FRANCIS BACON AND HIS EARLIEST SHAKESPEARE PLAY *HAMLET* A TUDOR FAMILY TRAGEDY

by A. Phoenix
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O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story.
[*Hamlet*: 5:2:296-301]

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1.

THE DATING OF *HAMLET* AND OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS CONCERNING QUEEN ELIZABETH, THE EARL OF LEICESTER AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE STRANGE AND SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF SIR NICHOLAS BACON

For my name and memory, I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages.

[Francis Bacon, Last Will and Testament (Spedding, *Letters and Life*, VII, p. 539)]

The Tragical History of Hamlet Prince of Denmark is the most problematic of all the Shakespeare plays and problems and questions still continue to vex orthodox editors, scholars and critics more than four centuries after its publication. Its central character the royal prince Hamlet is universally regarded as the most complex character in all world literature. The whole essence of his being completely engages and absorbs us-emotionally, psychologically and intellectually. The full gamut of human complexity resides within him. His vast philosophical mind provides him with a deep knowledge and understanding of the human condition. His troubled soul is filled with passion and contradictions as he explores the profound depth of his grief. He is possessed with the ability to turn his searching mind inwards to look within himself and outward at the nature of humankind, its virtues and defects, and its goodness and evil. An acceptance of life is the central theme in a play which is an all-encompassing meditation upon life and death. When we are able to comprehend Hamlet, we will be in a better position to understand ourselves, and when we are fully able to comprehend the play *Hamlet*, we will be better able to understand the elusive mysteries of the human condition and human existence, as well as the elusive secrets and mysteries of human life and death.

The first issue we are faced with is when precisely *Hamlet* was written a problematic question which has also eluded Shakespeare editors, scholars and commentators for more than four hundred years, one that has given rise to seemingly endless debate and discussion, with virtually all orthodox scholars now currently of the view that it is not likely to ever be satisfactorily resolved.

The drama was first entered on the Stationers' Register on 26 July 1602 as 'A booke called the Revenge of Hamlett Prince Denmarke as yt was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servants.'[1] The first quarto edition of the play appeared in 1603 entitled *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke By William Shake-speare. As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London*: *as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where* with a text of around 2,200 lines.[2] A second quarto followed shortly after in 1604 with a different title pag as *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie*, containing approximately 3,800 lines.[3] These are the simple undisputed bibliographical facts but to determine when the play was actually written it is necessary to work chronologically backwards. Not just some of the way, providing only part of the picture, the fraudulent *modus operandi* of orthodox scholarship, but all the way providing the reader with all the evidence and information, to enable them to see the full picture, which Stratfordian scholarship has been concealing from the rest of the world to the present day.

The modern editors of *Hamlet* generally believe it was written around 1600. This is the date given in *The Oxford Shakespeare The Complete Works* (2005) by its editors

Professor Stanley Wells, Honorary President of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust seen as the foremost living expert on Shakespeare and Professor Gary Taylor, Fellow of the Folger Shakespeare Library 'It is our belief that Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* about 1600'.[4] It was a view shared by Professor Bate, a Fellow of the British Academy and the Royal Society of Literature knighted in 2015 and Professor Eric Rasmussen the editors of Royal Shakespeare Company edition of *William Shakespeare Complete Works* (2007), 'DATE; 1600?'.[5] The Arden editor of *Hamlet* (1982) Professor Harold Jenkins 'one of the foremost Shakespeare scholars of his century' was of the mind 'The conclusion I am brought to concerning the date of *Hamlet* is that as it has come down to us it belongs to 1601'[6] In the Oxford edition of *Hamlet* (1987, 2008) Professor Hibbard hovers around the date 1600-1 and a possible date 'of mid 1601' is posited by Professor Philip Edwards in the Cambridge edition of *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1985, 2003).[7] For Sir E. K. Chambers in his still standard *William Shakespeare A Study of Facts and Problems* 'To put *Hamlet* in 1600 would not be counter to any indication of style or allusion, and would bring it near *Julius Caesar* as a companion study of tragic idealism.'[8] In his still standard eight-volume *Narrative And Dramatic Sources Of Shakespeare* Professor Bullough opts for a wider range of dates 'I believe the play was mainly written between 1598 and 1601, and that alterations were made, probably in 1601 or 1602.'[9] In his edition of *Hamlet* Professor John Dover Wilson believes that Shakespeare may first have handled the play in 1596 and then revised in 1601.[10] The date 1596 is when Thomas Lodge referred to *Hamlet* in *Wits Miserie, and the Worlds Madnesse* which according to most orthodox scholars was a play named *Hamlet* but written by someone else:

…he walks for the most part in black under colour of grauity, & looks as pale as the Visard of y[e] ghost which cried so miserally at y[e] Theator, like an oisterwife, Hamlet, revenge…[11]

There is a reference to a performance of a play named *Hamlet* at Newington Butts on 9 June 1594 in Henslowe's Diary. It is listed along with two other Shakespeare plays *Titus Andronicus* and *The Taming of a Shrew*:

5 of June 1594 Rd at Andronicous	xij s
9 of June 1594 Rd at Hamlet	viij s
11 of June 1594 Rd at the tamynge of A shrowe	ix s
12 of June 1594 Rd at Andronicous	vij s [12]

That there was certainly a *Hamlet* on the stage in 1589 is confirmed by Thomas Nashe in an curious and enigmatic address to the 'Gentlemen Students *of both Universities*' prefixed to Robert Greene's prose romance *Menaphon* (1589):

It is a com[m]on practise now a daies amongst a sort of shifting companions, that runne through euery arte and thriue by none, to leaue the trade of *Nouerint* whereto they were borne, and busie themselues with the indeuors of Art, that could scarcelie latinize the necke-verse if they should haue neede; yet English *Seneca* read by candle light yeelds manie good sentences, as *Bloud is a beggar*; and so forth: and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will affoord you whole *Hamlets*, I should say handfulls of tragical speaches. But O griefe! *tempus edax rerum*, what that will last alwaies? The sea exhaled by droppes will in continuance be drie, and *Seneca* let bloud line by line and page by page, at length must needes die to our stage: which makes his famisht flowers to imitate the Kidde in *Aesop*, who enamored with the Foxes newsangles, forsooke all hopes of life to leape into a new occupation; and these men renowncing all possibilities of credit or estimation, to intermeddle with Italian translations;

wherein how poorlie they haue plodded, (as those that are neither prouenzall men, nor are able to distinguish of Articles,) let all indifferent Gentlemen that haue trauailed in that tongue, discerne by their two penie pamphlets.[13]

The majority of modern Shakespeare scholars believe this *Hamlet* refers to an earlier play the so-called *Ur-Hamlet* (no longer extant) many of whom wrongly believe was written by Thomas Kyd.[14] Conversely several other Shakespeare scholars have taken a different view. In *Shakespeare The Invention of the Human* Professor Bloom writes:

The origins of Shakespeare's most famous play are as shrouded as *Hamlet*'s textual condition is confused. There is an earlier *Hamlet* that Shakespeare's drama revises and overgoes, but we do not have this trial work, nor do we know who composed it. Most scholars believe that its author was Thomas Kyd, who wrote the archetypal revenge play *The Spanish Tragedy*. I think, though, that Peter Alexander was correct in his surmise that Shakespeare himself wrote the *Ur-Hamlet*, no later than 1589, when he was first starting as a dramatist.[15]

It was a young Shakespeare who wrote this 1589 play called *Hamlet*, writes Sams, for which he provides a long list of grounds among them this following observation:

Economy of reasoning (also known as Ockham's Razor) and common sense say that the same revising author wrote and re-wrote all the various versions of *Hamlet* as of any other multiple-text play (e.g. *King Lear*).[16]

The joint modern Arden editors of *Hamlet* professors Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor not only expressed the view that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* may date back as far as 1589, but may have been written even before that date:

..the argument that *Hamlet* alludes to *Julius Caesar*, while attractive, remains unproven. Once this is conceded, and once it is further conceded that we are not looking for just one 'precise date' but a process of production which involves drafts of manuscripts, performances in different venues, and the publication of a number of different texts, then it becomes possible to admit that a version of *Hamlet* by Shakespeare may date back to 1589, or even earlier…[17]

In his *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* Professor Bullough speaking of any relationship between the *Ur-Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy*, one impossible to define in the absence of the date and text of the former states '*A Hamlet* play would have considerable topicality between 1587 and 1589 after the execution of Mary Queen of Scots and during the negotiations for her son's marriage. In 1585 when James VI was nearly 20 and his mother was a prisoner in England, Queen Elizabeth was disturbed when an embassy arrived in Edinburgh from Denmark to demand the return to Danish rule the isles of Orkney and Shetland, and also to suggest that James should marry a Danish princess.'[18] It was during this time Bacon produced his play *The Misfortunes of Arthur* written in 1587 in the wake of the execution of the Scottish queen (who was the most pressing problem of the early Elizabethan reign overseen by his father Sir Nicholas Bacon and uncle Sir William Cecil) in which Arthur represents Queen Elizabeth and Mordred Mary, Queen of Scots performed at Greenwich before Elizabeth on 28 February 1588.[19] It is certainly the case that all the known versions of *Hamlet* are haunted by the spectral presence of Queen Elizabeth and Mary, Queen of Scots and with the Scottish succession of her son James VI of Scotland.[20] The German Shakespeare scholar Professor Karl Elze seems to suggest Shakespeare (by which he means Shakspere) penned *Hamlet* after leaving Stratford in 1585 'There is…another circumstance that speaks in favour of 1585. We have seen that Shakespeare in 1589

was already sufficiently worthy of note to be attacked by Thomas Nash, and in all probability (in addition to other plays) "Hamlet" had already been put upon the stage in its first form.'[21] With one eye on the authorship issue modern orthodox scholars do not dare venture a date further back than the second half of the 1580s simply because William Shakspere was still residing in or had scarcely left Stratford (scholars put his departure at between 1585-87 for which there is no evidence whatsoever) in order to maintain their fictitious narratives that he was the author of the Shakespeare works, including the greatest of them all, *Hamlet*.

Before Shakspere according to orthodox Shakespeare scholars had supposedly left Stratford in 1585 the original version of the Shakespeare play the so-called *Ur Hamlet* had already been written and apparently performed at Oxford University by The Earl of Leicester's Men, named after its patron Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. The Earl of Leicester's Men were the first acting company founded in the Elizabethan reign in 1558-9 and the first to receive a royal patent granted to them by Queen Elizabeth, on 10 May 1574.[22] The acting company was active through the 1560s into the 1580s and was instrumental in ushering in the Shakespearean age. In *Sweet Robin A Biography of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester* its author Derek Wilson in presenting Leicester as the leading patron of a large number of artists, writers, philosophers, scientists, actors and dramatists, many of whom gathered at Leicester House among them Sir Philip Sidney (Wilson omits to mention Bacon) and Dr John Dee, who saw Queen Elizabeth as having an inescapable destiny arising from her supposed descent from King Arthur, saw Leicester as a great precursor of a new Shakespearean dawn:

> In leading this group of adventurous spirits, Leicester, almost inadvertently, became a prime mover (perhaps *the* prime mover) of the Elizabethan Renaissance. He was certainly the leading patron of the pre-Shakespearian drama. He had grown up with court entertainments, masques, mimes, plays and pageants. He enjoyed participating in them and presenting them. He found theatrical performances a useful vehicle for expressing his own policies to the Queen. It was natural that he should encourage playwrights and actors.[23]

It was a view shared by Robert Stedall in his recent *Elizabeth I's Secret Lover Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester*, which as it title suggests, focussed upon 'the not so virgin' Queen Elizabeth and her favourite Leicester who liked to share a bed together, whose relationship (in ways he did not fully appreciate) helped Shakespeare to emerge as the greatest poet and dramatist of the Elizabethan reign:

> He was perhaps the greatest impresario of his age, showcasing the great pageants of Elizabeth's reign, allowing her to appear to glittering effect before her adoring public. He spearheaded the development of the London theatre, combining classical style with ribald comedy. This created an environment which allowed Shakespeare to flourish.[24]

The Earl of Leicester's Men were most probably the first acting company to perform the Shakespeare play *Hamlet*. The first quarto edition of *Hamlet* states on its title page '*it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London*: *as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where*.',[25] which it appears stretched back two decades to its forerunner, The Earl of Leicester's Men. In *On Renascence drama Or History Made Visible* Thomson indicates that *Hamlet* had been acted at Oxford University in 1585. It is, he writes, 'a matter of inference from allusions to it by a contemporary writer.'[26] In the spring of 1585 the Earl of Leicester as Chancellor of Oxford University put on a series of royal entertainments for Queen Elizabeth:

During this gala season of Oxford, characteristic of Leicester and his time in any affair of regal compliment or festivity, the *Corpus Christi* and All Souls colleges were from day to day the theatre of "*fetes savants*," during one of which *Hamlet* was performed by the Chancellor's players.[27]

The acting company attended Leicester in his expedition to aid the States-General in the Netherlands. He was formerly appointed to the command of the English troops in August 1585 with Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex made General of the Horse, with the English forces reaching Flushing on 10 December. The Earl of Leicester's progress through Utrecht, Leyden and The Hague was noted for the lavish pageants given in his honour:

When Earl Leicester went over to the low countries in November, 1585 he took along with him in his grand retinue the company of players that had performed *Hamlet* during the gala week at Oxford in the early part of that year. In the grand reception given to the Earl, among the varied entertainments were poetry, charades, harangues, and allegories incomprehensible. [28]

In *An Apology for Actors* (1612) printed in the name of Thomas Heywood its author records:

At the entertainment of the Cardinall, Alphonsus and the infant of Spaine in the Low-countryes, they were presented at Antwerpe with sundry pageants and playes: the King of Denmarke, father to him that now reigneth, entertained into his service a company of English comedians, commended unto him by the honourable the Earle of Leicester: the Duke of Brunswicke and the Landgrave of Hessen retaine in their courts certaine of ours of the same quality.[29]

After serving in the Earl of Leicester's Men three of its players, the clown Will Kemp, George Bryan and Thomas Pope are recorded as performing at the Danish court:

In the year 1585 a troupe of English players had appeared in the courtyard of the Town-Hall of Elsinore. If we are justified in assuming this troupe to have been the same which we find in the following year established at the Danish Court, it numbered among its members three persons who, at the time when Shakespeare was turning over in his mind the idea of *Hamlet*, belonged to his company of actors, and probably to his most intimate circle: namely, William Kemp, George Bryan, and Thomas Pope.[30]

It also appears from a series of letters and other information printed by Albert Cohn in *Shakespeare in Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*: *An Account of English Actors in Germany and the Netherlands and of the plays Performed by them during the same period*, that a group of English actors who had been sent by Leicester to the King of Denmark, had also gone to Germany as early as 1586.[31] It was around this time that some Shakespeare scholars believe *The Tragedy of Fratricide Punished*: *or Prince Hamlet of Denmark* was written, a German derivative of an early version of *Hamlet*.[32] According to Thomson in 1586 the English actors in the employ of the King of Denmark put on a performance of *Hamlet* at Antwerp for Cardinal Alphonsus and the Infanta of Spain:

In the following year, 1586, the King of Denmark entertained at Antwerp Cardinal Alphonsus and the Infant of Spain, when *Hamlet* was performed before them. Competent critics allow

that the *Hamlet* then acted in English appears to have been translated into German, probably by being written as repeated, and afterwards performed in that language.[33]

The soliloquy of 'To be or not to be' is alluded to by Thomas Nashe in his preface to Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel And Stella* (1591) as being heard on the public stage, presumably the London stage, five years since, i.e., 1586, 'nor hath my prose any skill to imitate the Almond leape verse, or sit tabring fiue yeres together nothing but to bee, to hee: on a paper drum'.[34] The paper drum is a slang word for dramatic poetry.[35] It appears from the above that a version of *Hamlet* had already been written by 1584-5 and performed in England, the Low Countries, Germany and Denmark sometime in or even possibly before 1585. However according to another source, the first version of the Shakespeare play *Hamlet*, was written several years before in *c*.1580-1. The secret history of the earliest version of the Shakespeare *Hamlet*, also has a secret pre-history, one bound up in some of the greatest secrets of the Elizabethan reign.

According to Bacon's word cipher as deciphered by Dr Orville Owen sometime in September 1576 Francis was at court in the presence of Elizabeth and her ladies and gentlemen. The court was making merry dancing and singing and gossiping with each other before the scene of gaiety was intruded upon by a young Robert Cecil, son of Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley and Lady Mildred Cooke Cecil, elder sister of Lady Anne Cooke Bacon. This mood of gaiety and fun was suddenly transformed when one of Queen Elizabeth's Ladies-in-Waiting Lady Scales playfully teased and laughed at Robert Cecil prompting him in revenge to falsely tell Elizabeth that Lady Scales had said 'That thou are an arrant whore and that thou/Bore a son to the noble Leicester.'[36] It had the desired effect of sending Elizabeth into an uncontrollable rage causing her to violently attack Lady Scales before Francis fearing the worst tried to intervene which resulted in the queen redirecting her anger and wrath towards him. With her malicious mind still violently raging and her carcass twisting and distorting she furiously turned to Francis and screamed at him 'Slave! I am thy mother'.[37] The astonishing revelation screamed out in the heat of the moment hit Francis like a thunderbolt. With his head reeling from the revelation of his royal birth still ringing in his ears (according to his biliteral cipher as deciphered by Elizabeth Wells Gallup) Francis rushed home in tears to Lady Bacon who confirmed to him the truth of his royal status:

"I tooke a most solemne oath not to reveale your storie to you, but you may hear an unfinish'd tale to th' end if will go to th' midwife. Th' doctor would be ready also to give proofes of your just right to be named th' Prince of this realm, and heire-apparent to the throne. Neverthelesse Queene Bess did likewise give her solemn oath of a bald-faced deniall of her marriage to Lord Leicester, as well as her motherhood. Her oath, so broken, robs me of a sonne. O Francis, Francis, breake not you mother's heart! I cannot let you go forth after all the years you have been a sonne o' my heart.[38]

Before the above revelation described through his word and biliteral cipher systems Bacon was entered at Gray's Inn on 27 June 1576 fully expecting to commence his studies in law whereas the open facts of history show this did not happen. Instead for reasons consistent with the revelation of his royal birth and all the complexities and difficulties it gave rise to sometime in the autumn it was decided by Queen Elizabeth and her secret husband Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester that Francis was to be sent to France in the train of Sir Amias Paulet. He says through his word cipher that his royal mother Queen Elizabeth wanted him out of the way:

Fig. 1 Queen Elizabeth I, Robert Dudley and Francis Bacon Miniatures
by Nicholas Hilliard

Thus was I banished. And on the day following
About the hour of eight, I put to sea
With that gentle knight, Sir Amyas Paulet,
Bound to the court of France.[39]

With his banishment to France forever burned in his memory he repeatedly returned to it in his word cipher as a royal prince denied his royal birthright and sent into exile:

Banished from England's court by my royal mother's angry art,
(Who with envious carping tongue upbraided me,)
I start for France, and as my mother willed,
In a vessel of our country leaving home,
I crossed the seas and a passage cut
From England into France. By her breath
I am driven, like as rigour of tempestuous gusts
Provokes the mightiest hulk against the tide,
Either to suffer shipwreck, or at Calais to arrive.[40]

For the next two and a half years Bacon resided in Paris and spent time in other parts of France at Blois, Tours and Poitiers as part of the English Embassy train following the court studying foreign policy and sending intelligence reports in cipher back to London, to the head of the English Secret Service Sir Francis Walsingham, his uncle Sir William Cecil, and other members of the Privy Council. He was in Paris when about the 17th February 1579, in the words of his standard biographer Spedding, that Bacon 'from one of those vague presentiments of evil which makes no impression upon the waking judgement but so often govern the dream, he dreamed that his father's house in the country was plastered all over with black mortar.'[41] Three days later his beloved foster father Sir Nicholas Bacon died on 20 February 1579. When news of his death eventually reached Francis in Paris he left for England on 20 March 1579 carrying a number of secret dispatches for Queen Elizabeth and her chief ministers and members of the Privy Council, but by then the solemn funeral ceremony of Sir Nicholas had already taken place.

The news of Sir Nicholas Bacon's death reverberated around the major capitals of Europe and throughout the British Isles, up in Scotland over in Wales, and across the border in Ireland. The kingdom had lost a great statesman and all the great and the good whom loved, respected and admired him, immediately went into mourning.

The body of Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon lay in state at York House for nearly a fortnight before his burial in St Paul's Cathedral on 9 March attended by his family, friends and all the great and good of Elizabethan society, respectfully marking the passing of the great loyal statesman and architect of the Elizabethan Reformation who forever changed the future direction of England, Europe, and the rest of the world.

In the days leading up to his funeral the leading families and friends from Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex and Hertfordshire journeyed to the capital to pay their respects joining the full panoply of the establishment, all of whom were in attendance on this day of national mourning. The whole of York House was draped in black cloth, so too the hearse with over three hundred marchers in black mourning cloth accompanying the coffin, has it made its way through the streets as the bells rang out of St Martin's-in-the Fields, on route to its final destination at St Paul's Cathedral. The procession was headed by the principal mourner his brother-in-law the Lord Treasurer Sir William Cecil behind whom followed his rival and adversary Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

The towering Secretary of State and spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham came next in a group including the Lord Keeper's sons, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Nathaniel Bacon, Anthony Bacon, and three sons-in-law, Sir Henry Neville, Judge Francis Wyndham and Sir Henry Woodhouse. The legal establishment was represented by the Master of the Rolls, the Solicitor-General and the Attorney-General, alongside the Master of the Queen's Jewel House and the international financier Sir Thomas Gresham, founder of the Royal Exchange and Gresham College, forerunner of Francis Bacon's Rosicrucian Royal Society. They were followed by the Lord Keeper's widow Lady Anne Cooke Bacon, his brothers-in-law Mr William Cooke and Sir Henry Killigrew, and daughters Elizabeth Bacon Neville, Anne Bacon Woodhouse, Jane Bacon Wyndham, and Anne Bacon Gresham, and other members of the Bacon family; officials and yeoman of his household, and various other lords, gentlemen, and knights of the realm.[42] It was an unforgettable and fitting send off for a truly great, good, and virtuous man. The world had lost a towering statesman and great agent for lasting change in perpetuity and his devastated son Francis had lost a much loved and admired father, inspiration and role model, whose beloved memory forever haunted his consciousness:

His father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, had been Lord Keeper under Elizabeth for nearly twenty years. It is not too much to say that from the first the elder Bacon's precept and example, and after his death, his memory were absolutely decisive in making his son [Francis] the Bacon that we know.[43]

To the present day there is very little known about how Sir Nicholas really died and what he exactly died of and in precisely what circumstances. All we have is a story told by Francis later in life to his private chaplain and first editor and biographer Dr Rawley which was published a hundred years after Sir Nicholas Bacon's demise by Bacon's second editor Dr Thomas Tenison, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury:

Old Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon had his barber rubbing and combing his head. Because it was very hot, the window was open to let in a fresh wind. The Lord Keeper fell asleep, and awaked all distempered and in great sweat. Said he to his barber, Why did you let me sleep? Why, my Lord, saith he, I durst not wake your Lordship. Why then, saith my Lord, you have killed me with kindness. So removed into his bed chamber and within a few days died.[44]

It self-evidently does not all add up and Francis's account of Sir Nicholas's death has very quietly attracted some discreet and passing attention by the biographers of both father and son. In the still standard fourteen-volume edition of *The Life and Works of Francis Bacon*, his great editor and biographer James Spedding provides a footnote as follows, without any further comment:

"The 4 of February [21 Eliz. i.e. 1578]...fell such abundance of snow, &c…It snowed till the eight day and freezed till the tenth. Then followed a thaw, with continual rain a long time after…The 20 of February deceased Sir Nicholas Bacon." *Stowe's Chronicle*.[45]

In *Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Lord Keepers Of England* Sir Nicholas Bacon's nineteenth century biographer John Campbell, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, also referred to some of the anomalies in the account of his death, regarding which he was at a loss to explain:

He had enjoyed remarkably good health, and he might still have done the duties of his office satisfactorily for years to come, had it not happened that in the beginning of February, 1579,

while under the operation of having his hair and his beard trimmed, he fell asleep. The awestruck barber desisted form his task, and remained silent. The contemporary accounts state, that from "the sultriness of the weather, the windows of the room were open," which, considering the season of the year I do not exactly understand. However this may be, the Lord Keeper continued long asleep in a current of air, and when he awoke he found himself chilled and very much disordered. To the question "Why did you suffer me to sleep thus exposed?" the answer was,-"I durst not disturb you." Sir Nicholas replied, "By your civility I lose my life." He was immediately carried to his bed, and in a few days he expired.[46]

In the longest and most detailed account of the death and funeral of Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon, found in an unpublished MA thesis for the University of Chicago, its author Virgil Barnard studiously describes the account by Francis of Sir Nicholas's death as a 'story', and also pertinently highlights, the lack of information on the cause of his death:

It would be appropriate to begin this account with a few words on the causes of Sir Nicholas' death but there is little known of it. According to a story related by Francis Bacon, he fell asleep before an open window while being attended by his barber. The timid man was afraid either to wake Sir Nicholas or to close the window, When the Lord Keeper awoke he was "all distempered and in great sweat." Apparently foreseeing his demise, Sir Nicholas told the barber, "You have killed me with kindness." Whatever we think of this story, he died shortly after on February 20, 1579 at York House, his London residence.[47]

While discussing the death of their illustrious subject in *The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon*, and the various accounts of it provided by his earliest biographers Dr Rawley, Pierre Ambiose and the antiquarian John Aubrey (which are also fictional), professors Jardine and Stewart urge us to treat them with caution:

Accounts of the circumstances surrounding a prominent death in early modern England need to be taken with more than a pinch of salt. Just like the anecdote of Sir Nicholas Bacon dispensing his bon mot on the barber who thoughtfully left open a window for fresh air (that contained the 'cold' that killed him), this account of Bacon's end is carefully constructed.[48]

Jardine and Stewart highlight that the accounts given of Francis Bacon's death have been carefully constructed, just as the account of Sir Nicholas's death by Francis has been very carefully constructed, a story with just enough inconsistencies and hints to point to the fact that it is completely false. Thus the traditional account of the death of Sir Nicholas Bacon must be concealing a very secret explosive truth, which could not then be uttered in public, an explosive secret that has still never been openly revealed in public to the present day.

What explosive truth about the circumstances surrounding the death of Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon did the carefully constructed story conceal from the Elizabethan era, including perhaps even Queen Elizabeth herself and the Elizabethan government, and from history for the last four hundred and forty years? Let us see if we can tease it out. Writing many years later Francis recalled having a very striking dream about the death of his foster father Sir Nicholas and in describing it he conjured up some very dark imagery 'I myself remember, that being in Paris, and my father dying in London, two or three days before my father's death I had a dream, which I told to divers English gentlemen, that my father's house in the country was plastered all over with black mortar.'[49] Like his early editorial and biographical predecessors Dr Rawley and Dr Tenison his standard editor and biographer James Spedding was privy to Bacon's secret life and writings (something the rest of the world has still not yet woken up to).

In his brief account of Bacon's 'dream' about the death of his father Spedding very carefully characterises it as 'one of those vague presentments of evil', a pointed and ultimately revealing word to use regarding Bacon's dream, about the supposed natural death of Sir Nicholas Bacon.[50] Let us bear down on the striking phrase 'black mortar'. The meaning of the word mortar is 'a mixture of lime and cement' (*OED*), or in other words, a mixture of compounds. Among the meanings of its cognate word *mortify* (from the Latin *mortis* meaning death), is To Kill. The word black has of course many associated meanings. It is frequently associated with the sinister and the macabre. For example Black Death brought about by bubonic plague a poisonous and contagious disease or the plant Black Nightshade or Deadly Nightshade, as it is otherwise known, a poisonous plant, or deadly form of poison. All of this clearly suggesting or pointing to an evil death by poisoning. If Sir Nicholas was poisoned who of his contemporaries might wish to poison him? The most likely answer being the most notorious poisoner of the Elizabethan age, his long term adversary, the favourite Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

The enmity between Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon together with his brother-in-law Principal Secretary of State Sir William Cecil and the favourite Robert Dudley, afterwards the Earl of Leicester, was set in motion from the outset of the Elizabethan reign. Both Bacon and Cecil knew of his secret marriage to Queen Elizabeth and his wish to be king and sit on the throne of England and that he posed the most dangerous threat to the security of the nation. Their fears were intensified when in October 1562 Elizabeth suffered a near-fatal bout of small pox and for a time her death seemed inevitable. On what seemed to be her death-bed on briefly regaining consciousness she told her advisers if she did not survive she wanted the favourite Robert Dudley named Lord Protector of the Realm. Elizabeth slowly recovered but her wishes sent shockwaves around the Privy Council with many of them absolutely horrified at the possibility of Dudley being made protector or worse even ascending to the throne. In the parliament of 1563 the critical matter of the succession was debated at great length and a petition urging the queen to (publicly) marry and produce a legitimate heir was conveyed by Lord Keeper Bacon from the House of Lords but as with everything else Elizabeth proved evasive and resistant. But while it was being publicly debated in parliament and the lords more clandestine moves were being secretly set in motion which were at least partly designed to thwart the possibility of Dudley reaching for the helm of the kingdom. Even before the parliament had convened former Marian exile John Hales, whose close relationship with Lord Keeper Bacon and the rest of the Cooke-Bacon-Cecil family went a long way back, began surreptitiously circulating a manuscript tract in which the claims of the Stuart line were passed over in favour of Lady Katherine Grey, effectively endorsing the legitimacy of her marriage with the Earl of Hertford, previously declared void, and the legitimacy of their children, which made them immediate heirs to the royal throne of England.[51]Unless Elizabeth publicly acknowledged her private marriage with Leicester or publicly married him the threat of another legitimate claim to the throne put more hurdles in his way and complicated the political charade of Queen Elizabeth's policy of marrying him to Mary, Queen of Scots, a ridiculous notion which was laughed at throughout the courts of Europe:

> Although the tract made no reference to Dudley, it could well have been used as an effective thrust at his pretensions. As Hales went about this plan, Elizabeth was working to bring about a marriage between Dudley and Mary Stuart, and would soon name him the Earl of Leicester to make the match more attractive. If Elizabeth could be made to recognize the Grey claim, the favourite might be thwarted in his presumed ambition to gain a crown by marrying her...[52]

This tract *A Declaration of the Succession of the Crown Imperiall of Ingland* (not printed until 1723) which circulated surreptitiously came to the attention of the queen in the spring of 1564 and she immediately suspected that Hales had not acted alone and was most likely a mere front in a much wider conspiracy which must have included those of a much high rank and those in higher and more powerful positions.[53] Of course she was right it did. It appeared in the eyes of some, and maybe Elizabeth too, that Sir Nicholas Bacon was directly involved in gathering information and legal opinions for the succession tract and it was alleged by some he had actually written it, with many suspected, the full knowledge and assistance of his brother-in-law Cecil, who was also suspected of being its author. On 27 June 1564 the Spanish Ambassador Guzman de Silva wrote to his master 'A great friend of Lord Robert has been to visit me on his behalf, and has informed me of the great enmity that exists between Cecil and Lord Robert even before this book about the succession was published, but now very much more, as he believes Cecil to be the author of the book, and the Queen is extremely angry about it, although she signifies that there are so many accomplices in the offence that they must overlook it and has begun to slacken in the matter.'[54] Three months later on 4 September 1564 Guzman de Silva reported that 'The queen is still annoyed about this book concerning the succession, written, as I have mentioned, by the Chancellor [Bacon]',[55] a claim afterwards repeated by Elizabeth's godson Sir John Harrington, who declared Bacon as the author of *A Declaration of the Succession of the Crown Imperiall of Ingland*.[56] Under the pseudonym R. Doleman the Jesuit priest Robert Parsons writes that the book 'written in the fauour of the house of Suffolke, and especially of the children of the Earl of Hartford by the Lady Catherine Gray, which booke offended highly the Queene and nobles of Ingland and was afterwards found to be written by Hales surnamed of the clubbe foote, who was Clarke of the hamper, & Sir Nicholas Bacon then Lord keeper was presumed also to haue had a principal part in the same' (in the margin is printed 'The book of Hales and Sir Nicholas Bacon').[57] The Lord Chancellor of Great Britain John Campbell author of the first substantial life of Sir Nicholas Bacon asserts that behind the scenes the truth emerged that Bacon was the concealed author of the tract:

> On the complaint of the Scottish ambassador, Hales was committed to prison; but upon his examination great was the astonishment-deep the indignation of the Queen, when the truth came out that the real author of this pamphlet, pretending to be the production of a subordinate officer in the Court of Chancery, was no less a person than the chief of the Court himself [Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon].[58]

Whether Bacon wrote the tract he certainly had knowledge of it and the capacity for gathering information and legal opinions incorporated into its text, which was all carried out with the full knowledge of Cecil, with the two of them implicated in its clandestine circulation. Using all his Machiavellian political guile Cecil managed to escape punishment. Hales was not so fortunate he went to the Tower and while with the help of Cecil he was released the following year he was prohibited from leaving his house for the next four years without official permission. The full wrath of Queen Elizabeth fell on Sir Nicholas Bacon who was dismissed from the Privy Council and banned from her presence and the royal court:

> If nothing but the meeting with Newdigate could be held against him, one may well wonder what led Elizabeth to banish Bacon from court, a full six months after the fact became known. Whatever or whoever led her to that step must have had a prodigious influence, for even Cecil could not stay her course of action. Such factors, however circumstantial, point

only to one conclusion; it is the conclusion which William Camden reached much closer in time to the events. Only Leicester could have brought about Bacon's disgrace, for few held his sway over Elizabeth, and none had stronger motives. Opposed on the one hand by a formidable and often dominant section of the privy council in nearly all that he hoped to accomplish, and harried on the other by various negotiations for a Stuart marriage which he did not want, Leicester sought to strike out against whom he saw as his chief antagonists: Cecil and-both in his own right and as the most vulnerable supporter of the former-Bacon.[59]

His banishment and exile badly hit Bacon very hard and caused him to suffer a long period of ill-health and much disquiet of mind. He thought he might never recover Elizabeth's favour and feared for his political and private ruin not only for himself but the rest of his family with the memory of it living with him for the rest of his life. Despite the overtures of Cecil his restoration to power was slow and not a little humiliating and it would be the spring of 1565 before he was able to regain his position at court and then only slowly did he find himself back in full favour.

These had been dark and precarious times for Sir Nicholas Bacon and the rest of the Bacon family and while Francis was only a child he learned of the events and the dire potential consequences, of even being associated with any political writings, whether through the medium of prose, poetry or drama, and how just the whiff of suspicion could lead to utter professional and private ruin. This important lesson proved a guiding principle for the young age Francis and from a young age he took great care to conceal himself behind the mask of anonymity and various pseudonyms, a method he adopted in composing the greatest literature, poetry and drama known to mankind.

The cause of Sir Nicholas Bacon's downfall Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester was the most loathed man in the kingdom, loathed by most of the nobility, his fellow privy councillors, and virtually all the English people. Much of his private and some of his secret life were known to members of the nobility, members of the Privy Council and the Elizabethan government, but few if any dared to talk about them publicly, or out loud. This and more of the Black Legend of Leicester was consolidated and extended upon by an anonymous well-placed author who knew him very well in an explosive work neutrally entitled *The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge* otherwise known as *Leicester's Commonwealth* that is believed to have been printed in Antwerp or Paris in 1584. Within a year Latin and French translated versions (with additions) were circulating on the continent with its title very explicitly indicating its contents *A Discourse on the abominable life, plots, treasons, murders, falsehoods, poisonings, lusts, incitements and evil stratagems employed by Lord Leicester*.[60]As its two foreign language titles indicate the notorious tract presented a very long list of his alleged attempted murders, murders and other assassinations many of them by way of poisoning, a repulsive practice for which Leicester employed an Italian named Guilio Borgarucci, known as Doctor Julio.

Its anonymous author states that he first tried to poison his first wife Amy Robsart and when that failed Dudley arranged for others to murder her. It is well-known that Leicester had sexual trysts with some of Queen Elizabeth's Ladies-in-Waiting and the book appropriately portrays him as a complete lecher after other men's wives. He was involved with Lettice Knollys, the wife of Walter Devereux, first Earl of Essex from the mid-1560s with whom it is alleged that while her husband was in Ireland she had two children with Leicester. After falling ill the Earl of Essex died in September 1576 and his widow married Leicester in secret in 1578. He was also having an affair with Douglass Howard, wife of John Lord Sheffield soon after her husband's death in 1568 to whom Lady Sheffield later testified Leicester was formally contracted in 1571 and in a clandestine ceremony they were secretly married in May 1573. She too gave birth

to a son named Robert whom Leicester had raised by his kinsman John Dudley and a daughter who it seems died early. In 1575 or 1576 Leicester having now tired of Lady Sheffield renewed his relationship with the Countess of Essex. According to Lady Sheffield Leicester offered her seven hundred pounds to disclaim their marriage and when she refused he tried to poison her.[61] According to the family of Lord Sheffield his death was attributed to Leicester's poison and as for the Earl of Essex in a letter to Richard Broughton on 13 September 1576 implying foul play he wrote 'a disease took me and Hunnis my boy and a third person to whom I drank, which maketh me suspect of some evil received in my drink',[62] who the author of *Leicester's Commonwealth* indicates was procured by the Earl of Leicester:

…he fell in love with the Lady Sheffield, whom I signified before, and then also had he the same fortune to have her husband die quickly with an extreme rheum in his head (as it was given out), but as other say of an artificial catarrh that stopped his breath. The like good chance had he in the death of my Lord of Essex (as I have said before) and that at a time most fortunate for his purpose; for when he was coming home from Ireland with intent to revenge himself upon my Lord of Leicester for begetting his wife with child in his absence (the child was a daughter and brought up by the Lady Shandoies, W. Knooles his wife), my Lord of Leicester hearing thereof, wanted not a friend or two to accompany the deputy, as among other, a couple of the Earl's own servants, Crompton (if I not miss his name), yeoman of his bottles, and Lloyd, his secretary, entertained afterward by my Lord of Leicester. And so he died in the way, of an extreme flux, caused by an Italian *recipe*, as all his friends are well assured, the maker whereof was a surgeon (as is believed) that then was newly come to my Lord from Italy.

…Neither must you marvel though all these died in divers manners of outward diseases, for this is the excellency of the Italian art, for which this surgeon and Dr. Julio were entertained so carefully, who can make a man die in what manner or show of sickness you will; by whose no doubt but his Lordship is now cunning, especially adding also to these the counsel of his Doctor Bayley, a man also not a little studied (as he seemeth) in this art. For I heard him once myself in a public act in Oxford (and that in the presence of my Lord of Leicester, if I be not deceived) maintain that poison might be so tempered and given as it should not appear presently, and yet should kill the party afterward at what time should be appointed.[63]

He poisoned or had poisoned Sir Nicholas Throgmorton 'who was a man whom my Lord of Leicester used a great while (as all the world knoweth) to overthwart and cross the doings of my Lord Treasurer then Sir William Cecil, a man especially misliked always of Leicester'.[64] The anonymous author of *Leicester's Commonwealth* presented a further litany of poisoning, murders and attempted murders perpetrated on the orders of Leicester including an unsuccessful attempt to murder of Jean de Simier. In a clandestine ceremony the Earl of Leicester married Lettice Knollys at Wanstead on 21 September 1578 in the presence of Sir Francis Knollys, Ambrose Dudley, and the Earl of Pembroke. The news of the secret marriage was finally revealed to Queen Elizabeth by Alencon's agent Jean de Simier nearly a year later in July 1579. She took the news badly and Leicester was banished from court who in turn sought the death of the French Ambassador:

His treachery towards the noble late Earl of Sussex in their many breaches is notorious to all England. As also the bloody practices against divers others. But as among many, none were more odious and misliked of all men than those against Monsieur Simiers, a stranger and ambassador; whom first he practised to have poisoned (as hath been touched before) and when that device took not place, then he appointed that Robin Tider his man (as after upon his ale bench he confessed) should have slain him at the Blackfriars at Greenwich as he went

forth at the garden gate; but missing also of that purpose, for that he found the gentlemen better provided and guarded than he expected, he dealt with certain Flushingers and other pirates to sink him at sea with the English gentlemen his favorers that accompanied him at his return into France.[65]

More than four hundred and thirty years after its secret clandestine publication the authorship of *Leicester's Commonwealth* has never been satisfactorily resolved. From centuries past all the biographers of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and the modern editor of the *Leicester's Commonwealth* believe the work was the result of a vast and complicated Catholic conspiracy to discredit and destroy him. In trying to prove this so-called Catholic conspiracy these writers parade a large cast of Catholic dissidents for its authorship, production and distribution. For the supposed or alleged authorship of *Leicester's Commonwealth* the list is an impressively long one, gathered up from a variety of sources, which included the spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham, Head of the English Secret Service, from Paris the French Ambassador Edward Stafford and other English officials, as well as various Protestant and Catholic sources, including agents and spies in the pay of Walsingham and still others with personal axes to grind. Down the centuries the seemingly ever growing never ending list of individuals proposed for its authorship has included the Jesuit priest Robert Parsons, Thomas Morgan, the main agent of Mary Queen of Scots in Paris, Dr William Allen, Principal and founder of the English Collage at Douai, Dr William Nicholson, the Archbishop of Glasgow, Charles Arundell, former Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, Lord Henry Howard, Lord Paget, Thomas Fitzerhebert, William Tresham and Thomas Throgmorton.[66] The situation as it currently stands is summed up by its modern editor Dwight C. Peck:

To summarize the much-vexed authorship problem, then, our reflections suggest that *Leicester's Commonwealth* was written chiefly by Charles Arundell, probably with the assistance of all or some of the group comprising Lord Paget, Thomas Fitzherbert, William Tresham, Thomas Throgmorton, and possibly still others; so far this conclusion confirms the assertion of Father Parsons and the opinions of the scholars Pollen and Hicks. Parsons probably, and Stafford possibly, to some degree facilitated the production, and both must have known about it. The two other serious candidates for authorship, Parsons himself (advanced by tradition and recently revived by Professor Holmes) and Thomas Morgan (first suggested by Walsingham and latterly accepted by Hotson and Conyers Read) seem quite unlikely to have been involved in the writing.[67]

The writing, production and distribution of *Leicester's Commonwealth* was actually conceived, organised and directed by the English Secret Service in a secret operation to irreversibly damage and destroy the Earl of Leicester, who was a threat to national security, Queen Elizabeth, whether she could see it or not, and a number of powerful individuals at the heart of the English government and intelligence. Some of the detail in the publication could only have come from very senior government and intelligence sources and from those with very intimate knowledge of the court and persons close to Leicester himself, who possessed secret and little known knowledge of his private life, the poisoning, the murders, and attempted murders, his clandestine marriages, his children born in and out of wedlock, and many of his other hidden misdemeanours. The driving force with which the book is written indicates that it was also personal, very personal, written by someone very close to Leicester, who knew him personally, and possessed close and first-hand knowledge of his private and secret life. Someone who himself and his family had many times been on the receiving end of Leicester's legendary spite and revenge, even possibly poisonous and murderous, revenge.

None of the Catholic contingency paraded above as candidates for the authorship of *Leicester's Commonwealth* contributed a single word, nay, not even a single syllable to it, and what links and connections some of them might or might not have had with the printing, publication and distribution of the work, was without their knowledge an operation directed by others. The intelligence operation was organised and directed by spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham, head of the English Secret Service, chief minister of state Sir William Cecil, whose brother-in-law Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon had recently died in very curious and suspicious circumstances, and the concealed author of *Leicester's Commonwealth*. The anonymous author of the *Commonwealth* (where it is printed in the margin the 'Lord Keeper' [Bacon] and 'Lord Chamberlain' [Earl of Sussex] who Leicester had poisoned) explains how their deaths advantaged Leicester. Both Lord Keeper Bacon and the Earl of Sussex had from the very beginning of the Elizabethan reign closely marked Leicester's life and unspeakable transgressions (and provided its concealed author with some of the private and secret information found in *Leicester's Commonwealth*):

…now if we pass from Court to Council we shall find him no less fortified, but rather more, for albeit the providence of God hath been such that in this most honorable assembly there hath not wanted some two or three of the wisest gravest, and most experienced in our state that have seen and marked this man's perilous proceedings from the beginning (whereof notwithstanding two are now deceased, and their places supplied to Leicester's good liking, yet (alas) the wisdom of these worthy men hath discovered always more than their authorities were able to redress (the other's great power and violence considered)….[68]

An incomplete copy of *Leicester's Commonwealth* is found among Francis Bacon's collection of MSS, otherwise known as The Northumberland MSS, containing letters, political tracts and dramatic devices dating from 1580 through to 1597, that originally contained copies of Bacon's two Shakespeare plays *Richard II* and *Richard III* whose thrust for the crown of England, not unlike that of Leicester, involved him in schemes, plots, and murdering everybody that stood in his way.[69] On the outer-cover of Bacon's collection of MSS are various words and sentences scribbled all over it including in excess of a dozen instances of the name Bacon and Francis Bacon and the name of his pseudonym Shakespeare/William Shakespeare. Above the entry for his Shakespeare play *Richard II* is written '*By Mr. ffrauncis William Shakespeare*' and lower down the page the word '*Your*' is twice written across his pseudonym, so it reads '*Your William Shakespeare*', above which is the entry for '*Leycesters CommonWealth*'.[70]

Following his return from banishment in France by his royal mother Queen Elizabeth and his father Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester after the reading of his foster father Sir Nicholas Bacon's last will and testament, in Trinity Term 1579, Bacon was admitted to Gray's Inn to study law. It was in his early years at Gray's Inn that according to his word cipher deciphered by Dr Orville Owen he wrote the first version of his immortal play *The Tragedy of Hamlet* widely seen as the greatest drama in the Western canon.

In the word cipher speaking of his mother Queen Elizabeth and father Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester of whose behaviour he is critical Francis asks the person he is having a conversation with 'What say you!':

INTERLOCUTOR Nay, nay, ask me not, my lord;
I will not blame you that you do not love
Your mother dearly, but is't possible

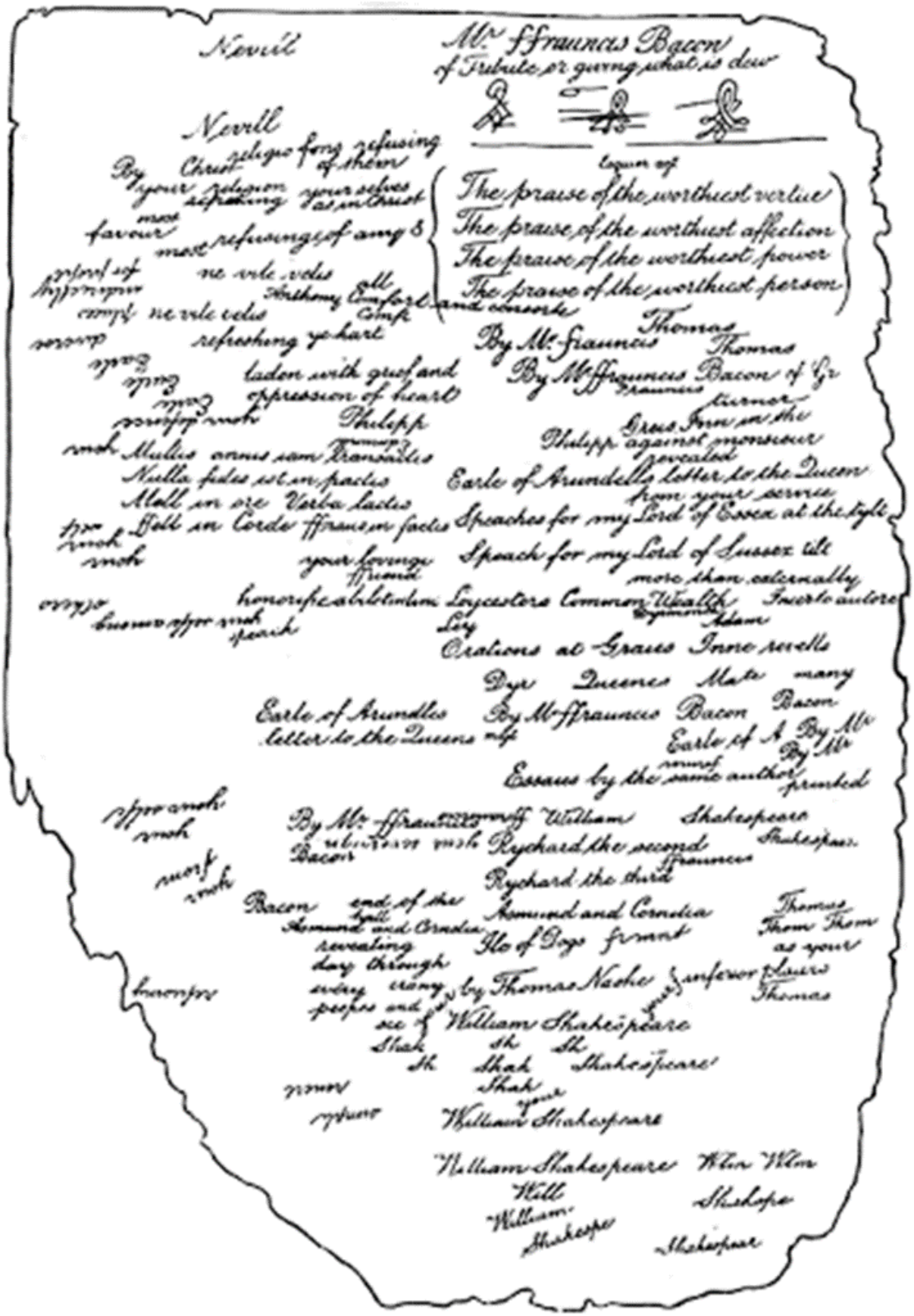


Fig. 2 The Northumberland Manuscript

That you are angry at your lord and father?
Between the child and parent, the child (being flesh
Of mother and father) ought all duty show;
Thus you should not speak against your father's white flakes,
Though he be oppos'd against you.

FRANCIS BACON You do me wrong, you are mistaken, sir.
I am proclaimed, even to full disgrace,
The foul flesh of my most noble mother,
While before the world my ungrateful father
Doth stand up blest-nay, godded indeed:
Therefore, before I'll show them the deep duty
Of common sons, I'll let the mutinous winds
Strike the proud cedar trees 'gainst the fiery sun
Of heaven, murd'ring impossibilities
Or let the pebbles on the hungry beach
Fillip the stars. Now that my sweet revenge has come
I will get a leaf of brass, and with a gad of steel,
I'll will the words and lay in on the sands,
Where th' angry northern winds will blow 't abroad,
Like Sybil's leaves.

INTERLOCUTOR You speak something wildly
And unproperly-leave impression that you
No softer are than th' flint. Sure, you must have
A motive for't. What is it pray? You should
Exchange charity.

FRANCIS BACON 'Tis true, the wheel has come full circle;
I'm here and it is time to speak. List a brief tale,
And when 'tis told let sorrow split my heart,
If I but print my royal mother or
My father true. I lost all by mine own folly:
Ere I was twenty-one, I was a pack-horse
In his great affairs; to royalize his blood,
I spent mine own much better blood than his,
And, though he was a liberal rewarder
Of his friends, he forgot his own poor son,
And, like the bees who are nurtur'd for their sweet taste,
My pains yield him engrossments to the bitter end.[71]

He proceeds to relate how his royal mother Queen Elizabeth and his father Robert Dudley discovered he had written his immortal play *Hamlet*:

FRANCIS BACON At twenty, I was to their yoke subdued,

I'm bound by oath, on my peril,
Not to alter my condition, and forbid
To say I am the child of royalty,
And, should I tell, I would be hang'd: but this,

Like hectic in my blood, did rather exasperate
Than make me afraid, and I was importunate.
My mother learn'd that I wrote Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,
And then I was lost.[72]

Through his word cipher Bacon tells how one night Leicester discovered that he was rehearsing his company while he was supposed to be studying at Gray's Inn:

FRANCIS BACON My father found I had collected,
(Whiles I was busy in th' administration
Of law) scenes in stage plays and masks, and that
I, in disguise, had train'd the brethren.
My noble father, one night, pried through
The crevice of the garret wall where we rehears'd
Our play, and laughed so heartily that both his eyes
Were rainie. Then he, looking near, saw who
Did instruct each scholar for his part. Two nights together
Did he hear me deliver instructions
To Marcellus and Barnardo on their watch;
And in the dead waste and middle of the night,
My father saw a figure, arm'd at all points
Exactly, *cap-a-pie*, appear and with solemn march
Go slow and stately before them-my ghost, alas!
My father, with an attent ear did for awhile
Season his baleful discontent, till I
Did to the gentlemen give tongue; then he
Presently, all inspir'd with rage, doth run about
T' my door and intercepts me, curses me
Awhile, calls me a most unnatural fool,
And roundly utters to me his complaint.
LEICESTER For heaven's love, have you divorc'd your wits?
I pray you, If you've hitherto conceal'd this play,
Let it be treble in your silence still.[73]

On his way back to Gray's Inn Leicester confronted him and in a heated exchange he unloaded an angry rant at Bacon 'if you had the best qualities of a man,/You would espouse the love of your great mother:/I know she loves you, boy.' He in turn rounded on Leicester contemptuously retorting 'Aye, when she banished me,/And put to death a citizen, only for saying/She had a son, heir to the crown, well I did know/Her grace lov'd me! She's your wife, but have you been king?'[74] He further tells him that by his plays and wit 'I shall make all/Nations canonize me, over courts of kings' and 'I, the poor son/Of this renowned Queen, with act and scene,/Will write and speak, my lord, to sight and ear.'[75] An incandescent Leicester ran along and reported to Elizabeth that their son Francis played with an idle company of actors 'I saw him yesternight, in a most murd'rous play/Take part, and I beseech your royal majesty/To let him have all th' rigour of the law,/Because this same boy's full of burning zeal/To mend the time, and do our country good.' The amoral Leicester then implied that his own son would be better dead than living:

LEICESTER I would that Jove esteemed him too good for earth,

And would raise him to a higher pomp than this.[76]

Having heard his report Elizabeth summoned Francis to the palace where he arrived to find her at the height of her anger as he awaited the onslaught:

QUEEN ELIZABETH You personate our person,
Do you, among the city wits and act
Your mother's death?[77]

Now giving full force to her vicious temper she laments not having murdered her own son at birth

QUEEN ELIZABETH O, by strangling you, my son,
I might have had some surety in the present!
You came on earth to make the earth my hell.[78]

His royal mother Elizabeth accuses him of using cunning speeches to breed suspicion in the mind and hearts of the people:

QUEEN ELIZABETH Upon the witness of your father, my Lord Leicester,
You, my son, were seen the night last gone by,
Among the worst company in the kingdom,
Attempting to make them instruments to plague us;
But there's a remedy to medicine
Destruction to this lawless tribe,-a prescription
Of rare and prov'd effect,-and I'll bestow it
On them; we'll have them whipp'd, and among them,
My son, I will fitly bring you to your knees.[79]

More fury, abuse and threats of violence and death followed in the kind of language that would embarrass a fishmonger's wife but an undaunted Francis presented a vision that would capture and mesmerise the world:

FRANCIS BACON I will create
Strange Tragedies for mine eternal jewel,

Shall speak to Hamlet of his father's foul
And most unnatural murder.[80]

His royal mother was not impressed with his fertile imagination and accuses him of portraying her in *Hamlet*:

QUEEN ELIZABETH as I fear
Thou hadst; thou playedst most foully to show the death
O' th' Danish King and Hamlet to my enemies.
(They murdered their king in the heaviness of sleep)
And th' violent harm, that the chiefest princes
Of Rome did put upon their emperors,
I doubt not shall be put on me.[81]

He tried to assuage her but she was having none of it. He was a traitor and no son of hers she ranted shall ever be king of England. He further tried to soothe and calm her fears and suspicions by stating she had mistaken his purpose which appeared to have the desired effect with Elizabeth saying it all amounted to 'a loving and a fair reply!' It was however nothing more than a cunning pretence and ruse from a well-practiced master of dissimulation. Now playing the part of a loving and mollified mother she sent Francis off to Gray's Inn to fetch his manuscript of *Hamlet*:

> As a personal favor to my mother, I brought
> My cause of sorrow (the first copy of Hamlet)
> To the palace. When I brought it to her
> The best of my matter, she, ere my hand
> Had settled down, in passion did tear it
> From my bosom, and without even reading it,
> Tore it in twain, and sans remorse, put it
> Into the fire.[82]

These events described by Francis through his word cipher when he was twenty or in his twentieth year probably took place towards the end of 1580 or in the early part of 1581, when he had already written his first version of *The Tragedy of Hamlet*, which he most likely commenced not long after his return from France following the death of his foster father Sir Nicholas Bacon.

2.

THE ROYAL TRAGEDY OF HAMLET

Recent interpretations have, in effect, accounted for the apparently excessive focus on Gertrude by identifying her with Elizabeth I and reading the play as a kind of meditation on the ageing and passing of the Virgin Queen.

…*Hamlet* has also been seen as a 'succession' play which reflects anxieties about female intervention in patrilinear culture and represents the exhaustion of the old dynasty.

…More limited claims for the topicality of *Hamlet* are made by Karin S. Coddon and Patricia Parker. Coddon's essay '"Such strange desyns": madness, subjectivity and treason in *Hamlet* and Elizabethan culture', relates *Hamlet* to the decline and fall of Elizabeth's former favourite Robert Devereux…

[Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, *Hamlet* (The Arden Shakespeare, 2006), pp. 40-1]

My name is Tidder [old way of spelling Tudor], yet men speak of me as Bacon, even those that knowe of my royal mother, and her lawful marriage to th' Earl o' Leicester.

I was Elizabeth's son, by her wedded Lord, elder brother to Robert, the Earle of Essex, who raised a rebellion to obtaine his owne mother's kingdome despite all other and prior rights [i.e., his own as the eldest born and rightful heir to the throne].

[Elizabeth Wells Gallup, *The Bi-literal Cypher of S^{ir} Francis Bacon discovered in his works* (London: Gay and Bird: 1899), pp. 50, 212]

In the early months of 1601 the final act in the Tudor tragedy was just beginning to play out its last throes with its inevitable consequences of blood, death and destruction marking the end of one of the most remarkable periods in English history nothing less than the end of the Tudor dynasty. With the ageing Queen Elizabeth deteriorating and nearing her death the subject of succession which had characterised the Elizabethan reign was of pressing and real concern. It was certainly preoccupying the minds of her chief ministers, the Privy Council and her government and those of Francis Bacon and Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex. Throughout her reign the ageing queen had lived a long double life. A public life masquerading as the so-called Virgin Queen married to England and a private secret life as a not so Virgin Queen who had secretly married Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester with whom she had two children the eldest known to the world as Francis Bacon and the other as Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex. Without informing and overlooking the prior right of his elder brother as rightful heir to the throne, the frustrated and desperate Robert Tudor Devereux realising Elizabeth was now unlikely to recognise his elder brother Francis, or himself, as her Tudor heirs decided upon seizing the reins of state by force in an ill-conceived *coup d'etat*. It was this lack of public acknowledgement by Queen Elizabeth of his secret royal birth with its hereditary right to the throne that was the true cause and impulse of his rebellion and one which would cost him his life.

On 2 and 3 February 1601 a secret enclave of key supporters of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex met at Drury House led by the Earl of Southampton to discuss their secret plan for surprising the court, seizing the queen's person, and for placing Essex at the very helm of the state. Four days later on 7 February with activity in and around Essex House attracting the attention of the authorities the Earl of Essex was summoned to appear before the Privy Council who then only sought to reprove him

for holding unlawful assemblies and convey a wish for him to retire to the country. He however fearing they knew something of his secret designs sent word he was too ill to attend. In the meantime the day before Sir Charles Percy and a number of other Essex followers called on the Lord Chamberlain's acting company to request a performance of *Richard II* with its controversial deposition scene and killing of the king. The play was performed on the afternoon of 7 February with a contingency of Essex supporters in the audience including Sir Charles Percy, Sir Christopher Blount and Sir Gelly Merrick, which was intended to rouse and inspire support from the London citizens.

In the early morning of Sunday 8 February the Lord Keeper and three councillors arrived at Essex House sent by the Queen to demand he disperse his followers and to privately communicate any complaint he had to her official party so they could pass it on to their lady sovereign. In response Essex locked the royal delegation under guard in the library and hotly set off on foot with three hundred men towards the City. As they walked along the streets Essex and his followers cried out to the citizens that his enemies were planning on murdering him. Passing through Cheapside they arrived at the house of the London sheriff Sir Thomas Smyth who was in charge of the militia and much needed weapons. After listening to Essex, a suspicious Smyth withdrew to consult with the Lord Mayor. By then Essex had been officially proclaimed a traitor through the City and troops loyal to the crown organised and deployed to oppose him. With support ebbing away and all opportunity for success now vanishing Essex and a dwindling number of hard core supporters headed back via the river to Essex House where he burned some secret papers pertaining to the conspiracy which if they fell into the hands of his mother Queen Elizabeth and her government would fatally prove his downfall. With the situation all but hopeless Essex House was soon surrounded by a large force of government troops and after two heavy canons arrived from the Tower Essex and his followers finally decided to surrender with all of them promptly rounded up and taken under heavily armed guard to prison.

Within a fortnight on 19 February 1601 Essex and his principal follower the Earl of Southampton were arraigned at Westminster on charges of treason before the Lord Treasurer, Lord High Steward and twenty-five peers (nine earls and sixteen barons). The queen had also commanded under threat of death that her other concealed royal son Francis Tudor Bacon appear as a prosecutor in the trial against his royal brother Robert Tudor Devereux. Besides her cruel and vindictive nature the so-called Virgin Queen was most probably concerned that the state secret of her clandestine marriage to Dudley and the fact that she had given birth to two children might in the heat of the courtroom be spurted out by Essex who lest we forget was on trial fighting for his life for attempting to seize the crown which he thought was rightfully his. The result was a foregone conclusion and Essex and Southampton were found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death.

Years earlier it is said that Queen Elizabeth had given Essex a ring which if he ever forfeited her favour, if he sent it back to her, its return would ensure his pardon and forgiveness. His royal brother Francis knew that Essex had only to return the ring and all would be forgiven. He may also have been informed that Essex had sent it. But the queen never received the ring. Elizabeth was incredulous that Essex even at his lowest point and with his life in imminent danger did not possess the humility to send the ring it to her. It reinforced her deeply held fears that her concealed son would forever remain unruly and dangerous and she finally signed his death warrant. In those last days while fearing for his life in the Beauchamp Tower (part of the Tower of London) where he was imprisoned before his execution in the face of imminent death Robert Tudor carved into the stone wall his true name over the door way which can still be

seen to this present day 'ROBART TIDIR', an old way of spelling ROBERT TUDOR, conveying his status as a concealed royal prince of England.

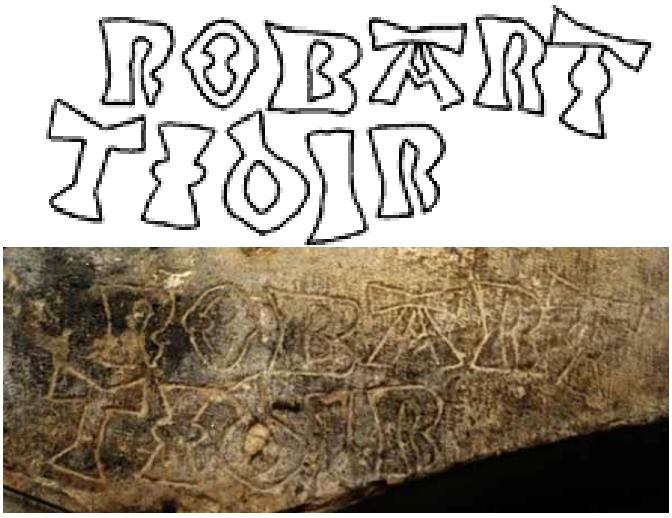


Fig. 3 'Robart Tidir' in the Beauchamp Tower

The day of reckoning came on 25 February when the concealed royal prince Robert Tudor, Earl of Essex led by the Lieutenant of the Tower and surrounded by sixteen guards solemnly walked to his execution. The queen had granted him one final favour in allowing him a private execution inside the Tower of London (rather than upon Tower hill in front of the people) which was attended by around a hundred persons, summoned to witness his final minutes on earth. All dressed in black, an outwardly calm and composed Robert Tudor, removed his doublet to reveal a scarlet waistcoat with scarlet sleeves. Taking off his hat the concealed royal Tudor prince forgave the executioner, and after kneeling down and praying, he laid his royal head on the block and received three blows of the axe, as he brutally departed from this mortal coil. As the life of her son Prince Robert Tudor ebbed away his mother Queen Elizabeth Tudor sat playing her virginals.

Locked in the Tower and condemned to death Essex had given the ring to a boy with instructions to pass it to Lady Scrope a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber to give to Elizabeth. Instead the page boy mistakenly gave the ring to her sister Katherine, the Countess of Nottingham, wife of Charles Howard, first Earl of Nottingham, Essex's sworn enemy. A relative of Queen Elizabeth and Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber the Countess of Nottingham had been a close friend of Elizabeth's for more than fifty years. She was privy to the significance of the ring and her husband fearing reprisals from Essex if he lived implored her to keep it for their own protection and survival. Thus while Essex lay in the Tower facing death agonisingly waiting for a reprieve from his mother Queen Elizabeth and she too waited night after night, sleepless and weeping, desperate for her son Essex to send the ring that would save his life, it never came and he was executed. Following his death what life Elizabeth had left slowly began to drain out of her and with it her mind began to deteriorate plaguing her to the end of her days.

Perhaps resulting from the guilt of her actions not long after Essex's execution the health of the Countess of Nottingham's also began to deteriorate and steadily decline. As she lay dying on her deathbed she received a visit from Queen Elizabeth to whom she confessed that she wilfully withheld the ring. Immediately overcome by a violent

passion Elizabeth grabbed the dying woman and in an inconsolable rage spat out a torrent of unrepeatable expletives ending with the exclamation "God may forgive you, Madam, but I never can!". With the words of Queen Elizabeth still ringing in her ears Lady Nottingham soon after died at Arundel House on 24 February 1603, a death which precipitated Elizabeth's final decline.

In the last days and weeks of her life those closest to Elizabeth watched on helplessly as she marched slowly but surely to her death as she descended into a chronic state of depression and melancholy. The death of her son Robert Tudor and the circumstances of it had taken a heavy toll on her. She experienced terrible nightmares where she saw Essex with his head chopped off surrounded by blood, her royal Tudor blood, which like Lady Macbeth, she was unable to wash from her eyes and hands. Her physicians were unable to do anything to ease her disorder and afflictions. She ate little and only washed intermittingly, nor did she bother changing her clothes for days on end. She is tormented and distracted by 'evil plots and designs' constantly pacing the rooms and corridors of the palace, stamping her feet, all the time raging, swearing and muttering incoherently. Every little thing disturbs and irritates her as she takes her fears and frustrations out on those closest and all around her. In the end with her mind tortured by the burden of her black conscience and the terrible guilt for all the wicked things she had done, the dying Tudor queen refused to go to bed and sleep instead choosing to lie against a pile of cushions as her life ebbed away.

Reduced to a shattered shell wrecked with grief and guilt without love and any more hope in this world she cried out for Dudley and their son Essex in full realisation that she had executed her own flesh and blood. Finally, to the relief of all her death was recorded as taking place at Richmond Palace on 24 March 1603. All the happenings and reports of her final weeks and days were known to her other royal son Francis Tudor Bacon, and for years after her death his mother agitated and haunted his mind.

It is no coincidence that in the year Queen Elizabeth died the first quarto edition of the royal tragedy of *Hamlet* appeared in a text amounting to 2,200 lines. During 1603 Bacon subjected the play to a thorough examination and revision and with his royal mother now well and truly dead a much revised and enlarged second quarto of *Hamlet* appeared in 1604 containing around 3,800 lines, in a play which obliquely portrays hidden in plain sight, some of the most explosive secrets in all Tudor history.

The Tragedy of Hamlet is Francis Bacon Tudor telling his own secret and hidden story. It is partly a succession play which represents his fears and anxieties about the passing of an old-ageing Queen Elizabeth and the exhaustion of a royal dynasty with Bacon having to face up to the extinction of the House of the Tudors. Through the play he discloses the unrecorded history of his own private secret life as a concealed Tudor Prince and heir to the throne of England with its players being 'the abstract and brief chronicles of the time.' It tells the tale of its author, a disinherited royal prince Francis Tudor Bacon in the shape of Hamlet asserting his royal right denied to him by his mother Queen Elizabeth, refracted through Queen Gertrude, and her husband the much loathed and notorious poisoner Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in the figure of her husband King Claudius. In real life Francis's noble foster father Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon may have died from being poisoned by his adversary Leicester with the story put out he had died from a cold and in the play the Ghost of Hamlet's father states 'the whole ear of Denmark' has been 'rankly abused', i.e., misled by the official story put out by the state, that Old King Hamlet (who had died from being poisoned by Claudius) had died by accident. Elizabeth's chief minister was Bacon's nominal uncle Sir William Cecil, the model for Polonius, the chief adviser to Queen Gertrude and King Claudius, and with Queen Elizabeth as Gertrude and Leicester as

Claudius, we can readily discern that Laertes represents Robert Tudor Devereux, which makes sense of the passage when Laertes storms Elsinore Castle with the mob crying 'Laertes shall be king', the hoped for reaction of the London citizens, when Essex attempted to storm the English court:

> young Laertes, in a riotous head,
> O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord,
> And, as the world were now but to begin,
> Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
> The ratifiers and props of every word,
> They cry 'Choose we! Laertes shall be king.'
> Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
> 'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king.'
> [*Hamlet*: 4:5:99-106]

The first and second quartos of *The Tragical Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmark* were being prepared, written, and published through the same period by Bacon as his landmark work *The Advancement of Learning*. In the year Queen Elizabeth died the first quarto edition of *Hamlet* was published in 1603 followed by a much revised and enlarged edition variously dated on its title page 1604 or 1605. It appears from a letter to his cousin Secretary of State Sir Robert Cecil (whose father Sir William Cecil is the model for Polonius in *Hamlet*) that Bacon had already conceived the design of writing the *Advancement* sometime before 3 July 1603. The first of its two books was written in 1603, with the second apparently after an interval hurriedly written in the latter part of 1604, and published in early 1605. In the *Advancement* Bacon set out a series of the cipher systems which he later incorporated into his acknowledged writings and the quarto and folio editions of his Shakespeare plays:

> For CYPHARS; they are commonly in Letters and Alphabets, but may bee in Wordes. The kindes of CYPHARS, (besides the SIMPLE CYPHARS with Changes, and intermixtures of NVLLES, and NONSIGNIFCANTS) are many, according to the Nature or Rule of the infoulding; WHEELE-CYPHARS, KAY-CYPHARS, DOVBLES, &c. But the vertues of them, whereby they are to be preferred, are three; that they be not laborious to write and reade; that they bee impossible to discypher; and in some cases, that they bee without suspition. The highest Degree whereof, is to write OMNIA PER OMNIA; which is vndoubtedly possible, with a proportion Quintuple at most, of the writing infoulding, to the writing infoulded, and no other restrainte whatsoeuer. This Arte of *Cypheringe*, hath for Relatiue, an Art of *Discypheringe*; by supposition vnprofitable; but, as thinges are, of great vse. For suppose that *Cyphars* were well managed, there bee Multitudes of them which exclude the *Discypherer*. But in regarde of the rawnesse and vnskilfulnesse of the handes, through which they passe, the greatest Matter, are many times carried in the weakest *Cyphars*.[83]

The Simple Cipher referred to by Bacon is a substitution cipher based upon the twenty four letter Elizabethan alphabet (I and J and U and V were interchangeable) in which the letter is given a numerical value:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T U	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

Examples: F R A N C I S B A C O N

6 17 1 13 3 9 18=67 2 1 3 14 13=33

F. B A C O N
6 2 1 3 14 13=39

W I L L I A M S H A K E S P E A R E
21 9 11 11 9 1 12 =74 18 8 1 10 5 18 15 5 1 17 5=103

F R A R O S I C R O S S E
6 17 1 17 14 18 9 3 17 14 18 18 5=157

The carefully formatted title pages of both the 1603 and 1604 quarto of *The Tragical Historie of Prince Hamlet* secretly include a number of Baconian-Rosicrucian ciphers. If we look closely at the upper section of the title page of the 1603 edition we see that the first five lines have been printed in three different types: block roman, ordinary roman, and italic. This is, of course, no accident. This top section contains a total of 64 letters that when added to the 3 words printed in italic 64+3=67 Francis in simple cipher. It also contains 39 ordinary roman letters: 39 F. Bacon in simple cipher. The middle section has 28 words comprising of 129 letters: 28+129=157 Fra Rosicrosse in simple cipher and if the 129 letters are added to the four digits in the date 129+4=133 this yields a double simple cipher for Francis Bacon (100)/Bacon (33). The 35 letters in the bottom section plus the four digits in the date: 35+4=39 F. Bacon in simple cipher. In total the whole page contains 48 words and 228 letters and 1 woodcut: 48+ 228+1=277 a split simple cipher for Francis Bacon (100)/William Shakespeare (177). The top section of the 1604 quarto edition of *Hamlet* also contains a total of 64 letters that when added to the 3 words printed in ordinary italics 64+3=67 Francis in simple cipher and 39 ordinary roman letters F. Bacon in simple cipher. The 16 italic letters and 6 roman capital letters added to 11 words: 16+6+11=33 Bacon in simple cipher. The middle section has 19 words containing 86 letters: 86-19=67 Francis in simple cipher. The 23 words and 78 ordinary letters in the bottom section 78+23=101 minus 1 woodcut produces a total of 100 Francis Bacon in simple cipher and conversely 101 plus the 2 words in block capitals totals 103 Shakespeare in simple cipher.

Furthermore various cryptic Baconian devices are carried over to the first pages in the 1603 and 1604 quarto editions. Above the top of the first page of the 1603 quarto appears the Baconian AA headpiece an enigmatic symbol of darkness and light where secrets are at once concealed and revealed to the initiated or to those with eyes to see. Over the top of the first page of the 1604 quarto appears another enigmatic headpiece. In the centre of the headpiece we see what appears to be a coat of arms, reminiscent of a royal coat of arms, with two figures either side of it, possibly representing Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester looking to and reaching for something resembling a crown. To the bottom right and left two children are depicted possibly denoting the concealed royal heirs Francis Tudor Bacon and Robert Tudor Devereux. The child on the left representing Life and the child on the right behind whom appears the grim reaper representing Death, the light and dark twin central themes of the play.

W

1

3

1

3

3
11

11

11
6
28

9

48W

L ORL

3

19 19

6

16 3 IW

20 20

64 39

47

39

43

129

1
woodcut

35

4 date

39

228 L

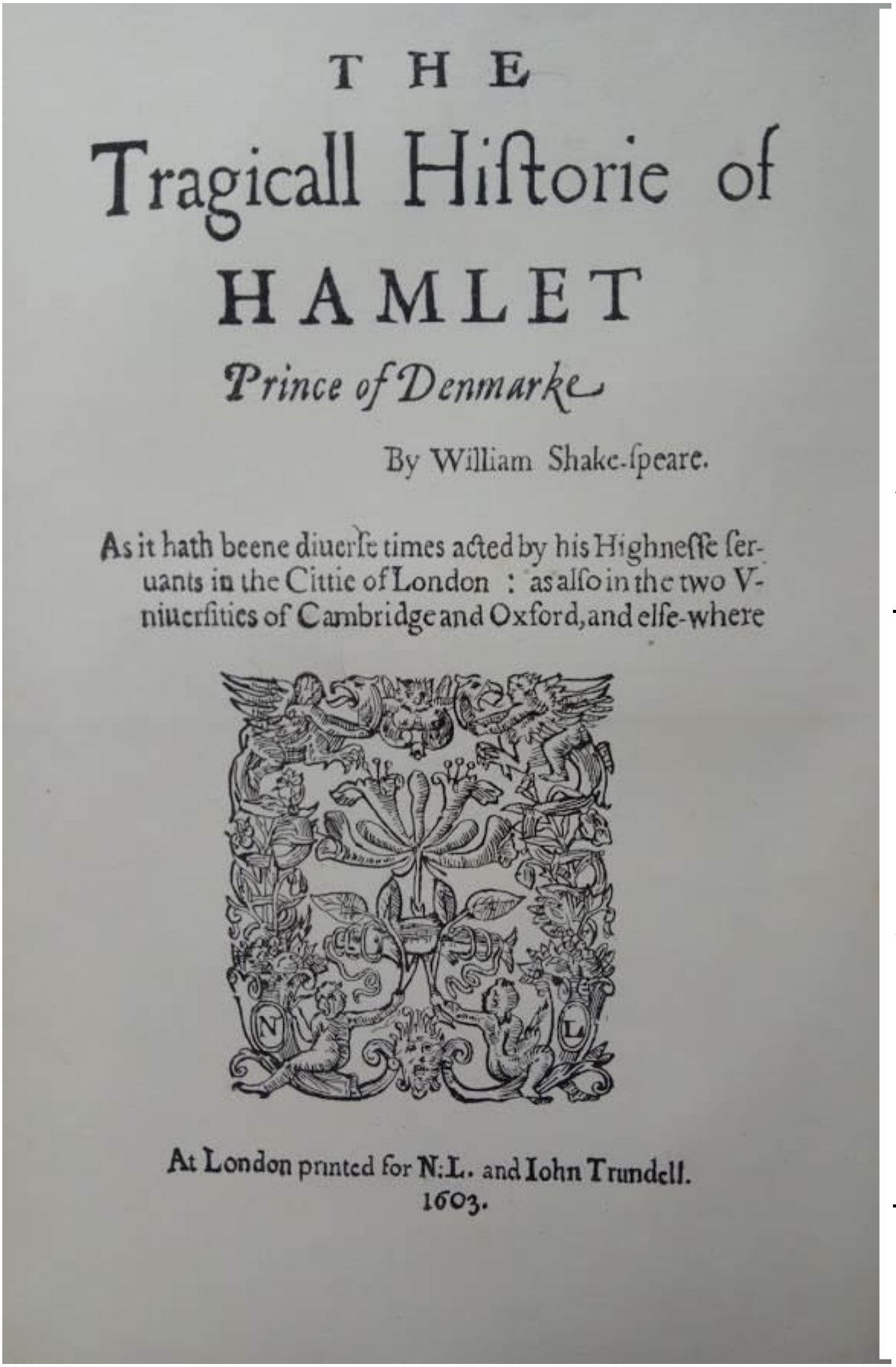
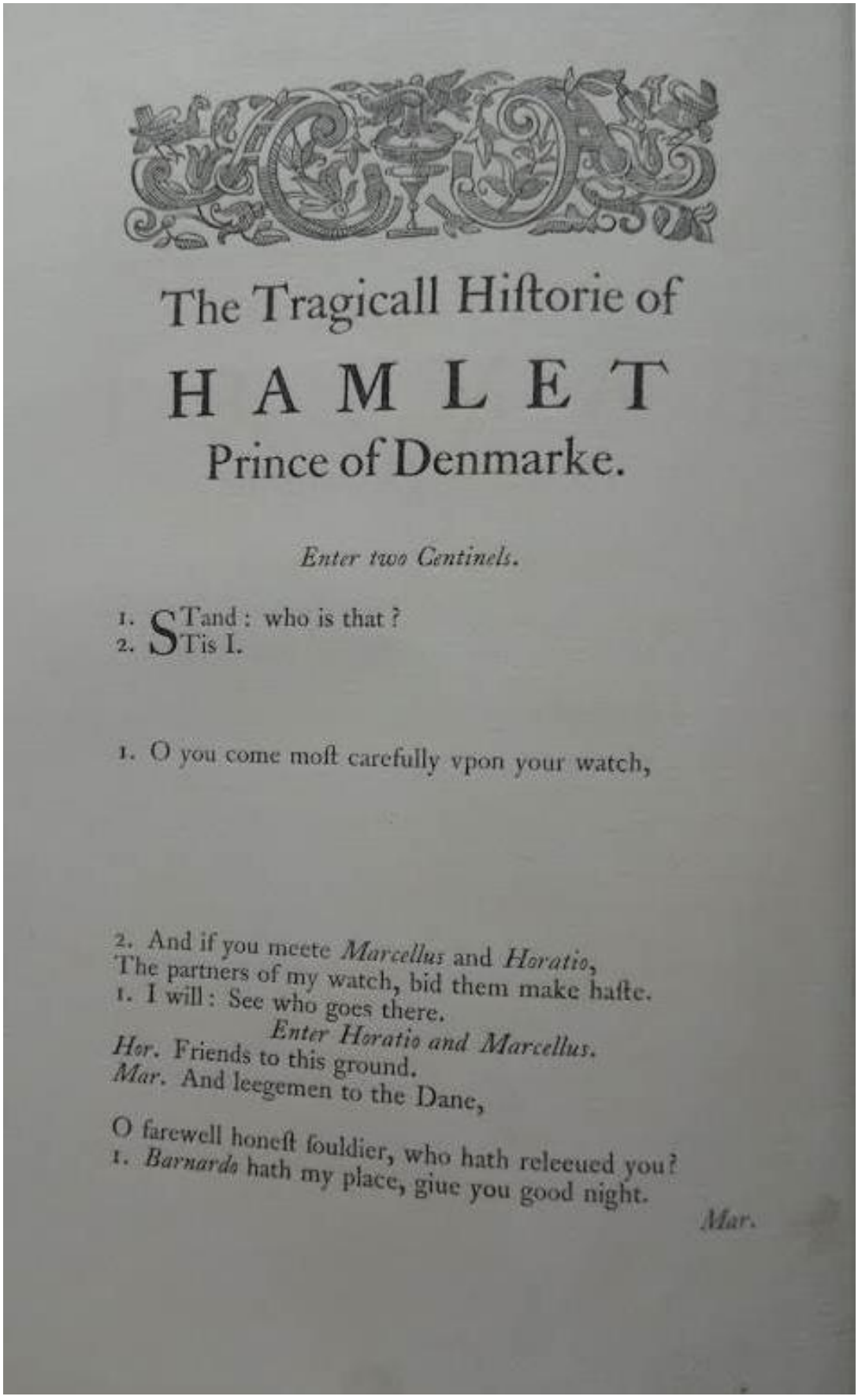


Fig. 4 The Title Page of *Hamlet* 1603



The Tragicall Hiſtorie of

HAMLET

Prince of Denmarke.

Enter two Centinels.

1. STand: who is that?
2. STis I.

1. O you come moſt carefully vpon your watch,

2. And if you meete *Marcellus* and *Horatio*,
The partners of my watch, bid them make haſte.
1. I will: See who goes there.
Enter Horatio and Marcellus.
Hor. Friends to this ground.
Mar. And leegemen to the Dane,

O farewell honeſt ſouldier, who hath releeued you?
1. *Barnardo* hath my place, giue you good night.

Mar.

Fig. 5 The First Page of *Hamlet* 1603

W
1
3
1
3
3
11
8
10
1
19
2
14
6
1
23

RL IL
3
19
6
16
20
64
39
41
6
86
1 woodcut
2 block
w
35
32
11
78

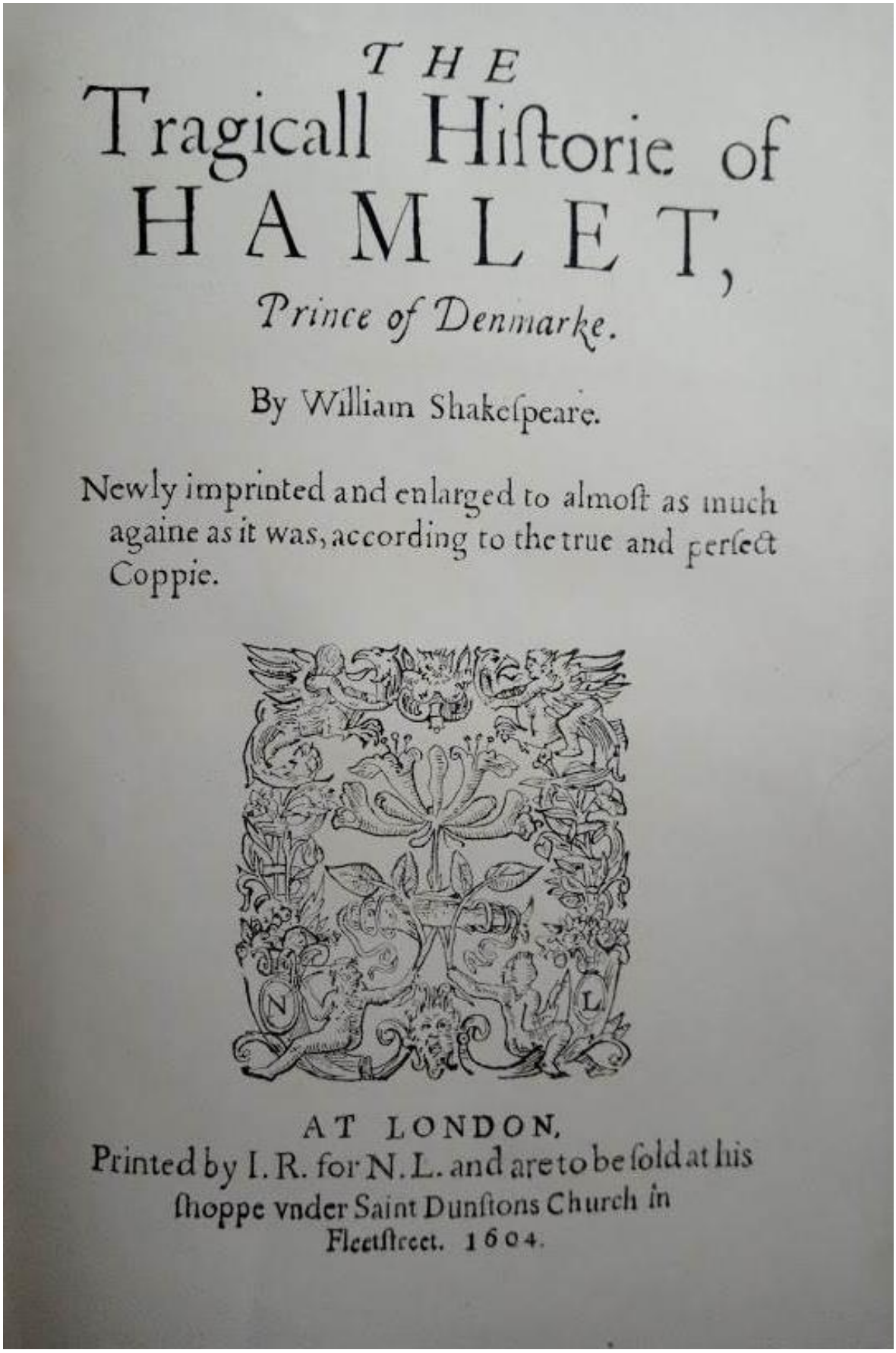
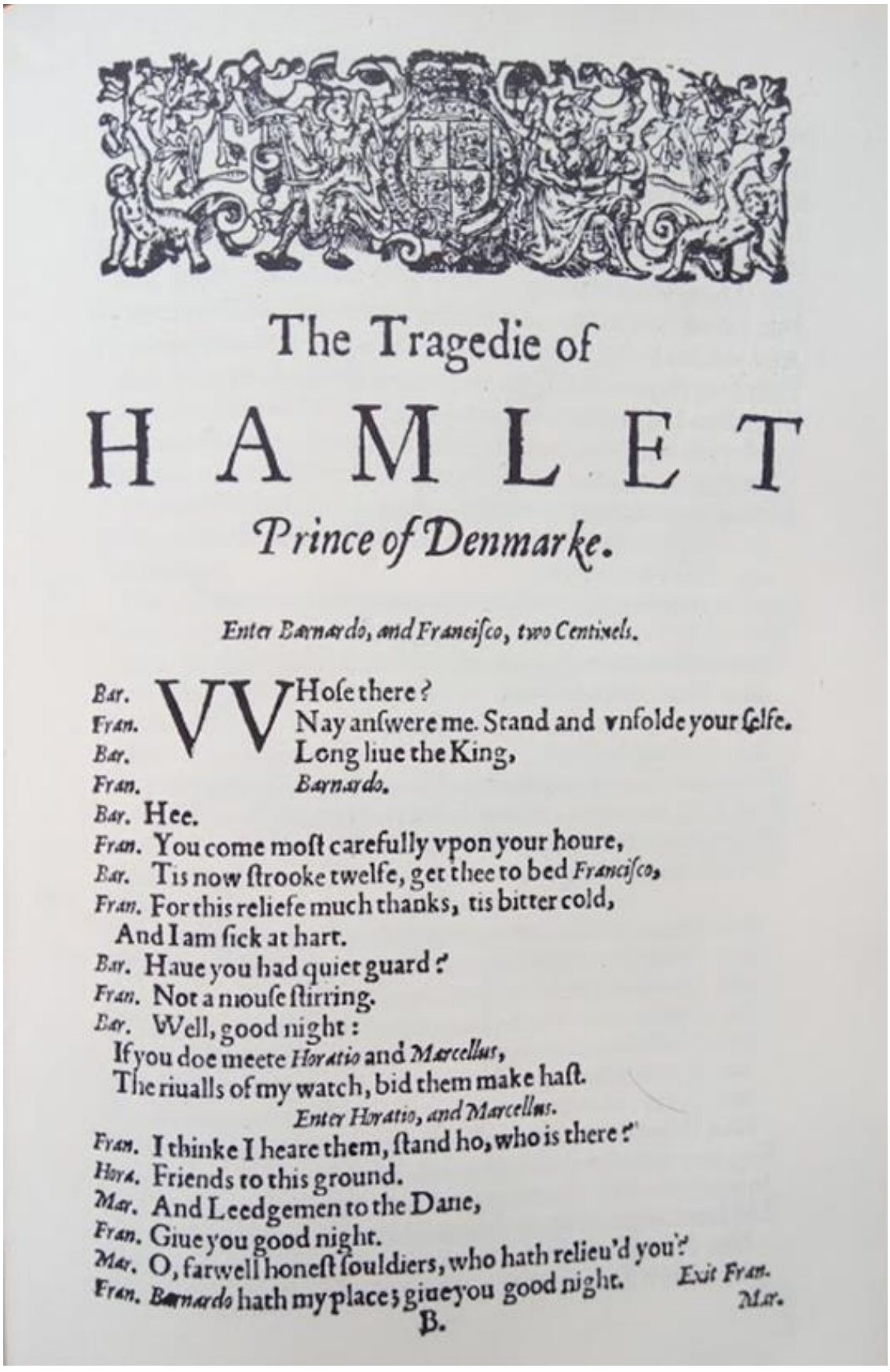

THE
Tragicall Hiſtorie of
HAMLET,
Prince of Denmarke.
By William Shakeſpeare.
Newly imprinted and enlarged to almoſt as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.
AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be ſold at his ſhoppe vnder Saint Dunſtons Church in Fleetſtreet. 1604.

Fig. 6 The Title Page of *Hamlet* 1604



The Tragedie of

HAMLET

Prince of Denmarke.

Enter Barnardo, and Francisco, two Centinels.

Bar. VVHose there?
Fran. Nay answere me. Stand and vnfolde your selfe.
Bar. Long liue the King,
Fran. *Barnardo.*
Bar. Hee.
Fran. You come most carefully vpon your houre,
Bar. Tis now strooke twelfe, get thee to bed *Francisco*,
Fran. For this reliefe much thanks, tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at hart.
Bar. Haue you had quiet guard?
Fran. Not a mouse stirring.
Bar. Well, good night:
If you doe meete *Horatio* and *Marcellus*,
The riualls of my watch, bid them make hast.
Enter Horatio, and Marcellus.
Fran. I thinke I heare them, stand ho, who is there?
Hora. Friends to this ground.
Mar. And Leedgemen to the Dane,
Fran. Giue you good night.
Mar. O, farwell honest souldiers, who hath relieu'd you?
Fran. *Barnardo* hath my place; giue you good night. *Exit Fran.*
Mar.

Fig. 7 The First Page of *Hamlet* 1604

It will be seen that on the first page of the 1603 edition appears the stage direction '*Enter two Centinels*' and in the 1604 edition the stage direction '*Enter Barnardo, and Francisco, two Centinels*'. It will be noticed that in both instances the word *Centinels* is spelt with a capital C instead of an S (*OED*: *Sentinel*, a sentry or lookout who keeps guard over someone/something). The Roman numeral C represents 100 the equivalent of Francis Bacon in simple cipher and the letter C is the 3rd letter in the alphabet thus 2 C's or a double C (3 and 3) placed together represents 33 Bacon in simple cipher.[84] Furthermore the name Hamlet is 56 in simple cipher the same as Fr. Bacon the way Bacon regularly signed his name and the first part of the name Hamlet, i.e., Ham is an obvious pointer and allusion to Bacon.

The first scene of *Hamlet* is set in darkness at midnight with its associated themes of secrecy and identity. The pregnant stage direction '*Enter Barnardo, and Francisco, two Centinels*' is followed by Barnardo asking Francisco the profoundly meaningful question in the first line of the play 'Who's there?' (1:1:1). The name Francisco is the Spanish and Portuguese form of the masculine name Franciscus (the baptismal entry for Bacon in St Martin-in-the Fields reads '*Franciscus Bacon*') corresponding to the English name Francis.[85] The name of the sentinel Francisco (Francis) set alongside the chosen name of the other sentinel Barnardo (Barnard/Bernard in English) is doubly significant. The two names placed together as Francis Barnard possess the Christian name of Bacon, and the initials of Francis Bacon. The names *Francisco* and *Bar*nardo also contain an anagram of Francis Bacon. To the question then 'Who's there', the answer is Francis Bacon, secret concealed author of *The Tragical Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*:

Enter Barnardo, and Francisco, two Centinels.

BARNARDO Who's there?
FRANCISCO Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.
BARNARDO Long live the King!
FRANCISCO Barnardo?
BARNARDO He.
FRANCISCO You come most carefully upon your hour.
BARNARDO 'Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.
FRANCISCO For this relief much thanks. 'Tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.
BARNARDO Have you had quiet guard?
FRANCISCO Not a mouse stirring.
BARNARDO Well, good night.
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.
Enter Horatio and Marcellus
FRANCISCO I think I hear them.-Stand! Who's there?
HORATIO Friends to this ground.
MARCELLUS And liegemen to the Dane.
FRANCISCO Give you good night.
MARCELLUS O farewell, honest soldier. Who hath relieved you?
FRANCISCO Barnardo has my place. Give you good night.
Exit Francisco.

[*Hamlet*: 1:1:1-14]

We know after addressing the question 'Who's there?', that it is Francis Bacon hidden behind the disguises and in the names of Francisco and Barnardo. Furthermore, as if having an inner conversation with himself Francisco instructs Barnardo to 'Stand and unfold yourself', to which Barnardo replies to Francisco 'Long live the King!' With the passing of his mother Queen Elizabeth the rightful King of England should be her concealed son Francis Tudor Bacon, Prince of Wales. With the kingship firmly on his mind Francisco then says to Barnardo 'You come most carefully on your hour', a time of passing from one prince to another, one reinforced by Barnardo who identifies the hour ''Tis now struck twelve', denoting not just the passing of one day to another, but the passing of one royal dynasty to another, marking the end of the Tudor dynasty.

In his *History of Life and Death* Bacon mentions the adverse influence which intense cold as on his stomach. His royal disinheritance and the denial of his rightful kingship broke his heart. Barnardo knowing that he is heartbroken and sick to his stomach tells him 'Get thee to bed, Francisco' to which he replies ''Tis bitter cold,/And I am sick at heart'. In a letter from his foster mother Lady Anne Bacon to her son Anthony Bacon she says 'I verily think your brother's weak stomach to digest hath been much caused and confirmed by untimely going to bed, and then musing, I know not what, when he should sleep'.[86] Barnardo asks Francisco 'Have you had a quiet guard?' He answers 'Not a mouse stirring'. Well not yet anyway. As well as being proverbial, it points to the play within a play *The Mousetrap*, wherein he will catch the conscience of King Claudius, a dramatic reflection of his royal father Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, as it similarly depicts the poisoning of Hamlet's father Old Hamlet, a dramatic reflection of his foster father Sir Nicholas Bacon.

Following the death of his royal mother Queen Elizabeth and impending entrance of King James, the usurper of his crown, Bacon wrote to an unnamed friend 'Things are here in good quiet' before continuing 'And withal I find myself as one awaked out of a sleep; which I have not been this long time, nor could, I think, have been now, without such a great noise as this'.[87] And in another letter to Robert Kempe 'Upon the Death of Queen Elizabeth' he writes 'This alteration is so great, as you mought justly conceive some coldness of my affection towards you if you should hear nothing from me, I living in this place. It is in vain to tell you with what wonderful still and calm this wheel is turned round; which whether it be a remnant of her felicity that is gone, or a fruit of his reputation that is coming, I will not determine: but I cannot but divide myself between her memory and his name.'[88] A name no doubt secretly odious to him.

As we have seen between the years 1603 when Queen Elizabeth died to 1605 Bacon was in parallel writing, revising, expanding and publishing the two quarto editions of *Hamlet* and *The Two Books of the Advancement of Learning*. In his twenty-two page article H. L. Moore compares at length and in detail the large amount of parallels that exist between the two works which are identical in thought and similar in expression, as well comparing other passages from *Hamlet* with his greatly revised and expanded Latin *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, *The Wisdom of the Ancients* and *The History of Life and Death*.[89] These parallels between *Hamlet* and *Advancement* and those of Bacon's other prose works would be added to and significantly increased by numerous other scholars which the Oxford, Cambridge and Arden editors (*et al*) of *Hamlet* were either profoundly ignorant of or chose for some reason to wilfully suppress them from their learned readers and the rest of the Shakespeare world.

In the play Francisco exits not to be seen again and says of his other self 'Barnardo has my place' who is joined by both Marcellus and Horatio. The death of his beloved foster father Sir Nicholas Bacon which occurred shortly before Bacon wrote the first version of *Hamlet* devastated him and haunted his consciousness and frames, informs

and haunts the opening Act of the play. The Ghost of Hamlet's father Old Hamlet has on two successive nights terrified the sentinels standing guard over the royal castle at Elsinore. In the dead of the night the sentinel Marcellus whispers 'What, has this thing appeared again tonight?'(1:1:19) with the other sentinel Barnardo replying 'I have seen nothing (1:1:20). Horatio, an old friend of Prince Hamlet's, thinks they have imagined it and refuses to believe it will appear. Barnardo begins to describe their previous sightings when the Ghost suddenly appears dressed in complete armour and holding a truncheon with his beaver up. All three marvel at this other worldly apparition with Barnardo exclaiming that it appears in the same figure of the late king. Marcellus says to Horatio that he is a scholar and should speak to the Ghost but it disappears without any response. Pale and trembling Horatio avows he would never have believed it if he had not seen it with his own eyes before adding 'This bodes some strange eruption to our state' (1:1:68). Understandably in the play the apparition of Hamlet's father Old Hamlet does not bode well for the state and the death of Bacon's father Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon the joint architect with his brother-in-law Sir William Cecil of the Elizabethan Reformation did not bode well for an Elizabethan England surrounded by enemies on all sides.

His foster father Sir Nicholas Bacon Lord Keeper and *de facto* Lord Chancellor of England was in Camden's words 'the very oracle of the law' and following his death within weeks of his return Francis took up residence at Gray's Inn in the old former chambers of his father at No. 1 Coney Square, now known as No 1 Gray's Inn Square where he wrote the first version of *Hamlet*. With extraordinary abilities inherited from his father Francis made rapid progress and in less than four years he was called to the bar (which usually took twice as long) and admitted Utter Barrister on 27 June 1582. Four years later Bacon became a Bencher at Gray's Inn and began participating in the workings of government and intelligence and other matters of state. Around this time Bacon was writing and completing his first surviving legal works. Sometime in 1587 he wrote a discourse on crown prerogatives and ownership in Law-French (Harleian MS 7017) and before October that year he also composed *A Brief Discourse Upon the Commission of Bridewell* (Harleian MS. 1323), an examination of the royal charter that established Bridewell Hospital. After only nine years he was elected Reader of Gray's Inn delivering a lecture in Lent 1588 on the Statue Westminster 2nd, Chapter 5, *On Advowsons* and in October 1589 he was granted the reversion to the Clerkship of Star Chamber by his royal mother Queen Elizabeth. Some eight years later she also appointed Bacon her legal counsel under the title Queen's Counsel Extraordinary and in 1600 he became a Double Reader of Gray's Inn. Against his will in 1601 his royal mother appointed Bacon as state prosecutor in the trial of his concealed royal brother Robert Tudor Devereux and following his execution she commanded him to write *A Declaration of the Practises & Treasons attempted and committed by Robert late Earl of Essex*, further souring his relations with his royal mother right up to her death in 1603, which precipitated the publication of the *Hamlet* quartos in 1603 and 1604.

The Tragedy of Hamlet is saturated with law some of it highly technical and abstruse and certain aspects of it dealing with matters of government and state. As the Ghost disappears with the kingdom on the brink of war speaking of the state Marcellus asks Horatio why has Denmark been building so many cannons and buying weapons from other countries, and why are the shipwrights busy building ships not even resting on a Sunday. What, he asks, is coming that forces our men to work day and night, that is unknown to the rest of us?:

Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war,
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week:
What might be toward that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labour with the day,
Who is't that can inform me?
[*Hamlet*: 1:1:69-78]

In his *Shakespeare*'*s Legal Requirements* Lord High Chancellor Campbell states that the above passage has been quoted by legal writers and serving Judges as an authority upon the legality of the press-gang and the debated question of whether shipwrights, as well as common seamen, are liable to be pressed into the service of the royal navy. [90] Horatio confesses that he has heard whispers that the deceased King Hamlet having killed the old King of Norway in a duel which resulted in lands belonging to Norway by signed and sealed contract in full accordance with the law being surrendered to the victor, the young Norwegian prince, Fortinbras is preparing to forcefully regain them in a passage packed with legal expertise:

our valiant Hamlet-
For so this side of our known world esteemed him-
Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed compact
Well ratified by law and heraldry
Did forfeit with his life all those his lands
Which he stood seized on to the conqueror;
Against the which a moiety competent
Was gaged by our King, which had returned
To the inheritance of Fortinbras
Had he been vanquisher, as by the same cov'nant
And carriage of the article designed
His fell to Hamlet. Now sir, young Fortinbras,
Of improved mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Sharked up a list of landless resolutes
For food and diet to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't, which is no other-
And it doth well appear unto our state-
But to recover of us by strong hand
And terms compulsative those foresaid lands
So by his father lost. And this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch, and the chief head
Of the post-haste and rummage in the land.
[*Hamlet*: 1:1:83-106]

Just as Horatio finishes his speech the Ghost reappears and he bids it 'Stay, illusion' (1:1:108) and attempts to make it speak 'If thou art privy to thy country's fate/Which happily foreknowing may avoid,/Speak to me' (1:1:114-6). The cock crows signalling

the break of day and just as it seems he might speak the Ghost disappears again. The three of them decide to tell Hamlet of what they have seen ‘Unto young Hamlet; for upon my life,/This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him’ (1:1:151-2).

Fig. 8 Queen Elizabeth I by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger

Fig. 9 Queen Gertrude from *Hamlet*

Fig. 10 Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester Attributed to Steven van der Meulen

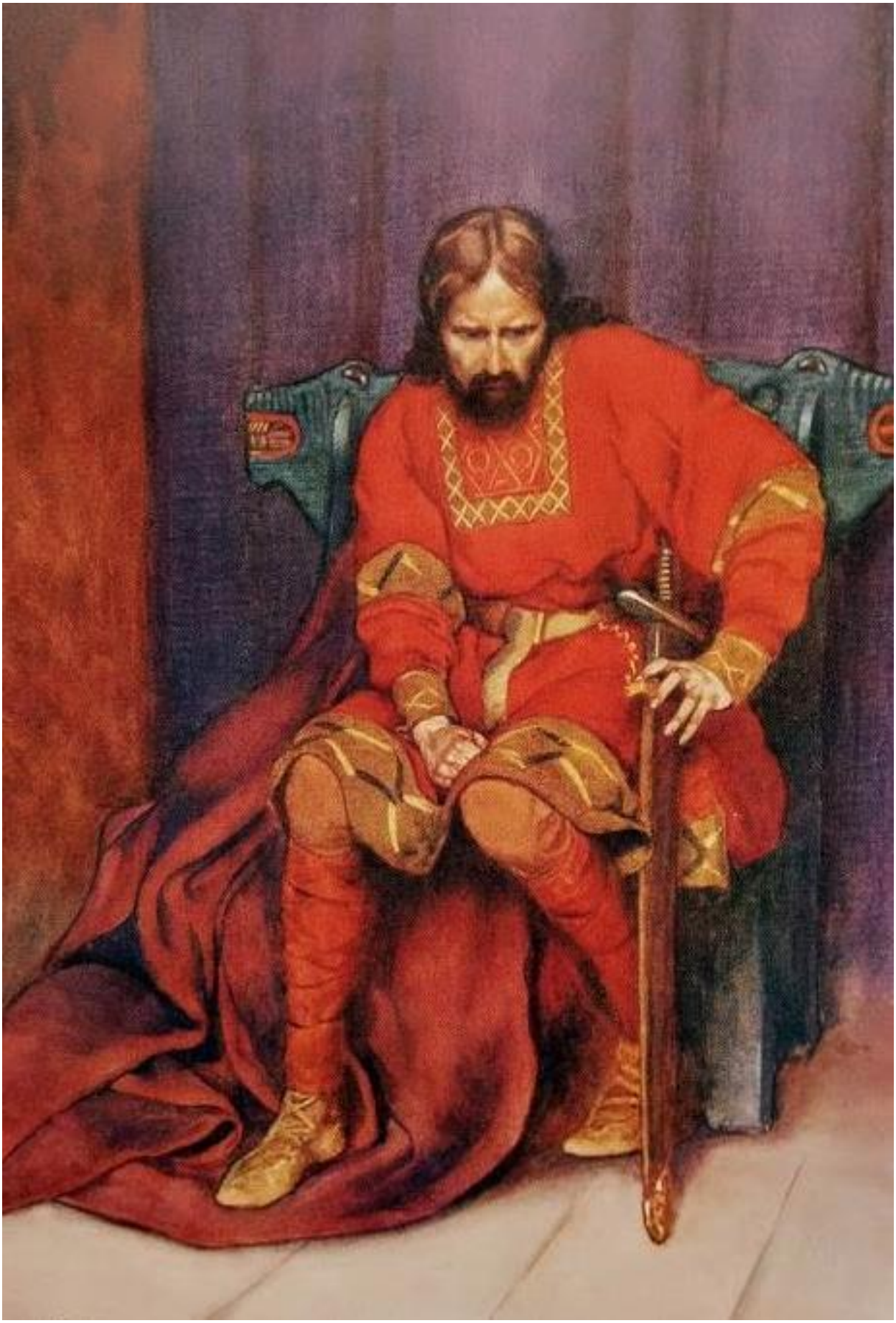


Fig. 11 King Claudius from *Hamlet*

The second scene opens in the royal court of Denmark at whose helm proudly stands King Claudius (Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester who believed he was king in all but name) and his wife Queen Gertrude (Queen Elizabeth), attended by several members of the Privy Council, including Polonius (Bacon's nominal uncle Sir William Cecil), his son Laertes (Robert Tudor Devereux, second Earl of Essex) and daughter Ophelia, and Prince Hamlet (Francis Tudor Bacon, Prince of Wales) all dressed in black. The newly installed king makes a speech to the court expressing his grief at the death of his brother Old Hamlet and announces that he has married his brother's widow. He despatches two ambassadors Cornelius and Voltemand to Norway to formally protest against young Fortinbras's plans to recover by the force the lands won from his royal father 'with all bonds of law' by Old King Hamlet 'Giving to you no further personal power/To business with the king more than the scope/Of these dilated articles allow' (1:2:36-8). Laertes requests permission to return to his studies in France after showing his duty in attending the royal coronation. Claudius agrees on the proviso that Laertes has the permission of his father Polonius who answers in the language of a lawyer 'He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave/By labouring petition, and at last/Upon his will I sealed my hard consent' (1:2:58-60). King Claudius (Bacon's father the Earl of Leicester) then turns to Hamlet addressing him as 'my son' and asks him 'How is it that the clouds still hang on you?' To which Hamlet replies 'I am too much i'th' sun' (1:2:64-7), an ironic and sarcastic pun on the words sun/son. His royal mother Queen Gertrude asks Hamlet to stop grieving for his noble father 'Thou know'st 'tis common –all that lives must die,/'Passing through nature to eternity'(1:2:72-3) before unwisely asking 'Why seems it so particular with thee?'(1:2:75). Her insensitivity and crassness rouses the ire of Hamlet 'Seems, madam?', (the term of address Bacon regularly used to his royal mother Queen Elizabeth), 'Nay, it *is*. I know not 'seems' for they are 'actions that a man might play' (1:2:76-84). In a telling passage where the word father is used seven times King Claudius (the Earl of Leicester) asks Hamlet to stop grieving for his father Old Hamlet (Sir Nicholas Bacon) and think of him as a father and again describes Hamlet as 'our son' (1:2:87-117), as to cryptically and emphatically convey that the Earl of Leicester dramatically reflected in the character of King Claudius was his secret father and Queen Elizabeth (Queen Gertrude) his secret royal mother.

With King Claudius and Queen Gertrude and their royal retinue departing all alone Hamlet in a devastating introspective soliloquy considers suicide and death:

> O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,
> Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
> His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God, O God,
> How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!
> [*Hamlet*: 1:2: 129-34]

In his treatise *The History of Life and Death* under the sub-heading 'Concerning the Duration of Life and the Form of Death' Bacon states in his third provisional rule 'The emission of the spirit produces dryness; the detention and working thereof within the body, either melts, or putrefies, or vivifies.'[91] In his explanation to the rule he adds 'Melting is the work of the spirit alone, and that only when they are excited by heat; for then the spirits expanding themselves and yet not going forth, insinuate and spread themselves among the grosser parts, and make them soft and molten, as appears in metals and wax; for metals and other tenacious bodies are apt to restrain the spirit, and

prevent it from rushing forth when excited.'[92] It is cries Hamlet 'an unweeded garden/ That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature/Possess it merely (1:2:135-7). As for the second half of the above passage, in *De Augmentis Scientiarum* Bacon makes a similar lamentation:

> '"Only think how often you do the same thing over and over. Food, Sleep, Play, come round in a perpetual circle; a man might wish to die, not only from fortitude or misery or wisdom, but merely from disgust and weariness of life."'[93]

Horatio, Marcellus and Barnardo arrive, and echoing Bacon's dream of anticipating and seeing the death of his foster father Sir Nicholas Bacon and his house plastered all over with black mortar, Hamlet says to Horatio 'My father-methinks I see my father' (1:2:183). A startled Horatio asks 'O where, my Lord' to which Hamlet replies 'In my mind's eye, Horatio' (1:2:184-5). Horatio tells Hamlet 'I think I saw him yesternight' a confused Hamlet asks 'Saw? Who?' Horatio responds as quick as a flash 'My lord, the King your father', Hamlet 'The King my father?' Horatio informs him that on two successive nights Marcellus and Barnardo encountered 'a figure like your father' that 'in dreadful secrecy' they imparted to me, who on a third night he had seen with his own eyes 'The apparition comes. I knew your father;/These hands are not more like' (1:2:196-212). A dumbfounded Hamlet resolves to meet with them on the battlements that night and try and speak to the apparition and swears them to secrecy 'I pray you all,/If you have hitherto concealed this sight,/ Let it be treble in your silence still,/And whatsoever else shall hap tonight,/Give it an understanding but no tongue'(1:2:245-9). Hamlet raises the spectre of 'foul play', but says that all deeds will rise, no matter how deeply they have been buried, and revealed to men's eyes (1:2:254-7).

That night on the battlements of Elsinore Castle just as the clock struck the midnight hour Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus await the appearance of the Ghost 'The air bites shrewdly, it is very cold./It is a nipping and eager air (1:4:1-2). The *OED* cites this *Hamlet* line as the first instance of 'eager' applied to cold which Bacon again used in the same sense in *Sylva Sylvarum* 'whereby the cold becometh more eager'.[94] Before the entrance of the Ghost (in a passage in the second 1604-5 quarto) Hamlet muses on how a single fault can overshadow or corrupt the reputation of an individual:

> So oft it chances in particular men
> That, for some vicious mole of nature in them
> As in their birth wherein they are not guilty
> (Since nature cannot choose his origin),
> By their o'ergrowth of some complexion
> Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
> Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens
> The form of plausive manners-that these men,
> Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect
> (Being Nature's livery or Fortune's star),
> His virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
> As infinite as man may undergo,
> Shall in the general censure take corruption
> From that particular fault: the dram of eale
> Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
> To his own scandal-
>
> [*Hamlet*: 1:4: 23-38] [95]

In the dramatic device entitled *Of Tribute*; *Or, Giving That Which Is Due* written by Bacon on behalf of his brother Robert Tudor Devereux, Earl of Essex intended to be presented before their royal mother Queen Elizabeth on her Accession Day 1592 (a copy of it is found in The Northumberland Manuscript originally containing copies of his Shakespeare plays *Richard II* and *Richard III*) Bacon also uses the phrase 'forts of reason':

> Thus is ffortitude the marshall of thought, the armour of the will, & fort of reason.[96]

In his Latin *In Felicem Memoriam Elizabethae* Bacon says of Roman Catholic priests supported and funded by foreign princes that they,

had by their own arts and poisons depraved and soured with a new leaven of malignity the whole lump of Catholics…[97]

Bacon makes the same point in the state document 'The Charge of Owen, Indicted for High Treason':

...the very doctrines themselves of the Papists stand not at a stay, but they mount and swell up still more and more to suffocate and strangle the authority of Princes. The books of Joannes Mariana, of Zuares of Coimbra, of Dominicus Bannes, of Sinanca and the rest, they are of a new stamp, they are as a poison often distilled and sublimate. These books no doubt come to the King's hands; he reads them; in his great wisdom he seeth whereto they tend, namely to sour the lump of all Papists in their loyalty…[98]

In his prose work *The History of King Henry VII*:

and as a little leaven of new distaste doth commonly sour the whole lump of former merits..[99]

In a speech given by Bacon in parliament:

the best men, are like the best precious stones, wherein every flaw or icicle or grain are seen and noted more than in those that are generally foul and corrupted.[100]

In *De Augmentis Scientiarum*:

Hence a little folly in a very wise man, a small offence in a very good man, a slight impropriety in a man of polite and elegant manners detracts greatly from their character and reputation.[101]

The Ghost appears and in the surreal apparition before his eyes Hamlet recognises his father Old Hamlet King of Denmark who beckons to him. Despite the protestations of his companions Hamlet follows while Marcellus senses 'Something is rotten in the state of Denmark'(1:4:67).The Ghost declaims a pregnant injunction to Hamlet 'Mark me' and pointedly asks him 'art thou to revenge when thou shall hear' (1:5:8):

GHOST I am thy father's spirit,
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison house

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

H AMLET Murder?

GHOST

Murder most foul, as in the best it is,
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

HAMLET

Haste, haste me to know it, that with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love
May sweep me to my revenge.

GHOST I find thee apt,
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear.
'Tis given out that, sleeping in mine orchard,
A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abused. But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always in the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distilment, whose effect
Holds such enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine;
And a most instant tetter barked about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.

[*Hamlet*: 1:5: 9-14, 25-73]

In *Sylva Sylvarum* and *The History of Life and Death* Bacon spent a good deal of time discussing medicines and poisons, which in certain circumstances can be one and the same, according to application and dose. The hebenon used to poison Old Hamlet (Sir Nicholas Bacon) is equated with Henbane a poisonous plant of the nightshade family:

Medicine…of secret malignity and disagreement towards man's body…And note well, that if there be any medicine that purgeth, and hath neither of the first two manifest qualities, it is to

Fig. 12 Sir Nicholas Bacon Artist unknown

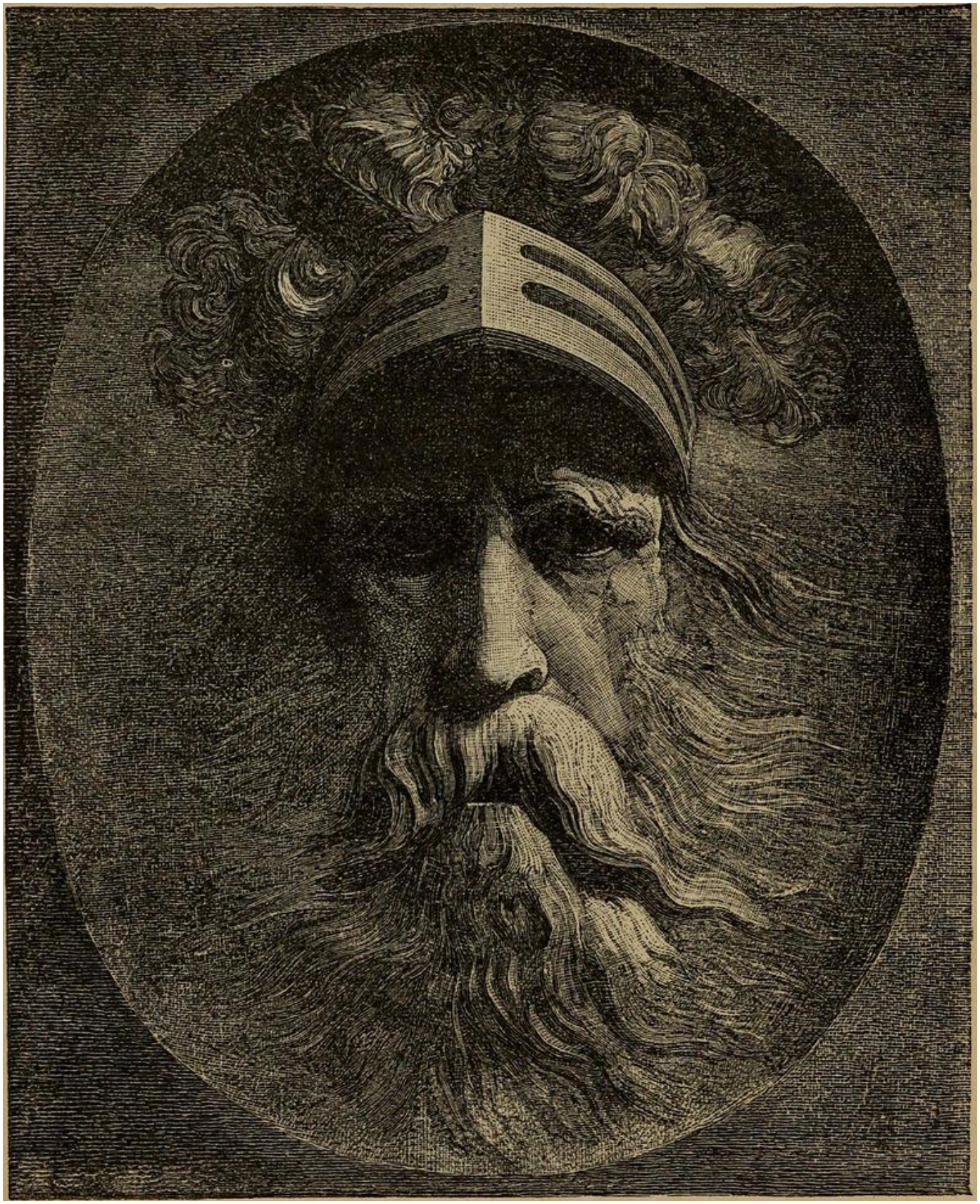


Fig. 13 The Ghost from *Hamlet*

be held suspected as a kind of poison; for that it worketh either by corrosion, or by a secret malignity and enmity to nature…[102]

But I suppose that the soporiferous medicines are likest to do it; which are henbane, hemlock, mandrake ...opium…[103]

Simple opiates, which are likewise called narcotics and stupefactives, are opium itself, which is the juices of the poppy, the plant and the seed of the poppy, hebane, mandragora, hemlock, tobacco, and nightshade.[104]

The Ghost tells Hamlet that the incestuous Claudius seduced the 'seeming-virtuous queen', (1:5:46) and urges Hamlet not to let the royal bed of Denmark be a couch of lust and incest and to avenge his death by killing Claudius, while insisting he must spare his mother, and leave her to the judgement of God. With morning approaching as the Ghost begins to vanish into thin air he urges Hamlet to remember him and now alone with himself he swears, that in his distracted globe, he will remember nothing else 'O most pernicious woman!/O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!'(1:5:105-6).

The play of Hamlet is the most famous revenge drama in all English literature and the motif of revenge is repeatedly examined explored and challenged throughout the play. The tragedy is saturated with the theme of revenge-Hamlet's revenge against Claudius for killing his father, and revenge over Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Laertes revenge against Hamlet for killing Polonius, and Fortinbras wanting revenge because Hamlet's father killed Fortinbras father. In short, the play is a profound and complex dramatic essay and meditation on the vexed subject of revenge. The legal and moral dilemmas it gives rise to, the rights and wrongs surrounding it, and the circumstances in which it may or may not be justified-as explored and discussed in Bacon's prose essay on the very same subject:

OF REVENGE

REVENGE is a kind of wild justice; which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Salomon, I am sure, saith, *It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence*. That which is past is gone, and irrevocable; and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come; therefore they do but trifle with themselves, that labour in past matters. There is no man doth a wrong for wrong's sake; but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honour, or the like. Therefore why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong merely out of ill-nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or briar, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but then let man take heed the revenge be such as there is not law to punish; else a man's enemy is still before hand, and it is two for one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous the party should know from whence it cometh. This is the more generous. For the delight seemeth to be not so much in doing the hurt as in making the party repent. But base and crafty cowards are like the arrow that flieth in the dark. Cosmus, duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious friends or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable; *You shall read* (saith he) *that we are commanded to forgive our enemies*; *but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends*. But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune: *Shall we* (saith he) *take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also*? And so of friends in a proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal

and do well. Public revenges are for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Caesar; for the death of Pertinax; for the death of Henry the Third of France; and many more. But in private revenges it is not so. Nay, rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches; who, as they are mischievous, so end they infortunate.[105]

His companions Horatio and Marcellus appear and breathlessly question him about what happened and what the Ghost had said. At first Hamlet refuses to tell them 'No, you'll reveal it' (1:5:122).Horatio and Marcellus swear not to utter a word and Hamlet demands that they keep everything they have seen 'secret'. He asks them to swear an oath to 'Never make known what you have seen tonight' (1:5:146) with the invisible Ghost also repeating the command 'swear'. Both Horatio and Marcellus swear never to reveal or give the slightest hint of what they have seen or heard tonight and with all of them sworn to secrecy Hamlet thanks them for their love and asks they never break their secret vow of silence:

HORATIO
O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!
HAMLET
And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy.
[*Hamlet*: 1:5:166-69]

King Claudius and Queen Gertrude welcome Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, former students of Hamlet's at Wittenberg, who they set to work to spy on Hamlet, brooding and preoccupied with his father's death, and unbeknown to them still reeling from the what the Ghost had secretly unfolded to him. Claudius instructs them to spend time with Hamlet in order to gain his confidence to gather 'So much as from occasions you may glean,/Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus' (2:2:15-17). Their adviser Polonius presents his supposition on Hamlet's mental afflictions to King Claudius and Queen Gertrude. Your noble 'son' is mad, Polonius informs them, and 'nothing else but mad', and on producing a love letter from Hamlet to Ophelia, he concludes that the cause of this defect is Hamlet is in love with his daughter. He conspires with the King for him to eavesdrop on his conversation with Hamlet. The royal prince arrives reading a book and enters into a conversation with Polonius who is no match for his feigned madness and surpassing wit. Polonius asks Hamlet 'What do you read, my lord?', with his reply echoing Bacon's famous passage about words and matter in the *Advancement* 'Words, words, words' (2:2:194-5). With Bacon amusingly putting into the mouth of Polonius, 'What is the matter, my lord?' (2:2:196) that Hamlet pretends not to understand: 'here therefore [is] the first distemper of learning, when men study words and not matter'.[106] Still playing Polonius under the cloak of feigned madness Hamlet humorously mocks him 'Slanders, sir; for the satirical slave says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber, or plum-tree gum' (2:2:199-201). Similarly in his *History of Life and Death* Bacon states that 'It is manifest that flies, spiders, ants, and the like, that have accidentally been inclosed and buried in amber or even the gums of trees, never afterwards decay'.[107] Polonius senses that something is not quite right 'Though this be madness, yet there is method in't' (2:2:207-8), an observation made by Bacon in his preface to the *Novum Organum* 'they were only taking pains to show a kind of method and discretion in their madness'.[108] With that, as Polonius takes his leave, Hamlet mutters to himself 'These tedious old fools' (2:2:221), to be replaced by two younger ones in the form of

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet continues in a similar vein with more seeming nonsensical talk before asking his two inquisitors 'What have/you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune/that she sends you to prison hither?' (2:2:242-4):

> GUILDENSTERN, Prison, my lord?
> HAMLET Denmark's a prison.
> ROSENCRANTZ Then is the world one.
> [*Hamlet*: 2:2: 245-7]

The same is said by Bacon in a letter to Buckingham:

> My letters out of the Tower were *de profundis*, and the world is a prison…[109]

Hamlet tells Guildenstern and Rosencrantz that he knows that were both sent for by King Claudius and Queen Gertrude and pressurises them into an admitting it. He then becomes more introspective and melancholy 'it goes so heavily with my disposition':

> This most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire-why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.
> [*Hamlet*: 2:2:300-4]

In the *Advancement* Bacon writes:

> For if that great work-master had been of an human disposition, he would have cast the stars into some pleasant and beautiful works and orders, like the frets in the roofs of houses.[110]

And in *Sylva Sylvarum*:

> ...in churches, at arraignments, at plays and solemnities, and the like: for poisoning of air is no less dangerous than the poisoning of water…And these empoisonments of the air are the more dangerous in meetings of people, because the much breath of people doth further the reception of the infection; and therefore, where any such thing is feared, it were good those public places were perfumed, before the assemblies.[111]

Rosencrantz informs Hamlet that they have commissioned a group of players, 'the tragedians of the city' he had previously taken delight in watching their performances. A flourish announces the arrival of the acting troupe with Hamlet enthusiastically greeting them like long lost friends. Polonius returns and he too welcomes the players:

> POLONIUS The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastorical-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.
> [*Hamlet*: 2:2:398-403]

Fig.14 William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Bacon's Uncle
Attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger

Fig. 15 Polonius from *Hamlet*

In the *De Augmentis* Bacon writes;

so among the poets (heroic, satiric, tragic, comic) are everywhere interspersed representations of characters, though generally exaggerated and surpassing the truth.[112]

The above passage in *Hamlet* may also contain two oblique glances at his foster father Lord Keeper and *de facto* Lord Chancellor of England Sir Nicholas Bacon, the highest law officer in the kingdom ('For the law of writ') whose favourite author was Seneca evidenced by him in a poem addressed to his wife Lady Anne Bacon:

> Thinkeinge alsoe with howe good will
> The Idle tymes which yrkesome be
> You have made shorte throwe your good skill
> In readeinge pleasante thinges to me,
> Whereof profitte we bothe did se
> As wittenes can if they could speake
> Bothe your Tullye and my Senecke.[113]

If so, they might well have been incorporated to serve as further pointers, as to the true identity of the Ghost of Old Hamlet (Sir Nicholas Bacon) and his poisoning at the hands of King Claudius (the Earl of Leicester) shortly about to be depicted in the play aptly titled *The Mousetrap*.

With the four or five of the players before him Hamlet thanks them for coming to Denmark (as players of the Earl of Leicester's Men had) and asks the first player to recite a dramatic monologue recounting an episode of revenge from the Trojan War which Hamlet begins and then is taken up by the tragedian. He delivers it with passion and emotion which is somewhat lost on Polonius (Bacon's nominal uncle Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley), whom Hamlet asks to see that the players are well provided for:

> Do ye hear?-let them be
> well used, for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles
> of the time.
> [*Hamlet*: 2:2:526-8]

His mind now turning Hamlet asks the players for a performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* (resembling the alleged murder of his father) before the court the next night adding that he has written 'some dozen or sixteen lines which I/would set down and insert in't' (2:2:543-4). With the actors and courtiers departed he delivers a soliloquy revealing his anguish over the delay in avenging his father's death. He contrasts how a player reciting a work of fiction is able to summon such passion and emotion for Queen Hecuba a character in a play while he delays avenging his dear father's murder by King Claudius (the Earl of Leicester) who 'Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,/Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words' (2:2:587-80). Regaining his composure Hamlet sets forth his plan to have the players enact a killing similar to his father's murder and if King Claudius (the Earl of Leicester) reacts like he is guilty he will know that the Ghost (Sir Nicholas Bacon) had revealed the truth of it: 'The play's the thing/Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King (2:2:606-7).

Fig. 16 King Hamlet being poisoned by Claudius from *Hamlet*

With his anguished mind still in turmoil and not knowing which way to turn Hamlet in his 'To be or not to be', speech he muses about life and death and whether to live or die, as he contemplates suicide, in what is most probably the most famous or well-known soliloquy in the history of world literature. Whereas what is virtually unknown is the numerous parallels between the Hamlet soliloquy and a wide range of Bacon's works which have recently been impressively brought to the fore by Dr Clarke in the 2020 online edition of *Baconiania*:[114]

Hamlet: To be, or not to be; that is the question
Abecedarium Naturae:

we must institute an inquiry concerning Existence and Non-existence…[115]

Hamlet: The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune

Lord Bacon's Prayer:

and ever as my worldly blessing were exalted, so secret darts [arrows] from thee have pierced me…[116]

De Augmentis Scientiarum:

…the condition of man is mortal, and exposed to the blows of fortune…[117]

Hamlet: 'tis a consummation/Devoutly to be wished

In Felicem Memoriam Elizabethae:

…others regarding it as the crown and consummation of felicity…[118]

Hamlet: For who would bear the whips and scorns of time

The Wisdom of the Ancients:

…because business would expose them to many neglects and scorns…[119]

Hamlet: the proud man's contumely

Of Superstition:

And as the contumely is greater towards God, so the danger is greater towards men.[120]

Hamlet: the law's delay

Of Judicature:

First, for the causes or parties that sue…delays make it sour. [121]

Hamlet:

When he himself might his quietus make

Letter to the Marquis of Buckingham:

Your last two acts which you did for me, in procuring the releasement of my fine and my *Quietus est*….[122]

Hamlet: To grunt and sweat under a weary life

De Augmentis Scientiarum:

…a man might wish to die, not only from fortitude or misery or wisdom, but merely from disgust and weariness of life.[123]

Hamlet: And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of

Of Death:

Revenge triumphs over death; Love slights it; Honour aspireth to it; Grief flieth to it...[124]

Hamlet: And enterprises of great pith and moment

Advancement of Learning:

Aphorisms, except they should be ridiculous, cannot be made but of the pith and heart of sciences… [125]

Hamlet: With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action

De Augmentis Scientiarum:

…the courses and currents of actions…[126]

A Brief Discourse Touching the Happy Union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland:

And when a smaller river runs into a greater, it leeseth both the name and the stream.[127]

A worried and fearful Claudius (the Earl of Leicester) is not convinced that Hamlet's madness is the result of love and nor that he is actually mad:

There's something in his soul
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger.
[*Hamlet*: 3:1:167-70]

In *Sylva Sylvarum* Bacon writes:

…the distance [time] between …the egg being laid, and the disclosing or hatching…[128]

Fig. 17 Francis Bacon at 17 years old by Nicholas Hilliard

Fig. 18 Hamlet by William Morris Hunt

Just as his royal parents Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester on discovering that Bacon had written *Hamlet* and catching him instructing the players they exiled him to France to prevent this danger King Claudius resolves to send/exile Hamlet to England in the hope it might 'expel/This something-settled matter in his heart' (3:1:175-6).

In readiness for the play-within-the play Hamlet instructs and directs the players on the art of acting and oration 'Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you-trippingly on the tongue' (3:2:1-2) (resembling the entry 'The tongue trippes upon teeth' in Bacon's private note-book the *Promus of Formularies and Elegances*):[129]

> HAMLET
>
> do not saw the air too
> much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in
> the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say the
> whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget
> a temperance that may give it smoothness….
>
> Suit the action to the word,
> the word to the action, with this special observance:
> that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature.
> [*Hamlet*: 3:2:4-8, 17-9]

In his *Short Notes for Civil Conversations* Bacon's advice for private conversation is the same advice as Hamlet's to the players:

> It is necessary to use a steadfast countenance, not wavering with action, as in moving the head or hand too much, which sheweth a fantastical, light, and fickle operation of the spirit, and consequently like mind as gesture: only it is sufficient, with leisure, to use a modest action in either.[130]

In the recent Oxford Clarendon edition of Bacon's *Essays* its editor Professor Kiernan compares the above passage in *Hamlet* to the opening lines in his essay *Of Boldness*:

> Question was asked of *Demosthenes*; *What was the Chiefe Parte of an Oratour*? He answered, *Action*, what next? *Action*; what next again? *Action*. He said it, that knew it best; And had by nature, himselfe, no Advantage, in that he commended. A strange thing, that that Part of an Oratour, which is but superficiall, and rather the vertue of a Player; should be placed so high, above those other Noble Parts, of *Invention*, *Elocution*, and the rest: Nay almost alone, as it were All in All.[131]

Following his fall from grace in the last few years of his life Bacon began to revise, amend and expand a whole range of his acknowledged writings and began collecting up his Shakespeare plays for publication in the First Folio. As with his known works he subjected a large number of his Shakespeare plays to revision, adding and deleting material where he saw fit, including *Hamlet*. As we have seen, the first quarto edition of *Hamlet* comprises around 2,200 lines with the much revised and expanded second quarto around 3,800. The First Folio version of *Hamlet* with about 3,900 lines, on the one hand lacks 230 lines in Q2, and on the other, it boasts around 80 lines not in Q2, added by Bacon in preparation for the First Folio going through the Jaggard family printing house. The same Jaggard printing house that was previously responsible for printing and publishing several editions of his *Essays* and printed another shortly after the publication of the First Folio.[132] The revision and introduction of the 80 lines for

the First Folio *Hamlet* version took place in late 1621, or in early 1622, when William Shakspere was long dead (*d.*1616), Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford even longer dead (*d.*1604) with Christopher Marlowe much longer dead (*d.*1592). About the time Bacon was revising the final version of *Hamlet* he wrote an astonishing letter to the Spanish Ambassador Count Gondomar (who owned a copy of the Shakespeare First Folio) in June 1621, one apparently not known to or systematically suppressed by orthodox Shakespeare scholars, and virtually unknown to the rest of the world, in which he explicitly states that he was to devote himself to the instruction of the actors, and the service of posterity:

Your Excellency's love towards me I found ever warm and sincere alike in prosperity and adversity. For which I give you due thanks. But for myself, my age, my fortune, yea my Genius, to which I have hitherto done but scant justice, calls me now to retire from the stage of civil action and betake myself to letters, and to the instruction of the actors themselves, and the service of Posterity.[133]

With the players prepared Hamlet informs Horatio (who resembles Bacon's intimate friend and '*alter ego*' Tobie Matthew who was privy to many of his secrets including his concealed authorship of the Shakespeare works) about the hidden purpose of the performance he has commissioned urging him to closely observe Claudius 'There is a play tonight before the King./One scene of it comes near the circumstance/Which I have told thee of my father's death./I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,/Even with the very comment of thy soul/Observe my uncle'(3:2:73-78). If his hidden guilt is not revealed in the one speech Hamlet has written mirroring the circumstance of his father's murder then the Ghost has played him false, he tells Horatio, but on watching his face and actions carefully they will combine judgements and censure his seeming.
The royal couple King Claudius and Queen Gertrude enter at the head of a procession followed by other members of the court among them Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, accompanied by royal guards carrying torches.

KING CLAUDIUS How fares our cousin Hamlet?
HAMLET Excellent, i'faith of the chameleon's dish. I eat
the air, promise crammed. You cannot feed capons so.
[*Hamlet*: 3:2: 90-2]

In *Sylva Sylvarum* Bacon writes:

A chameleon is a creature about the bigness of an ordinary lizard: his head unproportionably big: his eyes great: he moveth his head without the writhing of his neck (which is inflexible) as hog doth…If he be laid upon green, the green predominate; if upon yellow, the yellow, not so if he be laid upon blue, red or white…He feedeth not only upon air, (though that be his principal sustenance)… [134]

In the dumb show the Player King and Queen set down the plot of the play-within-a play and the circumstances surrounding the death of Hamlet's father in which asleep (in keeping with the story of Sir Nicholas Bacon death) someone creeps in and pours poison in his ears. Following the prologue wherein it is pointedly begged that we hear the tragedy patiently, in other words, we pay very close attention to it, in very similar vein Hamlet asks 'Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring? (3:2:145). In *The Marriage of Elizabeth Tudor Being an exhaustive inquiry into her alleged Marriage with the Earl of Leicester and the alleged Births of her Two Sons, Francis Bacon and the Earl*

of Essex its groundbreaking author Alfred Dodd suggests this may be a veiled allusion to the ring given by Queen Elizabeth Tudor to her concealed royal son Robert Tudor Devereux.[135] The Player King and Player Queen enter and she says that she will never remarry if he dies 'Such love must needs be treason in my breast./In second husband be accurst;/None wed the second but who killed the first' (3:2:169-71). Playing the interpreter Hamlet intersperses 'Wormwood, wormwood' (3:2:172), something which leaves a bitter taste or bitter mortification after having to listen to it. Loving another would be treason in her heart she continues and may she be cursed if she took another husband. Only a woman that had killed the first would marry a second before adding that 'A second time I kill my husband dead/When second husband kisses me in bed' (3:2:175-6).

In the play-within-a-play here we have the Player Queen portraying Queen Gertrude, a dramatic reflection of Queen Elizabeth Tudor, implying she is a practiced liar and a murderer. The Player King responds by saying that when a great man falls favourites and friends desert him, and when a poor man rises enemies become friends, and love likewise depends upon fortune of a similar nature 'Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love' (3:2:194) so in truth 'So think thou wilt no second husband wed;/But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead' (3:2:205-6). As Bacon observes in his essay *Of Fortune* 'It cannot be denied, but outward accidents conduce much to fortune; favour, opportunity, death of others…'[136]

The Player King decides to rest and falls asleep and the Player Queen exits. Hamlet asks his mother Queen Gertrude how much does she like the play 'The lady protests too much, methinks' (3:2:219), to which Hamlet contemptuously replies 'O, but she'll keep her word' (3:2:220). King Claudius turns and asks Hamlet 'Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?' (3:2:221-2) which Hamlet answers with priceless Baconian ironical wit 'No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest. No offence i'th' world' (3:2:323-4). The usurper King Claudius asks Hamlet what is the title of the play. *The Mousetrap* he tells him 'This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago is the Duke's name, his wife Baptista. You shall see anon. 'Tis a knavish piece of work; but what o' that? Your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not' (3:2:226-30). A mousetrap to catch a poisonous King Rat themselves usually killed by poison.

Another actor playing the part of Lucianus, nephew to the Player King, makes his entrance and Hamlet whispers in his ear 'Begin, murderer. Pox, leave thy damnable faces and begin. Come: 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge''(3:2:240-2).The Player Lucianus mutters darkly of evil thoughts and deeds and pours poison in the ear of the Player King just as the Old Hamlet's Ghost (Sir Nicholas Bacon) had described was the method of his own murder by Claudius (the Earl of Leicester). Overcome by what he had just witnessed the evil murderous usurper Claudius totally horror struck rises from his seat and Hamlet knowing the Rat was now caught in his mousetrap with unbridled loathing and contempt spits out 'What, frighted with false fire? (3:2:254) the same phrase used by Bacon in a letter to King James:

> I hold it fit that myself and my fellows go to the Tower (and so I purpose) to examine him upon these points and some others…
>
> I think also it were not amiss to make a false fire, as if all things were ready for his going down to trial…[137]

Polonius demands the play is halted and the King hurriedly leaves the room to the cry of the courtiers bellowing for the lights. With the reaction of King Claudius (the Earl

of Leicester) confirming to the eyes of Hamlet his guilt in the foul murder of the Old Hamlet (Sir Nicholas Bacon) for which his Ghost had repeatedly called for Hamlet to revenge.

The two spies Rosencrantz and Guildenstern deliver to Hamlet a summons from his mother Queen Gertrude who demands to speak privately with him. Rosencrantz asks Hamlet what is the cause of his distemper telling him 'You do freely bar the door of your own liberty if you deny your grief to your friends' (3:2:325-6), a point made by Bacon in his essay *Of Friendship*:

> Certainly, if a man would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends to open themselves unto are cannibals of their own hearts…For there is no man that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more: and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less.[138]

Hamlet replies 'Sir, I lack advancement' (3:2:327), the oft repeated lament of Bacon, supported by his royal brother Robert Tudor Devereux, Earl of Essex, against their royal mother Queen Elizabeth Tudor, who denied Bacon the posts of solicitor-general and attorney-general, and prevented his advancement throughout her entire reign.[139] Hamlet accuses Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of trying to play him like a pipe so as to 'pluck out the heart of my mystery' (3:2:353-4) and tells them they have not the wit and cunning to play upon him. When Polonius arrives he too delivers the summons from Queen Gertrude, telling him to go and speak with his mother. Feeling extremely bitter and great anger towards his mother Hamlet declares he will be cruel but will not use violence against her 'I will speak daggers to her, but use none' (3:2:385).

An alarmed and unnerved Claudius tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern he does not feel safe to let Hamlet's 'madness range' and instructs them to prepare themselves for a diplomatic mission. He tells them they are to accompany Hamlet to England with all due speed as he grows more dangerous by the hour. With the two state spies departed Polonius informs Claudius that Hamlet is going to speak to his mother Gertrude in her room and that he intends to conceal himself behind the arras to secretly spy on their conversation. Alone, Claudius (the Earl of Leicester) confesses to the cruel murder of Old King Hamlet (Sir Nicholas Bacon) 'O, my offence is rank! It smells to heaven./It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,/A brother's murder'(3:3:36-8).The evil tyrant wishes to be forgiven for 'my foul murder' but he does want to give up 'those effects for which I did murder-/My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen' (3:3:54-5). He ponders whether it be possible that he might be pardoned and retain the offence 'In the corrupted currents of this world/Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,/And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself/Buys out the law' (3:3:57-60), but you cannot hide your crimes and sins from the all-seeing eye of heaven.

He kneels down to pray and the unseen Hamlet appears behind Claudius drawing his sword as he prepares to take his revenge and kill him. His first impulse is to seize the chance 'A villain kills my father, and for that/I, his sole son, do this same villain send/ To heaven' (3:3:76-8) but he suddenly reflects that if Claudius dies while at prayer his soul will go to heaven. This would not be revenge for murder of his father. Conflicted he decides to wait to take his revenge on Claudius when he commits another guilty act so he can send his damned soul to hell where it truly belongs.

In Queen Gertrude's chambers with her agreement Polonius conceals himself behind the curtain to eavesdrop on the conversation with Hamlet. His mother Queen Gertrude (Queen Elizabeth Tudor) tells Hamlet (Francis Tudor) that he has greatly offended his father King Claudius (Bacon's secret biological father the Earl of Leicester) to which

Hamlet replies that it she who has offended his real father Old Hamlet. Their verbal exchange becomes increasingly heated and his royal mother threatens to call the guards but Hamlet is having none of it:

> Come, come, and sit you down. You shall not budge.
> You go not till I set you up a glass
> Where you may see the inmost part of you.
> [*Hamlet*: 3:4:18-20]

Frightened that Hamlet might attack her Queen Gertrude cries out 'What will thou do? Thou will not murder me?'/Help, help, ho!' (3:4:21-2) and on hearing it from behind the arras Polonius also calls out for help. Angered at being spied on Hamlet thrusts his sword through the curtain at the concealed figure believing that he might have killed the King but on pulling back the curtain he discovers he has in fact killed Polonius.

His mother asks Hamlet why does he talk to her in this way 'What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue/In noise so rude against me?'(3:4:38-9). He shows her a picture depicting his real father Old Hamlet (Sir Nicholas Bacon) and his royal father King Claudius (the Earl of Leicester) both of whose real historical identities Bacon is now just about to unmistakably reveal. Hamlet describes his father Old Hamlet (Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal) as 'Jove himself' where 'every god did seem to set his seal' (3:4:60) and as for King Claudius he pointedly asks Queen Gertrude 'Have you eyes?'(3:4:64) a telling allusion to Queen Elizabeth's well-known cognomen for the Earl of Leicester, whom she called the 'two eyes' of her kingdom; or, as Hamlet refers to him two lines later 'this moor' (3:4:66), the other well-known cognomen for Leicester, on account of his dark gypsy-like good looks.

Hamlet further expresses his disgust to Queen Gertrude (Queen Elizabeth) regarding her sexual lust and her black heart of betrayal:

> QUEEN GETRUDE O, Hamlet speak no more!
> Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
> And there I see such black and grained spots
> As will not leave their tinct.
> [*Hamlet*: 3:4 78-81]

In the midst of everything the Ghost appears and Hamlet asks if he has come to chide him for his delay in taking revenge. The Ghost of his father Old Hamlet reminds him to seek vengeance on Claudius, but urges him to take pity on his mother. It is clear Queen Gertrude is not able to see or hear the Ghost and asks Hamlet:

> Alas, how is't with you,
> That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
> And with th'incorporal air do hold discourse?
> Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep,
> And, as the sleeping soldiers in th'alarm,
> Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
> Start up and stand on end.
> [*Hamlet*: 3:4:107-13]

The idea of the spirits peeping out from the eyes and the impressions passions make upon the body and mind, and how fear causes hair to stand on end, is elaborated upon by Bacon in *Sylva Sylvarum*:

Joy causeth a cheerfulness and vigour in the eyes, singing, leaping, dancing, and sometimes tears. All these are the effects of the dilation and coming forth of the spirits into the outward parts; which maketh them more lively and stirring. We know it hath been seen that excessive sudden joy hath caused present death, while the spirits did spread so much as they could not retire again.[140]

Fear causeth paleness, trembling, the standing of the hair upright….[141]

Hamlet continues to address the Ghost and Queen Gertrude asks him to whom do you speak. He urges her to look upon the Ghost as the apparition of his father begins to steal away. His mother Queen Gertrude interprets Hamlet's actions and behaviour as signs of his madness 'This is the very coinage of your brain./This bodiless creation ecstasy/Is very cunning in' (3:4:127-9). As stated above Shakespeare scholars have accounted for the 'excessive focus', of Hamlet on Queen Gertrude, by identifying her with Queen Elizabeth,[142] which is much more fully illuminated when we know that Bacon is Hamlet and that Queen Elizabeth is his secret mother. As the son of Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester who was raised by Lord Keeper of the Realm Sir Nicholas Bacon and under the early patronage of the chief minister of the Elizabethan reign of his brother-in-law Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Bacon knew most if not all the secrets of state and secrets of Queen Elizabeth's life. He knew of the murder of Leicester's first wife, Amy Robsart, and the role played in it by Elizabeth, his poisoning and her violent and murderous ruthlessness, his and her sexual lusts, their seemingly endless string of lovers, their rank corruption, and all other manner of his and her vices:

HAMLET

Mother, for love of grace
Lay not a flattering unction to your soul
That not your trespass but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,
And do not spread the compost o'er the weeds
To make them ranker.
[*Hamlet*: 3:4:135-43]

In his speech on subsidies delivered in parliament in 1593 Bacon writes:

…we are here to search the wounds of the realm and not to skin over them…[143]

QUEEN GERTRUDE

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain!

Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

[*Hamlet*: 3:4:147, 181-3]

With his words like daggers in the heart still ringing in her ears Hamlet says 'I must to England/You know that?' drawing Queen Gertrude's guilty answer ''Tis so concluded on' (3:4:184-5), just as his royal mother and father Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester, had agreed on exiling Bacon to France. Hamlet bids his mother goodnight and leaves dragging the body of Polonius with him 'This counsellor/Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,/Who was in life a foolish prating knave' (3:4:187-9), as Bacon similarly observed in his essay *Of Counsel*:

It was truly said, *optimi consiliarii mortui*: [the best counsellors are the dead:] books will speak plain when counsellors blanch. Therefore it is good to be conversant in them, specially the books of such as themselves have been actors upon the stage.[144]

The Queen informs Claudius that Hamlet is as 'mad as the sea' and that in a lawless state has killed Polonius prompting Claudius to say 'His liberty is full of threats to all' (4:1:13). He orders Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to find and bring the body to the chapel wherein Hamlet has 'safely stowed' it. They ask Hamlet what he has done with the body but with a gallows humour he taunts them 'That I can keep your counsel and not mine own', when you be nothing more than mere sponges soaking up the King's countenance by trying to squeeze information from me (4:1:4-20). What then follows is a highly significant exchange between Rosencrantz and Hamlet:

ROSENCRANTZ My lord, you must tell us where the body
is, and go with us to the King.
HAMLET The body is with the King, but the King is not
with the body. The King is a thing-
[*Hamlet*: 4:2:24-27]

It will be recalled that the first shorter quarto edition of *Hamlet* was printed in 1603 (approximately 2,200 lines) followed by a much longer quarto edition (around 3,800 lines) in 1604. The above lines from *Hamlet* which do not appear in Q1 appeared for the first time in Q2. In 1603 (most probably after the appearance of Q1) Bacon wrote a political treatise *A Brief Discourse Touching the Happy Union of the Kingdom of England and Scotland Dedicated in private to His Majesty* (first printed in 1657) in which he expressed the idea of a perfect union of bodies, both politic and natural. The whole discourse centres round the notion of the body in the king and in the union of England and Scotland. In fact it is perfectly clear that in 1603-4 the term 'body' was uppermost in his mind whether it was the word itself, for use in a metaphor, and as a political principle representing the person of the King and body politic. For example, 'So again the water and other like bodies do fall towards the centre of the earth'; 'not for any affinity with that place in heaven can have with that part of man's body…and so worketh upon that part in inferior bodies which is most vital and principal'; 'when one body doth merely subdue another'; 'when the body of a living creature doth convert and assimilate food and nourishment'; 'the one being but a conjunction of bodies in place'; 'So those three bodies which the alchemists do so much celebrate as the three principles of things'; 'for we see those three bodies, of Earth, Water, and Oil'.[145] For the body of the king and the body politic of the union of kingdoms:

It resteth therefore but that (as I promised) I set before your Majesty's princely consideration the grounds of nature touching the union and commixture of bodies, and the correspondency which they have with the grounds of policy in the conjunction of states and kingdoms.[146]

In a brief political paper *An Act for the Better Grounding of a Further Union to Ensue Between the Kingdoms of England and Scotland* written in 1604 Bacon described the act of union as a 'union in your Majesty's royal person',[147] and in his report *Touching the Question whether the Scots born since the King came to the Crown be Naturalized in England* written in 1607 as 'a union made in the King's person'.[148] The meaning of the lines in *Hamlet* are perhaps best crystallized by Bacon in *The Case of the Post-Nati of Scotland* (written in 1608 and first printed in 1641) in his capacity of Solicitor-General before the Lord Chancellor and the Judges of England:

…the natural body of the king hath an operation and influence into his body politic, as well as his body politic hath upon his body natural; and therefore, that although his body politic of king of England, and his body politic of king of Scotland, be several and distinct, yet nevertheless his natural person, which is one, hath an operation upon both, and createth a privity between them

…for they that maintain the contrary opinion do in effect destroy the whole force of the king's natural capacity, as if it were drowned and swallowed up by his politic...

….[citing the king's learned counsel, Rouswell, Comment. fol. 205] "There is in the king not a body natural alone, nor a body politic alone, but a body natural and politic together…" [and Lord Barckley, Comment. fol. 234] "Though there be in the king two bodies, and that these two bodies are conjoined, yet are they by no means confounded the one by the other."[149]

The King sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to find Hamlet and to find the body of Polonius which represents his natural body and serves as a cipher for the body politic in the sense he was the chief instrument of state. His master King Claudius recognises the danger he is in while Hamlet 'goes loose' but in the circumstances he is unable to 'put the strong law on him (4:3:1-3). He wants to rid himself of Hamlet but Claudius knows he is loved by the people so dispatching Hamlet to England it must seem like it had been planned for some time. Rosencrantz arrives and tells Claudius that Hamlet will not reveal the whereabouts of the body but that they have managed to persuade Hamlet to see the King. The King orders Rosencrantz to bring Hamlet before him and demands to know where he has hidden Polonius's dead body. With humorous verbal dexterity Hamlet muses on corpses and how death is a great leveller which in the end whether a king or beggar we will all end up as food for worms. After playing with the fools around him Hamlet eventually tells them that they will 'nose' Polonius in the lobby an image indicating that the play is haunted and saturated by the smell of death.

Claudius sends Rosencrantz to find the body and under the pretence that it is for his own safety informs Hamlet he must set sail for England immediately with orders to Guildenstern to ensure he boards the ship tonight. In a soliloquy Claudius reveals he is sending letters to England with threatening instructions to the English authorities to kill Hamlet:

> And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught-
> As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
> Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
> After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
> Pays homage to us-thou mayst not coldly set
> Our sovereign process, which imports at full,

By letters conjuring to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet.
[*Hamlet*: 4:3:60-67]

En route Hamlet encounters Fortinbras and his army on its way to Poland claiming safe passage from Claudius through Denmark leading Hamlet (in the second Quarto of the edition of the play) to contrast Fortinbras's willingness to decisively act and his own inaction in taking revenge for the death of his father:

How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed?-a beast, no more.
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused. Now whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th'event-
A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward-I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do',
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me,
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I, then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain. O, from this time forth
My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!
[*Hamlet*: 4:4:23-57]

Since the death of Polonius his grieving daughter Ophelia has fallen into some form of madness and comes to Claudius and Gertrude speaking and singing distractedly of love, sex and death 'He's dead and gone, lady/He is dead and gone' (4:5:29-30) with the King remarking to Horatio that the cause of her grief stems 'All from her father's

death' (4:5:75). Turning to Gertrude he continues 'When sorrows come they come not in single spies,/But in battalions' (or as Bacon expresses it in prose in *The History of Henry the Seventh* 'thinking now all his misfortunes had come at once.'[150]) 'First, her father slain;/Next, your son gone' that are compounded by the conspiratorial whispers about 'Polonius' death' and his secret burial. Lastly, her brother Laertes has in secret returned from France with his head full of suspicions about his father's death who,

> Feeds on this wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
> And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
> With pestilent speeches of his father's death
> [*Hamlet*: 4:5:87-9]

In his essay *Of Suspicions* Bacon writes:

> Suspicions that the mind of itself gathers are but buzzes; but suspicions that are artificially nourished, and put into men's heads by the tales and whispering of others, have stings.[151]

All of a sudden Queen Gertrude is disturbed and frightened by some kind of loud commotion 'Alack, what noise is this?' with a shaken King Claudius shouting for his guards 'Where is my Switzers? Let them guard the door' (4:5:95) who Bacon explains in his *History of King Henry the Seventh* are 'seen in France and Italy (and some other parts abroad)' who are 'forced to employ mercenary bands of Switzers'.[152] With King Claudius and Queen Gertrude fearing the worst a messenger appears with news that Laertes at the head of his followers has raised a rebellion and is fast approaching the castle:

> young Laertes, in a riotous head,
> O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord,
> And, as the world were now but to begin,
> Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
> The ratifiers and props of every word,
> They cry 'Choose we! Laertes shall be king.'
> Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
> 'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king.'
> [*Hamlet*: 4:5:99-106]

The rebellion by Laertes is a dramatized reflection of the rebellion raised by Bacon's concealed royal brother Robert Tudor Devereux, second Earl of Essex. It makes sense of the mob crying 'Laertes shall be king', (an extremely unlikely prospect), the hoped for reaction of the London populace of Essex's attempt to storm the English court in his plan to take possession of his mother Queen Elizabeth, in his thrust for the throne, to satisfy his ambition to be King of England.

His followers break down the door and in the manner of Essex the hothead Laertes storms into the room 'O thou vile king,/Give me my father' (4:5:114), prompting the Queen to intervene 'Calmly, good Laertes'(4:5:115). Then in Baconian dramatic code Laertes (Robert Tudor Devereux) is made to say:

> LAERTES
> That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard
> Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot
> Even here between the chaste unsmirched brow

Of my true mother.
[*Hamlet*: 4:5:116-19]

These lines if read literally are unintelligible and make no sense because they simply do not apply to Laertes. In the play there is absolutely no suggestion whatsoever that he was an illegitimate child born out of wedlock to parents not married to each other. Nor is his father in anyway a cuckold whose wife, of which there is no mention of any wife in the play, is having a sexual relationship with another man. On the other hand Robert Tudor Devereux as the illegitimate royal child of Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley, who though they had secretly married in private, they had never made their marriage public hence Robert Tudor Devereux was a royal bastard, whose true mother was no Virgin Queen.

In his essay *Of Suspicion* Bacon says:

Certainly, the best mean to clear the way in this same wood of suspicions, is frankly to communicate them with the party that he suspects; for thereby he shall be sure to know more of the truth of them than he did before; and withal shall make that party more circumspect not to give further cause of suspicion.[153]

This is exactly what Laertes does in the play and exactly what occurs when he does it. Laertes demands an explanation from Claudius about the circumstances surrounding the death of Polonius. The King and Queen explain that Claudius is not responsible for Polonius's death and with his suspicions allayed Laertes begins to calm down but says 'I'll be revenged/Most thoroughly for my father' (4:5:133-4). Claudius tells him he shall have the truth of his father's death but asks him that in his desire for revenge does he actually wish to indiscriminately kill friend and foe alike, to which Laertes replies 'None but his enemies' (4:5:143) on which Claudius promises to assist Laertes in his revenge against the real culprit. Meanwhile Ophelia appears distractedly singing about a funeral with the sight of her causing Laertes to shout out in horror in seeing his sister in such a distressed state which further compounds his desire for vengeance.

The mentality disturbed Ophelia again starts to sing in a distracted way and distribute flowers to all of those around her:

OPHELIA There's rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray,
love, remember. And there is pansies; that's for thoughts.

There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's
rue for you, and here's some for me. We may call it
herb-grace o' Sundays. O, you must wear your rue
with a difference. There's a daisy. I would give you
some violets, but they withered all when my father
died. They say a made a good end.
[*Hamlet*: 4:5:176-7, 179-84]

In his celebrated essay *Of Gardens* Bacon refers to rosemary and columbine but just as with Ophelia it seems his favourite flowers were violets which he refers to on six occasions:

For March, there come violets, specially the single blue, which are the earliest…In April follow the double white violet…That which above all others yields the sweetest smell in the air, is the violet, specially the white double violet which comes twice a year.[154]

Then following ‘when my father died’ Bacon puts in the mouth of Ophelia an allusion to his own father and that of his brother Robert Tudor Devereux, the Earl of Leicester, one famously used by his secret wife Queen Elizabeth, which has been astonishingly missed or overlooked by every single orthodox Shakespeare editor and scholar around the world:

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.
[*Hamlet*: 4:5:185][155]

With the unmistakable allusion serving as a title for the modern standard *Life* of him *Sweet Robin A Biography of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester 1533-1588* (1997) for his modern standard biographer Derek Wilson.

Two sailors arrive with letters for Horatio from Hamlet announcing he has returned to Denmark. Following two days at sea Hamlet explains he was captured by pirates who have returned him to Denmark in which he urges Horatio ‘Let the King have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou wouldst fly death’ (4:6:21-3). He tells Horatio ‘I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb’ (4:6:23-4) adding that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern continue their journey to England (as we know to their death) with Horatio imploring the sailors with all good speed to take him to Hamlet.

Meanwhile Claudius is in conversation with Laertes who asks why he had not taken public action against Hamlet for Polonius’s death. Claudius tells him that he cannot directly act against Hamlet out of consideration for his mother the Queen and because Hamlet is loved by the people:

The other motive
Why to a public count I might not go
Is the great love the general gender bear him,
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his guilts to graces.
[*Hamlet*: 4:7:16-21]

A turn of expression used by Bacon in his *Physiological Remains*:

There are some springs of water, wherein if you put wood, it will turn into the nature of stone: so as that within the water will be stone, and that above the water continue wood.[156]

The letters are delivered by messenger announcing Hamlet’s arrival back in Denmark and asking to see Claudius the next day to explain his ‘strange’ return. The King and Laertes conspire with each other to murder Hamlet in such a way as to make it look like an accident. Claudius works Laertes asking him if he is really fixed on revenge would he undertake ‘To show yourself your father’s son in deed/More than in words?’ to which the easily led Laertes says he would ‘cut his throat i’th’ church’ (4:7:98-9). For the murderous poisoner Claudius ‘Revenge should have no bounds’ (4:7:101) and rest assured Laertes will have his revenge.

With murderous intent Claudius and Laertes conspire to arrange a fencing match between Laertes and Hamlet in which Laertes will use a sword anointed with deadly poison which is ‘so mortal’ there is nothing on earth that will save Hamlet from death.

If this should fail Claudius suggests a second back up plan by poisoning a cup of wine to give to Hamlet should he become thirsty or win some part of the duel:

> Therefore this project
> Should have a back or second that might hold
> If this should blast in proof.
> [*Hamlet*: 4:7:125-7]

The same observation is made by Bacon in *The Advancement of Learning*:

> For a man ought in every particular action so to carry the motions of his mind, and so to have one thing under another, as if he cannot have that he seeketh in the best degree, yet to have it in a second…[157]

In the midst of it Gertrude appears with the news Ophelia has drowned herself and Laertes collapses into tears earmarking the series of revenge and deaths that unfold in the final Act. The Arden editor of *Love's Labour's Lost* Richard David points out that it is very probable that certain aspects of Ophelia's death and funeral were prompted by the tragedy surrounding the death of Helen de Tournon in France in 1577:

> It was at Leige that Helene de Tournon, daughter of one of Marguerite's ladies in-waiting, died of love for a young nobleman, the Marquis de Varembon. The Marquis was not in Leige at the time of her death, and only learnt of it when, returning, he met the funeral procession. It is highly probably that this incident suggested not only the decline of Katherine's sister (v.ii.14) but the story of Ophelia in *Hamlet*.[158]

The unmistakable resemblances and correspondences between the story of Helene de Tournon and Ophelia in *Hamlet* were further detailed and set out by N.B. Cockburn in his groundbreaking work *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*:

> It will be recalled that Hamlet only learnt of Ophelia's death when he met her funeral cortege by chance. These parallels with Helene's death can hardly be coincidence. How many men first learn of the death of a girlfriend by encountering her funeral cortege by chance? There are also the following resemblances in detail: Both girls were members of a royal Court and in love with a great nobleman. Both had faced opposition to their love from their families-Ophelia from her father, Helene from the Marquis's family who wanted him to enter the Church rather than matrimony. Both had their hearts broken by the apparent indifference of their beloved, who relented but too late.[159]

Her death occurred while Bacon was in France where he spent a great deal of time at the French court during which time he had a secret love affair with Queen Marguerite and had personal knowledge of her Lady-in-Waiting Helen de Tournon. Familiar with her story, the circumstances surrounding her love for the Marquis de Varembon, and her death and funeral, Bacon afterwards incorporated aspects of it into his account of the death and burial of Ophelia in *Hamlet*, the first version of which he wrote shortly after his return from France.

For some two hundred years it has been known to Shakespeare scholars and editors of *Hamlet* that the gravedigger scene in Act 5 Scene I unmistakably echoes the law case of *Hales v Petit* originating in the 1550s reported by the distinguished lawyer and legal scholar Edmund Plowden in a publication written in law-French not translated into English until the eighteenth century.[160] The case resulted from Sir James Hales, a

Judge of the Common Pleas, committing suicide by drowning in a river at Canterbury in 1554 while of unsound mind, which gave rise to the above law suit of *Hales v Petit*, which Shakespeare editors and scholars have repeatedly pointed out and discussed at some considerable length while pointing out its numerous links to the grave-digger scene in *Hamlet*. The length and detail of these essays (the last three running to thirty-nine, twenty & nineteen pages) on *Hamlet* and *Hales v Petit* have been commendable and impressive, but like all those that have gone before them none have placed the case in its full historical context and not one has once referred to the Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon, and his son Francis Bacon, afterwards Solicitor-General, Attorney-General, Lord Keeper, and finally, Lord Chancellor of England.

The man in question Sir James Hales (*c*.1500-1554) originated from a distinguished legal family several of whom studied at Gray's Inn and occupied senior positions in a number of successive Tudor governments. He was the eldest son of judge John Hales (*c*.1469-1540), Baron of the Exchequer and legal adviser to Henry VIII, whose cousin was Sir Christopher Hales (*d*. 1541), a member of Gray's Inn, who went on to become Solicitor-General and Attorney-General and thereafter replaced his friend Sir Thomas Cromwell, an early patron of Nicholas Bacon, as Master of the Rolls.

The man whose legal case was later encoded in the greatest play in world literature was admitted to Gray's Inn, somewhere between 1517 and 1519, and was elected an ancient in 1528. He became a bencher of Gray's Inn in 1532 and gave his first reading on the *Statute of Costs* (23 Hen. VIII c.15), which includes the first known lectures on actions on the case.[161] In the same year Hales was joined at Gray's Inn by Nicholas Bacon who in the remarkably short time of four years became ancient in 1536.[162] In December 1539 Hales was among those appointed to receive Anne of Cleves at Dover at whose royal reception was Anthony Cooke, father of Francis Bacon's mother Anne Cooke Bacon and future father-in-law of husband to be Nicholas Bacon, who was one of Henry VIII's fifty spears, or reconstituted bodyguard.[163] In 1540 Hales gave a third reading at Gray's Inn on *Statute of Westminster II* c. 45 and around this time became an adviser to Archbishop Cranmer, another early patron of Nicholas Bacon.[164] On 4 November 1544 Hales was appointed one of the king's sergeants, a position renewed by Edward VI, whose tutor was Anthony Cooke (assisted by Bacon's mother Anne), and at his coronation King Edward made James Hales and Anthony Cooke Knights of the Bath in 1547. In the January of 1547 Nicholas Bacon's position as Attorney to the Court of Wards was formerly confirmed a post he held for the next fourteen years and two years later in May 1549 his fellow Gray's Inn lawyer Hales received a patent as one of the Justices of the Common Pleas, an office he held until his death five years after, before committing suicide by drowning himself in the river at Canterbury.

The reign of Edward VI was a short one and through his 'Device' he tried to alter the succession away from Princess Mary and Princess Elizabeth and settle the crown on Lady Jane Grey, daughter of Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk and Frances Duchess of Suffolk (herself the daughter of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk and Mary Tudor, the younger sister of Henry VIII) who married Guildford Dudley, son of the powerful John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland. The dynastic marriage between Lady Jane Grey and Guildford Dudley took place on 21 May 1553 at Durham House as part of a plan by Northumberland to place his son Guildford on the throne making him *de facto* King of England. As all the political machinations were largely unfolding behind the scenes Sir James Hales incurred the wrath of Northumberland by refusing to affix his seal to the document which altered the succession in favour of Lady Jane Grey on the grounds that the succession could only legally be altered by an act of parliament. One of the signatures on this dangerous instrument, as witness to the other signatures, was

that of the Duke of Northumberland's principal secretary, William Cecil (married to Mildred Cooke Cecil, the daughter of Anthony Cooke, whose brother-in-law Nicholas Bacon, married his other daughter, Anne Cooke Bacon). In the days leading up to the fight for the crown Anne Cooke Bacon intervened with Mary on Cecil's behalf who fearing for his life had entrusted a final farewell letter to his wife Mildred in the hands of Nicholas Bacon, which thankfully he never had to deliver. His own wife Anne accompanied Mary on her royal procession to London and served in her household as Gentlewoman of the Queen's Privy Chamber.[165]

With similar legal independence on the accession of Queen Mary Sir James Hales insisted in his charge to the justices at the assizes in Kent by directing that the statutes of Henry VIII and Edward VI against nonconformists remained in force and must not be relaxed in favour of Roman Catholics, which did nothing to endear him with senior members of the new Catholic administration. And although Queen Mary renewed his patent for his position as Justice of the Common Pleas in October 1553, on arriving at Westminster Hall two days later to take his oath of office the Lord Chancellor Bishop Gardner refused to administer it on the grounds that Hales had offended the queen by the nature of his conduct at the Kent Assizes. Shortly afterwards he was committed to the King's Bench prison, from whence he was removed to the Bread Street Compter, and then to the Fleet. In his incarceration Hales was visited by George Day, Bishop of Chichester, Sir William Portman, Justice of the Queen's Bench, and others, to unseat his religious beliefs which so affected his mind he tried to commit suicide by opening up his veins with a penknife. He recovered from his action and was released by royal command in April 1554, but with his mind still in some kind of disturbed state, Hales drowned himself by lying face downwards in a river at Thanington, near Canterbury, some months later on 4 August.[166] His suicide gave rise to the case of *Hales v Petit* in 1558 instigated by his widow against Cyriac Petit that was finally decided four years later in 1562 when Sir Nicholas Bacon was Lord Keeper and *de facto* Lord Chancellor of England, a case in which Bacon no doubt took a great deal of interest in.

The case of *Hale v Petit* echoed in the gravedigger scene in *Hamlet* was first reported by the lawyer and legal scholar Edmund Plowden in his volume of law reports written in law-French printed over successive decades. Shortly after Elizabeth ascended to the throne a number of candidates including the incumbent Nicholas Heath, the father-in-law of Bacon and Cecil, Sir Anthony Cooke and Plowden were rumoured to be in the running for the post of Lord Chancellor, but with the support of Cecil, his brother-in-law Bacon was appointed Lord Keeper with all the powers and responsibilities of the office of Lord Chancellor.[167] In June 1561 Plowden was appointed Treasurer of the Middle Temple an office he held for the next six years. Among the problems Plowden inherited when he assumed the office of Treasurer was the resolution of a dispute with the Inner Temple over Lyon's Inn whose origins went back to the reign of Edward VI. In an attempt to remedy the situation 'a secret approach was made in Trinity Term to the Lord Keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, to induce him to exercise his authority over the Inns by making an order severing Lyon's Inn from the Inner Temple and annexing it to the Middle Temple'.[168] To counter it the Inner Temple approached the favourite Sir Robert Dudley who persuaded Queen Elizabeth to intervene and she 'ordered Bacon not to meddle further in the matter but to allow the jurisdiction of the Inner Temple over Lyon's Inn to continue.'[169] Towards the end of 1561 Plowden was one of thirteen distinguished lawyers that included the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Sir James Dyer, several judges of the Common Pleas and King's Bench, the Attorney-General Gilbert Gerard and Solicitor-General William Roswell to confer on a case concerning the queen, regarding the validity of a lease under the seal of the Duchy of Lancaster,

of certain lands belonging to the duchy, granted by Edward VI. All agreed that such leases were sound and not voidable by reason of the nonage of Edward VI. The next day this distinguished group of senior law-figures went to York House to report their resolution to the Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon and the Chancellor of the Duchy Sir Ambrose Cave, in order that Elizabeth could be informed of their decision.[170]

Having read the tract purportedly written by the Marian exile John Hales (not to be confused with his kinsman Sir John Hales), on the matter of the succession entitled *The Hereditary Right of the Crown of England* favouring the Suffolk, which others suspected was written by Nicholas Bacon, the Catholic Plowden anonymously wrote a response in a two-part manuscript tract entitled *A Treatise of Succession written in the lifetime of the most virtuous and renowned Lady Mary, Queen of Scots. Wherein it is sufficiently proved that neither her foreign birth, nor the last will of Henry VIII could debar her from her and lawful title to the Crown of England*. In the first part of the tract Plowden wrote a lengthy exposition of the doctrine of the king's two bodies, a far more elaborate treatment than the one which subsequently appeared in his *Reports,* [171] the first most probably known to Francis Bacon and the second certainly known to him (reflected in *Hamlet* 'My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the King./The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body' (4:2:24-7).

It was in the first year of the following decade that the first of Plowden's law reports written in law-French *Les commentaries, ou, Les reportes de Edmunde Plowden, un apprentice de la comen ley, de divers cases esteantes matters en ley, et de les arguments sur yceaux, en les temps des raignes le roye Edwarde le size, le Roigne Mary, le Roy & Roigne Phillip & Mary, et le Roigne Elizabeth* appeared in 1571 that established his reputation the foremost legal mind of his time alongside Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon who Plowden was to appear before one last time before his death. In 1579 Plowden was involved in the final stages of a case which had begun ten years earlier which took place before Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Treasurer Sir William Cecil, and all the judges of the King's Bench. After an opening argument by Plowden the case was adjourned to the second Saturday in Easter Term, but in the intervening period, Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon died on 20 February, and the writ of error abated.[172] The previous year saw the issue of the second edition of Plowden's *Reports* in 1578, the year before Francis Bacon entered Gray's Inn, which contains his detailed account of *Hales v Petit* along with an analytical index compiled by Recorder William Fleetwood, who lived at Bacon House in Noble Street, built by Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon.

Obviously Bacon probably first heard of the *Hales v Petit* case from his father Lord Keeper and *de facto* Lord Chancellor Sir Nicholas Bacon, holder of the highest legal office in the kingdom, under whose jurisdiction fell the criminal and civil courts, and all the judges and other legal officers in England. His father Sir Nicholas was also on very familiar terms with the several members of the Hales family including the judge Sir James Hales, whose actions gave rise to the *Hales v Petit* case. Furthermore the private and professional lives of Sir Nicholas Bacon and the lawyer and legal scholar Edmund Plowden formed part of the legal fabric of the kingdom at the highest level and there is no doubt that Francis Bacon read Plowden's lengthy and detailed account of *Hales v Petit* in Law-French in the *Reports* which were not translated into English until the eighteenth century.

The Judge Sir James Hales drowned himself in the River Stour near Canterbury in 1554 and after his death a coroner's jury ruled his possessions be forfeited to the crown. Among the possessions forfeited was a lease held jointly by Sir James and his widow Lady Hales for a piece of land known as Graveney Marsh. The crown had

granted the lease to Cyriack Petit and Lady Hales brought an action to recover the property from him. The case was heard in the Court of the Common Pleas under Sir James Dyer and Justices Anthony Brown and Richard Weston. The Sergeants-at-law Southcote and Puttrell presented the case for Lady Hales and the Sergeants-of-law Walsh, Cholmley, Bendloe and Carus represented Petit. Since the coroner had earlier ruled his death to be a felony, the case turned on whether the felony of committing suicide had occurred during Hales's lifetime, or after his death. Southcote and Puttrel argued the act of suicide could not be completed during his lifetime, and that at his moment of death his wife a joint lessee, took possession by right of survivorship. Whereas Sergeant Walsh argued that 'The Act consists of three parts. The first is the Imagination, which is a Reflection or Mediation of the Mind, whether or no it is convenient for him to destroy himself, and what Way it can be done. The second is the Resolution, which is a Determination of the Mind to destroy himself, and to do it in this or that particular Way. The third is the Perfection, which is the Execution of what the Mind has resolved to do. And this Perfection consists of two Parts, *viz*. the Beginning and the End. The Beginning is the doing of the Act which causes the Death, and the End is the Death, which is only a Sequel to the Act.'[173] The court ruled in favour of Petit and the verdict of Justice Brown was as follows:

> Sir *James Hales* was dead, and how he came he to his Death? It may be answered by drowning; and who drowned him? Sir *James Hales*; and when did he drown him? In his Life-time. So that Sir *James Hales* being alive caused Sir *James Hales* to die; and the Act of the living Man was the Death of the dead Man. And then for his Offence it is reasonable to punish the living Man, who committed the Offence, and not the dead Man.[174]

The grave-digger division of an act into three branches are identical to the argument of the act of self-destruction which consists of three parts given in the case of *Hales v Petit*. The two gravediggers burying Ophelia, who seemingly drowned by committing suicide, observe she is to have a Christian burial and comically misconstrue the law of suicide, in an amusing burlesque of some of the key circumstances in *Hales v Petit*:

> FIRST CLOWN Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?
> SECOND CLOWN I tell thee she is, and therefore make her grave straight. The coroner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.
> FIRST CLOWN How can that be unless she drowned herself in her own defence?
> SECOND CLOWN Why, 'tis found so.
> FIRST CLOWN It must be *se offendendo*, it cannot be else; for here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and act hath three branches: it is to act, to do, and to perform. Argal she drowned herself wittingly.
> SECOND CLOWN Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver.
> FIRST CLOWN Give me leave. Here lies the water-good. Here stands the man-good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes. Mark you that. But if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself; argal he that is not guilty of

his own death shortens not his own life.
SECOND CLOWN But is this law?
FIRST CLOWN Ay, marry, is't: coroner's quest law.
SECOND CLOWN Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.
[*Hamlet*: 5:1:1-25]

In her little-known work *Ecclesiastical Law in Hamlet*: *The Burial of Ophelia* R. S. Guernsey states 'in Hamlet can be found allusions and statements showing the most thorough and complete knowledge of the canon and statue law of England relating to the burial of suicides that has ever been written'.[175] In pointing to the law in *Hamlet*, Guernsey says, the grave-digger scene is always discussed by Shakespeare critics and commentators, but they do observe all the law crammed into the passage, which is not just confined entirely to the parallels in the case of *Hales v Petit*.[176] In his chapter on 'The Death and Burial of Ophelia' Keeton observes that the scene in the churchyard 'is remarkable for the knowledge of the Law Reports' with its references to the fate of Sir James Hales 'which had consequences in two reported cases *Bishop of Chichester v. Webb* and *Hales v. Petit*', in a passage where 'a great deal of law has been crowded into this short colloquy'.[177] Similarly, Professor Sale notes that since the eighteenth century it has been regularly mused upon by scholars of Shakespeare and lawyers the use of law in the grave-digging scene, its allusions to *Hales v Petit*, and more recently twentieth century scholars have also pointed to *Hamlet*'s clear allusion to the famous sixteenth century murder trial known as the *Saunder's Case* (1573), regarding which a full account was given by Plowden in his *Commentaries or Reports*. Yet as Professor Sale illustrates in detail it is not only the grave-digging scene which shows evidence of familiarity with legal cases covered by Plowden '*Hamlet*'s engagement with the cases reported by Edmund Plowden in his seminal legal text *The Commentaries* (1571) is both more subtle and more thoroughgoing than attention to the allusions to *Hales v Petit* and *Saunder's Case* alone may suggest. The play is infused with legal matter reported by Plowden, and in particular with the constellation of concerns that arise in a late 1560s case, the *Queen v Northumberland* [or the *Case of Mines*]…about proprietary claims, in the sovereign's name, in dirt (that substance with which Hamlet is obsessed), and the spectre that haunts this play, is at least in part, a *legal* spectre.'[178] The simple truth is that Bacon was intimately familiar with Plowden's *Reports* written in Law-French (as is clearly evidenced in his acknowledged legal writings) examples of which infuse *Hamlet* and the grave-digger scene which forms only a part of the law and legal concepts and language as Hamlet engages in a revealing conversation with the grave-diggers as the scene unfolds.

Hamlet and Horatio arrive not knowing that the grave-diggers are in the process of digging a grave for Ophelia and Hamlet banters with one of them. He marvels at their indifference to death and at one of them singing while digging a grave as he throws up a skull that he unearths which Hamlet muses might have belonged to a lying politician or a grovelling sycophantic courtier. The merry grave-digger throws up another skull, prompting Bacon in the character of Hamlet, with his legendary wit and contempt for scheming, vexatious, money-grabbing lawyers, to ask if it be the skull of a lawyer:

HAMLET There's another. Why might not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his *quiddits* now, his *quillets*, his *cases*, his *tenures*, and his tricks? Why does he

> suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his *action of battery*? H'm! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his *statutes*, his *recognizances*, his *fines*, his *double vouchers*, his *recoveries*. Is this the *fine* of his *fines* and the *recovery* of his *recoveries*, to have his fine plate full of *fine* dirt? Will his *vouchers* vouch him no more of his *purchases*, and *double* ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of *indentures*? The very *conveyance* of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must th'*inheritor* himself have no more, ha?
>
> [*Hamlet*: 5:1:95-109]

For those not readily familiar with the intricacies of the law I have italicized the legal concepts and language crammed into the above passage which also reveals knowledge of the practices, attitudes and values of the legal profession, and their everyday habits and customs.

The word quillets means a small plot or narrow strip of land, and a verbal quibble or distinction, or frivolous or evasive argument the type, of course, used by lawyers.[179] The word was employed by Bacon in *Discourse in Praise of Elizabeth* (1592) 'The states of Italy, they be like little quillets of freehold lying intermixt in the midst of a great honour or lordship.'[180] The alliterative quiddits (quiddity) meaning equivocation or quibbling, was subtlety employed by Bacon in *A Declaration of the Practices and Treasons attempted and committed by Robert late Earl of Essex* printed in 1601 'And the Queen's Counsel did again enforce that point, setting forth that it was no mystery or quiddity of the common law, but it was a conclusion infallible of reason and experience'.[181] We may also take note of a passage in the *Use of the Law*:

> Which perpetuities, if they should stand, would bring in all the former inconveniences of entails, that were cut off by the former mentioned statutes; and far greater: for, by the perpetuity, if he that is in possession start away never so little, in making a lease, or selling a little quillet, forgetting after two or three descents, as often they do, how they are tied; the next heir must enter, who peradventure is his son, his brother, his uncle, or kinsman: and this raiseth an unkind suit, setting all the kindred at jars, some taking part with one side, some with the other, and the principals wasting their time and money in suits of law: so that in the end they are both constrained by necessity to join together to sell the land or a good part of it, to pay the debts occasioned through the suit.[182]

The next thing Hamlet asks in the above passage when looking at the skull of a presumed lawyer is where is his civil and criminal cases now? In his first major legal treatise *A Collection of Some Principal Rules and Maximes of the Common Lawes* (which was likely written and completed in late 1596 or early 1597 and first printed with the *Use of the Law* in *The Elements of the Common Law* published in 1630) in its preface Bacon sets out a vision for his planned reform of case law:

> Having therefore from the beginning come to the study of the laws of this realm with a mind and desire no less (if I could attain unto it) that the same laws should be the better by my industry, than that myself should be the better by the knowledge of them; I do not find that, by mine own travel, without the help of authority, I can in any kind confer so profitable an addition unto that science, as by collecting the rules and grounds dispersed throughout the

body of the same laws: for hereby no small light will be given, in new cases and such wherein there is no direct authority, to sound into the true conceit of law by depth of reason; in cases wherein the authorities do square and vary, to confirm the law, and to make it received one way; and in cases wherein the law is cleared by authority, yet nevertheless to see more profoundly into the reason of such judgements and ruled cases, and thereby to make more use of them for the decision of other cases more doubtful; so that the uncertainty of law, which is the principal and most just challenge that is made to the laws of our nation at this time, will by this new strength laid to the foundation somewhat the more settled and be corrected.[183]

Hamlet proceeds to ask where is his tenures? (a tenure in law is a condition or form of right to title, or the legal condition(s), under which land or buildings are held or occupied) a subject of which Bacon exhibited a masterly grasp in his brief treatise *The Argument in Lowe's Case of Tenures*:

Tenures, according to the most general division, are of two natures, the one containing matter of protection, and the other matter of profit. That of protection is likewise double, divine protection and military. The divine protection is chiefly procured by the prayers of holy and devout men; and great pity it is, that it was depraved and corrupted with superstition. This begot the tenure in *frankalmoigne*, which though in burden it is less than in *socage*, yet in virtue it is more than a knight's service. For we read how during the while Moses in the mount held up his hands the Hebrews prevailed in battle; as well as that when Elias prayed, rain came after drought, which made the plough go; so that I hold that the tenure in frankalmoigne in the first institution indifferent to knight-service and socage. Setting apart this tenure, there remain the other two; that of knight-service, and that of socage; the one tending chiefly to defence and protection, the other to profit and the maintenance of life. They are all three comprehended in the ancient verse *Tu simper ora, tu protégé, tuque labora* [Do you always pray? do you always protect? do you always labour]. But between these two services, knight-service and socage, the law of England makes a great difference….[184]

Let us now return to the sentence in *Hamlet* 'Where be his *quiddits* now, his *quillets*, his *cases*, his *tenures*, and his tricks?' We have looked at quillets/quiddits, cases, and tenures, which just leaves *tricks*. In his *Promus of Formularies and Elegances* (private note-book which is dated from December 1594 to 27 January 1596) in which Bacon jotted down words, phrases and quotations as an aid to his memory to be later used in his writings (several hundred of them were used in his acknowledged prose writings and throughout the Shakespeare plays) is the entry 'He will never doe his tricks clean' and in a private letter to King James concerning crown property and revenue 'which it pleased you to say were no tricks nor novelties, but true passages of business.'[185] This is followed by in the above *Hamlet* passage 'Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his *action of battery*?':

The use of the law consisteth principally in these two things: the one, to secure men's persons from death and violence: the other, to dispose the property of their goods and lands.

For safety of persons, the law provideth that any man standing in fear of another may take his oath before a justice of peace, that he standeth in fear of his life; and the justice shall compel the other to be bound with sureties to keep the peace.

If any man beat, wound, or maim another, [or give out false words that may touch his name,] the law giveth [an action of the case, for the slander of his name; and] an action of battery, and an appeal of maim, by which recompense shall be recovered to the value of the hurt and damage.[186]

The lawyer, says Hamlet, might have been in his time a great buyer of land, before reeling off a number of legal instruments beginning with *statutes*, a written law passed by a King and his Privy Council or by Parliament in times past as well as in the Tudor and Jacobean period which governed the kingdom and all its institutions. Or as Bacon put it in his earliest surviving legal work *A Brief Discourse upon the Commission of Bridewell* (1587) 'The maxims and rules by which the King is directed are the ancient Maxims, Customs, and Statutes, of this land...The Statues of the realm are the resolute decrees and absolute judgements of the Parliament, established by the King with the common consent of three Estates, who do represent the whole and entire body of the realm of England.'[187] About the time or shortly before Bacon was revising *Hamlet* in the 1600 Lent Vacation, he gave a Double Reading at Gray's Inn *Upon The Statute Of Uses* (27 Hen. 8th, ch. 10: first published in 1642).[188] Throughout his legal writings Bacon quotes from statutes passed in the reigns of Edward III, Richard II, Henry IV, Henry VI, Edward IV, Richard III, Henry VII and Henry VIII (reigns covered in the Shakespeare plays and his prose history *Henry VII*) which he regularly refers to in his non-history Shakespeare plays,[189] with the easy familiarity one would expect from Bacon who possessed a profound knowledge and expertise on the statutes of England. In *Hamlet* with his statutes came his *recognizances*, a bond or undertaking given by an individual before a court or magistrate, to pledge a surety or observe a condition, or to perform some act required by law and keep the peace. In *The Use of the Law* we read:

> Of like nature as leases for years are interests gotten in other men's lands, by extending for debt upon judgement in any court of record, statute merchant, statute staple, or recognizances, (which being upon statutes are called tenants by statute merchant or staple;-the other tenants by *elegit*,) and by wardship of body and lands: for all these are also called chattels real, and do go to executors and administrators and not to the heirs, and are saleable and forfeitable as leases for years are.[190]

On emulating his father Sir Nicholas Bacon with his appointment to the highest legal office in the kingdom Bacon wrote *The Ordinances made by Lord Chancellor Bacon for the Better and More Regular Administration of Justice in the Chancery* wherein under rule 84 he wrote:

> No *scire facias* shall be awarded upon recognisances not enrolled, nor upon recognisances enrolled, unless it be upon examination of the record with the writ; nor no recognisance shall be enrolled after the year, except it be upon special order from the lord chancellor.[191]

Then for this mortal lawyer driven by earthly things and materialism there were his *fines* and *recoveries* 'Is this the *fine* of his *fines* and the *recovery* of his *recoveries*, to have his fine plate full of *fine* dirt?'. The legal fictions of Fines and Recoveries were used in the conveyance (the legal transfer of title) of land in which the court, the seller and the purchaser of the land entered into a collusive action to achieve their collective objective. The terms of agreement between the parties were entered onto a parchment which was then torn into three pieces (a tripartite indenture). Each of the parties to the agreement would then retain one part, with the third part known as a 'foot of the fine', retained by the court as a record of the legal transaction.[192] The 'statutes 4 Hen. VII c. 24 and 32 Hen. VIII c. 28', observe Sokol and Sokol, 'confirmed that a fine would bar heirs of entailed land, allowing the disinheritance of what (probably) Sir Francis Bacon called 'disobedient, negligent, and wasteful sons'.[193] Bacon directly referred to these statutes in *Chudleigh's Case* written in Law-French 'The statute of Fines in 4 H.

VII. and 32 H. VIII., ordains and intends that fines shall be a bar to the issue. But by this device, inasmuch as the issue comes in by new limitation as purchaser, the fine in this case shall not be a bar.'[194] He elaborates on the law fines in *The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh*:

First therefore he made a law suitable to his own acts and times. For as himself had in his person and marriage made a final accord in the great suit and title for the crown; so by the law he settled the like peace and quiet in the private possessions of the subjects: ordaining, That Fines thenceforth should be final to conclude all strangers rights; and that upon fines levied, and solemnly proclaimed, the subject should have his time of watch for five years after his title accrued; which if he forepassed, his right should be bound for ever after; with some exception nevertheless of minors, married women, and such incompetent persons. This statute did in effect but restore an ancient statute of the realm, which was itself also made but in affirmance of the common law. The alteration had been by a statute commonly called the statute of *non-claim*, made in the time of Edward the Third. And surely this law was a kind of prognostic of the good peace which since his time hath (for the most part) continued in this kingdom until this day. For statues of *non-claim* are fit for times of war, when men's heads are troubled, that they cannot intend their estate; but statues that quiet possessions are fittest for times of peace, to extinguish suits and contentions; which is one of the banes of peace.[195]

In *Hamlet*, Bacon sarcastically asks, will the lawyer's vouchers and double vouchers vouch no more his purchases? The legal fiction of a common recovery was reinforced by a voucher for the purpose of breaking of an entail and where necessary a double voucher was used to bar all possible claimants or any other interest parties to the title of land. This was a complex process as explained in *The Use of the Law*:

A fine is a real agreement beginning thus, *Haec est finalis concordia*, &c., and this is done before the King's judges in the Court of Common Pleas concerning land, that one man shall have it from another to him and his heirs, or to him for his life, or to him and the heirs or heirs male of his body, or for years certain; whereupon rent may be reserved, but no condition or covenants…..

Recovery is where, for assurance of lands, the parties do agree that one shall begin an action real against the other, as though he had a good right to the land; and the other shall not enter into defence against it, but allege that he bought the land of one I. S. who hath warranted it to him, and pray that I. S. many be called in to defend the title: which I. S. is one of the criers of the Common Pleas, and is called the common vouchee. This I. S. shall appear and make as if he would defend it, but shall pray a day to be assigned by him by the court to bring in his matter of defence; which being granted him, at the day he maketh default; and thereupon the court is to give judgement against him. Which judgement cannot be for him to lose the land, because he hath it not, but the party that he sold it to hath it, who vouched him to warrant it…

This recovery barreth entails and all remainders and reversions that should take place after the entails: saying where the King is giver of the entail and keepeth the reversion in himself; there neither the heir, nor the remainder, nor reversion is barred by recovery.

The reason why the heirs in tail, remainders, and reversions are thus barred is, because in strict law the recompense adjudged against the crier, that was vouched, is to go in succession of estate as the land lost should have done…

Upon feoffments, fines, and recoveries, the estate of the land doth settle as the use and intent of the parties is declared, by word or writing, before the act was done; as for example, if they make a writing that one of them shall levy a fine, or make a feoffment, or suffer a recovery to the other, but the use and intent is, that one should hold it for his life, and after his death, a stranger to have it in tail, and then a third in fee-simple: in this case the land settleth in estate according to the use and intent declared: and that by reason of a statute made 27 H. VIII. conveying the land in possession to everyone that hath interest in the use or intent of the fine, feoffment, or recovery, according to the use and intent of the parties.[196]

In *Hamlet*, the searching poet-philosopher Bacon, continues his excoriating censure of a lawyer's shallow worldly ambition and greed by contemptuously asking does he in death get to keep only as much land with his vouchers and double vouchers equal to the width and length of a pair of *indentures*? In his *Collection of Some Principal Rules and Maxims of the Common Laws* under rule 13 in relation to land Bacon writes of indentures:

> So if I grant *omnes et singulas terras meas in tenura I. D. quas perquisivi de I. N. in indentura dismissionis fact*' *I. B. specificat*': if I have land wherein some of these references are true and the rest false, and no land wherein they are all true, nothing passeth: as if I have land in the tenure of I. D. and purchased of I. N. but not specified in the indenture to I. B. or if I have land which I purchased of I. N. and specified in the indenture of demise to I. B. and not in the tenure of I. D.: but if I have some land wherein all these demonstrations are true, and some wherein part of them are true and part false, then shall they be intended words of true limitation to pass only those lands wherein all those circumstances are true.[197]

All the conveyances of land, through his lawyer tricks, fines and recovery, vouchers, double vouchers, and indentures, when he passes from life are left behind at his death. 'The *fine* of his *fines* means the end or termination of his fines. That his fine pate is filled, not with fine dirt, but with the *last* dirt which will ever occupy it, leaving a satirical inference to be drawn, that even in his lifetime his head was filled with dirt.' [198] The life and death of a lawyer, with his head throughout his days filled with dirt, and as his body is lowered into his grave, his rotten carcass is covered over with dirt.

At the side of the grave Hamlet and Horatio exchange some black-humoured banter with a gravedigger who was capable of holding his own with Hamlet quipping that he had noticed in the last 'three years' (5:2:135) how some of the commoners are now as verbally agile as courtiers. Hamlet asks how long he has been a gravedigger to which he answered the day Old King Hamlet defeated Fortinbras neatly combining the two themes of death and revenge running through the Act and the play. Hamlet playfully asks the gravedigger how long ago was that? Any fool could tell you that, he says, it was the very day Hamlet was born. The gravedigger then adds 'I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years' (5:2:157-8). It will be recalled that in the first line of the play Barnardo asks Francisco 'Who's there?' (1:1:1) invoking the dual themes of secrecy and identity, and as we know the names *Francisco* and *Bar*nardo contain an anagram of Francis Bacon, and here in the last Act Bacon uses another arcane device to reveal to the initiated his identity as the concealed author of *Hamlet*. The number 3 added to the number 30 equals 33 Bacon in simple cipher. Immediately below this Hamlet asks the gravedigger how long will a man lie in a grave before he starts to rot? He answers-if he is not rotten before he dies he 'will last you some eight or nine year. A tanner will last you nine year' (5:2:162-3), with the emphasis on the number nine: 30+9=39 F. Bacon in simple cipher.

In *Hamlet* the witty gravediggers are alternatively referred to as the First Clown and Second Clown. The most famous clown of the Elizabethan era was Richard Tarlton (*d.*1588) and some have suggested the evocation of Yorick in the gravedigger scene was written in memory of Tarlton, about whom Thomas Fuller relates, that while in his youth employed in Shropshire keeping his father's swine, he came to the attention of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who introduced Tarlton to the court where he became beloved jester to the Queen Elizabeth,[199] whom Bacon knew from when he was a boy or young man. When the gravedigger pulls up another skull which 'has lain in the earth three-and-twenty years' (5:1:169) he identifies it has 'Yorick's skull, the

King's jester' (5:1:176). Bacon makes Hamlet take the skull and in lines exuding the air of personal recollection, he exclaims 'Alas poor Yorick. I knew him, Horatio-a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred my imagination is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar (5:1:180-87). In the first 1603 quarto edition of *Hamlet* Bacon writes 'I knew him Horatio…here hung those lips that I have kissed a hundred times'[200]: The number 100 equals Francis Bacon in simple cipher. In the 1603 quarto edition Hamlet says 'He carried me twenty times upon his back' which is changed in the greatly enlarged 1604 edition to 'He hath bore me on his back a thousand times',[201]: the number 1000 minus the null '0', leaves the number 100, again Francis Bacon in simple cipher.

Hamlet asks Horatio if he thinks even Alexander the Great came to look and smell like poor Yorick after being buried:

> HAMLET Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion
> i'th' earth?
> HORATIO E'en so.
> HAMLET And smelt so? Pah!
> [*He throws the skull down*]
> HORATIO E'en so, my lord.
> HAMLET To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why
> may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander
> till a find it stopping a bung-hole?
> HORATIO 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so.
> HAMLET No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither
> with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it, as thus:
> Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander
> returneth into dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make
> loam, and why of that loam whereto he was converted
> might they not stop a beer barrel?
> Imperial Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
> O, that that earth which kept the world in awe
> Should patch a wall t'expel the winter's flaw!
> But soft, but soft; aside.
> [*Hamlet*: 5:1:193-212]

In his natural history *Sylva Sylvarum* under the heading '*Experiment solitary touching prohibition of putrefaction, and the long consecration of bodies*' Bacon discusses the process of decay in the body after death and burial. Just as in *Hamlet* Bacon uses the example of Alexander the Great with whom he had a great fascination (Bacon refers to Alexander the Great on more than a dozen occasions in *Advancement of Learning* (1605), written and completed around the same time as the publication of the first and second quartos of *Hamlet* in 1603 and 1604-5) and the time Caesar visited his tomb:

> I find in Plutarch and others, that when Augustus Caesar visited the sepulchre of Alexander the Great in Alexandria, he found the body to keep his dimension; but withal, that notwithstanding all the embalming, (which no doubt was of the best,) the body was so tender, as Caesar, touching but the nose of it, defaced it. Which maketh me find it very strange, that

the Egyptian mummies should be reported to be as hard as stone-pitch; for I find no difference but one, which indeed may be very material, namely that the ancient Egyptian mummies were shrouded in a number of folds of linen, besmeared with gums, in manner of sear-cloth; which it doth not appear was practised upon the body of Alexander.[202]

Hamlet sees the funeral procession headed by King Claudius and Queen Gertrude with Laertes bearing a coffin with a solemn train of courtiers following behind it and he and Horatio conceal themselves to observe it unseen. The priest declares her death was doubtful (i.e. suicide) with Hamlet remarking to Horatio that even though they were witnessing 'maimed' funeral rites it must be somebody of noble rank or some estate. Laertes asks the priest can any more be done to which he answers 'No more be done./We should profane the service of the dead' (5:1:230-1). An enraged Laertes retorts that his sister will be a 'minist'ring angel' when the priest is howling in hell, at which point Hamlet realises the funeral is for fair Ophelia. With a show of emotion Laertes exclaims 'O, treble woe/Fall ten times treble on that cursed head/Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense/Deprived me of!' (5:1:242-45).Here once more Bacon employs a cryptographic device to reveal his concealed authorship: the word treble means threefold or something consisting of 3 parts and 10 times 3 is 30: 3+30= 33 Bacon in simple cipher. The distraught Laertes leaps into the grave demanding to be buried with her and with this Hamlet rushes forward, and beneath the Baconian cipher, reveals his identity 'This is I, Hamlet the Dane' (5:1:253), just as Bacon above had revealed his identity as the secret author of the play, cryptically conveying that, I Bacon am Prince Hamlet the concealed author of the play *Hamlet*.

Laertes and Hamlet fight and grapple with one another as they exchange threats and insults. Claudius demands they are separated and Hamlet says no amount of 'brothers' (5:1:266) combined love could match his love for Ophelia. In a disturbed and highly agitated state Hamlet departs followed by Horatio and in an aside Claudius cryptically speaks to Laertes about 'our last night's speech' that will be put 'to the present push' (5:1:291-2), an assurance that Laertes will get his revenge through their planned death of Hamlet.

Later Hamlet tells Horatio of how he discovered the incredible royal plot to kill him. He explains that while on the ship bound for England he stole the letters entrusted to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern by King Claudius containing explicit instructions for his death. He secured his revenge upon those who had betrayed him by forging a new letter purportedly from Claudius to the King of England ordering Rosencrantz and Guildenstern be put to 'sudden death' (5:2:47). Horatio pointedly asks Hamlet 'How was this sealed?' Why, Hamlet replies, 'even in that was heaven ordinant/I had my father's signet in my purse,/Which was the model of that Danish seal' (5:2:49-51), an oblique allusion by Bacon to his foster father Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England (the seal of the Crown inscribed with name and titles of the king symbolising royal approval of state documents). After sealing the letter with the royal seal Hamlet signed it and placed it safely 'The changeling never known' (5:2: 54). This coming directly under the allusion to his foster father Sir Nicholas Bacon carries a clear double meaning: a *changeling* is a child believed to have been secretly substituted for another, or who is suspected of not being a couple's real child. He was not the real child of Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne Bacon rather he was the concealed royal child of Queen Elizabeth Tudor and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

In the encounter with the pirates the following day Hamlet escaped the ship leaving Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to sail to their deaths, of who he says, they are not near his conscience because there demise was the result of their baser nature in conspiring

to have him killed. A shocked Horatio is taken aback by the King's behaviour. It is his declared intention to kill the King, states Hamlet 'He that hath killed my king and whored my mother' and plotted against his own life. Not only is he perfectly justified in killing King Claudius but he would be damned if he were to let this 'canker of our nature' commit more evil and destruction (5:2:65-71).

While Hamlet and Horatio discuss the need to act quickly they are interrupted by the courtier Osric sent to deliver the fencing challenge against Laertes to Hamlet. Despite the concerns of his loyal friend Horatio, who tells him he will lose the wager, Hamlet responds by saying that he has been in continual practice and will win at the odds. He tells Horatio after all the death he has witnessed his own mortality does not faze him and he is prepared to die-the readiness is all, as the greatest royal tragedy in the world builds up to its final climax.

The final decade of the Elizabethan reign was dominated by the Tudor trio of Queen Elizabeth and her two concealed royal princes Francis Bacon Tudor and Robert Tudor Devereux. The secret history of this royal Tudor trio is vividly told by Alfred Dodd in *Francis Bacon's Personal Life-Story* in three long and detailed chapters '"The Virgin Queen" and her Concealed Sons', 'The Two Brothers', and 'The Last of The Tudors', a story that Bacon encoded into the very fabric and soul of his royal tragedy *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*.[203] It was this shared secret that they were both royal heirs to the throne of England that initially bound these two concealed Tudor princes together but which in the end tore them apart and resulted in the ill-conceived Essex rebellion. An act of desperation in his reach for the throne, which involved taking possession of his mother Queen Elizabeth, and if necessary even the possibility of murdering her, in his desire to make himself King of England.

With the ageing and fading Queen Elizabeth edging towards the end of her reign the situation and frustration of their dilemma began to divide the two concealed royal princes and they began to slowly drift apart. This far into her reign the personal and political difficulties for the so-called Virgin Queen to publicly name and recognise her two concealed sons Francis and Robert Tudor, the fruits of her secret relationship and marriage with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, were even if she had the will simply enormous. The consequences for the succession would have almost certainly resulted in a national crisis and potential civil war. Francis had long given up any real hope of succeeding to the throne and the thought of civil war, which was the central theme of his Shakespeare history plays portraying the War of the Roses, with all its bloodshed, dividing families, fathers killing sons, and sons killing fathers, was a price he could never contemplate. The man and the circumstances surrounding Essex were different as were the means he was prepared to use to achieve his ambitions. Following his return from Ireland Essex had become increasingly reckless and dangerous, and when Queen Elizabeth removed his monopoly on sweet wines, increasingly desperate to the point where he probably thought he had little or nothing left to lose. He was also now prepared to sacrifice and discard the primogeniture rights of his elder brother Francis Tudor Bacon, the concealed Prince of Wales and heir to the royal throne of England. The two concealed royal princes were now pitted on opposite sides in the matter of the succession and for Essex it was going to be nothing short of a fight to the death, one symbolically portrayed in the explosive climax to *Hamlet* where Laertes (Robert Tudor Devereux) and Hamlet (Francis Tudor Bacon) fight in a duel to the death:

> We defy augury. There's a special
> providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis
> not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it

be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all.
[*Hamlet*: 5:2:165-8]

Fig. 19 Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex

Fig. 20 Laertes and King Claudius from *Hamlet*

In *Sylva Sylvarum* Bacon writes:

It is an observation amongst country people, that years of store of haws and heps do commonly portend cold winters; and they ascribe it to God's providence, that (as the Scripture saith) reacheth even to the falling of a sparrow….[204]

The King and Queen and Laertes with the accompanying royal entourage make their ceremonial entrance to the sound of trumpets and drums carrying a table with flagons of wine on it in a public show masking the secret conspiratorial intentions of Claudius and Laertes to kill Hamlet, and as part of the elaborate pretence Claudius joins Hamlet and Laertes's hands. Then Hamlet (Francis Tudor Bacon) and Laertes (Robert Tudor Devereux) have an encoded conversation in the play alluding to recent events prior to the publication of the first and second quartos of the royal tragedy.

When his royal brother Robert Tudor Devereux, second Earl of Essex returned from Ireland in September 1599 Bacon used everything in his powers to reconcile him with their mother Queen Elizabeth. When Elizabeth came to dine with Bacon at his lodge at Twickenham Park he presented her with 'a sonnet directly tending and alluding to draw on her Majesty's reconcilement to my Lord'.[205] He advised their mother to deal with Essex in private but his advice was ignored and following the Essex rebellion his brother Robert Tudor Devereux with the Earl of Southampton (who Bacon had earlier dedicated his Shakespeare poems *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece*) was put on trial for treason. In an act of spiteful cruelty Queen Elizabeth commanded her other concealed son Prince Francis Tudor Bacon to appear as a prosecutor in a trial against his concealed royal brother Robert Tudor Devereux. Throughout the time leading up to the trial of Essex (when behind the scenes Bacon was blackmailed, threatened and promised by Queen Elizabeth that Essex's life would be spared) Bacon was libelled by those who did not know the truth, and on his own report, his life was threatened by ruffians and thugs. The so-called Virgin Queen was concerned that the state secret of her clandestine marriage to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and the fact that she had given birth to two concealed royal princes might in the heat of a courtroom battle be spurted out by Essex; who lest we forget, was on trial fighting for his life for attempting to seize the crown, which he thought was rightfully his, which Bacon was directed to prevent from happening, whose rightful royal inheritance Essex was also usurping.

Now picture the scene in a hushed courtroom spellbound with all the high drama and theatrical trappings of a sensational state trial when Francis Tudor Bacon rises to his feet to question his royal brother Robert Tudor Devereux, the one pitched against the other charged with treason, as a result of his failed attempt to seize his mother Queen Elizabeth Tudor in his thrust for the throne of England. With the whole courtroom completely spellbound Francis Tudor Bacon addresses his royal brother Robert Tudor Devereux in a coded exchange "for you, my Lord, should know that though princes give their subjects cause of discontent, though they take away the honours they have heaped upon them, though they bring them to a lower estate than they raised them from, yet ought they not to be so forgetful of their allegiance that they should enter into any undutiful act; much less upon rebellion, as you, my Lord, have done. All whatsoever you have or can say in answer hereof are but shadows."'[206]They were both talking to each other in shadows and there were others in the packed courtroom who knew it. To which Essex replied "To answer Mr. Bacon's speech at once, I say thus much; and call forth Mr. Bacon against Mr. Bacon. You are then to know that Mr. Francis Bacon hath written two letters, the one which hath been artificially framed in

my name, after he had framed that other in Mr. Anthony Bacon's name to provoke me."[207] In fact Bacon had written the letters with Essex's knowledge in his name and the name of Anthony Bacon to try and reconcile him with Queen Elizabeth but given the circumstances gratitude was not the first emotion that came to mind.

The result was a foregone conclusion and Essex was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death while his royal mother Queen Elizabeth Tudor sat and played on her virginals. Only Bacon-Shakespeare could write this and what he could not write openly he encoded into his immortal play *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, or should that be, *The Tragedy of Francis Bacon Tudor, Prince of England* portraying a lustful and sexually promiscuous Queen Elizabeth Tudor (Queen Gertrude) and her secret husband the notorious poisoner and murderer Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (King Claudius), and his hot headed, disloyal, and treacherous royal brother, Robert Tudor Devereux (Laertes), in the greatest Tudor tragedy of all time.

Now shift the scene to a packed royal court with King Claudius and Queen Gertrude with Hamlet and Laertes about to square up. Before the trial of combat begins Hamlet (Francis Tudor Bacon) asks Laertes (Robert Devereux Tudor) to pardon him for his actions for which he says he cannot be held responsible while under the duress of the madness that had lately afflicted him:

HAMLET (*to Laertes*)
Give me your pardon, sir, I've done you wrong;
But pardon't as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punished
With sore distraction. What have I done
That might your nature, honour, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet.
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it then? His madness. If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged.
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house
And hurt my brother.
LAERTES I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive in this case should stir me most
To my revenge. But in my terms of honour
I stand aloof, and will no reconcilement
Till by some elder masters of known honour
I have a voice and precedent of peace
To keep my name ungored; but till that time
I do receive your offered love like love,
And will not wrong it.
HAMLET I do embrace it freely,
And will this brothers' wager frankly play.

Now the above exchange between Hamlet (Francis Tudor Bacon) and Laertes (Robert Tudor Devereux) has been framed and contextualized we are now in a position to read and decipher it. Hamlet turns to Laertes or Bacon to Essex and tells him in reference to acting as state prosecutor in the greatest show trial of the Elizabethan reign 'I have done you wrong', for which he asks his pardon or forgiveness. 'This presence knows', says Bacon-Hamlet to Essex-Laertes alluding to their royal mother Queen Elizabeth in the guise of Queen Gertrude 'how I am punished'. Meaning the Queen had barred Bacon from her presence for continuing to defend Essex and that others who wrongly thought he had acted against Essex, had threatened his life. He says, that it was not Hamlet (Bacon) that had wronged Laertes (Essex), he had acted under duress and the threat of his life from their mother, who lest we forget sent her own son Robert Tudor to his death. He 'is of the faction that is wronged', the Bacon-Essex faction and of two concealed royal Tudor brothers. His madness meaning the behaviour forced upon him by his mother Queen Elizabeth 'is poor Hamlet's enemy'. It was not his decision or purpose to act against him and again he asks forgiveness 'that I have shot mine arrow o'er the house', the Royal House of Tudor and now wait for it 'hurt my BROTHER', that is, his royal brother Prince Robert Tudor Devereux. In his reply Laertes (Robert Tudor Devereux) assures him 'I do receive your offered love like love,/And will not wrong it.' Trustingly, Hamlet (Francis Tudor Bacon) in hope more than expectation accepts his assurances 'I do embrace it freely', and as by way of especial notice, he again alludes to his secret concealed relationship with his royal brother Robert Tudor Devereux 'And will this BROTHERS' wager frankly play'.

As Hamlet and Laertes prepare to fence the poisoner and murderer King Claudius (the notorious poisoner and murderer Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester) who poisoned Old Hamlet (Sir Nicholas Bacon) instructs his attendants to place jars of wine on the table to toast Hamlet if he scores the first hit and places a poisoned pearl in Hamlet's cup. Hamlet and Laertes begin to fence and when Hamlet makes the first hit Claudius offers him the poisoned cup of wine but he brushes it aside and continues the match. He hits Laertes for a second time and in her excitement Gertrude, although the King tries to stop her, drinks from the poisoned cup and offers it to Hamlet, who declines it again. Laertes wounds Hamlet and in a scuffle they switch rapiers with both of them being wounded with the envenomed blade. In the mayhem Queen Gertrude falls down crying out 'No, no, the drink, the drink-I am poisoned' (5:2:263) and dies. A bleeding Laertes realising he has justly brought on his death through his own treachery reveals to Hamlet that Claudius (Leicester) is to blame for the plot to poison him 'The King, the King's to blame' (5:2:273). Grabbing the poisoned sword Hamlet fatally stabs his tormentor Claudius and forces him to drink the remaining poison from the cup 'Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane/...Follow my mother' (5:2:277-9).The King dies with Hamlet finally fulfilling his protracted quest for revenge for the death of his father Old Hamlet (Sir Nicholas Bacon). Hamlet and Laertes then forgive one another 'Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet./Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,/Nor thine on me' (5:2:281-3). A dying Hamlet pointedly exclaims out loud 'Wretched Queen, adieu!' (5:2:285), a condemnation through the character of Queen Gertrude, of Francis Tudor Bacon's own mother Queen Elizabeth, before adding 'O, I could tell you-/But let it be' (5:2:289-90), which if it were all revealed would shock the entire world and posterity.

Hamlet prevents Horatio from drinking the poison telling him to stay alive to tell his true story 'Horatio, I am dead,/Thou liv'st. Report me and my cause aright/To the

unsatisfied' (5:2:290-2). Bacon knew that his appearance in the Essex trial and his part in *A Declaration of the Practises & Treasons attempted and committed by Robert late Earle of Essex*, written under the compulsion of their royal mother, would badly damage his reputation to posterity, which he pointedly alludes to in the closing scene of the play:

> O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
> Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
> If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity a while,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
> To tell my story.
> [*Hamlet*: 5:2: 296-301]

Before Hamlet dies a warlike noise is heard and Osric explains that Fortinbras fresh from the conquest of Poland has fired his cannons to greet the arrival of ambassadors from England. The dying Hamlet laments that he will not live to hear the news from England and prophecies that Fortinbras will win the election for the Danish crown, for which he has his support. 'The rest is silence', he says, before drawing his last breath with his faithful friend Horatio lamenting his death 'Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,/And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest' (5:2:312-13).

The soon to be Danish king Fortinbras enters with the English ambassadors and asks what has happened and Horatio tells him that it is a tragedy of surpassing proportions. Fortinbras is overwhelmed by the sight before his eyes 'This quarry cries on havoc./O proud death,/What feast is toward in thine eternal cell/That thou so many princes at a shot/So bloodily hast struck' (5:2:318-21). The English ambassadors also lament this orgy of death and that they have arrived too late to tell the king that his commandment has been fulfilled 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead. Where should we have our thanks?' (5:2:325-6). Horatio tells the ambassadors that even if Claudius was alive he would not thank them, as he was not the one who ordered their deaths:

> But since so jump upon this bloody question
> You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
> Are here arrive, give order that these bodies
> High on a stage be placed to the view;
> And let me speak to th'yet unknowing world
> How these things came about. So shall you hear
> Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
> Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,
> Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause;
> And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
> Fall'n on th'inventors' heads. All this can I
> Truly deliver.
> [*Hamlet*: 5:2:329-39]

This is not a vague commentary about the play it is about the bloody and violent reign of Queen Elizabeth Tudor and her secret husband Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Their carnal lusts and unnatural acts, casual slaughters, poisonings and murders, of deaths they cunningly conspired in (including the death of his first wife Amy Robsart) and the propaganda protecting the truth about their marital relationship and their two concealed royal princes, one which has still never been fully revealed to posterity.

On an existential level the world's greatest dramatic piece of literature is about law, revenge, the meaning of human existence, mortality, and the full expanse of life and death. This transcendent canvas is prefaced by the inheritance of life and death and the effect it has on all those involved in the play and the seemingly endless river of human existence. The play is informed by the life and death of old King Hamlet who returns as a ghost to reveal that his brother Claudius killed him by pouring poison into his ear. Old King Hamlet kills Fortinbras Senior before the play begins and Yorick dies presumably of old age many years or even decades before the play commences. The minister of the state of Denmark Polonius is killed as he hid behind a curtain by Hamlet in the mistaken belief it was Claudius spying on him. Polonius's daughter, Ophelia after her descent into some kind of mental illness or affliction killed herself by committing suicide by drowning. The two courtiers Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who conspired with Claudius to bring about the death of Hamlet were sent to their deaths following the latter's intervention, killed on a forged mandate, by the King of England, or those acting under his directions. Gertrude, Queen of Denmark, drank the poisoned wine intended for Hamlet by Claudius who conspired with Laertes to bring about his death. Her second husband Claudius, who had murdered her first husband Old King Hamlet, was stabbed by Hamlet, and with poetic justice, forced to drink the poisoned wine that was of his conspiring. His co-conspirator Laertes was killed by Hamlet with the poisoned rapier with the two of them exchanging forgiveness before his death. Hamlet prevents Horatio from drinking from the poisoned vessel imploring him to choose life in order to tell his story, and finally Hamlet, the royal Prince of Denmark, wounded by Laertes with a poisoned sword, meets his mortal end, and dies.

For centuries Shakespeare critics and commentators have been devoting space to the theme of death in *Hamlet* as well as writing essays and articles published in scholarly journals, and lengthy chapters in their works printed by prestigious university presses and publishing houses distributed all around the world. Not one of which (as far as the present writer is aware) draws attention to the several tracts and essays on the subject of death written by Bacon, nor consequently do they provide any detailed comparative analysis with *Hamlet*, a play saturated with the theme of death.

Of all the orthodox writings on *Hamlet* and the theme of death perhaps still the most direct and powerful is the chapter written by the great Shakespearean critic Professor Wilson Knight in his classic work *The Wheels of Fire* under the title 'The Embassy of Death: An Essay on Hamlet':

> Now the theme of *Hamlet* is Death. Life that is bound for the disintegration of the grave, love that does not survive the loved one's life-both, in their insistence on Death as the primary fact of nature are branded on the mind of Hamlet, burned into it, searing it with agony...Death is over the whole play…Those first scenes strike the note of the play-Death. We hear of terrors beyond the grave, from the Ghost (i. v.) and from the meditations of Hamlet (iii. i). We hear of horrors in the grave from Hamlet whose mind is obsessed with hideous thoughts of the body's decay. Hamlet's dialogue with the King about the dead Polonius (iv. iii. 17) is painful; and the graveyard meditations, though often beautiful, are remorselessly realistic…
>
> The general thought of Death, intimately related to the predominating human theme, the pain in Hamlet's mind, is thus suffused through the whole play…
>
> Laertes and Hamlet struggling at Ophelia's grave are like symbols of Life and Death…
>
> …He is a superman among men. And he is a superman because he has walked and held converse with Death, and his consciousness works in terms of Death and the Negation of Cynicism. He has seen the truth, not alone of Denmark, but of humanity, of the universe…[208]

The compact ethos of Bacon's essay *Of Death* serves as a kind of epitome or succinct comment on the well-known speeches and soliloquies in *Hamlet* on suicide and death and the relentless running theme of death in the play:

Men fear Death, as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. Certainly, the contemplation of death, as the wages of sin and passage to another world, is holy and religious; but the fear of it, as a tribute due unto nature, is weak…And by him that spake only as a philosopher and natural man, it was well said, *Pompa mortis magis terret, quam, mors ipsa*: [it is the accompaniments of death that are frightful rather than death itself.] Groans and convulsions, and a discoloured face, and friends weeping, and blacks, and obsequies, and the like, shew death terrible. It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the mind of man so weak, but it mates and masters the fear of death; and therefore death is no such terrible enemy when a man hath so many attendants about him that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death; Love slights it; Honour aspireth to it; Grief flieth to it; Fear pre-occupateth it.[209]

Like his divine dramatic creation *Hamlet* Bacon was obsessed or all-consumed with the whole gamut of human existence and the full expanse of human life and death. It is certainly the case that non-specialist scholars would only be familiar with his brief essay *Of Death* found in the numerous editions of his *Essays* and have little or no idea that he wrote two full-length tracts on the subject of life and death. The first is entitled *De vijs Mortis, et de Senectute retardanda, atque instaurandis uiribus* or *An Inquiry concerning the Ways of Death the Postponing of Old Age, and the Restoring of the Vital Powers*, which may have been according to its modern editor Professor Graham Rees, destined for Part V of *Instauratio magna* (*Great Instauration*), Bacon's planned restoration and systematic division of all sciences of human knowledge.[210] The study of death, or, bringing about the prolonging of life, epitomizes as Professor Rees points out, the aims of Bacon's philosophical programme 'he believed that philosophy could improve material conditions and so in part restore prelapsarian felicity. He marked out the prolongation of life as the first and highest objective of the new philosophy. Realization of that ancient dream would be an outstanding fulfilment of a programme proposing a material soteriology for this world.'[211] It was to these ends that in his last known years Bacon issued *Historia Vitae & Mortis* published at the very time the last revised version of *Hamlet* was being printed in the Shakespeare First Folio published in 1623. In his preface to *The History of Life and Death* Bacon writes:

Ancient is the refrain and complaint that life is short and art long. So it seems right that I, who devotes his utmost strength to perfecting the arts, should also, by the grace of the Author of Truth and Life, apply my mind to the prolongation of human life…Now it is easy to take this as the greatest good, but an inquiry to come with means of achieving it is hard, the more so because it has been corrupted by false opinions and groundless reports. For what the medical rabble generally says about the radical moisture and natural heat is deceitful, while the extravagant praise heaped on chemical medicines only raises men's hopes to dash them.

Now I have not put the present inquiry in hand to concern itself with death resulting from suffocation, putrefaction, and the various diseases, for that belongs to the history of medicine; here I am concerned only with death caused by the disintegration and atrophy of old age. Nevertheless I judge that to investigate the last step of death and the very extinction of life, which can come about by so many internal and external factors (but which still lead as it were to common anteroom before reaching the point of death), is also relevant to the present inquiry, but I shall leave that until the end.

Anything which can be repaired gradually, without destroying the original whole, is like the vestal flame, potentially eternal.[212]

Following its preface Bacon sets out a list of 'Particulars Topics or Articles of Inquiry on Life & Death', which include inquiries into vegetable bodies, longevity in animals, longevity in human beings according to the ages in which they lived, their birthplaces, regions and climates in which they lived, their family origins, and their diet, mode of life, exercise, studies and several other lifestyle habits. Furthermore, separate inquiries into medicines which supposedly prolong life and 'into those things which purge old stuff and put back new':

But since it is difficult to know the ways to death, unless you first examine and search out the seat and residence (or rather vault) of death, an inquiry into this should be made, yet not into every kind of death but only of those deaths which come by privation and want, and not by violence. For only the former relate to the atrophy of old age.[213]

The section comprises two parts. The first part presents one hundred instances of longevity and another 267 unnamed instances derived via Pliny's *Historia naturalis* from Vespian's census, and other printed sources-the Old and New Testament, Greek and Roman sources, and various kinds of post-classical literature.[214] The second part of the section attempts to identify correlates of longevity down the ages from the time of Moses to his own Elizabethan and Jacobean era.[215] This is followed by an inquiry and discussion on medicines for the prolonging of life.[216] All these inquiries relating to longevity or the prolongation of life lead to 'Death's Anterooms' the 'things which befall the moribund during the critical instants just before and just after death'.[217] He concludes the historical section of *The History of Life and Death* with a short account of the differences between youth and age and differences concerning the 'affections of the mind' by recollecting the observations of a young Frenchman he met in France in his youth, who in the words of Bacon's editor Professor Rees, shared with Hamlet an unfavourable impression of the elderly:

Bacon rounds off the historical sections of *Historia vitae* with a short account of the differences between youth and old age. He runs through the physical differences, marking the decline from bilious, sanguine, and robust to phlegmatic, melancholy, and feeble. Then he considers differences regarding the 'affections of the mind', differences he tackles by recalling a French friend of his youth who seems to have shared with Hamlet a taste for reflections unfavourable to the elderly: he argued 'that the vices of their minds had in a way some agreement or parallel with the defects of their bodies'.[218]

The most extensive comparative analysis between *Hamlet* and Bacon's writings is found in a work unfamiliar to and unread by the schoolmen and casual student, by the German philosopher and scholar Edwin Bormann in a seventy-page chapter entitled 'Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' a dramatic parable in the sense of Bacon's Anthropology', in a groundbreaking work aptly titled, *The Shakespeare-Secret*. These are some of his considered conclusions:

Just as *The Tempest* shows the closest relations to the first essay on natural history, viz. to the *History of the Winds*, so does *The Tragedie of Hamlet* stand in connexion with the second section, namely with the *History of Life and Death*. This scientific work appeared in the same year (1623) as the Folio-edition of the dramas. Its first pages bear the greeting *to Present and Future Ages* which presents to us a long row of thoughts parallel with the first Hamlet monologue. The *32 Rules* already referred to form the conclusion thereof. These *Rules*, so far as they affect the imperishability and circulation of matter, the substance of the spirit, melting, putrefaction, change of form and coming to life, stand in constant interchange of thought and

are, nevertheless, closely bound up with the tragedy. Moreover, that which the book says, anent the duration of life (Claudius, Polonius, Cloister-life), about nourishment, generation, youth and old age is in complete harmony of thought with the drama.

The Encyclopedy, *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, shows that the whole of the fourth book on the science of the human body and the human soul is so filled up with Hamlet-thoughts, or let us rather say the reverse: the tragedy contains so many thoughts answering to Bacon's anthropology, that this section of the scientific work may be described as a complete commentary to Hamlet….

…The *New Organon* offers us simultaneously in its explanation of the term *Errors of the Cave* an elucidation of the parabolic meaning of the expression *Denmarke is a prison*. The human body is the cave in which the spirit is confined…The closing words of the *New Organon* gives us a list of sciences which even exceeds that of *De Augmentis Scientiarum* in respect of elaboration and of expressions bearing a *Hamlet*-colouring.

Sylva Sylvarum gives us those delightful paragraphs concerning the mimic-art and presents, furthermore, the remarks upon drunkenness, upon deception of the senses, in addition to many minutiae. The close of this work also consists of a list similar to the others and is full of *Hamlet-Bacon* sciences-of-the-future.

The two essays *Of Death* constitute an enlargement of the idea conveyed by the two Hamlet-monologues, and all this is made still more clear in so far as the contemplation of the shortening of life is concerned by Bacon's reflections with regard to the prolongation thereof. The *shoe* simile is used in both contemplations.[219]

we find natural philosophy, and always in the Baconian sense, in every page, we might say in every verse, of *Hamlet*. The speeches of all the characters in the play are filled with Baconian natural philosophy and, most of all, in those of the leading figure, Hamlet.[220]

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26. William Thomson, *On Renascence drama Or History Made Visible* (Melbourne: Sands & McDougall, 1880), p. 270. He does not identify the contemporary writer or his source of information.
27. Ibid., p. 325.
28. Ibid., pp. 293-4. See also O. Follett, 'The Early History of *Hamlet*. From 1585 to 1603', *Journal Of The Bacon Society*, Vol. II., No. 8 January, 1989, pp. 125-41, at pp. 130-32 and Thomas Bokenham, 'Hamlet and the Danish Connection', *Baconiana*, Vol. LXXX No. 187, December, 1987, pp. 46-52.
29. Thomas Heywood, *An Apology For Actors* (London: printed by Nicholas Okes, 1612); *An Apology For Actors. In Three Books by Thomas Heywood. From the Edition of 1612*, ed., John Payne Collier (London: reprinted for the Shakespeare Society, 1841), p. 40.
30. George Brandes, *William Shakespeare* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1898, 1926), p. 357.
31. Albert Cohn, *Shakespeare In Germany In The Sixteenth And Seventeenth Centuries*: *An*

Account Of English Actors In Germany And The Netherlands And Of The Plays Performed By Them During The Same Period (London: Asher &co., 1865), pp. xxii-xxvii. See also Simon Williams, *Shakespeare On The German Stage Volume 1*: *1586-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 28.

32. For a detailed discussion of the German version of *Hamlet* see George Ian Duthie, *The 'Bad' Quarto of Hamlet A Critical Study* (Cambridge University Press, 1941), pp. 238-70 and Simon Williams, *Shakespeare On The German Stage Volume 1*: *1586-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 35-45. For a brief summary see Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, eds., *Hamlet* (The Arden Shakespeare, 2006), pp. 45-6. The German text *Tragoedia*. *Der bestrafte Brudermord oder*: *Prinz Hamlet aus Dannemark* (*The Tragedy of Fratricide Punished or Prince Hamlet of Denmark*) with an English translation side by side is reproduced in Albert Cohn, *Shakespeare In Germany In The Sixteenth And Seventeenth Centuries*: *An Account Of English Actors In Germany And The Netherlands And Of The Plays Performed By Them During The Same Period* (London: Asher & co., 1865), pp. 237-304. Another English translation is reproduced by Geoffrey Bullough, ed., *Narrative And Dramatic Sources Of Shakespeare* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul: New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), pp. 128-58; and for a discussion of it, see pp. 20-24, 34, 36-7.
33. William Thomson, *On Renascence drama Or History Made Visible* (Melbourne: Sands & McDougall, 1880), p. 294.
34. Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophel And Stella Wherein the excellence of sweet Poesie is concluded* (London: printed for Thomas Newman, 1591), page unnumbered.
35. See R. Simpson, 'On Some Plays Attributed To Shakspere', *Transaction Of The New Shakspere Society*, 1875-6, p. 175n1; Edwin Reed, *Francis Bacon Our Shake-speare* (Boston: Charles E. Goodspeed, 1902), p. 67-70, at p. 67. Edwin Reed, *Coincidences Bacon and Shakespeare* (Boston: Coburn Publishing Co., 1906), p. 39. Parker Woodward, *The Early Life Of Lord Bacon* (London: Gay and Bird, 1902), pp. 38-9.
36. Orville W. Owen, *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story* (Detroit and New York: Howard Publishing Company, 1894), p. 93. There is a very considerable body of work produced by Baconian scholars pertaining to the secret royal birth of Francis Bacon stretching back more than one hundred and thirty years. As it constitutes a relatively unknown and important body of work and lacks the benefit of a previous bibliography I have thought it best to provide a list of the books and articles known to the present writer for the benefit of the reader and any future researcher. The following list covers all aspects of the subject: Orville W. Owen, *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story*, 5 vols., (Detroit and New York: Howard Publishing Company, 1894); Elizabeth Wells Gallup, *The Bi-literal Cypher of Sir Francis Bacon discovered in his works* (Detroit, Michigan: Howard Publishing Company: London Gay and Bird, 1899); Elizabeth Wells Gallup, *The Tragedy Of Anne Boleyn*. *A Drama In Cipher From In The Works Of Sir Francis Bacon* (Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A.: Howard Publishing Company: London Gay and Bird, 1901); Elizabeth Wells Gallup, *The Bi-literal Cypher of Sir Francis Bacon discovered in his works Part II* (Detroit, Michigan: Howard Publishing Company: London Gay and Bird, 1901); Parker Woodward, *The Early Life Of Lord Bacon* (London: Gay and Hancock, Ltd, 1902); Harold Bayley, *The Tragedy of Sir Francis Bacon* (London: Grant Richards, 1902); Elizabeth Wells Gallup, *Concerning The Bi-Literal Cypher Of Francis Bacon Discovered In His Works Pros And Cons Of The Controversy Explanations, Reviews Criticisms and Replies* (Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A.: Howard Publishing Co: London Gay and Bird, n.d.); Elizabeth Wells Gallup, *The Bi-literal Cypher Of Francis Bacon Discovered In His Works Deciphered Secret Story 1622 to 1671 The Lost Manuscripts Where They Were Hidden* (Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A.: Howard Publishing Co: London

Gay and Hancock, 1910); Granville C. Cunningham, *Bacon's Secret Disclosed In Contemporary Books* (London: Gay and Hancock, Ltd, 1911); Parker Woodward, *Tudor Problems Being Essays On The Historical And Literary Claims Ciphered And Otherwise Indicated by Francis Bacon* (London: Gay and Hancock, Ltd, 1912); Amelie Deventer Von Kunow, *Francis Bacon Last Of The Tudors, trans*., Willard Parker (New York: published by Bacon Society of America, 1921); C.Y. C. Dawbarn, *Uncrowned A Story Of Queen Elizabeth And The Early Life of Francis* "*Bacon*" *As Told In His Secret Writings And In Other Contemporary Records Of Her Reign* (New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923); S.A.E. Hickson, *The Prince Of Poets And Most Illustrious Of Philosophers* (London: Gay and Hancock, Ltd, 1926); F. L. Woodward, *Francis Bacon And The Cipher Story* (Adyar, Madras, 1932); A. B. Cornwall, *Francis The First Unacknowledged King Of Great Britain And Ireland* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers Ltd., 1936); Alfred Dodd, *The Marriage Of Elizabeth Tudor* (London: Rider and Co., 1940); James Arthur, *A Royal Romance* (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1941); Comyns Beaumont, *The Private Life Of The Virgin Queen* (London: Comyns (Publishers) Ltd, 1947); Peter Dawkins, *Dedication To The Light, The Bardic Mysteries The Love Affair of Elizabeth I and Leicester The Birth and Adoption of Francis Bacon* (Francis Bacon Research Trust, 1984); Jean Overton Fuller, *Francis Bacon A Biography* (London and The Hague: East-West Publications, 1981); Alfred Dodd, *Francis Bacon's Personal Life-Story* (London: Rider & Company, 1986); Ross Jackson, *Shaker Of The Speare The Francis Bacon Story* (Sussex: Book Guild Publishing, 2005); Virginia M. Fellows, *The Shakespeare Code* ((Snow Mountain Press, 2006); Lochithea, *Sir Francis Bacon's Journals The Rarest of Princes* (New York: iUniverse, Inc, 2007); Deslie McClellan, *Prince of Our Dreams* (Emmaus, Pennsylvania, Playhouse Books, 2011); William T. Smedley, 'The Mystery Of Francis Bacon', *Baconiana*, Vol. IX, No 33 (Third Series) January, 1911 (London: Gay & Hancock, Limited), pp. 5-34; Granville C. Cunningham, 'John Barclay's "Argenis" And Bacon's Secret Life', *Baconiana*, Vol. IX, No 35 (Third Series) July, 1911 (London: Gay and Hancock, Limited), pp. 137-60; Granville C. Cunningham, 'Queen Elizabeth's Son', *Baconiana*, Vol. XI, No 41 (Third Series) January, 1913 (London: Gay and Hancock , Limited), pp. 62-3; Anon., 'John Barclay's Argenis', *Baconiana*, Vol. XX. No. 78 (Third Series), February, 1931 (London: The Bacon Society Incorporated Canonbury Tower, N. 1.), pp. 237-40; M. F. Bayley, 'Was Francis Bacon Crowned King Of England?', *Baconiana*, Vol. XXII. No. 86 (Third Series) July, 1937 (London: The Bacon Society Incorporated Canonbury Tower, N. 1.), pp. 286-9; Parker Woodward, 'What Lady Dorset Knew', *Baconiana*, Vol. XXII. No. 86 (Third Series) July, 1937 (London: The Bacon Society Incorporated Canonbury Tower, N. 1.), pp. 296-300; Henry Seymour, 'A Discovery Of A Numerical Cypher Key In John Barclay's *Argenis*', *Baconiana*, Vol. XX. No. 78 (Third Series), February, 1931 (London: The Bacon Society Incorporated Canonbury Tower, N. 1.), pp. 241-49; R. J. A. Bunnett, 'John Barclay's 'Argenis'', *Baconiana*, Vol. XXVII. No. 109. October 1943 (London: published by the Bacon Society Incorporated), pp. 179-83; M. F. Bayley, 'The Royal Birth And Bacon's Reasons For Secrecy', *Baconiana*, Vol. XXXII, Spring 1948, No. 127 (London: published by the Bacon Society), pp. 93-5; James Arthur, 'The Royal Birth Theme', *Baconiana*, Vol. XXXII, Summer 1948, No. 128 (London: published by the Bacon Society), pp. 128-35; James Arthur, 'The Royal Birth Theme', *Baconiana*, Vol. XXXII, Autumn 1948, No. 129 (London: published by the Bacon Society), pp. 185-91, 208; Comyns Beaumont, 'The Royal Birth Of Francis Bacon Confirmed Historically, *Baconiana*, Vol. XXXIV, 1950 No. 134 (London: published by the Bacon Society), pp. 21-8; Comyns Beaumont, 'The Royal Birth Of Francis Bacon Confirmed

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37. Orville W. Owen, *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story* (Detroit and New York: Howard Publishing Company, 1894), p. 97.
38. Elizabeth Wells Gallup, *The Bi-literal Cypher of Sir Francis Bacon discovered in his works* (Detroit, Michigan: Howard Publishing Company: London Gay and Bird, 1899), pp. 30-1.
39. Orville W. Owen, *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story* (Detroit and New York: Howard Publishing Company, 1894), II, pp. 262.
40. Ibid., III, pp. 571-575.
41. Spedding, *Letters and Life*, I, pp. 7-8; *Works*, II, p. 666.
42. The account of Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon's funeral is primarily taken from Jack Virgil Barnard, 'The Political Career Of Nicholas Bacon', (MA Thesis, University of Chicago, 1957), pp. 135-62; Alan Simpson, *The Wealth Of The Gentry 1540-1660* (The University of Chicago Press and Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 22-27; Robert Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon, The Making of a Tudor Statesman* (Ohio University Press, 1976), pp. 188-93.
43. Paul H. Kocher, 'Francis Bacon and His Father', *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 21 (1957-8), pp. 133-58, at p. 133.
44. Spedding, *Works*, VII, p. 183; Michael Kiernan, ed., *The Historie of the raigne of King Henry the seventh and other works of the 1620s* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 2012), p. 650.
45. Spedding, VII, *Works*, p. 183n1.
46. John Lord Campbell, *Lives Of The Lord Chancellors And Lord Keepers Of England* (London: John Murray, 1856), pp. 130-1.
47. Virgil Barnard, 'The Political Career Of Nicholas Bacon', (MA Thesis, University of Chicago, 1957), p. 135.
48. Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1998), p. 503.
49. Spedding, *Works*, II, p. 666.
50. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, I, p. 7.
51. John Hales (1516?-1572) relationship with Nicholas Bacon went way back. He was brought up in the household of his uncle Sir Christopher Hales, a member of Gray's Inn, who went on to become Solicitor-General, Attorney-General and Master of the Rolls in the reign of Henry VIII and enjoyed a close relationship with Thomas Cromwell one of Bacon's early patrons. By 1535 John Hales was in Cromwell's service who secured him his post in the King's Bench as Keeper of the Writs and Clerk of the Court of First Fruits

and Tenths. It was probably at the Henrician court that Hale first met Anthony Cooke who was then one of the fifty spears of Henry VIII's reconstituted bodyguard. In the reign of Mary I Hales and Cooke were among the exiles who left to live abroad: Hales in Frankfurt and Cooke in Strasbourg. Early in 1548 his brother Christopher Hales went abroad with Sir Thomas Hoby which included a visit to Strasbourg. While in exile Hales 'was used by Secretary of State Cecil as a sort of field man in Germany. He worked in conjunction with the English ambassadors and with the leaders of the Reformed religion. And so we find him in the summer of 1550 in Augsburg with Sir Philip Hoby and Dr. Mount.' (Peck, p.164). His Protestant circle of friends included Sir Thomas Hoby (future husband of Lady Elizabeth Cooke Hoby) and the Italian preacher Bernardino Ochino, whose sermons were translated out of the Italian into English by Anne Cooke afterwards Lady Anne Cooke Bacon. From 1545-57 Hales served as Clerk of the Hanaper and on his return to England at the outset of the Elizabethan reign he resumed his duties at the Hanaper under Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon in the Court of Chancery. See Edgar Powell, ed., *The Travels And Life Of Sir Thomas Hoby K^t^ Of Bisham Abbey Written By Himself* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1902), pp. 6, 62, 123; Christina Hallowell Garrett, *The Marian Exiles A Study in the Origins of Elizabethan* (Cambridge University Press, 1938), pp. 6, 171-4; George T. Peck, 'John Hales And The Puritans During The Marian Exile, *Church History*, 10 (1941), pp. 159-177, especially at pp. 163, 164, 166, 167, 168-9.

52. Robert Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon, The Making of a Tudor Statesman* (Ohio University Press, 1976), pp. 117-8.
53. The tract was first printed in Francis Hargrave, *The Hereditary Right of the Crown of England* (London: 1713), pp. xx-xliii.
54. Martin A. S Hume, ed., *Calendar of Letters And States Papers Relating To English Affairs, Preserved Principally In The Archives of Simancas* (London: printed for her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1892), I, p. 365.
55. Ibid., p. 377.
56. Mortimer Levine, *The Early Elizabethan Succession Question 1558-1568* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 77.
57. Robert Parsons, *A Conference Abovt The Next Svccession To The Crowne of Ingland* (Imprinted at N. with Licence, 1594), pp. 1-2.
58. John Lord Campbell, *Lives Of The Lord Chancellors And Keepers Of The Great Seal Of England From The Earliest Times Till The Reign Of King George IV Four Edition* (London: John Murray, 1856), II, p. 225. For a discussion and comments on Bacon's direct links and involvement in the tract see Mortimer Levine, *The Early Elizabethan Succession Question 1558-1568* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 62-85; Virgil Jack Bernard, *The Political Career of Nicholas Bacon*, MA Thesis, University of Chicago, 1957, pp. 96-104; Robert Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon The Making of a Tudor Statesman* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976), pp. 116-26; Sidney Lee, Nicholas Bacon (1509-79), *Dictionary of National Biography*; Robert Tittler, Nicholas Bacon, (1510-79), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press 2004-21); Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), pp. 276-83; J. E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth* (London Jonathan Cape, 1947), p. 126; Alan Gordon Smith, *William Cecil The Power Behind Elizabeth* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd 1934), p. 110; George T. Peck, 'John Hales And The Puritans During The Marian Exile, *Church History*, 10 (1941), p. 176; Victoria de la Torre, '"We Few of an Infinite Multitude" John Hales, Parliament, and the Gendered Politics of the Early Elizabethan Succession', *Albion*, 33 (2001), pp. 557-82, at pp. 577, 581.

59. Robert Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon, The Making of a Tudor Statesman* (Ohio University Press, 1976), pp. 123-4.
60. For the additions in the French version see D. C. Peck, ed., *Leicester's Commonwealth The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge* (1584) *and Related Documents* (Athens, Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1985), pp. 228-48. I took the titles of the French and Latin versions from Derek Wilson, *Sweet Robin A Biography of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester 1533-1588* (London: Allison and Busby Ltd, 1997), p. 253.
61. D. C. Peck, ed., *Leicester's Commonwealth The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge* (1584) *and Related Documents* (Athens, Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1985), pp. 267-71. Cf. Derek Wilson, *Sweet Robin A Biography of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester 1533-1588* (London: Allison and Busby Ltd, 1997), pp. 208-10, and pp. 327-8 notes 17-24.
62. D. C. Peck, ed., *Leicester's Commonwealth The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge* (1584) *and Related Documents* (Athens, Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1985), pp. 267-8, 200n45-47.
63. Ibid., pp. 82-3.
64. Ibid., p. 84, and see p. 200n56, for Camden's account that follows the *Commonwealth's* in reporting the suspicion of poisoning.
65. Ibid., p. 92.
66. Alan Kendall, *Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester* (London: Cassell, 1980), pp. 200-2; Alan Haynes, *The White Bear Robert Dudley, The Elizabethan Earl of Leicester* (London: Peter Owen, 1987), pp. 14-5, 150-3; Derek Wilson, *Sweet Robin A Biography of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester 1533-1588* (London: Allison and Busby Ltd, 1997), pp. 255, 265-7; Robert Stedall, *Elizabeth I's Secret Lover Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester* (Pen and Sword History, 2020), pp. 232-3, 237; D. C. Peck, ed., *Leicester's Commonwealth The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge* (1584) *and Related Documents* (Athens, Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1985), pp. 25-32.
67. D. C. Peck, ed., *Leicester's Commonwealth The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge* (1584) *and Related Documents* (Athens, Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1985), p. 31.
68. Ibid., pp. 99/203n84.
69. James Spedding, ed., *A Conference Of Pleasure, Composed For Some Festive Occasion About The Year 1592 By Francis Bacon. Edited, From A Manuscript Belonging To The Duke of Northumberland* (London: printed by Whitingham and Wilkins, 1870), pp. xxvi -xxi. The incomplete text of *Leicester's Commonwealth* is printed Frank J. Burgoyne, *Collotype Facsimile & Type Transcript Of An Elizabethan Manuscript Preserved At Alnwick Castle, Northumberland* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co.,1904), pp.75-164.
70. James Spedding, ed., *A Conference Of Pleasure, Composed For Some Festive Occasion About The Year 1592 By Francis Bacon. Edited, From A Manuscript Belonging To The Duke of Northumberland* (London: printed by Whitingham and Wilkins, 1870), pp. xxiii -iv; Frank J. Burgoyne, *Collotype Facsimile & Type Transcript Of An Elizabethan Manuscript Preserved At Alnwick Castle, Northumberland* (London: Longmans, Green, and co., 1904), pp. xvii-xx.
71. Orville W. Owen, *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story* (Detroit and New York: Howard Publishing Company, 1894), IV, p. 649-50.
72. Ibid., p. 652.
73. Ibid., p. 653.
74. Ibid., p. 654.
75. Ibid., p. 654.

76. Ibid., p. 655.
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78. Ibid., p. 656.
79. Ibid., p. 657.
80. Ibid., pp. 660-1.
81. Ibid., p. 662.
82. Ibid., p. 666.
83. Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed., Michael Kiernan (Oxford Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 121-2.
84. This is pointed out by Martin Pares in 'Hamlet Cryptic Signatures', *Baconiana*, Vol. LXIV, No. 181, November 1981, pp. 43-52, at p. 43.
85. Alfred Dodd, *Francis Bacon's Personal Life-Story* (London: Rider and Company, 1986), p. 42; Jean Overton Fuller, *Francis Bacon A Biography* (London and The Hague: East-West Publications, 1981), pp. 25, 26n1.
86. William Hepworth Dixon, *Personal History Of Lord Bacon From Unpublished Papers* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1861), p. 36; Edwin Bormann, *The Shakespeare-Secret Translated From The German by Harry Brett* (London: Th. Wohlleben, 1895), p. 46.
87. Spedding, *Letters and Life*, III, pp. 73-4.
88. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, III, pp. 74.
89. H. L. Moore, 'Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*', *The Journal Of The Bacon Society*, No. 5, December 1887, pp. 175-97.
90. John Lord Campbell, *Shakespeare's Legal Requirements Considered* (London: John Murray, 1859), p. 84.
91. Spedding, *Works*, V, p. 321.
92. Ibid., *Works*, V, p. 322. This is also pointed out by H. L. Moore, 'Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*', *The Journal Of The Bacon Society*, No. 5, December 1887, p. 177.
93. Spedding, *Works*, V, p. 11.
94. Ibid., *Works*, II, p. 554; N. B. Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question The Baconian theory made sane* (Guildford and Kings Lynn: Biddles Limited, 1998), p. 492.
95. Ann Thompson, and Neil Taylor, eds., *Hamlet* (Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2006, 2012), pp. 234-5.
96. James Spedding, ed., *A Conference Of Pleasure, Composed For Some Festive Occasion About The Year 1592 By Francis Bacon. Edited, From A Manuscript Belonging To The Duke of Northumberland* (London: printed by Whitingham and Wilkins, 1870), p. 4; Frank J. Burgoyne, *Collotype Facsimile & Type Transcript Of An Elizabethan Manuscript Preserved At Alnwick Castle, Northumberland* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co.,1904), p. 4; Brian Vickers, ed., *Francis Bacon A Critical Edition Of The Major Works* (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 23; Alan Stewart with Harriet Knight, eds., *The Early Writings 1584-1596* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 2012), p. 249.
97. Spedding, *Works*, VI, p. 315.
98. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, V, p. 162.
99. Spedding, *Works*, VI, p. 152.
100. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, VII, p. 178.
101. Ibid., *Works*, V, p. 42. My attention was drawn to this and the above parallels (notes 97-100) by N. B. Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question The Baconian theory made sane* (Guildford and Kings Lynn: Biddles Limited, 1998), pp. 447-50.
102. Spedding, *Works*, II, p. 355; N. B. Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question The Baconian theory made sane* (Guildford and Kings Lynn: Biddles Limited, 1998), p. 482.
103. Spedding, *Works*, II, p. 664.

104. Ibid., *Works*, V, p. 271.
105. Spedding, *Works*, VI, pp. 384-5; Brian Vickers, ed., *Francis Bacon A Critical Edition Of The Major Works* (Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 347-8; Michael Kiernan, ed., *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 16-7.
106. Spedding, *Works*, III, p. 284.
107. Ibid., *Works*, V, p. 229.
108. Ibid., *Works*, IV, p. 41.
109. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, VII, p. 293.
110. Ibid., *Works*, III, p. 396.
111. Ibid., *Works*, II, p. 646.
112. Ibid., *Works*, V, p. 21.
113. Sir Nicholas Bacon, *The Recreations Of His Age* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1919), p. 27; Robert Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon, The Making of a Tudor Statesman* (Ohio University Press, 1976), pp. 55, 57, 196.
114. Barry R. Clarke, 'Parallels with the *Hamlet* soliloquy', *Baconiana*, Vol. 1 No. 8, September, 2020, *Online Journal of the Francis Bacon Society*, pages unnumbered.
115. Spedding, *Works*, V, p. 209
116. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, VII, p. 230.
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118. Ibid., *Works*, VI, p. 310.
119. Ibid., *Works*, VI, p. 705.
120. Ibid., *Works*, VI, p. 415.
121. Ibid., *Works*, VI, p. 507.
122. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, VII, p. 316.
123. Ibid., *Works*, V, p. 11.
124. Ibid., *Works*, VI, p. 380.
125. Brian Vickers, ed., *Francis Bacon A Critical Edition Of The Major Works* (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 234.
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127. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, III, p. 98.
128. Ibid., *Works*, II, p. 584.
129. Constance M. Pott, *The Promus Of Formularies And Elegances* (*Being Private Notes, circ. 1594 hitherto unpublished*) *By Francis Bacon illustrated And Elucidated By Passages From Shakespeare* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1883), p. 226n543.
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133. Spedding, *Letters and Life*, VII, p. 285n2; Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1998), pp. 473/585n1.
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136. Spedding, *Works*, VI, p. 472; Brian Vickers, ed., *Francis Bacon A Critical Edition*

Of The Major Works (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 420; Michael Kiernan, ed., *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 122.
137. Spedding, *Letters and Life*, V, p. 123.
138. Spedding., *Works*, VI, p. 440; Brian Vickers, ed., *Francis Bacon A Critical Edition Of The Major Works* (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 393; Michael Kiernan, ed., *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 83.
139. See Spedding, *Letters and Life*, I and II, *passim*.
140. Ibid., *Works*, II, p. 568.
141. Ibid., *Works*, II, p. 567. For a detailed discussion of these parallels see N. B. Cockburn in *The Bacon Shakespeare Question The Baconian theory made sane* (Guildford and Kings Lynn: Biddles Limited, 1998), pp. 471-3.
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143. Spedding, *Letters and Life*, I, p. 223 and see N. B. Cockburn in *The Bacon Shakespeare Question The Baconian theory made sane* (Guildford and Kings Lynn: Biddles Limited, 1998), p. 494.
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145. Spedding, *Letters and Life*, III, pp. 91-94.
146. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, III, p. 92.
147. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, III, p. 205.
148. Ibid., *Letters and Life*, III, p. 330.
149. Ibid., *Works*, VII, pp. 665, 667-8. The comparison between the lines in *Hamlet* and Bacon's writings was pointed out and discussed by N. B. Cockburn in *The Bacon Shakespeare Question The Baconian theory made sane* (Guildford and Kings Lynn, 1988), pp. 351-3. See also Jerah Johnson, 'The Concept Of The "King's Two Bodies" in *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 18 (1967, pp. 430-34 and a full-length treatment of the king's two bodies see Ernest H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies A Study In Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton University Press, 1981), *passim.*
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