



COMMENTARY

# Further Information on the Shakespeare Authorship Question

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***Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.***  
Charles W. Eliot, *The Happy Life* (1896, p. 26)

At the time of this writing, a Google Scholar search of the term “Shakespeare Authorship Question” (SAQ) returned 264,000 results. These range from reasonably impartial papers in peer-reviewed journals [e.g., Leigh, R. J., Casson, J., & Ewald, D. (2019). A scientific approach to the Shakespeare authorship question. *Sage Open*, 9 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018823465>] to passionate arguments that define academic books like *The Case for Shakespeare: The End of the Authorship Question* (McCrea, 2005). But despite the bold claim of McCrea’s subtitle, this Special Issue arguably shows that the SAQ matter is far from settled. We therefore hope that readers unfamiliar with the topic will be intrigued enough to seek out more information and perhaps even support education efforts or new research in this area. Note that there are several organizations indeed dedicated to these purposes (see below for details).

Moreover, the Guest Editor has specially compiled a recommended reading list for us. Teachers usually create such lists for their students as part of assignments, to help them engage with a topic more deeply, or simply to promote the habit of reading. It is true that the process or criteria used to select the most relevant entries is highly subjective, but the idea is to highlight resources that give a balanced primer on a subject and appeal to different learning styles [see e.g., Stokes, P., & Martin, L. (2008). Reading lists: A study of tutor and student perceptions, expectations and realities. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33, 113–125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070801915874>]. The following list was designed—not as a comprehensive overview of SAQ material— but as an entry point for interested individuals. Many of the recommended titles that follow are described by their own subtitles. However, the Guest Editor has included further annotation where there is no subtitle or where an additional comment seemed useful.

<https://doi.org/10.31275/20233031>

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## MAJOR SAQ-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

De Vere Society (UK based):

[deveresociety.co.uk](http://deveresociety.co.uk)

International Marlowe-Shakespeare Society (UK based):

[marloweshakespeare.info](http://marloweshakespeare.info)

Shakespeare Authorship Coalition (SAC) (US based):

[doubtaboutwill.org](http://doubtaboutwill.org)

Shakespeare Authorship Trust (UK based):

[shakespeareanauthorshiptrust.org](http://shakespeareanauthorshiptrust.org)

Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship (SOF) (US & Canada):

[shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org](http://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org)



## THE CASE FOR THE HISTORICAL MAN FROM STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

- Edmondson, P., & Wells, S. (2013). *Shakespeare beyond doubt: Evidence, argument, controversy*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139084352> [A collection of essays by two leading Stratfordians attempting to end the Authorship Question by ignoring most of the evidence. This volume was answered by the Shahan-Waugh volume (also on this list) with a similar title.]
- Matus, I. L. (1994). *Shakespeare, in fact*. Continuum. [An independent scholar's argument for the Stratford man as the true author.]
- Nelson, A. (2003). *Monstrous adversary: The life of Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford*. Liverpool University Press. <https://doi.org/10.5949/UPO9781846313592> [An American scholar's very negatively inflected biography of Oxford seeking to prove that he could not have been the acclaimed author for various reasons but especially because Oxford, in Nelson's view, did not respect his own aristocratic status sufficiently.]
- Shapiro, J. (2010). *Contested Will: Who wrote Shakespeare?* Simon & Schuster. [A Stratfordian look at the Authorship Question with a focus on its history and especially the evidence for Bacon and Oxford.]

## THE CASE AGAINST THE HISTORICAL MAN FROM STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

- Anderson, M. (2005). *Shakespeare by another name*. Gotham Books. [The most authoritative biography of Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford.]
- Beauclerk, C. (2010). *Shakespeare's lost kingdom: The true history of Shakespeare and Elizabeth*. Grove Press.
- Brame, M., & Popova, G. (2002). *Shakespeare's fingerprints*, Adonis.
- Brazil, R. S. (2010). *Edward de Vere and the Shakespeare printers*. Cortical Output.
- Cutting, B. M., (2018). *Necessary mischief: Exploring the Shakespeare authorship question*. Minos Publishing. [A collection of essays by one of the foremost American experts on the authorship.]
- Chiljan, K (2016), *Shakespeare suppressed: The uncensored truth About Shakespeare and his works* (originally published 2011). Faire Editions.
- Delahoyde, M. (n.d.). Shakespeare. <https://public.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/shakespeare/index.html> [A useful academic website.]
- Edelman, C. (1964). *The Great Shakespeare jubilee*. Michael Joseph. [Academic study of England's first Shakespeare Festival in 1769.]
- Farina, W. (Ed.). (2006). *De Vere as Shakespeare: An Oxford-*

- ian reading of the canon*. McFarland & Co.
- Feldman, B. (2010). *Hamlet himself* (originally published 1951). iUniverse. [Psychoanalytic dive into the play as it reflects the life of Edward de Vere.]
- Gilbert, S. (2020). *Shakespeare beyond science: When poetry was the world*. Guernica Editions.
- Gilvary, K. (2018). *The fictional lives of Shakespeare*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351186070> [A look at the history of Shakespeare mythography.]
- Hope, W., & Holston, K. (2009). *The Shakespeare controversy: An analysis of the authorship theories (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. McFarland & Co.
- Hughes, S. H. (2022). *Educating Shakespeare*. Veritas Press. [What Shakespeare learned and did not learn in school.]
- Jimenez, R. (2018). *Shakespeare's apprenticeship: Identifying the real playwright's earliest works*. McFarland & Co.
- Lefranc, A. (2022). *Behind the mask of William Shakespeare* (originally published in French in 1918, newly translated into English by Frank Lawler). Veritas Press. [An early study of the authorship question by a leading French scholar.]
- Looney, J. T. (2018). *'Shakespeare' identified in Edward de Vere, the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford* (originally published 1918, centenary ed. by James A. Warren, Editor). Veritas Press. [The core book for Oxfordian studies.]
- Magri, N. (2014). *Such fruits out of Italy: The Italian renaissance in Shakespeare's plays and poems* (English ed. by Gary Goldstein, Editor). Laugwitz Verlag. [Makes the compelling argument that Shakespeare had to have visited Italy.]
- Malim, R. (Ed.), (2004). *Great Oxford: Essays on Edward de Vere*. Parapress.
- Ogburn, C. (1984). *The mysterious William Shakespeare: The myth and the reality*. Dodd-Mead and Co. [A major study of the Stratford man's life and the disconnect from the works of Shakespeare.]
- Ogburn, D., & Ogburn, C. (1952). *This star of England*. Coward- McCann. [A major argument against Shakespeare and for Edward de Vere.]
- Ostrowski, D. (2020). *Who wrote that? Authorship controversies from Moses to Sholokhov*. Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501749728>
- Pointon, T. (2011). *The man who was never Shakespeare: The theft of William Shakespeare's identity*. Parapress. [An important examination of what is in a name.]
- Price, D. (2001). *Shakespeare's unorthodox biography*. Greenwood Press. [An essential read for anyone interested in biography and the authorship question.]
- Roe, R. (2011). *The Shakespeare guide to Italy: Retracing the bard's unknown travels*. Harper Perennial. [An exam-

- ination of just how well Shakespeare knew Italy.]  
Shahan, J., & Waugh, A. (Eds.) (2013). *Shakespeare beyond doubt? Exposing an industry in denial*. Llumina. [Important essays by a variety of scholars challenging the evidence for the man from Stratford.]  
Sobran, J. (1997). *Alias Shakespeare: Solving the greatest literary mystery of all time*, Simon & Schuster.  
Sturrock, P. A. (2013). *AKA Shakespeare: A scientific approach to the authorship question*. Exoscience.  
Twain, M. (1909). *Is Shakespeare dead? From my autobiography*. New York: Harper and Brothers. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2431/2431-h/2431-h.htm>
- [America's greatest satirist explores the authorship issue.]  
Whalen, R. (1994). *Shakespeare who was he? The Oxford challenge to the bard of Avon*. Praeger.  
Whittemore, H. (2016). *100 Reasons Shakespeare was the Earl of Oxford*. Forever Press.  
Wildenthal, B. H. (2019). *Early Shakespeare authorship doubts*. Zindabad Press.  
Winkler, E. (2023). *Shakespeare was a woman and other heresies*. Simon & Schuster. [The authorship controversy summed up by an unbiased cultural journalist.]