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Textual Genealogies and Shakespeare's History Plays

Gary Taylor and John V. Nance



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Cambridge Elements

Elements in Shakespeare and Text
edited by
Claire M. L. Bourne
The Pennsylvania State University
Rory Loughnane
University of Kent

TEXTUAL GENEALOGIES AND SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORY PLAYS

Gary Taylor
Florida State University

John V. Nance
Florida State University

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Gary Taylor
Florida State University

John V. Nance
Florida State University

Author for correspondence: Gary Taylor, gtaylor@fsu.edu

Abstract: This Element reconsiders the historical, theoretical, racial, ableist, and editorial problem of genealogy by analyzing to-be-spoken genealogies in two plays in the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio: the "Salic Law" speech in *Henry V* and the "seven sons" scene in *Henry VI, Part Two*. Both passages also exist in a significantly variant version in *The Chronicle History of Henry the fift* (1600) and *The First Part of the Contention* (1594). The differences between the two versions of the biological/bloodline genealogy have been central to the long-dominant theory of "bad quartos." That theory assumes that early modern chroniclers and playwrights shared the values of modern archival historians: They assume that Shakespeare prioritized accuracy over acting. The authors offer an alternative reading of genealogies written to be performed onstage as "documentary effects," adapted for changing audiences in a new multimedia entertainment industry. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

This Element also has a video abstract: www.Cambridge.org/ESTX_Taylor_abstract

Keywords: Shakespeare, genealogy, editing, documentary, media

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This Element also has an Online Appendix, available at http://www.cambridge.org/taylor

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Introduction: Biological and Textual Genealogies

All genealogies are the same, and every genealogy is unique. All genealogies reflect efforts to determine, and claim to represent, real patterns in the transmission of information over time. The hierarchical organization of prevailing features, the description of relationships through time, the close examination of inherited variations, and analyses focused on transmutation or diachronic change – these are methodological priorities that became central to evolutionary biology in the years after 1859, when Charles Darwin declared that "all true classification is genealogical."[1] But family and tribal genealogies existed long before Darwin, and they remain important to individual and social identities. In recent decades, the combination of digitized archival data and personal genetic testing, through organizations like Ancestry.com, has made personal genealogical research possible for millions of people. But attempts to trace the details of past sexual encounters that produced past and present biological offspring can still be frustrating, both because of the haphazard survival of evidence and the resistance of some people to explore or acknowledge past relationships.[2] Likewise, although the COVID-19 virus indisputably appeared in Wuhan, China, by December 2019 at the latest, the genealogy of the viral mutations that produced that deadly variant (which should be a purely empirical matter) remains disputed, partly because of national, racial, and scientific rivalries and partly because relevant evidence has been lost or deliberately destroyed. Each genealogy differs from every other because of the intrinsic idiosyncrasy of what is being transmitted, the mechanisms for transmitting it, the number of iterations, the passage of time from origin to descendant, and the difficulties of determining and representing in the present the real pattern of past transmission.

It is no accident that the popular, long-running PBS documentary series *Finding Your Roots* is hosted by Henry Louis Gates Jr., whose scholarly work has focused on racial identities in the United States. Nor is it

[1] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (London: Murray, 1859), 420.

[2] See Maud Newton, *Ancestor Trouble: A Reckoning and a Reconciliation* (New York: Random House, 2022).

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accidental that a recent breakthrough in our understanding of the origin of the most devastating Euro-Asian bubonic plague was made by a medieval philologist, Monica Green: "Her discipline of philology, the study of the development of texts over time, requires comparing manuscripts to each other, building a stemma, or genealogy of texts, from a parent or original manuscript . . . this is precisely the same skill one needs to read phylogenetic trees of mutating bacteria in order to trace the history of the disease."[3] Such textual genealogies, typically visualized in terms of a branching "tree" or "stemma" that shows the relationship of each text to others, is not limited to medieval texts. "In almost any handbook or monograph of textual criticism," Yii-Jan Lin observes, "manuscripts or texts are described as parents and offspring, comprising families, and mingling their textual makeup to create new mixtures and hybrids."[4] Lin focuses on texts of the New Testament, but his observations about the biological metaphors and racial assumptions behind modern textual criticism apply equally to the editing of Shakespeare.[5]

Each of the dramatized, to-be-spoken family genealogies in early modern English drama has a unique purpose and unique problems. But those speeches and the scenes in which they are spoken share features that illuminate textual scholarship, editorial practice, and social prejudices. They demonstrate that Shakespeare's English history plays are as interested in bloodlines, racial identities, gendered hierarchies, and disputes about who belongs in a "nation," as *Othello* or *The Merchant of Venice*.[6] In

[3] David M. Perry, "Did the Black Death Rampage across the World a Century Earlier Than Previously Thought?" *Smithsonian Magazine* (March 25, 2021), bit.ly/45qm7HS; Monica Green, "The Four Black Deaths," *American Historical Review* 125 (2020): 1601–31.

[4] Yii-Jan Lin, *The Erotic Life of Manuscripts: New Testament Textual Criticism and the Biological Sciences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 2.

[5] See especially Brandi K. Adams, "Editing Shakespeare and Race," in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Patricia Akhimie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024), 529–45.

[6] Andrew Hadfield, "Race in Shakespeare's Histories," in Ayanna Thompson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 62–76.

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Shakespeare's *Henry V* and *2 Henry VI*, to-be-spoken genealogical chains of transmission dramatize forms of inherited identity, including identities that legitimate varieties of authority and privilege. In medieval Europe, political power and landownership were both inherited and therefore legitimated by genealogies that established vertical, hierarchical family relationships. Throughout Shakespeare's lifetime, manuscript and printed royal genealogies were popular, powerful, and sometimes dangerous texts.[7]

In 1603, King James I succeeded Queen Elizabeth I as England's sovereign. But James was not a direct lineal descendant of Elizabeth, not her sibling, nor the direct descendant of her legitimated royal siblings (who, like her, had died childless). Elizabeth was Henry VIII's daughter; James was the acknowledged great-grandson of Henry VIII's sister Margaret. Thus, James Stuart's ascent to the English throne was, like Elizabeth Tudor's, legally based on biological descent from Henry VII, who was Elizabeth's grandfather and James's great-great-grandfather (as can be seen in the early modern stemma in Illustration 1).[8] Both the monarchs who ruled England during Shakespeare's lifetime owed their claim to royal authority and legitimacy to the "Wars of the Roses," which culminated in the collapse of the Plantagenet dynasty (1154–1485), the violent death of the last Plantagenet king (Richard III), and the contested succession of the Tudor dynasty, founded by the first Tudor king, Henry VII (the man responsible for Richard III's death), who was a direct descendant of the marriage between Welshman Owain Tudor and Catherine Valois (the French widow of Henry V). Eight of the ten history plays printed in the First Folio – including all the Shakespeare history plays that survive in more than one version – dramatize the dynastic conflict that began in 1399 (with Henry Bolingbroke's challenge to the authority of Richard II) and ended in 1485 (with the killing of Richard III and the accession of Henry VII). Shakespeare's artistic representation of English history was thus

[7] See Sara Trevisan 's lavishly illustrated *Royal Genealogy in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer and the British Library, 2020).

[8] We identify digital images of early documents as "Illustrations," and our own charts and stemmas as "Figures."

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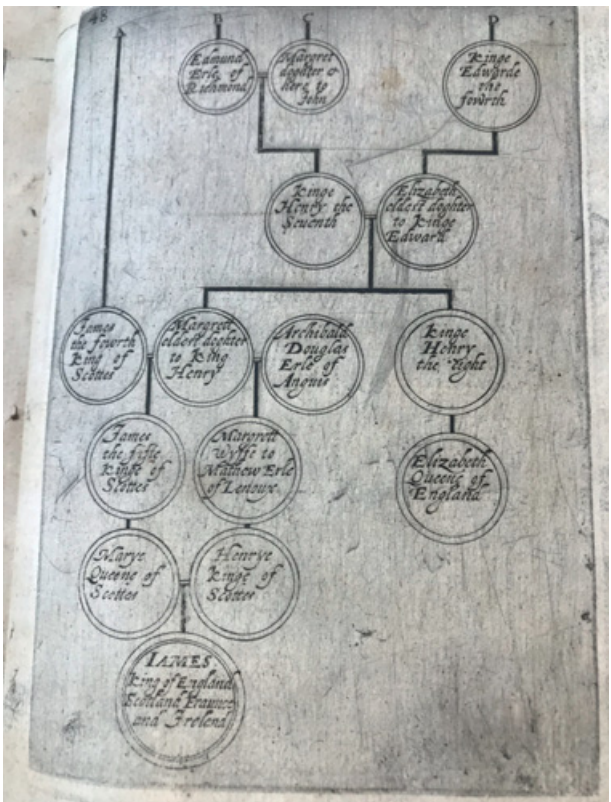


Illustration 1 Excerpt from unpaginated genealogical table in George Owen Harry, *The Genealogy of the High and Mighty Monarch, James, by the grace of God, king of great Brittayne* (STC 12872, 1604). Newberry Library, Case 4A 577.

overwhelmingly focused on a period of contested genealogies that underlay the legitimacy of the monarchs who ruled England in his lifetime.

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Texts, like persons, can have genealogies that certify their identity and legitimacy. The authority of Western European medieval Christian Bibles depended on the authority of Western European medieval Christian institutions, which retrospectively validated particular biblical texts (the Latin Vulgate) and their interpretation. Modern textual criticism originates with humanist attempts to create more reliable genealogies of textual authority.[9] Beginning in the late fourteenth century, contested textual genealogies (i.e., genealogies identifying the relationships between texts, rather than persons) led to explosive European disputes about the authority of key Christian texts. The humanist revolution sought to replace corrupt late medieval scribal copies of Greek and Latin texts by identifying earlier, more reliable manuscripts of the same works. "The Donation of Constantine," a text that foundationally legitimated the political power of the Roman Catholic papacy, turned out to be a forgery. The sixteenth-century European Reformation and Counter-Reformation were, essentially, disputes about the genealogical authority of various biblical texts and translations. Those disputes about textual genealogies, in turn, influenced disputes about dynastic genealogies. In 1558, Elizabeth Tudor's Protestantism – her commitment to the printed English Protestant Bible and to the printed English Book of Common Prayer – was more important politically than questions about her biological paternity. Likewise, in 1603, James I's Protestantism, well documented by his printed proclamations and theological tracts, outweighed the rival genealogical claims of English Catholics like Arabella Stuart and royal Spanish Catholics like Isabella Clara Eugenia. As an unauthorized 1595 treatise argued, "succession to gouerment by neernes of bloode is not by Law of nature, or diuine, but only by humane & positiue Lawes of euery particuler common wealth."[10]

[9] For the Italian humanist scholar Politian (1454–94) and the "genealogical" relationships between texts, see Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, ed. and trans. Glenn W. Most (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 47–51.

[10] "R. Doleman" [= Robert Parsons, William Allen, etc.], *A Conference about the next succession to the crowne of Ingland* (Antwerp: Arnout Coninx, [1595]), sig. *3v, STC 19398.

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Within the English-speaking world, the works of Shakespeare have often been paired with the Bible in terms of their cultural centrality, and it should not surprise us that the authority of certain Shakespeare texts has also been disputed, almost from the beginning. But by comparison with the thousands of surviving early manuscripts of biblical texts, no undisputed early Shakespeare manuscripts survive, and most of the early printed texts of his work belong to a simple genealogical sequence that began before his death. For example, the title pages of the only extant early modern texts of Shakespeare's *Henry V* establish a clear chronological sequence: Q1 1600 —> Q2 1602 —> Q3 1608 —> F1 1623 —> F2 1632 —> F3 1663 —> F4 1685. *The Chronicle History of Henry the fift* was first published in a quarto edition dated, on its title page, "1600" (STC 22289).[11] This date is confirmed by independent documentary evidence.[12] Other quarto editions are dated "1602" (STC 22290) and "1608" (STC 22291). Shakespeare editors in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries accepted that those three editions were published in that order in Shakespeare's lifetime (Figure 1). But the Cambridge edition of 1863–6 – the first academic edition and the first containing a systematic collation of textual variants in all early documents known at that time – provided clear evidence that both the "1602" and the "1608" editions were independently typeset from the "1600" printing.[13] In

[11] For STC numbers, see *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland . . . Second Edition*, comp. Alfred William Pollard and Gilbert Richard Redgrave, rev. William Alexander Jackson, Frederic S. Ferguson, and Katharine F. Pantzer, 3 vols. (London: Bibliographical Society, 1986–91). The 1600 quarto was printed by Thomas Creede for Thomas Millington and John Busby. The title page has "CRONICLE," but the head-title and all running titles spell the word "Chronicle," as do both reprints. For all known surviving copies of the first and subsequent editions, see shakespearecensus.org, which also has links to digital images of complete copies of each edition.

[12] An entry in the Stationers' Register on August 14, 1600, demonstrates that "The historye of Henrye vth wth the battell of Agencourt" had already been printed by that date. For digital images and transcriptions of all the Stationers' Register entries relevant to Shakespeare, see shakespearedocumented.folger.edu.

[13] William George Clark and William Aldis Wright, eds., *The Works of William Shakespeare*, 9 vols. (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1863–6), 4:615–58.

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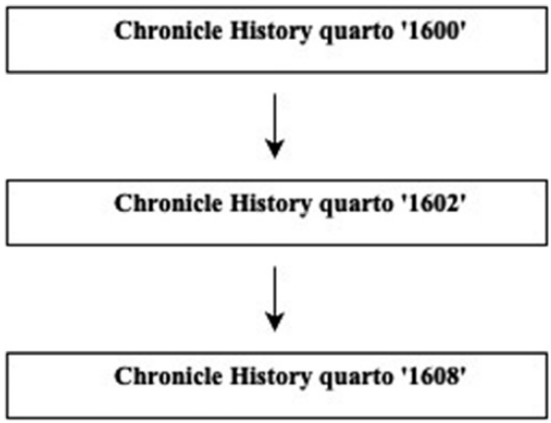


Figure 1 Chronological sequence of earliest surviving printed texts of *The Chronicle History of Henry the fift*.

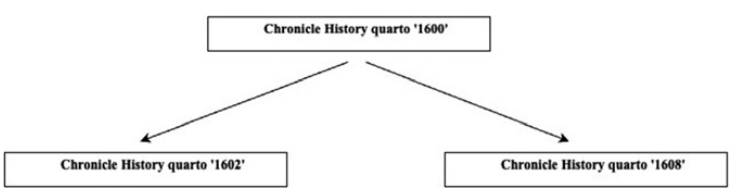


Figure 2 Genealogical sequence of earliest surviving printed texts of *The Chronicle History* established by collation of variants (1864).

genealogical terms, "1608" is not a *descendant* of "1602," but its *sibling*: They are two separate branches from the "1600" root (Figure 2).

The seemingly simple textual genealogy of those three quarto editions of *Henry V* became more complicated in the twentieth century. In 1908, Walter Wilson Greg provided bibliographical proof that ten quartos associated with Shakespeare, including the "1608" quarto of *Henry V*, were all

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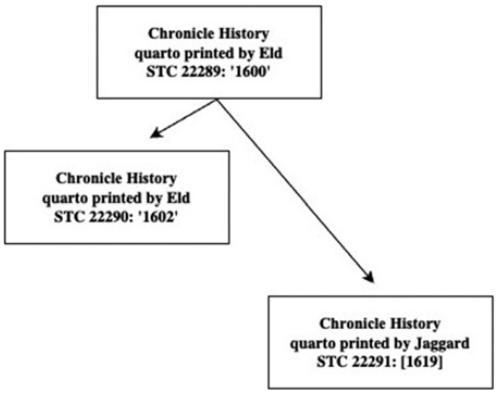


Figure 3 Genealogical sequence of earliest surviving printed texts of *The Chronicle History* established by bibliographical analysis of type and paper (1910).

manufactured in 1619 on the same stocks of paper and in the same printing house.[14] Greg's empirical evidence demonstrated that the title page of the "1608" edition of *Henry V* deliberately falsified its date of production. The chronological sequence of the three quartos remained the same, but Greg demonstrated that the third quarto edition was both posthumous and dishonest (Figure 3).

Moreover, the family firm of William Jaggard and his son Isaac, which in 1619 printed a false date on *Henry V*, also printed the First Folio edition ("F1") of Shakespeare's *Comedies*, *Histories*, & *Tragedies*. Their text of *The Life of Henry the Fift*, published in 1623, differs massively and radically from the text in the three early quartos.[15] Normally, we might suppose that texts printed in a

[14] Walter Wilson Greg, "On Certain False Dates in Shakespearian Quartos," *The Library* 34 (1908): 113–31.

[15] *The Life of Henry the Fift*, in *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies*, *Histories*, & *Tragedies* (London: Edward Blount et al., 1623), sigs h1r–k2r, STC 22273. A curated digital facsimile of the Bodleian Library copy (Arch. G c.7) can be accessed at http://firstFolio.bodleian.ox.ac.uk.

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writer's lifetime – when he could theoretically have overseen their production or been responsible for transferring copies to particular stationers – were more reliable than texts that did not begin to be set into type until years after his death. But the posthumous Folio explicitly denied the legitimacy of previous printings of his plays: a prefatory epistle ("*To the great Variety of Readers*") claimed that "where (before) you were abus'd with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maim'd, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them: euen those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes" (*A*3 r). If we remove the 1602 and 1619 editions as mere reprints, the chronological sequence would still be Q1 1600 —> F1 1623. But if we accept the claims of the 1623 Folio, the genealogical sequence of printed texts of *Henry V* (1600 —> 1623) might not represent the genealogical sequence of the manuscripts underlying those texts. The 1623 epistle divides the extant early texts of Shakespeare's works into two populations: one "maim'd, and deformed," the other "perfect of their limbes." This metaphor exhibits a prejudice against nonnormative bodies: "deformed" was "by far" the most "frequently used term in Shakespeare's day" for what we might call "disabled" or "statistically not normal," or for any bodily feature early modern English people considered "unnatural."[16] More generally, as is often the case, disability is a social as well as physical category, and therefore disability, class, and race are intertwined. The costly 1623 edition asserts its textual authority over the previously printed, much more affordable quarto and octavo texts of Shakespeare's plays by invoking a racial binary that stigmatizes and segregates one lower-class degenerate criminal population of "imposters" (trying to pass as members of a superior category) in order to protect the "perfect" upper-class population bound together in the Folio's expensive, curated space. This description of textual variants in terms of defective biological bodies can be seen in early modern textual scholars like French humanist Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609), who wrote of a "monstrous progeny" of variants in the surviving texts of Greek and Latin antiquity.[17] But the 1623 preface extends Scaliger's

[16] Sonya Freeman Loftis, *Shakespeare and Disability Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 7.

[17] Joseph Scaliger, *Epistolæ omnes quæ reperiri potuerunt* (Leiden: Elzevier, 1627), D2v. USTC 1028641. For USTC numbers, see Universal Short Title Catalogue,

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biological metaphor from individual variants to whole populations of texts. We can see here a binary logic that Lin identifies in his analysis of nineteenth-century biblical stemmatics: The contrast between "perfect" and "deformed" creates genealogical claims that identify whole populations ("families, tribes, and nations") as inferior.[18] The Folio preface anticipates the hierarchical categories of emergent racial classifications, solidified in Darwin's subtitle, "the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life."[19] But the 1623 prefatory epistle was ambiguous: were *all* the editions printed before the *Comedies*, *Histories*, & *Tragedies* being classified as "maim'd" (mutilated, wounded, injured, typically after birth) and/or "deformed" (misshapen, malformed, deviating from the normal structure, typically at birth), or was that criticism aimed only at *some*? Does "diuerse" mean "multiform" or "perverse" or "some" or "several different" or "many"?[20]

Although the Folio prefatory epistle was ambiguous in 1623, over the next three centuries the solidification of an allegedly scientific racism retrospectively obscured the ambiguity, making it difficult for later readers to interpret that epistle in anything other than white supremacist terms. "Natural philosophers and agricultural breeders" had "provided fresh evidence for both biparental heredity and the relative stability of inherited traits over generations" by the 1700s; by the end of the nineteenth century, "Hereditary Genius" had been established "by collating the pedigrees of hundreds of eminent

www.ustc.ac.uk. For Scaliger's importance, see Timpanaro, *Lachmann's Method*, esp. 51n19.

[18] Lin, *Manuscripts*, 42–66.

[19] For an introduction to emergent racial categories, see Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) and *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Patricia Akhimie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

[20] For the various potential meanings of these words, all current in the early seventeenth century, see the entries for *maimed*, *deformed*, *divers*, and *diverse* in *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, updated June 2020), www.oed.com.

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people," and "state enforced eugenics . . . had wide appeal."[21] In the early twentieth century, supposedly scientific racial categories saturated and dominated public discourse, George Bernard Shaw had christened the pervasive quasi-religious veneration of Shakespeare "bardolatry," and bibliography sought to erase the ambiguities of 1623. In 1909, Alfred William Pollard suggested a new interpretation of the Folio preface: "diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies" referred only to five "bad quartos" (including the 1600 *Chronicle History of Henry the fift*). Pollard claimed that those quartos had been published by stationers who were "pirating" the text, which legally belonged to other stationers.[22] Within a year, Pollard's interpretation of the 1623 epistle was combined with Greg's detailed conjectures about the illicit activities of actors, creating a theory of "memorial reconstruction" of plays like *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry V*, producing unauthorized and corrupt texts subsequently published by unscrupulous printers and booksellers.[23] This hypothesis dominated a century of textual criticism, textual genealogies, and editing of Shakespeare. In 1929, Peter Alexander (in a book with a preface by Pollard) added three more early Shakespeare histories to the roster of memorial reconstructions: the first printings of *2 Henry VI* (*The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*, 1594), *3 Henry VI* (*The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt*, 1595), and *Richard III* (*The Tragedy of King Richard the third*, 1597).[24] Pollard's five "bad quartos" eventually expanded to forty-one "suspect" printed texts that were seen to

[21] John Waller, *Heredity: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 37, 63.

[22] Alfred William Pollard, *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos: A Study in the Bibliography of Shakespeare's Plays 1594–1685* (London: Methuen, 1909), 64–80.

[23] *Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor 1602*, ed. Walter Wilson Greg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910).

[24] Peter Alexander, *Shakespeare's* Henry VI *and* Richard III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929).

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contaminate the early documentary record not only of Shakespeare but of early modern drama more generally.[25]

The enduring influence of the category of "suspect" texts depends on a simple genealogical theory of textual (re)production that explains the (de) generation of a whole population of texts. That eugenic theory allowed editors to ignore, segregate, disparage, and discourage reproduction of thousands of variants in texts published during Shakespeare's lifetime. In place of the clear chronological order of the extant printed texts ("1600 —> 1623"), it postulated an invisible chronology of lost manuscripts, a genealogy in which the 1623 Folio was printed from an *authorial* manuscript ("pre-F") that was the ancestor of a *badly corrupted*, *non-authorial* manuscript ("pre-Q") (see Figure 4).

Though the "Pre-F —> Pre-Q" genealogical stemma may seem counterintuitive, that does not prove it is wrong. The fact that the canonical hypothesis has been articulated in the language of eugenics (with inferior texts relegated to bibliographical ghettos) does not mean that all scholarly efforts to construct a genealogy of Shakespeare's texts are inherently flawed, inherently racist, inherently elitist, or inherently ableist. Genealogies can be and have been put to divergent uses. In May 2025, a genealogical archivist established that the maternal grandparents and great-grandparents of the newly elected Roman Catholic pontiff, Pope Leo XIV, came from a New Orleans Creole community, but the family deliberately changed their racial identity when they moved to Chicago: "They were consistently listed as Black, mulatto, colored here [in New Orleans], but once they get to Chicago it's white, white, white, white, white."[26] Another team, led by Henry Louis Gates Jr., discovered that some of the pope's free black ancestors themselves

[25] Laurie E. Maguire, *Shakespearean Suspect Texts: The "Bad" Quartos and Their Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Maguire concluded that few if any of the suspect texts could be plausibly attributed to memorial reconstruction.

[26] Molly Reid Cleaver, "From the French Quarter to the Vatican: The Creole Heritage of Pope Leo XIV," *The Historic New Orleans Collection*, May 9, 2025: https://hnoc.org/publishing/first-draft/from-the-french-quarter-to-the-vatican.

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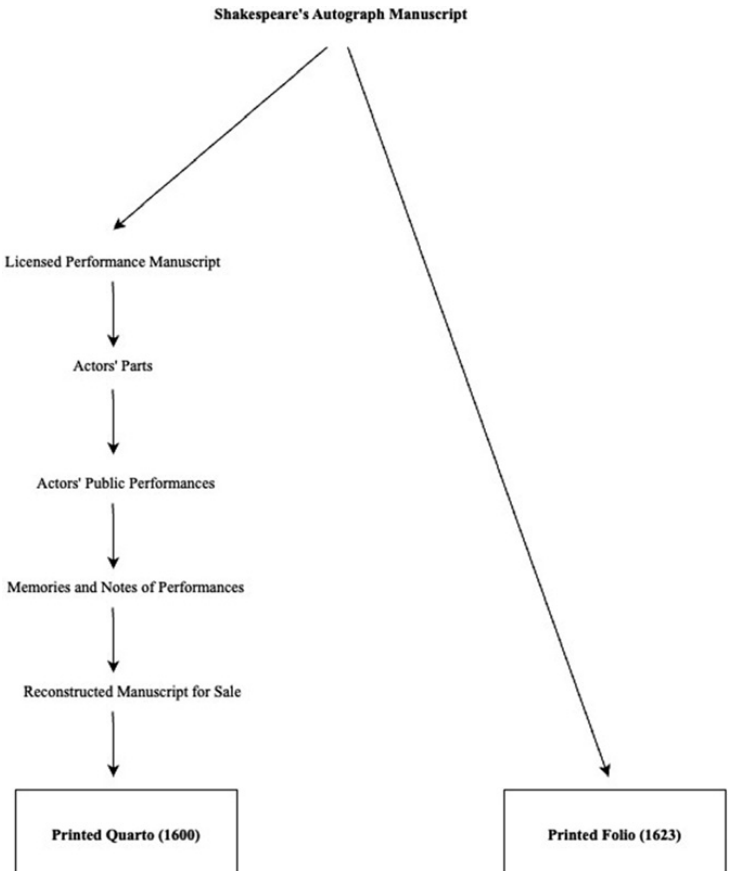


Figure 4 Stemma of New Bibliography "Bad Quarto Theory" of *Henry V*.

owned black slaves.[27] In 2023, DNA analysis "connected 27 free and enslaved African Americans buried in a Maryland cemetery to their

[27] See Henry Louis Gates, Jr. et al., "Finding the Pope's Roots." www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/06/11/magazine/pope-leo-xiv-ancestry-family-tree.html.

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42,000 living relatives."[28] Of course, the aims and politics of textual criticism differ fundamentally from the aims and politics of African Americans searching for their origins (often lost because of the slave trade or deliberately concealed to avoid racial prejudice). But both archival activities are driven by a search for more accurate evidence of the past, which in turn can reshape the present, both politically and personally. To intelligibly or creatively discuss the historical relationships between different early texts of Shakespeare we must "search for textual origins" and "find new methods for producing a stemma," rather than simply echoing previous editorial orthodoxies and previous textual genealogies.[29] Those new methods should be conscious of and attempt to avoid the ethnocentric, gendered, and ableist assumptions that underlay previous editorial theories. The New Bibliographical hypothesis – that the 1600 edition was a "bad quarto" based on inaccurate memories of theatrical performances, and that the "good" 1623 edition was printed directly from Shakespeare's first complete manuscript – might be correct. From 1979 to 1987, Gary Taylor, one of the authors of this Element, defended that hypothesis about the genealogical sequence[30]; it continues to be supported by recent editors of *Henry V*, including editors of the quarto version.[31]

[28] Margaret Osborne, "DNA Links 42,000 Living People to Enslaved and Free African Americans Buried in Maryland," *Smithsonian Magazine*, August 4, 2023, smithsonianmag.com.

[29] Zachary Lesser, *Hamlet before Q1: An Uncanny History of the Shakespearean Text* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 218, 220.

[30] Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *Modernizing Shakespeare's Spelling, with Three Studies in the Text of "Henry V"* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 39–164; *Henry V*, ed. Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); *The Life of Henry the Fifth*, ed. Gary Taylor, in *Complete Works*, gen. ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 638–71. See also Taylor's textual introduction to *Henry V* in Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, with John Jowett and William Montgomery, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 376–7.

[31] *The First Quarto of* King Henry V, ed. Andrew Gurr, *The New Cambridge Shakespeare: The Early Quartos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000);

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We both now believe that Pollard's, Greg's, and Alexander's textual genealogies, based upon theories about "bad quartos," are fundamentally flawed. But in this short Element, we cannot examine in detail the application of those New Bibliographical theories throughout the entire Shakespeare canon. Instead, we will focus on two plays: *Henry V* and *2 Henry VI*. In both these plays, the contested genealogies of dynastic families are textualized in extensive dramatic dialogue, and those to-be-spoken genealogies justify and precipitate violent resistance against the political status quo. Both plays exist in two versions: a text printed in the 1623 Jacobean Folio (widely reprinted, read, and performed for four centuries) and a shorter Elizabethan text, printed decades earlier in a smaller, more affordable format (seldom reprinted, read, or performed since 1623). For both plays, the dramatized genealogy in the Elizabethan printing substantially differs from the dramatized genealogy in the Jacobean printing; and for both plays, the differences in that dramatized genealogy have been repeatedly cited as proof that the Elizabethan printing is an illegitimate, bastardized text, so corrupt that it cannot have been written or authorized by Shakespeare. For each, a royal genealogy written to be spoken onstage in a single scene has been leveraged to challenge the textual genealogy and cultural authority of the entirety of the earliest surviving text. Moreover, the two plays share two crucial and indisputable stages of transmission: Both were first printed in Thomas Creede's printing house (and published by Thomas Millington), and then both were printed in a longer version in 1623 in Jaggard's printing house (and published by the Jaggards in partnership with Edward Blount and others).

For all these reasons, we consider the genealogies of both *Henry V* and *2 Henry VI* together. We begin (in Sections 1 and 2) with the play written and printed later, *Henry V*. We do so because *Henry V*'s genealogy scene, and its connection to Holinshed, became fundamental to theories of the

"Henry V (Modern, Quarto)," ed. James D. Mardock, *Internet Shakespeare Editions*. University of Victoria. https://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/doc/H5_Q1M/index.html ; *The Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth*, ed. Howard Marchitello, *The Norton Shakespeare: Third Edition*, Digital Edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015).

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relationship of its two texts in 1877, more than half a century before very similar arguments about the genealogy scene in *The First Part of the Contention* (and *its* connection to Raphael Holinshed) became fundamental to theories of the relationship between that quarto and its Folio counterpart. The 1877 hypothesis about *Henry V* provided the template for the 1929 hypothesis about *Contention*. Moreover, *Henry V* is in several respects less complicated. Unlike *2 Henry VI*, Shakespeare's authorship of *Henry V* has never been seriously or widely contested; it belonged from the outset to an acting company co-owned by Shakespeare, and both versions of its dramatized genealogy clearly derive from the 1587 edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*.[32] By contrast, Shakespeare's sole authorship of either version of *2 Henry VI* has been disputed since the eighteenth century; the 1587 Holinshed is not the only historical source of either version; the acting company that first performed it also remains uncertain; and the dynastic genealogy it dramatizes survives in widely divergent versions in sixteenth-century printed sources. All those complications have muddied analysis of the textual variants in its genealogy scene. By comparison, the genealogy scene in *Henry V* is, as Shakespeare's bishop declares in both versions, "as clear as is the summer's sun."[33]

Although genealogical scholarship can at its best identify real relationships between material texts, and although the New Bibliographical genealogy for *Henry V* (Figure 4) might theoretically be correct, the evidence for the "bad quartos" hypothesis has been systematically undermined for more than three decades.[34] So have claims about the widespread use of authorial

[32] Raphael Holinshed et al., *The chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande*, 2nd edition, 3 vols. (London: J. Harison et al., 1587), 3G.i, STC 13569.

[33] *Chronicle*, 1.52; *Life*, 1.2.86.

[34] See, e.g., Maguire, *Suspect Texts*; Paul Werstine, "A Century of 'Bad' Shakespeare Quartos," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50 (1999): 310–33; Terri Bourus, *Young Shakespeare's Young Hamlet: Print, Piracy, and Performance* (New York: Palgrave, 2014); *Shakespeare and the First Hamlet*, ed. Terri Bourus (Oxford: Berghahn, 2022). For a survey of the debates, see Gabriel Egan, *The Struggle for Shakespeare's Text: Twentieth-Century Editorial Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 100–28. For a compelling critique of Greg's foundational example of a memorial reconstruction, see Laurie Maguire and

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"foul papers" by early printers of Shakespeare's plays.[35] Most recently, further investigations of the 1619 quartos have also challenged a key assumption of the New Bibliography's genealogy. The bottom line of the title page of the third quarto edition of *The Chronicle History of Henry the fift* claims that it was "Printed for *T. P.* 1608." Those initials stand for the publisher Thomas Pavier, who published the 1602 edition, and who had owned the copyright for *The Chronicle History* since August 1600. For more than a century, the ten quartos printed by the Jaggards in 1619 were generally called the "Pavier" quartos, and many of the variants introduced in them were attributed to Pavier.[36] But examinations of the more than one hundred surviving copies of those quartos have made it clear that the Jaggard firm, which printed all the quartos, also probably initiated the whole project.[37] Thus, the initials "T. P." on the third quarto edition of *The Chronicle History* may be as false as the immediately following date "1608" (and as false as the "T. P." on the 1619 quarto text of *The Whole Contention*). The Jaggards now appear to be even more thoroughly implicated in the dishonest 1619 project: We should probably call those deliberately misleading Shakespeare editions "the Jaggard Quartos," because the agency of the Jaggard firm is indisputable and the agency of Pavier is speculative.[38] That must therefore also destabilize any assumption or assertion of the absolute reliability of the 1623 Folio, also printed and copublished by the Jaggards.

Emma Smith, "Theater, Revision, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 72 (2021): 177–202.

[35] See Paul Werstine, "Narratives about Printed Shakespearean Texts: 'Foul Papers' and 'Bad Quartos,'" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990): 147–68; Gary Taylor, "Post-Script," in Gary Taylor and John Jowett, *Shakespeare Reshaped 1606–1623* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 237–43.

[36] Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 121–35.

[37] Zachary Lesser, *Ghosts, Holes, Rips and Scrapes: Shakespeare in 1619, Bibliography in the Longue Durée* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

[38] Ben Higgins, *Shakespeare's Syndicate: The First Folio, Its Publishers, and the Early Modern Book Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 104–10.

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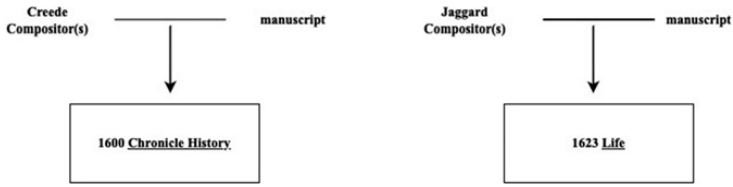


Figure 5 The role of compositors in the transmission of printed playtexts.

Figure 4 simplifies the complexity of the transmission of *Henry V*, because it does not properly distinguish between objects and agents. Human genealogies typically record the intersection of two agents (one male, one female), but textual genealogies record the intersection of material objects and a variety of human agents. In Figure 4, both the 1600 quarto and the 1623 Folio are boxed, because both are extant objects. But Figure 4 does not identify the long-deceased people who created those extant objects. The 1600 quarto derives, directly or indirectly, from a lost manuscript by Shakespeare himself; so does the 1623 Folio. But both quarto and Folio were created by the intersection of a now-lost manuscript with unfamous workers in a particular printing house (Creede's for the quarto, Jaggard's for the Folio), who selected for each letter, punctuation mark, line, and space in someone else's handwriting the corresponding pieces of type that were mechanically pressed against hundreds of sheets of paper (Figure 5). The quarto and Folio were produced at different times in different printing houses for different publishers. Such transformations from hand-and-pen to metal-and-machine always introduced changes: some deliberate, some inadvertent. Before we speculate about lost manuscripts and unidentified agents, we must acknowledge the certain agency of the two known printers and their unnamed employees (and perhaps also the different publishers who paid those different printers).

In this Element, we begin with an analysis of the genealogical speech in *Henry V*, asking why Q1's version of that speech has dominated arguments for memorial reconstruction (Section 1). We then examine

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F1's version (Section 2), considering various explanations for its additional material and relating its variants to the larger field of "authorial philology." Next, we turn to the genealogy of Edward III's descendants, which was the basis for the New Bibliography's claim that *The First Part of Contention* was a memorial reconstruction – a claim that depended on assumptions about the stability of "History," despite the many genealogical errors in English chronicles printed between 1516 and 1569 (Section 3). Edward Hall's 1548 chronicle, which undoubtedly influenced Shakespeare, is also unreliable (Section 4). Holinshed's *Chronicles* survives in two different editions (1577 and 1587); their differences clearly reflect variants between the 1594 and 1623 versions of the genealogy (Section 5). Collectively, this evidence undermines the New Bibliography's purist genealogy, which denied that Shakespeare could have collaborated with other playwrights, adapted existing plays, or revised his own work (Section 6). In conclusion (Section 7), we show why editors and critics need to distinguish between documentary archives (tools of historians) and "archival effects" (tools of playmakers).

1 The Law Salic

We should not take the New Bibliographical genealogies of *Henry the fift* and *Henry the Sixt*, *Part Two* as self-evident. But we *should* ask why it seemed so obvious to Pollard and Greg that the 1600 edition of *The Chronicle History* was a "bad" quarto. The answer is that they were convinced by an argument, made in 1877, that had nothing to do with bibliography as an empirical examination of material objects manufactured by particular agents working particular machines. Instead, the influential 1877 argument was based on literary interpretation of a royal genealogy.

Shakespeare's *Henry V* dramatizes a conflict of genealogies. A dispute about familial inheritance leads to war. English military victory then forces a new bequest (naming the English king as heir to the French throne) and the English king's marriage to a French princess (which produces a child who unites the genealogies of the two warring royal families). Until 1900, all patrilineal genealogies were stories rather than facts, because until the

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identification of blood types and then of DNA, it was impossible to determine empirically whether a particular man fathered a particular child. But in all early texts of Shakespeare's plays, the initial dispute about familial inheritance does not contest who fathered whom, but centers instead on the rules of representation and causation that should organize a genealogy: It is a dispute about legal precedent.

In *Henry V*, the dramatic genealogy does not name a single English king or aristocrat. Instead, it focuses on a procedural rule: Should the vertical genealogical line of legitimate heirs be governed by the misogynistic law of male primogeniture, in which the eldest son inherits everything? Or should it also recognize female heirs and the descendants of women? Henry asks an English bishop, "Why the Law Salicke which they haue in *France*, / Or should or should not, stop vs in our clayme."[39] In both versions, the bishop responds in a long speech surveying the genealogy of the French royal family, claiming two things. First, in both versions, the Salic Law did not historically apply to inheritance within the geographical territory called "France" or the ethnographic category "French." Second, in both versions, the vertical line of royal succession in France repeatedly recognized and descended through female inheritance: The French themselves have routinely ignored the Salic Law, which therefore cannot bar Henry's inheritance of the French crown and French territory.

The legitimacy of Henry's war, and any interpretation of his character and his play, depends on this genealogical, misogynistic, ethnocentric legal claim. But the 1600 and 1623 printed texts of *Henry V* contain significantly different accounts of the English bishop's speech about the Salic Law. The differences are so great that they cannot all be attributed to the printers Creede and Jaggard; they must represent, at least in part, differences in two

[39] For Q1, we give scene and line numbers (here, "1.7–8") from *The First Quarto*, ed. Andrew Gurr; for F1, we give act-scene-line numbers (here, "1.2.11–12") from *Henry the Fift*, ed. Rory Loughnane, in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Complete Works: Critical Reference Edition*, gen. eds. Terri Bourus, Gabriel Egan, John Jowett, and Gary Taylor, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2:2301–85. In these two lines, the texts are substantively the same, differing only in "which" and "stop" (Folio "that" and "bar").

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lost manuscripts, one that came into Creede's printing house, the other into Jaggard's. In 1877, Peter Augustin Daniel cited those differences as proof of a particular textual genealogy: The version of the speech printed in the later Folio gives the royal genealogy correctly, and the earlier quarto text of that speech gives it incorrectly, meaning that the entire quarto "may be with confidence asserted" as a text printed, not from "an authentic manuscript" but instead from "an imperfect copy of [Shakespeare's] work."[40] Daniel's argument was reiterated by subsequent textual scholars, who hardened Daniel's "confidence" into certainty.[41] Thus, Daniel's analysis of a single genealogical speech produced a textual genealogy for the entire play, which has dominated our understanding of the two texts ever since. In that long-dominant textual stemma (Figure 4), *The Life of Henry the fift* descends directly from Shakespeare himself and is often said to have been a manuscript in Shakespeare's own handwriting, a "rough draft" or "foul papers."[42] In that hypothesis, the 1623 Folio text is based on a manuscript that existed *before* the manuscript used by the 1600 quarto printer. By contrast, *The Chronicle History of Henry the fift*, published in 1600, is an illegitimate descendant of *The Life*, produced by unscrupulous actors "reporting" poorly

[40] Peter Augustin Daniel, Introduction to King Henry V: *Parallel Texts of the First Quarto (1600) and First Folio (1623) Editions*, ed. Brinsley R. Nicholson (London: New Shakspere Society, 1877), xi–xiv.

[41] Daniel's arguments were endorsed by Edmund K. Chambers in his influential *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), 1:390–2. Daniel's critique of the quarto variants was expanded in Alfred Hart 's *Stolne and Surreptitious Copies: A Comparative Study of Shakespeare's Bad Quartos* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1942), which also provides parallel texts of the Salic Law speech (190–8). George Ian Duthie, in "The Quarto of *Henry V*," in *Papers Mainly Shakespearean*, ed. George Ian Duthie (Edinburgh: University of Aberdeen, 1964), 106–30, also cited the claim that "This genealogical speech in Q is in part incoherent" as evidence that the quarto text was "a result of defective memorial transmission" (129n9).

[42] Ronald Brunlees McKerrow, "A Suggestion regarding Shakespeare's Manuscripts," *Review of English Studies* 11 (1935): 459–65; Walter Wilson Greg, *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942).

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remembered performances of the play, or by unscrupulous members of the audience supplementing their memories of performance by jotting down details during and after a performance, using shorthand or some other form of "fast note-taking" to "report" what they heard and saw.[43] Thus, the standard textual genealogy of *Henry V* derives its editorial and intellectual authority from a few textual variants in the speech outlining the French royal genealogy that authorized Henry V's invasion of France.

Before we examine the single speech that forms the basis for Daniel's hypothesis, we should ask whether the textual genealogy of an entire play can be credibly based on variants in a single idiosyncratic speech. The 308 words of the Salic Law speech in *Chronicle History* constitute only 2.5 percent of the quarto's to-be-spoken text, and Daniel's hypothesis that the entire quarto represents an abridged, derivative, unauthorized, and unreliable text depends on only two words in that speech. Since a comprehensive analysis of all available data is one of the fundamental principles for establishing the reliability and authority of stemmatological research or DNA analysis, we follow that method here. The number of lexical variants is especially important when we have only two variant texts (1600 quarto and 1623 Folio), as opposed to the thousands of early manuscripts of the New Testament, or even the twenty-three texts of John Fletcher's short song "Take oh take those lips away," or the nineteen copies of Francis Beaumont's verse letter 'The Sun That Doth the Greatest Comfort Bring', or the seven texts of Thomas Middleton's play *A Game at Chess*.[44]

[43] For "fast note-taking," see Tiffany Stern, "Sermons, Plays, and Note-Takers: *Hamlet* Q1 as a 'Noted' Text," *Shakespeare Survey* 66 (2013): 1–23; for a rebuttal, see Bourus, *Young Hamlet*, 68–100.

[44] John Jowett, "Appendix IV: The Text of 'Take Oh Take Those Lips Away,'" in Taylor and Jowett, *Shakespeare Reshaped*, 273–95; Mark Bland, "Francis Beaumont's Verse Letters to Ben Jonson and the 'Mermaid Club,'" *English Manuscript Studies* 12 (2005): 139–77; Gary Taylor, "*A Game at Chess*: General Textual Introduction," in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 712–873.

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In short, recent scholarship based on systematic investigation of the entire quarto and Folio texts of *Henry V* does not support Daniel's hypothesis. Idiosyncratic speech prefixes for the Frenchwomen Catherine and Alice, shared by both texts, cannot be explained by memorial reconstruction or note-taking during a performance, because speech prefixes are never spoken. Furthermore, because of massive differences in the length and dialogue of the two scenes, the variants cannot be explained by the Folio copying one of the quartos. Therefore, those shared eccentricities must come from a shared manuscript source that existed before the two versions of the play separated into the two branches that led eventually to the 1600 and 1623 editions. That shared source also lacked the many stage directions for music, characteristic of theatrical manuscripts, which are absent from the quarto but present in the Folio, suggesting that the Folio is more likely than the quarto to derive from a theatrical manuscript.[45] The quarto could instead derive from the initial draft manuscript that a playwright read aloud to the acting company, which might have been revised in response to feedback from the company.[46] Three recent studies, by three different scholars, have concluded that multiple passages unique to the 1623 text resulted from changes made for a court performance in 1602 or 1605, *after* publication of the 1600 quarto. If so, the quarto compositors cannot have been working from a manuscript created *later* than the one used by the Folio compositors.[47] Where the quarto and Folio share stage directions, scenes, and extended passages, the quarto is consistently closer

[45] Gary Taylor, "Play Manuscripts, Vectors of Transmission, and Shakespeare's *Henry the fift*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 116.3 (2022): 343–78.

[46] Terri Bourus, "Theatrical Environments," in Rory Loughnane and Will Sharpe, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Early Modern Authorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025), 191–208.

[47] Richard Dutton, *Shakespeare, Court Dramatist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Murat Öğütcü, "Masculine Dreams: *Henry V* and the Jacobean Politics of Court Performance," in *Performances at Court in the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. Sophie Chiari and John Mucciolo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 79–91; Gary Taylor, "One Book to Rule Them All:

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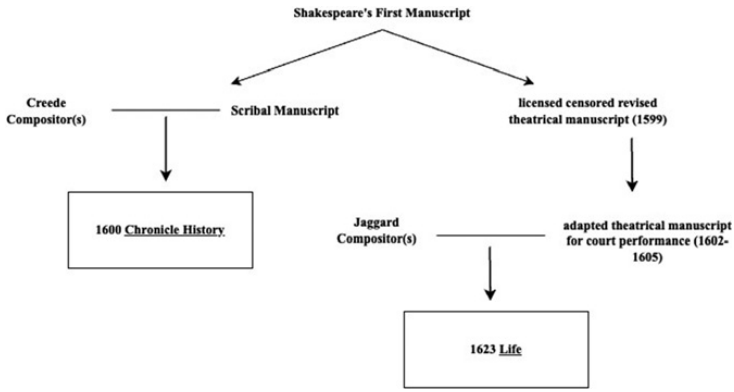


Figure 6 A proposed genealogy of the two printed versions (1600 *Chronicle History* and 1623 *Life*) of Shakespeare's *Henry V*.

than the Folio to Shakespeare's known sources.[48] None of this evidence proves that the quarto was printed directly from Shakespeare's draft, and its exit directions suggest at least one intervening manuscript between Shakespeare and Creede's compositors.[49] All this new research suggests Figure 4 should be replaced by something like Figure 6.

In evaluating errors in a royal genealogy, we should begin, not with *Henry V*, but with a play less foundational to English political and racial identity. *The first part Of the true & honorable history of the Life of Sir Iohn Old-castle* was written in autumn 1599 (just a few months after *Henry V*) and published in a quarto the next year (like *Henry V*). It dramatizes events in the reign of

'The King James Version' of Shakespeare's Plays," *Shakespeare* 19.4 (2024): 75–103.

[48] Gary Taylor, "Shakespearian Magnitudes," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 73 (2022): 246–79. That article explicitly excludes the major differences in the Salic Law speech, which are considered here.

[49] MacDonald P. Jackson, "Omnes Stage Directions in Three Suspect Shakespeare Texts," *Notes and Queries* 67.2 (2020): 237–39.

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Henry V, and a genealogy challenging his claim to the throne (7.8–43) is delivered by the Earl of Cambridge – who also appears in both versions of Shakespeare's play, where he is executed for treason. Ironically, like Henry's claim to France, Cambridge's claim to England depends on a woman (his wife, descended from Edward III's third son).

This scene of *Oldcastle* is usually attributed to Michael Drayton, one of the four authors Philip Henslowe paid to write the play.[50] Drayton was a serious student of English history. But his *Oldcastle* genealogy contains serious errors. It asserts that three of the four children of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, "dide" [=died] "without issue" (17). But the most important of those three, Edmund Mortimer, was still alive throughout Henry V's reign, and indeed is a character in *1 Henry VI*. The genealogy also claims that Cambridge's "father was / Edward, the Duke of York" (22–3); in fact, Edward was Cambridge's brother, and still alive at the time of this conspiracy. Likewise, Cambridge's "wife" was *not* "lawful heir to Roger Mortimer" (25–6), because Edmund Mortimer was still alive. The quarto also calls "Edmund Langley, Edward the third's first sonne" (24). In fact, he was the fifth son. This error was first corrected in print by lawyer and editor Edmond Malone in 1780.[51]

[50] In the only edition of Drayton's complete works, the two scenes featuring the Cambridge conspirators (including the genealogy scene) are identified as the part of the play most likely to be his: "All three editors of this edition reached this opinion independently." See *The Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. J. William Hebel, Bernard Newdigate, and Kathleen Tillotson, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931–41), 5:45. The Cambridge scenes are also typical of Drayton in their preference for *doth* (instead of *does*), *hath* (instead of *has*), and *yes* (instead of *ay*).

[51] Edmond Malone, ed., *Supplement to the Edition of Shakspeare's Plays Published in 1778*, 2 vols. (London: C. Bathurst et al., 1780), 2:304. See also *The Oldcastle Controversy*, ed. Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 77–8. We cite the text from the 1600 edition (STC 18795). We have checked this page in both digital copies of the 1600 edition, and all ten digital copies of the 1619 edition (STC 18796), on shakespearecensus.org. None contain these corrections.

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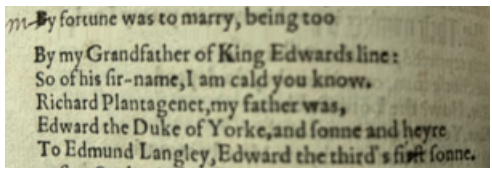


Illustration 2 *The first part Of the true & honorable history, of the Life of Sir John Old-castle* (STC 18796, 1619), sig. D4v, with two handwritten ink corrections. Newberry Library, VAULT Case 4A 956.

That error was also corrected by hand in ink in the Newberry Library copy of the 1619 reprint: The "r" of "first" is blotted out, and a crossbar added to change the penultimate "s" into "f." Five lines up, the first word is also corrected in ink: The initial "B" is blotted out, and an "M" is written in the margin to replace it (Illustration 2). This manuscript emendation restores the "My" present in Q1; but Q3's error was repeated in the 1664 and 1685 Folios. This copy of *Oldcastle* is bound with several other 1619 quartos: *Oldcastle* is followed by *The Whole Contention* (which combines *The First Part of the Contention* with *Richard, Duke of York*).[52] There is another manuscript correction in the genealogy scene in *The Whole Contention* (C4 r), where printed "*Yorke*" is crossed out and replaced by the historically accurate "Gloster" in the line: "The seauenth and last was Sir *Thomas of Woodstocke*, Duke of | *Yorke*" (Illustration 3).[53]

[52] Newberry Library, VAULT BOX Case 4A 956, sig. D4v. The name "W^m Henderson" is written at the top of the title page of *Merry Wives*. Librarian Lisa Schoblasky confirmed that the Newberry Library purchased the "book as part of a larger collection known as the Louis Silver collection in the 1960s," but she had "no information about its earlier ownership" and so tracing the source of the emendations is not yet possible (email to Gary Taylor, October 28, 2021).

[53] We have checked this page against the Folger copy of the first edition (STC 26099) and the Folger, Bodmer, Scotland, and Texas copies of the third edition (STC 26101) in the digital copies on shakespearecensus.org. None contain this correction (or any others in the genealogy).

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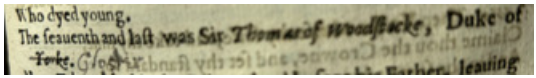
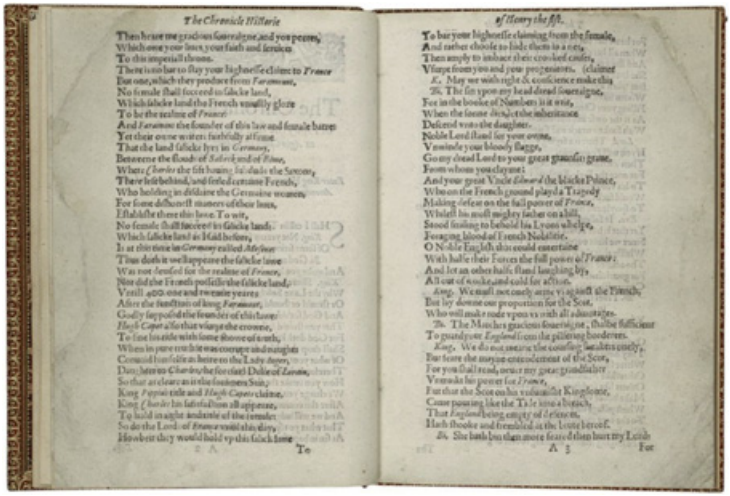


Illustration 3 *The Whole Contention between the two Famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke* (STC 26101, 1619), sig. C4r, with one handwritten ink correction. Newberry Library, VAULT Case 4A 956.

We cannot date these manuscript amendments or identify the reader(s) who made them, but they do establish that at least some mistakes in English royal genealogies were noticed and corrected by early readers of early printed playtexts. The incorrect "first" in *Oldcastle* may result from a compositor or scribe misreading the correct word in the author's manuscript – though the fact that the error was not corrected in the quarto of 1619 or the Folios of 1663/4 or 1685 suggests that "first" did not disturb most of the play's earliest readers. But the *Oldcastle* quartos' other three substantial errors about Mortimer's own lineage have not been emended away by any editor, because it is hard to explain any of them as the result of a simple misreading or routine copyist's or compositor's error.

How, then, should we explain these errors in the *Oldcastle* genealogy? Perhaps the playwright wanted to simplify for his audience the complexity of the genealogical issues created by the fact that Edward III had seven sons. This explanation could apply to almost any genealogy in any play. But here, there is another possible explanation: these lines in *Oldcastle* are spoken by and to traitors. The scene in which the genealogy is explained and discussed was invented by the playwright. Its primary dramatic purpose seems to be to provide a wholly fictitious proof that Oldcastle himself was not a traitor: In the play (but not in any known historical source) Oldcastle exposes the conspiracy of men planning to assassinate Henry V. Catholics justified Oldcastle's execution for treason; Protestants saw him instead as an early Protestant martyr. In the circumstances, the dramatist might have considered it wise not to make the case for treason too persuasive. In other words, a playwright might have political as well as dramatic reasons for altering or weakening a genealogical argument.

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The Chronicle Historie
Then heare me gracious soueraigne, and you peeres,
Which owne your liues, your faith and seruices
To this imperiall throne.
There is no barre to stay your highnesse clayme to *France*
But one, which they produce from *Faramont*,
No female shall succeed to Salicke land,
Which Salicke land the French vsually gloze
To be the realme of *France*:
And *Faramont* the founder of this law and female barre
Yet their owne writers faithfully affirme
That the land Salicke lyes in *Germany*,
Betweene the floods of *Sabrick* and of *Rone*,
Where *Charles* the fift hauing subdude the Saxons,
There left behind, and fixed certaine French,
Who holding in disdaine the Germaine women,
For some disorderly manners of their liues,
Ihalid the there this lawe. To wit,
No female shall succeed to Salicke land.
Which Salicke land as Ihalid before,
Is at this time in *Germany* called *Meisne*
Thus doth it well appeare the Salicke lawe
Was not ordeined for the realme of *France*,
Nor did the French possesse the Salicke land,
Vntill 400. one and twenty yeares
After the decease of king *Faramont*,
Godly supposed the founder of this lawe:
Hugh Capet also that vsurpt the crowne,
To faine his title with some shewe of truth,
When in pure truth it was corrupt and naught
Conueid himselfe as heire to the Lady *Lingare*,
Daughter to *Charles* the foresaid Duke of *Lorraine*,
So that as cleare as is the Sunne at noone,
King *Pepins* title and *Hugh Capets* claime,
King *Charles* his satisfaction all appeare,
To hold in right and title of the female:
So do the Lord of *Arance* vrge this clayme,
Howbeit they would hold vp this Salicke lame
Te

of Henry the fift.
To barre your highnesse clayming from the female,
And rather chuse to hide them in a net,
Then amply to imbrace their crooked tenets,
Vrge from you and your progenitors. (claime
K. May we with right & conficence make this
Th. The fit vpon my head dread Soueraigne,
For in the booke of Numbers it is writ,
When the sonne dyeth the inheritance
Deuolues vnto the daughter.
Noble Lord stand for your owne,
Vnwinde your bloody flagge,
Go my dread Lord to your great grandsires graue,
From whom you clayme:
And your great Vncle *Edward* the blacke Prince,
Who on the French ground plaid a Tragedy
Making defeat on the full power of *France*,
Whilst his most mighty father on a hill,
Stood smiling to behold his Lyons whelpe,
Forage in blood of French Nobilitie.
O Noble English, that could entertaine
With halfe their Forces the full power of *France*:
And let an other halfe stand laughing by,
All out of worke, and cold for action.
Kin. We must not only arme vs against the French,
But lay downe our proportion for the Scot,
Who will make roade vpon vs with all aduantages.
Th. The Marches gracious Soueraigne, shall be sufficient
To guard your *England* from the pilfering borderers.
Kin. We do not meane the coursing sneakers only,
But feare the mayne entendement of the Scot,
For you shall read, that my great grandfather
Ventured his person for *France*,
Fut that the Scot on his vnfurnisht Kingdome,
Came pouring like the Tide into a breach,
That *England* being empty of defences,
Hath drooke and trembled, in the lotte hereof.
Th. She hath bin then more fear'd than hurt my Liege
A 3 For

Illustration 4 *The Chronicle History of Henry the fift* (1600), sig. A2v (on the left) and sig. A3r (on the right). Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 22289 (online digital image).

From this perspective, we can now reconsider the genealogical speech – the so-called Salic Law speech – in the first quarto of *Henry V*. It begins at the top of sig. A2v, the second page of the playtext, which is the first full page of to-be-spoken text (Illustration 4). All major differences between the quarto and Folio versions of that speech occur on that page. Because it comes so early in the quarto text, the Salic Law speech has disproportionately influenced the way scholars read the rest of the quarto playtext. Daniel's argument about the speech introduces the first-ever parallel-text edition of the 1600 and 1623 versions, which visually highlighted differences between the two printings. Parallel texts are rhetorically prejudicial, because they implicitly identify difference as disability and absence as the result of mutilation or truncation.[54] But even without parallel texts, readers can be biased by familiarity: Since the

[54] Genevieve Love, *Early Modern Theatre and the Figure of Disability* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 122.

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Audio 1 A modern-pronunciation recording of the Salic Law speech printed in the 1600 edition of Henry V. Available to access online at www.cambridge.org/taylor

early eighteenth century, all scholars and critics have encountered the Folio's Salic Law speech before they read (if they ever read) the quarto's version.

But what if we read the quarto first? It may be instructive to begin our analysis with the less familiar version, the one that was printed (twice) in Shakespeare's lifetime. Here is a transcript of the speech printed in 1600 (with editorial line numbers in the right margin). Because these lines were, according to the quarto's title page, performed by a troupe of professional actors, some readers may also find it useful to listen to a modern-pronunciation recording of the speech (Audio 1).[55]

A2 v	Then heare me gracious soueraigne, and you peeres,	21
	Which owe your liues, your faith and seruices	
	To this imperial throne.	
	There is no bar to stay your highnesse claime to *France*	
	But one, which they produce from *Faramount*,	25
	No female shall succeed in salicke land,	
	Which salicke land the French vniustly gloze	
	To be the realme of *France*:	
	And *Faramont* the founder of this law and female barre:	
	Yet theire owne writers faithfully affirme	30
	That the land salicke lyes in *Germany*,	
	Betweene the flouds of *Sabeck* and of *Elme*,	
	Where *Charles* the fift hauing subdude the Saxons,	
	There left behind, and setled certaine French,	
	Who holding in disdaine the Germaine women,	35
	For some dishonest maners of their liues,	

[55] We do not attempt to provide original-pronunciation recordings, because (a) not everyone agrees on every early modern pronunciation, and (b) what would make the audio more "authentic" for early modern listeners would make it less intelligible for modern listeners.

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Establisht there this lawe. To wit,
No female shall succeed in salicke land:
Which salicke land as I said before,
Is at this time in *Germany* called *Mesene*:
Thus doth it well appeare the salicke lawe
Was not deuised for the realme of *France*,
Nor did the French possesse the salicke land,
Vntill 400. one and twentie years
After the function of king *Faramont*,
Godly supposed the founder of this lawe:
Hugh Capet also that vsurpt the crowne,
To fine his title with some showe of truth,
When in pure truth it was corrupt and naught:
Conuaid himself as heire to the Lady *Inger*
Daughter to *Charles*, the foresaid Duke of *Lorain*,
So that as cleare as is the sommers Sun,
King *Pippins* title and *Hugh Capets* claime,
King *Charles* his satisfaction all appeare,
To hold in right and title of the female:
So do the Lords of *France* vntil this day,
Howbeit they would hold vp this salick lawe
A3 r To bar your highnesse claiming from the female,
And rather choose to hide them in a net,
Then amply to imbace their crooked causes,
Vsurpt from you and your progenitors.

This speech makes sense, intellectually and dramatically. The king in Shakespeare's play (unlike the king in his historical sources) has asked the bishop whether there is any obstacle to his legal claim to the French throne, and in doing so has already specifically referenced "the Lawe *Salicke* which they haue in *France*."[56] The bishop answers that there is no obstacle, except one: the aforementioned foreign-sounding "Salicke" law, which the French attribute to someone with the foreign-sounding

[56] *Chronicle*, 1.7 (on the previous page of the quarto).

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name Faramount. The law is simple, consisting of a single brief sentence, which the bishop quotes twice: "No female shall succeed in salicke land" (26, 38). The rest of his speech describes the origins, meaning, and historical application of that sentence. Because the law names "salicke land," the first issue (30–42) is linguistic and geographical: What and where is that land the law references? It describes a particular region between two rivers in Germany. Henry is not claiming an inherited title to any part of Germany, so the Salic Law is obviously irrelevant. Moreover, the law was motivated by the bad behavior of "*Germaine* women" (35, emphasis added). Readers or members of the audience might endorse that gendered ethnocentric bias: At the time, bloodlines were entirely dependent on female testimony, and "dishonest" women could therefore endanger racial purity. But this speech does not criticize, and therefore does not target or delegitimize, inheritance by or through Frenchwomen or Englishwomen or women in general. The bishop next addresses the alleged author of this law (43–6). The attribution to Faramount cannot be correct, because the French did not acquire the Salic land until more than four centuries after his reign. Hence, the law is not ancient and foundational, but more recent and of unknown and suspect authority.[57] (This is exactly the argument humanists used, between Henry's reign and Shakespeare's play, to discredit "The Donation of Constantine," which allegedly authorized the political power and landowning wealth of the Roman Catholic Church.) Third, the bishop notes that the Salic Law has not governed royal or aristocratic inheritance in France itself (47–56): Hugh Capet claimed the throne through his mother rather than his father; therefore, not only Capet but his successors (including Pépin and King Charles) descended from a female ancestor – as do all or many French noblemen. In summary (57–61), the French themselves know perfectly well that the Salic Law is

[57] By the time Shakespeare wrote this passage, continental humanist scholars had demonstrated that Pharamond was an entirely fictional figure. See Maike Priesterjahn, "Back to the Roots: The Rediscovery of Gregory of Tours in French Historiography," *Mittelalter* (May 4, 2016), https://doi.org/10.58079/rgyu, accessed August 31, 2024.

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bogus, and its sole purpose is to obstruct the legitimate claim to the French crown of Henry himself and his "progenitors," going all the way back to his great-grandfather Edward III, named later in this scene.

Some details of this speech may be confusing to modern readers. For instance, the bishop's summary refers to "King *Pippins* title" (line 53) – though "Pippin" has not previously been mentioned in the quarto. But "Pippin" was a common sixteenth-century English spelling of the French "Pépin."[58] Pépin was also probably the medieval French king best known to English audiences in Shakespeare's lifetime: He is named, without any contextualization, in *Love's Labour's Lost* (4.1.112), *All's Well That Ends Well* (2.1.71), and *All Is True* (1.3.10).[59] Similarly, in the next line and the same sentence, the quarto's "King *Charles*" does not make sense as a reference to the previously mentioned "Charles" who subdued the Saxons. But Shakespeare's primary historical source (Holinshed's *Chronicles*) refers to the king of France, during Henry V's reign, as "King Charles."[60] Shakespeare therefore knew, and his primary dramatic source (the anonymous *Famous Victories of Henry the fift*) had made clear to audiences and readers, that "King Charles" was the man that Henry V's invasion of France aimed to depose.[61] Charles might well have also been named in two other

[58] EarlyPrint identifies fifty-two other examples of the spellings "Pip(p)in(s)," referring to the French king, from 1532 to 1600 (https://earlyprint.org, accessed October 12, 2022).

[59] Here, and elsewhere when citing other works by Shakespeare, we cite the line numbering of *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Complete Works*, ed. Bourus et al.

[60] There is a cluster of five such references in a passage of Holinshed Shakespeare clearly read, describing the treaty between France and England (Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 3Iiii), which is quoted verbatim in both *Chronicle History* (19.86–9) and *The Life* (5.2.294–6). Shakespeare would also have encountered reference to the same French king "Charles" in Holinshed's accounts of the reign of Henry IV.

[61] *The Famovs Victories of Henry the fifth* (London: Thomas Creede, 1598), STC 13072. Quotations from the play cite the signature and line numbering of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth 1598*, ed. Chiaki Hanabusa (Manchester: Malone Society, 2007). For a summary of scholarship, see Martin Wiggins, with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, *Vol. III*, *1567–1589* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 358–62 (#773).

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plays about Henry V performed in London in the 1590s.[62] *2 Henry VI* twice refers to "the French King Charles" (lines 41–4). A French king named "Charles" appears in six other early modern plays.[63] There was, of course, no English "King Charles" until 1625, but "King Charles" appears in sixteenth-century English printed books 905 times.[64] This contemporary-to-Henry "King Charles" is linked, two lines below, to the contemporary French aristocracy: "the Lords of *France* vntil this day" (1.56). The quarto speech extends French violation of the Salic Law from Hugh Capet to the monarch and noblemen ruling France in Henry V's time.

Even if the Folio version of the play did not exist, an editor could identify some problems with the quarto text. There is an indisputable error in the first line of the speech: the absence of an italic speech prefix. Because the king speaks before and after these lines, the speech must be spoken by the bishop. The catchword at the bottom of the previous page (A2r) provides the necessary speech prefix ("*Bish.*"), so the absence of that speech prefix on A2v represents a mistake made in Creede's printing house: The catchword should accurately reflect the first word (or two) of the next page, and the reprints of 1602 and "1608" ([i.e., 1619) therefore supply the missing speech prefix. Moreover, all scholars agree that Shakespeare's source for the Salic Law speech was a passage in Holinshed's *Chronicles* (Figure 7). Shakespeare often creatively departs from his sources, and we cannot simply assume that the quarto (or the Folio) should slavishly reproduce every detail in Holinshed, but here, the printing-house correction made in 1602 and then again independently in 1619 is supported by the 1587 *Chronicles* (Illustration 5).

Shakespeare's iambic pentameter norm suggests that the verse has been mislineated at 28–9, and probably also at 23–4. In early English printed

[62] For those other plays see Martin Wiggins, with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, *Vol. III, 1590–1597* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), #912 (1592), #1021 (new in November 1595).

[63] *The Massacre at Paris* (STC 17423, 1592), *The Maid's Metamorphosis* (STC 17188, 1600), *The Devil's Charter* (STC 1466, 1607), *The World Tossed at Tennis* (STC 17909, 1620), *1 Henry VI* (STC 22273, 1623), *Henry VIII* (STC 22273, 1623).

[64] *EarlyPrint* (1500–99), accessed October 12, 2022.

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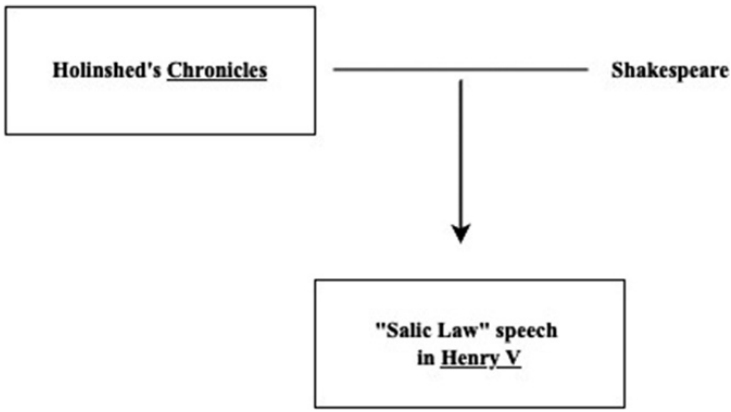


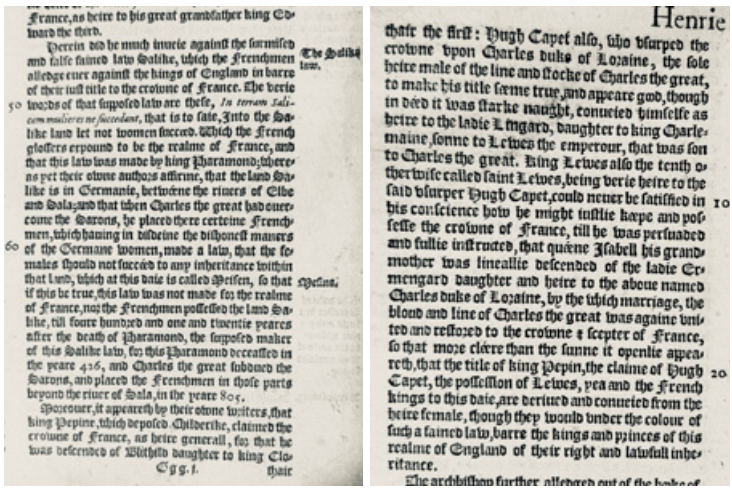
Figure 7 The intersection of a human being (Shakespeare) with a printed text (Holinshed's *Chronicles*) produces a new object (the "Salic Law" speech).

books, French names like "Pharamound" could be spelled phonetically with an initial "F." But we have found no other early examples of that name with a terminal -t; hence, the quarto's "Faramount" probably results from a (fairly common) misreading of "d" as "t." One could deduce that the quarto's final letter is mistaken, even without the evidence of the spelling "Pharamond" in both Holinshed and the Folio. Likewise, there is no river "Elme" (32) in Germany; but at least two late Elizabethan texts refer to the German river best known as "Elbe" by the alternative spelling/pronunciation "Elue" (= "Elve").[65] So does Edward Hall's 1548 *Union*, the source for Holinshed's account of the Salic Law speech.[66] In early modern handwriting

[65] *EarlyPrint* finds "the riuer Elue" in *The Mariners Mirrour* (1588?) and "the Elue a riuer" that flows past Wittenberg "in a faire Sommer sun-shine day" in the earliest extant edition of *The Second Report of Doctor Iohn Faustus* (1594). The spelling "Elue" also appears twice in the Folio *Life*.

[66] Edward Hall, *The Vnion of the two noble and illustre famelies of Lancaster & Yorke* (London: Grafton, 1548), STC 12721, XXXVI, F.iv. There is no evidence of Hall's influence on the *Chronicle History*, but the Folio *Life* does contain material that clearly derives from Hall (Taylor, "Shakespearian Magnitudes," 253).

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France, as heire to his great grandfather king Edward the third.

Herein did he much inueie against the surmised and falſe fained law Salike, which the Frenchmen alledge euer against the kings of England in barre of their iuſt title to the crowne of France. The verie words of that ſuppoſed law are theſe, *In terram Salicam mulieres ne ſuccedant*, that is to ſaie, Into the Salike land let not women ſucceed. Which the French gloſſers expound to be the realme of France, and that this law was made by king Pharamond; whereas yet their owne authors affirme, that the land Salike is in Germanie, betweene the riuers of Elbe and Sala; and that when Charles the great had ouercome the Saxons, he placed there certeine Frenchmen, which hauing in diſdeine the diſhoneſt maners of the Germane women, made a law, that the females ſhould not ſucceed to any inheritance within that land, which at this daie is called Peſtlen, ſo that if this be true, this law was not made for the realme of France, nor the Frenchmen poſſeſſed the land Salike, till foure hundred and one and twentie yeares after the death of Pharamond, the ſuppoſed maker of this Salike law, for this Pharamond deceaſſed in the yeare 426, and Charles the great ſubdued the Saxons, and placed the Frenchmen in thoſe parts beyond the riuer of Sala, in the yeare 805.

The Salike law.

Peſtlen.

Moreouer, it appeareth by their owne writers, that king Pepine, which depoſed Childerike, claimed the crowne of France, as heire generall, for that he was deſcended of Withlid daughter to king Clo-

Eee g. i. thair

Henrie

thair the firſt: Hugh Capet alſo, who vſurped the crowne vpon Charles duke of Loraine, the ſole heire male of the line and ſtocke of Charles the great, to make his title ſeeme true, and appeare good, though in deed it was ſtarke naught, conueied himſelfe as heire to the ladie Lingard, daughter to king Charlemaine, ſonne to Lewes the emperour, that was ſon to Charles the great. King Lewes alſo the tenth otherwiſe called ſaint Lewes, being verie heire to the ſaid vſurper Hugh Capet, could neuer be ſatiſfied in his conſcience how he might iuſtlie keepe and poſſeſſe the crowne of France, till he was perſuaded and fullie inſtructed, that quéene Iſabell his grandmother was lineallie deſcended of the ladie Ermengard daughter and heire to the aboue named Charles duke of Loraine, by the which marriage, the blood and line of Charles the great was againe vnited and reſtored to the crowne & ſcepter of France, ſo that more clére than the ſunne it openlie appeareth, that the title of king Pepin, the claime of Hugh Capet, the poſſeſſion of Lewes, yea and the French kings to this daie, are deriued and conueied from the heire female, though they would vnder the colour of ſuch a fained law, barre the kings and princes of this realme of England of their right and lawfull inheritance.

The archbiſhop further alledged out of the bookes of

Illustration 5 Raphael Holinshed, et al., *The Third Volume of Chronicles*, excerpts from sig. 3G1v (lower right column) and 3G2r (upper left column), containing the portions of the archbishop's speech concerning the Salic Law. Newberry Library, Case folio DA130.H7321587.

"Elue" (which appears here in the Folio *Life*) could easily have been mistaken for the much more common English word "Elme" (minim misreading).[67] So "Elme" is almost certainly a mistake made by Creede's compositor, but if the manuscript the compositor read was a scribal copy it might have contained the error. The quarto contains another geographical error in the same line: No river "Sabeck" flows through Germany, or apparently anywhere else, and we have not found "Sabeck" in any other searchable early printed texts. Because the word is unique, "Sabeck" is unlikely to be the result of an actor's or spectator's failed memory; memory

[67] Forms of letters in Elizabethan handwriting are conveniently illustrated in Thomas Wallace Craik, ed., *King Henry V*. The Arden Shakespeare (London: Routledge, 1995), 103–4.

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typically substitutes common words for rare ones (not vice versa).[68] But "Sabeck" could easily be a misreading of "Salick" (32). Shakespeare, or someone else, might have substituted "Salick" for Holinshed's "Sala" deliberately (to make sense of the German territory?) or accidentally (repeating the word above); then someone else – perhaps Creede's compositor? a scribe? – might have misread "Salick" as "Sabeck." Finally, "the Lady Inger" might not confuse Elizabethan readers or spectators, because "Inger" is a female Norwegian and Viking name occasionally found in medieval England. But Hall has "the Lady Lyngard," and Holinshed has "the lady Lingard" – itself, editors say, probably a mistake for "Luitgard," the final wife of Charles the Great. But the historical "Luitgard" apparently died childless. The whole complex history of Hugh Capet and the genealogy of the Capetian dynasty are compressed and confused here. Dramatically, what matters more than the proper name is the word "Lady," which appears in Hall, Holinshed, the quarto, and the Folio. That word, and not the proper name, establishes descent through the female line and therefore defiance of the Salic Law. Both the quarto ("Inger") and the Folio ("Lingare") are uniquely mistaken, but the quarto seems *more* mistaken in omitting the initial "L" present in all the other texts. Because in Elizabethan handwriting initial "I" and initial "L" could be easily confused, and because the minims "in" could be misread as "n," the simplest explanation might be that the quarto "Inger" represents a misreading of "Linger" or "Lingar." The number of these errors (Faramount, Elme, Sabeck, Inger) in a single speech may seem suspicious. But rare proper names in a foreign language are especially susceptible to misreading. Other books printed by Creede contain many examples.[69] The mathematics of information theory explains why such words are most likely to be misread: Our ability to

[68] For the editorial principle that unusual words should be preferred over common ones, see Gary Taylor, "*Praestat Difficilior Lectio: All's Well That Ends Well* and *Richard III*," *Renaissance Studies* 2 (1988): 27–46.

[69] Akihiro Yamada, *Thomas Creede: Printer to Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Tokyo: Meisei University Press, 1994), 147–9, 163, 165, 167–73, 177–8, 182; Gary Taylor, "Transeditions: Shakespeare's Two French English Lessons," *Letras* 33.67 (2024): 3–36.

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decipher a written text depends, in large part, on our ability to predict which word, or which letter, should come next, and foreign proper names are much less predictable than common English words like "law" or "lady."[70]

None of these mistakes damages the logic or legitimacy of the genealogical argument. However, the reference to "Charles the fift" (33) is genealogically important. It is obviously wrong historically. Charles V ruled France from 1364 to 1380, and he never conquered and settled parts of Germany. Paleographically "fift" could be a misreading of "first"; we have already seen the opposite error ("fift" misread as "first") in *Oldcastle*. Shakespeare might have used "first" here to indicate, for listeners unfamiliar with the foreign dynastic sequence, that the king in question belonged to early French history. But we have found no other early English examples of Charlemagne being called "Charles the first." Holinshed here has, instead, "Charles the great," a phrase that EarlyPrint identifies 669 times in English books between 1585 and 1600 (including five examples with the obsolete spelling "gret"). The quarto's "fift" might be a misreading of "gret." That misreading would have been especially easy for Creede's compositor here: The monarchical modifier "the fift" was set repeatedly in the quarto's title, head-title, and running titles.

We want to emphasize these errors because some defenders of the quarto version of the speech have claimed that it contains no errors at all. This leads to such absurdities as retaining the quarto's "Charles the fift" and then appending a commentary note explaining that "Charles the fift" means "Charlemagne."[71] That is not what it means, or what any Elizabethan reader or auditor would have understood it to mean. Furthermore, such claims are not likely to persuade experienced editors and textual scholars to take seriously the challenges to "bad quarto" theory.

Though the quarto speech does contain some mistakes, they result from recognizable kinds of error common to early modern manuscript copying

[70] Claude E. Shannon, "Prediction and Entropy of Printed English," *Bell System Technical Journal* 30.1 (1951): 50–64; James Gleick, *The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood* (New York: Pantheon, 2011), 229–30.

[71] Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey, eds., *The Cronicle History of Henry the fift*, Shakespeare Originals (Lanham: Barnes and Noble, 1993), 88.

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and handpress printing. But two words present in both texts – "also" and "foresaid" – convinced Daniel that the quarto version had suffered major, abnormal damage, which must have originated outside the printing house.[72] "Why *also*?" Daniel asks. "There is nothing in the [quarto] to account for this adverb." Likewise, the quarto "makes no mention of this '*foresaid* Duke of Loraine.' Again here is proof of *omission*." Daniel has already asserted that only one possible mechanism can account for such omissions: "[W]e know from the earliest times down to the present day the constant practice of the stage has been, and is, the shortening of the author's work."[73] Certainly from 1660 to 1877 the British stage had constantly shortened Shakespeare's plays. But in Shakespeare's lifetime plays were often advertised as containing "New Additions," so the practice of theatres after 1660 does not necessarily explain a text printed in 1600.[74] Moreover, theatrical "shortening" does not normally produce the incomprehensible nonsense that Daniel sees in these two passages of the quarto.

Daniel assumes that "also" must mean "likewise" or "in the same way."[75] If so, then "Hugh Capet also" must gesture to an antecedent proper name, illustrating the same point that "Hugh Capet" does (claiming hereditary right through the female line). The Folio *Life* – conspicuously available in the parallel-text edition that Daniel was introducing – provides such an antecedent name ("King Pepin"). But Shakespeare and his contemporaries also used the word "also" to mean "besides," or "as a further point."[76] Those meanings do not require an antecedent proper name; indeed, they indicate a break from the preceding phrase or paragraph. Both texts and Shakespeare's source mark a change in the bishop's argument

[72] "Hugh Capet *also* that vsurpt the crowne" (*Chronicle* 1.47; *Life* 1.2.69); "Daughter to Charles, the *foresaid* Duke of Lorain" (*Chronicle* 1.51; *Life* 1.2.83).

[73] Daniel, Introduction, xi.

[74] Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time, 1590 to 1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 265–63.

[75] *Oxford English Dictionary*, "also," *adv*.2 (last citation in 1600); Alexander Schmidt, *Shakespeare-Lexicon*, 2 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1886), 1:34.

[76] "Also" (OED, *adv*.3); Schmidt, *Shakespeare-Lexicon*, 34.

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at the point when he moves from (a) evidence about the origin of the Salic Law to (b) evidence that later French kings ignored it. In all three texts, that argumentative change is marked by a transitional adverb: "Moreover" (Holinshed), "Besides" (Folio 1.2.64), and "also" (quarto 1.47). All three words serve the same function, and therefore the quarto's "Hugh Capet also" would *not* have been nonsensical for readers or auditors (or Shakespeare) in 1600.

But Daniel is right about "foresaid": It requires an earlier reference to Charles, the Duke of Loraine, which the Folio supplies but the quarto does not. Some recent defenders of the quarto have cited Brinsley Nicholson, who in 1879 rejected Daniel's overall hypothesis that the Folio is Shakespeare's original version; but Nicholson endorsed Daniel's specific argument that this word "foresaid" indicates that the quarto text has here been "curtailed," probably by the actors, "to suit a poorer and a clod-poll audience."[77] There are three possible explanations for this particular deficiency in the quarto text.

1. The quarto is a "bad quarto," incompetently abridged in performance and/or misremembered by rogue actors creating a "memorial reconstruction" or by auditors "fast note-taking" during public performances. But this theory has been refuted by much new evidence in the rest of the quarto, and a claim so large and so unlikely cannot be credibly founded on a single word.
2. Shakespeare deliberately left "foresaid" without an antecedent to undermine the speech's credibility, and thereby undermine the legitimacy of Henry's invasion of France. That argument would support Steven Urkowitz's claim that Daniel's hypothesis "depended solely upon personal literary taste."[78] It is bolstered by antiwar critical interpretations, increasingly popular since the pointless, colossal carnage of World War

[77] Brinsley Nicholson, "The Relation of the Quarto to the Folio Version of *Henry V*," *The New Shakspere Society Transactions 1877–79, Part III* (1879): 77–102, esp. 77–8.

[78] Steven Urkowitz, "Good News about 'Bad' Quartos," in *"Bad" Shakespeare: Revaluations of the Shakespeare Canon*, ed. Maurice Charney (Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1988), 203. Urkowitz attributes this conclusion to Nicholson (without any bibliographical reference to his article), but Nicholson explicitly and specifically did not make that claim about "foresaid."

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I.[79] Certainly, the Hundred Years' War between France and England looks from a twenty-first-century perspective like an unconscionable turf battle between rival criminal gangs. But any reader or listener, on stage or off, who dismisses the bishop's critique of the Salic Law is, in effect, supporting atrocious misogyny. Christine de Pisan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405) was in part a rebuttal of the Salic Law, loudly trumpeted by French nationalists in the years between 1350 and 1430 despite its bogus legal and historical credentials.[80] More immediately, the claim that women were not fit to rule was deeply insulting to Elizabeth I, whose potential marriage to a member of the French royal family had provoked English polemics about the Salic Law.[81] Like much legal reasoning, the bishop's speech is dense and difficult, but complexity is not the same as incompetence.

3. The quarto text accidentally omits an earlier reference to the Duke of Loraine. Such a mistake could have been made by a compositor in Creede's printing house, or by whoever prepared the manuscript that the compositor read and tried to reproduce. Single lines of verse are accidentally omitted in early modern manuscripts for no obvious reason.[82] Single lines of verse are also omitted often enough by early modern printers. For instance, the 1602 edition of *The Chronicle History* (also printed by Creede) omits "Sir *Richard Ketley*, *Dauy Gam* Esquier" for no discernible reason.[83] Most editors believe that the Folio *Life* omits "And say, these wounds I had on Crispines day," a line present in the quarto.[84] Holinshed's *Chronicles* (Shakespeare's undisputed source for both versions of this speech) immediately follows "Hugh Capet also who vsurped the crowne" with "vpon Charles duke of Loraine, the sole heire male of the line and stocke of Charles the great." Shakespeare might have incorporated all this information into his manuscript of the

[79] Gerald Gould, "A New Reading of *Henry V*," *The English Review* 19 (1919): 42–55.
[80] Sarah Hanley, "The Salic Law," in *Political and Historical Encyclopedia of Women*, ed. Christine Fauré (New York: Routledge, 2003), 2–17.
[81] Gurr, ed., *Henry V*, 17–19.
[82] See Bland, "Verse Letters," 142–4, for the omission of line 80 (necessary for the stanzaic rhyme scheme) from three manuscripts of Beaumont's "The Sun."
[83] *Chronicle* 17.62. [84] *Chronicle* 12.43; *Life* 4.3.48.

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Chronicle History (as the Folio *Life* does), but the accidental omission of one verse line is more likely than the accidental omission of two, and we cannot simply assume, here or elsewhere, that the quarto text should perfectly mirror the Folio. The quarto's "foresaid" requires only a reference to the name of the person from whom Capet stole the crown, and that information would easily fit into a single iambic pentameter. We therefore propose to emend the quarto by adding one verse line:

> *Hugh Capet* also that vsurpt the crowne,
> [Of the sole heir male, Charles the duke of Loraine,]
> To fine his title with some showe of truth

No doubt some scholars will object to such an emendation, but in fact almost all Shakespeare editors since Alexander Pope have done the same thing elsewhere: conjecturally inserted a verse line, apparently accidentally omitted from the Folio text, supplying necessary information contained in Shakespeare's prose source (North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*).[85] Nobody supposes that *Coriolanus* is a "memorial reconstruction" because it lacks one piece of information that could easily fit into a single verse line. Here, the proposed omission would be easily explained by eye-skip from the end of one line ("ne,") to the end of the next (also "ne,"). Conjecturing that a scribe or compositor omitted one verse line is a much more conservative hypothesis than (a) damning the whole quarto, or (b) imagining that Shakespeare wanted to portray as incompetent someone criticizing the misogynistic Salic Law in a play performed during the reign of Elizabeth I.

If we possessed only the 1600 quarto of Shakespeare's play and its primary source (Holinshed's *Chronicles*), most editors would emend a few letters in the Salic Law speech and recognize that a single verse line has been omitted, either by leaving a blank space to signal the omission or by conjecturally restoring the lost line using material in Holinshed. But there would be no reason, in that speech or the play as a whole, to invoke fundamentally corrupt transmission via memorial reconstruction or spectators taking notes during a performance. None of Shakespeare's plays

[85] *Coriolanus* 2.3.222.

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printed in his lifetime was as well printed or proofread as his narrative poems *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *Lucrece* (1594), for which he provided signed prefaces. None of his printed plays includes an authorial preface. The 1600 printing of *Henry the fift* does not even mention Shakespeare's name, but like other editions of individual Shakespeare plays between 1594 and 1609 it is recognizably what Terri Bourus – invoking the feminist concept of the "good enough mother" – calls a "good enough quarto."[86]

2 In Terram Salicam

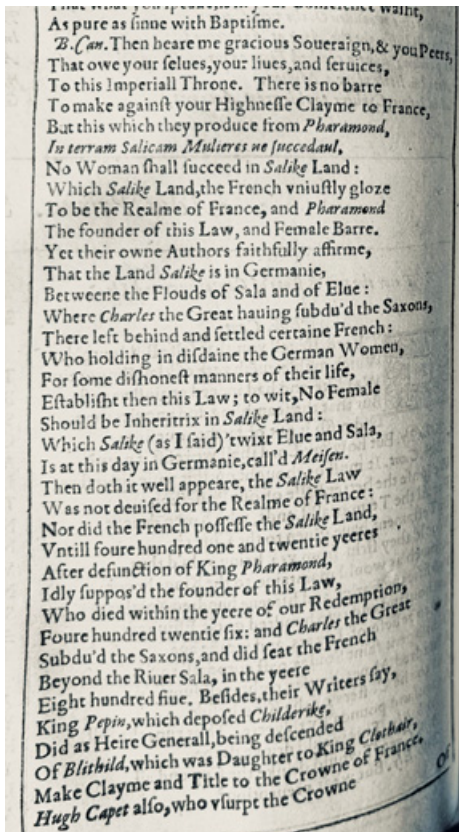
We can now turn to the Salic Law speech printed in 1623 (Illustrations 6 and 7). Our transcript adds marginal editorial act-scene-line numbers (right) and Through Line Numbers (left), and prints in bold type the lines and half-lines present in the Folio but not in the quarto. Because some prefatory matter in that Folio was written by two of Shakespeare's fellow actors, and because they emphasize that the plays collected in that volume have already been tested in performance, some readers may also find it useful to listen to a modern-pronunciation recording of the speech (Audio 2).

180 Then heare me gracious Soueraign, & you Peers,
That owe your selues, your liues, and seruices,
To this Imperiall Throne. There is no barre 1.2.35
To make against your Highnesse Clayme to France,
But this which they produce from *Pharamond*,
In terram Salicam Mulieres ne succedaul,
No Woman shall succeed in *Salike* Land:
Which *Salike* Land, the French vniustly gloze 40
To be the Realme of France, and *Pharamond*

Audio 2 A modern-pronunciation recording of the Salic Law speech printed in the 1623 edition of Henry V. Available to access online at www.cambridge.org/taylor

[86] Terri Bourus, "The Good Enough Quarto: *Hamlet* as a Material Object," in *Shakespeare and the First Hamlet*, 90–108.

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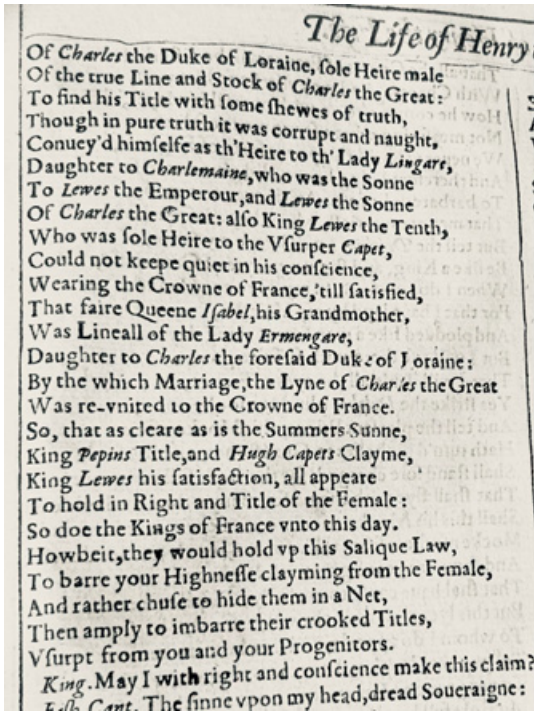


As pure as ſinne with Baptiſme.
B. Can. Then heare me gracious Soueraign, & you Peers,
That owe your ſelues, your liues, and ſeruices,
To this Imperiall Throne. There is no barre
To make againſt your Highneſſe Clayme to France,
But this which they produce from *Pharamond*,
In terram Salicam Mulieres ne ſuccedant,
No Woman ſhall ſucceed in *Salike* Land:
Which *Salike* Land, the French vniuſtly gloze
To be the Realme of France, and *Pharamond*
The founder of this Law, and Female Barre.
Yet their owne Authors faithfully affirme,
That the Land *Salike* is in Germanie,
Betweene the Flouds of Sala and of Elue:
Where *Charles* the Great hauing ſubdu'd the Saxons,
There left behind and ſettled certaine French:
Who holding in diſdaine the German Women,
For ſome diſhoneſt manners of their life,
Eſtabliſht then this Law; to wit, No Female
Should be Inheritrix in *Salike* Land:
Which *Salike* (as I ſaid) 'twixt Elue and Sala,
Is at this day in Germanie, call'd *Meiſen*.
Then doth it well appeare, the *Salike* Law
Was not deuiſed for the Realme of France:
Nor did the French poſſeſſe the *Salike* Land,
Vntill foure hundred one and twentie yeeres
After defunction of King *Pharamond*,
Idly ſuppos'd the founder of this Law,
Who died within the yeere of our Redemption,
Foure hundred twentie ſix: and *Charles* the Great
Subdu'd the Saxons, and did ſeat the French
Beyond the Riuer Sala, in the yeere
Eight hundred fiue. Beſides, their Writers ſay,
King *Pepin*, which depoſed *Childerike*,
Did as Heire Generall, being deſcended
Of *Blithild*, which was Daughter to King *Clothair*,
Make Clayme and Title to the Crowne of France.
Hugh Capet alſo, who vſurpt the Crowne

Illustration 6 *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (1623), excerpt from sig. h1v (lower right column). Newberry Library, VAULT Case oversize YS.01.

The founder of this Law, and Female Barre.
Yet their owne Authors faithfully affirme,
That the Land *Salike* is in Germanie,

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The Life of Henry

Of *Charles* the Duke of Loraine, ſole Heire male
Of the true Line and Stock of *Charles* the Great:
To find his Title with ſome ſhewes of truth,
Though in pure truth it was corrupt and naught,
Conuey'd himſelfe as th'Heire to th' Lady *Lingare*,
Daughter to *Charlemaine*, who was the Sonne
To *Lewes* the Emperour, and *Lewes* the Sonne
Of *Charles* the Great: alſo King *Lewes* the Tenth,
Who was ſole Heire to the Vſurper *Capet*,
Could not keepe quiet in his conſcience,
Wearing the Crowne of France, 'till ſatisfied,
That faire Queene *Iſabel*, his Grandmother,
Was Lineall of the Lady *Ermengare*,
Daughter to *Charles* the foreſaid Duke of Loraine:
By the which Marriage, the Lyne of *Charles* the Great
Was re-vnited to the Crowne of France.
So, that as cleare as is the Summers Sunne,
King *Pepins* Title, and *Hugh Capets* Clayme,
King *Lewes* his ſatisfaction, all appeare
To hold in Right and Title of the Female:
So doe the Kings of France vnto this day.
Howbeit, they would hold vp this Salique Law,
To barre your Highneſſe clayming from the Female,
And rather chuſe to hide them in a Net,
Then amply to imbarre their crooked Titles,
Vſurpt from you and your Progenitors.
King. May I with right and conſcience make this claime?
Eſh. Cant. The ſinne vpon my head, dread Soueraigne:

Illustration 7 *Comedies*, *Histories*, *& Tragedies*, sig. h2r (upper left column). Newberry Library, VAULT Case oversize YS.01.

Betweene the Flouds of Sala and of Elue:
Where *Charles* the Great hauing subdu'd the Saxons,
There left behind and settled certaine French:
Who holding in disdaine the German Women,
For some dishonest manners of their life,
Establisht then this Law; to wit, No Female
Should be Inheritrix in *Salike* Land:
Which *Salike* (as I said) 'twixt Elue and Sala,

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Is at this day in Germanie, call'd *Meisen*.
Then doth it well appeare, the *Salike* Law
Was not deuised for the Realme of France:
Nor did the French possesse the *Salike* Land,
Vntill foure hundred one and twentie yeeres
After defunction of King *Pharamond*,
Idly suppos'd the founder of this Law,
Who died within the yeere of our Redemption,
Foure hundred twentie six: and *Charles* the Great
Subdu'd the Saxons, and did seat the French
Beyond the Riuer Sala, in the yeere
Eight hundred fiue. Besides, their Writers say,
King *Pepin*, which deposed *Childerike*,
Did as Heire Generall, being descended
Of *Blithild*, which was Daughter to King *Clothair*,
Make Clayme and Title to the Crowne of France.
Hugh Capet also, who vsurpt the Crowne
Of *Charles* the Duke of Loraine, sole Heire male
Of the true Line and Stock of *Charles* the Great:
To find his Title with some shewes of truth,
Though in pure truth it was corrupt and naught,
Conuey'd himselfe as th'Heire to th'Lady *Lingare*,
Daughter to *Charlemaine*, who was the Sonne
To *Lewes* the Emperour, and *Lewes* the Sonne
Of *Charles* the Great: also King *Lewes* the Tenth,
Who was sole Heire to the Vsurper *Capet*,
Could not keepe quiet in his conscience,
Wearing the Crowne of France, 'till satisfied,
That faire Queene *Isabel*, his Grandmother,
Was Lineall of the Lady *Ermengare*,
Daughter to *Charles* the foresaid Duke of Loraine:
By the which Marriage, the Lyne of *Charles* the Great
Was re-vnited to the Crowne of France.
So, that as cleare as is the Summers Sunne,
King *Pepins* Title, and *Hugh Capets* Clayme,

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King *Lewes* his satisfaction, all appeare
To hold in Right and Title of the Female:
So doe the Kings of France vnto this day.
Howbeit, they would hold vp this Salique Law,
To barre your Highnesse clayming from the Female,
And rather chuse to hide them in a Net,
Then amply to imbarre their crooked Titles,
Vsurpt from you and your Progenitors.

This 1623 Folio version differs from the 1600 quarto version in three ways. It is better printed/proofread, it is much longer (sixty-two lines instead of forty), and it more closely resembles Holinshed's account of the speech (Illustration 5).

The proofreading is not perfect (or the manuscript the printers used was not perfect). The Latin "*succedaul*" (1.2.38) is an error for Holinshed's "succedant" (corrected in F2 and all subsequent editions). Like the quarto ("Inger"), the Folio ("Lingare") fails to reproduce exactly Holinshed's "Lingard" (1.2.74); the Folio's "Ermengare" (1.2.82) similarly misrepresents Holinshed's "Ermengard." The Folio's full stop after "this day" (1.2.90) and comma after "Howbeit" (91) differ from the punctuation and syntax of Holinshed and of the quarto (1.56–7), which some modern editors prefer. Likewise, many editors since Alexander Pope, three centuries ago, reject the Folio's "th'Heire" (1.2.74) in favor of the quarto/Holinshed "heire" without the article (1.50). But with the exception of "*succedaul*," nothing in the Folio speech is jarringly or obviously incorrect.

The improved proofreading in the 1623 *Life of Henry the fift* is what we should expect of a big, expensive Folio financed and marketed by major publishers like Edward Blount and the Jaggards. Small play quartos like the 1600 *Chronicle History* and the 1594 *Contention* required a small investment by the publisher/bookseller (in both cases Thomas Millington, who also published *Titus Andronicus* in 1594): They "could occupy underutilized presses but could not form the basis of a successful publishing business."[87] But bigger books like the 1623 Folio could potentially reap

[87] Holger Schott Syme, "Thomas Creede, William Barley, and the Venture of Printing Plays," in *Shakespeare's Stationers: Studies in Cultural Bibliography*, ed.

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much larger profits and therefore justified a larger investment, which included investing in better copyediting and proofreading. By the early 1620s, the Jaggard firm was well established as "a judicious and authoritative merchant of information," including in particular big books of history and heraldry (the latter constituting one-fifth of William Jaggard's published edition sheets).[88] Jaggard printed the Shakespeare Folio in tandem with Augustine Vincent's *A discoverie of errours in the first edition of the Catalogue of nobility* (1622), which excoriated a rival's genealogical mistakes. It is possible too that Jaggard was the one responsible for creating "Histories" as a separate category within the Shakespeare Folio.[89] Edward Blount, the other stationer highlighted on the Folio title-page, was a cosmopolitan publisher famous for ambitious literary, philosophical, and historical Folios, including the first and most celebrated translation of Montaigne's *Essays*.[90] Blount's and Jaggard's big expensive books were marketed to elite, educated readers, who would expect accuracy and notice its absence.

Although the interests of the publishers may account for the more accurate proofreading of the Folio's Salic Law speech, they will not account for its inclusion of more material versified from Holinshed's prose. That obvious length difference might result from expansion (Q —> F) or from

Marta Straznicky (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 28–46, esp. 44.

[88] Higgins, *Shakespeare's Syndicate*, 96–9.

[89] On the Folio's posthumous reconceptualization of the "History play," see especially Amy Lidster, *Publishing the History Play in the Time of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 206–11, and Gary Taylor, "Shakespeare's Christian Nationalist History Plays," *Shakespeare Review* 60.4 (2024): 785–809.

[90] On Blount, see Gary Taylor, "Making Meaning Marketing Shakespeare 1623," in *From Performance to Print in Early Modern England*, ed. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 55–72; Gary Taylor, "*Comedies*, *Histories*, & *Tragedies* (and Tragicomedies and Poems): Posthumous Shakespeare, 1623–1728," in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Complete Works: Critical Reference Edition*, gen. eds. Terri Bourus, Gabriel Egan, John Jowett, and Gary Taylor, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2:xliii–lviii; Higgins, *Shakespeare's Syndicate*, 41–78.

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diminution (F —> Q). Since 1877, most scholars have assumed that Shakespeare wrote the longer Folio version first, and that the actors wanted to shorten it. But those who make that assumption seldom ask: What would actors be most likely to cut? The overwhelming bulk of the quantitative difference between the two versions of the Salic Law speech results from the fact that the quarto does not contain twenty-two and a half verse lines present in the Folio; those Folio-only chunks are all based on Holinshed, but so is the material that the quarto and Folio share.[91] Would actors wishing to eliminate twenty-two and a half lines that are present in the Folio have chosen those particular bits to cut?

Almost certainly not. At least, none of the eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century acting editions and promptbooks collated by William P. Halsted omit all those lines and no others.[92] All the surviving theatrical texts of *Henry V* from *Bell's Edition* (1773) to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival 1973 production promptbook, two centuries later, postdate the republication of *The Chronicle History* in George Steevens's 1766 edition of *Twenty of the Plays of Shakespeare*; from that and subsequent reprints and facsimiles, all those theatrical abridgers had access to the quarto, but none of them exactly reproduce the quarto cuts. Instead, between sixteen and thirty-six of those later theatrical texts cut lines included in both the quarto and the Folio; such cuts affect twenty-seven of the forty-one lines (or 66 percent) shared by both early versions.[93] Moreover, when the later theatrical texts

[91] *Life*, 1.2.38, 52b, 60–8, 70–1, 75–82, 84–5 (in bold in our transcription).

[92] William P. Halsted, *Shakespeare as Spoken: A Collation of 5000 Acting Editions and Promptbooks of Shakespeare*, 12 vols. (Ann Arbor: American Theatre Association, 1977–9), 6:SS441a–b.

[93] These lines include 1.33–40/1.2.46–53 (absent from twenty-nine acting editions and promptbooks), 1.41–2/1.2.54–5 (twenty-seven), 1.43–6/1.2.56–9 (sixteen), 1.47/1.2.69 (thirty-two), 1.48/1.2.72 (thirty-six), 1.49/1.2.73 (thirty-three), 1.50/1.2.74 (thirty), 1.52/1.2.86 (twenty-three), 1.53/1.2.87 (sixteen), 1.54/1.2.88 (eighteen), 1.55/1.2.89 (twenty-one), 1.56/1.2.90 (twenty), 1.59–61/1.2.93–5 (twenty-eight). We have not attempted to survey all productions since 1973, but the same pattern was apparent in the 2022 Donmar Warehouse production (https://henryv.ntlive.com) and the 2024 Chicago Shakespeare Theatre production directed by Edward Hall.

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cut material that is *not* in the quarto, they also always cut material *in* the quarto. The shared line "Hugh Capet also, who usurped the crown" (1.46/1.2.69) is preceded in the Folio by nine lines absent from the quarto, and followed by two more; later theatrical texts that cut the preceding and/or following lines also cut "Hugh . . . crown." The same is true of the shared line "Daughter to Charles, the foresaid Duke of Lorrain" (1.51/1.2.83), preceded by eight Folio-only lines and followed by two. This pattern challenges the claims of scholars like Andrew Gurr and Lukas Erne, who believe that the quarto represents a deliberate theatrical abridgement by Shakespeare's own company.[94] Those claims have also been rebutted by other scholars, who demonstrate that there is no documentary or empirical evidence for abridgement as a routine practice in the Elizabethan or Jacobean theatre.[95] Besides, compelling evidence of links to Shakespeare's known sources, outside this speech, also shows that the quarto *Chronicle History* cannot be an abridgement of the Folio *Life*.[96]

Daniel's argument for inept abridgement depends on how we interpret the material present in the Folio but absent from the quarto. Bibliographically, the absence of twenty-two complete verse lines from the quarto version of this speech cannot plausibly be attributed to the printer. Those lines come in four separate chunks, which would require four separate acts of macro omission in setting one page, ranging in length from two type lines to eight. Moreover, typographical evidence suggests that Creede's compositors set the quarto by formes from cast-off copy, that sheet A was set first, and that its outer forme (including A2v, A3r, and A4v) was printed before the inner forme (including

[94] Andrew Gurr, "Maximal and Minimal Texts: Shakespeare v. the Globe," *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999): 68–87; Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 191–222.

[95] Michael Hirrel, "Duration of Performances and Lengths of Plays: How Shall We Beguile the Lazy Time?" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61 (2010): 159–82; Steven Urkowitz, "Did Shakespeare's Company Cut Long Plays Down to Two Hours Playing Time?" *Shakespeare Bulletin* 30 (2012): 239–62; Paul Werstine, *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 222–3.

[96] See Taylor, "Shakespearian Magnitudes," 246–79.

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A3v and A4r).[97] The accidental omission of twenty-two lines on A2v (more than half the number of type lines of text on a typical page of this quarto) could not have gone unnoticed in the setting of subsequent pages in sheet A, not to mention the rest of the play. Moreover, there is no evidence of "space wasting" techniques in the quarto to compensate for accidentally omitted lines. Since the omission of those lines cannot have originated in the printing house, the Salic Law speech in the manuscript behind the 1600 printing must have been much shorter than it was in the manuscript behind the 1623 printing.

But in both those manuscripts the episcopal defense of Henry's claim to France must have been much longer than the legal basis for that claim in the comparable scene in the anonymous *The Famous Victories of Henry the fift*, published two years before the Shakespeare quarto:

> Your right to the French Crowne of *France*,
> Came by your great grandmother *Iſabel*,
> Wife to King *Edward* the third,
> And sister to *Charles* the French King:[98]

Short and sweet, this single sentence of twenty-seven words presents an immediately intelligible and straightforward genealogical justification for Henry's claim to France. It happens to be inaccurate: Henry's claim comes from the Isabel who was wife to Edward II, the mother (not wife) of Edward III. But Shakespeare's *Henry V* omits any reference to Isabel, even though Isabel is indeed the reason that the Salic Law affects Henry's claim to France. We might therefore reasonably claim either that Shakespeare's treatment of the genealogical issue, in *both the quarto and Folio*, is incompetent, or that both texts incompetently represent Shakespeare's intentions (or that the archbishop's speech in Holinshed is incompetent).[99]

[97] Thomas L. Berger, "The Printing of *Henry V*, Q1," *The Library* 6.1 (1979): 117.

[98] *Famous Victories*, ed. Hanabusa, 858–61 (D2r).

[99] See Peter Lake 's description of the archbishop's "justification of Henry's French war" in the play as "all but incoherent," in *How Shakespeare Put Politics on the Stage: Power and Succession in the History Plays* (New Haven: Yale University

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Although the quarto devotes fewer words to the Salic Law speech than do Holinshed or the Shakespeare Folio, it is still the quarto's longest speech. In the Folio, it is exceeded only by Henry's outraged condemnation of the conspirators at Southampton, which is emotionally powerful but intellectually and politically simple.[100] Formally and structurally, both versions make the justification of Henry's claim uniquely long and complicated. Indeed, the quarto speech is a larger proportion of the spoken play (2.51 percent) than the Folio's (1.87 percent) – and would be an even bigger proportion (2.59 percent) if we are right about the accidentally omitted line ("Of the sole heir male, Charles the duke of Loraine"). The quarto's 308 words are more than eleven times the number in *Famous Victories*. The quarto speech would therefore require eleven times the duration to pronounce. The disparity between *Famous Victories* and the Folio version of the speech is even greater: its 478 words are nearly eighteen times as many as the earlier play. In both versions, Shakespeare chose to confront his audience with something radically different from the earlier play: a vastly longer speech, full of unfamiliar proper names and relationships, and one more difficult to digest, especially for auditors, who could not slow down or double back as readers could.

The questions we should be asking about the Salic Law speech, then, are these: Why did both versions reproduce so much of Holinshed? And why did the Folio reproduce even more of it than the quarto?

Critics and scholars who accept the contraction hypothesis (i.e., that the original authorial Folio version was deliberately shortened to produce the quarto's theatrical version) have argued that the acting company abridged Shakespeare's play "in the interests of simplifying it into patriotism."[101] But Henry's response to the long episcopal Salic Law

Press, 2016), 596. He does not note that the Folio text (which he cites) repeats Holinshed almost verbatim.

[100] *Life*, 2.2.76–141.

[101] Wells and Taylor, *Three Studies*, 130. For the fullest articulation of this hypothesis, see Annabel Patterson, *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 71–92.

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speech is almost identical in both: the skeptical, abrupt "May [we/I] with right and conscience make this claim?"[102] In both texts, Henry endorses the execution of Bardolph: "We would have all such offenders so cut off."[103] In both, in almost identical words, he orders "every soldier kill" the French prisoners of war.[104] In both, common soldiers challenge Henry's self-serving self-defense. In both, Henry concludes "[t]hat God fought for us."[105] In both, war is complicated, and so is Henry.

But what if the quarto represents Shakespeare's first version instead of a shortened version of the text that appears in the Folio? If, as other evidence suggests, Shakespeare had begun by abridging Holinshed's Salic Law speech, why would he risk, in his revision, reinstating the entire substance of the historical document? Doing so did not make the speech any less "unsatisfactory." The Folio, by lengthening the speech, makes it more complicated. It increases the amount of information auditors are expected to hold suspended simultaneously in mind. It may help to compare the speech to a math problem, which is easier to solve on paper than in your head. For anyone capable of doing math in their head, one of the Folio-only passages, taken from Holinshed, produces numerical nonsense: the incorrect equation "805 − 426 = 421" (rather than the correct "805 − 426 = 379").[106] Those confusing numbers are then followed, in the Folio, by four new names in three lines, including three (Childerike, Blithild, Clothair) that are not mentioned again and never appear as characters anywhere in Tudor or Jacobean plays.[107] Overall, the Folio-only additions, combined, produce a sequence of fourteen new and unfamiliar names in a mere twenty lines.[108] The corresponding mid-speech material in the quarto includes only two new names. In other words, the Folio version increases the cognitive burden imposed upon actors and

[102] *Chronicle* 1.62; *Life* 1.2.96. [103] *Chronicle* 9.77; *Life* 3.6.88.
[104] *Chronicle* 15.32; *Life* 4.6.37. [105] *Chronicle* 17.77; *Life* 4.8.110. [106] *Life* 1.2.60–4.
[107] Thomas L. Berger, William C. Bradford, and Sidney L. Sondergard, *An Index of Characters in Early Modern English Drama Printed Plays, 1500–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). We have also not found these names in *Lost Plays Database*, https://lostplays.folger.edu, accessed May 19, 2025.
[108] *Life* 1.2.65–82.

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auditors (and readers). Elizabethan actors may have relished the oratorical challenge, as modern actors do, and Elizabethan audiences certainly appreciated and responded to oratorical action.[109] The Folio also provides more reason to be skeptical about the speech. It does not mock the whole genre of royal genealogy as Rabelais did in his parodic account of Pantagruel's giant ancestors.[110] Nor does it make the complications of the Salic Law ridiculous, as does John Fletcher's *The Noble Gentleman*.[111] But it does precede the Salic Law episode with a scene (not present in the quarto) where the two bishops discuss their anxiety about a proposed tax on the church and explicitly position the archbishop's defense of the king's claim to France as part of an effort to persuade the king to reject the anticlerical tax. That additional scene is always cited by critics who challenge patriotic, prowar interpretations of *The Life of Henry the Fift* and its royal protagonist.

The Folio version of the speech and its context is closer to Holinshed than the quarto version, but that does not make the speech any easier for listeners to understand. However, it does relocate the difficulty. The quarto *Chronicle History*, in this as in other respects, follows *Famous Victories*: The bishop's speech starts less than twenty lines after the quarto begins (probably less than a minute of stage time). The Folio *Life* instead begins with the exhilarating actor's prologue, followed by the early modern religious language and political scheming of two bishops. The Folio's longer Salic Law speech begins 163 lines into the play. That's enough time to hook an audience, situating the pedantic legalistic unpoetic verse speech as

[109] For oratory, see John Dover Wilson, ed., *Henry V* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), xxiii–iv; Martin Holmes, *Shakespeare's Public: The Touchstone of His Genius* (London: John Murray, 1960), 97; Evelyn Tribble, *Early Modern Actors and Shakespeare's Theatre: Thinking with the Body* (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2017), 24–6, 29–30, 32, 41 43–4, 69.

[110] Francois Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Book II, chapter 1. There was no English translation in Shakespeare's lifetime, but there are many references to the often-reprinted French novel in English print in the second half of the sixteenth century, and Shakespeare's allusion to "Gargantua's mouth" (*As You Like It* 3.2.194) shows he was familiar with it and assumed that his audience would also be.

[111] See Taylor, ed., *Henry V*, 34–5.

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a deliberate, temporary outlier: a rocky island of difficulty defined as difficulty by the surrounding ocean of stylistic vitality.

Moreover, Shakespeare might have believed that the longer Salic Law speech would be intelligible to a better-educated audience, more accustomed to such complicated debates, with more personal interest in genealogies and complex inheritance law. If Q1 represents the play as originally written for a mixed public audience, F1 might, as Richard Dutton argues, represent an expanded version written for subsequent performance at court.[112] Elizabeth I personally could be expected to approve of an extended defense of the legitimacy of female inheritance and female rule. But James Stuart and his supporter the Earl of Essex might have been equally interested: As had been noted for decades, the Stuart claim to the English throne depended, like Henry V's claim to France, on rejection of the Salic Law.[113] The claim to the English throne of King James VI of Scotland was based directly on his paternal grand*mother* Mary Douglas and maternal great-grand*mother* Margaret Tudor, the older sister of Henry VIII (Illustration 1). James was also much more closely aligned to the French royal family (through the ancestry and alliances of his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots). King James and his supporters would have been interested in the play's critique of the Salic Law in 1599, when he was maneuvering to succeed Elizabeth, but also after his succession, when *Henry V* was performed for him at court in 1605. Two scholars have recently argued that the Folio text of *Henry V* shows other evidence of Jacobean additions.[114] The Folio's erudite Salic Law speech would have suited an Elizabethan or a Jacobean royal and aristocratic audience.

What matters most in interpreting the small and large variants between the quarto and Folio texts of this speech is whether we adopt the assumptions of traditional philology, which focuses on surviving texts (classical literature and the Bible) that were produced centuries later than the authorial original. In such circumstances, it is plausible to construct a textual genealogy by equating variation with error. The editor's job is therefore to identity which variants

[112] Dutton, *Court Dramatist*, 173–99.

[113] Lake, *How Shakespeare*, 386–7; Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), 112–13.

[114] Öğütcü, "Masculine Dreams"; and Taylor, "One Book."

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were later errors, and which represent the author's original intention. That said, the 1600 edition of *Henry the fift* was published in Shakespeare's lifetime, and the 1623 edition shortly after his death with assistance from his friends and theatrical collaborators. We must therefore at least consider the possibility that some or all of the differences between those texts belong instead to the territory of authorial philology – "the branch of philology that deals with variants due to the author's intentional desire to change the text" with documented examples as early as Petrarch, Tasso, and Lope de Vega.[115] With this approach, it seems most likely that the Folio represents Shakespeare's deliberate expansion of the speech, which in turn required him to *return* to his primary source (Holinshed's *Chronicles*), incorporating material that he had ignored or compressed in his first act of composition. This process applies not only to the Salic Law speech but also to the Folio's first scene. As scholars long ago established, the dialogue of the two bishops, not present in the quarto, is based on two passages in Holinshed;[116] so are another four lines, after the Salic Law speech, present in the Folio but not the quarto.[117] Many other Folio-only passages draw upon Holinshed, but for our immediate purposes what matters is that the pattern we see in the Salic Law speech can also be seen shortly before it and shortly after it. That pattern requires Shakespeare to have returned to Holinshed's *Chronicles*, at some point *after* his original use of the book, to expand the quarto's original version of the speech into the Folio's revised version (Figure 8).[118] This should not surprise us. Darwin's tree of evolution presupposes a simple linear transmission of information, and so does traditional stemmatics. But we now know that evolution is best visualized not as a tree but as a reticulated network, which permits multiple intersections. Authorial philology also recognizes such reticulated networks. We know Shakespeare doubled back to

[115] Paola Italia, Giulia Raboni, Marco Presotto, et al., *What Is Authorial Philology?* (Cambridge: Open Book, 2021), ix.

[116] Holinshed, *Chronicles* (1587), 545, 3G.i. [117] *Life*, 1.2.132–5.

[118] That return to Shakespeare's source explains not only large chunks of text present only in the Folio but also small, indifferent verbal variants in material present in both versions of the Salic Law speech (for which, see the Online Appendix).

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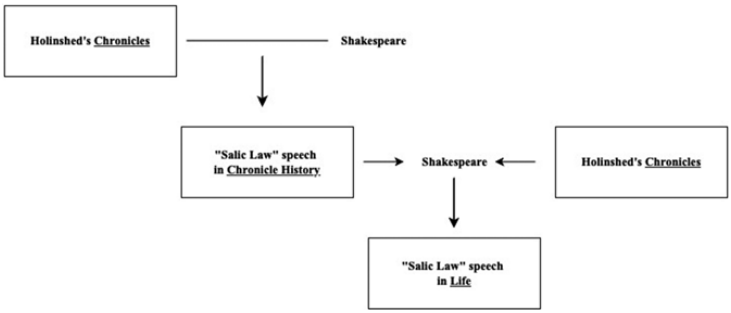


Figure 8 The repeated intersections of a human being (Shakespeare) with a printed text (Holinshed's *Chronicles*) produces two new objects (the 1600 and 1623 versions of the "Salic Law" speech).

Holinshed when writing different *plays*, over two decades, from *Henry VI* to *Cymbeline*. By extension, he could also have doubled back to that book when writing different *versions* of one play.

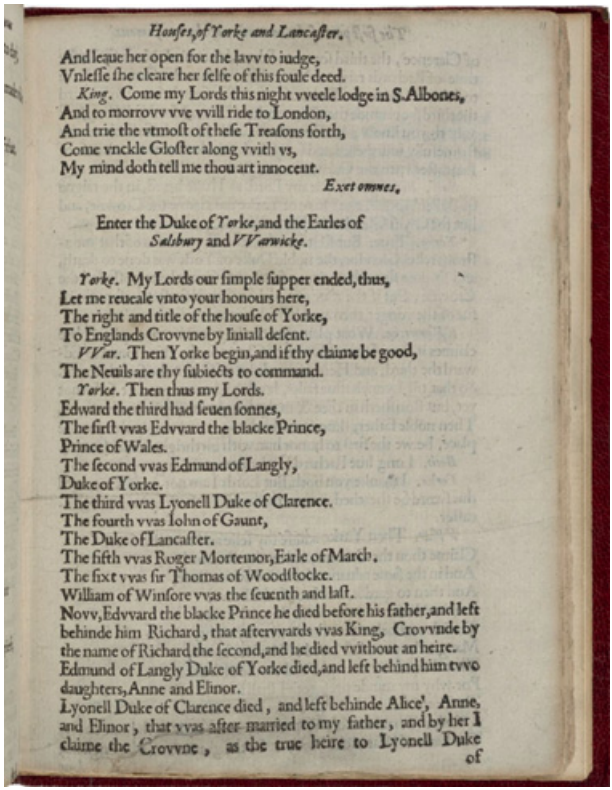
Will authorial philology also account for differences in the dramatized genealogy found, in different forms, in *The First Part of the Contention* (1594) and in *Henry the Sixth, Part Two* (1623)? Or will that problem require a different solution?

3 Contentious Origins

Enter the conspirators (you can read their speeches in the original 1594 edition of *The First Part of the Contention* in Illustrations 8 and 9 or hear their speeches spoken in modern pronunciation online in Audio 3, or read them in modern spelling and modern typography in what follows).

Audio 3 A modern-pronunciation recording of the discussion of the descendants of Edward III printed in the 1600 edition of The First Part of the Contention. Available to access online at www.cambridge.org/taylor

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Houses, of Yorke and Lancaster.

And leaue her open for the lavv to iudge,
Vnleſſe ſhe cleare her ſelfe of this foule deed.
King. Come my Lords this night vveele lodge in S. Albones,
And to morrovv vve vvill ride to London,
And trie the vtmoſt of theſe Treaſons forth,
Come vnckle Gloſter along vvith vs,
My mind doth tell me thou art innocent.
Exet omnes.

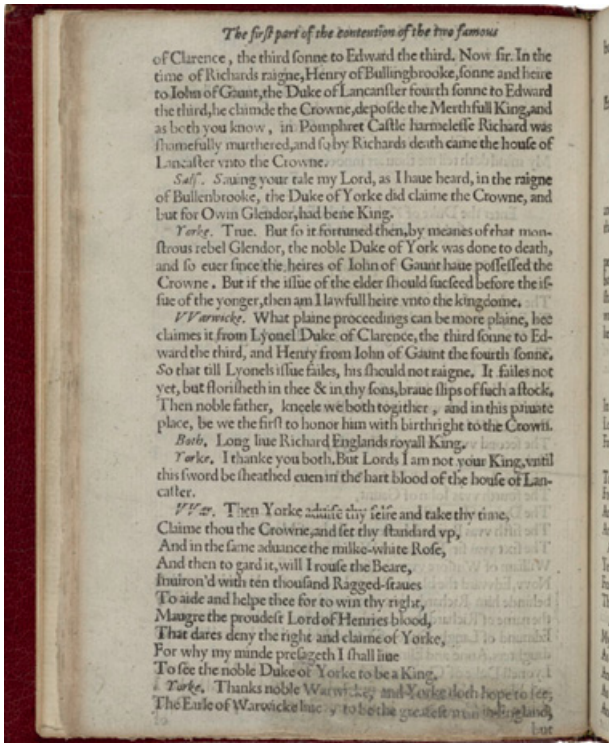
Enter the Duke of *Yorke*, and the Earles of *Salsbury* and *VVarwicke*.

Yorke. My Lords our ſimple ſupper ended, thus,
Let me reueale vnto your honours here,
The right and title of the houſe of Yorke,
To Englands Crovvne by liniall deſent.
VVar. Then Yorke begin, and if thy claime be good,
The Neuils are thy ſubiects to command.
Yorke. Then thus my Lords.
Edward the third had ſeuen ſonnes,
The firſt vvas Edvvard the blacke Prince,
Prince of Wales.
The ſecond vvas Edmund of Langly,
Duke of Yorke.
The third vvas Lyonell Duke of Clarence.
The fourth vvas Iohn of Gaunt,
The Duke of Lancaſter.
The fifth vvas Roger Mortemor, Earle of March.
The ſixt vvas ſir Thomas of Woodſtocke.
William of Winſore vvas the ſeuenth and laſt.
Novv, Edvvard the blacke Prince he died before his father, and left behinde him Richard, that aftervvards vvas King, Crovvnde by the name of Richard the ſecond, and he died vvithout an heire.
Edmund of Langly Duke of Yorke died, and left behind him tvvo daughters, Anne and Elinor.
Lyonell Duke of Clarence died, and left behinde Alice', Anne, and Elinor, that vvas after married to my father, and by her I claime the Crovvne, as the true heire to Lyonell Duke of

Illustration 8 *The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster* (1594), sig. C3r. Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 26099 (online digital image).

WARWICK: Then York begin, and if thy claim be good,
The Nevilles are thy subjects to command.
YORK: Then thus my lords.
Edward the third had seven sons,
The first was Edward the black prince,

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The first part of the contention of the two famous

of Clarence, the third sonne to Edward the third. Now sir. In the time of Richards raigne, Henry of Bullinghrooke, sonne and heire to Iohn of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancanster fourth sonne to Edward the third, he claimde the Crowne, deposde the Merthfull King, and as both you know, in Pomphret Castle harmelesse Richard was shamefully murthered, and so by Richards death came the house of Lancaster vnto the Crowne.

Saff. Sauing your tale my Lord, as I haue heard, in the raigne of Bullenbrooke, the Duke of Yorke did claime the Crowne, and but for Owin Glendor, had bene King.

Yorke. True. But so it fortuned then, by meanes of that monstrous rebel Glendor, the noble Duke of York was done to death, and so euer since the heires of Iohn of Gaunt haue possessed the Crowne. But if the issue of the elder should succeed before the issue of the yonger, then am I lawfull heire vnto the kingdome.

Warwicke. What plaine proceedings can be more plaine, hee claimes it from Lyonel Duke of Clarence, the third sonne to Edward the third, and Henry from Iohn of Gaunt the fourth sonne. So that till Lyonels issue failes, his should not raigne. It failes not yet, but florisheth in thee & in thy sons, braue slips of such a stock. Then noble father, kneele we both together, and in this priuate place, be we the first to honor him with birthright to the Crowne.

Both. Long liue Richard Englands royall King.

Yorke. I thanke you both. But Lords I am not your King, vntil this sword be sheathed euen in the hart blood of the house of Lancaster.

War. Then Yorke aduise thy seise and take thy time,
Claime thou the Crowne, and set thy standard vp,
And in the same aduance the milke-white Rose,
And then to gard it, will I rouse the Beare,
Inuiron'd with ten thousand Ragged-staues
To aide and helpe thee for to win thy right,
Maugre the proudest Lord of Henries blood,
That dares deny the right and claime of Yorke,
For why my minde presageth I shall liue
To see the noble Duke of Yorke to be a King.

Yorke. Thanks noble Warwicke, and Yorke doth hope to see,
The Earle of Warwicke liue y to be the greatest [illegible]

Illustration 9 *The First part of the Contention* (1594), sig. C3v. Folger Shakespeare Library, STC 26099 (online digital image).

Prince of Wales.
The second was Edmund of Langley,
Duke of York.
The third was Lionel Duke of Clarence.
The fourth was John of Gaunt,
The Duke of Lancaster.
The fifth was Roger Mortimer, Earl of March.
The sixth was Sir Thomas of Woodstock.
William of Windsor was the seventh and the last.

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Now, Edward the black prince he died before his father, and left behind him Richard, that afterwards was king, crowned by the name of Richard the second, and he died without an heir. Edmund of Langley Duke of York died, and left behind him two daughters, Anne and Elinor. Lionel Duke of Clarence died, and left behind Alice, Anne and Elinor, that was after married to my father, and by her I claim the crown, as the true heir to Lionel Duke of Clarence, the third son to Edward the third. Now sir. In the time of Richard's reign, Henry of Bollingbrooke, son and heir to John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, fourth son to Edward the third, he claimed the crown, deposed the mirthful king, and as both you know, in Pomfret Castle harmless Richard was shamefully murdered, and so by Richard's death came the house of Lancaster unto the crown.

SALISBURY: Saving your tale my Lord, as I have heard, in the reign of Bollingbrooke, the Duke of York did claim the crown, and but for Owen Glendower, had been king.

YORK: True. But so it fortuned then, by means of that monstrous rebel Glendower, the noble Duke of York was done to death, and so ever since the heirs of John of Gaunt have possessed the crown. But if the issue of the elder should succeed before the issue of the younger, then I am lawful heir unto the kingdom.

WARWICK: What plain proceedings can be more plain, he claims it from Lionel Duke of Clarence, the third son to Edward the third, and Henry from John of Gaunt the fourth son. So that till Lionel's issue fails, his should not reign.[119]

[119] [Shakespeare and others], *The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster* (London: Thomas Millington, 1594), C3r–v, STC 26099. Marginal numbers here refer only to the quarto type-lines being quoted.

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Now enter the conspiracists (in an academic monograph published in 1929, written by Peter Alexander, introduced by Alfred Pollard, and dedicated to John Semple Smart).

Following his mentor Smart, Alexander assumed and asserted that all the plays in the 1623 Folio – including the three Henry VI plays – were written entirely and only by Shakespeare.[120] Most scholars and editors since the eighteenth century believed otherwise, and so do we. We'll return to this larger issue later in our analysis (Section 7). Following Pollard, Alexander also assumed the existence of "bad quartos," but he wanted to add *The First Part of the Contention* to Pollard's category. As we have already pointed out (Section 1), Pollard's theory has been systematically challenged by recent scholarship. More immediately pertinent to our investigation of dramatized genealogies, Alexander pointed out "five obvious errors" in York's genealogical argument as it is presented in *The First Part of the Contention*.[121]

Before we examine those alleged errors, we encourage you to read again – or better yet, listen again to – the quarto passage we quoted, without consulting the Folio version of this scene or the reproduction of that Folio version in all modern editions, and without consulting any historical sources. Imagine yourself as an auditor of an early performance. What is the basis of York's claim, according to the *Contention*? King Edward III had seven sons (4). His *first* son (Edward the Black Prince) died before his father, but that prince's son Richard succeeded to the throne; that genealogical line then terminated when the childless Richard II died (15–17). So far, so well known, and not disputed. The fifth, sixth, and seventh sons (12–14) are irrelevant, because the third and fourth sons had living descendants. Edward's *second* son died (17), murdered by the Welsh rebel Owen Glendower (28–32). York's mother was the daughter of Edward's *third* son; "by her," York says, "I claim the crown" (20). In contrast, Bolingbroke's father was Edward's *fourth* son (22–6). As Warwick asks,

[120] For Smart's and Alexander's insistence that Shakespeare never collaborated, and the importance of that claim to bad quarto theory, see Gary Taylor, "The Politics of Attribution," in Loughnane and Sharpe, eds., *Oxford Handbook*, 848–68.

[121] Alexander, *Henry VI*, 61.

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"What plain proceedings can be more plain?" (35). As a descendant of the third son, York should take precedence over a descendant of the fourth son. Does this argument, read or heard, seem full of "obvious errors"?

When compared to more modern archival authorities, the quarto text does bungle some details of York's lineage. For Alexander, York's mistaken identification of Edmund of Langley as the second son of Edward III (as opposed to the fifth) is the most damning mistake of all because it "renders further argument superfluous." Alexander is correct that, if York was descended from Edward III's second son (Langley), there would be no question about his place in the sequence of succession. However, *Contention* NEVER makes York's claim dependent on Edmund of Langley, and NEVER says that York is Langley's grandson; in fact, *Contention* emphasizes at great length that Langley's direct line was terminated by Glendower. Alexander's patriarchal emphasis on *fathers* and *sons* (rather than mothers and daughters) is misleading. The general premise of York's claim in *Contention* is simple and accurate: York's right to rule comes through his mother's line. The quarto text indicates that Elinor – daughter of Lionel, Duke of Clarence – married York's father. The more familiar Folio text (Illustrations 10 and 11, Audio 4) provides a much more complicated, multigenerational lineage: Lionel's daughter "Philip" (modern "Philippe") married Edmund Mortimer, whose son Roger (Lionel's grandson) fathered Anne (Lionel's great-granddaughter and York's mother), who married the heir of Langley (the fifth son of Edward III). But in both texts, *York's claim to the throne depends on a line that can be traced back to Lionel, Duke of Clarence through York's mother*. This would supersede both his direct descent from the fifth son (Langley) and King Henry VI's descent from the fourth son (John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster). *Contention* may confuse some of the complex specifics of the genealogy – genealogies are often complex, after all – but the most important detail surrounding York's

Audio 4 A modern-pronunciation recording of the discussion of the descendants of Edward III printed in the 1623 edition of The Second Part of the Contention. Available to access online at www.cambridge.org/taylor

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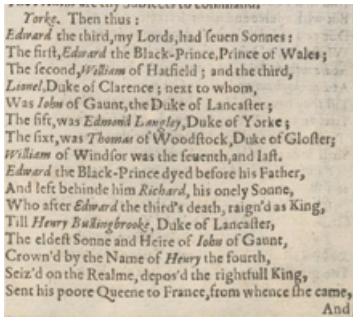

Yorke. Then thus:
Edward the third, my Lords, had seuen Sonnes:
The first, *Edward* the Black-Prince, Prince of Wales;
The second, *William* of Hatfield; and the third,
Lionel, Duke of Clarence; next to whom,
Was *Iohn* of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster;
The fift, was *Edmond Langley*, Duke of Yorke;
The sixt, was *Thomas* of Woodstock, Duke of Glosters;
William of Windsor was the seuenth, and last.
Edward the Black-Prince dyed before his Father,
And left behinde him *Richard*, his onely Sonne,
Who after *Edward* the third's death, raign'd as King,
Till *Henry Bullingbrooke*, Duke of Lancaster,
The eldest Sonne and Heire of *Iohn* of Gaunt,
Crown'd by the Name of *Henry* the fourth,
Seiz'd on the Realme, depos'd the rightfull King,
Sent his poore Queene to France, from whence she came,
And

Illustration 10 *Comedies*, *Histories*, & *Tragedies*, excerpt from sig. m6r. Newberry Library, VAULT Case oversize YS.01.

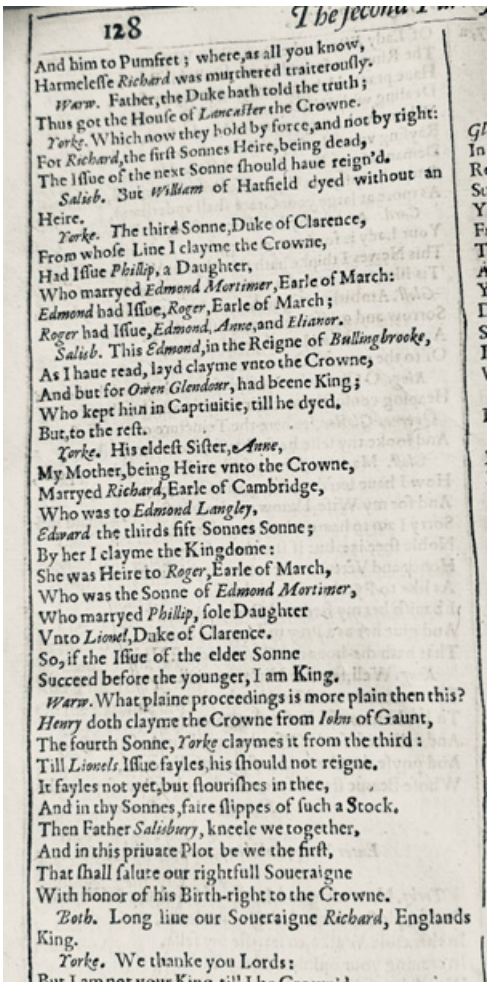
claim is still preserved and emphasized. Like the all-male genealogical scene in *Henry V*, the all-male genealogical scene here ironically locates male inheritance and authority in a *matrilineal* line.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of the all-male, all-white New Bibliographical line that led from Shakespeare to Heminges and Condell to Jaggard to McKerrow-Greg-Pollard to Smart to Alexander, the "hopeless confusion in the details of the pedigree and the mechanical repetition of phrases found in the Folio" is proof "that we have in the quarto nothing more than someone's attempt to reconstruct from memory one of Shakespeare's scenes."[122] The first and most important part of Alexander's argument about the degraded status of the quarto play assumes that the presence of *any* genealogical error proves the text is a memorial reconstruction. He denies *Contention*'s claim to Shakespeare's textual line of descent by turning it into an illegitimate offspring.

Using a "genealogical table" of unremarked and thus unknown authority (Illustration 12), Alexander confidently checks the inaccuracies of York's speech in *Contention* against the codified accuracy of

[122] Alexander, *Henry VI*, 63.

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128 *The second*

And him to Pumfret; where, as all you know,
Harmeleſſe *Richard* was murthered traiterouſly.
Warw. Father, the Duke hath told the truth;
Thus got the Houſe of *Lancaſter* the Crowne.
Yorke. Which now they hold by force, and not by right:
For *Richard*, the firſt Sonnes Heire, being dead,
The Iſſue of the next Sonne ſhould haue reign'd.
Salisb. But *William* of Hatfield dyed without an Heire.
Yorke. The third Sonne, Duke of Clarence,
From whoſe Line I clayme the Crowne,
Had Iſſue *Phillip*, a Daughter,
Who marryed *Edmond Mortimer*, Earle of March:
Edmond had Iſſue, *Roger*, Earle of March;
Roger had Iſſue, *Edmond*, *Anne*, and *Elianor*.
Salisb. This *Edmond*, in the Reigne of *Bullingbrooke*,
As I haue read, layd clayme vnto the Crowne,
And but for *Owen Glendour*, had beene King;
Who kept him in Captiuitie, till he dyed.
But, to the reſt.
Yorke. His eldeſt Siſter, *Anne*,
My Mother, being Heire vnto the Crowne,
Marryed *Richard*, Earle of Cambridge,
Who was to *Edmond Langley*,
Edward the thirds fift Sonnes Sonne;
By her I clayme the Kingdome:
She was Heire to *Roger*, Earle of March,
Who was the Sonne of *Edmond Mortimer*,
Who marryed *Phillip*, ſole Daughter
Vnto *Lionel*, Duke of Clarence.
So, if the Iſſue of the elder Sonne
Succeed before the younger, I am King.
Warw. What plaine proceedings is more plain then this?
Henry doth clayme the Crowne from *John* of Gaunt,
The fourth Sonne, *Yorke* claymes it from the third:
Till *Lionels* Iſſue fayles, his ſhould not reigne.
It fayles not yet, but flouriſhes in thee,
And in thy Sonnes, faire ſlippes of ſuch a Stock.
Then Father *Salisbury*, kneele we together,
And in this priuate Plot be we the firſt,
That ſhall ſalute our rightfull Soueraigne
With honor of his Birth-right to the Crowne.
Both. Long liue our Soueraigne *Richard*, Englands King.
Yorke. We thanke you Lords:
But I am not your King, till I be Crown'd,

Illustration 11 *Comedies*, *Histories*, *& Tragedies*, excerpt from sig. m6v. Newberry Library, VAULT Case oversize YS.01.

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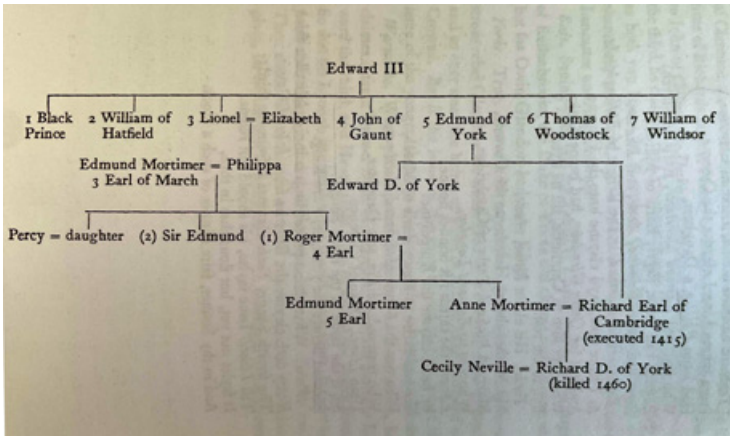


Illustration 12 Peter Alexander's "genealogical table" from *Shakespeare's Henry VI*, p. 60.

English ancestral assertions available to him in his own present.[123] Alexander's genealogical table – the anonymous source of his capital-H "History" – assumes a form of universal historical knowledge free of errors and inconsistencies that must interpret gestures of nonconformity with that knowledge into acts of sinful deviancy. Here, what is confidently known about the past (in a more perfect and correctable distance from it) inflects arguments about what is presently unknown or undeterminable. However, the perceived infallibility of historical consciousness through time neglects the variable conditions of historical knowledge that separate the past from the present. It just so happens that the information relayed by Alexander's anonymous table (Illustration 12) matches the information transmitted by York's claim in *The Second Part of Henry VI* in the

[123] Alexander, *Henry VI*, 60.

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Folio (Illustrations 10 and 11).[124] Because the Folio text carries genealogical knowledge consistent with twentieth-century awareness of its facticity, Alexander was led to assume that the details of the Folio text—like the facts of History itself – were compliant, tractable, and the product of undisrupted lines of transmission. Good texts represent good History.

Alexander's historical discourse is not only ahistorical; it also seems to confuse history with perpetual exactitude. This interpretive process marks *Contention* with a unique status: Its inaccuracies interrupt an accepted understanding of history as a reliable transmission of the past. If we can authorize the record of the past (i.e., this-has-been) as retrievable only by recognizing violations of institutional memory (i.e., this-has-not-been), *Contention* reinforces the very contours of historical thinking that reject its claims to authority. The principle of coherence inherent in this formulation – where history and continuity become syntheses realized through forms and signs of disturbance – naturalizes the past as a stable and determinable category. By challenging what we currently perceive as historical truths, the errors in York's speech in *Contention* acclimatize readers to the perpetual facticity of the information provided by Alexander's anonymized "genealogical table." The breaking through of the instance of (so-called) error is a disruption of tradition that in turn reinforces the (illusive) unity of historical permanence.

The 1594 text is considered a "bad quarto," in part, because it presents a bad version of history; its errors stand in contrast to the uncontested truths of a universal history. The assumption that *Contention* is a bad quarto *because* it includes genealogical errors seems to prioritize the authority of historical sources – and texts made from those sources – that do not contain errors. The insistent "badness" of *Contention* reflects the perpetuation of "universal" historical facts in the realm of textual studies. *The Second Part of Henry VI* is the authorized version of this *history* play because it accepts and reinscribes a line of influence that verifies the tradition from which it is drawn. This tradition also includes perceptions of Shakespeare as a historical subject. The Folio's status as an authorized historical object is therefore inseparable from concerns about its ability to represent a "corrected" and authorized history.

[124] TLN 966–1028; Sc. 6 (2.2).7–62. The Folio does not indicate act or scene divisions.

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This creates conditions of dual registration where notions of textual and historical authority confirm and validate one another. The stability of this relationship in turn influences our impressions of Shakespeare's role as an author/originator and thus the validity of his textual "offspring." Bad history makes bad texts and bad texts must have a bad lineage.

However, if we accept Alexander's implicit belief that history is indeed universal and therefore a conspicuously durable form of knowledge capable of corroborating or substantiating instances of its dispersal, there should be incontrovertible evidence of this type of perpetuity in historical texts themselves. To claim that the errors in *Contention* are indeed anomalies explainable only through recourse to activities not sanctioned by the regularity of the tradition we impose upon authorized agents of transmission, we need to prove that they are indeed intrusions in the procession of permanence. In other words, we need to prove that works of History are indeed universal and immutable. Alexander's assumptions about the genealogical errors in *Contention* invite a consideration of the limits and conditions of historical knowledge. In this way, his argument is as much of a historical problem as it is a textual one. It is therefore necessary to formulate an epistemological understanding of the status of accuracy in Edward III's genealogical historiography before tending to its literary-theatrical manifestations in *Contention* and *2 Henry VI*. Have the documentary details about York's genealogy always remained the same in historical sources? Does Alexander's historical discourse err in assuming that they do?

In the context of the current argument, we must first distinguish between the *types* of English history written and disseminated before 1590, the year of the putative first performance of the play known variously as *Contention* / *2 Henry VI*. As we will discuss in more detail, the historical data informing the dramatic visions of the reign of Henry VI must rely on extant works of history (that in turn are indebted to a wider tradition), but there is more than one genre of English historiography.

In any taxonomy of early modern historiographical types we should also include dramatic history, or, historical events dramatized for London audiences in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These texts substantially refract and theatricalize history as it is derived from their sources to tell dramatic stories with a historical basis, not to reiterate historical facts. Different genres of history

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produce different relationships to historical knowledge and this becomes important to an analysis of error in Edward III's genealogical historiography. When Alexander's book was published in 1929, archivists and historians occupied the same "methodological and conceptual space."[125] Historians attributed degrees of authority to certain documents, which in turn influenced the archival status of these documents and their subsequent relationship to the formation of historical knowledge. The discipline of the New Bibliography itself relied on these basic principles as it sought to describe, categorize, and authorize select versions of certain plays. In our contemporary "documentary episteme," historical information is available in the form of searchable data that can be accessed indexically across the "sociotechnical infrastructures" of digital databases.[126]

The taxonomic affordances of electronic text can provide a relatively easy documentary check on Alexander's epistemological assumptions about History, and they can help us orient a sense of accuracy in the early modern historical documents. As in all historiographical gestures, accessibility and availability of related materials necessarily imposes certain limits: We cannot seek the incidence of error across the entire documentary tradition of English history written and compiled since the twelfth century. The following analysis will focus on mass-produced texts of English history published as commodities within the regime of print capitalism between 1450 and 1594 – that is, from the beginning of print in Europe to the publication of *The First Part of the Contention*. The means of production of a brand of history made widely accessible and thus contrastable within its relative variety matches the technological conditions in which the authors of *Contention* and/or *2 Henry VI* were working and in which their works were published. Further, all author-compilers of English history working for the press admit many antecedent manuscripts into their printed texts. This allows us to experience the incorporation of distinct yet interdependent textual cultures (manuscript and print) in one form of media. "History in

[125] Francis Blouin and William Rosenberg, *Processing The Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6.

[126] Ronald Day, *Indexing It All: The Subject in the Age of Documentation, Information and Data* (Boston: MIT Press, 2014), 4.

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print" therefore establishes a boundary for conceptualizing the event of genealogical error, where it occurs, and how it proliferates.

Proceeding chronologically through dates of publication, the first account of Edward III's line of succession printed in English appears in Robert Fabyan's *New Cronycles of Englande and of Fraunce* (1516).[127] Edward III's line of succession appears first in a passage that derives from the manuscript *London Chronicle* of 1446.[128] The compiler indicates that Edward III has died, "leaving after him four sons; that is to say, Lionel duke of Clarence, John of Gaunt duke of Lancaster, Edmund of Langley duke of York, and Thomas of Woodstock earl of Cambridge."[129] According to the details of history known to us in our indexical present, the sequence of Edward III's surviving children at the time of his death in 1377 is here presented factually. Fabyan's second instance of the same genealogy appears in the section detailing Richard II's parliamentary declaration of 1397 that established an entail of succession through Mortimer: "sir Roger Mortimer earl of March, and son and heir unto sir Edmond Mortimer and of dame Philippe eldest daughter and heir unto sir Lionel the second son of Edward the Third, was soon after proclaimed heir apparent unto the crown of England."[130] This is a genealogical error: Lionel was Edward III's *third* son, not his *second*. As mentioned elsewhere in Fabyan, Lionel was not even the "second" of the children who outlived Edward: He was the *first*. Significantly, among the texts that share a determinable relationship to the *London Chronicle*, only Fabyan's carries these genealogical details into the

[127] Robert Fabyan, *The Cronycles of Englande and of Fraunce* (London: Richard Pynson, 1516), STC 10659, followed by three more editions, each expanded from its predecessor, until 1559 (STC 10664). Here and elsewhere, all results were generated by Early English Books Online–Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP).

[128] See Charles Kingsford, *Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1913), 98–122. All spellings in references cited from books of histories are hereafter silently modernized.

[129] *Fabyans cronycle newly prynted* (London: William Rastell, 1533), fol. CXV^{v}, sig. 2V.i^{v}, STC 10660.

[130] *Fabyans cronycle*, CXLIII^{v}, 2Z.v^{v}.

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medium of print. Fabyan here either includes (incorrect) details drawn from additional sources or he made the error himself.

Fabyan was the last major chronicler of the fifteenth century – the first to work directly for the press – and many printed histories that followed the publication of his *New Chronicle* borrowed extensively from it. The first to include Edward III's genealogical information was William Rastell's *Pastime of People* (1530). Although forfeiting an orderly arrangement for brevity's sake, it copies from Fabyan what was known about Edward III's surviving children at the time of his death.[131] Rastell repeats Fabyan's error about Lionel's position in the line of succession in his account of the reign of Richard II.[132] Rastell also adds additional genealogical errors not found in Fabyan. He records elsewhere that "John of Gaunt" (the father of Henry IV) was "the third son of Edward III," and he notes "Richard earl of Cambridge son to Edward of Langley the fourth son to king Edward the iii. which Richard married Anne daughter to Roger Mortimer son to Philippe only daughter of Leonell ii. son to King Edward the third."[133] John of Gaunt was the fourth son of Edward III (and the second to survive longer than Edward); Edmund of Langley was the fifth (and third to survive). Rastell's text replicates the genealogical errors from Fabyan while introducing new ones that were repeated in subsequent works of English history. Fabyan was the likely source for the mistaken conception that "Lionel" was Edward III's second son, and it seems that Rastell was the first extant printed text to suggest John of Gaunt was Edward III's third son.

John Hardyng's *Chronicle in Metre* (1543) indicates that Edward had "five sons," with "Edward the prince and eldest son of age" followed by

[131] "This king Edward when he died had four sons that is to say Leonell duke of Clarence, John of Gaunt duke of Lancaster, Edmonde of Langley duke of York, and Thomas of Woodstock earl of Cambridge" (*The pastyme of people* (London: John Rastell, [1530?]), sig. Diii, STC 20724.

[132] "Roger Mortimer son to Edmond Mortimer and Dame Phillipe eldest daughter to sir Leonell second son of Edward III was proclaimed heir apparent which sir Roger went after into Ireland and there was slain by wild Irishmen" (*Pastyme*, sig. Diii^{v}).

[133] *Pastyme*, sig. Eii.

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"Leonell next born after in Antwerp."[134] Here, Edward III is said to have had only five sons in total (he had seven), and – in the tradition of Fabyan – Lionel is presented as Edward's second son, rather than the third. The inclusion of Edward the Black Prince indicates Hardyng's list is not limited to only those sons that survived Edward III, and the text clearly specifies that Lionel (rather than William of Hatfield) was "next born" after the Prince of Wales. If we consider the circumstances of Hardyng's patronage and relationship to the court of Henry VI, these errors may seem surprising: He was hired to provide evidence (genealogical or otherwise) of the king's overlordship of Scotland, and it is not unreasonable to presume that he had an adequate understanding of royal heritage both within England and its potential dominions. Further, as a man of the court during the reign of Henry VI, Hardyng would have directly experienced the instability and shifting loyalties stemming from York's rebellion. A revised version of his *Chronicles* includes a dedication to Richard, Duke of York. However, despite these very personal links to the court, Hardyng did not seem to deviate from the historical data provided by his primary source: a version of the manuscript *Brut* that concludes in 1437.[135]

William Baldwin's *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559), in a section describing the Duke of York's oration before Parliament in 1460, reports: "For Richard earl of Cambridge, eldest son / Of Edmund Langley, third son of king Edward, / Engendered me of Anne."[136] Edmund was Edward's fifth son not his third, and if we interpret Baldwin's genealogy through the line surviving Edward, Edmund the "third" son would become the first (after the deaths of the Prince of Wales and William of Hatfield). This error would seem to make York the obvious and uncontested candidate for the throne, rendering the remainder of his oration "meaningless" as Alexander considered York's speech in *Contention*. However, the fact that Edmund was Edward's fifth son was not lost on Baldwin, who records this elsewhere: "This earl of

[134] *The chronicle of Jhon Hardyng in metre* (London: Richard Grafton, 1543), sig. aii, STC 12767.

[135] Kingsford, *Historical Literature*, 147.

[136] William Baldwin, *A myrroure for magistrates* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1559), fol. lix, sig. a.i, STC 1247.

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Cambridge Richard clept by name / Was son to Edmund Langley, Duke of York: / Which Edmund was fifth brother to the same / Duke Lionel."[137] However, this passage is unclear: The "fifth brother" to "Lyonel" would be the *sixth* son, as Edmund's position in the line of succession is here based on his proximity to Lionel as opposed to Edward III.

A related error concerning Edmund of Langley also intrudes into John Stowe's *A Summarie of Englyshe chronicles* (1565; rep. 1566, 1567, 1570, 1573, 1574), which records: "This year the queen was delivered of a man child at Langley, and was named Edmund of Langley, and was King Edward's third son."[138] Edward Prince of Wales was still living at the time of Edmund's birth, so even if William of Hatfield (who did not survive infancy) was not considered by the chroniclers, Edmund would be Edward III's fourth son (after Edward, Lionel, and John of Gaunt). The compilers also record that Edward III "left behind him four sons, Lewes Duke of Clarence, John of Gaunt Duke of Lancaster, Edmond of Langley Duke of Yorke, and Thomas of Woodstock Earl of Cambridge" (mistakenly naming the Duke of Clarence "Lewes" instead of "Lionel").[139]

Grafton's *Chronicle at Large* (1569) similarly reproduces accounts of Edward III's surviving sons at the time of his death, but he also includes a full account of Edward's children. Grafton's is also the first printed English chronicle to include a complete recreation of York's oration before Parliament in 1460. As in many other chronicles that follow its example, these passages do not provide a full *genealogical* account of York's heritage, but they do provide an accurate sense of Lionel's and John of Gaunt's place in the line of succession (third and fourth, respectively). However, the text also states elsewhere that Lionel was Edward III's "second son."[140] An

[137] Baldwin, *A myrroure*, fol. lxxvi, eii .

[138] John Stowe, *A summarie of Englyshe chronicles* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1565), fol. 115, P.iiii, STC 23319. "This year" refers to the sixteenth year of the king's reign.

[139] Stowe, *A summarie*, fol. 144, Q.iiii.

[140] Richard Grafton, *A chronicle at large* (London: Henry Denham, 1569), STC 12147, 347, 2H.i.

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identical error is found in Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587) concerning Edward III and "his second son the lord Lionel duke of Clarence."[141]

Indisputably, the incidence of error in historical writing is an essential feature of English chronicles in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As the preceding analysis demonstrates, the element of inaccuracy is in fact a common aspect of English genealogical historiography, particularly in instances involving Edward III's line of succession. Of the eighteen historical texts printed in English that record genealogical data on Edward III, eleven contain errors involving the order and priority of Edward III's sons. From this evidence, what we would readily identify as genealogical error is more widespread than exceptional, and such errors are certainly more common than Alexander's analysis suggests. What is perhaps most remarkable about these details is the fact that the authors and compilers of these texts were recorders of history, whose approach to the materiality of the past was different than a poet's or a dramatist's. We should expect an English chronicler (or any author of history qua history) to be more concerned with a style of accuracy different from the dramatic fictions drawn from the same material. If we accept Alexander's line of reasoning about the genealogical errors in the quarto *Contention*, then we would have to say that Grafton, Stowe, Holinshed, and Baldwin merely "trusted their memory" at the time of composition too.[142]

While the majority of English histories just cited incorporate and perpetuate errors surrounding Edward III's line of descent, it is worth noting that none of them repeat the same genealogical blunder in *Contention* cited by Alexander as the basis for his argument that it is a text reconstructed from memory. No known source identifies Edmund of Langley as Edward III's second son, so at present we must conclude this specific error is unique to a single text (the 1594 *Contention* quarto). This is also true about other related errors concerning Edward III's lineage in works of early modern historiography. As we have seen, it is common for authors not only to err when recounting a royal line of descent but also to err *uniquely* when not copying wholesale from another extant chronicle. Genealogical error is thus not a valid criterion on its own to prove the memorial reconstruction hypothesis.

[141] Holinshed, *Chronicles* (1587), 400, 2O.vi[v]. [142] Alexander, *Henry VI*, 62.

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4 Starting Points: Hall's *Union* and York's Genealogies

Most scholars agree that the documentary details of *The Second Part of Henry VI* – the long-accepted and authorized version of the play that must bear some relationship to *Contention* – are primarily based on Edward Hall's *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrious Families of Lancaster and York* (1548) and Raphael Holinshed's *The Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1577 and 1587). In terms of the occasional use of other sources in the play, there is a consensus that the Simpcox scene was likely taken from John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, but the amount of influence owed to Stowe, Grafton, Fabyan, or Hardyng remains a matter of debate. This uncertainty is likely related to the complex networks of appropriation in the context of Tudor historiography, where the act of borrowing and copying a received historical narrative (at times verbatim) was, as shown, a common practice. All these texts were available in some way to the author(s) of *The Second Part of Henry VI* at the time of its initial composition, and this fact can sometimes frustrate analytical gestures seeking to isolate one particular source for a specific line, speech, or scene. However effective or ineffective we may find assertions about the Folio text's relationship to these extant histories, the same conclusions do not necessarily apply to its consistently maligned quarto counterpart, especially in instances where the two texts diverge in substance, idiom, or historical focus. After all, dominant critical trends in the twentieth century considered *2 Henry VI* to be the *source* of the memorially reconstructed *Contention*. Source studies have therefore not properly accommodated the possibility that *Contention* is in fact a good quarto with potentially divergent trajectories of influence. How closely does it follow the sources so often linked to the Folio version of the play?

We will turn first to what many scholars consider to be the primary source for *2 Henry VI*. Here is York's genealogy as provided by Hall's *Union*:

> That the high and mighty Prince King Henry III of that name had issue Edward, his first begotten son born at Westminster the eleventh calends of July in the vigil of Saint Mark and Marcilian in the year of our Lord a thousand two hundred twenty nine. And Edmond his second begotten son born on

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> the day of Saint Marcell in the year of our lord a thousand two hundred forty. Which Edward after the death of King Henry his father, was entitled and called king Edward I, and had issue his first begotten son entitled and called after the death of King Edward his father, king Edward II, which had issue the right noble and honorable prince king Edward III, which king Edward had issue Edward his first begotten son, Prince of Wales, William of Hatfield the second begotten son, Lionel Duke of Clarence the third begotten son, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the fourth begotten son, Edmond of Langley, Duke of York, the fifth begotten son, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester the sixth begotten son, and William of Windsor, the seventh begotten son.[143]

Hall's sense of Edward III's line provides an impression of succession that agrees with the Folio text but contrasts with the details of York's speech in *Contention* on several points (Figure 9): Hall correctly lists Edmund of Langley as the fifth son (as opposed to the second), does not list Roger Mortimer as Edward III's son, and includes both William of Hatfield and William of Windsor – progeny of Edward III who did not survive infancy and did not factor into patrilineal debates about kingship. In terms of the genealogical table provided by Alexander, the lineage provided by Hall approximates historical fact. However, this passage from Hall is not found in his sections on Henry VI or even Edward III. Hall's only mention of York's dynastic line is provided in the "Introduction to the History of Henry IV" to situate the origins of the conflict between York and Lancaster. The line of succession leading to Edward I (and thus Edward III) begins with Henry III and his two sons, Edward, "his first begotten son," and Edmond, "his second begotten son."[144] The location of Edward III's

[143] Hall, *Vnion*, A.1^{v}[.

[144] It is worth noting that this section of York's pedigree offers an identical priority to Henry III's Edward and Edmond – claimants with the same name but different lineage – that we find in York's genealogy speech in *The First Part of the Contention*.

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A Comparison of York's Genealogy in *Contention* and Hall

	Contention	Hall
1st	Edward Black Prince	Edward Black Prince
2nd	Edmund of Langley, Duke of York	William of Hatfield
3rd	Lyonell, Duke of Clarence	Lyonell, Duke of Clarence
4th	John of Gaunt	John of Gaunt
5th	Roger Mortemer, Earl of March	Edmund of Langley
6th	Thomas of Woodstock	Thomas of Woodstock
7th	---	William of Windsor

Figure 9 A comparison of York's genealogy in *Contention* and Hall.

genealogical information in Hall's *Union* should be emphasized further in the context of sources for *2 Henry VI* and that play's relationship to *Contention*. If the author responsible for this passage in either text consulted the reign of Henry IV for this information, it would be *the only instance* in each version where historical details do not derive directly from Hall's section on Henry VI.

While this passage remains the only complete rendering of Edward III's line of descent in *Union*, Hall does include a version of York's notorious 1460 oration to Parliament under his history of the reign of Henry VI:

> For all you know (or should know) that the high and mighty prince king Richard II was the true and indubitable heir, to the valiant conqueror, and renowned prince king Edward III as son and heir to the hardy knight, and courageous captain, Edward prince of Wales, duke of Aquitaine and Cornwall, eldest son to the said King Edward III which king was not

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> only in deed, but also of all men, reputed and taken, as the very true and infallible heir, to the wise and politic prince, King Henry III as son and heir to king Edward II, son and heir to king Edward I, the very heir and first begotten son of the said noble and virtuous prince king Henry the III. Which king Richard, of that name the second, was lawfully and justly possessed of the crown and diadem of this Realm and region, till Henry of Derby, duke of Lancaster and Herdford, son to John Duke of Lancaster, the fourth begotten son, to the said king Edward III and younger brother, to my noble ancestor Lionel duke of Clarence, the third begotten son of the said king Edward, by force and violence, contrary both to the duty of his allegiance and also to his homage, to him both done and sworn, raised war and battle, at the castle of Flynt, in North Wales, against the said king Richard, and him apprehended and imprisoned within the Tower of London. After whose piteous death, and execrable murder (alas my heart panteth to remember this abominable fact) the right and title of the crown, and superiority of the Realm, was lawfully reverted and returned to Roger Mortimer, earl of March, son and heir to lady Philippe, the only child of the above rehearsed Lionel, duke of Clarence, to which Roger's daughter called Anne, my most dearest and well beloved mother, I am the very true and lineal heir, which descent, all you cannot justly gainsay, nor yet truly deny. Then remember this, if the title be mine, why am I put from it: if I be true heir to the crown (as I am indeed) why is my right withholden: if my claim be good, why have I not justice?[145]

York makes his claim through Mortimer by way of Lionel, Edward III's third son. *Contention*, *2 Henry VI*, and *Union* all attempt to explain the line of descent following the death of Edward the Black Prince, describe the

[145] Hall, *Vnion*, CLXXVII, 2F.v^{v}.

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murder of Richard II, and clarify the priority due to the lineage of Lionel. However, Hall's version of this speech is not as complete as York's claim in *Contention* or *2 Henry VI*. Hall's history fails to account for Lionel's other descendants through Mortimer, does not mention Mortimer's captivity under Glendower, and (more relevant to the Folio) it completely neglects the line of rival claimants of Edward III. Both versions of the play list Roger's other children besides Anne, note the interruption in the Mortimer line after Edmund was taken hostage, and mention Anne's marriage to York's father. Genealogical history, much like dramatic representations of history, organizes and visualizes human relationships through time, and royal genealogies focus on biological relationships between elite members of a dominant population. Richard's murder is "abominable" because it disrupts the lineage and therefore the legitimacy of hereditary monarchy. In monarchy, there is only a single source of authority, just as in Alexander's New Bibliography there can be only a single source of textual authority.

The list of names present in the three different versions of York's claim (Figure 10) indicates that the Folio text further clarifies and expands the catalogue of succession with additional details not found in *Contention* or this passage from *Union*. Only *2 Henry VI* mentions William of Hatfield (Edward III's second son) and Edmund Mortimer (son of Roger). In this way, the text of *2 Henry VI* is more unlike Hall's account than *Contention* is. However, *Contention* and *2 Henry VI* correspond with their references to Edmund of Langley, Elinor, York's father (Richard Earl of Cambridge), and Glendower. They are also in agreement with one another in the designations Henry Bolingbrook and John of Gaunt (Henry of Derby, Duke of Lancaster, and John, Duke of Lancaster, respectively in Hall). In turn, York's oration in Hall is not as comprehensive as the speeches found in both versions of the play and it is therefore unlikely to be the solitary source for the information they both provide.

An analysis of the relationship between the genealogical information presented in Hall and the two versions of the play indicates that: (a) the first part of York's speech related to Edward III's line of descent must derive from Hall's history of Henry IV, a section that Shakespeare

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Edward III's Line of Succession in Hall, *Contention*, and *2 Henry VI*

Hall	Contention	2H6
Richard II	**Edward Black Prince**	**Edward Black Prince**
Edward III	**Richard II**	**Richard II**
Edward Black Prince	*Edmund of Langley*	**Edward III**
Henry III	**Anne**	**Bolingbroke**
Edward II	*Elinor*	**John of Gaunt**
Edward I	**Lyonel**	**Henry IV**
Henry of Derby, Duke of Lancaster	Alice	Wil. Hatfied
John Duke of Lancaster	*'my father'*	**Lionel**
Lyonel Duke of Clarence	**Edward III**	**Philip**
Roger Mortimer	**Henry Bolingbrooke**	**Edmund Mortimer**
Phillippe	**John of Gaunt**	**Roger Mortimer**
Anne	*Glendor*	2 Edmund Mortimer
		Anne
		Eleanor
		Glendower
		Richard of Cambridge
		Edmund of Langley

Figure 10 Edward III's line of succession in Hall, *Contention*, and *2 Henry VI*.

consulted for the composition of his second tetralogy beginning in 1595; and (b) the second part of York's speech detailing his claim through his mother's line by way of Lionel could not have been based solely on the

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information provided in Hall's text. It follows, then, that some other source was likely used. Let's now turn to the texts of Holinshed, the other chronicle history that has been suggested as a source for *2 Henry VI* and, by extension, *The First Part of the Contention*.

5 Holinshed's *Chronicles* and York's Genealogies

The complex textual history of Holinshed's *Chronicles* clearly impacts interpretations of Edward III's line of descent and its relationship to *Contention* and *2 Henry VI*. The editions of 1577 and 1587 provide identical renderings of the genealogy, but they appear in different sections of the text, each with a different emphasis applied to the consequence of this information on the reign of Henry VI. In the 1577 edition, the line of descent for the sons of Edward III is provided only in the section describing the events and characteristics of Edward III's reign (as opposed to the reign of Henry VI):

> He [Edward III] had issue by his wife queen Philip seven sons, Edward prince of Wales, William of Hatfield that died young, Lionel of Clarence, John of Gaunt duke of Lancaster, Edmund of Langley, earl of Cambridge and after created duke of York, Thomas of Woodstock earl of Buckingham after made duke of Gloucester, and another William which died likewise young. He had also three daughters, Marie that was married to John of Mountford duke of Britaine, Isabell wedded to the lord Coucie earl of Bedford, and Margaret coupled in marriage with the earl of Pembroke.[146]

This genealogical information matches Hall's (and the line of descent provided by Alexander's genealogical table), but this could be related to the well-documented fact that Hall was one of the primary historical and

[146] Raphael Holinshed, *The firste volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (London: John Harrison, (1577), 999, sig. Oo..iiii.

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thematic sources for Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Lucas notes that Hall was a major foundation for Holinshed's account of English affairs for 1399–1509 in particular, so the correspondences between their descriptions of Edward III's lineage is more likely to be the result of appropriation by Holinshed as opposed to a baseline of independently derived and inarguable facts.[147] In addition to this précis of hereditary right from the life of Edward III, the 1577 edition of Holinshed also incorporates York's oration at Parliament from Hall's text.[148] Holinshed prefaces this oration in the 1577 *Chronicles* with a direct citation of Hall, and the two versions of York's speech are nearly identical. Aside from the expected deviations in spelling preferences, there is only a single variant – the presence of a parenthetical outburst on the murder of Richard II in Hall but not in Holinshed (1577): "alas my heart panteth to remember the abominable fact."[149] The essential agreement between the two chronicles dictates that our conclusions must remain the same: The author(s) of *Contention* and *2 Henry VI* must have consulted a different source – or a different section of the same source – for their respective genealogy speeches.

There is no further mention of York's lineage in the sections on Edward III or Henry VI in the 1577 *Chronicles*, but Holinshed does include a record of the king's court of Parliament of 1461, where Roger Mortimer, Earl of March was declared heir to the throne:

> Also by authority of this parliament, Roger lord Mortimer earl of March, son and heir of Edmund Mortimer Earl of March and of the lady Phillippe eldest daughter and heir unto Lionel Duke of Clarence, third son to king Edward the third, was established heir apparent to the crown of this realm and shortly after so proclaimed. The which earl of March anon after the end of the same parliament, sailed to Ireland to his lordship Ulster, whereof he was owner by right of his said mother: but while he

[147] Scott Lucas, "Holinshed and Hall," in *The Oxford Handbook to Holinshed's* Chronicles, ed. Paulina Kewes, Ian W. Archer, and Felicity Heal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 203–15, esp. 212–15.

[148] Holinshed, *Chronicles* (1577], 1302, 3Kiii[v]. [149] Hall, CLXXVII, 2F.vi.

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> remained there to pacify the rebellions of the wild Irish, a great number of them together assembled, came upon him and slew him, together with most of his company.
>
> This Roger earle of March had issue Edmund and Roger, Anne, Ales and Elanor, which Elanor was made a nun. The two sons died without issue, and Anne, the eldest of the daughters, was married to Richard earl of Cambridge, son unto Edmund of Langley before remembered. The which Richard had issue by the said Anne, a son called Richard, that was after the duke of York, and father to king Edward IV.[150]

This extension of Edward's line is provided in the section on Richard II to contextualize the extent and validity of the Yorkist dynasty as it was perceived in 1461. This record of parliamentary proceedings establishes the very line of succession – interrupted by the Lancastrian rebellion and subsequent abdication of the king in 1399 – that Richard Plantagenet uses to authorize his claim in the reign of Henry VI. Ronald Brunlees McKerrow believed that this passage included unique links to the genealogical information presented in *Contention* but absent from *2 Henry VI*. Specifically, he cites the unique parallels between *Contention*'s "Alice, Anne, and Elinor" and Holinshed's "Anne, Ales, and Eleanore."[151] Both of these statements reflect competing degrees of inaccuracy. *Contention* mistakenly presents these women (and Anne most importantly) as the daughters of Lionel, when in fact they were the daughters of Roger Mortimer, Lionel's son-in-law (as reported in Holinshed). However, both texts err in including "Ales"/"Alice" in their respective accounts of Lionel's line of descent: Alice was not a daughter of Lionel nor was she a daughter of Roger Mortimer. The "Ales" of the 1577 Holinshed is not included in the genealogical accounts in the 1587 edition or in the Folio text of *2 Henry VI*, so the

[150] Holinshed, *Chronicles* (1577), 1050, 2Rv^{v}.

[151] Ronald Brunlees McKerrow, "A Note on Henry VI, Part II, and The Contention of York and Lancaster," *Review of English Studies* 9.34 (1933): 157–169, 165.

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shared inclusion of the erroneous Alice led McKerrow to believe that this speech from *Contention* shared a particular relationship with the 1577 *Chronicles*. This observation was related to McKerrow's larger notion that the original text of *Contention* may have been revised at some point between its original composition and the publication of *2 Henry VI* in the first Folio. McKerrow agrees that *Contention* is a memorially reconstructed text, but he questions Alexander's argument that the quarto cannot represent a separate artistic vision and that any differences between the two plays cannot be attributed to revision.[152] He calls attention to York's genealogical speech in particular to suggest that the 1577 edition of Holinshed was the primary source for the initial version of the play reflected by the text of *Contention* while *2 Henry VI* was possibly revised in agreement with the 1587 edition. To this point, McKerrow provides additional details that link both plays more confidently to the 1577 edition to the exclusion of the 1587 text. The name "Sir John Standly" is used in *Contention*, *2 Henry VI*, and the 1577 *Chronicles* to refer (wrongly) to Eleanor's escort to the Isle of Man. In the 1587 *Chronicles*, the name is presented accurately as Sir *Thomas* Standley. The 1594 quarto, 1623 Folio, and 1577 *Chronicles* also agree on the spelling (phonetic or otherwise) of Iden as opposed to "Eden" (as recorded in the 1587 *Chronicles*).[153] For McKerrow, these correspondences suggest the existence of an authorized version of the play based on the 1577 *Chronicles*, a version that predates *2 Henry VI*. *Contention* is, for him, a report of that lost version. He believes that the Folio text carries echoes of this lost prior version in the form of unique links to the first edition of Holinshed.

The two passages from the 1577 *Chronicles* just cited seem to provide the basis of York's genealogical speech as it is presented in *Contention*.

[152] McKerrow, "Note," 159.

[153] McKerrow assumes that *Contention*'s "Eyden" is a phonetic spelling of Iden at a time when such characteristics were considered strong determinants of memorial reconstructions. Although rare in early print, the initial "Ey-" spelling is common in early manuscript archives: see " Eyden," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Patrick Hanks, Richard Coates, and Peter McClure (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), accessed June 6, 2025.

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Following McKerrow, the inclusion of "Ales" in this speech is evidence of a direct consultation of this passage from Holinshed. However, as similarly observed in the conditions surrounding the relationship between Hall's *Union* and the two versions of the play, the genealogical information from Holinshed's 1577 lives of Edward III and of Richard II is the *only* source material outside of the Henry VI section of this first edition of Holinshed to influence the composition of the play. The playwright(s) must have consulted both Holinshed's 1577 material on Edward III and Hall's material on Henry IV *after* the initial composition of the play we know as *The First Part of the Contention/2 Henry VI*. In turn, there is no direct evidence that the genealogical material provided in Hall and the first volume of the *Chronicles* was accessed prior to 1590 (the date of composition and first performances assigned to the play by the New Oxford Shakespeare).[154] This suggests that the Folio text of *2 Henry VI* could have resulted from a later revision that corrected *Contention*'s genealogical anomalies by consulting information about Edward III's line of descent in chronicle material not included in the 1577 Holinshed's life of Henry VI.

However, the revised and expanded Holinshed edition of 1587 contains a revised and expanded section of the life of Henry VI that brings together all relevant data concerning York's lineage in a section entitled: "The articles betwixt king Henry and the duke of Yorke." The 1587 *Chronicles* therefore contains additional material in the life of Henry VI directly related to York's claim that is not found in the life of Henry VI in Hall or the 1577 *Chronicles*. The inclusion of this prolonged discourse on hereditary right in the 1587 text bears upon assessment of the source material used for *2 Henry VI* and *Contention*:

> That right noble and worthy prince, Henry king of England the third had issue, and lawfully got Edward the first begotten son, born at Westminster, the fiftteenth calends of July,

[154] Gary Taylor and Rory Loughnane, "The Canon and Chronology of Shakespeare's Works," in *The New Oxford Shakespeare Authorship Companion*, ed. Gabriel Egan and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 417–602, esp. 493–6.

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in the year of our Lord 1239, and Edmund his second son, which was born on St. Marcel's day, the year 1200, the which Edward, after the death of king Henry his father, intitled and called king Edward I, had issue, Edward his first begotten son, called (after the decease of his father) king Edward II, the which had issue, Edward III, which Edward III had issue, Edward prince of Wales, William of Hatfield his second son, Lionel the third, duke of Clarence; John of Gaunt fourth, duke of Lancaster; Edmund of Langley fifth, duke of York; Thomas of Woodstock sixth, duke of Gloucester; and William of Windsor seventh.

The said Edward prince of Wales, which died in the lifetime of his father, had issue Richard, which succeeded Edward III his grandsire; Richard died without issue; William of Hatfield the second son of Edward III, died without issue; Lionel the third son of Edward III, duke of Clarence, had issue Philip his daughter and heir, which was coupled in matrimony unto Edmund Mortimer earl of March, and had issue Roger Mortimer earl of March her son and heir; which Roger had issue of Edmund earl of March, Roger Mortimer, Anne, Elanor; which Edmund, Roger, and Elanor died without issue.

And the said Anne coupled in matrimony to Richard earl of Cambridge, the son of Edmund of Langley, the fifth son of Henry III, and had issue Richard Plantagenet, commonly called duke of York; John of Gaunt, the fourth son of Edward and the younger brother of the said Lionel, had issue Henry earl of Derby, who uncontinently after that king Richard resigned the crowns of the 658 realms and lordship of Ireland, unrighteously entered upon the same, then being alive Edmund Mortimer earl of March, son to Roger Mortimer earl of March, son and heir to the said Philip, daughter and heir of the said Lionel, the third son of the said king Edward III, to the which Edmund the right and title of the said crowns and lordship by law and customs

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> belonged. To the which Richard duke of York, as son to Anne daughter to Roger Mortimer earl of March, son and heir of the said Philip, daughter and heir of the said Lionel, the third son of Edward III, the right, title, dignity royal, and estate of the crowns and realms of England and France, and the lordship of Ireland pertain and belong before any issue of the said John of Gaunt, fourth son of the same king Edward.[155]

This fragment is a direct importation of material from Stowe's *Chronicles of England from Brute unto this present year of Christ* (1580), from a section of that work that includes the parliamentary record of York's speech and the resultant oaths approving York's newly recognized status.[156] These passages in Holinshed from Stowe are derived from the Brut chronicle, and they expand the documentary reach and institutional response to York's genealogical claims. These details of English history are not found in the records of York's oration in Hall or in the 1577 Holinshed. The 1587 *Chronicles* therefore incorporates additional historical materials to make its history more efficient and comprehensive. Stowe's tallying of the events appears in the "Life of Henry VI" so it is clear that the editors of the revised *Chronicles* of 1587 not only copied portions of Stowe's *Chronicles* but also revised the structure of the text to incorporate thematically related material in the sections from Stowe detailing the reign of Henry VI. Even the title of this section in the 1587 *Chronicles* – "The Articles betwixt King Henrie and the Duke of York" – reproduces a marginal header from Stowe's text. It seems that these "Articles" as reproduced in Stowe represent a consultation of textual artifacts drawn from parliamentary archives, a line of historiographical transmission that was apparently not available to Hall or to the compilers of Holinshed's 1577 *Chronicles*. The publication of Stowe's text of the *Brut Chronicles* in 1580 produced a more complete version of these

[155] Holinshed, *Chronicles* (1587), 657–8, 3Q.iii.

[156] John Stowe, *The chronicles of England, from Brute vnto this present yeare of Christ. 1580* (London: Ralphe Newberie and Henry Bynneman, 1580), 700–2, 2X.vi.[v]-2X.vii[v], STC 23333.

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events that would have been accessible to the authors of the revised edition while it was being prepared. So even though we are reading "Holinshed" in this instance, we are also reading Stowe and the authors of the *Brut*.

Instead of having to consult the lives of Edward III and Richard II for a reference to York's genealogy and its relationship to the War of the Roses more generally in the 1577 text, the author(s) of Folio *2 Henry VI* would have found all this information neatly collected in a single passage from a section of the 1587 *Chronicles* directly related to the titular monarch. The information provided in this fragment – unique to Holinshed's 1587 *Chronicles* and directly drawn from Stowe's edition of the *Brut Chronicle* – seems to match the arrangement of York's speech in the Folio text of *2 Henry VI*.[157] Structurally, the genealogy portion of the "Articles" clearly lists Edward III's progeny in an accurate line of succession before explaining their individual destinies and establishing an unobstructed lineage that prioritizes York's claim through Clarence. Within these general similarities, the rendition of Clarence's line of descent in *2 Henry VI* clearly matches the account in "Articles" (Figure 11).

Rather fittingly, there is a genealogical error in Holinshed (1587): Edmund of Langley was the fifth son of Edward III, not Henry III, a detail that the Folio text fixes and therefore gets right. Beyond this, though, a lexical comparison between these two passages indicates that the Folio text repeats: seven trigram expressions ("The third son," "Duke of Clarence," "had issue Philip," "had issue Roger," "earl of March," "Roger had issue," "Edmund of Langley"; one quadgram (independent of the trigrams): "Richard, Earle of Cambridge"; and one pentagram (independent of the trigrams): "Edmund Mortimer, earl of March." In total, the Folio speech replicates 41 percent (forty-one of ninety-nine words) from this section of the "Articles" from the 1587 *Chronicles*. This number is even more impactful if we limit the comparison to consider only material found in both texts. On these terms, we can eliminate Salisbury's thirty-seven-word introjection as well as York's forty-six-word summary of the genealogical evidence. Importantly, there is no parallel to Edmond Mortimer's imprisonment at the hands of Glendower in the "Articles," and York's concluding précis seems like a necessary

[157] *2 Henry VI* Sc. 6 (= 2.2); *Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*, sig. M6v, col. A.

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***2 Henry VI* (1623 Folio)**

YORK: **The third son Duke of Clarence,**

From whose line I claim the crown,

Had issue *Phillip,* a daughter,

Who married ***Edmond Mortimer,* Earl of March:**

Edmond **had issue, *Roger,* Earle of March;**

Roger* had Issue, *Edmond, Anne,* and *Elanor.

SALIS. This Edmond, in the reign of Bullingbrooke,

As I have read, laid claim unto the crown,

And but for Owen Glendower, had been King;

Who kept him in captivity, till he died.

But, to the rest.

Figure 11 Comparison of Holinshed (1587) to *2 Henry VI* (1623).

accumulatio for an audience that has been asked to follow a confusing thought progression. With these eighty-three words excised from the one-to-one contrast, the Folio can be seen to repeat 73 percent (seventy-two of ninety-nine words) of descriptions of Clarence's line from the 1587 text. The major deviations in this reduced sample occur in the synonymous double-substitution of *2 Henry VI*'s "marriage" for "coupled in matrimony" in "Articles" and ten words found only in the Folio that likely derive from attention-directing strategies ("His eldest Sister," "My Mother, being heir

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YORK: His eldest sister, ***Anne,***

My mother, being heir unto the crown,

Married ***Richard,*** **Earle of Cambridge,**

Who was to ***Edmond Langley****,*

Edward **the third's fifth** son;

By her I claim the kingdom:

She was heir to Roger, Earle of March,

Who was the son of Edmond Mortimer,

Who married Phillip, sole daughter

Unto Lionel, Duke of Clarence.

So, if the issue of the elder son

Succeed before the younger, I am King. (151 words)

Figure 11 (cont.)

unto the Crowne"). In addition to the exact repetitions, the "Articles" from the 1587 *Chronicles* share a unique string of collocates with this portion of the Folio speech: "The third son" followed by "Duke of Clarence" followed by "had issue Philip" followed by "Daughter" [married to] followed by "Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March" followed by "had issue Roger" followed by "Earl of March" followed by "Roger had issue" followed by "Edmund" followed by "Anne" followed by "Elinor."

A comparison between this section of York's speech in the quarto *Contention* and the same passage from the 1587 Holinshed (Figure 12) does not yield the same similarities. The description of Clarence's line

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Holinshed 1587

Lionel **the third son** of Edward III, **duke of Clarence, had issue Philip** his **daughter** and heir, which was coupled in matrimony unto **Edmund Mortimer earl of March,** and **had issue Roger** Mortimer **earl of March** her son and heir, which was coupled in matrimony unto **Edmund Mortimer earl of March,** and **had issue Roger** Mortimer earl of March her son and heir; which **Roger had issue** of **Edmund** earl of March, Roger Mortimer, **Anne, Elanor;** which Edmund, Roger, and Elanor died without issue.

And the said **Anne** coupled in matrimony to **Richard earl of Cambridge,** the son of **Edmund** of **Langley,** the **fifth son** of Henry III, and had issue Richard Plantagenet, commonly called duke of York […] (99 words)

Figure 11 (cont.)

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Holinshed (1587)

Lionel the third son of Edward III, duke of Clarence, had issue Philip his daughter and heir, which was coupled in matrimony unto Edmund Mortimer earl of March, and had issue Roger Mortimer earl of March her son and heir, which was coupled in matrimony unto Edmund Mortimer earl of March, and had issue Roger Mortimer earl of March her and and heir; which Roger had issue of Edmund earl of March, Roger Mortimer, **Anne, Elanor;** which Edmund, Roger, and Elanor died without issue. And the said Anne coupled in matrimony to Richard earl of Cambridge, the son of Edmund of Langley, the fifth so of Henry III, and had issue Richard Plantagenet, commonly called duke of York […] (99 words)

First Part of the Contention (1594)

YORK: […] Edmund of Langley duke of Yorke died, and left behind him two daughters, **Anne** and **Elinor.**

Lionel duke of Clarence died, and left behind, Alice, Anne, and Elinor, that was after married to my father, and by her I claim the Crowne, as the true heyre to **Lionell Duke of Clarence the third sonne to Edward the third.** […] (58 words)

Figure 12 Comparison of Holinshed (1587) to *Contention* (1594).

is much shorter in *Contention* (58 words in the quarto as opposed to 151 in the Folio text), but it repeats only 13 percent (13 of 99 words) of the language from the "Articles" as they are presented in the 1587 *Chronicles*. This general agreement affords only three trigram repetitions ("the third son," "Edward the third," and "Duke of Clarence"). They appear in a cluster of text that resembles the same movement of

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thought in both the "Articles" and the Folio reading but they are placed in a variant order that in fact replicates the phrasing from the 1577 *Chronicles*: "Lionell Duke of Clarence, thirde sonne to king Edwarde the third" (Figure 10).

The preceding analysis demonstrates that York's genealogy speech in the Folio *2 Henry VI* has more in common with the 1587 *Chronicles* than the quarto *Contention* has. In short, a brief comparison of the lexical overlaps between the "Articles" and both dramatic texts shows a 73 percent match with the Folio and only a 13 percent match with the smaller sample of the quarto. These facts seem to provide additional support for McKerrow's claim that the Folio text represents a separate version of the play revised in line with the 1587 *Chronicles*, the only version of Holinshed to include every component of York's genealogy speech in the section detailing the reign of Henry VI. Despite the obvious similarities between the Folio and the "Articles" to the exclusion of *Contention*, there are important differences to consider that may again influence interpretations of *2 Henry VI*'s place in Shakespearean chronology.

As previously mentioned, Salisbury's intrusive speech in the Folio text includes additional marginal details about "Edmund Mortimer" not found in Holinshed's revised 1587 account of Henry VI's reign. *2 Henry VI* – a Folio text that has never been considered a memorial reconstruction – has a genealogical error of its own. As scholars have noted, the many "Edmund Mortimers" populating the historical archives of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries led to considerable confusion in the various chronicles as well as elsewhere in *1 Henry IV* and *1 Henry VI*. The speech from *2 Henry VI* does not properly distinguish Edmund, the fifth Earl of March, from his uncle Sir Edmund, brother of Roger Mortimer (the fourth Earl of March). It was Sir Edmund – not Anne's brother, Edmund – who was captured by Glendower and later became his son-in-law. This error in *2 Henry VI* is consistent with the genealogical errors in *1 Henry IV*, where the imprisoned Edmund Mortimer is described as "the Earl of March."[158] Together, these inaccuracies are consistent with identical confusions in Hall's "Henry the Fourth"

[158] *1 Henry IV*, 1.3.84.

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(where it is also "earle of Marche") and Holinshed's 1587 "Henry the Fourth" and "Henry the Sixth."

Further, there is no mention of Glendower in Holinshed's 1577 account of Henry VI's reign, but Holinshed's 1587 section on "Henry the Sixth" mentions Edmund Mortimer's imprisonment once; he is introduced incorrectly as "the last earl of March of that name" (he was not an earl), and we only know that he has "been restrained from his liberty." Glendower is, however, mentioned in York's speech from Hall's *Union*:

> Edmond earl of March, my most well-beloved uncle, in the time of the first usurper, in deed, but not by right, called king Henry the IV by his cousins, the earl of Northumberland and the lord Percy, he being then in captivity, with Owen Glendower, the rebel in Wales, made his title, and righteous claim, to the destruction of both the noble persons.[159]

Following the critical and editorial tradition since the eighteenth century, there is a consensus that Shakespeare used accounts of "Henry the Fourth" from both Hall and Holinshed when writing portions featuring Glendower as well as the vast bulk of the second tetralogy more generally. There is, of course, no such consensus about Shakespeare as the sole author of *Contention* or of the *Henry VI* plays more generally. The absence of any mention of Glendower in the quarto *Contention* suggests a return to arguments surrounding the origin of the Folio *2 Henry VI* as a revision of the original play represented by *Contention*. Outside of *2 Henry VI*, there is no mention of Glendower in any play associated with Shakespeare's canon before 1595: "Come Lords, away / To fight with Glendower and his complices."[160] The 1595 date of *Richard II* matches the timeline of Shakespeare's intimate familiarity with the reign of Henry IV and the beginning of the Wars of the Roses. The variant genealogy speeches in

[159] Hall, *Vnion*, CLXXVIIJ, 2F.vi.

[160] *Richard II*, 3.1.42–3. For the play's 1595 date, see Taylor and Loughnane, "Canon and Chronology," 512–13.

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the Folio text – and Salisbury's in particular – therefore reflect historical details (incorrect or otherwise) drawn from chronicle accounts of the reign of Henry IV. Hall and Holinshed do not link Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, to Glendower in sections outside of "Henry the Fourth."

Recent theories surrounding the date and composition of the Folio *2 Henry VI* indicate a layer of revision was added by Shakespeare at some point after 1595. The reference to "wild Onele" in the quarto *Contention* is absent from the Folio, and it has been suggested that this name was removed "for a revival in the mid-1590's, especially from mid-1595 onwards," when the reference would have been too controversial in light of the intensification of Hugh O'Neill's rebellion in Ireland.[161] The *terminus a quo* of 1595 "onwards" for a revised layer to *2 Henry VI* could also be seen to influence the relative accuracy of the genealogy speech found in the Folio text. In 1595, Shakespeare was almost certainly reading the sections about Henry IV in both Hall and Holinshed for his *Richard II* (1595), which was followed soon afterward by *1 Henry IV* (1597) and *2 Henry IV* (1598). Shakespeare may have corrected the details of York's genealogy in *2 Henry VI* after consulting different sections of Hall and Holinshed (1587) directly related to a different sequence of history plays written in the mid-to-late 1590s. York's claim in Hall's account of the reign of Henry IV does not contain errors, and it has more in common with York's speech in the Folio *2 Henry VI* than the quarto *Contention*. We have also illustrated that York's genealogy speech in *2 Henry VI* has more in common with the revised 1587 edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles* than the quarto *Contention* text does. Most importantly, there is no direct evidence that specifically links Hall's section on Henry IV to *Contention*.

6 If My Claim Be Good, Why Have I Not Justice?

The main thrust of Alexander's book seeks to displace the possibility of collaboration and revision in Shakespeare's early history plays. He believes all evidence in favor of these theories to be too "conjectural" and ultimately

[161] Taylor and Loughnane, "Canon and Chronology," 495.

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"unconvincing."[162] Alexander then moves to examples of Sheridan's *Duenna* and *School for Scandal* to introduce the notion of known provincial piracy and uses these "surreptitious" eighteenth-century texts to control his deductions about texts from the late sixteenth century. He acknowledges Sheridan "was working almost two hundred years later than Shakespeare" but nevertheless assumes textual cultures are identical through time.[163] The unsupported claim that "the legal means which [Sheridan] had at his disposal for preventing unauthorized provincial performances had not improved" since the time of Shakespeare is apparently enough for him to write off the considerable differences between Elizabethan and Georgian authorship and Elizabethan and Georgian culture more generally. Alexander begins his reassessment of Shakespeare's early histories by assuming plays like *Contention* were piracies that Shakespeare was powerless to prevent, just as Sheridan was two hundred years later. After comparing short passages from authentic and pirated copies of *The Duenna*, he plainly states: "No one doubts this paraphrase which was passed off on the public is later than Sheridan's own version; the additions and interpolations therefore offer no serious problem to those who regard Sheridan as the author of *The Duenna*."[164] The convenient flattening of time and cultural space enables Alexander to impressionistically declare the relative badness of the pirated text of *The Duenna* equal to that of the quarto *Contention*: "The variations from the Folio in *The Contention* and *Richard Duke of York*, which so occupied Malone, need raise no greater difficulty about the question of authorship and revision than those in the texts of *The Duenna* – once it is clearly established that the Quartos are piracies."[165]

Enter the conspiracists. For Alexander, *Contention* is a bad quarto because York's speech does not accurately present Edward III's line of descent. This is the foundation of his argument that *Contention* must be a piracy and it enables him to justify the prior relatedness drawn between the quarto play and the pirated text of Sheridan's *The Duenna*. But as the preceding analysis has shown, genealogical errors are common enough in early modern English historiography. If Alexander were right and the

[162] Alexander, *Henry VI*, 31. [163] Alexander, *Henry VI*, 53–4.
[164] Alexander, *Henry VI*, 54–5. [165] Alexander, *Henry VI*, 55.

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presence of genealogical error in a text were an unequivocal indication that it has been pirated, then the majority of all English chronicle histories would (absurdly) have to be designated memorial reconstructions. In turn, we can no longer accept the traditional assumptions about genealogical error in textual studies nor should we accept the historical discourses that justify and validate those assumptions in the first place. The dominion of the memorial reconstruction hypothesis is based on an archival misinterpretation – a form of epistemological error – and one that presumes a version of history (or History) that doesn't align with the documentary facts.

What must follow, as we have shown, is a reassessment of *The First Part of the Contention* on these terms. Alexander can easily dispossess *Contention* because of "how limpingly the Quarto writer halts after Shakespeare," who he believes treats the genealogical information from York's speech (in *2 Henry VI*, to him the only legitimate version of the play) "with the precision of the chroniclers." For Alexander, the real Shakespeare can only ever be a carrier of History as opposed to histories. Adherents to the "bad quarto" theory can no longer ignore the ubiquity of genealogical errors in the English chronicle tradition. Nor can they overlook our reconsideration of the source material for *Contention* and *2 Henry VI* that emphasizes the placement of the relevant genealogical information within those sources. Yet still they might focus on the perceived magnitude of the error and protest too much that "no author" could be responsible for it.[166] But this is an erroneous emphasis on facticity in a theatrical history. Shakespeare was not a genealogist nor was he a Historian.

Once we cast reasonable doubt on the badness of the quarto *Contention* simply because it contains genealogical errors, we must also be prepared to take seriously other explanations for the differences between the quarto and Folio versions of the play. The long-standing assumption that *Contention* is a bad quarto has forestalled alternative theories about its origins for too long. In this way, memorial reconstruction has become its own type of History insensible to other potential histories.

[166] Roger Warren, ed., *Henry VI, Part Two* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 79.

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In his quest to dislodge theories of collaboration in *2 Henry VI*, Alexander assumes Shakespeare's authorship of (the only legitimate version of) the whole play. This in part allows for the comparisons to Sheridan, who was writing alone, and the pirated text of *The Duenna*. However, known authorship has never been a feature of *2* and *3 Henry VI* even though Alexander's argument requires it. *Contention* cannot be a bad quarto simply because it contains a genealogical error. This fact disturbs Alexander's thesis, and it casts doubt on the concomitant certainty that *2 Henry VI* must have a single author. What remains, then, is the question of attribution, not just of *2 Henry VI*, but also of *Contention*. This analysis has suggested that York's genealogy speech in *2 Henry VI* was most likely revised by Shakespeare at some point after 1595, but that doesn't mean he was the only author of the play, nor does it imply there is only one layer of revision in the Folio text. Recent studies on the authorship of the Folio *Henry VI* plays suggest the presence of multiple authors, especially Christopher Marlowe, and these contributions to the play, including Shakespeare's, could have been made at any point between 1587 and 1597.[167] In the writing of the original *Contention*, Shakespeare may have been a traditional "apprentice," responsible for only a small part of a work planned and primarily executed by a more accomplished master; for *2 Henry VI*, he may have been a traditional "journeyman" (modern script doctor), reworking or tailoring an earlier product.[168] More work is needed, but it is

[167] Taylor and Loughnane, "Canon and Chronology," 495–6. Subsequent work includes Heejin Kim, "The Memorial Reconstruction Theory and Chronicles: The Henry VI Plays," *Shakespeare* (2019): 356–78; Gary Taylor, "Who Read What When?" in *Early Shakespeare, 1588–94*, ed. Rory Loughnane and Andrew Power (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 284–301; Rory Loughnane, "Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Traces of Authorship," *Memoria di Shakespeare* 9 (2022): 21–54; Gabriel Egan, Mark Eisen, Alejandro Ribeiro, and Santiago Segarra, "'I Would I Had That Corporal Soundness": Pervez Rizvi's Analysis of the Word Adjacency Network Method of Authorship Attribution," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 38 (2023): 1494–1507.

[168] For apprentice, journeyman, and script doctor, see Daniel Swift, *The Dream Factory: London's First Playhouse and the Making of William Shakespeare* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2025), esp. 204–5.

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clear that a more focused commitment to exploring the origin and authorship of *Contention* outside of the trappings of memorial reconstruction could help clarify the authorial and performative trajectories of the *Henry VI* plays and their quarto counterparts.

7 Editorial Investments and Documentary Effects in Performance

Contemporary interest in family genealogies, evolutionary genealogies, viral genealogies, and forensic DNA analysis is all predicated on the expectation, indeed the requirement, of accurate evidence. But none of the biological genealogies presented in the Shakespeare canon, or in other English history plays, is "correct." Consequently, inaccuracy in theatrical genealogies cannot be plausibly used to categorize some early texts (but not others) as a consequence of memorial reconstruction, shorthand, or fast note-taking. Why, then, have textual scholars, editors, and bibliographers found those nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theories of textual transmission so self-evidently satisfying?

Editors, like other people, have investments in what we might call Big Politics. Alexander was a veteran of World War I, and the later twentieth-century editors Dover Wilson and Thomas Wallace Craik made no secret of their patriotic enthusiasm for Henry V. But the bias in evaluating the alternative genealogy scenes in *The First Part of the Contention* and *The Chronicle History of Henry the Fift* springs, at least in part, from what we might call little politics: the political investments of any small group in the shared practices that establish membership in their community. Bibliographers, editors, textual scholars, genealogists, lawyers, theologians, and historians of all kinds have a professional and ethical commitment to the accurate reproduction of their textual sources. But Shakespeare did not. He routinely departs from his documentary sources in all his plays based on historical materials, English or Scots or Roman. His work contains nothing comparable to Ben Jonson's 1605 edition of *Sejanus His Fall*, which fills the margins of the text with references to his many classical sources for the details of his play. Indeed, the purpose of Jonson's marginalia was to

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differentiate the kind of history he wrote from the so-called history plays written by his contemporaries, including most conspicuously Shakespeare. Not surprisingly, Jonson has always been more admired by academics than playgoers.

Unlike Jonson, and unlike the modern academic scholars who now edit Shakespeare's plays, Shakespeare and most other early modern playwrights were not professionally or artistically committed to historical accuracy. For those playwrights, as for the compilers of New Testament accounts of the ancestors of Jesus of Nazareth, "The genealogy was a work of art."[169] These compilers were not producing what we would now call "verbatim theatre" (like the televised proceedings of the United States congressional committee investigating the attempted insurrection on January 6, 2021).

The questions we should ask about the Elizabethan editions of *The First Part of the Contention* and *The Chronicle History of Henry the Fifth* are not "Why are there errors in this genealogical passage?" but "What is the dramatic function of this genealogical passage?" For example, in the two versions of *Henry V*, why include an exceptionally long speech, based on Holinshed, rather than something like the simple justification in *Famous Victories*? In both *The First Part of the Contention* and *2 Henry VI*, the genealogical information provided by a single "voice" in various sixteenth-century printed chronicles was broken down into a conversation in which Salisbury and Warwick supplement, summarize, and endorse York's argument. A historical monologue was restructured as a dramatic dialogue. But in both early texts of *Henry V*, Shakespeare retained the genealogical monologue – despite having brought onto the stage *two* bishops instead of one. Why?

One reason could be because Shakespeare wanted to differentiate his Henry V play from the profoundly ahistorical but apparently popular *Famous Victories*. One way to make that contrast, from the outset, would have been to create an initial conspicuous "this-is-history" effect. He did the same thing at play's end, where both versions quote "this," presumably a document, the French and Latin text of an article of the peace treaty

[169] Marshall D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 256.

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recognizing Henry as the heir of France.[170] He did something similar, after the battle of Agincourt, with the lists of French prisoners and of the French and English dead.[171] At Agincourt, both texts call for at least one actual document on stage: "This note."[172] The three traitors at Southampton are each handed separate papers and told to "read them"; expecting commissions, they are instead handed criminal indictments.[173] Likewise, productions of the Folio *Life* often supply the archbishop with genealogical paperwork, which he is consulting or circulating to Henry and the onstage lords. Such paper or parchment properties, which Tiffany Stern calls "scrolls," were a regular feature of early modern performances.[174] But whether or not the bishop is holding documents on stage, the speech demonstrably *references* documents: It quotes, twice, the text of the Salic Law, but also "their own writers" (or "authors") and their commentary notes ("gloss"), and ends with the claim that the French literally "hold up" this law in defense of their illegitimate titles.

Nevertheless, a documentary effect (or what film theorists call an "archive effect") in a literary or dramatic or cinematic work remains a rhetorical and aesthetic *effect*.[175] In particular, Shakespeare regularly omits material found in his sources. Even when he wants a strong documentary effect, Shakespeare changes the documents: He turns the prose of Holinshed's "document" into verse in both the Salic Law speech and the

[170] *Chronicle*, 19.86–9; *Life*, 5.2.332–5. Although neither text explicitly requires an onstage document in the final scene, the treaty was being drafted offstage during the middle of the scene, and it would make sense for a manuscript to be physically present, as it usually is in modern performances.

[171] *Chronicle*, 17.45–63; *Life*, 4.8.68–98. [172] *Chronicle*, 17.49; *Life*, 4.8.72.

[173] *Chronicle*, 3.50; *Life*, 2.2.66.

[174] Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 174–200.

[175] See, for instance, Jaimie Baron, *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History* (London: Routledge, 2014); Peter Kilroy, "Indigenous Australia and the Archive Effect: Frances Calvert's *Talking Broken* as Essay Film," in *World Cinema and the Essay Film*, ed. Brenda Hollweg and Igor Krstic (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 193–210.

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Agincourt lists, and he incorporates only one of the three articles of the peace treaty included by Holinshed.

At the very end of *Henry V*, in both early versions, an English aristocrat reads a significant prose paragraph of the newly negotiated Anglo-French treaty establishing Henry V as successor to the French king; that prose paragraph is taken verbatim from Holinshed's transcription of the treaty. But Holinshed's text contains an error ("*Praeclarissimus*" for "*Praecharissimus*") not present in the first edition of Hall's transcription of the treaty. The mistake, made by a compositor in the 1550 reprint of Hall, was repeated in the 1577 and 1587 editions of Holinshed, and from there transmitted to the 1600 and 1623 versions of *Henry V*. Earlier in the same play, Essex delivers to the French king and court a document showing the "line" of Henry's V's "pedigree" (presumably a genealogical tree), justifying his claim to the French crown; whether or not that document was displayed to the audience offstage and/or the audience on stage, Essex's "pedigree," like the concluding treaty, claims to show an actual historical document. But, of course, in both cases what is carried on stage is not the original archival document.

In performance, the Duke of York (in *Contention* and *2 Henry VI*) and the bishop (in *Henry V*) sometimes are consulting, or sharing with their interlocutors, what we might call evidentiary paperwork. But the onstage paperwork, handled by actors pretending to be historical figures, is as fake as any other theatrical prop. Our own bibliographical and genealogical values cannot be properly applied to the bishop's Salic Law speech or the Yorkist family tree illustrating the descendants of Edward III. And because these archival effects are not rare and reliable evidence of the past, but simply props, they can be replaced, in subsequent performances, by new props, more appropriate to a new author or a new occasion. In the 1944 film of *Henry V*, directed by and starring Laurence Olivier, the Bishop of Ely (Robert Helpmann), assigned the task of handing relevant papers to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Felix Aylmer), dropped them on the stage floor and then could not properly reorganize them. In the 2022 Donmar Warehouse production, the Salic Law speech was illustrated by PowerPoint charts and family trees projected onto the back wall of the set.

The genealogical chronologies contained in early modern dramatic reenactments of medieval English history are not archival documents;

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they are just fleeting archival effects. To understand them, we do not need bibliographers. We need, instead, theatre historians, who ask different questions. Would any company of actors deliberately *change* a script to *begin* a play with the Salic Law speech? No. Why, then, does the *Chronicle History* begin the play that way? It begins like *1 Henry IV* (the Shakespeare play most often cited and most often reprinted in early modern England): A serious, complicated political and religious verse scene is followed by a comic prose scene. Likewise, *2 Henry IV* begins with a verse prologue, followed by a serious political verse scene, followed by a comic prose scene. By contrast, in Folio *Henry V* the first comic prose scene is the *fifth* scene in the play. Structurally, the 1600 quarto of *Henry V* follows the pattern of the two history plays that preceded it (in both historical and theatrical chronology). The quarto's Salic Law speech more comfortably fits into the quarto's well-established Shakespearian structure. What's more, unlike the Folio, the quarto begins the play with the Salic Law of inheritance, then ends it with a treaty that establishes Henry V's inheritance and marriage, which leads to the birth of his son Henry VI, whose claim to the throne of France depends upon rejection of the Salic Law. Of the two versions, the quarto has a clearer structure, framed by inheritance through the female line.

The leap from the justified observation (unsatisfactory genealogical speeches in *The First Part of the Contention* and *The Chronicle History of Henry the fift*) to the unjustified conclusion (unsatisfactory edition) depends upon failure to recognize an undeniable fact: *Shakespeare's intentions were not the same as Holinshed's*. (Or, if you prefer to avoid the emphasis on singular authorship, the intentions of the acting company differed from the intentions of historians.) Shakespeare's intentions, textual and political, might have been literary or theatrical or both, but they certainly differed from Holinshed's or Hall's. Hall and Holinshed were compilers; Shakespeare was a playwright.

This creative disregard for the details in a book can be seen in Shakespeare's treatment of a book much more important than any sixteenth-century chronicle of English history. An English bishop, on an official occasion and therefore presumably dressed in authoritative ecclesiastical

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vestments, in Hall and Holinshed and in both versions of *Henry V*, follows his account of the Salic Law with a citation of the Bible:

> The sin upon my head, dread sovereign,
> For in the Book of Numbers is it writ,
> When the son dies, let the inheritance
> Descend unto the daughter[176]

The Life passage has "it is" (not "is it") and "man" (not "son").[177] But neither quarto nor Folio correctly reproduces Holinshed's "The archbishop further alledged out of the booke of Numbers this saieng: When a man dieth without a sonne, let the inheritance descend to his daughter." Whichever text of *Henry V* we prefer, we must admit that the unambiguous biblical prose has been revised and muddled by Shakespeare for no other discernible purpose than to fit the meter. If Shakespeare was willing to misquote Scripture for the sake of metrical regularity, then he could hardly have had compunctions about misquoting Holinshed for dramatic or political reasons. For instance, he also changed, in both texts, what Holinshed calls a biblical "saying" (suggesting something proverbial) into holy "writ" (suggesting a written divine law). And what in Hall and Holinshed is simply a continuation of the bishop's long speech is in Shakespeare separated into a second speech: first Salic Law, then biblical law. In between, Shakespeare invented Henry's succinct (skeptical? impatient? ethical?) "May I/we with right and conscience make this claim?" Henry's/Shakespeare's interpolated question forces Shakespeare's bishop to take personal moral responsibility for the war ("The sin upon my head"), and to cite the Bible to justify his following exhortation to bloodshed and conquest.

That difference between the intentions of an historian and those of a playwright is evident even in the word "foresaid," the linchpin of the logical chain that leads to the conclusion that the 1600 quarto of *Henry V* is defective. As both versions testify, Shakespeare changed Holinshed's "above named" (where "above" refers to its position in a printed document) to "foresaid" (which refers to a temporal sequence of spoken sounds). Holinshed was

[176] *Chronicle*, 1.64–6. [177] *Life*, 1.2.97–100.

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allegedly recording "a pithie Oration" spoken by "Henrie Chichelie archbishop of Canterburie" in 1414 "in the parlement house."[178] But Holinshed was writing a text meant to be read, and for his readers "above named" made sense. Shakespeare was instead writing a speech to be delivered by an actor in a playhouse, a speech aimed at auditors rather than readers. The quarto title-page advertises that it presents a text that "*hath bene sundry times playd by the Right honorable the Lord Chamberaine his seruants*," and in the Folio two members of that acting company, John Heminges and Henry Condell, assure readers that "these Playes haue had their triall alreadie" in performances before audiences.[179] But all the members of Parliament could not have been crowded onto an Elizabethan or Jacobean stage; in both versions of Shakespeare's play the Salic Law speech is spoken to the king and a few nobles, resembling the Privy Council, which is also more appropriate for receiving the ambassador.

Both versions frame the speech differently than Holinshed. Beforehand, both refer to the "ambassador(s)," whose appearance will follow the speech. Holinshed separates those two events – Salic Law and French embassy – temporally and geographically, and the French ambassador delivers the tennis balls *before* the English bishop delivers his big speech. In changing the sequence, Shakespeare followed his other major source, a play performed by the Queen's Men for listeners rather than a chronicle printed for readers: *The Famous Victories of Henry the fift*. Shakespeare could have predicted that at least some members of an audience, having seen or read the earlier play, would be able to predict what the French ambassador would be bringing later in the scene. The added unnecessary preliminary reference to the ambassadors promises spectators the pleasure of an episode – Henry's majestically damning response to the French insult – that English audiences have always enjoyed.

Both versions of *Henry V* also significantly depart from Holinshed and *Famous Victories* in the words that immediately precede and follow the "documentary" justification of Henry's claim. In neither of Shakespeare's sources does Henry explicitly solicit the speech. More importantly, neither contains Henry's warning to the bishop.

[178] Holinshed, *Chronicles* (1587), 545, Gggi (text and marginal notes).

[179] *Chronicle*, A1r; "To the great Variety of Readers," *Comedies*, *Histories*, & *Tragedies*, pA3r.

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> Therefore take heed how you impawne our
> person,
> How you awake the sleeping sword of warre:
> We charge you in the name of God take heed.[180]

Henry's prefatory speech is longer in the Folio, but in both texts he warns the bishop not to "wrest" his reading of the law, referring to the "many now in health" who shall "drop their blood" if the bishop convinces him to go to war, and Henry's "conjuration" ends with his declaration that he will "believe" that the bishop's words are "washt as pure / As sin in baptism."[181] In both, Henry expresses ethical and political concerns that will encourage audiences to listen to the bishop's speech carefully and with some suspicion. And that skepticism is confirmed, in both, by Henry's immediate reaction to the Salic Law speech: "May we with right & conscience make this claime?"[182] The brevity and grammatical clarity of Henry's response contrasts unmistakably with the bishop's long, complicated speech. It also indicates that, despite or because of the length of the preceding speech, it does not satisfy Henry. The sources contain nothing comparable to Henry's question – and nothing comparable to the bishop's reply in both versions, "The sin vpon my head."

Shakespeare, in both texts, frames the speech skeptically, and Henry's question afterward makes it clear that he finds the bishop's long refutation of the Salic Law in some way unsatisfactory. Scholars and critics therefore should *not expect* the speech to be satisfactory in either version. Actors and audiences almost never find it satisfactory in performance. The first edition of Shakespeare's works with an explicitly theatrical commentary called the Folio version of the speech "monstrously tedious."[183] The Folio version has

[180] *Chronicle*, 1.14–16; *Life*, 1.2. 21–3. [181] *Chronicle*, 1.10–12; *Life*, 1.2.14, 18–19.

[182] *Chronicle*, 1.62; *Life*, 1.1.96 (reading "I" instead of the quarto's "we"). "Throughout this scene in Q Henry consistently uses the royal 'we'" (Gurr, *First Quarto*, 79).

[183] [Francis Gentleman], *Bell's Edition of Shakespeare's Plays, As they are now performed at the Theatres Royal in London . . . By the Authors of the Dramatic Censor* (London: John Bell, 1773–4), IV: 11.

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almost always been shortened, more or less drastically, in performance.[184] Editors usually take this evidence from the play's stage history as an argument for interpreting the quarto text of the speech as a theatrical abridgement of Shakespeare's original intention, preserved in the Folio. But the speech is long, tedious, and complicated in both versions, and Shakespeare as an experienced actor and playwright was surely aware that it would be. It would therefore not be surprising if he experimented with different ways of achieving its *documentary effect* without losing his audience.

One way of solving the problem is to acknowledge it. The line, identical in both versions, "So that as cleare as is the sommers Sun," almost always provokes a reaction from the onstage and/or offstage audience.[185] The Arden, Third Series, editor of *Henry V*, Thomas Wallace Craik, objects that actors "wrongly" often "invite" laughter "by pausing" at the end of the line.[186] But the pause seems indicated by both texts: The end of the verse line coincides with the end of a clause and a punctuation mark. Moreover, Shakespeare surely knew that performances in an open-air theatre like the Curtain or the Globe would make this line subject to uncontrollable meteorological ironies. Even in the summer, the skies in London are not always clear. Even less so in the winter, of course, but in the winter the adjectival "summer's" can seem, in performance, like a last-minute comic addition by the bishop, suddenly aware that the sun is not visible. If Shakespeare had followed Holinshed more closely ("more cleere than the sunne") the line would not have been vulnerable in performance, and the comparative could just as easily have been versified ("more clear than is the summer sun"). But Shakespeare, knowing that his text would usually be performed outdoors, possibly changed Holinshed, in both texts, in a way that invites laughter, or at the very least a sly acknowledgment of the unclarity of the archbishop's argument.

The Salic Law speech did not change significantly between the 1577 and 1587 editions of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, but the text of *Henry V* did

[184] Emma Smith, *King Henry V*. Shakespeare in Production (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 95–7.

[185] *Chronicle*, 1.52; *Life*, 1.2.86. [186] Craik, ed., *King Henry V*, 135n.

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significantly change between the 1600 and 1623 editions. Therefore, the 1600 and 1623 editions represent two different sets of intentions. Those different intentions may have belonged to different people. But we must at least acknowledge the logical possibility that *Shakespeare's own intentions may have changed over time*.

Genealogies combine vectors of agency and vectors of time. It should be obvious that textual genealogies cannot simply assume that all dramatic texts originate with a single agent at a single moment. In the case of *Henry V*, there is a strong scholarly consensus that the play was originally written by a single known playwright. But there is no such consensus about either *The First Part of the Contention* or *Henry the Sixth, Part Two*. Therefore, no genealogist can presuppose that Shakespeare wrote both versions (or either version) of the genealogy scene in that play. As we have shown, the evidence that most clearly links the Yorkist genealogy to Shakespeare links the Folio version to Shakespeare's reading in the mid 1590s. By contrast, no strong attribution evidence links Shakespeare to the corresponding scene in the quarto *First Part of the Contention*. Obviously, Shakespeare's intentions in 1595 may not have been the same as the intentions of a different author in 1590, and the intentions of one acting company in 1595 may not have been the same as the intentions of a different acting company in 1590.

*

The genealogies in these two versions of these two plays do nothing to support the theory of memorial reconstruction by actors or the theory of spectators rapidly taking notes during a performance. Those dramatic genealogies are most easily explained by the normal activities of early modern professional playwrights and early modern printers. We need to liberate these texts – and other so-called bad quartos – from the bibliographical ghetto to which they have been confined since 1623. We need to edit them in all the variegated, often incompatible ways that the canonical Folio texts have been edited, thereby making them accessible to an increasingly diverse modern readership. Show skeptical students that Shakespeare is not *always* "too long." Teach them that even great writers revise their first drafts. Introduce them to the earlier, shorter *First Part of the Contention* as

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the first great English history play (and the first collaboration between Shakespeare and Marlowe). Let them discover that the shorter *Chronicle History of Henry V* "is an extremely good play"; that it gives a larger proportion of the story to the play's ordinary men while containing less of the polemical "resounding rhetoric" of the "vessel of clay" that William Butler Yeats criticized in the Folio version; and that its Katherine speaks a more equal share of the dialogue with Henry in the final scene.[187] Let readers and audiences, actors and translators, teachers and directors, decide for themselves which Shakespeare they want to read – or whether they want to read any version of Shakespeare at all.

[187] Holderness and Loughrey, *Cronicle History*, 13; William Butler Yeats, "At Stratford-upon-Avon," in *Ideas of Good and Evil* (London: Bullen, 1903), 163; Michael Wagoner, "Listening to First Quartos: The Women of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry V*," *Shakespeare* 20:4 (2024), 541–60.

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To our ancestors, from whom we came to be.
To our children, who bring us hope for the future.
To our mentors, Glenen Vars Nance (1950–2025)
and Stanley Wells.
To our partners, Terri and Lydia, who inspire
and illuminate our present.

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Cambridge Elements

Shakespeare and Text

Claire M. L. Bourne
The Pennsylvania State University

Claire M. L. Bourne is Associate Professor of English at The Pennsylvania State University. She is author of *Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England* (Oxford University Press 2020) and editor of the collection *Shakespeare / Text* (Bloomsbury 2021). She has published extensively on early modern book design and reading practices in venues such as *PBSA*, *ELR*, *Shakespeare*, and numerous edited collections. She is also co-author (with Jason Scott-Warren) of an article attributing the annotations in the Free Library of Philadelphia's copy of the Shakespeare First Folio to John Milton. She has edited Fletcher and Massinger's *The Sea Voyage* for the *Routledge Anthology of Early Modern Drama* (2020) and is working on an edition of *Henry the Sixth, Part 1* for the Arden Shakespeare, Fourth Series.

Rory Loughnane
University of Kent

Rory Loughnane is Reader in Early Modern Studies and Co-director of the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies at the University of Kent. He is the author or editor of nine books and has published widely on Shakespeare and textual studies. In his role as Associate Editor of the New Oxford Shakespeare, he has edited more than ten of Shakespeare's plays, and co-authored with Gary Taylor a book-length study about the 'Canon and Chronology' of Shakespeare's works. He is a General Editor of the forthcoming

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