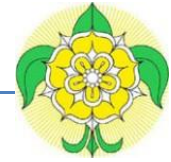


# The Stratford Shakespeare Monument



*The symbolism, mystery and secret message of the Shakespeare Monument in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, England.*

Author: Peter Dawkins

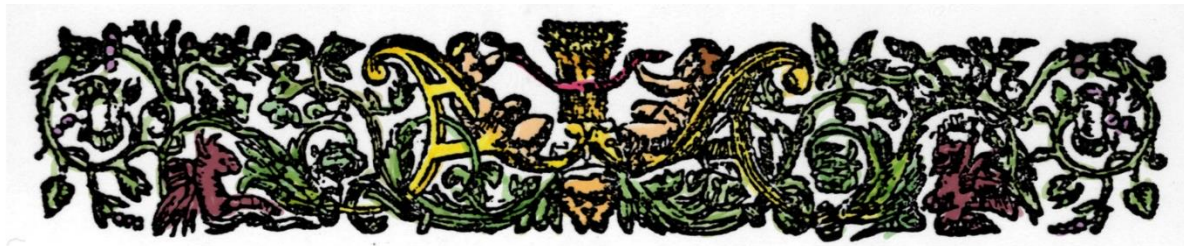
## Why is the Shakespeare Monument in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, important?

The Shakespeare Monument in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, was erected sometime after the death of William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon in 1616 and before the First Folio of *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* was published in 1623. Certain wording in the Folio associates Shakespeare with the Stratford monument and with a river Avon. Without this association and monument, there would be no ‘proof’ that William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon had anything to do with the actual authorship of the Shakespeare plays. We would know only from historical records that he was an actor with the Lord Chamberlain’s Men (later the King’s Men), the main company of players who performed the Shakespeare plays, and a co-owner of the Globe Theatre in London where the Shakespeare plays were performed for the public. The Stratford Shakespeare Monument, therefore, is a crucial piece of evidence for establishing and verifying this authorship link.

However, the Stratford Shakespeare Monument is even more than this. It is a major gateway into the mystery of Shakespeare—for there is a mystery, and it is very profound and far-reaching. For one thing, it helps us to read and understand the Shakespeare Folio of plays in a better light, and to enjoy the plays in performance to a far fuller extent. It enables us to comprehend the Shakespeare sonnets and poems in a much deeper and more meaningful way. Most of all, it takes us into the mystery of mysteries, in which we search for and are guided by the Author of All.

To enter the Shakespeare mystery is to enter a genuine mystery school, which enlightens us degree by degree. The Stratford Shakespeare Monument is a major entrance. All that is required is to be able to pause and “read” it correctly, and not pass it by too fast, making over-quick assumptions.

A major key to enter the mystery is the Gemini myth. The Gemini twins are shown prominently on the Shakespeare Monument, and they also appear as signature headpieces on the three main groups or productions of the Shakespeare works—the Shakespeare Folio of plays (1623), *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609) and the twin Shakespeare poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594).





**The Shakespeare Monument,  
Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon**

## The "Stratford Monument"

The eulogic poem, "Upon the Lines and Life of the Famous Scenicke Poet, Master William Shakespeare," by Leonard Diggs, included in the prefatory pages of the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio, refers to the "Stratford Monument" commemorating "Shake-speare": -

Shake-speare, at length thy pious fellowes give  
The world thy Workes, by which, out-live  
Thy Tombe, thy name must when that stone is rent,  
And Time dissolves thy Stratford Monument,  
Here we alive shall view thee still.

This "Moniment" to which Digges refers is a sculptured stone monument that is to be found in Holy Trinity Church, located on the banks of the River Avon in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. The monument is placed high up on the north wall of the chancel and overlooks the small, strangely-inscribed but unnamed stone slab set into one of the steps of the chancel that marks the grave of "Will Shakspeare gent.", as recorded in the Stratford Parish Register of Holy Trinity Church. (Will signed himself twice as "Shakspere" and once as "Shakspeare" on his last will and testament and is recorded as "Shakspere" on his baptismal record. The surname was variously spelt, but Shakspere is the most common.)<sup>1</sup>

The monument was erected sometime after the burial of "Will Shakspeare" (25 April 1616) and before the printing of the Shakespeare Folio (c. February 1622–November 1623). No-one seems to know who erected the monument or who paid for it, and there is no evidence that Shakespeare's family had anything to do with it. The sculptor, according to Sir William Dugdale's Diary of 1653, was "one Gerard Johnson", who most likely was Gerald Janssen the Younger.

The body of William Shakespeare (Shakspere or Shakspeare), who had been a lay rector of the church since 1605, was buried beneath the chancel floor of the church, where later the bodies of his wife and eldest daughter were also interred, adjacent to his.

The reference on the monument, together with the positioning of the monument relative to the grave, therefore tallies with the death and burial of Will Shakspeare in the parish church of his home town. Moreover, at the top of the monument is carved the coat of arms of the Shakspere family that was first granted to William's father, John Shakspere, in 1596, which William inherited on his father's death in 1601.

## 18th Century Repairs

By the mid-18th century the Shakespeare Monument had fallen into a bad state of repair. Between 1746 and 1748 sufficient funds were collected and early in 1749 it was substantially "repaired and beautified" by the carver Heath, under the auspices of the Rev. Kenrick, vicar of Holy Trinity Church, and the Rev. Joseph Greene, master of Stratford-upon-Avon's grammar school, who was both a scholar and an antiquarian.

The Rev. Greene, in a letter dated 27 September 1749 to the Rev. John Sympson, refers to the Shakespeare bust and the cushion before it, "on which as on a desk this our Poet seems preparing to write." He speaks of the two columns and the two painted figures which, he says, "represent Comedy and Tragedy." He states that, apart from the replacement of the



architraves, “nothing has been chang’d, nothing alter’d except ye supplying with ye original materials (sav’d for that purpose) whatsoever was by accident broken off reviving the old colouring and renewing the gilding that was lost.”

Despite the evidence of this letter, there has been much heated discussion as to how much work was actually carried out. This is because there are major discrepancies between the various drawings and engravings of the monument made before the restorations and how the monument appeared afterwards, which is how we see it now. However, the overall conclusion is that the statement of the reverent Joseph Greene is reasonably correct. Moreover, there would appear to be particular cryptic reasons for the discrepancies.

Nearly a century before the restoration was carried out, Sir William Dugdale, a Warwickshire historian and antiquarian, sketched the Shakespeare Monument and had it carefully engraved by the great Bohemian artist, Wenceslaus Hollar, for his *History of the Antiquities of Warwickshire*, published in 1656.<sup>2</sup> There are several major differences worthy of note between Dugdale’s record and the appearance of the Shakespeare Monument after the 1749 repairs, which is as we see the monument nowadays.

One major difference is that Shakespeare is depicted in the Dugdale illustration as appearing to clutch a sack to his lower abdomen with both hands, instead of resting his left hand on a paper laid on a cushion and with his right hand holding a quill pen.<sup>3</sup> The sack is clearly a woolsack—wool being a major commodity in medieval and Elizabethan England, and John Shakspere, William’s father, having operated as a ‘wool brogger’—an unlicensed and therefore illegal wool dealer—whilst at the same time being a glovemaker.



**Hollar’s engraving of the Shakespeare Monument from Dugdale’s sketch.**

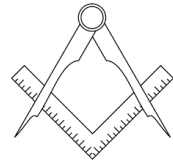
The second major difference is that Dugdale’s picture shows a monument without a complete entablature. Instead, Dugdale depicts a lion’s head surmounting the capital of each column, with a cornice placed directly on top. This is a substantial difference and architecturally incorrect, and so cannot be a true illustration of the Shakespeare Monument.

The Shakespeare Monument is designed in classical style using the Corinthian Order, which must have been as it was when first built, with the two smooth-faced columns supporting on their ornate capitals a fairly plain but deep entablature consisting of an architrave, a frieze and a cornice. Besides which, the Rev. Greene refers to the replacement of the architraves, which in Dugdale’s drawing are omitted entirely.

The third major difference is in the appearance and positions of the two figures (twin boys) on the architrave. In Dugdale’s picture they are seated rather precariously on the edges of the cornice, with their legs dangling over the sides, rather than being seated on an appropriately carved ‘ground’ and wholly on the top of the cornice. The right-hand figure holds up a spade, the left-hand one an hour-glass, both very prominently displayed. The

posture of the two boys and the presentation of these symbols makes them stand out dramatically, thereby emphasising their meaning.

Dugdale's seemingly deliberate misrepresentation of the Shakespeare Monument would appear to be so as to draw notice to its Masonic significance, for the arms of Shakespeare are shown arranged in a most awkward but stylised way which immediately draws attention. These arms are disposed such that they portray the geometrical form of the Masonic Square and Compass, the single most universally identifiable symbol of Freemasonry. The upper arms and head form the Compass (i.e. pair or set of Compasses); the lower arms and hands the Square.



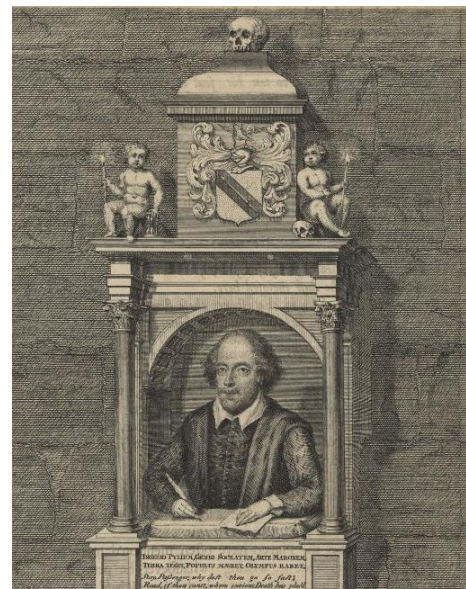
Then the woolsack is held in such a way as to make it visually prominent, as if we are to take especial notice of it. Shakespeare's hands hold it awkwardly 'on edge', flat against the lower part of his body. This is another alert pointing to Freemasonry; for in Freemasonry this part of the body is covered by the Masonic Apron, which is made of lamb skin. The symbolism is derived from the Bible, with the lambskin and wool referring to purity and the sacrificial act of the Lamb of God. But to substitute a woolsack for the cushion of the actual monument is so extreme that it might also mean that Dugdale is alluding to even more than Freemasonry, because the most famous woolsack is "The Woolsack", the seat of the Lord Chancellor whilst in council and presiding over the House of Lords.

The lions shown crowning the pillars, where there should have been an architrave, alludes to the 'Lions Paw' of Freemasonry's 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, a special grip in which the freemason is symbolically raised from the dead to become a master mason. It relates to the biblical 'Lion of Judah', which is symbolic of the royal heart and the Grand Master, the Messiah or Christ. It goes together with the Lamb of God allusion provided by the woolsack 'apron'.

The 'cherubic' twins on the cornice are made to stand out because of their positioning and posture, with the spade and hour-glass emphasised. (The spade and hourglass are more concealed in the real monument.) These, too, have Masonic significance.

Nearly 60 years later, George Vertue illustrated the Stratford Shakespeare Monument, once in the 1720s and again in the 1730s. In the early 1720s he made an engraving of the monument for Alexander Pope, which Pope published in his edition of *Shakespeare* in 1725. This engraving shows the monument largely as it is now and presumably how it was originally, but with two major differences: Shakespeare's face seems to have been made to look like that of the Chandos portrait, and the two cherubic figures are each shown holding a lighted candle, the right-hand figure having his left hand resting on an hour-glass and the left-hand figure having a skull at his feet.

In 1737 Vertue was consulted by the sculptor Scheemakers over details of Shakespeare's appearance, as Scheemaker was then under commission from the Earl of Burlington, Dr Mead and Alexander Pope for the



**Vertue's engraving of the Shakespeare Monument**  
(© National Portrait Gallery, London)

construction of the Shakespeare Memorial in Westminster Abbey. Vertue, that year, visited Stratford-upon-Avon and sketched the Shakespeare Monument, showing it to have been then largely as he had depicted it in the 1725 engraving, but showing the figures holding a spade and an hour-glass.<sup>4</sup>

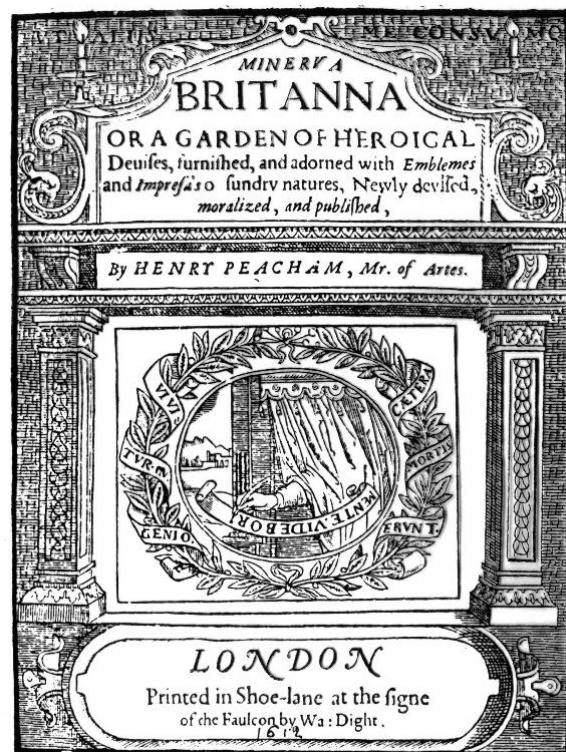
Naturally, this makes one wonder about the major difference between Vertue's 1720s engraving and the actual Shakespeare Monument, this difference being the candle held upright and alight in a hand of each of the cherubic figures, instead of the spade and inverted torch held by the twin figures on the actual monument. That Vertue's depiction is not a true replica of the actuality is emphasised by the fact that the two candles are shown alight, thus drawing attention to them, and also by the fact that he corrected this in his later 1730s version.

It is apparent from this that Vertue's engraving for Pope had been deliberately adapted for some reason. Because of Pope's connections, and the fact that Pope published his edition of *The Works of Shakespear* in 1725, Thomas Bokenham<sup>5</sup> suggested that the candles were placed in the illustration in order to alert the enquiring reader and to lead him/her to the title page of Henry Peacham's *Minerva Britanna*, a famous emblem book published in 1612.

This title page of *Minerva Britanna* certainly seems to have an affinity to the design of the Shakespeare Monument, since it portrays a similarly stylised monument but with square columns rather than the round columns of the Shakespeare Monument (just as the square design of the Fortune Theatre complemented the circular design of the Globe Theatre). The pediment, on which is engraved the title of the book, is supported each side by a griffin-headed letter C, of the kind that one finds in Elizabethan strap-work, instead of the twin boys. These C-shaped supporters are also supporting ('holding') lighted candles in candlesticks above them.

Then, between the two pillars, instead of the bust of Shakespeare as on the Shakespeare Monument, is a picture of a hand emerging from behind a curtain that conceals the author, who is writing "Mente Videbor," Latin for "by the mind I shall be seen".

The name of this book, *Minerva Britanna*, refers to the Greek goddess Pallas Athena, known to the Romans as Minerva and to the British as Britannia. Whether British, Roman or Greek, the goddess is always associated with a spear and known as the Spear-shaker (i.e. Shakespeare). The coat of arms of William Shakespeare, which is depicted on the box above the pediment of the Shakespeare Monument, carries a spear for this reason.





In further confirmation of the analogy of *Minerva Britannia's* title page with the Shakespeare Monument, the inscription on the base (or 'foot') of the *Minerva Britannia* 'monument' states that the book is 'Printed in Shoe-lane at the signe of the Faulcon'—a black falcon being the heraldic badge of Shakespeare.

Then there are further cryptic pointers on this title page that lead us to discover who the hidden author actually is, who is deliberately veiled and can only be seen (i.e. discovered) by the mind; but this is the subject of another essay.

## Architectural Design

The Shakespeare Monument's architectural design is based on classical principles, using what is known as the Corinthian Order. With its unfluted monolithic columns supporting a fairly plain entablature, the design is not dissimilar to the grand portico of the Pantheon at Rome. The Pantheon (now known as S Maria Rotunda) is the most perfectly preserved of all ancient buildings in Rome. It is described as the "grandest of all circular buildings",<sup>6</sup> its circle being based upon the eight-spoked wheel of the goddess Fortuna (Fortune). This analogy is probably exactly what was intended by the designer of the Shakespeare Monument, thereby relating the monument to the Globe Theatre, which was likewise a circular 'temple'. As an added sign, the Pantheon's portico once contained colossal statues of Augustus and Agrippa in niches each side of the entrance to the domed rotunda—the capital letter initials of the names of these two most famous Roman emperors forming the 'Double A' (AA) signature of the mystery schools.

These statues of Augustus and Agrippa echo the idea of the twin pillars that stand before the entrance to a temple, such as the Great Pillars of Solomon's Temple. In classical terms, they are sometimes referred to as the Venus and Mars pillars, or as the Gemini. The astrological glyph of Gemini (♊) is derived from the idea of these twin entrance pillars supported by a threshold and topped by a lintel.

The Gemini ('Heavenly Twins') comprise a key motif in the Shakespeare Works. In the Shakespeare Folio the Gemini appear reclining on two letter A's of the Folio's AA headpiece.<sup>7</sup>



In the Shakespeare Monument, the twin pillars either side of the arched niche—the 'gateway' in which the bust of Shakespeare sits—are the architectural representation of these Great Pillars and thus of the Gemini. This symbolism is prominently emphasised by the statues of the Gemini shown directly above the pillars.

## The Gemini

The two statues of the Gemini, portrayed as two naked boys, are placed on the Shakespeare Monument in the position of heraldic supporters. What they support is a marble box

displaying the Shakespeare coat of arms that rests, together with the twins, on the entablature above the niche containing the bust of Shakespeare. The figure on the dexter or right-hand side of the monument (i.e. as distinct from the viewer's right-hand side) holds a spade in his right hand whilst his left hand rests on the ground and vegetation. The figure on the sinister (left-hand) side holds an inverted, dowsed torch in his left hand whilst his right hand rests on a skull. In simple terms, these are emblematic of life and death, or of labour and rest as described in Freemasonry. These Gemini are associated respectively with the right and left-hand Great Pillars (*Jachin* and *Boaz*) of Solomon's Temple.

The spade is a reference to Adam, the gardener, who digs the ground to sow the seed, as also to St George, the Red or Rose Cross Knight, whose name means 'the cultivator'. This signifies the work which man was given to do by God; and—in the revelation of the wisdom teachings given first by Jesus, then by St John, and later reiterated, explained and emphasised by Francis Bacon—this work is God's work, the labour of love.

This labour of love is associated with God as Creator and represented in the Hebrew-Christian cabalistic 'Tree of Life'<sup>8</sup> by *Sephira 2* (Wisdom), sometimes known in Greek as *Logos* ('Word') or in Hebrew as *Abba* ('Father'). It heads the right-hand 'Pillar' of the Tree of Life. In human terms, this divine Principle is intended or destined to find its manifestation in *Sephira 4*, Mercy or Compassion, and *Sephira 7*, Good Desire or Good Will, both of which are placed below *Sephira 2* on the right-hand 'Pillar' and represented symbolically by Jupiter and Venus respectively. All of this meaning is incorporated in the symbolism of Adam with his spade, who was charged with looking after and cherishing nature, and with procreating (i.e. love-making and producing not only children but also good things).<sup>9</sup>

*Sephira 2*, the creative Wisdom (or Love-Wisdom), is balanced by *Sephira 3*, the loving Mind or Intelligence of God, in which the Wisdom accomplishes its work. This *Sephira*, also known as *Aima* ('Mother') or the Holy Spirit, heads the left-hand 'Pillar' of the Tree of Life. It is symbolised by the constellations of stars that fill the heavens, each representative of its children of light, and also by Saturn, Lord of Time and Space: hence the hour-glass in the left hand of the sinister Gemini figure on the Shakespeare Monument.

Saturn's association with death refers to the unending cycles of time, or life cycles, each of which begin with birth but end with death. Death is associated with rest or peace, which is essentially a time for contemplation and revelation (i.e. knowledge or illumination). This is then followed by rebirth. The *Sephiroth* that lie beneath *Sephira 2* on the left-hand 'Pillar' are *Sephira 5*, Judgement or Perception, and *Sephira 8*, Good Thought or Reason, which counter-balance the more forceful, creative side represented by the right-hand 'Pillar'. These are the divine principles or qualities by means of which we can receive, understand and eventually know the divine wisdom. They are symbolised respectively by Mars and Mercury.

In the Adam and Eve story, the Saturn figure is equated with Eve; whilst in the St George story she is equated with St Margaret who, like St George, is a spear-shaker and dragon-slayer. Interestingly, life-size statues of St George and St Margaret, each slaying their respective dragons, are to be found on either side of the east window of Holy Trinity Church and in their correct cabalistic-heraldic positions—St George on the heraldic right (the north side) and St Margaret on the heraldic left (the south side) of the window.



## The Enigmatic Bust, Blank Page & Cushion

The Shakespeare Monument's bust of Shakespeare strikingly depicts him with a blank or vacant expression. He is shown holding a quill pen in his right hand, whilst his left hand rests upon a single blank sheet of paper laid on a tassellated cushion.

The immediate suggestion of this depiction is that Shakespeare is thinking about what to write on the blank page. However, a cushion would be the last thing to choose to write on with a quill pen: it is far too soft a surface and would only cause the pen to blot the paper, or puncture it, or at the best produce a scrawl.

This sculpted blank page clearly represents the page mentioned in the monument's inscription, displayed below the bust, which states that all that "Shakspeare" left was a page. This is curious, because the author Shakespeare wrote a great many poems, sonnets and plays, and the manuscripts of the plays continued to exist after the actor Shakespeare died in 1616, as they were used to enable the publication of the 1623 Shakespeare Folio. The actors, John Heminge and Henrie Condell, in their foreword, "To the great Variety of Readers," printed as part of the preface to the Shakespeare Folio, take great pains to emphasise this: -

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the author himselfe had lived to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings; but since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to have collected & publish'd them; and so to have publish'd them, as where (before) you were abused with diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors, that expos'd them: even those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers as he conceived them.

Even more curiously, Heminge and Condell continue further on to say: -

Who, as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.

Ben Jonson refers to this in some writings about the actor that were found among Jonson's papers after his death in 1637 and printed in *Discoveries* in 1641, wherein he wishes Shakespeare had blotted out a thousand lines, suggesting that Shakespeare had actually written no lines of plays: -

I remember, the Players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, (whatsoever he penn'd) hee never blotted out line. My answer hath beene, Would he had blotted a thousand. Which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted.

Johnson then carries on to liken this Shakespeare to the Roman orator Haterius, who had the unfortunate reputation of being often so impetuous and carried away with his words that he would muddle them, burst into tears, speak *ex tempore* and become so profuse in his language that he had to be stopped: -

And to justifie mine owne candor, (for I lov'd the man, and doe honour his memory (on this side Idolatry) as much as any.) Hee was (indeed) honest, and of an open, and free nature: had an excellent Phantsie; brave notions, and gentle expressions: wherein hee flow'd with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stop'd: *Sufflaminandus erat*; as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so too. Many times hee fell into those things, could not escape laughter: As when hee said in the person of Caesar, one speaking to him; Caesar, thou dost me wrong. Hee replyed: Caesar did never wrong, but with just cause: and such like; which were ridiculous. But hee redeemed his vices, with his vertues. There was ever more in him to be prayesd, then to be pardoned.

The example that Jonson gives is taken from the Shakespeare play, *Julius Caesar* (III, i, 47-8), wherein Caesar says: "Know, Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause will he be satisfied." Jonson infers that Shakespeare acted the part of Caesar and got his words muddled up in a ridiculous way—a mistake that no author of such a play, with its major focus on good oratory, would have made.

In support of what Jonson writes is the fact that all contemporary historical records of Will Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon concern him as an actor or a businessman, with no mention or hint of him as a playwright. The existing contemporary records that name Shakespeare as an actor are as follows: -

1. An entry in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber reads: "To William Kempe, William Shakespeare and Richard Burbage, servaunts to the Lord Chamberleyne, upon the Councille's warrant dated at Whitehall XVth Marcij 1594, for two severall comedies or enterludes shewed by them before her majestie in Christmas tyme laste part viz St. Stephen's daye and Innocents daye..."<sup>10</sup>
2. In the 1598 initial presentation of Ben Jonson's *Euery Man In His Hvmovr*, "Will Shakespeare" is listed as a "principall Comoedian".
3. In the 1603 initial presentation of Ben Jonson's *Seianvs his Fall*, "Will. Shake-speare" is listed as a "principall Tragoedian".
4. In two identically worded royal warrants, dated 17 and 18 May 1603, written for letters patent authorizing "William Shakespeare...and the rest of their Associates freely to use and exercise the Arte and faculty of playinge Comedies Tragedies histories Enterludes moralls pastoralls Stageplaies and suche others like as they have already studied or hereafter shall use or studie aswell for the recreation of our lovinge Subjectes as for our Solace and pleasure when wee shall thincke good to see them duringe our pleasure..."<sup>11</sup>
5. In the Master of the Wardrobe record of 15 March 1604, "William Shakespeare" is listed among "Players" who were given scarlet cloth to be worn for the King's Royal Procession through London.<sup>12</sup>

Understood in this light, this gives an entirely different meaning to the Shakespeare Monument inscription words—"Sith all that he hath writ, leaves living art, but page, to serve his wit"—from the several convoluted ones that many others derive from the inscription. The Anglo-Saxon word 'sith' (represented by the 'YT' abbreviation) means 'behold' but is usually

translated as 'since'. Thus, the sentence really says, "Behold all that he hath writ, leaves living art, but page, to serve his wit."

Taking this sentence together with the blank page of the Shakespeare bust that illustrates what the sentence says, which we are to behold, there seems to be only one interpretation of its meaning: that the actor William Shakespeare has in fact written nothing, so that all he has left living art is a blank page to serve (i.e. represent, praise, celebrate)<sup>13</sup> his wit.

This blank page, which matches the bust's blank face of the actor Shakespeare, is laid on and covers a beautiful tassellated cushion, such as one would expect to find in a nobleman's house or on the seat of a Grand Master of Freemasonry. This latter allusion is of especial significance, as the cushion is depicted with golden tassels at its four corners and a gold cord around it linking the tassels. In other words, it is tassellated. In Freemasonry, the lodge, the lodge floor (or carpet) and the tracing board each have a tassellated (tessellated) border consisting of a cord connecting four tassels, one at each of the four corners. The tassels represent the four cardinal virtues—Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice. The whole symbolises the fraternal bond of love by which all Masons are united. The symbolism is adopted from the biblical tradition, wherein the Lord spoke to Moses, instructing him to tell the Israelites to make fringes in the borders of their garments consisting of a blue ribband with a tassel (Hebrew *tzitzit*) on each of the four corners, to help them to remember and keep all the commandments of the Lord, and as a sign of holiness. (Numbers 15:37-40.)

<sup>37</sup> And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

<sup>38</sup> Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

<sup>39</sup> And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:

<sup>40</sup> That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

The colour blue, as explained in rabbinical teachings, resembles the ocean, which in turn resembles the sky, which in turn resembles God's holy throne. Within or on each of these is God, the Light, the Divine Love, the Grand Master of all. This is symbolised by the Sun and by the colour gold: hence the Grand Master's chair or throne, represented by the cushion, is tassellated gold. Instead of blue, however, the two colours of the Shakespeare Monument's cushion cover, red and black, symbolise the light and darkness that were separated at the end of the First Day of Creation, but which are yet One. (Red is the heraldic colour of gold, symbolic of the divine light.)

So, the symbolism of this seems to be saying that the Grand Master's seat/cushion is covered with the blank page of the actor, implying that the Grand Master (the author Shakespeare) is covered or masked by the actor Shakespeare.

All this gives a very powerful hint that the monument is celebrating two Shakespeares: the author of the Shakespeare poems, sonnets and plays, who was a Grand Master of Freemasonry, and the actor-businessman who did not write the works but who co-owned the Globe Theatre where the Shakespeare plays were performed, acted in plays on stage and was a mask for the real author.



## The Enigmatic Bust & Blank Face

As further confirmation of this, complementing the blank page is the blank face of the Shakespeare bust. This could be explained away as being the death mask of the actor, meaning that the face of the bust was sculpted from a cast made of the actor's face after he had died and before he was buried. It is strange, however, that the mouth is carved slightly open, as this is somewhat unusual. The result, however achieved, is that the bust creates a strange impression of lifelessness and vacuous intelligence that has haunted many people and caused a great number of comments. Perhaps the most famous comment of all is that of Mark Twain: -

The bust too—there in the Stratford church. The precious bust, the priceless bust, the calm bust, the serene bust, the emotionless bust, with the dandy moustache, and the putty face, unseamed of care—that face which has looked passionless down upon the awed pilgrim for a hundred and fifty years and will still look down upon the awed pilgrim three hundred more, with the deep, deep, deep, subtle, subtle, subtle, expression of a bladder.

Mark Twain, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* (1909)<sup>14</sup>

However, this is perhaps a little unfair to Shakespeare if what we see is his death mask. But why choose to represent Shakespeare in this way?

Presumably the portrayal of lifelessness as well as vacuity is deliberate; for, in the verse by Ben Jonson that accompanies and describes the portrait of Shakespeare on the title page of the 1623 Shakespeare Folio, Jonson states that the engraver has tried his utmost to “out-doo the life”: -

To the Reader.  
This Figure, that thou here seest put,  
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;  
Wherein the Graver had a strife  
with Nature, to out-doo the life:  
O, could he but have drawne his wit  
As well in brasse, as he hath hit  
His face; the Print would then surpasse  
All, that was ever writ in brasse.  
But since he cannot, Reader, looke  
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.

B. I.

To the Reader.  
This Figure, that thou here seest put,  
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;  
Wherein the Graver had a strife  
with Nature, to out-doo the life :  
O, could he but haue drawne his wit  
As well in brasse, as he hath hit  
His face ; the Print would then surpasse  
All, that vvas euer vvrit in brasse.  
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke  
Not on his Pi&ture, but his Booke.  
B. I.

Taking the word “out-do” in its more common meaning as ‘surpass’ or ‘excel’,<sup>15</sup> the passage infers that the engraver tried his best to create a picture of Shakespeare that was better than the reality. In its literal meaning, however, *out-do* (as in the equivalent Dutch word *uitdoen*) means to erase or efface; hence Jonson is really telling us that the engraver tried very hard to do out or do away with the life or reality of Shakespeare—a comment which the rather lifeless face of the portrait seems to confirm. Ambiguity is clearly the name of the game, wherein things are not necessarily as they seem.

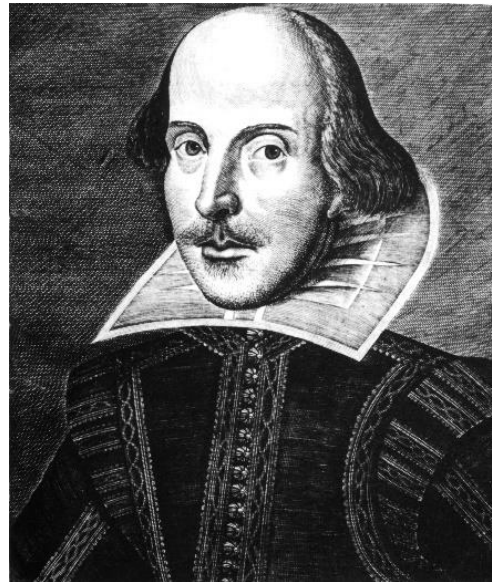
To make this clearer, a second ambiguity in Jonson's portrait poem is the word "hit". One of its meanings is 'struck', referring to the engraver's sharp tool striking the brass plate in order to make the engraving. However, another meaning is 'hid', for the word 'hit' is the old past participle of hide, with the meaning 'hid' or 'hidden', exactly as we find used by Chaucer in *The Squires Tale*: -

Right as a serpent hit hym under floures  
Til he may seen his tyme for to byte.<sup>16</sup>

Put into modern English prose, this means: "Just as a serpent hid himself under flowers until he might see his time to bite".

In other words, the author's face is concealed in some way by the picture. And indeed, if one looks carefully at the Shakespeare Folio title page portrait, the face of Shakespeare looks as if it is a mask concealing someone else's face.

It cannot be an accident, therefore, that both the Shakespeare Folio and the Shakespeare Monument convey the same idea. Each depicts Shakespeare as a mask: the former an actor's mask and the latter a death mask; the one described as lifeless and the other looking lifeless.



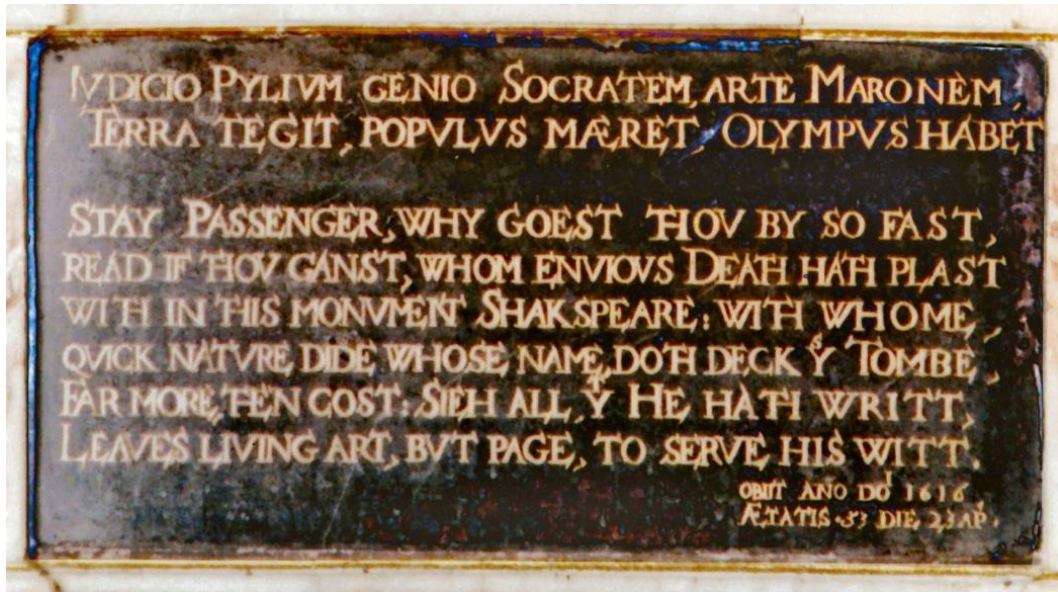
## The Enigmatic Inscription

Then, just as the Shakespeare Folio's portrait poem alerts us via ambiguity and other pointers, the Shakespeare Monument's inscription also warns us that not all is as it seems: -

Ivdicio Pylivm, genio Socratem, arte Maronem:  
Terra tegit, popvlvs maeret, Olympvs habet.

Stay Passenger, why goest thov by so fast?  
read if thov canst, whom enviovs Death hath plast,  
with in this monvment Shakspeare; with whome,  
qvick natvre dide; whose name doth deck ys Tombe,  
Far more then cost: Sieh all, yt He hath writt,  
Leaves living art, bvt page, to serve his witt.

obiit aÑo do<sup>i</sup> 1616  
Ætatis • 53 die 23 ap<sup>r</sup>.



Of the ten incised lines, the first two and last two are in Latin, whilst the six middle ones are in English.

The first two lines translate as: -

A Pylus in judgement, a Socrates in genius, a Maro in art:  
The Earth encloses, the people mourn, Olympus holds.

Or, in a more understandable English order: -

The Earth encloses, the people mourn, Olympus holds  
A Pylus in judgement, a Socrates in genius, a Maro in art.

The warning that not all is as it seems is given in the first three lines of the middle section, which comprise a command (“Stay Passenger”), a question (“Why goest thou by so fast?”) and a challenge (“Read if thou canst...”). Like Portia’s interjection to Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* (“Tarry a little, there is something else”),<sup>17</sup> we are warned not to read the inscription too quickly lest as a result we jump to some hasty conclusion and miss something important. It also implies that it is not easy to read “whom envious death hath placed within this monument” and whose “name doth deck this tombe”.

So, what are we supposed to read? And why should it be difficult for us to do so? At first glance this appears to be not much of a challenge, for the name “Shakspeare” is clearly given, followed at the end of the inscription by the date, in abbreviated Latin, of the death and age of the actor William Shakspeare (Shakespeare) of Stratford-upon-Avon: -

obiit aÑo do<sup>i</sup> 1616  
Ætatis • 53 die 23 ap<sup>r</sup>.

Written out in full, the Latin would be *Obiit Anno Domine 1616, ætatis 53 die 23 Aprilis*, which translates into English as “He died AD 1616 aged 53 on the 23rd day of April.” That is to say, according to the monument’s inscription, Shakespeare died on St George’s Day, 23 April 1616, aged 53. This date is partly supported by the Stratford Parish Register of 1616, which records



the burial of “Will. Shakspear gent.” on “Aprill 25” of that year, and burials usually took place two to three days after death.

But why does the monument record Shakespeare as being aged 53 when he died, when in fact he was 52 years old and may in fact have died on his 52<sup>nd</sup> birthday?<sup>18</sup>

Significantly, 53 is a special Freemasonic number, referring to the angle of 53° in the Pythagorean 3-4-5-sided right-angled triangle. This particular triangle refers to the 47<sup>th</sup> Proposition of Euclid, the Pythagorean theorem that represents the central tenet of Freemasonry.<sup>19</sup> It is represented in Freemasonry by the 3:4:5 Gallows Square, the Master Mason’s emblem or jewel, which squares the try-square or Masonic Square. The 53° angle is associated with the statement, “The Father and I are one”, which is the ultimate Gemini state of being—the marriage, union or atonement of immortal and mortal.<sup>20</sup>

So, all is definitely not as it seems at first sight.

### Whose Name decks the Tomb?

The last part of the fourth line of the middle section of the inscription on the Shakespeare Monument tells us that someone’s name “doth deck this tomb” and challenges us to read whose name this is if we can—the name of the person whom envious death has placed within the Shakespeare Monument: -

Stay Passenger, why goest thov by so fast?  
read if thov canst, whom enviovs Death hath plast,  
with in this monvment Shakspeare; with whome,  
qvick natvre dide; whose name doth deck ys Tombe,  
Far more then cost: Sieh all, yt He hath writt,  
Leaves living art, bvt page, to serve his witt.

Whose name decks the tomb? Although the punctuation is wrong for the obvious solution, the name that decks the tomb would appear to be the name “Shakspeare”. The word ‘tomb’ can refer to a monument commemorating someone who has died as well as to a vault or a grave containing the body of the dead person; so, from this point of view, the tomb referred to in the inscription is this Shakespeare Monument that commemorates “Shakspeare”.

But then this makes no sense of the challenge to “read if we can whom envious death has placed within this monument”, because, first of all, the name “Shakspeare” tells us who it is (or does it?), and, secondly, the monument is too small to contain the body of a person—and anyway we are told elsewhere that the body of “Will. Shakspear gent.” of Stratford-upon-Avon is buried beneath the chancel steps overlooked by the monument. So, it cannot be the body of the actor that is being referred to; it can only be a description of someone else who is known by the name “Shakspeare” or “Shakespeare”.

One key to this mystery would seem to be that we are challenged to “read” who is placed in the monument, which implies either reading the words of the inscription or reading the symbolism of the monument, or both. That this is not necessarily easy to do is emphasised by the comment, “if thou canst”.

A second key that follows the first is that, in terms of reading words, the inscription itself is the monument in which the description of “Shakspeare” is entombed.

A third key is that the word “deck” means ‘adornment’ or ‘covering’. That which decks the inscription is, therefore, the first or topmost line of the inscription: -

Ivdicio Pylivm, genio Socratem, arte Maronem

This first, topmost line, “A Pylus in judgement, a Socrates in genius, a Maro in art,” is the one which confirms that this monument is indeed the memorial to the renowned author of the Shakespeare plays, as no one else warranted such a tribute as is given in these lines—a tribute which is confirmed by the actual poems, sonnets and plays attributed to Shakespeare. Moreover, this line contains three *names* which describe the author Shakespeare.

“Pylus” is the appellation of Nestor of Gerenia, king of Pylos, who, as a statesman, ruler, judge and counsellor, and an adviser to kings and princes, was renowned for his legal judgement, eloquence, address, wisdom, justice and prudence of mind.

Socrates was the most celebrated philosopher of Greece, the father of moral philosophy, a renowned orator, an advocate of clarity and the inductive procedure, and the principal instigator of the great philosophies that have constituted the major traditions of Western civilisation right up to the modern era. He was said to have drawn down philosophy from heaven to earth by deriding the more abstruse enquiries and ungrounded metaphysical researches of his predecessors and encouraging his countrymen to learn from experience. By introducing moral philosophy, he induced humankind to consider themselves, their passions, their opinions, their duties, faculties and actions. Socrates’ aim was the happiness and good of his countrymen, and the reformation of their corrupted morals. He was attended by a number of pupils, one of whom was Plato—and it was via Plato’s writings that the spoken words of Socrates were passed down the centuries, such that Plato in his writings is Socrates.

“Maro” was the surname of Publius Vergilius Maro, better known to us as Virgil, the greatest of the Roman poets, who was a highly learned scholar, a refined writer and an initiate of the Romano-Greek mysteries as practised at Cumae, near Naples, where he lived for the last part of his life. His *Aeneid* is based upon the mysteries and Homer’s epic tales, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

However, none of these great men is known publicly to have written plays, and the only one of them who was a poet (Virgil) was also a scholar. So why, out of all the great exemplars of classical tradition, were these three chosen to be the ones to whom Shakespeare is likened?

The Shakespeare plays, poems and sonnets certainly reveal that the author was exceedingly eloquent and had a strong sense of justice, the legal knowledge and language of a jurist, the genius and understanding of a great philosopher, the education and art of a fine scholar-poet, and intimate familiarity with the royal court and Inns of Court as well as with the mysteries and wisdom traditions. But, from all that is known of the life of the Stratfordian actor and businessman Will Shakespeare, he is not the one who fits this description of the author.

There was, however, one man—and one man only—who does fit this description and who could have written the plays, who had a motive for doing so, and who was alive throughout the whole Shakespeare period (including the publication of the 1623 Shakespeare Folio), and that man was the lawyer, philosopher and statesman, Francis Bacon, who became Lord

Chancellor and sat on the Woolsack in the House of Lords. Moreover, Francis Bacon not only referred to himself as a “secret poet” but also was referred to by others as a secret poet who had renovated philosophy by means of comedy and tragedy. He was equated with Apollo, the Day Star and leader of the choir of Muses, and with Pallas Athena, the Tenth Muse.<sup>21</sup> Various signs indicate that he was a Rosicrucian. In 1621 he was created Viscount St Alban, being uniquely named after the saint whom Freemasonic legend claims founded English Freemasonry and was its first Grand Master.

A confirmation of such secrecy is provided by the suggestive fact that Socrates was reputed to have composed various tragedies attributed to his pupil Euripides, and Virgil, according to the English poet Edmund Spenser, wrote pseudonymously under the name of Tityrus. (Spenser points this out in his epic romance, *The Shepheard's Calendar*, adding that the use of pseudonyms or masks had always been common practice for poets, the French poet Marot having veiled himself under the name of Colin, and Spenser himself using the pseudonyms of Colin Clout and Immerito.)

A still further hint is that, just as Socrates was attended by a number of distinguished pupils who were collaborators in his discussions, so was Francis Bacon attended by distinguished pupils who were his collaborators and assistants, whom he called his “good pens”.

## Supportive References

Certain of the elegies in the *Manes Verulamiani* (1626), the collection of eulogies to Francis Bacon published shortly after his death, refer directly to the inscription on the Stratford Shakespeare Monument.

For instance, the description of the author Shakespeare on the Shakespeare Monument as being like Nestor, King of Pylus, and Virgil, surnamed Maro, is specifically applied to Francis Bacon by his contemporaries. In addition, they acknowledge that Francis Bacon was in his lifetime, like Socrates in his lifetime, the most renowned orator and celebrated philosopher of his country, famous for his use of the inductive process.

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

Anon., *Manes Verulamiani*, Elegy 16.

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

Gawen Nash, *Manes Verulamiani*, Elegy 27.

The Shakespeare Monument refers to Shakespeare being held in Olympus, the celestial home of the Greek gods and goddesses. Likewise, Bacon is said to be a star shining in rosy Olympus, being compared to celestial beings such as Zeus, Athena, Apollo and Mercury: -

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

Anon., *Manes Verulamiani*, Elegy 23.



The use of “Olympus” rather than “heaven” is not unusual, but the reference to “traveller” is. The inscription “Stay Passenger, why goest thou by so fast? Read if thou canst...” is pointedly alluded to in Thomas Vincent’s elegy to Francis Bacon, associating Bacon directly and intimately with the Shakespeare Monument: -

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

Thomas Vincent, *Manes Verulamiani*, Elegy 7.

The only difference in the specific reference that identifies the tomb is that whereas the Shakespeare Monument uses the word “passenger”, Vincent uses “traveller”—but the sense is the same. In the 16th/17th century, ‘passenger’ was the name for a traveller of a certain standing and substance, as distinct from a vagabond. It is used as such in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, for instance: -

*1st Outlaw.* Fellows, stand fast: I see a passenger.

*2nd Outlaw.* If there be ten, shrink not, but down with ‘em.

*3rd Outlaw.* Stand, sir, and throw us that you have about ye.

If not, we’ll make you sit, and rifle you.

*Speed.* Sir, we are undone; these are the villains

That all the travellers do fear so much.

Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV, i, 1-6.

## Far more than cost

Then what does the Shakespeare Monument inscription mean when it explains that this author’s name decks this tomb “far more than cost”? The word ‘cost’, besides meaning an expenditure or outlay of money, time, or labour, also means something that is sacrificed, suffered or forgone in order to secure a benefit or accomplish a result. In terms of the Shakespeare works, the real author, Francis Bacon, did indeed sacrifice or forgo voluntarily any public recognition of his authorship of these works by using a living person, William Shakspeare, spelt meaningfully as “William Shakespeare”, to mask his own name as author.

In addition, Francis Bacon made another and even greater sacrifice of his name for the sake of his king when he was impeached and ordered by King James to plead guilty to trumped-up charges without offering any defence. This scapegoating resulted in the loss of Bacon’s good name, which compounded the sacrifice of his name as author of the Shakespeare works. Bacon himself called it an “oblation”. Whether this extra sacrifice is alluded to in the Shakespeare Monument inscription depends on when the monument was made and the inscription carved.

Bacon’s impeachment as Lord Chancellor took place during March-April 1621 and sentence was given on 3 May 1621. The Shakespeare First Folio, with the eulogic poem by Leonard Digges that refers to the Shakespeare Monument, was probably printed between February 1622 and early November 1623. The first impression had a publication date of 1623, and the

earliest record of a retail purchase is an account book entry for 5 December 1623 of Edward Dering, who purchased two. It was printed and published in tandem with the final Latin version of Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, entitled *De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum* ('Of the Dignity and Advancement of Science').

As soon as he had been relieved of his duties as Lord Chancellor, Bacon had set to with fervour to complete as much of his Great Instauration project as possible, knowing that time left to him was short. This project, referred to in his *New Atlantis* as "The Six Days Work", involves the trinity of History, Philosophy and Poetry, with Bacon's part in it (as he declared) being to provide a light by which others might be guided on the quest for truth, in imitation of that Light which was created on the First Day of Creation.

Ben Jonson, Bacon's Chief Gentleman Usher when Bacon was Lord Chancellor, was one of Bacon's "good pens" or secretaries who helped him during this time—a period during which Jonson was also involved in writing, compiling and editing the introductory pages of the Shakespeare Folio.

## The Gemini Inscription

It is now possible to see not only that the first line of the Shakespeare Monument's inscription refers to the author Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, but also that the second line ("The Earth encloses, the people mourn, Olympus holds him") can suggest two Shakespeares—the actor who is dead and whose body is buried in the earth, and the author who lives on, immortal in Olympus.

A Pylus in judgement, a Socrates in genius, a Maro in art:  
The Earth encloses, the people mourn, Olympus holds him.

Here we have the idea of the Gemini hinted to us, of whom one is mortal and the other immortal—a partnership of actor and author which is outwardly declared by the Gemini figures crowning the Shakespeare Monument.

Great poets and teachers were considered "immortal": hence the description of Shakespeare as the "ever-living poet" in the dedication to *Shake-speare's Sonnets*. Moreover, the threefold description of the author Shakespeare in the first line is the description of a Hermes Trismegistus, the mortal who became immortal. As a mortal he was taught by Pymander, the Nous or Divine Mind. When enlightened, he became the 'immortal' teacher to his mortal students. This gives us a further key, opening the door to the Hermetic science and deeper mystery of Shakespeare.

## The Hermetic Inscription

In its fullness, the second line of the Shakespeare Monument inscription describes the Three Worlds of Hermetic tradition—the Natural, Human and Celestial Worlds, which are equated in Church tradition with the body, soul and spirit. They are names describing three distinct realms of consciousness as well as of existence.

Confirming this Hermetic reference, the first line describes the triple greatness of a Hermes Trismegistus. Nestor was a king reputed for his good judgement and advice, Socrates was a philosopher renowned for his universality and humanity, and Virgil was a poet who was an

initiate or priest of the mysteries, as demonstrated in his writings. These three analogies are associated with the triple description of Hermes Trismegistus, the 'thrice greatest' master and teacher of the Hermetic wisdom tradition.

That triplicity, which in great veneration was ascribed to the ancient Hermes; the power and fortune of a king, the knowledge and illumination of a priest, and the learning and universality of a philosopher.

Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning* (1605), Bk. I.

Then, not only do the first two lines introduce the idea of the Hermetic teachings but the whole of the inscription also does this.

The inscription is made up of three distinct parts: the two lines in Latin that head the inscription, the six lines in English that form the middle part of the inscription, and the two lines in abbreviated Latin at the end of the inscription. These three parts relate to the spiritual world of the immortal author (the two-line heading), the human world of the passenger, traveller or visitor (the six-line body of text), and the natural world or earth in which Shakespeare's deceased body is buried (the short two-line ending).

Iudicio Pylivm, genio Socratem, arte Maronem:  
Terra tegit, popvlvs maeret, Olympvs habet.

Stay Passenger, why goest thov by so fast?  
read if thov canst, whom enviovs Death hath plast,  
with in this monvment Shakspeare; with whome,  
qvick natvre dide; whose name doth deck ys Tombe,  
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Leaves living art, bvt page, to serve his witt.

obiit año do<sup>i</sup> 1616  
Ætatis • 53 die 23 ap<sup>r</sup>.

## The Hermetic Colours

The whole Shakespeare Monument, moreover, is constructed using the fundamental Hermetic colours of the three Worlds: black, white and red. Their metallic equivalents are lead, silver and gold. They symbolise the Natural, Human and Celestial Worlds respectively. These colours and their metal equivalents are also symbolic of the three main stages of human development and initiation. The alchemical work, which describes this, progresses from the black to the white to the red state; or, in metallic symbolism, from the lead to the silver to the gold or golden state of being.<sup>22</sup>

The Shakespeare Monument is built of black, white and golden-hued marble, and all colours or metals painted on it are of the same. The whole monument, therefore, depicts the alchemical process of life. Moreover, the heraldic colours in the coat of arms granted to John Shakspeare and inherited by his son, the actor William Shakespeare, and which is depicted on the Shakespeare Monument, consist of these basic alchemical colours. This coat of arms is comprised of a golden spear with a silver spearhead, point upward, displayed upon a bend sable (*i.e.* a black diagonal band) crossing a golden shield. The heraldic crest is described as a falcon with his wings displayed, standing on a wreath of his colours (*i.e.* black and gold) and

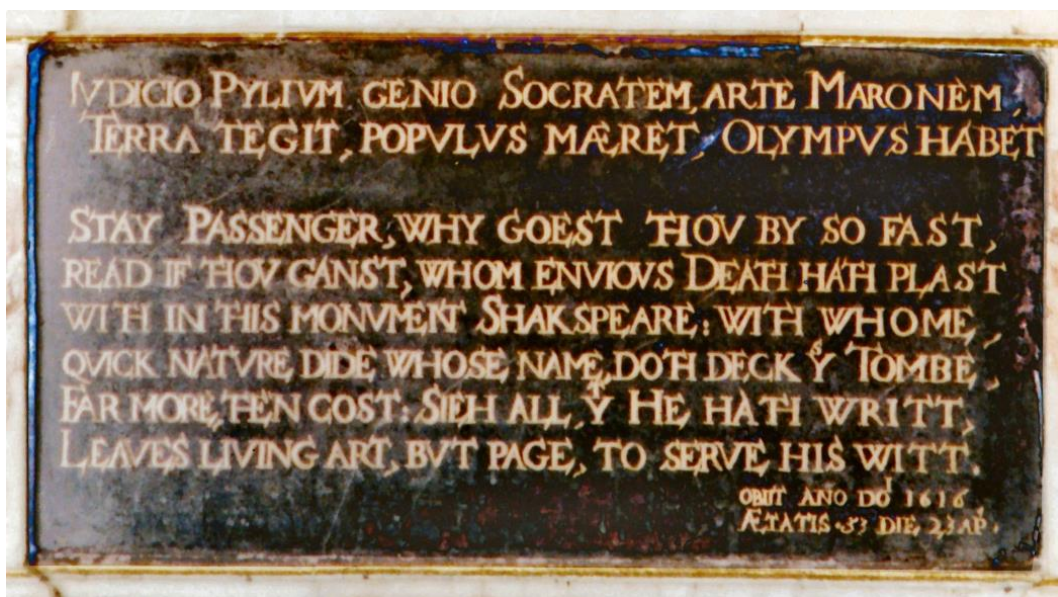


supporting a spear, headed silver, fixed upon a helmet with mantels and tassels. The falcon is coloured black, parodying the black crested cormorant known as a shag, its name especially referring to its crest. The shag holding the spear is an excellent rebus for “Shagspear”, which is one of the many spellings of the Shakspeare family of Stratford-upon-Avon.

## The Cryptic Inscription

Hermes Trismegistus is a title rather than the name of a specific person. That the first two lines refer to a Hermes Trismegistus who is Francis Bacon is cleverly confirmed in a very simple cipher embodied in these lines.

If we examine these first two lines of the inscription closely, as carved in the stone, we should notice that certain letters are formed larger than the others: namely, **I P S** and **M** in the first line, and **T** and **O** in the second line—six letters in all. The 6<sup>th</sup> letter in the alphabet is **F**.



If we count the number of small letters in each of the first two lines, the result is 33 for the first line and 33 for the second.

Iudicio Pylivm genio **S**ocratem arte **M**aronem = 33

Terra tegit populus maeret **O**lympvs habet = 33

33 is the well-used Simple Cipher for BACON (i.e. B.A.C.O.N = 1+2+3+14+13 = 33, using the 24-letter alphabet in use at that time).

If we add the F to BACON, we have the name F. BACON, which is one of the ways Francis Bacon signed his letters.

As a double check to this, 33+33 = 66, and 66 = FRA BACONI in Simple Cipher, wherein BACONI is a rendering of Bacon’s surname as used in Latin editions of Bacon’s works (e.g. “Francisci Baconi” in the 1609 edition and subsequent editions of *De Sapientia Veterum*; “Fr Baconi” in the 1644, 1659, 1662, 1685 editions of *Semones Fideles* (1634); “Franc Baconi” in the 1642 edition of *Historia Regni Henrici Septimi*.)

'F Bacon' or 'Fra Baconi', therefore, is the name that decks the tomb, with the Nestor-Socrates-Marco and Hermes Trismegistus descriptions confirming this name. It also harmonises with the fact that Francis Bacon at one time considered using the pseudonym of Hermes Stella for his philosophical works in his *Great Instauration*.

If we go on to count the larger letters in the main body of the inscription, the six lines in English, we will discover that there are nine such letters, **SPDSTFSLH**. In Simple Cipher, 9 = I, the personal pronoun.

So, the underlying question of who the real author Shakespeare was is answered simply as if by Francis Bacon himself: "I, F Bacon," and "I, Francis Bacon".

## The Freemasonic-Rosicrucian Inscription

The eight main lines of text (the upper two lines and the middle six lines) on the inscription of the Shakespeare Monument consist of 50 complete words containing 287 letters in total.

287 equals FRA. ROSICROSSE in the Kaye (or Key) Cipher, the well-known numerical cipher signature of the Rosicrucian Fraternity which can be found on many key pages of the Shakespeare Folio and Bacon's philosophical works.<sup>23</sup> 'Fra. Rosicrosse' stands for Fratres Rosicrosse ('Brothers of the Rosy Cross') or Frater Rosicross ('Brother of the Rosy Cross') or Fraternitatis Rosicrosse ('Fraternity of the Rosy Cross'). The signature can also stand for "Francis Rosicross", as given by Dr John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester, in his *Mathematical Magick*, which gives a further insight as to who "Fra: R.C.", the "Father" of the Rosicrucian Fraternity, actually was.<sup>24</sup>

The number 50 also has a highly significant meaning in the cabalistic cipher system, being rendered by the letter L in the Roman numeral system and used, for instance, in the Shakespeare play, *Love's Labour's lost*, to convey the idea of truth, which is Love's Labour or love in action (i.e. charity), as represented by the number 100 (LL), the cabalistic number of God, the Author of All. The number 50 is the number of the Argonauts, a metaphor for those seekers after truth who seek (and find) the golden fleece of enlightenment.

Carefully arranged one above the other, at the end of the last two lines of the middle 6-line section of the inscription, are two sets of TT. In Freemasonry, 'TT' signifies 'Thirty-Three' (33) and is used to represent the Thirty-Third Degree of Initiation, the ultimate degree of human mastery or enlightenment. These two sets of TT or 33 echo the two cipher sets of 33 of the first two lines of the monument's inscription.

Moreover, this middle 6-line section of the inscription has been contrived to have ten sets of TH, in two configurations of four and six, as well as the two sets of TT at the end. Each TH has been deliberately conjoined so as to give the signature of the Freemasonic Holy Royal Arch Degree, symbolic of the higher Rosicrucian degrees.

The letters TH as used in Freemasonry stand for Templum Hierosolyma, the 'Temple of the Great Solomon' or 'Temple of Jerusalem', and are specifically used in the Holy Royal Arch Degree.



TH is also used to refer to the Triple Tau (TTT), wherein the H is composed of two T's. The Triple Tau, moreover, can be written as TT, the two 'capital letter' initials of Triple Tau, using the Freemasonic Capital Letter Code. Then TT, as we have already seen, can represent the number Thirty-Three, or 33. Therefore all three ciphers, TH, TTT and TT, can and do refer to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Degree of Freemasonry, the highest degree one can reach.

TH is also said to represent Holiness supporting the Trinity. Holiness is written about in Edmund Spencer's book, the *Faerie Queene*. It is the title of the first book of the *Faerie Queene*, which concerns the Redcrosse Knight and his lady Una (Truth). Una helps to build the Redcrosse Knight into a mighty warrior capable of defeating the dragon that has imprisoned her parents. This Redcrosse Knight is associated by Spencer with the virtue of Holiness. Not only is Holiness the particular quality of the Holy Royal Arch Degree, but also the Red Cross Knight is the title of St George, who is associated with Shakespeare by virtue of Shakespeare's legendary date of birth and death on St George's Day.

The four T's (TT/TT), one pair above the other at the end of the last two lines of the middle section, is a neat way of indicating the Foundation Stone of Solomon's Temple, described in biblical terms as the Foundation Stone of the Universe. This is, symbolically, a cubic stone that contains all wisdom and is associated with the Word God that creates and founds all things. In itself it contains the idea of the Gemini (33 + 33)—heaven and earth, immortal and mortal, male and female, and all other secrets. In Solomon's Temple it acts as the foundation upon which the Holy of Holies is built. It is the symbol of the hierophant who, imitating the divine Creator, speaks words of wisdom and initiates all seekers after truth. This is the description of a great poet who, as Sir Philip Sidney explains, is a "creator" who moves men to virtuous action and mediates between heaven and earth.<sup>25</sup>

Then, these two TT's, each of which can be read as Thirty-Three (33), one above the other, echo the two 33's of the first two lines of the inscription. In this way the inscription provides a double signature and double confirmation, as well as being both Freemasonic and Rosicrucian.



## Summary

So, in this remarkable Shakespeare Monument, we have a memorial to the Shakespeare Gemini, the author and the actor—the actor, William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, and the author, Francis Bacon, Viscount St Alban, Grand Master of Freemasonry and Father of the Rosy Cross Fraternity.

Moreover, even in the idea of ‘Author-Actor’ as the Gemini, we are given the ancient signature of the Mystery Schools—the ‘AA’ sigil, representing Alpha-Omega, the Double Truth.<sup>26</sup>



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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The parish baptismal register records Will Shakspeare’s baptism on 26 April 1564 as “Guliemus filius Johannes Shakspere”; that is, “William son of John Shakspere”. His surname was variously spelt throughout his life, the main versions being Shakspere (baptism, heraldic documents, court records), Shaxpere (marriage licence), Shagspere (marriage licence bond), Shakespere (land survey, bill of sale), Shakespeare (lists of actors, court records), Shake-speare (list of actors), Shackspeare (last will and testament), Shakspeare (burial record). Shakspere is the most commonly used version. Shakspere and Shakspeare are both used for his own signatures on his last will and testament.

<sup>2</sup> The original sketch by Dugdale is in a private manuscript book of Dugdale’s still preserved at Merevale Hall.

Dugdale’s engraving was copied by Michael van der Gucht for Nicholas Rowe’s *Life of Shakespeare*, published in 1709, and by Grignon for Bell’s *Shakespeare*, published in 1786.

<sup>3</sup> Dugdale’s ‘sack’ was carefully copied by Hollar, or his assistant, in 1656, and it seems by Michael van der Gucht for Rowe’s *Life of Shakespeare* (1709), and by Grignon for Bell’s *Shakespeare* (1786).

<sup>4</sup> The sketch is now in the Duke of Portland’s collection at Welbeck. Vertue records on his drawing that he commissioned “Mr Harbord the statuary” to “make a cast from the bust of Shakespeare’s head on his mont”.

<sup>5</sup> Past-President of the Francis Bacon Society.

<sup>6</sup> Bannister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*, p 197 (17th ed, 1961).

<sup>7</sup> The AA-Gemini headpiece heads Hugh Holland’s poem, ‘Upon the Lines and Life of the Famous Scenicke Poet, Master William SHAKESPEARE’, printed in the prefatory pages of the 1623 Shakespeare Folio.

<sup>8</sup> The ‘Tree of Life’ represents the Ten *Sephiroth* (‘Ciphers’ or divine creative Principles) and their geometric connections which designs and underlies all forms and expressions of life.



<sup>9</sup> Genesis 1:26-28: -

<sup>26</sup> And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

The Hebrew word translated by the phrase “have dominion over” (i.e. dominate, often translated as “subdue”) actually means “serve” or “cherish”. This is referred to in the traditional formula which states that the quality of a lord (Latin: *dominus*) or king is mercy and that a true king is the perfect servant of his people and kingdom, which includes nature.

<sup>10</sup> Public Record Office, Pipe Office, Declared Accounts No. 542, f. 207b.

<sup>11</sup> Public Record Office, Privy Seal Office, Warrants for the Privy Seal, P.S.O. 2/22; Chancery, Warrants for the Great Seal, C. 82/1690.

<sup>12</sup> Public Record Office, Lord Chamberlain's Department, Special Events, L.C. 2/4(5), f. 78.

<sup>13</sup> *Service* is originally derived from Sanskrit *seva*, meaning to cherish, honour, worship, particularly in terms of celebration of the divine.

<sup>14</sup> Mark Twain, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* (Harper & Brothers, New York and London, 1909).

<sup>15</sup> e.g. In the second verse of Ben Jonson's Tribute to the Author a similar word, *out-shine*, is used in the sense of surpass: -

And tell, how far thou didst our Lily out-shine.

<sup>16</sup> Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, 'The Squires Tale', ii, 512-3.

<sup>17</sup> *The Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 301.

<sup>18</sup> According to the register of Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, William Shakspeare was baptised on 26 April 1564. The entry reads (in Latin): “Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakspere” (i.e. “William, son of John Shakspeare”). The exact date of his birth is unknown, but in the 16th century baptisms were typically performed within three days of birth, so it is possible that he was born on 23rd April, St George's Day, as tradition will have it. It is also possible that he died on his birthday, 23rd April, St George's Day, 1616.

<sup>19</sup> The 47th Problem of Euclid is the mathematical ratio (the knowledge) that allows a Master Mason to “Square his square when it gets out of square.”

<sup>20</sup> In the Pythagorean 3-4-5 right-angled triangle or Carpenter's Square, the side measuring 3 represents the Father (or Spirit), the side measuring 4 represents the Mother (or Matter), and the side measuring 5 represents the Son (or Soul). The angle of 53° is the angle between side 3 and side 5, and therefore represents the statement, “the Father and I are one” – a declaration of full illumination or mastery.

According to traditional instructions, a Freemasonic Lodge should be designed as an oblong square having dimensions such that it is one third longer than it is wide; in other words, a 3x4 rectangle. Circumambulation of a Lodge is traditionally done three times by the entered apprentice, four times by the fellow craft, and five times by the master mason.

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<sup>21</sup> See *Memoriae Honoratissimi Domini Francisci, Baronis de Verulamio, Vice-Comitis Sancti Albani Sacrum*. Londini In Officina Johannis Haviland, 1626. (Copies in the British Museum, Trinity College Library, Cambridge, and the Libraries of Jesus College and All Soul's, Oxford.)

This collection of tributes to Francis Bacon is more commonly known as the *Manes Verulamiani*. Selections from the collection were reprinted in the 1640 and 1674 editions of *The Advancement and Proficiency of Learning*. A limited facsimile edition was published privately in 1950, edited by W. G. C. Gundry of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law.

<sup>22</sup> The black or lead symbolism signifies the initial state of preparation known as *prima materia* ('first matter'), experienced as a psychological darkness or melancholy that culminates in an ego surrender known as psychological death, which is then followed by a state of peace. Out of this darkness a light is born, like a star. This light then increases in the mind or soul until the darkness is turned to light, the black turned to white. This whiteness is the state of purity – purity in desire, thought and deed (i.e. loving desires, understanding thoughts, and kind actions which are of service to others). From the whiteness is born the fiery red or golden state, the so-called Philosopher's Stone, which rises like a sun from its virgin womb. This is the third state – the state of exaltation or mastery.

<sup>23</sup> For instance, in Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* (1640) there are 287 letters on the Frontispiece page, 287 letters on the Dedication page, and 287 letters on page 215, which is falsely numbered and should in reality be page 287, just to make sure we get the message. Each of these key pages is therefore signed 'Fra. Rosi. Crosse' in Kay Cipher.

Ben Jonson's Portrait Poem on the first page of the 1623 Shakespeare Folio has 287 letters, the count of 'Fra. Rosi. Crosse' in Kay Cipher. The title-page of the Folio, containing Shakespeare's portrait, has 157 letters in its words, the count of 'Fra. Rosi. Crosse' in Simple Cipher. The first page of the Dedication in the Shakespeare Folio has 157 words in italic font, the count of 'Fra. Rosi. Crosse' in Simple Cipher. The Catalogue of plays has exactly 100 Roman letters on the full page, and 100 complete italic words in its second column, the count of 'Francis Bacon' in Simple Cipher. The page also has 111 capitals in italic font, the count of 'Francis Bacon' in Kay Cipher. The first page of the Comedies, (i.e. the first page of *The Tempest*) in the Shakespeare Folio has 287 words in regular font in its second column, whilst its first column has 100 italic font letters (actors' character names discounted) and 257 words in regular font.  $100 = \text{'Francis Bacon' (Simple Cipher)}$ , whilst  $257 - 100 = 157 = \text{'Fra Rosi Crosse' (Simple Cipher)}$ . That is to say,  $257 = 100 + 157 = \text{'Francis Bacon, Fra Rosi Crosse'}$ .

<sup>24</sup> That 'Fra' could also mean 'Francis' as well as 'Frater' is given weight by Dr John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester, a founding member and Secretary of the Royal Society, which acknowledged Francis Bacon as its Instaurator. When speaking of the ever-burning lamps of the ancients in his *Mathematical Magic*, Wilkins writes: "Such a lamp is likewise related to be seen in the sepulchre of Francis Rosicross, as is more largely expressed in the confession of that Fraternity." Wilkins, *Mathematical Magick*, 1680 edition, p. 237.

The expression "Father Fra: R.C." is used in the *Fama Fraternitas Rosae Crucis* ('The Fame of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross'), of which the *Confessio Fraternitatis* (Confession of the Fraternity) was its successor. The *Fama* was printed in Kassel (Germany) in 1614; the *Confessio* in Kassel (Germany) in 1615.

<sup>25</sup> Sir Philip Sydney, *An Apology for Poetry* (or, *The Defence of Poesy*), written c.1579, and first published in 1595, after Sidney's death.

<sup>26</sup> See author's essay, 'The Secret Signature' (FBRT website: [www.fbrt.org.uk](http://www.fbrt.org.uk)).