A Short History of the Text

> The most fertile ground is the flexible *via media* between line-to-line fidelity and idiosyncratic appropriation.
>
> —George Steiner

The Tragedy of King Richard the Second, Part One, as we have noted, is an anonymous, untitled and incomplete history play, fols. 161-185 in a 349-page, leather-bound volume owned by the British Library, London, catalogued as Egerton 1994.

The anthology is a treasure trove of fifteen anonymous early-English plays and a masque. In addition to *1 Richard II*, Eg.1994 includes *Edmund Ironside*, edited and ascribed to Shakespeare by Eric Sams.[1]

The B.L. purchased the volume from the estate of Lord Charlemont in 1865. Following Chambers, most scholars believe that after the closing of the theaters in 1642, Egerton 1994 belonged to William Cartwright the younger, an actor and book seller who bequeathed it to Dulwich College. Later it passed into the possession of Lord Charlemont, who may have stolen it.

Persuasive inferences about the play's origins and early history can and have been drawn from clues found in the heavily edited MS, which evidently passed through the hands of stage managers, actors, prompters and government censors. Their notes, cuts and insertions, and the reasonable inferences we may draw from them about the MS's history, including its author, are all exciting dramas in themselves. Their hidden protagonist of course is William Shakespeare.

Wolfgang Keller, the manuscript's second editor (1899),

[1] Eric Sams (ed.): *Shakespeare's Lost Play Edmund Ironside* (1985). See also Chambers, *William Shakespeare 1*, p. 92, and F.S. Boas, *Shakespeare & the Universities* (1923) pp. 97-8.

suggested that *1 Richard II* might be of an earlier vintage than the other plays in Egerton 1994, since its leaves are independently numbered, trimmed and mounted two to a page to fit the folio format. He added, however, that 'The only certain thing we can say of the original...is that it must have existed long before Eg. 1994.' [2]

This remains the commonsensus, as does Ribner's judgment that the MS continues to be 'one of the most important original documents we possess for the study of the Elizabethan theatre.' [3]

In the 1920's, Sir E.K. Chambers followed Keller and his predecessor Halliwell in calling the play *I Richard II*, hinting at Shakespeare's hand. But F.S. Boas hotly contested this in *Shakespeare & the Universities (*1923), insisting that the drama be retitled *Woodstock* precisely to discourage the notion that the author of *Lear* and *Hamlet* could ever write such mediocre stuff.

The Malone Society's editor, W.P. Frijlinck, who considered Shakespeare the likely author, thus tactfully called her 1929 transcription both *1 Richard II* and *Woodstock*. In 1946 however A.P. Rossiter firmly supported Boas's title and ascription to 'ANON,' as he emphatically expressed it, settling the debate for a generation.

Shakespeare's possible role in the play was not considered again until Everitt's error-filled edition in 1965, also the last time anyone attempted a transcript directly from the deteriorating manuscript itself.

List of Editions and Codes

The following editions and reference codes are used throughout this book. '*1 Richard II*' refers to the untitled

[2] Keller, Introduction, p. 4. An English translation appears in my *1 Richard II*, Vol. III (2006).

[3] Irving Ribner: *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (1964), p. 134.

MS, and '*2 Richard II*' to Shakespeare's canonical drama. Unless otherwise indicated, all references are to the text in this volume or *The Riverside Shakespeare* (1997).

APR A.P. Rossiter (ed.): *Woodstock, a Moral History* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1946).

ARM William A. Armstrong (ed.): *Woodstock* (*Anonymous*), in *Elizabethan History Plays* (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965).

BLN A.H. Bullen (ed.): *A Collection of Old English Plays in Four Volumes*, Vol. I (London: Wyman & Sons, 1882-5), Appendix 1, pp. 427-8.

BUL Geoffrey Bullough (ed.): 'from *Thomas of Woodstock*,' in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare,* Vol. III (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul and Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 460-91.

CAR Frederick Ives Carpenter: 'Notes on the Anonymous *Richard II*,' *The Journal of Germanic Philology*, Vol. III, No. 2 (Bloomington: Journal Publishing Co., 1900) pp. 138-42.

COR Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (eds.): *Thomas of Woodstock or Richard the Second, Part One* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002).

EBE E.B. Everitt (ed.): *Thomas of Woodstock or 1 Richard II*, in S*ix Early Plays Related to the Shakespeare Canon* (Copenhagen: *Anglistica*, Vol. XIV, Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1965).

HAL [J.O. Halliwell, ed.]: *A Tragedy of King Richard the Second, Concluding with the Murder of the Duke of Gloucester at Calais. A Composition Anterior to Shakespeare's Tragedy on the Same Reign, Now First*

Printed from a Contemporary Manuscript. (London: Printed by T. Richards, Great Queen Street. 1870).

KEL Wolfgang Keller (ed.): *Richard II. Erster Teil. Ein Drama aus Shakespeares Zeit* (*Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Geselschaft* XXXV, ed. Alois Brandl und Wolfgang Keller, Berlin 1899).

MEE Michael Egan (ed.): *The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 4 vols., 2006).

NOT George Parfitt and Simon Shepherd (eds.): *Thomas of Woodstock* (Nottingham Drama Texts, Nottingham University Press, 1977) *Thomas of Woodstock: An English History Play of Shakespeare's Time Otherwise Known As A Tragedy of King Richard the Second, The First Part of the Reign of King Richard the Second, Woodstock: A Moral History* and *Woodstock.* (Doncaster: The Brynmill Press, 1988).

OXF Thomas *of Woodstock*, compiled by Louis Ule, reviewed by M.W.A. Smith (ca. 1998-2001).

WPF Wilhelmina P. Frijlinck (ed.): *The First Part of the Reign of King Richard the Second or Thomas of Woodstock* (London: Printed for the Malone Society by J. Johnson at the Oxford University Press, 1929).

Condition of the MS

The MS has deteriorated and is deteriorating. More than a century ago, Wolfgang Keller, the German scholar who prepared the work's second edition (1899), sometimes disagreed with his predecessor J.O. Halliwell, noting that, for example,

Die Stelle ist ganz verwischt, und es wärenicht unmöglich, daß H. der ein Vierteljahrhundert vor mir arbeitete, sie

besser gelesen hätte.[4]

And also later:

So liest H. Heute ist am Rande nichts mehr zu erkennen. Vielleicht stand Yorke *da.*[5]

A sense of the continuing rate of loss may be gathered from the fact that in 2002 editors Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge found the word *fellow* (III.ii.185) to be completely 'obliterated,' [6] which I can confirm, whereas in 1929 Frijlinck saw *f*, in 1899 Keller could make out *fel*, and in 1870 Halliwell confidently transcribed *fellow*.

Keller's difficulties make Frijlinck's Malone Society recreation of the text 30 years later, using fonts to represent the script, an even more remarkable achievement, despite her access to primitive photographic technology.[7]

A.P. Rossiter (1946) also worked from the original, introducing several fundamental changes to the text and its organization. E.B. Everitt published an uneven and inaccurate transcription in 1965.

[4] 'This part [of the MS page] is completely obliterated, and it's not impossible that H[alliwell], who worked a quarter-century before me, read it more clearly.' (All translations by Michael Egan.)

[5] 'Thus reads H[alliwell. Today nothing more can be seen in the margin. Perhaps *Yorke* stood there.'

[6] Corbin and Sedge, p. 116n.

[7] Frijlinck used 'rotographs...[which] as a rule appeared to be clearer than the original and have enabled several words to be deciphered which it would have been difficult to make out in the manuscript itself. On the other hand it was found that the apparent legibility of the rotographs was at times speciously misleading, since they failed of course to reproduce the colour of the original, and in several cases what had been assumed to be traces of letters proved on further examination to be dirt.' (Frijlinck, p. xxxiii.)

My four-volume *The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One,* (2006), winner of the Adele Mellen Award for Distinguished Scholarship, was the first close look at the manuscript itself in over half a century. It remains, together with the revised and updated version in this volume, the only rendering based on a digital analysis of the original. The British Library generously provided both access to the fragile manuscript and full-size photoscans capable of conversion into a variety of digital formats.

The Art of Transcription

The MS's condition is so poor, and its handwriting often so ambiguous and enigmatic, that even simple transcription becomes quite difficult. The copyist's scrawl barely distinguishes between certain letters or even combinations of letters, resulting in errors like the *blocke/blade*, *hears/heaps* and other confusions discussed below.

The looped diphthong *oo*, for instance, tends to resemble the letter *a*, 'a peculiarity that has led to some misreadings by former editors,' as Frijlinck drily remarks.[8] Later at MS IV.i.10 she admits her own inability to distinguish between the copyist's *e* and 'a very small *d*.'[9]

Rossiter echoes, lamenting 'the manuscript's *e/d* confusions.'[10] Commenting on I.ii.124, where the word *Roope* (rope) is misread as *raixe* and *raxe* by Halliwell, Keller and Carpenter, he notes that 'even an expert can take *-oo-* for *-ai* in English hand.'[11]

These and related difficulties have led to widely divergent and even contradictory texts.

Consider, for example, the five contrasting versions of Nimble's speech at I.ii.79-86, set out for comparison below.

[8] Frijlinck, p. vii.
[9] Frijlinck, p. 61 n.
[10] Rossiter, p. 182.
[11] Rossiter, p. 185.

An early iteration perhaps of Falstaff's Nym, as indeed Tresilian may be of the fat knight, Nimble is responding to his master's teasing hint that he has been spectacularly promoted to the land's top legal office, Lord Chief Justice.

An inexpert reader might reasonably assume the accuracy of any of the following, starting with Frijlinck's literal recreation of the original. But in fact there are substantial differences between them all, in punctuation, emphasis, vocabulary, spelling, implicit characterization and thus overall semantics. Not one editor, however, provides any descriptive or explanatory notes.

W.P. Frijlinck (1929)
Neither S^{r}: nor mounsier: nor Signior: what should I call him, tro, hees monsterously translated sodaynly: at first when we were schoolefellows, then I calld hime sirra, but sence he became my m^{r}. I payrd away the .a. and serud him wth the Sur: what title he has gott now, I knowe not, but Ile try ffurther. has yo^{r} worshipp any Imployment for me.

J.O. Halliwell (1870)
Neither Sir, nor mounsier, nor signior, what should I call him, tro, hees monstrously translated sodaynly: at first when we were schoole fellows, then I calld hime Sirra, but sence he became my master, I payrd away the a. and serud him with the Sur. what title he has gott now, I knowe not, but Ile try ffurther Has your worshipp any Imployment for me

Wolfgang Keller (1899)
Neither S*ir*, nor Mounsier, nor Signior; what should I call him, tro? Hee's monstrously translated sodaynly. At first, when we were schoole-fellows, then I calld hime sirra; but sence he became my m*aster*, I payrd away the a and serud him with the Sur: what title he has gott now, I knowe not, but I'le try further. Has *your* worshipp any imployment for me?

A.P. Rossiter (1946)
Neither Sir: nor Monsieur: nor Signior. What should I call him? Troth, he's monstrously translated suddenly! At first, when we were schoolfellows then I called him Sirrah, but since he became

my master I pared away the Ah and served him with the Sir. What title he has got now, I know not, but I'll try further...Has your worship any employment for me?

E.B. Everitt (1965)
Neither sir nor monsieur, nor signior? What should I call him, trow? He's monsterously translated suddenly. At first when we were schoolfellows then I called him sirrah, but since he became my master, I pared away the *ah* and served him with the 'sir.' What title he has got now, I know not, but I'll try further. Has your worship any employment for me?

In light of these differences, I acknowledge doubt in its place but make what I like to think are reasoned choices. Editorial decisions are after all only judgments, albeit informed, and good alternatives may always suggest themselves.

Here's how I render Nimble's speech, beginning with a new stage direction and ending in another:

[*Aside*] Neither Sir, nor Monsieur, nor Signior! What should I call him? Trow, he's monstrously translated suddenly! At first, when we were schoolfellows, then I call'd him Sirrah, but since he became my master I par'd away the Ah and serv'd him with the Sir. What title he has got now, I know not, but I'll try further. [*To Tresilian*] Has your Worship any employment for me?
—*1 Richard II*, I.ii.75-80

Words and Meanings

Transcription difficulties also affect individual words and sentences, transforming the meaning of entire passages and hence the play.

At I.iii.230, for example, Woodstock refers to 'The inly passions boiling in my breast,' a key statement contributing to the Forsterian 'roundness' of his character. But Halliwell transcribes the second word as *Julye* and Keller follows with *Iulye*. Both must have realized they were creating semantic nonsense, but could not get beyond the scrawl.

Other instances include the discrepant versions of Lapoole's

exclamation in V.i.34: 'And yet, by all my fairest hopes, I swear...' Halliwell took the last two words to be 'of heauen' which—although the line is smudged and interlined, making the decode that much harder—vividly illustrates the challenges facing transcribers of the original.

Thirty years later Keller guessed right, but still felt so uncertain he omitted the phrase altogether, footnoting that what he thought might be 'I sweare' was written '*mit dunklerer Tinte.*'[12] It wasn't until Frijlinck's 1929 edition, checked by W.W. Greg, that the actual words in both these instances (*inly* and *I swear*) were definitively identified and restored.

Many inaccuracies, major and minor, have nonetheless survived. Thanks to modern computer technology they can now be resolved. Here are just two examples.[13]

Under the Blade
Halliwell and Frijlinck have the imprisoned Woodstock saying, just before his murder in V.i, that were he truly guilty of rebellion, he'd submit immediately to the angry king:

I'd lay my neck under the block before him
And willingly endure the stroke of death.

But Keller noticed that there was something wrong with this: heads about to be removed by the axe are normally laid 'upon' and not 'under' blocks. He thus suggested *upon the block* as a possible emendation.

Taking his cue, Rossiter opted for 'unto the block,' presumably to retain as much of *under* as possible. Editors since have either followed him or chosen some prepositional alternative.

[12] 'With darker ink.' (Keller, p. 106n.)
[13] For a complete list, please see my 'Text and Variorum Notes' in *The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One* (2006), Volume Two.

Computer magnification, however, suggests that what's been mistaken is not the preposition but the noun. *Blocke* is really *blade*. Kerning *cke* really tightly, like this, *ck*e, produces something easily mistaken for *de*, and of course vice versa. By imaginative extension, the *a* was read as *o*. My text thus gives *blade*, not *blocke*:

I'd lay my neck under the blade before him
And willingly endure the stroke of death.
—*1 Richard II,* V.i.180-1

We may note similar confusions in the manuscript of Peele's *Edward I*, where *blade* and *blode* (blood) are often mistaken for one another. Peele's editor, Frank S. Hook, notes that 'corruptions' of this sort 'are all of types likely to occur in reading secretary hand,'[14] the script used for *1 Richard II*.

Heaps

An even more striking instance is *heaps* at I.iii.261. Most editors, including Frijlinck, mistake the *p* for an *r*, incorrectly giving *here's*:

...the King, all careless.
Here's wrong on wrong, to stir more mutiny.

But Keller preferred '*heepes* wrong on wrong,' followed by a period. While he got the verb right, his stop for the MS's comma still leaves Woodstock nonsensically suggesting that it is he, and not the king, who is stirring up the rebellion:

The commons they rebell; and the king, all careless,
Heepes wrong on wrong. To stirr more mutiny,
Afore my God, I knowe not what to doe.

Carpenter finally got it right, as the degrained and magnified MS confirms. It is indeed the king who is to blame:

[14] Frank. S. Hook and John Yoklavich (eds.): *The Dramatic Works of George Peele,* 3 Vols. (Yale U.P. 1961), Vol. 2, pp. 42-3.

The commons, they rebel, and the King, all careless,
Heaps wrong on wrong, to stir more mutiny.
Afore my God, I know not what to do!

—*1 Richard II*, I.iii.251-3

Hidden Iambics

The manuscript's poetically inexpert and perhaps bored copyist often ran lines together or displaced words and even phrases, destroying what were apparently intended to be iambic pentameters and even couplets. A frequent editorial conundrum is thus Steiner's 'fidelity' to a damaged but authentic text, or the guesstoration of what seems to have been the author's poetic purpose.

An example is III.i.61-65, where the original reads (spelling and punctuation modernized):

Queen: … They are your noble kinsmen. To revoke the sentence were—
King: An act of folly, Nan. King's words are laws.

But editors Corbin and Sedge (COR) cleverly divide the last words of the queen's speech at *revoke*, revealing a hidden pentameter when *the sentence were* is taken with Richard's response:

Queen: … They are your noble kinsmen, to revoke
The sentence were—
King: An act of folly, Nan!
Kings' words are laws: if we infringe our word,
We break our law. No more of them, sweet queen.

—*1 Richard II*, III.i.61-65

The realignment of the rest reveals additional fossilized iambics, confirming this inspired call.

In another example, this time my own, Richard opens a big speech with:

So, sir, the love of thee and these, my dearest Green [...]

It sounds and looks like prose, but simply resetting the first two words, 'So, sir,' one of Richard's habitual phrases, reveals an introductory iambic pentameter consistent with the rest of the speech.

So, sir:
The love of thee and these, my dearest Green,
Hath won King Richard to consent to that
For which all foreign kings will point at us, [...]
—*1 Richard II*, IV.i.143-5

Similarly, the farewell between the Duchess of Gloucester and Queen Anne in II.iii reveals a stepped pentameter of some complexity, since to make it work *desolation*, the final word, has to be syllabically sounded out, something no actor would of course really do. In a sense, the poet is writing for himself alone:

Duchess of Gloucester: Madam, ye hear I'm sent for.
Queen: Then begone:
Leave me alone in desolation.
—*1 Richard II*, II.iii.77-9

A redraft of IV.iii.162-3, which appears to have been incorrectly copied from the original, reveals two previously unsuspected iambic pentameters and a couplet. The MS and all prior editions give:

What loss can be compar'd to such a queen?
Down with this house of Sheen! Go, ruin all!

But 'Go, ruin all!' almost certainly should be at the start of the second line, thus recovering

What loss can be compar'd to such a queen?
Go, ruin all! Down with this house of Sheen!
—*1 Richard II*, iv.iii.162-3

At I.iii.32-3, the MS gives

But his maturity, I hope you'll find,

True English-bred, a king loving and kind.

But transposing 'king' and 'loving' restores the iambic and adds perhaps Hamlet's sense of kinship to 'kind':[15]

But his maturity, I hope you'll find,
True English-bred, a loving king and kind.
—*1 Richard II*, 1.iii.32-3

Varieties of Language

Among *1 Richard II*'s remarkable accomplishments is a sweeping portrait of English society, literally from the masses to the monarch, excluding only the clergy. Its range of vivid speaking characters, each of whom possesses his/her own class, gender and regional registers, includes the king and his noble relatives, their household stewards with knighthoods, court dandies, the ambitious, landed bourgeoisie, well-off village merchants, corrupt local officials, devious lawyers, shrieves, servants, and soldiers, political prisoners, murderers, double-talking confidence tricksters, two ghosts and, yes, even a talking horse, about whom more in a moment.

All express themselves in their own distinctive ways, using accents, tones and vocabularies immaculately reproduced by a playwright with a sharp ear for speech rhythms and idiomatic differences. It's a theatrical *tour de force* that has unfortunately been overlooked these 150 years.

The mannered accent of the dandified Spruce Courtier, for instance, who rides onto the set demanding to see Woodstock, is deftly caught and mercilessly mocked, along with his equally ridiculous clothes, transparent social ambitions and stultifying arrogance. He unwittingly reveals himself not only in the way he speaks but—a very English critique—by his unkindness to horses and servants. Soon after arriving at Plashy House, the MS has him say of a groom too busy to help him:

[15] 'A little more than kin, and less than kind.' (*Hamlet*, I.ii.64-5).

A rud swayne by heauene, but stay heere walkes another. hearst ta. tho[u]: fellowe, is this plasshy house

'Hearst ta. thou: fellowe,' with its odd pointing, has completely flummoxed the editors. Halliwell proposed 'hearst tro,' and Keller 'heer, sta thou,' or 'heerst ta thou, fellow,' without further explanation. After tepidly suggesting 'hearst tha,' Rossiter adopted Keller's second suggestion and quickly moved on.

My view however is that the *ta* after *hearst* is a successful attempt to phonetically render a faux upper-class accent. It tells the actor that the final 't' in 'hear'st' should be spoken with exaggerated emphasis, almost like a spit. It's funny but also not, like the twit himself. These are King Richard's new-moneyed idiots, the play suggests, who are now disastrously running and ruining the country after his successful palace revolution in II.ii.[16]

Woodstock: But this most fashionable chain, that links as it were the toe and knee together?
Courtier: In a most kind coherence, so it like your Grace, for these two parts, being in operation and quality different, as, for example, the toe a disdainer or spurner, the k-nee a dutiful and most humble orator, this chain doth, as it were, so toeify the k-nee, and so k-neeify the toe, that between both it makes a most methodical coherence, or coherent method.

—*1 Richard II*, III.ii.222-30

It's a caricature certainly, but a very good one. As we shall see, Shakespeare himself seems to have thought it so effective he borrowed the Courtier for Osric. More about this below, and what it may tell us about the play's composition date.

[16] Despite his tepid edit, Rossiter understands this. In his notes he brilliantly proposes, while not including them in his text, 'k-nee' and 'k-neeify' at III.ii.228-9. I gleefully accept this inspired suggestion, which not only gets audience laughs but is wholly consistent with the Courtier's witless self-satire.

English of a sharply other sort may be heard in III.iii, when Nimble ruthlessly bullies a group of prosperous Dunstable merchants into signing away their lives and lands to the king and his money-hungry clique at court.

Farmers, butchers and graziers, the villagers are smart but uneducated, leery of the slick-talking government agent who is clearly up to something though they can't quite figure out what. The folk idioms fall thick and fast as they try to handle the future in the language of the past:

Nimble: Here, ye bacon-fed pudding-eaters! Are ye afraid of a sheepskin?
Grazier: Mass, 'tis somewhat darkly written.
Farmer: Ay, ay, 'twas done i' the night, sure.
Grazier: Mass, neighbors, here's nothing that I see.
Butcher: And can it be any harm, think ye, to set our hands to nothing? These Blank Charters are but little pieces of parchment. Let's set our marks to them, and be rid of a knave's company.
Nimble offers ink, pen and sealing wax. Butcher signs then hands pen to Farmer
Farmer: As good at first as last, we can be but undone. [*Signs*]
Grazier: Ay, and our own hands undoes us, that's the worst on't. Lend's your pen, sir. [*Signs*]
Butcher: We must all venture, neighbors, there's no remedy.
—*1 Richard II*, III.iii,118-130

Elsewhere in the same scene we meet the town's Bailiff, Master Simon Ignorance, whose rotund, oral pomposity contrasts sharply with the tight-lipped, muttered exchanges of the frightened villagers. Inwardly terrified himself, Ignorance tells Nimble:

Nay, look ye, sir, be not too pestiferous, I beseech ye! I have begun myself and seal'd one of your Blanks. I know my place and calling, my name is Ignorance and I am Bailey of Dunstable. I cannot write nor read, I confess it, no more could my father, nor his father, nor none of the Ignorance this hundred year, I assure ye.
—*1 Richard II*, III.iii.7-13

Like his brother, Master Ignoramus, who never appears, the Bailiff's catch-words are 'pestiferous' and 'pestiferously,' which he uses without comprehension variously to mean 'pressing' (III.iii.7), 'useful' (III.iii.36), 'serious' (III.iii.107), 'criminal' (III.iii.154, 210) 'assiduous' (III.iii. 160, 277), 'egregious' (III.iii.175), 'deceitful' (III.iii.216, 258) and 'rebellious' (III.iii.231).

In the same Dogberry-like fashion, Ignorance malapropriates 'examinations' for 'exclamations' (III.iii.217), 'strange' for 'effective' (III.iii.277), 'shameful' for 'serious' (III.iii.217) and 'reform' when he intends 'oppose' (III.iii.230). His linguistic universe, like his political standing, is distinct from the 'rich choughs,' all of whom he knows and all of whom he betrays.

To be clear, Simon Ignorance is not Dogberry, though he strongly evokes him, as all the play's editors since Rossiter have recognized. In other words, he is not a copy but a variation on a theme, recalling, or perhaps anticipating, Messina's constable in his mangling of the English tongue. Explicitly the embodiment of everything his name represents, Ignorance is also a politically more dangerous figure than Dogberry because *1 Richard II* is a politically more dangerous play than *Much Ado About Nothing*. The Bailiff of Dunstable is one of the *kapos* without which Richard's tyranny could not function.

As a last example of *1 Richard II*'s extraordinary linguistic variety, the nobility express themselves in an English different yet again. Never mocked or satirized, their speech is educated, literate and often soaringly poetic. For instance:

Queen: 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,
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.37-51

This is the young Queen on her wedding day, thanking the assembled lords and ladies for their warm welcome. But note how her pretty speech operates on an entirely different plane from the other examples we've looked at. Its theme is transformation, change and alteration, the 'golden metamorphosis' (I.iii.79) explored in almost every scene. This is a play about revolution, social and personal. As the shocked Woodstock says of Richard's historic palace coup in II.ii:

What transformation do mine eyes behold,
As if the world were topsy-turvy turn'd!

—*1 Richard II*, II.ii.145-6

Queen Anne, who becomes the drama's moral center, is at once caught up in the 'sweet spells' of her hosts' warmth and kindness. 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. But notice how at the same time her language performatively 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 itself, from uncultivated to cultivated—brambles to cedars, wild grape to fruitful vine, etc. Indeed, there's so much going on in these lines, including what seems to be a faint pre-echo of Macbeth's tale told by an idiot, that to suggest they were penned by some deservedly anonymous hack can

hardly be maintained. This fifteen-line sonnet literally speaks for itself.

Dating the Play

The matter of when the play was written goes to the heart of its most intriguing mystery: who wrote it? Scholars routinely insist on a Jacobean date, contemporaneous with the manuscript, implying and often claiming that its numerous Shakespearean echoes are simply plagiarisms by a third-rater like Samuel Rowley, author of *When You See Me You Know Me* (1605). This is the position maintained by that formidable attributionist, Macdonald P. Jackson.

But Jackson's case is not supported by the play itself, whose features point again and again to 1592-3. The most revealing evidence, though by no means all, concerns the Spruce Courtier and what we might call his literary DNA.

As we've seen, the king's hat-flourishing messenger seems undeniably related to Osric. Everyone since Rossiter has recognized and acknowledged it. The question, however, like the egg and the chicken, is which came first? All the editors insist upon Osric, a figure of such distinctively Shakespearean originality that Anon must, of course, have stolen him. It follows then that *1 Richard II* was written after 1601, the earliest agreed date for *Hamlet*.

But the historical and literary evidence all go in the other direction. Anon got his Spruce Courtier not from *Hamlet* but from his own careful research—Rossiter calls it 'academic,' meaning thorough—into the history of Richard II. His sources demonstrably included contemporary documents, legal, historic and literary, many of which are unmistakably reflected in the play.

Among Anon's literary sources we find an untitled 1380s poem dubbed 'On the Times' by its modern editors.[17]

[17] Thomas Wright, (ed.): *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History Composed During the Period from the Accession*

At 236 lines of alternating English and Latin verse ('macaronic'), it can't be quoted in full here, though I reproduce the key passages in my *Text and Variorum Notes* (2006), together with many of the documents referred to below.

'On the Times' (ca. 1400) is satirical folk poetry, among whose targets are precisely Richard II's so-called 'new men' (l. 133). They 'strut ridiculously' (l. 126), their shoulders puffed out to appear broader than they are (ll. 130-1) and—the detail seized upon by the author of *1 Richard II*—their slippers have long pointed toes or 'peaks' attached to their shins by chains of gold (ll. 141, 146). This absurd gear makes it impossible for them to kneel in church, upsetting others (ll. 145-155). Christ curses them, and their necks are ready for the sword (ll.138, 159).

In the play, Cheney describes the 'strange fashions' of Richard's new courtiers, objective correlatives for the transformations everywhere. The details derive from 'On the Times':

> They suit themselves in wild and antic habits
> Such as this kingdom never yet beheld:
> French hose, Italian cloaks, and Spanish hats,
> Polonian shoes with peaks a handful long,
> Tied to their knees with chains of pearl and gold.
> Their plumed tops fly waving in the air
> A cubit high above their wanton heads.
>
> —*1 Richard II*, II.iii.95-106

It seems perverse to deny the literary DNA here. The bloodline clearly descends not from Osric but the 'new men' described in 'On the Times' and similar folk poems. These include 'Richard the Redeless' (1399-1400), and 'Mum and the Sothsegger' (1403-6), both of which harshly mock Richard II and his youthful councilors. The second explicitly urges the king to pay better attention to his 'sothseggers' or

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of Edw. III. to that of Ric. II (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1859, Kraus Reprint Ltd., 2 Vols., 1965).

those who tell the truth, like Plain Thomas.[18] Osric is not the Courtier's ancestor but in fact his Danish cousin, summoned back to court when Shakespeare needed another ludicrous messenger from another murderous king to another doomed prince.

An even more influential document seems to have been John Gower's *Cronica Tripertita* (ca. 1400), a scathing indictment in Latin of Richard II's reign, still considered reliable by historians. It appears to have strongly affected Anon's overall historical analysis, and even contributed the unusual word 'pestiferous,' which is used repeatedly by Gower (Latin *pestifer*, pestilential) but by no other source.[19]

Another trace element may be Gower's unusual portrayal of the historically pugnacious Woodstock as both 'well-meaning' and 'honest.'[20] He also vividly describes the duke's kidnapping and murder using the same graphic imagery of a helpless creature hunted down and torn apart by savage wolves, *Plusque lupo saevit rex*, 'The king rages like a wolf.'[21]

Finally among Anon's probable sources we may note a popular contemporary ballad known by its first line, 'Ther is a Busche that is Foregrow.' [22] This satirical take-

[18] Helen Barr (ed.): *The Piers Plowman Tradition: A Critical Edition of Pierce the Ploughman's Crede, Richard the Redeless, Mum and the Sothsegger, and The Crowned King* (1993).
[19] Apparently Anon could read and translate scholarly Latin. This considerably narrows the field of possible authors.
[20] Eric W. Stockton: *The Major Latin Works of John Gower 'The Voice of One Crying' and 'The Tripartite Chronicle': An Annotated Translation into English With an Introductory Essay on the Author's Non-English Works* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962), *Passus secunda*, 36.
[21] *Ibid.* For more on Gower, Anon and Shakespeare, see my General Introduction, *1 Richard II* (2006).
[22] William Hamper (ed.): 'Sarcastic Verses, Written by an Adherent to the House of Lancaster, in the last year of the reign of

down of Bushy, Green and Bagot may well have been the inspiration, not only of the Schoolmaster's 'treasonous ' song, 'Would ye buy any parchment knives?' (III.iii.199-207), but also for its strikingly similar puns:

A poison may be Green,
But Bushy can be no faggot:
God mend the King and bless the Queen
And 'tis no matter for Bagot.

Cuts, Deletions and Corrections

The case for an Elizabethan rather than a Jacobean *1 Richard II* is strengthened further by a close look at the manuscript's cuts, alterations and edits.

Building on Frijlinck's pioneering work, including a study of inks and letter formations, Rossiter identified nine scribal, interpolating, editing, and/or correcting hands in the MS. Apart from the copyist, Hand A, there are notes and reminders from stage managers, interventions by censors and, most interestingly, deletions and marginalia by the author himself.

Rossiter also shows that author and copyist worked closely together. The latter occasionally left spaces for illegible words, as we can still see, or made a mistake, such as an incorrect speech assignment or misplaced stage direction, which the playwright afterwards completed or corrected. At one point, for instance, the copyist called Sir Edward Bagot 'Thomas,' subsequently put right by the author.

These changes and other alterations are all part of the process A.C. Partridge, the MS's best and most careful scholar, called 'stratification'—editorial layers put in place at different times, including abbreviations and scribal habits typical

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Richard the Second, A.D. 1399,' *Archaeologia 21* (1827), pp. 88-91; Thomas Wright, *ed. cit.*, and James Dean (ed.): *Medieval English Political Writings* (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1996), pp. 150-2. Also available on-line at http://www.ub.rug.nl/camelot/teams/tmsmenu.htm.

of their epochs. Partridge's conclusion is that while the MS itself is early Jacobean, the original play was made in the early to mid 1590s.[23]

Partridge's analysis is confirmed not only by the playwright's own cuts, interventions and alterations, but by the multiple 'unknown hand' edits we find throughout.

The systematic deletion of the text's frequent oaths and imprecations (*Zounds! Afore my God!* etc.), which all editors restore, also implies an original written some time before 1606, when the 'Act to Restrain Abuses of Players' prohibited actors from 'jestingly or profanely' invoking 'the holy Name of God or of Christ Jesus, or of the Holy Ghost or of the Trinity.'

The otherwise pointless deletion of a phrase describing the English monarch as 'Superior Lord of Scotland' (II.ii.111), sets the play's composition date even earlier, since it suggests sensitivity to James I's feelings following his accession in 1603. Patriotically appropriate during the 1590s, the title conferred on Richard at his coronation in the second act was tactfully omitted later.

Finally, the removal of the drama's climactic deposition scene strongly supports the likelihood that it was composed before such depictions were banned ca.1597, following the Q1 publication of *2 Richard II*. In its day Shakespeare's most popular work, *2 Richard II*'s deposition scene was strictly forbidden during the reigns of Elizabeth I and her successor. Its most famous performance, staged at the request of Essex and his supporters in 1601, specifically

[23] I studied with Partridge at Witwatersrand University when he was working on his influential *Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama; A Study of Colloquial Contractions, Elisions, Prosody and Punctuation* (University of Nebraska Press, 1964). On stratification, see also Rossiter, *Woodstock*, pp. 171-2.

included the illegal scene because it modeled the rebellion's intent, or so it was claimed at Essex's trial.

There is thus every reason to think that the censors simply removed the last page of the MS with its unacceptable conclusion. But it was of course there in the first place because when the play was originally written there were no injunctions against such portrayals. This gives us then a composition date no later than 1594, when *2 Richard II* was first performed.

Not all the text's deletions, however, reflect contemporary political or religious niceties. Many appear to be purely stylistic, providing us with a rare opportunity to observe an Elizabethan/Jacobean dramatist editorially at work—perhaps even Shakespeare himself, together with almost unique samples of his handwriting.

Among the most significant cuts are those carried out apparently because they echo—or pre-echo—*2 Richard II*. Like the deposition scene, they seem to have been deleted in hindsight.

This applies particularly to the MS's most famous passage and its eloquent removal. In IV.i, after leasing England to his court cronies for £7000 a month, Richard, who fully understands the revolutionary nature of what he has done, declares prophetically:

So, sir:
The love of thee and these, my dearest Green,
Hath won King Richard to consent to that
For which all foreign kings will point at us,
And of the meanest subject of our land
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 far as Babylon,
The maiden conqueress to all the world.
—*1 Richard II*, IV.i.143-15

A pelting farm was an emblem of the nobility in decline, the word 'farm' as a verb meaning to exploit or turn something into ready cash. When strapped for money, aristocratic families would 'farm out,' as we still say, a village or an area to professional tax collectors. Their ruthless conduct, hinted at by Nimble in III.i.163ff., and graphically portrayed in the anonymous *Jacke Straw* (1594), is clearly identified in that drama as a major cause of the Peasants' Revolt (1381).

In Anon's hands, and of course Shakespeare's, the story is more about Richard II analogically putting his entire kingdom out to farm, reaping similar anger, revolt and finally deposition. The greedy minions laughingly describe their plans:

Scroop: There's no question on't. King Richard will betake himself to a yearly stipend, and we four by lease must rent the kingdom!
Bushy: Rent it, ay, and rack it too, ere we forfeit our leases, and we had them once!
Enter Bagot
How now, Bagot, what news?
Bagot: All rich and rare! The realm must be divided presently, and we four must farm it. The leases are a-making and for seven thousand pounds a month the kingdom is our own, boys!
Bushy: 'Sfoot, let's differ for no price! And it were seventy thousand pounds a month, we'll make somebody pay for't!
—*1 Richard II*, IV.i.52-64

The outrage is famously taken up by John of Gaunt in his 'sceptr'd isle' speech:

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 to Richard's statement is so close that everyone remarks on it. F.A. Marshall was the first, commenting that 'The similarity of expression is worth noticing.'[24] Frijlinck feels that 'the phrase in one play is copied from the other,'[25] Matthew W. Black records the echo,[26] while Kenneth Muir says that Shakespeare 'took several hints' from *1 Richard II*, including this passage.[27] Even Dover Wilson, who rejects *1 Richard II* as his *Ur*-Richard II source play, acknowledges that the second repeats the first 'almost word for word.'[28]

In Shakespeare's view, and by no coincidence Anon's, Richard has turned the whole country into a pelting farm, and himself into its landlord, a mere collector of rent—a humiliating descent into the mercantile class with its confusing new world of laws and contracts. As both *1* and *2 Richard II* see it, the king has criminally abandoned the nobility's traditional rights and privileges, demeaning 'this royal throne of kings.'

It may be noted too that when Richard was permanently deposed in 1399, the phrase 'pelting farm' was never used. Article One instead accused him of turning his kingdom over to 'men unworthie.' The pelting-farm analogy is unique to Shakespeare and Anon.

Yet even more striking than these connections is the fact that Richard's original 'pelting farm' speech was deleted from the MS of *1 Richard II*. Given the authority and precision of

[24] Irving and Marshall (eds.): *The Works of William Shakespeare*, Vol. II, p. 463 n.
[25] Frijlinck, p xxvi.
[26] Black, *Richard the Second*, (1955) p. 104.
[27] '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.
[28] Dover Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. lvii.

the surgery, the remover was almost certainly the dramatist himself.

One asks why, and the answer seems to lie in the speech's key phrase, 'pelting farm,' which was repeatedly altered and replaced. Among its interlined alternatives we find *petty*, *peltry* or *paltry*, and perhaps *plteg*. When none of these proved satisfactory, the author drew a canceling line through the entire speech and for good measure wrote the word *Out* in the margin.

It had to be 'pelting farm' or nothing, because the term had a specific legal meaning, lost if *pelting* were replaced with *petty* or *paltry* or even nothing at all.

We're thus looking at part of the creative process and not, as Rossiter dismissively suggests, a word choice anyone might have made. Anyone hasn't. Other than these two obviously related theatrical moments, there are no others in all English and indeed world literature.

Ian Robinson, the critic and editor who published the first serious investigation into the authorship of *Woodstock*, as he called it, accepts the scholarly consensus that the author of *2 Richard II* must have had access to the manuscript in Egerton 1994:

> There are of course various ways in which Shakespeare might have come to read it; the simplest possibility is that the manuscript was made from his own papers and revised by him. He then realized he needed the 'pelting farm' image for [2 *Richard II*], and excised it from *Woodstock*.[29]

Other stylistic cuts tend to confirm this. For example, the author deleted a key line from the farewell scene between Woodstock and his brothers:

[29] Ian Robinson: *'Richard II' and 'Woodstock'* (Brynmill Press) 1988, p. 46.

On earth, I fear, we never more shall meet.
—*1 Richard II*, III.ii.107

perhaps because it too strongly recalls a similar parting of three in the later play:

Bagot: If heart's presages be not vain.
We three here part that ne'er shall meet again
—*2 Richard II*, II.ii.142-3

Similar deletes include references to the bearing and career of the Black Prince in *1 Richard II*, I.i.34-40, closely followed in *2 Richard II*, II.i.171ff. [30] All the evidence bears in the same direction.

A Touring Play

Among *1 Richard II*'s most remarkable moments is a sequence dominated by a real horse in conversation with a human, a *coup de théâtre* almost unique in Elizabethan drama. The nearest thing to it, perhaps unsurprisingly, is Launce and his expressive dog Crab in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

In *1 Richard II* the horse is ridden onto the set by the Spruce Courtier, his florid hat decorated by a feather 'waving in the air a cubit high' above his head.

However one defines a cubit, the hat and its feather would add considerably to the overall height of even a modest horse and rider, conservatively estimated at around eight or nine feet. This is much higher than the typical Elizabe-

[30] The complex matter of the relationship between *1* and *2 Richard II* unfortunately cannot be explored here. Please see the introduction to my *1 Richard II* (2006) under *2 Richard II*. In summary, Part One, not originally conceived as such, was written as a self-standing play, radically advocating what we now call constitutional monarchy. Shakespeare returned to its ideas, characters, themes and, concepts when he set out to dramatize the king's final year, 1399, which begins immediately after Part One.

than stage entrance of about seven feet, confirmed by recent excavations and beautifully visualized by Walter Hodges in his conjectural illustrations of the Swan and other theatres.[31]

The point is that the Spruce Courtier's mounted entrance could never have been intended for any known London stage. Coaxing a horse up a flight of wooden stairs and then, plus rider, onto a small stage, obviously presents major problems. There are also the complications and costs of stabling, feeding, transporting to and from the theatre, saddling and mounting the beast quietly backstage, and finally splashing its sides with a little water as it clatters on, since Woodstock remarks that it's sweating.

All this too before the critter decides to relieve itself mid-scene, which in the grand tradition of the theater it surely would, and at the wrong time and place and in the most awkward way possible. Obviously an in-house horse is an on-stage nightmare (no pun intended).

Outdoors it's an entirely different matter. Space is no longer a problem, there are no steps to mount or descend, and the more unpredictable the horse's behavior, the funnier things get.

A lot of the humor depends on the stand-up skills of the actor playing Woodstock, who is given a series of comments rather than a speech. Their sequence can be varied according to anything the horse might do, including neighs, headshakes and assorted digestive processes. Imagine the delight of a rural audience when Tom Pierce's grey mare, hired for the occasion, suddenly drops a load and Woodstock smirks, about the citified Courtier, 'I think you have as much wit as he, i' faith!'

The dramatist even provides for a completely unresponsive

[31] C. Walter Hodges: *Enter the Whole Army: A Pictorial Study of Shakespearean Staging 1576-1616* (Cambridge U.P. 2000), p. 192.

animal. Woodstock's options include, 'Ah, your silence gives consent, I see!'

It's a brilliant comedic episode, perhaps the best in a very funny play, leading to my suggestion that *1 Richard II* may have been originally conceived for the provincial tour and thus consciously designed for performance in market places, fields, tavern yards or other open spaces. This would also explain the stage directions in IV.iii, providing for not one but two whole armies simultaneously on stage in full armor with drums and colors flying. They then both 'march about' before engaging in shouted insults and a lengthy battle. Given an open space it could all be quite spectacular, something villagers from miles around would flock to see.

Performance Anxieties

Under open-air conditions then the horse, far from being a complication, becomes a triumph—a scene-stealer, the star of the show, who always gets the biggest cheer at the end.

Absent an outdoors venue, however, and access to a suitable horse (as in a 1999 production in Northampton, MA, which absolutely worked), modern directors will be challenged.

Michael Hammond's 2002 Emerson College production ingeniously resolved the difficulty by having a talented actor play the part, not in pantomime, but barefoot and with long tousled hair, which he tossed from time to time like a mane. Inspired perhaps by Peter Shaffer's *Equus*, this device worked surprisingly well.

Another solution might be to imply the horse by using sound recordings of hoof beats, neighs, clanging gates, etc. Enter and exit the Spruce Courtier. Woodstock holds the reins and talks to the animal just off stage or behind a bulging curtain. This would also provide plenty of opportunities for vulgar horsey noises in the right places, with Woodstock pointing them by his reactions.

Another of the play's most difficult scenes, theatrically

speaking, dramatizes Richard II's historic attempt to break the power of the old nobility through the redivision of his kingdom. His new class allies, the emerging rural bourgeoisie represented by Bushy, Bagot, Green and Scroop, reappear in Part Two. Richard's notorious invocation of the law on their behalf was a direct challenge to the established aristocracy, helped along by bitter family hatreds and ancient rivalries. At several points the author suggests that the great civil war between York and Lancaster began with the murder of Woodstock, a judgment supported by modern historians.

The critical scene, however, in which Richard parcels out England—the constitutional question being whether he has in fact the legal right to do so[32] —is excruciatingly specific, listing each of the 39 shires allotted and spelling out their lessees' responsibilities, including when and how to pay their rent. Before that, Tresilian reads aloud the particular terms and conditions of the agreement, phrased in perfect legalese (another of the play's many linguistic styles).

The directorial temptation is to cut, and frankly little seems lost, theatrically speaking, if 'fifteens, imposts, foreign customs, staples for wool, tin, lead, and cloth; all forfeitures of

[32] See Ernst H. Kantorowicz: *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (1957). The two bodies are the institution of the monarchy itself, eternal and incorruptible, and the king *in propria persona.* The first, or Body Politic, in the words of Edmund Plowden, the Elizabethan jurist of whom more below, 'cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People, and management of the Public Weal.' The second is the monarch's Body Natural, 'subject to all the infirmities that come by Nature or Accident, to the imbecility of Infancy or Old Age and to the like Defects that happen to the natural Bodies of other people.' As Schell notes, the foregoing is cited by Kantorowicz (*op. cit.*, p. 7) from Plowden's *Commentaries*, a text referred to in *1 Richard II*, V.vi.33. Kantorowicz argues that *2 Richard II* is an exploration of the tension between these two bodies. Without making any connection between the plays or their author(s), Schell shows that the same may be said of *1 Richard II.*

goods or lands confiscate' (IV.i.94-5) is dropped from Tresilian's recitation.

But the rest of this critical scene needs to be given its full dramatic weight. As Rossiter points out, the historic document that emerges is the very one 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.[33]

The implications of this are considerable, especially if we continue to insist, as Rossiter does, that *1 Richard II* comes from a hand other than Shakespeare's. It means either that the best mind of his generation plagiarized his analysis of the Wars of the Roses from a long-forgotten, anonymous drama, or—even more remarkably—that some long-forgotten, anonymous drama provided Shakespeare with his fundamental understanding of Elizabethan England's most important historical episode.

Theatrically, the challenge is communicating to a modern audience what will have been experienced as shock and outrage by the play's contemporaries. London—given away! Shropshire in the greedy hands of an upstart commoner! The analogy is perhaps with Trump's horrific presidency, unearned but technically legal, and the shock felt when he won and took office.

In my view, the most useful theatrical analogy is *King Lear*, I.i, which also involves the dramatic division of the kingdom, pointed by the gasps and other reactions among the assembled courtiers.

In the same way, the extent of Richard's revolution might be dramatized by the ad-libbed applause, congratulations,

[33] Rossiter, *Woodstock*, p. 227.

etc., of the assembled court and the king's praetorian guard of archers, who after II.ii accompany him and his minions everywhere.

Also among the drama's difficult moments is the king's exclamation at MS II.i.112: 'Thirteen sixty-five? What year is this?'

It's almost impossible to deliver this line without sounding like a complete idiot, though that cannot be the dramatist's intent. Richard is many things, but not unintelligent. His question, skillfully provoked by the scheming minions, prepares the way for his famous palace revolution against his uncles, dramatized in the next scene.

So again directorial deletion is not an option. Richard's exasperated query is dramatically rhetorical—of course he already knows the answer and may, as I imagine it, flourish a calendar as he speaks. Including this as a stage direction, however, goes beyond my brief. Instead, I edit the line and Bushy's response to bring out Richard's exasperation and even annoyance:

King: Thirteen sixty-five! [And] what year [then] is this?
Bushy: 'Tis now, my lord, 1387!

—*1 Richard II*, II.i.112-13

Sir Pierce of Exton

Among the surprising but forgotten facts about *1 Richard II* is that it includes Sir Pierce of Exton among its characters. Exton of course is historically famous as Richard II's assassin, suggesting that his inclusion is not fortuitous. Even more interesting, he is specifically identified and pointed out on stage although given no lines. The dramatist wanted him to be noticed.

The detail is so significant that Rossiter, who denies Shakespeare's hand in the play, not only questions whether Exton is even there, but 'proves' it by deleting him.

In the MS, Woodstock enters in I.i with an entourage including London's 'Lord Mayor' and another man called 'Exton.' But Rossiter conflates the two into a single figure, 'the Lord Mayor Exton,' whom he literally conjures out of thin air. Rossiter supports this by deciding that the author simply didn't know what he was doing, but that he, Rossiter, does. He explains:

> The MS reads, *Enter the Lord Mayre & Exton*, but I take it that only one person is meant, on Holinshed's authority and the single exit at [l. 130].[34]

But there is no authority for this in Holinshed or anywhere else and, as Sir John Dover Wilson points out, obvious stage exits, such as 'Hie thee, good Exton!' and many a concluding *Exeunt*, were not always written in. Exiting actors, he notes, could be trusted to find their way off stage.

Rossiter's fabrication unfortunately scrubs out one of the play's subtler ironies: Sir Pierce of Exton, Richard II's future murderer, glimpsed briefly at an early point in his career as a minor court functionary on the Lancastrian side. The next time we meet him he's still a minor court functionary, now working for Richard's usurper and willing to do whatever he wants. Sir Pierce's two appearances are subtle bookends to Richard's full story.

Rossiter's previously unrecognized intervention has had scholarly consequences, since all succeeding editors, intimidated by that vague reference to Holinshed, have followed him. The most recent casualty is Charles Forker, whose Arden edition of *2 Richard II* falsely claims that 'A Lord Mayor Exton appears as a character in *Woodstock*.'[35]

Thirteen Editions

A comparative chronological review of the play's previous editions follows, indicating each one's role in the evolution

[34] Rossiter, p. 182.

[35] Charles R. Forker (ed.): *King Richard II* (2002) p. 178 n.

of the text. The process offers an instructive and perhaps unique account of a significant Elizabethan drama, evolving from its original script to the modern stage.

1 *A Tragedy of King Richard the Second*, ed. J.O. Halliwell (1870)

As noted, the manuscript was recovered ca.1868 by the Victorian scholar J.O. Halliwell, also known as J.O. Halliwell-Phillipps, who found Egerton 1994 in a dusty box among the stacks of the old British Museum. It's a testament not only to Halliwell's industry but his literary acumen that he quickly recognized *1 Richard II*'s superior artistic qualities and—the heart of the play's continuing mystery—its tantalizing pertinence to Shakespeare.

Intrigued by all the possibilities, Halliwell published a clean, scholarly transcription in 1870, featuring a mock-Elizabethan title in a Gothic font. Only eleven copies were made available, however, with Halliwell at first declining even to identify himself as editor:

A Tragedy
of
King Richard the Second
Concluding with
the Murder of the Duke of
Gloucester at Calais.
A Composition Anterior to Shakespeare's Tragedy
on the same Reign, now first printed from
a Contemporary Manuscript

Later, however, Halliwell semi-changed his mind, autographing, dating and numbering each copy, and noting on the flyleaf of the eleventh, which he donated to the BM on 18 March, 1871, that the text had been 'Prepared from a MS in the British Museum — Eg. 1994.'

Sometime afterwards he added: 'See also *The Athenaeum*,

April, 1871,' referring to a letter he had published in that distinguished Victorian journal describing his edition as

> a curious and altogether unknown early drama of Richard the Second, composed, I should say, judging from internal evidence, previously to the appearance of Shakspeare's [*sic*] play on other events of the same reign, and written with no small ability.[36]

Halliwell went on to hope that 'competent judges of old handwriting' might 'give an opinion respecting its date, and introduce to the further notice of the public a volume which well deserves to be better known.'[37]

Halliwell's Text

Halliwell's edition is a neatly printed and readable version that sticks closely to the original. A modest but quite successful effort is made to clean up the manuscript without altering it too substantially: capitals are inserted at line-starts and most of the text clearly set out as verse.

The spelling and design generally follow the MS, with some occasional carelessness, e.g., I.i.69 gives *then* for MS *them*, I.iii.283 *brotheer* for *brother* and III.iii.118 *punding-eaters* for *pudding-eaters*.

Less forgivably, Halliwell characteristically renders *your* as *youre* (e.g., III.ii.191, III.ii.193 and III.iii.36), and at I.ii.47 gives *alittle* for *a little*, at III.ii.216 *apolonian* for *a Polonian*

[36] *The Athenaeum,* April, 1871, pp. 401-2. A copy of Halliwell's letter appears in *1 Richard II* (2006), Vol. III.

[37] References to Halliwell's edition include Henry Paine Stokes: *An Attempt to Determine the Chronological Order of Shakespeare's Plays. The Harness Essay, 1877* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1878) p. 44; Adolphus William Ward: *A History of English Dramatic Literature to the Death of Queen Anne* (rev. edition, 3 vols., London: Macmillan & Co., 1899) Vol. II, p. 103; and Frederick Gard Fleay: *A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559-1642* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1891) Vol. II, p. 320.

and at III.ii.222 *lickes* for *links*.

Lines are sparsely and inconsistently punctuated—sometimes he pops in a final period, though he usually follows the MS by omitting them. Where Halliwell perceives the need, he modestly emends, but without explanatory notes or editorial comment.

These are, however, minor cavils. Many of Halliwell's silent emendations are obviously correct and have been incorporated by almost all subsequent editors, including myself.

The most important occurs at II.iii.58-73, all of which was cut at some point and their speech-heads lost. Halliwell restores the text, identifies the missing speakers (Queen Anne, the Duchesses of Gloucester and Ireland) and assigns a short speech (ll. 59-60) to a (perhaps) previously silent Maid.

All editors except William A. Armstrong (1965) and E.B. Everitt (1965), who allocate these words to the Duchess of Ireland, accept Halliwell's introduction of the Maid. Others have built on his emendations and given three further lines that he assigned to the Duchess of Gloucester to the Duchess of Ireland (ll. 43-5).

At IV.iii.47-62 there are no visible speech-heads. Following Halliwell, editors now conventionally assign these lines to Tresilian and Nimble.

While these edits are not particularly difficult, given the context, later at IV.iii.112 the MS shows only *h* for a speech-head. Halliwell clearly guessed right when he gave these important lines, announcing Queen Anne's death, to Bushy.

Other Emendations

Halliwell was also a sharp-eyed editor of individual words. It was he who first noticed the absurdity of Richard's comment at III.i.95: 'or lett o^{r} predissessors yett to come' [...].

He declined to emend, but inserted a cautionary '(*sic*)' after 'predissessors.' Keller took the hint and supplied 'successors,' reinstating the meaning but losing a beat. Rossiter emended further, 'Or *let* all our successors yet to come,' finally restoring the pentameter. The work, however, was really begun by Halliwell.

Nimble's important lines at MS III.iii.248-254 are severely damaged, thanks to a torn right edge where several words are lost. The recreation below, in a reduced font to fit my margins, employs the symbol < to indicate page damage:

that's all one if any man whissells treason tis as Ill as speakeing <
marke me m^{r} bayle. the bird whissels, that cannot speake, & <
ther be birds in a manner that can speake too: your Rauen will call ye<
yo^{r} crow will call ye knaue m^{r} Bayle ergoe he that can whisse<
can speake, & therfore this fellowe hath both spooke & whissled treaso<
how say yo^{u} bayley Ignorance

Halliwell partially restores and emends this speech but doesn't quite get it right. 'Whissel' and 'treasone' are easily completed, but the rest is harder, as his still-mutilated version shows:

Thats all one if any man whissells treason tis as ill as speaking [it]
marke me master bayle. the bird whissells that cannot speake, and
ther be birds in a manner that can speake too; your rauen will your
crow will call ye knaue master Bayle ergoe he that can whissell
can speake, and therfore this fellowe hath both spooke and
whissled of treason how say you bayley Ignorance

To achieve coherence, Halliwell added 'it' to the end of the first line, and dropped 'call' from the third, perhaps intending that Nimble should appear to be correcting or supplementing himself: 'Your raven will—your crow will—call ye knave,' etc. Halliwell also added 'whissled of treason' toward the end, perhaps in error.

While Halliwell's rendition did not prove entirely successful, subsequent editors certainly built on it. Keller brilliantly contributed 'Your raven will call ye [rascal],' clarifying the

overall sense, and Frijlinck perhaps supplied (or read—it defeats me, despite Photoshop) the word 'yet' in the second line.

Rossiter pulled it even further together, cleaning up Keller's version slightly and repunctuating the whole speech for greater clarity.

My edition draws on all these improvements, but supplies 'black' in place of Keller's 'rascal,' since it refers to a popular Elizabethan idiom, 'The raven chides blackness,' a meaning similar to 'the pot calls the kettle black.'[38]

The finished version now reads:

That's all one. If any man whistles treason, 'tis as ill as speaking it. Mark me, Master Bailey: the bird whistles that cannot speak, and yet there be birds in a manner that can speak too. Your raven will call ye black, your crow will call ye knave, Master Bailey, *ergo* he that can whistle can speak, and therefore this fellow hath both spoke and whistl'd treason. How say you, Bailey Ignorance?

—*1 Richard II*, III.iii.248-254

Nimble's lines at V.v.2-6 are similarly damaged but more successfully restored by Halliwell. Again using < to indicate damage, the MS gives:

as light as a fether my lord. I haue putt off my shoo<e
that I might Rune lustely, the battailles lost & t<h
prisoners, what shall we doe my lord. yonders a<
we may Rune alonge that. & nere be sene I warra<

Halliwell emends this to

As light as a fether my lord. I haue putt of my sho[oes] that
I might rune lustely, the battailles lost and [all are] prisoners,
what shall we doe my lord. yonders a [ditch] we may rune
alonge that and nere be sene I warrant.

[38] Also used in *Troilus and Cressida*, II.iii.211

Aside from *of* for *off* in the first line, which is probably just a typo, this is almost the version now generally accepted. Keller extended the final line to read 'I warrant ye,' and Rossiter even further to 'I warrant you, sir.'

But these edits are too gratuitously conjectural, in my opinion. 'Warrant' *tout court* does the job, while for lengthy reasons outlined in my *Text and Variorum Notes* (2006), I supply 'the young lords are prisoners' and 'stream.'

The reconstructed text reads:

> As light as a feather, my lord. I have put off my [shoes] that I might run lustily. The battle's lost and [the young lords] prisoners. What shall we do, my lord? Yonder's a [stream.] We may run along that and ne'er be seen, I warra[nt.]
>
> —*1 Richard II*, V.v.2-6

Drums sound within at V.iii.37 is a composited stage direction first assembled by Halliwell and accepted by all subsequent editors except Everitt and Armstrong. From a confusion of additions, corrections and deletes, Halliwell took 'how now what dromes are these,' which he assigned to Arundel, relocated a stage-manager's reminder, *Dromes*, and combined them all with the s.d. fragment *s sounds in*, to create a coherent direction that clarifies the action and moves the scene along.

A related and even more important reconstruction is the stage direction inserted at V.iv.20, *They fight and Green is slain*. The badly damaged MS shows only '& ne'. Halliwell brilliantly supplied the missing letters, permanently restoring a crucial moment. Again, almost all later editors have followed him.

Omissions and Limitations

The discussion so far should give a clear sense of Halliwell's indispensable contribution to the history of *1 Richard II*. That said, it is also necessary to call attention to his lapses, a few of which are quite serious. For example, a mistran-

scription of *paleing* for MS *pooleing*, i.e., polling, contributed this non-existent word to the OED whose editors, as Frijlinck points out, accepted it entirely on the strength of Halliwell's scholarly authority.[39]

Also notable are Halliwell's inexplicable omissions of entire lines and, in one case, of a reasonably significant speech. In Act III.iii the Bailiff of Dunstable says to Nimble:

> You shall find me most pestiferous to assist ye; and so I pray ye, commend my service to your good lord and master. Come, sir, stand close.
>
> —*1 Richard II*, III.iii.160-2

But Halliwell inexplicably leaves it all out. Similarly, he omits 'By wolves and lions now must Woodstock bleed,' (IV.iii.215), and Lapoole's important verbal stage direction 'The time serves fitly, I'll call the murderers in.' (V.i.52-4.)

Halliwell enigmatically assigns the Bailiff's speech at III. iii.202-4 to Nimble, but then omits his last four words. At II.ii.190 he inserts the stage direction *Exitt B[aggott]*, though there seems to be no dramatic or textual justification for it.

After York and Lancaster leave Plashy in III.ii. Woodstock says:

> I have a sad presage comes suddenly
> That I shall never see these brothers more.
> On earth, I fear, we never more shall meet.
>
> —*1 Richard II*, III.ii.105-7

The MS deletes the whole of the third line, but Halliwell's response seems confused. He restores 'I fear, we never more shall meet,' a reasonable editorial decision, but then omits 'on earth,' truncating the pentameter. Whether this is an error or a conscious emendation (though why?) is again

[39] Frijlinck, *Introduction*, p. xxxxiii. The word was subsequently withdrawn.

unclear.

At III.ii.129 a servant describes the Spruce Courtier as 'Some fine fool: he's attir'd very fantastically, and talks as foolishly.'

But Halliwell omits 'and talks as foolishly,' although the Courtier's affected speech is a big part of the scene's humor. While it's true that there is partial damage to the line—as Keller notes, 'the last part of [fantastically] is smeared and the *T* obliterated'[40] —all subsequent editors, including myself, have had no difficulty reading and publishing 'and talks as foolishly.'

Finally, Halliwell includes some highly questionable transcriptions.

Apart from the meaningless 'The Julye passions boiling in my breast' (I.iii.230), at V.vi.36-7, where the MS breaks off, he gives the equally nonsensical 'for I haue plodded in ployden and can beard no lawe...'

As Frijlinck later clarified, however, Woodstock's 'Julye passions' are his 'inlye passions,' and the play's last surviving line is 'I have plodded in Plowden (an anachronistic reference to a famous Elizabethan legal authority) and can find no law...'

These corrections do not seem difficult and might have suggested themselves to an editor of Halliwell's ability. That they did not is puzzling and, together with other avoidable errors, tend to confirm some of the doubts about his scholarship that have been raised.[41]

[40] Keller, p 79.

[41] Akrigg for example describes Halliwell's two-volume *Letters of the Kings of England* (1848) as 'completely unreliable, being one of the horrors of Victorian "scholarship."' (G.V.P. Akrigg: *Letters of King James VI & I* (1984) pp. 33-4.)

2 *A Collection of Old English Plays*, Vol. I, ed. A.H. Bullen (1882-89)

Not surprisingly, Halliwell's eleven anonymous copies went virtually unnoticed. About 12 years later, however, A.H. Bullen, in his compendious four-volume anthology of forgotten English dramas, cited a few edited lines together with a dismissive and misleading characterization that suggests he barely skimmed Halliwell's text:

> Much of the play is taken up with *Greene* and *Baggott*; but the play-wright has chiefly exerted himself in representing the murder of *Woodstock* at Calais.[42]

Bullen's notice is nevertheless of historical significance, not least because it caught the eye of the play's next important editor, Wolfgang Keller, whose notes and introduction both refer to it.

3 *Richard II. Erster Teil. Ein Drama Aus Shake-speares Zeit*, ed. W. Keller (1899)

Wolfgang Keller was a German academic whose landmark edition of *1 Richard II* appeared in *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gessellshaft XXXV*, ed. Alois Brandl and Wolfgang Keller (Berlin, 1899).[43]

A long, untitled introduction not only intelligently and appreciatively discussed the play, but also outlined Keller's main editorial objectives.[44] These were in some measure a

[42] Bullen, I, Appendix 1, pp. 427-8. His light edits are recorded in my *Text and Variorum Notes* (2006).
[43] Founded in 1865, renamed *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* in 1925.
[44] Keller's fine critical analysis has not received the recognition it deserves, perhaps because it is in German. F.S. Boas for example drew heavily upon it for his *Woodstock* chapter in *Shakespeare and the Universities*, as did A.P. Rossiter, both without acknowledg-

response to Halliwell's edition which, as Keller observed,

> was published without introduction, notes, or even preface, and—although the play deserves it—made no attempt to update the punctuation or orthography.[45]

Keller undertook to remedy all of the above and thereby bring the play to a wider public. He largely succeeded. Without his edition we might still be waiting to hear of this remarkable and perhaps epochal drama.

Macro and Micro

Keller's important contributions are both particular and universal. Like most early Elizabethan plays, the MS lacks act and scene divisions. Keller introduced clearly numbered scenes and lines, though not the ones that prevail today, corrected words and phrases, supplied enduring emendations, and provided a quantity of informative and descriptive footnotes.

While retaining most of the MS's antique spellings, he freely punctuated the text, conferring upon it an indispensable coherence. In Woodstock's speech at I.i.130-144, for example, Keller's deft punctuations bring lucidity and movement to what in its raw Halliwell version seems a rather dull and uninspired declaration.

Keller's interventions also highlit many of Woodstock's subtler complexities as a dramatic and historical figure. Far from Halliwell's saintly political martyr, he emerges under Keller as a dithering if good-hearted court advisor not dissimilar to Polonius, sustained by his personal integrity and sense of responsibility to England. At the same time, like Lear's Gloucester, whose title of course he shares, Woodstock can often be short-tempered and tactless. His confrontation with Richard in the wedding scene, I.iii, ineluctably

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ment. My translation of Keller's introduction appears in the *Commentary* section, *1 Richard II*, Vol. III (2006).

[45] Keller, p. 5, *1 Richard II*, Vol. III (2006).

recalls the row between Kent and Lear in *Lear*, I.i

As noted, Keller was the first to recognize the play's well-organized scenic structure. An Aristotelian at heart, he held that a 'scene' must be a unified action in one place involving the same group of characters. His *1 Richard II* thus comprises five acts of three scenes apiece, though to make this work he was forced to introduce the concept of *Nebenscenen*, side- or sub-scenes, contained within the larger moments. Thus in his version of V.ii-V.vi, the climactic final battle, V.ii, (Nimble and Tresilian planning to run away), and V.iv, (the death of Green), are merely *Nebenscenen*, prologue and epilogue.

All editors since Rossiter, however, have recognized that these arrangements are too mechanical. The fifth act actually comprises six rapid-fire battle sequences, comparable to the climactic montage in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, hurrying the narrative towards its exciting dénouement—the defeat, deposition and restoration of the king.

Keller's organizational efforts nevertheless helped to understand the play more fully as a cohesive unit. He also provided quality emendations, words and repointings that sharpened up a speech here, battened down a moment there, collectively bringing everything into a clearer focus. There are few readers, I think, including my younger self, who fully appreciate the impact of editing on comprehensibility.

Two of Keller's edits in particular deserve to be noticed. The first, touched on earlier, is his reorganization and clarification of Nimble's lines at III.iii.250-4:

> Your raven will call ye [rascal,] your crow will call ye knave, Master Bailey: ergo, he that can [whistle treason] can speak, and therefore this fellow hath both spoke and whistl'd [treason].

It is only one speech, but a key one. Keller's conjectural emendations, especially *rascal* in the first line, helped pull both it and thus the whole scene together.

The second notable edit is more important, indeed so much so that at least three subsequent editors (Rossiter, Parfitt and Shepherd) brazenly stole it and passed it off as their own. Among scholars, plagiarism is the sincerest form of flattery.

At V.i.263-74 Woodstock has just been murdered. While his assassins drag his body off to be arranged neatly on his bed, so that he appears to have died naturally, Lapoole calls in his troops to kill his killers and so cover up the crime.[46]

The MS is so damaged at this point, however, with missing speech-heads and stage directions, not to mention the copyist's faded scrawl, that it's hard to figure out exactly what's supposed to be going on.

Keller brought order to this confusion by assigning the correct lines to their speakers, directing the entrance of a couple of soldiers and assigning to them a short verbal response. It's well rendered and obviously right. All subsequent editions have followed Keller, whose version is reproduced below. The square-bracketed speech-heads and stage directions represent his emendations:

[*Lapoole*] Take it up gently, lay him in his bed;
Then shut the door, as if he there had died.
[*1st Murderer*] It cannot be perceived otherwise, my lord. Never was murder done with such rare skill. At our return we shall expect reward, my lord.
[*Lapoole*] 'Tis ready told. Bear in the body, then return and take it.
[*Exeunt Murderers with the body*] Within there, ho!
[*Enter Soldiers*]
[*Soldiers*] My lord?

—*1 Richard II*, V.i.256-64

Keller also corrected many of Halliwell's mistranscriptions,

[46] The analogies with *Macbeth* are striking, as is Lapoole's conscience-stricken speech before Woodstock's murder. The tension between the two killers, one reluctant, the other greedy and ambitious, also hints at Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

restored the Bailiff's speech at III.iii.131-3, Woodstock's 'By wolves and lions now must Woodstock [bleed.]' (IV.iii. 225), and Lapoole's 'The time serves fitly, / I'll call the murderers in.' (V.i.51-2.)

Some Inaccuracies

On the other hand, Keller—harshly reprimanded for it later by both Rossiter and Frijlinck—did bow a little too easily to Halliwell's authority, mechanically reproducing some of his more questionable readings. Perhaps the German scholar felt a little insecure as a non-native speaker. He certainly did get confused about his English grammar at one point, discussed below.

A list of Keller's significant followings appears in my review of Frijlinck's edition, and more fully in my *Text and Variorum Notes* (2006).

Among them is his repeating Halliwell's absurd, 'Julye passions boiling in my breast' (I.iii.221), pointlessly replacing the *J* with an *I*. He also reprints Halliwell's careless substitution of 'sweete Richard' for MS 'sweete king' in II.ii.211.

At II.iii.32 Keller follows Halliwell's 'resent' where 'repent' is the actual word ('Nor now repent with peevish frowardness'). He also accepts Halliwell's emendation 'be off' at III.iii.103 where the MS gives 'begone.'

The censored play's incomplete concluding phrase, 'I have plodded in Plowden and can find no law...' is reproduced in Halliwell's meaningless version with only 'playden' for 'ployden' as a minor variant.

A little more seriously, at II.iii.43 Keller copies Halliwell in ignoring or overlooking a speech-rule,[47] thus assigning a

[47] As was common in Elizabethan and Jacobean prompt-books, the MS separates speeches by free-hand lines known as speech rules.

small but important declaration to the Duchess of Gloucester (rather than to the Duchess of Ireland, as do all other editors).

At III.iii.210 he appears to have again accepted Halliwell's authority in unwarrantedly transferring one of the Bailiff's speeches to Nimble.

While both these emendations could be defended on editorial grounds, there seems to be no explanation other than scholarly deference to explain Keller's omission of 'a day' from

> How like you that, Green? Believe me, if you fail, I'll not favor ye a day.
>
> —*1 Richard II*, IV.i.202-3

and the final 'well' in

> Would he were come! His counsel would direct you well.
>
> —*1 Richard II*, II.ii.196

Keller also followed Halliwell in placing a pointless *Exitt B*[*aggott*] after this line.

Not all of Keller's faults can be laid at Halliwell's door, however. At I.iii.170 and IV.ii.181 he unprecedentedly inserts an anachronistic and comic-like interrobang to express what he took to be combined surprise and indignation: 'Cankors?!' (I.iii.170) and 'Am I betrayd?!' (IV. ii.181).

Unfortunately this odd and very un-Elizabethan pointing has been repeatedly copied by other editors, including Rossiter and, through him, ARM and OXF. Yet both instances are wildly out of place and confer a sort of Bugs Bunny effect that may have encouraged some readers—most of whom won't know that they are not in the original—to feel that the play probably is some kind of scholarly hoax.

A second important editing mistake occurs in III.ii at the

conclusion of Woodstock's Launce-and-Crab dialogue with the Spruce Courtier's horse:

> Say a man should steal ye and feed ye fatter, could ye run away with him lustily? Ah, your silence argues a consent, I see! By the Mass, here comes company. We had been both taken if we had, I see.
>
> —*1 Richard II*, III.ii.178-9

Keller introduces a *not* into the last line, 'We had been both taken if we had not, I see.' commenting in a footnote that 'not is missing in MS. Without it the line makes no sense.'

But it is of course Keller who renders the line nonsensical. This is the little error we referred to earlier. As both Carpenter and Rossiter observe, the context makes it plain that Woodstock means, 'I see that we should both have been caught even if we *had* run away.'

Keller's edition nevertheless was a decisive step forward, and especially historic because he recognized the play's outstanding quality. He took seriously an obscure and almost forgotten drama where Halliwell had equivocated and Bullen merely sneered—'I will not inflict more of this stuff on the reader,' etc.[48]

Keller perceived that *1 Richard II* was well worth his time, attention and scholarly energy, and in so doing laid the groundwork, not only for the play's next two great editors, W.P. Frijlinck and A. P. Rossiter, but for its acceptance as a serious literary work and perhaps forgotten Shakespeare play (though he declined to make the call himself).

I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that Keller put *1 Richard II* on the map, albeit in an obscure corner. Nonetheless he successfuly called attention to what may yet prove to be an historic and transformative drama.

[48] Bullen, *op. cit.*, p 428.

4 'Notes on the Anonymous *Richard II*' by F.I. Carpenter (1900)

Carpenter's 'Notes' are not an edition but a five-page article in *The Journal of Germanic Philology,* Vol. III (1900), presented as a kind of extended commentary on Keller.

One gets the impression that the publication of *Richard II. Erster Teil* took Carpenter by surprise. A professor at the University of Chicago, he was evidently preparing an edition himself, noting in a brief introduction that his comments and suggestions were based on a transcription of the play, now lost, 'corrected from the original MS.'[49]

Nevertheless Carpenter acknowledged generously, if perhaps a little wryly, that Keller's text was 'an excellent piece of work,' which made available

> an interesting and significant drama of Shakespeare's time, hitherto practically inaccessible, although previously printed by Halliwell in an edition of eleven copies.[50]

While fate may have been a little unkind to Frederic Ives Carpenter, he deserves honorable mention here because many of his proposed edits have in fact passed into general acceptance.

I especially welcome the opportunity to recognize emendations not always acknowledged as his by later editors, some of whom were nonetheless willing to let it be understood that his clever suggestions were their own.

Carpenter's most useful clarification concerns the play's closing fragment (V.vi.36-7). Nimble enters the lords' camp leading the bound Tresilian, and Arundel asks him: 'What moved thee, being his man, to apprehend him?'

[49] Carpenter, p. 139.
[50] Carpenter, p. 138.

As we've noted, Keller and Halliwell give Nimble the following incomprehensible response:

Partly for thes causses, first the feare of the proclematione for
I haue plodded in playden and can beard no lawe

But Carpenter recognized that the reference was anachronistically to the distinguished Elizabethan jurist Edmund Plowden (1518-85), and that the mysterious 'beard' was really 'fynd' (find), which again tells us how hard it is to accurately read the MS.[51]

Carpenter's two emendations cleared up everything, allowing subsequent editors to intelligibly read the final existing line:

Partly for these causes: first, the fear of the proclamation,
for I have plodded in Plowden and can find no law …
—*1 Richard II*, V.vi.35-6

Rossiter and his successors have outrageously taken credit for this useful insight, and not only this one. At 1.ii.129 and V.vi.29 they give *Certiorari* for MS *surssararys*, usually with a scholarly explanation of the difference.[52] But these edits were originally Carpenter's.

Another of his skilled repairs occurs just before the big battle in Act V, John of Gaunt challenges the king:

And dost thou now plead doltish ignorance
Why we are landed thus in our defence?
—*1 Richard II*, V.iii.70-1

The word *landed* has created some debate. First, it does not accurately describe the occasion, and second, it appears to confuse John of Gaunt with his son, Henry Bullingbrook, also Duke of Lancaster, who more famously did land on the

[51] Carpenter, p. 142.
[52] Rossiter, p. 208.

coast at the start of his insurrection against Richard II. Carpenter resolved the issue, however, by proposing *banded* for *landed*, which may indeed have been the mistranscribed original. All editors since have copied him, though again without acknowledgment.

The following emendations, originating from Carpenter, have also been silently incorporated by his successors:

I.i.104 Let others *jet* in silk and gold, says he (*jet* for Halliwell's and Keller's *set*).

I.i.123 Alack the day, the night is made *a veil* (*a veil* for MS *auayle*).

I.i.130 Thanks from my heart. I swear afore my God (for MS 'Thankes from my harte I sweare: afore my god,')

II.i.134-5 Methinks 'tis strange, my good and reverend uncle, You and the rest should thus malign against us (*maligne* for MS *malinge*).

Carpenter made many other suggestions later editors quietly accepted, although most are too trivial to warrant discussion here—e.g., *handful* for *hand full* at II.iii.98, etc. He also proposed a few changes that never caught on, such as *shilling* for *pressing* at V.ii.9.

5 *The first part of the reign of King Richard the Second; or, Thomas of Woodstock*, ed. W.P. Frijlinck (1929)

The single most important edition of the play, Frijlinck's text is a 'type facsimile' in the Malone Society Reprint series, recreating the MS using print conventions. The copyist's handwriting is given in ordinary Times Roman, additions or comments by other hands in **Times Roman Bold**, and stage directions in *italics*. Deletions appear in [square brackets] and MS damage indicated by left and right carets, **< >**.

Frijlinck's edition also has a useful introduction describing the manuscript, its various hands and inks, and speculating about dates of composition. Her text, checked for accuracy by W.W. Greg, includes brief but descriptive footnotes of Halliwell's, Keller's and Carpenter's edits and/or errors.

Frijlinck's literary judgment is that *1 Richard II* 'marks a great advance towards historical tragedy after the chronicle plays,' and that 'the lively exposition has special merit.' It is successfully humorous where it needs to be, delineates and differentiates character well, and is unquestionably 'a forerunner to Shakespeare's *Richard II.*' Many of its speeches possess 'some poetic power.'[53]

Among Frijlinck's important textual clarifications are:

I.ii.137: 'I thanke your lordshipp, and a figg for the Roope then.' (For *Roope* (rope), Halliwell gives *Raxe*, Keller *raixe* and Carpenter *raxe*.)

I.iii.217: 'Shall we, that were great Edward's princely sons.' (For *sons* (MS *Sonnes*), Halliwell, Keller and Carpenter give *fame.*[54])

I.iii.230: 'The inly passions boiling in my breast.' (For *inly*, Halliwell gives *Julye*, and Keller *Iulye*.)

II.iii.25: 'That dost allow thy polling flatterers.' (For *polling,* MS *pooleing*, Halliwell and Keller give *paleing* which, as we have noted, led to an erroneous but temporary addition to the OED.)

II.iii.30: 'The sighs I vent are not mine own, dear aunt.' (For *vent*, Halliwell and Keller give *sent.*)

[53] Frijlinck, pp. xxiv-xxv.

[54] Carpenter compounds the misreading by going on to suggest *wear* for *were*—a classic instance where one editor's mistake (Halliwell, followed by Keller) leads to another's false emendation and the complete dist\ortion of the original.

II.iii.32: 'Nor now repent with peevish frowardness.' (For repent, Halliwell and Keller give *resent.*)

III.ii.57-8: 'Thou mak'st me blank at very sight of them! / What must these...?' ('What myscheefes' (Halliwell) and 'what mischeef...?' (Keller).[55])

III.ii.66: 'And then the bond must afterwards be paid.' (For *paid*, Halliwell and Keller give *seald.*[56])

III.ii.198: 'Go, sirrah, take you his horse.' (For *sirrah*, Halliwell and Keller give *for-[ward].*) [57]

III.iii.6: '...be ready to assist us.' (Halliwell and Keller give *...be ready to [fill them vpp].*[58]

III.iii.113: 'I'm e'en stroke to at heart too.' (For *stroke*, Halliwell gives *sticket*, and Keller *stirne*. But Frijlinck correctly notes that '*stroke to*...is the original reading, which has been obscurely altered, *ro* to *ic* and *ke* to something illegible, while the final *o* has been deleted all in darker ink.'[59])

IV.i.96-7: 'some near-adjoining friends.' (For *near-adjoining*, Halliwell and Keller give *of his.*)

IV.i.202-3: 'How like you that, Green? Believe me, if you fail, I'll not favor ye a day.' (WPF restores the last two words, inexplicably omitted by Halliwell and Keller.)

[55] Keller notes that he follows Halliwell here because again he was unable to make out a rapidly degrading text.
[56] Keller follows Halliwell because, as he again notes, 'The word is almost completely lost.'
[57] Keller: '*For[ward]* obliterated.'
[58] Keller follows Halliwell because '*Fill them vpp* illegible in the MS.'
[59] Frijlinck, III.iii.113n.

IV.i.226: 'Thou [may'st] now live at ease.' (For *[mayst]*, Halliwell and Keller give *[shalt]*.)

V.i.34: 'And yet, by all my fairest hopes, I swear.' (For *I swear*, Halliwell gives *of heauen.* Keller gives nothing while footnoting: '*hopes*: *I sweare* written behind it in darker ink.')

IV.iii.10: 'come off lustily.' (For *lustily*, Halliwell and Keller give *lusely*, and Carpenter suggests *easely*.)

V.iii.137: 'With much ado we got her leave the presence.' (For *presence*, MS gives *psence*, Keller gives *presence*, Halliwell *palace* and Carpenter *place*.)

IV.iii.172: 'Oh, dear my liege, all tears for her are vain oblations.' (For *oblations* Halliwell gives *illutions*.[60] Keller gives *oblations*.)

6 *Woodstock, a Moral History*, ed. with a preface by A.P. Rossiter (1946)

This is the play's best-known and most influential edition. Louis Ule drew upon it to work out his own version and concordance,[61] Armstrong (1965) reproduced it with only minor changes, and Parfitt/Shepherd (1977, 1988) accepted its scholarly authority virtually without argument—indeed suggesting, in the play's great editorial tradition, that many of Rossiter's most successful insights and emendations were really their own.

A plain-text version (without stage directions or notes) is available on-line at the Oxford Text Archives Internet site

[60] Perhaps an emendation rather than a misreading.

[61] Ule's *Concordance* is a stylometrically tallied list of words and their occurrence in the play. I am grateful to the late Eric Sams for sending me a copy. Ule's Oxford Text Archives (OTA) edition is reviewed below.

(http://ota.ahds.ac.uk/), replacing the Ule/Smith edition.[62]

Woodstock, a Moral History[63] is a large, thorough and compendious editing job based on a close re-reading of the original MS. It is equipped with a 76-page preface dealing with the most important aspects of the play, including the authorship question, dating, influences upon and of, and more.

It also has 26 pages of small-print text notes, 29 pages of general notes, and a lengthy appendix of source materials citing Holinshed, Stow, and Grafton, and an extended glossary of Elizabethan word usage. If you want to argue with Rossiter, you had better do your homework.

This wealth of research and information accounts to some extent for the edition's influence. Unless you're willing to match Rossiter's diligence and capacity for detail, you're obliged to accept his scholarship, which was considerable, his rendition of the text, which is actually quite shaky, and finally his critical judgments, which are by no means always reliable.

But getting to this point requires a level of energy and concentration most—I would say all—of the play's post-Rossiterian editors have been unwilling to exert, most likely because of his emphatic conclusion that the play is not by

[62] OTA provides the following bibliographical information: '*Woodstock*: *a moral history* / edited with a preface by A. P. Rossiter ... — London: Chatto and Windus, 1946. — 3 p., 255, [1] p.: p.; 23 cm. — Edited, and presented in a modernized text, from the Egerton MS 1994 in the British Library. — An anonymous play of doubtful date, probably about 1590 or later, generally regarded as preceding Shakespeare's play on the same subject; known variously by the titles *Richard II*, *Thomas of Woodstock*, and *Woodstock*.'

[63] In the *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 November 1946, the anonymous reviewer thought Rossiter's title 'not very happily chosen' because of its association with the novels of Scott.

Shakespeare. So for the greater part of the last century and most of this, Rossiter pretty much has had it his way, with even assiduous scholars tending to gesture vaguely in his direction when referencing the play and its details.

To put the matter concisely, Rossiter created *Woodstock* even as he consigned Halliwell's and Keller's *1 Richard II* to the ash-heaps of literary history. His famous conclusion—

> There is not the smallest chance [the author] was Shakespeare... I must leave him, as I found him, a quiet ghost among that great majority who must for all the troublings of their lives and labours rest ANON.[64]

—continues to prevail, despite the fact that he repeatedly contradicts himself and ends up in an almost Freudian way confirming Shakespeare's presence everywhere in the play.

As an editor, I am as much in his debt as any of his successors, not least because his text was the one I dutifully read as an undergraduate at Cambridge, where he had been a Lecturer in English. More than a decade after his premature death in 1957 his presence was still strongly felt.

Rossiter's scholarship was indeed prodigious and indispensable, his sense of the play's theatrical possibilities finer than any of his predecessors, his willingness to rethink and reinvestigate an inspiration, and his historical conclusions generally well supported and seldom arbitrary.

He was also quite funny and endearingly unable to resist risqué and, by modern standards, completely inappropriate academic jokes. I learned much from Rossiter and unhesitatingly incorporated many of his readings and suggestions.

Act and Scene

In addition to providing *Woodstock* with its modern identity, Rossiter successfully laid bare the play's inner structure—

[64] Rossiter, p. 76.

that is, he correctly identified and numbered its acts and scenes, though not their location.[65]

As we've noted, Keller had made a start, but was unable to get beyond his Aristotelian *ideé fixe* that each act, including the fifth, was organized into three scenes held together by the unities of time, place and action.

Frijlinck understood the drama's looser organization but, given her brief, confined her comments to often cryptic footnotes. Rossiter took her cue and clarified everything, including the six scenes in Act V, and has been followed in this respect by all subsequent editors.

With a sure hand and keen theatrical intelligence, Rossiter also cleaned up several murky stage directions, many of which I also follow.

As a representative instance, consider his s.dd. at III.i.108, which pull together the ragged manuscript's

{*sound*} se it be done: com Anne to our great hall
wher Richard keepes his gorgious ffeastiuall — *Exeunt*
Manett Trisillian

and replaces it with the coherent and functional

Trumpets sound. Exeunt all but Tresilian.

Likewise at III.i.116 s.d., where the MS gives only *Enter Nimble*, APR supplies

Enter NIMBLE, *in peaked shoes with knee-chains.*

[65] Only one location is specified in MS, Woodstock's estate at Plashy. It is an indication of Rossiter's influence that his vagueness carried over into subsequent editions. Even Corbin and Sedge (2002) leave the question untouched. I have tried to remedy these uncertainties by emending conjecturally, based on what the text and actual history suggest.

Rossiter notes: 'I fill in details from text,' a manoeuvre successfully carried out more than once and often followed by later editors.

At the end of II.i and the beginning of II.ii, Rossiter brilliantly resolves the long-standing puzzle of some apparently irrelevant stage directions by noticing that they have been displaced from II.iii. He restored them and made the moment whole.

Later in the same scene, II.ii.25, the right edge of the MS is damaged, leaving only the fragments *Ex*, *ff*, *s*, *he*, and some ambiguous marginal reminders, *florish* and (*sound*). Using Malone Society conventions, the MS looks approximately like this:

Queen: May heaven direct your wisdoms to provide
florish for englands honno^{r}, & king Richards good —<
yorke: beleeue no less sweete queene attend hir highnes
Arond: the king is come my lords
———*wood*: stand from the doore then, make way Cheney./ <
Ex < ff s> he/
(*sound*) ————————
Enter King. Richard, Baggott Busshey Greene & Scroope, & others

Rossiter clears it all up by compositing a whole new set of stage directions, indicated below by my square brackets:

Queen: May heaven direct your wisdoms to provide
For England's honor and King Richard's good.
York: Believe no less, sweet queen. Attend her Highness.
[*Exeunt Queen Anne and the Duchesses of Gloucester and Ireland*]
Arundel: The King is come, my lords.
Woodstock: Stand from the door, then. Make way, Cheney.
Sound [*a flourish.*] *Enter King Richard, Bagot, Bushy, Green, Scroop and others.*

Lines and Words

Other emendations by Rossiter that have been generally

accepted go to the level of lines and words. Among the most important is II.ii.205-7, where the damaged MS gives:

an excellent deuice, the commons has murmord a g <
a great while, and thers no such meanes as meate to stopp <

Halliwell and Keller conjecturally emended this to

An excellent deuice, the commons has murmord a[ngrily]
a great while, and thers no such meanes as meate to stopp
[them].

But Rossiter came up with the much improved

An excellent device: the commons have murmured against us
a great while, and there's no such means as meat to stop [their mouths].

—*1 Richard II*, II.ii.205-7

Another small but extremely important emendation, touched on earlier, concerns the much-disputed III.i.95, which the historically-challenged copyist, if indeed the error was his, gave nonsensically as 'or lett o^{r} predissessors yett to come.'

The solecism was later corrected by Halliwell to a stuttering 'or lett o^{r} successessors yett to come,' and then improved further by Keller's lame-footed 'Or lett our successors yett to come.' It took Rossiter to supply the rhythmic patch: 'Or let *all* our successors yet to come,' the iambic pentameter now universally accepted.[66]

A further nice touch occurs at III.ii.119-21, where Rossiter introduces the word *so* in order to clarify an otherwise impossibly prescient remark by Woodstock. The Spruce Courtier has just arrived at Plashy, Woodstock's Essex estate, and the duke tells his servant to bid the man enter:

[66] The italicized *all* is Rossiter's, the same treatment he gives all his edits.

to see me saist tho^{u}, agodsname lett hime com,
he brings no blancke charters wth hime
prethee bid hime light & enter

Rossiter suggests rendering this as prose, which I don't accept, based on the MS, though his addition of the logical conjunction *So* markedly improves intelligibility:

To see me, say'st thou? A' God's name, let him come,
[So] he brings no Blank Charters with him!
Prithee, bid him 'light and enter.

—*1 Richard II*, III.ii.119-21

MS II.ii.201-3 breaks off at the right edge, calling for some kind of editorial prosthesis:

Sblud & I were not a counsello^{r}. I could fynd in <
to dyne at a Tauerne to day

Rossiter supplies, 'I could *find in myself* to dine at a tavern today,' overlooking the familiar Elizabethan expression 'I could find in my heart,' etc., which I supply instead.

This has the double merit of colloquialism and consistency with the likelihood that Shakespeare is our author—he used the phrase 'find in my heart' seven times: *Much Ado About Nothing*, I.i.126, III.v.19-22, *The Comedy of Errors*, IV.iv. 155-6, *As You Like It*, II.iv.5, *All's Well That Ends Well*, II.v.12, *1 Henry IV*, II.iv.50, and *The Tempest*, II.ii.156.

Problems and Omissions

Rossiter's skills as a scholar and critic were unfortunately offset by some limitations. Among the gravest is that he was often tempted to editorial over-ingenuity, resulting in distortions of some scholarly consequence.

Examples include unjustified deletions, among them the character of Sir Pierce of Exton, discussed earlier. A second over-ingenious edit occurs at IV.iii.143ff. with the excision of Sir Henry Green, the king's favorite favorite, together

with Bagot's line, 'Here comes King Richard, all go comfort him.'

In both cases Rossiter weakly justifies his edits on the grounds that the characters have no spoken lines, though elsewhere he leaves other non-speakers in place. We may note too that eloquently silent on-stage presences were of course quite common in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama.[67]

Plagiarisms

Rossiter also often unsettlingly suggests that Keller's edits are actually his own. It's quite gratuitous, since his personal scholarship hardly comes into question; yet that he did it remains indisputable.

We have discussed the worst instance already, his appropriation of Keller's decisive reorganization of V.i. 256-64 (the killing of Woodstock's murderers). It cannot be supposed that Rossiter merely overlooked this pillage, since he mendaciously notes, 'I supply *Enter Souldiers.*'

Another important theft occurs at III.ii.138-9, 'Hear'st-ta, thou, fellow...?' Rossiter's commentary references only one of Keller's two suggestions about the problematic suffix *–ta*, while brazenly adopting the second as his own.[68]

What these remarks and judgments reveal is that like a good scholar Rossiter minutely examined Keller's text, but like a bad one he stole many of its most important editorial contributions.

Indeed, one almost gets the impression of a kind of scholarly kleptomania, extending even to the tiniest objects, like the clarifying dashes inserted at I.ii.27-8. Such small potatoes would hardly be worth commenting upon, except that Ros-

[67] See Chambers, *William Shakespeare* I, p. 231; Albert Feuillerat: *The Composition of Shakespeare's Plays* (1953) pp. 56-7.
[67] Rossiter, pp. 194n.,135
[68] Rossiter, p. 184.

siter goes out of his way to note, 'my dashes.' The fact is, they appeared in Keller's text first.

The Attack on Keller

Rossiter's commentary also includes a sustained critique of Keller's scholarship—legitimate enough among editors, though in this case too often crossing the boundaries of honesty and fair debate.

Clearly the practice becomes even more questionable when the attacker ruthlessly plunders the work of the attackee and, moreover, grossly misrepresents his faults. In a note to II.i. 151-2, for example, Rossiter blatantly ignores Keller's recognition of a reference and then blames him for its omission.[69]

It's possible that Rossiter's harsh critique of the German scholar was affected by the wartime conditions under which he worked. At III.ii.79 he perhaps unconsciously rendered the MS phrase, 'God and country,' as 'king and country,' because of the times. Certainly he was a ζωον πολιτικον who emphasized the play's political dimension and willingly drew analogies between it and current events.[70] Keller however was not Rossiter's only victim—he stole liberally from everyone.

Some of his embezzlements are quite substantial, such as Halliwell's brilliant emendation at V.iv.18.s.d., *They fight and Green is slain*, which he silently assimilates.

Rossiter also credits himself for Halliwell's important speech head *Maid* at II.iii.59-60, noting, 'No speech-heading in MS but the *sir* makes the guess easy.'[71] Perhaps, but he does not add that the easy guess was not his.

[69] Rossiter, p. 215, Keller, p. 30.
[70] Rossiter, p. 193.
[71] Rossiter, p. 192.

Indeed, many of Rossiter's apparently sharp-eyed observations are actually taken unacknowledged from elsewhere, especially Carpenter's obscure and hard-to-access article. They include *banded* for *landed* (V.iii.71), *Certiorari* for *Surssararis* (I.ii.29, V.vi.29), the s.d. *Paper* (II.ii.66) together with its explanatory note, *whiles* for *wilse* (III.ii.209) and Carpenter's replacement of Keller's *care all for* with *are all for* (III.i.41).

He also feasted on Keller and Frijlinck. For instance, Rossiter twice perceptively notes that Tresilian and York never appear on stage together, speculating that one actor doubled both roles. [72]

This is quite ingenious, but in fact the original observation was Keller's, who remarks on the doubling possibility in his introduction.[73] It is Rossiter however who has received whatever *kudos* derives from this insight. Crime often pays, at least in the groves of academe.[74]

Grammatical Changes

These petty thefts are reprehensible, but in my view a more serious offense is the unreliability of Rossiter's much-read text.

Its main deficiencies are inaccuracy and the imposition of unacknowledged grammatical preferences, including suppressing the writer's use of the Elizabethan noun-verb discord, as in

> ...and if any disturb ye, we four comes presently
>
> —*1 Richard II*, IV.i.156-7

a stylistic marker often used to identify Shakespeare. These

[72] Rossiter, p. 215.

[73] Keller, p. 38.

[74] In *Shakespeare & the Universities* F.S. Boas also draws heavily on Keller without acknowledgment.

false data are then cited to bolster Rossiter's conclusion that the author could not possibly be he.

A second red-alert concerns Rossiter's practice of almost never distinguishing between the MS's enunciated and unenunciated past and present tenses, e.g., *readst* vs. *readest*. This is a problem because obviously there's a significant rhythmic (and often rhyming) distinction between single-, double- and multi-syllabic verbs.

Rossiter's punctuation too is idiosyncratic, with often irrelevant or arbitrary dashes, brackets and multi-dot ellipses, two, three, four and, in one case, seven in a row……!

These intrusions and eccentricities alter the rhythm, emphases and feel of the text so that it hardly resembles a Shakespeare drama in any familiar way. Rossiter's motives, conscious and unconscious, may only be surmised.

Oversights and Errors

Some of Rossiter's misrepresentations seem merely to be oversights. Among them: 1.ii.67, *stubborn law* for *subtle law*; II.ii.1, *How now* for *Now*; II.iii.109, *starv'st* for *starvest*; III.i.30, *our* for *out*; III.ii.79, *king and country* for *God and country*; III.ii.102-3, *adieu* for *farewell*; III.ii.193-4, *If you so please* (twice) for *If so you please*; III.ii.222, *as twere* for *as it were*; III.iii.92-3, *There's* for *There is*; III. iii.247, *if a man whistles treason* for *if any man whistles treason*; IV.i.189-90, *ever* for *never*; IV.ii.58, *the* for *her*; V.i.203-6, *breathest* for *breath'st.*[75]

A handful of the above are obviously trivial, though still unacceptable by scholarly standards.[76] Others, such as *king and country* for *God and country*, and *if a man whistles*

[75] Additional examples are cited below when discussing Armstrong's 1965 edition, which is a plagiarized copy of *Woodstock, a Moral History*, including its mistakes.

[76] See Harold Jenkins' critical assessment in *Review of English Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 93, (January, 1948) p. 67.

treason for *if any man whistles treason*, have had exegetical consequences. Like lexicographers, scholars may be harmless drudges, but their mistakes have repercussions.

Despite the foregoing, Rossiter's achievement remains overwhelmingly positive. Frijlinck's hard-to-read edition is for specialists, and by 1946 Keller's *Jahrbuch* was all but unavailable, and Carpenter's commentary long forgotten. APR reintroduced the play to a new generation largely unaware of it, and did so in a popular edition that was well received and widely read among Shakespeare scholars.

7 From *Thomas of Woodstock*, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (1960)

Thanks in part to the success of Rossiter's edition, Geoffrey Bullough included a severely abridged version entitled *Thomas of Woodstock* in his *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare,* Vol. III (1960).

Bullough derives his text chiefly from Frijlinck, though he edits and emends irresponsibly at will, perhaps hoping to make his version look 'authentic.'

He also includes brief and often deliberately misleading summaries of most, though not all, of the omitted material.

In at least two glaring instances—the Spruce Courtier and Osric, and Edward III's ghost and King Hamlet—Bullough ignores his own brief of exploring possible sources.

An editorial footnote on the first page claims that the punctuation has been modernized, though in fact it's a hit-and-miss affair. Some but not all lower-case line-starts are given capitals, a few medial *u*'s and initial *v*'s are replaced (e.g., *heavey* for MS *heauey* and *uncles* for *vncles*, etc.), while here and there consonantal *i*'s are altered to *j*'s.

These difficulties extend even to the layout. Bullough ren-

ders every court scene in full verse, a complete misrepresentation of the MS.

Nimble's declaration at I.ii.112-115, for example, is clearly not verse, though Bullough prints it as such, and in the same cumbersome versiform he imposes throughout:

I, saveing your honnors speech, your worshippfull tayle was whipt
For stealeing my dinner out of my Satchell: you were ever
So craftye in your childhood, that I knewe your worshipp would
Prove a good lawyer.

Bullough's free hand with the text nevertheless leads to some minor but important emendations.

The most significant occurs at III.i.36, the entry of Queen Anne. As she and her entourage sweep in, the MS gives a short speech to a character identified only as '*g*':

g be yo^{r} leaue ther. giue way to'the queene.

Because of the 'g' most editors reflexively assign this line to Green. Bullough, with perhaps greater theatrical awareness, gives it to [*a*] g[*uard*], which he reasonably imagines posted at the door. I accept this emendation, further editing and repunctuating the speech to

[*A Guard*:] By your leave there, give way to the Queen!
—*1 Richard II*, III.i.36

An Abridgment Too Far

The most notable aspect of Bullough's edition is its savage abridging of the play by some 1880 lines, or approximately two-thirds.

Tallying only the spoken text, BUL deletes I.i—80 lines; I.ii —36 lines; all of I.iii and II.i; II.ii—142 lines; II.iii—all but three lines; III.i—80 lines (about half the scene); III.ii—126 lines; III.iii—140 lines; IV.i—105 lines; IV.ii—118 lines; IV.iii—all but 13 lines; V.i—205; V.ii—the whole scene;

V.iii—all but the first 26 lines; V.iv—all but 29 lines; V.v—the whole scene; V.vi—18 lines.

Most of these omissions are replaced by summaries. The following substantial cuts are indicated only by ellipses and are not summarized: I.i.31-40, 71-98, 110-130, 198-222; III.i.83-163; IV.i 1-61, 151-163, 196-228; IV.ii.197-215; V.iii.27-128.

In addition, the whole of V.v is omitted without comment or explanation.

Worse still, Bullough's so-called summaries seriously distort the play. For example, the wonderfully comic scene with the Spruce Courtier, arguably the original for Osric, becomes this:

> 'A spruce courtier on horsebacke' enters to bid Woodstock back to Court. Mistaking the Duke for a groom he asks him to mind his horse. The Duke does so, and when the mistake is revealed, demands the tip promised him.[77]

But the business with the tip is trivial compared to the theatrically bold and inventive portrait of court dandyism, the imaginative dialogue between Woodstock and the horse, and the subtle, satirically sketched class dynamics of the encounter between a gracious old-style nobleman and one of Richard II's brash 'new men.' In Bullough, the scene is politically, socially and even theatrically sterilized.

Another big cut, V.i.59-207, is misrepresented thus:

> The Ghosts of the Black Prince and Edward III appear to Woodstock in a vision and he awakes in terror. Lapoole urges him to write & submit to King Richard. Woodstock agrees to write, not to submit, but to admonish the King.[78]

[77] Bullough, p. 473.
[78] Bullough, p. 487.

Lost however are Lapoole's Macbethian psychomachia over murdering Woodstock, the deep connections between the spooky appearance of the prince's kingly father and *Hamlet*, and, almost word-for-word, the parallels with Richmond's ghostly visitors the night before Bosworth. This, in a book on Shakespeare's sources.

Bullough's summary of III.iii completely overlooks its menacing portrait of the Elizabethan police state and the satirical pre-echoes of Dogberry and Verges.

At V.vi.6 he omits, 'Who is't can tell us which way Bagot fled?' making complete nonsense of what little is quoted of the rest of the scene.

Finally, Bullough incorrectly gives *Lights, light* for *Lights, lights* at I.i.1; *kindsmen* for *kinsmen* at I.i.138; *well not* for *not well* at II.ii.149; *for all whisperers* instead of *all for whisperers* at III.iii.60, *Their* for *There* at III.iii.115; and *dist* for *didst* at IV.i.225.

8 *Thomas of Woodstock or 1 Richard II*, ed. E.B. Everitt in (1965)

E.B. Everitt (*The Young Shakespeare*, 1954), is one of the unsung heroes of early-Shakespeare studies. It was thus quite appropriate that he should edit, together with Ray L. Armstrong, *Six Early Plays Related to the Shakespeare Canon* (*Anglicistica*, Vol. XIV, 1965), including *Thomas of Woodstock.* [79]

Everitt's title page notes that his text is 'From MS Egerton 1994 in the British Museum.' He later adds that it represents a 'literal transcription...collated with all earlier editions but

[79] The others plays were John Bale: *King John*; Anonymous: *Edward the Third;* John Ford: *Perkin Warbeck*; Robert Davenport: *King John and Matilda.* Armstrong edited only *Edward III.*

stayed with the most conservative reading of the verbal text.'[80]

Since I generally admire Everitt's work, I would very much like to report that his edition is a good one. Unfortunately, this is not the case. His *Woodstock* is among the most error-prone and execrably proof-read of all, with one textual pratfall after another.

The most unforgivable occurs at II.i.86, where Bushy gravely informs the King:

> This was called the Battle of Poitiers, and was fought on Monday the nineteenth of September, 1963, my lord.

After absorbing this future shock, Richard wisely if inaccurately commands, 'Shut up thy book, good Busby!' (II.i120). Similarly, and even funnier, Woodstock's gracious wife is later referred to as the 'Duckess.'[81]

More serious mistakes include mislabeling V.ii as V.iii, and Nimble's 'Good bless my lord Tresilian!' at V.v.40-1 (for 'God bless,' etc.). The phrase is one of the drama's grimmest running jokes, and Nimble's use of it at this moment is the ultimate punch line. Everitt's most casual check would have revealed that wooden O.

Additional careless misprints include *loyal* for *royal* at I.i. 45; *subject* for *a subject* at II.i.36; *fashion* for *fashions* at II.ii.214; *forwardness* for *frowardness* at II.iii.32; *King's* for *Kings'* at III.i.64; *on ill word* for *an ill word* at III.i.146; *villany* for *villainy* at III.ii.77; *have him' light* for *had have him' light* at III.ii.123; *the king Richard's Council* at III.ii. 206; *turk cock* for *turkey-cock* at IV.i.141; omission of the word *lands* from IV.i.199; *Thou issue of King Edward's*

[80] Everitt, *Text Notes*, p. 7

[81] Everitt, p. 290. This one really quacked me up.

loins for *Thou royal issue of King Edward's loins* at V.i.66; *Pole* for *Poole* at V.i.159; *I'l* for *I'd* at V.i.180; *baron's* for *barons'* at V.i.296; *demurrer* for *demur* at V.ii.32; and *tender dare* for *tender care* at V.vi.1.

The poor proofing extends to the punctuation: *Yes,Who storms at it?* at I.iii.167; a period after *Scroop* (instead of a comma) at II.i.3; a solecistic period after *Ireland* at II.ii.87; the incomplete question *What must these?* at III.ii.59; and an incorrectly inserted period at III.ii.186, giving the tautological, *The error was in the mistake,*

Like Rossiter, Everitt is ambiguous about the status of *-ed* and *-est*. For example, he gives I.i.136 as: 'Th'art vexed I know. Thou greiv'st, kind Edmund York'

But the juxtaposition of *vexed* and *greiv'st* suggests *vexèd*, which is clearly not the intent of MS *vext*. Even more bewildering, at IV.iii.159 he gives the past-tense of *drown* as *drownd*, a literal but (for his edition) unique reproduction of the MS.

Everitt carelessly gives, 'Or let our predecessors yet to come,' at III.i.95, unpersuasively claiming in an afternote that he retains the original because 'it is probably the correct sense.'[82] Whatever that means, it seems likelier that Everitt was simply unaware of the textual debate until too late.

Also unique among editors, Everitt accepts Carpenter's highly doubtful emendation, 'shilling,' in Nimble's speech at V.ii.11-12, though Keller's superior 'pressing' is now generally followed.[83] Everitt compounds his poor judgment by mistakenly setting these lines as verse.

Despite these shortcomings, a few of Everitt's emendations

[82] Everitt, Textual Notes, *ed. cit.*, p. 307.

[83] The *OED* gives 1707 as the earliest use of the phrase 'to take the king's shilling.'

have survived. The most important is at MS I.ii.99-101, where Nimble tells Tresilian:

yes any thing. so yo^{r} honno^{r}. pray not for me. I care not for now you're lord chiefe Iustice: if euer ye cry, lord haue marcy vppon me, I shall hange fort Shure

Thanks to the commas after *cry* and *me*, most editors insert quote marks around 'Lord have mercy upon me.' But Everitt more intelligently gives

... if ever ye cry 'Lord have mercy' upon me, I shall hang for't, sure!

Everitt also neatly repunctuates MS II.ii.193, 'seeke hime, hang him, he lurkes not farr off I war^{r}ant,' so that it reads more clearly:

Seek him? Hang him! He lurks not far off, I warrant.

There are other minor edits where I either accept Everitt or am influenced by his reading—for example, 'the young lords' at V.v.4, which builds on his emendation, 'the lords.'

9 *Woodstock*, ed. William A. Armstrong (1965)

In the same year of Everitt's edition, William A. Armstrong, not be confused with Everitt's colleague Ray L. Armstrong, produced *Elizabethan History Plays* for OUP, including among his selections the anonymous *Woodstock.*

Armstrong's version need not detain us long; as we've noted, it is little more than a superficially edited xerox of *Woodstock, a Moral History*, omitting Rossiter's commentary and notes. All of Rossiter's innovations, good and evil, are photographically repeated, including the unjustified removal of Exton from the first scene, Green from IV.iii, and the deletion of Bagot's supporting line, 'Here comes King Richard, all go comfort him,' at IV.iii.143.

Armstrong also witlessly follows Rossiter's doubtful re-assignment of the Second Murderer's speech and action to the First Murderer, 'Not too fast for falling! (*Strikes him*)' (V.i.232).

He likewise carelessly reproduces all Rossiter's sleepy-eyed repetitions, including *king and country* for *God and country* (III.ii.79); *adieu* for *farewell* (III.ii.102-3); *the* for *her* (IV.ii.58); and *if a man whistles treason* for *if any man whistles treason* (III.iii.247).

At V.i.59 Rossiter emends MS 'Night horror' to 'Night-horror.' Although there is no justification for creating this strange compound, Armstrong goes along.

Armstrong also fails to proof-read carefully. I.iii.56 appears as 'Shall sing in raise of this your memory,' (instead of *praise*); III.i.151-2 as 'I will treat this paper,' (instead of *tear*); IV.i.247 as 'Westmorland' (instead of APR *Westmoreland* or even MS *westmerland*); V.ii.24 as 'but the sword and lance' (instead of *by the sword and lance*); and IV.iii.95 as 'Well, then: I see my whistle must be whipped...' (instead of *whistler*).

Sir Pierce of Exton Redux

One of Armstrong's few independent edits throws an interesting light on the textual debate concerning the presence of Sir Pierce of Exton in I.i.

As we've seen, Rossiter deletes this historically and Shakespeareanly significant character by claiming that the dramatist somehow didn't really mean to include him. Rossiter thus kindly helps out by creating an entirely new figure, 'The Lord Mayor Exton.'

Armstrong makes his unconscious contribution to the debate by mechanically reprinting Rossiter's emended stage direction sans Exton but with the new Lord Mayor:

Enter THOMAS OF WOODSTOCK *in frieze. The Mace* [*afore*]

him. The LORD MAYOR EXTON, *and others with lights afore them.*

Soon afterwards, however, the grammatically literate Armstrong spots an apparent contradiction in Rossiter's version, and reflexively repunctuates the dialogue by inserting a semicolon after 'Exton':

Woodstock: ... Hie thee, good Exton;
Good Lord Mayor, I do beseech ye prosecute
With your best care a means for all our safeties.
—*1 Richard II*, I.i.117-20

Armstrong's pointing properly separates 'Hie thee, good Exton,' who then exits, from the 'Good Lord Mayor' who remains on stage in further conversation about the security of the Lancastrian party in his city.

At II.iii.59 Armstrong declines to follow Rossiter's emendation, taken from Halliwell, assigning a short speech to a 'Maid.' He gives the lines instead to the Duchess of Ireland, as does Everitt.

10, 11 *Thomas of Woodstock*, ed. George Parfitt and Simon Shepherd (1977, 1988)

These two texts are virtually identical and therefore may be safely treated as one, although the 1988 edition inexplicably fails to reprint pp. 3 (I.i.1-34) and 66 (V.i.146-199), some 87 lines.

The first edition of NOT was prepared for the *Nottingham Drama Texts* series, published by Nottingham University. The second, commissioned by Brynmill Press eleven years later, accompanied Ian Robinson's groundbreaking 1988 essay, *'Richard II' & 'Woodstock'*, the first extended attempt to make the case for Shakespeare as the play's author.

A relic from the pre-computer age, NOT appears to have been typed on an IBM Selectric and then photocopied. It is staple-bound in dingy cartridge-paper, its textual layout marred by gaping white spaces, varying page lengths and erratically set footnotes full of typographical redundancies and inconsistent abbreviations.

The editors provide a short introduction and an incomplete list of earlier editions. Frijlinck is dismissed as offering a 'detailed but unscientific account of the state of the ms and its hands and inks, but a less thorough critical appraisal,' while Rossiter published 'much the most useful edition, although [he] imposes on the text his own notions of dramatic speech,' with notes that are 'thorough and helpful, although the viewpoint is often perverse.' Everitt's text 'is highly dubious,' without 'worth-while commentary' except for 'postulated relationships which teeter on the incredible.'

Parfitt/Shepherd also repeatedly claim or imply that they consulted the MS, but tell-tale errors show that at best they glanced occasionally at Frijlinck's literal transcription while deriving most of their editorial material from the perverse Rossiter and the highly dubious Everitt.

Minor unacknowledged borrowings from APR include the emendation *Accomp'nied* for MS *accompined* (II.iii. 86), *peers* for *peere* (III.i.44), parentheses and an exclamation point for *I sir, would yo^{u} & they were sodden for my swyne* (III.iii.133-4); and *the* for *they* (IV.ii.13).

Everitt's contributions include the incomplete sentence, *What must these?* (III.ii.59); the omission of *had* from *have had him light* (III.ii.121-3); and the unacknowledged adoption of his successful repointing of *'Lord have mercy' upon me* (1.ii.100-1).

Fake Scholarship

A feature of NOT is the editors' claim to have worked from the original. They refer confidently to the MS which 'shows

evidence of political intervention...[and] deletions seemingly made by the scribe.' Its pages are 'damaged' or 'damaged here,' and they repeatedly observe that a particular ink or hand has been used. [84]

But if Parfitt and Shepherd really did check the MS for its inks and edits, it was extremely cursory and, as I know from personal experience, almost impossible to accomplish without serious laboratory backup. Their prevarications may be inferred from the descriptive errors they claim proudly for themselves, and the fact that almost all their scholarly observations are transparent paraphrases from other editors.

For example, at V.i.188 the MS reads:

& such liues heere: though death King Richard s <

Parfitt and Shepherd conjecturally emend the last word to *send*, explaining in a footnote that in the MS the 'S is damaged.' [85]

But no, it is not—in fact, the *S* is the only part of the word that survives. The editors have simply mistaken Rossiter's note, 'All but the *s* of *send* is gone,'[86] reading it as 'The *s* of *send* is gone.' A similar blunder occurs at III.iii.193.

At II.ii.185 the MS is obscured. All we get is the half-verb *sha* followed by *country*. The topic is beards and shaving, and Rossiter once again provides the most successful conjectural emendation, shown here in square brackets:

Pox on't, we'll not have a beard amongst us. We'll [shave the] country and the city too, shall we not, Richard?

NOT copies Rossiter without acknowledgment, brazenly

[84] Parfitt and Shepherd (1988) p. vii.
[85] Parfitt and Shepherd, (1977) p. 66 n. As noted, p. 66 is missing from NOT 1988 edition.
[86] Rossiter, p. 204.

adding in a note: 'for *shave*, MS 'sha'; we add *the* before *country*'. [87]

MS II.ii.198 is another damaged line:

Troth, I think I shall trouble myself but with a few <

Halliwell originally supplied the missing final word, *counselors*, followed by all subsequent editors, excepting Everitt, who mysteriously leaves the line incomplete.

Unsurprisingly, Parfitt and Shepherd also give *counsellors*, which they found in Rossiter—HAL and KEL spell the word with one *l*—and then, in a sort of what-the-hell spirit, award themselves all the credit anyway:

counsellors: MS damaged after 'few'—we supply on basis of probable play on king's 'counsel' [l. 190].[88]

Green's speech at II.ii.205-7, as we have already noticed, contains one of Rossiter's most successful emendations. The damaged MS reads:

an excellent deuice, the commons has murmord a g a great while, and thers no such meanes as meate to stopp

Halliwell and Keller tried 'angrily,' and 'stopp them,' and Frijlinck suggested 'against you.' But Rossiter supplied the most widely accepted conjecture:

An excellent device: the commons have murmured [against us] a great while, and there's no such means as meat to stop [their mouths.]

You wouldn't know any of this from NOT's footnote, however, which proudly announces:

[87] Parfitt and Shepherd, p. 26 n.
[88] Parfitt and Shepherd, p. 26 n.

[ll.197-8] damaged MS; we supply 'a [gainst us]' (G would probably identify with the king), and 'their mouths'.[89]

Halliwell's superb emendation assigning a small but clarifying speech to 'A Maid' at II.iii.59 was, it turns out, actually first made by Parfitt and Shepherd a hundred years later, as they straight-facedly explain:

We give [these lines] to one of the maids on stage since she seems respectful. [90]

In the same back-to-the future way, Parfitt/Shepherd post-anticipate Keller's 'Your raven will call ye [rascal]' at III.iii. 250, patting themselves on the back for it and all the other long-established edits in Nimble's speech, ll. 247-54):

MS damaged; 'yet', 'whistle' completed, 'rascal' supplied as alliteration.[91]

This account of the editors' cynical malfeasance could be extended, but there seems little point. A full report appears in my *Text and Variorum Notes* (2006).

12 *Thomas of Woodstock*, compiled by Louis Ule, reviewed by M.W.A. Smith (Oxford Text Archives)

This edition was published online ca. 1998-2001 by Oxford Text Archives (http://ota.ahds.ac.uk). As noted, it has since been repealed and replaced by a battered version of Rossiter. Compiled originally by Ule for his concordance of the play's word frequencies,[92] the text passed ultimately to Oxford,

[89] Parfitt and Shepherd, p. 27 n.
[90] Parfitt and Shepherd, p. 29 n. Cf. Rossiter, p. 192
[91] Parfitt and Shepherd, p. 45 n. The 'alliteration' is unclear.
[92] Louis Ule was a Marlowe scholar who developed his own text-analysis program 1960-80 for numbering word occurrences in Elizabethan plays, which he published as a *Concordance*. I am grateful to the late Eric Sams for sending me a copy. Ule took

who published it online as an OTA resource 'reviewed' by M.W.A. Smith. The site gave the following bibliographical information, possibly by Ule himself:

Woodstock, key-punched in 1968 from the 1946 edition of the manuscript by A. P. Rossiter. Modern American spelling. Proofread by Freda Dusnic, 1977. Collated with text by Wilhelmina Frijlinck (1929 ed.) to minimize Rossiter's emendations, Jan. 1978 by Louis Ule. Converted to upper/ lower case, December 1983 by Louis Ule.

As this indicates, OXF is a genuine edition, albeit the most intrusive of all. The MS is so mauled and mangled as to be hardly recognizable, and so sloppily presented that one can hardly credit a university of Oxford's reputation publishing such a travesty.

On the other hand, it was also OUP which published Armstrong's plagiarized edition. Like ARM, Ule worked principally from *Woodstock, a Moral History*, although his text is not an uncritical reprint, overruling many of Rossiter's edits, including his deletion of Bagot's 'Here comes King Richard, all go comfort him' (IV.iii.133).

This is not to say that OXF is more accurate than APR —far from it. The text's worst feature is its systematic expansion of all colloquial contractions, e.g., *I'm*, *'tis*, *for't*, *you'll*, *we're*, etc., rewriting each in full—*I am*, *it is*, *for it*, *you will*, *we are*, and so forth.

Every apostrophe *s* has been replaced (*king's* becomes *king is*, etc.), every *'gainst* rendered *against,* every *'fore* expanded into *afore* (or sometimes *before*), and all past- and present-tense endings given their full weight as *-ed* and *-est*.

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pride in his editing, and bequeathed many of his texts, including *Thomas of Woodstock*, to Oxford. Donald W. Foster finds Ule's Marlowe *Concordance* to be 'inaccurate.' (*Elegy by W.S.* (1989) p. 250 n.)

The result is an ugly and pedestrian effort, unfortunately quite influential during its time online. Indeed, it does almost sound like imitation Shakespeare, which is exactly how some of its readers took it.

A single instance will have to stand for many others. At MS II.ii.176-7 Scroop says to the King:

old dooteing gray beards, fore god my lord had they not bene
yo^{r} vncles, Ile brooke my counsell staffe about their heads

But Ule/Smith gives:

old doting graybeard!
before god, my lord, had they not been your uncles
I had broke my council staff about their heads.

This is obviously different from the MS in important and distorting ways. Throughout, Ule's version capriciously inserts meaningless and insensitive line breaks of this sort. First-word capitalizations are used throughout Act I, but thereafter lazily abandoned.

Inconsistencies like these lead to wholesale confusion. MS III.i.28-31, e.g., appears ambiguously as—

not if his beard were off, prethee Tressillian, off wth itt.
sfoote tho^{u} seest we haue not a beard amongst vs
tho^{u} sendst out barbars ther to poole the whole country
sfoote lett some Shaue thee

—which some editors render as verse, others as prose. Because of OXF's variable and uncertain practice, however, it's impossible to tell what its editors' intentions are:

not if his beard were off! prithee Tresilian,
off with it. sfoot, thou seest we have not a beard
amongst us! thou sendest our barbers there to poll
the whole country. sfoot, let some shave thee!

Another egregious example occurs at III.iii.183-5, where the editing completely destroys the rhythm and impact of the dangerous political ballad created and sung by a provincial schoolmaster. In MS, the verse reads:

Will ye buy any Parchment kniues
We sell for little gayne
who ere are weary of ther liues
Theyle rid them of ther payne

But OXF mechanically changes the two last lines to:

whoever are weary of their lives
they will rid them of their pain.

Additional difficulties stem from an apparently careless use of word-processors. Having rendered Ule's text into digital code, the Oxford editors made certain decisions, among them instructing their program to 'Change All' instances of a particular usage, including a capitalized *King* for *king*. This is a perfectly defensible edit, but unhappily they did not bother to check the outcome closely enough. OXF thus includes such absurdities as *bucKinghamshire* (IV.i.262) and *bucKingham* (IV.ii.185), *Kingly bones*, *Kingly spirit* and *Kingly deed* (I.iii.214, IV.i.122, IV.i.224), *speaKing* (III.iii. 247), and the sudden appearance of *Kingdom* (IV.i.158) in an otherwise entirely lower-case line.

In the same bludgeoning way, the editors capitalized all instances of *grace* to read *Grace*, resulting in the obviously incorrect 'now we are all so / Brave to Grace Queen Anne,' at I.iii.139-41.

They also ordered *Anne* throughout, failing to notice that their literal-minded software obediently generated the bizarre *mAnner* at III.iii.250.

The editors apparently ran their spellcheck too with unintentionally hilarious consequences. After Queen Anne's pretty thank-you speech at their wedding, Richard tells her gal-

lantly, according to OXF: 'Gramercy, man, thou highly honourest me!' (I.iii.36-52.)

Probably *nan* showed up in the spell-check dialogue box, with a recommendation to change to *man*, and someone thoughtlessly clicked *OK*.

It's an easy mistake, but what it indicates, of course, is that the text was never taken seriously enough to be properly proof-read. Readers interested in all OXF's minor errors, such as *mound* for *mount* (I.iii.95) and *baron's* for *barons'* (V.i.296), etc., will find them in my *Text and Variorum Notes* (2006).

At some point in the MS's history, II.iii.58-73 was deleted (a sequence including the entrance of Sir Thomas Cheney, come to summon Woodstock's duchess, who is attending the Queen). In its place Cheney is directed to enter and simply say, 'Health to your majesty!' followed by a resumption of the original text.

Most editors, including myself, reprint the deleted passage, ignoring the obviously non-authorial cut and 'Health to your majesty!' Ule/Smith, however, hamfistedly supplies both: 'but to my message: health to your majesty! my lord the Duke,' etc.

It's hard to know what to make of this, since OXF's text as it stands suggests incorrectly that it is the Queen and not the Duchess who is being summoned. The editors compound their inaccuracy by omitting the word *Madam* from the resumed lines, 'Madam, my lord the Duke / Entreats your Grace prepare with him to horse.'

There are further tell-tale indications of a generally slapdash approach.

In II.ii, just before Richard pulls off his spectacular palace revolution, two speeches, ll.20-2, 23-4, are mistakenly run

together. In the same inattentive way the king's declaration at IV.i.206-8 is ludicrously assigned to Bushy:

'Tis very good. Set to your hands and seals. Tresilian we make you our deputy to receive this money. Look strictly to them, I charge ye.

As noted, the Ule/Smith edition has been removed from the OTA site, though the unreadable version of Rossiter that has replaced it is not much of an improvement.

13 Thomas *of Woodstock or Richard the Second Part One* (2002) ed. Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge

Early in the new millennium the established team of Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge produced a fresh edition for Manchester University Press in its well-known *Revels Plays* series.

Corbin and Sedge had worked together on similar projects for over 20 years, and *Thomas of Woodstock* displays all the hallmarks of their long collaboration, good and bad.

A workmanlike introduction reviews the main editorial issues without coming to any fresh conclusions: the MS is 'probably' a Jacobean transcription of a 1590s text, its author 'of considerable range and competence' capable of 'singular dramatic skill in providing [his] audience with a variety of dramatic tone and linguistic register.' [93] Despite this, they hastily add,

any ascription of the play to Shakespeare or any other dramatist must, however, remain highly speculative.[94]

It seems indisputable, the editors note, that the play influenced *2 Richard II*, especially in the 'telling phrases' about

[93] Corbin and Sedge, pp. 3, 4, 33.
[94] Corbin and Sedge, p. 4.

England becoming a 'pelting farm' and Richard its 'landlord.' Shakespeare's portrayal of John of Gaunt too, they say, 'appears to be modelled on Woodstock.'[95]

As this suggests, Corbin and Sedge evince an unusually high opinion of the work—a sign perhaps of the respect it was finally being accorded.[96] *1 Richard II* 'presents a significant democratisation of the drama' by speaking to the political concerns of its audience, and thus constitutes 'a significant advance' in opening up the processes of government to scrutiny and judgment.[97]

This is a remarkable claim for such an obscure work, and should encourage the editors of the latest *Oxford Shakespeare* to take a second and less dismissive look at it. COR approvingly references Stavropoulos's view of the masque's theatrical originality, noting that it

> does not follow the elaborate patterning of the Jacobean masque but is closer to the 'disguising' in which Henry VIII courts Anne Boleyn in [*Henry VIII*, I.iv.64-86].[98]

These observations, together with some fine critical insights in their textual notes, add weight to the case for an early composition date and the possibility of Shakespeare's hand in the play. A further mark of the editors' enthusiasm is the fact that they successfully persuaded the RSC to give a 're-

[95] Corbin and Sedge, p. 7.
[96] See for example Edgar Schell: *Strangers and Pilgrims: From The Castle of Perseverance to King Lear* (University of Chicago Press, 1983) pp. 77-112; Charles R. Forker (ed.): *King Richard II* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002), pp. 144-152; Janet C. Stavropoulos: ' "A masque is treason's license": the Design of *Woodstock*,' *Journal of the South Central Modern Language Association* (Summer, 1988) pp. 1-12; Alzada J. Tipton: ' "The Meanest Man...shall be permitted freely to accuse": The Commoners in *Woodstock*,' (*Comparative Drama*, Vol. 32, 1998), pp. 117-145).
[97] Corbin and Sedge, p. 14.
[98] Corbin and Sedge, p. 36.

hearsed reading' of their text in August, 2002 at The Swan Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon. Unfortunately, there was no follow up, so once again *1 Richard II* faded from view.

Revisions

COR's text is firmly though capriciously managed. The editors do not hesitate to intervene decisively, adding to or altering the MS as judgment and experience dictate.

By far their most successful edit, acknowledged earlier, is a redrafting of an exchange between the king and queen, revealing a series of hidden iambic pentameters:

Queen: ... They are your noble kinsmen, to revoke
The sentence were—
King: An act of folly, Nan!
Kings' words are laws: if we infringe our word,
We break our law. No more of them, sweet queen.
—*1 Richard II*, III.i.65-9

Another thoughtful redrafting occurs at III.ii.66-7,

And then the bond must afterwards be paid
That shall confirm a due debt to the king.

Corbin and Sedge notice that these lines are apparently reversed, 'since it is the blanks which confirm the debt, the bonds being paid subsequently.'[99] The editors set matters right, and again I follow.

A less visible but equally valuable rereading occurs at IV. iii.178, when Richard exits lamenting the sudden death of Queen Anne: 'My wounds are inward. Inward burn my woe!'

Rossiter, Armstrong and Parfitt/Shepherd all emend the verb to *burns*—'Inward burns my woe.' But COR retains the original, persuasively noting that the emendation 'weakens the

[99] Corbin and Sedge, p. 111 n.

sense of Richard's guilt which is suggested by the subjunctive mood of the MS reading.'[100]

Another useful feature of COR's edition is its routine substitution of characters' names for the generic titles given in the MS's speech-headings—*Queen*, *Bayle*, etc. The editors retrieve the full forms from the text and insert them. While harmlessly redundant in most cases (e.g., *King Richard* for *King*) these edits pay off handsomely among the smaller roles, particularly in the Dunstable scene where Cowtail, identified by name at III.iii.62, suddenly emerges as an individual from the group.

Among the MS's speech-heads he is vaguely 'Grazier,' just another face in the rustic crowd, but as Cowtail, the only named speaker, he becomes a distinct and interesting personality—the articulate one, the leader, the explainer of the Blank Charters, the mutterer of curses, and the one whose name is menacingly noted down by Nimble.

Insights and Corrections

A mark of good criticism is that it sends the reader back to the text with fresh or refreshed eyes. Several of COR's footnotes are of this quality.

At III.ii.41, for example, Lancaster bitterly complains about the minions having become 'four kings' themselves. Corbin and Sedge perceptively note that this is 'an ironic inversion of Edward III's triumph through London,'[101] recalled when his ghost laments that his grandson

> Rents out my crown's revenues, racks my subjects
> That spent their bloods with me in conquering France,
> Beheld me ride in state through London streets,
> And at my stirrup lowly footing by
> Four captive kings to grace my victory.
>
> —*1 Richard II*, V.i.93-7

[100] Corbin and Sedge, p. 159 n.
[101] Corbin and Sedge, p. 110 n.

COR's observation turns out to be extraordinarily fruitful, allowing us to trace lines of authorial and narrative development between three acknowledged Shakespeare plays—*Henry V*, *2 Richard II* and *Edward III*—and their anonymous contemporary, *1 Richard II*. These include repeated references to Edward III's famous victory parade, the legitimacy of England's lineal claim to France, followed up of course in *Henry V*, and the dire moment at Crecy Field when Edward III famously refused to send help to the Black Prince.

Earlier, in IV.i, Richard determines to abduct Woodstock, ship him secretly to the English fortress at Calais and there have him murdered. He concludes his speech with,

> Beware, Plain Thomas, for King Richard comes
> Resolv'd with blood to wash all former wrongs!
> —*1 Richard II*, IV.i 281-2

Corbin and Sedge comment:

> Whilst at the simplest level this is a statement of straightforward revenge for Woodstock's past treatment of Richard's former supporters, at another level the language suggests a striking blasphemy in its recollection of the Christian sacrifice.[102]

Again, yes. This fine critical insight comments implicitly not only upon Woodstock's murder and its narrative dynamics but, looking ahead to *2 Richard II*, reflects upon the King's own final sacrificial death. The parallels between the two are quite striking and are important intertextual references suggesting a common authorial hand.

Finally, Corbin and Sedge resolve a couple of minor textual debates and inaccuracies, among them the identity of the town of Hockley (III.iii.58), which Keller believed to be Hackley or Hacklay, and Rossiter Hockliffe in Essex. COR persuasively identifies it as Hockley-in-the-Hole, 'a village between Dunstable and Fenny Stratford which had a reputa-

[102] Corbin and Sedge, p. 141 n.

tion for highway robbery.'[103]

Stage Directions

Four of COR's emended stage directions are functional and/or clarifying. They include *Woodstock walks the horse* at III.ii.162, the Duchess of Gloucester *weeping* at the start of V.iii, and *Manet the King* [*with Greene's corpse*] at IV.iv.23. The addition at II.iii.80, noting that the Duchess of Ireland addresses her aunt, the Duchess of Gloucester, and not the Queen, may also prove helpful to readers and perhaps directors.

The rest of COR's conjectural emendations are not so useful. At IV.ii.106, the masquers' entrance, the editors vastly complicate a relatively simple matter which, in the MS, looks approximately like this (font reduced):

Enter Cheney thare com my lord
Anticke they all are wellcome Cheney: sett me a **fflorish Cornetts**
Chayre **: Dance**
we will behould ther sports in spight of care **& musique: cornetts. /**
sound a florish, then a great shout & winding a hornes, Then Enters Cinthia

The marginal addenda, set in bold to indicate a hand other than the MS writer's, are evidently reminders by some forgotten stage manager or director to prepare these elements for the upcoming masque. COR however gives the following unhappy composite, my square brackets indicating their emendations:

Enter Cheney
Cheney. They're come, my lord.
Woodstock. They all are welcome, Cheney. Set me a chair:
We will behold their sports in spite of care.
Sound a flourish of cornets. [*Enter* Masquers *conducted by Cheney who exits.*] *Antic dance and music; then a great shout and winding o' horns.* [*Exeunt* Masquers.]
Then enters *Cynthia.*

[103] Corbin and Sedge, p. 120 n..

The constant entering and exiting renders this orchestration theatrically impractical. First Cheney comes on, announces the players and sets Woodstock's chair, then he leaves only to return redundantly at the head of at least eight disguised masquers (the King, three minions and four other knights 'in green, with horns about their necks and boar spears in their hands').

Cheney once more exits. The masquers shout, dance, etc., after which they too depart. Finally Cynthia comes on and delivers her prologue, which of course it no longer is because the same group of masquers then re-enter.

It's the academic version, by which I mean hopelessly impractical, justified only by the opportunity to provide scholarly notation. No company of actors in its right mind would run it in performance, especially when the original is so usably straightforward.

COR does not do much better at II.i.121ff., which in MS is without stage directions, though clearly something is required. Richard and his new councilors are in informal session when his uncle, Edmund of York, arrives to 'invite' the King to meet with Parliament—a highly political act. The theatrical task is to get him on and move the scene along. Rossiter simply and elegantly solves the problem by directing a knock at the door answered by Bagot, followed by the duke's entrance.

COR however replaces Rossiter's directions with another unclear and logistically complicated set of moves requiring the entrance and exit of a new character, a messenger, who hands a note to Bagot, who then tells the King that his uncle craves admittance.

After thinking about it, Richard says, 'go admit him,' suggesting that Bagot should exit and return with the duke, though COR provides no directions at this point. Finally they give '*Enter York*' followed by Bagot's now supererogatory,

'He comes, my lord.'[104]

Again, it's much too convoluted and certainly not better than Rossiter's solution. I see no reason to abandon a well-established and more practical approach.

On three occasions, however, Corbin and Sedge do follow Rossiter's stage directions, though unwisely.

The first is Rossiter's poorly defended excision of Green at IV.iii.142. COR's editors ignorantly believe the cut is in the original, and thus revealingly puzzle over Green's absence which, as they say, is 'odd, as he is the favourite whom one would expect to be most prominent in comforting Richard.'[105]

The second instance—their reassigning of V.i.232, 'Not too fast for falling! [*Strikes him*]' to the First Murderer, plus similar explanatory notes—is a conscious plagiarism of Rossiter. COR claims that

> it is clear that it is the First Murderer who has the hammer, and that it is he, not the Second Murderer, who strikes Woodstock with it.'[106]

But this is just a thin paraphrase of Rossiter's:

> MS gives this to 2 *m.*: but it is clear that No.1 has the hammer.[107]

Corbin and Sedge are thus not only wrong—the whole point is that there are no marks on Woodstock's corpse, notoriously allowing Richard to later claim that he died a natural death—but they fail to acknowledge their faulty source.

As the foregoing suggests, COR's scholarship and textual

[104] Corbin and Sedge, p. 83.
[105] Corbin and Sedge, p. 157 n. Exactly.
[106] Corbin and Sedge, p. 169 n.
[107] Rossiter, p. 205 n.

readings are often poorly supported or, even worse, second-hand. These are serious charges, so I need to back them up.

At II.i.14, 'As if the sun were forced to decline,' COR footnotes:

[*decline*] *declyne* Keller (not as emendation); *delyne* MS.[108]

But this simply reproduces Rossiter's note,

MS *delyne*: Keller *declyne* (not as emendation).[109]

At III.i.95, 'Or let all our successors yet to come,' a line with a long and interesting history, COR overlooks Rossiter's successful emendation, *all*, completing the pentameter, and simply transcribes Frijlinck's superseded scholarship.

Here's COR:

[*successors*] *successessors* MS (owing to faulty correction—*succe* being interlined by another hand in darker ink above *predi* which is deleted.[110]

and here is Frijlinck:

successesso^{r}*s*] *sic*, owing to faulty correction: *succe* being interlined by another hand in darker ink above *predi* deleted.[111]

This is not only the crudest plagiarism, but it allows the editors to bolster their dubious claim that their observations are based on a close examination of the actual MS.

At II.i.75-88, a long reading by Bushy from a chronicle of English history, COR's explanatory footnote is a virtual

[108] Corbin and Sedge, p. 78 n.
[109] Rossiter, p. 187.
[110] Corbin and Sedge, 105 n.
[111] Frijlinck, p. 43 n.

transcription of the Nottingham edition's.[112]

Elsewhere, the editors fiddle gratuitously with the text. The most intrusive is the substitution at III.i.179 of *God buy ye* for MS *god boy* (*good-bye*), prompting the note,

> Either *Good-bye* or perhaps, ironically, given Tresilian's schemes, *God redeem you*.[113]

But this is mere editorial preening—an unjustifiable change permitting a smart academic comment. It is indulged in again when the editors insist on *gape* for *gate* at II.ii.208, 'make their gate wider,' followed by a footnote 'assuming' that an earlier conjecture by Rossiter is correct, which by definition cannot be certain, and then, without further evidence, since the MS is quite unambiguous, the unjustified claim that 'the scribe has misread his copy here.'[114] The scribe often misreads his copy, but not here.

COR later unwarrantedly replaces MS *stroke* (*struck*) with the obscure word *stern* (III.iii.113), despite acknowledging ultimately that 'I'm e'en struck at heart too' is probably the better version, as Frijlinck long ago pointed out.[115]

At I.i.42 the editors give *he'd've done* for MS *he'd 'a done*, altering the line's colloquial ring. In the same self-indulgent spirit they change *now* to *new* at III.i.71.

In a note to IV.i.231ff. they incorrectly take the dramatist to task for miscounting the number of territories Richard disburses among his cronies. At IV.ii.85 they give 'I'm glad to hear your grace addicted so,' instead of MS, 'I'm glad to see,' etc.

[112] Corbin and Sedge, p. 80 n., Parfitt and Shepherd, p. 20 n.
[113] Corbin and Sedge, p. 108 n.
[114] Corbin and Sedge, p. 93 n.
[115] Corbin and Sedge, p. 123 n.

COR's carelessness becomes increasingly marked in the later acts: either the editors' interest flagged, or they divided the work between themselves and whoever had responsibility for the latter half felt less committed than his partner. I found only one minor error in Act I (*nourishèd* at I.iii.169, where MS gives *norisht*), but five in Acts III-V: *yet* for *ye* at III.i.13; solecestic commas after *Let* (III.i.5), *we'll* for *we* at IV.iii.8; *owest* for *ow'st* at V.i.155; and a full stop in the middle of a sentence at V.vi.13-14 ('Our proclamations soon shall find him forth. The root and ground of all these vile abuses.')

The edition's references also contain minor errors following the same pattern. The most revealing is a footnote to V.i.34, which claims that *I protest* replaces MS *I swear*. In fact, wisely it does not. Perhaps at one point the editors intended the substitution, then changed their minds, later proofreading so sloppily that the old note was left in place.[116]

A Note on the Final Scene

The present edition of *1 Richard II* contains what may be the longest conjectural emendation in Elizabethan dramatic literature—V.vi.37-159 or 122 lines.

I am of course very conscious of my limitations, especially as I think the play is by the world's greatest playwright and poet, justifying my efforts on the grounds that half a loaf is better than none. A finish tying up at least some of plot's loose ends may mean more frequent performances, leading to the play's acceptance as the forgotten masterpiece it is.

It's also not strictly true that I wrote the scene's conclusion without help. Because I believe *1 Richard II* to be Shakespeare's, I took as much as possible from his own treatment of Woodstock's death, a theme running all the way from the opening of *2 Richard II* through *Henry V* and the night before Agincourt.

[116] Corbin and Sedge, p. 161 n.

I also used, or transfused, lines and phrases from earlier moments in *1 Richard II*, together with appropriate references to *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and other works. My joke is that I am Shakespeare's most recent collaborator.[117]

Finally, the really fun part, I adjusted my conclusion in the light of requests from the director and actors at Emerson College, Boston, who performed an earlier version of my text and conclusion in March-April 2002.[118]

Among other opportunities, this gave me a first-hand sense of how Elizabethan dramatists probably worked. Speeches I'd originally assigned to John of Gaunt, for example, were transferred during rehearsal to his gentler brother, Edmund of York, and I unhesitatingly accepted these judgments. I was also asked to 'toughen up' Richard's handling of his uncles, and complied.

Some time later I incorporated Corbin and Sedge's suggestion that the Duke of York, who is puzzlingly absent from the final scene's opening stage directions, subsequently enters as the captive king's escort.[119]

Bold Speculations

Editors and literary commentators have often speculated about the drama's resolution and Richard's fate. All the elements appear to be given by the play itself, the historical record, and *2 Richard II*, which of course begins almost immediately afterwards with Bullingbrook demanding Richard's accountability for their sainted uncle's murder.

Keller, whose introduction was the play's first critical

[117] A full list of my borrowings appears in *1 Richard II*, Vol. I, *Background and Synopsis* (2006).

[118] http://www.theatermirror.com/towecr.htm

[119] Corbin and Sedge, pp. 38, 185 n. The editors also include an interesting Appendix suggesting possible doubled roles, pp. 219-20.

appraisal, noted about the missing conclusion that unless

the king appears once more to confront the Lords...the piece suffers both literary-historical and aesthetic loss. [120]

Similarly, Corbin and Sedge comment that in IV.iv.49-56, Richard's remorse and 'recognition of his crimes,'

may perhaps prepare the way for the play's resolution in terms of repentance and uneasy truce between the king and his nobles, but since the text is incomplete this must remain speculative.[121]

The critic Michael Mannheim hypothesizes with greater imagination and historical awareness:

The lost ending of the play certainly involves reconciliation of some kind between Richard and his rebellious uncles, but any treatment of Richard's reign also assumes audience knowledge that he would one day be deposed, and the possibility of deposition hardly seems unwelcome in *Woodstock*.[122]

This too seems reasonable, since Richard II's deposition and the Wars of the Roses were among the most famous historical narratives in Elizabethan England. The Roses were their civil war, Henry VII their Lincoln, and its constitutional issues continued to dominate his granddaughter's political life. 'I am Richard II. Know yet not that?' she once famously said.

David Bevington also observes:

Although Woodstock goes to his death still wishing Richard's safety, his brothers evidently (although the manuscript is imperfect) extort from Richard some of the conditions for which they

[120] Keller, p. 121
[121] Corbin and Sedge, p. 4.
[122] Michael Mannheim: 'The Weak King History Play of the Early 1590s' *Renaissance Drama* n.s. Vol. II, 1969) p. 253.

have fought.[123]

As elsewhere, Edgar Schell intelligently explores the play's dramatic and political issues, implicitly tying *1 Richard II* to its great successor:

It is unlikely that Richard himself is either deposed or killed at the end of *Woodstock*. The well-known facts of his deposition by Henry Bullingbrook and subsequent death, argue against that. And while there is some ambiguity about the intention of Lancaster and York (it is not clear how far they mean to go to avenge Woodstock's murder) on the whole their aims seem to be as limited as they were in act 1. What they seem to seek is the restoration of the King's body politic: the purgation of its wanton humors and the return of mature wisdom to the council. Those, at least, are the demands they make on Richard when they confront him just before the battle in act 5, scene 3. It seems likely, then, that the play ended as generations of morality plays had ended, with Richard passing back under the control of his uncles, who have expelled from the Body Politic those who urged him towards vanity. If it did, the playwright deftly negotiated a passage between the claims of historical truth and the political dangers of seeming to advocate the deposition even of a tyrant; for he has dramatized the logic by which Richard historically deposed himself without ever showing him deposed. But if Richard did come to rest under the guidance of his uncles at the end of the play, it is difficult o believe that he did so willingly. He is more likely to have been a prisoner than a penitent. [124]

Most of these speculations are persuasive and moreover broadly consistent with the contemporary sources which almost certainly shaped the play's ending. Contrary to its current reputation among academics, *1 Richard II* is a very well-researched and historically accurate drama, consistent

[123] David Bevington: *Tudor Drama and Politics* (1965) p. 253.
[124] Edgar Schell: *Strangers and Pilgrims*, pp. 104-5. Schell later notes: 'Historically, [the Lords'] victory meant a return to the Good Parliament of 1387.' (*Ibid.*, p. 204.)

with what we know about Shakespeare, and drawing on all the same rare sources he consulted for *2 Richard II.*[125]

Analyzing the insurrection of 1387-8 and exploring its consequences were Anon's principal objectives, accomplished with an unusually high level of scholarly inquiry. *1* and *2 Richard II* are perhaps the most thoroughly researched history plays in the entire corpus of the Elizabethan theatre. Their authors read the same books and came to the same conclusions, including the importance of understanding the first part of Richard II's reign in order to appreciate the catastrophe of the second.

It must be added that the second drama depends in almost all essential matters of early fact upon the historical analysis (right or wrong) of the first. These include Woodstock's plain and simple personality, his faux 'confession' put out by Richard after his death, and the transparent lie that he died of natural causes after being kidnapped and imprisoned in Calais.

Also carefully researched is the depiction of Richard II's flamboyant sadomasochism, his bisexuality and favoritism, the outrage of the Blank Charters, his self-subjection to the law, his criminal leasing out of the kingdom like to a tenement or pelting farm, his notorious bodyguard of archers, his destruction of Sheen in a fit of grief over Anne's death and, above all, his deadly political rivalry with Woodstock and its historic outcome. The nobility did rise up in 1387, the king was defeated at Radcot Bridge, his closest associates were executed by the Merciless Parliament and, after a brief deposition, he was restored as (in effect) England's first constitutional monarch. In history's long view, and Shakespeare/

[125] Documenting this is a lengthy matter not appropriate here, but please see 'The Dramatist as Historian' in the introduction to my *1 Richard II* (2006). Independent studies showing the depth and breadth of Shakespeare's scholarship in *2 Richard II* include Matthew W. Black: 'Sources of Shakespeare *Richard II*' (1948) pp. 199-216, and Dover Wilson, e*d. cit.*, pp. lxi, xxxviii-lxiv.

Anon's, Woodstock was the first Lancastrian casualty in the Wars of the Roses.

Nigel Saul summarizes the historical situation after Radcot Bridge in 1387:

> When the King was suitably chastened [the Lords] made a number of demands on him. Knighton reports their insistence on the arrest and imprisonment of the five appellees. Walsingham, offering a different view, says that they required him to attend a council meeting at Westminster the next day; Richard, lachrymose and confused, initially agreed but then changed his mind and in the end only submitted under threat of deposition. The suggestion of deposition is picked up by the Westminster writer, who gives us a picture of difficult and prolonged crisis. The Lords, the writer says, rebuked Richard for his duplicity and misgovernance, and gave a clear warning that he must correct his mistakes and rule better in the future. The chronicle of Whalley Abbey, Lancashire, suggests that for a brief while Richard actually ceased to reign. On entering the Tower, the chronicler says, the Lords deposed Richard and for some three days he was deprived of his crown. Gloucester and his nephew Derby [i.e., Bullingbrook] could not agree on which of them was to take his place and in the end he was restored to his title.[126]

Based on the foregoing, our play's internal dynamics, and the requirements of *2 Richard II*, the necessary elements for a strong, theatrical conclusion are that (i) Tresilian must be hanged, (ii) Woodstock's murder publicly revealed and at least partly avenged, and (iii) the arrested king forcefully reprimanded but restored. This sequence also makes dramatic sense.

1. Tresilian

As the story's chief villain, architect of the despised Blank Charters scam, and the man responsible for 'more wrangling i' the land than all the wars has done these seven years' (V. ii.37-8), Tresilian must clearly be arraigned and dispatched.

[126] Saul, *Richard II*, p. 189.

Everything in history and the play's foreshadowings require it. When Woodstock first hears of the Blank Charters, he wishes that 'he were hang'd that first devis'd them,' (III.ii. 242). Even the harmless Schoolmaster sings:

Blank Charters they are call'd—
A vengeance on the villain!

—1 *Richard II*, III.iii.186-7

Finally, just before Nimble drags him on stage, perhaps with a Godot-style rope around his neck, Lancaster says, in the play's characteristically back-to-the-future way:

Had we Tresilian hang'd, then all were sure!

—1 *Richard II*, V.vi.10.

And in historic fact, Tresilian was captured, tried and executed by the Merciless Parliament of 1388.

There are so many ironies at this point in the play (justice judged, the accuser accused, the silencer silenced, the master mastered, etc.) that I cannot imagine any dramatist not cashing in at least a few.

At all events, I couldn't resist. Tresilian is sent whimpering to his fate, damned both by poetic and military justice and with the play's grimmest running joke—'God Bless my Lord Tresilian!'—ringing in his ears.

2. Woodstock's Murder

As we have noted, Richard's troublesome uncle died under highly suspicious circumstances while in the monarch's custody after being kidnapped and transported to France. His relatives maintained that he'd been killed in such a way as to make his death appear natural. The play agrees. 'Never was murder done with such rare skill' (V.i.258-9), his assassins gloat.

Since *1 Richard II* is loyal to the Lancastrian cause, it is thus likely that the final scene included some kind of evidence to

support their claim of a politically motivated murder. This appears in the form of Tresilian's warrant commanding that 'no marks nor violence show upon him, that we may say he naturally died' (V.vi.44-5).

Tresilian's written orders provide a number of theatrical opportunities.

First, it seems appropriate and in keeping with the play's spirit that a lawyer and a man who lived by crafting crafty documents—among them the Blank Charters and the contract turning England into a 'pelting farm'—should die by one ironically bearing his own signature.

Secondly, his warrant effortlessly reopens and makes historic the matter of Gloucester's assassination, giving the audience clear proof of Tresilian's guilt, and so cleaning the Lords' hands of his and Lapoole's executions.

I assume Bushy, Scroop and Lapoole are on stage for a purpose, and that there is also a reason why we've been told, 'King Richard's been taken prisoner by the peers' (V.v.9).

As Woodstock's proximate assassin, Lapoole must be present to be tried and condemned along with Tresilian. Both he and the king have already unwittingly forecast his fate—Richard threatens his execution should he allow Woodstock to be killed (IV.iii.175-6), while Lapoole himself says, 'The black reward of death is traitor's pay!' (V.i.285). And so he goes.

This gives us two executions for Woodstock's death—a satisfactory but not gratuitously bloody ratio. Scroop and Bushy are relatively guiltless, but they must be present for the interrogation—in effect, Richard's trial—helping both to implicate and excuse him. It is after all to Bushy that Richard says

Send post to Calais and bid Lapoole forbear
On pain of life to act our sad decree.

For heaven's love, go prevent the tragedy!
—*1 Richard II*, IV.iii.175-7

Bushy testifies to this and thus gets Richard partly off the hook, preparing the way for the drama's dénouement—the fate of the king and his kingdom.

3. Deposition and Restoration

When Richard's minions are questioned, they first turn on one another and then, self-seeking cowards that they are, lay all the blame upon him, fulfilling York's prophetic 'Thou lean'st on staves that will at length deceive thee' (II.ii.137).

This allows us to bring Richard back on stage—the moment, of course, that everyone has been waiting for.

The King's trial and reconciliation with the Lords has to be the climax of the play, since it is the event about which the whole of the action and the beginning of *2 Richard II* revolves. Accompanied by the Duke of York, he is led on stage in chains and forced to account for Woodstock's death, together with his general mismanagement of the kingdom. This is something the uncles have repeatedly threatened direly, and so must be honored:

If he [Woodstock] be dead, by good King Edward's soul,
We'll call King Richard to a strict account
For that, and for his realm's misgovernment.
—*1 Richard II*, V.iii.19-21

Yet Richard's guilt is ambiguous, as the play suggests, so he is allowed ambiguously to excuse himself and ambiguously to be forgiven (V.vi.90-5). In keeping with this and other outcomes also promised earlier—

Let him revoke the proclamations,
Clear us of all supposed crimes of treason,
Reveal where our good brother Gloucester keeps,
And grant that these pernicious flatterers

May by the law be tried…

—*1 Richard II,* V.iii.114-118

and

[Richard must] learn to govern like a virtuous prince,
Call home his wise and reverend councilors and
Thrust from his court those cursed flatterers
That hourly works this realm's confusion.

—*1 Richard II*, V.i.193-6

—he is forced to dismiss his minions, repeal the charges of treason against the old nobility, and admit them back into the country's governing council.

A passage from Holinshed is relevant here. It describes the negotiations between the King and Gloucester's brothers after his death, the dukes having 'assembled their powers to resist the king's dealings.' The historian continues:

There went messengers betwixt him [Richard] and the dukes, which being men of honour did their indeavour to appease both parties. The King discharged himself of blame for the duke of Glocester's death, considering that he had gone about to breake the truce, which he had taken with France, and also stirred the people of the realme to rebellion, and further had sought the destruction and loss of his life, that was his souereign and lawfull King. Contrarilie, the dukes affirmed, that their brother was wrongfullie put to death, hauing done nothing worthie of death. At length, by the intercession and meanses of those noble men that went to and fro betwixt them, they were accorded, & the King promised from thenceforth to do nothing but by the assent of the dukes, but he kept small promise in this behalfe, as after well appeared.[127]

Corbin and Sedge also refer to this passage, observing that there must obviously be some sort of political reconciliation and restoration of the *status quo ante*:

[127] Holinshed, *Chronicles* II, pp. 838-9

It seems unlikely, however, that the lost ending of the play could actually have involved the deposition of Richard, since his successor, Bullingbrook, is not active in the drama (or even mentioned) so no preparation for a change of monarch has been established. The most likely scenario is that Nimble's comic interlude with which the manuscript breaks off would have been followed by York's entry with the defeated King. York is a much more conciliatory character than his brothers, regarded by Richard as 'gentle, mild and generous' [II.i.125], and he has already interceded between Richard and Woodstock. It is fitting, therefore, that he should perform the delicate business of leading in the 'captive' Richard and effect a general reconciliation with the King.[128]

Richard is thus ambiguously restored to the throne we find him precariously occupying at the start of *2 Richard II*.

In Act II the entire movement of the play is summed up by the King himself in an unconscious prophesy:

Here, uncles, take the crown from Richard's hand
And once more place it on our kingly head.
—*1 Richard II*, II.ii.113-14

The drama ends with a weakened monarch apprehensively facing an uncertain future, which the historical record bears out. May McKissak notes:

On 31 May [1388] Richard entertained the parliament at his manor of Kennington; and on 3 June there was an impressive ceremony at Westminster Abbey when, after mass, lords and commons renewed their oaths of allegiance and Richard promised to be 'a good King and lord,' for the future...In June 1388 many must have hoped, and some may even have believed, that the worst troubles of the reign were over.[129]

[128] Corbin and Sedge, p. 38
[129] May McKisssak, *The Fourteenth Century 1307-1399*, pp. 459, 461.