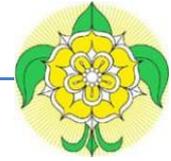


Knights of the Helmet & Comedy of Errors



An account of the Gray's Inn 1594/5 Christmas Revels, the 'Gesta Grayorum', at which 'The Honourable Order of the Knights of the Helmet' and 'The Comedy of Errors' were performed.

The Gray's Inn 1594/5 Christmas Revels: *Gesta Grayorum*, or *The High and Mighty Prince Henry, Prince of Purpoole*

Author: Peter Dawkins

www.fbrt.org.uk/pages/peter_dawkins

During the Christmas period of 1594/5 the lawyers of Gray's Inn put on one of their annual *Gesta* or Grand Entertainments—one of great significance. It was customary for the lawyers and students of Gray's Inn to elect a Prince of Purpoole, who then held court over the Christmas period with officers of state, courtiers and knights, in mock imitation of the Royal Court. In this particular *Gesta Grayorum* of 1594/5 the first recorded performance of a genuine and recognisable Shakespeare play took place—*The Comedy of Errors*—together with a special entertainment titled *The Honourable Order of the Knights of the Helmet*, both bearing the distinct hallmark of Francis Bacon.

Gray's Inn is one of the four Inns of Court in London, where lawyers are trained, and barristers made. In Elizabethan times it also contained sons of noblemen and gentlemen who were being given training in certain courtly arts and legal matters. The other Inns of Court are Lincoln's Inn, the Inner Temple and the Middle Temple—the latter two being on the site of the second Knights Templar headquarters in London. This second site lies midway between the City of London and Westminster Palace, where, until 1875, the Law Courts were held. The site of the first Templar headquarters was at Holborn, where Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn are located.

Gray's Inn is the Inn of Court that was attended by Francis Bacon and his elder brother Anthony after they had both left Cambridge University at the end of 1575, following in the footsteps of their father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, who kept a suite of rooms ('chambers') there. In the time of the two Bacon brothers, the number of students at Gray's Inn was three times the total number of students in all three other Inns, and the Inn was renowned throughout the reign of Queen Elizabeth I for its spectacular revelries. The Queen was an enthusiastic visitor to the Inn, together with her ministers, lords and courtiers.

After coming down from Cambridge at Christmas 1575, the two Bacon brothers were entered at Gray's Inn on 27 June 1576, and on the 21 November they were admitted (together with all of Sir Nicholas' sons) to the Grand Company of Ancients of Gray's Inn, giving them special privileges. This did not mean that they took up residence permanently. In fact, Francis set about preparing for a journey abroad and, on 26 September 1576, he departed "from the Queen's hand" for France with the new English Ambassador, Sir Amias Paulet, as an attaché to the embassy and on a special mission from the Queen. He stayed on the continent for three

years with the French Court, visiting England only once that we know of during that time (June 1578), and finally returning to England on 20 May 1579, on the death of Sir Nicholas Bacon.

Anthony Bacon, however, remained in London, occupying his father's chambers in Coney's Court at Gray's Inn,¹ where he studied law and courtly behaviour, and received training at Walsingham's special school for intelligencers, in accordance with his father's prescription for the advancement of learning and training of statesmen and suitable people for diplomatic and intelligence-gathering missions overseas. In September 1579, four months after Sir Nicholas had died and Francis had returned home, Anthony, heir to a portion of his father's estate, went abroad to France, Switzerland and Navarre (and possibly Italy), where he remained for twelve years, gathering intelligence and other information for Sir Francis Walsingham, the Queen's Secretary of State and head of the intelligence network, his uncle Burghley, the Lord Treasurer, and the Queen, as also for his brother Francis.

Whilst Anthony was abroad, Francis took up residence at Gray's Inn (in 1580) and, besides studying for the law and continuing his research into the classics, began writing in earnest. Such writing included masques,² plays, poetry, speeches for the Earl of Essex and others for the Tilt-Yard ceremonies, reports and advice for the Queen and Lord Burghley (his uncle), and his philosophical musings and notes for his great scheme, which he initially referred to as 'The Greatest Birth of Time' but later called 'The Great Instauration'. Francis had made an oath to serve the Queen, but this meant studying law at Gray's Inn and eventually acting as the Queen's personal Counsel Learned in Law, the first of its kind, although he hoped for other or further outcomes.

On the 27 June 1582, six years to the day from his date of admission to Gray's Inn, Francis Bacon was called to the Bar and admitted Utter Barrister at Gray's Inn. In 1586 he was admitted as a Bencher of Gray's Inn, and in November 1587 he was appointed a Reader of Gray's Inn.

In February 1592 Anthony Bacon returned home from his twelve-year sojourn on the continent and joined his brother Francis at Gray's Inn. At the end of that year (November–December 1592) two novae appeared in the constellation of Cassiopeia. The appearance of such 'new stars' in Cassiopeia were portentous and signified to people at that time the birth of 'children' of light appearing on earth, born of the Heavenly Virgin Queen (Cassiopeia), such as the famous supernova in Cassiopeia of 1572.³

A few months later, on 18 April 1593, the Shakespeare poem *Venus and Adonis* was registered and published soon after (probably on St. George's Day, 23 April 1593). This was the first work to state in print, on its dedication page, as being by "William Shakespeare" and referred to by the author as "the first heir of my invention".⁴ This was followed in the summer of 1594 by the second Shakespeare poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, which also carried the name of "William Shakespeare" on its dedication page, acting like a twin to the first poem.⁵ Both poems were dedicated to Southampton, a close friend of Francis Bacon.

The Shakespeare Sonnets, published in 1609, refer to there being two poets, as if the two novae in Cassiopeia heralded the birth or appearance of the two Shakespeare poets; and as if they were like the Gemini twins—two persons or souls, 'twin' to each other, each having a

mortal and an immortal part. Such an arrangement is allegorised in the *Comedy of Errors* under the guise of twin brothers each with a servant who is twin to the other. The idea of such twinship is also portrayed in one of the principal emblems of the Knights Templar, in which two knights ride the one horse, Pegasus.

Significantly, 1593 was Francis Bacon's 33rd year. At the end of the year he spent Christmas at Court in Windsor, where the several affairs took place that became the subject of parody in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—the original of Falstaff being the redoubtable Welshman Sir Roger Williams, who kept company with Anthony Bacon's friends, Captain Francis Allen and Anthony Standen, plus various ladies. In January 1594 Francis Bacon celebrated his 33rd birthday, before returning to Gray's Inn, where on 25 January 1594 he pleaded his first case in the King's Bench, and his second and third cases in February.

As for Anthony Bacon, in mid-November 1593 he went to Gorhambury to visit his mother, and then to nearby Redbourne in mid-December, where he stayed until April 1594. He then moved to a house in Bishopsgate, London, almost next door to the Bull Inn where plays were performed, and within easy reach of Shoreditch where James Burbage had his two playhouses, the Theatre and the Curtain, which had recently reopened after the plague had closed them for two years (1592-3). The Burbages (James and his sons Cuthbert and Richard) and their fellow-players were also lodged in Bishopsgate, and one Edward Burbage was employed in the service of Anthony Bacon.

Then, at the end of 1594, came the *Gesta Grayorum* of 1594/5, originally planned as usual to take place over the 12-day period of the ancient Saturnalia, 20–31 December, which celebrated the Winter Solstice and the start of the Capricorn period ruled by Saturn (Pan), characterised as the Lord of Misrule. For some reason, the annual Yuletide Revels had been omitted for the previous three years because of the plague, and so the students resolved to give the world "something out of the common". Francis Bacon was called upon to assist in "recovering the lost honour of Gray's Inn" and made co-Treasurer of the Inn for a year for that purpose. The result was an elaborate Entertainment or Revel (*Gesta*), in which chosen members of Gray's Inn played the principal roles, and which included masques, mumming, performances of plays and acrobatics, dancing and feasting.

For this particular Grand Entertainment at Gray's Inn, the Lord of Misrule was played by Henry Helmes, one of the members of the Inn, representing the Prince of Purpoole. Purpoole, or Portpoole, was the ancient name for Baron Gray de Wilton's manor, on the site of which Gray's Inn stands. The manor adjoined the original site⁶ of the Knights Templar headquarters in London before the Templars moved their headquarters c.1160 to their new site between Fleet Street and the river Thames. This riverside site was known as the New Temple, and was divided into three parts—Inner Temple, Middle Temple and Outer Temple, with Middle Temple straddling the boundary between Westminster and the City of London. Eventually the Inner Temple and Middle Temple were occupied by the Inns of Court of that name, whilst the Outer Temple was occupied by Leicester House, later known as Essex House, a meeting place of poets and their noble patrons.

The Revels or *Gesta Grayorum* were referred to as *The High and Mighty Prince Henry, Prince of Purpoole*, and certain "Grand Nights" were designed for the entertainment of strangers—

notably lawyers from the Inner Temple, with whom Gray's Inn was twinned, plus lords, ministers, statesmen and courtiers from the Queen's Royal Court. It was designed, staged, directed and partly written by a "Sorcerer or Conjuror", recognisable from the internal evidence of the entertainments as being Francis Bacon.⁷

On Friday 20 December, the beginning of the Saturnalia, the Prince of Purpoole (the Bencher's Master of Ceremonies who personified the Saturnian Lord of Misrule) proceeded to the Great Hall of Gray's Inn to open the proceedings, riding into the hall upon the back of a fiery charger, which, like the rider, was clothed in a panoply of steel. There he was enthroned with great pomp and ceremonial. The Revels then began, but with a proper pause and Christian respect for Christmas. The initial entertainments were so successful that the members of Gray's Inn were encouraged to enlarge their plan and raise their style, so they resolved to put on certain "Grand Nights" in which something extra special should be performed for the entertainment of noble guests specially invited for those evenings. (This is how it was described, but it is more than likely that the Revels had been planned and prepared beforehand from start to finish.)

The first Grand Night was on Saturday 28 December, Holy Innocent's Day, to which courtiers, lords, ladies and an "embassy" of the Inner Temple had been invited. The ambassador of the Inner Temple was to come "as sent from Frederick Templarius, their Emperor, who was then busied in his wars against the Turks." A special stage was constructed, and tiered seating set up "to the top of the House" for the purpose. The entertainment was to include a masque performed by the lawyers of Gray's Inn, followed by a play called "*a Comedy of Errors (like to Plautus his Menechmus)*" played by "the Players".

The play was the first known performance of Shakespeare's play, *The Comedy of Errors*, which is a modernized adaptation of Plautus' *Menaechmi*. Notably, William Warner's translation of the classical drama, from Latin into English, was entered into the Register of the Stationers Company on 10 June 1594, six months before the Yuletide Revels, and then published in 1595, after the Revels. The published translation was dedicated to Sir Henry Carey, 1st Baron Hunsdon, Queen Elizabeth's first cousin, who was the Lord Chamberlain at that time and who in 1594 had become the patron of the Lord Chamberlain's Men when it was newly reconstituted under the leadership of the Burbages.

Although Gray's Inn had its own in-house company of amateur players made up of gentlemen-lawyers, and although *The Audited Account of the Exchequer for 1594-5* records a performance of an unnamed play at Greenwich by the Lord Chamberlain's Men also on Innocents Day, December 28, 1594,⁸ it is thought nevertheless that it was probably the Lord Chamberlain's Men who performed the *Comedy of Errors* at Gray's Inn that night. It is possible that the Lord Chamberlain's Men performed for the Queen in the afternoon rather in the evening or, because an afternoon performance would have been unusual, performed before the Queen in the evening and immediately after travelled to Gray's Inn by torchlight later that night. It is in the 1594-5 Exchequer Account for that Innocents Day that William Shakespeare is for the first time recorded as being an actor with the Lord Chamberlain's Men, along with William Kemp and Richard Burbage.

Because of a frenzy of excited anticipation, this first Grand Night evening entertainment attracted more guests than could be accommodated in the Great Hall. When the special embassy of “gallantly appointed” Inner Temple lawyers arrived at 9.00 pm and with difficulty been seated, “there arose such a disordered tumult and crowd upon the stage, that there was no opportunity to effect that which was intended”. Not only was there no room for the actors, but the masquers were forced off the stage and the masque ended abruptly in general confusion.

The disappointed Inner Temple barristers, led by their Ambassador, returned to their Inn, whilst those who remained were set to “dancing and revelling with gentlewomen”, since it was impossible to present anything of any account, especially since the “Sports” had been designed for the “gracing of the *Templarians*”. After the dancing, the players performed their *Comedie of Errors*, and the evening revels concluded with a masque of the return of knights from a campaign in Russia against “Negro-Tartars”. The Prince of Purpoole, on his return from Russia, was made the occasion of further pageant, when he declared that he was only prevented from paying his respects to Queen Elizabeth by the fact that his body “by length of my journey, and my sickness at sea, is so weakened”.⁹

On the following day, Sunday 29 December, a mock trial was held, at which the “Sorcerer or Conjurer”¹⁰ was arraigned at the bar and playfully accused for causing the previous night’s disarray, for “our dearest friend the *State of Templariá*, to be disgraced”, and for foisting “a company of base and common fellows, to make up our disorders with a play of Errors and Confusions; and that night had gained to us discredit, and itself a nickname of Errors...”. The Conjurer argued, however, that “the very fault was in the negligence of the Prince’s Council, Lords and Officers of his state that had the rule of the roast, and by whose advice the commonwealth was so soundly misgoverned”. After bringing “divers instances of great absurdities committed by the greatest”, and making “such allegations as could not be denied”, the Conjurer was “freed and pardoned, and the Attorney, Solicitor, Master of the Requests, and those acquainted with the draught of the petition, were all of them commanded to the Tower...”. So ended the “lawsports, concerning the *Night of Errors*”.

The Conjurer was thus acquitted, with the resolution that “the Prince’s Council should be reformed, and some Graver Conceits should take their places” in order to recover their honour. The Revels were extended in time to include the full Twelve Days of Christmas (26 December–6 January), and within a few days the Conjurer came up with a new entertainment called *The Honourable Order of the Knights of the Helmet*, written by Francis Bacon, which was described as “one of the most elegant ever presented to an audience of Statesmen and Courtiers”, who included the Queen’s Lord Keeper, Lord Treasurer and Vice-Chamberlain. This was presented on the second Grand Night, Friday 3 January 1595,¹¹ with the masque being followed by a banquet and then a ball.

The next day (4 January), the Prince of Purpoole, attended by eighty gentlemen of Gray’s Inn and the Temple, dined in state at Crosby Place with the Lord Mayor and aldermen of the City. On Twelfth Night (5 January), the Eve of Epiphany (6 January), the Prince received a gallant assembly of lords, ladies, and knights at his court in Gray’s Inn.¹²

Everyone was so delighted with the Entertainment that “thereby Gray’s Inn did not only recover their lost credit, but got instead so much honour and applause as either the good reports of our friends that were present or we ourselves could desire”.

The Queen was eager to see the Prince of Purpoole again, to complete the Prince’s story, so he and his followers attended her Majesty at Greenwich on Shrove Tuesday (7 February 1595)¹³ to entertain her with some speeches followed by the masque of *Proteus and the Rock Adamantine*. This masque was the first to clearly define the ordered components of a masque as a norm to be followed.¹⁴

With the performance of *The Comedy of Errors* on Holy Innocents’ Day, 28 December, the theme of the Twins was dramatically portrayed. The play was based on the *Menæchmi* by the Roman comic dramatist, Plautus (c. 254–184 BC), of which there was no translation published until 1595, with additional material from Plautus’ *Amphitruo*, concerning two sets of twins and the mistaking of a husband by a wife over a feast. It also drew upon the traditional story of Apollonius of Tyre, in which there is a shipwreck, a loss of a wife and daughter, the wife who becomes high priestess of Diana at Ephesus, and a reunion. (This latter story was the main source for Shakespeare’s *Pericles*.) *The Comedy of Errors* is set in Ephesus, the city associated with magic, sorcerers and conjurers, witchcraft and deception, but which also was home to one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the famous Temple of Diana, whose goddess was personified by Queen Elizabeth, the Patron Lady of Gray’s Inn. The play also shows that the author was conversant with the Italian Commedia dell’arte, which is full of mistaken identities, twin masters and servants, misdelivering of messages and mistaken arrests.

The author was not only a classical scholar and a linguist in Latin, French and Italian, but he also knew Lily’s works, which influence the play, as well as George Gascoigne’s *Supposes* (printed 1575), a prose version of Ariosto’s *I Suppositi*, and a play performed at Gray’s Inn in 1566 which deals with errors or confusions of identity. In fact, the play is full of Gray’s Inn idioms, which only a member of Gray’s Inn would know, and the play itself turns on a misunderstanding with a goldsmith about a gold chain—a circumstance which has no place in the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, but which is evidently a skit on a dispute between Chief Baron Manswood and a goldsmith over a gold chain, which caused much merriment at Gray’s Inn and afterwards became a Privy Council affair.¹⁵

In the masque, *The Honourable Order of the Knights of the Helmet*, Francis Bacon announced publicly the existence or birth of his new Templar or Rosicrucian Order, labelled the Knights of the Helmet—the helmet¹⁶ being that of Pallas Athena, which bestows invisibility on all those who wear it; whilst the content of the entertainment laid down the course of study and action for the knights. At the beginning of the masque, the knights, after investiture, vowed to keep nineteen articles, full of Baconian philosophy and precepts, including vows to defend God and the State, to attack Ignorance, and to defend Truth and Virtue ceaselessly and secretly. Then, after a speech by the Prince of Purpoole, six Counsellors delivered a speech each, extolling the virtues of certain things: -

1. The exercise of war against vice and ignorance.

2. The study of philosophy (including the collecting of a perfect library, the making of a spacious botanical and zoological garden, a museum, and a laboratory or “palace fit for a philosopher’s stone”).
3. The acquisition of eternization and fame by buildings and foundations.
4. The absoluteness of state and treasure.¹⁷
5. The exercise of virtue and gracious government.
6. The exercise of joyful pastimes and sports.

The speeches of the six Councillors were included in the Northumberland Manuscript and listed on the contents page as “Orations at Graies Inne revels” by “Mr Frauncis Bacon”.¹⁸

The sixth Councillor, addressing the Prince of Purpoole, alluded to the play of *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, which implies that it was written and ready to be performed, and supports the belief that a third Grand Night had been intended, which would have made a fitting conclusion to the Revels, but was cancelled. The blackamours who accompany the Russians in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* are the equivalent of the Negro-Tartars in the Gray’s Inn Revels. Rosaline’s jibe in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, “Sea-sick, I think, coming from Muscovy,” echoes the excuse made by the Prince of Purpoole who, on his return from the mock visit to Russia, wrote a letter to the Queen excusing himself from attending on her Majesty that day because of his exhaustion “by length of my journey, and my sickness at sea”. And Berowne’s speech in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* echoes that of the Sixth Counsellor in *The Honourable Order of the Knights of the Helmet*.

L’Académie Française (The French Academie) was prescribed for the instruction of the Knights of the Helmet. The book, written in French, eventually appeared in four parts, the first part of which was first published in February 1578 when Francis Bacon was in France.¹⁹ The book also appeared in English, Italian and German translations, and was widely read across Europe. Its final form—an encyclopaedic book in four volumes—was printed in Geneva in 1608. Its four volumes concern (1) Moral Philosophy, (2) Human Philosophy, (3) Natural Philosophy, and (4) Christian Philosophy. 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. Its first English translation (by “T.B.”, probably T. Bowes) was published in 1586 as *The French Academie*, 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 of all four parts—is dated 1618 and printed in London for Thomas Adams. There are abundant signs that Francis Bacon was the main author and instigator of *L’Académie Française*, and that it was the necessary precursor of his *Great Instauration*, the final name and scheme of which Bacon announced in 1620, and which condensed the four main parts into three: Divine Philosophy, Human Philosophy and Natural Philosophy.²⁰

The Saturnalia and Twelve Days of Christmas make a time sequence of special significance and meaning, and the timing of when the various entertainments were put on within the period of the *Gesta* is not by chance. The Saturnalia begins on 20 December, the eve of the Winter Solstice, and continues for twelve days, thereby constituting a 12-day zodiacal cycle. It begins with the sign of Libra and ends with the sign of Virgo, this last day being dedicated to the Goddess of the Hearth Fire (Hestia/Vesta). Christmas Day is on the sixth day of the 12-

day cycle, corresponding to the sign of Pisces. The whole cycle is ruled by Saturn, known during this period as the Lord of Misrule—the Jester. The day after the completion of the cycle begins the new year, the 1st of January, dedicated to Janus, the chief of the Gods who opens the door to and leads the way into the new year.

Associated with this is another 12-day cycle, which begins on the seventh day of the Saturnalia—the day marked by the sign of Aries. This is the day after Christmas Day, which we now call Boxing Day. This second cycle is known as the Twelve Days of Christmas, and links Christmas Day, which marks the physical birth of Jesus to Epiphany, which marks the spiritual birth of Jesus or appearance of the Christ. Epiphany celebrates the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan, the turning of water into wine at the Marriage of Cana, and the presentation of the three gifts to Jesus by the three Magi.

These three events are intimately linked with each other, and have a very ancient origin. For instance, on the 6 January the Ancient Egyptians would celebrate the resurrection of Osiris and the spiritual birth of Horus, when the waters of the Nile would be blessed and turned to wine. Other countries had this same symbology of the rivers turning to wine. The Orphics celebrated this day as the time when Kore (Persephone) was brought out of the underworld cavern, seated on her throne and marked with five crosses (on her brow, hands and feet). After being perambulated around the temple, her statue was returned to the subterranean depths. During the time of her perambulation the Aion was born—the Aion being Dionysus, the Son of God. The three Magi represent the three Masters who oversee the ceremony, who personify the Holy Trinity and whose gifts represent the three major principles of life with which the newly baptised and reborn initiate is endowed. The Marriage is the Mystic Marriage of spirit with soul, wherein the living soul (Adam) becomes a life-giving spirit (Christ).

Christmas Day (25 December), corresponding to the sign of Pisces, which rules the feet, marks the physical birth and the matrix out of which Jesus, the soul, begins its journey. The 27 December, corresponding to the sign of Taurus, which rules the throat, is the Feast day of St. John the Divine (the Beloved), for John represents the overlighting 'Dove' which sits on the neck of the 'Bull' (represented by the Pleiades in the constellation of Taurus) and also the sacred Word, IOA, which is sounded via the throat.²¹ The 28 December, corresponding to the sign of Gemini, which rules the shoulders, is Holy Innocents' Day, celebrating the Twins. The 1 January, corresponding to the sign of Libra, which rules the generative chakra, celebrates the circumcision (*i.e.* the cutting away of all sin) and the naming of Jesus. The 2 January, corresponding to the sign of Scorpio, which rules the base of the spine, is marked by the purification or final cleansing of the Virgin Mary, required after giving birth. The 3 January corresponds to the sign of Sagittarius, the Archer, which rules the thighs. The 6 January is Epiphany, the Twelfth Day (or the Thirteenth Day if one counts from the 25 December), corresponding to Pisces and the day that celebrates the spiritual birth of the Fish Avatar, the Grail King, when the initiate or 'fish' is drawn up out of the waters of life into the air and fire of the Holy Spirit. The waters turned to wine symbolise this transmutation, with the wine signifying the knowledge and illumination of the spiritualised soul.

The Comedy of Errors, which is a story about twins, and which takes place at Ephesus, a city associated with sorcery and containing the great temple of Diana, was performed on the day

associated with the zodiacal sign of Gemini, the Twins. *The Order of the Knights of the Helmet* was performed on the day associated with the sign of Sagittarius, the Archer, which sign holds the key to the heart of the universe and to Eros, the Love of God. Sagittarius contains Sagittarius A* which marks the centre of the Milky Way Galaxy. Eros is symbolised by his bow and arrow, which represent the heart of love and ray of love-light respectively. Sagittarius is represented as a centaur holding the bow and shooting arrows. Sagittarius' opposite sign is Gemini, containing the star Sirius, known as the Sun behind the Sun. The Gemini are symbolised as knights riding white horses and bearing long spears. They are known as Spear-shakers, with their spears representing rays of light, akin to the arrows of light.

Francis Bacon and others at Gray's Inn obviously knew this symbolism and what it meant, and used it accordingly.

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Endnotes

¹ The name of the court, Coney, is particularly interesting, adding extra spice to the use by the Bacon brothers of the rebus 'Back-Coney'—the picture of two conies (hares) back-to-back with each other, used in the Archer headpieces to the Shakespeare plays and elsewhere.

² Masques that Francis Bacon wrote include *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, which was partly devised by Francis in co-operation with others and presented to the Queen by the Gentlemen of Gray's Inn in February 1587; *The Conference of Pleasure* written for Essex to present before the Queen at her Accession Day Tournament in November 1592; and another masque, *The Indian Prince*, written for Essex for the Accession Day Tournament of 1594.

³ SN 1572 (Tycho's Supernova, Tycho's Nova), or B Cassiopeiae (B Cas), was a supernova of Type Ia in the constellation Cassiopeia. It appeared in early November 1572, shining brighter than Venus, and was visible to the naked eye until 1594.

⁴ Two Italian lines from Ovid's *Amores* are prefixed to the poem.

⁵ Derived from the untranslated *Fasti* of Ovid, and dedicated with the author's "love without end" to Lord Southampton, a high-ranking nobleman and close friend of the Earl of Essex and thus of the Bacon brothers.

⁶ The original (and first) site of the Knights Templars in High Holborn, established c.1128, had been the location of a Roman temple. The site of the original Templar preceptory is now occupied by Southampton Buildings, just south of Chancery Lane tube station. When the Templars moved to their New Temple site by the river, they created New Street, later to be called Chancery Lane, to link their original Holborn site with their new site by the river.

The ancient Manor of Purpoole (or Portpoole) lay adjacent to and on the north side of the original Templar preceptory, with the boundary between the properties marked by High Holborn road. Purpoole (or Portpoole) means "the market by the lake". The market was the cattle market, the present site of the Prudential Insurance Building in Holborn. The lake or lakes were the area to the north and east of Purpoole Lane (to the east of Gray's Inn Road), where the land can be seen to fall away. The Purpoole Manor and Manor House was the property of Sir Reginald de Gray, Chief Justice of Chester, Constable and Sheriff of Nottingham, who died in 1308.

In 1370 the Manor House is described for the first time as a “hospitium” (hostel), so it is likely that the Manor House had become a hostel for a learned society of lawyers, as in 1388 two members became Sergeants and Holborn had become a district of lawyers.

The Manor was the property of the de Gray family until 1505, when "the manor of Portpoole, otherwise called Gray's Inn, four messuages, four gardens, the site of a windmill, eight acres of land, ten shillings of free rent, and the advowson of the Chantry of Portpoole" was sold to Hugh Denny. From Denny it passed into the hands of the Prior and Convent of East Sheen (in Surrey), who leased it to certain students of law. In Henry VIII's time Gray's Inn was seized by the King and the benchers of Gray's Inn became tenants of the Crown.

Gray's Inn Hall and Chapel are built on the site of the medieval Manor House and its chapel. The Hall began to be built in 1555, in the reign of Queen Mary, and was finished in 1560, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

⁷ An account of the Revels is given in the *Gesta Grayorum: or the History of the High and Mighty Prince Henry, Prince of Purpoole.... Who Reigned and Died, A.D. 1594*—a pamphlet in the possession of Gray's Inn giving a detailed account of the Revels held at Gray's Inn 1594/5, which was first printed in 1688.

⁸ *The Audited Account of the Exchequer for 1594-5:*

“To William Kempe, William Shakespeare and Richard Burbage, servants to the Lord Chamberleyne, upon the ' Councelles warrant dated at Whitehall xv. to Marcij, 1594, for twoe severall comedies or enterludes shewed by them before her Majestie in Christmas tyme laste paste, viz., upon St. Stephen's daye and Innocentes daye, xiiijli. vjs. viijd., and by waye of her Majesties rewarde, vjli. xiijs. iiijd., in all xxli.”

This was recorded in the accounts of the treasurer of the Chamber and printed by Hallwill Phillipps in the 6th Ed. of his *Outlines* I, 109.

⁹ This pageant or masque is alluded to in the Shakespeare play of *Love's Labour's Lost*, in the Russian masque performed by the men before the French Princess and her ladies-in-waiting. The ladies taunt the men on the failure of their Russian interlude and bring them to confusion, Rosaline making the remark: “Why look you pale? Sea-sick, I think, coming from Muscovy.” The stage direction for the entrance of the ‘Russians’ begins with “Enter Blackamoors with music”, which is possibly a reflection of the “Negro Tartars”. The Princess alludes to the four men as “A mess of Russians”, the word *mess* referring to the practice of the Inns of Court of dining in ‘messes’ of four persons. (See R. L. Eagle, *Love's Labour's Lost and Grays Inn*, Baconiana Vol. XLIV, No. 161.)

¹⁰ These same terms are used in the play of *Friar Bacon*, published earlier in 1594.

¹¹ Elizabethan dating, which used the Julian Calendar, would have been 1594, as each year officially began on the 25 March, rather than 1 January. This continued until the Gregorian calendar was adopted in 1752.

¹² ‘The Holborn Inns of Court and Chancery’ – *Old and New London*, Vol. 2, ch. LXI, pp. 553-576. (Originally published by Cassell, Petter & Galpin, London, 1878. Available www.british-history.ac.uk/vol2/pp553-576.)

¹³ In 1595 (modern dating) Shrovetide began on Septuagesima Sunday, 22 January, and ended 17 days later on Shrove Tuesday, 7 February 1595. The following day, Ash Wednesday (8 February 1595) was as usual 46 days (40 fasting days and 6 Sundays) before Easter Sunday, which in 1595 was on 26 March 1595.

¹⁴ “The masque of *Proteus and the Adamantine Rock* brings us to a turning point in the history of the masque. It is the first piece that we know of which gives the norm of the masque as composed by Ben Jonson and his fellow poets. Later masques were more elaborate, but with the exception of the anti-masque all the elements are here: the introductory song and dialogue, the entry of the masquers, the masque dances, the revels, the final song and dialogue recalling the masquers to the scene and concluding the performance, and finally the motivating of the whole by a slight story and dramatic action.” Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque* (Cambridge University Press, 1927).

¹⁵ Rt. Hon. Sir D. Plunket Barton, a Judge of the High Court of Justice in Ireland and a Bencher of Gray’s Inn.

¹⁶ Athena’s helmet was Pluto’s helmet, which bestows invisibility upon the wearer. The helmet was made for Pluto, god of the Underworld, by Hephaistos, the Greek ‘blacksmith’ god of fire, metallurgy and crafts. Athena used the helmet for her fight against Ares, the Greek god of war, in Homer’s *Iliad* account of the Trojan War. Athena was known for bestowing the helmet on her knight-heroes.

¹⁷ See Francis Bacon’s *Essays Of Empire and Of the Greatness of Kingdoms*.

¹⁸ The Northumberland Manuscript is a collection of manuscripts, penned in Elizabethan script, that once contained two Shakespeare plays (*Richard II* and *Richard III*) as well as a play by Nashe (*The Isle of Dogs*) and an unknown play, *Asmund and Cornelia*, all bound with philosophical and poetical writings known to be by Francis Bacon, and a contents page that not only links Francis Bacon with William Shakespeare’s name but also appears to indicate that Bacon is the actual author of *Richard II* and *Richard III*, using the name of “William Shakespeare”. This name written on the contents page is the first known use of the name ‘William Shakespeare’ in connection with any Shakespeare play.

See the author’s essay, *The Northumberland Manuscript*, published on the Francis Bacon Research Trust website: www.fbrt.org.uk/essays.

¹⁹ In February 1578 there was printed and published in France the first edition of the first part of a remarkable book entitled *Academie Francoise 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) is addressed, “Au Tres-chrestien Roy de France et de Polongne Henry III de ce nom.”

²⁰ See the author’s essay, *The French Academy*, published on the Francis Bacon Research Trust website, www.fbrt.org.uk/essays.

²¹ IOA is vowel sound basis of the Hebrew name יוֹחָן (Johanan), transcribed into Latin and German as Johannes, and into English as John. IOA is also the vowel sound basis of Jehovah, a transcription of the Hebrew Tetragramaton יהוה (JHVH).