

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Literature

William Shakespeare, Richard Barnfield, and the Sixth Earl of Derby

Leo Daugherty

ISBN: 9781604977127 5.5 x 8.5" Hardcover Level: College & Faculty
212 pages August 2010 US\$104.99 / £61.99

Description

The book *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1609) contains a famous major section which editors and other scholars long ago dubbed "the Rival Poet sequence." In these poems, Shakespeare speaks anxiously of another pastoral sonneteer who is competing with him for the love of his male addressee. Some authorities have held the view that Shakespeare is not the "autobiographical I" of his sonnets, and therefore that this rival poet and the male beloved of both were not real people either. Other authorities have argued that these three may have been real, but that it does not matter to us now as readers as the question is of little or no critical importance. However, most authorities over the years have believed that they were indeed real people in the real world and that it is important who they were simply because one of them was Shakespeare. The trend in recent scholarly work has been toward establishing a reliable historical grounding for all works of art—including poems—in cases where such a ground has not been adequately established. *Shakespeare's Sonnets* is such a case and is perhaps the most famous one in Western culture. This book provides the best evidence yet brought forward for that grounding.

Many other books and articles have taken the position that real historical persons are represented in *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and have attempted to identify them. But no previous study has considered the large amount of new evidence presented here (some of it historical and some of it textual), and none has made a logical case as powerful and persuasive regarding these identifications as the one constructed in this work.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
RICHARD BARNFIELD,
AND THE
SIXTH EARL OF DERBY



LEO DAUGHERTY

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Daugherty, Leo.
Shakespeare, Richard Barnfield, and the sixth Earl of
Derby / Leo Daugherty.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-60497-712-7 (alk. paper)

1. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616--Spurious and
doubtful works. 2. Shakespeare, William, 1564-
1616--Authorship. 3. Barnfield, Richard, 1574-1627-
Authorship. 4. Derby, William Stanley, Earl of, d.
1642--Authorship. 5. English drama--Early modern
and Elizabethan, 1500-1600--History and criticism. I.
Title.

PR2875.D38 2010
822.3'3--dc22

2010020591

20 Northpointe Parkway, Suite 188, Amherst, New York 14228

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William Shakespeare, Richard Barnfield, and the Sixth Earl of Derby

Description (continued)

This book is the first to argue that the Rival Poet of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* is the well-known young Elizabethan writer Richard Barnfield (1574–1620), long suspected to have been one of Shakespeare's "private friends" (as they were termed by Francis Meres in 1598), with whom (as Meres also tells us) Shakespeare shared some of his sonnets. This is also the first book to argue that William Stanley (1561–1642), sixth earl of Derby, is the young man to whom they addressed their respective sonnets and other love poems in the period c. 1592–1595.

In making these identifications, this is the first book to examine in detail the dialogue between *Shakespeare's Sonnets* and three of Barnfield's books of poetry (all published within a little more than one year)—a dialogue only known to be discussed in a conference paper and one other book.

William Shakespeare, Richard Barnfield, and the Sixth Earl of Derby will likely appeal to all readers interested in Shakespeare's life and love poetry, both specialist scholars and non-specialist enthusiasts alike.

About the Author

Leo Daugherty is professor emeritus of literature and linguistics at The Evergreen State College, where he taught Shakespeare and other programs in Renaissance studies and also served as academic dean and founding head of the Science and Human Values division for many years. He now teaches at the University of Virginia. Dr. Daugherty holds a PhD from Texas A & M University, an MA from the University of Arkansas, and a BA from Western Kentucky University. He also completed his postdoctoral studies in linguistics at Harvard University and MIT. He has published essays and monographs on Shakespeare, the Elizabethan poet Richard Barnfield, and William Stanley, sixth earl of Derby. In addition, he has also published studies of American writers, such as Cormac McCarthy and Allen Ginsberg. Dr. Daugherty is included on the lists of Who's Who in America and Who's Who in American Education.

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