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Did Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, write the Langham Letter?

In the July-September 1989 issues of the *Edward de Vere Newsletter*, the hypothesis was advanced that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the author of the Langham Letter describing Queen Elizabeth's entertainment at Kenilworth in the summer of 1575. Further support for this hypothesis is found in the relationships shared by three men connected with the Langham Letter and the Kenilworth entertainment: George Gascoigne, Humfrey Martin, and Edward de Vere.

The family connections in question revolve around John Bacon and his first cousins Nicholas and James. George Gascoigne (1542-1577) married Elizabeth, the daughter of John Bacon (1521?-1559), circa 1562 (Miller 303-322). Elizabeth's father John was a first cousin of James Bacon, a London alderman who had married Humfrey Martin's aunt, Anne Pakington, sometime between 1565 and 1573 (*Remembrancia*, 21). James Bacon's brother, the Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon (1509-1579), was married to Anne Cooke, sister of Lady Burghley, the Earl of Oxford's mother-in-law (Williams 49). Thus, Gascoigne, Humfrey Martin, and Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, were all connected by marriage either to John Bacon or to his first cousins James and Sir Nicholas Bacon, as illustrated in the diagram at the end of this article.

Since they were all related by marriage to the Bacons, there is every reason to suppose that Gascoigne, Humfrey Martin, and Oxford were ac-

quainted with each other. Being not too far apart in age (in 1575, Gascoigne was thirty-three, Humfrey Martin thirty, and Oxford twenty-five), they could easily have been friends. Each was also in some way connected with the Kenilworth entertainment.

George Gascoigne's part in the Kenilworth festivities is well documented. *The Princely Pleasures at Kenilworth Castle, 1575* records the various speeches, poems and songs performed in Queen Elizabeth's honour during her visit to Kenilworth. It also contains the text of *Zabeta*, a "shew" prepared by Gascoigne for the occasion, but never acted:

This shewe was devised and penned by M. Gascoigne; and being prepared and redy (every Actor in his garment) two or three days together, yet never came to execution (Nichols 515).

As the Queen took her departure from Kenilworth, Gascoigne was given the honor of speaking the final words of farewell:

The Queenes Majestie hasting her departure from thence, the Earle [of Leicester] commanded Master Gascoigne to devise some farewell worth the presenting; whereupon he himselfe, clad like unto Sylvanus, God of the woods, and meeting her as she went on hunting, spake ex tempore. . . (Nichols 515).

Humfrey Martin was connected with the entertainment at Kenilworth as the recipient of the Langham Letter. Since George Gascoigne was a relative by marriage of Humphrey Martin's aunt, Humfrey Martin had every reason to be interested in an account of the Kenilworth entertainment, and there is thus nothing particularly surprising in the fact that the

Langham *Letter* is addressed to him.

Williams, Neville. *All the Queen's men*. London: Sphere Books, 1972.

Nor is it particularly surprising that the Earl of Oxford, as author of the Langham *Letter*, should have phrased his account of the Kenilworth entertainment in the form of a letter to Humfrey Martin, a distant relative of his by marriage. Humfrey Martin's aunt had married into the family of Lady Burghley's brother-in-law and, as mentioned in the August 1989 issue of the *Edward de Vere Newsletter*, Oxford's father-in-law, Lord Burghley had business interests in common with Humfrey Martin's father and uncles.

In light of the way in which these three young men were connected through the Bacon family, it is also interesting to note William Patten's comment that one of the first copies of the Langham *Letter* was given to Sir Nicholas Bacon:

This day receyved I aunswer fro my good freend the master of Requests hoow the booke waz too be suppress for that Langham had complayed upon it, and ootherwise for that the honorable enterteinment be not turned intoo a jest. May it pleaz yoor honor, excepting the vi untoo master Wylson, too yoor Lordship and untoo my Lord Kepar [Sir Nicholas Bacon], I have not let three more pass me, but have & suppress them all. . . W. Patten (Scott 301).

In summary, then, the case for Oxford's authorship of the Langham *Letter* is considerably strengthened by the fact that he and two other individuals closely connected with the Langham *Letter* and the Kenilworth entertainment — George Gascoigne and Humfrey Martin — were related to each other through their connections by marriage with members of the Bacon family.

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OXFORD'S CONNECTIONS TO HUMFREY MARTIN AND GEORGE GASCOIGNE THROUGH THE BACON FAMILY

