

The Dispersal Hypothesis

Founding idea of the Cryptographic Audit · stated by Walter Wilkinson, August 2026 · companion: The Flow Asymmetry Audit — Methodology

The hypothesis

Owen's *Sir Francis Bacon's Cipher Story* is not a derived decoding at all — it is the **original** narrative, authored by Bacon, which he then deliberately dispersed in fragments across the First Folio and as many as forty other works of the era: some published under his own name, some under a bevy of pen-names. The Word Cipher, on this view, is the recovery procedure for reassembling a text that existed first.

The testable consequence: asymmetric flow

If the hypothesis is true, the direction of composition leaves a measurable fingerprint. Owen's reassembled text — being the original — should exhibit **excellent** narrative flow: natural continuity, coherent long-range structure, the smoothness of a text written as one piece. The destination documents should show the opposite: within a host work like the First Folio, the transplanted chunks sit as insertions in someone else's matrix, so the local flow around and through them should read as **peculiar** — detectable discontinuities, coherence anomalies, seams.



The predicted asymmetry in miniature: smooth source (blue), seamed hosts (orange, with violet seam lines). The full measurement design, metrics, guards, and pre-stated decision criteria are in the companion methodology document.

Why AI makes this an audit rather than an opinion

"Flow" was unmeasurable in Owen's day; today a language model senses it numerically — perplexity, coherence scores, next-passage predictability. That turns the hypothesis into a signal-vs-null test: measure the flow of Owen's text against scrambled controls, and measure the Folio's local flow at claimed chunk boundaries against matched passages elsewhere. The hypothesis predicts a specific asymmetry — smooth source, seamed hosts — that either shows up in the numbers or doesn't. **Either result is a real finding.**

Connection to the corpus

The OCR'd Owen volumes (Books I–II + Synopsis, in the Kaggle folder) are the machine-readable source text this test runs on; Books III–V carry clean embedded text layers awaiting extraction. The First Folio is public domain. No permissions are required to run the source-side measurement today.