

MALE FRIENDSHIP AND TESTIMONIES OF LOVE IN SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

Will Tosh



EARLY MODERN LITERATURE IN HISTORY

General Editors: Cedric C. Brown and Andrew Hadfield



Early Modern Literature in History

Series Editors

Cedric Brown

University of Reading
Reading, United Kingdom

Andrew Hadfield

University of Sussex
Brighton, United Kingdom

Within the period 1520-1740, this large, long-running series, with international representation discusses many kinds of writing, both within and outside the established canon. The volumes may employ different theoretical perspectives, but they share an historical awareness and an interest in seeing their texts in lively negotiation with their own and successive cultures.

Editorial board members:

Sharon Achinstein, University of Oxford, UK
John Kerrigan, University of Cambridge, UK
Richard C McCoy, Columbia University, USA
Jean Howard, Columbia University, USA
Adam Smyth, Birkbeck, University of London, UK
Cathy Shrank, University of Sheffield, UK
Michelle O'Callaghan, University of Reading, UK
Steven Zwicker, Washington University, USA
Katie Larson, University of Toronto, Canada

More information about this series at
<http://www.springer.com/series/14199>

Will Tosh

Male Friendship and
Testimonies of Love
in Shakespeare's
England

palgrave
macmillan

Will Tosh
Globe Education
London, United Kingdom

Early Modern Literature in History
ISBN 978-1-137-49496-2 ISBN 978-1-137-49497-9 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-49497-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016936096

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2016

The author(s) has/have asserted their right(s) to be identified as the author(s) of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd. London

*For my parents,
Norma Clarke and
John Tosh*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In quoting from manuscripts, I have silently expanded contractions, lowered superscriptions and smoothed over scribal corrections or deletions. Original spelling, capitalisation and punctuation have been retained throughout. Where it has been necessary to insert a punctuation mark to make sense of the text, I have done so within square brackets, which is also where I keep other editorial interventions. I have not attempted to regularise Old and New Style dating. Anthony Bacon and his correspondents used both, depending on where they were at the time of writing. I date the letters as they appear in the manuscript, although in the text I have amended the year when necessary to begin on 1 January (I note the distinction in the endnotes, however, as ‘20 January 1596/7’). I refer to the Bacon brothers by their first names, Anthony and Francis. For other individuals, where a confusion over shared family name does not arise, I use surnames only.

- BL British Library, London
EUL Edinburgh University Library
GL Daphne du Maurier, *Golden Lads: A Study of Anthony Bacon, Francis, and their Friends* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1975)
HF Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon, 1561–1626* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1998)
HMCS Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury, K.G. [...] preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, 24 vols (London: HMSO, 1883–1976)

- LL James Spedding (ed.), *The Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, 7 vols (London: Longman, 1861–72)
- LPL Lambeth Palace Library, London
- ODNB H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com>.
- PP Paul E.J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585–1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- TNA The National Archives, Kew

PERSONAL NAMES

- AB Anthony Bacon
- ACB Anne, Lady Bacon (née Cooke)
- AS Anthony Standen
- EE Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex
- ER Edward Reynolds
- FB Francis Bacon
- NF Nicholas Faunt
- NT Nicholas Trott
- WC William Cecil, Lord Burghley

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book grew out of research which started at Queen Mary University of London, came to fruition at the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters, and has taken me to my current post at Shakespeare's Globe. A great many people helped on the way.

I owe a considerable debt of gratitude to my former doctoral supervisors, the late Lisa Jardine (CELL) and David Colclough (QMUL). My work would never have left the ground without Lisa's vision, kindness and encouragement, and it would never have come to land without David's guidance. Lisa passed away while this book was in production, and it seems very hard to believe that I will not be able to present her with a copy. Alan Stewart has been an invaluable mentor throughout and read the manuscript in full at a crucial stage. My examiners, Andrew Hadfield and Stephen Clucas, offered a wealth of useful notes, not least of which were hints on how to develop a thesis into a book.

The trustees of Lambeth Palace Library gave me permission to quote extensively from the Anthony Bacon papers, and I thank them for their generosity. I am obliged to Giles Mandelbrote, Rachel Cosgrave and the Lambeth Palace Library team for running such a calm and well-managed reading room. Staff at the British Library, the National Archives, Edinburgh University Library and the Folger Shakespeare Library were unfailingly patient, and the trustees of those repositories allowed me to cite their holdings at will. Gisèle Benitez and Amalia Signorelli helped me from afar.

The portrait on the front cover of this book, attributed (not without challenge) to Nicholas Hilliard and believed to be of either Anthony Bacon

or Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex (c.1594), is held in a private collection and reproduced by kind permission of the owner.

My research was stimulated by audiences at the QMUL Department of English postgraduate conference, the CELL Director's Seminar, UCL's 'One Day in the City' conference, the Freiburg-QMUL exchange conference, Birkbeck's 'Renaissance Men of the Middle Temple' conference, the Renaissance Society of America annual conference, and VU University Amsterdam's 'Compassion in Early Modern Culture' conference.

At QMUL, I was glad of the support of colleagues in the School of English and Drama, including Ruth Ahnert, Michèle Barrett, Warren Boucher, Jerry Brotton, Bridget Escolme, Jenny Gault, Paul Hamilton, Huw Marsh, Daphne Rayment, Joad Raymond, Bill Schwarz and Beverley Stewart. I benefited from an AHRC stipend, and I acknowledge that organisation's contribution with thanks.

The faculty and students at CELL (formerly of QMUL and now established at University College London) constituted a very happy research community. I thank Robyn Adams, Katie Bank, James Everest, Jaap Geraerts, Daisy Hildyard, Helen Matheson-Pollock, Pete Mitchell, Brooke Palmieri, Nydia Pineda, Kirsty Rolfe, Lucy Stagg, Matthew Symonds, Clare Whitehead and Elizabeth Williamson.

My new home at Globe Education fostered this project in its final stages, and my current work on early modern staging practices is encouraging me to explore friendship and intimacy in fresh ways. Patrick Spottiswoode generously arranged leave for me to complete the book. Thanks also to Fiona Banks, Shauna Barrett, Rebecca Casey, Neil Constable, Jennifer Edwards, Laura Kennard, Joanne Luck, Savitri Patel, Adam Sibbald and Paul Shuter. My academic friends at or close to the Globe were liberal with their advice and encouragement: I thank Malcolm Cocks, Sarah Dustagheer, Gwilym Jones, Andy Kesson, Sarah Lewis, Lucy Munro, Simon Smith, Tiffany Stern, Miranda Fay Thomas, Neil Vallelly, Emma Whipday and Penelope Woods. I am truly indebted to Farah Karim-Cooper for her mentorship, support and friendship.

At Palgrave, I am grateful to Ben Doyle and Tomas René for guiding me through the publishing process. Cedric C. Brown has been a dedicated series editor, and permitted me to read his forthcoming monograph on seventeenth-century friendship in manuscript. I thank him for the ideas it generated. Further thanks are due to Cedric's co-series editor Andrew

Hadfield for his encouragement and good humour. Pauline Hubner compiled the index with insight and speed.

Friends and family kept things in proportion. Loving thanks to Christopher Adams, Timothy Allsop, Mark Belcher, Samuel Bibby, Rena Clarke, Alexander Duma and the Nephews of Le Gres, Andrew Fallaize, Annalisa Gordon, Rachel Hewitt, Blanche McIntyre, Johnnie Ormond, Jane Torday, Nick and Clare Torday, Nick Tosh, Caroline White and Tom Wicker. My father John Tosh, mother Norma Clarke and stepmother Barbara Taylor helped more than they can know. No one has endured this project with more patience and love than my husband Piers Torday, and I thank him most of all.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction: Anthony Bacon and the Uses of Friendship	1
2	Intimacy: Nicholas Faunt, Faith and the Consolations of Friendship	21
3	Instrumentality: The Prison, Liberty and Writing Friendship in the Space in Between	59
4	Institutionality: Nicholas Trott, the Inns of Court and the Value of Friendship	95
5	Instability: Service, Love and Jealousy in the Essex Circle	135
	Conclusion	179
	Bibliography	185
	Index	205

Introduction: Anthony Bacon and the Uses of Friendship

Far from home and charged with a shocking crime, an expatriate English gentleman faced a brutal punishment. He lived in the autonomous Protestant community of Montauban in south-west France, where he was on intimate terms with the town's Huguenot leadership and with the region's political heavyweight, Henri, the Bourbon king of Navarre. Since 1579, Anthony Bacon had been on an extended tour through France, relaying political and military intelligence to friends and patrons in England, who included his brother, Francis Bacon, his uncle, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and Sir Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth I's Principal Secretary of State. Now, in August 1586, the well-connected young man was the unofficial English envoy to the Protestant Henri, heir to the French throne. Few diplomatic positions were of greater importance or greater sensitivity in the middle of that decade, as England's Catholic neighbour and erstwhile enemy appeared on the verge of a Protestant succession after the turmoil of the civil wars. It was therefore with the worst possible timing that Anthony was convicted by the seneschal of Quercy at the bench in Montauban of sexual relations with a male servant. In sixteenth-century France, the penalty for sodomy was to be burned at the stake.

The evidence for Anthony Bacon's conviction, stored today in the Archives Départementales of Tarn-et-Garonne, is incomplete. Comprising a set of interrogations of some of the persons involved, conducted a year after the alleged incidents, the depositions tell a story of domestic mismanagement, jealousy and favouritism. Two of Anthony's numerous

servants, a father and son pair named Jean and Paul de la Fontaine, who had been in his service for about nine months, testified that their employer showed excessive favour to one of his pages, Isaac Bougades, frequently kissing and embracing him and bestowing upon the boy gifts of sweets and money. Paul de la Fontaine said that another of the servants swore that Anthony had sex with Isaac, and had seen them sharing a bed together in broad daylight. Isaac had scoffed at their concerns: Anthony apparently dismissed sodomy as no sin, claiming that even Theodore Beza (leader of the Calvinist wing of the Reformed church) and the senior Montauban minister enjoyed it. Jean de la Fontaine further testified that Isaac had sexually assaulted a junior lackey in the household named David Brysson. When Jean complained of this behaviour to Anthony, their master sacked David rather than chastise Isaac. Isaac then sought out David to buy his silence with a few coins (something corroborated by the lackey in his own interview).¹

These surviving testimonies record a set of interviews that took place in November 1587, a year after the first round of interrogations in August 1586 (the transcriptions of which have been lost). The voices of Anthony and Isaac are conspicuously absent from the archive. Even more peculiar is the fact that Anthony had appealed to the king of Navarre's council as soon as he received his conviction from the Montauban bench. In September 1586, Henri sent an uncompromising letter to one of his councillors insisting that Anthony be immediately freed without charge, as 'the merit of those to whom he belongs is great; we owe many obligations to the queen, his sovereign'.² By November 1587, the case should have been long closed. But the threat of the stake—the *bûcher*—was evidently still in force. No personal letters survive to record Anthony's feelings at this difficult time, or the final resolution of the case. He remained in Montauban for some years after the scandal before returning home via Bordeaux in the early 1590s. He never made mention of his experience at the hands of the Montalbanais judiciary. No one in England ever knew, and certainly never wrote of, the charges he had faced. The affair remained hidden from history until 1974, when the archival records were unearthed by the novelist

¹ Archives Départementales, Montauban, Préfecture Tarn-et-Garonne, France, la côte 5 E 1537, fols.176–9; *GL*, 66–8; *HF*, 107–10. The most thorough account of the depositions is Joyce T. Freedman, 'Anthony Bacon and his World, 1558–1601', unpublished PhD dissertation, Temple University, 1979, 103–10.

² BL Cotton MS Nero B.VI, fol.387; *GL*, 67; *HF*, 110.

and biographer Daphne du Maurier, author of *Golden Lads: A Study of Anthony Bacon, Francis and their Friends*. Du Maurier made Anthony's crisis in Montauban the central drama of her book, deducing that his fear of exposure drove his departure from France and subsequent avoidance of court life when he returned to England in the 1590s. Du Maurier's discovery placed Anthony in the ranks of famous 'homosexuals in history' (in A. L. Rowse's phrase), a category that expanded throughout the twentieth century as biographers sought to undo decades of pious and sexless life writing.³ In Anthony's case, the intersection of scandal, spying and same-sex love served to produce an irresistible conclusion for scholars of espionage: the homosexual affair in France was, the historian Alan Haynes observed, 'a historic first in the prodigious annals of such activity in the British secret service'.⁴

Writers like du Maurier and Rowse, working in the context of a post-war liberalism that had not yet been affected by the challenges of feminist or queer historiography, produced their work in a sort of intellectual twilight zone for the history of sexuality: the study of same-sex eroticism stood to benefit from the new openness of a permissive culture (anything to do with sex was up for discussion), but it was intellectually reliant on the structures put in place by nineteenth-century historians and sexologists. Their concern was therefore to identify and taxonomize, and speculate as to whether the evidence of Anthony Bacon's sodomy trial proved that he was homosexual, bisexual or besotted with young boys.⁵ Work was already underway in the 1970s that would render this classifying specious

³A.L. Rowse, *Homosexuals in History: A Study of Ambivalence in Society, Literature and the Arts* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), 41–47; Martin Greif, *The Gay Book of Days: an evocatively illustrated who's who of who is, was, may have been, probably was, and almost certainly seems to have been gay during the past 5,000 years* (London: W.H. Allen, 1985), 27.

⁴Alan Haynes, *Invisible Power: The Elizabethan Secret Services 1570–1603* (Stroud: Sutton, 1992), 127. A thoughtful analysis of the Cambridge spy ring (to which Haynes winkingly refers) is Christopher Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 168–74.

⁵Major works in the small field of mid-century sexuality studies include H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Love That Dared Not Speak Its Name: A Candid History of Homosexuality in Britain* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970) and Noel I. Garde, *Jonathan to Gide: The Homosexual in History* (New York: Vantage Press, 1964). Anthony Bacon regarded his own sex drive (if such a thing was conceived of in the sixteenth century) as relatively low: writing to a Shrewsbury doctor in 1597, he told him that he had 'neuer been troobled with any kinde of *leues veneria* [venereal disease] nor committed any act to occasion it' (AB to Mr Barker, 17 April 1597, LPL MS 661, fol.160v).

in an early modern context, and when Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart examined the same material for their major biography of Anthony's brother in 1998, *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon 1561–1626*, they came to a rather different conclusion, one that took into account the political and domestic context of the accusation: 'Perhaps all we can glean from these incomplete records is that somebody accused Anthony Bacon of sodomy—possibly disgruntled servants attempting to extort money, possibly political or religious opponents attempting to disgrace a rival.' As Jardine and Stewart demonstrated, Anthony's accusation came at a time when he was involved in numerous diplomatic and confessional disputes in war-torn France, any of which would have been sufficient to explain the politically-motivated slander of a man who was a foreigner in a beleaguered city.⁶

Much changed in the twenty years between Daphne du Maurier's revelation and the publication of Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart's biography. In 1976, Michel Foucault was the first to argue that sexual identity was a modern evolution, and that to speak of hetero- or homosexuality in the pre-modern era was anachronistic.⁷ Alan Bray similarly challenged the idea that sexuality was an 'essentially unchanging entity' and instead offered in his *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* a history of 'an aspect of sexuality whose expression has varied radically across different cultures and societies'. He later went on to make the point that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 'accusations [of sodomy] ... are not evidence of it': the charge appears with as much frequency as a political weapon as it does as an attack on sexual manners, and the all-pervasive physical intimacy that characterised relations between men of every background in the Renaissance meant that the behavioural indications of a homosexual attachment are not necessarily legible to a modern researcher. Bray acknowledged the irony of a history of homosexuality that discounted judicial evidence of its expression: '[t]his was evidently the detective story where the clue was that the dog did *not* bark', he wrote, in a nod to the curious incident of the silent watchdog at the heart of Arthur Conan Doyle's

⁶ HF, 109; Janine Garisson, 'La Genève française', in Daniel Ligou (ed.), *Histoire de Montauban* (Toulouse: Privat, 1984); Philip Conner, *Huguenot Heartland: Montauban and Southern French Calvinism during the Wars of Religion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 84–6.

⁷ Michel Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir [The Will to Knowledge]* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1976). Published in the UK as *The History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Allen Lane, 1979).

short story ‘Silver Blaze’.⁸ The combined force of scholarship like this was to do away with what the classicist David Halperin called the ‘dreary labelling’ of historical persons as homosexual or otherwise.⁹ Instead, cultural historians and literary critics turned their attention to the wide-ranging ways in which homoerotic desire manifested itself in past contexts, which as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick showed in her 1985 study, *Between Men*, were often strikingly pervasive and very different to today: what she called ‘male homosocial desire’ was a constituent ingredient in patriarchal power animated by a ‘highly conflicted but intensively structured combination’ of ‘ideological homophobia’ and ‘ideological homosexuality’.¹⁰ As Jonathan Goldberg argued, the ‘continuum of male-male relations’ that characterised the early modern public sphere was ‘capable of being sexualised, though where and how such sexualisation occurs cannot be assumed a priori’.¹¹ In other words, nothing is more likely than that Anthony Bacon had sexual relations with men. But his sodomy accusation is not evidence of it. Jardine and Stewart took this into consideration when they discussed the scandal in Montauban:

Like most young men moving around the continent, ‘they wrote’, Anthony’s immediate environment was almost exclusively male. In cramped lodgings, master and servant were forced into conditions of great intimacy, and shared beds. The situation was simultaneously absolutely commonplace and frighteningly vulnerable to accusations of malpractice—especially sodomy.¹²

Same-sex contact between men was part of the fabric of everyday life. But to raise a hue and cry about such contact was also a weapon in the arsenal of the slanderer, the fabulist and the blackmailer.

⁸ Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men’s Press, 1982), 9; Bray, ‘Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England’, *History Workshop Journal* 29 (1990), 1–19, 14; Bray, ‘Epilogue’, in Tom Betteridge (ed.), *Sodomy in early modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 164–8, 165.

⁹ David M. Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 7.

¹⁰ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 25. Alan Stewart’s *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in Early Modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) developed (and challenged) Sedgwick’s thesis in reference to the sixteenth century.

¹¹ Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 23.

¹² *HF*, 109.

This aspect of early modern culture creates something of an impasse for scholars of queer lives in the past. Goran Stanivuković has observed that with the realisation that evidence of erotic 'transgressions' does not constitute evidence for historic sexual identities, the task of trawling the archives for 'new homoerotic scenarios' has fallen out of favour among historians of sexuality. The alternative—analysis of queerness in historical terms—is a much trickier proposition, because homoeroticism (culturally endorsed) is twined into a range of discourses and it is never clear when, or if, those discourses blend into queerness (culturally proscribed). 'How difficult is it ... to cast a backward gaze on the early modern history of sexuality and identify desires and practices that we call queer, if we are considering a period that predates definitions of homosexuality?' asks Stanivuković.¹³ One response has been to re-frame the exploration of past sexualities as a study of intimacy, affect and friendship, modes that carried significant potential in early modern contexts (a time of 'ubiquitous homosociality', in Cynthia Herrup's phrase) for an eroticism that we understand today as homosexual. Laura Gowing, Michael Hunter and Miri Rubin, writing in response to Alan Bray's posthumously-published *The Friend*, called for a new investigation of the 'affectional transactions' that supported relationships between men in pre-modernity. Unlike Bray, whose intention in *The Friend* was as far as possible to de-eroticise the friendly connections he observed, Gowing, Hunter and Rubin were eager to acknowledge the 'shadow of homosexual intimacies' that these transactions cast.¹⁴

In this book, therefore, I take Anthony Bacon's likely interest in and experience of sex with men for granted, and focus instead on the evidence of same-sex emotional intimacy—the 'life of queer affect'—that is contained in his extensive personal archive.¹⁵ Anthony deserves a re-appraisal that allows him to claim a significant and acknowledged place in late Elizabethan society. Despite the advances in the study of sexuality,

¹³Goran Stanivuković, 'Beyond Sodomy: What Is Still Queer About Early Modern Queer Studies?' in Vin Nardizzi, Stephen Guy-Bray and Will Stockton (eds), *Queer Renaissance Historiography: Backward Gaze* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 41–65, 42, 43.

¹⁴Cynthia B. Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law, and the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 30; Laura Gowing, Michael Hunter and Miri Rubin, 'Introduction', in Gowing, Hunter and Rubin (eds), *Love, Friendship and Faith in Europe, 1300–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1–14, 3–4; Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

¹⁵David M. Halperin, 'Among Men – History, Sexuality and the Return of Affect', in Katherine O'Donnell and Michael O'Rourke (eds), *Love, Sex, Intimacy, and Friendship Between Men, 1550–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1–11, 2.

his modern-day reputation is not a good one. With the exceptions of du Maurier, Jardine and Stewart, biographers and scholars have been too willing to draw him in lurid terms as an archetypal homosexual spy, a malcontent who rejected both ‘natural’ allegiance to queen and country, and ‘normal’ attraction to women and the dynastic security of marriage. Charles Nicholl stated categorically that ‘[t]he Bacon brothers were homosexual ... [t]heir private circle was gay, filled with dubious young dandies.’ He also pictured Anthony as something out of Krafft-Ebing, with ‘pinched pallor’, ‘thin, over-refined features’ and ‘the brooding energy of the invalid’.¹⁶ More vituperative was Wallace MacCaffrey, who termed Anthony a ‘recluse’ and a ‘psychotic invalid’.¹⁷ As we will see, Anthony’s life might have been unconventional, but his emotional inclinations did not shut him away from society. His love rarely had difficulty speaking its name.

This book tells the story of Antony’s close friendship with four men, relationships that played out in the final years of the sixteenth century: with the devout civil servant Nicholas Faunt; the notorious double-agent Anthony Standen; an ambitious but unsuccessful government lawyer named Nicholas Trott; and Edward Reynolds, the Earl of Essex’s loyal and perennially anxious personal secretary. I recover some of the complicated affectional transactions that underlay these friendships, and reveal how they functioned within early modern culture and society. Through close reading of the often voluminous correspondence that survives between Antony and his friends, I show that relationships between men in the late sixteenth century comprehended a far richer mix of instrumental, affective and erotic connections than we have assumed, or that we would regard as ‘normative’ today. These bonds were varied, public, highly valued and sometimes contentious—especially when they clashed with more formalised alliance systems such as marriage. The relationships, locations and organisations that sustained Anthony’s life—institutions we might call the ‘friendship spaces’ of early modern English culture—were integral parts of society.¹⁸ Anthony Bacon’s archive suggests that his culture provided a

¹⁶ Charles Nicholl, *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe*, revised edn. (London: Vintage, 1992, 2002), 266.

¹⁷ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I: War and Politics 1558–1603* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 481.

¹⁸ ‘Friendship space’ deliberately recalls Stephen Guy-Bray’s adoption of the phrase ‘homosexual space’ to describe the literary terrains in which same-sex intimacy was explored and celebrated (*Homosexual Space: The Poetics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002)).

way for men with a homoerotic sensibility to fashion an identity and conduct a life that accorded with their affective inclinations. *Male Friendship and Testimonies of Love in Shakespeare's England* uncovers the means by which Anthony and some of his friends did so.¹⁹

Anthony Bacon was born in 1558 into one of the best-connected families in mid-Tudor England.²⁰ His father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, was made the

¹⁹The first major monograph on the cultural centrality of friendship in the English Renaissance was Laurens J. Mills, *One Soul in Bodies Twain: Friendship in Tudor Literature and Stuart Drama* (Bloomington: Principia Press, 1937). Major literary studies of the past two decades include: Ullrich Langer, *Perfect Friendship: Studies in Literature and Moral Philosophy from Boccaccio to Corneille* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1994); Reginald Hyatt, *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealisation of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994); Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Tom MacFaul, *Male Friendship in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 93–126, and Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 187–225, have explored the difference between 'literary' ideal friendship and the 'real thing'. Cedric C. Brown's forthcoming monograph *Discourses of Friendship in the Seventeenth Century*, kindly lent in manuscript by the author, promises to offer a much more nuanced picture of friendship in the early modern period. Brown's work also addresses a lacuna in my book, which is intimate friendships among women and between men and women: Anthony Bacon's circle was, with very few exceptions, totally male and the work which underpins this account includes few studies of female friendship. But the field is extensive and essential for a full understanding of early modern conceptions of friendship. A short survey includes: Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Sixteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Morrow, 1981); Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Denise A. Walen, *Constructions of Female Homoeroticism in Early Modern Drama* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

²⁰For Nicholas Bacon, see Robert Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon: The Making of a Tudor Statesman* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976); for Anne, see Katherine Alice Mair, 'Anne, Lady Bacon: A Life in Letters', unpublished PhD dissertation, Queen Mary University of London, 2009, and Gemma Allen (ed.), *The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon* (Camden Society Fifth Series, vol. 44) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). The Cooke family is well documented in Marjorie K. McIntosh, 'Sir Anthony Cooke: Tudor Humanist, Educator and Religious Reformer', *Proceedings of the American Philological Society* 199 (1975), 233–50, her 'The Fall of a Tudor Gentle Family: The Cookes of Gidea Hall, Essex, 1579–1629', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 41:4 (1978), 279–97, and Chris Laoutaris, *Shakespeare and the Countess: The Battle that Gave Birth to the Globe* (London: Fig Tree, 2014). The Bacon family command numerous entries in the ODNB including Robert Tittler, 'Bacon, Sir Nicholas (1510–1579)'; Lynne Magnusson, 'Bacon [*née* Cooke], Anne, Lady Bacon (c.1528–1610)'; Markku Peltonen, 'Bacon, Francis, Viscount St Alban (1561–1626)'; Alan Stewart, 'Bacon, Anthony (1558–1601)' (all accessed 20 August 2015).