



What is OP

- Original Pronunciation
- Early Modern English = EModE or EME
- Around the year 1600
- Different versions- not just one OP: eg musician

How can we reconstruct OP?

1. Shakespeare's contemporaries writing about how words were pronounced: Ben Johnson: doggy sound
2. Spelling: film as philome
3. Rhymes and puns: lines and loins

90 % accuracy

How OP changes the play

- Faster and less reverential than RP
- Earthier accent, guttural sounds
- Makes actors move differently
- Makes more sense:

'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine,
And after one hour more 'twill be eleven.
And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
And then from hour to hour we rot and rot;
And thereby hangs a tale.'

(As You Like It, II.vii.14–28)




Around the Globe in One Line

- Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Cornwall, Devon, Midlands, Scotland and Ireland
- “yet I will hammer it out”
(Richard II, V.v.5)





https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqmgeth4tFY&ab_channel=DivisionofHumanities%2CUniversityofOtago

Some Characteristics of OP

- Rhotic accent
- “trippingly upon the tongue” (Hamlet, III. ii. 2)
- The mouth lexical set started with the schwa, or neutral vowel [ə], resulting in [əʊ]
 - Examples: out, loud, noun, count, crowd, bough 
- The goat, near, square, face, and cure sets were more monophthongal in EME. We would have heard [go:t, fi:~, skwe:~, fe:s, kʌu:~] 
- Examples: goat, home, near, beer, square, bare, bear, face, stay, fatal, cure, tour, poor
- The bath and start sets together, telling us that [a] is the target
 - Examples: staff, path, brass, blast, ask, master, basket, AND start, heart, barn, sergeant 
- Fuller soundings of -sion and -tion spellings [sɪən] instead of [ʃən]

Some Characteristics of OP

- **Weak forms and elisions:** and [ən], as [əz], being [bɪn, bən], for [fə-], he [ə], I [a], my [mɪ], mine [mɪn], thine [ðɪn], must [məs], of [ə], or [ə], them [əm], thou [ðə], thee [ði], thy [ði], to [tə] 
- Initial /h/ on he, he's, him, his, him, her, hers, in unstressed positions will be dropped.
- Medial /v/ and voiced /th/ [ð] consonants in some common words will be elided. Hence: heaven [hɛǎn], even [iǎn], seven [sɛǎm], eleven [əlɛǎm], devil [di:ǎt], hither [hiǎ-], thither [ðiǎ-] 
- -ing suffixes should be reduced to [ɪn]: calling [kəlɪn], singing [sɪŋɪn], praying [preɪɪn].
- /wh/ should be aspirated in words like which [ˈmɪtʃ̪], when [mɛn], why [mɔɪ], whither [mɪðə-], whence [mɛns]

Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.



Sources

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQc5ZpAoU4c&ab_channel=BGS English](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQc5ZpAoU4c&ab_channel=BGS%20English)
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Thank you for your attention