

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910150524803321
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Titolo	Shakespeare's bastard : the life of Sir William Davenant / / Simon Andrew Stirling
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Stroud, [England] : , : The History Press, , 2016 2016
ISBN	0-7509-6856-7
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (238 pages) : illustrations, photographs
Disciplina	820.9
Soggetti	Authors, English - Early modern, 1500-1700 Authors, English
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references.
Sommario/riassunto	The extraordinary life of Sir William Davenant, from death to birth, culminating with an answer to the question: was he Shakespeare's natural son? Sir William Davenant (1606-1668) - Poet Laureate and Civil War hero - is one of the most influential and neglected figures in the history of British theatre. He introduced 'opera', actresses, scenes and the proscenium arch to the English stage. Narrowly escaping execution for his Royalist activities during the Civil War, he revived theatrical performances in London, right under Oliver Cromwell's nose. Nobody, perhaps, did more to secure Shakespeare's reputation or to preserve the memory of the Bard. Davenant was known to boast over a glass of wine that he wrote 'with the very spirit' of Shakespeare and was happy to be thought of as Shakespeare's son. By recounting the story of his eventful life backwards, through his many trials and triumphs, this biography culminates with a fresh examination of the vexed issue of Davenant's paternity. Was Sir William's mother the voluptuous and maddening 'Dark Lady' of Shakespeare's Sonnets, and was he Shakespeare's 'lovely boy'? AUTHOR: Simon Andrew Stirling is an award-winning scriptwriter, historical researcher and public speaker. Simon's first major book of historical nonfiction, The King Arthur Conspiracy: How a Scottish Prince Became a Mythical Hero (published

by The History Press in 2012), was quickly followed by his ground-breaking *Who Killed William Shakespeare? The Murderer, the Motive, the Means* (2013). SELLING POINTS: \* Rarity value: the subject is little known, and biographies of Davenant are thin on the ground \* With the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death approaching (23 April 2016) worldwide attention will be focused on Shakespeare's life, death and legacy - a good time to remind the world of Davenant's status as his 'godson' \* New research, building on the findings previously published in "Who Killed William Shakespeare?" 8pp b/w

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