

MERLIN, NOSTRADAMUS, AND RESOLVING THE MYSTERY OF SHAKESPEAREAN AUTHORSHIP

By Morten St. George

In 1909 the great American writer Mark Twain published *Is Shakespeare Dead?* in which he expressed his opinion on the Shakespeare authorship question. Twain concluded that William Shakspere (baptismal spelling) of Stratford did not have the education or the life experiences to have written the Shakespearean canon. As a great writer himself, Twain knew what it takes, and Shakspere did not have it.

In the following one hundred plus years, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of books and articles have renewed Twain's sentiments. Dozens of Elizabethan writers were proposed as the true Shakespeare but mainstream scholarship remains unconvinced with regard to any of them.

This reminds us of a cynical definition of insanity: repeating the same mistake over and over again and expecting a different result. After hundreds of failed attempts to convince academics that someone had a credible motive for concealing his identity, you might think the anti-Stratfordians would want to try a different approach.

A NEW APPROACH

In this investigation we will turn our attention away from England (where historical records have been exhaustively studied by anti-Stratfordians and Stratfordians alike) and search for clues in a foreign country. It seems that at times Shakespeare wrote entire dialogues in foreign languages, particularly in French, so we will begin our quest in France.

Quickly we discover that England was not the only country with a great writer in that epoch. France also had one: the seer Michel Nostradamus (1503 - 1566) who was, for a couple of years, a living contemporary of William Shakspere (born in 1564). Both of them, England's most famous writer and France's most famous writer, were

extraordinarily alike in some respects. This is especially evident in the Last Will and Testament of each, where we find many curiosities in parallel:

CURIOSITY #1

At the time of his death, Nostradamus had three hundred prophecies that were never published, yet his Will makes no mention of any unpublished manuscripts.

At the time of his death, William of Stratford had eighteen plays that were never published, yet his Will makes no mention of any unpublished manuscripts.

CURIOSITY #2

In his Will, Nostradamus makes no mention of his being a seer or prophet, and he makes no mention of prophecies.

In his Will, Shakespeare makes no mention of his being a writer, and he makes no mention of poems or plays.

CURIOSITY #3

In his Will, Nostradamus makes just one reference to astrology and he does so by way of an afterthought, that is, by attaching a brief codicil in which he bequeaths his astrolabe.

In his Will, Shakespeare makes just one reference to the London theatre and he does so by way of an afterthought, that is, by inserting interlinearly a bequeath to three actors.

CURIOSITY #4

In his Will, Nostradamus bequeaths to his descendants not yet born.

In his Will, Shakespeare bequeaths to his descendants not yet born.

CURIOSITY #5

In his Will, Nostradamus bequeaths **six** French coins to each of **thirteen** beggars.

In his Will, Shakespeare bequeaths ten pounds to the poor of Stratford, but in the same *Item* bequeaths "**thirteene** poundes, **sixe** shillinges, and eight pence" to a gentleman.

CURIOSITY #6

In his Will, Nostradamus bequeaths to his wife the bed located in the hallway of their home along with the nearby furniture. No mention is made of any other bed, such as the matrimonial bed. In effect, Nostradamus gave his wife (who was called "Anne") his second-best bed.

In his Will, Shakespeare bequeaths to his wife (who was called "Anne") his second-best bed along with the furniture.

CURIOSITY #7

Nostradamus signs his Will within a few weeks of his death, and this is witnessed by a named group of local gentry.

Shakespeare signs his Will within a few weeks of his death, and this is witnessed by a named group of local gentry.

The Last Will and Testament of Nostradamus was discovered by the French genealogist Pierre d'Hozier in 1659, reporting that it had been in the possession of a notary in the city of Salon, where Nostradamus died. Depending on which account you want to believe, the Last Will and Testament of Shakespeare was discovered in 1737 or 1747.

Postmortem events give rise to three more curiosities:

CURIOSITY #8

Nostradamus' Will requested that a tomb or monument be erected for him against the wall of his local church (*une tombe ou monument contre la muraille*). Indeed, after his death, his tomb was inserted against the **wall** of his local church.

After the death of Shakspere, a monument to him was erected against the **wall** of his local church.

CURIOSITY #9

In his book *La Première face du Janus françois*, Lyon, 1594, the French scholar Jean Aimes de Chavigny (1524 - 1604) published the first biography of Nostradamus confirming burial inside the local church, and he records a curse written on the gravestone:

CY REPOSENT LES OS DE MICH. DE NOSTREDAME ...
O POSTERES, NE TOVCHEZ À SES CENDRES,
ET N'ENVIEZ POINT LE REPOS D'ICELVY.

This translates as:

HERE LIES THE BONES OF MICH. DE NOSTREDAME ...
O POSTERITY, DO NOT TOUCH HIS ASHES,
AND DO NOT AT ALL ENVY HIM HIS REST.

By legend, someone found the courage to open Nostradamus' tomb in 1792 and he was promptly killed by a stray bullet!

And we also find The Curse of the Bones engraved on Shakespeare's tombstone:

GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FOREBEARE,
TO DIGG T'HE DVST ENCLOSED HEARE.
BLESTE BE Y'E MAN Y'T SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE Y'T MOVES MY BONES.

By legend, no one has ever dared to open Shakespeare's tomb!

CURIOSITY #10

Nostradamus tourism became a major industry of the town of Salon where Nostradamus lived, attracting pilgrims from around the world to visit the museum and church wall of Nostradamus.

Shakespeare tourism became a major industry of the town of Stratford where Shakespeare lived, attracting pilgrims from around the world to visit the museum and

church wall of Shakespeare.

Nostradamus died in 1566, and Shakespeare in 1616, some fifty years later. Their respective Last Will and Testament have too many curiosities in common to be pure coincidence, giving rise to the all-critical question: Was Shakespeare's Will based on Nostradamus' Will or was it the other way around?

Surprisingly, the correct answer to that question might be the following: *None of the above*. It is entirely plausible that the real Last Will and Testament of William Shakspere was destroyed along with the attendance records of the Stratford Grammar School and along with possible alterations to the registers of the town of Stratford (all civil records for Stratford between 1558 and 1600 were written, or re-written, in the same handwriting). With the current Will coming to light more than one hundred and twenty years after the death of Shakspere, who would be around to challenge its authenticity?

Nothing could be easier than to write Wills that have little in common. It therefore seems certain that someone, for reasons unknown, wanted to establish a link between Nostradamus and Shakespeare albeit only to become known in the distant future. But why in the world would anyone want to link them together? Surely the elegant plays of Shakespeare are not in any way connected with the prophetic gibberish of Nostradamus, or are they?

PROPHETIC THEMES

Nostradamus' most famous work was called *Les Propheties de M. Michel Nostradamus*, published in the year 1568. It contained 942 prophecies in the form of quatrains (poems with four lines rhyming ABAB), widely believed to have been written in Latin and then translated into French. One can read those prophecies a hundred times and not notice any connection at all with any of the thirty-six plays in Shakespeare's First Folio despite the fact that "prophecy" and related terms are frequently encountered therein.

On closer examination, however, we find yet another curiosity. At diverse places in each of Shakespeare's thirty-six plays, two or more unrelated terms in close proximity to each other equate with the same terms found in close proximity to each other inside one of Nostradamus' 942 prophecies.

These correlations do not draw our attention to all of the 942 prophecies or even to many

of them. They point to just thirty-nine prophecies and repeatedly point to the same thirty-nine prophecies. It seems as if Shakespeare is trying to identify, isolate, or extract those prophecies from the larger corpus.

Note that we are not talking about a few examples that could be coincidental, but quite a large number of such correlations, more than a hundred found to date. Spot checks with other playwrights of the epoch exposed no similar correlations between them and Nostradamus, except for Christopher Marlowe who will be discussed below.

Before beginning the illustrations, it's helpful to be aware of some statistics. Excluding pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, articles, numbers, and all variants of the verb *to be*, Nostradamus employs more than 6,000 unique terms for a prophetic corpus of more than 23,000 words. Shakespeare employs more than 20,000 unique terms for a corpus of more than 800,000 words. Each Nostradamus prophecy has roughly 24 to 27 words. Chances are good that most Nostradamus terms can be found in Shakespeare, but then the second correlation inside Shakespeare, out of his 20,000 plus terms, must be found within a distance of approximately 25 words from the first matching term. For each subsequent term, there is an exponential increase in the odds against a successful correlation on all the terms.

Equivalent words and concepts are in bold.

Nostradamus:

L'**oiseau** royal sur la cité solaire,
 Sept moys deuant fera **nocturne augure**:
 Mur d'Orient, **cherra** tonnerre esclaire,
 Sept iours aux portes les ennemis **à l'heure** [1,V-81].

The royal bird over the city of the Sun, Seven months beforehand shall make nocturnal augury, The wall of the Orient shall fall, thunder illuminated, Seven days to the ports the enemies to the hour. Note the forced Frenchification of the Latin "portis" (dative case) which can mean *gates* or *seaports*. See the unambiguous "port," *seaport*, below.

Shakespeare:

Ham. Not a whit, we defy **augury**; there's a special providence in the **fall** of a **sparrow** [2,*Ham.*].

Theophilus de Garencières, who made the first English translation of the Nostradamus prophecies in 1672, tells us "By the Royal Bird is meant an Eagle" [3], but Shakespeare considers other possibilities, here the sparrow. However, it is the word *fall* that seals the correlation. Note that Nostradamus uses *fall* in the sense of the fall of an empire and Shakespeare uses it to refer to the descent of a bird, but nevertheless the terms equate for the purpose at hand.

Shakespeare:

And with my hand at **midnight** held your head;
And, like the watchful minutes **to the hour** [2,*Jn.*].

Shakespeare follows Nostradamus in saying *to the hour* as opposed to *of the hour* or *in the hour*. But *to* seems to make the most sense in relation to larger, not smaller, units of time as in Nostradamus where the war comes to an end seven days (168 hours) *to* the (nearest) hour. Elsewhere, Shakespeare provides a clarification: "For in a minute there are many days" [2,*Rom.*].

Here's a very simple correlation:

Nostradamus:

Au point du iour au **second** chant du **coq** [1,VI-54].

At the dawn of day at the second chant of the cock.

Shakespeare:

Faith, sir, we were carousing till the **second cock** [2,*Mac.*].

Shakespeare:

Cap. Come, stir, stir, stir! The **second cock** hath crow'd [2,*Rom.*]

And here's a more complex correlation that includes the names of places:

Nostradamus:

Corinthe, Ephese aux **deux** mers **nagera** [1,II-52].

Corinth, Ephesus, to the two seas it shall swim.

Shakespeare:

Two ships from far making amain to us-
Of **Corinth** that, of Epidaurus this.

...

And, **coasting** homeward, came to **Ephesus** [2,Err.].

War follows:

Nostradamus:

Guerre s'esmeut par deux **vallans** de luite [1,II-52].

War moved by two valiant in combat.

Shakespeare:

Why, let the **war** receive't in **valiant** gore [2,Tim.]

One must always remember to take account of synonyms and terms that are closely related:

Nostradamus:

Ceulx d'**Orient** par la vertu **lunaire** [1,I-49].

Those of the Orient (East) by the lunar virtue.

Shakespeare:

It is the **East**, and Juliet is the sun!

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious **moon** [2,Rom.].

The *lunar virtue* can also allude to *lunacy* and *lunatic*, encountered more than a dozen times in the works of Shakespeare.

Let's move up to a three-word correlation:

Nostradamus:

D'vn gris & noir de la Compagne **yssu**,
Qui onc ne feut **si maling** [1,X-91].

Of one grey and black out of the Campaign issued (born), That never was there one so evil. This could be a military campaign whose name begins with the letter "C" given that it is capitalized in the French text.

Shakespeare:

This act, **so evilly borne**, shall cool the hearts [2,*Jn.*].

Shakespeare combines the last two words of the bottom line with the last word of the preceding line to get the correlation.

And now three words for England:

Nostradamus:

Plus Macelin que Roy en **Angleterre**,

...

Lasche sans foy, sans loy **saignera terre** [4,VIII-76].

More Macelin than king in England, ... Loose, without faith, without law, the ground shall bleed. Variant [1]: macelin.

Shakespeare:

Much work for tears in many an **English** mother,
Whose sons lie scattered on the **bleeding ground** [2,*Jn.*].

Here's an example where one of the three terms is purely conceptual.

Nostradamus:

Le Pánta chiona philòn **mis** fort **arriere** [1,IV-32].

The Panta Chiona Philon left far behind. This reminds us of the old saying: *It's Greek to me.*

Shakespeare:

BIONDELLO. Faith, nothing; but has **left** me here **behind** to expound the meaning or moral of his **signs and tokens** [2,*Shr.*].

Greek words make one reappearance:

Nostradamus:

Kappa, Thita, Lambda mors bannis esgarés [1,I-81].

Kappa, Thita, Lambda bite, banished, diverted.

Likewise, the *signs and tokens* make one reappearance:

Shakespeare:

DEMETRIUS. See how with **signs and tokens** she can **scrawl** [2,*Tit.*].

Shakespeare's *scrawl* is a deliberate misspelling of the verb *scrawl*, which means *to write in a hurried and careless manner*. How do we know that Shakespeare misspelled it to seal the correlation? That's easy. Just look at the French verse: Nostradamus misspells Theta!

Note the *bannis* in that last verse. It's a word that Nostradamus reemploys elsewhere:

Nostradamus:

Chassez, **bannis** & liures censurez [1,VIII-71].

Chased, banished, and books censured.

Without sealing a correlation, Shakespeare responds:

Shakespeare:

To mangle me with that word '**banished**'? [2,*Rom.*].

Mangled? Seriously? Nostradamus only used it twice! "Why, this fellow hath **banish'd two** on's daughters" [2,*Lr.*], and, lo and behold, banishment mangles diverse sections of the Shakespearean canon.

As noted above, Shakespeare was not the only playwright to correlate with Nostradamus. Inexplicably, we find similar correlations in the works of Christopher Marlowe, a playwright who preceded Shakespeare. One can perhaps imagine that they began the project with Marlowe, but when he unexpectedly departed at a young age, they had to start all over again with Shakespeare. Nonetheless, the preexisting

correlations between Nostradamus and Marlowe are interesting and we will illustrate them:

Nostradamus:

Le sang du iuste à **Londres** fera faulte,
Bruslez par **fouldres** de vingt trois les six:
 La **dame** antique cherra de **place haute** [1,II-51].

The blood of the just in London shall make fault, Burnt by lightnings of twenty, three the six, The antique dame shall fall from high place.

Marlowe:

This **cursed town** will I consume with **fire**,
 Because this **place** bereft me of my love;
 The houses, **burnt**, will look as if they mourn'd;
 And here will I set up **her stature** [5,g].

For Marlowe, London is a cursed town because it is destined to burn to the ground for fault (or deficiency) of just people, and this bereaves him. In Nostradamus, the dame falls from her high place but Marlowe goes back in time to where he is going to set up her stature, which, like the French verse, could be referring to a position of power or to an elevated statue.

Here's another complex correlation:

Nostradamus:

La terre & l'**air geleront** si grand **eau**,
 Lors qu'on **viendra** pour **Ieudy** venerer [4,X-71].

The land and the air shall freeze so much water, When one shall come to venerate on Thursdays. Variant [1]: ieudy.

Marlowe:

It was as blue as the most **freezing skies**;
 Near the **sea's** hue, for thence her **goddess came** [5,c].

Here we find five correlations in just two lines: *air* equates with *skies*; *geleront* (will

freeze) equates with *freezing*; *eau* (water) equates with *sea*; *viendra* (will come) equates with *came*; and *Ieudy* (the god of Thursday venerations) equates with *goddess*.

The Third Sestiad of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* displays a clear and unmistakable reference to the Earl of Essex's capture of Cadiz in 1596, making it unfeasible to attribute more than the first two Sestiads to Marlowe who was supposed to have died in 1593. But the correlation, here noted, comes in the Fourth Sestiad and thus casts doubt upon the authorship status of this poem as well as upon Marlowe's death [6].

Shakespeare:

she makes a **show'r of rain** as well as **Jove** [2, Ant.].

A *shower of rain* equates with *water* and the French Thursday (*Jeudi*) derives its name from Jove.

Correlations can repeat themselves with slight variations:

Nostradamus:

Feu grand deluge plus par **ignares sceptres**,
Que de long **siecle** no se verra refaict [1, I-62].

Fire, great deluge more by ignorant scepters, That, of long age, shall not be seen remade. The *of long age* effectively means to the end of time.

Marlowe:

Time ends, and to old Chaos all things turn,
Confused stars shall meet, celestial **fire**
Fleet on the **floods**, the earth shoulder the sea [5, b].

Here, Marlowe is making a verse-by-verse translation of the Roman poet Lucan, so surely it cannot contain a correlation, right? Wrong. M. Annaei Lucani, De Bello Civili, Liber Primus: *Antiquum repetens iterum chaos, omnia mixtis, Sidera sideribus concurrent ignea pontum, Astra petent, tellus extendere littora nolet.* Where's the deluge (floods)?

Remarkably, there are several instances where the correlations are inserted into Marlowe's verse-by-verse translations of the Latin poets Ovid and Lucan: here and there,

the translations deviate from the original Latin to accommodate the correlations!

Shakespeare also weighs in on this:

Shakespeare:

Give me a staff of honour for mine **age**,
But not a **sceptre** to control the world [2,*Tit.*].

Like Nostradamus, Shakespeare views that the scepter as an instrument that yields enormous powers.

Shakespeare:

When went there by an **age** since the great **flood** [2,*JC*].

Here's another repeated correlation with a slight variation:

Nostradamus:

Le penultiesme du surnom du **prophete**,
Prendra Diane pour son iour & repos [1,II-28].

The penultimate of the surname of the prophet, Shall take Diana for his day and rest.

Marlowe:

We are the Muses' **prophets**, none of thine.
What, if thy mother **take Diana's** bow [5,e].

In this translation, Marlowe dramatically alters Ovid's original in order to achieve the correlation. P. Ovidi Nasconis Liber Primus Amores: *Pieridum vates, non tua turba sumus. quid, si praeripiat flavae Venus arma Minervae.* The Muses were the inspiration of poets, not of prophets, and Minerva's weapon (a spear as in Shake-spear) is transformed into Diana's bow. Perhaps Marlowe is trying to symbolize the use of poetry for prophetic ends?

Shakespeare:

PORTIA. If I live to be as old as **Sibylla**,
I will die as chaste as **Diana** [2,*MV*].

Sibylla is the Latin name of the first Sibyl at Delphi, who by legend was of great antiquity. The Greek and Roman Sibyls were women famed for their *prophetic* powers, essentially making Sibylla a synonym of prophetess, thereby, with Diana, establishing a correlation.

Let's now look at another correlation that Marlowe inserted into his Ovid translation:

Nostradamus:

Bien eslongnez el **tago** fara **muestra** [1,X-25].

A long way away, el tago shall make a display. Note that Nostradamus writes this line in Spanish, suggesting a faraway location where that language is spoken, and El Tago could be someone who was born in or near Toledo, famed city on the banks of the Tagus River.

Marlowe:

To verse let kings give place and kingly **shows**,
And banks o'er which gold-bearing **Tagus** flows [5,e].

Ovid's original (*op. cit.*) goes *cedant carminibus reges regumque triumphi, cedat et auriferi ripa benigna Tagi!* The Tagus is there but the rest is modified to get the *shows* (a display) in.

Let's now turn away from these Spanish places and return to London, Marlowe's favorite town:

Nostradamus:

Senat de **Londres** mettront à **mort** leur **roy** [1,IX-49].

Senate of London shall put their king to death. Marlowe and Shakespeare take the same approach and stretch the correlation across four lines:

Marlowe:

By yelping hounds pull'd down, shall seem to **die**:
Such things as these best please his **majesty**.--
Here comes my lord the **king**, and the nobles,
From the **parliament**. I'll stand aside [5,a].

Shakespeare:

Have wrought the easy-melting **King** like wax.
 He swore consent **to your succession**,
 His oath enrolled in the **parliament**;
 And now to **London** all the crew are gone [2,3H6].

To your succession implies the *death* of a king and seals the correlation.

Marlowe correlates on his favorite town at every opportunity. Here's another example:

Nostradamus:

Trente de Londres secret **coniureront**,
Contre leur Roy ... [1,IV-89].

Thirty of London in secret shall conspire, Against their King ...

Marlowe:

May enter in, and once againe **conspire**
Against the life of me poore Carthage **Queene** [5,i].

This is a three-word correlation: *conspire* at the end of the first line, *against* at the beginning of the second line, and *queen* replaces *king*. Here's the last line of that prophecy:

Nostradamus:

Vn **Roy esleu** blonde, natif de Frize [1,IV-89].

A King elected blonde, native of Frisia. Frisia is the old name of Holland.

Marlowe envisions a conspiracy that results in the disposal of the first king:

Marlowe:

Y. Mor. Curse him, if he refuse; and then may we
 Depose him, and **elect** another **king**.

But the French verse is grammatically confusing: A King (masculine) elected blonde

(female), native (male) of Holland. Since Nostradamus routinely employs Latin syntax, we must assume that the *blonde* is in the ablative case where one can express causal agency *without* the use of a preposition. Thus, we must understand: A Dutchman elected King [of England] by reason of a woman [his wife?]. Marlowe, however, fails to recognize the Latin syntax and becomes appalled by the thought that a future king of England will be a transvestite!

Marlowe:

But seek to make a **new-elected king**;
Which fills my mind with strange despairing thoughts,
Which thoughts are martyred with endless torments;
And in this torment comfort find I none [5,a].

Nonetheless, Marlowe's whole line of thinking is curious because, in his day, English kings were normally chosen by hereditary factors or by the wishes of a reigning monarch, and not in open elections.

Here's one about an unwanted war:

Nostradamus:

Quand istront **faicts** enormes & **martiaux**:
La **moindre** part **dubieuse** à l'**aisnay** [1,VI-95].

When there shall emerge enormous and martial deeds: The least part doubtful to the eldest brother. The French "enormes" can also mean *atrocious* and the "aisnay" would be the *first born* of male siblings. Nostradamus has more to say about the brothers later.

Marlowe's correlation is simplistic:

Marlowe:

To some direction in your **martial deeds** [5,f].

Shakespeare also correlates on this:

Shakespeare:

Speak, Salisbury; at **least**, if thou canst speak.
How far'st thou, mirror of all **martial** men? [2,1H6].

Note that "least" is now employed as a noun and not as an adjective but it nonetheless gives us a correlation. When searching for correlations, one must consider the English translation of the French with regard to all parts of speech and nuances of meaning.

And Shakespeare again:

Shakespeare:

Reg. But have you never found my **brother's** way
To the forfended place?

Edm. That thought abuses you.

Reg. I am **doubtful** that you have been conjunct [2,*Lr.*].

This correlation looks doubtful but the *conjunct* at the end is suggestive of finding matching words on opposite ends of an intermediary line.

And now we turn to an unidentified, deep-freeze country described by the name of its rulers:

Nostradamus:

Terroir Romain qu'**interpretoit** augure,
Par gent Gauloise sera par trop **vexee**:
Mais nation Celtique **craindra** l'heure,
Boreas, classe trop loin l'auoir poussee [1,II-99].

Territory Romain that interprets the augury, By Gallic people [the French] shall be very much vexed: More, the Celtic nation [Germany] shall fear the hour, Boreas [the North Wind], army too far the having pushed. Note that the forced Frenchification of the Latin *classis*, which can mean *army* or *fleet*, here *army* because of *terroir* in the first line.

Marlowe:

Beats Thracian **Boreas**, or when trees bow own
And rustling swing up as the **wind** fets breath.
When Cæsar saw his **army** prone to war [5,b].

Marlowe moves Boreas from line 389 in Lucan (*op. cit.*) to line 391 in his translation to bring it closer to Caesar's army and seal the correlation.

Shakespeare considers this prophecy to be *beyond self-explication*, that is, pretty much impossible to comprehend:

Shakespeare:

Would be **interpreted** a thing **perplex'd**
 Beyond self-explication. Put thyself
 Into a haviour of less **fear**, ere wildness [2,*Cym.*].

The Stratfordians, likely to ignore the statistics mentioned earlier, will no doubt argue that these correlations are just a coincidence, and perhaps, in a few instances, that is the case. Therefore, to convincingly establish that the correlations with Nostradamus are so numerous and significant that they must have been deliberately made by our playwrights, we need to provide more illustrations, many more illustrations, and we will now proceed to do exactly that.

HISTORICAL THEMES

In this section we will interchangeably illustrate with Marlowe or Shakespeare.

Nostradamus:

Des sept rameaux à trois seront reduicts,
 Les plus aisnez seront surprins par mort [1,VI-11].

Of the seven branches to three shall be reduced, The oldest (plural, implying the two oldest of the three) shall be surprised by death.

Shakespeare:

Or **seven** fair **branches** springing from one root.
 Some of those seven are **dried by nature's course**,
 Some of those **branches** by the Destinies **cut** [2,*R2*].

Dried by nature's course alludes to aging branches (the oldest) and cut branches are branches that are quickly killed (surprised by death). We will now repeat the second line and join it with the last two lines.

Nostradamus:

Les plus aisnez seront **surprins** par mort,
 Fratricider les **deux** seront seduicts,
 Les coniuerez **en dormans** seront morts [1,VI-11].

The eldest (more than one) shall be surprised by death, To kill the two brothers they shall be seduced, The conspirators in sleeping shall die. And so we see that the three of the first line were brothers and, presumably, the remaining four (to bring the total up to seven) were their sisters.

Shakespeare:

And may ye **both** be suddenly **surpris'd**
 By bloody hands, **in sleeping** on your beds! [2,1H6].

In Nostradamus, the conspirators (*coniurez*) die of natural causes, i.e. are never caught, but Shakespeare would prefer another outcome; he also wishes he could help: "To rescue my two brothers from their death" [2,Tit.].

The saga continues:

Nostradamus:

Du **toict** cherra sur le grand mal **ruyne** [1,VI-37].

From the roof evil ruin shall befall the great one.

Shakespeare:

Seeking that beauteous **roof** to **ruinate** [2,Son.].

Shakespeare draws two correlations from the lines that follow this ruination:

Nostradamus:

Innocent faict **mort** on **accusera:**
Nocent caiché taillis à la bruyne [1,VI-37].

Innocent in fact (or of the deed) when dead he shall be accused, The guilty one hidden: "taillis" to the "bruyne" where we note that "bruyne" [1,VI-37] [4,VI-37] stands in sharp contrast to "bruine" [1,V-35] [4,V-35] seen below: there must be a "y" in the name of the guilty one!

Shakespeare:

KING. Wherefore hast thou **accus'd** him all this while?

DIANA. Because he's **guilty**, and he is **not guilty** [2,AWW].

Shakespeare:

To **slay** the **innocent**? What is my offence?

Where is the evidence that doth **accuse** me? [2,R3].

The location changes:

Nostradamus:

Lon passera à **Memphis** somentree [1,X-79].

One shall pass to Memphis somentree. The meaning of *somentree* is unknown; perhaps it was intended to allude to a place where we find Memphis. Garencières writes "This word *Somentrees*, being altogether barbarous, is the reason that neither sense nor construction can be made of all these words" [3].

Marlowe:

Memphis, and Pharos that sweet date-trees yields [5,e].

Marlowe too is unable to figure out what *somentree* (or *somentrees* per Garencières) means, but at least he notices that it ends in a recognizable English word: trees! Indeed, the hyphenated spelling *date-trees*, as opposed to *date trees*, could be taken as a signal that *trees* is the ending of a word; it is preceded by *so* and *men*, which are also English words. Here, Ovid's original (*op. cit.*), *quae colis et Memphin palmiferamque Pharon*, required only minimal modification to achieve the correlation.

Shakespeare gives us "Than Rhodope's of **Memphis** ever was" [2,1H6]. Rhodope is the name of a tree-infested mountain in Bulgaria, so perhaps *Somentrees* is a place with lots of trees!

This is the next verse of that prophecy:

Nostradamus:

Le grand **Mercure d'Hercules fleur de lys** [1,X-79].

The great Mercury of Hercules fleur-de-lys. Mercury was the god of commerce, and Hercules represents force, giving the verse the following sense: the great armaments trade shall flourish.

Shakespeare:

His foot **Mercurial**, his Martial thigh,
The brawns of **Hercules**; but his Jovial face- [2,*Cym.*].

Marlowe's take on this is far more profound:

Marlowe:

Besides, there goes a Prophecy abroad,
Published by one that was a Friar once,
Whose Oracles have many times proved true;
And now he says, the time will shortly come,
When as a Lyon, roused in the west,
Shall carry hence the **fluerdeluce** of France [7].

Note the allusion to the Pillars of **Hercules** in the penultimate line. It combines with the fleur-de-lys in the last line to give us another correlation. This citation is from *Edward the Third*, a play that was published anonymously and whose authorship was debated among scholars for centuries. Today, Shakespeare is believed to have written parts of it (and Marlowe the passage that we cite [7]). True, but if the scholars had known about the correlations, the issue could have been resolved a long time ago.

The setting of this passage is France, so *abroad* in the first line means Britain, not France. In the second line, Marlowe describes Geoffrey of Monmouth as a *publisher*.

Nostradamus now takes us to a faraway place:

Nostradamus:

Dedans le **coing** de Luna viendra rendre,
Ou sera prins & mis en **terre estrange**,
Les **fructs** immeurs seront à grand **esclandre** [1,IX-65].

Into a corner of the Moon he shall come to render, Where he shall be taken and placed

on strange terrain, The immature fruits shall be by great scandal.

Garencières exclaims: "But what he meaneth by the Corner of Luna, I must leave the judgement of it to the Reader, for I ingeniously confess that I neither know City nor Country of that name" [3]. Shakespeare, for his part, knows that Luna is the Moon and he leaves no doubts about it: "A title to Phoebe, to Luna, to the moon" [2,LLL]. Marlowe makes a complex correlation out of it:

Marlowe:

And search all **corners** of the new-found **world**
 For pleasant **fruits** and princely delicates;
 I'll have them read me **strange** philosophy [5,j].

On the immature fruits, Shakespeare writes "Then it will be the **earliest fruit** i' th' country; for you'll be rotten ere you be **half ripe**" AYL. Shakespeare also takes a look at the third line combined with the last line:

Nostradamus:

Les fruicts immeurs seront à grand **esclandre**,
 Grand vitupere à l'**vn** grande **louange** [1,IX-65].

The immature fruits shall be by great scandal, Great vituperation, to the one, great praise.

Shakespeare:

Oft have I heard **his praises** in pursuit,
 But ne'er till now his **scandal** of retire [2,3H6].

In Nostradamus, the praise (*louange*) is *in pursuit*, that is, follows the scandal (*esclandre*) of the preceding line, but in all cases the great scandal comes after the new-found Moon!

Around the same time, the surviving brother (as we saw, his two older brothers were killed) runs into some trouble of his own:

Nostradamus:

Par **detracteur calumnié à puis nay** [1,VI-95].

The youngest brother slandered by a detractor. The "puis nay" is the after born of male siblings.

Shakespeare:

To do in **slander**. And to behold his sway,
I will, as 'twere a **brother** of your order [2,MM].

Shakespeare reuses this correlation, only changing "slander" from a noun to a verb:

Shakespeare:

your **brother** incensed me to **slander** the Lady Hero [2,Ado].

Marlowe uses a word not found in Shakespeare: "An eare, to heare what my **detractors** say" [5,d].

In the next prophecy, Nostradamus reveals himself to be a devout Catholic:

Nostradamus:

Après le **siege** tenu dixsept ans,
Cinq changeront en tel reuolu terme:
Puis sera l'vn **esleu** de mesme **temps**,
Qui des Romains ne sera trop **conforme** [1,V-92].

After the (Holy) See held for seventeen years, Five shall change in such revolved term, Then the one shall be elected of same times, Who of the Romans shall not be very conformable. By of the same time, it is implied that the non-Italian Pope of the last line is the last of the five Popes who follow the Pope that reigned for seventeen years.

Marlowe:

That doth assume the **Papal government**
Without **election** and a true consent [5,j].

Marlowe:

POPE. Welcome, Lord **Cardinals**; come, sit down.--
Lord Raymond, take your **seat** [5,j].

Popes are *elected* to the Chair (*seat, "siege" in French*) of Saint Peter by Cardinals.

Shakespeare:

At all **times** to your will **conformable** [2,H8].

The action moves from Italy to the Middle East:

Nostradamus:

Le Roy de **Perse** par ceux d'**Egypte** prins [1,III-77].

The King of Persia by those of Egypt taken. Persia is the old name of Iran.

Marlowe:

SECOND MERCHANT. ,,,

Of **Persian** silks, of gold, and orient pearl.

BARABAS. How chance you came not with those other ships

That sail'd by **Egypt**? [5,h].

Marlowe fails to perceive that *taken* is used in the sense of *accepted* and not in the sense of *carried*, which explains why he ends with a question mark. Nostradamus now takes us from Iran to neighboring Afghanistan:

Nostradamus:

Aries doute son **pole** Bastarnan [1,III-57].

Aries doubts its Bastarnan pole.

Marlowe:

MEPHIST. All jointly move from east to west in twenty-four hours upon the **poles** of the world; but differ in their motion upon the **poles** of the **zodiac** [5,j].

The French *Arie* was the old name of Afghanistan but Marlowe sees the Aryans as something in the zodiac! The Bastarnae were a people who occupied Poland and the Ukraine during Roman times. Note that, contrary to legend, Marlowe originates the great Tamburlaine in Scythia (the Ukraine and parts of Russia).

Later, perhaps just a few years later, the newly-elected Pope has transformed himself into a great Pontiff:

Nostradamus:

De la partie de Mammer grand Pontife,
Subiuguera les confins du **Danube**:
Chasser la Croix par fer raffé ne riffe,
Captifs, or bague plus de **cent mille** rubes [4,VI-49].

From the party of Mammer, great Pontiff, Will subjugate the frontiers of the Danube, To chase the Cross by iron, by hook or by crook, Enticed: gold, bag more than one hundred thousand red things. Variants [1]: les croix, bagues.

The *partie* can refer to a region or to a political party while the *fer* can represent any type of weapon made of iron. The *raffé ne riffe* is an Italian expression, suggesting that Italy is the scene of action. Marlowe thinks *the frontiers of the Danube* could refer to the country of Bulgaria since he ends a line with Bulgaria immediately below where he ends a line with Danube:

Marlowe:

Betwixt the city Zula and **Danubius**;
How through the midst of Varna and Bulgaria [5,g].

Zula, a bay at the southern end of the Red Sea, makes no sense in the given context. More likely than not, Marlowe wishes to allude to the famed city of Zara (see below) on the Adriatic Sea, on the opposite end of the Balkans from the Danube and fitting the context perfectly.

At the end of the Nostradamus citation, the *rubes* is an adjective employed as a noun (red things), but Garençières sees them as rubles: "A Ruble was a coin of gold of the great *Mogul*, worth one or two pound sterling" [3].

Marlowe:

A **hundred thousand** crowns [5,h].

Shakespeare:

The payment of a **hundred thousand** crowns; [2,LLL].

Shakespeare views the hundred thousand as a payment [to the Bulgarians?] for services rendered [to hunt down the great Pontiff?]. Marlowe and Shakespeare each employ the hundred thousand in relation to a currency (the crowns), so perhaps Garençières was not far off in concluding that the *rubes* refers to rubles.

The attack on the Pope is again mentioned:

Nostradamus:

Prelat royal son **baissant** trop tiré,

...

Le regne **Anglicque** par regne respiré [1,X-56].

Royal prelate his baissant all shot up, ... The Anglican reign by reign breathes anew.

This prophecy indicates that the attack on the Pope will occur around the time of an English royal wedding. The meaning of *baissant* is unknown. Shakespeare likewise is unable to figure out what *baissant* means:

Shakespeare:

I cannot tell vat is **baiser** en **Anglich** [2,H5].

It is, however, somewhat mysterious where the Project Gutenberg found these words because the First Folio reads a bit different: "I cannot tell wat is buisse en Anglich," which is preceded by the words "baisee" and "baisant." Immediately above *buisse* we find "Interpreter" which quickly leads us to the true meaning of *baissant* in a Nostradamus quatrain: "Interpretez seront les extipices" [1], from where we conclude *Royal prelate his extispicy (intestines) all shot up*. Were they afraid of offending the Papacy?

This brings us to the last line of that prophecy:

Nostradamus:

Long temps **mort vif** en Tunis comme **souche** [1,X-56].

Long time dead alive in Tunis like a stump. The expression *dead alive like a stump* could refer to someone who became a human vegetable. Shakespeare asserts "**Not** he which

says the **dead is not alive**" [2,2H4] and again, "And so in spite of **death** thou dost survive, In that thy likeness still is left **alive**" [2,Ven.]. Marlowe and Shakespeare were both impacted by the stump:

Marlowe:

Cut is the **branch** that might have grown full straight [5,j].

Shakespeare:

And though we leave it with a **root**, thus **hack'd** [2,H8].

The meaning of *Tunis* is unknown because Nostradamus clearly spells the city of Tunis as *Tunes* in an unmistakable context. *Tunis*, therefore, is likely to be an acronym, contraction, or abbreviation of the name of some country. Regardless, the event of the human vegetable apparently occurs around the time of the attack on the Pope which, as we just saw, occurs around the time of an English royal wedding

It was noted that Nostradamus spells Tunis as *Tunes* and we will now look at that:

Nostradamus:

Ceulx de **Tunes**, de **Fez**, & de **Bugie**:

Par les Arabes captif le **Roy Maroq** [1,VI-54].

Those of Tunis, of Fez, & of Bougie, By the Arabs the King of Morocco enticed.

Marlowe and Shakespeare both refer to **Tunis** [5,g] [2,*Tmp.*] and to Bougie (**Argier** [5,f] [2,*Tmp.*]). For the king, Marlowe goes directly with the **King of Morocco** [5,f] while Shakespeare gives us the **Prince of Morocco** [2,*MV*], but only Marlowe mentions Fez:

Marlowe:

I here present thee with the **crown** of **Fez** [5,g].

The *crown* more or less equates with *king* to give us a correlation. Fez is a city in Morocco, so perhaps that is where the King of Morocco is captivated by the Arab cause. Besides North Africa, Arabs also live in the Middle East, and therein this passage may connect with another Nostradamus prophecy:

Nostradamus:

Cassich **saint George** à demy perfondrez:
Paix assoupie, la **guerre** esueillera,
 Dans **temple** à **Pasques** abysmes enfondrez [1,IX-31].

Encircled, Saint George to one half, demolished, Peace soporific, the war shall be awoken, Within the temple on Easter-day, abysses opened up. The war appears to be in full swing in the first line, but in the next line it is just beginning, so the Easter *abyss* likely precedes, and perhaps inspires, the war.

Shakespeare:
Saint George, that swing'd the dragon [2,*Jn.*].

By legend, Saint George killed the dragon near the city of Beirut, where today we find Saint George Bay. Twice more Shakespeare correlates on these lines:

Shakespeare:
 Throng our large **temples** with the shows of **peace**,
 And not our streets with **war**! [2,*Cor.*].

Shakespeare:
 And in the **temple** of great Jupiter
 Our **peace** we'll ratify; seal it with **feasts** [2,*Cym.*].

Here, both correlations make use of *temple* and *peace*. To make it a three-word correlation, Shakespeare, in the first instance, goes with *war*, and in the second instance he views Easter as a feast. Note that he says *seal it with feasts*, that is, *seal my correlation* with the third equivalent term.

Attention now turns to a war out at sea:

Nostradamus:
 ... sur le pont l'**entreprise**,
 Luy, satalites la **mort** degousteront [1,IV-89].

... upon the sea the enterprise, For it, satellites shall prepare the way for death. Note use of the Latin "pontus": "pont Euxine" [1], "Euxine Sea" [5,b], "Pontic Sea" [2,*Oth.*].

Marlowe:

And smite with **death** thy hated **enterprise** [5,j].

Though Marlowe and Shakespeare consistently make heavy use of the words of Nostradamus, for reasons unknown they both ignore the satellites. Garençières, without comment, simply repeats and italicizes the French word in his English translation.

The *enterprise upon the sea* suggests action taken by a fleet:

Nostradamus:

Angloise classe viendra soubz la bruine,

Vn rameau prendre, du grand **ouuerte guerre** [1,V-35].

English fleet shall come under the drizzle, To take a branch [of the British Empire?], from the great one [Great Britain?]: open war. In the first line of this prophecy we find "mer," sea, making *classe* a fleet.

The *bruine* comes from the Latin *bruma* which referred to wintry weather. Note that the *du grand* is of masculine gender and hence cannot apply to the *guerre* which is a feminine noun.

Shakespeare:

I shall be, if I **claim** by **open war** [2,3H6].

This is the only instance of the expression *open war* in Shakespeare, so it remains to be determined if there is another precedent for its use. Presumably, the aforementioned satellites played a role in the unleashing of this open war.

In a scene from *Edward the Third* attributed to Marlowe, an "English fleet" is associated with "sulfur battles" and "dispersed and sunk" [7]. Curiously, Nostradamus immediately precedes the lines we just cited with "à l'estomach la pierre" [1,V-35], *the stone to the stomach*. In addition to something big swallowing up something small, this can be viewed as suggesting the insertion of something harmful into something big, such as, for example, the fire ships that forced the Spanish Armada of 1588 to break formation and leading to an English victory.

We now return to the Middle East:

Nostradamus:

De **rouges** & **blancs** conduira grand troupe,
Et iront contre le **Roy** de **Babylon** [1,X-86].

Of reds and whites shall conduct great troop, And they shall go against the King of Babylon. Babylon is the old name of Iraq, and the reds and whites may refer to the flags of a great military force.

Marlowe:

Shall mount the milk-**white** way, and meet him there.
To **Babylon**, my **lords**, to **Babylon!** [5,g].

Shakespeare:

Am I not of her **blood**? Tilly-vally,
lady. [Sings]
There dwelt a **man** in **Babylon** [2,TN].

While Marlowe correlates with the color *white*, Shakespeare alludes to *red*, the color of blood.

Let's do one more:

Nostradamus:

Du **ciel** viendra vn grand Roy d'**effrayeur**,
Resusciter le grand Roy d'**Angolmois** [1,X-72].

From the sky shall come a great king of terror, To resuscitate the great king of Angolmois.

Marlowe:

But, lady, this fair face and **heavenly** hue
Must grace his bed that **conquers Asia**,
And means to be a **terror** to the world [5,f].

With *conquers Asia*, Marlowe apparently views Angolmois as an anagram of Mongolois, *the Mongols*, who were led by Genghis Khan to conquer Afghanistan and much of Asia.

THEATRICAL THEMES

Beyond the textual correlations, the prophecies of Nostradamus may have had a wider influence. Here we will look at one example from Marlowe followed by three examples from Shakespeare.

TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT

Nostradamus:

Le plus grand voile hors du port de Zara,
 Pres de Bisance fera son entreprinse:
 D'ennemy perte & l'amy ne sera,
 Le tiers à deux fera grand pille & prinse [1,VIII-83].

The greatest sail out of the port of Zara, Near Byzantium it shall make its enterprise, Of enemy, loss, and the friend shall not be, The third to two shall make great pillage and seizure.

This appears to be one of several prophecies that may have led Marlowe to write about Tamburlaine and his conquests. It was an ambitious project for Marlowe: he tries to incorporate all the places mentioned by Nostradamus from Scythia to Persia and then over to Morocco. However, it seems that the real Tamerlane (d. 1405) concentrated his conquests in Asia, so Nostradamus alone may have inspired the North African conquests found in Marlowe's play.

Byzantium, an earlier name of Constantinople, brings the Turks into the picture. Marlowe: "And think to rouse us from our dreadful **siege**, Of the famous Grecian **Constantinople**" [5,f]. Note that Marlowe specifies *Grecian* Constantinople: it was the Greeks who colonized Constantinople and named it *Byzantium*.

Unlike the historical Tamerlane, who had noble origins, Marlowe gives his Tamburlaine humble beginnings: a shepherd, who rises up to attain a great empire through military conquests:

Nostradamus:

Lieu obscur nay par force aura l'empire [1,VIII-76].

Born in obscure place, by force he shall have the empire.

CORIOLANUS

Nostradamus:

Le grand Senat discernera la pompe,
A l'vn qu'apres sera vaincu chassé,
Ses adherans seront à son de trompe
Biens publiez, ennemis deschassez [1,X-76].

The great Senate shall discern the pomp, Of the one who afterwards shall be vanquished, chased out, His adherents shall be by sound of trickery, Public goods, inimical things forced out. Note the apocope of tromperie to rhyme with pompe as affirmed in one of the informative quatrains: La cité prinse par tromperie & fraude,...Luy & tous morts pour auoir bien trompé [1].

Twists of fate and reversals of destiny permeate the plays of Shakespeare, and here we see a plausible inspiration for giving heavy emphasis to the concept. The story of Coriolanus coincides with the first two lines, but the prophecy does not specify that this is a Roman senate and not some other senate.

On the correlation with "To whom he more adheres. If it will please you To show us so much gentry and good will" [2,*Ham.*], note that *adherents* (a noun) equates with *adheres* (a verb) and that *goods* (a noun) equates with *good* (an adjective).

HAMLET

Nostradamus:

Le croisé frere par amour effreneé
Fera par Praytus Bellerophon mourir,
Classe à mil ans la femme forceneé
Beu le breuage, tous deux apres perir [1,VIII-13].

The crossed brother by unbridled love, Shall make, by Proetus, Bellerophon to die, Army (or fleet) to a thousand years, the woman enraged, Drink the beverage, all two afterwards to perish.

Bellerophon was the name of a great hero in Greek mythology; in later times, it became the name of a renowned ship of the royal navy. The meaning of *to a thousand years* is unknown. Nostradamus numbered this prophecy VIII-13 (813).

In the third line, the woman, the sister of the high-ranking ecclesiastic of the first line, becomes enraged by the military defeat of one of the two who are poisoned in the last line. Thus, the ecclesiastic, out of love for his sister and like Proetus in the myth, arranges for someone to kill the defeated hero.

Citation from Wikipedia on Bellerophon:

"Proetus dared not satisfy his anger by killing a guest, so he sent Bellerophon to King Iobates his father-in-law ... bearing a sealed message in a folded tablet: Pray remove the bearer from this world."

Citation from Wikipedia on Hamlet:

"Claudius, fearing for his life, sends Hamlet along with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to England with a note to the King ordering Hamlet to be executed immediately."

Let's continue with Wikipedia on Hamlet:

"Gertrude drinks poisoned wine intended for Hamlet and dies. ... In his own last moments, an enraged Hamlet ... manages to stab and wound Claudius ... and finishes him off by forcing him to drink his own poisoned wine. Horatio attempts to commit suicide by drinking the poison ..."

Oops! This cannot be. The prophecy says that **two** shall perish and two are already dead from drinking the poisoned wine.

" ... but Hamlet swipes the cup from his hands and orders him to live to tell the tale."

That's better.

Claudius was Hamlet's uncle, and assuming that Shakespeare interpreted Nostradamus correctly, the killer of the poisoned hero in our prophecy would have to be his uncle, that

is, the enraged woman was his mother.

Another way of saying *the woman enraged* would be *the woman gone mad*, and no doubt this reinforces the *lunatic* theme we saw earlier. Madness (*Hamlet*, *King Lear*) and suicide (especially *Romeo and Juliet*) became recurring themes in the Shakespearean canon.

Above all else, the Bellerophon prophecy likely inspired Shakespeare to look to mythology and folklore for the plot of many of his plays.

MACBETH

Nostradamus:

La chef de Londres par regne l'Americh,
L'isle d'Escosse tempiera par gellee:
Roy Reb auront vn si faux antechrist,
Que les mettra trestous dans la meslee [1,X-66].

The chief of London by realm of America, The isle of Scotland tempered by frost, Roy Reb (they) shall have one so false Antichrist, Who shall put them all into the melee.

In this one, we return to Marlowe's favorite town, but it was Shakespeare who got to write about it. The first line insinuates that the actions of the British government will be heavily influenced by the Americans, surely a ludicrous idea! Note that *Americh* has to be *America* but the final letter was changed only to achieve rhyme with *antechrist* at the end of the third verse.

Scotland in the second verse gives us the setting of *Macbeth*. Note the **frost** at the end of that verse and Lady Macbeth's gruesome expectations:

Shakespeare:

A woman's story at a **winter's** fire [2,*Mac.*].

Marlowe appears to be confused over the meaning of the *antechrist*:

Marlowe:

To wrack, an **antechristian** kingdome falles [5,d].

Marlowe:

Wherewith thy **antichristian** churches blaze [5,a].

In the first instance, *antechrist* means *existing before Christ* and in the second instance it means *fighting against Christ*. Shakespeare, however, is not confused: the Antichrist means blood and death, and combined with the melee, wild killing.

And wild killing is exactly what we get in Macbeth. At the end of the play, an English army (note the reference to England in the first line of the prophecy) arrives to finish the slaughter.

Curiously, Shakespeare seems to be unaware that the Virginia Colony was called America:

Shakespeare:

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. Where Spain?

DROMIO OF SYRACUSE. Faith, I saw it not, but I felt it hot in her breath.

ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE. Where America, the Indies? [2,Err.].

Could Shakespeare be hoping that someone in his audience would tell him where America was located?

CELESTIAL THEMES

In these illustrations, we turn our attention toward the heavens.

Nostradamus:

... **cieux en tesmoings**.

Que plusieurs **regnes vn à cinq** feront change [1,VI-2].

... *heavens (or skies) in testimony, That many reigns one to five shall make change.*

Shakespeare:

HERMIONE. There's **some** ill planet **reigns**.

I must be patient till the **heavens look** [2,WT].

Note that *reigns* was extracted from Nostradamus as a noun but in Shakespeare it got employed as a verb. Shakespeare is only looking at the English translation. The same applies for *one to five* (an end total of five) which equates with *some* in the sense of *a few* but got employed in another sense. Elsewhere, Shakespeare gives us the sequential progression "One to ten!" [2,1H6].

For the next correlation, we go beyond just *looking* at the heavens:

Nostradamus:

Par pluye longue le long du **polle arctique**:
Samarobryn cent **lieux** de l'**hemisphere**,
Viuront sans loy **exempt de** pollitique [1,VI-5].

By a long rain the length of the Arctic Pole, Samarobryn a hundred leagues from the hemisphere, Living without law, exempt from politics.

Marlowe:

We mean to travel to th' antarctic **pole**,
...
When Phoebus, leaping from his **hemisphere** [5,g].

Wikipedia, in its article on Antarctica, notes that "Antarctica has no indigenous population and there is no evidence that it was seen by humans until the 19th century." Elsewhere, Marlowe clarifies that *from his hemisphere* means upward into the sky: "Leaps from th' antartic world unto the sky" [5,j].

Shakespeare is cynical: "By the North Pole, I do challenge thee" which evokes the response "I will not fight with a pole, like a Northern man" [2,LLL].

The long rain along the length of the Arctic can indicate the makings of an Ice Age or, alternatively, radioactive fallout, which, from the days of nuclear testing in the atmosphere, is known to gravitate toward the Poles.

A hundred leagues would place Samarobryn roughly one hundred and fifty miles above the ground; thus, Marlowe and Shakespeare are in agreement on placing Samarobryn in the sky. Moreover, Shakespeare envisions life in orbit at even greater distances:

Shakespeare:

Hang in the air a thousand **leagues** from hence [2,1H4].

Shakespeare substitutes a *thousand* for a *hundred* to get the correlation. He has more to say:

Shakespeare:

Corrupted, and **exempt from** ancient gentry?

His trespass yet **lives** guilty in thy blood [2,1H6].

Here the verb *lives*, a variation of *living*, seals the correlation. The question mark at the end of the "exempt from" line suggests that Shakespeare may have been confused over the meaning of *politique* (also spelled *politique* [4]). Nostradamus associates this word with the making of laws, which is politics in our modern sense, but the words *politics* and *political* are nowhere to be found in the works of Shakespeare, nor in Marlowe for that matter. Curiously, the original "politique" of Nostradamus inexplicably appears in the Dedicatory of a 1598 publication of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*.

For our part, we have no problem in surmising that Samarobryn was quite fortunate to get away from the political nonsense of the *ancient gentry* living on the ground below.

Let's now go farther out into space.

Nostradamus:

Venus cachée sous la **blancheur**, **Neptune**,

De mars frappé par la **grauée** blanche [4,IV-33].

Venus hidden under the whiteness, Neptune, From Mars struck through the white gravel.

Variants [1]: no comma (,) before Neptune, Mars, frappée, branche.

Shakespeare confesses that he is *confused* by the high (in the sky) gravel:

Shakespeare:

LAUNCELOT. [Aside] O **heavens!** This is my true-begotten father, who, being more than sand-blind, high-**gravel** blind, knows me not. I will try confusions with him [2,MV].

Note that Shakespeare, by twice using the word *blind*, indicates that the textual variant *blanche*, and not the frequently seen *branche*, is the correct word for the French text. As for the meaning of white gravel, one possibility would be the tail of a comet. Indeed, Nostradamus alludes to the forthcoming appearance of Halley's Comet in 1607 when he refers to an increase in *astronomes* for the year *mil six cens & sept* [1,VIII-71].

Elsewhere, Shakespeare again views the gravel as grains of sand:

Shakespeare:

And sat with me on **Neptune's yellow sands** [2,*MND*].

Note that *yellow* is also marked since it is merely a change of color from white.

Nostradamus:

Quand le **Soleil** prendra ses iours laissez,
Lors accomplir & mine ma prophetie [1,I-48].

When the Sun shall take its days of wailing, Then to accomplish and terminate my prophecy.

The *laissez* appears to be a Frenchification of the Latin "laessus," *uncommon wailing*. Shakespeare envisions teardrops on the surface of the Sun: "Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth" [2,*Son.*]. Sunspots? Yes, Nostradamus and Shakespeare are likely referring to sunspots; these were discovered by astronomers, including Galileo, between 1610 and 1612, but Shakespeare published his sunspot observations in 1609!

Shakespeare:

Disasters in the **sun**; and the **moist star**
Upon whose influence **Neptune's** empire stands
Was sick almost to doomsday with **eclipse** [2,*Ham.*].

Are we to believe that Shakespeare, already centuries ahead of our scientists with regard to life in orbit, beats them again in predicting that the end of our solar system (*doomsday*) will result from the expansion and collapse of our Sun (*Disasters in the sun*)?

But we don't have to wait until the end of the world to see sunspots. For example, there was an exceptionally large sunspot in 2014, in which case we seem to have survived doomsday!

Venus is described as the *moist star*. Marlowe uses the words "night-wandering, pale, and wat'ry star" [5,c]. Surely, Marlowe's Venus is *pale* because she is *sick with eclipse* but later she comes out of the shadows to become Shakespeare's "bright star of Venus" [2,1H6]. Note also that, in both cases, the concept of *wetness* is based on association with Neptune, named after the Roman god of the *sea*.

The *whiteness* may refer to the Sun, surely the brightest thing in the sky. Thus, Venus is hidden (*cachée*) under the whiteness of the Sun, implying an *eclipse* of celestial entities. But such an eclipse can only be seen from another celestial entity, that is, Shakespeare apparently concluded, or suspected, that *Neptune* had to be something in the heavens. Marlowe, of course, concurs with this point of view:

Marlowe:

FAUSTUS. How many heavens or spheres are there?

MEPHIST. Nine; ... [5,j].

Faustus refers to *eclipses* in a follow-up question. At hand, the inspiration for leaping from seven to nine (as opposed to merely adding Neptune to bring the total up to eight) may have come from elsewhere:

Nostradamus:

D'humain troupeau neuf seront mis à part,

De iugement & conseil separez [1,I-81].

Of human flock, nine shall be placed apart, Of judgement and counsel separated.

Shakespeare wrote about the "Nine Worthies" [2,LLL] and also about the "nine sibyls" [2,1H6], but Marlowe intelligently noticed that the *devoid of judgement and counsel* could indicate that these are nine *inanimate* objects. In all fairness to Shakespeare, however, we must admit that in the end he finally figured it out, giving us "nine moons" [2,Oth.] which comes close enough to nine planets. Curiously, Wikipedia thinks the planet Neptune was unknown prior to 1846!

OBSCURE CORRELATIONS

Some of the correlations between Nostradamus and the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare are so obscure that they are very difficult to find. In the event that someone might wish to compile a complete account of all the correlations, we will here give an example of what we are referring to:

Marlowe:

Such Ariadne was, when she bewails,
Her perjured Theseus' flying vows and sails [5,e].

Shakespeare:

Madam, 'twas Ariadne passioning
For Theseus' perjury and unjust flight [2,TGV].

Nostradamus, however, does not mention Ariadne or Theseus anywhere in his text, but look at the following:

Nostradamus:

Chassez bannis & liures censurez,
L'an mil six cens & sept par sacre glomes [1,VIII-71].

Chased out, banished, and books censured, The year thousand six hundred & seven by sacred ball of thread.

Key to solving this is the word "glomes," a Frenchification of the Latin *glomus* which refers to a ball of thread. In Greek mythology, Ariadne gave a ball of thread to Theseus so that he could find his way out of the Labyrinth of Crete. Meanwhile, the citations refer to *fleeing* and *flight* which equate with *Chased out, banished* and seal the correlation.

One further word of advice: researchers should rely as much as possible on the original text of the First Folio or the Second Folio. Recall the *I cannot tell wat is buisse in English* where Project Gutenberg's source changed *buisse* to *baiser* because it made more sense, inadvertently destroying an important cipher. For the Third Folio, *English* was changed to *English* (as if Shakespeare did not know how to spell that word!), severely upsetting the correlation with *Anglicque*.

THE INCANTATION

Beyond the numbered prophecies (written in French) now extracted from Nostradamus by means of the correlations, the Nostradamus text contains one unnumbered incantation written entirely in Latin. Unlike the prophecies, it has a title: *Legis cantio contra ineptos criticos*, *Incantation of the Law Against Inept Critics*.

Nostradamus:

Quos legent hosce versus **maturè** censunto,
 Profanum vulgus, & inscium ne attractato,
 Omnesq; Astrologi **Blenni**, **Barbari procul sunt**,
Qui aliter facit, is ritè, sacer esto [1].

Let those who read these verses, consider them maturely, May the profane, the vulgar, and the ignorant be not attracted, That all Astrologers, Retards, Barbarians stay far away, He who does otherwise, be he sacred by rite.

Shakespeare:

EVANS. It is **qui**, quae, quod; if you forget your qui's, your quae's, and your **quod's**, you must be **preeches**. Go your ways and play; **go** [2, *Wiv.*].

Scholars believe "preeches" is a misprint for *breeched*, from where we would surmise *you must be spanked*. By misspelling "b" as "p" Shakespeare draws attention to a word beginning with the letter "b": *Blenni* refers to stupid people and fits perfectly well with forgetting your quod's.

Shakespeare:

But stay, I'll **read** it **over once again**.
 QUEEN. Ah, **barbarous** villains! ... [2, *2H6*].

To read it *over once again* equates with to read it *maturely*, and elsewhere Shakespeare gives us yet another "Read it again" [2, *AWW*]. Indeed, to understand the mind of Shakespeare, and how he arrives at some of the strange things that he says, it would be very helpful to go back and read our illustrations maturely, that is, read them again and ponder on them.

In total, the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare correlate with thirty-nine prophecies and one incantation.

MERLIN

It seems that in times gone past, Britain had a prophet of its own. In the late Middle Ages and until the emergence of Nostradamus, Merlin, the Welsh sage, was Europe's most widely-read prophet.

In Shakespeare's time, King Arthur and Merlin were believed to have been genuine historical personages. Today, everyone knows that Merlin was only a mythological wizard who served a legendary king. It is easy to see how the myth arose:

Nostradamus:

En l'an cinq cens octante plus & moins [1,VI-2].

In the year five hundred eighty more or less.

Why is a 16th-century seer referring to A.D. 580, a year in the midst of the Dark Ages and apparently a time when nothing significant was happening? Isn't a seer supposed to prophesy about *future* events, not past events?

Wikipedia cites the *Annales Cambriae*, which recorded for the year A.D. 573, that *after* "the battle of Arfderydd, between the sons of Eliffer and Gwenddolau son of Ceidio; in which battle Gwenddolau fell; Merlin went mad." Note that *after* A.D. 573 brings us to the A.D. 580 approximation seen in Nostradamus.

By association with Vortigern and King Arthur, Merlin dates to the 5th century but the 580 date forces his re-emergence a hundred years later. Though Merlin himself may not be real, there can be no doubt about writings in his name: In the early 12th century, Geoffrey of Monmouth translated (from British into Latin) and then *published* prophetic writings attributed to Merlin [8].

And now a question: Is there any connection between the prophecies of Merlin as published by Geoffrey of Monmouth and the thirty-nine stanzas of Nostradamus to which the plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare repeatedly allude?

Geoffrey's account of Merlin's prophecies includes the following words: *Britanniae, draco, rubeus, ignis, expulsum, sanguine, Gallicanos, sceptrum, Africana, flores, templis, fruticosos, fratres, aquila, civitatum, ruinae, gentis, fluviam, tremebunt, Arabes, saecula, pax, tempore, Boreas, mortem, terra, rex, flamma, naves, timore, nocturno, Orienti, ferro, nationis, regni, fulgor, Mercurii, and Aries*. Do any of these words look familiar? And there are also words that we did not get a chance to cover, such as the adjective *aquilonares* found in Nostradamus [1,I-49] and the noun *aquilo* (Aquilon) that we find in Nostradamus [1,X-86], in Marlowe [5,f], and in Shakespeare [2,*Tro.*].

Adriane (poetic spelling of Ariadne) also appears. The city of *Londonia* (frequently used for correlation purposes) is mentioned eight times. The Venus eclipse is referred to as *Venus deseret statutas lineas* and there is also a chariot to the Moon, *currus Lunae*. And while Marlowe and Shakespeare associate Neptune with Venus to get a watery Venus, Geoffrey's source associates it with the *blancheur*, giving us *Phoebus aequoreus*, watery Sun!

In his biography of Merlin (*Vita Merlini*), Geoffrey of Monmouth adds more words including *thiten* (Thita) and *tagus* (el tago). Curiously, Geoffrey's books seem to function just like the Marlovian and Shakespearean plays, that is, as pointers to Merlin's prophecies. Evidently, the larger work (if it ever existed) that held and masked these prophecies in the 12th century has not survived. By the 13th century, Inquisitions had acquired a fondness for the burning of books.

In his *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Geoffrey recounts a classic tale about Merlin. It goes something like this: King Vortigern ordered an edifice to be built but every night the construction work for that day sank into the ground and disappeared. The king's magicians told him it was a curse that could only be fixed by killing someone who never had a father and by pouring his blood on the ground. They found the fatherless Merlin for this sacrifice. But Merlin told the king that there was a lake below the ground, and in the lake two dragons were fighting, causing the ground to tremble and the edifice to sink into the lake. The king ordered the ground dug up and they found the lake, and then he ordered the lake drained. Merlin told the king that at the bottom they will find two hallow stones and inside each stone they will find a sleeping dragon. And so it was.

Nostradamus:

Le tremblement de terre à Mortara,
Cassich saint George à demy perfondrez:

Paix assoupie, la guerre esueillera,
 Dans temple à Pasques abysmes enfondrez [1,IX-31].

*The trembling of ground at Mortara, Encircled, Saint George to one half, demolished,
 Peace soporific, the war shall be awoken, Within the temple on Easter-day, abysses
 opened up.*

Saint George the dragon-slayer gets us a dragon, and the "demy," *half*, makes it two dragons. They are fighting by virtue of the unveiled war in the third line, causing the ground of the first line to tremble. The temple in the last line is the king's edifice that falls into the abyss (*abysmes*), sunk into the ground (*perfondrez*). Mortara apparently alludes to Morgana, popular alternative name of Morgan le Fay, the evil rival of the Lady of the Lake and sometimes identified as the Lady of the Lake herself. This has to be the lake of the Merlin tale. The dragons are asleep when found because of the *assoupie* in the third line, which means *sleeping*.

There is absolutely no doubt about it: Our playwrights were in possession of the original prophecies of Merlin, the great wizard of King Arthur fame!

Wikipedia tells us that the name "Merlin" is derived from the Welsh sage Myrddin, but points out that Welsh scholar Rachel Bromwich has observed that this "change from medial dd > l is curious." Look at the following:

Nostradamus:

Plus **Macelin** que Roy en Angleterre,

...

Son temps s'approche si pres que **ie** souspire [4,VIII-76].

More Macelin than king in England, ... His time approaches so near that I sigh.

Shakespeare correlates on this:

Shakespeare:

This prophecy **Merlin** shall make, for **I** live before **his time** [2,Lr.].

And so, from Shakespeare we learn something new: the name *Merlin* results from a merger of the names *Myrddin* and *Macelin*.

We find more information on Merlin in the play entitled *The Birth of Merlin*, which was published in the name of Shakespeare and Rowley [9]. Wikipedia reports that stylometric research has confirmed Shakespearean authorship of this play, but it seems that the Stratfordians reject it because, as Wikipedia explains, "there is unambiguous evidence that the play was written in 1622, six years after Shakespeare's death." This is not, however, a problem for the anti-Stratfordians who propose a younger (or longer-living) candidate.

The play includes cryptic messages:

The Birth of Merlin:

Is answer of our message yet return'd from that religious man, the holy Hermit, sent by the Earl of Chester to confirm us in that miraculous act? [9]

A "holy hermit" is also found in the Bacon's *New Atlantis* and again in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*; connections among them cannot be ruled out. An Earl of Chester existed during Arthurian times but his role in the Merlin play appears to be exaggerated. William Stanley, a Shakespearean candidate, had strong ties to the city of Chester; moreover, he was bequeathed the sum of "thirteen pounds six shillings eight pence" (see Curiosity #5 above) by his brother Ferdinando.

Confirm us? Who else?

The Birth of Merlin:

The DRAGON is your Emblem, bear it bravely [9].

The word DRAGON (all caps) appears in the original 1662 publication of this play. And this "Emblem" appears elsewhere:

Marlowe:

surgat Mephistophilis DRAGON, quod tumeraris [5,j].

A Project Gutenberg footnote reports that DRAGON (all caps) was inserted into later quarto publications of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*. They wanted to bring us here, but why? For one thing, it gives us a devil (Mephistophilis) and text written in Latin, perhaps suggesting that the Devil himself writes in Latin. Marlowe's play is based on a German-

language chapbook, called *Faustbuch*, which was published anonymously in the city of Frankfurt, September 1587. Among all Shakespearean candidates, only John Florio, who grew up in Germany and was educated at the famed university of Tübingen (where in 1588 the *Faustbuch* was printed in rhyming verse), may have been capable of writing the original *Faustbuch*. In his Testament, Florio acknowledges the reality of "forged" Wills and asserts that his Will is genuine, but then he gives no last name on a bequest to Artur (King Arthur), refers to his daughter Elizabeth by the name of Aurelia (King Aurelius), and alludes to Merlin's prophecies in ways that put the plays to shame.

In the Merlin play, the Devil takes a fancy to an earthling called Joan, and he goes in hot pursuit of her:

The Birth of Merlin:

Joan. Hence thou black horror, is thy lustful fire kindled agen? not thy loud throated thunder, nor thy adulterate infernal Musick, shall e're bewitch me more, oh too too much is past already.

Devil. Why dost thou fly me? I come a Lover to thee, to imbrace, and gently twine thy body in mine arms.

Joan. Out thou Hell-hound.

The last line, combined with the *black horror* above, reminds us of Shakespeare's "Away, you Ethiope!" [2,*MND*] and the "swarthy Ethiope" [2,*TGV*] of Proteus who, like Merlin, was able to change forms. Anyway, to make a long story short, Joan wound up pregnant and gave birth to Merlin, the son of the Devil. The play ends as follows:

The Birth of Merlin:

All future times shall still record this **Story**,
Of *Merlin's* learned worth, and *Arthur's* **glory** [9].

This too reminds of us of Shakespeare:

Shakespeare:

For perjurd Sinon, whose enchanting **story**
The credulous Old Priam after slew;
Whose words, like **wildfire**, burnt the shining **glory** [2,*Luc.*].

The Birth of Merlin:

Wilde-fire and **Brimstone** eat thee. Hear me sir [9].

Marlowe:

What book! why, the most intolerable book for conjuring
that e'er was invented by any **brimstone** devil [5,j].

Perhaps Merlin did not engrave his prophecies into glowing stardust after all, but rather
into burning brimstone from hell!

Finally, let's note that there is a Shakespearean passage that simultaneously refers to a
multiplicity of Merlin's prophecies.

Shakespeare:

Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,
And of a dragon and a finless fish,
A clip-wing'd griffin and a moulted raven [2,1H4]

Nostradamus:

[a dragon]
Cassich saint George à demy perfondrez [1,IX-31]

[a finless fish]
Es lieux & temps chair au poisson donra lieu [1,IV-32]

[a clip-wing griffin]
Comme vn gryphon viendra le Roy d'Europe [1,X-86]

[a moulted raven]
L'oiseau royal sur la cité solaire [1,V-81]

Some have claimed that "moulted" means *molted*, but one can find many examples from
the 16th and 17th centuries where "moulted" means *molten*, quite sensible for a bird flying
over the city of the Sun.

THE CATHARS

Major components of Shakespeare's account of Merlin were not taken from British
sources but rather from the French poet Robert de Boron who is, according to

Wikipedia, "credited with introducing Merlin as born of a devil and a virgin and destined to be a redeemed Antichrist." De Boron lived around the end of the 12th century, shortly before the Albigensian Crusade (the second crusade of Innocent III following the misguided Fourth Crusade that captured the city of Zara and then sacked the city of Constantinople) whose objective was to exterminate the Cathar heresy in southern France. Scholars are surprised by the brutality of the crusaders who were given a mandate to kill them all. (Surely, Merlin's accurate prediction of the fiasco of the Fourth Crusade did not make the Pope the laughingstock of southern France?) Estimates of the death toll range up to one million, men, women, and children; the Inquisition then finished off any survivors. And so the Cathars became extinct, but legend has it that they educated the orphaned Christian Rosenkreutz, and through him their legacy lived on.

On 14 March 1244, four Cathars reportedly made a daring escape from the fortress of Montségur (the last stronghold of the Cathars then under siege by the crusaders), carrying with them the great treasure of the Cathari. Speculations on the nature of this treasure range from the Holy Grail to ancient manuscripts found by the Knights Templar beneath the ruins of the Temple in Jerusalem. Classical treasures like gold and silver have also been mentioned but this seems unlikely as the Cathars placed little value on such things.

A distinct possibility is that the treasure was something the crusaders wanted to destroy rather than retain, such as something perceived to have been written by the devil. Perhaps thinking that this treasure remained hidden inside the fortress, the crusaders dismantled it stone by stone, and later the Inquisition tortured those who might know the whereabouts of the escapees. But they failed to recover the treasure and one can only wonder: Did this treasure eventually find its way to England and into the hands of our playwrights? We ponder on this because in the second prose introduction to his prophecies, in a sentence where he refers to prophetic stanzas (were they not all supposed to be prophetic?), Nostradamus tells us that the present date is 14 March (see above) "1547" [4], unquestionably an error for 14 March "1557" [1] as found in most editions. But the prose writings of Nostradamus are packed full of ciphers, that is, Nostradamus may have wished to emphasize the number "4" which is abundantly seen in the year 1244.

Is it purely coincidental that Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote his *Prophetiae Merlini* (A.D. 1130s) on the eve of a surge in Catharism, not long after the conquest of Jerusalem (A.D. 1099), and shortly after the Knights Templar established their headquarters on the

Temple Mount (A.D. 1120)? Perhaps our playwrights were mistaken in believing that Merlin was half British: the expanded legends of King Arthur may have arisen only as an assumption because the prophecies themselves frequently referred to the British and their kings. Though it may seem like Shakespeare read every book ever written, he apparently never saw the older sections of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or he would have known that *Macelin* does not refer to the prophet Merlin. The same applies to Geoffrey. In all probability, Merlin never existed, leaving us with yet another authorship mystery: Who wrote the prophecies attributed to him?

A BRIEF NOTE ON AUTHORSHIP

If William Shakspeare did not write the works attributed to him, then who did? Instead of voicing an opinion, we prefer to leave this question for literary historians to answer. It is anticipated, however, that information provided in this essay will help them to narrow down the field and quickly determine the true authors. For example, we now know that we need to find candidates who were expert in Latin by the mid 1580s (the translations of Marlowe), candidates who had acquired considerable strength in the French language, candidates with connections to the London theater giving rise to plays as the medium for publishing their guide to Merlin's prophecies, candidates with lots of money to finance expensive publications (on the finest paper) and the construction of monuments in England and France, candidates with enough political clout to maintain secrecy under Queen Elizabeth and afterwards under King James, and candidates who were still alive in 1623 (First Folio) and beyond.

Though many of the revisions for the Second Folio of 1632 could have been made by any good editor, some of them strongly point to Shakespearean authorship. For example, when we see that *Would not haue stayn'd with blood* was amended to *Would not have stayn'd the roses just with blood*, we have to conclude that the change from *Rosincrance* to *Rosincros* was indeed intended to allude to their secret society. Meanwhile, crazy ciphers like *buisse* for *baiser* and *scowle* for *scrawl* were left intact, which effectively rules out assignment of the revision work to an outsider. At least one of the original authors had to live past the 1623 publication of the First Folio in order to revise it. The academic community, dominated by the Stratfordians, rejects the Second Folio (forcing retreat to the First Folio) only because it is highly unlikely that Shakspeare (who died in 1616) could have made those changes, giving us yet another instance of where Stratfordian obstinacy is damaging our literary heritage. Most of us will never get to see the final version of those plays let alone pay tribute to the true authors [10].

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This essay has demonstrated that the translations, poems and plays of Marlowe as well as the poems and plays of Shakespeare contain peculiarities that specifically identify thirty-nine of the more than nine hundred prophecies of Nostradamus. It was also shown that these same thirty-nine prophecies correlate with abstracts of the prophecies of Merlin as published by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12th century.

More than merely identifying the prophecies of Merlin, the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare attempt to explain and interpret those prophecies and occasionally they also attempt to clarify the Latin to French translation of those prophecies. In effect, there can be little doubt that the same author or authors were actively engaged in the redaction of at least a part of the each work attributed to Marlowe and Shakespeare. There is no evidence (and it is not even remotely credible) that Shakspere of Stratford could have written the works of Marlowe.

Marlowe and Shakespeare reveal such profound knowledge of the Nostradamus prophecies that we can suspect that they themselves (and/or close associates) actually wrote the nine hundred prophecies not attributed to Merlin. This, of course, runs contrary to countless online biographies of Nostradamus that contend that he began publishing his prophecies in 1555 and that these prophecies rapidly became famous all across Europe. To support this contention, however, historians would need to find an Elizabethan author, poet or playwright who refers to Nostradamus by name, or else refute the claim that the Benoist Rigaud edition dated 1568 is a revision of the Iaqués Rosseau edition dated 1590. Otherwise we are led to the conclusion that the redaction of the Nostradamus prophecies occurred more or less simultaneously with the initiation of the playwriting project.

This essay has also insinuated that destruction of Merlin's prophecies was the real objective of the crusade that annihilated the Cathars in the 13th century. There was therefore reason to fear a new crusade, this time directed against England, whereby all of Catholic Europe would join forces with the Spanish (already undertaking efforts to conquer England) to exterminate the English Protestants and to track down and burn all copies of the First Folio. As Hamlet phrased it just after referring to the powers of the devil: "The play's the thing." For sure, the decision to publish Merlin's prophecies as a secret weapon against the Counter Reformation was a dangerous one.

Consequently, for the upper echelon of English royalty who were responsible for the writing and publication of Nostradamus (Merlin), Marlowe, and Shakespeare, the protection offered by the Shakespeare pen name was a matter of life and death. The Inquisition, when and if re-established in England, would burn them alive. In such circumstances, they had motive to retroactively rewrite the history of England, forging all types of documents and civil records on a massive scale. Thus, we find a clerical "error" saying that Shakspeare planned to marry someone called Anne Whately and another clerical "error" saying that Shakspeare's paternal grandfather went by the name of Richard Shakstaff. Similarly, an astrologer by the name of Nostradamus may have never existed as we see indications that his numerous *Almanachs* were backdated forgeries instigated by the aforementioned Chavigny during the 1590s.

The thirty-nine prophecies of Merlin are, for the most part, virtually indistinguishable from the some nine hundred prophecies that were newly written, which in turn explains the need for writing a guide (the First Folio) to locate Merlin. In addition to the two French introductions to Nostradamus, insider knowledge of the prophecies has been found in books written in the Italian (*Giovanna Graia*), German (*Fama Fraternitatis*), and Latin (*Nova Atlantis*) languages, suggesting a Shakespearean role in the redaction of those works. These foreign-language writings also provide a cryptic history of their activities. Hence, there is no mystery about who wrote the Shakespeare canon and why they did it. They did not want the matter of Shakespearean authorship to remain a secret forever. They only wanted this matter to remain beyond the comprehension of the Inquisition and their colleagues in ignorance, namely, literary scholars.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

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Several editions are still extant. The specific edition cited for our illustrations was labeled *Chomarat 96* by bibliographers. A facsimile of this edition is available for free download in PDF format from the website *prophecies.it*. Numbers, beginning with a Roman numeral, were created by Nostradamus to uniquely identify each of his quatrains. These numbers are provided for prophecies attributed to Merlin.

2. The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, by

William Shakespeare:

Ado, Much Ado About Nothing; *Ant.*, The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra; *AWW*, Alls Well that Ends Well; *AYL*, As You Like It; *Cor.*, The Tragedy of Coriolanus; *Cym.*, Cymbeline; *Err.*, The Comedy of Errors; *Ham.*, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark; *1H4*, The First Part of King Henry the Fourth; *2H4*, Second Part of King Henry IV; *H5*, The Life of King Henry the Fifth; *1H6*, The First Part of King Henry the Sixth; *2H6*, The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth; *3H6*, The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth; *H8*, King Henry the Eighth; *JC*, The Tragedy of Julius Caesar; *Jn.*, King John; *LLL*, Love's Labour's Lost; *Lr.*, The Tragedy of King Lear; *Luc.*, The Rape of Lucrece; *Mac.*, The Tragedy of Macbeth; *MM*, Measure for Measure; *MND*, A Midsummer Night's Dream; *MV*, The Merchant of Venice; *Oth.*, The Tragedy of Othello, Moor of Venice; *R2*, King Richard the Second; *R3*, King Richard the Third; *Rom.*, The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet; *Shr.*, The Taming of the Shrew; *Son.*, The Sonnets; *TGV*, The Two Gentlemen from Verona; *Tim.*, The Life of Timon of Athens; *Tit.*, The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus; *Tmp.*, The Tempest; *TN*, Twelfth Night, Or, What You Will; *Tro.*, The History of Troilus and Cressida; *Ven.*, Venus and Adonis; *Wiv.*, The Merry Wives of Windsor; *WT*, The Winter's Tale. Correlations were found in all thirty-six plays of the First Folio and in all of the longer poetry including the Sonnets. It seems fair to conclude that the real Shakespeare, whoever he might be, was absolutely obsessed with Merlin's prophecies.

3. THE TRUE PROPHECIES OR PROGNOSTICATIONS OF Michael Nostradamus, PHYSICIAN TO Henry II. Francis II. and Charles IX. KINGS of FRANCE ... Translated and Commented by THEOPHILUS de GARENCIERES, Doctor in Physick ... LONDON, Printed by Thomas Ratcliffe, and Nathaniel Thompson, ... 1672. Garençières' text follows the Nostradamus numbering system and therefore citations can be quickly found by reference to the Nostradamus number.

4. LES PROPHECIES DE Me. MICHEL. NOSTRADAMVS. Dont il y en a trois cens qui n'ont encores iamais esté imprimees. Adioutees de nouveau par ledict Authour. A LYON, PAR IEAN HVG VETAN M.DC.XXVII. Technical analysis reveals that this edition (or possibly a lost edition that it copies) was very likely the printing of a backup manuscript and thus it has considerable value despite the late publication date. A facsimile of this edition is available for free download in PDF format from the website propheties.it.

5. The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Works of Christopher Marlowe, Individual

Plays plus Vol. 3, by Christopher Marlowe:

a. Edward II; b. First Book of Lucan; c. Hero and Leander; d. Massacre at Paris; e. Ovid's Elegies; f. Tamburlaine the Great, Part I; g. Tamburlaine the Great, Part II; h. The Jew of Malta; i. The Tragedy of Dido Queene of Carthage; j. The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus. Note that Marlowe (who may not have lived very long) wrote far less than Shakespeare, thus the heavy correlations with Nostradamus are especially significant.

6. One must not surmise that Marlowe, a major Shakespearean candidate, is the real Shakespeare. In circumstances where William Shakspere of Stratford did not write the works attributed to Shakespeare, there can be no guarantee that Christopher Morley (Privy Council spelling) of Canterbury wrote everything that is attributed to Marlowe. Per all historical accounts, Marlowe died on May 30, 1593. Per a decoding of cryptic writings (alluded to in our comments), Marlowe was on board a ship that was last seen in the South Seas on September 7, 1595, a little more than two years after his official death. Either way, he could not have written the Shakespearean canon.

7. Project Gutenberg Etext of The Reign of King Edward the Third, attributed in part to William Shakespeare. Wikipedia, in its article on this play, notes that Act III, Scenes i and ii, from where our citations come, were attributed to Christopher Marlowe by Hartmut Ilsemann (2014).

8. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophetiae Merlini* was written, per Wikipedia, between 1130 and 1135, and was later incorporated into his larger work called *Historia Regum Britanniae*, published in the original Latin by The Medieval Academy of America, 1951, from where our citations come. Note that Geoffrey comments on more than two hundred prophecies but apparently only thirty-nine of them survived to reach our playwrights. The Roffet, Roger, and Ménier editions of Nostradamus refer to *trente neuf articles* on their title page. Geoffrey provides additional coverage of Merlin's prophecies in his *Vita Merlini* (The Life of Merlin) written, per Wikipedia, around 1150. A book called *Mirabilis Liber*, dated 1524, may also contain commentary (originating in medieval times) on Merlin's prophecies.

9. THE BIRTH OF MERLIN: OR, *The Childe hath found his Father*. As it hath been several times Acted with great Applause. Written by *William Shakespear*, and *William Rowley*. *Placere cupio*. LONDON: Printed by *Tho. Johnson* for *Francis Kirkman*, and *Henry Marsh*, and are to be sold at the *Princes Arms* in *Chancery Lane*. 1662. Note that "Shakespear" ends with the modern spelling of *spear* (shaken by Minerva the goddess of

poetry) on the title page, leaving a blank space for the "e" between the "r" and the comma. Wikipedia reports that this play was performed in 1622, and a prolonged delay in publishing it can hardly be surprising in view of the subject matter: Merlin was their great secret and the motive behind the Shakespearean plays. Beyond the title-page attribution and recent stylometric research, thematic considerations and cryptanalysis support a Shakespearean role in the redaction of this fantastical play about Merlin the Prophet who foresees the future on a blazing comet and then promises to build a monument (Stonehenge) to honor his earthling mom!

10. It is entirely possible if not likely that the comedies and tragedies of Shakespeare were the collaborative effort of two great scholars: Collaborator A, educated on the continent, devised the characters and the plot; Collaborator B, educated in England, wrote the plays closely following the outline provided by Collaborator A. Since one person did all or nearly all the writing, this type of collaboration cannot be detected; it can only be inferred from the large disparity between the foreign-language sources that provided the plots and the highly polished English seen in the output. This is not to say that they do not drop hints; for example, when the author of the *Sonnets* tells the Fair Youth "You had a father, let your son say so," we can imagine that the Shakespearean coauthor ("my friend and I are one") was an orphan. After publication of the First Folio (the secret key for the extraction of Merlin's prophecies from the Nostradamus mask), their mission was complete and they would have had no reason (and probably no desire) to write more plays.

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In an effort to promote the truth regarding Shakespearean authorship, this PDF file can be freely distributed to academics and media personnel worldwide on a not-for-profit basis. In case of doubt or special requests, please send email to the author at morten.stgeorge@gmail.com.

More information on the theme of this essay, along with additional evidence and explanations, can be found on the website <http://mortenstgeorge.info> in the Rosicrucian section and in the articles [franz.pdf](#) and [jhb.pdf](#).

Morten St. George has also posted on this theme in the Google Groups discussion [humanities.lit.authors.shakespeare](#) under "Influence of Merlin and Nostradamus on Shakespeare" and other threads.