METRICAL ANALYSIS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH
CRITICISM OF SHAKESPEARE

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METRICAL ANALYSIS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH CRITICISM OF SHAKESPEARE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the twentieth century the state of Shakespearean scholarship and criticism is such that one tends to take for granted the immense amount of work that has gone into the analyses and deliberations in times earlier than our own in an effort to arrive at the soundest and most objective basis for accepted opinion and fact. In view of the scrupulousness with which the plays have been examined one is inclined to feel that surely the last word has been said, especially in the area of internal evidence. Certainly very few Shakespearean scholars in mid-twentieth century any longer much concern themselves with that branch of internal evidence that is usually called stylistic evidence. Partly because there is a sense of finality about it and partly because to all except the most dedicated it seems pedestrian and tedious, that segment of stylistic evidence called metrical analysis has been especially neglected in recent years. A few scholars it is true have continued in the twentieth century to advance the status of metrical analysis of Shakespeare's plays, most notably A. W. Pollard and W. W. Gregg. It speaks well for the thoroughness and accuracy of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars and editors that
the results of their work, which of course is cumulative in effect, are largely accepted today. Advancement that has been made in more recent scholarship has been primarily in the area of precision and refinement of early work rather than in wholesale departure from earlier studies.

In view of the quantity and importance of the metrical analyses of Shakespeare's plays in the latter part of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth century, it is rather surprising that no significant study has been made of the nature and value of such studies. It is true that a few twentieth-century editors and literary historians have felt called upon to give summaries and condensations of this body of work, but for the most part the work remains largely unnoticed today and remains buried in the dusty and unused tomes of the New Shakspere Society and in the introductory matter of earlier editions of the plays.

It is the purpose of this study to resurrect and evaluate the most significant items of this material. The chief value of such a study is that it will make more readily accessible some of the findings and the data of the early metrical analysts. It will have the added value of systematically putting into proper historical perspective much of this work which now seems only incidentally related to current Shakespeare scholarship. It might even be hoped that this study might stimulate something of a revival of
interest in metrical analysis, even though on a very limited scale.

The material with which this study concerns itself is voluminous and difficult to organize logically. Any system that is devised is going to remain in the end somewhat arbitrary. On the other hand, the chronological limits of this thesis are not difficult to set; in fact, circumstances almost dictate them. It is only in the late eighteenth century with the monumental and pioneering studies of George Steevens and Edmond Malone that metrical analysis of Shakespeare's plays became extensive enough and systematic enough to be recognized as a distinct and valid approach. Significant as it is, the work of these two men and their contemporaries constitutes only a tentative beginning, and it is logical that a study and resume of metrical analyses in the late eighteenth century should be placed in a separate early chapter where the relationship between them and those who are to follow can be clearly shown and where the tentative and unfinished nature of their work will be apparent.

The terminal point chronologically for this study is as valid and defensible as its point of origin. It is only with the turn of the nineteenth century that a definite pause is perceptible in what has been a torrent of studies that concern themselves with metrical analysis. Another significant factor that makes the approximate end of the nineteenth century
the logical stopping point for this study is that the year 1904 sees the publication of A. C. Bradley's valuable and judicious work in metrical analysis. Bradley represents something of a turning point; he seems to stand with one foot in the nineteenth century and one foot in the twentieth. Bradley's study, in a manner of speaking, serves as a summation and a culmination of all the work that has gone before. Also, his critical perception is such that he can evaluate the techniques and the data with a more cautious and judicious eye than most who have gone before him. Then, too, his work points toward the future and lays the groundwork for work that is to come later.

One could, of course, make a case for ending this study at a somewhat earlier point. In some ways the formation of The New Shakspeare Society in 1874 under the impetus of F. J. Furnivall furnishes a logical stopping point since it is a milestone in the development of Shakespearean scholarship. But the Society quite actively stimulated and encouraged the study of all aspects of Shakespeare, and in some manifestations is more a beginning than an end. Even more appropriate as a terminal point is the publication between the dates 1863-1866 of the extremely significant Cambridge Edition, which remains, with modifications, even today the standard "working" edition. Important too as a possible terminal date is the beginning in 1871 of the
publication of the Variorum Edition under the editorship of H. H. Furness. In the end it was decided that the most appropriate terminal point for this study was around the turn of the nineteenth century by which time most of the major studies had been brought to something like completion.

If the determination of the chronological extent of this study was easy, the determination of the arrangement within this framework was not. Logic dictates, of course, that since metrical analysis of Shakespeare's plays has a cumulative effect over the years, a roughly chronological progression in this study would be in order. Even so, a strictly chronological arrangement alone would not allow for the greatest clarity or the proper emphasis. A possible internal arrangement is a plan which would concentrate on the major scholars that have been involved with metrical analysis over the years. There is much merit in a scheme that would give emphasis to the eminent figures such as Malone, Spedding, Furnivall, Furness, and others. In the last analysis, however, such an arrangement would not allow for the placement of the emphasis where it belongs. The plan that is most obtrusive in suggesting itself is one that would allow subdivisions along the lines of the major metrical tests involved. There are two main drawbacks to this arrangement, however. One is that the sheer multiplicity of tests is such that the
scope of this thesis could not adequately accommodate them all. More important is the fact that the development and refinement of the tests often covers an extensive period, and to arrange the major subdivisions according to the tests alone would necessitate a considerable amount of overlapping and backtracking. In the end, a plan which would seem to avoid most of the dangers and weaknesses of the others was adopted. This is a plan which would allow for major groupings on the basis of the intended purpose and the desired end of any given metrical test. Such a plan is flexible enough to leave room for a certain amount of concentration on both the major figures involved and the major types of metrical tests.

Quite clearly one of the most important purposes of the metrical tests is the determination of divided authorship of certain of Shakespeare's plays, and one chapter is devoted to this function. Equally clear is that a second major purpose of the tests is to determine an accurate chronological order for Shakespeare's plays, with special attention given to the plays for which no date can be fixed by external evidence. A second major chapter has been devoted to this purpose of the tests. Other possible purposes or functions of the tests, such as the determination of an accurate textual reading, were rejected as not being sufficiently important or sufficiently conclusive.
CHAPTER II

EARLY METRICAL ANALYSTS

The earliest tentative metrical studies of Shakespeare come in the eighteenth century. Richard Roderick's citation of certain verse distinctions in Henry VIII in T. Edward's Canons of Criticism, 1756, is conceded by most historians to be the earliest application of metrical tests to Shakespeare's works.\(^1\) In his study entitled "On the Metre of Henry VIII" Roderick pointed out that Henry VIII contained twice as many lines ending with a redundant syllable as any other of Shakespeare's plays. Roderick evidently failed to see the significance of his observations, and did not apply them further.\(^2\)

Toward the end of the century additional studies were made by eighteenth-century editors of Shakespeare's works, notably George Steevens, Edmond Malone, and James Boswell. Their work is genuinely significant and can be said to constitute the real beginning of metrical analysis of Shakespeare.

George Steevens was the first eminent eighteenth-century Shakespearean editor to study meter. As an editor two of his


chief aims were to cite the metrical defects of previous editions and to attempt to arrange the plays in chronological order. In much of his work he was concerned only incidentally with meter. In 1766 he published twenty quartos in four volumes as well as a long index of earlier editions. Adapting Dr. Johnson's edition, Steevens issued his own ten volume edition in 1773, after supplying missing scholarly data, much of it from contemporary references. His revision of this edition in 1778 represents a turning point in Shakespearean scholarship. In this edition Steevens published the first comprehensive transcript of notable Shakespearean records in the Stationers' Register. Steevens' edition also included Edmond Malone's "Attempt to ascertain the order in which the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written," one of the first attempts to determine the chronology of Shakespeare's plays by meter. Steevens' edition was revised in 1785 by Isaac Reed, and this, in turn, was followed by Edmond Malone's in 1790. Malone's edition stirred Steevens to publish his final one in 1793, with careless and contradictory meliorations, characterized by a malicious humor. Steevens' eminence as an editor is best illustrated in the eighteenth-century variorum editions of Shakespeare's

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4Halliday, p. 625.
plays, which contain the most complete accounts of the first attempts to study Shakespeare's meter. With Edmond Malone, Isaac Reed, and James Boswell, Steevens ranks as the most important of the eighteenth-century Shakespearean variorum editors. Basing their work in large part on Johnson's earlier studies, Reed and Steevens published the First Variorum in 1803, which was followed by the Second Variorum in 1813, each containing twenty-one volumes. The Third Variorum was published in 1821 by Malone and Boswell. These three editions summarized the basic material from the eighteenth century and are a culmination of Shakespearean scholarship up to the time of their publication.5 This study does not focus on editing in general, however. It is with Steevens as a metrical analyst that this study is most concerned. The first important document in the analysis of Shakespeare's meter is Steevens' "Advertisement" to the edition of 1773. In it he pointed out the metrical "perfection" or regularity of Shakespeare's earlier plays and sonnets, and he maintained that Shakespeare's metrical patterns had been warped or destroyed by the imperfections and incompetency of such editors as Rowe, Pope, Hanmer, and Warburton. He contended that their editions were characterized by careless and unnecessary deviations from the earliest copies of the plays, arising from interpolations needless to meaning and grammar

5Granville-Barker and Harrison, p. 311.
which in many instances could be deleted without the loss of meaning.

Steevens also claimed discovery of metrical imperfections in the first published copies of Shakespeare's plays. He claimed discovery of an occasional betrayal of Shakespeare's spirit, meaning, and versification. In light of these errors Steevens stressed the need for a future editor, well versed in Elizabethan phraseology, to restore an apparent sense to the surreptitious lines, and an acceptable flow to Shakespeare's stifled versification. He maintained that the metrical errors could be often corrected by the deletion of superfluous and supernumerary syllables, and an occasional inclusion of those perhaps accidentally omitted in the edition by Heminge and Condell, although they insisted on the accuracy of the copy.6

In addition to the metrical errors of the first editions of Shakespeare's plays, Steevens also noted similar metrical errors in later editions, including Johnson's. Steevens' 1773 edition was based on that of Johnson, and he cited various metrical differences between Johnson's edition and his. Noting Johnson's numerous interpolations, Steevens maintained that he had altered or repeated measures, and used various words without regard to the meaning and grammar of

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the seventeenth century. Among these distinctions was Johnson's transformation of such monosyllables as burn, sworn, worn, here and there, arms and charms, into dissyllables with which Steevens disagreed. He also disputed Johnson's deprecation of metrical differences in the first and second folios. Steevens believed that the second folio printed in 1632 was a correct revision of the folio of 1623, first altered by Lowin and Taylor, two of Shakespeare's fellow actors. Citing the year 1600 as the beginning of the era of incorrect transcriptions of Shakespeare's plays, he pointed out that it was impossible for Elizabethan printers to correctly edit a plain prose narrative, much less to adequately reprint a folio volume of dramatic verse in accurate meter, which demanded a much greater degree of precision than they were capable of.

In addition to merely citing the metrical imperfections of early printings of the plays, Steevens also attempted to chronologically date Shakespeare's plays. In his edition of 1778 he wrote an essay entitled "Entries of Shakespeare's Plays on the Books of the Stationers' Company," in which he dated Shakespeare's plays according to entries in the Register, and added critical commentaries concerning the dates and authenticity of the plays entered there. After tabulating the entries, Steevens maintained that several of

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7 Ibid., p. 29.  
8 Ibid., p. 31.
these were among the first works attributable to Shakespeare: Titus Andronicus, Venus and Adonis, two parts of King Henry VI, Locrine, the Widow of Watling Street, and King Richard II, and III. Steevens cautioned however that these entries were not dated in the order in which they were written and suggested finally that one could not date Shakespeare's plays by ancient records. He pointed out that playhouses had the ability to cease printing Shakespeare's theatrical pieces at will, and one could not date his plays by these entries. Steevens noted, however, that the playhouses did not have the same power over Shakespeare's poems, and maintained that Shakespeare's authorship began when he was twenty-nine with the publication of Venus and Adonis. Steevens maintained that Shakespeare's writing career began in 1593, and did not end before 1613, three years before his death. He maintained that within these twenty years Shakespeare produced thirty-five plays, eight of which had been considered by previous scholars to be spurious. Steevens maintained that only two of these plays, Titus Andronicus and Locrine, were not pirated.

In addition to these, Steevens also pointed out that The Yorkshire Tragedy, another play first considered spurious, had been rejected for the most inconsequential reasons. Noting its registration and publication in 1608 with Shakespeare's name, Steevens maintained that Shakespeare was in
London at the time conducting the Globe Theatre because of
the license granted to him and his fellow actors in 1603 by
James I. The Yorkshire Tragedy was only one of four short
plays presented for the entertainment of one evening, as
stated in the title page, and would probably have been
forgotten with the remaining three if it had not been known
to be Shakespeare's work.9

Steevens gave particular attention to the entries in
the Stationers' Register between the years 1582 and 1630.
In this bracket of years he found reference to the following
plays: Romeo and Juliet (1582), Henry the Fift [sic],
Sir J. Oldcastle, Tytus Andronicus, Yorke and Lancaster,
Agincourt, Pericles, Hamblett, and The Yorkshire Tragedy.10
All of these he attributed to Shakespeare, but his tabulation
did not establish chronology, for he had previously stressed
the unreliability of entries in the Register as a basis for
dating Shakespeare's plays. He merely attempted to deter-
mine the entries which made reference in any way to Shakespeare
and made an elementary study of authorship.

Steevens was succeeded in the late eighteenth century
by Edmond Malone, the first Shakespearean scholar to conduct
an extensive quantitative study of Shakespeare's verse.

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9George Steevens, editor, The Plays of William Shake-
speare (London, 1785), I, 277.

10Ibid., p. 281.
Malone developed the rhyme test, the first distinct test making use of metrical analysis. He achieved limited success in establishing a chronological order for Shakespeare's plays and in determining divided authorship within them. Malone's study was important in itself even though much of it was later superseded. His study laid the foundation for latermetrical tests, and set up the foundation for the determination of an accurate chronology and the determination of divided authorship in Shakespeare's plays.

Malone first developed the rhyme test in George Steevens' 1778 edition of Shakespeare's plays, which contained Malone's "Attempt to ascertain the order in which the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written." Malone also made the first systematic attempt to establish chronology by comparing the proportion of rhyme to run-on lines.11 In his "Chronological Order of Shakespeare's Plays," published in January, 1778, he stated his thesis:

A mixture of rhymes with blank verse, in the same play, and sometimes in the same scene, is found in almost all his pieces, and is not peculiar to Shakespeare, being also found in the works of Jonson, and almost all our ancient dramatich writers. It is not, therefore, merely the use of rhymes mingled with blank verse, but their frequency, that is here urged, as a circumstance which seems to characterize and distinguish our poet's earliest performances. In the whole number of pieces which were written antecedent to the year 1600, and which, for the sake of perspicuity, have been called the early compositions, more rhyming couplets are found, than in all the plays composed subsequently to that yeare.

11Halliday, p. 389.
which have been named his late productions. Whether in process of time Shakspere grew weary of the bondage of rhyme, or whether he became convinced of its impropriety in a dramatick dialogue, his neglect of rhyming (for he never wholly disused it) seems to have been gradual. As, therefore, most of his early productions are characterized by the multitude of similar terminations which they exhibit, whenever of two early pieces it is doubtful which preceded the other, I am disposed to believe, (other proofs being wanting,) that play in which the greatest number of rhymes is found, to have been first composed.  

Malone's editions of Shakespeare's works were of primary importance for his application of the rhyme test and for his analysis of the metrical qualities of Shakespeare's verse. As previously noted, the first publication of Malone's works appeared in 1778, in George Steevens' second edition of Shakespeare's plays. In 1780 Malone and Steevens joined forces to revise Steevens' preceding edition of Shakespeare by adding two volumes. In 1790 Malone produced his own edition of Shakespeare in ten volumes. This edition is important as an addition to Malone's study of Shakespeare's metrics and further application of the rhyme test.  

He asserted his faith in Steevens' scholarship in the Preface. Malone agreed that the plays were written in an order similar to that which Steevens had established earlier. Malone also stressed his faith in Steevens' method of research, which included material from ancient records, Shakespeare's

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12Steevens, p. 294.

13Halliday, p. 389.
plays, and entries in the Stationers' Register. Malone himself dated the plays in the order in which he believed that they were composed, citing the beginning of Shakespeare's career as 1589, when, according to Malone, he wrote the first part of *King Henry VI*. Malone concluded that *Twelfth Night*, which he dated in 1614, was the final play. He also noted that fifteen of Shakespeare's thirty-five plays were published in quarto before the Folio of 1623. Malone pointed out that these quartos were assumed to be incorrect and unreliable by Heminge and Condell, but only to make their own edition appear more authoritative. He believed himself that only two of these quartos were corrupt, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *King Henry V*. Although they were surreptitious in the sense that they were stolen from the theater, Malone believed that these copies were more authentic than the plays in the First Folio, for the printers of the 1623 edition frequently used these quartos as the basis for their own text.\(^{14}\)

In further commentary on the chronology of Shakespeare's plays, Malone noted that twenty-one of these plays were not published during Shakespeare's lifetime. Among these, he maintained that *King Henry VI, Part I*, the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry VI*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of*

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the Shrew, and The Two Gentlemen of Verona were clearly early compositions. Another play, All's Well that Ends Well, although originally classified as an early play, was not printed in Shakespeare's lifetime, and Malone could only estimate the date of this play.15

Malone died in 1812 while revising his 1790 edition. In 1821 James Boswell published a new edition of Shakespeare's plays, based upon Malone's text. Often termed the Third Variorum, this twenty-one volume edition is of special importance, for it is considered by many scholars to be the most valuable edition of Shakespeare's works up to the date of its publication. It was entitled by Boswell: "The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare, with the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators: Comprehending a Life of the Poet, and an enlarged History of the Stage, by the late Edmond Malone." Introductory material was found in the first three volumes, which contained the final version of Malone's "Attempt to ascertain the order of Shakespeare's plays," and the "Essay on the Phraseology and Metre of Shakespeare," which Boswell completed.16

Boswell proposed his plan for the text in the "Advertisement." He noted that he had followed Malone's order of the plays, which included Malone's emendations of precursors.

15Ibid., pp. 223-224.
16Halliday, p. 675.
Boswell acknowledged, however, that the text contained many errors. In a few instances he made changes of his own, deleting lines in which Shakespeare seemed to him to cast aspersions on certain passages of scripture.\footnote{17}

One of the most important items in the critical apparatus of this edition was Malone's "Essay on the Phraseology and Metre of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries," which was completed by Boswell after Malone's death. In effect, it is a summary of eighteenth-century metrical studies of Shakespeare. Boswell began by reiterating Steevens' faith in Shakespeare:

Though I once expressed a different opinion, I am now well convinced that the metre of Shakespeare's plays had originally no other irregularity than was occasioned by an accidental use of hemistichs. When we find the smoothest series of lines among our earliest dramatists (who could fairly boast of no other requisite for poetry) are we to expect less polished versification from Shakespeare?\footnote{18}

Boswell stated his intent to prove that Shakespeare's inconsistencies were not limited to him, and that English versification obtained significant improvements by his hand.

Beginning with a consideration of Shakespeare's verse regarded as unconventional, Boswell noted the frequent appearance of Alexandrines in each of Shakespeare's plays.\footnote{19} He also made reference to Steevens' deletion of many

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\footnote{17}{James Boswell, editor, The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare (London, 1821), I, viii.}

\footnote{18}{Ibid., pp. 535-536.}

\footnote{19}{Ibid., pp. 536-537.}
Alexandrines in Shakespeare's plays, and of his revision of the eight syllable line occasionally combined with ten syllable heroic verse in Pericles. Boswell noted redundancy in the repetition of a superfluous syllable at the beginning of a line, and also supernumerary syllables placed at the conclusions of lines. He cited Shakespeare's occasional adaptation of two words of similar strength at the ends of lines, for he placed a trochee on the first word, and created a spurious accent. Noting Shakespeare's infrequent use of this phenomenon, he cited two passages from Cymbeline:

Iachimo. I am glad to be constrained to utter that which Torments me to conceal.

Boswell discovered in Shakespeare an even more flagrant violation of the principles of the orthodox handling of meter in the supernumerary syllable in the midst of a line, as seen in King Henry VI:

And neither by treason nor hostility . . . .

He also agreed with Malone's contention that neither, either, whether, brother, and rather, and various related words were frequently employed as monosyllables by Shakespeare.

An additional metrical distinction of Shakespeare's verse according to Boswell was his occasional inclusion of

20 Ibid., p. 557.
21 Ibid., p. 560.
22 Ibid., p. 561.
an added syllable at the commencement of a line. Boswell maintained that Shakespeare included this syllable purposefully in some instances so that the sound might be congruent with the meaning, as in the opening scene of Macbeth:

Fair is foul and foul is fair
Hover through the fog and filthy air;

or as in the beginning of the third scene:23

1 Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?

Metrical peculiarities were found by Boswell in passages which were regarded as doubtful or spurious. In some of these Malone proposed to add several words once articulated as disyllables, and now regarded as monosyllables, or vice versa. These included a large number of words, especially those in which r or l is appended to an additional consonant.24

Prove it, Henry, and thou shalt be king.
Boswell averred that in the passage such as the one cited Henry must be pronounced as Henery to regularize the meter. He concluded rather lamely by saying that a less controversial explanation of this variation would be to ascribe such endings to Shakespeare's deficiency with meter.25

After emphasizing metrical distinctions characterized by redundant syllables or words, Boswell concentrated on

23Ibid., p. 567. 24Ibid., p. 568.
25Ibid.
words containing vowels no longer articulated. He cited numerous words in Shakespeare's verse containing a vowel no longer pronounced. He agreed with others that these vowels could represent the remains of the feminine e in the English language.26

A more complex phenomenon was Shakespeare's adaptation of the ten syllable heroic line. Boswell cited this as the most difficult type of line to develop. Boswell noted its prevalence especially in Shakespeare's early plays, and noted it also in his occasional substitution of rhyme for blank verse.27 He also maintained that Shakespeare was not always prudent in his use of rhyme, as seen in a passage of Love's Labour's Lost from Malone's text:28

Taffata phrases, silken terms precise,  
Three piled hyperboles, spruce affection,  
Figures pedantical: these summer flies  
Have blown me full of maggot ostentation.

Boswell noted that the original affection had been altered by later scholars into affectation. He commended Malone's restoration to the original reading, for he contended that affection represented a quadrisyllable, and this rhyme was deemed adequate by Shakespeare.29

Altogether, Boswell's work in metrical analysis was the most important and the most detailed of the period around the

26Ibid., p. 571. 27Ibid., pp. 575-576. 28Ibid., p. 577. 29Ibid.
turn of the eighteenth century. Of course, he had the advantage of being able to build on the pioneering work of Steevens and Malone, with whom he agreed in most essential details. His own work was chiefly important, not in that he did anything particularly original, but that he added an immense amount of detail to substantiate his claims and those of Steevens and Malone.

It is not arbitrary to conclude the review of early metrical analysts with the founding of the First Shakespeare Society by J. P. Collier in 1840. In effect, what had been somewhat isolated and random work in metrical analysis becomes with the founding of the Society more systematic and more regularized. In fact, the Society sponsored and encouraged the publication of valuable documents and the development of authoritative editions. In these endeavors it contributed markedly to the development and progress of metrical tests.
CHAPTER III

METRICAL ANALYSIS AND THE DETERMINATION OF AUTHORSHIP

As various metrical tests began to evolve, one of the most important aims of such tests was to determine authorship, either to distinguish divided authorship within Shakespeare's plays or to determine authenticity of apocryphal plays. Even as late as the early nineteenth century, and in spite of the "authority" of early editions and certain critics, much doubt remained as to the authenticity of the canon. Among the earliest and among the most important tests devised for determining authorship are the feminine ending test, the weak ending test, the rhyme test, and the end stopped line test. The plays to which these tests are most frequently applied are Henry VIII, The Two Noble Kinsmen, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Timon of Athens, and Pericles.

The feminine ending test was the first of the metrical tests to be applied with real thoroughness and consistency to Shakespeare's plays to determine divided authorship. In 1847 Samuel Hickson published a paper on The Two Noble Kinsmen, and James Spedding followed in 1850 with an article on Henry VIII. Both men's works were the only papers of metrical significance to follow the work of Malone and his collaborators, and each paper contained important general
verse criticism as well as a citation of the feminine ending test. In addition both essays contained the first ordered use of metrical tests to differentiate the composition of different authors within the same play.\(^1\) The application of the feminine ending test was of decided significance. As defined by Hickson and Spedding it represents the additional or redundant unaccented syllable at the conclusion of a line. Most often at the end of a polysyllabic or dissyllabic word, the feminine ending occasionally and with continued frequency became an unaccented monosyllable in Shakespeare's plays.\(^2\)

Samuel Hickson's study, which he entitled "The Shares of Shakespeare and Fletcher in The Two Noble Kinsmen," was the first to examine divided authorship in Shakespeare's plays and to establish Fletcher's work in them. Hickson also pointed out the presence of this play in the editions of Beaumont and Fletcher edited by both Knight and Dyce, and cited the first publication of the play in 1634 as "The Two Noble Kinsmen, presented at the Blackfriars, by the King's Maisties Servants, with great applause. Written by the memorable worthies of their time; Mr. John Fletcher and Mr. William Shakespeare."\(^3\)

1. Ingram, p. 444.
Hickson based his theory of divided authorship in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* on differences of metrical patterns within the play. Noting the characteristics of Shakespeare's verse, Hickson cited Shakespeare as the most musical composer of blank verse, for according to Hickson his lines flowed together with a complete harmony so that the words did not need to be divided into lines. Maintaining that Shakespeare's changing pauses broke without disjoining so that they did not become wordy or monotonous, Hickson also noted that Shakespeare adhered to metrical laws and minimized his use of redundant syllables and double endings.  

In contrast to Shakespeare's verse, Hickson pointed out that Fletcher's was most irregular, with repeated syllables, so that many lines often ended with an expletive. The result was a monotonous sing-song effect, as revealed by comparing lines from two plays, the first of which were from Fletcher's *The Elder Brother*:  

Charles—Old men are not immortal, as I take it.  
Is it you look for youth and handsomeness?  
I do confess my brother's a handsome gentleman;  
But he shall give me leave to lead the way, lady.  

Hickson then compared a passage from *The Two Noble Kinsmen* with the preceding one to show the similarities of style in the two plays, and to confirm Fletcher as the author of both  

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passages of dialogue: 6

The fair-eyed maids shall weep our banishments,
And in their songs, curse ever-blinded fortune,
Till she, for shame, see what a wrong she had done
To youth and nature; this is all our world;
We shall know nothing here but one another,
Hear nothing but the clock that tells our woes;
The vine shall grow, but we shall never see it;
Summer shall come, and with her all delights,
But dead cold winter must inhabit here still.

Using this passage as typical of Fletcher's work in The Two
Noble Kinsmen, Hickson cited the looseness of form and the
lack of logical continuity, maintaining that Fletcher's
verse was pretty but not genuine poetry. Hickson then
emphasized the notable characteristics in Shakespeare's
verse, maintaining that his lines did not stop on a super-
abundant syllable. If Shakespeare's verse ended on an
extra syllable, he continued it into the succeeding line.
To illustrate the differences in the styles of the two
authors, Hickson then cited a passage from The Two Noble
Kinsmen, which he attributed to Shakespeare: 7

Pal.—Hail, sovereign queen of secrets, who has power
To call the fiercest tyrant from his rage,
And weep unto a girl; that hast the might,
Even with an eye-glance, to choke Mars' drum,
And turn the alarm to whispers; that canst make
A cripple flourish with his crutch, and cure him
Before Apollo; that mayst force the king
To be his subject's vassal, and induce
Stale gravity to dance.

To further show divided authorship in the play Hickson
compared the verse patterns of Shakespeare and Fletcher in

6 Ibid., pp. 34-35.  7 Ibid., p. 35.
the first act. Attributing the first scene of the first act entirely to Shakespeare, Hickson continued by noting divided authorship in the second. Citing a speech in this scene by Arcite, he noted that it did not have the characteristics of Shakespeare's verse, and described the speech as a very ordinary metaphor phrased in metrical prose. In contrast to this, Hickson noted a speech by Palamon which he attributed to Shakespeare: 8

What strange ruins,
Since first we went to school, may we perceive
Walking in Thebes? Scars, and bare weeds,
The gain o' th' martialist, who did propound
To his bold ends, honor, and golden ingots,
Which, though he won, he had not.

Hickson then cited a speech by Arcite in the second scene, differing from the preceding one in measure and diction, and therefore ascribed by him to Fletcher: 9

I spoke of Thebes,
How dangerous, if we will keep our honors,
It is for our residing; where every evil
Hath a good colour; where every seeming good's
A certain evil; where not to be even jump
As they are, here were to be strangers, and
Such things, to be mere monsters.

On the basis of these differences, and especially on his analysis of the feminine ending, Hickson concluded that either Fletcher and Shakespeare jointly composed the second scene, or that it was first written by Fletcher, but later re-edited and partly revised by Shakespeare. Concerning the

8 Ibid., p. 36. 9 Ibid.
authorship of the entire play, Hickson maintained that the entire plan and execution of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* belonged to Shakespeare, and that only for want of time or as a means to encourage a young author of decided promise had Shakespeare allowed Fletcher to complete a portion of the outline.  

Hickson's essay on the feminine ending in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* was followed by James Spedding's paper on *Henry VIII* in 1850. Originally published as "Who Wrote Shakspere's *Henry VIII*?" the article cited the unusual number of lines with a redundant syllable in *Henry VIII*, over twice the number found in any of Shakespeare's other plays. Spedding proposed the hypothesis that the redundant syllables in *Henry VIII* indicate the possibility of more than one author.

In support of his theory of divided authorship in *Henry VIII*, Spedding maintained the possibility of not two but three authors who had worked alternately upon different parts of the play. Spedding first cited the metrical qualities of Shakespeare's final style as seen in the first act: a careless meter contributing to its harmonious results by the usual methods. Spedding noted a distinct change at the point of the third scene of the first act. From this

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point he felt characteristics of the verse to be entirely different and distinguishable by affectations.\textsuperscript{12}

Spedding also cited a speech by one of the major characters in the play, Lord Buckingham, to support his theory of divided authorship:\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{quote}
All good people,  
You that thus far have come to pity me,  
Hear what I say, and then go home and lose me.  
I have this day received a traitor's judgment,  
And by that name must die: Yet heaven bear witness,  
And if I have a conscience, let it sink me,  
Even as the axe falls, if I be not faithful.  
The law I bear no malice for my death,  
It has done, upon the premises, but justice:  
\end{quote}

Spedding maintained that Shakespeare's style never underwent changes which are illustrated in the preceding speech. He noted that Shakespeare's first plays were without the planned multiformity of cadence found here, but were characterized by ordered versification and interfused language. According to Spedding, when his verse attained more variety, it was a sign that his thought had assumed more fluidity.

In addition to the planned cadence of the verse, Spedding also noted the presence of the redundant syllable to support his theory of divided authorship in the play. Noting the inclusion of the redundant syllable twice as often in \textit{Henry VIII} as in Shakespeare's other plays, Spedding pointed out that in Shakespeare's portions, the number of

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., pp. 118-119. \hfill \textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 120.
redundant syllables was no less than the amount found in his later plays, for Spedding cited similar ratios of lines with redundant syllables in *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline*. He noted that the proportion of lines ending with a redundant syllable to total lines to be 2 to 7 in both *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*, and cited a similar ratio in *Henry VIII*, which he tabulated as follows:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE I</th>
<th>THE PROPORTION OF LINES ENDING WITH A REDUNDANT SYLLABLE TO TOTAL LINES IN <em>HENRY VIII</em></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>Scene</td>
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<td>3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>II</td>
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<td>V</td>
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</table>

Spedding drew several important conclusions from this table.

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14Ibid., p. 121.  
15Ibid.
Examining the sixteen scenes in the play, he pointed out that six of these contained as many redundant syllables as Cymbeline and The Winter's Tale. He noted the ratio to be never higher than 2 in 5, which was the proportion in the first scene of Cymbeline, and never less than 2 in 7, the ratio in the trial scene of The Winter's Tale. The average of redundant syllables to total lines in these 6 scenes was 1 in 3, while in the other 10 scenes, the ratio was never less than 1 in 2, and in the majority of lines, hardly in excess of 2 in 3.

Spedding then compared the ratios in the first six scenes of Henry VIII with the proportions in the last ten scenes, and noted that the meter of these two groups of scenes was constructed upon different principles, thereby distinguishing the work of two authors. He also maintained that these differences could best be seen by comparing the meter in a play of Shakespeare's later style with that in a work of Fletcher's middle period, which would identify composition by the two authors in Henry VIII. Spedding noted that in Fletcher's Thierry and Theodoret, a scene from the fourth act contained 232 redundant syllables out of 154 lines, or a proportion of 2 in 3, a ratio found in a great many scenes of Henry VIII.16

16 Ibid., pp. 121-122.
In light of all the evidence, Spedding concluded that *Henry VIII* was composed by Shakespeare, Fletcher, and an unknown third hand. He cited the common practice in the Elizabethan period of setting as many as four men to work to complete a play in great demand. He offered the opinion that the marriage of Princess Elizabeth in February of 1613 may have promoted the staging of a play to reproduce the marriage of Henry VIII and Anne Bullen. Spedding also contended that Shakespeare had conceived the idea of a great historical drama, and had composed the majority of the play. Because Shakespeare's fellows at the Globe were in need of a play to celebrate the marriage of Princess Elizabeth, Spedding contended that Shakespeare turned it over to them and that they gave the play to Fletcher to finish. Fletcher, he maintained, expanded the three act play into five. He concluded that Fletcher was responsible for the inferior parts, all of which exhibited the metrical patterns characteristic of his verse.17

In the effort to determine authorship no significant developments emerged after Spedding's work until the publication in 1869 of George Lillie Craik's monumental work, *The English of Shakespeare*. In it Craik is the first to make extensive use of the weak ending test. Craik's analysis of the weak ending distinguished two levels of this metrical

phenomenon, which, in turn, enabled him to revise ill-arranged passages in Shakespeare's text.\textsuperscript{18} Craik's study was of particular importance in this investigation for he continued and extended the general inquiry into the study of quantitative verse tests.\textsuperscript{19}

Craik cited the purpose of his study in his Preface. In it he noted the distinguishing characteristics of Elizabethan and Victorian English. He maintained that Shakespeare wrote in what he calls English Heroic verse, characterized by a line of blank verse containing five feet, with two syllables in each foot. The second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth syllables of each line were accented, and the rhythm concluded with the tenth syllable. Craik also noted that a measure could be added without affecting the rhythm of these lines.\textsuperscript{20} The distinctive feature of English Heroic verse was a heavily accented tenth syllable, and in the presence of rhyme a consonant in the tenth syllable. The weak ending as he describes it involves a variation of the accented tenth syllable, in which one finds an occasional slightly accented or unaccented tenth syllable. In one form of this deviation, the weak tenth syllable ended a word

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{18}Ingram, pp. 444-445.
  \item \textsuperscript{19}Granville-Barker and Harrison, p. 316.
  \item \textsuperscript{20}George Lillie Craik, \textit{The English of Shakespeare} (Boston, 1867), pp. 29-30.
\end{itemize}
whose accent was found in its proper position in the ninth foot. Such endings as -ing, -ment, -y, and -ness, were cited in both blank and rhymed verse because of the quality of these endings, which enable the poet to conclude lines by their accentuation on the antepenultimate. A similar phenomenon was seen with the presence of an unaccented monosyllable at the conclusion of a line, either merged as an enclitic with the foregoing word, or contained in the same clause, as found in the example which he cites from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Humorous Lieutenant*, ii, 2:21

By my dear father's soul, you stir not, Sir!

Craik also noted another variation of the weak ending. In this distinction, the tenth syllable is weak and unaccented, and does not comprise the last syllable of a word in which the emphatic syllable has fulfilled its function in the foregoing foot.22 It is an individual monosyllable, usually and, but, if, or, of, and even an, a, or the, representing the least and most swiftly spoken in our vernacular, and related syntactically and in intrinsic expression to the following line. The prevalence of this kind of rhythm was noted in modern vernacular terms, and Craik maintained that whenever this verse construction did not actually divide a word, the pattern was in harmony with the characteristics of English prose. To illustrate this,

he noted such words as or, of, and if, maintaining that they were no less accented syllables than such endings as -ty, -oe, and -ly, found so often in the same place. Craik also maintained that these and additional monosyllables were continually employed as accented in relation to syllables in other portions of the line. Citing the presence of a weak syllable in place of the usual and natural rhythm which required vast pressure, Craik noted that the subsequent effect was always surprising, yet desirable, for it created a liveliness and deviation most appropriate for the lighter types of poetry.  

Having established the weak ending test as a valid criterion for judgment, Craik elaborated upon Shakespeare's adaptation of the weak ending, noting two distinctions in his employment of it. By noting the scarcity of the weak ending in some plays, and its abundance in the final ones, Craik concluded that it was possible to determine divided authorship in certain plays. Craik concluded further that by distinguishing between the two types of weak endings, one could also determine divided authorship more readily. He pointed out that certain unemphatic verbs such as be, is, should, may, shall, might, and are are characteristic of Shakespeare's early style. They could be distinguished from the lighter accents of Shakespeare's later plays, which

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23 Ibid., pp. 35-36.
included and, or, but, if, that, who, than, as, of, to, with, and for, because the unemphatic verbs permitted the voice to linger for a longer time and with greater pressure. Craik concluded that the lighter suffixes were the only true indications of the weak ending, and maintained that a careful study of the kinds of weak endings could help the critic determine divided authorship.\(^{24}\)

Craik's study of the weak ending was succeeded by J. K. Ingram's "On the 'Weak Endings' of Shakspere," in 1874. Presenting the paper before the New Shakspere Society, Ingram analyzed the weak ending test more thoroughly than Craik, and applied the test to determine divided authorship in four plays: Timon, Pericles, The Two Noble Kinsmen, and Henry VIII.

Like Craik, Ingram also divided the weak ending into two groups, the "light" and "weak" endings, and distinguished the first group from the latter by pointing out the tendency of the voice to linger on them. The "weak" endings by contrast, were so proclitic that one must pronounce and understand them in relation to the first words of each succeeding line.\(^{25}\) Ingram also devised a table in which he listed these words:

**LIGHT ENDINGS**

am, are, art, be, been, but (=only), can, could, did, do, does, doth, ere, had, has, hath, have, he, how, I, into, is,

\(^{24}\)Ibid., pp. 38-39.  \(^{25}\)Ingram, p. 447.
like, may, might, shall, shalt, she, should, since, so, such, they, thou, though, through, till, unto, upon, was, we, were, what, when, where, which, whilst, who, whom, why, will, would, yet (=tamen), you. (54 in all).

WEAK ENDINGS

and, as, at, but (=sed, and -except), by, for (prep, and conj.), from, if, in, of, one, nor, or, than, that (rel. and conj.), to, with (17, or--if we count but, for, and that, twice over--20 in all). 26

Referring to the table, Ingram noted two instances in which these words, although essentially proclitic, should not be included in the classifications: when these words were emphatic, which would only influence the light endings, and when a marked pause followed them, usually resulting from a succeeding parenthetical clause. 27

Ingram's application of metrical analysis can be illustrated by his conclusions on Henry VIII. To begin with, Ingram's tabulation of light and weak endings in Henry VIII proved Spedding's assertion that there were two different verse styles in the play. Spedding had tabulated forty-five light and thirty-seven weak endings in Shakespeare's part of the play, as opposed to seven light and one weak ending in Fletcher's portion. Ingram also noted that the weak endings were found in every Shakespearean scene. The only weak ending in Fletcher's part was found in Act IV, Scene i, which had not been totally attributed to Fletcher, but resembled his work in the matter of feminine endings more than any

26 Ibid., p. 448. 27 Ibid., p. 449.
other scene attributed to Shakespeare. Ingram reopened the question of divided authorship in the fourth act, where Spedding claimed to detect three authors in the play: Shakespeare, Fletcher, and possibly Beaumont. Ingram refuted this assertion, agreeing with P. G. Fleay that the evidence does not support the possibility of a third author. Ingram attributed the coronation passage to Fletcher, even though it contained only one weak ending. He based this assertion upon an analysis of Fletcher's Custom of the Country, which contained only three weak endings.²⁸

Ingram also claimed to detect Fletcher's hand in The Two Noble Kinsmen. He maintained that the weak ending test confirmed Hickson's assertion that there are two styles of verse in the play. Ingram noted three light and one weak ending in Fletcher's part as opposed to fifty light and thirty-four weak endings in the other portion. Ingram also pointed out the presence of weak endings in all but two scenes not attributed to Fletcher, one of which was the fourth scene of the first act, which included only six lines not in song. The other passage is found in the third scene of the third act, and can be attributed to Fletcher on the basis of the feminine ending test, as well as other tests. In examining the non-Shakespearean portions of The Two Noble Kinsmen, Ingram is less assured of determining the unknown

²⁸Ibid., p. 453.
author than he is with *Henry VIII*. Even in view of what Ingram considered the inferior characteristics of the verse in this portion of the play, he nevertheless considered the verse typical of Shakespeare's final period.\(^{29}\)

Although it was invariably used in conjunction with other tests, the rhyme test should be cited as a further instrument to determine divided authorship in Shakespeare's plays. Frederick Gard Fleay combined the rhyme, the double ending, and the stopped line tests to determine the work of different authors in Shakespeare's plays. Fleay revised a table from the Globe edition in which he analyzed each play individually as to the number of prose and rhymed lines, unusually long and short lines, and the lines with repeated syllables or double endings. The table was reprinted, largely unaltered, in his *Shakspere Manual* of 1876, and could have been of considerable statistical value. Fleay's tabulations of the number of prose and rhymed lines, short and long ones, and lines with double endings were incorrect, however, for his figures often differed from those in the Globe text by as many as hundreds.\(^{30}\) Fleay's studies were important, in spite of obvious errors, for they helped to establish the authenticity of the work of different authors.


in Shakespeare's plays, notably Beaumont, Fletcher, and Massinger.

Fleay's "On Metrical Tests Applied to Dramatic Poetry" in 1874 was the first of his papers to analyze divided authorship by combining the rhyme test with certain other tests. He claimed to detect the hands of Massinger, Fletcher, and Beaumont in some of the plays. Fleay noted distinctions in their verse in the following ways: by feminine or double endings, which Fletcher employed more than any other playwright in the English language; by many lines with distinct pauses at the end, also characteristic of Fletcher; by variant use of rhymes, particularly characteristic of Beaumont, who used more rhymes than Massinger and Fletcher; by the frequency of lines of less than five measures, again characteristic of Fletcher; by the exclusion of prose; and by the great quantity of trisyllabic feet. Fleay also tabulated double endings to distinguish the metrical characteristics of Massinger from those of Fletcher. As a specific type, double endings were additional unstressed monosyllables found at the conclusions of lines. Generally a polysyllabic or disyllabic word, frequently in Fletcher's lines and with increasing abundance in Shakespeare's verse they were

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unemphatic monosyllables. Fletcher's verse contained 1500 to 2000 double endings, and averaged 1775 in a given play, while Massinger's lines included 900 to 1200 double endings, and averaged 1000. Fleay concluded that a play containing 1200 to 1500 double endings and divisible into parts by means of different styles would be the work of both Massinger and Fletcher. He felt that a passage could particularly be ascribed to Fletcher if it contained a large number of feminine endings combined with a great number of Alexandrines and short lines.

The rhyme test was used by Fleay in "On Two Plays of Shaksper's," published in 1874 to study divided authorship. In this study he contended that Macbeth and Julius Caesar had been changed by other hands. Fleay maintained that Macbeth had been revised by Middleton, and that Julius Caesar had been abridged by Ben Jonson.

Fleay based his theory concerning Macbeth on the hypothesis of the Cambridge editors, who maintained that the recognized text of the play had been altered, probably by Middleton, from the original copy. Fleay contended that there had been two distinct plays, Macbeth and The Witch, one of which was transcribed from the other in various parts. In view of this he stressed the importance of determining

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32 Halliday, A Shakespeare Companion, p. 203.
33 Fleay, p. 55.
which of the two plays was composed first. From his evidence Fleay concluded that The Witch was the earlier. He relied especially on one of Middleton's statements in the dedication, quoted by Fleay in the essay: "Witches are ipso facto condemned: and that only, I think, hath made her lie so long in an imprisoned obscurity." To Fleay this statement indicated that the play was composed before its dedication, which he felt was written shortly after 1603 when King James imprisoned the witches. Contending that Middleton changed the endings of several scenes in Macbeth by substituting rhyme-tags, Fleay devised a table citing the portions of the play composed by Middleton and those written by Shakespeare. Fleay then stressed his theory as to the composition of the play, averring that it was written in Shakespeare's third period, preceding Cymbeline and succeeding Hamlet and Lear, which would place it around 1606. Fleay also maintained that Middleton revised it after this date, but not before 1613. Further evidence of its alteration after Middleton wrote The Witch can be seen, according to Fleay, in the borrowed tunes and phrases of the final play.

To support this theory Fleay tabulated Shakespeare's plays according to their length. He cited the following six plays:

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35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., p. 352.
plays as the shortest: *Julius Caesar*, *Pericles*, *Timon*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Macbeth*. Fleay maintained that these plays had been completed or revised by someone other than Shakespeare, and that it was not by coincidence that the six plays are among the shortest of Shakespeare's thirty-eight plays.37

Fleay also created a table listing the number of scenes in the plays, the number of scenes with rhyme tags, and the number of tag rhymes. From his tabulation he noted that *Macbeth* had more scenes concluding with tags than any of Shakespeare's other plays. He also noted that the play has the largest number of tags, including even Shakespeare's earliest compositions. Fleay maintained that in his third period Shakespeare had largely abandoned the use of rhymes. Yet parts of *Macbeth* contain over twice the number of tag rhymes as found in any play before *The Merchant of Venice*. Fleay averred that these were the lightest and weakest types of tags, seldom used by Shakespeare. He was convinced that the evidence denoted a second author.

As with *Macbeth*, Fleay also applied the rhyme test to *Julius Caesar*. He concluded that the reduced number of rhymes indicated an abridgement, and proposed Ben Jonson as Shakespeare's collaborator.38 After having analyzed the metrical patterns in *Julius Caesar*, Fleay noted first of all that the

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number of short lines in the play was extensive in places not demanding a pause. He was able to conclude from this that the short lines and the nature of the pauses substantiated his hypothesis of abridgement in *Julius Caesar*. Fleay cited the pauses in Act II, Scene 1 as examples:  

He says he does, being then most flattered.
Let me work!
For I can give his humour the true bent.

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar
I have not slept.
Between the acting of a dreadful thing, . . . .

Fleay also claimed that this metrical pattern is like the styles of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* in the pirated copies of their first quartos. Since these quartos were surreptitious, their style was unlike Shakespeare's. Fleay also noted in *Julius Caesar* the presence of pauses at the ends of lines, which were even more prevalent than the pauses in the middle of lines, and felt that these end pauses were totally alien to Shakespeare's style. To substantiate his contention of divided authorship in *Julius Caesar* Fleay noted that the play was one thousand lines shorter than any of Shakespeare's historical tragedies, and that the speeches in the play concluded with the second and third measure of an unfinished line.  

Fleay concluded that the revisions in the play had been made mostly at the ends of speeches, notably at the

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conclusions of scenes. This had the unfortunate results for Fleay of preventing him from making a correct application of the rhyme test and an accurate comparison with Shakespeare's other plays. Nonetheless, he pointed out the increased number of rhyme tags in what he thought to be Middleton's portion of Macbeth, and the decreased number of rhymes in what he called Jonson's abridgement of Julius Caesar. At the very least he felt that these inconsistent uses of rhyme pointed to divided authorship in the two plays. 41

In 1874 Fleay examined the question of divided authorship in Timon of Athens in a long article published by the New Shakspere Society. Careful scrutiny of the play convinced Fleay that Shakespeare had composed only the first three acts, which were metrically superior to the last two. He then made the conjecture that Shakespeare's part of Timon was written in 1606, along with Pericles. Fleay supported this hypothesis with evidence from the rhyme test. He concluded that Timon differed from other plays of divided authorship in that it was not completed in Shakespeare's lifetime. 42

Fleay noted various metrical characteristics of the part of the play attributed to an unknown author: the proportion

41 Ibid., pp. 363-364.

of rhymed lines to blank verse; the inconsistent length of the four foot lines; introductory monosyllabic feet; and the number of double endings. All of these were similar in style to Cyril Tourneur's *The Revenger's Tragedy*, written in 1607. Because of these similarities in styles, Fleay declared that the unknown hand in *Timon* belonged to Cyril Tourneur, who possibly wrote it in 1608 or 1623. Fleay analyzed the versification in *The Revenger's Tragedy* and was able to support his theory with the following statistics:

- Total number of lines over 2400
- Number of rhyming lines exactly 460
- Number of double endings exactly 443
- Number of Alexandrines exactly 22
- Deficient and short lines about 125.

Fleay further examined divided authorship in *Timon* in Part II of his paper. He declared Shakespeare's portion to be stylistically characteristic of his third period plays. Metrical distinctions of Shakespeare's part also characteristic of his third period included lines of four and six syllables, limited numbers of Alexandrines with ordered caesuras, and rhymes in the presence of great stress at the conclusions of scenes, and infrequently in speeches in other parts. Fleay noted that the work of the second author by contrast displayed the following characteristics: lines containing eight to nine syllables; Alexandrines excluding caesuras; rhyming couplets including incorrect lines; rhymes succeeded by broken

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lines; and other patterns not characteristic of Shakespeare. Finally, Fleay applied the rhyme test, citing the ratio of blank verse lines to rhyme as 280 to 10 in Shakespeare's portion, and 36 to 10 in the remaining part. He maintained that Shakespeare's part contained 8 times as many rhymed lines as the section by the unknown author.\textsuperscript{45}

Although at times Fleay placed great faith in it, in the end the rhyme test remained inconclusive and unreliable as a test for authorship. More authoritative and conclusive was the end stopped line test developed by F. J. Furnivall, one of the eminent Victorian metrical scholars and a founder of the New Shakspere Society. The end stopped line as a particular type of métrical line was characteristic of the blank verse before Shakespeare's time. It consisted of an independent or dependent clause of ten syllables, each line self-contained and each ending in a pause.\textsuperscript{46} Furnivall developed the view that analysis of end stopped lines could help determine authorship. In his Introduction to the Leopold Shakspere of 1877, he applied his theory especially to Henry VIII and The Two Noble Kinsmen, and cited Beaumont and Fletcher as co-authors in both plays.

Furnivall based his theory of Fletcher's work in Henry VIII on the presence of the numerous ineffectual

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 148.

\textsuperscript{46}\textit{Halliday, A Shakespeare Companion}, p. 191.
passages in the play. He also noted the irrelevancy of the fifth act in relation to the remainder of the play, and maintained that the last act represented the work of Beaumont and Fletcher. Furnivall also claimed to detect the evidence of a writer other than Shakespeare in the second scene of the first act, and the first scene of the second act. Furnivall maintained that Shakespeare wrote these scenes; nevertheless, he averred that they were incorporated into the text of the play by another hand. To further support his theory of divided authorship Furnivall cited Spedding's tabulation of the number of superfluous syllables in lines attributed to Shakespeare and Fletcher in the plays, and added his own tabulation of the unstopped line. The ratio of Shakespeare's double endings was 1 to 3, whereas the ratio of Fletcher's was 1 to 1.7. The ratio of Shakespeare's end stopped lines was 1 to 2.03, and Fletcher's ratio was 1 to 3.79. Furnivall deduced divided authorship from these ratios, and he was able to conclude in addition that Shakespeare's part of Henry VIII was his final work.

Furnivall also applied the end stopped line test to The Two Noble Kinsmen, which he attributed to Shakespeare and Fletcher. On the basis of the superfluous syllable and the

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48 Ibid., p. xcvi.
end stopped line test, Furnivall maintained that Shakespeare wrote the underplot, as well as the major part of the play. According to Furnivall, Shakespeare composed Acts I; II.1; III.1,II; IV.iii; and Act V, except for the second scene. Furnivall maintained that Fletcher wrote the remainder of the play, as evidenced by weakness in these parts and a greater use of the final additional syllable. The double ending and end stopped line tests also revealed that in the 1,124 lines attributed to Shakespeare in the play, there are 321 with double endings or superfluous final syllables, or 1 to 3.5, with only 1 line of 4 measures; and in Fletcher's 1,398 lines, there are 771 with feminine endings, or 1 to 1.8, almost twice the number in Shakespeare's 114 lines of 4 measures. Furnivall also noted that the proportion of Shakespeare's end stopped lines to stopped lines was 1 to 2.41, as opposed to Fletcher's ratio of 1 to 5.53.49

By the time of the publication of the Cambridge Edition in 1863 and the beginning of the publication of the New Variorum in 1871, the determination of the canon of Shakespeare's plays had been pretty well resolved. Certainly by the last quarter of the nineteenth century no one any longer much argued about divided authorship in Shakespeare's plays. The metrical analysts had done much through the meticulous application of certain tests to allay suspicion about certain

49Ibid., p. xcvii.
doubtful plays and to determine the proportions of divided authorship in certain others.
CHAPTER IV

METRICAL ANALYSIS AND THE DETERMINATION OF CHRONOLOGY

One of the most significant applications of metrical tests around the turn of the eighteenth century was an attempt by Shakespearean scholars to determine as precisely as possible the chronological order for Shakespeare's plays. Commencing with Malone's use of rhyme to determine a chronology for the plays in the late eighteenth century, these studies culminated with a division of the plays into four periods by F. J. Furnivall in the nineteenth century. Furnivall was chiefly responsible for directing the activities of the New Shakspere Society in an effort by Victorian Shakespearean scholars to determine at least an approximate chronology for Shakespeare's plays. The significance of Furnivall's study is that the chronological divisions he decided upon are still recognized as standard by most twentieth-century critics. Preceded and followed by studies on every conceivable aspect of metrics in Shakespeare's plays, Furnivall's study was accompanied by analyses of weak endings, end stopped lines, rhyme, Alexandrines, double endings, doggerel, pauses, speech endings, and feminine endings. The contribution of middle and late nineteenth-century scholars to Shakespearean studies in general was impressive on
several fronts and in several areas. Their successful determination of an accurate chronological order for Shakespeare's plays was undoubtedly one of the most important nineteenth-century advancements in Shakespearean scholarship.

The first significant metrical analysis to examine the chronology of Shakespeare's plays was Charles Bathurst's "Remarks on the differences of Shakespeare's versification in different periods of his life" in 1857. His essay was of crucial importance, for he noted the ordered changes in Shakespeare's style, especially as it exhibits both his use of redundant end syllables and the accidence of rhythmical pauses with line endings.¹ Bathurst's paper was also unique in that it represented the first textual study in which all of Shakespeare's verse was analyzed in relation to the chronological order of the plays. In addition, Bathurst was the first Shakespearean metrical scholar to develop in detail the weak ending test. Of decided significance was his citation of the weak endings in the latter part of Shakespeare's career as a means of determining something other than divided authorship.

G. L. Craik's book The English of Shakespeare extended Bathurst's study by rendering a more precise and thorough analysis of the weak ending. He distinguished two types of this metrical distinction and revised previously ill-arranged

¹Chambers, p. 256.
passages in Shakespeare's text. He continued the general inquiry into the quantitative study of verse tests. He was the first to cite the weak ending which could be distinguished by a heavily accented tenth syllable, a distinctive feature of English Heroic verse. In defining the weak ending, Craik pointed out a variation of the accented tenth syllable in which an occasional slightly accented or unaccented tenth syllable occurs. He noted one form of this deviation by which the weak tenth syllable ends a word whose accent is found in its proper position in the ninth foot. Craik averred that the weak ending appears very sparsely in some of Shakespeare's plays, but is abundantly present in others. He concluded that the weak ending is a characteristic exhibited more frequently as Shakespeare became acquainted with it. His studies confirm also that Shakespeare's earliest plays are those including the fewest weak endings, and various of his latest plays are those containing the greatest number. He was able to establish a direct relationship between the abundance of weak endings and the chronological sequence in which the plays were composed.

Craik's method and careful reasoning can be illustrated in his attempt to establish the date of Julius Caesar. He first

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2 Ingram, pp. 444-445.
3 Granville-Barker and Harrison, p. 316.
4 Craik, p. 35.
5 Ibid., p. 37.
took note of its publication in 1623 in the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays, in a position dividing Timon of Athens and Macbeth among the tragedies. He cited Malone's dating of the play in 1607, and noted that his hypothesis rested solely on the basis of a rhyming play printed in London in the same year by William Alexander. Craik also pointed out an English play of anonymous authorship, entitled "The Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey, or Caesar's Revenge," of which two texts had been found, one dated 1607, the year of Alexander's Julius Caesar, and the other, dateless, but probably earlier according to Craik. He determined from this and other evidence that Shakespeare's play was probably composed before 1607 and possibly some time before.

In his endeavor to determine the date of Julius Caesar, Craik relied heavily on his analysis of various metrical phenomena. For example, he cited the line in Act I, Scene ii, beginning "The old Anchises . . ." as an Alexandrine, but one which is a variation on the standard six foot line, for it extends its bounds with various short supernumerary syllables. He further pointed out the difference between this line and the Alexandrine of the Spenserian stanza, and noted that Shakespeare's line formed the second line of rhymed couplets or the third of triplets. Craik also cited other instances

\[6\] Ibid., p. 44.
\[7\] Ibid., pp. 45-46.
\[8\] Ibid., p. 49.
of superfluous syllables, such as the line in Act V, Scene iii, which reads, "My life is run his compass. Sirrah, what news?"

He pointed out that the supernumerary syllable in this line interrupts the regular flow of the meter and forces an effective pause. Of course, Craik cited numerous other passages from the play to illustrate Shakespeare's varied use of the Alexandrine, superfluous syllables and weak endings. While he compiled a large body of convincing evidence to support his conclusions, Craik was cautious about dating the play specifically, except to insist that the metrical style involving the Alexandrine and weak endings is characteristic of Shakespeare's later plays.

Craik's application of the weak ending test to determine chronology was succeeded by F. J. Furnivall's application of the end stopped line test in 1874. The end stopped line as a particular type of metrical line was characteristic of the blank verse in Shakespeare's early plays. It consisted of an independent or dependent clause of ten syllables, each line self-contained, and each ending with a grammatical pause.9 Furnivall first delineated the end stopped line test in the Prospectus of the New Shakspere Society. He maintained generally that changes in the mechanics of Shakespeare's versification, and especially the decline in the use of the end stopped line, gave a basis for determining chronology.

9 Halliday, A Shakespeare Companion, p. 191.
Applying this theory to three of Shakespeare's earlier and three of his later plays, Furnivall obtained valuable statistics. In three of Shakespeare's first plays, Love's Labour's Lost, The Comedy of Errors, and The Two Gentlemen of Verona, he determined the proportion of unstopped to stopped lines as 1 to 18.14, 1 to 10.7, and 1 to 10 respectively. In three of the late plays, The Tempest, Cymbeline, and The Winter's Tale, he found the ratio to be 1 to 3.02, 1 to 2.52, and 1 to 2.12 respectively. 10

Furnivall's most complete study of meter was published in 1877 in the Introduction to the Leopold Shakspere, in which he set forth the end stopped line test in detail, and confirmed its use, along with the rhyme test, as a valid means for determining the chronology of Shakespeare's plays. Furnivall maintained that Shakespeare's meter was constantly changing and exemplified the differences in his verse by citing passages from two of his plays, The Comedy of Errors and Henry VIII. He averred that The Comedy of Errors was composed early because of its formal structure and versification. By contrast, he noted the informality in Henry VIII. Furnivall also pointed out that in The Comedy of Errors every line but three contained pauses at the end, as opposed to only eight lines of this type in the latter play. Averring that

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Shakespeare in *Henry VIII* constructed each line to continue into the next, Furnivall maintained that he created central pauses instead of end stops. To further emphasize the effect of run on lines, Shakespeare placed in these lines a weak or light ending to achieve the effect of natural conversation. Furnivall also noted that *The Comedy of Errors* rather rigidly maintained the pattern of five measure or ten syllable lines, as opposed to *Henry VIII*, which included some lines of eleven syllables in order to ease the repetitious verse pattern.¹¹

Furnivall urged finally that Shakespeare's use of rhyme and the end stopped line was of considerable significance, for these alterations in his meter constituted evidence of his stylistic development, and could be noted as evidence of the growth of Shakespeare's intellect and spirit, as well as indication of alterations in his mood and tone. He maintained that Shakespeare eventually was able to dispense with various devices that characterize most of his early plays. He cites as evidence the disappearance of wordiness, doggerel, ridicule, conceit, absurdity, boasting, and the use of stanzas in conversation.¹² On the basis of his extensive study of the rhyme patterns and the prevalence of end stopped lines Furnivall cited the following plays as "first-period" plays: *Love's Labour's Lost* (the first portion of *All's Well*

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¹²Ibid.
being *Love's Labour's Won*; *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Romeo and Juliet* (including the poems *Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis*, and possibly the first portion of *Troilus and Cressida*); *Richard II*; 1, 2, and 3 *Henry VI*; and *Richard III*.  

Although the rhyme test was first studied as an adjunct to the end stopped line test and only to determine plays of the first period, it was later developed as a single test to distinguish plays of the first and final periods by F. G. Fleay. The unique task of Fleay, one of the most tireless contributors to the New Shakspere Society, was to analyze the metrical distinctions of each play according to the ratio of double endings, rhyme, run on lines, and other metrical phenomena. It was thought that these analyses would eventually establish a chronological order for the plays based upon the concept that the more discriminating the verse the most recent the play.  

Fleay's first analysis of the rhyme test to determine chronology appeared in "Metrical Tests Applied to Shakspere," which was read at the first meeting of the New Shakspere Society in 1874. Fleay devised a table in which Shakspere's plays were divided essentially into four periods. He also published the first version of his metrical

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tabulations and noted their value in determining chronology. Fleay averred that the statistics revealed the various types of blank verse used by Elizabethan authors, and these distinctions could be tabulated as to the number of rhyming lines, double endings, and the number of lines exceeding or with less than five measures. Fleay also emphasized the value of such tables to determine chronology, noting that if an author had developed variations of his work and had distinctive characteristics in various periods of his career, these tabulations were very useful for determining chronology.¹⁵

Fleay made several generalizations from his metrical table, for he maintained that as Shakespeare progressed he slowly eliminated rhymed discourse, and incorporated Alexandrines, separated lines, and double endings. But he also pointed out that these stylistic characteristics alone were not of value in determining chronology, for they would inaccurately place the plays. He suggested by way of example that the double ending alone would separate widely the two parts of Henry IV, and would force the conclusion that Richard III was a late play. Fleay also averred that the Alexandrine test alone would establish Measure for Measure as the last of the comedies, and that the broken line

test would seem to establish *King Lear* as the last of Shakespeare's plays. In the end, he felt that the rhyme test was the only one which could be used alone to determine with accuracy the chronological order of Shakespeare's plays. Moreover, Fleay noted that *Love's Labour's Lost*, one of the earliest comedies, contained in its discourse more than 1,000 rhymed lines, while *The Winter's Tale*, a late comedy, contained none. Of no relevance, in his opinion, were the tabulations of double endings and Alexandrines in the two plays.¹⁶

The plays were divided into four broad periods of Fleay, and his order differed only to a small degree from Furnivall's chronology. Because of the great abundance of rhymed lines in what he determined to be the early plays, Fleay called this period the rhyming period. He cited as evidence the great number of rhymed lines in certain plays: 1,000 in *Love's Labour's Lost*, 850 in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 650 in *Romeo and Juliet*, 530 in *Richard II*, and 380 in *The Comedy of Errors*. None of Shakespeare's remaining plays contained as many as 200 rhymed lines, and Fleay maintained that Shakespeare's early love of rhyme gradually yielded to his appreciation of blank verse, which occurred as he revised and edited *Henry VI* after Marlowe's death. Another indication of the first period plays was the absence of Alexandrines.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 8-9.
which began to appear in Richard II, thus creating a link with the second period plays. Richard II was also an early history as evidenced by the absence of prose, so prevalent in succeeding plays.\textsuperscript{17}

Plays of the second period according to Fleay were The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, As You Like It, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado About Nothing, Richard III, John, Henry IV, and Henry V. These plays were grouped on the basis of the number of Alexandrines and the diminishing number of rhymed lines. Fleay noted two exceptions to the general metrical pattern in this group, Much Ado About Nothing and The Merry Wives of Windsor, which were almost entirely in prose, a notable exception to the plays of this period.\textsuperscript{18} He also noted that the quantity of short lines increased, but not to the degree in the succeeding period. Maintaining that the number of Alexandrines varied from five to twenty in these plays, he noted an exception in Richard II which contained thirty-three. Additional metrical distinctions included the quantity of feminine endings, which increased but in a sporadic progression. He also noted that the abundance of doggerel verse, sonnets, stanzas, and alternating rhymes, so evident in the earlier plays, diminished in the plays of the second period.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 10. \textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 11-12.
The third period plays, containing most of the tragedies, had definite characteristics: unobstructed meter, combination of verse and prose in the same scene, an abundance of tri-syllabic feet and short lines, an increase in double endings, and Alexandrines with consistent caesura. Other features included the introduction of Alexandrines excluding two lines of six syllables, and the reduction of rhymed lines. Macbeth was the only exception to the tragedies of this period, for its metrical structure was characterized by an abundance of rhymes, and a scarcity of Alexandrines and short lines. On the basis of its style and metrics he placed Macbeth earlier than Lear, Othello, or Hamlet. Fleay argued that Macbeth had been largely altered by another author, that this accounted for these distinctions in meter, and made it impossible to date the play with precision.

Finally, on the basis of the rhyme test Fleay determined the plays of the fourth, or Roman period. Fleay noted the rapid reduction of rhyme in these plays, and the actual disappearance of rhyme in the comedies of this period. Noting the more ordered and less impassioned meter of these plays, he formed the hypothesis that these plays were composed over a longer period of time because of their polished nature.

In summary of his conclusions and his tables Fleay made several qualifications on the basis of their subjectivity.

19 Ibid., pp. 13-14. 20 Ibid.
He noted that rhyme was sometimes accidental, especially if the lines consisted of six feet, or consisted of two lines, one containing one foot and the other five feet. He also admitted that many four feet lines in the Globe edition had been altered and hence were not reliable. Another eccentricity was the appearance of Alexandrines containing a caesura at the close of the third foot, which he had chosen to place in his table among the six measure lines rather than to list them as two lines of three measures.  

Fleay revised his figures and altered his chronological order in his *Shakspere Manual* of 1876, and further developed the rhyme test. The basis for these revisions was a more scientific application of the rhyme test on his part. The development of the rhyme test was aided by further studies of the weak ending, the middle syllable, and, most important, the placement of the caesura, the last of which was, according to Fleay, next to the rhyme test in importance. Some of the changes were simply corrections of inadvertent error, such as a numerical error in *Cymbeline* which had caused him to place it incorrectly in 1874.  

On the whole, however, Fleay's chronology of Shakespeare's plays in 1876 was essentially the same as that of 1874, with only slight revisions of the tables. An examination of the two tables reveals three essential changes:

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Julius Caesar was converted to a history of the second period from a play of the fourth; Cymbeline was altered from a tragedy of the third period to one of the fourth; and The Taming of the Shrew was classified as a play in which Shakespeare was not the sole author. Fleay undoubtedly changed his chronology of these plays for what he thought to be scientific reasons. The reasons he offers for his change of opinion about The Taming of the Shrew are indicative of his reasoning. While much of the play contains lines with initial monosyllabic endings, doggerel rhymes, and classical allusions, Fleay noted a diminution of these characteristics in various parts of the play, especially in the final scenes of the fourth and fifth acts, and parts of preceding scenes. These passages were those including Katherine and Petruchio together, and they were the most eminent and well-written portions of the entire play. Because of the variant style, he concluded that the play was of divided authorship and unreliable for his table. 23

An additional paper in which the rhyme test was applied to determine the chronology of Shakespeare's plays was Fleay's "On Certain Plays of Shakspere of Which Portions Were Written at Different Periods of His Life." Presented before the New Shakspere Society in 1874, this article contained studies of All's Well That Ends Well. The Two

23 Ibid., pp. 179-180.
First, Fleay contended that certain parts of *All's Well That Ends Well* were composed at a time which preceded the concluding portions of the play. He averred that at the time the play was written Shakespeare was writing in the easy style of his third period, the period of the tragedies, which was characterized by Alexandrines, double endings, and short lines. Fleay concluded that certain parts of *All's Well* reflected the style of Shakespeare's early compositions, with their use of extensive rhyme and regularized meter.

Since to Fleay these portions of the play were undoubtedly of a less mature period, he proposed that the play was founded on an earlier copy. The rhyme test was applied to determine which parts of the play were composed early and which parts late. To build his case he cited a fourteen line rhymed speech by Helen in Act I, Scene i, unrelated to the context, and an eight line stanza in Act I, Scene iii, spoken by the Countess, not necessary to the scene or related to the context. In Act II, Scene i, he noted seventy-one lines of successive rhyme, very distinct in tone from the remainder of the play, but formulating a significant portion of the action. Also in Act II, Scene iii, Fleay noted an additional twenty lines of rhyme precisely like the rhyme in the first scene of this act. Finally, in Act I, Scene iii, he noted rhymed lines resembling the passages in Act II, Scenes i and iii.
This rather extensive body of evidence was sufficient to give Fleay the basis for concluding that these rhymed passages were the remains of an earlier version of the play which had not been adequately assimilated when *All's Well* was rewritten.\(^{24}\)

Primarily on the basis of extensive application of the rhyme test Fleay maintained that Shakespeare often followed the practice of beginning a play in one period and finishing it in another. As examples Fleay noted that Shakespeare began *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Twelfth Night* at the conclusion of his first period in 1594–6. He also averred that at the close of his second period in 1601–2 Shakespeare completed *Twelfth Night*. Speculating further, Fleay contended that *The Taming of the Shrew* was a revision of an early play by Marlowe and that *All's Well That Ends Well* was a revision of the no longer extant *Love's Labour's Won*.\(^{25}\)

Fleay formed the theory from his research that *Troilus and Cressida* stood in a class by itself in that, as he saw it, the play was written in three distinct periods. Fleay maintained that *Troilus and Cressida* was begun in 1594 at the close of Shakespeare's first period, succeeding *Romeo and Juliet*, and preceding *The Merchant of Venice*. He maintained further that it had been resumed within one or


two years, and that it was completed prior to the Roman plays and succeeding the major tragedies. He discerned three distinct plots interwoven in Troilus and Cressida, each of which, he felt, was composed at a different period of time. To determine the composition dates of the play, Fleay devised a metrical table in order to establish the dates of composition of the three plots by comparing rhymed lines to verse in the three plots of the story, and tabulating their ratios.

In the same essay Fleay cautions the reader against injudicious use of metrical statistics. He warns that it is impossible to make accurate observations from an inadequate quantity of instances, but adds that the required number fluctuates with the nature of the analysis. He is especially concerned that tables of proportions should be applied only with a clear realization of the total quantity of statistics from which the proportions are derived. As an example of how unwise application of statistics can lead to error of judgment he noted that in The Tempest and The Winter's Tale the proportions of rhymed lines to blank verse were 1 to 729 and 1 to infinity respectively. Although the distinctions appeared great on the surface, Fleay maintained that the ratios merely indicated that The Tempest contained one rhymed couplet, and The Winter's Tale none. Moreover, he noted that the addition of one more rhyme in The Merry Wives of Windsor

\[26\] Ibid., p. 305.
would change the ratio of that play to 1 to 20 from 1 to 22. He maintained also that anyone unfamiliar with Shakespeare's meter might at times mistake prose for rhyme, and this in turn would throw his statistics off. In addition, he reminds his readers that plays that were written primarily in prose did not lend themselves to metrical analysis.27

Finally Fleay took the wise precaution to suggest that metrical tests should be applied only to confirm the chronology of a play, the date of which had already been determined by other means. Fleay noted that on the basis of other data he had placed Cymbeline after Lear, Hamlet, and Othello, and had emphasized the necessity for leaving a sizeable span for the dating of Macbeth. He pointed out that the metrical tests applied to these plays confirmed his original views.28 Fleay stressed that even though the various metrical tests must be applied by themselves, they should be interpreted in relationship to one another. He showed how this kind of composite analysis could be useful in determining the dates of composition of Troilus and Cressida. He was able to draw what he felt to be significant conclusions from a metrical analysis of the separate plot elements of Troilus and Cressida. From this analysis Fleay made the over-ingenious conclusion that the Troilus plot was composed between the first and second periods of Shakespeare's

27Ibid., p. 312. 28Ibid., p. 316.
development; the Hector story between the first and second periods, but closer to the second; and the Ajax story between the third and final periods, but closer to the final.29

At about the same time that Pleay was involved with the intricacies of the rhyme test James Spedding was working out the pause test. As a metrical distinction, the placement of the pause is one of the most significant methods of varying blank verse. The earliest blank verse with its regularity of meter usually exhibited the pause at the end of the line. Shakespeare did much to alter this pattern by extending the meaning of one line into the succeeding one and by varying the placement of these pauses in each line.30

Spedding noted that metrical effects upon the sense of hearing relied essentially upon the dispersion of pauses in the usual line structure. Spedding contended that the pause test was especially valuable in judging Shakespeare because, as he saw it, the pause evolved from the mental state of Shakespeare and reflected the author's taste.31 It was possible, according to Spedding, for a playwright to deliberately plan and manage certain aspects of a play: the choice of meter, the injection of prose lines into verse lines, the

29 Ibid., p. 317.

30 Halliday, A Shakespeare Companion, p. 467.

31 James Spedding, "On the Pause-Test," The Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society (1874), Series I, No. 1, p. 27.
variation of meter within the line. He maintained, however, that no playwright or director could render instructions for the dispersion of accents and pauses, but that these accents and pauses could throw valuable light on certain aspects of Shakespeare's plays.

Spedding agreed with Fleay that rhyme could be important in dating Shakespeare's plays. He felt the rhyme tests to be unreliable, however, in view of the fact that some of the plays contained very little rhyme and in view of the hypothesis that Shakespeare could have written entirely in rhyme in his late period if he had chosen to do so. As examples of the late use of rhyme Spedding cited certain humorous passages and the great abundance of songs in rhymed couplets in the late plays. To support his view that rhyme tests were unreliable he cited the numerous rhymed songs in As You Like It, The Tempest, and King Lear. Spedding concluded that rhyme could not be used to draw any conclusions about the date of composition of these plays.

Spedding had grave doubts also about the applicability of the double ending test. To demonstrate how it could be misapplied he quoted lines from plays representative of Shakespeare's early, middle and late periods. From Romeo and Juliet:

Her blood is settled and her joints are stiff, Life and these lips have long been separated. Death lies on her like an untimely frost. Upon the fairest flower of all the field.
From *Antony and Cleopatra*:

If they had swallowed poison, 'twould appear
By external swelling: but she looks like sleep,
As she would catch another Anthony
In her strong toil of grace.

And from *Cymbeline*: 32

How found you him? Stark as you see,
Thus smiling, as some fly had tickled slumber,
Not as death's dart being laughed at. His right cheek
Reposing on a cushion.

He averred that the changes in style evident in a comparison
of these passages represented a growth and alteration in
Shakespeare's development. He also averred that Fleay's
criteria failed to indicate this progress and that Fleay's
double ending test would place the passage from *Antony and
Cleopatra* chronologically before that of *Romeo and Juliet*,
and the passage from *Cymbeline* on the same date as *Romeo and
Juliet*. 33

Spedding reiterated his faith in the pause test as the
only reliable metrical test that was broadly applicable to
all the plays and the only one which would allow for fine
distinctions in the judgment of chronology. With tabulation
of Shakespeare's varied placement of the caesura Spedding
felt that a reliable body of data could be formed for the
dating of the plays. On the basis of such tabulations
Spedding hoped to establish the divided authorship of *The Two

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Gentlemen of Verona, to date Julius Caesar earlier than Fleay, and to determine the dates of Pericles, Troilus and Cressida, Love's Labour's Lost, and The Taming of the Shrew. Spedding concluded that regardless of the authorship of these plays, some parts of them were composed before others.  

As an indication of the ferment in Shakespearean scholarship during the second half of the nineteenth century, at almost precisely the time that Fleay and Spedding were at work the eminent J. K. Ingram was applying his theories of weak and light endings to the determination of chronology. Ingram in his essay "On the 'Weak Endings' of Shakspeare" had concerned himself with metrical tests as a means of determining divided authorship. He had emphasized the importance of what he called the weak ending test. He discerned two types of such endings: light endings, which are essentially auxiliaries and pronouns, upon which the voice can lightly dwell; and weak endings, which by contrast are proclitic and composed largely of conjunctions and prepositions. Ingram proceeded to examine his tables and statistics with a view toward applying them to the task of determining chronology as well as divided authorship. 

First, he noted that Shakespeare used light endings very seldom and weak ones scarcely at all in the first three fourths

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35 *Chambers*, p. 256.
of his compositions. By contrast, the last plays were characterized by a marked use of the number of light endings, and in an even more noticeable manner by the increase of weak endings. He felt that this increase was sufficient to allow him to term this period of Shakespeare's development as the "weak ending period." On the basis of his studies he placed Cymbeline in this final period, but placed Julius Caesar and Troilus and Cressida, which most critics had put late, in the preceding period. He also averred that the weak endings which appear in abundance in Antony and Cleopatra place it in the last period. In regard to the light endings, he maintained that since they occurred only sparsely in the plays, they could not be used as a basis for ordering the plays. Nonetheless, he felt that the number of light endings in Macbeth was sufficient to allow him to conclude that the play was the latest to be composed before the final or weak ending period.36

Ingram was aware of the weaknesses inherent in his weak ending test, and he concluded his study of the weak ending by making two general observations on metrical tests. First, he cited the end stopped line test and the pause test as the most comprehensive and most valuable of all metrical tests. Second, he indicated that the weak ending test was valuable only for evaluation of Shakespeare's verse in his final period.

36 Ingram, p. 447.
Ingram concluded that the more thoroughly metrical tests were studied and scientifically applied, the closer they would coincide with the conclusions of higher criticism.\(^\text{37}\)

In 1877 an important evaluation and an important summary of the verse tests were made in Edward Dowden's *Shakspere Primer*. He is remembered primarily for his famous *Shakspere: A Study of His Mind and Art* of 1875, but his commentaries on metrical analysis in the 1877 *Primer* are in some ways more important.\(^\text{38}\) Dowden clearly recognized the importance of verse tests in determining the chronology of the plays. But in view of the fact that the verse tests were wholly internal, he recognized that they could not be used as the sole means for determining chronology. Dowden believed that a reasonably accurate order could be established by studying the various changes in Shakespeare's verse patterns throughout his dramatic career. He cited six distinct bases for judgment: the end stopped and run on lines, the weak ending, the double or feminine ending, the rhyme scheme, the pause, and the speech ending tests.\(^\text{39}\)

In general commentary on the end stopped line Dowden noted that one quality of Shakespeare's early verse was the

\(^{37}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 455-456.}\)

\(^{38}\text{Halliday, A Shakespeare Companion, pp. 169-170.}\)

\(^{39}\text{Edward Dowden, Shakspere, Literature Primers (New York, 1877), p. 33.}\)
distinct pause or interruption at the ends of lines. Slowly, however, Shakespeare began to maintain the meaning from one line to the next without a pause at the conclusion of the line. The verse became increasingly "run on," and the pauses were increasingly found within the body of the line in varied patterns. To illustrate Dowden invited comparison between two of Shakespeare's plays, The Two Gentlemen of Verona and The Tempest: 40

At Pentecost,
When all our pageants of delight were play'd
Our youth got me to play the woman's part,
And I was trimmed in Madam Julia's gown,
Which served me as fit, by all men's judgments,
As if the garment has been made for me,
Therefore I know she is about me height.

Admired Miranda!
Indeed the top of admiration! worth
What's dearest to the world! Full many a lady
I have eyed with best regard, and many a time
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
Brought my too diligent ear: for several virtues
Have I liked several women;

He noted that these two passages illustrated a great change in Shakespeare's poetic style. Dowden agreed with Furnivall and others that when so distinct a pattern of run on and end stopped lines could be established, it would be a valuable adjunct in determining chronology, especially in light of the ratios that could be established between run on and end stopped lines.

40 Ibid., pp. 39-40.
Dowden agreed with the essentials of Ingram's definition of the weak ending. He recognized it as an unstressed monosyllabic ending, with two variant forms. He maintained that the light endings resulted from words such as am, are, be, can, could, and the auxiliaries do, does, has, had, and I, they, thou, and similar expressions. Weak endings, more evanescent in nature, were comprised of words such as and, for, from, if, in, of, and or. Applying the test to the plays, Dowden noted the scarcity of weak endings in Shakespeare's first and middle periods. As examples, he pointed out the dearth of weak endings in The Comedy of Errors and The Two Gentlemen of Verona, and the presence of only one in A Midsummer Night's Dream. He could find only one light ending in 2 Henry IV, and two in Henry V. Dowden then noted that by contrast there was a sudden and abundant use of light endings beginning in Macbeth, and a sharp increase of weak endings in Antony and Cleopatra. The evidence convinced him of the importance of the test to distinguish plays of the final period and to determine the composition dates of plays within this period.\footnote{Ibid., p. 41.}

Moving on to the rhyme test, Dowden cited its significance as a means for determining the early or late composition of a play. He noted that Shakespeare's first plays contained a large amount of rhymed verse. For instance, in Love's
Labour's Lost one can find two lines of rhyme for every one line of blank verse. Shakespeare's late plays, on the other hand, contain almost no rhyme. As examples, he pointed to The Tempest, which includes two rhymed lines, and The Winter's Tale, which contains none. Dowden also noted that the rhyme test could be used to determine the chronology of middle period plays as well as the very earliest and the very latest. To demonstrate how the rhyme test is more reliable than other tests, Dowden maintained that a playwright might accidentally include a weak ending or a double ending but would have to purposely compose rhyme. He pointed out that Shakespeare often used rhyme written with a special purpose in mind and for special effects. For instance, rhyme was used for unusual effects in A Midsummer Night's Dream. The play contains a passage of ten lines of successive rhyme, spoken by Titania in Act III, Scene 1, lines 168-177. Because of the general prevalence of rhyme, Dowden placed A Midsummer Night's Dream early, but not so early as The Comedy of Errors, which contains more. Dowden cautioned that in some circumstances, other factors govern the metrical patterns. He noted that a definite reason lay behind the quantity of blank verse in Richard III, for it was composed to succeed Henry VI, and more than any other of Shakespeare's plays was written under the influence of Marlowe. Richard II, on the other hand, was composed largely
without outside influence, and in it Shakespeare reverted, according to Dowden, to his earlier use of rhyme.⁴² Dowden pointed out that Shakespeare sometimes used rhyme to create special effects in his late plays. He cited as example the passage in Act I, Scene iii, of Othello in which the Duke speaks in a series of short moralizing epigrams, each of which is a rhyming couplet. Brabantio replies to this in a similar style, mocking the Duke's sententiousness.

Dowden concluded his summary and evaluation of metrical tests by citing some of the less well developed metrical tests. He concluded that the feminine ending test gives an indication of the late plays. He felt the pause test to be important, but felt that it was as yet incompletely developed and unreliable. He made reference to a speech ending test, as yet not completely developed. The speech ending test involved the determination of the ratio of speeches ending in a completed line to the speeches ending in a broken line. Dowden maintained that broken speech ending lines were prevalent in the later plays, while in early plays speeches usually ended with completed lines.⁴³

F. S. Pulling's study of the speech ending test succeeded Dowden's notation. Pulling noted the growing tendency for Shakespeare to conclude a speech in mid line, and devised a table for these endings, in which he tabulated the percentages

⁴²Ibid., pp. 42-43. ⁴³Ibid., pp. 45-46.
of speeches ending in mid line to the total number of speeches. 44 His article, "The Speech-Ending Test Applied to Twenty of Shakespeare's Plays," was published in 1879 for the New Shakspere Society. Pulling felt that the chief value of the test was its usefulness in determining plays of the middle period. Pulling applied the test to twenty of Shakespeare's plays and was able to confirm the conclusions of other metrical analyses. As an aid and adjunct to his test Pulling recommended numbering by speeches rather than by lines, and he devised an elaborate table in which he numbered the speeches of twenty of Shakespeare's plays according to whether they were written in prose or verse and calculated within them the number of lines ending in mid line. Pulling admitted, however, that his study was incomplete and inconclusive and recommended that it be used primarily as a means to substantiate the findings of other metrical tests. 45

The final advance in metrical studies of Shakespeare's plays was made by the eminent A. C. Bradley just past the turn of the nineteenth century. Like Dowden before him, Bradley applied himself to practically all of the major metrical tests, and, also like Dowden's, his work is something

44 Chambers, p. 265.

of a summing up and culmination. Yet Bradley was not content to merely summarize and recapitulate. He advanced the scope of many of the tests and applied them with greater precision than anyone before him.

Typical of Bradley's metrical analysis is his essay, "The Date of Macbeth. Metrical Tests," published in the Appendix to his great critical study of the tragedies. Bradley acknowledged the work of his predecessors and stressed the great value of metrical tests to determine chronology when properly applied. Two tests, the feminine ending and rhyme tests, were important in dividing Shakespeare's plays into two large groups, the early plays and the late plays. But Bradley felt that these tests could not be relied upon for anything more precise than general grouping. For example, he noted that because The Winter's Tale, The Tempest, and Henry VIII contained few five feet rhymed lines they could be grouped among the late plays. On the other hand, the fact that Macbeth contains a somewhat greater number of rhymes than King Lear, Othello, or Hamlet does not allow the critic to make fine distinction in dating among them.

Bradley arrived at the view that there were only three tests useful to determine chronology in plays not widely differentiated in style. One of these was the speech ending test. Bradley believed that the test had been applied earlier only sporadically and inconclusively. Applying the
test himself, Bradley concluded that the ratio was small in the early plays of speeches ending with a rhymed couplet to speeches not ending in a rhymed couplet: The Comedy of Errors, 0 to 6; King John, 12 to 1; Henry V, 18 to 3; and As You Like It, 21 to 6. The proportion not ending in the couplet increased so that each play after 1600-1601 contained at least thirty. The proportions for the four great tragedies Bradley cites as follows: Othello, 41 to 4; Hamlet, 51 to 6; King Lear, 60 to 9; and Macbeth, 77 to 2.46 The logic of this progression would establish Macbeth as the latest of the great tragedies.

Another of the reliable tests, according to Bradley, for determining the precise date of plays not widely separated in composition date was the end stopped and run on or overflow line. The end stopped line, of course, was a line in which the meaning and meter come to a distinct pause at the end of the line. The "run on" line extends without pause into the succeeding line. Bradley maintained that this differentiation was sometimes hard to determine, and he stressed the importance of the ear in determining the pause, rather than punctuation or grammar. Bradley agreed with other analysts in noting that the overflow line is very rare in the

early plays. He agreed also that the number increases as Shakespeare moves into his middle and late plays. Bradley applied the test scrupulously and was able to refine the statistics of earlier metrical analysts. He gave particular attention to the middle and late tragedies.

The third test that Bradley cited as reliable for determining the composition of plays relatively similar in characteristics and relatively close together in date is the weak and light ending test. Bradley generally accepted Ingram's definition of the weak ending and the light ending. Bradley noted an inconsequential number of light endings in the early and middle plays, and the appearance of many light endings in the late plays.

Bradley felt that he had adequately established the validity and the authority of three of the metrical tests for determining the chronology of plays of similar style and metrical patterns when they were written within a few years of one another. He then proceeded to apply these tests to Macbeth, the play of his particular interest. On the basis of the tests and some shrewd observations of other kinds, he concluded that Macbeth was the last of the great tragedies and showed stylistic and metrical characteristics

\[47 \text{Ibid.}, \ pp. \ 475-476.\]
\[48 \text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 478.\]
\[49 \text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 479.\]
that were to be even more pronounced in the final period, the period of *Timon, Cymbeline*, and *Henry VIII*. 50

By the time Bradley published his views the chronology of Shakespeare's doubtful plays had begun to solidify. The pioneering groundwork of his predecessors had enabled Bradley and others around the turn of the century to establish a chronological order that, with minor exceptions, is accepted today.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

It would be possible to extend this investigation into other areas of Shakespearean scholarship. Metrical tests have proved useful in the determination of things other than divided authorship and chronological arrangement. Accurate editing in nineteenth-century editions of the plays is attributable in large measure to the use of metrical tests to render an authoritative text. The tests could be used in editing to help determine or to confirm the accuracy of a reading; they could be used to help determine the lengths of certain lines; they could be used to straighten out the garbled meter of certain lines. Probably the most notable job of editing done in the nineteenth century was done by J. Glover, W. G. Clark, and W. A. Wright in their work on the monumental Cambridge Edition of 1863-1866. That they recognized the importance of metrical analysis in editing is clear from the fact that they included in their edition a special section on meter. By return to what they considered the most pristine text available and by careful application of the various metrical tests the editors of the Cambridge Edition were able to correct most of the errors of meter, grammar, and punctuation forced upon Shakespeare's plays by
eighteenth-century editors such as Nicholas Rowe and Thomas Hanmer. The work of the Cambridge editors and that of the editors of the New Variorum, which was to follow soon after, was the culmination of a great amount of work in the area of textual emendation. Such work on the whole is too scattered and at the same time too extensive to be properly or adequately brought within the scope of this study.

It cannot be claimed that this investigation has come up with a startlingly original thesis, or that it has added significantly to the corpus of Shakespearean criticism. Nonetheless, it has performed the valuable function of bringing together in a modest space a considerable body of useful data and critical opinion, much of which had been obscured and forgotten in the passage of time. Perhaps more important, this study has placed in historical and critical perspective a considerable amount of scholarly endeavor in metrical analysis which at one time was provocative and controversial but which since its origin has largely become accepted as a matter of course. This study should have the result of bringing to our attention again the importance of metrical analysis as not only merely a valid approach to the study of Shakespeare's plays, but as an absolutely necessary forerunner and adjunct to literary analysis of other types. It can quite easily be seen that until there has been the rendering of a text that is as precise as scholarship can
make it, until there is unanimity or near unanimity of agreement on which plays Shakespeare wrote and how much of which plays he wrote, and until there is something like agreement on the chronological order of Shakespeare's plays, there cannot really be any sound foundation for any critical judgment of Shakespeare's plays. Metrical analysis has helped to provide this foundation.

This study has had to be, of necessity, a considerable winnowing process, and from the beginning it has not aimed at completeness. Much that was done during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the way of metrical analysis was trivial, much was perverse, and much has been proved wrong. This kind of material except where it seemed pertinent has been ignored. From this winnowing process has emerged the material which forms the bulk of this thesis.

The main pattern that emerges is that there are two clearcut functions or purposes of the metrical tests, regardless of the nature or the name of the test. One of these purposes is to determine as accurately as possible the chronological order of Shakespeare's plays, and especially to place in the proper chronological context those plays about which there was no reliable objective data. This was one of the primary concerns of people like Steevens, Malone, and the younger Boswell, and it remained the concern of critics right on down to Bradley. The pattern of development
in this attempt to establish chronology reveals that a number of distinct but at times overlapping tests were developed, including the weak ending test, the double ending test, the feminine ending test, the rhyme test, and the pause test, among others. It can be noted too that practically every major figure of importance in metrical testing became involved in this search for chronological accuracy: Bathurst, Craik, Fleay, Spedding, Ingram, Furnivall, Dowden, and Bradley. At first the tests were little more than crude attempts to group plays as early, middle, or late. After considerable development and refinement, a perceptive scholar-critic like Bradley could use these same tests with enough preciseness to place Macbeth last among the great tragedies and just before the period of the final tragedies.

The second major purpose of these tests was quite clearly to determine authorship and cases of divided authorship. By the late eighteenth century, scholar-editors no longer stood quite so much in awe of the First Folio and the later folios of the seventeenth century. There was questioning of the authenticity of some of the plays, and more important there was increasing tendency to make distinctions of authorship within a given play. Some of these attempts were indeed naive, especially when some idolator ascribed all the good lines to Shakespeare, assuming that he could not write a bad line. But usually in the hands of the most careful
critics such as Spedding, Craik, Fleay, and Furnivall, the grossest errors of judgment were avoided. The tests that proved themselves most useful in the determination of authorship were the end stopped line test, the feminine ending test, the rhyme test, and the weak ending test. It is to be expected that the plays that would get the most careful scrutiny are the ones about which there had been the greatest doubt and controversy: *Timon of Athens, Julius Caesar, Pericles, Macbeth*, and especially *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. While there was much wrongheadedness in some of the judgments made, most of the analyses were sound, and some rather fine distinctions were made on the basis of the applications of the metrical tests to these plays. On the basis of the evidence it was rather generally accepted that there were at least two, and some critics said three, playwrights involved in the writing of *Henry VIII*. Certain passages were ascribed to Shakespeare, and further metrical testing strongly indicated that the second hand in the play was that of Fletcher. In *Macbeth* metrical tests supported the hypothesis that Middleton had a hand in the witch scenes and probably wrote Hecate's speech in Act III.

Everything considered, the performance of the metrical analysts of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is an impressive one. Theirs was the first attempt to be as objective as possible in analysis of Shakespeare's plays.
and theirs was the first attempt to systematically apply sound quantitative analysis to the plays. The value of their achievement is perhaps best indicated by the fact that much of their work is still accepted as valid, and much of the best twentieth-century criticism is based on an acceptance of their findings.
APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

1. Pre-Shakespearean Group
   (Touched by Shakespeare)
   Titus Andronicus (1588-90)
   1 Henry VI (1590-91)

2. Early Comedy
   Love's Labor's Lost (1590)
   Comedy of Errors (1591)
   Two Gentlemen of Verona (1592-93)
   Midsummer-Night's Dream (1593-94)

3. Marlowe-Shakespeare Group
   Early History
   2 and 3 Henry VI (1591-92)
   Richard III (1593)

4. Early Tragedy
   Romeo and Juliet (? two dates, 1591, 1597)

5. Middle History
   Richard II (1594)
   King John (1595)

6. Middle Comedy
   Merchant of Venice (1596)

7. Later History
   History and Comedy United
   1 and 2 Henry IV (1597-98)
   Henry V (1599)

8. Later Comedy
   (a) Rough and Boisterous Comedy
   Taming of the Shrew (? 1597)
   Merry Wives (? 1598)
   (b) Joyous, Refined, Romantic
   Much Ado about Nothing (1598)
   As You Like It (1599)
   Twelfth Night (1600-1)
   (c) Serious, Dark, Ironical
   All's Well (? 1601-2)
   Measure for Measure (1603)
   Troilus and Cressida (? 1603; revised 1607?)

9. Middle Tragedy
   Julius Caesar (1601)
   Hamlet (1602)
10. Later Tragedy

Othello (1604)
Lear (1605)
Macbeth (1606)
Antony and Cleopatra (1607)
Coriolanus (1608)
Timon (1607-8)

11. Romances

Pericles (1608)
Cymbeline (1609)
Tempest (1610)
Winter's Tale (1610-11)

12. Fragments

Two Noble Kinsmen (1612)
Henry VIII (1612-13)

Poems

Venus and Adonis (? 1592)
Lucrece (1593-94)
Sonnets (? 1595-1605)
### SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THEIR LENGTH

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<th>Length</th>
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