

SUMMARY: The document below, dated 7 June 1609, is the final surviving document in an action for debt brought by William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon in the Stratford Court of Record against John Addenbrooke.

Katherine Duncan-Jones has suggested that the document describes Shakespeare as ‘recently at the court of King James’:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=eMBwueQHR_UC&pg=PA12&lpg=PA12&dq=%22shakespeare%22+%22addenbrooke%22+%22king+james%22&source=bl&ots=yTf2F9t9xd&sig=rWc1PfoTyQk9mVdcIrO_37sPs_Q&hl=en&sa=X&ei=pTC5UqHeOdbpoASUn4KYCQ&ved=0CDYQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=%22shakespeare%22%20%22addenbrooke%22%20%22king%20james%22&f=false

That was his recovery of a debt of 36, with 24s interest, from John Addenbrooke, which was concluded at the Stratford Court of Record on 7 June 1609. The description of Shakespeare as ‘nuper in curia domini Jacobi’ (‘recently at the Court of King James’) could suggest that he had lately arrived back in Stratford, and now enjoyed an elevated status in his home town as a ‘King’s servant’, who frequently performed at court.

See Duncan Jones, Katherine, ed., *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, London: Thomson Learning, 1997, (The Arden Shakespeare), p. 12.

However it appears that the phrase in question was not applied to Shakespeare in the original document, but rather formed part of a description of the Stratford court’s jurisdiction. In his translation of the entire document reprinted below, Lewis places the words ‘recently in the court of James, now King of England’, immediately after ‘William Shakespeare, gentleman’, thus giving the impression that the descriptor should be applied to Shakespeare. A modification of Lewis’s translation with the words in question properly placed in context, might read:

Precept to the sergeants at mace there that, whereas a certain William Shakespeare, gentleman, lately brought a certain complaint in the court of King James, now King of England, held in the foresaid borough by virtue of letters patent of Edward VI, late King of England, against John Addenbrooke on a plea of debt...

The complete Latin transcript and English translation below are taken from Lewis, B. Roland, *The Shakespeare Documents*, Vol. II, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941, pp. 399-400.

LEWIS TRANSLATION

Borough of Stratford.

<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/>

There is an order to the sergeants at mace that when a certain William Shakespeare, gentleman, recently in the court of James, now King of England, of the aforesaid borough, same held by virtue of letters patent from King Edward VI, recently king of England, carried his own certain complaint against a certain John Addenbrooke concerning the payment of a debt; and when a certain Thomas Hornby of said borough in the same complaint became a pledge and mainpernor for the said John, towit: that if the said John in said suit were convicted in a legal manner that the same John would satisfy said William Shakespeare not only for the debt in said complaint by said William against said John to be recovered in the aforesaid court but also for the loss and cost to the same William in that complaint by said court that would be adjudged against said John; or that he would go to prison in the said year of the reign of James, now King in said borough, to satisfy to William Shakespeare the said debt, loss and costs; and furthermore, that if the same John does not satisfy for same William the debt, loss, and costs, and does not go to the aforesaid prison in the said year of our king to satisfy the said William in form aforesaid, then the same Thomas Hornby wishes to satisfy for the recovery of the debt, losses, and costs thus adjudged to the same William. And since also in that complaint such proceeding were had in the same court that the said William in said case by the judgment of the said court recovered against the said John not only six pounds for debt but also twenty-four shillings for the payment of losses and costs of the same William, appropriate to his suit and complaint. For which there was the order to the sergeant at mace the same which they executed, etc., etc., said John, if etc., greetings, that they have his body in the presence of the bailiff of the said borough at the next Court of Record there held to satisfy said William concerning said debt so recovered; namely, to the extent of twenty-four shillings for said damages and costs adjudged, Wherefore Francis Boyle, then and now sergeant at mace on the day for returning the writ, announced that said John was not found within his bailiwick. Wherefore the said William prays to said court of said Lord King that there be provided to him said suitable remedy against aforesaid mainpernor in the suit concerning which it was ordered to the sergeants at mace which they make known through upright and legal men of said borough, whether etc., that the aforesaid Thomas be in the presence of the bailiff of the said borough at the next court of record held in said district to show either if he has anything to say or whether or not he knows why the aforesaid William ought not have his execution against the said Thomas, concerning the debt, the losses, and the costs, according to the force, form, and effect of said mainpernor, whether or not he should see how to extricate himself and furthermore, whether or not he would do and would accept what said court of said King decrees in this matter, and therefore they have this order. Witnessed by Francis Smyth Jr., gentleman, before the same bailiff on the seventh day of June in the seventh year of the reign of James, by grace of God King of England, France and Ireland and forty-second year of his reign of Scotland. [Signed: Greene]

LEWIS TRANSCRIPT

Stratford Burgus

Preceptum est servientibus ad clavam ibidem quod cum quidam Willielmus Shackspeare, generosus, nuper in curia domini Jacobi, nunc regis Anglie, burgi predicti, ibidem tenta virtute literarum patentium domini Edwardi, nuper regis Anglie, sexti, levavit quandam querelam suam versus quendam Johannem. Addenbrooke de placito debiti, cumque eciam quidam Thomas Horneby de burgo predicto in eadem querela devenit plegius et manucaptor predicti Johanne, scilicet, quod si predictus Johannes in querela illa legitimo modo convinceretur quod idem Johannes satisfaceret prefato Willielmo Shackspeare tam debitum in querela illa per prefatum Willielmum versus predictum Johannem in curia predicta recuperandum quam misas et custagia que eidem Willielmo in querela illa per eandem curiam adjudicata forent versus eundem Johannem, vel idem se redderet prisone dicti domini regis Jacobi nunc, burgi predicti, ad satisfaciendum eidem Willielmo eadem debitum misas et custagia; et ulterius quod si idem Johannes non satisfaceret eidem Willielmo debitum et misas et custagia, nec se redderet predicte prisone dicti domini regis nunc ad satisfaciendum eidem Willielmo in forma predicta, quod tunc ipse idem Thomas Horneby debitum sic recuperandum et misas et custagia sic adjudicata eidem Willielmo satisfacere vellet. Cumque eciam in querela illa taliter processum fuit in eadem curia quod predictus Willielmus in loquela illa, per iudicium ejusdem curie, recuperabat versus predictum Johannem tam sex libras de debito quam viginti et quatuor solidos pro decremento misarum et custagiorum ipsius Willielmi in secta querela illius appositos. Super quo preceptum fuit servientibus ad clavam ibidem quod capiant, seu etc., predictum Johannem, si etc., et eum salvo etc., ita quod habeant corpus ejus coram ballivo burgi predicti, ad proximam curiam de recordo ibidem tenendam, ad satisfaciendum predicto Willielmo de debito predicto sic recuperato, quam de viginti et quatuor solidis pro predictis dampnis et custagiis adjudicatis; unde Franciscus Boyle, tunc et nunc serviens ad clavam, ad diem returni inde mandavit quod predictus Johannes non est inventus in balliva sua, unde idem Willielmus, ad predictam curiam dicti domini regis, supplicaverit sibi de remedio congruo versus predictum manucaptorem in hac parte provideri, super quod preceptum est servientibus ad clavam ibidem quod per probos et legales homines de burgo predicto scire faciant, seu etc., prefatum Thomam quod sit coram ballivo burgi predicti, ad proximam curiam de recordo in burgo predicto tenendam, ostensurus si quid et se habeat vel dicere sciat quare predictus Willielmus execucionem suam versus eundem Thomam de debito et misis et custagiis illis habere non debeat, juxta vim, formam and effectum manucapcionis predicti, si sibi viderit expedire, et ulterius facturus et recepturus quod predicta curia dicti domini regis consideret in ea parte, et habeant ibi tunc hoc preceptum. Teste Francisco Smyth Juniore, generoso, ballivo ibidem, septimo die Junii, annis regni domini nostril Jacobi, Dei gracia regis Anglie, Francie et Hibernie, septimo, et Scotie xlijo [Signed: Greene]