The Phoenix and the Turtle by William Shakespeare is an allegorical poem of great complexity, of a magnitude not to be underestimated. It is a poem that looks forward to death while harking back to passions so strong reason itself is confounded. Yet while it is true that tales of the Phoenix are ancient myth, it is also true that there are no earlier poems in which “The Phoenix and the Turtle” appear together as love-birds as they do in Shakespeare’s poem, in that sense he is the true creator of the story.

Having said that, the history of English poesy will never become completely enlightened, until we fully understand the underlying motivation behind our author’s desires in laying before us such heartfelt tragedy, as that with which the poem finishes, something I will explain before this article concludes - an article that also reveals:

1 - Why the Will-Sonnets 135 & 136 are a mathematical allusion to the first section of “The Phoenix and the Turtle” the ‘Session’.

2 – Why in the ‘Threnos’ the second section of “The Phoenix and the Turtle” there is a mathematical allusion to Sonnet 105.

3 - Why the poem is untitled.

4 - Why the poem is a Tragedy

4 - Why conclusively, it is a poem composed of two cantos amounting to eighteen stanzas and not two separate poems.

5 - The imperative in understanding the true meaning of the words “Beauty, Truth and Rarity”.

6 - Why the penultimate verse of “The Phoenix and the Turtle” is the most revealing verse Shakespeare ever wrote.

7 - Telling images of Princess Elizabeth and her mother Anne Boleyn beside images of Henry Wriothesley.

8 - Why ‘censors’ removed the premier-poem “The Authors Request to the Phoenix” from the 1611 reprint of ‘Love’s Martyr’ and why it’s author was a ‘deepe-read scholler’ famed for Poetry.
Immortality - is a prominent feature of the Phoenix in the ancient myth, a bird that lives perhaps for five hundred or a thousand years, and while approaching the end of its life-cycle, builds a nest of aromatic branches and spices where it sits and sings a song of rare beauty, before rays of the sun ignite the funeral pyre and it is consumed by flames, from which a new Phoenix is born, a conflagration wherein a symbol of eternity is reborn.

In complete contrast to this in Shakespeare’s poem the Phoenix is turned to cinders in a funereal urn (i.e. the bird is seen to die) an obvious contradiction to the myth. The reason for this conflict is that Shakespeare’s Phoenix is of course an allusion to a mortal Queen Elizabeth 1st to whom there are multiple allusions in ‘Love’s Martyr’, while bearing in mind the eighth Stanza of the poem actually describes the Phoenix with the word ‘Queen’. Our great author liked to imagine himself as Elizabeth’s most dedicated follower (which is the reason he cast himself in the guise of a Turtle-dove) a bird noted for its fidelity, and an emblem of pure constancy, a bird believed to mate for life.

Now, in terms of the structure of “The Phoenix and the Turtle” I think a good way of visualising the work is to consider the first section, commonly known as the ‘Session’ as being composed of ‘13 stanzas’, and the second shorter but more lucid section the ‘Threnos’ as composed of ‘5 verses’. Consequently if I talk of either stanzas or verses you will know which section of the poem I am referring to. I would also like to advise you that to gain maximum benefit from this article it would be advisable to have a copy of Shakespeare’s Sonnets to hand.

“The Phoenix and the Turtle” first appeared in the original quarto edition of ‘Love’s Martyr’ in the year 1601 a publication we are led to believe was written by Robert Chester though this may not necessarily be so, there is content in the very first poem of the publication that leads me to question this belief. While on the title-page there is an element of self-sabotage in the guise of a Latin quote from Martial: ‘Mutare dominum non potest liber notus’ (A famous book is not able to change its author.) Taken literally, this is of course true; though what a book can do, is substitute the name of the true author for the name of an imposter - what we call a pseudonym. I also believe, it is not feasible to extrapolate the true meaning of “The Phoenix and the Turtle” by studying the poem in isolation, because it is inextricably linked to the more
elaborate story told in ‘Love’s Martyr’. While I further believe that the entire narrative is driven by our great author, who is in effect editor-in-chief, he is the overseer of this pastiche of love and life – myth and prophesies.

To my mind the ingenious and enigmatic first five stanzas of “The Phoenix and the Turtle” and the last five verses of the poem are at counterpoint to one another. These first stanzas are a labyrinth of ambiguity, strong lines, wherein lay conceits, mysterious and appealing yes, but still appearing in some contrast to the last five verses of the ‘Threnos’.
Applause of course is due, because of our maestro’s virtuosity in poetry, while his wit conveys the sense that a mysterious lover (who doesn’t show all their parts) is a more enticing lover, while the transparent has its merits too! The poem is cunningly constructed so the more you read, the easier it becomes, the last verse arguably bearing the simplest message. In the second line of the ‘Threnos’ we find the words “Grace in all simplicity” words which not only describe three deceased Tudor dignitaries, but also the style of writing found in the ‘Threnos’. It is as if our author considered that if we racked our brains enough trying to comprehend the mysterious first five
stanzas, then when we have breezed through the ‘Anthem’, it would be a far easier task understanding the ‘essential-story’ told in the ‘Threnos’ as we would then find it simplicity itself.

This first section the ‘Session’ can be divided into two further sections, stanzas 1 – 5 (The Injunction) and stanzas 6 – 13 (The Antheme). The first 5 stanzas metaphysical and determinedly obscure in composition suggest a parliament of birds assembled for a requiem, creating a moribund atmosphere ultimately eclipsed by our love-birds in a consummation of flames. The ‘Antheme’ may be seen as a response to the ‘Injunction’ with our Phoenix royally described in the eighth stanza.

“Twixt the turtle and his Queen”.

While against a backdrop where love shone between ‘The Phoenix and the Turtle’ there is a strong numerical theme in which two become one, when these mythological love-birds are seen to flee.

“In a mutual flame from hence”.

A flame in which they sacrifice themselves by immolation, so two can become one. So a new princely Phoenix can rise - an act described in ‘Love’s Martyr’.

“Accept into your ever hallowed flame
Two bodies, from which may spring one name”.

Before the Poetic Essayists continue:

“Then look; for see what glorious issue .... Now springs from yonder flame,"
“.....Never came so strong amazement on astonished eye, as this, this measureless pure Raritie.”

Superficially the ‘Anthem’ appears to be poetry primarily commemorating miraculous love, but delve beneath the surface and there is poetry about sacrifice, immolation and rebirth, I say rebirth, though rebirth in the sense it is used in this story is nigh indistinguishable from succession, which is of course the subject these works wish to bring to the attention of the reader, a principle objective being to provoke (considered thought) in respect of the succession of the throne? In this respect there is an element of ‘Last chance saloon’ to it, our
author being fully aware at the time of writing, that a dying sunset had already begun a sense of contemplation in the realm of ‘The phoenix and the Turtle’.

In ‘Love’s Martyr’ at the very moment of Martyrdom the Turtle-dove says:

“Accept my body as a sacrifice,  
Into your flame, of whom one name may rise.”

‘One name’ is an allusion to the Tudor Prince Henry Wriothesley. The word ‘one’ relates to his motto: (One for all, all for one), and it is this single word ‘one’ (in groups of three) that is very much the key to the treasures, while in part it can be seen to represent Wriothesley as the 3rd Earl of Southampton. While our author’s dearest desire was that the Tudor dynasty should continue beyond Elizabeth’s death, and while we may sympathise with his determination in trying to provoke debate in respect of the succession (something outlawed by Elizabeth) history records that propaganda has limitations.

(Sonnet 144) arguably relates to a time when Wriothesley was banged-up at Elizabeth’s pleasure in the tower. It beautifully illustrates how within our author’s ‘invention’ of words, the word one has a special meaning.

But being both from me, both to each friend,  
I guess ‘one’ angel in another’s hell.  
Yet this shall I ne’er know, but live in doubt,  
Till my bad angel fire my good ‘one’ out.

Love is a Trinity.

Our Elizabethan friends were obsessed by numbers, the publication ‘A hundred Sundrie Flowers’ for instance, is an example of this, while numbers and mathematics seem to permeate our poem, stanza seven which is incestuously numerical also presents to us a sacred allusion, within which we find not ‘two themes in one’, but “three themes in one”. (Ref. S.105 L.12)

So they loved as love in twaine,  
Had the essence but in one,  
Two distincts, division none,  
Number there in love was slaine.
The ‘Antheme’ is part of a hymn for our two dead love-birds. The major conceits that exist in the poem at this stage disappear, replaced with deceits, as to a certain degree the remaining section of the ‘Session’ is duplicitous, because our author speaks in double-speak (in twain) for when frequently talking of two he is surreptitiously alluding to ‘three’. This Stanza is an excellent example of this, for here the essence of our two love-birds is embodied in one glorious issue emanating from a mutual flame.

“Burn both our bodies to revive one name” it says in ‘Love’s Martyr’. That name of course being Tudor, to be represented by Henry Wriothesley. The great fear existing, that Elizabeth’s death would be synonymous with the end of the Tudor dynasty.

We find in this seventh stanza a trinity of words (essence, distincts & division) that crop-up in Christian theology which refer to ‘The Holy Trinity’ - God’s essence is one substance composed of three persons ‘The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit’ who are distincts without division, an allusion our author particularly likes to embrace for his own secular family, whom I like to term ‘The Tudor Trinity’ a family composed of himself, Elizabeth and Prince Henry Wriothesley. The number therefore slain by love, are mortal and immortal - sacred and profane, but nonetheless - members of a Trinity.

Stanza by stanza this profanity continues because the truth of love that exists between our two love-birds is ‘miraculous’ because effectively they procreate while observing sexual abstinence – they are chaste birds (This is a critical part of the story).

‘The Tudor Trinity’ (I felt a strong need for this invention) is entirely my own responsibility, it is an innovation our author could only dream of, for fear of being branded blasphemous. While I am certain this royal trinity was one of his most persistent thoughts, because we see in acts of defiance and sentimentality his necessity in alluding to them. He does this (as previously mentioned) by gathering the word one together in groups of three, and as this was stately taboo it was essential that he did this in a surreptitious way. An illuminating example, particularly pertinent to this article, we find in the Tempest:
“There is one tree, the Phoenix throne, one Phoenix at this hour reigning there”.

In ‘Twelfth Night’ a further Trinitarian gesture arises, when the identical twins Sebastian & Viola are finally reunited - Duke Orsino comments:

“One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons!
A natural perspective, that is, and is not!”

Continuing with this Trinitarian theme, the preeminent word found in the twelfth stanza is ‘concordant’ not twain, because although two notes can be in harmony with one another, they cannot form a ‘cord’, the minimum amount of notes needed for a cord is three (a trinity) in Shake-speare’s mind that is what he considers true harmony. Therefore where the word one appears in stanzas seven & twelve it appears in the same context.

Shake-speare elegantly elaborates - when in (S.8) he speaks of “the true concord of well-tuned sounds”. Note; how the mother is happy (Royal).

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
Resembling sire and child and happy mother
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing.

In stanza twelve we also find what might be termed ‘nice speculations of philosophy’ when reason is usurped by love, something more profound than it may initially sound, because the reason for love, the nature of its existence, are the parts that remain, which creatively and literally in this particular scenario are proven to be one.

That it cried, how true a twaine
Seemeth this concordant one
Love hath reason, reason none
If what parts can so remain.

Chaste Birds.

The conclusion of Shake-speare’s poem the ‘Threnos’ is something I shall be examining later almost word for word, though being aware of my limitations, I
am going to restrict detailed observations regarding the beginning of the poem, to a single important one, in respect of the forth line of the first stanza.

“To whose sound chaste wings obay”.

These obedient wings belong to the Turtle-dove, who in the mythical ‘Session’ is both chaste and virtuous (as is the Phoenix) sadly for our author, myth is the only locus in the poem where ideal-love exists. The above description of “chaste wings” though, is not accurate of the Turtle-dove (or the Phoenix) who exist in the ‘Threnos’, because the differences between the two sections of the poem are formidable. The Turtle-dove in the ‘Session’ exists in a metaphysical realm as opposed to the bird in the ‘Threnos’ who is more down to earth (a more domesticated fowl). So there is a fundamental difference between the two main sections of the poem, for where the ‘Session’ is mostly rooted in mythological detail, the ‘Threnos’ contrastingly, is rooted both in prophesy and autobiographical detail, and where we find the ‘Session’ enigmatic, touched by transcendental love, the ‘Threnos’ is a lot closer to home - a lament where tears reign on terra firma. While to speak further of this division – I would say this. It is a poem where dream meets reality, where the indestructability of myth remains myth, but where reason seems justifiably usurped by a higher power, with prophesy ultimately eclipsed by inevitability. Conceptualizing the two sections of “The phoenix and the Turtle” I will make one further overriding demarcation, the stanzas can be seen as the ‘larger story’ (a myth) and the verses as the ‘greater story’ (A tragedy).

In one way and another, there is quite a bit of mathematics going on in the poem, a corpus that can be represented cardio-graphically. The ‘Session’ by the number 371, and the ‘Threnos’ by the number 105, the poem’s total ‘trace’ therefore = 476. Numbers I shall be elaborating upon shortly.

Though we know the poem as “The phoenix and the Turtle” today, when first published it had no title (and for good reason). It is therefore of considerable significance that the concluding section was blessed with the title ‘Threnos’, while I can tell you that the terrible truth behind our author’s reasoning for doing this was that reflecting on his own life, he saw himself as the victim of a catastrophe in a tragedy.
Hardly surprising then, that he was irresistibly attracted to the word ‘Threnos’ not just because there is a natural implication of ‘trinity’ in the words threne & threnos, but because this description of the central narrative of his life, which he seems obsessional about transcribing (in various works) precisely defines what the word means. Unsurprisingly as the ‘Threnos’ unveils the misery suffered at the centre of his life it gets a big build-up in the 13th stanza.

Whereupon it made this threne
To the Phoenix and the dove,
Co-supremes and stars of love,
As chorus to their tragic scene.

A chorus of course is a prologue, a commentary on action to follow. In this case the tragedy of our author’s life, so the poem cannot end here. Therefore in complementing his own character, our author astutely employs a dramatic device, where he reduces from the four lined stanzas of the ‘Session’, to the three lined verses of the ‘Threnos’. So verse by verse our passing-poem symbolises, and in practical terms as a structure, finds itself more in keeping with an epitaph for a trinity, a trinity identifiable in its very first words.

“Beautie, Truth and Raritie”.

Significantly these allusions are all Capitalized in the first-edition, because they represent individuals – three people I have already referred to as ‘The Tudor Trinity’.

A.K.A. Queen Elizabeth I, Our author, Henry Wriothesley.

It is absolutely critical to the true understanding of the poem that you are seduced by my argument, that you can see these three words “Beautie, Truth and Raritie” as allusions to individuals.

In fact, so concerned was our author that these words “Beautie, Truth and Raritie” should be recognised as allusions, that he cunningly structured the ‘Threnos’ so it could be understood mathematical as an allusion to Sonnet 105 where confirmation of this fact can be found.
The Mathematical Allusions.

Let me explain - broadly speaking the poem is written in trochaic tetrameter, so if we take a stethoscope and listen to its beating heart (the rhythmical metre of the poem) we find the lines are composed of seven heartbeats. It was therefore necessary for our author to find a three syllable word as an allusion to Henry Wriothesley to fit the meter, because the first three words (Beauty, Truth and ............) only use four syllables, while it transpires that his selection of the word ‘Raritie’ as an allusion is in fact incredibly clever, because in the year 1571 a parliamentarian honoured Queen Elizabeth by saying that “God had graced England with a blessed bird - a rare Phoenix.” So by describing Wriothesley with the word ‘Raritie’ our author expresses a correlation between him and Elizabeth, while it should be noted, in the very next line, the word ‘grace’ is immediately repeated.

“Beautie, Truth and Raritie,
Grace in all simplicity”.

The words ‘Raritie’ and ‘Wriothesley’ which is pronounced ‘Rose-ley’, of course are not so very different, while no doubt it would have pleased our author that they are alliterative. It is also of significant interest that in ‘Love’s Martyr’, the word ‘Raritie’ resurfaces so very quickly following Shake-speare’s poem “The Phoenix and the Turtle” in fact on the very next page - in a poem described thus:

A Narration and Description of a most exact wondrous creature, arising out of the Phoenix and the Turtle doves ashes.

‘O twas a moving Epicedium!
Can fire? Can time? Can blackest Fate consume
So rare creation? No; tis thwart to sense,
Corruption quakes to touch such excellence,
Nature exclaims for justice, justice Fate,
Ought into nought can never remigrate,
Then look; for see what glorious issue (brighter Than clearest fire, and beyond faith far whiter Than Dian’s tear) now springs from yonder flame?
Let me stand numb’d with wonder, never came
So strong amazement on astonished eye
As this, this measureless pure Raritie’.........

A summary of the last few lines illustrated here would be:
“Glorious issue - springs from yonder flame - its name Raritie”.

While In a somewhat incestuous line in (S. 60) we find further use of the word Raritie:

“Feeds on the Rarities of Nature’s truth.”

‘Nature’s truth’ is of course a naughty Tudor secret because Nature (Elizabeth) and Truth (our author) were responsible for bringing a great ‘Raritie’ (Wriothesley) into the world, a polemic to which it appears a wise-world turns its head away - only offering a deaf ear.

The concluding 5 verses of the poem the ‘Threnos’ all have 3 lines only, each of these lines as already stated composed of 7 heartbeats, consequently there are 21 beats in each verse, a beating-pulse Stephen Fry likes to refer to as the ‘Cardiogram trace’ of a poem. As there are 5 verses of 21 beats, the sum total is 105. This is a mathematical allusion to Sonnet 105, for when we read this sonnet we see it is kith and kin to “The Phoenix and the Turtle” for while varying to other words, it alludes to exactly the same three people, by describing them as “Faire, Kind and True”.

Which is of course exactly what our author does in “The Phoenix and the Turtle”, with the words - “Beauty, Truth and Raritie” - he varies to other words! We therefore have a circular allusion where “The Phoenix and the Turtle” alludes to (S.105) while it in turn alludes to “The Phoenix and the Turtle”.

In defence of this argument, in respect of this mathematical allusion, if it were never discovered - it would have no purpose. We therefore note the metre in the ‘Session’ to be quite ragged; stanzas 8, 11, & 13 are irregular, an inconsistency which has the greater effect of illuminating the ‘Threnos’ where
the metre is perfect, every verse the same, which it has to be, otherwise it would be undetectable as the allusion it is.

It must be said though, this story our author is adamant about telling, he is somewhat obsessional about, he vehemently records it as “all my argument” a narrative detailed chronologically in ‘Venus & Adonis’ and ‘The Bath Sonnets’ (153 & 154) and ultimately in “The Phoenix and the Turtle”, while we see in the first lines of (S.105) that although his love for the faire youth is platonic, he nevertheless is still self-conscious about it - it begins.

1 Let not my love be called idolatry,
2 Nor my belovèd as an idol show,
3 Since all alike my songs and praises be,
4 To one of one still such and ever so. (S.105)

There can of course be no doubt about the Faire Youth’s identity, because in the fourth line we find a variant motto-contraction, the words ‘one of one’, being a shortened version of Henry Wriothesley’s motto ‘One for all, all for one’. Many other examples of this tendency exist within the sonnets, while right at their heart we find the line “Why write I still all one, ever the same”.

Here we have Elizabeth’s motto ‘Semper Eadem’ (ever the same) proceeded by a contraction of Wriothesley’s motto, with the words (all one). His motto in contracted form pervades the sonnets, here are examples of some of the many variations, ‘All in one’, ‘One of one’, ‘All the all’, ‘All or all’, a tendency which also finds expression in ‘Love’s Martyr’.

While returning to the afore mentioned mathematical allusion, we receive confirmation that although these allusions appear in a different order “Beautie, Truth and Raritie” and “Faire, Kind and True” refer to exactly the same people. So Queen Elizabeth (the Phoenix) is ‘Beauty’ but also ‘Kind’, while our author (the Turtle-dove) is both ‘True & ‘Truth’, while their princely son (a one-time youth) is both ‘Raritie’ and ‘Faire’, but with whatever words our author ‘varies to’ in his ‘invention’ of words, inevitably as a trinity they find themselves summarized in the concluding lines of (S.105).

12 Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords,
13 Faire, Kind and True have often lived alone,
14 Which three till now never kept seat in one.
Our ‘Tudor Trinity’ we see here expressed by the phrase “Three themes in one” the “wondrous scope” being the possibility of sharing the throne together as a royal family, the throne itself expressed by the word “seat” in the last line. Although in respect of the penultimate line, I can see no other way of explaining its meaning other than “Faire, Kind and True” must surely be three individuals who have “often lived alone” or put another way (in twitcher-speak) “hearts remote, but not asunder”.

More Will than you can shake a thing at.

We have seen the cardiogram-count of the ‘Threnos’ amounts to one hundred and five heartbeats, which is an allusion to (S.105). While the total heart-beats in “The Phoenix and the Turtle” amount to 476. Therefore if we discard the 105 we have already made good use of, the remaining beats amount to 371.

We can see Sonnets 135 & 136 are undeniably a pair, a fact confirmed in that there are 7 highlighted Will in (S.135) and 3 highlighted Will in (S.136). In this sense the sum of Will in the two Sonnets = 10. A total of 10 highlighted Wills capitalised and italicised. Continuing with this principal, if we conjoin Sonnets 135 & 136, by adding these figures together we get the figure 271 which we will momentarily STORE.

At this point our author instructs us how we should proceed mathematically towards the greater number, and with no restraint of sexual innuendo either, he suggests “To thy sweet will making addition thus”, before continuing:

The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in Will (10 Wills) add to thy Will
One will of mine, to make thy large Will more:               (S.135)

We therefore add one to the ten we already have – the new figure is then 101. The last line of the Sonnet begins “Think all but one” and in so doing we arrive at the figure 100 - which we add to our STORE figure of 271 = 371. This is the sum of ‘heart-beats’ found within the 13 Stanzas comprising the ‘Session’. Admittedly this second allusion isn’t as sweet as the first, though in the fact that it all adds up, we find our corpus of allusions completed and legitimised.
“Little Love God”.

Being benevolent, let us say that on the 20th May 1574 it was a stork that delivered to our virgin Queen a “little love God”, an infant prince. Naturally (by being delivered so) it must be recognised that this child was not mortal, he was not born as a mortal would be, but like a God created, an arrival described by Shakespeare most appropriately in ‘Sonnet 20’ which as a portrait of him could be said, gilds the lily somewhat.

“And for a woman wert thou first created,  
Till nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting”.

As Wriothesley’s countenance was androgynous (like a God) our author is making the point that he was in fact male, and that he was born for the pleasure of women, although ultimately he may have contested this point.

Elizabeth ‘doted’ on this infant to such a degree that at this early stage of his life she still couldn’t bear to be parted from him, so precisely 3 months after his ‘creation’, while on her summer-progress on the 21st August 1574 this “little love-god” and his wet-nurse arrived with the Queen in the city of Bath. As if testimony to these events our author presents us with a pair of epigrams (The Bath Sonnets 153 & 154) in which the “boy for trial” so very closely related to the mythical world, finds himself masquerading in the guise of Cupid, his future up in the air.

It is therefore no surprise to read in (S.33) that Wriothesley (God-like) has a “golden face” although conversely, a chastening reality reveals itself in the last line, where we find this ‘son of the world’ nonetheless stained with bastardy. While in line 8 in language as plain as plain could be, both bastardy and the western city of ‘Bath’ are alluded to. There is a pun on the word ‘sun’ in line 9 while in line 12 the word ‘region’ is tellingly close to the word ‘regent’.

1 Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
2 Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,  
3 Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
4 Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy,  
5 Anon permit the basest clouds to ride  
6 With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my sun ‘one’ early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow:
But out, alack, he was but ‘one’ hour mine,
The region cloud has masked him from me now,
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain when heaven’s sun staineth.

Princes are divinely ordained beings - Gods on Earth - and while Wriothesley is both faire and androgynous, unambiguously he was blessed with Elizabeth’s looks.

“Thou art thy Mother’s glass” (S.3).

Although it doesn’t particularly appear so in this portrait, in his day Wriothesley was noted for his long-locks of auburn hair. Here he is seen holding his hand upon his hair, because he considered it a badge of Tudor honour. Naturally it is of significant assistance to my argument that these two paintings were executed when the sitters where both teenagers, while in reality there was a 40 year age gap between them.
Now, do you think that Wriothesley looks similar to his mother? If you do, you won’t be surprised to discover just how similar he looks to his grandmother!

Shakespeare refers to his ‘secluded’ special language as his ‘invention’ a language in which allusion is rife. Looking at Sonnet 1 we find allusion to Wriothesley in the very first line, where he is described as a “fairest creature” one our author desires to multiply, to bring forth a future heir to the throne. While in the second line Elizabeth is alluded to with the words “Beauty’s Rose” referencing her Tudor-Rose or Tudor dynasty.

“From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty’s rose might never die”. (S.1)

“Beauty” is the word Shakespeare uses most frequently (particularly in the Sonnets) as an allusion to Elizabeth. While the words Mistress, Nature, Dian and Fortune are further examples he favours.

In (S.67) we find an example of this, with our author seemingly taking exception to the Queen’s attitude towards Wriothesley.

“Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
Roses of shadow, since his rose is true.”

These two lines are also plump with allusion, ‘Beauty’ again used to refer to Elizabeth while the word ‘Rose’ relates to both Wriothesley and his Tudor heritage (our author particularly aware that the word ‘rose’ is a marsupial of the name Wriothesley).

While the words ‘True’ or ‘Truth’ are the words he uses most frequently to describe himself, his preferred word for describing Henry Wriothesley is the word ‘Faire’ as in ‘Faire Youth’, although as we have seen he also uses the words one & ‘Raritie’.

Although Shakespeare’s sonnets were not published until 1609 the concept of using variations of Wriothesley’s motto as an allusion to him was evidently formulated by 1601, a characteristic beautifully illustrated in both sonnets 53 & 105.
Love’s Martyr.

At this point I would like to recall an interesting passage:

“But as when the bird of wonder dies, the *maiden phoenix*, her ashes new create another *heir*, as great in admiration as herself, so she shall leave her blessedness to *one*."

*Elizabeth as the Maiden Phoenix*

These lines are in fact prophesied by Thomas Cramner at Elizabeth’s birth, taken from Shakespeare’s play Henry VIII. So we see this myth has infected both the brains of William Shake-speare and Robert Chester alike - two men with one fixation.

William Shake-speare was lauded for his poems ‘Venus & Adonis’ and ‘The Rape of Lucrece’ both personally published by him and both dedicated to Henry Wriothesley. While a considerable number of other works by him were published by various people towards the conclusion of the 16th century, including the year 1600. Though following what became known as the ‘Essex Rebellion’ a moratorium on the publication of Shake-speare’s works began, implying in some way that our author was perhaps associated with, or was a supporter of the Essex-faction, something I personally have no doubt about.

Though what is a great, great mystery is exactly how ‘Love’s Martyr’ came to be published in the same year as the ‘Essex rebellion’ 1601, when this
publication is most obviously seditious in nature, because it’s overriding theme is the succession of the throne. A mitigating circumstance might be that it is dedicated to the ‘Honoured Knight, Sir John Salisburie’ who was an alleged opponent of the Essex-faction and seemingly a strident supporter of Queen Elizabeth, although having said that, I’m afraid we could spend a lifetime studying the history of Sir John Salisburie and Robert Chester Esq without accessing the critical data necessary to explain the true relationship between themselves and William Shake-speare. What is not in doubt however is an obvious allusion (one of two) in ‘Love’s Martyr’ to the Essex-faction. The first of these we find at the very beginning of the publication, within the dedication to Sir John Salisburie.

Honourable Sir,

Having according to the directions of some of my best-minded friends, finished my long expected labour; knowing this ripe judging world to be full of envie, every one (as sound reason requireth) thinking his own child to be fairest although an Ethiopian, I am embolden to put my infant wit to the eye of the world under your protection, knowing that if absurdity like a thief has crept into any part of these poems, your well-graced name will over-shadow these defaults, and the known character of your virtues, cause the common back-biting enemies of good spirits, to be silent. To the world I put my child to nurse, and at the expense of your favour, whose glory will stop the mouths of the vulgar, and I hope cause the learned to rock it asleep, (for your sake) in the bosom of good wil. Thus wishing you all the blessings of heaven and earth; I end.

Yours in all service,
Ro. Chester.

With these words Robert Chester proves himself to be deceitful, for there are far too many hues and shades within this language with affinity to the style of good Wil Shake-speare. While many commentators have eagerly condemned the poor quality of Chester’s poetry, they seem unable to fathom just how satirical it is.
There was though, no doubt, many a muffled guffaw amongst Shakespeare’s coterie of poets, upon first reading of this title page in ‘Love’s Martyr’ where the work is described as:

“A poeme enterlaced with much varietie and raritie”.

Elevated by their finery (enter-laced) our author and son (varietie & raritie) are here identified as poetic-nobility, while the line that follows “First translated
out of the venerable Italian Torquato Caeliano, by Robert Chester” surely would have bought further laughter from these poetic essayists as it is pure fantasy, because no such Italian poet ever existed!

Meanwhile great play is made within the dedication, of Robert Chester as a country novice-hick. His work described as ‘being the first Essay of a new British poet’, of whom it says in the very first verse to appear in ‘Love’s Martyr’ “Accept my home-writ praises of thy love”.

The Author’s Request to the Phoenix.

Phoenix of beauty, beauteous Bird of any
To thee I do entitle all my labour,
More precious in mine eye by far than many,
That feedest all earthly senses with thy favour:
Accept my home-writ praises of thy love,
And kind acceptance of thy Turtle-dove.

Some deepe-read scholler fam’d for poetry,
Whose wit-enchanting verse deserveth fame,
Should sing of thy perfections passing beauty,
And elevate thy famous worthy name:
Yet I the least, and meanest in degree,
Endeavoured have to please in praising thee.

What is a great blessing to English history and the history of literature, is that in the quarto first publication of ‘love’s Martyr’ the censors missed the true author’s signature, which is written here in the first line of the second stanza, although come the republishing of this work in 1611 they were wised-up to it and the above poem was deleted. Hopefully you won’t need an abacus to understand the significance of the words ‘Deepe-read scholler’ (someone Learned) whose in-spired dreaming and wit-enchanting verse de-serve-th fame, although it does sound suspiciously like someone (who we know) who uses a pseudonym – our English Terence perhaps?

Robert Chester who is partial to a bit of self-deprecation, describes himself as “home-writ & the least and meanest in degree” and from what I can deduce appears strangely fluent in Italian & Latin, and in respect of the very next page
of ‘Love’s Martyr’ is well-versed in the history’s and myths of the ancient
world. In point of fact he is interested in precisely the same history’s our great
author has famously written about, including his particular interest in ancient
Britain, while his interest in flora & fauna is also replicated. Perhaps therefore
he is a tad more educated than he pretends to be?

To the Kind Reader.

Of bloody wars, nor of the sack of Troy,
Of Priam’s murdered sons, nor Didoes fall,
Of Helen’s rape, by Paris Trojan boy,
Of Caesars victories, nor Pompey’s thrall,
Of Lucrece rape, being ravished by a king,
Of none of these, of sweet conceit I sing.

Then (gentle reader) over-read my muse,
That arms herself to fly a lowly flight,
My un-tuned stringed verse do thou excuse,
That may perhaps accepted, yield delight,
I cannot clime in praises to the sky,
Least falling, I be drowned with Infamy.

Mea mecum Porto. R. Ch.

To presume upon your patience a while longer, I would like to make a
corruption of these two previous poems (two lines from each) to clarify our
author’s message.

‘Some ‘deepe-read scholler’ famed for poetry
Whose wit-enchanting verse deserveth fame,
Cannot clime in praises to the sky
Least falling, he’d be drowned with infamy’.

Shakespeare famously said “My name be buried where my body is”. While in
life he often wished his name could be drawn across the sky behind Apollo’s
chariot - illuminated by the sun. But alas, for the Tudor State this would have
been a truth too far, because reality determined that: “Truth may seem – but
cannot be”.


The poem entitled ‘To the Kind Reader’ is full of pretty rhymes - Troy/boy, Fall/thrall, King/sing, Muse/excuse, Flight/delight, before we arrive at the deficient Sky/infamy rhyme, which is so poor our attention is deliberately attracted to the word infamy - *infamia* in Latin. In the Roman world *infamia* was a loss of legal or social standing, exclusion or removal from legal protection enjoyed by Roman citizens and imposed by a censor.

“Then happy I, that love and am beloved
Where I may not remove nor be removed”. (S.25)

On the eve of the Essex rebellion, William Shakespeare’s play ‘The Tragedy of King Richard II’ was played at the Globe Theatre - deposition scene ‘n’ all. It was believed by those who organised and paid for this performance that it would help rally support for the attempted coup d état. One would have expected (as was the case) that as some of the players from the Globe ‘were interviewed’ by the authorities following the failed rebellion, that our great author would also have suffered this indignity, but no, he was not. It was as if he had some strange protection from scrutiny and prosecution. While we see in (S.35) that our author addressing Wriothesley expresses remorse for his complicity in this failed insurrection:

“All men make faults and even I in this,
Authorizing thy trespass with compare”.

But by acting as Wriothesley’s attorney he hoped he would be able to redress these wrongs, in doing everything he could to free him from capital-sentence and incarceration in the Tower. (The legal-spiel used here is worth noting.)

*Thy adverse party is thy advocate –*
*And gainst myself a lawful plea commence.*
*Such civil-war is in my love and hate*
*That I an accessory needs must be*
*To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.*

Returning to the dedication page to Sir John Salisbury - the words I have highlighted in the 3rd line in italics ‘envie, every one’ are allusions to members of the Essex-faction - Robert Devereux 2nd Earl of Essex, Our author and Henry Wriothesley 3rd Earl of Southampton. (In that order).
I have managed to count 14 occasions where the word ‘Envie’ with a capital ‘E’ has been used in ‘Love’s Martyr’ each of these is an allusion to Essex.

Bearing in mind that Elizabeth was 67 years old in the summer of 1601 when ‘Love’s Martyr’ was published, here is a lamentful verse from ‘A Dialogue’ at the beginning of the story which incorporates allusions to both the aging Queen and (Envious) Essex. If Shakespeare is punning on the word ‘sun’ as he so often does, there could be two implications, either her looks are suffering from delivering too many children into the world, or more pertinently one of them was Essex. It is also worth noting (to my knowledge) that no one has ever suggested the Queen bought daughters into the world.

What is my beauty but a fading Flower?
Wherein men read their deep-conceived Thrall,
Alluring twenty Gallants in an hour,
To be as servile vassals at my call?
My sun-bred looks their Senses do exhall:
But (oh my grief) where my fair Eyes would love,
Foul bleary-eyed Envie doth my thoughts reprove.

In the Wriothesley-centric (S. 53) it can easily be seen that the brace of words ‘every one’ are a collective allusion to our author and Henry Wriothesley, these are bonding words. Two words ‘every one’ endearing to our proud author, both in essence and meaning ‘father & son’.

1 What is your substance, whereof are you made,
2 That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
3 Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
4 And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
5 Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
6 Is poorly imitated after you.

These words, I hope therefore explain how the phrase ‘envie, every one’ alludes to fellows of the Essex-faction, while a second allusion to the same three people (bolder than the first) appears near the conclusion of ‘Love’s Martyr’ shortly before the ‘Poetical Essays’. Something I shall examine later.
Moreover something that does seem ridiculous - is how obvious the Phoenix allusion to Elizabeth is. The subtitle to ‘Love’s Martyr’ describes it so:

“Allegorically shadowing the truth of love, in the constant fate of the Phoenix and the Turtle”.

Meaning; that it represents the lives and loves of human beings - as opposed to birds. While no such information has returned to us confirming this fact, it would appear that in his time Robert Chester was quite close to Elizabeth, because as we have seen, he knows where her “fair eyes would love”. Though his knowledge of avian-anatomy may be a bit sketchier - as he describes a “Phoenix of exceeding beautie” anthropomorphically, comprehensively using names of human body-parts. There are in all, eighteen separate verses describing the Phoenix with human features, but I shall only look at a few of them.

In respect of the Phoenix’ Hair.

When great Apollo slept within my lap,
And in my bosom had his rest reposèd,
I cut away his locks of purest gold,
And placed them on her head of earthly mould.

Therefore the phoenix’ hair is golden like Elizabeth’s.

While describing the Phoenix’ Cheeks he seems to know she is a ‘Tudor Phoenix’ because he describes her in Tudor colours.

Her morning-coloured cheeks, in which is placed,
A Lillie lying in a bed of Roses;
This part above all other I have graced,
For in the blue veins you may read sweet posies:
When she doth blush, the heavens do wax red,
When she looks pale, that heavenly front is dead.

Describing the Phoenix’ Tongue, when she speaks she speaks exclusively to mighty kings.
Her tongue the utterer of all glorious things,
The silver clapper of that golden bell,
That never soundeth but to mighty kings,
And when she speaks, her speeches do excel:
He in a *happie chaire* himself doth place,
Whose name with her sweet tongue she means to grace.

The colours of the marigold were an allusion to Elizabeth’s hair and ‘her flower’ the Marigold was commented upon by the author *John Lyly* who said: “She uses the marigold for her flower, which at the rising of the sunne openth his leaves and at the setting shutteth them”. It is of no surprise then to discover that while describing where the Phoenix’ *Feet* walked, Elizabeth’s flower the marigold is invoked.

And if by night she walk, the *Marigold*,
That doth enclose the glory of her eye,
At her approach her beauty doth unfold,
And spreads herself in all her royalty,
Such virtue hath this Phoenix glassy shield,
That Flowers and herbs at her fair sight do yield.

While these detailed descriptions of the Phoenix terminate in the very next verse.

And if she graces the walks within the day,
*Flora* doth spread an Arras cloth of flowers,
Before her do the pretty *Satires* play,
And make her banquets in her leafy bowers:
Head, Hair, Brow, Eyes, Cheeks, Chin and all,
Lips, Teeth, Tongue, Neck, Breasts, Belly are majestical.

Focusing on this final rhyming couplet I find myself predisposed to the thought that there is a good poet at work here, contriving to write badly. While from within these last two verses if I select the words ‘Royalty’ and ‘Majestical’ they both allegorically shadow our Phoenix.

The story that Jove relates however determines it a pity the Phoenix should die “And leave no offspring of her progenie”. Determining that Dame-Nature and
the Phoenix should leave Arabia in Apollo’s’ chariot and fly to the delightful Paphos Isle, where the Phoenix will meet the Turtle-dove. Interestingly at this juncture we get some clues as to who the Turtle-dove allegorises:

“There shall thy find true honours lovely squire,  
That for this *Phoenix* keeps *Prometheus* fire”.

While in the next verse:

“His name is *Liberal-honour*, and his heart,  
Aims at truthful service and desart”.

While these virtues continue:

“In his brow sits blood and sweet *Mercie*”.....

“His hair is curled by nature mild and meek,  
Hangs careless down to shroud a blushing cheek”.....

Give him this ointment to anoint his head,  
This precious balm to lay onto his feet,  
This shall direct him to the *Phoenix* bed,  
Where on high hill he this bird shall meet:  
And of their ashes by my doom shall rise,  
Another *Phoenix* her to equalise.

While something that particularly interests me is the relative ages of ‘The Phoenix and the Turtle-dove’, we have learned in human terms that “his name is Liberal-honour” and his “hair is curled by nature”, while the following stanza suggests an age difference between our love-birds - which I contest was real.

O stay me not, I am no *Phoenix* I,  
And if I be that bird, I am defaced,  
Upon the *Arabian* mountains I must die,  
And never with a *poor young* Turtle graced;  
Such operation in me is not placed:  
What is my beauty but a painted wall,  
My golden spreading feathers quickly fall.
When these words were written Elizabeth was only a couple of years from her demise, while as coincidence would have it, I happen to know that in the real-world there was a seventeen year age-gap between our love-birds. A reality I believe is confirmed in this verse, for while he is described as “a poor young Turtle” – “her feathers quickly fall’.

Here I put before you two further quotes from this work:

“What is my beauty but a fading flower:”

“I’ll drown myself in ripeness of my years:”

This 17 year age gap between the Queen and her poet is persistently detectable in ‘Venus & Adonis’ and ‘The Sonnets’ and ‘Love’s Martyr’.

Now in confirmation of former observations I made, I was pleased to notice that towards the end of the book, in an individual poem again dedicated:

“To the worthily honor’d Knight, Sir John Salisburie”.

With a collective signature ‘Vatum Chorus’, the same three people I mentioned earlier are again illuminated. Unsurprisingly this poem was not signed by either, John Marston, George Chapman, Ben Jonson or William Shakespeare, principally I suppose because it is seditious, and lists protagonists of the Essex-faction - including its leaders – with our author sandwiched between them!

*Unusually* the poem in question which is reproduced below is printed in italics, the operative words easily discernible as they are not in italics, but all capitalised and in a larger point-size, while some other words merely to blindside the censors such as Muses, Perian & Apollo are also highlighted.

The words that would have offended the authorities, if they had recognised them for what they represented were:

“Kind, Learned & Envious”.

While the author or authors of this poem identify their language as would our bard: “An invention freer than the times”, whereas the words “Kind, Learned and Envious” are unambiguous allusions to Henry Wriothesley, our author, and Robert Devereux the 2nd Earl of Essex.
As already pointed out, it is easily discernible that on every occasion the word ‘Envie’ or ‘Envious’ is used in ‘Love’s Martyr’ they are allusions to ‘Essex’. While the word ‘Learned’ is a perfect allusion to our author, and the word ‘Kind’ or ‘Kynde’ (our author enthused by the connotation of blood-relative) is an allusion to Henry Wriothesley who is also described this way in line five of (S.105).
It is a well-known fact that this “damned fiend” Essex and his side-kick Wriothesley when they weren’t jockeying for princely supremacy were co-conspirators, equally responsible for the Essex rebellion.

Their shortcomings though, were that at a lock-in at the Blue-Boar’s Head neither of them would be capable of organising a piss-up. Significantly though, as brothers-in-arms their most important battle was to be read in the stars. (Shake-speare put it like this).

1 Let those who are in favour with their stars
2 Of public honour and proud titles boast,
3 Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
4 Unlooked for joy in that I honour most.
5 Great princes’ favourites their fair leaves spread
6 But as the marigold in the sun’s eye,
7 And in themselves their pride lies buried,
8 For at a frown they in their glory die.
9 The painful warrior famousèd for might,
10 After a thousand victories once foiled,
11 Is from the book of honour razèd quite
12 And all the rest forgot for which he toiled,
13 Then happy I, that love and am beloved
14 Where I may not remove nor be removed. (S.25).

These popular princes Essex & Southampton at a frown, in their glory die. The painful & Envious warrior his head quite down, while within the book of honour, not a single sight of him was allowed.

Interestingly, the penultimate line in this sonnet suggests our author could possibly be royal, which if it were true, would partially explain the seeming protection from prosecution he appeared to enjoy in respect of such calamities as the ‘Essex rebellion’. Therefore to ‘remove’ our turtle-dove from his high perch may have needed more than a whiff of infamy.

A ‘happy person’ is a royal person, who as we have seen in the poem describing the phoenix’ tongue sits in a “Happie chaire”, more familiarly known to us as a throne.
Exactly how incestuous the Tudor dynasty was we shall never know, Anne Boleyn suspected she was royal even before she became Queen, in a book-of-hours she presented to King Henry one day at mass, beneath an illumination of the annunciation she had written two lines.

By daily proof - you shall me fynde
To be to you - both loving and kynde.

The motto she chose for herself at her coronation was “The Moost Happi” a designation that represented the special grace and felicity that attended the possession of royal blood.

Queen Anne Boleyn (Grandmother) beside the Teenage Henry Wriothesley.

Incest was part of being Tudor - as was a trip to the Tower, everybody went there - even William Cecil had a sojourn there, while Anne Boleyn’s visit was mercifully short.

Wriothesley was so royal; Shakespeare accused ‘buds of Marjoram’ of having stolen his hair, while equally he admonished the violet for stealing his sweet breath.
The forward violet thus did I chide:
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steel thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love’s breath? The purple pride
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells
In my loves veins thou has too grossly dyed. (S.99)

Meanwhile Wriothesley was lucky to escape his purple-blood gushing all over
the chopping block following his committal to the tower for treason, where he
fretted so much over possible execution he became extremely ill. Eventually
though his sentence was commuted to life. According to Shake-speare his
confinement amounted to “Three winter’s cold”, before adding “Three April
perfumes in three hot Junes burned, since first I saw you fresh”. Lines relating
to a specific reunion which took place between our author and his son on the
evening of the 9th April 1603, courtesy of King James I - who when succeeding
Elizabeth made Wriothesley’s release from confinement in the tower one of his
very first priorities, so he could finally be reunited with his father, although the
eventual reunion with his mother would be purely spiritual.

In ‘Love’s Martyr’ we find chartered what was the beginning of the end for
Elizabeth who in the autumn of her years felt both betrayed and forsaken.

What is he gone? Is Envie packt away?
Then one foul blot is moved from his throne,
That my poor honest thoughts did seek to slay:
Away foul griefe, and over-heavie mone,
That do ore charge me with continual grones.
Will you not hence? Then with down-falling tears,
I’ll drown myself in ripeness of my years.

Two years later Elizabeth’s ripe years became no riper, as on the 24th March
1603 time tugged on her ermine sleeve, while it is possible our author could
have received warning of what could be termed fevers end, from his friend the
Queen’s conjurer Dr. John Dee.

A principal motivation for our author delivering his work “The Phoenix and the
Turtle” I believe was awareness of his own mortality, so in defence of this
belief I cite the first nine lines of (S.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 crownèd sit,
I make my love engrafted to this store,
So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised.

We see here our author, a decrepit father taking pride in his son’s “deeds of youth”, while in line six with the motto-contraction “all or all” his son’s identity is confirmed. While equally as pertinent is the fact that Wriothesley’s royalty is revealed in line seven with the words “Entitled in thy parts do crownèd sit”. While our author’s lameness is confirmed in lines three and nine, infirmity that gets further mention at the beginning of (S.89).

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault
And I will comment on that offence,
Speak of my lameness and I straight will halt.

Thoughts by our author of impending death were most probably an auxiliary factor in him producing “The Phoenix and the Turtle”. We know that already by the 25th March 1595 eight years before Elizabeth’s death he was suffering from lack of mobility, because on that particular day he wrote the following in a letter to Robert Cecil the Queen’s chief minister.

“When your lordship shall have best time and leisure if I may know it, I will attend your lordship as well as a lame man may at your house.”

While this condition became more critical as in a further letter written on 25th April 1603 he wrote.

“For reasons of my infirmity I cannot come amongst you so often as I wish.”

Interestingly somebody with such infirmity would have found utility in “A lame leg’d staff”.
And wonder upon wonder in a section of ‘Loves Martyr’ entitled ‘Pelican’ at its conclusion amongst a passage absolutely cramming with mischief we find just such an object:

But those that have the spirit to do good,
Their whips will never draw one drop of blood,
To all and all in all that view my labour,
Of every judging fight I crave some favour
At least to read, and if you reading find,
A lame leg’d staff, tis lameness of the mind.

Now never-ever did I say I was an educated man - but please don’t try to tell me that such contentious language was written by a novice-hick called ‘Robert Chester’ for I would vehemently veer away from such verisimilitude.

Disturbing or beautiful depending on one’s perspective Dr. John Dee Elizabeth’s conjurer spent a considerable amount of time exercising his not inconsiderable intellect communicating with angels. His inspirational ideas were pure prophesy, he was the man who first conceived the idea of ‘The British Empire’ something he elaborated upon in an astonishing four volume survey entitled:

‘General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Art of Navigation’.

This was a work he proudly presented to Her Majesty, something she enthused about. What he hadn’t anticipated though, was a brick-wall hung with the habiliments of the Secretary of State Sir William Cecil.

While Elizabeth felt the patriotic pulse and revelled in this new found glory, expanding her golden and purple feathered wings, Cecil felt intimidated by a man with a far greater intellect than himself, only seeing threat to the day today practicality’s of running the country and securing the crown against ever increasing Catholic scrutiny from across the seas. Many courtiers were faced during these times with such defining circumstances, which had the longer term consequence of forming allegiances. It is an unfashionable thing to say I know, but it was a time when the Cecil’s were kings of England, before Envious Essex’ drew his sword, in a failed coup, in which the Queen of England became a pawn.
A formidable expression of the friendship that formed between our great author and John Dee was the greatly misunderstood but ingenious (encrypted) Sonnet’s dedication to Henry Wriothesley, formed of ‘three triangles’, before being signed three times by Dee, once with his Greek Delta.

Looking specifically at the ‘Threnos’ written in 1601 we see that it anticipates the death of the sovereign who doesn’t die until 24th March 1603, in that sense we must understand it a prophesy (although perhaps not an extraordinary one). While I postulate that if our great author did seek the help of Dr. Dee in respect of the Queens death, then most surely he would have asked him to predict the date of his own death, for as we have said he was known to be in poor health at this stage of his life. If these dates were therefore both foretold by Dr. Dee they would have created impetus to the tip of our author’s pen, for he was a wit that knew, that something to be said, could only be writ while living, not when dead.

From time to time previously undiscovered copies of Shakespeare’s first folio seek treasure hunters with deep pockets (at the last count these extant volumes amounted to 235) while there still only remain ‘two’ complete first editions of ‘Love’s Martyr’ and I can tell you why - because all other copies have been destroyed! A conflagration bought about by our ‘deepe-read schollar’ who wasn’t always prudent in harnessing his great wit.

More seriously though, Shake-speare was a man ahead of his time. Having written and published the first great metaphysical poem in English, his genius is given further expression in the same publication with poems signed ‘Ignoto’ immediately preceding it in ‘Love’s Martyr.’ Poems because of their Phoebus-splendour transcribed here, companion pieces to “The Phoenix and the Turtle” which can be seen as prior and subsequent to the event.

The First.

The silver vault of heaven, hath but one eye,
And that’s the sun: The foul-masked-lady, Night
(Which blocks the clouds, the white book of the sky)
But one sick Phoebes, fever-shaking light:
The heart, one string: so, thus in single turns,
The world one Phoenix, till another burns.
The Burning.

Suppose here burns this wonder of a breath,
In righteous flames, and holy-heated fires:
(Like music which doth rapt itself to death,
Sweet’ning the inward room of man’s desires).
So she wafts both her wings in piteous strife;
“The flame that eats her, feeds the others life:
Her rare-dead ashes, fill a rare live urn:
“One Phoenix borne, another Phoenix burne. (Ignoto)

With *The Burning* we see persistence in our author to perpetuate his own myth, again alluding to Wriothesley with the word *one* in the final line. His dream, that myth would become reality and that Henry Wriothesley would succeed Elizabeth on the throne of England.

As a work of art – I warm my hands before it – while it singes my soul, for it sings of a poet burnt by love, who here has created something simply sublime.

In second place, comes *The First* which could of course mean ‘first heir’ or alternately ‘first love’, because there was a time when Elizabeth’s love shone a radiant light across her empire, where anachronistically in the guise of ‘John Clare’ our author was presented to her. Whom he perceived as the Goddess ‘Phoebe’ who had the ability to conjure silver-light, while a further myth informs, she had an incestuous relationship with her brother (always a plus with our author) with whom she had two daughters, before later developing a carnal lust for mortal men! The *Phoebe* in this particular poem unfortunately is sick – suffering from a psychological-fever, though still culpable for an uncertain light that began to shade her Tudor dynasty.

There was though, a time previous, when the radiant Moon-Goddess waxed, before being eclipsed by Wriothesley, the axis of our author’s love changed, the moon waned, before at the centre of his world he found *one* string, *one* heart, *one* future, and love as close to idolatry as you could possibly imagine. Interestingly in *The First* poem, Shake-speare alludes to ‘The Tudor Trinity’ in precisely the same way he does in “The Phoenix and the Turtle” using the word *one* - which appears ‘three times only’ in each work. While Wriothesley’s dream, of a ‘single turn’ upon the throne remained just that.
Wilful Sonnets.

In our author’s eyes Henry Wriothesley and he were one blood, one spirit, one Will. So when Elizabeth detained their son at her pleasure for acts of treason and he was stripped of all his lands and titles becoming a nobody, our author was incandescent with rage, he cursed himself for the part that he had played in that sorrid affair and at the beginning of (S.133) he also curses the Queen: “Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan” he says, before continuing:

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.

This persistent obsession with three we find exacerbated in the ‘Will Sonnets’ Nos (135 & 136) which we have already looked at mathematically, works which if you look to closely at really are quite filthy. Though while trying not to concentrate on that element of them, I couldn’t help but notice that amongst a plethora of ‘Wills’ (20 in all) that within the concluding three lines of (S.135) the word one appears ‘three times’. A trinity also replicated at the heart of (S.136). Now while bearing in mind that there is also a trinity of one’s in “The Phoenix and the Turtle” this then, can hardly be seen as a coincidence, especially as our author represents them with the words thrice threefold.

So, while the alliterative words one & Will shuttle there way at will, warp & weft, across these works, we learn from history - that we learn nothing from history. ‘Royal families can become dysfunctional’ but despite desperation reigning amongst our ‘Tudor Trinity’ our author successfully manages to amplify their iconography.

Here in (S.136) three one’s appear literally within three Wills. ‘The Tudor Trinity’ is alluded to within this illustration as a triangle composed of the word Will which is written and highlighted three times towards the outer margins of the Sonnet, while centred within this is a further triangle composed of the word one - also appearing three times.
Centred in the middle triangle we find the words “Number one is reckon’d none”, it particularly irked our author, that things of ‘great importance’ i.e. number-one, that he should be reckoned none! While considerable irony was vented by a poet who understandably appeared to have taken on a Caliban complex, in which he considered himself psychologically reduced to nothing, a social outcast, a nobody, suffering from the loss of his good name. So what seems clear - is as father and son they were indivisible, while also invisible as one & Will – Will & one.

Love can motivate us to behave in illogical ways, even in the wake of a failed rebellion that envisaged changing the order of state, our author still clung to his fading dream. Of course, in his mind, following the execution of Essex the dream of his son upon the throne theoretically had edged a teeny bit closer. Although it must be said, that it’s difficult to ascend the throne of England when incarcerated in a stone tower. Was there then, a germ of a thought in our author’s cavernous brain that his avian poem, could become a launch-pad towards liberty for his son – and more? Could there therefore through the society of courtiers, artisans & writers that he moved in, begin a groundswell of support for Wriothesley’s claim?
Or was our author’s motivation nobler?

Was producing “The Phoenix and the Turtle”, as it is revealed in the ‘Threnos’ a way of laying his soul at the feet of humanity - before eternity, because while fables will always be fables and myths always myths: “Time cannot make that false which once was true.”

Shake-speare’s Dilemma.

Our author’s great dilemma was how to set before humanity his catastrophic love-life without shaming his Queen, for him there was no glory in that. We therefore see myth, juxtaposing his desires before a state that were fearfully protective of their monarch, while criteria essential to both the stories of ‘Venus & Adonis’ and ‘Love’s Martyr’ is miraculous conception. It was therefore essential that when expressing his love for his Queen and the consequences of that love, that ‘the act of love’ itself remained anonymous in these stories.

The story of ‘Venus & Adonis’ concludes when the “tender boy” Adonis, is slain by the boar, which charges him, nuzzling his tusk into Adonis’ groin, and where in his blood that lay spilled upon the ground “a purple flower sprung up, check’red with white.” This flower is known today as the ‘Fritillary’, its colours symbolise royalty, and its greater significance is it represents the birth of a prince. In the penultimate stanza Venus confirms this before yoking her silver doves and flying to Paphos. “Thou art the next of blood, and ‘tis thy right.” She says.

The story of ‘Love’s Martyr’ concludes when the “poor young turtle” having arrived in Paphos, ultimately before the scorching funeral-pyre says “accept my body as a sacrifice, into your flame, of whom one name will rise.” While the Phoenix who follows, about to embrace the burnt-bones of the turtle-dove replies, “I hope of these another creature springs, that shall possess both our authority”.

This 17 year age gap that existed between our love-birds - I believe to be very significant. A point illustrated with great wit in the following stanza from ‘Venus & Adonis’.
Fair Queen,’ quoth he, ‘if any love you owe me,
Measure my strangeness with my unripe years,
Before I know myself, seek not to know me,
No fisher but the ungrown fry forebears:
The mellow plum doth fall, the green sticks fast,
Or being early plucked is sour to taste.

What with “ungrown fry” & “being early plucked” there is here some excellent naughty innuendo (though not necessarily to everyone’s taste). This stanza also hints at the fact that this love is not pursued with equally ardour from both sides, the more mature ‘Venus’ has the hotter blood, she is the pursuer, she is the would be seductress. This new telling of the tale is therefore at odds with a tradition where the love between ‘Venus & Adonis’ is portrayed as mutually-reciprocal.

In a sense the concluding section of the poem ‘The Threnos’ is political, our author is appealing to humanity, his soul beset with the reality that life is quickly running out of control. What he says is ‘look you’ beware! This grim prediction I lay before you is exactly what is going to happen, unless we take decisive action to change the course of history.

The Threnos.

The 14th Verse

Beautie, Truth and Raritie,
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclosed in cinders lie.

It is critical to remember this section of the poem is prophesy, it was written in 1601 and the Queen didn’t die until 1603. In suitably emaciated language it describes a period when all striving has passed. The Queen, our author and their princely son are ultimately reunited, finding dignity in dusty death, reduced to cinders within a funereal urn. As a metaphor this verse pronounces the death of ‘The Tudor Trinity’.
The 15th Verse

Death is now the Phoenix’ nest,
And the Turtle’s loyal breast,
To eternity doth rest.

‘The Phoenix’ nest’ (traditionally a pyre of spices) is another metaphor, this time for a deceased ‘Tudor Dynasty’ a hard reality our author was loathed to contemplate. For he, dressed in the soft feathers of a Turtle-dove (birds believed to mate for life) liked to see himself as the Queen’s most devoted, most constant, lover-courtier-poet. Yet, as restful eternity inevitably summoned, predicting life’s great certainty, hardly guaranteed him the mantle of ‘great prophet’.

While here, I do take pleasure in unravelling an interesting foot-note, because if one considers ‘the sole Phoenix on the sole Arabian tree’ as the place of immolation, this incineration also had the possibility of incinerating the tree! In Pliny the Elder’s ‘Historia Naturalis’ reflecting on this situation he said: ‘It had been assured to him, that the Phoenix died with the tree and was revived as the tree sprung to life again.’

(Paraphrasing Pliny) I shall continue:
‘The Phoenix builds a nest of twigs and branches and aromatic spices, yielding up her life, whereupon her bones and marrow breed “a little worm” which afterwards proveth to be a pretty bird.’

This passage may have had significant influence upon our author, particularly as the French word for worm is pronounced ‘vair’ a word that was something of an obsession for him because Worms appear in thirty or more of his plays.

Here are some of the more famous quotations:

“The smallest worm will turn being trodden on, and doves will peck in safeguard of their brood.”

“Let’s talk of graves and worms and epitaphs.”

“A plague on both your houses, they have made worms meat of me.”

“She never told her love, but let concealment like a worm ‘i the bud feed on her damask cheek.”
“A man may fish with the *worm* that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that *worm*.”

In terms of invertebrates though, there is one play that wriggles triumphantly past all others.

At the denouement of Antony & Cleopatra, the Queen famously says to the clown who nervously carries a basket:

“All thou the pretty *worm* of Nilus there, that kills and pains not?”

History has lead us to believe that *Cleopatra* died from the bite of a snake - an asp - a viper - or a serpent, but a revelation in Shakespeare’s play is he solely refers to it as a ‘*worm*,’ a word that appears *nine times* in thirty-six lines.

Lines that may contain some licentious language, as subconsciously the clownish-dialogue our author engages in, may be with Elizabeth not Cleopatra.

*Clown*: I wish you all the joy of the worm.

*Cleopatra*: Farewell.

*Clown*: You must think this, look you, that the worm will do his kynde.

*Cleopatra*: Aye, aye, Farewell.

*Clown*: Give it nothing, I pray you, for it is not worth the feeding.

*Cleopatra*: Will it eat me?

*Clown*: Yes, forsooth: I wish you joy of the worm.

*Cleopatra*: Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have immortal longings in me. Methinks I hear Antony call: I see him rouse himself to praise my noble act. Husband I come: Now to that name my courage prove my title! I am fire and air; my other elements I give to baser life - So - have you done? Come then and take the last warmth of my lips.

*Cleopatra*: Applies worm to her breast.

Come, thou mortal wretch - poor venomous fool,

Be angry and despatch,

Peace, peace!

Dost thou not see my baby at my breast - that sucks the nurse asleep.
The 16th Verse

Leaving no posterity,
’Twas not their infirmity,
It was married chastity.

Let me begin by saying that the term “married chastity” as it is used here, is absolutely nothing to do with ideal love, but is a phrase that down the years has bamboozled many a fine brain, it is a recipe for inaccuracy, as this the central verse of the final course is served with a large portion of irony. Post Elizabeth, things could have been very different than the way they turned out because “The Phoenix and the Turtle” did in fact leave behind them a ‘rare prince’ (posterity) a descendant! Who could have become king of England if Elizabeth had nominated him to succeed her, the great drawback of course with this bastard-thought was that history would have defined her without the high esteem afforded to her today, where she is remembered as ‘Good Queen Bess’, ‘Gloriana’ or ‘The Virgin Queen’. Therefore in order for the Tudor dynasty to have continued, our ‘chaste Queen’ would have had to propose an illegitimate son to succeed her, therefore in the eyes of humanity becoming illegitimate herself, and for someone as vain as Elizabeth, that was never going to happen, she was far too wrapped up in thoughts of how history would ultimately judge her.

The great irony of course was our love-birds were not always infirm, thereby contradicting the notion of “Leaving no posterity” - for our wily poet when visiting his Queen did not always take the postern entrance, although our great Queen always sang the virtues of “Married Chastity” the symbolic state of being married to her country, which is of course what she is bragging about in verse seventeen, she is bragging about being chaste, when she is not, thereby invoking from our author the nascent term ‘married-chastity’.

Verse sixteen is also ‘unique’ amongst these rhymes, as it neither falls into the categories of allegory, myth nor prophesy, though it could easily be seen (within these five laments) as a representation of “the truth of love”. Yet, while amongst its companions it is the most economical with words, autobiographically it is truly expansive.
Precis.

The reason ‘it appears’ our love-birds left no posterity
Was not because they were infirm when in their prime,
But because ‘Elizabeth’ (The bird of loudest lay)
Sang the loudest song (drowning out all other rhyme)
Bragging about married-chastity, the chaste-state
Of being wed to her country - seeding a calamity.

The 17th Verse

*Truth* may seem but cannot be,
Beauty brag but ‘tis not she,
*Truth* and Beauty buried be.

Arguably, this is the most important verse Shake-speare ever wrote, its
deliberations partially explaining his motive in wanting to write the poem in the
first place. Interestingly it deliberately appears in the ‘first-edition’ of ‘Love’s
Martyr’ on consecutive pages 170 - 171 - 172, although our author saw these
numbers differently - like this: 17 Zero, 17 One, 17 Two. While this the 17th
verse is composed of 17 words, none of which is a coincidence, any more than
the ‘double truth’ which envelops this verse is a coincidence, represented
here by the first word in the first line, and the first word in the third line.
These facts (this power of authority) inevitably mean our author must have
had full editorial control over the publication of ‘Love’s Martyr’ a publication
concluding with *poetical essays* on the former Subject; viz: “The Turtle &
Phoenix”, not ‘The Phoenix and the Turtle’.

As this closing sequence begins, our author ‘the Turtle’ thereby announces his
supremacy as controlling-editor of ‘Love’s Martyr’ before ‘17 pages’ of poetical
verse begin. This proliferation of the number 17 therefore can be seen as an
obvious and undeniable allusion to the true author of the work ‘The 17th Earl of
Oxford - Edward de Vere,’ and with this 17th verse representing the author, it
inevitably identifies “The Phoenix and the Turtle” as being ‘one poem’ and one poem only, one poem compose of eighteen verses.

Now if you would like to know why the poem has no title I can tell you! Having explained who the male protagonist is in this mystical tale, our great author divulges his co-star by producing a poem with 67 lines – Elizabeth’s age in the summer of 1601, when the poem was first published.

While it can’t categorically be said, that the poem was not deliberately arranged to cover a trinity of pages as in pages: 170 – 171 – 172.

Now, I feel at this juncture obliged to confess that the first line “Truth may seem but cannot be" almost brings a tear to my eye, because it is so laden with pathos, these are some of the saddest words in all Shake-speare, because the word ‘Truth’ is an allusion to Oxford’s life, one in which he anticipated sharing a throne with a Queen. A life in which it appeared through a romantic-liaison with a Queen he had sired a prince. A life in which he considered himself responsible for some of the greatest literature known to mankind, but a life in which he knew the state would do everything in their power to protect the myth of ‘The Virgin Queen’ consequently making sure the name ‘Edward de Vere’ would never be attached to his work, any more than the title ‘His Royal Highness’ would be attached to the name Henry Wriothesley. In this sense his life was victimized by the state and the reason that in the conclusion of his poem he reveals himself a victim of a catastrophe in a tragedy.

Returning to the 17th verse of the poem, in Latin the word ‘Truth’ translates to ‘Veritas’ our author’s motto being ‘Vero Nihil Veritas’ (Nothing Truer than Truth), so the two words ‘Truth’ in the first and third lines of verse seventeen are allusions to the first three letters of the first and third words in his motto, these words being ‘Ver’ which as previously mentioned is the French word for worm - pronounced ‘Vair’. While more obviously the number 17 is an allusion to the true author - Edward de Vere the 17th Earl of Oxford, who said of his son in (S.82).

“Thou, truly faire, wert truly sympathized
In true plain words by the true-telling friend”.

"In true plain words by the true-telling friend".
While 20 sonnets earlier, with the words ‘No-true-truth’ we see a contraction of our author’s motto. The line reads: “No shape so true, no truth of such account”. These sequential words being a glaring, obvious, barely disguised; reference to our author’s own motto: ‘Nothing truer than truth’.

It was naturally a blessing to our author that in Elizabethan times v’s & u’s were interchangeable, from which he creatively developed the double ‘V V’ insignia, a device with exactly the same origins - the ‘V’ of Verro and the ‘V’ of Veritas. This double ‘V V’ insignia can be seen on the dedication pages of both ‘Venus & Adonis’ and ‘The Rape of Lucrece’ heading up the name VVriothesley, while on both these quarto pages the ‘W’ of William Shakes-speare remains a standard ‘W’. Our author subtly illustrating that VVriothesley was part of the de Vere family. Slightly more obscure is the fact that in the year of his death Edward de Vere who was not only paid by the state for his wit but also intelligence, was blessed with the security code ‘40’, other top-dogs being king James I ‘30’ and Robert Cecil the 1st minister ‘10’. It can therefore be seen how the number ‘1740’ is significant in respect of our author.

This code ‘40’ = (4T) is represented in “The Phoenix and the Turtle” by the word Turtle which appears four times only, each time capitalised and italicised, the four ‘T’s representing his code ‘40’ (4T). While a more famous expression of this phenomenon can be found on Shakespeare’s Tomb in Westminster Abbey where he is found pointing to a tablet bearing a famous quotation from ‘The Tempest’ in which four ‘T’s appear in a vertical row, the first line having been contracted to 17 letters, from its original inception which was a line of twenty letters, where it appeared like this; “The cloud-capped towers”.

The cloud cap’d tow’rs,
The gorgeous palaces,
The solemn Temples,
The great globe itself.

A further expression of our author’s undying, unwavering love for his son, a passionate but platonic love which pervades the sonnets is posthumously shown with an announcement in the stationer’s office of the intention of their publication, an event that happened on the 20th May 1609 in celebration of Henry Wriothesley’s true birthday the 20th May 1574.
Of course our great author’s contemporaries knew exactly what personality lay behind the pseudonym ‘Shake-speare’, not least ‘Ben Jonson’ one amongst several poets featured in ‘Love’s Martyr’ and the supplier of the longest guest poem ‘Epos’. Typically with no lack of irony he both characterises and honours our great poet in the concluding lines:

“And to his sense object this Sentence ever,
‘Man may securely sin, but safely never.”

The final words in each line, most obviously a salute to the name E. Vere.

He also knew exactly who William Shakspeare from Stratford-upon-Avon was and in the year of his death 1616 wrote a witty poem about him called “On Poet Ape” which if you haven’t read - you really should.

Elizabeth whose birthday was 7th September 1533, died on the 24th March 1603 and was laid to rest in Westminster-Abbey. Edward de Vere whose official birthday was 12th April 1550 died on the 24th June 1604 exactly 15 months after his Queen and initially was buried in Hackney, before later being interred under the same vaulted roof as Elizabeth in the great abbey of Westminster - his sculpted-tomb which we see today interestingly being commissioned in the year ‘1740’. Henry Wriothesley’s official birthday was 6th October 1573 while his unofficial birthday was 20th May 1574. He was therefore ‘A darling bud of May’ who withered while at war in the Netherlands and died there in the year 1624.

Note on Ignoto.

We will possibly never know whether more than one Elizabethan poet used this pseudonym, although according to J.Thomas Looney in his publication “The Poems of Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford.” He definitely did, as he produced eleven poems therein signed ‘Ignoto’ (The unknown).

A particular favourite of mine from the book although not signed ‘Ignoto’ is written by a love-struck young man in favour of a ‘Queen of every grace’ who most obviously is ‘Elizabeth’, although it is conservatively entitled “What Cunning Can Express”, it charmingly showcases the immerging talent of the world’s greatest writer, interestingly first published in ‘The Phoenix Nest’. 
Whether True or Faire spirits or not? Edward de Vere and Henry Wriothesley are seen to be dutiful in death, heedful of obsequies, they return to Elizabeth’s funereal urn to pay their respects. While portrayed in the fourteenth verse as “Beauty, Truth and Raritie” in the final verse our ‘Tudor Trinity’ are reunited, while obsequious in their prayers, courtesy’s and farewells, it might also be worth reminding ourselves that in ‘The Tempest’ Prospero refers to ‘Ariel’ (a spirit) as “my bird”.

Myth & Truth.

My article, I realise, just like Shake-speare’s poem flies in the face of traditional beliefs - although I hope through my words, you know these love-birds a little better. While as an enigma it will always ruffle feathers, because just when you think you know every purple and golden plume – then it’s time to start again, for with this poem - there is always a further question, which is why it is such a great masterpiece.

Now, there is one further observation I have to pronounce before I close, and that is that towards the beginning of this article I divided the two sections of “The Phoenix and the Turtle” by categorising the first section the ‘Session’ as fundamentally mythological, and the contrasting second section the ‘Threnos’ as composed of prophecy and autobiographical detail.

Therefore looking at Sonnets (135 & 136) the so called Will-Sonnets, it can be seen how they, more specifically than any other Sonnets, relate to the name William Shake-speare. If we therefore sub-divide our author between ego and alter-ego, between true and false, then the name William Shake-speare lends itself more sympathetically with the first section of the poem – the ‘Session’ because it is a myth, as is the name!

While the second section the ‘Threnos’ is prophecies, mostly accurate, though it must be said that hitherto, its words were not to every reader - entirely clear, though more truthfully it tells the mortal tragedy, that was the life, of the 17th Earl of Oxford - Edward de Vere.
18th Verse

To this urn let those repair,
That are either true or faire.
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.

Our ‘deepe-read scholler’ awoken by ancient spirits - the poets Homer and Virgil, followed in their wake to the triangulated Mediterranean locations of Palermo, Vulcano and Messina and by him are immortalised in ‘A Winter’s Tale’, ‘The Tempest’ and ‘Much Ado About Nothing’.

Seeking justice on a hillside in a monumental foreign cemetery as indestructible as is possible in Messina, a family-mausoleum of marble should be built, reflecting architecturally the great treasure-houses consecrated to honour Apollo on mount Parnassus.

Thereby commemorating our great playwright, who passed through those climbs in the year of our Lord 1575. Within this mausoleum should be placed a red Jasper funereal urn, specifically to honour the Tudor family that resided in his heart, and in this new place of remembrance, mournful epitaphs should be hung, with rites and obsequies observed.

Even in death our great author cannot be divorced from his pseudonym, so for our dead birds, sobbing and sighing will be permissible, without any further references in this new hallowed-hall beginning with that Same letter.

There in Messina a mason should carve an epitaph in memory of Edward de Vere, his Queen, and the Faire Youth – with these words written upon it:

“Done to death by slanderous tongues.”

Because it’s all Greek to speak of Shake-speare
An Athenian name for our de Vere.

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Philip Cooper fecit © 13th April 2020

A million thanks to you all - who indirectly - have contributed to this article.
You know who you are.