

**THE LIFE & WORK OF  
ROGER BACON:  
AN INTRODUCTION  
TO THE OPUS MAJUS**

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The life & work of Roger Bacon: an introduction to the Opus majus by John Henry Bridges & H. Gordon Jones

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# THE LIFE & WORK OF ROGER BACON

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
THE OPUS MAJUS

BY  
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"Induire pour déduire, afin de construire."

AUGUSTE COMTE, *Synthèse Subjective*.

"Omnes scientiæ sunt connexæ, et mutuis se fovent auxiliis, sicut partes ejusdem totius, quæcumque quælibet opus suum peragit, non solum propter se, sed pro aliis." ROGER BACON, *Opus Tertium*.

EDITED, WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES AND TABLES, BY

H. GORDON JONES, F.I.C., F.C.S.

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

THIS volume is a new edition of the *Introduction* which the late Dr Bridges prefixed to his edition of the *Opus Majus*, published at the Clarendon Press in 1897. The Preface to that edition contains full details as to the important differences between it and the earlier edition of Jebb (1733), but it may be well to point out here two of the principal features of the Oxford edition. (1) It contained for the first time what Jebb had so unaccountably omitted, the important seventh part of the *Opus Majus*, dealing with Moral Philosophy, the crowning portion of the whole work. (2) To his annotated edition of the Latin text Dr Bridges prefixed a most useful analysis in English.

Dr Bridges had already contributed the biography of Bacon to the *New Calendar of Great Men*,<sup>1</sup> and in 1903 he delivered an admirable Lecture before the University Extension Students

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan and Co., 1892.

at Oxford on Roger Bacon. This was published in the volume of *Essays and Addresses*.<sup>1</sup> I have, with the permission of Mrs Bridges, made use of those portions of this Lecture which contain important matter not treated so fully in the *Introduction*, as follows. The shorter extracts from the Lecture have been placed as additional footnotes, while the longer and more important passages will be found in the Appendix at the end of the book. (All such extracts are characterized by the reference *E. and A.*)

Other footnotes, elucidative of various points in the *Introduction*, have been taken from the three volumes of the *Opus Majus*. (These are denoted by the reference *Op. Maj.*) All the additional footnotes, including the editorial ones, have been placed within brackets to distinguish them from Dr Bridges' footnotes to the *Introduction*.

In his Preface to the supplementary volume (1900) of the *Opus Majus*, Dr Bridges said :—

Three motives prompted me, in 1893, to undertake a new edition of Roger Bacon's *Opus Majus*. One was that the sixth centenary of one of the earliest and perhaps the greatest of Oxford thinkers was at hand. A second reason was that this work brings into prominence the connexion of Greek science with that of the modern world, through the mediation of the Arabic schools of

<sup>1</sup> Chapman and Hall, 1907.

Bagdad and Spain. And thirdly, the *Opus Majus*, when published in its entirety, appeared to me to present to the world a scheme of culture contrasting strongly with any that was offered in Bacon's time or in the centuries that followed. Combining the comparative study of language with a comprehensive grasp of physical science, conceiving these studies as progressive, and yet holding them subordinate to a supreme ethical purpose, it surpassed any that was put before the world till the publication of the philosophical and social works of Auguste Comte.

In my selection of the additional notes to this edition I have been guided by a consideration of Dr Bridges' aims as set forth in the above statement, and I think it will be found that this supplementary matter emphasizes and brings into still greater prominence both the standpoint of Dr Bridges in this subject and the true nature of Bacon's work.

The compendium of 'Facts Relating to Bacon's Life,' which appears in vol. i of the *Opus Majus*, has been reproduced here, and I have added a Table of the Seven Parts of the *Opus Majus*, also a Table of the *Scriptum Principale*, to enable the reader to see more clearly the general scheme of each of those works.

The English Positivist Committee now issue Dr Bridges' *Introduction* in a separate form, on