THE PREGNANCY PORTRAIT OF QUEEN ELIZABETH

AND THE SECRET ROYAL BIRTH OF FRANCIS BACON,

CONCEALED AUTHOR OF THE SHAKESPEARE WORKS

BY

A PHOENIX

It is an immense ocean that surrounds the island of truth
Francis Bacon

If circumstances lead me I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre
[*Hamlet*: 2:2: 159-61]

Tempore Patet Occulta Veritas
(In Time the Hidden Truth will be Revealed)
Francis Bacon

The Pregnancy Portrait of Queen Elizabeth at Hampton Court Palace

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The mysterious portrait part of the royal collection which now hangs in the Haunted Gallery at Hampton Court Palace had previously been hidden away from public view for centuries only receiving passing comment from an elite cabal of art authorities and a curious silence by its current custodians. Stimulated by an article by Roy Strong the renowned authority on Elizabethan art in his essay '"My Weepinge Stagg I Crowne": The Persian Lady Reconsidered', this enigmatic portrait has in the first two decades of our own twenty-first century finally been placed under the analytical microscope of other critics who have approached it from different perspectives, in particular, by two Oxfordians, Dr Paul Altrocchi in his article 'The Queen Elizabeth Pregnancy Portrait: *Who designed it and who did the cover ups*?' (2002), expanded upon in 'The Virgin Queen's Mysterious Abdominal Swelling' (2010), and David Shakespeare in his long and detailed examination of it in 'The Pregnancy Portrait of Elizabeth I' (2018).[1]

The enigmatic portrait depicts a pregnant Queen Elizabeth in an extraordinary gown embroidered with branches of foliage incorporating into its design various symbolic birds and flowers. She is wearing a curious headdress with a veil extending down her back standing beneath a large walnut tree bearing its fruit with a stream receding into the distance. Her right hand *crowns* a weeping stag with a circle of pansies. Three enigmatic Latin mottoes are placed down the trunk of the tree and in the bottom right-hand corner of the picture stands an elaborate cartouche with a special sonnet whose anonymous authorship has never been established. It is also not known who secretly commissioned this allegorical painting of Queen Elizabeth which will be revealed and confirmed here for first time and its coded complex imagery and symbolism, properly contextualised, decoded and deciphered.

On the grounds of its draughtsmanship and style the painting is now recognized to be the work of Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (1561-1636) and shares many similarities with his famous Ditchley portrait of Queen Elizabeth which has a similar cartouche and identical calligraphy.[2] The Oxfordians Dr Altrocchi and David Shakespeare date the portrait between 1594 and 1604 (the *terminus ad quem* presumably determined by the death of the Earl of Oxford in 1604) whereas Sir Roy Strong narrows it down to *c*.1600-1, which fits rather nicely with his arguments linking Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex to the painting.[3] The early whereabouts of the portrait remain unknown or uncertain. In 1613 the Duke of Saxe-Weimer saw a portrait of what he described as 'A beautiful Turkish lady' at Somerset House,[4] but whether this was the portrait by Gheerhaerts of a Persian Lady, or Queen Elizabeth in a Persian dress, is open to doubt and cannot now be resolved. Both Dr Altrocchi and David Shakespeare speculate the portrait was lost to the royal family sometime during the civil war and commonwealth after the beheading of Charles I in 1649. However this may be, the earliest specific reference to the painting is found in the notebooks of the antiquary George Vertue. He saw it in *c*.1728, describing it as a picture belonging to the crown of Queen Elizabeth, in a flowered gown with a stag by her which she is crowning with flowers, underneath a tree, whereupon there are several Latin inscriptions, and a sonnet in the cartouche.[5] A few years later in 1735 Vertue records Sir John Stanley some time ago recovered the picture of 'Qu. Elizabeth in a strange fantastick habit', while he was deputy to Queen Anne, from a flea market in Moor Fields, which had the mark of Charles I on the back of it,[6] that has since been removed. In the reign of Queen Anne I (1702-14) the portrait was recorded at St James's Palace in the Blue Room as '*Queen Elizabeth in fancy dress*'. It was afterwards removed by Queen Caroline, wife of George II (1727-60), to Kensington Palace where it was recorded by Vertue in 1734.[7] The painting resided there for more than a century. It is recorded by W. H. Pyne in *The History of Royal Residences* as a '*Portrait of Queen* ELIZABETH' in 'a fantastic

Asiatic dress, seemingly of the Persian character.'[8] It was also noted with some further detail by Walpole:

Another picture of Elizabeth, in a fantastic habit, something like a Persian, is in the gallery of Royal personages at Kensington…she is drawn in a forest, a stag behind here, and on a tree are inscribed these mottoes and verses, which as we know not on what occasion the piece was painted, are not easily to be interpreted.[9]

The painting was moved by Queen Victoria to Hampton Court Palace in 1838 where it now remains, which was described by Ernest Law the official historian at Hampton Court Palace and acclaimed expert on Tudor history, as '**Queen Elizabeth in a fanciful dress':**

Full-length, facing in front. She wears a long loose dress of thin white material, embroidered all over with flowers and birds, and edged with lace, a high conical headdress, and shoes of blue and white, embroidered with gold, and trimmed with blue braid. She is standing in a forest; on her right is a stag with a garland of flowers round its neck, on which the queen's right hand is placed. On wood, 7ft. high, by 4ft. 6in. wide. On a tree by her are inscribed the following mottos or verses:- "*Iniusti iusta querela*;" beneath that:- "*Mea sic mihi*," and still lower:-"*Dolor est medecina ed tori* (? *dolori*)." At the bottom of the picture on the other side is a scroll, or rather a tablet, on which are the following verses [here reproduced].

This curious picture, with its fantastical design, enigmatical mottoes, and quaint verses, doubtless had some allegorical meaning which we are now unable to interpret.[10]

Up to this point for several hundred years the painting had hung in royal palaces as a portrait of Queen Elizabeth until sometime in the twentieth century something rather remarkable occurred when its label at Hampton Court Palace was without explanation changed to a 'Portrait of an Unknown Woman.'

With the portrait of Queen Elizabeth rendered officially anonymous there have been a number of attempts to identify or label her as someone else. In 1914 Sir Lionel Cust, then Director of the National Portrait Gallery and renowned royal art critic stated that 'It seems almost certainly to be a portrait of Arbella Stuart'[11] a possible successor to Queen Elizabeth, and believed to be a threat to the throne by James I in the early part of the next reign. This identification by Sir Lionel Cust was dismissed by Roy Strong on the simple grounds that none of her portraits show any resemblance whatsoever to the lady in fancy dress.[12] Under the heading of '**A Century of Deception Continues**' Dr Altrocchi more acidly stated 'This raises questions as to the motivation of such a highly respected royal art critic as Lionel Cust, who had been Director of the National Portrait Gallery for fifteen years.'[13] Lady Penelope Devereux (later Lady Penelope Rich), the sister of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex and favourite of Elizabeth, has also been suggested who following her second marriage to Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy was banished from court by James I in 1605. In his long detail work 'The Pregnancy Portrait of Elizabeth I', David Shakespeare reproduces a known portrait of Lady Penelope when she was a young woman and places it alongside the 'pregnancy portrait', which clearly shows the latter 'does not depict Penelope Rich'.[14] In 1977 the costume historian Janet Arnold suggested that the sitter in the portrait may have been Anne Vavasour (Sir Henry Lee's mistress) or her sister Frances, who secretly married Sir Thomas Shirley in 1591.[15] The suggestion of Anne Vavasour was dismissed by Strong 'The former is an identity difficult to square with the full length of her now in the possession of the Armourers and Braziers Company whose identity has never been doubted',[16] and both sisters by Sorbie 'the identification is not convincing in the light

of a comparison with firmly identified portraits of these women.'[17] In 1999 Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel in a German work *Das Geheimnis um Shakespeares* '*Dark Lady*': *Dokumentation einer Enthullung* (*The Secret Surrounding Shakespeare's Dark Lady Uncovering a Mystery*) proposed that the portrait depicted the mysterious 'Dark Lady' of the Shakespeare Sonnets:

In making her case, she identified the subject of the portrait as Elizabeth Vernon, the wife of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, and the mysterious 'Dark Lady' of Shakespeare's sonnets. Supposedly her affair with William Shakespeare, in a love-triangle that included her prospective husband, left her with a child and in a melancholic condition. Hammerschmidt-Hummel concludes that Shakespeare provided the painter with the sonnet in order to create this elaborate testament to her state.[18]

'As the basis for an allegorical portrait' writes Alison Sorbie 'this line of reasoning is highly implausible.'[19] Then there is the very curious and strange case of Roy Strong, director of both the National Portrait Gallery and Victoria and Albert Museum and the world renowned writer and authority on Elizabethan portraiture, who initially said that the Gheeraerts painting was a portrait of Queen Elizabeth and the stag a transmuted representation of the Earl of Essex:

I think that I've solved the 'Persian Virgin crowning a weeping stag' [a picture in the Royal Collection at Hampton Court]. It is so obvious. The picture has just been cleaned, ravishing, and I stood in front of it and in a flash Essex [Elizabeth's I's favourite, Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of] crossed my mind. The stag is Essex as the transmuted Actaeon, as in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*. And then everything I touched fell into place: the regal pansies, the walnut-a royal tree, the fact that the picture must connect with Essex's friend Sir Henry Lee, for whom Gheeraerts, the painter, did this kind of picture as a special line. Here we are looking at the weeping Essex still protesting love and loyalty to the Queen.[20]

Yet within a year Strong completely changed his mind and stated that the painting is not of Queen Elizabeth but is instead a portrait of Frances Walsingham, widow of Sir Philip Sidney and wife of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, whom she secretly married in 1590.

In his article '"My Weepinge Stagg I Crowne": The Persian Lady Reconsidered' under the heading 'An Identity Suggested' Strong argued it was Sir Henry Lee who had commissioned the portrait of Lady Frances as part of a plan to rehabilitated Essex in the eyes of Elizabeth in 1600-1. Sir Henry Lee, the Queen's Champion and Master of the Horse, had the decade before commissioned Marcus Gheeraerts the younger to paint the Ditchley portrait of Elizabeth as part of the lavish Spenserian (or to be more accurate Baconian) dramatic entertainment staged in her honour at his Oxfordshire estate in 1592.

There exists what has been accepted as a certain portrait of the Countess [of Essex] a decade before these events. These features are perfectly compatible with those of the Persian Lady, a high forehead, lustrous eyes, and a full lower lip. Could we be looking at some sort of extraordinary penitential picture devised by Lee of Lady Essex in the autumn of 1600? She stands declaring her loyalty and that of her disgraced husband to the Queen in the two headdresses of her virgin flowers. The loose robe would have suited the Countess's enceinte condition at the close of 1600, for the last child, Dorothy, was born early in December.

...The Persian Lady, or may we say Lady Essex, remains a haunting and moving image, frank and direct in its coded message in spite of all its rambling conceits. This is by no means the

last word to be written on this amazing portrait. One day further scholarship will uncover more, but I have no doubt that its context if not its eventual identity will remain the same.[21]

His mistaken and simply plain wrong identification has not been well-received. In his recent extensive and detailed examination of what he describes as the pregnancy portrait of Queen Elizabeth, David Shakespeare delivers a series of fatal blows:

How does this stand up as an argument? In my opinion, not well at all. First let's consider the symbolism of the painting. It is very hard to understand how the phoenixes, and the reference to the *Phoenix and the turtle* would be relevant, and why such an effort was made to conceal the identity of the subject of the painting. The sentiment and content of the sonnet do not seem relevant to Frances. Why should she be depicted in Turkish attire? Why indeed would she be crowning her husband?[22]

For the purposes of a comparison he also reproduced a well-authenticated painting of Frances Walsingham now held at the M. H. de Young Museum in San Francisco and placed it alongside the pregnancy portrait. After generously accepting there is a 'high correlation' between the features of the two faces, he points out that the complexions and shape of the mouths are different, and the eye colour and nose also differ, leading him, after taking everything into account, to conclude that the subject of our painting was not Frances Walsignham.[23] His comparative analysis was confirmed by Alison Sorbie in her article 'The Persian Lady portrait: A new identification' printed in *The British Art Journal* in 2015:

In 1992, Strong proposed that she could be Frances Walsingham, widow of Sir Philip Sidney and wife of the ill-fated Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, and suggested that the purpose of the elaborate portrait might have been to encourage clemency on the part of the Queen towards Essex, who stood accused of treasonous ambition. It is difficult, however, to imagine the logic that would have the weeping stag, a possible metaphor for Essex, as Strong postulates, being 'crowned' in the image, when this is just what he is being punished for: his attempted assumption of the throne of England. In addition, the contemporary portraits of Lady Essex, which Strong asserts are 'perfectly compatible', do not actually confirm a resemblance with the Persian Lady.[24]

The mistaken identification by Strong was also roundly rejected by Dr Altrocchi:

The face on the pregnant lady is much more similar to that on the Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth by Gheeraerts than the face on the Frances Walsingham portrait. Also, the portrait of Frances shows brown hair and grey-blue eyes. The Pregnancy Portrait lady has orange hair and greenish-brown eyes, as did…Queen Elizabeth…

It is not immediately clear why world-respected royal art critics put forward other portrait-candidates who are so easily disproved.[25]

In 2015 Alison Sorbie presented a candidate of her own in the form of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (1561-1621), wife of Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke the parents of William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke (who many believe to be 'Mr. W.H.' to whom the Shakespeare Sonnets are dedicated) and Philip Herbert, first Earl of Montgomery, to whom the Shakespeare First Folio is dedicated. In her article Sorbie reproduces a series of portraits of Mary, Countess of Pembroke, one by Hilliard, another attributed to Robert Peake 'but possibly by Marcus Gheeraerts II', both of which 'bears a strong resemblance to the 'Persian Lady', a third by Gheeraerts 'or Paulus Van Somer' which 'is even more compelling'.[26] Some of the several flaws

in her proposal concerning the incompatibility of the symbolism and the sonnet in the cartouche of the portrait are pointed out by David Shakespeare:

Alison Sorbie (*British Journal of Art vol XVI 2015*) makes the case for the sitter being Mary Sidney Herbert largely on her literary background and family losses around 1600. She would have been 39 at the turn of the century, and was not pregnant at this stage in her life. However in my opinion she is an unlikely candidate as there is no one element of her life which fits easily with [the] symbolism of the painting and the interpretation of the sonnet.[27]

The three most recent independent investigators Dr Paul Hemenway Altrocchi, David Shakespeare and Francis Carr into the identity of the sitter of this very special portrait by Gheeraerts all identify her as a pregnant Queen Elizabeth. The royal custodians of this enigmatic portrait by Gheeraerts have for several centuries kept it hidden from public view in a series of royal palaces and the secrecy surrounding it continues to the present day. In their inquiries Francis Carr, David Shakespeare, and Dr Altrocchi have met with a very strange reaction or silence from the royal custodians of possibly the most important Elizabethan painting of the era which as we shall see contains a series of intertwined secrets of the greatest historical importance. In his brief article 'The Mystery Painting at Hampton Court' the Baconian Francis Carr relates the experience of his inquiries:

At Hampton Court in the part of the palace built by Cardinal Wolsey, some of the Queen's seven thousand paintings are on display. Some of them are reproduced in the illustrated guide books and on postcards. One large portrait, however, guards its secret history. There is no reproduction of it available, and no-one there can give you any information about the young woman who is portrayed. Not only are the staff at Hampton Court unable to provide any information; the librarians at the Victoria and Albert Museum are equally silent. They did not even know of its existence, when I wrote to them and spoke to them on the telephone.

All we can glean from the label which accompanies this portrait is that the subject is an unknown woman, and that the artist is Gheeraerts. What makes the refusal of the palace to divulge any further details all the more strange is the unique nature of the painting itself. Not only is it crammed with obviously significant symbolic details, but the woman is pregnant.[28]

Something similar happened to David Shakespeare when he visited Hampton Court to research his extensive ninety-two page thesis 'The Pregnancy Portrait of Elizabeth I', which provides the closest examination of the painting itself to date:

At one end of the Haunted Gallery of Hampton Court Palace hangs a large painting of a pregnant woman, dimly lit by three spotlights. Most people walk briskly on their way to the Chapel Royal. If they stop to read the crumpled title pinned to the wall, they will learn that the title is "Portrait of an Unknown Woman c. 1590-1600" by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger. They will find no mention of it in the Hampton Court Palace Guide.

…As an independent researcher I made several unsuccessful attempts to contact the Curator of Pictures at Hampton Court Palace concerning any records kept of the work done to the painting. Met with a stony silence, I decided to conduct my own study, armed with a camera capable of taking close up images in a very low light…

I am presenting my findings which I believe make a compelling case for the identity of the subject being Queen Elizabeth 1, and also reveal a link to the work of William Shakespeare.[29]

His fellow Oxfordian Dr Altrocchi similarly thinks the pregnancy of Queen Elizabeth depicted in the portrait was a result of a secret liaison between Elizabeth and Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, recalling some twenty years after, the birth

of their son Henry Wriothesley the Earl of Southampton. He had no doubt whatsoever that the establishment have been involved in a longstanding conspiracy and cover-up with highly respected authorities involved in an enormous deception practiced against the world at large through a programme of deliberate misinformation, falsehood and deceit relating to two great historical lies relating to the so-called Virgin Queen and the authorship of the Shakespeare poems and plays:

> It is puzzling why the Royal Family, or more likely the Royal Art experts, have created a campaign of misinformation by claiming that the identity of the pregnant lady is unknown…
>
> Additionally mystifying are the motivations of highly respected art experts who, in the last hundred years, have contributed to the intentional misinformation campaign by making easily disprovable claims that the pregnant lady represents either Arabella Stuart or Frances Walsingham. Why do the Royal Collection's custodians now officially deny that the portrait represents a pregnant Queen Elizabeth and claim that the portrait is of "an unknown woman"? Where is the pressure coming from? It is difficult to believe that the Royal Family is directly involved in these deceptions. *Cui bono*?
>
> Today the portrait is labeled "Portrait of a Woman in a loose white Oriental dress richly embroidered." No explanations for this trickery have been forthcoming from The Royal Collection custodians or its royal art experts. Whether these deliberate falsifications have anything to do with the Shakespeare authorship controversy is not clear.
>
> …Despite all attempts to de-name and anonymize the Pregnancy Portrait and misidentify the subject, curiously the name on the frame beneath the portrait remains Queen Elizabeth in large, easily-recognizeable indented letters which have merely been gilded-over in a clumsy effort at name-obliteration.
>
> …Are they deliberately trying to avoid the truth? If so, why? Is there some relationship to the Shakespeare authorship hoax which still involves an active cover-up?[30]

The modern scholars that have examined, analysed, and discussed this very special portrait are all of a mind regarding its historical importance, its symbolic complexity, and the fact it contains a number of different coded messages. The widely recognized authority on Elizabethan paintings and portraiture Sir Roy Strong rightly observes that 'Without doubt we are looking at perhaps the most complicated of all Elizabethan allegorical portraits, as complex as any of the Queen herself.'[31] There can be no doubt he states 'that we find ourselves in a presence which can certainly be described as something more than remarkable' and 'such a picture cannot have been conceived as anything other than a major statement'.[32] Sorbie observes 'Evidently there are various messages conveyed in the picture' with 'many allegorical aspects' to it, and 'in order to identify the subject, it is necessary to decipher its complex imagery.'[33] It is, Sorbie adds an emblem portrait and she believes along with Sir Roy Strong and Michael Bath 'the entire painting as been conceived as an emblem, the meaning veiled in a complex conceit.'[34] The Oxfordians Dr Altrocchi and David Shakespeare believe the complex painting incorporates into its central emblem and symbolism the secret the so-called Virgin Queen bore a son as a result of a illicit liaison with the Earl of Oxford. Their secret love-child being Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton, to whom the Shakespeare poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* are dedicated. The German writer Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel believed that the portrait depicted Elizabeth Vernon, the wife of Southampton, who she believed was the Dark Lady of the sonnets, whose ménage a trois with her prospective husband and Shakespeare, left her with child, and it was Shakespeare that provided the sonnet, for this elaborate and emblematic testament to her pregnant state. None of these writers and authorities once mention Francis Bacon in relation to the pregnancy portrait, who would no doubt have been highly amused by the errors and confusion (his famous themes regarding the

fallibility of the human mind) generated and compounded by these accounts and explanations as to the meaning of the elusive painting. The Baconian Francis Carr was right when stating that the painting (apparently where the experts and authorities and the world at large are concerned) still guards its secret history. Some of the elements of the secrets it contains are referred to above in a confused and misleading kind of way scattered as they are throughout these various writings that have never previously been collectively brought together in a single work. This has resulted in the so-called experts and authorities and the world at large only seeing a small part of the picture. What we need to do now for the first time in more than four centuries is to take all this evidence, information and facts (as well as other important evidence and facts not known to the above) to unravel this Gordian knot by removing the error and confusion and thereby rearrange and reconstruct them in their proper context, to reveal the true secrets of this, the most complicated of all Elizabethan allegorical paintings.

In the portrait the pregnant Queen Elizabeth stands proud in all her regal splendour radiating a sovereign greatness befitting the most famous English monarch in history. She is a powerful and magnificent sovereign head of state whose fame would spread during her lifetime throughout her kingdom, Europe and the rest of the known world. The Virgin Queen who as figurehead of the reformed Protestant faith, whose virginity elevated her to a transcendent semi-divine status, rivalled the Catholic Virgin Mary, who had miraculously conceived Jesus, without any sexual relations with a man. A myth which is here undermined and exposed.

Here the not so virgin queen is depicted wearing an elaborate headdress with a long veil that falls down her back. Before all the extensive alterations were made to the painting (as can be readily seen by comparing the first photographic reproduction of it by Ernest Law in 1898 with the portrait as it appears in its current state) which in the words of Catherine Macleod, Curator of Seventeenth-Century Portraits at the National Portrait Gallery and expert on Tudor paintings resulted in 'the adornments on the veil' being 'almost obliterated', Altrocchi points to the presence of a large R on the upper veil standing for Regina (reigning queen).[35] On comparing the Law reproduction of the portrait with the reproduction of it by Dr France Yates in 1959 and Roy Strong in 1969, and noting that the upper veil 'has been deliberately altered for a third time' between 1969 and 2001, Dr Altrocchi states:

> These three veil-alterations were done in the last 110 years, the most drastic occurring between 1969 and 2001 during the present reign of Queen Elizabeth II. All of these paint-alterations are concerned with eliminating the royal symbolism on the pregnant lady's upper veil-namely the "R" meaning Regina. It was in this same epoch that the Royal Collection also changed the name of the lady in the portrait from Queen Elizabeth to "Unknown Woman." The time-defined association between these two "strategies" is difficult to ignore.[36]

On her head points out Strong 'there is an arrangement of gauze puff studded with pansies' and 'the pansies are even scattered into her hair'.[37] She is also crowning the weeping stag with pansies in an act of the highest symbolic significance in the portrait which symbolises one of the great hidden secrets of history that I will return to later to reveal it in its proper context. The pansy symbolising love, and love for another, was Queen Elizabeth's favourite flower as explained by Strong:

> Although the rose and above all the eglantine were supreme in the royal flower mythology, the pansy had its place too. We know that it was the Queen's favourite flower from as early as 1575 when the Countess of Sussex records the fact. In 1591 Elizabeth was received by her aged Lord Treasurer, Burghley, yet again at his mighty mansion of Theobalds. Here, among

the entertainments was a speech by a gardener who described an allegorical garden which her host's son Robert Cecil, was creating at Pymms: "…all the Virtues, all the Graces, all the Muses winding and wreathing about your Majesty." Although eglantine is accorded the place of honour, being given an arbour, the Virtues were symbolised by roses, the Muses by "nine flowers," and the Graces by "pansies parti-coloured."

In the autumn of the following year, the Queen visited an old friend, Lady Russell, at Bisham in Oxfordshire. At the top of the hill leading down to the house she was welcomed by the two daughters of the house, soon to be maids of honour, disguised as shepherdesses warding off the advances of a wanton Pan. The girls were seen busy stitching samplers. One contained the follies of the gods in love and men's tongues, "not one true," the other virgin goddesses with the royal flowers, "Roses, Eglentine, harts-ease [pansies], wrought with Queenes stitch and all right."[38]

This is the kind of writing that is met with in orthodox literature which invariably passes unnoticed by the ordinary schoolmen and the casual student and reader. Let me fill in the gaps. Lord Treasurer Burghley, namely Sir William Cecil, was together with his brother-in-law Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon, one of the Great Architects of the Elizabethan Reformation. He wife was Lady Mildred Cooke Cecil, the eldest daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, with Nicholas Bacon married to her younger sister Lady Anne Cooke Bacon. From almost the time they were born, his son Robert Cecil and Francis Bacon saw much of each other at their family estates at Theobalds and Gorhambury in Hertfordshire and at York House the official residence of the Lord Keeper Bacon and Cecil House on the Strand, which continued to the end of their lives. The so-called Lady Russell, is Elizabeth Cooke Hoby Russell (whose legal dispute with Lovelace is alluded to in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and on whom Lady Roussillon is based in *All's Well That Ends Well*), the younger sister of Lady Mildred Cooke Cecil and Lady Anne Cooke Bacon, who firstly married Sir Thomas Hoby (translator of Castiglione's *The Courtier* into English an important well-known source for numerous Shakespeare plays) and secondly John, Lord Russell who originally appeared as a character named 'Russell or Rossill", in the early quarto editions of *I Henry IV*. With her first husband she had a son named Sir Thomas Posthumous Hoby on whom Malvolio is based upon in *Twelfth Night*.[39] For much of her life Lady Elizabeth enjoyed royal patronage and Queen Elizabeth was godmother to her two daughters Elizabeth and Anne Russell, the two daughters soon to be her Maids of Honour who welcomed their royal guest as she arrived at Bisham Abbey, the two beautiful cousins so beloved by Bacon.

For the visit of Queen Elizabeth and members of her Privy Council Lady Elizabeth Russell organised an elaborate entertainment a text of which was printed shortly after in a rare edition entitled *Speeches Delivered to her Maiestie this last Progresse, at the Right Honorable the Lady Rvssells, at Bissam* in 1592. Only three copies of *Speeches Delivered* survive: one copy is held at the British Library with the other copies housed in the US, at the Henry E. Huntington Library and the Folger Shakespeare Library.[40] It was printed anonymously and the authorship of this royal entertainment at Bisham has never been determined. In the four hundred and thirty years since its publication the original rare 1592 edition of the *Speeches Delivered* has remained inaccessible to the ordinary scholar and general reader and the reprints of it have lacked a very important piece of evidence that has a critical bearing on its authorship. Across the first page of the 1592 edition appears the Baconian AA headpiece which denotes its secret Bacon provenance. In the original edition of the Bisham entertainment the text occupies six pages; which if reprinted in a modern format would run to around four pages, or less. The entertainment is divided into three scenes which take place at the top, middle and bottom of the hill and contains an interesting cast of characters mainly drawn from the

classical world. The entertainment skilfully uses the beguiling landscape surrounding Bisham Abbey and as Elizabeth approaches the sound of mystical music emanating from the cornets hidden in the hills herald her arrival. With the first scene concluded Elizabeth and her train of privy councillors and courtiers proceed down to the middle of hill where Pan and two virgin shepherdesses named Sybilla and Isabella believed to have been played by Lady Russell's daughters Elizabeth and Anne are sowing their samplers and embroidering eglantine and roses, the queen's emblematic flowers. 'Roses, Egle[n]tine, harts-ease, wrought with Queenes stitch, and all right.'[41] As we know the reason for the choice of a rose and eglantine for their embroidery is because they were specifically associated with Elizabeth and the heartsease (pansies) was her favourite flower. She chose heartsease to ornament two embroidered bindings which she produced as a child. One for her own translation of *The Mirror or Glasse of the Synneful Soul* as a present for her stepmother Katherine Parr in 1544 (the presentation copy is housed at the Bodleian Library: MS Cherry 36) and for a book of the prayers and mediations by Parr translated into Latin, French and Italian by Elizabeth as a New Year's Gift for her father Henry VIII in 1545.[42] The 'most famous of all celebrations of the regal heartsease or pansy', highlights Strong, appears in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 'It fell upon a little western flower,/Before, milk–white; now, purple with love's wound/And maidens call it love-in-idleness (2:1:166-8),[43] and also in *Hamlet* Ophelia says 'There's rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray love, remember. And there is pansies, that's for thoughts' (4:5:175-7).

The patently obvious links between the Bisham entertainment and the Shakespeare plays (either unknown to or very curiously passed over by Lady Russell scholars) was actually briefly emphasized by the Elizabethan historian and Shakespeare scholar A. L. Rowse:

> As the Queen reached the top of the hill going down to Bisham, the cornets sounding in the woods, a wild man came out of them to greet her with a speech full of the conceits the time so loved: none could tell who was passing that way-the nymphs and shepherds were fearful of the music in the woods-"none durst answer or would vouchsafe, but passionate Echo, who said 'She'. And She it is, and you are She, whom in our dreams many years we satyrs have seen, but waking could never find any such...Your Majesty on my knees will I follow, bearing this club, not as a savage but to beat down those that are." Half-way down the hill a pretty scene was enacted: Pan with two shepherdesses sewing their samplers. A charming pastoral dialogue followed-like something out of *As You Like It* or *Love's Labour's Lost*-in honour of virgins who became goddesses for their chastity and so made Jupiter blush and dismayed Juno…
>
> …At the bottom of the hill, at the entrance to the house, the Queen was met by Ceres with her nymphs in a harvest cart. After singing a song, Ceres lays her feigned deity at the feet of the Queen….
>
> It is like the masque of Ceres that comes into *The Tempest*…[44]

In the third and final scene of the Bisham entertainment, Ceres, goddess of fertility and motherly relationships, a mother figure associated with Elizabeth, arrives with her nymphs in a harvest cart. She presents the queen with a jewel welcoming her with a song telling how all gods have yielded to Ceres followed by a speech in which Ceres defers to Queen Elizabeth, the goddess of Great Britain. In *The Tempest* Prospero (a complex portrait of Bacon) directs the betrothal masque to celebrate the engagement of Miranda and Ferdinand. The three spirits are directed to impersonate the goddesses Ceres, Iris and Juno in what is referred to as *The Masque of Ceres* wherein Ceres and Juno sing a hymn of blessing for the couple recalling the Bisham entertainment Bacon

wrote on behalf of his aunt Lady Elizabeth Russell for the visit of his mother-figure Queen Elizabeth.

Beneath the headdress Queen Elizabeth is seen with pearls hanging from her left ear lobe and a large dark brown oval looking earring hanging from her hair with two rings above it. Dr Altrocchi says the large oval earring was probably an armillary sphere. A spherical sphere of concentric rings representing the celestial lines of longitude and latitude with the Earth at its centre in the Ptolemaic system and the sun at its centre in the Copernican system of the universe. She wore an armillary earring in the Ditchley portrait also painted by Gheeraerts which shares several other similar features with the pregnancy portrait.[45] The armillary sphere says Wilson in her detailed article 'Queen Elizabeth I as Urania' is perhaps the most mysterious of the symbols associated with Elizabeth as Astrea, of the Queen as Urania, the Muse of Astronomy/Astrology and the poetry of the heavens. This motif of the armillary sphere appears in a number of representations of Elizabeth. 'The sphere is worn by the Queen herself on a chain in portrait of c.1575 now in the Reading Museum [which it has been often suggested was executed for the Kenilworth entertainment given by Leicester for Elizabeth]; as embroidery on a bodice in a panel painting of c.1580-85 (now in a private collection); as an earring in Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger's *Ditchley Portrait* of c.1592; and on her sleeve ornament in the *Rainbow Portrait* of c. 1603'.[46] The personal significance of the armillary sphere for Queen Elizabeth is indicated by a drawing of the motif in her psalter and Wilson also provides a series of examples of its association with her in other images including needlework and embroidery and various forms of architecture. Enhanced image lightening by David Shakespeare of the brown oval earring in the pregnancy portrait provides strong evidence that Elizabeth was originally wearing an armillary sphere in the pregnancy portrait similar to the one in the Ditchley and 'at some stage it was removed to mask her identity'.[47]

The striking and remarkable robe worn by Queen Elizabeth in the portrait which is usually described as Persian is embroidered with interconnected motifs and symbols consisting of birds, snails, leaves, grapes, honey-suckle and red roses. The symbol of the red rose was regularly incorporated into portraits of Queen Elizabeth. The Tudor rose symbolised the united red rose of Lancaster with the white rose of York and was adopted as the national emblem of England. Seen in the design of the robe are three phoenixes, the mythical bird which never dies, but after every 400 years is consumed by fire and born again, making it a symbol of resurrection and re-birth. These three phoenixes immediately bring to mind the famous painting of Elizabeth, known as the 'Phoenix' portrait, after the prominent phoenix jewel worn on her chest, executed by Hilliard before he travelled to France, where he painted in miniature a young Francis Bacon. The honey-suckle represents devotion and love and the grapes blessed fertility the ability to conceive and produce children. In addition David Shakespeare identifies another curious image which occurs at least seven times in the pattern of the robe. It is striped with gold and green with a red section along one side that appears to represent a fig which is splitting to expose its centre:

> Interestingly in Greco-Roman culture, the fig is associated with female genitalia and fertility. The Greek word for 'fig' is the same word for vulva (*sykon*)…The scroll frames the elements, and links the rings with tongues like leaves. Does this indicate a spoken oath of commitment between two people? At the centre are two figs, both splitting open. As symbols of fertility does this signify the birth of two offspring? Could it be interpreted in any other way? I rather think not.[48]

The figure of Queen Elizabeth in her Persian robe is standing beneath a walnut tree, known as a Persian walnut which in Elizabethan times was referred to as a Royal tree. The Royal walnut tree is a symbol of knowledge and wisdom (the subjects of Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* and *Wisdom of the Ancients*). On the branches of the tree Strong points out that at the top to the right there are two small birds with peachy pink breasts, namely chaffinches which David Shakespeare thinks may signify two young men.[49] With photographic enhancement David Shakespeare also identified a songbird perched on a branch, signifying a songbird in a sole Arabian tree, that is of some very special importance. In 1601 (for some about the date of the portrait) a long allegorical poem was set forth by a little known Robert Chester entitled *Love's Martyr*, with a collection of shorter poems by other poets, including the Shakespeare poem known as *The Phoenix and Turtle*:[50]

Let the bird of loudest lay
On the sole Arabian tree
Herald sad and trumpet be,
To whose sound chaste wings obey.
[Lines 1-4]

The 67 line (67=Francis in simple cipher) allegorical Shakespeare poem tells the story of a mystical love between two birds-the turtle a symbol of fidelity and the mythical phoenix emblem of immortality. The poem mourns the death of the phoenix and turtle and its theme of the mutual flame explores the complexity of the mystical union of the two dead birds. It is the most obscure of the Shakespeare poems and as Hackett argues it 'incites deciphering' with many attempting to decode the allegory via references to historical figures.[51] The phoenix is usually interpreted to represent Queen Elizabeth and numerous scholars believe the poem obliquely alludes to the relationship between Elizabeth and her lover the Earl of Essex (he was not her lover but her concealed son), or if not to their relationship, to the events that lie behind the Essex rebellion and his execution in 1601. Or alternatively, the turtle may partly shadow Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester with whom Queen Elizabeth had two sons. Some Shakespeare scholars have interpreted the child of the phoenix as a reference to Elizabeth's heir James VI of Scotland, which of course, is clearly problematic (and wrong), as she was alive in 1601. In the poem the phoenix simultaneously represents Queen Elizabeth, as well as her heir and successor. And in the *Threnos* its author Bacon laments that she leaves no open posterity, meaning himself her concealed child, and unacknowledged heir to the throne of England:

Beauty, truth, and rarity,
Grace in all simplicity,
Here enclosed in cinders lie.

Death is now the phoenix' nest,
And the turtle's loyal breast
To eternity does rest.

Leaving no posterity
'Twas not their infirmity,
It was married chastity.
[Lines 53-61]

In the climax to the closing scene of his Shakespeare play *Henry VIII* Bacon puts in the mouth of Cranmer a great speech in which he prophesises that the baby Princess Elizabeth, although described as a 'maiden phoenix' shall leave behind her a son and heir. The speech doubles as a veiled record of the state secret that the so-called Virgin Queen carried a royal child, as conveyed in the Pregnancy Portrait at Hampton Court, and gave birth to a concealed heir, Bacon-Shakespeare, 'as great in fame as she was':

For heavens now bids me, and the words I utter
Let none think flattery, for they'll find 'em truth.
This royal infant-heaven still move about her-
Though in her cradle, yet now promises
Upon this land a thousand thousand blessings
Which time shall bring to ripeness. She shall be-
But few now living can behold that goodness-
. A pattern to all princes living with her,
And all that should succeed. Saba was never
More covetous of wisdom and fair virtue
Than this pure soul shall be. All princely graces
That mould up such a mighty piece as this is,
With all virtues that attend the good,
Shall still be doubled on her. Truth shall nurse her,
Holy and heavenly thoughts still counsel her.
She shall be loved and feared. Her own shall bless her;
Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,
And hang their heads with sorrow. Good grows with her.
In her days every man shall eat in safety
Under his own vine what he plants, and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.
God shall be truly known, and those about her
From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,
And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.
Nor shall this peace sleep with her, but, as when
The bird of wonder dies- the maiden phoenix-
Her ashes new create another heir,
As great in admiration as herself;
So shall she leave her blessedness to one,
When heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness,
Who from the sacred ashes of her honour
Shall star-like rise as great in fame as she was,
And so stand fixed: Peace, plenty, love, truth, terror,
That were the servants to this chosen infant,
Shall then be his, and like a vine, grow to him.
Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine,
His honour and the greatness of his name
Shall be, and make new nations. He shall flourish,
And, like a mountain cedar reach his branches
To all the plains about him. Our children's children
Shall see this, and bless heaven...

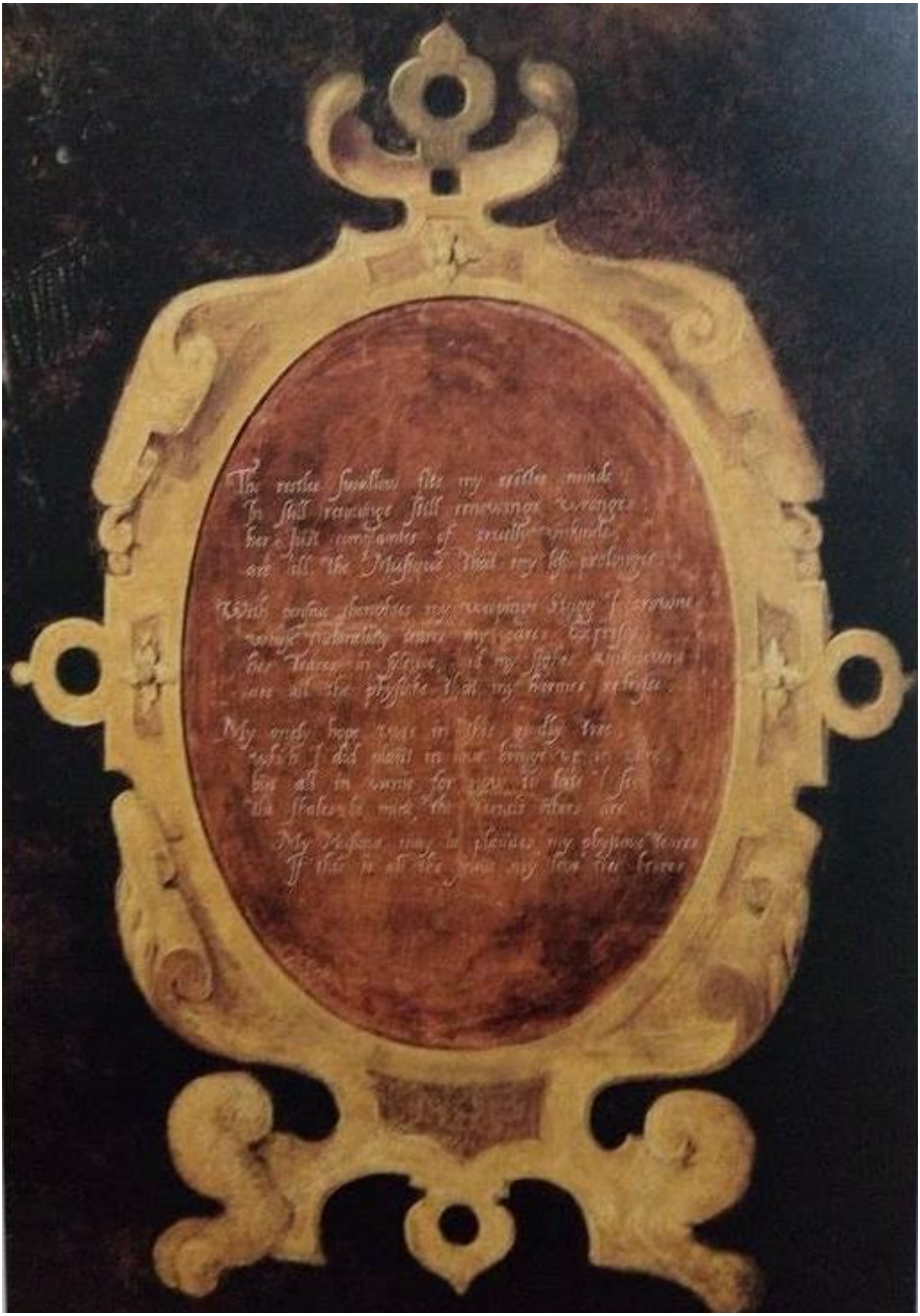
[*Henry VIII*: 5:4:15-55]

Down the trunk of the Persian tree, linked to the Arabian tree in the *Phoenix and the Turtle* and cedar tree in *Henry VIII* that shall spread his branches, under which Queen Elizabeth stands in the Pregnancy Portrait, appear three Latin inscriptions. The first of these 'Iniusti Justa querela' is translated by Strong as 'A just complaint of injustice'. The second or middle motto 'Mea sic mihi' that Strong translates as ''Thus to me my' which with Queen Elizabeth standing alongside it may mean 'Thus to me my Queen'. Dr Altrocchi presents the following interpretation 'Thus what is mine should be mine, namely the Queen.' The third motto which has been damaged and is slightly illegible and according to Dr Altrocchi intentionally interfered with has proved problematic in its translation. Strong believed it was Italian 'Dolor est medicina (e) d[o]lori' [grief is medicine for grief] whereas Dr Altrocchi insisted it was entirely in Latin and when magnified reads 'Dolor est medicina ed tori' which after a very convoluted discussion he concluded could be translated as 'Anguish is part of the healing process for foster parentage'.[52] On closely examining the motto and the current spacing in the lettering David Shakespeare restored the original motto to 'Dolor est medicina doloris' [pain is pain's medicine]. This is quotation from Dionysii Catonis, better known as Cato in a work entitled *Disticha de Moribus ad Filium* that translates as 'words of wisdom for the behaviour of a son'. The advice was given in couplet form:

> Quum quid peccaris, castiga te ipse subinde
> vulnera dum sanas, dolor est medicina doloris.
> [When you are wrong, then change your mind
> When you are dressing a wound, pain is pain's medicine].[53]

In the bottom right hand corner a cartouche contains a Baconian-Shakespeare sonnet a fourteen-line poem written in iambic pentameter set out in three stanzas of four lines followed by a rhyming couplet expressing the melancholy and regret of its invisible author and child concealed in the belly of the pregnant Queen Elizabeth:

7	The restles swallow fits my restles minde,	35
6	In still reuiuinge still renewinge wronges;	37
6	her just complaintes of cruelty vnkinde,	34
8	are all the Musique that my life prolonges.	35
27		141
8	With pensiue thoughtes my weepinge Stagg I crowne	42
6	whose Melancholy teares my cares Expresse;	36
8	hes Teares in sylence and my sighes vnknowne	37
8	are all the physicke that my harmes redresse.	37
30		152
8	My onely hope was in this goodly tree,	30
10	which I did plant in loue bringe vp in care;	34
10	but all in vanie, for now to late I see	29
8	the shales be mine, the kernels others are.	34
36		127
8	My Musique may be plaintes, my physique teares	38
10	If this be all the fruite my love tree beares.	36
18		74



The Shakespeare Sonnet in the Cartouche on The Pregnancy Portrait of Queen Elizabeth at Hampton Court Palace

In Christian symbolism the swallow represents the dual resurrection and incarnation of Christ and is a symbol of fertility and maternal instincts associated with the images of the child votive. In folklore the swallow was used for fertility rituals based on its association with early marriage in life. It also symbolises leaving the past behind to release yourself from the pain you have suffered which still torments his restless mind in still reviving and renewing wrongs of the past-his concealed birth and denial of his birthright, as son and heir to the royal throne of England. The melancholy tears of the weeping stag represent his own silent tears and unknown anguish over the loss of his royal inheritance. All his hope rested in this goodly tree, the Persian tree, underneath which stands the Persian lady his mother Queen Elizabeth whom he took pains to love and care for. But he now knows that it was all in vain. For now too late he realises he will forever flounder on the shales or cruel rock of fate where the kernels (the central most important thing) his status as her son and heir to the royal crown of England and his rightful posterity will be inherited by others. He has every right to complain as he remains unacknowledged and disinherited, and fears this will be all the fruit this royal tree, his royal mother Queen Elizabeth, bears and bequeaths him.

In 'The Pregnancy Portrait of Elizabeth I', Shakespeare suggests that there may be a hidden meaning in the sonnet in the layout of the text or contained within the words themselves. He states he has not been able to discern any coded message 'So for those with a skill in decoding ciphers here is a challenge.'[54] The message contained in the words have been decoded above in which Bacon laments the continuing loss of his royal birthright for which he has to suffer in silence while his royal inheritance slips into the hands of others. David Shakespeare is right to suspect the presence of ciphers in the Shakespeare sonnet. Around or not long after the date Bacon commissioned the artist Marcus Gheeraerts the younger to paint this extraordinary allegorical portrait of his royal mother Queen Elizabeth he commenced organising and writing the first book of the *Two Books of the Advancement of Learning* in July 1603, which on completion of the second book, was published in 1605.[55] In the *Advancement* proceeding from a section discussing writing and words, the images of words, hieroglyphics, emblems, poetry and verse Bacon introduces the arcane subject of ciphers, briefly explaining the art of enciphering and deciphering different forms of writings and texts:

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*.[56]

The Simple Cipher referred to by Bacon is a substation cipher based upon the twenty four letter Elizabethan alphabet 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 T U D O R
6 17 1 13 3 9 18=67 2 1 3 14 13=33 19 20 4 14 17=74

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

The Kay Cipher works on a similar principle:

A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T U W X Y Z
27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

Example: B A C O N
28 27 29 14 13=111

In the first stanza of the sonnet contained in the cartouche of the Pregnancy Portrait of Queen Elizabeth its author Bacon (the child she is carrying in the portrait) reveals his true concealed royal identity as the son of Elizabeth Tudor. The first stanza contains a total of 141 letters the equivalent of Francis Tudor in simple cipher.

Stanza no.1 contains 27 words and 141 letters giving a total of 168 which minus 1= 167, a split simple cipher 100/67 for Francis Bacon/Francis. The 141 letters in the first stanza added to the 36 words in the third 141+36=177 William Shakespeare in simple cipher. The 141 letters in the first stanza added to the 74 letters in the couplet gives a total of 215 which minus 3 stanzas and 1 couplet 215-4=211, a split simple/kay cipher for Francis Bacon (100)/Bacon (111). The 152 letters minus 30 words in the second stanza equals 129 which plus 3 stanzas and 1 couplet 129+4=133 a split simple cipher for Francis Bacon (100)/Bacon (33). The total of words in the second and the third stanza 30+36=66 a split simple cipher for Bacon (33)/Bacon (33). In the couplet the 74 letters minus the 18 words equals 56 Fr. Bacon in simple cipher. The whole sonnet housed in the cartouche of the Pregnancy Portrait of Queen Elizabeth contains a total of 111 words, Bacon in kay cipher. Thus the deciphered message appears clear: the pregnant Queen Elizabeth gave birth to concealed royal son, Francis Tudor known to the world as Francis Bacon, the secret author of the Shakespeare poems and plays.

In the heart of the portrait the hand of Queen Elizabeth is stretched out over the head of the weeping stag who Dr Altrocchi and David Shakespeare have correctly pointed out represents the individual who commissioned the painting or as Strong puts it: 'We should not lose sight of the fact that the weeping stag was Actaeon transmuted. Could we be looking at such a metamorphosed being? Indeed, any appearance of Actaeon in the guise of a stag presupposes the famous encounter with the goddess Diana and her nymphs bathing. And as in the case of the pansy, there could only ever be one Diana in late Elizabethan England, the Virgin Queen herself. With every attribute we seem to move closer and closer into a very rarefied world indeed, that of the Queen and her votaries as their eulogies reached their final cadences in the very last two or three years of the reign.'[57] Dr Altrocchi and David Shakespeare identify the weeping stag as Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford yet according to Roy Strong around 1600-1 'there is only one certain candidate for this role, the fallen Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex.'[58] In other words Strong is certain (and he is right to be) that the true context of the portrait is to be found in the rarefied world of Queen Elizabeth and the events surrounding her complex relationship with the Earl of Essex, and the events that intensified in the 1590s leading to his fall and eventual execution on 25 February 1601. On Twelfth Night 1601 Strong informs his learned readers a play was presented

before Queen Elizabeth with a 'show' accepted to be a performance of Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, or as it was also called, 'The Fountaine of Self-Loue':[59]

The later title and the inclusion of a character named Philautia, probably relate to material in the play charged with allusions to the disgraced Essex, because his most celebrated tiltyard appearance was at Accession Day 1595 in what his secretary, Sir Henry Wotton, referred to as his "darling piece of love and self-love."[60]

At this point it should be very carefully noted that in his thirty-eight page article '"My Weepinge Stagg I Crowne": The Persian Lady Reconsidered', the most well-known and read account on the subject, Sir Roy Strong does not once mention the name of Francis Bacon, in any way whatsoever. This is all the more astonishing considering that during the 1590s (as was known to Strong) the life and biography of Bacon and Essex were so intertwined that full-length works have been written on the subject and (which was also known to Strong) the close and complex relationship which existed between them is central to the first two-volumes of Spedding's standard work *The Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*. I assume the reference to his 'darling piece of love and self-love' and its full implications would be overlooked by the casual student and schoolmen (there is certainly no reference or discussion of it in any other writings on the portrait). In a reference tucked away at the back of his article Strong provides a note directing his readers to one of his earlier works *The Cult of Elizabeth Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* wherein he sheds a little more light on the matter *Of Love and Self Love*:

The only scenario we have for an Essex tilt is that of 1595 which he wrote in collaboration with Francis Bacon and which Sir Henry Strong, his secretary, referred to as his 'darling piece of love and self-love'. Numerous drafts and finished speeches relating to this performance survive, but its exact sequence is now difficult to divine…Essex, or, to use his tilt pseudonym, Erophilus, was described as poised between Love and Self-Love or Philautia. In the tiltyard he was wooed by the 'enchanting Orators of Philautia'; these were a Hermit (again a Lee figure), a Soldier and a Secretary who attempted to persuade him to adopt one of these three courses of life representing contemplation, experience and fame respectively. The theme was carried farther by another tilter disguised as a blind Indian prince...the tilting over, the Hermit, Soldier and Secretary re-entered and reiterated their arguments in interminable speeches by Bacon, after which the squire on behalf of Essex spurned them in favour of a life of service to the Queen…A marginal note to one of the speeches in Bacon's hand explains that it was 'the Queen's unkind dealing which may persuade you to self-love'.[61]

In the Notes to the Text at the back of his work Strong provides the following notes regarding the sources of information:

The Earl of Essex's device, by *Francis Bacon and Essex*
There is no complete text of this device but only fragmentary and often conflicting draft speeches. The following list is only a suggested order.

(i) *Speech by Philautia against Love*
PRO S. P. 12/254, no 68…

(ii) *Speech by or a letter from Philautia to the Queen*
Lambeth Palace MS. 936, no. 274; printed in *The Works of Francis Bacon*., ed. J. Spedding, L. Ellis, D. D. Heath, London, 1858, VIII, i, pp. 376-7. This is in draft in Bacon's hand…

(iii) *The Squire's speech in the tiltyard*
Lambeth Palace MS. 933 no. 118...*Works of Francis Bacon*, VIII, i, p. 378. This also occurs in the Alnwick Castle, Northumberland MS., f. 47; printed in F. J. Burgoyne, *An*

Elizabethan Manuscript at Alnwick Castle, London, 1904, p. 57…

(iv) *Draft speech of the Secretary*
Lambeth Palace MS. 936; no. 274 printed in *Works of Francis Bacon*, VIII, i, p. 376…

(v) *The speech of the Hermit*
Lambeth Palace MS. 936, no. 274; printed in *Works of Francis Bacon*, VIII, i. pp. 377-8…

(vi) *The Hermit's petition to the Queen*
Alnwick Castle, Northumberland MS., f. 69; printed in Burgoyne's, *Elizabethan Manuscript*, p. 57…

(vii) *Speech presenting another tilter disguised as an Indian prince*
PRO S.P. 12/254, no. 67; printed in *Works of Francis Bacon*, VIII, i, pp. 388ff....

(viii) *Speeches for the device after supper*
Lambeth Palace MS. 933, no 118…*Works of Francis Bacon*, VIII, i, pp. 378-86. They also appear in Alnwick Castle, Northumberland MS., f. 47-53; printed in Burgoyne's, *Elizabethan Manuscript*, pp. 57-63.[62]

It will be immediately apparent that the device referred to by Strong *Love and Self-Love* written by Bacon on behalf of Essex wherein *The ambassadors of Philautia to Erophilus present their arguments to Erophilus's squire before the Queen* presented before Elizabeth as part of the festivities celebrating her accession day 17 November 1595 is partly found in Spedding's standard *Letters and Life of Francis Bacon* and the so-called Northumberland Manuscript. This collection of manuscripts is named after the location of its discovery in Northumberland House in the nineteenth century. This, the most important of all contemporary documents of the Elizabethan period linked to the authorship of the Shakespeare works should simply be known (but it is part of its disguised delivery to posterity) for what it is, Bacon's own collection of MSS, parts of which have been removed, or lost in a fire, before it was made known to the world. In its present state it consists of a much scribbled outer-cover (to which we will shortly return) and a number of works in manuscript by Bacon. The first of these is a device *Of Tribute, or giving that what is due* (*c*.1592) written by Bacon most probably to be presented by the Earl of Essex as part of the celebrations for Elizabeth's accession day in 1592. It comprises of four speeches in praise of the worthiest virtue, Fortitude; the worthiest affection, Love; the worthiest power, Knowledge, and the worthiest person, his sovereign, Queen Elizabeth. Of which Vickers says 'This accelerating structure is proto-dramatic, and has some interesting parallels with *Love's Labour's Lost*, written at much the same time and (in part, at least) out of a similar rhetorical background.'[63] 2] A brief essay *Of Magnanimity or Heroical Virtue* of which no other copy survives in manuscript or print. 3] A short essay on religion *An Advertisement touching private censure* (*c*.1589), no other copy of which is known. 4] *An Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England* (1589) written against the background of the Marprelate controversy between the nonconformists and the established Church. 5] *A Letter on the Religious Policies of the Queen to Monsieur Critoy* (*c*. 1589). 6] *Of Love and Self-Love* written by Bacon on behalf of Essex presented before Elizabeth as part of the celebrating marking her accession day 17 November 1595. 6] *A Speech for the Earl of Sussex at the Tilt* (*c*.1596) addressed to Elizabeth that was most likely written for the tilt at Whitehall on 17 November 1596 of which there is no other known copy. 7] *A Letter to Queen Elizabeth dissuading her from marrying the Duke of Anjou*. 8] A copy of part of *Leicester's Commonwealth* the infamous political tract written against Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. It is also clear from the list of contents found on the outer-cover of Bacon's collection of MSS that is also contained *An Address or Letter to Queen Elizabeth* and a copy of his *Essays* first printed in 1597 which he dedicated

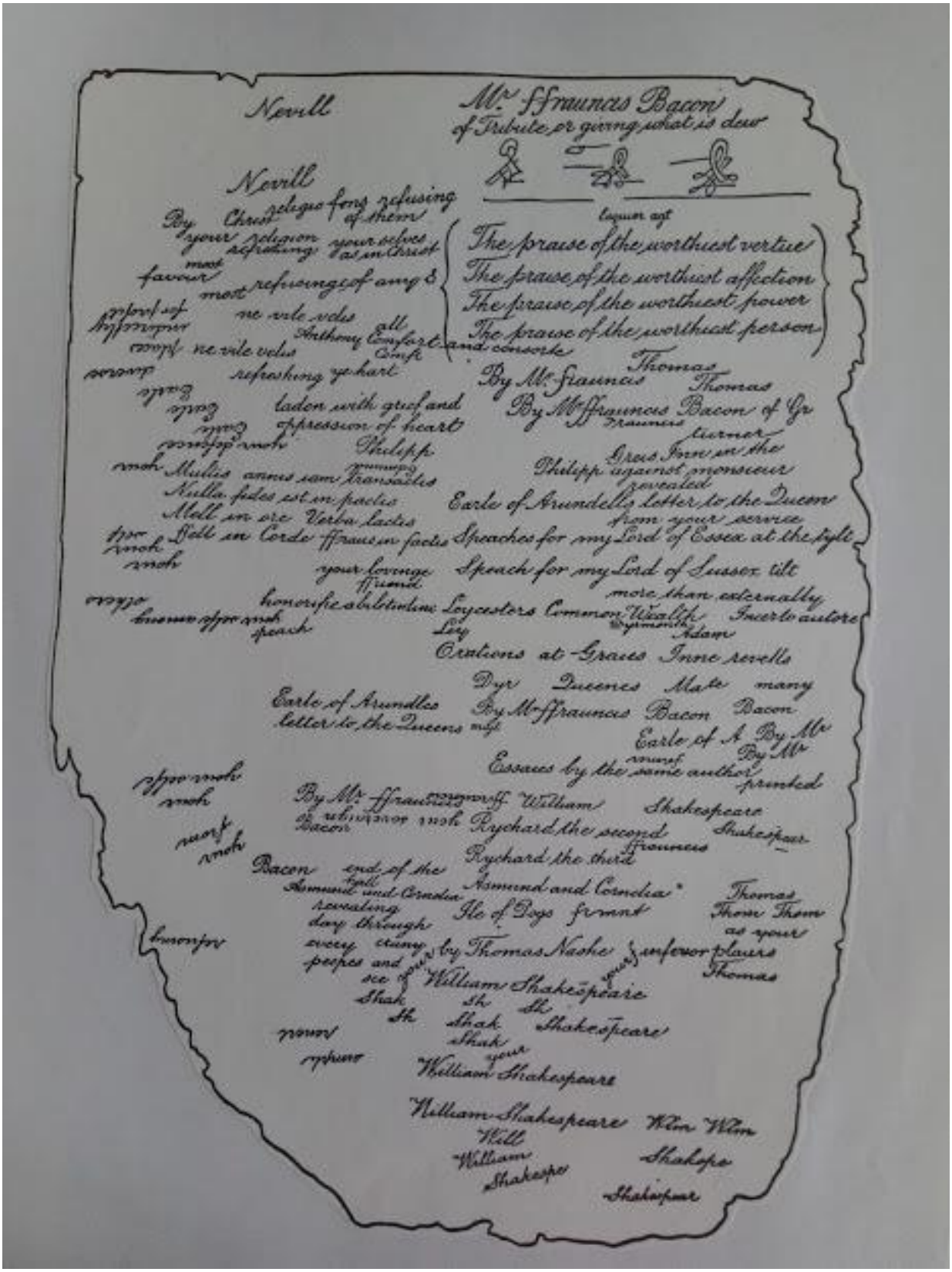
to his brother Anthony Bacon. It also originally held a copy of his six speeches which formed part of the magnificent Christmas Gray's Inn Revels of 1594-5 that saw the first known performance of his Shakespeare play *The Comedy of Errors*, and most importantly, it at one time, held priceless manuscript copies of his Shakespeare plays *Richard II* and *Richard III*.[64]

On the outer-cover containing its list of contents is a large mass of scribbled writings of the utmost importance and significance to the authorship of the Shakespeare works. Down the left side of the page appears *Honorificabiletudine* a variant of the long word *honorificabilitudinitatibus* in *Love's Labour's Lost* (5:1:41). Further down appears the line '*revealing day through every crany peepes and see Shak*', essentially line 1086 of *The Rape of Lucrece* 'revealing day through every cranny spies'. Furthermore this is the only contemporary manuscript where the names of Bacon and Shakespeare appear together. In fact the name of Bacon/Francis Bacon and his pseudonym Shakespeare/ William Shakespeare have been scribbled across its outer-cover on more than a dozen occasions. In particular above the entry for the Shakespeare play *Richard II* appears the entry '*By Mr. ffrauncis William Shakespeare*' and further down the page the word '*Your*' is twice written across his pseudonym William Shakespeare- so it reads '*Your William Shakespeare*'.[65] The manuscript should be the most famous document relating to the authorship of the Shakespeare poems and plays in the world and known to all and sundry in every corner of the literary globe. The reason why this is not the case is since the time of its discovery the orthodox Shakespeare authorities and Shakespeare biographers and editors have systematically suppressed or misrepresented it. Although for some reason Sir Roy Strong did not wish to draw to the attention of his readers the outer-cover and original contents of the Northumberland MSS, or Bacon's collection of MSS, not least the Shakespeare plays *Richard II* and *Richard III*, we are now able to appreciate more fully its relation to the Pregnancy Portrait of Queen Elizabeth.

The scholars (Roy Strong, Dr Altrocchi, David Shakespeare and Alison Sorbie, etc) that have examined and discussed the portrait have all briefly highlighted the link between the weeping stag and a passage in the Shakespeare play *As You Like It* and Ovid' story of Actaeon's metamorphosis into a stag.[66] This however scarcely scrapes the surface as the links between Actaeon and other Shakespeare plays is extensive and (not that any of the above mention it) Bacon interprets the myth of *Actaeon and Pentheus*: *Or Curiosity* in *Wisdom of the Ancients* as a fable obliquely communicating the secrets of princes (used in Elizabethan times as a generic terms for kings and queens) just like the secrets of the so-called Virgin Queen in the Pregnancy Portrait.

The ancient myth of Diana and Actaeon tells the story of a young hunter and his encounter with the chaste Diana, goddess of the hunt. In the woods Actaeon stumbled across the virginal Diana and her group of nymphs bathing in the nude. On noticing him the nymphs begin to scream and try to screen Diana from his gaze, but she was still visible, and due to her embarrassment and fury she threw water into his face and cursed him for seeing her naked. Following which he is immediately transformed into a lusty stag with antlers on his head, his hands changed to hooves, and his arms and legs, into forelegs. In fear he flees into the woodland to hide where a pack of hounds track him down, and failing to recognise their master, rip him to pieces and kill him.

This motif of Actaeon's metamorphosis into a stag was a recurring theme from the earliest Shakespeare plays written throughout the 1590s and beyond during a period leading up to the date the Pregnant Portrait of Queen Elizabeth was painted with its own weeping stag that is central to one of the greatest secrets in Elizabethan history.



The outer-cover of the Northumberland Manuscript (Bacon's collection of MSS) held at Alnwick Castle, Northumberland with the names of Francis Bacon and his pseudonym William Shakespeare scribbled across it and which once contained his Shakespeare plays *Richard II* and *Richard III*.

In the second act in the early Shakespeare play *Titus Andronicus* Tamora's sons Demetrius and Chiron argue over Lavinia, whom each desires and wishes to possess. The evil Aaron proposes that they both rape her during the forthcoming royal hunt. It is here in the context of the hunt in the forest that Bacon raises the myth of Diana and Actaeon taken from Book 3 in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

BASSIANUS
Who have we here? Rome's royal empress
Unfurnished of her well-beseeming troop?
Or is it Dian, habited like her
Who hath abandoned her holy groves
To see the general hunting in this forest?

TAMORA
Saucy controller of my private steps,
Had I the power that some say Dian had,
Thy temples should be planted presently
With horns, as was Actaeon's, and the hounds
Should drive upon thy new-transformed limbs,
Unmannerly intruder as thou art!
LAVINIA
Under your patience, gentle Empress,
'Tis thought you have a goodly gift in horning,
And to be doubted that your Moor and you
Are singled forth to try experiments.
Jove shield your husband from his hounds today-
'Tis pity they should take him for a stag.
[*Titus Andronicus*: 2:3: 55-71]

It is not difficult observes Barkan to establish that Titania, Queen of the Fairies, is Shakespeare's transformation of Diana as he borrows her name directly from Ovid's account of Diana and Actaeon, which is also pointed out by the Arden, Oxford, and Cambridge editors of the play, and of course, Bate.[67] The range of its associations is expanded upon by Barkan:

In his great Ovidian comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare juxtaposes all the profound associations of the Actaeon myth with the comic tradition concerning men who become, first spiritually and then physically, jackasses. The meeting of Bottom and Titania, it seems to me, is the fullest example in Renaissance literature of the Diana and Actaeon story: here we find the sublime aspect of the story re-created through comic pathos.[68]

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* which contains pointed allusions to Bacon's aunt Lady Elizabeth Cooke Hoby Russell's (the younger sister of his mother Lady Bacon) dispute with her neighbour Richard Lovelace,[69] he again recalls the Actaeon myth when Pistol warns Ford that Falstaff has designs upon his wife:

PISTOL
With liver burning hot. Prevent,
Or go thou like Actaeon, he,
With Ringwood at thy heels.

O, odious is the name!

FORD

What name, sir?

PISTOL

The horn, I say. Farewell.

[*Merry Wives of Windsor*: 2:1:12-17]

Again in Act 3 Scene 2 Falstaff when on his way to see Mistress Ford bumps into her jealous husband who believes Falstaff is sleeping with Mistress Page and Mistress Ford. In his soliloquy Ford articulates how he plans to catch Falstaff with his wife so he can torture her and 'pluck the borrowed veil of modesty from the so-seeming Mistress Page, divulge Page himself for a secure and wilful Actaeon, and to all these violent proceedings all my neighbours shall cry aim' (Arden: 3:2:36-9).

In the final act of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Bacon presents a burlesque of the Actaeon myth in connection with the legend of Herne the Hunter with Falstaff where 'Actaeon has become a cant name for a cuckold' and continues Professor Bullough when Falstaff 'dons the horns which he would have placed on Ford's brows he suffers the poetic justice of a failed Don Juan.'[70] As for this Falstaff-Actaeon parallel observes Steadman 'except for one comic variation-Sir John's obesity-there is a point by point correspondence between his disguise as Herne the Hunter and the standard Renaissance picture of Actaeon as a composite figure with stag's head, human body, and hunter's clothing...Indeed, to intensify this comic awareness of the Falstaff-Actaeon parallel Shakespeare allows Sir John to comment on his own metamorphosis into "a Windsor Stagge, and the fattest (I think) i' the Forrest."[71]

As pointed out by the scholars who have examined the Pregnant Portrait of Queen Elizabeth the weeping stag scene appears in the second act of *As You Like It*. The play in which Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester shadows both Duke Senior and Sir Rowland de Boys, Elizabeth is transmuted into the figure of Rosalind and the Earl of Essex is alluded to repeatedly, all against a background of Elizabethan iconography and emblems, which feels like an expansive canvas of the pregnancy portrait where these figures, emblems and iconography are condensed into a smaller compass.[72] The play was entered in the Stationers' Register on 4 August 1600 and is usually believed to have been written and completed *c*.1600-1, the date according to Sir Roy Strong, Gheeraert painted the portrait depicting weeping stag here referred to in *As You Like It*:

The melancholy Jacques grieves at that,
And in that kind swears you do more usurp
Than doth your brother that hath banished you.
Today my lord of Amiens and myself
Did steal behind him as he lay along
Under an oak, whose antic root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood,
To the which place a poor sequestered stag
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt
Did come to languish. And indeed, my lord,
The wretched animal heaved forth such groans
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat
Almost to bursting, and the big round tears
Coursed one another down his innocent nose

In piteous chase. And thus the hairy fool,
Much marked of the melancholy Jacques,
Stood on th'extremest verge of the swift brook,
Augmenting it with tears.
[*As You Like It*: 2:1:26-43]

The following year the first quarto of *Hamlet* was entered in the Stationers' Register on 26 July 1602 and appeared in a quarto edition in 1603, the year Queen Elizabeth died on 24 March, comprising only 2,200 lines with the following passage which also alludes to the weeping stag as depicted in the Pregnancy Portrait:

What, frighted with false fires?
Then let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play,
For some must laugh while some must weep-
Thus runs the world away!
[*Hamlet*: 1603 Quarto Edition: 9: 174-78][73]

With Queen Elizabeth now safely dead a much revised and enlarged second quarto of *Hamlet* appeared in 1604 with around 3, 800 lines to which Bacon added a few more lines to the above passage which unmistakably and directly alludes to the Pregnancy Portrait. In addition to the obvious allusion to the weeping stag it also alludes to the Persian/Turkish headdress ('forest of feathers': Arden *Hamlet* 'extravagantly plumed hats') worn by Queen Elizabeth and her remarkable shoes with their rare jewels set in gold appearing in the shape of razed roses:

Why let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play,
For some must watch while some must sleep
Thus runs the world away.
Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers, if the rest
of my fortunes turn Turk with me, with provincial
roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of
players?
[*Hamlet*: 1604 Quarto Edition: 3: 2: 263-70][74]

It has been often said that the robe in the portrait of what Strong titles 'The Persian Lady' appears more Turkish than Persian (modern day Turkey was one time part of the Persian Empire) and this is how David Shakespeare who overlooks the passage in *Hamlet* describes the strikingly fabulous shoes in the Portrait of the Pregnant Queen:

These must be very special shoes indeed. The artist has had to perch his subject on a considerable slope in order to display them, while at the same time giving the impression of a full length robe.

The shoes are adorned with blues pearls, the rarest of all, and the fact that they are all the same shade of blue must have made them even more valuable. There are three further pearls on each shoe, which have a slight pink colour and are set in gold to form roses. A large ruby is set in front of each ankle and the shoe fabric is adorned with gold thread. Incidentally, a rose pattern appears in the lacework along the bottom of the robe.

…Elements of the costumes would appear to be Turkish rather than Persian and this would fit very well with the facts…[75]

In the Shakespeare plays Bacon fused Ovidian myths in theme and characterisation which brilliantly drove the narrative and dialogue to great dramatic effect a case in point being *Twelfth Night* a play about secrecy, the deciphering and decoding of texts and the self-delusion of narcissism. The play is set in Illyria (the Greek and Roman name for Yugoslavia) and the Duke of Illyria Orsino's 'attitude to love, particularly in the play's opening speech, has often provoked charges of self-indulgence and self-deception',[76] with one critic describing him as 'a narcissistic fool'.[77] The theme of narcissism runs through the play and is reflected in many of its characters affecting their interactions and the dynamics of their relationships 'Not only do many of the play's dilemmas and potential disasters arise from the narcissism of Olivia and Orsino: the comic plot reiterates and emphasizes the motif.'[78] The play is dominated by Malvolio who is based upon Bacon's cousin Sir Thomas Posthumously Hoby, son of his aunt Lady Elizabeth Cooke Hoby, younger sister of his mother Lady Bacon,[79] and it will be recalled one of its characters is named Antonio, Christian name of his brother, Anthony Bacon. Malvolio is initially identified with Narcissus when Olivia describes him as being 'sick of self-love' (1:4:86), a description sometimes hurled at the Earl of Essex, and reminiscent of the title of the device *Of Love and Self-Love* written by Bacon for Essex presented before Elizabeth as part of the celebrations for her accession day on 17 November 1595.

The opening narcissistic speech by Orsino (1:1:1-15) which sets the tone and theme of the play is immediately followed by Orsino's 'Actaeon sequence' or the allusion to the Actaeon myth, thus writes Bate 'So it is that certain myths form the Cadmean section of the *Metamorphoses*, in particular those of Actaeon and of Narcissus…are among the controlling structures of the play'.[80]

CURIO
Will you go hunt, my lord?
ORSINO What, Curio?
CURIO The hart?
ORSINO Why so I do, the noblest that I have.
O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first
Methought she purged the air of pestilence;
That instant was I turned into a hart,
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,
E'er since pursue me.
[*Twelfth Night*: 1:1:16-22]

This fused theme of Narcissism and the Actaeon myth observes Loraque 'repeats the motif of Actaeon's metamorphosis in a burlesque mode with the trapping and baiting of Malvolio' who 'in his lust dwells on the prospect of Olivia naked in his day-bed-and she has been associated with Diana when first referred to in the play-Malvolio is being metamorphosed into an Actaeon by his very dress. Deluded and mocked he 'clearly becomes a preposterous Actaeon who is being watched and preyed upon by the comic group that has persistently and viciously kept dogging him'.[81] This fusion of themes and imagery (narcissism and the Actaeon myth) is not just confined to the character of Malvolio but is also present in the dual character traits of Orsino:

If the noble Orsino is to be read as Actaeon in that he is hunted by the dogs of his own desires, the steward may be viewed in terms of the myth's implication that it is dangerous to

lift one's eyes above one's rank. In the box-tree scene, instead of seeing Actaeon spying on Diana, we watch an Actaeon figure being spied on himself as he fantasizes about his Diana's desire for him. As Malvolio interprets the meaning of the 'I' in the letter, Fabian remarks, 'Ay, an you had any eye behind you, you might see more detraction at your heels than fortunes before you' (II. v. 132-4). The pun concentrates the double identity of Malvolio as Narcissus (the self-obsessed 'I') and Actaeon (the desiring 'eye').[82]

In his *Shakespeare and Ovid* Professor Bate emphasized 'Shakespeare's particular interest in the Actaeon story',[83] and similarly Professor Laroque states 'Shakespeare was much taken by it', adding, 'it is indeed intriguing' that for Shakespeare 'Actaeon represents a mysterious crux which needs to be decoded'.[84] The Ovidian Actaeon myth absorbed into the fabric of *Titus Andronicus*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet* is interpreted by Bacon in his fable *Actaeon and Pentheus*; *or Curiosity* in *The Wisdom of the Ancients* which is about 'the discovery of secrets', that is, the secrets concealed by kings and queens, such as the great secrets concealed in the Pregnancy Portrait:

Actaeon And Pentheus:
or Curiosity.

The curiosity and unhealthy appetite of man for the discovery of secrets, is reproved by the ancients in two examples: one of Actaeon, the other of Pentheus. Actaeon having unawares and by chance seen Diana naked, was turned into a stag and worried by his own dogs…

The first of these fables seems to relate to the secrets of princes, the other to the secrets of divinity. For whoever becomes acquainted with a prince's secrets without leave and against his will, is sure to incur his hatred: and then, knowing that he is marked and that occasions are sought against him, he lives the life like a stag; a life full of fears and superstitions. Often too it happens that his own servants and domestics, to curry favour with the prince, accuse and overthrow him. For when the displeasure of the prince is manifest, a man shall scarcely have a servant but will betray him; and so he may expect the fate of Actaeon.[85]

This interpretation of the myth of Actaeon with its central theme of secrecy represents a textual commentary on the Pregnancy Portrait of Queen Elizabeth and the life of the hidden individual who commissioned the painting wherein he is transmuted into the form of a stag, who lived much of his life in fear as the concealed bastard child of its royal sitter, a marked man hunted like Actaeon by those who knew of his royal status.

Let us then return to the Pregnancy Portrait of Queen Elizabeth in which it appears that the stag is being crowned with pansies (her favourite flower) by her royal hand. Who does the figure of the stag represent? Who is this invisible person transmuted into the figure of a weeping stag? It is Francis Tudor Bacon the concealed son and heir of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and his wife Queen Elizabeth, the heir to the royal crown whose birth was kept secret by the so-called Virgin Queen. For private and political reasons throughout her reign she never officially or publicly recognised him and thereby denied Francis Tudor his rightful succession. This is why he Francis Tudor metamorphosed into the transmuted stag is weeping in the pregnancy portrait because in truth and reality he was never as he should have been actually recognized and crowned Francis I King of England.

This complex allegorical painting transcends time and simultaneously represents Queen Elizabeth for those with eyes to see as the mother of the two towering figures of the 1590s (Francis Tudor Bacon and Robert Tudor Devereux) during the period it was painted. It specifically represents her as pregnant with her first son Francis by

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester around the time of mid to late 1560 through to his birth on 22 January 1561, to which times we must now turn our attention.

2.

THE SECRET ROYAL BIRTH OF FRANCIS BACON PRINCE OF WALES AND HEIR TO THE ENGLISH THRONE

Everyone sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are.
[Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*]

Nothing is more revolting in the Queen than her shameless mendacity. It was an age of political lying, but in the profusion and recklessness of her lies Elizabeth stood without peer in Christendom.
[J. R. Green, *The History of the English People*]

It was a misfortune of Elizabeth's stratagems that she deceived her friends as well as her enemies.
[James Anthony Froude, *History Of England*, VI, p. 484]

You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.
[Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America]

In recent times the traditional view held by modernity of the Elizabethan reign has been subject to a process of re-examination and reassessment. For centuries historians have presented a rose-tinted view of the period presided over by the so-called Virgin Queen Elizabeth, of dazzling intellect and beauty, who was religiously tolerant whose reign was founded upon the love of the people during a mostly peaceful reign of some forty-five years. This simplistic and shallow illusion is still presented by ill-informed and ignorant historians and biographers as well as those who produce the seemingly endless dramas and English speaking films about the so-called Virgin Queen and her reign. On the other hand a growing number of more incisive historians and scholars have based on the examination of primary documents begun to penetrate the layers of illusion and dissimulation that has been carefully woven into the fabric of the glossy Elizabethan history presented to posterity. Their efforts have produced a substantial body of evidence which indicates that Elizabeth and her Machiavellian administration presided over a highly effective police state headed by her chief minister Sir William Cecil (and afterwards by his son Sir Robert Cecil), in the legitimate fight of Protestant England against the ubiquitous forces of Catholicism at home and abroad, through a massive intelligence operation which produced an oppressive and brutal regime, one cruelly effecting her own people whatever their political and religious persuasion. Yet even these groundbreaking historians and academics have scarcely penetrated beneath the surface of Elizabethan history or searched the hidden depths of the Shakespeare poems and plays which when fully explored will unlock the deep and closely guarded secrets of the age which produced them.

The simplistic and out-dated view of Elizabethan history has also affected how we largely see and evaluate some key Elizabethan figures, beginning, of course, with the

Virgin Queen herself, her favourite in the first half of her reign Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and in the final years of her reign, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, and the intellectual colossus and towering figure of the age Francis Bacon, whose intertwined and hidden relationships, constitute the very key for unlocking the secrets of the time. The first and greatest lie of her reign, and endlessly repeated myth of the age, was the presentation of Elizabeth as the 'Virgin Queen', herself a master of dissimulation and deception, which was supported and surrounded by a subtle and nuanced propaganda machine, then and now, presenting her as Protestant alternative to the Catholic Virgin Mary. The cult of Elizabeth imbued with all its religious and political symbolism was one of incredible complexity generated by a vast propaganda machine, supported by elaborate spectacle and ceremonial displays, as well as fantastic portraits and images radiating her power and magnificence. This ubiquitous iconography was supported by an enormous body of poetry and literature which was seen as critical for winning the hearts and minds of her loyal subjects, the fear and admiration of other kingdoms and princes of Europe, and for securing the triumph of Protestantism over Catholicism, to determine the future direction of the world.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the divine myth surrounding the figure of the Virgin Queen Elizabeth not only in the times she lived, but also over the following centuries, as England established itself as the main bulwark against a Catholic hegemony which stretched over the known world. She formed the symbolic figurehead of the emerging British Empire, the largest empire the world has ever seen, after whom the state of Virginia, the site of the first permanent English settlement was named, that eventually evolved into the United States of America, the most powerful nation in the history of mankind, thus personifying the dawn of a new world. It was primarily through the vast expanse of the British Empire the English language became the universal language of the world the vehicle of those immortal Shakespeare poems and plays which today are known throughout every corner of the globe.

There was so much that depended on the myth of the Virgin Queen, that once it was conceived and established, it was necessary for interrelated and evolving reasons, to deliberately sustain and maintain it down the centuries all the way through to our own times. This enduring myth of the Virgin Queen is still peddled by orthodox historians and scholars the world over, portrayed as such in universities and schools, TV dramas and films and in the broadsheet and tabloid press.[86] A myth built upon a massive lie and fraud of gargantuan proportions and as we have learned-if you tell a big enough lie and keep on repeating it, nearly everybody ends up believing it. This was the first and greatest lie of the Elizabethan reign which determined the shape and direction of the whole of the period which has and still continues to shape the last five centuries of English history. The dissembling and duplicitous Virgin Queen did not live her life as a virgin, nor did she remain unmarried and childless. As we shall see she married her lover and favourite Lord Robert Dudley, with whom she had two children, the eldest known to the world as Francis Bacon and thus heir to the English throne, and his royal brother known as Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex. It is only when we understand the true relationship between Queen Elizabeth and her two concealed sons Francis and Robert can we truly comprehend the complex reasons for the subsequent events that shaped and defined her reign and the first of varied and complex reasons why her son Francis, concealed his authorship of the Shakespeare plays.

On 17 November 1558 Queen Mary died-a date that proved historically pivotal for the future direction of England, Europe and the rest of the world when replaced on the English throne by her sister Elizabeth, whose reign still continues to reverberate down the ages to the present day. On the eve of the accession her lover Robert Dudley was

among the witnesses to the surrender of the Marian Great Seal at Hatfield in the morning of 18 November. The same day Dudley was appointed Master of the Horse the first of many positions, titles, preferment, enormous gifts and grants of land and property, given to him by Queen Elizabeth, as well as untold revenues and monies, making him one of the most powerful and wealthiest persons in the kingdom. She also immediately appointed William Cecil Principal Secretary of State and afterwards his brother-in-law Nicholas Bacon Lord Keeper of the Great Seal with all the powers of the Lord Chancellor of England-the Grand Architects of the Elizabethan Protestant Reformation. At the state opening of parliament in January 1559 the Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon in his opening address called for moderation and tolerance in matters of religion and to restore peace and prosperity to the country. In the important Act of Supremacy Elizabeth declared herself Supreme Governor of the Church of England and instituted an Oath of Supremacy requiring all public and church officials to swear allegiance to the monarch as Head of Church and State and the Treason Act made it a treasonable offence to even imagine to deprive the monarch or her heirs of the crown, or destroy her, or her heirs. In the 1559 parliament Elizabeth told all those before her she had decided to remain unmarried: it shall be for me sufficient 'that a marble stone should declare that a Queen having reigned such a time lived and died a virgin.'[87] It was a grand statement which would have raised a few eyebrows and a few smiles by those who knew better. It was the first great lie of her reign and it would certainly not be the last.

Beyond those who knew the true status of the secret relationship of Elizabeth and Dudley in the spring of 1559, increasing rumours amongst courtiers and ambassadors concerning their inappropriate behaviour were circulating round the Elizabethan court and the courts of Europe. On 18 April 1559 the Spanish Ambassador Count de Feria wrote to his master Philip telling him 'During the last few days Lord Robert has come so much into favour that he does whatever he likes with affairs, and it is even said that her Majesty visits him in his chamber day and night. People talk so freely that they go so far as to say that his wife has a malady in one of her breasts and the Queen is only waiting for her to die to marry Lord Robert. I can assure your Majesty that matters have reached such a pass that I have been brought to consider whether it would not be well to approach Lord Robert on your Majesty's behalf, promising him your help and favour and coming to terms with him.'[88] A master of dissimulation in public Elizabeth was doing her best to keep up appearances at a time when she was going through the pretence of considering marriage with the Archduke Ferdinand while her private inner circle knew she only truly had eyes for Dudley. Later that month on 29 April De Feria wrote again 'Sometimes she appears to want to marry him [Archduke Ferdinand] and speaks like a woman who will only accept a great prince, and then they say she is in love with Lord Robert, and never lets him leave her.'[89] Taking care to write in cipher Paolo Tiepolo, Venetian Ambassador to Philip II, reported to the Doge and the Senate that Elizabeth personally attended the ceremony where Dudley was knighted along with three others 'Lord Robert Dudley, Master of the Horse, and son of the late Duke of Northumberland, [is] a very handsome young man, towards whom in various ways the Queen evinces such affection and inclination that many young persons believe that if his wife, who has been ailing for some time, were perchance to die, the Queen might easily take him for her husband.'[90] It was now routinely whispered at court and in foreign diplomatic circles that Elizabeth and Dudley were indulging in a sexual relationship. On 10 May the Venetian Ambassador Schifanoya aware that his letters might well be intercepted wrote to the Castellan of Mantua 'my Lord Robert is in very great favour and very intimate with her Majesty. On this I ought to report the opinion

of many, but I doubt whether my letters may not miscarry, or be read; wherefore it is better to keep silence than to speak ill.'[91] On 10 May Spanish Ambassador De Feria reported to Philip that he had forgotten to write on St George's Day when Norfolk, the Marquis of Northampton, the Earl of Rutland and Lord Robert, were created Knights of the Order, before informing him that 'The secretary (Cecil), Bacon, the treasurer of the household, and Lord Robert rule everything.'[92] The Spanish Ambassador De Feria was succeeded by Bishop De Quadra who in the November reported to Philip II that Lord Robert was planning to poison his wife and foretold in a manner that would characterise much of her reign that Elizabeth was merely playing with the powers of Europe and her royal suitors 'I have learnt from a person who usually gives me true information, that Lord Robert has sent instructions to have his wife poisoned; and that all the dallying with us, all the dallying with the Swede, all the dallying there will be with the rest, one after another, is merely to keep Lord Robert's enemies in play till his villainy about his wife can be executed. I have learnt also certain other things as to the terms on which the Queen and Lord Robert stand towards each other, which I could not have believed.' Before adding that 'the Duke of Norfolk is the leader of Lord Robert's enemies, who are in fact all the greatest persons in the realm; and the Duke says Lord Robert shall never die in his bed unless he gives over his preposterous pretensions' of being king of England.[93]In a diplomatic despatch to his predecessor De Feria in March 1560 it is clear that De Quadra held a similar view of Dudley 'I have just been with the Queen. She treated me like a dog. The youth [Dudley] must have been complaining to her of a message which I sent three days ago…Lord Robert is the worst young fellow I have ever encountered. He is heartless, spiritless, treacherous, and false. There is not a man in England who does not cry out him as the Queen's ruin.'[94] Later the same month De Quadra reports Dudley certainly entertained a higher degree of expectancy which points to further elevation through a promise made to him by Elizabeth 'Lord Robert says that if he lives a year he will be in another position from that he holds. Every day he presumes more and more; and it is now said that he means to divorce his wife.'[95] Perhaps Elizabeth had promised him something or they knew something the rest of their inner circle, and her diplomats and those from the court of Europe, did not know, concerning secret events fomenting on their private horizons.

After negotiating the Treaty of Edinburgh drawn up on 5 July 1560 between the English commission headed by Cecil, the Scottish Lords of the Congregation, and French representatives of Francis II of France, husband of Mary, Queen of Scots, who had a strong claim to the English throne, Cecil headed back to London where he was met with a cool reception from Elizabeth and her lover Dudley. While Cecil had been away Elizabeth and Dudley's intimate love affair and sexual relationship (which was known to her Ladies-in-Waiting and his servant John Tamworth as well as members of their inner circle) further intensified resulting in momentous developments behind the scenes that soon came to his attention. The so-called Virgin Queen was pregnant by Dudley, a situation which had potentially enormous implications for the succession and the security of the country, and balance of power in Europe. Who knew what and when cannot now be precisely determined but we can be confident that it was known to Principal Secretary of State Cecil and his brother-in-law Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon, other senior members of the Privy Council, senior members of the nobility and leading Elizabethan courtiers, other key figures in the Elizabethan administration, and at some point, a number of foreign ambassadors and diplomats.

Beyond those in the knowledge circle news and rumours began to spread outside of the court and around the country fanned and repeated in the mouths of members of the

great English public most of whom were oblivious to its untold implications and the severe punishments it was to be met with by the authorities. It would not take too long before rumours of a royal pregnancy, openly spoken of in different parts of the country, reached the ears of Cecil. He obtained a formal written report dated 13 August 1560 from Lord Rich stating that one Mother Dowe of Brentwood had openly asserted that Queen Elizabeth was with child by Robert Dudley, the first of at least eight offenders to be sent to prison, for even daring to say it out loud:

After our most hartie commendacions, you shall receyve herein enclosed thexamynacions, of certen persones of this Shire of Essex, towchinge wordes spoken and sprede abrode here against the Quenes Majestie. The pryncypall offender and rayser whereof, whose name ys Anne Dove, as we perceyve by thexaminacion, we have committed to the comen gayle of the Shyre, and such other as she hath accused, who in our opynyons are not culpable therein, we have, nevethelesse, put under sureties to be ffourth commynge to aunswere thereunto at all tymes. And although by specyall statute lawe made in that parte we mought procede both to thenquyre and also to the tryall of suche malefactors, yet forasmuche as we understodde of the commynge downe this waye of the Lord Keaper of the broade Seale [Nicholas Bacon], and specyallye for that the wordes moche touched her Majesties honor, whiche wordes we thought not to mette to be divulged amongest the comen people no further to procede untill we had eyther spoken with his lordeship therein or geven advertysement thereof to her Maiesties most honorable councell. And his Lordeshipp at his commynge understondinge by us the state therof and lykinge well our opynyons for the staye of our procedinge, accordinge to the lawe, advised us to wright unto you specyallye herein, so as uppon your consideracion and the rest of her Maiesties mose honorable councell, order mought be geven for her punyshement, whiche as well his Lordeshipp as we wolde wyshe rather for dyverse respectes to be by order from her Maiesties councell then by thexecucion of the saied statute, by some letter, comprysinge generall wordes of slaunder of the Quenes Majestie without recytinge any specyall cause. And yet yf yt shall seeme to their honors and yow that tryall shalbe herein hadd, accordinge to the lawe, uppon their pleasures therein knowen, whiche we desire may be knowen to us with such expedition as shall seeme to them convenyent, we will be redye with dylygence to see the same accomplysshed and donne accordinglye. And so levinge any further to troble yow at this tyme, we commytte yow to God, ffrom Lyes this XIIIth of this August 1560.

Your owne most assuredlye
R. Ryche
. Tho. Mildmay.[96]

The woman in question Anne Dowe was examined by Justice of the Peace Thomas Mildmay who reported that under examination she stated that about five weeks earlier at a house in Rochford in the county of Essex the wife of that dwelling said openly in the presence of others Dudley had given the queen a new petticoat. Three days later in Bromfeld she met one Mr Coke who said rather than a petticoat Dudley had given the queen 'a chylde I warrant thee'. On travelling to Dombery on 16 July Anne visited one John King, a tailor by trade, who under examination by Mildmay, stated that she said 'there was thinges now adayes that she might say nothing of' before proceeding to tell him: 'that Dudley and the quene hadd playd by legerdemayne to gether…for he hathe geven her a chyld, why quod this examynat she hathe no chylde yet, no sayd Mother Dow if she have nott he hath putt one to makyng, and that greter fooles then he or she dyd talke of that matter.' The examination of John King and his good lady wife Betty King is endorsed 'To the right honourable Sir William Cecill'.[97]Under examination by the Mayor of Totnes, a market town in Devon, John Whyte reported that one Thomas Burley 'hadde said to hym in his own howse that the Lord Robert

Dudley dyd swyve [copulated or had sex with] the Queene'. Whyte and Burley and all the parties present at the house who had heard him say it were bound over to the next sessions at Exeter. The document is endorsed by Cecil.[98] At Salisbury Assizes ten justices of the peace presented to Justices of the Peace Weston and Harper the examinations of unnamed individuals 'concerninge most odious and faulse slanderous tales against the Quenes majestie…We have committed the offenders to the Gayle, there to be and remayne until they receyve punishment for their said faultes'.[99] Sometime after in the county of Wiltshire one Bartholomew Auger under examination stated that one Robert Brooke had declared to him in the presence of Peter Strong, and others unknown to him, that Robert Dudley 'hathe gotten the queen wth childe', a statement confessed by Brooke and confirmed by some of those present.[100] Concerned with the widespread nature of these statements both Cecil and Bacon and senior members of the Elizabethan regime were determined to dampened down any further talk of Elizabeth's pregnancy among the people of her realm but more importantly as the days passed foreign ambassadors and diplomats caught wind of the situation and it was now spreading across the major courts of Europe.

The developing circumstances were becoming increasingly dangerous for Elizabeth in terms of protecting her life and her crown. If she were to have a bastard son, the consequences would doubtless be very grave in a country bitterly divided politically and religiously. There would almost certainly have been a Roman Catholic reaction, both at home and abroad, and even some of her own Protestant subjects might favour a Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots when faced with the prospect of an adulterous queen pregnant with an illegitimate child conceived out of wedlock with a widely unpopular man still married to another woman. Elizabeth and Dudley were now in a serious bind and were looking for a solution to a mounting problem that threatened to completely overwhelm and consume them. One critically important part of the problem was Lady Amy Robsart Dudley, whose days as things then stood at the outset of August 1560, were fatally numbered-she was a dead woman walking.

On 8 September 1560 Lady Amy Robsart Dudley was found dead with a broken neck at the bottom of some stairs at Cumnor Place, Oxfordshire. The house was leased by Anthony Foster, chief controller of Dudley's expenses, who lived there with his wife. At Cumnor Lady Dudley had a household of ten servants and two other gentlewomen, a Mrs Owen and a Mrs. Odingsells. On the day of her death with Mr and Mrs Foster already absent Lady Dudley is said to have given permission for her entire household to visit Abingdon fair. Three ladies decided not to go to Abingdon and according to one report they were all playing a game of cards when Lady Dudley heard her name called from the hall-which she thought sounded like the voice of her husband. Leaving the room she went to the staircase landing and lent over the balustrade which apparently gave way, and she fell headfirst onto the stone paving below. Later in the day when her servants returned from Abingdon they found Lady Dudley dead at the bottom of the stairs with a broken neck and two wounds to her head. At the time Elizabeth and Dudley were together at Windsor Castle and were told of her demise by messenger on 9 September. The coroner's jury found Lady Dudley had died of a fall and delivered a verdict of accidental death. It was however widely suspected Dudley had orchestrated her death and according to the anonymous author of *Leicester's Commonwealth*, the earliest printed account of the tragedy, Dudley used for his instrument his follower Sir Richard Verney who carried out the murder. Initially, the conspirators tried to poison her:

This I prove by the report of old Doctor Bayley [Procter of New College] who then lived in Oxford (another manner of man then he who now liveth about my Lord of the same name) and was Professor of the Physic Lecture in the same University. This learned grave man reported for most certain that there was a practice in Cumnor among the conspirators to have poisoned the poor lady a little before she was killed, which was attempted in this order:

They seeing the good lady sad and heavy (as one that well knew by her other handling that her death was not far off) began to persuade her that her disease was abundance of melancholy and other humors, and therefore would needs counsel her to take some potion, which she absolutely refusing to do, as suspecting still the worst, they sent one day (unawares to her) for Doctor Bayley and desired him to persuade her to take a little potion at his hands, and they would send to fetch the same at Oxford upon his prescription, meaning to have added also somewhat of their own for her comfort, as the Doctor upon just causes suspected, seeing their great importunity and the small need which the good lady had of physic; and therefore he flatly denied their request, misdoubting (as he after reported) lest if they had poisoned her under the name of his potion he might after have been hanged for a cover of their sin. Marry, the said Doctor remained well assured that this way taking no place she should not long escape violence, as after ensued. And the thing was so beaten into the heads of the principal men of the University of Oxford, by these and other means-as for that she was found murdered (as all men said) by the crowner's inquest, and for that she being hastily and obscurely buried at Cumnor (which was condemned above as not advisedly done), my good Lord, to make plain to the world the great love he bare to her in her life and what a grief the loss of so virtuous a lady was to his tender heart, would needs have her taken up again and reburied in the University church at Oxford, with great pomp and solemnity-that Doctor Babington, my Lord's chaplain, making the pubic funeral sermon at her second burial, tript one or twice in his speech by recommending to their memories that virtuous lady so pitifully murdered, instead of so pitifully slain.[100]

On failing to have his wife Lady Dudley repeatedly poisoned, Dudley arranged to have her killed through a more violent method by Sir Richard Verney who was directed to disguise her murder by making it appear that she died of a broken neck as a result of falling down a flight of stairs:

When his Lordship was in full hope to marry her Majesty and his own wife stood in his light, as he supposed, he did but send her aside to the house of his servant Forster of Cumnor by Oxford, where shortly after she had the chance to fall from a pair of stairs and so to break her neck, but yet without hurting of her hood that stood upon her head. But Sir Richard Varney, who by commandment remained with her that day alone, with one man only, and had sent away perforce all her servants from her to a market two miles off, he (I say) with his man can tell how she died, which man, being taken afterward for a felony in the marches of Wales and offering to publish the manner of the said murder, was made away privily in the prison. And Sir Richard himself, dying about the same time in London, cried piteously and blasphemed God, and said to a gentleman of worship of mine acquaintance not long before his death that all the devils in hell did tear him in pieces. The wife also of Bald Buttler, kinsman to my Lord, gave out the whole fact a little before her death.[101]

A truly remarkable letter from De Quadra written to the Duchess of Parma dated 11 September 1560 provides an account of a conversation with Cecil which took place prior to the death of Lady Amy Dudley confirming Cecil was aware that Dudley was intending to murder his wife, with whom Elizabeth conspired and was complicit in the plot:

Since my last letter to your Highness so many great and unexpected matters have taken place here that I think it right to give you immediate information of them.

On the 3rd of this month the Queen spoke to me about her marriage with the Archduke. She said she had made up her mind to marry, and that the Archduke was to be the man. She has now just told me drily that she does not intend to marry, and that it cannot be.

After my conversation with the Queen, I met the Secretary Cecil whom I knew to be in disgrace. Lord Robert I was made aware was endeavouring to deprive him of his place.

With little difficulty I led him to the subject, and after many protestations and entreaties that I would keep secret what he was about to tell me, he said that the Queen was going on so strangely that he was about to withdraw his service. It was a bad sailor, he said, who did not make for port when he saw a storm coming, and for himself he perceived the most manifest ruin impending over the Queen through her intimacy with Lord Robert. The Lord Robert has made himself master of the business of the State and of the person of the Queen, to the extreme injury of the realm, with the intention of marrying her; and she herself was shutting herself up in the palace to the peril of her health and her life. That the realm would tolerate the marriage he said that he did not believe; he was therefore determined to retire into the country, although he supposed they would send him to the Tower before they would let him go.

He implored me for the love of God to remonstrate with the Queen, to persuade her not utterly to throw herself away as she was doing, and to remember what she owed to herself and to her subjects. Of Lord Robert he twice said he would be better of in paradise than here.

He told me the Queen cared nothing for foreign princes; she did not believe that she stood in any need of their support…

Last of all he said that they were thinking of destroying Lord Robert's wife. They had given out that she was ill; but she was not ill at all; she was very well, and was taking care not to be poisoned; God, he trusted, would never permit such a crime to be accomplished or allow so wicked a conspiracy to prosper….

The day after this conversation [i.e. 4 September four days before the murder of Lady Amy], the Queen on her return from hunting told me that Lord Robert's wife was dead or nearly so, and begged me to say nothing about it...

These quarrels among themselves and Cecil's retirement from office will do no harm to the good cause. We could not have to do with any one worse than he has been; but likely enough a revolution may come of it. The Queen may be sent to the Tower, and they may make a king of Lord Huntingdon who is a great heretic…Cecil himself told me that he was the true heir to the crown; Henry the Seventh having usurped it from the House of York...Certain it is they say openly that they will not have a woman over them any more; and this one is likely to go to sleep in the palace, and to wake up with her lover in the Tower…

Since this was written the death of Lord Robert's wife has been given out publicly. The Queen said in Italian-'Que si ha rotto il collo' [she broke her neck]. It appears that she fell down a staircase.[102]

The repeated rumours that Lady Amy was ill and Dudley was trying to poison her (a stock-in-trade for which he was afterwards notorious) had been circulating as early as the spring of 1559, and according to her own Principal Secretary of State Sir William Cecil, as reported above, Queen Elizabeth and Dudley conspired to have her murdered as she stood in the way of their planned and very much impending private marriage. It was not just that Queen Elizabeth conspired in the murder of Lady Amy according to the story told by Lady Anne Bacon to Francis that he conveys through his word cipher she insisted and ordered it. As soon as Elizabeth discovered she was pregnant 'The idea of her evil shame determined her,/Before the world was of her frailty 'ware,/The death of your father's true and honourable wife to seek,/And presently she did prepare to force/Your father to consent to rob the sweet young creature/Of her mortal life./ And him she called to her/And led unto her private chamber, where she did tell him/ That she ever hath been constant in advancing him,/And from a prisoner in the Tower/ That she hath made him/First Lieutenant and Master of her horse,/And by degrees to

the most glorious estate/In the whole kingdom. 'Now,' said she,/'My Lord, I claim your hand, the gift my due by promise/For which your honour and your faith is pawned./And I demand of you that you shall run a certain course,/And in justice to me, with ostentations of all sorrow,/Give forth that your wife is sick and cannot live,/ And get one of your gentlemen to send this young Ayme/To her death.'[103] The queen continued to pressurize Dudley and threatened to 'turn my back on you forever' if he did not carry out the foul deed screaming 'I will kill you both/Before title tattling idiots speak of my condition/And their imaginations feed upon my dishonour;/Or else I myself will die.'[104]She forcefully persuaded him to do the vile deed and ever mindful of her carefully crafted image she insisted 'Take heed that slanders do not live/In the tongues of men against me'. She does not want to hear the details of how he intends to carry out the murder of his wife but he must keep take heed of her censure and keep his promise 'You must use all means to save me'.[105] In the meantime Lady Amy turned up at court and bravely confronted Elizabeth telling her she rather wished her husband home rather than at court these past years and now finds herself subject to slanderous tongues foretelling of her death. Reacting in anger and embarrassment to accusations about her improper relations with Dudley and that she was base born Elizabeth armed with a staff aimed a heavy blow to Lady Amy's head striking her to the ground. She then tried to stab Amy to death but in her rage Elizabeth was unable to draw a dagger from its sheath. Fearing Elizabeth might kill her Lady Anne Bacon intervened begging her to spare her life, throwing herself between Elizabeth and Amy, to prevent any further bloodshed. A distraught Lady Bacon attempts to calm Elizabeth 'Impious 'tis for thee to kill the gentle lady' but Elizabeth still continued to vent her spleen 'Let her look for no less than death./She called our mother a whore.' Still in the throes of her rage Elizabeth instructs Dudley to escort her from the court.[106] On his return, in responding to her anger Dudley says to Elizabeth 'I did command her death, I erred/That she is yet unburied' but, he tells her, if you will suspend your indignation I will rid us of her. Elizabeth in no mood for further delay turned to him and with a deadly gaze issued a fatal command '"Sir, five days do we allot thee to remove her'. Dudley promises Elizabeth 'Within five days…she'll be dead', and adds Lady Bacon, he 'kept his word'.[107] Following the murder of Lady Amy Robsart Dudley, the goodly Lady Bacon tells Francis:

> The Queen took this man of evil
> And was married to him like a beggar under a bush,
> Not in a church but in secret.
> My gentle lord [Nicholas Bacon] performed the marriage service
> "Did you the Queen's wedding attend?"
> "I, and I alone of all the attending train
> Of Eliza's fair ladies, in company of my Lord Pickering,
> Saw her nuptial."[108]

The above rendering relating to the secret private marriage of Elizabeth and Dudley deciphered by Dr Owen is revisited by Bacon's in his bi-literal cipher in *Advancement of Learning* as deciphered by Elizabeth Wells Gallup:

> Queen Elizabeth, the late soveraigne, wedded secretly, th' Earle, my father, at th' Tower of London, and afterwards at th' house of Lord P----- this ceremony was repeated, but not with any of the pompe and ceremonie that sorteth wel with queenly espousals, yet with a sufficient number of witnesses.[109]

With the death of Lady Amy Robsart Dudley, the way was open for Elizabeth and Dudley to marry in private meaning that the child the pregnant queen was carrying would be born in wedlock. With the national scandal surrounding the circumstances of Lady Amy's death reverberating round the kingdom and the royal courts of Europe it was personally and politically impossible for Queen Elizabeth to publicly marry the notorious widower and suspected murderer of his first wife, who was widely hated by the nobility and the people. The precise date of their private marriage is uncertain but it most likely occurred shortly after the death of Lady Amy possibly as Alfred Dodd presents it within a few days:

Shortly afterwards, on the 12th September, Dudley and the Queen were privately married at Brooke House, Hackney, belonging to the Earl of Pembroke's, Sir Nicholas and Lady Bacon, being witnesses.[110]

The secret private marriage of Elizabeth and Dudley was of course known to the Earl of Pembroke, those who attended it, Sir Nicholas and Lady Bacon, and doubtless their brother-in-law, Principal Secretary of State William Cecil and other senior members of the Privy Council, her Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber and some members of the royal household, and most likely a few of Dudley's trusted servants. Knowledge, news and rumour of it inevitably began to be whispered in and around the court and it soon reached the ears of foreign ambassadors and diplomats who relayed what they knew and had heard back to the respective royal masters and other senior dignitaries throughout the courts of Europe. On 12 November 1560 De Quadra wrote to his royal master Phillip II telling him 'The design of Cecil and the heretics is to make the earl of Huntingdon King, and Cecil has given way to Robert, who they say was married to the Queen in the presence of his brother and two ladies of the Chamber'.[111] As Froude put it:

The Bishop of Aquila [De Quadra] reported that there were anxious meetings of the council; the courtiers paid a partial homage to Dudley; while Cecil and the Protestants, in dread of imminent convulsion, thought of pressing the Queen to declare Huntingdon her successor…It was rumoured-seemingly on Lord Robert's authority-that some private but formal betrothal had passed between the Queen and himself.[112]

Some of De Quadra's letters later came to the attention of Elizabeth and her ministers and the Spanish Ambassador was afterwards summoned before the Lord Chamberlain and Dr Wotton to answer a number of specific charges made against him. The sixth of these, and the one which one is of interest to us, is recorded in the minutes as follows:

6. That I had written to His Majesty [Philip II] that the Queen had been secretly married to Lord Robert at the earl of Pembroke's house.

Answer: What I wrote to his Majesty about this was the same as I said to the Queen, which was that people were saying all over the town that the wedding had taken place, which at the time neither surprised nor annoyed her, and she said it was not only people outside of the palace who had thought such a thing, as on her return that afternoon from the Earl's house her own ladies in waiting when she entered the chamber with Lord Robert asked whether they were to kiss his hand as well as hers to which she had told them no, and that they were not to believe what people said in addition to this he (Robert) told me two or three days after the Queen promised to marry him but not this year. She told me also with an oath that if she had to marry an Englishman it should only be Robert. I had refrained from communicating these

details to his Majesty for the sake of decorum, and I do not think, considering what others say of the Queen, that I should be doing her an injury in writing to his Majesty that she was married, which in fact I never have written, and I am sorry I cannot do so with truth.[113]

News of events soon reached the French court in Paris where the murder of Lady Amy Robsart Dudley at the hands of those acting on behalf of her husband Dudley (this is how it was seen and understood in the courts of Europe) and the marriage of Queen Elizabeth and her lover was on everybody's lips. Her rival for the crown of England Mary, Queen of Scots, wife of the young Francis II joyfully quipped 'The Queen of England was about to marry her horsekeeper, who had killed his wife to make a place for her'.[114] The English Ambassador to France Nicholas Throckmorton was well acquainted with news of Lady Amy Dudley's death and rumours of a secret marriage between Elizabeth and Dudley. He wrote to Cecil on 28 October:

The bruits [rumours] be so brim and so maliciously reported here touching the marriage of the Lord Robert and the death of his wife, as I know not where to turn me or what countenance to bear.

...And therefore I say if that marriage take place I know not to what purpose any advice or counsel should be given, for as I see into the matter none would serve. If you think that I have any small skill or judgment in things at home or on this side, or can conjecture sequels, I do assure you in the matter succeeding our state is in great danger of utter ruin and destruction.[115]

In a letter to Cecil dated 31 December 1560 he indicates that he knows the rumours of a marriage between Elizabeth and Dudley are true and that it is the talk of all Europe:

But if her Majesty do so foully forget herself in her marriage as the bruit runneth here, never think to bring anything to pass either here or elsewhere. I would you did hear the lamentations, the declamations, and sundry affections which have course here for that matter …Remember your mistress is young and subject to affectations; you are her sworn councillor and in great credit with her. You know that there be some of your colleagues which have promoted the matter...

My duty to her, my goodwill to you, doth thus move me to speak plainly…

…after I had written thus much the ambassador of Spain came to visit me; who did amongst other matters earnestly require me to tell him whether the Queen's Majesty was not secretly married to Lord Robert; for, said he, I assure you, this Court is full of it...The bruits of her doings, said he, be very strange in all courts and countries.[116]

According to Amelie Deventer von Kunow, in December 1560 a secret despatch of the Spanish envoy states that 'the Queen is expecting a child by Dudley' (Escurial Papers),[117] a fact known to Cecil who on 15 January 1561 sent a very guarded reply to Throckmorton suggesting the secret marriage between Elizabeth and Dudley is a *fait accompli* which he cannot discuss openly due to its dangerous nature and the possibility it might find its way into the wrong ears:

I have professed and do avow earnest friendship to you; and in respect thereof I must advise you not to meddle with the matters of this Court, otherwise than ye may be well advised from hence. What her Majesty will determine to do, only God I think knoweth; and in her His will be fulfilled. Writings remain, and coming into adverse hands may be sinisterly interpreted on the other part; servants or messengers may be reporters to whom they list, and therefore I cannot give you so plain a counsel as I wish; but in one word I say contend not where victory cannot be had.[118]

One possibility for making a public marriage more acceptable was to garner the support of Philip II of Spain with whom Dudley had a relationship stretching back to the reign of Philip's English wife Mary I of England. He thought by enlisting Catholic Spanish help to publicly legitimise his private union with Elizabeth it might persuade her to take the final step and openly make him Prince Consort or King of England. On 22 January 1561 De Quadra wrote to his royal master Philip II to inform him that Sir Henry Sidney (apparently speaking for his brother-in-law Dudley and Elizabeth) had asked him whether Philip would provide support for a public marriage if Elizabeth and Dudley promised to restore the Roman Catholic religion in England:

There came lately to see me Sir Henry Sidney, who is married to Lord Robert's sister, a high-spirited noble sort of person and one of the best men that the Queen has about the Court.

After speaking generally on ordinary matters he came to the affair of his brother-in-law, and the substance of his words to me was this:-The marriage was now in everybody's mouth, he said, and the Queen I must be aware was very anxious for it. He was surprised that I had not advised your Majesty to use the opportunity to gain Lord Robert's good-will. Your Majesty would find Lord Robert as ready to obey you and do service as one of your own vassals; with more to the same purpose.

..he added that if I could be satisfied about Lady Dudley's death, he thought I could not object to informing your Majesty of what he had said. The Queen and Lord Robert were lovers; but they intended honest marriage, and nothing wrong had taken place between them which could not be set right with your Majesty's help. As to Lady Dudley's death, he said that he had examined carefully into the circumstances and he was satisfied that it had been accidental, although he admitted that others thought differently.

If this was true, I replied, things were not so bad as I had believed. Had Lady Dudley been murdered God and man would surely have punished so abominable a crime. Lord Robert however would find it difficult to persuade the world of his innocence.

He allowed that there was hardly a person who did not believe that there had been foul play. The preachers in their pulpits spoke of it-not sparing even the honour of the Queen; and this, he said, brought her to consider whether she could not restore order in the realm in these matters of religion. She was anxious to do it; and Lord Robert to his own knowledge would be ready to assist.

I answered that your Majesty would gladly see religion restored in England as well as everywhere else; but it was not a thing to be mixed with concerns of the world. Whether married or wishing to be married, if the Queen was a Christian woman she would regard religion as between God and herself.

..he assured me on his solemn oath that the Queen and Lord Robert were determined to restore the religion by way of the general council; and he then went on to press me to write to your Majesty to forward the affair in such a form that Lord Robert should receive the prize at which he aims from your Majesty's hands.

…He said the Queen could not begin the subject with me, but I might assure myself she waited for nothing but your Majesty's consent to conclude the marriage.

Of this I am certain, that if she marry Lord Robert without your Majesty's sanction, your Majesty has to but give a hint to her subjects and she will lose her throne: I know how this matter really stands and I know the humour of the people. But I am certain also that without your Majesty's sanction she will do nothing in public, and it may be that when she sees that she has nothing to hope for from your Majesty she will make a worse plunge to satisfy her appetite. She is infatuated to a degree which would be a notable fault in any woman, much more in one of her exalted rank.

...I ought to add that this woman is generally believed to be out of her mind; and it is thought too that she can never have a child. Some say she is a mother already….[119]

On the very day De Quadra wrote to Philip II in a letter which reports that it is being said by some that Queen Elizabeth 'is a mother already' she gave birth on 22 January 1561 (or as some have maintained shortly or a few days before) to a boy, an event and whose true identity, has remained an official state secret for five centuries; though it is a secret which for those with eyes to see his earliest biographer Pierre Ambiose, and his first English biographer Dr Rawley, enigmatically reveal to us.

The Church of England clergymen Dr William Rawley knew the truth and secrets of the concealed and hidden life of who the world and posterity knows as Francis Bacon. On 22 January 1600 the twelve year old William Rawley was admitted bible-clerk of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge where he graduated BA in 1605 and MA in 1608, and was elector tutor on 19 March 1610. He took his holy orders in April 1611 and in December 1612 he was instituted by the university to the rectory of St Michael's in Bowthorpe, Norfolk. He was soon after introduced to Bacon whose influence resulted in Corpus Christi College bestowing on Rawley the rectory of Landbeach in 1616.[120] By this time Dr Rawley was already chaplain and '*Amanuensis*, or dayly instrument' to Bacon assisting him, as he tells us, 'in the composing, of his *Works*, for many years together; Especially, in his writing Time; I conceived, that no Man, could pretend a better Interest, or Claim, to the ordering of them, after his Death, then my self.'[121] He was a witness to Bacon's last will and testament and entrusted with a large number of Bacon's manuscripts.[122] In the months following Bacon's supposed death to the world Dr Rawley compiled and published a commemorative work in his honour *Memoriae honoratissimi Domini Francisci, Baronis de Verulumio, vice-comitis Sancti Albani sacrum*, known as the *Manes Verulamiani*. This rare volume contains thirty-two Latin verses in praise of Bacon and an introduction by Rawley (32+1=33 Bacon in simple cipher: Rawley who helped Bacon with his *De Augmentis* containing Bacon's treatise on ciphers was familiar with all his cipher systems), whose contents Bacon's orthodox biographers and editors have suppressed, portrays Bacon as a secret supreme poet and dramatist-writer of comedies and tragedies, under the pseudonym, Shakespeare. As revealing as these remarkable verses already are, in his address to the reader, Rawley, plainly states 'very many poems, and the best too, I withhold from publication'.[123] In the same year Dr Rawley also published *Sylva Sylvarum* and *New Atlantis* (*The Land of the Rosicrucians*) in a single volume, the coeval of the *Fama Fraternitatis* (written by Bacon) being the first Rosicrucian manifesto of the secret Brotherhood of which Dr Rawley was a member under his beloved Rosicrucian Master, Lord Bacon. Around the emblem on the title-page of the Rosicrucian *New Atlantis* published by Dr Rawley appears the following inscription '*TEMPORE PATET OCCVLTA VERITAS'* (In Time The Hidden Truth Will Be Revealed).[124] The hidden truth as Bacon himself explains it would over time be delivered via various methods of delivery 'that is, Enigmatical and Disclosed. The pretence whereof is to remove the vulgar capacities from being admitted to the secrets of knowledge, and to reserve them to selected auditors, or wits of such sharpness as can pierce the veil.'[125] In addition to the *Manes Verulamiani* Dr Rawley continued to edit, translate and publish numerous editions of Bacon's works culminating in the *Resuscitatio, or, Bringing into Public Light Several Pieces, of the Works, Civil, Historical, Philosophical, & Theological, Hitherto Sleeping* to which he prefixed the first English *Life* of Lord Bacon. In his address to the reader, in strict accordance with the precepts laid down by his Rosicrucian master, Rawley primes the initiated 'in regard, of the Distance, of the time, since his *Lordships* Dayes; whereby, I shall not tread too near, upon the *Heels* of *Truth*; Or of the Passages, and Persons; then concerned'.[126] In keeping with his Rosicrucian master Dr Rawley delivers as much of the truth as he is able via a Baconian method of delivery, at once enigmatical

and disclosed, or simultaneously concealed and revealed, that can be read by those possessing a penetrating intellect or eyes to see, to enable them to pierce the carefully constructed veil, a method he employs in the very first sentence of his *Life* of Bacon:

FRANCIS BACON, *the* Glory, *of his* Age, *and* Nation; *The* Adorner, *and* Ornament, *of* Learning; *Was born, in* York House, *or* York Place, *in the Strand*; On the 22th Day *of* January; *In the* Year *of our* Lord, 1560. *His* Father, *was that Famous* Counseller, *to* Queen Elizabeth; *The Second Propp of the* Kingdome, *in his Time*; *Sir* Nicholas Bacon, Knight, Lord Keeper, *of the* Great Seal, *of* England; A Lord, *of Known Prudence, Sufficiency, Moderation, and Integrity*. *His* Mother, *was* Anne Cook, *one of the* Daughters, *of Sir* Anthony Cooke; *unto whom, the* Erudition, *of* King Edward, *the* Sixth, *had been committed*: *A choyce* Lady, *and Eminent, for Piety, Vertue, and Learning*; *Being exquisitely Skilled, for a Woman, in the* Greek, *and* Latin, *Tongues*. *These being the* Parents, *you may easily imagine, what the* Issue, *was like to be*; *Having had, whatsoever*, Nature, *or* Breeding, *could put into Him*.[127]

It will be observed that curiously Dr Rawley pointedly says that Bacon was born at York House or York Place, which are two separate buildings, and as he was perfectly aware carried absolutely different meanings and implications for the filial antecedents concerning the secret life of the man who had entrusted him with them. In Elizabethan England the mansion York House on the Strand was the official residence of the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England the office first held in the Elizabethan reign by Sir Nicholas Bacon who occupied it for some twenty years from 1559 until his death in 1579. The York House mansion was set within grounds adjacent to those of York Place (now known to us as the Palace of Whitehall comprising government buildings including the Cabinet Office and Ministry of Defence), Queen Elizabeth's Palace, the main residence of English monarchs from the early sixteenth century. York Place was originally the official residence of the Archbishops of York from the middle of the thirteenth century. It was rebuilt and extensively expanded in the fifteenth century by Cardinal Wolsey and rivalled Lambeth Palace and surpassed the king's royal palaces as the greatest house in London. When Henry VIII removed Wolsey from power in 1530 (depicted by Bacon in his Shakespeare play *Henry VIII*) he acquired York Place as a replacement for the broken-down fire-ravaged Palace of Westminster as his main London residence, and afterwards re-named it Whitehall. He spent a vast fortune on redesigning and greatly extending York Place during his lifetime turning it into the largest palace in Europe with somewhere in the region of one thousand five hundred rooms. After their first secret wedding which took place on 14 November 1532 Henry VIII formally married his second wife Anne Boleyn on 25 January 1533 at the Palace and died there in 1547. On her accession in 1558 Elizabeth inherited York Palace and on appointing Sir Nicholas Bacon as her Lord Keeper of the Great Seal he moved into the adjacent York House in the following year. Of course, Dr Rawley who lived and spent several years with Bacon at York House when he was Lord Keeper and Lord Chancellor of England knew the difference between York House and York Place, the royal residence of Queen Elizabeth, and was privy to the secret of his royal birth. He had gone as close to the heels of truth as he might dare by directly suggesting there was some kind of mystery regarding his birth by pointing to York Place, the royal palace of Queen Elizabeth, secret royal mother of Francis Bacon.

The first English *Life* of Bacon by Dr Rawley pointed to his royal birth and the first *Life* of Bacon published in French repeatedly confirmed it. The 'Discovrs Svr La Vie De M^re^ Francois Bacon, Chancelier D' Angleterre' appeared in Paris in 1631 prefixed to what appeared to be a French translation of Bacon's natural history *Sylva Sylvarum* as *Histoire Natvrelle De M^re^ Francois Bacon, Baron de Verulan, Viscomtede sainct*

Alban, & Chancelier d'Angleterre.[128] This work as so often with early Bacon writings is deliberately enveloped in mystification regarding its provenance and authorship and its content. The volume consists of a dedication to the Lord Keeper of the Seals of France 'A Monseignevr De Chasteav-Nevf, Garde Des Seavx De France' signed with the initials 'D. M.'[129] This is followed by an Address to the Reader (Advertisement) in which he tells us that he had been aided in his translation by Bacon's MSS but fails to informs us how he obtained them. He tells us he is familiar with the *Sylva Sylvarum* published by Dr Rawley but on examination of the Bacon MSS before him he says that his English editor has omitted and added material, and his version of the natural history (here reduced from ten books to six), radically differs from it.[130] The 'Discovrs Svr La Vie De M^re^ Francois Bacon, Chancelier D' Angleterre' printed in large type across twenty-six pages contains *information not found in any other biography of Bacon* some of it either provided by Bacon himself or somebody close to him leading its English translator to observe 'Parts of the work are so intimate and so introspective that the thought has come to me that I was dealing-not with Pierre Vambiose or with "D. M."-but with Bacon's own "Apologia pro Vita Sua" (*Apology for his Life*).'[131] An ode in honour of 'Monseivr Bacon' completes the prefatory matter which is followed by the 'Histoire Naturalle' and a translation into French of *New Atlantis*.

It need not be pointed out to any serious student of literature that the first biography of any great literary figure would be of the utmost importance and interest to his later biographers and commentators. Furthermore, given that Bacon is arguably the greatest literary figure in English history whose controversial life and writings have attracted more attention than any other writer (save his pseudonym Shakespeare), there can be no doubt whatsoever that the first *Life* written about him issued only five years after his supposed death, would ordinarily have been scrutinized by orthodox scholars word by word, all the way down to its very last comma and full stop; and familiar, to every ordinary schoolman and casual student with an interest in Bacon all around the world.

This first *Life* of Bacon which Gilbert Wats the first interpreter of *The Advancement of Learning* (1640) praised and testified to its accuracy 'M^r^ PIERRE D'AMBIOS, S^r^ DE LA MAGDELAINE In his just and elegant discourse upon the life of our *Author*',[132] is not once referred to by Dr Rawley in his first English *Life* of Bacon and nor was it either known to or mentioned by any other seventeenth and eighteenth century biographer of Bacon. A copy of the very rare *Histoire Natvrelle De M^re^ Francois Bacon, Baron de Verulan, Viscomtede sainct Alban, & Chancelier d'Angleterre* was added to the stacks of the British Library sometime around 1820.[133] In researching his monumental seven-volume *Letters and Life of Francis Bacon* his standard biographer James Spedding spent some thirty years in the rarefied environs of the British Library seeking out and examining everything he could that remotely related to his beloved Bacon. It is with some surprise then that we are unable to find any trace whatsoever of this French edition and its *Life* of Bacon. The French *Life* of Bacon was first discovered almost by accident by the Baconian writer Walter Begley at the turn of the twentieth century on purchasing a copy of the *Histoire Natvrelle* from a bookseller in Paris. He gave an extensive account of the edition and its contents in his three volume edition *Bacon's Nova Resuscitatio Or The Unveiling of his Concealed Works and Travels* (1905).[134] In the following year another Baconian writer Granville C. Cunningham provided an English translation of it 'A NEW LIFE OF LORD BACON' in the April 1906 edition of *Baconiana*.[135] Thereafter the *Histoire Natvrelle* and its *Life* of Bacon became known to orthodox Bacon biographers, nearly all of whom rigorously and systematically failed to draw attention to it, and with a single exception known to the present writer, the multiple passages referring and alluding to Bacon's secret royal birth.[136] In the

recent celebrated biography of Bacon by professors Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart (the most comprehensive single volume biography on Bacon since Spedding) which is now the first port of call for the schoolmen, the French *Life* attracts a single solitary mention here cited in its entirety 'The first printed account of his death, in 1631, was by Pierre Ambiose'.[137] The impressive conscious brevity and suppression is positively prolix compared with the silence met with in Professor Robert Ellis's *Francis Bacon the Double-Edged Life of the Philosopher and Statesman* (2015), where the name of Ambiose and the first *Life* of Bacon is nowhere to be found.[138]

What is it then about the earliest *Life* of Bacon (aside from the ignorance of ordinary biographers and commentators) that has apparently motivated his major editors and biographers to effectively suppress certain lines and passages within it for the last four hundred years? Why on earth, and for what reason, would they go to such lengths to obscure and conceal them? What were they trying to hide and withhold from the rest of the world for nearly half a millennium? Answer: the first secret of Bacon's life, the secret of his royal birth. The first secret of his life, which when toppled will (like the first domino) when it is finally known and understood by the rest of the sleepy world that they have been drip fed an enormous lie, will topple all the other secrets about his life and writings, all the way through to his supposed death, which did not occur when his early biographers from Dr Rawley onwards said it did. (In fact, does it really even need to be said to anyone with a smattering of intelligence that if someone suppresses something it is done with the purpose of concealing and hiding it from the rest of us? And when this systematic suppression has been perpetrated and maintained for four hundred it must obviously be of the greatest historical significance and importance.)

It is perhaps no coincidence that in this earliest *Life* of Bacon there is no mention of dates, either of birth or death, nor is the name of his supposed parents referred to, his father is simply spoken of as the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal and his mother not at all.[139] It is somewhat curious and strange for a *Life* of this length not to specifically name a mother and father, and these conspicuous omissions form a kind of ambiguity and uncertainty about his parentage, that paves the way for the revelation to come.

The earliest *Life* of Bacon opens with the customary praise of his intellectual gifts 'a merit so rare and extraordinary', a man, he emphasises from the off, who was 'great in…birth'.[140] For the literal and superficial we are at first told he was the 'son of a father who possessed no less virtue than he; his worth secured to him the honour of being so well beloved by Queen Elizabeth that she gave him the position of Keeper of the Seals and placed in his hands the most important affairs of the kingdom...[and] the principal instrument that she made use of in order to establish the Protestant religion in England.'[141] There is no doubt whatsoever that Lord Keeper Nicholas Bacon is one of the most important and greatest Englishmen who ever lived whose influence on the future of England and Europe has never attracted the recognition it truly deserves. He was not however the natural father of Francis as his first biographer (whoever he was) was now about to communicate to us using the kind of Baconian method of delivery that Bacon himself advocated, in which he intermingled allusions to Nicholas Bacon, the father who raised him, with striking and unmistakable allusions, to his secret royal birth, born of the very regal and royal monarch, Queen Elizabeth:

M. Bacon was not only obliged to imitate the virtues of such a one, but also those of many others of his ancestors, who have left so many marks of their greatness in history that honour and dignity seem to have been at all times the spoil of his family. Certain it is that no one can reproach him with having added less than they to the splendour of his race. Being thus born in the purple (*ne parmy les pourpes*) and brought up with the expectation of a grand career (*l'esperance d'une grande fortune*) his father had him instructed in "bonnes letters" with such

great and such especial care that I know not to whom we are more indebted for all the splendid works (*les beaux ouvrages*) that he has left to us, whether to the mind of the son, or to the care the father had taken in making him cultivate it. But however that may be, the obligation we are under to the father is not small.

..I wish to state that he employed some years of his youth in travel in order to polish his mind and to mould his opinion by intercourse with all kinds of foreigners. France, Italy, and Spain, as the most civilized nations of the whole world, were those whither his desire for knowledge (*curiosite*) carried him. And as he saw himself destined one day to hold in his hands the helm of the kingdom (*le timon du Royaume*) instead of looking only at the people and the different fashions in dress, as do the most of those who travel, he observed judiciously the laws and the customs of the countries through which he passed, noted the different forms of Government in a State, with their advantages or defects, together with all the other matters which might help to make a man able for the government of men.[142]

There is clearly in the above passage several phrases and observations which point to and confirm that Francis Bacon, or should we say, Francis Tudor, was of royal birth. Firstly, it explicitly and directly refers to his 'ancestors, who have left so many marks of their greatness in history that honour and dignity seem to have been at all times the spoil of his family.' It is completely without any doubt whatsoever that this does not refer to the ancestors of Sir Nicholas Bacon. He came of relatively humble stock none of whom left any marks of greatness in history. His grandfather John Bacon (*d*.1513) was a sheep farmer, so too Nicholas's father Robert Bacon (*d*.1548) who was married to Isabel, daughter of John Cage, a yeoman of Pakenham, Suffolk. Something similar can be said for Lady Anne Cooke Bacon, daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, son of John Cooke (1485-1516) of Gidea Hall, Essex, whose only ancestor to leave some mark on history was Sir Thomas Cooke, a Lord Mayor of London in 1462-3. So what kind of ancestors leave so 'many marks of their greatness in history that honour and dignity seem to have been at all times the spoil of his family'? A description consistent with the Tudor royal family which derived its ancestry from both the Houses of York and Lancaster: Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Edward IV, Richard III, Henry VII and Henry VIII (all reigns covered by Bacon in his Shakespeare plays and prose history of Henry VII) that clearly left countless marks of their greatness in history. To reinforce and confirm the allusion that Bacon was born of royalty, his first biographer then explicitly states he was 'born in the purple': as everybody knows purple is the colour of royalty, and Queen Elizabeth herself forbade anyone except close members of the royal family to wear it; thus in other words, Bacon was born in the purple to royalty, a glaring confirmation, that he was the royally born son of Queen Elizabeth. (When Bacon later married at his own wedding he wore a suit 'purple from cap to shoe'). His biographer declares moreover that Bacon 'saw himself destined one day to hold in his hands the helm of the kingdom' (helm: in control or head of the country), meaning as son and heir of Queen Elizabeth, that one day he was destined to be King of England, and that he had from a young man studied all forms of government in anticipation of his role as royal head of state for the governance of his kingdom.

Fittingly, in his prose version of *History of Henry the Seventh* Bacon inserted using via his bi-literal cipher as deciphered by Elizabeth Wells Gallup his royal birth and lineal descent as well as his deep gratitude to his foster-mother Lady Anne Bacon who saved his life and raised him as her own:

I am indeed by vertue of my birth, that royall, thoug' grossly wrong'd so t' our most glorious, yet most faulty-I ca' find no stronger terms-Queene Elizabeth, of th' stocke that doughtie Edward truly renowned. O' such stock Henries Fifth, Seventh and Eighth, historic battle

kings, came, like branches sent from the oakes. My true name is not as in some backe pages it was giv'n, but Tudor. Bacon was only foster parent to my early youth, yet was as loving and kinde to me as to his owne sonne, carefull o' my education, and even aspiring to my high advancement. But to Mistresse Anne Bacon, ever quick with her simpathie and wise to advise, do I owe a greater and warmer gratitude, since she did much more truly and constantlie guard, guide, protecte and counsel me.

Moreover, to her I do owe my life, for though she did but rear me, not being, *de facto*, my mother, it was by her intervention that the houre of nativitie did not witnesse my death. Her Ma. would truly have put me away privilie, but Mistresse Bacon, yearning ove' helplesse babyhood, saved me, having held ove' me a hand o' protectio'.[143]

Through the word cipher incorporated into his Shakespeare plays as deciphered by Dr Owen the story is conveyed of how Lady Anne Bacon carried Francis away:

> When you were born
> I secretly conveyed you out of the nuptial room
> In a round, painted box,
> Carried you to my house
> And brought you up as my own.
> "Why was I concealed?"
> "The very force of circumstances
> Made it impossible for Queen Elizabeth
> To own you as her son."[144]

According to the cipher accounts at the same time Elizabeth was expecting Francis, Lady Anne Bacon was also pregnant and after taking him to York House in a painted box under the strictest secrecy she awaited the birth of her own child. Fate would have it that her own child was still-born and the adopted royal offspring replaced him, and was thereafter, given the name of Francis Bacon:

Then Yorke House gave me a private chamber, gentle Lady Anne so slily bearing me thither no one, other then her small maid, knew aught of my simple life within Sir N. Bacon his house. Ladie Anne guarded me until a boy still-borne as hath been said, made naturall place for the royale child.[145]

With the royal child in the safe care of Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne Bacon at York House adjacent to Queen Elizabeth's palace at York Place (Whitehall) the next step in establishing the charade was to have his birth officially recorded. Three days after the date it is generally assumed he was born (22 January 1561) his birth was entered into the baptismal register of St Martin's-in-the-Fields a church which has a long and close relationship with the royalty: 'Januarii: 25 Baptizatus suit ^{Mr} Franciscus Bacon' and to this there has been added underneath in different handwriting and a paler ink 'filius Dm Nicho: Bacon, Magni Anglie Sigilli Custodis' (son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Keeper of the Great Seal of England).[146] Through his bi-literal cipher he says he was named in the world as a Bacon, instead of his true name, of Tudor as the first born son of Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (making him the Prince of Wales) who were privately married sometime before his birth

I am named in th' world, not what my stile should bee according to birth, nor what it rightfullie should be according to our law, which giveth to the first born o' th' royall house, (if this first-borne be a sonne o' th' ruling prince, and borne in true and right wedlocke) th' title of th' Prince o' Wales. My name is Tidder [Tudor], yet men speak of me as Bacon, even

those that knowe of my royal mother, and her lawfull marriage with th' Earle o' Leicester, a suitable time prior to my birth.[147]

Now that Queen Elizabeth and Lord Robert Dudley were privately married they had the enormous problem of whether to make their marriage public. It will be recalled that in the previous letter by De Quadra to Philip II (22 January) he assured his royal master in reference to any marriage with Dudley 'I am certain also that without your Majesty's sanction she will do nothing in public',[148] or as rendered in the *Calendar of State Papers* 'I am certain that if she do not obtain your Majesty's consent she will not dare to publish the match'.[149] It is with public marriage in mind that Elizabeth and Dudley proceeded with their international diplomatic relations primarily with Philip II of Spain in order to gain his consent and support (while maintaining the pretence they had not married in private which was known to and rumoured by Spanish, French and her own English Ambassadors and diplomats, at home and abroad). Three weeks after the concealed birth of his son Francis baptized under the name of his foster-parent Sir Nicholas Bacon, his biological father Lord Robert Dudley, together with his brother-in-law Henry Sidney, met with the Spanish Ambassador De Quadra on 13 February as a follow-up to the meeting between Sidney and De Quadra as reported in his previous letter 'On the 22nd ultimo I informed your Majesty of Henry Sidney's interview with me in Lord Robert's business, and I have delayed giving them an answer about it because they, on their side, have delayed addressing me further on the matter, the cause of this being, as far as I can learn, that the Queen does not commend her affairs to your Majesty out of any wish or good will of her own, but forced thereto by the persuasion of Lord Robert, who knows the peril in which they stand, and sees clearly that, without the favour of your Majesty's, they can hardly ensure themselves against a rising in the country, or suppress one should it occur.'[150] At their meeting Dudley repeated what his emissary Sidney had previously told De Quadra and 'he besought me, in your Majesty's name, to recommend the Queen to marry him, and he would promise to render your Majesty all the service his brother-in-law had told me, and very much more.'[151] Dudley 'begged' De Quadra to speak to the queen which he did two days after 'and told her she already knew how much your Majesty wished to see her married'.[152] Elizabeth then asked the Bishop of Aquila De Quadra to hear her confession in which she employed her usual disingenuous double speak and duplicity 'After much circumlocution she said she wished to confess to me and tell me her secret in confession, which was that she was no angel, and did not deny that she had some affection for Lord Robert for the many good qualities he possessed, but she certainly had never decided to marry him or anyone else, although she daily saw more clearly the necessity for her marriage, and to satisfy the English humour that it was desirable that she should marry an Englishman, and she asked me to tell her what your Majesty would think if she married one of her servitors as the duchess of Suffolk and the duchess of Somerset had done.'[153]The Spanish Ambassador was too worldly not to know Elizabeth and Dudley lied to everyone, lied to each other, and ultimately lied to themselves, as they tip-toed around trying to sound out if Philip II would consent and support a public marriage. In reply, Philip II expressed his approval of De Quadra's dealings with them, but suggested that he secure from Elizabeth a statement of her proposals in writing '*This is necessary, as her words are so little to be depended upon, and you know by the experience you have had of her that this is always the course she pursues when she has no intention of fulfilling what she says, and only wishes to use our authority for her designs and intentions*.'[154]

The letter from De Quadra to Philip recounting his meeting with Dudley and Sidney (on the 13th) was dated 23 February and his next letter to Philip in the March was written against the background of the ongoing suggestion that the Spanish king gave his public support for a marriage between Elizabeth and Dudley. For which they in turn would restore Catholicism in England and receive the Papal Nuncio, bringing an invitation to the Council of Trent, the ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church, created in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. Of course, the Principal Secretary of State Sir William Cecil and his brother-in-law Lord Keeper Nicholas Bacon, were not about to stand aside and let any public marriage between Elizabeth and Dudley be traded with the Spanish for a change in religion. In his letter to his master De Quadra, after discussing the return of the specially appointed Ambassador to France Francis Russell, second Earl of Bedford, and his efforts to form a firm alliance with France concerning the session of the Council of Trent he reports, 'Robert is very aggrieved and dissatisfied that the Queen should defer placing matters in your Majesty's hand ...and as he has fallen ill with annoyance the Queen resolved to please him' by sending Cecil to speak with him about her marriage with Lord Robert.'[155] The wily statesman went to work suggesting to De Quadra that it would be well if the King of Spain would write a letter to Elizabeth advising her to marry a gentleman of her own country to the satisfaction of her nobles and that it was in the interests of 'the friendship of the two houses because if these negotiations fell through the Queen might marry a prince less friendly to your Majesty than Robert would be' which could be laid before parliamant.[156] Cecil then added Elizabeth 'was resolved to do nothing in the business without the consent and goodwill of her people, who have the right of controlling the public actions of their sovereigns, and she did not wish to prejudice this right by marrying without their consent.'[157] In reality, Cecil was putting forward numerous hurdles, the nobles, parliament, and the people, who would not take well to Spanish interference and would not willingly accept Elizabeth marrying the widower Dudley widely suspected of murdering his first wife Amy Robsart and widely loathed up and down the whole kingdom. De Quadra understood what was afoot. She desired, as Cecil told him, a letter from the Spanish king,

> to give her an opportunity for calling together some members of the three estates of the realm and placing before them your Majesty's communication with the reasons for coming to a decision, and so with the accord of these deputies to arrange the marriage with Robert. The deputies would be three Bishops, six peers, and ten or twelve deputies of cities, all of them confidants of Robert and informed of the Queen's wish. This is now being arranged and they have already ordered to be called together in some provinces the people who usually have the management of public affairs in order to form this deputation. The sum of it all is that Cecil and these heretics wish to keep the Queen bound and subject to their will and forced to maintain their heresies, and although she sees that the heretics treat her very badly, especially the preachers, and that Robert is more disliked by them than by the Catholics, she dares not to go against Cecil's advice because she thinks that both sides would then rise up against her.[158]

In April Cecil put other aspects of his plan into action with a convenient discovery of what he presented as a Catholic conspiracy. He had several agitators arrested and at the same time a letter from one of the imprisoned Marian bishops was intercepted that expressed the hope that the arrival of Papal Nuncio might bring about their liberty. He accused De Quadra of conspiring with the imprisoned bishops and when De Quadra asked Dudley to use his influence he either could or would not intervene in the matter. An exasperated De Quadra had a meeting with Cecil who gave him a long account of the Catholic conspiracy and informed him that under the circumstances there was no

longer any possibility of admitting the Papal Nuncio. Two days later De Quadra met with Elizabeth and reminded her that it was Dudley who had promised to restore the Catholic religion as part of his marriage proposal to the queen to which she responded with characteristic bare-faced mendacity by flatly denying neither she or Dudley had ever proposed the restoration of Catholicism. On 1 May the Privy Council dominated by Cecil and his brother-in-law Sir Nicholas Bacon met to consider the admission of the Papal Nuncio, all of whom spoke against it. The formal statement perhaps drawn up by Cecil and Bacon set out the position of the Council and an abridged version was read to De Quadra a few days later stating that Elizabeth would not receive the Papal Nuncio nor send a delegation to the Council of Trent.[159]

Whatever his conspiratorial misdemeanours De Quadra was the ambassador of the most powerful monarch in Europe and an important instrument in the public marriage designs of Elizabeth and Dudley in soliciting the approval and support of Philip II of Spain, the temporal leader of Catholic Europe. Near the end of the following month Elizabeth invited De Quadra to a water party on the Thames given by Dudley on St John's Day where all three of them sat together in the afternoon on a barge watching the games when the subject of their public marriage was inevitably raised once more. Behaving like a pair of infantile adolescents in a letter to the king De Quadra reports 'they began to talk nonsense, and went so far that Lord Robert at last said, as I was on the spot there was no reason why they should not be married if the Queen pleased...I let them trifle in this way for a time, and then I said gravely to them both, that if they would be guided by me they would shake off the tyranny of those men who were oppressing the realm and them; they would restore religion and good order; and they could then marry when they pleased-and gladly would I be the priest to unite them. Let the heretics complain if they dared. With your Majesty at her side the Queen might defy danger. At present it seemed she could marry no one who displeased Cecil and his companions.'[160] In a letter written the same day by De Quadra to Granvelle he states, 'You will see by my letter to the King how we are going on…because with this love affair of hers she would be a lost woman if the King our master so pleased. As to the rumoured marriages with Sweden or Denmark, she is so infatuated with Dudley that nothing will ever induce her to give him up.'[161] In a letter to Throckmorton dated 15 July Cecil expressed his misgivings about the increasing credit with Elizabeth of the Spanish ambassador. There were he suspected many secrets between them and he knew that the Spanish ambassador, 'seemed to seek by all means overt and covert to further the marriage'.[162] It was however so grave a situation, so complex, so fraught with intractable difficulties on all sides, one dangerous to both the lives of Elizabeth and Dudley, the lives of the people of her kingdom, either through possible invasion and/or civil war, and as Cecil and Bacon knew only all too well, the future political direction of Europe, that the question of a public marriage and a legitimate succession was the critical Gordian knot of her reign.

Her near fatal small-pox attack in 1562 acutely focussed attention on the question of her marriage status and the critical question of succession. On 16 October De Quadra wrote to the Duchess of Parma 'The Queen has been ill of fever at Kingston, and the malady has now turned to small-pox. The eruption cannot come out and she is in great danger. Cecil was hastily summoned from London at midnight. If the Queen die it will be very soon, within a few days at latest, and now all the talk is who is to be her successor. Lord Robert has a large armed force under his control, and will probably pronounce for his brother-in-law, the earl Huntingdon'.[163] The Spanish ambassador is most likely mistaken in believing that Dudley would pronounce for his brother-in-law

Huntingdon considering his driving ambition and desire for the crown of England, an obsession which had devoured his father Northumberland and devastated the Dudley family as a whole, a lesson which his perverse headstrong nature would cause him not to heed. The next day De Quadra wrote again to the Duchess of Parma gravely telling her that 'the palace people were all mourning for her as she were already dead…She was all but gone.'[164] As she lay dying, as everybody then believed, according to De Quadra, more than a dozen members of the Privy Council closely gathered around her bedside and their thoughts soon turned to the matter of succession and 'out of the 15 or 16 of them that there are there were nearly as many different opinions about the succession to the Crown', and even the Catholic party appeared undecided with some liking the Queen of Scots and others Lady Margaret.[165] In his letter to Philip on 25 October De Quadra informed his master about the queen's illness and that she was now better, adding 'if her improvement had not come soon some hidden thoughts would have become manifest.' The Council, he solemnly tells him, had discussed the succession, 'I am told there were three different opinions. Some wished King Henry's will to be followed and Lady Catherine declared. Others who found flaws in the will were in favour of the earl of Huntingdon. Lord Robert, the earl of Bedford, the earl of Pembroke, and the duke of Norfolk with others of the lower rank were in favour of this. The most moderate and sensible tried to dissuade the others from being in such a hurry'. During this lengthy discussion 'on recovering from the crisis which had kept her unconscious and speechless for two hours the first thing she [Elizabeth] said was to beg her Council to make Lord Robert Dudley Protector of the kingdom with a title and income of £20,000'. Both Cecil and Bacon and other senior members of the Privy Council must have individually and collectively drawn in a very deep breath and it appears a wily De Quadra understood that there was no way they would let it happen 'Everything she asked was promised, but it will not be fulfilled.' Even though she was still not out of danger and conceivably still staring at the possibility of death the consummate master of dissimulation conformed to type and blatantly lied through her teeth. 'The Queen protested at the time although she loved and had always loved Lord Robert dearly, as God was her witness, nothing improper had ever passed between them.' Several of her Privy Council present certainly knew this to be untrue, not least, Cecil and Bacon who had personally witnessed her marriage to Dudley at the home of Pembroke and was now with his goodly wife Lady Anne Bacon secretly raising their royal offspring. Yet in her very next breadth she transparently betrayed herself by crudely ordering that hush money be paid to Dudley's Groom of the Chamber to make sure he kept quiet for the rest of his days. 'She ordered a groom of the Chamber called Tamworth, who sleeps with in Lord Robert's room, to be granted an income of £500 a year.'[166] As we know she did not die and the Privy Council did not have to break their promises to her as she lay ill and dying. And, as God himself was her witness, she was no virgin, nor had it escaped the notice of God she was privately married to Dudley, nor that their union had produced a royal prince, known to posterity as Francis Bacon.

In the Pregnancy Portrait of Queen Elizabeth two rings hang on a black cord from her neck. The one ring appears to be made of rubies with black stones and the other gold with black stones.[167] These two rings symbolically represent the secret marriage between Queen Elizabeth and Lord Robert Dudley the mother and father of the person who commissioned the painting which looks back to another painting of himself when a child a little after she had given birth to him.

At Gorhambury House located on the Bacon family estate built originally built by Sir Nicholas Bacon there hangs on display a unique oil painting of Francis Bacon as a young child aged between one to two years old by an unknown artist. The oil painting

was presumably commissioned by Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne Bacon (*c.* 1563) and it has very quietly passed down the descendants of the Bacon family during the last five centuries, overlooked by his orthodox editors and biographers. Its existence became known to a small number of Baconian scholars in the second half of the twentieth century, a few of whom reproduced it without providing any further commentary. It first received a detailed examination by Peter Dawkins in his work *Dedication to the Light* published by the Francis Bacon Research Trust in 1984, a work little known outside of Baconian circles. For the first time Dawkins produced an enlarged image of the painting which made clearly visible a framed miniature suspended on a chain from shoulders of a baby Francis that is completely central to its secret symbolic meaning and obscured message. In the portrait Francis is depicted holding an apple in his right hand carefully situated just below two framed miniatures: one of them larger, that is concealing a smaller framed miniature. The apple is a universal symbol of knowledge and immortality and appears in several religious traditions as a mystical or forbidden fruit. It is the fruit growing in the Garden of Eden which God commands mankind not to eat (i.e., it is forbidden or disallowed by divine or royal authority which derives directly from the will of God). Adam and Eve eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge and are punished for it by being exiled from Eden and in Greek mythology it shares similarities with Pandora's Box that contains hidden treasure or knowledge that when opened reveals secrets concealed from the rest of mankind, which in this instance will bring down the wrath of divine royal authority and punishment, if uttered out loud:

The framed miniature suspended on the double chain around Francis's shoulders is clearly also placed there carefully. But why the double chain? Looking carefully it would appear that there are in fact two miniatures, the top and larger one concealing a smaller framed miniature beneath, and that there is therefore a chain for each one. The top miniature depicts what appears to be a bearded nobleman, with ladies kneeling on each side of him. The most reasonable explanation for the miniatures is that they are intended to portray Francis's parents, and a first glance one would think the top (visible) portrait was that of his father, with the portrait of his mother hidden from view underneath. But why hide the picture of his mother? Surely this would either be an insult to his mother, supposedly Lady Anne Bacon, or else the painter was instructed by the two parents to deliberately paint it this way. The latter must certainly have been the case, as Sir Nicholas Bacon would certainly not have insulted his wife.

So what is the picture saying? The miniature is too small to tell whether the man depicted is in fact Sir Nicholas Bacon. From what can be seen, it would appear that the forehead is too high, face and beard to narrow, and clothing too much like a courtier-soldier's, to be Sir Nicholas. The miniature also seems to be portraying the man's right arm raised as if about to forcibly smite or reject the woman kneeling before him, to his right, and falling backwards from him whilst he looks over his head; whilst the other woman, kneeling on his left and slightly behind him, in the shadows, clings to him and holds on to his right arm. Following the same symbolic basis of the larger portrait of Francis, this miniature would seem to be depicting the forcible and uncaring rejection of a lover-a mistress or even a wife-by the man, even to the extent of a physical injury being given to her; whilst the inward urge giving rise to this action lies with his close relationship with the woman clinging to his left arm. This is not Sir Nicholas's story; but it is the tale of Francis's real father, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. If this really is what the painter was trying to convey, then it also makes absolute sense of why the portrait miniature of the mother is concealed, she being too regal and well-known a personage not to be noticed if displayed, and to whom complete secrecy as to her motherhood was essential if she were to maintain her public image as the Virgin Queen.[168]

Francis Bacon, as a child aged 1-2 years old (*c.*1562-3), artist unknown held at Gorhambury

A Queen [Elizabeth] and her Son by Nicholas Hilliard (British Museum)

Around the time Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne Bacon commissioned the oil painting of a young Francis his royal mother Queen Elizabeth instructed Roger Ascham one of the greatest scholars of his time to write his famous book *The Schoolmaster*. For the previous twenty years, Ascham had a close relationship with the Cooke-Bacon-Cecils which continued right through the writing and publication of *The Schoolmaster* issued after his death by his widow Margaret Ascham. From the mid-1540s Ascham was part of the Protestant circle which included Queen Katherine Parr, the Duchess of Suffolk, John, Lord Russell (afterwards the first Earl of Bedford) John Cheke, Anthony Cooke, William Cecil and Nicholas Bacon.[169] Ascham taught in the royal household of Prince Edward as did Anthony Cooke and his daughter Anne (afterwards Lady Bacon) prior to his appointment as tutor to his sister Princess Elizabeth in the Chelsea household of Queen Katherine Parr and her husband Thomas Seymour, High Admiral of England brother of Edward Seymour, Lord Protector of the Realm. It marked the beginning of Ascham's tutoring and studying with Elizabeth that continued intermittingly until his death twenty years later. During his stay at the Chelsea household of Queen Katherine Parr, Ascham witnessed things and events which he forever thereafter remained silent.

Following the death of Henry VIII and the coronation of her royal stepson Edward VI on 31 January 1547 the Dowager Queen Katherine Parr set up her household at her home in Chelsea. Within weeks she took up with her handsome former lover and the new king's uncle, Thomas Seymour, Baron Seymour of Sudeley and secretly married him sometime in May 1547. The young king and the Privy Council were not told of their secret marriage for several months and when it became public knowledge it caused a big scandal. Despite this Katherine and her new husband Seymour somehow managed to secure the guardianship of Princess Elizabeth then aged thirteen years old an arrangement which lead to a seismic royal scandal that rocked the establishment for years.

On the insistence of Princess Elizabeth in early 1548 Ascham joined the household at Chelsea and set out a classical curriculum designed to prepare her for a leading role in the state. In the morning they studied Greek, the New Testament, the tragedies of Sophocles and works of Isocrates and Demothenes, and in the afternoon, the orations of Cicero, the histories of Livy, and some of the early Church fathers. With his royal charge he pioneered his method of teaching languages by double translation which he later made famous in *The Schoolmaster*. Their congenial relationship was unsettled in the May when the household plunged into turmoil when Princess Elizabeth entered into an unwholesome relationship with the older Seymour and persistent rumours of an illicit affair began to soon circulate at court. There were romps in her bedchamber and her servant Kate Astley testified Seymour regularly entered Princess Elizabeth's room pulled back the curtains and smacked her buttocks and repeatedly tried to kiss her. Another time Katherine came upon them suddenly and caught Seymour and Elizabeth in an embrace and on an extraordinary occasion in the garden at Hanworth, Katherine held Princess Elizabeth while Seymour cut her gown into a hundred pieces. Certainly, at first Katherine tolerated it and was even complicit in their behaviour but being now pregnant and with whispers Elizabeth might also be carrying Seymour's child she protested resulting in Elizabeth, her tutor Ascham, and her other servants being sent to live at Chestnut, and later, Hatfield in Hertfordshire. The death of Queen Katherine Parr in September 1548 and the attempts by Elizabeth's stewards Parry and Astley to assist Seymour in his plans to marry the princess made Hatfield a dangerous place to be. Probably seeing where all this was heading, Ascham spent the Christmas period at St John's College, Cambridge. He returned in January 1549 and by now the situation was out of control. On 17 February Seymour was arrested for planning to

kidnap the young king and marry Elizabeth and make himself Lord Protector of the Realm. He was joined in the Tower by Astley and Parry where they were interrogated. The Privy Council instructed Sir Robert Tyrwhit to interrogate Princess Elizabeth in order to get her to confess to her part in any conspiracy and investigate persistent rumours about her pregnancy. Princess Elizabeth did what she always did in these situations she repeatedly lied and denied all the allegations put to her and though Tyrwhit found nothing to implicate her in the intrigue and no evidence of her pregnancy he reported to his masters, 'I do see it in her face that she his guilty'.[170] He was right to believe so.

We get another account of the events from the cipher related to Francis via his foster mother Lady Anne Bacon. She told Francis that Elizabeth was indeed pregnant. In the panic the pregnant princess turned to Lady Bacon to help deliver the child. Due in part to the situation the child did not live and it was left to Lady Bacon to hide the body in the garden but a royal guard saw her and reported what he had seen to King Edward who had the body of the still-born child recovered from his watery grave:

She could not do it without betraying
The secret of a very terrible crime
Which, led on by the great but licentious Semour,
She committed when a girl.
I will rehearse to you the same.
I tried to prevent the loose encounters
Of this lacivious man with her grace,
But when I did hint to her most mannerly
How unstayed it was for the adulterous admiral
To ascend nightly to her chamber
And lodge with her,
She did strike me and said,
'Will you then, wench, lesson me?
Knowest y-not his looks are my soul's food?
He is full of virtue, bounty, worth
And beseeming qualities, and I would be his wife;
But, alas! alas! he is the husband
Of my stepmother, whose unviolated honour,
Wisdom, sober virtues and modesty
Plead on her part for life.'

Some weeks after that she said to me,
'I do conjure thee, Anne, to assist me.'

As thou lovest me, promise to save me,
For 't is a secret must be locked
Within the teeth and lips.
I fear death, for my conceptious womb
Will soon give birth to a child.

The sweet soul in speechless death
Lie'st in bed as in a grave.
I was not skill'd enough
To play the nurse, open the rotten bands

And aid the poor child
From the impervious case
Which keeps it from breathing native breath.
So unhallowed, unmuzzled, it passed in silence
To the fountain of final causes,
Namely, God.
The necessity of concealing the body
Of the young child, which,
If our attendants approached,
Could not be hid, was apparent;
Yet no time have I before day blazonest
To dig a grave, and there is no staying here,
For fear some one will discover all.
But, I remembered,
By the wood there is a fish pond….[171]

For his part in the various interlocking conspiracies against the crown and behaviour towards Elizabeth the unscrupulous Thomas Seymour was beheaded on Tower Hill on 20 March 1550. His paramour Elizabeth with whom he had an unlawful relationship faired somewhat better. The matter of her pregnancy and childbirth was hushed up by all concerned or those who knew of it but for her penance she was kept at Hatfield in disgrace by her brother King Edward for nearly two years.

None of his correspondence for the time Ascham was living at Chelsea and Hatfield survives. His modern editor and biographer Lawrence Ryan suggests 'his editor Grant would surely have deleted any allusions in the letters to this unfortunate episode of the reigning queen's stormy youth.'[172] Safely back at St John's College on 28 January 1550 Ascham wrote to Cheke telling him how he had been badly affected by 'recent violence and injury at court' in which he reports his recent departure from Princess Elizabeth's household.[173] He had seen much and said nothing and would do so for the rest of his life. But he would leave to posterity a document of the utmost historical importance revealing that he knew Elizabeth was no virgin and that she had during the early years of her tenure as Queen of England given birth to a royal child.

Throughout the Marian reign Ascham maintained his relationship with Elizabeth and from August to October 1555 when she returned to court he studied with her. He was also permitted to occasionally visit Elizabeth at Hatfield where he and his royal pupil read Greek and Latin texts and discussed politics and statecraft. When Elizabeth ascended the throne she appointed Ascham her Latin secretary a post he held for the remainder of his life which meant he attended upon her almost daily and after dinner most evenings they studied their favourite Greek and Latin works. It was during one of these congenial occasions when Ascham dined at Windsor Castle with Cecil and other members of the Privy Council it was suggested to him he should write a work that became *The Schoolmaster*. In its preface Ascham recounts a conversation which took place in the afternoon of 10 December 1563 in Cecil's chamber with Sir William Petre, Sir John Mason, Dr Wotton, Sir Richard Sackville, Treasurer of the Exchequer, Sir Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Haddon, Master of Requests (a former suitor of Lady Anne Bacon), John Astley, Master of the Jewel House, Bernard Hampton, Clerk of the Privy Council and Nicasius Yetswaert, an agent for Elizabeth in the Netherlands. On sitting down to dinner Cecil informed them that news had been brought to him that very morning that scholars had run away from Eton through fear of a beating and the conversation turned to educational discipline where those present

gave opinions on the subject. After dinner Ascham went up to read with Elizabeth the oration of Demosthenes against Aeschines regarding his false dealings in his embassy to Philip of Macedonia. Soon after, Sir Richard Sackville came up to Elizabeth's Privy Chamber and requested that Ascham find him an ideal tutor for his grandson, Robert Sackville, who he suggested could be taught alongside Ascham's son of a similar age, at his cost, a promise which Sackville kept until his dying day. He also suggested to Ascham that he should consider writing a book on the right training and education of children and young men to which request Ascham responded, 'I made some excuse by lack of ability and weakness of body'. Not to be put off Sackville again pressed him, 'I, beginning some farther excuse, sodeinlie was called to cum to the Queene. The night following I slept litle; my head was so full of this our former taulke, and I so mindefull somewhat to satisfie the honest request of so deare a frend. I thought to praepare some little treatise for a Newyeares gift that Christmas. But, as it chanceth to busie builders, so, in building thys my poore scholehouse (the rather bicause the forme of it is somewhat new, and differing form others) the worke rose dailie higher and wider, than I thought it would at the beginninge.'[174] The request to write the book in Elizabeth's Privy Chamber was made with the intention of it being dedicated to her. What exactly passed between Elizabeth and Ascham is not known but whatever it was resulted in him being unable to sleep that night and likely for a few nights after. It is distinctly possible given his reaction that some secret was discussed which changed his mind from whence under royal command he proceeded to write *The Schoolmaster*:

> that the youth in England, especially gentlemen, and namely nobility, should be by good bringing up so grounded in judgement of learning, so founded in love of honesty, as, when they should be called forth to the execution of great affairs, in service of their prince and country, they might be able to use, and to order all experiences, were they good, were they bad, and that according to the square, rule, and line of wisdom, learning, and virtue.[175]

It appears the writing of the work was protracted and delayed for a variety of reasons 'Beside moch weaknes of bodie, but more trouble of mind, by some soch sores, as greue me toche them my selfe, and therefore I purpose not to open them to others' and the death of his close friend Sir Richard Sackville he cast the work aside for almost two years before he found the strength to take it up again.[176] It appears a manuscript version of Book I (British Library Royal MS. 18 B. xxiv) may have been completed within a couple of years and the second Book (as it was printed) in 1566. The preface to the printed edition was apparently written shortly before Ascham's death in 1568 where he thanked Cecil for giving him the hope that enabled him to finish it.[177] Nearly two years passed before it was first printed by John Day, who had a long history and relationship (some of it secret) with the Cooke-Bacon-Cecils, who in the same year printed Lady Anne Cooke Bacon's translation of Bernardino Ochino's *Sermons*. In a warm dedication prefixed to the edition written by his widow Margaret addressed 'To the honorable Sir William Cecill Knight, principall Secretarie to the Quenes most excellent Maiestie' she recalled '*how much my sayd husband was many wayes bound unto you, and how gladly and comfortably he used in hys lyfe to recognise and report your goodnesse toward hym*'.[178] There was however missing from the edition another dedication dated 30 October 1566 entitled 'DIVAE ELIZABETHAE' by Ascham that was originally suppressed, and thereafter concealed and hidden, perhaps to begin with by Cecil, or more likely Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne Bacon, and afterward by Francis

Bacon and members of his Rosicrucian Brotherhood, before it quietly emerged nearly two hundred years later in 1761, when first published by his editor James Bennet.

This historically important dedication to Queen Elizabeth suppressed from the first 1570 edition of *The Schoolmaster* was prefixed to the front of where it was originally intended by James Bennet editor of the English works of Ascham without any fanfare or commentary with only the following single line at the bottom of its first page 'The letter to Queen *Elizabeth* is now first published from a manuscript.'[179] It was again printed without commentary by his nineteenth editors Cochrane (1815) and J. A. Giles (1865) but it does not appear in the single standard edition of *The Schoolmaster* edited by John E. B. Mayor, nor in the edition by his modern editor Ryan, published by the Folger Shakespeare Library in 1974.[180] Prior to this Ryan was responsible for the only modern full-length biography of Ascham (jointly published by Stanford and Oxford University Press in 1963/1964) in which he pointed out to his learned readership that despite his enduring fame for learning, prose writings and important correspondence, and that he was tutor, Latin secretary and companion to the most written about female figure in all English history, he has attracted relatively little biographical attention:

> Despite his considerable stature as a literary and historical figure, Ascham has been dealt with only in partial studies by modern scholars. Except for Alfred Katterfeld's volume in German, published more than eighty years ago, no critical biography has ever been attempted. In English, the most significant account of his life and writings has been Samuel Johnson's *vita*, written anonymously in 1761 to help sell the Reverend James Bennet's edition of Ascham's *English Works*. The following biography is an attempt to present the story of Ascham's life accurately and sympathetically, to trace the generation of his three principle English works from his reading, his personal experience, and his letters, and to assess his contribution to the intellectual heritage and prose literature of Elizabethan England.[181]

Unfortunately, in this, the only full-length English biographical account of Ascham's *Life*, his editor and biographer Professor Ryan, in a three hundred and fifty page work that includes a twenty-six page chapter on 'The Scholemaster', passes over the '*Diva Elizabethae*' in silence. On account of the quiet method of delivery without discussion and analysis, followed by more silence and suppression, I imagine the contents of this dedication to Queen Elizabeth by her tutor Ascham, who for many years from the outset of her reign attended upon her almost daily, is unfamiliar to the non-specialist reader, and for very good reason.

In the dedication presented in the form of a letter Ascham likens Elizabeth's life to that of the biblical story of King David. The parallels he draws between Elizabeth and David are pointed and unmistakable and reveal that he is intimately familiar with key aspects of her secret life. King David is captivated by the beautiful Bathsheba and commits adultery with her and murders her husband Uriah. After his death David and Bathsheba married and their first surviving son was Solomon. Similarly Elizabeth and Dudley committed adultery and were accused of conspiring to murder his wife Lady Amy Robsart Dudley to make way for their own marriage whose union produced a royal child known to history as Francis Bacon another baby Solomon wise beyond his years (he later named his scientific institution Solomon's House in *New Atlantis*):

> These blessinges of God to King David were greate, but there folowed far greater, both for the comfort of himselfe, and the happinesse of his subjectes: for he heard of Gods own mouthe, *Thine seade shall fit in thy seate*, which is the greatest comfort can come to a good Prince, and the joyfullest felicite that a good Prince can leave to his subjectes...

Most noble Princesse, and my best Ladie and Mistres, I ofte thinking of this race of Davides life; of his former miseries, of his later felicities, of Gods dealing with him at all pointes, to bring happinesse to his present Tyme, and safety to his posterity, have had, for many like causes, many like thoughtes, even of the like life and state of your Majesty.[182]

…the life of *David*, the image of a good Prince, a faire picture of a flourishing state and happie time, when God was alwayes in mynde, and his former benefites, his former deliveries from danger of deathe, never utterlie forgotten,...And in the ende, had this joyfull blessinge from Gods own mouthe by *Nathans* message, which all trewe *Englishe* harts dailie do praye, that God will send the same unto your Majestie: *Excitabo semen tuum postea, quod egredietur de utero tuo, et regnum seminis tui perpetuo firmabo* [*I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his Kingdom*].[183]

David was wrapte in a stranger case and kinde of miserie: for when God had shewed him greatest favor, and had given him the hiest benefites that man in earth could receive, yet God suffered him to fall into the deepest pitte of wickednes; to committe the cruellest murder, and shamefullest adultrie that ever did man on earthe. Whereinto he did not stumble by ignorance, nor slide by weakenesse, nor only fall by wilfullnesse, but went advisedly, purposing all practices, and finding out all fetches that mischiefe could imagine, to bring mischiefe to passe.[184]

And therefore was I verie willinge to offer this booke to your Majesty, wherein, as in a faire glasse, your Majesty shall see and acknowledge, by God's dealing with *David*, even verie many like good dealinges of God with your Majesty... and in the ende have as *David* had, that is, most prosperitie, and surest felicitie for you, youres, and your posteritie...

XXX°. OCTOB.
M. D. LXVI.

Your Majesties
Most bounden, and
Faithfull Servante,
R. ASCHAM.[185]

He was clearly aware that Queen Elizabeth had a secret child with Dudley which he hints at on several occasions 'for he [David] heard of Gods own mouthe, *Thine seade shall fit in thy seate*', and even more strikingly 'from Gods own mouthe by *Nathans* message, which all trewe *Englishe* harts dailie do praye, that God will send the same unto your Majestie: '*I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his Kingdom*.' He repeatedly reminds Elizabeth 'of this race of David life', his 'safety to his posterity', which Ascham likens to her own 'life and state of your Majesty' and the very last sentence he twice refers to her posterity: 'in the ende have as *David* had, that is, most prosperitie, and surest felicitie for you, youres, and your posteritie'. The repeated use of the words seed and posterity refers to the succession, her royal heir, one if she named him was destined to become King of England, and ensure the Tudor name and progeny passed down to future generations.

Shortly after the publication the *Schoolmaster* (without the suppressed dedication to Elizabeth) one of Mary, Queen of Scots followers, the Catholic Bishop of Galloway, preached a remarkable sermon against Queen Elizabeth where he also likened her to King David-as a sinner, an adulterer, and a murderer:

Saint David was a sinner, and so is she. Saint David was an adulterer, and so is she. Saint David committed murder in slaying Uriah for his wife, and so did she…I doubt not but you consider that no inferior subject has power to depose their lawful magistrates, although they commit whoredom, murder, incest, or any other crime.[186]

In the year that Ascham was prompted to write *The Schoolmaster* Elizabeth directed her Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon to begin building a country residence just outside London at Gorhambury and at the same time she heaped more preferment and grants upon Dudley. Following on from similar bequests the years before she granted him a licence to export cloth worth in excess of £6,000 per annum and presented to him the lordships and castles of Kenilworth and Denbigh plus lands in Lancashire, Surrey, Rutland, Carmathen, Cardigan, and York, followed the next year with the manors of Caldecote and Pelynge in Bedford. In September 1564 Dudley was created Earl of Leicester previously held by the royal princes John of Gaunt and Henry Bolingbroke, the future Henry IV designed to make him more acceptable to Mary, Queen of Scots in a diplomatic ploy by Elizabeth offering up Dudley as a husband to her rival which was never seriously meant and the cause of much mirth around the courts of Europe. Earlier in July the Spanish Ambassador Guzman De Silva reported to his royal master Philip that Dudley 'is in high favour and makes great offers and promises'. His friend 'also assured me that Robert still looks to marry the Queen, and thinks the religious question will be settled thereby. Robert, he says, has an understanding *with the Pope* on the matter, and a person at Rome to represent him. This he told me in strict secrecy, and greatly praises Robert's good intentions with regard to the marriage and about religion, but with equivocal assurances as to what measures would be adopted.' [187] Dudley stayed with Elizabeth during her official visit to Trinity College Cambridge in August 1564 and soon afterwards on 31 December he was appointed Chancellor of Oxford University. His royal wife Elizabeth had made him one of the most powerful, influential and wealthiest men in the whole kingdom but there was of course one thing which still eluded him, a public royal marriage, regarding which he had not given up hope; which in pursuit of behind the scenes Dudley was still devoting much time and energy on the domestic and international stage.

On 15 March 1565 De Silva wrote to Philip informing him that parliament had again been prorogued for among other reasons Elizabeth understands that it will press her to decide upon a marriage or appoint a successor 'The question of marriage is a difficult one, because if she weds Robert I am assured it will cause great dissatisfaction to the country, both amongst the higher classes and the common people'[188]With the pretence of a marriage with Archduke Charles in the air Elizabeth had again informed De Silva she wanted to marry but not with Dudley and he himself had told him the same. All negotiations for a proposed marriage between Elizabeth and Archduke Charles were going through, Dudley who was publicly pretending to support the match in another one of those political charades Dudley and his royal wife had already been playing for years and would for years to come. Later in the month De Silva related to Philip his meeting with Elizabeth concerning certain private affairs and other unofficial matters as well as the latest gossip on her marriage plans which beside the Archduke included proposals from the kings of France, Sweden and Denmark. The only monarch that had not been mentioned to her Elizabeth told De Silva was your king to which the wily Spanish ambassador knowingly replied, 'The king my master no doubt is convinced that your Majesty does not wish to marry since he, the greatest prince in Christendom and the wisest, to whom, I am told, your Majesty owes most obligation, was offered to you and nothing came of it.'[189] He was right Elizabeth certainly had no intentions of marrying any European monarch-she was already privately married to Dudley and the two of them (perhaps him more than her) were still hoping that they might if all their private and political stars aligned publicly marry and possibly name their successor,

the one living next door at York House with Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne Bacon, and to further complicate matters, she was now pregnant with her second child.

On 10 November 1565 Robert Devereux, the future second Earl of Essex was born, so it is said at Netherwood, Herefordshire the son of Walter Devereux, first Earl of Essex and his wife Lettice Knollys, who for the first decade of his life, about which virtually nothing is known, was mostly raised away from prying eyes on the family estate at Chartley, around one hundred and fifty miles from the Elizabethan court. He was however not the child of Walter Devereux, first Earl of Essex and Lettice Knollys but the second concealed royal child of Queen Elizabeth and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who in public stood as his godfather. In the decades ahead, the relationship between Queen Elizabeth and her two concealed royal children Francis Tudor Bacon and Robert Tudor Devereux dominated the political landscape of the final part of her life ending in a terrible tragedy when Essex over-reached himself for the crown, events configured and shadowed in the background of the Pregnancy Portrait. The fact that Francis Tudor Bacon and Robert Tudor Devereux were concealed royal brothers (of which there is an overwhelming abundance of evidence though this is not the place to disclose and discuss it) was itself also captured in a portrait overlooked for centuries.

In the middle of the twentieth century Dr Gerstenberg drew attention to an illustration by Adriaen van der Werff in Isaac De Larrey's four-volume *Histoire D'Angletterre, D'Ecosse, et D'Irlande* printed at Rotterdam in 1707.[190]An interpretation of the Queen Elizabeth Vestal Flame portrait with its three children one in the shadowy background dowsing the vestal flame (the sacred fire of Vesta representing the Vestal Virgins) and two other royal children Francis and Robert Tudor was provided by Professor Henrion who was in no doubt as to its import and meaning:

Professor Gerstenberg's very interesting find not only provides one more, in the already long list of pointers to Queen Elizabeth's real matrimonial condition, but affords an excellent example of the paramount importance of *context*…

It represents an oval portrait of the Queen, the frame of which is entwined with live boughs (not to be mistaken for the bays of the conqueror, the fruit is much too big), symbolising her sedulous avoidance of armed conflicts. Below the portrait is the essential feature-the altar on which, in honour of the "Virgin Queen", blaze the flames of the VESTAL FIRE. Behind, in the dark and the smoke of the fire, lurks an obscure child, with a gentlemen's hose and an orphan's cloak, who grasps in his right hand the semi-spherical extinguisher which fits the altar *focus*. The most inconvenient way in which he holds it leaves no doubt as to his gesture. He is going to cap the *focus* with it and extinguish the Vestal Fire, as our modern Vesta is no longer worthy of the name. This is the first-born child whose conception in sin invalidated the Queen's much publicised claim to maidenhood. The child is in the dark, firstly because this fact is not for public consumption…

The other two children, half-brothers to the first, being born in wedlock, are in full light. Besides, they became men of much greater note, one a general, the other a chancellor. They have nothing to do with the Fire because their mother had long ceased to be a devotee of Vesta when she bore them. They do not even look at the portrait of their ungrateful mother. Robert, on the left, looks his brother directly in the eye as he holds up in front of him his palm of a martyr-a martyr to his mother's unnatural relentlessness. Close scrutiny will show that he is speaking. He seems to say: this is what you did not save me from! Robert also wears a *paludamentum*, that vestment held by a clasp on the right shoulder and reserved to *imperators* (Roman commanders-in-chief). It is often used by artists to symbolize general-ship as Van der Werff does here for Essex. Francis, in the middle, holds a rudder (of ancient design, notice the helm at the top left), since he was destined to hold the helm of state, and ears of corn, since he cared for peace and prosperity more than military adventures.[191]

Queen Elizabeth-Vestal Flame Portrait with two children (representing Francis Tudor Bacon and Robert Tudor Devereux) by Adriaen van der Werff in Issac de Larrey, *Histoire D'Angleterre, D'Ecosse, et D'Irlande* (Amsterdam: Chez Jean Covens et Corneille Mortier, 1723), frontispiece.

A few years later the queen's cousin and the premier peer and only duke of the realm Thomas Howard, fourth Duke of Norfolk, a regional prince and senior member of the Privy Council, who was aware of the secret private marriage of Elizabeth and Dudley and that she had given birth to an unacknowledged son and heir-and a second child-of which it seems he left a hint to posterity. In his *Confessions for High Treason* Norfolk records when the court was at Guildford seeing a young child with both Elizabeth and Leicester in her private apartments delightfully playing a lute and singing to them:

when the court was at Guildford, he came unaware into the queen's privy chamber, and found her Majesty sitting on the threshold of the door, listening with one ear to a little child, who was singing and playing on the lute to her, and with the other to Leicester, who was kneeling by her side. The duke, a little confused, no doubt at interrupting a party so conveniently arranged, drew back; but her Majesty bade him enter. Soon after Leicester rose, and came to Norfolk, leaving the Queen listening to the child, and told him, "that he was dealing with the queen in his behalf when he approached;"… [192]

Knowing the private marriage of Queen Elizabeth and Dudley and that she had given birth to an unacknowledged heir to the throne was a heavily guarded state secret while fighting for his life on a charge of treason and the future of his family, he was careful not to be too specific about what he was witnessing, and did not, or dared not, name the child, whom he almost certainly knew was their secret royal offspring. How then can we be confident the child singing and playing the lute to Elizabeth and Leicester seen by Norfolk was their concealed son Francis? The answer has always been hidden in plain sight right in front of the eyes of the world as this and more occasions like it were later recalled by Bacon in one of his Shakespeare Sonnets:

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who all in one pleasing note do sing.
[Sonnet 8] [193]

In 1571 parliament passed the *Treasons Act* which made it treason to intend bodily harm to the queen, or levy war or incite others to make war against her, to affirm she has no right to the crown, but some other person, or to publish the queen is a heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel, or usurper of the crown, or to claim right to the crown, or to affirm the right of succession of the crown in some other than the queen. Or to say the laws and statutes do not bind the descent or inheritance concerning the succession to the throne. This is followed by:

Whosever shall during the Queen's Life, by any book, or work written or printed, expresly affirm, (before the same be established by parliament) That any one particular person is or ought to be heir or successor to the Queen, except the same be the natural issue of her body; or shall wilfully set up in open place, or spread any books or scrowls to that effect: or shall print, bind or put to sale, or utter, cause, &c. any such book or writing, he, his abettors and counsellers shall for the first offence be a whole year imprisoned, and forfeit half his goods; and for the second time shall incur the penalty of a praemunire.[194]

The great Elizabethan historian William Camden (1551-1623) was twenty years old when this Act of Treason was passed by parliament. He entered Oxford in 1566 the year the Earl of Leicester celebrated his appointment as Chancellor of the University

with a grand reception for Elizabeth. He left Oxford in 1571 and following four years in which the records are silent as to his whereabouts (nor any word regarding a patron, or where, or with whom, he resided during these years) he was appointed as a second master at Westminster School to its headmaster Edward Grant, a long-time friend of Bacon's uncle Cecil, presiding steward of the school, and a close colleague and friend of Ascham. In 1576 Grant published Ascham's letters under the title *Disertissimi viri Rogeri Aschami* in which Camden contributed a fulsome elegy entitled '*In doctissimi viri Rogeri Aschami laudem sylva*' and published a collection of his religious writings *Apologia doctissimi viri Rogeri Aschami* in 1577. Camden dedicated his famous work *Britannia* first published in 1586 to his patron Cecil which went through a number of enlarged editions of 1587, 1590, 1594 and 1600 dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. It was Cecil who suggested to Camden that he write a history of Queen Elizabeth's reign but it would be a decade later before he reluctantly took up the project. He began *Annales rerum Anglicarum, et Hibernicarum, regnate Elizabetha* (*The History of Elizabeth*) in what was the first history and biography of Elizabeth in 1607. The first part Books I to 3 of the *Annales* covering Elizabeth's reign up to 1588 first appeared in 1615. The second part Book IV was completed in 1617 and he sent the manuscript of it to Pierre Dupuy in Leiden with instructions that it should not be published until after his death. Part II of the *Annales* containing the fourth Book was finally published posthumously in Latin at Leiden in 1625 and London in 1627. It appears however, writes Spedding, that 'a better copy was in existence; that after the first three books were published, and the fourth copied, Camden had revised and corrected the whole' with a corrected copy of the latter 'through what channel we are not informed' was eventually passed down to Thomas Hearne and used in his edition of the entire work published in 1717. A large number of 'additions and more material alterations' found in a copy of the fourth book of Camden's *Annales* (now in the Cottonian Library) 'are in the hand of Francis Bacon.' Spedding supposes that 'Camden lent the MS. to Bacon to read and criticise; that Bacon had returned it with these passages suggested for insertion' in the MS copy of Camden's *Annals of Queen Elizabeth*.[195] The first part was translated into English in 1625 by Abraham Darcie from the 1624 French edition by Pierre de Bellegent with the fourth Book translated into English by Thomas Browne in 1629. An English version of the whole work first appeared in 1635 with further editions in 1675 and 1688.

In the preface it is clear that Camden is aware of the sensitivity of writing what was the first history and biography of Elizabeth with its repeated references to the Truth. Not unlike the Truth referred to by Dr Rawley in the *Resuscitatio* with its first English biography of Bacon ('whereby, I shall not tread too near, upon the *Heels* of *Truth*; Or of the Passages, and Persons; then concerned'), and in the vein of Dr Rawley, he gives enough of a hint of the truth regarding the reason for the precise wording of the 1571 Act of Treason (as quoted above):

> This seemed harsh to some, who were of the opinion that it would make for the Tranquillity of the Realm if an Heir apparent were designed. But incredible it is what Jests those that lewdly catch at Words made amongst themselves upon occasion of that Clause, *Except the same be the natural Issue of her Body*; forasmuch as the Lawyers term those Children *Natural* who are gotten out of Wedlock, whom Nature alone, and not honest Wedlock, hath begotten: and those they call *Lawfull*, according to the ordinary form of the Common Law of *England*, *who are lawfully procreated of the Body*. Insomuch as I my self, being then a young man, have heard some oftentimes say, that that word was inserted into the Act of purpose by *Leicester*, that he might one day obtrude upon the English some Bastard-son of his for the Queen's *natural Issue*.[196]

What Camden wanted to say was the specific intentions behind the change in wording in the 1571 Act of Treason was Elizabeth and Leicester wished to legally pave the way to ensure the acceptance of her natural issue if in future they decided to publicly name their rightful successor to the throne. Regarding any problems or disputes that may arise in gaining acceptance for her private marriage and first born child Elizabeth no doubt with the full support of Dudley refused to have the word 'lawful' annexed to the 'natural issue of her body.' The fact their first child was conceived out of wedlock would thus not lawfully prove an impediment and if circumstances allowed they had pre-empted any opposition to one day naming their royal heir.

Sometime in September 1576 Bacon was at court in the presence of Elizabeth and her ladies and gentlemen who were dancing and singing making merry 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. Born within two years of each other Bacon (*b*. 1561) and Cecil (*b*.1563) saw much of each other in their formative years growing up in their family estates at Gorhambury and Theobalds in Hertfordshire and the grand London residences of York House official residence of Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas Bacon and Cecil House (built by Cecil) on the Strand. From the beginning there was no love lost between the two cousins: on the one hand the prodigious Bacon, who it was said, by the age of twelve had a mind which surpassed all his contemporaries and who would become the greatest of all English philosophers and the greatest dramatist of all time; and the other, Cecil, a crafty, devious and treacherous sycophant destined to become a scheming, reviled, and universally loathed politician. To make matters worse, Bacon was tall, handsome, and regal in his appearance and demeanour, whereas in marked contrast, Cecil was a dwarfed deformed hunchback with an ill-disposed nature (whom Bacon afterwards alluded to in his essay *Of Deformity* and whose ambitious, ruthless and treacherous character is reflected in the titular character of *Richard III*) that made dogs bark at him in the street. In the word cipher Bacon described him as 'that bottled spider, that hunchback'd toad' a 'base dwarf' who of all men 'had the countenance/Of the queen and received much honour and favour from her'.[197] In cipher Bacon relates that when Cecil entered the scene Elizabeth's Ladies-in-Waiting ignored his presence and he entreats his royal mistress to dismiss them from court. Let them laugh and be merry Elizabeth tells him. They would rather lose a friend than a jest. They will be scoffing or insulting their inferiors-after all for their sport they must crucify someone. Gesturing to her ladies Elizabeth says every one of them pities you and if you only did hear them play and dance I know you would be well-pleased indeed. You would she playfully continues be well-taken with such companions and teasing him further says they 'Will be especially delighted to let thee/Be in company with them'. With a wave of the royal hand she beckons to Lady Scales and addresses her in mock seriousness 'This good gentleman/Is not ashamed to confess that he takes infinite delight/In singing, dancing, music, woman's company/And such like pleasures, therefore,/He wouldst have thee dance./And fair goddess, fall not deep in love with him.' Entering into the spirit of the jest Lady Scales plays her part with equal aplomb 'Does the lamb love the wolf?', she asks, 'If he were but grim I would not care./I then would be content, for then I should love him./But all may witness, he is fair.' Elizabeth tickled with her wit laughed loudly and no doubt did the rest of her court apart from a scowling Cecil who felt struck down and humiliated. He followed the maid and in silence like a blasted tree among them while they completely ignored him 'They broke away as if he were a mad dog/Which must by all means be avoided.' In tune with his essay *Of Deformity* in cipher Bacon says 'all deformed persons are/Extreme

bold, first in their own defence' and with malice they carefully 'watch and observe weakness in others/ That they may have somewhat to repay'. Here he says Cecil stood 'Like a hapless, wretched, misshaped and sullen knave', while everybody were busy talking about him behind his back. Thus needs be this 'foul devil' and 'hard-hearted, unnatural monster' devised 'a way to be revenged' upon this fair maid and at the same time be 'honoured, admired and highly magnified' by cruelly deceiving Lady Scales 'Into covert rubs of the worth and honour/Of the Queen',[198] which nearly cost the royal Lady-in-Waiting her life:

> The complexion of the maid changed from pale to red
> And from scarlet to pale when he
> With big, thundering voiced cried twice:
> 'All this condemns you to the death
> To so much dishonour the fair queen.'
> As falcon to the lure, flies the queen to him
> And ask'd what he had heard.
> 'Madam, this innocent and pure model,
> Moved by love for thee, told me
> That thou art an arrant whore and that thou
> Bore a son to the noble Leicester.
> I pray that thou give her chastisement.
> Either thou must, or have thy honour
> Soiled with the attainder of her slanderous lips.'[199]

As a 'painted tyrant the queen stood' as all the court fell silent bracing themselves for her reaction before Elizabeth exploded into an uncontrollable rage with all its ugly anger and force directed against the maligned Lady Scales 'Thou liest, dishonourable, vicious wench!' and 'By God, we will cut and mince/The throat that doth call us a common whore!/Like to a Turkish mute/Thou shalt have a tongueless mouth.' In an attempt to elude capture from the predator bearing down upon her in terror Lady Scales turns to flee with a raging Elizabeth earnestly giving chase after her prey. In this unsightly melee Lady Scales lost her balance and slipped down on the floor and in an instance a raving Elizabeth dived on top of her like a woman possessed violently grabbing and pulling at her hair 'I'll unhair thy head; thou shalt/Be whipt with wire and stewed in brine,/Smarting in lingering pickle./I'll spurn thine eyes like balls before me./I will teach thee to slander me-/Thou hast lived too long.' From one of the courtiers in front of her Elizabeth snatches a knife and with her life now clearly in imminent danger Lady Scales again attempts to flee her attacker but to no avail as the queen threw herself upon her. Wildly brandishing her weapon of destruction Elizabeth struck at her heart and bosom as Lady Scales cried and pleaded for her life. Devoid of any compassion-and in keeping with Lady Macbeth-the milk of human kindness, this cruel minister of death went for the kill. With her full weight Elizabeth 'stamped upon her breasts' as Lady Scales lay helpless and bleeding form her wounds before finally someone struck up the enough courage to intervene and save this poor woman's life.[200]

With tears in his eyes a courageous young Francis took hold of the queen's arm urging her to come to her senses and realise what she had done. He pleads with her to stop her barbarous onslaught and let him help Lady Scales who was evidently in need of medical attention and support from one of the royal physicians. The enraged queen immediately transferred her fury and anger from Lady Scales towards Francis for

daring to have the temerity to intercede in front of the whole court 'The wrath of the enraged queen/Like an earthquake/Fell upon my head, and my lord,/I'll tell you what, all my glories/In that one woman I forever lost' before she unloaded the revelation of his royal birth:

> The queen like thunder spoke:
> 'How now, thou cold-blooded slave,
> Wilt thou forsake thy mother
> And chase her honour up and down?
> Cursed be the time of thy nativity!
> I would the milk thy nurse gave thee
> When thou suck'st her breast
> Had been a little rats-bane.
> I am thy mother. Wilt thou stoop now
> And this good girly take away from me?'
> I stand aside aghast and most astonished.
> Then she said again:
> 'Slave! I am thy mother.
> Thou mightst be an emperor but that I will not
> Bewray who son thou art;
> Nor though with honourable parts
> Thou art adorned, will I make thee great
> For fear thyself should prove
> My competitor and govern England and me.'
>
> Great God, all our care hath been
> To have this secret hid!
> And now to have a wretched, puling fool,
> A whining mammet in her fortunes tender,
> Tell it in company of the whole court![201]

With this as Lady Scales was being helped to her feet Elizabeth tells her injured and bloodied Lady-in-Waiting she will pardon her but with the dire warning and threat to hold her tongue in future before dismissing her from the court. The same warning is directed at Francis 'Speak not of this/That thou hast heard, but go./Speak not; begone! I desire thee/To know no more. Look, let thy lips/Rot off e'er thou speak of this. Get you gone.'[202] With his head reeling from the revelation in tears Francis rushed home to Lady Bacon who confirmed to him the truth of his royal birth:

> "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 you 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 the sonne o' my heart.[203]

Before the above revelation described through his word and bi-literal cipher systems Bacon was entered at Gray's Inn on 27 June 1576 fully expecting to commences his studies in law whereas the open facts of history show this did not occur and sometime in the autumn it was decided by Queen Elizabeth and Dudley that he was to be sent to

France in the train of Sir Amias Paulet. It is reported through his word cipher that his royal mother wanted him out of the way:

> And to shield thee from disasters of the world,
> I am resolved that thou shall spend some time
> In the French emperor's court.
> Muse not that I thus suddainly proceed,
> For what I will, I will; and there an end.
> To-morrow be in readiness to go;
> Excuse it not, for I am peremptory.
> Madam, I cannot so soon be provided;
> Please you deliberate a day or two.
> No more; look, what thou wantest
> Shall be sent after you.
>
> 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.[204]

Before the revelation of his royal birth as far as Lord Keeper Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne Bacon were concerned Francis had been admitted to Gray's Inn and was about to commence his law studies. When they discovered Elizabeth had decided the child they had reared as their own for the last fifteen years was to be sent abroad to France they were understandably upset and both of them in their own way made overtures to the queen which predictably fell on deaf ears:

> th' Queene…sent for good Paulet and arranged that under pretexte of great import, I should accompany our ambassage to France. I was plact in th' care of Sir Amyias and left th' shores of my own faire lande without a moment of warning soe to speak. Th' Queene by her [power] royall, and her rights maternall, readily overrul'd all our several objections. No teares on part o' my dear foster-mother, nor entreaties o' that o' grave Sir N. Bacon avail'd, while I, as soone as my first protest had been waived, occupied my fantasy houre after houre, picturing to myselfe th' life in forraine lands.[205]

With all the preparations finally completed Sir Amias Paulet, English Ambassador-elect to France and his large entourage including a young Francis prepared themselves for the journey across the Channel. The memory of his departure lived with Bacon for the rest of his days. Writing some two decades later in a letter to his cousin Sir Robert Cecil he refers to having served Elizabeth 'for these one-and-twenty-years (for so it is that I kissed her Majesty's hands upon my journey into France)' and at the same time to his concealed royal brother the Earl of Essex of serving 'now these twenty years (for so long it is, and more, since I went with Sir Amyas Paulet into France, from her Majesty's royal hand)'.[206] The costs and expenses for a resident ambassador in France was enormous which in the case of Paulet were further added to by Elizabeth, who besides Francis, had insisted on several others being added to his entourage, 'my train hath been great by reason of divers gentlemen recommended unto me by the Queen's Majesty as Master Doctor Caesar, Mr Throckmorton and Mr Hilliard besides those of mine owne company'[207] After kissing and departing from the royal hand of his mother Queen Elizabeth the young and excited Francis set sail for France in an embassy train that included the miniature painter Nicholas Hilliard (afterwards joined in Paris by the

cryptographer Thomas Phelippes 'the grand master of intelligence ciphers'), whom Bacon struck up a close relationship lasting decades. The embassy train of Sir Amias Paulet landed at Calais on 25 September 1576 and arrived in the French capital eight days later on 3 October home of the royal court of Henry III and his mother Catherine de Medici.

The three years Bacon spent in France are to the present day still shrouded in secrecy largely on account of his royal birth and his concealed authorship of the Shakespeare poems and plays-several of which are partly based in or relate to the French kingdom: *Love's Labour's Lost, King John, I Henry VI, 3 Henry VI, Henry V, All's Well That Ends Well* and *As You Like It* with its pointed weeping stage scene as portrayed in the Pregnancy Portrait of Queen Elizabeth. Later in life he reckoned these years in France to have been among the most formative for his personal and intellectual development 'I was', he wrote 'three of my young years bred with an ambassador in France',[208] a kingdom he evidently fell in love with.

His close companion in Paris the goldsmith, jeweller and miniature painter Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619) had most probably known Bacon years before they both arrived in France in the train of Sir Amias Paulet. In the 1560s he and his brother John were apprenticed to leading goldsmiths in Cheapside near St Paul's three miles from where Bacon grew up at York House on the Strand. The master under whom Hilliard served his apprenticeship was Queen Elizabeth's jeweller Robert Brandon. After completing his apprenticeship Hilliard became a freeman of the Goldsmith's Company on 29 July 1569 and he soon came to the attention of Elizabeth who was fully aware of the power of iconography, representation, and the importance of image. Sometime early in the next decade Hilliard was appointed goldsmith, jeweller and limner to Queen Elizabeth whom he painted on numerous occasions over the next years and decades. The first of his many portrait miniatures of Elizabeth is dated 1572 (National Portrait Gallery) and by his own account during the first sitting Elizabeth asked about the use of shadowing by various artists from different nations and after telling her that the best way to show oneself was in open light she sat for the purpose in the garden. On 9 January 1573 he received the first of several royal promises of tithes with the grant of the reversion of a lease of the rectory and church of Cleve in Somerset and later in the October there is a warrant under the Privy Seal for payment of the large sum of £100 for unspecified work, however it remains unclear whether he ever received it.[209] The famous Phoenix (National Portrait Gallery) and Pelican (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool) portraits of Elizabeth (*c.*1575) are believed to have been painted by Hilliard or under his direction in the same workshop and in 1576 Hilliard painted a miniature of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (National Portrait Gallery) the year he travelled to France with Bacon.

We know from a letter from Sir Amias Paulet written to John Peter, Auditor of the Exchequer dated 8 October 1576 that Hilliard had been recommended for his embassy to France by Queen Elizabeth with orders to provide her with a likeness of long time suitor Francois, Duc d'Alencon, brother of Henry III of France and Queen Marguerite of Navarre.[210] As with Bacon the royal painter immersed himself in French society in particular in the company of the French poet Ronsard and members of the Pleiade and he struck up a close friendship with philosopher and cryptographer Blaise de Vigenere who later published a treatise on codes and ciphers *Traicte des Chiffres, ou Secretes Manieres d'Escrire* (Paris, 1586), a work familiar to Bacon (with some suggesting he actually wrote it).[211] Hilliard had originally been sent to France by Queen Elizabeth and in early February 1578 his royal patron was becoming concerned that her court painter had not by then returned to England. On 19 February 1578 Sir Amias Paulet wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham to give assurances that Hilliard was not planning on

staying in France any longer than necessary and that had he no intention of leaving her service. He remained in France for no other purpose than to, 'get a piece of money of the lords and ladies here for his better maintenance in England at his return; where he would have been before this time if he had not been disappointed by some misfortunes, intending to repair thither very shortly, and carry his wife with him.'[212] It seems likely that Hilliard hoped to return shortly as his wife was at the time pregnant or there may have been some other unknown reason why he delayed his stay in France. In a letter from Sir Amias Paulet to the Earl of Hertford dated several months later from Paris on 16 June the English Ambassador writes 'Heyler hath prayed me to signify unto your Lordship that he had finished your jewel long before this time if God had not visited him with sickness, and that he trusteth to end the same within three weeks, and then will not fail either to bring or send it to your Lordship'.[213] During this delay sometime in 1578 Hilliard (who had painted miniatures of Elizabeth in 1572 and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester in 1576) painted a miniature of Francis then in his eighteenth year with the following inscription '1578 Si tabula daretur digna/Animum mallem AE S 18' (If only I could paint his mind). It is not known who commissioned the miniature of Francis. It may possibly have been commissioned by Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne Bacon or even by Francis himself, or more likely, it was commissioned by Hilliard's royal patron Queen Elizabeth, the royal mother of the sitter. The likeness of the three miniatures of Queen Elizabeth, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Francis all bear an unmistakable striking resemblance to each other (the true significance of which if not already known would no doubt not have been lost on a great artist like Hilliard). They simply look unmistakably like what they are-three miniature portraits of a Mother, Father, and their Son, namely Queen Elizabeth, her husband Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Francis, the concealed Tudor, Prince of Wales and heir to the royal throne of England.

Francis Bacon by Nicholas Hilliard National Portrait Gallery no. 6761

Queen Elizabeth by Nicholas Hilliard National Portrait Gallery no. 108

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester by Nicholas Hilliard National Portrait Gallery no. 4197

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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, Ltd), 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

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88. Martin S Hume, ed., *Calendar Of Letters And State Papers Relating To English Affairs, Preserved Principally In The Archives Of Simancas. Vol.1. Elizabeth 1558-1567* (London: printed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1892), pp. 57-8.
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90. Rawdon Brown and G. Cavendish Bentinck, eds., *Calendar Of State Papers And Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs Existing In The Archives And Collections of Venice And In Other Libraries Of Northern Italy* (London: printed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1894), p. 69.
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92. Martin S Hume, ed., *Calendar Of Letters And State Papers Relating To English Affairs, Preserved Principally In The Archives Of Simancas. Vol.1. Elizabeth 1558-1567* (London: printed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1892), p. 59.
93. James Anthony Froude, *History Of England The Fall Of Wolsey To The Defeat Of The Spanish Armada* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1870), VI, pp. 271-2.
94. Ibid., pp. 333-6.
95. Ibid., p. 340.
96. Frederick Chamberlain, *The Private Character Of Queen Elizabeth* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head Limited, 1922), p. 173.
97. Ibid., pp. 173-5.
98. Ibid., p. 176.

99. Ibid., pp. 176-7.
100. 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. 91.
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127. Ibid., $B2^{r-v}$.
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131. Granville C. Cunningham, 'A New Life Of Lord Bacon', *Baconiana*, Vol. IV. Third Series, April 1906, No. 14 (London: Gay and Bird, 1905), p. 78.
132. Gilbert Wats, ed., *Of The Advancement And Proficience Of Learning or the Partition Of Sciences IX Bookes Written in Latin by the Most Eminent Illustrious & Famous Lord Bacon Baron of Verulam Viscont S^t^ Alban Counsilour of Estate and Lord Chancellor of England* (Oxford: printed by Leonard Litchfield printed to the University for Robert Young and Edward Forrest, 1640), A1^v^.
133. Granville C. Cunningham, 'A New Life Of Lord Bacon', *Baconiana*, Vol. IV. Third Series, April 1906, No. 14 (London: Gay and Bird, 1905), p. 84.
134. Walter Begley, *Bacon's Nova Resuscitatio Or The Unveiling of his Concealed Works and Travels* (London: Gay and Bird, 1905), III, pp. 1-33. It is difficult to understand how Begley missed or overlooked the references and allusions to his secret royal birth (p. 11).
135. Granville C. Cunningham, 'A New Life Of Lord Bacon', *Baconiana*, Vol. IV. Third Series, April 1906, No. 14 (London: Gay and Bird, 1905), pp. 69-84. He reproduced the translation in *Bacon's Secret Disclosed In Contemporary Books* (London: Gay and Hancock, 1911), pp. 49-58.
136. The biographer of Bacon known to the present writer to refer to these passages is Bryan Bevan, *The Real Francis Bacon A Biography* (London: Centaur, 1960), pp. 33-4 'Ambiose also informs us "He was born to the purple and brought up with the expectation of a great career. He saw himself destined one day to hold in his hand the Helm of the Kingdom". Advocates of the theory that Francis was the concealed son of Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester have used these rather ambiguous statements to support their belief…When Ambiose says Francis "was born to the purple", he is of course using the phrase in its figurative sense. It is curious, however, that it was Francis' favourite colour. At his wedding many years later he wore a resplendent suit of Genoese velvet "purple from cap to shoe".
137. Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1998), p. 502.
138. Robert P. Ellis, *Francis Bacon The Double-Edged Life of the Philosopher and Statesman* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2015).
139. This point is highlighted by Granville C. Cunningham, 'A New Life Of Lord Bacon', *Baconiana*, Vol. IV. Third Series, April 1906, No. 14 (London: Gay and Bird, 1905), p. 71.
140. Pierre Ambiose, 'Discovrs Svr La Vie De M^re^ Francois Bacon, Chancelier D' Angleterre', in *Histoire Natvrelle De M^re^ Francois Bacon, Baron de Verulan, Viscomtede sainct Alban, & Chancelier d'Angleterre* (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville & Andre Sovbron, 1631), pp. 1-2; Granville C. Cunningham, 'A New Life Of Lord Bacon', *Baconiana*, Vol. IV. Third Series, April 1906, No. 14 (London: Gay and Bird, 1905), pp. 72-3.
141. Pierre Ambiose, 'Discovrs Svr La Vie De M^re^ Francois Bacon, Chancelier D'

Angleterre', in *Histoire Natvrelle De M^re^ Francois Bacon, Baron de Verulan, Viscomtede sainct Alban, & Chancelier d'Angleterre* (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville & Andre Sovbron, 1631), pp. 2-3; Granville C. Cunningham, 'A New Life Of Lord Bacon', *Baconiana*, Vol. IV. Third Series, April 1906, No. 14 (London: Gay and Bird, 1905), p. 73.

142. Pierre Ambiose, 'Discovrs Svr La Vie De M^re^ Francois Bacon, Chancelier D' Angleterre', in *Histoire Natvrelle De M^re^ Francois Bacon, Baron de Verulan, Viscomtede sainct Alban, & Chancelier d'Angleterre* (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville & Andre Sovbron, 1631), pp. 5-9; Granville C. Cunningham, 'A New Life Of Lord Bacon', *Baconiana*, Vol. IV. Third Series, April 1906, No. 14 (London: Gay and Bird, 1905), pp. 73-4.
143. 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. 27-8, see also, pp. 29-33, 44. See also
144. Orville W. Owen, *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story* (Detroit and New York: Howard Publishing Company, 1894); I, pp. 108-9.
145. 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); Part III, pp. 11-5, at p. 15.
146. For a facsimile of the baptismal record, see Alfred Dodd, *The Marriage Of Elizabeth Tudor* (London: Rider and Co., 1940), between pp. 32-3 and Alfred Dodd, *Francis Bacon's Personal Life-Story* (London: Rider & Company, 1986), between pp. 48-9. See also Jean Overton Fuller, *Francis Bacon A Biography* (London and The Hague: East-West Publications, 1981), p. 26n1.
147. 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), p. 212.
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150. Ibid., p. 180.
151. Ibid., p. 181.
152. Ibid., p. 181.
153. Ibid., pp.181-2.
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156. Ibid., pp. 187-8.
157. Ibid., p. 188.
158. Ibid., p. 188.
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162. Ibid., VI, p. 504.
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165. Ibid., p. 262.
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167. See Paul Hemenway Altrocchi, 'The Queen Elizabeth Pregnancy Portrait: *Who designed it and who did the cover- ups*?', *Shakespeare Matters*, I (2002), pp. 12-13; Paul Hemenway Altrocchi, *Malice Aforethought*: *The Killing Of A Genius* (2010), pp. 316-7; David Shakespeare, 'The Pregnancy Portrait of Elizabeth I', (First edition May, 2018, online), pp. 26-7.
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169. Robert Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon The Making of a Tudor Statesman* (Ohio University Press, 1976), pp. 40-1.
170. John Neale, *Queen Elizabeth* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1947), p. 33.
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172. Lawrence V. Ryan, *Roger Ascham* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press: London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 112.
173. J. A. Giles, ed., *The Whole Works Of Roger Ascham, Now First Collected And Revised, With A Life Of The Author* (London: John Russell Smith, 1864), I, pp. 174-6.
174. Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster Or plaine and perfite way of teachyng chyldren, to vnderstand, write, and speake, the Latin tong, but specially purposed for the priuate brynging up of youth in Iengtlemen and Noble mens houses, and commodious also for all such, as haue forgot the Latine tonge, and would, by themselues, with a a Scholemaster, in short tyme, and with small paines, recouer a sufficient habilitie, to vnderstand, write, and speake Latin* (London: printed by John Day, 1570), B3^{r}.
175. J. A. Giles, ed., *The Whole Works Of Roger Ascham, Now First Collected And Revised, With A Life Of The Author* (London: John Russell Smith, 1864), III, p. 138.
176. Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster* (London: printed by John Day, 1570), B3^{v}.
177. Ibid., B3^{v}.
178. Ibid., A2^{r}.
179. James Bennet, ed., *The English Works of Roger Ascham* (London: printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1761), p. 179.
180. It was printed without any commentary by J. G. Cochrane, ed., *The English Works Of Roger Ascham* (London: printed for White, Cochrane and Co, 1815), pp. 175-182 and J. A. Giles, ed., *The Whole Works Of Roger Ascham First Collected and Revised, With A Life of The Author* (London: John Russell Smith, 1865), III, pp. 65-75. It is not found in the standard edition by John E. B. Mayor, ed., *The Scholemaster* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1863) based upon the edition of 1570 (with corrected here and there by the 1571 edition); nor in William Aldis Wright, ed., *Roger Ascham English Works* (Cambridge University Press, 1904). As its title indicates the following edition by Lawrence V. Ryan is based upon the original 1570 edition, *The Schoolmaster* (*1570*) (published for The Folger Shakespeare Library by the University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1974).

181. Lawrence V. Ryan, *Roger Ascham* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press: London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 7.
182. James Bennet, ed., *The English Works of Roger Ascham* (London: printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1761), p. 182.
183. Ibid., p. 184.
184. Ibid., pp. 185-6.
185. Ibid., p. 186.
186. John Neale, *Queen Elizabeth* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1947), p. 198.
187. Martin S. Hume, ed., *Calendar Of Letters And State Papers Relating To English Affairs, Preserved Principally In The Archives Of Simancas. Vol.1. Elizabeth 1558-1567* (London: printed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1892), pp. 366-7.
188. Ibid., pp. 407-8.
189. Ibid., pp. 409-11
190. Issac de Larrey, *Histoire D'Angleterre, D'Ecosse, et D'Irlande* (Amsterdam: Chez Jean Covens et Corneille Mortier, 1723), frontispiece. See the engraving of Queen Elizabeth by Cornelis Martinus Vermeulen, after Adriaen van der Werff, in the National Portrait Gallery, NPG d25036. The discovery is highlighted in *Baconiana*, Vol. XXXIX No 153, December 1955, Editorial, p.103.
191. P. Henrion, 'Van Der Werff's Portrait Of Elizabeth: A Study in Context' in *Baconiana*, Vol. Xl No.154, June 1956, pp. 8-10. A similar interpretation of the portrait is given by Peter Dawkins in *Dedication To The Light*: *The Bardic Mysteries, The Love Affair of Elizabeth I and Leicester, The Birth and Adoption of Francis Bacon, Gorhambury Platonic Academy* (The Francis Bacon Research Trust, 1984), p. 102. He reproduces the illustration on p. 104.
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193. As far as the present writer is aware the first to point this out was Alfred Dodd in *The Marriage Of Elizabeth Tudor* (London: Rider and Co., 1940), pp. 46-7; see also by the same author *Francis Bacon's Personal Life-Story* (London: Rider & Company, 1986), p. 64.
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199. Ibid., p. 93.
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201. Ibid., pp. 97-8.
202. Ibid., p. 101. See also 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. 28-32 and 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:

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