

Everything we know about William Shakspere of Stratford is a complete mismatch with what we may surmise about Shakespeare the Author. Nothing seems to fit—and this, too, is the case with the Shakespeare memorial structure in Stratford. There is no general agreement as to who commissioned the structure, or who made it, or when it was made—though most Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians agree that the structure was an honorarium for William Shakspere, constructed some time between 1616 and 1623.

Below are three scenarios with respect to the construction of the Stratford memorial (beginning with the least likely):

1) The original structure was designed and built as a memorial in honor of William Shakspere of Stratford sometime between 1616 and 1623 (which are the years between Shakspere’s death and the publication of the First Folio). In this memorial the Stratford man is honored in his capacity as a merchant (and appropriately holding a sack of barley or wool) and as the famous poet “Shakespeare,” which is indicated by the glowing Latin verse which likens the Stratford man to Pylus [Nestor], Socrates, and Maro [Virgil] and elevates him to the status of a god, now on Mount Olympus.

2) The original structure was a memorial honoring William Shakespeare, made after 1623, as a result of the publication of the First Folio. Thus, the famous line from Digges’s poem, “*thy Stratford Momiment*” was not a reference to this structure but to some other “monument” located in another town called “Stratford.” (The most likely monument would have been Old Sarum which was located in Stratford-sub-Castle.)

3) The original structure was a memorial for John Shakspere; it was conceived and paid for by John Shakspere (as provisioned in his will); its construction was overseen by his son, William Shakspere. The structure was erected some time between 1601 and 1611 (which are the years between the deaths of John Shakspere and Gheerart Janssen, the person who was said to have sculpted the original bust) but most likely between 1602 and 1604.

a) Sometime *before* 1623 (in anticipation of the publication of the First Folio) the structure was changed; it became a memorial for William Shakspere by the addition of two Latin lines, two additional English lines, and two lines indicating the year of death and age of William Shakspere. Everything else remained the same. (The additional lines were probably written by Ben Jonson).

b) Sometime *after* 1623 the structure was changed: it became a memorial for William Shakspere (by the addition of the English and Latin lines) as a response to the publication of the First Folio, and to make the memorial more fitting of William Shakespeare, the supposed Author.



Hollar engraving, 1656



Detail of Dugdale’s sketch, 1634

### *Was the Original Monument to John Shakspere?*

The most plausible scenario concerning the Stratford Memorial Structure is that it was originally conceived and constructed for John Shakspere and later morphed (by the addition of two Latin lines, two English lines, and a death date of 1616) to become a memorial for William Shakespere, the playwright. (The original English inscription mentions the name “Shakespere”—which could refer to John or William).

“Controversies arise concerning those features of Dugdale’s representation which do not square with the monument as we know it [in its present form]. The subject looks elderly, with a gaunt face and a drooping moustache; the columns enclosing the monument are crowned with leopards’ heads; and he is shown arms akimbo, resting his hands on a woolsack. As Richard Kennedy has argued, the woolsack suggests that the original monument was erected to John Shakespeare (1530-1601), father of the poet, who had been “a considerable dealer in wool.” Shakespeare senior also held various civic offices between 1557 and 1571 (Alderman, Mayor, JP) before falling on hard times. Following his son’s acquisition of a coat of arms in 1596, he regained his place on the borough council. Kennedy also showed that the leopards’ heads were far from “irrelevant,” as E. K. Chambers judged, since they are found in Stratford’s coat of arms, another detail making this monument more suitable for the father than for the son.”

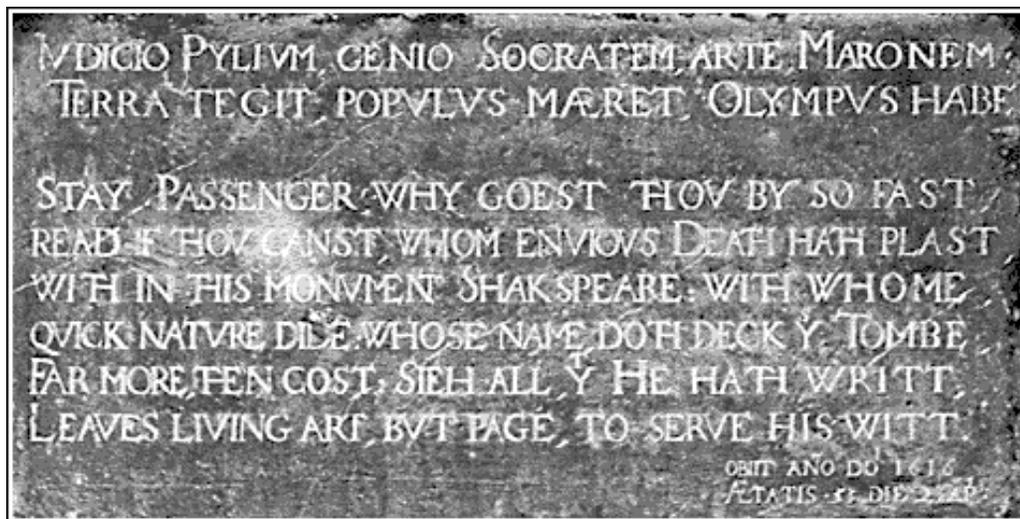
“The first witness is that great assembler of information, John Aubrey. As Kate Bennett showed (Notes and Queries, 2000), Aubrey visited Stratford some time between 1640 and 1670, recording that Shakespeare’s “figure is thus, viz a Tawny satten doublet I thinke pinked [the ornamental cuts in cloth revealing an underlying surface, clearly visible in Dugdale’s engraving] and over that a blacke gowne like an Under-graduates at Oxford, scilicet the sleeves of the gowne doe not cover the armes, but hang loose behind.” “I do believe,” Aubrey adds, “that about the later end of Queen Elizabeth time ‘twas the fashion for grave people, to weare such Gownes.” John Shakespeare, who died in his seventies after nearly twenty years of service to the town council, would be more likely to figure among the “grave people” of Stratford than his son.

Dugdale recorded that the monument had been sculpted by “one Gerard Johnson,” the Anglicized name of Gheerart Janssen, who settled in London in 1557 and became England’s leading tomb-maker. [The statement of Sir William Dugdale is as follows: “The monument of John Combe, at Stratford-sup’-Avon, and Shakespeare’s, were made by one Gerard Johnson.”] His stoneyard was in Southwark, near the Rose Theatre, where he died in 1611. . . Sidney Lee claimed that the Stratford monument was sculpted by Janssen’s far less prominent son, Garret. However, if we accept that Dugdale was referring to Gheerart Janssen, Shakespeare may have helped arrange the commission of a monument to his father. (Brian Vickers)

The prominent placement of the Shakspere family coat-of-arms on the memorial structure—a coat-of-arms which was finally secured by John Shakspere, in 1599—supports the notion that the structure was originally intended for John Shakspere. In addition, William Shakspere, who died with a substantial amount of wealth, all of which was allotted in the details of his will, made no provision for the construction of his own memorial (as did his neighbor, “and fellow usurer,” John Combe) so, if the structure was originally intended for William Shakspere, it remains a mystery as to who commissioned it and why. (What is also curious is this: why, after William Shakspere’s death did not one write a single verse to commemorate his life and his passing? Are we to believe that someone had the mind to honor the man from Stratford with an expensive memorial structure but no one ever thought to rite him one commemorative verse—something which would have been a lot easier to do than construct a whole

memorial). What we know is that William Shakespere, who died a wealthy man, made no provisions in his will for the construction of a memorial; we also know that John Shakespeare died a wealth man, and that his will was never discovered. Thus, we have no reason not to assume that he desired to have a memorial constructed and that he made provisions in his will to cover the large cost involved in its construction. (In the absence of his will, we can comfortably hold this assumption; whereas in the presence of William Shakspere's will, we can state with certainty that he made no provision for the payment and construction of this memorial). Thus, if the structure was initially intended as an honorarium for William Shakspere, we don't know who would have paid for it. If the memorial was commission by faithful devotees from London, wanting to honor their Poet, it is unclear as to why they would have positioned him holding a sack of barley or wool and why they would have written such a poor English poem in his honor.

*Inscription on the Stratford Memorial Structure*



IVDICIO PYLIUM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM,  
TERRA TEGIT, POPULUS MAERET, OLYMPUS HABET

STAY PASSENGER, WHY GOEST THOV BY SO FAST  
READ IF THOV CANST, WHOM ENVIOVS DEATH HATH PLAST  
WITH IN THIS MONVMENT SHAKSPEARE: WITH WHOME,  
QVICK NATVRE DIDE: WHOSE NAME, DOTI DECK Ys TOMBE  
FAR MORE, THEN COST: SIEH [SINCE] ALL, Yt HE HATH WRITT,  
LEAVES LIVING ART, BVT PAGE, TO SERVE HIS WITT.

OBIT ANO DO 1616  
ETATIS 53 DIE 23AP.

A Pylus [Nestor] in judgment, a  
Socrates in genius, a Maro [Virgil] in  
art,  
  
The earth buries him, the people  
mourn him, Olympus possesses him.

The year of death 1616  
Aged 53 on the day 23 April.

According to our working assumption, the lines in black constitute the original engraving, which appeared on the floor stone marking the grave of John Shakespere, and which was later propped up and used for his memorial structure. The lines marked in grey were added when the structure was morphed from John Shakspere to William Shakspere. These added lines include two lines of superlative Latin verse, two lines of English verse, and a Latin inscription indicating William Shakspere’s date of death and age. We can assume that these added lines were written by Ben Jonson as part of an overall schema to erect William Shakspere as a suitable “straw man” standing in for the true Author. Now, if Jonson took the time to write these lines we must assume that he crafted some kind of double meaning into them: he would have used words which, read one way, might seem to praise William Shakspere while read another way might reveal that he was not Shakespeare the Author. The added English lines, while one the surface seem to offer praise, when read more deeply seem to offer the opposite:

“Far more [the true Author is far more than the man who is supposedly honored here], then cost [followed by cost; followed by someone who is much lesser than the Author]: since all, yet [up till now] he [Shakspere] hath written, leaves living art [good writing], but page [a) with less than a page, b) with the

writing of a 'page' and not a master-poet] to serve [testify for] his wit." In other words, the true Author is "far more" than William Shakspere, who, in terms of high quality writing has left us with not even a single page of worthy writing; or, all that he has left us is but the work of a page and not a master poet, like the true Author.

In addition, the Latin lines are so far over-the-top as to preclude any correlation with William Shakspere of Stratford. They state: "The earth buries him, the people mourn him, Olympus possesses him." None of this has anything to do with what is known about the Stratford man: a) the earth does not bury him, as he was entombed below the floor of Trinity Church; b) the people do not mourn him, which is evidenced by the fact that no one wrote any eulogies for William Shakspere after his death, c) Olympus does not possess him, as only gods (and not men) are "possessed" by Olympus. Clearly everything about the Latin inscription points away from William Shakspere of Stratford.

### Some Conclusions

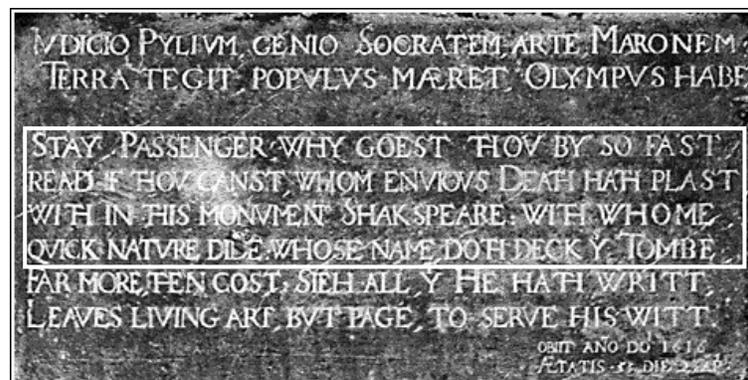
Our working conclusions are as follows:

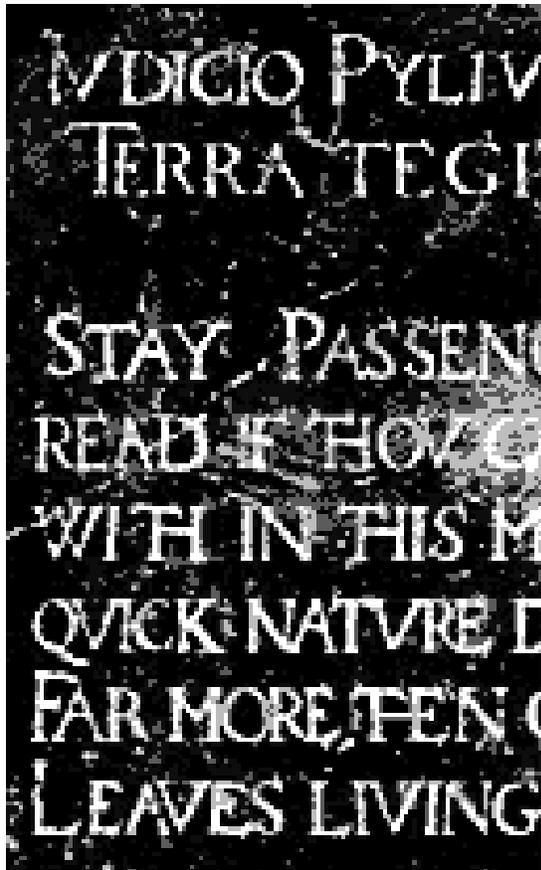
a) **The original memorial structure was originally constructed for John Shakspere** sometime between 1602 and 1611 (and later morphed into a memorial structure for William Shakspere).

b) **The original structure only contained four English lines.** The Latin verse, the last two lines of the English poem, and the date of death of William Shakspere, were added to the memorial when it was changed from John Shakspere's memorial to William Shakspere's (sometime between 1621 and 1623).

c) **The stone slab on which the inscription was written, was originally a tombstone on the floor of Trinity Church** (with four lines of English verse), marking the grave of John Shakspere—and similar, in terms of lettering and poetic quality, to the floor slab covering the grave of William Shakspere. The inscription on the original slab (and present structure) reads, "with in this monument" and "doth deck this tomb" which suggests that the body of the deceased "Shakspeare" was entombed within the original structure. However, the original structure was not a tomb and did not contain a body; the body was likely interred in the floor of the church. (One more note: if the original floor slab mentioned "with in this monument" then it could not be referring to the present structure as a 'monument,' because there was no present structure at the time to refer to—and neither the original structure (nor the present wall-mount) could be rightly called a 'monument.' Neither could either of the structures be called a 'tomb.' All said, it is likely that the line "with in this monument" (which was originally found on a stone slab on the floor of Trinity Church) indicated that John Shakspere was buried within the 'monument' of Trinity Church (and not within the structure that was later constructed using the floor stone).

In support of these assumptions, one will notice that if the later-added lines are removed (i.e., the two lines of Latin, the two lines of English, and the death date and age) it leaves the four original English lines centered within the slab. Thus, such a four-line inscription, centered within the stone, would make for a typical tombstone, resting on the floor of the church, similar to the stone which now marks William Shakspere's grave. If the stone was originally a tombstone on the floor of Trinity Church then it must have been for John Shakspere since William Shakspeare has a different stone marking his grave.





In addition, a careful examination of the inscription will reveal that the “style” of the last two English lines (as well as the two Latin lines) is somewhat different from the middle four English lines. Not only is the letter spacing more generous (in the added lines) but the lettering used in the opening is different: The original four English lines follow the standard pattern where the first letter of the first line is capitalized (and the first letters of all the other lines are not). With the added English lines (as well as the added Latin lines) the engraver capitalizes the first letters of every line. Had the engraving been done at the same time, by the same person, then the last two English lines (and the second Latin line) would have opened with a lower case letter (and not a capital). In addition, a) the second Latin line is indented, which causes it to run too far to the right, b) the capitalized letters of the fifth and sixth English line are placed slightly to the left (of the four original English lines), and c) in the first four English lines all appearances of “TH” (eight in all) are contracted in a standard way whereas the first time “TH” appears in the fifth English line (forming the word “then”) it is dissimilarly contracted (which suggests that the lines were engraved by different people at different times).

### *The Stratford bust and the Droeshout engraving*

The obvious mismatch between the Martin Droeshout engraving and the likeness of an actual person (along with Jonson's dissuasive poem that faces the engraving) is a clear indication that the engraving was not made in the likeness of the Author (or any real person) but stands as a replacement image which covers (or covers-up) the Author's true identity. It seems that the portrait directors wanted to make the image of "Shakespeare" appear mask-like which symbolizes that which masks the true face (or identity) of the Author, similar to the way that the pen name "Shakespeare" covers, or masks, the true name of the Author.

Our primary concern, however, is not with the particulars of the Droeshout engraving (though that topic has some interest in itself) but with how the bust of the original structure relates to the Droeshout engraving. Three major features of the original Stratford bust share a likeness with the Droeshout engraving: they are a) both have the same hair pattern (balding) and same head shape (perfectly round on top), b) both sport the same number of buttons—14, and c) both have similarly strange arm positions, with both arms resembling each other. Expert tailors who examined the Droeshout engraving suggest that the tunic is most unusual in that it seems to sport two left arms (where the right arm is a back view of the left arm). The same oddity is displayed in the original bust.

The bust, of course, professes to show what the Poet looked like when he had put on flesh and bobbed his hair; yet in spite of the fact that adipose tissue has rounded forms and filled up hollows, broadened masses and generally increased dimensions—we recognize that the perpendicular forehead and the shape of the skull are very much the same in both; and we further observe that whereas the Droeshout Print shows us chiefly the width of the forehead across the temples, the full face of the bust gives us the shape of the head farther back, across where the ears are set on. . . . When all is said, the outstanding fact remains—that the forms of the skull, with its perpendicular rise of forehead, correspond with those of the Stratford effigy; and this—the formation of the skull—is the definitive test of all the portraits. The Droeshout and the sculpted effigy show the skull of the same man, who, in the engraving, is some twenty years or so younger than him of the bust.

(Spielmann et al., *Studies in the First Folio*, 1924: London: Oxford UP, pp. 26, 33).

### **Anomalies with the New Stratford Monument**

The so-called 'moniment' in Stratford is somewhat odd in that it is neither a moniment nor a monument (in any known sense of the word), nor is it a tomb (containing a body) as indicated by the inscription; and the figure seems to be holding a bag of grain or wool, which bears no relationship to Shakespeare the Author. And the revised bust is as motley and misplaced as the original: the "poet" has pen and paper in hand and is impossibly writing on a cushion (which was originally a bag of wool or grain); the figure sports a foreign, upturned mustache (which is alien to any local style of the time) and he is staring blankly out into space.

Shakespeare's bust [as it now stands] has dismayed generations of pilgrims to his Stratford shrine. This crude, blankly-staring image of a portly, middle-aged burgher is a caricature rather than an actual portrait of anyone. Shakespearian biographers are united in their scorn of it. Sir Sidney Lee condemned its 'mechanical and unintellectual expression.' John Dover Wilson as 'a self-satisfied pork-butcher.' Samuel Schoenbaum criticized its close-set eyes, exaggeratedly high eyebrows, the gaping mouth and 'a nose too small for the face, placed between plump, sensual cheeks.' (Michell, *Who Wrote Shakespeare?*, p. 90)

### ***Thy Stratford Monument***

The crucial line in Digges's poem, "*thy Stratford Momiment,*" may have been conceived by Jonson who asked Digges to place this significant line in his poem. This can be compared to an acting exercise where someone from the audience mentions a line and the actor has to include it in his improvised dialogue; a skillful actor can do this without the audience knowing which line was inserted; however, when a poor actor tries this—and must make too many disjointed changes in his speech pattern to accommodate the line—the audience can usually spot it. Similarly, in the case of poetry, with a lesser poet—which seems to be the status of Digges—the inserted line sticks out because the surrounding verse is somewhat strained in its attempt to accommodate it. Thus, from the look of Digges's poem, it appears that the line, "*thy Stratford Momiment*" was inserted. What sticks out in Digges's poem more than the disjointed verse which leads up to this line, is the word *momiment*. This word is very specific and very rarely used, and the inclusion of this word in Digges's short poem—which is the same word found in Jonson's eulogy—clearly links this line with Jonson's poem and suggests that Digges was prompted to use this word. (To understand how rare this word is, if you do a search of all of Shakespeare's works, who used more words than any other author of his time, you will not find this word.) The word *momiment* refers primarily to a long-lasting legacy and less so to a physical 'monument.' The use of this word, by both Jonson and Digges, specifically indicates a long-standing tradition and less so an actual monument. Had Digges wanted to make a clear reference to a physical monument he would have used the common word 'monument'—as it appears on the Stratford memorial structure—and not the impossibly uncommon word 'moniment.'

All said, why would Jonson have instructed Digges to include this line in the first place? Perhaps the "straw man" of William Shakspeare was too flimsy and too transparent, especially since neither Jonson (through his eulogy) or Jonson (through the words attributed to Hemings and Condell) made any direct or traceable reference to William Shakspeare of Stratford. Thus, some shoring up was needed to make this "straw man" more believable—at least one seemingly direct reference, by which the Stratford man could be identified, needed. Certainly Jonson was not going to make any direct reference to Stratford, or anything which could be directly linked to William Shakspeare but Digges—who was not central to the issue and did not positively know the identity of the Author—could. It appears that Jonson chose this particular line because it was sufficient vague and dual-applying—and is so rare a construction that it leaves a distinct Jonsonian trace to it. In terms of dual possibilities: "Stratford," could be Stratford-on-Avon (William Shakspeare's home town) or Stratford-sub-Castle (which is the town closest to Mary Sidney's Wilton House, and where the Herbert's attended local church). "Moniment" means a long-standing legacy or tradition, and Digges's line would most likely be a reference to some kind of tradition. (And the only thing that could accommodate this meaning would be the long-standing literary tradition of Wilton House, started by Mary Sidney and her brother, which was located near the town of Stratford-sub-Castle. That is the only "Stratford Moniment." Digges's meaning, in this case, would be that the Author's works would outlive the long-standing literary tradition established at Wilton House. However, the word could also refer to an actual, long-standing structure. This term could be imperfectly applied to the Shakspeare memorial structure found in Trinity Church in Stratford (though this could not, by any stretch, be referred to as a 'moniment' or monument) or to Old Sarum, a long-standing stone structure overlooking Wilton Estate, in Stratford-sub-Castle.

Shake-speare, *at length thy pious fellows give*  
*The world thy Workes : thy Workes, by which, out-live*  
*Thy Tombe, thy name must when that stone is rent,*  
*And Time dissolves thy Stratford Moniment,*

(From L. Digges's poem in the First Folio)

## **In Sum**

A summary of some possibilities concerning the origin of the Shakspeare memorial structure in Stratford are as follows:

### 1. Constructed between 1616 and 1623

The most unlikely scenario—yet embraced by all Stratfordians and most anti-Stratfordians—is that the memorial structure is as it seems: it was originally conceived as an honorarium to William Shakspere (with two lines of Latin verse, six lines of English, and the death date and age), and constructed sometime between 1616 and 1623.

The monument was erected some years after the death of the actor William Shakespeare in 1616 but before the publication of the Shakespeare First Folio in 1623. No-one seems to know who erected the monument or who paid for it, and there is no evidence that Shakespeare's family had anything to do with it. The sculptor, according to Sir William Dugdale's *Diary of 1653*, was 'one Gerard Johnson,' who most likely was Gerald Johnson the Younger.

(Dawkins, *The Shakespeare Enigma*, p.70)

Apart from the Droeshout engraving, the only portrayal of Shakspere which has any plausible claim to authenticity is the bust on his monument in Stratford parish church. The monument was erected some time in the seven years between Shakspere's death and 1623, when Leonard Digges made mention of it in his poem for the First Folio.

(Michell, *Who Wrote Shakespeare?*, p. 88)

### 2. Constructed after 1623

It is possible that there was no original structure in 1623 and Digges's line, "*thy Stratford Monument*," referred to the massive stone structure of Old Sarum, located near Stratford-sub-Castle or to the long-standing tradition, or monument, of Wilton House. After the First Folio was published, and devotees descended upon Stratford to see this "monument," and found nothing, a suitable structure was created. (In this scenario, if the structure was inspired, and paid for, by the pilgrims from London, wanting to see their "Shakespeare," would they depict the Author holding a sack?)

The [present] 'monument,' *in situ*, [on a wall in Trinity Church] is in a strange location, placed without any deliberate intent. How many other 'monuments' are like this? Can this rightly be considered a 'monument'? The drawing by Dugdale shows a free-standing shrine—probably erected so that the faithful visitors would have something to see, and not bother everyone with questions like, "where is the monument that was mentioned in the First Folio?" (David Roper)

### 3. Constructed between 1602 and 1611

The original structure which sported the figure of a man holding a sack of wool (or grain) and was crowned with the "Shakspere" coat of arms was originally conceived as a honorarium for John Shakspere, and built sometime between 1602 and 1611 (which are the years between the death of John Shakspere and Gheerart Janssen, the one who was reported by Dugdale to have sculpted the memorial.) The mostly date of construction was between 1602 and 1604. Janssen was also the one who "made the Stratford tomb of Shakspere's friend and fellow usurer, John Combe." The original structure was conceived and paid for by John Shakspere, who made provisions in his will for its construction. The stone slab bearing the present inscription was originally a tombstone, with four lines of English verse, which marked the grave of John Shakspere, who was buried under the floor of Trinity Church.

Sometime after 1623 (when the Stratford structure of John Shakspere was unconvincing, and began to raise doubts, and no longer "cut the mustard"—Jonson and Herbert decided that the memorial structure needed to a more definitive statement, and more directly related to William Shakspere. Thus, the honorarium to John Shakspere was "revised" and "made to fit" William Shakspere—by the addition of two over-the-top Latin lines (likening the Stratford man to Nestor, Socrates, and Virgil—and even to the

gods on Mount Olympus); two additional English lines (which make a reference to “Shakespeare’s” writing, art, and wit (which could not apply to John Shakspeare, since he was illiterate and signed his name with an “X”); and two short lines which positively designated William Shakspeare of Stratford by stating that he died in 1616, in his 53<sup>rd</sup> year, on April 23) Thus, the memorial for John Shakspeare, the illiterate wool merchant, with a few strokes of the chisel, had become a memorial for William Shakspeare, the great and godly Poet.

As mentioned, this transformation was probably conceived by Jonson and Herbert and the extra Latin and English verses were likely written by Jonson. But why take all these extra steps? Why not leave the structure as it was, to John Shakspeare and not William Shakspeare? The most likely reason for the change is that the “straw man” of William Shakspeare, created by Jonson and Herbert to “sit in for” William Shakespeare the Author, needed some shoring up; this sham needed to be made more believable. Visitors who made the long trip to Stratford, only to encounter this paltry memorial, might begin to ask dissatisfied questions: “If this man were so great how come there was no memorial structure to honor him (but only a memorial for his father)? And if this memorial was to Shakespeare the Author, how come it makes no mention of his greatness as a poet? How come the structure appears to be that of a merchant, holding a bag of grain? Where is the Star of Poets?” So, a memorial in Stratford for William Shakespeare, the poet (as mentioned by Digges) was sorely needed.

As mentioned, the transformation of the memorial, from that of John Shakspeare to William Shakspeare could have happened before the publication of the First Folio (in anticipation) but that is unlikely. In accordance with the sardonic mindset of Jonson (and his irksome resistance to offer any direct praise of Shakespeare of Stratford, and his constant tendency to obliquely undermine and mock him), it seems more like the memorial was transformation took after the publication of the First Folio. (Jonson could not resist the idea that the pilgrims traveling to Stratford to see ‘thy Stratford monument’ were really seeing a memorial for John Shakspeare, not William Shakspeare).

The most plausible scenario, then, is that Jonson heard about the John Shakspeare memorial in Stratford and, as a way to perpetuate the farce of mis-attributing the plays to William Shakspeare of Stratford, Jonson instructed Digges to add a line in his poem which referenced the “Shakespeare” memorial (which was a memorial for John Shakespeare, not William Shakespeare). (Digges was not an especially skilled wordsmith, and so when Jonson requested that the phrase, “thy Stratford Monument,” be included in his poem, Digges obliged somewhat ineptly. As it now stands, the one line in the First Folio which most strongly indicates William Shakspeare of Stratford is one of the most famously inept and misplaced lines in all of English). Only when this sham became too flimsy, and began to raise doubts and questions, was Jonson (perhaps at the insistence of William Herbert) prompted to change the structure and make it a more convincing reference to William Shakspeare of Stratford and William Shakespeare as the Author. To accomplish this transformation, two Latin lines, two English lines, and the death date of William Shakespeare were added to the existing engraving. The Latin lines praise the author, but make no direct reference to William Shakspeare of Stratford. As it stands the engraving appears to be two distinct addresses: one Latin address to the peerless poet (whose name is never mentioned) and one English address to William Shakspeare of Stratford (whose name is never mentioned). In all, the name of William Shakespeare was never added to the structure; the vague mention of “Shakespeare,” as found in the original engraving (and which originally indicated John Shakspeare) is the only name that graces the structure.

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## Additional Notes:

### 1. Timeline

#### 1596:

John Shakespere applies (for the second time) for a family coat of arms, in order to increase the status of his family and gain the title of a “gentleman.” He lists his net worth at £500.

#### 1599:

The Shakespere coat of arms is granted.

#### 1601 (September):

John Shakspere dies and is buried under the floor of Trinity Church. A tombstone is placed over his grave with four lines of English verse. He makes a provision in his will (and allots the necessary sums) for a memorial structure to be made in his honor. His son William handles the construction of the memorial and secures a notable sculpture in London (Gheerart Janssen) to sculpt the memorial.

#### 1601 (May)

William purchases a large tract of land in Stratford for £320, cash.

#### 1602-04:

A free-standing memorial structure is made for John Shakspere and placed in Trinity Church. The floor stone originally covering John Shakspere’s grave is used for the structure. The structure is paid for by John Shakspere, who leaves a provision for its construction in his will.

#### 1611:

“Gerard Johnson” (aka Gheerart Janssen) who sculpted the memorial structure for John Shakspere dies.

#### 1616:

William Shakspere dies. Though dying a relatively wealthy man, and leaving an extensively detailed will, he leaves no provision for any construction of a memorial in his honor.

#### 1621:

Mary Sidney begins the publication of the First Folio; she dies before its completion (and only after four plays are prepared).

#### 1621:

Herbert and Jonson take over the task of completing the First Folio. In order to preserve the anonymity of the Author, they decide to use the device of creating a “straw man,” in the person of William Shakspere of Stratford, so that the plays of Shakespeare can be attributed to a real person (as opposed to leaving the name hang as an obvious pen name). Attributing the plays to an actual person, albeit long dead and obscure, effectively “closes the case” and prevents people from diligently searching out the true identity of the author—which would have been the case had no person been made to “stand in” for the true Author, and claim the name “Shakespeare.”

#### 1622:

Once the unknown Shakspere of Stratford was elected as the stand-in for the real Shakespeare some investigation revealed that the only remnant of William Shakspere was an unmarked tombstone (and a small honorarium to William Shakspere’s father). The young artist, Martin Droeshout, was sent to Stratford to make a sketch of the bust and elements of his sketch were used in the engraving he made for the First Folio. To perpetuate the farce of attributing the plays to William Shakspere of Stratford, Jonson instructed Digges to write a poem which references the Shakspere memorial in Stratford (which, at the time, was a memorial for John Shakespere).

#### 1623:

First Folio was published. The preface contains a poem by L. Digges which makes a reference to “*thy Stratford Momiment*”

#### 1624-1628:

The “Shakespere” memorial structure, which appeared to be an honorarium of a local merchant (and not the world-renowned Author), was “enhanced” with a few extra lines, which morphed the structure of John Shakespere, illiterate wool merchant, to William Shakespere, of Stratford, the Author.

#### 1631:

The present inscription found on the memorial structure (including the Latin verse, six English lines, and the date of death lines) are recorded by John Weever. (See Next Section)

**1634:**

William Dugdale makes a rough sketch of the memorial.

**1653:**

Wenceslaus Hollar completes a detailed sketch and an engraving of the structure which is included in Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656).

**1737:**

George Vertue makes a sketch which reveals that the memorial structure had been changed from a free-standing structure to its present position as a wall-mount, and that the bust was changed from a man with his hands on a sack to a man holding a pen and paper (on a cushion).

## 2: John Weever

In 1631, a year before his death, John Weever published the massive *Ancient Funerall Monuments*, which recorded many inscriptions from monuments around England, particularly in Canterbury, Rochester, London, and Norwich. Shakespeare's monument does not appear in the published book, but two of Weever's notebooks, containing his drafts for most of the book, as well as many unpublished notes, survive as Society of Antiquaries, SAL/MS/127 and 128. In one of these notebooks, under the heading "Stratford upon Avon," Weever recorded the poems from Shakespeare's monument and his gravestone. (David Kathman)

It is unclear why in Weever's "massive" volume he did not publish anything about Shakespeare's monument, even though Weever had been an a long-standing admirer of Shakespeare's work. Could it be that Weever suspected, or knew, that the memorial structure in Stratford—in honor of a local businessman, William Shakspere, complete with his hands on a sack of grain—was not a true honorarium of the great poet, William Shakespeare? Why else would Weever not include this important monument in his book?

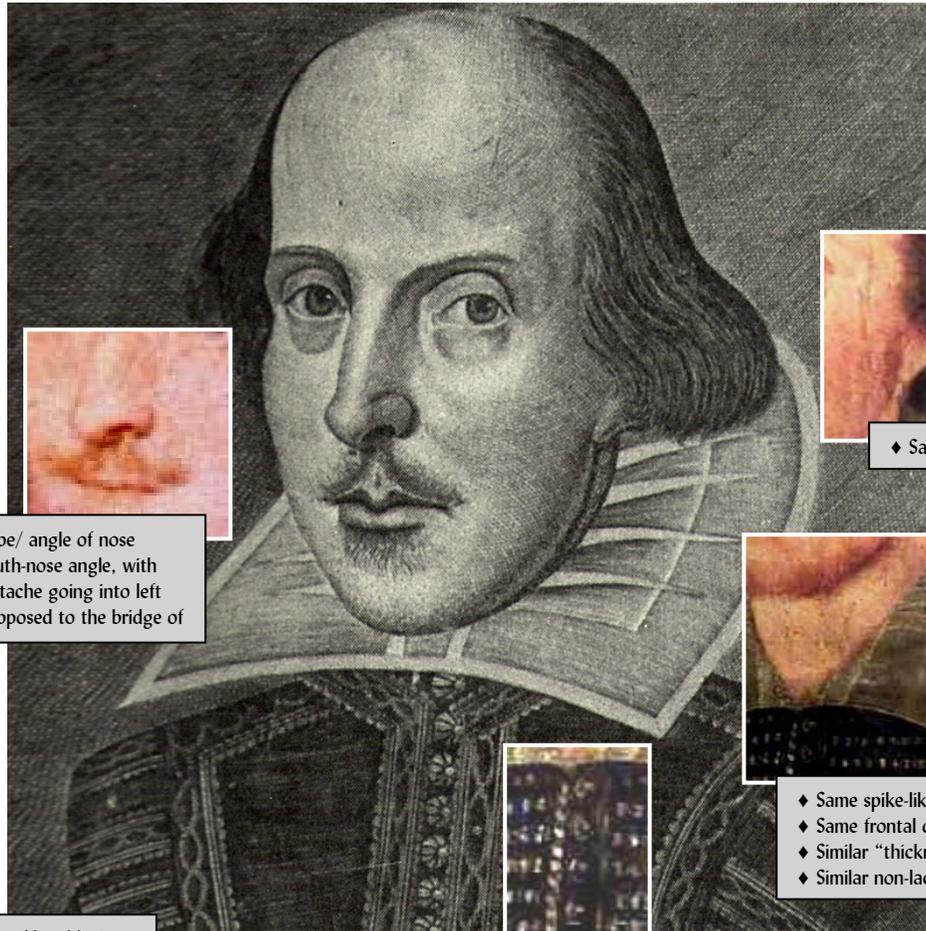
Weever was not only the first to mention the Shakespeare memorial structure, and record the verses which "decked" it, but he was also the first to honor Shakespeare's work with a full poem, which was published in his *Epigrammes*, 1599:

*Ad Gulielmum Shakespeare.*

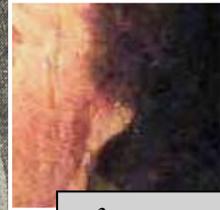
Honie-tongued Shakespeare, when I saw thine issue,  
I swore Apollo got them and none other,  
Their rosy-tainted features clothed in tissue  
Some heaven born goddess said to be their mother:  
Rose-cheeked Adonis with his amber tresses,  
Faire fire-hot Venus charming him to love her,  
Chaste Lucretia virgin-like her dresses,  
Proud lust-stung Tarquine seeking still to prove her.  
Romea, Richard, more whose names I know not,  
Their sugared tongues and power attractive beauty  
Say they are Saints, although that Saints they show not  
For thousands vows to them subjective duty:  
They burn in love, thy children Shakespeare het them,  
Go, wo thy Muse, more Nymphish brood beget them.

(John Weever)

### 3. The Droeshout engraving and William Herbert



- ◆ Same shape/ angle of nose
- ◆ Same mouth-nose angle, with top of moustache going into left nostril (as opposed to the bridge of



- ◆ Same ear exposure

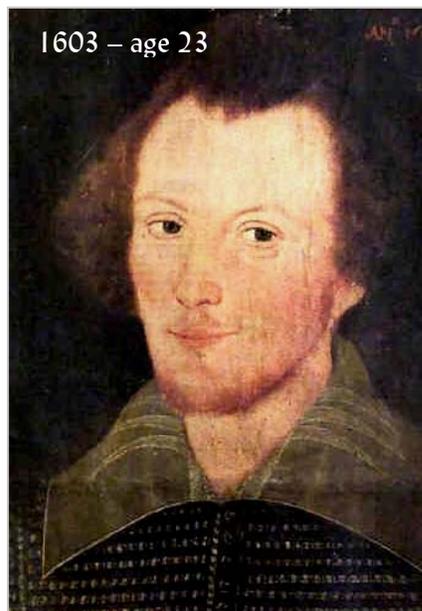


- ◆ Same spike-like design on collar
- ◆ Same frontal design on collar
- ◆ Similar "thickness" of collar
- ◆ Similar non-lace border



- ◆ Similar button style and angle

- ◆ Same sense of head being cut off by collar and floating above the body
- ◆ Same size and positioning of head, collar, and body



The image on lower left is a miniature of William Herbert. The image on lower right is “the Sanders portrait”—a portrait which some scholars hold is that of William Shakspere but may very well be that of William Herbert. The problem with attributing this portrait, dated 1603, to Shakspere is that it is of a young man: in 1603, Shakspere was 39, while Herbert was 23.