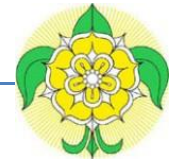


Sir Francis Bacon, the Third Plato



Sir Francis Bacon's meaningful portrayal as the Third Plato, philosopher and poet, Apollo and Shakespeare.

Author: Peter Dawkins

As a philosopher Francis Bacon was likened to Plato in greatness. This analogy, made clear on the frontispiece to Bacon's remarkable book, the 1640 English edition of *The Advancement and Proficiency of Learning*, is of great significance. In an oval plaque surrounded with a poet's wreath of bays which hovers above his head, Bacon is proclaimed as "Tertius a Platone Philosophiae Princeps", which translates as "The Foremost of Philosophers, third (in succession) after Plato".



Figure 1: Illustration from frontispiece, *Of the Advancement and Proficiency of Learning* (1640), an English translation of Francis Bacon's Latin *De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum* (1623).

Plato was the famous pupil of Socrates and, like Socrates, an initiate of the Pythagorean and Orphic tradition. It was due to Plato that the thoughts and words of Socrates were recorded and made known. Plato founded the first Academy, in 387 BC, in the Grove of Academus. The main philosophical thrust of the European Renaissance, which underlay its Humanism, was derived primarily from Plato. It developed first into medieval Christian Platonism and then into the full Neoplatonism of the Renaissance.

Renaissance Neoplatonism was born as a result of the works of Plato and the classical Neoplatonists, recorded in Greek manuscripts, being brought to Florence from Byzantium after the fall of Constantinople. With these texts was the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the Hermetic wisdom supposedly recorded by Hermes Trismegistus, the Egyptian sage, or series of sages, who lived in the remotest antiquity and who has had various appearances or incarnations ever since.¹ The founders of Renaissance Neoplatonism were Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, both members of the brilliant circle of scholars, writers and artists associated with the Medici court in Florence in the 15th century, under the patronage of the great Cosimo de' Medici, who ordered the manuscripts to be brought to him at Florence.

Marsilio Ficino (1433-99), a scholar, physician and priest, was commissioned by Cosimo to translate into Latin the Hermetic writings and the dialogues of Plato, together with the Neoplatonic writings of Porphyry, Proclus, Pseudo-Dionysus the Areopagite and Plotinus. The translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* was ready in 1464 and published in 1471 under the title of *Pimander*,² and the translations of Plato's dialogues, completed c.1468, were published as the *Platonic Theology* in 1474.

Ficino's understanding, as that of others including St Augustine, was that a divine theology or wisdom tradition, based on love, began simultaneously with Zoroaster among the Persians and with Hermes Trismegistus (i.e. Thoth) among the Egyptians,³ and that this wisdom tradition led in an unbroken chain to Plato via Orpheus and Pythagoras. It is this wisdom which is reputed to underlie the Hebrew, Orphic and Christian teachings, all of which developed from the blended Hermetic and Magian origin.

Demonstrating that this wisdom tradition was associated with Christianity, with links via Moses and the Zoroastrian Magi, Ficino was able to reconcile Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy with Christian theology. He regarded both philosophy and religion as being manifestations of a spiritual life, each needing the other in order to attain the *summum bonum* or greatest good. According to the Neoplatonic philosophy which he founded, based upon the Hermetic wisdom, love is the sustaining principle of the universe, and the attainment of the highest good is dependant not upon the Church but upon an impulse universal to man. The soul is not only immortal, but all souls by an inner urge naturally seek truth and goodness (i.e. God). Ficino was interested in the humanism of his day and known for his *magia naturalis* (natural magic).

Ficino's small country house near the Medici villa at Careggi, outside Florence, which he had received from Cosimo, became the city's foremost philosophical centre, and from there his influence spread throughout Europe. Ficino called his villa 'the Academy' in memory of Plato, and it provided a sense of spiritual community as well as a forum for the discussion of religious and philosophical subjects. He and his friends celebrated Plato's birthday with a solemn banquet. He became known as "the new Plato".

Ficino was immeasurably helped in the development of Neoplatonism by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94). Pico joined Ficino's circle in 1484 and introduced Kabbalah into Ficino's Neoplatonism, being the founder or first great exponent of Christian Cabala. In this Pico was following in the footsteps of the poet-philosopher Ramon Lull, who in the 13th century, in Spain, brought together Jewish Kabbalah, Islamic mysticism and Christian revelation into a single method, which had an enormous influence on succeeding generations. As a result of Pico's and Ficino's partnership, Neoplatonism became a universal philosophy, which blended Hebrew Kabbalah with the Hermetic, Neoplatonic and Christian teachings, making a synthesis of them all. As a result, the spiritual, magical and scientific core of Renaissance Neoplatonism was born.

Ficino was almost certainly the second Plato about whom the Baconian plaque makes an inference, being the primary founder of Renaissance Neoplatonism and the second Platonic Academy. Francis Bacon was the next in line of these great initiates—the third Plato—who likewise laid the foundations for the next leap in human consciousness and development, building upon the inheritance left by Ficino (added to by Pico and others), who himself built upon Plato's work. The dual means to achieving the goal of truth and goodness, which means Ficino called religion and philosophy, Bacon renamed divinity and philosophy, with divine love being recognised as the summary law and essential being of the universe.

What is not so commonly known is that Plato, like Pythagoras and Socrates before him, was an initiate of the Mysteries. The Greeks had three institutions and levels of culture: the first being the state religion which promulgated a polytheistic theology; the second being the philosophical schools, each under the leadership of a renowned and venerated teacher; and the third being the Mysteries. The Mysteries made use of the state religion and the philosophical schools but went much further, seeking to release the student from purely philosophical or academic speculations by means of powerful and meaningful drama in which the ancient wisdom was shown in action, in life situations. The Mysteries had the power not only to produce perceptive visions of truth but also to stimulate a continuing revelation of and communication with heavenly realms of existence, including the very Source of life. Plato partook in all of these, his Academy being his own philosophical school through which he sought to correct the abuses, corruptions, lack of knowledge and misconceptions in both religion and politics. Like all initiates, about the Mysteries he was not allowed to speak openly, although he gives hints in his *Phaedrus*: -

But it will then be lawful to survey the most splendid beauty, when we shall obtain, together with that blessed choir, this happy vision and contemplation. And we indeed shall enjoy this blessed spectacle together with Jupiter, but others in conjunction with some other god; at the same time being initiated in those mysteries which it is lawful to call the most blessed of all mysteries. And these divine orgies will be celebrated by as many of us as shall remain in futurity; each of us at the same time possessing the proper integrity of his nature, and being freed from the molestations of evil. Likewise, in consequence of being initiated and becoming spectators of mysteries, we shall be familiar with entire, simple, quietly stable and blessed visions, resident in a pure light; and shall be ourselves pure and immaculate, and liberated from this surrounding vestment, which we denominate body, and to which we are now bound, like an oyster to its shell.⁴

Although known to history as a philosopher, Plato was a poet, as made clear by the English poet Shelley, who also links Bacon to Plato: -

Plato was essentially a Poet; the truth and splendour of his imagery, and the melody of his language, are the most intense that it is possible to conceive.....
Lord Bacon was a Poet.

The language of Plato is that of an immortal spirit, rather than a man; Lord Bacon is, perhaps, the only writer who, in these particulars can be compared to him.

Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*.

Shelley points out that “Poetry is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge... and that to which all science must be referred”; and that “a poet is the author to others of the highest wisdom, pleasure, virtue and glory”.

Plato lived exactly eighty-one years, which was thought to be highly significant—eighty-one⁵ being the perfect number according to the Magi of Chaldea. The Apollonian tribute inscribed on Plato’s sepulchre was a forerunner of those penned to Francis Bacon: -

From great Apollo Pæon sprung,
And Plato, too, we find:
The saviour of the body, one;
The other of the mind.⁶

Related to this meaningful analogy to Plato is the fact that Plato was an adopted name—a pseudonym. Plato’s real name 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 in effect to call him an Apollo, which the writers of the *Manes Verulamiani*⁷ elegies 12, 18, 25 and 32 directly do, referring to Bacon as “the brilliant Light-Bearer”, “Phoebus”, “the Day-Star of the Muses” and “Apollo, leader of our choir... the rarest glory of the Aonian band”, emphasising at the same time that Bacon was a poet.

He [Bacon] 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: -

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. This connection of Francis Bacon's philosophy to stage plays is also depicted clearly in the frontispiece to the 1645 Latin edition of Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, where Bacon can be seen directing with his left hand an actor in the buskins of tragedy, whilst with his right hand he points to his book of philosophy. Left-handedness denotes 'in the shadow' or 'secret', 'concealed'.



Figure 2: Frontispiece, 1645 version of Francis Bacon's *De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum* (originally published in 1623)

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)

But many hints are given as to which plays were written by Bacon, and still today they are considered one of the greatest works of literary and dramatic art, albeit the true authorship of them still remains mainly concealed by a 'mask'.

Thomas Randolph, in his tribute to Francis Bacon, reiterates R.P.'s account of Bacon rescuing Philosophy, but instead of the word 'Philosophy' he uses the name of the goddess with whom Philosophy as well as Poetry equates: -

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). Her name literally means "Spear-Shaker". She is equated with both Philosophy and Poetry, as well as with all the arts and sciences. 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 Delphic Oracle on the slopes below them.

John Williams, in his tribute to Francis Bacon, not only likens Bacon to Apollo, the rarest glory ('Phoebus')⁸ of the Aonian band (the Muses),⁹ but also tells us that he was the chief inspirer and leader (Apollo) of the writers, poets and artists who considered themselves 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)

That Bacon led a group of writers, poets, artists and amanuenses, who were also his pupils, is well documented, the poet Ben Jonson being one of them. Jonson revered Bacon and used the same unique description (a phrase borrowed from Seneca)¹⁰ of Bacon as he used for the author Shakespeare in the 1623 Folio of Shakespeare plays.¹¹

[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 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.

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

Not only was Francis Bacon given the title of Viscount St Alban, but also, prior to this, the title of Baron Verulam of Verulam. The double use of 'Verulam' is both interesting and a give-away, for normally the title would be just Baron of Verulam, with 'Verulam' referring 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 person, Francis Bacon. As such, the word 'Verulam' has an analogous meaning to 'Spear-shaker' or 'Shake-speare', for it is compounded of the Latin *Veru*, meaning 'javelin/spear', and the old English word *lam*, meaning 'thrash', 'beat', or 'strike'.

Both Apollo, with whom Bacon is equated, and Pallas Athena, with whom Bacon is not only associated but also to whom he is likened in some of the *Manes Verulamiani* tributes, are Spear-shakers, shaking or striking their spears of light (wisdom) at the dragons of ignorance and vice.

Besides uniting Philosophy and Poetry, William Boswell, in his tribute to Bacon, states that Bacon has united Pallas (Athena) with Themis, the goddess of Justice:-

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, Elegy 5, *Manes Verulamiani* (1626)

Themis is not only the goddess of Justice but also 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.

To unite Themis (Justice, Law and Order) with Pallas Athena (Philosophy, Poetry and the Arts) is a Herculean task, but one accomplished by Francis 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 also, in a clever turn of phrase with double meaning, 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.¹²

Thomas Campion, a physician and composer well known for his exquisite songs and lyrics, in his tribute to Francis Bacon when Bacon was the Lord Chancellor, acclaims not only Bacon's love and friendship but also his combination of philosophy and law with the poetry and arts of the Muses: -

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.¹³

Notably Campion describes Francis Bacon as a Hermes Trismegistus when he associates Bacon with the Law, the Academy and the Muses, and refers to Bacon as having silent gravity (i.e. of the judge), steadfast love (i.e. of the philosopher), and merry wit (i.e. of the poet).

This is analogous to the description of the author Shakespeare given on the first line of the inscription on the Shakespeare Monument in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, wherein the first line (in Latin) likens the author to Pylus in judgement, Socrates in genius, and Maro in art. "Pylus" is Nestor, king of Pylos, who was noted for his fair judgements and wise counsel, and acted as an adviser to other kings and princes. Socrates, the most celebrated philosopher of ancient Greece, was not only a lover of wisdom but also the father of moral philosophy and advocate of the inductive procedure. "Maro" refers to Virgil, the great Roman poet whose surname was Maro, who was both a highly learned scholar and an initiate of the Romano-Greek mysteries as practised at Cumae, Naples.

Both descriptions—that of Bacon and that of Shakespeare—are those of a Hermes Trismegistus ('Thrice-greatest Hermes'), whom Marsilio Ficino describes as being the greatest philosopher, greatest priest and greatest king, and Francis Bacon describes more explicitly as having the power and fortune of a king, the knowledge and illumination of a priest, and the learning and universality of a philosopher.¹⁴

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Endnotes

¹ According to Cicero, the 'fifth Mercury' (i.e. Hermes, or Thoth) founded Hermopolis, the Egyptian city of Un in the heart of Egypt (c. 3000 BC), taught the Egyptians the arts and sciences, set down the rules for kings and determined the rights of the people.

² *Pimander* was the title of the first treatise of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, but Ficino used it to cover all fourteen sections of the *Corpus Hermeticum* which he had at his disposal to translate, the 15th section being missing.

³ As with Hermes, Zoroaster is understood to have had a succession of incarnations. The Greek writers distinguish at least six Zoroasters: the first was a Chaldean, the second a Bactrian, the third a Persian, the fourth a Pamphylian, the fifth a Proconnesian, the sixth a Babylonian. The last of these, according to Lucius Apuleius, was a contemporary of Pythagoras who visited and studied with him when Pythagoras was carried a prisoner to Babylon by the armies of Cambyses. The fifth, Spitama Zarathustra (660-583 BC), was the most famous. (See *Twelve World Teachers*, by Manly P Hall.)

⁴ Manly P Hall, *The Adepts*, 'The Initiates of Greece and Rome', p 58 (1981).

⁵ *i.e.* $81 = 9 \times 9$; 9 being the number of completion, itself being 3×3 . 81 is also 3 to the power of 4 (3^4), 3 representing the Holy Trinity and 4 signifying the four great powers or elements that build the universe, and which form the foundations of the universe (*i.e.* the alchemical elements of earth, water, air, fire).

⁶ *The Platonist*, Vol I, No 3, April 1881. Quoted in Manly P Hall, *The Adepts*, 'The Initiates of Greece and Rome', p 60.

Paeon was the physician of the gods who healed their wounds when they were injured in battle. The name became used as an epithet for Apollo in the sense of a deliverer of human beings from the evils of life, such as pains, sorrows, calamities and evil-doing. Songs or hymns chanted to Apollo for the purpose of averting such evils became known as 'paeans'.

⁷ Within a few weeks of Francis Bacon's death on Easter Day, 9th April 1626, 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, Vicecomitis Sancti Albani Sacrum* (1626), 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.

⁸ *Phoebus*, meaning 'glory', was a descriptive title of Apollo.

⁹ 'Aonian band' refers to the Muses. The word is derived from Aonides, a name for the Muses, whose principal dwelling place was on Mount Helicon in the land of Aones (Boeotia).

¹⁰ Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Controversia*, Book I, *Preface*: '*Quidquid Romana facundia habet quod insolenti Graeciae aut opponat aut praeferat.*'

¹¹ Ben Jonson, 'To the memory of my beloved, The Author, Mr William Shakespeare', 1623 Shakespeare Folio:

And though thou hadst small Latine, and lesse Greeke,
From thence to honour thee, I would not seeke
For names, but call forth thund'ring Æschilus,
Euripides, and Sophocles to us,
Paccuius, Accius, him of Cordoua dead,
To life againe, to heare thy Buskin tread,
And shake a stage: or, when thy Sockes were on,
Leave thee alone, for the comparison
Of all, that insolent Greece, or haughtie Rome
sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.

The first line of this quotation is sometimes misread as meaning that Shakespeare knew very little Latin and Greek. However, such an interpretation is not only grammatically incorrect but also makes no sense in the context of everything else that Jonson is saying about Shakespeare. The words 'hadst' and 'would' form a conditional construction, so that the word 'though' has the meaning of 'even if'. (As an example of 'though' followed by the conditional 'would' or 'should', and therefore meaning 'even if', we have Hamlet speaking to the Ghost: 'I'll follow thee, *though* Hell itself *should* gape.' *Hamlet*, I.2.247) In other words, Ben Jonson is declaring that even if Shakespeare had small Latin and less Greek, he (Ben) would still honour him, calling forth the great Roman and Greek tragedians of the classical era to hear and applaud his tragedies—all of whom were learned in the

language, rhetoric, poetry, literature and knowledge of those times. It is a fine tribute and obviously intended to be read as such. As for Shakespeare's comedies, Ben can think of no one who even approaches Shakespeare—not the Greeks, the Romans, or anyone since.

¹² 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.

¹³ *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.

¹⁴ Francis Bacon, *Advancement and Proficiency of Learning*, Book I (1605).