Review

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Source: *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jul., 1906), p. 342

Published by: [Modern Humanities Research Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3713464>

Accessed: 19-02-2016 02:07 UTC

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Orthographie, Lautgebung und Wortbildung in den Werken Shakespeares.
 Von WILHELM FRANZ. Heidelberg: Winter, 1905. 8vo. vi + 125 pp.

Dr Franz has with this small volume completed his Shakespearean Grammar, of which the main portion was issued in 1899. The most interesting and instructive portions of the book are those dealing with the spelling and phonology of Shakespeare's works. Here, at least on the phonological side, Dr Franz has had the help of the works of Ellis and Sweet, and if he has not discovered much that is new, he has selected for us the points that are of interest for the student of the language of Shakespeare, separating them from much extraneous matter.

The exceeding variableness of Elizabethan spelling and the fact that we have no printed work of Shakespeare's definitely known to have been revised by him prevent our arriving at any very definite conclusion in matters of orthography. In matters of phonology more can be done. Shakespeare's pronunciation of English was presumably that of most of his contemporaries, and, though it is not likely that the normalisation of speech had been carried so far as in modern literary English, it is probable that there was, at least approximately, a standard of literary speech. What this standard was may be determined with a good deal of accuracy from various grammarians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who deal with the pronunciation of words in their own day. Doubts remain on many points; at times especially there are hints of a struggle between popular tendencies and learned pedantries as to the pronunciation of certain sounds, but in all such cases Dr Franz has set the evidence clearly before us and has left us to draw our own conclusions.

In observing the many differences of pronunciation between English of the seventeenth and English of the twentieth century, one wonders how far Shakespeare, if he were to revisit the stage, would be able to understand his own language on the lips of Tree or Benson, or again how far we should understand a performance of, say *Much Ado*, by the Elizabethan Stage Society, in which its members carried their conservatism to the extent of restoring the phonology as well as the stage-setting of Shakespeare's plays.

The final section dealing with word-composition in Shakespearean English, though sound and scholarly, contains nothing that is strikingly new, and as regards a good deal of the vocabulary of Shakespeare the final word cannot in many cases be said until the *New English Dictionary* has finished supplying us with the material on which to work.

ALLEN MAWER.