

## Was *The Raigne of King Edward III* a Compliment to Lord Hunsdon?

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The anonymous play *The Raigne of King Edward the Third* was entered in the Stationers' Register on 1 December 1595 and first published in the following year.<sup>1</sup> It owes what fame it has to the increasingly popular theory that Shakespeare wrote all or part of it.<sup>2</sup> Many critics have believed that he wrote the scenes in which King Edward tries to seduce the reluctant Countess of Salisbury, but recent work has tended to stress the unity of the play, and to conclude that if Shakespeare wrote the Countess scenes he probably wrote the whole play, despite its uneven quality.<sup>3</sup>

Although I agree that Shakespeare did write all or most of *Edward III*, this paper is not primarily concerned with the question of authorship. It suggests that *Edward III* was written as a deliberate compliment to Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, Elizabeth's cousin and Lord Chamberlain from 1585, 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. This theory is based on two kinds of evidence. First, I shall show that the author of *Edward III* must have known Hunsdon personally, had access to his library, and used his privileged knowledge in the writing of the play. Secondly, I argue that *Edward III* contains specific references to Hunsdon's interests; it flatters him both by referring more or less directly to his achievements and by providing support for his views.

One of Hunsdon's interests was in fact the reign of Edward III itself. He left the evidence for this in his own copy of Froissart's *Chroniques*, which is preserved in the British Library.<sup>4</sup> Thanks to this fortunate survival we know that the principal source for *Edward III* was also one of Hunsdon's most valued and consulted books. He used it rather as

a family bible, for on a blank leaf he recorded the births of his children—the time of birth, the place, and the names of their godparents. Moreover on some pages in the first Book he underlined short sections of the text and added comments in the margin. The margins were later cropped, with the result that a few letters are missing from some of the annotations. There is no doubt that these notes are in Hunsdon's own hand, and it is certain, from the firm and elegant character of the hand, that Hunsdon wrote them long before his old age and hence long before the composition of *Edward III*. They show, first of all, that the dramatist and Lord Hunsdon were both interested in the same historical events and had read about them in the same chapters of Froissart. No other dramatist depicted these events in any extant play. Froissart's *Chronicles* is a very long work, but both dramatist and patron were concerned with the same small section of it. The overlap is not exact, but it is extraordinarily close. Hunsdon begins his annotation of Froissart at Chapter 24; in the same chapter the dramatist starts to borrow consistently and heavily from Berners' translation.<sup>5</sup> The only chapter that he uses earlier than this is Chapter 5. Hunsdon's notes end at Chapter 123, while the dramatist continues to borrow from another fifty chapters. Thus the dramatist read all the chapters that Hunsdon annotated, and borrowed from many of them. Hunsdon did not annotate the accounts of Crécy and Poitiers, which are important in the play, but it is hard to believe that he did not go on to read Froissart's account of these battles, either in the original or in Berners' translation.

The marginal notes vary in importance. Some consist of a word or two, and are little more than signposts, but others are longer and indicate a greater interest. When we compare these longer annotations with *Edward III* we find again and again that what Hunsdon thought worth recording is reflected in the play. What makes these parallels especially significant is that both Hunsdon and the dramatist are highly selective in their use of Froissart. In fifty chapters of Froissart, for example, Hunsdon may make as few as ten marginal notes, and the dramatist, of course, is equally selective, or more so.

The fact that the play seems to echo so many of Hunsdon's annotations leads to the natural conclusion that the dramatist had read them, and we shall later see conclusive proof that this was the case. More, he must

have had Hunsdon's own copy of Froissart's *Chronicles* before him as he wrote. As he read the annotations, he sometimes chose Hunsdon's words in preference to those that he found in Berners' translation of Froissart.

What are the main parallels between Hunsdon's annotations and the play? Hunsdon notes: "kyng edward cales hymself kyng of france" (fol. xxxi *recto*), and the same point is made in the first scene of the play. Even more striking is the note: "Homage dune by kyng edward too kyng phillip of france" (xvii *recto*). This occurred long before the events depicted in the play, and there is no reason why the dramatist should make use of it. Nevertheless he does so, and departs from Froissart in the process, since he makes Edward's refusal to do homage part of his declaration of war (I.i.60: "do him lowly homage"). Nor is there any particular reason why the dramatist should mention that "the Emperor . . . makes our king lieutenant general" (II.ii.8, 10). But again Hunsdon notes: "kyng edward m[ade] ye emperors vi[car] general and ly[eute]nant of ye empire" (xxv *recto*). Hunsdon comments on the sea battles, including the battle of Sluys; the dramatist shows us this battle in detail. Hunsdon, like the dramatist, is interested in the Earl of Salisbury, and notes that he was taken prisoner (xxxv *recto*). The dramatist describes this incident, and returns to it several times. Elsewhere Hunsdon writes: "[ki]ng edwardes [la]ndying yn nor[m]andy" (lxxxii *verso*). Berners does not use the word *landing* in this context, but in the play Edward twice refers to "my (our) *landing*" (III.iii.15, 89; *my* italics).

But most remarkable of all is the fact that Hunsdon takes an especial interest in the Scottish siege of Salisbury's castle, an incident which the dramatist not only included but, as we shall see, seems to have designed with Hunsdon in mind. Hunsdon notes in the preliminary sack of Durham: "[y]e towne of duram [ta]ken and burnt [a]nd man woman chylde kylde" (liii *verso*). Here the dramatist seems to echo three of Hunsdon's words—*towne*, *taken* and *burnt*—and he uses them in the same context: "or *take* truce; / But *burne* their neighbor *townes*" (I.ii.23-24, *my* italics). In Berners (Chapter 75) Durham is always correctly referred to as a *city*, never a *town*. Hunsdon then writes: "Salsbery beseg[ed]" (liiii *recto*), and over the page "[y]e skots remoude yer sege" (liiii *verso*). He does not always note the names of participants, but on this occasion

he picks out for mention a man who plays an important rôle in this section of the play, Sir William Montague, the messenger between the Countess of Salisbury and the King. Finally Hunsdon shows his interest in the principal subject of the next act. He writes: "The kyng fell in love wythe the countes of Salsb[ury]" (lv *recto*).

Besides these shared areas of interest there is conclusive evidence that the dramatist had seen the marginal notes, and that he had Hunsdon's copy of Froissart before him as he wrote. We have already noticed that from time to time the play seems to echo Hunsdon's words. Another verbal parallel occurs on folio xxvi *verso*, where Hunsdon noted "[so]luthamton [sp]oylde." With this we may compare the dramatist's "Newcastle spoyle" (I.i.128); *spoiled* is not in Berners. The dramatist's attention was particularly caught by an unusually long note about Sir William Montague: "Wyllyam Montageu and xl wythe hym overthreue ic skots and tooke vixx horsys laden wt iuels and uthar stufe" (liii *verso*). From this note the dramatist borrowed several words, including *jewels*, which does not occur in Berners' translation.

*Douglas*. Why then, my liege, let me enioy her *iewels*. (I.ii.45, my italics)

The dramatist invented this dialogue between the Scottish King David and Douglas, in which they argue about which of them shall have the Countess's jewels when they capture her castle. Berners has nothing about the Scots stealing jewels, but it is clearly implied in Hunsdon's note.

The final verbal parallel is too long and complex to be explained by chance, and can only be a borrowing by the dramatist. The *verso* page of folio liii has two marginal notes, both already quoted; first, that recording the sack of Durham, and then, at the foot, the comment on William Montague. The facing page, folio liiii *recto*, has one note, "Salsbery beseg[ed]," and the *verso* page also has one: "[y]e skots remoude yer sege."

The dramatist had these notes in mind, and probably in front of him, as he began to write Act III, Scene ii, a scene which has nothing to do with the border but which shows the effects of war on the French population. He made some use of Berners' Chapter 122, but most of the

scene is his own invention. His starting point was Hunsdon's note "man woman chyldre kylde," and he also picked out the words *laden with, and other stuff, and removed*. He wrote (all italics are mine):

Enter two French *men*; a *woman* and two little *children* meet them, and other Citizens.

One. Wel met, my mysters: how now? whats the newes?

And wherefore are ye *laden thus with stuff*?

What, is it quarter daie that you *remove*,

. . . .

(III.ii.1-3)

Here there can be no doubt that the dramatist is using Hunsdon's words. Since Berners has "men, women, and chyldren" (Chapter 75), he may be borrowing from him as well. But none of the other words occurs in Berners in any relevant context. Moreover the dramatist follows Hunsdon's word order almost exactly; only "and other" is slightly misplaced.

The only reasonable explanation for this parallel is that the author of *Edward III* had Hunsdon's annotations, in some form, before him as he wrote. Whoever he was, it seems certain that he was allowed to consult the books in Hunsdon's library in Somerset House, and he quite possibly wrote the play there. It is clear that he was well known to Hunsdon.

His use of Hunsdon as a source allows us other insights into the way he worked. We can see, for example, that he did not work casually. Not all Hunsdon's notes leap to the eye, and a careless glance could easily miss the Montague note, for example. The dramatist looked for the annotations and read them carefully. In other words, he was intent on finding out all that he could about Hunsdon's tastes and interests. He is putting into practice Viola's words on the Fool:

He must observe their mood on whom he jests  
 The quality of persons and the time;  
 And, like the haggard, check at every feather  
 That comes before his eye. This is a practice  
 As full of labour as a wise man's art.

(*Twelfth Night* III.i.61-65)

The dramatist, carefully reading and using Hunsdon's notes, might well be said to "check at every feather / That comes before his eye."

The same desire to please his patron is, I believe, visible in many other aspects of *Edward III*. The play contains several broad themes and many individual details which would have been of particular interest to Hunsdon, and to few others in the audience. On several occasions it reflects views which we know that he held. When the dramatist alters what he finds in Froissart, the change often seems designed to compliment Hunsdon. I suggest, on this evidence, that *Edward III* was written with Hunsdon's knowledge and assistance, and was created as a public compliment to him.

If the dramatist had wanted to compliment Lord Hunsdon, to what would he have first drawn attention? Hunsdon and his sons were professional soldiers; war was their occupation and their pride, and the front on which they saw most service was the Scottish border. There were good political reasons for this. The border was the most vulnerable and unreliable part of Elizabeth's realm; she therefore entrusted it to her most reliable subjects—the Carey cousins who were her nearest kin. They fully justified her trust. Both Hunsdon himself and his eldest son George made their military reputations here, Hunsdon by his defeat of the rebellious northern Earls in 1570, and George by his bravery in action in the ensuing campaign in Scotland.<sup>6</sup> Hunsdon held military command on the border from 1568 until the end of his life. So, at different times, did three of his surviving sons. They had an intimate knowledge of border fighting against the Scottish raiders, and everyone knew that this was their particular expertise.<sup>7</sup>

It may therefore be significant that one of the principal themes of *Edward III* is the king's defence of his northern border against the Scots. The subject is not treated at great length, but it is introduced early in the play and is then frequently referred to, since the success of Edward's campaign in France depends on the security of the Scottish border. The alliance between France and Scotland that Edward faces in the play still had to be faced by Hunsdon two hundred years later in his border command.<sup>8</sup> In fact the early scenes of the play reflect with some accuracy the conditions on the border during most of Elizabeth's reign. The Scottish invasion is simply a raid carried out by men on horseback

who destroy as much as they can and carry off anything valuable. They quickly retire, unpunished, when they hear that a relieving force is marching North. The defensive importance of garrisoned towns and castles is made clear. *Edward III* is the only extant play which depicts the military situation on the Scottish border in this way. For this reason alone it was likely to have had a special appeal to Lord Hunsdon.

The very first mention of Scotland in the play would have caught Hunsdon's attention. Edward asks: "How stands the league between the Scot and us?" (I.i.122). The state of the league between Scotland and England was a question that had preoccupied Hunsdon for much of his career. One of his many diplomatic missions to Scotland had had as its aim the restoration of this league. In the play, Sir William Montague replies to the King that the Scots have "made invasion on the bordering Townes" and captured both Berwick and Newcastle: "Barwicke is woon, Newcastle spoyld and lost" (I.i.127-28). Hunsdon had spent his life on the watch for just such invasions. Moreover, in specifying these two towns the dramatist has chosen to go directly against his source, Froissart's chronicles. Froissart spends some time explaining that the Scots did *not* take either Berwick or Newcastle. The towns that they destroyed were Durham and, on an earlier occasion, Edinburgh.<sup>9</sup> Why does the dramatist diverge from Froissart here? I believe that he is deliberately shaping his material both to interest Hunsdon and to compliment him. Berwick and Newcastle were the two border towns for which Hunsdon had been responsible and whose garrisons he had commanded. He was appointed governor of Berwick in 1568, and the town was his northern base for the next twenty years. Moreover we know that he thought of the two towns as a single unit. He considered "that the charge at Newcastle should be joined to Berwick."<sup>10</sup> This early mention of Berwick and Newcastle in the play (and they are never mentioned again) would therefore arouse his interest and remind the rest of the audience of his past achievements and his sons' present duties in the North. There is an implicit contrast between the days of Edward III, when the Scots could sack Berwick and Newcastle, and the reign of Elizabeth, when her cousins kept both towns secure. A reference to Durham, following Froissart, would not have had the same effect.

It might be objected that this compliment is inept, since Hunsdon knew his Froissart well, and would have realized the deviation from the source. But the compliment is in no way diminished by such knowledge. On the contrary, the dramatist is flattering Hunsdon, both by appealing to his knowledge of Froissart and by, as it were, letting him share in the creative process. He and his patron become accomplices, a complicity that we have already seen in his use of Hunsdon's annotations. They both knew more than the rest of the audience, who, ignorant of Froissart, take the compliment as historical truth. *Edward III*, I shall later argue, was designed to be a public tribute as much as a private one.

In its last fifty lines, then, the first scene of the play recalls Hunsdon's concerns in his border command, and Edward resembles Hunsdon both in his situation and his personality. He regards the Scots as "trayterous," just as Hunsdon did, and he has Hunsdon's love of war and honor.<sup>11</sup> He too is faced, as Hunsdon so often was, with a sudden Scottish invasion, and he prepares to "once more repulse" it (I.i.155). If Hunsdon had seen the play it would have been easy for him to identify with Edward at this early stage. Very few others in a London audience could have done so.

The next scene, like all the Countess scenes, actually takes place in a border garrison. It opens before the castle of Roxburgh, where the Countess of Salisbury is besieged by the jubilant and boasting Scots. The tables are agreeably turned, however, by the arrival of the English army, at the mere report of which the Scots hurry away without a fight.

There are innumerable ways in which the dramatist might have written this scene. Yet his choice of theme and particular examples seems designed to appeal to Hunsdon and his family. What he chooses to give us is a vivid, highly detailed picture of certain aspects of life on the border, and in particular of those whom he calls "the everlasting foe," the Scots. We hear of "their broad untuned othes" and their speech—"their babble, blunt and full of pride" (I.ii.8, 17). But the subject of most interest to the dramatist is their military tactics and equipment, a topic which is introduced with an ingenuity that must arouse suspicion. In theory King David of Scotland is sending a declaration of loyalty which the French ambassador will report to the King of France. But in fact the declaration is simply an excuse for a long description of a Scottish border raid:



Touching your embassage, returne and say,  
 That we with England will not enter parlie,  
 Nor never make faire wether, or take truce;  
 But burne their neighbor townes, and so persist  
 With eager Rods beyond their Citie Yorke.

(I.ii.21-25)

King David then depicts in detail his men and their appearance, an account which has little dramatic point, since no raid ever takes place. They are “bonny riders” who use “lightborne snaffles” and “nimble spurres.” They wear “Jacks of Gymould mayle” and carry “staves of grayned Scottish ash” which in peace they hang “upon their Citie wals.” They sling their swords, their “byting whinyards” from “buttoned tawny leatherne belts.” This detailed inventory, which occupies eight lines out of a total of seventy-two, is remarkable, and unique in the play. In two thirds of the play we are concerned with war, and meet soldiers of many nationalities—French, English, Genoese, Poles and Muscovites—but only the Scots, whom we never see fighting, have their armor so meticulously described. The rest are not described at all. Why is this? Can we believe that the average London playgoer was interested in “buttoned tawny leatherne belts”? Hunsdon certainly was. He had, after all, many years first-hand experience of the Scottish raiders and their equipment, and in 1587 we find him discussing which weapons are suited to border fighting, and which not.<sup>12</sup>

These two short scenes—one of fifty, the other of seventy lines—did more than appeal to Hunsdon’s interests and specialist knowledge. They flattered him in the most irresistible way of all: they agreed with him. His opinions and prejudices are either expressed by characters with whom we sympathize, or else demonstrated in the play’s action. The play satisfyingly confirms his views.

Not everyone, for example, disliked the Border country, yet Hunsdon did, and in particular thought that its air was unhealthy.<sup>13</sup> Sure enough, the Countess complains of “the barraine, bleake, and fruitlesse aire” of Roxburgh (I.ii.14). Her words “barraine” and “fruitlesse” may echo Hunsdon’s own belief that his post at Berwick was unprofitable: as he put it, “for pleasure or commodity is none in it and less thrift.”<sup>14</sup>

A contemporary describes Hunsdon’s attitude to Scottish raiders as follows: “He takes as great pleasure in hanging thieves as other men

in hawking and hunting."<sup>15</sup> The comparison may directly reflect Hunsdon's views. His love of hawking is well attested, and in 1594 we find him referring to English pursuers who "chase" the fleeing Scots "even to Edinburgh gates."<sup>16</sup> His son Robert describes a day's fighting in which several men were killed on both sides as a "day's sport."<sup>17</sup> King Edward also looks on war as a kind of field sport. Of the fleeing Scots he says

What, are the stealing foxes fled and gone,  
Before we could uncupple at their heeles?

To which Warwick replies:

They are, my liege; but, with a cheerful cry,  
Hot hounds and hardie chase them at the heeles,  
. . . . (I.ii.90-93)

Later in the play Edward speaks of war in the language of hawking (III.v.46).

If there was one thing that Hunsdon hated, it was what he called "the rejoicing of his enemies," or, on two other occasions, their "jollity."<sup>18</sup> He was particularly irritated when a rumor reached Scotland that Mary Queen of Scots was going to marry the Duke of Norfolk. What annoyed him was the jubilation of her supporters at this proposed match and their certainty that it would take place. "They hold it for concluded," he wrote, "and make assured account and vaunt of it as if it were irrevocable, wherein they are in such a jollity as who but they."<sup>19</sup> We may be sure that he was correspondingly delighted when their hopes were dashed. Clearly Hunsdon not only strongly disliked this premature rejoicing, he also saw it as a Scottish characteristic ("as who but they"). It is therefore interesting that this characteristic is singled out for special criticism in *Edward III*. The Countess, like Hunsdon, cannot bear the derision and the "skipping giggs" of the triumphant Scots.

Thou doest not tell him, if he heere prevaile,  
How much they will deride us in the North,  
And in their vild, unsevell, skipping giggs,  
Bray forth their Conquest and our overthrow  
. . . . (I.ii.10-13)

Not long afterwards we see the Scottish leaders doing exactly what Hunsdon so disliked in the followers of the Queen of Scots: they celebrate an anticipated success—in this case the capture of Roxburgh Castle. “Say you came from us,” says King David to the French ambassador, “even when we had that yeilded to our hands” (I.ii.36-37). But his confidence is premature: the castle is not yet in their hands. The King and Douglas then return “to our former taske again,” that is “the devision of this certayne spoyle” (I.ii.40-41), and they argue over which of them shall have the Countess and which her jewels. This is precisely what Hunsdon describes: “they hold it for concluded and make assured account and vaunt of it as if it were irrevocable.” The Countess makes the same point when she describes them as “the confident and boystrous boasting Scot” (I.ii.75). As they prepare to run away, she mocks their recent certainty: “I am sure, my Lords, / Ye will not hence, till you have shared the spoyles” (I.ii.63-64).

This detailed critique of Scottish over-confidence is, I believe, unique to *Edward III*. I have not found it in any other play of the period, and I suggest that the dramatist made so much of it because he knew that this Scottish trait was a *bête noire* of Hunsdon’s. The Scots in the play behave exactly as Hunsdon would like them to behave. There is nothing so pleasant as having our favorite prejudices confirmed.

One other aspect of these scenes suggests that the dramatist is using them as a vehicle for topical reference. We saw that King David’s description of a Scottish raid was as relevant to Elizabeth’s reign as to the fourteenth century. In the same way the dramatist carefully constructs the Countess’s first speech so that her attack on the Scots becomes universal rather than particular. It is as true for the audience as it is for her. She might have said: “If I am captured, the Scots will scorn me and woo me with oaths.” But what she in fact says is

Thou doest not tell him, what a griefe it is  
 To be the scornfull captive to a Scot,  
 Either to be wooed with broad untuned oaths,  
 Or forst by rough insulting barbarisme  
 . . . . . (I.ii.6-9)

She has turned her particular situation into a general complaint, and the dramatist goes on to repeat the phrase which achieves the

transformation: "Thou doest not tell him" (I.ii.10). The naturalness and psychological realism with which this trick is managed are the marks of a skilled dramatist.

One of the problems of *Edward III*—and one reason for seeing it as a play of divided authorship—is its mixture of the crude and the sophisticated. This is as true of the play's ideology as it is of its poetry. While the scenes between Edward and the Countess take a complex and subtle view of human relationships, the battle scenes are excessively simple. In these scenes war is viewed with almost unqualified approval, and the value of military honor is never questioned. War is good, the play suggests, because it is the only arena where honor can be won. In the words of the Black Prince, war is the "schoole of honor," and the tumult of war is therefore "as cheerful sounding to my youthful spleene" as "the joyfull clamours of the people" at a coronation (I.i.160-65).

This crude glorification of war is easily explained if we suppose that the author was writing for Lord Hunsdon. Hunsdon was renowned for his bluntness and straightforward speech; he was not subtle, and the soldier's code of honor was what he lived by. Naunton writes of him: "he was downe-right . . . his Lattine and dissimulation were alike . . . he loved sword and buckler men, and such as our fathers were wont to call men of their hands."<sup>20</sup> One could apply to him the words that his eldest son George used of himself, that he "ever esteemed an ounce of honour more than a pound of profit."<sup>21</sup> This is perfectly the spirit of *Edward III*. In a work written for such a man it would be tactless to question the values of war and honor.

One way of winning honor was through military display and ceremony, and both were important to the Careys. In his youth George Carey won renown for issuing a challenge to the Scottish governor of Dumbarton, Lord Fleming. The youngest son, Robert, was a keen competitor in tilts and joustings. "In all triumphs I was one," he wrote, "either at tilt, tourney or barriers."<sup>22</sup> I believe that the Careys' love of honor and military ceremony led the author of *Edward III* to make an addition to his source which, judged by its length alone, he obviously considered of some significance.

In Act III Scene v the King knights his son, the Black Prince, for his valor at the battle of Crécy. This knighting is the battle's climax, its end

and even, we are led to feel, its justification, and the dramatist takes considerable pains to prepare for it. Before the battle the Prince is presented with his armor in an elaborate ceremony in which war is given almost religious importance. His father introduces the rite as follows:

And, Ned, because this battell is the first  
That ever yet thou foughtest in pitched field,  
As ancient custome is of Martialists,  
To dub thee with the tipe of chivalrie;  
In solemne manner we will give thee armes.

(III.iii.172-76)

According to the original stage direction four heralds now bring on "a coate armor, a helmet, a lance and a shield." The Prince receives each piece of armor in turn, each accompanied with an appropriate speech of dedication. Finally his father adds:

Now wants there nought but knighthood which deferd  
Wee leave, till thou hast won it in the fields.

(III.iii.204-05)

During the battle the Prince is in mortal danger, but despite the pleas of Artois, Derby and Audley the King refuses to rescue him, lest he jeopardize his knighthood.

Tut, let him fight; we gave him armes to day,  
And he is laboring for a Knighthood, man.

(III.v.17-18)

Naturally the Prince emerges not only safe but victorious, bringing with him the dead body of the King of Bohemia, "this sacrifice, this first fruit of my sword" (III.v.72). The climax of this semi-religious ritual is the knighting. The Prince sums up his account of his deeds in battle:

Lo, thus hath Edwards hand fild your request,  
And done, I hope, the duety of a Knight.

(III.v.87-88)

To this his father replies: "I, well thou hast deservd a knighthood, Ned!," and he knights his son with his own sword, carried on "yet reaking

warme" by a soldier. "This day thou hast confounded me with joy," says the proud father (III.v.89-93).

The battle thus begins and ends with two military ceremonies, and both were invented by the dramatist. The giving of arms is not in Froissart at all; nor is the knighting at Crécy. It is true that Edward did knight the Black Prince, but not at Crécy, nor for valor in battle. Edward knighted his son as soon as the army landed in France.<sup>23</sup> Froissart has only a brief reference to the Prince being allowed "to wynne his spures" at Crécy.<sup>24</sup> He spends more time on Edward's refusal to rescue his son, but even this was considerably expanded by the dramatist. Such an expansion is easily explained, since the refusal to rescue creates a highly dramatic situation. But the emphasis on the knighthood is neither necessary nor particularly dramatic. Why then did the dramatist invent it, and build his account of the battle of Crécy around it?

He designed it, I suggest, as an easily identifiable compliment to Lord Hunsdon. By 1594 Hunsdon had four surviving sons, to whom he was strongly attached and for whose honor he was much concerned.<sup>25</sup> The author of *Edward III* altered his source so that the Black Prince was knighted on the field of battle; three of Hunsdon's four sons were knighted in a similar way—by their commanders while on military service.<sup>26</sup> In the small world of the Elizabethan court this distinction would have been well known, and to a soldier like Hunsdon it was naturally a source of pride. Few other fathers, if any, could boast of such a record. The dramatist, through his invention of the elaborate knighting ceremony, was able to draw attention to the parallel case of a well known soldier who, like Edward III, was proud that his sons were knighted in the field. Hunsdon's affection for his sons, and theirs for him, is well attested, and the dramatist may have had this in mind when he designed the scene to bring out the relationship between Edward III and his son. One could argue that the main dramatic interest of the whole episode lies in this relationship. What brings these scenes to life is the father's pride in his son and the son's corresponding desire to live up to that pride.

The scenes are full of references to the father-son relationship. The Prince compares his father to "Ould Jacobe" "when as he breathed his blessings on his sonnes" (III.iii.210-11). Even more than the desire for

honor it is his father's trust in him that inspires him. When he is in peril of his life and his strength fails, he revives himself by remembering "the gifts you gave me, and my zealous vow" (III.v.83). And his knightly duty is done to fulfil his father's "request" (III.v.87).

With this we may compare the high value that Robert Carey placed on his father's opinion. In his journal he writes of his marriage: "the Queen was mightily offended with me for marrying, and most of my best friends, only my father was no ways displeas'd at it, which gave me great content."<sup>27</sup>

The parallel between Edward and Lord Hunsdon in this scene is made even closer by an apparent increase in Edward's age. As we have seen, his son compares him to "Ould Jacobe," and a similar length of years is implied shortly afterwards. If the Black Prince is killed, says his father, "what remedy? we have more sonnes / Then one to comfort our declyning age" (III.v.23-24). His "declyning age" must be in the future, but this is by no means clear, and the words are extraordinarily inappropriate from a man of thirty-four, which was Edward's age at the time. They seem even more odd when one remembers that he still had thirty-one years to live. Hunsdon, however, certainly was in his declining age. In 1594 he was sixty-eight, and he did have the comfort of "more sonnes / Then one" in his remaining two years of life.

There was one achievement of Hunsdon's that no dramatist who wished to flatter him could afford to omit. The highest point of his career came in the Armada year when he was summoned from the North to take command of the Queen's bodyguard. This was a post of great responsibility, and Hunsdon was well rewarded for his services.<sup>28</sup>

It is therefore no surprise to find that *Edward III* is full of obvious allusions to the Armada. As others have pointed out, the dramatist radically changed the accounts of the battles of Sluys and Poitiers that he found in the chronicles, and in each case he introduced details that an informed auditor would have recognized as drawn from the Armada narratives.<sup>29</sup>

At this point it may be useful to summarize the main points of the case that I am making. We have seen that the author of *Edward III* consulted Hunsdon's own copy of Froissart as he wrote the play, and echoed Hunsdon's annotations certainly in Act III Scene ii and probably

in other scenes as well. There can therefore be no doubt that the dramatist associated the play with Hunsdon, and it is a reasonable assumption that Hunsdon himself knew what the dramatist was writing. He must, after all, have known that the dramatist was using his highly prized copy of Froissart.

As the subject of his play the dramatist chose a period of history in which he knew Hunsdon was particularly interested, and he used as his source a chronicle that Hunsdon particularly admired. He therefore knew from the start that his entire project would appeal to Hunsdon and that he was likely to want to see the play, the more so since it was the first and only one to deal with these events. It would have for him a personal interest that it could have for no other spectator. Others were interested in the Scottish border, but very few were as personally concerned with it as Hunsdon was. And how many of these few were also devotees of Froissart? Certainly none of them had lent his copy of the *Chronicles* to the author of the play.

Since we know that the author himself associated the play with Hunsdon, his apparent echoing of Hunsdon's interests and prejudices is likely to be deliberate rather than coincidental. To take one example, Hunsdon would certainly have appreciated the emphasis that the play gives to the knighting of the Black Prince on the battlefield. He would know that it was the dramatist's invention, and he could hardly avoid taking it as a personal compliment to himself and his sons. He would also have noticed that the dramatist greatly expanded Froissart's account of the events at Roxburgh Castle, an account which he himself had heavily annotated. Would he suppose that the dramatist, who had seen his annotations, did this without any reference to himself? Or would he have thought that the many allusions to the Armada were introduced simply by chance? He is more likely to have seen them as a graceful compliment to himself, just as he is likely to have been flattered by the play's reflection of his own views on the Border and the Scots.

There can be little doubt that if Hunsdon or any of his family had seen the play, they would have taken it as an obvious tribute to the Lord Chamberlain. Indeed other court spectators would have had no difficulty in interpreting it as such. Can we believe that the play's author, who used Hunsdon's own notes as a source, accidentally introduced so much



which would have been agreeable to him and his family? The appeal to coincidence strains credulity. It is also unnecessary, since, as we shall see, there were actors and at least one dramatist who had good reasons for paying a compliment to Lord Hunsdon.

When and by whom was *Edward III* first performed? If my theory is correct, it is obviously most likely to have been commissioned by Hunsdon's own company of actors. But which company? It must have been written after 1588, and Hunsdon did have a company of players up till 1589. All the evidence, however, argues against this company and such an early date. The play was clearly written to be acted by a large company in a well equipped theater.<sup>30</sup> But Hunsdon's men of 1588-89 were not a company of this kind; they are only recorded in the provinces and there is no sign that they acted in London. Secondly, since they are not heard of after 1596, one would expect them to have sold their copy of *Edward III* long before 1596, its actual date of publication. Finally, the play's references to the stories of Hero and Leander and Lucrece suggest a date after 1593.

The new evidence, then, leads to the conclusion that *Edward III* was first performed in 1594 by the actors that Hunsdon took into his service in May or June of that year. It is in fact just the kind of play that they were accustomed to put on. They were an experienced group who were used to large casts and complex staging. Moreover they had in their repertoire other plays which look as if they were designed to please aristocratic patrons—*Love's Labour's Lost*, for example, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is now widely accepted that in 1597 they paid a compliment to their master, Hunsdon's son George, with their production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. We might well expect them to have put on a similar performance for his father three years earlier.

In 1594 they had good reason to do so. By taking them into his service he rescued them from an unpleasant situation. They had just endured almost two years of plague, with all the hard work, additional expense and small reward of touring in the province. Some were probably members of Pembroke's company, which had gone bankrupt. Others were certainly servants of the Earl of Derby, the former Lord Strange, who had died painfully and suddenly on 16 April. At this moment Strange's men found themselves on tour, with the plague still raging

and without the protection of a patron. For the time being they continued under the name of Derby's widow, the Countess, but this can have been no more than a temporary arrangement, and during May their future was dangerously uncertain.<sup>31</sup> They could not know that the plague would die away by June; they might have expected it to increase in the warmer weather. At this critical moment Hunsdon solved their most urgent problem by taking at least the principal actors into his service.<sup>32</sup> They were thus deeply, and perhaps literally, in his debt. *Edward III* would have been a way of expressing their gratitude, and perhaps their loyalty to a new master. It would also have proclaimed their new identity to the general public; with its overt compliments to Hunsdon, it said unmistakably "these actors are Hunsdon's men."

If this scenario is correct, *Edward III* must have been written in 1594, probably in May or June. Such a date is confirmed by the play's references to the war between Austria and Turkey, which broke out openly in June of 1593.<sup>33</sup> The play would also have to be written quickly, and hasty writing may be one explanation for the play's uneven quality. 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. This is not surprising. On the contrary, it is just what we should expect in the difficult early summer of 1594. The actors may have wanted to thank their new patron, but with the re-opening of the theaters they also needed new plays to attract the public. They could not afford to put on and rehearse a play for only one or two performances. In any case Hunsdon's men were in the habit of bringing their coterie plays into the public repertory.

*Love's Labour's Lost* and *Titus Andronicus* both had public and private performances. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* probably had a private origin, but was certainly acted in public. *Edward III* fits perfectly into this pattern. The public audience would naturally miss some of the more personal allusions, but they could be expected to appreciate the more obvious references to Hunsdon's border service, his Armada honors and his soldier sons. There were many ways in which the actors could make clear the play's purpose.

I turn finally to the question of authorship. It is obvious that the association of *Edward III* with Shakespeare's patron and Shakespeare's company must greatly increase the possibility that he had a hand in it. If Hunsdon's men needed a play to flatter their master, they would naturally turn to Shakespeare, especially if he was already a member of the company. They needed a play which was patriotic and had war as its theme. In 1594 Shakespeare was already well known for his skill in handling military and patriotic themes. He was also an experienced and successful writer for aristocratic patrons. Most of his known or probable output in the years 1593-94 was of this kind: the *Sonnets*, *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, *Love's Labour's Lost*. The actors had already commissioned him, or would commission him to write their other plays of compliment—the *Dream* and *Merry Wives*. It would be surprising if they had not asked him to write this particularly important play as well. At the beginning of a new London season, after so long a gap, they needed to put their wares on view as quickly as possible, and Shakespeare was certainly a valuable asset.

The techniques which the author of *Edward III* used to compliment Hunsdon are techniques in which Shakespeare shows interest, and which, in one play at least, he used himself. I have argued that *Edward III* is in effect a mirror in which Hunsdon can see himself and his own career. The dramatist recalls and displays to him his military experience on the Scottish border, his part in the Armada year, his pride in his sons, and his love of Froissart. Implicitly he compares him to the successful soldier, Edward III. Shakespeare was clearly fascinated by the theater's power to act as a mirror. This power is at the centre of *Hamlet*, where the play-within-the-play is devised to show Claudius an image of his past actions. The same technique may be seen in *Love's Labour's Lost*, in which the aristocratic audience for whom the play was probably written watch the reactions of an audience like themselves as they watch a play. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* also shows a noble audience its own reflection, and so do the 'garter' passages in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

The theory that *Edward III* was written for Lord Hunsdon also counters the principal objections that can be brought against Shakespeare's authorship. It explains the play's crude jingoism and uncritical worship of the code of honor. It may also explain its markedly uneven quality.

Richard Proudfoot has argued that in it we see "the working of an artistic intelligence of the highest order in material which . . . is in many ways constricting."<sup>34</sup> If the dramatist was writing to order, limited by what Lord Hunsdon wanted to hear, he may well have been constricted by his material. Indeed at one point he refers to "constraining warre" (III.ii.49).

To sum up, we now know that there was a connection between Hunsdon and *Edward III*. The dramatist had access to Hunsdon's personal copy of Froissart's *Chronicles*, and used his marginal notes as a source for the play. Moreover he often altered or added to Froissart's account in ways which seem designed to compliment or flatter Hunsdon. Hunsdon's men had reason to compliment their master in the first half of 1594, and internal evidence makes this a likely date for the play's composition. Finally, the new facts agree with the other evidence that Shakespeare had a hand in the writing of *Edward III*.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>References are to the edition in C. F. Tucker Brooke, ed., *The Shakespeare Apocrypha* (Oxford: OUP, 1908) 67-101. I have also consulted the edition of Fred Lapes (New York: Garland, 1980).

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, MacD. P. Jackson, "Edward III, Shakespeare, and Pembroke's Men," *N&Q* 210 (1965): 329-31 (p. 330); Richard Proudfoot, "The Reign of King Edward the Third (1596) and Shakespeare," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 71 (1985): 159-85 (p. 184); John Kerrigan, ed., *The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint* by William Shakespeare (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986) 293-94; Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 136; Eliot Slater, *The Problem of The Reign of King Edward III: A Statistical Approach* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988).

<sup>3</sup>Proudfoot 168, 176-78.

<sup>4</sup>B. L. 596.L.24,25. Two vols. (Paris, 1513). The chapters are not numbered.

<sup>5</sup>Robert Metcalf Smith, "Edward III," *JEGP* 10 (1911): 90-104. This article shows which chapters of Berners the dramatist consulted for each scene. The allocation is useful, but incomplete.

<sup>6</sup>*DNB* under "Carey, Henry" (entries also for George and Robert). For all information about the Careys *DNB* is the source unless a separate reference is given. The entry for Hunsdon in S. T. Bindoff, *The House of Commons 1509-1558* (London: Secker, 1982) 1: 582, gives his date of birth.

<sup>7</sup>*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the reign of Elizabeth, 1591-1594*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1867) 268.

<sup>8</sup>*Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the reign of Elizabeth, 1569-71*, ed. Allan James Crosby (London, 1874) 178, 212-13.

<sup>9</sup>Lord Berners, trans., *The Chronicle of Froissart*, ed. W. P. Ker (London: David Nutt, 1901) vol. 1, chs. 55, 73-75.

<sup>10</sup>Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury*, K. G. (London, 1883) 1: 373.

<sup>11</sup>Hunsdon's mistrust of the Scots is in DNB.

<sup>12</sup>*Calendar of Letters and Papers relating to the affairs of the Borders of England and Scotland*, ed. Joseph Bain (Edinburgh, 1894) 1: 282.

<sup>13</sup>*CSP Foreign 1572-74* (London, 1876) 132.

<sup>14</sup>*HMC Salisbury MSS 1*: 372.

<sup>15</sup>*CSP Foreign 1575-77* (London, 1880) 175.

<sup>16</sup>*HMC Salisbury MSS 4*: 504-05. For his hawks, see *Calendar of Border Papers 1*: 73.

<sup>17</sup>*The Memoirs of Robert Carey*, ed. F. H. Mares (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 19.

<sup>18</sup>*CSP Foreign 1572-74 42*; 1569-71 212. See also the next note.

<sup>19</sup>*HMC Salisbury MSS 1*: 420.

<sup>20</sup>Robert Naunton, *The Court of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. James Caulfield (London, 1814) 79.

<sup>21</sup>*HMC Salisbury MSS 6*: 488.

<sup>22</sup>*Memoirs of Robert Carey 7*.

<sup>23</sup>DNB, under "Edward, the Black Prince."

<sup>24</sup>Berners, *Froissart 1*: 300.

<sup>25</sup>*CSP Foreign 1569-71 115, 571, 580*; 1572-74 41-42. A. L. Rowse, *Eminent Elizabethans* (London: Macmillan, 1983) 187.

<sup>26</sup>George, Edmund and Robert. See P. W. Hasler, *The House of Commons 1558-1603* vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1981) 545, 547-49, 550-51.

<sup>27</sup>*Memoirs of Robert Carey 26*.

<sup>28</sup>Rowse 178.

<sup>29</sup>Proudfoot 170-71.

<sup>30</sup>Proudfoot 162-63.

<sup>31</sup>E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951) 2: 126.

<sup>32</sup>Chambers 2: 126, 193.

<sup>33</sup>For a discussion of this evidence, see Roger Prior, "The Date of *Edward III*," *N&Q* 235 (1990): 178-80. E. K. Chambers in *William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930) 1: 517, and James Winny, ed., *Three Elizabethan Plays* (London: Chatto, 1959) 19, also date the play to 1594. But a much earlier date is preferred by many commentators, including Karl P. Wentersdorf, "The Date of *Edward III*," *SQ* 16 (1965): 227-31; MacD. P. Jackson 329-31; Lapidés 4, 31; Proudfoot 181-82. Some of their reasons are worth considering in detail. Wentersdorf favours 1589-90, partly because "plays rarely came into the hands of the printers until several years after their original production" (230). This is, in my view, the best argument for an early date. But Wentersdorf himself admits that it is "inconclusive" (231), and adds: "more important . . . is the fact that *Edward III* breathes the spirit of nationalistic feeling that was particularly

strong in the years immediately after the victory over the Armada" (231). I would argue instead that the play owes its nationalistic spirit to the influence of that defender of the nation and cousin of the Queen, Lord Hunsdon.

MacDonald Jackson raises an important new point. He demonstrates that there are echoes of *Edward III* in two reported plays, *The Contention* (1594) and *The True Tragedy* (1595). "It has been generally accepted," he writes, "that these reports were constructed by some of Pembroke's Men upon the collapse of that company in the summer of 1593. Those scenes in *Edward III* which are echoed by one of the two Bad Quartos can therefore hardly have been composed later than 1592" (331). I accept Jackson's evidence that the reporters knew *Edward III*, but I disagree with his conclusions. Why must *Edward III* have been written by 1592? Could it not have been written, and at least rehearsed, in 1593? Alternatively, if we date the play to 1594, is it not possible that the reporters acted in it in that year, before they went on to compile the Bad Quartos? They were, after all, familiar with *Romeo and Juliet*, which is rarely dated before 1594.

<sup>34</sup>Proudfoot 179.