

Sources for King Lear

- The primary source was ***The True Chronicle History of 'King Lear'***, and his three daughters, *Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella*, published in 1605, but acted much before that, in 1594.

'*King Lear*' was performed at the Rose Theatre in London

- That same year a bookseller named Edward White obtained a license to publish the play, but since no copy of the play printed in that year survives, we do not know if White went through with an actual printing.
- In May of 1605, another license was obtained to publish '*King Lear*', this time by a printer named Simon Stafford. It is through the efforts of Stafford that we have a surviving printed edition of the play.

Although '*King Lear*' retains the ending found in earlier accounts of the story, in which Cordelia lives and Lear is restored to the throne, the anonymous play incorporates vivid new characters (the most crucial being Perillus) and situations which are not found in any of the previous retellings of the tale, thus expanding the sparse legend into an effective, five-act play.

Shakespeare, in turn, expands on '*King Lear*'s original elements. He changes Perillus' name to Kent, and adopts most of the scenes shared between Lear and Perillus. Compare Lear's famous speech 2.4 to the analogous speech found in 3.3 of *King Lear*:

- For the sub-plot of *King Lear*, Shakespeare relied upon a story from ***Arcadia***, the epic romance by Sidney, published in 1590.
- Use of Samuel Harsnett's "***A deceleration of Egregious Popish Impostures***" especially in creating Edgar as Poor Tom
- He also used two real life stories that both he and the audience were familiar with; a former mayor of London, ***Sir William Allen***, who divided his properties between three daughters and ***Sir Brian Ainsley***.