

BACON Francis—philosopher and statesman, b. 22 January 1561 in London, d. 9 April 1626 in London.

By education he was a lawyer. He was a member of Parliament (1595). He held a high position in the King's Bench and the Royal Court. In 1618 he came Chancellor and Lord of Verulam. In 1621 he became Viscount of Saint Albans. Also in 1621 he was accused of accepting bribes, lost his position, and avoided fines and lengthy imprisonment only because of royal favor.

He was the author of legal, philosophical, and historical works notable for their beautiful literary form (in the nineteenth century some even thought that he was the true author of Shakespeare's works). In 1597 his *Essays* appeared, which were studies in ethics and politics (a third expanded edition, 1625; *Eseye* [Essays], Wwa 1959). In 1605 he published *On the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning Divine and Human* (Part I of the *Instauratio Magna*, a corrected and expanded version appeared in Latin in 1623: *De dignitate et augmentis scientiarum*). In 1609 he published *De sapientia veterum*. In 1620 he published *Novum organum* (Part II of *Instauratio magna*, Polish translation Wwa 1955). He never published Part III of the *Instauratio* but only wrote fragments of this work. He also published a small work called *Historia naturalis* (1622) and his utopia *New Atlantis* appeared posthumously in 1627 (*Nowa Atlantyda* [New Atlantis], Wwa 1954). R. L. Ellis, J. Spedding, and D. D. Heath published a complete edition of his works in 14 volumes, *The Works of Francis Bacon* (Lo 1857–1874, 1887–1899², reprinted NY 1968).

Bacon was opposed to medieval scholasticism and looked to ancient thought (especially Democritus) and to the empirical tradition of Oxford. In the development of science he saw the most effective means to master nature. He wanted to make a survey of the present state of knowledge, a critique of infertile scientific methods, and to project effective and economical methods. He realized only the initial stages of this plan. He divided knowledge first according to the faculties of the mind into theory (the reason), history (the memory) and poetry (the imagination). He further divided the sciences according to their objects. Theory included theology, the natural sciences, and the science of man. History included religious history, natural history, and social history. The new style of scientific thinking that he propagated emphasized the practical aim of science, the need to do scientific research in groups, and the initiation of new methodological studies that emphasized the importance of experiments to establish facts. This approach was an attempt to establish a theory of induction (in the destructive part he presented the illusions of thought, called idols, which must be thrown out, and in its constructive part he developed rules for discovering forms in things). In the philosophy of nature he was a mechanistic, and in anthropology he defended a sober and practical attitude in man. Bacon believed in God but was not concerned with subtleties of conscience. He recognized the existence of a supernatural world and an immaterial and immortal soul, but in epistemology he took a position of exclusive naturalism.

There are various opinions on the theoretical value of Bacon's thought. He has often been regarded as a dilettante or as radical only in his slogans (in the realization of details he was traditional: he rejected the Copernican image of the world, disregarded the achievements of Galileo and W. Harvey, and did not think much of the role of mathematics). Bacon was certainly an out-standing propagator of experimental research and a precursor of the eliminative theory of induction and the ideas of the Enlightenment.

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