

New book sheds light on doubts about Shakespeare's First Folio authorship

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Court plays and the 1623 deception

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A new book launched this month, April 2016, entitled 'Shakespeare Unravelling. Court plays: the 1623 deception' delves into the rich history and controversy surrounding William Shakespeare's First Folio of 1623. The book argues that the plays in this publication were brought together because of their significance for the Sidney-Herbert family, patrons of poets and playwrights over many generations.

Pauline Black, researcher and co-author says "A key point here is that these plays were produced for Elizabethan and Jacobean court entertainment not the popular stage. These thought-provoking dramas were written for the intelligentsia by well-educated writers --certainly not by the attributed author, Shakespeare." The book launch coincides with William Shakespeare's Anniversary (April 23rd) throwing new light on a highly contentious issue subject.

The book looks into the reasons which prompted the concealed authorship, principally the fear of Spanish domination at the time because of the impending royal marriage of Crown Prince Charles and a Spanish Princess. This outcome could incur severe repression of English freedom of expression. The Protestant aristocracy, led by William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, were determined to preserve their literary and historical heritage. This included the Tudor royal legitimacy dramatised in the English history plays. The deceased Shakespeare was chosen to avoid potential punishment of writers and editors (a duty of patrons) since he was beyond retribution for heresy or unorthodox writing by a tyrannical power.

Shakespeare Unravelling presents a detailed portrait of William Shakespeare and the period. Shakespeare's parents were illiterate, so were his children. The Bard had limited local schooling and no higher education. Yet the claimed author, a tradesman's son, wrote almost entirely about royalty and the courts of Europe while displaying detailed knowledge of aristocratic life and the law. Without visiting Italy he was aware of the country's history, geography and language. Shakespeare's comprehension of classical texts is another mystery. For centuries there have been doubts about the authorship of the First Folio. Alongside the profile of Shakespeare, play-broker and money lender, the book throws a new spotlight upon popular theatre and its great contrast with entertainment for the court.

The co-authors: Pauline and Michael Black retired to Eastbourne from London over a decade ago and have spent much of that time researching the Shakespeare authorship question. Pauline is a painter and was a graphic designer by profession while Michael's career embraced marketing communications.

Further information:

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'Shakespeare Unravelling' is available on Amazon

(<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Shakespeare-Unravelling-Court-Plays-Deception/dp/0993561209>) and in selected bookshops.

Complimentary copies for press available on request contact michael.black2011@btinternet.com