THOMAS SACKVILLE AND THE

SHAKESPEAREAN GLASS SLIPPER

BOOK TWO of

A 'Third Way' Shakespeare Authorship Scenario

Sabrina Feldman

The front cover illustration is John Faed's 1851 painting *Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, also known as *Shakespeare and His Friends at the Mermaid Tavern*. The three standing figures in the back, from left to right, are the poet Joshua Sylvester (who honored Thomas Sackville after his 1608 death as a poet who had been secretly devoted to the muses), the legal scholar John Selden, and the playwright Francis Beaumont. Seated at table from left are the historian William Camden, the poet-statesman Thomas Sackville (then Earl of Dorset, and perhaps the real Shakespeare?), the playwright John Fletcher, the essayist Sir Francis Bacon, the poet Ben Jonson (who organized the 1623 First Folio project), the poet John Donne (who praised the "E. of D."'s poetry above that of all his peers), the poet Samuel Daniel, the actor-playwright William Shakespeare, the courtier poet Sir Walter Raleigh, the Earl of Southampton (the Fair Youth of *Shake-Speare's Sonnets*), the antiquarian Sir Robert Cotton, and the playwright Thomas Dekker. Figure identifications are provided in *The World's Best Essays from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, edited by David J. Brewer in ten volumes (St. Louis: Ferd. Kaiser, 1900; see engraving facing page 1491 of Vol. 4).

The back cover illustration is the undated portrait *Thomas Sackville, 1st Earl of Dorset*, by John De Critz the Elder (died 1647).

For my friend Bob Grumman, in memoriam.

February 2, 1941 – April 2, 2015.

To know Thomas Sackville—to know his two poems and one play—is to know where Elizabethan tragedy came from and where it was going.

(Normand Berlin, 1974)

The overused term "Renaissance man" once had specific validity, signifying the zeal, energy, and virtu of an era as well as designating those scholars, statesmen, and poets of one of histories most glorious and adventuresome periods, especially in Great Britain. Virtu represented a concept of doing many things well, of strength and excellence and of an appreciation for the arts equally matched by martial capabilities. What today is thought of as "virtue" was, at its root meaning, that for which the complete courtier strove. Such was the Englishman Thomas Sackville, first earl of Dorset.

(Wayne Narey, 2004)

Contents

Legend

MANY YEARS AGO a child was born in England. As he lay in his cradle, the nine muses gathered around the infant to grace him with their gifts. Fair-voiced Calliope taught him to love epic poetry, while her sister Clio gave him a fascination with history. Erato made the baby a supreme poet of romance, and Euterpe and Terpsichore graced him with the spirit of music and dance. From Polyhymnia the child learned to see the divinity in nature. Thalia infused the infant with the merry spirit of comedy, and Urania turned his eyes to the stars.

One muse loved this child best of all—Melpomene, the muse of tragedy. She gave him words at will, the ability to draw effortlessly from her powers so that he might become the greatest poet England had ever known. After the baby had been blessed by all the muses the grey-eyed goddess Athena approached, taking him upon her lap and giving him many kisses. The goddess of wisdom was so captivated by the child that she built a bower in his brain and lodged herself there to show her princely power to the world.*

*A prose adaptation of George Turberville's verse tribute to Thomas Sackville, from the preface to his 1576 *Tragical Tales*. Turberville's original verse tribute is reprinted in Chapter 9 (*Love's Labour's Lost*).

Introduction

I can never bring you to realize the importance of sleeves, the suggestiveness of thumbnails, or the great issues that may hang from a bootlace.

Sherlock Holmes in *A Case of Identity*. By Arthur Conan Doyle, 1891.

THIS BOOK IS about a preeminent Elizabethan poet and statesman, Thomas Sackville (1536—1608). Although he is now little known, students of English literature may have come across Sackville as a co-author of the 1561 play *Gorboduc*, believed to be the first blank verse play in English, the first English history play, and the first English play inspired by the dramatic models of ancient Greece and Rome. Sackville's early poetic works paved the way for the great flowering of the Elizabethan drama in the time of Christopher Marlowe and Shakespeare, and for this reason alone he merits interest. I am writing about him here, however, because I believe he may have been even more important to English literature than has yet been recognized. In fact, I believe Sackville did not just influence Shakespeare's works, but *wrote* them.

The idea that someone other than William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon wrote the Bard's works is not new, of course. Indeed, it was first proposed over a century and a half ago. In the intervening years dozens of alternate authorship candidates have been put forward, and thousands of books and articles have been written on the authorship question. Despite this outpouring of ink, prominent Shakespeare scholars have yet to doubt William's authorship. This lack of traditional scholarly interest is certainly a valid point against authorship skepticism. The fundamental problem is that none of the alternative authorship candidates proposed thus far have been sufficiently credible. They either demonstrably didn't write like Shakespeare, or died too soon, or came into the world too late, or were generally less plausible than William himself.

There can be no real doubt that William Shakespeare was widely accepted by his peers as the author of the Shakespeare canon. He is memorialized as the great author in a monument erected in the Stratford church, as well as in the 1623 First Folio. The Folio alludes to William as a "sweet swan of Avon," and mentions his "Stratford Monument." Although authorship skeptics often seek to deny it, there is clear evidence that William was generally known to his contemporaries as both a writer and an actor. The only way to argue that another man wrote the Bard's works is to postulate that the Stratford actor was a successful front man for a hidden aristocratic poet, and that this deliberate authorship deception was known only to small circle of people who closely guarded the secret. Otherwise there are too many unresolvable contradictions in the records.

But why argue against William in the first place? My own journey from belief to skepticism to advocacy for a new authorship scenario took place as follows.

I was vaguely aware in my 20s and early 30s that some people (whom I assumed were crazy) believed Francis Bacon might have been Shakespeare. However, I first learned in earnest about the authorship question from the April 1999 *Harper's Magazine* cover story "The Ghost of Shakespeare: Who, In Fact, Was the Bard?," with five short articles by traditional Shakespeare scholars and another five by people arguing that Shakespeare was really Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, the currently leading alternative authorship candidate.

(In the authorship debate, proponents of William Shakespeare are often called Stratfordians, while the skeptics are grouped together as anti-Stratfordians. Advocates for particular candidates are known as Oxfordians, Baconians, Marlovians, and so on. I am thus a "Sackvillian," or as my Stratfordian friend Bob Grumman once punned, a "Sackvillain.")

After reading all the Stratfordian and Oxfordian arguments, I found the Shakespeare authorship question to be the most fascinating literary whodunit of all time. I was surprised to learn how many prominent writers, thinkers, and Shakespearean actors were authorship skeptics, including Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Henry James, Sigmund Freud, Mark Rylance, and Derek Jacobi. I had never seen William's six surviving signatures before, all attached to legal documents, and was amazed that they looked so unpracticed and were all spelled differently. I had never paid any serious attention to the contents of William's will before; I only knew that he had infamously bequeathed to his wife no more than his "second best bed." I was truly surprised by the will's uncharitable and businesslike tone—so different from what I would have intuitively expected from the great renaissance spirit of the author of the canon.

I also hadn't realized previously that William's parents and even his children either signed with a mark or were barely capable of forming their own names, indicating their likely illiteracy. Nor had I known that none of his books, letters, or manuscripts survive. Among the mundane records that did survive, many reflect poorly on him. For instance, even though William had become wealthy by the late 1590s, he still hoarded grain during a famine, dodged his taxes in London, and sued aggressively to recover small sums of

William Shakespeare's six surviving signatures are all spelled differently, and do not appear to be those of a practiced writer.

money. Mark Twain was so outraged by the standard nineteenth century biographies of Shakespeare, which papered over the little that is actually known about his life with vast tissues of speculation, that he compared them to the construction of a colossal brontosaur skeleton on display at the New York Museum of Natural History: "We had nine bones, and we built the rest of him out of plaster of paris. We ran short of plaster of paris, or we'd have built a brontosaur that could sit down beside the Stratford Shakespeare and none but an expert could tell which was biggest or contained the most plaster."

These were not my only reasons for questioning the traditional authorship belief. I was astonished to learn of Shakespeare's vast array of specialized knowledge as revealed in his writings—knowledge of Italian geography and customs, Italian literature, the law, aristocratic sports, people and events associated with the early Elizabethan court, and many other topics which make little or no sense in the context of William Shakespeare's life. I was also struck by the biographical parallels that could be drawn between the Earl of Oxford's life and certain episodes or passages in Shakespeare's writings. (Nearly all of these parallels work as well or better for Thomas Sackville, plus some compelling new ones—but I didn't know that then.) Finally, I found it odd that when Shakespeare's sonnets were first published in 1609, the prefatory materials paid tribute to the poems' "ever-living author," which in poetic parlance usually means an already dead author.

Long before I learned about the authorship controversy, I had loved Shakespeare's plays. My parents took me to a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when I was in elementary school, but my deep interest in Shakespeare awoke during my junior year in high school, when my English teacher showed our class the 1980 BBC production of *Hamlet* with Derek Jacobi in the leading role. After that I was hooked. I became an undergraduate and graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley, where I attended plays performed by the Berkeley Shakespeare Company (later the California Shakespeare Company) whenever possible. I also took a wonderful class on Shakespeare from Stephen Booth. Because I was already so interested in Shakespeare's works, when I first learned about the authorship problem in 1999 I felt an intense desire to know who really wrote them.

For the next eight years I read widely in my spare time on all sides of the authorship debate, including more than a dozen traditional biographies of William Shakespeare and all of the leading books for the Earl of Oxford, Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, the Earl of Derby, etc. I would then have called myself an Oxfordian, but the authorship question continued to exert a powerful hold on my imagination because none of the existing theories quite made sense to me, or encompassed *all* the available evidence. In particular, I was puzzled by the implications of the following: the London writer Robert Greene's 1592 attack on William Shakespeare as an untrustworthy actor and hack playwright in his posthumously published pamphlet *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*; the dating problem posed by Edward de Vere's 1604 death; the existence of the Stratford Monument; the testimony of the 1623 First Folio; and the fascinating paragraph "de

Shakespeare Nostrati" from Ben Jonson's notebook, most likely written in the early 1630s, which seems to be a straightforward endorsement of William Shakespeare as the true Bard.

My own fateful venture into the authorship controversy began in 2007, soon after Google Books and other historical and literary resources sprang up on the internet. Many rare and out-of-print works by Elizabethan and Jacobean authors had become universally available for the first time, offering an unprecedented opportunity to explore materials that even Shakespeare scholars might have overlooked or ignored. Suddenly my dream of resolving the question of Shakespeare's identity became less far-fetched.

If Shakespeare had been a nobleman unwilling to write for the disreputable public theaters under his own name, as many authorship doubters have speculated, I was sure that William Shakespeare could not have represented the Bard's poetry as his own without being detected by at least some members of London's intimate literary world of the 1590s and early 1600s. Some of William's contemporaries who knew or suspected an authorship deception would surely have alluded to the matter in their topical and satirical works, even if custom, manners, and severe censorship laws constrained them from openly revealing the author's identity. Indeed, quite a few satirical references to William Shakespeare as a clownish and inept poet, and contemporary allusions to a major hidden aristocratic poet, were already known. I wondered whether other such evidence might have been overlooked on both sides of the authorship debate. Thus on one night in September of 2007, I began reading the prefatory verses to Edmund Spenser's 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene* with an open mind concerning the authorship question.

One of Spenser's dedicatory sonnets surprised me: his tribute to "the Lord of Buckhurst, one of her Majesty's Privy Council." I had never heard of Lord Buckhurst, but Spenser praised his "golden verse," "lofty numbers," and "heroic style." Spenser even declared that Buckhurst was "much more fit" than he to write a work such as *The Faerie Queene*, had Buckhurst had the leisure to do so. Spenser added that Buckhurst's "dainty pen" could file the "gross defaults" of his own work, the product of a "baser wit." While Spenser was not above ingratiating himself to the powerful, it seemed to me that he sincerely considered Buckhurst to be a superior poet. I decided to learn more about this intriguing lord.

As I began combing through the vast resources now available online, the biographical information on Lord Buckhurst (born Thomas Sackville in 1536, made Baron Buckhurst in 1567 and the first Earl of Dorset in 1604) quickly assembled into the authorial glass slipper I was searching for. I was struck time and again by how the facts of Sackville's life seemed to explain Shakespeare's writings far more plausibly than did William Shakespeare's, or any other authorship candidate known to me. For example, his upbringing as Queen Elizabeth's second cousin would explain Shakespeare's knowledge of the exclusive sports of the aristocracy; his journey to Italy would explain Shakespeare's knowledge of Italian geography; and his legal training and interests would explain why Shakespeare's works contain so many intricate and arcane legal references, including to

the 1562 legal trial *Hales v. Petit* so surprisingly lampooned in *Hamlet*.

While I was learning about Sackville's life, I also began reading his poetry and scholarly assessments of his work. Not only was Sackville biographically a plausible authorship candidate, he was artistically credible. His few known youthful poetic works are widely viewed as the best English poetic poetry between the times of Chaucer and Spenser. One literary critic, Edmund Gosse, viewed him as a "great poetic genius, born out of his time." Sackville was drawn to sonnet writing; in 1560, his friend Jasper Heywood lauded his "sweetly sauced and featly fined" sonnets. As a young man, Sackville formulated a grand plan to relate the histories of England's past kings—a plan completed by Shakespeare in his history plays. Sackville also became the father of the Elizabethan drama in 1561 when he co-authored *Gorboduc* with Thomas Norton, a play viewed by Eric Sams as "the manifest source of Shakespeare's lifelong style and idiom."

As a member of the aristocracy, Sackville was subject to a 'stigma of print.' He only printed a handful of works under his name, and these were short commendations of others' works or socially acceptable contributions to an anthology. He never allowed any of his literary works to be printed under his name after 1563, and is reported to have been terribly embarrassed when a literary pirate published *Gorboduc* in 1565. (No aristocrat voluntarily published a play under his own name throughout the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, even though many enjoyed writing plays and masques for court entertainments.)

For centuries scholars assumed that Sackville abandoned poetry in the early 1560s, when he was in his mid-twenties. This belief—along with the nearly three decades separating Sackville's known poetic works from Shakespeare's earliest known works, and Sackville's career as a leading statesman of the period—might explain the near-total neglect of Sackville as a Shakespeare authorship candidate until now. However, the assumption that Sackville quit poetry in his youth was proved to be incorrect when a copy of the lost poem *Sacvyle's Olde Age* was discovered moldering in a Tudor account book in the 1980s. This poem, first published in 1989, shows that Sackville had a deep love for poetry, and devoted many years to writing works that never appeared in print under his name.

He wrote *Sacvyle's Olde Age* as he was nearing forty years old, completing it by 1574. In the poem's concluding lines he announces his plan to set aside frivolous poetry in favor of devotional poetry. Sackville clearly found it embarrassing for a man of his advancing years and social station to be seen as devoted to writing poetic "toys" and "trifles." His resolution to leave frivolous poetry would not last, however. In the early 1580s he translated a popular novel by John Lyly and poems by Samuel Daniel into Italian, and there are indications that he continued writing in secret all his life. In 1602 the English writer Thomas Campion praised Sackville's "public and private poems," which "so divinely" crowned his fame. And after Sackville died in 1608, his friend Joshua Sylvester wrote that he was "to the sacred muses secretly devoted," and had written under a "feigned ghost."

Any new theory should be judged not only by its ability to explain facts that are already known, but also by its ability to make accurate predictions about things yet unknown. If Sackville wrote Shakespeare's works, certain things *should* be true about Sackville. While researching *Thomas Sackville and the Shakespearean Glass Slipper*, I made dozens of tentative predictions to myself about him. I used these to guide my course of reading beyond the limited biographical material available on Sackville's life. In each case, when evidence was available, my speculations were borne out by further research.

To begin, after conjecturing that Sackville had attended the 1575 Kenilworth festivities alluded to in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I discovered his name on a list of attendees. I also suspected that Sackville had been lamed at some point in his life, because in two of Shakespeare's sonnets the author refers to himself as "lame." While it is possible that he meant this in a metaphorical sense, the allusions seem to refer to an actual physical condition. Eventually, I found a passage in one of Sackville's 1587 letters, posted at British History Online, mentioning that he had recently been lamed after a horse kicked him in the leg. After I learned from Stephen Greenblatt's *Will in the World* that Shakespeare seems to have alluded to the 1605 reception of King James at Oxford University in *Macbeth*, I was able to establish that Sackville hosted this reception as Chancellor of Oxford. As a final example, I felt certain that Sackville and Ben Jonson had been friends. However, for many months I was unable to uncover evidence of this. Eventually I typed the combination "Lord Treasurer" and "Ben Jonson" into a Google search bar. From the resulting links, I discovered that after Jonson was released from prison in early 1605, where he had been confined for co-authoring a controversial play, Sackville gave him a dozen cases of palm sack wine in a show of support. Shortly after, Jonson co-dedicated his play *Volpone* to Sackville as Chancellor of Oxford University.

Long after I had satisfied myself that Thomas Sackville had the lifespan, specialized knowledge, habits of mind, and poetic ability to write Shakespeare's works, I remained puzzled by what William Shakespeare's role might have been in an authorship deception. To overturn the long-established belief that William wrote Shakespeare's works, I knew that I must present not only a plausible author but also a satisfactory explanation for why an authorship deception occurred and how it was successfully concealed. I continued reading widely in the Elizabethan and Jacobean literature looking for clues to the authorship problem, particularly focusing on the satirical and topical works of Shakespeare's contemporaries.

My breakthrough came after I began studying the anonymous play *The Taming of A Shrew*, most likely a ~1589 adaptation of the Bard's much better known *The Taming of The Shrew*. Based on the many problems posed by *A Shrew*, which I discuss at length in Chapter 19, I formulated the hypothesis that William began his career in London as a popular but unscrupulous actor-playwright whose first dramatic efforts were enjoyably silly adaptations of works already belonging to his company's repertoire. No sooner had I credited William with the ability to adapt popular plays on his own than I noticed a strange elephant sitting in the room of the traditional authorship belief: the existence of

a second set of plays attributed to William Shakespeare in his own time that modern Shakespeare scholars don't believe he wrote.

There's an old Stratfordian joke that goes like this: "Shakespeare's plays weren't actually written by Shakespeare. They were written by some other guy named Shakespeare." The funny thing is, there could very well have been "some other guy named Shakespeare." According to title page evidence and other usually reliable forms of authorship evidence, this other William Shakespeare wrote, adapted, or co-authored around a dozen surviving plays: *The Taming of A Shrew*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, *Fair Em*, *Locrine*, *Mucedorus*, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, *The Puritan*, *The London Prodigal*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, *The Birth of Merlin*, and perhaps *Double Falsehood* (originally titled *Cardenio*). These plays are usually assigned to the "Shakespeare Apocrypha," but they were evidently accepted as authentic Shakespeare plays by William's contemporaries and near-contemporaries even though they weren't printed in the First Folio. The "other Shakespeare" was also credited with writing six or so Shakespearean "bad quartos," shorter and poetically inferior adaptations of six canonical plays. There are no contemporary records indicating that anyone other than William Shakespeare wrote these apocryphal plays and bad quartos, at least as a co-author or play reviser.

Why was the Stratford actor credited in his lifetime, and for many decades afterwards, with writing two separately authored bodies of work? One possible—even obvious—explanation is that two different men were writing under the same name. In other words, William Shakespeare might have been *both* a legitimate playwright and a front man for the true Bard, a hidden aristocratic poet.

My 2011 book, *The Apocryphal William Shakespeare: Book One of a 'Third Way' Shakespeare Authorship Scenario*, argues that William Shakespeare was the main author of the apocryphal plays and bad quartos, and that Thomas Sackville was the hidden aristocratic poet revered by some members of the Elizabethan literati during the period while Shakespeare's works were being written. It includes many new arguments supporting this scenario, long overlooked in the context of the authorship debate. I called my new theory a 'third way' Shakespeare authorship scenario because it bridges the traditional Stratfordian and anti-Stratfordian camps. My theory embraces William Shakespeare as a legitimate and popular playwright, but argues against his primary authorship of the Shakespeare canon. This could explain why some of William Shakespeare's contemporaries hailed him as a great poet while others mocked him as a literary hack.

Why do I think my 'third way' scenario is an improvement over the traditional authorship belief? Because although the traditional belief best explains the "big picture" (why William Shakespeare was widely accepted by his contemporaries as the author of the Shakespeare canon), it is not actually very good at explaining the "whole picture" (why dozens of secondary puzzle pieces point away from William Shakespeare as the canon's author). For instance, it doesn't provide a satisfying explanation for why Robert Greene attacked William Shakespeare from his deathbed in the 1592 pamphlet *Greene's*

Groatsworth of Wit as an incompetent playwright and plagiarist (according to a common scholarly interpretation of Greene's words). It overlooks the existence of mediocre plays containing wholesale plagiarism from the works of Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, and others that were attributed to William Shakespeare in his own time, either directly or indirectly. It discounts the substantial evidence—including abundant title page testimony—that William Shakespeare wrote many works now considered apocryphal or classified as 'bad quartos.' It appears not to have noticed the stylistic similarities among the apocryphal works which suggest they shared a common author or co-author. It fails to explain why some of the Stratford actor's contemporaries, according to plausible interpretations of their topical satires, repeatedly lampooned him as an incompetent or plagiaristic writer. It disregards or too lightly dismisses the evidence for the existence of a major hidden poet at court. Finally, it does not seem, to many, to satisfactorily connect William Shakespeare's life with the Bard's writings.

Although *The Apocryphal William Shakespeare* argues for Thomas Sackville as the major hidden poet of Shakespeare's time, it merely glances at the case for Sackville as "Shakespeare." That full case is presented here for the first time.

Book Plan for Thomas Sackville and the Shakespearean Glass Slipper

I wrote several versions of this book before finally settling on the current plan. Initially I began with a biographical approach, which I still intend to publish in the future. Thomas Sackville's life is of considerable interest, aside from the Shakespeare authorship question, and no comprehensive biography of Sackville has yet been written. However, my goal here is to make the case for Sackville as clear as possible by explicitly detailing the main reasons why he is an excellent fit to the authorial glass slipper. In essence, I wrote this book in response to the following question: "Why should anyone believe that Thomas Sackville wrote Shakespeare's works, based on internal evidence from the works and their likely composition dates?" Here are my sixty most important reasons why.

I seek here to present the positive case for Sackville based on a close reading of Shakespeare's works, rather than the negative case against William Shakespeare or any other authorship candidate. Even though William is a remarkably poor fit to the glass slipper, I do recognize and even embrace the fact that many good Stratfordian arguments can be made for the Stratford actor as the main author of the Shakespeare canon. At the same time, I believe that an even more compelling case can be made for William as the main author of the apocryphal plays and bad quartos. For my complete authorship theory, readers must also consult *The Apocryphal William Shakespeare*.

In this book, my focus is on constructing an authorial "glass slipper" based on a close reading of Shakespeare's canonical plays, narrative poems, and sonnets. My slipper consists of sixty attributes derived from these works. Why sixty, rather than twenty or one hundred? My intention was to create a profile of the Author that is so specific and detailed that only one man in England would be likely to match it, just as Cinderella's

glass slipper was so precisely tailored that it could only fit her foot. Sixty is the number that naturally emerged from my research: twenty would not have been sufficient to narrow down the search for the Author, and one hundred would have involved too many relatively insignificant details.

I group these sixty attributes into eight categories:

1) Shakespeare's knowledge of specific events;
2) Shakespeare's knowledge of English, French, and Danish aristocrats;
3) Shakespeare's knowledge of Italy;
4) Shakespeare's knowledge of miscellaneous specialized topics;
5) Shakespeare's biographical characteristics;
6) Shakespeare's literary characteristics;
7) Shakespeare's habits of mind; and
8) Intriguing chronological and textual facts.

The first seven categories pose a sort of 'Gedanken experiment' (thought experiment), in essence asking the question: if all of Shakespeare's works had been published anonymously, which man would be most likely to have written them? In other words, if we didn't know anything about the Author outside the works, what conclusions might we draw about him? The eighth category comprises a set of possible clues to the Author's identity related to early and variant versions of Shakespeare's canonical plays.

Most of these sixty attributes are based on objective facts. Some do involve plausible speculation, but even these avoid large leaps of intuition. To the extent possible, my individual findings are aligned with traditional Shakespeare scholarship—none are intended to be controversial. While another researcher would surely come up with a somewhat different set of attributes, the overall shape of the glass slipper should hold true.

Following this Introduction and a Note to Readers, I list the "Sixty Attributes of the Shakespearean Glass Slipper." (The attributes themselves are derived and justified in Chapters 2 through 42.)

Chapter 1 describes an "Ideal Shakespeare Candidate" who satisfies all sixty attributes of the authorial glass slipper.

Chapter 2 introduces Thomas Sackville's life and writings.

Chapters 3 to 42 present the case for Sackville as Shakespeare through a close reading of Shakespeare's plays, poems, and sonnets. The chapter order is based on a variety of chronological considerations for the years between 1562 and 1613, taking into account the works' relevance to Sackville's biography, likely first composition date, first publication date, and first performance record. For example, Chapter 3 begins with *Hamlet* because it contains a clear allusion to the 1562 legal trial *Hales v. Petit*. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss *Julius Caesar* and *Romeo and Juliet* because Thomas Sackville plausibly wrote two plays with the same, or nearly identical, titles which were performed in London in

1562. On the far end of the chronological spectrum, Chapters 41 and 42 discuss *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, both traditionally dated to 1612 or 1613.

Chapter 43 cycles back to Chapter 1, showing that Sackville is indeed an Ideal Candidate, matching all sixty attributes of the authorial glass slipper. In contrast, William Shakespeare is only a definite match to four attributes, as discussed in Chapter 44.

Chapter 45 considers some of the fundamental questions raised by Sackville's possible authorship of Shakespeare's works, and offers speculative answers. These questions include whether Sackville would have been too busy to have written the Shakespeare canon, or would have wanted to ensure that he received credit from posterity.

In the Conclusion, I summarize why I believe Thomas Sackville is the one man in England most likely to have written Shakespeare's works, and discuss why this possibility has been thus far overlooked by traditional Shakespeare scholars.

Some readers may ask why I largely overlook the positive arguments that can be made on behalf of the Earl of Oxford, Christopher Marlowe, Sir Francis Bacon, the Earl of Derby, and others. There are several main reasons. First, I am not aware of any candidate other than Sackville who matches *all* the available evidence concerning Shakespeare's identity, and doesn't fall short in some critical area. Furthermore, the arguments for and against the currently leading candidates have already been well aired, while Sackville has yet to receive any serious attention from the world. Yet even from a 50,000 foot view, he satisfies the three collective criteria that traditional Shakespeare scholars have long used to discount previous candidates: he is a recognized poetic genius, *and* his works demonstrably influenced Shakespeare's writings, *and* his lifespan is consistent with the known range of composition dates of Shakespeare's works. As a final consideration, to comprehensively compare the case for Sackville with the case for other alternative authorship candidates would require that I write an entire book along the lines of John Michell's lively 1996 exploration of the authorship question, *Who Wrote Shakespeare*? Although such an effort is beyond the scope of this work, I do hope to read such a book in the future—and perhaps even write one myself some day!

Although Thomas Sackville has been somewhat inexplicably overlooked for the last century and a half as a Shakespeare authorship candidate, he is an exceptional match to the literary glass slipper. That's why I wrote this sequel to *The Apocryphal William Shakespeare*, and I hope readers enjoy learning more about both Sackville and Shakespeare while reading this book.

Note to Readers

MANY BOOKS ON the Shakespeare authorship question spell William Shakespeare's last name as 'Shakspere,' a common spelling variant from the time that is useful in distinguishing the man from the poet. Despite its usefulness, I have not followed this practice because for some modern readers, the spelling 'Shakspere' carries a pejorative implication. Instead, I always refer to William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon as "William Shakespeare," "William," or "the Stratford actor," and to the great poet (whoever he was) as "Shakespeare," "the Bard," or "the Author."

By the "Shakespeare Apocrypha," I mean to refer only to those works which were attributed to William Shakespeare in his own time by title pages, play lists, or other sorts of records, and which pose a genuine authorship problem in relationship to the Shakespeare canon. Unfortunately, discussions of the Shakespeare Apocrypha often include random plays from Shakespeare's time whose authors happen to remain unknown. For example, although the 1592 play *Arden of Faversham* is often listed as a member of the Shakespeare Apocrypha, it actually has no established connection to the Stratford actor or the Shakespeare canon. Instead, it has occasionally been attributed to William Shakespeare by post-seventeenth century scholars casting about for an author.

I wrote this book for general readers like myself. When quoting literary texts from Shakespeare's time, I modernized spelling and to a lesser degree punctuation when I felt that doing so would help clarify the meaning of the passages. To avoid disrupting the flow, I did not include footnotes in the main body of the text. However, readers interested in my sources are encouraged to consult the Chapter Notes.

Lastly, I designed *The Apocryphal William Shakespeare* and *Thomas Sackville and the Shakespearean Glass Slipper* so that either book might stand alone—the first book as a self-contained argument for William Shakespeare as the main author of the apocryphal plays and bad quartos, and this sequel as a self-contained argument for Thomas Sackville as the main author of the Shakespeare canon. To enable them to stand alone, I intentionally repeat certain arguments (in some cases paragraph for paragraph). Although the two works are very different, they rely on each other to convey their full impact.

Sixty Attributes of the Shakespearean Glass Slipper

—and where discussed

Shakespeare's Knowledge of Specific Events
1) Knowledge of the 1562 Legal Case *Hales v. Petit*—*Hamlet*
2) Knowledge of the 1575 Kenilworth Festivities—*A Midsummer Night's Dream*
3) Knowledge of the 1581 Interrogation of Edmund Campion—*Twelfth Night*
4) Apparent Knowledge of King James' 1605 Visit to Oxford University—*Macbeth*

Shakespeare's Knowledge of English, French, and Danish Aristocrats
5) Knowledge of Sir William Cecil, the Lord Burghley—*Hamlet*
6) Knowledge of Queen Elizabeth—*Love's Labour's Lost*, *Antony and Cleopatra*
7) Knowledge of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford—*Hamlet*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Henry IV Part One*
8) Mocking Allusion to Christopher Hatton's Pen Name—*Twelfth Night*
9) Knowledge of French Aristocratic Titles—*Love's Labour's Lost*
10) Knowledge of Danish Aristocratic Titles and Drinking Customs—*Hamlet*

Shakespeare's Knowledge of Italy
11) Knowledge of Italian Geography and Customs—*Romeo and Juliet, The Merchant of Venice, The Taming of The Shrew, Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece, Othello*
12) Knowledge of Italian Language and Literature—*Romeo and Juliet, The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, Cymbeline, The Taming of The Shrew, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Measure for Measure, Othello*
13) Knowledge of Italian Dramatic Forms—*Love's Labour's Lost, The Tempest*

Shakespeare's Knowledge of Miscellaneous Specialized Topics
14) Knowledge of Aristocratic Sports—*The Taming of The Shrew, Venus and Adonis, Henry V, As You Like It*
15) Knowledge of Traditional Catholic Mystery Plays—*Richard II*
16) Knowledge of Acting—*Hamlet*

17) Knowledge of Untranslated Greek Works—*Titus Andronicus*
18) Fluency in French—*The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Henry V*
19) Knowledge of the Law—*Hamlet, Venus and Adonis, Henry V*
20) Knowledge of the Vernacular of the Sea—*The Tempest*
21) Acquaintance with Giordano Bruno's beliefs—*Hamlet*

Biographical Characteristics

22) Claimed to be a very old man in the 1590s and early 1600s—*Shake-Speare's Sonnets*
23) Claimed to be lame—*Shake-Speare's Sonnets*
24) Claimed to have experienced a period of shame, exile, and disgrace, around the same time he was lame—*Shake-Speare's Sonnets*
25) Claimed to have strayed from his marriage vows—*Shake-Speare's Sonnets*
26) Appreciated the beauty of the young male body—*Shake-Speare's Sonnets*
27) Asked the 'Fair Youth' (Earl of Southampton) to beget children "for love of me"—*Shake-Speare's Sonnets*
28) Used the phrase "I bore the canopy"—*Shake-Speare's Sonnets*
29) Still alive in 1606, but possibly dead by 1609—*King Lear, Macbeth, Shake-Speare's Sonnets, Troilus and Cressida, Henry VIII, The Two Noble Kinsmen*

Shakespeare's Literary Characteristics

30) Major Poetic Talent—*Introducing Thomas Sackville*
31) Versatile Poet Who Enjoyed Experimenting in a Variety of Genres, and Minting New Words—*Introducing Thomas Sackville, Romeo and Juliet, A Lover's Complaint*
32) Drawn to Writing Sonnets, Songs, Narrative Poems, and Blank Verse Plays—*Introducing Thomas Sackville*
33) Motivated to Relate a Grand Cycle of Stories from English History— *Henry VI trilogy, King John, Henry IV Part One, Henry IV Part Two, Richard II, Richard III, Henry V, Henry VIII*
34) Pervasive Influence of Chaucer's Poetry—*Romeo and Juliet, Midsummer Night's Dream, Troilus and Cressida, The Two Noble Kinsmen*
35) Pervasive Influence of Thomas Sackville's Poetry—throughout, but especially in *King Lear, Titus Andronicus, Henry VI Trilogy, A Lover's Complaint, The Rape of Lucrece*, and *Richard III*
36) Comedic Influence of John Lyly's Writings—*Henry IV Part Two*
37) Late Philosophical Influence of *Montaigne's Essays*—*Hamlet*

Shakespeare's Personal Characteristics

38) Respected Women's Intelligence and Emotional Complexity—*Much Ado About Nothing*
39) A Witty Man With a Talent for Comedy—*Love's Labour's Lost*

40) Interested In, and Knowledgeable About, Legal and Historical Arguments for Queenship—*Henry V*

41) Placed a Great Value on Hospitality and Generosity—*Macbeth*

42) Deeply Appreciated Music—*Henry VIII*

43) Attracted to Both Magnificence and Simplicity—*As You Like It*

44) A Great Bird Lover—*The Winter's Tale*

45) A Close Observer of Nature and the Seasons—*The Winter's Tale, Henry VIII*

46) Felt an Unusual Sympathy for the Sufferings of Animals—*As You Like It*

47) Particularly Drawn to Images from the Sport of Lawn Bowling—*Hamlet, The Taming of The Shrew, Richard III*

48) Rejected a Jingoistic and Chivalric Enthusiasm for War—*King John*

49) Concerned about Soldiers' Lack of Pay—*Henry V*

50) Concerned About the Potential for Kingly Abuses—*Richard II, Richard III*

51) Concerned that All Men be Treated as Equal Under the Law, and That the Great Not Abuse Their Power Over the Weak—*Measure for Measure*

52) Opposed to the Practice of Grain Hoarding—*Coriolanus*

53) Concerned about Flattering Councilors—*Richard II*

54) Fascinated by Mob Psychology—*Coriolanus*

55) Interested in How Politicians Gain Public Favor—*Julius Caesar*

56) A Great Political Thinker as Well as a Great Poet—*Richard II, Measure for Measure*

Interesting Chronological and Textual Facts

57) Early Versions of Many Canonical Plays Existed Before William Shakespeare's Arrival in London—*Julius Caesar* (1562), *Romeo and Juliet* (1562), probably *The Comedy of Errors* (1576), possibly *Richard II* (1578), *The Merchant of Venice* (1579), possibly *Cymbeline* (early 1580s?), *Timon of Athens* (1584), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1584)

58) Other Canonical Plays Appear to Have Existed Years Before Their Traditional Composition Date—*The Taming of The Shrew, King John, Henry IV Part One, Henry IV Part Two, The Winter's Tale,* possibly *Pericles*

59) Scholars Designate Many Printed Versions of Canonical Plays as 'Bad Quarto' or 'Corrupted' Texts—*Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Henry VI Part One, Henry VI Part Two, Henry VI Part Three, Timon of Athens, Henry V, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Pericles*

60) Non-Shakespearean Versions of Several Canonical Plays Exist With Nearly Identical Titles, and Nearly Identical Plots—*The Taming of The Shrew, King John, Henry IV Part One*

1

The Ideal Shakespeare Authorship Candidate

An "ideal" Shakespeare authorship candidate is one who matches the authorial glass slipper in all respects. However remarkable it might seem—and despite having been overlooked for the last century and a half—Thomas Sackville is this Ideal Candidate.

IT IS POSSIBLE to construct an "ideal" Shakespeare authorship candidate, one whose specialized knowledge, life experiences, habits of mind, and literary style are precisely tailored to match those of the authorial glass slipper. A key feature of the Ideal Candidate is that his specialized knowledge should be gained directly rather than at second- or third-hand whenever possible. In other words, he should be constructed based on the principle that "the simplest explanation for all the facts is preferable," as first stated by the medieval philosopher William of Occam. For any given set of observations, Occam's razor admonishes us not to add complexities and assumptions that are not required to explain those observations.

It can certainly be objected that this construction of an Ideal Candidate omits a crucial fact—that Shakespeare's works were not published anonymously, and hence there is no need to construct an Ideal Candidate because the principle of simplicity dictates that the man whose name appears on the title pages, William Shakespeare, wrote the works, even though he is a very poor match to the literary slipper. However, Occam's razor is not such a crude tool as that. It requires that all the facts be accounted for, and could equally be used to argue that William is the most likely author of many plays now assigned to the Shakespeare Apocrypha (which would be the simplest explanation for why his name appears on their title pages).

Occam's razor is a valuable tool because it guides the selection of the most likely explanation among an infinite number of possible explanations for a given set of observations. It is particularly useful for evaluating Shakespeare authorship candidates because Elizabethan England holds hundreds, maybe even thousands of theoretically possible (however implausible) authors. Given the complexity of the arguments that could be, and have been, constructed to explain how any particular candidate could have written Shakespeare's works, the chances of identifying any one man as the most likely Author would be vanishingly slim if no guiding principle were available for deciding between rival candidates.

Rather than devising complex scenarios to explain how Shakespeare might have acquired his impressive range of specialized knowledge, in the absence of any material evidence for such scenarios, Occam's razor dictates that *if the Author's works reveal a definite knowledge of some obscure fact, it is most likely because he had a personal reason to be aware of that fact.* A hypothetical scenario in which the Author overheard a stranger talking about some topic in the Mermaid Tavern (a marvelous Tavern of Universal Knowledge where Shakespeare soaked up great quantities of lore, according to the traditional authorship belief) is not as plausible as a documented scenario in which the Author learned about the topic at first hand.

To construct the Ideal Candidate, let's begin with Shakespeare's knowledge of four particular events in English history (**Attributes 1 to 4**), connecting the dots in as straight a line as possible. To explain the extended lampoon of the 1562 legal case *Hales v. Petit* in the gravediggers' scene in *Hamlet* (**Attribute 1**), make Shakespeare a law student in London during the year the trial was held. (We could instead make him a lawyer or judge in 1562, but in that case he would most likely be too old to be the Author.) To make sense of his evocative reminiscence of the 1575 festivities at Kenilworth Castle in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, let's have him attend the Kenilworth festivities in person (**Attribute 2**). To explain how Shakespeare learned about the crown's 1581 interrogation of Edmund Campion during which the Catholic martyr was denied paper and ink, and to explain the Author's sympathy towards Campion as revealed in *Twelfth Night*, make Shakespeare a secret sympathizer to the Catholic cause who was privy to court gossip in 1581 (**Attribute 3**). Finally, to explain the Bard's apparent knowledge of King James' 1605 reception at Oxford University, in which three sibyls hailed King James as Banquo's descendent (foreshadowing a similar scene in *Macbeth*), have Shakespeare attend the reception in person (**Attribute 4**).

Let's turn next to Shakespeare's knowledge of the English and French aristocracy. To explain why his works contain definite or probable personal allusions to four of the leading luminaries of the Elizabethan court—Sir William Cecil, Queen Elizabeth herself, the Earl of Oxford, and Sir Christopher Hatton—referring to events from the 1560s, 1570s, and 1580s, have the Author be a high ranking member of the court during this period (**Attributes 5 to 8**).

For the simplest explanation of why the fictional King of Navarre's three best friends in *Love's Labour's Lost* were named after real French noblemen—the Baron de Biron, the Marquis de Mayenne, and the Duc de Longueville—have Shakespeare himself visit the French court and become acquainted with members of the French aristocracy (**Attribute 9**).

To explain how Shakespeare knew the names of the Danish aristocratic families Rosenkrans and Gyldenstierne, and learned about the Danish court's unique drinking ritual (**Attribute 10**), place Shakespeare at the English court during the visit of the Danish delegation of 1592, which included a Rosenkrans and a Gyldenstierne. For good measure, have him move in the same aristocratic circles as Peregrine Bertie (sent as an ambassador

to Denmark in 1582 and 1585) and Thomas Bodley (sent as an ambassador to Denmark in 1585). Alternatively, we could cause our Ideal Candidate to visit Denmark himself— but this was an unusual travel destination even among Elizabethan aristocrats, and a trip to Denmark is not necessary given these other direct paths to knowledge about Danish aristocratic families and drinking customs.

Now consider Shakespeare's knowledge of Italy's geography and customs, language and literature, and dramatic conventions. To explain these findings, the simplest explanation by far is to postulate that Shakespeare spent time in Italy (**Attribute 11**), had a particular love for the Italian language and literature (**Attribute 12**), and personally attended Italian dramatic performances including *commedia dell'arte* plays (**Attribute 13**).

Turning to Shakespeare's knowledge of various other specialized topics, Occam's razor continues to serve as a helpful guide. The simplest explanation for the Author's impressively detailed knowledge of aristocratic sports is that he was himself an aristocrat (**Attribute 14**). The easiest way to account for Shakespeare's familiarity with the Catholic Mystery Play tradition is to make him a Catholic who was able to attend mystery play revivals during Queen Mary's reign (1553—1558), when the mystery plays enjoyed a brief popular resurgence (**Attribute 15**). Another way is to have Shakespeare grow up in one of the few cities that carried on the Mystery Play tradition until they essentially vanished from England in 1579.

To explain why many actors feel intuitively certain that the Author had acting experience, let's give Shakespeare opportunities to perform in dramatic spectacles (**Attribute 16**). To account for his knowledge of untranslated Greek and French works, have the Author study both languages (**Attributes 17 and 18**). His remarkable knowledge of the law is best explained by giving him many years of legal training and a lifelong interest in legal questions (**Attribute 19**). The Author's detailed knowledge of the vernacular of the sea is most readily explained by sending him on multiple sea voyages (**Attribute 20**). Finally, Shakespeare's apparent familiarity with the philosophical teachings of Giordano Bruno (not yet available in English translation) is most simply explained by postulating that Shakespeare met Bruno during his visit to England between 1583-85 (**Attribute 21**).

Turning to the personal revelations in Shakespeare's sonnets, let's suppose that Shakespeare claimed to be a very old man in the 1590s and early 1600s because he really was an old man, rather than a young man pretending to be old for literary purposes (**Attribute 22**). To explain why he claimed to be lame, give the Author a documented accident to one of his legs that caused lameness (**Attribute 23**). To explain why he claimed to have experienced a period of shame, exile, and disgrace, make him endure a period of official disgrace and exile from the court (**Attribute 24**). To justify his claim to have strayed from his marriage vows, have him be a married man who did take a mistress (**Attribute 25**). Also have him be a man who appreciated male beauty (**Attribute 26**), with the social rank necessary for him to urge the 'Fair Youth' (the Earl of Southampton) to marry and beget children "for love of me" (**Attribute 27**). Finally, place Shakespeare

under a ceremonial canopy of state during some chronicled historical event to explain why he opened Sonnet 125 with the words, "Were't ought to me I bore the canopy" (**Attribute 28**).

Because topical allusions in *King Lear* and *Macbeth* can be solidly dated to 1606, keep the Ideal Candidate alive until at least that year (**Attribute 29**). Beyond that, there is no firm evidence concerning Shakespeare's year of death based on internal topical allusions, although several lines of argument suggest the Author might have died before the publication of *Shake-Speare's Sonnets* in 1609.

Now let's consider Shakespeare's literary characteristics, setting an exceptionally high poetic bar for our Ideal Candidate. There must be solid evidence that he was a major poetic talent (**Attribute 30**) capable of poetic innovation in a wide variety of genres (**Attribute 31**). Let's establish that he definitely wrote in the four literary genres favored by Shakespeare: sonnets, songs, narrative poems, and blank verse plays (**Attribute 32**). As a young man, let's cause him to formulate a grand plan to relate stories from English history in verse as a way of teaching the important lessons of history, as Shakespeare did in his history plays (**Attribute 33**). The great English poet Chaucer exerted a major influence on Shakespeare's poetry, so let's have the Ideal Candidate revere Chaucer and consciously draw upon his works for poetic inspiration (**Attribute 34**). Let's also make him well acquainted with Thomas Sackville's early poetic works, whose strong influence on Shakespeare's style—though readily established—has largely been overlooked by literary critics (**Attribute 35**). The writer John Lyly also exerted an important influence on Shakespeare's comedic style, so let's make the Ideal Candidate intimately familiar with Lyly's style (**Attribute 36**).

To explain how Shakespeare might have read John Florio's English translation of Montaigne's *Essays* several years before their publication in 1603, in time to influence his portrayal of Hamlet in the ~1601 *Hamlet*, let's go so far as to have John Florio translate a significant portion of the essays in the Author's own house (**Attribute 37**).

Next, let's turn to Shakespeare's personal characteristics as revealed in his works. The Author displays an unusual respect for women's intelligence and emotional complexity for a man of his time; this must be apparent in the Ideal Candidate's writings and personal actions (**Attribute 38**). However, since Shakespeare also created some of literature's most memorable female villains, let's further require that the Ideal Candidate be capable of portraying a great female villain, as Shakespeare did so memorably with Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Queen Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*, and Queen Margaret in *Henry VI Part III*.

The Ideal Candidate must also have been witty, and capable of writing excellent comedies (**Attribute 39**). To explain why he wrote the infamously boring Salic law scene in *Henry V*, let's give him a strong interest in the legal and historical arguments for queenship (**Attribute 40**). Shakespeare placed a high value on personal generosity and hospitality, as evident throughout his works; this should be reflected in the Ideal Candidate's behavior both during his life and in his will (**Attribute 41**). Since his works reveal a deep love for music, let's require historical documentation of his appreciation

for music (**Attribute 42**). He should also be a man who was attracted to both magnificence and simplicity, as Shakespeare's works reveal the Author to have been (**Attribute 43**). Even in the smallest points, such as Shakespeare's well-known interest in birds (**Attribute 44**), his habit of closely observing nature and the seasons (**Attribute 45**), his unusual sympathy for the sufferings of animals (**Attribute 46**), and his distinctive habit of using imagery drawn from the sport of lawn bowling (**Attribute 47**), let's insist that the Ideal Candidate's writings display these features.

He should also display a more subtle and wary attitude towards war than was typical for Englishmen of the period, expressing concern for the dangers and hardships of battle (**Attribute 48**) as well as concern for soldiers' lack of adequate pay (**Attribute 49**). Shakespeare's plays are rife with concerns about the potential for kingly abuses; so too should be the writings of the Ideal Candidate (**Attribute 50**). Like Shakespeare, he should care that justice be even-handed, and that the great not abuse their power over the weak (**Attribute 51**). Just as Shakespeare was opposed to the practice of grain hoarding, concerned about flattering royal councilors, and both fascinated and disturbed by mob psychology, so should the ideal Author be (**Attributes 52, 53, and 54**). He should also share Shakespeare's interest in how politicians win favor with the public (**Attribute 55**). To explain Shakespeare's deep insights into the art and practice of politics, let's give the Ideal Candidate many opportunities to hone his political skills as a statesman and privy councilor (**Attribute 56**).

Finally, let's explain the existence of the 1562 play *Julius Caesar*, the 1562 play *Romeus and Juliet*, the 1579 play *The Jew* (an early version of *The Merchant of Venice*), a 1584 play about *Timon of Athens*, a 1584 precursor to *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and other supposedly too early versions of the canonical plays, by making the Ideal Candidate a plausible author of all these works (**Attributes 57 and 58**). To explain why Shakespeare's canonical plays sometimes appeared in print as 'bad quartos' or otherwise mangled texts, and why several (*The Taming of The Shrew*, *King John*, and the *Henry IV* trilogy) appear to have been adapted for the public theatres by a lowbrow popularizer of the Bard's works (**Attributes 59 and 60**), postulate the existence of a second playwright who sometimes adapted Shakespeare's works to make them shorter and more accessible to a general play audience.

The Ideal Candidate constructed above might seem to be too perfect a fit to the Shakespearean glass slipper to possibly match any living Englishman of Shakespeare's time. If such a man did exist, and if surviving documentary records were available to establish each of the authorial traits discussed above, one would reasonably expect him to have been put forward as a Shakespeare authorship candidate at some time during the last century and a half of debate. Yet, however implausible it might seem, Thomas Sackville is indeed this Ideal Candidate, as Chapters 2 to 42 will establish, and his candidacy has indeed received no serious or sustained consideration up to now.