

Shakespeare's Phoenix in Numbers.

This is an article reflecting on numeracy and mathematics found in Shakespeare's poem 'The Phoenix and the Turtle'.

When Shakespeare said: "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" he was possibly thinking of - Henry Wriothesley - who was born on 20th May 1574, an event commemorated rather appropriately in Sonnet 20 which is a portrait of him. With Wriothesley firmly focused in his mind he arranged for an announcement to be made in the stationer's register of the publication of his sonnets on the 20th of May in the year 1609, while in Henry IV Pt. 1 the 20th May is referred to as a day that didn't even exist.

"Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May" is the 3rd line of Shakespeare's most famous Sonnet 18. "Rough Winds" is a bawdy metaphor for the Tudor State, who attached an official birth-day of the 6th October 1573 to a prince they simply wished, would just disappear.

While our great author had *one* entirely different perspective.

'**One**' is the number Shakespeare uses to identify 'Henry Wriothesley' because his motto is 'One for all, all for one'.

This word 'one' appears *3 times* only in the poem "The Phoenix and the Turtle" and these 3 one's represent the fact that Wriothesley was the 3rd Earl of Southampton, while equally they represent 'The Tudor Trinity' the Royal family he was a part of.

Who are they? I hear you ask!

They are: Queen Elizabeth I, Our Poet, and Prince Henry Wriothesley.

As it's rather rude to reduce a prince to a number, our poet realizing how precious and rare this "little love god" was, blessed him with the name "Raritie", and while he was at it, he blessed Elizabeth with the name "Beautie" and as our national poet never lies, he blessed himself with the name "Truth".

You therefore now know, what the first words in the 'Threnos' represent: "Beautie, Truth and Raritie" represent a secular trinity, and in examining *Stanza seven* we find the words *essence*, *distincts* and *division*, which found in

Christian theology represent 'The Holy Trinity' - The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. What we are therefore presented with is a sublime profanity, an allusion twixt the 'Tudor Trinity' and the 'The Holy Trinity'.

'Two' - only 'two' complete copies of the 1601 first edition of 'Love's Martyr' the publication in which 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' first appeared are extant, all others have been destroyed!

'The poem' itself is composed of two 'cantos', *two* principal sections, the so called 'Session' and the 'Threnos'.

'Three' is the number used as an *allusion* to 'The Tudor Trinity'. While in the quarto *first-edition* 'the poem' covers *three* pages, numbered 170 - 171 - 172.

Within the principal *Will-Sonnets* (135 & 136) the word *one* appears *six-times*. That's *three times* in the concluding three lines of (S.135) and again *three times* in a triangular formation slap-bang in the middle of (S.136). These are allusions to "The Phoenix and the Turtle" where as I said previously - the word *one* can be found *three times*.

'Four' is represented in the poem by the word *Turtle* which is an allusion to our great author, which appears in the poem *four times* only, on each occasion it is capitalised and italicised – the reasoning behind this I shall come to shortly.

'Five' - In the major scheme of things, is a very significant number because the 'Threnos' is composed of five verses each having three lines.

In layman's language each line is composed of what we shall call 'heart-beats' what *Stephen Fry* likes to refer to as the cardiogram trace of a poem - its rhythmical metre. Thus the first line "Beautie Truth and Raritie" represents seven heart-beats. A matter of note being, that these allusionary words in the *first edition* are all capitalised, because they are allusions to individuals. Therefore having 5 verses of 21 beats in each, we arrive at the figure 105 which is an allusion to *Sonnet 105*.

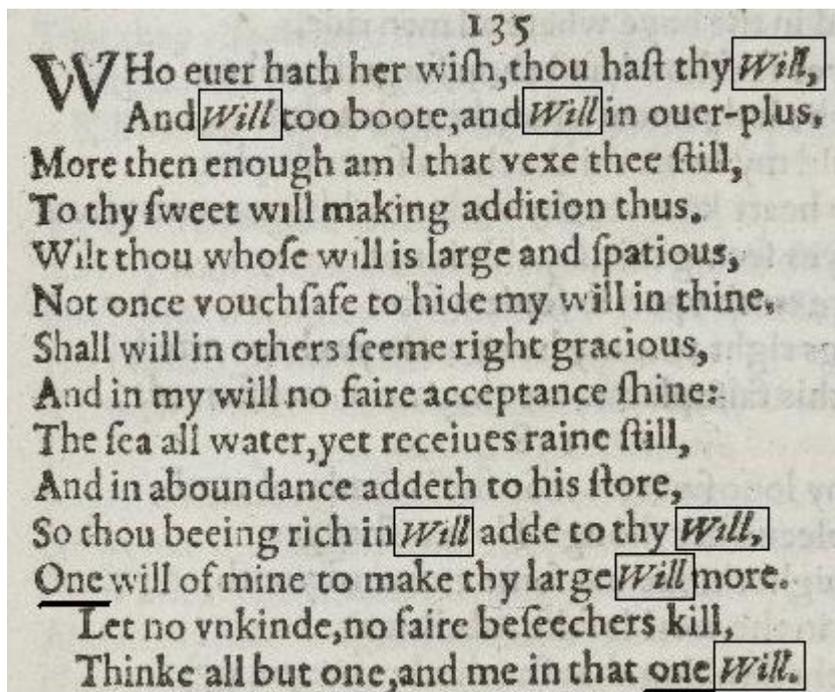
Here in (S.105) describing precisely the same people, we find our author *varying to other words*, "Fair, Kind and True" are words that represent the Faire Youth (Henry Wriothesley), Kind (Elizabeth), and True (our author) and

out of fear of being accused of blasphemy our author diplomatically describes this trinity as “*Three themes in one*”.

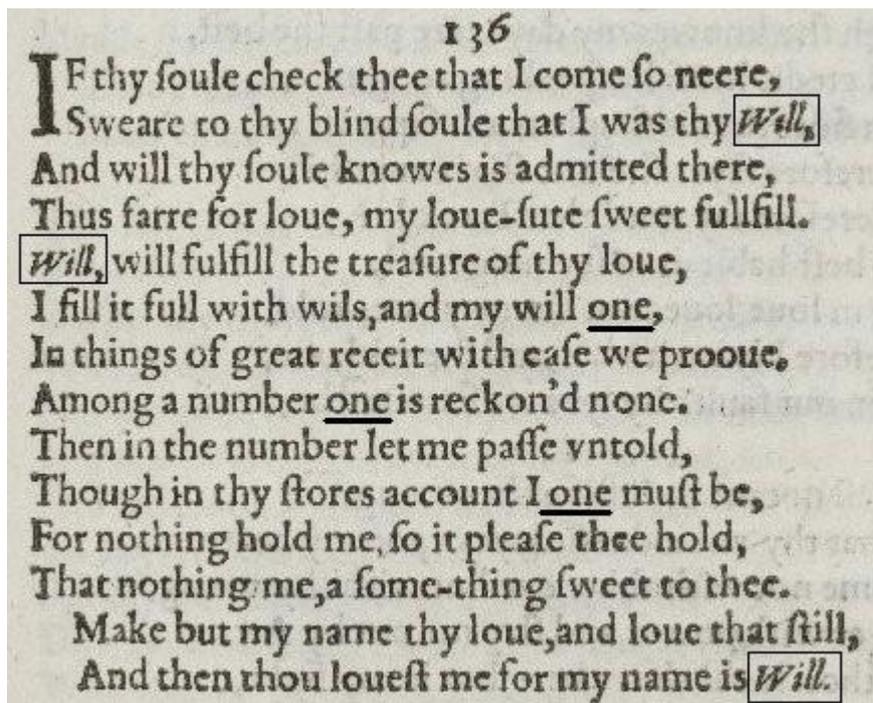
‘**Ten**’ is very significant because in the *Will*-Sonnets (135 & 136) although the word ‘will’ appears 20 times in total, the more important *highlighted Wills* (capitalised & italicised) only appear 10 times - there being 7 *Wills* in sonnet 135 and 3 *Wills* in sonnet 136.

The Mathematical Allusions.

In the fact that the cardiogram-trace of the ‘Threnos’ amounts to one hundred and five heart-beats, it alludes 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 heart-beats amount to 371.



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



At this point in (S.135) our author instructs us how we should proceed mathematically towards the greater number, 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 (S.135) 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.

Seventeen: The 17th verse is composed of 17 words which appear in Love’s Martyr’ on consecutive pages, numbers 17 zero, 17 one, 17 two.

The poem itself finds itself amongst a group of works written by “The Poetic Essayists” works covering 17 pages in total.

Of particular interest, is the fact that in the original 1601 quarto edition, the very first poem appearing in that publication was signed by our author, in the first line of the second verse, the very reason it was deleted from the 1611 reprint.

Here is a transcription of that work:

The Author's Request to the Phoenix.

*Phoenix of beautie, 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 poetrie,
Whose wit-enchancing 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.*

The words "deepe-read scholler" amount to 17 letters and are most obviously an allusion to the 17th Earl of Oxford – Edward de Vere, who partly because he was an aristocrat, wrote using the Athenian pseudonym Shake-speare.

In fact in the following line of this poem he almost succeeds in spelling his surname with the word: de-serve-th = de Vere, as in *deserveth fame*.

Due in part to the fact that our author fathered a prince with Queen Elizabeth there subsequently developed an ambivalent relationship with the Tudor-State, and while he found his vocation of playwright & poet to be extremely fruitful, it was a well-known fact he wasn't so fortunate in fiscal matters.

Mercifully in the year 1585 he came to a financial agreement with Queen Elizabeth and from this time forward until his death he received an annuity of £1000.00 for supplying works of literature and *intelligence* to the state.

'Forty' - The impression I get is that if you were one of the most eminent Jacobethan courtiers, you were most likely to be involved with intelligence work in one way or another. Some of these top-dogs had personalised secret-code numbers, Oxford's was '40', King James '30' and Sir Robert Cecil '10'.

The Earl of Oxford always liked to see himself as one of Elizabeth's most dedicated followers (the reason he cast himself in the guise of a *Turtle-dove* in the poem) a bird noted for its fidelity and an emblem of pure constancy, a bird believed to mate for life.

Interestingly the word *Turtle* (on every occasion capitalised and italicised) appears in 'The Phoenix and the Turtle' just four times, which is an allusion to his code '40' (4T).

This is the same code we find utilised on the sculpted tomb of Shake-speare in Westminster Abbey, where our author 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 when it was composed of twenty letters, when it appeared like this: "The cloud-capped towers".

This is how it appears on Shake-speare's tomb in the Abbey:

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

4T's = Edward de Vere's code (40) which equally can be seen as 1740.

'Sixty Seven' was Elizabeth's age in 1601 the year 'Love's Martyr' was published, and the reason the poem was left untitled, because our author foresaw that a title could confuse the counting, because as it is, the poem is 67 lines long. So, if you didn't previously know who the *Phoenix* allegorised - You do now!