

**THE CRYPTOGRAPHY
OF SHAKESPEARE,
PART I**

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The Cryptography of Shakespeare, Part I by Walter Conrad Arensberg

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WALTER CONRAD ARENSBERG

**THE CRYPTOGRAPHY
OF SHAKESPEARE,
PART I**

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE
CRYPTOGRAPHY OF
SHAKESPEARE

PART ONE

BY
WALTER CONRAD ARENSBERG

LOS ANGELES
HOWARD BOWEN
1712 Las Palmas Avenue
1922

TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE
AMERICAN

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by
WALTER CONRAD ARENSBERG

Gift

TO MY FATHER

520592

PREFACE

The controversy as to the identity of the author of the Shakespeare plays and poems has involved three kinds of evidence, historical, stylistic, and cryptographic; and in the already extensive literature to which the controversy has given rise this evidence must be carefully sifted from a mass of conjecture which is sometimes plausible and sometimes not. For a general introduction to the literature that deals with the historical evidence that the poet was not the actor William Shakespere the reader may refer to G. G. Greenwood: *The Shakespeare Problem Restated*. For a general introduction to the literature that deals with the historical and stylistic evidence that the poet was Francis Bacon the reader may refer to Walter Begley: *Is It Shakespeare?* and *Bacon's Nova Resuscitatio*; R. M. Theobald: *Shakespeare Studies in Baconian Light*; W. S. Booth: *The Droeshout Portrait of William Shakespeare*; and J. P. Baxter: *The Greatest of Literary Problems*.

The attempts that have been made to discover cryptographic evidence that Francis Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare plays and poems have been based on a variety of cryptographic methods. Among these methods are the "arithmetical cipher", as employed by Ignatius Donnelly in *The Great Cryptogram* and *The Cipher in the Plays and on the Tombstone*; the bi-literal cipher, as employed by Elizabeth Wells Gallup in *Francis Bacon's Bi-Literal Cypher*; the word cipher, as employed by Orville W. Owen in *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story Discovered and Deciphered*; the "progressive anagram", as employed by an anonymous "Shake-spearean" in *Shakespeare Anagrams*; and a variation of this method which is employed by William Stone Booth in *Some Acrostic Signatures of Francis Bacon* and in *The Hidden Signatures of Francesco Colonna and Francis Bacon*, and which Mr. Booth sometimes, as in his first title, designates inaccurately as an acrostic method, and sometimes as the method of the "string cipher." In my opinion, none of the methods to which I have re-

ferred has been proved to have been employed by Francis Bacon in the works of *William Shakespeare*.

Other attempts to discover cryptographic evidence that Francis Bacon was the author of the Shakespeare plays and poems have been based on the methods of the common anagram and the common acrostic. The only spellings of interest with which I am acquainted that have been obtained in the Shakespeare plays and poems in accordance with these methods are some common acrostics deciphered by W. S. Booth; they include, among some acrostic spellings of words not the name, one incomplete acrostic spelling of the name of Francis Bacon: F. BACO. This incomplete acrostic spelling of the name, which appears in the Folio in *The First Part of Henry the Fourth*, Act 1, Scene 1, lines 102-106, is simply part of an acrostic spelling of the complete form of the name, F. BACON, which may be deciphered in accordance with the method which I have defined and illustrated in the following pages as the key to the cryptography of Shakespeare and which I have called the compound anagrammatic acrostic. Another acrostic discovered by Mr. Booth which I regard as of value in connection with the question of the poet's identity, is the acrostic IAMON, the Spanish word for *ham* and an allusion to Bacon, which may be read on the opening lines of *Richard the Third*. In *Is It Shakespeare?* Begley shows, as the discovery of an anonymous German publisher and bookseller, an acrotelestial BACON at the end of *Lucrece*. The signature in this position, the structure of which is inadequately defined by Begley, is decipherable as F. BACON in accordance with the method, as I have shown, of the compound anagrammatic acrostic. In connection with the riddle in *Loues Labour's lost*: "What is Ab speld backward with the horn on his head?" I am indebted to Isaac Hull Platt: *Bacon Cryptograms in Shakespeare*, for the evidence that the horn may be understood as the letter C.

For the purpose of deciphering I have used the Sidney Lee facsimiles of the first Shakespeare Folio, *Pericles*, and the Shakespeare poems; the Ashbee-Halliwell facsimile of the quarto edition of *Loues Labor's lost*; A. W. Pollard: *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*; the first edition of *The Advancement of Learning*, and also Spedding's edition of the same work; and the first edition of *Timber*, which appears in the second volume of the first Jonson Folio and a copy of which was kindly lent to me by

Mrs. George M. Millard. For the text of passages not included in the foregoing works I have depended either on facsimiles or on reprints. The line numbers in my references to the Shakespeare plays and poems are based on the *Oxford Shakespeare*. For secretarial assistance I am indebted to Miss Dorothy B. Daniels.

The acrostics which I have deciphered include spellings of the name of Francis Bacon in various forms. The forms FR. BACON and FRA. BACON appear as the signatures of some of Bacon's letters. For the form BAKON contemporary evidence may be found in Spedding's *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon*, Vol. I, page 32. The form BACO, which appears in a few of the signatures which I have deciphered, may be found in the Northumberland Manuscript, dating from about 1597, among various spellings of the names of Bacon and Shakespeare; and the letters of BACO may further be understood as a sufficient form for BACON in view of the fact that the letter O with a circumflex may be understood to represent the letters ON. In connection with the acrostic spellings of VERULAM and ST. ALBANS, it will be remembered that these names belonged to Bacon as Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Alban.

The three chapters which I am at present publishing are to constitute the introduction to my complete account of *The Cryptography of Shakespeare*, which is now in preparation; they are intended, in this separate form, primarily as a definition of the method on which the cryptography of Shakespeare is based; and as they include, as illustrative of the method, only a small portion of the acrostic spellings of the name of Bacon which I have deciphered in the Shakespeare plays and poems, the acknowledged works of Bacon, and various contemporary works referring to Shakespeare and Bacon, they are not to be understood as in any sense a complete account of the evidence which I have to offer that *William Shakespeare* was Francis Bacon's pseudonym.

