INTRODUCTION

The suppression into the Kingdoms of Darkness of this Masterpiece, King Edward III, for more than two centuries, is simply in its way a *national* scandal, blot, and reproach. I repeat, another of the Incredible Facts! one of the most ridiculous, futile, humiliating things in literary history. But, O Shakespeare! even in thy death thou teachest us lessons. What is Fame? – and Merit?[1]

These are the words of the worthy German scholar Alexander Teetgen, in a booklet published in London in 1875 under the impressive title: *Shakespeare's 'King Edward the Third,' absurdly called, and scandalously treated as, a 'DOUBTFUL PLAY:' An Indignation Pamphlet*. He had come across it in Max Moltke's Tauchnitz edition of *Six Doubtful Plays of William Shakespeare* (1869), and in his enthusiasm for the discovery sent a copy to the Poet Laureate, Alfred Lord Tennyson, who was kind enough to reply: 'I have no doubt a good deal of it is Shakespeare's. You have given me a great treat.'[2] The suggestion that the anonymous play on *The Reign of King Edward the Third*, never reprinted since 1599, might have been Shakespeare's, was first advanced by Edward Capell when he provided a modern-spelling edition in 1760, but in the next hundred years or so it found support only in Germany, with the translations of the play included by Ludwig Tieck in his *Vier Schauspiele von Shakespeare* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1836) and by Ernst Ortlepp in *Nachträge zu Shakespeare's Werken* (vol. II, Stuttgart, 1840), while in England Henry Tyrrell reprinted it in the cautiously entitled collection *The Doubtful Plays of Shakespeare* (London, 1851). The attribution was firmly contested by another authoritative German scholar, Nicolaus Delius, when he re-edited Capell's text as the first of his *Pseudo-Shakesperesche Dramen* (Elberfeld, 1854), on which the Tauchnitz edition, known to Teetgen – and Tennyson – was based. But in 1874 John Payne Collier privately published 'King Edward III: a historical play by William Shakespeare. An essay in vindication of Shakespeare's authorship of the play', in which he confessed: 'I take shame to myself that I could omit, in both my editions of Shakespeare, such a grand contribution to the series of our English dramas as King Edward III.' And he made amends by including Capell's text in the third volume of *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, privately printed in 1878.

Both Collier's vindication, and Teetgen's extravagant and peremptory claim of the whole 'Masterpiece' for Shakespeare, seemed to raise more misgivings than approval in the most serious scholars and editors of the play. F. J. Furnivall denied Shakespeare's authorship when he reprinted Delius's edition in the Leopold Shakespeare (London, 1877), and, more seriously, Karl Warnke and Ludwig Proescholdt, in pro-

[1] Alexander Teetgen, *Shakespeare's 'King Edward the Third'* (1875), p. 17.
[2] Teetgen, p. 20.

viding the first critical old-spelling edition of *King Edward III* as volume III of their *Pseudo-Shakespearian Plays* (Halle, 1886), after discussing at length F. G. Fleay's theory (which was to find ample credit in later times) of double authorship, attributing to Shakespeare only the first two acts of the play,[1] came to the conclusion that 'Neither is it established that two authors have been at work in the composition of our play, nor is there any reason for supposing Shakespeare to have written part of the play.'

The ban of *Edward III* from the Shakespeare canon was confirmed by C. F. Tucker Brooke's denial that any part of *Edward III* could be by Shakespeare (suggesting instead George Peele as its sole author), when he reprinted it as the third of the fourteen plays included in his collection *The Shakespeare Apocrypha* (1908), destined to remain for a long time the most authoritative pronouncement on the 'doubtful' or 'disputed' plays. By now Brooke's attribution of the play to Peele is as much discredited as his contention that *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is the result of a collaboration not between Shakespeare and Fletcher but between Fletcher and Massinger, and since then a growing body of critics, scholars, and editors has recognised the presence in varying measure of Shakespeare's hand in the play.[2] The ban on *Edward III* has not been lifted, however, while from 1966 onwards *Kinsmen* has been included in all editions of Shakespeare's Complete Plays,[3] albeit it is acknowledged that it is by no means all his own work.

Edward III has appeared separately (ed. G. C. Moore Smith for the *Temple Dramatists*, 1897, J. S. Farmer for the Tudor Facsimile Texts, 1910, F. Lapides for the Garland Renaissance Drama Series, 1980, G. Parfitt for the Nottingham Drama Series, 1986), or in variously named collections: *Shakespeare's Doubtful Plays* (A. F. Hopkinson, 1891), *English History Plays* (Thomas Donovan, 1896 and 1911), *Three Elizabethan Plays* (J. Winny, 1959), *Six Early Plays Related to the Shakespeare Canon* (R. L. Armstrong for E. B. Everitt, 1965), *Elizabethan History Plays* (W. A. Armstrong, 1965), *Disputed Plays of William Shakespeare* (W. Kozlenko, 1974). The 'apocryphal' label is hard to remove, and the caution of the most recent Oxford editors is emblematic – as Gary Taylor puts it,[4] 'if we had attempted a thorough reinvestigation of candidates for inclusion in the early dramatic canon, it would have begun with *Edward III*'.

[1] Fleay had put forward the hypothesis of double authorship at first in *The Academy*, 25 April 1874, 461 ff., and then in his *Shakespeare Manual* (1878), pp. 303 ff.

[2] The most recent scholarly works providing convincing evidence in support of this attitude are those of Fred Lapides (Introduction to his critical, old-spelling edition of the play, 1980, pp. 3–31), Richard Proudfoot ('*The Reign of King Edward the third* (1596) and Shakespeare', *PBA*, 71 (1985), 169–85), Eliot Slater (*The Problem of 'The Reign of King Edward III': A Statistical Approach*, 1988), G. Harold Metz (*Sources of Four Plays Ascribed to Shakespeare*, 1989, pp. 7–20), M. W. A. Smith ('The authorship of *The Raigne of King Edward the Third*', *L&LC* 6 (1991), 166–75), and Jonathan Hope (*The Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays*, 1994, pp. 133–7).

[3] See *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. Clifford Leech (Signet Shakespeare, 1966); ed. G. Blakemore Evans (*Riverside*, 1974); ed. N. W. Bawcutt (New Penguin Shakespeare, 1977); ed. W. Montgomery *et al.* (Oxford *Complete Works*, 1986); ed. E. M. Waith (Oxford Shakespeare, 1989).

[4] Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, with William Montgomery and John Jowett, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*, 1987, p. 137. According to Eric Sams, *The Real Shakespeare. Retrieving the Early Years 1564–1594*, 1995, pp. 101, 111, 117 etc., in an interview reported in *Shakespeare Newsletter*, 2 (1990). 28, Wells and Taylor seem now to accept *Edward III* as 'Shakespeare's work in its entirety'.

The inclusion of *Edward III* in the New Cambridge Shakespeare – its first appearance in a multi-volume edition of Shakespeare's works – is not a recognition of Teetgen's or Collier's sweeping claims. The play is perhaps no 'Masterpiece', though no worse than many history plays of the time, and probably Shakespeare is not its sole author. But several of the plays in the Folio, both early and late, from *1 Henry VI* to *Henry VIII*, are also the result of more or less openly acknowledged collaboration. The omission of *Edward III*, though the play had been in print since 1596, from Francis Meres's list of twelve of Shakespeare's plays compiled in 1598, does not by itself confine it to the 'apocrypha': Meres ignored also the three parts of *Henry VI* – plays written and performed before 1594 with which *Edward III* has the closest formal affinities. On the strength of their inclusion in the 1623 Folio, they are received in the canon, though Shakespeare's sole authorship of at least the first of them is more than questionable. The reasons for the omission of *Edward III* from the Folio will be discussed in the section of this Introduction on 'Authorship'. The fact is that *Edward III* is the natural prelude to the second Shakespearean historical cycle, from *Richard II* to *Henry V*. Since, in Richard Proudfoot's words,[1] it is also 'the sole remaining doubtful play which continues, on substantial grounds, to win the support of serious investigators as arguably the work of Shakespeare', *Edward III* has as much right to 'canonic rank' as the earliest Folio Histories.

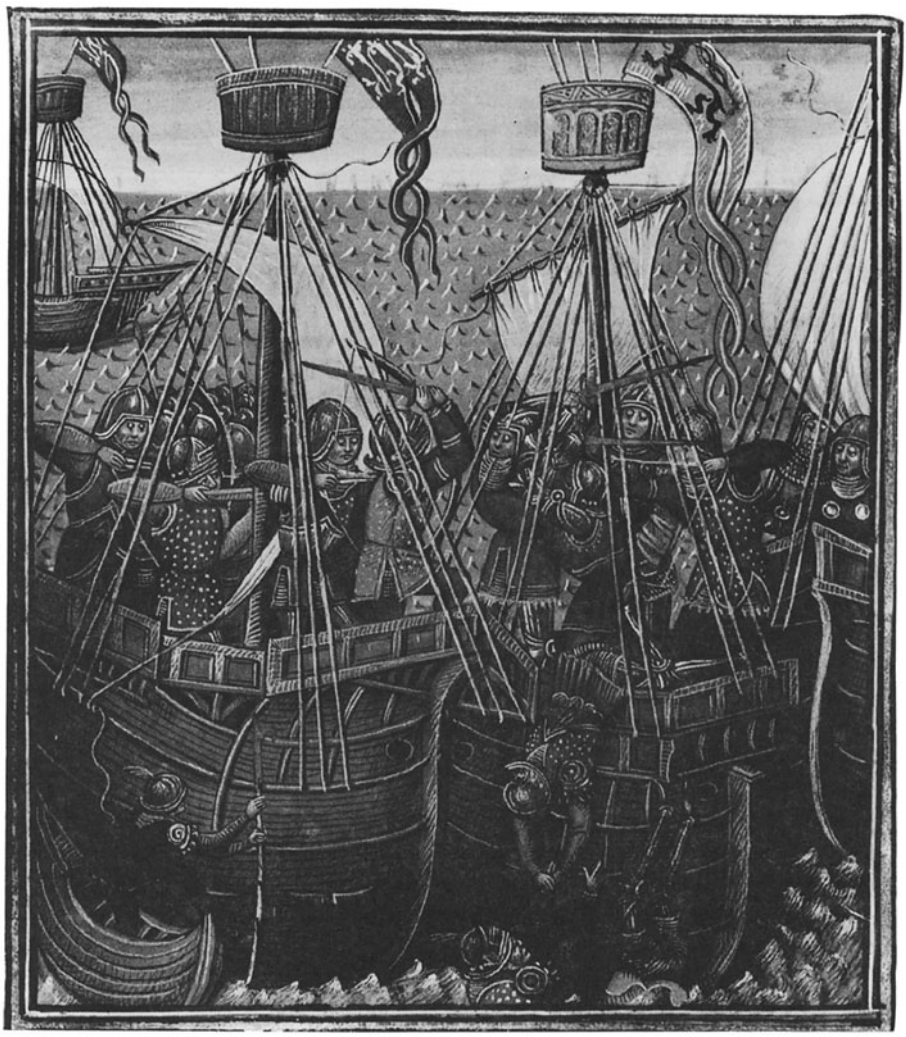
Date and destination

Cuthbert Burby entered (1 December 1595) on the Stationers' Register 'A book Intitled Edward the Third and the blacke prince their warres wth kinge Iohn of Fraunce'. The title-page of the first quarto, 'printed for Cuthbert Burby' in 1596, reads: THE RAIGNE OF KING EDVVARD the third: *As it hath bin sundrie times plaied about the Citie of London*. The only information conveyed by the registration and the title-page is that the play existed and had been performed before the end of 1595. When and by whom? The vagueness of the expression 'sundrie times plaied about the Citie of London',[2] used by Burby also in the case of *A Knack to Know an Honest Man*, entered in the Register only five days before *Edward III*, suggests one of two things: either the publication of the plays was not authorised by the company owning them;[3] or they were at the time temporarily derelict, i.e. the company which had performed them was no longer in existence, and no other claim had as yet been put forward for them. This is the most likely explanation in view of the date, 1595, not long after the

[1] Proudfoot, p. 185.

[2] Proudfoot (p. 162) remarks on the ambiguity of the preposition 'about'. It probably means not 'within' the City limits, but outside, where the three public playhouses (Theatre, Curtain, and Rose) used by the main acting companies were located. On the other hand, the fact that it had been performed 'sundrie times' seems to rule out the possibility that the play had been presented only privately.

[3] This may well be the case with *A Knack*, known to have been performed by the Admiral's Men on 22 October 1594. Burby was probably equivocating on the confusion with the title of its predecessor, *A Knack to Know a Knave*, performed on 10 June 1592, a day or two before the closing of the theatres because of the plague, which was published in 1594 as 'sundry times played by Ed. Allen [Alleyn] and his Companie', that is, Lord Strange's Men, a company no longer active in 1595.



1 A battle at sea, illustration in a manuscript copy (now in the British Library) of Jean de Wavrin's *Cronique d'Angleterre*, made at Bruges for Edward IV (1461–83)

end of the plague that had repeatedly caused the closure of playhouses between June 1592 and the middle of 1594, the consequent disruption of most theatre companies, and the dispersal of their play-books.[1] It can safely be assumed therefore that *Edward III*, derelict in 1595, had been performed by one of the disbanded companies before

[1] Two other plays, registered in this period (14 May 1594) though performed in earlier times, carried when published evasive formulas on their title-pages, with no indication of acting company: Greene's *James IV* (1598, 'sundry times publikely plaied'), and Peele's *David and Bethsabe* (1599, 'divers times plaied on the stage'). *Mucedorus*, not entered in the Stationers' Register, was published in 1598 as acted 'in the honorable Cittie of London'.

1594. On the other hand, the epic description in 3.1 of the English naval victory off Sluys in 1340 deliberately evokes the recent defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The author or authors relied for several details on the celebrative literature of the event published in the following years,[1] and this probably places the composition of the play after 1590, when the most impressive reports of the Armada appeared in print.

1590 and 1594 are the unquestionable limits of composition. Any attempt at narrowing them must rely on internal evidence. The parallels with the Sonnets particularly evident in 2.1 and the mention of Roman Lucrece at 2.2.192–5, which suggested to Chambers 'a date in 1594–1595',[2] and to Kenneth Muir 'after 1593',[3] are inconclusive: the Lucrece theme runs through the whole of Shakespeare's work,[4] and the allusion is in the most surely Shakespearean part of the play. It is to the same part that Østerberg refers in giving on stylistic grounds 1592–4 as the date.[5] The closing of the theatres caused by the plague in June 1592 cannot be assumed as a terminus, since performances took place in or 'about' London for short periods during the epidemics. MacDonald Jackson, finding echoes of *Edward III* in the two parts of the *Contention between the two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, which are considered reported texts of *2* and *3 Henry VI*, 'constructed by some of Pembroke's Men upon the collapse of that company in the summer of 1593',[6] argues for an early date, and tends to agree with Wentersdorf who, on the basis of the topical allusions to the Armada, thinks that '*Edward III* was written . . . about 1589–90'.[7] Here is a double fallacy: the reports of the Armada, dating from 1590, were not necessarily echoed in the play in the year of their publication, and, as Jackson himself acknowledges, the reported texts of the two plays, published in 1594 and 1595 respectively, cannot have been compiled before 1593 (and more likely, shortly before their publication). This makes 1592 or early 1593 as possible a date as any for the performance of *The Raigne of King Edward the third* 'about the Citie of London'.[8]

[1] See the section 'From sources to structure'.
[2] E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, 1930, I, 517.
[3] K. Muir, *Shakespeare as Collaborator*, 1960, p. 39.
[4] G. Melchiori, *Shakespeare's Garter Plays. 'Edward III' to 'Merry Wives of Windsor'*, 1994, pp. 131–2.
[5] V. Østerberg, 'The "Countess scenes" of *Edward III*', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 65 (1929), 49–91.
[6] MacD. P. Jackson, '*Edward III*, Shakespeare, and Pembroke's Men', *N&Q* 210 (1965), 329–31.
[7] Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The date of *Edward III*', *SQ* 16 (1965), 227–31. Jackson does not refer to this paper, published after his note, but to Wentersdorf's unpublished thesis on 'The authorship of "Edward III"' presented at the University of Cincinnati in 1960, from which the paper was extracted.
[8] A later date not only for the performance but also for the writing of the play is proposed by Roger Prior, who some time ago ('The date of *Edward III*', *N&Q* 235 (1990), 178–80), in view of some topical allusions, had argued that 'the play was written after June 1593', or rather, since the theatres were closed at the time and reopened only from 28 December 1593 till 5 February 1594, and then from 4 June 1594 on, either 'in the six weeks at the beginning of the year [1594]' or after June of the same year. The discovery of marginal annotations in the hand of Henry Carey Lord Hunsdon, the Lord Chamberlain from 1585, in his copy of the 1513 French edition of Froissart, has induced Prior, in a new closely argued paper ('Was *The Raigne of King Edward III* a compliment to Lord Hunsdon?', *Connotations* 3 (1993–4) 242–64) to suggest that '*Edward III* was written as a deliberate compliment to Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon . . . and that it was performed before him and his family in 1594 by the actors whom he took into his service in that year, the company commonly known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men.' The suggestion is attractive, but I find it hard to believe that a play which went through more than one stage of elaboration (see the section 'The genesis of *Edward III*') could have been written in so short a time.

The most interesting aspect of Jackson's contribution is his claim, recently strongly supported by Proudfoot,[1] that *Edward III* must be added to the scanty repertory of the Earl of Pembroke's Men. Little is known of this company, first heard of as active in Leicester in 1592, when the London playhouses were shut. Surprisingly, Pembroke's Men presented two plays at court in the Christmas season 1592–3, but by September 1593, upon returning from another provincial tour, they were so impoverished that they had to pawn their playing apparel,[2] and they are heard of no more,[3] except for the appearance of their name on the title-pages of: Marlowe's *Edward II*, registered 6 July 1593, published 1594; *Titus Andronicus*, registered 6 February 1594, published 1594; *The Taming of A Shrew*, registered 2 May 1594, published 1594; *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, published 1595, but not registered separately because it was the sequel of *The First Part of the Contention between the two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, which had been entered on 12 March 1594 and published the same year with no indication of acting company. The dates of registration and publication of the five plays are a sure sign that in 1593 the company was disbanded and had variously disposed of its playscripts. The two parts of the *Contention* and *A Shrew* are now considered memorial reconstructions of perhaps reduced versions of *2* and *3 Henry VI* and of an earlier version of *The Taming of the Shrew* respectively.[4] Taking them together with *Titus*, the association of Shakespeare, at some stage, with Pembroke's Men is undeniable.

Other unassigned plays were thought to have been acted by Pembroke's: at first, on stylistic grounds, *Arden of Feversham, Soliman and Perseda, Massacre at Paris*,[5] then, in view of the state of the early quartos, *Spanish Tragedy, Richard III, Romeo and Juliet*, as well as *1 Henry VI*, though the last is known only in the Folio version.[6] Twelve plays seem too large a repertory for so short-lived a company. In an attempt to antedate its origin, A. C. Cairncross wrote:

> Pembroke's, *under whatever name or with whatever organization*, existed before 1592, probably as early as 1589, and . . . it was then Shakespeare's company, as it was, for a time at least, Kyd's and Marlowe's [my italics].[7]

[1] Proudfoot, pp. 181–3.
[2] *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert, 1961, p. 280.
[3] As Chambers suggests (*The Elizabethan, Stage*, 1923, II, 131), the Earl of Pembroke's Men who had an engagement at the Swan in 1597 must have been a temporary offshoot of the Chamberlain's Men.
[4] For the two histories see Madeleine Doran, 'Henry VI, Parts II and III', *University of Iowa Humanistic Studies*, 4.4 (1928), and Peter Alexander, *Shakespeare's Henry VI and Richard III*, 1929. For *A Shrew* Peter Alexander in *TLS*, 16 September 1926, and Richard Hosley, 'Sources and analogues of *The Taming of the Shrew*', *HLQ* 27 (1964), 289–308; but compare G. I. Duthie, '*The Taming of a Shrew* and *The Taming of the Shrew*', *RES* 19 (1942), 337–56. Recently, though, the idea of 'bad' quartos and 'memorial reconstructions' has been hotly contested: for instance *A Shrew* has been published by G. Holderness and B. Loughrey (1993) as an early Shakespearean version of the play, and Eric Sams has devoted several chapters of his book (1995) to providing 'evidence' that *A Shrew* and *Contention* are Shakespeare's original works (Sams, pp. 136–45 and 154–62), and to demolishing the very notion of memorial reconstruction (ch. 31, pp. 173–9).
[5] Hart, *Stolne and Surreptitious Copies*, 1942, pp. 389–90.
[6] A. C. Cairncross, 'Pembroke's Men and some Shakespearean piracies', *SQ* 9 (1960) 335–49.
[7] Cairncross, p. 344.

There is no evidence for the existence of Pembroke's Men under that or another name before 1592. The largest acting companies equipped to stage full-scale history plays in the late eighties and early nineties were the Admiral's, the Queen's, and Lord Strange's Men. Leaving aside the Admiral's Men, who one way or another managed to weather the plague years and to survive into the next century, the June 1592 crisis played havoc not only with the Queen's own players, replaced at court in the 1592–3 Christmas season by Pembroke's Men, but also with Lord Strange's, who had petitioned the Privy Council in July to be allowed to play in town to avoid 'division and separation' inside the company.[1] It has been suggested that Pembroke's Men emerged as a result of a split that took place some time earlier in the Queen's company,[2] but Scott McMillin, examining casting and doubling patterns in the *Contention* plays and *A Shrew*, as well as the names of actors appearing in them, compared with those that figure in the plot of *2 The Seven Deadly Sins* (performed by Lord Strange's Men about 1590), demonstrated that Pembroke's Men were the result of a split during the plague years in Lord Strange's Men,[3] the very 'division and separation' Strange's Men feared in July. It must have been a reduced company that was finally allowed to play at the Rose during the intermission of the plague between 29 December 1592 and 1 February 1593, when they revived *1 Henry VI*, which they had first presented in the same theatre on 3 March 1592, performing it no less than thirteen times before the closing of the playhouses in mid-June.[4] It can be concluded that *2* and *3 Henry VI* as well as the other three plays bearing the name of the Pembroke's Men on their title-pages had been staged in previous years by Lord Strange's Men, and were taken over by the new formation when the plague caused a division of the company. This is made obvious by the title-page of *Titus Andronicus* (Q1, 1594), 'As it was Plaide by the Right Honourable the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembrooke, and Earle of Sussex their Seruants': the play was first performed by Strange's (in 1593 Ferdinando Lord Strange had acquired the title of Earl of Derby) and then by Pembroke's Men; when both companies collapsed and the plays became temporarily derelict, a minor company, Sussex's Men, were able to play 'Titus & ondronicus' in a Henslowe playhouse on 24 January 1594. Signifi-

[1] Chambers, *Stage*, II, 311–12.

[2] G. M. Pinciss, 'Shakespeare, Her Majesty's Players and Pembroke's Men', *S.Sur.* 27 (1974), 129–36, placing the split around 1590–1. The opinion that Pembroke's were an offshoot of the Queen's Men is shared by Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The origin and personnel of the Pembroke Company', *TRI* 5 (1989–90), 45–68.

[3] Scott McMillin, 'Casting for Pembroke's Men: the *Henry VI* quartos and *The Taming of a Shrew*', *SQ* 23 (1976), 141–59. See p. 158: 'It very much appears that the *Sins* plot represents a large company from about 1590 which a year or two later divided into two groups: one group carried Strange's name and included such established members of the large company as Alleyn, Brian, Phillips, Pope, and Cowley; the other group, gaining new patronage from the Earl of Pembroke, included the younger elements of the large company – the nine actors whose names are shared between the Pembroke plays and the plot.' Also Mary Edmond ('Pembroke's Men', *RES* 25 (1974), 129–36), in the wake of Chambers, *Shakespeare*, I, 49, had seen Pembroke's Men as a splinter of Strange's Men. This opinion is shared by David George, 'Shakespeare and Pembroke's Men', *SQ* 32 (1981), 305–23, who goes on to argue that, after the dissolution of the company in 1593, some Pembroke actors joined Derby's Men, others Sussex's Men, and possibly for a time, in 1594, the three companies counted as one.

[4] See Michael Hattaway, ed., *The First Part of King Henry VI* (New Cambridge Shakespeare, 1990), pp. 36–8.

cantly, these Pembroke plays entered the repertory of the Chamberlain's/King's Men, who were joined at the same time by most of the actors who are known to have belonged either to Pembroke's or to Lord Strange's Men – or to both.[1]

What is the connection of *Edward III* with either or both companies, apart from the unquestionable fact that Shakespeare had been associated with them, and the more questionable one that he was at least part-author of the play? And how would such a connection, if it exists, affect the dating of the play? That all the 'Pembroke plays' are pre-plague plays, originally destined for performance in regular London playhouses, is proved by their large cast and staging requirements, with particular attention to the use of extended platforms for crowd, court, and battle scenes, of at least two 'doors' and of an upper stage – the first act of *Titus*, for instance, loses all meaning unless it is played on two levels. Original stage directions repeatedly stipulate these theatrical needs.

Not so in *Edward III*. The last scene (5.1.187–end) demands a maximum of ten adult actors and a boy, plus possibly a few mute extras ('soldiers').[2] In the rest of the play no more than seven actors are ever present at the same time on the stage, except for 3.3.46–178, when ten (plus 'soldiers') are required. In all cases ample scope is given for doubling, and there is an unusual restraint in the presentation of battle scenes: no fighting on stage, apart from the brief 'crossing of the stage' at the beginning of 3.4;[3] a variety of sound effects must serve to suggest battles described by outside observers. A. R. Braunmuller remarks[4] that a famous earlier play, *Tamburlaine*, also 'relies on sound effects for its battles, which are never represented before us'. The authors of *Edward III* may have learnt their technique from it, when uncertain of the availability of regular playhouses for their play.

Still more surprising, in *Edward III* there is a siege (Calais, 4.2) with no mention of walls or gates, and no use of the upper stage, a regular feature of numberless similar scenes in other history plays for the public stage. The 'six poor Frenchmen' enter apparently unnoticed from the side (see 6 SD n.), and even the Captain of Calais

[1] McMillin, 'Casting', p. 159. Like the Oxford editors (*Textual Companion*, p. 113) I am 'unpersuaded' by David George's argument (George, pp. 315–23) that the title-page of *Titus* does not refer to three companies acting the play in succession, but to a single company which, in 1594, included actors from all three (see p. 7, n. 3) – an argument on which Jonathan Bate, in the Introduction to his edition of *Titus Andronicus* (Arden 3, 1995, pp. 74–9), bases his view that *Titus* 'was written in late 1593', but which does not substantially affect the question of the original destination of *Edward III*, a play not mentioned by George.

[2] They are King Edward, Queen Philippa (a boy-actor), and Derby, present from the beginning, Copland and King David of Scotland, entering at 63, Salisbury, entering at 96, Prince Edward, King John of France, his son Philip, Audley, and Artois (the last three do not speak), entering at 186. The exit for the six citizens of Calais, who entered at 7, is clearly marked at 59, and, though no exit is marked in the text, the Herald entering at 175 is no longer needed on stage after 186. The figures of '21+' adults and 4/5 boys suggested by David Bradley (*From Text to Performance in the Elizabethan Theatre*, 1992, p. 232) for the cast of *Edward III* are overestimated. Proudfoot (pp. 162–3), though maintaining that the play was meant for a large company requiring 'a properly equipped playhouse', remarks that the absence from the last scene, where he should have appeared, of Prince Charles of France is due to the actor doubling for King David.

[3] *Alarum. Enter a many French men flying. After them Prince Edward running. Then enter King Iohn and Duke of Loraine.* (Q1, sig. F3v).

[4] Private communication.

negotiating the surrender does not speak from the wall or enter through a town-gate, but slips in quietly from an unstated direction. The same is true of the scene of the surrender (5.1.1–59), where, in the 1596 quarto, the entrance of *sixe Citizens in their Shirts, bare foote, with halters about their necks* is placed at the beginning, before that of Edward, his queen, Derby, and soldiers.

In one case, nonetheless, the use of the upper stage seems inescapable – when, at 1.2, the Countess of Salisbury, from the battlements or windows of her castle, overhears the talk of the besieging Scots, welcomes her 'cousin' Montague (who exclaims: 'we are not Scots, / Why do you shut your gates against your friends?') and finally descends to 'show her duty' at the arrival of King Edward who has come to her rescue. Neither quarto indicates in stage directions that she is 'above', or on the walls or at the window. And when at 87 Montague invites her to 'descend and gratulate his highness' who is about to arrive, there is no direction for her exit from above; instead, a few lines later (93), the direction 'Enter Countess', with which the scene had begun, is repeated. It looks as if the author of this passage is particularly wary of providing directions indicating specific stage requirements. This is consistent with the idea, developed in a later section of this Introduction, that the 'Countess scenes' replace an earlier treatment of the episode which perhaps did not present such requirements.[1]

In conclusion: the devisers of the play for Pembroke's or Lord Strange's Men were not sure that its performance could enjoy the stage facilities offered by the Rose or the other regular theatres, which had been instead freely exploited, for instance, in *Titus Andronicus* and in the *Henry VI* plays. *Edward III* is the only major history written while keeping in mind that it might have to be played outside the London playhouses. Its date cannot be other than late 1592–early 1593.[2]

Authorship

The main argument against the inclusion of *The Reign of Edward the Third, King of England* in what has become known as the Shakespeare canon is its absence from all the seventeenth-century Folio editions. Justifications have been found for the omission of

[1] Roger Prior ('Compliment', p. 260) takes a different view. Arguing for May or June 1594 as the date of composition of *Edward III* Prior concludes: 'Its first performance would presumably have been a private one, given before an audience composed of Hunsdon, his family and friends. Yet it was clearly also designed to be acted in a public theater, and, according to the title-page, was so acted.' Uncertainty about the destination of the play, rather than the fact that it had 'to be written quickly' for a specific occasion, seems a better reason for the lack of staging directions. Besides, when Prior remarks 'hasty writing may be one explanation for the play's uneven quality', he ignores the question of multiple authorship and of the belated replacement of the Countess scenes (see especially 'The final version of the Countess scenes' below).

[2] It is perhaps no mere coincidence that the other play of multiple authorship to which Shakespeare contributed at least one very remarkable 'addition', was most probably written exactly at this time. As Scott McMillin remarks (*The Elizabethan Theatre and 'The Book of Sir Thomas More'*, 1987, p. 72), 'I would say that *Sir Thomas More* was originally written for Strange's Men between the summer of 1592 and the summer of 1593.' Further evidence for a date 'before 1593' has been recently provided by W. Godshalk ('Dating Edward III', *N&Q* 240 (1995), 299–300), who noted that Thomas Deloney's ballad 'Of King *Edward* the third, and the faire Countesse of *Salisbury*', largely based on the play, was included in *The Garland of good Will*, entered in the Stationers' Register on 5 March 1593.

the two other plays which generally figure in the most recent editions of the collected plays, though they had been overlooked by Heminges and Condell when in 1623 they offered to 'the great variety of readers' the writings of their friend and fellow. Of *Pericles*, already in print in a form obviously 'maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors', they could not secure a text answering their intention of presenting the plays 'cured and perfect of their limbs'; *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, on the other hand, could be claimed by John Fletcher, the surviving co-author. Neither argument holds for *Edward III*. The anonymous printings of 1596 and 1599 were reasonably correct by current standards, and no other dramatist laid claim to the play.

What is surprising about *Edward III* is the total lack of any mention or reference to it from its second publication in 1599 until nearly sixty years later,[1] in 1656, when the booksellers Richard Rogers and William Ley, in 'An exact and perfect Catalogue of all the Playes that are Printed' appended to their edition of Thomas Goff's *The Careless Shepherdess*, listed *Edward II*, *Edward III*, and *Edward IV*, as works of William Shakespeare. The arbitrariness of the attribution is self-evident not only because the other two Edward plays are by Marlowe and Heywood respectively, but also because a similar catalogue of plays in stock published the same year by the more reliable bookseller Edward Archer contains the title of the play with no mention of the author, and the same happens with the lists of plays in print compiled by Francis Kirkman in 1661 and 1671.

Edward Capell first associated the play with the name of Shakespeare more than a century and a half later. In his *Prolusions; or, select pieces of Antient Poetry* (1760) he, though acknowledging that the external evidence for an attribution to Shakespeare was less than slight, provided the first modern edition of the text so as to enable readers to confirm or reject his attribution on stylistic and other grounds.[2] The arguments in favour or against it put forward by a large number of scholars in the following centuries are carefully examined by Harold Metz, and his conclusions deserve attention:

> The evidence adduced by such leading critics as Chambers, Muir, and Proudfoot makes clear that Shakespeare is the playwright of at least scenes 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, and 4.4, and the convincing arguments set forth by these and other sound scholars concerning Shakespearean structural, lexical, and imagistic elements elsewhere in the play establish the likelihood that his hand is present in scenes other than those four. The hypothesis that he wrote the entire play may be questionable, but it cannot be completely ruled out . . . On balance, though, it would appear that the traces of his work in the second half of the play, except for 4.4, which fired his imagination, are not quite sufficient as a basis for the claim that he is the sole author of *Edward III*.[3]

[1] In 1610 it was included by Sir John Harington in the catalogue of the plays in his collection, where only titles are given, with no indication of authors. The catalogue and the booksellers' lists mentioned here are reproduced in Greg, *A Bibliography of English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, III.1306–62.

[2] Capell, *Prolusions; or, select pieces of Antient Poetry. Part II. Edward the third, an historical Play* (1760), x: 'But after all, it must be confess'd that it's being his [Shakespeare's] work is conjecture only, and matter of opinion; and the reader must form one of his own, guided by what is now before him, and by what he shall meet with in perusal of the piece itself.'

[3] Metz, pp. 6–20.