

William Shakespeare and the Possibility of Encoded Information in Freemasonry's Earliest Documents

By Michael McKeown

William Shakespeare appears on the historical scene in 1564 and it is said he died in 1616, so right in the time period of active Masonry that was prior to the codifying of the Craft by the formation of the first grand lodge in 1717. During this period lodges appear to have had a mix of rituals, each lodge pretty much working independently of the others, with only basic elements being shared among lodges. The information on how to hold a lodge and what was to be done in the lodge was often encoded and secret, but even if each lodge was a bit different from the others, they all had a set of basic intentions at play. It hadn't really occurred to me that perhaps our Craft's ancient secrets might not only been encoded through the choice of imagery and ritual used, but may have gone further than that and be encoded in the actual texts themselves. My research hasn't had time to dig into those ancient documents at that level, but the path that has opened before me about William Shakespeare certainly suggests it is worth a look.

What you might read about William Shakespeare on Wikipedia would lead you to believe we know well the life of Shakespeare. It reads like an authoritative text book that a scholar can believe in and point to. Remember, a scholar is someone that studies, memorizes and believes what other people thought things meant, but were often wrong. Here in this paper we are autodidactics, i.e. we look at the original information and make up our own mind what it means. Very often our more modern minds realize that those ancient scholars we had to memorize in college were wrong.

I'm sure you have been exposed to the idea that Shakespeare might not have existed as such. Some believe he might have been a pen name for Sir Francis Bacon, and there is a lot of compelling evidence for that. Some believe it was Edward De Vere, and there is similar compelling evidence to support that theory. Some believe he might have not existed as a person per. se., but rather Shakespeare was a name give to an amalgamation of different authors or even a team of authors working in concert. But I am about to show you something so fascinating that it could be that whoever Shakespeare was, he was something else entirely, perhaps an aspect of Divinity. Perhaps a survivor of a different race of humans that were far more capable than us, or perhaps something even more outlandish sounding that I dare not even say. Or maybe this team employed a technology that allows the capability of encoding complex information in seemingly innocuous text.

It turns out, and I had no idea about this, but apparently it has been known for quite some time, that the 46th Psalm in the King James Bible encodes Shakespeare's name in a very intriguing way. It is important to first know the dates of the writing of the King James Bible. It is said to have been commissioned as a version of the Christian Bible written in English for the Church of England in 1604, and was completed in 1611. Remember Shakespeare is said to have died in 1616. In the 46th Psalm, if one counts the 46th word from the beginning the word there is "Shake" and if one counts 46 words from the end of the psalm, the word is "Speare" (note, not "spear" which would have been the correct spelling, but "speare" which fits Shakespeare's spelling). Some articles I read say that these words were changed in some later editions of the bible, but modern versions I have checked do have those two words exactly as described.

Researchers then discovered clues on the very first page of the 1611 King James Bible. There are 5 perfect crosses forming the words: "Ark of the Covenant Mercy Seat Hidden in a Church".

Well now my Masonic Researcher neck hairs were standing on end! I mean, the very root of the Hiramic Legend has to do with King Solomon's Temple which was built to house the Ark of the Covenant and all the mysteries involved in the temple's construction: no iron used, solid stone, clad inside with sheets of solid gold, like some kind of nuclear containment building, and the Ark itself reported as causing instant blindness if looked at, it burned bushes in it's path, it had to be carried on long *wood* poles, etc.

Knowledge of this has set researchers looking closely at Shakespeare's works. If Shakespeare was employed to help write the King James translation of the Christian Bible, and if he had encoded his name in the 46th Psalm, then what might he have encoded in work published in his name? So researchers have been studying Shakespeare's book entitled: "Shake-Speares Sonnets" (sic), and they have found incredible, and I mean mind blowing complexity of hidden messages including advanced geometry and mathematics.

The clues left in the document to the unraveling of this code are rather obvious to us now that we've had our attention drawn to it, but it had remained a hidden secret for centuries. I do not have room here to delve into the layers of messages encoded in the book of Sonnets, nor is it the point of this paper, but one of the main experts on the subject is Alan Green who has published three books on the subject under the title: "Dee-Coding Shakespeare: The Holy Trinity Solution Series" His work ties in alchemist John

Dee who frequently pops up in research regarding Masonry's roots and includes a surreptitious X-ray scanning of an altar in a church in England wherein may lie a document of profound import. The location of this altar was found encoded in Sonnets.

And so I wonder now: what hidden messages might there yet be to be discovered in Freemasonry's oldest documents before the knowledge drift of time made our craft begin to look more like a Don Quixote windmill than the repository of mankind's deepest lost secrets that I believe our Gentle and so Great Craft is? How were these documents created with pen and parchment paper with so many layers of encoded information?

Seems like my research recently has been more about history than strictly about the esoteric. But we must look somewhere for clues to our continuing journey of discovery of the meaning of our ancient and Great Craft. We can't just make pareidolia out of the symbols of Freemasonry. The mysteries are there, but we need a frame of reference to put those mysteries in context. This is proving to be exciting research, because every time we take a sidelong nervous glance behind the curtain of history we find startling information.

So now that Shakespeare was thrown on the path of my journey I figured I'd better educate myself a bit on Sir Francis Bacon, the enigmatic fellow that some believe might have been Shakespeare. Certainly whoever wrote Shakespeare's Sonnets had to be on par with who, or what, wrote the book of Genesis in the Torah. Michael Drossnin, as I'm sure you all will recall, contracted to have software written to finally put to rest the millennia long idea that the book of Genesis in the Torah contained encoded information, as it was written with no spaces or punctuation and looking every bit like a code. And boy did he find it. The entire document contains information encoded on diagonals, forwards, backwards, vertical, and letter skip. Words speaking to the same thing cross each other. The original book of Genesis in the Torah could not have been written by a human without a significant computer program to enable it. Certainly no human with a pen and a mountain of parchment paper could have pulled it off, especially when most of the messages found were prophetic in nature about events that have subsequently occurred. This concept is also tantalizingly similar to hidden sacred geometry in art works like *Et in Arcadia Ego* by Nicolas Poussin.

Bacon is generally accepted as being born on 22 Jan 1561. Bacon is said to have studied at Trinity College at the University of Cambridge, both the name of which and the building itself, lead our recently opened Masonic scholar's eyes to fly open with awareness that Bacon was enveloped in the previous Tartarian civilization's architecture and science and may very well have been privy to the secrets that were sequestered mouth to ear in early Freemasonry. In 1618 he was appointed Lord Chancellor, the most powerful position in England. In 1621 he was accused of, and admitted to accepting bribes, which was the end of his political life. He is said to have died in April 1626.

I almost have to laugh giddily at the very first thing I learned about Bacon which suggests we are on a fruitful path: Sir Francis Bacon was the originator of the Knights of the Helmet, wherein Francis Bacon lead a talented group of Rosicrucians and Freemasons. Wow, right?

He is believed to have been a member of a number of secret societies, including Freemasons (note this would have been a hundred years before the formation of the first Grand Lodge), the Rosicrucians, and the Knights of the Helmet, an "invisible" order dedicated to Pallas Athena that seems to have started in Gray's Inn, London. According to Greek myth, Pallas Athena (a woman) carried a spear and wore a great helmet, a symbol of secrecy. According to Greek myth, anyone who wore the helmet was made invisible. The helmet is very strange looking, depicting a woman under a curved roof and surrounded by strange winged creatures that have a powerful lion like bodies and hooked beak looking mouths. The second asteroid discovered, in 1802, was named after Pallas Athena.

Some researchers believe that the Knights of the Helmet was formed with the intent of creating a series of classical works which would educate the English people and transform them into a nation that would one day dominate the world. Other researchers go a bit further and suggest that the order also kept the secret that Bacon was actually Shakespeare. Shakespeare is taken to be a synonym for Apollo and Athena who were both known as "shakers of the spear". The spear represents a ray of wisdom. If Bacon, founder of a secret society based on Athena and who endeavored to bring about a ray of wisdom to the English nation invented Shakespeare, what an apropos name he created!

In Manley P. Hall's 1928 book "The Secret Teaching of All Ages", Hall wrote: "The Bacon-Shakespeare controversy ... involves the most profound aspects of science, religion, and ethics; he who solves it's mystery may yet find therein the key to the supposedly lost wisdom of antiquity...".

Uh huh; interesting how the path opens before us, how one clue leads to the next and each is so clearly a signpost our journey is going in the right direction. Are we being divinely guided? What magic is this that we should look at seemingly random things in

history that are so in alignment with our goal? I mean, I'm not making up these things I write about, nor am I cherry picking information to make it look consistent with our journey.

Some scholars (remember, here in this column we are autodidactics) argue that Bacon's involvement with esoteric organizations are a fabrication of prior authors, but there is a record that on 22 January 1621, in honor of Sir Francis Bacon's sixtieth birthday (as I write this my 60th birthday is this week), a select group of men assembled in the large banquet hall in York House (his childhood home he later purchased and which had 40 fireplaces) without fanfare for what was described as a Masonic banquet to pay tribute to Sir Francis Bacon. Only those of the Rosicrosse (Rosicrucians) and the Masons were invited. The poet Ben Jonson, a long-time friend of Bacon, gave a Masonic ode to Bacon that day.

From what I've read so far about Bacon, I feel confident he was a Freemason in those mysterious early days long before the first grand lodge. If there were secrets being transmitted mouth to ear that have now been lost under the morass of symbology of the modern version of Freemasonry, he would certainly have known about it. And if he (or his team) was the one capable of encoding secret information into Shakespeare's Sonnets, then Bacon's writings certainly deserve a close look. We have over a dozen literary works that Bacon wrote, and as an initial glance I noted the Frontispiece to *Instauratio Magna* (1620) shows Jachin and Boaz pillars, and the Latin inscription is from Daniel 12:4: "Multi pertransibunt et augebitur scientia." "Many shall go to and fro and knowledge shall be increased.", although many scholars (remember our admonition about scholars) quote it as translating to: "Many will pass through, and their knowledge will become ever greater." There is much online that can be read of the standard interpretation of what Bacon intended with this image and quote, but here I want us to note the Jachin and Boaz pillars which we've learned to recognize as a component of the previous world's power system.

Another person whose name is recorded in code in Shakespeare's work is Edward De Vere. Here we find another Freemason who was contemporary with Bacon, albeit a decade younger. Most scholars do not accept that Edward De Vere was Shakespeare, but I suggest he could have been on the team and had his name encoded as has been found.

When we look at ancient pyramids around the world we see Cheops as the greatest example of the technologies that were used, and when we look at later pyramids we see what looks like a devolving of the capability, further devolved when we look at rock cut structures, and later further devolved, but still utilized, in cathedrals and the stone buildings that today we know as the world's government buildings and city halls. This same technology must have been employed with the creation of what appear to be impossible 3d printed stone sculptures. There are sculptures from this period in Europe with multiple types of stone layered onto the statue, all formed together as if it was a single stone.

It almost seems like a technology was employed in the writing of Genesis that was the highest example of a technology's capability which in later centuries devolved to the level of capability we see in Shakespeare.

Certainly I can't imagine the work it would have taken, the sheer man hours involved, to create a single document like Sonnets, let alone multiple such works. I mean, just imagine for a minute writing the book of Sonnets without any encoded information in it at all. That alone is a feat. Now re-write it so as to include encoded information, with each new additional element influencing the language and letter placements and page numberings but yet the document must still read like a normally written and intelligible text. It seems to me like a multi-year effort at the least.

Or perhaps works like this were written in merely the time it took to write them first time through. Dr. Isaac Asimov (*The Good Doctor*) published over 500 books and published in every section of the Dewey Decimal system. He wrote with an old fashioned typewriter and he accomplished this amazing feat because he wrote without mistake first time through. Did he naturally exhibit a spiritual-like skill that could be utilized at a much higher level by a society that was tuned into that possibility and created a technology to exploit it?

Similarly the work of David John Oates discovered that when we make hiccups of speech speaking forwards, some strange aspect of our consciousness is speaking in reverse, and these reverse messages are consistent with the truth of whatever is being said forwards. His examples are clear as day and quite amazing. This also suggests a natural ability that everyone is doing all the time and if recognized as a "thing" could be developed and utilized and is exactly in alignment with the skill or technology required to encode information in text backwards, on diagonals, with skip letters, etc.

As a further example, when Michael Drosnin first published on the hidden messages his software found in Genesis, some argued that hidden messages could be found in other written works, and indeed, Drosnin did find similar hidden messages in *Moby Dick* and *War and Peace*, but those seem to be naturally occurring interpenetrating messages rather than Genesis which looks to have taken a naturally occurring thing and turned it into a technology.

I want to remind us though that the primary secret of Freemasonry is quite clear. It has to do with how the Great Architect (to give the unknowable a name) is all that is observable and the observable changes constantly and is influenced by intention (hence "Architect", or you might say: the Great Creator), and this Great Creator (which term suggests an anthropomorphism that is inaccurate), is that which we unknowingly yearn for and seek through our attraction to things of the world. This Great Creator is actually us and all we observe, or more correctly stated is the root of the observable. You might say the observable are moving images, phantasms, painted on top of that which is Real, but we look at the observable space and believe that to be what is real, when actually what is Real is the Great Architect's presence.

The Great Architect (of if you like a more concise term: God, Atman, Truth, Reality, etc.) can be recognized by noticing that aspect of your experience which is always the same; in other words, that which is changeless. That which in your experience of sensing the world does not feel different. There is a way it feels to see, and a way it feels to hear, and a way it feels to think, and this feeling is the same for each method of observation. The observed things and our observed thoughts and the meanings we attribute to them change constantly, but the feeling of observing is always the same. It is the root of thought. It is properly called Awareness: the root of observation. It is exactly the same for each of us. It is the Great Architect's presence (to again use inaccurate language, as that would suggest there is something or some entity to be present).

We already are that which we seek, and ignorance of this is the root of our pain as humans. It is the root of the reason for disharmony in the world. It was the fall from this Grace that created our world of pain, and conversely only through the Grace of the Great Architect can we realize that which we lost. "We" can not make this realization happen, for if "I" "try" I already failed for there is no I to be doing this other pretend thing called trying. All we can do is prepare the mind for the Great Architect to be revealed to us. This is what I mean when I say it can only be revealed to us through the Grace of the Great Architect.

This is the hope Freemasonry holds for the future of humanity, and most excitingly my research suggests humans existed as enlightened beings for a very long time and connection with Awareness was lost. I would even go so far as to postulate it was taken from us. Freemasonry aspires to awaken it's members and in turn awaken the world. In this way we will achieve the outer goal of Freemasonry of bringing about peace, civility and harmony to the world, for if all humans were Self realized (a term to describe this thing I'm talking about), the world would be a completely different place from what it is today.

It is important to remember this teaching because I suggest our brethren from the 15th through the 18th century (1400-1700's) might have been Self aware, and might have been privy to knowledge that was being taken from us and perhaps they hid that knowledge in the fabric of Freemasonry. Perhaps, I conjecture, they left clues to our real history, who we really are, and clues to technologies that were used to build the megalithic stone buildings and cathedrals around the planet.

We know there are clues all over Masonry's symbolism which borrow from Hermeticism, Alchemy, Jewish and Christian traditions, Rosecrucianism, and ancient Egyptian and pagan symbols. But what if those are all signposts, or even red herrings, with the real secret information encoded in a way researchers up until now never even thought of? Most tantalizing for us at this time is there might well be information about what I call the "great forgetting" encoded in the actual text of our earliest brethren's writings.

I am suggesting that a previous civilization, in the recent past; the one that built the cathedrals and the world wide grid system, existed in the enlightened state. The enlightened state is the easy state of awareness. It takes tension and effort to create the observable space the way we do by utilizing the pretend ego thing to separate out our experience into the three parts we know so well: the seer seeing the seen thing; the thinker who thinks the thought. It makes more sense that humans existed in the past in the state of Self awareness than not. People of that time would have had to be taught to fall into the lower state of awareness of the ego, the same as we have to be taught today to attain the simpler, higher, ego-less state.

I postulate that if a civilization were all Self realized that technologies would be developed that might look completely different than the technologies we have developed as an ego-aware species. Those spiritual technologies, if you will, might have made it easy to create geometries and encoded information on a global scale, and on the scale of the pyramids, and to utilize that same capability in miniature in works of art, architecture, and writing. Maybe at the time of the writing of Shakespeare this technical capability had diminished from global and pyramid scale to the textual level.

Or maybe it was simply just a team of smart people with long experience of encoding secret information by hand and a mountain of parchment.

This line of research however leaves me to wonder if the real secrets of Freemasonry from the time long before 1717 might not be encoded merely in Freemasonry's symbols, but also perhaps in it's earliest written documents and treatises, secrets hidden in a code yet to be found.

Sources:

“How Rosicrucians and Freemasons used Symbols, Ciphers, and Clues in Portraits to tell the Love Story of Queen Elizabeth 1 and Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford”

Presented at Rosicrucian conference, “Hidden in Plain Sight,” July 22-25, 2010 © Helen H. Gordon, Santa Barbara, CA

<https://thetruthaboutshakespeare.com/>

The Bard Code

Alan Green "Dee-Coding Shakespeare: The Holy Trinity Solution Series”