

ON THE TRUE FACE OF SHAKESPEARE

By Morten St. George

The year 1597 saw the publication of an encyclopedia of plants called *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes*. At more than 1,400 pages, it was, and remains, the largest botany book ever published in English. On the title page four persons are depicted. On the upper left we find the botanist John Gerard, the principal author. On the upper right, we see the Flemish botanist Matthias de l'Obel, almost certainly a contributing author. On the bottom left, we encounter William Cecil, the great Lord Burghley, surely a patron of this botany project granted that there is a dedicatory to him. The person on the bottom right is unidentified though there seems to be some agreement among the experts (including Stanley Wells) that a poet is depicted. Whether this poet was a wealthy patron or a contributing author, or perhaps both, is unknown. It was not unusual for great geniuses of the Renaissance to dabble in diverse fields ranging from arts to science. This is him:



In 2015, the historian and botanist Mark Griffiths published an article claiming that this poet was William Shakespeare. His arguments include the fact that this poet is depicted

carrying a rare flower called the snakeshead fritillary, which grew from the spilled blood of Adonis in the poem *Venus and Adonis*. Shakespeare unambiguously identifies this flower in his poem but other versions of the Adonis myth refer to a different flower.

There is more. The poet is standing upon a pedestal, and on that pedestal there's an emblem containing unknown iconography. Griffiths has interpreted these icons as referring to William Shakespeare, but his analysis is unconvincing, mainly because the 4L looks more like 4L than 4E to mean "shake", and XXX is more likely to be XXX than a W for William.



Here' s a close-up view of the iconography in question:



Previously, I demonstrated that there were many correlations between the Last Will and Testament of William Shakespeare and that of the French seer Michel Nostradamus, and also that there were correlations between the gravestone epitaphs of each. Most of all, I found numerous textual correlations between the works of Shakespeare and the prophecies of Nostradamus. For details, see my essay *Merlin, Nostradamus, and Resolving the Mystery of Shakespearean Authorship*. Also see my article *The Story of Giovanni and Giovanna* for yet another illustration of how a drawing on the title page of a book links to Nostradamus and affirms a Shakespearean connection with that book. Here too it should be the same. If that poet really is Shakespeare, this iconography must point to the prophecies of Nostradamus.

As we know, the prophecies of Nostradamus were written in the French language and here, in the middle of the iconography, we see a French word: OR, which means GOLD. The French usually write it as l'or, the gold, and note that preceding the OR we see the L above. Consequently, we must assume that the strange comma (,) after OR is in fact a misplaced French apostrophe ('). Hence, we're looking for L'OR, all in caps.

The Nostradamus prophecies comprise ten "Centuries" of prophecies, numbered I through X (but Century VII was incomplete), where each Century contained one hundred prophecies, numbered I through C. Where are we to find the L'OR?

On top of the iconography, we see the number 4 and the Latin L, which is the Roman numeral for 50. The 4 is connected with the L with an X, where one line proceeds from

the down shaft of 4 and extends horizontally into the L, and the other line proceeds from the top of 4 to the base of the L. In Roman numerals, XL represented 40 but keep in mind that numbers to the left are subtractions and numbers to the right are additions. Here, therefore, 4L is nothing more than the number 46.

Of which Century? The best guess is the connecting X, the tenth Century.

This is prophecy XLVI of Century X from the famed Benoist Rigaud Edition backdated to 1568:

XLVI.

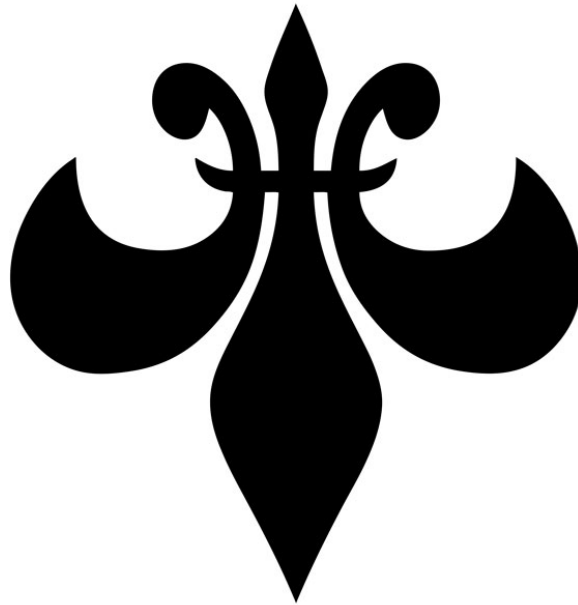
Vie fort mort de L'OR vilaine indigne,
Sera de Saxe non nouveau electeur:
De Brunswic mandia d'amour signe,
Faux le rendant au peuple seducteur.

There you see it, In the middle of the first line: L'OR, and this is its only appearance (in caps) in the Nostradamus prophecies.

Let's now take another look at our iconography.



One interesting observation is that the iconography is positioned on an emblem in the shape of a fleur de lys turned upside down. For comparison, here is free art of a fleur de lys turned upside down:



But in which prophecy are we to find the fleur de lys?

On the bottom, note the XXX which is the Roman number for 30. Next, note that the XXX is connected to the 4 by virtue of the I (dark vertical line down the middle) which is final numeral of the number XLVI. Logically, therefore, the 30 and 4 replace the I of XLVI, giving us XLV plus 30 plus 4, or 79. Without other indications, we remain in the tenth Century.

Here is prophecy LXXIX (79) of the tenth Century:

L X X I X .
Les vieux chemins seront tous embellys,
L'on passera à Memphis soimentree:
Le grand Mercure d'hercules fleur de lys,
Faisant trembler terre, mer & contree.

And there you see it, at the end of the third line: the fleur de lys.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the preface to *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes*, there is a surprising allusion to Nostradamus. In fact, it's extremely surprising because Early English Books Online finds no other reference to Nostradamus in all of English literature for the entire 16th century.

*"... Nostradami Salo-mensis Gallo-prouincie,
Nostra-damus, cùm verba damus, quia fallere nostrum;
Et cùm verba damus, nil nisi Nostra-damus
Vale. Londini ipsis Calendis Decembris 1597."*

Nostradamus lived in **Salon**, a town in the **Gallic province** of Provence. While Nostradamus had absolutely nothing to do with plants, he certainly had a lot to do with Shakespeare. It's an open and shut case: the depicted poet is in fact the real William Shakespeare.

Let's take one last look at him:



Not old (1597), energetic, good-looking, short beard, mustache twisted upward.