

Sc(e)acan, Shack, and Shakespeare

by Eddi Jolly

Our English language has been growing and evolving steadily for the past 1500 years. Those who study it tend to divide it into three periods: Old English, from 450 to 1100, Middle English up to 1500, and Modern English, from 1500 to the present day. The latter is often subdivided into the Renaissance or Early Modern English (1500-1650), the Appeal to Authority (1650-1800), and Modern English.¹ Early Modern English is the time span of particular interest here. There are six principal areas in which the development of the language is evident: letters or graphology, grammar, vocabulary, semantics, pronunciation, and orthography. We might look very briefly at a feature or two in the first four of these areas, just to have some idea of the details and differences. Most people who study the language will also touch upon the rise of Standard English, the effects of printing, and the issue of spelling reform.

For example, by the beginning of Early Modern English the **letters or graphs** are those we expect today. The old letter thorn, <þ>, representing <th> today, is still present; it was gradually written with the top open, so that it looked like a <y>, as we find in texts from around 1500, for instance. Early printers, who were seeking to justify lines, sometimes abbreviated words like *the* (three letter spaces) by printing <y> with an <e> over the top, to represent *the* (taking up one letter space). Sometimes an ampersand, <&> (one letter space), was used instead of *and* for the same reason. Occasionally ād, with a horizontal line over the <a> to indicate the predictable letter <n>, was used, to take up just two letter spaces. The horizontal line over a letter to show that a predictable letter followed was not uncommon.

Grammar, loosely denoting the rules which govern language, has changed considerably. Old English was a highly inflected language, where word endings on nouns signified subject or object (or dative or genitive) and adjectives agreed with the case and gender of the noun they modified, for example. Word order therefore wasn't as critical as it is today. By Middle English these inflected endings had largely been eroded, and meaning was dependent on word order, as it still is today. Verbs in Early Modern English still used <eth> as the third person singular present tense inflection, but by the end of that period it had been replaced by <(e)s> almost completely. So while at the beginning of the period *he speaketh* would have been found, by the end *he speaks* would have been the norm. Speeches like Portia's "The quality of mercy

. . .’ in *The Merchant of Venice* use both <eth> and <(e)s> inflections, showing the playwright was writing in this transition period. Q1 *Hamlet* has proportionally more <eth> and fewer <(e)s> endings on third person singular present tense verbs than Q2 *Hamlet*, which contributes to suggesting that Q1 is earlier than Q2 (Jolly 26-29).

As for **vocabulary**, our post-Conquest lexis was already supplemented extensively by words which speakers had borrowed from French, like *parliament*, and *petticoat*. In Shakespeare’s time writers delighted in coining more words, and particularly in deriving them from Latin and Greek. Some people complained about these ‘inkhorn’ terms, but generally the opinion was that to have splendour and magnificence in our language, we needed to borrow. There was a practical reason for some of the loan words, for they provided labels we lacked.

A number of the words used in earlier times have changed their **semantics**. Caxton uses *mete* to denote *food* generally (Bolton 2), whereas today *meat* denotes edible *dead flesh*. Shakespeare uses *enlargement* to denote freedom, whereas we are more likely to use it to mean a *bigger photograph*, or similar. The biggest change in meaning is probably *nice*, which originates from the Latin *nescius*, and originally meant *ignorant*, or *silly*, later meant *fastidious* (retained in legal *niceties*), and now means a rather bland *pleasant*. A good dictionary offers a fuller history of this quite fascinating change of semantics for *nice* over the centuries.

Those are the briefest of examples to hint at some of the significant changes over the 1500-year history of the English language. Two changes across this time span are particularly relevant to those interested in ‘Shakspere’ and ‘Shakespeare,’ namely pronunciation and spelling. These are best understood with some additional background information about late Middle English.

The **rise of Standard (written) English** comes towards the end of the fourteenth century; it was then that the East Midlands dialect began to be the preferred version. This was partly because

[the] men of the east with the men of the west . . . accordeth more in sound-
ing of speech than the men of the north with the men of the south; there-
fore it is that Mercia, that beeth the men of middle England . . . understan-
deth better the side languages, Northern and Southern, than Northern and

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Southern understandeth each other (Baugh 287).²

It also had to do with the region being relatively wealthy and influential, thanks to the success of sheep-farming and the resulting wool for the cloth trade in this part of the country. Above all it was the presence of London with all its trade and the power of government, and it may owe something to the presence of the two universities. It is usually roughly the triangle between the universities and London which is seen as giving rise to the standard.

Consequently, this area, especially London, tended to see the first stages of language change, which then radiated out to the rest of the country. The **accents** which survive today still show that not all changes reached the furthest parts of the British Isles. For example, in Chaucer's time the velar fricative <gh> (/x/³) in *knicht* was pronounced, but gradually that sound has been dropped from the speech of the English, although it is retained in Scotland in words like *loch*. Another example might be rhotic <r>.⁴ This too was country-wide in Chaucer's day, but from the eighteenth century was gradually dropped in, for example, the word-final position in much of England; it is retained in Scotland on words such as *beer*. Its retention in Scotland goes alongside a tendency for Scots not to have changed their vowels quite so much as has happened further south in Britain.

One of the changes in Middle English was that some short vowels were lengthened. Baugh gives the example of the Old English infinitive *bacan*, which became Middle English *baken*, modern *to bake* (Baugh 287). Other words which shared the sound change of *bacan* include *tacan*, modern *to take*; *sc(e)acan*, *to shake*; and the noun *nama*, *name*. Part of the change to modern pronunciations took place during what is called the Great Vowel Shift, generally seen as occurring between 1400 and 1600, but there were later vowel changes too. Baugh gives a table which shows the pronunciation of *name* in Shakespeare's time as /ne:m/ (to rhyme with modern British English *hem*), where the diacritical mark [:] indicates that the vowel is long rather than short.

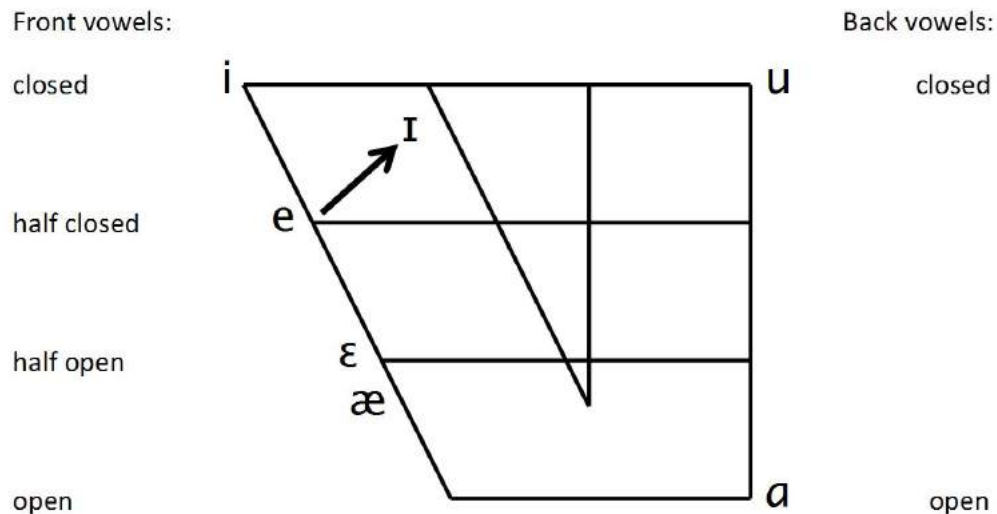
Wrenn gives a slightly more complex table, suggesting a sound change pattern as follows:

Word	O.E. spelling	Chaucer's pronunciation	Shakespeare's pronunciation	Modern southern pronunciation
<i>name</i>	<i>nama</i>	/a: /	/e /	/eɪ / ⁵

Simeon Potter gives it century by century, thus:

XIV	XV	XVI	XVII	XVIII	
/a /	/æ /	/ɛ /	/e /	/eɪ /	<i>name</i> ⁶

It may be useful to look at a diagram which shows where in the mouth these vowel sounds were articulated, since that shows a clear progression from the open back vowel of Old English, /**a**/ (British English *father*) in the International Phonetic Alphabet, to the slightly less open front vowel /**æ**/ (British English *bat*), to the half open front vowel /**ɛ**/, to the half closed front vowel /**e**/ and finally to the diphthong British English uses today, /**eɪ**/. However, although we can be sure of the progression, we cannot pinpoint exactly when and where the changes in pronunciation took place, or how fast they occurred and spread, but we can be reasonably confident that they began in the London area and spread out from there.



This diagram shows the places of articulation for the vowel changes from *sc(e)acan* to *shake*, including the three cardinal vowels /**a**/, /**u**/ and /**i**/ as well. The right hand side represents the back of the mouth, and the sloping line on the left hand side represents the front of the mouth.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that whatever the pronunciation of ‘Shak-’ or ‘shake’ in Elizabeth I’s day, the vowel sound would have changed in the London area earlier than in Warwickshire. ‘Shak-’ might reflect Warwickshire pronunciation and /**æ**/, a sound perhaps surviving a century longer in the regions than in London for ‘shake.’ However, the vowel diagrams above, from Baugh, Wrenn, and Potter, suggest the vowel sound would have been /**ɛ**/. We might note that one of the spellings of Shakspeare is actually ‘Shexpere’ (Chambers 113), which suggests that the vowel sound was at that stage and that the writer was spelling the first vowel sound phonetically. The same writer spelled *Stratford* as *Stretford*, a pronunciation change not found today, but a spelling which is not unique: c.f. ‘John Combe of Old Stretford’ (Chambers 107).⁸ However, the ‘Shak-’ spelling, where it existed, will have survived later than the pronunciation, because the pronunciation change for this sound will have

occurred earlier than the change in spelling. This is generally true.⁹ It was the change in pronunciation which drove the desire for spelling change.

There is another small complication, the dialectal word *shack*. This may be the sound associated with ‘Shakspere,’ since a variant of the name is also spelled ‘Shackspere,’ where the initial vowel is a monophthong rather than the diphthong in modern *shake*, and here assumed to rhyme with *back*. ‘Shack’ is reflected in some of the spellings of the surname ‘Shakespeare’ in the sixteenth century; Chambers gives a christening entry at Budbroke for a ‘Henrie Shackspere’ (Chambers 13), for instance. *The Shorter Oxford English* dictionary – the two-volume edition – opens its entry on *shack* thus:

Shack...Now dial[ectal]. 1536. [f. Shack, dial var[iation] of SHAKE.]

In other words, regional dialects (it is not clear which ones) in the sixteenth century might have used *shack* for *shake*. Of course, the writer Shakespeare did use *shake* in its modern form in e.g., *As You Like It*, when Orlando says ‘thou shalt hear how he will shake me up,’ and the Crystals’ glossary in *Shakespeare’s Words* does not offer any use of *shack* in the plays. But if *shake* was part of the standard and of London usage, then probably that would be the form the playwright and/or his printers would employ. The same dictionary tells us that Old English *spere* gives us today’s *spear*. What this shows is that the spelling ‘Shakspere’ might have a hint of a dialect word and of an older spelling.

What about **orthography**? In 1490, William Caxton, who had brought printing to Britain, wrote a preface to his *Eneydos*, his translation (from French) of *The Aeneid*. In it he tells a story of a man called Sheffelde, who temporarily unable to make progress with his sea journey, went to a house and asked for *mete* [*food*], ‘and specially he axyd after eggys.’ The lady of the house couldn’t understand him, so eventually another of the men travelling with Sheffelde asked for ‘eyren.’ The point is that the first man had asked for the northern version of *eggs*, while the second asked for the southern version. The old southern plural inflection, <en>, is retained in five words today, e.g., *men* and *children*. And Caxton metaphorically throws his hands up in the air and asks as a printer, ‘Loo, what sholde a man in thyse days now wryte, egges or eyren?’ (Baugh 236). Of course Caxton’s concern is to spell in such a way that most readers will understand him, in order to ensure as many readers (and purchasers) of his books as possible.

By the mid to late sixteenth century the desire to ascertain the correct spellings of words was even stronger. The spelling issue was complicated by the fact that by the mid-sixteenth century spellings were not always phonetic renderings of the words, because, as we have seen, pronunciation had changed in some circumstances while orthography had not. Nor was this the only reason. Contributions by the French scribes after the Norman Conquest – who contributed delights such as the <c> in *mice* – hadn’t helped, and the variability of individual writers was also a matter of

concern. The second half of the sixteenth century saw several would-be spelling reformers making proposals. Sir Thomas Smith was one of those who wished to improve English orthography, in his 1568 proposal for the *Correct and Emended Writing of the English Language*. He wanted to increase the alphabet to thirty-four letters, among other suggestions (Baugh 252). John Hart in 1570 wanted more phonetic spelling (Baugh 253), and in 1580 William Bullokar employed accents and apostrophes among his suggestions.

It was Richard Mulcaster¹⁰ who made the most progress with encouraging ‘right writing,’ by adopting the customary spelling ‘wherein the skilful and best learned do agree’ (Baugh 254). One of his guidelines was to use word-final <e> consistently to indicate a preceding long vowel, in order to distinguish between *mad* (/mæd/) and *made* (/me:d/), for example. Today the word-final <e> tends to indicate that the preceding vowel is a diphthong (/meɪd/ in modern British English). Mulcaster’s proposals came in his *Elementarie* in 1582. English spellings have followed his suggestions more than any of the other reformers of the time. Gradually, spellings became less varied and more fixed as printing spread and as writers tended to adopt the orthography they saw in printed books. Spelling is seen as largely standardised, or fixed, by 1650, though it is possible to find non-standard spellings in documents later than this – often explained by the writer’s distance from London or by the writer’s level of education.

This background to orthography is necessarily rather brief and summative, but it might permit us to make a generalised prediction. Since we know that changes occurred in the capital and spread out, we might speculate that older spellings would survive longer in areas more distant from London, while ‘modern’ spellings would be more likely to be used first in the London area and thereabouts. It may be too that the spelling ‘Shak-’ reflects a dialect word rather than Standard English *shake*. We have already commented that ‘Shak-’ may reflect a pronunciation that became less common in London at an earlier time than in Warwickshire. Both ‘Shak-’ and *spere* are more likely to be found later in parts of the country some distance from London than in the capital itself. Those in the capital who were involved in printing would be trying to produce spellings which would please the majority. It is therefore also likely that ‘Shakespeare’ would be found in London a little earlier than well outside the capital. With spelling reform actively promoted in London, and a considerable amount of printing done there, it is also more likely that consistent spellings would be found earlier in London. Writers who used ‘Shakspere’ are perhaps courteously using the spelling *Shakspere* preferred, as suggested by the six signatures, or have not yet adopted the word-final <e> to indicate a preceding long vowel.

We now turn to the spellings associated with the W. ‘Shakspere’ of Stratford and the spellings associated with the ‘Shakespeare’ on the title pages of the canon.

The records in Stratford show the record keepers there wrote ‘Shakspere’ more frequently than any other variant, from 1566 to 1600 (Chambers 2-4), for the family

of W. Shakspere. Chambers does show one Stratford entry with the now standard spelling:

1583, May 26. C. Susanna daughter to William Shakespeare.

But this is an error, and ‘Shakspere’ is what is found in the facsimile in Schoenbaum’s *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life*. Shakspere’s marriage license has the spelling ‘Shaxpere’, and the bond of sureties, also in 1582, has ‘Shagspere’ (Chambers 41).

In 1597 an extract in Latin – presumably by a reasonably well-educated writer – from an *Exemplification of Fine* concerning New Place mentions ‘Shakespeare’ three times, with consistency (Chambers 95-6). A 1602 document, again in Latin, and again an extract, from *Foot of Fine*, gives ‘Shakespeare.’ In contrast, also in documents relating to Stratford, the Chamber Account – written in English – records ‘Shaxpere’ for a load of stone and, on an endorsement for a lease of property, gives us ‘Shaxpeare.’ As a maltster his name is spelled ‘Shackespere.’ The old Stratford Freehold conveyance of 1602 refers to ‘Shakespeare’ five times. This spelling is found again in 1610, in the *Finalis Concordia* in Common Pleas – another document in Latin. Not all these documents in Latin are consistent: one – in 1602, from *Copy* of an entry in the *Court Roll* – has both ‘Shackespere’ and ‘Shakespeare.’ After his death in 1616, a note gives his name as ‘Shakespeare’ (Chambers 96-112).

W. Shakspere of Stratford himself allegedly left six signatures, but does not spell his name as ‘Shakespeare.’ Jane Cox, writing in the HMSO book on *Shakespeare in the Public Records*, comments that the six signatures do not come from the same writer.¹¹ The earliest signature is 1612 ‘Shakp’, and the 1613 ones are both ‘Shakspe’, with the line over the top of the word-final <e> to indicate a predictable next letter (or two). In 1616 he apparently signs his name as ‘Shakspere’ (twice) and ‘Shakspeare’ (once) on his will, a will made out on behalf of ‘William Shackespeare’ (Chambers 171, 173-4). The signatures are presumably all spellings of his choice, though the contrasting spellings of his name in the documents and in his signatures on those documents are disconcerting to a modern reader.

Some of his acquaintances and family mention him by name. It is noticeable that ‘Shakspere’ is the spelling in the letter from Abraham Sturley to Richard Quiney in Stratford. This might have suggested these two local people knew Shakspere’s apparently preferred spelling, if it were not for Quiney’s letter to Shakspere, which is addressed to ‘Shackespere’ (Chambers 101-02). The Welcombe Enclosure documents from 1614 include extracts from memoranda by Thomas Greene, who refers to ‘my Cosen Shakspeare,’ ‘Mr Shakspeare,’ ‘my Cosen Shakespeare’ (these last two in the same sentence), with several repeats of ‘Shakspeare’ (Chambers 142-3). Greene was presumably one who knew Shakspere reasonably well, but he still does not spell his cousin’s name consistently. It is also rather curious that Greene appears to have attended Middle Temple, where his shield is displayed in the Middle Tem-

ple Hall. It records him as a 'lector' (reader) in 1621, a role he is likely to have taken up towards the end of his career, according to the stewards on duty on the 19th of September 2015. Do Greene's spellings represent a mixture of his cousin's preference and his own awareness that in London, 'Shakespeare' was the expected spelling? Interestingly, Chambers doesn't quote Greene as mentioning the performance of *Twelfth Night* on 2nd February 1602, which one might expect Greene to do somewhere, since his 'Cosen Shakespeare' is supposed to have written the play performed there. And somewhat earlier, Augustine Phillips's will (in London) has a legacy for 'Shakespeare' (Chambers 73). It is unlikely he did not know his legatee well, but he doesn't use W. Shakspere's apparently preferred spelling.

In London the records are a little different. In 1588, the bill of complaint in the Queen's bench regarding the Arden inheritance is in Latin. It has Johanne[s] or Willielmo 'Shackespere' quite consistently thirteen times, though the writer also produces two instances of 'Shackspere' and one of 'Shackspeare.' In 1596 the application for a grant of arms has the spelling 'Shakespere,' and John 'Shakespeare' (Chambers 18-9). These two – the bill of complaint and the grant of arms – undoubtedly refer to a Shakspere of Stratford, as does the Belott-Mountjoy lawsuit, though these are to father and son respectively. The Belott-Mountjoy suit is dated 1612 and states clearly that 'William Shakespeare of Stratford vpon Aven' is the man giving the deposition, spelled thus eleven times, with one 'Shakespe<are>,' and one 'Shakspeare' (Chambers 90-94).

A different set of records concerns London residences. These see him failing to pay taxes which have been levied, with spellings like (1597) 'Shackspere,' twice (1598) 'Shakespeare,' and twice (1599) 'Shakspeare' (Chambers 87-88).

As an actor, 'Shakespeare' leads the cast list in *Every Man In his Humour* in 1598. It is the same spelling in 1603 for the license for the King's Men, and for the red cloth for the procession of King James through London in 1604 (Chambers 71-73). It is also 'Shakespeare' at the top of the cast list in the First Folio.

On the narrative poems and on the plays, where a name is given, the spelling tends to be 'Shakespeare' or 'Shake-speare.' This isn't true for the 1608 *Lear* ('Shak-speare') (Schoenbaum 202) or *A Yorkshire Tragedy* where the author's name seems to have been 'borrowed' ('Shakspeare'), and the entry on the Stationers' Register in 1623 appears to have 'Shakspeer[']s' or perhaps 'Shakspere[']s' (Schoenbaum 203, 257). It is rather peculiar that it is the earliest spellings on play texts in London which have the now modern spelling of this name, on the whole.

Regarding the Globe theatre, a Latin document from 1615 mentions 'Shakespeare,' consistently spelled eight times. The 1619 document about the interest of 'Shakespeare' in the Globe and Blackfriars spells the name 'Shakespeare' six times without variations (Chambers 58-63, 52-54).

In 1607, the burial records of St Giles' show a burial of a child of 'Edward Shackspeere, Player,' while later that year the records of St Saviour's show the burial of 'Edmond Shakespeare, a player' (Chambers 18), assumed to be Shakspere's brother.

One much later example is that of Cuthbert Burbage, in 1635. The text is 'From the Answer of Cuthbert Burbadge . . .' It is not immediately clear in Chambers' entry whether this was actually written by C. Burbage. If it was, we would have to note and consider the significance of the (mis)spelling of his own name, as 'Cutbert'. He clearly knows 'Shakspere,' and in the same text spells the name both 'Shakspere' and 'Shakspeare' (Chambers 65-66). The text might merit closer examination, because it is the latest considered briefly here, and it demonstrates several non-standard spellings.

This paper doesn't list every single use of the name which is widely thought to refer to William Shakspere of Stratford. It isn't easy to decipher some of the English Secretary hand-writing in *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life*. Nevertheless, there are some distinct patterns. It appears that however the name was pronounced, in the Stratford records it was usually spelled 'Shak-' at the turn of the sixteenth to seventeenth century. There is also a trend for those who have a higher level of education (and are able to write in Latin) to use 'Shakespeare,' and for that spelling to be more frequent in London, but still there are unsurprising spelling variations, even by the same writer. Those who know Shakespeare and are writing in Stratford appear to mix their spellings. His cousin, who spent some time at Middle Temple, in London, veers towards the spelling version more common in London.

There does appear to be a clear link between Shakspere of Stratford, 'Shakespeare ye player,' and Shakespeare the Globe share owner (Schoenbaum 171-2). The last two also link in their spellings with Shakespeare the playwright. Yet it seems that Shakspere to the end of his life preferred the spelling 'Shak-' at the beginning of his name, despite the name 'Shakespeare' appearing on play lists, and narrative poems and plays. The six signatures showing this preferred spelling are dated 1612, 1613 and 1616.

The above outline of some of the changes affecting the language during the Renaissance shows it is sensible to be cautious about the pronunciation of 'Shakspere' and 'Shakespeare,' and also about the significance of the spelling of the name. The records of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries show 'Shake-' was hardly unusual for the beginning of a name (Chambers 354ff). Online registers of births, marriages and deaths in England for plus or minus forty years around 1580 show clearly that names beginning 'Shake-' are by far the most common; then there is a much smaller number of 'Shaksp-', with a dozen 'Shackes-' and no 'Shex-'. Consequently it would not be surprising that a printer, especially a London one, would spell the surname the more common way. The online records also show that a certain 'S*, William' died in 1616; the spelling of his surname is not something the recorders appear certain about. It may be worth examining these records more closely, to understand the distribution

of spellings. Is ‘Shakspere’ found more in Warwickshire? Perhaps too it is worth studying the whole of the texts where the name occurs, in case the context provides some indication of how particular or standard the writer is about other spellings.¹² But that might be for another paper. The intention here is to give a general overview of pronunciation and orthography regarding ‘Shak-’ and ‘Shake-’ in the Elizabethan and early Jacobean period, and to offer a context for discussion of the names ‘Shakspere’ and ‘Shakespeare.’

It is not easy to establish whether the orthographical differences are significant. Different name spellings are found among Shakspere’s contemporaries. For example ‘Oxford’, ‘Oxenford’, ‘Oxenforde’ are found at the end of three of the seventeenth Earl’s letters.¹³ Yet we are left with a series of questions and anomalies regarding ‘Shakspere’ and ‘Shakespeare.’ *Venus and Adonis* was first published in 1593. F. T. Prince comments in his edition, which was printed from the first quarto of the poem:

. . . the First Quartos, which have been generally accepted as well printed, [are] probably from the poet’s fair copies. Some trouble would probably be taken, both by author and printer, in the production of pieces such as these.¹⁴

If the printing of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 was so carefully overseen, shouldn’t we assume the spelling of its author’s name – ‘Shakespeare’ – was approved by the author – that the spelling has the author’s authority? It is also disconcerting that Shakspere of Stratford apparently spent time in London, where printing was contributing to the regularization of spelling, yet he did not adjust the spelling of his own name in his six (alleged) signatures to the most widely found form, ‘Shake-’, particularly when that form was being used on most of the plays which presumably had some prominence among the printed books of the day. Then the lack of fluency in the penmanship of the signatures is odd. It is also curious that he does not have a clearly legible and stylish signature – as many who have left signatures in Henslowe’s *Diary*¹⁵ did – and that he is not mentioned in the *Diary*. Additionally if (as traditional scholars believe) Shakspere was the playwright, it seems peculiar that those printing his poems and plays did not use his preferred spelling. Of course, the playwright Shakespeare and/or his compositors are not entirely consistent with spellings in the plays, but as we have seen, this was not surprising or unusual at the time. Why would Ben Jonson, so particular about no <h> in his own name, use ‘Shakespeare’ rather than ‘Shakspere’ on cast lists and on the title page of the First Folio? And all of that is before we consider the will, three pages long, yet not mentioning one book by ‘Shakespeare’ or even a Shakespearean source. And – in only an interlineation at that – he bequeaths a ‘peece to buy . . . Ringes’ for ‘John Hemynge Richard Burbage & Henry Cundell’ without remembering any contemporary playwrights.

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Notes

- 1 These divisions are used by A.C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, reprint 1968).
- 2 Modernized spellings of Trevisa's comments; taken from Baugh, p 232.
- 3 The symbol in slashes or obliques [//] indicates it is drawn from the International Phonetic Alphabet, as are later symbols similarly marked.
- 4 The sound, or phoneme, /r/ is articulated in several different ways around the world. Each different version is known as an allophone. The French, for instance, pronounce the sound towards the back of the mouth. Rhotic <r> describes the allophone many Scots use to articulate <r> after a vowel. This is why it is also sometimes called post-vocalic <r>.
- 5 Wrenn actually uses /eɪ/, pronounced as in 'play'. C. L. Wrenn, *The English Language* (London, Methuen and Co. Ltd, reprint 1970), p 86.
- 6 S. Potter, *Our Language* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, reprint 1969), p 66.
- 7 Note that today British English speakers produce /e/ just above mid-way between the half open and the half closed front vowel positions, in words like 'yet' and 'bed'.
- 8 The vowel sound in 'Shakspere' and 'Stretford' could have been as close as /ɛ/ and /æ/.
- 9 There are a very small number of examples of spelling affecting pronunciation. One of these is in the word *perfect*. Middle English quite happily used the French spelling and pronunciation, 'parfait', 'parfit' (cf. Chaucer's *Knight*), but when it was decided to 'correct' the spelling and show its Latin root (Latin *perfectus*), the new spelling, *perfect*, affected how we pronounce the word today.
- 10 Headmaster at Merchant Taylor School, where Thomas Kyd attended.
- 11 'It is obvious at a glance that these signatures, with the exception of the last two, are not the signatures of the same man.' *Shakespeare in the Public Records* (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1985). Comments by Jane Cox, p 33.
- 12 It is noticeable that the Revels Account in 1604-5 which records the

name 'Shaxberd' has a high proportion of now non-standard spellings, and inconsistent ones at that (Chambers 331).

- 13 These are all found in William Plumer Fowler's *Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Peter E. Randall, 1986), pp 56, 164 and 803.
- 14 *Venus and Adonis*, edited by F. T. Prince (London, Methuen, reprint 1982), p xiii.
- 15 Explored by, inter alia, Frank Davis in chapter 2 in *Shakespeare Beyond Doubt?* (USA, Lumina Press, 2013).

