

Shakespearean Authorship Trust



Sir Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam, Viscount St Alban

Dates: 1561 – 1626

Background:

- Educated privately and then at Cambridge University.
- Entered Gray's Inn in 1579 as a student-lawyer, becoming a barrister, Bencher and Treasurer of Gray's Inn.
- Spent three years with the French Court (1576-9), followed later by a year touring France, Italy and Spain, and possibly Germany and Denmark (1581-2), and made at least one visit to Scotland (1584).
- Leader of a literary society and scrivenery that included poets such as Ben Jonson, John Lyly, John Florio, John Davies of Hereford, Sir John Davies and George Herbert.
- Member of the Elizabethan intelligence network.
- Involved with writing and producing masques for the Inns of Court.
- Wrote plays for the stage and speeches for court pageants.
- Wrote in numerous different styles and successfully imitated other people's styles.

Famous for:

- Extraordinary public service as an MP and a legal adviser to the Crown, and later in life as a privy counsellor, Solicitor General, Attorney General and ultimately Lord Keeper of the Great Seal and Lord Chancellor.
- A renowned philosopher, prolific writer, dedicated to developing the arts and sciences, and whose passion was for the poetic 'waters of Parnassus'.
- Celebrated by Ben Jonson as the 'mark and acme' of the English language, who had 'filled up all numbers' and was 'one of the greatest men, and most worthy of admiration, that had been in many ages'.

The Case:

- Bacon's life experience, attitudes, interests, philosophy, wit, vocabulary and learning matches that to be found in the Shakespeare works.
- Bacon relished poetry and the theatre as a branch of learning, a source of delight and a means of educating people to virtue.
- Bacon was described by friends as a 'concealed poet' and 'the precious gem of concealed literature'.
- Essex once wrote to the Queen complaining that Francis Bacon and his brother Anthony 'print me and make me speak to the world, and shortly they will play me in what form they list upon the stage'.
- Bacon referred to by his contemporaries as 'Apollo' and 'Leader of the Muses', 'the golden stream of eloquence' who renovated Philosophy 'in the socks of Comedy' and 'the buskin of Tragedy'.
- Bacon likened to Pallas Athena, the 'Spear-shaker'.
- Bacon's life not only spans the whole Shakespeare period but fits with the choice and production of the Shakespeare plays.
- Several contemporary poets pointed clearly to Bacon as the author of the Shakespeare works.
- There are Bacon signatures hidden in the printed Shakespeare works.
- Bacon even considered publishing his philosophical works under a pseudonym.
- Bacon was a Christian kabbalist who believed in the kabbalistic maxim that some things are to be revealed whilst others are to be concealed. The underlying structure of most of the Shakespeare plays is kabbalistic.