Ideas don’t explode; they subvert. *They take their time.* And because they change the way we think, they are less visible than a newly paved national highway or the advent of wall-sized TVs. After a while, someone notices that we’re not thinking about things the way our parents did.

*Keith Hammonds, “Why the Net Really Changes Everything”*"
Surprisingly, the research on Anne Brockman began with the well-examined play *Hamlet*. The “captain” of the research team of the *Hamlet Variorum*, Eric Rasmussen, gave the first clue to me, an academic sleuth. It led to a dark and dingy room and a simple listing of some women’s writing found in the old British Library. The game was afoot, and a paper trail followed through two continents—the Brockman Family Papers in London, England; the ESTC microfilms in Reno, Nevada; and books of printing history, mother’s advice books and criticism, cultural histories, the Drake-Brockman family history and demographics; and round again to the British Library, the first edition of *Age Rectified* and Kent, where I visited the Brockman tomb at St. Nicholas’s Church and the family estate, Beachborough. Begun in 1996, the verdict of this mystery is the publication of this book.

This book presents the results of scholarly detection, highlighting the essentials of the investigation. Chapter 1 discusses seventeenth-century mother’s advice books, and in turn, gives a background on some of the topics important to seventeenth-century Englishwomen. Although publication was usually a venue closed to women, motherhood seems to have provided a loophole to the ruling social ideal. In fact, authors of mother’s advice books entered publishing through their private roles as mothers, who, unlike women in general, cannot be forced to remain silent if their entry into the public world of publication is to advise their children and other children by doing so. Chapter 2 discusses the suspected author. Little is known about her, but some information can be gleaned from the Brockman Papers at the British Library to understand who she was and what her advice book contained. Chapter 3 includes the investigation of authorship as well as the edition of *Age Rectified*.

*Age Rectified* and the Unknown Author

Included in the Brockman papers is an anonymous tract entitled “*Age Rectified*” in Anne Brockman’s handwriting. The British Library catalogue labels this holograph text as Anne Brockman’s laborious copy of the published treatise, *Age Rectified*, that is, as her painstaking, word-by-word reproduction of the anonymously published treatise. First published in 1709, *Age Rectified* was reprinted in 1742, suggesting its continuing influence across almost half a century. Although the printed tract describes the author only as: “One of the Same Sex,”