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CHRISTINE ADAMS

FRANCIS BACON’S WEDDING GIFT OF ‘A GARDEN OF A GLORIOUS AND STRANGE BEAUTY’ FOR THE EARL AND COUNTESS OF SOMERSET

On 6 January 1614 a ‘garden of a glorious and strange beauty’ appeared in The Masque of Flowers, a wedding masque presented by Sir Francis Bacon for the Earl and Countess of Somerset. It is the single most compelling reflection of a real garden to appear in the Jacobean court masques, and succeeds as an illuminating example of garden design and symbolism, and of the delight inspired by flowers in the early seventeenth century. Also this garden is at the heart of a mystery, as the identity of the masque’s creator remains unknown. However, research has uncovered a trail of clues leading to Sir Francis Bacon. This paper presents evidence to attribute the stagecraft, verse and ‘the garden of a strange and glorious beauty’ of The Masque of Flowers to Bacon.

On 26 December 1613, the court of James I gathered at Henry VII’s Chapel, Westminster, to witness and celebrate the marriage of ‘two noble persons’. The profile of the match could not have been higher: the groom, Robert Carr, the newly created Earl of Somerset, was the acknowledged favourite of the king, and his bride was Lady Frances Howard, daughter of Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, the Lord Chamberlain. The marital union symbolically announced the immense power created by the alliance of the man who ‘held the king’s ear’ with the politically powerful Howard faction. The Jacobean court, ever keen to position itself most favourably with those in power, bestowed an abundance of gifts upon the couple. The King bore ‘the charge ... all saving the apparell’ for the wedding and gave ‘10,000li in jewels’ to the bride, while the court gave ornaments of gold, silver and precious stones, which Chamberlain reported ‘were more in number and value, then I ever thincke were given to any subject in this land’.

Alongside the lavish gifts came compliments and tributes in poems and masques. Masques by Thomas Campion, Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton and Gray’s Inn entertained the court throughout the period of their traditional Christmas festivities, beginning on 26 December, the wedding night, with Thomas Campion’s Somerset Masque and concluding on Twelfth Night with The Masque of Flowers. The Masque of Flowers was a generous wedding gift from Sir Francis Bacon, who sponsored and financed the production, noted to have cost ‘above 2000li’. Bacon called upon his professional colleagues, the gentlemen of Gray’s Inn, to stage the Masque at Whitehall Banqueting House on 6 January 1614 (Figure 1). It proved a fitting and sumptuous finale to the marriage celebrations. The King, Queen and court were in attendance, including the French and Venetian ambassadors, who had been advised that ‘the best maske had been reserved for them’. In keeping with the tradition of court masques, The Masque of Flowers was a beautifully staged, richly costumed and gloriously lit performance, designed purely for the occasion of the

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Somerset’s marriage. Following a light-hearted antimasque, the main masque presented a three-dimensional garden stage set. The ‘garden of a glorious and strange beauty’ was an abundantly floral and verdant spring paradise, glittering with gilded ornamentation and shimmering from the lustre of coloured lights resembling jewels. The Masque allegory that unfolded upon the garden stage revealed the Sun’s command to Primavera to deliver her spring garden in the midst of winter, and to transform her garden’s flowers magically back to their once-previous state of young men, in order to dance for the newly married couple:

And we require you, Primavera, for your part, that whereas of ancient time there were certain fair youths turned into flowers, which have so continued until this time, that you deal with Flora by virtue of this commission that they be now returned to men, and present a dance at this marriage. Hereof fail you not. Given at our palace, your lord and master, I, the Sun.

Figure 1. The Maske of Flowers (London: printed by N.O. for Robert Wilson, 1614), frontispiece; Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth. With permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees
In spite of the fairy tale quality of the allegory and the transient nature of the ‘garden of a glorious and strange beauty’, a compelling interplay between illusion and reality, a characteristic of all court masques, is conveyed by The Masque of Flowers. Many parallels and perspectives pertinent to real gardens, including design, symbolism and the delight inspired by flowers at this time, are revealed. As a convincing reflection of reality, and appearing at a time when the design it represented was on the brink of change, the ‘garden of a glorious and strange beauty’ is of historical significance. Such parallels are explored in this paper, followed by a consideration of the mystery surrounding the creator of The Masque of Flowers. Evidence reveals that Bacon’s wedding gift extended beyond personal sponsorship and financing: Bacon had a motive, and an expertise in both masques and gardens to assume a leading and active role and, significantly, his involvement is visible through reflections of his works in the Masque’s stagecraft, verse and, most particularly, the garden.

THE GARDEN OF THE MASQUE OF FLOWERS

The main masque of The Masque of Flowers was announced by the simultaneous sound of ‘loud music’ and withdrawal of the traverse, revealing ‘a garden of a glorious and strange beauty’ that filled the entire stage. For more than four hours, over six hundred of the most powerful and wealthy people in the kingdom of James I (r. 1603–25) were captivated by the garden and the performance within it. Copies of the Masque printed just a few days after the performance captured the garden’s image, in prose, unsurpassed in descriptive detail by any other Stuart court masque garden:

The traverse being drawn, was seen a garden of a glorious and strange beauty, cast into four quarters, with a cross-walk, and alleys compassing each quarter. In the middle of the cross-walk stood a goodly fountain raised on four columns of silver; on the tops whereof stood four statues of silver, which supported a bowl, in circuit containing four and twenty foot, and was raised from the ground nine foot in height; in the middle whereof, upon scrolls of silver and gold, was placed a globe garnished with four golden mask-heads, out of which issued water into the bowl; above stood a golden Neptune, in height three foot, holding in his hand a trident, and riding on a dolphin so cunningly framed that a river seemed to stream out of his mouth.

The garden-walls were of brick artificially painted in perspective, all along which were placed fruit trees with artificial leaves and fruit. The garden within the wall was railed about with rails of three foot high, adorned with balusters of silver, between which were placed pedestals beautified with transparent lights of variable colours; upon the pedestals stood silver columns, upon the tops whereof were personages of gold, lions of gold and unicorns of silver; every personage and beast did hold a torchet burning that gave light and lustre to the whole fabric.

Every quarter of the garden was finely hedged about with a low hedge of cypress and juniper; the knots within set with artificial green herbs, embellished with all sorts of artificial flowers. In the first two quarters were two pyramids garnished with gold and silver, and glistening with transparent lights, resembling carbuncles, sapphires, and rubies. In every corner of each quarter were great pots of gilly-flowers, which shadowed certain lights placed behind them and made a resplendent and admirable lustre.

The two farther quarters were beautified with tulipps of diverse colours, and in the middle and in the corners of the said quarters were set great tufts of several kinds of flowers, receiving lustre from secret lights placed behind them.

At the farther end of the garden was a mount raised by degrees, resembling banks of earth covered with grass; on the top of the mount stood a goodly arbour substantially made, and covered with artificial trees and with arbour-flowers, as egantine, honeysuckles and the like.

The arbour was in length three and thirty foot, in height one and twenty, supported
with terms of gold and silver; it was divided into six double arches, and three doors answerable to the three walks in the garden. In the middle part of the arbour rose a goodly large turret, and at either end a smaller.

Upon the top of the mount on the front thereof was a bank of flowers curiously painted, behind which, within the arches, the Masquers sat unseen. Behind the garden, over the top of the arbour, were set artificial trees appearing like an orchard adjoining the garden, and over all was drawn in perspective a firmament like the skies in a clear night.

Never before had a vision of such seeming garden reality, an abundantly floriferous, fruiting and verdant *verperpetuum*, with a mount and arbour, railed quarters of herbal and floral knots, a crosswalk of alleys with a flowing gilded fountain at its centre, all enclosed within a walled garden, appeared on the stage of a Stuart court masque. Never before had a garden reflected back to king and court, an image of garden design so instantly familiar and prevalent amongst them, albeit one beautifully bejewelled and colourfully lit for the performance. And, never again would such a vision of garden reality appear in the Jacobean court masques.

Gardens appeared infrequently in the Jacobean court masques (1604–25), with an inconsistent imagery, and illustrations of garden stage designs have not survived. Without extant designs, imagery relies upon details in verse and stage directions and, for the six Jacobean masque gardens other than *The Masque of Flowers*, such details are limited so their images remain elusive. In this context, ‘the garden of a glorious and strange beauty’ is unique: the description reveals the overall design, the selection and siting of features and planting, and various measurements providing a sense of scale. It is also unique because it dominated the allegory, and the entire stage for the entire performance, unlike the other masque gardens that briefly supported the allegory and featured as one of many stage designs. And further, the garden of *The Masque of Flowers* was unique in the authenticity of its reflection of reality, capturing the inward-looking formality typical of the age. Such three-dimensional realism was achieved by a combination of stage techniques, many borrowed from the Italian *intermezzi*, coupled with an accurate replication of the design and features prevalent in real gardens. Their combined impact resulted in the audience seeing a garden that both looked and worked as if it was real.

**STAGE TECHNIQUES**

The stage technique of single-point perspective, still relatively new in England and used first by Inigo Jones in 1605, was an important element in creating the reflection of reality in *The Masque of Flowers*. Its purpose was to heighten the authenticity of the stage vision experienced by the King, who was seated at the optimum central point, and, also, but to lesser degrees depending on their distance from the King, the experience of the audience. In the Masque, the garden was enclosed within ‘walls ... of brick artificially painted in *perspective*’ and ‘over all was drawn in *perspective* a firmament like the sky in a clear night’. So the audience would have seen the garden recede into the distance, as they would in any real situation. The seeming reality of the audience’s garden experience was increased by their viewpoint from elevated tiered seating around the Banqueting Hall, thus replicating the way real gardens were viewed from the raised walkways of Jacobean gardens. The inclusion of working models of real garden features within the garden also helped to enhance the seeming reality. The Neptune fountain, with its commanding scale and lavish ornamentation and gilding, echoed visually the popularity and prominence of the large-scale, ornate, gilded fountains found in leading Jacobean gardens, with notable examples by Salomon de Caus at Somerset House and Greenwich. In addition to a life-like scale and design, the authenticity of the Masque’s fountain was enhanced by its
realistic animation of continuously flowing water from four golden maskheads and a dolphin ‘so cunningly framed that a river seemed to stream out of its mouth’.22

The description of the Masque’s magnificent, three-dimensional, 31-foot-long, 21-foot-high tunnel arbour, raised upon a mount, topped with turrets and adorned with gilded terms and flowers, creates a visual image that adheres closely to designs of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries for ‘real’ tunnel arbours, such as those by Hans Vredeman de Vries.23 In addition to the arbour’s design authenticity, the unfolding of the Masque’s allegory revealed how the transient structure replicated the functionality of its real garden counterparts, acting as a shaded vantage point and as a route to different areas in the garden. Initially, the arbour served to conceal the thirteen male masquers (the Masque’s heroes dressed as flowers):

there is a stately long arbour or bower arched upon pillars, wherein the masquers are placed, but are not discovered at first, but there appear only certain great tufts of flowers betwixt the columns.24

Later, the masquers were beckoned to leave their ‘shady bowers’ by Primavera’s ‘Charm’ and each of the arbour’s ‘six double arches’ framed their simultaneous revelation: ‘Those flowers upon the charm do vanish, and so the masquers appear every one in the space or inter-column of his arch.’25 Attention moved next to the arbour’s three doors that framed the masquers’ synchronized descent to the three alleys, where they halted under the fountain before their magical transformation:

the Masquers descend in a gallant march through three several doors of the arbour to the three several alleys of the garden, marching till they all met in the middle alley under the fountain.26

In this way, the authentic visual and operational replication of the Masque’s arbour made the illusion both realistic and intrinsic to the dramatic performance.

DESIGN AND FEATURES

The representation of the overall design and key features prevalent in real gardens assisted the Masque garden’s reflection of reality. However, it was not possible to replicate the vast scale typical of Jacobean gardens and the ‘glorious garden’ had to work within the stage space available in the 120-foot-long, 53-foot-wide Whitehall Banqueting Hall.27 After allowing for the State, boxes, tiered seating and the all-important dancing place, the maximum stage size recorded for Jacobean court masques was 40 by 40 feet.28 However, while the garden of The Masque of Flowers was of a reduced scale compared with its live counterparts, its three-dimensional projection of a single compartment was a design format well established since 1580 for laying out the grounds of leading gardens in England.29 Garden historian Roy Strong has suggested that ‘New College, Oxford, is the garden of The Masque of Flowers’, meaning, possibly, that New College shares many of the Masque garden’s features, but was not its live blueprint (Figure 2).30 Another representative image, sharing the Masque’s design of tunnel arbours around a floral garden, is portrayed in the unattributed Portrait called Sir Francis Walsingham (1625) (Figures 3 and 4).

Essentially, the garden of The Masque of Flowers was a staged composition of an established design, containing a representative selection of features in leading gardens. For example, the Mount garden with a prospect to the wilderness at Audley End, Essex, was represented in the Masque garden by the mount with a prospect of an orchard;
Figure 2. ‘Collegium Novum’ (New College), Oxford; from W. Williams, Oxonia depicta (Oxford, 1732). With permission of the British Library, London

the painted balustrades topped with gilded lions at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, were represented by the Masque garden’s rails topped with gilded lions and unicorns; while the plantings of ‘choice flowers’ and knots of ‘Tulipps, Lillies, Piannies, and divers other sorts of flowers’ at Theobalds, also Hertfordshire, were represented by the Masque garden’s knots of ‘tullipas’ and ‘great tufts of several kinds of flowers’.31

FLORAL DELIGHT

Flowers were the defining theme and the stars of The Masque of Flowers: ‘tulippas of diverse colours’, ‘tufts of several kinds of flowers’ and ‘pots of gillyflowers’ adorned the knots, and upon the ‘bank of flowers’ the arbour was dressed with ‘eglantine, honeysuckles and the like’. And flowers were the stars of real gardens too, as in 1614 Jacobean England was basking in a floral wonderland. The horticultural palette of English gardens in the early seventeenth century had been expanded significantly by imports of new trees, plants and flowers arising from sixteenth-century voyages of exploration by the Spanish, Portuguese and English, and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Sultan and the courts of Western Christendom.32 Between 1560 and 1620, a significant period for plant introductions, flowers ‘from forren places’ arrived via English ports, English agents in Europe, growers based in Brussels, Paris, Delft, Leiden, Haarlem and elsewhere, and also as gifts between garden-owners and their gardeners.33 New blooms reaching England before The Masque of Flowers included passion flowers, cannas and sunflowers from
Figure 3. Portrait called Sir Francis Walsingham (c.1625), by an unknown artist. With permission of the Marquis of Bath, Longleat House, Wiltshire; courtesy: Courtauld Institute of Art, London, B54/346 P5

America; tulips, crown imperials, grape hyacinths, autumn crocuses and musk roses from Turkey and western Asia; delphiniums from Siberia; damask roses from the Middle East; orange and yellow day lilies from China; and common pinks, clematis, sweet williams, geraniums, campanulas, and gladioli from Europe.34

Ideas for flowers to appear sooner, last longer, with bigger blooms and headier scent were shared by Hugh Platt in Floraes Paradise (1608). Instructions for beautiful floral arrangements, including diversely coloured floral knots such as those presented in The Masque of Flowers, were provided by Gervase Markham in The English Husbandman (1613):

[in] a plaine double knot ... plant in every severall third, flowers of one kinde and colour ... in one third plant your carnation Gilly-flower, in another your great white Geli-
flower, in another your mingle-coloured Gilly-flower, and in another your blood-red Gilly-flower ... and so likewise if you can compasse them you may in this sort plant your several coloured Hyacinths, as the red, the blew, and the yealow, or your severall coloured Dulippos, and many other French and Italian flowers ... and stand a little remote ... and anything above it ... you shall see it appears like a knot made of divers ribans, most pleasing and rare.\textsuperscript{35}

And the delight flowers inspired was expressed by many, including William Lawson in \textit{A New Orchard and Garden} (1618):

\begin{quote}
What more delightsome then an infinite variety of sweet-smelling flowers? decking with sundry colours, the green mantle of the earth, the universall mother of us all, so by them bespotted, so dyed, that all the world cannot sample them, and wherein it is more fit to admire the dyer, then imitate his workmanship, colouring not onely the earth, but decking the aire, and sweetning every breath and spirit.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

With such emotional sentiment attached to flowers at this time, it appears appropriate that the dramatic climax of \textit{The Masque of Flowers} focused on the magical transformation of flowers returned to men:
Thrice happy flowers!
Your leaves are turned into fine hair,
Your stalks to bodies straight and fair,
Your sprigs to limbs, as once they were,
Your verdure to fresh blood, your smell
To breath; your blooms, your seedy cell,
All have a lovely parallel.37

GARDEN SYMBOLISM
Alongside the reflection of garden reality The Masque of Flowers also conveys reflections of Jacobean garden symbolism. Court masques were key vehicles within the royal marketing repertoire because of their capability to use allegory and dramatic performance to project symbolically the omnipotence and authority of the king.38 In The Masque of Flowers, 'the great Sun of our firmament' (a readily understood symbol for James I) had commanded the appearance of the spring garden in the midst of winter, thus implicitly conveying to the audience that it was the King, with his divinely inspired powers, who had created the floral garden, which more widely symbolized the qualities of his kingdom.39 Additionally, The Masque of Flowers conveys floral symbolism.40 White lilies were highly prominent as the thirteen masquers were costumed to resemble this recognized floral symbol of purity and beauty. While their selection was suitably symbolic for all brides, it was a gesture of particular resonance for Frances Howard, whose chastity had been questioned publicly during the recent annulment hearings of her former marriage.

Fittingly, The Masque of Flowers concluded with a presentation of flowers to the bride and groom, and the dancing prowess of the court ensued in choreographic patterns thought to reflect and reinforce the geometric order evident in garden design, with celebrations continuing through to the lavish and very late banquet.41

HISTORIC VALUE OF THE MASQUE OF FLOWERS' GARDEN
The enchanting story and garden of The Masque of Flowers succeeds as an illuminating example of aspects of the design, delight and symbolism of real gardens in the early seventeenth century. Also, its portrayal in 1614 of the prevailing compartment design, with its series of isolated incidents within separate enclosures, was timely. In the period after The Masque of Flowers, the incorporation of Italian and French design into English gardens, up until then characterized by a piecemeal application of features, began to embrace the fundamental Renaissance principles, including the alignment of the house and garden, conceived as one, the deployment of space according to the rules of perspective, and a variety of experiences in formal and informal areas.42 Indeed, for Strong, the adoption of Renaissance design was such that 'the floodgates never opened until after Inigo Jones's second [Italian] visit in 1613–14'.43 When masque gardens reappeared in the 1630s after an absence of fourteen years they too reflected Renaissance design, echoing the trend in progress in real gardens.44 Thus, the garden of The Masque of Flowers is the only authentic reflection of real garden design in the Jacobean court masques and when considered together with the Caroline masque gardens, illustrates the evolution away from an essentially inward-looking Elizabethan design towards Renaissance design during the second and third decades of the seventeenth century, which is a trend of equal relevance to masque and real gardens.

WHO CREATED THE MASQUE OF FLOWERS?
The historic value of the garden of The Masque of Flowers also makes its creator of interest to garden history. This interest accentuated by Francis Bacon's known association with
the Masque, as his important contributions to science, law, history and philosophy also include garden history, through his works, *Of Gardens* (1625) and *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627) and his gardens at Twickenham, Gray’s Inn and Gorhambury. It has been assumed that the three sets of initials found at the close of the dedication of *The Masque of Flowers* were those of the authors, but because *The Register of Admissions to Gray’s Inn* offers several possible candidates for the initials, ‘I.G., W.D., T.B.’, the individuals’ identities have not been confirmed. Also, doubt has been expressed about whether, in fact, there were three authors, as the initials could represent Gray’s Inn officials for the revels of that year. It is possible that initials rather than names were detailed to avoid attention upon particular individuals, because staging the Masque required collective effort. Studies have shown how masques were the multimedia affairs of their day, involving a large cast of players, including the poet, stage designer, composer, choreographer, musicians, costume designers, stage builders and performers. However, for court masques sponsored by royalty, tradition at this time dictated that the poet’s name was most prominent, appearing, for example, in printed copies of masques. This was also the case for masques sponsored by the Inns of Court, thus the absence of a named author for *The Masque of Flowers* by Gray’s Inn was unusual.

Bacon’s involvement as the Masque’s sponsor arose from the collapse of earlier plans for a wedding masque by the four Inns of Court. Correspondence between Bacon and the groom, the Earl of Somerset, reveals that Bacon stepped forward to offer a replacement masque to ensure the marriage was suitably celebrated (see Appendix 1). His sponsorship is confirmed by the Gray’s Inn dedication of *The Masque of Flowers*, which was addressed ‘To the very honourable knight, Sir Francis Bacon, His Majesty’s Attorney-General’, and declared that he was ‘the principal, and in effect the only person, that did encourage and warrant the gentlemen to show their good affection towards so noble a conjunction’. Bacon’s personal financing of the Masque is evidenced in a letter dated a few days before the wedding, from John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, which hints also at a possible reason for Bacon’s generosity:

Sir Fra: Bacon prepares a maske to honor this marriage which will stand him in above 2000li, and though he have ben offered some helpe by the house, and specially by Master Sollicitor Sir Hen: Yelverton, who wold have sent him 500li yet he wold not accept yt, but offers them the whole charge with the honour: mary his obligations are such to his Majestie as to the great Lord, and to the whole house of Howards as he can admit no partners.

James Spedding has suggested that the settlement of the unspecified ‘obligations’ possibly related to the groom’s seeming support for Bacon’s recent promotion to Attorney General. Furthermore, a letter from Bacon to the King two years after the wedding implied that the Earl of Somerset had required payment for his alleged help. If Bacon, as Spedding has assumed, felt indebted to the Earl of Somerset, then the Masque was a perfect veil for a generous repayment in kind: support to secure public office, could not be repaid in money, as this would amount to sale of office.

Thus, the evidence recognizes Bacon as the financial sponsor of *The Masque of Flowers* and offers a possible reason for his motivation. However, a fresh look at additional evidence indicates that Bacon’s involvement may have been driven by supplementary factors and also extended beyond sponsorship and funding, embracing the Masque’s production, verse and ‘the garden of a glorious and strange beauty’. His appointment as Attorney General, a few months before the wedding, is an example. Having been left with little choice but to earn his own living following the premature death in 1579 of his father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Queen Elizabeth’s Lord Keeper of the Seal, and, having withstood the
lack of support from influential family members (early in his career from his uncle, Lord Burghley, and later from his cousin, Robert Cecil, Lord Salisbury), Bacon’s attainment of the highly prestigious and financially lucrative position of Attorney General in October 1613 was a hard-won, long-awaited, significant personal milestone. The importance of this appointment is evidenced by Bacon’s effusive expression of gratitude to the King (see Appendix 2). Furthermore, Bacon’s much-improved financial circumstances, following years of impecunity, then enabled him to afford the personal generosity of an expensive wedding masque, as a near contemporary assessment of Bacon’s salary indicated:

The office that Bacon now entered upon was of exhorbitant profit for that age. He owns, in one of his letters to the King, that it was worth 6000l. a year; and his employment of Register to the Star Chamber ... now brought him in 1600l. a year more.

And Bacon’s personal style was to ostentatiously display his new wealth:

for he feasts the whole university of Cambrige this Christmas, and hath sent warrants to his frends and acquaintance far and neere to furnish him with venison to bestowed on the colleges. He caries great as well I his traine as in his apparel and other wayes, and lives at great charge.

In this context, Bacon’s staging of *The Masque of Flowers* may have been motivated by his desire to announce his newly elevated status and wealth in a highly visible and magnificent style. And yet, while Bacon’s personal profile and exposure in gifting a wedding masque for the King’s favourite and Lord Chamberlain’s daughter were undoubtedly high, there were also risks with such action. A successful masque would secure and, hopefully, enhance his reputation, while a disappointing masque could cause inestimable personal damage. Bacon’s appointment of his loyal supporters at Gray’s Inn to stage the Masque would have given him confidence in its successful delivery. Indeed, the dedication of *The Masque of Flowers* revealed that Gray’s Inn had completed the production in fewer than three weeks (an unusually short lead-time as months of preparation was standard), made possible because of ‘every man’s exceeding love and respect to you gave him wings to overtake Time’. Also, it is likely that Bacon’s confidence in staging a successful masque would have been maximized by personal involvement. Uniquely for a man in his position, Bacon was exceptionally well equipped to stage a court masque, particularly one with a stunning garden as its centrepiece. Throughout his life he had written, produced and directed dramatic productions, including a royal wedding masque, and gardens had been one of his most enduring pleasures and passions.

**Bacon’s Masque and Garden Expertise**

In 1588 Bacon helped to devise dumb-shows for Thomas Hughes’s *Misfortunes of Arthur*, presented by Gray’s Inn to Queen Elizabeth. In 1595 he participated in *Gesta Grayorum* and, while his creation of the plan for this Gray’s Inn entertainment remains conjecture, Spedding is adamant in attributing the concluding speeches to Bacon. Later in the same year Bacon scripted a device, performed on Queen’s Day, 17 November 1595. And in February 1613, Bacon’s involvement in one of the three royal wedding masques for Princess Elizabeth is evidenced in the dedication of Francis Beaumont’s *The Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray’s Inn*:

To the worthy Francis Bacon, his Majesty’s Solicitor-General ... Ye that spared no time nor travail in the setting forth, ordering, and furnishing of this masque ... And you Sir Francis Bacon especially, as you did then by your countenance and loving affection advance it.
While the nature of Bacon’s tasks is unclear, his direction over planning and organization and, possibly, costume and stage design are suggested. Also, Chamberlain called him ‘the chief contriver’, and Phineas Pett, an important participant in the masque, referred to him as the ‘chiefe’. Therefore, just ten months before his own masque, Bacon’s experience of dramatic production had culminated in a leading role producing a royal wedding masque of great splendour and success.

Bacon’s garden-making credentials had been developed through his exposure to beautiful gardens, at his father’s Gorhambury, his uncle’s Theobalds and his cousin’s Hatfield and, also in France, in the early days of his career working for Sir Amais Paulet. And he had designed and planted gardens throughout his life. During the 1590s at Twickenham Park, with ‘its Garden of Paradise’, Bacon had planted alder trees to strengthen the river banks, and an orchard of lime and birch trees in the shape of a circular maze. Between 1597 and c.1612 he directed the creation of new gardens and walks at Gray’s Inn, encompassing walled enclosures, gravelled walks, extensive planting and a mount with open-sided banqueting house. And from 1608 at Gorhambury Bacon laid out his celebrated water gardens, with their series of streams, palisaded ponds, and islands adorned with different features. Such experience of gardens and garden-making would have been invaluable in equipping Bacon to design a beautiful garden for his own masque.

And yet, while Bacon’s combined expertise in masques and gardens equipped him to assume a leading and active role in The Masque of Flowers, and the profile of the Somerset’s wedding and his recent promotion is likely to have prompted a desire to be involved, these factors do not evidence his actual involvement. However, aspects of the Masque itself also indicate that Bacon was involved in a role that extended beyond sponsorship and funding. Reflections of works by Bacon, including his essays Of Masques and Triumphs (1625) and Of Gardens (1625) and, also, De Sapientia Veterum (1609), Novum Organum (1620) and Sylva Sylvarum (1627) are visible in the Masque’s stagecraft, verse and, most particularly, in ‘the garden of a glorious and strange beauty’.

**Reflections of Bacon**

The stagecraft of *The Masque of Flowers* reflects Bacon’s own guidelines for ideal stagecraft, as articulated in his essay Of Masques and Triumphs (1625). As an entertainment featuring slapstck-style humour in the antimasque, and magic and beauty in the main masque, *The Masque of Flowers* satisfied Bacon’s definition of a masque: ‘These things are but toys’. However, he recognized that ‘But since princes will have such things, it is better they should be graced with elegancy than daubed with cost’, and the essay specified the delivery of ‘elegancy’. For example, Bacon defined the acceptable and unacceptable activities to accompany song: ‘dancing to song is a thing of great state and pleasure ... Acting in song ... hath extremely good grace: I say acting, not dancing (for that is a mean and vulgar thing)’. In *The Masque of Flowers*, ‘acting in song’ had taken place as Primavera and the Garden-gods ‘descended to the stage and, marching up to the King, sang to lutes and theobores’, and dancing in song had not taken place, but followed on after songs when, for example, the masquers ‘fell into their first measure’ after ‘The Song that Induced the Charm’.

In Of Masques and Triumphs Bacon emphasized the importance of lighting, ‘Let the scenes abound with light, specially coloured and varied’, and *The Masque of Flowers* had been filled with a variety of different light effects: pedestals were ‘beautified with transparent lights of variable colours’; pyramids were ‘glistening with transparent lights, some resembling carbuncles, sapphires and rubies’; flowers received ‘lustre from secret lights placed behind them’; and each gilded statue ‘did hold a torchet burning that gave
light and lustre to the whole fabric'. He advised that music should ‘be sharp, loud and well-placed’, and in the Masque ‘loud music’ punctuated the most important moments, announcing the main masque, and immediately before the moment of the masquers’ revelation. Bacon also defined the optimum colours for the evening stage, ‘The colours that show best by candle-light are white, carnation, and a kind of sea-water green’, and in The Masque of Flowers, white, followed by carnation, were the most dominant costume colours, with the thirteen masquers costumed head to toe in rich fabrics of white, carnation and silver.

The close adherence of the stagecraft of The Masque of Flowers to Bacon’s own guidelines in Of Masques and Triumphs indicates that Bacon probably conceived and specified the production. But, because the dedication revealed that his ‘times did scarce afford moments’, it is likely that he delegated the implementation, of the lighting, set, costume, music and choreography to Gray’s Inn, quite possibly with those represented by the three initials sharing overall charge.

Certain lines of verse in The Masque of Flowers also suggest Bacon’s involvement. For example, in an antimasque song, ‘But if Silenus’ ass should Bray/ ’Twould make them roar and run away’ has resonance with Bacon’s prose in De Sapientia Veterum (1609), ‘or when he hears how (in that memorable expedition of the gods against the giants) the braying of Silenus’s ass condued much to the profligion of the giants’. Also, a reference in the penultimate song of the main masque to Britain as ‘a fifth monarchy’ reflects a prophecy of importance to Bacon, as demonstrated in the frontispiece of Novum Organon (1620) with a quotation from the Book of Daniel (12, 4): ‘Multi pertransibunt et augebitur scientia’ (Many will go to and fro and knowledge will be increased). Bacon’s previous experience of writing verse suggests his likely contribution to his Masque, particularly given his vested interest in delivering a successful entertainment. Bacon’s practice of anonymity with regard to his poetic verse, was reflected by Aubrey: ‘His Lordship was a good poet, but conceal’d, as appears by his Letters.’ Possibly, Bacon’s promotion to Attorney General, a role demanding great personal gravitas and authority, could have made him reluctant to make public his involvement, should it be considered inappropriate for his rank. Alternatively he may have wished simply for the credit of the Masque’s success to be associated with Gray’s Inn in gratitude for their support.

BACON’S GARDEN

Bacon’s leading and active role in the Masque, however, is most clearly reflected in the garden of a glorious and strange beauty’, which demonstrates his personal writing style, garden preferences, and his knowledge and love of flowers. For example, the description of the garden of The Masque of Flowers provides sufficient detail to enable its reconstruction (Figure 5), and amongst Bacon’s works are descriptions for two gardens, which demonstrate a similar level of detail and accuracy. The first description, for Bacon’s own, then planned, garden at Gorhambury, was set out in a memo of July 1608, with ‘directions of a plot to be made to turn ye pond yard into a place of pleasure’ (Figure 6). The second description was for his ideal ‘princely garden’ set out in his essay Of Gardens (Figure 7). All three descriptions share the same writing style, characterized by

OPPOSITE  Figure 5. Plan based upon the description of ‘a garden of a glorious and strange beauty’ described in The Masque of Flowers (London, 1614). Drawing: author. A: Backdrop: prospect of trees ‘appearing like an orchard joining to the garden’; B: Stage: an elevated 40 by 40 foot platform, about 6 feet at the front rising to about 8 feet at the rear; C: Angled wings: ‘garden-walls were of brick, ... painted in perspective, all along which were placed fruit trees with ... leaves and fruit’; D: Arbour: ‘in length three and thirty foot, in height
one and twenty'; 'covered with ... trees and arbour-flowers, as eglantine, honeysuckles and the like'; 'supported with terms of gold and silver'; 'divided into six double arches, and three doors answerable to the three walks of garden'; 'In the middle part ... rose a goodly turret, and at either end a smaller'; E: Mount: 'raised by degrees, resembling banks of earth covered with grass'; 'upon the top ... a bank of flowers curiously painted'; F: Fountain: 'raised on four columns of silver; on the tops whereof stood four statues of silver, which supported a bowl, in circuit containing four and twenty foot and was raised from the ground nine foot in height; in the middle, ... upon scrolls of silver and gold, a globe ... with four golden maskheads, ... above stood Neptune, in height three foot, holding ... a trident, and riding on a dolphin';

G: Rails: 'of three foot high, adorned with balusters of silver, between which were placed pedestals beautified with transparent lights of variable colours; upon the pedestals stood silver columns, upon the tops were personages of gold, lions of gold and unicorns of silver; every personage and beast did hold a torchet burning'; H: Quarters: 'low hedge of cypress & juniper; the knots within set with ... green herbs, embellished with all sorts of ... flowers'; 'in every corner ... great pots of gilly-flowers, which shadowed certain lights placed behind them'; 'in the first two quarters were two pyramids, garnished with gold and silver, and glistering with transparent lights'; 'two farther quarters were beautified with tulipas of diverse colours, and in the middle and in the corners ... were set great tufts of several kinds of flowers, receiving lustre from secret lights placed behind them'; I: Steps: to the Dancing Place; J: Ceiling: 'over all was drawn in perspective a firmament like the skies in a clear night'
Figure 6. Plan of a garden based upon Bacon's memorandum of 'directions of a plott to be made to turn ye pond yard into a place of pleasure' (1608). Drawing: author
A: 'grownd to be inclosed square wth a bricke wall, and frute trees plashed upon it'; B: 'on the owt side of it to sett fayre straite birches on 2 sides and lyme trees on 2 sides, some x foote distance from the wall'; C: 'From ye wall to have a waulk of some 25 foote on a higher levell'; D: 'Under that waulke some 4 foote to have a fyne littell stream rune upon gravel and fyne peppell to be putt into ye bottome, of a yard and a half over, wch shall make the whole residue of the grownd an Iland'; E: 'the banque to be turfed and kept cutt; the banq I mean of the ascent to ye upper waulk: no hedg hear but some fyne standers well kept'; F: 'Within that stream upon a lower levell to make another waulk of 25 foote, the border to be sett wth flagges of all sortes of flower de Luces and lyles'; G: 'All the grownd within this waulk to be cast into a laque, wth a fayre rail wth Images gilt round about it and some low flowres specially violetts and strawberries along qu'; H: 'Then a fayre hedg of Tymber woork till it towch the water, with some glasses colored hear and there for the ey'; I: In ye Middle of the laque ... to make an Iland of 100 broad; An in the Middle thereof to build a house for freshnes ...; 'In this Grownd to make one waulk between trees; 'Nothing to be planted here but choyse'; J: 'To sett in fitt places llands more. An Iland where the fayre hornbeam standes with a stand in it and seats underneath. An Iland with Rock. An Iland with Grot. An Iland Mounted wth flowres in ascents. An Iland paved and wth picture. Every of the Ilands to have a fayre Image to keepe it, Tryten or Nymph etc. An Iland wth an arbour of Musk roses sett all wth double violetts for sent in Autumn, some gilovers wch likewise dispers sent'; K: 'A fayre bridg to ye Middle great Iland onely, ye rest by bote'
Figure 7. Plan based upon the description of Bacon's ideal design for a 'princely garden' described in *Of Gardens* (1625). Drawing: author

A: Entrance green: 4 acres; 'grass kept finely shorn'; 'fair alley in the midst'; B: 'of either side of [the] green ... a covert alley upon carpenter's work'; C: Main garden: 12 acres; 'best to be square, encompassed on all four sides with a stately arched hedge'; D: Arched hedge: 'raised upon a bank ... gently slope, of some six foot, set with flowers'; E: 'Ground within the great hedge': 'leave to a variety of device'; 'little low hedges ... some pretty pyramids ... fair columns ... alleys spacious and fair'; 'fair alleys ranged on both sides with fruit trees'; 'arbours with seats'; F: Mount: 'in the very middle, a fair mount, with three ascents and alleys'; 'thirty foot high; and some fine banqueting house'; G: Fountains: 'of two natures: the one, that sprinkleth or spouteth water, the other a fair receipt of water, of some thirty or forty foot square'; H: Heath: 6 acres: 'a natural wildness'; 'some thickets ... some little heaps, [some with] standards of little bushes'; I: Side grounds: 'four [acres] and four to either side'; 'unto which the two covert alleys of the green may deliver you'; 'variety of alleys, private, to give full shade'; 'frame some of them for shelter'; 'closer alleys must be finely gravelled'; 'in many ... alleys ... set fruit trees, ... as well upon the walls'; 'At the end of both the side grounds, ... a mount of some pretty height, leaving the wall of the enclosure breast high, to look abroad into the fields'
detail and precision, revealing each garden's: overall design; selection, design and location of individual features; planting selection and location; and specific measurements and dimensions providing a sense of scale. For example, in Bacon's 1608 memo, he specified: birch and lime trees to be positioned 'x foote distance from the wall', also for a 'waulk of some 25 foote' with a stream 'some 4 foote' below, for a further 'waulk of 25 foote', and in the middle of the lake, 'an Iland of 100 broad'. In *The Masque of Flowers* the garden featured 'rails of three foot high', an arbour 'in length three and thirty foot, and in height one and twenty', a fountain crowned by Neptune 'three foot in height', with a bowl 'in circuit containing four and twenty foot', itself 'raised from the ground nine foot in height'. And in Bacon's princely garden he specified that it should not 'be under thirty acres', with 'four acres of ground assigned to the green, six to the heath, four and four to either side, and twelve to the main garden'. Also, within the main garden, he specified a stately arched hedge, supported by pillars 'of some ten foot high and six foot broad', with a hedge over the arch of 'some four foot high', to be positioned on a gently sloping bank 'of some six foot'. It is interesting that the total height of the princely arbour of 20 feet almost matches that of the Masque's arbour of 21 feet.

Further reflections of Bacon through his personal preferences of garden features are repeated across all three descriptions. For example, his preference for gilding and reflective surfaces is evident: for Gorhambury, Bacon specified 'a fayre raile wth Images gilt' to surround the lake, and for the hedge of 'Tymber woorke' to feature 'some glasses colored'. The Masque garden featured rails 'adorned with balusters of silver', 'lights of variable colours', and silver columns topped with gilded statues, and the arbour was supported by 'terms of gold and silver'. While for the princely garden Bacon specified the spaces between the hedged arches to have 'broad plates of round coloured glass, gilt, for the sun to play upon', and for the two different types of fountains, one with 'ornaments of images gilt or marble', the other 'embellished with coloured glass'. Bacon's preference for raised banks dressed with flowers is evident: for Gorhambury with 'An Iland Mounted wth flowres in ascents'; for the Masque garden, 'a mount raised by degrees, resembling banks of earth; [set with] ... a bank of flowers'; and, for the princely garden, the stately hedge was 'raised upon a bank ... set with flowers'. Similarly, Bacon's preference for designed prospects is evident: for Gorhambury by the predetermined placing of birch and lime trees beyond the garden wall so 'only the tufts appear above'; for the Masque garden, 'over the arbour, were set artificial trees appearing like an orchard joining the garden'; and for the princely garden, 'your prospect from the hedge, through the arches upon the heath' and in the heath, 'a mount of some pretty height, leaving the walls of the enclosures breast high, to look abroad into the fields'. And, Bacon's preference for low hedging and pyramid topiary is evident in the Masque garden with its 'low hedge of cypress and juniper' and 'pyramids' positioned in the first two quarters, and also in his princely garden which featured 'little low hedges, ... with some pretty pyramids'. Finally, the celebration of flowers is repeated across all three gardens, reflecting Bacon's love of flowers and his horticultural knowledge. For example, for Gorhambury:

> upon a lower levell ... the border to be sett wth flagges of all sorts of flower de Luces and lyles. All the grownd within this waulk ... some low flowers specially violets and strawberries ... An Iland wth an arbour of Musk roses sett all wth double violets for sent in Autumn, some gilovers wch likewise dispers sent.

The Masque itself was defined by flowers, appearing in the knots, over the arbour, upon the mount, and animated as masquers, and Bacon's practical experience of horticulture, revealed by experiments detailed in *Sylva Sylvarum*, including 'the acceleration of germination', 'the putting back or retardation of germination', and 'the melioration of
fruits, trees, and plants’, indicates that he had the skills required to create a spring garden in winter, not only for his Masque, but also to some extent in reality. And for the princely garden, Bacon revealed both his emotional attachment to and his knowledge of flowers, as the creation of a _ver perpetuum_ took precedence, appearing before his garden design specification. He declared that ‘there ought to be gardens for all months of the year, in which several things of beauty may then be in season’, and listed the seasonal flowers for each month. For example:

In April follow the double white violet, the wall-flower, the stock-gilliflower, the cowslip, flower-de-luces, and lilies of all natures; rosemary flowers, the tulipa, the double peony, the pale daffodil, the French honeysuckle; the cherry-tree in blossom, the damson and plum-trees in blossom, the white-thorn in leaf, the lilac-tree.

And _Sylva Sylvarum_ continues with echoes of such knowledge.

Bacon’s writing style, his garden preferences, and his knowledge of flowers, visible in his two garden descriptions and _The Masque of Flowers_ support other evidence presented here that he was not only motivated to stage a replacement wedding masque, but also was equipped to script and produce one with a garden of flowers as its defining theme and visual focus. Reflections of Bacon’s works found within _The Masque of Flowers_, most particularly reflections about gardens, point strongly, therefore, to his leading and active involvement in writing and producing _The Masque of Flowers_, and that ‘the garden of a glorious and strange beauty’ may be attributed to him.

**LEGACY OF THE MASQUE OF FLOWERS**

Bacon’s promotion and his wedding gift marked the beginning of an immense change in his good fortune. His career trajectory soared thereafter, securing a succession of increasingly more powerful positions including Privy Council member in 1616, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal in 1617, Lord Chancellor and Baron of Verulam in 1618, and Viscount St Alans in 1621. His impeachment in 1621, stripped of office and public disgrace, is another story. For the early seventeenth-century’s version of a celebrity couple, the fortunes and marriage of Frances Howard and Robert Carr faded fast. Both were tried and found guilty of the murder of Thomas Overbury in 1616. They were condemned to be hanged, later pardoned by the King, but their fortunes and marriage did not recover. In contrast, the garden of _The Masque of Flowers_ remains as beautiful and magical as when it first appeared on the stage of the Whitehall Banqueting House on 6 January 1614.

**APPENDIX 1**

This letter is printed in D. Mallet, _Life of Francis Bacon, Baron of Verulam, Viscount St Alban, Lord High Chancellor of England_ (London, 1760), appx, n.p. Mallet indicates that the letter was ‘from an original in the Earl of Oxford’s library, never before printed’. The same letter is reproduced in T. Spencer and S. Wells, _A Book of Masques in Honour of Allardye Nicoll_ (Cambridge, 1967), p. 152, with reference, Lansdowne MS 107, f.13, art. 8, as printed in Malone Society’s _Collections_ (1, 2) (1908), pp. 214–15. The letter is not dated, nor addressed to the Earl of Somerset, but James Spedding, _The Letters and Life of Francis Bacon_, 7 vols (London, 1861–74), suggests that the ‘dozen gentlemen’ agree loosely with the thirteen masquers of _A Masque of Flowers_. Also, the letter’s reference to the Lord Chamberlain fits with a note in the dedication of the previous masque of Inner Temple and Grays Inn by Francis Beaumont in 1613, ‘where they were most honourably received by the Lord Chamberlain’.
It may please your good Lordship,
I am sorry that the joint masque from the four inns of court faileth; wherein I conceive that there is no ground of that event but impossibility. Nevertheless, because it faileth out at this time Grays-Inn is well furnished of gallant young gentlemen, your lordship may be pleased to know, that rather than this occasion shall pass without some demonstration of affection from the inns of court, there are a dozen gentlemen of Grays-Inn, that out of the honour they bear to your lordship and my lord Chamberlain, to whom their last masque they were so much bounden, will be ready to furnish a masque wishing it were in their powers to perform it according to their mind. And so for the present I humbly take my leave resting
Your Lordship’s very humbly
and much bounden
FR. BACON.

APPENDIX 2

Letter from Sir Francis Bacon to James I on his appointment as Attorney General in October 1613.

It may please your Ma.
A full heart is like a full pen; it can hardly make any distinguished work. The more I look into mine own weakness the more I must magnify your favours, and the more I behold your favours the more I must consider mine own weakness. This is my hope, that God who hath moved your heart to favour me will write your service in my heart. Two things I may promise; for though they be not mine own yet they are surer mine own, because they are God’s gifts; that is integrity and industry. And therefore whenever I shall make my account to you, I shall do it in these words, ecce tibi lucrifeci, and not ecce mibi lucrifeci. And for my industry, I shall take to me in this procuration Martha’s part, which [is] to intend your service; for the less my abilities are the more they ought to be contracted ad unum. For the present I humbly pray your Majesty to accept my humble thanks and vows as the forerunners of honest services which I shall always perform with a faithful heart.
Your Majesty’s most obedient servant,
FR. BACON.

REFERENCES

1 The Earl and Countess of Somerset were referred to as ‘two noble persons’ in The Masque of Flowers (1614).
2 Carr was elevated from Viscount Rochester to Earl of Somerset on 4 November 1613. For Carr as the favourite, see J. Harington, Nuga Antiqua (London: Vernor & Hood, Poultry, Cuthell & Martin, 1804), pp. 390–7, letter of 1611 from Lord Thomas Howard to Sir John Harington. Carr’s position was secure until the rise of George Villiers in 1615.
3 Status and credentials aside, the inevitability of this wedding commanding a high profile was also due to the controversial nullity of the bride’s first marriage to Robert Devereux, 3rd Earl of Essex, an event that had occurred just a few months earlier, provoking much court gossip; David Lindley, The Trials of Frances Howard (London: Routledge, 1993), ch. 3; Anne Somerset, Unnatural Murder (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1997), ch. 3. For contemporary comment, see McClure, Letters of John Chamberlain, p. 458.
4 McClure, Letters of John Chamberlain, p. 487, 10 June 1613 to Winwood; and p. 478, 14 October 1613 to Carleton.
5 McClure, Letters of John Chamberlain, p. 487, 25 November 1613 to Dudley Carleton; and p. 490, 9 December 1613 for the King’s gifts; and pp. 496–7, 30 December 1613 to Alice Carleton for itemization of the court’s gifts.
6 See John Nichols, The Progresses, Processions and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First (London: J. B. Nichols, 1828), II, pp. 706–45, for wedding celebrations and copies of masques; and Lindley, Trials of Frances Howard, pp. 123–44; and Somerset, Unnatural Murder, pp. 242–51, for analyses of wedding celebrations.
For an analysis of Gray’s Inn revels and masques from the early fifteenth to the late sixteenth centuries, see Adwin W. Green, The Inns of Court and Early English Drama (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1931).

See Mary Sullivan, Court Masques of James I (New York: Knickerbocker, 1913), pp. 84–93, for diplomacy of foreign attendance at Somerset wedding celebrations; and McClure, Letters of John Chamberlain, p. 499, 5 January 1614 to Dudley Carleton, on sensitivities of foreign attendance at ‘the best masque’.

For tradition of court masques in England and Italian and French origins, see Allardycce Nicoll, Stuart Masques and the Renaissance Stage (London: George G. Harrap, 1937); and Enid Welsford, The Court Masque (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927). The Masque of Flowers is notable for its revival on 7 July 1887 at Gray’s Inn in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the coronation of Queen Victoria.


Nicoll, Stuart Masques, pp. 80–1, believes that for The Maske of Flowers the traverse was some kind of shutter, not the usual curtain.

An estimate of the duration and audience size attending court masques is provided by Horatio Busino, chaplain to the Venetian Ambassador, 24 January 1618, who noted ‘every box was filled with most noble and richly arrayed ladies, in number some 600’, and after ‘two hours of waiting’, ‘at about the 6th hour of the night the king appeared with his court’, and ‘the story ended at half past two in the morning’; see the report in Venetian State Papers 1617–19, pp. 110–14, repr. Robert Ashton, James I and His Contemporaries (London: Hutchinson, 1969), pp. 238–42.

The Maske of Fowers was entered in The Stationer’s Register on 21 January 1614.

Lines 260–306.


Nicoll, Stuart Masques, analyses techniques, developed originally for the Italian intermezzi, in the Jacobean court masques; whilst Orgel and Strong, Inigo Jones, I, pp. 15–27, discuss ‘The Mechanics of Platonism’ and stage techniques of Caroline court masques.


Orgel and Strong, Inigo Jones, I, p. 7.

Lines 272, 305–6 (added emphases).


The technique most likely to have been used for this illusion is detailed in Nicola Sabbatini, Practica di Fabricar Scene, e Machine ne’ Teatri (Ravenna, 1638). For an illustration, see Nicoll, Stuart Masques, p. 71.

Hans Vredeman de Vries, Hortorum Viridarioarumque Formae (Antwerp: Theodore Galle, 1587); facs. (Amsterdam: Van Hoeve, 1980).

Lines 59–61.

Lines 61–2.

Lines 345–8.


Nicoll notes the dimensions of the arbour and fountain would have required a large stage, hence the assumption in this paper of a stage size of at least 40 by 40 feet. The author has calculated that the dancing place, positioned between the stage and the State, was also about 40 by 40 feet, having considered measurements in different sources, including Paul Reyher, Les Masques Anglais (Paris: Hachette & Cie, 1909), p. 347.

David Jacques, ‘The compartment system


47 Doubts regarding the initials' representation of the authors are expressed by Ernst Anselm Joachim Honigmann, in Spencer and Wells, Book of Masques, p. 155.


50 McClure, Letters of John Chamberlain, p. 493, 23 December 1613 to Carleton.


52 Ibid.: ‘As a compliment, it was splendiferous, according to the taste and magnificence of the time; costly to the giver, not negotiable by the receiver; valuable as a compliment but nothing else. Nor was its value in that kind limited to the parties in whose honour it was given. It conferred great distinction upon Gray's Inn.'

53 For an account of Bacon's struggle to achieve promotion in public office, recognition and financial reward, see Jardine and Stewart, Hostage to Fortune. See Spedding, Letters, IV, for Bacon's letters revealing his attempts to win favour (e.g. pp. 281–2 to the King following Robert Cecil's death stating his desire for greater responsibility).

54 Spedding, Letters, IV, p. 391.


58 Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, III, p. 212; Green, Inns of Court, pp. 71–85 (p. 82).


61 Pett organized the opening procession from Southwark to Whitehall; see his account in Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, III, p. 234.

62 For Bacon's time with Sir Amais Paulet, see Jardine and Stewart, Hostage to Fortune, ch. 2.

63 Twickenham's 'Garden of Paradise' was noted in the later works of Bacon's servant, Thomas Bushell, quoted in Bunten, Twickenham Park, p. 19; and Mallett, Life of Francis Bacon, p. xi.

64 Bacon, Essays, pp. 175–8, for Of Masques and Triumphs (1625).

65 Bacon's view contrasted starkly with that held by pre-eminent court masque poet, his friend Ben Jonson. For Jonson, masques embodied serious intent, designed to convey deep philosophical truths, 'more removed mysteries', and to act as 'the mirrors of man's life'; David Lindley (ed.), Court Masques, Jacobean and Caroline Entertainments, 1605–1640 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), pp. ix–xvii.

66 Added emphases.

67 The lighting system involved the use of glass bottles, known as diaphanous glasses, filled with coloured liquids, lit from behind with a row of lamps; Nicoll, Stuart Masques, pp. 133–5.

68 Carnation ranged from light pink to full crimson in the early Stuart period; Ravelhofer, Early Stuart Masque, p. 167.

69 Bacon's De Sapientia Veterum was translated into English in 1619 as The Wisdom of the Ancients, and was Bacon's interpretation of the hidden meanings of thirty-one myths. For Honigmann's identification of the similarity of the verse in the Masque and The Wisdom of the Ancients, see Spencer and Wells, Book of Masques, p. 177.

70 One of the last five empires in the prophesy of Daniel, in the seventeenth century identified with the millennial reign of Christ predicted in the Apocalypse.


72 O. L. Dick, Aubrey's Brief Lives (London: Secker & Warburg, 1949), p. 10. Bunten, Twickenham Park, p. 27, quotes a letter from Bacon (28 March 1603) to Mr Davis that closes: 'So desiring you to be good to concealed poets' and reveals (p. 28) that 'One of the most important arrangements which Francis Bacon formed at Twickenham was a Writing School or Scriptorium. This was a small gathering of students who wrote under Bacon's guidance various essays or miscellanies for the
distribution of knowledge'. Given this, it is possible that others at Gray's Inn also wrote the verse of *The Masque of Flowers* under his guidance.


75 Ibid., p. 77: included 'experiments in consort touching the seasons in which plants come forth', which revealed 'There be flowers, blossoms, grains and fruits, which come more early, and others which come more late in the year. The flowers that come early with us are primroses, violets, anemones, water-daffodilies, crocus vernus, and some early cold plants'.

76 Alternative candidates to Bacon, with the credentials and experience to create a court masque garden, were unavailable at the time of *The Masque of Flowers*: Jones was travelling in Italy, Jonson and Campion were also occupied delivering wedding masques for the Somersets. Samuel Daniel is unlikely to have risked the disfavour of his patron, Queen Anne, who was aligned to the Pembrokes, rival faction to the Howards. However, it is possible that Jonson as Bacon's friend, and Campion as an ex-Grayan, may have assisted Bacon in some capacity with his Masque. Also, Honigmann, in Spencer and Wells, *Book of Masques*, has speculated that 'T.B.', one of the three sets of initials, could have represented Thomas Bushell, one of Bacon's loyal servants, who went on to make celebrated gardens at Enstone, Oxfordshire, visited by Charles I and Henrietta Maria in 1636. However, research here has concluded that the initials represented members of Gray's Inn, which is supported by the reference made to their 'graver studies' in the Masque's dedication.