A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE SHEWING WHAT IS PROVED AND WHAT IS NOT PROVED ABOUT SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE AND WORK

BY

FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE SOCIETY

IT is hoped that the accompanying Table will prove useful not only to students of the period of literature to which it refers, but also to the general reader.

The incidents given in the column headed "Traditions" appear in all writings on Shakespeare's life, where they are usually referred to as "probable," and it is possible that the current opinion as to their probability will be to some extent corrected or modified by this method of presenting the material.

The Table, for sake of convenience, has been arranged in two sheets, the first covering the Elizabethan period, 1564-1603; the second the Jacobean period, 1603-1616.

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,

Shewing what is Proved and what is not Proved about Shakespeare's Life and Work

SHEET I.—ELIZABETHAN PERIOD, 1564-1603.

COMPILED BY WILLIAM POEL.

FACTS.		TRADITIONS.	CONTEMPORARY EVENTS AND ALLUSIONS.	UNPROVED.
 (a) STRATFORD-ON-AVON. 1564 BAPTISM, April 26th. Father, Mayor, 1568. Players first visit town*; Father chief Alderman and called "Mr." 1571. First visit of Lord Leicester's players, 1573. Queen visits Kenilworth, 1575.⁺ Second visit of Leicester's players, 1577. Father's money troubles begin. Mother pawns her estate, "Ashbies," and her lands at Snitterfield, 1578. Father fails to redeem her property, 1580. 1582 MARRIAGE. Bishop's license issued to marry "William Shakespeare and Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton," Nov. 27. Two Stratford men sign bond for Bishop's leave to marry "William Shagspere and Anne Hathwey," Nov. 28th. 1583 DAUGHTER'S baptism, May 26th. 1585 TWINS' Baptism, Feb. 2nd. Father's debts increase. A writ served but no goods to distrain, 1585. He forfiets his Alderman's gown, 1586. He is sued for his brother Henry's debts. He is held in custody or put in prison. Third visit of Leicester's players, 1587. 1587 (About this time Shakespeare may have left Stratford). Father, fearing arrest, fined for not 	 (b) LONDON. 1593-4 Dedicates his poems, VENUS and ADONIS, and LUCRECE, to Southampton; they are published by Field, formerly of Stratford. Further editions of Venus appeared in 1594, in 1596, and in 1599. 1594 Named as one of the ACTORS paid March 15, for shewing before the Queen at Christmas "twoe severall comedies or enterludes." 1596 ASSESSED 138. 4d. on property valued at £5‡ in the parish of St. Helens; he was now lodging in Bankside. 1598 Acts in BEN JONSON's comedy, "Every Man in his Humour." Refers to SPENSER in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." His name appears for the first time on published plays, "Rich. 11." "Rich. 111." and "Love's Labour's Lost." The title-page of the latter states that the play was acted before the Queen. Twelve of his plays had now been written and acted; of four others he was part author. Nine had been printed; two ("Rich. 11." "Rich. 111.") reached a second edi- tion. Some unpublished Sonnets had been written for private friends. 	That his father was a but- cher, Aubrey, 1680: a wool- dealer, Rowe, 1709: that Shakespeare went to the Stratford Free School, Rowe, 1709: that he was once a schoolmaster, Aubrey, 1680: that he was apprenticed to a butcher, Dowdall, 1693: that he poached Sir Thomas Lucy's deer, William Ful- man, 1688: that he began as a playhouse servitor, Dowdall, 1693: that he held horses for theatre- goers, Old Tradition, quoted by Colley Cibber, 1750 c.: that he received £1,000 from Southampton, Rowe, 1709: that he got Ben Jon- son's first play acted, Rowe, 1709: that he held wit com-	ALLUSIONS. 1593 Death of MARLOWE, June Ist. 1594 SPENSER and DRAYTON praise Shake- speare's Muse. 1597 ESSEX appointed Earl Marshal and head of Heralds' College; CAMDEN, King of Arms. 1597 BLACKPRIARS HALL bought by Burbage for £600‡. Dutchman makes a sketch of Swan THEATRE from description given by a friend. DEATH OF JAMES BURBADE, "the first builder of playhouses." 1598 FRANCIS MERES, a University graduate and divine, quotes a line of Falstaff's, and says that Shakespeare's dramatic art among the English is the best for comedy and tragedy. He names six comedies and six tragedies which had been acted. GABRIEL HARVEY writes that Shake- speare's "Venus" delights young folk, but "Lucrece" and the tragedy of "Ham- let" please the wiser sort. MARSTON, the dramatist, says that "Romeo and Juliet" was acted at the Curtain playhouse and applauded there. HENTZNER, a foreigner, writes that tra- gedy and comedy are acted in London be- fore large audiences nearly every day. Death of SPENSER, Jan. 16. SOUTHAMPTON spends an interval of leisure in "merrily going to plays every day." 1601 ESSEX REBELLION. "Rich. II." acted	That Shakespeare was the actor at- tacked by Robert Green and defended by Henry Chettle, 1592: that Shakespeare wrote the "Talbot Scenes" (Hen. VI. Part I.), which attracted crowds of spectators (<i>Nash</i>) 1592: that the "Errors" play acted at Gray's Inn, Dec. 28, was Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors," 1594: that Shake- speare was the "W. S." mentioned on the title-page of "Locrine," a tragedy: and also the "W. S." alluded to in an anony- mous poem, "Willobie His Advisa," 1595 that Shakespeare's Sonnets, 1598 c., were autobiographical: that they are printed in the order in which they were written that "The Passionate Pilgrim," by "W Shakespeare," and "The Phœnix and the Turtle," by "William Shakespeare," were the work of Shakespeare, 1599 that the Queen alluded to Shakespeare? play when she said, "I am Richard II know ye not that?" (<i>Aug. 4th</i> , 1601)
 left Stratford). Father, fcaring arrest, fined for not going to church, 1592. On or before 1595 Anne borrows forty shillings from a shepherd, who in his will (1602) directs that Shakespeare shall repay. Father in debtor's court for last time, 1595; sells "slip of land" in Henley street, 1596. 2596 Son dies; buried August 11th. First ap- 	tion. Some unpublished Sonnets		day."	
plication to Heralds' College for coat of arms. 1597 Buys NEW PLACE and an acre of land for £60.‡ A lawsuit to recover Mother's estate. The family described as "of small wealth and very few friends."	 1600 First mention of name in Stationers' Register ("Hen. IV. Part II.") 1601 Allusion in "Hamlet" to the Town favouring CHILD-PLAYERS. 1602 "TWELFTH NIGHT" acted in Middle Temple Hall, Feb. 2nd. Quotes MARLOWE in "The Merry 	returned home once a year, Aubrey, 1680: that he planted a mulberry tree at New Place, R. B. Whelen, 1760: that the Queen wish- ed him to write a play to	Queen's CHAPEL BOYS of the "Black- friars" satirize the plays and players of the "Globe" in Ben Jonson's "Poet- aster." 1602 "Here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, aye, and Ben Jonson too." (<i>Kemp</i> , in The Parnassus Play, Part 3).	sey, a highwayman, alluded to Shakespeare when he told actors to save money in Lon don to buy "some place in the country where their money may bring them dignity and reputation." (Undated Tract, before
 1598 Third largest owner of Corn in his ward. Now called GENTLEMAN and Householder in town documents. Corporation wish to sell him tithes. Stratford man wants to borrow £30.[‡] Coat of Arms granted by Heralds' Col- lege. Mother's claim to the arms of Arden of Park Hall refused, 1599. Father dies intestate; buried Sept. 8, 1601. 1602 Buys one hundred and seven ACRES OF LAND near Stratford for £320.[‡] Also a COTTAGE and a quarter acre of land at back of New Place. 	 Wives of Windsor," and in "The metry Wives of Windsor," and in "As You Like It." 1603 Acts in Ben Jonson's "SEJANUS." By this time 21 of his plays had been acted; 14 published, 10 of them under his name; 10 extra editions had appeared, besides 5 of "Venus" and 3 of "Lucrece." Twenty-eight plays, of which four at least were Shakespeare's, were acted by Burbage's Players at Court during the Queen's reign. 	ed him to write a play to show Falstaff in love, <i>Rowe</i> , 1709.	 1603 Death of Queen Elizabeth, Mar. 24th. Between 1591 and 1603 Forty Writers quote or parody lines from Shakespeare's poems and plays, occasionally giving his name. Burbage's Company of Players visited the following provincial towns.— 1593 Coventry, Leicester. 1594 Winchester, Marlborough. 1596 Faversham. 1597 Rye, Dover, Marlborough, Bristol, Bath. 	UNKNOWN. Date of birth: what he did before he was eighteen: whether he saw the Queen at Kenilworth: date and place of marriage where he lived afterwards: when he left Stratford: which year he reached London when he first joined a company of players when he returned to Stratford.

* For some years these visits were repeated annually. "Henry IV. Part II." and "The Merry Wives of Windsor." A Midsummer's Night's Dream," and of Stratford-on-Avon in "The Taming of the Shrew," ‡ In comparing this sum with modern currency multiply by eight.

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SHEET II.—JACOBEAN PERIOD, 1603-1616.

COMPILED BY WILLIAM POEL.

 John Hall, aged. 32, physician of Stratford, June, 1607. Elizabeth, his grand-daughter, born Feb. 1608. Mary, his mother, buried in Parish Church, Sept. 1608. 1608 GODFATHER to William Walker, son of Henry Walker, mercer and alderman. 1609 Wins case against DEBTOR, who then absconds. Sues Hornby, who had gone bail for debtor. Legal difficulties about tithes begin. 1610 Buys 20 ACRES from John Combe. 1611 Signs PETITION for Bill in Parliament to repair Stratford Highways. 1613 Visits London. Buys House, with shop and yard in Blackfriars, for £140‡. 1614 The Mine Marker, in Statford Highways. 1615 Visits London. Buys House, with shop and yard in Blackfriars, for £140‡. 1616 Players for acting in the town in- creased from 10s. to £10, Feb. 7th, 1612. His youngest brother, Richard, is buried in the Parish Church, Feb. 4th. Slander case in the 	TRADITIONS. That his father was "a merry-cheeked old man," Archdeacon Plume, 1656 : that he received an autograph letter from King James, Lintot, 1710 : that King Charles read his plays more often than the Bible, James Cooke, 1649 : that he said he had to kill Mercutio in the third act to save his play, Dryden, 1672 : that "Troilus and Cressida" was maimed by the omission of act and scene divisions, and that this was the fault of the actors, Dryden, 1677 : that in the writing of his plays he was guilty of "immorality," Jeremy Collier, 1698 : that he in-	JOHN DAVIES of Hereford writes that Shake- speare and Burbage have "wit, courage, good shape, good pattes, and all good"; elsewhere he mentions Shakespeare personally: "Some say (good Will) which I, in sport, do sing, Had'st thou not plaid some kingly parts in sport, Thou hadst bin a companion for a King, And beene a king among the meaner sort." Hampton Court Conference. The King's threat to the Puritans, Jan. 1604 ANTHONY SCOLOKER writes that an Epistle to the Reader should resemble one of "friendly Shakespeare's tragedies"; it should "please all, like Prince Hamlet." Elsewhere he de- scribes the stage antics of the Prince, "Puts off his cloathes, his shirt he only weares, Much like mad Hamlet; thus a passion tears." Peace with Spain, followed by the Guni-	UNPROVED. That he was loved by Ben Jonson during his lifetime, "Discoveries," printed 1641: that he wrote plays without blotting a line, Heminge and Condell, 1623: that he wrote "The London Prodigal," "The Yorkshire Tragedy,"and "Pericles," all acted at the "Globe," and printed with his name on the title-pages, 1605- 9: that he wrote the "Henry VIII." printed in the First Folio, 1623: that he was joint author with Fletcher of "The
 1605 Buys for £440[±] half the unexpired lease of Stratford TITHES. 1603 SECOND on the list of players licensed by the King to act in Globe playhouse or elsewhere. FIRST on the list of players receiving scarlet cloth as King's Servants. They are paid £30[±] for acting before the King at WILTON (Dec. 2); and an additional £30[±] in Consideration of losses due to the Plague in London.* 1608 GODFATHER to William Walker, son of Henry Walker, mercer and alderman. 1609 Wins case against DEBTOR, who then absconds. Sues Hornby, who had gone bail for debtor. Legal difficulties about tithes begin. 1610 Buya 20 ACRES from John Combe. 1611 Signs PETITION for Bill in Parliament to repair Stratford Highways. 1613 Visits London. Buys House, with shop and yard in Blackfriars, for £140[±]. Fine on Players for acting in the toton increased from 10s. to £10, Feb. 7th, roiz. His youngest brother, Richard, is buried in the Parish Church, Feb. 4th. Slander case in the 	merry-cheeked old man," Archdeacon Plume, 1656: that he received an autograph letter from King James, Lintot, 1710: that King Charles read his plays more often than the Bible, Jumes Cooke, 1649: that he said he had to kill Mercutio in the third act to save his play, Dryden, 1672: that "Troilus and Cressida" was maimed by the omission of act and scene divisions, and that this was the fault of the actors, Dryden, 1677: that in the writing of his plays he was guilty of "inimorality," Jeremy Collier, 1698: that he in-	 among others, as one of the "most pregnant witts of these our times, whom succeeding ages may justly admire." Queen Elizabeth buried, Apr. 28. JOHN DAVIES of Hereford writes that Shakespeare and Burbage have "wit, courage, good shape, good partes, and all good"; elsewhere he mentions Shakespeare personally: "Some say (good Will) which I, in sport, do sing, Had'st thou not plaid some kingly parts in sport, Thou hadst bin a companion for a King, And beene a king among the meaner sort." Hampton Court Conference. The King's threat to the Puritans, Jan. 1604 ANTHONY SCOLOKER writes that an Epistle to the Reader should resemble one of "friendly Shakespeare's tragedies"; it should "please all, like Prince Hamlet." Elsewhere he describes the stage antics of the Prince, "Puts off his cloathes, his shirt he only weares, Much like mad Hamlet; thus a passion tears." 	Jonson during his lifetime, "Discoveries," printed 1641: that he wrote plays without blotting a line, Heminge and Condell, 1623: that he wrote "The London Prodigal," "The Yorkshire Tragedy," and "Pericles," all acted at the "Globe," and printed with his name on the title-pages, 1605- 9: that he wrote the "Henry VIII." printed in the First Folio, 1623: that he was joint
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Ecclesiastical Court about Susanna's honour. (printed 1616) of Ben Jonson's "Vol-	guilty of "immorality," Jeremy Collier, 1698: that he in-	Peace with Spain, followed by the Gun-	
Defendants, Lane and Smith, fail to appear, pone."+	Collier, 1698: that he in-	homeder Plat New r	Two Noble Kinsmen," the
		powder Plot, Nov. 5. 1605 BURBAGE says the Queen has seen all the	title-page of which gives both
1614 Mentioned with some neighbouring gentry as a Bell being tolled, Dec. 31.	structed Taylor in the part of	NEW PLAYS, and that the revival of "Love's	
LEGATEE in John Combe's will. Secures from 1608 Takes one Seventh Share in BLACK-	Hamlet, and that his imper-	Labour's Lost" at Southampton's House	their names, 1634: that he
Combe's heir, William, a deed of indemnity against personal loss if COMMON-FIELDS are en- has now purchased the remaining	sonation was imitated by Bet-	should "please her exceedingly." Owing to the Act of Uniformity, fifteen	was the "Mr. Shakespeare"
closed. Does not support protest against the lease. Chapel Royal Children cease t	terton, Downes, 1663 : that he	hundred ministers surrender their livings.	who, with Burbage, was paid
enclosure. acting there, 1609-10. His share in w	wrote for gain and not for	1606 DRUMMOND, the poet, has read this year	for an herald's device designed
	glory, Pope, 1726: that he	"Venus and Adonis," "Lucrece," "A Mid- summer Night's Dream." and "Romeo &	for the Earl of Rutland, 1613.
Jan. 25. teenth.	satirized his friend, John	Juliet."	. 3
	Combe, in an epitaph "fas-	Many Nonconformists take refuge in Hol-	
	tened " to his monument, Nor-	land, 1608.	UNKNOWN.
fore Ecclesiastical Court they fail to appear iov case. Described as of Stratford-	wich Diary, 1634: that his	1609 EDWARD ALLEYN notes in his Diary that he paid 6d. [±] for a copy of the "Sonnets." The	Whether all the "Sonnets,"
	last years were spent in ease,	author of the PREFACE to "Troilus and Cres-	
Revises and SIGNS Will, March 25. Assets: 48 or thereabouts. £330 ⁺ , in cash, personal belongings, and estate He deposes that the defendant author-	retirement, and the conversa- tion of his friends, <i>Rowe</i> , 1709 :	sida" asserts that even those who dislike	published in 1609, were
bought for £1,200 [±] . The mayor and leading ized him to promise Bellot amarriage-	that Sir William D'Avenant	the theatre are pleased with Shakepeare's comedies.	written before 1598: the
portion term his thingher, havy,	seemed contented enough to	1611 DAVIES reproves Shakespeare for his choice	chronological order of the
	be thought his son, Aubrey,	of the Venus legend as a subject for his "eternal lines."	plays: date of his final retire-
and his silver and gilt bowl: to his grand- 1 1613 Globe playhouse burnt down june 29.	1680: that Susanna was his	Dr. FORMAN notes that he saw " Cymbeline,"	ment to Stratford: whether
daughter, Elizabeth, all the rest of his plate: Rebuilt next year at a cost of £1,600‡	favourite daughter, Rowe,	" Macbeth," and "A Winter's Tale," at the	he survived all his three
Cottages, during her lifetime, f 20, and his terday to towne. I went to see him how I	1709: that he engaged in a	"Globe."	brothers: on what terms he
wearing apparel: to her three sons, £5 cach: he did."-T. Greene, Nov. 17.	drunken bout at Bideford,	Authorized version of the BIBLE published. 1615 PHILIP HENSLOWE, theatrical manager,	lived with his wife : who paid
to Thomas Combe, his sword : to his godson, a gold piece : to the Poor, £10 : to Heminge, "Pericles," had been written, 4 of them	British Magazine, 1762 : that	buried in the CHANCEL of S. Saviour's	
Burbage, Condell, and four townsmen, money being printed: 15 extra editions had h	he drank too hard at a merry	Church, with "afternoon knell of the Great	for his monument in Stratford
for memorial rings : to his daughter, SUSANNA, been published : 2 more " V us," 13 []	meeting with Drayton and	Bell." First Congregational Church in England	Church, and who wrote the
	Jonson, and died of a fever,	formed 1616.	inscription for it : whether he
London theatres, and the Blackfriars' house. One hundred and thirty plays, of which J	John Ward, Vicar of Stratford,	During this period some seventy or more writers	wrote the verses inscribed on
with reversion to her issue, Elizabeth, in strict at least 17 were Shakespeare's, had been 1	1662 : that he died a Papist,	quote or parody lines from Shakespeare's poems and plays, occasionally giving his name.	his grave-stone (1616):
	Rev. Rich Davies, 1708: that	Burbage's Company of Players visited the fol-	whether any of his books and
rest of his furniture and effects. The 5 compositions most frequently men-	his wife and daughter wished to be buried in his grave,	lowing provincial towns :	MSS. were in his family's pos-
	Dowdall, 1693.	1605 Oxford, Bainstaple. 1606 Marlborough, Oxford, Leicester, Saffron	session at the time of his
opened. Entry in Parish Register:	<i>27010.00011</i> , 1093.	Walden, Dover, Maidstone.	
Burials, 1616. Venus, 42: Hamlet, 33: Lucrece, 25:	:	1607 Barnstaple, Oxford, Cambridge.	death.
April 25, Will: Shakespeare, Gent. Monument gives date of death, Apr. 23, and		1608 Marlborough, Coventry. 1609 Ipswich, Hythe, New Romney.	
age, 53. The character of Falstaff, 15 times.	:	1610 Oxford, Dover, Shrewsbury.	

* The first time players had received a Royal Gift.

+ Probably he had now given up acting.

\$ In comparing this sum with modern currency multiply by eight.