

Shakespeare's Dates: Their Effects on Stylistic Analysis

W. Ron Hess, CDP, assisted by Howard Bloch, Ph.D. & Winston C. Chow, Ph.D.



SINCE the style of a writer, particularly a great writer, will necessarily evolve and change over time, and since the favored styles of any period follow the same processes of growth and change, any analysis of a canon of works made to determine its authorship must begin with as close and accurate a system of dating as is possible. Unfortunately, in the case of the Elizabethans, this is easier said than done and it is particularly difficult with that gaping gulf of anomalies known as the Shakespeare canon. With so little that is secure to use for guidelines, there will always be a danger that analysis will be more than a little dependent on factors determined deliberately or accidentally by the analyst; and so we find the process of dating the plays. Peter Moore's 1997 article in *The Elizabethan Review* went into some depth on the many unfounded assumptions made by E. K. Chambers, the great early twentieth-century Shakespearean, whose chronology still retains its place as the standard accepted by most mainstream scholars. As Moore states, "Chambers's dating scheme amounts to an attempt to force the plays, in their proper sequence — early, middle, late — into the span of 1590-1613" (27). Furthermore, for the sake of argument, Moore agrees with

. . . Chambers and every other authority that the approximate sequence or order of composition of the plays can be determined on stylistic grounds with reasonable certainty, [however,] that attempts to determine an exact sequence by the use of quantitative methods are probably hopeless. Such methods assume, for example, that Shakespeare's stylistic development was monotonic, to use a mathematical term, that it always proceeded in the same direction, as from more rigid versification to freer versification. (56-7; f. 12)

Thus, agreeing with Moore in general, but not nearly so despairing of the possibilities offered by "the use of quantitative methods" (see Part I of this series in the 1998 edition of the *Oxfordian* for a discussion of the future of computer analysis) we ask: If Chambers' sequence were set in a less constrained timespan than the 1590-1613 forced on orthodoxy by the biography of Wm. of Stratford and replaced with, say, 1578-1604, bringing it in line with the biography of the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, how might it be applied to, and would it be consistent with, existing stylistic analysis?

A good start might be an examination of the results of this shift in time in terms of a particular component of what Moore calls *monotonic style*, namely *feminine endings*, or FEs; poetic or dramatic line endings with unstressed, weak syllables; for example, *-ing* or *-gotten*. Besides FEs, we will encounter four other style ending terms listed by Halliday: *open endings*, or OEs, *mid-line speech endings* or MEs, *light endings* or LEs, and *weak endings* or WEs (see definitions in the insert on the following page). The extent of their use in a given work is normally expressed as a percent of all the line endings.

Although style is a primary factor in determining authorship, it is nonetheless an elusive property, often hard to pin down with the kind of hard and fast terms needed for statistical analysis. The constant use by the Elizabethans of lines set in iambs (the weak-strong-weak-strong meter that most closely resembles ordinary speech), makes it possible to determine an author's fondness for a particular kind of ending, or conversely, an aversion to it; so that—in theory, at least—a statistical study of endings can provide a concrete basis for analysis.

Analyses based on style acquire more importance in efforts to date the canon than they might otherwise, since other kinds of evidence are so lacking. As Moore noted:

The evidence available for establishing the date of composition of even one of Shakespeare's plays tends to be maddeningly scrappy and unsatisfactory. Some pieces of evidence are strong but vague, for example, the year the play was first put in print, establishing a firm latest possible date, but where everyone is quite sure that the play in question was written years earlier. Other evidence is precise but weak, most notoriously, suggested allusions to the sort of topical events that repeat themselves [star alignments, earthquakes, eclipses, plagues, droughts, etc.] Where several items might suggest the earliest possible date for a play, all should be listed; Chambers only took the ones he wanted. (38)

Even in works universally attributed to Shakespeare, there are puzzling stylistic and textual questions, often relevant to how the plays are dated. For instance, some scholars remark at the use of *euphuism* in many of Shakespeare's plays (Rushton 1-111; Ogburn Jr. 625-28). Euphuism, a literary fashion in favor throughout Europe during the middle decades of the sixteenth-century, derived most immediately in England from the Euphues novels and Court plays credited to John Lyly (secretary to the Earl of Oxford during the 1580s)—was no longer in style by the 1590s, when most scholars believe that Shakespeare did most of his writing.

Questions emerge as well upon comparing the earlier quartos to versions published in the First Folio. There appear to have been significant textual changes made to a number of the plays just prior to their 1623 First Folio publication, and less significant changes were made again prior to the 1632 Second Folio, and again in later folios (Leary 116-17). The dedications to *Troilus and Cressida* and to the *Sonnets* would also seem to indicate that their "ever-

living" author was dead by the time they were published in 1609.

Also troublesome is the strong probability urged by many scholars that more than a single hand is to be found in many of the plays. The process of rehearsing, of reworking a play for a later production, for a new set of actors or for a road company, of cutting controversial material before publication, as well as the strong possibility that the editor/s of the First Folio had more than a little to do with the text (Stritmatter, Dickson); even the possibility that works by other writers have been palmed off as Shakespeare's, are considerations that have continued to haunt the authorship of the canon for four hundred years.

The fact that spelling, punctuation, and grammar were still extremely diffuse and chaotic, with the linguistic rules and protocols we take for granted today

Halliday's Endings*

Feminine endings or FEs: *line endings with unstressed, weak syllables which Halliday describes as the extra or redundant unstressed syllable at the end of a line, usually that of a disyllabic or polysyllabic word, . . . rarely, though with increasing frequency in Shakespeare's plays, an unstressed monosyllable. 'When Shakspeare uses the extra syllable, he does it generally in moments of passion and excitement, in questions, in quarrel, seldom in quiet dialogue or narrative, and seldom in any serious or pathetic passage (203-4).*

Open endings or OEs: *is Elliott's term (1991, 504 f 14); Halliday's is "run-on lines"—verse in which the sense runs on, or flows over, from one line into the next. It is not always easy to decide which is a run-on line, for the end of the line usually coincides with some break in the grammar, however slight. Before Shakespeare's time, most verse was end-stopped, as is his own early verse, but he added variety and fluidity by developing the run-on line, partly by shortening the clauses so that they did not coincide with the line (561).*

Mid-line speech-ending or MEs: *in the early plays, speeches generally finish at the end of a line, and in the later plays, more often in mid-line. This was due to mid-line pauses and a steady decrease in the number of end-stopped lines (412).*

Light endings or LEs: *lines ending with lightly stressed monosyllables, usually pronouns and auxiliaries, but excluding those relational conjunctions or prepositions known as weak endings; an extreme form of run-on line (361).*

Weak endings or WEs: *monosyllabic prepositions and conjunctions at the end of a line, which are so "essentially proclitic" that we are forced to run them, in pronunciation no less than in sense, into close connection with the first word of the succeeding line; another extreme form of run-on line (691).*

**We offer these definitions so that the reader may be clear about what factors are being used here as markers, although it isn't important what they are exactly—they could be anything. We use them because orthodoxy, and Elliott, have used them. In fact, Halliday himself showed little faith in them as scientific indicators for dating, stating, "The evidence of verse tests is treated less seriously today." (680) We wonder why Elliott failed to heed his warning.*

still so far from consensus, contributes to the difficulties presented to analysts. Although idiosyncratic spelling and grammar might conceivably be factors in determining authorship, that editors, copyists and printers' compositors, each with his own standards, were involved in every published work, complicates considerations like these to such an extent that grammar and spelling are almost impossible to consider as factors in anything but holograph manuscripts, which are, unfortunately, in the case of Shakespeare, still nonexistent.

Thus we agree with Moore's conclusion that "any attempt to present a list of Shakespeare's plays assigning a year of composition to each, no matter how qualified, is pretending to know more than we do" (55). When establishing data for statistical uses, therefore, rather than attempting to fix a single highly dubious date to each work, it is more realistic to assign it a somewhat more solid if less specific "date range" consisting of the earliest possible likely date (*terminus a quo*) and the latest possible likely date (*terminus ad quem*) for the work's composition/production. An intermediate "most likely" date would then reflect only an approximate modal date for which more evidence exists than for other dates in the range.

To illustrate the concept of the need for a date range, let's briefly step back from Shakespeare and examine this dilemma from a more modern view. The original version of Tennessee Williams's great play, *Sweet Bird of Youth* (SBOY), consisting of roughly half the play as we know it, was written early in his career. He set it aside for a number of years while he proceeded with other projects, and finally got around to finishing it years later during his most creative and productive period. He presided over subsequent revivals of SBOY until close to the end of his career.

So, how would one provide a *date* for SBOY? Would it be: a) when the project was first conceived? b) when his pen first touched paper on it about the fall of 1955? c) when he first had a product he could show friends, or (hypothetically) his first off-Broadway production?

W. Ron Hess holds an M.S. in the Technology of Management from American University in Washington, DC and a B.A. in European and Russian History from the University of Hawaii, and is a Certified Data Processor (CDP) with the Association of Information Technology Professionals, in which he has been several times President of local chapters. He has been a contributor to such journals as Government Computer News, Federal Computer Week, The Elizabethan Review, The SOS Newsletter, and now serves on the Editorial Board of THE OXFORDIAN. He is a Senior IT Security Officer for the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. (rh96b@nih.gov or beorn@erols.com). This article is Part II of "Hotwiring the Bard into Cyberspace" from the 1998 edition of THE OXFORDIAN.

Howard Bloch is a graduate of Princeton University with a Ph.D. in Economics. He is a full professor in the Department of Economics at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA (hbloch@wpgate.gmu.edu).

Winston C. Chow graduated from George Mason University and holds a Ph.D. in Statistics and Probability. He is a Statistician for the U.S. Naval Space Command (wchow@nsc.navy.mil).

d) when he revived it later and beefed it up for production as a major play, perhaps inserting later topical references to later events? e) (hypothetically) when various pirate publishers stole and bowdlerized advance copies of it for quick sale to the public, such as to college drama classes? f) when his agent registered it with the Copyright Office? g) when it first opened under a neon marquee in Times Square in 1959? or h) when he submitted it to a publisher and it was first publicly available? We know that Williams made changes to this play over many years, and so, as with Shakespeare's works, any attempt to throw a dart at a boat and claim that *SBOY* dates to 1959 would be inaccurate at best, dishonest at worst.

Unfortunately, the two-dimensional graphs such as those we must use for text analysis would become incomprehensibly cluttered were we to attempt to graph such date ranges, so that even when we have established a date range for a given work we must determine some *likeliest* date with which to model the entire range of what it took to *write* each work, one that is sandwiched somewhere between the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem*. Consequently, *SBOY* might be described as having been *likeliest* written in the year 1957—rather than between, at the earliest, 1954 or, at the latest, 1965. Or we might say that the most likely date for Shakespeare's *Tempest* was 1600, choosing a date somewhere between the range of dates 1584 to 1603, ignoring for the sake of clarity the probability that some topical items might indicate versions that were written as much as two decades earlier than 1600 or changes and additions that were made as much as two decades later.

Elliott's use of dates vs. style distributions

With this in mind, let's examine the self-congratulatory certitudes exhibited in two charts in Professor Ward Elliott's 1991 article in *Notes & Queries*. Elliott uses point distributions of *feminine endings* (Halliday 681) in Shakespeare's plays to compare the *Riverside dating*, which follows the date scheme in the Riverside collection of Shakespeare's works, based largely on chronologies by Chambers and other early twentieth-century orthodox scholars, with the *Ogburn early dating*, which follows the Ogburn Srs.'s (Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, Sr., parents of Charlton Ogburn, Jr.) dating, which in turn parallels Eva Turner Clark's chronology so closely that, without offering any explanation, Elliott appears to have substituted Clark for the Ogburn Srs. on his web version (www.Clark.net). Elliott's two distributions are reproduced here in Figures 1 and 2 on pages 30 and 31, from the original sources. (See Appendix on page 40 for a complete list of plays and the single number and letter codes used to identify them in Figures 1–6.) It is necessary to point out that while Clark's chronology was clearly devoted to identifying the earliest periods of the authorship process, with early topical references emphasized and later developments not quite as important, the Ogburn Srs. were less interested in establishing a definite date of writing the plays than in showing how many pieces of evidence indicate that each play was written over a broad timeframe.

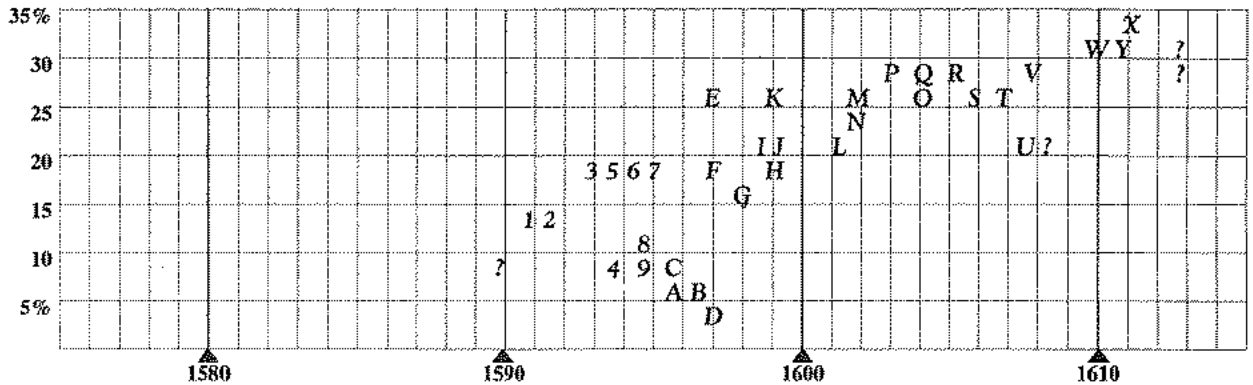


Figure 1: Our reconstruction of Prof. Ward Elliott's Riverside dating vs. FEs distribution; dates and FEs come directly from Riverside and Halliday. The four question marks are works doubtfully by Shakespeare: *I Henry 6*, *Timon of Athens*, *Henry 8*, and *Two Noble Kinsmen*. (We do not feature these four doubtful plays for Figures 3-6.)

Thus Elliott's Figures 1 and 2 distributions would seem to be comparing apples and oranges, since the Riverside dating reflects the orthodox likeliest dates, which are not necessarily either the latest nor the earliest. Meanwhile, the Ogburn dating (now Clark dating) is relegated to only the category of *earliest* dates. (We leave to others to speculate why Elliott chose to contrast two clearly dissimilar date-measuring standards.)

Elliott's current web Riverside dating yields a comet tail of points from 1590 to about 1611, with the most prominent clusters at about 1595-98 and 1601-05, as reconstructed in Figure 1. The Clark dating currently on his website (in 1991, early Ogburn dating) yields a great bunching of points between 1576 to 1589, as reconstructed in Figure 2.

The accompanying charts are intended only to illustrate our response to Prof. Elliott's challenge, not as an authoritative treatment. Not having his exact figures, we must derive dates and percentages from his cited sources, many of which show some degree of variance from his Tables. Figure 1 dates reflect the Riverside preferred dates, selecting the latest date where a range of dates were specified. For his convenience, Elliott dispensed with ranges preferred by Riverside and simply chose one "most probable" date out of their range in order to form a graphable point. We do the same in Figures 3-6, which all use our "most likely" dates. Where Moore supplies a date or range, we normally give those preference over all other rationales in choosing a likeliest date. We may list other Oxfordian authors' dating rationales, but do not always use them because they may reflect dates too early in Shakespeare's creative process to be likeliest, or clearly recognizable as his.

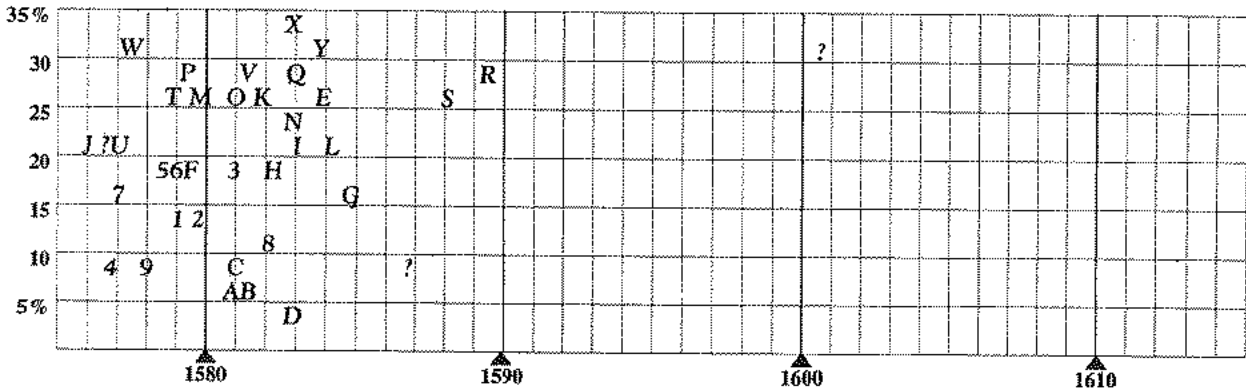


Figure 2: Our reconstruction of Prof. Elliott's Clark (or his 1991 "early Ogburn") dating distribution vs. feminine endings; dates and FEs derived directly from Clark and Halliday. The three question marks represent doubtful works (see Figure 1).

The reader should note that Elliott's Figures 1 and 2 have changed considerably between the two versions of the article, the FEs levels of many of the points having been changed, something that is not explainable by the shift from Ogburn Srs. to Clark. In particular, the 1991 version appears to have confused FEs with a different style OEs (comparing our Fig. 5 with Elliott's 1991 published Fig. 1 will show them nearly identical). Our Figure 2 uses only Clark dating.

Under both dating schemes used by Elliott (in both versions of his article), there is a notable disparity between the percentages of FEs, with many plays of high percentage lying close by time-wise to other plays of low percentage, often in the same year (in the web version, most notably the year 1597, with FEs of 5%, 18%, and 27% in Figure 1, and the years 1577-84 in Figure 2). Furthermore, Elliott has continuously failed to give a table with precise information about the data points he used and, even after researching his sources, particularly in Figure 2, we've found that visual examinations of his specific points often yield some doubt as to what play, date, and FEs level is to be assigned to each point, which is rendered even more difficult since Elliott apparently assigned points to three plays of debatable authorship that are not included in his 1996 list of plays (including as well the highly debatable *Two Noble Kinsmen*). The best an interested scholar can do is to research his sources (Halliday, Ogburn Srs., and Clark) and graph them as we did in Figures 1 and 2. Note that Elliott's later article of 1996 contained a table listing dates for the plays, but even Elliott's 1996 table does not exactly match his Figure 1 data points!

Is it this same false certainty that caused Elliott to reject Oxford as potential Shakespeare in both versions of his article?

Alternate ways to interpret Figures 1 and 2

We do not need to argue that Elliott's Figure 2 distribution is a fair and reasonable chronology; on the contrary, we believe that Shakespeare wrote over at least two decades, more like what we see in Figures 1 and 3 (page 35). But, if we are to take Elliott's Figure 2 distribution seriously at all, one reasonable interpretation is that there were at least two authors of Shakespeare's plays, writing concurrently over a compressed twelve-year period; with one author whose FEs were consistently about 20% or better, and another author (or authors) whose FEs stayed at 18% or less (or some other dichotomy). Such a hypothetical collaboration would have to have begun about 1576 and ended about 1590, a period consistent with the years during which the Earl of Oxford was closely associated with early writers John Lyly, Anthony Munday, and Thomas Watson, each acknowledging his patronage, each arguably comparable in one or more of his works to an early Shakespeare. Further, the earlier dating and potential collaboration hinted at in Figure 2 might be consistent with the euphuism to be found in many of Shakespeare's plays, as noted above. Concerns like these need to be considered in preparation of any database for an Expert System or Neural Network (as discussed in Hess, 1998), for if works now thought to be Shakespeare's alone were, in fact, the result of a collaboration, this factor could seriously skew the results.

If Elliott was correct in his data and conclusions, the Riverside dating in Figure 1 would seem to have yielded a gradual point distribution indicative of a single individual gradually changing his style, with most of the lower percentages of feminine endings showing in the earlier part of his career, and the higher percentages grouping more toward his later years. Of course this interpretation might match the theoretical mature lifespan of the man from Stratford, and it does seem to go on for nearly a decade after Oxford's death in 1604. Still, we might be suspicious about a distribution which shows Shakespeare varying his style so dramatically within individual years over so long a period. For instance, the single year of 1597, as noted above, has three plays varying from 5% to 27%. How do we interpret this disparity? Did Shakespeare succumb to some form of schizophrenia in 1597 which caused him to write with such different levels of one element of style? Did feeble-minded dotage begin setting in at age thirty-three? Elliott seems to have been oblivious to these obvious questions raised by his Figure 1 distribution.

Also, if the Ogburn early dating in Figure 2 is correct and we dismiss the notion of collaboration, then it is difficult to explain how one individual could have written so many plays in such a short timespan with different style percentages in the FEs category. One might also ask whether Elliott's Riverside distribution can account for the earlier writing, revisions, emendations, modifications, and other anomalies one encounters in comparing quarto versions of the plays to the folio versions. In other words, if plays written between 1576 to 1591

were revised and modified during the period 1592 to 1623 by parties unknown (and even to a certain extent between 1623 and 1632, the year of the Second Folio), as would seem to have been the case from the various texts that span a timeframe of six decades, would it then be surprising to find diversity in style ratings?

Before we leave Elliott's Figure 1, note that unlike his 1991 Figure 1 (which looked much like our Figure 5), the current web Figure 1 shows a distinct *hook* to the wrong direction in the points we've labeled 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, and A-D. This anomaly may be meaningless, but when we get to our Figure 3 we see that it gets accentuated dramatically.

Elliott's circular reasoning

The Riverside dating scheme derived from Chambers is now less respected among orthodox scholars; Moore's 1997 article lists many doubters who believe that Chambers's chronology is simply too late. The fact is (per Moore), Chambers essentially established (and Riverside and Elliott followed) a handful of plays which he felt reasonably secure about dating, then he evenly distributed the rest of the plays in between, following stylistically-indicated criteria to determine which would seem to be early, middle, or later works. But, as Moore demonstrated, even those dates about which Chambers felt confident were shaky upon closer examination. Moore lays out an excellent case for earlier dating based upon the arguments used by the orthodox themselves. He corroborates this conclusion (36-37) by showing that even the well-respected Kenneth Muir's estimations of Shakespeare's sources would have us believe that Shakespeare stopped reading and attending plays after 1604! No other playwright known to history has ever stopped reading and taking an interest in plays for nearly a decade before his or her career ended. Great writers, committed writers, continue to write for as long as they are able.

Small wonder then that the Riverside-dating appears to form a smooth distribution, since its smoothness is an artifact of the monotonic style assumptions made by Chambers and other orthodox scholars in establishing their dates in the first place! So it is with some amusement that we find Elliott using the smooth distribution resulting from his Riverside-dated chart as an argument that

the line-ending trends in Shakespeare's plays which make Oxford's early poems only a dubious mismatch, still hurt his candidacy because, as the plays are conventionally dated, the trends continued for years after Oxford's death in 1604. Figures 1 and 2 [above] illustrate the dilemma this poses for the Oxford candidacy If one accepts the earliest clear Oxfordian Dating . . . Shakespeare's plays cluster two decades earlier and nothing happens after Oxford's death—but the rising trend disappears [Figure 2], and Oxford's and *Meritum's* [from the pseudonym, *Meritum Petere Grave*, used by

one of the contributors to Gascoigne's 1575 *One Hundreth Sundry Flowres*, and regarded by many Oxfordian scholars as Oxford's] line endings are a complete mismatch with those in Shakespeare's plays. Oxfordian dating is speculative [as if Elliott's/Riverside's/Chamber's dating was not speculative?] and could no doubt be *reshuffled somehow* to fit Oxford at both ends, but *it would require a major overhaul of their present dating*" (our emphases, 504).

Elliott may not have realized just how much he was using circular reasoning above: the monotonically stylistic assumptions for Shakespeare were used to date the plays, then the plays were grouped by dating and at least one stylistic attribute, thereby yielding a pattern which Elliott finds consistent for Shakespeare but discordant for Oxford. Duplication or sincere oversight? In either case it adds up to error on Elliott's part.

We shall take up Prof. Elliott's implied challenge to "reshuffle" the dating and show that it does not require an "overhaul" of Oxfordian dating. Rather, we will use the Oxfordian dating as it was intended, as early indications of periods in the authorial continuum; otherwise we will use materials from non-Oxfordian sources to establish date ranges for each play which we believe to be completely defensible. The results are in the Appendix on pages 40-57.

Constructing and evaluating Figures 3 and 4

The Figure 3 chart takes into account a number of key arguments about earlier dating of the plays, but does not avoid taking the same liberties which Elliott/Riverside/Chambers took in their orthodox chronology concerning monotonically stylistic progressions. Where the orthodox deal with style, and sequence many plays based on style, for the sake of argument we will not disagree in our revamped Oxfordian chronology. The decisions we made in constructing the data points for Figures 3 and 4 are therefore fully described in the introduction to the Appendix on page 40. When we laid out our seventeen *anchored points*, there was an obvious span over the period 1579 to 1603; approximately twelve years difference from Elliott's distribution in Figure 1. So, to preserve the monotonically stylistic continuum for the rest of the plays, wherever there are no better reasons to date a play we simply subtract twelve years from the Elliott/Riverside date for that play. Without needing to know the details of what stylistics Elliott/Riverside/Chambers used to put the plays in order, we nevertheless honor that stylistic ordering (but not his dating!) for the bulk of the plays.

Our Figure 3 distribution is therefore quite similar to that used by Elliott in his Riverside dating distribution, except for the timescale slip by twelve years (not the "two decades" that Elliott claimed Oxfordians must adopt). Furthermore, contrary to Elliott's boast that Oxfordians must "overhaul" their dating estimates, we have incorporated them into our dating wherever appropriate, while those that were not directly used are never dismissed entirely.

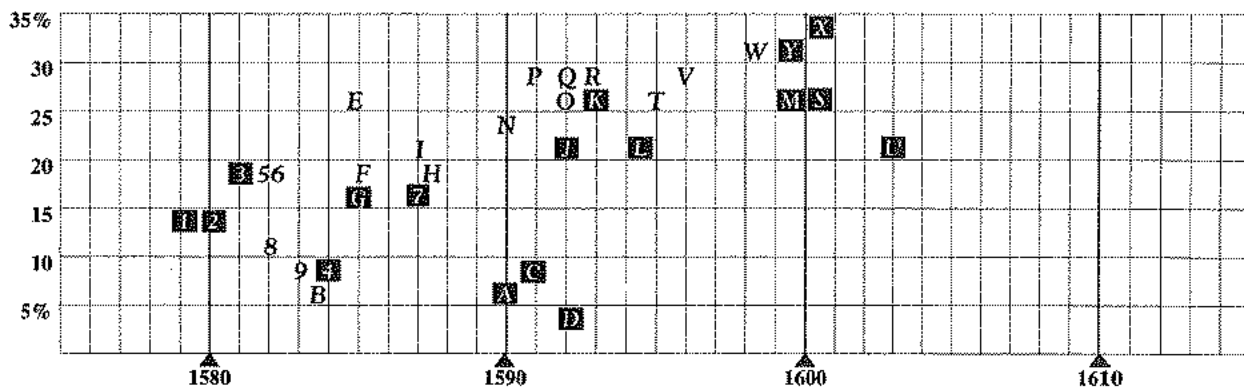


Figure 3: Our anchored dating distribution vs. feminine endings (using our likeliest dates from Appendix B).

For the most part, where not stylistically determined, Figure 3 dates are linked to a likely Court or public performance, and to discrete early sources and topical allusions which would lose their context if presented before an audience more than five years afterwards. The sources cited by Riverside are often more important to us than Riverside's rationalizations and analysis, since the latter are biased by orthodox expectations of later dating. We have assigned numbers and letters to the plays in the order in which Elliott listed them in his 1996 article (211). Elliott's 1991 article implies (504 f. 14) that there is a useable stylistic continuum, based on Riverside and other orthodox sources (which, by de facto use of style figures, roughly parallels Halliday's date order). Where there are no better ways of dating a work for Figure 3, in order to defer to Elliott's continuum, the stylistic relationship of a work to other works in the continuum is preserved. After establishing a "skeleton" with our seventeen anchored dates, and noting that its range is twelve years earlier than Riverside's, for less strong plays we preserve the stylistic continuum by simply subtracting twelve years from the Riverside dates used in Figure 1. Figure 3 dates reflect what we believe to be the likeliest or most probable date by which a clearly recognizable version existed, ignoring subsequent changes and emendations. These dates are used for later figures.

We were interested in demonstrating that a consistent Oxfordian retreatment of Elliott's/Riverside's/Chambers's stylistic dating continuum could be quite consistent with Oxford's career, and completely inconsistent with Wm. of Stratford's supposed career. Accordingly, for the rest of the Figures, our anchored dating is used.

There is one obvious difference between Figures 1 and 3 (other than the twelve-year shift). Note that the data points labeled 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, and A-D in Figure 3 are anomalously accentuated in both Figures 1 and 3. However, in Figure 3, these points are more exaggerated in comparison with their positions in Figure 1. This is in large part because we chose Moore's dating rationale for anchoring A, C, and D at points about eight years later than might have been justified by the twelve-year stylistic shift, or by the Clark/Ogburn dating. This deference to Moore has yielded a peculiar anomaly: Shakespeare's Figure 3 FEs distribution as a whole appears to mirror Elliott's Figure 1 distribution, but there could be said to be an underlying second distribution of the plays labeled 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, and A-D which are trend-

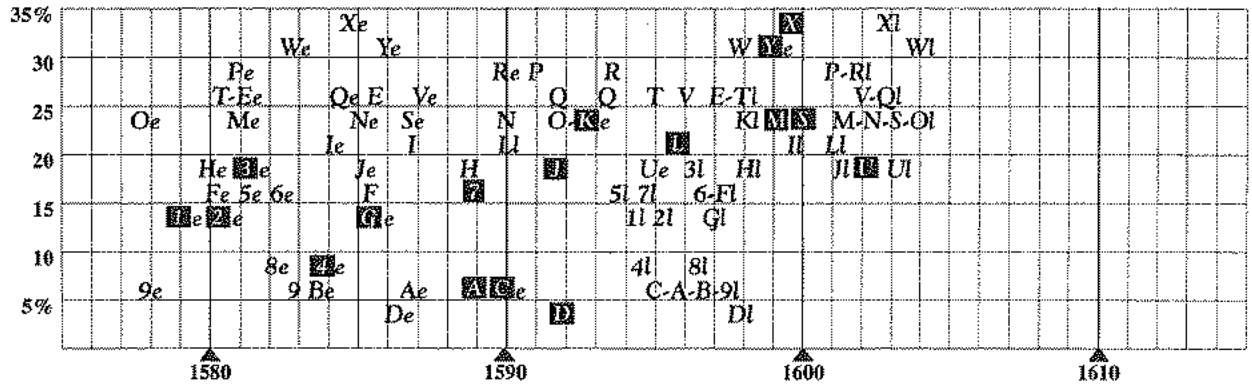


Figure 4: Date ranges applied to anchored dating distribution (earliest, likeliest, and latest dates from Appendix B). Figure 4 ranges reflect our analysis of all dating sources cited here. No post 1604 source dates are used because Moore effectively debunked the need for all post-1604 sources (36-7); although there may have been non-authorial changes after 1604.

ing quite contrary to the rest of the FEs distribution. Since this anomaly appears only for FEs and not for the other style endings distributions, we need not over-explain it other than as accentuation of an anomaly which Elliott's own Figure 1 distribution already demonstrated.

With creativity and research, we might explain the Figure 3 points 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, and A-D anomaly as nine of the thirty-four plays which were heavily influenced by some person or persons who had less influence on the other plays. Who might they be? We don't have the resources here to do a detailed analysis of possible co-authors, but note that the Figure 3 anomaly appears to start at about 1579 and truncate at about 1593 as did the careers of playwright Thomas Kyd, and playwright-poets Robert Greene and Christopher Marlowe.

Pressing on to Figure 4, we see what the FEs vs. anchored dating distribution looks like with date ranges assigned to each and every point in Figure 3. If Figures 3 and 4 are accurate, clearly Shakespeare was almost continuously active, with FEs style ratings completely across the board from about 1578 until 1598. Then from 1599 on, the date range continues to an abrupt truncation at about 1602-04, but with only FEs ratings of 20% or greater. We have no concrete explanation for this high ratings anomaly, though we might point out that in 1599 Oxford's son-in-law, the Earl of Derby, was noted as "penning" plays; the two seem to have been frequent guests in one another's homes, judging from their correspondence. Oxfordians do have a concrete explanation for the 1604 truncation: Oxford's death! Though far from hard and fast, such explanations are certainly much more consistent with Oxford's life than is Elliott's/Riverside's Figure 1 with the life of Wm. of Stratford. Quite simply, orthodoxy continues to be quietly stumped about why their Shakespeare would have been content to rusticate in Stratford for at least four years before his death.

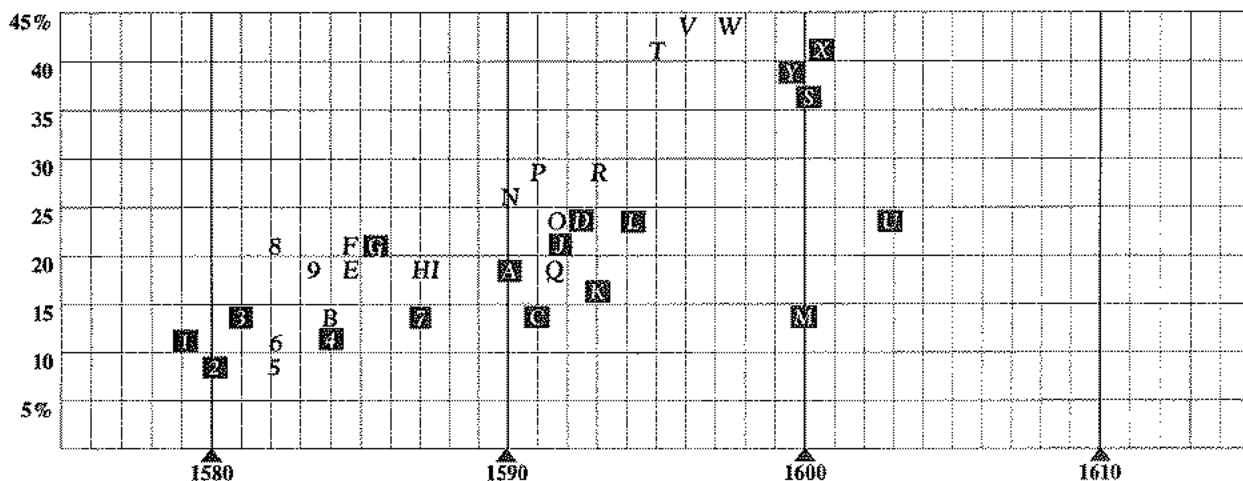


Figure 5: Open endings vs. our anchored dating distribution.

Evaluating Figure 5

Figure 5 reflects our *anchored dating* vs. the open endings (OEs) style element ratings (the reader should note how similar Figure 5 is to Elliott's 1991 published Figure 1 distribution). Note the three obvious groupings that show up in the Figure 5 distribution. The first, from 1579 to 1587, might be said to be contiguous with Oxford's close association with three early poet playwrights of the first caliber, as noted on page 32. The second, from 1590 to 1594, might be said to be contiguous with Oxford's association with Nashe, possibly also with Spenser, Greene, Kyd, and Marlowe. The third grouping, 1595-1603, might be said to be contiguous with Oxford's close association with his playwright son-in-law, the sixth Earl of Derby, William Stanley (note the "W.S." initials), and with the emergence of "Wm. Shakespeare" as a recognized name. Are the differences of OEs between the three groupings related to differences among those *literati* with whom Oxford chose to associate?

Figure 5 begins a pattern which is more or less repeated in the remaining Figures 6 through 9: points **M** (*Twelfth Night*) and **U** (*Pericles*) serve as the most extreme outliers from the general distribution, with the greatest distances from any linear mean drawn through each distribution. Although **U** is a slight outlier in Elliott's Figure 1 distribution, **M** is right about on his linear mean. **U** can be explained, perhaps, by noting that it did not appear as part of the Shakespeare canon until after the 1662 Third Folio. Might it have been adulterated over the years more than the other plays by those meddling hands towards whose existence we've been hinting? But **M** is quite a mystery; it may be an anomaly caused by our choice of Hotson's dating preference for this play vs. earlier dates which could place it as early as 1590 or even 1580. If placed at 1590, **M** sits right about on the linear mean for Figures 3 and 5

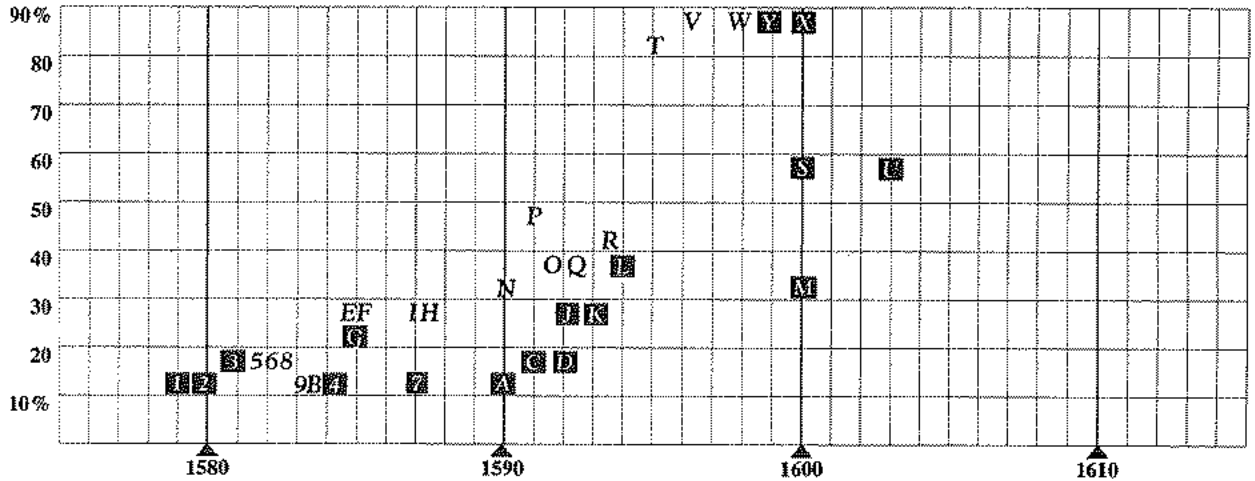


Figure 6: Composite scores vs. our anchored dating distribution.

through 9. Similarly for U, the slight anomaly disappears for Figures 3 and 5-9 if we embrace Moore's "before-1604" as being 1594 (the date of the source by Twine).

Evaluating MEs, LEs, and WEs (ungraphed)

Apparently Elliott had little faith in the style elements MEs, LEs, and WEs, though he did mention that they showed a steep increase, which his dating regime placed well beyond the 1604 death of Oxford (504 f. 14). After plotting them, we too have little faith in them. In all three, a good number of the plays hover just above zero percent of the respective distributions for the first half or more of each distribution and then suddenly balloon upwards to stratospheric percentages for the remaining plays. In fact, it would be very difficult to believe from these three style elements that points T (*Anthony and Cleopatra*), U (*Pericles*), V (*Coriolanus*), W (*Cymbeline*), X (*The Tempest*), and Y (*A Winter's Tale*) were by the same author who wrote all of the others. Derbyites might note that these extraordinarily high points correspond to the 1595-1604 period that Derby was close to his father-in-law. But, since Elliott chose not to try to explain these three style elements, neither will we. They are, however, no less consistent with our anchored distribution and Oxford's career than Elliott's Riverside distribution is with Wm. of Stratford's supposed career.

Evaluating Figure 6

Figure 6 graphs a *composite score* (CS) for each play, derived from a normalized average of all five style elements (FEs, OEs, MEs, LEs, and WEs). For example, the maximum FEs in Figure 3 was 35% and the FEs for point N, for instance, was 24%. So the normalized score for FEs

for point N was 24% divided by 35% to equal 68.57% of the maximum. After computing similar normalized scores for the other four style elements for N (58.70%, 35.23%, 7.26%, and 0.00%), we added the five together and divided by 5, yielding a CS of 33.95%. We followed the same method for computing CSs for all thirty-four of the plays/data points.

After plotting all 34 CSs into Figure 6, there is a remarkable similarity between this Figure 6 distribution and the one shown in Figure 5. Apparently the dominant style ending element of the five is the OEs. Why this should be so is something future scholars may look into. However, the three apparent divisions in the distribution as noted for Figure 5 (1579-87, 1590-94, and 1595-1603), appear just as prominent for the distribution in Figure 6.

In conclusion

Examining the CSs distribution may determine whether Elliott/Riverside/Chambers genuinely followed a stylistic continuum, for the distributions we are seeking should not be found in FEs alone, OEs alone, or any of the rest alone, but in a composite of them all. That this composite distribution fits in well with the conjectures mentioned for Figure 5 should lend them weight, though they remain conjectures. However, we believe that we have taken Elliott's challenge to "reshuffle" the dating rationale "somehow" to fit the Oxford biography at both ends. And we believe we've disproved his demand for "a major overhaul of their present dating." Along the way we've seen that Elliott made some roaring gaffes which he felt obliged to correct without comment or apology in a later posting of his article to his website. We've also seen that what Elliott pretended was a distribution uniquely favoring the career of Wm. of Stratford does, in fact, better favor Oxford's. Finally, we have seen that the distribution is far more favorable to Oxford's biography than to that of Wm. of Stratford, shown most dramatically by the way our distribution truncates at 1604, the year of Oxford's death, while it leaves the Stratford genius with many years to fill with little more than petty local lawsuits, one more of the many curiosities and anomalies which Elliott would rather not discuss.

Finally, with regard to Elliott's use of statistics, for the exercise under examination here we feel that it was misapplied. Our own use of it in this article is primarily intended to refute Elliott's certitudes and explore some areas open to imaginative conjecture. We prefer to end by fully agreeing with Halliday's statement, "the evidence of verse tests is treated less seriously today," as are the Elliott/Riverside/Chambers dating schemes which were largely built upon these now less-fashionable verse tests. _____ ☺

Appendix

List of works and explanation of dates and style tests for Figures 1-6

The following relates to the dates of the thirty-six plays of the Shakespeare canon in the order as listed in Professor Elliott's 1996 article. We number the list 1 to 9 and A to Y in order to identify each play with a single character in the graphs in figures 1-6. The information within each discussion has been collated from Halliday's, *A Shakespeare Companion*, from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, and from the work of four notable Oxfordian scholars, along with our own analysis and comments. Although Halliday declined to date the plays, he did claim: "The plays are printed in chronological order, or at least in an order that must approximate to that in which they were written." That order is roughly parallel to Elliott's order, so for clarity we list Halliday's *date order*—"DO," with his style information.

Riverside uses several classifications of sources: *definite sources* (called simply "sources"), *likely sources*, and *possible sources*, indicating decreasing levels of likelihood. In the interest of clarity, we quote extensively from Riverside, though occasionally paraphrasing (in the interest of space). For this reason we sometimes omit all but the date of a source, relying on the reader's ability to access the widely available Riverside directly for details. We often omit Riverside sources cited before 1570 or after the most logical *latest* date for a work since these are normally irrelevant to our discussion (thus, we have omitted the many references in Riverside to the 1565 translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (by Oxford's uncle and tutor, Arthur Golding), and most of the many references to the 1623 First Folio. We have added comments in brackets and loosely borrowed from or paraphrased the referenced texts where they seemed relevant or necessary to explain our departures from Riverside, allowing qualifiers such as "possibly," "perhaps," etc. to pass without comment as far too plentiful to note, though their presences may be sufficient grounds to reject a given Riverside argument in part or entirety.

We believe the plays clearly show that Shakespeare was multilingual. The orthodox adherence to the Stratford biography finds little room for the education and experience which would be consistent with this multilingual attainment; therefore, orthodox insistence that Shakespeare could not read and write other languages flies in the face of the mixed Latin-French-Italian coinages enriching his works and the abundant indications of his continental travels (Lambin). Though dates of original sources themselves may be relevant to our discussion, Riverside sources specifying translations into English are often only marginally relevant since Shakespeare could have read them directly from the originals. Similarly, English works not printed until some later date may have been read by Shakespeare from MSS (an argument occasionally made by the Riverside editor himself).

Where Riverside refers to later editions of a source, we regard as slight-of-hand the fact that no reason has been given for rejecting Shakespeare's possible use of an earlier edition.

We question Riverside's variable usage of Henslowe's diary, with the "ne" entry putatively meaning "new." It may be that "ne" was "new" to Henslowe, though not to Shakespeare or his private audience. On occasion Riverside will disregard "ne" as it does with *Titus Andronicus*, which has it, or *The tamyng of A shrowe*, which doesn't. We believe that Henslowe's "ne" has little proven relevance for dating purposes.

We regard as questionable any use by Riverside of Greene's *Groatsworth of Witte* (1592) for dating purposes (Hess 1996).

We question Riverside's variable usage of Meres's 9/7/1598 *Palladis Tamia* (as in *Shrew*, *Merry Wives*, *Much Ado*, and *2 Henry IV*), where Riverside deftly sets Meres aside but elsewhere regards him as authoritative. The Meres list of twelve plays established only that some version of those plays

existed in and prior to 1598. No plays were publicly attributed to Shakespeare before 1597, therefore, a play not included in his list may mean a variety of things; among them, that Metes simply didn't associate that play with Shakespeare.

We question those "sources" that are very similar to works by Shakespeare but that are dated too early for Riverside to regard Shakespeare as their source, rather than the other way around. We note the abundant references in Riverside to sources written by those patronized by Oxford, such as John Lyly, Anthony Munday, Thomas Watson, Thomas Nashe, Edmund Spenser, Robert Greene, and Gabriel Harvey; possibly also Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, and Ben Jonson, many of whom worked for (and lived with) Oxford, and so would have had easy access to his works in draft (Ogburn Jr. 535, 694, 779); Meres comments on Shakespeare sharing "his sugared Sonnets among his private friends" (4); while Lyly's 1579 (774-5), Watson's 1582 (776), and Greene's 1584 dedications to Oxford mention sharing their draft works.

We also question those later dates based on a particular performance rather than any process directly linked to original authorial effort, as they could very well be revisions of an old work for which no earlier documentation has survived. Also, where there is reason to believe that there was an earlier version of a play than the extant version, we believe it reasonable to look to the earlier version as authorial effort by the original author, unless there is good reason to think otherwise.

1 2 Henry 6

2H6, Figure 1=1591, Figure 2=1579, Figure 3=1579, Figure 4 Range=1579-94; 1st anchor Halliday's style: feminine endings (FEs)=14%; open endings (OEs)=11%; mid-line speech endings (MEs)=1%; light endings (LEs)=0.06%; weak endings (WEs)=0.03%; a composite score (CS) of FEs, OEs, LEs, & WEs=13.91%; prose to total (PTT)=18%; rhyme to verse (RTV)=3%; total lines (TLs)=3,162; dating order (DO)=1.

Riverside's analysis: places it at 1590-91 (48); sources: Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 2nd ed., 1587; Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, 1570 ed.; Grafton's *Chronicle at Large*, 1569; the 1594 "bad" quarto: *1st pt. of the Contention betwixt York and Lancaster*. Plague events, 1592-94, may be connected to bad quarto. "Authorship problems raise further difficulties." [Riverside's reference to *Greene's Groatsworth* from 1592 should be ignored.]

Oxfordians' analyses: Clark favors a Court performance in 1579 due to probable allusions to the Duke of Alençon's arrival in England in August 1579 (316-329). Ogburn Sr. (Dorothy and Charlton St., parents of Charlton Ogburn, Jr.) date both 2H6 and 3H6 to c 1580-1 (311).

Likeliest date of composition: honoring orthodoxy's putative stylistic continuum, 2H6 transfers twelve years back from 1591 to 1579, matching Clark's 1579 citation.

Earliest reasonable date of imbedded allusions: Riverside sources with as early as the 1577 first edition of Holinshed, but we defer to Clark's 1579.

Latest reasonable date of imbedded allusions: the 1594 events of the "bad" quarto appear to be the last changes made to versions of this play.

2 3 Henry 6

3H6, 1=1591, 2=1580, 3=1580, 4=1580-95; 2nd anchor Halliday: FEs=14%, OEs=10%, MEs=1%, LEs=0.10%, WEs=0%; CS=13.43%; PTT=0.1%, RTV=3%; TL=2,904; DO= 2.

Riverside: favots 1590-91 (48); sources: in general, the same as 2H6. 2H6 and 3H6 are closely connected (both bad quartos by same publisher) and present the same problems; sources: Holinshed's *Chronicles*; 2nd ed., 1587; the bad quarto, *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, 1595.

Oxfordians: Clark, due to probable allusions to Mary Stuart's conspiracies, suggests that this was given at Court on Dec 27, 1580, by the Lord Chamberlain's Men (393-415). Ogburn Srs. date both 2H6 and 3H6 to 1580-1 (310-25). Ogburn Jr. says possibly 1581 (776).

Likeliest: Stylistically, might transfer from 1591 to 1579, but we favor Clark's 1580.

Earliest: Riverside sources are not inconsistent with beginning our range at 1580.

Latest: Riverside sources show no later source than the 1595 bad quarto.

? 1 Henry 6

Halliday: FEs=8%, OEs=10%, MEs=1%, LEs=0.11%, WEs=0.04%;
CS not computed; PTT=0%, RTV=10%; TL=2,677; DO=2a.

Riverside: 1589-90, citing "authorship problems," thus doubting it's by Shakespeare (48)[perhaps this is why 1H6 is missing from Elliott's 1996 list].

Oxfordians: Clark places at 1587 "to parallel the efforts" for peace with Spain of that year, with few lines "from Shakespeare's own pen" (791-95). Ogburn Srs. (772) suggest 1H6 "blocked out" in a 1587 collaborative effort.

Orthodoxy is ambivalent about Shakespeare's contribution to this play, *Tim.*, *H8*, and *TNK*.

3 Richard 3

R3, 1=1593, 2=1581, 3=1581, 4=1581-97; 3rd anchor

Halliday: FEs=20%, OEs=13%, MEs=3%, LEs=0.11%, WEs=0%;
CS=18.70%; PTT=2%, RTV=4%; TL=3619; DO=3.

Riverside: favots 1592-93 (48). Close links with 3H6 suggest that it was composed immediately after that play [not according to Halliday's dating order]. Probable sources: Anon., *The True Tragedy of Richard III*, 1591; Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 2nd ed., 1587; Stow's *Chronicles of England*, 1580; the 1597 bad quarto. Close links with 3H6 suggest that it was composed immediately after that play.

Oxfordians: Clark dates it at 1581 when Oxford was in the Tower, noting allusions to his boar symbol (416-431). Ogburn Srs. concur (310-325). Ogburn Jr. "possibly" 1581 (776).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transfers from 1593 to 1581, matching Clark's 1581 citation and Riverside's 1580 "probable source."

Earliest: Clark's 1581 is consistent with Riverside sources.

Latest: Riverside sources show no later source than the 1597 bad quarto.

4 Titus Andronicus

TA, 1=1594, 2=1577, 3=1584, 4=1584-94; 4th anchor

Halliday: FEs=9%, OEs=12%, MEs=3%, LEs=0.20%, WEs=0%;
CS=12.75%; PTT=2%, RTV=4%; TL=2,523; DO=4.

Riverside: favors 1593-94 (49). Performed January 24, 1594 (Henslowe's *Diary*, where it is marked "ne"). Listed by Meres in *Palladis Tamia*, 1598, as by Shakespeare. An allusion to a play on this subject in *A Knack to Know a Knave*, labeled "ne" by Henslowe, June 10, 1592, must, if we accept the dates 1593-94, be interpreted as a reference to the pre-Shakespearean play.

Probable source: Plutarch's *Lives*, tran. North, 1579 ed.

Oxfordians: Moore notes *TA* dated by Ben Jonson at either 1589 or 1584, with the latter being the most reasonable (30-32). Clark suggests the Feb. 1577 Court play *The historye of Titus and Gisippus* given by "Children of Pawles" was an early version (47-59). Ogburn Srs. concur with 1577 (127); revision 1581 (343). Ogburn Jr. concurs with 1581 (774).

Likeliest: *Tit.* is very solid for earlier dating, with Ben Jonson's 1584 as best. Could be 1579 based on Riverside's source.

Earliest: Inferential evidence for earlier versions of *Tit.*, but safest to stay with 1584.

Latest: 1594 quarto and performance.

5 The Taming of the Shrew

TOS, 1=1594, 2=1579, 3=1582, 4=1582-93

Halliday: FEs=18%, OEs=8%, MEs=4%, LEs=0.04%, WEs=0.04%;

CS=15.53%; PTT=23%, RTV=4%; TL=2,649; DO=6.

Riverside: favors 1593-94 (49); sources: *The tamyng of A shroue* is recorded in Henslowe's *Diary* as performed 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. Henslowe does not mark the play "ne" [which the orthodox would take to mean that it was not "new," although this was the first time it was entered in the *Diary* and only days after his first mention of the Chamberlain's Men (Ogburn Jr., 731)]; for the Sly frame, some version of a story that appears in P. Hueterus's *De Rebus Burgundicis*, 1584, Bk. IV, relates a similar prank played by Philip the Good of Burgundy on a drunken fellow countryman. In 1594, *The Taming of a Shrew* [note "a" *Shrew* rather than "the" *Shrew*] was published and is speculated to either be a bad quarto of a progenitor to Shakespeare's play or else a bad quarto of the play itself. Riverside states, "If the second view is accepted, a view that has steadily gained support in recent years, Shakespeare's play (*The Shrew*) would have to be dated not later than 1593."

Oxfordians: Clark notes the Jan. 1579 *A Morrall of the marryage of Mynde and Measure* at Court by "Children of Pawles" and cites an allusion to Gascoigne's *Suppositi* of pre-1577 (102-9).

Ogburn Srs. concur (158). Ogburn Jr. says the 1579 "might" be an early version (775).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1594 to 1582, the midpoint between the Oxfordians' 1579 and Riverside's 1584 source.

Earliest: Though the Oxfordians' 1579 is tempting, it's safer to start our range with 1582.

Latest: We won't argue with Riverside's "not later than 1593."

6 The Two Gentlemen of Verona

TGV, 1=1594, 2=1579, 3=1582, 4=1582-98

Halliday: FEs=18%, OEs=12%, MEs=6%, LEs=0%, WEs=0%;

CS=16.87%; PTT=29%, RTV=7%; TL=2,294; DO=7.

Riverside: favors 1594 (49). 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 *The Comedy of Errors*. The two stages, he believes, may explain some of the numerous inconsistencies in the play as we now have it [a statement clearly based on style theory.] But a date earlier than 1594 remains problematic [as is this whole line of facile orthodox reasoning, with "stages" founded upon quicksand].

Montemayor's *Diana Enamorada* (possibly in Yonge's English tran., published 1598 but in MS sixteen years earlier) [that is, 1582]. Lyly's *Midas*, 1589. [Peele, Lyly and Munday were the Earl of Oxford's personal secretaries over much of the decade up to this date, and likely would have shared works in draft with such friends, or vice versa].

Oxfordians: Clark notes "A history of the Duke of Millayn and the Marques of Mantua shewed at Whitehal . . . by the Lord Chamberleyne's seruantes" Dec 26, 1579 (298-315). Ogburn Srs. concur (222), with a 1590s revision (969-979). Lambin (53-68) examines Milan's geography mid-1570s, including an obscure tower, well, woods, and cell which would not have been known by someone who had not seen them about then. Oxford visited Milan twice 1575-76 (see Prof. Alan Nelson's webpage <http://violet.berkeley.edu/~ahnelson/>); Lambin noted that in 1577, Oxford's secretary, Munday, was in Milan as a spy, heading to Rome.

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1594 to 1582, consistent with the 1582 Yonge date cited by Riverside.

Earliest: Respecting the wealth of Oxfordian (and Lambin's) 1570s allusions, we still choose 1582 as safest.

Latest: Noted by Meres (*Palladis Tamia*, 1598) as by Shakespeare.

7 The Comedy of Errors

COE, 1=1594, 2=1577, 3=1587, 4=1587-94; 5th anchor

Halliday: FEs=17%, OEs=13%, MEs=1%, LEs=0%, WEs=0%;
CS=15.59%; PTT=14%, RTV=19%; TL=1,778; DO=5.

Riverside: favors 1592-94 (48-9); sources: Plautus, (1) *Menaechmi*, tran. by William Warner, 1595; (2) *Amphitruo* [undated?]; (3) Lyly's *Midas*, 1589. The allusion to France "atm'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 the struggle as still in progress appeared for several years after 1593. It is therefore possible that the Gray's Inn performance of 1592 was the first and that the play with its classical source and unusual amount of legal terminology was written for that occasion. [Or that it was selected for Gray's Inn because its early versions already had those traits. Riverside's "war upon her heir" argument ignores that Henri de Navarre was named *heir presumptive* by Henri III when the Duc d'Alençon died in 1584. Shakespeare's largely Protestant audience regarded Henri de Navarre as heir from 1584 on.]

Oxfordians: Moore at 1587-88 (39-42). Clark favors January 1577 *The historie of Error* performed at Court by "Children of Powles" (15-21). Ogburn Srs. concur (110-11). Ogburn Jr. concurs (774).

Likeliest: We choose the earliest of Moore's range at 1587.

Earliest: There are inferences that *THOE* equaled COE, but it's safer to favor Moore's 1587.

Latest: Performed at Gray's Inn December 28, 1594; prior performances likely Court or private.

8 Richard II

R2, 1=1595, 2=1582, 3=1582, 4=1582-97

Halliday: FEs=11%, OEs=20%, MEs=7%, LEs=0.15%, WEs=0%;
CS=17.85%; PTT=0%, RTV=19%; TL=2,756; DO=A.

Riverside: favors 1595 (51); sources: Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 2nd ed., 1587; Anon., *IRII* (or *Thomas of Woodstock*, 1592, probably indebted to Daniel's *Civil Wars*, 1595; probable source:

Daniel's *Civil Wars*, 1595. Possible a performance of this play took place at the house of Sir Edward Hoby, December 9, 1595. If the "K. Richatd" of Hoby's letter is Shakespeare's *Richard II*, this evidence, coupled with the influence of Daniel, would give us the first definite year date for the composition of one of the plays [it gives no such certainty, noting "probably indebted" and "possible," all that it shows is a possible first known performance, not the date of composition].

Oxfordians: Clark suggests 1582 due to allusions to conspiracies of the Howards, the rebellion in Munstet, and Oxford and Lyly's leasing of the Blackfriars' Theatre (491-507). Ogburn Sr. place at 1581-2 (415).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1595 to 1583, which is close enough to favor Clark's 1582.

Earliest: We'll lean toward Clark and the style transfer vs. the doubtful Riverside sources.

Latest: 1597, quarto published; 1598, listed by Meres; we ignore the 1595 play as only possible.

9 Love's Labour's Lost

LLL, 1=1595, 2=1578, 3=1583, 4=1578-98

Halliday: FEs=8%, OEs=18%, MEs=10%, LEs=0.11%, WEs=0%;
CS=15.61%; PTT=39%, RTV=62%; TL=2,789; DO=8.

Riverside: favors 1594-95, Court revision 1597 (51). There seems to be a reference in Chapman's *Shadow of Night*, 1594, which would place the play not earlier than that year. The Muscovite disguise in V.ii [perhaps a reference to the visit to London in 1582 of a Muscovite delegation "whose absurd conduct made them a joke among English sophisticates" (Sobtan 185)] and Betowne'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; Betowne's remark in V.ii.460-62 may be taken as a reference to the ill-fated performance of *The Comedy of Errors* during those revels. Certainly the song in V.ii.889-924 cannot have been composed before 1597 since it draws from Getard's *Herbal* published in that year [Getard might have borrowed from Shakespeare]. 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. No "definite" source for LLL, but some suggested analogues with French history of the sixteenth-century [Marguerite de Valois's visit to Nerac in 1578?]; probable influence of *commedia dell'arte* in plot and character types [the *commedia* had been in full flower for decades by the time of Oxford's visit to Italy in 1575]. It seems likely that a bad quarto edition preceded the 1598 quarto, but no copy is extant [unless we date the actual play much earlier]. It was listed by Meres in 1598, and coupled with what sounds like a companion play, *Love labours wonne*, also not extant.

Oxfordians: Clark places at 1578-9, noting probable caricatures of Gabriel Harvey and Sir Phillip Sidney (125-251). Ogburn Sr. concurs (174-210). Ogburn Jr. notes the January 1579 Court play, *A Maske of Amazonas and a Maske of Knights* (775).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1595 to 1583.

Earliest: The 1578 visit to Henri de Navarre by his estranged wife, Marguerite de Valois, Princess of France, a connection first noted by Prof. Abel Lefranc in 1918.

Latest: 1598: bad quarto; Meres list.

A King John

KJ, 1=1596, 2=1581, 3=1590, 4=1587-98; 6th anchor

Halliday: FEs=6%, OEs=18%, MEs=13%, LEs=0.04%, WEs=0%;
CS=14.89%; PTT=0%, RTV=5%; TL=2,570; DO=C.

Riverside: favors 1594-96 (50-51). The dating problem for *King John* is exceptionally murky [for orthodoxy, that is]. Two widely different views are held about the relationship of Shakespeare's play to the anonymous two-part play called *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*, published in 1591: (1) TR is the principal source of *King John* (the orthodox and still most generally accepted opinion); (2) TR is a memorial imitation of Shakespeare's play (i.e. a bad quarto) [putting it at 1590]; source: Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 2nd ed., 1587; possible source: Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, 1570 ed.

Oxfordians: Moore, 1590 (43-44). Clark suggests 1581 based on allusions to intrigue by Spanish Ambassador Mendoza (477-90). Ogburn Srs., 1581-2 (415).

Likeliest: We believe Moore's 1590 is consistent with the Riverside sources.

Earliest: Riverside's 1587 citation.

Latest: 1598, listed by Meres.

B A Midsummer Night's Dream

MND, 1=1596, 2=1581, 3=1584, 4=1584-98

Halliday: FEs=7%, OEs=13%, MEs=17%, LEs=0%, WEs=0.05%;
CS=14.16%; PTT=22%, RTV=43%; TL=2,174; DO=B.

Riverside: favors 1595-96 (51). The play suggests special composition for a wedding and seven different weddings have been suggested, ranging from 1590 to 1600. No source known for the main plot; probable source for subplots, details: Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584; possible source for Pyramus and Thisbe: Robinson, ed., *A Handful of Pleasant Delights*, 1584. 1600, quarto published.

Oxfordians: Clark favors a 1581 masque, followed by a 1584 comedy, followed by the January 1594/5 Court marriage of the 6th Earl of Derby to Oxford's daughter Elizabeth Vere (613-26). Ogburn Srs. say 1583 based on a suggested early version, *A Pastorall of Phillyda and Choryn*, presented at Court, December 1584 (575-6). Barbara Flues: the Fairy King, Oberon, and the rude mechanicals show similarities to Robert Greene's *James IV*, published 1594.

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1596 to 1584, consistent with Riverside sources.

Earliest: The stylistic transfer and sources support 1584.

Latest: 1598: Meres.

C Romeo and Juliet

R&J, 1=1596, 2=1581, 3=1591, 4=1591-97; 7th anchor

Halliday: FEs=8%, OEs=14%, MEs=15%, LEs=0.20%, WEs=0.03%;
CS=16.16%; PTT=15%, RTV=17%; TL=3,052; DO=9.

Riverside: favors 1595-96 (51). Baldwin (*Five-Act Structure*) suggests a date of 1591, between *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Lucrece*. Astrological references in the play and allusion to the great earthquake of 1584 as having occurred eleven years earlier seem to point to 1595 or 1596. Good quarto published in 1599. 1598, listed by Meres.

Oxfordians: Moore, 1591 (42-43). Clark suggests 1581-82, following Oxford's duel with Knyvet, and notes a catastrophic 1570 Italian earthquake (+ 11 yrs = 1581) (461-474). Ogburn Srs.

suggest 1581-83 (385-414). Ogburn Jr. suggests it was begun about 1581 (776).

Likeliest: Moore's 1591 11 years after a large 4/6/1580 earthquake which shook England, whereas the 3/1/1584 quake was centered in France (per Fred Manzo's search of Geological Survey tables on the internet). The 1580 quake was so traumatic that Oxford's uncle, former tutor and Ovid translator, Arthur Golding, wrote an epistle on the quake being God's wrath upon an evil age (L.T. Golding 84-5, 157). Clark's 1570 Italian quake is also good, but we accept Moore's rationale as safest.

Earliest: Although much earlier dating is possible, Moore's 1591 is safest.

Latest: 1597: bad quarto published.

D 1 Henry 4

IH4, 1=1597, 2=1582, 3=1592, 4=1586-98; 8th anchor

Halliday: FEs=5%, OEs=23%, MEs=14%, LEs=0.16%, WEs=0.06%;

CS=18.18%; PTT=47%, RTV=3%; TL=3,176; DO=E.

Riverside favors 1596-97 (52); sources: Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 2nd ed., 1587; Anon., *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, 1586; Anon., *I Richard II* (a.k.a. *Thomas of Woodstock*), 1592; probable sources: Stow's *Chronicles*, 1580; Daniel's *Civil Wars*, 1595. Meres lists in 1598. 1598 quarto published.

Oxfordian: Moore, 1592 (44-46). Clark favors 1583-4, citing the Throgmorton Plot (680-705).

Ogburn Srs. concurs (713-4). Ogburn Jr., possibly 1584 (777).

Likeliest: Moore's 1592 is consistent with the Riverside sources.

Earliest: *The Famous Victories*, c. 1586.

Latest: Meres and the quarto of 1598.

E The Merry Wives of Windsor

MWW, 1=1597, 2=1584, 3=1585, 4=1581-97

Halliday: FEs=27%, OEs=20%, MEs=21%, LEs=0.03%, WEs=0%;

CS=29.15%; PTT=88%, RTV=6%; TL=3,018; DO=G.

Riverside: favors 1597, revised 1600-01 (52). No definite sources; probable sources: J. Rathgeb's "Journal," 1602, an account of the Mompelgard visit, details of which could have been known earlier than this by Shakespeare; possible sources: Tarlton's *News Out of Purgatory*, 1590; Rich's *Military Profession*, 1581; Lyly's *Endimion*, 1588. 1602, bad quarto published. There is a theory that the play was revised for the public theatre about 1600-01, and it is the revised version that lies behind the bad quarto [of 1602], while the First Folio text represents in most essentials (except for the name Broome for Brooke) the earliest "court" performance. On this view, Shakespeare wrote *Merry Wives* shortly after he began work on 2 *Henry IV*. Meres does not list *Merry Wives* among Shakespeare's plays as of September 7, 1598 but a special Court production might not have been known to him.

Oxfordian: Clark favors "An Antick play and comdye," a Court presentation of February 1584/5 (706-32). Ogburn Srs. suggest 1585 (737-45). Ogburn Jr., 1573 (773).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1597 to 1585, placing it alongside IH4.

Earliest: The most relevant source listed by Riverside, 1581.

Latest: Riverside favors Hotson's suggestion that the play was originally written specially for the Garter Feast held at Whitehall April 23, 1597. We'll accept 1597, assuming it to be a revamp of an earlier version.

F The Merchant of Venice

MOV, 1=1597, 2=1579, 3=1585, 4=1580-98

Halliday: FEs=18%, OEs=22%, MEs=22%, LEs=0.23%, WEs=0.04%;
CS=27.33%; PTT=24%, RTV=5%; TL=2,660; DO=D.

Riverside: favors 1596-97 (51). Among various supposed allusions in the play, I.i.27-29 refers to a ship ("wealthy Andrew"); there is little doubt that Shakespeare is here glancing at a Spanish vessel called the *St. Andrew*, captured in the Cadiz expedition of 1596, news of which reached England by July 30, 1596. Late 1596, or early 1597, seems, therefore, a likely date of composition [of that single line, perhaps, but not necessarily of the whole play]; Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, c. 1589 for some details only; probable source: *Gesta Romanorum*, tran. Richard Robinson, 1577, 1595, story 66; possible sources: Munday's *Zelauto*, 1580 [Munday was a servant to Oxford at this time]; Anon., *The Jew*, 1569-79; not extant. Entered on SR. July 22, 1598; quarto published 1600.

Oxfordians: Clark notes 1579 play *The Jew* was performed by "the Lord Chamberleyns seruantes" (331-48). Ogburn Srs. concur (230). Ogburn Jr. suggests *The Jew* was performed "with Spenser-Harvey exchange indicating this an early version" (775). He also says for February 1580, "*the history of Portio and demorantes*" performed at Court, with "demorantes" very likely an error for "the Merchants" "and the play thus the same as *The Jew*."

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1597 to 1585, in line with the c. 1589 Marlowe source.

Earliest: The 1580 Munday source listed by Riverside.

Latest: 1598: Meres.

G 2 Henry 4

2H4, 1=1598, 2=1585, 3=1585, 4=1585-1598; 9th anchor

Halliday: FEs=16%, OEs=21%, MEs=17%, LEs=0.03%, WEs=0%;
CS=22.39%; PTT=53%, RTV=3%; TL=3,446; DO=F.

Riverside: favors 1598 (52); sources: Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 2nd ed., 1587; Anon., *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, 1586; probable sources: Daniel's *Civil Wars*, 1595; possible source: Stow's *Chronicles*, 1580. Some traces of the name Oldcastle, the original name for Falstaff, (changed, it is supposed, because it offended the Cobham family) remain in the speech-prefixes in the early part of *2 Henry IV*; this indicates that Shakespeare must have started writing *2 Henry IV* before *Part 1* (containing the change to Falstaff) was entered on SR., February 25, 1598. That *Part 2* was not much more than begun at this time is suggested by the omission of "The First Part" on the title-page of the 1598 quarto. Meres's reference to "Henry the 4" is ambiguous [Part 1? Part 2? Both?]. Entered on S.R. August 23, 1600; published 1600.

Oxfordian: Clark cites the 1585 Babington Plot, Drake's expedition, and the campaign in the Low Countries (733-48). Ogburn Srs. cite "significant additions" in 1603-04 (1183-1198).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1598 to 1585, consistent with Clark and the Riverside sources.

Earliest: We find Clark's 1585 citations convincing and in line with Riverside's sources.

Latest: Riverside's sources support earlier dating of composition, not later than circa 1598.

H Julius Caesar

JC, 1=1599, 2=1582, 3=1587, 4=1580-99

Halliday: FEs=20%, OEs=19%, MEs=20%, LEs=0.40%, WEs=0%;
CS=27.65%; PTT=7%, RTV=1%; TL=2,478; DO=L.

Riverside: favors 1599 (53); sources: Plutarch's *Lives*, tran. North, 1579 (the lives of Caesar, Brutus, Antony, and Cicero); possible sources: Tacitus's *Annals*, tran. Grenewey, 1598; Appian's *Civil Wars*, tran. W. B., 1578; Pescetti, *Il Cesare*, 1594; Anon., *Caesar and Pompey, or Caesar's Revenge*, c. 1595. A performance, probably at the Globe, was witnessed by a German traveller, Thomas Platter, on September 21, 1599. Not mentioned by Meres in 1598. Jonson appears to paraphrase III.ii.104-5 in *Every Man Out of His Humor*, 1599.

Oxfordians: Clark suggests a performance on January 6, 1582-83, following Pope Gregory's new calendar and an assassination attempt on the Prince of Orange on the Ides of March, 1582 (529-33). Ogburn Srs. cite a January 1583 *History of Caesar* presentation at Windsor (468).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1599 to 1587.

Earliest: Grouping of Riverside source material in the proximity of 1580.

Latest: We'll respect the Jonson and Meres evidence for a 1599 upper limit.

I Much Ado About Nothing

MA, 1=1599, 2=1583, 3=1587, 4=1584-1600

Halliday: FEs=23%, OEs=19%, MEs=21%, LEs=0.04%, WEs=0.04%;
CS=27.03%; PTT=75%, RTV=5%; TL=2,826; DO=1.

Riverside favors 1598-99 (52); no definite sources; probable sources: Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, tran. Harington, 1591, Bk. V [Shakespeare could have known the original]; Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Bk. II, Canto iv, 1590; possible source: Munday's *Fedele and Fortunio*, c. 1584. 1600, quarto published. Not mentioned by Meres in 1598. This omission by Meres may be significant but it need not be so, since he failed to include *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1593-94.

Oxfordians: Clark notes the February 1583 Court play *A historie of Ariodante and Genevora* given by Children of the Merchant Taylors School (534-51). Ogburn Srs. concur, suggesting *Benedicte and Betteris* as an early version (480). Ogburn Jr. concurs with 1583 (777).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1599 to 1587.

Earliest: Combining the Oxfordian theories with Munday's 1584 source.

Latest: We'll go with the 1600 quarto.

J Henry 5

H5, 1=1599, 2=1576, 3=1592, 4=1586-1603; 10th anchor

Halliday: FEs=21%, OEs=22%, MEs=18%, LEs=0.06%, WEs=0%;
CS=26.17%; PTT=42%, RTV=3%; TL=3,380; DO=H.

Riverside: favors 1599 (52-53); sources: Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 2nd ed., 1587; Tacitus's *Annals*, Bks. I, II, tran. Grenewey, 1598 [an erudite Shakespeare could have known the original]; Anon., *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, c. 1586; possible source: Daniel's *Civil Wars*, 1595. 1600, bad quarto published. Not included by Meres in 1598. Imitation of certain scenes and verbal echoes from *Henry V* in *I Sir John Oldcastle* give a definite *terminus ad quem* for Shakespeare's play, since the authors (Munday, Drayton, Wilson, and Hathaway) were paid for the finished play October 16, 1599, by Henslowe (*Diary*, fol. 65). 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 arguing 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 to Shakespeare's play by another hand during those years (hence their absence from the bad quarto of 1600). The matter remains open.

Oxfordians: Moore estimates 1592-99 (46-47). Clark favors creative periods for *H5* in 1574, 76-77, and 86 (9-14, 772-790). Ogburn Sts. have *Famous Victories* written 1572-3 and *H5* in 1586 (77). Ogburn Jr. suggests *Famous Victories* in 1574 (773).

Likeliest: Following Moore, 1592.

Earliest: Riverside: *The Famous Victories*, 1586.

Latest: Latest Riverside discussion date, 1603.

K As You Like It

AYL, 1=1599, 2=1582, 3=1593, 4=1593-1600; 11th anchor

Halliday: FEs=26%, OEs=17%, MEs=22%, LEs=0.07%, WEs=0%;
CS=27.85%; PTT=57%, RTV=6%; TL=2,857; DO=J.

Riverside: favors 1599 (53); sources: Lodge's *Rosalynde*, 1590; probable source: Anon., *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*, c. 1570. Marked "to be staied" on S.R. August 4, 1600. Not included by Meres, 1598. Setting of the song "It was a lover and his lass," V.iii.16-33, probably original to this play, published in Thomas Morley's *First Book of Aires*, 1600 [Morley may have provided the music for the play at an earlier date].

Oxfordians: Moore, 1593 (47-48). Clark suggests 1582 due to reference to first minting of half pence and Queen Elizabeth's November 1581 pledge to marry Alençon, but one scene added in 1589 to reflect the Marprelate controversy (508-28). Ogburn Sts., 1582 (443-466). Ogburn Jr. says Oxford probably "revamps" AYL about 1588 (779).

Likeliest: Moore's 1593, although other Oxfordian theories are worth consideration.

Earliest: 1593 is consistent with the Riverside sources.

Latest: The SR and Morley, 1600.

L Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

HAM, 1=1601, 2=1584, 3=1594, 4=1589-1602; 12th anchor

Halliday: FEs=23%, OEs=23%, MEs=52%, LEs=0.20%, WEs=0%;
CS=36.67%; PTT=31%, RTV=3%; 3,931; DO=M.

Riverside: favors 1600-1 (53). Topical references to the players' "inhibition," arisen out of the "late innovation" (II.ii.332-33) and to the "aery of childten, little eyases" (II.ii.339), have been used in dating. Two interpretations 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, limiting the number of playhouses in London to two and performances to twice weekly. The "little eyases" passage, since it occurs only in the First Folio text and clearly comments on the so-called War of the Theatres (after the middle of 1601), may be a later addition (as may all of these "inhibition-innovation" lines). The two incidental allusions to Julius Caesar link closely with *Julius Caesar*, 1599, and suggest that the material was still fresh in Shakespeare's mind when he turned to *Hamlet*. Gabriel Harvey's well-known marginal comment on Shakespeare's play, which is usually dated before the execution of Essex (February 25, 1601), is perhaps more safely dated as not later

than July 21, 1603. It is generally agreed that the principal source was the earliest Hamlet play (now lost) referred to in 1589; other sources: Bright's *A Treatise of Melancholy*, 1586; Lavater's *Of Ghosts and Spirits Walking by Night*, tran. RH., 1572; Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, 1584; Nashe's, *Pierce Penniless*, 1592; Montaigne's *Essays*, tran. Florio, 1603, used in MS.; possible source: Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*, vol. V, story 3, 1570, in the original, the source for the Ur-Hamlet play. A play on the Hamlet story existed at least as early as 1589, probably by Thomas Kyd (Nashe's preface to Greene's *Menaphon*, 1589). Entered on Stationers Register July 26, 1602; bad quarto published, 1603; good quarto published, 1604.

Oxfordians: Moore, 1594 (48). Clark notes a January 3, 1584/5 Court production of *Felix and Philomena* as precursor to HAM (634-78). Ogburn Sr., have Oxford "btooding about" Hamlet in 1583-5 (632). Ogburn Jr., probably written about 1586 (778).

Likeliest: Moote's 1594 is consistent with the Rivetside sources.

Earliest: The 1589 Hamlet, putatively by Kyd, likely by Shakespeare.

Latest: We'll use the S.R. entry of 1602.

M Twelfth Night

MTN (also called *What You Will*), 1=1602, 2=1580, 3=1600, 4=1581-1602; 13th anchor

Halliday: FEs=26%, OEs=15%, MEs=36%, LEs=0.11%, WEs=0.04%;
CS=31.01%; PTT=64%, RTV=14%; TL=2,690; DO=K.

Rivetside: favors 1601-2 (54); sources: Rich's *Military Profession*, 1581; possible source: Fotde's *The Famous History of Parismus*, 1598. A performance at the Middle Temple, possibly the first, took place February 2, 1602, as described by John Manningham in his Diary. The play is probably not earlier than 1600, since the snatches of songs in II.iii seem to derive from Robert Jones's *First Book of Songs and Airs*, published in that year. There is a possible allusion to Sir Toby Belch in Jonson's *Poetaster* (III.iv.345), acted in 1601. Not included by Meres.

Oxfordians: Clark favors 1580 and before, based on allusions to a rivalry between Hatton and Oxford, though she mentions a possible reference to a 1584 letter from Mary Stuart to Queen Elizabeth and a 1596 drawing of Malvolio by DeWitt (364-92). Ogburn Sr. also argue for 1580, but say revised in 1587 (266). Ogburn Jr. points to 1580 when "A pleasant conceit by Vete" was mentioned, possibly an early version (775).

Likeliest: The most probable date for TN relies on Leslie Hotson's 1954 book (16-17), in which he claimed that the first performance of TN was January 6, 1601 (twelfth night), when Shakespeare's company performed an unnamed play before Queen Elizabeth, with the real-life Duke Orsino sitting next to her, since a major character in TN is named "Duke Orsino." If this was the play TN, final composition would have been in late 1600.

Earliest: 1581 source from Rivetside. Bentley lists TN as first performed 1599-1600, one year earlier than Hotson's date (231). Of course, there is no reason that this play could not have been written earlier yet, perhaps privately performed for an unknown number of years, then revamped in 1600 for presentation before Duke Orsino and the Queen. Indeed, apart from his name, there is little about the play which resembles Orsino's then-famous, often heroic biography, nor any reference to the holiday known as "twelfth night."

Latest: If Hotson's first performance theory is wrong, then Manningham's 1602 is an upper limit.

N Troilus and Cressida

T&C, 1=1602, 2=1583, 3=1590, 4=1585-1603

Halliday: FEs=24%, OEs=27%, MEs=31%, LEs=0.17%, WEs=0%;
CS=33.95%; PTT=34%, RTV=9%; TL=3,496; DO=N.

Riverside: favors 1601-2 (54); sources: Caxton's *Ancient History of the Destruction of Troy*, tran. of Le Fèvre, 1596 ed.; Homer's *Iliad*, tran. Chapman 1598, only Bks. 1-II, VII-XI and "Achilles's Shield"; possible sources: Chettle and Dekker, *Troilus and Cressida*, 1599, extant only in a fragmentary MS "plot"; Greene's *Planetomachia*, 1585. Entered on S.R. February 7, 1603; published 1609. First Folio text, 1623, substantially different. The reference in the Prologue to the "prologue arm'd" is generally taken as pointing to Jonson's *Poetaster*, 1601, in which an "armed Prologue" appears [or it may be Jonson who is pointing to an earlier T&C]. 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 *Poetaster*. What appears to be a reference to Gilbert's *De Magnete*, 1600, III.ii.179 and IV.ii.104-5, may be taken to support a date after that year.

Oxfordians: Clark notes December 1583, *Agamemnon and Ulysses* performed at Court by Oxford's company of boy players (627-33). Ogburn Sr., 1584 (611-2). Ogburn Jr. concurs with Clark, noting another performance in December 1584 (777-8).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1602 to 1590.

Earliest: Because we believe that Shakespeare had access to original texts of Caxton and the *Iliad*, we begin with the 1585 Riverside possible source.

Latest: Entered SR February 7, 1603. (War of the Theatres argument no more than speculation.)

O Measure for Measure

MFM, 1=1604, 2=1581, 3=1592, 4=1578-1604

Halliday: FEs=26%, OEs=23%, MEs=51%, LEs=0.25%, WEs=0%;
CS=38.58%; PTT=41%, RTV=4%; TL=2,821; DO=P.

Riverside: favors 1604 (54); sources: Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578, a play based on Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* [1565], Decade S, Novella 5, and Claude Rouillet's *Philanira* [1556]; probable sources: Cinthio's *Epitia*, 1583, no contemporary translation known; Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, 1565, no contemporary translation known, though Whetstone included a prose version in his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses* [1582], which Shakespeare may have known [he may also have known the originals]. Performed at Court December 26, 1604. The Duke referred to in connection with the King of Hungary's peace, Lii.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 [perhaps a later modification, as per Ogburn Sr.'s 1603 suggestion].

Oxfordians: Clark favors 1581 due to possible allusions to a protest of punishing recusants (447-90). Ogburn Sr. suggest 1581 with a 1603 revision (327-8).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1604 to 1592, even though Riverside's sources favor late 1570s.

Earliest: Based on the identification in Lambin's 1962 book (93-124), MFM contains many allusions to the Court of Henri III of France, including Henri's associations with Poland (he was concurrently his King as well), and various place names, courtiers, and events of 1572 to 1578 ("Vienna" = Paris in this play). Therefore we prefer 1578.

Latest: There is the possibility changes were made into 1603-04.

P All's Well That Ends Well

AW, 1=1603, 2=1579, 3=1591, 4=1580-1603

Halliday: FEs=29%, OEs=28%, MEs=74%, LEs=0.37%, WEs=0.07%;
CS=49.62%; PTT=50%, RTV=19%; TL=2,966; DO=O.

Riverside: favors 1602-3 (54); sources: Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, 1566-67, Novel 38, tran. of Boccaccio. Some believe, due to differing styles, that Shakespeare first wrote this play, or parts of it, as early as 1594-95, and that the First Folio text represents his reworking around 1602-3. The fact that the *bed trick* is also found in Shakespeare's source suggests that the play is at least earlier than *Measure for Measure*, where the bed trick is Shakespeare's addition to the plot he borrows [the bed trick also occurs in *Much Ado*, and in a contemporary anecdote about Oxford and his wife from 1574 (Ogburn Jr. 575)].

Oxfordian: Clark notes for January 1579, *The historie of the Rape of the second Helene* performed at Court (110-24). Ogburn Srs. concur (160-61). Ogburn Jr. concurs (775).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1603 to 1591, but the source would look to the 1570s.

Earliest: The extreme earliness of the one Riverside source would have us begin our range at about 1580, if not earlier. Lambin's 1962 book (25-40) lends support to earlier dating because of the allusions to Italian and French nobility connected with the French Civil Wars; Lambin also cites detailed knowledge of the city of Florence circa the 1570s which could not have been known except by someone there at the time (in 1576, Oxford wrote a letter from Sienna just south of Florence).

Latest: Riverside's 1603, although very weak.

Q Othello, the Moor of Venice

OTH, 1=1604, 2=1583, 3=1592, 4=1584-1604

Halliday: FEs=28%, OEs=20%, MEs=54%, LEs=0.06%, WEs=0%;
CS=37.43%; PTT=20%, RTV=3%; TL=3,316; DO=Q.

Riverside: favors 1604 (54); sources: Cinrhio's *Hecatommithi*, 1565, Decade 3, Novella 7 (no contemporary English translation known; Shakespeare does not appear to have used the French translation by Chappuys [1584]) [but he may have used the original]; Pliny's *History of the World*, tran. Holland, 1601; Conraren's *Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, tran. Lewkenor, 1599. Performed at Court November 1, 1604. Some possibility of an earlier date is suggested by verbal borrowings from *Othello* in the bad quarto of *Hamlet*, 1603.

Oxfordian: Clark suggests 1583 as connected with Alençon's loss of sovereignty over the Netherlands and the sack of Antwerp (Elizabeth called him her "lirtle Moor") (552-582).

Ogburn Srs. put it at 1583, rewritten 1585, 88, and 1604 (507).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1604 to 1592, but sources could say earlier.

Earliest: The earliness of original foreign sources lead us to choose 1584.

Latest: We accept the 1604 Court performance.

? Timon of Athens

Halliday: FEs=22%, OEs=33%, MEs=63%, LEs=0.67%, WEs=0.21%;
CS not computed; PTT=29%, RTV=9%; TL=2,373; DO=Qa.

Riverside: 1607-08, claiming "The play was probably left unfinished by Shakespeare and never acted" (55) [possibly why it was left off Elliott's 1996 list]. Clark (30-46, 337-38) and Ogburn Srs. (110) say 1576; the latter says "final revision" 1590-01 (957-968).

R King Lear

KL, 1=1605, 2=1589, 3=1593; 4=1590-1603

Halliday: FEs=29%, OEs=29%, MEs=61%, LEs=0.15%, WEs=0.03%;
CS=44.71%; PTT=20%, RTV=3%; TL=3,316; DO=R.

Riverside: favors 1605 (54-5); sources: Anon., *The Chronicle History of King Leir*, c. 1590; Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 2nd ed., 1587; Sidney's *Arcadia*, 1590; Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Bk. 11, Canto x, 1590; *Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. Higgins, 1574, 1587; Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, 1603; Montaigne's *Essays*, tran. Florio, 1603; possible source: Marston's *The Malcontent*, 1604. The popularity of Shakespeare's play probably led to the publication (entered on SR May 14, 1594, and again May 8, 1605) of the much earlier anonymous *Chronicle History of King Lear*, c. 1590, in 1605 [?]. Since Shakespeare's play uses material from Harsnett's *Popish Impostures*, it cannot be earlier than 1603 [the received version, that is, which says nothing of a possible early version].

Oxfordians: Clark favors 1589 after marriage of James VI to Anne of Denmark (866-88). Ogburn Srs. argue for composition 1589-03 (1121-1164). Ogburn Jr. mentions that an April 1594 *King Leare* was registered and produced two days later by Henslowe (781).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1605 to 1593, a year before the S.R. registration in 1594.

Earliest: Riverside's own sources support a date circa 1590.

Latest: No source convincingly argues for composition after 1603-04.

S Macbeth

MAC, 1=1606, 2=1588, 3=1600, 1587-1603; 14th anchor

Halliday: FEs=26%, OEs=37%, MEs=77%, LEs=1.00%, WEs=0.09%;
CS=58.15%; PTT=7%, RTV=6%; TL=2,108; DO=S.

Riverside: favors 1606 (55); source: Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 2nd ed., 1587; probable source: Buchanan's *Rerum Scotticarum Historia*, 1582. Contains probable allusions to the equivocation issue at the trial of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators, January-March 1606 [or equally well to the earlier Babington and Throgmorton plots]. 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 [dating a performance, but not necessarily its composition].

Oxfordians: Moore, 1600 (48-49). Clark favors 1588-9 due to assassinations of Henri Duc de Guise by Henri III and then of Henri III by a crazed monk (809-54). Ogburn Srs. argue for 1589-90 (785-802).

Likeliest: Moore's 1600 is safest, although Clark's/Ogburn's 1588-90 is very tempting.

Earliest: Riverside sources, circa 1587.

Latest: Since it isn't flattering to Scots, as an anti-Scottish play *Macbeth* would most likely have existed in an earlier form prior to James I's ascension in 1603, after which it was modified.

T Anthony and Cleopatra

A&C, 1=1607, 2=1579, 3=1595, 4=1580-1599

Halliday: FEs=27%, OEs=43%, MEs=78%, LEs=2.32%, WEs=0.91%;
CS=83.35%; PTT=9%, RTV=1%; TL=3,063; DO=T.

Riverside: favors 1606-7 (55); sources: Plutarch's *Lives*, tran. North, 1579 (the life of Antony); Appian's *Civil Wars*, tran. W. B., 1578; probable sources: Plutarch's *Lives*, tran. North, 1603;

(the life of Octavius Caesar); Daniel's *Tragedy of Cleopatra*, 1599 ed. Some influence of Shakespeare's play has been found in Daniel's revision of his *Cleopatra*, published in 1607.
 Oxfordians: Clark notes allusions to Alençon's 1579 arrival and a 1579 Court production of *Ptolome* (349-57). Ogburn Srs. not so sure about *Ptolome*, placing A&C at 1579-80 (265), and revisions 1601-03 (1165-1182).
 Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1607 to 1595, though Clark's arguments are interesting.
 Earliest: Earliness of Riverside sources imply an early beginning, circa 1580.
 Latest: No Riverside source argues convincingly for composition after 1599.

U Pericles, Prince of Tyre

UPER, 1=1608, 2=1577, 3=1603, 1594-1604; 15th anchor
 Halliday: FEs=22%, OEs=25%, MEs=71%, LEs=1.32%, WEs=0.44%;
 CS=56.50%; PTT=30%, RTV=3%; TL=1,140 (the part allegedly by Shakespeare); DO=V.
 Riverside: favors 1607-8 (55); sources: Twine's *Pattern of Painful Adventures*, no date, estimated circa 1594, and 1607; possible source: Sidney's *Arcadia*, 1590. A performance was seen at Court by the Venetian and French ambassadors between May 1606 and November 1608 [dared a performance, nor necessarily its composition]. George Wilkins's little novel, *The Painful Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre*, based in part on this play, was published in 1608. The problem of authorship is discussed [?].
 Oxfordians: Moore states "before-1604" (49-51). Clark suggests a Dec 29, 1577 Court performance by "Children of Pauls" (60-78). Ogburn Srs. suggest initial version 1577, 1590-01 revision (127, 957-68). Ogburn Jr. concurs with 1577 (774).
 Likeliest: Though there are inferences of an earlier version, safest to go with Moore's 1603.
 Earliest: Riverside sources clearly argue for an early 1590s beginning.
 Latest: Riverside arguments only address recorded performance and publication, and don't place composition beyond 1604.

V Coriolanus

V COR, 1=1608, 2=1581, 3=1596, 4=1588-1604
 Halliday: FEs=28%, OEs=46%, MEs=79%, LEs=1.76%, WEs=1.29%;
 CS=85.53%; PTT=24%, RTV=1%; TL=3,410; DO=U.
 Riverside: favors 1607-8 (55); sources: Plutarch's *Lives*, tran. North, 1579; three works as source of the fable of the belly: 1) Averell's *A Marvellous Combat of Contrarieties*, 1588; 2) Sidney's *Apology for Poetry*, 1595, and 3) Camden's *Remains*, 1605; probable source: Livy's *Roman History*, tran. Holland, 1600. Apart from stylistic evidence, there is little to suggest a more exact date. The reference to "the coal of fire upon the ice," l.i.173, has been taken as alluding to the great frost of 1607-8 (see Dekker's *The Great Frost*, 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 1609 but discussed earlier) [pre-1604?] has been detected in III.i.95-97.
 Oxfordians: Clark suggests allusions following Drake's knighthood of April 1581 (432-46). Ogburn Srs. argue for a revision 1590-01 (957-968).
 Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1608 to 1596, though Clark's 1581 is tempting.
 Earliest: Riverside sources would have us place the start at circa 1588.
 Latest: Were there no frosts or burning coal on ice before 1608? Given the 1588 date, no reason why the later 2 sources of the fable of the belly are needed. Other sources support 1604.

W Cymbeline

CYM, 1=1610, 2=1578, 3=1598, 4=1582-1604

Halliday: FEs=31%, OEs=46%, MEs=85%, LEs=2.34%, WEs=1.56%;

CS=97.03%; PTT=16%, RTV=3%; TL=3,339; DO=W.

Riverside: favors 1609-10 (56). Metrical and stylistic evidence links *Cymbeline* with *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. Sources: Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 2nd ed., 1587; *Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. Blenerhasset, 1578, and Higgins, 1587; Anon., *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, 1582; possible source: Anon., *Sir Clyomon and Clamydes*, c. 1570. Simon Forman saw a performance in 1611 [dating a performance, not necessarily its composition].

Oxfordians: Clark cites December 1578 Court play *An history of the cruelties of A Stepmother* by the "Lord Chamberleyne's Servauntes" as early version (79-101). Ogburn Srs. concur with 1578 (148) and 1590-01 revision (957-968). Ogburn Jr. concurs with 1578 (774).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1610 to 1598, though Clark's 1578 is interesting.

Earliest: The Riverside sources argue for a start of circa 1582.

Latest: Riverside provides no compositional evidence beyond 1587, so we are ultra-conservative in using 1604.

X The Tempest

TT, 1=1611, 2=1583, 3=1600, 4=1584-1603; 16th anchor

Halliday: FEs=35%, OEs=42%, MEs=85%, LEs=2.03%, WEs=1.21%;

CS=90.44%; PTT=22%, RTV=0.1%; TL=2,064; DO=Y.

Riverside: favors 1611 (56). No sources known for the main plot; for the rest: Strachey's *True Repertory of the Wrack and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates* dated July 15, 1610, but not published until 1625 in *Purchas his Pilgrims* [Shakespeare would have had to read it in ms.]; Jourdain's *Discovery of the Bermudas*, 1610; *True Declaration of the Estate of the Colony in Virginia*, 1610; Montaigne's *Essays*, tran. Flotio, 1603. TT performed at Court November 1, 1611. The play makes use of sources not available before September [Moore refutes claims for these post-1603 sources, suggesting Hakluyt, published 1600, or the voyages of St. Paul (51-53)].

Oxfordians: Clark puts original version at 1583 for many reasons including Whitgift's elevation (584-612). Ogburn Srs. concur (536).

Likeliest: Stylistically, might be transferred from 1611 to 1599. However, we prefer 1600, relying on an unnamed Court play of January 6, 1601, cited by Hotson (16-17) as one of several "twelfth day" entertainments for Duke Orsino presented by Derby's Men. Lambin points out the similarities between the elaborate masque of Ariel's sprites in *Tempest* and the famous masques and other celebrations following the proxy marriage in Florence in September 1600 of Marie de Medici to Henri IV of France (41-51, 69-91). Marie's favorite cousin, Duke Orsino, attended, escorted Marie to France, then proceeded to England by December, 1600.

Earliest: An early version could have been written much earlier than 1600 and performed privately until it became relevant to revive it for Duke Orsino's 1600-01 visit. Based on Lambin's analysis and the early character types reminiscent of *commedia dell'arte* (Ogburn Jr. 549-50, 698; Lambin 69), we begin circa 1584.

Latest: Though we believe the Bard could have read Montaigne in the original, we accept the 1603 source.

Y The Winter's Tale

WT, 1=1611, 2=1584, 3=1599 4=1586-1599; 17th anchor

Halliday: FEs=33%, OEs=38%, MEs=88%, LEs=1.85%, WEs=1.40%;
CS=89.14%; PTT=28%, RTV=0%; TL=3,075; DO=X.

Riverside: favors 1610-11 (56); sources: in IV.iv.783-91 the reference to a source probably used for *Cymbeline* (Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Day 2, Tale 9) would seem to indicate that *The Winter's Tale* is the later play [?]; Greene's *Pandosto*, 1588; Sabie's *Fisherman's Tale*, 1594, and *Flora's Fortune*, 1595; probable source: Greene's *The Second Part of Cony-Catching*, 1591, for Autolycus's first trick on the Clown; possible source: Forde's *The Famous History of Parismus*, 1598. Simon Forman saw a performance on May 15, 1611; a Court performance took place November 5, 1611 [dating two known performances, not the original composition].

Oxfordian: Clark puts a progenitor as early as 1584-86, alluding to the trial of Mary Stuart, the rise of Raleigh, and the 1586 return of Virginia colonists with tobacco (749-771). Ogburn Srs. favor 1586 (746-762). Ogburn Jr. suggests that *A Wynters nightes pastime*, registered 1594, was also some version of WT (781).

Likeliest: Stylistically, transferred from 1611 to 1599, consistent with the 1598 source.

Earliest: Clark's 1586 allusions are persuasive of an early beginning.

Latest: No Riverside sources are convincing for a composition date later than 1599.

? Henry the Eighth

Halliday: FEs=32%, OEs=39%, MEs=72%, LEs=3.86%, WEs=3.17%;

CS not computed; PTT=0.6%, RTV=0.5%; TL=1,167 (the part by Sh.); DO=Ya.

Riverside: says 1612-13 with "question of Shakespeare's collaboration with John Fletcher" (56) [so H8 isn't in Elliott's 1996 list]. Clark, "by many is not considered a Shakespeare play," puts it at 1601 (883); yet cites "helping hands" and "not later than 1592" a "Harry VIII gown" and "Cardinall's gown" among Edward Alleyn's properties (889); also noted by Ogburn Jr., (386-87). Ogburn Srs. favor 1603.

? Two Noble Kinsmen

Halliday: FEs=30%, OEs=30%, MEs=92%, LEs=4.42%, WEs=3.01%;

CS not computed; PTT=5%, RTV=2%; TL=1,131 (the part supposedly by Sh.); DO=Yb.

Riverside: 1613, citing a question of collaboration by "Flercher and Shakespeare" (57) [nevertheless, TNK is included in Elliott's 1996 list]. Neither Clark nor Ogburn Srs. mention it.

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