

Shapiro's 1599 – Year in Life of Shakespeare

- Theatre moved from London proper (on rented land) to south of Thames where bearbating took place. Globe opened the next year. Had to store wood until foundation could be built next Spring. Blackfriars owned but closed in 1596 to adult players—later rented out to kids
- Spenser died in 1599. Pastoral poems starred fellow poet/colonizers of Ireland as shepherd; also circulated as propaganda to get people to settle Ireland. Didn't work so well because Spenser et al didn't honor promises. Spenser advocated starving the Irish, described in gruesome detail. Earl of Essex paid for Spenser's funeral.
- Kemp split with theatre in 1599—perhaps a sign of change of direction with Shakespeare. Kemp was part owner in company, like WS, so would take a lot to walk away. New actor hired to do comic parts; more sophisticated; no more jigs at end of play (jig was a pantomime bawdy skit with prostitutes and dancing and drag.)
- Earl of Essex's departure for Ireland commemorated in speech by Lancelot Andrews? At Richmond. Parallels with "this day" in St Crispin's day speech. Lots of parallels between Richard II/Henry IV and Elizabeth/Essex. Henry V had a lot to do with Ireland. Also blending of political and old saints day holidays (St. Crispin's day celebrates figures from Battle of Agincourt "to the end of the world"—ironically, no longer celebrated in 1599 when play was written); Accession day was same day as a saint's day too
- Shoemaker's Holiday sets play in times of Henry VI, though king seems more like Henry V
- Rule about no graven images imperfectly observed (Elizabeth didn't enforce, exactly); at the same time, it was illegal to deface an image of a monarch. Lots of finger pointing by Catholics about hypocrisy.
- Impressment—widespread. At an easter Sunday service, doors were locked and all able bodied males impressed. Also rounded up people at plays, including performances of Chamberlain's men. Shakespeare's company were exempt—players remarked upon this.
- Disastrous series of Irish campaigns meant no one was eager to join up, sometimes went out of way. Lots of corruption about impressments practices, provisioning soldiers, theft, etc.
- "Triumph" was a popular genre—triumphal processions, scripted by many playwrights. Other civic staged events included Accession day ceremony and Lord Mayor's ceremonies; usually scripted by playwrights and designed by artists. Elizabeth sometimes staged them; Essex did one in Ireland; accomplished little else, lots of deaths. Shakespeare used to co-design pasteboard coats of arms for gentlemen; displayed in Whitehall. Bought his own coat of arms in 1596.
- On official holidays non gentry males were supposed to wear wool caps. Confusion about holidays because of shift of protestants, but not catholics, from Gregorian calendar.
- Parallels with Julius Caesar & Accession day—Famous accession day speeches for /against (Republican) "monarchy" were radical; speaker imprisoned. Two speeches in Julius Caesar (Brutus + Antony)
- Also lots of censoring; fear of sedition. A rival printed book version (not play, though influenced by I Henry IV) came out same time as Shakespeare's play printed. Dedicatory preface to Earl of Essex; lots of controversy about "popular" which meant people ruled. As a result author imprisoned; books burned (along with lots of others including 15 Joys of Marriage which might be interpreted as anti-virgin queen). No histories could be written after 1599 without privy counsel permission (unlikely to be granted).
- Summer and fall of 1599 whole of London awaited an Invisible Armada—parallels with Invincible Armada—that drove city crazy with rumors but never came. Thousands mobilized, missed harvest, increased bitterness of poor.
- As You Like It / Shoemaker's Holiday shows pressure from boy companies; lots of music, dancing
- Deforestation, enclosures of Arden and region surrounding Stratford meant starvation for many; travel was difficult in winter months, so he probably saw his family only once a year.
- Year ends with failure of Essex in Ireland that would lead to his imprisonment, staged revolt (preceded by Shakespeare's Richard II performance) and eventual execution.
- Year also ends with beginnings of merchant-formed coalition (The East India Company); no aristocratic investors.