

DAVID CRYSTAL

THE OXFORD  
DICTIONARY  
OF ORIGINAL  
SHAKESPEAREAN  
PRONUNCIATION



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## PREFACE

This dictionary has been over ten years in the making. I downloaded an electronic edition of the First Folio in December 2004, once it became apparent that the initiative of Shakespeare's Globe to present plays in original pronunciation (OP) was going to result in many more such projects, and began work on a resource that I hoped would one day help anyone interested in mounting a production. It took much longer than I thought, mainly because I wanted the work to include all the data on rhymes and spelling variations that provide a great deal of the evidence for phonological reconstruction, so that those interested could evaluate my decisions for themselves.

Incorporating frequency information about the use of spellings in the First Folio was one of the reasons the project took so long, as I had to go through each count, initiated using the Find function in Word, to check on such things as word-class, compound words, and lexical status (e.g. proper vs common nouns), and also to eliminate irrelevant strings (such as speech character-identifiers). One day a fully tagged grammatical and semantic corpus of the lexical items in the canon will allow such searches to be done in seconds, and provide a level of checking that no manual approach could achieve, but that day is not yet.

I must admit that there were many days—especially (as all lexicographers know) in the middle of 'long' letters, such as C, P, and S—when I thought to abandon the project and await the time when more sophisticated software would do this aspect of the job for me. But the demand for OP materials remained pressing, and I persuaded myself that the usefulness of the dictionary would far outweigh any inaccuracies I may have inadvertently introduced. I hope that is so. Certainly, these weaknesses are far fewer than they might have been, thanks to Professor Paul Meier, who provided helpful suggestions on a draft of my Introduction, Audrey Norman for help in file-collating, and above all to Hilary Crystal, who spent I don't know how many hours inputting, collating, and checking entries during the final stages of the project.

My thanks must also go to John Davey, formerly of OUP, who commissioned the project, to Kim Allen for her copy-editing (no mean feat, with a book like this) and Michael Janes for his proofreading, to Gary Leicester, who looked after the audio-recording, and to Julia Steer who took over from John Davey, advised on the final organization of the dictionary, and saw the work through press. Nor must I forget the indirect but hugely important contribution of the many actors and directors with whom I have collaborated over the past decade, and in particular those in Ben Crystal's *Passion in Practice* Shakespeare Ensemble, for demonstrating the effect of OP in theatrical practice, and providing me with the confirmation I needed that my account of OP was not just an academic exercise but something that actually worked on stage.

DAVID CRYSTAL  
*Holyhead, January 2016*

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>abbr</i>	abbreviated	<i>n</i>	noun
<i>adj</i>	adjective	<i>prep</i>	preposition
<i>adv</i>	adverb	<i>pro</i>	pronoun
<i>aux</i>	auxiliary verb	<i>Prol</i>	Prologue
<i>det</i>	determiner	<i>pron</i>	pronunciation
<i>emend</i>	emendation	<i>Q</i>	Quarto
<i>Eng</i>	English	<i>rh</i>	rhyming with
<i>Epil</i>	Epilogue	<i>s.d.</i>	stage direction
<i>f(f)</i>	following line(s)	<i>sp</i>	spelling
<i>F</i>	First Folio	<i>Sp</i>	Spanish
<i>Fr</i>	French	<i>str</i>	stressed
<i>interj</i>	interjection	<i>unstr</i>	unstressed
<i>Ital</i>	Italian	<i>usu</i>	usually
<i>Lat</i>	Latin	<i>v</i>	verb
<i>m</i>	metrical choice	=	OP pron same as today
<i>malap</i>	malapropism	1.2.3	Act 1, Scene 2, Line 3

## The Shakespearean Canon

\* Texts not in the First Folio

AC	Antony and Cleopatra	LC*	A Lover's Complaint
AW	All's Well That Ends Well	LLL	Love's Labour's Lost
AY	As You Like It	Luc*	The Rape of Lucrece
CE	The Comedy of Errors	MA	Much Ado About Nothing
Cor	Coriolanus	Mac	Macbeth
Cym	Cymbeline	MM	Measure for Measure
Ham	Hamlet	MND	A Midsummer Night's Dream
1H4	Henry IV Part 1	MV	The Merchant of Venice
2H4	Henry IV Part 2	MW	The Merry Wives of Windsor
H5	Henry V	Oth	Othello
1H6	Henry VI Part 1	Per*	Pericles
2H6	Henry VI Part 2	PP*	The Passionate Pilgrim
3H6	Henry VI Part 3	PT*	The Phoenix and the Turtle
H8	Henry VIII	R2	Richard II
JC	Julius Caesar	R3	Richard III
KJ	King John	RJ	Romeo and Juliet
KL	King Lear	S*	Sonnets



ABBREVIATIONS

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Tem	The Tempest	TN	Twelfth Night
Tim	Timon of Athens	TNK*	The Two Noble Kinsmen
Tit	Titus Andronicus	TS	The Taming of the Shrew
TC	Troilus and Cressida	VA*	Venus and Adonis
TG	The Two Gentlemen of Verona	WT	The Winter's Tale

# PART I

## INTRODUCTION

### An artistic-scientific endeavour

This dictionary has a single aim: to help those who wish to present Shakespeare using Early Modern English pronunciation—or OP (‘original pronunciation’). Although this term has a much broader application, describing any period of phonological reconstruction in the history of a language, it has come to be popularly used when approaching Shakespeare in this way. It echoes another ‘OP’—‘original practices’ (as used, for example, by Shakespeare’s Globe in London), referring to the efforts that have been made to discover as much as possible about the ways in which plays of the period were originally performed.

OP is an exercise in applied linguistics—to be precise, in applied historical phonology. Phonology is the study of the sound system of a language—or, as here, of the state of a language in a particular period of time. Pronunciation always changes, as shown by the archive of recorded sound over the past century. The phonology of Early Modern English was thus different in several important respects from that of Modern English, and this dictionary gives an account of what those differences were. They are not so great as to make OP unintelligible to a modern ear: most of the consonants and almost half of the vowels haven’t changed noticeably over the past 400 years, and the stress pattern on most words has stayed the same. So people listening to an OP production for the first time quickly ‘tune in’ to the system. But the consonants, vowels, and stresses that *have* changed are enough to produce a way of speaking that is distinctive, fresh, and intriguing, opening up new directions for linguistic, literary, and theatrical enquiry.

OP aims to meet a need that comes from outside linguistics, and in a theatre context is thus as much an artistic as a scientific endeavour. Although a great deal can be firmly established about the nature of the Early Modern English sound system, thanks to a century of research by philologists and historical phonologists, there are still several words where the evidence for a particular pronunciation is lacking or can be interpreted in more than one way—usually because alternative pronunciations were current, just as they are today. In such cases, all one can do is (as lawyers say) ‘take a view’. Because of the limitations of the evidence, historical phonologists would never claim that their reconstructions were authentic, therefore; but they would say that they are plausible, and (in a situation such as a theatrical setting) usable and effective. They would also point out that several versions of OP are possible, based on different interpretations of the evidence, and my recommendations in this dictionary should be seen in that light. In this respect, a practitioner’s choices as to which version of OP to use in a production involves a similar kind of decision-making to what takes place when deciding about other domains of theatrical practice, such as setting, lighting, music, movement, and costume.