

## Letters:

To the Editor:

It seems that the English professor quoted in the Fall issue of *Shakespeare Matters* was inaccurate in asserting that Shakespeare's use of the words *seethes* and *sodden* in *Troilus and Cressida* indicates a knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language. Upon looking through several comprehensive Anglo-Saxon dictionaries on line, I do not find these words listed. According to *Webster's*, they are long-standing English words derived from the Middle English words *sethan* and *soden*, the Old English word *seothan* and the Old High German word *siodan*. Shakespeare's forms are not even as old as Middle English; neither form appears, for example, in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer used *seeth*, *sethe*, *sode* and *soden* in their more common meaning of the time: *boil(ed)*.

Shakespeare used these words a few other times; *seethe* appears in *Timon of Athens*, and *sodden* in *Henry V* and *Pericles*. It may be of interest that John Lyly also used the term. In *Euphues and His England* (1580), he writes of a potential repetition "...which I must omitte, least I set before you, Colewortes twice sodden." In this case the word has the archaic meaning: *boiled*. An Oxfordian might say that as Oxford matured, so did the meaning of his occasionally used word, *sodden*.

A colewort, by the way, is a cabbage-like vegetable, thus the term *cole slaw*. *The good Huswives Handmaide for the Kitchen* (1594) instructs us, "Take a good quantitie of Colewortes and seeth them in water whole a good while...."

Thirteen years before Lyly, Arthur Golding used both terms in his translation of the tale of Philemon and Baucis in Book 8 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: "Hir Husband from their Gardenplot fetcht Coleworts... and in the pan to boyling did it put./ And while this meate a *seething* was...." Isn't it interesting where these obscure terms tend to pop up?

Robert Prechter

To the Editor:

I would like to thank Howard Schumann for pointing out an egregious error on my part. I wrote that Diana Price recorded that William Shaksper was back in Stratford selling malt to Phillip Rogers at the time of King James' procession through London on March 15, 1604. He was indeed selling malt, but the recorded date of the transaction is 12 days later, on March 27. Therefore this record does not preclude Shaksper from having rushed down to London and back—a three-day trip each way—to participate in the procession, returning quickly to effect his petty transactions in Stratford as recorded throughout the springtime of that year. The transaction records do prove that he was uninvolved in the presumed "resumption of public performances" (Price 34) of the King's Men in April. They are therefore suggestive that he stayed in Stratford, particularly given that there are no records of his being in London at all during 1604. But they do not prove it. My primary point remains: "Edward de Vere and 'Shakespeare' attended the same function on the same day, at the behest of King James." I am mystified, though, as to

how I overlooked this clearly stated time difference and sincerely regret the error.

Robert Prechter  
Executive Director,  
Socionomics Institute

And, speaking of errors, we're surprised nobody noticed (or if you did, you were shy, right?) the blunder on page 32 of issue 6:2, where your editor suffered a temporary lightning strike in the brain and wrote "Agincourt" in place of Barnet. The battle at which soldiers of the 13th Earl of Oxford were fired on by their own Lancastrian allies was, of course, Barnet (April 14, 1471), not Agincourt. Like Mr. Prechter, we sincerely regret the error. Keep those letters coming! — Ed.

It is with sadness that we record the passing of Gordon Cyr, resident of Baltimore, MD., and former past-President of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. A memorial tribute will appear in the next issue.

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The purpose of the Shakespeare Fellowship is to promote public awareness and acceptance of the authorship of the Shakespeare Canon by Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), and further to encourage a high level of scholarly research and publication into all aspects of Shakespeare studies, and also into the history and culture of the Elizabethan era.

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