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I. Prologue

My first introduction to The Francis Bacon Society was in the summer of 2008 when I sent a copy of my research *The Shakespeare Puzzle: A Non-esoteric Baconian Theory* to the Chairman at that time, Peter Welsford. We agreed to meet at the Randolph Hotel in Oxford and we shared a pot of tea in the café off the foyer. I recall being fascinated by Peter's stories about Nigel Cockburn, whose work I had enthusiastically read. That same year, Susan Sheridan graduated from the MA course in Shakespeare Authorship Studies at Brunel University, and with progress in the air the possibility opened up for someone to research a PhD degree through the society. I already had a substantial body of background research and was looking for a new project, and so a deal was agreed in which The Francis Bacon Society would half-fund the whole three years of the degree and I would supply the rest.

During that three years, I invented a new method of stylistic analysis which I called Rare Collocation Profiling (RCP). This involved painstakingly raking through a play, line by line, phrase by phrase, and checking any seemingly unusual phrases against the Early English Books Online (EEBO) database to see how rare it was when it was used in the play. I could also look at the authors who shared its use, and this gave me the data I needed to support circumstantial evidence that Francis Bacon had contributed to *The Tempest* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. In January 2014, I attended the viva voce, the interview that would decide whether or not I would be awarded the degree. My external examiner was a professor from Carnegie Mellon University who had an interest in both science and the humanities, while my internal examiner from Brunel University was an expert in computer linguistics. A third person sat in to ensure fairness. After the 90-minute grilling at Brunel — and it *was* a grilling — I recall returning to the office of my supervisor, Bill Leahy, whose face betrayed his expectancy that my work had been rejected. It was certainly a high-risk project. After all, it was the first PhD thesis to argue for the exclusion of Shakspere from certain plays, and the first to claim that Francis Bacon contributed to some of them. How could it possibly get past the censors?! When I announced that it had been passed without amendment — the best possible outcome — he uncorked a bottle of champagne. I don't usually drink alcohol, but I did that day!

In the following years, I managed to get academic papers and chapters accepted in various Shakespeare journals and books. It was no small feat because about 95% of my attempts were rejected, often with toxically mean comments from the referees. My biggest breakthrough came in 2019 when Routledge, a first-rate academic publisher, accepted my *Francis Bacon's Contribution to Shakespeare: A New Attribution Method*. This meant that the ideas from my PhD thesis, which I had subsequently

developed and expanded, would now be distributed to mainstream universities. It managed to attract scholarly attention. In his review of *The Oxford Shakespeare Authorship Companion*, a collection of papers by leading orthodox researchers, Professor Joseph Rudman stated that my PhD work on Bacon's contribution should have been included. [1] A review of my Routledge book appeared in *Style* journal. Its author was Professor MacDonald P. Jackson, a world expert on Shakespeare authorship, and one of the contributors to *The Oxford Shakespeare Authorship Companion*. [2] My response to his review appears in this edition of *Baconiana*, see VI. Of course, not all the research I have carried out has appeared in books or academic journals, so when the present Chairman, Susan McIlroy, suggested that I edit a *Baconiana*, it seemed natural to suggest that I put together a special issue that contained work of mine still unpublished.

Over the years, Peter Welsford and I met many times at the Randolph Hotel, sharing stories about the fascinating characters who passed along the corridors of The Francis Bacon Society. On our first meeting, we formed a pledge to visit a different table in the Randolph café every subsequent time we met there until we had visited every single one. Unfortunately, our task was left incomplete. The same cannot be said of our academic project. The seeds planted all those years ago have now grown to flower, and a section of that blossoming garden is now presented for your inspection.

References

1. Rudman, Joseph. *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 34, No. 3 (2019).
2. Jackson, MacDonald P. *Style* 53(3), (2019): 364–370.

II. Did Bacon edit *Macbeth*?

1. Preliminary

Certain events that occur in *Macbeth* can be interpreted as echoing those involving Sir Walter Raleigh, especially his execution for treason in 1618. Dr Simon Forman recorded in his diary that he saw the play at the Globe theatre on 10 April 1610, and there is a claim, first made by Malone, that it might have been first performed at court on 7 August 1606 for a visit to London by the King of Denmark, King James's brother-in-law. [1] This suggests that the manuscript was modified after Raleigh's death for its debut publication in the *First Folio* (1623). The *First Folio* declares in "To the Great Variety of Readers" that the plays were edited for publication, having been "offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes". So who edited *Macbeth*? The relevant lines could not have been added by

William Shakspeare because he died in 1616. Since Sir Francis Bacon was a prosecutor at Raleigh's trial and subsequently reported on it in *A Declaration of the Demeanor and Carriage of Sir Walter Raleigh* (1618), we suggest here that he is a good candidate for having edited the *First Folio* version of the play.

2. Holinshed's *Chronicles*

The main source for *Macbeth* is Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587) which relates certain events in Scotland in 1040AD concerning the "somewhat cruell of nature" Makbeth (also Mackbeth), son of Sinell, the Thane of Glamis. [2] In the *Chronicles*, Makbeth, cousin of King Duncane, and Banquo, Thane of Lochquhaber, had helped Duncane defeat the invading Danes led by Sueno, the King of Norway:

They that escaped and got once to their ships, obtained of Makbeth for a great summe of gold, that such of their friends as were slaine at this last bickering, might be buried in Saint Colmes Inch.

Afterwards, while Makbeth and Banquo, were passing through woods and fields:

there met them thrée women in strange apparel, resembling creatures of elder world [...] the first of them spake and said; All haile Makbeth, thane of Glamis (for he had latelie entered into that dignitie and office by the death of his father Sinell.) The second of them said; Haile Makbeth thane of Cawder [at that time he was not]. But the third said; All haile Makbeth that héerafter shalt be king of Scotland [...] the common opinion was, that these women were either the weird sisters, that is (as ye would say) the goddesses of destinie, or else some nymphs or feiries, indued [sic] with knowledge or prophesie [...] shortly after, the thane of Cawder being condemned at Fores of treason against the king committed; his lands, livings, and offices were given of the kings libertie to Mackbeth. [3].

The *Chronicles* give no further information about the Thane of Cawder.

3. Raleigh's first trial

In 1595, Sir Walter Raleigh (pronounced "raw lie") was committed to finding 'El Dorado', reputed to be rich in gold. During an expedition to the island of Trinidad at the mouth of the Orinoco river, he obtained important information from Topiawari, an old Indian chief, that there was gold at Macureguari in Guiana (now part of Venezuela), a vast mountainous region bordered by the Orinoco river. On his return voyage to England, and following orders from Elizabeth to "offend the King of Spain", he attacked the Spanish coastal towns west of Trinidad.

Two secretly pro-Spanish Privy Councillors, Lord Robert Cecil and Lord Henry Howard, in a conspiracy to dispose of Sir Walter Raleigh, began to indoctrinate Queen Elizabeth with suspicions concerning Raleigh's loyalty. On 23 March 1603 Elizabeth died. The Scottish King James took the throne and made peace with Spain a year later. That summer, Cecil reported that he had discovered a 'plot' between the pro-Spanish Lord Cobham and Count Aremberg from the Spanish Netherlands, mediated by a Flemish merchant called Laurencie. Apparently, Raleigh was to receive Spanish money and stir English and Scottish malcontents to remove the king. Known as the 'Main Plot', Cobham 'confessed' to his participation and implicated Raleigh as the prime mover. Raleigh was sent to the Tower and such was his distress that on 27 July he attempted suicide.

Raleigh went to trial at Winchester on 17 November 1603 before seven Commissioners who included the prosecutor Sir Edward Coke, Lord Robert Cecil, and Lord Henry Howard. [4] The main evidence came from Cobham's examination of 20 July, when he 'confessed' that, through Laurencie, he had exchanged letters with Aremberg, newly arrived in England, about a promise of money and a safe pass to Spain. Cobham had intended "to deal with the King [of Spain] for 600,000 crowns, and to return by Jersey, and that nothing should be done until he had spoken with Sir Walter Raleigh for distribution of the money to them which were discontented in England". [5] In contrast, Raleigh's statement claimed that before Aremberg's arrival "Lord Cobham offered me 10,000 crowns for the furthering the peace between England and Spain". [6]

At his trial, Raleigh added that Cobham had told him:

when Count Aremberg came he would yield such strong arguments for peace as they would satisfy any man [... and] he told [him ...] what great sums of money would be given to some Councillors for making the peace; and named my Lord Cecil and the Earl of Mar [7]

The scheming Lord Cecil, a man on a Spanish pension, feigned empathy for Raleigh throughout, ending the proceedings by reading a retraction from Cobham of Raleigh's involvement "you are as innocent and as clear from any treasons against the King, as is any subject living". [8]

However, the outcome had already been determined. The jury was unimpressed, and Raleigh took a sentence of death. The whole trial had been manufactured by Cecil, and Cobham his main witness was spared just as he placed his head on the block. Raleigh was fortunate to see his sentence commuted to thirteen-year confinement to the Tower.

4. Search for gold

In 1612, Robert Cecil died and Raleigh sent a letter to the Lords of the Council reminding them of the gold mine in Guiana and their offer to transport his associate Keymis there with two ships of men “as should be able to defend him against the Spaniards inhabiting upon Orinoco”. In the middle of March 1616, after a bribe of £1500 to the brother of George Villiers, an anti-Spanish Council member, Raleigh was freed from the Tower and given permission to prepare ships for Guiana on condition that he refrain from attacking the Spanish towns. On 12 June he set sail from Plymouth with a force of 431 men and 14 heavily armed ships, one of them commanded by Keymis. Many thought that Raleigh would take to piracy and never return. [9]

In November, they reached Guiana only to discover that the Spanish had received intelligence from London of their strength and were lying in wait. Raleigh, who was confined to bed with a high fever, sent his son Wat with Keymis, who claimed to know the location of the gold mine, up the Orinoco with 250 men in boats. On 13 May 1618, the Spanish Ambassador received news that Raleigh’s men had destroyed the Spanish town of St. Thomas and killed the governor, against the wishes of King James. Wat was fatally wounded, Keymis refused to proceed to the mine and committed suicide, and the British, unable to consolidate their position, retreated to the ships.

5. Raleigh’s execution

When Raleigh returned in June 1618, King James, who was trying to marry his son Prince Charles to the Infanta of Spain, was enraged. Raleigh was brought before the authorities again, and Sir Francis Bacon was one of six Commissioners from the Privy Council appointed to examine on the case:

Bacon came up from Gorehambury on the 17th August; on which day the first of many meetings was held. [10]

In a private hearing on Wednesday 28 October 1618, contrived because it was thought that a public one might favour Raleigh, no treason was found, but King James had insisted that Raleigh’s original sentence of death should be carried out upon the charge of 1603. The next day, at about nine in the morning, after speaking for “more than an hour’s space” to the crowd in the Old Palace Yard at Westminster with “Apologies to sundry imputations”, Raleigh “dyed very resolutely” under the axe. [11]

6. The Thane of Cawdor

There seem to be several connections between the Thane of Cawdor in the play *Macbeth* and the facts of Raleigh’s alleged treason. The first to suggest that *Macbeth*’s Thane of Cawdor was Sir Walter

Raleigh was the Victorian editor of Bacon's *Works* James Spedding who, without developing the notion, noted that:

Shakespeare [Shakspeare] died two years before, or one might have thought that the famous description of the thane of Cawdor was suggested by that of Raleigh. [12]

Speed of execution

Spedding had in mind the speech by Malcolme in the Palace at Forres:

King. Is execution done on Cawdor?
Or not those in Commission yet return'd?
Malcolme. My Liege, they are not yet come back,
But I have spoke with one that saw him die:
Who did report, that very frankly hee
Confess'd his Treasons, implor'd your Highnesse Pardon
And set forth a deepe Repentance:
Nothing in his Life became him,
Like the leaving it. He dy'de,
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he ow'd,
As 'twere a carelesse Trifle.
(1606 *Macbeth*, 1.4)

Several sources had remarked on Raleigh's frivolity in the face of his impending execution. The Dean of Westminster wrote to Sir John Isham:

when I began to encourage him against the fear of death, he seemed to make so light of it that I wondered at him [13]

Dudley Carelton thought that:

he knew better how to die than to live; and his happiest hours were those of his arraignment and execution [14]

However, this is not the only point of contact between Cawdor and Raleigh. The fact that the trial's Commission had "not yet [had time to] come back" suggests that the execution was carried out almost immediately after the trial. In fact, Raleigh was executed the day after. By comparison, the Earl of

Essex, who had committed the much graver crime of assembling a small army against the queen went to trial on 19 February 1601 and did not meet his executioner until six days later. So as with the Thane of Cawdor in *Macbeth*, Raleigh's departure was swift.

Raleigh's 'coward'

The first lines in *Macbeth* that introduce the Thane of Cawdor are spoken by one of the king's messengers:

Rosse. From Fiffe, great King,
Where the Norwayan Banners flowt the Skie,
And fanne our people cold,
Norway himselfe, with terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyall Traytor,
The Thane of Cawdor, began a dismall Conflict
(1606 *Macbeth*, 1.2)

The name Cawdor, which is here claimed to represent Raleigh, was originally Cawder in Holinshed's *Chronicles*. For the *First Folio*, the spelling had been modified into an anagram of 'coward'. Was this intentional? In the Tower, the night before his execution, Raleigh wrote a piece entitled "on the snuff of a candle":

Cowards fear to die, but courage stout,
Rather than live in snuff, will be put out. [15]

There is a less significant reference to a 'coward' when Lady Macbeth is castigating her husband for procrastinating over his decision to murder King Duncan:

Lady. Would'st thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"
Like the poor cat I' th' adage?
(1606 *Macbeth*, 1.7)

The missing adage in the last line appears in John Heywood's *Proverbes* [16] and can also be found in Francis Bacon's *Promus* waste book:

The catt would eat fish but she will not wett her foote.

(*Promus*, f.96, recto)

Ten thousand crowns

The king's messenger continues:

Rosse. That now

Sweno, the Norwayes king, craves composition;

Nor would we deigne him buriall of his men,

Till he disbursed, at Saint Colmes ynch,

Ten thousand Dollars to our general use.

(1606 *Macbeth*, 1.2)

As mentioned in §2, Holinshed alludes to this event but assigns no value to the payment, describing it only as “a great summe of gold.” Was the play’s “Ten thousand” an arbitrary amount? We recall from §3, Raleigh’s statement at his trial in 1603 that “Lord Cobham offered me 10,000 crowns for the furthering the peace between England and Spain”. It seems that Norway is playing the part of Spain in *Macbeth*.

7. Post-1618 modifications

The witches

In §2, the three women on the heath in Holinshed’s *Chronicles* appeared in “strange apparel, resembling creatures of elder world” and “these women were either the weird sisters, that is (as ye would say) the goddesses of destinie, or else some nymphs or feiries, indued with knowledge or prophesie.” This is also the description of the women given by Simon Forman in his diary when he saw *Macbeth* at the Globe on 20 April 1610:

Macbeth and Banquo, two noble men of Scotland, riding through a wood, there stood before them three women fairies or nymphs [17]

There is no mention of witches, which is what they are given to be in the *First Folio* (1623). The descriptions ‘weird sisters’ and ‘like elves and fairies in a ring’ are uttered in the play but the term ‘witch’ also appears in the dialogue:

1st Witch. A Saylor's Wife had Chestnuts in her Lappe,
And mouncht, & mouncht, and mouncht:
Give me, quoth I.
Aroynt thee, Witch, the rumpe-fed Ronyon^a [mangy creature] cries
(1606 *Macbeth*, 1.3)

3rd Witch. Scale of Dragon, Tooth of Wolfe,
Witches Mummey, Maw, and Gulfe
(1606 *Macbeth*, 4.1)

As witches might, the sisters even dance around a cauldron chanting spells:

All. Double, double, toyle and trouble,
Fire burne, and Cauldron bubble.
(1606 *Macbeth*, 4.1)

The sisters appear not to have been witches in the version Forman saw. Perhaps Holinshed's "nymphs or feiries" were transformed into witches after Rayleigh's death in 1618. It is a reasonable proposition, because Sir Francis Bacon once remarked on the ladies in Court that attended Queen Elizabeth:

Sir Walter Raleigh was wont to say of the ladies of Queen Elizabeth's privy-chamber and bed-chamber "That they were like witches, they could do hurt, but they could do no good" [18]

Apparently, their gossip of the queen's business to Lord Henry Howard mysteriously found its way to Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador. In *Macbeth*, the King decides that the treacherous Thane of Cawdor must perish and Macbeth should inherit his title:

King. No more that Thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our Bosome interest ; Goe pronounce his present death,
And with his former Title greet Macbeth.
(1606 *Macbeth*, 1.2)

Like the gossiping queen's ladies, the witches manage to relay this information to Macbeth in advance of the king's messenger. So the introduction of witches serves as yet another reference to Raleigh especially since Banquo casts ambiguity on their gender with his mention of their "Beards":

Banquo. [...] you should be Women,
And yet your Beards forbid me to interpret

That you are so.
(1606 *Macbeth*, 1.3)

Raleigh's expedition

There is a further connection with Rayleigh. During the play the witches curiously discuss a sea voyage. The lines in this speech, arresting in their detail, sit so incongruously with the main plot, one has to wonder at their purpose:

First Witch. [...] Her Husband's to Aleppo gone, Master o'th Tiger [...]
Though his Barke cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be shall be Tempest-tost
(1606 *Macbeth*, 1.3)

On 9 April 1585, Sir Walter Raleigh sent an expedition to the New World consisting of five ships, two small pinnaces, and 600 men. His cousin, Sir Richard Grenville, commanded the queen's ship, the Tiger. [19] The expedition encountered a storm off Portugal in which the ships were scattered, the Tiger — "his Barke" — survived but a pinnace was lost. None of the discussion by the weird sisters in Holinshed's *Chronicles* involves a sea voyage. This is an invention for the play.

Bacon's proposed involvement

Sir Francis Bacon appears to have had a hand in the *Declaration Concerning Sir W. Raleigh*, printed in 1618, which gave the "true motives and inducements which occasioned his Majesty to proceed in doing justice upon him." John Chamberlain reported that:

I have not read a word of it (more than the title); for it came forth but this morning: and, as I hear, it is the work of the Lord Chancellor [Bacon], Mr. Attorney, or Secretary Norton; or rather fathered upon all three [20]

So if we are looking for a candidate who was familiar with the details of Raleigh's 1618 trial, and might have edited the *First Folio* in 1623 to incorporate them, then Bacon comes to mind.

8. Summary

There is an argument that the lines in the *First Folio* (1623) version of *Macbeth* referring to witches had been added after the performance in 1610 that Dr Simon Forman witnessed, and a stronger one that events surrounding the Thane of Cawdor in the play refer to Raleigh's execution in 1618. These

additions were not essential to the narrative and the latter changes could not have been made by Shakspeare who died in 1616. Sir Francis Bacon, who was on the Commission that examined Rayleigh in 1618, had greater access to these details than Shakspeare who had been in his grave two years by the time Raleigh was executed. This renders Bacon a good candidate for having edited *Macbeth* for the *First Folio*.

References

1. Brooke, Nicholas, ed. *The Oxford Shakespeare*. Oxford University Press, 1990, pp.59, 72.
2. Before the 15th century, a thane was a Scottish clan leader who was given land in return for service to the King.
3. Holinshed, Raphael. *Chronicles*. Vol. V, Scotland (1587), p.170.
4. Williams, Norman Lloyd. *Sir Walter Raleigh*. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962, p.173.
5. *Ibid.*, p.178.
6. *Ibid.*, p.188.
7. *Ibid.*, p.189.
8. *Ibid.*, p.202.
9. *Ibid.*, p.237.
10. Spedding, James, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath. *Works*. 13.356.
11. Stow, John. *Annales, or Generall Chronicle of England*. London: 1631, p.1030.
12. Spedding *et al.* 13.372.
13. Williams, Norman Lloyd. *Sir Walter Raleigh*. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962, p.254.
14. Spedding *et al.* 13.373, footnote.
15. Williams, Norman Lloyd. *Sir Walter Raleigh*. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962, p.254.
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17. Forman, Simon. *Book of Plaies*, 1611.
18. *A Collection of Apothegmes New and Old, by the Right Honourable Francis Bacon, Baron of Verulam, Viscount St. Alban*. London:1625, No. 31; in Spedding 7.129.
19. Williams, Norman Lloyd. *Sir Walter Raleigh*. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962, pp.65-6.
20. Spedding 13.382.

III. Shakespeare plays and Bacon's Histories

The scientific Histories that were intended to form the third part of Bacon's Great Instauration project are well documented. For example, *Historia Ventorum* (1622) and *Historia Vitae et Mortis* (1623), were just two investigations that he wrote up himself. However, he also had projects in mind involving ethics and politics:

It may also be asked [...] whether I speak of natural philosophy [science] only, or whether I mean that the other sciences, logic, ethics, and politics, should be carried on by this method. Now I certainly mean what I have said to be understood of them all; and as the common logic, which governs by the syllogism, extends not only to natural but to all sciences; so does mine also, which proceeds by induction, embrace everything. For I form a history and tables of discovery for anger, fear, shame, and the like; for matters political [1]

The utility of a philosophy of matters civil and moral were clear to him:

[...to] exhibit the movements and perturbations, the virtues and vices, which took place no less in intellectual than civil matters; and that from the observation of these the best system of government might be derived and established [2] [...] the best provision and material for this treatise is to be gained from the wiser sort of historians [...] from the entire body of history as often as such a person enters upon the stage; for a character so worked into the narrative gives a better idea of the man, than any formal criticism and review can [3]

In a section entitled Culture of the Mind in his *Advancement of Learning* (1605), Bacon recalls the words of Aristotle:

Therefore we must inquire not only to what kind virtue belongs, but also how it may be obtained. [4]

There are diseases of the mind, wrong ways of thinking that impede the path to virtue, such as being disagreeable, for which Bacon recommends a medicine:

And if it be said that the cure of men's minds belong to sacred Divinity, it is most true: but yet Moral Philosophy may be preferred unto her as a wise servant and a humble housemaid. [5]

He knew where to find examples of this moral philosophy:

both history, poesy, and daily experience are as goodly fields where these observations grow [...] [6] I find strange, as before, that Aristotle should have written divers volumes of Ethics, and never handled the affections, which is the principal subject thereof [...] I find some particular writings of an elegant nature touching some of the affections; as of anger, of comfort upon adverse accidents, of tenderness

of countenance, and others. But the poets and writers are the best doctors of this knowledge; where we may find painted forth with great life, how affections are kindled and incited; and how pacified and restrained; and how again contained from act and further degree; how they disclose themselves, how they work, how they vary, how they gather and fortify, how they are inwrapped one within another, and how they do fight and encounter one with another, and other the like particularities: amongst the which this last is of special use in moral and civil matters; how (I say) to set affection against affection, and to master one by another [...] upon which foundation is erected the excellent use of praemium and proena^a, whereby civil states consist [...] For as in government of states it is sometimes necessary to bridle one faction with another, so it is in the government within. [7]

Key: (a) rewards and punishment

Leonard Dean observes that:

Bacon believed that the chief functions of history are to provide the materials for a realistic treatment of psychology and ethics, and to give instruction by means of example and analysis in practical politics. [8]

Bacon's intention was to:

approach to the good life through the realistic analysis of human nature by historians [9]

There is an incident from *Henry IV, Part 2*, involving Prince Hal (later Henry V) that corresponds with Bacon's view that history should provide instruction in the moral good. The source is *The Governour* (1531) by Sir Thomas Elyot [10], a book intended to demonstrate the education that a gentleman required in order to obtain a position in court. It has been described as "the earliest treatise on moral philosophy in English" propounding monarchical theories and advertising Elyot's view that "the same qualities that make a good king make a good man". [11] Elyot relates how Bardolfe, one of Prince Hal's favoured servants, was arraigned at the King's Bench for felony and an incensed prince stormed into the court and ordered his release. The Lord Chief Justice at the time was Sir William Gascoigne, a Reader of Gray's Inn, whose reputation rested on his rigorous impartiality and his steadfast endeavour to preserve the independence of the Bench from the Crown. Chief Justice Gascoigne was unmoved and advised that Prince Hal must either let the law take its course or obtain a royal pardon from the king. The prince would not be persuaded and attempted to escort his servant away whereupon Gascoigne commanded him to leave both the prisoner and the court. Prince Hal, now even more enraged, confronted Gascoigne and caused so much alarm that some believed he would slay the judge. However, Sir William simply admonished the prince with:

Sir, remembre your selfe; I kepe here the place of the king, your soueraigne lorde and father, to whom ye owe double obedience, wherfore, eftsones in his name, I charge you desiste of your wilfulnes and unlauffull entreprise, and from hensforth gyue good example to those whiche hereafter shall be your propre subjectes. And nowe for your contempt and disobedience, go you to the prisone of the kynges benche, where unto I committe you; and remayne ye there prisoner untill the pleasure of the kyng, your father, be further knowen.

With that, the prince lay down his sword and allowed himself to be taken away. When the king heard of the matter he was so pleased with Gascoigne that he looked up to the heavens shouting

howe moche am I, aboue all other men, bounde to your infinite goodnes; specially for that ye have gyuen me a juge, who feareth nat to ministre justice, and also a sonne who can suffre semblably and obey justice?

The first reference to this event in *Henry IV, Pt 2* occurs when Sir John Falstaff's page notices the Chief Justice approaching.

Page. Here comes the Nobleman that committed the Prince for striking^a him, about Bardolfe. (1597-8 *Henry IV, Pt 2*, 1.2.51-2)

Key : (a) engaging (not necessarily hitting)

Bardolfe, a servant to Sir John Falstaff, is a man who hopes to prosper when Prince Hal becomes king. Later, when King Henry IV dies, Prince Hal assumes the throne and has the following conversation with the Chief Justice:

Prince. [...] How might a Prince of my great hopes forget

So great Indignities you laid upon me?

What? Rate? Rebuke and roughly send to Prison

Th'immediate Heire of England? [...]

Chief Justice. I then did use the Person of your Father:

The Image of his power, lay then in me

Whiles I was busie for the Commonwealthe

Your Highnesse pleased to forget my place,

The Majesty, and power of Law, and Justice,

The Image of the King, whom I presented,

And Strooke^a me in my very Seate of Judgement

Whereon (as an Offender to your Father)

I gave bold way to my Authority
And did commit you
(1597-8 *Henry IV, Pt 2*, 5.2.68-83)

Key: (a) engaged

The relevant passage from *The Governor* is quoted verbatim in Stow's *Annals* (1592) so it is unclear which work served as the play's source. Nevertheless, the author of this passage seems to have been drawn to Elyot's moral that:

Wherefore I conclude, that nothing is more honourable or to be desired in a Prince, or noble man, than placability, as contrarwise nothing is to be detestable, or to be feared in such a one as wrath or cruel malignity. [12]

These lines demonstrates the prince's lack of wrath by his encouraging the Chief Justice to continue in office, that is "Beare the Balance and the Sword", and by his discussion of how he would wish his own son to behave if the incident were repeated:

Prince. You are right Justice, and you weigh this well:

Therefore still Beare the Balance and the Sword [...]

[...] So shall I live to speak my Fathers words:

Happy am I, that have a man so bold,
That dares do Justice, on my proper Sonne,
And no lesse happy, having such a sonne,
That would deliver up his Greatnesse so,
Into the hands of Justice

(1597-8 *Henry IV, Pt 2*, 5.2.102-12)

In the *Wisdom of the Ancients*, Francis Bacon might have had Prince Hal in mind when discussing the application of philosophy to human affairs

and applying her powers of persuasion and eloquence to insinuate into men's minds the love of virtue and equity of peace, teaches the people to assemble and unite and take upon them the yoke of the laws and submit to authority, and forget their ungoverned appetites, in listening and conforming to precepts and discipline. [13]

Returning to the play, the prince then proposes the Chief Justice as one of the "Limbes of Noble Counsaile" in the High Court of Parliament. However, according to Sir Dunbar Plunket Barton:

history does not confirm this part of the legend. It appears that soon after Henry V's accession Gascoigne either resigned or was superseded [14]

So here we find the author of these lines in the play manipulating the facts to execute the moral of the tale and in doing so we recall Bacon's view that the aim of history should be to exhibit "virtues and vices" so that "from the observation of these the best system of government might be derived and established". Who better to receive these moral lessons than Inns of Court audiences who as law students trained into the nobility were to be the future rulers of England.

There is evidence that *The Governor* was the source for other Shakespeare plays:

Elyot is the likeliest source for the main plot of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, though the story in question was also available elsewhere. There are strong echoes or apparent echoes of the first two chapters of *The Governor* in *Henry V* and *Troilus and Cressida*. [15]

According to Starnes, Elyot's book gives us

the nature of majesty and of the virtues which a king should possess [16]

In other words

the chapters on government are strongly related to the discussions of training in knowledge, manners and virtue [17]

This clearly echoes Bacon's use for a moral philosophy and, as A. L. Rowse has commented:

Shakespeare's concern with the importance of unity and good government [...] is unique with him. [18]

In *Shakespeare and Renaissance Politics*, Hadfield informs us that:

Writers became fascinated after 1591 by the themes of kingship, authority, and the acquisition of and retention of power [...] the aim was to explain how 'vice', 'flattery' and 'ambition' had come to supercede the traditional values of 'wisdom', 'service' and *respublica*. [19]

Christopher Marlowe in *Edward II* (1592) and Sir John Heywood in *The First Part of the Life and Raigne of Henrie IIII* (1599) also worked on this theme. However, there are two characteristics that distinguish the Shakespeare work from these other writers. The first is the number of different political systems explored:

No other contemporary dramatist explored the meaning and significance of such a wide variety of political and social systems, or established such a carefully nuanced relationship between examining alternative constitutions in their own right, and reading them in terms of English or British politics. [20]

For example, *Coriolanus*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Othello* refer to the constitutional issues of republican Rome and Venice; *Hamlet* portrays an elective monarchy; and *Macbeth* deals with the problems of re-establishing a legitimate government after the reign of a bloody usurper. We recall Bacon's statement above in regard to his Great Instauration project "For I form a history and tables of discovery for anger, fear, shame, and the like; for matters *political*". By surveying such a wide range of political systems, the Shakespeare canon seems to exhibit the same completeness that Bacon intended for his political Histories. In other words, the inductive method could only be effectively applied in the sphere of political thought when a complete survey of political data had been conducted.

Hadfield frames the second characteristic as follows:

It would not be stretching a point to describe a number of Shakespeare's plays as 'Tacitean' [...] Tacitus was regarded throughout Europe as the most dispassionate of historians, whose work combined moral insight into the behaviour of political actors with an assessment of their value as governors [21]

Hadfield recognizes this quality in both the Shakespeare canon and Bacon's work:

His [Shakespeare's] works appear to be indebted to the numerous attempts made in that decade [1590s] to study history, politics and society in the relatively detached and relatively objective manner pioneered by thinkers such as Lipsius, Montaigne, Livy and Tacitus, as well as their English disciples such as Francis Bacon and Sir John Heywood. [22]

There is evidence in his *Advancement of Learning* that Bacon had studied Tacitus in great detail:

Of all histories I think Tacitus simply the best; Livy is very good; Thucydides above any of the writers of Greek matters [23]

and the *Advancement of Learning* contains many quotations in Latin from Tacitus.

However, Hart allows a further point of connection between the historical agendas of Bacon and the Shakespeare work:

Shakespeare outdoes every important dramatist of his time in the number and variety of allusions made to the divine right of the reigning monarch. [24]

For example, in *Pericles* we find:

Pericles. King's are earth's gods; in vice their law's their will;
And if Jove stray, who dares say Jove doth ill?
(1608-9 *Pericles*, 1.1.103-4)

Bacon, who believed in an absolute monarchy, was content to subscribe to this view in his essay *Of Empire*:

All precepts concerning kings are in effect comprehended in these two remembrances; 'Remember that you are a man'; and 'Remember that you are a God' or 'God's lieutenant'; the one bridleth their power, and the other their will. [25]

A few months after *Pericles*, King James reiterated the God-like status of princes (that is, kings) in a speech at Whitehall

kings are not only God's Lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called Gods. [26]

Now, there is a considerable amount of uncorroborated interpretation here, and the aim is not to suggest that Francis Bacon was the sole author of all the Shakespeare plays because evidence of style, using computer access to the Early English Books Online database, suggests that the canon is the work of many hands. However, Bacon has already been identified as a contributor to *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Tempest* [27] and so the door is now open to the possibility that he might have contributed to one or more of the Shakespeare history plays in order to leave his civil and moral philosophy to the world.

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IV. Parallels with the *Hamlet* soliloquy

The following is presented merely as an amusement, because it is easily possible that most of the following parallels are commonplace and for that reason the standard of evidence might not be particularly strong. Nevertheless, here is a comparison between the work of Bacon and the famous *Hamlet* (1600–1601) soliloquy from Act 1, Scene 3. The figures and phrases in the play predate Bacon's major publications. At the least, it demonstrates that Bacon had the necessary vocabulary and figures of speech to compose this piece. Whether or not others had too is left for a future test of the rarity of these correspondences.

Hamlet. The Slings and Arrowes of outrageous Fortune

Bacon. [...] and ever as my worldly blessings were exalted, so secret darts [arrows] from thee have pierced me [1]

Bacon. [...] the condition of man is mortal and exposed to the blows of fortune [2]

Note also that 'darts' also appears in *Coriolanus*:

Marcus. Filling the air with swords advanced and darts
(1608 *Coriolanus*, 1.6)

Returning to our comparison:

Hamlet. 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wish'd [...]

Bacon. [...] others regarding it [childlessness] as the crown and consummation of felicity [3]

Hamlet. For who would beare the Whips and Scornes of time,

Bacon. [...] because business would expose them to many neglects and scorns [4]

Hamlet. [...] the poore man's Contumely

Bacon. And as the contumely is greater towards God, so the danger is greater towards men. [5]

Hamlet. [...] the law's delay

Bacon. First, for the causes or parties that sue [...] delays make it sour. [6]

Hamlet. [...] When he himself might his Quietus make

Bacon. Your two last acts which you did for me, in procuring the releasement of my fine and my Quietus est [7]

Hamlet. To grunt and sweat under a weary life

Bacon. [...] a man might wish to die, not only from fortitude or misery or wisdom, but merely from disgust and weariness of life [8]

Hamlet. And makes us rather beare those illes we have

Than flye to others that we know not of.

Bacon. Revenge triumphs over death; Love slights it; Honour aspireth to it; Grief flieth to it; [9]

Hamlet. And enterprises of great pith and moment

Bacon. Aphorisms, except they should be ridiculous, cannot be made but of the pith and heart of sciences; [11]

Hamlet. With this regard their Currants turne away,

And lose the name of Action.

Bacon. [...] the courses and currents of actions [12]

Bacon. And when a small river runs into a greater, it loseth both the name and stream. [13]

By way of comparison, Ben Jonson makes use of four of the above in his *Timber: Or Discoveries* (1641), a work of some 33,000 words: “it shall not fly from all humanity” [14]; “if refused [coining of new word], the scorn is assured” [15]; “these styles [of languages] vary, and lose their names” [16]; and “as if the contumely respected their particular” [17]. However, the first two examples appear in Bacon’s *Essays* (1625) which Jonson assisted in translating into Latin before *Timber* appeared, and they all appear in Shakespeare’s *First Folio* (1623), the publication of which appears to have involved Benjamin Jonson.

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V. The Essex rebellion: a performance piece

The following is a performance piece, originally intended for the 2019 Shakespeare Authorship Trust conference, but like *Love's Labour's Lost* at the 1594–5 Gray's Inn revels, was left unperformed. It is written for three parts: one is the presenter, and the other two are Queen Elizabeth and Francis Bacon. The latter pair form a comedy double act and illustrate the underlying tension between the queen and her Queen's Counsel Extraordinary. Bacon evidently felt he had been held back under Elizabeth. The malicious whispers of his cousin Robert Cecil did much to undermine him and so the queen, although respectful of Bacon's wisdom, had little trust in his motives. This is reflected in her attitude towards him.

The performance focuses on the rebellion against the queen's government that the Earl of Essex staged in February 1601. From the outset, it had almost no chance of success, and replaying the events as they transpired, one has to wonder at the delusional state of Essex's mind. Bacon began as Essex's secretary but as his friend grew more unpredictable he gradually withdrew from his acquaintance. In what follows, we return to these troubled times and examine how Francis Bacon viewed them.

PRESENTER, FRANCIS, and ELIZABETH enter stage left.

PRESENTER: Assembled Parliamentarians, welcome to our hustings! Our manifestos will soon be open to your inspection, and our two candidates ready to accept your vote. If we set our sight to the horizon of history, and let time increase, we can only watch as the shapes of our ancestors recede and diminish. But as a reflection of the human heart, they still stand tall and bold in the mirror of our spirit.

Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, with unbridled declarations of entitlement, and Elizabeth Tudor, a love-lost queen who gave license to his will. The finger of fate could only beckon the earl towards an early end, and Elizabeth, cast adrift in the ocean of his attention, could only watch the swelling storm as it sank his ailing vessel.

And so ... to our two candidates ...

Oscar Wilde once said “you destroy the thing that you love”. The American journalist George Plimpton had a different view ... “It’s the other way round. What you love destroys you.” These are the two candidates we present for election, and at the end we shall ask: Which will *you* vote for?

To help you decide, we welcome two friends from time past:

Francis Bacon ...

FRANCIS bows.

PRESENTER: ... who in the reign of King James would become Attorney General then Lord Chancellor, and was employed in his early years as an adviser to the Earl of Essex. As Queen’s Counsel Extraordinaire to Elizabeth, he had access to court, although she made little use of him, mainly due to the influence of his devious cousin Robert Cecil. Cecil was determined to reserve the trappings of high office for himself. As an adviser to both Essex and Elizabeth, Francis Bacon’s loyalties were divided. In the end, he was forced to choose between them.

And Elizabeth Tudor ...

ELIZABETH gives a royal wave.

PRESENTER: ... who was born on 7 September 1533 to Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII. However, when Elizabeth was just two years and eight months old, her mother was murdered by the

state, on the authority of her father King Henry, who secretly sanctioned a dubious charge of adultery, incest, and treason.



Figure 1. Anne Boleyn (age 32) by Hans Holbein the Younger.

And so a case was duly constructed against her. It was Henry's desire to remarry, and since his will usually prevailed, he gave the task to his instrument Thomas Cromwell, who having a *head* for expediency, thought it an advantage to keep it on his shoulders! However, to Francis Bacon, one of the most astute minds of the age, the evidence against Anne Boleyn was wanting.

FRANCIS: Tis abundantly evident, that Henry the Eighth was engaged in a new love before he gave way to his anger against Queen Anne, nor is posterity a stranger to the nature of that king, which was so very prone to love and jealousy, and prosecuted both evenly with the effusion of blood. She was cut off by an accusation grounded on slight conjectures, and on the improbable testimony of a wicked accuser: all of which was muttered privately at that very time. [1]

PRESENTER: So on the nineteenth day of May 1536, about eight in the morning, Anne Boleyn was brought to the green within the Tower of London. As she knelt upright on the scaffold, blindfold and desolate, her hair gently fluttering in the breeze, her trembling voice was heard to say "To Jesus Christ I commend my soul". As the executioner drew his sword, the murmuring crowd fell silent. Then, quicker than a teardrop takes to fall, a single stroke took her away. [2]

The next day, Henry married Jane Seymour. Anne's daughter Elizabeth was now declared illegitimate and deprived of her place in royal succession. Nevertheless, as her first governess Margaret Bryan recalled, she still managed to display an even temperament.

As toward a child, and as gentle of conditions as ever I knew any in my life



Figure 2. Princess Elizabeth (age 13).

When Henry died, Elizabeth went to live with his widow Catherine Parr who had found a new husband in Thomas Seymour. Unfortunately, Seymour lacked self-control, and when Elizabeth was fourteen years old, he would enter her bed chamber in his night gown and engage in horseplay. On one occasion he even cut her night gown into ribbons. At first, Catherine laughed it off as play acting, but when she stumbled upon Thomas and the teenage princess in a passionate embrace, Elizabeth was sent away, never to return.

Two years later, Seymour was arraigned for organizing a rebellion against his brother, the Lord Protector to the young King Edward VI. Part of the indictment was his plot to marry the fifteen year old princess. Elizabeth was hauled in for questioning, but despite being interrogated for several weeks, she refused to testify against him. It didn't save him. The regency council managed to find thirty-three charges of treason and Seymour ... was *no more!*

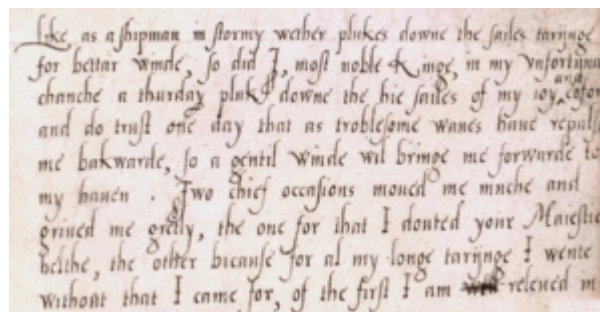


Figure 3. Letter from Elizabeth (age 20) to Edward VI in her own hand.

The suspicion against Elizabeth didn't stop there. When her half-brother and childhood companion, King Edward VI contracted bronchial pneumonia, she was turned away by his associates as she attempted to visit. She sent the young king a letter two days later.

ELIZABETH: Like a shipman in stormy weather plucks down the sails, turning for better wind, so did I, most noble king, in my unfortunate chance on Thursday pluck down the high sails of my joy and comfort, and do trust one day that as troublesome waves have repulsed me backward, so a gentle wind will bring me forward to my haven. [...] The best is that whatsoever other folks will suspect, I intend not to fear your grace's goodwill, which I trust will still stick by me. And thus as one desirous to hear of your Majesty's health, though unfortunate to see it, I shall pray God for ever to preserve you. [3]

PRESENTER: Unfortunately, the fifteen-year old king died from his infection and Elizabeth never saw him again.

When Mary, Henry VIII's first child, became queen, Elizabeth was again seen as a threat and was confined to the Tower. Since Mary's mother, Catherine of Aragon, had Spanish connections, she decided to marry Philip of Spain. However, Thomas Wyatt, a Kentish landowner, organized a rebellion to "prevent us being over-run by strangers". Had he been alive today, Donald Trump would almost certainly have followed him on Twitter!

When Thomas Wyatt was eventually arrested with 90 of his followers, Elizabeth was suspected of conspiracy, and despite intensive interrogation she was skilful enough to avoid the executioner. Mary eventually placed her under house arrest at Woodstock in Oxfordshire. Four years later, when Mary died, Elizabeth took the throne of England. She was 25 years old.

One of Elizabeth's first tasks was to appoint William Cecil, later Lord Burghley, as her principal secretary. In modern terms, he was effectively Prime Minister, and the extent to which Elizabeth relied on him is perfectly illustrated by the nickname she gave him ... "my spirit".



Figure 4. The 2nd Earl of Essex (age 30).

PRESENTER: Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex, was born on 10 November 1565 near Bromyard in Hertfordshire. His maternal grandmother, Mary Boleyn, was Anne Boleyn's sister which made Essex and Elizabeth first cousins twice removed.

When he was 12 years old, Essex's mother married Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who became the queen's favourite. Elizabeth made sure Dudley's apartments at court were next to hers and it was reported that she was given to acute anxiety whenever he was absent on business. She called Dudley her 'Eyes' and at one point they planned to marry.

When Robert Dudley fell terminally ill, Essex took his place as the queen's favourite. He was then just 21 years old, and 32 years the queen's junior. She provided him with a substantial income by presenting him with the monopoly on sweet wines. This allowed him to collect taxes from anyone who sold it. We shall see later that the queen's withdrawal of this income, when he fell out of favour, was one of the motives for his planned uprising.

A servant of Essex, Anthony Bagot, reported of the queen:

when she is abroad, nobody is with her but my lord of Essex, and at night my lord is at cards, or one game or another with her, that he cometh not to his own lodging till birds sing in the morning. [4]

According to the historian John Guy:

She may perhaps have regarded him as the son she never had; at the very least, he would be a constant reminder of his stepfather. She was not in love; that could never be [5]

Indeed, she was so committed to keeping Dudley's memory alive, that she kept the last letter he ever sent in her bedside treasure box. It was still there 15 years later when she died.



Figure 5. Nicholas Hilliard miniature of Francis Bacon (age 18).

Francis Bacon was an essayist, philosopher, and statesman of whom Ben Jonson once said:

He seemed to me ever, by his work, one of the greatest men, and most worthy of admiration, that had been in many ages

Dr Thomas Tenison, Archbishop of Canterbury enthused

Such great wits are not the common birth of time, and they, surely, intended to signify so much who said of the phoenix, that nature gives the world that individual species, but once in 500 years

FRANCIS brushes the dust off his lapel with his hand, breathes on his finger nails and polishes them on his lapel.

ELIZABETH notices and shakes her head in disdain.

FRANCIS: (glancing to his left) By the way, is Essex not here?

ELIZABETH: Why should he be here?

FRANCIS: He's in the script.

ELIZABETH: Where?

FRANCIS: (*pointing to last page*) Here ... "Essex" ... (*pointing to his left*) "stage left".

ELIZABETH: (*pointing to his script*) "Exit ... stage left".

FRANCIS: (*slight embarrassment*) I knew that ...

ELIZABETH: I mean (*shaking head*) ... it's not even a typo.

FRANCIS: I was just ...

PRESENTER: Francis was born on 22 January 1561 at York House on the Strand ...

ELIZABETH: (*To FRANCIS*) You're supposed to be the brightest man in England!

PRESENTER: His father Nicholas was Lord Keeper of the Seal, which gave him all the powers of a Lord Chancellor. Francis would later take this office himself. Anne Bacon, Francis's mother, was a classical scholar and, as well as English, could boast fluency in four foreign languages. Anne was a Puritan, was highly critical of her children, and was reportedly no fun at parties! Her sister, Mildred, had married Lord Burghley, so the Bacon family had powerful connections in government.

By the time he was 18 years old, Francis had completed three years at Trinity College, Cambridge, as well as diplomatic training with the Ambassador in France.

With his life's aim set at challenging the unproductive methods of Aristotle taught in the universities, he recommended that more effort should be devoted to experimentation, something that Galileo was practising independently in Italy.

James Spedding, the Victorian editor of Francis Bacon's *Works* suggests that Francis became acquainted with Essex early in 1591. Francis himself writes:

FRANCIS: I applied myself to him, in a manner which I think happened rarely enough amongst men: for I did not only labour carefully and industriously in that which he set me about, whether it were

matter of advice or otherwise, but neglecting the queen's service, mine own fortune, and in a sort my vocation. I did nothing but advise and ruminare with myself to the best of my understanding, propositions and memorials, of anything that might concern his Lordship's honour, fortune, or service. [6]

PRESENTER: Anthony Bacon was an older brother of Francis by three years. They studied together at Trinity College, Cambridge, and in 1580 Anthony became part of Sir Francis Walsingham's intelligence-gathering network in France. On his return to England in April 1594, he took up residence in Bishopsgate, and then when his brother Francis arranged for him to serve Essex as his Secretary of State, he moved into Essex House. Anthony Bacon soon developed secret communications with James VI of Scotland.

Robert Cecil had been diminished in stature by a congenital curvature of the spine, and stood a little over five feet tall. Elizabeth called him "Elf" and, even less flattering "my little pygmy". With the Equality Act still 400 years in the future, Cecil had small redress for discrimination in the workplace! To Anthony Bacon, Robert Cecil was "a pot soon hot", the idea being that just as a small pot of water boils faster than a large pot, a small man is made angry quicker than a large man ... apparently, only when he plants his buttocks on a red-hot stove!

Two recent publications conspire to suggest that Robert Cecil is represented by Caliban in *The Tempest*. *Francis Bacon's Contribution to Shakespeare* is part of the Routledge Studies in Shakespeare series, and uses rare phrase matching to show that Francis Bacon contributed to *The Tempest*. *Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years* suggests that

Francis cruelly mocked Cecil's puny physique, making him appear as the living embodiment of Caliban in *The Tempest*: a slave, savage and deformed, "a born devil on whose nature / Nurture could never stick" (*The Tempest* 4.1). [7]

Francis Bacon had every reason to align himself with Essex's opposition to Cecil. When Francis was chasing the position of Attorney General in 1594, Cecil made sure the position went to Edward Coke. In fact, when Robert Cecil died in 1612, Francis wrote:

FRANCIS: Deformed persons are commonly even with nature: for as nature hath done ill by them, so they do by nature, being for the most part (as the Scripture saith) void of natural affection [...] and it layeth their competitors asleep, as never believing they should be in possibility of advancement, till they see them in possession. [8]

PRESENTER: Cecil might well have had a sour demeanour, but guests still came round for supper. There they were treated to the antics of his hyperactive parrot who spent the entire evening strutting up and down the dining table. His guests must have wondered which of the two was the more tedious!

It was around this time that James VI of Scotland informed Essex, through Anthony Bacon, that if Essex could facilitate James's accession to the throne of England then the earl would receive some "spectacular reward". [9] It is clear that as early as 1594, Essex saw Lord Burghley and his son Cecil as obstructing his access to the queen. So Anthony Bacon was encouraged to prepare the way for James as Elizabeth's successor.

All this time, Essex was acting as a double agent: he had the queen's attention because he reminded her of Dudley, her deceased lover; and he had contact with James whom he was trying to promote as Elizabeth's successor.

As for Elizabeth, her Privy Council had repeatedly pressed her to marry and produce an heir. She had always resisted such pressure and eventually began to promote herself as the 'Virgin Queen'. Francis Bacon formed his own opinion on the matter. In a tract entitled *The Felicity of Elizabeth*, written after her death, he had this to say.

FRANCIS: She allowed herself to be wooed and courted, and even to have love made to her; and liked it; and continued it beyond the natural age for such vanities. These dalliances detracted but little from her fame and nothing at all from her majesty, and neither weakened her power nor sensibly hindered her business. [10] Childless she was indeed and left no issue of her own. [11]



Figure 6. Elizabeth I (age 61).

PRESENTER: If Elizabeth had kept an honest diary of her daily appearance and routine at this time, it might well have recorded the following facts.

ELIZABETH: I am no morning woman and am still abed before midday. I have three or four ladies who wait on my bedchamber and dress me. This usually takes upwards of two hours. I know there are those at court who jest that it be quicker to rig a royal navy ship than dress the queen.

My face is lightly scarred by the pox I contracted at 19. The marks are concealed by the application of a compound of powdered egg shell, alum, and plant extract mixed in spring water. My skin receives an ointment of liquid mercury and white lead, known as Venetian ceruse. The red die on my cheeks and lips is vermilion. The wigs I have worn since I was 30 now serve to conceal my thinning grey hair.

In the long summer evenings I sit outdoors, reading or conversing, while eating plates of marzipan or sugared fruits. Sweet white wine flavoured with spices is commonly served. My few remaining teeth are tainted yellow and black, and trouble me often. I conceal them, and their unwelcome odour, by placing a perfumed silk handkerchief in my mouth. At night, when sleep deigns to visit me, my dreams are haunting. I often consult my physician but I tire of his conjectures. (*Slight incredulity*) This is a man who says my stomach ailments, chest infections, and sore eyes are brought on by a surfeit of sugar.

I have two rules for life which have served me well: 'I see and keep silent', and 'always one and the same'.

PRESENTER: In fact, the mercury and lead in the skin ointments, and the red vermilion or mercury sulphide, which was also used in her lipstick, were highly toxic. These would have caused allergies, memory loss, baldness, and sensory impairment. Elizabeth's addiction to sugar would undoubtedly have been the principal cause of her digestive disorder, sleep impairment, and loss of molars.

FRANCIS: (*to ELIZABETH*) Is that true, madam? You have a sweet tooth?

ELIZABETH: Sweet tooth? I haven't got any teeth.

FRANCIS: I think it advisable to give up the marzipan.

ELIZABETH is shaking her head

FRANCIS: ... and the sugared fruits.

ELIZABETH: OK, leave it.

FRANCIS: (*pointing into his mouth*) I lost a couple of teeth at the back here eating sugared fruits.

ELIZABETH: I said leave it! Or I'll get Cecil to have them pulled.

PRESENTER: When Essex arrived at the tilt yard on Queen's Day 1594, with Lord Burghley lying ill in bed, his intention was to advertise himself as Burghley's replacement. Francis Bacon wrote a device that he thought might assist Essex, and so lines were given to an educated Hermit, a fame-seeking Soldier, an industrious Secretary, and a morally-superior Squire. The Squire, who spoke for Essex, was there to declare love for his mistress, the Goddess of Love, whose virtue, wisdom, and beauty were to be held in high admiration. Everyone could see that this meant Elizabeth. However, far from being flattered, she complained about the attention and wished she had stayed away. Privately, she thought the device had been more about Essex's ambition than about his willingness to serve.

In late 1595, *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England* was published. Elizabeth was incensed. She was no longer capable of producing an heir and thought she had quelled all discussion about marriage and the succession. It seemed not.

The book appeared under the pseudonym 'R. Doleman', but its real author was an exiled Jesuit priest, Robert Parsons. It examined the claims of 14 different candidates to the throne of England, one of its arguments being that the monarch should be elected by Parliament on the basis of merit not lineage. James VI of Scotland was promptly ruled out. It concluded that the English Parliament should choose the Spanish king's daughter, the Infanta Isabella, and so a pro-Spanish source was suspected. Both Elizabeth and James were enraged, but what must really have alarmed Elizabeth was the book's dedication to the Earl of Essex.

ELIZABETH: (*with incredulity*) No man is in more high and eminent place or dignity at this day in your realm, than yourself, whether we respect your nobility, or calling, or favour with your prince, or high liking of the people, and consequently no man like to have a greater part or sway in deciding of this great affair (when time shall come for that determination) than your honour, and those that will assist you and are likeliest to follow your fame and fortune.

PRESENTER: In fact, Essex had no part in the dedication and was the victim of Catholic enemies who were trying to suggest his impropriety. By the time 2,000 copies had been printed in Antwerp, and smuggled into London, Anthony Bacon's continental connections had already given Essex advance warning. By being the first to inform the queen of the book's impending arrival, he could have turned the matter to his advantage. Instead, he made the mistake of staying silent. So on 3 November 1595 he

was summoned to explain the book's dedication to Elizabeth. The experience so affected him that he withdrew to his bedchamber for an entire week, overwhelmed by psychosomatic illness.

The publication was a serious matter. Elizabeth regarded possession of the book as a treasonable offence and ordered a torchlight search of all her courtiers' lodgings for hidden copies. Eventually, she accepted that Essex was innocent, sent her own physician to attend him, and personally fed him broth on his sickbed.

According to the English historian John Guy

Almost certainly, the issues raised by Parsons were the inspiration for Shakespeare's *King John* and *Richard II*. Both, strikingly, were written out of sequence in the canon of the English history plays. Both were about royal succession, dynastic ambition, civil war and usurpation, and each is replete with Shakespeare's most visceral reflections on the action of history and the legitimacy of kingship. [12]

In fact, *Richard II* appears to have been written less than a year later in 1596.

The whole affair with the Parsons pamphlet must have cut close to the bone with Essex. He was indeed trying to influence the succession, but not by supporting the Infanta Isabella of Spain. It was James VI of Scotland he was negotiating with, with the hope of realising his promised position in government.

In June 1596, the conflict with Spain began to escalate. Keen to demonstrate his military prowess, Essex persuaded the queen to send him as one of two commanders of a force to ransack Philip's navy at Cadiz. The queen was quite specific about his remit: under no circumstances should he attempt to extend the conflict or establish a naval base on Spanish soil. Essex had other ideas. Before sailing from Plymouth he wrote to the Privy Council urging them to persuade the queen to sanction a garrison at Cadiz of 3,000 men. Lord Burghley seized the moment. After showing the letter to a furious queen, the post of Principal Secretary, which Essex had hoped for, went to Burghley's son, Robert Cecil.

In pushing to take Cadiz, Essex ignored the opportunity to loot the Spanish merchant ships, a serious blunder, since their cargo was worth 10 times the queen's annual income ... £3.5 billion in modern value. On his return to England, Lord Burghley and Robert Cecil gave Essex an admonishment he would never forget. From now on, his correspondence would be intercepted and copied.

Francis Bacon realised that for Essex to gain advancement from the queen, he would need to temper his approach. The queen championed peace, yet Essex portrayed himself as a man of war who

followed his own course, and placed his own popularity before that of the queen. So on 4 October 1596, Francis sent Essex a letter of advice.

FRANCIS: My singular good Lord, whether I counsel you the best, or for the best, duty boundeth me to offer you my wishes. I said to your Lordship last time, win the queen. If this be not the beginning, of any other course I see no end. In you, the queen will come to the question: But how is it now? A man of a nature not to be ruled, that hath the advantage of my affection and knoweth it, of a popular reputation, of a military dependence. I demand whether there can be a more dangerous image than this represented to any monarch living, much more to a lady, and of her Majesty's apprehension. Her Majesty loveth peace. She loveth not charge. If you pretend to be bookish and contemplative as ever you were, this course has its advantage and serves exceedingly aptly to this purpose. It maketh her Majesty more fearful and shadowy, as not knowing her own strength. The only remedy to this is to give way to some other favourite matter, as in particular you shall find her Majesty inclined.

PRESENTER: It was around this time that the Earl of Southampton was recruited to the Essex camp. His name was later to appear on the Shakespeare narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Southampton quickly became an ally in Essex's growing resentment towards Burghley and Cecil. Essex did nothing to build bridges with Burghley. In fact, his sexual liaisons with Burghley's granddaughter must have struck him as the boldest gesture of contempt.

Nevertheless, in June 1597, Essex was given command of another expedition to Spain. This time, the orders were to destroy the Spanish ships in the harbour at Ferrol, before seeking out the Spanish treasure ships in the Azores. The queen even sent him a reminder that he had sufficient men to fill her purse, if only he would put judgment ahead of fortune.

ELIZABETH: Eyes of youth have sharp sights, but commonly not so deep, as those of elder age, which makes me marvel less at rash attempts and headstrong counsels, which give not leisure to judgment's warnings, nor heeds advice, but makes a laughter at the one, and despise with scorn the last. This have I not heard but seen, and thereof can witness bear. But it pleaseth his Goodness to strengthen our weakness, and warns us to use wit when we have it hereafter: foreseen happenings breed no wonder. But for answer, if your full fed men were not more than fitted by your desired rate, that purse should not be thinned at the bottom, that daily by lightness is made to thin already, but if more heed were taken *how*, than haste *what*, we needed not luck by reckonings.

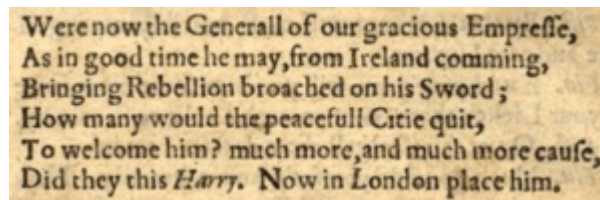
PRESENTER: Her counsel made no difference. After foul weather had detained the fleet in port, Essex rejected her order to wreak havoc at Ferrol, went straight for glory, and sailed directly to the Azores in search of Spanish bounty. It was a mission that relied on fortune not judgment, and his luck abandoned him. He missed the Spanish ships by three hours. As he sailed back into England on 5

November, empty handed, he knew that his relationship with Elizabeth was under more strain than ever.

A year later, Essex effectively tried to exile an enemy of his, Sir George Carew, by proposing him for the post of Lord Deputy of Ireland. Elizabeth instead chose Sir William Knollys. What happened next, initiated the beginning of his end. In a fit of petulance, Essex gave the queen a look of scorn and, in full view of courtiers, turned his back on her, a serious violation of royal protocol. Elizabeth struck him across the face and told him to go and be hanged. To the astonishment of all present, Essex half-drew his sword. As the guards ushered him out of the Privy Chamber, he cried “I neither would nor could put up with so great an indignity”. Worse was to follow. As he made his exit, Elizabeth heard him mutter “her condition were as crooked as her carcass”.

Hours later, when Essex had regained his composure, the Keeper of the Seal, Sir Thomas Egerton urged him to issue an apology. He refused. As a living memorial to the queen’s lost love, Robert Dudley, Essex believed he could still bend her will. To some extent he was right. Two months later, when he went down with a fever, Elizabeth sent one of her physicians to treat him. Nevertheless, she now realised that Essex was becoming increasingly unpredictable. The problem was, how could she extricate herself from the knot they had tied themselves in?

In August of that year, Elizabeth lost Lord Burghley ... “my spirit”. His son Robert Cecil took his place as Chief Minister, and would prove to be a far more formidable opponent to Essex than his father had been.



Were now the Generall of our gracious Empresse,
As in good time he may, from Ireland comming,
Bringing Rebellion broached on his Sword;
How many would the peacefull Citie quit,
To welcome him? much more, and much more cause,
Did they this *Harry*. Now in London place him.

Figure 7. Henry V (Act 5, Prologue).

Despite the slap on the face, on 25 March 1599, Elizabeth signed Essex’s commission to conclude the war in Ulster against the rebel Hugh O’ Neil, Earl of Tyrone, who only a year earlier had humiliated the English forces.

Shakespeare’s play *Henry V* seems to allude to the earl’s appointment:

Chorus: [...] Were now the general of our gracious Empress, As in good time he may, from Ireland coming, Bringing rebellion broached on his sword, How many would the peaceful city quit, To

welcome him? (*Henry V*, Act 5, prologue)

In Ireland, Essex was given 20,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry but he marched them with such vigour in the summer months that by September they were too exhausted for battle. [13] It was a deliberate ploy, because by disabling his forces he now had an excuse to seek a truce with Tyrone. As usual, Elizabeth was not to be beguiled.

ELIZABETH: Whosoever shall examine the arguments used for excuse shall find that your proceedings beget the difficulties, and that no just cause doth breed the alteration. If lack of numbers, if sickness of the armies be the reasons, why was not the action undertaken when the army was in a better state? If it was winter's approach, why were the summer months of July and August lost? If the spring was too soon and the summer that followed otherwise spent, [...] then surely we must conclude that none of the four quarters in the year will be the season for you to agree of Tyrone's prosecution. [...] We require you to consider whether we have not great cause to think that the purpose is *not* to end the war. [14]

PRESENTER: Essex marched on. He met Tyrone at Ballaclinch ford near Dundalk where the rebel leader demanded Irish independence and a full pardon. Essex had his own ideas and he made sure there were no witnesses. The terms of the truce that Essex actually agreed with Tyrone were later revealed in *A Declaration of the Practices and Treasons* which Francis Bacon compiled from witness testimonies.

FRANCIS: His ends were two: to get great forces into his hands, and to oblige the heads of the rebellion unto him, and make them his party. [15] The condition of that contract between Tyrone and Essex was that Essex should be King of England, and that Tyrone should hold of him the honour and state of Viceroy of Ireland, and that the proportion of soldiers which Tyrone should bring or send to Essex were 8,000 Irish. [16] My Lord of Essex told the Earl of Southampton and Sir Christopher Blunt that he thought it fit to carry with him to England an army to the number of two to three thousand to land them at Milford-Haven in Wales, not doubting that his army would increase within a small time as he should be able to march with his power to London, and make his own conditions as he thought good. But both Southampton and Blunt dissuaded him from this enterprise. [17]

PRESENTER: On 16 September 1599, Essex informed the queen by letter of his supposed triumph in Ireland, which as far as she could see amounted to Tyrone being allowed free while the English army casually dispersed. Elizabeth responded by letter the day after.

ELIZABETH: Right trusted and right well-beloved cousin and Chancellor, we greet you well. By the letter and journal which we have received from you, we see a quick end made of a slow proceeding. It

appeareth to us by your journal that you and the traitor spake together half an hour near, and without anybody's hearing, wherein although we that trust you with our kingdom are far from mistrusting you with a traitor, yet we marvel you would carry it no better. If we had meant that Ireland should have been abandoned, then was it not superfluous to have sent over such a personage as you are, who had deciphered so well the errors of their proceedings? To trust this traitor upon oath is to trust a devil upon his religion.

PRESENTER: Before the letter could arrive in Ireland, and contrary to the queen's orders, Essex abandoned his post, and before dawn had broken, he startled her in her bed chamber at Nonesuch Palace in Surrey. Elizabeth was without wig, and still undressed, and as she rose, he threw himself at her feet and kissed her hand. Believing it was a coup, she took care not to raise suspicion of opposition. Essex was eventually brought before the Privy Council to explain himself. Why had he wasted the queen's finances on an ill-used army? Why had he bargained with Tyrone without authority? Why had he abandoned his post in Ireland without permission? As he was marched off to confinement at York House, the queen was heard to expostulate:

ELIZABETH: By God's son, I am no queen; that man is above me. Who gave him command to come here so soon? I did send him on other business.

PRESENTER: In order to recover Elizabeth's affection, Essex did what he usually did — he fell ill. And when Essex fell ill, Elizabeth did what *she* usually did — she sent Dr Brown, her personal physician, and ordered broth to aid his recovery. After six weeks he was a free man again.

The same year a pamphlet entitled *The first part of the life and raigne of King Henry IV* was published under the name of John Hayward. Dedicated to Essex, it dealt with the deposition of Richard II and his usurpation by Henry Bolingbroke. Elizabeth thought Essex was behind it and summoned her Queen's Counsel Francis Bacon.

ELIZABETH: I think it a seditious prelude to put into the people's heads boldness and faction. I have good opinion, that there is treason in it. Can you not find places where such a case might be drawn?

FRANCIS: Madam, treason surely I find none, but for felony very many.

ELIZABETH: Wherein?

FRANCIS: The author has committed very apparent theft, for he hath taken most of the sentences of Cornelius Tacitus, translated them into English, and put them into his text.

ELIZABETH: But I smell some more mischievous author. Perhaps John Haywood might be racked to confess him.

FRANCIS: Nay, madam, he is a doctor, never rack his person, but rack his style. Let him have pen, ink and paper, and help of books, and be enjoined to continue the story wherein it breaketh off, and I will undertake by collecting the styles, to judge whether he were the author or no.

ELIZABETH: What?! *You* can't even tell the difference between 'exit' and 'Essex'.

FRANCIS scowls at her.

PRESENTER: In the end, John Haywood was imprisoned for three years.

In May 1600, Essex anonymously published a propaganda pamphlet *An Apologie of the Earle of Essex*. Its address to Anthony Bacon was merely a literary device, and its purpose was to justify all his actions up to the present time. [18] Again he was interrogated. Again he was set free. However, this time, he was banished from Court and his tax monopoly on sweet wines, due for renewal, was reverted to the Crown. It was a major financial blow. The revenue it generated was his main income, and its loss convinced Essex that the queen was taking malicious counsel. He was now clear who his main enemies were: Robert Cecil, the chief minister; Walter Raleigh, the Captain of the Guard; and Lord Cobham, Cecil's brother-in-law. They had to be neutralized.

His plan now began to crystalize. First, Essex tried to persuade the new Lord Deputy of Ireland, Sir Charles Blount, to cross the water to England with 5,000 men. There they would join forces with an army Essex planned to raise. He would also persuade James VI of Scotland to supply men to his cause. However, when James was sounded out, he neglected to respond, and when the Earl of Southampton was sent to Ireland to petition Sir Charles Blount, the proposal was rejected. With his plan in ruins, Essex grew increasingly desperate. So he tried to persuade James that the Privy Council intended to put the Infanta of Spain on the throne instead of him. The remedy was clear. James should send an ambassador to Elizabeth to secure his succession, with a recommendation that Essex be restored to all his former offices. James saw through the charade and kept his distance.

Essex now played his full hand. On 3 February 1601, his conspirators met at Drury House, near the Strand, to discuss overthrowing the government. [19] To avoid suspicion, Essex stayed away.

Four days later, 11 of Essex's men were at the Globe theatre to witness a performance of Shakespeare's *Richard II*. In the play, Henry Bolingbroke, who has been illegitimately disinherited and sent into exile by Richard II, returns from France with an army. In the final scene, Richard is deposed

and murdered. When Sir Piers Exton, who has just killed Richard, presents his body in a coffin to Henry, Exton declares:

Exton: From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed. (*Richard II*, 5.6)

To this, Henry replies:

King Henry: Though I did wish him dead, O hate the murderer, love him murdered. The guilt of conscience take though for thy labour, But neither my good word nor princely favour.

Having just handed the responsibility for the deed to Exton, in the last lines of the play Henry seems to take it back again.

King Henry: Lords I protest my soul is full of woe, That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow. Come mourn with me for what I do lament, And put on a black incontinent. I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land, To wash this blood off my guilty hand. (*Richard II*, 5.6)

Bolingbroke might have been troubled by his conscience, but it wasn't sufficient to prevent him taking the crown. It turned out that the play's performance at the Globe had been specially commissioned by one of Essex's followers, Sir Gelly Merrick, hoping that it would incite rebellion.



Figure 8. Map of London 1600, route taken by the Essex rebellion.

FRANCIS: The afternoon before the rebellion, Merrick, with a great company of others, that afterwards were all in the action, had procured to be played before them, the play of deposing King Richard II. Neither was it casual, but a play bespoken by Merrick. And not so only, but when it was told him by one of the players, that the play was old, and they should have loss in playing it, because few would come to it, there was forty shillings extraordinaire given to play it, and so thereupon played it was. [20]

PRESENTER: That same day, Essex was summoned to appear before the Privy Council. Fearing his life was in danger he refused.

Sunday 8 February ... early morning ... Essex House by the Strand. Essex informed his 300 followers that his life was in danger and that he intended to take over the court. At 10 O' clock, having learnt of the assembly, the queen sent four officers, including the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, to address his grievances. Instead, Essex locked them in his library. With 200 men behind him, Essex then set off on foot in the direction of Ludgate to take the Tower of London.

As he passed along Cheapside he realised that there was no desire to join him, and so he berated his onlookers that they did him injury to appear with no weapons. As he reached Gracious Street and Fanchurch Street he began to shout "England is bought and sold to the Spaniard" meaning the Infanta of Spain. However, anxiety had started to spread, and sensible of a lack of increase, his followers began to disperse.

When Essex attempted to return home via Ludgate, he found that the Bishop of London had secured a chain across the street near the west gate of St. Paul's church, defended by a band of musketeers and pikemen. After a brief exchange of pistol shot, three men fell dead, including young Henry Tracy on the rebels' side. As two musket balls pierced his hat, Essex was fortunate not to be mortally wounded. In fact, Essex had no prospect of success, and many onlookers saw the insurrection as the height of folly, the action of a man who had lost his senses.

Now forced towards the Thames, he boarded a rowing boat at Queen Hythe, and returned to Essex House on the riverside at water-gate. There he learned that the hostages had already been freed and that three of his men had been killed by musket fire. At 10 O' clock at night, with the house surrounded on all sides, and with cannon about to destroy Essex House, the rebels surrendered. [21] Seldom has such a wealth of arms resulted in such poverty of action.

Essex and Southampton were tried together on Thursday 19 February 1601 at Westminster Hall with 25 peers in attendance. There the prosecution, assisted by Francis Bacon as junior to Edward Coke, focused on two issues: "The plot of surprising her Majesty's person in Court, and the open rebellion in the city". [22] Essex pleaded not guilty, and protested that he had no intention of harming the queen. However, in the confessions that his associates gave upon their arrest — voluntarily and not under torture — several revealed that the real plan was for Essex to become King of England with Tyrone as ruler of Ireland. [23] And so both Essex and Southampton were convicted of treason. Elizabeth signed his death warrant the following day.

According to the account given by William Camden, the queen wavered in her judgement, sending Sir Edward Carey to the Tower to halt Essex's execution. However, Camden reports that far from showing contrition, Essex thought the queen was in error, and so she restored the penalty:

On the other side, his perverse obstinacy, who scorned to ask her pardon and had declared openly, that his life would be the queen's destruction, did so prick her forward to use severity, that shortly after she sent a fresh command by Darcy, that he should be put to death. [24]

What Camden omits is that the day before the execution, Elizabeth sent the order to save Essex just before she was about to watch a play in the Great Hall at Whitehall by the Lord Chamberlain's Men. When the performance had concluded, she sent Edward Darcy to renew the warrant. [25] The identity of the play is not recorded, but one wonders if it was a performance of *Richard II* with its deposition scene that finally sealed Essex's fate. At least he was allowed a relatively swift private beheading, rather than an excruciatingly painful public butchering.

ELIZABETH: Whereas Robert Earl of Essex late of Chartley in the County of Stafford and Henry Earl of Southampton late of Tichfield in the County of Southampton have been indicted of diverse high treasons by them committed against us, and thereupon have been tried and found guilty of those offences. We do by these present pardons remit and release the said Robert Earl of Essex of and from such execution of judgement to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and instead thereof our pleasure is to have the head of the said Robert Earl of Essex cut off at the green within our Tower of London. [26]

PRESENTER: Southampton skilfully begged the queen's mercy and escaped with life imprisonment.

It was reported that just before Essex died on 25 February 1601, he remembered none of his wife, children, or friends but was only concerned with the state of his own conscience. On the scaffold, he protested that he had never intended to lay violent hands upon the queen. He prayed that God might strengthen his mind against the terror of death. He asked the onlookers to join him in a short prayer. He forgave the executioner. Then, as the clock struck eight, Essex began to recite the first two verses of Psalm 51: "In humility and obedience I prostrate myself to my deserved punishment, Thou O God have mercy on thy prostrate servant, Into thy hands O Lord I commend my spirit". Wearing a scarlet waistcoat, he lay flat on the boards, his arms outstretched, his head face down upon the block. The axe was raised just as he uttered his final words "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit". The first blow took away both sense and motion. By the third, it was all over. [27]

Eight days later, several of his associates went to trial: Sir Christopher Blunt, Sir Henry Cuffe, and Sir Charles Danvers, who were all part of the original conspiracy at Drury House. All were executed. So too was Sir Gelly Merrick, who not only organized the playing of *Richard II* at the Globe, but had commanded the armed defence of Essex House against Her Majesties forces.



Figure 9. Sir Francis Bacon (age 56).

On Francis Bacon's alteration from Essex's adviser to prosecutor, Lytton Strachey (pronounced 'Stray-chee') completely absolves him:

Private friendships and private benefits were one thing: the public duty of taking the part required of him by the State in bringing to justice a dangerous criminal was another. It was not for him to sit in judgment: he would merely act as a lawyer, merely put the case for the Crown, to the best of his ability. [28]

Elizabeth lived on for another two years. We can only wonder how much the betrayal by her former favourite, and the conscience she must have kept over his destruction, hastened her exit from this world. When we consider her early abandonment, the threats against her life both before and during her reign, her skill at protecting these islands from foreign invaders, and her ability to survive in a male-dominated world, we can only register our applause.

As for the earl, it appears that his greatest enemy was his own ambition. So to Essex the adventurer, let us raise our hats. But to Essex the man, let us lower them again.

ELIZABETH: I notice you're still here.

FRANCIS: Well, madam, I understand the position of Attorney General is again vacant.

ELIZABETH gives a deep sigh and puts cell phone to her ear.

FRANCIS: Being a little bit ... er, unemployed ... I was wondering if ...

ELIZABETH: (*into cell phone*) Cecil! Are you still in touch with that tooth puller? ... yes, the really friendly one ... that's right, also does burials ... Henry Baxter ... Baxter the Extractor and Funeral Contractor ...

FRANCIS: OK, that's it! (*To PRESENTER as he exits*) When James of Scotland (*pointing to ELIZABETH*) gets the job, give me a bell.

ELIZABETH: (*exiting after him*) If that drunken Jock comes within a hundred mile of Whitehall I'll stick a sizzling torch up his kilt!

PRESENTER: (*To audience*) Friends, researchers, and countryfolk ... lend me your 'eres! Now at the end of this closing speech I want you all to pretend you're at Prime Minister's Question Time and shout "'Ere, 'Ere" in a low register. It's got to sound like Westminster sheep. Why don't we rehearse that. On the count of three: one, two, three ...

AUDIENCE: 'Ere, 'ere

PRESENTER: OK. I'll give you the cue when to come in.

Assembled Parliamentarians, the hour has now struck for *you* to cast your vote. Having heard our hustings, we now ask: Which is *your* favourite candidate?

"You destroy the thing that you love" or "What you love destroys you"?

Perhaps, in the province of this princely parable now told, they should both be elected. (*Pointing to the left and right*) With equal 'ayes' to the left and right we might say (*pointing to eyes*) 'aye, aye' ... or let us instead follow our friends at Westminster and cry ... (*conducts the audience in their response while pointing to his ears*)

AUDIENCE: 'Ere, 'ere!

PRESENTER: Thank you.

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VI. Response to a review

In 2019, in the peer-reviewed *Style* journal, Professor MacDonald P. Jackson, a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand, published a review of my Routledge book *Francis Bacon’s Contribution to Shakespeare: A New Attribution Method*. [1] I felt there were certain discrepancies in his analysis that needed addressing, not least that he had completely ignored the main argument. So I published a response to it in a later edition of the same journal [2] which will now be presented.

Text of response

It is gratifying when a researcher as experienced as Professor MacDonald P. Jackson takes the time to review my work, especially one as broad in scope as *Francis Bacon’s Contribution to Shakespeare: A New Attribution Method*. No one is free from error, and I welcome the opportunity to correct my lapses, both in recollection and reason. However, a review must itself be judged according to the care with which the main substance of the contention has been addressed.

There are three arguments in the book review which I identify as follows: (1) Shakspere’s contribution to the Shakespeare canon is in need of testing; (2) there is no method by which Shakspere’s contribution to the Shakespeare canon can be known; and (3) the new RCP attribution method can reliably point to certain contributors.

1. Need to test Shakspere’s contribution

The review states that “theories denying that the Stratford-born Shakespeare was the author of the vast bulk of the dramatic dialogue in the First Folio are untenable” (366). It is in no doubt whatsoever that there are identifiable sections of Shakespeare plays that are pure Shakspere, and suggests that scholars

have “devised means of discriminating between Shakespearean plays most confidently considered to be of his sole authorship and plays by other early modern dramatists” (366). The review neglects to answer the concerns I raised in the book. Given that the Folio is the work of multiple hands, how can one possibly know what Shakspeare of Stratford’s style is? Does this knowledge rest on a dubious assumption?

One should always treat with suspicion any empirical investigation that lays claim to certainty and the alarm bells are ringing loud and clear here. The review’s absolute confidence is unrealistic, especially since there are “few ‘orthodox scholars’ who nowadays believe that every play in the First Folio (1623) is by Shakespeare [Shakspeare] alone” (364). In that case, one cannot avoid the conclusion that no stylometric counting method can claim to produce reliable results. They all rely on a single-contributor assumption, the premise that the words in the text segments under examination are by one hand alone, and have survived modification by scribes, editors, and revisers. I say, that the notion that these text segments are pure representations of a single author is unsound, and even the method’s main practitioners themselves declare “we are unsure of what may have intervened between those texts and the authorial originals”. [3] In fact, the assumption’s *only* justification is that most academics share the same view, and I maintain they do so uncritically.

Attending the use of stylometric methods is the notion of ‘collaboration’, and it is a device employed to shield these methods from objection. A collaborator is unlikely to intrude on another’s allocated parts whereas a reviser is under no such constraint. The fact is, it is often impossible to discern whether the writing was carried out contemporaneously or consecutively (although the RCP method gives some indication), yet ‘collaboration’ is regularly asserted with complacent abandon. So, it matters not how many variants of these counting methods fall into agreement. When, in support of stylometry, the review points to “the cumulative force of several different and independent types of investigation” (368), I say, they are not independent; they all rest on the same dubious single-author assumption.

In questioning the Folio as a reliable attribution document, it is supposed that my book argues for a ‘damning contradiction’ (366). There is no mistake here. Given the acceptance of multiple hands, the eulogies that maintain sole authorship for Shakspeare (e.g. Epistle Dedicatorie, To the great Variety of Readers, etc.) are misleading, and for that reason I state again that the Folio is an unreliable indication of contribution. The review curiously omits my book’s main exclusion argument for Shakspeare. This gives a detailed analysis of the history of players and writers at the Inns of Court reveals in order to conclude that precedent favours Shakspeare not being present either to write or perform *The Comedy of Errors* or *Love’s Labour’s Lost* in 1594–5. It also concludes that *Twelfth Night* was designed for the Middle Temple from which Shakspeare was excluded. Even if all other interpretations of exclusion were rejected in the book (e.g. as suggested by the Parnassus plays), the Inns of Court analysis alone

should be sufficient to place considerable doubt against the assumption that the default author of unattributed passages of the Shakespeare work is the man from Stratford. So, I say that a test of his contribution is urgently recommended and should be granted unopposed.

2. *A test of Shakspeare's contribution*

As soon as one allows that Shakspeare is in need of testing, a problem arises. There must be examples of his style to compare any given Shakespeare play against. If one does not assume that Shakespeare contributed to any part of the Folio, then there is no work of his that defines his style. No letters or prose works are extant in his name. If one assumes that Shakspeare contributed to the Folio, then the only material against which a Shakespeare play can be tested is the material that is itself in need of testing, the plays in the Folio. There is no way out of this dilemma. The extent of Shakespeare's contribution to the Folio cannot be tested.

The review queries how letters might be useful to a test should they exist (367). The answer is straightforward: rare phrases and collocations, whether in correspondence, prose works, poetry, or plays, form an identifiable part of an author's style.

3. *The new RCP method*

A question mark is justifiably placed against my definition of 'originator', suggesting that "for Clarke 'originated' implies sole authorship" (367). To clarify, by 'originator' I simply mean 'first contributor' and it should be clear that since EEBO cannot be assumed to hold the complete canon of every author's work, or in some cases any of it, then it is possible that a certain author began a play, others revised it, yet the first author's contribution is unidentifiable due to a lack of presence in EEBO. For this reason, I state that no originator of a Shakespeare play can be identified, only some of the contributors (one of which may or may not be the first one). So, I accept the criticism and admit that it would have been clearer to say "the assumption cannot be made that *any part of these texts* [my alteration in italics] are entirely his" (367).

The review is mistaken in reporting that I claim "rare locutions shared with the target text must have been either borrowed from it or vice versa" (368). I am clear that a single locution is insufficient to make such a judgement. In fact, it even quotes my statement from the book "the more such matches the greater the likelihood" (368). In other words, I am fully aware that the judgment rests on their cumulative effect.

The review's counter-argument that Bacon can "provide many matches with *The Tempest*" because his "output was vast" is easy to address (369). If vastness of output is the main determinant of an

accumulation of rare phrase matching, then one needs to explain why those authors with an even vaster output in EEBO have failed to register. I have no hesitation in agreeing that confidence in the RCP method could be tested by application to well-attributed targets, for which the result is known in advance.

Concluding remarks

It is curious that a particular footnote from the book has been included with “Clarke discloses that some years ago he held the view that the Shakespeare canon was created by ‘Francis Bacon ... alone under the pseudonym Shakespeare’” (365). The rest of the footnote explaining why I no longer hold this view has been omitted, and so the reader is deflected away from the main issue onto a false *ad hominem* trail. Also, the review’s omission of the strongest exclusion argument against Shakspere, the 1594-5 Gray’s Inn revels, left me to wonder if denial was thought to be the only defence against it.

Immovable certainty, deflection, and denial do not sit well with the spirit of scientific enquiry and if progress is to be made one must endeavour at all times to set aside one’s prejudices and banish one’s ego from the judgement. It is a challenge for us all.

Nevertheless, I very much appreciate the trouble Professor Jackson has taken to assemble his thoughts. I recognize his considerable experience, welcome his openness to engage in discussion, and take his criticisms to be a valuable opportunity for improvement.

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Much of the text of the following article was used in my video presentation for the Institute of Physics Bacon 2020 project.

Watch a talk by Dr Barry R. Clarke - [Bacon's Politics and Drama](#).

VII. Bacon and drama

1. Introduction

Francis Bacon is best known for his moral and scientific philosophy as set out in the three editions of his essays, and his *Novum Organon*, but what is less well known is his interest in drama. There are several examples of his written dramatic pieces as well as of his involvement in the production of masques, and it seems a mystery as to why someone with such pronounced scientific and philosophical ambitions should be interested in staging drama. However, in his *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (1623), he tells us how it might serve his ends: “And though in modern states play-acting is esteemed but as a toy [...] yet among the ancients it was used as a means of educating men’s minds to virtue”. [1] In other words, it might be a useful way to illustrate his moral philosophy.

From a letter written in Bacon’s own hand in Lambeth Palace Library, we find that in 1592, he revealed his life plan to his uncle, Lord Burghley: “I confess that I have as vast contemplative ends as I have moderate civil ends for I have taken all knowledge to be my province”. [2] His intention is clear: “bring in industrious observations, grounded conclusions, and profitable inventions and discoveries, the best state of that province”. It is a statement that clearly places his scientific ambition above his political one but they are not unrelated. If he could manage to rise to a position of political influence, then he might obtain funding for new research institutions based on directed experimentation.

In 1605, Bacon sent a copy of his *Advancement of Learning* to Thomas Bodley, founder of the Bodleian Library in Oxford. His enclosed letter says much the same thing “knowing myself by inward calling to be fitter to hold a book than to play a part, I have led my life in civil causes, for which I was not very fit by nature”. [3]

In 1594, Francis Bacon wrote speeches for the mock Privy Counsellors at the Gray’s Inn Christmas revels. The revels will be examined in more detail later, but according to James Spedding, the Victorian editor of Bacon’s *Works*, Bacon intended to use his revels speeches to impress the invited nobility with “an enumeration of those very reforms in state and government which throughout his life he was most anxious to see realized”. [4] In fact, *The Oxford Francis Bacon* suggests that as far as canvassing support for his project was concerned “For Bacon this was an especially rich opportunity”. [5] So it appears that there were two reasons connected with his Great Instauration project as to why he subjected himself to the politics of the time. The first was scientific and it was to gain funding for the building of new centres for experimentation. The second involved his moral philosophy, which he could perfect while observing the political manoeuvrings of the time, and which could be set out for

posterity in his written dramatic pieces. As Leonard Dean observes “Bacon believed that the chief functions of history are to provide a realistic treatment of psychology and ethics, and to give instruction by means of example and analysis in practical politics”. [6]

2. Dramatic credentials

One of his essays in the 1625 edition is entitled ‘Of masques and triumphs’, that is, a masque involving dance and song. In it Bacon discusses the colours that are best illuminated by candlelight for the audience to see which he identifies as ‘white, carnation, and a kind of sea-water green’. At the end of the essay he roundly diminishes the importance of masques with ‘enough of these toys’. As we shall see, it’s a curious dismissal considering the effort he expended in organizing them.

Besides these speeches there was also penned a **Chorus** for the first act, and an other for the second act, by Maister **Francis Flower**, which were pronounced accordingly. The dumbe shows were partly devised by Maister **Christopher Peluerton**, Maister **Francis Bacon**, Maister **John Lancaster** and others, partly by the saide Maister **flower**, who with Maister **Deurdocke** and the saide Maister **Lancaster** directed these proceedings at Court.
(. .)

Figure 1. Francis Bacon credited with writing dumb shows in the Gray’s Inn play *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587–8)

The first recorded case of Francis Bacon’s interest in drama appears in a quarto publication from 1588. On 28 February of that year, Gray’s Inn took their playing company to Greenwich to perform their own play *The Misfortunes of Arthur* before the queen. A 17 year old Francis Bacon appears in the end credits along with several other members of Gray’s Inn as contributing to the dumb shows that appeared between each Act. [7]

In the early 1590s, Bacon chose to align himself with the Earl of Essex, the step-son of the queen’s former favourite Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. On 17 November 1592, a device he wrote for Essex was performed before at court with four speeches, one of which praised Queen Elizabeth.

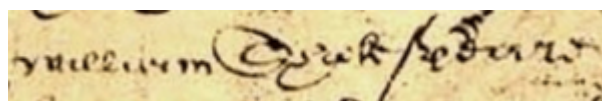


Figure 2. William Shakespeare’s name on the Northumberland Manuscript cover sheet.

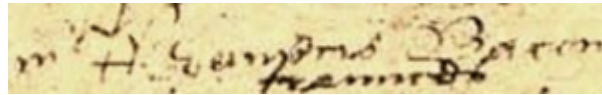


Figure 3. Francis Bacon's name on the Northumberland Manuscript cover sheet.

These are listed on the top right of the heavily soiled contents sheet of the Northumberland Manuscript collection, from 1597. [8] The contents sheet is a curious document. It has a forest of scribbles suggestive of a scrivener trying out his pens.

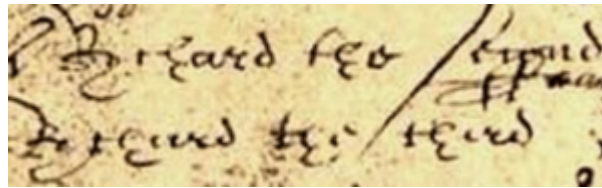


Figure 4. Titles of the Shakespeare plays 'Richard the second' and 'Richard the third' on the Northumberland Manuscript cover sheet.

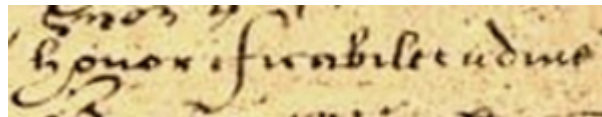


Figure 5. Latin word honorificabilitudine on the Northumberland Manuscript cover sheet.

The names 'William Shakespeare' and 'Francis Bacon' appear many times, the titles of the two Shakespeare plays 'Richard II' and 'Richard III' are mentioned, and a variant of the Latin word 'honorificab' from *Love's Labour's Lost* is visible, see Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4. For the curious, it 'honorificab' translates as 'the state of being honoured'. It has to be said that although copies of Bacon's writings were found with the contents sheet, no manuscript in Bacon's hand appeared, and neither were there any copies of the two Shakespeare plays *Richard II* and *Richard III*. As for the coincidence of the names 'Shakespeare' and 'Bacon' on the contents sheet, the reader is at liberty to interpret them.

Two years later, Francis Bacon was actively involved in writing entertainments for the 1594 Christmas revels at Gray's Inn. This was where the first known performance of *The Comedy of Errors* took place, and there is good evidence that *Love's Labour's Lost* had been earmarked for enactment but had been cancelled.

For November 1595, Bacon again wrote a device for Essex to present to the queen. It was described in a letter written 5 days after the event from Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sydney. This time there were

dumb shows and speaking parts for a hermit or philosopher representing Contemplation, a secretary of state for Experience, a soldier for Fame, and a morally superior squire who was played by Bacon's friend Toby Matthew. A document in the Gibson Papers at Lambeth Palace Library, written in Bacon's hand, informs us of its structure.

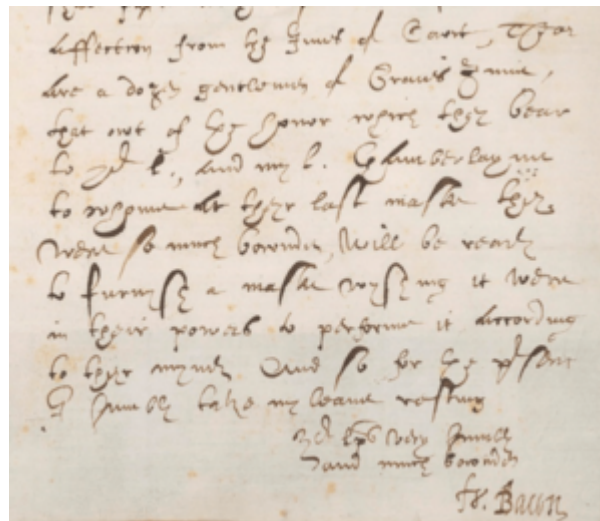


Figure 6. Letter from Bacon to Burghley (before 1598) “Thear are a dozen gentlemen of Graies Inne [...] will be ready furnysh a maske”.

In the context of Bacon's ridicule of masques, the following letter which he sent to Lord Burghley, the queen's first minister, will be of interest, see Figure 5. [9] It can be found in the British Library written in Bacon's own hand with no address and docketed 'Mr Fra. Bacon'. The date is unclear but it was certainly sent before Burghley's death in August 1598. In it, Bacon apologises for a masque that the four Inns of Court intended to perform but, for some unstated reason, was cancelled. This suggests that he was at least a producer of masques at this time for the Inns of Court. As compensation, he recommends that 12 gentlemen of Gray's Inn be allowed to perform a masque of their own choosing.

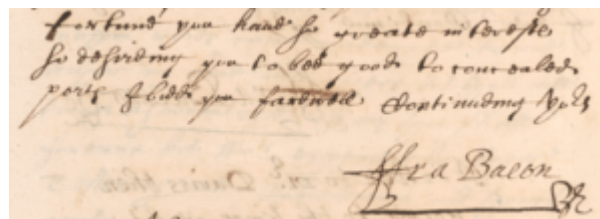


Figure 7. Bacon to John Davies “so desiring you to bee good to concealed poets” (this copy is in the hand of a state official).

In 1603, the barrister and poet John Davies was travelling north to meet King James before his coronation. Keen for advancement, Francis Bacon urged his friend to recommend him to the king.

Figure 6 shows a copy of the letter that Bacon sent, written in the hand of a state official. [10] Of special interest is Bacon's entreaty "so desiring you to be good to concealed poets".

There are two other documented cases of Francis Bacon as a producer of masques and some evidence that he wrote one of them.



Figure 8. Francis Bacon receives credit for producing *The Masque of Flowers*.

At the wedding of Frederick Count Palatine to Lady Elizabeth in February 1613, Gray's Inn and the Inner Temple sent a playing company to enact a masque. Francis Beaumont is credited as the writer but Bacon is commended as "yee that spared no time nor trauell in the setting forth, ordering, and furnishing of this masque". [11] Events didn't run smoothly. King James managed to stay awake long enough to enjoy the magnificently lit procession of barges on the Thames, but declared himself too tired to concentrate on the masque that was to follow, so it was delayed for three days.

A year later at Whitehall, Gray's Inn presented the 'Masque of Flowers' on the occasion of the marriage of the Earl of Somerset to the Earl of Suffolk's daughter. According to the quarto published in 1614, Bacon was "the principal and in effect the only person that did both encourage and warrant the gentlemen to show their good affection", see Figure 7. [12] In a research paper analysing the masque, Christine Adams has argued that Francis Bacon's writing style and his two essays 'Of Gardens' and 'Of masques and triumphs' had equipped Bacon to "script and produce a masque with a garden of flowers as its visual theme and focus". [13]

Clearly Bacon expended a lot of effort in organizing and perhaps writing masques and devices, but there was another kind of drama that he was involved in.

3. Gray's Inn revels

In the early 1590s, theatres and places of public gathering had been closed due to the plague, and so the revels at Gray's Inn in the Christmas of 1594 were the first for three or four years. It was usual at these festivities to appoint a law student to play the Prince of Purpoole, and he was attended by mock Privy Counsellors, officers of state, and a guard. Over 60 members of Gray's Inn took part in the fantasy, and the scripted entertainments included speeches for the six Privy Counsellors, a court hearing for a mischievous sorcerer, masques, and three plays. The plays were usually given on one of the so-called 'Grand Nights' but only one was performed in the revels of 1594, the other two were cancelled.

A detailed contemporary account of the proceedings called the *Gesta Grayorum* or 'Affairs of Gray's Inn' still survives and it records that on Innocents Day, the 28 December 1594 "a Comedy of Errors (like to Plautus his Menechmus) was played by the players". [14] How do we know that this was the play that later appeared under Shakespeare's name? Well first, there are correspondences between certain terms used at the revels and those that appear in the play: 'conjuror', 'sorcerer', 'witchcraft', 'juggling', 'wretch' as well as certain euphemisms relating to prostitution such as 'nuns', 'lamps', and 'burning'. Secondly, the stage plan required three fixed locations at the back of the stage: the Priory, Courtesan's house, and house of Antipholus. This was a common Inns of Court setting. And thirdly, the script was based on translations from Roman plays, in this case, *Menaechmi* and *Amphitruo* by Plautus. This was also typical of an Inns of Court production.

However, there are also correspondences between the revels proceedings and the play *Love's Labour's Lost* which suggest that this was one of the two plays that were cancelled. Francis Bacon wrote speeches for the six mock Privy Counsellors and later we shall examine some of the parallels between these speeches and *Love's Labour's Lost*. There are also some interesting correspondences between the play and the work of Thomas Nashe, which raises the possibility that one of his plays had been adapted for the festivities. The idea that this play was intended for the revels is not new. Robert White at the University of Australia and Henry Woodhuysen at Lincoln College, Oxford had both discussed this idea in the 1990s. However, an exhaustive search of the play text using the Early English Books Online (EEBO) database has uncovered some new textual evidence that points to Bacon's contribution. This work which I called Rare Collocation Profiling formed part of my PhD research in 2014.

There is little dispute amongst scholars that Francis Bacon scripted entertainments for the revels. Brian Vickers published the six Counsellor's speeches in *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, and *The Oxford Francis Bacon* included 'Orations at Graies Inne revels' in their 'Early Years' edition. Also, since

Bacon was elected one of the two Treasurers for the legal year 1594, this would have allowed him to oversee the organization of the whole project.

Politically, Francis Bacon's problem had been his cousin Robert Cecil, Lord Burghley's son, who had the queen's ear and did all he could to thwart Bacon's advancement. As long as Elizabeth was alive Bacon's advancement in government faced obstruction.

4. Shakespeare's absence

Let us return to the 1594 Gray's Inn revels. This was where the first known performance of *The Comedy of Errors* took place, and as we shall see later, *Love's Labour's Lost* was also intended but cancelled. Now one might expect that if *The Comedy of Errors* was Shakespeare's play then he would be there at Gray's Inn performing it with his company The Lord Chamberlain's Men. The astonishing fact is, the evidence suggests that he was absent.

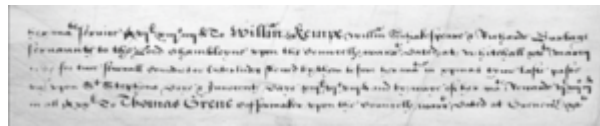
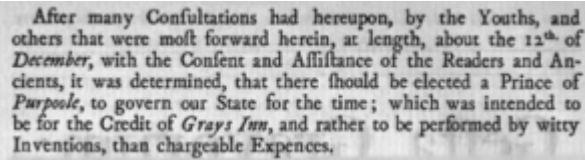


Figure 9. William Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlain's Men recorded as being at Greenwich on 28 December 1594 (Innocent's Day).

There is a financial document in the Public Record Office that shows William Shakespeare and his company playing before the queen at Greenwich on the night that this play was put on at Gray's Inn, see Figure 8. [15] The name "Willm Shakespeare" can be seen on the first line, "severall Comedies or Interludes" on the left of the third, and "Innocents Daye" [28 December] on the fourth. According to the *Gesta Grayorum*, the performance at Gray's Inn on the 28 December was meant to start at 9pm, but was delayed due to overcrowding, so it likely began at 9:30pm. Edmund Chambers informs us that over at Greenwich "the court performances were always at night beginning at 10pm and ending about 1am". [16] So it is unrealistic to expect Shakespeare and his company to have been in two places at once.

The Pension Book of Gray's Inn recorded all business that their committee (or Pension) conducted, including payments to outsiders. There is no record of anyone being paid for either writing or performing a play on 28 December. If the players had been The Lord Chamberlain's Men they would have certainly have demanded a fee. The Gray's Inn Ledger Book also recorded financial transactions but that has no entry either.



After many Consultations had hereupon, by the Youths, and others that were most forward herein, at length, about the 12th of December, with the Consent and Assistance of the Readers and Ancients, it was determined, that there should be elected a Prince of Purpoole, to govern our State for the time; which was intended to be for the Credit of *Grays Inn*, and rather to be performed by witty Inventions, than chargeable Expences.

Figure 10. *Gesta Grayorum*, a contemporary account of the 1594–5 Gray’s Inn revels, says “rather to be performed by witty Inventions, rather than chargeable Expences”.

The Gray’s Inn policy on expenditure during the revels is clearly stated in the *Gesta Grayorum*: “there should be elected a Prince of Purpoole [...] which was intended to be for the credit of Gray’s Inn and rather to be performed by witty inventions rather than chargeable Expenses”, see Figure 9. [17] In other words, their intention was to write and perform their own entertainments. There was no budget for hiring a professional company.

In fact, for an outside writer to have his work performed at one of the Inns of Court, he would have needed special admission. This was the case with Arthur Brooke when his *Masque of Beauty and Desire* was played at the 1561 Inner Temple revels. An Inner Temple Parliament in February of that year met to grant him special admission which was placed on record in their Admissions Register. Two Inner Temple members, Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, both writers, were his pledges. For the 1594 Gray’s Inn revels, seven people were granted special admission on 25 December, and four more on 6 February but William Shakespeare was not one of them. [18]

In fact, there was no known precedent for Gray Inn hiring an outside company to play at their revels. Only seven years before, both *The Misfortunes of Arthur* and *Sylla Dictator* were plays performed by Gray’s Inn players, and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* was known to have been written by a team of writers from Gray’s Inn. During Christmas 1594, Gray’s Inn had a highly competent company of players because only a few weeks later they took a masque to the royal court. So from all appearances, *The Comedy of Errors* was a play that came out of the Inns of Court, and when we examine *Love’s Labour’s Lost* we have to reach the same conclusion.

5. Bacon’s writing for revels: *LLL* parallels

There is an interesting parallel at the end of the *Gesta Grayorum*, the contemporary account of the Gray’s Inn revels, that suggests that it was Francis Bacon wrote it.

Thus on *Shrove-Tuesday*, at the Court, were our Sports and Revels ended: So that our *Christmas* would not leave us, till such time as *Lent* was ready to entertain us, which hath always been accounted a time most apt, and wholly dedicated to Repentance. But now our Principality is determined; which, although it shined very bright in ours, and others Darknes; yet, at the Royal Prefence of Her Majesty, it appeared as an obscured Shadow: In this, not unlike unto the Morning-star, which looketh very cheerfully in the World, so long as the Sun looketh not on it: Or, as the great Rivers, that triumph in the Multitude of their Waters, until they come unto the Sea.
Sic vinci, sic mori pulchrum.

Figure 11. The ‘greater lessens the smaller’ figure of speech in the *Gesta Grayorum*.

It uses the examples of a light and a stream to show that a smaller one is overpowered on encountering a larger one.

In this, not unlike unto the Morning star which looketh very cheerfully in the World, so long as the Sun looketh not on it: Or, as the great Rivers, that triumph in the Multitude of their Waters, until they come unto the Sea. [19]

In 1603, Bacon used this in *A Happy Discourse touching the Happy Union of Kingdom of England and Scotland*.

So we see when two lights do meet, the greater doth drown and darken the less. And when a small river runs into a greater, it loseth both the name and stream.

It also appears in his 1625 essay ‘Of Deformity’ as “the stars of natural inclination are sometimes obscured by the sun of discipline and virtue”. In *The Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet* we find:

Ner. When the moone shone we did not see the candle
Por. So doth the greater glory dim the lesse,
 A substitute shines brightly as a King,
 Untill a King be by, and then his state
 Empties it selfe, as doth an inland brooke
 Into the maine of waters: musique hark”
 (*The Merchant of Venice*, 5.1.92–7).

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
 As daylight doth a lamp
 (*Romeo and Juliet*, 2.2.19-20)

In 2014, I developed a method called rare collocation profiling in which I searched a play line by line for rare phrases. I estimated their rarity by using the Early English Books Online database which has over 60,000 fully searchable texts from before 1700. Then I listed the authors who shared these rare phrases with the play I was searching. There are a number of rare parallels between the *Gesta Grayorum* and *Love's Labour's Lost*.

During the Gray's Inn revels, on 1 February 1595, the elected mock Prince complains of seasickness on his make-believe return from Moscow. In the *Gesta Grayorum*, the Prince writes a letter to the queen excusing himself from paying her a visit:

I found that my desire was greater than the ability of my body, which by length of my journey and my sickness at sea is so weakened as it were very dangerous for me to adventure it. [20]

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, when Rosaline is confronting the king about disguising himself as a Russian, she addresses the king with

Why look you pale? Seasick, I think, coming from Muscovy.

Only one document in the Early English Book Online database exists before the First Folio that associates 'seasick' with 'Muscovy' and that is the 1598 quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost*. So it is a unique correspondence between the *Gesta Grayorum* and the play.

The sixth Privy Counsellor's speech at the revels, which was written by Francis Bacon, has

What! Nothing but tasks, nothing but working days? No feasting, no dancing, no triumphs, no comedies, no love, no ladies? [21]

If we compare this with Berowne's speech in the play concerning their academy we have

Oh, these barren tasks too hard to keep, Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep.

The association of the ideas of 'tasks' and 'feasting' or 'tasks' and 'love' or 'tasks' and 'ladies' is again unique to the *Gesta Grayorum* and *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The final example is also from one of Bacon's speeches, that of the second Privy Counsellor addressing the mock prince, who says

When all miracles and wonders shall cease, by reason that you shall have discovered their natural causes, yourself shall be the only miracle and wonder of the world. [22]

In King Ferdinand's opening speech in the play he says

Navarre shall be the wonder of the world, Our court shall be a little academie, Still and contemplative in living art.

The 'living art' refers to the ethics of the Stoics and their interest in the secrets of the universe. The phrase 'wonder of the world' in the context of deciphering Nature is used only twice before the Gray's Inn revels by George Gifford in *Eight sermons* (1589) and by Henry Smith *A preparative to marriage* (1591) both in reference to Solomon's wisdom. This means only 2 out of 3,340 searchable documents are returned before it was used at the revels, a high level of rarity. So there is a good argument here that *Love's Labour's Lost* was designed for performance at the 1594 revels but was left unperformed because two Grand Nights on which plays were to be performed at Gray's Inn were cancelled.

There is much work to be done in looking for rare phrases in the Shakespeare plays using EEBO. We cannot expect Francis Bacon to appear in every one, in fact, for *3 Henry VI* it is Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, and Anthony Munday who are prominent. However, Bacon is the only one to have a significant number of rare phrases in *The Tempest* and he has enough correspondence with *Love's Labour's Lost* to assert that he contributed to it. His authorship of the *Gesta Grayorum* is beyond doubt. Since any play that went through the Inns of Court excludes Shakspeare then identifying plays that did seems to be the best approach. In this regard, one candidate that merits further research is *Troilus and Cressida*. [23]

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VIII. Epilogue

I hope that this *Baconiana* will inspire new research into the Shakespeare plays. As I mentioned earlier, the evidence from the Early English Books Online database is that Bacon cannot be expected to be the main contributor for all of them. *Henry VI, Part 3*, in which Greene, Marlowe, and Munday are implicated is an example of that. However, there is good evidence that Francis Bacon was a major contributor to *The Tempest* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, and with lesser certainty *Twelfth Night*.

It seems to me that the identification of rare phrases in a Shakespeare play together with information about who else shared their use is the best way forward to finding evidence of contribution. Stylometric tests, which rely on counting instances of certain words are unreliable when several hands are involved, and there is ample evidence of many hands in the plays.

My best guess from all the evidence that I have seen is that the Shakespeare First Folio is a collection of plays gathered from different sources which William Shakespeare of Stratford acquired by honest means for performance in his theatre, and to which he added lines that were not well regarded (at least, by Ben Jonson). It appears to me that several of these plays came out of the Inns of Court and so Francis Bacon, being a producer of the Inns of Court players, must have been associated with them.

For those who enjoy cyphers, I know that Nigel Cockburn dismissed them out of hand and that this has disappointed several investigators. To some extent I can understand his point of view. The evidence needs to be much more convincing. I have to say though, that with over 30 years of experience as a professional constructor of maths and logic puzzles for national publications and books, it seems to me that the First Folio is suffused with cryptic and acrostic hints at Bacon's involvement in the editing. However, one has to be careful when assessing whether or not there is a puzzle there at all. The compositors were working to tight deadlines on a hugely complex project. The only precedent for a work of this magnitude was Ben Jonson's *Workes* of 1616. In fact, the page numbering errors in the Shakespeare First Folio are there for all to see. The compositors would not have had the time to ensure that certain letters aligned to form shapes in the middle of a page. However, I think the eulogies prefacing the First Folio would not be under such constraint as the pages mostly stood alone, and the end text of a page was not required to match up with the starting text of the page that followed. Of course, none of this can be relied upon as evidence, but it certainly adds an extra level of intrigue to the greatest of all literary mysteries.

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