

The Six Signatures of Shakespeare



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The above show the six signatures of Shakespeare that we have a record of:

- a) From the 1612 Mountjoy suit deposition: Willm Shacker
- b) From the 1612 Blackfriars Gatehouse deed: (William) Shakspear
- c) From the 1612 Blackfriars mortgage: Wm Shakspea
- d) From the 1615 will, page 1: William Shackspere
- e) From the will, page 2: Wilm. Shaksper
- f) From the will, page 3: (by me William) Shakspeara

The words shown in brackets were added by someone else's writing, probably a clerk. Some believe that the last two or three signatures look different to the rest as Shakespeare was ill, or may be they were written by someone else as he was too ill to write.

Some signatures are probably "squashed up" to fit into very limited available space.

What is striking is not only do there seem to be three different styles of signature (a, b to d, e and f) but in each signature the name is spelt differently.

As "evidence" they are unsatisfactory.

Signatures in Shakespeare's time were often just scribble or a mark.

But some believe that they show that Shakespeare could hardly write.
