
OXMYTHS AND STRATMYTHS: SECTION V

As well as myths involving the additions by Hand D, myths involving the additions in Hand B and Hand E are found at the end of this file.

MYTH: Hand D in The Play of Sir Thomas More is in the handwriting of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon.

For a review of Pollard's unsuccessful efforts to establish Hand D as authorial via paleographical evidence, see Werstine, p. 132:

. . . . by 1927, Thompson's paleographical evidence had been exposed as grossly overextended, and so Greg, who had, in 1923, kept silent about Thompson's work and, for that matter, kept silent about the identification of Hand D as Shakespeare, had to break his silence, detail his differences with Thompson, and acknowledge that the paleographical case was inconclusive ("Shakespeare's Hand Once More").

Tannenbaum leaves open the question of whether William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon dictated the Hand D addition; however his expert and very detailed analysis, which has never been refuted, establishes that William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon did not personally pen the Hand D addition. Tannenbaum writes:

[O]n the basis of the six unquestioned signatures the weight of the evidence is overwhelmingly against the theory that in folios 8 and 9 of The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore we have a Shakspeare holograph.

See also Hays, p. 7:

It would seem fitting to conclude with at least a cursory review of the paleographic features of both the six signatures attributed to Shakespeare and Addition IIc [=Hand D] of Sir Thomas More. But any effort either way – that is, any effort to argue the similarity or dissimilarity of the hands involved – must be inconclusive because the evidence is insufficient. Moreover, those letters and features what have received particular attention are remarkably unproductive.

See also Huber, p. 66:

*The evidence is **not** sufficiently strong to justify a positive identification of the poet [=William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon].*

For Huber's publications in the field of handwriting identification, see Harralson, Heidi H. and Larry S. Miller, *Huber and Headrick's Handwriting Identification: Facts and Fundamentals*, 2nd ed., CRC Press, at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=STJDDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT737>

References:

(1) Werstine, Paul, 'Shakespeare, More or Less: A.W. Pollard and Twentieth-Century Shakespeare Editing', *Florilegium* 16 (1999), pp. 125-45, available as a pdf file online at:

<https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/flor/article/view/19201>

(2) Tannenbaum, Samuel A., *Problems in Shakespeare's Penmanship*, (New York: The Century Co., 1927), pp. 179-211.

(3) Hays, Michael L., 'Shakespeare's Hand in Sir Thomas More: Some Aspects of the Paleographic Argument', *Shakespeare Studies*, Vol. VIII (1975), pp. 241-53.

(4) Huber, Roy A., 'On Looking Over Shakespeare's "Secretarie"', in Jackson, B.A.W., ed., *Stratford Papers on Shakespeare, 1960*, (Toronto: W.J. Gage, 1961), pp. 51-70.

MYTH: The six signatures of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon constitute a valid sample for comparison with the handwriting of the Hand D passage in The Play of Sir Thomas More.

Handwriting experts agree that a lengthy sample is required for comparison purposes. Six signatures, particularly since they repeat the same two words six times, do not constitute anything even approaching a valid sample for comparison with Hand D. Moreover handwriting experts agree that it is impermissible to compare capital letters and small letters, as has been done with the capital letter 'W' from the signatures and the small letter 'w' in Hand D. Handwriting experts also agree that the samples must be from the same time period as the document to which they are being compared. The six signatures date from 1612 to 1616, and were thus all written more than a decade later than any date which has so far been proposed for Hand D. The analyses which have claimed that the Hand D passage in *The Play of Sir Thomas More* is in the handwriting of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon are therefore invalid since they do not meet even the most basic criteria for handwriting analysis. The identity of the individual who wrote out the Hand D passage is still entirely unknown.

The first step in finding a valid sample for comparison to Hand D would thus appear to be to identify the features of Hand D which differ to a significant degree from the usual letter formations of the later Elizabethan period. There are at least six of these features:

1. initial straight upstrokes on many small letters such as 'm', 'w', 'v', 'r' and 'i'.
2. spurred 'a' (not invariable, but frequent).
3. large lower loops on the letter 'h' (in many cases those in the Hand D passage are significantly larger than those found in many other hands of the period).

4. a spiky flourish at the end of the letter 'f' in the words 'if' and 'of'.
5. a forward tail on small 'g' (not invariable, but frequent).
6. large tails on final 'y' (there appear to be only two examples of this, rendering it less significant than the first five characteristics).

Any reasonably lengthy document from the later Elizabethan period which exhibits all these distinctive features would be a candidate for further analysis, particularly if it exhibited the same 'slope' and spacing between lines as the Hand D passage.

References:

(1) Facsimile of Hand D from the Wikipedia article on the play in which the foregoing features are clearly visible:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Sir_Thomas_More_Hand_D.jpg

MYTH: The writers of Hand C and Hand D in The Play of Sir Thomas More were different persons.

According to Ramsay, p. 151:

. . . no thorough study exists to show that Hand C and Hand D are distinct hands. . . .

References:

(1) Ramsey, Paul, 'The Literary Evidence for Shakespeare as Hand D in the Manuscript Play Sir Thomas More: A Re-reconsideration', *The Upstart Crow*, Vol. XI (1991), pp. 131-55.

MYTH: Hand D was one of the revisers of The Play of Sir Thomas More.

The issue here is whether the Hand D passage was originally written for inclusion in the play of *Sir Thomas More*, or whether the passage was originally written for a different play.

According to Greg, the passage in Hand D is unrelated to the version of the play in the extant manuscript of the play of Sir Thomas More. Hand D's 'characters are unrecognizable', and he has 'perhaps no knowledge of the play on which he is working'. The Hand D passage was, moreover, corrected by Hand C, indicating that the passage in Hand D came from a different play, and was merely inserted by the revisers into the existing manuscript. See Greg, pp. xii-xiii:

. . . and then comes the astonishing addition by D. Round this much controversy has centred. The writer has no respect for, perhaps no knowledge of, the play on which he is working. His characters are unrecognizable. He is indifferent to the personae. He writes 'other' and leaves it to C to assign the speech to whom he pleases. In II 233 and following he begins by writing a sentence which in the absence of punctuation it is almost impossible not to misread, then alters and interlines till it becomes impossible to follow his intention, and leaves it to C to clear up the confusion. This C does by boldly excising some three lines and inserting one makeshift half-line of his own.

Greg's statements are echoed by Maunde Thompson:

It is also obvious that the writer was a careless contributor. It has been remarked by Dr. Greg that he shows no respect for, perhaps no knowledge of, the play on which he was at work. In a haphazard fashion he distributes speeches and exclamations among the insurgents, and sometimes he merely attached the word 'other' instead of the actual name of a character to a speech, leaving it to the reviser to put things straight. In one passage, which he has partially altered, he leaves two and a half lines (ll. 112-14) so confused that the reviser has found no way out of the difficulty but to strike them out and substitute a half-line of his own.

As Greg's bibliographic analysis below makes clear, it is impossible to determine the origin of the Hand D passage, which was one of the 'later insertions' to the extant manuscript, or the circumstances under the Hand D passage became connected to the extant manuscript. Thus, considering that the Hand D passage is strikingly unrelated to the version of the play written out by S, and was, moreover, corrected by Hand C, the weight of evidence suggests that the Hand D passage formed part of another play on the same or a related topic, and was inserted by the revisers into the extant manuscript, but that the author of Hand D was not himself one of the revisers, and that the Hand D passage does not date from the same period as the rest of the revisions in Hands A, B, C and E. See pp. v-vi:

<https://archive.org/stream/bookofsirthomasm00brituoft#page/n9/mode/2up>

The number of leaves of which the manuscript originally consisted cannot now be determined with certainty, for the individual leaves have been detached and mounted, while the closeness of the writing, the absorbent nature of the paper, and in parts the heaviness of the mending, put any collation by watermarks, if such exist, out of the question. All we can say is that thirteen original leaves remain and that there are two lacunae. Thus we have fols. 3-5, gap, 10-11, gap, 14-15, 17-22, the verso of the last leaf being blank. The other leaves are later insertions. The extent of the lacunae is doubtful, but to judge from the subject matter it would seem that after fol. 5 possibly and after fol. 11 probably, not more than a single leaf is absent. In that case there presumably was once a blank leaf at the end; and if we imagine the original manuscript to have consisted of eight sheets we shall not be far wrong.

But considerable additions have been made at a later date. After fol. 5 has been inserted a leaf, fol. 6, written on one side only, which we shall see belongs, if anywhere, to a much later portion of the play. After fol. 6 appear three leaves, fols. 7-9, the verso of the third being blank, designed to replace the original leaf or leaves cancelled after fol. 5 as well as matter deleted on fol. 5b itself. So again after fol. 11 are inserted two leaves, fols. 12 and 13, intended to fill the later lacuna and replace most of fol. 11b and the whole of fol. 14a. Besides this two slips of paper, each measuring about 6 x 5 inches, were pasted over cancelled matter on the lower portions of fols. 11b and 14a respectively. They contain minor additions intended to stand at the beginning and end of the main insertion of fols. 1 and 13. These slips have recently been soaked off and mounted as separate leaves, fols. 11 and 13*, so that the underlying text can now be read for the first time since the sixteenth century. Lastly, after fol. 15 we find one leaf, fol. 16, of which the recto and part only of the verso are filled, containing an addition to be made to the text on fol. 17a.*

See also Greg, p. ix:

D, a purely English hand apparently, occurs on fols. 8a, 8b, 9a only, the two former pages being now badly obscured by tracing paper. It is certainly a different hand from C, with which it has been sometimes confused, but C is found correcting it rather freely. It has, for instance, the distinction of forming its 'p' in the usual manner and of also using 'p{ro}' repeatedly and correctly. There is very little punctuation. The ink is quite unmistakable, being of a peculiar muddy yellow.

References:

(1) Greg, W.W., ed., *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, (Malone Society Reprints, 1911), pp. xiii-xiv at:

<https://archive.org/stream/bookofsirthomasm00brituoft#page/xii/mode/2up>

(2) Thompson, Sir Edward Maunde, *Shakespeare's Handwriting*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), p. 37 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/shakespeareshand00thom#page/36/mode/2up>

(3) Facsimile of Hand D from the Wikipedia article on the play in which corrections by Hand C to the Hand D passage are visible:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Sir_Thomas_More_Hand_D.jpg

MYTH: The Hand D passage in the play of Sir Thomas More was written out by the author in his own hand, and the alterations in it reflect authorial composition

This issue is distinct from the issue discussed immediately above, i.e. whether the Hand D passage was originally written for inclusion in the play of *Sir Thomas More*, or whether the passage was originally written for a different play. It is also distinct from the issue of whether Shakespeare was the original author of the passage.

Alterations indicative of scribal error establish that the passage now known as the Hand D passage in the *Play of Sir Thomas More* was copied out by a scribe. See Downs, p. 2:

However, if a great majority of the thirty or so alterations belong to well-known categories of scribal error, Melchiori's assumption that Hand D is an author's lines as he wrote them may be in need of reassessment.

See also Price, p. 340:

There is yet another impediment to Thompson's case. Following B.A.P. Van Dam and L.L. Schucking, Gerald E. Downs questions an underlying assumption on which Thompson's case for 'Hand D' is based: that D's Additions are authorial, representing original composition. Downs identifies characteristics in the handwriting, including eyeskip (at lines 127, 130) and mistaken anticipation (the deleted and at line 85), both of which are consistent with scribal transcription (2000, 5, 8-9).

References:

(1) Downs, Gerald E., 'A Question (not) to be Askt: Is Hand D a Copy?', 2007.

(2) Price, Diana, p. 340, 'Hand D and Shakespeare's Unorthodox Literary Paper Trail', *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, No. 4 (2015), pp. 329-52, available as a pdf file online at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.13128/JEMS-2279-7149-18095>

MYTH: The capitalization of mid-sentence verbs beginning with the letter 'c' is a distinctive feature of Hand D.

It is not. Although the writer of the Hand D additions capitalizes nine mid-sentence verbs beginning with the letter 'c', he also uses small 'c' for twelve mid-sentence verbs, as well as capital C for several mid-sentence nouns.

Moreover the use of mid-sentence capital letters, including mid-sentence capital 'c' for both nouns and verbs, was very common at the time. For example, in the original will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon there are four verb forms beginning with the letter 'c', and three of the four, or 75%, are capitalized. See also Tannenbaum:

A C is perhaps the most common majuscule to be found in Elizabethan and Jacobean documents; in fact, it occurs even in the middle of words (as in hypoCriticall), probably because penmen found that the minuscular c was too often mistaken for other letters.

References:

(1) Original will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon, TNA PROB 1/4, which can be viewed at the National Archives website at:

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C198022>

(2) Transcript of the will of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon which preserves the mid-sentence capitalization of letters:

<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/life/retirement/will+1.html>

(3) Transcript of the Hand D additions in Greg, W.W., ed., *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), pp. 73-8, at:

<https://archive.org/stream/bookofsirthomasm00brituoft#page/72/mode/2up>

(4) Tannenbaum, Samuel A., *The Handwriting of the Renaissance*, (Columbia University Press, 1930), p. 98.

MYTH: The spelling ‘scilens’ is found nowhere but in the Hand D addition to the play of Sir Thomas More and in the speech headings for the character Justice Silens in the 1600 quarto of Shakespeare’s 2 Henry IV.

The spelling ‘scilens’ is not unique to Hand D and the 1600 quarto of *2 Henry IV*. The spelling ‘scilens’ is found in a letter dated 17 May 1582 from the spy William Herle to Lord Burghley (SP 12/86/42 f. 193). See the Letters of William Herle Project at:

<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/herle/letters/165.html>
. . . where longer scilens condempnes me utterly

Moreover the very similar spelling ‘scylens’ is found in seven other letters written by Herle, i.e. to Lord Burghley in 1571, 1572, 1574 and 1575, to Sir Francis Walsingham in 1582, and to the Earl of Leicester in 1580 and 1582:

<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/herle/letters/079.html>
. . . as it were to conjure hym to a constant scylens of suche thinges as might have passed bettween them

<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/herle/letters/092.html>

. . . *that mi scylens [deleted] humble scylens shold serve me for a sufficyent spokes man in mi affayres*

<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/herle/letters/032.html>

For Govyll he [deleted: ys] ys growne to a sodeyn fasshyon of scylens & sadness

<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/herle/letters/163.html>

. . . & att his executyon he was redy to encoraige hym with his finger to a certayn scylens, & constancy

<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/herle/letters/266.html>

Assuryng your honor that master norrys is a person of grett suffycyencye for his yeres, & of synguler judgement & scylens withal

<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/herle/letters/156.html>

Being lothe to troble your L. with mucche writeng, and as lothe by scylens, to shew misellf slack in dutye

<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/herle/letters/240.html>

. . . & the matter might passe in the more scylens therby./

According to MacDonald P. Jackson, the spelling ‘scilens’ also occurs in a poem, *Say the Best and Never Repent*, by John Lydgate (1370–1449), and in an anonymous fourteenth-century poem, *The Reply of Friar Daw Topias, with Jack Upland’s Rejoinder*.

Partridge notes that the very similar spelling ‘scylens’ is found in the play *The Pardoner and the Frere*, attributed to John Heywood, published in 1533 by William Rastell. The spelling ‘scylens’ is also found in John Skelton’s *Colyn Clout*:

*That they be deafe and dum,
And play scylens and glum,
Can say nothing but mum.*

These examples establish that there was nothing particularly distinctive about the ‘ns’ ending, and that it was common to spell ‘silence’ with an ‘ns’ ending at the time.

The *OED* entry for the word ‘silence’ also establishes that, far from being distinctive, the spelling of ‘silence’ with an initial ‘sc’ was common in the 1400s and 1500s, being taken from the Old French spelling, ‘scilence’:

Forms: *ME–15 scilence, ME–15 scylence, 15 scylens; ME cilence; ME sylens(e, 15 Sc. silens, ME–15 sylence, ME– silence*

Etymology: *Old French silence, scilence*

1474 Caxton tr. [Game & Playe of Chesse](#) (1883) ii. iii. 38 *And oftetymes they selle as welle theyr scilence as theyr vtterance.*

c1480 (►a1400) *St. George* 637 in W. M. Metcalfe [Legends Saints Sc. Dial.](#) (1896) II. 194 [*He*] *gert scilence be mad, til he had sad þat wes in his gule.*

?1473 Caxton tr. R. Le Fèvre [Recuyell Hist. Troye](#) (1894) I. lf. 60^v, *With this Iupiter helde his pees and kept scilence.*

c1480 (►a1400) *St. Ninian* 336 in W. M. Metcalfe [Legends Saints Sc. Dial.](#) (1896) II. 313 *As þai come til his presence, he gert þe puple kepe scilence.*

c1380 Wyclif [Sel. Wks.](#) I. 93 *We shulden be tymes reste, and preye to God in scilence.*

1581 J. Bell tr. W. Haddon & J. Foxe [Against Jerome Osorius](#) 254 *Such force and dexterity, as may be able to putte your overthwart obstinacy to scilence.*

►a1387 J. Trevisa tr. R. Higden [Polychron.](#) (St. John's Cambr.) (1874) V. 19 *Speke wolde he nevere, as it is i-write in þe questiouns þat he wroot in his scilence tyme*

1398 J. Trevisa tr. Bartholomew de Glanville [De Proprietatibus Rerum](#) (1495) x. ii. 27 b, *Derknesse is seen yf noo thyng is seen, & scylence is knowen yf noo thyng is herde.*

a1513 H. Bradshaw [Lyfe St. Werburge](#) (1521) i. i. sig. a.iiii, *It were no reason, her name be had in scylence But to the people her name be magnyfyed.*

Moreover the entry for ‘silence’ in *The Dictionary of the Scots Language* establishes that the specific spelling ‘scilens’ was not uncommon in Scotland in the 1400s and 1500s, and that the very similar spelling ‘scylens’ was used as well. See:

http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/silence_n

[Wisd. Sol. 176.](#)

Tyme of spekinge, tyme of scilens.

Wisd. Sol. [c1460] *Wisdom of Solomon*. In *Ratis Raving, and Other Moral and Religious Pieces, in Prose and Verse*. Lumby, J. Rawson (ed.); EETS OS 43, London, 1870. pp 11–25. Also STS edn. pp 177–92 (see *Ratis R.*). (DOST Lib.)

[Seven S. 2645.](#)

Gar mak scilens that all may heire.

Seven S. [a1500] *The Buke of the Sevyne Sagis*. Rolland, John of Dalkeith. In *Asl. MS II*. pp 1–88. Also van Buuren, Catherine (ed.); Leiden University Press, 1982.

[Seven S. 2535.](#)

With hie voce he bad scilens.

Seven S. 868.

Wnder the nychtis myrk scilens Thai ... gat entre.

Wisd. Sol. 436.

The word of rich men is bettir hard in scylens na the pwr manis word in gret audiens criyt in the rew.

When the spelling ‘scilens’ in the Hand D addition and in the 1600 quarto of 2 Henry IV is considered in light of the foregoing evidence, it is clear that the spelling is not unique to the Hand D addition and the 1600 quarto of 2 *Henry IV*, and that neither the ‘sc’ beginning nor the ‘ns’ ending were in any way distinctive at the time, and that, in fact, the precise spelling ‘scilens’ was used by the spy William Herle in 1582.

It is also worth considering that Jackson’s argument that ‘scilens’ is an older spelling is evidence of an early date of composition for the Hand D addition and 2 *Henry IV*.

References:

(1) Letters of William Herle Project, at:

<http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk/herle/>.

(2) Jackson, MacDonald P., ‘Is “Hand D” of *Sir Thomas More* Shakespeare’s? Thomas Bayes and the Elliott–Valenza Authorship Tests’, *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 12.3 (January, 2007) 1.1-36, at:

<http://oxfraud.com/HND-macdonald-p-jackson>

(3) Partridge, A.C., *Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama*, (London: Arnold, 1964), p. 62.

(4) ‘Colyn Clout’ in Southey, Robert, *Select Works of the British Poets*, (London: Longman, 1831), p. 66 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/selectworksofbri00sout#page/n77/mode/2up>

MYTH: *The Play of Sir Thomas More* was written circa 1600.

The original play was written much earlier, since it contains no identifiable source dating from after 1588. Although an incident in Scene 2 may have been taken from Thomas Stapleton’s *Tres Thomae*, printed at Douai in 1588, according to Jowett, that incident may also have been taken from a manuscript source.

In 1844 the play's first editor, Alexander Dyce, dated it to 1590 or perhaps a little earlier, and according to Simpson, the play was inspired by an incident in 1586 reported by William Fleetwood, Recorder of London, in one of his regular weekly letters to Lord Burghley. See Maunde Thompson, pp. 38-9:

It will be convenient here to quote Mr. Simpson when he reminds us that the Insurrection Scene represents the rioting of the London apprentices against the aliens on the famous 'ill May day' of 1517, and continues: 'The same feeling, prevalent for years in Elizabeth's reign, was very nearly bursting out into violent acts in September 1586, when Recorder Fleetwood wrote to Burghley that the apprentices had conspired an insurrection against the French and Dutch, but especially the French, "all things as like unto yll May day as could be devised, in all manner of circumstances, mutatis mutandis", and concludes that it was during the heat of this feeling that the play came before the censor, who forthwith issued his order (written in the margin of the first page of the MS.) 'to leave out the insurrection wholly and the cause thereof'.

According to Simpson, who first suggested a date of composition of 1586:

The plot itself enables us to fix the date with somewhat more precision. Before doing so, a preliminary remark is necessary. It is clear from the play itself under consideration, and from many other passages from writings of 1589 or 1590 which I might quote, that it was a received theory of the time that plays ought to have a present interest; that it was of no use to reproduce the great men of antiquity unless there were some extant parallel to them in the circles of the day. When no such modern instances existed there was no reason for reviving the old examples. The theatre was the stage to discuss the great questions of the day under the thin disguise of Plutarchian parallels. . . . This being the case, it is reasonable to suppose that the play was intended to have reference to the subjects of the day. And this conjecture is strengthened if we find the censor objecting to any part of it for no apparent reason except its political danger.

The topicality of the September 1586 incident and the absence of post-1588 sources suggest that the play was written circa 1586/7 (if the incident in Scene 2 was taken from a manuscript source) or circa 1588 (if the incident in Scene 2 was taken from the 1588 Douai edition of *Tres Thomae*).

Moreover according to Long, both *The Play of Sir Thomas More* and Anthony Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber* were both bound in 'fragments of the same medieval manuscript' and endorsed by the person who wrote Hand C in *The Play of Sir Thomas More*, rendering it likely that they were owned by the company Hand C worked for in the early 1590s. Long writes:

Date is all important, and the History of More is inextricably tied to that of Anthony Munday's John a Kent and John a Cumber, now in the Huntington Library. The manuscript of John a Kent is 'written throughout in the hand of Anthony Munday' and is tied to the More manuscript not only by Munday as the principal hand in the More manuscript, but also by the fact that both plays were bound by fragments of the same

medieval manuscript, thus making it very likely that they were bound at the same time by the same person. In addition, W.W. Greg's identification of the hand that elaborately endorsed the play titles on both wrappers as that of 'Hand C', the playhouse bookkeeper of both plays, offers conclusive proof that the plays were owned at the same time by the company for whom Hand C worked in the early 1590s.

In addition, Metz accepts the opinion of J.A. Shapiro and the staff of the Huntington Library that the date on Munday's *John a Kent* is '1590', and that the original version of *The Play of Sir Thomas More* therefore dates from 1591 or earlier.

The date appended to John a Kent was closely examined in facsimile by Shapiro, who provisionally determined that it read 1590 rather than 1595 or 1596. This was verified by staff members at the Huntington Library by a close examination of the manuscript and Shapiro prints a convincing photograph of the date. On the basis of Thompson's opinion that Munday's writing in More is close to the date of John a Kent and a reference to that play in a Martinist tract of September 1589, Shapiro concludes that Munday's original version of More 'would have to be dated not later than 1591 and . . . possibly earlier', and that the revision may have occurred 'about 1593, when Lord Strange's men, who then included Shakespeare [and the writer of Hand C], were temporarily associated with the Admiral's company'. . . .

For the wrappers and the engrossments on them by Hand C, see also the discussion by Greg in his edition of *John a Kent and John a Cumber*.

References:

(1) Simpson, Richard, 'Are There Any Extant MSS. in Shakespeare's Handwriting?', *Notes & Queries*, 4th Series, Vol. VIII, (July 1, 1871), pp. 1-3 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/s4notesqueries08londonoft#page/n7/mode/2up>

(2) Spedding, James, 'Shakespeare's Handwriting', *Notes & Queries*, 4th Series, Vol. X, (September 21, 1872), pp. 227-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/s4notesqueries10londonoft#page/226/mode/2up>

(3) BL Lansdowne 49/4 in Ellis, Henry, *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, 2nd ed., (London: Harding, Triphook and Lepard, 1825), Vol. II, pp. 306-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/originallettersi02elliuft#page/306/mode/2up>

(4) Thompson, Sir Edward Maunde, *Shakespeare's Handwriting*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916) at:

<https://archive.org/stream/shakespeareshand00thom#page/38/mode/2up>

(5) Jowett, John, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, (London: A & C Black Publishers Ltd., 2011), pp. 59, 61.

(6) Long, William B., 'The Occasion of The Book of Sir Thomas More', Howard-Hill, T.H., ed., *Shakespeare and Sir Thomas More*, (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 47.

(7) Metz, G. Harold, 'Voice and credyt': The Scholars and Sir Thomas More', Howard-Hill, T.H., ed., *Shakespeare and Sir Thomas More*, (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 26.

(8) Shapiro, I. A., 'The Significance of a Date', *Shakespeare Survey*, Vol. 8 (1955), pp. 100-5 at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521816564.010>

(9) Greg, W.W., ed., *John a Kent & John a Cumber*, (Malone Society Reprints, 1923), p. vi.

MYTH: The revisions to The Play of Sir Thomas More, including those in Hand D, were written in response to the strictures of the censor, Sir Edmund Tilney.

As both Greg and Jenkins indicate, the revisions do not deal with the overriding objection raised by the censor, Sir Edmund Tilney. Greg writes:

It seems always to have been assumed that the play was submitted to Tilney in its original form and that the alterations and substitutions now found in the manuscript are the result of an attempt to comply with the censor's demands. This appears to me an error. His directions are specific and urgent. 'Leave out the insurrection wholly and the cause thereof,' says Tilney, 'and begin with Sir Thomas More at the Mayor's sessions, with a report afterwards of his good service done, being Shrieve of London, upon a mutiny against the Lombards, only by a short report and not otherwise, at your perils'. And we are to suppose that in the face of this the actors allowed the first scene, containing the cause of the riots, to stand unaltered, went to the trouble and expense of making an elaborate revision of the insurrection scenes, which whatever its literary merit can hardly have been supposed to meet the political objection, and then ventured to put the play on the stage. That is to say they behaved as though there were no Master of the Revels, no Privy Council, and no Star Chamber. Only collective insanity could account for such a proceeding.

Similarly, Jenkins writes:

The agitation of the populace against the aliens seems particularly lively and vigorous for a representation of the insurrection quelled by More in 1517, and the writer was apparently inspired by the bitter feeling of his own day, and no doubt expected his play to

have special appeal to the spectators because it voiced their own sentiments. The animosity against strangers was particularly fierce in 1586, 1593, and 1595, when it gave rise to serious disturbances. The first of these dates, though it was proposed by Richard Simpson, is highly improbable, and Professor Pollard argues strongly in favour of the riots of 1593 as having provided the special inspiration which led to the writing of the play. The theatres in London were closed in 1593 on account of the plague, but they were open in 1594, and it may have been hoped to have the play performed in that year.

There is a further difficulty of dating the various "additions" to the play. At first it would appear that such extensive revision was undertaken in order to comply with the demands of the censor, but the extraordinary thing is that the alterations do not supersede the passages to which Tilney specifically objected, and seem in each case to be suggested as a literary or dramatic improvement on the original. Tilney's large strictures on the opening scene and again on the passage describing More's refusal to sign the articles have produced no alteration. Since no notice was taken of his demands, it appears that the revision was not the result of his refusal to license the play and may have taken place before the play was submitted to Tilney. On the other hand, Tilney made no notes on any of the additions, and if the alterations and additions were made before the play was sent to the censor, we must suppose that the manuscript was presented to him in so disorderly a form that he would have considerable difficulty in reading it. Sir E. K. Chambers therefore suggests as a possible alternative that the play may have been revised for literary reasons some time after it had come back from Tilney, it being intended to produce it on the assumption that the political cloud had by then passed over. That could hardly have been before the disturbances of 1595, and in 1595 feeling had risen so high and measures taken against the insurgents were so severe that it is unlikely that any company would have ventured the responsibility of staging so dangerous a play for some years to come.

It is thus a fact that Tilney's strictures were ignored by the revisers which, Jenkins notes, gives rise to the issue of whether the revisions were made long after Tilney's initial rejection of the play. In support of the possibility that there was a gap of several years between the rejection of the play by Tilney and the revisions, it is noteworthy that Greg says on p. 41 that S, who wrote out the original draft of the play, took no part in the revisions:

S is responsible for the whole of the original fair draft of the play so far as it has survived (one or more leaves are missing after folio 5 and again after folio 11) but took no part in the revision.

If the revisions had been made immediately after S had submitted the play to Tilney, who demanded extensive revisions, it seems reasonable to expect that S would have taken some part in the revisions. Yet S is not among the revisers, which suggests that a period of years elapsed before the revisers got hold of the play, and that S was no longer involved with it at that time.

(1) Greg, W.W., ed., *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, (Malone Society Reprints, 1911), pp. xiii-xiv at:

<https://archive.org/stream/bookofsirthomasm00brituoft#page/xii/mode/2up>

(2) Jenkins, Harold, *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle*, (London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd., 1934), pp. 66-7.

(3) Greg, W.W., 'The Handwritings of the Manuscript', in Pollard, Alfred W. et al, *Shakespeare's Hand in The Play of Sir Thomas More*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), p. 41 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/shakespeareshand00polluoft#page/40/mode/2up>

MYTH: Thomas Heywood wrote the revisions to The Play of Sir Thomas More found in Hand B.

There has been considerable scholarly debate concerning the identification of Thomas Heywood as the reviser who wrote the Hand B additions, and there is no scholarly consensus that he was the author of the Hand B additions. See the summary by Metz.

References:

(1) Metz, Harold, 'Voice and credyt': The Scholars and *Sir Thomas More*', in Howard-Hill, T.H., ed., *Shakespeare and Sir Thomas More: Essays on the Play and its Shakespearian Interest*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 11-44 at pp. 14-15:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=VK4iIx2bTbIC&pg=PA14>

MYTH: Thomas Dekker wrote the revisions to The Play of Sir Thomas More found in Hand E.

Greg, who first identified Hand E as Dekker's, was unable to convince Sir George Warner, then Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Library, that the identification was correct. See Pollard, *infra*, p. 23 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/shakespeareshand00polluoft#page/52/mode/2up>

Alleged samples in Dekker's hand consist of six items, two of which contain only signatures. The first of the latter is a letter in another hand containing an alleged Dekker signature, Dulwich College, MSS 1, Article 109, 1r at:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-1/Article-109/01r.html>

The letter first appeared in Collier's *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn*, pp. 185-7, and according to the Freemans, p. 346, although there are some items in Collier's *Memoirs* which are of merit:

Inevitably, however, it is the impostures in Memoirs of Alleyn that now concern scholars and overshadow its merits. Ten of these have long been acknowledged, all but two based on physical forgeries among the Dulwich College archives.

The second item containing only a signature is in Dulwich College MSS 7, fol. 31r. The flourishes on the final 's' of 'Thomas' and the double loops on the letter 'k' in 'Dekker' render the signature strikingly different from other alleged Dekker signatures. See:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-7/031r.html>

Of the remaining four items, in which the hands and signatures differ markedly, the one most likely to be in Dekker's hand, called 'a good letter of Thomas Dekker' by the Freemans, *supra*, p. 345, is a letter to Edward Alleyn dated 12 September 1616. See Collier's *Memoirs*, *supra*, p. 131 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/memoirsEdwardal00collgoog#page/n138/mode/2up>

See also Dulwich College MSS 1, Article 108, 1-2 at:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-1/Article-108/01r.html>

In modern spelling, the letter reads:

To my worthy and worshipful friend, Edward Alleyn, esquire, at his house at Dulwich

Sir,

*Out of that respect which I ever carried
to your worth, now heightened by a pillar
of your own erecting, do I send these poor
testimonies of a more rich affection. I
am glad, if I be the first, that I am
the first to consecrate to memory, if at
least you so embrace it, so noble & pious
a work as this your last & worthiest is.
A passionate desire of expressing a glad-
ness to see goodness so well delivered,
having been long in labour in the world, made me thus
far to venture. And it best becomes me*

*to sing anything in praise of charity,
because albeit I have felt few hands
warm through that complexion, yet
imprisonment may make me long for
them. If anything in my eulogium or
praise of you or your noble act be
offensive, let it be excused because
I live amongst the Goths & Vandals,
where barbarousness is predominant.
Accept my will, howsoever, and me,*

Ready to do you any service,

Tho: Dekker

*King's Bench
Sept. 12
1616*

For an original spelling transcript, see Leinwand, Theodore B., *Theatre, Finance and Society in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 51 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=vH8m6ULJC1oC&pg=PA51>

In 'identifying' Hand E as Dekker's, Greg eliminated this 1616 letter of Dekker's from consideration on the ground that it was much later than the other four alleged samples of Dekker's hand considered below. However Tannenbaum, in discussing the issue of the time span between samples in connection with the comparison of the six signatures of William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon to Hand D, states that if the sample is large enough, a time span of 20 years would not be significant, which implicitly calls into question Greg's elimination of Dekker's 1616 letter, although in the case of William Shakespeare's six signatures, where the sample is both quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate, a span of 20 years between samples 'may be fatal'. See pp. 185-6:

The matter of age does not, broadly speaking, affect the discussion in any way. A difference of fourteen or eighteen years (between 1594 or 1598 and 1612) in the handwriting of a person who has attained maturity, and whose handwriting habits have become fixed, does not ordinarily matter in a handwriting investigation. Even though an old man's writing may be so poor, because of tremulousness, as to be largely illegible, his writing habits are so unalterably a feature of his personality that the handwriting expert has no great difficulty in establishing its identity with specimens written at an earlier age. But when the amount of standard writing at the examiner's disposal is as inadequate, both qualitatively and quantitatively, as in our present investigation, a difference of some twenty years (assuming that I have proved Moore and the Addition to have been written in 1593) may be a fatal handicap to reaching a positive

conclusion. That a penman's writing habits change in the course of years, especially if he be a person who writes much, is a well-established fact, even though under favorable conditions that is not a barrier to the establishment of his identity.

Of the three remaining samples, none of which is verifiably in Dekker's hand, the first is a receipt, purportedly written in Dekker's hand and signed by him, now catalogued as BL MS Add 30262 R (see Metz, p. 14, the facsimile and transcript in Tannenbaum, pp. 17, 222, and the entry in the British Library manuscript catalogue which states that the receipt, which contains another receipt on the reverse signed by George Chapman, was 'cut from Henslowe's *Diary*'). It reads:

1 August 1599

*Receaved by mee Thomas Dekker at the hands of mr
Phillip Hynchlow the Som{m}e of twenty Shillings to bee
payd the last of this moneth
Thomas Dekker*

A striking feature of BL MS Add 30262 R is the difference in size between the name 'Thomas Dekker' and the style in which it is written in the body of the receipt, and the size and style of the rest of the handwriting in the body of the receipt, which raises the possibility that the body of the receipt was written by someone other than Dekker, and Dekker's name was later filled in when the document was signed. If so, it is this other individual's handwriting which Greg found bore a resemblance to Hand E. A further anomaly is that in the signature, the double loops on the tops of the letter 'k' appear to have been added after the rest of the signature was written.

Two other receipts are found in Henslowe's *Diary* itself. The first of these, Dulwich Archives, MSS 7, fol. 101r, ll. 1-7, purports to be written by Dekker in what Greg describes as 'a rather ornate Italian hand'. For that reason alone it bears little resemblance to Hand E, written in what Greg calls 'an English hand'. It is signed 'Thomas Dekker', but the signature is strikingly different from the Dekker signature on fol. 31 r. It reads:

30 Die Ianuarij 1598

*Receaved by mee Thomas Dekker of Mr Phillip Hynchlow the
some of three Powndes ten shillings to be repayd vnto
Him or his Assignes vpon the last of February next ensuing
for paymant whereof I bynd mee my Hayres Executors
and Administrators
Thomas Dekker*

The second receipt, Dulwich College MSS 7, fol. 114r, ll. 1-14, purports to be written by Dekker, but is unsigned, and moreover contains a feature which would be highly unusual for someone writing his own Christian name, the abbreviation of Dekker's first name as 'Thom{a}s'. As well, the formation of the name 'Thomas Dekker' in the body of the unsigned entry is completely different from the formation of the name 'Thomas Dekker'

in any of the other three documents. The receipt has been transcribed by Foakes as follows:

*Quinto die Maij. 1602.
Bee it knowne vnto all men by
theis pnte that wee Anthony
Mundy50& Thomas Dekker 51 doe
owe vnto Phillip Hynchlay gent
the Some of five powndes of
lawfull money of England to bee
payd vnto him his executors or
assgnes vppon the xth of June
next ensuing the date hereof
In wittnes hereof herevnto
wee haue Sett or handes 52
dated this day & yere above
written
folio 114; transcribed Foakes 212*

For the reasons mentioned above, although the letter of 12 September 1616 appears to have been written by Dekker, none of the other documents can be firmly identified as being in Dekker's hand, and there is thus only one document which can legitimately be compared with the additions in Hand E found on fol. 13b of *The Play of Sir Thomas More*, of which a facsimile is provided by Greg in his 1911 edition of the play (see below). Since Greg omitted this document from consideration, and since it appears to be the only document verifiably written by Dekker, Greg's basis for identifying the Hand E additions as having been written by Dekker is far from clear.

References:

(1) Collier, John Payne, *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn, Founder of Dulwich College*, (London: Shakespeare Society, 1841), p. 186 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/memoirsEdwardal00collgoog#page/n194/mode/2up/>

(2) Freeman, Arthur and Janet Ing Freeman, *John Payne Collier: Scholarship and Forgery in the Nineteenth Century*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 346.

(3) Metz, Harold, 'Voice and credyt': The Scholars and *Sir Thomas More*', in Howard-Hill, T.H., ed., *Shakespeare and Sir Thomas More: Essays on the Play and its Shakespearian Interest*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 11-44 at p. 14:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=VK4iIx2bTbIC&pg=PA14>

(4) Tannenbaum, Samuel A., *Problems in Shakespeare's Penmanship*, (New York: The Century Co., 1927), pp. 17, 222.

(5) British Library Manuscript Catalogue entry for BL Add MS 30262 R at:

http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&doc=IAMS040-002021906&indx=7&recIds=IAMS040-002021906&recIdxs=6&elementId=6&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&dscnt=0&frbg=&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&tab=local&dstmp=1437944533755&srt=rank&mode=Basic&&dum=true&v1%28freeText0%29=Dekker&vid=IAMS_VU2

(6) Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project fol. 31r, ll. 16-21:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-7/031r.html>

(7) Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project, fol. 101r, ll. 1-7 at:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-7/101r.html>

(8) Henslowe-Alleyn Digitisation Project, fol. 114r, ll. 1-14 at:

<http://www.henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-7/114r.html>

(9) Greg, W.W., ed., *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, (Malone Society Reprints, 1911), pp. xiii-xiv at:

<https://archive.org/stream/bookofsirthomasm00brituoft#page/n43/mode/2up>

(10) The Hand E addition is transcribed by Greg on pp. 87-8 (superscripts not reproduced below):

<https://archive.org/stream/bookofsirthomasm00brituoft#page/86/mode/2up>

Morr : what ailst thou ? art thou mad now.

Faulk. mad now ? nayles yf losse of hayre Cannot mad a man —

what Can ? I am deposde : my Crowne is taken from mee

Moore had bin better a Scowrd More ditch, than a notcht

mee thus, does hee begin sheepe sharing with Iack Faulkner?

Morr : nay & you feede this veyne Sr, fare you well.

Falk : why fare well Frost. Ile goe hang my Selfe out for the —

poll head, make a Sarcen of lack ?

Morr: thou desperate knave, for that I See the divell,

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wholy getts hold of thee.

Falk : the divells a dambd rascall

Morr : I charge thee wayte on mee no more : no more,

call mee thy mr.

Falk : why then a word mr Morris.

Morr: Ile heare no wordes, Sr fare you well.

Falk : Sbloud farewell :

Morr : why doest thou follow [you] mee:

*Falk: because Ime an Asse, doe you sett yor shavets vpon mee, & then
cast mee off? must I condole? haue the fates playd the fooles
veepes. am I theire Cutt? Now the poore Sconce is taken, must Iack
march wth bag & baggage?* 230

Morr: you Coxcomb.

*Falk: nay you ha poacht mee, you ha given mee a hayre, its here
here.*

*Morr : Away you kynd [foole] Asse, come Sr, dry yor eyes,
keepe yor old place & mend theis fooleryes.*

*Falk : I care not to bee tournd off, and twere a ladder, so it bee in
my humor, or the fates becon to mee ; nay pray Sr, yf the destinyes
Spin mee a fyne thred, Falkner flyes another pitch : & to
avoyd the headach, hereafter before Ile bee a hayremonger Ile
bee a whoremonger. Exeu(* 240

MYTH: Hand D in The Play of Sir Thomas More is in the handwriting of William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby.

It is not. No document in the handwriting of William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby, exhibits the six distinctive features of Hand D noted above.

References:

(1) Rollett, John M., *William Stanley as Shakespeare: Evidence of Authorship by the Sixth Earl of Derby*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., 2015) at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=Fq8GCAAAQBAJ&pg=PR4>

(2) Facsimile of Hand D from the Wikipedia article on the play in which the foregoing six features are clearly visible:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Sir_Thomas_More_Hand_D.jpg

MYTH: Hand D in The Play of Sir Thomas More is in the handwriting of Sir Henry Neville.

It is not. No document in the handwriting of Sir Henry Neville exhibits the six distinctive features of Hand D:

1. initial straight upstrokes on many small letters such as 'm', 'w', 'v', 'r' and 'i'.
2. spurred 'a' (not invariable, but frequent).
3. large lower loops on the letter 'h' (in many cases those in the Hand D passage are significantly larger than those found in many other hands of the period).
4. a spiky flourish at the end of the letter 'f' in the words 'if' and 'of'.
5. a forward tail on small 'g' (not invariable, but frequent).
6. large tails on final 'y' (there appear to be only two examples of this, rendering it less significant than the first five characteristics).

References:

(1) Casson, John, 'Hand D: The Evidence for William Shakspeare and Henry Neville', 2012, 29 pp., available online in pdf format.

(2) Facsimile of Hand D from the Wikipedia article on the play in which the foregoing six features are clearly visible:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Sir_Thomas_More_Hand_D.jpg