The Critical Legacy of

THOMAS OF WOODSTOCK
or
RICHARD II, PART ONE

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Edited by

Michael Egan

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2024

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-7196-3
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-7196-9

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Introduction

Thomas of Woodstock, or *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second, Part One*, is an anonymous and incomplete Elizabethan drama of some 51 pages and 2989 lines, owned by the British Library, London. The hand-written MS lacks front and back covers and therefore title, author, list of *dramatis personae*, and part of the final scene. If the lost cover and back page were a single folded sheet, perhaps four MS pages are missing, which seems about right for what remains to be accomplished.[1]

Purchased from the estate of Lord Charlemont in 1865, the battered manuscript is one of 15 anonymous plays in a hand-bound volume catalogued as BL Egerton 1994, fols.161-185.[2] Following Chambers, most scholars believe that in the 17th century Eg. 1994 belonged to William Cartwright the younger, an actor and book seller, who bequeathed it to Dulwich College. After that it passed into the possession of Lord Charlemont, perhaps by theft.[3]

While nothing certain is known of the play's origins and early stage history, inferences can and have been drawn from the action and the MS's extensive editings and marginalia, which suggest that over the years it served both as the director/stage-manager's master script and the prompt's copy during performances. Wolfgang Keller, the manuscript's second editor (1899), thought that what he titled *Richard II, Part One* might be earlier than the rest of Egerton 1994, since its leaves were independently numbered, trimmed and mounted two to a page.

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[1] See Michael Egan: *The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One: An Acting Edition with Notes and a Short History of the Text* (Westshore Press, 2017), for a computer-aided transcription from the MS, and an original conclusion in the Elizabethan manner.

[2] In addition to *Woodstock*/*1 Richard II*, the anthology includes *Edmund Ironside*, ascribed to Shakespeare in Eric Sams (ed.) *Shakespeare's Lost Play Edmund Ironside* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1985).

[3] Chambers, *William Shakespeare* I, p. 212.

A Touring Play

The inclusion of a live horse and horseman clip-clopping into the play area in III.ii supports Frijlinck's speculation that this unusual and inventive drama was designed or adapted to be played outdoors, in fields or marketplaces—in other words, on the provincial tour.[4] No Elizabethan theater, nor even most modern ones, could possibly handle a live horse, never mind with a mounted rider. Entrances to an elevated stage were typically about seven feet high and accessed from below and/or behind by steps. This was fine for people but obviously difficult if not impossible for horses, especially one whose rider, as the text suggests, sports a courtly hat topped by a two-cubit feather.

The spectacular final battle, involving almost the entire cast of 25, seems also to take advantage of unrestricted space, when two unusually large stage armies confront one another while simultaneously 'marching about' noisily with drums and colors flying. The spectacle is clearly intentional. They then engage in an extended battle with one-on-one duels, chases and lamentations over the dead.

In his discussion of the MS's possible history, MacDonald Jackson notes that it may have survived the great Globe fire of 1613,

> perhaps through being with an offshoot of the company that was on tour at the time. William Cartwright, whom Boas considered responsible for forming the Egerton MS collection as a touring repertoire, was an Admiral's-Prince Henry's-Palsgrave' s man, who appears to have become a member of the King and Queen of Bohemia's company, and then of its successors, and is named in the miscellaneous traveling group at Norwich in 1635.[5]

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[4] Frijlinck writes: '…the play belonged to the repertory of the touring company which in 1635 visited Norwich.' She also notes that it was 'refused leave to play,' perhaps because of its explosive political nature (Frijlinck, Introduction, p. xxviii).

[5] 'Shakespeare's *Richard II* and the Anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock* (*Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 14 (2001), 17-18

The reconstructed modern Globe, together with C. Walter Hodges's beautiful 'conjectural' illustrations, make it quite clear that a real horse was inconceivable on any Elizabethan or Jacobean stage.[6] Just getting it to and from the theater, then on and off, would be major problems. Another one: dung and urine, which in the great theatrical tradition would occur at the worst time and in the worst place. No director/stage manager would even consider difficulties of this sort without a big dramatic payoff, but there is one. Woodstock and the horse indulge in a richly comic dialogue made up of neighs, headshakes and perhaps even manure, with the duke's ironic comments in response.[7]

It's a brilliant scene, directly comparable to Launce and his dog in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Indeed, I would venture that in any given performance the horse steals the show, especially if it relieves itself at the right moment. In other words, on a conventional stage the horse is a disaster, but in a field or market square it's a theatrical masterstroke.

The implication here—that in *Woodstock/1 Richard II* we have a rare example of an actual Elizabethan touring play from whose features implicit and explicit we can learn much—has unfortunately been overlooked by scholars distracted by the manuscript's authorship issues. In fact, the one resolves the other.

Discovery and Recovery

Three or four years after its 1865 acquisition, the Victorian scholar, J.O. Halliwell, stumbled upon an unopened box in the dusty stacks of the old British Museum library, to which he had privileged access. Inside he found a battered, leather-bound anthology of 15 lost plays and masques. Reading through them, he gradually recognized the superior literary quality of one in particular, and resolved to share it with the world.

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[6] C. Walter Hodges: *Enter the Whole Army: A Pictorial Study of Shakespearean Staging 1576-1616* (Cambridge U.P. 2000) p.25, fig. 10.

[7] Quoted in full p.126 below by Ian Robinson, 'Is *Woodstock* Shakespeare's?'

Halliwell's anonymously edited *A Tragedy of King Richard the Second, Concluding with the Murder of the Duke of Gloucester at Calais* was published in 1870. The oddly misleading title he assigned, with *King Richard the Second* stylishly printed in Gothic to suggest an authentic text, might be considered the play's first critical comment. The story actually concludes not with Woodstock's murder but the baronial uprising it provoked, Richard's defeat at the battle of Radcot Bridge in 1387, and his brief deposition over Christmas that same year—this last, almost certainly the reason the MS's final pages were censored out. A similar fate awaited the parallel scene in the follow-up play, for as we later discover in *Richard II*, I.i., the young king has been uneasily restored, true of course to the historical record.

Indeed, *Richard II, Part Two*, as I propose Shakespeare's canonical play be retitled, picks up the narrative seamlessly after the conclusion of Part One. Remarkably enough, Shakespeare assumes everyone's awareness of its major events, I mean the players on stage, including the recent elevation of Richard's 'minions,' his leasing out of the kingdom to them, Gloucester's shocking assassination, the king's ambiguous role in it, and the deteriorating relationship between the houses of Lancaster and York.

Halliwell might also have mentioned the narrative's affinities with *2 Henry VI*, which are almost as strong as those with *Richard II*. That he did not has left its mark on the play's critical legacy. Objectively, the plot is a skilled integration of both dramas, suggesting either plagiarism at the highest level, or (given the exciting possibilities) the creative hand of the original author.

As his oddly inaccurate title indicates, Halliwell felt ambivalent about his discovery, authorizing only eleven anonymously edited copies but then signing, dating and numbering each one, the BM's last. The following year he published a letter in *The Athenaeum*, calling attention to his 'curious' find, again hinting suggestively that it was 'written with no small ability.' He also added, sparking a debate still unresolved these 150 years:

Knowing how readily anything of the kind can be satisfactorily proved to be a modern forgery, that few things are more certain than that Lord Bacon wrote the plays of Shakspeare [*sic*], &c., it was rather with amusement than surprise that I have received an elaborate argument demonstrating that it is 'a very clever imitation of an old drama, but not the old drama itself.' [8]

There were probably fewer than half-a-dozen scholarly gentlemen in Victorian England who might have furnished Halliwell with his now-lost 'elaborate demonstration,' certainly someone with access to his limited edition. The allusion to Bacon aside, Halliwell's forgotten correspondent came close to at least one 21st Century view: that the MS might indeed be a revised version of a lost original written ca. 1592, a 'simplified Shakespeare,' as A.P. Rossiter put it in 1946.[9]

Still in two minds, Halliwell later retrieved his BM copy and on its flyleaf referenced for posterity his *Athenaeum* letter.

Bullen's *Old English Plays*

Halliwell's small-run edition of course went virtually unnoticed, despite his teasing *Atheneaum* announcement. About 12 years later, A.H. Bullen glancingly referred to it in an appendix to his compendious four-volume anthology of forgotten dramas, *A Collection of Old English Plays*, noting inaccurately, thanks probably to Halliwell's title, that

> Much of the play is taken up with *Greene* and *Baggott*; but the playwright has chiefly exerted himself in representing the murder of *Woodstock* at Calais.[10]

Bullen's mischaracterizations imply a skimming read at best. Almost all his references are to the murder scene, suggesting that

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[8] *The Atheneaum*, April, 1871, 6

[9] This hypothesis is supported by recent stylometrical analyses in the *New Oxford Shakespeare Authorship Companion* (2017), though *Woodstock* itself is not discussed.

[10] Bullen, *A Collection of Old English Plays*, Vol. I, Appendix 1, (London, Wyman & Sons, 1882–89) 427-8.

it was he rather than Anon who exerted himself with V.i. Nevertheless, his notice was of some historic significance, not least because it caught the eye of the play's next transcriber, Wolfgang Keller, whose strongly edited 1899 text, with detailed notes and a long introduction in German, put *Richard II*, *Part One*, as he was the first to boldly call it, forever on the Shakespearean map.

Authorship and Attribution

As Halliwell implied, it's impossible to come away from *Woodstock*/*1 Richard II* without an overwhelming sense of Shakespeare's presence—one way or another. Alternatives include: he influenced it, he stole from it, and of course perhaps that he wrote it. A.L. Rowse's curiosity is typical:

> Who can have written it? How much we should like to know! For it has something of Shakespeare's grasp of historical situation and political sense, a plain homely realism and a sense of humour taking after the Jack Cade scenes in *2 Henry VI*...Thomas of Woodstock [is] an idealised 'good Duke Humphrey' standing for plain, honest dealing and the good of the country as against both favourites and factions.[11]

Rowse's teasing hint that Shakespeare might indeed be the author is also characteristic of the critical reactions Eg. 1994 has provoked. Who after all did write it? It is the question around which all commentary inevitably revolves, like this book, and will continue to revolve, until it is settled.

The matter was first mooted in April, 1885, when F.A. Marshall, alerted by Bullen's reference, read a paper, now unfortunately lost, to the New Shakespeare Society, London, describing the contents of Halliwell's edition. Members thought it was a goodish play but not by Shakespeare, and was most likely written around 1625.[12] Marshall later added: 'There is nothing, so far as

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[11] A.L. Rowse: *Bosworth Field: From Medieval to Tudor England* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1966) p. 271.

[12] *New Shakespeare Society's Transactions, 1880-6* (London: Tubner & Co., n.d.), pp. 144-5. Marshall later recollected a verdict of 'probably as late as 1630.' (*The Works of William Shakespeare*, Vol. II, p. 396.)

I can ascertain at present, to indicate its authorship.'[13] And there the question remained.

Bold Speculations

Nearly 30 years after Halliwell, Wolfgang Keller, a well-known German Shakespeare scholar, published a new and strongly edited transcription of the MS, to which he gave the provocative German title, *Richard II. Erster Teil. Ein Drama Aus Shakespeares Zeit.*[14] With a challenging introduction also in German, but extensive English footnotes and commentary accompanying the text, Keller's edition transformed and even founded what we might call 'Woodstock Studies.' Keller introduced clearly numbered scenes and lines, though not the ones that prevail today, corrected words and phrases, supplied enduring emendations and a quantity of informative and descriptive commentary. While retaining most of the MS.'s antique spellings, he freely punctuated its almost unpunctuated text, corrected and/or completed misplaced lines, reconstructed fragmented scenes, and generally made visible the play's skilled composition. Suddenly it began looking like a credible Shakespeare drama.

Keller's scholarly introduction also included what was at the time an astonishing catalogue of more than a dozen striking phrasal parallels with Shakespeare.[15] The inviting title he provided, *Richard II*, *Part One*, almost begged for scholarly consummation, though in the end he faint-heartedly called it all off with the single cryptic comment: 'Nothing is known about the author, and I consider bold speculations to be completely worth-

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[13] *Ibid*.

[14] (*Richard II, Part One. A Drama from Shakespeare's Time*) in *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gessellshaft XXXV,* Berlin, 1899. Founded in 1865, the *JDSG* was renamed *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* in 1925.

[15] Successive editors have continued Keller's search for collocations, now numbering several hundred. For a referenced list by play, see my *The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One* (2006).

less.'[16] Yet Keller's entire edition—title, introduction, footnotes and critical observations— scintillates with speculative boldness.

The Twentieth Century

Keller's ground-breaking edition and notes revealed a work technically so accomplished that the revived academic interest it provoked, reluctant to boldly identify Shakespeare as its author, inclined towards the next best, Marlowe. In 1908, Ashleigh Thorndike published a positive assessment, hinting that the Canterbury playwright might well have written what he preferred to call *The Tragedy of Woodstock*, a drama 'not unworthy' of his abilities.[17]

Based on Keller's edition, Thorndike argued that *1 Richard II* 'apparently' preceded *2 Richard II*, displaying a 'skillful' integration of the 'tragic and comic, action and counsel, force and counterforce.' Thorndike added that the characterization was also 'remarkably well individualized.'[18]

Six years later D.W. Briggs published a similar consideration, calling the play both *Richard II*, *Part I* and *Thomas of Woodstock.* In his view, the anonymous author's 'handling of material is elevated noticeably above the usual level of the chronicle history.' If it were not by Marlowe himself, it was profoundly influenced by his *Edward II.*[19]

Finally, in 1921, the Australian scholar, John Le Gay Brereton, supplemented Keller's work on the verbal parallels between *1* and *2 Richard II*, identifying several additional matching Shake-

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[16] Keller, p. 42. In the same paragraph however, Keller notes the author's familiarity with 'Layton Bussard [*sic*] perhaps Leyton in Essex, a mile from Stratford.'

[17] Ashley H. Thorndike: *Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1908) p. 109.

[18] Ibid. The debate over what to call the play remains unresolved. I use *1 Richard II*, *Woodstock*, *1 Richard II/ Woodstoc*k and occasionally *2 Richard II* for clarity.

[19] William Dinsmore Briggs (ed.): *Marlowe's Edward II* (David Nutt, 1914) p. cxii.

spearean lines and phrases his predecessors had overlooked.[20]

F.S. Boas

Professional opinion had cautiously accepted most of the foregoing, so the terrain was well prepared for the play's first major critical study in English, F.S. Boas's *Shakespeare and the Universities* (1923). In a widely read and well-received book, Boas expressed high regard for the anonymous dramatist's skill, especially his comic scenes, but adamantly opposed any suggestion of Shakespeare's authorship, the question everyone was dancing around. Even Halliwell's and Keller's titles, *A Tragedy of King Richard the Second* and *Richard II, Part One*, were, Boas felt, too suggestive of a close literary relationship. He insisted rather on *Thomas of Woodstock*, and by way of emphasis titled his essay, 'A Non-Shakespearean *Richard II*.' Boas's discretion seemed to Shakespeareans in the universities to be the better part of valor after all, and *Woodstock* became again a vaguely interesting literary curiosity, little more.

Reyher's *Notes*

Early in the next year a long and extremely thorough article by the French scholar, Paul Reyher, investigated the literary and historic sources of *Richard II*, including among them '*Thomas Woodstock*,' as he titled the play.[21]

Reyher's still untranslated discussion is worth reviewing for several reasons, among them his discovery of further previously unrecorded Shakespeare collocations, many verbatim. The total was now disturbingly impressive, again catching the eye of academic scholars. Reyher also placed a fresh emphasis on tandem ideas and concepts, what Wilson Knight later called 'thought-parallels.'[22] Third, and in a sense fatally, '*Notes sur les sources*

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[20] John Le Gay Brereton: 'Some Notes on *Richard II*' (*Australian Modern Language Review,* N.S., Vol. 1, 1921) pp. 7-10.
[21] Paul Reyher: 'Notes sur les sources de *Richard II*' (*Revue de l'enseignment des langue vivantes*, Paris, January-March, 1924), pp. 1-169.
[22] G. Wilson Knight: 'Lyly,' in R.J. Kaufmann (ed.): *Elizabethan Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism* (Oxford U.P., 1961) p. 56.

de Richard II' declared that the evidence made it almost certain that Shakespeare was indeed *Thomas Woodstock*'s true author. Reyher summed up:

> The affinities between *Richard II* and *Woodstock* are too many and, with two exceptions, are all found in the first two acts of *Richard II*, developing and completing events originating in the first play. Chief among them, of course, is the murder of Woodstock and its consequences, though we also meet again the Duke's widow, his brothers Gaunt and York, and are reminded of the famous dead, Edward III and the Black Prince. With the deaths of Gaunt and the Duchess of Gloucester in the second act, a whole generation, an entire epoch, disappears. York alone remains, aware of Richard's crimes but exhausted, weakened by age, and of no further political consequence. The action passes to the new generation; the decisive phase of the rivalry, which is the true subject of the tragedy, begins in Act III.[23]

Reyher noted too that the mild and honest Woodstock referred to in *2 Richard II*, II.i.128, so different from his harsh portrayal in Holinshed, cannot have been derived from any other source than *1 Richard II*, I.i.99-104, 108-9, 208, I.iii.16, and V.iii.4-9, etc. Equally, the rounded portrait of his Duchess, also not found in Holinshed or any other chronicle, is strongly paralleled in *1 Richard II*, II.iii, IV.ii and V.iii, etc. Similar echoes, pre-echoes and suggestive analogies may be seen amongst all the major characters.

In 1939 Dover Wilson drew heavily on Reyher's research for his New Cambridge edition of *King Richard II*,[24] and a few years later so did Rossiter in *Woodstock, a Moral History*. In 1955 Matthew Black acknowledged some of the parallels Reyher had catalogued,[25] as did G. Lambrechts in 1967 and MacDonald Jackson in 2001.[26] Yet none of these writers mention Reyher's

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[23] Reyher, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-5. Translated by Michael Egan.
[24] Wilson erroneously gives June, 1923, as the date for Reyher's article.
[25] Matthew W. Black (ed.): *The Life and Death of King Richard the Second* (New Variorum Edition, Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott, 1955).
[26] G. Lambrechts, 'Sur Deux Prétendues de *Richard II*,' *Etudes Anglaises*, 20 (1967), pp. 118-39; MacD. P. Jackson: 'Shakespeare's

bold speculation about the author, not even by way of rebuttal or rejection.

W.P. Frijlinck's 'Type Facsimile'

The first part of the reign of King Richard the Second; or Thomas of Woodstock, edited by Wilhelmina P. Frijlinck (1929), is a 'type facsimile' in the Malone Society Reprint series, a reproduction of the unedited MS. using print conventions like **bold** and *italic* to indicate cuts, marginal comments and the various hands at work on a very busy text. Assisted by W.W. Greg, Frijlinck included brief but descriptive footnotes and lists of the minor errors she found in Halliwell and Keller.[27] Her edition is the single most useful tool for students of the play wishing to work directly from the hard-to-read original, an editorial *tour de force* for which all drama scholars should be grateful.

Frijlinck's edition was especially timely since Eg. 1994 was (and is) rapidly deteriorating. Words she was able to make out, helped by an early camera called a Rotograph,[28] are now illegible, even using the degraining and magnifying capabilities of modern computer software. A sense of the rate of loss may be gathered from the fact that in 2002 editors Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge found the word *fellow* (III.ii.172) to be completely 'obliterated,'[29] which I was able to confirm in 2006, whereas in 1929 Frijlinck saw *f*, in 1899 Keller could make out *fel*, and in 1870 Halliwell confidently transcribed *fellow*.

Frijlinck also provided a long and functional introduction describing the manuscript, its various hands and inks, and specu-

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Richard II and the Anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock*,' in *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, Volume 14 (2001)

[27] Frijlinck's transcription includes a few minor errors I was able to discover using modern computer software on the original MS, noted in my Acting Edition (2017).

[28] First used in 1899, a Rotograph produced a white-on-black print on bromide paper. Frijlinck reports it was not always helpful, often confusing specks with letters, etc.

[29] Peter Corbin & Douglas Sedge (eds.): *Thomas of Woodstock: or King Richard the Second, Part One* (Manchester U.P., 2002). p. 116n.

lating about possible dates of composition. Her view is that as a work of art *1 Richard II* 'marks a great advance towards historical tragedy after [Shakespeare's] chronicle plays,' and that 'the lively exposition has special merit.' It is successfully humorous where it needs to be, delineating and differentiating its characters well, while 'certain passages, especially Woodstock's speeches, possess some poetic power.' The play is unquestionably 'a forerunner to Shakespeare's *Richard II.*'[30]

The War Years

Protégé of the formidable E.M.W Tillyard of Jesus College, Cambridge, and a rising star in the university's English faculty in his own right, A.P. (Arthur Percival) Rossiter undertook *Woodstock, a Moral History* (1946) during the war years. His goals included rescuing the play from the now-scandalously Teutonic Keller, whom he took time to patriotically vilify and misrepresent. More importantly, he committed to settling once and for all the drama's outstanding questions, especially the nagging authorship matter.

Still the best-known and most widely read edition of the play, Rossiter's flawed version, as I must report it to be, is nonetheless thoroughly researched, equipped with two sets of small-print endnotes (*Text* and *General*), several appendices, and a comprehensive introduction. His long-anticipated conclusion was unequivocal and capitalized, almost like a defiant shout:

> There is not the smallest chance that he [the writer] was Shakespeare ...his verse too rarely rises...his mind never moves fast enough...I must leave him as I found him, a quiet ghost among the great majority who must, for all the troublings of their lives and labours, rest ANON.[31]

This, however, was followed, at what level of consciousness I cannot say, by several pages decisively proving the reverse. 'Yet there is something of a simplified Shakespeare in him,' Rossiter immediately concedes, noting among other things that

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[30] Frijlinck, *ed. cit*. pp. xxiv-xxv.
[31] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* pp. 73, 76. I discuss Rossiter's flawed edition in more detail in Egan (2006).

Anon characteristically

tries to see History in a big way...has a marked sense of humour of an unusually unbawdy kind: and an interest in human pride of gesture in dramatic situations: much in politics and in the common people—of whom he is not afraid. He knows something of the law and can turn a point with legal jargon; so perhaps he was an Inns of Court man. He recognizes twisty law as a social plague, though he makes rogue-comedy of it; and he can read up a long story and make a case of it.[32]

Rossiter also grants that in addition to these notable abilities and talents, Anon had a strong sense of social justice. In his feeling for the common man, 'the author stands a little apart from his times.'[33] He views Simon Ignorance, Dunstable's bloviant mayor and arguably the original of Dogberry, with amused detestation,[34] while understanding that he is 'a small tyrant swollen to a danger by toadying to a large.'[35] Anon has a more humane and moral mind than Marlowe—than Marlowe!—and gives the impression that the world would go very well if only people would be a little more reasonable, moderate and responsible. Above all, he was an accomplished dramatist who 'knew how a plot should run, beginning, middle and end,' and could skillfully render an effective scene:

Each part—and he mainly planned the play in determinate parts —hangs together and leads to his point. The high spots come off in themselves, and also fit the argument of the whole. Neither in structure nor in the passing episode nor in the detail of touches of 'character' and wry humour did the man write like a hack...His scenes and acts are well diversified by change of tone, but almost all his variations bear on his theme.[36]

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[32] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 73.
[33] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 31.
[34] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* pp. 42, 224, 225. The Dogberry/Bailiff equation was first made by Boas in 1923 (*Shakespeare and the Universities*, pp. 151, 153), repeated in 1931 by Millett (*The Date and Literary Relations of 'Woodstock*', p. 9), and by almost everyone else since.
[35] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 74
[36] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* pp. 74-5, 33

This isn't simplified Shakespeare; this is Shakespeare. Rossiter adds that Anon was discerning enough to resist making stage-villains out of Woodstock's murderers,[37] and used farce seriously, recalling Hamlet's admonition to the clowns:

> In all these cases the farce has a function. It is not there merely as funny (skilled clownery is that, whether relevant or not) but to throw a twisted pattern across the serious theme...In nearly all the comical or farcical matter so skillfully blended in *Woodstock* there is a suggestion of that frightening inclusiveness of the Elizabethan mind which attains its full scope only in Shakespeare...Its maker, whoever he was, had gone quite as far as Shakespeare in showing what subtleties could be worked on his rather unpromising frame.[38]

'Quite as far as Shakespeare' is a phrase that goes quite as far as my broader argument requires, for Shakespeare alone among Elizabethan playwrights can be said to have brought together farce and tragedy 'in ways so frighteningly inclusive.' Who else but he could have conceived the Porter scene in *Macbeth* and the grim political humor in the Dunstable episode in *1 Richard II*? It's the combination of politics and gallows humor that is unique to Shakespeare and Anon, and quite unlike anything else in Elizabethan or Jacobean drama.

Shakespeare's Handwriting?

Rossiter notes a significant deletion in the MS, apparently by the author himself, which includes the following crucial passage. After leasing out his kingdom, Richard declares prophetically:

> We shall be censur'd strongly when they tell
> How our great father toil'd his royal person
> Spending his blood to purchase towns in France,
> And we, his son, to ease our wanton youth,
> Become a landlord to this warlike realm,
> Rent out our kingdom like a pelting farm,
> That erst was held as fair as Babylon,
> The maiden conqueress to all the world.
> —*1 Richard II*, IV.i.132-8

[37] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 74
[38] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* pp. 35-7.

These lines are famously taken up by the dying John of Gaunt in *2 Richard II*:

This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leas'd out—I die pronouncing it—
Like to a tenement or pelting farm.
—*2 Richard II*, II.i.57-60

The relationship is so close that everyone remarks on it—F.A. Marshall was the first, commenting that 'The similarity of expression is worth noticing.'[39] Frijlinck feels that 'the phrase in one play is copied from the other,'[40] Black also notes the echo in *2 Richard II*,[41] Kenneth Muir says that Shakespeare 'took several hints' from *1 Richard II*, including this passage,[42] and even Dover Wilson (who rejects *1 Richard II* as his *Ur*-play) acknowledges that the second repeats the first 'almost word for word.'[43] Shakespeare was obviously familiar with Richard's speech and unhesitatingly worked its ideas, images and later even the technical term *pelting farm* into Gaunt's denunciation.

A pelting farm was an emblem of the nobility in decline, which is why Gaunt uses it with such withering contempt. When strapped for cash, aristocratic families would lease or 'farm out' a village or an area to a professional tax collector, who of course always took in more than he paid for the privilege. In Shakespeare's view, and by no coincidence also Anon's, this turned

[39] Irving and Marshall (eds.): *The Works of William Shakespeare*, Vol. II, p. 463, n. 110.
[40] Frijlinck, *op. cit.*, p xxvi. Frijlinck also here compares John of Gaunt's reproaches in *1 Rich-ard II*, V.iii.107-8 and *2 Richard II*, II.i.113.
[41] Black, *Richard the Second*, (1955) p. 104.
[42] 'From *Woodstock* Shakespeare took several hints—the attack on foreign fashions, the phrase "pelting farm" , and the idea of the King as landlord.' (Kenneth Muir: 'Shakespeare Among the Commonplaces' (*The Review of English Studies*, NS, Vol. X, No, 39, August 1959) p. 286).
[43] Dover Wilson, *op. cit*., p. lvii.

nobles into mere landlords—a humiliating loss of rank. Seen another way, *1 Richard II* captures the rise of contract law and the end of pure feudalism.

In *2 Richard II*, Gaunt accuses Richard of shamefully transforming his entire kingdom into a business. The moment itself is fully dramatized in *1 Richard II*, IV.i but teased out in the second play:

Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world
It were a shame to let this land by lease ...
Landlord of England art thou now, not king,
Thy state of law is bond-slave to the law.
—*2 Richard II*, II.i.109-14

Rossiter recognizes the connection between the 'pelting farm' passages, observing further that John of Gaunt's bitter conclusion is dramatically clarified by a knowledge of *1 Richard II*.[44] He makes the point repeatedly:

This matter of the farming is clearly explained here [*1 Richard II*, IV.i. 41-6] but never in [*2 Richard II*]; where it seems to be taken for granted, i.e. these explanations are assumed known.[45]

If the question is followed up in [*2 Richard II*] from [I.iv.45] to [II.i.59-60] and thence to [II.i.109-14], it can be seen how much *Woodstock* is depended on, even to make the events intelligible.[46]

Plainly the basis of [*2 Richard II*, II.i.113]—'Landlord of England art thou now, not king.'[47]

Gaunt's accusations are not only explained by *Woodstock*: his terms of reproach derive from that text...This is not simply a source-hunter's game: it affects the whole moral complexion of Richard in Acts I and

[44] See also Donna B. Hamilton: 'The State of Law in *Richard II*,' *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 34, No. 1 (Spring, 1983), pp. 5-17.
[45] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p.225.
[46] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 226.
[47] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 226.

II, and alters both the colour of the theme and Shakespeare's reading of history.[48]

This is a remarkable turn-around. Instead of Anon taking his historical perspectives from Shakespeare, as Tillyard and others had so casually assumed, now it is the color and theme of Shakespeare's reading of history which is altered.

The claim is worth pondering: Anon's impact on Shakespeare apparently went far beyond mere lines and words, helping to formulate his entire literary-political perspective. So who was this extraordinary figure whose single play transformed the thinking of perhaps the most powerful intellect in the past 500 years? Rossiter lets the question go, though to be fair so has almost everyone else.

Later in *Woodstock, a Moral History*, Rossiter says that John of Gaunt's pre-battle accusation ('And thou no king but landlord now become,' (*1 Richard II*, V.ii.107) is

> Plainly echoed by Gaunt in [*2 Richard II*, II.i.113] as well as in the basic idea of the famous speech earlier [ll. 50-68]. Cf. *ante*, [*1 Richard II*, IV.i.127-38n].[49]

In a related note, Rossiter comments of the contract Richard signs in *1 Richard II*, IV.i.127ff., dividing up his kingdom:

> It is this legal document which Shakespeare's Gaunt must be supposed to have in mind when he speaks of England 'bound in...with inky blots and rotten parchment bonds' [*2 Richard II*, II. i.64-5]. Indeed the accusation 'Thy state of law is bond-slave to the law' [*2 Richard II*, II.i.113-14] is nearly unintelligible without what we see here.[50]

The rub, however, as both he and Frijlinck accurately record, is that the key passage in *1 Richard II*, IV.i.132-8 is deleted, part of a 20-line sequence (ll.127-47) that is

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[48] Rossiter, *Angel with Horns*, pp. 31-2.
[49] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 235.
[50] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 227.

Marked as cut in MS., with a diagonal line through in Ink VII...with the word *out* twice written in the margin (opposite [l.131] and [l.144]) in the hand of the MS., using Ink I (as at [I.i.32-8] cut). Cf. the deletions in the same inks at [IV. iii.92], and for the priority of VII, see [IV.i . 203n.].[51]

It's easy to miss the implications of Rossiter's 'in the hand of the MS.,' surrounded as it is by several cross references and a long discussion of *pelting*, *peltry*, *petty*, etc., closing with the rhetorical, 'Why should we assume that Shakespeare did not know the word *pelting* till he read *Woodstock*?'[52]

But this is not the point, which is the combination of *pelting* with *farm* in an almost identical context. The statistical probability of such coincidence being chance is virtually zero and indeed, as Jackson points out, the Chadwyck-Healey *Literature Online* electronic database finds no other occurrence in the whole of English dramatic literature.[53]

In his introduction Rossiter merely notes, apparently without further interest, that the passage is 'cancelled in the MS.,' confining himself to a polite disagreement with Frijlinck's suggestion that

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[51] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 198.
[52] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 198-9.
[53] Jackson, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II* and the Anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock*,' p. 54. The odds against chance are perhaps even better than *The Revenger's Tragedy* being written by Middleton, which Jackson describes as 'about one in twenty million,' or warrantable odds. (Jackson, *Studies in Attribution*, p. 167.) In addition we find in Shakespeare 'low farms, / Poor pelting villages (*King Lear*, II.iii.17-18) which Jackson notices; 'Therefore the winds,...Hath every pelting river made so proud / That they have overborne their continents,' (*A Midsummer Night's Dream,* II.i.87-92); 'We have had pelting wars since you refused / The Grecians' cause.' (*Troilus and Cressida*, IV.v.267-8); 'every pelting, petty officer,' *Measure for Measure*, II.ii.112); and 'Thou bring'st such pelting scurvy news continually, / Thou art not worthy life.' (*The Two Noble Kinsmen*, II.ii.266-7) '...the pelting of this pitiless storm,' (*King Lear*, III.iv.29) of course uses the word in another sense.

it was removed because it was out of character for Richard.[54] If we follow up his references, however, we find that these deletions are highly authoritative, both literally and figuratively. 'The writer of the MS. made them,' Rossiter says elsewhere, adding that Hand A, as he calls the copyist, was probably 'correcting *from* something (? the author's foul papers?).'[55]

Rossiter's inspired guess is remarkably close to the truth—the scribe was copying from something, though it was not the author's foul papers. He had in front of him either the original manuscript or its first copy, and periodically at his elbow perhaps Shakespeare himself. Given the literal authority of the deletion, together with the evident struggle to find a suitable synonym for *pelting*, neither of which a mere copyist would presume to do, the likelihood that the editing hand is in fact the author's, i.e., Shakespeare's, is the most exciting possibility overlooked to date.

But Rossiter does not notice; he is too absorbed in scoring points at the expense of Dover Wilson, whose notion of an unknown, non-existent Ur-*Richard II* he scornfully rejects: 'No 'old play'

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[54] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 45.

[55] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* pp. 191, 189. In an unrelated comment (see *Text and Variorum Notes*, V.i.26-8) Rossiter goes even further, suggesting that other corrections in the same hand 'seem to me to be more like the author's alterations than is consistent with the accepted view that the MS.-writer is only a 'scribe' or copyist. But all *might* have been dictated.' (Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 203.) At V.ii.40 he says that a change 'Looks like an author's correction to avoid repetition.' (*Woodstock,* p. 205.) Elsewhere he suggests that A and the scribe may not be the same, with A having precedence: 'From the top of F. 177r. Hand A abbreviates speech-heads to initials, as far as [IV.i.160]. The MS. hand continues, also initialing (except at [IV.i.163], *Triss:);* and A initials again from [IV.i.187-195]. The evidence suggests that A came first, sharing the task with the MS.-writer.' (*Woodstock,* p.199.) In the end he leaves the question unresolved, writing of a speech-head alteration at IV.i.203: 'The slip is evidence that the MS.-writer (or S, scribe) was a copyist: unless authors can be bored silly with copying also.' (Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 199).

or source other than *Woodstock* is required,'[56] Elsewhere, however, we find the following:

> This gives 1595 as a date by which Shakespeare knew *Woodstock*, possibly in this very MS. (if we consider the evidence of the cut passage at [IV.i.127 ff.]) [57]

> The closeness of [Richard's] sentiments to those of Shakespeare's Gaunt...makes it plain that if this speech was 'outed,' Shakespeare must have read this MS.—Or some earlier one from which it derives.[58]

The implications are profound: at the very least, Shakespeare apparently knew *1 Richard II* in draft, and perhaps even studied the original manuscript. Ian Robinson, who published the first sustained piece arguing that Shakespeare might in fact be the author of *1 Richard II*, notes: 'Rossiter's complicated discussion of the text makes it seem probable that this revision was made before the manuscript began its life as a prompt copy.'[59] MacD. Jackson argues from the same evidence that the phrase 'pelting farm' was likely never spoken on stage.[60] Geoffrey Bullough also believes Shakespeare knew the MS. at first hand.[61] Peter Ure thinks that 'the easiest explanation' is that Shakespeare 'read and remembered' *1 Richard II*, though like Rossiter and Bullough he doesn't even wonder how Shakespeare might have obtained a copy.[62]

A.C Partridge and Stratification

Rossiter's agnostic conclusion, backed as it were by Tillyard and the entire Cambridge English faculty, supported Boas's atheism, and swept the authorship question off the table for another gener-

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[56] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 49.
[57] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 72.
[58] Rossiter, *Woodstock,* p. 198.
[59] Robinson, '*Richard II*' *and* '*Woodstock*', p. 45.
[60] Jackson, 'Shakespeare's *Richard II* and the Anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock*,' p. 56.
[61] Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol. III*, p. 465n.
[62] Ure, *ed. cit*., p. xxxix.

ation. While the play was occasionally anthologized in his version, warts and all, it was the manuscript and its extensive edits in several hands, including possibly the author's, which now drew academic attention.

In 1964, the South African scholar A.C. Partridge published a detailed analysis of the MS's complex and often contradictory orthography. Partridge agreed with Rossiter and Frijlinck that the drama had likely been composed 1591-4, confirmed by the text's abundant proclitics, enclitics, and other verbal features, but decisively argued that the manuscript itself must have been edited and prepared by a copyist 'no earlier than 1607.'[63] The result was what Partridge called orthographic 'stratification,' a geological analogy, describing 'a grammar based on the theory that language consists of a series of hierarchically related strata linked together by representational rules.'[64] This insight became the basis for the modern view, including my own, that the play is both *Woodstock* and *Richard II, Part One*, a Jacobean edit of an Elizabethan original.

In support of his case for the manuscript's early-1600s date, confirming Boas's sense that the language often has a Jacobean 'ring' to it, Partridge records contractions such as *th'are* (they are) and 'Jonsonian' elisions like *we'had*. On the other hand, many 'old fashioned' usages and spellings, such as *tother* (t'other, the other) *bith* (by the) *oth* (of the), *ith* (in the) and *h'as* (he has), 'belong to the last decade of the sixteenth century,' i.e., the 1590s, and are 'almost certainly the author's.' [65]

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[63] Partridge, *Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama*, pp. 34-42. 'The terms *proclitic* and *enclitic* are derived from Greek Grammar. *Proclitic* is applied to any combination of two words in which the first is so reduced as to have no independent accent, but in pronunciation is attached to the following stressed word, e.g. *'tis. Enclitic* is applied to the combination in which the *second* is so unemphatic as to be heard in pronunciation as part of the preceding word, e.g., *is't*.' (Partridge, *op. cit.,* p. 14.)
[64] Webster. The first recorded use of 'stratification' is 1962.
[65] Partridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 35.

Partridge's analysis showed clearly that there are temporal and stylistic 'contradictions' between the MS.'s Elizabethan and Jacobean usages.[66] In other words, the play was likely copied and edited sometime after its original composition. The extant text, he concluded, is an early 17th-century version of an older, lost play, exemplifying orthographic strata where

> earlier contraction types would be overlaid by later ones, and especially by a different orthography and more precise use of the apostrophe. Thus, in *Woodstock*, *shalls*, *th'are*, *hang um* and *I'me* are probably later than the other contractions, and so are the forms *has* and *does* for the author's *hath* and *doth*.[67]

Partridge's conclusions are supported by other Shakespeare plays, among them the roughly contemporaneous *King John* (1594), whose First Folio irregularities closely resemble those in the *Woodstock* manuscript. Dover Wilson notes that *John*'s inconsistencies also reveal 'two textual strata,' deriving either from the author's revision of an existing prompt book (like Eg. 1994), or 'interference' with the author's 'foul papers by a Jacobean printer, or both.'[68]

Partridge's meticulous data flatly contradict the claims of more recent scholars, principally Lake and Jackson, who not only ignore or lightly dismiss his work, but argue, on the basis of the MS.'s 17th-century word usages alone, that *Woodstock* is an insignificant drama by a Jacobean third-rater plagiarizing outrageously from Shakespeare, thus accounting for the text's myriad collocations, references and echoes.

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[66] Partridge, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
[67] Partridge, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[68] J.D. Wilson (ed.): *King John* (Cambridge U.P., 1936), pp. 91-4; E.A.J. Honigmann (ed.): *King John* (London: Methuen & Co., 1954, repr. 1973), p. xxxxvi. Honigmann finds additional evidence in *Love's Labor's Lost* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (p. xxxvii). See also Egan, *King John* (2021).

Ian Robinson on Shakespeare's Authorship

Others had hinted at it, some strongly, but it was left to Ian Robinson, an English publisher and literary critic, to first argue at length that Shakespeare might indeed have written *1 Richard II* (or *Woodstock*, as he also preferred to call it). In 1988 Brynmill Press issued his 51-page study, '*Richard II*' *and* '*Woodstock*,'[69] along with a reprint of the Nottingham edition, poorly edited but the only uncopyrighted text available.[70] Robinson's conclusion, based on a close textual analysis of the two Richard II dramas, is that they 'come from the same mind at different moments of its development.'[71] He adds:

> Putting the two plays together, as they cry out to be put together, one makes best sense of the contrast between them as the author of Richard *II* seeing a deeper, more stylistically challenging way of treating that King, but a way for which there are hints in *Woodstock* itself. Both plays are achieved works of art, and neither needs any appeal to the chronicles, inexperience or inadvertence on the part of the dramatist for their substance to be intelligible. All that they need is a performance good enough to allow them to have their respective poetic lives, whether for the audience in the theater or in the mind of the reader.[72]

As this suggests, Robinson willingly confronts the nay-sayers, especially Rossiter and the Nottingham editors, on their own stylistic grounds. Their objection is that the writing in *Woodstock* is just not good enough to be Shakespeare. Robinson shows 'on the contrary' that it is often quite good enough, citing among many examples the young Anne a' Beame (Anne of Bohemia) at her wedding to Richard in the first act:

> My sovereign lord and you true English peers,
> Your all-accomplish'd honors have so tied
> My senses by a magical restraint
> In the sweet spells of these your fair demeanors,

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[69] Ian Robinson: *'Richard II' and 'Woodstock'* (Doncaster, Brynmill Press) 1988.
[70] George Parfitt and Simon Shepherd (eds.): *Thomas of Woodstock* (Nottingham Drama Texts, Nottingham University Press, 1977)
[71] Robinson, p. 46.
[72] Robinson, p. 36.

That I am bound and charm'd from what I was.
My native country I no more remember
But as a tale told in my infancy,
The greatest part forgot; and that which is,
Appears to England's fair Elysium
Like brambles to the cedars, coarse to fine
Or like the wild grape to the fruitful vine.
And, having left the earth where I was bred,
And English made, let me be Englished.
They best shall please me shall me English call.
My heart, great King, to you; my love to all!
—*1 Richard II*, I.iii.36-50

As Robinson rhetorically demands, who else but Shakespeare writes like this? Anne is at once caught up in the 'magical restraint,' and 'sweet spells' spun by England and its true peers. They 'charm' her, a neat ambivalence—winning ways and necromancy—wiping away all memories of her former self and homeland, magically transforming her into an Englishwoman. Her language itself morphs—nouns become verbs (*English* to *Englished* in a single line), while the tales of her childhood evaporate in a trance-like oblivion.

Underpinning everything is the transformation of Nature, from uncultivated to cultivated—brambles to cedars, wild grape to fruitful vine, etc. There's so much going on, including perhaps a subtle anticipation of Macbeth's tale told by an idiot, 'But as a tale told in my infancy,' that obviously, as Robinson concludes, only one English dramatist could have created it.

Eric Sams: *Woodstock*'s Language

Musicologist and Shakespeare scholar Eric Sams was the author of more than one hundred articles, essays and books on dating and identifying Shakespeare's plays, especially the apocryphal or disregarded. His work includes the pioneering *Shakespeare's Edward III: An Early Play Restored to the Canon* (Yale, 1996), for which he has received insufficient credit. *Shakespeare's Lost Play: Edmund Ironside* (St Martin's Press, 1985), and *The Real Shakespeare: Retrieving the Early Years 1564-1594* (Yale, 1995) also deserve wider recognition.