

*William Shakespeare*

**1564 - 1616**

# **William Shakespeare**

- The facts about Shakespeare's life and personality are few.
- The speculations about him are many.

# **William Shakespeare**

## **1564 - 1616**

- The early years (1564 – 1585)
- The lost years (1585 – 1592)
- The London years (1592 – 1613)
- The return to Stratford-upon-Avon (1613 – 1616)

# **The early years**

## **1564 - 1585**

Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon to Mary Arden and John Shakespeare.

- Shakespeare's father, John Shakespeare, moved from the village of Snitterfield to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1550 to start a glove-making business. In 1556, John Shakespeare bought the house on Henley Street known today as Shakespeare's birthplace.

# Shakespeare's Birthplace



A restored 16th-century house situated in Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, where it is believed that William Shakespeare was born in 1564 and spent his childhood years. It is now a small museum open to the public.

# **The early years**

## **1564 - 1585**

- In 1557, John married Mary Arden, the daughter of a wealthy local landowner, and then later joined the town council, rising to the position of high bailiff in 1568. William Shakespeare was therefore raised in a comfortable home.
- It is therefore assumed that Shakespeare attended grammar school in his hometown.
- Stratford had a grammar school with a reputation of excellence with a teaching staff of Oxford graduates. There is no document to prove that William Shakespeare attended this school, but it seems reasonable to suppose that he attended grammar school in his hometown.

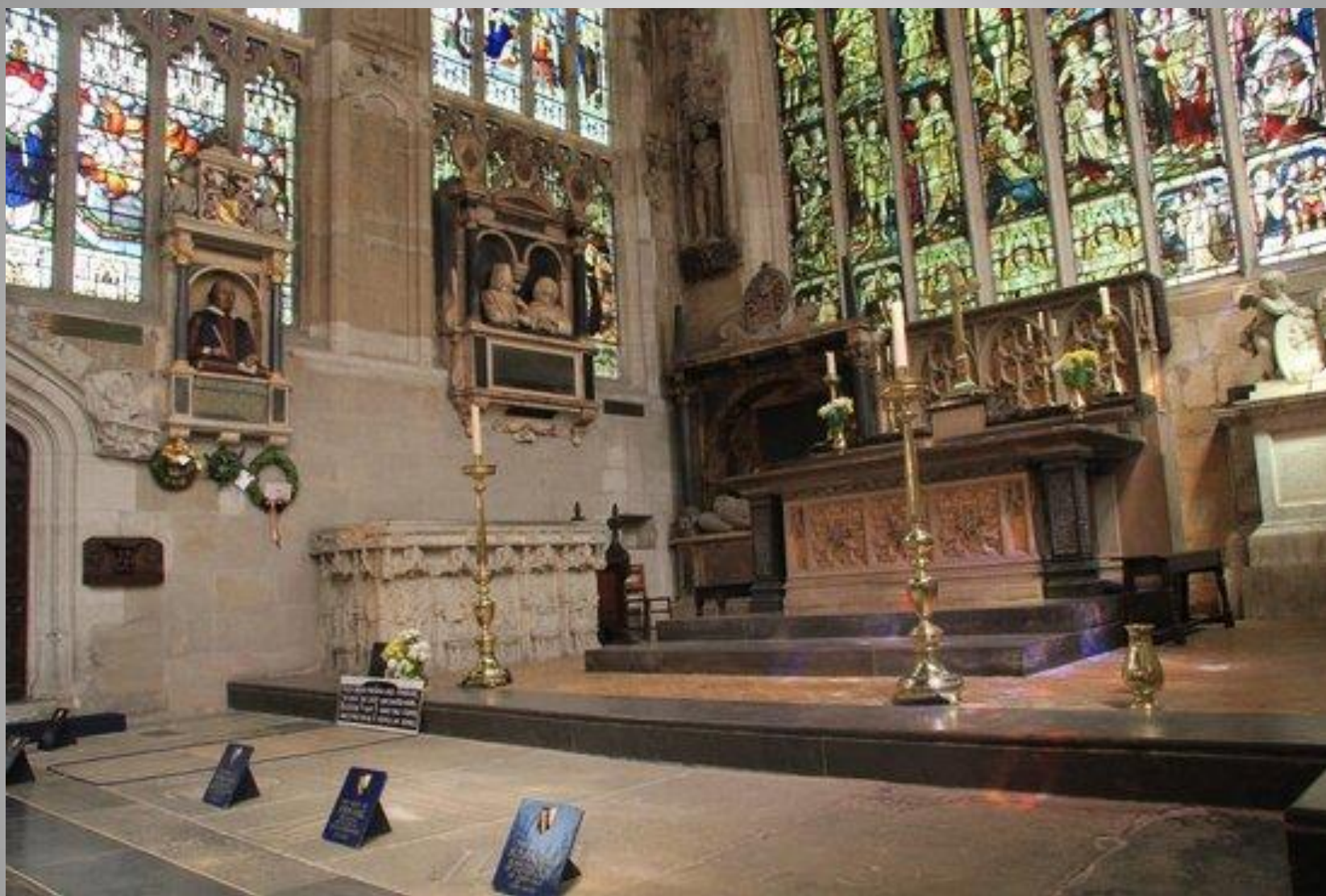
# **The early years**

## **1564 - 1585**

Many facts about Shakespeare's early years come from church documents:

- ❖ He was baptized in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon on 26 April 1564 (his birth date is widely accepted to be 23 April)
- ❖ He was granted dispensation to marry Anne Hathaway on 28 November 1582.
- ❖ In 1583, Shakespeare baptized his first child Susannah in Holy Trinity Church.
- ❖ His twins Judith and Hamnet were also baptized in the same church in 1585.





Holy Trinity Church



# **The lost years**

## **1585 - 1592**

- Widely known as the undocumented period of Shakespeare's life.
- No records to prove what Shakespeare was doing or where he was throughout this period.
- Assumptions concerning Shakespeare's occupation during this period include:
  - Fighting the Spanish Occupation of the Low Countries
  - Working as a lawyer's clerk
  - Working as a private tutor
  - Learning his trade with some theatrical company as an apprentice writer and actor.

# **The London years (1592 – 1613)**

## **Poet and Playwright**

The earliest references to Shakespeare in London in 1592 indicate that he was already making his mark as a playwright

- The first glowing review of a Shakespeare production came from Shakespeare's first grateful acknowledger, Thomas Nashe, who praised Shakespeare's first trilogy (Henry VI). In August 1592, Nashe particularly admired the production of *I Henry VI* in his pamphlet *Piers Penniless his Supplication to the Devil*. Nashe praised the action of *I Henry VI* because it rekindled the splendour of the heroic past.
- In September of the same year, Robert Greene's pamphlet *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* was shortly published after his death. In it, Greene launched a rancid attack on Shakespeare and warned fellow playwrights against the uneducated newcomer who was invading their turf: "There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers ... [who] supposes he is well able to bombast out blank verse as the best of you."

# **The London years (1592 – 1613)**

## **Poet and Playwright**

- Shakespeare was quickly noticed, as his early plays were performed at the Rose (London's most popular theatre in the 1590s).
- In the summer of 1592 the outbreak of the plague forced theatres to close and many theatre companies toured and performed in the provinces. Shakespeare opted to stay in London.
- Between 1592 and 1594 Shakespeare wrote poetry.

# **The London years (1592 – 1613)**

## **The Lord Chamberlain's Men**

- By the autumn of 1594, the plague had declined. The Lord Chamberlain's Men was founded with William Shakespeare among its shareholders.
- The group performed at the Theatre until 1599 when they moved to the newly built Globe theatre. The Globe was soon recognized as London's best playhouse. Almost all of Shakespeare's new plays were performed there.
- Shakespeare was a shareholder in the Globe and the theatre company (The Lord Chamberlain's Men).
- The group was frequently invited to perform before the queen. Shakespeare's status as a playwright was growing.
- The group became known as the King's Men after James I succeeded Elizabeth I in 1603.



**The Globe Theatre**

# **The London years (1592 – 1613)**

## **The King's Men**

- Between 1603 and Shakespeare's death, the King's Men appeared before King James I on 177 occasions, more than all other troupes put together.
- This put pressure on its writers. Shakespeare produced two new plays a year.
- His famous tragedies *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth* were written between 1604 and 1607. Together with *Hamlet*, they are widely regarded as the 'pinnacles of his genius'.



# **The London years (1592 – 1613)**

## **The final plays**

- *The Tempest* was performed before King James I in 1611 for the first time. It is believed to be the last play that Shakespeare wrote on his own. Prospero's final speech "now my charms are all o'erthrown" is sometimes read as Shakespeare's farewell to his art.
- Shakespeare collaborated with John Fletcher in writing *Cardenio* (now lost), *Henry VIII* (1613), and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613-14).

# **The London years (1592 – 1613)**

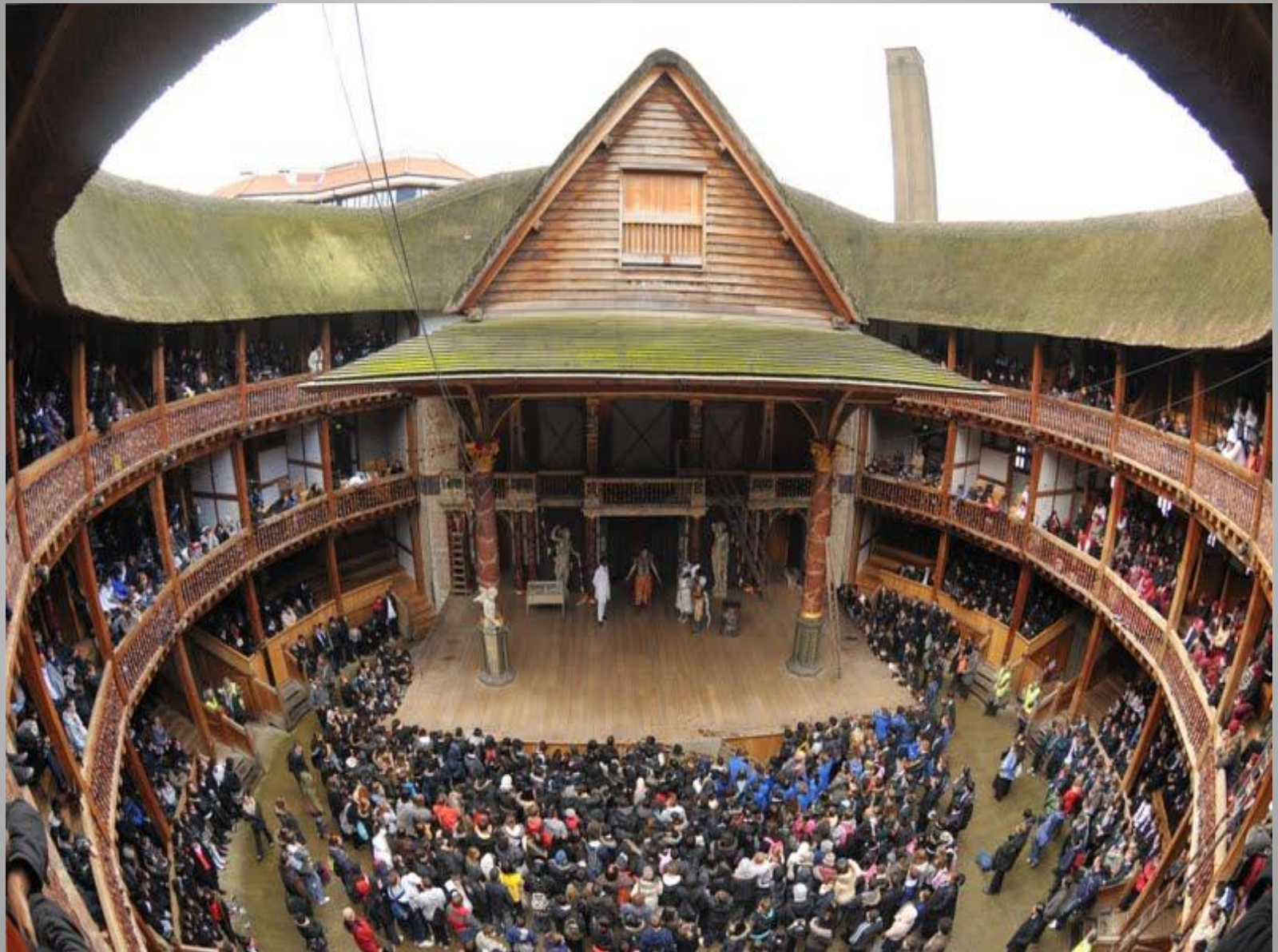
## **The Globe**

On 29 June 1613, a prop cannon was fired during the performance of *Henry VIII* and set fire to the Globe. The theatre was soon rebuilt (1614). The Globe was closed by the Puritans in 1642 when they closed theatres. A modern reconstruction of the Globe theatre (Shakespeare's Globe) opened in 1997.



**The Globe Theatre**





**The Globe Theatre**





**The Globe Theatre**

# **Some Elizabethan and Jacobean Theatres**

- The Theatre 1576
- The Curtain 1577
- The Rose 1587
- The Swan 1595
- The Globe 1599
- The Fortune 1600
- The Hope 1605
- The Red Bull 1605



# London Theatres c.1600

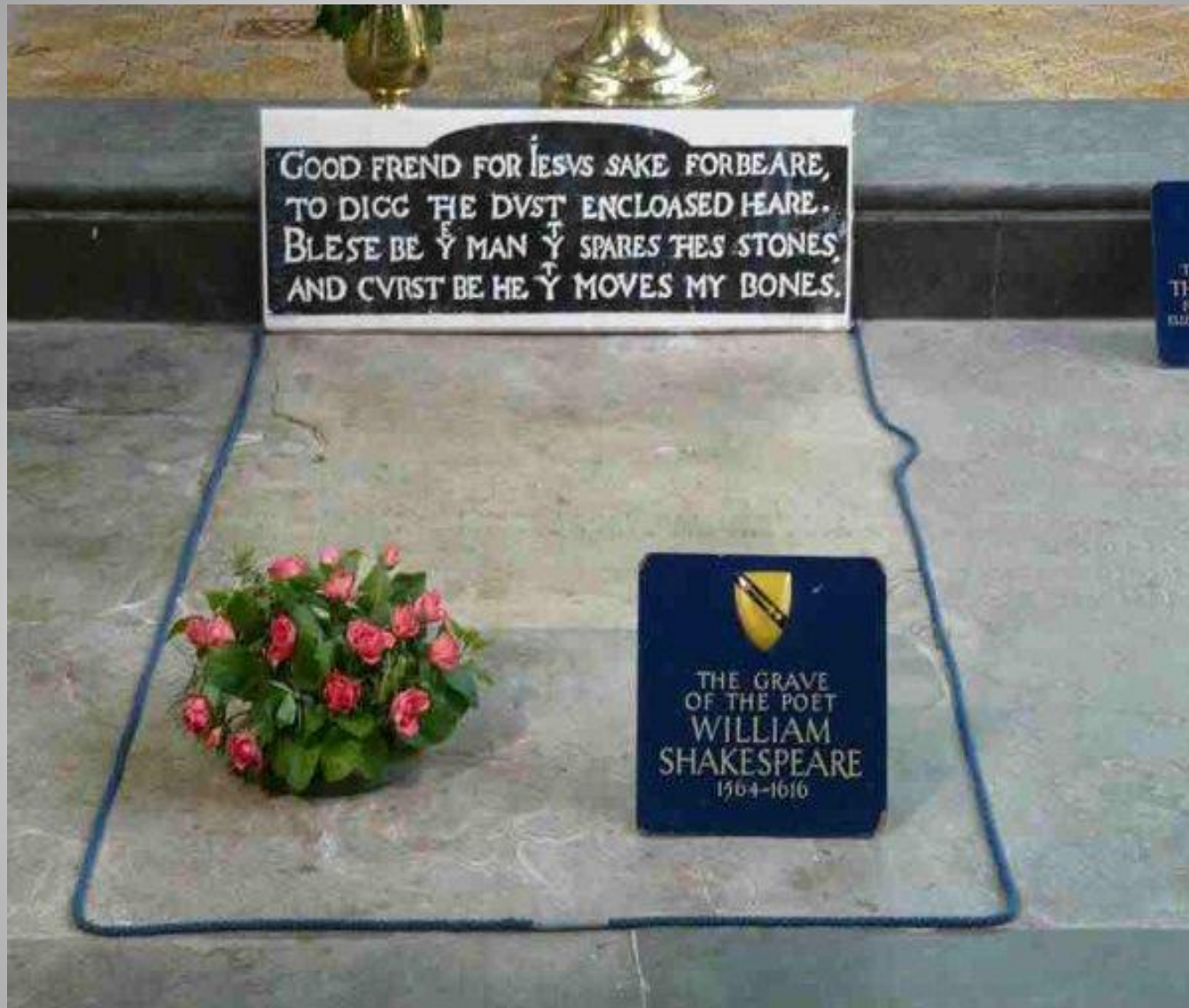


# **Elizabethan and Jacobean Theatres**

- In addition to outdoor theatres, smaller indoor playhouses were also established in the former monasteries of Blackfriars and Whitefriars (where popular children's companies performed)
- Blackfriars was taken over by Shakespeare's company (the King's Men) in 1608.

# **The return to Stratford-upon-Avon (1613 – 1616)**

- Shakespeare returned to his wife and children in Stratford-upon-Avon after spending too much time away in London.
- Shakespeare's fellow playwrights Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton visited him in Stratford-upon-Avon and attended his daughter's (Judith) wedding in February 1616.
- Shakespeare died on 23 April 1616 and was buried in Holy Trinity Church.



Shakespeare's grave in Holy Trinity Church



# Portraits of Shakespeare

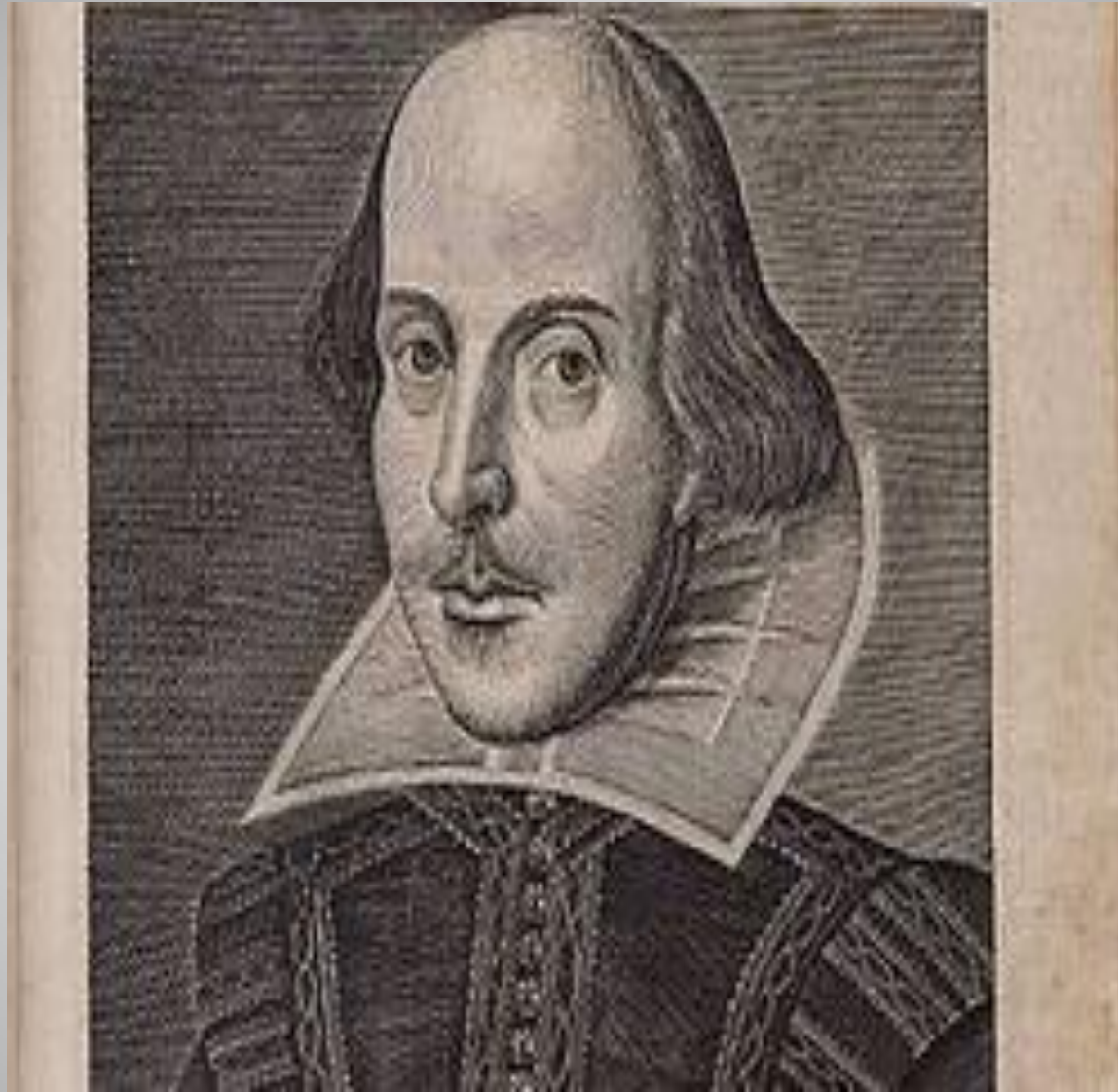
## What did Shakespeare look like?



# **Portraits of Shakespeare**

Many paintings are claimed to be portrayals of Shakespeare. However, the only two portraits with strong claims to authenticity are the Droeshout portrait (which appears on the title page of the First Folio) and the bust on the monument (which appears in Holy Trinity Church).





**The Droeshout portrait of William Shakespeare**

This one appears on the title page of the First Folio (1623).



Shakespeare's bust in Holy Trinity Church



**The Chandos portrait of William Shakespeare**





## **The Cobbe portrait of William Shakespeare**

None of these portraits has been verified beyond all doubt.

# **The Shakespeare Authorship Question**

- Since the appearance of the authorship question, many groups have attempted to attribute the works of Shakespeare to many names.
- The authorship question is believed to be prompted by the disbelief that a man from a provincial town and with no university degree could produce the works that are now attributed to Shakespeare. Furthermore, there are fewer surviving references to Shakespeare than to many of his contemporaries.

# **Francis Bacon**

## **1561 - 1626**





# Francis Bacon

- Around 1785 the first suggestion was made by Revd James Wilmot. He did not publish his conclusion.
- The first extended attempt to prove Bacon's authorship was in an article by Delia Bacon published in 1856 (Later that year, she spent a night in Holy Trinity Church with the intention of opening Shakespeare's grave, but abandoned the plan). Her theory was elaborated in her book *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded* (1857).

# Christopher Marlowe

## 1564 - 1593



# **Marlowe as 'Shakespeare'**

- By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Christopher Marlowe was offered as the new 'Shakespeare'.
- To explain Marlowe's murder in 1593, his advocates claimed that he faked his death, fled to Italy and sent his work to a middleman called William Shakespeare.

# Edward de Vere, 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford

## 1550 - 1604



# Edward de Vere as 'Shakespeare'

## (The Oxfordian Theory)

- Nowadays a stronger case is made for Edward de Vere. He had the education and experience necessary to write 'Shakespeare'.
- The theory was first advanced by J. Thomas Looney in 1920 in his book *'Shakespeare' Identified in Edward de Vere the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*.
- Oxfordians maintain that de Vere had good reason to use a different name: it would have been improper for a nobleman to be associated with the craft of playwriting.
- To the counter argument that he died in 1604 and that ten of Shakespeare's plays are dated after that, Oxfordians respond that, at most, only *The Tempest* and *Henry VIII* were written after 1604.

# **Shakespeare in Print**

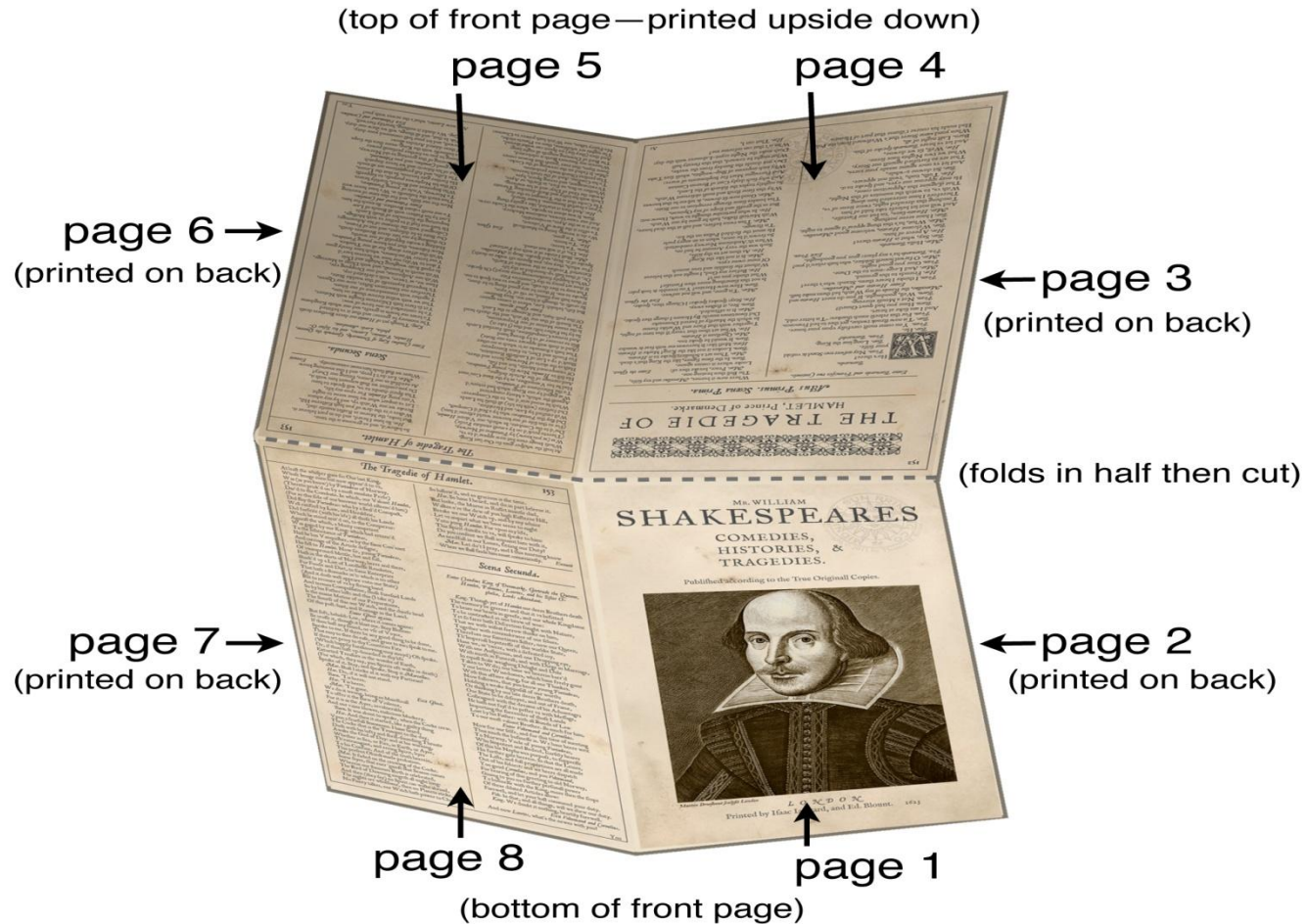
Quartos and Folios

# Quartos

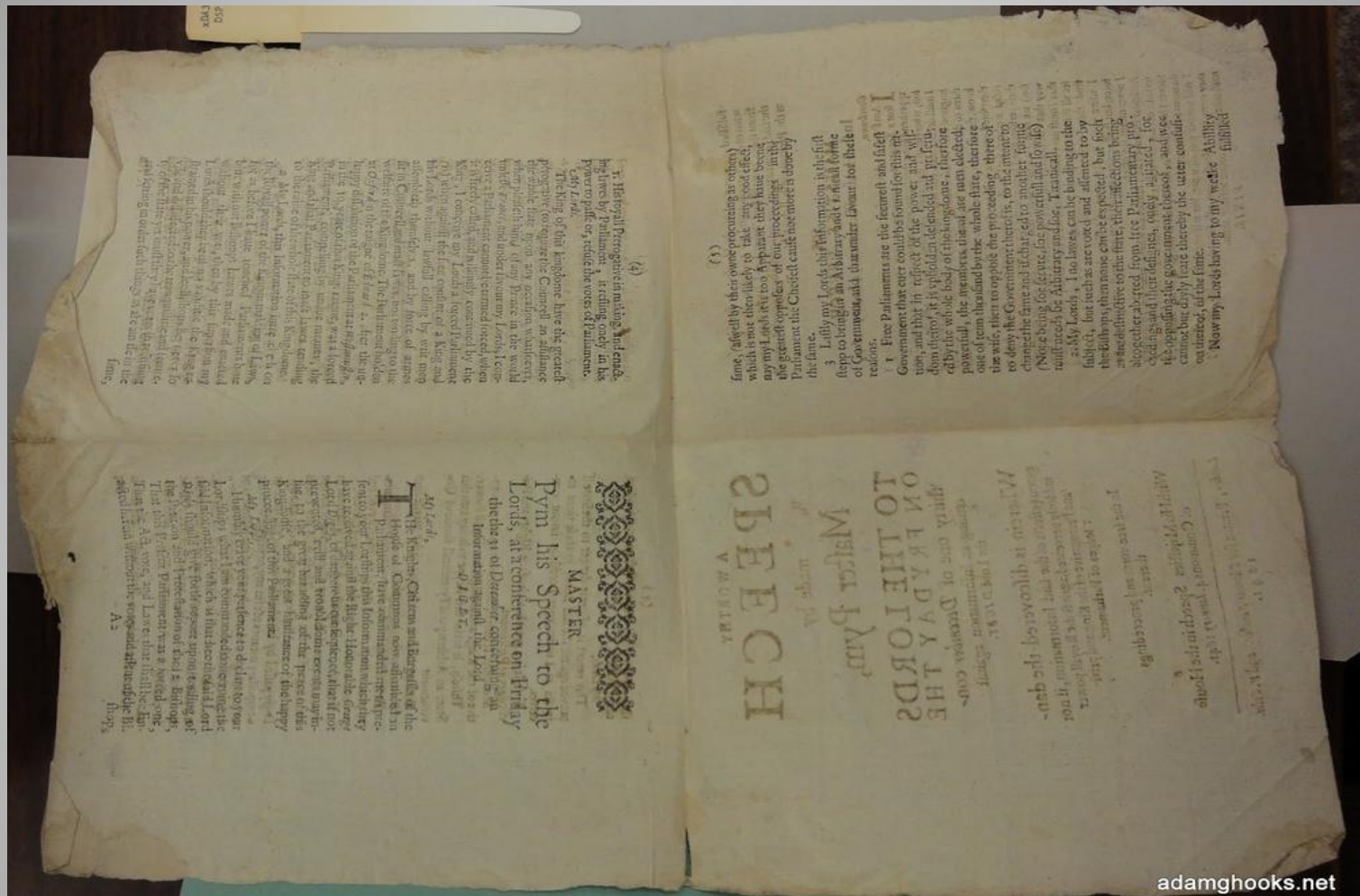
- Quarto: a book with pages in quarto size ( a size of page made by folding a standard sheet of paper twice to make eight pages )
- There are good quartos and bad quartos.



# Quartos



**QUARTO**



Most of the early editions of Shakespeare were in quarto.

# Bad Quartos

- This is a technical term devised by the bibliographer A. W. Pollard to refer to certain early texts of Shakespeare's plays which he believed were not printed from an authoritative manuscript.
- Possible sources:
  - Reconstructions from memory by some actors.
  - Some of them are believed to be early versions by Shakespeare.
  - Abbreviations made for Shakespeare's company or for other companies.
- Examples: The first quartos of
  - *Romeo and Juliet* (1597).
  - *Henry V* (1600).
  - *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1602).
  - *Hamlet* (1603).
- Though they have no textual authority they may assist in the effort to establish a true text, especially in their stage directions.

# Good Quarto

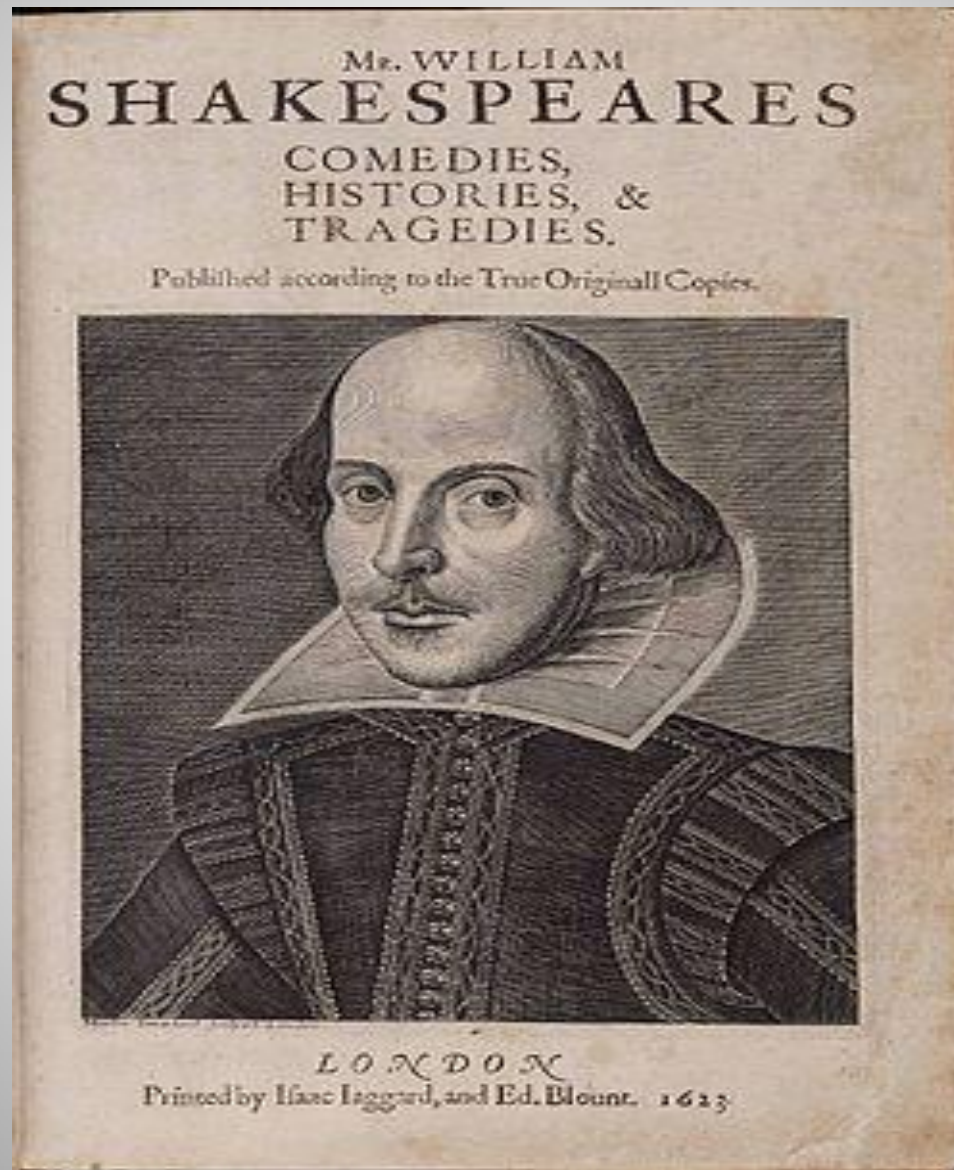
- It is an edition of a play in quarto printed from an authoritative manuscript, as distinct from a bad quarto.
- The Second Quarto (Q2) of *Hamlet* is a good quarto.

# **The First Folio (1623)**

- John Heminge and Henry Condell, two colleagues of Shakespeare at the King's Men, tracked down 36 plays of Shakespeare to publish them in this folio.
- 18 of the plays published in this folio were not printed before.
- The First Folio was published by Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount.
- It was approximately 900 pages.
- It groups the plays for the first time into comedies, histories and tragedies.
- It is believed that around 750 copies of the First Folio were printed; 235 survive today.
- These copies were printed over a period of two years.



# The First Folio (1623)

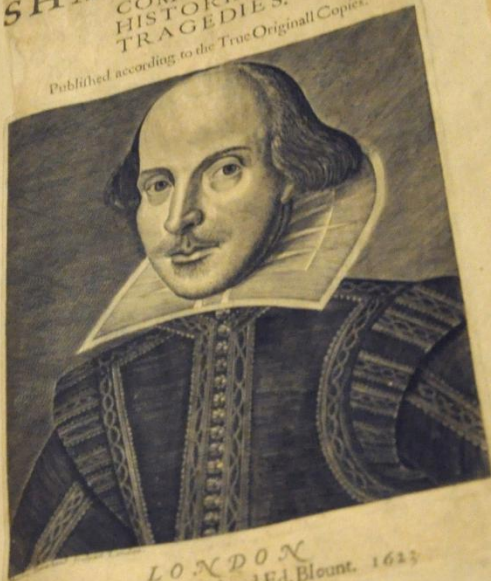


To the Reader.  
This Figure, that thou here seest put,  
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;  
Wherein the Grauer had a strife  
with Nature, to out-doo the life:  
O, could he but haue drawne his wit  
As well in brasse, as he hath hit  
His face; the Print would then surpasse  
All, that vvas ever vvrit in brasse.  
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke  
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.

B. I.

MR. WILLIAM  
**SHAKESPEARES**  
COMEDIES, &  
HISTORIES, &  
TRAGEDIES.

Published according to the True Originall Copies.



LONDON  
Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623





# A C A T A L O G V E

of the feuerall Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies contained in this Volume.

## COMEDIES.

<b>T</b> he Tempest.	Folio 1.
<b>T</b> he two Gentlemen of Verona.	20
The Merry Wiues of Windsor.	38
Measure for Measure.	61
The Comedy of Errours.	85
Much adoo about Nothing.	101
Lones Labour lost.	122
Midfommer Nights Dreame.	145
The Merchant of Venice.	163
As you Like it.	185
The Taming of the Shrew.	208
All is well, that Ends well.	230
Twelſe-Night, or what you will.	255
The Winters Tale.	304

## HISTORIES.

The Life and Death of King John.	Fol. 1.
The Life & death of Richard the ſecond.	23

The Firſt part of King Henry the fourth.	46
The Second part of K. Henry the fourth.	74
The Life of King Henry the Fiſt.	69
The Firſt part of King Henry the Sixt.	96
The Second part of King Hen. the Sixt.	129
The Third part of King Henry the Sixt.	147
The Life & Death of Richard the Thirđ.	173
The Life of King Henry the Eight.	205

## TRAGEDIES.

The Tragedy of Coriolanus.	Fol. 1.
Titus Andronicus.	31
Romeo and Juliet.	53
Timon of Athens.	80
The Life and death of Julius Ceſar.	109
The Tragedy of Macbeth.	131
The Tragedy of Hamlet.	152
King Lear.	283
Othello, the Moore of Venice.	310
Anthony and Cleopater.	346
Cymbeline King of Brittain.	369

# **The First Folio (1623)**

- The editors of the folio seem to have worked from several sources:
  - Bad quartos (the flawed texts of some plays).
  - Good quartos.
  - Foul papers (earlier drafts).
  - Fair copies (edited transcripts).
  - Loose sheets kept by actors.
  - Prompt books (approved by the royal censor).

# Folios

- Second Folio was printed in 1632.
- Third Folio in 1663.
- In 1664 seven new plays were added to the Third Folio (only *Pericles* would eventually be accepted as authentic). This edition would be later considered 'contaminated'.
- In 1685, The Fourth Folio was published.