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soldier in the service of Catholic Venice. Honor as a war hero, coupled with knowledge of Desdemona's innocence, leads Othello to a Stoic and honorable suicide.

Mind-moving literary criticism occurs when a writer leads the reader along, such as Wymer does with his rich, five-page discourse on Othello. Readers are less apt to be convinced when Wymer, arguing that paradox is at the heart of Christian doctrine about despair, jams together in one paragraph references to Chaucer, Morality plays, Shakespeare, and Luther. Such widely scattered allusions, in terms of writers, genres, and time periods, leave the reader bewildered and sceptical. At this (and other) points in the book, one is tempted to pencil in marginalia requesting omission. Wymer can make his case for the paradox of Christian and Stoical doctrines in a few pages, not many. In short, when Wymer dwells upon a suicide, he argues well and writes well. When he constructs a pastiche of primary and secondary sources, his argument becomes clouded and his writing smells of the scholarly inkhorn.

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In 1927 Eleanore Boswell published for the Malone Society an edition of Edmund Ironside, an anonymous late sixteenth-century chronic history play from Egerton 1994 in the British Library. In The Young Shakespeare: Studies in Documentary Evidence, Anglistica, II, 1954, E. B. Everitt attributed the play to Shakespeare and, still claiming Shakespeare as the author, published a modernized edition of Edmund Ironside in Six Early Plays Related to the Shakespeare Canon, Anglistica, XIV, 1965. Everitt’s attribution received little credence, and it remained for the musicologist Eric Sams to reopen the case in 1982 in the pages of the Times Literary Supplement. Shakespeare’s Lost Play “Edmund Ironside,” a hybrid edition somewhere between Boswell’s diplomatic edition and Everitt’s modernization, was achieved, in Sams’s words, by “depunctuating Everitt and decapitalising Boswell” (53). It is Sam’s conviction that “the Ironside case, now reinforced and returning to the charge, will…strike every rational and fair-minded reader as extremely strong” (1); that William Shakespeare wrote Edmund Ironside, in his own hand, the same hand that wrote Hand D in the manuscript of Sir Thomas More; and that Edmund Ironside was written and acted circa 1588.
The text of the play is accompanied by a polemical introduction; notes, which nearly all point to Shakespearean parallels; and a lengthy commentary designed to cap the argument of the introduction, text, and notes with further evidence, largely of a parallel nature, divided into topic headings covering Books, Life, Scenes and Characters, Chains of Association, Single Images and Symbols, Rhetorical Devices, Verse, and Vocabulary. Where there is a parallel or the slightest possibility of a parallel, Sams surely and doggedly finds and lists it, no matter what the evidential weight: Ironside: “causeless flight”; Titus: “fly causeless” (34, 35); Ironside: “I am contented”; Shrew: “I am content” (244).

Shakespeare’s Lost Play “Edmund Ironside” is rather more than a labor of love, but for all the undeniable effort and reading behind it, the massive, not to say obsessive, collection of parallels, and for all of Sams’s impassioned advocacy, the case is, at best, not proven. At the level of the look-walk-and-talk-like-a-duck-ergo test some readers (I for one) will find Edmund Ironside a weak, poorly written play by an author or authors familiar with and influenced by the early works of Shakespeare, one of the many humdrum plays designed to fill the ever hungry maw of the Elizabethan stage.

Apart from the feel of the play, it is by no means certain that, as Sams asserts, Hand D of the Sir Thomas More manuscript is Shakespeare’s. (Carol A. Chillington, for example, makes a compelling argument that Hand D is not Shakespeare’s in “Playwrights at Work: Henslowe’s, Not Shakespeare’s,” Book of Sir Thomas More, English Literary Renaissance, X:3, Autumn, 1980.) The copia of the parallel citations would be convincing only if the date is absolutely established as before 1589, so that the parallels can be certainly demonstrated not to be echoes of Shakespeare. Even if computerized statistics show “that the vocabulary of Edmund Ironside falls within early-Shakespearean parameters” (369) the jury must, nevertheless, remain out.

Detailed discussion of all of Sams’s arguments is for someone else, somewhere else. Typical assertions such as “The figure of Edricus is a direct link between the Vice of the old morality play and such self-assertive soliloquizing villains as Aaron, Joan of Arc, Richard III and Iago. What could be more Shakespearean?” (8, 9) don’t make a swallow, much less a summer. Moreover, there is no external evidence whatever to link Edmund Ironside with Shakespeare. Sams dismisses doubters as the “self-appointed guardians of the gateway, the professed and professional sceptics”…Shakespeareans of “the stratosphere” and addresses himself to the “Shakespeareans in the street” (2). Believe as you list, but it is difficult to see what the Shakespeareans of the street are to do with an edition of a bad, (presumably) sixteenth-century play edited on the principles of “depunctuating Everitt and decapitalising Boswell,” and equipped with polemical footnotes which seldom elucidate the text. The Shakespeareans of the stratosphere can read

This interdisciplinary collection of eleven essays presents, in large part, the fruits of a conference, “Changing Perspectives on Women in the Renaissance,” held at The Newberry Library in 1983. The volume contains both historical and literary studies, although literary subjects tend to predominate, as do Renaissance subjects in comparison to medieval. The influence of pioneering feminist historian Joan Kelly is readily apparent in the interdisciplinary approach, in the emphasis placed on examining the influence of sexual ideologies, and in the basic notion of using public and private spheres as an analytical framework.

The essays fall into two distinct groups. The first examines the effects on women of a patriarchal sexual ideology. The initial essay explores a significant social change that began concurrently with the advent of the Renaissance, namely that women’s roles and activities were increasingly forced out of what was becoming defined as the public sphere of life. Another essay investigates the possibility that medieval nuns committed self-mutilation in order to safeguard the state of virginity, which the Church deemed essential to their being. Yet another uses gender distinction to examine statistics that relate to accusation and punishment during the Italian Inquisition. Two selections analyze well-known texts by men, Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus* and John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*, in order to suggest how these texts reflect an ambiguous attitude toward women. The last essay in the first part looks at the political uses of androgynous images by drawing a parallel between Shakespeare’s comic heroines (acted by boys) and Elizabeth I’s self-defined image as “prince.” The second half of the book contains essays that examine texts by women (Margery Kemp, Sister Beatrice del Sera, the Countess of Pembroke, Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, the Duchess of Newcastle, Ann Fanshawe, Alice Thorton, and Anne Halkett). These women’s writings illustrate various responses to the problem of attempting to create a self-identity through literary endeavors usually reserved for men.

As this collection illustrates, medieval and Renaissance women were not attempting to contradict the prevailing patriarchal ideologies; nevertheless, their lives reveal a struggle to reconcile their personal lives with the lives