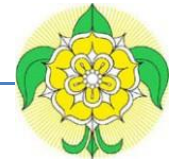


Tributes to Sir Francis Bacon



A selection, with commentary, of tributes to Sir Francis Bacon given by his contemporaries which reveal Bacon as the author Shakespeare.

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Tobie Matthew

Tobie Matthew (1577–1655), a lawyer, poet, writer, translator, orator and, in later life, a courtier, and who was the son of the Archbishop of York, became a lifelong friend of Francis Bacon. Their friendship began in 1595 when Matthew acted in *The Device of the Indian Prince* written by Francis Bacon for the Earl of Essex and presented in the Queen's presence at York House. Matthew subsequently joined Bacon as a member of Gray's Inn in 1599 and became close enough to Bacon as a confidential friend and assistant as to take the place of Anthony Bacon as Francis Bacon's "alter ego" when Anthony died in 1601. Matthew travelled to France in 1604 and Italy in 1605, where (in Florence) he was baptised a Roman Catholic. In November 1605 Francis Bacon sent Matthew a copy of his newly published first edition of *The Advancement of Learning*. In the summer of 1607 Matthew returned to England, where he was imprisoned for sixteen months for his Catholic persuasions, until Bacon managed to intercede for him and secure his release. But Matthew was then banished from England, leaving for the continent in April 1608, where he travelled widely through France, Italy, Spain, Germany and Flanders. In 1611 he went to Rome to study for the priesthood and was ordained as a Roman Catholic priest on 20 May 1614. During all this time he maintained a frequent correspondence with Bacon, who sent him samples of his writings and interchanged various literary ideas. In May 1617 Matthew was allowed to return to England, where he stayed with and assisted Bacon, who was by then the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, including editing the Italian translation made by Sir William Cavendish of Bacon's second edition of essays. These were published in 1617 in London, prefaced with a dedicatory letter by Matthew to Cosimo (II) de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, containing the following tribute to Bacon:-

And truly I have known a great number whom I much value, many whom I admire, but none who hath so astonished me and, as it were, ravished my senses, to see so many and so great parts which in other men were wont to be incompatible, united, and in that eminent degree in one sole person. I know not whether this truth will find easy belief... The matter I report is so well understood in England, that every man knows and acknowledges as much, nay hath been an eye and ear witness whereof; nor if I should expatiate upon this subject, should I be held a flatterer, but rather a suffragan to truth. ...

Praise is not confined to the qualities of his intellect, but applies as well to those which are matters of the heart, the will and moral virtue; being a man both sweet in his ways and conversation, grave in his judgments, invariable in his fortunes, splendid in his expenses, a friend unalterable to his friends, an enemy to no man, a most indefatigable servant to the King, and a most earnest lover of the Public, having all the thoughts of that large heart of his set upon adorning the age in which he lives, and benefiting, as far as possible, the whole human race.

And I can truly say (having had the honour to know him for many years as well when he was in his lesser fortunes as now he stands at the top and in the full flower of his greatness) that I never yet saw any trace in him of a vindictive mind, whatever injury was done to him, nor ever heard him utter a word to any man's disadvantage which seemed to proceed from personal feeling against the man, but only (and that too very seldom) from judgment made of him in cold blood. It is not his greatness that I admire, but his virtue; it is not the favours I have received from him (infinite though they be) that have thus enthralled and enchained my heart, but his whole life and character; which are such that, if he were of an inferior condition I could not honour him the less, and if he were my enemy, I should not the less love and endeavour to serve him.

Sir Tobie Matthew, Dedicatory Letter to Cosimo (II) de' Medici, grand duke of Tuscany, prefacing *Saggi Morali del Signore Francesco Bacono*, the Italian translation of Bacon's *Essays and Wisdom of Ancients* (1617)

Matthew was exiled again from early 1619 to late 1621. During this time he lived in Saint Omer, where he translated and published several books by different writers, including writing his own books. One of his letters to Bacon contained a postscript referring to Bacon as the most prodigious wit that Matthew knew, both in Britain and continental Europe, but who used another name by which he was known to others:-

To the Lord Viscount St. Alban.

Most honoured Lord,

I have received your great and noble token and favour of the 9th April, and can but return the humblest of my thanks for your Lordship's vouchsafing so to visit this poorest and unworthiest of your servants. It doth do me good at heart, that, although I be not where I was in place, yet I am in the fortune of your Lordship's favour, if I may call that fortune, which I observe to be so unchangeable. I pray hard that it may once come in my power to serve you for it; and who can tell but that, as *fortis imaginatio general causum*, so strange desires may do as much? Sure I am, that mine are ever waiting on your Lordship; and wishing as much happiness as is due to your incomparable virtue, I humbly do your Lordship reference.

Your Lordship's most obliged and humble servant,
Tobie Matthew

P.S. The most prodigious wit, that ever I knew of my nation, and of this side of the sea, is of your Lordship's name though he be known by another.

Since the letter is addressed to Bacon as Viscount St. Alban, it must have been written sometime after 3rd February 1621, when Bacon was created Viscount St. Alban, and before December 1621 when Matthew returned to England.

The tone of Matthew's letter, accompanied by the remark "although I be not where I was in place", implies that he was then in exile. Matthew's exile at that time was from early 1619 to December 1621, when he was allowed to return to England again and was favourably received by the king. During the time of this exile Matthew lived at Saint Omer, where he was busy writing, translating and publishing several books.

Matthew's strange reference to Bacon's fortune ("yet I am in the fortune of your Lordship's favour, if I may call that fortune, which I observed to be so unchangeable") implies that Matthew was not referring to fortune as normally understood, which for Bacon had been very changeable, but to Bacon's unchanging and unchangeable loving friendship, which Matthew remarks upon elsewhere: "a friend unalterable to his friends".¹ Bacon's impeachment in Parliament took place during March–April 1621 on concocted charges of corruption, with sentence given on 3 May 1621. This means that the letter to Bacon was probably written sometime between May–December 1621.

Since Matthew was writing to Bacon, whom he admired as the greatest wit of all (as made clear in other writings), some of whose writings he had recently helped with translating and publishing, and since Matthew himself was involved with translating and publishing various books by other continental authors whilst in exile, his postscript, "The most prodigious wit, that ever I knew of my nation, and of this side of the sea, is of your Lordship's name though he be known by another," must undoubtedly refer to Bacon as the most prodigious wit of all in comparison to himself and the other wits on the continent whose works he either knew or was busy translating. Matthew also indicates that Bacon was using another name to veil his own.

In his preface to his *Collection of Letters* (1660), Matthew, who was himself reputed as an orator, was full of praise not only for Bacon's many talents and virtues but especially for his fine oratory:-

It will go near to pose any other nation of Europe, to muster out in any age, four men, who in so many respects should excel four such as we are able to show them: Cardinal Wolsey, Sir Thomas More, Sir Philip Sydney and Sir Francis Bacon. The fourth was a creature of incomparable abilities of mind, of a sharp and catching apprehension, large and faithful memory, plentiful and sprouting invention, deep and solid judgement, for as such as might concern the understanding part. A man so rare in knowledge, of so many several kinds endowed with the facility and felicity of expressing it in all so elegant, significant, so abundant, and yet so choice and ravishing a way of words, of metaphors and allusions as, perhaps, the world hath not seen, since it was a world.

Tobie Matthew, Preface to his *Collection of Letters* (published 1660)

William Rawley

Dr William Rawley, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, was Bacon's private chaplain, friend and literary executor. After Bacon died in 1626, Rawley became chaplain to Charles I and Charles II. On his death Bacon left many of his manuscripts, in various stages of completion, to Rawley, for Rawley to either publish or reserve to a private succession as he deemed fit. Many of these were subsequently edited and published by Rawley with the help of associates led by Thomas Meautys, Bacon's principal secretary. Rawley wrote a 'Life of Francis Bacon' to preface his 1657 publication of various of Bacon's works under the title of *Resuscitatio*, from which the following quotes are taken:-

There is a commemoration due as well to his abilities and virtues as to the course of his life. Those abilities, which commonly go single in other men, though of prime and observable parts, were all conjoined and met in him. Those are,

sharpness of wit, memory, judgement, and elocution. For the former three, his books do abundantly speak them; which, with what sufficiency he wrote, let the world judge; but with what celerity he wrote them, I can best testify. But for the fourth, his *elocution*, I will only set down what I heard Sir Walter Raleigh once speak of him by way of comparison (whose judgment may well be trusted): *That the Earl of Salisbury was an excellent speaker, but no good penman; that the Earl of Northampton (the Lord Henry Howard) was an excellent penman, but no good speaker; but that Sir Francis Bacon was eminent in both. ...*

His meals were refectations of the ear as well as the stomach: like the *Noctes Atticae* or *Convivia Deipno Sophistarum*, wherein a man might be refreshed in his mind and understanding no less than in his body. And I have known some of no mean parts that have professed to make use of their notebooks when they have risen from his table. In which conversations and otherwise, he was no dashing man, as some men are; but ever a countenancer and fosterer of another man's parts. Neither was he one that would appropriate the speech wholly to himself or delight to out-vie others, but leave a liberty to the co-assessors to take their turns. Wherein he would draw a man on, and allure him to speak upon such a subject as wherein he was peculiarly skilful and would delight to speak: and for himself he contemned no man's observations, but would light his torch at every man's candle. ...

I have been induced to think, that if there were a beam of knowledge derived from God upon any man in these modern times, it was upon him. For though he was a great reader of books, yet he had not his knowledge from books, but from some grounds and notions from within himself; which, notwithstanding, he vented with great caution and circumspection. ...

This lord was religious: for though the world be apt to suspect and prejudge great wits and politics to have somewhat of the atheist, yet he was conversant with God, as appeareth by several passages throughout the whole current of his writings. Otherwise he should have crossed his own principles, which were, *That a little philosophy maketh men apt to forget God, as attributing too much to second causes; but depth of philosophy bringeth a man back to God again.* Now I am sure there is no man that will deny him, or account otherwise of him, but to have been a deep philosopher. And not only so; but he was able to render a reason of the hope which was in him, which that writing of his of the *Confession of the Faith* doth abundantly testify. He repaired frequently, when his health would permit him, to the service of the Church, to hear sermons, to the administration of the sacrament of the blessed body and blood of Christ, and died in the true Faith, established in the Church of England.

This is most true: he was free from malice, which (as he said himself) *he never bred nor fed.* He was no revenger of injuries; which if he had minded, he had both opportunity and place high enough to have done it. He was no heaver of men out of their places, as delighting in their ruin and undoing. He was no defamer of any man to his prince.

Rawley's Life of Bacon²

Ben Jonson

Ben Jonson (1572-1637), a professional poet, playwright and literary critic, was one of Francis Bacon's "good pens". Also known as Johnson, Bacon referred to him as "my man John". We do not know when Jonson first joined Bacon's team, but Jonson's play, *Every man out of his Humor*, first produced in 1599, indicates that by then he was fully "in the know". When Bacon was Lord Chancellor, Jonson was living and working for Bacon at Gorhambury. In the list of Bacon's household in 1618 "Mr Johnson" is mentioned as Chief Gentleman Usher, and an account of Bacon's receipts and payments from 24th June to 29th September 1618 mentions that Bacon was paying for the education of Jonson's son: "July 27th to Mr. Johnson by your Lordship's order for his son and his son's tutor at Eton 480 pounds." Gorhambury was Bacon's country residence, to which he retired during vacations; otherwise his main residence was York House in London. As such a key person in Bacon's household, the natural presumption is that Jonson also lived and worked in that same position at York House. In *Baconiana* (1679) the editor, Thomas Tenison, referring to Bacon's books, writes that: "His lordship wrote them in the English tongue and enlarged them as occasion served. The Latin translation of them was a work performed by divers hands: by those of Doctor Hackett (late Bishop of Lichfield), Mr. Benjamin Johnson (the learned and judicious Poet) and some others whose names I once heard from Dr. Rawley, but I cannot now recall them."³ In *The Great Assizes Holden in Parnassus* (1645), attributed to George Wither, wherein Francis Bacon is described as the "Chancellor of Parnassus", Jonson is referred to as "The Keeper of the Trophonian Denne", which is an appropriate symbolic description not only of Jonson's role as Chief Gentleman Usher to Bacon's household but also of the role he played in Bacon's Rosicrucian group and as the Doorkeeper or Usher to introduce the Shakespeare Folio.

Yet there happened in my time one noble speaker [Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam] who was full of gravity in his speaking; his language, where he could spare or pass by a jest, was nobly censorious. No man ever spake more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered. No member of his speech but consisted of his own graces. His hearers could not cough or look aside from him without loss. He commanded where he spoke, and had his judges angry or pleased at his devotion. No man had their affections more in his power. The fear of every man that heard him was lest he should make an end.

Ben Jonson, 'Dominus Verulamius,' *Timber, or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter* (1641)

[Bacon] is he who hath filled up all numbers, and performed that in our tongue which may be compared or preferred either to insolent Greece, or haughty Rome. In short, within his view, and about his times, were all the wits born that could honour a language, or help study. Now things daily fall: wits grow downward, and Eloquence grows backward. So that he may be named and stand as the mark and acme of our language.

Ben Jonson, 'Scriptorum catalogus,' *Timber, or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter* (1641)

My conceit of his Person [Francis Bacon, Lord St Alban] was never increased toward him by his place or honours. But I have and do reverence him for the

greatness that was only proper to himself, in that he seemed to me ever, by his work, one of the greatest men and most worthy of admiration that had been in many ages. In his adversity I ever prayed that God would give him strength: for greatness he could not want. Neither could I condole in a word or syllable for him, as knowing no accident could do harm to virtue, but rather help to make it manifest.

Ben Jonson, 'Lord St Alban,' *Timber, or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter* (1641)

Jean de la Jessée

In a sonnet written to Francis Bacon by the French poet Jean de la Jessée, private secretary to the Duc d'Anjou, Jessée praises Francis Bacon as a supreme poet, naming Pallas Athena, the Tenth Muse, chief of the other Nine Muses, as Bacon's Muse:-

À MONSIEUR FRANCOIS BACON - SONNET
 Ce qu' inspire du Ciel, et plein d'affection
 Je comble si souvent ma bouche, et ma poitrine
 Du sacré Nom fameux de ta Royne divine
 Ses valeurs en son cause et sa perfection.
 Si ce siecle de fer si mainte Nation
 Ingratte à ses honneurs, n'avait l'âme Æmantine
 Ravis de ce beau Nom, Qu'aus Graces je destine
 Avec eus nous l'aurions en admuration.
 Donc – Bacon – s'il advient que ma Muse l'on vante
 Ce n'est pas qu'elle soit ou diserte, ou scavante:
 Bien que vostre Pallas me rende mieus instruit
 C'est pource que mon Lut chant sa gloire sainte
 Ou qu'en ces vers nayfz son Image est empreinte
 Ou que ta vertu claire en mon ombre reluit.

LA JESSEE.⁴

The last six lines can be translated as follows:-

Therefore, Bacon, if it chances that my Muse praises someone,
 It is not because she is eloquent or learned,
 Although your Pallas has taught me to make better;
 It is because my Lute sings her saintly glory
 Or in these naive lines his Image is imprinted
 Or that thy bright virtue shines in my shade.

Manes Verulamiani

Francis Bacon is recorded as having died on Easter Day, 9th April 1626, aged sixty-five. Within a few weeks of his death a remarkable set of thirty-two Latin elegies, described as "tokens of love and memorials of sorrow," was published in commemoration of him. The elegies were gathered and an 'Introduction' written for them by Bacon's private chaplain, Dr. William Rawley, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, who subsequently became chaplain to Charles I and Charles II. The collection was published by John Haviland under the title of *Memoriae Honoratissimi Domini Francisci, Baronis de Verulamio, Vice-comitis Sancti*

Albani Sacrum (1626),⁵ but is more commonly known as the *Manes Verulamiani*. The elegies, selected by Rawley from a much larger number of tributes to Bacon, were largely written by scholars and Fellows of the Universities, together with members of the Inns of Court. These writers include:-

- John Williams, Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, chaplain to James I and Bishop of Lincoln, who became Lord Keeper of the Great Seal after Francis Bacon and later Archbishop of York;
- Henry Ferne, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who became Bishop of Chester in 1661;
- Samuel Collins, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge;
- William Boswell, Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, diplomat, scholar, man-of-letters and, for a time, secretary to Sir Dudley Carleton, the Ambassador at the Hague;
- George Herbert, poet and musician, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge;
- Robert Ashley, Middle Temple barrister and writer;
- Thomas Randolph, poet and dramatist, one of Ben Jonson's adopted 'sons';
- John Haviland, the finest printer of the time.

Rawley states in his 'Introduction' that, as editor, he felt it necessary to withhold the best poems from publication. Nevertheless, even though these elegies are often abstruse and difficult to translate into English or follow their allusions, they provide evidence that a fair number of contemporaneous scholars, lawyers, poets, writers and at least one printer knew Bacon to be a supreme poet as well as an extraordinary philosopher. A substantial number of the elegies celebrate the outstanding poetic genius of Bacon and some of them identify him as the author Shakespeare if we look closely at them. The following are extracts from the elegies, freely translated from the original Latin mainly by W.C.G. Gundry,⁶ with some added comments:-

As Eurydice wandering through the shades of Dis longed to caress Orpheus, so did Philosophy, entangled in the subtleties of Schoolmen, seek Bacon as a deliverer... He renewed her, walking humbly in the socks of Comedy. After that, more elaborately he rises on the loftier buskin of Tragedy...

R.P., Elegy 4, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

This is a clear statement that Bacon both rescued and renewed philosophy by means of stage plays. For such an achievement, which requires changing and improving people's thinking, a great many profound yet popular plays would be needed. The question as to why there are no plays existing or known of which bear his Bacon name is answered by the attested fact that he was a concealed poet.

Let expediency consider the better part of counsel, but add, a concealed poet from Ithaca, and you hold all.

E.F., King's College, Elegy 17, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

Part of thy works lie truly buried...

Robert Ashley, Middle Temple, Elegy 15, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

Muses pour forth your perennial waters in lamentations, and let Apollo shed tears... The very nerve of genius, the marrow of persuasion, the golden stream of eloquence, the precious gem of concealed literature, the noble Bacon has fallen by the fates (ah! the relentless warp of the three sisters!). O how am I in verse like mine to commemorate you, sublime Bacon! and those glorious memorials of all the ages composed by your genius and by Minerva.

R. C., Trinity College, Elegy 9, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

And you, who were able to immortalise the Muses, could you die yourself, O Bacon?

R.L., Elegy 29, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

You have filled the world with your writings, and the ages with your fame.

C.D., King's College, Elegy 24, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

The Columbus of Apollo with his lordly crew passes beyond the Pillars of Hercules in order to bestow a new world and new arts...

R.P., Elegy 4, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

Columbus is famed for the discovery of America. To do this he had to sail beyond the Pillars of Hercules (Straits of Gibraltar). The Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, who was King of Spain in the years following the discovery of the Americas, depicted the Pillars on his impresa and the coat of arms of Spain, together with the motto "Plus Ultra" (Latin for "More Beyond"). Previous to this the Pillars had been associated with the warning "Non plus ultra", meaning "nothing more beyond"—the reason for this being that the continent across the Atlantic was thought to be Atlantis, which had sunk beneath the ocean (Plato had described the lost land as being beyond the Pillars of Hercules). Bacon adopted this theme of "Plus Ultra" to illustrate the purpose, method and goal of his Great Instauration, which is intended to culminate in a "New Atlantis" and golden age on Earth. For this reason he was likened to Columbus—not the historical Columbus, but the Columbus of Apollo.

Other elegies in the *Manes Verulamiani* go further and liken Bacon to Apollo, the brilliant Light-Bearer (Phoebus) and Day-Star of the Muses:-

Finally he [Bacon] dies full of an unusually rich vein of arts, and dying demonstrates how extensive is art, how contracted is life, how everlasting fame; he who was in our sphere the brilliant Light-Bearer, and trod great paths of glory, passes, and fixed in his own orb shines refulgent.

Anon., Elegy 25, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

The Day-star of the Muses has set before his hour! Alas! Fallen is Bacon, thy darling, O Nature, and the world's—the special care and sorrow of the Clarian god [Apollo]; aye—passing strange—the special grief of Death. Why was not cruel Fate willing to allow herself liberty? Death would be willing to spare, but Fate refused. Melpomene, rebuking, would not endure this, and addressed the

dire goddess in these words: "Atropos, never before truly cruel; take the whole world, only give me back my Phoebus."

Anon., Elegy 18, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

Since Melpomene is the Greek goddess of tragic poetry, the inference of this elegy is that Bacon was the author of noble tragedies, as in fact stated by R.P. in Elegy 4. Atropos, on the other hand, is the eldest of the three Fates (Moirai), goddesses of fate and destiny. She was known as the "inflexible" or "inevitable" Fate. She holds the shears that cut the thread of life, thereby ending the mortal life of each individual.

The ardour of his noble heart could bear no longer that you, divine Minerva, should be despised. His god-like pen restored your wonted honour and as another Apollo dispelled the clouds that hid you. But he dispelled also the darkness which murky antiquity and blear-eyed old age of former times had brought about; and his super-human sagacity instituted new methods and tore away the labyrinthine windings, but gave us his own. Certainly it is clear that the crown of ancient sages had not such penetrating eyes. They were like Phoebus rising in the East, he like the same resplendent at noon..... They begot the infant muses, he the adult. They were parents of mortal muses, he produced goddesses..... Pallas too, now arrayed in a new robe, paces forth, as a snake shines when it has put off its old skin.

Thomas Randolph, Trinity College, Elegy 32, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

Minerva is the Roman name for Pallas Athena, the Tenth Muse (i.e. the Muse of all Muses) and "Spear-Shaker". She was equated with Philosophy. Randolph describes her as being restored to her wonted honour, revealed like a sun that can now be seen because the clouds that previously hid her have been dispersed. Moreover, she has been given a new 'robe'. All this has been accomplished by Francis Bacon, whom Randolph describes as another Apollo. Apollo is Athena's male counterpart. They were said to reside together on twin-peaked Mount Parnassus, overlighting and inspiring the Muses and the Delphic Oracle on the slopes below them.

In the tribute by John Williams, Francis Bacon is again likened to Apollo, the rarest glory (i.e. Phoebus)⁷ of the Muses and chief inspirer of a group of writers, poets and artists who are disciples of the Muses:-

Is it thus falls the rarest glory of the Aonian band? and do we decree to entrust seed to the Aonian fields? Break pens, tear up writings, if the dire goddesses may justly act so. Alas! what a tongue is mute! what eloquence ceases! Whither have departed the nectar and ambrosia of your genius? How is it happened to us, the disciples of the Muses, that Apollo, the leader of our choir, should die?

John Williams, Elegy 12, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

'Aonian band' refers to the Muses. The word is derived from Aonides, a name for the Muses, whose principal dwelling place, according to the Greeks, was on Mount Helicon in the land of Aones (Boeotia).

The chief of the nine Muses is Pallas Athena, the Tenth Muse. Athena is Shakespeare's Muse. In the tributes acclaiming Francis Bacon as Apollo, the goddess is perceived as his partner or female counterpart. In the following tributes Bacon is described as Athena:-

If none but the worthy should mourn your death, O Bacon! none, trust me, none will there be. Lament now sincerely, O Clío! and sisters of Clío! Ah, the tenth Muse and glory of the choir has perished. Ah, never before has Apollo himself been truly unhappy!

Anon., *Elegy 20, Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

Bacon... a muse more rare than the nine Muses.

Samuel Collins, *Elegy 2, Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

This reference is taken further by Thomas Randolph, who links Bacon not only with Apollo and Pallas Athena, the Spearshakers, but also with Quirinus, the Spearman:-

When he [Bacon] perceived that the arts were held by no roots, and like seed scattered on the surface of the soil were withering away, he taught the Pegasean arts to grow, as grew the spear of Quirinus swiftly into a laurel tree. Therefore, since he has taught the Heliconian goddesses to flourish, no lapse of ages shall dim his glory.

Thomas Randolph, *Elegy 32, Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

"The Pegasean arts" are the arts of the Muses. Pegasus, the white winged horse, opened up the Hippocrene spring on Mount Helicon, the waters of which are sacred to the Muses and provide poetic inspiration when imbibed. The "Heliconian goddesses" are the nine Muses. The Muses preside over poetry, history, music, dance, astronomy, and all the liberal arts. Their chief, though, is Pallas Athena, the Tenth Muse or Muse of Muses.

"The spear of Quirinus" refers to the spear thrown by Romulus Quirinus into the ground on the Quirinal hill, where it took root and became a laurel tree, thereby founding Rome. Romulus was the son of Mars, whose surname was Quirinus. Quirinus is derived from the Sabine word 'quiris', meaning 'lance/spear'. Quirinus thus means 'spearman,' or 'spear-shaker'.

Apollo, the divine spear-shaker whose spears are rays of light, is usually represented wearing a laurel wreath on his head. Athena, the Tenth Muse, is said to bestow these golden laurel crowns on her heroes. The greatest of the poets were crowned with these golden laurel wreaths. Such a laurel crown is depicted surrounding the inscription above Bacon's head in the frontispiece to the 1640 edition of Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, which inscription describes Bacon as "Tertius a Platone philosophiae princeps" ("Prince of Philosophers, third after Plato") The original Greek philosopher known as Plato was Aristocles, son of Ariston. 'Plato' was his pseudonym, meaning 'son of Lato'—i.e. Apollo, whose mother was the goddess Lato. ('Plato' is derived from Greek *ap-Lato*, 'son of Lato'.) To refer to Bacon as Plato is to call him an Apollo, which elegies 12, 18 and 25 do.

Verulam, reigning in the citadel of the gods, shines with a golden crown; and, enthroned above the bounds of the sky, he loves with face towards Earth to view the stars; who grudged the immortals that wisdom should be confined to the

abode of the blessed, undertaking to bring it back and restore it to mortals by a new cult. Than whom no inhabitant of Earth was master of greater intellectual gifts; nor does any survivor so skilfully unite Themis and Pallas. While he flourished the sacred choir of the Muses, influenced by these arts, poured forth all their eloquence in his praise...

William Boswell, Elogy 5, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

'Verulam' has an analogous meaning to 'Spear-shaker' or 'Shake-speare' (*i.e.* *Veru*, Latin for 'javelin/spear', + *lam*, English for 'strike/beat/thrash'). The bringing of wisdom (*i.e.* fire, or light) back to the earth is a Promethean task. It is noteworthy that the first title given to Bacon was Baron Verulam of Verulam. Normally it would be just Baron of Verulam when the name 'Verulam' refers to the place, in this case Verulamium, the name of the Roman town whose ruins lie partly in the grounds of Gorhambury estate, Bacon's family home near St Albans. This means that the attribution of the first 'Verulam' in Bacon's title is given as a description of the man, Francis Bacon: thus the title 'Verulam of Verulam' neatly conveys the meaning of 'Shakespeare of Verulamium'.

Both Apollo, with whom Bacon is equated, and Pallas Athena, with whom Bacon is associated, were Spear-shakers, shaking or striking their spears of light at the dragons of dark ignorance. In the goddess' case, it is the meaning of her name, *Pallas Athena*. In Boswell's elogy, he states that Bacon has united Athena (Pallas) with Themis.

Themis is the Goddess of Justice and the first introducer of oracles. (She inspired, for instance, the Delphic oracle.) She makes known the laws of Zeus to men. She was the first to whom the inhabitants of the Earth raised temples. She is representative of Cosmic Law, Order and Harmony, and is attended by the Seasons. She was considered to be the first of the divinities who established the laws of religion, sacrifices, divination, and whatever tends to the harmony and peace of society. She frequently appears on coins holding a cornucopia and a pair of scales. She is also portrayed as holding a sword in her right hand and scales in her left.

To unite Themis (Justice, Law and Order) with Pallas Athena (Philosophy, Poetry and the Arts) is a Herculean task, but one accomplished by Bacon, as also pointed out so well by the poets John Davies of Hereford and Thomas Campion in their tributes to Bacon.

To the Royall Ingenious and All-learned Knight, Sir Francis Bacon.

Thy bounty and the beauty of thy witt
 Compris'd in lists of Law and learned Arts,
 Each making thee for great Imployment fitt,
 Which now thou hast (though short of thy deserts,)
 Compells my pen to let fall shining Inke
 And to bedew the Baies that deck thy Front,
 And to thy Health in Helicon to drinke,
 As to her Bellamour the Muse is wont,
 For thou dost her embosom; and dost use
 Her company for sport twixt grave affaires:
 So utter'st Law the livelyer through thy Muse.
 And for that all thy Notes are sweetest Aires;

My Muse thus notes thy worth in ev'ry line,
With ynke which thus she sugars; so, to shine.

John Davies of Hereford, *Epigrams to Worthy Persons* (c.1610)

John Davies of Hereford, poet, writing-master and an instructor of Prince Henry at the Court of King James I, not only identifies Bacon as a poet but, in a clever turn of phrase with double meaning, he refers to the bays (*i.e.* the poet's laurel wreath) as decking Bacon's "Front". *Deck* means 'cover' or 'adorn', and *front* can refer to 'face' as well as 'forehead'. Hence Davies appears to be giving a twofold meaning in his words: firstly, that bays adorn Bacon's forehead and, secondly, that they cover his face—the latter implying a concealed poet. Moreover, Davies vividly contrasts the two lives of Bacon, one as a lawyer dealing with grave affairs and the other as a poet who sports with his Muse. One life is public, the other secret; one is serious, the other fun. Bacon always contended that he did not much enjoy the practice of law, whereas he took great pleasure in his literary work and the "fountains of Parnassus", for which he felt he was born.⁸

To the Most High Chancellor of all England, FR. BA.

How great thou stand'st before us, whether the thorny volumes of the Law
Or the Academy, or the sweet Muses call thee, O Bacon!
How thy prudence rules over great affairs!
And thy whole tongue is moist with celestial nectar!
How well combinest thou merry wit with silent gravity!
How firmly thy love stands by those once admitted to it.

Thomas Campion, *Epigrammatum*. Lib II (1619). Translated from the Latin.⁹

In this epigram by Thomas Campion, a physician and composer well known for his exquisite songs and lyrics, he pays tribute to Francis Bacon, when Bacon was the Lord Chancellor, acclaiming Bacon's love and friendship, and his combination of philosophy and law with the poetry and arts of the Muses. Notably Campion uses the Hermetic trilogy of the Shakespeare Monument in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, to describe Bacon: namely, the thorny volume of the law and silent gravity of the judge (Nestor), the Academy and steadfast love of the philosopher (Socrates), and the sweet Muses and merry wit of the poet (Virgil).

Certain of the elegies in the *Manes Verulamiani* likewise link Bacon directly to the Shakespeare inscription on the Shakespeare Monument as well as to the Shakespeare Folio's eulogies. For instance, the description of the author Shakespeare on the Shakespeare Monument as being like Nestor, King of Pylus, the great statesman and judge, and Virgil, surnamed Maro, the prince of poets, is specifically applied to Francis Bacon by his contemporaries. In addition, they acknowledge that Bacon was in his lifetime, like Socrates in his lifetime, the most renowned orator and celebrated philosopher of his country, famous for his use of the inductive process.

You have written, O Bacon! the history of the life and death of us all.... Nay, give place, O Greeks! give place, Maro, first in Latin story. Supreme both in eloquence and writing, under every head renowned....

Anon., Elegy 16, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

For if venerable Virtue and the wreaths of Wisdom make an Ancient, you [Bacon] were older than Nestor.

Gawen Nash, Pembroke Hall, Elegy 27, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

The Shakespeare Monument refers to Shakespeare being held in Olympus, the celestial home of the Greek gods and goddesses. Likewise, Francis Bacon is said to be a star shining in the rosy heavens of Olympus:-

Think you, foolish traveller, that the leader of the choir of the Muses and of Phoebus is interred in cold marble? Away, you are deceived. The Verulamium star now glitters in ruddy Olympus...

Anon., Elegy 23, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

This use of 'Olympus' rather than 'heaven' is not unusual, but the reference to 'traveller' is, especially in the elegy by Thomas Vincent:-

Some there are though dead live in marble, and trust all their duration to long lasting columns; others shine in bronze, or are beheld in yellow gold, and deceiving themselves think they deceive the fates. Another division of men surviving in a numerous offspring, like Niobe irreverent, despise the mighty gods; but your fame adheres not to sculptured columns, nor is read on the tomb, "Stay, traveller, your steps"...

Thomas Vincent, Elegy 7, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

"Stay, traveller, your steps" is almost exactly the same as the virtually unique command and question, "Stay Passenger, why goest thou by so fast?" inscribed on the Shakespeare Monument or "tomb" in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon. A passenger is a traveller in this 17th century context. The word refers to a wayfarer or traveller of a certain standing and substance rather than a vagabond, such as is used in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*: "Fellows, stand fast: I see a passenger" (1st Outlaw. IV, 1: 1-2).

In his dedicatory poem to the beloved author Shakespeare in the Shakespeare Folio, Ben Jonson refers to Shakespeare's plays as being Shakespeare's progeny, born of his mind. This is almost certainly an allusion to Minerva, who was born from the mind of Jupiter. Minerva is the Roman name for Pallas Athena, who leapt forth from the head of her father, Zeus (Jupiter), fully armed and shaking her spear of light at dark ignorance:-

... Looke how the father's face
Lives in his issue, even so, the race
Of Shakespeare's minde, and manners brightly shines
In his well torned, and true filed lines:
In each of which, he seemes to shake a Lance,
As brandish't at the eyes of Ignorance...

Ben Jonson, Eulogy, Shakespeare Folio, 1623.

Thomas Vincent's tribute to Francis Bacon uses the identical symbolism for Francis Bacon and his works, thereby directly associating his own tribute to Bacon with Ben Jonson's tribute to Shakespeare—and, by doing this, associating Bacon with Shakespeare:-

If any progeny recalls their sire, not of the body is it, but born, so to speak, of the brain, as Minerva's from Jove's...

Thomas Vincent, *Elegy 7, Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

Vincent continues his tribute to Bacon by stating a philosophy identical to that which underlies the Shakespeare sonnets, one which distinguishes between the higher and lower selves—the higher, better part surviving death whilst the lower, grosser part dissolves and returns to dust:-

...first your virtue provides you with an everlasting monument, your books another not soon to collapse, a third your nobility; let the fates now celebrate their triumphs, who have nothing yours, Francis, but your corpse. Your mind and good report the better parts survive; you have nothing of so little value as to ransom the vile body withal.

Thomas Vincent, *Elegy 7, Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

Oh how thy worth with manners may I singe,
When thou art all the better part of me?
What can mine own praise to mine own selfe bringe;
And what is't but mine owne when I praise thee.

Shakespeare Sonnet 39.

As Bacon writes elsewhere, the mind or genius is the higher self, the better part, and it is this that is to be praised, not the lower self and its body:-

My praise shall be dedicated to the mind itself. The mind is the man, and the knowledge is the mind. A man is but what he knoweth.

Francis Bacon, *Bacon's Works*, ii. 123.



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Endnotes

¹ Sir Tobie Matthew, Dedicatory Letter to the Duke of Genoa prefacing an Italian translation of Bacon's *Essays and Wisdom of Ancients* (1617), entitled *Saggi Morali del signore Francesco Bacono, Cavaglia Inglese*.

² *The Life of The Right Honourable Francis Bacon, Baron of Verulam, Viscount St. Alban*, by William Rawley, D.D. His Lordship's First and Last Chaplain and of Late His Majesties Chaplain in Ordinary. Prefaced to *Resuscitatio, Or, Bringing into Publick Light Severall Pieces of the Works, Civil, Historical, Philosophical, & Theological, hitherto sleeping, Of the Right Honourable Francis Bacon, Baron of Verulam, Viscount Saint Alban*, by William Rawley, Doctor in Divinity, His Lordship's First, and Last, Chapleine. Afterwards, Chapleine to His late Majesty. London, Printed by Sarah Griffin, for William Lee, and are to be sold at his Shop in Fleetstreet, at the sign of the Turks-head, near the Mitre Tavern, 1657.

³ *Baconiana* (1679), edited by Thomas Tenison, Introduction, p 60.

⁴ Handwritten sonnet placed amongst Anthony Bacon's correspondence and preserved in the Lambeth Archiepiscopal Library.

⁵ *Memoriæ Honoratissimi Domini Francisci, Baronis de Verulamio, Vice-Comitis Sancti Albani Sacrum. Londini In Officina Johannis Haviland, 1626.* (Copies in the British Museum, Trinity College Library, Cambridge, and the Libraries of Jesus College and All Soul's, Oxford.) Selections from the collection were reprinted in the 1640 and 1674 editions of *The Advancement of Learning*. A limited facsimile edition was published privately in 1950, edited by W. G. C. Gundry of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law.

⁶ *Manes Verulamiani*, edited by W.G.C. Gundry (F.B.S.,1950).

⁷ *Phoebus*, meaning 'glory', was a descriptive title of Apollo.

⁸ Davies included this eulogic epigram addressed to Bacon in his *Scourge of Folly* (1610) together with a satirical epigram addressed to "Mr. Will Shake-speare", referring to "Shake-speare" as "our English Terence"—Terence being a Roman slave who was famous for the comedies he was supposed to have written but in fact was alleged to have been a mask for the writings of great men such as the Roman senators Scipio the younger and Laelius, who wished to keep their authorship concealed.

⁹ *Tho. Campiani Epigrammatum. Lib II.*(1619):

Ad Ampliss. Totius Angliæ Cancellarium.

FR. BA.

Quantus ades, seu te spinosa Volumina juris

Seu schola, seu dolcis Musa (Bacone) vocat!

Quam super ingenti tua re Prudentia regnat!

Et tota æthereo nectare lingua madens!

Quam bene cum tacita nectis gravitate lepores!

Quam semel admissis stat tuus almus amor.