

Chronology and Sources

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The following table attempts to arrange Shakespeare's plays and poems in the order of their composition, to present the evidence for the proposed order, and, because dating sometimes depends upon the time when particular sources became available, to list the source materials for each work.

Any attempt to arrange the plays chronologically is beset with hazards and uncertainties, and, as the information in the table will make clear, the undertaking has given rise to differences of opinion among a long line of editors and critics. The first to attack the problem was Edward Capell, although the credit as pioneer is usually assigned to Edmond Malone, whose "An Attempt to Ascertain the Order in Which the Plays Attributed to Shakspeare Were Written" was published in 1778, two years before Capell's earlier chronology appeared in print. Since the time of Capell and Malone, many of whose proposed dates are no longer acceptable, other scholars have addressed themselves to the problem of chronology, and the results of their labors may be found authoritatively brought together by Sir Edmund Chambers in the first volume of his *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (Oxford, 1930). The most recent general review of the evidence for dating is James G. McManaway's "Recent Studies in Shakespeare's Chronology" in Volume III of *Shakespeare Survey* (1950).

Evidence for dating may be distinguished as of two kinds: internal evidence and external evidence. Internal evidence, as the term suggests, is drawn from the texts of the plays and poems and deals for the most part in topical allusions (which if dateable can establish a *terminus a quo*, i.e. a date before which the work cannot have been written), metrical development, kinds and handling of imagery, incidence of rhyme, and vocabulary. External evidence is concerned with rather more concrete matters: dates of actual publication; entry on the Stationers' Register (cited below

as *S.R.*), Henslowe's *Diary*, Francis Meres's *Palladis Tamia* (1598), Revels accounts, etc.; allusions to, or imitations of, Shakespeare's plays or poems by contemporary writers whose work can be dated.

Even with the aid of all the known evidence it is frequently impossible to narrow the date of a play to the limits even of a particular year, although it will be noticed that the dating set forth below becomes somewhat firmer beginning with *Richard II* (1595). External evidence can generally establish a *terminus ad quem*, i.e. the date after which the work cannot have been written, but it tells us nothing definite about how long before this terminal date the work was in fact composed. It is at this point that internal evidence must be brought to bear, but internal evidence is slippery in the extreme and often susceptible of more than one interpretation. The problem is further complicated by two other factors: the possibility that Shakespeare reworked an earlier play by another writer (mixed authorship) and the possibility that a play as we now have it represents Shakespeare's reworking of his original version (revision). The claims of both mixed authorship and revision have given rise to much disagreement among critics, and consequently to further uncertainty in establishing a chronology.

The table, which for the chronology is based in great part on the work of Chambers and McManaway and more recent investigations of particular plays, is arranged, following the name of the play or poem, to give, in the first column, the most commonly accepted date or dates for that play or poem (where more than one title is assigned to the same year or years the order of listing represents the probable order of composition) and, where indicated, the date of suggested revision; in the second column, the basic evidence for the dating, followed by a list of the proposed sources, arranged under the categories employed by Geoffrey Bullough in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (7 vols., London, 1957-73).

TITLE	PROPOSED DATE	EVIDENCE FOR DATING; SOURCES
<i>1 Henry VI</i>	1589-90 (revised 1594-95)	Published in F1 (1623). Performed March 3, 1592 (marked "nc," i.e. new, by Henslowe, <i>Diary</i>). Alluded to by Nashe (<i>Pierce Penniless</i> , August 8, 1592; see Appendix B, Number 12). Rival theories of authorship: (1) wholly by Shakespeare and revised after 2 and 3 <i>Henry VI</i> ; (2) reworking of an earlier play by another hand or hands (Greene, Peele, Nashe the strongest candidates). Some would place the play in any form later than 2 and 3 <i>Henry VI</i> . No definite proof that the F1 text represents the play in essentially the same form as performed for Henslowe or referred to by Nashe. SOURCES: (1) Hall, <i>The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York</i> (1548). (2) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). (3) Fabyan, <i>Chronicle</i> (1559 ed.; first English version 1533). (4) Geoffrey of Monmouth, <i>Historia Regum Britanniae</i> . PROBABLE SOURCE: Sir Thomas Coningsby, <i>Journal of the Siege of Rouen</i> (MS; published 1847).
<i>2 Henry VI</i>	1590-91	"Bad" quarto (<i>The First Part of the Contention betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster</i>) entered on S.R. March 12, 1594; published 1594. Received text published in F1 (1623). The plague closed the theatres in London for three months in 1592, the whole of 1593, and the first half of 1594. The "bad" quarto version presumably resulted from forced provincial tours and implies a date not later than the beginning of 1592 for the original play. Greene parodied a line in 3 <i>Henry VI</i> (l.iv.137) before his death on September 3, 1592 (<i>Groatsworth of Wit</i> ; see Appendix B, Number 8), which seems to require a still earlier date for 2 <i>Henry VI</i> . As for 1 <i>Henry VI</i> , authorship problems raise further difficulties, but it seems relatively sure that the F1 texts of 2 and 3 <i>Henry VI</i> are essentially the plays as performed around 1590-91. SOURCES: (1) Hall, <i>The Union of . . . Lancaster and York</i> (1548). (2) Fabyan, <i>Chronicle</i> (1559 ed.). PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). (2) Foxe, <i>Acts and Monuments</i> (1570 ed.). (3) Grafton, <i>Chronicle at Large</i> (1569).
<i>3 Henry VI</i>	1590-91	"Bad" quarto (<i>The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York</i>) published 1595. Received text published in F1 (1623). See Greene's allusion (1592) under 2 <i>Henry VI</i> above. The two parts are closely connected (both "bad" quartos were published by the same publisher) and present essentially the same problems. SOURCES: (1) Hall, <i>The Union of . . . Lancaster and York</i> (1548). (2) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). POSSIBLE SOURCE: Baldwin, ed., <i>A Mirror for Magistrates</i> (1559).
<i>Richard III</i>	1592-93	"Bad" quarto entered on S.R. October 20, 1597; published 1597. Somewhat enlarged and revised text published in F1 (1623). Close links with 3 <i>Henry VI</i> suggest that it was composed immediately after that play. SOURCES: (1) Hall, <i>The Union of . . . Lancaster and York</i> (1548). (2) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Baldwin, ed., <i>A Mirror for Magistrates</i> (1559). (2) Anon., <i>The True Tragedy of Richard III</i> (c. 1591). (3) Stow, <i>The Chronicles of England</i> (1580).
<i>Venus and Adonis</i>	1592-93	Entered on S.R. April 18, 1593; published 1593. Generally thought of as being composed in 1592-93 because of the enforced suspension of theatrical performances in London as a result of the plague. A minority interpret Shakespeare's reference to the poem as "the first heire of my inuention" as implying that it predates any of his work in the drama, thus throwing the date of composition back into the late 1580's.
<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	1592-94	SOURCE: Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> (tr. Golding, 1565, 1567), Bks. III, IV, X. Published in F1 (1623). Performed at Gray's Inn December 28, 1594 (see Appendix B, Number 14). The allusion to France "arm'd and reverted, making war against her heir" (III.ii.123-24) has generally been taken to date the play before July 9, 1593, when a truce was declared between Henry IV and the League, but it has recently been shown that comments on

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<i>The Comedy of Errors</i> (cont.)		the struggle as still in progress appeared for several years after 1593. It is therefore possible that the Gray's Inn performance was the first (1594) and that the play with its classical source and unusual amount of legal terminology was written for that occasion.
<i>Sonnets</i>	1593-99	<p>SOURCES: Plautus, (1) <i>Menaechmi</i> (English tr. by William Warner, 1595) and (2) <i>Amphitruo</i>. (3) Lyly, <i>Midas</i> (c. 1589). (4) Gascoigne, <i>Supposes</i> (1566). PROBABLE SOURCE: Gower, <i>Confessio Amantis</i> (1554 ed.), Bk. VIII.</p> <p>Entered on S.R. May 20, 1609; published 1609. The date span here suggested is a kind of average of critical opinion (Rollins, <i>New Variorum</i>, II, 73). Minority views would either push the dating back into the middle 1580's for some sonnets or see other sonnets as late as 1609. There are one or two facts and one interesting implication. Meres (before September 7, 1598) refers to Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends" (see Appendix B, Number 22), and William Jaggard printed two of the sonnets (138, 144) in the 1599 <i>Passionate Pilgrim</i>. Some of the sonnets, therefore, were in existence by 1598, a conclusion that helps not at all, since all dating theories allow this premise. More significant, perhaps, is the large number of verbal and thematic parallels that can be established between the sonnets and the earlier plays (through <i>King John</i>, 1594-96), the only later plays to show such parallels being <i>As You Like It</i> (1599) and <i>Troilus and Cressida</i> (1601-2).</p> <p>SOURCES: None specific; probable influence of Daniel's <i>Delia</i> (1592) and Sidney's <i>Astrophel and Stella</i> (1591).</p>
<i>The Rape of Lucrece</i>	1593-94	<p>Published 1594. Many verbal links have been pointed out between <i>Lucrece</i> and <i>Titus Andronicus</i> (some, though fewer, between that play and <i>Venus and Adonis</i>).</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Ovid, <i>Fasti</i>, Bk. II. (2) Livy, <i>Historia</i>, Bk. I (with possible use of William Painter's tr. in <i>The Palace of Pleasure</i>, 1566). PROBABLE SOURCE: Chaucer, <i>The Legend of Good Women</i> (lines 1680-1885).</p>
<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	1593-94	<p>Performed January 24, 1594 (Henslowe's <i>Diary</i>, where it is marked "ne," i.e. new). Entered on S.R. February 6, 1594; published 1594. Listed by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>, 1598) as by Shakespeare. Rival theories of authorship: (1) Shakespeare's thorough rewriting of an earlier play (c. 1589), probably by Peele; (2) wholly Shakespeare's. An allusion to a play on this subject in <i>A Knack to Know a Knave</i>, acted as "new" on June 10, 1592 (Henslowe, <i>Diary</i>), must, if we accept the dates 1593-94, be interpreted as a reference to the pre-Shakespearean play.</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Anon., <i>The History of Titus Andronicus</i> (known only from an eighteenth-century chapbook in the Folger Shakespeare Library). (2) Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> (tr. Golding, 1567), Bk. VI. (3) Seneca, <i>Thyestes</i> (tr. Jasper Heywood, 1560). PROBABLE SOURCE: Plutarch, <i>Lives</i> (tr. North, 1579 ed.).</p>
<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	1593-94	<p>Entered on S.R. January 22, 1607; published in F1 (1623). A play called <i>The Taming of a Shrew</i> was entered on S.R. May 2, 1594, and published in the same year. Two general views of <i>A Shrew</i> have been held: (1) that it is a "bad" quarto text of a play that served as Shakespeare's source for <i>The Shrew</i>; (2) that <i>A Shrew</i> is a "bad" quarto version of Shakespeare's <i>The Shrew</i>. If the second view is accepted, a view that has steadily gained support in recent years, Shakespeare's play (<i>The Shrew</i>) would have to be dated not later than 1593. The performance of a play called "the tamyng of A shrowe" is recorded in Henslowe's <i>Diary</i> for June 11, 1594, at the Newington Butts theatre, where both Shakespeare's company (the Chamberlain's Men) and the Admiral's Men are believed to have been performing at this time. Significantly perhaps, Henslowe does not mark the play "ne" (i.e. new).</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) <i>A Merry Jest of a Shrewd and Curst Wife Lapped in Morel's Skin for Her Good Behavior</i> (c. 1550). (2) Gascoigne, <i>Supposes</i> (1566). (3) <i>The Taming of a Shrew</i> (published 1594) [see above for a different view].</p>

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<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> (cont.)		(4) For the Sly framework: some version of a story that appears in P. Heuterus' <i>De Rebus Burgundicis</i> (1584; Bk. IV) that relates a very similar prank played by Philip the Good of Burgundy on a drunken countryman. Shakespeare may have got the story from a now-lost collection of tales by Richard Edwards published in 1570 (see Thomas Warton, <i>History of English Poetry</i> [1774-81], Section 52); a later fragment (c. 1620) with the title "The Waking Man's Dream" may be part of a reprint of Edwards' collection (see <i>Shakespeare's Library</i> , ed. W. C. Hazlitt [1875], IV, 406-14). A translation of Heuterus' version by Grimestone (from the French of S. Goulart) appeared in 1607.
<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	1594	Published in F1 (1623). Noted by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i> , 1598) as by Shakespeare. Generally admitted to be Shakespeare's earliest attempt at romantic comedy. Leech (New Arden ed.) suggests that it was composed in two stages, first stage 1592, second stage late 1593, and that it precedes <i>The Comedy of Errors</i> . The two stages, he believes, may explain some of the numerous inconsistencies in the play as we now have it. But a date earlier than 1594 remains problematical. SOURCES: (1) Montemayor, <i>Diana Enamorada</i> (possibly in Yonge's English tr., published 1598 but in MS sixteen years earlier). (2) Brooke, <i>Romeus and Juliet</i> (1562). (3) Lyly, <i>Midas</i> (c. 1589). PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Elyot, <i>The Governour</i> (1531). (2) Edwards, <i>Damon and Pithias</i> (c. 1565).
<i>Love's Labor's Lost</i>	1594-95 (revised 1597 for court per- formance)	Published 1598. It seems likely that a "bad" quarto edition preceded the 1598 quarto, but no copy is extant. Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i> , 1598) mentions the play as Shakespeare's, coupled with what sounds like a companion play, "Loue labours wonne," of which, although we know it to have been published in quarto by 1603, no copy has survived (see T. W. Baldwin, <i>Shakespeare's "Love's Labor's Won,"</i> 1957). There seems to be a reference in IV.iii.343-44 to Chapman's <i>Shadow of Night</i> (1594), which would place the play not earlier than that year. The Muscovite disguise in V.ii and Berowne's complaint in I.i.48 ("Not to see ladies") are thought to show the influence of the Gray's Inn Christmas revels of 1594-95 (see Appendix B, Number 14); and Berowne's remark in V.ii.460-62 may be taken as a reference to the ill-fated performance of <i>The Comedy of Errors</i> during those revels. Certainly the song in V.ii.889-924 cannot have been composed before 1597 since it draws from Gerard's <i>Herbal</i> published in that year. This song and other revisions were probably written for the court performance (not later than Christmas of 1597) referred to on the title-page of the 1598 quarto. SOURCE: None definite; some suggested analogues with French history of the sixteenth century; probable influence of <i>commedia dell'arte</i> in plot and character types and of the Gray's Inn Christmas revels of 1594-95; song in V.ii.889-924 based on Gerard's <i>Herbal</i> (1597).
Additions to <i>Sir Thomas More</i>	1594-95	Suggested dates for the play as a whole range from 1590 to 1605, but the most widely accepted dating for the original play is 1590-93, for the revisions 1594-95. Shakespeare's proposed part in the revisions is limited to a single scene (Addition II in Hand D) and a shorter passage (Addition III in Hand C). For a full discussion, see the critical introduction to Additions II and III in this edition. SOURCES (for the play as a whole): (1) Hall, <i>The Union . . . of Lancaster and York</i> (1548). (2) "Lives" of More. PROBABLE SOURCE: Foxe, <i>Acts and Monuments</i> (1570 ed.).
<i>King John</i>	1594-96	Published in F1 (1623). Listed by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i> , 1598) as by Shakespeare. The dating problem for <i>King John</i> is exceptionally murky. Two widely different views are held about the relationship of Shakespeare's play to the anonymous two-part play called <i>The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England</i> , published in 1591: (1) T.R. is the principal source of <i>King John</i> (the orthodox and still most generally accepted opinion); (2) T.R. is a memorial imitation of Shakespeare's play (i.e. a "bad" quarto). The proponents of (2), who are few in number, would thus date <i>King John</i> not later

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<i>King John</i> (cont.)		<p>than 1590. If they should ever prove their case, the chronology of Shakespeare's early plays would have to be reconsidered.</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Anon., <i>The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England</i>, 2 pts. (published 1591) [see above for another view]. (2) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). PROBABLE SOURCE: Hall, <i>The Union of . . . Lancaster and York</i> (1548). POSSIBLE SOURCE: Foxe, <i>Acts and Monuments</i> (1570 ed.).</p>
<i>Richard II</i>	1595	<p>Entered on S.R. August 29, 1597; published 1597. Listed by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>, 1598) as by Shakespeare. Shakespeare is probably indebted to Daniel's <i>Civil Wars</i> (1595). It is possible that a performance of this play took place at the house of Sir Edward Hoby, December 9, 1595 (see Appendix B, Number 15). If the "K. Richard" of Hoby's letter is indeed Shakespeare's <i>Richard II</i>, this piece of evidence, coupled with the probable influence of Daniel, would give us the first definite year date for the composition of one of the plays.</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) <i>The Union of . . . Lancaster and York</i> (1548). (2) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). (3) Anon., <i>I Richard II</i> (or <i>Thomas of Woodstock</i>) (c. 1592). PROBABLE SOURCE: Daniel, <i>Civil Wars</i> (1595). POSSIBLE SOURCES: (1) Baldwin, ed., <i>A Mirror for Magistrates</i> (1559). (2) Froissart, <i>Chronicles</i> (tr. Lord Berners, c. 1523-25).</p>
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	1595-96	<p>"Bad" quarto published 1597; "good" quarto published 1599. Listed by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>, 1598) as by Shakespeare. Several astrological references in the play and an allusion to the great earthquake of 1584 as having occurred eleven years earlier seem to point to 1595 or 1596. Baldwin (<i>Five-Act Structure</i>) suggests a date of 1591, between <i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> and <i>Lucrece</i>, partly on the evidence of another quake in 1580.</p> <p>SOURCE: Brooke, <i>The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet</i> (1562).</p>
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	1595-96	<p>Entered on S.R. October 8, 1600; published 1600. Listed by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>, 1598) as by Shakespeare. The play suggests special composition for a wedding, and seven different weddings have been suggested, ranging in date from 1590 to 1600 (despite the fact that Meres's listing rules out any date after September 7, 1598, for the play except in a revised form). An allusion to bad summer weather (II.i.81-117) has been connected with conditions in 1594, 1595, and 1596, the most recent opinion favoring 1596. The only wedding late enough in that year is the double wedding of the daughters of the Earl of Worcester, November 8, 1596.</p> <p>SOURCE: No source known for the main plot; for the Pyramus and Thisbe story, Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> (tr. Golding, 1567), Bk. IV. PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Chaucer, "The Knight's Tale." (2) Plutarch, <i>Lives</i> (tr. North, 1579 ed.). (3) <i>Huon of Bordeaux</i> (tr. Lord Berners, c. 1533-42). (4) Scot, <i>Discovery of Witchcraft</i> (1584). POSSIBLE SOURCES: (1) Apuleius, <i>The Golden Ass</i> (tr. Adlington, 1566). (2) Robinson, ed., <i>A Handful of Pleasant Delights</i> (1584; for Pyramus and Thisbe).</p>
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	1596-97	<p>Entered on S.R. July 22, 1598; published 1600. Listed by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>, 1598) as by Shakespeare. Among various supposed allusions in the play, only one seems unambiguous evidence for dating. I.i.27-29 refers to a ship ("wealthy Andrew") and there is little doubt that Shakespeare is here glancing at a Spanish vessel called the <i>St. Andrew</i>, which was captured in the Cadiz expedition of 1596. News of the capture reached England by July 30, 1596. Late 1596, or early 1597, seems, therefore, a likely date of composition.</p> <p>SOURCE: Marlowe, <i>The Jew of Malta</i> (c. 1589; for some details only). PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Giovanni Fiorentino, <i>Il Pecorone</i> (1558), first story of fourth day (no contemporary tr. known). (2) Masuccio, <i>Il Novellino</i> (1476), fourteenth story (no contemporary tr. known). (3) <i>Gesta Romanorum</i> (tr. Richard Robinson, 1577, 1595), story 66. POSSIBLE SOURCES: (1) Munday, <i>Zeluato</i> (1580). (2) Anon., <i>The Jew</i> (c. 1569-79; not extant).</p>

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<i>1 Henry IV</i>	1596-97	Entered on S.R. February 25, 1598; published 1598. Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i> , 1598) refers to "Henry the 4." as by Shakespeare. SOURCES: (1) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). (2) Anon., <i>The Famous Victories of Henry V</i> (c. 1586). (3) Anon., <i>1 Richard II</i> (or <i>Thomas of Woodstock</i>) (c. 1592). PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Stow, <i>Chronicles of England</i> (1580). (2) Daniel, <i>Civil Wars</i> (1595). POSSIBLE SOURCE: Baldwin, ed. <i>A Mirror for Magistrates</i> (1559).	Henr
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	1597 (revised c. 1600-1)	Entered on S.R. January 18, 1602; "bad" quarto published 1602. Received text published in F1 (1623). Until relatively recently <i>Merry Wives</i> was regularly dated 1601-2, but Hotson's suggestion that the play was originally written specially for the Garter Feast held at Westminster April 23, 1597, is being more and more strongly supported (see New Arden ed.). On this theory, the play was revised for the public theatre about 1600-1, and it is the revised version that lies behind the "bad" quarto, while the F1 text represents in most essentials (except for the name Broome for Brooke) the earlier "court" performance. On this view, Shakespeare wrote <i>Merry Wives</i> shortly after he began work on <i>2 Henry IV</i> . Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>) does not list <i>Merry Wives</i> among Shakespeare's plays as of September 7, 1598, but a special court production might not have been known to him. SOURCES: None definite. PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> (tr. Golding, 1567), Bk. III. (2) J. Rathgeb's <i>Journal</i> (1602; an account of the Mompelgard visit, details of which could have been known earlier to Shakespeare). POSSIBLE SOURCES: (1) Tarlton, <i>News Out of Purgatory</i> (1590). (2) Rich, <i>His Farewell to Military Profession</i> (1581). (3) Lyly, <i>Endimion</i> (1588).	Julius
<i>2 Henry IV</i>	1598	Entered on S.R. August 23, 1600; published 1600. Some traces of the name Oldcastle (the original name of Falstaff, changed, it is supposed, because of offense to the Cobham family) remain in the speech-prefixes in the early part of <i>2 Henry IV</i> ; this indicates that Shakespeare must have started composition of <i>2 Henry IV</i> before Part 1 (containing the alteration to Falstaff) was entered on S.R. (February 25, 1598). That Part 2 was not much more than begun at this time is suggested by the omission of "First Part" on the title-page of the 1598 quarto. Meres's reference to "Henry the 4." (<i>Palladis Tamia</i> ; see above under <i>1 Henry IV</i>) is ambiguous so far as Part 2 is concerned. SOURCES: (1) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). (2) Anon., <i>The Famous Victories of Henry V</i> (c. 1586). PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Hall, <i>The Union of . . . Lancaster and York</i> (1548). (2) Daniel, <i>Civil Wars</i> (1595). POSSIBLE SOURCES: (1) Elyot, <i>The Governor</i> (1531). (2) Stow, <i>Chronicles of England</i> (1580).	As Y. Hamlet
<i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>	1598-99	Marked "to be staied" on S.R. August 4, 1600; registered for publication on S.R. August 23, 1600; published 1600. Not included by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>) as of September 7, 1598. This omission by Meres may be significant, but it need not be so, since he fails to include <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> (1593-94). PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Ariosto, <i>Orlando Furioso</i> (tr. Harington, 1591), Bk. V. (2) Spenser, <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Bk. II, Canto iv (1590). (3) Bandello, <i>Novelle</i> , Novella 22 (1554; no contemporary English tr. known; French tr. in Belleforest's <i>Histoires Tragiques</i> , vol. III, 1568, story 18). POSSIBLE SOURCE: Munday (?), <i>Fedele and Fortunio</i> (c. 1584).	
<i>Henry V</i>	1599	Published in F1 (1623). Marked "to be staied" on S.R. August 4, 1600. A "bad" quarto text (1600) had been published by Millington and Busby before August 14, when its transfer to Thomas Pavier was entered on S.R. Not included by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>) as of September 7, 1598. Imitation of certain scenes in <i>Henry V</i> , and verbal echoes from it, in <i>1 Sir John Oldcastle</i> give a definite <i>terminus ad quem</i> for Shakespeare's play, since the authors (Munday, Drayton, Wilson, and Hathaway) of <i>1 Oldcastle</i> were paid for the finished play on October 16, 1599, by Henslowe (<i>Diary</i> , fol. 65).	The P Turt

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<i>Henry V</i> (cont.)		<p>An allusion, usually taken as referring to Essex's Irish campaign, in the Chorus to Act V has been used to date the play between March 27 and September 28, 1599. This view has recently been challenged by W. D. Smith, who argues that the allusion is rather to Lord Mountjoy, Elizabeth's successful commander in Ireland between early 1600 and Elizabeth's death in 1603, and that the Choruses were added, by another hand, to Shakespeare's play during those years (hence their non-appearance in the "bad" quarto of 1600). The matter remains open.</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). (2) Tacitus, <i>Annals</i>, Bks. I, II (tr. Grenewey, 1598). (3) Anon., <i>The Famous Victories of Henry V</i> (c. 1586). POSSIBLE SOURCES: (1) Anon., <i>The Battle of Agincourt</i> (c. 1530). (2) Daniel, <i>Civil Wars</i> (1595).</p>
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	1599	<p>Published in F1 (1623). A performance, probably at the Globe, was witnessed by a German traveller, Thomas Platter, on September 21, 1599 (see Appendix B, Number 16). Not included by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>) as of September 7, 1598. Jonson appears to paraphrase III.ii.104-5 in <i>Every Man Out of His Humor</i> (1599).</p> <p>SOURCE: Plutarch, <i>Lives</i> (tr. North, 1579; the lives of Caesar, Brutus, Antony, and Cicero). POSSIBLE SOURCES: (1) Tacitus, <i>Annals</i> (tr. Grenewey, 1598). (2) Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> (tr. W. B., 1578). (3) Pescetti, <i>Il Cesare</i> (1594). (4) Anon., <i>Caesar and Pompey, or Caesar's Revenged</i> (c. 1595).</p>
<i>As You Like It</i>	1599	<p>Published in F1 (1623). Marked "to be staied" on S.R. August 4, 1600. Not included by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>) as of September 7, 1598. Setting of the song "It was a lover and his lass" (V.iii.16-33), probably original to this play, was published in Thomas Morley's <i>First Book of Aires</i> (1600).</p> <p>SOURCE: Lodge, <i>Rosalynde</i> (1590). PROBABLE SOURCE: Anon., <i>Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes</i> (c. 1570).</p>
<i>Hamlet</i>	1600-1	<p>Entered on S.R. July 26, 1602; "bad" quarto published 1603; "good" quarto published 1604. A play on the Hamlet story existed at least as early as 1589, probably by Thomas Kyd (see Nashe's preface to Greene's <i>Menaphon</i>, 1589 [Appendix B, Number 17]). Topical references in the play to the players' "inhibition," which has arisen out of the "late innovation" (II.ii.332-33), and to the "aery of children, little eyases" (II.ii.339), have been used in dating. Two interpretations have been advanced for the "inhibition-innovation" reference: (1) that it refers to the abortive Essex rebellion of February 8, 1601; (2) that it refers to the Privy Council decree of June 22, 1600, which limited the number of playhouses in London to two and performances to twice weekly. The "little eyases" passage, since it occurs only in the F1 text and clearly comments on the so-called War of the Theatres (after the middle of 1601), may be a later addition. The two incidental allusions to Julius Caesar link closely with <i>Julius Caesar</i> (1599) and suggest that the material was still fresh in Shakespeare's mind when he turned to <i>Hamlet</i>. Gabriel Harvey's well-known reference to Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet</i> (see Appendix B, Number 18), which is usually dated before the execution of Essex (February 25, 1601), is perhaps more safely dated as not later than July 21, 1603.</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) It is generally agreed that the principal source was the earlier Hamlet play (now lost) referred to above. (2) Bright, <i>A Treatise of Melancholy</i> (1586). (3) Lavater, <i>Of Ghosts and Spirits Walking by Night</i> (tr. R.H., 1572). (4) Scot, <i>Discovery of Witchcraft</i> (1584). (5) Nashe, <i>Pierce Penniless</i> (1592). (6) Montaigne, <i>Essays</i> (tr. Florio, 1603; used in MS). POSSIBLE SOURCE: Belleforest, <i>Histoires Tragiques</i> (vol. V, story 3, 1570; in the original, which was the source for the <i>Ur-Hamlet</i> play, or in the anonymous tr. <i>The History of Hamblet</i>, in an edition antedating the earliest now known [1608]).</p>
<i>The Phoenix and Turtle</i>	c. 1601	<p>Published in Robert Chester's <i>Love's Martyr</i> (1601). It seems to have been written specifically for this volume.</p>

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<i>Twelfth Night</i>	1601-2	<p>Published in F1 (1623). A performance at the Middle Temple, possibly the first, described by John Manningham in his <i>Diary</i> (see Appendix B, Number 19), took place February 2, 1602. The play is probably not earlier than 1600, since the snatches of songs in II.iii seem to derive from Robert Jones's <i>First Book of Songs and Airs</i>, published in that year. There is a possible allusion to Sir Toby Belch in Jonson's <i>Poetaster</i> (III.iv.345), acted in 1601. Not included by Meres (<i>Palladis Tamia</i>) as of September 7, 1598.</p> <p>SOURCE: Rich, <i>His Farewell to Military Profession</i> (1581). PROBABLE SOURCE: <i>GI Ingammati</i> (1531; no contemporary tr. known). POSSIBLE SOURCE: Forde, <i>The Famous History of Parismus</i> (1598).</p>
<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	1601-2	<p>Entered on S.R. February 7, 1603; published 1609. F1 text (1623) substantially different. The reference in the Prologue to the "prologue arm'd" is generally taken as pointing to Jonson's <i>Poetaster</i> (1601), in which an "armed Prologue" appears. The character of Ajax is by some thought to be Shakespeare's parting blow at Jonson in the War of the Theatres in answer to Jonson's attack on Shakespeare's company in <i>Poetaster</i>. What appears to be a reference to Gilbert's <i>De Magnete</i> (1600) in III.ii.179 and IV.ii.104-5 may be taken to support a date after that year.</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Caxton, <i>The Ancient History of the Destruction of Troy</i> (tr. of Le Fèvre; 1596 ed.). (2) Homer, <i>Iliads</i> (tr. Chapman, 1598; only Bks. I-II, VII-XI and <i>Achilles' Shield</i>). (3) Lydgate, <i>The Ancient History and Only True Chronicle of the Wars [of Troy]</i> (tr. of Guido delle Colonne; 1555 ed.). PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Chaucer, <i>Troilus and Criseyde</i>. (2) Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> (tr. Golding, 1567), Bks. XII, XIII. POSSIBLE SOURCES: (1) Chettle and Dekker, <i>Troilus and Cressida</i> (1599; extant only in a fragmentary MS "plot"). (2) Greene, <i>Planetomachia</i> (1585).</p>
<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	1602-3	<p>Published in F1 (1623). Some critics believe, on the basis of different styles, that Shakespeare first wrote this play, or parts of it, as early as 1594-95, and that the F1 text represents his reworking around 1602-3. The fact that the "bed trick" here used is found also in Shakespeare's source suggests that the play is at least earlier than <i>Measure for Measure</i>, where the "bed trick" is Shakespeare's addition to the plot he borrows.</p> <p>SOURCE: Painter, <i>The Palace of Pleasure</i> (1566-67), Novel 38 (tr. of Boccaccio).</p>
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	1604	<p>Published in F1 (1623). Performed at court December 26, 1604. The Duke referred to in connection with the King of Hungary's peace (I.ii.1-5) has recently been identified with the Duke of Holstein, Queen Anne's brother, who was in England in 1604 to raise men in the Protestant cause against Rudolph II of Hungary.</p> <p>SOURCE: Whetstone, <i>Promos and Cassandra</i> (1578; a play based on Giraldi Cinthio's <i>Hecatommithi</i> [1565], Decade 8, Novella 5, and Claude Rouillet's <i>Philanira</i> [1556]). PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Cinthio, <i>Epitia</i> (1583; no contemporary tr. known). (2) Cinthio, <i>Hecatommithi</i> (1565; no contemporary tr. known, though Whetstone included a prose version in his <i>Heptameron of Civil Discourses</i> [1582], which Shakespeare may have known).</p>
<i>Othello</i>	1604	<p>Published 1622; F1 text (1623) substantially different. Performed at court November 1, 1604. Some possibility of an earlier date is suggested by what appear to be verbal borrowings from <i>Othello</i> in the "bad" quarto of <i>Hamlet</i> (1603).</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Giraldi Cinthio, <i>Hecatommithi</i> (1565), Decade 3, Novella 7 (no contemporary English tr. known; Shakespeare does not appear to have used the French tr. by Chappuys [1584]). (2) Pliny, <i>The History of the World</i> (tr. Holland, 1601). (3) Contareni, <i>The Commonwealth and Government of Venice</i> (tr. Lewkenor, 1599).</p>
<i>King Lear</i>	1605	<p>Entered on S.R. November 26, 1607; published 1608 in a text in many ways resembling a "bad" quarto. Received text published in F1 (1623). Performed at court December 26, 1606. The popularity of Shakespeare's play probably</p>

TITLE	PROPOSED DATE	EVIDENCE FOR DATING; SOURCES
<i>King Lear</i> (cont.)		<p>led to the publication (entered on S.R. May 14, 1594, and again May 8, 1605) of the much earlier anonymous <i>Chronicle History of King Leir</i> (c. 1590) in 1605. Since Shakespeare's play uses material from Harsnett's <i>Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures</i>, it cannot be earlier than 1603; and the imitation of <i>Lear</i> (I.iv) by Sharpam in <i>The Fleer</i>, entered on S.R. May 13, 1606, affords a terminal date.</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Anon., <i>The Chronicle History of King Leir</i> (c. 1590). (2) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). (3) Sidney, <i>Arcadia</i> (1590). (4) Spenser, <i>The Faerie Queene</i>, Bk. II, Canto x (1590). (5) <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i> (ed. Higgins, 1574, 1587). (6) Harsnett, <i>Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures</i> (1603). (7) Montaigne, <i>Essays</i> (tr. Florio, 1603). POSSIBLE SOURCE: Marston, <i>The Malcontent</i> (1604).</p>
<i>Macbeth</i>	1606	<p>Published in F1 (1623). Contains probable allusions to the equivocation issue at the trial of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators (January-March 1606). There is some evidence that the play was first performed before James I on August 7, 1606, in honor of the visit of King Christian of Denmark. Simon Forman has left a description of a performance seen by him April 20, 1611 (see Appendix B, Number 20).</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). (2) Seneca, <i>Hercules Furens</i> and <i>Agamemnon</i> (the second in Studley's tr., 1565). PROBABLE SOURCE: Buchanan, <i>Rerum Scoticarum Historia</i> (1582).</p>
<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	1606-7	<p>Entered on S.R. May 20, 1608; published in F1 (1623). Some influence of Shakespeare's play has been found in Daniel's revision of his <i>Cleopatra</i>, published in 1607.</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Plutarch, <i>Lives</i> (tr. North, 1579; the life of Antony). (2) Appian, <i>Civil Wars</i> (tr. W. B., 1578). PROBABLE SOURCES: (1) Plutarch, <i>Lives</i> (tr. North, 1603; the life of Octavius Caesar). (2) Daniel, <i>The Tragedy of Cleopatra</i> (1599 ed.).</p>
<i>Coriolanus</i>	1607-8	<p>Published in F1 (1623). Apart from stylistic evidence, there is little to suggest a more exact date. The reference to "the coal of fire upon the ice" (I.i.173) has been taken as alluding to the great frost of 1607-8 (see Dekker (?), <i>The Great Frost</i>, 1608), when the Thames was frozen over and pans of coals were burned on it. An allusion to Hugh Middleton's project for bringing water into London (begun in February 1609 but discussed earlier) has been detected in III.i.95-97.</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Plutarch, <i>Lives</i> (tr. North, 1579; life of Coriolanus). (2) Averell, <i>A Marvellous Combat of Contrarities</i> (1588; this and the two following for Menenius' fable of the belly). (3) Sidney, <i>An Apology for Poetry</i> (1595). (4) Camden, <i>Remains . . . Concerning Britain</i> (1605). PROBABLE SOURCE: Livy, <i>Roman History</i> (tr. Holland, 1600).</p>
<i>Timon of Athens</i>	1607-8	<p>Published in F1 (1623). The play was probably left unfinished by Shakespeare and never acted. Stylistic evidence places it somewhere between 1605 and 1608; most critics favor 1607-8.</p> <p>SOURCE: Plutarch, <i>Lives</i> (tr. North, 1579; life of Alcibiades). POSSIBLE SOURCES: (1) Lucian, <i>Timon, or the Misanthrope</i> (no contemporary English tr. known; Latin tr. by Erasmus, 1506; Italian by Lonigo, 1536; French by Bretin, 1583). (2) Lyly, <i>Campaspe</i> (c. 1584). (3) Anon., <i>Timon</i> (c. 1602; possible relationship to Shakespeare's play much debated).</p>
<i>Pericles</i>	1607-8	<p>Entered on S.R. May 20, 1608; published, in a "bad" quarto text, 1609. The play was not included among Shakespeare's collected works until the second issue of F3 (1664). A performance was seen at court by the Venetian and French ambassadors between May 1606 and November 1608. George Wilkins' little novel, <i>The Painful Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre</i>, based in part on this play, was published in 1608. The problem of authorship is discussed in the introduction to the play.</p> <p>SOURCES: (1) Gower, <i>Confessio Amantis</i> (1554 ed.). (2) Twine, <i>The Pattern of Painful Adventures</i> (n.d. [c. 1594] and 1607). POSSIBLE SOURCE: Sidney, <i>Arcadia</i> (1590).</p>

TITLE	PROPOSED DATE	EVIDENCE FOR DATING; SOURCES
<i>Cymbeline</i>	1609-10	Published in F1 (1623). Simon Forman saw a performance probably between April 20 and 30, 1611 (see Appendix B, Number 20). Metrical and stylistic evidence links <i>Cymbeline</i> with <i>The Winter's Tale</i> and <i>The Tempest</i> . SOURCES: (1) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). (2) <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i> (ed. Blenerhasset, 1578, and Higgins, 1587). (3) Anon., <i>Frederyke of Jennen</i> (1560 ed.; based on Boccaccio's <i>Decameron</i>). (4) Anon., <i>The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune</i> (1582). PROBABLE SOURCE: Boccaccio, <i>Decameron</i> , Day 2, Tale 9 (no contemporary English tr. known; two in French, the one by Maçon [1545] frequently reprinted). POSSIBLE SOURCE: Anon., <i>Sir Clyomon and Clamydes</i> (c. 1570).
<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	1610-11	Published in F1 (1623). Simon Forman saw a performance on May 15, 1611 (see Appendix B, Number 20), and a court performance took place November 5, 1611. In IV.iv.783-91 the reference to a source probably used for <i>Cymbeline</i> (Boccaccio's <i>Decameron</i> , Day 2, Tale 9) would seem to indicate that <i>The Winter's Tale</i> is the later play. SOURCES: (1) Greene, <i>Pandosto, the Triumph of Time</i> (1588). (2) Sabie, <i>The Fisherman's Tale</i> (1594) and <i>Flora's Fortune</i> (1595). PROBABLE SOURCE: Greene, <i>The Second Part of Cony-Catching</i> (1591; for Autolycus' first trick on the Clown). POSSIBLE SOURCE: Forde, <i>The Famous History of Parismus</i> (1598).
<i>The Tempest</i>	1611	Published in F1 (1623). Performed at court November 1, 1611. The play makes use of sources not available before September 1610. SOURCES: None known for the main plot, but Shakespeare used: (1) Strachey, <i>True Repertory of the Wrack and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates</i> (dated July 15, 1610, but not published until 1625 in <i>Purchas His Pilgrims</i>). (2) Jourdain, <i>A Discovery of the Bermudas</i> (1610). (3) [Virginia Council], <i>True Declaration of the Estate of the Colony in Virginia</i> (1610). (4) Montaigne, <i>Essays</i> (tr. Florio, 1603). (5) Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i> , Bk. VII (both in the original and in Golding's tr., 1567).
<i>Henry VIII</i>	1612-13	Published in F1 (1623). The Globe Theatre burned down during a performance of the play, probably the first, on June 29, 1613. An account of the play and the fire is contained in a letter (July 2, 1613) from Sir Henry Wotton to Sir Edmund Bacon (see Appendix B, Number 21A). The question of Shakespeare's collaboration with John Fletcher in <i>Henry VIII</i> is discussed in the introduction to the play. SOURCES: (1) Holinshed, <i>Chronicles</i> (2nd ed., 1587). (2) Foxe, <i>Acts and Monuments</i> (1570 ed.). PROBABLE SOURCE: Samuel Rowley, <i>When You See Me, You Know Me</i> (1604).
<i>Cardenio</i> (a lost play)	1612-13	A play called "Cardenio" or "Cardenna" was twice acted at court 1612-13 by the King's Men. It was attributed to Fletcher and Shakespeare in Humphrey Moseley's S.R. entry September 9, 1653. The play itself has been lost, but it is likely that Lewis Theobald's <i>Double Falsehood, or The Distress'd Lovers</i> (1728) represents a drastic reworking of the original <i>Cardenio</i> . SOURCE: Cervantes, <i>Don Quixote</i> (tr. Shelton, 1612), the story of Cardenio and Lucinda.
<i>The Two Noble Kinsmen</i>	1613	Entered on S.R. April 8, 1634; published 1634. Both the entry and the title-page describe the play as by Fletcher and Shakespeare; the question of their collaboration is discussed in the introduction to the play. A date not earlier than 1613 is indicated by the borrowing of the morris-dance in III.v from Beaumont's <i>Inner Temple and Gray's Inn Mask</i> , produced February 20 of that year. SOURCES: (1) Chaucer, "The Knight's Tale." (2) Beaumont, <i>Inner Temple and Gray's Inn Mask</i> (1613).