

# Reports of the Death of the Case for Francis Bacon's Authorship of Shakespeare Have Been Greatly Exaggerated!

Dedicated to the memory of Brian McClinton, author of *The Shakespeare Conspiracies: A 400-Year Web of Myth and Deceit*

## Part One: Thirteen Points of Evidence

By Christina G. Waldman

July 13, 2022 (revised August 8, 2022)<sup>1</sup>

So might Mark Twain say, if he were with us today.<sup>2</sup> The argument that Francis Bacon played a major, but covert, role in Shakespeare authorship is very much alive and well! That Bacon authored Shakespeare is not as implausible as scholars who accept authorship by the “Man from Stratford” have led us to believe, especially now that collaboration among playwrights has been conceded.<sup>3</sup> For, if lesser authors are now being included within the canon, why not one of the world’s acknowledged literary giants, Francis Bacon? Many Baconians believe the evidence shows that Bacon, with his superlative literary skills, was the leader of a group of writers who worked with him on what would ultimately be published in the First Folio under the pseudonym of “William Shakespeare.”

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<sup>1</sup> A prior version of this essay was posted at SirBacon.org on August 3, 2022. This version corrects numbering errors (my apologies) and makes other small changes.

<sup>2</sup> See Emily Petsko, “Reports of Mark Twain’s Quote About His Own Death Are Greatly Exaggerated,” Mental Floss, Nov. 1, 2018, <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/562400/reports-mark-twains-quote-about-mark-twains-death-are-greatly-exaggerated>; Mark Twain, essay, “Is Shakespeare Dead?” in *The Complete Essays of Mark Twain*, ed. Charles Neider (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, repr. 2000 (1909), 407–54. It is also in *What is Man? And Other Essays* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2019) and on Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/isshakespearedea0000unse>.

<sup>3</sup> See Barry R. Clarke, *Francis Bacon’s Contribution to Shakespeare: A New Attribution Method* (New York: Routledge, 2019), for a collaboration theory that includes Bacon. In part 2, “Bacon’s Influence on Selected Plays,” Clarke focuses on four plays: *The Comedy of Errors* (111–129), *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (130–143), *Twelfth Night* (144–168), and *The Tempest* (169–192).

Another well-reasoned book is Samuel Crowell (pseud.), *William Fortyhands: Disintegration and Reinvention of the Shakespeare Canon* (Charleston, WV: Nine-Banded Books, 2016). Although it is not a “Baconian” book, it begins with a quotation from Francis Bacon on the “four idols” from Bacon’s *New Organum*.

Unlike the purported Oxfraud.com *prima facie* case, however, the argument for Bacon is *not* neatly discernable on the surface.<sup>4</sup> Rather, it requires digging—in the “mine of truth,” to use Bacon’s metaphor. It requires employing the inductive method which Bacon championed: first you accumulate all the evidence, *then* you draw conclusions, rather than first hypothesizing a theory, then attempting to prove it with evidence (deductive method). Arguably, a “fact” should always be open to reconsideration when new evidence challenges its veracity. Under scientific standards of proof, what “most scholars believe” is not *evidence*; evidence consists of facts. It does not matter how many people believe the sun revolves around the earth if it is not true. We can largely thank Bacon for evidentiary standards in Anglo-American jurisprudence and science.<sup>5</sup>

Researching Francis Bacon can feel like being on a treasure hunt or solving a puzzle. Often, intriguing evidence has been embedded, as a rhetorical device, perhaps, into a text. “The devil is in the details.” It is a challenge to try to present a straightforward case for Bacon in a short space. People today tend to want to read things literally. Often, they have not had as much practice “reading between the lines.” What can be inferred is often very important, however, just as non-verbal cues are an integral part of a speaker’s complete message.

For example, Bacon, in a passage of his “The Abecedarium of Nature,” uses the Latin word *quasdam*, a feminine accusative plural of *quidam* which means “certain persons or things, known but not but not necessarily named.” In a Latin dictionary, one finds *quassare* or *quassus* (past participle of *quatere*, “to shake, to shake violently”) and *hasta* (a “spear, pike, javelin”; *hastam* in the singular accusative).<sup>6</sup> The 1679 publisher of the piece translated the passage where this word occurs to include the phrase “hints of practice.”

Also we suggest for use, some hints of practice. Furthermore, we propose wishes of such things as are hitherto only desired and not had, together with those things which border on them, for exciting the industry of man’s mind.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “The Prima Facie Case for Shakespeare,” Oxfraud.com, <https://oxfraud.com/>.

<sup>5</sup> See Barbara Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England, 1550–1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), <https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/9780801436864/a-culture-of-fact/#bookTabs=1>; Daniel R. Coquillette notes Bacon’s “concern with evidentiary methods in the legal process” in Coquillette, *Francis Bacon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 279.

<sup>6</sup> *Cassell’s Latin Dictionary*, ed. D. P. Simpson (New York: Wiley Publishing, 1968), s.v. *quidam*; *Wheelock’s Latin*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., ed. Frederic M. Wheelock, rev. by Richard A. LaFleur (New York: Harper Resource, 2000), 110, s.v. “*qui, quae, quod*.”

<sup>7</sup> “A fragment of a book written by the Lord Verulam [so after 1618], and entitled, ‘The Alphabet of Nature,’” in *Baconiana, or Certain Genuine Remains of Sr. Francis Bacon, in arguments civil and moral, natural, medical, theological, and bibliographical, now for the first time faithfully published*, ed. Thomas Tennison (London, 1679), 84-103, 90.

The nineteenth century Spedding edition of Bacon's *Works* translated it thus:

For use, some reminders concerning practice are suggested. To rouse human industry, a list of desiderata, with their approximations, is proposed.<sup>8</sup>

Here is Bacon's original Latin:

*Ad usum vero vellication •s quasdam, de Practicâ suggerimus. Etiam Optativa eorum, quae adhuc non habentur, unâ cum proximis suis, ad erigendam humanam industriam, proponimus.*<sup>9</sup>

Neither translation is *ad verbum* ("to-the-word," literal). How would *you* translate the passage literally?

No, one word does not prove a case, but Bacon's use of *quasdam* (and of *quosdam* in the preceding sentence) surely might be seen as a hint or suggestion, an invitation to curious readers to make further inquiry.<sup>10</sup> Stratfordians, however, tend to have a

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(English), 77-83, 83 (Latin), Early English Books Online: Text Creation Partnership, accessed June 27, 2022, <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A28024.0001.001>. Basil Montagu's translation, under "The Alphabet of Nature," in *The Works of Francis Bacon* 3 (of 3), ed. Basil Montagu (Philadelphia, 1852-53), is the 1679 translation. 530-531, 531.

The full text of this four-page fragment in Latin, edited by Graham Rees, with an English translation, is printed in *The Instauration magna: Last Writings*, The Oxford Francis Bacon, vol 13 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 171-225, as reported in the Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts (CELM) 1450-1700, [https://celm-ms.org.uk/authors/baconfrancis.html#bibliotheque-nationale-paris\\_id430352](https://celm-ms.org.uk/authors/baconfrancis.html#bibliotheque-nationale-paris_id430352).

<sup>8</sup> *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath (London: Longmans, 1857-1874), 14 vols (hereafter referred to as "Spedding"), 5:211.

<sup>9</sup> *Baconiana*, ed. Tennison, 83 (in Latin); Spedding 2:88. Spedding's Latin is identical to Tennison's.

<sup>10</sup> The Latin verb *suggerimus*, from *suggerere* has been translated "to suggest," but it means "to bring up, supply, provide." One meaning of hint is "to give a clue or cue as an aid or help." Bacon kept a writer's notebook which he called his *Promus* in which he wrote down proverbs, short phrases, and witty expressions he intended to use in his writing. Baconians have pointed out that many of these items are found only in the Shakespeare plays, not in any of Bacon's other writings.

The word *Promus* means "butler" in Latin, a bit of personification on Bacon's part. The word *promus* comes from the Latin word *promo, promere*: "to bring out, produce, bring forward, disclose." *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *suggero, promus, promere*. The theatrical word "prompt" derives from *promptus, promo's* fourth principal part. For fuller discussion, see FBHH 82-87, 86.

*Practica* (capitalized in the text) is the plural of *practicum*, a Late Latin word meaning "a course in practical training" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. *practicum*, <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=practicum+in+latin>). The word is not in *Cassell's* (classical) Latin dictionary. It seems plausible that it may have derived from the verb

“guard-dog” mentality that does not permit them to publicly admit that *any* evidence of Bacon’s authorship is tenable.

People do not read Bacon’s works as much as they used to. His *Essays* were once extremely popular. Moreover, if people are reading Bacon, they are usually doing so in English, because fewer people read Latin these days. As Brian Vickers has observed, by reading Bacon only in translation, readers will miss fully understanding his classical allusions and meaning.<sup>11</sup> Also, they will miss pondering the ambiguities that exist for one who is trying to translate from Latin, where words can have more than one meaning and context must be considered.

### Sources for Baconian Research

There are three main websites which focus on Francis Bacon and his connection to the name “Shakespeare.” The Francis Bacon Society, <https://francisbaconsociety.co.uk/>, has been publishing its members research on Bacon in its journal *Baconiana* since 1886. Most issues are available online, either at the FBS site or at Francis Bacon’s New Advancement of Learning (SirBacon.org) which collects many resources, <https://www.sirbacon.org> (don’t miss the Bibliographies). The third major website is The Francis Bacon Research Trust (“FBRT,” Peter Dawkins, founder and principal), <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/>. Actor Jono Freeman’s entertaining and educational videos on the topic should not be missed.<sup>12</sup>

The argument for Francis Bacon’s contribution to Shakespeare does not suffer from a lack of evidence, but from an abundance of it! So much has already been collected in older books just waiting to be rediscovered by a new generation of readers. The main problem has been the refusal of Shakespeare scholars to acknowledge the *legitimacy* of the case for Bacon. Yet, it took Cockburn, for example, thirty-five chapters with a separate chapter for each category, to discuss all the evidence in favor of Bacon.<sup>13</sup> Two authors, Brian McClinton and Barry R. Clarke,<sup>14</sup> have

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*praeacuo*, -ere, “to sharpen to a point.” One sharpens one’s skills by practice. A *praeco* is a herald, a role in which Bacon saw himself, i.e., as the “bell-ringer who calls all the wits together.” Bacon to Dr. Playfer, Spedding 10:301. A possibly related word is *Praecutio - cutere* means “to shake before, brandish before.”

<sup>11</sup> As stated by Brian Vickers, intro., *Francis Bacon: The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, first pub. 1996), i–xliv, xxxvii.

<sup>12</sup> Jono Freeman’s YouTube channel, [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU6OOF4\\_Jg3cl7EvOVGyyg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU6OOF4_Jg3cl7EvOVGyyg), available also from SirBacon.org, <https://sirbacon.org/jono-freeman/>.

<sup>13</sup> N. B. Cockburn (late British barrister), *The Bacon Shakespeare Question: The Baconian Theory Made Sane* (Surrey, UK: privately printed, 1998). For the table of contents, see <https://sirbacon.org/cockburn.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> Brian McClinton, *The Shakespeare Conspiracies: A 400-Year Web of Myth and Deceit* (Belfast: Shanway Press, 2008); Barry R. Clarke, *Francis Bacon’s Contribution to*

explicitly expressed their gratitude to Cockburn for laying a foundation for the modern case for Bacon. Peter Dawkins, founder and principal of the Francis Bacon Research Trust, has published numerous books, articles, and videos as well.<sup>15</sup>

Yet, somehow, without addressing at all the evidence that had been compiled to date, Alan Stewart purported to dismiss the case for Bacon in just one minute in his Shakespeare Birthplace Trust podcast, “Sixty Minutes of Shakespeare.” One wonders if he is serious in opining that Bacon could not possibly have been Shakespeare because the masques he composed “lacked drama.”<sup>16</sup> It seems obvious that a masque is not the same art form as a play and cannot be judged by the same standards. Peter Dawkins has responded to Stewart on this issue.<sup>17</sup>

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*Shakespeare: A New Attribution Method* (New York: Routledge, 2019). I am sad to see that McClinton, a humanist and former teacher, passed away on June 3, 2022. See Philip Bradfield, “Leading Northern Ireland Humanist Brian McClinton was a “true liberal who loved respectful debate,” June 13, 2022, <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/education/leading-northern-ireland-humanist-brian-mcclinton-was-a-true-liberal-who-loved-respectful-debate-3730206>. He was head of the Irish Free Thinkers, [http://irishfreethinkers.com/dynamic\\_content.php?id=48](http://irishfreethinkers.com/dynamic_content.php?id=48). Clarke has a Ph.D. in Shakespeare Studies from Brunel University.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Dawkins’s books include *The Shakespeare Enigma* (London: Polair Publishing, 2004) and, more recently, *Second-Seeing Shakespeare* (e-book, April 2020. See “Resources,” FBRT, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/books/>.

<sup>16</sup> Alan R. Stewart, question #45, “Sixty Minutes With Shakespeare,” The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, first published 2011, accessed June 21, 2022, <https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/podcasts/60-minutes-shakespeare/>.

Cockburn provides the “full annotated text, including two songs,” of Bacon’s *Masque of Proteus* in app 2, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 693–704. Martin Pares provides a list of masques with which Bacon was involved in “Parallisms and the Promus,” from *Baconiana*, August, 1963, <https://sirbacon.org/mp.html>. On the Masque of Flowers, see Christine Adams, “Francis Bacon’s Wedding Gift of a ‘Garden of a Glorious and Strange Beauty’ for the Earl and Countess of Somerset,” *Garden History* 36, no 1 (Spring, 2008), 36–58, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25472393>.

For observations on masque evaluation, see Inga Stina-Ewbank, “The Eloquence of Masques: A Retrospective View of Masque Criticism,” *Essays Principally on Masques and Entertainments, Renaissance Drama*, New Series, vol 1 (1968), 307–327, JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41917418>. For Vickers on Bacon’s masques, see *Major Works*, xxiv–xxx.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Dawkins responds to Stewart in “Exposing an Industry in Denial: Authorship Doubters Respond to ‘Sixty Minutes With Shakespeare’, pdf, #6, p. 50, DoubtAboutWill.org, #6, <https://doubtaboutwill.org/downloads>. Dawkins provides a list of Bacon’s masques in “Baconian Poetry,” <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/shakespeare/baconian-poetry/>.

## A Brief Bio of Bacon

Arguably, we have in Bacon a man whose life experiences eminently prepared him to write the plays and poems of “Shakespeare.”<sup>18</sup> Bacon famously told his uncle, Lord Burghley, that he had “taken all knowledge to be his province.”<sup>19</sup> Bacon was a courtier and statesman in the top echelons of government; in fact, there is persuasive evidence that he was Queen Elizabeth’s own son, the offspring of a secret marriage to Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, although she never publicly acknowledged Francis as her son.<sup>20</sup> She did make him her special Counselor, creating a novel position for him, “Counsel Extraordinaire,” probably in 1592. He later served King James in a similar role.

Bacon received the best possible education. From an early age, he was tutored at home in Latin and Greek by his mother, classical scholar Anne Bacon, wife of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Queen’s Lord Keeper, and then by John Walsall, so that he was prepared to enter Cambridge University at age thirteen. At Cambridge, he was tutored by John Whitgift, later Archbishop Whitgift. Prodigy that he was, he quickly became frustrated with the shortcomings of the Aristotelian educational model.<sup>21</sup>

At age fifteen (1576) or so, Bacon was sent to France “by the Queen’s own hand,” attached to the British embassy to France of Sir Amias Paulet. In 1579, he began his legal studies at Gray’s Inn (having been admitted to Gray’s Inn in 1576).<sup>22</sup> While in France, he became involved with *La Pléiade*, the group of seven poets led by Pierre de Ronsard.<sup>23</sup> As Vickers wrote, “Bacon made contact with many Huguenot

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<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., Bertram Theobald, ch 14, “How the Shakespeare Plays Fit Bacon’s Life-Story,” *Enter Francis Bacon* (London: C. Palmer, 1932), 78–91, <https://sirbacon.org/btheobaldenterchxiv.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> Francis Bacon to Lord Burghley, undated (presumably ca. 1592), Vickers, *Major Works*, 20–21, 513; Spedding 8:108–109, discussed at Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 73.

<sup>20</sup> See “Bacon’s Royal Parentage,” <https://sirbacon.org/links/parentage.htm>; “Royal Birth,” FBRT, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/bacon/royal-birth/>; my essay, “Bacon’s Maiden Speech to Parliament and his Royal Birth,” June 15, 2020, pdf, <https://sirbacon.org/bacons-maiden-speech-to-parliament-his-royal-birth/>.

<sup>21</sup> Markku Peltonen, intro., and Brian Vickers, “Bacon and Rhetoric,” *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*, ed. Markku Peltonen (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3, 205–206; William Rawley, “The Life of The Right Honorable Francis Bacon,” first pub. 1657, Spedding 1:1–18, 4.

<sup>22</sup> For a brief modern biography of Bacon, see Vickers, *The Major Works*, i–xx; “Baconian History,” FBRT, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/bacon/baconian-history/>.

<sup>23</sup> Essay, “The Life of Sir Francis Bacon,” 28 n6, pdf, available from FBRT, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/essays/>. Frances Yates writes about the *Pléiade* in *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Penguin, 1977, first pub. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), xii, 13, 128–31, 139–140, 147, 151, 186, 198–94, 212, 214.

leaders ... and even studied with the eminent Reformed theologian Lambert Daneau.”<sup>24</sup> Because Daneau taught in Geneva, by inference, Bacon most likely travelled to Geneva to study with him during his 1576–79 years abroad. Vickers pointed out a need for further study into Bacon’s years in France and his debt to Huguenot and French intellectual influences.<sup>25</sup>

Bacon had an opportunity to witness a performance of the Italian *commedia dell’arte* troupe—the Gelosi—in Bloise in December, 1576.<sup>26</sup> Some Italian performers had performed in England in 1574, and the Martinelli troupe performed in London in 1577.<sup>27</sup> The influence of the *commedia dell’arte* with its stock characters is evident in several Shakespeare plays.<sup>28</sup>

He was very close to his brother Anthony Bacon throughout his life. All throughout his life he suffered from poor health; yet, he accomplished so much. His collected *Works* filled fourteen volumes in the Spedding edition. His writing published under his name include his *Essays* (first ed. 1597, 2d ed. 1612, 3d 1625); *Novum Organum* (1620); *The Advancement of Learning*, 2 vols (1605, in English; revised in Latin as *De ... Augmentis scientiarum* 1623); *Wisdom of the Ancients* (1609); *The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh* (1622); and *New Atlantis* (1627, posthumously).

### Thirteen Points to Consider

The thirteen points sketched here do not make up the whole case, of course; however, they should be enough to demonstrate the legitimacy and viability of the Baconian view. Other summaries do so as well.<sup>29</sup> Independent thinkers are

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<sup>24</sup> Vickers, xl.

<sup>25</sup> Vickers, *The Major Works*, xl. Ryan Murtha in his independent research has discovered notable parallels in the works of Bacon, Shakespeare, and contemporaneous works for which authorship is uncertain, including *Anti-Machiavel*, *The Anatomie of the Minde*, *The French Academy*, *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*, and *Don Quixote*. See Ryan Murtha, *The Precious Gem of Literature* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2022).

<sup>26</sup> See “The Bacon Brothers and France,” 3d par., pdf, FBRT, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/essays/>.

<sup>27</sup> “Timeline” and “Resources,” Judith Chaffee’s *Commedia Website*, <https://commedia-dell-arte.com/history/>.

<sup>28</sup> “The Life of Sir Francis Bacon,” FBRT, 3, 28 n7, [https://www.fbrt.org.uk/pages/essays/Life\\_of\\_Sir\\_Francis\\_Bacon.pdf](https://www.fbrt.org.uk/pages/essays/Life_of_Sir_Francis_Bacon.pdf); Jean Clair, *The Great Parade: Portrait of the Artist as Clown* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 350.

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Peter Dawkins, ch 6, “The Authorship Evidence of the Plays,” *The Shakespeare Enigma* (London: Polair Publishing, 2004), 120–156; Francis Carr, “Summary of Baconian Evidence for Shakespeare Authorship,” <https://sirbacon.org/baconian-evidence-for-shakespeare-authorship/>, Mather Walker, “What Evidence Points to Bacon as the Author of the Shakespeare Plays?” <https://sirbacon.org/matherevidence.htm>); “Shakespeare

encouraged to make their own investigation and further explore the references in the footnotes.

1) **A Shakespeare manuscript was found in Bacon's own handwriting!** In a 1992 report, UK forensic analyst Maureen Ward-Gandy concluded it was "highly probable" that a play fragment of a scene analogous to one in *The First Part of Henry IV* was written in Francis Bacon's own handwriting.<sup>30</sup>

As of this writing, the listing for this play fragment (dubbed the "Play of Thieves and a Gullible Tapster") in the Folger Lost Plays Database, maintained by David McInnis, does not mention the existence of Ward-Gandy's report.<sup>31</sup> I emailed McInnis at the email address listed for him at the Lost Plays Database website (on May 7, 2020 and Sept. 25, 2020) to let him know. To date, I have received no response. Nor did I find any mention of Ward-Gandy's report in his recent book, *Shakespeare and Lost Plays: Reimagining Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). It has been typical for Stratfordians to ignore evidence that challenges their position.

2) **Bacon was known as a poet, though concealed.**<sup>32</sup> Bacon was praised as a poet both during his lifetime and after his death. He also wrote religious satire.<sup>33</sup> He was a

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Authorship," <https://francisbaconsociety.co.uk/shakespeare-authorship/>; "Shakespeare Authorship, FBRT, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/shakespeare/shakespeare-authorship/>.

<sup>30</sup> Ward-Gandy's report was first published in app 4, "Handwriting on the Wall," *FBHH*, 247–274. The report was commissioned by the late Francis Carr, a British historian.

Can you distinguish one from another the handwriting samples in the Sotheby's advertisement (July 21, 1992) for the play fragment displayed at <https://sirbacon.org/links/baconwrite.htm>? See also Heather Purchase, "Writing's on the Wall for Shakespeare," *London Evening Standard*, July 30, 1992, <https://sirbacon.org/links/handwriting1.html>. Discussed in my blogpost, "Shakespeare Play Fragment—Said to be in Francis Bacon's Handwriting," May 14, 2020,

<https://christinagwaldman.com/blog/>. The fragment was found serving as endleaves ("binder's waste") in a copy of Homer's *Odyssey* (Geneva: E.[Eustace] Ougnone, 1586).

<sup>31</sup> "Play of Thieves and a Gullible Tapster," Lost Plays Database, maintained by David McInnis,

[https://lostplays.folger.edu/Play\\_of\\_Thieves\\_and\\_a\\_Gullible\\_Tapster](https://lostplays.folger.edu/Play_of_Thieves_and_a_Gullible_Tapster), last updated August 1, 2018).

<sup>32</sup> See, e.g., Cockburn: ch 2, "Bacon was a Poet," 13–21." See pp. 15–18 for Bacon's reference to himself as a "concealed poet" in a letter to John Davies, Spedding 10:65, n1, and Spedding's correspondence with Judge Nathaniel Holmes: Cockburn, ch 14, "The Hall and Marston Satires and a Freeman Epigram," 184–209, ch 22, "The Tobie Matthew Postscript," 255–277, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*; McClinton, ch 8, "House Secrets," *The Shakespeare Conspiracies*, 177–197, 43–46, 183–186.

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., Edwin Reed, ch 7, "Bacon's Poetic Gifts," *Francis Bacon: Our Shake-Speare* (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 1902), 217–225; Walter Begley, ch 14, "Bacon as a Poet," *Is it Shakespeare? The Great Question of Elizabethan Literature* (London: J. Murray, 1903), 267–280, 268; Edwin Bormann, *Francis Bacon's Cryptic Rhymes and the Truth They Reveal*, transl. Harry Brett (London: Siegle, Hill, 1906); (Judge) Nathaniel Holmes, *The*

humanist poet.<sup>34</sup> Stratfordians frequently attempt to disparage the quality of Bacon's poetry; and yet, Spedding thought Bacon possessed the "fine phrenzy" [Shakespeare's phrase] of a poet."<sup>35</sup> He praised Bacon's *Translations of Certain Psalms* (1625), writing that he "had all the natural faculties which a poet wants: a fine ear for metre, a fine feeling for imaginative effect in words, and a vein of poetic passion."<sup>36</sup>

In his essay, "A Defense of Poetry," the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote:

Lord Bacon was a poet.\* His language has a sweet and majestic rhythm, which satisfies the sense, no less than the almost superhuman wisdom of his philosophy satisfies the intellect; it is a strain which distends, and then bursts the circumference of the reader's mind, and pours itself forth together with it into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy. All the authors of revolutions in opinion are not only necessarily poets as they are inventors, nor even as their words unveil the permanent analogy of things by images which participate in the life of truth; but as their periods are harmonious and rhythmical, and contain in themselves the elements of verse; being the echo of the eternal music. Nor are those supreme poets, who have employed traditional forms of rhythm on account of the form and action of their subjects, less capable of perceiving and teaching the truth of things, than those who have omitted that form.

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*Authorship of Shakespeare*, vol 1 (of 2) (Boston: Hurd and Houghton, 1887), 64 ("Even [Thomas Babington] Macauley admitted that 'the poetical faculty was powerful in Bacon's mind.'"); *Manes Verulamiani*, <https://sirbacon.org/Parker/ManesVerulamiani.html>; Kenneth Alan Hovey, "Bacon's 'Serious Satire' of the Church and the 'Golden Mediocrity' of Induction," *Seventeenth Century News* 61, nos 1 and 2, <https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/95572>; "Bacon as a Lucretian Poet," *FBHH*, 36–40.

On Macauley and his "deplorable" essay on Bacon, see Nieves Matthews, *Francis Bacon: The History of a Character Assassination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 19–28, 20, 454, n13, et al. Thomas B. Macaulay, "Francis Bacon," *Edinburgh Review* (July 1837), reprinted in *Critical and Historical Essays*.

<sup>34</sup> McClinton, ch 15, "Humanist and Poet," *The Shakespeare Conspiracies*, 289–311.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted by Holmes, *The Authorship of Shakespeare*, vol 1, ch 3, sect. 6, 184–207, 185 (in Spedding's preface to Bacon's "Translations of Certain Psalms," 7:265–272, 268.

<sup>36</sup> Spedding 7:265–286, 267. See also R.A. J. Bunnett, "Bacon's Translation of the Psalms," *Baconiana*, January 1943, no 106, <https://sirbacon.org/psalms.htm>; passage from Edwin Bormann, ch 7, "The Rhymes in Francis Bacon's Psalms," *Francis Bacon's Cryptic Rhymes*, 85–96, 85, <https://sirbacon.org/bormannpsalms.htm>.

Shakespeare, Dante, and Milton (to confine ourselves to modern writers) are philosophers of the very loftiest power.

\* See the “Filum Labyrinthi” and the “Essay on Death” particularly.  
--S.<sup>37</sup>

Note the figurative language throughout in this passage of Bacon’s:

All History, excellent King, walks upon the earth, and performs the office rather of a guide than of a light; whereas Poesy is as a dream of learning; a thing sweet and varied, and that would be thought to have in it something divine; a character which dreams likewise affect. But now it is time for me to awake, and rising above the earth, to wing my way through the clear air of Philosophy and the Sciences. The knowledge of man is as the waters ....”<sup>38</sup>

The phrase “fine phrensy” appears in a (translated) Latin epigram, *Jocus in importunum Januae polsatores*, written by the German Lutheran scholar Philip Melancthon (1497–1560), a friend of Sir Thomas More’s (who also wrote witty epigrams):

In his attic, all divine  
Poet sits in phrensy fine:  
Far above the vulgar ken  
Verses trickling from his pen.  
In furious haste a rustic boor  
Comes up thundering at the door,  
And cries—there’s nought!—and this doth show it,—  
Between an ass and such a poet!—  
Poet answers, short and sore,  
Nought between them,—but a door!”<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, “A Defense of Poetry” (1840), in *Art and Interpretation: An Anthology of Readings in Aesthetics and The Philosophy of Art*, ed. Eric Dayton (Ontario CA: Broadview Press, 1998), 90–105, 93. For Shelley’s other references to Bacon, see 91, 102, 104. See also “M.P.,” “Imagery, Thought Forms, and Jargon,” from *Baconiana*, Sept. 1969, SirBacon.org, <https://sirbacon.org/jargonmp.htm>, “Bacon as a Poet: Modern Views, ch 3, 14–15, from the book, *Enter Francis Bacon* by Bertram Theobald,” <https://sirbacon.org/btheobaldenterchiii.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> Francis Bacon, *De Augmentis*, opening to bk 3, ch 1, transl., Spedding 4:336.

<sup>39</sup> *Philomorus: a brief examination of the Latin poems of Sir Thomas More*, 2d ed., ed. John Howard Marsden (London, 1878), app, 270.

Sir Nicholas Bacon, Francis’s father, translated a poem by Sir Thomas More about a tempest at sea, called “A Friar and the Mariners,” from a manuscript of miscellaneous verses by Sir Nicholas, entitled “The Recreations of his Age.” *Philomorus*, app, p. 271. It will be remembered that Francis Bacon several times used the word “recreation” to describe

*Oh, that rustic boor!* I do not know when this epigram was first translated into English and which Latin word was translated as “phrensy” (possibly *furor*). Did Bacon or “Shakespeare” read this epigram? How much was Bacon (or Shakespeare) influenced by Sir Thomas More and/or Erasmus? The phrase “fine frenzy” appears in *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (V, 1, 1842) and *Merry Wives of Windsor* (V, 1, 2497–98, 1864 Globe edition, <https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org>).

In all, Shakespeare uses “frenzy” thirteen times and “frenzies” once.<sup>40</sup> Bacon uses the word frenzy in *The Advancement of Learning* (1605, in English) to convey his belief that words alone failed to adequately convey reality.<sup>41</sup> Would you not think such intriguing similarities would suggest that further inquiry should be made? If Spedding was *not* hinting at a connection between Bacon and Shakespeare, why *did* he use *Shakespeare’s* words to describe *Bacon’s* poetic abilities?

3) **Shakespeare was learned.** Whoever wrote the works of Shakespeare was learned in the law,<sup>42</sup> as well as in Roman history, classical Latin and Greek,<sup>43</sup> and in

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writing in which he engaged as a diversion from his professional duties. One such use was in his preface to *Wisdom of the Ancients* (1609), Spedding 6:695, as reported in Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 34.

Sir Nicholas also translated one of More’s “witty sayings” which ended in the line: “Out of good rhyme t’ have made nor rhyme nor reason.” *Philomorus*, app, 273. See *As You Like It*, III, 2, 1475; *Comedy of Errors* II, 2, 442–43.

<sup>40</sup> *Comedy of Errors* IV, 4, 1332; *Cymbeline* IV, 2, 2495; V, 5, 3711; *King John* IV, 2, 1854; *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (V, 1, 1842); *Merry Wives of Windsor* (V, 1, 2497–98; *Taming of the Shrew*, prologue, 280; *Titus Andronicus* IV, 1, 1553; IV, 4, 2021; *Troilus and Cressida*, V, 3, 3376; V, 10, 3662; *Twelfth Night* V, 1, 2484; *Rape of Lucrece*, 1726; *Venus and Adonis*, 762.

<sup>41</sup> “Here therefore is the first distemper of learning, when men study words and not matter: whereof though I have represented an example of late times, yet it hath been and will be *secundum majus et minus* in all time. And how is it possible but this should have an operation to discredit learning, even with vulgar capacities, when they see learned men’s works like the first letter of a patent or limned book; which though it hath large flourishes, yet it is but a letter? It seems to me that Pygmalion’s frenzy is a good emblem or portraiture of this vanity: for words are but the images of matter; and except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture.” *The Advancement of Learning*, bk 1, Spedding 3:284.

<sup>42</sup> Cockburn, ch 30, “Was Shakespeare a Lawyer?” 338–366; McClinton, *The Shakespeare Conspiracies*, 64–68, 369–71; Lord Penzance, *The Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy*, 83–96 (law terms in the plays and sonnets), Holmes, *The Authorship of Shakespeare*, vol 2, 629–642; Thomas Regnier, “Could Shakespeare Think Like a Lawyer? How Inheritance Law Issues in Hamlet May Shed Light on the Authorship Question,” 57 U. MIA L. REV. 377 (2003), available at: <https://repository.law.miami.edu/umlr/vol57/iss2/4>. For bibliographies, see *FBHH*, 293–295 and collected at my author website, <https://christinagwaldman.com/bibliography-baconshakespeare-incontext/>.

<sup>43</sup> See Charles Martindale and A. B. Taylor, eds., *Shakespeare and the Classics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). “*Shakespeare and the Classics* demonstrates that the

practically every area of knowledge.<sup>44</sup> Yet, if the plays were written by a relatively unlearned commoner, how does one account for such erudition? Stratfordians stress the excellence of a Stratford grammar school education, but there is no proof Shakespeare ever attended.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, this rationally inexplicable paradox leads to a tendency to “dumb down” the learning in Shakespeare, commensurate with Shaxpere’s biography, as McClinton has observed.<sup>46</sup> “Dumbing down” the works of Shakespeare deprives the reader of the full experience their author(s) intended.

4) **The Promus parallels.** There are *numerous* parallels between Bacon’s *Promus*, a writer’s notebook in which he jotted down apt phrases and proverbs for use in his writing, many of which only show up in the works of Shakespeare.<sup>47</sup> Both Mrs. Henry [Constance] Pott and her team of scholars and Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence<sup>48</sup> have produced editions of the *Promus* detailing their findings of parallels. It appears that Alan Stewart, an editor of the Oxford Francis Bacon

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classics are of central importance in Shakespeare’s plays and in the structure of his imagination.”—book jacket. Andrew Hui sought more detail in his “Review of Jonathan Bate, *How the Classics Made Shakespeare*,” *Modern Language Quarterly*, Spring 2020, 246–49. Hui is also the author of “The Infinite Aphorisms of Erasmus and Bacon,” *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 38, no 2 (Oct. 2018), 171–199, DOI:[10.1163/18749275-03802003](https://doi.org/10.1163/18749275-03802003).

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., Cockburn, ch 7, “The Learning of Shake-Speare, Bacon, and Shakspere,” *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 65–105; McClinton, ch 3, “The Literary Colossus,” *The Shakespeare Conspiracies*, 61–81; Reed, ch 5, “The Classical Element in the Plays,” *Francis Bacon: Our Shake-speare*, 144–214; Lord Penzance, *The Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy*, 70–79; Holmes, *The Authorship of Shakespeare*, vol 1, 9–28; II, app., 642–644.

<sup>45</sup> See David Kathman, ch 110, “Authorship Controversy,” *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare: Shakespeare’s World, 1500–1660*, vol 1, ed. Bruce R. Smith and Katherine Rowe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 854.

<sup>46</sup> McClinton, preface, *The Shakespeare Conspiracies*, 12. For Shaxpere’s factual and fictional biographies compared and critically examined, see E. M. Dutton, *Homeless Shakespeare: His Fabricated Life from Cradle to Grave*, e-book, 2011, Silo.Pub, <https://silo.pub/homeless-shakespeare-his-fabricated-life-from-cradle-to-grave.html> and Internet Archive, [https://archive.org/details/HomelessShakespeareHisFabricatedLifeFromCradleToGrave\\_99\\_1](https://archive.org/details/HomelessShakespeareHisFabricatedLifeFromCradleToGrave_99_1) (which I reviewed at SirBacon.org May 2, 2019).

<sup>47</sup> See “Promus, new text, <https://sirbacon.org/links/notebook.html>. On the “notebook culture,” see Vickers, intro, *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, xli–xliv.

<sup>48</sup> Mrs. Henry [Constance] Pott, *Francis Bacon and Shakespeare, the promus of formularies and elegancies, being private notes, ca 1594, being hitherto unpublished ... illustrated and elucidated by passages from Shakespeare*, ed. E.A. Abbott (London, 1883), available from SirBacon.org, <https://sirbacon.org/links/notebook.html>; Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, *Bacon is Shakespeare: together with a reprint of Bacon’s Promus of formularies and elegancies* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970, first pub. 1910). See also “Excerpts from *The Shakespeare Myth* by Walter Ellis, 1946” (pp. 10–29), SirBacon.org, <https://sirbacon.org/shakespearemyth.htm>.

edition of the *Promus* (vol 1), dismissed Pott's and Durning-Lawrence's work from serious consideration because those persons were Baconians (which might be defined as persons who studied Francis Bacon and his works, often in relation to Shakespeare). Stratfordians urge readers to believe that the sayings and proverbs Bacon collected in the *Promus* were common expressions among general use, not expressions specially collected for use in the Shakespeare works.

5) **Other parallels.** Even aside from the *Promus*, a great many parallels have been found between the writings of Bacon and Shakespeare.<sup>49</sup> Both Shakespeare and Bacon saw the taming of the passions as the aim of civilization.<sup>50</sup>

In the Tennison *Baconiana* is related the story of how Francis's father, Sir Nicholas, died:

Of his Death, this is said \* to be the occasion. He had his Barber rubbing and combing his Head. And, because it was very hot, the Window was open to let in a fresh Wind. He fell asleep, and awaked all distemper'd, and in a great sweat, Said he to the Barber, Why did you let me sleep? Why, my Lord, said he, I durst not wake your Lordship. Why then, saith my Lord Keeper, you have killed me with Kindness. So he removed into his Bed-Chamber, and within a few days died.<sup>51</sup>

Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* said: "This is a way to kill a wife with kindness" (IV, 1, 1819). Now, granted, Erasmus in a letter mentions both kindness and killing. This might have given Bacon the *idea*, had he seen it—which he might have done. It does not, however, contain the specific phrase "kill with kindness."<sup>52</sup> It would make sense for the Christian humanist Bacon to be influenced by the Christian humanist Erasmus. I wonder, was Shaxpere's copy of Erasmus heavily marked-up?

6) **Northumberland Manuscript.** Francis Bacon's name appears written next to the name "William Shakespeare" on the "Northumberland Manuscript," the cover of a folder which once contained manuscripts written by both Bacon and Shakespeare.

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<sup>49</sup> See, e.g., Cockburn, ch 8, "The Comedy of Errors and The Gray's Inn Revels of Christmas 1594–97," *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 105–128; Edward Johnson, "Directory of Bacon-Shakespeare Coincidences," <https://sirbacon.org/coinc-matrix.htm>, from *Baconiana* 120, July, 1946); Martin Pares, "Parallelisms and the Promus," <https://sirbacon.org/mp.html>; Lord Penzance, *Bacon-Shakespeare Controversy*, 168–188; Holmes, *The Authorship of Shakespeare*, vol 1, 148–165 ("parallel works"), 303–327 ("more parallels").

<sup>50</sup> Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 33.

<sup>51</sup> Tennison, *Baconiana*, 245.

<sup>52</sup> Erasmus to Thomas Grey, Paris, [August] 1497, in *The Epistles of Erasmus from his Earliest Letters to his Fifty-First Year*, transl. Francis Morgan Nicholls (London: Longmans, Green, 1901), 137–139, 138.

The cover displays a list of the contents the folder once contained. They include two Shakespeare plays. The “Northumberland Manuscript” was discovered in 1867 at Northumberland House, Charing Cross, London. The folder still contained a manuscript of Bacon’s 1592 device, “Of Tribute; or, giving that which is due” which Spedding printed as *A Conference of Pleasures* (London, 1870).<sup>53</sup> A “better” manuscript discovered by Peter Beal was relied upon by Vickers in his *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, first published in 1996.<sup>54</sup>

7) **Bacon used pseudonyms.** Bacon employed pseudonyms. “Valerius Terminus” and “Hermes Stella” were pseudonyms he assumed in “Valerius Terminus.”<sup>55</sup> This name suggests a connection to St. George, the patron saint of England, for *Galerius* was thought to be the name of a Roman emperor (son-in law and second-in-command to the Emperor Diocletian) who, in 303 A.D., made an edict ordering the persecution of Christians. This occurred during the festival for the Roman God *Terminus*. The martyrdom of “the real” St. George, thought to have been surnamed “Nestor” (Nestorius), dates to this period—as does the martyrdom of St. Alban, Britain’s first Christian martyr (ca 301–305 A.D.).<sup>56</sup> Bacon in later years signed his name as “Lord Verulam” and, after he was made Viscount St. Alban, he signed as “St. Alban.”

Bacon wrote speeches for a dramatic interlude or “device” which was performed before Queen Elizabeth on November 17, 1595 at Essex House. These speeches were

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<sup>53</sup> See “The Northumberland Manuscript: Bacon & Shakespeare Manuscripts in One Portfolio!” <https://sirbacon.org/links/northumberland.html>); Cockburn, ch 13, “The Northumberland Manuscript,” *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 164–184; McClinton, ch 9, “Exhibits in the Case,” *The Shakespeare Conspiracies*, 197–212, 197–202; Holmes, *The Authorship of Shakespeare*, vol 2, 657–682; “The Northumberland Manuscript,” FBRT, copyright 2016, rev. May 2020, available from <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/essays/>.

<sup>54</sup> Vickers, “Note on the Text,” *Major Works* (unpaginated; it follows the introduction).

<sup>55</sup> “Valerius Terminus: Of the Interpretation of Nature, With the Annotations of Hermes Stella” (first pub. 1734). The annotations were, apparently, never done. Spedding 3:215–252.

<sup>56</sup> Edward Clapton, *The Life of St. George*, 2d ed., rev. and enlarged (London, Swan, Sonnenschein, 1903), 15, 20, 32, 36–38, 40–42; C. Hardwick, ed., transl., *An Anglo-Saxon Passion of St. George: From a Manuscript in the Cambridge University Library* [written by Aelfric, Archbishop of York from 1023–1051] (London, 1850), 3. *Authorship by Aelfric was demonstrated by comparing the manuscript with a manuscript known to be Aelfric’s in the Cotton library.* Bacon had access to the Cotton library. He borrowed source materials from Robert Cotton when he was writing *The History of the Reign of King Henry VII* (See the Brian Vickers edition (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xiii, xxviii, 128 n., 221 n.).

“Datianus” (which sounds like “Gratianus” in *The Merchant of Venice*) may have been the same person as “Galerius,” also called “Magentius.” See “St. George: The Trophy Bearer,” St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Ocean Township, New Jersey, <https://www.stgeorgeap.org/patron-saint/>); Christina Hole, *English Folk Heroes: From King Arthur to Thomas a Becket* (New York: Dorset Press, 1992), 103–120.

attributed on their title page to “Mr. Henry Cuffe, servant to the Earl of Essex,” Essex’s secretary, but they were in Bacon’s handwriting, says Stanley Wells of the Stratfordian Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.<sup>57</sup> A poem, “The Earl of Essex his Bee ...,” is also attributed to Cuffe.<sup>58</sup>

“William Shakespeare” as a pseudonym is believed to show an alliance with Pallas Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom who shook her spear at ignorance.<sup>59</sup> In my book, *Francis Bacon’s Hidden Hand*, I speculated about other possible etymologies, such as *chez sphere*.<sup>60</sup> The notion that “Shakespeare” may have derived from the French name, “Jacques-Pierre” has been proposed.<sup>61</sup> I think that is plausible. I observed a possible pattern in *The Merchant of Venice* of “taking the name of the teacher,” in that the main characters’ names suggest those of twelfth century Italian jurists (Portia for Azolinus Portius, Nerissa for Irnerius, etc.).<sup>62</sup> When he was in France, Bacon was involved with the French Pleiade group of seven poets, led by *Pierre* de Ronsard and including *Joachim* du Bellay, Jean-Antoine de Baif, Rémy Belleau, Étienne Jodelle, Pontus de Tyard, and Jean Daurat. There is more to be explored in this regard.

8) **Bacon had reasons to remain anonymous.** Arguably, Bacon had more reason than most for employing a pseudonym. An artist is the medium through which his/her/their own life experience is transmuted into art. As a high-ranking statesman and counselor to sovereigns, Bacon had state secrets and confidences to keep. I believe Spedding felt it was his duty to keep Bacon’s secrets. He understood that Bacon’s method was to bury truths beneath the surface, trusting that those who had to dig for it would appreciate it more.<sup>63</sup> Bacon, for whom the reformation of learning and education were a sacred mission, understood the joy people can experience in the making of new discoveries. There was one secret to be safeguarded in particular, though: Bacon’s royal birth. It was a secret of estate, a state secret.

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<sup>57</sup> See Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), p. 76, discussed in FBHH, 96–97.

<sup>58</sup> Catalog of English Literary Manuscripts, EsR86, pp. 368–69 [Feilde MS, c. 1642]. See also Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 38, n3, 229.

<sup>59</sup> On the name “William Shakespeare” as a pseudonym, see “Secret Bacon,” FBRT, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/bacon/secret-bacon/>.

<sup>60</sup> FBHH, 90–93.

<sup>61</sup> As noted by James Shapiro in *Contested Will: Who Wrote Shakespeare* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010, e-book 2017), 164.

C. M. Ingleby (Clement Mansfield) calls “Shakespeare” a “double-beloved disciple name.” C.M. Ingleby, *Shakespeare: The Man and The Book* (London, 1877), 16.

<sup>62</sup> See FBHH, 159–173 in ch 9.

<sup>63</sup> Bacon retells an Aesop’s fable in *The Advancement of Learning*, bk 1, Spedding 3:289, which Edwin Reed paraphrases in his introduction to *Francis Bacon: Our Shakespeare*: “A father, dying, called his sons to his bedside and told them he had buried a treasure in his vineyard for them. In due time they found it, not in gold or silver, but in the bountiful crops that reward the spade and pick.”

9) **Bacon had a keen interest in the theatre.** He wrote masques.<sup>64</sup> He praised the Jesuits' use of theatre as an educational tool.<sup>65</sup> He used theatrical metaphors in his writing.<sup>66</sup> Incidentally, the word "poesy" did not refer only to poetry but included fictional prose as well. Cockburn has a very good section on Bacon's interest in the theatre which collects many quotations from Bacon.<sup>67</sup>

10) **Bacon worked in intelligence.** Anthony Bacon and Francis Bacon ran an intelligence network for Queen Elizabeth's government.<sup>68</sup> This required regular use of codes and ciphers. Francis Bacon invented the biliteral cipher which, like modern computers, uses binary code.<sup>69</sup> He understood the importance of protecting a message so that only those for whom it was intended would be able to comprehend it. He sometimes wrote in foreign languages to add extra protection when he was stating his own controversial opinions or revealing sensitive information.<sup>70</sup> Where there is censorship, one must guard against the dangers of "speaking the truth too plainly," then as now.<sup>71</sup>

Cipher arguments in Shakespeare have been highly controversial. Cockburn was not convinced there were ciphers in the play.<sup>72</sup> McClinton cautioned that "ciphers and emblems have done more harm than good ... because they are easily mocked."<sup>73</sup> Arguably, the test of truth is not popular opinion. That is one reason why Bacon hid his meanings and new ideas somewhat, to protect them from scoffers until they had a chance to take hold. Thomas Tension advised that "whosoever would understand the Lord Bacon's cypher, let him consult that accurate edition." It would seem he was referring to *De Augmentis*, in Latin (London, 1623).<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> On masques, see also *infra*, pp. 4–5.

<sup>65</sup> *De Augmentis*, bk 6, ch 4 (Spedding 4:494–5), cited by Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 29.

<sup>66</sup> See Brian Vickers, "Bacon's Use of Theatrical Imagery," in William A. Sessions, ed., *Francis Bacon's Legacy of Texts* (New York: AMS Press, 1990), 171–213.

<sup>67</sup> Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 25; ch 3, "Bacon's Interest in the Theatre," *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 21–39 (highly recommended).

<sup>68</sup> See, e.g., "Baconian History, FBRT, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/bacon/baconian-history/>).

<sup>69</sup> See Peter Pesic, "The Clue to the Labyrinth: Francis Bacon and the Decryption of Nature," originally pub. in *Cryptologia*, July 2000, SirBacon.org, <https://sirbacon.org/pesic.htm>.

<sup>70</sup> Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 74, citing Spedding 11:278.

<sup>71</sup> Bacon to Bishop Williams and the Bishop's Answer, Spedding 14:546–547, regarding "letters *e re nata*." The phrase is often translated as "arising out of present circumstances," but *nata* is a past participle of *nascor*; i.e., "having been born," or "birth." *Cassell's Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *nascor*, creating a possible ambiguity.

<sup>72</sup> Cockburn, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 280.

<sup>73</sup> See McClinton, ch 10, "Lights of Truth," *The Shakespeare Conspiracies*, 215–226.

<sup>74</sup> *Baconiana*, ed. Tension, intro., p. 27, <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/a28024.0001.001>.

Simple acrostics are easy enough to see on title pages or in the beginning lines of a work—especially once someone has pointed them out!<sup>75</sup> Cryptologists William F. and Elizebeth S. Friedman tried to bury forever the question of codes and ciphers in Shakespeare in their 1957 book, *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined*. They included among their chapters treatment of the deciphered works of Elizabeth Wells Gallup.<sup>76</sup> However, their objectivity has been called into question.<sup>77</sup> Stratfordians tend to overstate the significance of the Friedmans’ assessment.<sup>78</sup> What the Friedmans *said* was that they did not think the case had *been* proven by scientific standards they themselves set—not that it could *never possibly* be proven.<sup>79</sup>

At any rate, arguments based on cipher theories are not *essential* to an argument that Bacon wrote Shakespeare. It should be remembered, however, that *all* reading is a process of decoding and that art and literature frequently employ symbolism and allusions which must be interpreted, as well as multiple levels of meaning.

11) **Coining words.** “Both” Bacon and Shakespeare were linguistic geniuses whose invention of new words has enriched the English language. Both were inveterate “word coiners.” Ironic, isn’t it? for two such men to appear on the world’s stage at the exact same time. Stratfordians try to make light of this, arguing that neither Bacon nor Shakespeare coined as many new words as had been previously thought. Even if so, is it not unusual that “both men” used the same *modus operandi* (way of

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<sup>75</sup> See William Stone Booth, *Subtle Shining Secrecies Writ in the Margents of Books, generally ascribed to William Shakespeare, the Actor, and here ascribed to William Shakespeare, the Poet* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1925, *but see* William F. and Elizabeth S. Friedman, *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011, first pub. 1957), 92–102 (finding “no acrostics”), 114–137 (finding the “string cipher of William Stone Booth” invalid).

<sup>76</sup> Discussed in *FBHH* (app 2, “The Tragedy of Anne Boleyn”), 227–232. I have found many of William Stone Booth’s examples in *Subtle Shining Secrecies* persuasive.

<sup>77</sup> See Kenneth Patton, ebook, *Setting the Record Straight: An Exposé of Stratfordian Anti-Baconian Tactics, bk 1, The Vindication of William Stone Booth*, 2000, <https://sirbacon.org/pattonstrs.htm>; Penn Leary (<https://www.baconscipher.com/>), *The Second Cryptographic Shakespeare* (Omaha, NB: Westchester House, 1990), epdf, available from the sirbacon.org archives (search: “epdf.Penn Leary pub\_the-second-cryptographic-shakespeare”).

See the e-book of “A Phoenix,” *The Fraudulent Friedmans: The Baconian Ciphers in the Shakespeare Works*, pdf, June 2022, available from <https://aphoenix1.academia.edu/research>.

<sup>78</sup> As late as 2018, psychiatrist W. Ross Ashby outlandishly claimed that anyone who did not believe William Shaxpere was Shakespeare had a mental disorder! (W. Ross Ashby, review of *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined*, in *The British Journal of Psychiatry, Journal of Mental Science* 104, no 435, online Feb. 8, 2018).

<sup>79</sup> The Friedmans, “Conclusion,” *The Shakespearean Ciphers Examined*, 279–288, 280 (“in case it may be helpful to Baconian cryptologists who wish to try again”), 287 (“bilateral cipher is the one reputable system among those proposed”).

operating) of bringing into the English language new words *based* on words already existing in Latin?<sup>80</sup>

12) **The Droeshout Portrait.** Is the “Droeshout portrait” a joke? The jaw line looks like “Shakespeare” is wearing a mask, and the jacket is constructed as if its sleeves had been “set in” backwards. Stratfordians sometimes claim that for two hundred years no one questioned whether “William Shaxpere of Stratford” was also “William Shakespeare the poet-dramatist.” James Shapiro traces the first recorded incidence of doubting to James Wilmot in 1785.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> For word coining, see, e.g., R. M. Theobald, “Word Coinage in Shakespeare and Others,” *Baconiana*, vol 4, no 16, Third Series, Oct. 16, 1906 (239-246), available from <https://francisbaconsociety.co.uk/baconiana-journals/baconiana-journals-1886-1999/> or <https://sirbacon.org/baconiana-collection/>. For Bacon and English language enrichment, see, e.g., Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, “Francis Bacon and the English Language,” <https://sirbacon.org/links/BaconEnglishLanguage.htm>; Mather Walker, “Bacon and the King James Bible,” 2007, [https://sirbacon.org/Mather\\_KJV/Bacon\\_KJV.html](https://sirbacon.org/Mather_KJV/Bacon_KJV.html).

One should keep in mind, however, that the English Corpora of the Early English Books Online (EEBO, first online in 2017) may call into question other sources as to when certain word usages were first recorded, at least as to sources it contains within it: printed books, pamphlets, and broadsides. “Nemo” of the Oxfraud Facebook group (which is affiliated with the website Oxfraud.com) brought this to my attention, in discussions at their group’s Facebook page in February 2022.

However, one must not assume that all uses of a word will be collected within the English Corpora (EEBO). McQuain and Malless in *Coined by Shakespeare* (Springfield MA: Merriam-Webster, 1998, p. 95) had claimed that Shakespeare was the first to use the word “hint” as a noun in its modern meaning, in *Othello*, and that the first recorded use as a verb was in 1648. Shakespeare used “hint” in eight plays (id., 95; English Corpora, s.v., “hint,” <https://www.english-corpora.org/eebo/>. *Othello was first performed in November, 1604*, according to the [Royal Shakespeare Company](https://www.royalshakespearecompany.com/).

Perhaps it would be safer not to conclude that either Bacon or Shakespeare was the *first* person to use the word hint, as a noun or verb, in English, within something approaching its modern meaning of “to suggest indirectly or by covert allusion; intimation; insinuation.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “hint,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hint>, as I did suggest in my book, *FBHH*, p. 3, and in my essay, “If Bacon is Shakespeare, What Questions Does that Answer,” p. 4 (Nov. 27, 2020, available from SirBacon.org).

Still, Bacon used “hint” (but not in its modern meaning) in the *Sylva sylvarum*, published posthumously in 1627 (Spedding 2: 339–685. The English Corpora did not give a page number.) and even earlier in a letter he signed “St. Alban” to his good friend Tobie Matthew (in its modern meaning. Spedding 14:344, in the section “1621-22”). Bacon was made Viscount St. Alban on Jan. 27, 1621 (This letter was not in the English Corpora). I have not searched all fourteen volumes of Spedding for the word “hint.” Bacon also had many handwritten commonplace books. See “The Private Manuscript Library of Francis Bacon ...,” entered and edited by Juan Schoch for educational research purposes, <https://sirbacon.org/Tottel.htm>. It would be convenient if one source could be definitive on when words were first used, but that does not appear to be the case.

<sup>81</sup> Shapiro, *Contested Will*, 3.

Evidence of earlier doubts exists, however. McClinton asserted that doubt as to Shakespeare authorship “existed from the very beginning.”<sup>82</sup> John Taylor (1580–1653), the “Water Poet,” a Thames ferryman who knew Bacon, created a caricature of the “Droeshout Portrait.” This evidence strongly suggests he was “in on” the joke.<sup>83</sup> The outfit in the Droushout Portrait resembles that worn by amateur painter Nathaniel Bacon (1585–1627), a relative of Francis’s.<sup>84</sup> In addition, the satires of Joseph Hall and John Marston and an epigram of Thomas Freeman contemporaneously connect the person they refer to as “Labeo” (the name of an ancient Roman jurist) with both Bacon, whose family motto was *Mediocra firma*, and the “real Shakespeare.”<sup>85</sup>

13) **The Venus and Adonis Mural at the White Hart Inn.** Bacon lived just two miles away at Gorhambury. Both T. D. Bokenham and Francis Carr discuss the details and significance of this “coincidence.”<sup>86</sup>

### The Stratfordian Case

Think about it: the *posthumous* claim purportedly made by his friends on behalf of William Shaxpere of Stratford—never asserted by him during his own lifetime—is based on tradition and very little evidence. Unlike Bacon, Shaxpere left no books or manuscripts to others in his Will. The case which the “Oxfraudians” make at their Oxfraud.com website is based on printed statements (in the First Folio and elsewhere) and on monuments left to the memory of Shakespeare-the-poet. In law, these are of a type of evidence called “hearsay.” It is a legal term that means they are “out-of-court statements offered to prove the truth of the matter asserted.” Such statements are *inadmissible* evidence in a court of law, unless they fall within an exception, because there is no opportunity for cross-examination. Four hundred years after the fact, there are, of course, no living witnesses to be sworn under oath

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<sup>82</sup> McClinton, ch 2, “Treacherous Doubts,” *The Shakespeare Conspiracies*, 37–59.

<sup>83</sup> See Simon Miles, “The Prank of the Face: Unmasking the “Droeshout Portrait” of William Shakespeare,” SirBacon.org, <https://sirbacon.org/The-Prank-of-the-Face.html>; Basil Brown, [Isabelle Kittson Brown], *Supposed Caricature of the Droeshout Portrait of Shakespeare, with Fac Simile of the Rare Print Taken from the very scarce Tract of an Elizabethan Poet*. (New York: privately published, 1911), Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/supposedcaricat00taylgoog>.

<sup>84</sup> “Sir Nathaniel Bacon,” National Portrait Gallery, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw127654/Sir-Nathaniel-Bacon?LinkID=mp00205&role=sit&rNo=2>.

<sup>85</sup> See Cockburn, ch 14, *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 184–209; McClinton, *The Shakespeare Conspiracies*, 43–47, 183–86, Dawkins, “Labeo is Shakespeare is Bacon,” FBRT, <https://www.fbrt.org.uk/essays/>.

<sup>86</sup> See, e.g., T. D. Bokenham, “The Ancient Mural at the White Hart Inn,” repr. from *Baconiana* 72, no 189, Dec. 1990, <https://sirbacon.org/links/bokenham.html>; Francis Carr, “Venus and Adonis at the White Hart Inn,” <https://sirbacon.org/links/carrmural.html>.

to tell the truth and verify such statements. Evidence must also be *sufficient* to prove a matter for a party to prevail in a court of law. There are standards that must be met.

The Oxfraud.com website purports to present a *prima facie legal case*. In other words, its “legal team” claims that their case is so good that, if we can’t “rebut” it, they win. However, as a preliminary matter, only an impartial judge, not a party to a matter, has the authority to decide whether the evidence is strong enough to *grant* a case *prima facie case status*. In a recent U.S. case, Judge W. Keith Watkins has stated an important rule, “No man can be judge in his own cause, because his interest would certainly bias his judgment, and, most probably, corrupt his integrity.”<sup>87</sup> Thus, the Oxfraud.com claim of having stated its own *prima facie case* would seem to be groundless.

The *Oxfraudian* “legal team” may be confusing the Latin term *prima facie* which means “on first appearance, on the surface” with the specific term of art, *prima facie case*. But even if an impartial judge had decided they had stated a *prima facie case*, the opposing party need not *disprove* their case to be given a trial on the evidence. It would only need to establish reasonable doubt. Sufficient evidence of reasonable doubt has been presented countless times, but Stratfordians tend to ignore it. It is entirely plausible that “Shakespeare” was a pseudonym; pseudonyms were commonly in use at the time. This essay, incorporating by reference all resources included within it, addresses other reasons for doubting that the mysterious “Man from Stratford” wrote the works of Shakespeare.

I do not purport to speak for all Baconians in this essay—only for myself. This is about the journey, not the destination. It is about making the inquiry and finding truth and wisdom that resonates. It is also about the satisfaction of solving literary puzzles. It is about leaving the door open, not hammering it shut.

## Conclusion

It is good that Baconians are not the only ones who are researching Shakespeare authorship,<sup>88</sup> for different perspectives are welcome. Facts and truth are objective, not partisan. Bacon tried to help thinking people guard against the intrusion of the

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<sup>87</sup> The Hon. W. Keith Watkins, *Broadway v. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company*, 364 F.Supp.3d 1329 (N.D. Alabama March 14, 2019), quoting *The Federalist* No. 10 (James Madison), pdf available from <https://constitutionus.com/books/list-of-free-pdfs-available-to-download-and-print/>.

<sup>88</sup> See, e.g., William Leahy, ed. with intro., *My Shakespeare: The Authorship Controversy* (Brighton, UK: EER Edward Everett Root, 2018); Don Rubin, ed., “Special Topics II: The Question That Won’t Go Away,” *Critical Stages*, no 18, Dec., 2018, <https://www.critical-stages.org/18/special-topic/>; Cockburn, ch 36, “Rival Claimants,” *The Bacon Shakespeare Question*, 579–599.

“four idols” which could distort their judgment and perception. While this brief essay cannot hope to treat the entire case for Bacon, at minimum I think it demonstrates that there is sufficient evidence to put the world “on notice” that further investigation into Bacon’s connection to Shakespeare is called for. It is morally wrong to “wall off” (in James Shapiro’s term<sup>89</sup>) Shakespeare authorship studies from legitimate scholarly inquiry. Scholarship is supposed to be about finding out what really happened and accurately recording it, so that we are building a foundation of truth, not lies.

Yes, the author(s) of the Shakespeare works should be acknowledged. What is equally or more important, however, is preserving the spirit of free inquiry. As Bacon wrote, if we begin with certainties, we will end with doubts. If we begin with doubts, we will end with certainties (paraphrased).<sup>90</sup>

What would be the harm in leaving the matter open and acknowledging the validity of the search—just as we do with any other scientific hypothesis? As American jurist Learned Hand famously said, “The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure it is right ....”<sup>91</sup> Surely that is a spirit worth guarding!

Ay, such a pleasure as incaged birds  
Conceive when after many moody thoughts  
At last by notes of household harmony  
They quite forget their loss of liberty.<sup>92</sup>

## Selected Resources

### Websites

A Phoenix, independent scholar, <https://independent.academia.edu/APhoenix1/>.

Francis Bacon Research Trust (Peter Dawkins, Founder and Principal), <https://www.fbrt.org>.

Francis Bacon Society, <https://francisbaconsociety.co.uk/>.

Francis Bacon’s New Advancement of Learning, <https://www.SirBacon.org>.

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<sup>89</sup> Shapiro, *Contested Will*, 5.

<sup>90</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), Spedding 3:293.

<sup>91</sup> Learned Hand, speech, “The Spirit of Liberty” (1944), *The Spirit of Liberty* (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), 143-145; “Learned Hand, For Civil and Religious Liberty, posted January 16, 2013, <http://www.learnedhand.org/?p=4>.

<sup>92</sup> *Henry the Sixth*, IV, Part III: IV, 6, 2326–29.

The Oxford Francis Bacon Project, <http://www.oxfordfrancisbacon.com/>.

The Prima Facie Case for Shakespeare, <https://oxfraud.com/>.

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[https://archive.org/details/HomelessShakespeareHisFabricatedLifeFromCradleToGrave\\_991](https://archive.org/details/HomelessShakespeareHisFabricatedLifeFromCradleToGrave_991).

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