Notes

Shake-hyphen-speare

An interesting argument was offered during GTE's televised debate on the Shakespeare authorship question on September 17, 1992, moderated by William F. Buckley, Jr. Professor Gary Taylor, citing the work of Randall McLeod, stated that the Bard's name was hyphenated as "Shake-speare" for typographical reasons. Taylor said that the forward tail of a swash *k* would curl down under the *e* and shove against or crowd out the rearward tail of a swash *s*. The result would be loose type falling out of its frame during the printing process, unless a hyphen was inserted to add more space. Consequently, Taylor maintained, there is nothing suspicious in the spelling "Shake-speare."

Let us respond. To begin with, common sense tells us that typecasting technology 130 years after Gutenberg must have been remarkably poor if a simple letter combination like *kes* had to be hyphenated, but let us examine some evidence.

I looked for "Shake-speare" in all of the facsimiles of early Shakespeare works that were readily available: *Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto, A Facsimile Edition of Copies Primarily from the Henry E. Huntington Library;* the original edition of the Sonnets; the title page facsimiles and other illustrations in *The Reader's Encyclopedia of Shakespeare,* edited by O. J. Campbell and Edward G. Quinn; and the First Folio. The first three of these sources give the following hyphenated examples of the author's name: the title pages of the 1603 quarto of *Hamlet* and both quartos of *King Lear*, the cast list for *Sejanus* from the 1616 edition of Ben Jonson's complete works, the title page of the 1640 John Benson edition of Shakespeare's poems, and the 1609 Sonnets, where the name is hyphenated on the title page and in the running title printed throughout the book. In all of these examples, the name is printed in normal roman type. Neither the *k* nor the *s* has a tail descending below the line, and it is impossible for the two letters to collide. Professor Taylor's theory does not explain these examples–the name was hyphenated intentionally

and not as a typographic accident.

The prefatory pages to the First Folio print the author's name nineteen times. Five of these are hyphenated, all five being on the page with the commendatory poems by L. Digges and I. M. On all other pages where the name appears, it is not hyphenated. On the Diggs/I. M. page, the name appears six times: first, unhyphenated in the title of Digges' poem; next, hyphenated three times in the body of Digges' poem; next, hyphenated in the title of I. M.'s poem; and last, hyphenated in the body of I. M.'s poem. In four of the five hyphenated cases, the name is in normal roman type, and there is no typographic need for hyphenation. In the title of I. M.'s poem, the name is in swash italic type, and the *k* and *s* have descending tails.

We seem to have found what we were looking for. I measured the width of the hyphen and the horizontal distance between the tails of the *k* and *s* as carefully as possible with dividers. It appears that if the hyphen were deleted, the tails would probably collide. So the Taylor/McLeod theory seems to check out in this example.

But is there an alternative explanation? The oversized italic type used in the title of I. M.'s poem is from the same font as (i.e., is identical to) the type used to print the dedication on pages A2r and A2v, the heading "To the great Variety of Readers" at the top of page A3r, and the names of the "Principall Actors in all these Playes" on the last prefatory page. The name "William Shakespeare" heads the list of actors and is not hyphenated, the typesetter having chosen a *k* with a short tail. Further, none of the other material printed with this font contains words with unnecessary hyphens. These facts, coupled with the fact that the italic "Shake-speare" is found on the one page where the name is regularly hyphenated, make it extremely improbable that the italic example of hyphenation resulted from the typesetter being too lazy to toss the long-tailed *k* back in its case and replace it with a short-tailed *k*.

Still, let us give this hyphen hypothesis every opportunity to succeed. Suppose the Digges/I. M. page was set up last, and the long-tailed *k* was the only *k* left in the case. Was the typesetter compelled to hyphenate the name? No, he had another option that would detract far less from the appearance of the word.

There was a simple way to gain the minute amount of spacing needed to prevent clashing tails. A font of type includes not only pieces that print letters, numbers, and punctuation marks, but also pieces that produce blank spaces. These "spaces," as they are called, are mostly of a standard size, about equal to the width of an average letter, and provide the separations between words. But there are also longer spaces to fill out lines that don't reach to the right margin–for example, the last line of a paragraph or a line of verse. And there are shorter spaces, some hair-thin, used to adjust the spaces between words so that the entire line of type fits tightly between the left and right margins. Therefore, the typesetter who prepared the Digges/I. M. page could easily have used a hair-space instead of a hyphen if the tails of the two letters collided. He spelled the name "Shake-speare" because he wanted it that way. In other words, even in the one example that seems to meet Professor Taylor's requirement of colliding tails, there is still no need for a hyphen.

The evidence presented here is only a sample of all the early hyphenations of the author's name. But I feel that it justifies rejecting Professor Taylor's explanation of "Shake-speare" as a typographic accident. The hyphenation was intentional.

–Peter R. Moore

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"Concealed Poets"

The following letter from Francis Bacon to John Davies, listed as MSS. 976, fo. 4 at Lambeth Palace and published in Bacon's collected writings, firmly establishes that "concealed poets" were an integral part of Elizabethan life and that Davies was associated with them. After James became king and the seventeenth Earl of Oxford died, Davies all but stopped writing poetry. He devoted himself instead to politics, becoming attorney-general for Ireland and enjoying the patronage of Oxford's

brother-in-law, Robert Cecil.

A Letter to Mr. Davis, Then Gone To the King, At His First Entrance, March 28, 1603

Mr. Davis,

Though you went on the sudden, yet you could not go before you had spoken with yourself to the purpose which I will now write. And therefore I know it shall be altogether needless, save that I meant to show you that I am not asleep. Briefly, I commend myself to your love and to the well using of my name, as well in repressing and answering for me, if there be any biting or nibbling at it in that place, as in impressing a good conceit and opinion of me, chiefly in the King (of whose favour I make myself comfortable assurance), as otherwise in that court. And not only so, but generally to perform to me all the good offices which the vivacity of your wit can suggest to your mind to be performed to one, in whose affection you have so great sympathy, and in whose fortune you have so great interest. So desiring you to be good to concealed poets, I continue

Your very assured,
Fr. Bacon

–Warren Hope

Warren Hope is the author of "The Singing Swallow," in this issue.

Did Shakespeare Read Dante in Italian?

In his 1936 book, *Have You Anything to Declare?,* Maurice Baring suggested that Shakespeare had read *The Divine Comedy:* "There is a passage in *Measure for Measure* which makes me think that Shakespeare may possibly have read the *Inferno*" (109). Baring then compared Canto V of the *Inferno* with Claudio's outburst in *Measure for Measure* (see

III. i. 119-133), which summarizes the punishments Dante prescribed for those (like Claudio) found guilty of the "crime" of lust.

In 1940, James Dwyer made the same claim in The Shakespeare Fellowship Newsletter (Vol. 1, No. 5), providing compelling verbal parallels, such as: "e'l modo ancor m'offende" (*Inferno,* V. 102). This unusual expression, says Dwyer–"and still the manner of it offends me"–is another echo of the Fifth Canto, employed by Francesca to relate how she was suddenly slain. It crops up in the middle of *Othello* when Montano is called upon by Othello to explain what happened to him in the night brawl fomented by Iago: "I am hurt to danger. / Your officer, Iago, can inform you– / While I spare speech, which something now offends me– / Of all that I do know...." (II. iii. 190-194).

Dwyer then compares the unusual phrase, "cima di giudizio" (*Purgatory,* VI. 37)–"the top of judgment"–with its literal translation in *Measure for Measure* and then *Hamlet:* ISABELLA: How would you be / If He, which is the top of judgment, should / But judge you as you are? (II. ii. 80-82). HAMLET: others, whose judgment in such matters cried in the top of mine– (II. ii. 437-438).

Upon rereading Shakespeare's poems, I came across further Dantean echoes, especially in the sonnets: "Your love and pity doth th' impression fill / Which vulgar scandal stamped upon my brow" (sonnet 112). Compare with Dante: "Even as wax the seal's impressed, / Where there's no alteration in the form, / so does my brain now bear what you have stamped." ("Sì come cera da suggello / che la figura impressa non transmuta / segnato è or da voi lo mio cervello" (*Purgatory,* XXXIII. 79-81).

Since *The Divine Comedy* had not been translated into English until 1802 (by Henry Boyd), it's likely that Shakespeare had thoroughly read this epic poem in Dante's polished and sophisticated Italian. Inevitably, one must ask how someone with a grammar school education could become fluent in Italian in a socially restricted society, one whose population was 85 percent illiterate in its native tongue.

–Gary B. Goldstein