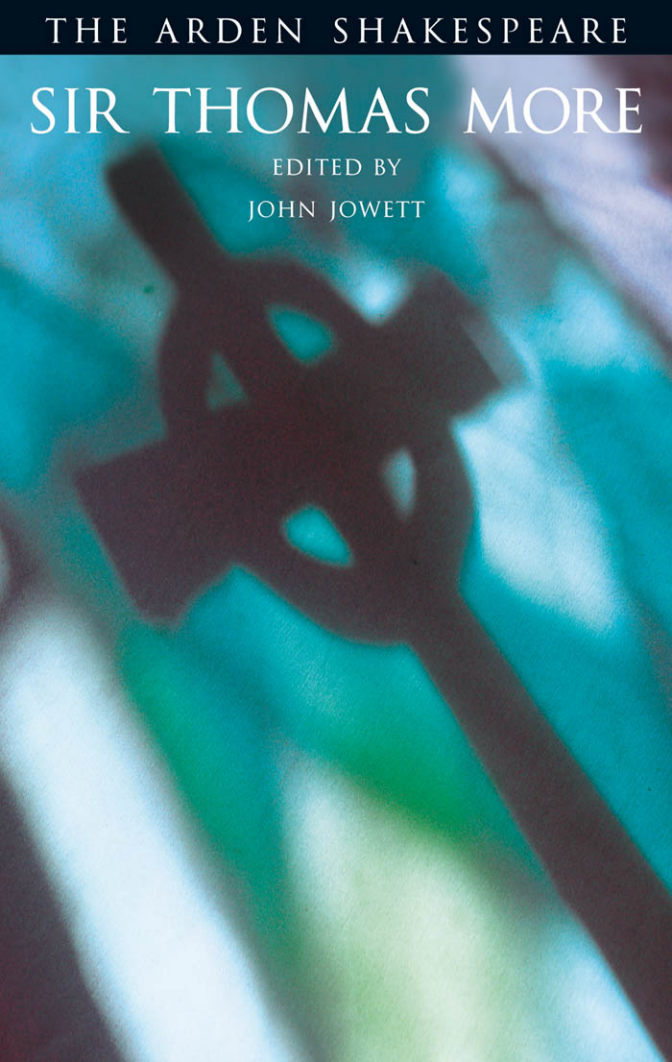


THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE

# SIR THOMAS MORE

EDITED BY  
JOHN JOWETT



THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE

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SIR THOMAS MORE

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THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE

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# SIR THOMAS MORE

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Revised by  
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Thomas Heywood and  
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Edited by  
JOHN JOWETT



Arden Shakespeare  
1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2



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# GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

The earliest volume in the first Arden series, Edward Dowden's *Hamlet*, was published in 1899. Since then the Arden Shakespeare has been widely acknowledged as the pre-eminent Shakespeare edition, valued by scholars, students, actors and 'the great variety of readers' alike for its clearly presented and reliable texts, its full annotation and its richly informative introductions.

In the third Arden series we seek to maintain these well-established qualities and general characteristics, preserving our predecessors' commitment to presenting the play as it has been shaped in history. Each volume necessarily has its own particular emphasis which reflects the unique possibilities and problems posed by the work in question, and the series as a whole seeks to maintain the highest standards of scholarship, combined with attractive and accessible presentation.

Newly edited from the original documents, texts are presented in fully modernized form, with a textual apparatus that records all substantial divergences from those early printings. The notes and introductions focus on the conditions and possibilities of meaning that editors, critics and performers (on stage and screen) have discovered in the play. While building upon the rich history of scholarly activity that has long shaped our understanding of Shakespeare's works, this third series of the Arden Shakespeare is enlivened by a new generation's encounter with Shakespeare.

## THE TEXT

On each page of the play itself, readers will find a passage of text supported by commentary and textual notes. Act and scene

divisions (seldom present in the early editions and often the product of eighteenth-century or later scholarship) have been retained for ease of reference, but have been given less prominence than in previous series. Editorial indications of location of the action have been removed to the textual notes or commentary.

In the text itself, elided forms in the early texts are spelt out in full in verse lines wherever they indicate a usual late twentieth-century pronunciation that requires no special indication and wherever they occur in prose (except where they indicate non-standard pronunciation). In verse speeches, marks of elision are retained where they are necessary guides to the scansion and pronunciation of the line. Final -ed in past tense and participial forms of verbs is always printed as -ed, without accent, never as -'d, but wherever the required pronunciation diverges from modern usage a note in the commentary draws attention to the fact. Where the final -ed should be given syllabic value contrary to modern usage, e.g.

Doth Silvia know that I am banished?  
(*TGV* 3.1.214)

the note will take the form

214 **banished** banishèd

Conventional lineation of divided verse lines shared by two or more speakers has been reconsidered and sometimes rearranged. Except for the familiar *Exit* and *Exeunt*, Latin forms in stage directions and speech prefixes have been translated into English and the original Latin forms recorded in the textual notes.

## COMMENTARY AND TEXTUAL NOTES

Notes in the commentary, for which a major source will be the *Oxford English Dictionary*, offer glossarial and other explication of verbal difficulties; they may also include discussion of points

of interpretation and, in relevant cases, substantial extracts from Shakespeare's source material. Editors will not usually offer glossarial notes for words adequately defined in the latest edition of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* or *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, but in cases of doubt they will include notes. Attention, however, will be drawn to places where more than one likely interpretation can be proposed and to significant verbal and syntactic complexity. Notes preceded by \* discuss editorial emendations or variant readings.

Headnotes to acts or scenes discuss, where appropriate, questions of scene location, the play's treatment of source materials, and major difficulties of staging. The list of roles (so headed to emphasize the play's status as a text for performance) is also considered in the commentary notes. These may include comment on plausible patterns of casting with the resources of an Elizabethan or Jacobean acting company and also on any variation in the description of roles in their speech prefixes in the early editions.

The textual notes are designed to let readers know when the edited text diverges from the early edition(s) or manuscript sources on which it is based. Wherever this happens the note will record the rejected reading of the early edition(s) or manuscript, in original spelling, and the source of the reading adopted in this edition. Other forms from the early edition(s) or manuscript recorded in these notes will include some spellings of particular interest or significance and original forms of translated stage directions. Where two or more early editions are involved, for instance with *Othello*, the notes also record all important differences between them. The textual notes take a form that has been in use since the nineteenth century. This comprises, first: line reference, reading adopted in the text and closing square bracket; then: abbreviated reference, in italic, to the earliest edition to adopt the accepted reading, italic semicolon and noteworthy alternative reading(s), each with abbreviated italic reference to its source.



Conventions used in these textual notes include the following. The solidus / is used, in notes quoting verse or discussing verse lining, to indicate line endings. Distinctive spellings of the base text follow the square bracket without indication of source and are enclosed in italic brackets. Names enclosed in italic brackets indicate originators of conjectural emendations when these did not originate in an edition of the text, or when the named edition records a conjecture not accepted into its text. Stage directions (SDs) are referred to by the number of the line within or immediately after which they are placed. Line numbers with a decimal point relate to centred entry SDs not falling within a verse line and to SDs more than one line long, with the number after the point indicating the line within the SD: e.g. 78.4 refers to the fourth line of the SD following line 78. Lines of SDs at the start of a scene are numbered 0.1, 0.2, etc. Where only a line number precedes a square bracket, e.g. 128], the note relates to the whole line; where SD is added to the number, it relates to the whole of a SD within or immediately following the line. Speech prefixes (SPs) follow similar conventions, 203 SP] referring to the speaker's name for line 203. Where a SP reference takes the form e.g. 38+ SP, it relates to all subsequent speeches assigned to that speaker in the scene in question.

Where, as with *King Henry V*, one of the early editions is a so-called 'bad quarto' (that is, a text either heavily adapted, or reconstructed from memory, or both), the divergences from the present edition are too great to be recorded in full in the notes. In these cases, with the exception of *Hamlet*, which prints an edited text of the quarto of 1603, the editions will include a reduced photographic facsimile of the 'bad quarto' in an appendix.

## INTRODUCTION

Both the introduction and the commentary are designed to present the plays as texts for performance, and make appropriate reference

to stage, film and television versions, as well as introducing the reader to the range of critical approaches to the plays. They discuss the history of the reception of the texts within the theatre and scholarship and beyond, investigating the interdependency of the literary text and the surrounding 'cultural text' both at the time of the original production of Shakespeare's works and during their long and rich afterlife.

## P R E F A C E

This edition brings the collaborative play *Sir Thomas More* into a major Shakespeare series for the first time. My first and founding acknowledgement is therefore to the general editors of the Arden Shakespeare, and in particular Richard Proudfoot, for their courageous decision to extend the series to this play, and for a confidence that I can only hope was not misplaced in inviting me to edit it.

This edition could not have proceeded without the courtesy of the British Library and its staff in allowing access to Harley MS 7368, one of its greatest and most restricted treasures. I am especially grateful to C.J. Wright, Andrea Clarke and Justin Clegg. My research was also furthered by the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Eileen Cottis at the Society for Theatre Research kindly put me in touch with the late Jack Reading, who in turn helped me to locate Muriel St Clare Byrne's papers in Somerville Library, Oxford, where Pauline Adams kindly made the archives available for study.

The project was facilitated by the University of Birmingham in approving study leave in autumn 2006, and by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in granting an award for follow-on research leave in spring 2007. The Shakespeare Institute Library once again proved the perfect facility for my immediate day-to-day research. Student library assistants provided support over a period of several years, in particular Kelley Costigan, Eleanor Lowe, Mary Partridge, Clare Smout and Brian Willis. These I know of; there are no doubt others, whose contributions are no less valued.

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*John Jowett*  
*Stratford-upon-Avon*

# INTRODUCTION

## *SIR THOMAS MORE* AND 'THE BOOKE OF SIR THOMAS MOORE'

*Sir Thomas More* dramatizes the rise and fall of the humanist and Catholic martyr Thomas More. He opposed King Henry VIII's divorce of Katherine of Aragon, siding with the Pope, and as a consequence was executed for treason on 6 July 1535. Of all the episodes of English history quarried by Renaissance dramatists, this one is as striking and axiomatic as any. It is a story of national emergence, and has the power of a foundation myth. More's execution dramatically represents the point of fracture between the English nation and pre-Reformation European Catholicism, which was the beginning of modern politics as the Elizabethans experienced it. Further, his conflict with the King is a prime site for the modern figuration of the human subject, emerging at the very point where the inwardness of conscience comes into critical conflict with the demands of state.

The play's favourable picture of More has been described as 'the most fascinating and revealing stage biography of its time' (Forker & Candido, 86). It takes a strikingly different tack from Shakespeare's better-known history plays: More is no prince or soldier, but begins a City of London sheriff. If anything, he acts against action. He quells a London riot by mere persuasion. He later refuses to sign articles sent from the King to the Privy Council – by implication the 1534 Oath of Succession recognizing Henry's heirs by his new wife Anne Boleyn as successors to the Crown. This leads to arrest, imprisonment and execution. From the outset, the interest lies in qualities the play describes as wit and wisdom, as the narrative focuses on an intelligent, enigmatic mind negotiating matters of unexpected weight and consequence.

Image removed - rights not available

- 1 Portrait of Sir Thomas More, by Hans Holbein the Younger, chalks and wash on paper, *c.* 1526

More attempts to block the main event in the unfolding of the English Reformation. Here the dramatists faced a difficulty: how could More's status as humanist scholar, the foundation of the respect in which he was held in late sixteenth-century Protestant England, be made dramatically effective? The challenge was acute, as the public theatre audience was in large part unversed in Latin and in smaller part illiterate. The paradigmatic stage presentation of a scholar in his study is the opening scene of *Doctor Faustus*, where Marlowe brought the spirit of Renaissance intellectual enquiry dramatically alive through the paraphernalia of esoteric

learning, devils and comic trickery. Without this subterfuge, scholarship is private and physically passive. Hence in *Sir Thomas More* scholarship is afforded dramatic representation only at the point where it breaks down, whether modulating into merry jests or lending itself to jocular satire. More is made familiar as a Londoner and a witty but down-to-earth man of the people.

In the insurrection episode (Sc. 6), More quite literally stands between the rebels and the forces of law and order. Throughout the play, he occupies borderline positions. He conjoins two personal qualities that the play sets in opposition, 'wit' and 'wisdom'. As Chancellor, his absorption into the political and intellectual ruling elite never seems complete or permanent. At the end of the play he occupies another border territory, standing between the secular and spiritual worlds, grounded in humanity yet self-disciplined in the face of death. In his own words, the King sends him as 'a rich present' to the King of Heaven (13.88). More is the gift object that conveys an implied message that he does not articulate himself, a token of pure intermediation.

More's antagonist Henry VIII is mentioned several times, always in his function as king, never by name. Probably for reasons of censorship, he at no point appears onstage. Henry nevertheless exerts a determining influence over all the major events. In the first half of the play, ultimate responsibility for the contested privileges of the strangers living in London belongs with him. The Council acts in his name in sending troops to reinforce the City authorities. He issues the pardon that saves the lives of all the rebels except their leader John Lincoln. In the later scenes, it is Henry who is the source of the all-important document that More refuses to sign; the Earl of Surrey announces that 'Our words are now the King's' when More is arrested (13.138). Henry's presence is felt palpably behind More's conveyance to the Tower of London and execution. The King, the unseen prime mover, assumes a virtually providential role, more manifest in its effects than the power of God, and yet unknowable, omnipotent and unnervingly quiet.



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- 2 '... to draw you / To shun such lewd assemblies' (7.162–3): Surrey (Michael Jenn) announces the King's pardon, in the production by Robert Delamere (Royal Shakespeare Company, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2005)

The issue of royal authority haunts the play. If Henry's is intrinsic to the subject-matter, Queen Elizabeth's profoundly affected the writing and the censorship of the writing. Critical and historical analysis can scarcely begin without some understanding of the manuscript in which the text is preserved. The demands of Elizabethan censorship were such that some things could not be attempted to be shown, and

other things were rashly attempted but disallowed. *Sir Thomas More* is one of only a small group of plays from the public theatre that survive in manuscript form. And it demonstrates more aspects in the making of an early modern play than any of the other extant manuscripts. An extended exploration will be found in Appendix 2, but what immediately follows is a brief account not of a play, but of the incomplete making of a play.

*Sir Thomas More* survives as the British Library manuscript 'The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore' (Harley MS 7368). The play was most likely first composed in or around 1600, in a lost draft by Anthony Munday, perhaps working in collaboration with Henry Chettle (see pp. 419–20). The provisionally finished play was copied out in its entirety by Munday. This copy, the main part of the existing manuscript, is generally referred to as the Original Text. The term distinguishes it from later Additions, which are revisions written on separate leaves. The Original Text was intended to become a theatre company's official playbook. Hence, as was routine, it was submitted to Edmund Tilney, who as Master of the Revels was the Court official responsible for regulating and licensing drama. His interventions in the manuscript represent the only surviving example of his censorship, and they are remarkable. He strongly disliked what he read on two counts. The early scenes showed a riot of London citizens and apprentices against the privileges of foreigners resident in London. This attracted his most hostile interventions. Tilney deleted almost all of the first scene, and instructed at the beginning of the play:

*Leave out the insurrection wholly and the cause thereof, and begin with Sir Thomas More at the Mayor's sessions, with a report afterwards of his good service done being Sheriff of London upon a mutiny against the Lombards – only by a short report, and not otherwise, at your own perils.*

(Tilney, 1–6)

As the insurrection took up most of the first half of the action, the damage was severe.

Tilney also demanded cuts in the later part of the play dealing with More. The dramatists had shown considerable tact and even evasiveness in dealing with the Oath of Succession. Tilney's objection was evidently to the very fact that it was mentioned, albeit obliquely.<sup>1</sup> He required the passage in which Rochester and More refuse to sign the articles (10.80–104) to be omitted. The religious politics surrounding Henry's break with the Catholic Church were extremely sensitive, as the Protestant state and Church under Elizabeth I had been under considerable threat from Spain. Though the immediate danger of invasion diminished after the failed Armada of 1588, a state of hostility continued until James I made peace in 1603. Spain's actions were validated by the Pope's insistence that Elizabeth was not rightful ruler of England. The Pope, refusing to recognize Henry's divorce and remarriage, had declared Anne Boleyn's daughter Elizabeth to be illegitimate by birth, and so an unlawful monarch. More's opposition to Henry's divorce of Katherine of Aragon challenges nothing less than the authority of the living Queen.

Most likely, the revisions all came after Tilney's censorship of the Original Text. It is a remarkable testimony to the complexity of the revision that no fewer than four dramatists were involved. They were originally distinguished by W.W. Greg, and are now identified with varying degrees of probability as Henry Chettle (Greg's Hand A), Thomas Heywood (Hand B), William Shakespeare (Hand D) and Thomas Dekker (Hand E). No single dramatist can be credited with oversight of the whole process. Instead, they were assisted and guided by a playhouse annotator and scribe, unknown by name and so identified simply as 'Hand C'.

The play was revised in ways that took limited account of Tilney's requirements. The playwrights were concerned also

1 Shell, *Catholicism*, 219. But see 10.75n.

with other matters, such as ensuring greater dramatic cohesion in the middle scenes. They retained the insurrection episode, albeit in altered form. There is no attempt to rework the opening scene. A strategy of simply abandoning the first scene might have been necessary. Fortunately, the play makes perfect sense without it; all the salient details are reported later on.

How could it be that the revisers nevertheless ignored Tilney's instruction to omit the insurrection entirely? The answer could partly lie in the authorship and date of the project. If, as is most plausible, the play was revised shortly after James I came to the throne, the specific threat of xenophobic rioting against aliens would have receded. One of the revisers, Shakespeare, was principal dramatist for the company by then known as the King's Men. He had already established his skill in writing acceptable scenes showing popular unrest. He would be a safe pair of hands. As for the matter of Sir Thomas More, the political agenda changed decisively with the accession of James. His first act of foreign policy was to make peace with Spain. English Catholics were no longer potential allies of the enemy. A play about More might have appeared to be a timely renegotiation of the Catholic past and of Henry VIII's break with it.

The manuscript of the play, like More in the play, stands at a threshold. It is a textual object that is in a state of unfinished process. It is complex and discontinuous, slashed by the fault-lines of censorship, fractured by revision. It stands in between the complete fair copy penned by Munday and any theatrical future the play may have had. The text is dismembered by the exercise of state authority in a way that can be correlated with the execution of the play's subject Sir Thomas More.<sup>1</sup> The cutting edge of authority was felt by both the person, under Henry VIII, and the dramatic script representing him, under

1 Cf. George Chapman's description of his censored plays as 'these poore dismemberd Poems', in his epistle to Sir Thomas Walsingham (*Charles Duke of Biron* (1608), sig. A2).

his daughter Elizabeth. The manuscript thus represents More in two ways: by its containing a script for mimetic presentation of him onstage, and by its re-enactment of More's execution in the state-inflicted damage to the text.

To take this line of thought a stage further, one might consider the relation between More as liminal figure in early modern England and the play of *Sir Thomas More* as a liminal text within the literary canon of Shakespeare. As an analogy it is not quite exact, and as a causal relation it is not quite straightforward. Nevertheless, there are significant similarities. More disrupts the discourse of early modern Protestant probity; the play disrupts the image of Shakespeare as a dramatist available only in print and in isolation from the agency of theatre. Since the publication of the First Folio in 1623, print has fabricated Shakespeare as a bounded, determinate authorial figure by effacing the traces of contingency and collaboration that the lost manuscripts would have revealed. Accordingly, the position of *Sir Thomas More* within Shakespeare studies, like the position of More in Protestant early modern England, has been characterized by half-hearted endorsement if not exclusion. *Sir Thomas More* is only now becoming familiar in Shakespeare editions and series as a full-length play. Its presence and presentation here in the Arden series consolidates its claim to be part of the Shakespeare canon, restoring the connection between text and the process of writing that is otherwise lost. It gives us Shakespeare as neither revered bard nor postmodern author function, but as dramatic author marking the paper with strokes of ink.

## THE POET-PLAYMAKERS

This section places *Sir Thomas More* within the lives of its writers. The terms 'playmaker' and 'poet' were both used to describe dramatists. 'Poet' highlights the play as a literary artefact shaped by personal qualities of writing. 'Playmaker'

brings us closer to the collaborative business of writing for the theatre. Both shaped the play as the artefact it is.

*Anthony Munday*

Munday described himself as a citizen and member of the Drapers' Company of London. For him, the City was both a 'Birth-place and a breeder' (Hill, *Munday*, 22). Born in 1560, he was the oldest of the dramatists involved in *Sir Thomas More*, and outlived most of the others. His parents died early. He was probably tutored for several years, particularly in languages, by a French Huguenot called Claudius Hollyband, who dwelled with the printer Thomas Purfoot. Munday entered into an apprenticeship with the stationer John Allde in 1576. The apprenticeship was shortlived, for Munday was released from serving the full term in 1578, on his own request.<sup>1</sup>

His early works and the admonitory narrative poem *The Mirror of Mutability* were dedicated to the Earl of Oxford, who flirted with Catholicism and may have been willing to assist Munday's ambition to travel in Europe to learn languages. Munday journeyed to Rome with the pro-Catholic Thomas Nowell, and stayed at the English College, the college of Catholic exiles resident in Rome. Having accepted its hospitality, he returned to England to write *The English Roman Life* (1582), a fierce and satirical diatribe against the College. By 1582 he had already become a spy for the government's interrogator and torturer Richard Topcliffe. He gave evidence against the Jesuit Edmund Campion at his trial in 1581. Campion was sentenced to death by hanging, drawing and quartering. Having witnessed the torture and execution of Campion and other Catholic martyrs, Munday went on to write a series of propagandist pamphlets against them: *A Brief Discourse of the Taking of Edmund Campion, the Seditious Jesuit* (1581), then *A Discovery of Edmund Campion*, *A Brief Answer*

1 Celeste Turner, *Anthony Munday: An Elizabethan Man of Letters* (Berkeley, Calif., 1928), 13–16.

*Made unto Two Seditious Pamphlets and A Brief and True Report of the Execution of Certain Traitors at Tyburn* (all published in 1582).

Michael A. Anderegg suggests how Munday could have obtained a copy of his main source for *Sir Thomas More*, Nicholas Harpsfield's biography, which existed only in manuscripts circulated amongst Catholics. The copy now in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, originally belonged to the More family. It contains the note, in an early hand: 'This booke was founde by Rich: Topclyff in M<sup>r</sup> Thomas Moares Studdye emongs other bookes at Greenstreet Mr Wayfarers hovse when Mr Moare was apprehended the xiiij<sup>th</sup> of Aprill 1582'. The Thomas More in question was grandson of the play's protagonist. 'Greenstreet' refers to the house where the Jesuit Robert Persons set up a press for printing Catholic propaganda.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the manuscript was seized specifically to prevent it being printed. The two facts, that Munday was involved in raids on Catholic suspects at this very time and that he wrote a play based on this very text, point to an uncomfortable connection.

Munday's earlier writing was in non-dramatic genres, the most prominent work being the prose romance *Zelauto* (1580). A decade later he was busy translating extravagantly long romances such as *Palmerin d'Oliva* (1588), Claude Colet's *Palladine of England* (1588), *Palmendos* (1589), Estienne de Maisonneuve's *Gerileon* (1592) and *Primaleon of Greece* (1595–6). But in the anonymous *Death of Campion* (1582), sometimes attributed to Thomas Alfield, who himself died a Catholic martyr in 1585, further details emerge. Munday 'first was a stage player' even before his apprenticeship, to which the writer adds with parenthetical sarcasm, 'no doubt a calling of some creditt' (sig. D4<sup>v</sup>). The pamphleteer goes on to say that he deceived his master Allde, and in his journey to Rome was

1 See Harpsfield, xiii and 296.

‘neuer admitted in the seminary’; when he returned to London he went back ‘to his first vomite againe’. This was acting:

I omite to declare howe this scholler new come out of Italy did play extempore, those gentlemen and others whiche were present, can best giue witnes of his dexterity, who being wery of his folly, hissed him from his stage. Then being therby discouraged, he set forth a balet against playes, but yet (O constant youth) he now beginnes againe to ruffle vpon the stage.<sup>1</sup>

(sig. E1<sup>r</sup>)

Munday was often dismissed as a mediocre commercial writer (Hill, *Munday*, 69–83), yet earned praise as ‘our best plotter’ in Francis Meres’s 1598 evaluation of the drama in *Palladis Tamia*. The term ‘plotter’ here probably refers to the initial sketch of a play in a series of scenic units, the ‘plot’ submitted to the theatre company for initial approval. Meres was therefore praising Munday’s skill in constructing plays. His first extant drama, *Fedele and Fortunio* (1585), another translation, follows the conventions of pastoral romance. *John a Kent and John a Cumber* is a fanciful folkloric comedy about two magicians. It survives, like *Sir Thomas More*, in manuscript. Between March 1598 and May 1603 Philip Henslowe’s *Diary* provides a detailed record of Munday’s output for the companies Henslowe managed, principally the Lord Admiral’s Men. Munday appears in the accounts up to December 1602. Much of his work was collaborative; most of it is lost. The survivors include two plays on the Robin Hood legend, *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon* and *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, written with assistance from Chettle. They combine comic popular legend with a melodramatic account of

1 The ‘balet [i.e. ballad] against playes’ is probably a dismissive reference to *A Second and Third Blast* (1580), actually a pamphlet and in part a translation.



Prince John's grim pursuit of the woman commonly known as Maid Marian but also in the plays called *Matilda*.

In the early years of the seventeenth century Munday was commissioned to write a series of civic pageants for the City of London, beginning with the mayoral pageants of 1602, 1604 (with Jonson) and 1605. If the revision of *Sir Thomas More* took place in about 1604, one possible reason why Munday may not have been involved is that the project sat awkwardly alongside his prestigious new commissions; or perhaps he was simply no longer in need of the money. His City employments also included revising John Stow's *Survey of London*; Munday's expanded edition appeared in 1618. Into Stow's section on 'Sports and Pastimes' Munday inserted a full account of the Ill May Day riots. The City eventually awarded him a pension for his various labours, and he died an old man in 1629.

The persecutor of Catholics and anti-Catholic pamphleteer is, on the face of it, the last person one would expect to write a play that seems designed to rehabilitate the martyr Sir Thomas More amongst the Elizabethans. In unpublished work in progress at the time of her death, Muriel St Clare Byrne momentarily lost the benign neutrality of the biographer and gazed into a heart of darkness:

Munday *liked* seeing Jesuits hanged and then drawn and quartered; and Munday liked such a sight not because it was the heyday of the Renaissance and passions ran high, [. . .] not because he lived in the spacious times of great Elizabeth, but because he was one of those human beings who find a ghastly and secret pleasure in seeing other people hurt . . . or in hurting.<sup>1</sup>

Yet Munday's religious affiliations remain an enigma. As the pamphleteer's 'O constant youth' hints, the key point about Munday is perhaps not his committed anti-Catholicism but

1 The bracketed ellipses have been inserted. The unbracketed ellipses are Byrne's.

his opportunistic vacillation. Sir John Davies, in an epigram punning on Munday's name and Monday the day of the week entitled 'In Mundayum, wrote:

Munday I sweare shalbee a hollidaye,  
If hee forswear himselfe but once a daye.<sup>1</sup>

David Womersley, who drew attention to this verse, went on to present Munday's religious identity in terms of self-constructed personae:

Was it the case that, when in Rome, he played the part of a Catholic? Or was it rather that, when he returned to England, he played the part of a Protestant? Or do we not have to choose between these alternatives? Was religious affiliation for Munday in fact just another expression of the extemporizing theatrical talent he had displayed as a boy? Was he therefore always acting, always simply trying on different religious identities for size and, like a religious chameleon, hoping to blend in to the background? Certainly, it is hard to pick out any thread of consistency running through Munday's religious activities and associations. This sometime scholar of the English College in Rome on his return to London became a friend of that ferocious Protestant and Marian exile, Robert Crowley. Later still he befriended and worked with the crypto-Catholic antiquarian and historian John Stow. By all accounts an officious and even overly-energetic hunter-out of recusants, Munday was just as happy, a few years later, to be equally busy (although less successful) in attempts to suppress the anti-episcopal writings of Martin Marprelate.<sup>2</sup>

1 John Davies, *Poems*, ed. Robert Krueger (Oxford, 1975), 157.

2 Quoted from a script kindly provided by Womersley.

One of the suspected authors of the ‘Martin Marprelate’ anti-episcopalian tracts was the nonconformist minister Giles Wigginton, who, when examined before the Church authorities in 1588, claimed that ‘Monday, the pursuivant . . . seemeth to favour the Pope and to be a great Dissembler’. In a pamphlet issued the following year entitled *Just Censure and Reproof of Martin Junior*, the Archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift is imagined castigating Munday as a turncoat: ‘Ah, thou Judas, thou that has already betrayed the Papists, I think meanest to betray us also’ (Donna B. Hamilton, 65). Munday was evidently trusted by no one. He himself, echoing Plato’s condemnation of poets, acknowledged that writers propagate falsehoods. A paragraph in *A Second and Third Blast*, given the marginal note ‘*Against Auctors of plaies*’, reads: ‘The notablest lier is become the best Poet; he that can make the most notorious lie, and disguise falshood in such sort, that he maie passe vnperceaued, is held the best writer’.<sup>1</sup> Munday himself cannot logically be excluded. He makes himself an instance of the ‘Cretan liar’ paradox.

Donna B. Hamilton argues that there is an underlying strand of support for Catholic martyrs in several of Munday’s pamphlets, despite their ostensible anti-Catholic agendas: the Iberian romances Munday translated into English display an implicitly pro-Catholic viewpoint, and behind Munday’s virulent anti-Catholicism lies a much more sympathetic attitude that can be compared with that in *Sir Thomas More* itself. Hamilton’s study may not prove that Munday was a covert Catholic sympathizer all along, but it suggests some element of residual Catholic mentality. Undue focus on Munday’s sensational activities in 1581–2 distorts the picture the other way. Munday is best seen as an unfixable figure who repeatedly engaged in religious controversy but who was notable for the apparently contradictory nature of his involvement.

1 *Second and Third Blast*, sig. H2<sup>v</sup>. The ‘Second Blast’ is a translation from Salvian, but the quotation comes from the ‘Third Blast’, presented on the title-page as ‘by a worshipful and zealous gentleman now aliue’, in fact probably Munday himself.

The reconstructed personal and spiritual life of an author, nowhere more a troublesome basis on which to read a work than in the case of Munday, might not tell the whole story. Indeed it can be argued that it is not even the critical factor. William B. Long places the play in a political context wherein the purposes of the government are foregrounded rather than those of the author. He suggests that the play was written as propaganda against anti-alien rioting in the early 1590s, and designed to show the consequences of disobedience to the sovereign ('Occasion', 50). This account implies an instrumental view of theatre in relation to those in power. Yet it is not clear why such a play would focus on More. A critique of Long's approach is that Munday, as the government's appointed propagandist, evidently failed utterly to demonstrate the political acumen for which he was supposedly chosen. Moreover, the plausibility of Long's account of the early scenes as a homily against insurrection depends on when the play was written. If the later dating proposed in this edition is correct, his case cannot so readily be sustained.

The 'water poet' John Taylor testifies in *Taylor's Feast* (1638) that in his old age Munday had a neurotic aversion that might relate to his early involvement in the reduction of human beings to butchered carcasses: 'Mr. *Anthony Munday* (sometimes a Writer to the City of *London*) would run from the Table at the sight of a forequarter of Lambe roasted' (sig. E4<sup>v</sup>). If such an anecdote offers only a slight foundation for an account of the psychology of Munday's authorship of *Sir Thomas More*, its import is too tantalizing to dismiss. It is not impossible that part of the genesis of *Sir Thomas More* lay in its vacillating main author's need for atonement.

### *Henry Chettle*

Henry Chettle may well have shared with Munday in the writing of the Original Text, and is identified with confidence as the author of Add. I (13.53–122; see Fig. 12). He was probably

involved at an early stage of the revision. The direction to rewrite at the beginning of Sc. 8, 'This must be new written' (OT2a.0.1), is most likely in his hand, and Chettle is also the most probable author of the revised Sc. 5 as copied out by Hand C.

Like Munday, Chettle was a Londoner and began his working life as a stationer.<sup>1</sup> He served an apprenticeship with Thomas East from 1577 to 1584, and in 1591 formed a short-lived partnership with John Hoskins and John Danter. The following year saw Chettle acting as editor and perhaps part-author of *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*, famous for its attacks on writers identified cryptically as Christopher Marlowe and Shakespeare. This title was entered in the Stationers' Register on 20 September 1592 'vppon the perill of Henrye Chettle', and part-printed by Danter. In his own prose dream-satire *Kind-Heart's Dream* (1592) he admitted to having transcribed the text, and, whilst denying his actual authorship, he issued an apology to Shakespeare. The two pamphlets associated with Chettle were the first to give public recognition to Shakespeare as an emerging authorial figure.

Further interventions as stationer's assistant from the early to mid-1590s attest to a more personal relationship with Munday than he could claim with Shakespeare. In 1592 Chettle tried to pass off an epistle to Munday's translation of *Gerileon* as by 'Your friend, T.N.': that is to say, supposedly, Thomas Nashe. His own *Kind-Heart's Dream* confesses his authorship of the epistle. In a letter prefixed to Munday's translation of the prose romance *2 Primaleon of Greece* (1596), Chettle claims to have done his best to speed up the printing of the work; the letter is signed 'Your old Well-willer: H. C. Printer'. Chettle was to collaborate with Munday on several plays.

A year after publication of *2 Primaleon*, Chettle may well have been responsible for adding to the stage directions and dialogue of the 1597 First Quarto of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was issued by Danter (Jowett, 'Chettle'). If the identification is

1 For biographical details, see Jenkins, *Chettle*, and Jowett, 'Notes'.

right, this is Chettle's earliest datable dramatic composition.<sup>1</sup> By 1598 he had emerged as a prolific dramatist. Henslowe's *Diary* again provides the details from that year until 1603. An entry of 29 December 1602 records part-payment for the one extant play probably entirely from Chettle's hand, *The Tragedy of Hoffman*. He elsewhere collaborated with all the dramatists involved in *Sir Thomas More* except Shakespeare, and had a hand in thirty-nine named plays, writing usually in collaboration. On 25 March 1602 he signed an order in Henslowe's *Diary* restraining him from working for other theatre companies. Whether he fully observed the restraint is impossible to say.

Chettle's writing around the time of the revision of *Sir Thomas More* was not confined to drama. In 1603 he published *England's Mourning Garment*, a pastoral in prose and verse lamenting the death of Elizabeth and accusing other poets of neglecting to do likewise. Here Chettle again expresses resentment against Shakespeare, identified as 'siluer tongued *Melicert*'. His catalogue of remiss poets includes another collaborator in the revision, Dekker, who is probably '*Quicke Antihorace*', so-called for his rivalry with the English Horace, Jonson (sig. D2<sup>r</sup>).

To judge by *England's Mourning Garment*, 1603–4 was for Chettle a time to praise rather than condemn kings and queens.<sup>2</sup> But in revising *Sir Thomas More* he may have been equally or more concerned about censorship. His addition, Add. I, revises a passage that in the Original Text offers the play's most forthright criticism of royal authority. Part of the passage contains a savage indictment of 'the prince, in all his sweet-gorged maw' (OT3.21). If indeed potential censorship was an issue, the changes extended beyond the removal and replacement of the troublesome lines, which could have been achieved with much less effort. Chettle's addition offers an illuminating example

1 See p. 423 on Chettle's contribution to *John of Bordeaux*.

2 I am grateful to Katherine Duncan-Jones for drawing my attention to the significance of the date.

of authorial thought-processes manifested in ink. He made numerous alterations as he wrote, and marked two passages for omission within his draft, 13.57–70 and 105–12. Both contain politically controversial material. His agitation about the subject-matter perhaps contributed to his anxiety as writer, which may be reflected too in the passage's contorted syntax.

Chettle's biographer Harold Jenkins identifies his writing as characterized by contrasting styles of darkly intense melodrama and light lyricism. As a passage such as 13.57–63 illustrates, Add. I amalgamates the two. More speaks 'like More in melancholy' (53), consciously exempting the speech itself from his more characteristic 'mirth' to address his wife's distress about his fall from power. The passage as Chettle revised it is central to the play's representation of More's relation with his wife, children and servants. There is nothing More can say that can justify to his wife the course he is taking, which will make her a widow. But at least in Chettle's version he engages with her far more directly than in the Original Text, and makes such attempt as he can to palliate her distress.

### *William Shakespeare*

'Hand D', identified with strong probability as William Shakespeare, supplied by far the most extended passage of new writing in the revisions.<sup>1</sup> By 1604 Shakespeare was an established sharer in the King's Men and stood at the height of his career. The main run of history plays on the lives of monarchs had been completed some years previously, as had *Hamlet*. Among the plays closest in date of composition to the *Sir Thomas More* revisions are *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare's most intense study of the city and civic government, and *Othello*, his most searching examination of what it means to belong to a foreign country.<sup>2</sup> The themes of *Sir Thomas More* were

1 For a persuasive account of Shakespeare's contribution, see John Jones, 7–29.

2 Unless one counts *The Merchant of Venice*, on the basis that Shylock experiences Venice as foreign despite being a resident there.

therefore of immediate interest to Shakespeare. Moreover, as E.A.J. Honigmann has pointed out, by 1604 Shakespeare would have gained a first-hand understanding of foreigners resident in London, for around this time he lodged in the house of the Huguenot Christopher Mountjoy.<sup>1</sup> This connection may have inflected the moving speeches in which More appeals for tolerance to immigrants.

Honigmann's depiction of a man in close contact with and potentially sympathetic towards the Protestant Huguenots contrasts with the theory, revived in the 1990s, that Shakespeare held strong Catholic sympathies. Yet Shakespeare is typically indirect in reference to doctrinal issues. When he does allude to them, it is not in order to participate in religious debate, but to engage with issues closer to playmaking, such as the relation between art and nature. The Hand D passages have nothing to do with religious doctrine beyond the political commonplace of divine right.

In revising Sc. 6, Shakespeare was acting as a professional dramatist. But the themes and dramaturgy are recognizably familiar from his work elsewhere. R.W. Chambers provides a convincing demonstration that the sequence of ideas in More's defence of authority follows a specific Shakespearean course, searching out the point 'beyond which it becomes absurd to speak of fortuitous combinations' (Chambers, 'Play of *More*', 207). Verbal associations such as that between 'infection', 'palsy' and 'sore eyes' (6.14–15) are distinctively Shakespearean, as is the image of social chaos in which men 'Would feed on one another' (98). Even individually, some of these turns of phrase have proved genuinely distinctive. In sequence, Chambers argues, they reflect a specific creative or psychological tick.

Shakespeare had recently depicted scenes of insurrection or popular tumult in the opening scene of *Julius Caesar* and the killing of Cinna the poet in 3.3 of the same play. The first scene of *Coriolanus*, which begins with 'a company of mutinous

1 Honigmann, 234; see also Nicholl, 180.



*Citizens with staves, clubs, and other weapons*', was later to show an even more striking similarity of scenic structure. Both scenes begin with one of the rebel citizens calling to be heard: 'Peace, hear me!', 'hear me speak'. Both speakers go on to complain of the dearth of food. In *Coriolanus* the grievance is true to the narrative and thematically important, whereas in *Sir Thomas More* it is an unpredicted swerve away from the critical grievance against aliens. In both scenes, patricians intervene in a successful attempt to defuse the violence. Shakespeare put the experience of revising the insurrection scene to good later use.

Shakespeare's writing practices in the passage show a dramatist perhaps uncertain as to how the scene would fit into the play. Indeed he was probably unable to consult the previous leaf, where Hand C had written the opening stage direction as guidance (see pp. 375–80). Shakespeare's one stage direction, for the mid-scene entry after 6.31, omits to provide an entry for More. Shakespeare also fails to identify who should speak when he gives the speech prefix as 'other' (a form also found in both Q2 and F *Hamlet* for the second 'clown' or gravedigger in 5.1), which he then reduces to 'oth' and eventually the most minimal 'o'.<sup>1</sup> 'Other' is an open invitation to someone else involved in bringing the play to the stage to determine the role, and so a marker of the collaborative nature of playmaking. Shakespeare was unsure or even confused when he supplied two speech prefixes for 'Sher' at 6.32 and 35; these must be spoken by different roles, and it is unclear which those roles should be. Though Hand C largely neglected the stage directions, he intervened repeatedly in the speech prefixes and made a decisive deletion in the dialogue itself (see pp. 127–9). Hand C's changes would not have been apparent if the play had been printed from the manuscript and the manuscript lost, as is the usual situation with the text of Shakespeare, or even if he or someone else had transcribed it. They therefore provide

1 See transcript, pp. 405–6.

a unique insight into the authorial script and its relation to theatre alterations. The latter would be invisibly subsumed within the text that we call 'Shakespeare' if the site of writing and annotation were not preserved for us to see.

The fact that Shakespeare was writing only one section of the play accounts for readers' and audiences' mixed responses to the 'Hand D' passage. Compared with the rest of the play, the passage is exceptionally dynamic, poetically resonant and vividly etched. Even audience members who are unaware of the authorship issue often find that the play speaks with more urgency here.<sup>1</sup> Yet, because it is not part of a full Shakespeare play, the passage arguably lacks some of the added virtue of being, in John Jones's words, 'wonderful through belonging to a particular masterpiece, this and no other' (28). The resonances between this scene and the play as a whole are strong, but Jones argues that they are not as remarkable as they are, to cite his high-threshold example, in the case of the sleepwalking scene in *Macbeth*.

However, Shakespeare's writing is evidently not wholly confined to a single episode. The soliloquy transcribed by Hand C at 8.1–21 (Add. III) has also been ascribed to Shakespeare, and in this edition it is further argued that he may have drafted some of the comparable soliloquy at the beginning of the following scene (9.6–18). These speeches extend our picture of Shakespeare's involvement. The Sc. 9 soliloquy resembles the Hand D passage in that it required further work to assimilate it into the revised script as a whole. But the soliloquies taken in conjunction with the Hand D passage show Shakespeare playing a significant role in reshaping the overall script. The soliloquy beginning Sc. 8 looks back to the insurrection sequence. More's pacification of the rebels has made him Lord Chancellor, and now his meditation on the nature of high office leads on to the plan to test Erasmus' ability to 'distinguish /

1 Inevitably, the basis for this claim is anecdotal. It draws on comments made by students from various institutions on the RSC production of 2005–6.

Merit and outward ceremony' (8.40–1). The first of the added soliloquies therefore establishes a thematic connection between the two episodes by highlighting the questionable substance of authority and high office. The second informs the audience that Erasmus has now left London, and shows More reflecting on the messenger's news that the Lord Mayor is about to visit: 'Friends go and come' (9.6). Here the method of joining scenes is less thematic and more oriented to narrative, but it also stresses the whimsical, affective nature of More in power. If Shakespeare sketched a first draft, this might indicate that he reviewed the whole sequence of Scs 8 and 9. The context is collaborative: another dramatist, presumably Dekker, had already revised Sc. 8, Hand C transcribed both soliloquies and Heywood added lines to one of them. But the soliloquies show their first author also to be deeply implicated in the process.

*Thomas Dekker*

Thomas Dekker was born in about 1572, and it is significant to *Sir Thomas More's* representation of Dutch and other London aliens that his name suggests that he came from a family of Dutch immigrants. He is unknown as dramatist until January 1598, when he appears in Henslowe's *Diary* writing for the Admiral's Men. His work for the company was mostly in collaboration with other dramatists, amongst them Chettle and Heywood. He specialized in a genial variety of city comedy demonstrated in his best-known work, *The Shoemakers' Holiday* (1599). His satire of the London theatre *Satiromastix* (1601) mocked Ben Jonson as the self-important Horace. It was originally performed by Paul's Boys, and then by the Chamberlain's Men at the Globe, Dekker's one known association with the troupe in this period. He worked for various companies, and in 1604–5 collaborated with Thomas Middleton and John Webster. Dekker demonstrated strong Protestant politics in his anti-Papist play *The Whore of Babylon* (1607). Except during a period of imprisonment for debt, he continued to write until his death in 1632.

Dekker is generally supposed to be the author of the new material in the parts of Sc. 8 transcribed by Hand C, as well as the section in his own handwriting (Metz, 'Scholars', 19; see Fig. 16). The revised scene is produced by the major structural alteration of dividing the Falconer episode in two and splicing in the Erasmus scene. The equivalent to Sc. 8 in the Original Text is made up of two separate scenes in the sequence: Randall > Erasmus > Falconer > 'Wit and Wisdom'. The revised version has: Randall > Falconer A > Erasmus > Falconer B > 'Wit and Wisdom'. In the Original Text the Falconer episode is probably an encounter on the street. It includes More's and Surrey's detailed and strict instructions to enforce an end to factional fighting; their words recall the issues of public order already dramatized in the insurrection sequence (OT2b.25–41). The revised text gives the impression of a single location. It evidently occurs in More's Court office as Lord Chancellor. The speeches on restraining riot are omitted, and the parallel with the Lifter scene is more obvious.

These changes involved only limited fresh writing. But Dekker supplied a new ending to the scene that survives in his handwriting. The passage is comparable with Heywood's added ending to Sc. 9: both add comic but spirited epilogues focusing on rootless commoners. Dekker's lively dialogue, showing Falconer's rage at his more or less enforced haircut, is of a piece with his city comedy and with the interest in London's street-dwellers shown in his rogue pamphlets of 1606–12 about the city's low-life villains. Falconer is here less conformable than in Munday's original insofar as it survives. In this respect Dekker demonstrates a typical characteristic of his writing, what his biographer John Twynning calls 'a sustained compassion for society's misfits and casualties'.

*Thomas Heywood*

The identification of Hand B as Thomas Heywood is likely, and the present edition provisionally accepts it. Unlike Munday,

Chettle and probably Dekker, but like Shakespeare, Heywood was not a Londoner. Unlike them all, he was university educated. He was probably born in Lincolnshire in 1573. His time at Cambridge University may have been cut short by his father's death in 1593. Thereafter he lived in London. As with Dekker, his earliest known dramatic work is recorded in Henslowe's *Diary*: it was written for the Admiral's Men in 1596. His two-part early play *King Edward IV* was written for Derby's Men and performed some time before it was printed in 1599. It has been described as characteristic of Heywood's drama for its 'episodic plots, sympathetic treatment of tradesmen and apprentices, strong female characters, and a focus on Christian mercy and forgiveness rather than revenge' (Kathman, 'Heywood'). In most of these respects it is similar to *Sir Thomas More*. *King Edward IV* also includes an insurrection in London, though in this case the prentices resist the insurrectionists, remaining loyal to the Crown.

Heywood acted onstage and composed a wide variety of plays for various companies, though he did not, as far as is known, write for the Chamberlain's/King's Men until much later in his career. In the late 1590s he worked for the Admiral's Men, but after the new Worcester's company was formed in 1602 he became one of their leading actors and wrote for them too (Gurr, *Playing Companies*, 321–2). Altogether, his own claim was that he had 'either an entire hand or at the least a maine finger' in 220 plays.<sup>1</sup> The statement, though possibly a jocular exaggeration, suggests that there must have been a lot of theatrical jobbing of the kind that Hand B undertakes. One known example of a comparable kind is his Prologue to the revised version of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*. Heywood's best-known play is the domestic tragedy *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603). His drama shows a strong middle-class orientation, and ranges from the domestic to the improbably adventurous. He also wrote narrative verse, prose translations and a prose defence of the

1 'To the Reader', *The English Traveller*, sig. A3<sup>r</sup>.

theatre entitled *An Apology for Actors* (c. 1608; published 1615). He remained active as a writer until 1640, and died in 1641 (Kathman, 'Heywood').

Heywood's participation as reviser of *Sir Thomas More* is the most diversified. He annotated the Original Text with new speeches, and wrote no fewer than three separate sections of the Additions themselves. The revisers were especially interested in bolstering the play's comic elements, partly but not entirely with the purpose of mollifying the threat posed by the rebels. Heywood's role was crucial. In the insurrection scenes he took the main action needed to establish the role of the Clown. To this end, he copied Sc. 4, writing in speeches for Clown Betts as he did so, and also added speeches for him in the margins of Sc. 7 in the Original Text (see Fig. 11). Many of Heywood's plays contain clowns, and it was a common strategy in revising a play to add new comic material. Heywood's added speeches for Clown Betts are therefore both typical of his provision of a hand or main finger, and characteristic of the kind of role he typically created. He also added the passage at the end of Sc. 9, the 'Marriage of Wit and Wisdom' scene, in which the players who performed the interlude outwit the servingman who tries to cheat them. In the Hand B addition, and nowhere else in the scene, one of the players is identified in speech prefixes as 'clo' – that is, 'Clown'. It is possible that Hand B envisaged that this role would be played by the same actor as Clown Betts. The contributions are certainly of a piece in that they bolster the clowning.

From a political point of view, the intent in introducing Clown Betts was probably to defuse the scene's threatening violence by making the action more comic and the insurgents more foolish. In the Original Text, Lincoln's first speech, inciting the citizens to fire the houses of the strangers, begins: 'Come, gallant bloods, you whose free souls do scorn / To bear th'enforced wrongs of aliens' (OT1a.4–5). Clown Betts's words added in the revised version, 'We are free-born / And do

take scorn / To be used so' (4.13–15), echo Lincoln. However, the new script defies the logic of the comic uptake because the words are spoken before Lincoln's speech (in the revision at 4.21–2), not after it. To Eric Rasmussen, 'the parody precedes the object of the parody and the point is lost'.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, though, Clown Betts's version of the line, preceded as it is by comic doggerel, defuses the serious impact of Lincoln's speech in advance. The same explanation can apply to Heywood's addition at 4.68–73, which takes the wind out of the sails of Lincoln and Sherwin's exchange at 74.

The third passage composed by Hand B is the first draft of the opening five lines of the revised Sc. 9, which he drafted on spare paper at the end of the episode of the cheating servingman. Hand B's variegated work on Scs 4, 8 and 9 identifies him as a theatre practitioner as much as a dramatist. His writing offers as lively a humour as any passage in the play.

## THE CENSOR AND THE REMAKER

Two further hands were involved in marking the manuscript and defining the text. Tilney's impact was at first negative, but the revisers took account of his requirements to the extent that he can be seen to be a contributor to the play in its revised form. But it fell to Hand C to control the text through the delicate process of that revision.

### *Edmund Tilney*

Edmund Tilney, courtier and Master of the Revels, was the most socially elite of those whose hands are found in the manuscript (Maslen). His parents had both frequented the Henrician Court, his father being an usher to Henry VIII and his mother a chamberwoman to Henry's fifth wife, Katherine Howard.

- 1 Rasmussen, 'Clown', 130. Rasmussen conjectures that Heywood ineptly inserted lines that the Clown had spoken onstage by way of improvisation, and wrote them in the wrong place. But the assumption that the Original Text version of the play was performed onstage is implausible in view of Tilney's prohibition.

Edmund was himself trained for Court service. His fictional discourse in dialogue, *The Flower of Friendship* (1568), was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. In 1578 he began to serve under the Lord Chamberlain as Master of the Revels. He developed the licensing of plays into an arrangement whereby each play was submitted to his office to be perused and approved. The system whereby he came to read and censor *Sir Thomas More* was therefore of his own devising.

The criteria for allowance were well established, if malleable in their application. *Sir Thomas More* fell foul of them, both because it staged an insurrection and because it placed the religious politics of Queen Elizabeth's father (and Tilney's father's patron) in a potentially unfavourable light. However, Dutton and others have stressed the facilitating aspect of Tilney's overall regulation: the theatre was protected as well as controlled by the Master of the Revels, whose patent of 1581 required him to 'order' and 'reform' plays as well as 'authorize' them or 'put them down'. The injunction in *Sir Thomas More* falls well short of putting the play down, and allows that it be reformed. As his comment against the insurrection scenes shows, Tilney was not opposed to a play about More as such. Indeed, he formulates a plan of action whereby the dramatists can retrieve the play. His insistence that More should be shown doing 'good service' indicates that Tilney was in favour of More being given a positive depiction; the play's fictitious account of More's rise to power is thus endorsed as a narrative even as it is disallowed as a staged event.

There remains an apparent contradiction between Tilney's severe part-prohibition and his willingness to contemplate a revised play reaching the stage. Perhaps this helped the revisers, some time later, in altered circumstances, to envisage that a revision would be feasible. Nevertheless, Tilney's aims do not mesh with those of the dramatists. Although he contributed to the text of the manuscript, he can scarcely be accounted a collaborating author.



Hand C

Hand C, who cannot be identified by name, is a theatre scribe and annotator. Though not a dramatist or ‘poet’, he nevertheless significantly contributed to the making of the revised version of the play. If Munday excelled as ‘plotter’ in the sense of the dramatist who made the initial author plot from which the play was written, Hand C had particular expertise as ‘plotter’ in another sense: the organizer of the stage action at the point when the script developed towards theatre performance. His skill is reflected in the surviving theatre plots of two plays: *2 Seven Deadly Sins* and the play provisionally identified as *2 Fortune’s Tennis*.<sup>1</sup> *Sir Thomas More* likewise attests to his skills in dealing with the functional operation of the play, and in ensuring that actors and properties were available when needed. Playmaking was always a collaborative activity involving theatre personnel as well as dramatists. In the case of *Sir Thomas More*, the complex nature of the revisions led Hand C to make various kinds of interventions at various stages in the process. The number of dramatists was exceptionally large, and communication between them seems to have been limited; hence Hand C’s role as orchestrator was exceptionally active.

Errors that Hand C made when transcribing sections of the revisions to *Sir Thomas More* confirm that he copied rather than composed them (see Figs 15 and 16). One way or another, he intervened in five out of six revised passages (the exception is the free-standing Add. I), and his contributions were multiple to the extent that in Add. IV they went through four stages of development. It is evident that he, rather than any of the dramatists, supervised the revision. Hand C is therefore the project manager. Indeed, his active role in planning and co-ordinating the revisions, and his constructive alterations of the text, perhaps identify him as a special kind of co-author.

1 MS XIX, Dulwich College, London, and British Library Add. MS 10449, fol. 4. Both are reproduced in Greg, *Dramatic Documents*. See p. 102 for further discussion of the date and acting company of both.

There are, however, no indications that he was occupationally a dramatist. Rather, his efforts demonstrate a particular creativity that could come from the theatre itself. The present account has described how the play intersects, sometimes puzzlingly, with the dramatists who wrote and revised it. As far as the revisions are concerned, it is Hand C who made those intersections happen. Through distribution of paper, transcription, annotation of authorial drafts, reference marks and paste-ins, Hand C controlled the dispersal of work, then gathered back the revision from the separate contributing poet-playmakers, laying claim to the assembled text as a theatre work controlled by the company who presumably called for the revisions in the first place.

## PAST AND PRESENT

### *Unroyal histories*

*Sir Thomas More* can be linked with a small group of plays dealing with the lives of the friends and advisers of kings. These cluster in the late 1590s, thus around or shortly before the date proposed for *Sir Thomas More* in this edition. Some of them were inspired or provoked by Shakespeare's Sir John Falstaff as misleader of a prince. The most notable surviving examples are *I Sir John Oldcastle*, written by Munday, Michael Drayton, Robert Wilson and Richard Hathway in 1599 for the Admiral's Men, and printed without attribution in 1600, and *Cromwell*, which is said on the title-page of the 1602 edition to have been written for the Chamberlain's Men, Shakespeare's company, by one 'W.S.'.

Oldcastle, a friend and comrade-in-arms of Henry V, later became a leader of the anti-clerical Lollard heresy, and was eventually sentenced to death for his opposition to the Church's practice of venerating the images of saints. He was satirized in Shakespeare's *I Henry IV* in the character whose name was subsequently changed to Falstaff. The Admiral's Men's two

Oldcastle plays (the second has not survived) offer a rejoinder in which Oldcastle's integrity is vindicated. They present the common Elizabethan view of him as a Protestant martyr *avant la lettre*, opposing Church corruption and dying for his faith. Oldcastle's initial friendship with the King, his conflicting obligations to king and religious conscience and his execution for his recalcitrance to royal authority are all points of direct comparison with Sir Thomas More. The difference is that Oldcastle was identified with Protestantism and More with Catholicism.

One important point of contact between Shakespeare and *Sir Thomas More* lies in the name and role of Doll, Falstaff's mistress in *2 Henry IV*. The only plays written between the formation of the professional theatres and the end of the Jacobean period with a character of such a name are *2 Henry IV*, *1 Oldcastle*, *Sir Thomas More*, *Northward Ho!*, *The Alchemist* and *Epicene* (Berger). In all of these plays Doll (a diminutive of 'Dorothy') is a feisty London citizen; in some she is potentially or actually a prostitute.<sup>1</sup> The Dolls in *1 Oldcastle* and *The Alchemist* are clearly modelled on Shakespeare's character. In *1 Oldcastle*'s scenes of Sir John of Wrotham and Doll, the echoes of Sir John Falstaff and Doll are unmistakable. The defence of Oldcastle partly involves using Doll to show that the play displaced the unsavoury aspects of Oldcastle/Falstaff on to this play's rogue character, the corrupt priest Sir John. Debauchery, the play implies, is to be found not in the pre-Protestant hero but in the priesthood of the pre-Reformation Church.

What are the implications for Doll Williamson? In one important way she is the exception, a faithful wife who resists abduction. But the difference may be to the point, for, whereas Shakespeare's Doll Tearsheet establishes a sentimental and loyal affection for her client Falstaff, Doll Williamson's fidelity to her husband is challenged by Cavalier's violent attempt to seize and prostitute her. In *Sir Thomas More* the community politics are

1 As also in the reference to 'Moll and Doll' in Middleton's *Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1.57.

in the foreground. The opening scene depicts Londoners as humble but spirited, resistant to outside influence and fiercely loyal to family and community. Doll is the epitome of these values. To a late Elizabethan audience (if there ever was one), she might have been emblematic of City, nation or religion. Her resistance to abduction and rape might even have offered a reminder of Queen Elizabeth's opposition to the threatened invasion from Spain. But the religious politics are subdued, for the strangers are not identified as Catholics (though the assailant is an Italian 'Lombard' at 1.56). Had they been so, it would have been harder for the play to sustain its suggestions of empathy between the Londoners and More.

The connections between *Sir Thomas More* and other plays about meritocratic princely advisers are not confined to *1 Oldcastle*. Within a few years the secular '*Tres Thomae*' of Henry VIII's successive chancellors Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, Sir Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell all became subjects of plays.<sup>1</sup> The Admiral's company's two Wolsey plays are lost. *Cromwell* has particular links with *Sir Thomas More*. It records the career of the Lord Chancellor who succeeded More after his resignation, and who helped to implement the Henrician Protestantization of the nation. A significant feature it shares with *Sir Thomas More* is that the King makes no appearance in it.

*Sir Thomas More*, *1 Oldcastle* and *Cromwell* all deflect from the mainstream of historical events by presenting anecdotal and episodic accounts of the rise and fall of the man on whom they focus. Ultimately they derive from the medieval plays showing the lives of saints (Ribner, 193). *Sir Thomas More* is distinct not only for its greater sophistication as drama, but also for its closer relation to the model of the saint's life and its focus on a Catholic martyr. But the play's religious cross-currents are extraordinarily complex, not least on account of its debt to Protestant traditions of history-making.

1 For the original religious *Tres Thomae*, which also included More, see p. 59.

*Holinshed's Chronicles*

One of the two main sources of *Sir Thomas More* is Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles*, the most comprehensive of the Tudor surveys of English history, first published in 1577, and reissued in an expanded edition prepared under the supervision of Abraham Fleming in 1587.<sup>1</sup> Holinshed records in detail the history of England, Scotland and Ireland from misty pre-history up to the Tudor present day in three large folio volumes. They were a major source for Elizabethan history plays. If they provided material for no dramatist more frequently than Shakespeare, they were also consulted by other dramatists, including Munday and Chettle for the *Robert Earl of Huntingdon* plays, and perhaps for their lost history plays recorded by Henslowe.

The perspective on More in Holinshed is Protestant in two respects: it withholds any account of More's virtuous life, and it interprets his wit as a sign of ungodliness. But the *Chronicle's* main value to the dramatists lies elsewhere. *Sir Thomas More* draws on Holinshed for the long Ill May Day sequence, which directly and often closely follows the chronicle. The opening scene dramatizes a sustained passage in Holinshed describing events in 1517 (Holinshed, 1; reprinted on pp. 470–4). The 'malicious grudge' of London citizens against the privileges of strangers is exacerbated by a Frenchman's seizing of two doves purchased by Williamson and by de Barde's enticement of an unnamed man's wife to his house. John Lincoln, seeking to have complaints read from preachers' pulpits, succeeds in his approach to Doctor Beal, who reads a bill of complaints at the Spital. From this account, the dramatist made a single scene. De Barde's attempt to capture and rape the woman who is identified in the play as Doll happens at the same time as Cavalier's theft of the doves, and becomes the play's opening

1 Gabrieli, '*Sir Thomas More*', establishes that the chronicle source is Holinshed, not Edward Hall, and that the biographical source is Harpsfield, not Roper, nor the author identified only as Ro. Ba.

incident. Doctor Beal's sermon is presented indirectly as an event that will take place, and the words of the bill are instead placed in the mouth of Lincoln. In other respects, Holinshed is followed attentively, sometimes with careful regard for verbal detail.

There is, however, a possible additional source. George Betts's resolution to 'go forth a-Maying, but make it the worst May Day for the strangers that ever they saw' (1.142–4) may be based on an account of the riots from a popular ballad, first printed in the 1631 *Crown Garland of Golden Roses*, an expanded edition of ballads originally collected in 1612 by the populist historian Richard Johnson. It relates that:

Poore Tradesmen had small dealings then,  
and who but strangers beare the bell?<sup>1</sup>  
Which was a griefe to Englishmen,  
to see them here in *London* dwell.  
Wherefore (God wot) upon May Eue,  
as Prentises on Maying went . . .  
But such a May-game it was knowne,  
as like in *London* neuer were.

(sig. F8<sup>v</sup>)

The events therefore had currency in London folklore as well as in the tomes of the English chronicles, but the ballad makes no mention of More.

In Sc. 3 and after, the play still adheres to Holinshed for details, but More's role is altered. This involves, amongst other things, correcting a misleading detail. In Holinshed, More is described as 'late vnder-shiriffe of London, and now of the kings priuie counsell'. In fact he was still under-sheriff at this point. This suited the dramatists better, as they were concerned to show his rise to power as the main result of these events, and so coming after them – though they lend plausibility to his prominent role in City affairs by promoting

1 'Bear the bell' = have foremost rank, take the prize.

him to sheriff. Holinshed relates that More, in line with his role as Councillor, came to the City aldermen with a message from the Privy Council (Holinshed, 2; reprinted on p. 474). The play instead retains him as a City official who therefore welcomes the Privy Council party to London:

I hear the Mayor hath gathered men in arms,  
And that Shrieve More an hour ago received  
Some of the Privy Council in at Ludgate.  
(4.58–60)

This steepens the trajectory of his later ascent to power, and allows his promotion to come entirely as reward for quelling the rebels, as historically it was not.

More continues to be given prominence. The aldermen's debate as to whether to use violence in Holinshed finds its first echo in Sc. 3, where the courtier Palmer advocates force and Surrey opposes by suggesting that instead Sir Thomas More could speak to the citizens with his 'gentle and persuasive speech' (89). At 5.17, as the City authorities debate the intensifying crisis, More himself questions whether 'force or parley' should be deployed. Shortly after, the Court contingent arrives with reinforcements, beginning an association between More and the earls that continues until the end of the play. Shrewsbury advocates force until More urges the counter-insurgents to try the effect of words. Palmer himself, the erstwhile advocate of violence, accepts this advice (5.40–1).

In order to sustain this account of the insurrection as the cause of More's rise to the office of Lord Chancellor, the play critically reorders events as related in Holinshed. According to Holinshed, just after the Guildhall decision for a curfew, 'sir Iohn Mundie (an alderman) came from his ward, and found two yoong men in Cheape plaieng at the bucklers' before an audience of 'a great manic of yoong men'. Munday ordered them to 'leau of'. When he attempted to arrest one of them, the onlooking prentices intervened. The disturbances continued until 3 a.m. As rioters then made their way home, they were picked off and arrested.