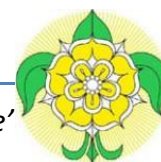


The French Academy



Francis Bacon's connection with and possible authorship of 'Academie Françoise' by Pierre de la Primaudaye.

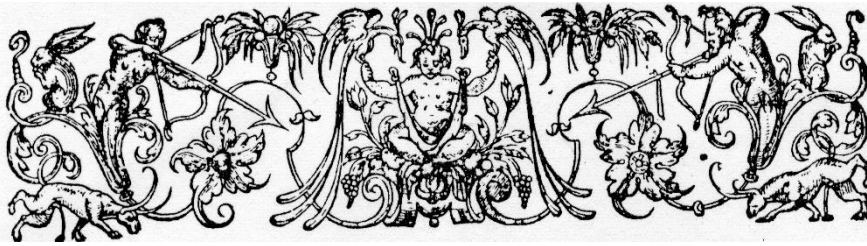
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In February 1578 there was printed and published in France the first edition of the first part of a remarkable book entitled *Academie Françoise par Pierre de la Primaudave Esceuyer, Seigneur dudict lieu et de la Barree, Gentilhomme ordinaire de la chambre du Roy*. The dedication, dated “February 1577” (1578 modern reckoning)¹ is addressed, “Au Tres-chrestien Roy de France et de Polongne Henry III de ce nom.” Its final form—an encyclopaedic book in four volumes—was printed in Geneva in 1608 and entitled *L'Académie Française*. Its four volumes concern (1) Moral Philosophy, (2) Human Philosophy, (3) Natural Philosophy, and (4) Christian Philosophy. The second volume is also called “natural history of the mind and body, whilst the third volume is sometimes referred to as a natural history of the universe. The whole book, which was added to in stages, is a compendium of moral, philosophical and scientific knowledge made up of observations, facts, experiments, theories, critique and opinions.

The contents of the book are presented theatrically as an academy or school of wisdom composed of a teacher and four gentlemen, sons of noblemen, who, after due preparation, meet in a walking place covered over with a goodly green arbour in order to converse and learn from each other, with their fathers in attendance to hear their discourses—the aim being to acquire wisdom and virtue. The book is assembled according to a cabalistic numerical order, with the series of discourses taking place over “three whole weeks, which made eighteen daies workes” (i.e. three times six days’ work plus one day of rest). Each day’s dialogue occupies a ‘century’ made up of 100 chapters.

The book, written in French, also appeared in English, Italian and German translations, and was widely read across Europe. Its first English translation (by “T.B.”, probably T. Bowes) was published in 1586 as *The French Academie*,² imprinted at London by Edmund Bollifant for G. Bishop and Ralph Newbery. This was a translation of Part 1. Other parts and editions followed in 1589 (one part), 1594 (two parts), 1602 (three parts) and 1614 (three parts), all quartos. The first complete edition in English—a folio containing the fourth part “never before published in English”—is dated 1618 and printed in London for Thomas Adams.

Over the dedication to this 1618 edition is printed the ‘Archer’ headpiece which came to be one of the renowned signatures of Rosicrucian works directly associated with Francis Bacon and his fraternity—an emblem which was first used (as far as I am aware) in a 1583 edition of the highly popular *The Whole Booke of Psalmes: Collected into english meeter by Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins & others, &c*, published in 1583 after Sternhold’s and Hopkins’ death by someone or some people who felt it important to “give this work to the world in a new and specially remarkable garb”.³ The headpiece also appears in Spencer’s *Faerie Queene* (1609), Bacon’s *Novum Organum* (1620), and the Shakespeare Folio (1623).



The 'Archer' headpiece is an emblem intimating the highest mysteries of initiation, relating peculiarly to the Orphic Mysteries of Divine Love and to the hidden knowledge concerning Sirius, the Dog Star, Falcon or Archer. In the emblem is incorporated the Baconian rebus of two rabbits or hares (known as conies in the 16th century) placed back to back to each other.⁴

In the first English edition of *The French Academie*, published in 1586, was printed a special ornamental capital 'S', carved from a woodblock and used for the first letter in the text of the dedication. This same woodblock was reused in a similar manner in the second English edition of 1589, and finally in an identical way (i.e. as the first letter in the text of dedication) in the 1625 edition of Francis Bacon's *Essays*, printed in London by John Haviland, which was Francis' last publication (with the exception of a small pamphlet containing his versification of certain Psalms) issued during his lifetime.



As William Smedley discovered, the block was also used on page 626 of the 1594 quarto edition of William Camden's *Britannia*, published in London by George Bishop, who was the publisher of the 1586, 1589 and 1594 editions of *The French Academie*. At the foot of the imprint of the block there is a marginal note commencing "R. Bacons." Francis Bacon is known to have assisted Camden in the preparation of this work, his handwriting appearing on the manuscript.⁵

The French Academie of 1618 is a thick folio volume, with 1,038 pages of text. As Smedley noted in his *Mystery of Francis Bacon*:-

"It may be termed the first encyclopaedia which appeared in any language, and is perhaps one of the most remarkable productions of the Elizabethan era. Little is known of Pierre de la Primaudaye. The particulars for his biography in the *Biographic Nationale* seem to have been taken from references made to the author in the *French Academie* itself. In the French Edition, 1580, there is a portrait of a man and under it the words "Anag. de L'auth. Par la priere Dieu m'ayde."⁶

The book is a record by a youth who had by "good hap" been a visitor at the Court of Henri III when the Court was at Blois for the meeting of the Estates-General (November 1576 – February 1577). It had been a time of great festivities and cultural activity, and a feast of knowledge and artistry, and the author desired to thank Henri III for this privileged time by offering to his Majesty another "dish of divers fruits, which I gathered in a Platonicall garden or orchard, otherwise called an ACADEMIE, where I was not long since with certain young Gentlemen of Anjou my companions, discoursing together of the institution in good manners, and of the means how all estates and conditions may live well and happily."

The author describes how the Academy came about, founded by “an ancient wise gentleman of great calling” who had spent the greater part of his years in the service of two kings and of his country, France. This wise gentleman retired to his house and set up an academy to teach the youth of his day good manners, virtuous, honest living and philosophy, to help keep them from the “over great license and excessive liberty granted to them in Universities.” The wise old gentleman admitted four young gentlemen, sons of distinguished noblemen of Anjou, and appointed a tutor of great learning to instruct them.

After six or seven years the fathers of the four youths decided to pay a special visit to the Academy to see the results of their children’s privileged education. Their visit was a happy one and they managed to spend several days there with their sons, hearing their discourses, but a fresh outbreak of civil war (i.e. in August 1572, started by the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew’s Day) interrupted their happy assembly, and the noble youths were called to the service of their king.

When a new peace was eventually concluded (i.e. The Edict of Beaulieu, signed on 6 May 1576), the four young noblemen “laboured forthwith to meet together” again and to arrange a fresh visit of their fathers. This duly took place and lasted for a period of “three whole weeks”. During this time the author was “by good hap” included as one of the company when they began their discourses. This “good hap” was the result of one of the four principal students quitting the academy without any explanation and leaving his father disappointed, but thereby allowing the author to take his place. The author then so greatly wondered at the discourses that he thought them worthy to be published abroad; but he first published them as an ‘offering’ for Henri III, whom he honours with the title of ‘Salomon’ in the Dedication.

After the dedication of the book to the French king, the author continues with ‘The Author to the Reader’, which is an essay on Philosophy, the thoughts and sentences of which are familiar to us in Francis Bacon’s *Essays* and his other works. Then follow the several chapters, each beginning with the word ‘Of’ (e.g. ‘Of Death’, ‘Of Nature and Education’, ‘Of Poverty’, ‘Of Riches’), which are paralleled both in title and thought by Francis Bacon’s *Essays*. An original of these titles and their subject matter may be found in Sir Nicholas Bacon’s *Sententiae* which were inscribed on the walls of his Long Gallery at Gorhambury.⁷ The same form was used in Michel de Montaigne’s *Essais* which were first published in France in 1580.

The author of *The French Academie* describes himself as a youth of small experience, yet the supposed author, Pierre de la Primaudaye (1546–1619), was already aged 30 in 1576. Moreover, the contents of the book bear evidence of a wide knowledge of classical authors and their works, an intimate acquaintance with the ancient philosophies, a profound interest in modern philosophy and moral virtue, and a store of general information that would have been impossible for any ordinary youth of that time and age to have possessed.

However, Francis Bacon, almost uniquely as a youth, did have such knowledge, acquaintance and interest, as well as the ability to speak and write fluently in various languages, ancient and modern. Even before he went to France in September 1576, in the entourage of the English ambassador to the French Court, Francis had received a highly privileged education by the best tutors of the day, both in London and at Gorhambury, the country home of his father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Queen Elizabeth’s Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. Gorhambury, moreover, had been specially built by Sir Nicholas to be not just a home but also a Platonic academy for the education and training of Francis Bacon and his brother Anthony, together

with two others, wards of the Lord Keeper. Paralleling the one described in *The French Academie*, the house had a covered walking place, in this instance cloisters with a long gallery above that were open to a garden and specifically designed for philosophical discussions.

Sir Nicholas Bacon began to build his new house at Gorhambury in 1563, the same year that Queen Elizabeth asked her old tutor and mentor, Roger Ascham, to write a book (*The Schoolmaster*) “concerning the right order of teaching” of young noblemen and, in particular, princes. In his dedication to the Queen, entitled ‘Divae Elizabethae’, written as a personal letter to the Queen (dated 30th October 1566) and intended as the preface to his book, Ascham makes it clear that in a private interview at Windsor Castle he was commanded personally by the Queen to write the book, and that the book was designed for the training of a royal prince. In the letter Ascham likens Elizabeth’s life to that of David, king of Israel, and shows that he is obviously intimately conversant with her secret life, singling out in particular the sin of David with respect to Uriah, whose death David brought about in order to marry Bathsheba. The book was completed in 1566 but was not published until 1571, seven years after his death, and his personal Dedication to Her Majesty was suppressed. Almost 200 years went by before the latter was eventually published by James Bennet in 1761, revealing that the work was composed not for any young aristocrat but for the training of a royal prince. A primary theory of Ascham’s was that young children were “sooner allured by love than driven by beatings to attain learning”. It was Ascham’s principles outlined in *The Schoolmaster*, coupled with Sir Nicholas Bacon’s own ideas for the “advancement of learning”, that were put into practice for the education of Francis, Anthony, and their two co-students.

The fifteen-year old Francis Bacon arrived in France in the middle of the French Wars of Religion when, on one hand, the functions of the French State were in disorder and, on the other hand, the French Renaissance was at its height. This was a time when, despite the corrupt level of French politics, the French court was abuzz with cultural activity and splendour, and the French philosophers, humanists, artists, musicians, scholars and poets were at their height of fame. They formed a royal academy patronised by the king of France, Henri III, which extended its field of interest far beyond the Platonic type of academy that had its renaissance in Italy under the patronage of the Médici. Henri III’s Palace Academy included philology, drama and music, and the artists and poets who composed the academy were largely responsible for the court entertainments, which included elaborate masques and pageants, and involved women as well as men.

In addition there was Bernard Palissy’s ‘Petite Academie’, as he called it. Starting in the Lent of 1575 (and continuing annually until 1584), Palissy gave a course of lectures together with discussions on Natural Science in the museum of his house in Paris, which various leading thinkers of the time attended. Palissy was a devoted proponent of inductive reasoning, founded upon experiment and observation. Many of Francis Bacon’s early opinions in philosophy and natural science show indebtedness to Palissy. Almost certainly Francis attended this ‘Little Academy’, which formed “the first society established in Paris for the pure advancement of science, by discussions among learned men... held in the first natural history museum ever thrown open in that capital.”⁸ Other attendees included the brothers Jacques and Pierre de la Primaudaye, the latter being the ascribed author of *L’Académie Françoise*. Everything in fact points to Palissy’s ‘Little Academy’ as being the ‘French Academy’ of *L’Academie Françoise*.

When the French Court moved from Paris to Blois for a meeting of the Estates-General in December 1576, the English embassy accompanied it. At Blois, where they stayed until March 1577, there was an opportunity for Francis Bacon to witness the famous Italian *commedia dell'arte*, whose direct influence can be found in many Shakespeare plays.⁹ The Shakespeare plays also show evidence of being influenced by both the words and philosophy of *The French Academie*, and the Shakespeare play, *Love's Labour's Lost*, in particular is modelled on the idea of a French academy in which four noblemen meet to study philosophical subjects. Originally written to be performed at the Gray's Inn Revels of 1594, *Love's Labour's Lost* was eventually published in quarto in 1598, being the first play to have the Shakespeare name ascribed to it (displayed under the title on the title page as "Newly corrected and augmented / By W. Shakespere.").

The principal organiser, producer and poet-playwright of the 1594 Gray's Inn Revels, *The Prince of Purpoole and the Order of the Knights of the Helmet*, was Francis Bacon. In these revels *The French Academie* is specifically mentioned as necessary to be studied by the 'Knights of the Helmet'. These knights were a theatrical as well as symbolic representation of Francis Bacon's fraternity in learning and illumination, being another name for the Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross (the Rosicrucian fraternity).¹⁰

It seems fairly clear that *The French Academie* was the necessary precursor of Francis Bacon's later and far more polished *Great Instauration*, which condensed the four main areas to be studied into three: Divine Philosophy, Human Philosophy and Natural Philosophy. One can see that the youthful Francis Bacon, whilst in France and in the midst of its philosophical, poetic and artistic milieu, wrote up his thoughts and experiences as a book whilst they were still fresh on his mind. Then he caused the first part of the book to be straightway printed and published in February 1578. He was obviously exhilarated and fired by the whole experience, just as he had been by the equally extraordinary time with the French Court at Blois. His young mind, prepared and trained by his upbringing at Sir Nicholas Bacon's Platonic academy at Gorhambury, had proved fully capable of responding to and enjoying this unique opportunity at the 'French Academy', as well as at Henri III's Palace Academy, and in true form he just had to write it down and let his and others' thoughts and knowledges pour out for the benefit of the world at large as an early stage of his philanthropic and philosophical scheme. Then in the years following he kept adding to his 'encyclopaedia'.

In the Dedication to the *French Academy*, the author, understood to be Francis Bacon, addresses Henri III thus¹¹:-

"The dinner of that prince of famous memorie, was a second table of Salomon, vnto which resorted from euerie nation such as were best learned, that they might reape profit and instruction. Yours, Sir, being compassed about with those, who in your presence daily discourse of, and heare discoursed many graue and goodly matters, seemeth to be a schoole erected to teach men that are borne to vertue. And for myselfe, hauing so good hap during the assemblie of your Estates at Blois, as to be made partaker of the fruit gathered thereof, it came in my mind to offer vnto your Maiestie a dish of diuers fruits, which I gathered in a Platonicall garden or orchard, otherwise called an ACADEMIE, where I was not long since with certaine yong Gentlemen of Aniou my companions, discoursing together of the institution in good maners, and of the means how all estates and conditions may

hue well and happily. And although a thousand thoughts came then into my mind to hinder my purpose, as the small authoritie, which youth may or ought to haue in counsell amongst ancient men: the greatness of the matter subiect, propounded to be handled by yeeres of so small experience: the forgetfulness of the best foundations of their discourses, which for want of a rich and happie memorie might be in me: my judgement not sound ynough, and my profession vnfit to set them downe in good order: briefly, the consideration of your naturall disposition and rare vertue, and of the learning which you receiue both by reading good authors and by your familiar communication with learned and great personages that are neere about your Maiestie (whereby I seemed to oppose the light of an obscure day, full of clouds and darkness, to the bright beames of a very cleere shining sonne, and to take in hand, as we say, to teach Minerua)²⁷". I say all these reasons being but of too great waight to make me change my opinion, yet calling to mind manie goodlie and graue sentences taken out of sundry Greeke and Latine Philosophers, as also the woorthie examples of the hues of ancient Sages and famous men, wherewith these discourses were enriched, which might in delighting your noble mind renew your memorie with those notable sayings in the praise of vertue and dispraise of vice, which you alwais loued to heare: and considering also that the bounty of Artaxerxes that great Monarke of the Persians was reuiued in you, who receiued with a cheerfull countenance a present of water of a poore laborer, when he had no need of it, thinking to be as great an act of magnanimitie to take in good part, and to receiue cheerfully small presents offered with a hartie and good affection, as to giue great things liberally, I ouercame whatsoeuer would haue staid me in mine enterprise."

Then, in the first chapter, Francis describes how the Academy came about:-

"An ancient wise gentleman of great calling having spent the greater part of his years in the service of two kings, and of his country, France, for many good causes had withdrawn himself to his house. He thought that to content his mind, which always delighted in honest and vertuous things, he could not bring greater profit to the Monarchic of France, than to lay open and preserve and keep youth from the corruption which resulted from the over great license and excessive liberty granted to them in the Universities. He took unto his house four young gentlemen, with the consent of their parents who were distinguished noblemen. After he had shown these young men the first grounds of true wisdom, and of all necessary things for their salvation, he brought into his house a tutor of great learning and well reported of his good life and conversation, to whom he committed their instruction. After teaching them the Latin tongue and some smattering of Greek he propounded for their chief studies the moral philosophy of ancient sages and wise men, together with the understanding and searching out of histories which are the light of life. The four fathers, desiring to see what progress their sons had made, decided to visit them. And because they had small skill in the Latin tongue, they determined to have their children discourse in their own natural tongue of all matters that might serve for the instruction and reformation of the every estate and calling, in such order and method as they and their master might think best.

“Now this school having been continued for the space of six or seven years to the great profit of this nobility of Anjou, the four fathers on a day tooke their iournie to visite this good old man, and to see their children.”

The four fathers visited their sons at the Academy, to hear them discourse on what they had learnt, but the fresh outbreak of civil war broke up their happy assembly after only a few days. Later, when peace was again restored, they all assembled again to carry on where they had left off:-

“The sudden and sorrowfull newes of the last franticke returne of France into civill warre, brake vp their happy assembly, to the end these noble youths betaking themselves to the service due to their Prince, and to the welfare and safetie of their countrie,... .But, as we said in the beginning, after newes of the peace proclaimed, which was so greatly looked for, and desired of all good men, they laboured forthwith to meete together, knowing that their ioint return would be acceptable to their friends, especially to that good old man by whom they were brought vp. Moreover they deliberated with themselves as soon as they were arrived at the old man’s house, to give their fathers to understand thereof, to the end they might be certified from them, whether it were their pleasures to have them reiterate and continue in their presence the morale discourses begun by them, as we have learned before; that they might be refreshed with the remembrance of their studies, and thereby also keepe fast for ever those good instructions, which by the daily travell of so many years they had drawn out of the fountaine of learning and knowledge. As it was devised by them, the execution thereof followed, so that all these good old men being assembled together, taking up their first order, and conferring anew of the same matters, daily met in a walking place covered over in the midst with a goodly green Arbour, allotting for this exercise from eight to ten in the morning, and from two to foure in the afternoone, Thus they continued this exercise for the space of three whole weeks, which made eighteen daies workes...

“It was arranged that they should meet in a walking place covered over with a goodly green arbour, and daily, except Sundays, for three weeks, devote two hours in the morning and two hours after dinner to these discourses, the fathers being in attendance to listen to their sons. So interesting did these discussions become that the period was often extended to three or four hours, and the young men were so intent upon preparation for them that they would not only bestow the rest of the day, but oftentimes the whole night, upon the well studying of that which they proposed to handle. During which time it was my good hap to bee one of the companie when they began their discourses, at which I so greatly wondered, that I thought them worthy to be published abroad.”

Francis Bacon had the good fortune to be in the company of the four fathers and their sons when the discourses began, as a privileged visitor; then, sometime during the three weeks of these discussions, he took the place of one of the student sons for a reason that is not given except for the mention that the student’s father was disappointed (by his son). The narrative continues with Francis included as one of the four students:-

“And thus all fower of us followed the same order daily until everie one in his course had intreated according to appointment, both by the precepts of doctrine, as also by the examples of the lives of ancient Sages and famous men, of all things necessary for the institution of manners and happie life of all estates and callings in this French Monarchie. But because I knowe not whether, in naming my companions by their proper names, supposing thereby to honour them as indeede they deserve it, I should displeas them (which thing I would not so much as thinke) I have determined to do as they that play on a Theater, who under borrowed maskes and disguised apparell, do represent the true personages of those whom they have undertaken to bring on the stage. I will therefore call them by names very agreeable to their skills and nature: the first **ASER** which signifieth Felicity: the second **AMANA** which is as much to say as Truth: the third **ARAM** which noteth to us Highness; and to agree with them as well in name as in education and behaviour, I will name myself **ACHITOB** which is all one with Brother of goodness. Furthermore I will call and honour the proceeding and finishing of our sundry treatises and discourses with this goodlie and excellent title of Academie, which was the ancient and renowned school amongst the Greek Philosophers, who were the first that were esteemed, and that the place where Plato, Xenophon, Poleman, Xenocrates, and many other excellent personages, afterwards called Academicks, did propound & discourse of all things meet for the instruction and teaching of wisdome: wherein we purposed to followe them to our power, as the sequele of our discourses shall make good prooffe.”

And then the reports of the discourses follow, in their respective chapters.

The names of all the people concerned and the place of the Academy are carefully concealed, but clues are provided as to the esoteric nature of the Academy and its initiates. First of all the suggestive letter ‘A’ is employed as the capital letter of each name. When twinned, the ‘AA’ was used as the special hieroglyphic symbol and signature of the Rosicrucian fraternity. The four names (ASER, AMANA, ARAM and ACHITOB) provide a double twinning, ‘AA’ and ‘AA’, suggestive of the two pairs of twins born to Leda and Zeus as related in the classical ‘Leda and the Swan’ Gemini allegory.

The ‘AA’ hieroglyph can still be seen prominently displayed in François I’s Great Gallery (1534-37) in the Palace of Fontainebleau. It appears in the bold stucco framing to the pre-eminent ‘elephant’ painting in the king’s private long gallery—a symbol of the king himself as being both divine and human, wise and intelligent, standing within the centre of the universe.¹² The first appearance of the ‘AA’ hieroglyph in print, however, is as an ‘AA’ headpiece in an extremely rare Hebrew Grammar, the *Hebraicum Alphabethum Jo. Bovlaese*, published in Paris in 1576, which Francis Bacon owned and annotated.¹³ A modified (extended) version of this same headpiece was later used in the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio. In this the Gemini are depicted reclining on the two A’s.



AA headpiece, *Hebraicum Alphabethum Jo. Bovlaese* (Paris, 1576/7)

The first time that the 'AA' hieroglyph is usually thought to have appeared in print was as an 'AA' headpiece in a version of John Baptista Porta's cipher book, *De Furtivis Literarum Notis, Vulgo De Ziferis*, dated 1563 on its title page.¹⁴ However, as discovered by William T. Smedley, this date is in fact not correct. This particular version of Porta's book was actually printed in London in 1591 and falsely dated 1563 so as to pass for the first edition, in which the AA headpiece does not appear.

Other than the 1576/7 *Hebraicum Alphabethum*, which appears to have been more of a private publication for a select few, the first public appearance of the 'AA' in print was in emblem XLV, entitled "In Dies Meliora" ("On to better days/things"), printed in the 1577 edition of Andreas Alciato's *Emblemata*. This edition was published in Antwerp by Christopher Plantin, a Frenchman who set up a printing business in Antwerp and who was one of the most noted and ardent members of the "Family of Love". This European-wide fellowship of initiates and adepts were responsible for the deep study and transmission of occult and mystical truths during the European Renaissance. The Family believed in tolerance, friendship, the promotion of learning and artistry in service of truth, and that the purity and strength of a person's inner spiritual life was of more importance than any outer religious observance or political point of view. Members pursued the liberal arts and sciences, but, most importantly, they viewed charity as the greatest of the virtues and set out to practice it as far as possible.

The Family of Love had a good representation in France at the time that Francis Bacon was there, and especially in Paris where the apothecary, Pierre Porret, acted as an agent for the Plantin publishing business in the rue Saint-Jacques. Porret was not only one of Plantin's oldest and closest friends but also "an agent, not only for the Plantin publications, but also for the diffusion of Familist teachings."¹⁵ The Valois Court of Henri III was strongly influenced by the Familists, and Henri III even asked Plantin to establish himself as a printer in Paris as "royal printer for ten languages."¹⁶ This offer, which was in fact refused, took place in 1577.

In the names that Francis uses for the four students of the French Academy, he begins each name with the significant and revealing 'A', and then adds suitable symbolic words to name each student accurately:-

- **A-SER** signifies 'Felicity', which is a state of calmness, tranquillity, joy and happiness. The same root, 'SER', is to be found in the English word 'SERENE' from which Francis' cipher word is undoubtedly derived. 'Serene' was also an honorific epithet given to a reigning prince or to a royal house,¹⁷ and certainly fits the son of an eminent nobleman of Anjou.
- **A-MANA** represents 'Truth', which is a state of knowledge or illumination, as also the Wisdom or Word which illuminates (hence the idea of the Double Truth). The word 'MANA' is at the root of such words as 'manna', the spiritual 'bread' or nourishment, and 'man', meaning 'mind' or 'thinker', analogous to the Eastern word 'manas', meaning 'mind'.
- **A-RAM** is used to convey the idea of 'Highness', which or who is in charge over other things that lie lower in hierarchical order. 'The Most High' is the special title of God in relation to the head and crown chakra of the human being and of the universe itself. The symbol of the ram is used in many ancient traditions to signify this 'head', 'heaven' or 'chief'. It is, like ASER, another princely title, befitting a member of the royal house.

- **ACHITOB**, with which Francis names himself, is explained to be “all one with Brother of Goodness”. Goodness is the very quality and nature that formed the central feature of Francis Bacon’s Great Instauration—the primary goal for man to attain unto. This was Francis’ very motivation and driving force, and great hope for mankind. Everything that Francis thought, wrote or did was woven around this central focus, which he makes clear in his essay ‘Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature’:-

“I take Goodness in this sense, the affecting of the weal of men, which is that the Grecians call *Philanthropia*; and the word *humanity* (as it is used) is a little too light to express it. Goodness I call the habit, and Goodness of Nature the inclination. This of all virtues and dignities of the mind is the greatest; being the character of the Diety; and without it man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing; no better than a kind of vermin. Goodness answers to the theological virtue Charity, and admits no excess; neither can angel or man come in danger by it. The inclination to goodness is imprinted deeply in the nature of man; insomuch that if it issue not towards men, it will take unto other living creatures...

“The parts and signs of goodness are many. If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shews he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island cut off from other lands but a continent that joins to them. If he be compassionate towards the afflictions of others, it shews that his heart is like the noble tree that is wounded itself when it gives the balm. If he easily pardons and remits offences, it shews that his mind is planted above injuries; so that he cannot be shot. If he be thankful for small benefits, it shews that he weighs men’s minds, and not their trash. But above all, if he hath St Paul’s perfection, that he would wish to be an *anathema* from Christ for salvation of his brethren, it shews much of a divine nature, and a kind of conformity with Christ himself.”

Goodness and Holiness mean the same thing, and it should be noted that, in Book I of *The Faerie Queen* by “Immerito”,¹⁸ the Knight of the Red Cross represents Holiness; and in the story he is eventually brought to the House of Holiness in which were to be found Faith, Hope and Charity—Charity being the chief of the three and the principal nature of the House itself. The person who brings the knight to this House of Holiness is Una, his lovely lady, whose name means ‘Oneness’ or ‘One’. All this is indicated in the careful choice of words in the phrase, “ACHITOB which is all one with Brother of Goodness.”

It has been suggested that ‘ACHITOB’ yields a revealing anagram, ‘BACO-HIT’, in which the word ‘hit’, as used by Chaucer, is the past participle of ‘hide’, and ‘BACO’ is an acceptable shortened form of ‘Bacon’.¹⁹ Furthermore, if we return to the title of the French publication, *Academie Francoise*, we have in this title a possible ambiguity where ‘Francoise’ can mean either ‘French’ or ‘free one’. In the 15th and 16th centuries both ‘Francoise’ and ‘Francaise’ were used to signify ‘from France’ or ‘French’; but the meaning of the word ‘Francoise’ (‘free one’) is also the meaning of the name ‘Francis’. In other words, *Academie Francoise* could be translated as *Academy of Francis*. The English translation of *L’Academie Francoise* as *The French Academy* disguises this subtle ambiguity; but it is just the kind of subtlety and ambiguity that Francis Bacon revelled in and of which he was a master.

Finally, it is worth noting the opinion concerning the education and upbringing of a prince, which Francis records in chapter 59 of *The French Academie* as a result of personal experience:-

“For there is no time better and fitter to frame and correct a prince in, than when he knowes not that he is a prince. For if hee learne to obey from his infancy, when he commeth to the degree of commanding, he applieth and behaveth himself a great deal better with his subjects, than they that from their youth have been alwise free and exempted from subiection.”²⁰

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Rev. May 2020

Endnotes

¹ In the Tudor period, each new year began on the 25th March, thus February 1577 by 16th century reckoning would be February 1578 by modern reckoning.

² Alternate title: *The French academie Fully discoursed and finished in foure bookes. 1. Institution of manners and callings of all estates. 2. Concerning the soule and body of man. 3. A notable description of the whole world, &c. 4. Christian philosophie, instructing the true and onely meanes to eternall life. This fourth part neuer before published in English. All written by the first author, Peter de la Primaudaye, Esquire, Lord of Barre, Chauncellour, and Steward of the French Kings house.*

³ Joachim Gerstenberg, *Strange Signatures*, p.13 (The Francis Bacon Society, 1967).

⁴ i.e. Back-conies, or Back-cony = Bacony, or Baconian.

⁵ William T. Smedley, *The Mystery of Francis Bacon*, ch.VI: ‘Bacon’s “Temporis Partus Maximus”.’

⁶ William T. Smedley, *The Mystery of Francis Bacon*, ch.VI: ‘Bacon’s “Temporis Partus Maximus”.’

⁷ See F.B.R.T. Journal 1/3, *Dedication to the Light*.

⁸ Henry Morley, *The Life of Bernard Palissey, of Saintes: His Labors and Discoveries in Art and Science*, Vol. II, p.90 (Boston: Ticknor, Reed & Fields, 1853).

⁹ e.g. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Comedy of Errors, Love’s Labour’s Lost, Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Taming of the Shrew, Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, The Tempest*.

¹⁰ An account of the Gray’s Inn Christmas revels of 1594 is given in the *Gesta Graiorum* set out in Nichol’s *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. III, p. 262.

¹¹ *The French Academie*, printed for Thomas Adams, published in London (1618).

¹² See FBRT essay, *Secrets of the Rosy Cross*, by Peter Dawkins (FBRT website: www.fbrt.org.uk)

¹³ William T. Smedley, *The Mystery of Francis Bacon* (1910). Bacon’s copy of the book came into the possession of Smedley, whose collection of books and manuscripts was obtained by the Folger-Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C.

¹⁴ The ‘AA’ headpiece heads the dedication to “Ioanni Soto Philippi Regis”.

¹⁵ Frances A. Yates, ‘Religious Processions (1583-4): The Family of Love’, *Astraea* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975). See also Wallace Kirsop, *The Family of Love in France* (Sydney University Press, III, 1964-5).

¹⁶ L. Voet, *The Golden Compasses* (Amsterdam, 1969), ch.I, p.91. See also Frances A. Yates, 'Religious Processions (1583-4): The Family of Love', *Astraea* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

¹⁷ Oxford Dictionary.

¹⁸ "Immerito" means 'the blameless one'. There are indications that *The Faerie Queene* was written by Francis Bacon under the pseudonym "Immerito" and later masked by Edmund Spenser.

¹⁹ William T. Smedley, *The Mystery of Francis Bacon*.

²⁰ *The French Academie* (1618).