
OXMYTHS: SECTION II

The Oxmyths outlined below are arranged chronologically in terms of events in the life of William Shaksper of Stratford-upon-Avon, designated 'Shaksper' in order to differentiate the name from the pen-name, William Shakespeare.

MYTH: The family name of the Shaksper of Stratford was never spelled 'Shakespeare' prior to William Shaksper's arrival in London.

The name of Shaksper's father John was spelled 'Shakespeare' in a 1569 document.

References:

(1) Thomas, D.L. and N.E. Evans. "John Shakespeare in the Exchequer". *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35 (1984), pp.315-8 at p.315.

MYTH: The names Shaksper and Shakespeare were pronounced differently.

Since both spellings were used by the Stratford family from 1569 on, they must have been pronounced in the same way. Moreover the coat of arms on the monument in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford Upon Avon features a spear, indicating that the final syllable of the surname must have been pronounced 'spear'.

References:

(1) Lewis, Benjamin Roland. *The Shakespeare documents*. 2 vols. Stanford University Press, 1940, vol. 1, p.6.

(2) Thomas, D.L. and N.E. Evans. "John Shakespeare in the Exchequer". *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 35 (1984), pp.315-8 at p.315.

(3) Kathman, David. "The spelling and pronunciation of Shakespeare's name", posted on the Shakespeare Authorship Page website at <http://www.clark.net/tross/ws/name1.html>.

MYTH: It is significant that Shaksper is not mentioned in the first edition of Camden's Britannia.

Since Camden's *Britannia*, a topographical survey of England, was first published in 1586, it is not to be expected that Shaksper would be mentioned in the section on Stratford in the first edition.

MYTH: *The first reference to Shaksper of Stratford in London is in Greene's Groatsworth of Wit in September, 1592.*

The first reference to Shaksper of Stratford in London is in reference to a loan of £7 made by him to John Clayton of Willington in Bedfordshire on May 22, 1592.

References:

(1) Chambers, Sir Edmund Kerchever. *William Shakespeare: A study of facts and problems*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930, vol. 2, p.52.

(2) *Shakespeare in the Public Records*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964, pp.37-8.

MYTH: *The Countess of Southampton fabricated the entry in the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber in connection with a Privy Council warrant of March 15, 1595 authorizing payment to Shaksper, Kempe and Burbage for plays performed at court on December 26 and 28, 1594.*

There is no evidence of this. The accounts are in the hand of a clerk, and there are two contemporary copies of the record from two separate departments. Moreover, according to Lord Burghley's diary, in December, 1595, William Killigrew (not the Countess of Southampton) was deputed to make payment in the Office of the Chamber upon the death of Sir Thomas Heneage (who had died between October 20-27, 1595).

References:

(1) Akrigg, G.P.V. *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968, pp.49-50 and footnote, p.50.

(2) Stope, Charlotte Carmichael. *The life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's patron*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922, p. 92.

(3) *Shakespeare in the Public Records*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964, p.6 and plate 1.

(4) Stopes, Charlotte Carmichael. *The seventeenth century accounts of the Masters of the Revels*. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1922, pp. 9-10.

MYTH: William Shaksper applied to the College of Herald's for a coat of arms.

His father, John Shaksper, applied to the College of Herald's for a coat of arms.

References:

(1) Schoenbaum, Samuel. *William Shakespeare; A documentary life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, pp. 166-73.

MYTH: The grant of arms to John Shaksper by the College of Herald's includes the motto 'Non sans droict'.

The motto is never mentioned or alluded to in the terms of the patent in a grant of arms in England.

References:

(1) Fox-Davies, Arthur Charles. *A complete guide to heraldry*. New York: Gramercy Books, 1978, p. 448.

MYTH: Shaksper was neither an actor nor a theater shareholder.

A 1599 inventory of the property of the deceased Sir Thomas Brend states that Shaksper and others were then in occupation of the Globe. The petition of Thomasina Heminges in the 1615 Heminges vs. Ostler lawsuit states that Shaksper was a shareholder in the Blackfriars. The 1619 answer of John Heminges and Henry Condell in the 1619 lawsuit of Witter vs. Heminges and Condell states that Shaksper was a Globe shareholder. The 1635 answer of Cuthbert Burbage to a petition directed to Philip Herbert, then Lord Chamberlain, states that Shaksper was a shareholder in the Globe in 1599 and an actor with the King's Men at the Blackfriars circa 1608/9.

References:

(1) Smith, Irwin. *Shakespeare's Blackfriars playhouse*. New York University Press, 1964, pp.557-9.

(2) Wallace, Charles William. *Advance sheets from Shakespeare, the Globe and Blackfriars*. Stratford Upon Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1909.

(3) Chambers, Sir Edmund Kerchever. *The Elizabethan stage*. 4 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923, vol. 2, pp.58-64.

(4) Lewis, Benjamin Roland. *The Shakespeare documents*. 2 vols. Stanford University Press, 1940, pp.508-520.

MYTH: Shaksper was a secret Catholic.

Shaksper's children were christened in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford, and the death of his son Hamnet was recorded in the parish register. Shaksper's deposition in the Mountjoy lawsuit states indicates that he was resident with the Protestant Huguenot Mountjoy family in Silver Street in London circa 1602.

References:

(1) Fripp, Edgar I. *Master Richard Quyny, bailiff of Stratford-upon-Avon and friend of William Shakespeare*. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1924, pp. 36-7, 108.

(2) Wallace, C.W. "Shakespeare and his London associates as revealed in recently discovered documents". *University Studies*, University of Nebraska, vol. 10, no. 4 (October, 1910), pp.261-305.

MYTH: The casebook of Dr. John Hall contains an entry stating that 'My father-in-law died on Thursday.

This alleged entry does not exist.

References:

(1) Joseph, Harriet. *Shakespeare's son-in-law; John Hall, man and physician; With a facsimile of the second edition of Hall's "Select Observations on English Bodies"*. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1964.

MYTH: 'Moniment', spelled with an 'i' has a different meaning from 'monument', spelled with a 'u', which is significant in interpreting the line 'Thou art a moniment, without a tomb' in Ben Jonson's poem in praise of Shakespeare in the First Folio.

The spellings 'moniment' and 'monument' were interchangeable in the Elizabethan period, and either spelling could be used for the various meanings of the word.

References:

(1) 'Monument', *Oxford English dictionary, second edition, on compact disc*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

MYTH: The Shakespeare manuscripts are enclosed within the Shakespeare monument at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford on Avon.

There are no manuscripts in the Shaksper monument in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford on Avon.

References:

(1) "The Shakespeare mystery". PBS Frontline television documentary, April 18, 1989.

MYTH: Michael Drayton never referred in print to Shakespeare.

Michael Drayton mentions Shakespeare in his *Of poets and poesie*, published in 1627.

References:

(1) Chambers, Sir Edmund Kerchever. *The Elizabethan stage*. 4 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923, vol. 1, p.292.

MYTH: Judith Shakespeare and Susanna Shakespeare were illiterate.

Although Judith Shakespeare signed a deed of bargain and sale dated 4 December 1611 with her mark, Susanna Shakespeare signed her name to legal documents involving New Place and other properties on 27 May 1639 and 2 June 1647.

(1) Schoenbaum, Samuel, *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, p. 241.

(2) Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office (SBTRO) MS ER27/11 at:

<http://calm.shakespeare.org.uk/dserve/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqCmd=Show.tcl&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqPos=0&dsqSearch=%28Refno=%27ER27/11%27%29>

(3) Halliwell-Phillipps, J.O., *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, Vol. I, 7th ed., (London: Longmans, Green, 1887), p. 278, and Vol. II, pp. 108-9, 115 at:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=anjV6Gsx00MC&pg=PA115&lpg=PA115&dq=%221647%22+%2B%22susanna+hall%22&source=bl&ots=RTznUdv9C9&sig=3WzzvhYZGpZkLjeR9ia0P8FQg_Q&hl=en&ei=XfeqTqX4KrSGiQLvoKmnCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&sqi=2&ved=0CDMQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=%221647%22%20%2B%22susanna%20hall%22&f=false

(4) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SusannaHallsignature1647.jpg>