

Charles Beauclerk A Descendant of Edward de Vere, Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, the Founder and President of the De Vere Society

The leading light of the Oxfordian movement Charles Francis Topham de Vere Beauclerk (*b.* 1965), Earl of Burford, is heir apparent to Murray Beauclerk, fourteenth Duke of St Albans and is descended from Charles Beauclerk, the first Duke of St. Albans, the illegitimate son of Charles II and Nell Gwynne. He was educated at Eton College and Sherborne school before moving up to Hertford College, Oxford. Through his father he is related to Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford.

He is the Founder and President of the De Vere Society, former President of the Shakespeare Oxford Society, and trustee of the Shakespeare Authorship Trust.

He founded The De Vere Society at Hertford College, Oxford in 1986. According to its own website:

The De Vere Society is dedicated to an appreciation and celebration of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550–1604) as the true genius behind the literary pseudonym ‘William Shakespeare’. Founded at Oxford University in 1986 the Society organises tours, theatre trips, lectures, forums and social events; it publishes essays, articles, reviews, videos, audio recordings and books, and promotes research around the world. Anyone who enjoys the works of Shakespeare and is intrigued by the greatest of all authorship mysteries is welcome to join.

Among its patrons is the famous actor Sir Derek Jacobi with Alexander Waugh Chairman and a member of its Board of Trustees.

After spending more than two decades researching the Shakespeare Authorship Question in 2010 Beauclerk published *Shakespeare’s Lost Kingdom: The True History of Shakespeare and Elizabeth*. In a work whose central theme is the true identity of our immortal poet and dramatist Shakespeare, Beauclerk only once refers to Francis Bacon and the Baconians in the following passage here quoted in its entirety:

When serious and persistent doubts over the identity of Shakespeare began to appear in print in the mid-nineteenth century, the search was on for the man whose life and learning matched the high culture of the Shakespeare canon. The Victorians promoted Francis Bacon, who held the field for over sixty years. Baconians, as they are now called, were the first to realize the significance of the royal theme in Shakespeare, but their reliance on fantastically complex ciphers, as witness Minnesota congressman Ignatius Donnelly’s *The Great Cryptogram* (1888), stretched credulity. Then, in November 1918, a sealed envelope was entrusted to Sir Frederick Kenyon, head librarian at the British Museum, by an English schoolmaster with the provocative name of J. Thomas Looney (1870-1944). Inside was a statement of his discovery of the true identity of the man who wrote under the pen name William Shakespeare [i.e., Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford].¹

The mercifully brief passage contains a series of misstatements of fact. As the candidate for the true authorship of the Shakespeare poems and plays Francis Bacon and the Baconians did not hold sway for over sixty years a *terminus ad quem* determined by the publication of J. Thomas Looney’s letter to Sir Frederick Kenyon in 1918 followed by the publication of his *Shakespeare Identified* first printed in 1920. It took another half-a century before the Oxfordian movement started to gain any real traction and in the interim it is reported that at one time it had less than fifty supporters before their support began to slowly but steadily rise from the 1970s during which time the Baconians were still the dominant force producing numerous books and The

Francis Bacon Society literally hundreds of articles in support of his authorship in its journal *Baconiana*.

This misleading assertion served as a prelude to the incorrect and absurd misrepresentation of the overwhelming mountainous and irrefutable evidence revealing and confirming that Bacon is the secret author of the Shakespeare works, when Beauclerk misinformed that the Baconians reliance on fantastically complex ciphers stretched credulity, citing the example of *The Great Cryptogram* by Ignatius Donnelly published more than a hundred and thirty years ago. This simply risible and ludicrous nonsense conveyed the misleading impression to the Oxfordian flock that a larger part of the Baconian position rested upon this and little else. Whereas on a point of fact there is not a single living Baconian who rests his or her support for Lord Bacon's authorship of the Shakespeare works on fantastically complex ciphers put forward by Ignatius Donnelly.

Rather the evidence advanced and relied upon by Baconian scholars is wide and various and covers all aspects of historical, evidential and factual critical inquiry into Bacon's authorship of the Shakespeare works, built upon numerous primary manuscript and printed documents, regarding which I provide the following five examples:

1] FRANCIS BACON'S PRIVATE NOTEBOOK *THE PROMUS OF FORMULARIES AND ELEGANCIES* A MAJOR SOURCE FOR HIS SHAKESPEARE POEMS AND PLAYS

In ordinary circumstances this contemporary manuscript document named the *Promus of Formularies and Elegancies* would be well known to every Bacon and Shakespeare scholar and student of English literature around the world. Bacon's unique private notebook held at the British Library contains a total of 51 leaves numbered pages 83 to 132 all written (apart from some French proverbs) in his own hand. The Folio numbered 85 is headed 'Promus' and beneath it appears the date 'Dec. 5, 1594' with the Folio numbered 114 headed 'Formularies Promus' carrying the date '27 Jan. 1595' (i.e., January 1596). It contains 1655 entries jotted down as an aid to his memory. The entries include single words, phrases, lines, turns of speech, metaphors, similes, aphorisms, and various moral and philosophical observations. These include entries drawn from the Bible; Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, and English proverbs; and lines and verses from classical poets and dramatists, among them, Virgil, Ovid, Seneca, Horace, and Terence. It is the source of several hundred resemblances, correspondences and parallels found throughout his Shakespeare poems and plays.²

2] FRANCIS BACON'S OWN COLLECTION OF MSS KNOWN AS THE NORTHUMBERLAND MANUSCRIPT ORIGINALLY CONTAINING HIS TWO SHAKESPEARE PLAYS *RICHARD II* AND *RICHARD III*

The Bacon collection of manuscripts hitherto known as The Northumberland Manuscript contains various writings by Bacon, comprising letters, essays, religio-political treatises, dramatic devices and originally held two of his Shakespeare plays *Richard II* and *Richard III*.

All the evidence makes tolerably certain that no part of the manuscript was written after c.1596-7. The precise dating of the manuscript is not merely some historical curiosity. The precision of the date is of the most manifest importance for the very simple reason that in 1597 William Shakespeare was not publicly known as a dramatic author. The pseudonym first appeared on the 1598 quarto edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* the same year it appeared on the title pages of

the quartos of *Richard II* and *Richard III*, most probably printed from the manuscripts that were originally part of this Bacon-Shakespeare Manuscript.

In addition to originally having held two of Bacon's Shakespeare plays *Richard II* and *Richard III*, the outer cover of his collection of manuscripts contains references and links to his narrative Shakespeare poem *The Rape of Lucrece* and another three of his Shakespeare plays *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Romeo and Juliet* & *The Merchant of Venice*. This is moreover the only manuscript where the names Bacon and Shakespeare appear together in a contemporary document. Various forms of his name Bacon and Francis Bacon and pseudonym Shakespeare and William Shakespeare are scribbled all over its outer cover on around twenty occasions. Above the entry for his Shakespeare play *Richard II* appears the entry 'By Mr. ffrauncis William Shakespeare', and further down the word 'Your' is twice written across his pseudonym William Shakespeare-so it reads 'Your William Shakespeare'. As if to emphasise this entry a second occurrence of the name 'ffrauncis' is written upside down above the first 'ffrauncis' thus reading from left to right 'ffrauncis William Shakespeare'. Below the entry for 'Rychard the second', and above the entry for 'Rychard the third', appears his name 'ffrauncis' and to the left 'Bacon' and the right 'Shakespeare'. Below at the bottom of the outer cover his pseudonym 'William Shakespeare' is repeated numerous times, and as if to emphasise one more time Bacon is Shakespeare, we are met with the possessive entry 'your William Shakespeare'.³

3] THE SO-CALLED 'DERING' MANUSCRIPT OF *HENRY IV* THE UNIQUE AND EARLIEST KNOWN SHAKESPEARE MANUSCRIPT (c. 1596) ORIGINATING FROM BACON'S LITERARY WORKSHOP AND CORRECTED IN HIS OWN HAND

It is little known to virtually all Shakespeare scholars, the ordinary schoolmen, and the rest of the world that there exists an early manuscript version of the play *Henry IV*. *This manuscript is the earliest extant manuscript of a Shakespeare play ever discovered.*

This manuscript was discovered in 1844 preserved in the collection of the eighth Baronet Sir Edward Dering (1807-96) at Surrenden Hall near Pluckley in Kent. It had previously formed part of the library of the first Sir Edward Dering (1598-1644), an antiquarian with an interest in literature and drama, named after his uncle the Puritan preacher Edward Dering patronised by the Cooke sisters Lady Anne Cooke Bacon, Lady Elizabeth Cooke Hoby Russell, Lady Mildred Cooke Cecil and Lady Cooke Killigrew. The relatively obscure Sir Edward Dering (1598-1644) about whose early life very little is known was-here revealed for the first time-a close friend and relative (twice over) of the author of *Henry IV* Francis Bacon.

The so-called Dering manuscript is a single-five act Shakespeare play of *Henry IV* and is earlier than the first printed quarto of *The Historie of Henrie the fourth* issued in 1598 and the quarto edition of *The Second part of Henrie the fourth* printed in 1600. The MS represents the play as Bacon originally composed it when it was one play and not two before developing his original version into two separate parts. Furthermore, we can be reasonably precise regarding the date of the manuscript. It is widely agreed *Henry IV* followed closely upon *Richard II* as not only is *Henry IV* next chronologically its predecessor *Richard II* clearly points to a sequel. The earlier *Richard II* is believed to date to around late 1595 or early 1596, and *Henry IV* was probably composed shortly after, sometime in 1596.

The so-called corrector's hand in the so-called Dering manuscript is Bacon's own cramped hand, as one would expect, from the author of the play.⁴

4] THE 1623 SHAKESPEARE FIRST FOLIO

On 8 November 1623 Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard entered on the Stationers' Register sixteen Shakespeare plays which had not been previously published. Another twenty previously published plays were added giving a total of thirty-six plays in the First Folio therein divided into Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, in an enormous volume of more than nine hundred pages, representing the greatest secular publication in the history of English literature, whose untold impact around the world over the last four hundred year has never been fully understood and thus never fully told.

On its 400th anniversary a recent work entitled *The 1623 Shakespeare First Folio: A Baconian-Rosicrucian-Freemasonic Illusion* uncovers and reveals unknown and untold secrets about the greatest work of literature in the history of humankind. For the first time, it brings forth the hidden connections of its author Francis Bacon and his Rosicrucian-Freemasonry Brotherhood with all the key members involved in its production, printing, and publication. His hidden relationships with its printers William and Isaac Jaggard, and the other members of the First Folio consortium, John Smethwick, William Aspley, and its publisher Edward Blount.

It is almost universally unknown that its dedicatee William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke was at the time of its dedication Grand Master of England, one of half of the 'Incomparable Paire Of Brethren', with his brother Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, whose joint open and hidden relationships with Bacon went back decades. The other critical member in the production of the 1623 First Folio was its editor and contributor of its two verses Ben Jonson who at the time the First Folio was making its way through the Jaggard printing presses was living with Bacon at Gorhambury, where he was at the heart of the secret plans for bringing together this vast and complex enterprise.

The Droeshout engraving on the title page of the most famous secular work in English history is iconic and recognised the world over as the contemporary face of William Shakespeare the greatest poet and dramatist of all time. In strikingly marked contrast virtually nothing is known about Martin Droeshout the draughtsman responsible for the most recognisable literary image since time immemorial. A remarkable level of secrecy still surrounds his private life, friends and the social and professional circles he moved in, even though he self-evidently knew some of the most important figures in Jacobean England and moved in the highest circles of his times. This man who for the first thirty-three years of his life lived in the heart of London has scarcely left any documentary trace of his existence akin to him having been deliberately expunged from the records. To the present day his whole life is completely shrouded in secrecy and mystery. The key reason is Martin Droeshout and the famous/infamous Droeshout engraving on the title page of the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio is a mask behind which its concealed author Francis Bacon is hidden in plain sight, which when lifted reveals the truth behind the Rosicrucian-Freemasonic illusion and *ludibrium* that the semi-illiterate William Shakspere of Stratford was the author of the greatest literature in the history of the world, that at a single devastating stroke brings the whole Stratfordian fiction crashing to the ground.

For the first time *The 1623 Shakespeare First Folio: A Baconian Rosicrucian-Freemasonic Illusion* conveys an explosive secret in making known the concealed and hidden relationship between Francis Bacon and Martin Droeshout which has been suppressed for the last four hundred years. Their secret relationship is encapsulated in an earlier Droeshout engraving titled

Doctor Panurgus (c. 1621) wherein one of its central figures is a depiction of Francis Bacon replete with a series of clues and indicators to confirm it.

The figure of Bacon in the *Dr Panurgus* engraving by Droeshout dating from the early 1620s is drawn from the life, that points to Bacon sitting for it at Gorhambury. The complex engraving has clearly been very carefully planned out and must have involved Bacon giving Droeshout instructions and further directions that over a period of time necessitated numerous revision and amendments, not unlike the Droeshout in the First Folio, which exists in three known states, showing close attention to minor details as well as slight changes made to various aspects of it. This process was all taking place around the time Bacon was planning and preparing his Shakespeare plays for the Jaggard printing house during the years 1621 to 1623 when it is likely that Droeshout made numerous visits to see Bacon at his country estate at Gorhambury where he was most likely residing for periods with Bacon and Ben Jonson as part of his entourage of good pens and other artists that made up his literary workshop.

It also lifts the veil of secrecy surrounding the hitherto unknown relationships between Francis Bacon and the other little-known figures Hugh Holland, James Mabbe and Leonard Digges who contributed verses to the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio. Particularly, Bacon's relationship with Leonard Digges, whose own father Sir Nicholas Bacon was the special patron of his grandfather and father Leonard Digges and Thomas Digges, the poet whose verse prefixed to the Folio refers to the Stratford Monument, which is adorned with Rosicrucian-Freemasonic symbols and Baconian ciphers, secretly commissioned by Francis Bacon and his Rosicrucian-Freemasonry Brotherhood.

In addition to all the above cryptic devices secretly inserted by Bacon in the Shakespeare First Folio there are also many remarkable and astonishing references and allusions to himself and members of the Bacon family, which for four hundred years have remained unfamiliar or unknown to the ordinary schoolmen, the casual student, and effectively the rest of the world. These include references and allusions to himself in several different plays where the character is in some instances named Francis and similarly where characters are named after his three brothers Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Nathaniel Bacon, and Anthony Bacon. Similarly in the First Folio there are references and allusions to his father and mother Sir Nicholas and Lady Anne Cooke Bacon, her three sisters Lady Katherine Cooke Killigrew, Lady Elizabeth Cooke Hoby Russell and her husband John, Lord Russell, Lady Mildred Cooke Cecil and her husband William Cecil, Lord Burghley, as well as their offspring (Bacon's cousins) Thomas Posthumous Hoby and Sir Robert Cecil, and the son of their brother William Cooke, named after his father, Bacon's other cousin, known as William Cooke of Highnam Court in Gloucester.⁵

5] The *Memoriae Honoratissimi Domini Francisci, Baronis De Verulamio, Vice-Comitis Sancti Albani Sacrum* (1626) containing 32 Latin verses cryptically conveying Bacon is Shakespeare

In the months following the death of Francis Bacon to the world his trusted Rosicrucian Brother Dr William Rawley gathered together and published a commemorative work in his honour entitled *Memoriae honoratissimi Domini Francisci, Baronis de Verulamio, vice-comitis Sancti Albani sacrum*, otherwise known as the *Manes Verulamiani*. This rare volume contains thirty-two Latin verses in praise of Bacon which his orthodox biographers and editors have simply passed over, ignored, or suppressed, that portray Bacon as a secret supreme poet and dramatist, writer of comedies and tragedies, under the pseudonym of Shakespeare.

The Church of England clergymen Dr William Rawley knew the truth and secrets of the concealed and hidden life of whom the world and posterity know 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 made 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 Lord Bacon whose influence resulted in Corpus Christi College bestowing on Rawley the rectory of Landbeach in 1616. 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.' He lived with Bacon for the last ten years of his known life (1616-26) and was one of his good pens residing at Gorhambury with the poet and dramatist Ben Jonson when the Shakespeare First Folio was working its way through the Jaggard family printing presses.

In the final elegy Bacon's inward friend, the poet and dramatist Thomas Randolph, one of the sons of Ben Jonson, refers to Bacon as Quirinus, strikingly pointing to the fact that Bacon is our secret supreme poet and dramatist, Shakespeare:

See! how plentiful the flood! I acknowledge these for genuine Muses and their tears. One Helicon will scarce equal them; Parnassus, not covered by Deucalion's flood, will, wonderful to say, be hidden beneath these waters...When he perceived that the arts were held by no roots, and like seed scattered on the surface of the soil were withering away, he taught the Pegasean arts to grow, as grew the spear of Quirinus [*Spear/Spearman; i.e., Shakespeare*] swiftly into a laurel tree. Therefore since he has taught the Heliconian goddesses to flourish no lapse of ages shall dim his glory. The ardour of his noble heart could bear no longer that you, divine Minerva [*Pallas Athena the Shaker of the Spear who wore a helmet which rendered her invisible*], should be despised. His godlike pen restored your wonted honour and as another Apollo [*leader of the Nine Muses presiding over the different kinds of poetry and liberal arts*] dispelled the clouds that hid you.

Thomas Randolph, Trinity College.⁶

1. Charles Beauclerk, *Shakespeare's Lost Kingdom: The True History of Shakespeare and Elizabeth* (New York: Grove Press, 2010), pp. 6-7.
2. C. M. Pott, *The Promus Of Formularies And Elegancies (Being Private Notes, circ. 1594, hitherto unpublished) By Francis Bacon Illustrated And Elucidated By Passages From Shakespeare* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1883); N. B. Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question* (Guildford and Kings Lynn: Biddles Limited, 1998), pp. 509-47; A. Phoenix, 'Francis Bacon's Private Manuscript Notebook (Known as the *Promus of Formularies and Elegancies*) The Source of Several Hundred Resemblances, Correspondences and Parallels Found Throughout his Shakespeare Poems and Plays, (2023), pp. 1-133.
3. James Spedding, *A Conference Of Pleasure, Composed For Some Festive Occasion About The Year 1592 By Francis Bacon. Edited, From A Manuscript Belonging To The Duke Of Northumberland* (London: Whittingham and Wilkins, 1870); Frank J. Burgoyne, *Collotype Facsimile & Type Transcript Of An Elizabethan Manuscript Preserved at Alnwick Castle,*

Northumberland (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904); A. Phoenix, *The Bacon-Shakespeare Manuscript (Hitherto known as the Northumberland Manuscript) which originally Contained Copies of his Shakespeare Plays Richard II and Richard III* (2022).

4. A. Phoenix, 'Francis Bacon and the so-called 'Dering' Manuscript of *Henry IV*, the Unique and Earliest Known Manuscript of a Shakespeare play: or the Holy Grail of Shakespeare Scholarship a Shakespeare Manuscript (c.1596) Originating from Bacon's Literary Workshop and Corrected in his Hand' (2022), pp. 1-126.

5. A. Phoenix, *The 1623 Shakespeare First Folio: A Baconian-Rosicrucian-Freemasonic Illusion* (2023).

6. William Rawley, ed., *Memoriae Honoratissimi Domini Francisci, Baronis De Vervlamio, Vice-Comitis Sancti Albani Sacrum* (Londini: In Officina Johannis Haviland, 1626); W. G. C. Gundry, ed., *Manes Verulamiani* (London: The Chiswick Press, 1950); A. Phoenix, *The Secret Links Between the Rosicrucian-Freemasonic Memoriae (1626) Containing Thirty-two Verses Dedicated to Francis Bacon our Shakespeare, the First Folio of the Shakespeare Works (1623), and the Stratford Monument* (soon to be published on 1 January 1624).

