRESS PAGE Heaven guide him to thy husband's
> **cudgel**, and the devil guide his **cudgel** afterwards!
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 4.2[30]

After the beating, Mistress Page declares that the cudgel "hath done meritorious service." Galis beats women he believes to be witches; Ford beats Falstaff disguised as a woman he believes to be a witch. The cudgel is named in both

texts. Dell connects the comedy with the Windsor accusations and emphasizes the wives' control of the disguise; Peters analyzes Galis's coercion. The further comparison here brings their findings together: Ford's violence rests on a certainty the audience knows is mistaken.

## The keeper's share

The forest becomes part of Falstaff's disguise in the final scene. Mistress Page has recalled a local tale about Herne the Hunter, a former keeper who walks round an oak at midnight, wearing ragged horns and shaking a chain. The wives use this frightening figure to set the terms of their promised meeting. Falstaff is to come dressed as Herne.[31]

He accepts because he still believes the women desire him. Wearing antlers, he imagines himself the successful hunter and offers them his body as a divided deer:

> FALSTAFF Divide me like a bribed **buck**, each a haunch.
> I will keep my sides to myself, my **shoulders** for
> the fellow of this **walk**, and my horns I bequeath
> your husbands. Am I a woodman, ha? Speak I like
> Herne the Hunter? Why, now is Cupid a child of
> conscience; he makes restitution. As I am a true
> spirit, welcome.
> [A noise of horns within.][31, 32]
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 5.5

Most of the distribution is easy to follow: the wives receive the haunches, while the husbands inherit the horns that signify cuckoldry. The shoulders, however, go to someone outside this sexual arrangement—the man responsible for the walk.

William Harrison's *Description of England*, published with *Holinshed's Chronicles* in 1577 and 1587, explains the custom. Harrison, who became a canon of Windsor in 1586, describes the keeper's payment in his chapter on parks and warrens. In modern spelling:

> [...] who beside three shillings four pence or five shillings in money, hath the skin, head, umbles, chine, and **shoulders**: whereby he that hath the warrant for a whole **buck** hath in the end **little more than half**, which in my judgment is scarcely equal dealing [...][33]

The *umbles* were the entrails; the *chine* was the backbone with adjoining meat. The keeper's allowance left the recipient of a whole buck with little more than half to take home.

Falstaff's sexual fantasy preserves the keeper's entitlement. Even as the wives turn him into their quarry, he divides the imagined carcass according to a custom familiar to the men who managed Windsor's deer.

## The Garter from ceremony to comedy

At the haunted oak, the final entertainment invokes the royal castle. Mistress Quickly, playing the Fairy Queen, sends her followers to bless Windsor and then invokes the Order of the Garter.[34]

The family connection with Bisham went back to 1562: Neville's mother Elizabeth Neville and grandmother Frances Gresham were godmothers to Elizabeth Hoby, daughter of Thomas Hoby and Elizabeth Cooke. These ties preceded Neville's own marriage to Anne Killigrew in 1584.[34]

The Order of the Garter's chapel is St George's at Windsor. Mistress Quickly's speech names its knights' stalls and heraldic emblems, then recreates the embroidered garter and its French motto—*Honi soit qui mal y pense*, "Shame on him who thinks this evil"—in meadow flowers:[35]

> MISTRESS QUICKLY, [as Fairy Queen] [...]
> The several chairs of order look you scour
> With juice of balm and every precious flower.
> Each fair installment, coat, and sev'ral crest
> With loyal blazon evermore be blest!
> And nightly, meadow fairies, look you sing,
> Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring.
> Th' expressure that it bears, green let it be,
> More fertile-fresh than all the field to see;
> And Honi soit qui mal y pense write
> In em'rald tufts, flowers purple, blue, and white,
> Like sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,
> Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee.[35]
> — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 5.5

For the Garter installation at Windsor on 16 December 1589, the royal wardrobe keeper prepared Neville's father's lodging as well as the Dean of Windsor's house to accommodate visiting noblemen.[36]

Neville's own part in Garter ceremony is documented in 1595. On 23 April 1595, at Whitehall, Elizabeth sent him to escort the Württemberg envoy Hans Jakob Breuning von Buchenbach. Breuning records two coaches and numerous servants, Neville's invitation in French, the journey by coach and royal barge, and his remaining with the visitors throughout the ceremony.[37]

Breuning's mission was to obtain the Garter for Frederick, Duke of Württemberg and Count of Mömpelgard. His account describes the clothing, jewels, garters, French motto and procession that Neville witnessed as the Queen's appointed host.[38]

This gives a particular interest to the comedy's German visitors. In Act 4, the Host loses horses to supposed Germans; the 1602 quarto calls the cheats "cosen garmombles." In *Sir Henry Neville Was Shakespeare: The Evidence* (2016), John Casson and William D. Rubinstein connect this possible play on Mömpelgard with Frederick's visit to England and pursuit of the Garter. Neville had personally escorted the envoy pursuing that honour. His later diplomacy kept him in

contact with Württemberg's representatives: on 9 May 1600 he reported news received from its ambassador about Danish naval preparations. The proposed joke belongs to a diplomatic world Neville knew at first hand.[39]

The play moves easily between the venison on a neighbour's table, the keeper's share of a buck, the laundresses by the Thames and the splendour of the Garter. Its witches belong to household quarrels as well as local history; its fairies borrow the work and ceremony of Windsor. These connections reinforce the case for Neville: Shakespeare's comedy gives dramatic life to a community whose practices, disputes and institutions were part of his family's experience.

## Notes and sources

1. *Merry Wives*, 1.1; Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I," offices: *custos rotulorum* by 1601 and again by 1604 until his death.
2. These passages follow the longer text preserved in the 1623 Folio. The 1602 quarto already has the deer grievance, the antlered hunter, the haunches, and the husbands' horns, but lacks the pasty exchange and the shoulders for the man of the walk. The Folio also contains the extended blessing of the Garter's chairs, crests, and motto discussed below. The dates when these additional passages were composed remain uncertain. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, "An Introduction to This Text," *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; *A Most Pleasaunt and Excellent Conceited Comedie, of Syr John Falstaffe, and the Merrie Wives of Windsor* (1602), TCP A11983, compared with the 1623 Folio, TCP A11954. The quarto names the hunter "Horne" and also lacks the Folio's extended Garter blessing.
3. *Merry Wives*, 1.1, the thanks for venison and Page's invitation to dinner.
4. W. D. Macray, ed., *Beaumont Papers: Letters Relating to the Family of Beaumont, of Whitley, Yorkshire, from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries* (Roxburghe Club, 1884), p. 13 and p. 14. The printed page images establish the text, address to Sir Richard Beaumont, and editorial date "[1606?]." The source manuscript, cited by Macray at fol. 120, has not been newly collated.
5. Randall Martin, *Shakespeare and Ecology* (Oxford University Press, 2015), chapter 1, "Localism, Deforestation, and Environmental Activism in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*," pp. 32–55, especially p. 33; chapter DOI. Martin also considers maps, chorographies, and information received from others. His geographical finding is the starting point for the Neville comparison developed here.
6. John Harley, "'My Ladye Nevell' Revealed", *Music & Letters* 86.1 (2005), 1–15, especially 4–6; Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I (1564–1615)", in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010), family, offices, and biography. Thrush dates the Berkshire magistracy from 1593 and records interruptions following the Essex affair in 1601.
7. R. R. Tighe and J. E. Davis, *Annals of Windsor*, II (1858), pp. 28–30, printing and describing Norden's 1607 survey. The account of Fines and its stocking is on p. 30. "Reputed" and the claim to inheritance follow the survey's distinctions. John Norden, *Survey of the Honor of Windsor* (1607), British Library, Harley MS 3749, f. 4r, table of walks, keepers and deer; ff. 4v–4*r, general forest map. The manuscript catalogue and Tighe and Davis's printed account were consulted, not the original manuscript. The catalogue describes seventeen walks; the printed account lists sixteen entries, one combining Linchford and Ashe. For geographical orientation, see Horace Woollaston Monckton, *Berkshire* (1911), ch. 24, pp. 146–148: Fines lay between Maidenhead/Bray and Wokingham/Twyford; Ascot Racecourse occupied part of Swinley Walk. These descriptions do not establish exact modern boundaries. On forest law and the riding forester, see J. Charles Cox, *The Royal Forests of England* (1905), chs. I and III.

8. Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1598–1601* (1869), p. 157, "[Jan.]" 1599, abstract citing Warrant Book I, p. 36.
9. Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of James I, 1603–1610* (1857), p. 372, 29 September 1607, docquet; Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O12/42, August 1606, letter from Lord Buckhurst to Neville requesting a buck for Edward Fenner; the catalogue describes a request, not a record of delivery. For the parks within Cranbourne Walk, see Tighe and Davis, *Annals of Windsor*, II, pp. 30, 39. Norden's Moat table names "M. Staffordton" as keeper, whereas the royal docquet records Neville's office and his son's succession. The records cited here do not explain the relationship between the two appointments. Norden's Moat (also spelled Mote or Moate) table is Harley MS 3749, f. 7r. For the riding forester's office, see Cox, *The Royal Forests of England*, ch. III, cited above.
10. Surrey History Centre, Loseley manuscripts, LM/COR/3/446, 13 April 1589, Sir Henry Neville to Sir William More. The details follow the repository's description of this damaged document.
11. William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. Quotations preserve Folger wording and line breaks. Shallow is explicitly a Gloucestershire justice; the comparison is with Neville's Berkshire office and park experience, not an assertion that the play makes Shallow a Berkshire officer. For Neville's offices, see notes 1 and 6; the Warfield dispute is discussed in Chapter 8.
12. For Falstaff's scheme, see *Merry Wives*, 1.3; for the wives comparing letters, 2.1; for their tricks, 3.3, 4.2, and 4.4–5.5. The argument connecting the play and the scholarly findings to Neville's possible authorship is this chapter's.
13. Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 3.3, ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, Folger Shakespeare Library; Falstaff's recollection is in 3.5. Block quotations preserve Folger's wording and line breaks, with typographic apostrophes and dashes regularized. Brackets mark omissions; bold emphasis is editorial.
14. Janet Kennish, "A brief history of Datchet's development" (2017), sections on the river, ferry, and early settlement; John Norden's 1607 plan, in the printed reproduction displayed by the Windsor Local History Group. The plan belongs to the Windsor survey, British Library, Harley MS 3749; the reproduction, rather than the manuscript original, was inspected. The catalogue identifies the Little Park table at f. 5r and its map at ff. 5v–5*r. This town-and-park illustration is distinct from the general forest map and the table naming Neville's walks.
15. *Merry Wives*, 2.3 and 3.1. The Host sends Shallow, Page, and Slender through the town and takes Caius by the fields.
16. *Merry Wives*, 4.4, 4.6, 5.2, and 5.5. Fenton arranges a vicar at a church; the deanery belongs to Mistress Page's plan for Caius.
17. Anne Page shares her given name with Neville's wife, Anne Killigrew. Her chosen husband, Fenton, is expressly credited with writing poetry: the Host says that he "writes verses." The pairing of Anne with a verse-writing gentleman offers a further possible personal echo within the play's Windsor setting. See *Merry Wives*, 3.2; Marion E. Colthorpe, *Elizabethan Court Day by Day*, 1584, p. 46, recording Neville's marriage to Anne Killigrew on 22 December 1584.
18. Original name-group comparison of the 527 plays documented in Pervez Rizvi, "Collocations and N-grams", rechecked 5 September 2026. The search used normalized spellings and included stage directions. Counts for *Merry Wives*: Windsor 19; Herne 9; Brentford/Brainford 6; Datchet 4; Eton 4; Frogmore 3; Maidenhead 1; Colnbrook/Colebrook 1. Five plays tie at three groups: *The Roaring Girl*, *The Two Maids of More-Clacke*, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, *The City Match*, and *The Sparagus Garden*. The groups were selected from *Merry Wives*; the comparison measures their concentration across these texts. It includes the personal name Herne, and spelling matches such as "maidenhead" can have non-geographical senses. This is the book's comparison, not a result reported by Martin or Rizvi. *Merry Wives* contains all eight, with forty-seven occurrences in total. No other play contains more than three of the selected groups; Datchet and Frogmore occur only in *Merry Wives* within this collection. For the scene-based list, see *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 2.3–3.5 and 4.2–5.5, Folger reading text.

19. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O12/27, petition of Richard Staverton to Lord Howard, dated by the catalogue before 1596. This description follows the public archive catalogue, not a new manuscript transcription. For the sawpit and Herne's former keepership, see *Merry Wives*, 4.4.
20. Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, *Shakespeare's Englishes: Against Englishness* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp.187–189; "Richard Carew, William Shakespeare, and the Politics of Translating Virgil in Early Modern England and Scotland," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 5.4 (1999), pp.507–527, especially pp.518–523, article.
21. William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.3, Folger Shakespeare Library. The ellipsis omits Falstaff's preceding directions to Robin.
22. Richard Carew, "The Excellency of the English Tongue," in G. Gregory Smith, ed., *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, II (Oxford, 1904), p.292; quoted in Tudeau-Clayton, *Shakespeare's Englishes*, p.188. Spelling modernized. Compare British Library, Cotton Julius F XI, fol.267r, Shakespeare Documented. The essay first appeared in the 1614 edition of William Camden's (1551–1623) *Remaines*, pp.36–44. Tudeau-Clayton, pp.187–188, n.44, argues for possible composition in 1595–96 while reporting a later date for the surviving copy; the manuscript's date and the essay's composition are distinct questions.
23. George Carew's identity and relationship to the elder Richard: Westminster Abbey, "Sir George Carew". W. J. Jones, "Carew, Sir George (c.1556–1612)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), as cited in the William & Mary Law Library account; Paul Hunneyball's *History of Parliament* entry gives c.1560 instead. For Richard the younger (c.1580–1643), see Historic England, Antony, list entry 1000647. For the journey see Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy" (1996), p.440; for the son's retrospective account see Richard Carew, in Samuel Hartlib, *The True and Readie Way to Learne the Latine Tongue* (London, 1654), p.46, EEBO-TCP A42982.
24. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, *Catalogue of the Books in the Library at Billingbear*, 7 November 1780, entry "Survey of Cornwall by Carew _ Lond. 1602." English Heritage, Audley End collection inventory, object 81038804, *The Survey of Cornwall* (1602), Library, Case P, Shelf 1. These are records of later holdings, not a dated acquisition by Henry Neville. For the edition, see the 1602 printed volume.
25. Jessica Dell, " 'A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean!': Image Magic and Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*," in Lisa Hopkins and Helen Ostovich, eds., *Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage* (Ashgate, 2014), 185–201: the local-history proposal at 186; the Windsor accusations and wax figures at 188–189; the wives and Mother Pratt at 190–193.
26. *A Rehearsall Both Straung and True, of Hainous and Horrible Actes Committed by Elizabeth Stile* ... (1579), TCP A12973, Stile's examination and confession; Dell, 188–189. The age and magical acts are reported by the pamphlet, which presents the accusations as true.
27. John Roche Dasent, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, new series, XI, 1578–1580 (1895), pp. 20–22, entry of 16 January 1578/79, to Sir Henry Nevell and the Dean of Windsor.
28. Richard Galis, [*A Brief Treatise Containing the Most Strange and Horrible Cruelty of Elizabeth Stile* ...] (1579; supplied title), TCP A72130, accounts of the appeal to Neville, religious examination, public instruction, and removal of Stile to his lodging. The earlier episodes are not all securely dated; Galis does not name the wife he consulted.
29. Galis also described unsuccessful attempts to burn Mother Dutton's straw hovel and another adjoining her house with brimstone, gunpowder, linen, an arrow and a match on a stick. Julie Stone Peters, *Staging Witchcraft before the Law: Skepticism, Performance as Proof, and Law as Magic in Early Modern Witch Trials* (Cambridge University Press, online 2024; print 2025), section 2.1, pp. 8–10, especially p. 10, and the illustration on p. 12. For Galis's own account, see Richard Galis, *A Brief Treatise* (1579), TCP A72130, the episodes concerning Master Handley and Mother Dutton's straw hovels. Peters analyzes Galis's efforts to produce proof. The comparison with Ford is developed here alongside Dell's reading of the play. Galis, *A Brief Treatise* (1579), sigs. B2v, C3v–C4r: B2v describes the four kneeling women and the cudgel held over their backs; C3v–C4r recount Stile's release and the repeated beatings. The printed pages were checked. "Ribrost" means beat or thrash; the quotation retains the 1579 spelling.

30. *Merry Wives*, 4.2, including the borrowed clothes, Ford's accusation, and the beating.
31. *Merry Wives*, 4.4, for the tale of Herne and the planned disguise; 5.5, for Falstaff's speech.
32. Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 5.5, Folger Shakespeare Library. The quotation follows the modern Folger edition; it is not offered as evidence for the passage's presence in the 1602 quarto or for an exact composition date.
33. William Harrison, "Of Parkes and Warrens," *Holinshed's Chronicles* (1587), I, pp. 204–206, especially p. 204. The quotation follows the modern-spelling text in *Elizabethan England: From "A Description of England"*, ed. Lothrop Withington (London: Walter Scott), chapter XX, p. 207, Project Gutenberg text. Bracketed ellipses mark the extract's boundaries. For Harrison's work, rectory at Radwinter, and Windsor appointment in April 1586, see "Harrison, William," *Dictionary of National Biography*.
34. Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich compares the wives' final entertainment with the outdoor performances staged for Elizabeth I's progresses. At Bisham in 1592, Lady Elizabeth Russell's daughters Anne and Elizabeth played shepherdesses who rejected Pan's advances and laughed at his threats. These performers were first cousins of Neville's wife, Anne Killigrew: Russell was the sister of Anne's mother, Katherine Cooke. Neville's maternal family had earlier ties to the same household. At the christening of Elizabeth Hoby on 31 May 1562, his mother Elizabeth Neville and grandmother Frances Gresham were godmothers. This Elizabeth was Lady Russell's daughter by her first husband, Thomas Hoby, distinct from the Russell daughters who performed in 1592. Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich, "Pageantry, Queens, and Housewives in the Two Texts of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63.3 (2012), 328–354, especially 331–333 and 342. Kolkovich compares the endings with country-house entertainment, including Bisham in 1592; the relationship to Neville's family is developed here. Her larger argument considers different political effects of the quarto and Folio endings and the possibility of Jacobean revision. Bisham was the Hoby family home. After Thomas Hoby's death in 1566, Elizabeth retained possession through her marriage to John, Lord Russell in 1574 and her second widowhood in 1584. She was therefore twice widowed when she hosted the Queen in 1592. Her eldest Hoby son, Sir Edward, gained control of Bisham after her death in 1609; in 1617 he left virtually his entire estate to his son Peregrine. See Andrew Thrush, "Hoby, Sir Edward (1560–1617)", in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629* (2010), opening biography and sections VI–VII; Colthorpe, "Court Women," cited below, for the second marriage. Thomas Hoby, *The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas Hoby*, ed. Edgar Powell (Royal Historical Society, 1902), p. 129, records Elizabeth Hoby's birth on 27 May 1562 and christening on 31 May, naming both godmothers. For their relationship to Neville, see Elizabeth Neville's funeral certificate, printed in Granville Leveson Gower, *Genealogy of the Family of Gresham* (1883), pp. 9–10: it names Frances as Elizabeth's mother and Henry as Elizabeth's son and heir. Colthorpe, *Elizabethan Court Day by Day*, 1584, p. 46, 22 December, records Neville's marriage to Anne, daughter of Henry Killigrew and Katherine Cooke; her "Court Women: Royal Household," p. 39, identifies Lady Elizabeth Russell as Katherine Killigrew's sister and as mother of Anne and Elizabeth Russell. The kinship establishes the family connection; no attendance by Neville at the 1592 entertainment is asserted.
35. *Merry Wives*, 5.5, Mistress Quickly's fairy blessing; the chairs, coats, and crests occur earlier in the same speech. For the foundation, chapel, heraldry, and translation of the motto, see the Royal Household's historical account, "The Order of the Garter".
36. The wardrobe account records six days' preparation by the keeper and four labourers, followed by six days putting things in order, at a cost of fifty-two shillings. Marion E. Colthorpe, *Elizabethan Court Day by Day*, 1589, p. 34, 16 December: installation of Henry Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, and Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst. Colthorpe prints the preparation account for John Stephenson, Keeper of the Standing Wardrobe at Windsor Castle, marking its source "T" for Treasurer of the Chamber accounts. The date is the installation date under which she places the account. This follows her published transcription.
37. *Hans Jakob Breunings von Buchenbach Relation über seine Sendung nach England im Jahr 1595*, ed. August Schlossberger (Stuttgart, 1865), pp. 27–30, Bavarian State Library digitization; Marion

E. Colthorpe, *Elizabethan Court Day by Day*, 1595, pp. 12–13, 23 April. The account follows the German printed edition and Colthorpe's chronology. For Martin's suggested occasion in 1597, see *Shakespeare and Ecology*, p. 33.

38. Breuning's address to Elizabeth on 6 April 1595 expressly requests the Garter for Frederick and recalls the promise he believed she had made during his visit three years earlier. Victor von Klarwill, ed., *Queen Elizabeth and Some Foreigners* (London: John Lane, 1928), pp. 363–365; Neville's escort, p. 375; public digitization. The embassy's purpose is also documented in the Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg catalogue, HStAS A 114 Bü 12.

39. John Casson and William D. Rubinstein, *Sir Henry Neville Was Shakespeare: The Evidence* (Amberley, 2016), chapter 6, Kindle location 2762 and following, notes 32–33 (eBook ISBN 9781445654676). They also report an alternative involving Monsieur de Chastes in 1596, citing Giorgio Melchiori's 2000 edition, p. 26, note; that alternative is cited here through Casson and Rubinstein. Their date of 27 April 1600 for the Württemberg passage is incorrect: the passage on p. 183 of Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, vol. I (1725), belongs to Neville's letter dated 9 May 1600, O.S., beginning on p. 179; see p. 183. For "cosen garmombles," see the 1602 quarto, TCP A11983; compare the Folger text, 4.3 and 4.5. The identification of the joke with Frederick is an interpretation; the play does not establish an actual theft by the duke or his party. David Lindley, ed., *The First Quarto of The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), introduction, pp. 5–7, discusses the uncertain identification and dating implications; publisher's excerpt.

# Hamlet: Letters, Reputation and the Wounded Name

Chapter 26

Robert Cecil wanted Henry Neville to keep watch on a young man in Paris: Aurelian Townshend. In spring 1600 Cecil asked Neville to arrange Townshend's lodging, control his expenses, and report on his conduct.

> [...] **hearken whether he use any riotous life or disorder, and certify me**, to the intent that I may guess whether he be fit to be near my son.[1]

Polonius gives Reynaldo a strikingly similar task: deliver money and notes to his son Laertes in Paris, but first inquire into the young man's behavior:

> POLONIUS [...]
> **Inquire** me first what Danskers are in **Paris**;
> And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
> What company, at what expense; and finding
> By this encompassment and drift of question
> That they do know **my son**, come you more nearer
> Than your particular demands will touch it.[2]
> — *Hamlet*, 2.1

The shared setting is Paris; the concerns are lodging, company, money and conduct. Cecil's young man was a prospective servant for his son, whereas Polonius is watching his own son.

Neville carried out the commission. On 24 April 1600, he told Cecil:

> I will be careful also to **look into his conversation**, so to make some judgment of him whether he be fit for that employment that your Honor designs him for.[3]

"Conversation" here means conduct.

Three days later, on 27 April 1600, Neville explained how he would obtain information about disputed precedence at the last Franco-Spanish treaty. The chancellor was the only commissioner available to question:

> **Directly** sure I shall not, but I will do the best I can by **oblique means**.[4]

In the same scene, Polonius gives Reynaldo the corresponding maxim:

> POLONIUS [...]
> By **indirections** find **directions** out.
> — *Hamlet*, 2.1

Neville's diplomatic inquiry and Polonius's domestic surveillance share a method: an indirect approach may reveal what a direct question will not.

Polonius's habits have long invited comparison with Robert Cecil's father, William Cecil, Lord Burghley. The comparison includes Polonius's advice to Laertes and Burghley's precepts for Robert, especially their warnings against borrowing. The letter to Neville brings the parallel into the next generation of the Cecil family.[5]

## Claudius and Laertes

Elsewhere, *Hamlet* turns the language of negotiation into pressure on an individual. Writing to Cecil from Paris on 15 June 1599, Neville considered what England and France should do if the United Provinces refused to join a peace with Spain. One possibility was to use the two monarchs' authority to compel their acceptance:

> either by their common authority to **over-rule them to accept the peace**, or otherwise, by common means to maintain them

In *Hamlet*, Claudius asks Laertes to submit to his guidance. Laertes agrees on condition that the king does not force him into a reconciliation:

> KING [...]
> Will you be ruled by me?
> LAERTES Ay, my lord,
> So you will not **o'errule me to a peace**.
> — *Hamlet*, 4.7

Both use "overrule" for forcing a reluctant party into peace. Neville considers compelling the Dutch to accept a diplomatic settlement; Laertes refuses to let Claudius compel him to make peace with Hamlet.[6]

In February 1604 Neville thanked Ralph Winwood for remembering him. Plague in his household had disrupted his correspondence, but he wanted his friend to put him to use:

> how willing I would be to make it appear **more than in words**, if in your absence you would make any use of me.

Later in the same scene in *Hamlet*, Claudius uses the same expression when pressing Laertes to prove his love for his dead father:

> KING [...]
> Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake
> To show yourself indeed your father's son
> **More than in words?**
> — *Hamlet*, 4.7

Laertes offers to cut Hamlet's throat in church. Claudius turns the demand for affection proved in action into a demand for murder.[7]

The wording is uncommon in the surveyed drama: only *Hamlet* uses it among 239 plays dated 1590–1615. The comparison joins the same words to the same test: affection must become action. Neville offers to demonstrate his love through service; Claudius presses Laertes to demonstrate his through revenge. The phrase appears in the second quarto (1604/5), though not in the corresponding scene of the first (1603).[8]

## The cast of brazen cannon

On 19 November 1599, Neville reported from Paris that Henri IV had ordered cannon to be cast and tested and, separately, for arms to be purchased:

> hath taken order for the **casting** of 50 or 60 pieces here in the arsenal, whereof 30 are already **cast** and tried; he hath also appointed great store of **arms to be bought** in sundry towns as I am informed

Near the beginning of *Hamlet*, Marcellus asks why Denmark is preparing for war:

> MARCELLUS [...]
> And why such daily **cast** of brazen cannon
> And foreign **mart for implements of war**,
> Why such **impress of shipwrights**, whose sore task
> Does not divide the Sunday from the week.
> **What might be toward** that this sweaty haste
> Doth make the night joint laborer with the day?
> Who is 't that can inform me?
> — *Hamlet*, 1.1

Both passages move from casting cannon to buying arms. Marcellus's "cast," the First Folio reading, names the manufacturing operation Neville reports. The arms markets differ: Marcellus specifies foreign purchases; Henri was buying weapons from towns he might also wish to disarm.[9]

On 9 May 1600, Neville sent Cecil another report from Paris, this time about Denmark's naval preparations. The news had reached him through the ambassador of Württemberg, whose informant was in Hamburg:

> The King of Denmark makes very great **preparation by sea**, which gives occasion of much discourse, **no man seeing any apparent cause for it**. [...] I thought it my duty to relate what I heard of it, considering his demeanor the last summer toward our fishermen, and the **northern jealousies**.

The "northern jealousies" suggest mutual suspicion among the northern powers. Neville reports Denmark preparing its fleet without an apparent explanation; this parallels Marcellus's question about why Denmark is preparing for war (*Hamlet*, 1.1).[10]

## Artillery, testing and plots

The extent of the artillery imagery in *Hamlet* is remarkable. Two images bring its technical language particularly close to the gun-testing records preserved among Neville's papers.

Claudius wants a second means of killing Hamlet in case his first scheme fails:

> KING [...]
> 'Twere better not assayed. Therefore this project
> Should have a back or second that might hold
> If this did **blast in proof**. Soft, let me see.
> — *Hamlet*, 4.7

"Blast in proof" means burst during testing.[11] This is the very failure recorded in a German notarial certificate among Neville's papers. Dated 4 September 1591, it describes a gun brought from England breaking into pieces during testing in Hamburg; its endorsement bears "Nevill." Neville's Paris report cited above describes guns "cast and tried," and the certificate records what could happen when a gun failed that trial. Claudius imagines his scheme as a weapon that might destroy itself when put to the test.[12]

Hamlet gives a related danger to the plot sending him to England. He intends to turn the scheme against the men carrying the sealed letters:

> HAMLET [...]
> For 'tis the sport to have the **enginer**
> **Hoist with his own petard**; and 't shall go hard
> But I will delve one yard below their **mines**
> And blow them at the moon. O, 'tis most sweet
> When in one line two crafts directly meet.
> — *Hamlet*, 3.4

The petard is a siege explosive: its engineer is blown upwards by his own charge. Hamlet will dig beneath his opponents' mines and turn their work against them. Both passages give intrigue the danger of a destructive device failing or turning upon its user. The German certificate supplies a concrete example of the practical hazard behind these images.[13]

Other artillery references run through the play: royal drinking salutes from the "great cannon" (1.2), the duel's "ordnance fire" and the final command to "bid the soldiers shoot" (5.2).[14] Scandal becomes "poisoned shot" aimed like a "cannon to his blank"—its target (4.1); accumulated troubles strike like a "murd'ring piece," a gun scattering small shot (4.5).[15, 11] Even Osric's sword-hangers prompt Hamlet's joke about carrying "a cannon by our sides" (5.2). The technical imagery extends from making and testing weapons to ceremony, reputation, humour and plots.[11]

## Two Danish names

When Claudius welcomes Hamlet's old companions, he names them together:

> KING
> Welcome, dear **Rosencrantz and Guildenstern**.
> — *Hamlet*, 2.2

The corresponding Danish family names appear among the sixteen ancestral names on Jacques de Gheyn's engraved portrait of the astronomer Tycho Brahe. **“ROSENKRANS”** is on the left side of the arch; **“GVLDENSTEREN”** is at the foot of the left column. The shields display Tycho's ancestry.[16]

The portrait has a route into Neville’s circle through Thomas Savile, the younger brother of his tutor Henry. Italian newsletters addressed to Thomas in 1591 survive among Neville’s papers, as discussed in Chapter 27. On his European tour of 1588–1591, Thomas followed his brother’s earlier route, visiting Dudith and Pinelli, whom Henry Savile and Neville had met on their own travels.

On 1 December 1590, Tycho wrote to Thomas that he had enclosed four copies of his likeness, recently engraved in copper at Amsterdam. He wanted English poets to compose an epigram on the portrait and his work, suggesting Daniel Rogers as a contributor. These were images intended for literary circulation. The documented recipient was Thomas; the letter places the portraits within Neville’s scholarly network, without establishing that Neville saw one.[17]

Neville’s family library supplies another Danish connection. The later Billingbear catalogue lists the 1576 Frankfurt edition of Saxo Grammaticus’s *Gesta Danorum*, whose account of Amleth is the ultimate source of the Hamlet story. That edition and its place in the library are discussed in Chapter 10.[18]

**Figure 26.1:** Jacques de Gheyn II, Tycho Brahe, catalogued by Statens Museum for Kunst as 1588–1590. ROSENKRANS appears on the left side of the arch; GVLDENSTEREN appears below the lowest shield on the left column. Red boxes mark the two names. SMK, KKSgb7575, public domain.

## Deer, keepers and the hunt

Neville describes a deer hunt that took him away from a guest waiting at home. In an undated letter to Windebank, later docketed 15 September 1608, he apologizes for abandoning him and for his household's poor hospitality:

> My hope was to have **killed our deer** in time to have returned to you to dinner. But when I saw he had carried us out as far as **Cramborne**, and that it was not possible for me to come back in time, I thought it as good to **stay out his death**, presuming of their discretion at home, not to have stayed your dinner for me.

Neville stayed with the hunt; his servants kept Windebank waiting. He closes by hoping the visit had done his guest no other harm than "the loss of your dinner."[19]

In *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness* (2017), Rhodri Lewis follows the play's sustained language of hunting: deer and hounds, snares, nets and falconry.

After Claudius breaks off the play within the play, Hamlet sings:

> HAMLET
> Why, let the **strucken deer** go weep,
> The **hart ungalled** play.
> For some must watch, while some must sleep:
> Thus runs the world away.
> — *Hamlet*, 3.2

Lewis emphasizes the distinction between the wounded deer and the hart: Hamlet demotes Claudius within the hierarchy of hunted animals, refusing him the fully regal status of a hart. Hamlet believes he has wounded his quarry and can now track him down.

Hamlet is also the quarry. When Guildenstern questions him, he asks: "why do you go about to **recover the wind of me**, as if you would **drive me into a toil**?" (*Hamlet*, 3.2). Lewis explains the technical precision: a toil is a hunting net, and getting upwind allows the quarry to smell the approaching hunter and flee into the waiting net. Hamlet describes political manipulation through the practical workings of a hunt.[20]

Neville's letter catches him in the chase, unwilling to leave before the deer is killed. Lewis's reading shows how *Hamlet* makes that world of pursuit, quarry and capture a language for life at court.

## Conscience and reputation

After Essex's failed rising in February 1601, Neville had to explain his dealings with the earl's circle. In his confession of 2 March 1601, he described Henry Cuffe's approaches and a meeting at Drury House where a plan to enter the queen's court and seize Essex's enemies had been discussed. He acknowledged knowing about the proposals but insisted that he had refused to become an actor in them. The distinction mattered: knowledge of a conspiracy could be made to look like consent to it.[21]

### A mind examining itself

Neville's separate defence, printed as *Sir Henry Nevill's Case*, opens by acknowledging an offence while appealing to his inward knowledge of his loyalty:

> [...] yet my own **soul** witnessing to **herself**, that it was ever **loyal and faithful** to her Majesty, and consequently abhorring more than death, the imputation of that fault, and loathsome crime of falsehood and treason [...]
>
> — Henry Neville, *Sir Henry Nevill's Case*[22]

He asks that his actions be read with the circumstances that reveal his intentions.

Hamlet likewise calls his soul "herself" when describing his choice of Horatio:

> HAMLET [...]
> Since my dear **soul** was mistress of **her** choice
> And could of men distinguish, **her** election
> Hath sealed thee for **herself**. For thou hast been
> [...]
> — *Hamlet*, 3.2

Both passages make the soul a judge of personal allegiance: Neville's soul witnesses to his loyalty, while Hamlet's chooses Horatio and seals that choice for herself.

The central question is why Neville failed to expose the plot. Neville rejects one explanation after another: malice against the state, a wish that the attempt should succeed, personal devotion to Essex. His sentences become questions: "for who had more interest therein than I?" and "for who could have more disliked it than I?" He is pleading his case by examining his motives.

His explanation comes in two parts. He had hoped that the weak, unfinished project would collapse when its authors recovered their reason. But he also admits a more personal cause:

> partly upon an **imbecility and weakness of my own nature**, (**if so it be to be termed**), which **could not resolve** to become an accuser

Even while naming his weakness, he questions the name he has given it. He recoils from accusing a man of Essex's standing, then concedes that public duty should have outweighed his fear of private disgrace. The defence moves through denial, inquiry, explanation and reluctant self-reproach.[22]

Hamlet's encounter with Fortinbras's army produces the same kind of argument with himself. Other men act; he tries to determine what has stopped him:

HAMLET [...]
[...] Now whether it be
Bestial oblivion or **some craven scruple**
Of thinking too precisely on th' event
(A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward), **I do not know**
Why yet I live to say "**This thing's to do**,"
[...]
— *Hamlet*, 4.4

The force lies in the movement of the voice. Both men weigh reasons for inaction and interrupt their explanations to judge their own character. Neville questions whether his reluctance deserves the name of weakness; Hamlet divides his scruple into one part wisdom and three parts cowardice. Neville was explaining why he had not denounced a conspiracy; Hamlet is reproaching himself for delaying revenge. The *Case* gives us Neville writing in precisely this questioning, divided, self-accusing register.[23]

### One idea in two words

The same documents also permit a comparison of verbal technique. Hendiadys expresses one idea through two terms joined by "and." Shakespeare used it very unevenly. In his 1981 study "Hendiadys and Hamlet," George T. Wright counted sixty-six examples in *Hamlet*, more than twice his total for any other play. "**Youth and observation**" (*Hamlet*, 1.5) means youthful observation; "the **heat and flame** of thy distemper" (*Hamlet*, 3.4) means a hot flame.[24]

The comparison can be extended by distinguishing kinds of writing.[25] A study undertaken for this book found eight secure or probable examples in 168 letters containing 131,988 words. The *Confession*, the *Case* and the *Advice Touching the Holding of a Parliament* contain another eight in just 6,981 words: about 0.6 against 11.5 per 10,000 words.[26]

In other words, Neville's ordinary correspondence, including the diplomatic letters, used hendiadys sparingly; his extended defences and political arguments used it much more densely. The contrast points to a choice of register: he draws on the technique when it suits his purpose, just as Shakespeare varies its use between plays.

In the March confession, Cuffe breaks out into "words of **heat and impatience**"—impatient heat. In the *Case*, Neville answers the objection that a visit to Essex might have begun "a **friendship and inwardness** with him": an intimate friendship. He denies that anything passed beyond general compliments. The *Advice* describes James's breach with Parliament as "full of **distaste and acrimony**"—bitter distaste—and closes by defending "the honest **purpose and sincerity** of my heart": sincere purpose.[26]

### A wounded name

On 22 April 1601, writing from Chelsea, Neville asked Cecil to withhold his declaration—probably the March confession. It had been collected before he could include the circumstances that explained his conduct. He feared the judgment that an incomplete account would invite:

> So as if it should be published in that **naked sort** as it is set down, it would be to my infinite disadvantage, and lay me open to the **censure of every common person**, even for that whereof I am **not guilty**. Therefore chiefly I desire it may not be published; or if that must needs be [...] I humbly desire that I may be permitted to **revise it and to add some circumstances** which I have either by word or writing already declared unto your Honours, that so **the world may know the best of me as well as the worst**.[27]

At the end of *Hamlet*, the prince appeals to Horatio, fearing what account will survive him:

> HAMLET [...]
> O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
> **Things standing thus unknown**, shall I leave behind me!
> [...]
> — *Hamlet*, 5.2

He begs Horatio to live and tell his story. Neville worried that his account could contain true statements yet leave its readers with a false judgment. Hamlet needs a surviving witness to supply what his actions alone cannot explain.[28]

## Notes and sources

1. Robert Cecil to Henry Neville, undated in the printed heading, Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp.166–167, request on p.167. The letter turns from diplomatic negotiations to Townshend's accommodation, expenditure, religious observance and fitness to attend Cecil's son. The boy described as Anne Neville's cousin is Cecil's son, not Townshend. Neville's reply of 24 April supplies the chronological anchor; an exact date for Cecil's request is not inferred from its position in the volume. Quotations from Sawyer modernize spelling and capitalization, without treating the printed spelling as autograph evidence.
2. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 2.1, Polonius's instructions to Reynaldo. This compares the arrangement and concerns, not a distinctive shared phrase. The subsequent invented allegations belong to Polonius's method and are not in Cecil's request.
3. Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 24 April 1600, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp.175–176, Townshend paragraph on p.175. The reply confirms receipt, placement with a minister, ten crowns a month for lodging and diet, and responsibility for further provision and assessment. "Conversation" denotes behavior or manner of life. It does not report that Townshend actually committed misconduct.
4. Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 27 April 1600, Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp.177–178, quoted paragraph on p.178. Spelling modernized. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 2.1. This is a separate diplomatic inquiry, not part of Cecil's instructions about Townshend.

5. Tricia A. McElroy and Jason Powell, "Copying Fatherly Advice," in *A Manuscript Miscellany*, Folger Institute, NEH summer institute (2005), PDF, pp.46–47, especially PDF p.47. Their discussion of Folger MS V.a.381 records the proposed identification of Polonius with Burghley and compares the fifth precept with Polonius's advice against borrowing. They refer readers to Josephine Waters Bennett, "Characterization in Polonius' Advice to Laertes," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 4.1 (1953), pp.3–9, and G. K. Hunter's response, "Isocrates' Precepts and Polonius' Character," 8.4 (1957), pp.501–506. These articles are identified through McElroy and Powell, not independently consulted here. The proposed character model is an interpretation; "By indirections find directions out" is not identified here as a quotation from Burghley's precepts.
6. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 15 June 1599, Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), p. 47, checked against the printed page; spelling and capitalization modernized. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 4.7, Folger text and lineation. The second quarto reads "I my Lord, so you will not ore rule me to a peace": British Library Garrick copy, facsimile page 80, image checked. The First Folio transcription reads "If so you'l not o'rerule me to a peace," TLN 3070. The small textual differences leave the construction intact. Neville follows "over-rule them" with the infinitive "to accept the peace"; Laertes follows "o'errule me" with "to a peace." The comparison concerns a shared verb, object and outcome, with different grammatical complements; no claim of uniqueness is made.
7. Neville to Ralph Winwood, London, 16 February 1603/4 O.S., Sawyer II, p. 17. The year is 1604 in modern numbering; Sawyer prints 1603. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 4.7. Spelling and capitalization are modernized.
8. An earlier example of the same contrast occurs in Thomas Hoby, trans., *The Courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio* (London, 1561), sig. Kk4r, page image; TCP A18135. Q2 passage in the Huntington copy, 69305. Shakespeare Census records Q2 copies with 1604 and 1605 title dates as the second edition. For Q1's different scene see QLNs 1845 onwards. Searches include than/then and normalized spelling variants. Play counts describe the searched collection, not all surviving drama.
9. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 19 November 1599, Sawyer I, p. 132. Spelling and capitalization are modernized. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1.1; compare Q1, TCP A11959, with the First Folio, TCP A11954. Q2's "cost" is recorded in the Internet Shakespeare Editions transcription. The Folio reads cast, while Q1 and Q2 read cost; the comparison concerns both the manufacture of cannon and the purchase of arms. A search across 527 dramatic-text records, checking cast and inflected forms near artillery terms, found few examples of the manufacture sense. Controls include Dekker and Webster's *Northward Ho* (printed 1607), an ordnance-casting metaphor, TCP A20098; Davenant's *The Cruel Brother* (printed 1630), a patent for casting ordnance, TCP A19876; and Marmion's *Holland's Leaguer* (printed 1632), a gun-recasting sexual metaphor, TCP A07025. These support rarity, not uniqueness; the search concerns the artillery-manufacture sense, not every use of cast for moulding metal. The proximity search is not an exhaustive semantic census. For Neville's Mayfield foundry, see Chapters 3–9.
10. Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 9 May 1600, Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), p.183. The dateline appears on p.179. Spelling and capitalization are modernized. The report passes from a Hamburg informant through the Württemberg ambassador to Neville; it is not Neville's eyewitness account. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1.1, Marcellus's question about shipwrights and unexplained preparations, present in Q2 and F1. Christian IV ruled both Denmark and Norway; the comparison concerns unexplained military preparations, not a contemporary war between those kingdoms. Related reports in Winwood include Cecil's statement to Neville that "Denmark hath used us very ill," I, p.72, and his announcement of a planned Anglo-Danish conference at Emden, I, p.167. These establish contemporary friction involving Denmark but do not identify the particular "jealousies" Neville meant. For Christian IV's 1599 northern voyage and disputes with England and Sweden, see the University Library of Tromsø, "Christian IV's Northern Voyage in 1599".
11. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 4.5, 4.7 and 5.2, Folger Shakespeare Library. For the technical glosses, see Philip Weller, *Hamlet Navigator*, notes to 4.5.95 (a cannon loaded with small shot) and

4.7.154 (blowing up while being tried). "Blast in proof" makes failure under testing an image for the possible failure of the murder scheme.

12. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/7, German notarial instrument dated 4 September 1591, beginning on the leaf numbered 36; catalogue. The testimony records an English gun breaking into pieces during testing in Hamburg. Its endorsement carries "Nevill," the number 47, a weight figure of 1620 and the September date. This is a comparison of the recorded failure with the image "blast in proof," not an English phrase found in the German document. The endorsement does not identify the gun's manufacturer. The separate April certificate's account of a burst gun and the absence of injuries is discussed with these records in Chapter 31, "Macbeth: The Deed and Its Consequences."

13. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 3.4, Folger Shakespeare Library. This passage is present in the second quarto (1604/5) and absent from the Folio. It joins the petard image to military mining; it is not evidence that Neville manufactured these devices.

14. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1.2 and 5.2, Folger Shakespeare Library: Claudius's drinking salutes, the duel and the final stage direction; also 1.4, where the direction calls for two cannon shots.

15. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 4.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. The quoted passage follows Folger's wording and lineation.

16. Jacques de Gheyn II, *Tycho Brahe*, Statens Museum for Kunst, KKSgb7575, museum dating 1588–1590; public-domain image. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 2.2. The inscription gives Tycho's age and 1586; it is not by itself the impression's printing date. SMK's catalogue explains its early dating by reference to a portrait reportedly present in Giovanni Magini's copy of Tycho's 1588 book by 1590; that copy has not been independently inspected here. Other museums date their impressions differently, and the four copies in the letter have not been matched to a surviving impression.

17. Tycho Brahe to Thomas Savile, 1 December 1590, ed. Peter Zeeberg, Tekstnet, postscript; also J. L. E. Dreyer, ed., *Tychonis Brahe Dani Opera Omnia*, VII (Copenhagen, 1924), pp.283–285, especially p.285. The scholarly edition identifies British Library Harley MS 6995, item 40; the published text controls this summary. For Thomas as Henry Savile's younger brother, Mordechai Feingold, *The Mathematicians' Apprenticeship: Science, Universities and Society in England, 1560–1640* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.130–131. The addressee is Thomas, not Henry or Neville; dispatch and an invitation to poets are explicit, fulfilment is not. For the 1591 newsletters, see The National Archives, PRO 30/50/70/2, catalogue, in Neville's additional diplomatic correspondence, and Chapter 27. The catalogue identifies Thomas Savell as recipient; the packet's preservation among Neville's papers supports the transmission route. Robert B. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 58.2 (1996), pp.439–444, especially 442–444, dates Thomas's tour to 1588–1591 and distinguishes it from Henry's earlier journey with Neville. Todd explicitly corrects the claim that the brothers travelled together: p.440 n.7 states that Henry was not accompanied by his brother, against Maccagni and Derenzini, "Libri Apollonii," p.682. Thomas's departure on 4 June 1588 and his following of Henry's route are discussed on p.442; his Italian contacts and return to England by the end of 1591 on pp.443–444.

18. Billingbear library catalogue, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1; see Chapter 10. The 1576 Wechel edition is available in the University of Tartu's digitized copy, with the Amleth narrative at pp.44–47. The later catalogue establishes the edition's presence in the family library, not the date on which Henry Neville acquired or read it.

19. Henry Neville to [Sir Thomas Windebank], docketed 15 September 1608, The National Archives, SP 14/36, f.20, State Papers Online, Gale document MC4323586678. Transcription by John O'Donnell; spelling modernized, with the manuscript's place-name "Cramborne" retained (the calendar prints "Cranborne"). Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of James I, 1603–1610* (London, 1857), p.456, item 17, calendars the same deer-and-dinner episode under 1608 and supplies the recipient in brackets. The body is undated; 1608 appears in a later endorsement, not an autograph dateline. The re-

cipient's forename is editorial and the year requires further scrutiny; the 1606 date sometimes attached to this letter is unsupported by these witnesses.

20. Rhodri Lewis, "Hamlet, Hunting, and the Nature of Things", chapter 2 of *Hamlet and the Vision of Darkness* (Princeton University Press, 2017), pp.43–111, especially pp.62–63 on wind and the toil, and pp.71–73 on the play scene and deer song. Lewis interprets the play's hunting language; the comparison with Neville's records is made here. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 3.2. The wind-and-toil question occurs in Q2 and F1 and is absent from Q1's shorter recorder exchange. The deer song occurs in all three witnesses: Q1 begins "Then let the stricken deer" and has "laugh" and "weep" where Q2 and F1 have "watch" and "sleep." Modern wording follows Folger. Neville's letter documents his following a deer hunt to the kill; it does not describe this particular netting technique.

21. Henry Neville to Lords Egerton, Buckhurst, Nottingham and Secretary Cecil, 2 March 1600 Old Style (1601 in modern year numbering), The National Archives, SP 12/279, f.15, beginning "Right honourable, my duty and conscience binding me"; transcription by John O'Donnell. This confession is distinct from the shorter *Sir Henry Nevill's Case* printed in Sawyer I, pp.302–304.

22. Henry Neville, *Sir Henry Nevill's Case*, Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp.302–304, especially pp.303–304 for the self-questioning and inability to become an accuser. Spelling and capitalization modernized. The undated defence concerns the Essex conspiracy of 1601; the running year 1600 is Old Style. It refers back to an earlier declaration and is not that declaration. Sawyer says he found the paper, in Neville's hand, among Winwood's papers; his suggestion that Neville sent it to Winwood is explicitly tentative. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 3.2.67–69, quoted in Folger's modern wording and lineation. For the three witnesses compare Q1, QLNs 1252–1262, Q2, and F1, TLNs 1914–1916. Q1 moves from Hamlet's rejection of flattery to his instructions about observing the king, without the soul's choice of Horatio. Q2 and F1 both contain the feminine personification. Q2 reads "her choice"; the Folio reads "my choice," retaining "her election" and "herself." These lines are absent from Q1 (1603), present in Q2 (1604/5) and F1 (1623). Absence from Q1 does not itself date the composition of the passage.

23. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 4.4, the soliloquy after the encounter with Fortinbras's captain. Folger wording and line breaks retained; the quotation begins within the speech and stops before "Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means / To do 't." This soliloquy survives in Q2 and is absent from the First Folio: see Folger's textual notes, 4.4.10–69.

24. George T. Wright, "Hendiadys and Hamlet", *PMLA* 96.2 (March 1981), pp.168–193, especially pp.173, 182 and the lists at pp.185–191. His sixty-six is a count in a modern edited text, not a count in each early witness; classification involves interpretation. The quoted phrases occur in Q2 and the Folio. Q1 has "That ever youth, or else observance noted" in place of "youth and observation" and does not give Gertrude the "heat and flame" lines. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1.5 and 3.4.

25. For the earlier Neville comparison, see John Casson, "Reflections on 'The Annotated Amleth: Belleforest in the British Library': The Identity of the Annotator," *Electronic British Library Journal* (2017), article 11, pp.1–3, at p.2 and n.9. Casson explicitly directs readers to chapter 10 of Mark Bradbeer and John Casson, *Sir Henry Neville, Alias William Shakespeare: Authorship Evidence in the History Plays* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015), for hendiadys in Neville's letters and 1601 deposition. The earlier book is credited here through Casson's published reference. For Shakespeare's distribution, see the discussion of Wright, "Hendiadys and Hamlet," above.

26. Neville's confession, 2 March 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279, f.15 and following leaves, transcription by John O'Donnell; "heate and impacience" modernized. *Sir Henry Nevill's Case*, Sawyer I, p.303. "Friendship and inwardness" concerns Essex, not Cuffe. These are proposed readings of the paired expressions, not a claim that every doublet is hendiadys or that the figure is unique to Neville. Neville, *Advice Touching the Holding of a Parliament*, Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Disgrace of Chief-Justice Coke*, II (London, 1863), Appendix V, pp.389–394, p.389 for "distaste and acrimony"

and p.394 for "purpose and sincerity". The author's comparative study, undertaken for this book, examined 168 letters containing 131,988 words and the three extended documents containing 6,981 words. It identified three secure and five probable cases in the letters, against four secure and four probable cases in the documents: about 0.6 versus 11.5 cases per 10,000 words when probable examples are included. These figures describe that study's sample and interpretive classifications. Its 168 letters and 138,969 words overall differ from the enlarged collection described in Chapter 11; the rates have not been recalculated from the enlarged collection. Ordinary political and diplomatic letters by other writers supplied controls; Neville's letter rate was not elevated against them. The contrast made here is between Neville's own kinds of writing, not a claim that this distribution is unique to him.

27. Neville to Robert Cecil, Chelsea, 22 April 1601, Hatfield House Archives, Cecil Papers 86/1, autograph letter, pp. 1–2; spelling and punctuation modernized. Also printed in Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, XI (Dublin, 1906), pp. 175–176, quotation and request on p. 176, Hatfield reference 86.1. The calendar describes a two-page holograph. Neville's explanation of the haste and omissions is his own account. The declaration was to be carried to the Tower; the letter itself is dated Chelsea. The April letter does not date the declaration it asks Cecil to withhold: identification with the long March confession is probable, not explicit. This confession is distinct from the shorter *Sir Henry Nevill's Case* printed in Sawyer I, pp.302–304.

28. For Othello's related final appeal about how his deeds will be reported, see Chapter 27. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 5.2, Hamlet's appeal to Horatio. Shakespeare quotations follow Folger's wording, with verse lines preserved and omissions marked; display wraps within a verse line are joined. Editorial variant brackets and pronunciation accents are omitted; substantive readings are identified in the relevant notes.

# Othello: The Making of False Proof

Chapter 27

## A man arriving in his shirt

Henri IV ran downstairs in his shirt with a sword in his hand. Neville reported the scene to Robert Cecil on 7 August 1599, after a fight outside the king's lodgings:

> The king, hearing of the matter, leapt out of his bed and ran down **in his shirt with a sword in his hand**, but by that time the rest were gone, and le Grand was brought in wounded as he was.[1]

The prince of Joinville believed that Bellegarde, the king's grand equerry or "le Grand," had made Henri jealous by reporting that Joinville was courting Mademoiselle d'Entragues. Bellegarde was caught unarmed and wounded through the thigh; others were hurt.

In *Othello*'s fifth act, Cassio has been attacked at night. Lodovico and Gratiano hesitate to approach the wounded men in the darkness. Iago returns with a light:

> GRATIANO
> Here's one comes **in his shirt**, with light and
> **weapons**.[2]
> — *Othello*, 5.1

Both men arrive amid nocturnal violence "in his shirt," carrying a weapon. Henri has hurried from bed; Iago looks similarly roused by the alarm, concealing his own part in the attack.

Cinthio, whose Italian tale supplies the play's main plot, already gives the dark night, sword attack, thigh wound and assailant's return as a sympathetic bystander. Cinthio describes the ensign attacking with a sword, but says nothing of his dress, light or weapon when he returns.[3]

Iago then offers the shirt as a bandage: "Light, gentlemen. I'll bind it with my shirt." The garment helps him perform concern for the man he has just injured.[2]

Neville's dispatch predates the recorded performance by more than five years.[4] It also describes jealousy deliberately aroused—a technique that recurs in his diplomatic reports.

## How to plant jealousy

On 24 September 1599 Neville reported a French attempt to weaken the understanding between Elizabeth and the States of the Netherlands. The method was to persuade the States that England would abandon them:

> **put** a **jealousy into** the States' heads of her Majesty, that she will abandon them.[5]

Neville explains the purpose: to break communication and understanding between the allies. Iago plans the same destruction of trust within a marriage:

> IAGO
> Or, failing so, yet that I **put** the Moor
> At least **into** a **jealousy** so strong
> That judgment cannot cure. [...][6]
> — *Othello*, 2.1

Another letter brings the language of suspicion together with watching. On 15 November 1600 Neville discussed the possibility of secret measures against the Protestants and expected those concerned to be:

> **jealous** enough of it, and therefore **open-eyed to observe** what is done.[7]

Iago uses the same association when advising Othello:

> IAGO
> Look to your wife; **observe** her well with Cassio;
> Wear your **eyes** thus, not **jealous** nor secure.[7]
> — *Othello*, 3.3

"Secure" means unsuspecting or overconfident. Iago poses as a prudent adviser while making innocent actions look suspicious.

## What Shakespeare adds to Cinthio

Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, third decade, seventh tale, supplies the marriage, the ensign's deception and the handkerchief used against Disdemona.[8] It also supplies professed concern, staged evidence, the misleading conversation and the night ambush.[9]

Neville was in Venice in 1582.[10] Billingbear's later catalogue records Venetian editions of Cinthio (1580) and Sansovino's history of the Turks (1582), though it does not date their acquisition.[11, 12]

Cinthio's commander sails to Cyprus during a routine change of troops, and the voyage is calm. Shakespeare adds the Ottoman emergency, conflicting fleet reports, successive messengers and ships arriving with news of storm losses.[13] Those additions bring the play into the world of the newsletters preserved in Neville's papers through Thomas Savile: naval preparations, concealed military intentions and reports carried into port by surviving ships.

## Newsletters from Venice

The newsletters' first link with the play is Venice itself. The Italian newsletters that passed through Thomas Savile into Neville's papers include sheets headed "Di Venetia"—"From Venice." The National Archives catalogues the packet as newsletters addressed to Thomas Savell by an anonymous correspondent, dated from Rome and Venice, within Neville's additional diplomatic correspondence. Thomas's accompanying note calls Neville his cousin, and Neville's handwritten notes appear on the sheets. The packet passed into the archive from Neville's family papers. These establish that Thomas forwarded the newsletters to Neville. The sheet illustrated here is dated 4 October 1591. The translations below follow provisional AI readings checked against photographs; uncertain words are marked, and the readings await independent transcription.[14]

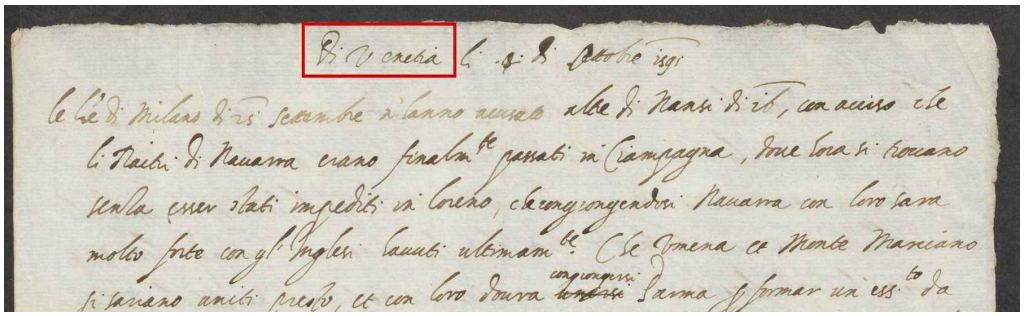


**Figure 27.1:** "Di Venetia"—"From Venice"—boxed in red in the newsletter of 4 October 1591. The opening lines relay letters from Milan referring to earlier letters from Nancy. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/70/2; catalogue. Detail of the manuscript; red box added.

Thomas, Henry Savile's younger brother, had travelled in Italy and maintained connections in Padua, Venice and Rome.[15] These handwritten newsletters, or *avvisi*, brought together reports from different places. Venice was the point from which a writer could pass on news of French campaigns or Ottoman preparations at Constantinople. Other reports in the packet carry Antwerp and Cologne datelines. The documents preserve successive stages of transmission: a place, a date, a letter or arriving vessel, and the news it brings.

That is the activity Shakespeare puts onstage around Cinthio's story. Othello greets Cassio and the Duke's officers by asking:

> OTHELLO
> The servants of the Duke and my lieutenant!
> The goodness of the night upon you, friends.
> What is the **news**?
> — *Othello*, 1.2.[16]

Cassio knows that messengers have arrived before he knows exactly what their reports establish:

> CASSIO
> Something from Cyprus, as I may divine.
> It is a business of some heat. The galleys
> Have sent a dozen **sequent messengers**
> This very night at one another's heels,
> And many of the Consuls, raised and met,
> Are at the Duke's already. You have been hotly
> called for.
> [...]
> — *Othello*, 1.2.[16]

"Sequent" means following one another. The news reaches Venice in instalments, and its officials must assemble it. Savile's packet supplies examples of the kind of reporting that makes this scene intelligible: information collected, forwarded and assessed while events remain uncertain.

## Which reports deserve belief?

In the council chamber, the papers disagree:

> DUKE, [reading a paper]
> There's no composition in these news
> That gives them credit.
> FIRST SENATOR, [reading a paper]
> Indeed, they are disproportioned.
> My **letters** say a hundred and seven galleys.
> — *Othello*, 1.3.[17]

The Duke's report gives 140 galleys; another senator's gives 200. Yet disagreement over the number does not invalidate everything the reports say:

> SECOND SENATOR, [reading a paper]
> And mine, two hundred.
> But though they jump not on a just account
> (As in these cases, where the aim reports
> 'Tis oft with **difference**), yet do they all **confirm**
> A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.
> — *Othello*, 1.3.[17]

The senator separates an uncertain detail from the common warning. A newsletter headed Venice, 1 November 1591, makes a comparable distinction. After a detailed account of fighting involving Henri IV and the League, the writer qualifies the story:

> ma p[er] non esserci **altre l[ette]re non si crede così facilmente**, ben si **ha p[er] certo** che ui era battaglia [assignata?]

In translation:

> but because there are no **other letters**, **it is not believed so readily**; it is, however, **held for certain** that a battle had been [appointed?].[18]

On this reading, the writer doubts the detailed battle story for lack of supporting letters, yet accepts that a battle had been arranged. Shakespeare's senator likewise sets aside the uncertain totals while accepting the warning the reports share. Neither speaker treats a report as something to accept or reject in its entirety: each distinguishes what deserves belief from what remains doubtful.

Cinthio already gives the Moor a demand for proof and the ensign devices for satisfying it falsely. Shakespeare adds this public examination of military intelligence, in which reports are compared before a decision is made.[9]

## Ottoman preparations and concealed intentions

The newsletters also convey the substance of the intelligence Venice needs. Shakespeare brings an incoming report directly before the state:

> SAILOR
> The **Turkish preparation** makes for Rhodes.
> So was I bid **report here to the state**
> By Signior Angelo.
> — *Othello*, 1.3.[17]

A sheet dated 15 November 1591 relays a report from Constantinople that Cicala had inspected the Ottoman Arsenal, found it poorly furnished with sails, cables and anchors, and informed the Sultan. The report then gives the Sultan's order and follows the preparations through to their expected result:

> ordering him to ensure that the said Arsenal was supplied with twice as much of everything necessary, as the said Cicala had begun to do, having ordered along the whole coast of the Black Sea the making of galley hulls, cables and other things belonging to the **naval fleet**, which it is believed without doubt **will go out the following year**.[19]

A later Venetian newsletter, dated 27 December 1591, cites Constantinople letters of 2 and 12 November. It reports talk of a large fleet, then qualifies that talk by noting:

> despite all this, work in the **Arsenal** was not seen proceeding with much **diligence**.[19]

One report builds an expectation from orders and supplies; the other sets rumour against the observed pace of work. This is concrete intelligence about Ottoman naval readiness—the subject of Shakespeare's emergency council. Neither report names Cyprus as the intended destination, but both show the kind of information about a Turkish fleet circulating through Venice.

Knowing that a force is preparing to move leaves another question: where is it really going? When a sailor reports that the Turkish fleet is making for Rhodes, Shakespeare's senator suspects a diversion:

> FIRST SENATOR This cannot be,
> By no assay of reason. 'Tis a **pageant**
> To keep us in **false gaze**. When we consider
> Th' importancy of Cyprus to the Turk,
> [...]
> — *Othello*, 1.3.[17]

He argues that Cyprus matters more to the Turks and is less well defended. A further messenger reports thirty additional sail joining the fleet and a turn back towards Cyprus. Fresh news supports the senator's reading of the manoeuvre.

The newsletter headed Venice, 4 October 1591—the one illustrated above—reports just such a distinction between apparent movement and military intention. The action is on land, in the Dauphiné, relayed through letters from Milan. Its account of Lesdiguières reads, in translation:

> Lesdiguières, **pretending to turn** with all his forces towards [Provence?], seemed to have left Grenoble unprovided; Don Amedeo consequently turned into the Dauphiné with cavalry from the state of Milan and infantry from Naples; but Lesdiguières, **having returned secretly** with his men-at-arms, fell upon him unexpectedly. [...][20]

The apparent departure invites a move against an exposed target. The secret return reveals the trap. The newsletter tells of a successful deception, whereas Shakespeare's senator detects the purpose behind the reported movement. Both require a reader of military news to distinguish where a force appears to be going from what its commander intends. That strategic problem belongs to Shakespeare's added war setting, beyond Cinthio's private intrigue.

## Ships bringing news of shipwreck

The same dependence on reports governs the arrival in Cyprus. Cinthio's Moor fears the dangers of the sea, but the couple make their voyage together in calm weather. Shakespeare separates his travellers in a storm, then lets each arriving ship alter what those waiting ashore know. A gentleman announces news of the Turkish fleet:

THIRD GENTLEMAN **News**, lads! Our wars are done.
The desperate tempest hath so banged the Turks
That their designment halts. A noble **ship** of Venice
**Hath seen a grievous wrack** and sufferance
On most part of their fleet.
MONTANO
How? Is this true?
THIRD GENTLEMAN The **ship is here put in**,
A Veronesa. Michael Cassio,
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,
Is come on shore; the Moor himself at sea,
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.
— *Othello*, 2.1.[21]

The question "Is this true?" is answered by identifying an arriving ship and its officer. The northern reports in Savile's packet preserve a closely comparable form of maritime news. A passage citing Lisbon letters dated the last day of October states:

> Letters from Lisbon dated the last day of October confirm the **arrival** in that port of eighteen **ships** of the New Spain and Tierra Firme fleet; these gave **news** that twenty-four others, including the two richest, **had perished in a storm**.[22]

The report joins the arrival of part of a fleet to news of losses elsewhere. Shakespeare dramatizes that situation: a ship comes into port, a speaker announces the losses, and a listener asks how the news can be trusted. The play explicitly makes the Venetian ship a witness to the wreck; the newsletter does not specify how its loss report was obtained.

Another passage shows why arrival matters. An Antwerp report dated 7 December relays news from London of the previous month:

> From London, on the 17th of the preceding month, they report the **arrival** in that port of a vessel from Malaga. Its **mariners reported** that twenty-five ships of the fleet had reached Lisbon and Sanlúcar; but, because the remainder **had not appeared**, it was **feared** that it had perished in a storm.[22]

Here absence produces fear, rather than a report of witnessed destruction. The two newsletters preserve different states of knowledge; their differing totals need not describe the same group of ships. In the play, news of the Turkish losses likewise leaves another fate unresolved: Cassio has arrived, but Othello is still missing. Each arrival can bring reassurance about one ship while leaving others in doubt.

These Atlantic reports illuminate the reporting situation Shakespeare creates in the Mediterranean. His additions to Cinthio place Venice and Cyprus in a world of incoming letters, uncertain fleet intelligence, deceptive movements and ships bringing news. The newsletters preserved through Savile are surviving examples of that world, including reports sent from Venice itself. They document Neville's familiarity with the kinds of reports Shakespeare adds to Cinthio's

story, without establishing that these particular sheets supplied the play's details.

## Further diplomatic and historical parallels

Juraj Kittler's study of Venetian communications describes the historical setting for such a scene: official intelligence from Constantinople supplied to foreign diplomats, alongside private letters and less formal sources used when official information was restricted.[23]

Richard Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603) has been proposed as a source for the play's military setting, though the case is not established. Its fleet movements and detected feint provide a comparison with the newsletters.[24, 25]

Sansovino supplies another part of this historical background, with the additional relevance of an edition recorded at Billingbear. His 1582 *Historia universale* describes Piali's departure with eighty galleys and thirty galliots. Later, a hundred galleys move from Cyprus towards Rhodes to obtain news of the Christian fleet; five galliots are sent towards Crete, intelligence is gathered, and Piali returns to Cyprus with a detailed report. Knolles names Sansovino among the authors he used.[26]

Neville's own dispatches show him performing this work. On 20 February 1600 he told Cecil that two couriers had arrived from Spain "one after another," travelling with extraordinary speed. He had been secretly informed that the Spanish king was dead or dangerously ill. He sent an urgent messenger to England and promised another dispatch when he had obtained either "confirmation or controlment"—confirmation or information contradicting the first report. Speed did not remove the need to test what he had heard.[27]

## The arithmetician and his wife

Iago resents Othello's choice of Cassio as lieutenant. His description puts mathematical learning and a wife in three consecutive lines:

> IAGO
> Forsooth, a great **arithmetician**,
> One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
> A fellow almost damned in a **fair wife**,
> — *Othello*, 1.1.[28]

Thomas Digges (d. 1595), the mathematician and military writer, developed his father Leonard's work into *Stratioticos*, an arithmetic military treatise published in 1579 and enlarged in 1590. Michael Neill's Oxford edition connects Iago's attack on Cassio's mathematical learning with Digges's defence of military mathematics against soldiers who argued, like Iago, that experience in the field was enough.

Digges's wife, Anne St Leger, was Henry Neville's second cousin. This adds a family connection to the military-intellectual comparison. The adjoining "fair wife" may suggest Anne, though this is speculative and distinct from Neill's argument.[29]

*Stratioticos* also gives instructions for the ensign—the office Iago holds. He should guard the standard entrusted to him with a husband's care:

> to be no less careful and jealous thereof, than every honest and honorable gentleman should be of his wife.[30]

The manual connects a soldier's reputation, his responsibility for the ensign and jealousy over a wife. In the play, the ensign exploits jealousy to destroy his commander's marriage.

## The state inside the tragedy

The storm ends the immediate naval threat, but the island remains a military outpost. Colm MacCrossan's 2020 study of *Othello* and Cyprus makes this point especially forcefully. Shakespeare turns Cinthio's captain into a general and governor whose destruction deprives Cyprus of its defender. Cassio's drunken disturbance terrifies a community expecting war. Read against the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus in 1571, the collapse of command acquires a consequence beyond the household: private malice disables the island's defence.[31]

Venice continues to govern through letters after the storm. Othello entrusts Iago with papers for the pilot to carry to the Senate before he turns to inspecting the fortifications:

> OTHELLO
> These letters give, Iago, to the pilot
> And by him do my duties to the Senate.
> [He gives Iago some papers.]
> That done, I will be walking on the works.
> Repair there to me.
> — *Othello*, 3.2.[32]

Iago occupies a trusted place in the commander's official communications as well as in his private confidence. Later, Lodovico's arrival brings the order recalling Othello and appointing Cassio. Iago exploits that genuine appointment by telling Roderigo that Othello will take Desdemona to Mauritania, and that removing Cassio can prevent her departure. An authentic change of command supplies a false story with its persuasive foundation (*Othello*, 4.1–4.2).[33]

Cinthio ends by having the commander arrested in Cyprus and brought to Venice for judgment. Shakespeare's intervening scenes of dispatch and recall keep the state's communications active throughout the tragedy.[34]

## Neville's good name and an early reader of *Othello*

The connection between Neville's disgrace and *Othello* was made long before the modern authorship argument. In 1795 *The Biographical Mirrour* described his loss as "the immediate jewel of his soul, his good name," borrowing Iago's language, and imagined him echoing Cassio:

> "Reputation! reputation! reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, my reputation, my reputation!"[35]

Neville's own declaration calls the threat to his name a "blot"; his prison letter imagines washing it away in blood (Chapters 6–7). The *Mirrour* explicitly connects that injury to *Othello*.

Cinthio also brings the crime before Venetian justice: the ensign and the wounded officer travel to Venice, accusations are made, and the Moor is brought back from Cyprus for examination. The ensign's wife ultimately supplies the narrative of what occurred. Shakespeare compresses discovery into the final scene, where Emilia's testimony, Cassio's account and the papers found on Roderigo expose the deception. The distinctive addition is the use of those papers as evidence before Othello's death.[34, 36]

Stripped of command and held prisoner pending Venice's judgment, Othello asks to shape the written account of his offence:

> OTHELLO
> Soft you. A word or two before you go.
> I have done the **state** some **service**, and they
> know 't.
> No more of that. I pray you in your **letters**,
> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
> Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in **malice**.
> — *Othello*, 5.2.[37]

Writing from the Tower on 8 May 1601, Neville likewise asked that admitted fault be judged alongside his life of service. He appealed to Cecil as both friend and counsellor of state:

> I acknowledge a great fault, only I would be glad it might be conceived that there was more misfortune than **malice** in it.[38]

Later in the same letter he asks:

> Let my whole life and former carriage towards her Majesty be examined, and by that let there be some judgment made of my heart and intention towards her.[38]

In the separate defence printed as "Sir Henry Nevill's Case," he acknowledges his failure to disclose the conspiracy:

> But howsoever, I do freely and from my heart acknowledge my offence in concealing of it, and do humbly implore her Majesty's pardon and mercy for it; but protest it was not from any **malice** or discontent against the **state**, for who had more interest therein than I?[39]

He also acknowledges the conflict between public duty and his reluctance to become an accuser:

> Although I confess, that my duty to the public should have prevailed above all respect of my own private disgrace which I apprehended in it.[39]

Near the close, he recalls that he had been preparing to return to France "with a full purpose, desire, and resolution to **serve** her Majesty [...]".[39]

Both men ask that fault be weighed against intention and service. Neville had also asked Cecil on 22 April 1601 to suppress his declaration or let him restore omitted circumstances (Chapter 26).[40]

## Cuffe and Iago

In a 2024 article, the historian William D. Rubinstein identified Henry Cuffe, Essex's secretary, as a model for Iago.[41] Neville's account records an approach by Cuffe after the failed Boulogne peace conference in August 1600. Cuffe told him that Essex had heard from friends at court that Neville was likely to be blamed for the failure.

Neville went to court to investigate and found the contrary. When he told Cuffe, Cuffe replied that there had been such an intention, but circumstances had changed. He added that Essex esteemed Neville and regretted his ill treatment. Neville responded with thanks and an offer of service to Essex.[41]

The comparison with Iago concerns the role of the adviser: Cuffe brought Neville an alarming report and assurances of Essex's goodwill; Iago presents his warnings to Othello as the service of a concerned friend. In the play, that profession of concern conceals deliberate deception.[42]

## Notes and sources

1. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 7 August 1599 O.S., Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer (London, 1725), I, p. 86, page image; manuscript: The National Archives, SP 78/43, fols. 272–273. The quotation follows the printed transcription, with spelling, capitalization and light punctuation modernized. This rule applies to all Winwood quotations in the chapter; historical vocabulary and meaning are retained. The king arrives after the other participants have gone. Ken Feinstein drew attention to the shirt-and-sword comparison in a post of 1 June 2019. Neville's "le Grand" is Roger de Saint-Lary et de Termes, seigneur and later duc de Bellegarde. The designation came from his office as grand equerry of France: François de Bassompierre, *Journal de ma vie*, ed. marquis de Chantérac, I (Paris: Veuve Jules Renouard, 1870), p. 60 n. 1. Bassompierre recounts the same quarrel on pp. 75–76, but describes a wound

in the buttock and the king coming out with his robe and sword, with Bassompierre carrying a torch. Neville's account is retained here. The catalogue of BnF, Dupuy 407, fol. 147 also identifies "Mr Le Grand" as Bellegarde in its description of Henri IV's autograph instructions for settling the quarrel.

2. Shakespeare, *Othello*, 5.1, Iago's return with a light, Gratiano's description, and Iago's offer to bind Cassio's wound. The wording is present in both early printed texts: the 1622 quarto reads "in his shirt, with lights and weapons"; the 1623 Folio reads "in his shirt, with Light, and Weapons" (long s normalized). See the Text Creation Partnership transcriptions of the quarto, A11992, and Folio, A11954. Bold emphasis in comparisons identifies matching or corresponding language; it is editorial.
3. Cinthio, p. 582. The absence concerns the returning ensign's appearance in this episode. The tale does use *camiscia* elsewhere: on p. 573 Disdemona declares that she would accompany her husband even through fire in her shift. That separate occurrence does not supply the armed responder's costume in the ambush scene.
4. Edmund Tylney's Revels account, 1604–05, The National Archives, AO 3/908/13, records the King's Men performing *The Moor of Venis* at Whitehall on 1 November 1604. See Alan H. Nelson, "Account of Edmund Tylney", *Shakespeare Documented*. For Neville's release in April 1603, see *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I*, 1603–10, p. 3, April 1603 entries. Quotations from Shakespeare follow Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine's Folger reading text. The play survives in materially different texts in the 1622 quarto and 1623 Folio; see their "An Introduction to This Text".
5. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 24 September 1599 O.S., Winwood, I, pp. 106–107, especially p. 107. The continuation seeks to "break off the intelligence" between Elizabeth and the States: their communication and understanding.
6. Shakespeare, *Othello*, 2.1, Iago's closing soliloquy. The excerpt begins with the alternative to his desire to be revenged "wife for wife."
7. Neville to Winwood, London, 15 November 1600, Winwood, I, pp. 273–275, especially p. 274; Shakespeare, *Othello*, 3.3, Iago's advice to observe Desdemona. Neville's letter anticipates secret measures against "the Religion," meaning the Protestant cause.
8. Giovanni Battista Giraldi Cinthio, *De gli hecatommithi*, first part (Venice, 1580), third decade, seventh tale, pp. 571–586, scanned edition. For a modern translation, see Joseph Grossi, trans., Jessica Slights, ed., "Cinthio's Tale", *Internet Shakespeare Editions*. The source comparison here follows the Italian narrative as well as that translation.
9. Cinthio, *Hecatommithi*, pp. 575–582: reluctant disclosure and duty, pp. 575–577; demand for direct sight, p. 577; stolen and planted handkerchief, pp. 578–579; misleading conversation, pp. 579–580; sight of the handkerchief being copied, p. 581; ambush and false assistance, p. 582. News of the attack spreading through the city: p. 582.
10. Andreas Dudith to Tadeáš Hájek, Breslau, 29 January 1582, *Andreas Dudith, Epistulae*, VII: 1581–1589 (2019), letter 1115, pp. 207–209, especially p. 208, lines 17–20 and notes 8–9, public critical edition. Translation of the quoted clause is supplied here. Dudith writes from Breslau; Savile and Neville are the men he places in Venice.
11. Billingbear library catalogue, 7 November 1780, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, Cinthio entry; publicly discussed and illustrated by Ken Feinstein, "Henry Neville's Library of Shakespeare Sources".
12. Billingbear catalogue, D/EN/F37/1, entry for Sansovino, Venice, 1582. Francesco Sansovino, *Historia universale dell'origine et imperio de' Turchi* (Venice: Altobello Salicato, 1582), pp. 442, 445–447, Google Books edition. Publication in 1582 does not establish that the edition was already on sale at the time of Dudith's January letter.
13. Cinthio, pp. 572–574, 583–586; Shakespeare, *Othello*, 1.3 and 5.2. These additions are identified by direct comparison of the narratives.
14. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/70/2, sixteen Italian newsletters addressed to Thomas Savell of London by an anonymous correspondent, dated from Rome and Venice, September–

November 1591, item catalogue; PRO 30/50/70, "Additional diplomatic correspondence of Sir Henry Neville," parent catalogue. The catalogue identifies the recipient as Thomas Savell and places the packet in Neville's additional diplomatic correspondence. An English note on the reverse, beneath the Italian report headed "Di Colonia li 5 Decembre," begins "Cosen I caused yor man to stay this day" and apologizes for detaining the recipient's man beyond the appointed time. The note is Thomas Savile's to Neville: its address as "Cosen," the newsletters' address to Thomas, Neville's handwriting on the sheets and their provenance among his family papers establish the route. The leaf is identifiable by this heading and opening; no archival folio number is visible. The surviving photographic sequence also includes December datelines; the catalogue's September–November range should not be treated as a complete dating of every sheet. Newsletter translations are supplied here from unverified AI readings checked against manuscript photographs; they are not human-certified transcriptions. Bold emphasis in translations identifies correspondences in meaning, not identical original wording. Particular reading uncertainties are noted below. The catalogue controls the packet's identity, not its individual reports or their historical accuracy.

15. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy," pp. 439, 442–444: relationship, travels, Italian contacts, books and return to England. The newsletter information comes separately from the National Archives catalogue.
16. Shakespeare, *Othello*, 1.2, Folger Shakespeare Library, ed. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine. All Shakespeare extracts follow the Folger reading text and retain its lineation; editorial emphasis is added in comparisons.
17. Shakespeare, *Othello*, 1.3. The extended comparison of the islands' defences contains Folio material absent from the 1622 quarto; the draft does not use that difference to date the play or identify a particular report as its source.
18. TNA, PRO 30/50/70/2, newsletter headed Venice, 1 November 1591, near the end of its report of fighting involving Navarre and the League; catalogue. Abbreviations are expanded in square brackets. A dark mark obscures part of the word provisionally read as "assignata"; [assignata?] marks the uncertain reconstruction of that word, and [appointed?] carries the uncertainty into the translation. "Ha per certo" introduces what the writer treats as certain, not a fact independently established here. The distinction between the detailed battle story and the more limited proposition follows this provisional reading.
19. TNA, PRO 30/50/70/2, Venice, 15 November 1591, embedded Constantinople report; and Venice, 27 December 1591, report citing Constantinople letters of 2 and 12 November; catalogue. The October day in the first embedded dateline is obscured and is not adopted. In the second report, the precise verb describing the rumoured fleet's departure remains unsettled; only the clear contrast with the lack of diligent Arsenal work is used. Neither passage supplies the Senate's 107/140/200 figures or an explicit Cyprus destination. The longer quotation follows the order to supply the Arsenal through the production of galley hulls and equipment and the forecast of the fleet's sailing. "Black Sea" translates "Mar Maggiore." Cicala is the name in the report; no further identification is assumed.
20. TNA, PRO 30/50/70/2, Venice, 4 October 1591, report naming Lesdiguières; catalogue. The destination is provisionally read as [Provence?]; no independent human transcription of that word has been identified. For the ensign's feigned return after the ambush, compare Cinthio, *Hecatommithi* (1580), p. 582. The translation follows the provisional manuscript reading through the feigned movement, the opponent's response and the secret return; casualty totals and independent authentication of the manoeuvre are not claimed.
21. Shakespeare, *Othello*, 2.1. The scene also uses gunfire to identify a friendly arrival before its passengers are known. The gunfire functions as an audible arrival signal within the news sequence.
22. TNA, PRO 30/50/70/2: Antwerp, 7 December, embedded London report dated 17 of the preceding month; and the passage beginning with Lisbon letters of the last day of October, preceding the Cologne heading of 12 December; catalogue. In the second passage, *le quali davano nova* follows the mention of the eighteen ships, the natural antecedent adopted in the discus-

sion, but the feminine plural can also refer back to the letters. It does not explicitly claim eyewitness observation of the losses. The totals are the newsletters' reported figures, not independently established casualty returns. The first passage does not name its fleet; the second explicitly names the New Spain and Tierra Firme fleet. Their counts are not reconciled here. Both passages belong to the northern reporting sequence in the photographed packet; neither is presented as a Venetian dateline. "In a storm" translates "per fortuna" in its maritime sense.

23. Juraj Kittler, "Venetian Control of Information Flows with Constantinople and the Soft Power of a Renaissance State," *The Historical Journal* 68 (2025), 259–284, especially pp. 269–270, article. Kittler supplies the historical context; the comparison with Neville's packet is made here.

24. Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (London, 1603), account of Selimus II, pp. 845–846, Bavarian State Library copy. The eighty galleys and thirty galliots occur on p. 845; the Rhodes rendezvous and combined fleet of two hundred on p. 846. For discussion of Knolles in relation to *Othello*, see Colm MacCrossan's article cited below.

25. Knolles, *Generall Historie*, pp. 575 and 579, in the account of Solyman's campaign against Rhodes. The Grand Master detects the diversion on p. 575; the councillor's reassurance on p. 579 is followed by the siege, so the two judgements have different outcomes. For Shakespeare's variant texts, compare the TCP transcriptions of Q1, A11992, and F1, A11954. The seven-line passage from "For that it stands not in such Warrelike brace" through "To wake, and wage a danger profitlesse" is present in F1 and absent from Q1. This is a structural comparison, not a claim of identical wording.

26. Sansovino, *Historia universale*, pp. 442 and 447; Knolles, unpaginated list headed "The names of the Authors whom we especially used," at the end of "To the Reader," naming *Franciscus Sansouinus*. This acknowledgement identifies the author, not a particular Sansovino title or edition.

27. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 20 February 1599 O.S. (1600 in modern year numbering), Winwood, I, pp. 153–154, especially p. 153. The report is expressly uncertain. "Controlment" retains the historical sense of contradiction or refutation.

28. Shakespeare, *Othello*, 1.1, Iago's opening account of Cassio's appointment. The quotation preserves the Folger reading and verse lines. Michael Neill, ed., *Othello, the Moor of Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 197, note to 1.1.18, connects the passage with Digges's epistle "To the Reader" in *Stratioticos*, sig. B2, and refers to Paul A. Jorgensen, *Shakespeare's Military World*, pp. 113–115. Neill establishes the military-intellectual comparison, not an identification of Cassio as Digges. The further suggestion here concerns the adjoining "fair wife" and Anne St Leger's relationship to Neville; the play does not name the couple.

29. Leonard and Thomas Digges, *An Arithmeticall Militare Treatise, Named Stratioticos* (London: Henry Bynneman, 1579), digitized edition; enlarged as *An Arithmetical Warlike Treatise Named Stratioticos* (London: Richard Field, 1590), digitized edition. For Anne's parentage and marriage, see "St. Leger, Sir Warham," *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 50, p. 168. The second-cousin relationship follows the descent through the brothers George Neville, Lord Bergavenny, and Sir Edward Neville: George–Ursula–Anne; Edward–Henry Neville of Billingbear–Henry Neville the ambassador. See *The Complete Peerage*, vol. 1, p. 35, and the DNB lives of Sir Edward Neville and Henry Neville. This is a calculation from the compiled genealogy. No description of Anne's appearance is asserted.

30. Digges, *Stratioticos* (1590), chapter VII, "The office and duty of the ensign of a band," p. 93, printed page. Spelling and capitalization are modernized; the wording and comparison with a wife are retained. The wife in this instruction is generic, distinct from the proposed personal allusion in Iago's speech.

31. Colm MacCrossan, " 'What, in a Town of War … to Manage Private and Domestic Quarrel?': Othello and the Tragedy of Cyprus," *Shakespeare* 16.3 (2020), pp. 239–257, DOI; open accepted manuscript. MacCrossan's interpretation establishes the importance of the military and political setting; the application to Neville is the argument of this chapter.

32. Shakespeare, *Othello*, 3.2.

33. Shakespeare, *Othello*, 4.1 and 4.2.

34. Cinthio, *Hecatommithi* (1580), pp. 584–586; edition. The Moor is taken from Cyprus to Venice after accusations; the ensign's wife tells the story after her husband's death. The dispatch, recall and final papers extend the play's communications; no particular newsletter is proposed as the source of those incidents.

35. *The Biographical Mirrour, Comprising a Series of Ancient and Modern English Portraits* (London: S. and E. Harding, 1795), "Sir Henry Neville," p. 93, visually checked in the Google-digitized New York Public Library copy. The words quoted here preserve the 1795 entry's wording and punctuation, not a modern Shakespeare edition. Its imagined application to Neville is reception evidence, not a record of Neville speaking Cassio's lines or evidence of the play's authorship. Compare Shakespeare, *Othello* 2.3 (Cassio's lament) and 3.3 (Iago on the good name as the soul's jewel).

36. Shakespeare, *Othello*, 5.2, Roderigo's papers, Cassio's account and the proposed report to Venice.

37. Shakespeare, *Othello*, 5.2, Othello's last speech, following Lodovico's announcement that Cassio now rules Cyprus and Othello will remain a close prisoner. "Speak of me as I am" is the First Folio reading (1623); the first quarto (1622) reads "Speake of them as they are," referring back to the deeds. See Folger's textual notes, 5.2.402.

38. Neville to Cecil, Tower of London, 8 May 1601, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp. 193–194, manuscript reference 86.37, printed letter. The acknowledgement of fault and phrase about malice occur on p. 193; the appeal to his whole life and former conduct continues on p. 194. The quotations follow the printed calendar.

39. "Sir Henry Nevill's Case," Winwood, I, pp. 302–304, especially pp. 303–304. This is a separate document from the letter of 8 May. The volume's marginal year 1600 reflects old-style dating in this part of the sequence; the defence concerns the Essex conspiracy of 1601. The quotations from the Case follow the printed pages, with spelling, capitalization and light punctuation modernized. "State" is the word printed on p. 303; it is not supplied by paraphrase. The public-duty sentence and the phrase about serving her Majesty are on p. 304.

40. Neville to Robert Cecil, Chelsea, 22 April 1601, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 86/1; also *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp.175–176. Chapter 26 quotes the plea from the document and discusses the probably intended March declaration. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 5.2; *Othello*, 5.2.

41. William D. Rubinstein, "Why William Shakespeare Did Not Write the Works Attributed to Him, and Why Sir Henry Neville Did," *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 38.2 (2024), pp. 258–272, especially p. 263, section 2, DOI; open article. Rubinstein explicitly identifies Cuffe as the basis for Iago. For Neville's own account, see his declaration to Egerton, Buckhurst, Nottingham and Cecil, 2 March 1601, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth*, 1601–03, pp. 5–8, item 11, especially p. 5. The description follows the printed calendar's account, not a new transcription of the manuscript.

42. Cinthio, pp. 575–577; Shakespeare, *Othello*, 3.3, from Iago's questions about Cassio's participation in the courtship through his warnings about Desdemona. The inherited device and its dramatic elaboration are distinguished in the text.

# Measure for Measure: The Prison and the Pardon

Chapter 28

## Prison on stage

The prison or the street outside it occupies more than a third of the dialogue in *Measure for Measure*, a much larger share than in any of the nine earlier plays charted here.[1]

Neville left the Tower in April 1603 after nearly two years of confinement.[2] *Measure for Measure* is usually dated to late 1603 or 1604; its first recorded performance was at Whitehall on 26 December 1604.[3] Claudio, condemned to death by Angelo, waits in prison while his sister Isabella pleads for his life. The play's concentration on confinement belongs to the period immediately following Neville's release.

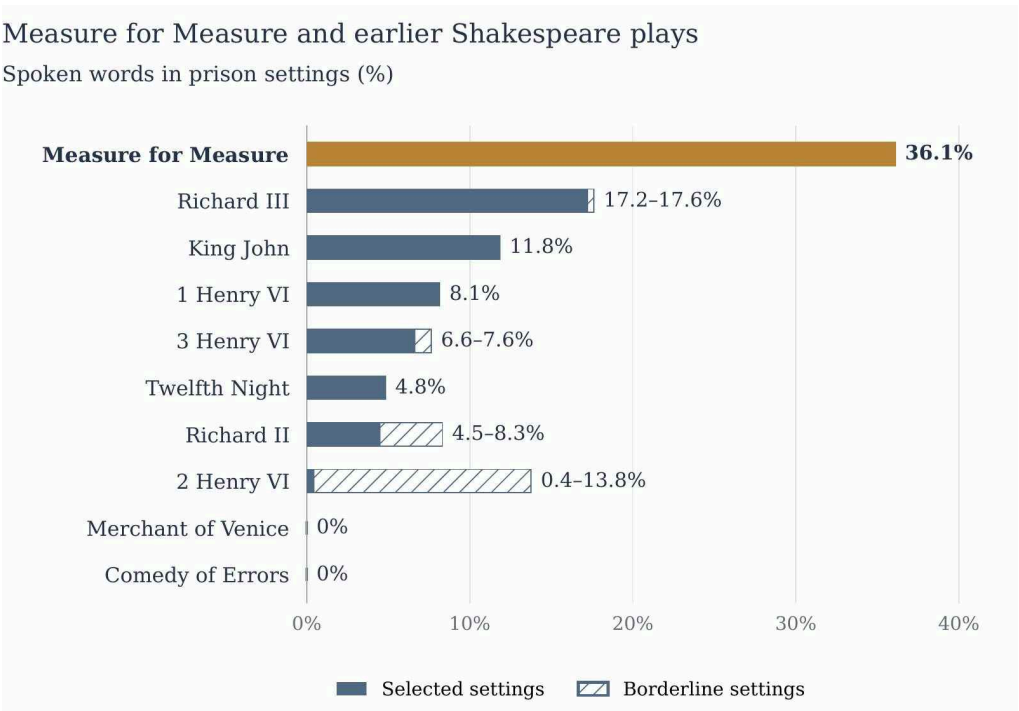



*Figure 28.1. Prison settings in Measure for Measure and nine earlier plays. Solid bars show selected settings; hatching adds borderline locations. Percentages count spoken words in whole scenes.*[1]

## A friar inside the prison

On 16 September 1599, Neville explained to Cecil how a former priest could gain trust while serving as an agent in Spain:

> yet for his more safety, and to avoid suspicion in his abode there, he will take upon him the **habit**, and for need the **function of a priest**, which will also give him credit and trust there, and means thereby to do the better service.[4]

The Duke of Vienna likewise uses religious disguise to observe others unsuspected. He leaves Angelo in charge and pretends to depart, but remains among his subjects. He asks Friar Thomas for the clothing and instruction that will make his impersonation convincing:

> DUKE
> [...]
> I will, as 'twere a brother of your order,
> Visit both prince and people. Therefore I prithee
> Supply me with the **habit**, and **instruct me**
> How I may formally in person bear
> **Like a true friar**. [...]
> — *Measure for Measure*, 1.3.

As a friar, the Duke gains access to the prison and the confidence accorded to a spiritual adviser. He arranges to overhear Claudio and Isabella while concealed.[5] Neville's report likewise pairs the habit with, if necessary, the priest's function. Religious trust provides access for intelligence work.

Shakespeare inherited the story of a corrupt magistrate and a sister's plea for her condemned brother from Cinthio and Whetstone. Neither Cinthio's novella nor Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* gives its ruler the Duke's friar disguise. Whetstone includes a preacher attending prisoners and a rescued man returning in disguise, but these are separate characters.[6]

A book listed in the 1780 Billingbear library catalogue offers a political explanation for a ruler's disguise. Giovanni Botero's *Della ragion di stato* (1589) describes Aripert, king of the Lombards, going in disguise to discover what people said against him and his ministers. Botero explains:

> It is necessary that princes either hear or see matters themselves, because all the other methods are more or less corruptible, like the officials themselves.[7]

This gives a close comparison with the Duke's purpose in watching Angelo: "Hence shall we see, / If power change purpose, what our seemers be" (*Measure for Measure*, 1.3). The disguise allows the ruler to test an official's conduct for himself. Botero's discussion places that observation within the practical problem of keeping magistrates faithful to their duties.[8]

Another operation in Neville's dispatches shows religious trust at work. On 25 January 1600, Neville told Cecil that he had sent a friar to Rome after arranging for him to gain the confidence of suspected Scottish conspirators:

> In this confidence (he having governed himself discreetly, and seeming very zealous and passionate in the common cause) they have opened themselves in general terms very far unto him ...

Their trust produced letters of recommendation and access to a cipher. Neville also instructed the friar to offer to carry their correspondence:

> I have willed him to offer his means of conveying their letters, which they will never distrust; and thereby their letters will fall into my hands.[9]

## The Provost and the Duke's letter

Shakespeare calls the prison keeper the Provost, where Cinthio has *il prigioniere* and Whetstone "gaoler." The *Oxford English Dictionary* places the play's use under the judicial subsense concerning the apprehension, custody and punishment of offenders. Its explanation links this subsense to the French *prévôt* and his powers of summary jurisdiction.[10, 11]

Neville used the word in a dispatch from France of 30 May 1599, reporting the punishment planned for French soldiers implicated in an enterprise against Charlemont:

> the King has sent a **Provost** thither to do round justice upon them, and to proceed to their **execution**.[12]

The Provost's question to Angelo makes the corresponding responsibility explicit:

> PROVOST
> Is it your will Claudio shall **die tomorrow**?
> — *Measure for Measure*, 2.2.[13]

In both passages the officer is responsible for carrying out an execution.

At a knock in the night, the Provost hopes for "some pardon or reprieve" for Claudio, but the visitor is the disguised Duke. A later knock brings Angelo's messenger with an order pressing the execution. The friar's assurances cannot overcome the Provost's fear of disobeying. The Duke therefore produces a letter announcing his own return:

> DUKE, [as Friar] [...]
> since I see you fearful, that neither my coat, integrity,
> nor persuasion can with ease attempt you, I will
> go further than I meant, to pluck all fears out of
> you. Look you, sir, here is the **hand and seal** of the
> Duke. [He shows the Provost a paper.] You know the
> character, I doubt not, and the signet is not strange
> to you.
> PROVOST I know them both.
> — *Measure for Measure*, 4.2.[14]

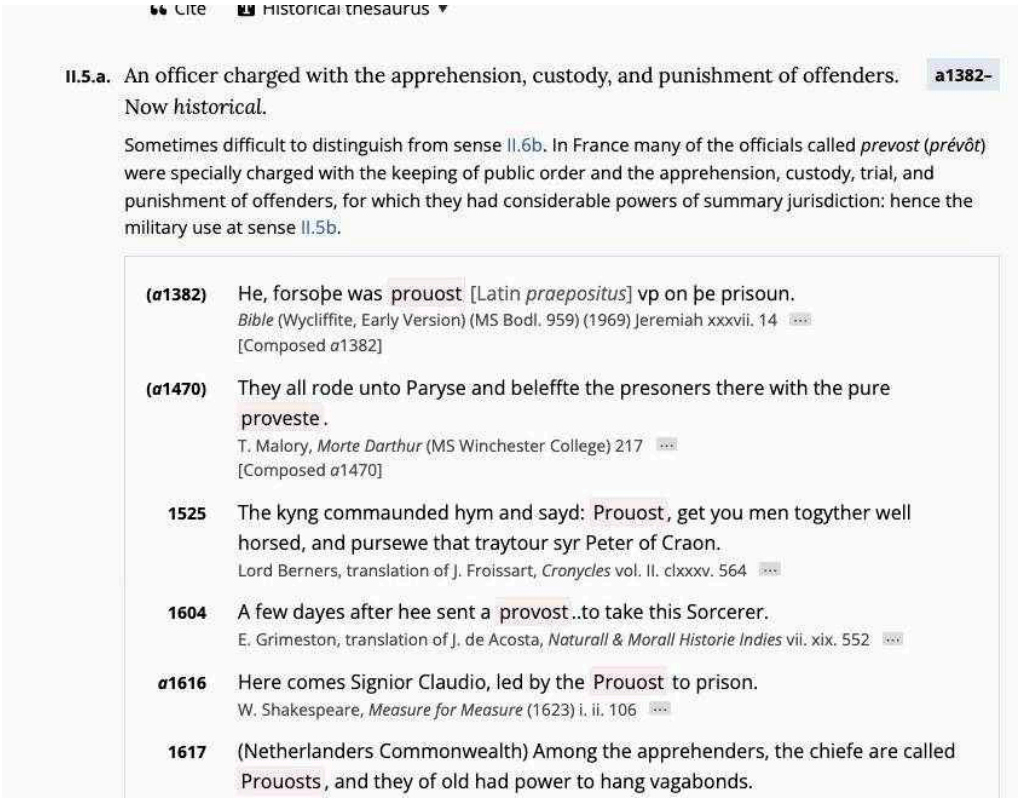



**Figure 28.2:** Oxford English Dictionary, "provost," subsense II.5.a. The entry explains the French judicial usage and includes its citation from Measure for Measure, describing Claudio being led to prison.

The Provost recognizes both handwriting and seal. Where the habit has failed, the Duke offers documentary assurance that he will return to uphold the officer's actions.

On 19 November 1599, Neville used the same formula for the representative who would collect his English pay and allowances. Before leaving, he had:

> authorized one under my **hand and seal** to demand and receive my entertainment and other allowances

"Entertainment" means pay or maintenance. Neville's hand and seal authorize a representative; the Duke's authenticate the letter announcing his return.[15]

## The language of the hearings

Three expressions recurring in Neville's letters appear together in the hearing before Escalus in *Measure for Measure* 2.1:

| Expression in Neville's letters | Uses | Letters |
|---|---|---|
| **I beseech your honour** | 33 | 28 |
| **In my poor opinion** | 9 | 8 |
| **So for this time** | 9 | 9 |

The counts come from 162 English letters.[16] Pompey appeals to Escalus:

> POMPEY, [to Escalus] **I beseech your Honor**, ask me.
> — *Measure for Measure*, 2.1.

He then challenges the suppression of prostitution in the language of modest advice:

> POMPEY Truly, sir, **in my poor opinion**, they will to 't
> then. If your Worship will take order for the drabs
> and the knaves, you need not to fear the bawds.
> — *Measure for Measure*, 2.1.

Escalus closes the encounter:

> ESCALUS
> [...] shall have you whipped. **So, for this time**, Pompey,
> fare you well.
> — *Measure for Measure*, 2.1.[17]

Pompey gives an impertinent argument the form of respectful counsel; Escalus follows a threat with courteous leave-taking. "In my poor opinion" appears in no other play in the selected comparison through 1616, though it is widespread in printed prose. The scene turns the familiar language of petitions and correspondence into comic exchanges between a magistrate and a bawd.[16]

The play's final hearing turns from petition to denial. In his account of the Essex affair, Neville marked the end of an encounter by denying any subsequent communication:

> **After which, I never spake with** them, **nor heard from** them;

Angelo makes a closely matching denial of further dealings with Mariana:

> ANGELO
> [...] Since which time of five years
> **I never spake with** her, saw her, **nor heard from** her,
> Upon my faith and honor.
> — *Measure for Measure*, 5.1.

The matching syntax dates a last encounter and denies any subsequent conversation or message. Angelo's denial is false because Mariana has secretly taken Isabella's place, though he believes he has slept with Isabella.[18]

## "Liberty of the prison"

On 12 July 1601, following Neville's petition, the Privy Council instructed Sir John Peyton, Lieutenant of the Tower:

> that he may have such **liberty of the prison** as that his wife may have access unto him

Anne Neville could visit at convenient times; two or three business visitors a day could also confer with him about his estate, especially the means of paying his fine. The order was Peyton's warrant to admit them.[19]

In *Measure for Measure*, the Provost uses the same expression when describing Barnardine:

> PROVOST He will hear none. He hath evermore had the
> **liberty of the prison**; give him leave to escape
> hence, he would not.
> — *Measure for Measure*, 4.2.[20]

## Waiting for mercy

Writing from the Tower on 6 January 1602, Neville described selling his plate, horses, cattle and even household goods and bedding to meet his expenses. He told Cecil:

> And if my **imprisonment** continue, I cannot but expect the uttermost of **misery**.[21]

On 11 March 1602, Neville told Cecil that he had raised his offer for a pardon from £4,000 to £5,000. The payments would leave scarcely £50 a year for himself,

his wife and eight children. Imprisonment itself cost over £150 a year, consuming money that could otherwise reach the Queen.[22]

For Neville, continued imprisonment and the proposed price of freedom both threatened his family's livelihood. Asking Cecil to ease the terms, he recalled:

> the **rigour of the law**, according as your honour did deliver it yesterday.

Lucio's account of Claudio's predicament uses the corresponding expression:

> LUCIO
> [...]
> Falls into forfeit. He arrests him on it,
> And follows close the **rigor of the statute**
> To make him an example. All hope is gone
> Unless you have the grace by your fair prayer
> To soften Angelo. [...]
> — *Measure for Measure*, 1.4.

Cinthio already gives Juriste the "rigour" of a harsh law. Neville's letter gives that legal concept a prisoner's urgency: the cost to his household. Like Lucio's appeal, it asks what might move authority to relax a punishment.[23]

The waiting brought further suffering. By April 1602, the Queen had accepted £5,000 in principle, but the securities remained disputed. On 3 April Neville reported that his wife had lost one child and feared losing another.[24]

In May 1602, Neville put the cost of confinement most starkly:

> My **state is wholly decayed** and my **health** of late **much impaired**. There is little left but my **life**, which, if it please God and her Majesty, **I am willing to preserve**.[25]

Claudio brings the same burdens together when he recoils from death:

> CLAUDIO
> [...]
> The weariest and most loathed worldly **life**
> That age, **ache, penury, and imprisonment**
> Can lay on nature **is a paradise**
> To what we fear of death.
> — *Measure for Measure*, 3.1.[26]

Neville sought release from confinement; Claudio pleads to escape execution. Neville's letters describe three of the burdens Claudio compresses into a line: ache, penury and imprisonment. Neville still wanted life, and time to remove the "blemish and blot" upon his reputation.[25]

In January 1603 Neville was still thanking Cecil for efforts to obtain his liberty; release came in April.[24, 2] The play that followed gives that waiting a dramatic urgency. Access to a prisoner, an officer's trust, and the arrival of a letter can decide whether mercy comes in time.

## Notes and sources

1. Calculation from the Folger Shakespeare XML editions, public reading texts, counting spoken word tokens and excluding speaker names, directions and apparatus. In *Measure for Measure*, scenes 2.3, 3.1, 4.2 and 4.3 contribute 5,539 words; 3.2, the street before the prison, adds 2,154: 7,693 of 21,301 words, or 36.1%. The same whole-scene method is applied to the nine comparators, with traditional editorial locations checked against the dialogue. Tower palace and fortress scenes are included. Hatched extensions mark alternative location classifications, not statistical uncertainty; the large extension for *2 Henry VI* includes 3.2, adjoining Gloucester's murder in custody. Zero means no qualifying staged location, not no imprisonment in the story. This selected comparison excludes later plays, including *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*; it is not a complete-canon ranking or a measure of performance duration.
2. Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1601–1603* (London, 1870), p. 45, Chamberlain's letter of 27 May 1601, and p. 91, the Tower officer's entry recording Neville's arrival on 1 May, public scan. Neville's Tower confinement followed supervised custody at Chelsea. Chamberlain reported that the term had passed without his arraignment; Neville should not be described as a prisoner sentenced to death. For the financial petitions, see the letter of 11 March 1602 and the Salisbury calendar entries cited under "Waiting for mercy". For his April 1603 release, see Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, James I, 1603–1610* (London, 1857), vol. 1, item 18, 10 April 1603, Council report.
3. Folger Shakespeare Library, "Historical Background," *Measure for Measure*, section 1, on the Whitehall performance recorded in the Revels accounts. The performance date is not a demonstrated date of first composition. The surviving printed text first appeared in the 1623 Folio: Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine, "An Introduction to This Text". For the usual composition date, 1604 or late 1603, see the Royal Shakespeare Company, "Dates and Sources".
4. Neville to Cecil, 16 September 1599, in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, vol. 1 (London, 1725), pp. 102–105, quotation p. 104. Winwood describes the man as "of the Religion", that is, Protestant. This proposed agent for Spain is not identified with the friar whom Neville reported dispatching to Rome in January 1600. Shakespeare quotations follow the Folger edition, retaining its line breaks. Ellipses mark omissions; bold type identifies the words carrying the verbal or conceptual comparison. Winwood quotations have modernized spelling, capitalization and light punctuation, preserving vocabulary and meaning. His printed orthography is not treated as manuscript spelling. Other historical quotations are identified by their witness; the short quotation from the letter of 11 March 1602 has spelling modernized after image collation.
5. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 1.3, 2.3 and 3.1. The opening request to the Provost invokes the friar's charitable office; the concealed overhearing occurs in 3.1. Christy Desmet's "A Modern Perspective" reads the disguise as political surveillance and stresses religious function as well as dress.
6. Cinthio, *Hecatommithi*, VIII.5, Venice edition of 1574; Whetstone, *Promos and Cassandra*, Part I, 2.6 (the printed scene number; the sequence is sometimes counted as 2.7), prisoners accompanied by a preacher; Part II, 5.1, Andrugio's return in disguise (4.2 presents his earlier life in exile). Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 1.3, 2.3, 3.1 and 4.2–4.3. The comparison is between these particular treatments, not an assertion that Shakespeare invented the general device of a disguised ruler.
7. Giovanni Botero, *Della ragion di stato* (Venice: Gioliti, 1589), book I, "Del contenere i Magistrati in Ufficio," especially p. 38. Translation supplied here from the Italian: "egli è necessario, che i Prencipi, ò ascoltino, ò veggano essi medesimi le cose: perche tutti gli altri modi sono più, ò manco corrottibili, come gli Ufficiali istessi." The Italian quotation normalizes u/v. The 1780 Billingbear library catalogue lists the Venice, Gioliti, 1589 edition. That later entry does not date the book's acquisition or establish Neville's personal reading.

8. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 1.3, Folger Shakespeare Library; slash marks the line break. Botero, book I, pp. 36–39. The comparison concerns the political use of concealed observation; it does not establish a direct borrowing from Botero.
9. Neville to Cecil, 25 January 1599/1600 O.S., Winwood, *Memorials*, vol. 1, pp. 146–147. The printed heading explicitly says O.S.; the year is 1600 in modern year numbering. Quotations from pp. 146 and 147 respectively, with spelling and capitalization modernized. The report distinguishes gaining confidence, obtaining a cipher and offering to convey correspondence. It does not identify this friar as the proposed former priest discussed in September 1599.
10. *Oxford English Dictionary*, "provost (n.), sense II.5.a", September 2026, accessed 7 October 2026 (citation supplied by the OED). This judicial subsense concerns apprehension, custody and punishment; its explanation describes French officials' summary jurisdiction and points separately to military usage at II.5.b. It cites *Measure for Measure* 1.2. The screenshot was taken directly from the OED entry.
11. A contextual review of surface-form occurrences, including early spelling variants, in the dramatic corpus described by Pervez Rizvi distinguishes judicial custody from military, civic, household and fencing senses. The word is not unique to Shakespeare: Greene's *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* orders a provost to take Fabius to the Marshalsea, and Chapman's *May Day* connects a provost with threatened whipping. Military provost-marshals provide additional punitive uses. These examples prevent a claim of exclusive usage; the comparison here is the specific judicial sense, independently identified by the OED, and its French setting in Neville's dispatch. Exact totals for that narrow sense are not used because some institutional classifications remain debatable.
12. Neville to Cecil, 30 May 1599 O.S., Winwood, *Memorials*, vol. 1, p. 42. The report concerns French soldiers implicated in Count Maurice's enterprise against Charlemont. *Round* indicates summary or decisive proceeding. The comparison concerns a French judicial officer ordered to proceed to execution; other ecclesiastical, civic and educational senses of *provost* are distinct.
13. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 2.2, the Provost's question to Angelo about Claudio's execution.
14. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 4.2, the Duke's production of a letter announcing his return within two days. A handwritten, sealed order already appears in Cinthio's *Epitia* (Venice, 1583), Act III, pp. 50–51; the comparison concerns Neville's use of the formula.
15. Neville to Cecil, 19 November 1599 O.S., Winwood, *Memorials*, vol. 1, p. 130. The authorized representative was to demand and receive it and pursue his affairs in England.
16. Original recurring-phrase study, 13 September 2026: 162 English letters, 127,352 analysis tokens; contiguous surface sequences, capitalization ignored, with honor/honour and declared spelling equivalents. The three counts are 33 uses in 28 letters, 9 in 8, and 9 in 9, respectively. They are overlapping features of one scene, not independent proofs of authorship. In 38 Shakespeare plays and 254 other dramatic entries assigned dates through 1616, "I beseech your honor" occurs in four Shakespeare plays and three others; "in my poor opinion" in *Measure for Measure* alone; "so for this time" in that play and *1 Edward IV*. EarlyPrint searches of publications through 1616 returned 47, 49 and 41 records respectively, including editions and repeated material, not independent authors. The dramatic corpus is described by Pervez Rizvi. Neville examples are printed in Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 16–17 (closing formula), 44–45 (request), and 47–50 (opinion); counts use modernized research text and make no claim about manuscript spelling.
17. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 2.1, Folger text. Pompey speaks both the request and the opinion; Escalus supplies the dismissal. Quoted line breaks are preserved. The chapter compares the scene's use of a correspondence register, not three exclusive verbal matches.
18. "Sir Henry Nevill's Case," relating to the Essex rising of 1601, Winwood, *Memorials*, I, p. 302. The Case is distinct from Neville's separate declaration of 2 March. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 5.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. Angelo's denial is false within the play; the comparison concerns the form of the denial, not the truth of Neville's account.

19. John Roche Dasent, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, vol. 32, 1601–1604 (London, 1907), p. 64, order of 12 July 1601 to Sir John Peyton, British History Online. Spelling modernized. The order permits two or three necessary business visitors in a day, in addition to the stated provision for Lady Neville.
20. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 4.2, the Provost's account of Barnardine. The shared phrase identifies qualified liberty while remaining in custody; the specific privileges in the two passages differ. Henry Arthington, *The seduction of Arthington by Hacket* (London, 1592), passage beginning "But to speake of some particular favours," TCP A21681: "the libertie of the prison. That all my friends may come and see me." This independent usage explains the concession; the Council order is wording about Neville, not a letter authored by him.
21. Neville to Cecil, 6 January 1601/2, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 84/45, first text leaf; the quotation was checked against the manuscript image, with spelling and punctuation modernized. The abridged entry in *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, XII (1910), pp. 6–7, records the sale of plate, horses, cattle and bedding but omits the quoted sentence. The original uses the old-style year 1601; the date here is 1602 in modern year numbering.
22. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 11 March 1601/2, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 85/76; calendared in *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. 12 (London, 1910), pp. 72–73, printed calendar. The sums and family circumstances are Neville's representation of his financial position. His letter explains that an indisposition of his head and eyes prevented him from writing it in his own hand. The annual cost of more than £150 is his stated expense under continued confinement, not a general tariff asserted for every Tower prisoner.
23. Neville to Cecil, 11 March 1601/2, Cecil Papers 85/76, first text page, transcription by John O'Donnell. The calendar at vol. 12, pp. 72–73, abridges this part of the letter. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 1.4. *Rigour/rigor* is a correspondence in legal register and application, not a claim that Neville coined the word. Cinthio's novella VIII.5 already has "rigore della dura Legge" in Juriste's response to Epitia; see Cinthio, *Hecatommithi*, VIII.5, Venice, 1574. The earlier *Comedy of Errors* 1.1 also speaks of rigorous statutes. Neither the word nor the concept begins in this play.
24. *Calendar of the Salisbury Manuscripts*, vol. 12, pp. 95–96 and p. 589. These are paraphrases of the published calendar.
25. Neville to Cecil, May 1602, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 93/44, checked against the manuscript image and the *Calendar of the Salisbury Manuscripts*, XII, pp. 151–152, which dates the letter 11 May. Spelling and punctuation modernized. The sentence continues with his hope to "wipe and wear out this blemish and blot" upon him in the Queen's eyes. Neville's appeal concerns preservation of health and life under confinement; unlike Claudio, he was not under sentence of death.
26. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 3.1, Claudio's response to Isabella. "Penury" is the Second Folio reading (1632), adopted by Folger; the First Folio (1623) prints "periury." See Folger's textual notes, 3.1.145.

# All's Well That Ends Well: A Promise in Writing

Chapter 29

Writing to Cecil from Paris on 24 April 1600, Henry Neville reported that Henri IV had promised:

> in **writing under his hand** unto Mademoiselle d'Entragues, **to marry her if she proved with child** within six months after he enjoyed her.[1]

Henri was preparing to marry Marie de' Medici and wanted the written promise back. D'Entragues retained it, Neville explained:

> for the justification of her honour; that it might appear, she yielded not to him upon any base or dishonest consideration, but upon such a direct promise of marriage.[1]

Henri's own letter to d'Entragues, dated 21 April 1600 and surviving in a manuscript copy, confirms his demand for the return of the written promise.[2] Neville reports that she eventually surrendered it in exchange for financial provision.[1]

The fuller promise printed in Henri's collected correspondence required her to become pregnant within six months and subsequently give birth to a son. The six-month deadline concerned conception, not the birth.[1]

In *All's Well That Ends Well*, a written condition concerning a child likewise stands between Helen and Bertram's acceptance of their marriage. Helen has cured the King of France, who requires Bertram to marry her. After the marriage, Bertram refuses to live with her and leaves for Florence. He sends her a letter setting conditions he believes impossible to fulfil:

> HELEN
> Look on his **letter**, madam; here's my passport.
> [She reads.] When thou canst get the ring upon
> my finger, which never shall come off, and **show me**
> **a child begotten of thy body that I am father to**, then
> **call me husband**. But in such a "then" I write a
> "never."[3]

The main narrative source is Boccaccio's story of Giletta of Narbonne in the *Decameron* (III.9); William Painter's English retelling in *The Palace of Pleasure* is a possible source as well. But the letter is Shakespeare's addition.

In Boccaccio's tale, Giletta sends two knights to tell her husband that, if he is staying away because of her, she will leave. He answers with his conditions, and they return to report them. Painter preserves this exchange. Shakespeare keeps the messengers but adds a letter for them to carry: the husband's answer now

exists in his own writing, which Helen can later produce *as proof* before the King of France.[4]

## What Shakespeare changes

The ring and the wife's substitution for another woman are already in Boccaccio and Painter. The relevant changes concern how she establishes her claim.[4] The third column sets Neville's report beside them.[1]

| Boccaccio and Painter | *All's Well That Ends Well* | Henri IV and d'Entragues (Neville's report, April 1600) |
|---|---|---|
| The husband gives his conditions orally to messengers. | Bertram sends Helen a letter. | The King of France gives d'Entragues a written promise of marriage. |
| The wife returns at her husband's feast. | Helen confronts Bertram with his letter before the King of France. | D'Entragues keeps the written promise to justify her honour; the King of France tries to recover it. |
| She brings her two sons, already born. | Helen claims that she is pregnant. | The promise depends on her proving "with child" within six months. |

In the play's final scene, Helen produces Bertram's letter before the king (*All's Well That Ends Well*, 5.3):

> HELEN
> O, my good lord, when I was like this maid,
> I found you wondrous kind. There is your ring,
> And, look you, here's your **letter**. [She takes out a paper.] This it says:
> When from my finger you can get this ring
> And are by me **with child**, etc. This is done.
> Will you be mine now you are doubly won?[5]

Helen does not bring a baby to this scene: she says she is pregnant. When she reads Bertram's letter back to him, its original demand to "show me a child" becomes "are by me **with child**." Shakespeare thus replaces the source tale's two sons with a claim of pregnancy, expressed in the same terms as Neville's report of Henri's promise: "if she proved **with child**."[1], [5]

## Marseilles

Neville's April dispatch also reports that Marie de' Medici was expected to pass through Marseilles on her way from Italy to marry Henri. In *All's Well* 4.4, Helen learns that the King of France is in Marseilles and goes to find him. Her journey

to find the king at Marseilles is absent from both Boccaccio's tale and Painter's retelling.[6], [7]

## Notes and sources

1. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 24 April 1600, in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, vol. I (London, 1725), p.176. Printed report. Winwood quotations have modernized spelling and capitalization. The complete paragraph continues through the surrender of the writing, pensions and payment, and resumed meetings. Neville closes by calling these "petty matters" a response to the postscript of Cecil's letter. The fuller promise is printed in Jules Berger de Xivrey, ed., *Recueil des lettres missives de Henri IV*, V (Paris, 1850), p.226, editorial note: printed text.
2. Henri IV to Mademoiselle d'Entragues, Fontainebleau, 21 April 1600, in Jules Berger de Xivrey, ed., *Recueil des lettres missives de Henri IV*, vol. V (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1850), p.224. The complete letter is paraphrased from the printed page. Its date follows the French calendar (11 April in the English calendar). The edition identifies its witness as a copy in the Bibliothèque nationale, Fonds Du Puy, MS407, f.36r; the reference is reproduced as given in that edition.
3. William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, 3.2, Folger Shakespeare Library text. The play quotation preserves Folger's lineation. Bold type marks the corresponding document, pregnancy and marital claim; this is a structural comparison, not a claim of identical phrasing.
4. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, III.9, particularly paragraphs 30–31 and 58–60, Brown University, Decameron Web, Italian text; William Painter, *The Palace of Pleasure*, first tome (1566), novel 38, "Giletta of Narbonne," in the edition reproduced by Project Gutenberg, pp.171–179 of that edition.
5. Shakespeare, *All's Well*, 5.3, Folger text, Helen's return and production of the letter. Bertram's following reply remains conditional upon a clear explanation.
6. Same dispatch, heading and preceding news, p.175. Neville reports uncertainty over the Princess of Florence's arrival, the intended passage through Marseilles and her dowry. This is the context of his d'Entragues report; the play's French and Florentine locations are also inherited from its narrative sources.
7. Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, 4.4. Marseilles is absent from the complete Giletta tales in Boccaccio III.9 and Painter novel 38. Helen's journey and Marie de' Medici's journey in Neville's report have different purposes. In both source tales, Giletta stops at Montpellier before returning to her husband's feast; she does not travel to Marseilles to find the king.

# King Lear: Justice, Possession and Dover

Chapter 30

At Dover in February 1601, Henry Neville's journey back to his French embassy came to a halt. Cecil's letters required him to return to court. Sir Thomas Fane, reporting from Dover Castle on 22 February, described how abruptly Neville left:

> While I sought to **prevent his passage by sea**, he on the sudden took horse, **leaving his wife and children here** with the gentlemen of his retinue.[1]

Fane sent Captain Windebank and one of his own servants after Neville to observe the route he took. If Neville went directly to court, they were "to pass as unknown persons"; otherwise, they were "to make stay of him by force of your warrant." His wife and children remained at Dover with the gentlemen of his retinue; Neville rode towards examination and imprisonment.[1]

The embassy journey had been planned before Essex's rising. On 23 January, Neville told Winwood that he expected to leave just after Candlemas, travelling by Rouen. The rising on 8 February changed the circumstances: Neville had heard proposals from Essex's associates, and his knowledge now exposed him to investigation. By 19 February he was at Rochester; Fane's report places the decisive reversal at Dover.[1]

Dover is also the destination towards which Shakespeare drives the closing movement of *King Lear*. Gloucester seeks death at its cliffs; for Lear it promises refuge. Having overheard a plot to kill the king, Gloucester urgently directs Kent to take him there:

> GLOUCESTER
> Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms.
> I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him.
> There is a litter ready; lay him in 't,
> And drive toward **Dover**, friend, where thou shalt meet
> Both **welcome and protection**. Take up thy master.
> —*King Lear* 3.6[2]

The earlier *King Leir* never names Dover. Its king and his companion Perillus escape across the Channel, surrendering their outer garments to pay for the passage, and find Cordella in France. Shakespeare keeps Lear in England and makes Dover the destination of his flight. Both plays bring a French army to Britain, but Shakespeare moves the father's reunion with his daughter from France to the Dover setting. Defeat and captivity follow. The place that promises protection becomes the setting for its failure.[3]

For Neville, Dover had been the threshold of a return to his embassy; it became the point at which he was sent back into danger, separated from his wife and children. Shakespeare's transformation of *Leir* gives the same port a concentrated dramatic weight: the expectation of safety, the reunion of a family, and the approach of imprisonment.

## John Chamber and the stars

John Chamber, whose *Treatise against Judicial Astrology* appeared in 1601, was closely associated with Neville and his tutor Henry Savile. His edition of Barlaam's *Logistica*, published the previous year, credited Neville's repeated requests to bring it to press. Chamber later named Neville and Savile his executors.[4]

Chamber's attack supplies a telling comparison with *King Lear*: two arguments on a single page become the opposing positions of a father and the son who is deceiving him. In 1.2, Gloucester accepts Edmund's forged letter as evidence that Edgar intends to betray him. He then reads the same disorder in the heavens:

> GLOUCESTER These late eclipses in the sun and moon
> **portend no good to us**. Though the wisdom of
> nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds
> itself scourged by the sequent effects. Love cools,
> friendship falls off, brothers divide; in cities, mutinies;
> in countries, discord; in palaces, **treason**; and
> the bond cracked 'twixt son and father.
> —*King Lear* 1.2[5]

Chamber complains that astrologers' almanacs offer precisely such a catalogue:

> such catalogues of diseases, **warres, treasons**, and such like, **without anie one mention of anie good to come**, that a man would thinke there were no goodnes in heauen.[6]

Gloucester's "portend no good" and list of broken bonds give dramatic form to the predictions Chamber attacks. When his father leaves, Edmund supplies the other side of the dispute:

> EDMUND This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune (often the surfeits of **our own behavior**) we **make guilty** of our disasters the sun, the moon, and **stars**, as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his **goatish disposition on the charge of a star**!
> —*King Lear* 1.2[5]

On the same page as his catalogue of disasters, Chamber protests that men are ready to blame heaven for their own behaviour:

> When men are thus readie to **father all their follies vpon heauen**, imputing to it the cause of whatsoeuer hapneth, who can hold, and not exclaime with him [...].[6]

Phebe Jensen identifies a "striking resemblance to Edmond's denunciation" in another passage of Chamber's treatise. There he retells Augustine's account of an astrologer who shifted responsibility for his sins to the planets:

> This man denied that his **owne will committed adulterie**, but **Venus**: and that his **owne will committed murther**, but **Mars** [...].[7]

The comparison reaches beyond a shared mention of the stars. Chamber's argument joins human misconduct, celestial excuses and predictions of nothing but disaster. Shakespeare divides these materials between two characters: Gloucester sees betrayal foretold by eclipses; Edmund, who has manufactured the evidence of betrayal, ridicules the attempt to make heaven responsible.

Edmund then uses the language of eclipses to frighten Edgar. Jensen stresses that his polemic should not simply be accepted as the play's verdict on astrology. Shakespeare has given a familiar argument to a calculating speaker, who can mock a belief in one moment and exploit it in the next. Neville's association with Chamber places him close to the author of the treatise in which these arguments occur together.

Chamber's publication plans also included an astrology work by George Carleton, to be printed alongside his own, with Neville and Savile as his executors. Carleton's *Astrologomania*, published in 1624 as a work written nearly twenty years earlier, takes the debate into the circumstances of conception:

> When **Adulterie is committed and Bastards begotten**, it is against the reuealed will of God [...]

Carleton asks how sinful conduct can remain within divine government. Edmund makes his own "bastardizing" the test of a heavenly explanation for his

character (*King Lear* 1.2). The fuller comparison, and the illustrated story of the book's eventual publication by Thomas Vicars through the Jaggard press, appear in "Carleton, Vicars and the Jaggard Press" (Chapter 51).[8]

## Possession, illness and performance

In 1599–1600, Neville reported on a woman whose supposed demonic possession was being used to accuse Henri IV of remaining secretly a Huguenot and planning to act against Catholics. Writing to Cecil on 26 August 1599, he linked Bennet, an English Capuchin recently captured in England, with an alleged plot involving a woman said to have feigned possession:

> I understand there is one Bennet an English Capuchin lately taken in England, who was thought to have a hand very deep in the practice of the Duke of Joyeuse, about the woman that was **suborned to counterfeit herself to be possessed with a devil**. In which practice, it is thought here, there was a **dangerous reach**, and not thoroughly sifted, because it would have **touched some great ones**.

He wanted the affair investigated:

> So as if now **the bottom of it might be extorted** from this Bennet, I think it would be very acceptable to the king.

On 27 April 1600, Neville reported that the woman had reached Rome:

> The king hath been much troubled with the news he hath received from Rome, that the demoniac woman (**whose imposture was discovered here in Lent was twelvemonth**) is come to Rome, and there in her pangs hath **delivered much scandalous matter against him**; as if he were a dissembled Huguenot and no Catholic, and that he did but watch his time to declare himself, and to do some notable prejudice to the Catholics in favour of the heretics.

Neville then described the king's response:

> He is very careful to **stop this scandal**, and hath written earnestly to the Pope to clear himself, and to **have the demoniac punished**.[9]

The woman was probably Martha Brossier, whose case follows this Paris–Rome sequence. Neville's concern was the political use of her alleged possession: who had arranged it, which powerful people were implicated, and how Henri IV could stop the accusations spreading.[10]

Shakespeare draws directly on a book about counterfeit possession for Edgar's disguise as Poor Tom. Samuel Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603) attacks the English exorcisms conducted at Denham in the 1580s by William Weston and other Catholic priests. Among its devils are "Captain **Maho**, Sara's devil; Captain **Modu**, Maynie's devil." Edgar, disguised as the supposedly possessed beggar Poor Tom, announces:

EDGAR The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman. **Modo**
he's called, and **Mahu**.
—*King Lear* 3.4[11]

Harsnett's Smolkin likewise becomes Smulkin. These borrowed names make the book's place in *Lear* tangible. Edgar uses the language of possession to survive; the audience knows that the apparent demoniac is a hunted son in disguise. Harsnett's English cases and the French affair reported by Neville belong to the same contentious subject, although they concern different people and events.

Edward Jorden's *Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother*, also published in 1603, offers a medical comparison with Lear's own distress. The book grew out of the controversy over Mary Glover in London, for whose symptoms Jorden offered a natural explanation. Kaara L. Peterson places its publication alongside Harsnett's attack on exorcism: both books challenged supernatural explanations of apparent possession.[12]

Jorden's account gives particular force to Lear's description of his suffering. He calls the condition "**Passio Hysterica**," or "**the Mother**," and describes the womb's "**rising**," when it is "**drawn vpwards**" above its natural place. Martha J. Craig has already compared this upward movement with Lear's words, given here in Folger's edited text, which reads "Hysterica" where the early quarto and folio print "Historica":

LEAR
O, how this **mother swells up** toward my heart!
**Hysterica passio**, down, thou **climbing sorrow**!
Thy element's **below**.—Where is this daughter?
—*King Lear* 2.4[13]

The term and the upward movement work together: Lear commands a bodily sorrow to return to its proper place. Jorden's description concerns a uterine illness; Shakespeare transfers that language to an anguished father. Harsnett's account of Richard Mainy also contains "the mother," and Peterson warns against treating Lear's words as a straightforward medical diagnosis.[13]

Jorden also names Martha Brossier among his examples of counterfeited possession, referring readers to the history of her case while allowing that illness and deception could overlap. His book thus discusses the very French affair that Neville had probably been reporting to Cecil.[10]

Neville's personal association with Jorden is documented later. In a complaint dated 1 December 1615, Jorden recalled an alum proposal involving Neville about two and a half years earlier. Southampton, Neville, Robert Killigrew and Herbert Croft belonged to the proposed security group. The arrangement brings Neville, the physician and the dedicatee of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* into the same business proposal in 1613, several years after *Lear*.[14]

## An imagined cliff

Jorden's book also describes a way of treating sufferers through their beliefs. When argument and persuasion fail, he writes:

> we may **politikely confirme them in their fantasies**, that wee may the better fasten some **cure** vpon them [...].[15]

"Politikely" means by calculated contrivance. Rather than simply contradicting a false belief, the healer can work within it to bring relief. Jorden illustrates the method with people made to believe that the supposed cause of their illness has been removed.

At Dover, Edgar stages just such a contrivance. Gloucester wants to leap from the cliff. His son leads him over level ground while describing a dizzying height, with fishermen like mice on the beach below. Before Gloucester falls, Edgar tells the audience what he is doing:

> EDGAR, [aside]
> Why I do **trifle thus with his despair**
> Is done to **cure** it.
> —*King Lear* 4.6[15]

Gloucester falls on the ground. Edgar adopts a new voice and persuades him that he has survived a tremendous drop: the gods have preserved him. His invented cliff answers his father's desire for death with an invented deliverance. The correspondence with Jorden concerns the method—entering a sufferer's imagined situation to change its meaning—and Edgar states its curative purpose himself.

## Chrysostom and the suffering poor

The play's movement from exposed bodies to moral obligation has another scholarly comparison behind it. Debora Shuger places Lear's suffering poor beside the sermons of John Chrysostom, the fourth-century preacher whose works Henry Savile would edit. She connects him both with *Lear* and with the hunger protests in *Coriolanus*:

> What Shakespeare shares with the Church Fathers is this savage perception of earthly injustice and these tragic bodies of the poor [...][16]

Savile's edition of Chrysostom appeared in 1610–13. The comparison brings into view a body of writing central to the scholarly interests of Neville's former tutor.[17]

In his eleventh homily on 1 Corinthians, Chrysostom asks his listeners to imagine a poor man trying to sleep:

> For how is he to sleep after all, with pangs of the belly, restless **famine** besetting him, and that often while it is **freezing**, and the **rain** coming down on him?[18]

He asks them to remember that man when they return to lighted houses, prepared tables and beds. Their own comfort should make them attend to the person who has none. Shakespeare gives Lear that recognition while the king himself is exposed to the storm. At the entrance to shelter, concern for Kent and the Fool becomes a prayer for those his kingship has neglected:

> LEAR
> Prithee, go in thyself. Seek thine own ease.
> This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
> On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.—
> In, boy; go first.—You houseless poverty—
> Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.
> [Fool exits.]
> Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your **houseless heads and unfed sides**,
> Your looped and windowed **raggedness** defend you
> From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
> Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp.
> Expose thyself to **feel what wretches feel**,
> That thou may'st shake the **superflux** to them
> And show the heavens more just.
> — *King Lear*, 3.4.[19]

Chrysostom asks the comfortable to imagine deprivation; Lear has been made to feel it. He calls on "pomp" to undergo the same exposure and surrender its surplus. The king who began by distributing his realm now recognizes what he failed to give its poorest people. His changed understanding comes through the body: cold, hunger, raggedness, and the need for shelter.

## Notes and sources

1. Neville to Winwood, 23 January 1600/1, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, p.290; Neville to Cecil, Rochester, 19 February 1600/1, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp.73–74; Thomas Fane to Cecil, Dover Castle, 22 February 1600/1, ibid., p.76. The quotations from Fane's report and postscript follow the printed calendar entry; Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 76/100. For Neville's prior knowledge of the plans, see his declaration of 2 March 1601, discussed in Chapter 6. This account distinguishes recall and conditional surveillance from arrest at Dover. The documents establish an official journey planned before the rising; they do not settle Neville's private motives after it.

2. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 3.6, Folger. Gloucester directs Kent to take the king to Dover after overhearing a plot against his life.

3. Anonymous, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* (1605), ed. Andrew Griffin, Queen's Men Editions: scene 19, especially 19.181.1, 19.278.1 and 19.301–326; scene 23, payment for the crossing; scene 24, reunion with Cordella in France; scene 28, the French army on British soil. The complete modernized text contains no occurrence of Dover. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 4.6, the Dover cliff scene; 4.7 and 5.3, reunion and captivity. The comparison here distinguishes the two plays; it is not a claim that Dover is absent from every other possible source. The older play already has thunder and lightning during the attempted murder in scene 19.

4. John Chamber's address to Neville in *Barlaami Monachi Logistica* (Paris: Guillaume Auvray, 1600), Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 4 Math 43, digitized leaf 8. The address records Neville's repeated requests to print Barlaam; it is not the dedication of Chamber's astrology treatise, which addresses Egerton. For the executorship, TNA, C 2/JasI/N4/24, *Nevill v Reeve*, catalogue, explicitly names Neville and Savile as Chamber's executors; see also Chamber's will, July 1604, PROB 11/104/339, discussed in Chapter 8.

5. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 1.2, Folger. Both speeches and Edmund's ensuing exchange with Edgar belong to the same scene. Folger, first-edition record, records the December 1606 court performance and gives 1605–06 as the probable composition range.

6. John Chamber, *A Treatise against Iudicial Astrologie* (London: John Harrison, 1601), ch.VIII, p.44, within the discussion on pp.43–45, STC 4941, TCP A18368; public text. Both selected arguments occur on p.44. Long s is rendered s and line-end divisions are joined. The omission between them is described in the prose.

7. "Astrology," in Michael Dobson, Stanley Wells, Will Sharpe and Erin Sullivan, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2015), p.18, edition record. The entry names Chamber and Heydon and discusses Gloucester and Kent; it does not establish direct borrowing. Phebe Jensen, "Causes in Nature: Popular Astrology in King Lear," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 69.4 (2018), pp.205–227, especially pp.207 and 214–216, quotation p.215, publisher's article. Jensen's quoted comparison concerns Chamber's Augustinian example on p.10, quoted in this chapter alongside the distinct paired arguments on p.44. The p.10 quotation was checked in the paged TCP transcription of Chamber's treatise. She also challenges the assumption that Edmund's polemic represents the play's position.

8. John Chamber, will, July 1604, TNA PROB 11/104/339; George Carleton, *Astrologomania* (1624), title page and p. 112. The 1624 work is probably a realization or revision of the work named in the will; its earlier wording is not established. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 1.2, Folger.

9. Neville to Cecil, 26 August 1599, Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp.94–95; and 27 April 1600, pp.177–178: p.95, p.178. Spelling and capitalization modernized; "demoniac" modernizes the printed "Demoniaque." "Lent was twelvemonth" refers to Lent of the previous year. These are Neville's reports of allegations and political responses, not eyewitness testimony to a possession performance or proof of a completed examination.

10. Edward Jorden, *A Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother* (London: John Windet, 1603), ch.4, ff.12r–12v, STC 14790, TCP A04663; facsimile. Marianne Closson, "La possession démoniaque: un 'scandale' au service du catholicisme?" (2022), supplies the matching Paris–Rome historical sequence. Neville does not name Brossier; the identification is an inference from that sequence and setting.

11. Samuel Harsnett, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (London: James Roberts, 1603), ch.10, modernized selections edited by Michael Best and Sarah Milligan, Internet Shakespeare Editions, with introductory account of the Denham exorcisms and the play's borrowings; Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 3.4, Folger. Harsnett's Modu/Maho and Smolkin become Modo/Mahu and Smulkin in the play. No personal association between Neville and Harsnett is established by these letters.

12. Kaara L. Peterson, "Historica Passio: Early Modern Medicine, King Lear, and Editorial Practice," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 57.1 (2006), pp.1–22, p.17 n.48, article. Peterson explicitly connects the publications and cites Michael MacDonald, *Witchcraft and Hysteria in Elizabethan London: Edward Jorden and the Mary Glover Case* (1991), pp.xxii–xxiv. MacDonald's introduction is cited here through Peterson, not represented as independently read. The books have different printers: Jorden's title page names John Windet; Harsnett's names James Roberts. The connection is in their publication context, not a shared imprint.

13. Jorden, ch.2, ff.5r–5v; Shakespeare, *Lear*, 2.4, Folger. Martha J. Craig, "The rise of the mother," *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* (March 2003), pp.73–91, at p.82, already compares Jorden's upward-movement language with Lear: Gale record. This chapter adopts the textual comparison, not her wider medical and maternal interpretation. Samuel Harsnett, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603), Richard Mainy's examination (TCP A02750), is a sep-

arate English exorcism account; its "mother" and Poor Tom source relationships should not be confused with Brossier's French affair. The quoted "Hysterica" follows Folger's editorial emendation: both the first quarto and First Folio print "Historica." See Folger's textual notes, 2.4, line 63. The reversed Latin wording is therefore that of the edited text.

14. Jorden's complaint, 1 December 1615, TNA SP 14/84, f.7, State Papers Online; R. B. Turton, *The Alum Farm* (1938), pp.111–112, public scan. The complaint is retrospective; the security was proposed, not an established executed bond. Turton also names Twysden separately. His Lansdowne proposal citation has an unresolved folio mismatch; the complaint independently preserves the Neville association. No pre-composition acquaintance or book transmission is established by the 1613 proposal.

15. Jorden, *Briefe Discourse*, ch.7, f.24v, facsimile. The quotation follows the scanned page, retaining "politikely" and "wee"; long s is rendered s and line-end divisions joined. The paragraph begins with failed attempts to moderate distress through reason, persuasion or distraction. Jorden attributes precedents to earlier medical authorities; the method is not presented as his invention. Shakespeare, *King Lear* 4.6, Folger. The comparison concerns the staged cure, not demonstrated borrowing or a pre-composition connection with Neville.

16. Debora K. Shuger, "Subversive Fathers and Suffering Subjects: Shakespeare and Christianity," in *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540–1688*, ed. Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 46–69, chapter DOI, pp. 49–51; quotation, p. 51. The excerpt ends before her comparison with Bakhtin. On p. 49 she expressly declines to claim that Shakespeare studied the Church Fathers.

17. Debora K. Shuger, "Subversive Fathers and Suffering Subjects: Shakespeare and Christianity," in *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540–1688*, ed. Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 46–69, chapter DOI, p. 52 (Savile), pp. 62–63 n. 7 (earlier circulation), and pp. 53–54 (the broader Christian tradition of duties towards the poor). Savile's edition and collaborators are discussed in the last-years and John Hales chapters. For the usual dating of *Lear*, see the Folger first-edition record. The homily's Greek and early Latin wording has not been collated here for a verbal-source claim.

18. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, first series, vol. XII (1889), homily text, Homily XI on 1 Corinthians, §10, p. 63; Shuger, p. 64 n. 16. The quotation follows the nineteenth-century English translation, not an English text shown to have been available to Shakespeare. The comparison of the passages' rhetorical movement is developed here from the homily and the full dramatic speech; no claim of distinctive verbal borrowing is made.

19. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 3.4, Folger Shakespeare Library. The complete speech is reproduced with Folger's wording and stage direction; display wraps within verse lines are joined.

# Macbeth: The Deed and Its Consequences

Chapter 31

On 2 March 1601, after the failure of Essex's rebellion, Henry Neville explained why he had objected to an earlier proposal to force access to Elizabeth. Southampton had described the plan to him. Neville's answer was a maxim from Tacitus:

> This was an action of the nature of those which, as Tacitus saith, *non laudantur nisi peracta*, and **would be interpreted by the success**.[1]

The Latin means "they are not praised unless carried through." The enterprise would acquire its meaning from its outcome: success might vindicate what failure would condemn. About five years before *Macbeth*, Neville had put that dangerous calculation into words.[2]

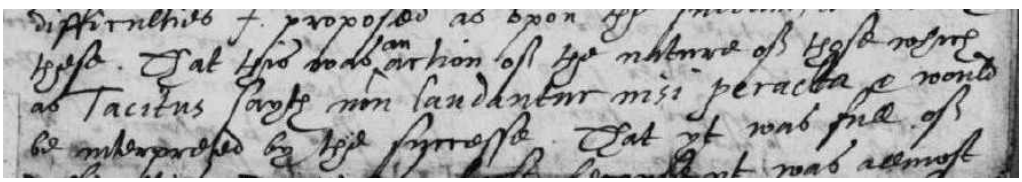


**Figure 31.1:** Detail of Henry Neville's original declaration (confession), 2 March 1601, in his own handwriting. The Latin *non laudantur nisi peracta* ("they are not praised unless carried through") appears beside the reference to Tacitus; the next line supplies the English gloss about success. The National Archives, SP 12/279, document beginning at fol. 15; image supplied by State Papers Online, Gale. Compare the published calendar, p. 7.

## An enterprise judged by its success

Neville's warning turns on the relation between completing an enterprise and justifying it. He drew the maxim from Otho's speech urging a coup against Galba in Tacitus's *Histories*. [3] The official account of the Gunpowder trial in 1606 also applied the maxim to the conspirators, showing its renewed public currency. Neville had used it about his own danger five years earlier.[3] His former tutor Henry Savile had translated the passage in 1591:

> No delay in that enterprise is to be used, which never is commended, **before it be ended**.[4]

The same problem of completion and consequence opens Macbeth's soliloquy:

MACBETH
**If it were done when 'tis done**, then 'twere well
It were done quickly. If th' assassination
Could trammel up the consequence and catch
With his surcease **success**, that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgment here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague th' inventor. [...]
—*Macbeth* 1.7[5]

Macbeth wants Duncan's death—his "surcease"—to secure success without releasing further consequences. "Trammel" imagines those consequences caught in a net. He would risk the life to come if he could make the present safe. But almost immediately he recognizes that judgment operates here, in this world: murderous instruction returns to punish its teacher.

Gordon Braden describes the impulse driving Macbeth from one violent act to the next as a "radical fear of incompleteness."[5] Neville asks how success will determine the judgment passed on an enterprise; Macbeth asks whether success can end its consequences. The blow can kill Duncan, but cannot end what the killing sets in motion.

Holinshed supplied Shakespeare with the murder of Duncan and, in the separate story of King Duff, a reluctant killer urged on by his wife, drunken attendants and an attempt to put the blame on others. Donwald already recoils inwardly from the deed. Shakespeare develops that reluctance into the sustained reasoning we hear before the murder, then makes its consequences dominate the rest of the play.[6]

Lady Macbeth voices the other side of the argument while she waits for her husband to return:

LADY MACBETH
Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done. **Th' attempt and not the deed**
Confounds us. [...]
—*Macbeth* 2.2[7]

Here the peril lies in an unfinished enterprise. Once Macbeth returns, however, completing it proves to have solved very little. The couple's immediate problem becomes the manufacture of an acceptable account: who will be blamed, what will be seen, and how they must appear.

## The face and the hidden intention

At the end of his declaration, Neville describes learning at court what Essex had done:

> […] when I understood what course the Earl took, and saw the **vizard taken from him** and his **true intents laid open**, which he had so **disguised** before with specious pretences and cloaks of religion and virtue, I detested him and his actions from the bottom of my heart […].[8]

A vizard is a mask. In Neville's image, the action exposes the intention that words had hidden.

In *Macbeth*, the mask has to stay on. Before the banquet at which Banquo's absence will require explanation, Macbeth tells his wife to be attentive to Banquo, whose murder he is secretly arranging. Their faces must protect the secrets of their hearts:

> MACBETH So shall I, love,
> And so I pray be you. Let your remembrance
> Apply to Banquo; present him eminence
> Both with eye and tongue: unsafe the while that we
> Must **lave our honors** in these flattering streams
> And make our faces **vizards to our hearts**,
> **Disguising what they are**.
> —*Macbeth* 3.2[9]

The "vizard" and "disguising" belong together in both passages. Neville describes the moment when Essex's apparent virtue becomes exposed intention; Macbeth instructs his wife to preserve the separation. Even the language of washing has become deceptive: their honours must be bathed in flattery. Macbeth keeps the planned murder of Banquo from his wife, as well as from the intended victim.

## Blood that might wash away a crime

In the declaration of March 1601, Neville had already asserted that to join an enterprise against Cecil, his relative and benefactor, would "**blot my reputation** to be false unto him or any man."[8] By July 1602, Neville's question had changed. He was no longer explaining why an enterprise might fail. He was trying to recover his liberty and repair what its failure had done to him.

On 31 July 1602, Neville asked Cecil to continue his mediation with Elizabeth:

> And if there be no other means to **wipe away this blot** wherewith I am **soiled**, yet it is possible that if I were at liberty, I might shed so much of my **blood**, in some place where she hath occasion to use men, as might serve for a **laver for the crime** which hath made me so ugly in her eye.[10]

A *laver* is a vessel or means of washing. Neville imagines his offence as visible dirt: a blot that has made him repulsive to the queen. Future service, even to the shedding of his own blood, might wash it away.

In *Macbeth*, washing becomes the measure of a crime's persistence. Macbeth looks at the blood on his hands:

MACBETH
[...]
Will all great Neptune's ocean **wash this blood**
**Clean from my hand**? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.
—*Macbeth* 2.2[11]

He imagines the whole ocean turning red before his hand can become clean. Lady Macbeth answers him with a brisk assurance:

LADY MACBETH
**A little water clears us of this deed.**
—*Macbeth* 2.2[11]

By the sleepwalking scene, she has become unable to finish the washing:

LADY MACBETH [...] What, will these hands **ne'er be clean**? [...]
—*Macbeth* 5.1[12]

The physical stain has gone; the offence remains. Her attendant has watched her rub her hands for a quarter of an hour. What she had promised would clear them of the deed has become the action that continually recalls it.

The direction of Neville's image is revealing. His own blood, shed in the queen's service, might cleanse an offence; the murdered king's blood makes Macbeth unclean. Both make blood and washing measures of an offence against the monarch. In the letter, restoration remains imaginable. In the tragedy, no amount of power can make the guilty mind accept that the washing is finished.

## "Give sorrow words"

Two months before Neville's appeal to wash away his offence, his wife had addressed Cecil from within the same family crisis. In a letter endorsed 23 May 1602, Anne Neville pleaded for her husband's release from the Tower and quoted Seneca's *Phaedra*:

**Curae leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.**
Lesser troubles speak; great ones are struck dumb.[13]

Brian Arkins connects this maxim with Malcolm's words to Macduff, who has just learned that his wife and children have been slaughtered:

MALCOLM
**Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak**
**Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.**
—*Macbeth* 4.3[13]

Anne uses Seneca to explain why suffering defeats expression. Malcolm turns that thought into an urgent appeal to speak before suppressed grief destroys the sufferer. A particular classical sentence, independently identified in Shake-

spearean scholarship, appears in a dated letter from Neville's wife, written amid the consequences of his political disaster.

The maxim also appears in Florio's 1603 translation of Montaigne:

> Light cares can freely **speake**,
> Great cares **heart** rather **breake**.[13]

Florio's English supplies the heart and the speak/break rhyme of Malcolm's speech; Montaigne's French text already carried the Latin. Anne's letter shows that maxim being used in Neville's household under the pressure of his imprisonment, a year before Florio's English appeared.

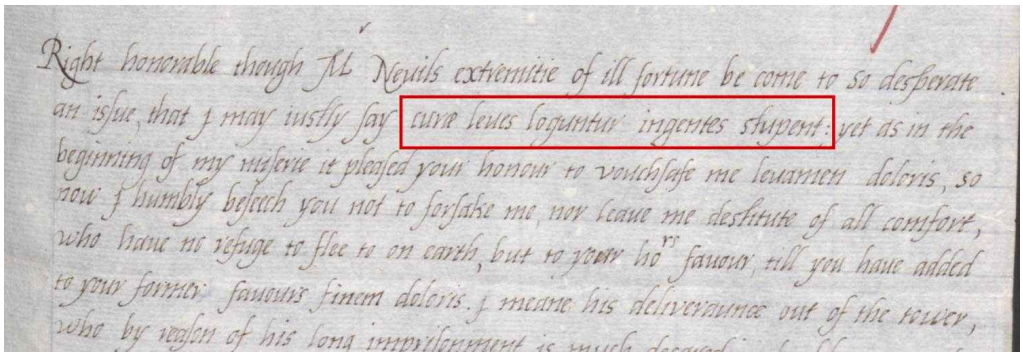

Right honorable though M Neuils extremitie of ill fortune be come to so desperate
an issue, that I may iustly say curæ leues loquuntur ingentes stupent: yet as in the
beginning of my miserie it pleased your honour to vouchsafe me leuamen doloris, so
now I humbly beseech you not to forsake me, nor leaue me destitute of all comfort,
who haue no refuge to flee to on earth, but to your ho^rs fauour, till you haue added
to your former fauours finem doloris. I meane his deliveraunce out of the tower,
who by reason of his long imprisonment is much

**Figure 31.2:** Opening of Anne Neville's letter to Robert Cecil, endorsed 23 May 1602. The Senecan maxim appears in the second line. Manuscript photograph: Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 93/72, with the Latin boxed in red. The calendar linked in the source note identifies the letter but does not reproduce this photograph or its Latin.

Arkins also traces the tragedy's impossible washing to Seneca: in *Phaedra* and *Hercules Furens*, speakers ask what rivers or ocean could cleanse their pollution. The imagery of Neville's plea thus stands beside a classical tradition that scholars have already recognized in the play.[14]

## Cannons overcharged

The play introduces Macbeth's prowess through an anachronistic image of artillery. Asked whether a fresh assault dismayed Macbeth and Banquo, the wounded captain describes their answer:

> CAPTAIN
> [...]
> If I say sooth, I must report they were
> As **cannons overcharged with double cracks**,
> So they **doubly redoubled strokes** upon the foe.
> [...]
> —*Macbeth* 1.2[15]

The simile brings the artillery of Shakespeare's own time into eleventh-century Scotland. Holinshed describes the successive assaults and Macbeth and Banquo's resistance, but the overcharged-cannon comparison is Shakespeare's addition.[16, 17] T. McAlindon hears a warning in the captain's praise: "uncurbed valour might prove self-destructive."[18]

Neville's connection with the technology was practical. He managed the Mayfield furnace and the ordnance business.[19] The surviving records include a 1592 export grant to Henry Nevile, esquire, probably the younger Neville, and Abraham Jones's letter of 23 November 1595 reporting shipments and stocks of ordnance at Lewes.[20, 21] Chapter 3 discusses the business; Chapter 17 follows its dependence on woodland and charcoal.

German notarial records give a concrete example of the danger. A certificate dated 21 April 1591 records the testing of English guns in Hamburg on 12 April. One gun "shattered into small pieces"; the gunner thanked Almighty God that nobody had lost his life or otherwise suffered harm. A second certificate, dated 4 September, records another gun bursting during testing. Its endorsement bears the name "Nevill," although it does not identify the gun's manufacturer.[22]

The earlier *2 Henry VI* makes the recoil explicit. Queen Margaret warns Suffolk that his curses will turn against him:

> QUEEN MARGARET
> [...]
> Or like an **over-charged gun**, recoil
> And turn the force of them upon thyself.
> —*2 Henry VI* 3.2[23]

The force directed outwards may destroy the person who releases it—the danger Macbeth recognizes when he says that bloody instructions "return / To plague th' inventor" (*Macbeth* 1.7).[5] The German certificates show the practical danger beside the tragic use McAlindon identifies, although they do not specify that excessive loading caused either failure. The soldier celebrated for destroying the king's enemies will turn his force upon the king, and ultimately bring destruction upon himself.

Neville also used **overcharged** of Anne's grief in April 1602, after the loss of one child and the expected loss of another. In *2 Henry VI* 3.2 the same word describes both a gun's excessive charge and the dying Cardinal Beaufort's burdened soul. These passages connect physical loading and inward strain; Neville's own use belongs to that emotional sense.[24]

## Gowrie: a Scottish tragedy Neville knew

On 27 February 1600, while ambassador in Paris, Neville wrote to Cecil recommending John Ruthven, third Earl of Gowrie, who was returning to Scotland through England. His recommendation was personal:

> And because I **know him well**, and have had **good communication with him**, and therein found him to be of very good judgment, and exceedingly well affected both to the common cause of religion, and particularly to her Majesty, and that which may concern her honour and service; I have thought good to recommend him especially unto your Honour.[25]

Neville had given Gowrie a passport in the most favourable terms he could. He urged Cecil to speak with him about "alterations feared in Scotland." This was a well-informed young nobleman who Neville thought could be useful to Elizabeth's government.

On 5 August that year, Gowrie and his brother Alexander were killed in their house at Perth during a visit by James VI. According to the royal account, Alexander had drawn James into a private room and attempted to overpower him; the king's attendants intervened, killing both brothers. James presented his escape as deliverance from treason. The brothers could no longer answer that accusation, and the account provoked immediate doubt.[26]

Neville reported the news to Winwood on 28 August. He described the alleged conspiracy and the king's escape, then separated the relation sent to England from the opinions circulating about it:

> This is the relation sent hither of it, which notwithstanding is **diversely censured according to men's divers affections**.[27]

*Censured* here means judged. Neville knew both the official narrative and its disputed reception. By 2 November he was reporting the punishment of Robert Bruce and other Scottish ministers. Their offence, he wrote, was refusing to declare the brothers' conspiracy in the form required of them.[28] The controversy concerned not only what had happened in the room, but the power to determine how everyone else must describe it.

That controversy reached Shakespeare's company. In a letter of 18 December 1604, John Chamberlain told Winwood that the King's Men had twice performed a play about the tragedy of Gowrie, drawing large crowds. Some great councillors were displeased. Chamberlain wondered whether the treatment was at fault or whether depicting living princes was considered unsuitable; he expected the play to be forbidden.[29]

David McInnis, in *Shakespeare and Lost Plays*, puts this episode back into the company's repertory: before *Macbeth*, the King's Men had dramatized an alleged attempt on James's life. He argues that the handling of the contested story, rather than simply the appearance of a living king on stage, may have caused the offence.[30]

McInnis also notes an analogy with Macbeth's confidence in magical protection. The official pamphlet claimed that a small parchment bag containing magical characters had been found in Gowrie's pocket. He was said to have relied on it for safety; his mortal wound supposedly began to bleed freely only after it was removed.[31] Facing Macduff, Macbeth declares:

MACBETH
[…]
I bear a **charmed life**, which must not yield
To one of woman born.
—*Macbeth* 5.8[31]

Holinshed already gives Macbeth the assurance that no man born of woman can kill him. Gowrie's story supplies a recent Scottish counterpart to that fatal trust in supernatural protection. The landscape itself brings the histories close: Holinshed places Dunsinane in the district of Gowrie, ten miles from Perth, where the brothers died.[31]

Neville had known and recommended the young earl, then reported the disputed accounts of his death and the punishment of ministers who refused the required declaration. The King's Men turned the affair into theatre. Its lost text prevents a comparison of wording, but the surviving records connect Neville's diplomatic correspondence with a Scottish political tragedy in the company's repertory.

Success might determine how others judged an enterprise; it could not settle what followed. Neville's declaration and the Tower letters move from the calculation before the attempt to the damaged reputation and household left after it. *Macbeth* makes the hope of finality its tragic error. The deed that was meant to settle everything demands another deed, and another:

MACBETH
**Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.**

—*Macbeth* 3.2[9]

## Notes and sources

1. Henry Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601 (dated 2 March 1600 in the manuscript), The National Archives, SP 12/279, document beginning at fol. 15; State Papers Online manuscript record. Text follows John O'Donnell's transcription; spelling and punctuation modernized. For an additional printed reference, see Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1601–1603* (London, 1870), pp. 5–8, especially p. 7, vol. CCLXXIX, no. 11. The Candlemas conference is Southampton's account of the proposed court enterprise as reported by Neville, not an account of the march into London on 8 February.
2. *Macbeth* is conventionally dated about 1606. David McInnis, *Shakespeare and Lost Plays* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), chapter 4, pp. 118–149, especially pp. 119, 135–136, 142, discusses its Jacobean context and Simon Forman's record of a Globe performance on 20 April 1611. The surviving printed text first appeared in 1623: Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, "An Introduction to This Text," *Macbeth*, Folger Shakespeare Library. An exact composition date and the extent of subsequent adaptation are not settled.
3. Tacitus, *Histories* 1.37–41, especially 1.38: *nullus cunctationis locus est in eo consilio quod non potest laudari nisi peractum*. Latin and English text, LacusCurtius. Otho urges a coup; Neville cites the maxim while explaining his objection to the proposed court enterprise. The saying also circulated elsewhere: the official account of the Gunpowder trial, *A True and Perfect Relation* (London, 1606), sig. B2r, applies the plural formulation to the alleged calculations of the conspirators. William Camden also reports Neville's use of *quae non laudantur nisi peracta*, recalling that he was present when the confession was read: *Annales*, 1601, §51, Latin

text. Camden's account was published later; his stated presence concerns the reading of the confession, not the original conversation.

4. Tacitus, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba. Fower Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus. The Life of Agricola*, trans. Henry Savile (Oxford, 1591), *Histories*, p. 22. Spelling modernized; vocabulary and syntax retained. Neville's compressed Latin identifies the passage, but does not establish which edition or language he was recalling.
5. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* 1.7, ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, Folger Shakespeare Library. All Shakespeare quotations in this chapter follow the Folger text, preserving line breaks; bold emphasis is added. Gordon Braden reads this soliloquy as part of Macbeth's search for a decisive act that will settle everything, tracing his "radical fear of incompleteness" through the ensuing violence: "Senecan Tragedy and the Renaissance," *Illinois Classical Studies* 9.2 (1984), pp. 277–292, especially pp. 287–289. Braden's comparison is with Seneca. A separate Tacitus–*Macbeth* parallel is proposed by Herbert W. Benario, "Shakespearean Debt to Tacitus' Histories," *Notes and Queries* 55.2 (2008), pp. 202–205, at p. 204: Cawdor's dignified death and Tacitus's judgment of Otho (*Histories* 2.50.1). The comparison with Otho's coup maxim in *Histories* 1.38 developed here is distinct from both.
6. Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles*, Scottish history, pp. 234–235 (Duff and Donwald) and p. 269 (Duncan and Macbeth), pagination of the 1808 reprint, vol. V. Donwald "abhorred the act greatlie in heart," but followed his wife's urging; four servants carried out the murder. Shakespeare combines material from the two narratives. The source already includes reluctance and concealment; the comparison concerns their dramatic elaboration.
7. *Macbeth* 2.2.
8. Neville, declaration of 2 March 1601, TNA SP 12/279, cited in note 1: final paragraph for the vizard passage; the preceding discussion of Cecil for "blot my reputation." Transcription by John O'Donnell. It reads "course," not "cause," and retains the clause about disguise, specious pretences and cloaks of religion and virtue. At "with specious pretences," the manuscript's abbreviated "with" corrects "which" in the transcription. Spelling and punctuation modernized; ellipses mark omitted text. Additional printed reference: Green's *CSPD 1601–1603*, p. 8. The mask is Essex's; the reputation is Neville's.
9. *Macbeth* 3.2. The excerpt begins within Macbeth's sentence; *lave* means wash or bathe. The following section compares the related washing image in Neville's 1602 appeal, a separate document.
10. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 31 July 1602, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 94/90, holograph. Quotation follows John O'Donnell's transcription; spelling and punctuation modernized, first person and vocabulary retained. Additional printed reference: *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury*, vol. XII (London, 1910), p. 268. The calendar abridges the passage and converts it to the third person; the quotation here is from Neville's letter.
11. *Macbeth* 2.2.
12. *Macbeth* 5.1.
13. Anne Neville to Robert Cecil, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 93/72, endorsed 23 May 1602. Latin read from the manuscript; the abbreviated calendar omits it: HMC, *Salisbury*, XII (1910), p. 164. Seneca, *Phaedra* 607. Translation here is new. The manuscript uses *loquuntur*; the Latin Library has the spelling *locuntur*. Brian Arkins, "Heavy Seneca: his Influence on Shakespeare's Tragedies", *Classics Ireland* 2 (1995), section 7, connects this line with Malcolm's speech. Shakespeare quotation follows *Macbeth* 4.3, Folger Shakespeare Library, preserving verse lineation. Arkins establishes the Seneca–Shakespeare comparison, not the connection with Anne. Florio's 1603 translation of Montaigne, I.2, "Of Sadnesse or Sorrowe," renders the same maxim: "Light cares can freely **speake**, / Great cares **heart** rather **breake**." E. K. Chambers records this parallel with *Macbeth*, crediting Collier: *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Warwick Shakespeare (Toronto, 1907), pp. 151–152, note to 4.3.208. The Latin also appears in Montaigne's French text, I.2, here consulted in the transcription of the 1598 edition. Florio's English supplies the heart/break image and speak/break rhyme found in Malcolm's speech. Anne's May 1602 letter predates that publication; her Latin and Florio's translation are distinct witnesses to the maxim's circulation, without establishing the dramatist's route to it.

14. Arkins, "Heavy Seneca," section 7, comparing *Phaedra* 715–718 and *Hercules Furens* 1323–1326 with the washing passages in *Macbeth*. His argument concerns Senecan influence on Shakespeare; the dated Neville documents provide the additional household comparison made here.
15. *Macbeth* 1.2, Folger Shakespeare Library. David and Ben Crystal, *Shakespeare's Words*, "crack"; Samuel Johnson, *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth* (1745), note III. Johnson rejects Theobald's proposed repunctuation and defends the cannon's thunderous sound. Philip Weller's *Macbeth Navigator*, note to 1.2.37, glosses "cracks" as charges of gunpowder. These interpretations explain the metaphor without turning it into an exact loading specification.
16. Royal Household, "Macbeth (r. 1040–1057)"; Royal Armouries, "The Hundred Years' War 1337–1453," sections "Early Artillery" and "Handguns", dating unequivocal western European records of guns to Florence in 1326. The anachronism lies in the captain's simile; the passage describes Macbeth and Banquo's blows, not cannon deployed on their battlefield.
17. Holinshed, Scottish history, pp. 265–268, especially p. 268, 1808 reprint, vol. V. The chronicle narrates successive conflicts; Shakespeare compresses the military action and supplies the overcharged-cannon simile.
18. T. McAlindon, "Macbeth," *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 197–219, reproduced essay. His discussion of "cannons overcharg'd with double cracks" connects excessive valour with potential self-destruction. The link to Neville's ordnance business is the present chapter's comparison.
19. Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I (1564–1615), of Billingbear," *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629* (2010), on the Mayfield furnace and the April 1591 monopoly. Chapter 3 distinguishes that reported grant from the separately catalogued 1592 instrument and discusses identification of the younger Neville. For the furnace industry and cast-iron gunfounding, Jeremy Hodgkinson, "The Wealden Iron Industry," Wealden Iron Research Group (2002). The dated ordnance records are cited in the following notes.
20. The National Archives, LR 15/301, grant dated 8 November 1592, Discovery catalogue. The catalogue describes a transcript of the grant to Henry Nevile, esquire, Ludolfe Englested and Giles Devisher. The original instrument has not been collated here; the grantee's identification with the younger Neville is an inference from the designation and context.
21. Abraham Jones to Henry Neville, 23 November 1595, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O/23/2; catalogue of the ordnance papers, D/EN/O/23. The letter records two shipped consignments and remaining ordnance at Lewes. It is distinct from the separate iron-shot account in the same bundle.
22. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/7, German notarial instruments of 21 April and 4 September 1591, catalogue. The April instrument begins on the leaf numbered 32; the testimony is on the leaf numbered 33: "In kleinen stücken zersprungen" ("shattered into small pieces") and "daß keiner dabey vmbs Leben oder sonst Zu schaden vnd vmb seine gesundheit gekommen wehre" (that nobody had lost his life, otherwise come to harm, or lost his health). Translation from the manuscript. The September instrument begins on the leaf numbered 36; its endorsement carries "Nevill," the number 47, a weight figure of 1620 and the date 4 September 1591. That endorsement belongs to the September instrument, not the April no-injury account. The records do not identify overcharging as the cause or name Mayfield as the place of manufacture; the endorsement alone does not establish who made the gun.
23. William Shakespeare, *2 Henry VI* 3.2, Queen Margaret to Suffolk, Folger Shakespeare Library.
24. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 3 April 1602, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 92/99. Manuscript checked against the independent printed abstract in *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury*, XII, pp.95–96. The calendar confirms "overcharged" and the family bereavements; the manuscript gives the fuller account of grief and successive afflictions. This passage paraphrases the letter.
25. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 27 February 1599/1600, Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer (London, 1725), vol. I, p. 156. Dates in the narrative begin the year on 1 January; the printed heading is 27 February 1599 O.S. Quotations from Winwood throughout

this chapter modernize spelling, capitalization and light punctuation, preserving vocabulary and syntax. Winwood's spelling is not treated as evidence of manuscript orthography.

26. McInnis, *Shakespeare and Lost Plays*, pp. 120–128, reviewing the royal narrative and its contested reception. His account draws on W. F. Arbuckle's two-part study of the Gowrie conspiracy in *Scottish Historical Review* 36 (1957).
27. Neville to Winwood, London, 28 August 1600, Winwood, vol. I, pp. 248–250, especially pp. 249–250. The dating is 28 August, not 8 August. The distinction between the reported accusation and differing reactions is Neville's own.
28. Neville to Winwood, 2 November 1600, Winwood, vol. I, pp. 270–272, especially p. 271. Neville reports that Bruce and other ministers were deprived of their charges and banished from Edinburgh and the court because they refused the required declaration.
29. John Chamberlain to Ralph Winwood, 18 December 1604, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure (Philadelphia, 1939), vol. I, p. 199, quoted and examined by McInnis, pp. 120, 126–128. The lost play is usually called *The Tragedy of Gowrie*, but its exact title is uncertain. The letter records two performances and an expected prohibition; no surviving prohibition is established by that expectation.
30. McInnis, "Courting Controversy—Shakespeare and the King's Men," pp. 118–149, especially pp. 119–128, 135–136, 147. He also proposes, expressly as conjecture, that *The Spanish Maze* concerned the Copley family and the Bye Plot; this chapter's argument does not depend on that identification.
31. McInnis, pp. 124–125, quoting *Gowreis Conspiracie* (Edinburgh: Robert Charteris, 1600), sig. C3. For the prophecy already in the chronicle, Holinshed, Scottish history, p. 274; compare *Macbeth* 5.8. The magical bag and bleeding are claims in the official account, not accepted supernatural events.

# Julius Caesar

Chapter 32

## Pulled by the cloak

In August 1599, Neville reported a violent encounter at the French court. The Prince de Joinville and Monsieur le Grand had accompanied Henri IV to his lodging. The rest of the party had already entered le Grand's coach when Joinville stopped him:

> Joinville **pulled** le Grand **by the cloak**, and required to **speak with** him, who thereupon drawing himself aside from the company [...] [1]

The private word became an accusation. Joinville believed that le Grand had turned the king against him with a report about his attentions to Mademoiselle d'Entragues. He drew his sword and wounded the unarmed man. Neville sent the account to Robert Cecil from Paris on 7 August.

In *Julius Caesar*, a tug at a cloak likewise draws a man out of a departing company to speak. After Caesar leaves the stage, Casca turns to Brutus:

> CASCA You **pulled** me **by the cloak**. Would you **speak with** me?
> — *Julius Caesar*, 1.2[2]

Casca then tells Brutus and Cassius about Antony's offer of a crown to Caesar. In both passages, the man who pulls the cloak seeks the conversation. Neville reports Joinville's demand; Shakespeare gives the question to the man who has been stopped. The same sequence of gesture and speech appears in the diplomatic narrative and the dramatic dialogue. The combination is more distinctive than the act of pulling a cloak alone.

A search of EarlyPrint texts published before 1650 for the linked wording—pull, by the cloak, speak with, allowing intervening words—returned one text: the 1623 First Folio.[3] Neville's dispatch also falls close to the play's earliest recorded performance. Thomas Platter saw a *Julius Caesar* in London in September 1599, generally identified as Shakespeare's play at the newly built Globe. The letter precedes that performance by about five weeks.[4]

Neville's use of both English and French Plutarch in his *Advice* to James is examined in Chapter 9, "Counsel, Ambition and the Last Years." His engagement with the work provides a further connection with the principal narrative source of *Julius Caesar*.

## Dudith and the death of princes

On the morning of Caesar's murder, Calphurnia begs him to stay at home. He answers that the predictions concern everyone:

> CAESAR
> [...]
> Yet Caesar shall go forth, for these predictions
> Are to the **world in general** as to **Caesar**.
> — *Julius Caesar*, 2.2[5]

Calphurnia insists on the distinction between ordinary people and rulers:

> CALPHURNIA
> When **beggars** die there are no **comets** seen;
> The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of
> **princes**.
> — *Julius Caesar*, 2.2[5]

Andreas Dudith, the humanist whom Neville knew during his travels with his tutor Henry Savile, had challenged that distinction. In his 1579 treatise on the significance of comets, he asked:

> Quaeso cur **Reges** magis eripiat **cometa**, quam **de plebe quemvis**?
>
> Tell me, why should a **comet** carry off **kings** rather than **anyone from the common people**?[6]

Dudith presses the question through the physical likeness of royal and ordinary bodies. Are kings made from different elements? Do they breathe different air, or have a different sun and stars? Earlier in the treatise he discusses the comet associated with Julius Caesar's death, quoting Virgil as evidence brought forward by others. Caesar's death and the supposed celestial privilege of rulers thus belong to the very argument he is examining.[6]

North reports a comet seen after Caesar's death. Shakespeare places the discussion before the murder and makes it a dispute about whether princes receive special celestial warnings.[7] Caesar resists the claim that the predictions single him out; Calphurnia asserts that the heavens distinguish princes from beggars. Dudith's question about a comet carrying off kings concerns its supposed power to cause death, while Calphurnia speaks of its power to announce it. Both turn on whether the heavens treat rulers differently from everyone else.

Neville's connection with Dudith was personal and scholarly. In a letter to Hájek of 1 February 1581, printed in Hájek's book on comets that year, Dudith praised the learning and character of Neville and Robert Sidney. On 7 August he wrote directly to Neville about books Neville had left with him and work requested from Savile on ancient mathematics and Copernicus.[8, 9] The exchange places Neville within the scholarly circle of a writer who had made the question underlying Caesar and Calphurnia's disagreement explicit.

## The oath and the limits of conspiracy

Before the murder, Cassius asks the conspirators to bind themselves by oath. Brutus refuses:

> CASSIUS
> And let us **swear** our resolution.
> BRUTUS
> No, not an **oath**. If not the face of men,
> The sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse—
> If these be motives weak, break off betimes,
> And every man hence to his idle bed.
> […]
> What need we any spur but our own cause
> To prick us to redress? What other bond
> Than secret Romans that have spoke the word
> And will not palter? And what other oath
> Than honesty to honesty engaged
> That this shall be or we will fall for it?
> — *Julius Caesar*, 2.1[10]

North already says that the conspirators took no oaths. As John D. Cox observes, Shakespeare makes that shared practice into a disagreement between Cassius and Brutus.[11] Brutus's refusal becomes an assertion of character: their cause and their honour should bind them more securely than any vow. Later in the same meeting, he insists that Antony be spared. North supplies that decision too; Shakespeare brings the questions of trust and restraint together in the conspirators' deliberations.

Neville confronted both questions when the Essex circle discussed armed intervention at Elizabeth's court. In his declaration of 2 March 1601, he recalled telling Henry Cuffe:

> I could not nor would not give any approbation to any such enterprise, unless the undertakers did all take a **solemn oath** not to attempt anything against the Queen's person or her estate, as they had done in the enterprise of Amboise, a precedent whereof was to be seen in the story.[12]

The plan involved seizing the court gate and guard chamber to gain access to Elizabeth. Neville demanded a limit on what its participants could do once they had entered. For that safeguard he turned to French history. In the enterprise of Amboise in 1560, the confederates swore to protect the king while proceeding against the Guises. An English account published in 1598 describes both the oath and an undertaking to warn the king if the enterprise turned against his person.[13]

Neville's declaration belongs to 1601, after the play's recorded performance. It shows him using a historical precedent to address the practical problem Shakespeare had staged: how men entering a conspiracy could bind one another and set limits to their violence. Brutus trusts "honesty to honesty engaged." Neville makes an oath limiting the enterprise the condition of his approval.

## Notes and sources

1. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 7 August 1599 O.S., in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, vol. I (London, 1725), heading p. 84, passage p. 86. Heading; passage and complete altercation. Spelling and capitalization are modernized; the excerpt ends before the accusation.
2. William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 1.2, Folger Shakespeare Library text. Folger's line break after "speak" is preserved; bold type marks the wording being compared.
3. EarlyPrint, public Library text search, checked 9 September 2026. The lemma query allowed zero to three tokens between pull and by the cloak, and zero to eight between cloak and speak with. Restricting the results by publication year to before 1650 gives one hit in one text, the 1623 First Folio, TCP A11954, *Julius Caesar* 1.2. The only other result was the same passage in a 1684 edition, outside this date range. This is a corpus- and query-bounded result; transcription and tagging errors can suppress matches. Winwood's 1725 volume is outside the date range.
4. Thomas Platter's account, German transcription and English translation reproduced by the New Variorum *Julius Caesar* project, citing Gustav Binz, "Londoner Theater und Schauspiele im Jahr 1599," *Anglia* 22 (1899), p. 458, and Ernest Schanzer's translation. The entry gives 21 September in New Style; the equivalent English date is 11 September. John D. Cox, *Julius Caesar*: Introduction, paragraphs 3–5, explains the identification with Shakespeare's play. It is a performance record, not a composition date or proof of the first performance.
5. William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 2.2, Folger Shakespeare Library text. Folger's line break before "princes" is preserved. Bold type marks the conceptual comparison. Caesar challenges the distinction that Calphurnia asserts; Dudith's question challenges it too.
6. Andreas Dudith, *De cometarum significatione commentariolus* (Basel, 1579), p. 46, the question about kings and common people and the ensuing comparison of their bodies; p. 19, sig. C2r, the discussion of Julius Caesar and the verses from Virgil, *Georgics* 1.487–488. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, bsb10198859. Latin spelling and typography normalized; English translation supplied here. Dudith introduces the Caesar example as evidence adduced by others, not as his own endorsement.
7. Plutarch, "Julius Caesar," in Thomas North, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* (London, 1579), concluding account of the signs following Caesar's death, TCP A09802. North places the bright comet after the death and describes its appearance on seven nights.
8. Dudith to Tadeáš Hájek, Breslau, 1 February 1581, printed in the preliminaries to Thaddaeus Hagecius ab Hayck, *Apodixis physica et mathematica de cometis* (Görlitz: Ambrosius Fritsch, 1581), closing greeting, digitized volume. Also Andreas Dudithius, *Epistulae*, Pars VII: 1581–1589, ed. Nicolaus Szymański and Ida Radziejowska, commentary Lechus Szczucki and Nicolaus Szymański (Budapest: Reciti, 2019), no. 1040, pp. 37–39, greeting on p. 39. The letter separately praises Savile's learning; its closing greeting calls Sidney and Neville young men distinguished in learning and character ("doctrina ac moribus praestantes").
9. Dudith to Henry Neville, Breslau, 7 August 1581, in Dudithius, *Epistulae*, VII, no. 1072, pp. 87–88. The opening answers Neville's letter; p. 88 contains the requests concerning Savile, Copernicus and Neville's books. The edition records an autograph draft at Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Depot Breslau, R 253, no. 19, f. 10r; the dispatched letter is unknown. The books are not identified. Breslau is Dudith's dateline.
10. Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 2.1, Folger text, Cassius's proposal and excerpts from Brutus's reply; line breaks preserved.
11. Plutarch, "Marcus Brutus," trans. Thomas North, in *Shakespeare's Plutarch*, ed. W. W. Skeat (London: Macmillan, 1875), p. 114, printed page. This is Skeat's edited North witness. The 1579 TCP A09802 text, encoded p. 1060, transcribes "othes" twice as "others," obscuring the oath passage in word searches: TCP text. The no-oath fact is already available in North's translation of Plutarch; it is not Shakespeare's independent invention. Compare Cox, Introduction, paragraph 25, on Shakespeare's dramatization of the disagreement.

12. Henry Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279, fol. 15. Transcription by John O'Donnell; spelling, capitalization and punctuation modernized. Neville writes "solemne oath" and "a president whereof was to be seene in the storie." For a supplementary calendar account, see Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1601–1603* (London, 1870), pp. 5–8, especially p. 7 and p. 8.
13. Jean de Serres, *An Historical Collection, of the Most Memorable Accidents, and Tragicall Massacres of France* (London: Thomas Creede, 1598), pp. 63–64, the Nantes assembly and "The solemne protestation of the confederates," TCP A01160, public text. The account is paraphrased here. It establishes that the Amboise oath was available in English before the play; Neville does not name this book as the history he used.

# Timon of Athens: The Open Table

Chapter 33

In January 1600, Neville was being eaten out of house and home. English gentlemen kept arriving at his embassy in Paris, and he could neither close his gates nor refuse them a place at his table. Writing to Thomas Windebank, he asked for help in securing his return to England:

> the burden is to heavye for mee every way, especyally
> for my **purse**: and is like rather to grow every day, then to
> diminish, by reason of the continuall repaire over hither of
> English gentlemen, to whome I can not **shut my gates**, nor
> refuse my table

The guests, he continued, accepted his hospitality so readily that he had "somtimes a dozen or sixteene at once besides my owne company." His position required him to keep feeding them:

> I will hold out as long as I can for the queenes **honnour** & mine owne **credit**, hoping there willbe som compassion taken of me in the end. And ever heereafter my mot shallbe **fie vpon honnour that brings no profit**.[1]

Keeping an open table sustained Neville's standing while consuming the money needed to maintain it. That conflict runs through *Timon of Athens*. Timon's creditors can see where his hospitality is taking him. One describes the household in *Timon of Athens* 2.1:

> SENATOR
> [...] No porter at his **gate**
> But rather one that smiles and still invites
> All that pass by. It cannot hold. No reason
> Can sound his state in safety.—Caphis, ho![2]

Neville's "I can not shut my gates" gives the host's side of the predicament. The obligations of hospitality continue while his means diminish. By the time Timon's creditors send their servants to collect, the money is gone. In *Timon of Athens* 3.4:

> LUCIUS' MAN
> 'Tis deepest winter in Lord Timon's **purse**:
> That is, one may reach deep enough and yet
> Find little.

Honour and credit keep Neville's table open, but his anger breaks through in "fie vpon honnour that brings no profit." Timon's steward Flavius likewise sets the host's reputation against what it costs to maintain. In *Timon* 2.2, he repeats the praise Timon's hospitality purchases, then exposes its dependence on money:

FLAVIUS
[...]
Great Timon, **noble, worthy, royal** Timon!
Ah, when the **means** are gone that **buy this praise**,
The breath is gone whereof this praise is made.
Feast-won, fast-lost. One cloud of winter showers,
These flies are couched.[3]

Both passages expose the expense concealed inside an honourable reputation. Neville resents having to pay for it; Flavius sees how quickly it will vanish when the money runs out.

## From the open table to the forest

Neville's next sentence turns from the cost of honour to a specific escape: he will leave public life and become a hermit in the forest.

> when I com home I will becom an **hermit** in Ashridge or somwhere in the **forrest**, and do pennance for the faults I committe heere.

Timon follows that course after his former guests refuse to help him. He repudiates them at a final banquet and leaves Athens. In *Timon of Athens* 4.1:

TIMON
Timon will to the **woods**, where he shall find
Th' unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.[4]

"You may see I am not in love with my place," Neville tells Windebank. His forest retreat is the answer to the crowded embassy: he imagines exchanging a house he cannot close to visitors for a life apart from them.[1]

The play gives that withdrawal a sustained woodland setting. North's Timon has a house and yard; Painter's has a cabin in fields and an adjoining garden. Lucian places him on a stony plot on the slopes of Hymettus and later has him plan a fortified dwelling for himself and his treasure. In the play, the woods and cave become Timon's refuge from the society he once entertained.[5]

Neville's complaint already brings the pressures and the imagined escape together. He cannot shut his gates; honour requires him to bear the expense; resentment follows; and he longs to disappear into the forest. The letter moves in a few sentences through the conflict the play develops at length. Its force lies in how closely the host's predicament, anger and desired retreat belong together.

Neville wrote the letter in January 1600, before the usual dating of *Timon* to about 1604–06.[6]

## Poverty and contempt

The cost of the embassy did not end when Neville came home. On 14 January 1609, seeking Salisbury's help, he said that his French service had cost him about

£4,000 of his own money. With many children to provide for, he had struggled to conceal his necessities:

> although **poverty be no vice**, especially not growing by any disorder of a mans own, but by service imposed, yet whatsoever the cause is, **the effect is contempt** for the most part.[7]

In *Timon of Athens* 4.2, the Second Servant describes how Timon's former companions slip away as his fortune disappears, leaving him to walk alone:

> SECOND SERVANT
> [...]
> With his disease of all-shunned **poverty**,
> Walks, like **contempt**, alone.[8]

Neville's letters give this conflict a personal history. In 1600, honour kept his table open while he wished himself a hermit in the forest. In 1609, still burdened by the cost of that service, he feared the contempt that poverty brought. *Timon* gives dramatic form to the same bitter relationship between hospitality, honour and money: the man who pays to sustain his standing finds that his standing depends on his continuing ability to pay.

## Notes and sources

1. Henry Neville to Thomas Windebank, Paris, 10 January 1599/1600, The National Archives, SP 12/274, f.15; State Papers Online, Gale MC4304580829. TNA piece record. Transcription by John O'Donnell. Manuscript line breaks are retained in the opening block quotation; the subsequent extracts follow O'Donnell's transcription without reproducing manuscript lineation. The final short quotation regularizes its initial capital. The letter does not identify which forest.
2. William Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, 2.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. The speaker is the Senator, a creditor, not Timon's steward. Shakespeare quotations retain Folger's printed line breaks, including in prose speeches. Bold marks verbal or conceptual correspondences, distinguished in the accompanying prose.
3. Shakespeare, *Timon*, 2.2, Folger, Flavius on praise bought by hospitality; and 3.4, Folger, Lucius's Man. The following scene of renewed hospitality is 3.6.
4. Shakespeare, *Timon*, 4.1, Folger.
5. Plutarch, *Life of Marcus Antonius*, trans. Thomas North (first published 1579), the Timon digression: North's Timon passage, transcribed by the Pulter Project, citing the 1579 edition, sig. 4P4r–v. North describes the fig tree in Timon's yard and his proposed building there; Painter describes a cabin in fields and an adjoining garden. Lucian's opening and the speeches surrounding the discovery of the gold place Timon on the lower slopes of Hymettus, digging a stony plot, and planning a small fortified dwelling. William Painter, *The Palace of Pleasure*, first tome, novel 28, pp.112–113 in the Jacobs/Haslewood edition. Lucian, *Timon the Misanthrope*, especially the opening account of Timon's expenditure and abandonment; H. W. and F. G. Fowler's translation, *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, I (Oxford, 1905). The Fowler translation is used to describe the classical dialogue, not proposed as a source available to Shakespeare. The Royal Shakespeare Company's source account identifies North as the main source and Lucian, through translation, as a possible additional source. The extent and route of Lucian's influence remain uncertain. A further brief reference occurs in *Le vite de filosofi cavate da Laertio et altri* (Venice: Gioacchino Brugnolo, 1602), p.66: the life headed "Timon Niceo" distinguishes

its philosopher from the Athenian who refused human company. This edition is recorded in the 1780 Billingbear catalogue and identified with the surviving Audley End volume, English Heritage object 81035055. The illustrated biography concerns the philosopher, not the Athenian misanthrope; the catalogue does not establish when the family acquired it. Anonymous, *Timon: A Play*, ed. Alexander Dyce (London: Shakespeare Society, 1842), 5.3, p.85, and 5.5, p.91; digitized edition. Both printed pages were checked against the scan. At p.85 Timon chooses a secluded place shaded by cypress trees; at p.91 Eutrapelus urges him to "forsake the woods." The manuscript is conventionally dated about 1600; see the Royal Collection catalogue. Dyce's introduction discusses, without establishing, its possible use by Shakespeare. A woodland retreat is thus also present in this separate dramatic treatment; the comparison with Neville does not depend on the setting being unprecedented.

6. Royal Shakespeare Company, *Timon*: dates and sources, for stylistic dating to about 1604–06 and the unsettled textual history.

7. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, 14 January 1609 (1608/9), The National Archives, SP 14/43, f.29; transcription by John O'Donnell, checked against the manuscript. Spelling is modernized here; manuscript lineation is not retained. The letter and its £4,000 claim are calendared in Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, James I, 1603–1610* (1857), p.486, no.22 (British History Online). This letter follows the play's usual composition dating; it documents Neville's continuing concern with poverty and reputation.

8. William Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, 4.2.16–17, Folger Shakespeare Library, Second Servant. The association was not unique: in Geoffrey Fenton's *Certaine tragicall discourses* (1567), the story of Perillo likewise connects poverty with contempt (EEBO-TCP A03432). The comparison here concerns Neville's experience of financial loss and social standing, rather than the rarity of the two words.

# Coriolanus: Reading Rome

Chapter 34

When Volumnia pleads with her son to spare Rome, she reminds him that her whole life has been invested in him:

> VOLUMNIA [...]
> [...] Thou hast never in thy life
> Showed thy dear mother any courtesy
> When she, poor hen, fond of **no second brood**,
> Has clucked thee to the wars and safely home,
> Loaden with honor. [...]
> — *Coriolanus*, 5.3.[1]

Earlier she calls him "the **only son** of / my womb" (*Coriolanus*, 1.3). Her appeal draws its force from that concentration of love and ambition. She has sent this one son into danger to win honour; now she demands that he use his power to save his country.

Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, the play's principal narrative source, gives Shakespeare a widowed mother and a son whose greatest pleasure is to return crowned with honours and see her joy. Another Roman historian, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, supplies a more particular family history. In Dionysius the mother, there called Veturia, recalls the choice she made:

> When you reached manhood and it was in my power to be freed from these cares by **marrying again, to rear other children**, and lay up many hopes to support me in my old age, **I would not do so**, but remained at the same hearth and put up with the same kind of life, placing all my pleasures and all my advantages **in you alone**.[2]

Earlier in the same appeal she calls him her "dear and **only son**." North's corresponding account gives the widowhood and devotion, but does not specify this refusal of another marriage and further children. The hen with "no second brood" gives Shakespeare's Volumnia the same concentration of hope in a single child.[3] The image gives Volumnia a claim upon her son that no military or political allegiance can discharge.

Henry Neville studied Dionysius under his tutor, Henry Savile. His copy of the 1546 Greek *Roman Antiquities*, now at Audley End, contains an annotation attributed to him correcting the chronology of Rome's kings. The note supplies sixty-two missing years and names Ancus Martius and Tarquinius Collatinus. The arithmetic restores the total from 182 to 244 years, although the second name should be Tarquinius Priscus. This was attentive reading of the ancient history. Ancus, whose reign the annotation restores to the calculation, also appears among Coriolanus's ancestors in the play.[4] Brutus includes him in the family history he coaches the citizens to repeat:

BRUTUS [...]
The noble house o' th' Martians, from whence came
That **Ancus Martius**, Numa's daughter's son,
Who after great Hostilius here was king, [...]
— *Coriolanus*, 2.3.[5]

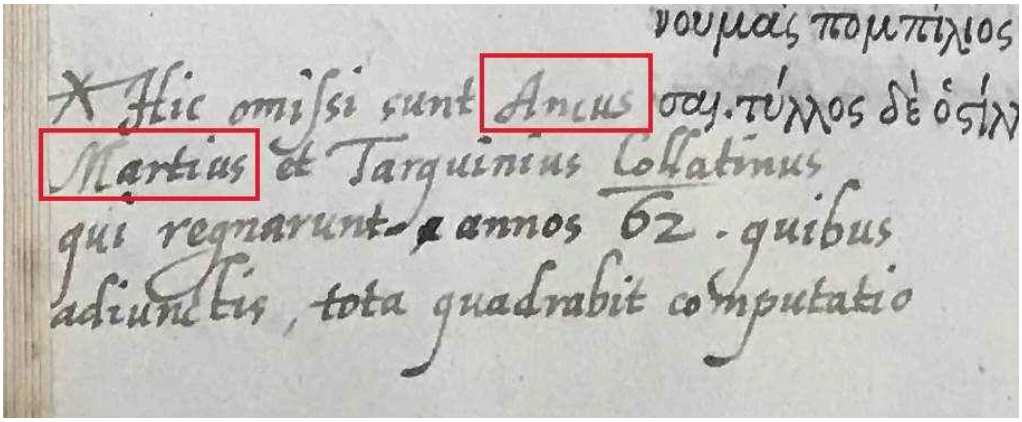



**Figure 34.1:** Neville's chronological correction in Dionysius, Roman Antiquities (Paris, 1546), Audley End copy, p. 45. Red outlines identify "Ancus Martius," written across two lines.

The relevance of that reading extends beyond a name in the margin. Dionysius gives fuller accounts of Rome's food crisis, its political divisions and the mother's intervention than the corresponding passages in North. Several of Shakespeare's departures from North come into sharper focus beside this book Neville had studied.

## Hidden food and the starving citizens

The play opens with citizens ready to kill Coriolanus. They believe that Rome's rulers let them starve while keeping stores for themselves:

SECOND CITIZEN Care for us? True, indeed! They ne'er
cared for us yet. Suffer us to famish, and their
**storehouses crammed with grain**; make edicts for
usury to support usurers; repeal daily any wholesome
act established against the rich, and provide
more piercing statutes daily to chain up and restrain
the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they will;
and there's all the love they bear us.
— *Coriolanus*, 1.1.[6]

North supplies a famine and agitators spreading "false tales and rumours" against the nobility. He emphasizes the poor's inability to buy corn: "though there had been plenty enough, yet the common people had no money to buy

it." Dionysius gives Sicinius and Brutus a more specific accusation. The wealthy, they say, have:

> not only **provisions secretly hoarded up**, but also money to purchase imported foodstuffs, and thus could treat the calamity with fine scorn, whereas the plebeians had neither resource.[7]

Both the historian's speakers and Shakespeare's citizens turn scarcity into an accusation of unequal suffering: food exists, but the rich possess it while the poor go hungry. The play does not describe concealed stores; it makes their abundance brutally visible in "crammed." The play also marks this as a disputed charge. Menenius reports the citizens' belief that "The city is well stored," and Martius challenges it: "They say there's grain / enough?" Dionysius supplies the allegation of hidden supplies beyond North's account of the dearth.

Debora Shuger has placed the opening citizens beside another writer familiar to Neville's scholarly circle: John Chrysostom. In his seventeenth homily on 2 Corinthians, Chrysostom attacks those who profit from hunger:

> But when thou both **shuttest up corn and raisest the price**, and devisest other unusual tricks of traffic; what hope of salvation shalt thou have henceforth? Thou hast been bidden to give freely to the hungry, but thou dost not give at a suitable price even.[8]

Chrysostom makes the hoarder's treatment of the hungry a test of his faith. Shakespeare gives the charge to citizens demanding political action. Neville's former tutor Henry Savile devoted years to the Greek edition of Chrysostom published in 1610–13; Shuger herself draws attention to Savile's work. The edition appeared after the play's usual dating to 1607–08, but the intellectual connection joins the Roman narrative to a continuing argument about wealth, hunger and responsibility.[9]

## War as a remedy for division

Hunger also supplies the occasion for a political remedy: war abroad to end division at home. Dudley Digges discusses that policy through the story of Coriolanus. His fourth discourse in *Foure Paradoxes* (1604) argues that war can sometimes do less harm to a well-governed state than peace. Andrew Hadfield, returning to a source proposal previously discussed by Kenneth Muir, connects Digges's argument with *Coriolanus*.[10]

Digges prefers a man's shedding his blood for his king's honour or his "**country's safety**" to "the sordid sparing, **lazy living**, or foolish delaying" of those who avoid action.[11] Volumnia puts that choice in the imagined lives of her sons:

VOLUMNIA [...]
[...] had I a dozen sons, each in my
love alike and none less dear than thine and my
good Martius, I had rather had eleven **die nobly**
for their **country** than one **voluptuously surfeit out**
**of action**.
— *Coriolanus*, 1.3.[12]

Digges discusses Coriolanus by name. He describes Rome's famine, popular resentment and the nobility's contempt for the poor, then the Senate's remedy: war against the Volscians. Rich and poor will share a camp and its dangers. The play opens on the same calculation. When news comes that the Volscians are in arms, Martius welcomes it: "Then we shall ha' means to vent / Our musty superfluity."[13] The citizens protesting over corn can now be sent to war. Digges shows this Roman episode being read in 1604 as a policy for governing a divided people.[14]

## Menenius and the diseased limb

Later the crisis reverses. The citizens' tribunes now seek Coriolanus's destruction, and Menenius tries to save him. Shakespeare makes the dispute turn on a surgical distinction:

SICINIUS
He's a **disease** that must be **cut away**.
MENENIUS
O, he's a **limb** that has but a **disease**—
**Mortal to cut it off**; to cure it easy.
What has he done to Rome that's worthy death?
— *Coriolanus*, 3.1.[15]

For Sicinius, Coriolanus is the disease; for Menenius, he is a part of Rome that can be cured. Killing him would injure the community that depends upon him.

Dionysius gives Menenius a closely related argument. Addressing the Senate during the earlier conflict with the plebeians, he warns that:

> neither the **ailing part** of a human body ought always to be **lopped off** (for that would be to render the appearance of the rest ugly and its **term of life brief**) nor the disordered part of a civil community to be driven out (since that would be the quickest way of **destroying the whole** in time through the loss of its separate parts).[16]

The same speaker argues against the same remedy: removing the troublesome part can destroy the body that remains. The application changes. Dionysius's Menenius defends the people against exclusion by the ruling class; Shakespeare's defends an aristocratic soldier against the people's leaders. An argument for preserving the community crosses from one side of the Roman conflict to the other.

North gives Rome's rulers a different remedy. They send citizens away to colony and war to clear the city of "many mutinous and seditious persons, being the superfluous ill humours that grievously fed this disease." That is a purge. Dionysius's Menenius argues instead for keeping the troubled body together. Shakespeare's Menenius takes the same side of that argument: preserving the part protects the body.[17]

## Making laws and managing voices

The struggle to preserve Rome is also a struggle over who governs it. The opening citizen's speech adds a pointed account of legislation. North describes creditors stripping debtors of their property and a Senate favouring the rich. Shakespeare has the rulers actively making and unmaking law: "make edicts," "repeal daily any wholesome / act," and provide "more piercing statutes" (*Coriolanus*, 1.1). The complaint identifies how power works. Those who control legislation create advantages for their own class and remove protections from the poor.[18]

The same practical attention appears when Coriolanus challenges the tribunes' authority. North already gives him a complaint against an officer who acknowledges "no superior to command him." Shakespeare develops the constitutional consequence:

> CORIOLANUS [...]
> It makes the consuls base! And my soul aches
> To know, when **two authorities** are up,
> **Neither supreme**, how soon confusion
> May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take
> The one by th' other.
> — *Coriolanus*, 3.1.[19]

He objects to an arrangement in which the governing elite cannot act without popular assent:

> CORIOLANUS [...]
> [...] where gentry, title,
> wisdom
> **Cannot conclude but by the yea and no**
> Of general ignorance—it must omit
> Real necessities and give way the while [...]
> — *Coriolanus*, 3.1.

North also describes mutual dependence: later, when Rome considers recalling the exile, the people cannot confirm anything by vote unless the Senate proposes it first. Shakespeare makes the dependence a matter of urgent argument, here voiced by a man who resents submitting to the people's judgment.

The tribunes, meanwhile, know how to organize that judgment. After the citizens have promised Coriolanus their support, the tribunes rebuke them for not speaking "as you were lessoned" and tell them what to say when withdrawing

it: "Say you chose him / More after our commandment" (*Coriolanus*, 2.3). Before the trial Sicinius asks:

> SICINIUS Have you a **catalogue**
> Of all the **voices** that we have procured,
> Set down by th' **poll**?
> — *Coriolanus*, 3.3.[20]

North supplies voting by tribes, counting by poll and manipulation of the charges. Shakespeare puts the preparation onstage: voices secured beforehand, written down and directed into coordinated responses. The audience sees how an apparent expression of popular will is arranged.

Neville had practical experience of the work required to turn opinion into parliamentary action. He took part in the debates on Anglo-Scottish union and naturalization in 1606–07, close to the play's usual dating. On 21 June 1608, writing to Ralph Winwood about assistance to the Dutch, he expressed his willingness to:

> cooperate as seriously with my **voice and best endeavour in Parliament** to enable the king to yield them a real assistance.[21]

Parliament was not sitting that year; Neville was looking towards a future meeting. His later *Advice* to James proposed hearing representatives chosen by the Commons themselves, so that they could explain the House's intentions without others construing them on its behalf. The proposals would be discussed and reported back without binding the House.[22] Questions of who could speak for a body, how its assent could be secured and what would prevent cooperation were part of Neville's political work. They are questions Shakespeare develops at length beyond the corresponding account in North.

Rome's conduits also enter the play through Coriolanus's ancestry. Brutus coaches the citizens to explain their earlier support by claiming that the tribunes had lectured them about Coriolanus's distinguished family. His proposed account names Ancus Martius, the king in Neville's chronological note, and Publius and Quintus, "That our best water brought by conduits hither" (*Coriolanus*, 2.3). North already places these family details together. Shakespeare makes them part of the management of public opinion: even Rome's water supply can be recruited to secure, or explain away, a politician's support.[5]

## Rome's conduits and London's New River

Water becomes an image of power when Coriolanus accuses the senators of surrendering their authority to a tribune:

CORIOLANUS [...]
You grave but reckless senators, have you thus
Given Hydra here to choose an officer,
That with his peremptory "shall," being but
The horn and noise o' th' monster's, wants not spirit
To say he'll turn your **current in a ditch**
And make your **channel** his? [...]
— *Coriolanus*, 3.1.[23]

R. B. Parker, in his Oxford edition, writes that the imagery:

> probably refers to the goldsmith Hugh Middleton's scheme to bring clean water into London by channels from streams in Hertfordshire.[24]

Marc Geisler endorses the connection and develops its political meaning. Myddelton's reshaping of the landscape, and the objections of landowners whose property the works crossed, offer a counterpart to the tribunes' redirection of power away from Rome's Senate.

Neville helped finance that undertaking. The City obtained parliamentary powers for the watercourse in 1606; Myddelton took over in 1609. A receipt dated 26 November 1610 records Neville's involvement by then and is docketed £200. He eventually held two of the thirty-six parts of the adventurers' interest after the Crown's half had been reserved. Two further surviving receipts establish payments of £50 each.[25]

In his draft estate instructions of July 1612, Neville calls the investment "my **two parts in the new cut or river**" and expects it to "**grow and increase much more in time than at the first**." He was planning for his family's share in the venture's future income.[26]

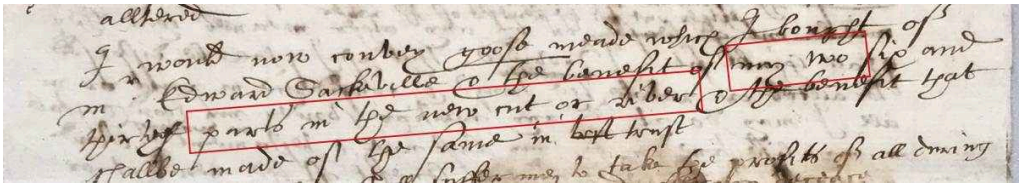


**Figure 34.2:** Neville's estate instructions, July 1612: "my two parts in the new cut or river." Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1.

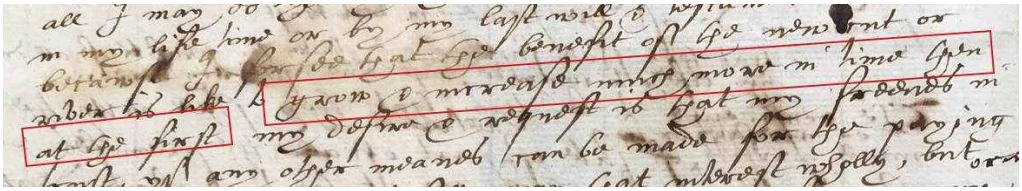


**Figure 34.3:** Neville's estate instructions: "grow and increase much more in time than at the first." Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1.

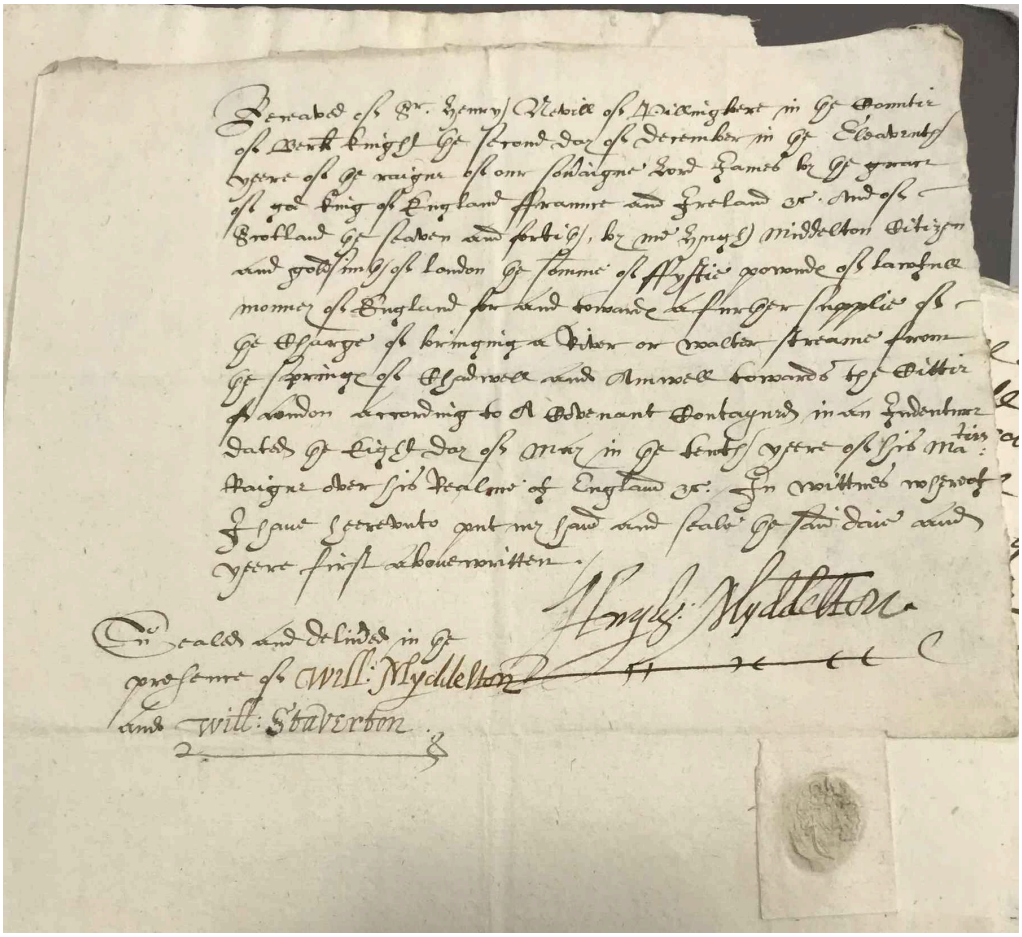


**Figure 34.4:** Hugh Myddelton's receipt for a further £50 from Neville, 2 December 1613. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O24.

The surviving payments postdate the play's usual dating; they establish Neville's financial participation, not the date at which he first became interested. Parker's proposed allusion nevertheless concerns a specific enterprise in which Neville acquired a substantial stake.

## The interpretation of the time

Coriolanus returns to the Volscians with a peace treaty signed by Rome's consuls and patricians and bearing the Senate's seal. Aufidius tells the lords not to read it. The charge of treason overtakes the account of service, and Coriolanus is killed.[27] Aufidius has already explained how public honour can turn against a man:

AUFIDIUS [...]
[...] So our virtues
Lie in th' **interpretation of the time**,
And power, unto itself most commendable,
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair
T' extol what it hath done.
— *Coriolanus*, 4.7.[28]

Neville warns James of the same political danger in his *Advice* of about 1613. Before trying new financial projects, the king must repair his relations with the Commons:

whereas otherwise whiles **dislikes continue** *seu benè, seu malè facta premunt*.[29]

The Latin recalls Tacitus's account of Galba: when a ruler is hated, deeds done well and deeds done badly alike count against him. Neville's answer is to restore cooperation by hearing the Commons. Shakespeare gives the judgment to Aufidius, who exploits it: the man whose victories made him indispensable can be destroyed by the interpretation put upon his peace.

Then the verdict changes once more. After the murder, Aufidius helps give his rival a soldier's funeral:

AUFIDIUS My rage is gone,
And I am struck with sorrow.—**Take him up.**
Help, three o' th' **chiefest soldiers**; I'll be one.—
Beat thou the drum that it speak mournfully.—
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
Hath widowed and unchilded many a one,
Which to this hour bewail the injury,
Yet he shall have a noble memory.
Assist.
— *Coriolanus*, 5.6.[30]

North has the Volscians "honourably bury him," setting out his tomb "with great store of armour and spoils." Dionysius specifies who carries the body:

the young men who were the most **distinguished for their military achievements took up the bier**[31]

The military distinction of Dionysius's bearers reappears in Shakespeare's order to the "chiefest soldiers," with Aufidius adding himself to their number. The correspondence reaches into the play's final stage action. The man denounced as a traitor is carried away with military honour, borne by the enemy who helped to kill him. From Volumnia's one child to the soldiers carrying his body, Dionysius illuminates details through which Shakespeare makes the Roman story his own. Neville's study of that history belongs beside his experience of Parliament and his investment in London's water supply: the study of ancient Rome and the practice of government were parts of the same life.

## Notes and sources

1. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 5.3 and 1.3. Shakespeare quotations follow Folger; North quotations modernize spelling. North, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* (1579), "Coriolanus," pp. 237, 239, TCP A09802, supplies widowhood and maternal delight in military honours.
2. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 8.48.1–2 and 8.51.3–4, translated by Earnest Cary, Loeb Classical Library, vol. V. English quotations from Dionysius in this chapter use Cary's modern translation for the comparison of content, not as a proposed English source. The refusal of another marriage and further children is also present in the sixteenth-century Latin translation: 1555 Gelenius, p. 153. Shakespeare does not expressly narrate refusal of remarriage; the comparison concerns the absence of another child.
3. A further, less exact comparison concerns the mother's appeal. North says Coriolanus hears her "without interrupting her speech at all," whereas Dionysius, 8.47, has him intervene during it. North then has him remain silent before his mother begins again. In Shakespeare, 5.3, he rises to leave after the exchanges with his wife and son, and Volumnia resumes the appeal: "Nay, go not from us thus." This is an attempted departure, not the same interruption of a speech.
4. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* (Paris: Robert Estienne, 1546), Audley End copy, p. 45, at 1.75. Photograph and identification discussed in Ken Feinstein, "Part 8: Henry Neville and Henry Savile Annotations in Roman Antiquities", 16 October 2020. The note reads: "Hic omissi sunt Ancus / Martius et Tarquinius Collatinus / qui regnarunt [ink correction] annos 62. quibus / adiunctis, tota quadrabit computatio." The name *Collatinus* is retained as written; the chronological correction requires the reign of *Priscus*. Compare the printed chronology in the 1546 edition, p. 45.
5. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 2.3; Plutarch, "Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus," opening paragraph, Thomas North's translation, *Lives* (1579). North likewise names Ancus and the family members who brought water by conduits.
6. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 1.1. Compare North's narrative of scarcity and purchasing power in the "Life of Coriolanus."
7. Dionysius, *Roman Antiquities*, 7.14.3–4, English translation by Earnest Cary. The speakers are Sicinius and Brutus, then aediles; the hidden supplies are their accusation, not an established fact of the narrative.
8. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, first series, vol. XII (1889), CCEL text, Homily XVII on 2 Corinthians, §3, p. 362. The English is the nineteenth-century translation. Debora K. Shuger, "Subversive Fathers and Suffering Subjects: Shakespeare and Christianity," in *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540–1688*, ed. Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 46–69, chapter DOI, p. 49 and p. 64 n. 17, supplies the published comparison with *Coriolanus*.
9. Shuger, "Subversive Fathers," p. 52 on Savile and pp. 53–54 on the wider Christian and English anti-hoarding context. Savile's edition of Chrysostom appeared at Eton in eight volumes, 1610–13.
10. Andrew Hadfield, "Shakespeare and the Digges Brothers", *Reformation* 25.1 (2020), 2–17, especially 13–17. Hadfield discusses Kenneth Muir's earlier source proposal.
11. Thomas and Dudley Digges, *Foure Paradoxes, or Politique Discourses* (London, 1604), fourth paradox, opening argument, sigs. M4v–N1r; TCP A20463. Spelling modernized. Words in quotation marks are Digges's; the rest of the sentence summarizes his argument.
12. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 1.3.
13. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 1.1. North also describes using war and colonization to remove "superfluous ill humours" from Rome.
14. Dudley Digges, fourth paradox in Thomas and Dudley Digges, *Foure Paradoxes* (1604), p. 104; TCP A20463. The marginal references identify Plutarch's life of Coriolanus and Livy, book II.

15. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 3.1.
16. Dionysius, *Roman Antiquities*, 6.54.2, Cary translation.
17. North, *Lives* (1579), "Coriolanus," passage on removing seditious citizens as superfluous humours; also the comparison of the Gracchi with Agis and Cleomenes, p. 895, on political remedies and the physician's sword: TCP A09802. Related English anti-amputation arguments also occur in Jerónimo Osório, translated by John Fen, *A learned and very eloquent treatie* (1568), TCP A08569, and John Bridges, *A defence of the government established in the Church of Englande* (1587), TCP A16832.
18. Plutarch, "Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus" and the appended comparison with Alcibiades, in Thomas North, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* (1579), TCP A09802; compare Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 1.1. The comparison concerns these two North units, not every Life in the volume. North already supplies oppression by creditors and disagreement about the severity of the law; the added feature is the citizen's formulation of legislation made and repealed for economic interests.
19. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 3.1, especially the speeches concerning "two authorities" and the "yea and no." North's corn debate supplies Coriolanus's hostility to the tribunate, the diminished consulship and the tribune acknowledging no superior; the later proposed recall supplies the rule requiring the Senate's initiative before a popular vote. North quotations modernize spelling.
20. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 2.3 and 3.3; North, "Life of Coriolanus," trial narrative. North already describes the shift from voting by hundreds to voting by tribes, counting by poll, and manipulation of the accusation. The comparison identifies the play's advance catalogue of procured voices and instructions for coordinated responses.
21. Andrew Thrush, "NEVILLE, Sir Henry I (1564–1615)", *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, for union, naturalization and parliamentary activity in 1606–07. Neville to Winwood, London, 21 June 1608, Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, II (1725), p. 411; quotation checked against the printed page, with spelling and capitalization modernized. Folger's dating discussion gives 1607–08 as a possible composition period. The letter anticipates parliamentary business; no parliamentary session took place in 1608.
22. Neville, *Advice*, Gardiner II, p. 393. The representatives would discuss and report to the House without binding it.
23. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 3.1. Shakespeare quotations throughout follow Folger's text and lineation; ellipses mark omissions, including omitted parts of lines.
24. Marc Geisler, "Collecting a National Voice: Shakespeare's Coriolanus and the People's Grievances", *Journal of Theatre and Drama* 3 (1997), 17–44, section III and notes 40–41, quoting R. B. Parker, ed., *Coriolanus*, Oxford Shakespeare (1994), p. 5. Parker's wording is quoted here through Geisler. The political explanation that follows summarizes Geisler's next two paragraphs. Lee Bliss, *Coriolanus*, updated New Cambridge Shakespeare edition (2010), Introduction, pp. 3–4, records the proposed allusion but considers disputes over agricultural water rights sufficient to explain the imagery.
25. Bernard Rudden, *The New River: A Legal History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), Appendix E, pp. 274–278, prints the agreement of 8 May 1612 acknowledging Neville's £200 already paid and assigning two thirty-sixth shares after the Crown's half had been reserved. Leslie Tomory, *The History of the London Water Industry, 1580–1820* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), pp. 50–57, discusses the venture, its financing and political opposition. Receipts of 26 November 1610, 18 May 1612 and 2 December 1613: Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/O24. The 1610 receipt is docketed £200; this is treated as evidence of the payment already acknowledged in 1612, not an additional £200. The later receipts record £50 each. For the fuller business account, see Chapter 9.
26. Henry Neville, draft instructions for the conveyance of woods and payment of debts, July 1612, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1; estate instructions catalogue. The draft contains can-

cellations and insertions. The two quoted passages concern the New River interest; spelling is modernized, including "then" to "than."

27. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 5.6.
28. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 4.7.
29. Neville, *Advice Touching the Holding of a Parliament*, in Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of England*, II (1863), Appendix V, pp. 389–394, especially p. 394. Tacitus, *Histories*, 1.7. The English explanation paraphrases the Latin.
30. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 5.6. North, *Lives* (1579), "Coriolanus," p. 259, TCP A09802. The specified military bearers are the additional detail; the honourable burial is already in North.
31. Dionysius, *Roman Antiquities*, 8.59.3, Cary translation. Dionysius does not specify three bearers or participation by Aufidius; his death narrative describes stoning.

# Antony and Cleopatra: The Queen My Mistress

Chapter 35

An Egyptian messenger comes before Caesar after Antony's death, asking what Caesar intends for Cleopatra:

> EGYPTIAN
> A poor Egyptian yet, the **Queen my mistress**,
> Confined in all she has, her monument,
> Of thy intents desires instruction, [...]

— *Antony and Cleopatra*, 5.1[1]

Shakespeare's principal source, North's translation of Plutarch, has no Egyptian envoy at this point. North sends Proculeius to Cleopatra; Shakespeare adds the queen's representative approaching Caesar. North's Proculeius tells Cleopatra to be "of good cheere"; Shakespeare's Caesar replies to her envoy, "Bid her have good heart." The reassurance becomes part of a formal audience.[2]

"The Queen my mistress" was a recurrent formula in Neville's embassy correspondence. Reporting his first audience with the French king in May 1599, he described how he had presented Elizabeth's letters and explained his appointment:

> the **Queen my mistress** being very willing to continue the good amity, that had been so long since begun and entertained between them, and knowing that nothing could be more available thereunto, than a good and real intelligence between them, had sent me to reside about his person as her ordinary ambassador[3]

Both Shakespeare's Egyptian envoy and Neville speak to a foreign ruler as the representative of an absent queen. Neville's "mistress" is Elizabeth, whose instructions he carries and whose interests he must defend. The Egyptian's is Cleopatra, whose fate turns on Caesar's answer.

Writing in French to Villeroy, the secretary of state, on 6 June 1599, Neville uses the same formula, *la royne ma maistresse*—word for word, "the queen my mistress"—while pressing for a satisfactory answer to Elizabeth's demands.[4]

This was habitual language for Neville. The exact sequence occurs twelve times in ten English letters to Cecil between May 1599 and January 1600, as he discusses alliances, debts, war and obligations between rulers. The table adds one possessive form, giving thirteen instances.[5]

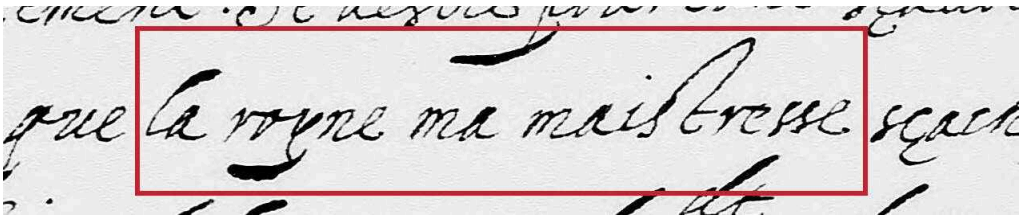



**Figure 35.1:** "La royne ma maistresse" in Neville's letter to Villeroy, 6 June 1599. BnF, Français 15970, f.102r. Detail; red box added.

| Date and recipient | Wording | Winwood, I |
|---|---|---|
| 15 May 1599 · Robert Cecil | **the Queen my mistress** being very willing to continue the good amity | p. 20 |
| 26 May 1599 · Robert Cecil | the other respect of **the Queen my mistress** was like to continue | p. 33 |
| 26 May 1599 (separate letter) · Robert Cecil | the great wrong and ingratitude done therein to **the Queen my mistress** | p. 36 |
| 6 June 1599 · Robert Cecil | so would I upon **the Queen's my mistress's** | p. 45 |
| 15 June 1599 · Robert Cecil | anything else that might concern **the Queen my mistress** | p. 49 |
| 13 July 1599 · Robert Cecil | so little respect towards **the Queen my mistress** | p. 61 |
| 13 July 1599 · Robert Cecil | want of respect towards **the Queen my mistress** | p. 61 |
| 28 July 1599 · Robert Cecil | the money **the Queen my mistress** had lent the King | p. 79 |
| 7 August 1599 · Robert Cecil | Whereas **the Queen my mistress**, by reason of her present war | p. 85 |
| 15 November 1599 · Robert Cecil | for the interest of **the Queen my mistress** | p. 129 |
| 15 November 1599 · Robert Cecil | a due regard of **the Queen my mistress** | p. 129 |
| 3 January 1599/1600 · Robert Cecil | against the subjects of **the Queen my mistress** | p. 141 |
| 26 January 1599/1600 · Robert Cecil | **the Queen my mistress** had discharged the part of a true and perfect friend and confederate | p. 148 |

In the surveyed drama through 1616, "queen my mistress" occurs in two Shakespeare plays and none of the 254 other dramatic entries. The other Shakespeare example is Posthumus's exclamation to Imogen in *Cymbeline* 1.1:

POSTHUMUS My **queen, my mistress**![6]

Posthumus addresses his beloved; the Egyptian speaks for his queen. The formula also occurs in other printed prose, including ambassadorial speech in Hakluyt, giving Cleopatra's embassy the voice of contemporary diplomacy.[7]

## Honour and profit

Overwhelmed by the expense of entertaining English visitors in Paris, Neville told Thomas Windebank in January 1600 what his future motto would be:

> And ever heereafter my mot shallbe **fie vpon honnour that brings no profit**.[8]

Pompey turns the same opposition into a declaration of principle in *Antony and Cleopatra* 2.7. His enemies are drinking aboard his vessel. Menas proposes cutting the cable and killing them, leaving Pompey master of their territories. Pompey says Menas should have acted without consulting him; now that he knows the plan, he must forbid it:

> POMPEY Ah, this thou shouldst have done
> And not have spoke on 't! In me 'tis villainy;
> In thee 't had been good service. Thou must know
> 'Tis not my **profit** that does lead mine **honor**;
> Mine **honor**, it. Repent that e'er thy tongue
> Hath so betrayed thine act. Being done unknown,
> I should have found it afterwards well done,
> But must condemn it now. Desist and drink.[9]

The episode is already in North. His Pompey says Menas should have acted without telling him, then declares: "I was neuer taught to breake my faith nor to be counted a traitor." Shakespeare preserves the compromising admission but gives it a new verbal shape: "profit" must follow "honor."[10]

Neville curses honour that costs him money; Pompey insists that honour must govern profit, while admitting he would have welcomed the profitable crime had it been committed without his knowledge. Neville makes a bitter joke of the conflict between public standing and personal advantage; Pompey makes a convenient principle of it.

## "Perpetual amity"

The same letter reporting Neville's first audience contains a second expression used in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Neville had urged the king to maintain free trade between England and France. He argued that friendship would last longer if it rested on the interests of their subjects as well as the dispositions of their rulers. He therefore asked that trade continue:

> in such ample sort as it had been in his predecessors' times, and according to the treaties of **perpetual amity** passed between the two crowns.[11]

In *Antony and Cleopatra* 2.2, Agrippa proposes a marriage to secure an alliance between Antony and Caesar. Antony should marry Caesar's sister Octavia:

> AGRIPPA
> To hold you in **perpetual amity**,
> To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts
> With an unslipping knot, take Antony
> Octavia to his wife, whose beauty claims
> No worse a husband than the best of men;[12]

North supplies the marriage and its political purpose. Octavia is to be "a good meane to keepe good loue & amitie betwext her brother and him." Shakespeare makes that hope "perpetual amity": the language of a treaty enters a proposal of marriage.[13]

Neville invokes treaties binding two crowns; Agrippa proposes to bind rival rulers through Octavia. Both speakers seek a lasting settlement by giving political friendship a durable foundation. The play will expose the fragility of Agrippa's promise.

The two diplomatic expressions belong together. "The Queen my mistress" identifies the authority for whom Neville speaks; "perpetual amity" names the relationship he is charged with maintaining. Both occur in his account of his first audience with Henri IV, and both enter *Antony and Cleopatra* where Shakespeare reshapes North's narrative. The play's ancient politics are expressed in language Neville used in conducting his own embassy.

## Notes and sources

1. William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, 5.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. Shakespeare quotations preserve the edition's line breaks. Bold marks the corresponding words.
2. Plutarch, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes*, translated by Thomas North (1579), "Antonius," p.1007, TCP A09802, full text. North describes Proculeius's reassurance and subsequent report to Caesar; Shakespeare places the Egyptian's embassy before Caesar sends Proculeius to the queen. An earlier embassy, sent jointly by Antony and Cleopatra after Actium through the schoolmaster Euphronius, is already in North, p.1004. Shakespeare stages it in 3.12; that ambassador names Cleopatra without using "the Queen my mistress." The comparison concerns the additional envoy in 5.1.
3. Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 15 May 1599, Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, I (1725), p.20. Spelling and capitalization modernized. The letter calls this his first audience on p.24. The French king's "serviteur" courtesy appears on p. 21 and is compared with *Twelfth Night* 3.1 in Chapter 24.
4. Henry Neville to Nicolas de Neufville, seigneur de Villeroy, Paris, 6 June 1599, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Français 15970, ff.101r–102r, phrase at f.102r; manuscript. The quoted French preserves the manuscript spelling. The letter is also printed in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, I (1725), pp.37–38, with the corresponding phrase on p.38. The French example is additional to the English-language counts below.
5. A comparison of 162 English Neville letters and 292 dramatic entries dated through 1616 included 38 Shakespeare plays and 254 other works, including masques, entertainments and translations. Ignoring punctuation and capitalization and allowing declared spelling equivalents, "queen my mistress" returned twelve Neville occurrences in ten letters, two Shakespeare

occurrences in two plays, and no other dramatic match. The full "the queen my mistress" occurs only in *Antony and Cleopatra* among those plays. Including the possessive gives thirteen instances in eleven letters. The dramatic texts are from Pervez Rizvi's *Collocations and N-grams*; results describe that dated collection. The table modernizes spelling and follows Sawyer, *Memorials*, I: the second 26 May letter is headed "Of the same date with the former" on p.36; the former begins on p.29. The possessive on p.45 refers back to "place and honour." The 13 July and 15 November entries include Neville's indirect reports of answers given to him.

6. Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, 1.1, Folger. Only the opening exclamation of Posthumus's speech is quoted.
7. An EarlyPrint standardized-word search of texts published through 1616 found six occurrences across three records: *Amadis of Gaule* (1590), A18993; Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*, A02495, dated 1599 in the search catalogue; and Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (1612), A68764. The Hakluyt examples include diplomatic speech.
8. Neville to Thomas Windebank, Paris, 10 January 1599/1600, The National Archives, SP 12/274, f.15; State Papers Online, Gale MC4304580829; TNA record. John O'Donnell's transcription; spelling retained.
9. Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, 2.7, Folger.
10. North, *Lives* (1579), "Antonius," p.984, TCP A09802. North's account already contains Pompey's willingness to benefit from an act done without his knowledge. Shakespeare's explicit honour–profit antithesis distinguishes the wording of his speech.
11. Neville to Cecil, 15 May 1599, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, p.24. Spelling and capitalization modernized. "Intercourse" in the surrounding passage concerns trade between the realms.
12. Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, 2.2, Folger.
13. North, *Lives* (1579), "Antonius," p.984, TCP A09802. A separate earlier search of 239 plays dated 1590–1615 found "perpetual amity" only in *Antony and Cleopatra*. That result has a different scope from the 292-entry comparison of "queen my mistress."

# The Tempest: Virginia and the Embassy

Chapter 36

When the *Sea Venture* was wrecked on Bermuda in July 1609, Henry Neville belonged to the council governing the expedition's sponsor, the Virginia Company. The survivors' accounts became important sources for *The Tempest*. One of them, William Strachey's *True Reportory*, remained unprinted until 1625—fourteen years after the play's first recorded performance. That makes Neville's position directly relevant to a familiar question about the play: how did its author obtain the shipwreck narrative?[1, 2, 3]

His name already appears in the scholarship on that question. Arthur F. Kinney quotes Geoffrey Bullough's suggestion that company contacts, including "perhaps Sir Henry Neville," might have supplied Shakespeare with Strachey's account.[4] For the argument of this book, that is a striking starting point: Neville has been proposed as a possible intermediary for material used by the dramatist. His documented role in the company deserves examination alongside the play itself.

## A report for the company

The charter of 23 May 1609 names "Sir Henry Nevil" among both the company's incorporated members and its council resident in England. This council could appoint and replace colonial governors and issue instructions governing Virginia and the voyages to and from it. Neville's appointment preceded the wreck by two months.[5]

The *Sea Venture* carried Sir Thomas Gates, the colony's lieutenant governor. After the storm, its passengers spent months on Bermuda, built vessels and reached Virginia in May 1610. Strachey, one of the survivors, dated his longer account 15 July 1610. Gates left for England five days later, carrying Strachey's accounts of the colony and shipwreck. They concerned the very enterprise for whose direction Neville's council was responsible.[2]

Some of this news became public quickly. Sylvester Jourdain's *Discovery of the Barmudas* and the company's *True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia* appeared in 1610. Strachey's longer narrative took a different route: it appears to have circulated among people connected with the company before Samuel Purchas printed it in 1625. *The Tempest* was performed at court on 1 November 1611. The important distinction is between the printed news available to any reader and the fuller manuscript account available through a more restricted circle.[2, 3]

Bullough's suggested contacts include Southampton, Pembroke, Dudley Digges and Christopher Brooke: men from Neville's own circle. All four sat on the same Virginia Company council as Neville, and their associations with him extended into literary gatherings, Parliament and court politics.[5, 4]

Christopher Brooke appears with Neville in the *Convivium Philosophicum* at the Mitre Tavern, discussed in "At the Mitre," and was likely a parliamentary ally. Dudley Digges defended Neville in the Parliament of 1614, arguing that a private man could approach the king unbidden for the good of the country.[6] His signed examination of 1615 also records his conversations with Neville about Rochester and Sir Thomas Overbury: the two men exchanged information about affairs at the centre of court politics.[7, 8] Southampton actively supported Neville's bid to become secretary of state. Neville also helped reconcile Pembroke with Rochester and offered to deliver Winwood's letter to Pembroke personally.[9]

These relationships give Bullough's suggestion its particular interest here. These four men he names as possible intermediaries for Shakespeare's access to Strachey were associated with Neville himself. Several also have prominent places in Shakespeare's literary history: Southampton received the dedications of the narrative poems, Pembroke would be a dedicatee of the First Folio, and Brooke praised the dramatist who brought Richard III to the stage.[10, 8]

**Figure 36.1:** Author's diagram: Virginia Company councillors and their literary connections. Sources and qualifications appear within the figure.

The charter places Neville within the body directing the expedition. That gives the proposed access a concrete institutional basis. The next question is what the narrative offered a dramatist.

## The fire on the rigging

Strachey's account contains a detail far more particular than a storm at sea. During the storm, Sir George Somers saw a small light moving about the rigging:

> A little round light, like a faint star, trembling, and streaming along with a sparkling blaze, half the height upon the **mainmast**, and shooting sometimes from shroud to shroud [...] running sometimes along the **mainyard** to the very end, and then returning.[11]

Strachey calls it sea-fire. In Ariel's account, the light becomes an agent who moves about the ship and deliberately terrifies its passengers:

> ARIEL [...]
> I boarded the King's ship; now on the beak,
> Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
> I flamed amazement. Sometimes I'd divide
> And burn in many places. On the **topmast**,
> The **yards**, and bowsprit would I flame distinctly,
> Then meet and join. [...]
> — *The Tempest*, 1.2

The resemblance lies in the movement: a light runs about the upper parts of a storm-tossed ship, appearing at different points in its rigging. Shakespeare makes the sailors' alarming sight into Ariel's controlled performance. The spirit can describe from within what a survivor could only watch from below.

Strachey also records the safe landing of everyone aboard—about 150 men, women and children. Prospero asks Ariel directly about the passengers' safety:

> PROSPERO
> But are they, Ariel, safe?
> ARIEL Not a hair perished.
> On their sustaining garments not a blemish,
> But fresher than before; and, as thou bad'st me,
> In troops I have dispersed them 'bout the isle.
> — *The Tempest*, 1.2

The shared survival belongs to the wreck story generally; it does not by itself identify Strachey as the source. The moving sea-fire supplies the more distinctive comparison. Together they show how a frightening deliverance could become a dramatic illusion: the audience sees apparent catastrophe before learning that the storm has been managed and its victims protected.[11]

## Who commands after the wreck?

The survivors' escape did not settle their obligations. Strachey reports that Stephen Hopkins argued that Gates's authority had ended with the shipwreck:

> Since the **authority** ceased when the wreck was committed, and with it, they were all then freed from the government of any man [...].[12]

Hopkins wanted to remain on Bermuda rather than proceed to Virginia. His argument attacked the expedition's chain of command: if the voyage had failed, why should the passengers still obey a governor appointed for another place? Gates sentenced him to death. Intercession by Strachey and others secured his pardon. For the council in England, the issue was practical as well as constitutional. The survivors had to build their ships and continue to the colony; their willingness to obey mattered to the enterprise's survival.

*The Tempest* begins by putting authority under similar pressure. A king and his courtiers obstruct sailors fighting a storm. The Boatswain tells Gonzalo:

> BOATSWAIN [...] You are
> a councillor; if you can command these elements
> to silence, and work the peace of the present, we
> will not hand a rope more. Use your **authority**. If
> you cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and
> make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance
> of the hour, if it so hap. [...]
> — *The Tempest*, 1.1

The immediate question is who can save the ship. On the island, it becomes who may rule. Caliban proposes replacing Prospero with Stephano:

> CALIBAN
> Thou shalt be lord of it, and I'll serve thee.
> — *The Tempest*, 3.2

Hopkins sought release from the governor's authority; Caliban offers his service to a new master. Their proposals differ, but both expose the instability of command when a stranded company imagines a new life on an island. Shakespeare turns the problem into comedy as the drunken Stephano entertains kingship and threatens punishment for mutiny. The people challenging one ruler promptly begin imitating another.[13]

This is a reason to read Strachey beyond the storm. His narrative combines extraordinary deliverance with arguments over obedience, work, punishment and pardon. Those questions fell within the responsibilities of the council to which Neville belonged. They also give *The Tempest* much of its action after the waters become calm.

## Bermuda and Naples

Shakespeare does not simply put the survivors of the *Sea Venture* on stage. The royal party is returning from a wedding at Tunis to Naples, and Ariel reports that the other ships are on the Mediterranean. Bermuda enters through the spirit's recollection of an earlier errand:

> ARIEL [...]
> [...] In the deep nook, where once
> Thou called'st me up at midnight to fetch dew
> From the still-vexed **Bermoothes**, there she's hid;
> — *The Tempest*, 1.2

Neville had encountered the island's name in diplomatic news long before the wreck. Writing to Cecil on 12 March 1600, he reported Spanish letters describing a vessel that had reached Seville and left the Indian fleet "on this side of a

place called **Bermuda**." The dispatch places Atlantic shipping news among the matters Neville was following during his embassy.[14]

The play's European politics have a more substantial counterpart in those dispatches. On 26 May 1599, Neville reported Henri IV's account of a quarrel over the kingdom of Naples:

> That there was a quarrel grown between the Pope and the Spanish King about the **cense** and **homage** of the kingdom of **Naples**, which being not performed nor tendered since the death of the late king, the Pope had sent to seize upon the revenue of the kingdom, and the viceroy had imprisoned his commissaries; whereupon the Pope had excommunicated him [...].[15]

The *cense* was the payment or tribute associated with Naples's obligation to the papacy. Homage acknowledged political subordination. Neville's report shows what happened when these obligations were withheld: the Pope tried to seize revenues, the viceroy imprisoned his agents, and excommunication followed.

Tribute and homage are also the terms of the political injury at the centre of *The Tempest*. Antonio has obtained Naples's assistance in overthrowing his brother Prospero by sacrificing Milan's independence. Prospero describes the agreement:

> PROSPERO [...]
> So dry he was for sway, wi' th' King of **Naples**
> To give him **annual tribute**, do him **homage**,
> Subject his coronet to his crown, and bend
> The dukedom, yet unbowed—alas, poor Milan!—
> To most ignoble stooping.
> — *The Tempest*, 1.2

In Neville's report Naples owes payment and homage to the Pope; in the play Milan promises them to Naples. Shakespeare uses the same political instruments in a different relationship. Antonio gains personal power by making the state he wants to govern dependent on a greater ruler. Prospero's loss is therefore larger than his expulsion: his brother has traded away the dukedom's standing to buy its throne.

The reversal also invites a Protestant reading. *The Bee Hive of the Romish Church* (1579) mocked the homage owed by Naples to the Pope, accompanied by a white horse and thousands of ducats. In *The Tempest*, Naples itself demands tribute and homage from Milan, and Prospero condemns the bargain as "most ignoble stooping." The kingdom that acknowledges Rome as its superior becomes the instrument of another state's humiliation. That possible irony accords with Neville's Protestant political outlook and his work with Winwood, Southampton and Pembroke.[16]

## Notes and sources

1. James I, Second Charter of Virginia, 23 May 1609, incorporated members and resident council. Natalie Zacek, "William Strachey (1572–1621)", *Encyclopedia Virginia*, for the June 1609 departure, July storm, Bermuda survival and later account. The charter records appointment, not attendance.
2. Zacek, "William Strachey", sections on Virginia and Strachey's writings. The article identifies two versions, dates the longer one 15 July 1610, reports Gates's departure on 20 July and describes probable company-connected circulation. The first printed version appeared in Purchas in 1625.
3. Royal Shakespeare Company, "Dates and sources: The Tempest", for the recorded performance, probable composition period and the two printed 1610 accounts. Its parenthetical dating of Strachey's publication to 1623 is an error: 1623 is the First Folio's date; Strachey's account was printed in 1625, as the Purchas edition cited for the Hopkins episode confirms.
4. Arthur F. Kinney, "Revisiting The Tempest", *Modern Philology* 93, no. 2 (November 1995): 161–177, especially pp. 165–167. At p.166 Kinney quotes Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, VIII, p.239, naming "perhaps Sir Henry Neville"; the quotation is cited through Kinney's page, not a fresh reading of Bullough's volume. Kinney finds the suggested chain of transmission tenuous. Kinney's wider argument expands the play's cultural context beyond the Strachey narrative. He does not endorse a Neville authorship attribution.
5. Tom Cain, "John Donne and the Ideology of Colonization", *English Literary Renaissance* 31, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 440–476, p. 443, identifies Neville among members of the first council (1606–1607), in his discussion of company investors. Second Charter of Virginia, paragraphs beginning "AND forasmuch as the good and prosperous Success," "AND further, We ESTABLISH and ORDAIN" and "AND further, of our special Grace." These distinguish the council resident in England from government in Virginia. The resident council includes Pembroke; Montgomery appears in the wider incorporated list but not in this council list.
6. Andrew Thrush, "Digges, Sir Dudley (1583–1639), of Chilham Castle, Kent", *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629* (2010), discussion of the undertaking controversy and Digges's intervention of 14 May 1614, citing Maija Jansson, ed., *Proceedings in Parliament, 1614 (House of Commons)*, p. 246.
7. For the *Convivium*, see "At the Mitre" and Andrew Clark, ed., *Brief Lives*, II (Oxford, 1898), pp. 50–53, public text; Zachary Lesser, "Mixed Government and Mixed Marriage in *A King and No King*: Sir Henry Neville Reads Beaumont and Fletcher," *ELH* 69.4 (2002), pp. 947–977, at p. 972 n. 13, article, supports the identification of the Neville in the company as the Billingbear diplomat. Owen Lowe Duncan, Jr., *The Political Career of Sir Henry Neville: An Elizabethan Gentleman at the Court of James I* (Ohio State University PhD, 1974), pp. 226–228, especially p. 227, dissertation, groups Brooke and Neville among parliamentary opposition figures.
8. Christopher Brooke, *The Ghost of Richard the Third* (London: George Eld for Laurence Lisle, 1614), sig. D2r; Dudley Digges, examination, 6 November 1615, The National Archives, SP 14/83, f.12. The respective images, transcriptions and fuller discussion appear in Chapters 21 and 49.
9. Southampton to Winwood, 6 August 1613, Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer (London, 1725), III, p. 475; Jackie Watson, *Epistolary Courtiership and Dramatic Letters: Thomas Overbury and the Jacobean Playhouse* (Edinburgh University Press, 2024), chapter 2, chapter, on the secretaryship campaign and associated correspondence. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry*, I (1899), pp. 131–132, calendar entry, for Neville's reconciliation and offer of personal delivery; the calendar tentatively dates the letter to April 1613. These later records document the personal and political associations discussed here.
10. Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, dedication, and *Lucrece*, dedication. Folger Shakespeare Library, "Folger First Folio 24", identifies the Folio's dedicatees as William Herbert, Earl of Pem-

broke, and Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery. These publication relationships are separate from proof of manuscript transmission.

11. William Strachey, *A true reportory of the wracke, and redemption of Sir Thomas Gates Knight*, in Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London, 1625), IV, p. 1737, transcription and page images, Virginia Humanities. Spelling and punctuation modernized in Strachey. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2, Folger Shakespeare Library. Strachey's survivors work to save themselves; Ariel's account describes a controlled magical ordeal. The comparison concerns the moving light and survival, not an identity of every detail.
12. William Strachey, *A true reportory of the wracke, and redemption of Sir Thomas Gates Knight*, in Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London, 1625), IV, pp. 1743–1745, especially p. 1744; Virginia Humanities transcription and page-image links. The Hopkins episode is Strachey's report of the argument, sentence and intercession, not an independently preserved trial transcript.
13. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.1 and 3.2. Strachey, "Conspiracies on Bermuda", p. 1744. The comparison concerns challenges to authority, not an identification of Hopkins with a particular character.
14. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2. The quotation preserves Folger's line breaks; omissions are marked. The same scene supplies Naples and the Mediterranean setting; 2.1 supplies the wedding at Tunis from which the party is returning. Neville to Cecil, 12 March 1599/1600, in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer (London, 1725), I, p. 158. The printed dateline gives 1599 under the English year beginning on 25 March; the year is modernized to 1600 in the text.
15. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 26 May 1599, reliable fair-hand copy, The National Archives, PRO 30/50/2, leaf numbered 123; compared with Winwood, *Memorials*, I, p. 30. Spelling and punctuation modernized and abbreviations expanded from the manuscript copy; the continuation after the excommunication is omitted. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2, Prospero's account of Antonio's agreement with Naples.
16. Philips van Marnix van St Aldegonde, *The Bee Hive of the Romish Church*, trans. George Gilpin (London, 1579), part II, chapter 10, on papal supremacy, TCP A07026, public transcription. The passage describes the yearly homage of the kings of Sicily and Naples to the Pope, their acknowledgment of him as chief lord, and the presentation of a white horse and money. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1.2. For Neville and Winwood's efforts to form a Protestant opposition to Thomas Lake and the associated Southampton–Pembroke grouping, see Jackie Watson, *Epistolary Courtiership and Dramatic Letters: Thomas Overbury and the Jacobean Playhouse* (Edinburgh University Press, 2024), chapter 2, pp. 68–69, chapter. The Protestant reading of the dramatic reversal is proposed here.

# Cymbeline: Bonds, Mercy and Jupiter's Moons

Chapter 37

## Gout, debt and a prisoner's reckoning

POSTHUMUS
Most welcome, **bondage**, for thou art a way,
I think, to **liberty**. Yet am I better
Than one that's sick o' th' **gout**, since he had rather
Groan so in perpetuity than be cured
By th' sure physician, **Death**, who is the **key**
T' **unbar** these **locks**.
— *Cymbeline*, 5.4.[1]

Posthumus awaits execution, believing that his wife, Imogen, has been killed on his orders. Posthumus compares himself with someone "sick o' th' **gout**"; Neville described his own illness to Winwood on 1 November 1604:

> Though in much pain of the **gout** (which with shame I do now acknowledge), I could not dismiss this messenger, without a line or two of salutations.[2]

Posthumus welcomes "**bondage**" as a way to "**liberty**" and calls Death "the **sure physician**". From the Tower, in a letter to Cecil endorsed 4 August 1601, Neville had written that without some mitigation of Queen Elizabeth's indignation he would "account my **life** but a **burden** unto me, and hope to be **eased** of it ere it be long."[3]

POSTHUMUS
My **conscience**, thou art **fettered**
More than my **shanks and wrists**. You good gods,
give me
The **penitent** instrument to **pick** that **bolt**,
Then **free** forever. Is 't enough I am **sorry**?
— *Cymbeline*, 5.4.[1]

Posthumus asks, "Is 't enough I am **sorry**?". In the same 1601 letter, Neville expresses his own contrition:

> [...] I do so much **condemn myself** for the error and offence I have committed, and so truly **grieve** that I have incurred the indignation of so gracious a sovereign [...].[3]

POSTHUMUS
So children temporal fathers do **appease**;
Gods are more full of **mercy**. Must I **repent**,
I cannot do it better than in **gyves** [fetters],
Desired more than **constrained**. **To satisfy**,
If of my **freedom** 'tis the main part, take
No stricter **render** [payment] of me than **my all**.
— *Cymbeline*, 5.4.[1]

Posthumus says "**To satisfy**" and offers "**my all**". Earlier in that 1601 letter, Neville had used satisfaction in its financial sense: "for the **satisfaction** of the **fine** imposed upon me." He asked the Queen to take his lands and "**satisfy** herself out of the yearly profits thereof," while allowing sustenance for his family. Posthumus appeals to gods "more full of **mercy**"; Neville similarly joins "**all**" he can offer to the sovereign's "**mercy**":

> This is **all** that I can offer. And this I trust her majesty, in the **riches** of that **mercy** which she hath extended towards all others, will be pleased to accept [...].[3]

POSTHUMUS
I know you are more **clement** [merciful] than vile men,
Who of their **broken debtors** take **a third**,
**A sixth, a tenth**, letting them **thrive again**
On their **abatement**. That's not my desire.
— *Cymbeline*, 5.4.[1]

Posthumus describes creditors accepting "**a third**" or "**A sixth, a tenth**", though he himself refuses an abatement.[4] Neville likewise calculates a fraction he would accept, but in a different transaction: in January 1609 he sought compensation for his expenditure as ambassador in France:

> [...] if I might obtain any thing which would yield me but **half** that I spent in France, I would hold myself well **satisfied** [...].[5]

POSTHUMUS
For Imogen's **dear life take mine**; and though
'Tis not so **dear**, yet 'tis a **life**; you **coined** it.
'Tween man and man they **weigh** not every **stamp**;
Though **light**, take **pieces** for the **figure's** sake;
You rather mine, being yours. And so, great powers,
If you will take this **audit** [reckoning], take this **life**
And **cancel these cold bonds**. O Imogen,
I'll speak to thee in silence. [He lies down and sleeps.]
— *Cymbeline*, 5.4.[1]

Posthumus treats his life as a coin minted by the gods: he asks them to accept it despite its deficient value and close the account. "For Imogen's **dear life take mine**," he pleads. Neville's 1601 sentence of contrition ends with his declared willingness to lose his life:

> […] as I would willingly undergo any misery whatsoever that might light but upon myself, even to the loss of my **life**, **to satisfy** her displeasure for my offence, and to **purchase** her **grace** and favour to my children.[3]

Posthumus's "**take this life**" matches Neville's "loss of my **life**," and both use "**to satisfy**." Posthumus offers his life in payment for Imogen's; Neville declares himself willing to lose his to satisfy the Queen and win favour for his children. Physical chains, financial obligations and spiritual debt meet in "**cancel these cold bonds**."[6] A schedule of about 1599 among Neville's Billingbear papers, headed "A note of my **bonds** when they growe due," lists obligations totalling £1,709.[7] In 1609 he used the word figuratively, describing himself as "**tied** unto you by so many **bonds**"—his obligations to Cecil.[5]

As Posthumus sleeps, to solemn music, his dead father, mother and two brothers appear and circle him. They appeal to Jupiter, who descends on an eagle amid thunder and lightning. The god promises that Posthumus's suffering will end and leaves a tablet foretelling his good fortune.[8]

This spectacle belongs to the moment when Galileo's telescope had revealed four moons circling Jupiter. *The Starry Messenger* announced the discovery in March 1610; *Cymbeline* is generally dated to about 1610, and Simon Forman's account of seeing the play is generally assigned to 1611. John Pitcher and Scott Maisano have proposed that the new astronomy helped shape the scene.[9], [10], [11]

## Jupiter and the four ghosts

The stage direction makes the grouping and movement explicit:

> [Solemn music. Enter, as in an apparition, Sicilius Leonatus, father to Posthumus, an old man attired like a warrior; leading in his hand an ancient matron, his wife and mother to Posthumus, with music before them. Then, after other music, follows the two young Leonati, brothers to Posthumus, with wounds as they died in the wars. **They circle Posthumus round as he lies sleeping.**]
> — *Cymbeline*, 5.4.[8]

The ghosts circle Posthumus; Jupiter descends afterwards. The astronomical reading connects the four circling figures with the god who answers them. Pitcher thought "it was no accident" that this combination appeared just as Galileo was describing Jupiter and its four attendant moons.[11]

Jupiter's speech gives the comparison a second point of contact:

JUPITER [...]
**Our Jovial star reigned at his birth**, and in
Our temple was he married. Rise, and fade.
He shall be lord of Lady Imogen,
And happier much by his affliction made.
— *Cymbeline*, 5.4.[8]

Here the god names his planet and claims its influence over Posthumus from birth. Galileo's dedication to Cosimo II de' Medici likewise associates Jupiter's position at his patron's birth with his character and good fortune. Pitcher and Maisano draw attention to this correspondence. The proposed allusion joins a celestial spectacle to a story of family and benevolent protection.[11]

## "My honorable kynsman"

One of Neville's correspondents had seen the new moons for himself. Sir William Lower was a Cornish gentleman living at Trefenty in Carmarthenshire, a correspondent of the astronomer Thomas Harriot and a cousin of Neville's wife, Anne Killigrew.[12] His wife, Penelope Perrot, was the stepdaughter of Harriot's patron, the Earl of Northumberland.[13], [14]

On 30 July 1608 Lower addressed a letter to Neville:

To my honorable kynsman
S[i]r Henry Nevill
knighte att Billingbeare
in Berkeshyre

He closed it:

Your verie assured frend and kinsman
to command
Willm Lower[14]

The letter concerns the Trelawny estate and the interests of a ward, matters in which Neville was actively involved. Lower reported negotiations, discussed the protection of the estate's woods and proposed bringing the dispute before the master of the Court of Wards. In a further letter of 6 November, he asked Neville to continue in his existing trust. Their kinship language accompanied shared responsibilities for an estate and its heirs.

Their association also appears in parliamentary business. The Commons Journal for 2 April 1604 lists "Sir Henry Nevill" immediately before "Sir Wm. Lowre" among the committee appointed to consider Southampton's restitution.[15]

## A man who had seen the moons

Lower's astronomical correspondence shows how closely he followed the discoveries as they unfolded. In a letter dated "the longest day" of 1610, he asked Harriot for the book announcing them:

> Send me also one of Galileus bookes if anie yet be come ouer and you can get them.[16]

By December 1610, according to Bryn Jones's historical account, Lower had observed Jupiter's satellites with Harriot at Syon House. Writing to Harriot on 4 March 1611, Lower explained that his own instrument would not show the moons, though he had seen them with Harriot's:[13]

> [...] when wee, I say, have often diligentlie observed Jupiter, wee could never see anie thinge; I impute it to the dullnesse of my lighte, **for onlie with your greate glasse I could se them in London**.[17]

The letter goes beyond the excitement of seeing them. Lower was following Harriot's efforts to determine their orbital periods:

> That you have made so manie exellent observations of them I am most glad of, for you have gotten the starte of all in limitinge ther periods.[17]

this imitation. Concerninge the Joveall starres I writte nothinge of them last, because I had nothinge to writte; for indeede, although both I and the yonge philosopher att Hanbesbrooke have often and in verie cleare nights (when Presepe was most plaine to bee seene without the cylinder); when wee, I say, have often diligentlie observed Jupiter, wee could never see anie thinge; I impute it to the dullnesse of my lighte, for onlie with your greate glasse I could se them in London.

That you have made so manie exellent observations of them I am most glad of, for you have gotten the starte of all in limitinge ther periods.

**Figure 37.1:** Lower's account of seeing Jupiter's satellites through Harriot's telescope in London. J. O. Halliwell, A Collection of Letters Illustrative of the Progress of Science in England (1841), p. 40 (detail); letter dated 4 March 1611.

## Notes and sources

1. William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, 5.4, Folger Shakespeare Library. Source line breaks preserved except for one verse line divided between consecutive excerpts; the speech is presented complete across five passages. Bold emphasis and square-bracketed glosses are editorial. Omissions in Neville's quotations are marked. Posthumus compares himself with a gout sufferer; he does not say he himself has gout. His captivity is as a supposed Roman prisoner, rather than arrest for debt.
2. Henry Neville to Ralph Winwood, 1 November 1604, Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, II (1725), p.35. Spelling and capitalization modernized.
3. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, undated, endorsed 4 August 1601, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 87/61; *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp.320–321. Spelling modernized from the manuscript; omissions marked. Chapter 7 gives the fine negotiations and family appeals.
4. Patricia Parker, "Cymbeline: Arithmetic, Double-Entry Bookkeeping, Counts, and Accounts," *SEDERI* 23 (2013), pp.95–119, especially p.104, note 14, article. Parker discusses the accounting imagery, not a Neville attribution. The speech's grammar makes the debtors the beneficiaries allowed to thrive after abatement. Edward Dowden, ed., *Cymbeline* (1903), pp.170–171, also discusses the penitential argument and the legal sense of bonds: edition.
5. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, 14 January 1609 (1608/9), The National Archives, SP 14/43, ff.29–30. Quotations follow John O'Donnell's transcription; the continuation has not been fully collated against the manuscript. Revised draft: RBA D/EN/F6/2/3. Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1603–1610* (1857), January 1609, no.22, January 1609. Spelling modernized. Chapter 33 examines the letter's argument about poverty and reputation. In the same appeal Neville compares himself to the diseased man at Bethesda who needed help to enter the water. The figurative bonds concern service and gratitude, rather than the obligations in the financial schedule. Robert Sidney's later notice of Neville's death says he "hath left a great debt behind him"; Robert Sidney to Barbara Gamage Sidney, 22 July 1615, Margaret P. Hannay, Noel J. Kinnamon and Michael G. Brennan, eds., *Domestic Politics and Family Absence* (Ashgate, 2005), Letter 252 (C81/259; *De L'Isle and Dudley* V, p.303), publisher record. Sidney's notice gives no sum or connection with the earlier bonds.
6. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, II.9, Brown University, Decameron Web. Bernabò loses the wager and becomes poor; his life is later declared forfeit, and his wife obtains his pardon after he asks her forgiveness. The developed prison prayer is absent from that tale. This comparison does not claim absence from every proposed source for *Cymbeline*. Cancellation of bonds also had an established religious use in writing about redemption. Samuel Rowlands, *A Terrible Battell Betweene the Two Consumers of the Whole World: Time, and Death* (1606), juxtaposes a usurer's money, bonds and bills with a rich man suffering from gout: EEBO-TCP A11139. This earlier conjunction supplies context, but not Posthumus's penitential offering of his life. For another Shakespearean use of the cancelled bond, see *Macbeth*, 3.2.
7. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1/5, unsigned bond-maturity schedule, preserved among Miscellaneous correspondence, of Sir Henry Neville, D/EN/F6/1. The first-person heading and provenance identify Neville as the probable debtor; the hand is not independently authenticated. The nine recorded sums total £1,709. February 1598 is February 1599 in modern year numbering. The schedule does not record later payment or cancellation.
8. William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, 5.4, Folger Shakespeare Library. Bold emphasis added. All play quotations in this chapter follow this text.
9. Maisano, "Shakespeare's Last Act," pp. 402–407 and 420, notes 3 and 51; Martin Butler, ed., *Cymbeline* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 6, quoted in Maisano's note 3. Composition and any Christmas 1610–1611 performance are scholarly reconstructions; Forman's account is undated, within his notes conventionally assigned to 1611; see the manuscript description and images.

10. For the astronomical interpretation, Scott Maisano, "Shakespeare's Last Act: The Starry Messenger and the Galilean Book in Cymbeline," *Configurations* 12.3 (2004), pp. 401–434, especially pp. 402–406 and 416–417, DOI. The article appeared on Project MUSE in 2007. Lower's observation and Neville correspondence are documented separately below.

11. John Pitcher, ed., *Cymbeline* (Penguin, 2005), introduction, p. lxxiii, quoted and discussed in Maisano, p. 406; Peter Usher, "Jupiter and Cymbeline," *Shakespeare Newsletter* 53 (2003), pp. 4–10, especially p. 8, discussed there. Pitcher's and Usher's positions are cited through Maisano's published account. Maisano, pp. 416–417, including note 43 citing Pitcher's commentary, pp. 288–289; his source is Galileo Galilei, *Sidereus Nuncius or The Sidereal Messenger*, trans. Albert Van Helden (University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 31–32. These are interpretations of Shakespeare's imagery, not endorsements of a Neville attribution. The Folger stage direction specifies Posthumus as the centre of the circling movement. Maisano describes the spirits dancing "about the descending god" (p. 402; cf. p. 433); that is his account of the astronomical analogy, rather than the wording of the stage direction. For a dissenting assessment of the astronomical interpretation and discussion of the scene's religious and dramatic functions, see C. R. A. Eager, *Theophany on the Shakespearean Stage* (PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2020), pp. 131–132, White Rose repository. The play's tablet is not named as Galileo's book.

12. J. L. Vivian, ed., *The Visitations of the County of Cornwall* (Exeter, 1887), pp. 268, 299–300 and 459, Killigrew, Lower and Treffry pedigrees; public digitization. These pedigrees make Anne Killigrew and William Lower second cousins once removed, both descended from John Killigrew (d. 1536) and Jane Petit. Anne descends through their son John and his son Sir Henry; William through their daughter Elizabeth, her daughter Agnes Treffry, and Agnes's son Thomas Lower. This is the relationship supplied by the printed pedigrees, alongside the contemporary letter's own kinship language.

13. Bryn Jones, "Despite the Clouds: A History of Wales and Astronomy," *The Antiquarian Astronomer* 8 (2014), pp. 66–86, especially pp. 68–69, journal issue. The December 1610/Syon House placement comes from the historical account; Lower's March letter itself specifies London and Harriot's telescope.

14. William Lower to Henry Neville, St Winnow, 30 July and 6 November 1608, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F7, public catalogue. The July letter's address and closing both use kinship language. The file concerns the execution of Sir Jonathan Trelawny's will and the wardship of his sons. The quoted passages are from the original July letter; the two letters concern estate business, not astronomy.

15. *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. 1, 2 April 1604, second scribe, "Restitution of Southampton." The entry records appointment to the committee, not proof of attendance at its meeting.

16. William Lower to Thomas Harriot, 21 June 1610, printed from the holograph in Henry Stevens, *Thomas Hariot, the Mathematician, the Philosopher and the Scholar* (London, 1900), pp. 116–118, quotation p. 118; public text. Stevens dates the letter 21 June; Lower's own dateline reads "the longest day of, 1610." The quotation has been checked against the printed page image. Anna Cetera-Włodarczyk, Jonathan Hope and Jarosław Włodarczyk, "Unsphered, Disorbed, Decentred: Shakespeare's Astronomical Imagination," *Shakespeare* 17.4 (2021), pp. 400–427, especially the section "Shakespeare, Ptolemy, Copernicus and Beyond" and notes 37–38, DOI. Their discussion of Lower cites his letter to Harriot of 21 June 1610; it is separate from the March 1611 observation letter quoted above.

17. William Lower to Thomas Harriot, 4 March 1611, printed from British Library, Add. MS 6789, in J. O. Halliwell, ed., *A Collection of Letters Illustrative of the Progress of Science in England* (London: Historical Society of Science, 1841), pp. 38–40, quotation and image p. 40. Original printed spelling retained; emphasis added. This is a facsimile of the printed edition, not the manuscript.

# Henry VIII: The Missing Neville

Chapter 38

At Wolsey's banquet, the cardinal mistakes Sir Edward Neville for Henry VIII. He offers him his chair of state; the king laughs and unmasks them both. That is Holinshed's account. In *Henry VIII*, Wolsey identifies the king correctly, and Sir Edward's part in the comedy disappears. Sir Edward was Henry Neville's grandfather.[1,2]

The change belongs beside the treatment of Neville's ancestors in *Richard II* and *Henry V*. There, the plays enlarge their parts and give them memorable speeches. Here, a comic incident involving his grandfather is left out. A second comparison concerns Neville himself: the play gives Buckingham an explanation for absence strikingly close to one Neville used in a letter.

## The grandfather who disappears

Holinshed describes the king and his companions arriving at Wolsey's entertainment in disguise. The cardinal suspects that one visitor has a better claim to his chair of state and is challenged to identify him. He selects the man with the black beard, Sir Edward Neville, whose appearance resembles the king's. Henry cannot contain his laughter. He removes his own mask and Sir Edward's, revealing the mistake to the company.[1]

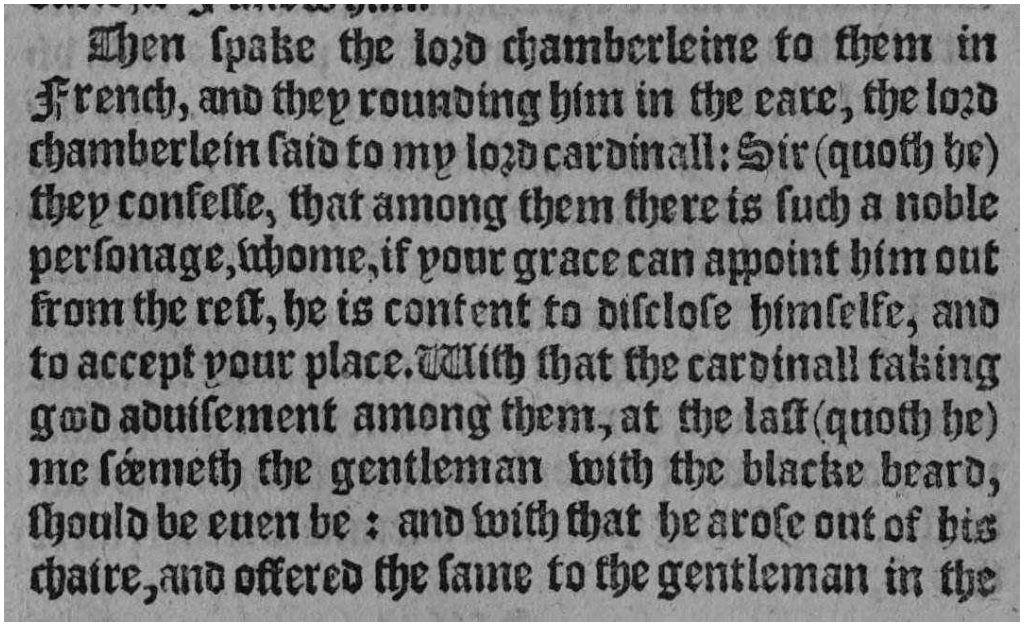
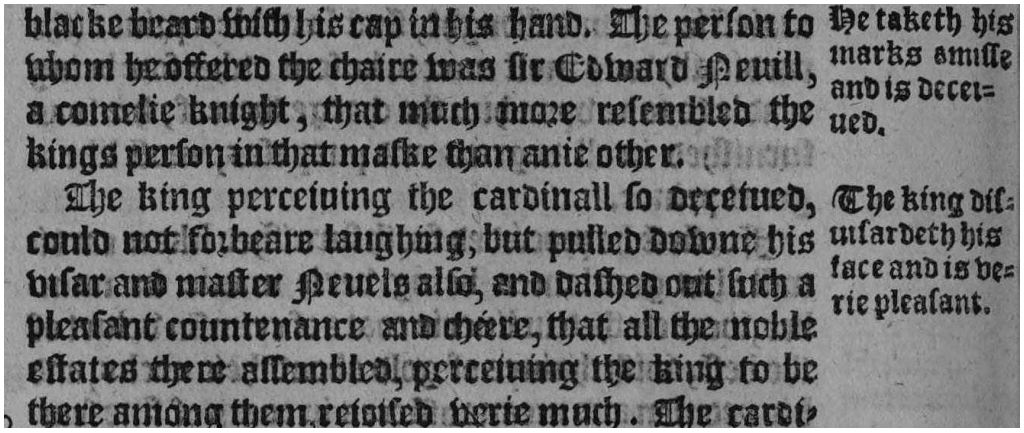

Then ſpake the lord chamberleine to them in French, and they rounding him in the eare, the lord chamberlein ſaid to my lord cardinall: Sir (quoth he) they confeſſe, that among them there is ſuch a noble perſonage, whome, if your grace can appoint him out from the reſt, he is content to diſcloſe himſelfe, and to accept your place. With that the cardinall taking good aduiſement among them, at the laſt (quoth he) me ſéemeth the gentleman with the blacke beard, ſhould be euen be: and with that he aroſe out of his chaire, and offered the ſame to the gentleman in the

**Figure 38.1:** Detail from the bottom of Holinshed's left column: Wolsey offers his seat and selects the gentleman with the black beard. The sentence continues in the next illustration.


blacke beard with his cap in his hand. The perſon to whom he offered the chaire was ſir Edward Neuill, a comelie knight, that much more reſembled the kings perſon in that maſke than anie other.

He taketh his marks amiſſe and is deceiued.

The king perceiuing the cardinall ſo deceiued, could not forbeare laughing, but pulled downe his viſar and maſter Neuels alſo, and daſhed out ſuch a pleaſant countenance and chéere, that all the noble eſtates there aſſembled, perceiuing the king to be there among them, reioiſed verie much. The cardi-

The king diſguiſeth his face and is verie pleaſant.

**Figure 38.2:** Continuation at the top of the right column: the mistaken choice is Sir Edward Neville; the king laughs and unmasks them both. Holinshed, volume III (1587), p. 922.

The play retains the masked visitors, the dancing and Wolsey's offer of his chair. At the moment of recognition, however, the joke is gone:

WOLSEY Let me see, then.
[He leaves his state.]
By all your good leaves, gentlemen.
[He bows before the King.]
Here I'll make
My royal choice.

KING, [unmasking] You have found him, cardinal.
[…]

— *Henry VIII*, 1.4.[3]

The king's reply makes the change explicit: Wolsey has chosen correctly. Sir Edward is neither named in the play nor given the mistaken recognition that distinguishes him in the chronicle. The scene continues towards Henry's interest in Anne Bullen, with whom he has danced. Its action works without the joke, but the omission also removes Neville's grandfather from this moment of public amusement.

The family is not otherwise absent. Sir Edward's brother George, Lord Abergavenny, is arrested with Buckingham in the opening scene.[4]

## An omission noticed long ago

This difference was noticed long before the modern Neville authorship argument. In 1795, *The Biographical Mirrour* discussed it in its life of the ambassador. The entry remarks that Shakespeare either overlooked the incident or thought it unnecessary. It nevertheless judges that including the mistake could have heightened the scene's comedy.[5]

# SIR HENRY NEVILLE.

THIS eminent statesman was the son of Henry, the second son of the gallant Sir Edward Neville, who made so conspicuous a figure during great part of the reign of King Henry VIII. was the foremost in all the justs and tournaments then in vogue; and a most valiant commander in several memorable battles: for his signal prowess in one of which he was made a Knight Banneret, temp. 5 Henry VIII.

Among many other remarkable incidents of his life, it is recorded by Hollinshed, that he was one of the masquers with the King at Cardinal Wolsey's banquet, when the Cardinal mistook him for the King, and offered him his chair of state: Sir Edward being a comely, portly Knight, whose person more resembled the King's than did that of any other masquer present; a circumstance which Shakspeare either overlook'd, or did not think it necessary to avail himself of in his play of King Henry VIII, but which might have considerably heighten'd the pleasantry of the scene. Being, on a frivolous pretence, attainted of high treason, he was beheaded on Tower-hill, in the 31st year of that implacable monarch's reign.

**Figure 38.3:** The Biographical Mirrour (1795), p. 90, opening of the Sir Henry Neville entry. The second paragraph explicitly compares Holinshed's incident with Shakespeare's play. Google-digitized New York Public Library copy, preserved at Internet Archive.

Lord Braybrooke, a descendant of the Billingbear Nevilles, wrote about the omission in *Notes and Queries* in 1850.[6]

The masquing scene in *Henry VIII.*, as described by Holinshed, perhaps furnishes a clue to the Queen's pleasantry, though Shakspeare has omitted the particular incident relating to Sir Henry Nevill. The old chronicler, after giving an account of Wolsey's banquet, and the entrance of a noble troop of strangers in masks, amongst whom he suspected that the king made one, proceeds as follows: —

"Then the Lord Chamberlain said to the Cardinal, Sir, they confesse that among them there is such a noble personage whom, if your Grace can appointe out 'from the rest, he is content to disclose himself and to accept your place.' Whereupon the Cardinal, taking good advisement among them, at the last quoth he, 'Me seemeth the gentleman in the black beard should be even he,' and with that he arose out of his chaire and offered the same to the gentleman in the black beard, with his cap in his hand. The person to whom he offered the chaire was Sir Edward Nevill, a comelie knight, that much more resembled the king's person in that mask than anie other. The King perceiving the Cardinal so deceived, could not forbear laughing, and pulled down his visor and Maister Nevill's too."

**Figure 38.4:** Lord Braybrooke, Notes and Queries, volume II, no. 50 (12 October 1850), p. 307. Detail of the masque discussion and the quoted recognition episode; the parentage anecdote is reproduced in Appendix B.

## An ague and a chamber prison

The play's opening supplies a more intimate comparison. Buckingham explains why he missed the meeting between Henry VIII and François I at the Field of the Cloth of Gold:

BUCKINGHAM An untimely **ague**
Stayed me a **prisoner** in **my chamber** when
Those suns of glory, those two lights of men,
Met in the vale of Andren.

— *Henry VIII*, 1.1.[7]

Writing to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, probably in early 1608, Neville had explained why illness prevented him from attending in person, using almost identical language:

> Although I have shaken off an **ague** and a cold which have kept me a **prisoner** to **my chamber** more than a full month, yet I am not so strong as I dare venture abroad in this extreme weather; therefore I make bold to advertise your Lordship by writing [...].

— Henry Neville to the Earl of Salisbury, probably early 1608.[7]

Both passages make an ague the cause of confinement, describe the sufferer as a prisoner in his own chamber, and use that confinement to explain his absence. Buckingham then returns to the image:

BUCKINGHAM All the whole time
I was my **chamber's prisoner**.

— *Henry VIII*, 1.1.[7]

This explanation also departs from the chronicle. Holinshed places Buckingham with Wolsey escorting the French king during the festivities. In his edition of the play, C. Knox Pooler noted that he could find no evidence for Buckingham's ague and that the duke was certainly not absent throughout. The play turns him into the man who missed the spectacle and must hear about it from Norfolk; the language used to explain that absence closely resembles Neville's account of his own illness.[7]

## Notes and sources

1. Raphael Holinshed and continuators, *The Third Volume of Chronicles* (London, 1587), p. 922, STC 13569; Wellcome Library copy at Internet Archive. The episode passes from the lower left column to the upper right. The images reproduce that edition. The searchable text witness is EEBO-TCP A68202, in the account of Henry VIII.

2. W. A. J. Archbold, "Neville, Edward (d. 1538)," *Dictionary of National Biography*, identifies George as Edward's brother and the elder Henry as Edward's son, through whom he was grandfather of the ambassador. See also Archbold, "Neville, Henry (1564?-1615)." These entries are used here for the stated family links, not for the Edward entry's confused account of the paternity rumour. The 1795 *Mirrour*, p. 90, also explicitly sets out the three generations.

3. William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, Act 1, scene 4, Folger Shakespeare Library, especially lines 101-123. Quotation preserves the Folger text's line breaks and speaker labels. The stage directions supplied by the modern edition are retained in brackets; the king's spoken reply independently establishes the successful recognition. The banquet scene, 1.4, is generally assigned to John Fletcher within the collaborative play. Petr Plecháč, "Relative contributions of Shakespeare and Fletcher in Henry VIII" (2019), tables 1 and 3 and §4, supports that allocation. Attribution of the scene's wording does not by itself identify who chose its departures from Holinshed.

4. Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, Act 1, scene 1, Folger Shakespeare Library, concluding arrest sequence. See Chapter 1 for the family setting. The play's Abergavenny and the masque's Sir Edward are brothers, not interchangeable names for the same person.

5. *The Biographical Mirrour, Comprising a Series of Ancient and Modern English Portraits, of Eminent and Distinguished Persons, from Original Pictures and Drawings* (London: S. and E. Harding, 1795), "Sir Henry Neville," p. 90; Internet Archive, Google-digitized New York Public Library copy. The illustration reproduces the entry's heading and first two paragraphs.

6. Lord Braybrooke, "Queen Elizabeth and Sir Henry Nevill," *Notes and Queries*, first series, II, no. 50 (12 October 1850), p. 307; bound-volume scan; Project Gutenberg transcription. Braybrooke's introductory sentence names Sir Henry, but the chronicle passage he quotes names Sir Edward. The separate anecdote concerning Elizabeth and the ambassador's father is discussed in Appendix B, "The Parentage Tradition." No independence from the 1795 notice is claimed. The printed signature reads "Braybrooke"; the transcription's "Brathbrooke" is erroneous. The adjacent item is "Further Notes on the Authorship of Shakspeare's Henry VIII," pp. 306-307. Braybrooke's family connection is set out in his *History of Audley End* (London, 1836), pp. 53–55: Catherine Neville's son Richard Neville Aldworth inherited Billingbear after the

death of Henry Neville Grey's widow in 1762; his son became the second Lord Braybrooke, father of the third. See also Essex Record Office, D/DBy F61, for the Neville–Aldworth descent and the family pedigree.

7. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, probably early 1608, Edmund Lodge, *Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners*, III (London, 1791), no. XCII, p. 340. Quotation checked against the printed page; spelling and capitalization modernized, with "off" for printed "of." The manuscript itself is undated, but the Hatfield calendar, XX (1968), p. 2, Cecil Papers 124/100 places it conjecturally after 1 January 1607/8 (1608 with the year beginning on 1 January). It follows a dated letter about the same exemption scheme, Cecil Papers 120/1. Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, 1.1, Buckingham; Folger wording and line breaks retained. The interest lies in the combination of ague, chamber confinement and explanation of absence; the broader chamber-prison metaphor occurs elsewhere. Act 1, scene 1 is assigned to Shakespeare in all five earlier allocations summarized by Petr Plecháč, "Relative contributions of Shakespeare and Fletcher in Henry VIII" (2019), table 1; his own scene-level analysis agrees, table 3. C. Knox Pooler, ed., *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry VIII* (London: Methuen, 1915), notes to 1.1, pp. 7–8, reports finding no evidence for Buckingham's ague and points to his recorded attendance at the festivities. Holinshed's *Chronicles*, III (1587), p. 860, places Buckingham with the cardinal escorting the French king; this passage was checked in the EEBO-TCP transcription, A68202.

# Part IV

## The Poems and Sonnets

# Venus and Adonis and Lucrece: The Earl Behind the Books

Chapter 39

Shakespeare's first two published poems were dedicated to a young earl still under Lord Burghley's control.

Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, was nineteen when *Venus and Adonis* was entered in the Stationers' Register on 18 April 1593, and twenty when *The Rape of Lucrece* was entered on 9 May 1594. He reached legal adulthood at twenty-one on 6 October 1594. Both registrations therefore fell within his minority, while his custody and marriage arrangements remained under Lord Burghley's control.[1], [2], [3]

Neville knew that household and the young earl within it.

## The child in Burghley's house

After Southampton's father died, Lord Howard of Effingham bought his wardship and transferred custody and marriage arrangements to Burghley. Southampton entered Burghley's care in late 1581 or early 1582 and spent much of his youth at Cecil House.[3]

In his declaration of 2 March 1601, written after the Essex rising, Neville recalled his earlier acquaintance with Southampton. Explaining his greeting at the Drury House meeting discussed below, where he found Southampton and Sir Charles Danvers, he wrote:

> because I had never spoken with my Lord since he was a child in my old Lord Treasurer's house[4]

Neville's "old Lord Treasurer" was Burghley, who had died in 1598. Neville places their earlier acquaintance in Burghley's household, but gives no date for their last conversation.[4]

The relevant legal cutoff is 6 October 1594, Southampton's twenty-first birthday. Until then he remained a minor: *Venus and Adonis* had been registered roughly eighteen months earlier, and *Lucrece* only five months earlier. Neville's word "child" need not mean a small boy. If he was referring broadly to Southampton's years as Burghley's ward, that period extended beyond both registrations. His wording does not tell us how near to its end they had last spoken.[1], [2], [3], [4]

## A letter from Southampton in Neville's house

On 6 May 1600, Sir Robert Drury wrote from London to Neville, then ambassador in France, about a letter from Southampton that had not reached him. His opening insists on the accuracy of an earlier report: "Sir, I did not a whit mistake what I writ unto you concerning the letters." As proof, he invokes Humphrey Fludd's account:

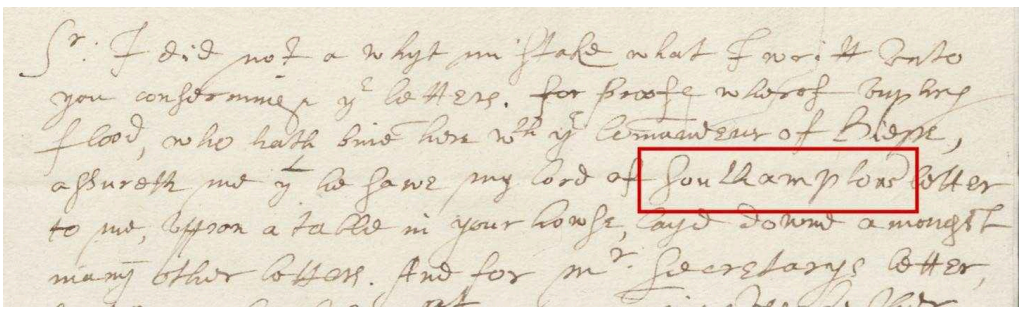
> Humphrey Fludd, who hath been here with the Commander of Dieppe, assureth me that he saw **my Lord of Southampton's letter to me, upon a table in your house**, laid down amongst many other letters.[5]

The letter was addressed to Drury, but Fludd had reportedly seen it lying among the papers in Neville's house. Drury also mentions a letter from Secretary Robert Cecil, which Cecil had told him was sent in Neville's packet. Returning to Southampton's letter, Drury suggests neglect, then expressly declines to suspect deliberate injury:

> and for the other, it might very well be lost not being cared for by anybody. [...] I will not be jealous that you would willingly do me any wrong[5]

"Jealous" here means suspicious. Drury stands by his account of where Southampton's letter had been seen, but closes by saying he will not believe Neville intended to wrong him. Why Neville was so concerned with this letter is unclear. The house may have been Neville's residence in Paris: in February 1600 he had used Drury's return to England to send intelligence to Cecil.[5]

For a fuller discussion of this letter and Fludd's courier work, see "Humphrey Fludd: Letters, Trumpets, and Shakespeare" (Chapter 44).



Sir Robert Drury to Henry Neville, 6 May 1600. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/2, fols. 97–98. Detail of the opening passage; Southampton's name is boxed in red. Reproduced with the permission of The National Archives. Source and transcription.

## Southampton presents the plan

Neville's earlier visit to Essex and his later meeting with Southampton were different encounters. In his declaration of 2 March 1601, Neville says that he visited Essex after the middle of October 1600. Essex asked about foreign affairs and spoke of his hopes of regaining the queen's favour. Neville insists:

> But in all his talk I protest I did not hear him use any undutiful speech of the Queen or the state.[4]

Henry Cuffe, Essex's secretary and Neville's longstanding acquaintance, subsequently pressed him to meet Southampton and Sir Charles Danvers. Cuffe assured him that nothing would be attempted against the queen's person or estate. After repeated delays, Neville went to Drury House on 2 February 1601. It was Southampton who then presented the plan, explaining that Essex had authorized him to disclose "a matter of great secrecy and importance."[4]

Southampton made the case for Essex to reach the queen with enough armed supporters to prevent his enemies from barring access. Men would seize the court gate and the guards' halberds; sympathetic lords would receive Essex and accompany him into the royal presence. Southampton sought Neville's advice, and he and Danvers answered the practical objections Neville raised. At the close, Neville records:

> In conclusion they prayed me to think of it because it was new unto me[4]

Cuffe arranged the approach; Southampton explained and argued for the enterprise. Neville's declaration records the attempt to enlist him, together with his objections and his subsequent refusal to act against Cecil. Chapter 6 gives the fuller account of the Essex crisis.[4]

## A later alliance

Neville and Southampton then spent nearly two years in the Tower together. Neville joined Southampton there on 1 May 1601, and both remained imprisoned until James's accession. They were released together in April 1603: the king's letter of 5 April ordered Southampton's release and added Neville's, and both were free by 10 April. Chapter 42, "The Sonnets: Bound for a Friend," examines that shared change of fortune.[6]

On 2 April 1604, Neville was named to the Commons committee considering Southampton's restitution: the parliamentary restoration of the earl's rights after his conviction for treason.[7]

Less than three months later, they faced another arrest. On Sunday 24 June 1604, James and his council ordered Southampton, Henry Danvers (Lord Danvers), and Neville into custody. Henry was the brother of Sir Charles Danvers, who had been executed for his part in the Essex rising. Historian Neil Cuddy, in his 1989 article on Anglo-Scottish union and James's court, records:

their papers were seized and the suspects interrogated, but they were released next day after 'several examinations'.[7]

The accusation concerned Southampton's supposed intention to kill Scots close to the king. Cuddy places the episode amid disputes over James's plans to unite England and Scotland and the privileged access of his Scottish attendants to the king. It was an allegation circulated by Southampton's enemies.[7]

Southampton later became Neville's "champion" in the contest for the secretaryship. In the description reported from their political opponent Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, Neville was Southampton's "dear Damon." The allusion is to Damon and Pythias, the classical exemplars of faithful friendship: one risked his life as surety for the other. Here it identifies Neville as Southampton's especially close and trusted ally. Chapter 9 follows their campaign through the letters, including Southampton's own hopes and doubts about Neville's appointment.[8]

## A promise and its answer

In 1593, years before the Tower and the secretaryship campaign, *Venus and Adonis* addressed Southampton with a nervous question: would the writer offend him by offering these "unpolished lines"? A year later, *Lucrece* opened with a declaration: "The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end." Uncertainty had become assurance.[1], [2]

The dedication of *Venus and Adonis* offers Southampton the power to turn the writer's public risk into success:

> TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
> Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton,
> and Baron of Titchfield.
>
> Right Honorable,
>
> I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden; only if your Honor seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have honored you with some graver labor. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honorable survey, and your Honor to your heart's content, which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.
>
> Your Honor's in all duty,
> William Shakespeare. [1]

The uncertainty is sustained through a series of images. Southampton is a prop supporting a burden, a godfather to a possibly deformed child, and the

judge of a doubtful harvest. The writer asks for approval and promises "some graver labor" in return. "The first heir of my invention" announces a beginning in print; it need not mean the first thing the writer had ever composed.[1]

*Lucrece* answers the promise of greater gravity. Its dedication is shorter, but the commitment is larger:

> TO THE RIGHT
> HONORABLE, HENRY
> Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton,
> and Baron of Titchfield.
>
> The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honorable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship, to whom I wish long life still lengthened with all happiness.
>
> Your Lordship's in all duty,
> William Shakespeare [2]

The writer now claims a warrant for acceptance in Southampton's disposition. Past work, future work and personal devotion all belong to him. The modest description of "untutored lines" survives, but it no longer creates doubt. The relationship is presented as secure.

In her 2011 study of a verse letter attributed to Southampton, literary scholar Lara Crowley distinguishes the conventional flattery of the first dedication from the intimacy and affection of the second. That judgment concerns the whole address: the change from asking whether a gift will offend to declaring an enduring attachment.[9]

## How unusual was this dedication?

A computational study carried out for this book compared 804 dedications from 638 books dated 1590–1600. The *Lucrece* dedication ranked second overall for the personal character of its address—within the top quarter of one percent of the sample. Five methods examined whom the writer addressed, expressions of personal attachment, direct address and the balance between intimacy and public formality. Their individual results were:

| Method | Rank of 804 |
|---|---|
| Comparisons between pairs of dedications | **2** |
| Patterns of words and phrases | **3** |
| Intimacy relative to formality | **7** |
| Word associations and textual features | **12** |
| Recipient specificity and personal relations | **16** |
| **Combined ranking** | **2** |

Two methods placed it in the top three; all five placed it in the top two percent.[10]

The dedication ranked first was William Vaughan's *The Golden-grove* (1600), addressed to his own brother, Sir John Vaughan. It begins with Cato repeatedly naming his brother as the person he loved best, then turns to the author's own affection. Vaughan writes of "our mutual love" and his wish:

> to impart unto you the just half of my substance, nay in a manner all my substance.[10]

In *Lucrece*, the gift likewise extends beyond the book in hand: "What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours." Its declaration of love without end stands beside a dedication grounded explicitly in brotherhood. The combined ranking is exploratory, but the consistently high placement gives numerical support to the exceptional personal character of the address.[10]

## The motto on the title page

Before the dedication presents the name William Shakespeare, the title page of *Venus and Adonis* presents a Latin phrase that James Leyland connects with the Neville family motto:

> **Vilia** miretur vulgus: mihi flavus Apollo
> Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.
> —*Venus and Adonis* (1593), title page; Ovid, *Amores* 1.15.35–36

"Let the crowd admire **base things**; may golden-haired Apollo supply me with cups full of Castalian water." The Neville motto, *Ne **vile** velis*, means "Desire nothing **base**." *Vilia* and *vile* are forms of the same Latin adjective: the plural

"base things" and the singular "anything base." The correspondence is present in the Latin itself.[11]

**Figure 39.1:** The title-page epigraph enlarged; the box marks *Vilia*. *Venus and Adonis* (1593), Bodleian Libraries, Arch. G. e. 31 (2). Image © Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, 2015; Shakespeare Documented.

Both phrases use the accusative neuter of *vilis*, "base" or "worthless"; only the number changes.

| Phrase | Form | Meaning |
|---|---|---|
| *Ne **vile** velis* | Singular | Desire nothing **base** |
| ***Vilia** miretur vulgus* | Plural | Let the crowd admire **base things** |

The full declension is given in the note.[12]

Leyland draws attention to its position at the beginning of the first published work carrying Shakespeare's name as author. He proposes that the quotation also recalls the Neville motto: a family identity suggested before the printed dedication supplies the public name. Shakespeare's name appears beneath the address to Southampton on the following leaf, A2r.[11]

Ovid's lines contrast the crowd's tastes with the poet's desire for inspiration and lasting fame. That literary declaration may also carry the personal allusion Leyland proposes. The later poems and jokes explicitly playing on the Neville motto, examined in the Sonnet 121 chapter, show how readily the family name could invite such wordplay.[11]

VENVS
AND ADONIS

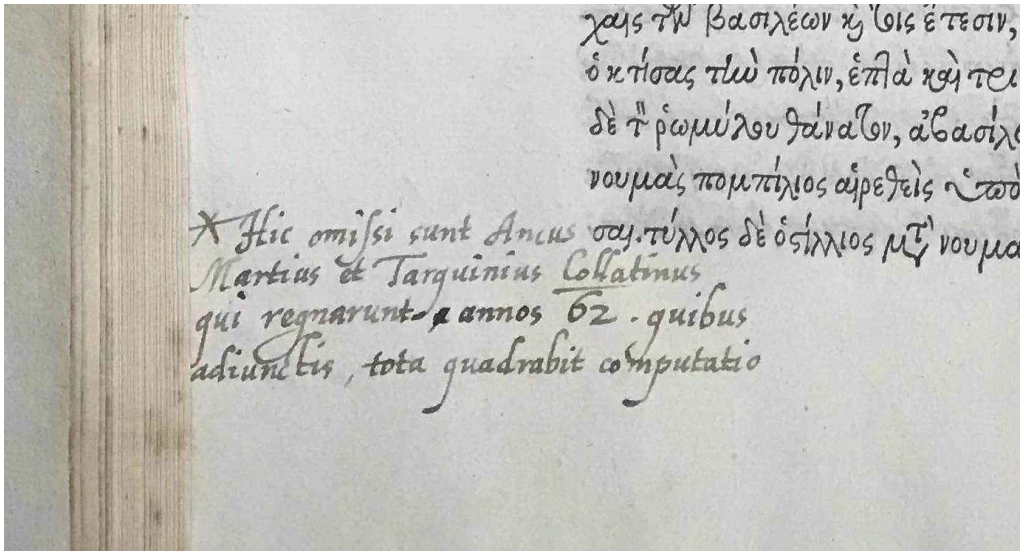
*Vilia miretur vulgus: mihi flauus Apollo*
*Pocula Caſtalia plena miniſtret aqua.*

LONDON
Imprinted by Richard Field, and are to be ſold at
the ſigne of the white Greyhound in
Paules Church-yard.
1593.

**Figure 39.2:** *Venus and Adonis* (1593), title page. The epigraph begins *Vilia miretur vulgus*. Bodleian Libraries, Arch. G. e. 31 (2). Image © Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, 2015; Shakespeare Documented.

## Collatinus in Neville's Dionysius

Neville's annotation in the 1546 Greek edition of Dionysius of Halicarnassus's *Roman Antiquities*, now at Audley End, names Tarquinius Collatinus. The same note appears in the *Coriolanus* chapter for its reference to Ancus Martius. Here the other name brings us to Lucrece's husband.[13]




Neville's annotation in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* (Paris, 1546), Audley End copy, p. 45. Photograph reproduced in published image.

The note begins:

> Hic omissi sunt Ancus
> Martius et Tarquinius **Collatinus**

"Here Ancus Martius and Tarquinius **Collatinus** have been omitted." It continues that sixty-two years must be added to make the calculation come right.[13]

The annotator likely wrote Collatinus in error: the missing king is Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, whose thirty-eight years, added to Ancus Martius's twenty-four, supply the missing sixty-two. Collatinus appears as a consul earlier on the same page. Familiarity with the story of Lucretia and her husband may also have brought his name to mind.[13]

The Argument to *The Rape of Lucrece* places Collatinus at the beginning of the action. During the siege of Ardea, the Roman commanders compare their wives:

> [...] men of the army meeting one evening at the tent of Sextus Tarquinius,
> the King's son, in their discourses after supper every one
> commended the virtues of his own wife; among whom **Collatinus**
> extolled the incomparable chastity of his wife Lucretia.[14]

Collatinus's praise leads to the visit at which Sextus Tarquinius sees Lucrece. Collatinus is her husband; Sextus, the king's son, is her assailant.

## "Deep policy"

The Argument to *Lucrece* makes the story explicitly political: a royal crime leads to the overthrow of the monarchy. After Lucrece's death, Lucius Junius Brutus denounces "the tyranny of the King," moves the people to act, and brings about a change of government:

> [...] the people were so moved that with one consent and a general acclamation the Tarquins were all exiled and the state government changed from kings to consuls.
> — *Lucrece*, Argument[14]

Richard Field printed *Lucrece* in 1594. That year he also printed William Jones's translation of Justus Lipsius's *Politickes*, a work addressed to those who govern or advise in public states. The two books bring classical narrative and contemporary political counsel to the same press.[15]

The promised "graver labor" thus follows sexual violence into revolution. Tarquin's violation of Lucrece, hospitality and royal obligation becomes the occasion for expelling his family. Brutus, who has protected himself by appearing foolish, now reveals his intelligence and directs the grieving men towards political action:

> But now he throws that shallow habit by
> Wherein deep policy did him disguise, [...]
> — *Lucrece*, lines 1814–1815[16]

Political survival through a managed public appearance connects this passage with Neville's education under Savile and his engagement with Tacitus. The disguise belongs to the classical story; the poem calls it "deep policy." Feisal Mohamed's 2019 study places Brutus's prudence and pursuit of political interest at the centre of its interpretation.[16]

## Notes and sources

1. William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis* (London: Richard Field, 1593), dedication, sig. A2r, Bodleian Library, Arch. G. e.31 (2); first-edition record and images, Shakespeare Documented. The record supplies the 18 April 1593 registration and Adam G. Hooks's interpretation of "first heir" as the first published work. Dedication quoted in the modern spelling and line divisions of the Folger Shakespeare edition.
2. Shakespeare, *Lucrece* (London: Richard Field for John Harrison, 1594), dedication, sig. A2r, Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 22345 copy 1; first-edition record and images. Registration: 9 May 1594. Dedication quoted from the Folger Shakespeare edition, preserving its line divisions.

3. Lara M. Crowley, "Was Southampton a Poet? A Verse Letter to Queen Elizabeth," *English Literary Renaissance* 41, no. 1 (2011): 111–145, pp. 123–125 and n. 31. Southampton was born on 6 October 1573. His father's birth announcement survives as Folger MS L.b.584 and is printed in Alfred John Kempe, *The Loseley Manuscripts* (1836), p. 240. The digital catalogue's bracketed 5 October conflicts with the standard date and the letter's Tuesday dateline. Legal majority was twenty-one; receipt of inherited estates additionally required livery: The National Archives, Court of Wards guide. No claim of immediate unrestricted estate possession on the birthday is intended.
4. Henry Neville, declaration, 2 March 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279, fol. 15; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1601–1603*, p. 6. Quotation modernized from the manuscript-based transcription; "my Lord" in this sentence is Southampton. The declaration describes renewed contact through Henry Cuffe and the meeting at Drury House.
5. Sir Robert Drury to Sir Henry Neville, London, 6 May 1600, The National Archives, PRO 30/50/2, fols. 97–98; catalogue. Image and transcription published in Ken Feinstein, "Shakespeare, Southampton, Humphrey Fludd and Henry Neville", 16 August 2019, transcription prepared with John O'Donnell; sender identified by Andrew Zurcher. Spelling modernized. The address identifies Neville as ambassador in France. Drury reports Fludd's sighting; the manuscript does not locate the house or establish that Neville read Southampton's letter. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 26 February 1599/1600, in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, vol. 1 (1725), p. 155: "The opportunity of Sir Robert Drury's return is the cause that I sent no messenger purposely with this advertisement [...] hoping it will come by his means in reasonable time" (spelling modernized). This supports Paris as a possible location.
6. The Tower officer's notes record Neville's arrival on 1 May 1601: *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1601–1603* (1870), p. 91. James I to the nobles and councillors at Whitehall, Holyrood, 5 April 1603, printed in C. C. Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton* (1922), pp. 259–260; contemporary copy, Folger V.a.321, fols. 16v–17, catalogue. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1603–1610* (1857), p. 2, item 18, dated 10 April, reports both men's release; Manningham's 10 April diary reports the release as the previous day. Hence "by 10 April."
7. *Journals of the House of Commons*, I, 2 April 1604, pp. 161–162, and second scribe's entry. The record establishes committee nomination. For the subsequent arrest and political collaboration, Neil Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603–1625," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 39 (1989): 107–124, especially pp. 113–114 and 117–119. The arrest passage quoted is on p. 113, continuing on p. 114; article. Cuddy names Neville. Nicolò Molin's contemporary dispatch names Southampton and Danvers but leaves five other detainees unnamed: Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, X, nos. 238 and 242, pp. 165–168. The allegation is not evidence that a plot existed. For the distinction between the brothers, see G. F. R. Barker, "Danvers, Henry (1573–1644)," *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 14 (1888), biography.
8. Neil Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603–1625," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 39 (1989), pp.107–124, at p.117, describes Neville as Southampton's "dear Damon." For the attribution to Northampton, John Casson, "The Earl of Southampton, Richard III, Shakespeare and Henry Neville," p.1 and n.2, reports Northampton's November 1613 letter to Rochester and identifies Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.3.63, fol.50v, citing Brenda James and William D. Rubinstein, *The Truth Will Out* (2005), p.246. Casson paper. For the friendship story, see Cicero, *De officiis* 3.45 (Phintias is the form of Pythias's name used there). The phrase is a description of the pair, not established here as Southampton's own form of address. Chamberlain to Carleton, 4 November 1612, McClure, *Letters*, I, p.387; Southampton to Winwood, 6 August 1613, Sawyer, *Memorials*, III, p.475.
9. Crowley, "Was Southampton a Poet?", pp. 123–125, especially p. 124 and nn. 31, 33. Conventional words such as duty, honour and happiness should not be treated as a personal verbal signature. The whole dedicatory progression is the comparison at issue.

10. Dedications extracted from the Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership corpus, publication-date selection 1590–1600: 804 dedication records from 638 TCP texts. The analysis conducted for this book combined two rule-based scores with lexical, word-vector and pairwise regression methods, weighting their percentile ranks by performance against 270 provisional reference labels. *Lucrece* (TCP A12035) ranked 16, 7, 3, 12 and 2 respectively; combined rank 2. These are measures of textual personalness, not independently validated measurements of an actual relationship. The models share features and calibration material; their agreement is not five independent historical tests. The first three combined scores are close, and the precise ordering should not carry more weight than the consistently high placement. The scored corpus does not include *Venus and Adonis* and is not a census of all surviving dedications. For the comparison, William Vaughan, *The Golden-grove* (1600), dedication to Sir John Vaughan, TCP A14293, public text. Vaughan's spelling is modernized here; the complete dedication, rather than the website's machine-modernized version, controls the quotation.

11. William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis* (London: Richard Field, 1593), title page and sig. A2r, Bodleian Libraries, Arch. G. e. 31 (2), first-edition images and account by Adam G. Hooks, Shakespeare Documented. Ovid, *Amores* 1.15.35–36; see William Turpin's Latin text and commentary, Dickinson College Commentaries, especially lines 31–42. Translation supplied here; Latin u/v normalized. The epigraph's possible reference to Neville's motto is James Leyland's interpretation; it is not a literal quotation of the motto.

12. Enrico Olivetti, *Latin Dictionary*, declension of vilis. Full declension (masculine/feminine, neuter; singular then plural): nominative and vocative, vilis, vile / viles, vilia; genitive, vilis, vilis / vilium, vilium; dative and ablative, vili, vili / vilibus, vilibus; accusative, vilem, vile / viles, vilia. Masculine and feminine share their forms. The alternative masculine/feminine accusative plural ending -īs is not shown. In both quoted phrases the adjective stands substantivally, meaning a base thing or base things; no expressed noun is required.

13. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* (Paris: Robert Estienne, 1546), Audley End copy, p. 45, at 1.75; photograph reproduced and attributed to Neville in Ken Feinstein, "Part 8: Henry Neville and Henry Savile Annotations in Roman Antiquities", 16 October 2020. The note reads "Hic omissi sunt Ancus / Martius et Tarquinius Collatinus / qui regnarunt [mark, unexpanded] annos 62. quibus / adiunctis, tota quadrabit computatio." Translation supplied here. Compare the 1546 edition, BSB scan 00048: the missing regnal entries are Ancus's twenty-four years and Priscus's thirty-eight, restoring 182 to 244. Collatinus is named as a consul in 1.74 on the same printed page. Neither the nearby name nor possible familiarity with the Lucretia story establishes why the annotator wrote it; both are suggested explanations of the apparent slip. The transcription preserves Collatinus as written. The passage is a cross-reference to the figure in *Lucrece*, not a note about Lucrece's assault or evidence that the poem was being composed.

14. Shakespeare, *Lucrece* (1594), the Argument, Folger Shakespeare edition. Excerpts preserve Folger's line divisions. The opening excerpt begins within the account of the siege; the second excerpt is the conclusion of the Argument. Collatinus, Sextus Tarquinius and Lucius Tarquinius Superbus are distinct people.

15. Justus Lipsius, *Sixe Bookes of Politickes or Civil Doctrine*, translated by William Jones (London: Richard Field for William Ponsonby, 1594), STC 15701, TCP A05583. Same printer and year establish a publication context. Richard Field the printer must be distinguished from Dr Richard Field the theologian, whose visits to Neville are described in Nathaniel Field, *Some Short Memorials Concerning the Life of that Reverend Divine Doctor Richard Field* (1716–17), p. 12.

16. Shakespeare, *Lucrece*, Folger text, lines 1807–1817, and the Argument. Brutus's assumed foolishness belongs to the classical narrative; the political wording is discussed as the poem's treatment of that inherited action. For a fuller interpretation, see Feisal G. Mohamed, "Raison d'état, Religion, and the Body in *The Rape of Lucrece*," *Religions* 10, no. 7 (2019): 426, article.

# Sonnet 66: To Die, I Leave My Love Alone

Chapter 40

In August 1601 Henry Neville asked Robert Cecil to put a value on the remainder of his life. His lands were largely settled on his children; what he could offer the Queen was the income available to him while he lived. From this he begged that something be reserved for the "necessary sustenance of my wife and my eight poor children." The petition then turned from the price of his life to his desire to be rid of it:

> Unless I be so happy as to obtain some mitigation of that indignation which is kindled in her against me, I shall account my **life but a burden** unto me, and hope to be **eased of it** ere it be long.[1]

On the same page he asked Cecil to persuade Elizabeth to "lay the punishment upon myself, which have only deserved it, and not upon my poor children which are innocent." He was willing to undergo misery, even the loss of his life, to purchase her grace for them. His wish for death came with an urgent attempt to secure the lives of those who depended on him.

Sonnet 66 holds those two thoughts together. The speaker wants to leave the world; the person he loves would be left in it:

**Sonnet 66**

Tired with all these, for **restful death** I cry:
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection **wrongfully disgraced**,
And strength by **limping sway disabled**,
And art made **tongue-tied by authority**,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill.
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, **to die, I leave my love alone**.[2]

Ten successive lines begin with *And*, accumulating reasons to wish for death. The couplet brings the list to a halt. "Save that" introduces the one thing the speaker cannot dismiss: the cost of his departure to someone else. Neville's petitions give that conflict an immediate setting in the welfare of his household.

## Two August petitions

In another petition that August, Neville calculated what remained after the expenses of his embassy, his debts and the charges on his estate. He proposed payments and security for the fine. If the Queen would not accept them, he had no further means:

> If this be not accepted, I must resolve to endure what will be laid upon me in any kind with patience, for other means I have none to redeem myself with. And my mind is so prepared already for misery, as nothing can be much more welcome to me than that which is **the end of all misery**.[3]

Both August petitions turn from financial calculations to welcoming death if relief is refused. On 25 July he had already pleaded for his wife and children:

> I beseech your honour therefore even for God's sake to take compassion upon my poor wife and children, and let not my folly be their utter overthrow. I wish the whole punishment might light upon myself, for I only have deserved it, and they are innocent.[4]

He admits the fault and tries to contain its consequences. His wife and children must not suffer his "utter overthrow" with him. In the second August petition he asks not to be made "the only precedent of rigour" among so many examples of mercy.[3] The appeal to the Queen's compassion is also an attempt to preserve a reason to live.

## Unequal judgment and disabling power

In March 1602 Neville made the unequal treatment explicit:

> She hath been pleased to give better conditions to some other of greater state than mine, who were in the **eye of law as great offenders as myself**, and from whom she took nothing else but their bare fine.[5]

The men better able to pay had received better terms. Neville calculated that his offer would leave scarcely £50 a year for himself, his wife and eight children. Keeping him imprisoned would cost more than £150 a year: accepting his terms, he argued, would bring the Queen more than continued confinement.[5] Sonnet 66 turns comparable reversals into its indictment of public life: merit begs, empty worth wears finery, strength is disabled, and good serves evil. The letter gives unequal judgment a particular consequence—a household deprived of the means to survive.

On 3 April Neville reported that his wife was burdened with grief "with the late loss of one of her children, and the likelihood to lose another."[6] The danger to his dependants was no longer only what might follow his own death.

A year earlier, even comforting her by letter had required permission. In an appeal from about 26 February 1601 he wrote:

> I have made bold, according to your honour's **permission**, to **write unto my wife a word or two to comfort her**, which I desire, if it so please your honour, that J. Packer may carry.[7]

This is a concrete restriction on private speech. The sonnet's "art made tongue-tied by authority" extends the grievance to art. Neville's position supplies the experience of speaking only by another's leave.

In "strength by limping sway disabled," it is the ruling power that limps.[8] Neville's correspondence also records bodily trouble. His sister-in-law Dorothy Seymour hoped that a journey to Bath would bring "health to your leg," which had troubled him the previous summer.[9] On 1 November 1604 Neville wrote to Winwood "in much pain of the gout," "from my bed at the Star Chamber"; he had "not yet been present at any meeting" of the Union conference.[10] Sonnet 37 turns lameness into the speaker's own condition: "made lame by fortune's dearest spite."

## Living through another

On 3 February 1602 Neville asked for enough revenue to maintain his eldest son at university:

> For seeing I may account myself a man in some sort **dead to this world**, I have nothing left to wish or hope but that my **house and fortune may revive in him**.[11]

His own public existence seemed over. What he hoped to preserve was the house and fortune through which his son could continue it. Sonnet 37 opens with a father finding pleasure in his child, then makes that relation the model of the speaker's consolation:

> **Sonnet 37**
>
> As a decrepit **father** takes delight
> To see his active **child** do deeds of youth,
> So I, **made lame** by fortune's dearest spite,
> Take all my comfort of thy **worth and truth**.
> For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
> Or any of these all, or all, or more,
> Entitled in thy parts do crowned sit,
> I make my love engrafted to this store.
> So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised
> Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give
> That I in thy abundance am sufficed
> And by a part of **all thy glory live**.
> Look what is best, that best I wish in thee.
> This wish I have, then ten times happy me.[12]

The father is the poem's comparison, not an identification of the beloved. Its force lies in the movement from personal loss to another person's abundance: the

speaker lives by a share of the other's glory. Neville's letter gives that movement a literal father and son, and makes sustaining the son the surviving object of his ambition.

Sonnet 13 pictures a related hope as a house kept from decay:

**Sonnet 13, lines 9–14**

Who lets so fair a **house** fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honor might **uphold**
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day
And barren rage of death's eternal cold?
O, none but unthrifts, dear my love, you know.
You had a father; let your son say so.[13]

Neville's son already existed; the sonnet urges the beloved to become a father. Both make a son's continuance the answer to a threatened house. Neville calls himself dead to the world and asks that his house revive in his son; the poem asks for a son who can say he had a father.

## Notes and sources

1. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, undated, endorsed 4 August 1601, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 87/61; also *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp. 320–321. Spelling, capitalization, abbreviations and light punctuation are modernized; vocabulary and syntax are retained. The calendar is an additional public checking reference, not a substitute for the manuscript. Bold type marks the particular words or relations being compared.
2. Shakespeare, Sonnet 66, Folger Shakespeare Library. The entire poem is quoted; its wording and lineation are retained.
3. Neville to Cecil, undated August 1601, Cecil Papers 87/153; also *Calendar*, XI, p. 371. The first-person death passage is on the second written page of the manuscript. The calendar gives a third-person abstract. The endorsement identifies August 1601; no day is assigned here.
4. Neville to Cecil, 25 July 1601, Cecil Papers 87/20; also *Calendar*, XI, p. 300.
5. Neville to Cecil, 11 March 1602 (1601 in the letter's contemporary year reckoning); also *Calendar*, XII (1910), pp. 72–73. The body is in another hand: Neville explains that indisposition of his head and eyes prevented him writing it himself.
6. Neville to Cecil, 3 April 1602, Cecil Papers 92/99; also *Calendar*, XII, pp. 95–96.
7. Neville to Cecil, undated, approximately 26 February 1601; also *Calendar*, XI, p. 88. Manuscript and John O'Donnell transcription. Packer's initial is abbreviated in the document.
8. Ken Feinstein's "Shakespeare's Sonnet 66 and Henry Neville", 3 July 2020, raises the bodily association for 'limping.' In Sonnet 66 the subject is 'strength,' disabled 'by limping sway': the political meaning and the proposed biographical resonance are distinct. The letters establish leg trouble and a painful attack of gout, but do not establish a permanent limp or a date of composition for this sonnet.
9. Dorothy Killigrew Seymour to Henry Neville, 18 January [probably 1604/5], Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/2/7; catalogue, D/EN/F6/2. Quoted from the manuscript, with spelling and punctuation modernized. The letter gives no year; the postponement of Parliament and news of ministers losing their livings support the 1605 assignment. On that dating, 'this last summer' is summer 1604. The letter proposes Bath; it does not establish that the visit occurred.

10. Henry Neville to Ralph Winwood, London, 1 November 1604, in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, II (London, 1725), p. 35. Spelling modernized. Neville names gout in this letter. Dorothy does not name the cause of his leg trouble, so the two reports are not treated as a single medically established diagnosis.
11. Neville to Cecil, 3 February 1602 (1601 in the contemporary year reckoning); also *Calendar*, XII, pp. 43–44. Manuscript and John O'Donnell transcription.
12. Shakespeare, Sonnet 37, Folger Shakespeare Library. The father and child form the opening simile; the poem does not identify its addressee as the speaker's child. "Made lame" is attributed to fortune in the poem and does not independently establish a physical disability.
13. Shakespeare, Sonnet 13, lines 9–14, Folger text. The sonnet urges procreation; Neville's appeal concerns an existing son and the means to sustain his inheritance.

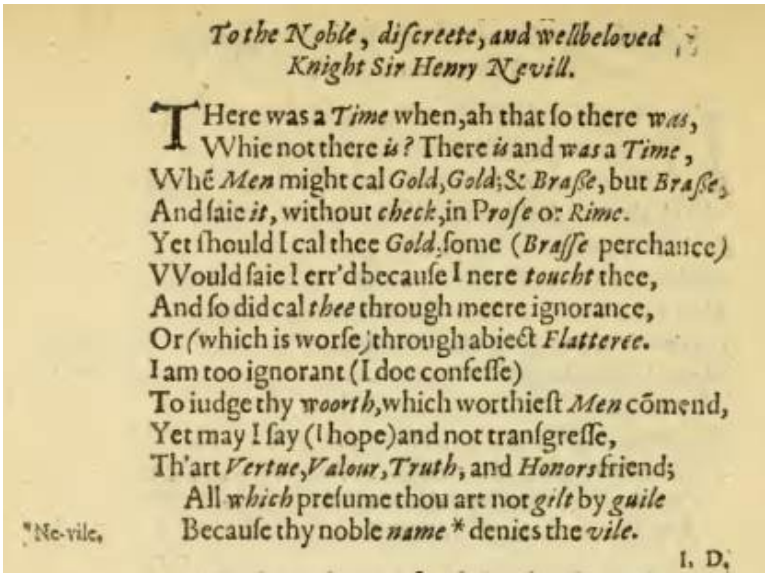
# Sonnet 121: The Vile World

Chapter 41

Beside a poem addressed to Sir Henry Nevill in John Davies's *Microcosmos* (1603), a printed marginal gloss supplied a defence in two syllables: "Ne-vile." Davies's closing lines made the moral claim in the name explicit:

> All which presume thou art not gilt by guile,
> Because thy noble **name** denies the **vile**.

The heading calls its addressee "the Noble, discreet, and wellbeloved Knight Sir Henry Nevill." The marginal gloss shows that the surname joke was being made in print during Neville's lifetime.[1]



*To the Noble, discreete, and wellbeloved Knight Sir Henry Nevill.*

THere was a *Time* when, ah that ſo there *was*,
Whie not there *is*? There *is* and *was* a *Time*,
Whē *Men* might cal *Gold*, *Gold*; & *Braſſe*, but *Braſſe*,
And ſaie *it*, without *check*, in *Proſe* or *Rime*.
Yet ſhould I cal thee *Gold*, ſome (*Braſſe* perchance)
VVould ſaie I err'd becauſe I nere *toucht* thee,
And ſo did cal *thee* through meere ignorance,
Or (which is worſe) through abiect *Flatteree*.
I am too ignorant (I doe confeſſe)
To iudge thy *woorth*, which worthieſt *Men* cōmend,
Yet may I ſay (I hope) and not tranſgreſſe,
Th'art *Vertue*, *Valour*, *Truth*, and *Honors* friend;
All *which* preſume thou art not *gilt* by *guile*
Becauſe thy noble *name* * denies the *vile*.

*Ne-vile.

I. D.

**Figure 41.1:** Davies's address to Sir Henry Nevill, with the marginal gloss "Ne-vile"; Microcosmos (1603). Source: Internet Archive, microcosmosdisco00davi, leaf n291.

## An honest man, however he seemed

From the Tower, Neville had asked Cecil to separate the appearance created by his disgrace from his judgment of the man. On 9 July 1601 he wrote:

> I have received great comfort ... for the hope ... that your honour doth not in your private judgment condemn me to have been **so wicked and disloyal**, as my folly and misfortune together **have made me to seem**.[2]

He admitted folly. What he resisted was its conversion into a complete account of his character. One title mattered more than the rest:

> Whatsoever other opinion I have deserved to lose, that you will vouchsafe still to hold me an **honest man**. For that is the highest title that I aspire unto.[2]

Sonnet 121 makes the distinction between conduct and hostile reputation with greater defiance:

> **Sonnet 121**
>
> 'Tis better to be **vile** than **vile esteemed**,
> When **not to be** receives **reproach of being**,
> And the just pleasure lost, which is so **deemed**
> Not by our feeling but by others' seeing.
> For why should others' **false adulterate eyes**
> Give salutation to my sportive blood?
> Or on my frailties why are **frailer spies**,
> Which in their wills count bad what I think good?
> No, **I am that I am**; and they that **level**
> At my abuses reckon up their own.
> I may be straight though they themselves be **bevel**;
> **By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown**,
> Unless this general **evil** they maintain:
> All men are bad and in their badness reign.[3]

To receive the reproach without committing the vice charged is to suffer other people's judgment in place of one's own experience. The poem acknowledges frailties while refusing the accusers' right to define them. Its "sportive blood" gives those frailties an amorous setting; Neville's offence was political. The correspondence lies in the shape of the defence: admit a fault, refuse the hostile identity built upon it. Neville asks Cecil to preserve that distinction; the speaker answers his hostile judges, "I am that I am."

The contrast with the preceding sonnet makes the point sharper. Sonnet 120 ends by making each person's fault the ground for forgiving the other:

> **Sonnet 120, lines 13–14**
>
> But that your trespass now becomes a **fee**;
> Mine **ransoms** yours, and yours must **ransom** me.[4]

Sonnet 121 changes the tribunal. Its outsiders turn their own "rank thoughts" into an account of someone else's deeds. Admitting an error, in Neville's petitions as in this contrast between the poems, need not mean accepting every accusation built upon it. His attempts to withhold or revise his declaration are examined in Chapter 6. His fear of "the censure of every common person" and the "worst interpretation" of his errors gives the poetic conflict a documented personal urgency.[5,6]

## A name in the rhyme

The accusers *level* their charges at a speaker who may be straight while they are *bevel*, or crooked. Both words rhyme with Neville. Two lines after *bevel*, the 1609 quarto prints "this general *euill*."[3]

Shakespeare uses *bevel* only here in the plays and poems checked. A search of EEBO texts dated 1500–1615, allowing for spelling variants and inspecting verse-line endings, found no other independent example of the *level*/*bevel* rhyme. Its two hits were witnesses of this same sonnet.[3] The unusual rhyme occurs inside a defence against being falsely judged vile—the very charge Davies makes Neville's name deny. Sound, written form and the poem's argument work together here.

## The family joke before and after 1609

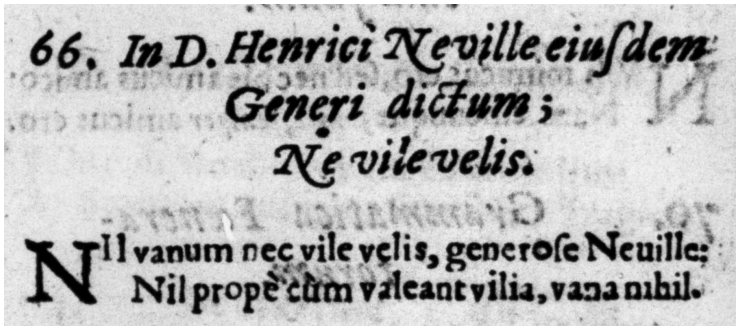
The dated witnesses show how the name-play and the language of esteeming gather around the sonnet's publication:

| Date | Witness | Name-play or verbal connection |
|---|---|---|
| 1603 | Davies, *Microcosmos* | A poem addressed to Sir Henry Nevill ends with the printed marginal gloss "Ne-vile."[1] |
| 1606 / 1607 | Owen, *Epigrammatum libri tres* | Books I–III first appeared in 1606; the Neville motto epigram is checked here in the 1607 third edition. Its addressee is the Abergavenny cousin.[7] |
| 1609 | Shakespeare's *Sonnets* | Sonnet 121 sets being vile against being "vile esteemed"; publication does not date its composition.[8] |
| Probably 1611 | *Convivium Philosophicum* | "Ne vile aestimet Henricus" combines the surname joke with esteeming. The likely gathering date is 2 September 1611.[9] |
| 1619 | John Vicars's translation of Owen | The named Neville epigram uses "base esteem" and "deem," after the Sonnets were in print.[7,10] |

John Owen used the motto *Ne vile velis*—"Wish for nothing vile"—for Henry Neville of Abergavenny, the ambassador's cousin. The epigram follows that of the Earl of Dorset, whose daughter Mary Sackville he had married. The third edition of 1607 prints:

> Nil vanum nec **vile velis**, generose **Neville**:
> Nil prope cum valeant vilia, vana nihil.

"Wish for nothing vain or base, noble Neville, since base things are worth almost nothing, vain things nothing." The joke belongs to the family name; the addressee here is the cousin.[7]


66. In D. Henrici Neville eiuſdem Generi dictum; Ne vile velis.

Nil vanum nec vile velis, generoſe Neuille:
Nil propè cùm valeant vilia, vana nihil.

**Figure 41.2:** Owen's Latin epigram, Book II, no. 66, with "Ne vile velis" above the verse. Epigrammatum libri tres, third edition (1607), Archive leaf n58.

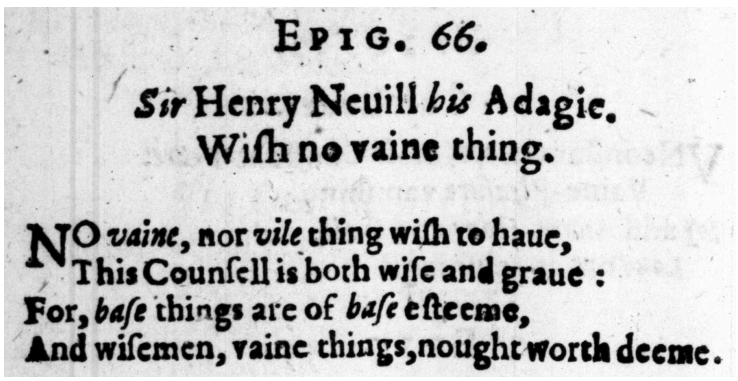
John Vicars's 1619 translation gives it a more particular resemblance to Sonnet 121:

> No vain, nor **vile** thing wish to have,
> This counsel is both wise and grave:
> For, **base** things are of **base esteem**,
> And wise men, vain things, nought worth **deem**.[7]

**Sonnet 121, lines 1–3**

> 'Tis better to be **vile** than **vile esteemed**,
> When not to be receives reproach of being,
> And the just pleasure lost, which is so **deemed**[3]

"Base ... base esteem" repeats the structure of "vile ... vile esteemed," with *deem* following in rhyme. Vicars also keeps *vile* in his opening line. His English is later than the 1609 *Sonnets*; Owen's Latin is attested before them in the 1607 edition. The sequence matters: a printed family pun precedes the sonnet's publication, while the English verbal resemblance is a later parallel.[10]


Epig. 66.

Sir Henry Neuill his Adagie.
Wiſh no vaine thing.

NO vaine, nor vile thing wiſh to haue,
This Counſell is both wiſe and graue:
For, baſe things are of baſe eſteeme,
And wiſemen, vaine things, nought worth deeme.

**Figure 41.3:** John Vicars's English translation of Owen's Neville epigram, 1619, epigram 66; Archive leaf n25.

The *Convivium Philosophicum*, discussed in Chapter 45 and probably associated with a gathering on 2 September 1611, brings *vile* and esteeming together inside the surname joke:

Robertus Equorum amicus,
**Ne vile aestimet Henricus**
Dignabitur adesse,

"Ne vile aestimet Henricus" pairs *vile* with *aestimet*, "let him esteem." The contemporary English translation printed by Andrew Clark keeps the name-play:

Sir Robert Horse-lover the while
**Ne let Sir Henry count it vile**
Will come with gentle speed;[9]

A manuscript's appended guest list names "Sr Henry Neville," without distinguishing the diplomat from the cousin. The combination is specific: the family pun *Ne vile* is completed by *aestimet*, the act of esteeming. It could be a deliberate recollection of "vile esteemed." In the Latin Henry does the judging, whereas the sonnet's speaker is judged; the shared words perform different actions.[9]

## Apparent and true

The poets' puns give the name a moral meaning. Neville's 1599 portrait presents integrity through a different medium: an astronomical device. Above the inscription identifying him as ambassador to France appear a geometrical diagram and a line of Greek.

**Figure 41.4:** Sir Henry Neville, 1599, Audley End House. The astronomical device and Greek inscription appear at upper left.

The specialist reading of its Greek inscription is "Absolutely without prosth-aphaeresis"—without the correction between a heavenly body's mean and true position.[11]

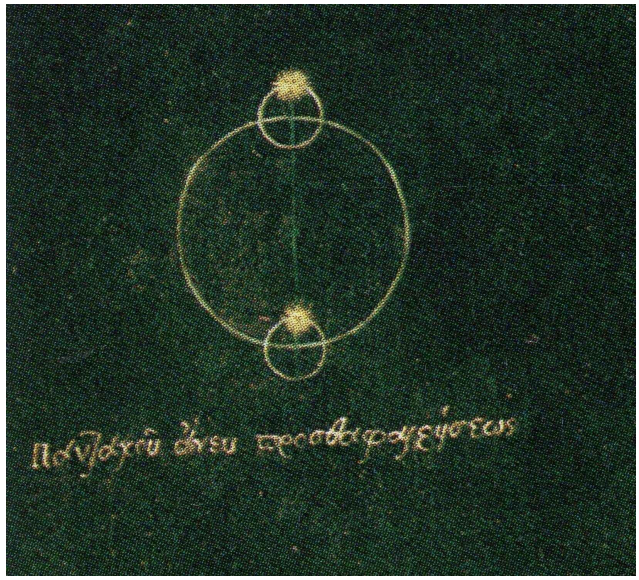


**Figure 41.5:** Detail of the astronomical device and Greek inscription in Neville's 1599 portrait.

The specialist interprets the device as requiring no correction between Neville's apparent and true self; the GrECI catalogue also connects it to *Ne vile velis*. At the two positions shown—apogee and perigee in the Ptolemaic solar model—the mean and true directions coincide. The portrait claims agreement between appearance and character. Sonnet 121 protests against viewers who make the speaker appear crooked. One represents integrity as a coincidence of positions; the other challenges the eyes that misrepresent it.

## Base things and the judging crowd

The title-page epigraph of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) begins *Vilia miretur vulgus*—"Let the crowd admire base things." Chapter 39 sets out James Leyland's proposed connection with *Ne vile velis*, including the Latin forms linking *vilia* with *vile*. The epigraph puts the crowd's taste for base things against the poet's own ambition. Sonnet 121 challenges the crowd's moral judgment instead: who gets to decide whether a man is vile? The proposed motto connection gives this earlier declaration a place beside the sonnet's defence of character.

**Figure 41.6:** *Venus and Adonis* (1593), title-page epigraph (detail); the box marks *Vilia*. Bodleian Libraries, Arch. G. e. 31 (2). Image © Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, 2015; Shakespeare Documented.

## A name defended or concealed

The *vile* word-family occurs in only two of the 154 sonnets, twice in one line in each: "vile world with vilest worms" in 71, and "vile than vile esteemed" in 121.[8] Both place a life under the power of other people's judgments. They answer that danger differently.

**Sonnet 71**

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this **vile world** with **vilest worms** to dwell.
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The **hand** that writ it, for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I, perhaps, compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my **poor name** rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan
And **mock** you with me after I am gone.[8]

The poem moves from the bell's public announcement to the private act of reading. A line of verse can bring back the writer's hand and name. He asks the beloved to suppress precisely those acts of recognition: "remember not," "do not so much as my poor name rehearse."

The last couplet explains what recognition could cost. The world will look into the survivor's mourning and mock both people. Death does not end the danger of association; the dead man's name can still hurt someone he loves. Sonnet 72 carries that danger into the act of praising him:

**Sonnet 72, lines 9–14**

O, lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
**My name** be buried where my body is
And live no more to **shame** nor me nor you.
For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things **nothing worth**.[12]

Praise itself can misrepresent the person it means to honour. Sonnet 127 objects to "Sland'ring creation with a **false esteem**." Sonnet 130 ends by affirming love while rejecting false description:[13]

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with **false compare**.[13]

The speaker can love the woman without inventing her perfection. That gives Sonnet 121's protest a further counterpart: a person may be misrepresented by flattering comparison as well as hostile judgment.

In Sonnet 72, the friend's praise can expose both of them to shame. In 71 and 72, love therefore asks for a buried name; in 121, the speaker refuses to let other people's thoughts determine his deeds. The alternatives are concealment and defiance.

The argument for Sonnet 121 is cumulative. The poem that refuses to be "vile esteemed" contains Shakespeare's only use of *bevel* in the works checked, rhymed with *level*. Both words sound the surname; two lines later the quarto prints *euill*. Those features occur together inside a defence of reputation, and Davies had already printed that moral reading of the name: "thy noble name denies the vile." Owen supplies the family motto; Vicars and the *Convivium* bring the name-play into the language of esteeming. Neville's own plea supplies the personal stakes: others might take away every title, but Cecil must still hold him an "honest man." The sonnet's speaker grants his judges less power still: "I am that I am."

## Notes and sources

1. John Davies of Hereford, *Microcosmos* (Oxford, 1603), concluding address "To the Noble, discreet, and wellbeloved Knight Sir Henry Nevill," page image, EEBO-TCP A19903. Spelling modernized in the quotations; the image retains the printed spelling. The heading names Sir Henry Nevill without an estate or office; its identification with the diplomat is the reading adopted here, not additional wording in the heading.
2. Neville to Cecil, from the Tower, 9 July 1601; manuscript, with *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp. 273–275 as independent text control. Spelling and light punctuation modernized.
3. Shakespeare, Sonnet 121, quoted in full; lines 9–14 supply the rhyme and spelling comparison. A whole-word check of the Folger reading texts for the 38 plays, the 154 Sonnets, Venus and Adonis, Lucrece, and The Phoenix and Turtle finds bevel only in Sonnet 121, line 11.

The broader EarlyPrint search covered EEBO witnesses dated 1500–1615 inclusive, searching level/leuel/levell/leuell and bevel/beuel/bevell/beuell and inspecting encoded verse-line endings and surrounding rhyme contexts. It found the pairing in A12043 and A12044, two witnesses of the Sonnets. A separate 1615 multilingual passage in A08077 pairs bevell with well, not level. This is a finding within the dated, searchable corpus and its verse encoding, not a claim about every surviving or lost poem. Ken Feinstein's 14 May 2019 discussion connects the rhyme to Neville's surname. The 1609 quarto has leuell (line 9), beuel (line 11), and euill (line 13); the surname comparison retains the original u in both euill and Neuill. See the old-spelling edition, Sonnet 121, lines 9–14, ed. Hardy M. Cook and Ian Lancashire. Evil occurs within line 13; the closing end-rhyme is maintain/reign.

4. Shakespeare, Sonnet 120, lines 13–14, Folger text. The reciprocal forgiveness in the couplet is contrasted with the public accusation in Sonnet 121; their printed order does not date their composition.

5. Neville to Cecil, Chelsea, 22 April 1601, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 86/1; also *Calendar*, XI, pp. 175–176. For Chelsea custody and controlled visits, see Nottingham and Cecil to Zachary Lock, March 1601, TNA PRO 30/50/4, manuscript leaf numbered 7, authorizing Lady Neville to visit privately.

6. Neville to Cecil, 7 January 1603 (1602 in the letter's year reckoning), Cecil Papers 91/35; also *Calendar*, XII (1910), pp. 589–590.

7. John Owen, *Epigrammatum libri tres*, third edition (London: Humfrey Lownes for Simon Waterson, 1607), II.66, STC 18986, Latin page image, n58. Latin u/v and accents normalized; literal translation supplied here. The preceding Dorset heading explains *eiusdem generi*, "his son-in-law." John Vicars, trans., *Epigrams of that most witty and worthy epigrammatist Mr. John Owen* (1619), epigram 66, STC 18993, English page image, n25; EEBO-TCP A08687. English spelling modernized. Ken Feinstein, "Shakespeare's Sonnet 121, John Vicars, and Vile Things", 28 July 2019, identifies the comparison and distinguishes the Abergavenny addressee. For the first publication of Books I–III in 1606, see the Philological Museum edition, Introduction, §2. The illustrated witness is the 1607 third edition; the specific epigram has not yet been collated against a first-edition copy.

8. Shakespeare, Sonnet 71 and Sonnet 121, Folger Shakespeare Library. A whole-word, case-insensitive check of the 154 numbered Folger sonnets for *vile* and *vilest* gives four occurrences, confined to these two lines. This is a statement about distribution within the sequence, not the rarity of the words in English. The 1609 quarto prints *vildest* in Sonnet 71; the reading text here follows Folger's *vilest*.

9. *Convivium Philosophicum*, attributed to John Hoskyns; Latin and contemporary English translation by John Reinolds in John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark, II (Oxford, 1898), pp. 50–53 (text). Clark's note expressly identifies the Neville family motto. Manuscript: TNA SP 14/66, f. 2r–v, CELM HoJ 267, State Papers Online MC4323680944, catalogued as 2 September 1611. The manuscript images confirm the pun and the appended name; the quotation follows Clark's edition rather than silently assimilating manuscript variants. The unqualified "Sir Henry Neville" does not distinguish Billingbear from the Abergavenny cousin; the family-motto evidence holds for either. The represented company is not by itself proof that every named guest attended. For the dating, see I. A. Shapiro, "The 'Mermaid Club' ", *Modern Language Review* 45.1 (1950), 6–17, at p. 7 and nn. 1–3: the poem specifies 2 September without a year, and Shapiro argues for 1611 as the most likely year. Julian T. S. Neuhauser, "Sirenaicks, Guilds and a New Coryate Manuscript", *Review of English Studies* 74.313 (2023), 31–46, at p. 34 and n. 15, retains "likely in 1611," citing Shapiro. The possible allusion to Sonnet 121 is proposed here, not attributed to either scholar. "Robertus Equorum amicus" ("Sir Robert Horse-lover") names Sir Robert Phelips. On 12 November 1612 Sir Maurice Berkeley wrote to Phelips approving his proposed consultation with Neville: "I like well of your purpose of treating with Sir H[enry] N[eville]." Clayton Roberts and Owen Duncan, "The Parliamentary Undertaking of 1614", *English Historical Review* 93 (1978), 481–498, at p. 488 and n. 2, quoting

Somerset DD/PH/219/59. This records a planned approach, not confirmation of a completed meeting.

10. Vicars also uses the rhyme in "A Good-man," epigram 87 in the first sequence (n14), and "To the Reader, of himselfe," epigram 168 (n18). The comparison here concerns the repeated synonymous adjective with esteem and the Neville motto context, not a unique rhyme. The 1619 translation is a later parallel, not a proposed source for the 1609 quarto; Owen's epigram is confirmed in the 1607 third edition, while its presence in the 1606 first edition has not been checked.
11. GrECI/MUSEU-HUB, "Portrait of Sir Henry Neville", image 042_Id_17, dates the oil-on-wood portrait to 1599, locates it at Audley End in Lord Braybrooke's collection, and tentatively attributes it to Marcus Geeraerts the Younger. Its description reads the Greek as "Absolutely without correction" and expressly connects the device to Ne vile velis. Ken Feinstein, "The Greek Inscription on Henry Neville's Portrait: Solved!", 9 July 2021, publishes an anonymous specialist's translation and astronomical explanation. The exact diplomatic Greek is not supplied here. Astronomical prosthaphaeresis is distinct from the later computational technique of that name. The motto connection is an interpretation of the emblem, not Latin words painted on the panel. Portrait reproduction.
12. Shakespeare, Sonnet 72, lines 9–14, Folger text. The printed sequence's development of public reputation is not a chronology of the poems' composition.
13. Shakespeare, Sonnet 127, line 12, and Sonnet 130, lines 13–14, Folger Shakespeare Library. The comparison concerns false description in praise and accusation; it does not identify the poems' addressees.

# The Sonnets: Bound for a Friend

Chapter 42

On 31 July 1602 Henry Neville told Robert Cecil that the Queen already possessed land belonging to some of his friends. They had made it over to help him meet the terms of his fine. Neville remained confined, and without his pardon he could not complete the transactions needed to repay them:

> Now till I have my pardon, I can neither give my **friends any recompense**, for the **land which they have made over for me**, nor receive money for the land I have sold as mine own.[1]

His friends' assistance had drawn their property into his punishment. The Crown held their land, but he could neither repay them nor secure his own freedom. Sonnet 134 drives that disturbing separation between another person's loss and the speaker's release to its limit:

> **Sonnet 134, lines 11–14**
>
> And sue a **friend came debtor for my sake**;
> So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
> Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me.
> **He pays the whole, and yet am I not free**.[2]

The friend has become liable "for my sake"; the creditor now holds both people. Neville's letters show how helping a debtor could entangle the helper, and how one obligation generated another.

## A friend's assistance becomes a liability

Some obligations predated the Crown's demands. On 25 July 1601 Neville explained what had happened to his valuable possessions:

> Those I had, as my plate and other things of best value, I have been forced to sell since my trouble, to pay my debts and to **disengage my friends that stood bound for me**, as became an honest man.[3]

Selling the goods released friends who had already stood bound for him. It also reduced what remained available for his fine.

The fine brought a fresh demand. By 3 April 1602 the Queen had accepted an offer of £5,000, payable through money on delivery of pardon, land and later instalments. Neville offered his own recognizances—acknowledged obligations of record. The Lord Treasurer required "**bonds with sureties**."[4] A surety made another person answerable if Neville failed to pay.

That was precisely the risk friends hesitated to take. His estate was exhausted, and the Queen's claim stood before those of other creditors. He had little left

with which to protect the people who might guarantee him. On 18 April he proposed another form of security:

> Whereas my Lord Treasurer required **bonds of me with sureties**, I finding that my **friends are willinger to engage their land for me than their bonds**, have offered of mine own and my friends', land of the yearly rent of about six score pounds.[5]

He offered land producing about £120 a year, first for £2,000 of the remaining debt and then at a reduced valuation. Every part accepted in land would reduce what still required sureties. His explanation shows why the form of the assistance mattered:

> I protest by the faith of a Christian, that I do it not with any meaning to let the land fall into the Queen's hands, for there were small honesty for me to deal so with my friend, but only to avoid the necessity of providing sureties for so great sums, which I find to be so hard a matter, and which, though I should obtain it at my friends' hands, would infinitely **entangle the poor remnant of my estate, with counter-assurances to them**.[5]

"Land is better assurance than any man's bond" was his practical conclusion.[5] To obtain his friends' guarantees, he would have to secure them in turn. Those counter-assurances would further encumber the remnant of the estate already needed to meet the original penalty. He was trying to prevent help from becoming another means of ruin. By July, friends' land had passed to the Crown, yet the uncompleted pardon still prevented him compensating them.

## Both men held

Sonnet 133 makes another person's involvement the cause of the speaker's protest:

> **Sonnet 133**
>
> Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan
> For that deep wound it gives **my friend and me**.
> Is 't not enough to **torture me alone**,
> But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?
> Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken,
> And my next self thou harder hast engrossed;
> Of him, myself, and thee I am forsaken,
> A torment thrice threefold thus to be crossed.
> **Prison** my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,
> But then my friend's heart let my poor heart **bail**.
> Whoe'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard;
> Thou canst not then use **rigor** in my **jail**.
> And yet thou wilt, for I, being pent in thee,
> Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.[2]

It is not enough for the mistress to hold one heart: she also possesses the friend's. The speaker offers his own captivity as bail for the other, but cannot make the exchange work. She already holds him and everything within him.

Neville likewise tried to prevent his punishment from spreading to others. His petitions for his wife and children belong to the preceding Sonnet 66 discussion; his letters about friends who stood surety show a different mechanism. They helped willingly, but their property and credit became answerable for his obligations. Read in full, Sonnet 134 explains how the friend reaches the predicament announced in its closing lines. The mistress's possession of both men becomes a financial action:

**Sonnet 134**

So, now I have confessed that he is thine
And I myself am mortgaged to thy will,
Myself I'll forfeit, so that other mine
Thou wilt restore to be my comfort still.
But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free,
For thou art covetous, and he is kind;
He learned but **surety-like** to write for me
Under that **bond** that him as fast doth bind.
The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,
Thou usurer that put'st forth all to use,
And sue a **friend came debtor for my sake**;
So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me.
**He pays the whole, and yet am I not free**.[2]

The speaker is mortgaged; the friend writes under a bond; the creditor can sue him. His kindness has helped bring about the speaker's loss, and he too will not be free. The sonnet's creditor is the mistress, its statute is beauty, and its forfeiture concerns the relations among all three. Legal obligations become the workings of desire.

Neville's letters supply the practical force of that language. Standing surety is an act of friendship that creates liability. In Neville's case, help had already placed his friends' property in the Crown's hands while his pardon remained uncompleted. The poem drives the failure of release further: the friend pays the whole, yet the speaker is still held.

## Valuing a limited possession

An August 1601 petition places another unusual term beside the valuation of property. Neville said that nothing could be strained against him beyond *misprision*, the legal limit of his offence. He asked Cecil and the other lords:

> To **estimate what my estate for life might be worth**, in lands of that yearly value, and to make an offer thereof unto her Majesty in my name.[6]

Much of the land was already settled on his son. What Neville could offer was principally his own lifetime interest, not the whole inheritance. After allowances, he calculated the available income at about £500 a year and its value at six years' purchase: £3,000.[6]

Sonnet 87 also joins *estimate*, *worth* and *misprision* to the limits of possession:

**Sonnet 87**

Farewell, thou art too dear for my **possessing**,
And like enough thou know'st thy **estimate**.
The charter of thy **worth** gives thee releasing;
My **bonds** in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting,
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thy self thou gav'st, thy own **worth** then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon **misprision** growing,
Comes home again, on better **judgment** making.
Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.[6]

The gift rests on an error in value or in the recipient's deserving. Correct that error, and the grant returns to its giver. In Neville's petition, *misprision* names an offence; in the poem, a mistake. The senses differ, but in both passages the word belongs to an assessment of what someone can properly hold and what he may lose. The poem's charter, patent and ended bonds give the loss the form of a title withdrawn.

## Release, and what follows it

Neville was still seeking liberty in January 1603. Cecil's intercession gave him joy, but had not yet secured his delivery.[7] Elizabeth died on 24 March. On 5 April James's letter concerning Southampton's release added an instruction for Neville's. The same royal letter dealt with both prisoners; contemporary reports establish that both were out by 10 April.[8]

Sonnet 107 moves from a lease threatened with forfeiture to an assured crown and renewed hope:

**Sonnet 107**

Not mine own fears nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come
Can yet the **lease** of my true love control,
Supposed as **forfeit** to a **confined doom**.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now **crown themselves assured**,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes;
And thou in this shalt find thy monument
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.[9]

Sidney Lee read the mortal moon's eclipse as Elizabeth's death, the assured crown as James's accession, and the renewal as Southampton's release.[9] On that historical reading, the public change directly transforms the beloved's prospects. Neville was the other prisoner named in the instruction. Read as his address to Southampton, the poem becomes the celebration of one released prisoner speaking to another.

The "lease" supposed forfeit also continues the language of limited possession. Neville's petitions had tried to preserve what remained of his life and interest; the poem passes from a threatened term to life secured in verse. Its last promise outlasts the new ruler's mercy. When the monuments of rulers have worn away, the person addressed will still have his monument in the poem.

## Notes and sources

1. Neville to Cecil, 31 July 1602, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 94/90; manuscript and John O'Donnell transcription, with *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XII (1910), p. 268. Spelling and light punctuation modernized. Shakespeare quotations follow Folger wording and lineation.
2. Shakespeare, Sonnet 133 and Sonnet 134, Folger Shakespeare Library. Both are quoted in full. The claim concerns the represented transaction, not exclusive ownership of legal vocabulary.
3. Neville to Cecil, 25 July 1601, Cecil Papers 87/20; also *Calendar*, XI (1906), p. 300.
4. Neville to Cecil, 3 April 1602, Cecil Papers 92/99; also *Calendar*, XII, pp. 95–96. The manuscript specifies bonds with sureties; the calendar compresses the negotiation. A recognizance was an acknowledged obligation of record. The proposed payment schedule is evidence of an offer, not proof that all the money had been paid.
5. Neville to Cecil, 18 April 1602, Cecil Papers 92/139; manuscript and John O'Donnell transcription, also *Calendar*, XII, p. 113. "Willinger" is retained as vocabulary, not replaced by the calendar's "more willing." The manuscript gives approximately £120 annual rent.
6. Neville to Cecil, undated August 1601, Cecil Papers 87/153; also *Calendar*, XI, p. 371. The calendar supplies an independent abstract. The document says six years' purchase. Shakespeare, Sonnet 87, Folger text.

7. Neville to Cecil, 7 January 1603 (1602 in contemporary year reckoning), Cecil Papers 91/35; also *Calendar*, XII, pp. 589–590.
8. James I to the nobles and councillors at Whitehall, Holyrood, 5 April 1603, printed in C. C. Stopes, *The Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton* (1922), pp. 259–260. Contemporary copy: Folger Shakespeare Library, V.a.321, fols. 16v–17, catalogue. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1603–1610*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (1857), p. 2, item 18, reports their delivery on 10 April. A report's date is not necessarily the date of release; Stopes also quotes Manningham's 10 April entry recording release "yesterday."
9. Sidney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare*, 4th ed. (1899), pp. 147–150. Shakespeare, Sonnet 107, Folger text. Lee supplies the historical interpretation, not an authorship argument for Neville. The application to a possible Neville speaker is the reading proposed here.

# The Sonnets: The Judging Eye

Chapter 43

On 8 May 1601 Neville asked Robert Cecil to look at him in two different capacities. As a councillor, Cecil judged the offence. As a friend, he knew the man whose wife and children would suffer with him:

> Humbly beseeching you not to look upon my offences only with the **severe eye of a councillor of state**, but sometimes also with the **affectionate eye of an honourable friend**, and to think of my poor wife and children, whose good or ruin is now in your hands.[1]

Neville placed his "chief and only confidence (after God)" in Cecil's favour and compassion. He admitted a great fault, but asked that it be understood as more misfortune than malice.

Sonnet 29 moves from hostile eyes to the value of one person's love:

**Sonnet 29**

When in **disgrace** with fortune and **men's eyes**,
I all alone beweep my **outcast state**,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I **think on thee**, and then my **state**,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my **state** with kings.[1]

Neville asks one person to look with affection as well as severity. The sonnet's speaker escapes public judgment by remembering someone's love. Its three uses of *state* carry the reversal: the outcast condition becomes a state that rises like the lark and finally outweighs a king's. In each, the public condition is not the final measure of the person: the letter asks affection to intervene in it, while the poem discovers a wealth that outweighs it. Neville's own words for his condition in April 1602—"my **state is utterly overthrown**"—show what that public measure meant.[2]

## The misery of waiting

Affection had to produce action. Neville could not end his dependence on Cecil merely by remembering his kindness. In March 1602, after proposing terms for his fine, he closed by submitting:

> For I am not so unreasonable to press any more, but will rather resolve to **subject myself with patience to any misery** that God hath appointed for me.[3]

Sonnet 58 gives dependence the form of waiting upon another's freedom:

> **Sonnet 58**
>
> That god forbid, that made me first your **slave**,
> I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
> Or at your hand th' account of hours to crave,
> Being your **vassal** bound to stay your leisure.
> O, let me suffer, being at your beck,
> Th' **imprisoned absence** of your liberty,
> And **patience**, tame to sufferance, bide each check
> Without accusing you of injury.
> Be where you list, your charter is so strong
> That you yourself may privilege your time
> To what you will; to you it doth belong
> Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.
> I am to **wait**, though **waiting** so be hell,
> Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.[3]

One person controls the time; the other suffers the delay without claiming the right to condemn it. The privileged beloved may even pardon his own conduct. Neville seeks someone else's pardon, but the pressure of his stance is similar: he needs action and must avoid making his urgency sound like an accusation.

In September 1601 he promised to urge nothing Cecil found inconvenient and to refer everything to his "good pleasure and favour." Nobody would give Neville credit or contract with him until the pardon was sealed.[4] The delay prevented the transactions needed to meet the conditions of release. Submission was the form his urgent request had to take.

## Concealing a name to protect its bearer

A friend's public intervention could rescue Neville. Acknowledging another relationship could ruin the person who had served him. A March 1601 letter gives that danger a practical form. Neville had employed Colville to obtain intelligence in Rome. He told Cecil that the man had travelled at Neville's procurement and chiefly at his expense, and had gained the confidence of the people whose activities he was observing. Colville had required a promise:

> He made me give him my faith that I would not **reveal him to anybody**, nor be acknowen that he held intelligence with me, for it would be, he said, his **utter ruin**.

Neville asked Cecil to preserve that protection:

> Only I humbly beseech your honour that his **name may be concealed**, because I have given him my faith to that effect.[5]

Sonnets 36 and 89 likewise describe a relationship that must not be publicly acknowledged. Sonnet 36 says:

**Sonnet 36, lines 9–14**

I may not evermore **acknowledge thee**,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee **shame**,
Nor thou with public kindness honor me
Unless thou take that honor from thy **name**.
But do not so. I love thee in such sort
As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

And Sonnet 89 takes the separation into speech and conduct:

**Sonnet 89, lines 8–12**

I will **acquaintance** strangle and look strange,
Be absent from thy walks, and in my tongue
Thy sweet beloved **name** no more shall dwell,
Lest I, too much profane, should **do it wrong**
And haply of our old **acquaintance** tell.

The circumstances differ: Colville's danger arose from the discovery of his intelligence work; Sonnet 36 fears that the speaker's guilt will shame the friend, and Sonnet 89 withdraws lest the speaker wrong the friend's name. The shared action is deliberate concealment of a name and connection to protect the other person. Neville's letter supplies an instance in which silence about a relationship was an explicit promise, made because disclosure could ruin the person he was protecting.

## The blot and the cure

Concealment could protect a connection; Neville also sought a way to remove the disgrace that made association dangerous. On 31 July 1602 Neville thanked Cecil for kindness that had "even **enthralled my heart unto you**," then proposed how he might remove his offence from the Queen's sight:

> If there be no other means to **wipe away this blot wherewith I am soiled**, yet it is possible, that if I were at liberty, I might shed so much of my blood, in some place where she hath occasion to use men, as might serve for a **laver for the crime, which hath made me so ugly in her eye**.[6]

His blood would become a *laver*, a means of washing. Release would allow him to serve where the Queen needed men; the service might kill him, but it

could cleanse the offence that had made him ugly to her. Disgrace has become something on the body and in the sovereign's eye.

In his confession of 2 March 1601, Neville had linked public knowledge with the same image. His obligations to Cecil were known, "as **all the world took knowledge**," and he would not "**blot my reputation** to be false unto him or any man."[6]

The opening of Sonnet 36 gives the reason for the separation its later lines enforce:

**Sonnet 36, lines 1–4**

Let me confess that we two must be twain
Although our undivided loves are one;
So shall those **blots** that do with me remain,
Without thy help, by me be **borne alone**.[7]

Here the speaker bears the blots alone to separate the other person from their consequences. Neville asks for the liberty to wash his stain away through service. Sonnet 111 develops disgrace as a stain and then appeals for a cure:

**Sonnet 111**

O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my **name receives a brand**;
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the **dyer's hand**.
Pity me, then, and wish I were renewed,
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong **infection**;
No bitterness that I will bitter think,
Nor **double penance**, to **correct correction**.
Pity me, then, dear friend, and I assure ye
Even that your **pity** is enough to **cure** me.[6]

Dye marks the dyer's hand as the speaker's occupation marks him. Neville's stain arises from his offence; the sonnet's from the public means by which the speaker lives. Both imagine a remedy willingly undergone: service and blood in Neville's letter, medicine and penance in the sonnet.

The dyer's trade had a documented place in the public responsibilities of Neville's family. On 14 December 1589, the Privy Council wrote to his father and Reading's mayor about a dispute between the town's clothiers and dyers: clothiers could dye wool for their own manufacture, but not dye others' wool for profit or dye finished cloth.[8]

The sonnet's "double penance" and "correct correction" also have a counterpart in Neville's ordinary speech. He could turn penitential accounting into a joke between friends.

In a dinner apology to Windebank, on a letter later endorsed 15 September 1608, he explained that a deer chase had kept him away and his household had then failed to serve the guest. His own absence and their neglect made two faults:

> I am much ashamed of the **errors which were redoubled** towards you yesterday. First by myself in forsaking you, and next by my people in their ill attending you.
>
> But I perceive **errors go not single**, but one commonly begets another, as bad, if not worse than itself. I pray you **pardon both**; confession and contrition you have already, which are **two parts of penance**. The third, satisfaction, shall be when and how you will enjoin it.[9]

Neville counts two faults, asks pardon for both, and leaves the satisfaction to his friend. Sonnet 111's speaker offers to undergo "double penance," then asks for the friend's pity as the cure.

## One voice against the world

Sonnet 112 takes up 111's final appeal to the friend. Neville had made his own declaration of dependence in the September 1601 petition:

> I owe more unto your honour than to **all the world besides**.[4]

> **Sonnet 112**
>
> Your love and pity doth th' impression fill
> Which **vulgar scandal** stamped upon my brow;
> For what care I who calls me well or ill,
> So you o'ergreen my bad, my good allow?
> You are my **all the world**, and I must strive
> To know my **shames and praises** from your tongue;
> None else to me, nor I to none alive,
> That my steeled sense or changes right or wrong.
> In so profound abysm I throw all care
> Of others' voices that my adder's sense
> To critic and to flatterer stopped are.
> Mark how with my neglect I do dispense:
> You are so strongly in my purpose bred
> That **all the world besides** methinks are dead.[10]

The exact phrase "all the world besides" appears in both passages in a closely similar context: a disgraced man places one person above everyone else. Neville's declaration follows his account of an unsealed pardon and unavailable credit; Cecil's intervention could help restore his position. In Sonnet 112, the friend's love repairs the mark of public scandal, and the friend's judgment outweighs every other voice. Neville expresses his dependence through what he owes Cecil; the sonnet's speaker through whose praise and blame he will hear.

## Notes and sources

1. Neville to Cecil, 8 May 1601, manuscript; also *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp. 193–194. Spelling and light punctuation modernized. Shakespeare, Sonnet 29, Folger text. The May date is 8 May, not the 20 May label found in some earlier derivative records.
2. Neville to Cecil, 3 April 1602, Cecil Papers 92/99; also *Calendar*, XII (1910), pp. 95–96. The quoted phrase occurs in the manuscript's explanation of the difficulty in finding sureties.
3. Neville to Cecil, 11 March 1602 (1601 in contemporary year reckoning), manuscript and John O'Donnell transcription; also *Calendar*, XII, pp. 72–73. Shakespeare, Sonnet 58, Folger text.
4. Neville to Cecil, undated, endorsed September 1601, Cecil Papers 88/75; also *Calendar*, XI, p. 400. The manuscript contains the declaration of obligation and submission omitted from the short calendar abstract. These passages are normalized from the manuscript; the calendar independently controls the document and the payment context. The older assignment to 23 May 1602 is not followed.
5. Neville to Cecil, March 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279, fol. 49; manuscript and John O'Donnell transcription. The letter is undated in its body. The photographed endorsement reads 26 March; a circulated transcription filename and some derivative records give 29 March. No exact day is assigned in the narrative. *Acknowen* is retained from the document's vocabulary. Shakespeare, Sonnet 36, lines 9–14, and Sonnet 89, lines 8–12, Folger text.
6. Neville to Cecil, 31 July 1602, Cecil Papers 94/90; manuscript and John O'Donnell transcription, also *Calendar*, XII, p. 268. Shakespeare, Sonnet 111, Folger text. Davies's 1603 verse about players, Fortune, and the stain upon gentle blood is discussed in Chapter 48, "*Microcosmos*: Neville and Shakespeare"; it supplies another contemporary context for 111's public occupation, not the text of Neville's letter. Neville's confession, 2 March 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279, beginning fol. 15, autograph declaration signed by Neville, State Papers Online; see the full text in Appendix L. The passage refers to his obligations to Robert Cecil. Spelling modernized.
7. Shakespeare, Sonnet 36, lines 1–4, Folger Shakespeare Library. The poem's speaker undertakes to bear his own blots without the other's help; Neville proposes service to cleanse his offence. The images and the uses made of them are distinguished.
8. John Roche Dasent, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, new series, XVIII, 1589–1590 (London: HMSO, 1899), pp. 260–261; the meeting date appears on p. 258. The National Archives, PC 2/16, register p. 427, State Papers Online, MC4316080078, scan 215. The order addresses the elder Sir Henry Neville (d. 1593); it does not establish the younger Neville's participation or that the dispute prompted Sonnet 111.
9. Neville to [Sir Thomas Windebank], undated, endorsed 15 September 1608, The National Archives, SP 14/36, fol. 20; manuscript and John O'Donnell transcription. The forename is an editorial identification; its apparent conflict with Sir Thomas's reported death in 1607 remains unresolved. The later endorsement is not an autograph dateline. Also Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1603–1610* (1857), p. 456, item 17. The chase and the missed dinner are the immediate occasion of the penitential joke.
10. Shakespeare, Sonnet 112, Folger Shakespeare Library. At line 14, Folger emends the 1609 quarto's "me thinkes y'are" to "methinks are." The quarto's closing line is disputed; "all the world besides" occurs in both readings. See Folger's textual notes, 112.14.

# Part V

## Writers, Publication and Posterity

# Humphrey Fludd: Letters, Trumpets, and Shakespeare

Chapter 44

On 6 May 1600, Sir Robert Drury wrote to Henry Neville about a missing letter. Humphrey Fludd had seen it on a table in Neville's house. Its sender was the Earl of Southampton, the dedicatee of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*:

> Humphrey Flood, who hath been here with the Commander of Dieppe, assureth me that he saw **my Lord of Southampton's letter to me, upon a table in your house**, laid down amongst many other letters.[1]

Southampton's letter was addressed to Drury, not to Neville. Drury's account places it in Neville's house and identifies Fludd as the witness—a man who also appears in Shakespeare's London biography. Humphrey Fludd was a royal trumpeter, a carrier of letters between England and France, and Stephen Bellott's stepfather. Bellott was the apprentice whose marriage Shakespeare helped arrange in the Mountjoy household. The French connection runs through both sets of records: Fludd married Bellott's mother in France, while his official journeys carried correspondence to and from Paris.[2], [3]

## Drury's French business

Drury's journey was an unofficial diplomatic mission to the Duke of Bouillon in the winter of 1599–1600. He reported to Robert Cecil from Paris on 15 January; that report survives among the French State Papers. John P. Ferris identifies the mission in his parliamentary biography of Drury. Neville's correspondence then shows Drury helping to convey the embassy's intelligence to England. Writing to Cecil from Paris on 26 February 1600, Neville explained:

> The opportunity of **Sir Robert Drury's return** is the cause that I sent no messenger purposely with this advertisement [...] hoping it will come by his means in reasonable time.[4]

Drury therefore belonged to the practical network through which Neville's intelligence reached England. By May he was back in London, trying to establish what had happened to letters intended for him. Fludd reported seeing Southampton's letter amongst other correspondence at Neville's house. The setting was evidently Neville's house during his French embassy.[1]

Fludd's work carrying letters appears again in Winwood's *Memorials*. On 13 January 1601, Ralph Winwood wrote from Paris to Neville in England. His earlier letter had remained in the post's hands, and he now entrusted letters to Fludd:

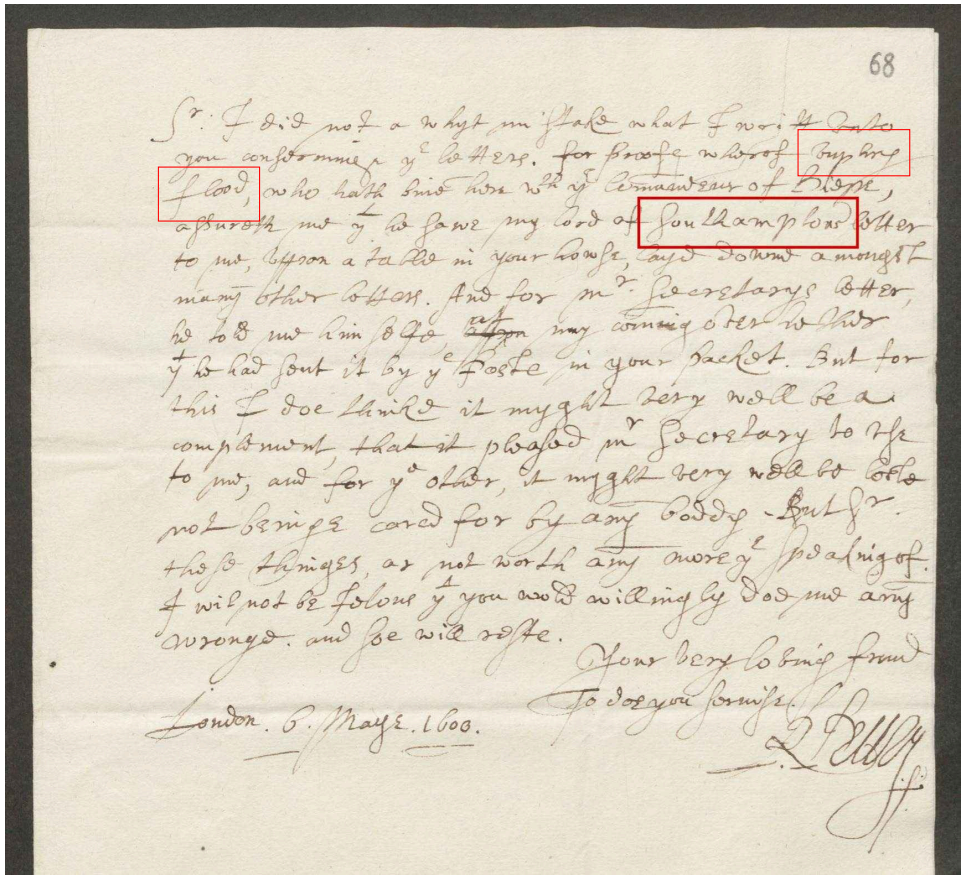



**Figure 44.1:** Robert Drury to Henry Neville, 6 May 1600. Humphrey Fludd's name, divided between two lines, and the reference to Southampton are outlined in red. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/2, fol. 97. Source and transcription.

> I have entreated this gentleman, **Mr. Fludde**, who I understood was purposed within some few days to return home, for the more **speedy and assured conveyance of these letters**, to deliver them [...].[5]

A later letter opens, "I have not written since my last by Mr. Fludd." These notices show Fludd serving as a trusted carrier when the ordinary post had failed to move promptly. Together with Drury's letter, they place him inside Neville's Anglo-French correspondence.

## One of the king's trumpeters

Carrying letters was part of a court trumpeter's work. Music historian Trevor Herbert records several payments to Humphrey Flood at the beginning of the seventeenth century expressly for "**taking a letter to France**." His source is Andrew Ashbee and David Lasocki's *Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians*. Charles William Wallace had likewise described Fludd in 1910 as a member of the royal household frequently employed to carry official letters to and from Paris and elsewhere.[2]

This gives the courier in Neville's correspondence a recognizable occupation. His royal service included both trumpeting and official journeys to France.

His musical office can also be followed through Henry Cart de Lafontaine's *The King's Musick*. Its summary of a warrant dated 17 April 1609 records yearly livery for:

> **Humphrie Floud**, appointed trumpeter in the place of Robert Dromond [...].[6]

The accounts ending at Michaelmas 1615 list him among the trumpeters; the 1621 records provide for liveries and banners. He remains in the accounts ending at Michaelmas 1624. On 7 March 1625 a warrant appointed Cuthbert Collin in his place. The spellings vary between Floud and Floyd, but de Lafontaine's index groups these Humphrey entries together, separately from Randolph Floud.[6]

## A French family and Shakespeare's London household

The lawsuit *Bellott v. Mountjoy* supplies the personal history behind Fludd's French connection. In his deposition of 19 June 1612, he was described as a resident of St Giles without Cripplegate, about fifty-three years old, and "one of his Majesty's trumpeters." Asked how he knew Stephen Bellott and Christopher Mountjoy, he answered:

> He hath known the plaintiff about eighteen years, for **he married his mother in France**; and the defendant he hath known about eighteen years, for **he put the plaintiff to be the defendant's apprentice**.[3]

Fludd was Bellott's stepfather. He had arranged the young man's apprenticeship with Mountjoy, a French Huguenot who made fashionable headpieces in

Silver Street. He also supported Bellott during that apprenticeship. His testimony records clothes and linen supplied by himself and Bellott's mother, money given to the young man, and even payments to the barber to cut his hair. This was a continuing family responsibility.

William Shakespeare lodged in the Mountjoy household and helped persuade Bellott to marry Mountjoy's daughter Mary in 1604. The later dispute concerned the financial provision promised with the marriage. Shakespeare testified on 11 May 1612; Fludd followed in June. Their evidence concerns different parts of the same household history: Fludd had placed and supported the apprentice, while Shakespeare participated in the marriage negotiations.[3]

## Drury and John Donne

Drury's later literary association was substantial. He became a friend and patron of John Donne, providing lodging for Donne and his family at his London property. After Drury's daughter Elizabeth died in 1610, Donne commemorated her in the two *Anniversary* poems: *An Anatomy of the World*, published in 1611, and *Of the Progress of the Soul*, published in 1612.[7]

In 1611–12 Donne accompanied Sir Robert and Lady Drury on a continental journey. A surviving letter discusses his book commemorating Elizabeth, French affairs, and plans to travel to Frankfurt and the Palatinate. Donne acknowledged that he had never seen the girl whose death his poems memorialized. The poems grew from his relationship with her family.[8]

## Notes and sources

1. Sir Robert Drury to Sir Henry Neville, London, 6 May 1600, The National Archives, PRO 30/50/2, fols. 97–98. Andrew Zurcher identified the sender; John O'Donnell's transcription accompanies Ken Feinstein's publication of the manuscript: "Shakespeare, Southampton, Humphrey Fludd". The address identifies Neville as ambassador in France. Drury writes the name as "Humphrey flood." The house's location is inferred from Neville's embassy and the French context; Drury calls it "your house."

2. Trevor Herbert, "'...men of great perfection in their science...': The Trumpeter as Musician and Diplomat in England in the Later Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", *Historic Brass Society Journal* 23 (2011), p. 14 and note 43 (p. 22), DOI 10.2153/0120110011001. Herbert cites Andrew Ashbee and David Lasocki, *A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians, 1485–1714*, I (1998), p. 433; the payment evidence is cited here through Herbert's article. Charles William Wallace, "Shakespeare and his London Associates as Revealed in Recently Discovered Documents," *University Studies*, University of Nebraska, 10 (1910), p. 265, refers to further records concerning Fludd's official courier work without printing their account references in that passage.

3. *Bellott v. Mountjoy*, second depositions, 19 June 1612, The National Archives, REQ 4/1/4/2, facsimile, transcription and contextual account in *Shakespeare Documented*. The record identifies Fludd's age and occupation and records his French marriage, apprenticeship arrangements and support for Bellott. For Shakespeare's testimony, see the first depositions, 11 May 1612, The National Archives, REQ 4/1/4/1.

4. John P. Ferris, "Drury, Sir Robert (1575–1615), of Hawstead, Suffolk and Drury House, Westminster", *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1604–1629* (2010), especially note 24, citing R. C. Bald, *Donne and the Drurys* (1959), pp. 39–40, and The National Archives, SP 78/44, fol. 30. Drury's report to Cecil, Paris, 15 January 1599/1600, survives in State Papers Online. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 26 February 1599/1600, in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, I (1725), p. 155. The printed page reads "sent."

5. Winwood to Neville, Paris, 13 January 1600/1601, *Memorials*, I, p. 289; subsequent letter, p. 295. January's printed year is 1600 under the English calendar then in use; the modern year is 1601. The second notice recalls the earlier dispatch.

6. Henry Cart de Lafontaine, ed., *The King's Musick: A Transcript of Records Relating to Music and Musicians, 1460–1700* (London: Novello, 1909), pp. 48, 51, 53–55; index, p. 500. The appointment warrant is dated 17 April 1609 and cites Lord Chamberlain's records, vol. 812, p. 72, in the edition's numbering. The replacement warrant is printed as 7 March 1624/25. It records a replacement without stating that Fludd had died.

7. REED Online, Suffolk, record suffk-rid64, inventory of Drury's goods, 27 May 1613, and accompanying biographical account. See also Ferris's parliamentary biography, especially note 47, for Donne's patronage and the continental journey. The dates 1611 and 1612 are the poems' publication years.

8. John Donne, *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*, ed. Charles Edmund Merrill Jr (New York: Sturgis & Walton, 1910), letter XXVI, pp. 63–67, with notes, pp. 284–85; reprinting the 1651 collection. The letter discusses Elizabeth Drury, the French journey and the projected German itinerary.

# At the Mitre: The Convivium Philosophicum

Chapter 45

The *Convivium Philosophicum*, or "Philosophical Banquet," at the Mitre Tavern offers a tantalizing insight into Henry Neville's social and literary life. The gathering is usually dated to 2 September 1611, the year Thomas Coryate's *Crudities* was published.[1]

A Henry Neville is named in the poem and its appended list alongside the poet Hugh Holland, whose tribute to Shakespeare would appear in the First Folio, as well as John Donne, the architect Inigo Jones, and the poets and parliamentarians John Hoskyns and Christopher Brooke.[2]

Zachary Lesser identifies this Neville as the Billingbear diplomat, "Neville the parliamentary undertaker," and calls the evidence for the alternative identification "scanty." He points to Neville's close parliamentary associations with other men named in the poem.[3]

## The company at the Mitre

A comic Latin poem accompanied the gathering, naming its company through a series of learned puns and presenting the dinner as a mock summons. Its opening promises food and jokes. In the contemporary English version printed by Andrew Clark, it begins:

> Whosoever is contented
> That a number be convented
> Enough but not too many;
> The Miter is the place decreed,
> For witty jests and cleanly feed,
> The betterest of any.[4]

The mock ceremony continues through the roll call. Christopher Brooke becomes a torrent, John Donne "John Made," and Henry Goodyere a good year. Inigo Jones appears as an architect; the English version turns him into an "Ionicke-piller." A man who fails to appear is threatened with a fine of forty pence. The joke assumes a company that will recognize its members from these transformations of their names.

The State Papers copy has an appended list headed *Conuiua*. Normalizing the names, the thirteen men listed are:

| Named company | Named company |
|---|---|
| Christopher Brooke | John Hoskyns |
| John Donne | Richard Martin |
| Lionel Cranfield | Sir Henry Goodyere |
| Arthur Ingram | John West |
| Sir Robert Phelips | Hugh Holland |
| Sir Henry Neville | Inigo Jones |
| Richard Connock | |

Coryate supplies the fourteenth figure in the poem, although he is not included in this appended list. The verse says the entertainment will be incomplete without him. The appended list identifies the company behind the poem's jokes.[2]

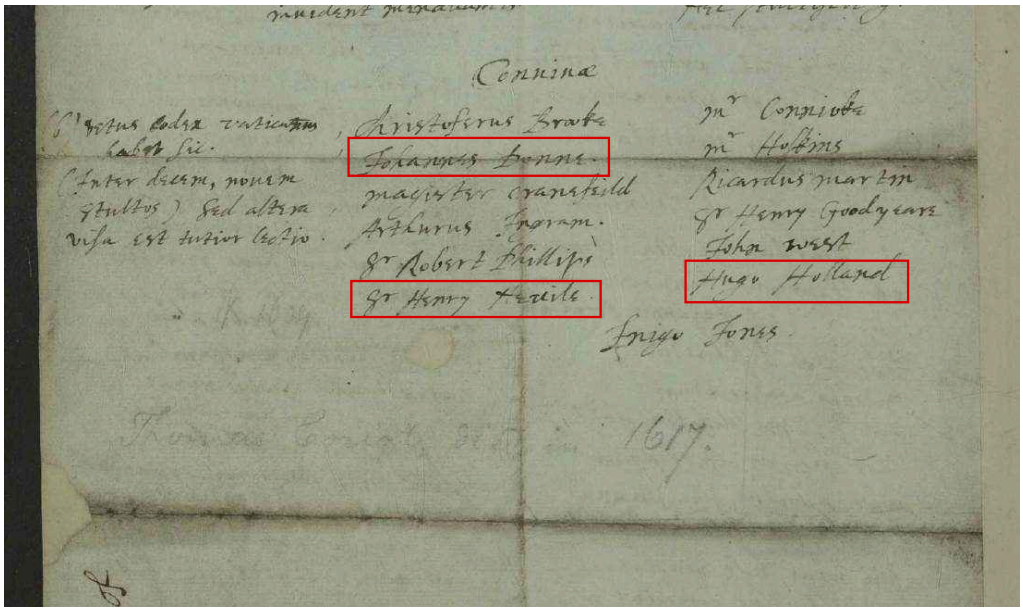



**Figure 45.1:** The list headed Conuiua beneath the poem. Red boxes mark John Donne, Sir Henry Neville and Hugh Holland. The National Archives, SP 14/66, f. 2v.

The list places poets beside men occupied with law, government and business. That mixture is central to the occasion. A Latin joke could be shared by people whose daily work lay in Parliament or commerce as readily as in writing verse. Richard Martin, Hoskyns and Brooke were lawyers as well as literary men; Jones brought the arts of architecture and court entertainment into the same company.[5]

Billingbear Neville shared parliamentary as well as literary connections with this company. Martin and Hoskyns, for example, had both sat with him in the Parliament of 1604. On 14 May 1610, Richard Martin moved to add him to a Commons committee concerning ambassadors' children. The parliamentary record thus puts the two men into a specific piece of business before the probable date of the dinner.[6]

## A learned joke with a political edge

Most copies attribute the poem to "Doctore Rudolpho Colfabio" of Brasenose College, an otherwise unidentified figure. One early copy used by Clark names John Hoskyns, to whom the poem is traditionally attributed. Its mock Latin repeatedly admits English words and invented formations. Coryate is imagined making all Europe into a Fleet Street, and his travels invite jokes about the same shoes and shirt lasting throughout. Learning supplies the means of laughter rather than a solemn academic programme.[4]

Neville's place in the roll call is particularly suggestive:

> Robertus Equorum amicus,
> **Ne vile aestimet Henricus**
> Dignabitur adesse,

The English version renders the middle line "Ne let Sir Henry count it vile." The surname is broken into *Ne-vile*, while *aestimet* introduces the act of esteeming. Clark identifies the joke as an allusion to the family motto, "Ne vile velis." Chapter 41 examines the conjunction with Sonnet 121's "vile esteemed." Here the joke also shows how a member's family name could become a miniature performance for the company.[4]

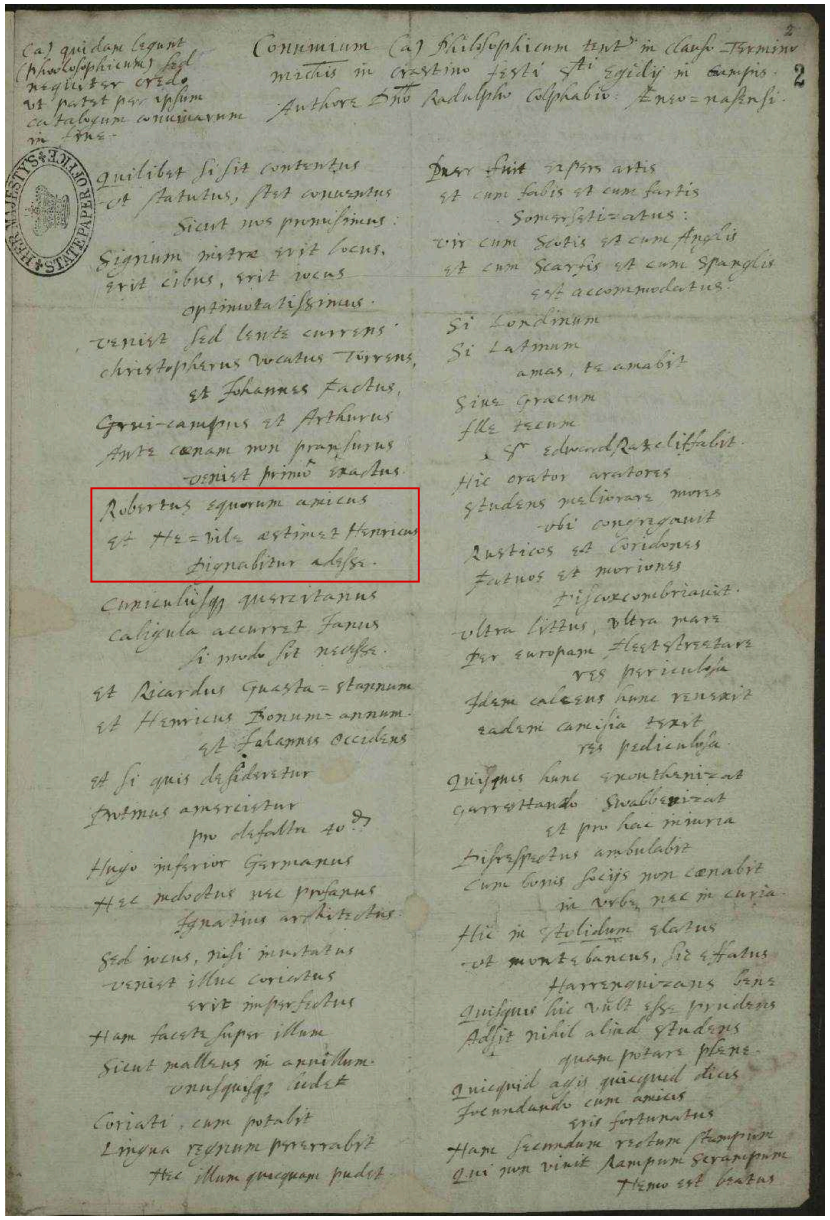


**Figure 45.2:** The opening leaf of the Convivium Philosophicum, including the Mitre setting and the Neville stanza, marked in red. The National Archives, SP 14/66, f. 2r.

The latter part ranges over the king, princes, ministers, clergy, merchants and other estates of society. Drinking and fellowship sit beside political observation. The poem's transmission also suggests collaborative wit: a manuscript discussed by Julian Neuhauser attributes a later portion to "Whittakers," whom he identifies as almost certainly Laurence Whitaker. Hoskyns's name need not imply that every surviving stanza came from one author.[5]

Neuhauser places such exchanges within an overlapping world of convivial associations, including Coryate's "Sireniacal Gentlemen." Coryate's later letter describes their monthly meetings at the Mermaid in Bread Street. The Mitre dinner belongs to the same wider culture of learned sociability, but the two taverns and their particular records should remain distinct. Neither Shakespeare nor Jonson occurs in the Mitre poem's named company.[5]

## Hugh Holland: from convivial verse to the First Folio

Holland makes the connection with Shakespeare's publication especially concrete. He was not merely an unidentified name on a dining list. Jonson contributed an ode to Holland's *Pancharis* in 1603; Holland in turn supplied verse for Jonson's *Sejanus* in 1605. He also contributed to the verses surrounding Coryate's *Crudities* in 1611. His poetry participated in the public presentation of other writers' books.[7]

The manuscript names him plainly, while the Latin calls him *Hugo Inferior-Germanus*, playing on Holland as the Low Countries. He appears immediately before Inigo Jones. The poet who would help introduce the First Folio was therefore already a recognizable figure in this company's exchanges of wit.

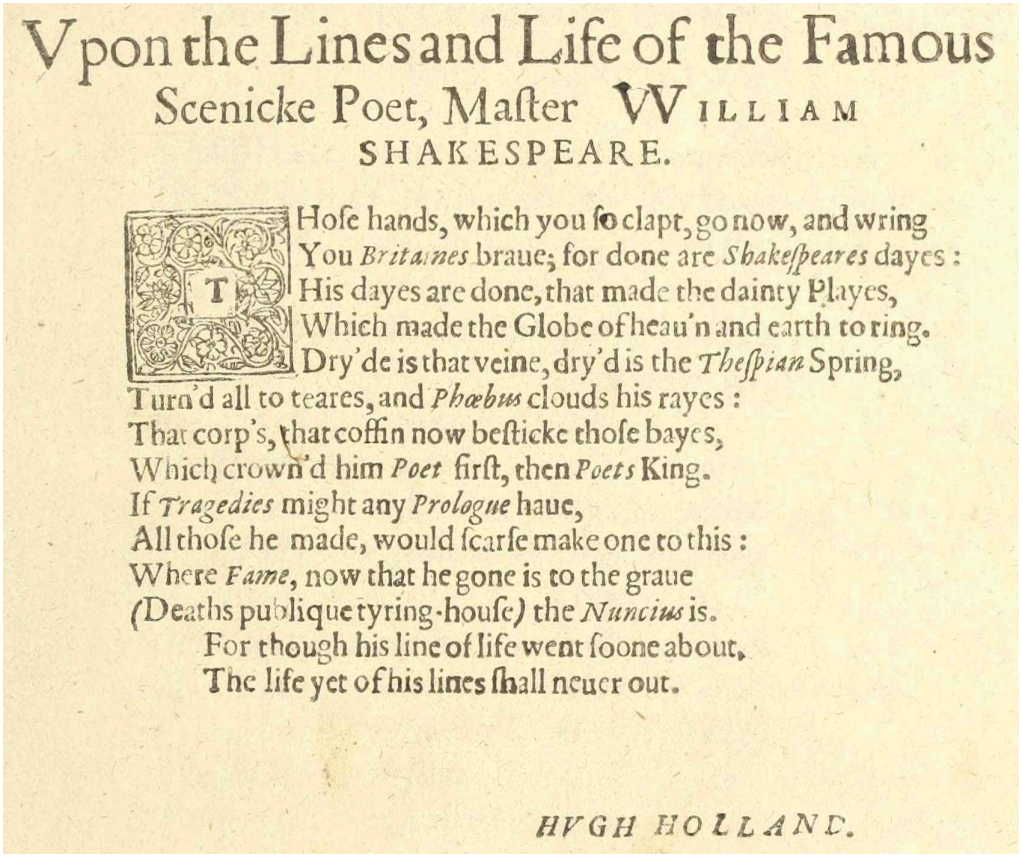
His literary friendships also continued beyond the occasion. An engraved memorial portrait of Richard Martin, dated 1620, carries a joint dedication by Christopher Brooke, John Hoskyns and Hugh Holland to Lionel Cranfield. Holland supplied verses mourning Martin and arranged for the engraving. Five names from the *Convivium* recur here: Martin himself, Brooke, Hoskyns, Holland and Cranfield.[8]

In the First Folio of 1623, Holland's signed poem is headed "Upon the Lines and Life of the Famous Scenicke Poet, Master William Shakespeare." Its opening turns the audience's applause into mourning:

> Those hands, which you so clapped, go now, and wring,
> You Britains brave; for done are Shakespeare's days:
> His days are done, that made the dainty plays,
> Which made the Globe of heaven and earth to ring.[9]

The closing couplet promises survival through writing:

> For though his line of life went soon about,
> The life yet of his lines shall never out.[9]



Vpon the Lines and Life of the Famous
Scenicke Poet, Maſter WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE.

THoſe hands, which you ſo clapt, go now, and wring
You *Britaines* braue; for done are *Shakeſpeares* dayes:
His dayes are done, that made the dainty Playes,
Which made the Globe of heau'n and earth to ring.
Dry'de is that veine, dry'd is the *Theſpian* Spring,
Turn'd all to teares, and *Phœbus* clouds his rayes:
That corp's, that coffin now beſticke thoſe bayes,
Which crown'd him *Poet* firſt, then *Poets* King.
If *Tragedies* might any *Prologue* haue,
All thoſe he made, would ſcarſe make one to this:
Where *Fame*, now that he gone is to the graue
(Deaths publique tyring-houſe) the *Nuncius* is.
For though his line of life went ſoone about,
The life yet of his lines ſhall neuer out.

HVGH HOLLAND.

**Figure 45.3:** Hugh Holland's signed tribute in the First Folio (1623). Boston Public Library, Barton G.174.1, preliminary leaf reproduced in the public scan at n17.

Holland's tribute joins theatrical performance to the printed book that will preserve it. His presence in both the *Convivium* and the Folio is a documented connection between a particular literary company and Shakespeare's posthumous publication. With Lesser's identification of Neville, the invitation associates the Billingbear diplomat with that company.

## Notes and sources

1. Andrew Clark, ed., *Brief Lives*, II (Oxford, 1898), pp. 50–53, text, prints the heading specifying the day after St Giles's feast (1 September), hence 2 September. Julian T. S. Neuhauser, "Sirenaicks, Guilds and a New Coryate Manuscript," *Review of English Studies* 74.313 (2023), pp. 31–46, at p. 34 and n. 15, DOI, follows I. A. Shapiro's dating to 1611. The year is a scholarly dating, not treated here as an independently verified date in the manuscript's hand.
2. The National Archives, SP 14/66, f. 2r–v, *Convivium Philosophicum*, State Papers Online, MC4323680944; Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts, HoJ 267. The appended names are on f. 2v. Names in the table are normalized identifications, not a diplomatic transcription. Coryate appears in the verse, giving fourteen named figures in total.
3. Zachary Lesser, "Mixed Government and Mixed Marriage in *A King and No King*: Sir Henry Neville Reads Beaumont and Fletcher," *ELH* 69.4 (2002), pp. 947–77, at p. 972 n. 13, article. Lesser expressly supports the Billingbear identification against I. A. Shapiro, "The 'Mermaid Club'," *Modern Language Review* 45.1 (1950), pp. 6–17, at p. 8, article, who assumes the Abergavenny cousin because he contributed to Coryate's *Crudities*. Lesser's references to parliamentary associates support his argument; they are not an identifying description in the guest list itself. Annabel Patterson discusses the difficulty of distinguishing the cousins in "All Donne," in *Soliciting Interpretation*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine Eisaman Maus (Chicago, 1990), pp. 37–67, at p. 62; that discussion is cited by Tom Cain, "Donne and the Prince d'Amour," *John Donne Journal* 14 (1995), pp. 83–111, n. 37, text, who regards Berkshire Neville as "marginally more likely." The list supplies no residence or office that conclusively distinguishes the two men.
4. Clark, *Brief Lives*, II, pp. 50–53, prints the Latin and a contemporary English version; spelling in the English extracts is lightly modernized. Neuhauser, p. 34 n. 15, identifies the translator as John Reinolds and directs readers to British Library, Harley MS 4931, ff. 18r–19r. The Latin quotations follow Clark rather than claiming a fresh diplomatic transcription of SP 14/66. The attribution to Hoskyns is explicit in the heading of the Madan manuscript used by Clark. Clark's note 186 identifies the Neville family motto. For the attribution to "Doctore Rudolpho Colfabio", see Neuhauser, p. 42 n. 73.
5. Neuhauser, "Sirenaicks, Guilds and a New Coryate Manuscript", pp. 34–43, especially pp. 35–38 on sociability, pp. 39–43 on guild-like practices and pp. 42–43 on Bodleian MS Don. c. 54 and the Whitaker attribution. Coryate's description of monthly meetings concerns the Mermaid, not the Mitre. The occupations mentioned here provide context, not a claim that the dinner had an official parliamentary or court purpose.

6. *Journals of the House of Commons*, I (1802), p. 428, 14 May 1610, "Ambassadors Children"; Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I (1564–1615), of Billingbear", *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629* (2010), n. 71, identifies the diplomat. The journal records the appointment on Martin's motion; it does not report a private meeting. Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae, eds., *Early Stuart Libels* (2005), "The Censure of the Parliament Fart," C1iv, notes 11 and 27, identifies Martin and Hoskyns as members of the 1604 Parliament.
7. Colin Burrow, "Holland, Hugh (1563–1633)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), on the reciprocal commendations in *Pancharis* and *Sejanus*, the Coryate verses, the Mitre company and the First Folio contribution.
8. Clark, *Brief Lives*, II, pp. 49–50, note V, transcribes the dedication of the 1620 engraved portrait, naming Brooke, Hoskyns and Holland as dedicators and Cranfield as recipient, followed by Holland's memorial verses. The engraving is associated with Bodleian MS Aubrey 8, f. 17; Clark's printed transcription is the witness used here.
9. William Shakespeare, *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (London, 1623), preliminary poem signed "HVGH HOLLAND," Boston Public Library copy, Barton G.174.1, scan n17. English spelling is modernized in the quotations; the image preserves the original printing. Holland's signed contribution establishes his participation in the Folio's commemorative preliminaries, not an editorial role in collecting the plays.

# Jonson's Muse Calls on Neville

Chapter 46

Ben Jonson's writings are an important early testimony about Shakespeare. In *Discoveries*, discussing Shakespeare with the players, he defended his criticism and declared: "I loved the man."[1]

His two poems in Shakespeare's First Folio of 1623 also frame the author for posterity: the address facing the portrait directs readers to the book; the longer tribute celebrates the author and his surviving work. Jonson was likely deeply involved in preparing the Folio, although the extent of his work on the volume remains unknown.[2]

## Jonson's own folio and its book of epigrams

Seven years earlier, in November 1616, Jonson had published his own collected *Workes*. This was a different folio: it gathered nine of his plays, court masques and entertainments, and two collections of poetry, *Epigrams* and *The Forest*. The epigrams form a distinct collection within the volume, dedicated to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. Their 133 poems include praise of named individuals as well as satire.[3,4]

The *Epigrammes* had also appeared separately before the folio, in an edition dated approximately 1612. The collection was entered in the Stationers' Register on 15 May that year. Tara L. Lyons's research supplies evidence of the earlier printed book: Bodleian records list it among books sent for binding on 15 September 1614. Her later study argues that a small octavo edition was circulating as early as 1612. No copy has been recovered, so its full contents cannot be checked.[5]

Jonson addressed epigrams to both Henry Neville and his former tutor Henry Savile. Epigram XCV (95), "To Sir Henry Savile," praises Savile's translation of Tacitus and his account of the interval between Nero and Galba. Epigram CIX (109), "To Sir Henry Nevil," praises Neville's character, understanding of honour and approach to public service. The two men thus appear by name in the same book, Savile as a scholar and Neville as the subject of a sustained personal tribute.[6]

Neville's eighteen-line poem occupies parts of pages 803 and 804. The image below shows it as printed in the 1616 *Workes*; the transcription then allows us to read it before turning to its possible connections with Shakespeare's Sonnets.[3]

## To Sir Henry Nevil

Ben Jonson, *Workes* (1616), Epigram CIX

CIX.

TO SIR HENRY NEVIL.

WHo now calls on thee, Nevil, is a *Muſe*,
That ſerues nor fame, nor titles; but doth chuſe
Where vertue makes them both, and that's in thee:
Where all is faire, beſide thy pedigree.
Thou art not one, ſeek'ſt miſeries with hope,
Wreſtleſt with dignities, or fain'ſt a ſcope
Of ſeruice to the publique, when the end
Is priuate gaine, which hath long guilt to friend.

Thou

804 *Epigrammes.*

Thou rather ſtriu'ſt the matter to poſſeſſe,
And elements of honor, then the dreſſe;
To make thy lent life, good againſt the *Fates*:
And firſt to know thine owne ſtate, then the States.
To be the ſame in roote, thou art in height;
And that thy ſoule ſhould giue thy fleſh her weight.
Goe on, and doubt not, what poſteritie,
Now I haue ſung thee thus, ſhall iudge of thee.
Thy deedes, vnto thy name, will proue new wombes,
Whil'ſt others toyle for titles to their tombes.

**Figure 46.1.** Jonson's complete epigram "To Sir Henry Nevil," *Workes* (1616), pp. 803–804. Folger Shakespeare Library image, reproduced in the author's post. The image preserves the original page break.

## The eighteen lines as a whole

Here spelling and punctuation are lightly modernized, while the folio's "then" in lines 10 and 12 and "States" in line 12 are retained.[3,7]

Who now calls on thee, Nevil, is a Muse,
That serves nor fame, nor titles; but doth choose
Where virtue makes them both, and that's in thee:
Where all is fair, beside thy pedigree.
Thou art not one, seek'st miseries with hope,
Wrestlest with dignities; or feign'st a scope
Of service to the public, when the end
Is private gain, which hath long guilt to friend.
Thou rather striv'st the matter to possess,
And elements of honour, then the dress;
To make thy lent life good against the Fates:
And first to know thine own state, then the States.
To be the same in root thou art in height;
And that thy soul should give thy flesh her weight.
Go on, and doubt not what posterity,
Now I have sung thee thus, shall judge of thee.
Thy deeds unto thy name will prove new wombs,
Whilst others toil for titles to their tombs.

## Neville, Donne and Beaumont

Jonson addressed Neville by name, with language recalling a Shakespeare sonnet and an opening resembling his salutations to Donne and Beaumont, two of the greatest writers of their time.

Read the three openings together:

**To John Donne, Epigram XXIII**

Donne, the delight of Phoebus and each **muse**,

**To Francis Beaumont, Epigram LV**

How I do love **thee**, Beaumont, and thy **muse**,

**To Sir Henry Neville, Epigram CIX**

Who now calls on **thee**, Neville, is a **muse**

Each opening names the recipient and ends with "muse." Donne is the Muses' delight; Beaumont has his own Muse; the Muse calls upon Neville. The last opening also recalls Sonnet 38's "calls on thee," examined below.[4,8]

## The sonnet within the salutation

Sonnet 38 invites its addressee to become the tenth Muse:

> Be thou the tenth **muse**, ten times more in worth
> Than those old nine which rhymers invocate;
> And he that **calls on thee**, let him bring forth
> Eternal numbers to outlive long date.

Jonson's opening brings the significant words into still closer contact:

> Who now **calls on thee**, Neville, is a **muse**

James Leyland and James Goding drew attention to this comparison in their 2018 book *Who Will Believe My Verse?*.[9] Jonson puts Neville's name between "calls on thee" and "muse." The sonnet promises verse that will outlive its age; Jonson's epigram ends by entrusting Neville's name to posterity.

The combination is distinctive. An EarlyPrint search for the calling phrase followed within fifteen words by "muse" returned only Jonson's 1616 *Workes* and three witnesses of Shakespeare's Sonnets.[10] In the sonnet the addressee is invited to become a Muse; in the epigram the Muse calls upon Neville.[11,12]

## Sonnet 29: the inward measure of a man

A second sonnet contributes a different correspondence. In Sonnet 29, the speaker's dissatisfaction with his condition becomes envy of other men's advantages:

> Wishing me like to one more rich in **hope**,
> Featured like him, like him with **friends possessed**,
> Desiring this man's art and that man's **scope**,
> With what I most enjoy contented least;

Jonson's Neville is distinguished from the man who seeks misery through hope and invents a public scope for private gain:

> Thou art not one, seek'st miseries with **hope**,
> Wrestlest with dignities; or feign'st a **scope**
> Of service to the public, when the end
> Is private gain, which hath long guilt to **friend**.
> Thou rather striv'st the matter to **possess**,
> And elements of honour, then the dress;

Both poems make *hope* and *scope* their third distinct rhyme group: lines 5 and 7 of the sonnet, lines 5 and 6 of the epigram. A second pair appears in Sonnet 29's opening quatrain:

> When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast **state**,
> And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
> And look upon myself and curse my **fate**,

Jonson's Epigram CIX, lines 11–12, reverses the pair:

> To make thy lent life good against the **Fates**:
> And first to know thine own **state**, then the **States**.

Sonnet 29 has *state*/*fate*; Jonson has *Fates*/*States*. The rhyme comparison treats the related noun forms together.[13,14]

The sonnet's "friends possessed" also corresponds to Jonson's "guilt to friend" and "matter to possess": both passages bring those words into a discussion of status and dissatisfaction.

## Public service in Neville's own words

Neville's letter to Ralph Winwood of 16 February 1603/4 makes Jonson's portrait more particular. Answering his correspondent's advice about advancement, Neville sets out the terms on which he understands service:

> I hold it the duty of every honest man to **dedicate his life to those ends**, more than to his **private contentment**. But withal I think it may satisfy any man's conscience that he shuns not **service imposed**; and I hold no man bound to **seek employments**.

He later describes his immediate responsibility as attending "the care of my **private state and family**," while leaving "the care of **public affairs**" to those entrusted with them. These phrases occur within an account of his own circumstances, including his exclusion from the honours he might otherwise seek. At the close, he accepts Winwood's wish for his advancement if those with power judge him worthy.[15]

Jonson likewise distinguishes "service to the public" from "private gain," and "thine own state" from "the States." Neville's letter gives those contrasts a personal setting: service was a duty, but seeking office was not an obligation.[15]

## When was Neville's epigram written?

The surviving text was published in 1616, after Neville's death on 10 July 1615. Whether the lost collection of about 1612 contained CIX is unknown.[16,5]

Colin Burrow, following F. G. Fleay, proposes Neville's secretaryship campaign in 1612 as the occasion, but this remains conjectural. Jonson's use elsewhere of direct address to the dead, and of tombs and "lent" life in poems to the living, leaves the question open.[17]

## Notes and sources

1. Ben Jonson, *Discoveries*, ed. Lorna Hutson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson Online*, lines 468–482, text and commentary. The work was printed in 1641. Jonson's personal knowledge is the historical judgement drawn here from his testimony; the passage does not identify Neville as Shakespeare.

2. Jonson, "To the Reader" and "To the Memory of My Beloved, The Author, Master William Shakespeare, And What He Hath Left Us", ed. Colin Burrow, *Cambridge Edition*, complete poems and commentary. Both were first printed in Shakespeare's 1623 Folio. The short poem faced the Droeshout engraving. The view that Jonson was very deeply involved in preparing the volume is the interpretation advanced here; neither the poems nor these editorial accounts establish the extent of his editorial or organizational work.

3. Jonson, *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (London: William Stansby, 1616), pp. 803–804, page-image witness. The full CIX quotation modernizes spelling, capitalization and punctuation, while retaining "then" at lines 10 and 12 and the unapostrophized "States" at line 12. The first-line comparisons use the Cambridge edition instead, as specified in note 4. On the volume as a collection of plays and other writings, see Ian Donaldson, "Note on folio title-page (1616)", *Cambridge Edition*. The context supports the importance of Jonson's selection; it does not mean that plays first became literature in 1616.

4. Ben Jonson, *Epigrams*, ed. Colin Burrow, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson Online*, XXIII, LV and CIX, text and commentary. These opening comparisons follow Burrow's modern text, with typographic apostrophes normalized; bold type is editorial emphasis. CIX's opening differs in spelling and punctuation from the lightly modernized folio text printed above, not in the phrase being compared. Jonson's second Donne poem, XCVI, opens "Who shall doubt, Donne, whe'er I a poet be, / When I dare send my Epigrams to thee?" Its question brings together the addressee, poetic identity and "thee"; the closer verbal comparison with Sonnet 38 is CIX's "calls on thee" and "muse." See also Epigrams XXIII, lines 1–10.

5. Tara L. Lyons, "New Evidence for Ben Jonson's *Epigrammes* (ca. 1612) in Bodleian Library Records," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 114, no. 3 (2020): 343–364, article. The Bodleian evidence establishes an earlier printed collection; it does not identify CIX among its contents. See also Tara L. Lyons, "Reading a Lost Book: Ben Jonson's *Epigrammes* (c.1612) and Disposable Authorship," *English Literary Renaissance* 53.1 (2023), pp. 1–34, DOI. The publisher's abstract, consulted here, describes an octavo edition circulating as early as 1612; the full 2023 article has not been consulted for this revision.

6. Ben Jonson, *Epigrams* XCV, "To Sir Henry Savile," in Colin Burrow's Cambridge edition, poem and commentary. The poem praises both the translation and Savile's historical supplement; CIX is the address to Neville reproduced here.

7. Jonson, *Epigrams* CIX, commentary to line 12. The folio has "then"; Burrow prefers "than," governed by "rather" in line 9. He observes that most modernized editions retain "then" at line 12. The folio's unapostrophized "States" does not by itself establish a plural sense: Burrow reads "the State's," with the possessive referring back to "state." The printed forms and the editorial interpretation are distinguished here. The main text retains the folio's "then"; Burrow's reading makes the preference comparative, while "then" at line 12 can place self-knowledge before statecraft.

8. Jonson, *Epigrams* XLIII, "To Robert, Earl of Salisbury," in Burrow's edition. Four of the 133 epigrams end their first line with "muse": XXIII (Donne), XLIII (Cecil), LV (Beaumont), CIX (Neville). Cecil's opening is different: "What need hast thou of me, or of my muse". "My

muse" explicitly means Jonson's own Muse, not Cecil's. The poem turns back towards Jonson's reputation: Cecil's name may add fame to Jonson's book, and Jonson calls himself "not the worst" of poets. Its professed modesty thus includes self-congratulation and a defence of Jonson's freedom from flattery.

9. James Leyland and James Goding, *Who Will Believe My Verse? The Code in Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2018), p. 11, page preview. The approximate composition date proposed there is not treated as established.

10. EarlyPrint, public BlackLab collection. Queries of 4 September 2026: the consecutive lemma sequence *call* / *on* / *thou* returned 350 hits in 216 records; the forward *muse* restriction with 0–15 intervening tokens returned four hits in four records; the reverse restriction returned three. Records: TCP A04632 (Jonson, 1616), A12043 and A12044 (Sonnets, 1609), A12034 (Shakespeare's *Poems*, 1640). The search does not establish uniqueness beyond its corpus, annotations and defined wording.

11. Shakespeare, Sonnet 38, lines 5–14; Jonson, *Epigrams* LV, lines 1–10. The shared rhyme pairs *worth*/*forth* and *me*/*thee* occur at LV 3–4 and 9–10, and Sonnet 38 9–11 and 5–7 respectively. The broader relation of praise and creative indebtedness is the chapter's comparative reading, not a claim of a newly proved source. Beaumont's poem and Sonnet 38 both turn praise back towards the person who inspires or supplies it; this subsidiary comparison is retained here rather than developed as a second literary analysis in the chapter.

12. Jonson, *The Underwood*, ed. Burrow, XIV, "An Epistle to Master John Selden," lines 79–86, text and commentary. It supplies a contextual tenth-muse comparison, not the exact "calls on thee" phrase. The headnote records its first appearance with Selden's *Titles of Honour* in 1614. The broader conceit of a tenth Muse is not by itself the distinctive wording being compared.

13. Shakespeare, Sonnet 29, complete poem; Jonson, CIX, lines 5–12. *Fates*/*States* and *state*/*fate* are related forms, not identical printed word-pairs.

14. Across all 133 epigrams and 154 sonnets, only ten poem-pairings share two rhyme pairs when related noun forms are normalized. CIX and Sonnet 29 are among them; their *hope*/*scope* pair also occupies the same numbered rhyme group in each poem. Robert Parry's twenty-four-line Passion XXVII in *Sinetes Passions* (1597) also combines *hope*/*scope* and *state*/*fate*. The pairing is therefore not exclusive, though Jonson and Shakespeare still share its positional and ethical relations. Parry's publication date establishes neither Sonnet 29's composition date nor borrowing from Parry by either poet. New descriptive comparison of Burrow's 133 *Epigrams* and Folger's 154 Sonnets. The sequences contain 1,612 and 2,155 verse lines respectively. Explicit rhyme schemes produce 812 and 1,079 line-pair records, including triplets and the exceptional forms of Sonnets 99 and 126. With possessives removed and the declared noun-form normalization, 19,837 comparisons share no pair, 635 share one, ten share two, and none shares three. Without noun normalization, the corresponding counts are 19,868, 605 and nine; CIX/Sonnet 29 then shares only *hope*/*scope*. Distinct paired terminal words are counted, not acoustic identity or every occurrence of a repeated pair. Robert Parry, *Sinetes Passions upon His Fortunes* (London: Thomas Purfoot for William Holme, 1597), Passion XXVII, EEBO–TCP A09044. *Hope*/*scope* ends lines 2 and 4; *state*/*fate* ends lines 8 and 10.

15. Neville to Ralph Winwood, London, 16 February 1603 [1604 with the year beginning on 1 January], in *Memorials of Affairs of State*, collected from Sir Ralph Winwood's papers, ed. Edmund Sawyer, vol. II (London, 1725), p. 17, printed letter. Its final willingness to receive advancement qualifies any account of Neville as indifferent to office. There is no evidence that Jonson read this letter. Quotations from Winwood modernize spelling, capitalization and light punc-

tuation while preserving vocabulary, syntax and meaning; editorial emphasis is added. The correspondences do not preserve an identical order.

16. Andrew Thrush, "NEVILLE, Sir Henry I (1564–1615)", in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010), complete biography and relevant notes. It supplies the death date and the prolonged secretaryship campaign. The proposed specific occasion for CIX in Burrow's headnote remains conjectural.

17. Jonson, *Epigrams* XXXIII, the complete six-line poem following the epitaph on Sir John Roe; *The Forest* XII and III, complete poems and relevant headnotes, ed. Colin Burrow. XII's headnote dates the New Year's gift to 1600 and records that its addressee and her husband had died by the 1616 publication. Its Muse, tombs and wombs provide a parallel to CIX's language of preservation without dating CIX. III closes by joining country service to the conception of life as lent. The dating of these occasions follows the edition. XXXIII addresses the dead Roe as "thou"; The Forest XII addresses the living Countess of Rutland with Muse/tomb/womb language, while III calls life "a thing but lent." These parallels cannot decide whether CIX was composed before or after Neville's death.

# Neville Among the Muses

Chapter 47

In the previous chapter, Jonson wrote, "Who now calls on thee, Nevil, is a Muse." Three other contemporary publications also associate Neville with the Muses.

## Chamber and the Muses

John Chamber wrote that Neville had often asked him to put Barlaam's writings into print. The claim appears in Chamber's Latin address to Neville as ambassador, printed with his edition of Barlaam's *Logistica* in Paris in 1600. The poem brings public office, learning and literary praise together around a specific request for publication.[1]

The entire poem shows how that literary characterization leads into an account of publication. The translation below follows its twelve couplets; the English lineation is a reading aid rather than a metrical imitation.[1]

Although you may count your lineage and ancestors in a long succession,
and the lofty halls of the prince stand open to you,
nothing amid such great fortune deserves greater esteem
than the honour of your virtue and the distinction of your talent.

Through that talent you govern all your affairs and conduct such weighty business;
through it you leave the earth behind and gladly approach the stars.
Gladly you approach the stars, where your abundant virtue,
making you immortal, claims you for the gods before your time.

You would seem to have achieved too little in rising above earth and the crowd,
unless the kindly company of Muses made your name resound.
**The Muse gave you varied arts; cultivated Thalia gave you**
**the power to pour forth whatever you wished in rounded speech.**

Euclid teaches you, opening his sources and elements;
the old man of Pelusium leads you to the stars.
Not content even with these things, you are accustomed to stir
the shade and buried ashes of Barlaam the monk.

I need not now recount how earnestly, or how often, you asked
that I should put his writings under the press.
Here, then, at last, are the monk's learned writings for you,
now answering with learned sound beneath the blows of type.

Had Savile not been first in deserving this praise,
Barlaam would now owe his ransom to you.
For through your prompting and your request alike
the man's Muse survives, which otherwise would have perished.

The lines on Thalia read:

Et superasse parum terras, vulgumque videris,
Te nisi musarum personet alma cohors.
**Musa dedit varias artes, dedit ore rotundo**
**Fundere quae Velles, culta Thalia tibi.**

The Muses confer fame; Thalia also confers expression. *Fundere*, to pour forth, and *quae velles*, whatever he wished, credit Neville himself with fluent, wide-ranging speech.

The wording is more literary than a translation into general "culture" would suggest. Chamber is adapting Horace's *Art of Poetry*:

Grais ingenium, Grais dedit ore rotundo
Musa loqui ...

To the Greeks the Muse gave genius; to the Greeks she gave
speech with rounded fullness ...

In Horace the passage concerns the Greeks' artistic gifts and their pursuit of praise. Chamber transfers the distinctive combination—*Musa*, *dedit*, *ore rotundo*—to Neville. A reader who recognized the source would hear a compliment measured against an eminent classical account of literary excellence.[2]

Chamber then names Thalia. Her association with comedy is real and was current in Neville's lifetime: Hendrick Goltzius's engraving of 1592 represents her as the Muse of comedy, and its inscription explicitly names *Comedia*. Her literary range also includes pastoral poetry. Virgil calls his pastoral Muse Thalia at the opening of the sixth *Eclogue*. These associations give Chamber's choice more precision than the interchangeable use of a decorative goddess. They also leave room for several kinds of poetic achievement.[3]

Euclid, astronomy and mathematical recovery form a scholarly portrait animated by poetry: Barlaam's shade is stirred, his ransom paid and his Muse saved as print restores his voice.

In Chamber's preliminaries, the poem printed before this one makes Savile Barlaam's rescuer from the dead. The poem to Neville preserves Savile's priority while crediting Neville with persistently urging the printing: their sequence presents a cooperation.

*Quotiesque rogasti*, "how often you asked," records repeated prompting before publication. The printed book answers those requests, giving Neville a role in its survival beyond ceremonial dedication.

## Fitzgeoffrey's "Aonian Neville"

In 1601 Charles Fitzgeoffrey published a Latin epigram welcoming Richard Carew the younger (c.1580–1643) home from France. He was the son of the antiquary Richard Carew (1555–1620) and nephew of George Carew (c.1556–1612), who had travelled with Neville and Savile, as described in Chapter 2. Chapter 25 examines the elder Richard's writing alongside *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In the poem, the younger Carew returns to his parents laden with the treasures of learning acquired in Paris and Orléans. In describing his visit to the French king's court, Fitzgeoffrey names the company he kept:

> Qua tibi Aonii latus Nevilli
> Phaebaeumque Trelaunium sequuto
> Aulam invisere curiam magni
> Regis contigit, aemulam Tonantis.
>
> There, following at the side of Aonian Neville
> and Phoebean Trelawny, you had the good fortune
> to visit the court of the great king,
> a rival to the Thunderer's court.[4]

"Aonian" joins Neville to the Muses; "Phoebean" joins Trelawny to Apollo. The paired epithets characterize the embassy's company through poetic inspiration rather than diplomatic rank.

The Neville is identifiable from more than the surname. Carew's own retrospective account, published by Samuel Hartlib in 1654, says that his father sent him to France with "Sir Henry-Nevill," then resident ambassador to Henri IV, to learn French. Carew's subject is language teaching: he contrasts the French he acquired through practice with the Latin he had learned slowly through grammatical rules. That independent recollection fixes the personal setting of Fitzgeoffrey's welcome.[5]

Fitzgeoffrey's own usage helps recover the force of the epithet. In the same book of *Affaniae*, Fitzgeoffrey explicitly praises John Harington as a poet and names his literary achievements. He also celebrates Thomas Bodley for giving the Aonian divinities a home in his library. The Muses' vocabulary accommodates the writer and the benefactor of writing; its presence need not settle which capacity is foremost.[6]

## Carleton: poetry under Neville's protection

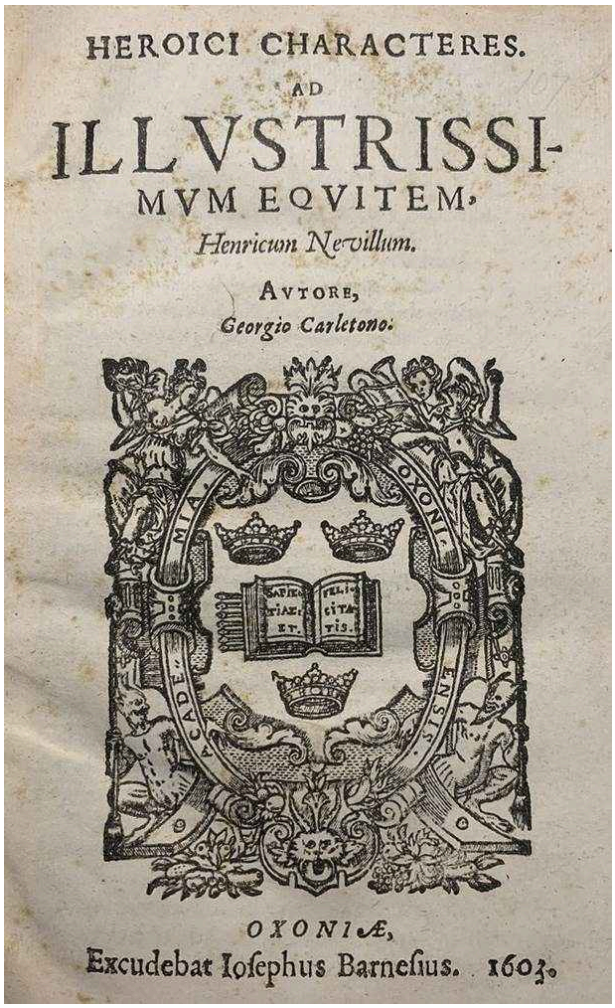

HEROICI CHARACTERES.
AD
ILLVSTRISSI-
MVM EQVITEM,
Henricum Nevillum.
AVTORE,
Georgio Carletono.
OXONIÆ,
Excudebat Iosephus Barnesius. 1603.

Figure 47.1: George Carleton, Heroici characteres (Oxford, 1603). The title addresses Henry Neville; the Latin imprint names Joseph Barnes.

George Carleton's *Heroici characteres*, printed by Joseph Barnes at Oxford in 1603, puts Henry Neville's name on the title page and addresses him in a substantial opening poem. The work gives poetic portraits of heroes; the prefatory address places Neville's experience among examples of virtue subjected to suffering.[7]

The address is one continuous poem across three pages. It passes through images of trial, changing fortune, and deliverance, including Joseph's emergence from imprisonment. Near its conclusion Carleton turns to the poems he is presenting and to the relationship that permits their presentation:

**Si licet, o nostris qui feceris otia musis,**
Nominis umbra tui magnorum emblemata parva
Protegat Heroum ...

**If it may be, you who have made leisure for our Muses,**
may the shadow of your name protect these little emblems
of great heroes ...

*Umbra*, "shadow," makes Neville's name shelter the book. The patronage formula is personal: he has made leisure for Carleton's Muses.

The line recalls the opening of Virgil's first *Eclogue*, where Tityrus explains that a god has made his leisure possible: *deus nobis haec otia fecit*. Carleton's *nostris ... feceris otia musis* adapts that language to his own recipient. The classical echo helps identify the relationship being asserted: the poet acknowledges the conditions under which he can write.[8]

Carleton develops the appeal through an image drawn from the tragic stage. The closing passage reads:

Illa quidem **maioribus attollenda cothurnis**
Quis negat? ultro etiam tenuis tentamina musae
Agnosco, nec in hac quicquam me gloria laude
Sollicitat: nec me vatis pro crimine nomen
Obiectum fallit. Quin contra murmura vatum
Tu clypeo defende tuum. Cantata per orbem
Et sine vate sibi per se celeberrima gesta
Heroum, sat erit nostram tentasse Camoenam.

Who denies that those deeds deserve to be **raised on greater buskins**?
I readily acknowledge these efforts of a slender Muse;
no desire for glory in such praise entices me.
Nor am I unaware that the name of poet is cast as an accusation.
Rather, against the murmuring of poets,
defend your own with your shield. It will be enough
that my Muse has attempted the deeds of heroes, sung throughout the world
and supremely famous in themselves, even without a poet.[9]

A buskin was a high boot associated with actors in ancient tragedy. Its Latin name, *cothurnus*, consequently became a shorthand for tragedy itself and for the elevated style appropriate to heroic subjects. The contrasting *soccus*, the low shoe or "sock," represented comedy. Horace uses the two together in his *Ars poetica* and later associates the buskin with Aeschylus's lofty dramatic speech.

Carleton's "greater buskins" therefore give his appeal a specifically theatrical resonance: these heroic deeds deserve the elevation of tragedy. He contrasts their scale with the "slender Muse" of his own poems, then asks Neville to shield his poet from criticism. Addressed to Neville, the passage brings the Muses, tragic ambition and literary protection together. Its immediate subject is Car-

leton's poetry and the treatment his heroes deserve; the force of the comparison lies in the literary terms in which he expects Neville to receive his appeal.

Chamber credits Thalia's eloquence; Carleton seeks protection for heroic subjects deserving tragic elevation. Together they place Neville in discussions of genre, classical models and the conditions of composition.

## Neville's preference about the dedication

Neville did not want to remain in the position Carleton had given him. Writing from Nuffield to Dudley Carleton on 22 October 1617, George Carleton discussed printing his poems again abroad. He wanted an introduction to Hugo Grotius and envisaged a dedication to the prince. He recalled:

> Sir Henry Nevil in his lifetime wished that the **dedication had been altered**, and the verses written to him **placed in some other part of the book**, which may be done with a little alteration.[10]

The verses could stay; Neville wanted them away from the opening dedication. Carleton's letter does not give the date or motive of the request. It records a precise preference about public prominence from a man whose assistance had helped other writers reach print. Set beside his attempts to prevent an incomplete account of his conduct from circulating (Chapter 6), it shows his attention to how a book presented his name. The parallel concerns control of presentation; Carleton supplies no motive that would justify identifying the request with a plan to conceal literary authorship.

## Three tributes to Neville and the Muses

Chamber credits Thalia with Neville's eloquence; Fitzgeoffrey places "Aonian Neville" among the Muses; Carleton thanks him for making leisure for his Muses and asks his name to shelter the poems. Published in 1600, 1601 and 1603, these three tributes repeatedly associate Neville with literary expression and the conditions that enable others to write. Taken together with Jonson's epigram, they establish a strong, recurring association between Neville and the Muses in contemporary print.

## Notes and sources

1. Barlaam, *Barlaami Monachi Logistica nunc primum Latinè reddita, & scholiis illustrata à Ioanne Chambero* (Paris: Guillaume Auvray, 1600), Chamber's prefatory poems, digitized leaves 7–8; address headed "Eiusdem. Ad illustriss. virum dominum Henricum Nevillum ... ad Galliarum Regem legatum." Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 4 Math 43, address. Latin quotations normalize long *s*, ligatures, and *u*/*v* where needed. Translations are new render-

ings for this chapter. *Varias* is rendered "varied"; the name printed *Sauillus* is Savile. "The old man of Pelusium" is the poem's learned designation of Ptolemy.

2. Horace, *Ars poetica*, lines 323–324, read with the discussion of literary judgement, Greek example, and Roman calculation in lines 309–332. Latin text. The shortened quotation marks its omission. Chamber's verbal adaptation supports the proposed allusion; it does not independently identify any work by Neville.

3. Hendrick Goltzius, *Thalia*, 1592, from *The Nine Muses*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, object 2020.54.2: collection record and inscription. For the pastoral use, Virgil, *Eclogues* 6.1–12, especially 6.2 and 6.8: Latin text. The two sources establish a range of association rather than an exclusive generic definition.

4. Charles Fitzgeoffrey, *Affaniae: sive epigrammatum libri tres* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1601), III.41, pp. 129–130, "Ad Richardum Caraeum, Richardi filium, e Gallis reducem." Latin edition, Dana F. Sutton. The translation is new. The identification of *Aureliae* as Orléans corrects "Orange" in the accompanying modern English translation.

5. Richard Carew, "The True and Ready Way to learn the Latine Tongue ... Exprest in an Answer to a Quere," in Samuel Hartlib, *The True and Readie Way to Learne the Latine Tongue* (London: R. and W. Leybourn, 1654), opening autobiographical account, especially p. 46. EEBO-TCP A42982; digitized volume. This is retrospective testimony published after the events, not a contemporary travel diary.

6. Fitzgeoffrey, *Affaniae*, III.30 (Harington) and III.31 (Bodley), in Sutton's Latin edition. The comparison concerns the ways the same poet uses the vocabulary of the Muses for literary achievement and its support.

7. George Carleton, *Heroici characteres. Ad illustrissimum equitem Henricum Nevillum* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1603), title and opening poem, sigs. A2r–A3r. Digitized copy. Latin excerpt at A3r; translation is new. The reading *umbra* is from the page image. A few other words in the reproduction are damaged; no uncertain reading from those places is quoted here.

8. Virgil, *Eclogues* 1.6–10: Latin text. The shared expression for making poetic leisure supports the allusion. It does not specify the financial or institutional means of Neville's assistance.

9. Carleton, opening poem, sig. A3r, closing eight lines; Latin checked against the printed page, with long s and u/v normalized; translation is new, with English line breaks adjusted for sense. "Your own" refers to the poet asking for protection. For the theatrical and figurative senses of the buskin, see Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), s.v. "cothurnus," II.B; dictionary entry. Compare Horace, *Ars poetica* 80 and 275–280, especially "docuit magnumque loqui nitique cothurno"; Latin text.

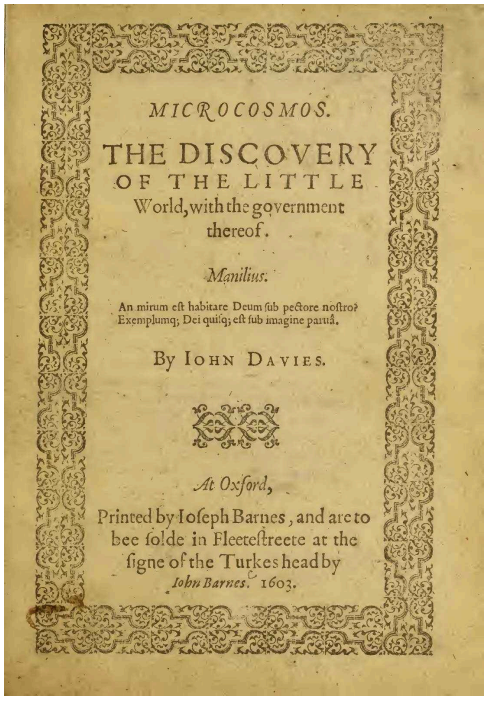
10. George Carleton to Sir Dudley Carleton, Nuffield, 22 October 1617, The National Archives, SP 14/93, ff. 235–236, passage f. 236r; State Papers Online, MC4323685410, scan 340, right leaf. The document's identity is independently controlled by the catalogue and Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, James I, 1611–1618* (London, 1858), p. 489, entry 135; calendar page. The calendar summarizes the proposed alteration of the poems and dedication to the prince but omits the Neville sentence. Abbreviations are expanded and spelling and punctuation modernized. The letter does not give the book's title: identification with *Heroici characteres* rests on its published Neville dedication and the context of Carleton's printed poems. The proposed new edition is not established as completed.

# Microcosmos: Neville and Shakespeare

Chapter 48

John Davies of Hereford's *Microcosmos* appeared at Oxford in 1603, the same year and from the same printer, Joseph Barnes, as Carleton's *Heroici characteres*. Both books addressed Henry Neville. Carleton associated him with the Muses; Davies called him "discreet" and questioned how freely his worth could be praised. *Microcosmos* also names Shakespeare and Burbage by their initials and contains passages compared with Sonnet 111 and *Macbeth*.[1]

Davies was a poet and professional writing master. *Microcosmos* examines humanity as a little world of body and soul, appetite and reason, and closes with poems addressed to named contemporaries.[1]


MICROCOSMOS.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE LITTLE World, with the government thereof.

*Manilius.*

An mirum est habitare Deum sub pectore nostro?
Exemplumq; Dei quisq; est sub imagine parvâ.

By IOHN DAVIES.

*At Oxford,*
Printed by Ioseph Barnes, and are to bee solde in Fleetestreete at the signe of the Turkes head by *John Barnes.* 1603.

Figure 48.1: John Davies of Hereford, Microcosmos (Oxford, 1603). The imprint names Joseph Barnes as printer and John Barnes as bookseller.

## Davies: the difficulty of praising Neville

The concluding group of poems in *Microcosmos* includes thirty-three sonnets and a longer poem to Oxford. Neville's sonnet sits between poems to Sir Edward Wingfield and Sir Edward Dyer. It is headed "To the Noble, discreete, and well-beloved Knight Sir Henry Nevill."[2]

The poem deserves a complete reading. Spelling is modernized here, with the fourteen verse lines preserved:

> There was a time when, ah that so there was,
> Why not there is? There is and was a time,
> When men might call gold, gold; and brass, but brass;
> And say it, without check, in prose or rhyme.
> Yet should I call thee gold, some (brass perchance)
> Would say I erred because I ne'er touched thee,
> And so did call thee through mere ignorance,
> Or (which is worse) through abject flattery.
> I am too ignorant (I do confess)
> To judge thy worth, which worthiest men commend,
> Yet may I say (I hope) and not transgress,
> Thou art Virtue, Valour, Truth, and Honour's friend;
> All which presume thou art not gilt by guile
> Because thy noble name denies the vile.

In the original, "Ne-vile" is printed as a marginal gloss to the last line, outside the verse. Davies uses the division of Neville's name to illuminate the closing assertion of character. Chapter 41 examines the connection with Sonnet 121.

The poem turns on the assay of precious metal: to "touch" gold is to test it on a touchstone. Davies imagines calling Neville gold and being challenged by critics who may themselves be brass. In that setting, "I ne'er touched thee" concerns testing Neville's worth; it does not establish that the two had never met. The closing "gilt by guile" distinguishes genuine worth from a deceptive surface.[3]

Davies invokes the judgement of the "worthiest men" while repeatedly questioning his own freedom to praise: "without check," "I hope," "not transgress." The heading's "discreet" fits this concern with judgement and guarded speech. Neville alone receives that epithet in the dedicatory headings, although Davies uses the word elsewhere for prudence and good government.[4]

The surrounding poems also honour people affected by the Essex rebellion: Southampton's release and the young Earl of Essex's restored prospects receive praise. Neville's sonnet belongs to that setting of contested reputations, but its distinctive question is whether his worth can be acknowledged openly.[5]

## "W. S. R. B.": the praise of players

Davies marks this stanza with the initials "W. S. R. B.," conventionally identified as William Shakespeare and Richard Burbage:[6]

> Players, I love ye, and your quality,
> As ye are men, that pass time not abused:
> And some I love for painting, poesy,
> And say fell **Fortune** cannot be excused,
> **That** hath for **better** uses you refused:
> Wit, courage, good shape, good parts, and all good,
> As long as all these goods are no worse used,
> And though the stage doth **stain** pure gentle blood,
> Yet generous ye are in mind and mood.

The initials are keyed to "some," linking poetry with Shakespeare and painting with Burbage. "Quality" means the players' profession.

Davies's epigram to Shakespeare in *The Scourge of Folly* is reproduced and discussed in Appendix I.

## Sonnet 111: a possible answer to Davies

Sonnet 111 likewise blames Fortune for work that stains a name:[7]

> O, for my sake do you with **Fortune** chide,
> The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
> **That** did not **better** for my life provide
> Than public means which public manners breeds.
> Thence comes it that my name receives a **brand**;
> And almost thence my nature is subdued
> To what it works in, like the **dyer's hand**.

In his 2007 article, MacDonald P. Jackson argued that Davies's stanza probably prompted Sonnet 111: both blame Fortune for denying better employment and describe its damage as a stain or brand. The sonnet's uncertain date leaves the direction of borrowing open.[8]

For the connection between Neville's father and Reading's dyers, see the discussion of Sonnet 111 in Chapter 43, "The Sonnets: The Judging Eye."

## Macbeth: the three offices of drink

Davies also describes three functions of drink:[9]

**Drink** hath **three** offices; the first assists
Concoction, for in it is boiled the meat:
The next, to mix the food the first digests:
The last, to bring it to the liver's heat ...

"Concoction" means digestion.

The Porter gives a comic list in *Macbeth* 2.3:[10]

PORTER Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock, and **drink**, sir, is a great provoker of **three** things.

MACDUFF What **three** things does **drink** especially provoke?

PORTER Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine.

Brian Vickers identified this possible echo of Davies's three-part formulation; Jackson credited him with the observation.[11]

## Notes and sources

1. John Davies of Hereford, *Microcosmos* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1603), title page, main poem, and address to Oxford; 1603 scan. George Carleton, *Heroici characteres* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1603), title page; scan. See also Falconer Madan, *The Early Oxford Press* (Oxford, 1895), p. 55, entries 1603.3–4; edition. Both title pages identify Joseph Barnes as printer (Iosephus Barnesius in Carleton's Latin imprint). Davies additionally names John Barnes at the Turk's Head in Fleet Street as the London bookseller; a common bookseller or exact simultaneous release is not established.

2. John Davies of Hereford, *Microcosmos. The Discovery of the Little World* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1603), concluding poems, Neville followed by Dyer. Neville and Dyer, original page; EEBO-TCP A19903. The chapter's modernized verse retains words and verse order while regularizing spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Marginal matter is distinguished from the verse. The sequence from Canterbury through "To the World" contains thirty-three fourteen-line poems and the twenty-nine-line Oxford poem; this is a defined section, not a count of every poem in the volume.

3. Davies, Neville sonnet, lines 3–8 and 13–14. For the assay sense of *touch*, see University of York, *Yorkshire Historical Dictionary*, "touch", including the entry's discussion of touchstones and historical assay usage. The reading is also sustained by the poem's own gold, brass, and gilding vocabulary.

4. Davies, *Microcosmos*, Henry VII passage, "For government discreete and temperate," and the occurrences in the Neville heading and Magdalen poem; EEBO-TCP A19903. Robert Cawdrey, *A Table Alphabeticall* (London, 1604), sig. D3v, "discretion," electronic edition by Raymond G. Siemens: text. The heading claim is restricted to this volume, not Davies's entire career.

5. Davies, *Microcosmos*, sonnets to Southampton and the young Earl of Essex. The latter addresses Robert Devereux, the third earl, not his executed father.

6. Davies, *Microcosmos*, pp. 214–216, especially p. 215, sig. 2F4r; page 215. The marginal "W. S. R. B." is keyed to "some"; the Simonides and Roscius notes appear on the same page. For the identification and later references, Alan H. Nelson, "Microcosmos: John Davies of Hereford alludes to Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Documented*.

7. William Shakespeare, Sonnet 111, lines 1–7, Folger reading text. Quotation preserves its line breaks and wording; bold emphasis is added for comparison. The 1609 publication does not establish the sonnet's composition date.

8. MacDonald P. Jackson, "Shakespeare's Sonnet CXI and John Davies of Hereford's Microcosmos (1603)," *Modern Language Review* 102.1 (2007), 1–10; DOI, complete article through Gale. The proposed connection is distinguished here from a demonstrated direction of borrowing.

9. Davies, *Microcosmos*, p. 69, sig. L3r; original page. The quotation gives the first four of nine lines, with an ellipsis at the cut. Spelling and the anomalous punctuation after "three" are modernized.

10. Shakespeare, *Macbeth* 2.3, the Porter's dialogue with Macduff, Folger reading text. The excerpt preserves the edition's speech labels, wording, and physical line breaks. The final speech continues beyond the quoted sentence.

11. Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, A Lover's Complaint, and John Davies of Hereford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Introduction, publisher's excerpt. For the specific drink parallel and attribution of its identification to Vickers, see Jackson, "Shakespeare's Sonnet CXI," note 18 and the accompanying discussion. The present argument does not depend on Vickers's attribution of *A Lover's Complaint* to Davies.

# The Herberts, the Digges Brothers and the First Folio

Chapter 49

The First Folio of 1623 names the patrons and poets who helped present Shakespeare's collected plays to the world. Those names align remarkably closely with Neville's documented relationships. William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, worked alongside him in political affairs. Leonard Digges contributed a Folio poem; his brother Dudley publicly defended Neville in Parliament and wrote a proposed source for *Coriolanus*. Hugh Holland connects the Folio to the Mitre company. This chapter follows those relationships, then explains the family ties that link Neville to the Digges brothers and to Thomas Russell, an overseer of Shakespeare's will.

## Pembroke: patronage and political trust

The Folio's dedicatees belonged to the Sidney family Neville had known since his youth. William and Philip Herbert were the sons of Mary Sidney Herbert, sister of both the poet Philip Sidney and Neville's travelling companion Robert Sidney. Their grandfather, Sir Henry Sidney, had been a friend of Neville's father (Chapter 2).

William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, was supporting Neville's secretary John Packer as early as 1605. On 25 February 1604/5, John Packer wrote to Sir Thomas Lake about his suit, for which the Earl of Pembroke had written on his behalf.[1]

On 17 November 1612, Robert Naunton reported to Winwood that Neville had brought Pembroke and Rochester together. He called it Neville's "noble and Christian intermise" and expressly added that Neville had been present at their meeting.[2]

In an undated letter to Winwood, provisionally placed in April 1613 by HMC, Neville described his reconciliation of Pembroke with the peer whom the editor tentatively identifies as Rochester:

> Yet I have prevailed so much, as I have made a full reconciliation between my Lord and my Lord of Pembroke: who hath showed himself a noble, wise and worthy gentleman; not only in clearing himself from all the imputations our side had laid upon him without any just ground, but in remitting [the] injuries done him upon that false surmise, unto the public, [and pr]omising to join henceforth closely with my Lord in all things he shall undertake for religion and the state.
>
> I write you the rather of this, because I would wish you not to neglect him, out of any mistaking of his worth, but rather to bestow a letter upon him, which I will deliver **with mine own hands**.[3,4]

On the evening of 21 April 1613, after Sir Thomas Overbury had been sent to the Tower, Pembroke and Neville jointly advised Rochester. John Packer's letter to Winwood, written the following day, places Pembroke first in the king's service and then alongside Neville advising Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester, the king's favourite and Overbury's patron:

> Yesterday about six of the clock my Lord Chancellor and my Lord of Pembroke were employed by the king to speak with Sir Thomas Overbury, and to make him an offer of an ambassage into the Low Countries or France, which he would.

Overbury refused. Packer reported that he pleaded "want of language" and ill health, and declared that "he would not leave his country for any preferment in the world." When the refusal was reported to James, the king summoned his councillors and ordered them to send Overbury to the Tower. Packer then turned to Rochester:

> Now for my Lord of Rochester, who had but newly begun to leave his chamber, he knew nothing till all was done and he gone, which your Lordship may imagine did much perplex him. But that evening **my Lord of Pembroke and Sir Henry Neville were with him**, and so were again this morning; who have given him so good advice, that if he follows it, as I hope he will, all will be well with him, and no hurt to his friend.[5]

The secret letters sent by Thomas Overbury from the Tower to Carr supply a second view of the relationship. Overbury assigned Neville the name *Similis* and Pembroke *Niger*. His instructions put the two men to work together: "Do you and Similis set Niger upon this." Neville was an intermediary in the factional negotiations surrounding Neville's bid for the secretaryship, with Pembroke and Southampton among the important participants. The last-years chapter explains his dependence on Overbury's influence with Carr; Appendix B distinguishes Thomas's "Similis" letter from the later recollections of his father, Sir Nicholas Overbury.[6]

Pembroke also sat with Neville on the Virginia Company's resident council in England, created by the charter of 1609. The same council included Dudley Digges and Christopher Brooke. Philip Herbert's company connection belongs to the wider membership, rather than that council list.[7]

The Herbert connection outlived Neville and his son. Pembroke received the benefit of the wardship of the ambassador's grandson Richard in 1629; his secretary John Thorowgood later married the younger Neville's widow and acquired the wardship. Chapter 53 follows those arrangements and the later inheritance of books.[8]

## Pembroke remembered in the Neville family

William Herbert also appears in the jestbook compiled by Sir Nicholas L'Estrange, who married Neville's granddaughter Anne Lewknor. Jest 69

is attributed to "Mr Wil: Nevill," identified by the editor as the ambassador's son William. Its subject is "Sir William Herbert," whom Lippincott identifies as William Herbert of Wilton, third Earl of Pembroke.[9]

Herbert is playing dice with another gentleman when they dispute a cast. The other man insists that it was five and four; Herbert says it was six and five. His opponent swears repeatedly that he is right. Herbert calls him perjured and makes a challenge: give him sixpence, and if there is a four on the dice he will give the other man a thousand. The explanation turns the accusation back upon its speaker: the dice were false and had no four on them. Herbert knows that his opponent is lying because he knows that the dice cannot produce the number claimed.

The story ends, in L'Estrange's wording:

> for give me but 6d, and if there be e're a 4 in the Dice, I'le give thee 1000

The narrator then explains that the dice were false, "without a 4." Both men are caught by the ending: one swears to an impossible throw, while the other reveals his knowledge of the crooked dice. The offer is conditional; the story does not describe Herbert paying over the disputed money.[9]

This is a specifically Neville-attributed story about a Herbert, preserved by the husband of Neville's granddaughter. It gives the political relationship described above a place in the family's remembered conversation. The anecdote supplies neither a date nor proof of the underlying gambling incident, but its source label records the route by which the story reached the compiler. Its "Sir William Herbert" also lacks the earl's title: the identification with Pembroke follows Lippincott's person index, rather than an independent identification supplied by the anecdote. Chapter 55 provides the genealogy and the wider family contributions.

## Dudley defends Neville in Parliament

Dudley Digges's connection with Neville included public support in Parliament. On 14 May 1614, when the Commons debated Neville's advice to the king and the charge of "undertaking," Digges defended his right to offer that counsel:

> a private man might go and **move the King for the good of the country, uncalled**[10]

He invoked his father Thomas's precedent: unsolicited proposals to Elizabeth I had not prevented him from serving in Parliament. This is a recorded act of political support for Neville by the brother of a First Folio poet. Leonard wrote the Folio tribute; Dudley defended Neville before the Commons. Chapter 9 places the intervention in the parliamentary dispute.

## Dudley's Coriolanus source, Leonard's Folio poem

Dudley Digges knew Neville directly. In his examination during the Overbury investigation in November 1615, he recalled an earlier conversation in which he had told Neville of his fear that Rochester wanted to be rid of Overbury. Neville and Sir Thomas Mansell had replied with information from Overbury himself. Dudley also wrote the last two discourses in *Foure Paradoxes* (1604), proposed by Kenneth Muir and discussed by Andrew Hadfield as a source for *Coriolanus* (Chapter 34). His fourth discourse explicitly treats Coriolanus and Rome's conflict between people and nobility. The connection therefore extends across both brothers: Dudley, who knew Neville, wrote a proposed source for the play; Leonard later wrote a First Folio tribute to Shakespeare.[11]

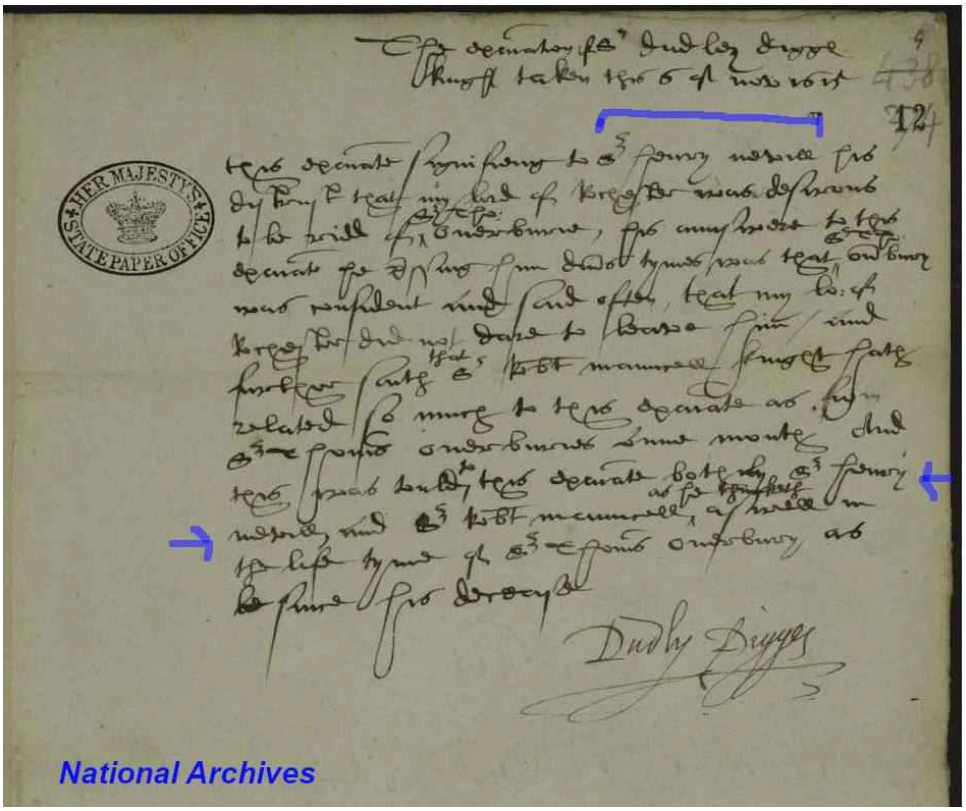



**Figure 49.1:** Dudley Digges's signed examination, 6 November 1615, recalling conversations with Neville about Rochester and Overbury. The National Archives, SP 14/83, f.12. Blue annotations are modern. Image and transcription; manuscript record.

Dudley's brother Leonard was a translator and a contributor to the First Folio. A note he signed around 1613 compared Lope de Vega's reputation with that of "our Will Shakespeare." In 1622 his translation of *Gerardo the Unfortunate Spaniard* appeared through Edward Blount, dedicated to Pembroke and Mont-

gomery. The following year, Leonard's signed poem, Blount's name in the imprint and the same two dedicatees appeared together in the First Folio.[12]

The brothers connect Neville's political world to people engaged in Shakespeare's publication. The family ties examined below add a second connection; no surviving letter describes a transfer of literary manuscripts along that route. Leonard's own dedication also calls him a stranger when approaching the Herberts, so its appearance in print should not be expanded into an undocumented intimate friendship.

## Hugh Holland and the Mitre company

Hugh Holland supplies another connection between the Folio and a named literary company. His signed tribute appears in its preliminaries; the *Convivium Philosophicum*, probably dating from 1611, had named him alongside Donne, Hoskyns, Brooke, Jones and a Sir Henry Neville. Zachary Lesser identifies that Sir Henry Neville as the Billingbear diplomat; Chapter 45 examines that identification and the alternative claim for his Abergavenny cousin. Holland's place in both documents is certain, and his earlier verses for Jonson's *Sejanus* and Coryate's *Crudities* show him already engaged in introducing other writers' books.[13]

## The connection through Neville's daughter

Sir Henry Berkeley (c.1579–1667), Maurice Berkeley's younger brother, was Neville's son-in-law. He married Neville's daughter Elizabeth; their postnuptial settlement survives in a copy, and the published pedigree dates the settlement 12 February 1608/9 (1609 in modern year reckoning). Sir Maurice Berkeley (c.1577–1617) was also connected to Neville through his own marriage: his wife Elizabeth Killigrew, daughter of William Killigrew, and Neville's wife Anne, daughter of William's brother Henry Killigrew, were first cousins.[14]

Neville entrusted Maurice with family property. An estate abstract dated 30 April 1615 records "Bury Farm with the appurtenances" as conveyed to **"Sir Maurice Berkeley"**, Robert Killigrew, William Barlas, Henry Savile and Edward Neville by an indenture of 20 May 1609. Maurice thus appears among the men holding property under Neville's estate arrangements.[15]

His support for Neville's political advancement is explicit. On 12 November 1612, Maurice wrote to Sir Robert Phelips, a fellow parliamentarian whose father had been Speaker of the Commons:

> I like well of your purpose of treating with Sir H[enry] N[eville] and I do assure myself it will be grateful to him to see such as you are so well affected.[16]

## Thomas Russell: half-brother and stepfather

The Berkeley brothers had a maternal half-brother, Thomas Russell (1570–1634), whom Shakespeare appointed an overseer of his will in 1616. Their mother, Margaret Lygon, had married first Sir Thomas Russell of Strensham, who died in 1574, and then Sir Henry Berkeley of Bruton, who died in 1601. Thomas Russell belonged to her first marriage; Maurice and Henry Berkeley to her second.[17]

Russell was also stepfather to Dudley Digges (1583–1639) and Leonard Digges (1588–1635). Their mother, Anne St Leger (1555–1636), married Russell after the death of their father, the mathematician Thomas Digges (c.1546–1595). The overseer of Shakespeare's will was therefore both the Digges brothers' stepfather and the half-brother of Neville's son-in-law.[18]

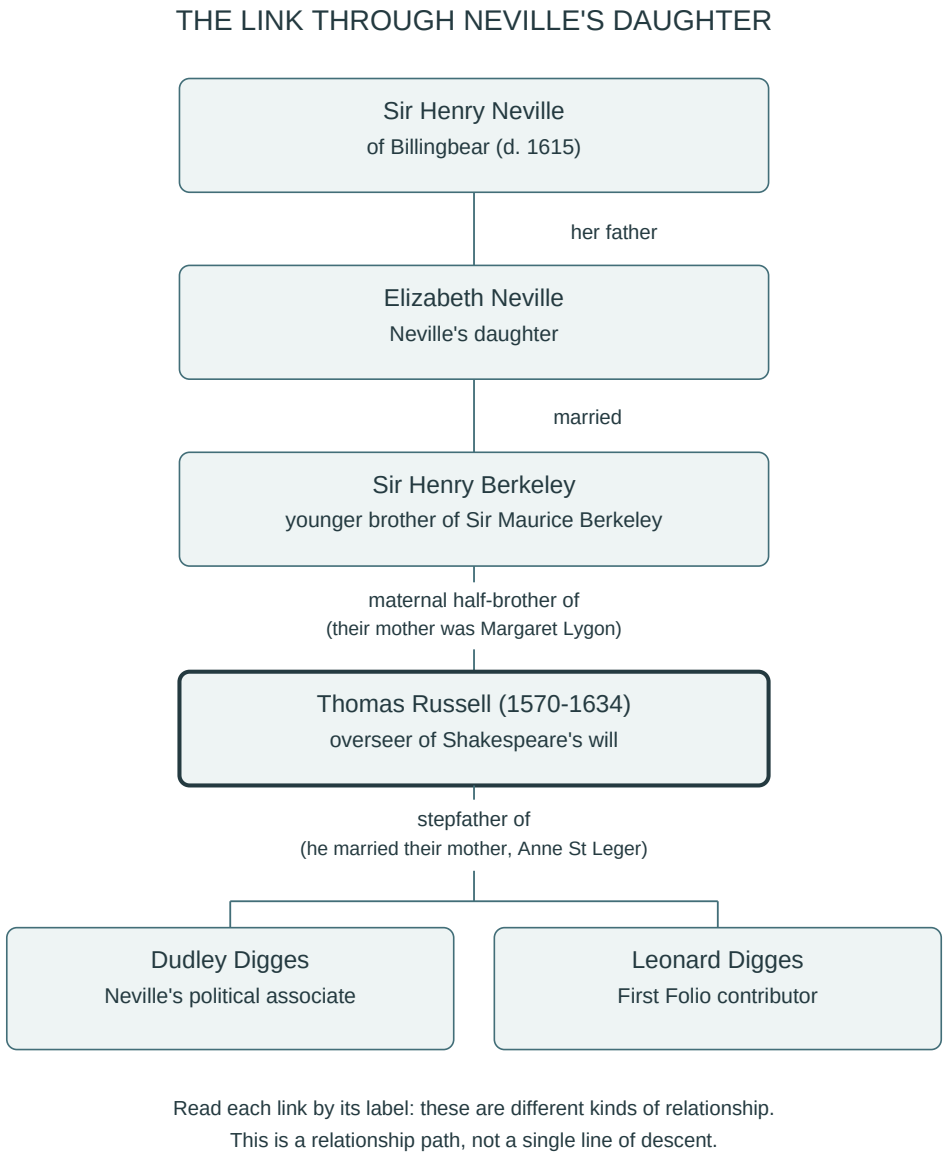



**Figure 49.2:** From Neville's daughter to the Digges household. Each link is labelled: parenthood, marriage, half-brotherhood and stepfatherhood. Thomas Russell was also an overseer of Shakespeare's will. Sources: the Berkeley and Russell pedigrees cited in this section.

## The Digges brothers' Neville ancestry

The Digges brothers also had Neville ancestry of their own. Their maternal grandmother, Ursula Neville, was a daughter of George Neville, Lord Abergavenny, whose brother Sir Edward Neville was the ambassador's grandfather.

Anne St Leger and the ambassador were second cousins; her sons Dudley and Leonard were his second cousins once removed.[19]

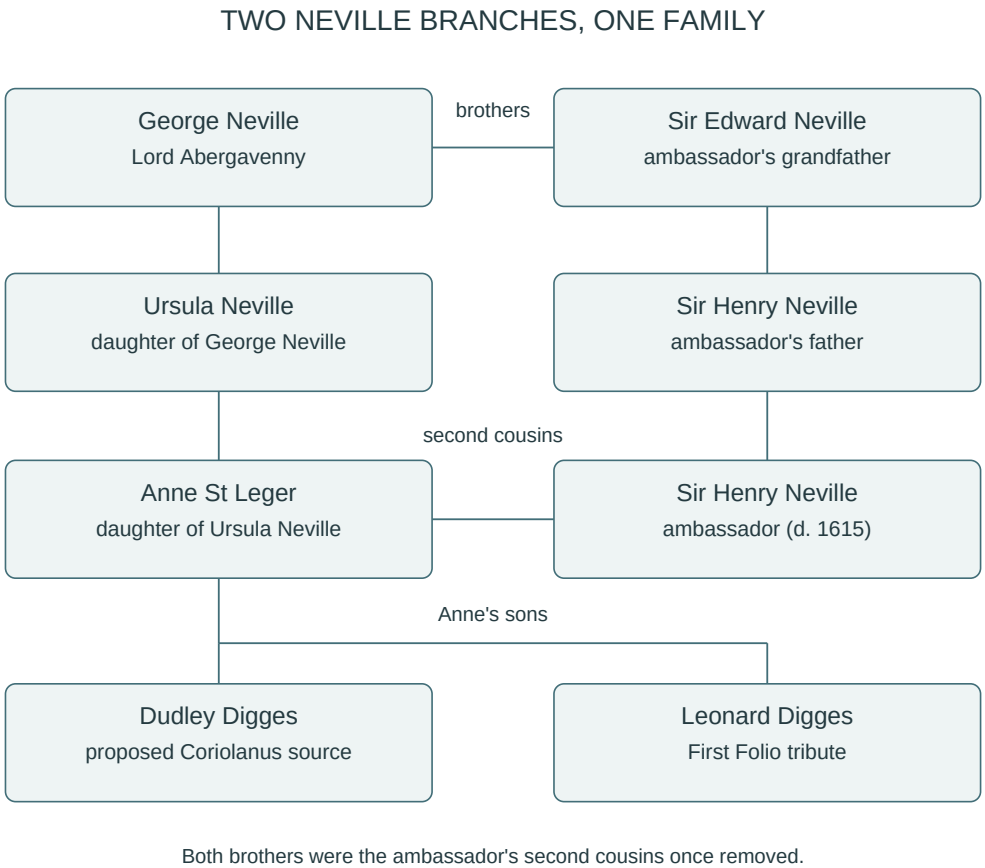



**Figure 49.3:** The Digges brothers' kinship with Neville. Anne St Leger and Neville were second cousins; her sons were his second cousins once removed. Vertical lines show descent; the horizontal links identify brothers and second cousins.

The connections extend from the Folio's patrons to its poets and into Shakespeare's own household arrangements. Pembroke dealt directly with Neville. Dudley Digges defended him in Parliament and wrote a proposed source for *Coriolanus*; Leonard contributed to the Folio and had already dedicated a book published by Blount to the Herbert brothers. Through Neville's daughter, the family route reaches Thomas Russell, Shakespeare's will overseer and the Digges brothers' stepfather. Holland adds the Mitre company, with the identification of its Sir Henry Neville discussed in Chapter 45. These are specific relationships between Neville and people named in the records of Shakespeare's works and their publication.

## Notes and sources

1. John Packer to Sir Thomas Lake, Billingbear ("Pillingbeare"), 25 February 1604/5, The National Archives, SP 14/12, f.210, State Papers Online MC4323583159; Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1603–1610* (1857), p.199, item92, calendar. These particulars are controlled by the calendar and manuscript; the more difficult opening clause is not quoted. Margaret P. Hannay, "Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621)" (2000), The Sidney Homepage, University of Cambridge, supplies the sibling relationships and her sons' identities. For the two sons as dedicatees of the 1623 First Folio, see Folger First Folio 24.
2. Robert Naunton to Ralph Winwood, Holborn, 17 November 1612, in Jackie Watson, *Epistolary Courtiership and Dramatic Letters: Thomas Overbury and the Jacobean Playhouse* (2024), letter31, pp.92–94, at p.93, DOI. Watson prints the letter from HMC, *Buccleuch and Queensberry*, I (1899), p.118. "Intermise" means intervention. This is a distinct document from Neville's undated letter below; for the possibility that both describe the same reconciliation, see note 4.
3. Henry Neville to Ralph Winwood, undated, Buccleuch and Queensberry MSS, Winwood Papers, transcribed by John O'Donnell; spelling modernized and abbreviations expanded; square brackets retain supplied readings. HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry*, I (1899), 131–132, provisionally dates the holograph '[1613, April?]' and tentatively identifies 'my Lord' as Rochester. Emphasis added.
4. HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry*, I (1899), p. xiii, read with pp. 118 and 131–132, public volume. The introduction expressly questions the date inferred from the letter's position in the volume and directs comparison with Naunton's report of 17 November 1612.
5. John Packer to Ralph Winwood, London, 22 April 1613, in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, III (1725), pp.447–448, especially p.448. Spelling modernized; emphasis added. "Him" is Rochester; "his friend" is Overbury. The two visits took place on 21 and 22 April.
6. Jackie Watson, *Epistolary Courtiership and Dramatic Letters: Thomas Overbury and the Jacobean Playhouse* (2024), 134 (code names), 153 (instruction), DOI. Quotation follows Watson's transcription with modernized spelling.
7. Second Virginia Charter, 23 May 1609, in Samuel M. Bemiss, ed., *The Three Charters of the Virginia Company of London* (1957), Second Charter, resident-council clause beginning "And further wee establishe and ordaine".
8. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Charles I, 1629–1631*, 86, 3 November 1629; Hull History Centre, Barnard papers, U DDBA/4/98, draft quitclaim marked "Sealed 25 Jun 1637," catalogue, p.24; John P. Ferris, "THOROWGOOD, John (1588–1657)," *History of Parliament*. Statements follow the calendar, catalogue and biography.
9. H. F. Lippincott, ed., *"Merry Passages and Jeasts": A Manuscript Jestbook of Sir Nicholas Le Strange (1603–1655)* (Salzburg, 1974), 30–31, jest 69, source "Mr Wil: Nevill"; person index, 219, Herbert entry, and 231, Neville entry. Quotation follows the printed edition. Lippincott identifies Sir William Herbert as the third Earl of Pembroke; the story itself supplies no date. For the compiler's marriage and genealogy, see Chapter 55.
10. Maija Jansson, ed., *Proceedings in Parliament 1614 (House of Commons)*, Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 172 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988), p. 246, debate of 14 May 1614. The printed page records Sir Dudley Digges's speech immediately after Mr Hoskins's defence of the king's use of his subjects' counsel and before Sir Robert Mansell's proposal to clear Neville of being an undertaker. Digges cites his father's unsolicited proposals to Elizabeth I as a precedent. The quotation follows the printed parliamentary report; "uncalled" means without being summoned.
11. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1611–1618*, 325, item 9, 6 November 1615; underlying examination, The National Archives, SP 14/83, f.12. The calendar explicitly prints Sir Thos. Mansell. The conversation preceded Neville's death; 6 November is the examination date.

For Dudley's contribution, see Thomas and Dudley Digges, *Foure Paradoxes* (1604), fourth paradox, p. 104, TCP A20463; Andrew Hadfield, "Shakespeare and the Digges Brothers," *Reformation* 25.1 (2020), 2–17, especially 13–17, DOI. The source relationship is a scholarly proposal; Dudley's discussion of Coriolanus is explicit.

12. Leonard Digges's note, Balliol College, 30 a 152, Shakespeare Documented; *Gerardo the Unfortunate Spaniard* (1622), title and dedication, facsimile; First Folio, poem signed L. Digges. The flyleaf note has no written date; c.1613 is the assigned date. The dedication to *Gerardo* calls Digges a stranger; this is a printed self-description, not proof that he had never met the dedicatees.

13. Zachary Lesser, "Mixed Government and Mixed Marriage in *A King and No King*: Sir Henry Neville Reads Beaumont and Fletcher," *ELH* 69.4 (2002), pp. 947–77, at p. 972 n. 13, article. Colin Burrow, "Holland, Hugh (1563–1633)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), on the reciprocal commendations in *Pancharis* and *Sejanus*, the Coryate verses, the Mitre company and the First Folio contribution. For the signed Folio poem and the manuscript company, see the facsimiles and sources in Chapter 45.

14. Somerset Heritage Centre, DD/WR/2, copy of the postnuptial settlement of Sir Henry Berkeley the younger and Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Henry Neville, 1609, catalogue; *Visitation of England and Wales*, XXX, pp.155–156, Berkeley pedigree. The pedigree dates the settlement 12 February 1608/9. For Maurice's marriage and the Killigrew connection, see also "BERKELEY, Sir Maurice (c.1577–1617)," *History of Parliament*, biography.

15. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/1/19, estate abstract headed "A feoffment dated 30. Aprilis 1615," Bury Farm entry; catalogue of the containing file, D/EN/F6/1. The recorded indenture is dated "20. May . 7 Jac:" (20 May 1609). Quotations from the manuscript, spelling modernized; emphasis added. Maurice occurs in the Bury Farm group, distinct from the abstract's first list of feoffees.

16. Maurice Berkeley to Robert Phelips, 12 November 1612, Somerset Heritage Centre, DD/PH/219/59; quoted in Clayton Roberts and Owen Duncan, "The Parliamentary Undertaking of 1614," *English Historical Review* 93 (1978), p.488 and n.2, article. Bracketed expansions follow the published transcription.

17. W. P. W. Phillimore, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Worcester Made in the Year 1569* (1888), p.119, Russell pedigree; *Visitation of England and Wales*, XXX, pp.155–156. The published Worcester pedigree includes later continuations. William Shakespeare's will, 25 March 1616, names Thomas Russell, esquire, and Francis Collins as overseers: The National Archives, PROB 1/4, Shakespeare Documented. This Thomas Russell of Rushock/Alderminster was the half-uncle of Sir Thomas Russell of Strensham (1577–1632), whose father John belonged to the elder Sir Thomas's other marriage. See also S. M. Thorpe, "RUSSELL, Thomas (1577–1632)", *History of Parliament* (1981). Their closeness in age does not make them the same person.

18. Phillimore, *Visitation of Worcester*, p.119, records Thomas Russell's marriage to Anne, widow of Thomas Digges and daughter of Sir Warham St Leger. See also "Digges, Leonard (1588–1635)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, DOI, and Andrew Hadfield, "Shakespeare and the Digges Brothers" (2020), DOI.

19. "St. Leger, Sir Warham," *Dictionary of National Biography*, L (1897), p.168, text; *The Complete Peerage*, I, p.35, Abergavenny pedigree. The cousin degrees are calculated from these pedigrees.

# Part VI

## After Neville’s Death

# After Neville's Death

Chapter 50

After Henry Neville's death, his wife Anne and Henry Savile declined the executorship named in his will. The probate court authorized the eldest son to administer the estate on 24 July 1615.[1]

## The forest office after Neville

On 13 July 1615, Chamberlain reported that Sir Ralph Winwood had secured for Neville's son the keeping of Windsor, Sonning's stewardship and his other places in or about the forest. The report captures an effort to preserve the offices for the next generation, but the succession was contested. As Andrew Thrush explains, Sonning's stewardship was granted to Lord Knollys a week later, and Mote Park went to another man in August. The son retained some forest responsibilities, but did not inherit the whole group.[2]

## The later Virginia account

The Virginia Company's printed declaration of 1620 carries an accounting entry: "Sir Henry Neuill, of Barkshire," with £37 10s. against the name.[3] This preserves a Berkshire Neville interest, five years after the ambassador's death. It may record his earlier contribution or a continuing family account.

## Anne after Neville's death

The will, dated 30 April 1615, directed that the following should be "equally divided between my wife and eldest son":

> all my goods, chattels, plate, silver vessel, stock of cattle and household stuff whatsoever

Funeral expenses and specified legacies were excepted. Anne could also remain at Billingbear for three months.[1]

Anne's life also remained connected with publishing. She married George Carleton, whose poems had been addressed to Neville and whose work on astrology figured in John Chamber's plans for posthumous publication. In 1622 Thomas Vicars named her among the three patrons of his translation of Keckermann's *A Manuduction to Theology*, describing her as the wife of the Bishop of Chichester.[4] The printed dedication shows her continuing place among the patrons of books after Neville's death.

## Thomas Vicars and the poet who "shakes a spear"

Thomas Vicars supplies a direct Shakespeare reference from the circle around Neville's widow. Vicars married Anne Carleton, daughter of Bishop George Carleton; Anne Killigrew Neville, the bishop's second wife, was therefore his wife's stepmother. The Cuckfield family monument identifies Vicars's wife as the bishop's daughter.[5]

In 1628 Vicars published the third edition of his Latin rhetoric textbook, *Manuductio ad artem rhetoricam*, first issued in 1621. A discussion of English poets on page 70 repeats a list associated with Charles Butler: Chaucer, Spenser, Drayton and Wither. Vicars then adds a sentence absent from the 1624 edition. Fred Schurink first brought this previously unnoticed Shakespeare reference to scholarly attention in 2006, in "An Unnoticed Early Reference to Shakespeare."[6]

> Istis annumerandos censeo, celebrem illum poetam qui a quassatione & hasta nomen habet, Ioan. Davisium, & cognominem meum, poetam pium & doctum Ioan. Vicarsium.

In English:

> To these I think we should add that famous poet whose name comes from shaking and a spear, John Davies, and my namesake, the devout and learned poet John Vicars.[7]

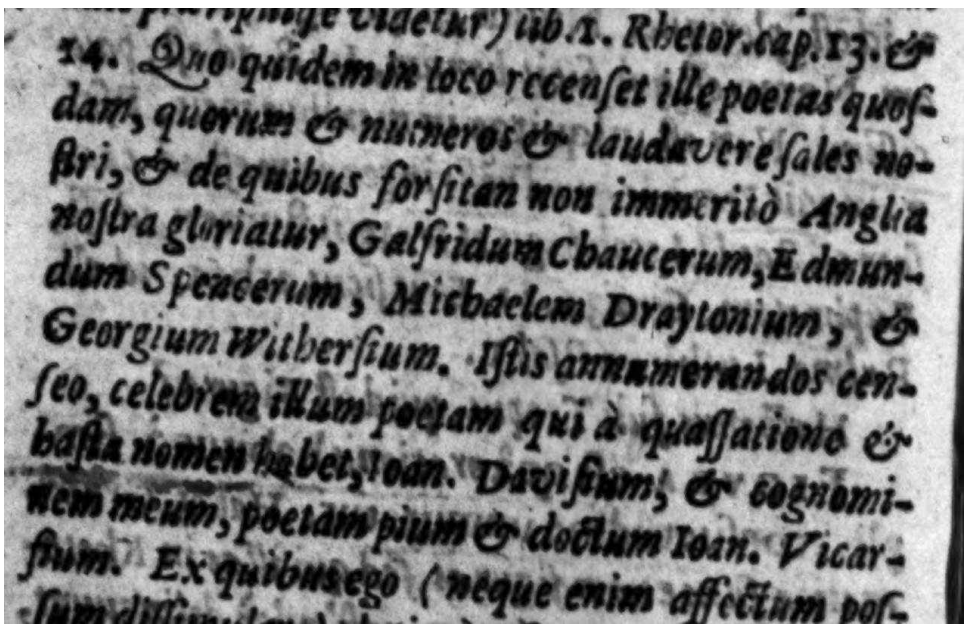

14. Quo quidem in loco recenſet ille poetas quoſ-
dam, quorum & numeros & laudavere ſales no-
ſtri, & de quibus forſitan non immeritò Anglia
noſtra gloriatur, Galfridum Chaucerum, Edmun-
dum Spenceerum, Michaelem Draytonium, &
Georgium Witherſium. Iſtis annumerandos cen-
ſeo, celebrem illum poetam qui à quaſſatione &
haſta nomen habet, Ioan. Daviſium, & cognomi-
nem meum, poetam pium & doctum Ioan. Vicar-
ſium. Ex quibus ego (neque enim affectum poſ-

**Figure 50.1:** Thomas Vicars, Manuductio ad artem rhetoricam, third edition (1628), p. 70, detail. The passage names Shakespeare through "quassatione & hasta" — shaking and a spear — before naming Davies and John Vicars.

The contrast is explicit: Davies and John Vicars receive names, while Shakespeare receives a description of his name. Schurink identifies Davies as most probably John Davies of Hereford, rather than Sir John Davies; the Latin surname alone does not settle the distinction. Vicars also singles Shakespeare out as "famous." Schurink reads the phrase as a pun that readers were expected to recognize; he considers both the recent First Folio and the continuing popularity of the narrative poems as possible contexts. The passage gives no play title and does not specify which works Vicars had in mind. Dana F. Sutton subsequently published the surrounding Latin discussion and an English translation in *The Philological Museum*.[6]

For this book, the conjunction matters: a writer connected by marriage and patronage with Neville's surviving household praised Shakespeare through a Latin pun on his name. That makes the passage relevant to the family's literary afterlife.

Vicars's earlier publication of Carleton's *Astrologomania*, its Jaggard imprint of 1624 and its comparisons with *Lear* and *Macbeth* are examined in "Carleton, Vicars and the Jaggard Press" (Chapter 51).

## Books passing through the circle

Library donations show another way in which books moved through this circle and acquired recorded custodians. In 1620 Sir Henry Savile presented the Bodleian with a fourteenth-century Italian manuscript of Sallust's histories of Catiline and Jugurtha. The catalogue describes drawings, chiefly of soldiers, in several margins. Four years later William Simonson, named "Symondson" in the donation inscription and identified there as a fellow of Merton, gave the library a French manuscript of the memoirs of Nicolas de Neufville, seigneur de Villeroy. Villeroy was a French minister with whom Neville negotiated: in June 1599 Neville met him at Conflans to discuss relations between the two crowns. The manuscript's two parts cover 1574–89 and 1589–94; the catalogue dates the copy to the first quarter of the seventeenth century and records a "de Neufville" subscription to each part, using Villeroy's family name.[8]

Savile died in 1622, before the First Folio appeared. Simonson, the Merton scholar associated with the younger Neville's education and continental travels, made his gift a year after the Folio.[9] The ambassador's registered will lists "William Simonson" among its witnesses, alongside Savile and Edward Neville.[1] These gifts placed historical writing in an institution that recorded it and could preserve it.

## Packer's later book work

John Packer had performed the day-to-day work of correspondence. A contemporary life records his service as Neville's secretary; his surviving letters carried office business and court news to Winwood. His December 1604 report included

preparations for the queen's masque.[10] Such work helps explain how information and papers moved through the household.

Packer's later career also brought him into the preparation of books. On 7 December 1619 Patrick Young wrote to him about a work by James I, identified by the editor as the king's *Meditation on the Lord's Prayer*. Young had delivered the book to Bishop Andrewes for review and passed it, sealed and with Andrewes's letter, to Secretary Calvert for dispatch. Acting on Packer's requests, he had also searched for classical passages. One reference in Suetonius still eluded him, but he had found useful material in Julius Capitolinus and Aelius Spartianus. If Packer thought the research fit to show the king, he could present it and ask what the book's title should be. Further letters could reach Young at the printer John Bill's shop in Paul's Churchyard.[11]

By 1619, four years after Neville's death, his former secretary was helping coordinate scholarly research, editorial review and publication.

## Notes and sources

1. Henry Neville, registered will and probate act, 24 July 1615, The National Archives, PROB 11/126/63. The register names Anne and Savile as executors; the act records their renunciation and administration to the son. Quotations modernize spelling. The original-will bundle cited for further collation is TNA PROB 10/323; the registered copy remains a separate witness.
2. John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, 13 July 1615, in Norman Egbert McClure, ed., *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, I (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1939), pp.607–608, public volume record. McClure identifies the secretary as Sir Ralph Winwood and the son as Neville's eldest, Sir Henry. Chamberlain's keeping of Windsor is not silently expanded into a precise patent title. This is a contemporary report of procurement, not inspection of the underlying grants. For the subsequent contest and grants to others, see Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry III (1588–1629)", *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629* (2010), biography and notes 18–20. Thrush dates the Sonning grant to 20 July 1615 and the Mote grant to August.
3. *A Declaration of the State of the Colonie and Affaires in Virginia* (1620), reproduced in Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, III (Washington, 1933), p. 330. The same accounting list records Christopher Brooke, £50 (p. 318); Dudley Digges, £37 10s. (p. 322); Montgomery, £40 (p. 329); Pembroke, £400 (p. 331); Southampton, £350, and Edwin Sandys, £212 10s. (p. 333); and William Strachey, £25 (p. 334). These are entries in a 1620 list, not dates of individual payments or proof that the listed people acted together. Smith's 1624 repetition belongs to the same list tradition and should not be counted as a second independent subscription record. A separate bill of complaint dated 28 April 1613 describes Sir Henry Nevile as of an unnamed place in Kent and alleges a £75 promise in November 1610: Kingsbury, III, p. 43. It is not assigned here to the ambassador. The following answer, p. 44, is Sir George Huntley's, not Neville's. Thrush's biography of Sir Henry Neville III lists Virginia membership by 1620, but note 9 cites this same Kingsbury p. 330 entry; it is a scholarly identification, not a second independent account.
4. Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 30 October 1619, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1619–1623*, p.88; John Chamber's will, The National Archives, PROB 11/104/339; Keckermann, *A Manuduction to Theology*, translated by Thomas Vicars (1622), sig. A2r, printed dedication. Its other patrons are Anne Fetiplace and Mabel Blenerhasset. For Carleton's poems, see *Heroici*

*characteres. Ad illustrissimum equitem Henricum Nevillum* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1603), title and opening poem, sigs. A2r–A3r.

5. J. H. Cooper, "The Vicars and Parish of Cuckfield in the Seventeenth Century," *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 45 (1902), p. 17, transcribing the Guy Carleton monument, which calls Vicars's wife Anne the daughter of Bishop Carleton. For Neville's widow as dedicatee, see the 1622 dedication cited above. Anne Carleton and Anne Killigrew Neville Carleton are distinct women.
6. Fred Schurink, "An Unnoticed Early Reference to Shakespeare", *Notes and Queries* 53.1 (March 2006), 72–75. Schurink identifies the addition in 1628, discusses the name-pun and possible reception contexts, and distinguishes John Davies of Hereford from Sir John Davies. Dana F. Sutton, ed., *The Philological Museum*, introduction, Latin text, and translation, supplies the surrounding discussion, pp. 70–72, and credits Schurink's discovery.
7. Thomas Vicars, *Manuductio ad artem rhetoricam*, third edition (London, 1628), p. 70, facsimile. Latin checked against the printed page; long s, u/v and accents normalized. English translation supplied here. The figure is a detail of the page, not an image of Schurink's article.
8. Falconer Madan and H. H. E. Craster, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, II, part I (Oxford, 1922), nos.2193 and2198, pp.253,255: public edition. Sallust is MS. Auct. F.5.8; Villeroy is MS. Bodl.235, iii +209 leaves. The catalogue's report of the subscriptions does not establish that they are Villeroy's autographs. For Neville's negotiations with him, Neville to Cecil, 29 June 1599 O.S., Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp.53–54, describing the meeting at Conflans.
9. F. Madan and H. H. E. Craster, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, II.1 (1922), pp. 253, 255, entries 2193 and 2198: MS. Auct. F. 5. 8 and MS. Bodl. 235. For the identification: Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500–1714*, IV (1892), p. 1357; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1603–1610*, p. 371, licence of 24 September 1607; Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F6/2/4, Simondes to Neville, Paris, 24 November [1608]. The letter's year is supplied from its reported events. The registered will is a scribal copy, not his autograph signature.
10. Packer to Winwood, 12 December 1604, Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, II (1725), pp. 39–40. For secretaryship: Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of the Marquess of Abergavenny, Lord Braye, G. F. Luttrell, Esq., &c.* (1892), p. 174, summary of "Life and character of Mr. John Packer," dated 9 February 1648/9.
11. Patrick Young to John Packer, 7 December 1619, in Samuel Rawson Gardiner, ed., *The Fortescue Papers*, Camden Society, new series I (1871), pp.108–109, no.LXVIII: public volume. The editor identifies the book and Bishop Andrewes in the notes. Young first took the king's letter and book to Andrewes; Andrewes returned the book sealed with his own letter to the king enclosed. The request about showing the research paper to the king is conditional on Packer's judgment. The episode concerns James I's book and supplies no evidence of a Shakespeare manuscript passing through Packer's hands.

# Carleton, Vicars and the Jaggard Press

Chapter 51

In 1624, the year after Shakespeare's First Folio appeared, George Carleton's *Astrologomania: The Madnesse of Astrologers* finally reached print after remaining unpublished for nearly twenty years—and bore the imprint of the same Jaggard printing house that produced the Folio. Its title page reads:

> London, Printed by **W. Iaggard**, for W. Turner of Oxford. **1624**.

The same title page announces the long interval:

> **Written neere vpon twenty yeares ago**, by G. C. And by permission of the Author set forth [...]

Between those two statements lies a publication story that reaches back into Henry Neville's lifetime. In 1604 John Chamber had instructed in his will that an astrology book by Carleton should be printed with his own work on the subject. The executors he named were Neville and Henry Savile. By the time *Astrologomania* appeared, both men were dead, Carleton had married Neville's widow, and Thomas Vicars, Carleton's son-in-law, was bringing the treatise before readers.[1, 2, 3]

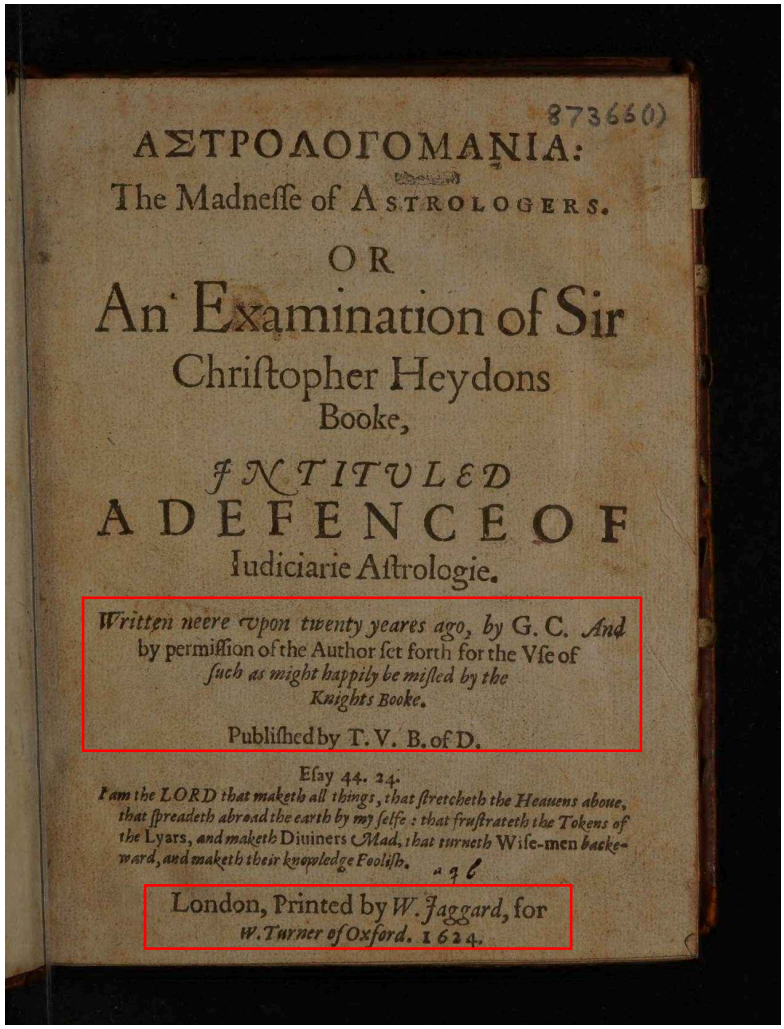


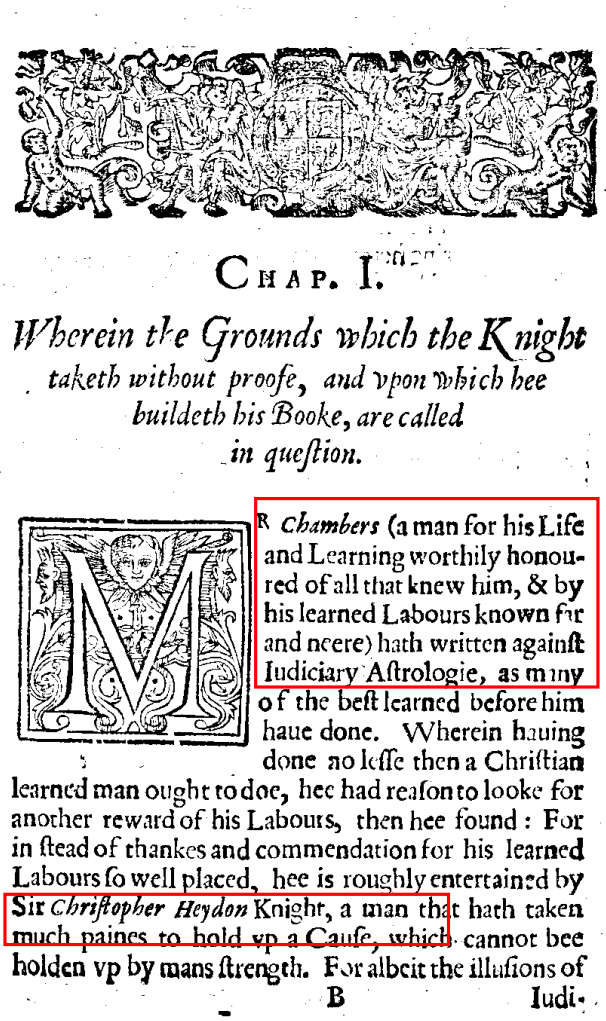

**Figure 51.1:** The title page of Astrologomania (1624). The red boxes identify the retrospective composition statement, "Published by T. V.," and the Jaggard–Turner imprint. Wellcome copy, Internet Archive b30320434.

The Jaggard name supplies a concrete connection with the production of Shakespeare's collected plays. William and Isaac Jaggard's printing house produced the First Folio; William died before its completion, and Isaac continued the business. The 1624 treatise still bears William's name. Here, a work connected with Neville's earlier publishing responsibilities reached the same printing house as the Folio.[4]

## A manuscript brought into the light

Carleton's book answers Sir Christopher Heydon's *Defence of Judicial Astrology*. Heydon had defended the practice against Chamber's attack of 1601. Carleton

continued Chamber's side of the argument, distinguishing what could be inferred from natural causes from claims to foretell human choices and fortunes. This was a learned controversy in which Neville's associates were active participants. The first page names Chamber and praises him as "a man for his Life and Learning worthily honoured of all that knew him." Carleton complains that Heydon has treated him roughly. The book begins as a defence of the scholar whose will had placed Carleton's work in Neville and Savile's care.[5]



CHAP. I.

*Wherein the Grounds which the Knight taketh without proofe, and vpon which hee buildeth his Booke, are called in queſtion.*

MR *Chambers* (a man for his Life and Learning worthily honoured of all that knew him, & by his learned Labours known far and neere) hath written againſt Iudiciary Aſtrologie, as many of the beſt learned before him haue done. Wherein hauing done no leſſe then a Chriſtian learned man ought to doe, hee had reaſon to looke for another reward of his Labours, then hee found: For in ſtead of thankes and commendation for his learned Labours ſo well placed, hee is roughly entertained by Sir *Chriſtopher Heydon* Knight, a man that hath taken much paines to hold vp a Cauſe, which cannot bee holden vp by mans ſtrength. For albeit the illuſions of

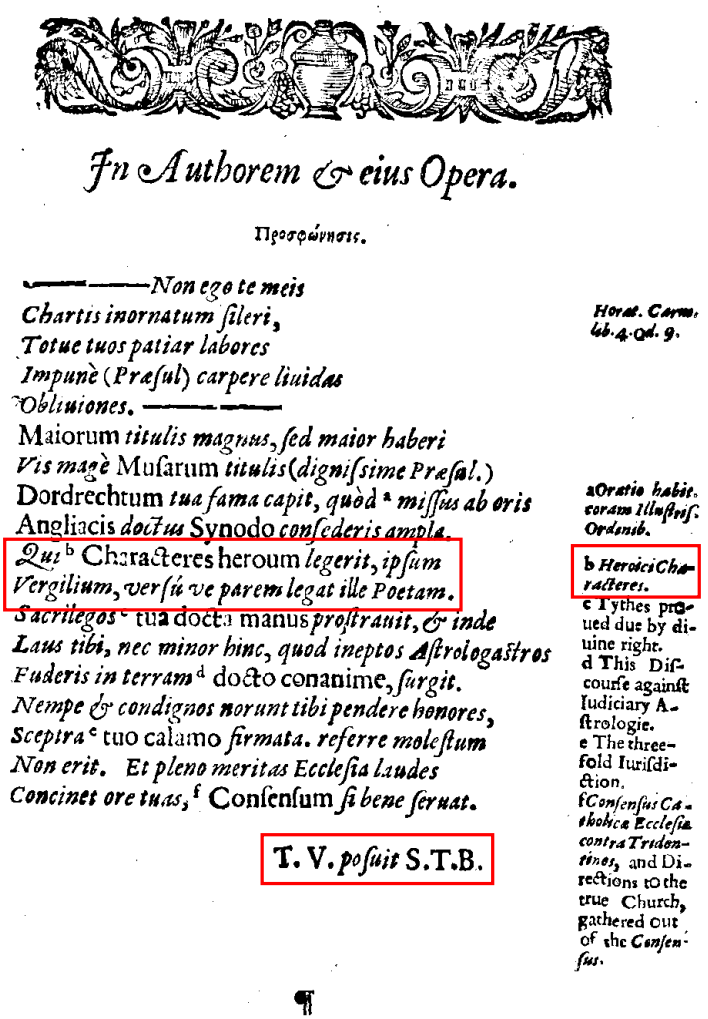
B Iudi-

**Figure 51.2:** The first page of Astrologomania names and praises Chamber before identifying Heydon as his opponent. The red boxes mark both names and the praise of Chamber.

Thomas Vicars wrote the dedication for the volume.[6] By then the relationships had become familial as well as scholarly. Vicars's wife, Anne, was Carleton's daughter; Neville's widow was her stepmother. Vicars had already included

Neville's widow among the patrons of his 1622 translation of Keckermann's *A Manuduction to Theology*. The preceding chapter examines his later, 1628 praise of the famous poet whose name came from shaking and a spear. Here we see him performing another literary task: securing an older work's passage into print.

Vicars also supplied a Latin poem praising Carleton and his writings. Its margin names *Heroici characteres*, the 1603 volume addressed to Neville and discussed in "Neville Among the Muses." The poem praises its author in comparison with Virgil. The old book addressed to Neville is thus recalled within the new one bearing the Jaggard imprint.[7]



*In Authorem & eius Opera.*

Προσφώνησις.

——Non ego te meis
Chartis inornatum ſileri,
Totue tuos patiar labores
Impunè (Præſul) carpere liuidas
Obliuiones. ——

Horat. Carm. lib. 4. Od. 9.

Maiorum *titulis magnus, ſed maior haberi*
*Vis magè* Muſarum *titulis* (*digniſsime Præſul.*)
Dordrechtum *tua fama capit, quòd* [a] *miſſus ab oris*
Angliacis *doctus* Synodo *conſederis ampla.*
*Qui* [b] Characteres heroum *legerit, ipſum*
*Vergilium, verſú ve parem legat ille Poetam.*
*Sacrilegos* [c] tua docta manus *proſtrauit, & inde*
*Laus tibi, nec minor hinc, quod ineptos Aſtrologaſtros*
*Fuderis in terram* [d] docto conanime, *ſurgit.*
*Nempe & condignos norunt tibi pendere honores,*
*Sceptra* [e] tuo calamo *firmata. referre moleſtum*
*Non erit. Et pleno meritas Eccleſia laudes*
*Concinet ore tuas,* [f] Conſenſum *ſi bene ſeruat.*

T. V. *poſuit* S.T.B.

¶

a *Oratio habit. coram Illuſtriſ. Ordinib.*

b *Heroici Characteres.*

c Tythes proued due by diuine right.

d This Diſcourſe againſt Iudiciary Aſtrologie.

e The three-fold Iuriſdiction.

f *Conſenſus Catholicæ Eccleſiæ contra Tridentines*, and Directions to the true Church, gathered out of the *Conſenſus*.

**Figure 51.3:** Vicars's prefatory poem, "In Authorem & eius Opera." Red boxes mark the reference to Characteres heroum, the marginal title Heroici Characteres, and Vicars's initials.

## The stars and Edmund's birth

The earlier anonymous *King Leir* has no bastard character and no Gloucester family subplot. Shakespeare added that family to the Leir story, drawing on Sidney's *Arcadia*, where a bastard son already turns his father against his legitimate brother.[8] Shakespeare makes that family conflict a vehicle for the argument about the stars: Edmund mocks people who blame heaven for misconduct that is their own. Chamber's arguments have already provided a close comparison. Carleton states the principle with particular directness:

> For ouer a mans **freedome**, the Positions of heauen haue **no power**. And it is a most foolish thing, for a man to seeke that **without him**, whose cause is altogether **within himselfe**.[9]

Edmund turns that dispute into a joke about the circumstances of his own birth. Gloucester has just blamed eclipses for broken family bonds, accepting as genuine the letter Edmund has forged against Edgar. Left alone, the son who manufactured the deception attacks the attempt to transfer responsibility to heaven:

> EDMUND [...] An admirable
> evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his **goatish**
> **disposition on the charge of a star**! My father
> compounded with my mother under the Dragon's
> tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major, so that it
> follows I am rough and lecherous. Fut, **I should**
> **have been that I am**, had the maidenliest star in the
> firmament twinkled on my **bastardizing**. [...]
> —*King Lear* 1.2[10]

Carleton's final chapter brings illicit sex and the resulting child into the argument about divine government:

> When **Adulterie is committed and Bastards begotten**, it is against the reuealed will of God: But hee that shall affirme that God hath no will, nor power, nor part in **gene[r]ation**, shall take away part of his power, and giue it to some other thing, and so make moe Gods.[11]

This is a more particular correspondence than a general disagreement about horoscopes. Sexual conduct, the birth of a child, divine and celestial causation, and personal responsibility occupy the same discussion. Carleton distinguishes what God commands from what occurs under divine government: adultery violates the command, but the child's generation cannot be placed outside God's power. Edmund rejects a celestial explanation for his own disposition. The questions overlap even though the answers differ.

Shakespeare gives the later judgment to Edgar. After defeating Edmund, he tells him:

EDGAR [...]
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us.
The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes.
—*King Lear* 5.3

Edgar makes Gloucester's suffering a consequence of the sexual act that produced Edmund. That is a harsher and more specific judgment than Carleton's argument about generation. Read together, the two scenes show Shakespeare returning to the same family history through opposed explanations: Edmund's ridicule of heavenly excuses and Edgar's insistence on retribution. Carleton's treatise helps us see how closely questions of birth, guilt and divine justice belonged together in the controversy surrounding Chamber.

## A truth that wins belief

In *Macbeth*, the danger lies in believing a prediction because part of it has come true. The witches have hailed Macbeth as Thane of Cawdor before he knows that the king has awarded him that title. When the news arrives, their promise of kingship becomes more tempting. Macbeth asks why the supernatural message, if evil, should begin with a truth:

MACBETH, [aside] [...]
[...] If ill,
Why hath it given me **earnest of success**
Commencing in a **truth**? [...]
—*Macbeth* 1.3[12]

Carleton quotes Heydon's confidence in astrology in similar terms:

there is no one thing that hath made me so **confident in the validity of this Art**, as that which I haue seene to **fall out true**.[13]

A fulfilled prediction is being made to warrant confidence in the whole source of prediction. Banquo has already named the trap, moments earlier in the same scene:

BANQUO [...]
And oftentimes, to **win us to our harm**,
The **instruments of darkness tell us truths**,
Win us with honest trifles, to **betray 's**
In deepest consequence.—
—*Macbeth* 1.3

Carleton exposes the same danger by taking Heydon's argument into the realm of witchcraft. If fulfilled predictions justify confidence in an art, then Heydon should be "very confident in Witchcraft": the prediction made to Saul by witchcraft also came true. Carleton argues that the truth itself could serve the deception:

> God in his iust iudgement against the wicked King Saul, did suffer **Sathan thus to deceiue and illude Saul**, euen by **foretelling him a true Euent** [...].[14]

The truth of the prediction and the trustworthiness of its source are different questions. Macbeth treats the first success as an invitation to believe more. Banquo warns that the success may be the means by which belief is obtained.

Vicars makes the same point in his dedication:

> [...] the wizard is **neuer a whit the more to be beleeued** [...] The **Diuell telleth truth sometimes**, and yet he is still the **Father of Lyes**; and his **Instrument** (at haphazard) may light vpon a **Truth**, and yet remain a **Lyer** still.[15]

Vicars's combination of the devil's "Instrument" with a deceptive "Truth" brings the comparison especially close to Banquo's warning. His insistence that the wizard is no more to be believed also parallels the conclusion Macbeth reaches too late in the action of the play.

Carleton also describes what happens once the enquirer becomes dependent on such assurances. Spirits appear to serve the person consulting them while making that person their captive:

> all vncleane Spirits are desirous to illude the soule of man, and **make shew of obedience**, to **catch the soule of man in these snares**; requiring a **strong Credulity**, and **excessiue desire** of the Soule [...].[16]

Macbeth's growing reliance on the witches follows that destructive course. He demands further answers and builds his confidence on assurances whose wording he has misunderstood. When Macduff reveals the circumstances of his birth, Macbeth finally recognizes the separation between the words he heard and the hope he placed in them:

> MACBETH [...]
> And be these juggling fiends **no more believed**
> That palter with us in a double sense,
> That **keep the word of promise to our ear**
> And **break it to our hope**. [...]
> —*Macbeth* 5.8

## An old project in a surviving household

Chamber's will had placed a Carleton treatise on astrology in the care of Neville and Savile. Nearly twenty years later, after both executors were dead, a treatise by the same author on the same controversy appeared with his consent, opening with a defence of Chamber. Thomas Vicars brought it into print; Carleton, his father-in-law, had married Neville's widow. The imprint places it in the Jaggard printing house in 1624, the year after the First Folio.

The arguments give that history substance: Carleton's treatment of responsibility and generation belongs beside the dispute within Gloucester's family, and his account of truthful deception illuminates Macbeth's disastrous trust.

## Notes and sources

1. George Carleton, *Astrologomania: The Madnesse of Astrologers* (London: W. Jaggard for W. Turner of Oxford, 1624), STC 4630, ESTC S107657, TCP A17971, title page, Wellcome copy; Folger catalogue. Quotations retain printed spelling, with long s rendered s and words divided at line endings joined. Red rectangles in the illustrations are editorial annotations. G.C. is George Carleton; T.V. is Thomas Vicars, Bachelor of Divinity. The date of composition is the title page's approximate retrospective statement.
2. John Chamber, will, July 1604, The National Archives, PROB 11/104/339. It names Neville and Savile as executors, directs publication of unprinted works, and identifies Carleton of Mayfield's *Arraignement of Astrologie*. See "Back in Public Life." The uncertain expense phrase in the Carleton clause is not quoted. Agreement in author, subject and approximate date supports continuity with the 1624 work, not identity of every passage or a claim that Neville personally edited the surviving text.
3. For Anne Neville's marriage and Vicars's patronage address, Bartholomaeus Keckermann, *A Manuduction to Theology*, translated by Thomas Vicars (1622), sig. A2r, printed dedication. For Vicars's wife as Bishop Carleton's daughter, J. H. Cooper, "The Vicars and Parish of Cuckfield in the Seventeenth Century," *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 45 (1902), p. 17, monument transcription. The two women named Anne are distinguished in "After Neville's Death," which also gives the 1628 Shakespeare passage and Fred Schurink's identification of it.
4. Folger Shakespeare Library, "The Shakespeare First Folio," "Who produced the First Folio?"; Carleton's 1624 title page, cited above. The imprint reads W. Jaggard; it does not settle the division of work between William and Isaac. Eton catalogue, B42024, suggests that Isaac may have finished the printing and reports Stationers' Register entry on 18 July 1623. The original register has not been collated here. The printing-house connection does not establish transmission of Shakespeare manuscripts from Neville's estate.
5. Carleton, *Astrologomania*, chapter I, p. 1. "Chambers" is the printed form of John Chamber's name. The book repeatedly defends him against Heydon.
6. Thomas Vicars, dedicatory epistle in Carleton, *Astrologomania*, opening and printed subscription.
7. Thomas Vicars, "In Authorem & eius Opera," in Carleton, *Astrologomania*, unnumbered prefatory leaf, with marginal identification "Heroici Characteres"; George Carleton, *Heroici characteres. Ad illustrissimum equitem Henricum Nevillum* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1603), public scan. The comparison with Virgil praises Carleton, not Neville. See "Neville Among the Muses" for that volume's Neville address.
8. Anonymous, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* (1605), edited by Andrew Griffin, Queen's Men Editions, full text; Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, book II, Paphlagonian episode, source extract. See also Jeffrey R. Wilson, "Edmund's Bastardy". Edmund is an addition to the earlier Leir play; the bastard-son plot has a precedent in Sidney.
9. Carleton, *Astrologomania*, chapter VIII, p. 75, following the distinction between natural causes and free human action on pp. 73–74.
10. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 1.2 and 5.3, Folger Shakespeare Library. Ellipses mark excerpts from longer speeches. For the Chamber comparison and the distinction between Edmund's polemic and the play's larger treatment, see Phebe Jensen, "Causes in Nature: Popular Astrology in King Lear," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 69.4 (2018), 205–227, especially pp. 214–216, publisher's article, discussed in the *Lear* chapter. The Carleton comparison developed here is distinct from Jensen's Chamber finding.
11. Carleton, *Astrologomania*, chapter X, pp. 111–113, quotation p. 112. "Gene[r]ation" corrects the printed "gene-gation," divided across two lines. He answers Heydon on how forbidden acts can occur under providence; p. 113 expressly retains punishment and God's freedom from sin. This is not a passage specifically about Gloucester's punishment.
12. Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, 1.3, 4.1 and 5.8, Folger Shakespeare Library.

13. Carleton, *Astrologomania*, chapter III, p. 20, quoting Heydon, *A Defence of Iudiciall Astrologie* (1603), p. 195. The quotation here is controlled against Carleton's printed report of his opponent's words, not a fresh collation of Heydon's edition.
14. Carleton, *Astrologomania*, chapter III, pp. 20–22, quotation p. 21. The claim about Satan and Saul is Carleton's theological account, not an independent assertion about supernatural events.
15. Thomas Vicars, dedicatory epistle in Carleton, *Astrologomania* (1624), third answer to the argument from successful prediction, unnumbered leaf. "Remain" follows the printed page. This prefatory formulation is not assigned the main treatise's approximate composition date.
16. Carleton, *Astrologomania*, chapter IX, pp. 85–87, quotation p. 86. This passage interprets the claims of Agrippa and distinguishes apparent obedience from the spirits' entrapment of the enquirer. Vicars also develops this argument in his epistle.

# A King and No King: The Son and the Printed Play

Chapter 52

> I present, or rather **return unto your view**, that which formerly has been **received from you**, hereby effecting **what you did desire**.[1]

With these words in 1619, Thomas Walkley dedicated Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* to the ambassador's eldest son, Sir Henry Neville. The father had died four years earlier. The title page advertised a play performed at the Globe by the King's Men; the dedication described a text received from the younger Neville and now returned to him in print.

Walkley also invoked Neville's "approbation and patronage." The younger Neville thus appears as both supplier and patron of the published text. The family's publishing connections are examined in Chapter 50.

## A play read through the father's politics

Zachary Lesser used the dedication to frame his 2002 study, "Mixed Government and Mixed Marriage in *A King and No King*." Following an earlier suggestion by Charles Mills Gayley, he proposed that the father had bought a private manuscript copy of the play and that his son subsequently gave it to Walkley. Walkley's words establish the son's involvement; the earlier ownership is Lesser's reconstruction.[2]

Lesser then asked what the play might have meant to the elder Neville. Its story turns on a king who discovers that he is a subject. Arbaces returns victorious from war, only to become consumed by desire for Panthea, whom he believes to be his sister. The final revelation overturns their places in the succession: Arbaces is the son of Gobrius, the Lord Protector, while Panthea is the rightful sovereign. Their marriage joins a queen to the man who had mistakenly occupied her throne.

Lesser reads this ending through the relationship between king and Parliament that Neville sought to repair. Neville's *Advice Touching the Holding of a Parliament* treats political harmony as something maintained by reciprocal acts. A ruler cannot simply demand affection and money: grievances must be heard and answered.

The play gives that problem a family form. Arbaces must recognize an authority he does not possess, while the settlement joins sovereign and subject in a relationship of mutual dependence. Gobrius supplies the mechanism: he reconciles claims that seemed incompatible, as Neville sought to reconcile the Crown and Commons. Marriage then restores Arbaces to legitimate kingship through

TO
THE RIGHT
*VVORSHIPFVLL,*
AND WORTHIE
*Knight, Sir* HENRIE
NEVILL.

WORTHY SIR,

*I Preſent, or rather returne vnto your view, that which formerly hath beene receiued from you, hereby effecting what you did deſire: To commend the worke in my vnlearned method, were rather to detract from it, then to giue it any luſter. It ſufficeth it hath your Worſhips approbation and patronage, to the commendation of the Authors, and incouragement of their further labours: and thus wholy committing my ſelfe and it to your Worſhips diſpoſe I reſt, euer readie to doe you ſeruice, not onely in the like, but in what I may.*

Thomas VValkley.

**Figure 52.1:** Thomas Walkley's dedication to Sir Henry Neville the younger in A King and No King (1619), sig. A2r. The opening records receipt from Neville and publication at his request. Boston Public Library copy.

Panthea. Lesser's argument depends on that transformation, rather than a simple replacement of a king by a subject. This is Lesser's "mixed government": sovereign and gentry sharing political authority. He also shows the cost of the settlement to Panthea, whose voice and sovereignty give way to her husband's.[2]

This is a substantial connection between the play's political structure and Neville's thinking, developed in scholarship concerned with Beaumont and Fletcher. The publication history gives the reading a personal foundation: the play reached print through Neville's son.

Two stationers place the transaction within the Shakespeare publishing world. Edward Blount entered *A King and No King* in the Stationers' Register on 7 August 1618. Walkley published it the following year; in 1622, he published the first quarto of *Othello*. Blount would be one of the First Folio's publishers in 1623.[3] The register does not record how the play passed from Blount's entry to Walkley's edition, but both men belong to its documented history.

## Notes and sources

1. Beaumont and Fletcher, *A King and No King* (1619), sig. A2r, Boston Public Library copy. Dedication signed Thomas Walkley; spelling modernized and emphasis added. The dedicatee is Sir Henry Neville III (1588–1629), identified by Folger's Early Modern English Drama catalogue; his father died in 1615.
2. Zachary Lesser, "Mixed Government and Mixed Marriage in *A King and No King*: Sir Henry Neville Reads Beaumont and Fletcher," *ELH* 69.4 (2002), 947–977, especially 949 (ownership reconstruction), 952–953 (the Advice), 957–960 (Gobrius and the settlement), and 963–964 (Panthea and the restoration of male rule), DOI. Lesser's father-to-son manuscript history is an inference, following Gayley. In note 13 (p.972), he disputes Shapiro's identification of a cousin as the Neville in the Mitre group; that disputed group membership is not used here as an established link. Lesser extends the dedication's praise to the father through his ownership reconstruction; the present text assigns Walkley's direct address to the son.
3. Stationers' Register Online, SRO6958, 7 August 1618, Register C, f.293r; Arber III, 631. Published transcription. *Othello* (1622), Shakespeare Documented; First Folio (1623), facsimile.

# The Herberts and Neville's Descendants: Office, Wardship and Books

Chapter 53

In 1628 Philip Herbert, then Earl of Montgomery, intervened to help Henry Neville's son obtain a place at court. Andrew Thrush attributes the appointment to Herbert's support. The act begins a sequence of relations between the Folio dedicatees and later Neville generations, followed here through wardship, remarriage and books.[1,2,3]

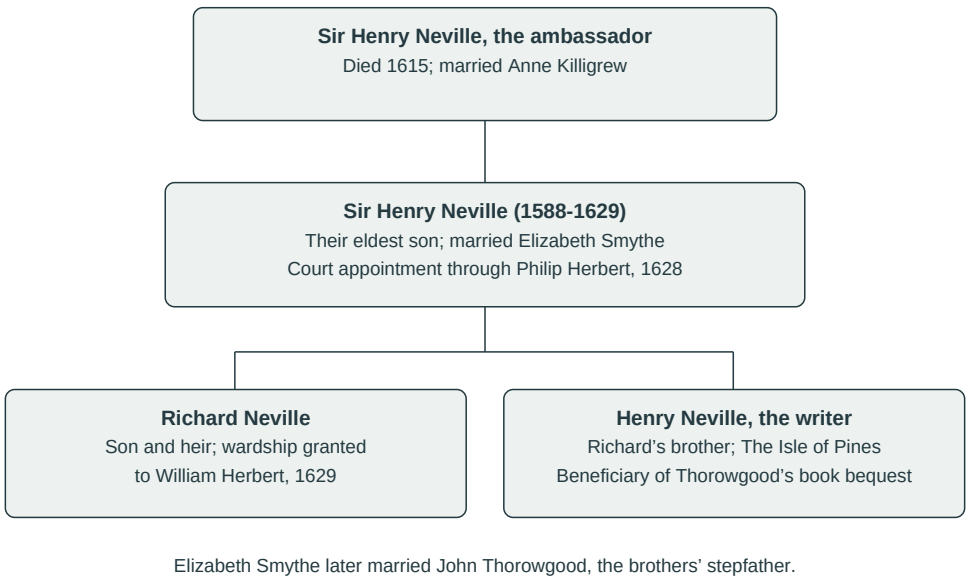



**Figure 53.1:** The family members in this chapter. Solid lines show descent: the ambassador's eldest son is the father of both Richard, the ward, and Henry, the writer. Elizabeth Smythe's later marriage made John Thorowgood their stepfather. This is a selected family guide, not a complete pedigree.

The court appointment concerns the ambassador's son; the wardship concerns Richard, his heir; the books were bequeathed to Richard's younger brother Henry, the writer.[1,2,3,4]

## William Herbert and the family's remembered conversation

Chapter 49 follows William Herbert's dealings with Neville during the ambassador's lifetime. It also examines the dice story in L'Estrange's jestbook, where "Sir William Herbert" appears in a tale attributed to "Mr Wil: Nevill." Lippincott identifies the two men as the third Earl of Pembroke and the ambassador's son William. The family's connection with the Herberts had a conversational afterlife as well as a political one.[5]

The documentary sequence is more specific. In November 1621 a Sir Henry Neville was returned for Wilton on Pembroke's interest. Andrew Thrush identifies the member as probably the ambassador's son, rather than another Sir Henry Neville, partly because the subsequent Herbert relationships fit that identification. The parliamentary return alone does not settle the shared name. What follows in the younger Neville's career is clearer.[1]

## The sons as patrons and readers

The younger Henry's association with printed books extended beyond *A King and No King*. In 1628 Anthony White dedicated *Truth and Error Discovered*, two Oxford sermons, to "Sir Henry Nevill of Pillingbere in Berks," his "much honoured Patron." White submitted the work to Neville's judgment and to those readers to whom he might choose to show it. A play and a theological work thus both publicly addressed the ambassador's son as a patron.[6]

His younger brother Edward was remembered for literary accomplishment. The Latin epitaph at Shellingford, erected by his wife Alice after his death in 1632 and recorded by Elias Ashmole, praises his learning among the fellows of King's College, Cambridge. Ashmole's English rendering calls him "versed in Poetry, and all the Liberal Sciences." The inscription explicitly identifies his father as Elizabeth's ambassador to Henri IV.[7]

## The son and the East India Company

In May 1618 Sir Henry Neville and George Thorpe each received permission to invest £300; in August 1619 the Company ordered £100 paid to Sir Henry for timber. The 1618 investment belongs with the son's career. The 1619 timber order may also concern him, but the entry alone does not establish the payee's identity.[8]

## Philip Herbert's appointment of the younger Neville

In December 1628 Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, appointed the ambassador's eldest son, Sir Henry Neville (1588–1629), a gentleman of the privy chamber in extraordinary. Thrush records the appointment and lists the office as held from 1628 until Neville's death.[9] Philip had succeeded William as Lord

Chamberlain on 3 August 1626, when William became Lord Steward—the title the later wardship grant gives him.[10] This was the son whom Thomas Walkley addressed in the printed *A King and No King* (Chapter 52).

Five years after the First Folio was dedicated to William and Philip, Philip was exercising patronage for Neville's son. The appointment does not explain how the Folio was assembled, but it establishes that the family relationship with one of its dedicatees was still active, expressed through an office rather than inferred from a dedication or an association of names.

It also belongs to a longer effort to maintain the son's position after a difficult inheritance. As Chapter 50 shows, the forest offices did not all pass smoothly from father to son. The younger Neville had some successes and some losses. The court appointment of 1628 should be placed against that history of dependence on influential friends and patrons, not described as an automatic inheritance from the ambassador.[1]

## William Herbert and Richard's wardship

The younger Sir Henry died on 29 June 1629. His heir Richard was still a minor. On 3 November the Crown granted William Herbert the benefit of Richard's wardship. The domestic state-paper calendar records:

> Grant to William Earl of Pembroke, Lord Steward, of the benefit of the wardship of Rich. Neville, son and heir of Sir Henry Neville, deceased.[2]

Nov. 3. Westminster. Grant to William Earl of Pembroke, Lord Steward, of the benefit of the wardship of Rich. Neville, son and heir of Sir Henry Neville, deceased. [*Sign Man.*, *Car.* I., *Vol.* xi., *No.* 31.]

**Figure 53.2:** The calendar entry for 3 November 1629, identifying William, Earl of Pembroke, as recipient of the benefit of Richard Neville's wardship. Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Charles I, 1629–1631, p. 86, detail.

The wording fixes the identities. William, not Philip, received this grant. Richard, not the younger literary Henry Neville, was the ward. The deceased Sir Henry was the ambassador's son. The entry concerns an interest in wardship, an arrangement with legal and financial consequences; it should not be casually paraphrased as Richard moving into Pembroke's home.

This dated record supplies an important continuation of the earlier relationship. Pembroke's connection to Neville's family was no longer simply a matter of supporting an adult associate. It extended to the position of an under-age heir after a second death in the family. The calendar's underlying reference is to the royal sign-manual material. Its concise entry is independent documentary support for the wardship event summarized in the parliamentary biography.[2]

## Pembroke's secretary enters the household

John Thorowgood had served William Herbert as secretary from about 1621 until the earl's death in 1630. Through that service he obtained parliamentary seats and acted in his employer's affairs. After Sir Henry Neville the younger's death he married the widow, Elizabeth Smythe Neville, and settled in Berkshire. The parliamentary biographies also record his acquisition of Richard's wardship. A member of Pembroke's own household thus became part of the Neville family.[3]

The later family record supplies a firm endpoint. Hull History Centre's catalogue describes a draft quitclaim from Sir John Thorowgood of Pillingbeere to Richard Neville, son and heir of the deceased Sir Henry. It concerns Richard's wardship and marriage and bears an annotation recording that it was sealed on 25 June 1637. The document's description connects Thorowgood directly with the same ward and the rights arising from his minority. "Pillingbeere" is Billingbear, the household from which Packer had written in 1604/5 (Chapter 49).[11]

The sequence deserves to be kept intact: the father's death in June 1629; the Crown's grant to Pembroke in November; Thorowgood's marriage to the widow and acquisition of the wardship; and the 1637 quitclaim. The marriage has no precise date in the cited account, so its exact position relative to the November grant and the acquisition of wardship rights should remain open. The exact terms by which the wardship passed to Thorowgood would require the underlying instruments. The published evidence already establishes the people, the direction of the relationship and two dated legal events.

## A proposed place in the Revels office

Pembroke's patronage had earlier extended to an attempt to obtain a place for Thorowgood in theatrical administration. On 28 February 1622/3 (1623 in modern year reckoning) Secretary Conway wrote to Lord Chamberlain Pembroke about a bill sent for signature that would give Thorowgood the reversion of the Mastership of the Revels. The state-paper calendar preserves the proposal. John P. Ferris's parliamentary biography explains that the office ultimately went to another member of Pembroke's circle, Sir Henry Herbert.[12]

This episode precedes Thorowgood's Neville marriage. It gives his later entrance into the family an additional institutional context: he had been the beneficiary of an actual effort to secure a future position in theatrical government through Pembroke. A proposed reversion is not the same as occupation of the office. The interest lies in the patronage transaction and the people involved, rather than in assigning him duties he is not known to have performed.

The year is also the year of the First Folio. That concurrence is worth recording without supplying an undocumented causal link. Pembroke's household was engaged in literary patronage and the distribution of offices connected with performance, while the same household would later provide a husband for Neville's daughter-in-law and a custodian of the grandson's wardship.

## French and Italian books for Henry Neville

Thorowgood's will, made on 20 January 1657, carries the story into a further literary generation. Ferris records that he left his stepson Henry Neville all his French and Italian books, together with a brass figure of a Roman fencer. This Henry was the political writer associated with *The Isle of Pines*, whose writing and place in the family's literary afterlife are examined in Chapter 56. The bequest names a Neville descendant as the recipient of Pembroke's former secretary's French and Italian books.[4]

It is an unusually concrete bequest. The books are grouped by language, and the accompanying classical figure gives a glimpse of the objects among which their owner lived. We do not have a title-by-title list in the biography's account. Thorowgood designated these books for a member of the household who subsequently published works of his own.

The two grandsons have different roles in this history. Richard is the heir whose wardship brought Pembroke and Thorowgood into legal relations with the estate. Henry is the stepson to whom the books were bequeathed. Conflating them would obscure the most valuable feature of the evidence: patronage, guardianship and literary inheritance operated through several members of the family, over more than a quarter of a century.

## The papers in the study

A later dispute reminds us that preservation within a household could be imperfect. In a Chancery bill of 8 June 1670, Richard Neville alleged that he had entrusted deeds to Sir John Thorowgood for safekeeping and that, after Thorowgood's death, they had passed to William Thorowgood. The catalogue reports his complaint that papers in the study at Billingbear had been left "much disorderly & tumbled" and that a document needed to establish the terms of a property transaction was missing.[13]

This is Richard's allegation in litigation, not a neutral inspection of the study. It concerns property deeds, not literary manuscripts. Its relevance is practical: the same family arrangements that carried books and legal rights across generations also affected the custody of papers. Family continuity did not guarantee orderly survival.

The Herbert relationship after Neville's death is therefore recoverable in several distinct forms. Philip's court appointment supported the son. William's wardship grant concerned the grandson. Thorowgood's marriage joined the households, his quitclaim records a later stage of the wardship, and his will bequeathed books. Together these records give the family's posthumous literary setting a documented social and material history.

## Notes and sources

1. Andrew Thrush, "NEVILLE, Sir Henry III (1588–1629), of Billingbear, Waltham St. Lawrence, Berks.", in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010), biography and notes 18–25. Thrush treats the identification of the 1621 Wilton member as probable. The appointment and wardship concern the ambassador's son and his heir respectively.
2. John Bruce, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I, 1629–1631* (1860), 86, entry of 3 November 1629. The calendar cites "Sign Man., Car. I., Vol. xi., No. 31." The calendar page, rather than a new image of the original grant, is reproduced here.
3. John P. Ferris, "THOROWGOOD, John (1588–1657)", *History of Parliament* (2010), offices, family details and biography; Thrush, "NEVILLE," concluding paragraphs. Ferris distinguishes this man from the other Sir John Thorowgood of Kensington, who died in 1675.
4. Ferris, "THOROWGOOD," final paragraph and note 17, citing the will of 20 January 1657, The National Archives, PROB 11/265, ff.209v–211. The date and bequests follow Ferris's biography, which also records burial on 31 January 1657; the original will has not been independently collated here. No complete list of the French and Italian titles is supplied there.
5. H. F. Lippincott, ed., *"Merry Passages and Jeasts": A Manuscript Jestbook of Sir Nicholas Le Strange (1603–1655)* (Salzburg, 1974), 30–31, jest 69; person index, 219, Herbert entry, and Neville entry. The full discussion is in Chapter 49; the compiler's genealogy and other family stories are in Chapter 55.
6. Anthony White, *Truth and error discovered, in two sermons in St Maries in Oxford* (Oxford: John Lichfield for Henry Curteyne, 1628), dedication, sig. ¶2r–v, STC 25376, TCP A15075, printed witness. The address reads 'Sr HENRY NEVILL OF PILLINGBERE IN Berks his much honoured Patron'; spelling and abbreviations are modernized in the main text. White praises 'the exactnesse of your iudgement' and invites Neville to show the sermons to others. The dedicatee is the son (1588–1629), not the ambassador (d.1615).
7. Elias Ashmole, *The History and Antiquities of Berkshire* (Reading, 1736), pp.82–83, Shellingford, Latin epitaph and English rendering. The memorial gives Edward's age as thirty in 1632 and names his wife Alice. The literary praise concerns the ambassador's son, not the ambassador's brother Edward; 'vers'd' is expanded in the quotation.
8. The son's East India membership is recorded by Thrush in "Neville, Sir Henry III (1588–1629)", Offices Held and note 9. Compare *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, East Indies, China and Japan, 1617–1621*, pp. 164–165, no. 347, minutes of 8–15 May 1618, and pp. 287–288, no. 717, 4 August 1619. The former grants permission; the latter orders payment. Neither entry alone proves completed payment. Their underlying references are Court Book IV, pp. 170–174 and 390–391, respectively.
9. Thrush, "NEVILLE," "Offices Held," note 10, and the paragraph discussing the Wilton election: December 1628 appointment by Montgomery; The National Archives, LC 5/132, p. 67. The archival locator is given as Thrush's cited authority. The register page has not been independently inspected for this chapter. The ambassador's eldest son entered Merton as a boy and succeeded to Billingbear in 1615.
10. Arthur Herbert Dodd, "HERBERT family, earls of Pembroke (second creation)", *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, sections on William, third earl, and Philip, fourth earl. William became Lord Steward and Philip Lord Chamberlain on 3 August 1626; this was a succession to the chamberlainship, not a literal exchange of two offices between the brothers.
11. Hull History Centre, U DDBA/4/98, "Draft. Quitclaim," 1637, annotated "Sealed 25 Jun 1637"; Barnard family catalogue, 24. The description names Thorowgood, Richard Neville and the wardship and marriage. The account follows the catalogue, not a transcription of the full instrument.
12. Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1619–1623* (1858), 503, Conway to Pembroke, 28 February 1623, citing Conway's letter book, p. 6; Ferris, "THOROWGOOD," note 14 and biography. These sources document an attempted reversion, not Thorowgood's service as Master of the Revels.

13. Hull History Centre, U DDBA/4/100, Richard Neville's Chancery bill against William Thorowgood, 8 June 1670; Barnard catalogue, 25. The answer is separately catalogued as U DDBA/4/101. The statement about disorder is the plaintiff's allegation as summarized in the catalogue.

# John Hales: Savile's Scholar and Shakespeare's Champion

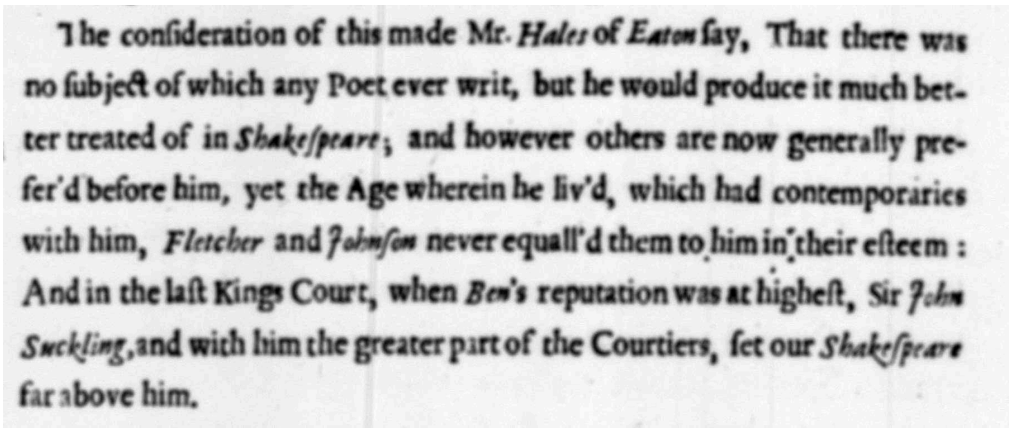
Chapter 54

Henry Neville's tutor and lifelong friend, Henry Savile, helped establish the career of John Hales, a Greek scholar remembered for an extraordinary judgement of Shakespeare. Hales became a fellow of Merton in 1605, while Savile was warden, and helped edit Savile's Chrysostom edition. Savile explicitly credited a textual conjecture by Hales in the *Admonitio* prepared for the edition and secured Hales's election to an Eton fellowship in 1613.[1,2]

## Hales's judgement of Shakespeare

In *Of Dramatick Poesie*, published in 1668, twelve years after Hales's death, John Dryden reported:

> The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eaton say, That there was **no subject of which any Poet ever writ**, but he would produce it **much better treated of in Shakespeare**.[3]



The conſideration of this made Mr. *Hales* of *Eaton* ſay, That there was no ſubject of which any Poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better treated of in *Shakeſpeare*; and however others are now generally prefer'd before him, yet the Age wherein he liv'd, which had contemporaries with him, *Fletcher* and *Johnſon* never equall'd them to him in their eſteem: And in the laſt Kings Court, when *Ben's* reputation was at higheſt, Sir *John Suckling*, and with him the greater part of the Courtiers, ſet our *Shakeſpeare* far above him.

**Figure 54.1:** Dryden's report of Hales's judgement in Of Dramatick Poesie (1668), p. 48, from the Internet Archive copy. The following sentences discuss Shakespeare's reputation among his contemporaries and name Suckling among his admirers. Public source.

Hales meant that, for any subject another poet had written about, he could find a passage in Shakespeare that treated it better. Dryden places it immediately after acknowledging Shakespeare's unevenness and his ability to rise to great occasions. He then recalls the preference of Suckling and other courtiers

for Shakespeare over Jonson. Hales supplies the authority of a learned reader alongside that courtly admiration.

Hales's scholarly work helps explain the weight Dryden placed on his judgement. Alongside his Greek teaching and editorial work, he recorded books and benefactions for the Bodleian and delivered a funeral oration for Bodley in 1613. He was also remembered for conversation and learning that ranged beyond theology into history, mathematics and natural knowledge.[4,5] Savile's edition also connects with Debora Shuger's comparisons of the hungry and exposed poor in *King Lear* and *Coriolanus* with Chrysostom's sermons, discussed in Chapters 30 and 34.[6]

Later writers turned the judgement into a scene. In 1694 Charles Gildon, claiming to recall a story told by Dryden, described a contest in Hales's chamber at Eton. Books were assembled before a company including Falkland and Suckling, and appointed judges unanimously preferred Shakespeare to the Greek and Roman poets. Rowe's 1709 biography offered a different scene: Suckling defended Shakespeare against Jonson, with Davenant and Endymion Porter present. Hales intervened to say that, if Shakespeare had not read the ancients, at least he had not stolen from them—a pointed accusation against Jonson.

In 1710 Gildon merged the accounts, placing Jonson among Shakespeare's opponents in Hales's Eton chamber. The resulting legend pictured Savile's scholar defending Shakespeare against the classical standards in which Hales had been trained. Freehafer shows how the story grew and why the merged scene is unreliable: Jonson's condition after his stroke prevented such a visit to Eton, while Falkland was his admirer and patron. Dryden's earlier report gives no date, setting or assembled company.[7]

## The books around Hales

William Poole's study of an Eton shelflist, dating from around 1624, gives a view of the breadth of Hales's learning. Poole identifies Hales as its scribe and argues that the collection was probably his. Approximately 750 entries cover classical authors and Church Fathers, medicine, law, geography, travel and theological controversy. Mathematics and astronomy are conspicuous: Poole identifies nine works by Kepler. Savile's Chrysostom, his edition of English historical writers and his edition of Bradwardine are also present.[8,9,10]

Shakespeare is absent, as are Chaucer, Spenser, Daniel, Jonson and Sidney. The list nevertheless includes Montaigne, Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* and the English translation of Alemán's *The Rogue*. Poole suggests that modern English literature may have occupied separate shelves. The list records a collection at one moment; it cannot give a complete account of Hales's reading. Nor can its unidentified entry "Tragical histories" be treated confidently as a Shakespeare volume.[11]

## Shakespeare in the universities

Daniel Blank's study, "'Our Fellow Shakespeare': A Contemporary Classic in the Early Modern University," places Hales's admiration within a history reaching back to Shakespeare's lifetime. Greek and Latin authors dominated formal education, but university drama shows readers quoting Shakespeare, joking about his reputation and borrowing his theatrical techniques. These examples describe the academic culture of Hales's generation.[12]

In the anonymous *Parnassus* plays, performed at St John's College, Cambridge, around 1598–1601, the pretentious Gullio worships Shakespeare and vows to sleep with *Venus and Adonis* beneath his pillow—a comic counterpart to Alexander's devotion to Homer. Burbage and Kempe also appear as characters, with Kempe declaring Shakespeare superior to university playwrights. These academic jokes place a contemporary English dramatist beside classical authors and above writers trained in the universities.[13,14]

At Oxford, where Hales was studying, *Narcissus* was performed at St John's College in 1602. Ovid supplied its myth. Margaret Lee noted verbal correspondences with *1 Henry IV*, and Blank shows how the comedy borrows stagecraft from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. An actor explains that his bucket represents a well, much as Shakespeare's amateur performers explain how they represent a wall and moonlight. An Oxford entertainment built on Ovid was borrowing its comic stagecraft from Shakespeare.[15]

## Notes and sources

1. Nancy E. Scott, "The Ever Memorable Mr. John Hales", *Harvard Theological Review* 10.3 (1917), 245–271, especially 248–250; Daniel Blank, "'Our Fellow Shakespeare': A Contemporary Classic in the Early Modern University", *Review of English Studies* 71.301 (2020), 652–669, especially 655. Basil Greenslade, "Hales, John (1584–1656), scholar", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, published 23 September 2004, version of 21 May 2009, confirms his close involvement in the Chrysostom project. For Neville's relationship with Savile, see Chapters 2, 6 and 50.
2. Jean-Louis Quantin, "Historical Criticism, Confessional Controversy, and Self-Censorship: Henry Savile and the Lives of John Chrysostom", *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* 6 (2021), 138–223, especially 197–198 and note 214, citing Savile's *Admonitio*, sig. Ppp3r. This printed material was intended for insertion among the notes to volume 8 but was withheld from general circulation; see Quantin, 144–145 and note 25. Hales's conjecture concerned the identity of Palladius; it depended on a defective Latin translation and was subsequently corrected. Its relevance here is his identifiable editorial contribution.
3. John Dryden, *Of Dramatick Poesie, an Essay* (London, 1668), p. 48, first-edition page. Quotation retains the printed spelling, with long s normalized; emphasis added. The figure reproduces the relevant paragraph. The printed witness gives page 48; Freehafer cites page 47. Dryden reports Hales's judgement without dating its utterance.
4. Blank, "'Our Fellow Shakespeare'," 655 and its notes on Hales's Bodleian work and Bodley's funeral. William Poole, "Analysing a Private Library, with a Shelflist Attributable to John Hales of Eton, c.1624", in Edward Jones, ed., *A Concise Companion to the Study of Manuscripts, Printed Books, and the Production of Early Modern Texts* (Wiley, 2015), 41–65, especially 57, also discusses Hales's work on the benefactors' register.

5. Scott, "Ever Memorable," 245–247, 250–268, for the character of his writings, intellectual interests and remembered conversation. For the later Rowe anecdote, see Freehafer's analysis cited above.
6. Debora K. Shuger, "Subversive Fathers and Suffering Subjects: Shakespeare and Christianity", in *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540–1688*, ed. Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 46–69, especially 49–52. Her comparison and the Savile connection are developed in the *King Lear* and *Coriolanus* chapters.
7. John Freehafer, "Shakespeare, the Ancients, and Hales of Eton", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 23.1 (1972), 63–68, especially 64–68, examining Charles Gildon, *Miscellaneous Letters and Essays* (1694), 85–86, and Nicholas Rowe, "Some Account of the Life, &c. of Mr. William Shakespear," in *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear* (London, 1709), vol. 1, xiv. For Gildon's 1710 conflation, see Freehafer, 67–68. Compare Blank, " 'Our Fellow Shakespeare'," 668–669, for the relation between the anecdote and the broader reception history.
8. Poole, "Analysing a Private Library," 52–54: Eton College Archives 62/55, physical arrangement, dating and number of entries. The present account relies on Poole's examination, not a new inspection of the manuscript.
   The list follows the 1621 audit accounts in Eton College Archives 62/55; its latest identified publication dates from 1624. Six rows of folios and nine of smaller books, with space for additions and no valuations, suggest a working shelflist rather than a probate inventory. Some entries cover several volumes or texts.
9. Poole, "Analysing a Private Library," 54–58. His comparison of possible owners and identification of the writing establish a strong attribution to Hales, not absolute certainty of ownership. Poole considers the college library and the collections of Savile and Thomas Murray as alternatives. Recorded gifts, including one to the writer's brother, support his attribution to Hales.
10. Poole, "Analysing a Private Library," 53–56, for subject range, Kepler and Savile's works.
11. Poole, "Analysing a Private Library," 58; compare Blank, " 'Our Fellow Shakespeare'," 655–656. Poole leaves "Tragical histories" unidentified: it might refer to plays or a *Mirror for Magistrates*-type prose work. Separate shelving is Poole's proposed explanation, not a surviving second catalogue.
12. Blank, " 'Our Fellow Shakespeare'," 652–655, 668–669. References use the final journal pagination, rather than the advance-publication pagination.
    Greek and Latin authors remained the formal educational models; Hales himself imitated Horace in a Latin poem associated with Christian IV's visit in 1606 (656–658). Bodley's restrictive attitude towards vernacular playbooks coexisted with the Bodleian's acquisition of a First Folio shortly after publication (658–660).
13. Blank, " 'Our Fellow Shakespeare'," 661–664, especially the analysis of Gullio, *Venus and Adonis*, and the Alexander–Homer analogy. The anonymous plays are evidence of academic representation and reception. The Gullio passage is also preserved in Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 398, transcribed in Shakespeare Documented, "Pilgrimage to Parnassus and Return from Parnassus".
14. Blank, " 'Our Fellow Shakespeare'," 661–662, discussing *The Second Part of the Return from Parnassus*, IV.iii. The "our fellow Shakespeare" speech is assigned to Kempe in the dramatic text; the actors are characters written by the academic dramatist.
15. Blank, " 'Our Fellow Shakespeare'," 665–667, on *Narcissus*, its 1602 Oxford performance, verbal parallels with *1 Henry IV* and theatrical debts to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Primary text: *Narcissus, a Twelfe Night Merriment*, ed. Margaret L. Lee (London: David Nutt, 1893), lines 494–511, complete text.

# The Family Jestbook: Neville's Descendants and Shakespeare's Remembered Wit

Chapter 55

Sir Nicholas L'Estrange (1604–1655) compiled *Merry Passages and Jeasts*, a handwritten collection of more than six hundred jests. In 1630 he married Anne Lewknor, Henry Neville's granddaughter; her mother was Mary Neville, the ambassador's daughter, and her father Sir Edward Lewknor.[1]

One story in the manuscript, now British Library Harley MS 6395, has Shakespeare offer Ben Jonson a dozen "Latin spoons" for his child, then ask Jonson to "translate" them. The joke turns on *Latin* sounding like *latten*, a cheap copper alloy: Jonson would have to turn the spoons into silver. L'Estrange records "Mr Dun" as the source of this Shakespeare jest.[2]

The manuscript often preserves the name of the informant for each jest. Those source labels let us see Neville's family participating in the preservation of oral literature. Anne appears as "My wife"; her mother Mary as Lady Lewknor; and her siblings Edward and Catherine as Ned Lewknor and "My Sis. Ka. Lewk." William Neville also supplied stories. Shakespeare's remembered wit survives among the things that this household and its wider acquaintance thought worth writing down.

## Who compiled the book?

Nicholas belonged to the L'Estrange family of Hunstanton in Norfolk. The family relationships are set out in J. G. Nichols's notice accompanying William J. Thoms's 1839 selection from the manuscript. Nichols also cites the marriage settlement of August 1630 and quotes Mary Lewknor's will, made in 1642. In that will Mary names her eldest daughter, Lady Anne L'Estrange, wife of Sir Nicholas, and leaves her a coach and four coach horses. The sequence from Neville through Mary to Anne is thus supported by a named family relationship, not merely a similarity of surnames.[1]

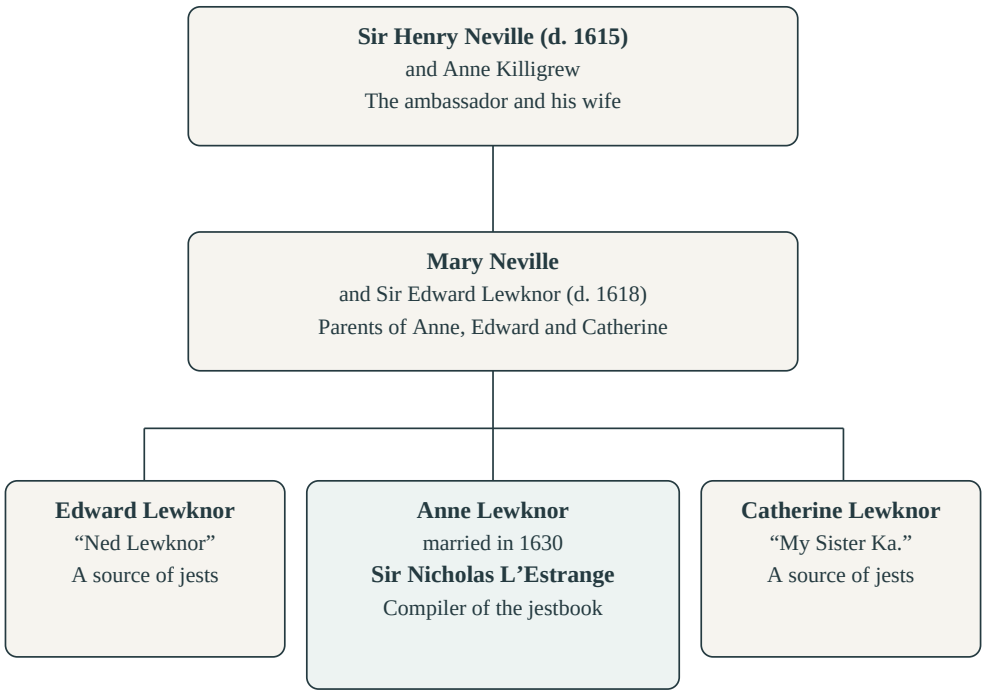



**Figure 55.1:** Original genealogical diagram showing the compiler’s relationship to Henry Neville. Vertical lines indicate descent; couples are grouped within a box. Selected siblings are included because they supplied stories. Sources: Nichols’s family notice in Anecdotes and Traditions (1839), pp. xv–xvii, xx.

Mary’s husband died in 1618, when their children were young. Nicholas’s marriage to Anne brought him into a family whose older generation had lived through Neville’s public career and whose younger generation could transmit stories learned at home. His manuscript consequently contains several layers of time. A jest written down in the middle of the seventeenth century may describe a childhood episode decades earlier. The date of the compilation must not automatically become the date of the incident.

The two principal printed editions also need distinguishing. Thoms’s *Anecdotes and Traditions* offers a selection, retaining the original L’Estrange numbers alongside its own sequence. H. F. Lippincott’s 1974 edition provides the fuller text. The numbers used in this chapter are the L’Estrange jest numbers, so that a reader can find the same item across witnesses. The manuscript image reproduced below supplies direct visual control for jest 11; the other passages are discussed from the printed editions.[3]

## The "Latin spoons": Shakespeare and Jonson

Jest 11 presents Shakespeare as godfather to one of Ben Jonson's children. After the christening, Jonson finds him unusually thoughtful and asks the reason. Shakespeare explains that he has been considering a suitable present. His answer supplies the joke:

> I' faith, Ben, I'll e'en give him a dozen good Latin spoons, and thou shalt translate them.[2]

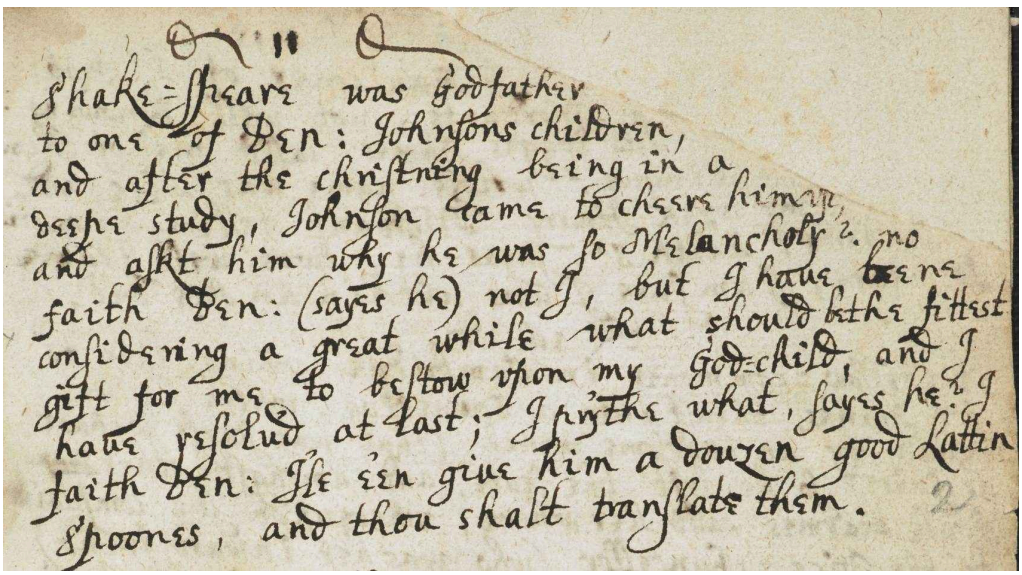

11
Shake-Speare was Godfather
to one of Ben: Johnsons children,
and after the christning being in a
deepe study, Johnson came to cheere him up,
and askt him why he was so Melancholy? no
faith Ben: (sayes he) not I, but I have been
considering a great while what should be the fittest
gift for me to bestow upon my God-child, and I
have resolv'd at last; I pr'ythe what, sayes he? I
faith Ben: Ile e'en give him a dozen good Latin
Spoones, and thou shalt translate them.

**Figure 55.2:** The complete "Latin spoons" jest, no. 11, in Sir Nicholas L'Estrange's manuscript, c. 1650. British Library, Harley MS 6395, fol. 2r, detail. British Library image contributed to the Folger's Shakespeare Documented under the Public Domain Mark.

The pun depends on *Latin* sounding like *latten*, a term for brass or another copper alloy. Silver spoons were an appropriate christening gift. Shakespeare proposes the cheaper material and leaves Jonson the task of "translation": changing the metal into silver. A familiar scholarly operation becomes an impossible act of alchemy. The story gives Shakespeare the quick conception and Jonson the labour required to make it valuable.

Its remembered setting is domestic and social. The two writers are connected through a child's christening rather than a theatrical quarrel. The joke imagines them sharing enough linguistic and literary understanding for its compressed ending to work. Neither the date of the christening nor the identity of the child is supplied by the anecdote. Heather Wolfe's Folger account presents the manuscript, transcribes the entry and explains the wordplay, making it possible to see exactly what the surviving witness says.[2]

For the history of Neville's descendants, the manuscript's provenance is the point of contact. The story was preserved by the man who married his granddaughter. That is a concrete relationship between the Shakespearean anecdotal tradition and the extended Neville family. The manuscript also tells us something more precise about transmission: this particular story is attributed to "Mr Dun," rather than to one of the Neville informants.

## Could "Mr Dunn" be the poet Donne's son?

Lippincott renders the source name "Mr Dunn"; Thoms prints "Mr. Dun." One possibility is John Donne the younger (1604–1662), the poet's son. He handled his father's books and papers and helped bring his writings into print. If he were the informant, the story would connect two families engaged in preserving literary memory: the Donnes and the Neville–Lewknor–L'Estrange descendants.[4]

That identification remains open. The source label contains no first name, office or statement of kinship. There are also "Mr Donne" labels elsewhere in Lippincott's transcription, including jests 26 and 56. Their presence makes the spelling question worth investigating across the manuscript, but does not prove that the differently written names designate one man. A variant spelling is a possible connection, not a completed identification.[5]

## The Herbert stories

William Neville supplied the dice story about William Herbert in jest 69. The jest is quoted and discussed in Chapter 49. Chapter 53 follows the later patronage and wardship involving the two Herbert brothers. The jestbook records the story's informant as "Mr Wil: Nevill," a more explicit Neville source attribution than that attached to the "Latin spoons" anecdote.[6]

A separate story, jest 535, concerns Philip Herbert and an argument at bowls. It is attributed to Mr Jenkins. The distinction between the brothers and their informants matters: the collection preserves several Herbert stories through different routes.[7]

## Anne Neville, Mary as a child, and Mr Packer

Jest 604 takes us into an older domestic scene. Mr Packer is travelling in a coach with "old Sir Henry Nevill's Lady." Lady Lewknor, then a little girl, accompanies them. After a hard frost and snow, the adults describe the thaw as having removed the ice. The child sees a remaining piece and calls Packer's attention to it. He deliberately misconstrues her hurried words as an indecent expression and repeats that interpretation to her mother.[8]

The comedy depends on sound: "There ice yet i' the ditch" becomes, through Packer's wilful interpretation, "There I shit i' the ditch." The jest preserves a

little performance of childish innocence and adult teasing within a named family scene.

The people make it particularly valuable here. "Old" Lady Neville is identified in Lippincott's index as Anne Killigrew, the ambassador's wife. The child is Mary, later Lady Lewknor and eventually the compiler's mother-in-law. Lippincott identifies Mr Packer as John Packer, whose service and correspondence were discussed in Chapter 50, although the jest itself supplies only the surname. The *History of Parliament* places Packer in Neville's service by 1600, so the 1604 letter discussed in Chapter 50 is not the beginning of that employment. The narrative reaches back behind Nicholas's marriage to an episode from the childhood of the woman whose daughter he married.

It would be a mistake to classify this simply as a story supplied by Neville's wife. She is a participant in it; the entry does not give her as its informant. Yet its survival shows how anecdotes could carry household names and remembered childhood scenes into a later generation. The family's oral history included the ambassador's wife and secretary as well as more public literary figures.

## Women as tellers and makers of wit

Jest 70, another of William Neville's contributions, preserves an exchange between old Lady Neville and her maid. Seeing a gentleman eating from a dish at the lower end of the table, she asks her attendant whether it is a fool. The maid answers that she thinks so, and that she is certain it was made for one. "Fool" names both a dessert and a foolish person. The maid supplies the punchline, moving the ambiguity from the dish to its intended eater. This small domestic exchange shows the older woman participating in the same play of double meanings that animates the more celebrated literary stories.[9]

Jest 123 is told by the compiler's wife Anne. A Lady Neville insists on serving a piece of cheese to a witty young man and praises it extravagantly. After tasting it, he replies that the cheese must be her own, which explains her liking for it, since he would not wish to eat worse. She takes the words as an insult and becomes angry until he explains his meaning. The sentence can sound like a refusal to taste anything worse than this cheese, or a compliment: he desires nothing inferior to it. Lippincott's index identifies this Lady Neville as Elizabeth Smythe, wife of the Sir Henry Neville who died in 1629. She was the ambassador's daughter-in-law and later married John Thorowgood, whose place in the household is followed in Chapter 53. She is distinct from Anne Killigrew, the "old" Lady Neville of jests 70 and 604.

Anne's contribution was not confined to stories about relatives. In jest 121 she supplies the tale of an atheist caught in a storm, who asks God to hear him on the ground that he seldom troubles him. In jest 173 she tells of a severe mother who accidentally whips her son's visiting Cambridge fellow pupil after he exchanges beds with the son. In jest 175 a minister claims that extra wine helps a man praise God with greater alacrity. These stories range across household discipline,

university life, piety and self-excusing speech. Anne was an active source of the collection's comic variety.[10]

Her siblings also contributed. Ned Lewknor supplies jest 64, in which an English speaker hears a Latin sentence delivered in a French accent and produces an absurd English rendering built around "veal." Catherine's jest 370 gives a hungry man the fear that his own stomach will eat him up. The latter is brief, but its label, "My Sis. Ka. Lewk.," matters: the compiler records a woman of the Neville-descended family as the person from whom it came.[11]

These entries make the genealogy more than an introductory ornament. It explains why the source labels recur and how the collection acquired its material. The women of the family were remembered characters, skilled conversational participants and suppliers of stories. Anne's role is especially clear because "My wife" records the compiler's immediate relation to his informant.

## What the collection preserves

The jestbook combines literary celebrity with household familiarity. Shakespeare and Jonson appear alongside women at dinner, a mischievous secretary in a coach, a gambling Herbert and a mother deceived by university visitors. The collection preserves the forms in which wit travelled: a remembered reply, an ambiguous sound, a borrowed story, a family anecdote and a named attribution.

For Neville's afterlife, its significance extends beyond a single famous jest. His daughter's household and his granddaughter's marriage helped sustain a culture in which stories were exchanged and recorded. Several relatives appear in the record as tellers. The Shakespeare anecdote's place within that manuscript is therefore part of an identifiable social history, even while its own informant remains unresolved.

The source labels also give us a discipline for reading it. We can distinguish the person in the story from the person who told it, and both from the person who wrote it down. Applied consistently, that distinction brings the Neville family's actual contribution into clearer view. Their role in preserving seventeenth-century wit is substantial enough to be described in its own terms.

## Notes and sources

1. J. G. Nichols, notice of Sir Nicholas L'Estrange and his contributors, in William J. Thoms, ed., *Anecdotes and Traditions, Illustrative of Early English History and Literature* (Camden Society, 1839), xv–xvii, xx, public edition. Nichols cites the 25 August 1630 marriage settlement and quotes Mary Lewknor's 1642 will at xvi. The diagram shows selected descendants, not a complete pedigree. The British Library catalogue dates the compiler 1604–1655 (Harley MS 6395); Nichols and the title of Lippincott's edition give 1603 for his birth.
2. British Library, Harley MS 6395, fol. 2r, jest 11, c.1650; Heather Wolfe, "Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and the 'Latin' spoons in L'Estrange's jest book", *Shakespeare Documented*, Folger Shakespeare Library, updated 23 February 2020. The record supplies the image, transcription,

source label and explanation of the pun. The quotation modernizes spelling. British Library image supplied under the Public Domain Mark.

3. Thoms, *Anecdotes and Traditions*, introduction and source list, especially xiii–xx; H. F. Lippincott, ed., *"Merry Passages and Jeasts": A Manuscript Jestbook of Sir Nicholas Le Strange (1603–1655)*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature, Elizabethan & Renaissance Studies 29 (Salzburg, 1974). The title's birth date is retained as part of its bibliographical identity. The present chapter does not claim a fresh collation of the whole Harley manuscript.
4. Thoms, *Anecdotes and Traditions*, 2–3, jest 11; Lippincott, *Merry Passages*, 19, jest 11. Augustus Jessopp, "Donne, John (1604–1662)", *Dictionary of National Biography*, for the younger Donne's custody and publication of his father's papers. Jessopp does not identify him as this informant.
5. Lippincott, *Merry Passages*, 22, jest 26, and 28, jest 56, both with "Mr Donne" labels. These printed spellings call for comparison with the original manuscript before any identification of the several labels is adopted.
6. Lippincott, *Merry Passages*, 30–31, jest 69, and the person-index entries for Herbert and Neville. The story names "Sir William Herbert"; its identification with the third Earl of Pembroke is the editor's. The source label is "Mr Wil: Nevill."
7. Thoms, *Anecdotes and Traditions*, 71–72, selection no. CXXVII, L'Estrange jest 535, source "Mr. Jenkins," and Nichols's explanatory note identifying Philip Herbert. The note also corrects chronological embellishments in another version of the earlier affront.
8. Lippincott, *Merry Passages*, 160, jest 604, and the index entry for old Lady Neville. The two expressions are transcribed from the printed edition. Packer's first name is not supplied in the jest; the person index identifies him as John Packer. Paul Hunneyball, "PACKER, John (c.1572–1649)", *History of Parliament* (2010), records his service to Neville by 1600. The anecdote is undated, and the family notice cited above does not establish Mary's birth date; it therefore does not support a precise year for this childhood scene.
9. Lippincott, *Merry Passages*, 31, jest 70, and 45–46, jest 123, with the distinct index entries for old Lady Neville and Lady Neville, pp. 230–231. The latter identifies Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Smythe of Ostenhanger and wife of Sir Henry Neville (d.1629). Jest 70 is sourced to William Neville; jest 123 to the compiler's wife.
10. Lippincott, *Merry Passages*, 45, jest 121, and 60, jests 173 and 175. Each carries "My wife" as its source label. The catalogue of her contributions is larger than the examples discussed here.
11. Lippincott, *Merry Passages*, 29, jest 64, source "Ned. Lewkenor"; Thoms, *Anecdotes and Traditions*, 51, selection no. LXXXVII, L'Estrange jest 370, source "My Sis. Ka. Lewk." For the siblings' relationships, see Nichols's family notice, xvi–xvii.

# Henry Neville and *The Isle of Pines*

Chapter 56

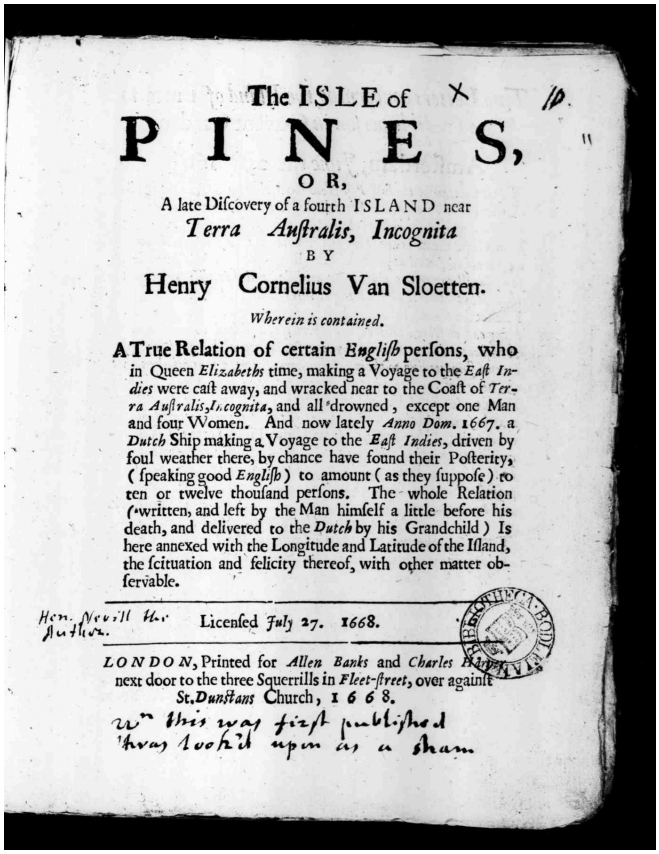
Henry Neville (1620–1694), the ambassador's grandson, was a republican politician, satirist and translator of Machiavelli. *The Isle of Pines* appeared in 1668 without his name, first anonymously and then as the report of an invented Dutch voyager. The book tells of an English family founded after a shipwreck in Elizabeth's reign and of a grandfather's history preserved by descendants.[1]

## A book published under another name

The combined edition carries the invented voyager's name on its title page:

> The Isle of Pines,
> or,
> A late Discovery of a fourth Island near
> Terra Australis, Incognita
> By
> Henry Cornelius Van Sloetten.[2]

Van Sloetten is the supposed discoverer and narrator of the tale, not its author. The title page also promises an account written by the original castaway and delivered to the Dutch by his grandchild. The assumed name and the story of the manuscript's transmission work together to make an invented island sound like a reported discovery.



The ISLE of
PINES,
OR,
A late Diſcovery of a fourth ISLAND near
*Terra Auſtralis, Incognita*
BY
Henry Cornelius Van Sloetten.
*Wherein is contained.*
A True Relation of certain *Engliſh* perſons, who in Queen *Elizabeths* time, making a Voyage to the *Eaſt Indies* were caſt away, and wracked near to the Coaſt of *Terra Auſtralis, Incognita*, and all drowned, except one Man and four Women. And now lately *Anno Dom.* 1667. a *Dutch* Ship making a Voyage to the *Eaſt Indies*, driven by foul weather there, by chance have found their Poſterity, (ſpeaking good *Engliſh*) to amount (as they ſuppoſe) to ten or twelve thouſand perſons. The whole Relation (written, and left by the Man himſelf a little before his death, and delivered to the *Dutch* by his Grandchild) Is here annexed with the Longitude and Latitude of the Iſland, the ſcituation and felicity thereof, with other matter obſervable.
Licenſed July 27. 1668.
LONDON, Printed for *Allen Banks* and *Charles* [illegible] next door to the three Squerrills in *Fleet-ſtreet*, over againſt St. *Dunſtans* Church, 1668.

Hen. Neuill Ha[illegible] Author.

**Figure 56.1:** The 1668 combined edition: the printed author line names Henry Cornelius Van Sloetten, not Henry Neville. The handwritten attribution to Neville at lower left is a reader's annotation, separate from the printed title. Licence dated 27 July 1668.

In the book, the founder, George Pine, survives a shipwreck with four women, including an enslaved African woman. Their descendants become the island's population. When Dutch visitors arrive, George's grandson William explains how the family has preserved its history:

> What after passed (said he) during my Grandfathers life, I shall show you in a Relation thereof written by his own hand, which he delivered to my Father being his eldest Son, charging him to have a special care thereof ...[3]

William brings out two sheets, reads them aloud and gives the visitors a copy. George's own account ends with instructions to preserve the history and let strangers copy it, "that our name be not lost from off the earth."[4] A grandson thus brings his grandfather's writing to a new audience. For a book written by the ambassador's grandson, this is a suggestive choice of plot: family descent becomes the means of literary survival.

## *The Tempest* on the Restoration stage

The timing makes *The Tempest* a particularly relevant comparison. London's theatres reopened with the Restoration in 1660, after the parliamentary closure of 1642. On 7 November 1667, Pepys attended the first performance of Dryden and Davenant's adaptation, *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island*, at the Duke's theatre. He recorded a packed house and the presence of the king and court. *The Isle of Pines* followed the next summer: its first part was licensed on 27 June 1668, and the combined edition on 27 July.[5]

The adaptation supplies a closer comparison than the general theme of a shipwreck. Hippolito, a young man brought up without seeing women, discovers sexual desire and refuses the idea that he must love only one:

> HIPPOLITO
> I will have all of that kind, if there be a hundred of 'em.[6]

George Pine's island turns such unlimited desire into a founding history. In the play's expanded sailors' scenes, the survivors also attempt to establish a government, dispute who may rule, and bargain for offices. Neville's fiction likewise turns isolation into an experiment in sexual and political order. After George's death, his descendants need laws, punishment and eventually Dutch armed assistance. Natural plenty has not produced lasting innocence.[7]

Shakespeare's original already sets Gonzalo's ideal of abundance without labour against the ambitions and violence of the other castaways. Neville develops a comparable tension across generations. The 1667 adaptation brings sexual appetite and improvised island government into still sharper focus, immediately before the publication of *The Isle of Pines*. This gives the comparison a precise contemporary setting, although no evidence cited here places Neville at a performance. The adaptation was printed in 1670; its performance in 1667, rather than that later publication, supplies the relevant chronology.[8]

## The sonnet at Audley End

Neville researcher John Casson discovered an unsigned English sonnet on the final blank page of a 1607 volume of *Las Comedias del Famoso Poeta Lope de Vega Carpio* at Audley End. It matches the younger Henry Neville's distinctive handwriting.[9] In Casson's modernized transcription it begins:

> At length into your fingers I am come
> Wherein so close restraint I am to die,
> That you to me my sighs and tears deny,
> The only easers of my martyrdom.

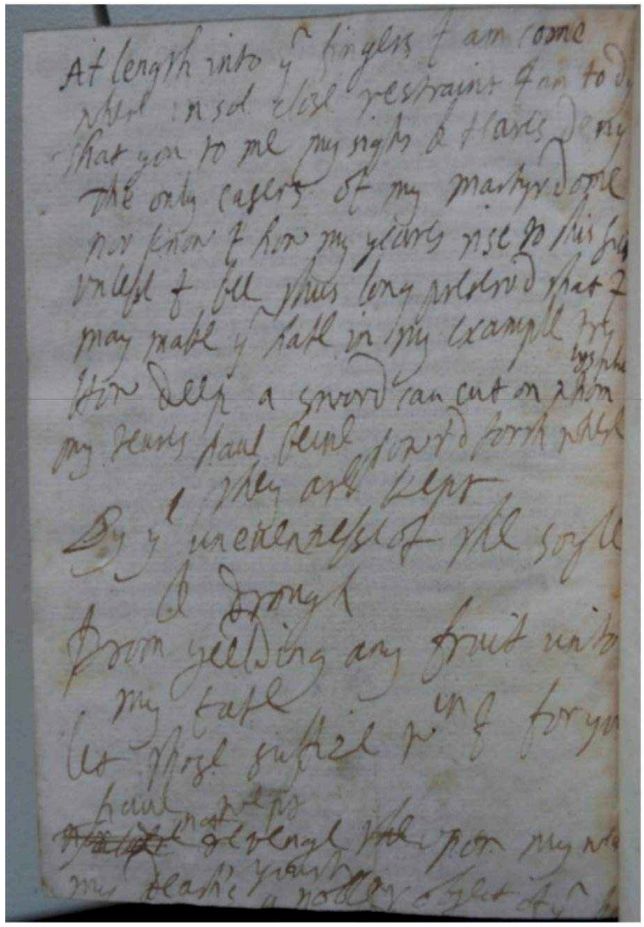


**Figure 56.2:** The unsigned sonnet in the 1607 Lope de Vega volume at Audley End, in the younger Henry Neville's hand. Reproduced by John Casson, Notes and Queries 64.3 (2017), p. 451, fig. 1.

The poem is an English version of Garcilaso de la Vega's Sonnet II. Its sequence follows the Spanish poem from captivity in the beloved's hands, through the sword and fruitless tears, to a final appeal for death. This identifies the literary source; whether Neville translated it himself remains a separate question.[10]

The volume connects his writing with the surviving family collection, but its place in the earlier library needs care: no matching entry has yet been identified in the 1780 Billingbear catalogue.[11] The important object is the surviving book itself—Spanish plays carrying an English sonnet in the hand of the author of *The Isle of Pines*.

## Notes and sources

1. J. M. Rigg, "Neville, Henry (1620–1694)", *Dictionary of National Biography*, 40 (1894). He was the second son of Sir Henry Neville (d. 1629) and Elizabeth Smythe. Casson gives 1619 as his birth year; this book retains Rigg's 1620. For his stepfather John Thorowgood's bequest of French and Italian books in 1657, see Chapter 53.
2. *The Isle of Pines* (London: Allen Banks and Charles Harper, 1668), combined-edition title page. Capitalization and long s normalized in the excerpt; line arrangement follows the title. The image retains the historical annotations. For the anonymous first part and the successive publications, see Worthington Chauncey Ford, *The Isle of Pines: An Essay in Bibliography* (Boston: Club of Odd Volumes, 1920), "The Combined Parts" and "The Story," public edition. The first part's account of George Pine was subsequently enclosed within the Dutch narrator's account.
3. *The Isle of Pines*, combined edition, p. 6. Long s normalized; the ellipsis marks the rest of the sentence. The following paragraph describes the two sheets, reading and copy.
4. *The Isle of Pines*, p. 15. The fictional family sequence is George Pine, his son Henry, and grandson William. The voyage licence in the narrative is dated 1569 (p. 7).
5. University of Exeter, Stuart Successions Project, John Denham's 1660 theatre prologue and historical introduction, for the reopening; Samuel Pepys, *Diary*, 7 November 1667, for the first-day performance, audience and royal attendance. The production was the Dryden–Davenant adaptation: Royal Shakespeare Company, "Stage History". Ford, "The Combined Parts," records the first licence, 27 June, the continuation's date, 22 July, and the combined licence, 27 July 1668. Licence dates should not be mistaken for exact dates of sale. Shadwell's operatic revision belongs to 1674, after Neville's book.
6. William Davenant and John Dryden, *The Tempest; or, The Enchanted Island* (1670), act III, Hippolito and Ferdinand's conversation, 1670 text edited by Jack Lynch. The quotation is the adaptation's wording, not Shakespeare's original. Act II contains the sailors' debate over government, election and offices.
7. *The Isle of Pines*, combined edition, George's narrative and the continuation, especially pp. 16–26, 1668 scan. The governing family's account retains distinctions between the four maternal lines and singles out descendants of the enslaved Philippa in the rebellions. Its account of order is therefore also an account of inherited hierarchy.
8. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 2.1, Gonzalo's commonwealth and his companions' replies. Gonzalo's speech draws on Montaigne, "Of the Caniballes," in John Florio's *Essayes* (1603), I.30, text. The comparisons concern appetite, abundance and political order; they do not establish direct borrowing. Chapter 36 treats the ambassador's lifetime and the Virginia evidence.
9. John Casson, "A Newly Discovered Seventeenth-century Sonnet", *Notes and Queries* 64.3 (2017), 450–455. Casson compares the tall *e*, the forms of *t*, *w* and capital *T*, joined letters and abbreviations with Neville's letters, Royal Berkshire Archives D/EN/F8/1/13 and D/EN/F8/1/9. The dated comparison is 20 January 1664 "old stile," or 1665 in modern year reckoning; the other is undated. These details identify the distinctive hand, not the translator. Casson reports Katherine Duncan-Jones's broad dating estimate, late 1620s to early 1640s; it does not securely date the inscription. His transcription records corrections and letters obscured by rebinding. The four lines quoted follow his modernized transcription on p. 450, with its line breaks and punctuation.
10. Garcilaso de la Vega, *Obras* (Madrid: Ediciones de La Lectura, 1911), Sonnet II, p. 207, compared with Casson's complete transcription. Garcilaso and Lope de Vega are different writers. The source identification is the present book's comparison, not a claim made in Casson's article.
11. *Catalogue of the Books in the Library at Billingbear*, 7 November 1780, Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1. Searches of the available catalogue transcriptions under Lope, Vega, Carpio and Comedias produced no identifiable entry. This is a bounded non-result, not proof that the volume was absent from the family's library. Casson documents the surviving Audley End volume; its ownership by the ambassador remains unestablished.

# Robert Nevile and the Killigrew Playwrights

Chapter 57

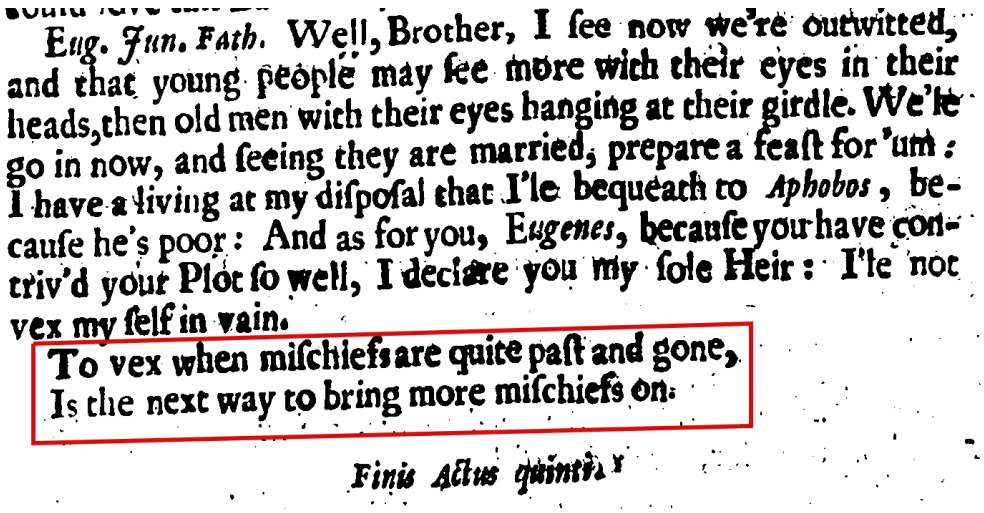
Robert Nevile's *The Poor Scholar*, published in 1662, ends its action with a couplet adapted from *Othello*. A father who has opposed his son's marriage finally accepts it, restores his inheritance and calls for a feast. He ends his speech:

> To vex when **mischiefs** are quite **past and gone**,
> **Is the next way to** bring more **mischiefs on**.

In *Othello*, the Duke offers Brabantio this advice after Desdemona has married against her father's wishes:

> To mourn a **mischief** that is **past and gone**
> **Is the next way to** draw new **mischief on**.[1]

The correspondence joins wording and dramatic situation. Both passages concern a father who must accept a marriage he cannot undo. Robert makes the advice the father's own conclusion: Shakespeare's tragic scene supplies the closing maxim of a comedy.


Eug. Jun. Fath. Well, Brother, I ſee now we're outwitted, and that young people may ſee more with their eyes in their heads, then old men with their eyes hanging at their girdle. We'le go in now, and ſeeing they are married, prepare a feaſt for 'um: I have a living at my diſpoſal that I'le bequeath to *Aphobos*, becauſe he's poor: And as for you, *Eugenes*, becauſe you have contriv'd your Plot ſo well, I declare you my ſole Heir: I'le not vex my ſelf in vain.

To vex when miſchiefs are quite paſt and gone,
Is the next way to bring more miſchiefs on.

*Finis Actus quinti.*

**Figure 57.1:** The closing speech and couplet in Robert Nevile's The Poor Scholar (1662), act 5, scene 6. The father declares his son his sole heir before adapting the Othello couplet (boxed in red; annotation added). Source: the microfilm witness of Wing N524 associated with EEBO-TCP A52863.

## A playwright in the Neville family

Robert was very probably Sir Henry Neville's great-nephew, through the ambassador's younger brother Edward. His parents were Robert Neville of Sunninghill Park and Mary Umfreville. The published Umfreville pedigree identifies Mary's husband as a younger son of Edward Neville of Sunninghill Park. This Edward is very probably the ambassador's younger brother, whose children Henry and Anne each received £50 in Neville's will, as discussed in Chapter 9.[2]

Born about 1640–41, Robert attended Eton and King's College, Cambridge. He became a fellow of King's in 1660 and took his BA in 1661. His comedy appeared the following year, with his name and college prominently displayed on its title page. He later became rector of Anstey in Hertfordshire.[3]

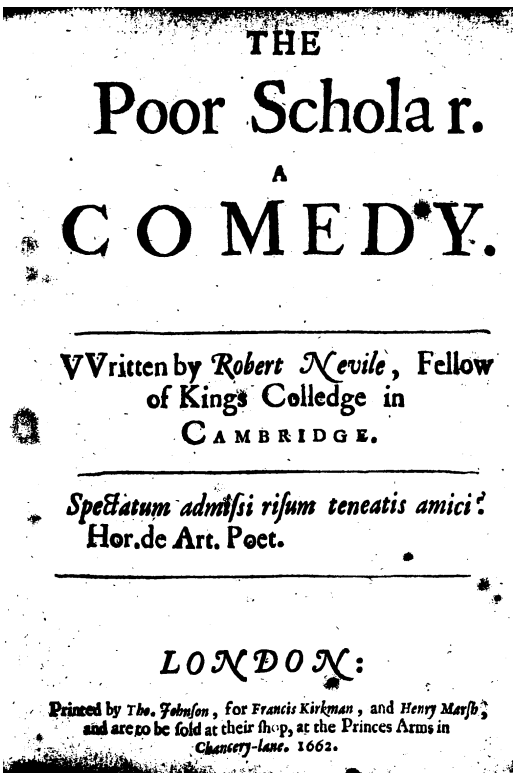

THE
Poor Scholar.
A
COMEDY.
VVritten by *Robert Nevile*, Fellow of Kings Colledge in CAMBRIDGE.
*Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici?*
Hor. de Art. Poet.
*LONDON:*
Printed by *Tho. Johnson*, for *Francis Kirkman*, and *Henry Marsh*; and are to be sold at their shop, at the Princes Arms in *Chancery-lane*. 1662.

**Figure 57.2:** The title page of The Poor Scholar (London, 1662), naming Robert Nevile, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. Printed by Thomas Johnson for Francis Kirkman and Henry Marsh. Source: the microfilm witness of Wing N524 associated with EEBO-TCP A52863.

## Shakespeare in a university comedy

The poor scholar is Eugenes Junior, whose father restricts his money and whose uncle presides over the college. The plot brings learning, courtship and family authority into collision. Eugenes and his companions obtain money, escape detection and secure their marriages through borrowed books, changes of clothing and disguise. In the last act, Eugenes tricks his clerical uncle into marrying him to Morphe when the couple pose as country strangers. The elders discover that their attempts to prevent the marriages have failed.[4]

Two other features may recall Shakespeare's comedies. During his tutor's reprimand, Eugenes remarks aside:

> **I'd rather hear a Dog bark**, then him speak now.

Beatrice says in *Much Ado About Nothing*:

> [...] **I had rather hear my dog bark** at a crow
> than a man swear he loves me.[5]

This may be a remembered comic phrase, adapted from an unwanted lover to an unwanted lecture. The ending also invites comparison with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: secret marriage and disguise defeat parental designs, and the older generation must accept the result. The possible verbal echo and the parallel ending complement the clearest connection: the close adaptation of the *Othello* couplet.[6]

Robert's closing couplet does more than repeat Shakespeare's words. It turns Shakespeare's counsel into a successful reconciliation, giving it the closing word of the action in a comedy published by a later member of the Neville family.

## The Killigrew playwrights and a First Folio

Three more playwrights belonged to the family of Neville's wife, Anne Killigrew: Sir William, Thomas and Henry Killigrew, sons of Sir Robert Killigrew and Mary Woodhouse. Sir Robert was Anne's first cousin: his father, Sir William Killigrew—the playwrights' grandfather—was the brother of her father, Sir Henry Killigrew. Sir Robert's connection with Henry Neville was also personal. In his will Neville included him among his friends and left him a piece of plate. The three playwright brothers thus came from a household connected to Neville by both kinship and friendship.[7]

Sir Robert's son William published *Three Playes* in 1665. Thomas's *The Prisoners* and *Claracilla* had appeared together in 1641, followed by his collected *Comedies and Tragedies* in 1664. Henry, a clergyman, wrote *The Conspiracy*, printed in 1638, and issued a revised version as *Pallantus and Eudora* in 1653.[8]

Thomas also helped restore Shakespeare to the public stage. In 1660 he and Sir William Davenant received royal authority to establish the two licensed London theatre companies. His company's early repertory included *Othello*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV, Part 1*, alongside plays by Beaumont and Fletcher.[9]

A surviving First Folio provides a further connection in the next generation. Thomas's son Charles Killigrew owned the copy that subsequently belonged to the playwright William Congreve. John C. Hodges records the names "Charles Killigrew" on its flyleaf and "Will: Congreve" on its contents page. The volume places the collected Shakespeare plays in the possession of this branch of Anne Neville's family, before it passed to Congreve.[10]

## Notes and sources

1. Robert Nevile, *The Poor Scholar. A Comedy* (London: Thomas Johnson for Francis Kirkman and Henry Marsh, 1662), 5.6, Wing N524, ESTC R14670, EEBO-TCP A52863; Shakespeare, *Othello*, 1.3. The play quotations modernize long s and a few spellings while retaining vocabulary and lineation. The 1622 quarto reads "draw more mischiefe on"; the 1623 Folio reads "draw new mischiefe on." Robert's "bring more mischiefs on" agrees with the quarto's "more," but does not identify the edition he used. See TCP A11992 and A11954. An EarlyPrint regularized-spelling search for "past and gone is the next way" on 2 October 2026 returned three documents: the 1622 quarto, the 1623 Folio and *The Poor Scholar*. This is the result within the searched corpus, not a claim of universal uniqueness.
2. W. Harry Rylands, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Buckingham Made in 1634* (1909), p. 122, Umfreville pedigree: Mary Umfreville married Robert Neville, a younger son of Edward Neville of Sunninghill Park, of the Abergavenny family. John and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, part I, vol. III (1924), p. 244, identifies the playwright and his father. Caroline L. Leachman, "Neville, Robert", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, names both parents, supplying the Mary Umfreville link to the pedigree. Alan Harding, "NEVILLE, Edward II (b.1567), of Wargrave and Windsor, Berks.", *History of Parliament* (1981), identifies Henry's brother and discusses his associations with Sunninghill, Culham and Windsor, with qualifications about the identification. This is Edward II, born in 1567, not the older Edward who claimed the Abergavenny barony. The relationship follows from joining these sources: the identification of the pedigree's Edward with Henry's brother is strongly supported by name, place, family and chronology, rather than stated in a single document giving the complete descent. The pedigree includes later additions and does not date the marriage simply by its visitation heading. Neville's registered will, dated 30 April 1615, names "my brother Edward Nevill" in the bequest to Edward's children Henry and Anne; Anne is also identified as Neville's wife's goddaughter: The National Archives, PROB 11/126/63, register f.26. The kinship does not establish a particular route by which Robert knew *Othello*.
3. Caroline L. Leachman, "Neville, Robert (b. 1640/41, d. in or before 1694)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, I.III, p. 244. The title page spells the surname "Nevile."
4. Nevile, *The Poor Scholar*, cast list and acts 1–5, especially 5.3–6. Gerard Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691), pp. 384–85, TCP A49533, records the 1662 publication but does not know whether it was acted; no historical performance is asserted here. UCLA's William Andrews Clark Memorial Library holds an original, PR3605.N19 P8*. The illustrations reproduce the microfilm witness associated with TCP, not a photograph of the Clark copy.
5. Nevile, *The Poor Scholar*, 2.3; Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1.1. The printed play reads "hear," where the TCP text has "heat." Unlike the closing couplet, the frequency of this expression outside Shakespeare has not been established here.
6. Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 5.5; Nevile, *The Poor Scholar*, 5.3–6. The comparison concerns the arrangement of the ending rather than an exact quotation. A commendatory poem invokes Jonson's audience, and the prologue names Randolph; the comedy's literary affiliations extend beyond Shakespeare.

7. For Robert's parentage and children, see Thomas Seccombe, "Killigrew, Robert", *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 31 (1892), and "KILLIGREW, Sir Robert (c.1580–1633)", *History of Parliament*. For Anne's father and his parentage, see T. F. Henderson, "Killigrew, Henry (d.1603)", *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 31 (1892). Read together, these biographies trace both branches to John Killigrew of Arwenack. The playwright brothers were Anne Neville's first cousins once removed. Neville's will, 30 April 1615, leaves Robert Killigrew a piece of plate worth £10: The National Archives, PROB 11/126/63, register f.26; see Chapter 9.

8. Sir William Killigrew, *Three Playes* (1665), Wing K470; Peter Beal, *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts 1450–1700*, introductions to Sir William Killigrew and Thomas Killigrew. For Thomas's 1641 publication, see Knight, "Killigrew, Thomas," cited in the following note. For Henry's play and revision, see G. A. Aitken, "Killigrew, Henry (1613–1700)", *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 31 (1892).

9. Beal, *CELM*, Thomas Killigrew introduction; Joseph Knight, "Killigrew, Thomas (1612–1683)", *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 31 (1892), citing Malone's list of the company's stock plays.

10. John C. Hodges, *The Library of William Congreve* (New York Public Library, 1955), catalogue item 541; Peter W. M. Blayney, *The First Folio of Shakespeare* (Folger Shakespeare Library, 1991), p. 34. Blayney confirms Charles's ownership but explains that there is no evidence for the suggestion that his father Thomas previously owned this copy. It should not be confused with Folger copy 73: the abbreviated name "T: Killig" in that volume is not in Thomas Killigrew's handwriting (pp. 34–35).

# Part VII

The Case as a Whole

# The Life and the Changing Plays

Chapter 58

Around 1601, Shakespeare's dramatic career changes. The sustained run of festive comedies ends with *Twelfth Night*; darker comedies and the great tragedies follow. At the same turning point, Henry Neville lost his embassy, his liberty and his public reputation in the aftermath of the Essex rebellion.[1]

The change belongs to a larger pattern: the plays' shifting interests and forms follow the course of Neville's documented life.

## Classical learning and Italy

Neville's preparation began well before the surviving plays. In 1578 he left England with his Oxford tutor, Henry Savile, for about four years of travel and study. The journey brought him into the company of scholars, collectors and readers of ancient texts. At Padua in 1581 he encountered the university world evoked by Lucentio's arrival in *The Taming of the Shrew*. In January 1582 Dudith's correspondence places him with Savile at Venice. Dudith's earlier letter to Neville discusses the books he had left at Breslau and asks him and Savile to obtain unfamiliar mathematical and philosophical works.[2]

The early plays combine precisely these two interests: classical literature and Italy. *Titus Andronicus*, Shakespeare's earliest tragedy, builds its Roman world through sustained engagement with ancient authors. Ovid's story of Philomela supplies the means of recognizing Lavinia's suffering; the revenge plot works with Senecan tragedy; Virgil and Livy contribute further patterns of action and memory. Pramit Chaudhuri's study of the play's Latin quotations shows how carefully their meanings change with their dramatic setting. Its classicism is part of the machinery of the play.[3]

Savile's English Tacitus appeared in 1591. As the early Shakespeare plays took shape, Neville's former tutor was translating the historian of imperial power, succession and conspiracy.[4]

Italy, meanwhile, supplies the young travellers and lovers of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the educational and marriage world of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and the feuding households of *Romeo and Juliet*. Verona, Milan, Padua, Venice and Mantua recur across the plays. Neville's documented Italian experience gives that concentration a substantial biographical setting.

Melissa Emerson Walter's *The Italian Novella and Shakespeare's Comic Heroines* traces Italian storytelling, courtesy and women's verbal authority in the early comedies: young men learning social conduct, women testing suitors, households negotiating marriage. Neville's Italian education was followed by marriage into the learned Cooke–Killigrew family. Chapter 19 examines the Padua setting and the Cooke–Killigrew family connections.[5]

## The English histories

The Italian plays overlap with the English histories. Through the 1590s, the *Henry VI* plays, *Richard III*, *Richard II*, *King John* and the two parts of *Henry IV* return to inheritance, disputed succession, noble service and rebellion.

Back in England, Neville became a husband, landowner and parliamentary representative, with responsibilities in Sussex and Berkshire. His own family's role in the Wars of the Roses is prominent in the *Henry VI* plays. Allegiance and legitimate rule belonged both to his ancestry and to his working political life.[6]

## The embassy and the French plays, 1599–1601

In 1599 Neville became Elizabeth's ambassador to Henri IV. Three plays cluster around these years: *Henry V*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*.

*Henry V*, conventionally dated 1599, makes the relationship between England and France its central business. Ambassadors carry challenges and negotiate claims; French speech occupies whole exchanges; the conclusion joins diplomacy to courtship. Neville was now professionally engaged in the relations between those two kingdoms. The fifth-act Chorus is usually read as anticipating Essex's return from Ireland in 1599, the year Neville took up the embassy. France and Essex—the man whose fall would ruin Neville two years later—thus meet within the same play.[7]

*As You Like It* turns to a French setting and gives one of the exiled duke's companions the name Amiens. Neville's embassy brought him through the Amiens region in 1600, during the peace negotiations. The place and the play belong to the same French phase.[8]

Henry Cuffe, Neville's close associate through Savile and Essex, supplies another connection at this point. His *The Differences of the Ages of Man's Life* was published after his death in 1607, but its title dates its writing to **1600**. Neville likely knew it in manuscript. Chapter 23 compares Jaques's reshaping of the seven ages and his compound melancholy with Cuffe's account of bodily composition and temperament.[9, 10]

*Twelfth Night* is set in Illyria, but its names and diplomatic language bring it close to Neville's correspondence. He investigated the claimant to the identity of King Sebastian of Portugal and reported the visit of Virginio Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, to Elizabeth's court. Within eleven weeks in the winter of 1600–01, Neville's letters discuss both Sebastian and Orsino, a year before the comedy's first recorded performance. Robert K. Turner Jr already used Neville's letter as evidence for the play's Orsino context.[11]

## The break: Essex, imprisonment and the dark plays

On 8 February 1601 Essex's rising failed. Its consequences transformed Neville's life. His close associate Henry Cuffe was executed; Southampton was sentenced

to death and then reprieved; Neville was disgraced and imprisoned. In his declaration of 2 March he explained conversations about the proposed seizure of the court, drawing on Tacitus to judge the danger of a conspiracy that could be justified only by success. By April he was pleading with Cecil to limit what would be published about him. His name, as well as his freedom, was at stake.[12]

The change in the plays is equally conspicuous. The sustained festive-comedy phase ends around *Twelfth Night* and does not return. After this boundary, the comedies themselves change. *Troilus and Cressida* corrodes the ideals of love and honour; *All's Well* forces a marriage through conditions and deception; *Measure for Measure* places a condemned prisoner, sexual coercion and the abuse of office at its centre. Marriage no longer guarantees the generous comic release familiar from the earlier plays.[13]

The former ambassador became a prisoner fearful of public disgrace. The plays examine confinement, judgment, compromised authority and the destruction of a good name. *Measure for Measure* makes imprisonment and mercy central; *Hamlet*, at the chronological boundary, joins corrupted counsel and surveillance to concern for a reputation that will survive death.

A. L. Morton contrasts the martial confidence of *Henry V* with the disillusionment of *Troilus and Cressida*, associates Hector's destruction with Essex's fate, and places the great tragedies within a broader political and social crisis. The connection between Essex and the darker drama was recognized by many scholars independently of the Neville argument.[14]

## Freedom without restoration

Release from the Tower in April 1603 did not restore Neville to state employment. On 16 February 1604 he told Winwood that he could not repay his news with equally valuable intelligence:

> To requite your advertisements with others of like worth, I cannot; and I know your other friends which know more than I, will not leave you ignorant of such things as pass here.

The former ambassador now depended on people better informed than himself. In the same letter he described life at court "without any office, business or regard" and said that he would leave public affairs to those entrusted with them. On 21 June 1605 he returned to the subject:

> But I am out of my proper orb when I enter into state matters; I will therefore leave these considerations to those to whom they appertain, and think of my husbandry in the country [...].[15]

He still asked Winwood for news. Parliamentary and county work continued, but those responsibilities did not replace the central employment and access he

had lost. The darkest plays belong to these years of frustrated service and exclusion, not simply to the two years of imprisonment. *Othello* and *Measure for Measure* were performed at court in 1604; *King Lear* and *Macbeth* are usually placed around 1605–06, followed by *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*. Neville's complaints of 1604–05 fall within this sustained tragic period.[16]

The man who had represented Elizabeth before Henri IV now described himself as outside his proper sphere. The plays repeatedly show authority lost or abused, honour destroyed, and service repaid with rejection.

Chapter 14's exploratory vocabulary study records an increase in selected diplomatic and administrative terms through the embassy and its aftermath.[17]

## Recovery and the romances

From about 1608 come the romances: *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. Broken families reunite, rulers discover their errors, and apparent death gives way to recognition. Suffering remains, but loss can be repaired.

Neville's prospects were broadening too. His parliamentary standing grew, and his campaign for the secretaryship offered renewed national influence. By 1612 he was proposing a reconciliation between James and the Commons.[18]

The recovery was gradual: new ventures could coexist with exclusion from central office. Neville served on the Virginia Company's first council in 1606–07. On 23 May 1609 the Second Virginia Charter named Neville, Southampton and William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, to the governing council resident in England.

Three days earlier, on 20 May, Thomas Thorpe had registered Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. Its dedication references the "adventurer in setting forth." Katherine Duncan-Jones reads that language as an allusion to the Virginia enterprise, joining the publisher's venture to the colonial interests of William Herbert, whom she identifies as "Mr. W.H."[19] The dedication and the charter thus bring the publication into the same circle of patrons and company councillors to which Neville belonged. Chapter 59 sets out this connection.

In July 1609 the company's flagship, the *Sea Venture*, was wrecked on Bermuda. Accounts of the survivors and the colony reached England in 1610, before *The Tempest*'s recorded court performance on 1 November 1611. Neville belonged to the institution directing the venture whose shipwreck and deliverance supplied material for *The Tempest*. The company, the Sonnets dedication and the late play converge in these years of his renewed public prospects.[20]

He did not obtain the secretaryship. Yet these years of renewed opportunity coincide with plays imagining the recovery of what had seemed lost.

## The closing years

The final collaborations with John Fletcher, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, are usually dated 1613 and 1613–14. Neville's health was gravely impaired

by early 1615; he died on 10 July. The conventional sequence of the final plays falls within his lifetime. Four years after his death, Thomas Walkley's dedication to Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* acknowledged that Neville's eldest son, Sir Henry Neville, had supplied the play and requested its publication. The family thus had a documented role in bringing a play by Shakespeare's final collaborator into print, as Chapter 52 explains.[21]

The force of the argument lies in the sequence. The interests change, the festive comedies end, the darkest plays follow, and restoration becomes imaginable again. With *Henry VIII*, the sequence returns directly to Neville's own family's story. His great-uncle George Neville, Lord Abergavenny, appears in the opening scene; the banquet scene reworks the chronicle episode involving his grandfather, Sir Edward Neville: Wolsey now identifies the disguised king correctly, removing Edward's part in the embarrassing mistake. Chapter 38 examines both connections. The comparison that began with classical learning, Italy and the English histories closes by circling back to Neville's own relatives.[22]

## Notes and sources

1. Approximate composition dates follow the Royal Shakespeare Company's "Timeline of Shakespeare's Plays". Years are numbered from 1 January.
2. Andreas Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, ed. Nicolaus Szymański and Ida Radziejowska (Budapest: reciti, 2019), no. 1072, pp. 87–88, and no. 1115, pp. 207–209, especially p. 208; edition. Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485–1603* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), and Will Tosh, *Male Friendship and Testimonies of Love in Shakespeare's England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), discussed with the itinerary evidence in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 distinguishes Neville's documented locations from the possible routes of the travelling company.
3. Pramit Chaudhuri, "Classical Quotation in Titus Andronicus", *ELH* 81, no. 3 (2014): 787–810, especially pp. 787–790 and 791–803. The article analyzes the dramatic work of Latin quotation and its classical contexts; it does not advocate Neville's authorship and accepts a contribution by George Peele. *Titus* is described here as the earliest tragedy, not as demonstrably the first Shakespeare play.
4. Tacitus, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba*, trans. Henry Savile (Oxford, 1591), TCP A13331. Chapters 2, 6 and 16 examine the personal and scholarly connections. For Neville's early interest in French affairs, see also Léonard Constant, *A Christian and Wholsom Admonition Directed to the Frenchmen*, trans. Christopher Fetherstone (London, 1587), dedication to Henry and Anne Neville, sigs. A5r–A6r. The embassy sharpened an existing interest; it did not begin his knowledge of France.
5. Melissa Emerson Walter, *The Italian Novella and Shakespeare's Comic Heroines* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), introduction and Chapter 1, "Filomena's Voice: Female Character and Authority in Shakespeare's Early Italianate Comedies," pp. 27–43. Walter's early-comedy discussion includes *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Much Ado About Nothing*; *Romeo and Juliet* is included here as an Italian-set tragedy, not within that comic category. English intermediaries supplied major Italian plots, including Arthur Brooke for *Romeo and Juliet* and George Gascoigne's *Supposes* for the *Shrew* subplot. Travel is a biographical correspondence, not a prerequisite for access to those plots.
6. Shakespeare, *Henry VI*, Parts 1–3, especially Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, and his son Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick; *Richard III*, *Richard II*, *King John* and *Henry IV*, Parts 1–2. The family and political comparisons appear in Chapters 1, 3–4, 17 and 20–21. The Italian plays and histories overlap in the 1590s; they are not presented as mutually exclusive periods.

7. *Henry V*, Act 5 Chorus; Chapter 22 gives the French and diplomatic comparisons. The usual identification of the returning general as Essex supports a 1599 context. The Choruses are absent from the 1600 quarto; the reference is not an independently dated manuscript record. The argument does not require the play to have been written after Neville's first French audience, or treat the inherited ambassador episodes as his invention.
8. Neville's 1600 Amiens itinerary and its relation to the added character are documented in Chapter 23. The RSC places the play in 1599. The name was also familiar through the siege of 1597: the connection is not exclusive geographical knowledge or a means of forcing a later composition date.
9. Henry Cuffe, *The Differences of the Ages of Man's Life* (London: Arnold Hatfield for Martin Clearke, 1607), title page and R.M.'s dedicatory epistle, facsimile, Folger catalogue. The title dates the writing to 1600. R.M. describes a transcript of what he was informed was Cuffe's original; he does not name Neville as a reader. Manuscript access is inferred from the close association documented in Chapter 23. Sidney Lee, "Cuff, Henry," *Dictionary of National Biography*, describes the Savile and Essex connections. The title supplies no month and cannot settle the order of composition of the treatise and play.
10. Alan Taylor Bradford, "Jaques' Distortion of the Seven-Ages Paradigm", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 27.2 (1976), pp. 171–176, especially 173–175. Bradford establishes the planetary comparison using Cuffe; identifying Cuffe as a personal model for Jaques is the proposal examined in Chapter 23. That chapter quotes Cuffe's account of composition and melancholy alongside *As You Like It*, 4.1. The resemblance concerns ideas as well as shared terms; it is not a claim that either "simples" or elemental composition originated with Cuffe.
11. Neville to Winwood, 15 November 1600 and 29 January 1601, in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer (London, 1725), I, pp. 273–275 and 291–292; Orsino letter. The printed January heading uses the year 1600. Robert K. Turner Jr, "The Text of Twelfth Night," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (1975): 128–138, p. 134 n. 16, article; the Sebastian evidence is discussed fully in Chapter 24. John Manningham, *Diary*, ed. John Bruce (London, 1868), p. 18, records the performance on 2 February 1602 (1601/2 in dual-year notation). The unnamed comedy performed for Orsini on 6 January 1601 cannot securely be identified as *Twelfth Night*.
12. Neville's declaration, 2 March 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279, f. 15 onwards; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1601–1603*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1870), pp. 5–8. Neville to Cecil, 22 April 1601, Cecil Papers 86/1, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XI (1906), pp. 175–176. Chapters 6–7 give the documents, the distinction between the earlier court-seizure scheme and the rising, and the sequence of Neville's custody. His transfer to the Tower was on 1 May; the February rising did not place him there immediately.
13. The RSC dates *Twelfth Night* to 1601, *Hamlet* to 1600, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to 1597–1601. These ranges prevent identifying a precise day on which the comic phase ended or asserting that *Hamlet* followed the rising. "Festive comedy" describes the sustained earlier form; later plays retain comic scenes and sometimes happy endings. The romances are discussed separately. The argument concerns a change in the balance and character of the work, not the invention of tragedy in 1601.
14. A. L. Morton, "Shakespeare's Historical Outlook," in *The Matter of Britain: Essays in a Living Culture* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1966), pp. 36–52, especially pp. 51–52 and notes 14–15; scan. Morton interprets the change through war and broader social conflict as well as Essex. His comparison supports the history of this critical interpretation, not a consensus about a single cause or an endorsement of Neville.
15. Neville to Winwood, 16 February 1603/4 and 21 June 1605, Winwood, *Memorials*, II, p. 17 and pp. 77–78. Spelling and capitalization modernized. The February year is expressed as 1604. In that letter plague in Neville's household also explains an immediate interruption of company and correspondence; the broader comments concern the absence of suitable employment and standing at court. "Advertisements" means reports or intelligence. The June letter invokes Horace's praise of country life but then asks for continued news. These letters doc-

ument withdrawal from central state employment, not complete inactivity or total exclusion from political information. Chapter 8 sets them beside his substantial parliamentary and local responsibilities.

16. James I to the councillors at Whitehall, 5 April 1603, Folger image record; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1603–1610*, p. 2, item 18, report of 10 April confirming release. RSC chronology for the plays. Chapter 31 compares Neville's Tacitus passage with *Macbeth*. The declaration postdates the Caesar tragedy seen by Thomas Platter in September 1599 and is not treated as that play's source. Nor are the 1604 court performances assigned to Neville's imprisonment.
17. Original diplomatic-vocabulary study, Chapter 14. The four assigned periods give rounded rates of 129 occurrences per million words before 1599, 193 in 1599–1600, 282 in 1601–03 and 160 afterwards; comparison drama changes much less. Those assignments differ from the RSC chronology. Holding the panel and counts fixed, moving *Measure for Measure* to 1604 leaves a rate of 312.6 in the remaining peak-period group; moving *All's Well* as well gives 315.2, and also moving *Hamlet* to 1600 gives 327.3. The smaller groups make the precise boundary less secure. These are sensitivity calculations, not a complete redating or a new significance test. Chapter 14 retains the corpus definitions, exploratory 5.7% matched-panel result and unrestricted-window result; neither is a probability of authorship.
18. Andrew Thrush, "Neville, Sir Henry I (1564–1615), of Billingbear", in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010); Chapters 8–9 set out the parliamentary work, investments and secretaryship campaign with the underlying documents. Tom Cain, "John Donne and the Ideology of Colonization," *English Literary Renaissance* 31, no. 3 (2001): 440–476, p. 443, places Neville on the first Virginia council in 1606–1607; Chapter 36 discusses this earlier involvement as well as the 1609 charter.
19. The *Sonnets* were registered on 20 May 1609: Stationers' Register, Liber C, fol. 183v, Shakespeare Documented. For Duncan-Jones's reading of the dedication's Virginia allusion, see Mark Vessey, "The Citie of God (1610) and the London Virginia Company," *Augustinian Studies* 30.2 (1999): 257–281, pp. 265–266 n. 26, discussed in Chapter 59. The connection to Neville follows his inclusion in the charter's resident council.
20. James I, Second Charter of Virginia, 23 May 1609, council resident in England; Natalie Zacek, "William Strachey (1572–1621)", *Encyclopedia Virginia*. The company's *True Declaration* and Sylvester Jourdain's *Discovery of the Barmudas* appeared in 1610; Strachey's longer account remained unprinted until 1625. Chapter 36 distinguishes institutional access from the unestablished route of that manuscript to Neville. The RSC dates *Pericles* to 1608, before the second charter, and *The Tempest* to 1611.
21. RSC chronology, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*; John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 9 February 1615, in Norman Egbert McClure, ed., *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, I (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1939), p. 577; Théodore de Mayerne, *Opera medica*, ed. Joseph Browne (London, 1701), pp. 198–203, case dated 14 May 1615; James Whitelocke, *Liber Famelicus*, ed. John Bruce (London, 1858), pp. 46–47. Chapter 9 quotes the illness reports and death record. Collaboration also occurs earlier in the canon, including *Titus*, *Timon* and *Pericles*; late partnership does not itself establish illness. *Henry VIII* was being performed when the Globe burned on 29 June 1613. The First Folio appeared in 1623, eight years after Neville's death; its publication and preservation history is distinct from this composition chronology. For the son's provision of the play, see Beaumont and Fletcher, *A King and No King* (1619), sig. A2r, Thomas Walkley's dedication to Sir Henry Neville, Boston Public Library copy; Chapter 52 reproduces and discusses the dedication.
22. Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, Acts 1.1 and 1.4; Raphael Holinshed and continuators, *The Third Volume of Chronicles* (London, 1587), p. 922, Wellcome Library copy. The banquet scene, 1.4, is generally assigned to Fletcher; the origin of the decision to change Holinshed remains uncertain. Chapter 38 establishes the relationships and compares the banquet scene with its chronicle source: George Neville, Lord Abergavenny, was the brother of Sir Edward Neville, the ambassador's grandfather.

# The Four Dedications

Chapter 59

The four dedications place the works within a history of literary patronage: *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* address Southampton in Shakespeare's name; the *Sonnets* address "Mr. W.H." through the publisher Thomas Thorpe; the First Folio names William and Philip Herbert through John Heminge and Henry Condell after the author's death. William Herbert is the strongest candidate for "W.H." For the Neville case, the significance is patronage: these earls stood above him in rank and could advance his career and his family's interests. Neville was a knight and country gentleman; Southampton, Pembroke and Montgomery had the standing and access of great aristocratic patrons.

Southampton championed Neville's bid for high office. The Sidney–Herbert connection stretched from his father's friendship with Sir Henry Sidney, through his own travels with Robert Sidney, to Herbert patronage of his descendants. The following sections bring those earlier chapters together. The dedications point back to the documented history of Neville's ambitions, friendships and family fortunes.[1]

## The first two dedications: Southampton

In 1593 the author of *Venus and Adonis* offered Southampton "the first heir of my invention" and promised "graver labor." The following year's *Lucrece* is usually read as the fulfilment of that promise. Its dedication begins:

> The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end; [...] [2]

These are the only two dedications signed "William Shakespeare." They place Southampton at the beginning of the author's public literary identity.

Neville himself supplies the earliest connection. In his declaration of March 1601, he recalled Southampton's earlier time in Lord Burghley's house. Southampton remained a minor until October 1594, after both poems had been entered for publication. Neville's remark establishes earlier acquaintance, without dating their last conversation or establishing their closeness in 1593–94.[3]

Southampton was chosen to approach Neville about the proposed seizure of Elizabeth's court. Both men were later imprisoned following Essex's failed rising in February 1601 and released in April 1603. Southampton subsequently championed Neville's bid for the secretaryship; their opponent Northampton reportedly described Neville as Southampton's "dear Damon," invoking the classical example of devoted friendship.[4]

Southampton's support was patronage in action. The earl used his standing to promote a knight's claim to one of the great offices of state. Their friendship had grown through shared imprisonment, but it operated across a difference in

rank and influence. The recipient of Shakespeare's two signed dedications was a man who actively sought Neville's advancement.

## The third dedication: "Mr. W.H." and William Herbert

The 1609 *Sonnets* offer a different problem. Thomas Thorpe wishes happiness and the immortality promised by the poet to "Mr. W.H.," the "onlie begetter" of the ensuing sonnets. William Herbert supplies those initials in their natural order. More importantly, he appears repeatedly in the patronage history of Thorpe's other books.[5]

Three titles make the case concrete:

- **1609: *The Discovery of a New World*.** John Healey's translation of Joseph Hall's *Mundus alter et idem* was entered by Thorpe and printed by George Eld, the printer of the *Sonnets*. Healey dedicated it to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke.
- **1610: Augustine's *City of God*.** Eld printed Healey's translation with a dedication to Pembroke signed by Thorpe. It recalls the patron's earlier protection and explicitly brings Virginia into the account of the translator's movements.
- **1610 and 1616: Epictetus.** Thorpe's address in the 1610 edition was to John Florio. It credited Florio with obtaining protection for Healey's earlier work and sought the same patron's help again. In the 1616 edition, Thorpe addressed his dedication directly to Pembroke and explained Healey's wish that the translations should be offered to him.[6]

The 1616 edition was printed for Edward Blount, who seven years later co-published the First Folio.[7]

Mark Vessey's study of the English Augustine draws these books together. He explains Pembroke's suitability by "his previous favors to Thorpe and Healey and his prominence in the Virginia Company." Vessey also directs readers to Katherine Duncan-Jones's substantial case for identifying the *Sonnets*' "W.H." with Herbert.[8]

Virginia sharpens the context. Thorpe registered the *Sonnets* on 20 May 1609. Three days later the Second Virginia Charter named Pembroke, Southampton and Neville to the company's resident council in England. Duncan-Jones, as discussed by Vessey, reads Thorpe's "well-wishing adventurer in setting forth" against this moment of colonial enterprise. In her reading, Thorpe risks an investment in publishing while Herbert supports expeditions to the New World.[9]

Herbert is the strongest identification: the initials fit, and this publishing sequence repeatedly seeks his protection. Healey dedicated the 1609 *Discovery* to him; Thorpe himself signed the Pembroke dedications of 1610 and 1616. Calling an earl "Mr." remains an objection, and the identification is disputed. But the case rests on a sequence of actual dedications, not initials alone. Nor does iden-

tifying the dedicatee settle who inspired every sonnet or what Thorpe meant by "begetter."[10]

## The fourth dedication: from Sidney friendship to Herbert patronage

In 1623 there is no riddle about the names. The First Folio addresses William, Earl of Pembroke, and Philip, Earl of Montgomery. Heminge and Condell explain that the brothers had favoured the plays and their author while he was alive:

> and have prosecuted both them, and their Author living,
> with so much favour[11]

Here "prosecuted" means pursued: the brothers' patronage is presented as an existing relationship, continued in the collected edition.

For Neville, this was a family connection already more than a generation old. Sir Henry Sidney, the Herbert brothers' maternal grandfather, was an intimate friend of Neville's father. Writing to his son Robert on 28 October 1580, Sidney declared:

> There can be no greater love than of long time hath been, and yet is, between Sir Harry Neville and me, and so will continue till our lives end. Love you those we have done, and do.[12]

The younger men carried that friendship forward. Neville travelled with Robert Sidney, the future Folio dedicatees' uncle. Robert's brother Philip urged him to remain with Savile and undertake exercises with Neville: there was "great expectation of you both." Their sister Mary Sidney Herbert was William and Philip Herbert's mother. Neville's European education placed him within the family from which the Folio's patrons emerged.

By 1605 Pembroke was writing on behalf of Neville's secretary John Packer. In 1612–13 Neville brokered a reconciliation between Pembroke and the king's favourite Rochester, offering to deliver Winwood's letter to the earl "with mine own hands." After Overbury's imprisonment in April 1613, Pembroke and Neville counselled Rochester together. Pembroke backed Neville's secretary; Neville supplied mediation and counsel—reciprocal dealings across a difference in rank.[13]

Herbert involvement with Neville's family continued after his death and across the Folio years. In November 1621 a Sir Henry Neville, probably the ambassador's eldest son, was returned for Wilton on Pembroke's interest. In December 1628 Philip, as Lord Chamberlain, appointed the son a gentleman of the privy chamber in extraordinary.[14] After the son's death in June 1629, William received the benefit of the wardship of his under-age heir Richard—a legal and financial stake, not by itself an act of generosity.[15]

William's secretary John Thorowgood married the son's widow, Elizabeth Smythe, and acquired Richard's wardship. He became stepfather to Richard and

his younger brother Henry, the future author of *The Isle of Pines*, to whom he left his French and Italian books.[16]

A friendship between the fathers became companionship among the sons, political cooperation with William Herbert, and continuing involvement with Neville's descendants. The brothers who received Shakespeare's collected plays belonged to a family bound to Neville's across generations.

## The poets who introduce the Folio

The Folio's verses are part of the same evidence. They establish literary authority, mourn the author and promise his survival in print. Their writers connect this aristocratic patronage to Neville's literary friendships, kinship and the publishers who brought the works into print.

Ben Jonson supplies the portrait verses and the great memorial poem. His own *Epigrams*, dedicated to William Herbert, contain an eighteen-line address to Neville beginning "Who now calls on thee, Nevil, is a Muse." Chapter 46 compares its opening with his addresses to Donne and Beaumont and with Sonnet 38. The collection unites the Folio's leading poet, its chief dedicatee and Neville in one printed volume.[17]

Hugh Holland, author of the Folio sonnet "Upon the Lines and Life," appears with Donne and a Sir Henry Neville in the *Convivium Philosophicum* associated with the Mitre Tavern. Zachary Lesser identifies that Neville as Neville of Billingbear.[18]

Leonard Digges was Neville's second cousin once removed; his brother Dudley's dealings with Neville are documented in the Overbury investigation. Dudley's *Foure Paradoxes* also supplies a proposed source for *Coriolanus* (Chapter 34): one brother connects to the play's sources, the other to its Folio tribute. Leonard's *Gerardo* (1622), published by Blount, was dedicated to the same Herbert brothers who received the Folio the next year. Kinship, publisher and dedicatees converge.[19]

"I.M.", generally identified as James Mabbe, is connected through Blount's publication of his *The Rogue* (1622–23), with commendatory verses by Jonson and Digges; no direct Mabbe–Neville contact has been established.[20]

Southampton, recipient of the author's two signed dedications, championed Neville's advancement. William Herbert is the strongest candidate for Thorpe's "W.H." and, with Philip, a named patron of the Folio. The brothers belonged to the Sidney family Neville had known since his youth; their later dealings extended to his son and grandson. On the Neville hypothesis, the dedications place the works under the protection of aristocrats whose influence mattered to their author and whose family connections outlasted him. The fit is between literary patronage and a documented life.

## Notes and sources

1. The evidence brought together here is presented in Chapter 2 (Sidney family friendship and travel), 39 (Southampton), 49 (Pembroke and Neville) and 53 (the Herbert brothers and Neville's descendants). "Patronage" describes support for careers, offices and family interests; it does not imply a surviving record of payment for Shakespeare's writing.
2. William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis* (1593), dedication, sig. A2r, first-edition record; *Lucrece* (1594), dedication, sig. A2r, first-edition record. The quoted opening of *Lucrece* follows the Folger edition. "First" here concerns the works initially published under Shakespeare's name, not a claim that no play had yet been written. Chapter 39 prints the complete dedications.
3. Chapter 39 reproduces Neville's declaration of 2 March 1601 and examines Southampton's minority alongside the publication dates of the two poems. The declaration establishes earlier acquaintance, not the date of a literary transaction.
4. Chapter 6 recounts Southampton's approach and the Drury House meeting. Chapter 39 supplies the release order, the secretaryship correspondence and the source for Northampton's "dear Damon." It also quotes Drury's letter to Neville of 6 May 1600: the Southampton letter among Neville's papers was addressed to Drury, not Neville.
5. *Shake-speares Sonnets* (London: George Eld for Thomas Thorpe, 1609), dedication, first-edition record and image. The signature is "T. T." The claim for Herbert concerns the dedicatee of the published volume; it does not equate every addressee within the sequence with him.
6. Mark Vessey, "The Citie of God (1610) and the London Virginia Company," *Augustinian Studies* 30.2 (1999): 257–281, pp. 265–267 and notes 26–36. Joseph Hall, *The Discovery of a New World*, translated by John Healey (1609), STC 12686, dedication signed "I. H."; Augustine, *Of the Citie of God*, translated by Healey (1610), dedication signed "Th. Th.," TCP A22641; Epictetus, *His Manuall. And Cebes His Table* (1610), address to Florio signed "TH. TH.," TCP A00303. Vessey identifies Pembroke as the patron sought through Florio. The 1610 Epictetus issue represented by A00303 names Edward Blount and William Barrett on its title page; Thorpe's signed address must be distinguished from the imprint.
7. *Epictetus Manuall. Cebes Table. Theophrastus Characters*, translated by John Healey (London: George Purslowe for Edward Blount, 1616), STC 10426, ESTC S101637, Folger catalogue. Vessey, p. 267 and n. 33, supplies the account of Thorpe's dedication and Healey's intention. The change of dedication is not a claim that Florio ceased to be involved, or that Thorpe and Eld produced the 1616 edition under the same imprint as in 1610.
8. Vessey, "The Citie of God," p. 280 (quotation); pp. 265–266 n. 26, discussing Katherine Duncan-Jones, ed., *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Arden Shakespeare (1997), pp. 53–69. Duncan-Jones's argument is cited here through Vessey. Vessey's study concerns the translation's religious and colonial setting; it does not advance Neville's authorship. Its suggested chronology of Healey's voyage is not needed for this patronage argument.
9. *Sonnets* entry, Stationers' Register, 20 May 1609, Liber C, fol. 183v, Shakespeare Documented; Second Charter of Virginia, 23 May 1609, resident council clause. Philip Herbert appears in the wider company list, not this council clause. For Duncan-Jones's interpretation see Vessey, pp. 265–266 n. 26. The extension to Neville follows the charter, not a claim made by Duncan-Jones. The publisher is the grammatical "adventurer"; the colonial resonance is an interpretation of his wording, not proof of Thorpe's individual subscription.
10. The identity of "W.H." remains disputed. The preference for Herbert argued here follows the publication evidence discussed by Vessey, pp. 265–267; it is not a claim of scholarly consensus. Thorpe uses Pembroke's title in his signed dedications of 1610 and 1616, making "Mr." a real difficulty for the identification.
11. *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (1623), dedication, sig. A2r–v; address to readers; Jonson and Digges poems. Boston Public Library copy, facsimile. Dedication quotation preserves the printed line break, with spelling modernized. Heminge and Condell sign the address; the attribution of its composition is a separate question. The poems do not name Neville as Shakespeare.
12. Chapter 2 reproduces Sir Henry Sidney's letter to Robert of 28 October 1580 and Philip Sidney's letter to Robert of 18 October 1580, with the documentary references, and identifies Mary

Sidney Herbert as the brothers' mother. The quotation concerns the ambassador's father, the elder Sir Henry Neville. Robert and Philip Sidney were the Herbert brothers' maternal uncles.

13. Chapter 49 documents Pembroke's support for Packer in February 1604/5 and prints the relevant Naunton, Neville and Packer letters. Neville's undated letter is provisionally placed in April 1613, although the Historical Manuscripts Commission's introduction suggests it concerns the November 1612 reconciliation. Packer's report is dated 22 April 1613. The two reconciliation accounts need not describe separate events.
14. Chapter 53 documents the November 1621 Wilton return and the December 1628 court appointment, following Andrew Thrush's History of Parliament biography of Sir Henry Neville III (1588–1629). Thrush treats the identification of the 1621 Wilton member as probably the ambassador's son, not certain; the later appointment is securely assigned to him.
15. Chapter 53 reproduces the calendar entry for the Crown's grant to William Herbert on 3 November 1629 of the benefit of Richard Neville's wardship. Richard was the ambassador's grandson, not his son. The grant alone does not establish upbringing in Pembroke's household; Thorowgood's subsequent acquisition of the wardship is a separate event.
16. Chapter 53 documents Thorowgood's service to Pembroke, marriage to Elizabeth Smythe Neville, acquisition of Richard's wardship and bequest of French and Italian books to his stepson Henry in 1657. Richard, the ward, and Henry, the writer, were different grandsons of the ambassador. The precise terms by which the wardship passed to Thorowgood have not been established here.
17. Chapter 46 prints Jonson's complete epigram "To Sir Henry Nevil" (*Epigrams*, CIX) and compares it with his addresses to Donne and Beaumont and with Sonnet 38. The collection's dedication names William Herbert. The verbal comparison is interpretive; the named addressee and dedicatee are printed facts.
18. Chapter 45 reproduces the manuscript list and poem and gives Zachary Lesser's identification of Neville of Billingbear, together with the scholarly disagreement over which Sir Henry Neville is intended. The identification used here follows Lesser. The gathering is not evidence of Folio planning.
19. Chapter 49 sets out the Digges pedigree, Dudley's examination of 6 November 1615, and Leonard's dedication of *Gerardo* (1622) to the Herbert brothers. Leonard, not Dudley, wrote the Folio tribute. For Dudley's contribution, see Thomas and Dudley Digges, *Foure Paradoxes* (1604), fourth paradox, p. 104, TCP A20463; Andrew Hadfield, "Shakespeare and the Digges Brothers," *Reformation* 25.1 (2020), 2–17, especially 13–17, DOI. The source relationship is a scholarly proposal; Dudley's discussion of Coriolanus is explicit. The chapter also documents their stepfather Thomas Russell's links with the Neville family and Shakespeare's will.
20. Arthur W. Secord, "I.M. of the First Folio Shakespeare and Other Mabbe Problems," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 47 (1948): 374–381, especially pp. 374–377, article scan. Secord distinguishes the attribution from a named signature and grounds it in publishing associations as well as verbal parallels. On p. 375 n. 3 he records first-edition copies of *The Rogue* with the two parts dated 1622–22, 1622–23 and 1623–23. The Folio itself prints only "I. M."

# The Evidence That Carries the Case

Chapter 60

## Windsor: the land he knew and managed

Randall Martin calls *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Shakespeare's "most locally detailed play." Its Datchet Mead, Frogmore, Herne's oak, castle ditch, Eton and deanery belong to a connected landscape. The comedy knows how people move, work and quarrel on this ground.

That ground was Neville's childhood and adult home. Billingbear stood in Windsor Forest. His letters speak of "my keepers" and "my walk," the shortage of bucks and the gift of a stag. The play's deer, keeper, lodge and venison belong to the working world visible in his correspondence. Its locality is therefore more than a place he could have visited. It is a place for which he had responsibilities.

The Elizabeth Stile witchcraft case adds a family connection to the comedy's treatment of a supposed witch. Neville's father and stepmother belonged to the recorded episode; Neville himself was abroad. This is a subsidiary point beside the central one: the canon's exceptionally local English comedy is rooted in the landscape of his home and work.[1]

## The thinking survives on paper

Neville left enough prose for comparison to reach beyond a matching name or a biographical resemblance. His dispatches, confession, *Case* and parliamentary advice show how he organized an argument, examined motives and imagined consequences.

In his autograph confession of 1601, he used Tacitus's account of Otho to explain how an undertaking would be judged by its outcome: it "would be interpreted by the success." *Macbeth* turns the same problem into drama: beginning, completion and consequence are inseparable. Neville's use of Tacitus was habitual. The 1599 dispatch on benefits that become burdens, the 1601 confession, the 1606 question whether the givers or receivers of favour had had enough, and the later *Advice* draw ancient political analysis into present choices. Scholars including David Womersley and George R. Price have independently examined Tacitus in Shakespeare. Savile's 1591 translation includes the father-and-son episode that Womersley compares with *3 Henry VI*. The connection thus joins an established source question to a writer visibly using Tacitus and to the work of his own tutor.

The *Case* brings Neville's own conduct under repeated examination. He anticipates objections, tests explanations and considers how his actions will appear to others. That movement of thought matters to *Hamlet*, but so does the personal crisis behind it. In April 1601 he feared the account that would be published of his involvement in the Essex affair. His concern for his reputation recurs across his career. A wounded public name was a continuing problem in Neville's life, and it becomes an urgent dramatic problem in *Hamlet*.

The familiar interpretation of Sonnet 107 as celebrating Southampton's liberation was developed independently of the Neville theory. Yet the royal letter of 5 April 1603 releasing Southampton also releases Neville. On that reading, the sonnet's hope of survival after confinement fits both men's circumstances.[2]

Neville consulted Plutarch, a major source for Shakespeare's Roman plays, and appears to have consulted both North's English and Amyot's French translations. His account of Antigonus and Demetrius follows North's narrative, but "confidence and concord" preserves a pairing found in the French and Greek where North has only "agreement." Neville turned that reading into political advice, urging James to restore trust between king and people by summoning Parliament.[3]

## The histories give his ancestors a larger part

In *Richard II*, John of Gaunt becomes a commanding moral voice. In *Henry V*, Westmoreland is moved from the English responsibilities assigned to him in Holinshed to the battlefield of Agincourt, where his wish for more men prompts the St Crispin's Day speech. The dramatist makes choices that enlarge the role of figures in Neville's ancestry.

The point is the change to the source. A Neville name in an English chronicle would be unsurprising. Altering the inherited account to give an ancestor a more conspicuous or honourable part is a different kind of correspondence.

The treatment of public business belongs beside these family histories. Neville worked in Parliament, managed estates and forest responsibilities, and ran the Mayfield ironworks. The cannon of *King John*, conspicuous in its medieval setting, belonged to his practical experience of ordnance. The detailed comparisons with *Coriolanus* likewise concern political procedure and judgment, including the dramatist's additions to North. They draw attention to what the plays add to their sources and what Neville knew through work.[4]

## The return and the stayed plays

The previous new Shakespeare play entered in the Stationers' Register was *The Merchant of Venice*, on 22 July 1598. Just over two years later, on 4 August 1600, *As You Like It*, *Henry V* and *Much Ado About Nothing* were grouped with Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* under the instruction "to be staied." Neville had landed

at Dover on 2 August and began his journey to London on 4 August. Fane's letter announcing his return reached London at ten at night on 3 August: the news was there the night before the stay. These dates connect an unusually concentrated intervention in the publication of Shakespeare's plays with Neville's return from France. Appendix A reproduces the letter, its postal endorsements and the register entry.

## The embassy supplies unusually particular details

Neville's French reports record small things that become more interesting when placed beside dramatic choices. In May 1599 he describes an execution ordered through a provost, an office that takes a central role in *Measure for Measure*. The comparison concerns the provost's particular function in arranging an execution.

His report of Henri IV's *serviteur* courtesy at his first audience gives a contemporary diplomatic setting to Viola's "votre serviteur" in *Twelfth Night*. His attempt to dissuade someone "underhand" from a course of action resembles the covert discouragement of the wrestling in *As You Like It*, a detail absent from Lodge. His report of Henri IV in his shirt with a sword supplies another pointed comparison with Iago's arrival amid nocturnal violence in *Othello*, where the nightshirt belongs to Shakespeare's elaboration of the story.

The names in *Twelfth Night* provide a further conjunction. Neville's letters to Winwood report the claimant to the identity of King Sebastian and the visit of Virginio Orsini to Elizabeth's court. The letters fall within eleven weeks in the winter of 1600–01, a year before the comedy's first recorded performance. Robert K. Turner used the Orsino letter in discussing the play independently of the Neville authorship argument.

Neville's negotiation and Olivia's "extort thy reasons from" speech both return to "reason" in the continuation, supplying a close verbal comparison in *Twelfth Night*. *All's Well* adds a letter and a royal hearing to Boccaccio's marriage conditions, beside the written marriage promise Neville reported from Henri IV's court. These comparisons are developed in Chapters 24 and 29.[5]

These examples give the embassy argument its specificity. They are details of office, speech and action, recorded by Neville in dated correspondence and also found in the plays. Their force exceeds the general observation that an ambassador knew French politics.[6]

## The books and the people who taught him

Savile was Neville's tutor, travelling companion and lifelong friend. Dudith's correspondence shows the travelling party seeking unfamiliar texts and leaving books in his custody; Zündelin's report links Neville's studies and illness. This was an active scholarly education, sustained through people who could obtain books, introduce readers to collections and discuss what they found.

The family connections widen that setting. Neville's stepmother Elizabeth Bacon was Francis Bacon's half-sister; his wife Anne Killigrew was Bacon's first cousin through the Cooke sisters. Anne's father Henry Killigrew participated in the review of the 1587 *Holinshed*, while her uncle William owned a copy of the 1577 edition. The chronicles behind the histories belonged to the work and reading of Neville's close relations.

Katherine Cooke's poem to her sister Mildred supplies a particularly striking conjunction of family life and literary form. Its Latin appeal concerning Henry Killigrew uses praise, mock repudiation and a playful declaration of war to press a family request. In the Latin lesson of *The Taming of the Shrew*, Bianca turns a classical text into a vehicle for a concealed exchange, answering a suitor with distrust and encouragement. Both passages make women's learning and verbal wit instruments of personal persuasion. Add Katherine's name and the family's connections with Padua, including Neville's own stay, and the comparison becomes substantially more particular than a general appeal to educated women.

Physical books survive as well. The Audley End Tacitus of 1574 contains extensive annotations attributed to Neville and Savile, including an undated imperial genealogy in which the two proposed hands appear together. The Audley End Theodosius bears Greek annotations attributed to Savile and a title-page inscription naming Henry Neville, in an unidentified hand. The Dionysius contains a Roman chronological annotation attributed to Neville. Five Greek historical editions in the Billingbear catalogue match the editions Savile cited in his Tacitus. Cinthio and Saxo also occur in the catalogue, providing routes to the stories behind *Othello*, *Measure for Measure* and *Hamlet*. Its date, 1780, cannot establish when every volume entered the family library, but the marked books allow the argument to move from titles towards the activity of readers.[7]

## Writers address him; his family sends a play to print

The literary witnesses are named and public. Chamber credited Neville with repeatedly urging the publication of his mathematical work and invoked Thalia in praising his expression. Fitzgeoffrey placed him in Aonian company. Carleton dedicated poetry invoking the Muses and the tragic buskin to Neville; Neville later asked for changes to the dedication and the placing of the verses. Davies praised his discretion in *Microcosmos*, a volume that also marks Shakespeare and Burbage with the initials "W.S." and "R.B."

Jonson's epigram offers a sharper textual comparison. Its first line calls on Neville through a Muse, resembling the openings to Donne and Beaumont. Its opening brings together Sonnet 38's "calls on thee" and "muse"; the later lines also echo Sonnet 29's language and rhymes. Jonson, a central voice in the First Folio, wrote a sustained personal tribute to Neville that can be read beside his tributes to recognized writers. At the Mitre, the *Convivium* poem places Neville among Donne, Hoskyns, Brooke and Holland, with the pun *Ne vile aestimet Hen-*

*ricus*. With Zachary Lesser's identification of this Neville as the Billingbear diplomat, the company includes a future Folio poet alongside him.

William Cornwallis the younger's *Encomium of Richard III* adds a different publishing connection. A manuscript dedication addresses Neville, while the work criticizes the treatment of Richard by "witty play-makers." Thomas Thorpe, publisher of the *Sonnets*, published the *Encomium* in 1616, without that dedication. Christopher Brooke's *Ghost of Richard III* praises the dramatist in the same wider literary and political world.

Then there is an actual play transaction. In 1619 Thomas Walkley stated that he had received Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* from Neville's son and returned it in print at his request. The son had administered his father's estate. The dedication does not say that the play came from that estate, but it establishes that Neville's family supplied a play text to a publisher. Walkley subsequently published *Othello*; Blount, later a Folio publisher, had registered *A King and No King*.

Neville's widow Anne's later marriage to George Carleton joins this family history to another Shakespeare witness. Thomas Vicars, who married Carleton's daughter, praised the poet whose name came from shaking and a spear in 1628. Carleton's *Astrologomania* had appeared from the Jaggard shop in 1624; Chamber's will had earlier entrusted Neville and Savile with publishing an astrology work by Carleton. The publication and its Shakespeare comparisons are examined in "Carleton, Vicars and the Jaggard Press" (Chapter 51). Hales, the L'Estrange jest book and the grandson's *Isle of Pines* extend the account of a family whose relations with learning, literature and print continued after Neville's death.[8]

## What the language tests add

The quantitative work asks whether the correspondences extend beyond selected passages. Chapter 12's two-word comparisons rank Shakespeare above other plays in 81.9 per cent of cross-group pairings, falling to 73.9 per cent with matched-length samples. These are rankings, not probabilities of authorship. A panel of nineteen terms drawn from Neville's diplomatic writing rises in the plays during and after the embassy and reaches its highest rate in the five-play group assigned to 1601–03. The rise survives removing individual terms or plays and the dating alternatives examined. It remains exploratory: 5.7 per cent of matched alternative panels produced an equal or greater rise, and the peak-versus-comparison result was 15.0 per cent. The unrestricted search for a maximum was not unusual, and word-network tests did not support the proposed effect.

Several late plays lead the broad two-word comparisons, while the nineteen diplomatic terms peak in the group assigned to 1601–03. These measure different aspects of language: recurring phrasing and the prominence of a selected professional vocabulary.

A separate frozen-feature comparison of 236 plays found a positive difference of about 0.44 standard deviations in affinity to Neville's prose profile between Shakespeare's plays and other playwrights' plays. Its primary permutation test gave p = .1169 and missed the declared .05 threshold. The result points in the expected direction, but the confirmatory test did not succeed. The studies share materials and are not independent replications; neither supplies a probability that Neville wrote Shakespeare.

Their proper place is alongside the documentary comparisons. They provide results that can be challenged and extended, including a failed confirmatory threshold that any account of the work must retain.[9]

## The evidence together

Windsor supplies the ground Neville knew and managed. His prose records his political reading, habits of reasoning and anxiety about his public name. The histories enlarge figures in his ancestry; the embassy letters supply particular details of speech and action. The annotated books and literary tributes add evidence of reading and relationships, while his son's dealings with Walkley establish a family role in bringing a play to print.

An embassy letter remains one document however many comparisons it supports. The weight comes from different kinds of record meeting at the same person. The argument is strongest where a documented experience meets a distinctive choice in the writing. Taken together, these correspondences give the Neville case its particularity: they connect the works to the land, work, reading, family and words of one identifiable man.

## Notes and sources

1. Chapter 25 reproduces Randall Martin's assessment and the local references, Neville's forest correspondence, and the Stile evidence. The forest letter illustrates his practical responsibilities; it is not presented as a source from which the play borrowed. The distinction between Neville and his father is retained throughout that discussion.
2. Chapter 42 gives the Sonnet 107 interpretation and the joint release order of 5 April 1603.
3. Chapters 9, 16, 26 and 31 examine the *Case*, reputation, Tacitus and Plutarch in detail; Chapter 11 describes the surviving prose. The Tacitus comparison in the confession concerns *Histories* 1.38. Womersley's discussion of *3 Henry VI* and Price's Germanicus proposal concern separate passages; Womersley also notes the wider tradition of commanders visiting their soldiers at night. The *Annals* passage behind the Germanicus comparison is not part of Savile's translated *Histories*.
4. Chapters 20, 17 and 22 examine Gaunt, cannon in *King John*, and Westmoreland at Agincourt; Chapter 34 examines *Coriolanus* and North. The earlier *Troublesome Reign* already has a figurative cannon reference: the argument concerns the use of artillery in Shakespeare's play, not the first occurrence of the word.
5. Chapter 29 compares *All's Well That Ends Well* with Boccaccio III.9 and Painter, first tome, novel 38, and Neville's French dispatches concerning the marriage dispute. The note of Alibech and Rustico is on the reverse of the 1591 Italian newsletter material, TNA, PRO 30/50/70/2; those names belong to Boccaccio III.10 and attest familiarity with the collection, not an annotation

of III.9. The 1555 edition's later catalogue history does not establish its date of acquisition. Chapter 27 compares *Othello* with Cinthio and the Italian newsletters of 1591, preserved in The National Archives, PRO 30/50/70/2, catalogue. Their background value and their status as examples of the news letters invoked by the play are distinguished from a claim that particular details were borrowed directly.

6. Chapters 22–24, 28 and 27 give the letters and play passages. Chapter 24 discusses Turner's use of the Orsino letter and compares Henri IV's *serviteur* courtesy with Viola's French response in *Twelfth Night* 3.1. The Sebastian and Orsini letters are dated 15 November 1600 and 29 January 1601, an interval of 75 days; the first recorded performance of *Twelfth Night* was on 2 February 1602. The provost comparison uses the execution-office sense, not all senses of the title. Chapter 23 also discusses victualling and Neville's use of "purlieu" in 1609; that later letter illustrates his vocabulary, not a document available before the usual composition date of *As You Like It*.

7. Chapters 2–3, 10, 16 and 19 document the education, relationships, books and Katherine Cooke comparison. The Latin poem is an appeal to Mildred concerning Katherine's husband; the comparison does not identify Bianca as one particular Cooke sister. Chapter 10 distinguishes the Savile annotations from the unidentified hand naming Neville in the Theodosius. The catalogue is Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, dated 7 November 1780. The library chapters retain unsuccessful or unresolved source matches, including the later Rolli *Decameron*, the 1602 Boiardo and the language or edition problems affecting Appian and Livy.

8. Chapters 21 and 45–48 examine the *Encomium*, Brooke, the Mitre company, Jonson, the Muses and *Microcosmos*. Carleton's buskin immediately describes his own poetry, not an explicit attribution of tragedies to Neville. Chapters 50–57 follow the papers and family after Neville's death, including Walkley's 1619 dedication, Hales, Nicholas L'Estrange's collection and the grandson's anonymous publication of *The Isle of Pines*. Vicars's wordplay does not itself identify Neville as Shakespeare. George Carleton, *Astrologomania* (London, 1624), title page: "Printed by W. Iaggard, for W. Turner of Oxford"; STC 4630, Folger catalogue. Chamber's proposed publication and the 1624 *Astrologomania* are not assumed to be identical texts. The "Latin spoons" jest is transmitted with "Mr. Dun" as its source; the jest-book compiler's family connection does not make every anecdote a Neville-family testimony.

9. Chapters 12–14 and 58 report the methods, denominators, comparison panels, alternative dates and unsuccessful tests. The feature freeze was not a public preregistration. Positive bootstrap estimates do not replace the reported primary permutation result. The vocabulary and affinity studies must not be treated as independent probabilities of authorship.

# Further Research

Chapter 61

The first priority is to find more of Neville's letters, especially personal correspondence and letters written before 1599. The surviving collection is weighted towards diplomacy and the Tower crisis. Much of the work in the major archives has already been done; private letter collections, private libraries and foreign archives now offer the most promising directions. Following recipients, descendants and continental contacts may uncover material catalogued under other names—or not catalogued at all.[1]

Anne Killigrew Neville's life after her husband's death deserves closer investigation. Her later marriage to George Carleton kept her within a literary and scholarly circle, but much remains to be learned about her activities, relationships and household.[2]

Neville's travels with Savile also leave important gaps. Further discoveries could establish how long he stayed in particular places, whom he met and which books he read or acquired. Foreign correspondence, university records, friendship albums and private libraries are promising places to look. The existing itinerary provides the starting points; the aim is to recover new details of his European education.[3]

The annotated books at Audley End need further study and publication. Work already done on Tacitus, Dionysius and Theodosius provides a foundation for a fuller account of Neville's and Savile's reading. Bringing the images, transcriptions, translations and handwriting comparisons together would make this evidence more accessible and help establish the extent and character of their annotations.[4]

Finally, the Billingbear catalogue provides leads to books not yet located at Audley End. Private libraries, dispersed family collections and the book trade may preserve some of them. The Pliny set's appearance at auction in 2025 shows the value of following books beyond the surviving household collection. Finding more copies with ownership marks or annotations could substantially enlarge our knowledge of Neville's library.[5]

## Notes and sources

1. Chapter 11 describes the surviving correspondence and its uneven distribution.
2. Chapter 50 examines the will, estate administration and Anne's later marriage and patronage.
3. Chapter 2 assembles the documented stages and scholarly contacts.
4. Chapters 2, 10, 34 and 39 discuss the annotated volumes and handwriting attributions.
5. Chapter 10 examines the 1780 Billingbear catalogue, provisional Audley End matches and the Pliny set's provenance.

# News before the Traveller: Neville's Return and the Stayed Plays

Appendix A

On 4 August 1600, three Shakespeare plays and one by Ben Jonson were entered together on a flyleaf of the Stationers' Register with the instruction "to be staied." Henry Neville had landed at Dover two evenings earlier and was beginning his journey to London that Monday. But news of his return was already in London. The letter announcing his arrival records its own progress along the post road: it left Dover at ten at night on 2 August and reached London at ten at night on 3 August. The announcement arrived the night before the stay.[1,2]

## The letter that travelled ahead

Sir Thomas Fane wrote from Dover Castle to Lord Cobham, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and Lord Lieutenant of Kent, on 2 August:

> Here arrived this evening from Bolloigne, Sir Henry Neville, with his wife and family, and also Mr. Secretary Harbert, with the rest of the Commissioners late employed for the treaty there. They intend to repose themselves here all day tomorrow, and on Monday to take their journey towards the Court.[1]

The calendar identifies the letter as holograph and prints the endorsements beneath it:

> **Hast hast hast post hast.** Dovor this Seconde of August at 10 night. Canterbury past 3 in the morning. Sittingborn morning 8. Rochester the 3 day past 10 in the fornon. Darford the 3 of Agust at almost 8 in the afternone. **London at 10 in the night.**[1]

These endorsements supply a timed itinerary for the report of Neville's arrival. They follow the letter through the principal towns on the Dover–London road, including its passage overnight and on Sunday.

| Stage | Recorded time | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Dover | 10 at night | Saturday, 2 August |
| Canterbury | Past 3 in the morning | Sunday, 3 August |
| Sittingbourne | 8 in the morning | Sunday, 3 August |
| Rochester | Past 10 in the forenoon | Sunday, 3 August |
| Dartford | Almost 8 “in the afternone” | Sunday, 3 August |
| London | 10 at night | Sunday, 3 August |

The endpoints give a journey of twenty-four hours. The uneven intervals are worth preserving: this was an actual recorded journey, not a speed calculated from a modern road distance. The London endorsement establishes the letter’s arrival in the city; it does not name its subsequent readers. The document is especially valuable because its subject is Neville’s return itself.

## Neville’s own journey

Neville’s letter to Robert Cecil, written in London on 6 August, confirms the sequence independently of Fane’s report. It also explains what occupied the party on Sunday:

> We arrived ourselves at Dover upon Saturday night last, as I suppose Mr. Secretary Herbert has given you to understand. **The next day our horses and servants were landed, and upon Monday we set forward on our journey**, and arrived here, Mr. Edmonds and myself, this evening.[3]

Neville and Thomas Edmondes thus travelled from Monday to Wednesday, arriving in London on the evening of 6 August. Herbert went to his house at Mortlake; Neville believed Robert Beale had done likewise. The commissioners planned to assemble at Herbert’s on Friday morning before going together to court, and Neville asked whether Cecil wished to meet them privately first. He requested an answer by the messenger carrying his letter.[3]

There are two distinct movements here. The returning embassy had a household, servants and horses to bring ashore, followed by a journey extending across three calendar days. Fane’s urgent announcement moved from Dover to London in one day and night. Its arrival preceded Neville’s by three days. Neville also supposed that Herbert had separately informed Cecil of their arrival.

## How the post made that possible

The Dover road was a central artery of government communication with the Continent. Mark Brayshay’s archival study identifies London–Dover as England’s first royal standing post route. Postmasters supplied fresh horses at successive

stages, while post-boys carried government packets to the next stage. Messages could therefore continue through a relay without waiting for an entire travelling household.[4]

Brayshay also describes instructions requiring postmasters to record a packet's arrival and forward it within fifteen minutes. The stipulated riding speeds were at least six miles an hour in summer and four in winter. These were service requirements, not measurements of every journey. Fane's endorsements provide the more directly relevant evidence: what happened on this particular road, with this particular letter, on 2–3 August 1600.[4]

The distinction matters to the chronology. Neville did not need to reach London before London could hear that he had returned. We possess a contemporary record showing that the news actually arrived ahead of him.

## The following day's entry

The Stationers' Register places four titles together under the date 4 August:

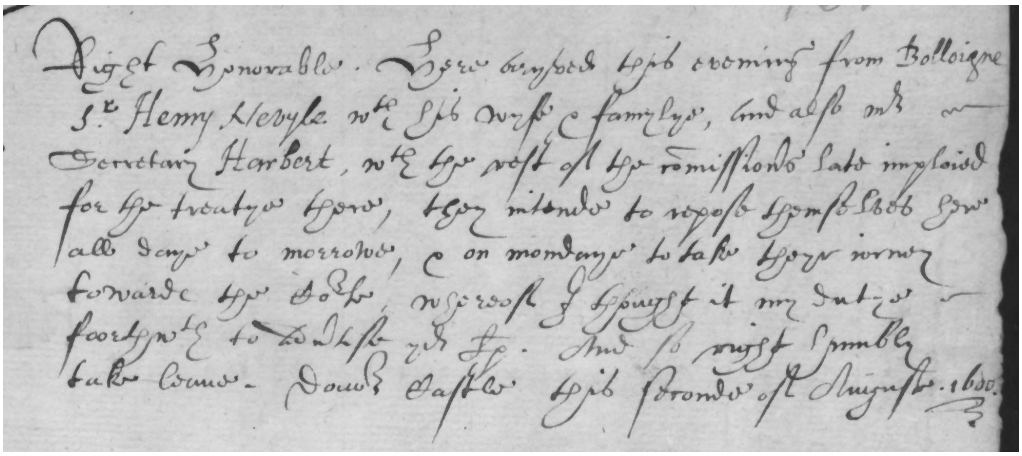
> As you like yt / a booke
> Henry the ffift / a booke
> Every man in his humour / a booke
> The commedie of muche A doo about nothinge / a booke
> **to be staied**[2]

The instruction applies to the group. Three titles are Shakespeare's; the fourth is Jonson's. The previous first registration of a Shakespeare play was *The Merchant of Venice*, on 22 July 1598, just over two years earlier.[5] The 4 August note records a stay rather than an ordinary entry establishing a stationer's right to print. That distinction gives the entry its particular interest: it is an intervention affecting a cluster of plays.[6]

The subsequent record shows renewed publishing activity. Rights in *Henry V* were transferred on 14 August. Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, the fourth play in the stay, was also entered on 14 August, to Cuthbert Burby and Walter Burre. *Much Ado About Nothing* was entered on 23 August; it and *Henry V* appeared in print that year. *As You Like It* remained unprinted until the First Folio in 1623.[2]

The documentary sequence can therefore be stated precisely: Neville landed on Saturday evening; Fane's urgent letter reached London on Sunday night; the four plays were stayed on Monday, the day Neville began his onward journey; Neville reached London on Wednesday. For the Neville authorship argument, the importance lies in this unusually close alignment of his return, the arrival of news about it, and the recorded action concerning three Shakespeare plays. The postal endorsements make that alignment sharper than the arrival dates alone.

## The documents



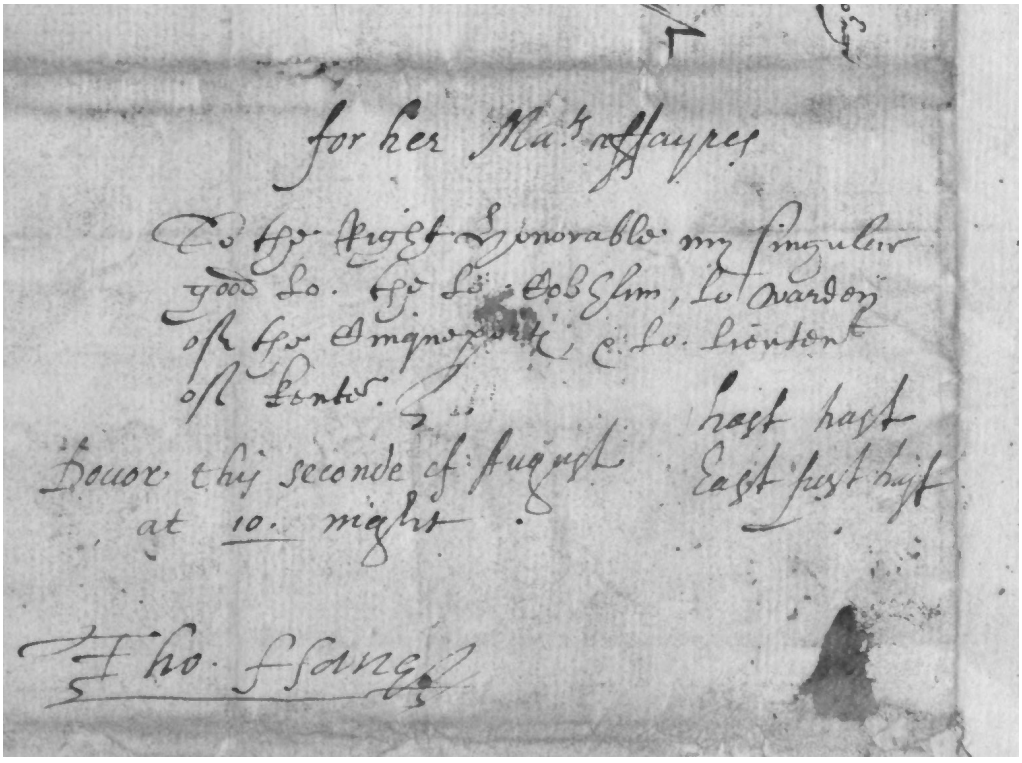
Original letter: Fane to Cobham, Dover Castle, 2 August 1600. Enlarged text from Hatfield, Cecil Papers 87/46. Image © Hatfield House Archives, 2010 / ProQuest, The Cecil Papers.

SIR THOMAS FANE to LORD COBHAM, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and Lord Lieutenant of Kent.

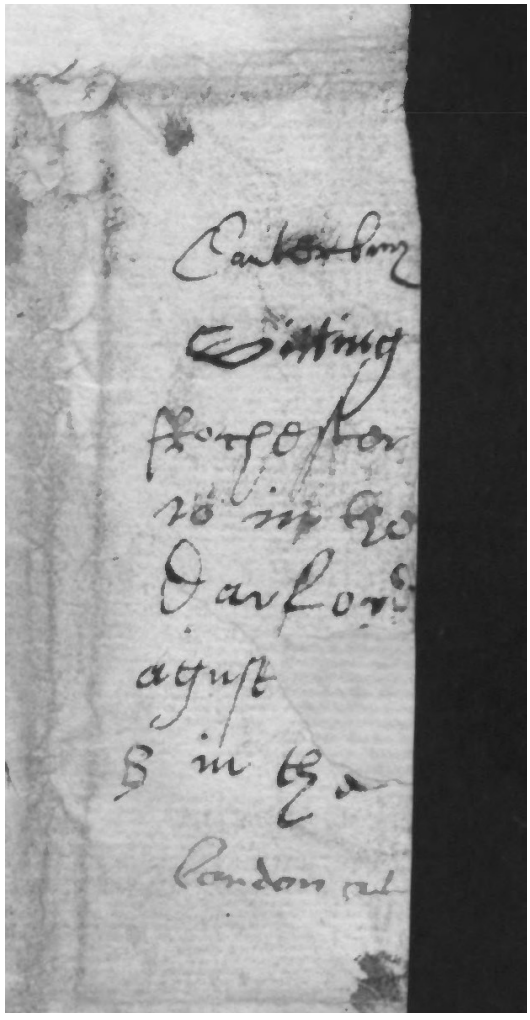
1600, Aug. 2.—Here arrived this evening from Bolloigne, Sir Henry Neville, with his wife and family, and also Mr. Secretary Harbert, with the rest of the Commissioners late employed for the treaty there. They intend to repose themselves here all day to-morrow, and on Monday to take their journey towards the Court.—Dover Castle, 2 August, 1600.

*Holograph. Endorsed*:—"Hast hast hast post hast. Dovor this Seconde of August at 10 night. Canterbury past 3 in the morning. Sittingborn morning 8. Rochester the 3 day past 10 in the fornon. Darford the 3 of Agust at almost 8 in the afternone. London at 10 in the night." 1 *p.* (**87.** 46.)

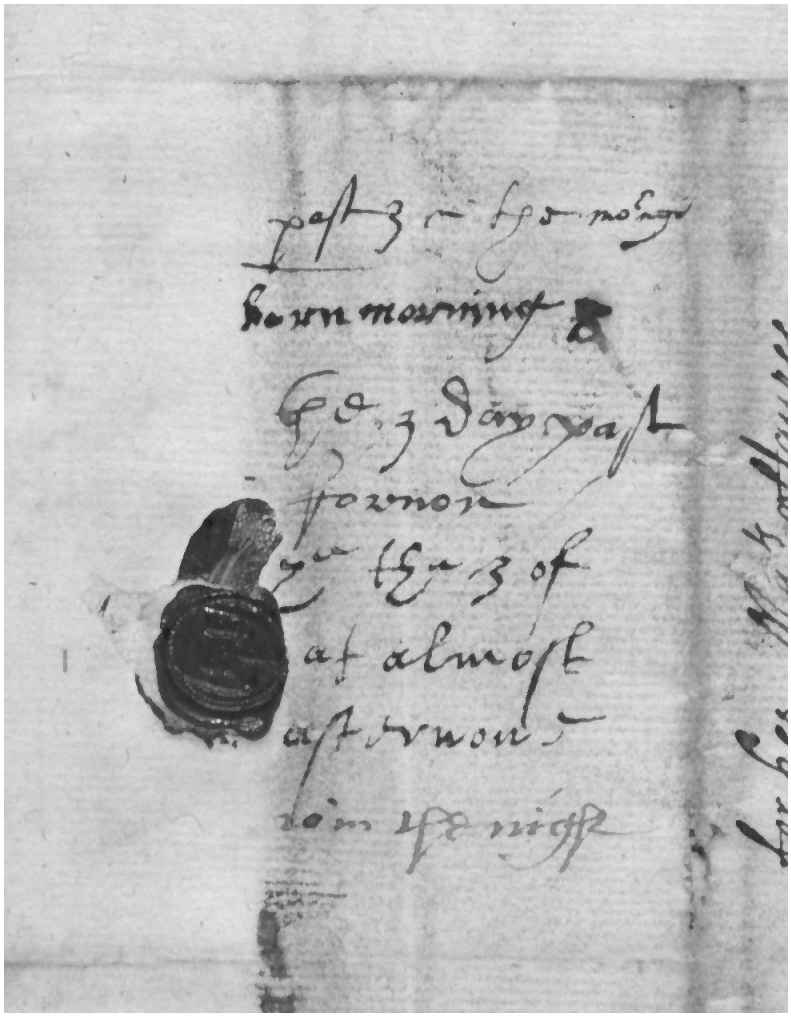
Fane's arrival report and postal endorsements, enlarged from HMC, Salisbury Manuscripts, X (1904), p. 261, reference 87.46.




The address and Dover despatch endorsement: 2 August at ten at night. Enlarged and turned for reading. Hatfield, Cecil Papers 87/46. Image © Hatfield House Archives, 2010 / ProQuest, The Cecil Papers.



Postal endorsements at one edge of the address leaf, enlarged and turned upright. Some writing extends beyond the visible edge of the source scan; the calendar supplies the continuous transcription. Image © Hatfield House Archives, 2010 / ProQuest, The Cecil Papers.



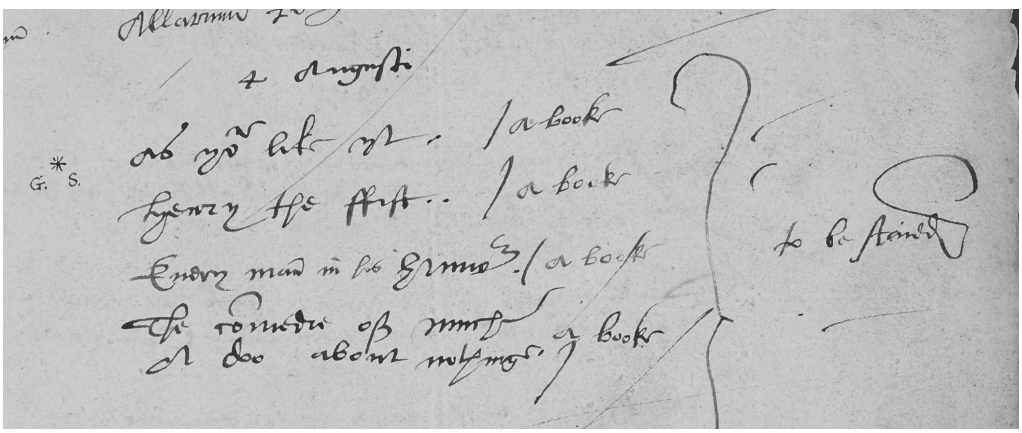
Postal endorsements beside the seal, enlarged and turned upright; the London time is at the bottom. Separate view of the same leaf. Image © Hatfield House Archives, 2010 / ProQuest, The Cecil Papers.

## Sir Henry Nevill to Sir Robert Cecil.

1600, Aug. 6.—We arrived ourselves at Dover upon Saturday night last, as I suppose Mr. Secretary Herbert has given you to understand. The next day our horses and servants were landed, and upon Monday we set forward on our journey, and arrived here, Mr. Edmonds and myself, this evening. Mr. Secretary went to his house to Mortlake, and Mr. Beale likewise, as I take it. We have all appointed, unless you command the contrary, to meet at Mr. Secretary's upon Friday morning, and so come together to the Court. Notwithstanding, we would be glad to wait upon you somewhere privately, if you so think good, before we come to her Majesty's presence. It may please you therefore to signify your pleasure therein unto me by this messenger.—London, 6 August, 1600.

*Holograph.* 1 *p.* (**81.** 19.)

Neville to Cecil, London, 6 August 1600. Enlarged entry in HMC, Salisbury Manuscripts, X (1904), p. 268, reference 81.19.



The four stayed plays, 4 August 1600. Enlarged entry on the flyleaf of Stationers' Company, Liber C. Image: Stationers' Company / Folger Shakespeare Library, Shakespeare Documented.

## Notes

1. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquess of Salisbury, K.G., &c., Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, X (London, 1904), p. 261, Fane to Cobham, 2 August 1600, reference 87.46. Text and endorsements checked against the printed page image. Dates retain the English calendar; weekday identifications agree with the letters' own references to Saturday and Monday. Digitized volume.

2. Stationers' Company, *Liber C*, flyleaf; Edward Arber, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London*, III, p. 37; Folger Shakespeare Library, "As You Like It, Henry V, and Much Ado About Nothing are 'stayed' in the Stationers' Register". The Folger reproduces the register image and explains the subsequent publication history. The group is transcribed here without reproducing the manuscript's spatial layout. The fourth title in the stay, Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, was entered to Cuthbert Burby and Walter Burre on 14 August 1600. Edward Arber, ed., *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London*, III (1876), p. 169; see the register transcript. The subsequent registration activity thus included the non-Shakespeare play in the group.

3. HMC, *Salisbury Manuscripts*, X, p. 268, Neville to Cecil, 6 August 1600, reference 81.19. Checked against the printed page image. The proposed Friday meeting is a plan, not evidence that the meeting took place. Digitized page.

4. Mark Brayshay, "The Royal Post-Horse Routes of Hampshire in the Reign of Elizabeth I," *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society* 48 (1992), pp. 121–134, especially pp. 121–123. His account of the regulations cites British Library, Stowe 1/100, and State Papers, SP 12/41/71. Publisher's full article.

5. Stationers' Company, *Liber C*, fol. 39v, 22 July 1598; Arber, *Transcript*, III, p. 122; Folger Shakespeare Library, "The Merchant of Venice is entered in the Stationers' Register", and its chronology of plays in the register. This comparison concerns the first appearance of a new Shakespeare play title, not every transaction involving an already registered work.

6. Tiffany Stern, "Plays in the Stationers' Registers in the time of Shakespeare" (Adam Matthew Digital, 2017), p. 7, "Staying," discussing the 4 August 1600 entry: "Scholars are still debating the meaning of 'stay'." She considers an agreement to delay publication while securing the stationer's eventual printing rights, and reports Peter Blayney's suggestion that a stay could assert ownership when no Master or Warden was present to register it (her note 6 cites Blayney, "The Publication of Playbooks," 1997, p. 397). The close timing documented here remains striking; the meaning and cause of the stay remain debated.

# The Parentage Tradition

Appendix B

A seventeenth-century account makes Henry Neville the grandson of Henry VIII. It comes from the family of Sir Thomas Overbury, the courtier who supported Neville's bid to become secretary of state. Thomas's father, Sir Nicholas Overbury, was a Middle Temple lawyer and MP for Gloucester. Nicholas Oldisworth, who recorded Sir Nicholas Overbury's recollections in 1637, was Sir Nicholas's grandson through his daughter Muriel and therefore Thomas's nephew. The transmission is thus from the courtier's father to the courtier's nephew.[1]

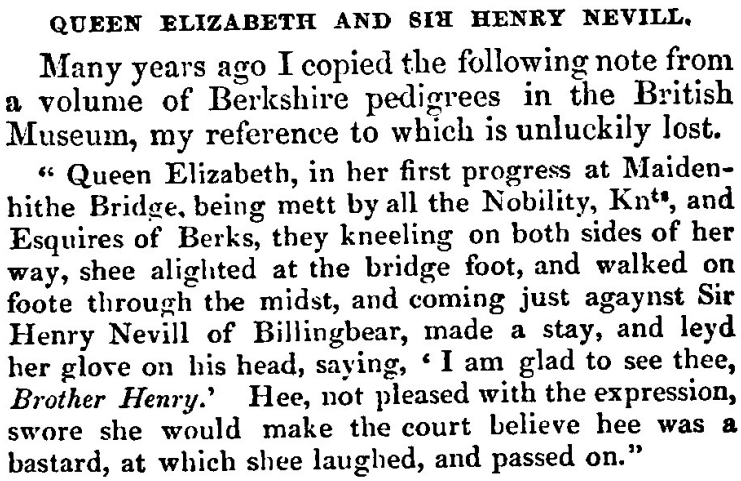
Thomas's importance to Neville was political. As Jackie Watson explains in *Epistolary Courtiership and Dramatic Letters* (2024), he was the intimate adviser of James I's favourite, Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester, later Earl of Somerset. Neville and Ralph Winwood relied on Thomas to promote their claims through Carr. This is the background to Sir Nicholas's recollection, which first praises the ambassador and recalls the secretaryship campaign, then turns to Neville's father:

> Sir Henry Neville was a wonderful wise man, whom Sir Thomas Overbury would fain have made the King's Secretary, and once brought him to be sworn; but Somerset interrupted him, as not loving him for being against the Countess. He was son to that Henry Neville who was bastard to King Henry VIII.[1]

The two Henry Nevilles must be distinguished. The prospective secretary was the ambassador, who died in 1615. The man alleged to have been Henry VIII's son was his father, who died in 1593. Oldisworth's compilation survives as British Library Add MS 15476; the passage quoted here is the printed transcription published in *The Herald and Genealogist* in 1874.

"Somerset" in this retrospective account is Carr; "the Countess" is Frances Howard, Countess of Essex, whom Carr married in 1613. Thomas opposed the marriage. He died in the Tower in September 1613, a death that led to the poisoning scandal discussed in Chapter 49, where Dudley Digges's deposition records his conversations with Neville about Overbury and Carr. Sir Nicholas Overbury's account therefore came from a family closely involved in the political struggle around Neville, though its parentage claim remained a recollection recorded more than twenty years after the ambassador's death.[1]

Another version appears in an anecdote published by Lord Braybrooke in 1850 from a volume of Berkshire pedigrees. Elizabeth calls the elder Neville "Brother Henry"; he protests that the court will consequently think him a bastard. The lost identification of Braybrooke's source prevents a firm date being attached to that telling of the story.[2]



QUEEN ELIZABETH AND SIR HENRY NEVILL.

Many years ago I copied the following note from a volume of Berkshire pedigrees in the British Museum, my reference to which is unluckily lost.

"Queen Elizabeth, in her first progress at Maidenhithe Bridge, being mett by all the Nobility, Kn^ts, and Esquires of Berks, they kneeling on both sides of her way, shee alighted at the bridge foot, and walked on foote through the midst, and coming just agaynst Sir Henry Nevill of Billingbear, made a stay, and leyd her glove on his head, saying, 'I am glad to see thee, *Brother Henry*.' Hee, not pleased with the expression, swore she would make the court believe hee was a bastard, at which shee laughed, and passed on."

**Figure 1:** Lord Braybrooke, Notes and Queries (12 October 1850), p. 307: the Berkshire-pedigree anecdote in which Elizabeth addresses Sir Henry Neville as "Brother Henry."

Braybrooke printed this anecdote alongside the masque episode discussed in Chapter 38. The two passages concern different generations: the elder Henry Neville in the Elizabeth story and his father, Sir Edward Neville, at the masque. The lost pedigree reference leaves the anecdote's date and transmission uncertain; the printed note establishes its publication in 1850, rather than verifying the reported conversation.

Thomas himself supplies the contemporary comparison of Neville with Henry VIII. After his imprisonment in the Tower in April 1613, he continued to write secretly to Carr. In Letter 41 of Watson's edition he instructs him:

> Call Neville hereafter Similis and because he is like Hen 8;

The same letter assigns James I the name *Julius* and Pembroke *Niger*, alongside precautions about seals and messengers. *Similis* was a name for use in clandestine political correspondence, and Thomas expressly explains it by Neville's likeness to Henry VIII. The letter is undated; Watson places it soon after the arrest, probably in late April or very early May 1613. It describes resemblance, not a father–son relationship.[3]

The masque account offers a straightforward explanation for the ambassador's reported resemblance without requiring a royal-paternity story. As Chapter 38 shows, Holinshed describes Sir Edward Neville, the ambassador's grandfather in the recorded family pedigree, as resembling Henry VIII so closely that Wolsey mistook him for the king. A resemblance already attributed to his grandfather could therefore have continued through the Neville family. The ambassador's likeness to Henry VIII need not imply descent from the king.

The biography records the father's documented royal connections: Henry VIII was his godfather, granted him an annuity in 1539, left him £100 and included him among the witnesses to his will. The family pedigree identifies his father as Sir Edward Neville, executed in 1538. Royal favour and a later parentage story are separate pieces of evidence. The sources establish the existence of the tradition; they do not settle its biological truth.

## Notes and sources

1. "A Booke touching Sir Thomas Overbury," printed from British Library Add MS 15476 in *The Herald and Genealogist*, VIII (1874), p. 446 for the transmission through Nicholas Overbury and Nicholas Oldisworth, and p. 449, item 25 for the passage. Spelling modernized and abbreviated names expanded. British Library catalogue. The quoted witness is the printed transcription, not a photograph of the manuscript leaf. Jackie Watson, *Epistolary Courtiership and Dramatic Letters: Thomas Overbury and the Jacobean Playhouse* (Edinburgh University Press, 2024), pp. 11–12, 68–70 and 111–113, supplies the family's legal background, the secretaryship alliance and the crisis over Carr's marriage. For Muriel's marriage to Robert Oldisworth and the resulting kinship, see Sidney Lee, "Overbury, Thomas", *Dictionary of National Biography*, opening family account. For Thomas's imprisonment, death and the later trials, see Watson, pp. 1–2 and 105–114; the political consequences are discussed in the last-years chapter.
2. Lord Braybrooke, contribution to *Notes and Queries*, 12 October 1850, p. 307. The source is described as a British Museum volume of Berkshire pedigrees; its precise shelfmark has not been established. The date of the anecdote's "first progress" remains uncertain.
3. Jackie Watson, *Epistolary Courtiership and Dramatic Letters: Thomas Overbury and the Jacobean Playhouse* (Edinburgh University Press, 2024), Letter 41, pp. 133–134, source and dating in n. 104, code-name comment in n. 105; see also the discussion on pp. 112–114. Watson transcribes British Library Harley MS 7002, fol. 281. Book DOI. The quotation follows her printed transcription; the manuscript leaf has not been independently collated here.

# Bacon's "Concealed Poets"

Appendix C

Four days after Elizabeth's death, Francis Bacon asked a poet travelling to the new king to "be good to concealed poets." Henry Neville and Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, were still in the Tower. By 10 April 1603, thirteen days later, both were free. Bacon's letter belongs to that brief interval between the change of monarch and the prisoners' freedom.[1]

The recipient was John Davies, later Sir John Davies, the lawyer and author of *Nosce Teipsum*. He was a different man from John Davies of Hereford, whose poem to Neville appeared in *Microcosmos* that year. Spedding prints Bacon's letter in full as follows:

> Mr. Davis,
>
> Though you went on the sudden, yet you could not go before you had spoken with yourself to the purpose which I will now write. And therefore I know it shall be altogether needless, save that I meant to show you that I am not asleep. Briefly, I commend myself to your love and to the well using of my name, as well in repressing and answering for me, if there be any biting or nibbling at it in that place, as in impressing a good conceit and opinion of me, chiefly in the King (of whose favour I make myself comfortable assurance), as otherwise in that court. And not only so, but generally to perform to me all the good offices which the vivacity of your wit can suggest to your mind to be performed to one, in whose affection you have so great sympathy, and in whose fortune you have so great interest. So desiring you to be good to **concealed poets**, I continue
>
> Your very assured,
> FR. BACON.
>
> Gray's Inn, this
> 28th of March, 1603.[2]

Bacon asks Davies to defend his reputation and recommend him to James. The unexplained final request follows these personal appeals. "Concealed poets" is Bacon's own phrase, used without an explanation to a fellow poet: it could refer to writers known to both men whose poetry was not publicly acknowledged. The plural invites consideration of a circle, although it does not exclude an indirect reference to Bacon himself.

Spedding's note gives both his uncertainty and his proposed explanation:

> The allusion to "concealed poets" I cannot explain. But as Bacon occasionally wrote letters and devices, which were to be fathered by Essex, he may have written verses for a similar purpose, and Davis may have been in the secret.[2]

### Bacon, Neville and the change of reign

Bacon was connected to Neville through two branches of the family. His half-sister Elizabeth Bacon had married Neville's father and become Neville's step-mother. His first cousin Anne Killigrew was Neville's wife: their mothers, Anne Cooke Bacon and Katherine Cooke Killigrew, were sisters. This was a relationship Bacon acknowledged himself. Writing to his mother on 4 December 1593, he referred to "Mr Nevell, my cosin" and promised to remember him when an opportunity arose.[3]

The political relationship was more complicated. Bacon had acted as counsel for the queen at the trial of Essex and Southampton in February 1601. Two years later he was seeking favour under James while Southampton and Neville awaited release from the imprisonment that followed the rising. The letter's date therefore places its unexplained request in an immediate setting of damaged reputations, hoped-for rehabilitation and access to the new king.[4]

The possibility proposed here is that Southampton and Neville were the "concealed poets" Bacon had in mind. The timing makes that worth considering; the family connections explain how Bacon could have known about Neville's private writing.

### Southampton's poem from the Tower

Southampton's place in this possibility acquired a substantial new basis when literary scholar Lara M. Crowley published "Was Southampton a Poet? A Verse Letter to Queen Elizabeth" in *English Literary Renaissance* in 2011. She examined a seventy-four-line poem attributed to the earl in British Library Stowe MS 962, fols. 47r–48r. Its heading presents Southampton as a condemned prisoner addressing Elizabeth; Crowley dates its likely occasion to February or March 1601. The plea opens:

> Not to live more at ease (Dear Prince) of thee
> But with new merits, I beg liberty
> To cancel old offences [...]

Later, the prospect of execution takes a startling physical form:

> Prisoners condemned, like fish within shells lie
> Cleaving to walls, which when they're opened die.[5]

The poem survives in a later scribal copy, not Southampton's handwriting. Crowley's case rests partly on the care of the miscellany's compilers: among fifty-four attributed works she found only one almost certainly wrong attribution and one further probable error in a disputed case. She also compares the poem with Southampton's Tower petitions and the circumstances of his imprisonment. She

considers composition by another writer on his behalf, or a later poem adopting his voice, but concludes that Southampton's authorship is likely.[5]

If that attribution is right, the patron of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* also wrote poetry himself, though this substantial example survived outside his familiar public identity. It gives the proposed connection with Bacon's phrase something more concrete than Southampton's patronage of other writers. Neville, imprisoned alongside him and connected to Bacon by family, becomes a second possible referent under the authorship hypothesis developed in this book. Crowley's discovery concerns Southampton; the application to Bacon's letter and to Neville is the argument made here.

## Robert Sidney's unpublished poetry

Robert Sidney provides a particularly close example within Neville's own circle. Neville's travelling companion was the younger brother of Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, and the father of the poet Mary Wroth. His public career as a soldier, governor of Flushing and later Earl of Leicester long overshadowed his own writing. Yet his surviving autograph notebook contains thirty-five complete sonnets, eighteen songs, five pastorals, four short epigrams, three translations and an elegy.

The notebook bears the inscription 'For the Countess of Pembroke': Sidney intended his sister to read it. His daughter Mary Wroth drew on his poems in her own writing. This was poetry known within a literary family, but largely unknown beyond it. The notebook preserves corrections and attempts to arrange the poems into sequences, showing sustained work rather than occasional versifying. Acquired by the British Library in 1975, it gave modern readers access to a substantial body of poetry by a man whose literary achievement had been almost invisible.[6]

One particularly effective sonnet, ‘Time, cruel time’, moves from enforced silence to defiance. The speaker begins hidden in darkness, afraid to declare his love; by the final couplet he insists that time cannot travel beyond its reach:

> Time, cruel time, how fast pass you away,
> And in my case from your own custom fly,
> While I unknown in blackest shadows lie,
> And dumb with fear, not that I love dare say.
> Alas, your wings do to the light display
> What choicest care in darkest bands doth tie;
> But thus forsaking me, you make me try
> That who to time trusts doth himself betray.
> Speak, time, and time’s child truth, since first I saw
> That bodied angel, did my faith e’er quail?
> Or was not spurred love held with reigns of awe?
> But you hear not; pack on then your best sail;
> Leave me behind. Time, you shall nowhere move,
> Where while you are you shall not see my love.
>
> — Robert Sidney, “Time, cruel time”.[7]

The sonnet’s craft makes the historical point tangible. One of Neville’s own companions was an accomplished poet whose surviving work bore little relation to his public reputation.

The proposed connection rests on the letter’s timing, Bacon’s knowledge of Neville and the Essex circle, and the evidence that Southampton himself may have been an unrecognized poet. Bacon leaves the names unstated.

## Notes and sources

1. John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, 12 April 1603, in Norman Egbert McClure, ed., *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, I (Philadelphia, 1939), letter 63, pp. 191–192, public edition. Chamberlain dates both men’s delivery from the Tower to 10 April. Bacon’s letter is dated 28 March in Spedding, cited below. Elizabeth died on 24 March. The four-day and thirteen-day intervals are calendar calculations, not evidence that Bacon knew the release date in advance.

2. Francis Bacon to John Davies, 28 March 1603, James Spedding, ed., *The Works of Francis Bacon*, X, containing *Letters and Life*, III (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1868), p. 65 and note 1; complete digitized volume. Letter reproduced without omissions, retaining Spedding’s wording and spelling; paragraph layout and emphasis added. Spedding identifies his witness as Lambeth MSS 976, fol. 4, describes a secretarial body with Bacon’s signature and docket, and notes a Register-book copy with slight verbal differences and no date. Those manuscript descriptions are Spedding’s. His suggestion about verses written for Essex is an editorial hypothesis. The recipient’s identification as the poet of *Nosce Teipsum*, later Attorney General for Ireland, also appears in his note.

3. Gemma Allen, ed., *The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon*, Camden Fifth Series 44 (Cambridge University Press for the Royal Historical Society, 2014), letter 78, pp. 157–158, especially p. 158 n. 501; public edition. Allen identifies Henry Neville and the Killigrew–Cooke relationship.

John Harley, " 'My Ladye Nevell' Revealed," *Music & Letters* 86.1 (2005), pp. 1–15, especially pp. 4–5, article, for Elizabeth Bacon's parentage and marriage to the elder Neville. See also Chapters 1 and 3.

4. *The Arraignment, Tryall and Condemnation of Robert Earl of Essex and Henry Earl of Southampton* (London: Thomas Basset, Samuel Heyrick and Matthew Gillyflower, 1679), opening list of counsel for the queen, public transcription. Its 19 February 1600 date is 19 February 1601 in modern year numbering. Bacon's letter itself supplies the request for advancement at James's court; it does not identify its "concealed poets."

5. Lara M. Crowley, "Was Southampton a Poet? A Verse Letter to Queen Elizabeth [with text]," *English Literary Renaissance* 41.1 (Winter 2011), pp. 111–145, especially pp. 111–123, 133–141, and transcription pp. 143–145, JSTOR. Quotations are from lines 1–3 and 31–32, spelling modernized; the third line is excerpted. The poem is an early modern text reproduced through Crowley's human transcription. Her authorship judgment is qualified, and she does not identify Neville as its author or connect it to Bacon's letter. British Library, Stowe MS 962 catalogue, identifies the poem at fols. 47r–48r. The miscellany was assembled principally in the 1620s and 1630s; its ascription is not an autograph signature.

6. Kelliher and Duncan-Jones, "A Manuscript of Poems by Robert Sidney," *British Library Journal* 1.2 (1975), pp. 107–108, 113–115; British Library, Add MS 58435. Chapter 2 gives the contents and publication history. Robert Sidney is introduced here as a documented example of limited poetic circulation, not as an identified referent of Bacon's phrase.

7. Robert Sidney, "Time, cruel time", in Katherine Duncan-Jones, ed., "The Poems", *English* 30.136 (Spring 1981), pp.5–72, no.48, p.53, edition. Complete sonnet, checked against the printed page; the edition's modernized spelling, punctuation and verse lineation are retained, including "reigns" in line 11 (the sense is reins). British Library, Add MS 58435, f.36v. The lover's concealment is the poem's subject, not evidence identifying the people meant by Bacon's phrase.

# A Never Writer to an Ever Reader

Appendix D

"A never writer, to an ever reader. News." The heading of the address prefixed to some copies of *Troilus and Cressida* in 1609 is an extremely cryptic message. The heading sets a "never writer" against an "ever reader"; the address immediately turns the latter into an "Eternal reader." The opposition invites several readings, including the concealed-name possibility explored here. The first sentence extends the puzzle:

> Eternal reader, you have here a new play, **never** staled with the stage, **never** clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar.
> — *Troilus and Cressida*, address to the reader (1609), sig. ¶2r.[1]

The proposed Neville pun lies in never: a concealed play on the name of a man whose writing appeared under another name. Read that way, the heading presents the paradox of a writer who is publicly no writer at all.

## Two title pages

The 1609 quarto survives with two different title pages. One calls it *The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida* and advertises performance "As it was acted by the Kings Majesties servants at the Globe." Copies in this state have no "never writer" address. The other title page calls it *The Famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid*, describes the lovers and Pandarus's wooing, and omits the Globe and the King's Men. This is the state with the additional address. Both title pages name William Shakespeare and date the printing to 1609.[2]

The change is striking: the first title page sells a performed play, while the added address offers one supposedly untouched by the stage and the applause of the crowd. Bibliographically, these are different states of the same quarto, with a replacement title leaf and an added leaf containing the address on both sides. The reasons for the change remain disputed; it does not establish that the play had never been performed. Nor should every surviving copy with the revised title automatically be assumed to retain its address: H. P. Stokes also recorded copies with that title but without the prefatory leaf.[3]

The following pages reproduce the title and opening address together. George Eld printed the book for Richard Bonian and Henry Walley. In the same year Eld also printed *Shake-speares Sonnets*, with its equally enigmatic dedication, for Thomas Thorpe.[4]

# THE Famous Hiſtorie of Troylus *and* Creſſeid.

*Excellently expreſſing the beginning* of their loues, with the conceited wooing of *Pandarus* Prince of *Licia.*

*Written by* William Shakeſpeare.

LONDON
Imprinted by *G. Eld* for *R. Bonian* and *H. Walley*, and are to be ſold at the ſpred Eagle in Paules Church-yeard, ouer againſt the great North doore.
1609.

*The Famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid* (1609), title page of the state containing the address. The Huntington Library, 56669 (Shakespeare Census 1552), photographed original quarto.

# A neuer writer, to an euer reader. Newes.

ETernall reader, you haue heere a new play, neuer ſtal'd with the Stage, neuer clapper-clawd with the palmes of the vulger, and yet paſſing full of the palme comicall; for it is a birth of your braine, that neuer vnder-tooke any thing commicall, vainely: And were but the vaine names of commedies changde for the titles of Commodities, or of Playes for Pleas; you ſhould ſee all thoſe grand cenſors, that now ſtile them ſuch vanities, flock to them for the meane grace of their grauities: eſpecially this authors Commedies, that are ſo fram'd to the life, that they ſerue for the moſt common Commentaries, of all the actions of our liues. ſhewing ſuch a dexteritie, and power of witte, that the moſt diſpleaſed with Playes, are pleaſd with his Commedies. And all ſuch dull and heauy-witted worldlings, as were neuer capable of the witte of a Commedie, comming by report of them to his repreſentations, haue found that witte there, that they neuer found in them-ſelues, and haue parted better wittied then they came: feeling an edge of witte ſet vpon them, more then euer they dreamd they had braine to grinde it on. So much and ſuch ſauored ſalt of witte is in his Commedies, that they ſeeme (for their height of pleaſure) to be borne in that ſea that brought forth Venus. Amongſt all there is none more witty then this: And had I time I would comment vpon it, though I know it needs not, (for ſo much



"A neuer writer, to an euer reader. Newes." The first page of the address, sig. ¶2r, from the same Huntington copy. The original spelling makes the printed neuer / euer pairing visible. Red outlines mark neuer in the heading and twice in the opening passage.

## Leonard Digges: "never, never" and "never die"

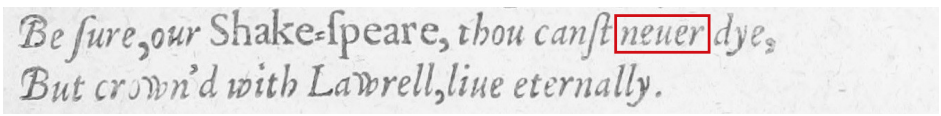
James Leyland draws attention to another example: Leonard Digges's repeated "never, never" in a note of about 1613 mentioning Shakespeare and his sonnets. Digges wrote it on the flyleaf of Lope de Vega's *Rimas* (Madrid, 1613), a book of Spanish poetry that James Mabbe was sending to Will Baker. The copy survives at Balliol College, Oxford. Digges compares Lope's standing in Spain with Shakespeare's in England, then closes his recommendation:

> [...] as in England we should of **our Will Shakespeare**. I could not but insert thus much to you, that if you like him not, you must **never, never** read Spanish poet.[5]

Here the doubled never occurs in a private note explicitly discussing Shakespeare's poetry, four years after the "never writer" address. Leyland's observation adds a manuscript example to the proposed never / Neville wordplay. Digges's immediate point is that a reader who dislikes Lope should give up Spanish poetry; the suggested Neville allusion would be a second meaning carried by that emphatic repetition.

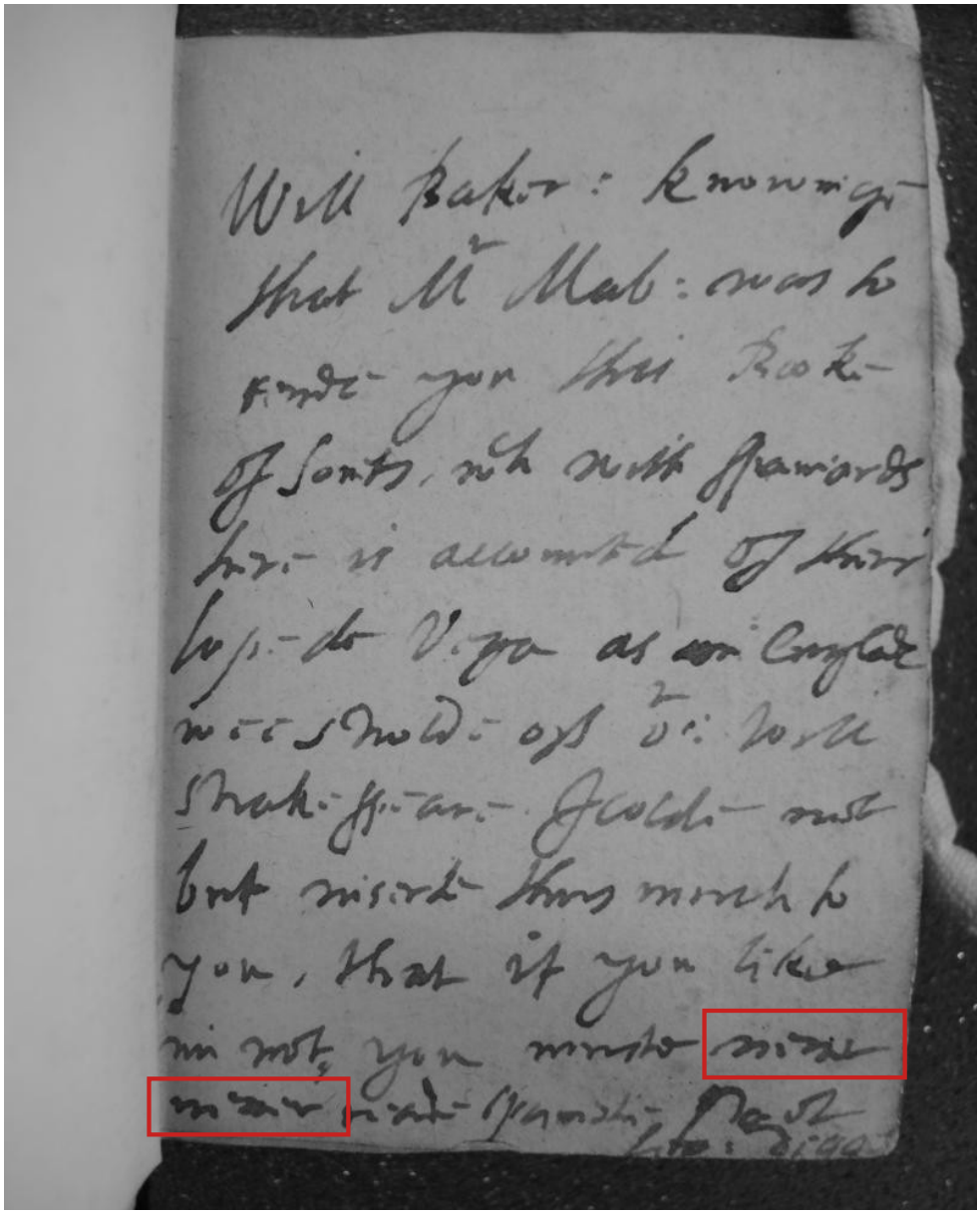
Ten years later, the same Leonard Digges closes his First Folio tribute with "never die":

> Be sure, our Shakespeare, thou canst **never** die,
> But crowned with laurel live eternally.
> — Leonard Digges, "To the Memory of the Deceased Author Master W. Shakespeare" (1623), closing couplet.[6]


Be ſure, our Shake-ſpeare, thou canſt neuer dye,
But crown'd with Lawrell, liue eternally.

Leonard Digges, *First Folio* (1623), closing couplet. Boston Public Library, G.174.1. Red outline marks "never."

The "never, never" of his 1613 note and the "never die" of his 1623 poem belong together: both occur in Digges's praise of Shakespeare. In the poem, never is paired with "live eternally," returning to the language of the "ever" and "Eternal" reader in the 1609 address.

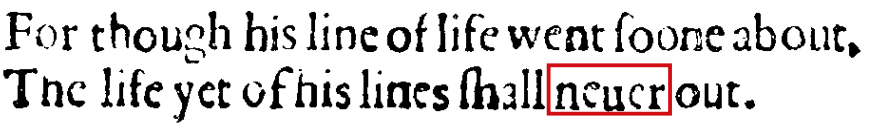


Leonard Digges's note on the flyleaf of Lope de Vega's *Rimas* (1613). The closing lines repeat "neuer," at the end of one line and the beginning of the next. Red outlines mark the two occurrences. Balliol College, Oxford, 30 a 152, via *Shakespeare Documented*.

## Hugh Holland's "never"

Hugh Holland supplies another example in the First Folio's preliminary poems. He ends his sonnet:

> For though his line of life went soon about,
> The life yet of his lines shall **never** out.
> — Hugh Holland, "Upon the Lines and Life of the Famous Scenic Poet, Master William Shakespeare" (1623), closing couplet.[6]

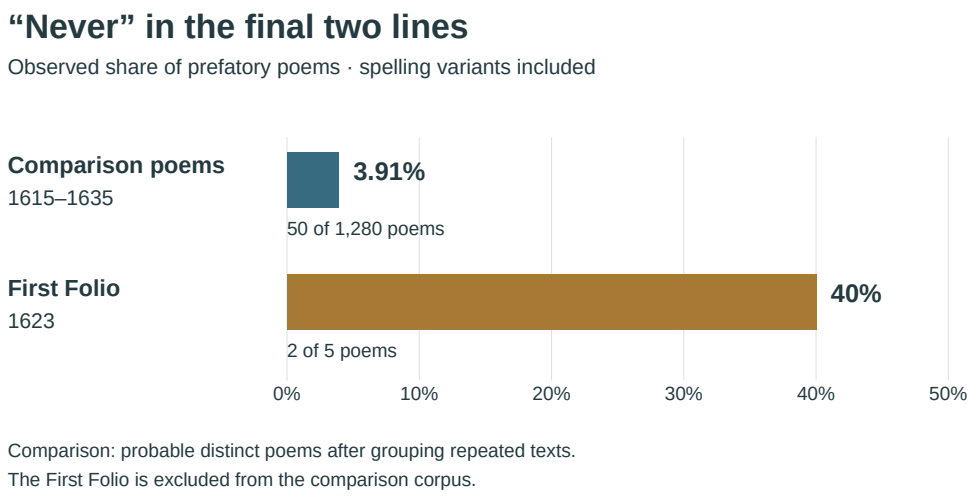

For though his line of life went ſoone about,
The life yet of his lines ſhall neuer out.

Hugh Holland, *First Folio* (1623), closing couplet. Boston Public Library, G.174.1. Red outline marks "never."

Like Digges, Holland places never in his final assurance of the author's survival through his works, setting the end of a life against the continuing life of the lines. The proposed wordplay lets never carry a second association with Neville within that promise of survival. Literary immortality supplies a complete ordinary meaning for both couplets; the Neville reading proposes an additional personal allusion. It is a possible pun, not an explicit naming of Neville.

## How common is a "never" ending?

A survey of prefatory poems in books printed between 1615 and 1635 found 50 of 1,280 probable distinct poems (3.91%) with a form of *never* in their final two lines. The First Folio has two such endings among its five prefatory poems (40%): Holland's last line and Digges's penultimate line. Its observed proportion is about ten times the comparison rate.[7]




The same two-line definition is used for both groups. The Folio count includes Jonson's portrait verse and the four poems praising Shakespeare.

The concentration remains conspicuous when the comparison is narrowed to poems of praise: 18 of 375 (4.80%) have a *never* ending. This was an uncommon but established way to close a poem. Promises of lasting fame occur elsewhere: in Thomas Powell's *Direction for Search of Records* (1622), a prefatory poem ends "But mine shall never die, while we are living." The result shows how concentrated the wording is in the Folio's small group; it does not establish a Neville allusion. A separate comparison with memorial poems would be needed to distinguish the Folio's subject from a possible personal allusion.[8]

## "Ne'er so vile" in Henry V

Mark Bradbeer and John Casson identify a related possibility within *Henry V* itself. In the St. Crispin's Day speech, the 1600 quarto and the 1623 Folio give different words:

> Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so **base**,
> — *Henry V*, 4.3, quarto (1600).

> Shall be my brother; be he **ne'er so vile**,
> — *Henry V*, 4.3, Folio (1623).

Bradbeer and Casson suggest that "Ne'er so vile" contains "Ne'vile." They also note that "vile" breaks the surrounding alliteration in "band of brothers," "blood," "brother" and "base." The proposed name-play links the phrase with Neville's motto, *Ne vile velis*, and the "vile" wording of Sonnet 121.[9] Chapter 22 examines the speech's address to Westmoreland, Neville's ancestor.

## Notes

1. William Shakespeare, *The Famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid* (London: G. Eld for R. Bonian and H. Walley, 1609), sig. ¶2r. Title and address photographed from the original quarto, The Huntington Library, 56669, STC 22332, Shakespeare Census 1552: Census record; Huntington title page; opening address. Quotations in the prose use modernized spelling; images retain the printed spelling. This is an address to the reader, rather than a dedication to a named patron.
2. W. L. Godshalk, "The Texts of *Troilus and Cressida*," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 1.2 (1995), §2, items 3–5, and §3, item 4a, article; Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, "An Introduction to This Text," Folger Shakespeare Library. For photographs of the alternative title pages, see British Library 163.i.12, Shakespeare Documented, and Folger Shakespeare Library STC 22332, Shakespeare Documented. The latter site's "first edition" and "second edition" labels should be distinguished from the more precise account of quarto states in Godshalk and the Folger textual introduction.
3. H. P. Stokes, introduction to William Griggs, *Troilus and Cressida: The First Quarto, 1609. A Facsimile in Photo-Lithography* (London, 1886), p. v n. 2; scan. Stokes distinguishes the revised title with and without the address, the Globe title, and a Huth copy reported to contain both titles. His explanation of the publishers' motives is not needed to establish those reported physical differences.
4. *Shake-speares Sonnets* (London: G. Eld for T. T., 1609), title page; Folger Shakespeare Library, Shakespeare Documented. The books share a printer, not the same named publishers.
5. Alan H. Nelson, "Rimas de Lope de Vega Carpio: Leonard Digges praises Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Shakespeare Documented*, Balliol College, Oxford, 30 a 152 (formerly 700.a.14), flyleaf, dated c.1613. Quotation follows the institutional semi-diplomatic transcription, with spelling and punctuation modernized; the opening ellipsis marks an excerpt. Image: Balliol College. Paul Morgan first published the document in "'Our Will Shakespeare' and Lope de Vega: An Unrecorded Contemporary Document," *Shakespeare Survey* 16 (1963), 118–120, DOI.
6. Hugh Holland and Leonard Digges, preliminary verses in *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (London: Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, 1623), unpaginated preliminary poems; Boston Public Library copy, G.174.1, Holland and Digges. "Never" falls in Holland's last line and Digges's penultimate line, rather than being either poem's final word.
7. Analysis of the EarlyPrint / EEBO-TCP XML corpus, 1615–1635, completed 18 September 2026. The source census covered 4,321 book records; eligible English prefatory verse supplied 1,311 comparison poem witnesses, reduced by exact and probable near-duplicate grouping to 1,280 poems. The First Folio (TCP A11954) was excluded from the baseline. A hit is a standalone form of *never* anywhere in the final two encoded verse lines, not necessarily the last word. Original spellings and contractions were included, with ambiguous *near*/*never* forms adjudicated in context. Counting edition witnesses gives 55/1,311 (4.20%); using the final four lines gives 74/1,280 distinct poems (5.78%). These are observed corpus proportions, not estimates that a Neville allusion is true or false. Coverage and poem boundaries depend on the available transcriptions. The five Folio poems are Jonson's "To the

Reader," his longer encomium, Holland's sonnet, Digges's tribute and the poem signed I.M.; First Folio preliminaries.

8. Thomas Powell, *Direction for Search of Records Remaining in the Chancerie, Tower, Exchequer, with the Limnes Thereof* (London, 1622), prefatory poem to William Noy, signed "Tho. Powell," final couplet; TCP A09904. Spelling and punctuation modernized. The 375-poem subset consists of encoded encomia, not a separately classified sample of memorial or immortality poems. The five Folio poems are not treated as independent random draws, and no chance probability is assigned to their concentration.

9. Mark Bradbeer and John Casson, *Sir Henry Neville, Alias William Shakespeare: Authorship Evidence in the History Plays* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015), "Henry V (1413–1422)," subsection "Word Play: A Neville Line," Kindle locs. 1463–1485. For the quarto reading, see Internet Shakespeare Editions, scene 12, line 36; both readings are reproduced in William George Clark and William Aldis Wright, eds., *The Works of William Shakespeare*, IV (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1864), *Henry V* 4.3.62 and the quarto text, p. 643. Quotations use modernized spelling. The different readings do not by themselves establish the direction of authorial revision.

# The Sonnets Dedication and Roman Monuments

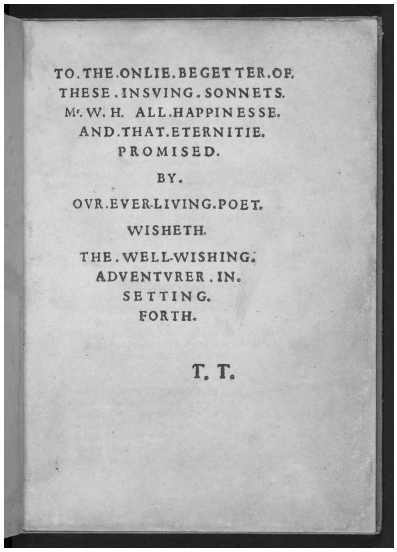
Appendix E

The dedication to *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609) presents its words in capitals, separated by stops and arranged in centred lines.[1] Thomas Fulton describes them as "words that look cut in stone, with dots between the words in Roman lapidary style." He connects this presentation with the Sonnets' promises of literary immortality: the printed page takes the form of a monument.[2]

Henry Savile's 1591 Tacitus offers a striking comparison. Its title page uses widely spaced capitals, short centred lines and a large expanse of unornamented paper.[3]

The Audley End copy of Justus Lipsius's 1574 Tacitus contains printed examples of this inscriptional typography. In its concluding notes, Roman inscriptions stand apart from the surrounding prose in spaced capitals, with abbreviated names and titles and stops between words. The example on p. 720 records Claudius's extension of Rome's boundary; a second example appears on p. 722. These are photographs of the printed passages in the actual Audley End volume associated with Neville and Savile.[4]

Jane Kingsley-Smith places the language of poetic monuments within the wider classical tradition of preserving memory through writing.[5] The pages reproduced here make the visual comparison concrete: the Sonnets dedication, Savile's title page and the inscriptions in the Audley End Tacitus share a recognizable Roman idiom.



TO. THE. ONLIE. BEGETTER. OF.
THESE. INSVING. SONNETS.
Mr. W. H. ALL. HAPPINESSE.
AND. THAT. ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.

BY.

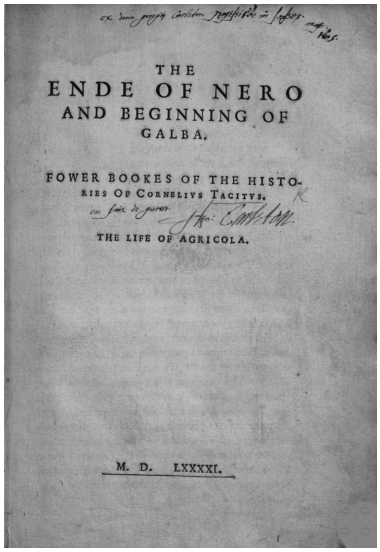
OVR. EVER-LIVING. POET.

WISHETH.

THE. WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTVRER. IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.

T. T.

1609 Sonnets dedication, sig. A2r. British Library copy.



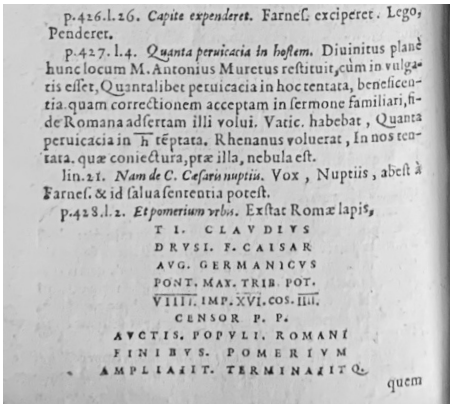
THE
ENDE OF NERO
AND BEGINNING OF
GALBA.

FOWER BOOKES OF THE HISTO-
RIES OF CORNELIVS TACITVS.

THE LIFE OF AGRICOLA.

M. D. LXXXXI.

Savile's *Tacitus* (1591), title page. British Library copy, Google Books.



p.426.l.26. *Capite expenderet.* Farnes. exciperet. Lego, Penderet.

p.427.l.4. *Quanta peruicacia in hostem.* Diuinitus planè hunc locum M. Antonius Muretus restituit, cùm in vulgatis esset, Quantalibet peruicacia in hoc tentata, beneficentia quam correctionem acceptam in sermone familiari, fide Romana adsertam illi volui. Vatic. habebat, Quanta peruicacia in h̄ tēptata. Rhenanus voluerat, In nos tentata. quæ coniectura, præ illa, nebula est.

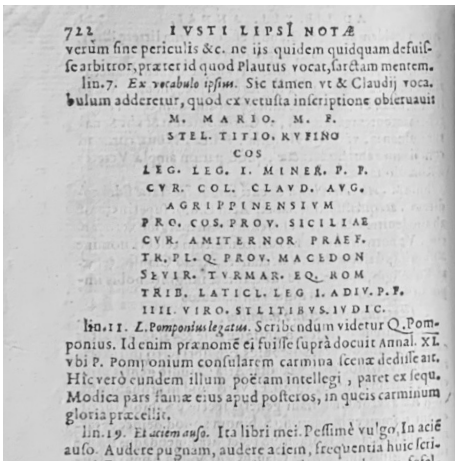
lin.21. *Nam de C. Cæsaris nuptiis.* Vox, Nuptiis, abest à Farnes. & id salua sententia potest.

p.428.l.2. *Et pomerium vrbis.* Extat Romæ lapis,

TI. CLAVDIVS
DRVSI. F. CAISAR
AVG. GERMANICVS
PONT. MAX. TRIB. POT.
VIIII. IMP. XVI. cos. IIII.
CENSOR P. P.
AVCTIS. POPVLI. ROMANI
FINIBVS. POMERIVM
AMPLIAVIT. TERMINAVIT Q.

quem

Audley End Tacitus (1574), p. 720: Claudius boundary inscription.



722 IVSTI LIPSI NOTÆ

verùm sine periculis &c. ne ijs quidem quidquam defuisse arbitror, præter id quod Plautus vocat, sarctam mentem.

lin.7. *Ex vocabulo ipsius.* Sic tamen vt & Claudij vocabulum adderetur, quod ex vetusta inscriptione obtinuit

M. MARIO. M. F.
STEL. TITIO. RVFINO
COS
LEG. LEG. I. MINER. P. P.
CVR. COL. CLAVD. AVG.
AGRIPPINENSIVM
PRO. COS. PROV. SICILIAE
CVR. AMITERNOR. PRAEF.
TR. PL. Q. PROV. MACEDON
SEVIR. TVRMAR. EQ. ROM
TRIB. LATICL. LEG I. ADIV. P. F.
IIII. VIRO. STLITIBVS. IVDIC.

lin.11. *L. Pomponius legatus.* Scribendum videtur Q. Pomponius. Id enim prænomē ei fuisse suprà docuit Annal. XI. vbi P. Pomponium consularem carmina scenæ dedisse ait. Hîc verò eundem illum poëtam intellegi, patet ex sequ. Modica pars famæ eius apud posteros, in quois carminum gloria præcellit.

lin.19. *Et aciem ausa.* Ita libri mei. Pessimè vulgo, In aciē ausa. Audere pugnam, audere aciem, frequentia huic sci-

Audley End Tacitus (1574), p. 722: Roman inscription and commentary.

## Notes and sources

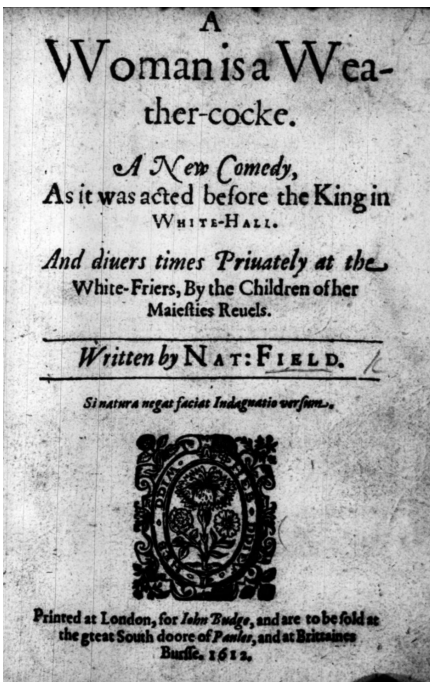
1. William Shakespeare, *Shake-speares Sonnets. Neuer before Imprinted* (London: G. Eld for T.T., 1609), dedication, sig. A2r. British Library copy, digitized page 3: page image and transcription. The facsimile reproduces the original typography; "Mr." includes a superscript lowercase letter.
2. Thomas Fulton, "Gilded Monuments: Shakespeare's Sonnets, Donne's Letters, and the Mediated Text," in N. Katherine Hayles and Jessica Pressman, eds., *Comparative Textual Media: Transforming the Humanities in the Postprint Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), pp. 221–253, especially pp. 225–229; quotation, p. 227. Author's institutional copy. Fulton's wider argument distinguishes literary immortality from confidence in any particular material medium. He does not propose the Savile–Audley End comparison.
3. Tacitus, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba. Fower Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus. The Life of Agricola*, translated by Henry Savile (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1591), title page, STC 23642. British Library copy digitized by Google Books, title page.
4. Tacitus, *Historiarum et annalium libri qui exstant*, edited by Justus Lipsius (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1574), Audley End copy, *Iusti Lipsi notae*, pp. 720 and 722. Photographs from the Audley End research collection; the excerpts reproduce printed inscriptions, not marginal annotations. Ken Feinstein illustrated the p. 720 comparison in posts of 5 July 2023, followed by the Savile title-page comparison. For the volume and its annotations, see Feinstein, "Part 6: Henry Savile and Henry Neville's Annotations of Tacitus", 17 December 2019.
5. Jane Kingsley-Smith, *The Afterlife of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), authorized excerpt published by the Folger Shakespeare Library, 11 December 2019, discussion of the First Folio's preliminary poems and the classical monument tradition. The cited material is the published excerpt, not the whole book.

# Field's Nevill: Friendship, Disguise and Shakespeare

Appendix F

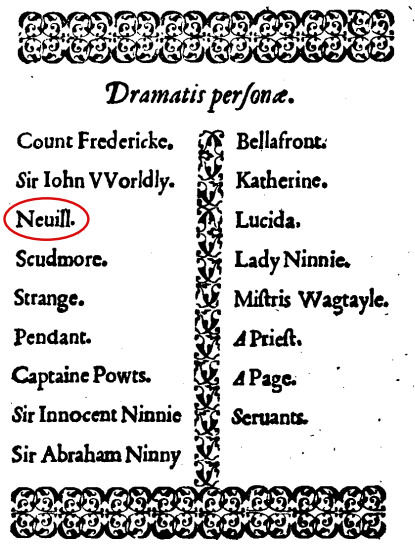
Nathan Field's comedy *A Woman Is a Weathercock*, staged around 1609–10 and published in 1612, gives an important role to a gentleman called Nevill. He helps a friend marry the woman he loves despite her father's choice of another husband, disguises himself as a priest, and arranges a performance in which another man appears under his name. The priestly disguise is especially significant: in 1599 Sir Henry Neville had described an agent who would assume a priest's dress and duties to gain trust. Field's play also contains several echoes of Shakespeare.

Field was an actor as well as a playwright. His title page records performances before the king at Whitehall and by the Children of the Queen's Revels at Whitefriars, a London indoor playhouse. The cast list names "Neuill," the contemporary printed spelling of Nevill, without a first name or title. This appendix uses *Nevill* for Field's character and *Neville* for the historical man.[1]



A
Woman is a Wea-
ther-cocke.
*A New Comedy,*
As it was acted before the King in
White-Hall.
*And diuers times Priuately at the*
White-Friers, By the Children of her
Maiesties Reuels.
*Written by* Nat: Field.
*Si natura negat, facit Indignatio versum.*
Printed at London, for *John Budge*, and are to be sold at
the great South doore of *Paules*, and at Brittaines
Bursse. 1612.

The 1612 title page names Nathan Field and records performances at Whitehall and Whitefriars.



*Dramatis personæ.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Count Fredericke. | Bellafront. |
| Sir Iohn VVorldly. | Katherine. |
| Neuill. | Lucida. |
| Scudmore. | Lady Ninnie. |
| Strange. | Mistris Wagtayle. |
| Pendant. | A Priest. |
| Captaine Powts. | A Page. |
| Sir Innocent Ninnie | Seruants. |
| Sir Abraham Ninny | |

The cast list, sig. A2r. "Neuill" is circled in red (annotation added). Both images are cropped from the edition cited in note 1.

## A friend who makes the plot work

Scudmore loves Bellafront, but her father, Sir John Worldly, has arranged for her to marry Count Frederick. Nevill comes to Scudmore with news of the wedding. Scudmore's distress draws him into an effort to recover Bellafront, and Nevill supplies the practical means.

First, Nevill persuades and pays the intended priest to let him take his place. Wearing the priest's appearance and clothing, he performs an apparent marriage ceremony. The substitution prevents Bellafront's marriage to the Count from becoming binding within the play's resolution. Nevill explains his plan to the theatre audience beforehand; Scudmore and the wedding party do not know who is under the disguise.[2]

Next comes a masque, a costumed entertainment with dancing, to celebrate the wedding. Nevill is expected to lead it and dance with Bellafront. He instead exchanges clothes with Scudmore, who has entered disguised as the craftsman supplying the masks. Scudmore takes Nevill's place in the dance, tells Bellafront who he is, and leaves with her to marry before the real priest. Nevill, now dressed as the craftsman, can leave without attracting the wedding guests' attention.

The instructions are precise. Nevill tells Scudmore:

> Tonight by promise, I do give a masque,
> As to congratulate the bridal day,
> In which the Count, Pendant, and the wise knight,
> Will be most worthy dancers; sir, you shall
> **Learn but my part**, which I will teach you too,
> As nimbly as the usher did teach me,
> And **follow my further directions**.

Scudmore accepts his friend's control:

> I am your **property, my enginer**.[3]

"Enginer" means a deviser or contriver. Nevill gives directions; Scudmore learns and performs his part. The stage direction "Change habit" makes the exchange of costumes explicit. During the dance, the wedding guests believe that "young Nevill" is leading, although the dancer is Scudmore. The theatre audience has seen the substitution.

At the end Nevill returns in his priestly disguise. He removes it to reveal a devil's robe, then removes that too and is recognized. The joke gives a visible form to his argument that forcing Bellafront to marry the wrong man would have been a devilish act under a priest's cloak. Scudmore and Bellafront are now married, and Scudmore closes his part in the comedy with:

> And may all true love have like happy end,
> Women forgive me; **Men, admire my Friend**.[4]

Nevill's ingenuity has made the lovers' marriage possible. He does not, however, direct every intrigue: another character, Strange, separately exposes a slander against Bellafront's sister Katherine. Field gives more than one character a hand in bringing about the ending.

## A priest's habit: Field, Neville and Shakespeare

Nevill's assumption of a priest's role has a particular connection with Sir Henry Neville's diplomatic work. On 16 September 1599, Neville wrote to Robert Cecil about a prospective agent for a mission to Spain. The man had been a priest, had become Protestant and married, and proposed using his former occupation as cover. Neville explained:

> he will take upon him the **habit, and for need the function of a priest**, which will also give him **credit and trust** there, and means thereby to do the better service.[5]

The point is the authority gained through the disguise. Neville's agent would wear a priest's clothes and, when necessary, perform the priest's duties to secure confidence and access. Field's Nevill likewise assumes both appearance and function: he takes the priest's place and performs the wedding ceremony before people who accept his religious authority. The letter concerns an intelligence mission; the comedy turns the same means of gaining trust into a device for managing a marriage.

Nevill's role also invites comparison with the Duke in *Measure for Measure*. Before assuming a friar's disguise, the Duke asks Friar Thomas:

> **Supply me with the habit**, and instruct me
> How I may formally in person bear
> Like a **true friar**. More reasons for this action
> At our more leisure shall I render you.

Nevill likewise obtains a real priest's cooperation and assumes his appearance. Both men use religious dress to move through a marriage plot under a concealed identity, directing events while other characters misunderstand who they are. Both disclose their identities in the final settlement. The audience, unlike the people deceived on stage, knows about the disguise beforehand.

Their purposes are different: the Duke investigates his deputy's conduct and governs Vienna; Nevill helps a friend recover the woman he loves. Field's counterfeit wedding and masque exchange are his own plot's particular devices. The comparison concerns the dramatic role of a concealed director who brings about the marriage resolution.[6]

The same letter is compared with Feste's impersonation of Sir Topas in Chapter 24. In *Twelfth Night*, costume and the performance of a religious office again become instruments of deception.[7]

## "Thou hast spoke my heart in twain"

When Nevill first announces Bellafront's impending marriage, Scudmore answers:

> Oh! that this stroke were thunder to my breast,
> For Nevill **thou hast spoke my heart in twain**,
> And with the sudden whirlwind of thy breath,
> Hast ravished me out of a temperate soil,
> And set me under the red burning zone.

The addressed construction, "thou hast … my heart in twain," closely resembles Gertrude's words to Hamlet. The second quarto, with a 1604 title page, reads:

> O Hamlet **thou hast cleft my hart in twaine**.[8]

Field replaces the physical verb "cleft" with "spoke": Nevill's announcement itself divides Scudmore's heart. The line addresses Nevill by name; it is Scudmore's speech, not Nevill's. The comparison does not depend on the First Folio's publication in 1623. The image is already present in the first quarto of *Hamlet* (1603), which reads "Hamlet, thou cleaues my heart in twaine," and the closer "thou hast cleft" construction appears in the second quarto.

Field uses the image again later in the comedy. Mistress Wagtail, coached by the Count's follower Pendant, is flattering Sir Abraham Ninnie:

> Oh, thy very name,
> Like to a hatchet **cleaves my heart in twain**.

Here "thy very name" refers to Abraham, not Nevill. The extravagant compliment turns the earlier language of injury into comic courtship. The two uses show Field adapting the same expression to different speakers and situations.

Shakespearean influence on Field has an established scholarly history. In his 1950 article "Shakespeare and Nathan Field," William Peery examined both verbal echoes and larger dramatic similarities, including Scudmore's later confrontation with Bellafront beside Hamlet's confrontation with Gertrude. Peery also pointed to Field's explicit recollection, in *Amends for Ladies*, of the play in which the fat knight Oldcastle explains honour—a reference to the speech now associated with Falstaff in *1 Henry IV*.[9]

## Further Shakespearean echoes

The "heart in twain" passages belong to a wider set of correspondences. They occur in different characters' speeches, often in scenes of courtship or persuasion.

Pendant flatters Count Frederick, Bellafront's intended husband, by imagining Nature falling in love with the man she has made:

> **Nature** herself having made you, **fell sick**
> **In love with her own work**, and can no more
> Make man so lovely, being diseased with love.

Peery compares this with Sonnet 20:

> Till **Nature** as she wrought thee **fell a-doting**,

In both passages, Nature becomes enamoured of her own creation. Peery presents the resemblance as a possible Shakespearean echo.[10] The same flattery speech continues with another Shakespearean phrase:

> Oh foot, oh leg, oh hand, oh body, face,
> By Jove it is a little **man of wax**.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the Nurse similarly recommends Paris as a husband for Juliet:

> A man, young lady—lady, such a man
> As all the world—why, he's a **man of wax**.

The expression praises a man as perfectly formed, like a wax model. Both passages advertise a desirable bridegroom; Field makes the praise part of Pendant's extravagant flattery of his employer.[11]

Later, Pendant finds Sir Abraham occupied with a foolish love poem and remarks, "Oh, **this love will undo us all**." The same words occur in *Troilus and Cressida*, when Helen asks Pandarus to sing:

> Let thy song be love. "**This love will undo us all.**"

The setting strengthens the verbal comparison: Field's exchange concerns a suitor's poem and its possible musical setting, while Shakespeare's concerns a song of love. The wording may also draw on a circulating song or refrain.[12]

Scudmore's confrontation with Bellafront supplies another resemblance. Angry at her apparent betrayal, he insists:

> I'll make you sure first: I am come **to speak**,
> **And speak I will** freely, and to bring back
> Your letters, and such things you sent; and then,
> I'll ne'er see those deceiving eyes again.

Katherine, resisting Petruchio's attempts to silence her in *The Taming of the Shrew*, says:

> Why, sir, I trust I may have leave **to speak**,
> **And speak I will**. I am no child, no babe.

Both speeches turn the declaration of an intention to speak into an emphatic assertion. The speakers' positions differ: Katherine demands a hearing, whereas Scudmore has threatened Bellafront.[13]

Finally, when Pendant coaches Mistress Wagtail to entrap Sir Abraham, he begins, "They say every woman has a **springe to catch a woodcock**." A springe is a snare, and the woodcock represents an easily deceived person. In *Hamlet*, Polonius dismisses Hamlet's professions of love to Ophelia:

> Ay, **springes to catch woodcocks**. I do know,

Both uses turn courtship into a trap. This expression was proverbial—Field himself introduces it with "They say"—but its presence adds another point of contact with *Hamlet* in the scene that also contains Wagtail's "heart in twain" compliment.[14]

## Talent without employment

Nevill also gives a speech about intellectual ability denied an adequate outlet. He begins by judging Scudmore's behaviour:

> How well does Scudmore speak, ill for himself,
> **Wit's a disease, that fit employment wants**,
> Therefore we see, those happiest in best parts,
> And under-borne fortunes under their merits,
> Grow to a sullen envy, hate, and scorn
> Of their superiors; and at last, like winds,
> Break forth into **rebellious civil wars**,
> Or **private treasons**; none so apt for these,
> As **melancholy wits fettered with need**.[15]

"Wants" means lacks; "parts" are abilities. The speech describes talented people whose circumstances fall short of their merits, and the danger of that frustration turning into resentment or political violence. Scudmore answers that wit governed by discretion can avoid these faults. He then accepts Nevill's guidance, and Nevill gives his abilities a practical task: learning the part he will perform in the masque.

The political frustration has a point of contact with Sir Henry Neville's correspondence. Writing to his regular correspondent, the diplomat Ralph Winwood, on 4 June 1606, he complained:

> For my own business **I am at a stand, if I go not backward**. This Parliament hath done me no good, where not only speeches and actions, but countenances, and conversation with men disliked, hath been observed. But in these points **I cannot betray my own mind**, speed as it will.[16]

The letter records Neville's sense of stalled progress and scrutiny of his political associations. Field's speech concerns unused ability and its consequences.

## The name and the evidence

The conjunction is worth recording: a character named Nevill directs a marriage intrigue through disguise and performance; his priestly impersonation uses the means of gaining trust described in Neville's own diplomatic letter; he is addressed in language closely resembling *Hamlet*; and he speaks about talent, frustrated advancement and political danger. The play identifies him only as Nevill, "Master Nevill" and "young Nevill." Nothing in the play directly identifies him as Sir Henry Neville. The possible personal allusion therefore remains a question alongside the directly observable dramatic and verbal correspondences.

## Notes and sources

1. Nathan Field, *A Woman Is a Weather-cocke* (London: for John Budge, 1612), title page and dramatis personae, sig. A2r; STC 10854, TCP A00725, quarto facsimile and TCP transcription. The scan identifier ends in "1611," but the title page prints 1612. Field's quotations below modernize spelling and capitalization; bold emphasis is added. For the performance date and Field's acting career, see Jean MacIntyre, "Production Resources at the Whitefriars Playhouse, 1609–1612", *Early Modern Literary Studies* 2.3 (1996), paragraphs 6–7.
2. Field, *Weathercock*, Act II, sigs. C4v–D1r; the marriage's resolution is at sig. H4v. Nevill tells the audience that he has obtained the real priest's cooperation through argument and payment.
3. Field, *Weathercock*, IV.1, sig. G2v; costume exchange, V.1, sig. H3v; "young Nevill," sig. H4r. "Property" makes Scudmore available for his friend's purposes; "enginer" describes the deviser of the scheme. The usher is the instructor from whom Nevill learned the dance.
4. Field, *Weathercock*, sigs. H4v–I2v. The closing "my Friend" is unnamed but follows Nevill's successful assistance to Scudmore. Strange's exposure of Captain Pouts's slander provides a separate resolution to Katherine's story. Alan William John Heaven also reads the closing stage picture as Scudmore applauding Nevill: "'The soul of lively action': instructing movement in the comedies of Nathan Field" (PhD thesis, University of York, 2020), p.162.

5. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 16 September 1599, in Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (London, 1725), pp.102–105, at p.104. Quotation checked against the printed page; spelling and capitalization modernized, emphasis added. The preceding sentence identifies the man as a former priest who had become "of the Religion" and married. Neville describes a proposed appointment, not a completed mission.
6. Field, *Weathercock*, Act II, sigs. C4v–D1r, and the disclosure at sig. H4v; Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 1.3 and 5.1. *Measure for Measure* first appeared in print in 1623. The resemblance is between the dramatic arrangements, not evidence that Field read a printed copy before publishing his own play.
7. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 4.2. Feste assumes the identity of Sir Topas the curate to question Malvolio; Chapter 24 quotes the passage alongside Neville's letter.
8. Field, *Weathercock*, I.1, sig. B3r, and IV.3, sig. H1r. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, second-quarto facsimile, reproduced p.64 (PDF p.65); compare the first-quarto facsimile, PDF p.46. Hamlet's original spelling is retained, with long s normalized. The first quarto places the remark before the Ghost's entrance; the second places it after his departure. William Peery, ed., *The Plays of Nathan Field* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1950), pp.245 and 262, notes to 1.1.172 and 4.3.51, already compares the first passage with *Hamlet* and points to Field's later comic reuse; he also cites Chapman's *The Widow's Tears*.
9. William Peery, "Shakespeare and Nathan Field," *Neophilologus* 34 (1950), 238–245, especially 241–245, DOI. Peery considers both the similarities and differences between the confrontation scenes and distinguishes convincing comparisons from common expressions. His account establishes prior discussion of Field's Shakespearean debts; it does not identify Nevill with Sir Henry Neville.
10. Field, *Weathercock*, I.2, Pendant's praise of the Count; William Peery, "Shakespeare and Nathan Field," *Neophilologus* 34 (1950), p.245, comparing *Weathercock* 1.2.52–53 with Sonnet 20 and proposing a possible conscious or unconscious echo. Shakespeare, Sonnet 20, line 10. Field's spelling is modernized; both quotations retain their verse lineation.
11. Field, *Weathercock*, I.2, sig. B4v; Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 1.3, Nurse's recommendation of Paris. Shakespeare quotations in this section follow the Folger text, with its line divisions; bold emphasis is added. Peery, *The Plays of Nathan Field* (1950), p.246, note to 1.2.77, identifies the *Romeo and Juliet* parallel and Field's reuse in *Amends for Ladies*.
12. Field, *Weathercock*, III.3, sig. F3v; Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 3.1, Helen's request for a song. Folger encloses "This love will undo us all" in quotation marks. *Troilus and Cressida* appeared in quarto in 1609.
13. Field, *Weathercock*, III.2, sig. F1r; Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, 4.3. *Shrew* first survives in print in the 1623 First Folio; any earlier influence on Field would have depended on theatrical or manuscript circulation, rather than that printed edition.
14. Field, *Weathercock*, IV.3, sig. G4v; Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1.3. Field's quarto spells the word "Sprindge." The short quotation from Polonius preserves the complete verse line; his explanation continues in the following lines. The same Field scene later gives Wagtail the hatchet-and-heart compliment, sig. H1r. Peery, *The Plays of Nathan Field* (1950), p.262, note to 4.3.3–4, likewise calls the expression proverbial and compares *Hamlet*.

15. Field, *Weathercock*, IV.1, sigs. G2r–G2v. The speech has the prefix "Neu." and names Scudmore in its first line. The speech continues through rustic contentment and the misuse of intellectual gifts before Scudmore replies. The threat of frustrated men turning to violence also appears earlier in the play: Captain Pouts, rejected as Katherine's suitor, threatens her father, "I will pray for civil wars, to cut thy throat without danger" (Act I). A contemporary treatment of misdirected ability occurs in *A sixefolde politician* (1609), attributed to John Melton, chapter III, p.32: its marginal summary reads, "A pregnant wit wanting employment takes hold of naughty courses."
16. Henry Neville to Ralph Winwood, 4 June 1606, Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, II (1725), p.216. Spelling and capitalization modernized from the printed witness. Neville proceeds to discuss parliamentary business; the letter records frustration within public life rather than complete inactivity.

# Hamlet's "Infinite Space"

Appendix G

Thomas Digges, the mathematician, astronomer and military writer, belonged to the family already encountered in several of this book's strongest connections. His wife, Anne St Leger, was Neville's second cousin; their sons Dudley and Leonard were his second cousins once removed.[1] Thomas's *Stratioticos* supplies the military-mathematical comparison with *Othello* in Chapter 27, while Dudley's contributions to *Foure Paradoxes* have been proposed as a source for *Coriolanus* (Chapter 34).[2] Dudley defended Neville in Parliament and recalled their personal conversations (Chapters 9 and 49); Leonard contributed a First Folio tribute (Chapters 49 and 59).[3] Thomas's astronomy adds another connection: his account of infinite heavens provides a striking context for Hamlet's "infinite space."

The passage appears in the First Folio of 1623 but is absent from the Second Quarto of 1604/5. Hamlet imagines limitless sovereignty within the narrowest confinement:

> O God, I could be **bounded in a nutshell** and
> count myself a king of **infinite space**, were it not
> that I have bad dreams.[4]

The contrast between confinement and infinity has a striking astronomical context. In 1576 Thomas Digges published a diagram that placed the moving Earth around the Sun and extended the stars beyond the enclosing boundary of the traditional cosmos. His account of these infinite heavens circulated in English. Digges also joined Henry Savile and John Chamber, two scholars closely connected with Neville, in assessing John Dee's proposed reform of the English calendar.

## Digges's infinite heavens

Digges added *A Perfit Description of the Caelestiall Orbes* to his father Leonard's *Prognostication Everlasting*. His diagram preserves the circles of the planets but disperses the stars beyond them. Its inscription describes the stellar region as extending infinitely and calls it the palace of felicity, the court of celestial angels and the dwelling of the elect. Infinity is both an astronomical proposition and a religious vision: the heavens have become the limitless habitation of God and the blessed.[5]

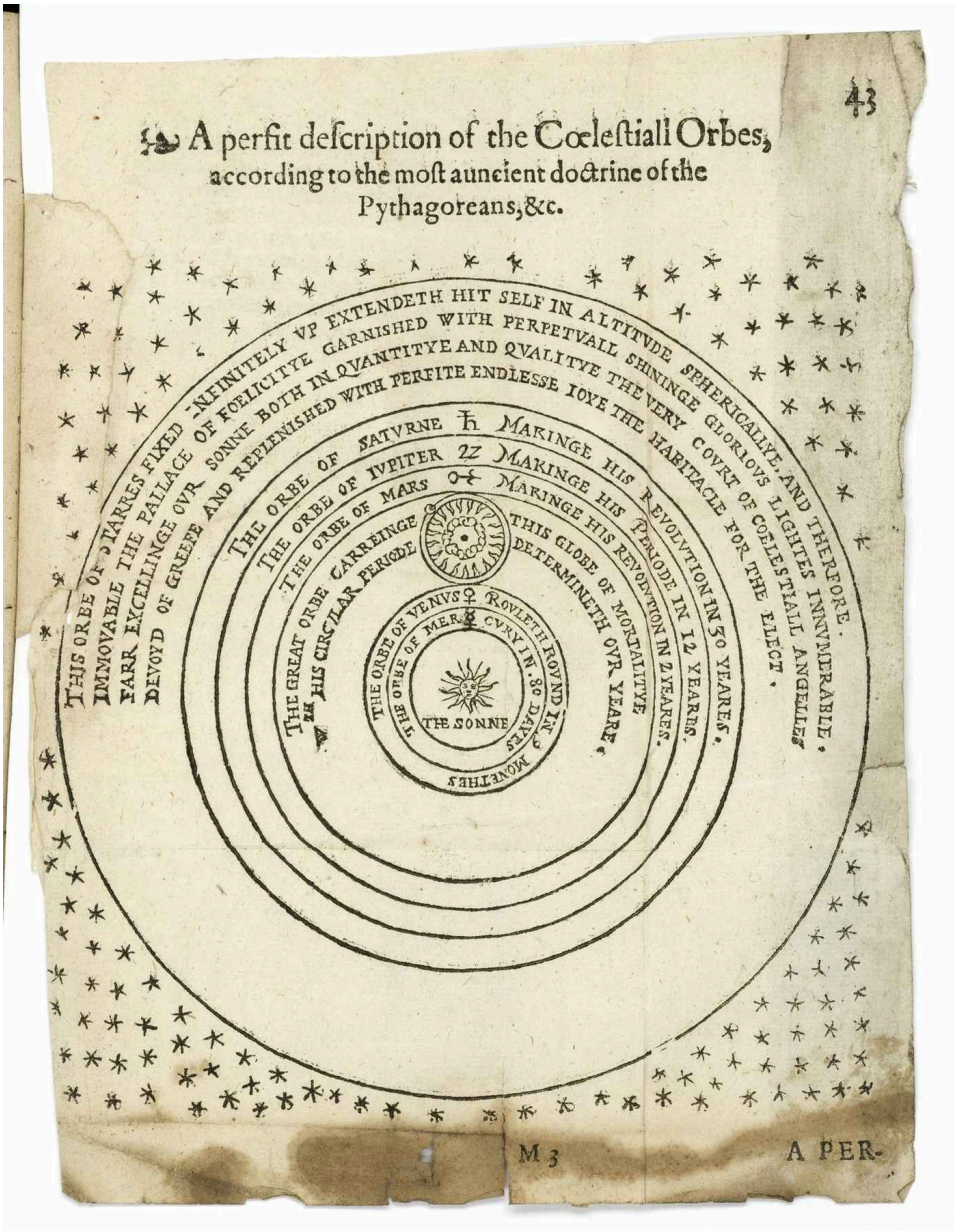



**Figure G.1:** Thomas Digges's diagram of the heavens, first published in 1576, reproduced here from the 1605 edition of A Prognostication Everlasting. The Earth occupies an orbit around the Sun; the stars extend beyond the planetary circles. The upper inscription explicitly describes their region as infinite. Source: Wellcome Library, London, L0049132; image supplied under CC BY 4.0.

Digges's accompanying prose makes the relationship between infinite space and divine sovereignty explicit. Describing "the glorious Court of the great God," he writes:

> to whose **infinite power and Majesty**, such an **infinite place** surmounting all other both in quantity and quality only is convenient.[6]

Peter Usher connects Hamlet's imagined kingship of infinite space with Digges's unbounded universe. Alan S. Weber also considers Digges a possible stimulus for Shakespeare's interest in infinity, while distinguishing this comparison from Usher's much more extensive interpretation of the play as a cosmic allegory. Digges joins "infinite power and Majesty" to "infinite place"; Hamlet joins "king" to "infinite space." Both bring sovereignty and infinity together.[7]

The dramatic force remains immediate. Hamlet has just called Denmark a prison; even a nutshell could contain a king of infinite space, but his bad dreams frustrate that imaginative freedom. It is the kind of thought a former prisoner such as Neville might express: the imagination can escape the walls, only for bad dreams to close them in again. Digges supplies a contemporary context for the scale of the thought. As Stephen Johnston explains, his infinite heavens were also a vision of divine perfection set against the mortal world below.[8]

## Savile, Chamber and the calendar consultation

The connection with Neville's scholarly circle is documented in a different astronomical undertaking. John Dee submitted his calendar proposal to Lord Burghley on 26 February 1583. England still used the Julian calendar, while the Gregorian reform had removed ten days in countries that adopted it. Burghley's report of the subsequent consultation names the readers of Dee's proposal:

> It was agreed by Mr. Digges, Mr. Savile, and Mr. Chambers, that upon their several Perusal of the Book written by Mr. Dee [...]

These were Thomas Digges, Henry Savile and John Chamber. Each had examined Dee's book. They agreed that an eleven-day correction was preferable if the calculation began at Christ's birth, but accepted a ten-day correction reckoned from the Council of Nicaea. The latter would bring England into agreement with neighbouring countries.[9]

The revised scheme spread the ten omitted days across May, June, July and August, preserving festival dates and Trinity term. It was a practical attempt to reconcile astronomical calculation with the calendar by which religious, legal and commercial life operated. The proposal did not become English practice. Robert Poole's study shows how mathematical assessment became entangled with ecclesiastical authority and opposition to adopting a reform associated with Rome.[10]

Savile had been Neville's tutor and travelling companion. Chamber's connection was also personal: his 1600 edition of Barlaam's mathematical work ad-

dressed Neville and recalled his repeated requests for its publication. Chamber subsequently named Neville and Savile as executors of his will. The calendar consultation therefore places Digges in a common scholarly assessment with two men whose relationships with Neville are independently documented.[11]

Neville himself participated in correspondence about Copernicus. As Robert Goulding shows, Dudith asked him in 1581 to press Savile for explanations of difficult passages in the ancient mathematicians and in Copernicus. The request places Neville within the exchange of astronomical learning during his travels.[12]

The astronomical reading of Hamlet's words and this historical association belong together. Digges gave English readers an image of infinite space; Savile and Chamber worked with him on a question of astronomy and public affairs. The comparison reaches beyond a shared phrase to a recognisable scholarly environment around Neville.

## Notes and sources

1. "St. Leger, Sir Warham," *Dictionary of National Biography*, L (1897), p.168, text; *The Complete Peerage*, I, p.35, Abergavenny pedigree. The cousin degrees are calculated from these pedigrees. For Anne's subsequent marriage to Russell, see W. P. W. Phillimore, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Worcester Made in the Year 1569* (1888), p. 119; Andrew Hadfield, "Shakespeare and the Digges Brothers", *Reformation* 25.1 (2020), 2–17.
2. Michael Neill, ed., *Othello, the Moor of Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 197, note to 1.1.18, on the epistle to the reader in *Stratioticos*. For Dudley's contributions and Muir's source proposal, see Hadfield, "Shakespeare and the Digges Brothers," 13–17; Thomas and Dudley Digges, *Foure Paradoxes* (1604), fourth paradox, p. 104. Thomas wrote the first two discourses, Dudley the last two.
3. Maija Jansson, ed., *Proceedings in Parliament 1614* (*House of Commons*) (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988), p. 246, 14 May 1614; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, James I, 1611–1618*, p. 325, item 9, examination of 6 November 1615, underlying document TNA SP 14/83, f. 12; First Folio (1623), preliminary poem signed "L. Digges." The examination recounts conversations before Neville's death.
4. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 2.2. Quotation and lineation follow the Folger text; emphasis added here and in the other quotations. This exchange appears in the First Folio (1623), but not in the Second Quarto (1604/5); Folger marks it with pointed parentheses, as explained in its textual introduction.
5. Thomas Digges, *A Perfit Description of the Caelestiall Orbes*, appended to Leonard Digges, *A Prognostication Everlasting* (first published in this form in 1576). The figure reproduces the Wellcome copy of the 1605 printing, STC 6870, ESTC S115715, image L0049132, available through Wikimedia Commons under CC BY 4.0. For the circulation and significance of astronomical language, see Anna Cetera-Włodarczyk, Jonathan Hope and Jarosław Włodarczyk, "Unsphered, Disorbed, Decentred: Shakespeare's Astronomical Imagination", *Shakespeare* 17.4 (2021), 400–427.
6. Digges, *A Prognostication Everlasting* (1596), *Perfit Description*, sig. N2r, digitised edition. Spelling modernised. "Convenient" here means appropriate or fitting.

7. Peter Usher, "Advances in the Hamlet Cosmic Allegory", *The Oxfordian* 4 (2001), 25–49, especially 42–44; Alan S. Weber, "What Did Shakespeare Know About Copernicanism?", *Romanian Journal of English Studies* 9.1 (2012), 351–365, especially 360–362. Usher's larger allegorical identifications are not required for this comparison. Weber also discusses the wider circulation of ideas of infinity: the parallel does not establish direct borrowing from Digges.
8. Stephen Johnston, "Like father, like son? John Dee, Thomas Digges and the identity of the mathematician", in Stephen Clucas, ed., *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), author's publicly available text.
9. John Dee's diary, ed. James Orchard Halliwell (1842), pp. 18–19, records delivery on 26 February 1583. Burghley's "Report ... of the Consultation ..." is printed in *Philosophical Transactions* 21 (1699), 355–356. The identification of the three assessors follows Poole. The printed heading gives 25 March 1582; the editor of the reprint in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, new series 36 (November 1851), 451–459, assigns it to 1583. The printed date and its chronological interpretation must be distinguished: 25 March was the English year boundary, so this is not simply an automatic conversion of a January or February Old Style date. The report documents consultation, rather than an instrument appointing a formal commission; it does not name Neville as an assessor.
10. Burghley, report, 355–356: May is reduced to 28 days, June to 29, July to 28 and August to 28, removing ten days in all. This revised May–August scheme is distinct from Dee's original eleven-day proposal. Robert Poole, "John Dee and the English Calendar: Science, Religion and Empire", Institute of Historical Research seminar paper (1996). Participation in this consultation does not establish that the assessors shared Digges's views about the Earth's motion.
11. John Chamber, ed., *Barlaami Monachi Logistica* (Paris: Guillaume Auvray, 1600), address to Henry Neville. For Neville and Savile as Chamber's executors, see The National Archives, C 2/JasI/N4/24, Nevill v Reeve. Savile's travels with Neville and Chamber's connections are discussed in the chapters on Neville's education and *King Lear*.
12. Robert Goulding, "Henry Savile and the Tychonic World-System", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 58 (1995), 152–179, at 175 and n. 78. Goulding prints and translates the request to Neville; this is a citation of his manuscript-based study, not a new collation of the letter.

# Troilus, Tycho Brahe and Neville's Astronomical Circle

Appendix H

In *Troilus and Cressida*, Ulysses places Earth at the centre of the heavens but gives the Sun the authority of a king. This combination invites a reading alongside the astronomical problem Henry Savile investigated during his travels with Neville: how could Copernicus's account of planetary motion be used without accepting Earth's annual revolution around the Sun? Savile's surviving diagrams and letters document his work on that question in 1581. Dudith then wrote directly to Neville asking him to press Savile for an explanation of Copernicus. The connection begins with an identifiable intellectual problem, pursued by Neville's tutor and discussed in a letter addressed to Neville himself.[1]

## Ulysses's planetary order

The Greek commanders are discussing why their army has failed. Ulysses blames the neglect of rank and authority, turning to the heavens for his governing analogy:

> The heavens themselves, the planets, and **this center**
> Observe degree, priority, and place,
> Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
> Office, and custom, in all line of order.
> And therefore is the glorious **planet Sol**
> In noble eminence **enthroned and sphered**
> **Amidst the other**, whose med'cinable eye
> Corrects the influence of evil planets,
> And posts, like the **commandment of a king**,
> Sans check, to good and bad. But when the planets
> In evil mixture to disorder wander,
> What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,
> What raging of the sea, shaking of Earth,
> Commotion in the winds, frights, changes, horrors
> Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
> The unity and married calm of states
> Quite from their fixture! [...]
> — *Troilus and Cressida*, 1.3, Ulysses.[2]

The speech separates position from power. Earth is "this center," but the commanding body is "planet Sol," enthroned among its fellows. Its influence reaches good and bad alike, without obstruction, like a king's command. Ulysses needs both an ordered place for every body and an authority capable of governing the whole. The Sun supplies that authority.

Thomas Digges gives the comparison a sharper focus. In his *Perfit Description*, which sets out a Copernican universe, he describes the Sun:

> **like a king in the middest of all reigneth and giveth laws of motion to the rest**.[3]

Digges joins central position and royal power in the Sun. Ulysses distributes them: Earth is "this center," while the Sun is enthroned "amidst the other" and exercises the "commandment of a king." Digges describes the government of celestial motion; Ulysses turns celestial government into an argument about political order. Their shared image of solar kingship makes the difference in the Sun's position especially interesting.[4]

Savile's investigations give this comparison a concrete setting within Neville's life. Copernicus's mathematical account of the planets could be studied and adapted without accepting his placement of Earth in motion around the Sun. This was precisely the problem Savile pursued with Wittich during the European journey. The reading proposed here places Ulysses's combination of terrestrial centrality and solar authority alongside that documented inquiry.[5]

## Savile, Wittich and Neville

In 1581 Henry Savile was studying with Paul Wittich at Breslau, where Andreas Dudith maintained a household that welcomed scholars and supported mathematical inquiry. Wittich had spent several months with Tycho at Uraniborg in 1580. Neville's travels with Savile thus brought him into a scholarly circle whose work connected directly with the astronomical investigations taking place at Tycho's observatory.[1]

Savile's surviving papers show the investigation taking shape. In a draft letter to the astronomer Johannes Praetorius, he proposed a central Earth that still rotated daily on its axis and asked how the planetary circles could be arranged to agree with Copernicus's calculations. He began by asserting a result, then changed *dico* ("I say") to *quaero an* ("I ask whether"). In later notes and correspondence he recorded five alternative arrangements for the superior planets—Mars, Jupiter and Saturn—discussed with Wittich. Different arrangements could reproduce the same observed motions. His notes and diagrams survive in two Bodleian manuscripts, Savile 47 and Savile 108.[6]

Savile also prepared an explanation of Copernicus's account of Earth's threefold motion for Dudith, dated 22 March 1581. Dudith's interest was sustained: he wanted someone able to make the difficult mathematics intelligible.[7]

Neville himself appears in this correspondence. On 7 August 1581, when Neville and Savile were in Venice, Dudith wrote to Neville asking him to spur Savile to further work:

> Urge Savile, I beg you, most earnestly, and press him harder to prepare something for me on the obscure passages of the ancient mathematicians, and on **Copernicus, who should be compared with the ancients—or, if Wittich is to be believed, preferred to them**.

Dudith's Latin poses the choice: *comparandum aut, si credendum est Wittichio, anteponendum*. The question was whether Copernicus should be set beside the ancient authorities or placed above them. In the same letter Dudith asked what Neville wanted done with the books he had left behind and requested further mathematical and philosophical works. Neville was being asked to help obtain both texts and explanations.[8]

Dudith's request drew Neville personally into a continuing exchange about the old and new astronomy. Savile's investigations belonged to 1581, seven years before Tycho published his completed system.[9]

## Tycho's solution

Tycho Brahe (1546–1601), a Danish nobleman and astronomer, established Uraniborg on the island of Hven in 1576 with royal support. Working before astronomical telescopes, he built a programme of precise observation using large sighting instruments.[10] His measurements placed the new star of 1572 and the comet of 1577 beyond the Moon, challenging the idea of unchanging heavens and, in the comet's case, solid planetary shells.[11]

In 1588 he published his alternative to Copernicus in *De mundi aetherei recentioribus phaenomenis*: Earth remained stationary, but the five other planets travelled around the Sun, which itself travelled around Earth. The principal arrangements were:

| System | Earth | Sun and other planets |
|---|---|---|
| Ptolemaic | Stationary at the centre | Sun, Moon and planets move around Earth. |
| Copernican | Rotates and travels around the Sun | The planets, including Earth, travel around the Sun; the Moon travels around Earth. |
| Tychonic | Stationary at the centre | Sun and Moon travel around Earth; Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn travel around the Sun. |

Tycho thus gave the Sun an organising role within an Earth-centred universe. His observations also outlasted his own model: Kepler used them to establish the motions of the planets.[12]

## Tycho's books in the Savile circle

The later correspondence supplies a second connection. Henry Savile's younger brother Thomas undertook his own European tour in 1588–1591, visiting Dudith and subsequently working with Gian Vincenzo Pinelli in Padua. Like Henry, Thomas combined Greek scholarship with mathematics and astronomy; while

at Breslau he completed a Latin translation of the ancient astronomical writer Geminus.[13]

On 20 November 1588 Dudith asked Johannes Praetorius about Tycho's newly printed book and expressed his wish to inscribe a globe with stars positioned from Tycho's observations, which he considered more accurate than others. On 11 December he asked Tadeáš Hájek to thank Tycho for his gift, promising to write after studying the whole book. Thomas Savile was then with Dudith and sent greetings in the same letter.[14]

Dudith was still seeking Henry's earlier work. On 14 January 1589, after Thomas's arrival and the receipt of Tycho's book, he asked Praetorius to return Henry Savile's explanation of Earth's threefold motion, adding a clear diagram and any necessary annotations. The explanation prepared in 1581 remained part of the household's astronomical discussions eight years later.[7]

Eleven days later, on 25 January 1589, Dudith described a diagram associated with Wittich which resembled Tycho's new hypotheses and asked Praetorius to examine both. This was the same household in which Henry Savile had worked years earlier, now receiving and discussing Tycho's published astronomy while Thomas Savile was present.[15]

Tycho's own letter to Thomas Savile, dated 1 December 1590, is still more explicit. Thomas had written to him from Hamburg and had intended to visit Hven, but adverse winds and seas had prevented the journey. He had also requested Tycho's book eagerly. Tycho responded by sending two copies of his second book on recent celestial phenomena and asked Thomas to show it to John Dee and Thomas Digges so that they could examine it and give their opinions freely. Astronomy travelled through this circle as books to be read, criticised and discussed. Tycho also sought literary recognition. His postscript begins:

> *Addidi quaterna Exemplaria meæ Effigiei nuper Amsterodami cupro insculptæ.*
> I have added **four copies of my portrait**, recently engraved in copper at Amsterdam.

He then asked whether excellent English poets might compose an epigram on the portrait and in praise of his work, mentioning Daniel Rogers as a possible contributor. The request deliberately joined the circulation of astronomy to the circulation of poetry.[16]

Thomas Savile forwarded Italian newsletters to Neville, as the covering note, Neville's handwriting and the packet's family provenance establish (Chapter 27). Sixteen newsletters addressed to Thomas Savell of London in 1591 survive among Neville's diplomatic papers, carrying reports from Rome and Venice. Discussed in the *Othello* chapter, they give a concrete example of Thomas passing continental information to Neville: the recipient of Tycho's books and portraits was also a supplier of Neville's news.[17]

## Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and Hamlet

Jacques de Gheyn's engraved portrait of Tycho surrounds him with the arms and names of his ancestors. Among them are "ROSENKRANS," on the left side of the arch, and "GVLDENSTEREN," near the foot of the left column. The conjunction of the two names has long attracted attention in discussions of *Hamlet*.[18] The portrait and Thomas Savile's connection with its circulation are already described in the Hamlet chapter.[19]

The correspondence gives this comparison a particular interest for Neville. The intended recipient of the portraits was his tutor's brother, and Tycho expressly wanted them brought to the attention of English poets. The same letter directed Thomas towards Digges and Dee. Here the names in Shakespeare's Danish tragedy occur on an object that Tycho was sending into an identifiable English scholarly and literary circle.[16]

Hamlet's own astronomical language appears in his letter to Ophelia:

> Doubt thou the stars are fire,
> **Doubt that the sun doth move**,
> Doubt truth to be a liar,
> But never doubt I love.

Copernicans did question whether the Sun moved; both Ptolemy and Tycho retained a moving Sun. Later Hamlet says he could be confined in a nutshell and count himself a "king of infinite space." That passage survives in the First Folio but is absent from the Second Quarto. Whether these lines invoke a particular astronomer or draw on a broader debate, the movements of the Sun and the extent of the heavens offered Shakespeare material for thinking about certainty, confinement and freedom.[20]

The comparison begins with words on the page: Digges's Sun reigns from the centre; Ulysses names Earth as the centre and gives the Sun command. Behind it lies a documented question pursued within Neville's circle—how to reconcile the old celestial order with the new planetary mathematics. Savile's papers record the inquiry, Dudith's letter brings Neville into it, and Thomas Savile's correspondence continues the exchange through Tycho's books and portraits.

## Notes and sources

1. Robert Goulding, "Henry Savile and the Tychonic World-System", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 58 (1995), 152–179, especially 163–175. His evidence includes Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Savile 47 and Savile 108. Manuscript readings and identifications here follow his published study. Wittich's visit to Tycho in 1580 and his subsequent work with Savile establish a personal connection, but do not establish that Savile knew everything Wittich had discussed with Tycho.
2. Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 1.3, Folger Shakespeare Library. Lineation retained; emphasis added. The quotation ends before Ulysses's next sentence.

3. Thomas Digges, "To the Reader," *A Perfit Description of the Caelestiall Orbes*, appended to Leonard Digges, *A Prognostication Everlasting* (1596), sig. M1r, digitised edition. Spelling modernised from the printed leaf, retaining "middest," "reigneth" and "giveth." The *Perfit Description* first appeared in 1576; the wording quoted here was checked in the 1596 printing. The correspondence is one of imagery and thought: Digges explicitly affirms Earth's annual movement, whereas Ulysses's speech does not.
4. The distinction between position and governing authority is the reading developed here. A specifically Tychonic identification remains debatable. Anna Cetera-Włodarczyk, Jonathan Hope and Jarosław Włodarczyk, "Unsphered, Disorbed, Decentred: Shakespeare's Astronomical Imagination," *Shakespeare* 17.4 (2021), 400–427, conclusion and note 71, article, identify "sphered" here as one of Shakespeare's two explicitly Ptolemaic uses of "sphere," while arguing more broadly that Shakespeare responded imaginatively to contemporary astronomical debates. The point at issue is whether "amidst" gives the Sun the orbital centrality Moore and Wember infer, or its middle position in the traditional order of seven planets. "Sphered" also raises a question about how literally to read the celestial machinery, since Tycho rejected solid planetary shells. The speech does not explicitly say that the five planets orbit the Sun. Its compatibility with Tycho should therefore be distinguished from a uniquely demonstrated identification. The speech's silence about solar orbits does not positively identify it with Savile's experimental models either. Ulysses speaks of the Sun correcting planetary influence, an astrological function; Digges explicitly speaks of laws of motion. The comparison here concerns their treatment of position and authority, not identical physical claims. For the differing approaches to Copernicus taken by Savile and Digges, see Goulding, pp. 153–154.
5. Peter R. Moore, "Shakespeare's Astronomy," *Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter* 24.3 (Summer 1988), p. 5, original article, PDF p. 34; Hanno Wember, "Illuminating Eclipses: Astronomy and Chronology in King Lear," *Brief Chronicles* II (2010), 32–43, especially 34–35 and note 6, article. Moore identifies "this center" with Earth, takes "planet Sol" to retain a moving Sun, and reads solar kingship "amidst the other" as the Sun's central relation to the planets in Tycho's system. Wember expressly credits Moore and argues by exclusion: the moving Sun rules out Copernicus, while the Sun's centrality rules out Ptolemy. These are the prior published Tychonic readings, not independent discoveries claimed here. The present argument draws its historical foundation from Goulding's reconstruction of Savile's papers and distinguishes the speech's distribution of position and authority from a technical description of planetary orbits. Neither Moore's nor Wember's identification is assumed as an established result.
6. Goulding, "Henry Savile," pp. 163–165 for the central-Earth proposal retaining daily rotation and axial precession, and the change from *dico* to *quaero an*; pp. 167–168 for the diagrams and equivalent constructions; pp. 171–173 for the five models of the superior planets and the draft correspondence. He tentatively places the first draft in January 1581 and the second in March, reconstructing their sequence from the letters mentioned and the development of Savile's questions. The planetary diagrams in the draft and the separate notes share their identifying Greek and Roman letters. Savile's surviving conclusion expresses uncertainty about the models' truth; the manuscript breaks off. Goulding's discussion of Savile's mathematical understanding and his role as a recorder of Wittich's work is at pp. 178–179. The manuscripts themselves have not been independently collated here.

7. Goulding, "Henry Savile," p. 165 n. 48 and p. 167 n. 49. The summary dated 22 March 1581 explained the astronomical function of the three motions Copernicus assigned to Earth. Dudith requested its return on 27 October 1583, 10 January 1584 and 14 January 1589, the last after Thomas Savile's arrival. In the 1589 request he remembered having sent Praetorius the explanation Henry had prepared for him, could find no copy among his papers, and asked for a copy with a diagram and any annotations Praetorius thought necessary. Goulding cites the surviving letter-book copy at Esztergom, Főszékesegyházi Könyvtár, Cat. V. Tit. IV/d, p. 85. This account follows Goulding's transcription and discussion, not a fresh inspection of that manuscript.
8. Andreas Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, 1581–1589 (Budapest, 2019), no. 1072, 7 August 1581, pp. 87–88, critical edition. English translation here from the edition's Latin. The edition identifies the surviving draft as Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Depot Breslau, R 253, no. 19, f. 10r. For Neville and Savile in Venice, and the accompanying requests addressed to Savile, see Goulding, p. 175 and n. 78. The published edition, rather than the original manuscript, was checked for this draft.
9. Goulding, "Henry Savile," 175–179, especially pp. 177–178: the notes distinguish experimental heliocentric arrangements from their geocentric equivalents. The models recorded in 1581 did not retain even the Capellan arrangement in which Mercury and Venus orbit the Sun; their adjustments for those planets instead involved additional epicycles. They must not be conflated with Tycho's later system. Goulding assigns the final development to Tycho while explaining Wittich's contribution to the underlying mathematics.
10. Ronald Brashear, introduction to Tycho Brahe, *Astronomiæ instauratæ mechanica* (1598), Smithsonian Libraries, digital exhibition; History of Science Museum, Oxford, "Images of Tycho Brahe: Tycho Brahe".
11. High Altitude Observatory, NSF National Center for Atmospheric Research, "Tycho Brahe (1546–1601)", sections on the 1572 nova and the 1577 comet. For the wider significance of the dissolution of celestial spheres, see Cetera-Włodarczyk, Hope and Włodarczyk, "Unsphered, Disorbed, Decentred," section "Shakespeare, Ptolemy, Copernicus and Beyond."
12. Robert Goulding, "Henry Savile and the Tychonic World-System", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 58 (1995), 152–179, especially 152–161. The table gives the basic arrangements, not the full geometrical machinery for calculating motion. For Kepler's use of Tycho's observations, see Brashear's Smithsonian introduction.
13. Robert B. Todd, "Henry and Thomas Savile in Italy", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 58.2 (1996), 439–444, especially 439 and 442–444. Thomas's tour was separate from Henry's earlier journey with Neville; Todd corrects the claim that the brothers travelled together, p. 440 n. 7. Thomas completed his Geminus translation at Breslau on 14 November 1588.
14. Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, no. 1281, 20 November 1588, pp. 584–588, particularly 586–587; no. 1284, 11 December 1588, pp. 591–592. Note 7 at p. 592 identifies the Savile present as Thomas. Dudith asks that thanks be conveyed to Tycho for his gift and says he will write after reading the whole book: "Scribam ad eum, postquam totum eius librum cognovero."
15. Dudith, *Epistulae*, VII, no. 1294, 25 January 1589, pp. 616–619, particularly 618–619; Goulding, 176–177. The surviving letter is a later copy and its diagram may simplify the original. It is evidence of discussion and comparison, not a secure reproduction of every detail of Wittich's model.

16. Tycho Brahe to Thomas Savile, 1 December 1590, ed. Peter Zeeberg, Tekstnet; J. L. E. Dreyer, ed., *Tychonis Brahe Dani Opera Omnia*, VII (Copenhagen, 1924), 283–285. English translation of the postscript's first sentence supplied here. The edition identifies the manuscript as British Library, Harley MS 6995, item 40. The letter records the sending of books and portraits and the request for epigrams; it does not identify a subsequent poem or establish which individuals viewed a portrait.
17. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/70/2, "Sixteen newsletters addressed to Thomas Savell of London by an anonymous correspondent, dated from Rome and Venice; in Italian," catalogued September–November 1591, item catalogue; PRO 30/50/70, "Additional diplomatic correspondence of Sir Henry Neville," parent catalogue. Chapter 27 describes the English covering note on the reverse of the Italian report headed "Di Colonia li 5 Decembre" and explains the evidence for transmission from Savile to Neville. The catalogue independently controls the packet's archival identity, not that identification. The packet documents the newsletter connection; it does not establish that Tycho's books or portraits accompanied the newsletters.
18. Peter Usher develops the portrait connection into a cosmic allegory: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern represent Tycho's hybrid cosmos, Claudius evokes Claudius Ptolemy, and Hamlet's "infinite space" evokes the expanded universe associated with Thomas Digges. He also discusses the proposal that the opening scene's star recalls the nova of 1572, observed by both Tycho and Digges. See "Advances in the Hamlet Cosmic Allegory", *The Oxfordian* 4 (2001), 25–49, especially 29–34 and 42–44. At p. 30 he credits Donald W. Olson, Marilynn S. Olson and Russell L. Doescher with the nova identification; that proposal is reported here through Usher. Alan S. Weber, "What Did Shakespeare Know About Copernicanism?", *Romanian Journal of English Studies* 9.1 (2012), 351–365, especially 357–362, criticises the more elaborate claims of otherwise unknown telescopic discoveries encoded in the play, while taking more seriously Digges's possible influence on Shakespeare's imaginative treatment of infinity. At p. 358 he also discusses the English visit of Frederik Rosenkrantz and Knud Gyldenstierne in 1592 as an alternative explanation for the courtiers' names. These interpretations are distinct from the documented contents of Tycho's letter and do not establish Neville's own cosmological allegiance.
19. Jacques de Gheyn II, *Tycho Brahe*, Statens Museum for Kunst, KKSgb7575, catalogued 1588–1590. The inscription gives Tycho's age and the year 1586; that is not necessarily the printing date of a particular impression. The shields display ancestral names. For the history of the Hamlet comparison, see Usher, p. 29, and Weber, pp. 357–358, cited in the preceding note. Usher credits the portrait proposal to Leslie Hotson.
20. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 2.2, and Folger's introduction to the text. The Folger lineation is retained in the verse. For the editorial discussion of "Doubt that the sun doth move," see Weber, pp. 355–357. "Infinite space" is present in the First Folio (1623), absent from Q2 (1604/5); the textual distinction is discussed further in "Hamlet's Infinite Space," Appendix G.

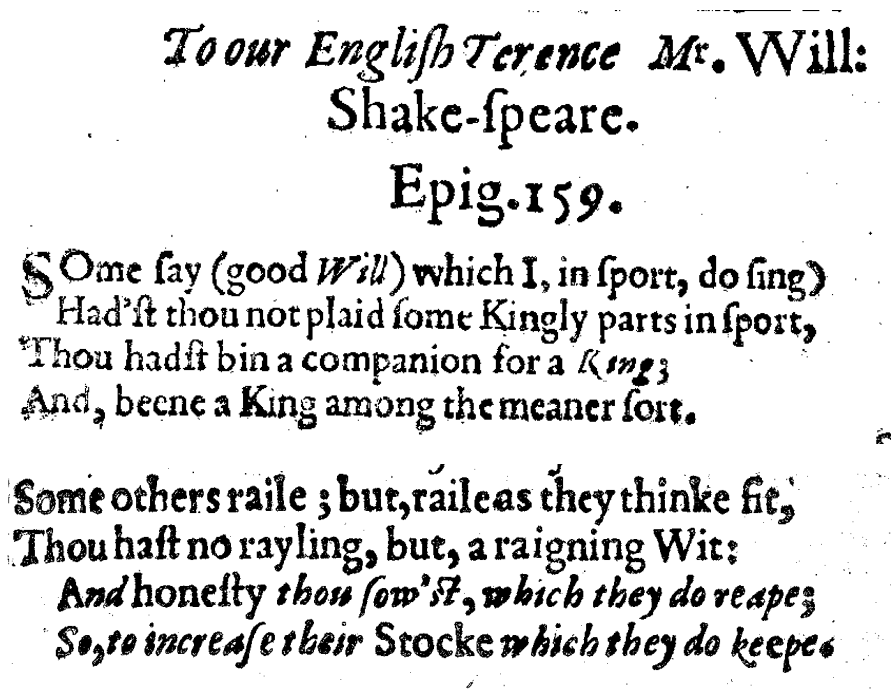
# John Davies of Hereford: Shakespeare and Neville

Appendix I

## Davies's epigram to Shakespeare

John Davies of Hereford's *The Scourge of Folly*, registered in October 1610 and generally dated about 1611, contains an explicit address to Shakespeare. Epigram 159 is headed "To our English Terence Mr. Will: Shake-speare":

> Some say, good Will, which I **in sport** do sing,
> Hadst thou not played some **kingly parts in sport**,
> Thou hadst been a **companion for a king**,
> And been a king among the meaner sort.
> Some others rail; but rail as they think fit,
> Thou hast no railing, but a **reigning wit**:
> And honesty thou sow'st, which they do reap;
> So to increase their stock which they do keep.[1]



To our Engliſh Terence Mr. Will:
Shake-ſpeare.

Epig. 159.

SOme ſay (good *Will*) which I, in ſport, do ſing)
Had'ſt thou not plaid ſome Kingly parts in ſport,
Thou hadſt bin a companion for a *King*;
And, beene a King among the meaner ſort.

Some others raile; but, raileas they thinke fit,
Thou haſt no rayling, but, a raigning Wit:
*And* honeſty *thou ſow'ſt, which they do reape;*
*So, to increaſe their* Stocke *which they do keepe.*

John Davies of Hereford, *The Scourge of Folly*, epigram 159, pp. 76–77 (c. 1611). Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 6341. Cropped colour photographs, CC BY-SA 4.0.

"English Terence" carries a history of disputed literary credit. In "Black Comedy: Shakespeare, Terence, and Titus Andronicus" (2018), Shakespeare scholar Misha Teramura examines "the contemporaneous rumor that Terence's plays were really authored by his noble friends." The Roman biographer Suetonius recorded claims that Scipio and Laelius helped Terence write, and that work by these aristocrats appeared under Terence's name. Teramura traces the tradition into the Renaissance: Montaigne and Roger Ascham both accepted versions of it. Davies's heading thus invokes a dramatist whose name had long been associated with arguments about who wrote the plays attributed to him.[2]

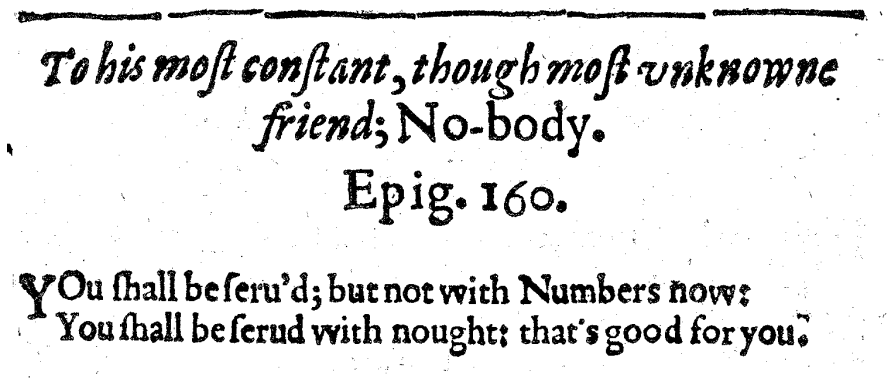
Teramura also stresses Terence's achievement as "a slave who became a successful dramatist." He connects that career directly with the ambitions of London playwrights and Davies's address to Shakespeare. Terence offered a model of artistic distinction across barriers of status; scepticism about his authorship could express resistance to an African former slave's learning and eloquence. Both strands were available to a reader of Davies's compliment: celebrated comic writing and a contested relationship between the named author, social rank and literary credit.[2]

Davies's opening makes the "kingly parts" an obstacle to companionship with a king. The poem then changes the kind of sovereignty it attributes to its subject: Shakespeare has a "reigning wit." Its final lines describe others reaping the honesty he sows. These are the actual terms of the praise, and they are more particular than a general compliment to literary talent.

## "No-body," "Some-body," and "much ado"

Immediately after the Shakespeare epigram, Davies addresses "his most constant, though most unknown friend; No-body." Epigram 160 reads, with spelling modernized:

> You shall be served; but not with numbers now;
> You shall be served with **nought**; that's good for you.



*To his moſt conſtant, though moſt vnknowne friend*; No-body.

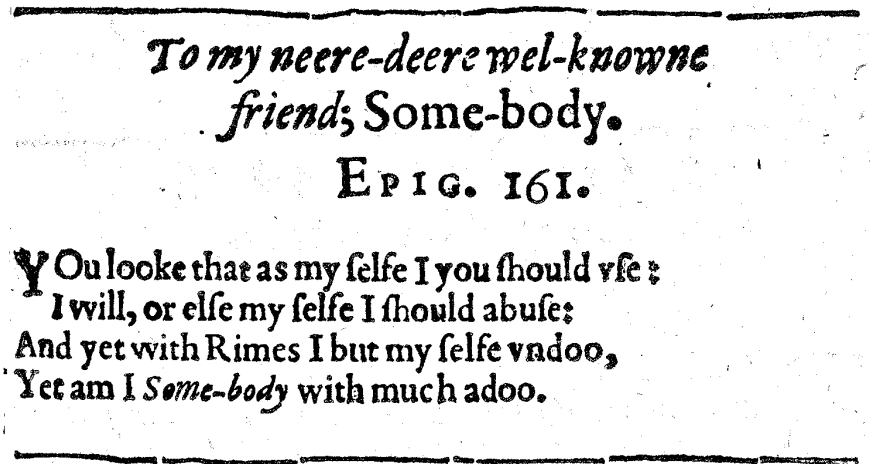
Epig. 160.

YOu ſhall be ſeru'd; but not with Numbers now:
You ſhall be ſerud with nought: that's good for you.

Davies, *The Scourge of Folly*, epigram 160, p. 77. Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 6341. Cropped photograph, CC BY-SA 4.0.

The next heading reverses unknown into well-known: "To my near-dear well-known friend; Some-body." Epigram 161 says:

> You look that as myself I you should use:
> I will, or else myself I should abuse:
> And yet with rhymes I but myself undo,
> Yet am I **Some-body, with much ado**.[1]



*To my neere-deere wel-knowne friend;* Some-body.

EPIG. 161.

YOu looke that as my ſelfe I you ſhould vſe:
I will, or elſe my ſelfe I ſhould abuſe:
And yet with Rimes I but my ſelfe vndoo,
Yet am I *Some-body* with much adoo.

Davies, *The Scourge of Folly*, epigram 161, p. 77. Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 6341. Cropped photograph, CC BY-SA 4.0.

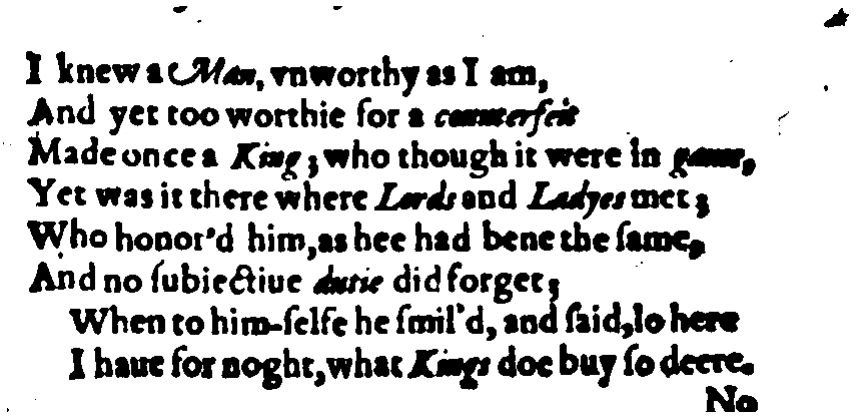
The sequence is Shakespeare, No-body, Some-body. "Numbers" means verse as well as counting; "nought" answers the nameless friend with nothing. Read immediately after Shakespeare's name and this play on nothing, the closing **"much ado"** points towards *Much Ado About Nothing*. Its first quarto was published in 1600 and named William Shakespeare on its title page.[3]

The two brief poems turn on the contrast between an unknown friend and a well-known one, between being nobody and somebody, and between verse and nothing. Their position following the named Shakespeare address gives the final apparent title reference its particular force.

## "I knew a man"

In 1616, the year after Neville's death, Davies published *A Select Second Husband for Sir Thomas Overbury's Wife, Now a Matchless Widow*. Its poem *Speculum Proditori* contains another account of a man playing king. The opening of the episode reads:

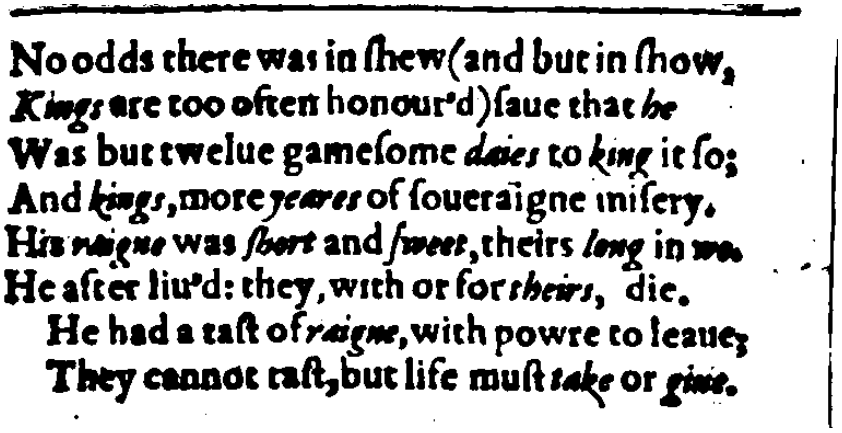
I knew a man, **unworthy** as I am,
And yet too **worthy for a counterfeit**,
Made once a **king**; who though it were **in game**,
Yet was it there where **lords and ladies met**;
Who honoured him, as he had been the same,
And no subjective duty did forget;
When to himself he smiled, and said, lo here
I have for nought, what kings do buy so dear.[4]


I knew a *Man*, vnworthy as I am,
And yet too worthie for a *counterfeit*
Made once a *King*; who though it were in *game*,
Yet was it there where *Lords* and *Ladyes* met;
Who honor'd him, as hee had bene the same,
And no ſubiectiue *dutie* did forget;
When to him-ſelfe he ſmil'd, and ſaid, lo here
I haue for noght, what *Kings* doe buy ſo deere.
No

Davies, *A Select Second Husband* (1616), "Speculum Proditori." Original stanza.

The next stanza gives the duration and outcome of his reign:

No odds there was in show (and but in show,
Kings are too often honoured) save that he
Was but **twelve gamesome days** to king it so;
And kings, more years of sovereign misery.
His reign was short and sweet, theirs long in woe.
**He after lived**: they, with or for theirs, die.
He had a taste of reign, with power to leave;
They cannot taste, but life must take or give.[4]


No odds there was in ſhew (and but in ſhow,
*Kings* are too often honour'd) ſaue that *he*
Was but twelue gameſome *daies* to *king* it ſo;
And *kings*, more *yeares* of ſoueraigne miſery.
His *raigne* was *ſhort* and *ſweet*, theirs *long* in woe.
He after liu'd: they, with or for *theirs*, die.
He had a taſt of *raigne*, with powre to leaue;
They cannot taſt, but life muſt *take* or *giue*.

The following stanza: "twelve gamesome days." Original page.

Davies continues the comparison. The temporary king makes friends of enemies through a bloodless performance. He "poisoned" people with sugar and perfumed wines, moved with guards without fearing assassination, and conversed with ladies without the suspicion that followed a real sovereign. The passage ends by asking who has the better reign: a king in reality or in pretence.

The relationship with the Shakespeare epigram is close in subject and wording: "kingly parts in sport" becomes a man made king "in game." Both separate the person's worth from the role he performs. Alexander B. Grosart, editor of Davies's collected works, printed the two passages together in his 1878 introduction and proposed that the unnamed man was Shakespeare:

> I like to think that this 'man' was **Shakespeare**, and that herein we have a **designed supplement to the Epigram**. Let the reader compare and judge.[5]

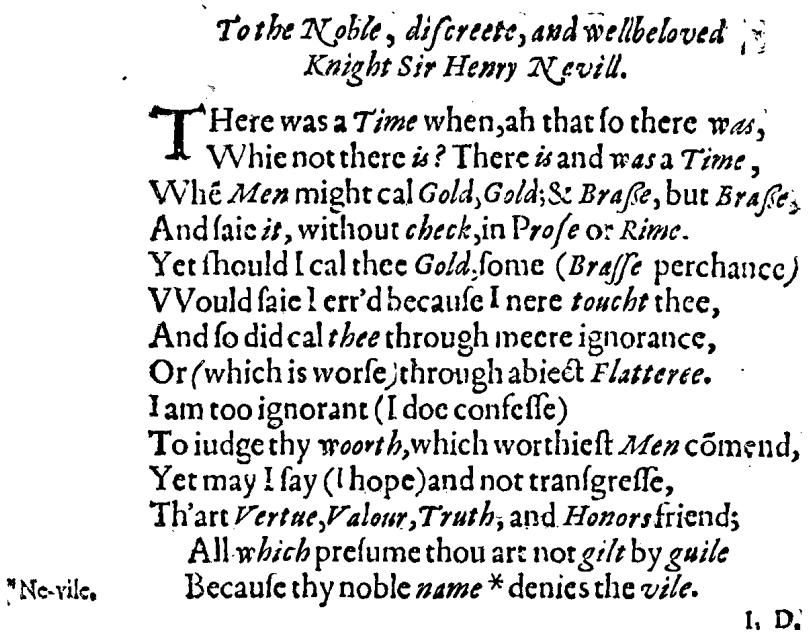
MacDonald Jackson also discussed both texts in his 2007 article on Davies and Sonnet 111, although he rejected Grosart's identification of the unnamed man. He understood the twelve-day reign as that of a Christmas Lord or King of Misrule, and treated it as another version of Davies's recurring comparison between performed and actual kingship.[6]

The language of **"unworthy"** and **"worthy"** also recalls Davies's poem addressed to Neville in *Microcosmos* (1603):

> I am too ignorant (I do confess)
> To judge thy **worth**, which **worthiest** men commend.

In both passages Davies lowers himself while praising another man's worth. The later phrase **"too worthy for a counterfeit"** also recalls the earlier poem's distinction between gold and brass, genuine value and something merely **"gilt by guile."** The poem to Neville makes true worth, obscured or misjudged by others, its central concern. This is a further connection between the unnamed man

and Davies's named praise of Neville, discussed in Chapter 48, "Microcosmos: Neville and Shakespeare."[4]



*To the Noble, discreete, and wellbeloved*
*Knight Sir Henry Neuill.*

THere was a *Time* when, ah that ſo there *was*,
Whie not there *is*? There *is* and *was* a *Time*,
Whē *Men* might cal *Gold*, *Gold*; & *Braſſe*, but *Braſſe*;
And ſaie *it*, without *check*, in *Proſe* or *Rime*.
Yet ſhould I cal thee *Gold*, ſome (*Braſſe* perchance)
VVould ſaie I err'd becauſe I nere *toucht* thee,
And ſo did cal *thee* through meere ignorance,
Or (which is worſe) through abiect *Flatteree*.
I am too ignorant (I doe confeſſe)
To iudge thy *woorth*, which worthieſt *Men* cōmend,
Yet may I ſay (I hope) and not tranſgreſſe,
Th'art *Vertue*, *Valour*, *Truth*, and *Honors* friend;
All *which* preſume thou art not *gilt* by *guile*
Becauſe thy noble *name* * denies the *vile*.

*Ne-vile.

I. D.

Davies's address to Neville in *Microcosmos* (1603), with "worth," "worthiest" and "gilt by guile." Original poem.

For the Neville reading, the sequence is suggestive: Davies's named address to Neville in 1603, his named address to Shakespeare around 1611, and this unnamed man in a book published in 1616. Neville had died on 10 July 1615. Publication after his death gives the opening "I knew a man" a possible retrospective force, but those words alone do not say that the man was dead. The fuller passage supplies a specific question for further research: can Neville be documented taking the part of a festive king for twelve days? No such occasion is identified in the evidence presented here.

## Notes and sources

1. John Davies of Hereford, *The Scourge of Folly* (London: Edward Allde for Richard Redmer, undated, c.1611), epigrams 159–161, STC 6341; digitized edition. The registration date, 8 October 1610, and the probable publication year are discussed by MacDonald P. Jackson (2007). The full Shakespeare epigram is printed at the beginning of this appendix.
2. Misha Teramura, "Black Comedy: Shakespeare, Terence, and Titus Andronicus," *ELH* 85.4 (Winter 2018), pp. 877–908, especially pp. 888–890, article. The first quotation is from p. 888; the second from p. 890. Teramura examines the racial and social politics of Terence's reception and his relationship to *Titus Andronicus*. He does not argue for a concealed author behind Shakespeare; the application to Davies's heading here is this book's interpretation.

3. Folger Shakespeare Library, "Much Ado About Nothing, first edition," *Shakespeare Documented*, STC 22304: London, Valentine Simmes for Andrew Wise and William Aspley, 1600; registration 23 August 1600. John Davies of Hereford, *The Scourge of Folly*, STC 6341, epigrams 159–161, pp. 76–77; registered 8 October 1610, conventionally dated [1611]. The "much ado" title echo is an interpretation of the wording and sequence, not an explicit naming of the play. Epigrams 160–161 are quoted in full with spelling modernized; the photographs preserve the printed forms.
4. John Davies of Hereford, *A Select Second Husband for Sir Thomas Overburies Wife, Now a Matchlesse Widow* (London, 1616), "Speculum Proditori," TCP A19911, beginning at page-image marker tcp:9887:42; public TCP transcription. The two stanzas are quoted in full, with spelling modernized. The following three stanzas continue the royal comparison; their content is summarized in the text. The book's publication year does not establish when Davies composed this passage. For the comparison with Neville's worth, see Davies, *Microcosmos* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1603), "To the Noble, discreete, and wellbeloved Knight Sir Henry Nevill," lines 5–10 and 13–14; original page, TCP A19903. Spelling is modernized. The parallel is offered as a connection in Davies's language and imagery, not an identification established by the unnamed poem.
5. Alexander B. Grosart, ed., *The Complete Works of John Davies of Hereford*, I (1878), "Memorial-Introduction," p.lv, printed page. Grosart prints the Shakespeare epigram immediately before the "I knew a Man" stanzas and proposes a deliberate connection. His identification is explicitly conjectural. The quotation is checked against the printed page; line-end word divisions are joined.
6. MacDonald P. Jackson, "Shakespeare's Sonnet CXI and John Davies of Hereford's *Microcosmos* (1603)," *Modern Language Review* 102, no. 1 (January 2007), pp. 1–10, full text, discussion of "Speculum Proditori" and Davies's other treatments of playing kings. His interpretation concerns festive misrule; it does not identify the unnamed man as Neville.

# Quadratus in Marston's What You Will

Appendix J

Quadratus quotes *Richard III* and immediately announces what he is doing. In Act 2, scene 1 of John Marston's *What You Will*, he cries:

> **A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!**

The line is Richard's cry in *Richard III*, Act 5, scene 4. Quadratus follows it by calling attention to his habit of speaking "play scraps." His quarrel with Lampatho is conducted partly through the language of the theatre.[1]

Marston's play belongs to about 1600–1601 and appeared in print in 1607. Its title is also the subtitle of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. The 1607 book was printed by George Eld for Thomas Thorpe—the same printer and publisher responsible for Shakespeare's *Sonnets* in 1609.[2]

Quadratus supplies further Shakespearean echoes. At the opening of Act 5, scene 1, he says:

> Feed and be fat, my fair Calipolis.

Pistol uses the same formulation in *2 Henry IV*, Act 2, scene 4. The joke already has a theatrical history: Pistol combines phrases from George Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar*. Marston's use belongs to that chain of quotation and parody.[3]

"Rivo" is also part of Quadratus's recognisable manner. Immediately after the *Richard III* quotation in *What You Will*, Act 2, scene 1, he cries "**Rivo**, Saint Mark," and later in the same scene gives a drinking rhyme:

> Music, tobacco, sack and sleep,
> The tide of sorrow backward keep.
> If thou art sad at others' fate,
> **Rivo**, drink deep, give care the mate.

At the dinner in Act 5, scene 1, his next line after "Feed and be fat" is "**Rivo**, here's good juice, fresh borage, boy?" But the fourth occurrence belongs to another character's imitation of him. In Act 4, scene 1, Meletza describes:

> my chub, my Epicure Quadratus, that **rubs his guts, claps his paunch and cries Rivo**, entertaining my ears perpetually with a most strong discourse of the praise of bottle ale and red herrings.

The distinction matters: Quadratus says "Rivo" three times, and Meletza makes it his catchphrase in her caricature. Marston shows both the performance and how another person hears and mimics it.[4]

Shakespeare also puts the cry inside an impersonation. In *1 Henry IV*, Act 2, scene 4, Prince Hal imagines himself and Falstaff playing Hotspur and Hotspur's wife:

> [...] I prithee, call in Falstaff. I'll play Percy,
> and that damned brawn shall play Dame Mortimer
> his wife. "**Rivo!**" says the drunkard. Call in
> Ribs, call in Tallow.

Here too "Rivo" accompanies a bodily caricature and a performed voice. Together with the Calipolis quotation, sack, paunch and appetite, it gives Quadratus a recognisable connection with the comic world of the *Henry IV* plays.[4]

Later in *What You Will*, Act 5, scene 1, Quadratus addresses the Duke of Venice:

> I am **fat and therefore faithful**. I will do that which few of thy subjects do: love thee. But I will never do that which all thy subjects do: flatter thee.

He then proposes an entertainment on Cato of Utica and volunteers to play Cato himself. The duke objects that he lacks a beard; Quadratus answers that a beard never made Cato. Here is a theatrical figure who combines appetite, hostility to flattery and an ambition to perform a classical statesman.[1]

Neville's bodily build gives this characterization a biographical point of comparison. Quadratus calls himself "**fat**"; John More, writing to Winwood on 29 October 1611 about Neville's prospects of office, refers to "his **unwieldy body** and giving himself to a mere country life." Mayerne's medical account, headed "Sir Henry Nevill. May 14. 1615," begins with **"Obesus"**—corpulent. The letter assigning Neville the name **Similis** because he was "**like Hen 8**," quoted in Appendix B, supplies another contemporary comparison of his appearance. These descriptions belong beside Quadratus's own "I am fat" and Meletza's caricature of his guts and paunch.[5]

The vocabulary study places this cluster among 197 plays written in 1590–1610. **"Rivo"** occurs in five plays (2.5 per cent), including *What You Will* and *1 Henry IV*. Each of the seven words highlighted in Ken Feinstein's cited blog discussion occurs in nine or fewer plays in this period; all seven also appear, in the corresponding word forms or inflections, in Shakespeare:

| Word or word family | Plays containing it, out of 197 |
|---|---|
| Calipolis | 4 |
| Rivo | 5 |
| yelp | 2 |
| incomprehensible / incomprehensibly | 8 |
| snaffle | 6 |
| unwind | 9 |
| vassalage | 9 |

These are counts of distinct plays, not repetitions of a word. The four "Rivo" occurrences in Marston therefore contribute one play to the total of five. The small distributions make the cluster more particular than a collection of common verbal resemblances.[6]

The exchange need not run in one direction. Shakespeare could also play off Marston. *What You Will* and *Twelfth Night* belong to an overlapping theatrical moment, and the order of their composition is disputed. Some Shakespeare examples in this word group are earlier than Marston's play; *snaffle* occurs in the later *Antony and Cleopatra*, while *vassalage* occurs in the approximately contemporary or later *Troilus and Cressida*. The figures describe shared vocabulary within that exchange; the direction has to be considered passage by passage.[6]

Quadratus clearly quotes Shakespeare and uses Shakespearean language, but whether he is intended as a caricature of Shakespeare or Neville remains unresolved.[7]

**Marston's *Pigmalion's Image* and *Venus and Adonis***

Before *What You Will*, Marston had published *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image. And Certaine Satyres* (1598). Its opening poem retells the story of the sculptor who falls in love with his own ivory image, which Venus brings to life. Its relationship to *Venus and Adonis* has long been recognised in scholarship: A. H. Bullen identifies Shakespeare's poem as an inspiration and notes their shared stanza form. The verbal echo is particularly clear in the verses headed "The Author in praise of his precedent Poem."

In *Venus and Adonis*, lines 199–200, Venus asks:

> Art thou **obdurate, flinty**, hard as steel?
> Nay, more than flint, for **stone** at rain **relenteth**.

Marston writes:

> So Labeo did complain his love was **stone**,
> **Obdurate, flinty**, so **relentless** none.

The echo joins the repeated "obdurate, flinty" to the same image of a beloved whose stony hardness resists entreaty.[8]

The accompanying satires offer a further possible Shakespearean echo. In the second satire accompanying *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image* (1598), an apparently devout man is exposed as a "**vile**, sober, damn'd, **Polititian**." Hotspur calls Bolingbroke a "**vile politician**" in *1 Henry IV*, 1.3. Searches of EEBO/EarlyPrint, allowing spelling variants and intervening words, retrieved no other independent example of this particular combination before 1650: the additional Shakespeare hit repeats the passage in the First Folio. Both works appeared in print in 1598. Neville's parliamentary and diplomatic career gives "politician" an obvious biographical relevance, while "vile" invites a possible play on Neville and the family motto *Ne vile velis*. A Catholic newsletter of 16 August 1612 also calls him "a greate Puritane," while discussing his prospects of becoming secretary. That supplies another biographical point of contact with Marston's Puritan politician, though the satire's accusation of usury does not by itself identify Neville.[8]

The same satire opens with the speaker calling himself a "dull-sprighted **fat Boetian Boore**." Beside Neville's documented corpulence, Fitzgeoffrey's description of him as **Aonian** in *Affaniae* (1601), III.41, is suggestive: Aonian is a poetic designation associated with Boeotia, and Sutton translates the phrase as "Boeotian Neville's person." These correspondences belong beside Quadratus's appetite and Shakespearean language. They remain possible allusions: the Boeotian speaker and the later politician are distinct figures within the satire, and Fitzgeoffrey's learned compliment has a different tone from Marston's self-mocking "boor."[9]

## Notes and sources

1. John Marston, *What You Will* (London: George Eld for Thomas Thorpe, 1607), STC 17487, TCP A07081, Acts 2.1 and 5.1; Folger Early Modern English Drama record; public TCP transcription. Shakespeare, *Richard III* 5.4. Quotations from Marston modernize spelling; punctuation has been adjusted for readability.
2. Janet Clare, "What You Will", *The Complete Works of John Marston*, University of Leeds, on the approximate composition period and publication in 1607. The Folger record gives the imprint. Shakespeare, *Shake-speares Sonnets* (London: George Eld for Thomas Thorpe, 1609), title page.
3. Marston, *What You Will* 5.1; Shakespeare, *2 Henry IV* 2.4. George Peele, *The Battle of Alcazar*, the Calipolis feeding episode, provides the earlier phrases. See the annotated text, with Dyce's comparison of the lines and Pistol's combination of them. This is not an independently invented phrase unique to Shakespeare.
4. John Marston, *What You Will* (London: George Eld for Thomas Thorpe, 1607), 2.1, 4.1 and 5.1; STC 17487, TCP A07081, public transcription; Folger edition record. Spelling modernized. Three occurrences of "Riuo" are in Quadratus's speeches; the fourth is Meletza's representation of him. Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, 2.4, Prince Hal's speech. The Folger lineation is retained; the opening ellipsis marks omission within a line. Within the 1590–1610 comparison, the other three plays containing "Rivo" are *Blurt, Master Constable* (1601), *Law Tricks* (1604) and *The Alchemist* (1610), using the corpus's composition dates.

5. John More to Ralph Winwood, 29 October 1611, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, Preserved at Montagu House, Whitehall*, I (London, 1899), pp. 101–102, quotation on p. 102; also Jackie Watson, *Epistolary Courtiership and Dramatic Letters* (2024), Letter 17, p. 80. More's own words are quoted in the printed edition. 'Unwieldy' supplies a bodily comparison without giving Neville's weight or establishing his appearance in 1600–1601. Théodore de Mayerne, *Opera medica*, ed. Joseph Browne (London, 1701), pp. 198–203, especially p. 198, printed case, headed 'Sir Henry Nevill. May 14. 1615.' This is the ambassador's case. 'Obesus' means corpulent; the case is a posthumously printed medical account. For Similis, see Watson, Letter 41, pp. 133–134 and n. 104, transcribing British Library Harley MS 7002, fol. 281, discussed in Appendix B. These descriptions postdate the play's likely composition, so neither fixes his bodily appearance in 1600–1601. The Sonnet 66 chapter discusses More's description alongside the other physical evidence.
6. Author's count of the seven terms identified in Ken Feinstein, "Marston's 'What You Will' and Shakespeare" (27 April 2020), using the 197 plays dated 1590–1610 inclusive in Pervez Rizvi's dramatic corpus. These are the corpus's estimated composition dates, not publication dates. Counts use the supplied lemmas and distinct play identifiers; incomprehensibly is grouped with incomprehensible, and yelping with yelp. Both eligibility and word frequencies are restricted to this period. This is a vocabulary-distribution test, not an authorship probability. For the intertextual dating problem see Janet Clare, *What You Will*, Complete Works of John Marston.
7. Ken Feinstein, "Marston's 'What You Will' and Shakespeare", 27 April 2020. Janet Clare's account for the *Complete Works of John Marston* records the alternative reading of Quadratus as Marston and Lampatho as Jonson. The earlier experimental affinity ranking is not restated as a fresh measurement here.
8. A. H. Bullen, introduction to *The Works of John Marston*, vol. I (London: John C. Nimmo, 1887), discussion of *Pygmalion*, public text. Bullen identifies the shared metre and Shakespearean inspiration, while questioning Marston's later claim to have written the poem as a moral satire. For the *Venus and Adonis* echo, see Marston, "The Author in praise of his precedent Poem," lines 29–30, printed p. 25: "So Labeo did complaine his loue was stone, / Obdurate, flinty, so relentlesse none." Original page. Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, lines 199–200. Marston's quoted couplet modernizes spelling and punctuation; Shakespeare's lineation is retained. Marston, *The Metamorphosis of Pigmalions Image. And Certaine Satyres* (London, 1598), pp. 42–43, TCP A07075; original p. 43. Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, 1.3, Hotspur's speech. Searches on 22 September 2026 used adjacent lemmas and a gap of zero to four tokens, checked against original-spelling variants. The relevant pre-1650 witnesses retrieved were TCP A11966 (1598), A07075 (1598) and A11954 (1623). This describes the searched texts, not every surviving book, and does not establish borrowing direction. The wider public corpus also returns later instances, including the 1700 adaptation of *Henry IV* and Centlivre's *The Cruel Gift* (1717). EarlyPrint search documentation. Andrew Thrush, "NEVILLE, Sir Henry I (1564–1615)", *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris (2010), opening paragraph and n. 21, citing *Newsletters from the Archpresbyterate of George Birkhead*, ed. M. C. Questier, p. 192. The newsletter has been checked directly: [Benjamin Norton] to George West (Thomas More), 16 August 1612, letter 34, in Questier, *Newsletters* (Camden Fifth Series 12, 1998), pp. 188–193, at p. 192: "S.r Harry Nevill a greate Puritane shall execute the office." Published text. The report envisages Viscount Rochester as chief secretary and Neville executing the office; it records a rumour, not an appointment. Manuscript reference supplied by the edition: AAW A XI, no. 136, pp. 369–72.
9. Marston, *Pigmalions Image*, p. 38, opening of Satire II. Charles Fitzgeoffrey, *Affaniae* (1601), III.41, *Aonii … Nevilli*; Latin and Dana F. Sutton's translation. For the later descriptions of Neville's corpulence, see note 5 above. The "amber tresses" on Marston's pp. 45–46 belong to a separate figure, revealed as Lais in male clothing, and are not attributes assigned to the Boeotian speaker.

# Interesting Parallels

Appendix K

## Rycote and the soldier-wooer in Henry V

Henry's courtship in *Henry V* has an earlier parallel in the entertainment given for Elizabeth at Lord Norreys's Rycote in 1592. A soldier's love letter, mistakenly read before the queen, opposes military action to literary courtship:

> You say love cannot be in soldiers, I swear it is, only this the difference, that we prove it by the **sword**, others by their **sonnets**; theirs ink, black for cold, ours blood, red for heat.[1]

Henry likewise presents himself to Katherine as a soldier unequal to a poet's wooing:

> KING HENRY Marry, if you would put me to **verses** or to dance for your sake, Kate, why you undid me. For the one, I have neither words nor measure; and for the other, I have no strength in measure, yet a reasonable measure in strength. If I could win a lady at leapfrog or by **vaulting into my saddle** with **my armor on my back**, under the correction of bragging be it spoken, I should quickly leap into a wife. Or if I might **buffet for my love**, or bound my horse for her favors, I could lay on like a butcher and sit like a jackanapes, never off. …[2]

Both passages contrast poetry with the soldier's way of proving his love: the Rycote letter sets sword against sonnets, while Henry offers feats of strength and horsemanship instead of verses. The Neville-family connection extends to the entertainment's expenses: a 1917 sale catalogue records a letter from Lord Norreys to Sir Henry Neville concerning payment of thirty soldiers' wages in connection with Elizabeth's entertainment at Rycote in 1592. The catalogue dates the letter to 1599; if 1592 was intended, its recipient was Neville's father.[3]

## Cuffe's leanness and superfluity

Henry Cuffe had repeatedly approached Neville to draw him into Essex's plans, as Neville described in his March 1601 confession. Cuffe's *The Differences of the Ages of Mans Life*, published in 1607, treats nutrition in terms of the body's proper balance. "All mixture of **superfluities**," he writes, "is against nature, enemy to good digestion, and sound nutrition." Excessive waking, by contrast, consumes the vital juice and "causeth **leanness** in the body."[4]

The First Citizen turns these bodily conditions into a description of unequal distribution:

> FIRST CITIZEN We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good. What authority surfeits on would relieve us. If they would yield us but the **superfluity** while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely. But they think we are too dear. The **leanness** that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularize their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them. Let us revenge this with our pikes ere we become rakes; for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge.
> — *Coriolanus*, 1.1.[5]

North also describes purging Rome's "superfluous ill humours." The sharper comparison with Cuffe is the pairing of superfluity and leanness: Cuffe treats them as disorders of the body; the citizen distributes them between rich and poor. Cuffe's work on the ages of man is discussed more fully in the *As You Like It* chapter.

An EEBO-TCP search finds both terms in earlier medical writing: Nicholas Gyer's *The English Phlebotomy* (1592) discusses leanness and the body's discharge of superfluities. They belong to a shared vocabulary of bodily health. Cuffe uses them in separate passages about nourishment and imbalance; Shakespeare brings them together to contrast the rich's excess with the poor's hunger.[6]

## "Absolute power": a phrase found by comparison

Our independent study looked for phrases that Shakespeare uses repeatedly but other playwrights use rarely. "Absolute power" stood out: in the 239-play comparison set dated 1590–1615, it appears in four Shakespeare plays—*Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens* and *Coriolanus*—but in only one play by another dramatist, Ben Jonson's *Sejanus His Fall*. Neville uses the same phrase in his diplomatic correspondence. The point is its concentration in Shakespeare's plays and its presence in Neville's writing.[7]

On 12 March 1600, Neville reported to Cecil on the negotiations for Henri IV's marriage to the Princess of Florence, Marie de' Medici. He expected the French negotiator, Sillery, to have reached Florence:

> and Monsieur de Sillery is by this time I suppose at Florence, with **absolute power** to conclude the contract there publicly.[8]

The letter precedes all five play witnesses in the comparison. Three of the Shakespeare passages use the expression in closely related situations: authority is delegated, restored or offered to someone for a defined purpose.

In *Measure for Measure*, the Duke explains the authority he has entrusted to Angelo:

DUKE [...]
I have delivered to Lord Angelo,
A man of stricture and firm abstinence,
My **absolute power** and place here in Vienna,
And he supposes me traveled to Poland,
For so I have strewed it in the common ear,
And so it is received. Now, pious sir,
You will demand of me why I do this.
— *Measure for Measure*, 1.3.[9]

In *King Lear*, Albany declares his intention to restore authority to the old king:

ALBANY [...]
Shall be applied. For us, we will resign,
During the life of this old Majesty,
To him our **absolute power**; you to your rights,
With boot and such addition as your Honors
Have more than merited. All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings. O, see, see!
— *King Lear*, 5.3.[9]

In *Timon of Athens*, the senators offer Timon command of the city's defence:

FIRST SENATOR
Therefore, so please thee to return with us
And of our Athens, thine and ours, to take
The captainship, thou shalt be met with thanks;
Allowed with **absolute power**, and thy good name
Live with authority. So soon we shall drive back
Of Alcibiades th' approaches wild,
Who like a boar too savage doth root up
His country's peace.
— *Timon of Athens*, 5.1.[9]

In *Coriolanus*, the phrase describes the people's political authority in Greece:

CORIOLANUS
Though there the people had more **absolute power**,
I say they nourished disobedience, fed
The ruin of the state.
— *Coriolanus*, 3.1.[9]

## "Without the form of justice"

Neville's embassy correspondence records him insisting on the distinction between power and lawful procedure. Writing to Cecil on 28 July 1599, Neville

described his protest to the French king over the seizure of an English ship by men of Marseilles. He had objected:

> that it was done altogether **without any form of justice**, of their own authority, without any commission or letters of reprisal from the king, and without requiring justice first in England, as all the treaties, both old and new, do in that case require[10]

Cornwall acknowledges the same distinction between force and lawful procedure before Gloucester's blinding in *King Lear* 3.7:

> CORNWALL
> Though well we may not pass upon his life
> **Without the form of justice**, yet our power
> Shall do a court'sy to our wrath, which men
> May blame but not control.[11]

Neville invokes lawful procedure to restrain power; Cornwall names it before setting it aside. The diplomatic protest and the dramatic speech turn on the same distinction.

## Forgiveness and the rights of others

On 26 September 1599, Neville disputed an argument that the French king's pardon of former rebels discharged claims for an English ship taken by men of Marseilles. He insisted that the injured party mattered:

> Although the king might **pardon for offences done against him**, yet he could not pardon those that were committed **against his allies**; or if he will, he must of his own make good the damages.[12]

Prospero likewise separates his own forgiveness from the offence against Alonso. He can expose Antonio and Sebastian as traitors, but chooses to remain silent; he forgives Antonio while requiring his dukedom back. In *The Tempest*, 5.1:

> PROSPERO [...]
> I here could pluck his Highness' frown upon you
> And **justify you traitors**. At this time
> I will tell no tales.
> [...]
> [To Antonio.] For you, most wicked sir, whom to
> call brother
> Would even infect my mouth, **I do forgive**
> Thy rankest fault, all of them, and require
> My dukedom of thee, which perforce I know
> Thou must restore.
> — *The Tempest*, 5.1

Neville's dispute concerns maritime damages; Prospero's concerns usurpation and attempted murder. In each, forgiving a wrong to oneself is distinct from disposing of another ruler's claim.[12]

## Amity between England and France

Reporting his protest over France's failure to repay Elizabeth, Neville told Cecil that he had offered to withhold the French king's unsatisfactory answer while the king reconsidered it. His purpose was to preserve relations between the two monarchs:

> out of my love to the king, and desire of the continuance of good **amity between their Majesties**[13]

In *Henry VIII*, Buckingham describes the Emperor's fear that closer relations between England and France would threaten his interests:

> BUCKINGHAM [...]
> His fears were that the interview betwixt
> **England and France** might through their **amity**
> Breed him some prejudice, for from this league
> Peeped harms that menaced him; [...]
> — *Henry VIII*, 1.1.[14]

Both passages concern amity between England and France: the same two kingdoms and the political consequences of their relationship. Neville seeks to preserve it through honourable treatment of Elizabeth; Buckingham describes the Emperor's fear of the harm it could do him. The diplomatic relationship is viewed from opposite sides: something to protect, or something to fear.

## A royal offer

In *1 Henry IV*, 5.2, Worcester returns from the king's camp determined to hide the offer of peace from Hotspur:

> WORCESTER
> O no, my nephew must not know, Sir Richard,
> The liberal and **kind offer of the King**.[15]

Neville uses the same formulation in his account of negotiations with Villeroy on 29 June 1599. Whatever course Elizabeth chose, he said, she would

> not forget to claim and embrace those **kind offers of the King's** towards her.[16]

Both offers pass through intermediaries, though Worcester suppresses his. EarlyPrint finds the phrase in the 1598 quarto and First Folio; its only other

results are a 1683 military letter and a 1700 adaptation of the play. The correspondence is distinctive, but Neville's later letter cannot be established as the dramatic line's source.[17]

## When writing speaks for feeling

Writing to Salisbury on 14 January 1609, Neville explained why he had put his appeal into a letter:

> finding in myself, either out of the imbecility of my nature, or the **abundance of my love and respect** unto your Lordship, which is ever accompanied with awe and reverence, that I **cannot so freely express myself** unto your Lordship **by speech** as my occasions require, I have adventured to do it **by writing**[18]

Sonnet 23 follows the same movement from overwhelming feeling to failed speech, then to writing:

> So I for fear of trust **forget to say**
> The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
> And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
> **O'ercharged with burden of mine own love's might.**
> O, let **my books be then the eloquence**
> And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,
> Who plead for love and look for recompense
> More than that tongue that more hath more expressed.
> — Sonnet 23.[19]

The correspondence is a sequence of thought: abundant feeling inhibits speech, and writing must carry what the speaker cannot say. Neville addresses a patron; the sonnet addresses a beloved. In both, the difficulty comes from the strength of feeling itself.

## An estate disabled: land, bonds and assurances

On 6 May 1598, Neville asked Cecil to consider the danger that employment abroad would pose to his finances. He had sold land to buy part of Sir Henry Unton's estate and faced obligations that required his attention:

> I am entered into **recognizances** of above twelve thousand pound to be discharged within three months, and all reciprocal **assurances** within that time to be performed. How impossible it is for me to accomplish this if I should be employed I do assuredly know. And not accomplishing it, I foresee the overthrow of my poor **estate**, and shall both serve her Majesty without comfort now, and be utterly **disabled** to serve her in any sort hereafter.[20]

Bassanio uses the same pairing of estate and disability to explain his financial position:

BASSANIO
'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have **disabled mine estate**
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance.
— *The Merchant of Venice*, 1.1.[21]

Bassanio's expenditure has disabled his estate; Neville fears that the loss of his estate will disable his service. The same vocabulary connects financial resources with the capacity to act.

The letter's recognizances and assurances also belong to the world of land transactions that Hamlet evokes in the graveyard:

HAMLET [...] Hum, this fellow might
be in 's time a great **buyer of land**, with his statutes,
his **recognizances**, his fines, his double vouchers,
his recoveries. [...]
— *Hamlet*, 5.1.[21]

When Horatio confirms that parchment is made from sheep and calf skins, Hamlet turns legal security into a joke:

HAMLET They are sheep and calves which seek out
**assurance** in that. [...]
— *Hamlet*, 5.1.[21]

These are connected terms from the business of buying land and securing title. Neville describes the obligations that could ruin him; Hamlet asks what such elaborate securities leave their owner at death.

## All's Well That Ends Well

### "O, that 'had' "

The Countess interrupts herself while remembering Helen's father (*All's Well That Ends Well*, 1.1):

COUNTESS This young gentlewoman **had** a father—O,
that "**had**," how sad a passage 'tis!—whose skill
was almost as great as his honesty; had it stretched
so far, would have made nature immortal, and
death should have play for lack of work.[22]

John Davies of Hereford opens his poem to Henry Neville in *Microcosmos* (1603) with a similar interruption, this time over "was":

There **was** a Time when, ah that so there **was**,
Whie not there is? There is and was a Time,[22]

Both speakers pause over their own past tense. The Countess mourns a dead physician; Davies immediately challenges his "was" and turns to the freedom to speak and praise honestly. His Neville poem is discussed more fully in Chapter 48, "Microcosmos: Neville and Shakespeare."[22]

### Counterpoise and balance

In *All's Well That Ends Well*, the king overcomes Bertram's objection to Helen's lower rank (*All's Well That Ends Well*, 2.3):

> KING Take her by the hand,
> And tell her she is thine, to whom I promise
> A **counterpoise**, if not to thy estate,
> A **balance** more replete.[23]

Neville had used the pair in his dispatch of 12 March 1600. The Dutch States were seeking to stop trade through Calais from supplying their enemies. The Duke of Bouillon and Monsieur du Plessis supported the States against Villeroy's opposition. Neville wrote that they:

> do what they may to **counterpoise the balance** in their favour.[24]

Both apply the weighing metaphor to power or standing. The pairing was already available in English and is not a unique expression.[24] The written marriage conditions are examined in Chapter 29.

### Wisdom and constancy

Reporting his first audience with Henri IV, Neville told Cecil on 15 May 1599 how he had praised the king's resolve in religious policy:

> I commended his **wisdom and constancy** therein, as the only assured means of true peace and prosperity to his kingdom.

Lafew uses the same paired virtues in his admiring account of Helen:

> [...]
> With one that in her sex, her years, profession,
> **Wisdom, and constancy** hath amazed me more
> Than I dare blame my weakness. [...]
> — *All's Well That Ends Well, 2.1*, Lafew.

The same virtues carry the praise in both passages: Neville commends a king's political judgment and persistence; Lafew finds wisdom and constancy remarkable in a young woman whose abilities have been underestimated.[25]

### "Thitherward": journeys to Florence and Lyons

On 25 June 1600, Henry Neville wrote to Cecil from Boulogne about Henri IV's journey towards Lyons, as the king prepared to confront the Duke of Savoy over the disputed Marquisate of Saluzzo. Neville reported:

> he determined to set forward on his journey **thitherwards** in post.[26]

In *All's Well That Ends Well*, two gentlemen bring Helen news that Bertram has gone to serve the Duke of Florence:

> SECOND GENTLEMAN
> Madam, he's gone to serve the Duke of Florence.
> We met him **thitherward**, for thence we came,
> And, after some dispatch in hand at court,
> Thither we bend again.[27]

Both passages use the directional word for a journey: Henri's towards Lyons, Bertram's towards Florence. Among the 297 plays dated before 1616 in the corpus, *All's Well* supplies the only occurrence. The actual word appears in the play text, not merely as a lemma. It was common in other kinds of writing.[26]

## "Course of justice"

"Course of justice" connects Neville's diplomatic writing with the dispute over justice in *Measure for Measure*. Writing to Winwood on 23 January 1601, shortly before his own detention, Neville intended to pursue English grievances against the French "in some **course of justice**." In the final scene, Angelo uses those same words to describe Claudio's supposed death:

> ANGELO
> My lord, her wits, I fear me, are not firm.
> She hath been a suitor to me for her brother
> Cut off by **course of justice**.
> ISABELLA, [standing] By **course of justice**!
> — *Measure for Measure*, 5.1.

Isabella's repetition strips the formula of its reassuring sound. What Angelo describes as the regular operation of justice, she knows as the outcome of a corrupt bargain. Neville's letters show the expression in the vocabulary of diplomacy; the play makes its adequacy a matter of life and death.[28]

## "At every sentence' end"

The Rycote entertainment of 1592 gives its final messenger a comic excuse for arriving late: lovers have detained him on the way.

> ... at every mile's end a lover, **at every sentence end** a lie, I stayed to hear the conclusions ...

In *As You Like It*, Orlando's verses make the same position in a sentence the place for his beloved's name:

> But upon the fairest boughs,
> Or **at every sentence' end**,
> Will I "Rosalinda" write,
> Teaching all that read to know
> The quintessence of every sprite
> Heaven would in little show.[29]

The shared phrase belongs to the language of lovers in both passages: Rycote makes each sentence end in a lie, while Orlando makes it end in Rosalind's name. An earlier English Eunapius supplies a precedent for the wording, describing an orator clapping his hands "at every sentence end"; the courtship application brings Rycote and Shakespeare closer together.[30]

## Declarations sealed with blood

Another speaker at Rycote offers Elizabeth his life in the language of a document made binding:

> For myself, I can but wish all happiness to her highness, and any occasion that **what my tongue delivers, my blood may seal**, the end of my service, that in her service my life may end.

Writing to Robert Cecil on 7 January 1603, Neville likewise makes blood the guarantee of his declaration of gratitude:

> I shall ever hold, not only my poor fortune, but my life well spent to give your honour any testimony of my thankfulness. And with this protestation (**which I will always avow, and seal with my blood, if occasion require it**) ...[31]

In each passage, words become an undertaking guaranteed by the speaker's life. The 1600 report of Anthony Sherley's Persian journey offers a useful contemporary comparison: his oration speaks of devotion and observances "**sealed with my blood**," offered to be "shed and spent" at the ruler's command. Blood as a seal thus belongs to a wider language of personal service, as well as linking these two passages.[32]

## Blood washing away disgrace

From the Tower on 31 July 1602, Neville imagined military service as a way to remove the stain of his disgrace in Elizabeth's eyes:

> And if there be no other means to **wipe away this blot** wherewith I am **soiled**, yet it is possible that if I were at liberty, I might shed so much of my **blood**, in some place where she hath occasion to use men, as might serve for a **laver for the crime** which hath made me so ugly in her eye.[33]

Lucrece also imagines blood washing away a stain upon her name:

> **My blood shall wash the slander** of mine ill;
> My life's foul deed my life's fair end shall free it.[34]

The correspondence is blood conceived as a cleansing agent for dishonour. Neville's "laver" is a washing or cleansing: he offers to shed blood in the queen's service to wipe away his political disgrace. Lucrece, who has been raped, imagines her death removing the slander attached to her. The circumstances differ, but both passages turn shed blood into a means of restoring a damaged name.

## Hollow friendship

Neville distrusted the durability of French friendship as Henri IV drew closer to Rome. On 14 May 1600 he wrote to Cecil:

> For the **friendship is very hollow**, and will grow every day more **unsound**, as his combination with Rome groweth more strait […]

Edward IV likewise prefers open enemies to unreliable allies:

> I rather wish you foes than **hollow friends**.
> But if you mind to hold your true obedience,
> Give me assurance with some friendly vow,
> That I may never have you in suspect.
> — *3 Henry VI, 4.1*, Edward IV.

Both passages distrust professed friendship in a political relationship. Neville's further opposition between hollow and sound also appears in the Duke's examination of penitence in *Measure for Measure*, 2.3.[35]

## Arms wiping away dishonour

Savile's translation of Tacitus gives a martial form of the blot-removal image. In *Histories* 3.24, Antonius urges the Pannonian legions to recover their honour, asking:

> for what purpose they had now resumed **arms**? if to **wipe away the blot** of their late **ignominy**, here was the field where they might reintegrate themselves in their **honour** again

Whitmore makes the same connection between a weapon, dishonour and a blot:

> Never yet did base **dishonor** blur our name
> But with our **sword** we **wiped away the blot**.
> — *2 Henry VI, 4.1*, Whitmore.

Armed action wipes away a blot of dishonour and restores a damaged name. Savile's translation and Whitmore's speech share that complete proposition, making the comparison particularly pertinent beside Neville's offer to remove his own disgrace through military service.[36]

## Guazzo and Ulysses' book

The Billingbear catalogue records another Italian book: Stefano Guazzo's *La civil conversatione*, Venice, 1579. Guazzo explains that people learn their own faults and qualities through the responses of others. George Pettie's English translation puts it sharply:

> the judgment which we have to **know ourselves**, is not ours, but we **borrow it of others**.[37]

In *Troilus and Cressida* 3.3, Ulysses is reading when Achilles asks about his book. Their discussion turns on the same problem: a person cannot see his own qualities without their reflection in other people. Ulysses explains the author's argument:

> ULYSSES
> I do not strain at the position—
> It is familiar—but at the author's drift,
> Who in his circumstance expressly proves
> That no man is the lord of anything—
> Though in and of him there be much consisting—
> Till he **communicate his parts to others**;
> Nor doth he **of himself know them** for aught
> Till he behold them formed in the applause
> Where they're extended; who, like an arch, reverb'rate
> The voice again or, like a gate of steel
> Fronting the sun, receives and renders back
> His figure and his heat. [...][38]

In his 2018 article "The Conversational Turn in Shakespeare," Shakespeare scholar John Gillies makes this comparison and asks whether Ulysses' unnamed book might be Guazzo.[39]

## Lesser merit makes generosity greater

Asking Salisbury for help on 14 January 1609, Neville described the financial losses of his French embassy and the needs of his growing family. He ended by turning his own limited claim to reward into an argument for his patron's generosity:

> And the **lesse my precedent merit** hath bin, the **more free and the more noble will your favour be**, and bind the more heereafter.

In *Hamlet* 2.2, Polonius promises to treat the visiting actors according to their deserts. Hamlet insists that they should be treated better:

> [...] The **less they deserve, the more merit** is in
> your bounty. [...]
> — *Hamlet*, 2.2, Hamlet.[40]

Both reverse the usual logic of reward: the recipient's lesser merit increases the value of the giver's generosity. Neville adds the obligation it creates—the favour will bind him more closely to Salisbury.

## The king's healing hand

In *Macbeth*, Edward the Confessor's touch heals the sick. The rightful king's body restores other bodies.

Neville had reported royal healing during his French embassy. Writing to Cecil on 13 July 1599, he noted:

> Upon Sunday last the king **healed a great many**, both of Spaniards and others.[41]

The king Neville describes is Henri IV of France.

In *Macbeth*, Malcolm reports the English king's cures:

> MALCOLM
> [...]
> The mere despair of surgery, **he cures**,
> Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
> Put on with holy prayers; and, 'tis spoken,
> To the succeeding royalty he leaves
> The healing benediction. [...]
> — *Macbeth*, 4.3.[42]

The practice rested on a belief that a monarch's touch could cure the disease called the king's evil, commonly identified as scrofula. Holinshed explicitly credits Edward with healing and prophecy and says that he left the healing virtue as an inheritance to his successors. Shakespeare had that material in his historical source.[43]

## Wax figures and the Windsor accusations

The Windsor witchcraft accusations of 1579 brought wax images into the official responsibilities of Neville's father, Sir Henry Neville. The printed account attributed to Elizabeth Stile a confession involving four figures of red wax pierced with hawthorn prickles. On 16 January 1579 the Privy Council instructed the

elder Neville and the Dean of Windsor to investigate allegations that people had been killed through wax images. Similar devices had recently been suspected against Elizabeth I, giving the inquiry a political urgency. These were accusations the authorities investigated, not established accounts of supernatural harm.[44]

Two Shakespeare passages turn the destruction of a wax figure into an image of human change. Proteus describes his fading love for Julia:

> PROTEUS
> [...]
> That I did love, for now my love is thawed,
> Which like a **waxen image 'gainst a fire**
> Bears no impression of the thing it was.
>
> — *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 2.4.

In *King John*, the wounded Melun uses the same image to explain that he is dying and therefore has no reason to deceive his hearers:

> MELUN
> Have I not hideous death within my view,
> Retaining but a quantity of life,
> Which bleeds away even as a **form of wax**
> Resolveth from his figure **'gainst the fire**?
>
> — *King John*, 5.4.

The second comparison is especially close to the premise of image magic: the destruction of a figure corresponds to a person's bodily decline and death. The Windsor pamphlet describes piercing figures, whereas both plays describe melting them. Neither scene stages a magical ritual; the interest is the imagery of wax figures in plays beside an investigation involving Neville's father.[45]

A related image appears in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Theseus tells Hermia that her father possesses authority over the daughter he has fashioned:

> THESEUS
> [...]
> To whom you are but as a **form in wax**
> By him imprinted, and within his power
> To leave the **figure or disfigure it**.
>
> — *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1.1.

Here the wax figure expresses parental power to preserve or destroy a form, rather than a magical attack.[46]

## Henry Constable and Sonnet 99

Henry Neville named the poet Henry Constable in his report to Cecil of 25 January 1600. Neville had obtained a cipher through a friar he was sending to Rome, and listed Constable among the English names for which it supplied special characters.[47]

Constable's *Diana* (1592) contains a close parallel to Sonnet 99. Gerald Massey drew attention to the shared roses, lilies, purple violet and sweetness derived from the beloved. Both poems imagine flowers acquiring their beauty from a person, with several of the same details.[48]

> The forward **violet** thus did I chide:
> "Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
> If not from my love's **breath**? The **purple** pride
> Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells
> In my love's **veins** thou hast too grossly **dyed**."
> The **lily** I condemnèd for thy **hand**,
> And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair;
> The **roses** fearfully on thorns did stand,
> ⌜One⌝ **blushing shame**, another white despair;
> A third, nor red nor white, had stol'n of both,
> And to his robb'ry had annexed thy **breath**;
> But, for his theft, in pride of all his growth
> A vengeful canker ate him up to death.
> More **flowers** I noted, yet I none could see
> But **sweet or color** it had stol'n from thee.
> — Shakespeare, Sonnet 99.[49]

Constable's sonnet reads:

> My lady's presence makes the **roses** red,
> Because to see her lips, they **blush for shame**:
> The **lilies'** leaves (for envy) pale became,
> And her white **hands** in them this envy bred:
> The marigold the leaves abroad doth spread,
> Because the sun's and her power is the same:
> The **violet** of **purple colour** came,
> **Dyed** in the **blood** she made my heart to shed.
> In brief, all **flowers** from her their virtue take;
> From her **sweet breath**, their **sweet smells** do proceed;
> The living heat which her eye beams doth make,
> Warmeth the ground, and quickeneth the seed:
> The rain wherewith she watereth the flowers,
> Falls from mine eyes, which she dissolves in showers.
> — Henry Constable, *Diana* (1592), Sonnet XVII.[48]

Sonnet 99 turns Constable's floral tribute into an accusation of theft. Its violet steals sweetness and colour; its lily steals the whiteness of the beloved's hand; one rose blushes with shame, another is white with despair. A third steals both colours and the beloved's breath, and is punished by a canker. Constable sup-

plies a close literary comparison, while Neville's dispatch places the poet's name in the diplomatic intelligence he was examining. That report does not establish a personal meeting or Neville's possession of *Diana*.

## Notes and sources

1. *Speeches delivered to Her Maiestie this last progresse* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1592), STC 7600, TCP A21246, Rycote section, sig. C3r, printed page. Spelling and punctuation modernized; emphasis added. The entertainment is anonymous. The comparison concerns its soldier-wooer rhetoric, not an attribution of the entertainment to Neville.
2. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 5.2. Folger line breaks retained; emphasis added. The excerpt continues through Henry's offer of physical feats; the ellipsis marks the continuation of his speech.
3. Myers & Co., *An Illustrated Catalogue of Rare Books, Historical Documents, Autograph Letters, Etc.*, no. 214 (1917), p. 31, item 140. The catalogue dates the letter 8 October 1599; if this is a misreading of 1592, the recipient was Neville's father. The manuscript has not been located.
4. Henry Cuffe, *The Differences of the Ages of Mans Life* (London, 1607), discussions of mixture, digestion and nutrition, and of immoderate watching; TCP A19683. Spelling modernized. The title page dates the work's writing to 1600. The two quotations come from separate passages. For Cuffe's approaches to Neville, see Neville's confession, 2 March 1601, The National Archives, SP 12/279, f. 15, and the document's discussion in the Macbeth chapter; also *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1601–1603*, ed. M. A. E. Green (1870), pp. 5–8, item 11.
5. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, 1.1. No numerical rarity claim is made for the paired vocabulary.
6. EEBO-TCP lemma searches for leanness and superfluity (including plural forms), 29 September 2026: 191 indexed texts contain both; eight place them within a 100-token NEAR window, across the indexed material through 1649. These are text/edition counts, not independent authors. Nicholas Gyer, *The English Phlebotomy* (1592), chapter 9, TCP A02428, discusses the constitution of bodies suitable for bleeding. Cuffe's nearest occurrences are 304 lemma-token positions apart (TCP A19683), so they do not constitute an adjacent phrase. The comparison concerns the use of shared medical vocabulary, not verbal exclusivity.
7. Independent exact-adjacency comparison, 28 July 2026, rechecked 29 September 2026, using the plays described in Pervez Rizvi's corpus documentation. The check joined consecutive word tokens within each play, ignoring capitalization, and counted matching play documents in the 239-play selection dated 1590–1615. It returned the four Shakespeare titles named here and Jonson's *Sejanus*. The initial report used a 1590–1616 window; the present count is explicitly for 1590–1615. This was an exploratory discovery from inspected phrase results. Wider print use was checked in EarlyPrint; the phrase is not unique to drama or to these writers. The dates in the comparison database are working composition dates, not dates of surviving drafts.
8. Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 12 March 1599/1600 O.S., Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, I (London, 1725), p. 158. The printed heading gives 1599 O.S.; the year is 1600 when numbered from 1 January. Spelling and capitalization modernized. "I suppose" preserves Neville's qualification about Sillery's whereabouts. The quotation is from the printed edition.
9. Folger Shakespeare Library, *Measure for Measure*, 1.3, *King Lear*, 5.3, *Timon of Athens*, 5.1, and *Coriolanus*, 3.1. Line breaks retained. *Timon* is a collaborative work; the count is of plays in the Shakespeare canon, not four independently established Shakespeare-only passages. See Folger's discussion of its authorship. The *Coriolanus* passage follows North's *Plutarch* (1579), Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus, p. 245: Greek cities had "more absolute power," and free corn would "nourishe their disobedience" to the "ruine and ouerthrowe of the whole state." See

the 1579 text, TCP A09802. This identifies the source of that occurrence; it does not establish the source of the earlier use in *Measure for Measure*.

10. Neville to Robert Cecil, Blois, 28 July 1599, in Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (1725), p.76. Spelling, capitalization and light punctuation modernized; vocabulary and syntax retained. The "form of justice" is lawful procedure, not the merits of the initial English seizure.
11. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 3.7, Folger. This is corresponding legal language, not a claim of a unique or exceptionally rare expression.
12. Neville to Cecil, 26 September 1599, Winwood, *Memorials*, I (1725), p.114, printed witness. Spelling modernized; quotation begins within the sentence. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 5.1, Folger text; two separated portions of Prospero's speech are shown with the intervening passage omitted. The correspondence is conceptual, not a shared verbal formula.
13. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 26 May 1599 (Old Style), in Edmund Sawyer, ed., *Memorials of Affairs of State*, I (1725), p. 36. The continuation is headed "Of the same Date with the former." Spelling and capitalization modernized; quotation checked against the printed page. Neville was discussing the repayment of money Elizabeth had lent the French king.
14. William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, 1.1, Folger Shakespeare Library, Buckingham on Charles V and Anglo-French relations. The extract preserves Folger's line breaks; omissions are marked. The comparison concerns the diplomatic sense and political consequences of amity, not a claim that the word or sense was exclusive to Neville and Shakespeare. Holinshed already supplies the episode and its key term: the Emperor feared that a "faithfull bond of amitie" between the English and French kings "might turne him to displeasure." See Chronicles (1587), vol. III, p. 856, TCP A68202. The play adapts that historical account; Neville's letter supplies a later diplomatic parallel.
15. Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 1*, 5.2, Folger Shakespeare. Worcester and Vernon return from the royal camp; Blunt's earlier embassy is a separate exchange.
16. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 29 June 1599, Old Style, in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer (London, 1725), I, pp. 53–55, quotation p. 54; page-image witness. Spelling and capitalization are modernized.
17. EarlyPrint public BlackLab search, 7 September 2026, consecutive lemmas "kind offer of the king": four document hits, TCP A11966 (1598 quarto), A11954 (1623 Folio), A41748 (1683 letter of the Marquis of Grana) and A59501 (1700 Betterton adaptation). This is a result within that indexed collection, not a claim of universal uniqueness. The quarto's imprint establishes publication before Neville's letter: *The History of Henrie the Fourth* (London: P. Short for Andrew Wise, 1598), STC 22280, TCP A11966; EarlyPrint search interface.
18. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, 14 January 1608/9, The National Archives, SP 14/43, ff. 29–30, opening on f. 29r. John O'Donnell's transcription, checked against the manuscript image. Spelling, capitalization and punctuation modernized; emphasis added. 'Imbecility' here means weakness. The year is 1609 when numbered from 1 January.
19. Shakespeare, Sonnet 23, lines 5–12, Folger Shakespeare Library. Folger's reading 'books' and its line breaks are retained; emphasis added. The comparison concerns the sequence of feeling, impeded speech and written expression, not an identical relationship between speaker and addressee.
20. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 6 May 1598, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 60/114a. John O'Donnell's transcription, checked against the manuscript image; 'into' follows the manuscript. Spelling, capitalization and punctuation modernized; emphasis added. The date reads 'vith', not 19 May. The recognizances were binding legal obligations; the reciprocal assurances concerned the completion of the land transaction.
21. Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, 1.1, and *Hamlet*, 5.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. Line breaks retained; omissions marked and emphasis added. Recognizances and assurances are established legal terms; no claim of lexical exclusivity is made.

22. Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, 1.1; John Davies of Hereford, *Microcosmos* (Oxford, 1603), "To the Noble, discreete, and wellbeloved Knight Sir Henry Nevill," printed poem. Ken Feinstein proposed the comparison in "Possible parallel between All's Well and Microcosmos", 13 September 2021. This is a rhetorical correspondence; no rarity or direction of borrowing is claimed.
23. Shakespeare, *All's Well*, 2.3, Folger text. The immediately preceding speech develops the image of scales and royal power to confer honour.
24. Neville to Cecil, Paris, 12 March 1600, Sawyer, *Memorials*, I, pp.158–160, quotation p.159. The heading, p.158, prints 12 March 1599 O.S.; the chapter modernizes the year without changing the Julian day. An EarlyPrint lemma search for counterpoise the balance, 7 September 2026, returned six indexed texts, including Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (1483 and 1532) and *Greene's Vision* (1592), TCP A02121. The other three results date from 1606, 1609 and 1684; the three earlier results represent two works, including two editions of Gower. This tests Neville's phrase, not the frequency of the differently arranged pair in Shakespeare. No uniqueness or quantitative authorship claim is made.
25. Neville to Robert Cecil, 15 May 1599, Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, I (1725), p.22. Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, 2.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. The phrase has earlier witnesses: Robert Southwell, *The triumphs over death* (1595), describes a woman's "wisedome, and constancie" as a "miracle in that sex" (TCP A12650); Rudolf Gwalther's *Homelyes ... vppon the Actes* (1572), Homily 28, p.204, joins amazement at the apostles with "wisedome and constancie" (TCP A14710). These are useful earlier contexts for Lafew's praise.
26. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Boulogne, 25 June 1600, The National Archives, SP 78/44, f.194, transcription by John O'Donnell; spelling modernized. The opening links the journey to the Duke of Savoy's refusal to surrender the marquisate or offer an exchange, and reports orders to raise troops. Later in the same letter Neville discusses d'Entragues and the Princess of Florence's offer to join the king at Lyons. Compare Henri IV's letters of 1 and 2 July 1600, *Recueil des lettres missives*, V, p.245, concerning his impending arrival at Lyons and the duke's failure to fulfil his undertaking. In a search conducted on 29 September 2026, the three matching play records contain the actual word "thitherward," not merely a lemma: *All's Well That Ends Well* (assigned date 1603), Nabbes's *Hannibal and Scipio* and Brome's *The Queen and Concubine* (both assigned 1635). The dates are those assigned in the 527-play index. In the public EarlyPrint search, original-spelling CQL `[word="(?i)thitherwards?"]` returned 1,553 hits in 896 document records across the full collection; all hits were retrieved. Filtering the returned metadata to unambiguous four-digit publication years before 1600 gives 202 hits in 92 records. These are document/edition counts, not independent authors. Lemma and standardized-spelling searches also retrieve older forms such as "thyderwarde" and "thetherward"; the result is not created by lemmatization. For contemporary examples of the word in travel writing, see Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations* (1599), TCP A02495. The dramatic distribution should not be mistaken for rarity throughout English print.
27. William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, 3.2, Folger Shakespeare Library. Verse lineation retained; emphasis added.
28. Neville to Winwood, 23 January 1600/1, Winwood, *Memorials*, vol. 1, p. 290; Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, 5.1. The January year is expressed here as 1601, with the printed old-style year identified in the citation. "Course of justice" already occurs in *Richard III* 4.4 and in Portia's mercy speech in *The Merchant of Venice*, 4.1; this is continuity of register, not a first-use claim.
29. *Speeches delivered to Her Maiestie this last progresse* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1592), STC 7600, TCP A21246, final Rycote messenger, text. Spelling and punctuation modernized; omissions marked. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 3.2, Folger Shakespeare Library, Orlando's poem as read by Celia. The entertainment is anonymous.

30. Eunapius, *The lives of philosophers and oratours* (London, 1579), TCP A00437, life of Proaeresius: 'clapping his owne hands, at euery sentence ende'; text. Spelling modernized in the discussion. This earlier occurrence precludes treating the phrase as exclusive to Rycote and Shakespeare.
31. *Speeches delivered to Her Maiestie* (1592), Rycote section, speech accompanying delivery of the key, TCP A21246. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, 7 January 1602/3, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 91/35, holograph; spelling and punctuation modernized. The manuscript reads 'alwaies avow' in the parenthesis. HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XII (1910), pp.589–590, printed calendar, identifies and abridges the letter but omits the blood-seal clause; that clause is quoted from the manuscript.
32. *A true report of Sir Anthony Shierlies iourney ouerland to Venice* (London, 1600), TCP B15781, oration to the Persian ruler, text; printed witness. Spelling modernized. The report supplies a comparator, not evidence of Neville's involvement in its composition or translation.
33. Neville to Robert Cecil, 31 July 1602, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 94/90, holograph. Quotation follows John O'Donnell's transcription, with spelling and punctuation modernized, checked against the manuscript. HMC, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Salisbury*, XII (1910), p.268, abridges the passage and converts it to the third person.
34. Shakespeare, *Lucrece*, Folger Shakespeare Library, stanza beginning 'Thou, Collatine, shalt oversee this will'. The poem was published in 1594, before Neville's 1602 letter. This is a comparison of imagery; no rarity or direct borrowing is claimed.
35. Neville to Robert Cecil, 14 May 1600, Winwood, *Memorials*, I, p.184. Shakespeare, *3 Henry VI*, 4.1; compare *Measure for Measure*, 2.3: "And try your penitence, if it be sound / Or hollowly put on." The latter is a related metaphorical opposition, not the same reference to friendship.
36. Tacitus, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba. Fower Bookes of the Histories*, trans. Henry Savile (Oxford, 1591), Histories 3.24, TCP A13331. Shakespeare, *2 Henry VI*, 4.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. The Whitmore lines belong to the fuller text preserved in the First Folio (1623); the 1594 quarto omits this speech. The date of the surviving witness is not a date of composition.
37. Royal Berkshire Archives, D/EN/F37/1, *Catalogue of the Books in the Library at Billingbear*, 7 November 1780, entry "La civil Conversatione del Signor Guazzo," Venice, 1579; catalogue record. Stefano Guazzo, *The Civile Conversation*, translated by George Pettie, first three books (London: Richard Watkins, 1581), book II, p.4, TCP A02291, text. Spelling modernized. The English wording illustrates the Italian work's argument; it is not evidence that this English edition was Neville's copy.
38. William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 3.3, Folger Shakespeare Library. The extract ends partway through the line continuing "I was much rapt in this"; the following words are omitted. The exchange begins with Achilles asking what Ulysses is reading.
39. John Gillies, "The Conversational Turn in Shakespeare," *Études Épistémè* 33 (2018), §§32–34. Gillies proposes the identification as a question, "Guazzo?", rather than identifying the stage property with certainty.
40. Neville to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, 14 January 1609 (1608/9), The National Archives, SP 14/43, f.30; John O'Donnell's transcription, checked against the manuscript. Manuscript lineation is not reproduced. For the letter's identification and financial request, see Mary Anne Everett Green, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, James I, 1603–1610* (1857), p.486, no.22 (British History Online). Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 2.2.558–59, Folger Shakespeare Library; Folger line break retained. The letter postdates the early printed *Hamlet* texts. The reasoning has earlier parallels: Erasmus's *Paraphrase*, second tome (1549), on 1 Timothy 1, has "The lesse that I deserue mercye, the more excellent is his clemencye" (TCP A68942); Robert Greene's *Arbasto* (1589 witness) connects lesser desert with a greater obligation to repay kindness (TCP A02074). These supply a wider context of grace, favour and gratitude for the comparison.
41. Neville to Cecil, 13 July 1599, Winwood, vol. I, p. 66. The letter reports the ceremony and observations about the crowd; the quoted passage does not explicitly establish that Neville personally witnessed it.
42. *Macbeth* 4.3. Malcolm's description is followed by Ross's arrival and report from Scotland.

43. Holinshed, *Chronicles* (1577), English history, p. 279, Edward the Confessor: EarlyPrint/TCP A03448. The account attributes to Edward both healing and prophecy, and transmission of the healing virtue to succeeding kings. For the practice and the identification of the disease, Royal College of Physicians, "The king's evil". Neville's letter supplies contemporary diplomatic experience of the ceremony; Holinshed supplies the historical episode and hereditary claim.
44. A Rehearsall Both Straung and True (1579), TCP A12973, Stile's reported confession. John Roche Dasent, ed., Acts of the Privy Council of England, new series XI, 1578–1580 (1895), pp.20–22, entry for 16 January 1578/9, instruction on p.22. The year is modernized to 1579. The named magistrate was the elder Sir Henry Neville, not his son.
45. Shakespeare, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, 2.4, and King John, 5.4, Folger Shakespeare Library. Verse lineation retained; omissions marked and emphasis added. The shared motif does not establish borrowing from the Windsor pamphlet.
46. Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1.1, Folger Shakespeare Library. The conjuration involving the Duchess of Gloucester in Henry VI, Part 2, 1.4 offers a separate example of politically dangerous magic, but the scene specifies no wax figure.
47. Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 25 January 1599/1600 Old Style, in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, I (London, 1725), pp.146–147, especially p.147. The year is 1600 in modern year numbering. This is the acquired cipher described in Neville's report, not an identification of Henry Constable in the surviving embassy key, SP 106/2. Inclusion in the vocabulary permits a correspondent to refer to him in code; it does not establish his participation in the correspondence.
48. Henry Constable, *Diana. The praises of his mistres, in certaine sweete sonnets. By H.C.* (London: John Charlewood for Richard Smith, 1592), Sonnet XVII, headed "Sonnetto decisette," EEBO-TCP A19223. Spelling, capitalization and punctuation modernized; lineation retained, printer's pointing hand omitted, emphasis added. Gerald Massey, *The Secret Drama of Shakspeare's Sonnets* (1888), part I, discussion comparing Sonnet 99 with Constable. The textual parallels are the point cited here; the date of *Diana* follows the 1592 edition, not Massey's erroneous 1584.
49. William Shakespeare, Sonnet 99, Folger Shakespeare Library. Wording, punctuation and verse lineation retained; emphasis added.

# Neville's Confession, Case, and Advice

Three complete documents are gathered here: Neville's account of his dealings with Essex's circle, his separate defence of his conduct, and his advice on reconciling James I with Parliament.

Spelling and capitalization are modernized, abbreviations expanded, and punctuation and paragraphing lightly adjusted. Simple older verb forms are modernized; historical vocabulary, syntax and the substance of every passage are retained. Square brackets distinguish editorial explanations from Neville's words. The notes identify textual difficulties and selected variants.

## I. Neville's confession, 2 March 1601

The base witness is Neville's actual confession/declaration, written and signed by him in his own hand: The National Archives, SP 12/279, beginning at f. 15. John O'Donnell's transcription supplies the reading control, with the manuscript images consulted for source control and selected readings. The manuscript date, 2 March 1600, is 2 March 1601 in modern year reckoning. State Papers manuscript.

### Document text

Right Honourable, my duty and conscience binding me, besides your Honours' commandment, to declare whatsoever has come to my knowledge touching the designs and the enterprises of the late Earl of Essex, I have faithfully set it down in this evil-couched narration following: and not only that, but whatsoever else has passed between me and him or any of his complices since my coming out of France, that your Honours, seeing all the circumstances that concern me laid open before you, may make the clearer judgment of my intention.

It may please your Honours to understand that at my arrival at London from Boulogne, which was, as I remember, the sixth of August last, I met with a message which Mr. Cuffe (with whom I had had long acquaintance) left at my lodging the day before, to this effect: that I had had evil offices done me, as my lord of Essex was informed by his friends in court, and that some great blame was like to be cast upon me for the breach at Boulogne, as if I had, by some particular evil carriage of mine, given the occasion of it; which my lord in good will was desirous I should know, that I might be prepared to answer it. Mr. Cuffe himself was then gone out of town to Oxford, as I remember it was said, but returned upon the Monday after, being the 10th or 11th of the month, and came presently unto me and renewed the same advertisement. But I had been in the meantime at the court and found no such matter, but rather altogether the contrary. And so I answered him. But he said, howsoever things were turned now, there was such an intention, and my lord had received it from so good hand as there could not be but some truth in it; and that my lord in good will would have me know it, being one that he esteemed very much and was sorry to see so wronged. I answered that I did acknowledge myself very much bound to my lord in it, and did take it for a great argument of his good will and favour, which I would deserve with any service I could do him.

Not long after this he brought me a letter from my lord, full of all kindness towards me, testifying his good conceit of me and his affection towards me, and that he desired my love and would hold it as a great treasure. I returned an answer with the best compliments I could, with such phrases and offers of service as are usual unto such persons and upon such kind provocations. Soon after, my lord went into the country, and myself likewise for a time, where, although I remained within ten mile of him, and rode twice in one week by the park pale where he lay, I protest I never saw him nor sent to him, either to present or visit

him, although I understood that most gentlemen in those parts did both. But Cuffe came from thence once to my house and brought me very kind commendations from my lord, and purposed, as it seemed, to have stayed two or three days with me, but that the next day I had occasion to ride into the Vale, and so we parted at Nettlebed.

After this I saw him not till my coming to London, which was not till after the middle of October, where I had not been long but he came to see me and moved me to come to see my lord, saying that now he was at liberty, and all the world that would now came at him. I said I would find a time to come see him ere it were long; but yet, upon some occasion of business I had, I put it off for four or five days. But at length he named me a time, saying that he had told my lord I would come, and that he expected it and would marvel if I came not. He said that time would be very fit, and that he would desire my lord to go to supper so much the sooner. He told me also he would appoint one to meet me and bring me in to my lord's study. I came accordingly in the evening, about eight of clock as I guess, and was met by Glascocke, my lord's man, who conducted me as Mr. Cuffe (he said) had directed. After some half hour's stay or more, my lord came up and received me very kindly, and entertained me with many questions of foreign matters, and some hopes of his own about the sweet wines, and otherwise to be restored to Her Majesty's presence and favour ere it were long; and at length dismissed me with very kind offers, and brought me down himself to the back gate. But in all his talk I protest I did not hear him use any undutiful speech of the Queen or the state.

After this visitation I protest I never spoke with him, nor received any letter from him, nor he from me. Cuffe would come sometimes unto me. And when I asked him how his lord's matters stood in court, he would sometimes give show of hope and sometimes of despair. And at those times when he seemed to despair, he would break out into words of heat and impatience; as namely, once I remember he repeated this verse: Arma tenenti omnia dat qui iusta negat. Whereunto I answered in French, Tout beau, he spoke very big. And either at that time or another, upon like occasion, he said it made no matter; it would give my lord cause to think the sooner of some other courses. About Christmas last, but whether before or after I do not well remember, he told me they were informed that there was a purpose to take some pretext to lay up my lord of Southampton, and that they took it as a preface to the laying up of my lord of Essex himself; but that he thought my lord was resolved they should never coop him more.

With these uncertain and wild speeches he would sometimes entertain me, and never broke directly with me of my particular till the Saturday after Candlemas term began, as I remember. And then I, coming in to my lodging somewhat late in the evening, found him there, where he had attended me an hour or two, as I learned. He desired me to walk up into my chamber, which he had not used to do before; and there he told me, after a preface of the confidence that my lord had of my good affection towards the state and towards himself in particular,

that his purpose was to make me privy to some designs he had, both for his own safety and for the good of the state; wherein he would first assure me that there should be nothing intended or attempted against Her Majesty's person or estate. And told me further that my lord did not desire that I should embark myself into it further than I was willing, but that when I should hear it proposed I should consider of it and give him what advice I thought fit; and for that purpose he desired that I would meet as soon as might be with my lord of Southampton and Sir Charles Davers, who should relate the particulars unto me. I told him that, with that limitation which he promised me, that nothing should be attempted against the Queen's person nor her estate, I would be contented to hear what should be proposed, and would meet for that purpose the next day in the afternoon at Sir Charles Davers' lodging.

But that day I was appointed to attend the Lords about French causes, where I stayed till it was late, and so disappointed the meeting. The Monday and Tuesday I attended Mr. Secretary Herbert at the Doctors' Commons about an answer to be made to the French ambassador's complaints. The Wednesday we spent all the afternoon with the ambassador. The Thursday, Friday and Saturday I excused myself by reason of my private business. Yet upon the Friday or Saturday, as I remember, having understood that Sir Charles Davers was not at his lodging, I went that way and left word I had been there to see him; which I did because I had been often solicited by Cuffe in the meantime about the meeting, and told that they began to make an evil judgment of my delay. And when I answered that my lord might as well deliver his mind to me by him as by them, he said my lord had rather made choice of them than of him, to breed a confidence between them and me. And indeed Mr. Cuffe had been at least two or three months persuading me to make acquaintance with my lord of Southampton and Sir Charles Davers, who he said did greatly desire; notwithstanding, I still omitted it. And at length he brought Sir Charles Davers to my lodging about a fortnight after Christmas, where I protest there passed nothing but compliments and ordinary talk; and was the first time that ever I had spoken with Sir Charles in my life.

But to return to the matter. Upon Monday, being Candlemas Day, in the afternoon about four of clock, as I was coming out of Serjeants' Inn, where I had acknowledged a statute before my Lord Anderson and sealed other writings, there came by in coach my lords of Essex and Southampton, Sir Christopher Blunt and Sir Charles Davers, and went towards the Strand. And because I had told Cuffe that I would be there that day, and they had seen me so near, I went thence soon after to Drury House, and there found my lord of Southampton with Sir Charles Davers; where, after some ordinary salutations (because I had never spoken with my lord since he was a child in my old Lord Treasurer's house), my lord began to break with me that my lord of Essex had received by Mr. Cuffe so good a persuasion, both of my love to him and of my honesty, discretion and secrecy, that he had given him commission to reveal unto me a matter of great secrecy and importance: namely, that my lord, finding his life sought by his enemies by undue means, and despairing of justice against them because they

were so potent about the Queen and did besiege her so as nothing could come to her knowledge but what they listed, was advised to make his repair to her presence, to declare both his particular grievances and many other; which, because he knew he should not be suffered to do in private sort, he was advised to go so well accompanied as he might not be kept from her.

That for the effecting hereof it was proposed to send some forty persons in several companies to the Mews, who, upon the discovery of my lord's approach (who should come in coach well attended, with my lord of Southampton), should make on before to the court gate and possess it; and some other of their company to be before in the hall of the court, who, upon the sight of their possessing the gate, should make up into the guard chamber and seize upon the guards' halberds, and so be masters of that chamber; and in the presence, that there should be some lords and other to welcome my lord when he came, and to go in with him to the Queen and countenance his action. Herein my lord required my advice.

I told him it was a matter of too great weight to be suddenly digested. But for the assurance which Mr. Cuffe had given of me, if he had not exceeded his commission, as I hoped he would not, being an honest man, I would perform what he had delivered from me. But for offering to draw my sword in the cause, I vow before God and his angels I never offered it nor ever meant it. Some objections and difficulties I proposed, as upon the sudden, as namely these: that this was an action of the nature of those which, as Tacitus says, non laudantur nisi peracta, and would be interpreted by the success; that it was full of difficulties and dangers, first, because it was almost impossible to prepare so many hands as should suffice for it without communicating it to so many as it must needs be revealed; secondly, if any door were found shut upon them, they were disappointed; and lastly, the City of Westminster was at hand, which, though they should prevail at the first so far as to possess the gate, yet might quickly bring in force enough to dispossess them and pull them out by the ears.

To the first difficulty they answered that they would not make their purpose known till the morning they intended to execute it, and that they would draw their company together upon some other pretext. To the second, that they hoped to come so unexpected, and those which they appointed to be before in court would be so vigilant, as there should not be time to shut any doors. And to the last, that being once in court, and having the show of the state on their side, nobody would stir against them. Their end, as it seemed, was to seize upon the persons of those that they accounted my lord's enemies, and to require justice against them, tendering other presently to supply their places. I cannot certainly say that they then spoke of any parliament to be called, but I am sure Cuffe did afterwards. In speech of their means, I do not remember that they spoke of above 120 hands. Some noblemen they named that they would take along with them, as among other my lord of Rutland; but they said they could not trust him with the matter above two hours before they attempted it. They spoke of seizing the Tower as a matter which they could do when they would, by the means of Sir

John Davies. But surely at that time they had resolved certainly, as it seemed to me, neither of the time nor any circumstance of their attempt. In conclusion, they prayed me to think of it, because it was new unto me, and said that Sir Charles Davers would come unto me within four or five days, under pretence of taking his leave of me, to have further conference of it.

Since which time, God is my witness, I never saw either of them, nor ever received letter or message from them, or they from me. But Cuffe came to me within a day or two after, to whom I related what had passed in that conference, and said I could not nor would not give any approbation to any such enterprise unless the undertakers did all take a solemn oath not to attempt anything against the Queen's person or her estate, as they had done in the enterprise of Amboise, a precedent whereof was to be seen in the story. And further, seeing I perceived it was directed among other against Mr. Secretary, I said I would have no hand nor be no actor in it, because I was near allied unto him and had been beholden to him, as all the world took knowledge; and I would not blot my reputation to be false unto him or any man. And this I told him walking in the alley by the east wall in the garden of my lodging, and added these words, that they must dare pudori not to embark me into any action against him. He answered me that for the first, I should make no doubt of it, but I should be fully satisfied, and himself wished as well as I that it should be so. And for the second, I had reason, and they would not press me; only he wished I might be in the presence at the time when it should happen. And I asking why, he said my lord meant to name me among other to supply some place there, and he would have me at hand. And when I replied that I should be gone into France out of hand, and that my dispatches were signed, he told me I might feign myself sick if I were pressed to be gone. Which notwithstanding I did not, as some of your Honours know, but solicited as much as I could possible to receive my money out of the Exchequer, as Mr. Skinner will testify, with a purpose to have been gone presently. So little will or purpose had I to have any partaking with the Earl, even in that wherein he pretended mine own advancement.

I remember that in some of his conferences with me about that time, he moved me to sound a minister whom I was familiar with, how he stood affected to my lord, and what he did conceive of the affection of the City to my lord in his former troubles; which notwithstanding I did not, and indeed that minister was out of town all that while. He told me also that there was a buzz and a flying rumour that there was some practice against my lord's person, which caused very many, both noblemen and other, to come and offer themselves to my lord; and that there came more than they could tell well what to do with, or how to put them off. About the middle of that week he told me that there had been warning given to the Mayor of London to look to the City, but that he made account that the affection of the City was sure unto my lord, and that of twenty-four aldermen they held themselves assured of twenty or twenty-one. The last time I spoke with him, he desired me from my lord that, although I would not be an actor myself in the matter, I would command my men, if I were in the court when my

lord came thither, either to take part with him, or at least not to take part against him. Whereunto I answered, "Very well," which how he construed I know not. But God is my witness that I neither did it nor ever meant it; and I humbly desire that my servants, if it be thought meet, may be examined of it.

Lastly, I vow and protest before Almighty God that I knew nothing, neither of the matter, manner, time, nor any circumstance of their attempt that Sunday, but came that morning to the court with Otwell Smith (as he can testify) to have spoken with Mr. Secretary about the merchants' causes at Rouen. Where, when I understood what course the Earl took, and saw the vizard taken from him, and his true intents laid open, which he had so disguised before with specious pretences and cloaks of religion and virtue, I detested him and his actions from the bottom of my heart, and remained in court till ten of clock at night, with a purpose to have spent my life in Her Majesty's defence, if there had been cause, as ready and as willingly as any man of my sort in the company.

Secundo Marcij 1600 [2 March 1601]

Henry Neuill

### Notes to the confession

"Evil offices" means damaging interventions or reports; "advertisement" means information; "presently" means immediately; "estate" can mean the political order; "vizard" means a mask. Davers is the name-form used here for Sir Charles Danvers. The references to an unnamed minister and to "some place" are left unidentified.

The enterprise of Amboise was the Huguenot conspiracy of 1560. "Arma tenenti, omnia dat qui iusta negat" means that one who denies just claims gives everything to the man bearing arms. "Tout beau" checks the speaker: softly, or not so fast. "Non laudantur nisi peracta" means that such actions are not praised until accomplished. "Dare pudori" asks that consideration be given to honour or shame.

The final paragraph reads "with specious pretences," following the manuscript, rather than "which" in the working transcription. "Phases" in that transcription is rendered "phrases"; the reading and the transcription's "at it seemed" (rendered "as it seemed") remain provisional readings. The entire final paragraph and the autograph subscription are retained.

## II. Sir Henry Neville's Case

This is a separate defence, not another version of the confession. The base text is Ralph Winwood, Memorials of Affairs of State, edited by Edmund Sawyer, volume I (London, 1725), pp. 302–304. Its exact date is not supplied in that printing. Sawyer's note describes the paper as wholly in Neville's hand and found among Winwood's papers; his suggestion that Neville sent it to Winwood is conjectural. Winwood, p. 302 and following.

### Document text

Although I mean not to justify myself altogether from blame, but do freely and willingly acknowledge an offence, and submit myself to her Majesty's mercy; yet my own soul witnessing to herself, that it was ever loyal and faithful to her Majesty, and consequently abhorring more than death, the imputation of that fault, and loathsome crime of falsehood and treason, I do only desire, that my fault may not be barely or nakedly censured, but examined together with all the circumstances that did accompany it; which are the best means to try, not only the actions, but the intentions of all men, as far as it is possible to penetrate.

I have already acknowledged to the lords of her Majesty's privy council, that I was entreated by Mr. Cuffe, in the late Earl of Essex his name, to meet with the Earl of Southampton and Sir Charles Davers; by them to understand some project which he had in consultation, touching his own good, and the good of the state, and to give my advice in it; with assurance, that nothing should be proposed, which I might not hear with due respect to my allegiance; for so the words of the Messenger did import.

After some days delay on my part, and often solicitation, I went to Drury House on Candlemas Day, and met with them; where their project being opened unto me, I objected both against the nature and difficulties of it, gave no approbation, or promise of partaking, but only said I would advise of it. After which, I never spoke with them, nor heard from them; and when Mr. Cuffe came soon after unto me, I utterly refused to have any part or hand in the matter; and being requested to come, and speak with the Earl of Essex himself about the third day after, I refused it, because indeed I would have nothing to do with him, finding that he had such conceits working in his mind.

The bare and simple truth of my case is this. Whereby it appears, first, that it was not a matter that originally entered into my thoughts, but that I was enticed, and in a manner enforced to hear it. For with these protestations and assurances, how could I well have refused, and who might not have been abused as well as I? And if these assurances had been performed, what offence had it been to have heard what had been proposed? Secondly it appears, that at the first proposition I gave not approbation, but rather made opposition to it, and afterwards refused absolutely to have any hand or fellowship in it: which will I hope sufficiently

argue, that neither originally, nor by persuasion, any disloyal thought against her Majesty did ever settle in my mind.

For the better evidence whereof, I desire that these circumstances may be considered.

First that I never had any inwardness with the Earl of Essex, nor any dependency on him, nor any obligation to him, when he was in his highest fortunes; but had rather cause of unkindness and discourtesy offered me by him sundry times, as I have showed my lords of the council of. And if it be objected, that I went to see him in October last, and might then begin a friendship and inwardness with him; besides, that I avow there passed nothing of that kind, but general compliments between us; let all men consider, what kind of inwardness that was like to be, being that in four months after, he lying in London, and myself likewise, I never so much as once saw him, or had any communication with him.

Secondly, I desire that it may be remembered, that this meeting at Drury House was not till Candlemas; whereas her Majesty had signed my privy seal and all my dispatches, at the least four days before; and in truth if I could have got my money (which I laboured with all earnestness both my Lord Treasurer and Mr. Skinner, and was at length forced to signify to Mr. Secretary that I could not get it, albeit my journey stayed upon nothing else,) I fully purposed to have set forward upon the Thursday after Candlemas Day at the farthest; and if that had been so, undoubtedly I had never met with them.

Now then my dispatches being ready signed, and myself making all the haste I could to set forward within so few days, what likelihood is there that the Earl should build upon any thing from me, in that I was not likely to see the issue of? Especially, which I desire may be noted as the third circumstance, being the matter was delivered to me as an undigested conception, and not as a resolution; and besides that, they never imparted to me their articles whereof they did deliberate.

Fourthly it may be considered, that after that conference, I never saw them that had broken the matter to me, nor ever heard from them. Which argues, that they found little comfort at my hands, and made small account of me in the matter; as it appears likewise in this, that when they made their desperate attempt upon the Sunday, and sought to gather unto them all those of whom they had any hope whatsoever, though it were but by presumption, they never sent to me nor made me acquainted with it, as the Lord knows, and as I hope they all testified; which is a plain argument that they had not any confidence in me.

Nay rather, considering that Cuffe never came to me, after that I refused to come to my Lord; and how unequally (that I may not say uncharitably) my Lord dealt with me in his confession; wherein he delivered matters to charge me, but nothing to discharge me, although both alike known unto him, and how he has added some things nothing pertinent to this matter, and only of purpose to aggravate as it seems; I have cause to think that he took offence against me for my refusal, and perhaps afterwards conceived that I was the revealer of it.

But howsoever, I do freely and from my heart, acknowledge my offence in concealing of it, and do humbly implore her Majesty's pardon and mercy for it; but protest it was not from any malice or discontent against the state, for who had more interest therein than I? Nor any desire that the attempt should succeed, for who could have more disliked it than I? Nor any personal affection to my Lord, for I never had any particular obligation to him: but partly upon contempt of the matter, being so weak and unlikely a project (neither formed nor resolved of) as I hoped would have proved abortive, and vanished of itself, whensoever they should have laid aside the passion of discontentment and examined it with reason; and partly upon an imbecility and weakness of my own nature, (if so it be to be termed,) which could not resolve to become an accuser; which how odious a thing it is, all the world knows; especially in respect of the person, whom I must have accused; who I desire may be considered, not as he has been found since, but as he was reputed.

Although I confess, that my duty to the public, should have prevailed above all respect of my own private disgrace which I apprehended in it. And that I did not consent to it upon any evil ground, let my frank, simple, and plain declaration, which I made upon my first calling to some, be witness for me; wherein I have set down my whole knowledge freely and directly, and presumed so much of my own innocency, as touching any consent or participation in the action, as I have omitted divers circumstances therein, which might most have justified my intention.

But the more really and plainly I have dealt therein, the more graciously I trust her Majesty will interpret of my former error, which (the Lord is my judge) was without conceit of any traitorous or disloyal thought against her Majesty. And desire God to deal in mercy with my soul, that I was going now into France with a full purpose, desire, and resolution to serve her Majesty with all, that faith, zeal, and Councell can witness I had done, in my former employment; and will always do, whensoever it shall please her Majesty to call me to the like again.

### Notes to the Case

"Inwardness" means intimacy; "abused" means deceived; "imbecility" means weakness; "really" here means sincerely. "Advise of it" means consider it. Historic constructions, including "the Earl of Essex his name," are retained.

The closing passage is difficult in Winwood's printing. "Upon my first calling to some" and "with all, that faith, zeal, and Councell can witness I had done" are retained without supplying missing words. Winwood's spelling "Councell" is retained here because modernizing it as "counsel" or "Council" would resolve an ambiguity in the defective printed clause. Likewise, no words have been inserted into "And desire God to deal in mercy with my soul, that…". Winwood remains the main text. The Folger copy, MS V.b.214, f. 212r, offers a clearer ending: "faith, zeal and loyalty it was possible for me; as I hope the lords of her Majesty's council can witness I had done in my former employment." It also has the oath formula "And I desire God so to deal in mercy with my soul, as I

was now going into France…". These readings clarify the sense of the difficult printed conclusion without silently replacing it. Folger copy, f. 212r.

At the earlier difficulty, the Folger copy appears to read "upon my first calling, be some witness for me," against Winwood's "upon my first calling to some, be witness for me." The small word after "calling" needs final confirmation. In the same paragraph, Folger has "I did not conceal it upon any evil ground," where Winwood has "I did not consent to it upon any evil ground." The difference concerns what Neville is defending: his failure to disclose, or his alleged assent. Both texts acknowledge concealment in the preceding paragraph. These selected variant readings do not constitute a complete critical collation.

## III. Advice touching the holding of a Parliament

The base text is the complete Advice printed as Neville's by Samuel Rawson Gardiner, History of England from the Accession of James I to the Disgrace of Chief-Justice Coke: 1603–1616, volume II (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1863), Appendix V, pp. 389–394. The earlier State Papers copies are catalogued under July 1613; an exact composition date is not asserted. The separate memorial mentioned within the Advice is not part of Gardiner's printed text. Gardiner, p. 389 and following.

### Document text

There is a question grown and much debated amongst us, whether the King should relieve himself in his great want (whereof the world takes knowledge both at home and abroad), by a Parliament, or by some projects and devices to raise money, which may be set on foot to that purpose. For my part, I will not examine what these projects may be, although by experience of such as have been put in use since the dissolution of the last Parliament, I am induced to believe that either they will fail or fall short in the practice, howsoever they may appear likely in the theory; or that they will prove like some medicines, which do rather take away sense of pain for the present than cure the grief for which they were applied. But admit there may be other ways devised to relieve the King, yet am I clearly of opinion that there is none so fit, so honourable, and so necessary as by a Parliament.

My reason is this; I consider on what terms the King and the last Parliament parted at the dissolution, full of distaste and acrimony on His Majesty's part, and not without some discontentment on theirs, I consider also that from the Parliament, the apprehensions that are taken there are spread and dispersed over the whole realm. And further that the knowledge of these misunderstandings between His Majesty and the Parliament is not confined within this kingdom only but is flown abroad into all foreign parts that have any commerce or dealing with us. Now what disadvantage this opinion may breed us, and what hopes it is like to raise both in our enemies abroad and our discontented persons at home may easily be gathered. For, as there is nothing that more upholds the reputation of any Prince than the opinion of his strength at home, which consisted principally in the love and concord between him and his people from whence there follows naturally a sequence of all other duties on their part to make him strong and able to help and hurt his neighbours; so there is nothing that emboldens more an enemy, either open or secret, to attempt the disturbance of the peace of any State than the imagination that the Prince and people stand not in kind and loving terms.

And to this purpose I remember a story of Antigonus, one of the immediate and mightiest successors of Alexander, who, being solemnly set in great state to give audience to some other prince's ambassador, as he was in that solemnity, his son Demetrius came in from hunting, and being arrayed in his hunting attire,

with his darts in his hand, presented himself so unto his father, and after a salutation given according to the manner of that people, sat down by him. The audience being ended, and the ambassadors retiring themselves, Antigonus called them again, and willed them to report one thing more to their masters, namely, in what fashion they had seen his son and him converse together, intending that it would be taken for a great argument of his strength and a great assurance of his safety that his son and he lived in that confidence and concord.

If this were true in that case between the father and the son, how much more is it verified between the Prince and the people? And hereupon I conclude that the world being possessed with a conceit that the last Parliament ended with some sourness and distaste on the King's part, and not with the best satisfaction on theirs, there is nothing more necessary for the King's Majesty, either in regard of honour or safety, than to deface that opinion, and to make it apparent to the world that as he was received into the kingdom at his first entry, with the greatest demonstrations of the love and joy of his people that ever Prince was, so he is still rooted and established in their hearts; and that whatsoever cloud or mist might seem to have darkened or overshadowed the kind respects between them at that time, it was no other but that which happens often by some distemper, between a tender father and dutiful children which quickly vanish when the distemper of either side is removed.

For the effecting of this I can think of no other way but by another Parliament, for there this error grew, and there and nowhere else it must be repaired. The harsh conclusion of the former Parliament bred that ill-conceit, and the sweet close of another must beget a better. And by this means two notable effects will be wrought together if matters be well handled; the removing of that erroneous and dangerous conceit of a misunderstanding between the King and his people, and the relieving of the King's present necessities in a sure speedy and plentiful manner; whereas that other cause of projects may happily prove slow and fail in the most, and in very few succeed according to the first design. And for rectifying the misconceit between the King and his people there is no hope at all that way. It is rather to be feared it will do hurt, and rather aggravate than cure that malady if there be not great judgment used in the choice of the projects, and much dexterity in the managing of them.

Against this opinion there are two objections. The one that the Parliament may still continue adverse and unwilling to relieve the King at all, and so no hope of making up the breach, the other that as long as it is conceived the King cannot help himself without them, they will play upon the advantage of his necessities and extort some unreasonable demands from him before they yield to do anything for him. Both these objections are grounded upon the same false foundation, namely, that whatsoever the last Parliament did in that kind, they did it out of evil affection, which I do know, and do confidently avow to be otherwise, and have before in speech delivered the true reasons of that averseness, as one that lived and conversed inwardly with the chief of them, that were noted to be most backward and know their inwardest thoughts on that business.

So I dare undertake for the most of them that the King's Majesty proceeding in a gracious course toward his people, shall find those gentlemen exceeding willing to do him service, and to give him such contentment, as may sweeten all the former distastes, and leave both His Majesty and the world fully satisfied of their good intentions, and of the general affection of his subjects.

It is true (as I lately delivered unto His Majesty), that some things will be desired and expected of him by way of grace, which may both give some contentment to them that shall pay what is given, and justify the care and honest regard of them that shall give it. And, without this, I dare promise nothing; for it is most certain that, as in private families and all other societies, where the straitest bonds of nature or election do concur to unite affections, there is almost a continual necessity of mutual offices of kindness to nourish and maintain that love, so in kingdoms, besides that great bond of protection and allegiance between the sovereign and the subject, there is a like necessary use of the frequent interchange of mutual effects of grace and love to cherish and foster that tender affection that daily is to be renewed between them.

But what be the things that will be demanded or expected by the Parliament on behalf of the people will be hard for any one man to set down. Yet what I have collected out of the desires of sundry of the principal and most understanding gentlemen that were of the last Parliament, and are like to be of this, I will be bold to deliver in a memorial hereunto adjoined, whereby it shall appear that they aim not at anything unjust or unreasonable, or that may derogate from His Majesty in point of sovereignty further than His Majesty has already been pleased to offer in writing to the last Parliament (which no doubt will be maintained) nor in point of profit to any matter of certain and considerable value, but only at such things as being now of small moment and loss to His Majesty to depart with, because they have been sifted and ransacked to the bottom, may yet be valued to the subjects, both in opinion and truth, at a high rate, because they shall thereby enjoy a great repose and security from vexation which any of them may otherwise be subject unto.

These things being taken into His Majesty's consideration, and receiving His gracious approbation as matter not unfit to be yielded of grace unto his subjects, the next points to be thought of are the time of holding the Parliament, the things preceding to be done by way of preparation, and the manner of proceeding with the House of Commons when the Parliament is assembled.

For the first I see no cause why it should be deferred longer than Michaelmas, for after the session there must be a time proportionable for the Commissioners to sit, and for the money to be levied and brought into the Exchequer, which the sooner it is done, the sooner will the King be eased of his debts for which he pays interest, and the sooner will his reputation be recovered and settled, which is the thing that most deserves to be respected.

If the Parliament begin at Michaelmas, the Term may be adjourned to Hollantide; or if not, yet till that time there is little business done, so as the lawyers may well attend the Parliament, whose absence will otherwise breed delay. And I

do not see but in a month or five weeks this point of supplying the King and of his retribution will be easily determined if it be proposed betimes and followed close afterwards.

For the second, which concerns matter of preparation, these be the things that I would humbly offer to His Majesty's gracious consideration, to forbear to use any speech that may irritate, and to seem rather confident than diffident of their affections, casting the fault of any former error upon evil offices done on both sides, and want of true understanding rather than want of good affection.

To speak graciously and benignly to the people that shall flock to see His Majesty this progress. And especially to take notice of the principal gentlemen, and let them kiss his hand, and do them some other grace.

To give order to the Archbishop to prohibit all books and invective sermons against the Parliament, so as notice may be taken of His Majesty's commandment before the meeting.

To peruse the grievances exhibited the last Parliament, and if His Majesty would please to be gracious in any of them, to do it of himself before he be pressed. For a small thing in that manner will give more contentment than much more obtained with importunity.

And especially to call to mind if His Majesty promised anything to the last Parliament which is not yet performed; for upon the performance of that men will be like to ground their trust and hopes in those things which shall be offered now.

For the last point concerning the manner of proceeding, I wish that His Majesty will be pleased to make his propositions by himself or by his ministers and servants that are of their own body, and not by mediation of the Lords. For the Commons will be rather willing to make oblation of their affections themselves unto His Majesty than that any others should do it, and intercept both the merit and thanks from them.

I wish also that the King should forbear to nominate any particular men to be sent unto him from the Commons to treat upon any point or occasion, but after His Majesty has declared his own desires and made likewise known his gracious inclination to gratify his subjects with any favours and graces that with reason and moderation they can desire for them. His Majesty may be pleased to require the House to nominate a competent number of thirty or forty or fewer which may repair unto him with their demands, and be authorized both to ask and answer such questions as the debate about them shall beget without concluding or binding the House in any point, but only to clear things and report all back to the House.

This course, I conceive, will much expedite the business, avoid jealousies, and give good satisfaction to the most, when they shall see that the King shall understand their desire immediately from themselves without any interposition, or danger of misinterpretation, and that upon any point of doubt they shall be

admitted to clear their own intentions and not to be subject to the construction of other.

Matters being thus prepared beforehand, and thus managed at the time, and His Majesty being pleased to be gracious to his people in the points proposed or any other of the like nature which may be thought of by the House, when they meet (for beforehand no man can precisely say these things will be demanded and no other) I have no doubt, but am very confident, that His Majesty shall receive as much contentment of this next Parliament as he received distaste of the former, and that all things will end in that sweet accord that will be both honourable and comfortable for His Majesty and happy for the whole realm.

And when His Majesty has made use of his people's affection to put him out of want, any fit projects that shall be offered may be the boldlier entertained to fill his coffers. For whatsoever shall be done in that kind will be the less subject to offence when there is a perfect renewing of affections gone before; whereas otherwise whilst dislikes continue seu bene, seu male facta premunt.

In this advice it may evidently appear that I have proceeded with more zeal to His Majesty than caution or wariness for myself; for I am not ignorant what a hazard I run if things should fall out contrary to my expectation. But love and faith cast no perils. And I hold it a matter of that consequence both to King and people to have these misunderstandings cleared as well in truth as in opinion, that I would think my life of little value in respect of it, and had rather hazard anything that may befall me than leave such an office unattempted. Wherein if I fail, howsoever my discretion may be censured, yet I am sure the honest purpose and sincerity of my heart cannot be reproved.

### Notes and selected variants to the Advice

"Grief" in the medicine comparison means an ailment; "projects" means schemes for raising money; "happily" here means perhaps; "deface" means erase; "straitest" means closest; "retribution" means a reciprocal return. Michaelmas is 29 September; Hollantide is All Saints' Day, 1 November. "Love and faith cast no perils" means that they do not reckon the risks. The Latin "seu bene, seu male facta premunt" means that deeds, whether good or bad, weigh against one.

The following selected differences are given in modern spelling. Gardiner remains the base; manuscript readings are reported separately, not silently inserted. These examples do not establish a descent from one copy to another.

1. Opening: Gardiner and the earlier copies at SP 14/74, ff. 84r and 88r, have "the world takes knowledge"; the later copy, SP 16/441, f. 262r, has "the world takes notice." The later reading does not settle the original authorial wording. Later copy.

2. Projects: Gardiner has "that other cause of projects"; SP 14/74, f. 85r, reads "that other course of projects."

3. The King's earlier offer: Gardiner has "which no doubt will be maintained"; SP 14/74, f. 85v, reads "which no doubt will be remembered."

4. Favours and graces: Gardiner has "with reason and moderation"; SP 14/74, f. 86v, reads "with reason and modesty."

5. Affections: Gardiner has "a perfect renewing of affections"; SP 14/74, f. 87r, reads "a perfect renewing and reunion of affections."

The four readings in items 2–5 were checked at their respective manuscript loci against Gardiner's printing. Earlier copy, SP 14/74, ff. 84r–87v. A second earlier copy survives at SP 14/74, ff. 88r–91r. Second copy. A complete critical collation is separate from this selected apparatus.

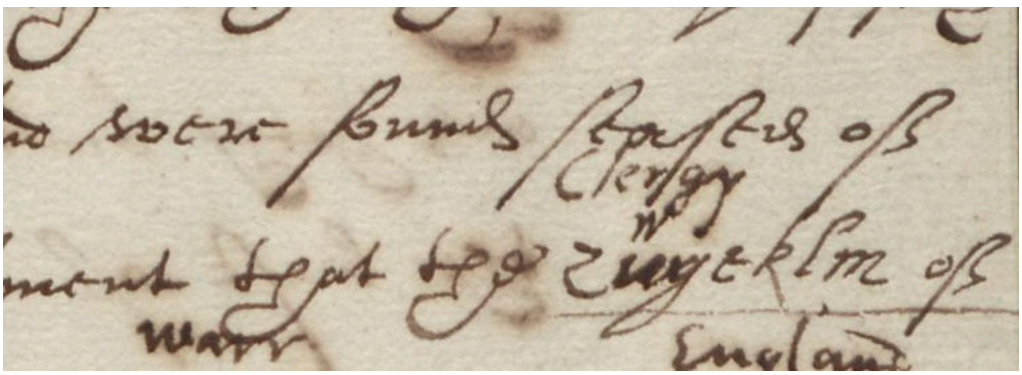
# Neville's Ciphers: Keys, Letters, and Intelligence

Henry Neville's letters from France sometimes change abruptly from ordinary prose into cipher. A familiar-looking string of letters conceals a word; a letter and number replace a ruler or a country. The recipient needed a key to restore the hidden information. In some surviving dispatches, the deciphered words have been written above the coded passage, allowing us to follow both layers on the same page.

## A letter with its decipherment

On 13 July 1599 (Old Style), Neville reported to Robert Cecil from Orleans about three Englishmen detained at La Rochelle. Letters found on them described an offer of money to sustain war against England. The dispatch is in Ralph Winwood's handwriting. As Neville's secretary in France, Winwood wrote out many of the letters that Neville signed.[1]

The concealed words include "clergy." In this enlargement, its cipher group appears in the line of the letter; the reading "Clergy" sits above it.

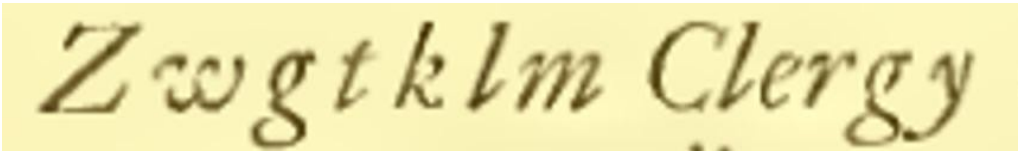


The alphabetic cipher for "clergy," enlarged with its interlinear decipherment. The National Archives, SP 78/43, f. 235r.

The passage was also printed in the eighteenth-century collection known as Win-

[1]Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Orleans, 13 July 1599 Old Style, The National Archives, SP 78/43, ff. 232–236, especially ff. 235r–v. The manuscript closing date is 23 July, corresponding to the 13 July Old Style date printed at the head of the letter in Winwood, I, p. 61. The manuscript page and enlarged detail were compared with the printed passage in Ralph Winwood, *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I*, ed. Edmund Sawyer, I (London, 1725), p. 65. The selected numerical pairs and alphabetic groups were checked against the manuscript images and the printed page; the "title" group is on f. 235v. The alphabetic decoding is explained in the following note. The hand responsible for the interlinear readings is not identified here. Spelling in the prose quotation is modernized; omissions are marked. Alphabetic cipher groups are not silently reconstructed from OCR.

wood's *Memorials*, which preserves the coded groups alongside their readings. Here the group is easier to distinguish:




The same cipher group, followed by "Clergy," in Winwood's Memorials, I (1725), p. 65.

## Using the surviving key

Neville's embassy key survives in the State Papers. Its first sheet contains four alphabets, each written as two rows of paired letters. The accompanying instructions explain how to use them: exchange a letter in the upper row for the letter beneath it, or a letter in the lower row for the one above it. The exchange works in either direction.[2]

The four characters `x`, `y`, `z` and `q` tell the reader which alphabet to use:

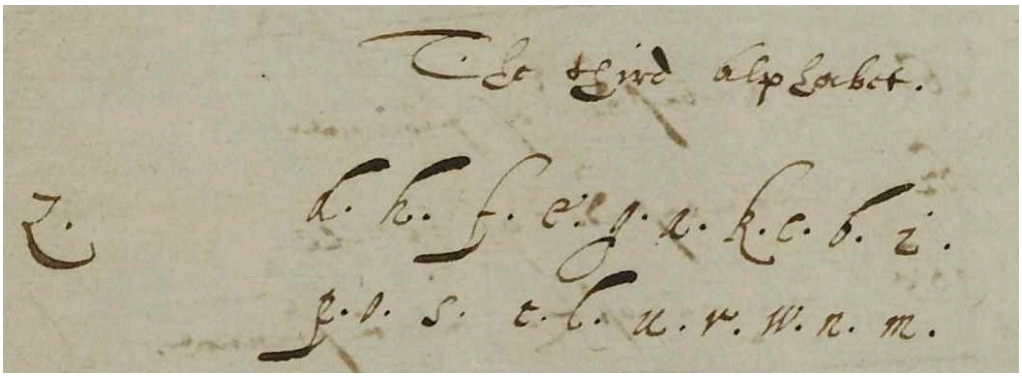
| Character | Alphabet selected |
|---|---|
| x | First |
| y | Second |
| z | Third |
| q | Fourth |

These characters are instructions, not letters of the concealed word. Select the indicated alphabet, exchange each subsequent cipher letter with its partner, and change alphabets when another selector appears. The change can occur inside a word.

### First example: "clergy"

The dispatch's `z` selects the third alphabet. Here is that part of the manuscript key:

[2] The National Archives, SP 106/2, ff. 32–33, volume catalogue; State Papers Online, manuscript volume MC4323480003, viewer scans 38–40. The figures reproduce crops from the original embedded scan images. The preceding leaf and the following f. 34r are separate items and are omitted. No attribution of the key's writing hand is made.



The third alphabet, enlarged from the surviving key. Letters in the upper row exchange with the letters directly beneath them. The National Archives, SP 106/2, f. 32r.

Transcribed into a table, its pairs are:

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Upper row | d | b | f | e | g | a | k | c | h | i |
| Lower row | p | o | s | t | l | u | r | w | n | m |

Each letter appears only once in this paired alphabet, so its partner is unambiguous. Now read `w g t k l m`. Find `w` in the lower row: its partner above is `c`. Find `g` in the upper row: its partner below is `l`. Continue, moving in either direction as necessary:

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cipher | w | g | t | k | l | m |
| Decoded | c | l | e | r | g | i |

The result is `clergi`. The final `i` is explained by another instruction in the key: ordinary `y` is represented by `i`, leaving `y` available as an alphabet selector. The recovered word is therefore "clergy," exactly as supplied above the cipher in the letter and beside it in the printed *Memorials*.[3]

[3]The National Archives, SP 106/2, f. 32r, paired alphabets and instructions, tested against the cipher groups and supplied readings in Winwood, *Memorials*, I, p.65. The first alphabet pairs `aebfhcgkid` with `mwunolpsrt`; the second, `fbdachiekg` with `opnsrtmwlu`; the third, `dbfegakchi` with `postlurwnm`; the fourth, `gichekadbf` with `rtowuplsnm`. Read each pair in either direction. Selectors x/y/z/q designate the first/second/third/fourth alphabets. The instructions also replace ordinary x with cs, y with i, z with s and q with k, reserving these four characters for selection. The six displayed sequences give clergi, hither, deputieof, sent, to and title; i/y and the spacing in deputie of are explained in the text. The sequences for deputie of and title retain the alphabet previously selected in the passage until their internal selector changes it. This demonstrates the tested alphabetic mechanism, not a complete collation of every entry and sign in the key.

**Second example: "hither"**

The next group is `q. w t i w u g`. This time `q` directs us to the fourth alphabet, transcribed below:

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Upper row | g | i | c | h | e | k | a | d | b | f |
| Lower row | r | t | o | w | u | p | l | s | n | m |

Using those pairs gives:

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cipher | w | t | i | w | u | g |
| Decoded | h | i | t | h | e | r |

The result is "hither." Both occurrences of `w` give H. In the third alphabet, the same `w` gave C. The selector tells the reader which of these meanings applies.

**Changing alphabets inside a word**

On the following manuscript page, f. 235v, the letter uses a more elaborate sequence for "title": `e m q i a u`. The third alphabet is already in use at this point. Decode the first two letters with it: `e` gives T and `m` gives I. Then `q` tells us to change to the fourth alphabet. The remaining `i a u` give T, L and E:

| Cipher | e | m | q | i | a | u |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Action | Third | Third | Switch to fourth | Fourth | Fourth | Fourth |
| Decoded | t | i | — | t | l | e |

The selector contributes no letter: the result is `title`. The two Ts in that word are concealed differently—first as `e`, then as `i`—because the alphabet changes between them.

The printed ſ is a long s, not an f. Points in the printed groups and spaces in the examples below help separate the selectors and letters; they do not encode letters themselves.

The same procedure works across all four alphabets in this passage:

| Cipher sequence | Alphabet used | Result from the key |
|---|---|---|
| z.wgtklm | Third | clergi: clergy |

| Cipher sequence | Alphabet used | Result from the key |
|---|---|---|
| q.wtiwug | Fourth | hither |
| su y.bghmwfo | Fourth, then second | deputieof: deputie of |
| x.kwfd | First | sent |
| z.eb | Third | to |
| em q.iau | Third, then fourth | title |

In `su y.bghmwfo`, the fourth alphabet remains in force from "hither": `su` gives `de`. The `y` then switches to the second alphabet, giving `putieof`. The combined result is `deputie of`. Word spacing must be restored as the message is read. These six sequences have been decoded from the manuscript tables and checked against the printed readings.[4]

## Other parts of the key

The alphabet sheet also offers alternative signs for vowels. A sender could vary those signs as well as change alphabets, making repeated vowels less immediately recognizable. The examples above use the paired letters; they do not require the alternative vowel signs.

The sheet identifies Neville and France; the archival index dates it to 1600. Its successful decoding of these passages shows that its alphabet arrangements were already in use in the July 1599 dispatch. That does not date the surviving sheet itself.[5]

The next two pages supply codes for whole names and expressions—a *nomenclator*, or code vocabulary.

This part works by direct lookup. The key and the July dispatch agree: `m.173` stands for Spain, `c.100` for the King of Spain and `a.101` for England. The prefix forms part of the code. The writer could therefore conceal "clergy" letter by letter while replacing "Spain" with a single code group.

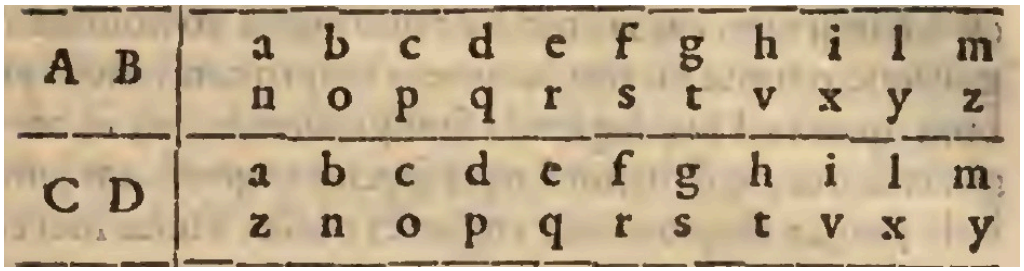
[4] The National Archives, SP 106/2, f. 32r, paired alphabets and instructions, tested against the cipher groups and supplied readings in Winwood, *Memorials*, I, p.65. The first alphabet pairs `aebfhcgkid` with `mwunolpsrt`; the second, `fbdachiekg` with `opnsrtmwlu`; the third, `dbfegakchi` with `postlurwnm`; the fourth, `gichekadbf` with `rtowuplsnm`. Read each pair in either direction. Selectors x/y/z/q designate the first/second/third/fourth alphabets. The instructions also replace ordinary x with cs, y with i, z with s and q with k, reserving these four characters for selection. The six displayed sequences give clergi, hither, deputieof, sent, to and title; i/y and the spacing in deputie of are explained in the text. The sequences for deputie of and title retain the alphabet previously selected in the passage until their internal selector changes it. This demonstrates the tested alphabetic mechanism, not a complete collation of every entry and sign in the key.

[5] The National Archives, SP 106/1, handwritten index p. 4, Neville entry, France, 1600, old reference 86; index volume; State Papers Online MC4323480002, scan 5. The index reference corresponds to the older number on the key.

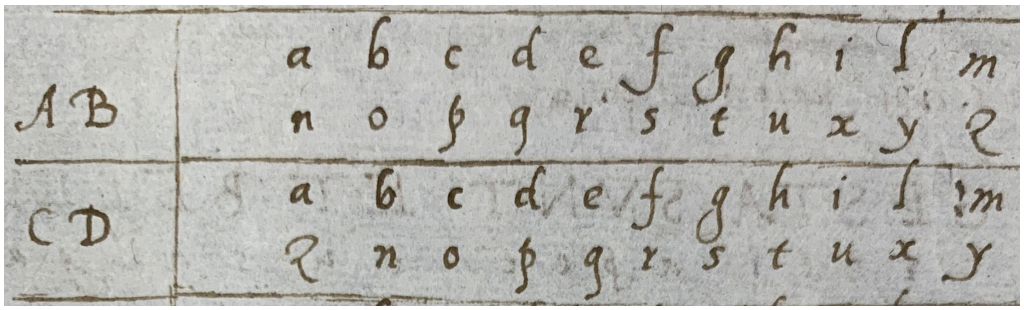
## Porta's book and the manuscript copy

A separate manuscript in Neville's collection at The National Archives copies material from Giambattista della Porta's *De furtivis literarum notis*, a book about secret writing. The corresponding passages appear in the Naples edition of 1563. They include a table and worked example that let us demonstrate a complete operation, from an ordinary word to cipher and back again.[6]

Porta's method also uses reciprocal pairs, but selects them by successive letters of a key phrase. In the dispatch just decoded, the writer instead inserts alphabet selectors into the message.




Detail of Porta's printed cipher table, 1563, p. 101, showing the AB and CD rows.




The AB and CD rows of the corresponding handwritten table in Neville's collection. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/8.

Each row divides the alphabet into two paired lines. A letter in one line exchanges places with the letter directly opposite it. The exchange works both ways: if B becomes N, N becomes B. The alphabet has twenty-two letters, with-

[6]The National Archives, PRO 30/50/8, cryptographic extracts, catalogued under Sir Henry Neville's diplomatic correspondence in the Neville and Aldworth family papers, PRO 30/50, formerly held in the Braybrooke family archives at Audley End. This family collection is distinct from the State Papers cipher series SP 106; Giambattista della Porta, *De furtivis literarum notis, vulgo de ziferis libri IIII* (Naples: Giovanni Maria Scotto, 1563), II.16, pp. 99–103, and III.2, pp. 147–150. The printed work controls the explanation and calculation here; manuscript variants require separate collation. Neither its placement in the bundle nor its resemblance to the printed source establishes Neville as its copyist.

out separate J, K, U or W.

### Following the example

Porta's example begins with the message `BELLA` and a key phrase beginning `CASTVM`. Put the first five message letters above the first five key letters:

| Message | B | E | L | L | A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Key | C | A | S | T | V |

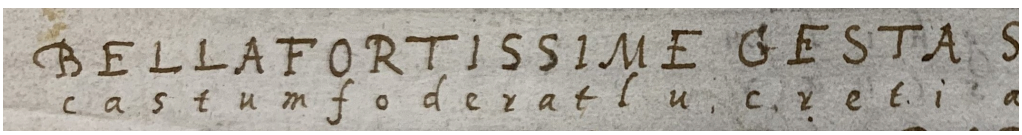
Start with B. The key letter beneath it is C, so use the row labelled `CD`. Find B in that row: its partner is N. Write N as the first cipher letter.

For the next letter, E, the key supplies A. Move to row `AB`, where E is paired with R. Continuing through the five positions gives:

| Message letter | Key letter | Row | Cipher letter |
|---|---|---|---|
| B | C | CD | N |
| E | A | AB | R |
| L | S | ST | O |
| L | T | ST | O |
| A | V | VX | P |

The result is `NROOP`. To read it, use the same key letters and the same rows. In row CD, N gives B; in row AB, R gives E; the remaining rows restore L, L and A. The recipient recovers `BELLA`.[7]

The two Ls happen to become O because their key letters, S and T, select the same row. A different row can give the same message letter a different cipher partner.




Enlarged beginning of the manuscript worked arrangement: BELLA with the key letters castum beneath it. The National Archives, PRO 30/50/8, following the leaf numbered 62.

[7] Porta, II.16, table, p. 101, and example and instructions, p. 102. The first five letters are recalculated directly from the table rather than copied from the complete printed ciphertext. The full printed key is `CASTVM FODERAT LVCRETIA PECTVS ALGAZEL`; its final word is retained without translation. The reciprocal alphabet is `ABCDEFGHILMNOPQRSTVXYZ`.

The manuscript therefore preserves both the table and its application. Porta's key phrase includes the Latin words "Lucretia had pierced her chaste breast." These words already occur in the printed example copied into the manuscript.[8]

## Getting hold of somebody else's key

Neville also reported obtaining a cipher used by other correspondents. On 25 January 1600, he described sending a friar to Rome. Before leaving, the friar cultivated Scottish contacts in Paris and obtained letters of recommendation. Neville inspected the letters and copied one. Its writer proposed that the traveller receive a cipher on reaching Rome.

Neville had the friar ask for the key earlier, explaining that he would need to write from Lyons on the way. Once it was obtained, Neville reported that he could read the letter.[9]

He also inspected the cipher's list of English names. It included the Queen, Cecil, Essex, the English ambassador, Sir Henry Bromley, Mr Bacon, Father Parsons, Doctor Cecil, Henry Constable, Bishop (a priest), Mr Paget and the English College at Rome, among others.[10]

Henry Constable appears in this reported list. The entry enabled the correspondents to refer to him in code; it does not establish that he took part in their correspondence. The acquired key has not been identified with either the embassy key or the Porta extracts.

In March, Neville was still waiting for a fuller answer from Rome.[11] His January dispatch explains how he hoped to obtain further letters:

> I have willed him to offer his means of conveying their letters, which they will never distrust; and thereby their letters will fall into my hands.[12]

[8] Porta, II.16, table, p. 101, and example and instructions, p. 102. The first five letters are recalculated directly from the table rather than copied from the complete printed ciphertext. The full printed key is `CASTVM FODERAT LVCRETIA PECTVS ALGAZEL`; its final word is retained without translation. The reciprocal alphabet is `ABCDEFGHILMNOPQRSTVXYZ`.

[9] Neville to Cecil, 25 January 1599/1600 Old Style, Winwood, I, p. 146. Compare the preceding report, p. 145, where Neville asks for special characters for the friar, the intermediary and Rome.

[10] Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 25 January 1599/1600 Old Style, in Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 146–147, especially p. 147. The year is 1600 in modern year numbering; the January date retains the English calendar. Prose quotations modernize spelling and capitalization. The acquired cipher itself has not been identified with SP 106/2.

[11] Neville to Cecil, Paris, 12 March 1599/1600 Old Style, Winwood, I, p. 159. Neville writes that he has heard nothing from Rome concerning the matter he has undertaken there, but expects a fuller answer.

[12] Henry Neville to Robert Cecil, Paris, 25 January 1599/1600 Old Style, in Winwood, *Memorials*, I, pp. 146–147, especially p. 147. The year is 1600 in modern year numbering; the January date re-

tains the English calendar. Prose quotations modernize spelling and capitalization. The acquired cipher itself has not been identified with SP 106/2.