Sir Thomas More: the Hand D pages

British Library, Harley MS 7368, fols. 8r, 8v and 9r — searchable

These are the only pages thought to be in Shakespeare's own hand: 148 lines of the scene in which Sir Thomas More quells the May Day riot against the "straingers", written by the hand known as Hand D (Addition II, lines 123–270 in W. W. Greg's numbering).

Each photograph is shown as it was taken, untouched. Behind it lies an invisible layer of text: Greg's transcription, placed line by line on the handwriting. Use your PDF reader's search (Ctrl+F or Cmd+F) to find a word – try scilens, straingers or momtanish – and the reader highlights it in the hand itself. The text can also be selected and copied. After each photograph comes Greg's transcription of that page in ordinary type, with his line numbers.

How the layer was made. The lines of writing were found on the photographs and each was matched by eye to Greg's numbered line; every page was then checked with the text drawn over the handwriting. The words within a line are spread along it in proportion to their length, so a highlight falls on or very near its word, not always exactly on it.

What the text is. It is Greg's reading of 1911, not a new edition. Where the leaf has since darkened or been repaired (fol. 8 is pasted over with tracing paper on both sides), Greg's text is given even where the photograph no longer shows it.

Greg's signs, kept in the text

[ ] words deleted in the manuscript. ⟨ ⟩ letters lost from the damaged leaf, supplied by Greg from earlier readers.

(C) words written by Hand C, the playhouse reviser, not by Hand D: most of the altered speakers' names, and "tell me but this" (line 237).

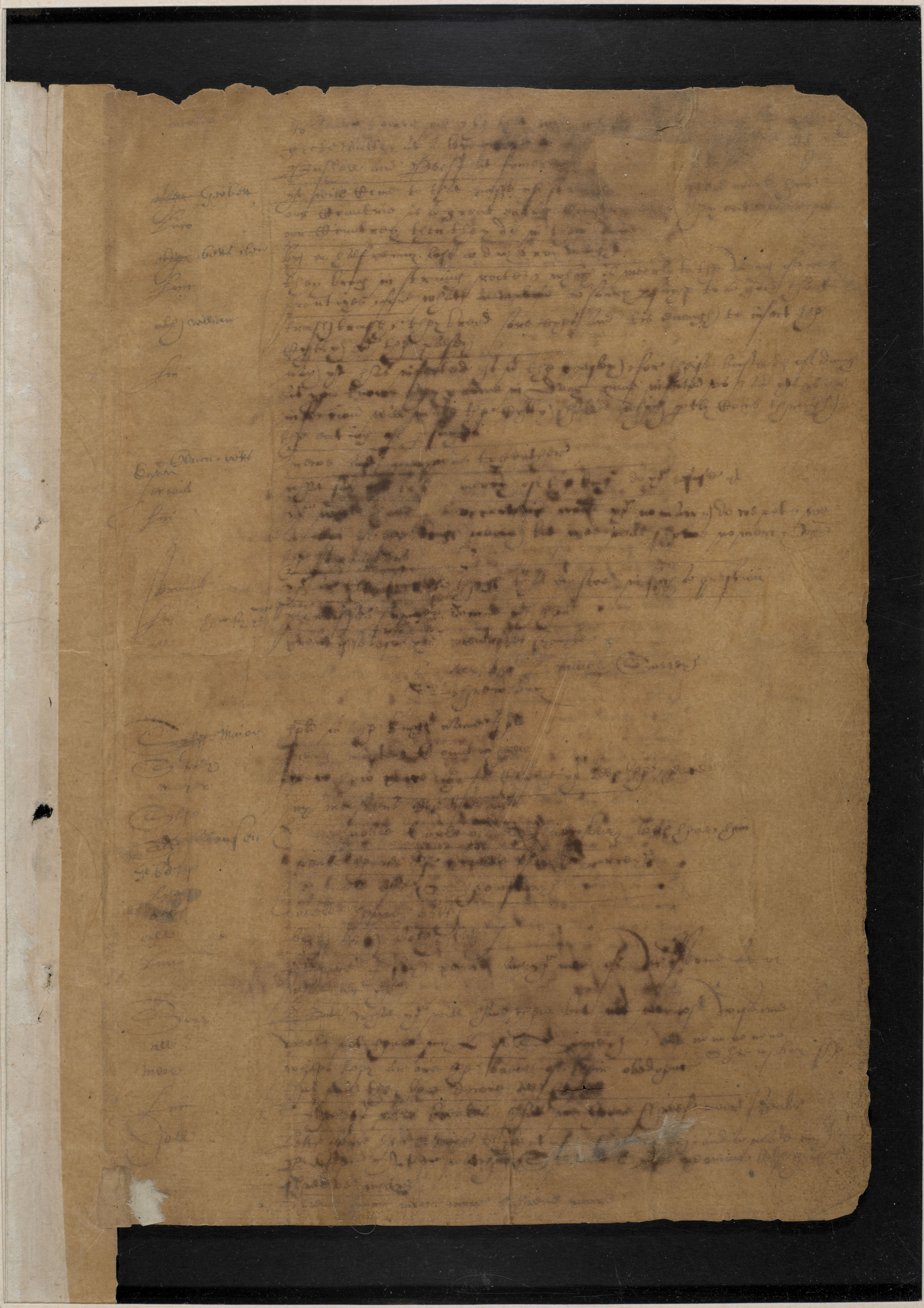
Superscript letters are abbreviations: yo^{u} = you, yo^{r} = your, wth and w^{t} = with, w^{ch} = which; ꝑ = p with the stroke for per/par (ꝑsnyp = persnyp, parsnip); ꝓ = p with the flourish for pro (ꝓclamation); ſ = Greg's sign for -es/-s (kingſ); matĩe = matie (majesty) with a mark of contraction.

Sources and credits

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Transcription: W. W. Greg (ed.), The Book of Sir Thomas More, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1911), pp. 73–78, Addition II, lines 123–270 (in the public domain); transcribed from Greg's printed pages for this edition and compared line by line with his text.

Searchable edition: David Pizzanelli, YoungShakespeare.fyi, with Claude (Anthropic), November 2026. Typeface: Junicode, by Peter S. Baker (SIL Open Font Licence).



fol. 8r: Greg's transcription, lines 123–168

Lincolne	Peace heare me, he that will not see ⟨a red⟩ hearing a⟨t⟩ a harry	123
	grote, butter at a levenp⟨enc⟩e a p⟨ounde meale at⟩ nyne shillings a	124
	Bushell and Beeff at fower ⟨nobles a stone lyst⟩ to ⟨me⟩	125
[*other*] *Geo bett (C)*	yt will Come to that passe yf stra⟨ingers be su⟩fferd marke him	126
Linco	our Countrie is a great eating Country, argo they eate more in	127
	our Countrey then they do in their owne	128
[*other*] *betts clow (C)*	by a half penny loff a day troy waight	129
Linc	they bring in straing rootes, which is meerly to the vndoing of poor	130
	prentizes, for whatꝑ [a watrie] or sorry ꝑsnyp to a good hart	131
[*oth*] *willian (C)*	trash trash ; they breed sore eyes and tis enough to infect the	132
	Cytty w^{t} the palsey	133
Lin	nay yt has infected yt w^{t} the palsey, for theise basterdꝑ of dung	134
	as you knowe they growe in Dvng haue infected vs, and yt is our	135
	infeccion will make the Cytty shake which ꝑtly Coms through	136
	the eating of ꝑsnyps	137
[*o*] *Clown. betts (C)*	trewe and pumpions togeather	138
Enter (C) Seriant	what say ⟨ye to the⟩ mercy of the king do yo^{u} refuse yt	139
Lin	yo^{u} ⟨would haue vs⟩ vppon thipp woold yo^{u} no marry do we not, we	140
	accept of the kingꝑ mercy but wee will showe no mercy vppō	141
	the st⟨raungers⟩	142
seriaunt	yo^{u} ar the ⟨simplest⟩ thingꝑ that eu' stood in such a question	143
Lin	how say yo^{u} now prenti prentisses symple downe wth him	144
all	prentisses symple prentisses symple.	145
	Enter the L. maier Surrey	146
	Shrewsbury	147
[*Sher*] *maior (C)*	hold in the kingꝑ name hold	148
Surrey	frendꝑ masters Countrymen	149
mayer	peace how peace I [sh] Charg yo^{u} keep the peace	150
Shro.	my maisters Countrymen	151
williamson (C)	The noble Earle of Shrowsbury lettꝑ hear him	152
Ge (C) bettꝛ	weele heare the earle of Surrey	153
Linc	the earle of Shrowsbury	154
bettꝛ	weele heare both	155
all	both both both both	156
Linc	Peace I say peace ar yo^{u} men of Wisdome [ar] or	157
	what ar yo^{u}	158
Surr	[But] what yo^{u} will haue them but not men of Wisdome	159
all	weele not heare my L of Surrey, [ ] no no no no no	160
	Shrewsbury shr	161
moor	whiles they ar ore the banck of their obedyenc	162
	thus will they bere downe all th⟨ings⟩	163
Linc	Shreiff moor speakes shall we heare shreef moor speake	164
Doll	Lettꝑ heare him ⟨a⟩ keepes a plentyfull shrevaltry, and a made my	165
	Brother Arther watch⟨ins⟩ Seriant S⟨af⟩es yeoman letꝑ heare	166
	shreeve moore	167
all	Shreiue moor moor more Shreue moore	168

moor

all

all

Limoln Bells

moor

Limoln

moor

Doll

all

moor

Bell

moor

Doll.

Bell Limoln

moor

fol. 8v: Greg's transcription, lines 169–218

moor	⟨even⟩ by the rule yo^{u} haue among yo^{r} sealues	169
	⟨comand sti⟩ll audience	170
all	⟨Surrey S⟩ury	171
all	⟨moor moor⟩	172
Lincolne bett^{R}	peace peace scilens peace.	173
	Yo^{u} that haue voyce and Credyt w^{t} the [Mv] nvmber	174
	Comaund them to a stilnes	175
Lincolne	a plaigue on them they will not hold their peace the deule	176
	Cannot rule them	177
Moor	Then what a rough and ryotous charge haue yo^{u}	178
	to Leade those that the deule Cannot rule	179
	good masters heare me speake	180
Doll	I byth mas will we moor thart a good howskeeper and I	181
	thanck thy good worship for my Brother Arthur watchins	182
all	peace peace	183
moor	look what yo^{u} do offend yo^{u} Cry vppō	184
	that is the peace, not ⟨ of yo^{u} heare⟩ present	185
	had there such fellowes, lyv⟨d w⟩hen yo^{u} wer babes	186
	that coold haue topt the p⟨eace⟩ as nowe yo^{u} woold	187
	the peace wherin yo^{u} haue till nowe growne vp	188
	had bin tane from yo^{u}, and the bloody tymes	189
	coold not haue brought yo^{u} to [ ] the state of men	190
	alas poor thing^{P} what is yt yo^{u} haue gott	191
	although we graunt yo^{u} geat the thing yo^{u} seeke	192
[*D*] *Bett*	marry the removing of the straingers w^{ch} cannot choose but	193
	much [helpe] advauntage the poor handycraftes of the Cytty	194
moor	graunt them remoued and graunt that this yo^{r} [y] noyce	195
	hath Chidd downe all the matie of Ingland	196
	ymagin that yo^{u} see the wretched straingers	197
	their babyes at their back^{P}, and their poor lugage	198
	plodding tooth port^{P} and cost^{P} for transportacion	199
	and that yo^{u} sytt as king^{P} in your desyres	200
	aucthoryty quyte sylenct by yo^{r} braule	201
	and yo^{u} in ruff of yo^{r} [yo] opynions clothd	202
	what had yo^{u} gott, I'le tell yo^{u}, yo^{u} had taught	203
	how insolenc and strong hand shoold prevayle	204
	how ordere shoold be quelld, and by this patterne	205
	not on of yo^{u} shoold lyve an aged man	206
	for other ruffians as their fancies wrought	207
	with sealf same hand sealf reasons and sealf right	208
	woold shark on yo^{u} and men lyke ravenous fishes	209
	woold feed on on another	210
Doll	before god that^{P} as trewe as the gospell	211
[*Bett^{R}*] *Lincoln (C)*	nay this a sound fellowe I tell yo^{u} lets mark him	212
Moor (C)	Let me sett vp before yo^{r} thoughts good freind^{P}	213
	on supposytion which if yo^{u} will marke	214
	yo^{u} shall ꝑceaue howe horrible a shape	215
	yo^{r} ynnovation beres, first tis a sinn	216
	which oft thappostle did forwarne vs of vrging obedienc to aucthory⟨ty	217
	and twere [ ] no error yf I told yo^{u} all yo^{u} wer in armes gainst g⟨	218

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BRIT. MUS.

fol. 9r: Greg's transcription, lines 219–270

all	marry god forbid that	219
moo	nay certainly yo^{u} ar	220
	for to the king god hath his offyce lent	221
	of dread of Iustyce, power and Comaund	222
	hath bid him rule, and willd yo^{u} to obay	223
	and to add ampler matĩe. to this	224
	he [god] hath not [le] only lent the king his figure	225
	his throne [his] sword, but gyven him his owne name	226
	calls him a god on earth, what do yo^{u} then	227
	rysing gainst him that god himsealf enstalls	228
	but ryse gainst god, what do yo^{u} to yo^{r} sowles	229
	in doing this o desperat [ar] as you are.	230
	wash your foule mynds w^{t} teares and those same hand^{ƒ}	231
	that yo^{u} lyke rebells lyft against the peace	232
	lift vp for peace, and your vnreuerent knees	233
	[that] make them your feet to kneele to be forgyven	234
	[is safer warrs, then euer yo^{u} can make]	235
	[whose discipline is ryot ; why euen yo^{r} [warrs] hurly] [in in to yo^{r} obedienc.]	236
	[cannot ꝑceed but by obedienc] TELL ME BUT THIS (C) what rebell captaine	237
	as mutynes ar incident, by his name	238
	can still the rout who will obay [th] a traytor	239
	or howe can well that ꝑclamation sounde	240
	when ther is no adicion but a rebell	241
	to quallyfy a rebell, youle put downe straingers	242
	kill them cutt their throts possesse their howses	243
	and leade the matie of lawe in liom	244
	to slipp him lyke a hound ; [saying] [alas alas] say nowe the king	245
	as he is clement, yf thoffendor moorne	246
	shoold so much com to short of your great trespas	247
	as but to banysh yo^{u}, whether woold yo^{u} go.	248
	what Country by the nature of yo^{r} error	249
	shoold gyve you harber go yo^{u} to ffraunc or flanders	250
	to any Iarman ꝑvince, [to] spane or portigall	251
	nay any where [why yo^{u}] that not adheres to Ingland	252
	why yo^{u} must need^{ƒ} be straingers. woold yo^{u} be pleasd	253
	to find a nation of such barbarous temper	254
	that breaking out in hiddious violence	255
	woold not afoord yo^{u}, an abode on earth	256
	whett their detested knyves against yo^{r} throtes	257
	spurne yo^{u} lyke dogg^{ƒ}, and lyke as yf that god	258
	owed not nor made not yo^{u}, nor that the element^{ƒ}	259
	wer not all appropriat to [ther] yo^{r} Comfort^{ƒ}.	260
	but Charterd vnto them, what woold yo^{u} thinck	261
	to be thus vsd, this is the straingers case	262
all	and this your momtanish inhumanyty	263
	fayth a saies trewe letts vs do as we may be doon by	264
[*all*] *Linco (C)*	weele be ruld by yo^{u} master moor yf youle stand our	265
	freind to ꝑcure our ꝑdon	266
moor	Submyt yo^{u} to theise noble gentlemen	267
	entreate their mediation to the kinge	268

gyve vp yo^{r} sealf to forme obay the maiestrate 269
and thers no doubt, but mercy may be found. yf yo^{u} so seek it 270