

ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

A Critical Edition of I Sir John Oldcastle

Volume IX

Edited by
Jonathan Rittenhouse



Routledge Revivals

**A Critical Edition of
I Sir John Oldcastle**



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I Sir John Oldcastle**

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The Renaissance Imagination
Volume 9



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Important Literary and Theatrical Texts
from the Late Middle Ages
through the Seventeenth Century

Stephen Orgel
Editor



Taylor & Francis

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Volume 9



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The Huntington, Folger, Clark, and Biblioteca Bodmeriana libraries provided me with microfilm copies of Q1.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this work to the memory of my mother and father, two loving parents.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

I. EDITIONS

- Q1 *The First Part . . . of Sir John Old-castle*, printed by V.S. for Thomas Pavier, 1600
- Q2 *The First Part . . . of Sir John Old-castle*, printed for T.P., 1600 [1619].
- F3 *Mr. William Shakespear Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*, 1664.
- F4 *Mr. William Shakespear's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*, 1685.
- Rowe *The Works of Mr William Shakespear*, Nicholas Rowe, ed., 1709, Vol. VI.
- Pope *The Works of Shakespear*, Alexander Pope, ed., 2nd ed., 1728, Vol. IX.
- Mal. *Supplement to the Edition of Shakespeare's Plays Published in 1778*, Edmond Malone, ed., 1780, Vol. II.
- Simms *A Supplement to the Plays of William Shakespeare*, William Gilmore Simms, ed., 1848.
- Tyrrell *The Doubtful Plays of Shakespeare*, Henry Tyrrell, ed., n.d. (conj. 1851).
- Hopk. *The First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*, A.F. Hopkinson, ed., 1894.
- Mac. *The First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*, J.R. Macarthur, ed., 1907.
- MSR *The Life of Sir John Oldcastle*, Percy Simpson, ed., 1908.
- Brooke *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, C.F. Tucker Brooke, ed., 1908.

- Hebel *The First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*, in *The Works of Michael Drayton*, J. William Hebel, Kathleen Tillotson, and Bernard H. Newdigate, ed., Vols. I and V, 1931 and 1941.

II. OTHER WORKS

- Abbott E.A. Abbott, *A Shakespearean Grammar*, 1869.
- Annals* John Stow, *The Annales of England*, 1592.
- Complete Peerage* Vicary Gibbs, et al., eds., *The Complete Peerage*; or, *A History of the House of Lords and all its members from the earliest times*, Vol. VI, 1926.
- DNB* Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, 1921–22.
- DWB* Sir John Edward Lloyd et al., eds., *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography Down to 1940*, 1959.
- Elton G.R. Elton, *The Tudor Constitution*, 1965.
- Foxe John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed., Rev. George Townsend, 1843, Vol. III.
- GHQ* Frank Taylor and John S. Roskell, translators and eds., *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, 1975.
- Hol. Raphael Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicles*, R.S. Wallace and Alma Hansen, eds., 1923.
- OED* *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- Survey* John Stow, *Survey of London*, ed., Henry B. Wheatley, n.d.
- Tilley Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 1950.
- Waugh W.T. Waugh, "Sir John Oldcastle," *English Historical Review*, 20 (1905), 434–56, 637–58.

III. PERIODICALS

- ELR* *English Literary Renaissance*
- MLN* *Modern Languages Notes*

<i>N&Q</i>	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
<i>SB</i>	<i>Studies in Bibliography</i>
<i>SP</i>	<i>Studies in Philology</i>



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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

The Text

i. Textual History

For such an obscure play, 1 Sir John Oldcastle has had a varied and tempestuous printing history. Primarily because the play became connected with the various works known as the Shakespeare apocrypha,¹ it has been printed eighteen times since its original 1600 publication date. As well, some eminent Shakespeare editors and scholars of the Elizabethan period--Edmond Malone, Percy Simpson, and J. William Hebel--have given their time and attention to solving some of its textual cruxes and elucidating some of the more obscure passages. Oldcastle presents the critic, then, with a series of interesting problems or controversies that span the centuries.

The play's printing history begins with this entry from the Stationers' Register, a list of books authorized for printing:

11 Augusti / 1600
Thomas pavier Entred for his copies vnder the
handes of master VICARS and the / wardens.
These iij copies
viz.
The first parte of the history of the life of
Sir John / OLDCASTELL lord COBHAM.
Item the second and last parte of the history
of Sir / JOHN OLDCASTELL lord COBHAM with his
martyrdom

Item ye history of the life and Deathe of Cap-
taine / THOMAS STUCLEY, with his Mariage . . . xvii^{d2}

1 Sir John Oldcastle was indeed published in 1600. Captain Thomas reached print in 1605, and 2 Sir John Oldcastle either never was printed or has simply disappeared.³

On the title page of the 1600 edition of 1 Sir John Oldcastle we read that "The first part / Of the true and hono- / rable historie, of the life of Sir / John Old-castle, the good / Lord Cobham" was "Printed by V.S. for Thomas Pauier". "V.S." refers to Valentine Simmes, a printer who worked with various publishers (A. Wise, W. Aspley, among others). This Simmes printed a number of plays in the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean period, but the appearance of the first quarto (Q1) of 1 Sir John Oldcastle in 1600 marks the only time that Simmes collaborated with the publisher Thomas Pavier.⁴ A full discussion of Q1 follows in the "Copy Text" section of this "Introduction."

Another quarto of Oldcastle appeared with a slightly altered title page. On it we find that the play was supposedly written by "William Shakespeare" and that it was printed in 1600 in London "for T.P.". Not until the early twentieth century did research prove that Thomas Pavier, publisher of both quartos, was up to something irregular, and that the Shakespeare-attributed quarto was printed not in 1600, the same year as Q1, but in 1619. According to W.W. Greg and A.W. Pollard,⁵ in 1619 Pavier and printer William Jaggard decided to print a number of Shakespeare plays and other plays to which they had the rights: The Whole Contention, Pericles, The Merchant of Venice, Sir John Falstaff, King Lear, Henry V, A Midsummer Night's Dream, A Yorkshire Tragedy, and 1 Sir John Oldcastle. The existence of bound volumes of these nine plays, as well as the general similarity in layout of their title-pages,

the brief imprints, the use of the same device (gillyflower between rose and marigold) and the similarity in type led Greg and Pollard to conclude that Pavier and Jaggard intended some sort of collection designed, no doubt, to "scoop" the newly-planned Shakespeare folio. The intention to make a regular collection was apparently frustrated when a letter of May 3, 1619, was sent out from a court official, the Lord Chamberlain, in effect forbidding Pavier and Jaggard to anticipate the forthcoming Shakespeare folio. Both printer and publisher circumvented this prohibition by printing the plays using the old dates (in Oldcastle's case 1600) so that they could be passed off as old stock.⁶

Jaggard, the printer of the Shakespeare quarto Q2, plainly used Q1 as the basis for Q2. All evidence points to this, and there is no indication that the numerous changes between the two quartos are the result of playhouse alterations to a copy of Q1 subsequently used when printing Q2. Q2's major alterations or substantives, then, are regarded as no more textually valid than any later edition's might be. These substantives, however, have had a long textual history, for almost all later editions of Oldcastle used Q2 or an edition based on Q2 as their source.

Despite thousands of spelling modernizations and punctuation alterations, all clearly introduced by the Q2 compositor, Q2 is obviously a reprint of Q1. Up to the last three sheets Q2 is a page for page reprint. Some Q2 pages have one line more or less than Q1, and revealingly Q2 occasionally retains a wrong Q1 catchword (instead of "For" Q2 has Q1's "With" on E3r). In the earlier sheets, A3r-G4v, there are few substantive changes in the play's verse, the revision of Q1's pointing being Q2's main concern. The major substantive differences between the quarto texts come in the longer prose speeches where

words are dropped or abbreviated, and phrases shortened. Excisions in both prose and verse become more pronounced in the later sheets, H1r-K4v. The Q2 compositor seems intent on saving time and space, and so from H1r he "edits" the remaining twenty-four pages of his copy into twenty-two and a half pages.

¹ Sir John Oldcastle was printed twice more in the seventeenth century. Both the third and fourth folios of Shakespeare (published in 1664 and 1685) included the play in an addition of seven plays "never before Printed in Folio."⁷ The third folio (F3) is based on Q2,⁸ and it faithfully reproduces the variants of that quarto. The F3 printer also adds and subtracts still more words and phrases. Emendations are rare, but one useful example is the reassignment of two Constable speeches to the Aleman (iv.114-16, 119).⁹ This edition also supplies a list of the characters' names. The fourth folio (F4) is no more than a reprint of F3¹⁰ and repeats almost all of the earlier folio's emendations. However, F4's relinication into prose of original verse (i.1-2, 13-14, 42-43, 56-57) was often retained by later editors.

The eighteenth century saw more editions of Oldcastle. In Nicholas Rowe's edition of The Works of Mr William Shakespear (first edition, 1709) the play was printed in "Volume the Sixth" along with the other apocrypha dramas collected in F3 and F4. Added to Alexander Pope's 1728 second edition of The Works of Shakespear was a supplementary Volume IX in which Oldcastle was printed. Jacob Tonson came out with a single-volume edition of the play in 1734 (along with separate issues of forty-two other Shakespeare plays, published in this and subsequent years), and produced another issue in 1735. In the same year R. Walker came out with a single-volume edition of Oldcastle, of which only one copy exists. Apparently this was a pirated edition for on the verso of the title page of Tonson's edition there appears a piracy notice

by Tonson against Walker.¹¹ Finally, in 1780 Edmond Malone edited a two-volume supplement for the 1778 Johnson-Steevens edition of Shakespeare's works, in which we find Oldcastle in Volume II.

The Rowe edition is a slightly edited reprint of the text found in the Shakespeare folios. Some attempt is made to expand on incomplete stage directions (vii.195.1), and a few changes from prose to verse are made (iii.66-67; vii.222-24). Rowe is also the first editor to recognize and correct the obvious confusion in the printing of the scenes at the Bell Inn and those with Sir John, Doll, and the Irishman (xvii-xxiv). Evidence suggests Rowe used F4 as he follows that text's unique alterations. For example, Rowe adopts F4's emendations in lineation in scene i, and its change of "old saw:" to "old say." (v.58).

The 1728 Pope edition of Oldcastle is a faithful copy of Rowe's text, with very few emendations. Later editors have followed its relineation to prose of the soldier's speech (iii.39) and relineation to verse of a Cobham speech in the same scene (11.152-53). The Tonson edition offers no new emendations--only printing errors.

With the publication of Malone's supplement, Oldcastle gets its first thorough going over. In this scholarly edition Malone provides the reader with glossarial and explanatory notes to the text (some of which are attributed to other Shakespeare editors: Farmer, Percy, Reed, and Steevens), and general remarks on the play's authorship and connections with the Henry IV and V plays. Moreover, the text is spruced up. Malone carefully divides the play into acts (five) and scenes, each scene provided with a highly specific scene-heading: Eltham. / An anti-chamber in the palace, Kent. / An outer court before lord Cobham's house. A publick road / leading to it;

and an alehouse appearing at a little distance, and London. / A room in the
Axe Inn, without Bishopgate. Most entrances and exits are expanded and
clarified so that the reader can easily follow the action. Careful attention
is paid to punctuation, lineation, and obscure passages, Malone endeavouring
to turn Oldcastle into some readable and uniform whole. His intentions are
laudable if overzealous.

Of greater importance is the crucial fact that Malone returns to the
"original" edition of Oldcastle, basing his text primarily on this, thus
rejecting the easier method of merely modifying a previous edition. The
"original," however, was Q2, not Q1, and so all Malone produced was a rela-
tively sound edition of the "Shakespeare" quarto. There is no doubt that
Malone's source is Q2 as his text consistently incorporates the variants in
Q2. Where he does provide an occasional Q1 reading, this is not due to any
first-hand knowledge of Q1; rather it is a correct emendation of a corrupt
Q2 reading. An example of this occurs at vii.19. The Q2 reading is "By
fortune was to marry,"; Malone emends to the original Q1 "My fortune . . . ",
but notes that "all copies concur" with the unemended reading. Obviously
Malone never saw, or at least never referred to, a copy of Q1.

In the nineteenth century five editors turn their attention to Oldcastle.
All used the Malone text, or an edition based on Malone, as their copy,
occasionally (and intentionally) emending to a Q2 reading, or rarely (and
unintentionally) emending to a Q1 reading.

In Volume I of The Ancient British Drama in Three Volumes (Edinburgh:
James Ballantyne and Co., 1810) the compiler (conjectured to be Sir Walter
Scott) provides us with a direct reprint of the 1780 Malone text, and only
modernizes the spelling. Later on in the century William Gilmore Simms, the

noted American writer and editor, produces his A Supplement to the Plays of William Shakespeare (New York: G.F. Cooledge & brother, 1848). His text is idiosyncratic, Simms allowing himself many creative and wild surmises. One lucky result of his technique comes with his emending the Malone and Q2 "pretensed" to "prepensed" (vi.39). He notes that the old copy has "pretensed," yet feels that "malice prepense or prepensed malice seems most legitimate." As "prepensed" is, in fact, in the original Q1, Simms, on this occasion, comes up with a fortuitously correct emendation.

Henry Tyrrell edits Oldcastle in his The Doubtful Plays of Shakespeare (London and New York: John Tallis and Co., n.d., conj. 1851). In contrast to the eccentric and more valuable Simms text, Tyrrell's edition of the play is an unoriginal modern-spelling reprint of Malone. Tyrrell's notes are taken from Malone and his historical and critical introduction (like Simms' before him) is derivative. William Hazlitt's edition of the play in the familiar-sounding The Doubtful Plays of Shakespeare (London: George Routledge and Sons, Limited) which was printed a number of times between 1852 and 1887, is cursorily edited. Hazlitt, however, does incorporate a few Malone conjectures into his text.

A.F. Hopkinson, the last of the nineteenth-century editors of Oldcastle, is also the last to modernize the spelling of the original, a practice adopted by every previous editor or printer and by none afterwards. In the last years of the century Hopkinson edited the plays of the apocrypha individually and produced his version of our play in 1894 (London: M.E. Sims and Co.). His text is merely a reprint of Tyrrell and Hazlitt, yet his introduction to the play is fresh. He is the first editor to make use of the knowledge gained from Henslowe's Diary that Oldcastle was written by Drayton,

Munday, Wilson, and Hathaway.¹² Indeed he sallies forth (in the tradition of F.G. Fleay) into the murky underworld of authorship and metric analysis, but is aware of the fallibility and limitations of his apportionment of Oldcastle amongst the four collaborators.

In the early twentieth century Oldcastle reached print four times. In 1907 the American scholar John Robertson Macarthur had his dissertation, an old-spelling edition of Oldcastle, published (Chicago: Scott, Foreman and Company). Unfortunately for him he had done all the work before the Greg-Pollard discoveries, and produced a faithful reprint of Q2. His introduction to the play is, of course, the most complete study of Oldcastle written. Here he spends a good deal of time trying to prove that the "Shakespeare" quarto is indeed the original quarto. To his credit, however, he provides the reader with all the "substantive variants" found in the non-Shakespearean quarto. He also discusses the play's sources, authors, and aesthetic qualities. The explanatory notes are useful from an historical or literary viewpoint, but scant attention is paid to dramatic issues.

In 1908 the Malone Society published a reprint of Q1 prepared by Percy Simpson, using as copy text the British Museum (C.34.1.2) and Bodleian (Mal. 768) copies. The text was scrupulously reprinted (I have found only five errors) and Simpson provides the reader with a useful listing of Q1 press variants and doubtful readings, and a collection of the substantive changes in the Q2 text, as well as a list of significant emendations found in the Shakespeare folios and Malone's text. A brief introduction to the play provides the bibliographical background to the Oldcastle text, and refers to the important Greg articles in The Library (1908) which established the correct printing date of the "Shakespeare" quarto and thus Q1's textual

superiority over Q2.

In the same year C.F. Tucker Brooke came out with his The Shakespeare Apocrypha (Oxford: Clarendon Press). The text of Oldcastle found there is a critical old-spelling edition of Q1. Emendations in punctuation and lineation are freely made, Brooke incorporating later editions' improvements to Q1. In 1911 Q1 was photographically reproduced for the Tudor Facsimile Texts, John S. Farmer editor.

Oldcastle was once again published in Volume I of The Works of Michael Drayton (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1931) which was edited by J. William Hebel. The text is a reprint of Q1 though a few emendations are introduced into it. By the time of the printing of Volume V (1941), in which an introduction to the play and glossarial and explanatory notes appear, Hebel had died and Kathleen Tillotson and Bernard H. Newdigate had completed his work.¹³ Nothing of great originality appears in the introduction, but much of what has been previously said on the play has been cogently summarized. Collation of five of the seven extant copies of Q1 is provided. Explanatory notes are good, but are more an exercise in compilation than original work.

Finally, William Kozlenko has recently edited the Disputed Plays of Shakespeare (New York: Hawthorn Books Inc., n.d., © 1974) in which we find Oldcastle. His text is a photographic reprint of Tyrrell's with nothing new added.

Oldcastle has been translated into German (three editions) and Danish (one edition). It first appeared in L. Tieck's Vier Schauspiele von Shakespeare (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1836), then in Volume I of Ernst Ortlepp's compilation of Tieck's and Schlegel's translation of the apocrypha, Nachträge zu Shakspeare's Werken von Schlegel und Tieck (Stuttgart: L.F. Rieger, 1840),

and in Heinrich Döring's Supplemente zu allen Ausgaben Shakspeare's sämtlicher Schauspiele (Erfurt: Hennings und Hopf, 1840). In 1913 a Danish translation by A. Halling was printed in Den Lystige Djaevel. Tre pseudo-Shakespeareske Skuespil (Kjobenhavn og Kristiania).

ii. This Edition

This edition is a critical modern-spelling version of 1 Sir John Oldcastle generally based on the editorial format of the Revels Plays. Details of spelling, punctuation, and italicization which do not affect sense, as well as obvious printing errors,¹⁴ are silently emended. Copy text has been a microfilm of the Huntington Library copy of Q1. All other extant copies have been checked for press variants. (See Appendix I for lists of Q1 copies, press variants, and running-titles). Subsequent editions of Oldcastle have been collated but this edition does not supply a variorum collation. Only emendations adopted in my critical edition are noted in the collation notes, as well as important emendations which, while rejected in this text, are considered valid alternatives. All citations are printed as in the original texts, except that archaic i/j, u/v, and long s have been normalized.

The text, as stated above, is a modern-spelling version and archaic forms are only preserved where rhyme or metre requires them or when modernization obscures rather than clarifies the required sense of the word. However, in dialect passages (Welsh-English, Irish-English, and Lancashire-English--see scenes i, xvii-xix, xxi, xxiii-xxiv, xxvii) the practice is to retain the spelling of the original text, modernizing only where pronunciation

seems unaffected. Throughout, the "-ed" form is used for non-syllabic terminations and "-èd" for syllabic.

Punctuation is modernized to reflect modern usage. For example, many of Q1's commas habitually placed at the end of a verse line or unnecessarily inserted between phrases or clauses have been eliminated in this edition. Attempts are made, though, to convey the rhetorical or dramatic effect of Q1 where the pointing seems trustworthy. Thus a colon, usually employed in Q1 either for purposes of emphasis or as an indication of a break in speech due to stage action, becomes an exclamation point in the first instance and a period in the second. In the collation notes punctuation is collated when changes involve a decision between alternative interpretations (see, for example, notes for Prologue.12, 13). Occasionally, where usage has changed since the time of an earlier editor, I have adopted the interpretive spirit of an emendation in pointing made by him, but used punctuation conforming to modern usage. In these cases my modified use of the earlier editor's emendation is identified without comment as deriving from him.

Lineation of the text has caused a few problems, primarily because of the indifferent nature of much of the verse in Oldcastle. Thus it is sometimes difficult to tell if an irregular or unrhymic line set as verse, in a mixed scene of verse and prose, is indeed verse. In a number of scenes characters who normally speak verse are interacting with those who usually speak prose (for example, scenes iii, x, xi, xx); moreover, it would appear that certain characters are present in scenes written by different collaborators, who, of course, may approach these characters from different artistic viewpoints. The upshot of all this is that I have found it very difficult and not especially useful to be rigorously consistent in my lineation of the text.

I have attempted to follow Q1 where possible, emending prose to verse or vice versa only where Q1 seems demonstrably wrong, or, in some cases, where Q1's compositor seems to have manipulated his MS copy by "creating" prose or verse so that he could more easily set his type. Variations from Q1's lineation are indicated in the collation notes.

The practice with stage directions is to centre entrances and to place exits on the right, irrespective of their original positioning. Stage directions within speeches are marked off by parentheses. Editorial stage directions are printed in square brackets--[. . .]. Characters' names in stage directions are silently normalized: thus King Harry, Lord Cobham, and Sir John are always preferred over King Henry, Sir John Oldcastle, and Priest. In similar fashion speech headings are silently normalized. Asides are normalized thus--(Aside). They are always placed before the aside portion of the speech, irrespective of their position in Q1, and subsequent portions not spoken aside are preceded by (To them) or whatever is appropriate.

In this text the scenes are consecutively numbered in square brackets on the left hand side of the page. Line-numbering, in fives, is provided on the right-hand side of the text.

iii. Copy Text

Q1 of 1 Sir John Oldcastle was printed in the shop of Valentine Simmes.¹⁵ Simmes's press printed a number of Shakespeare quartos and some of the plays put on by the theatre company called the Admiral's Men, as well as other plays and projects. The 1597 and 1598 quartos of Richard II, the 1597 Richard III, the 1600 The First Part of the Contention, 2 Henry IV, and Much Ado About

Nothing, the 1603 Hamlet, the 1604 1 Henry IV, and the 1611 Hamlet were done on the Simmes press. He was also responsible for the printing of the Admiral's Men's 1599 An Humorous Day's Mirth, the 1600 Oldcastle and The Shoemaker's Holiday, the 1604 Doctor Faustus, and the 1604 and 1605 1 Honest Whore. Other plays printed at his shop were the 1599 A Warning for Fair Women, the 1604 The Malcontent, the 1605 How to Choose a Good Wife from a Bad, the 1606 The Gentleman Usher, the 1607 The Taming of a Shrew, and the 1611 1 & 2 The Troublesome Reign of King John.¹⁶

Bibliographic research into the compositorial and spelling habits of the workmen in Simmes's shop has centred on the Shakespeare quartos. In a 1960 article, "The Compositors of Henry IV, Part 2, Much Ado About Nothing, The Shoemaker's Holiday, and The First Part of the Contention," SB, 13, 19-29, W. Craig Ferguson concluded that one workman, Compositor A, was responsible for all of 2 Henry IV and Much Ado, most of The Contention, and part of Holiday. For Ferguson the crucial identifying mark of Compositor A's work was his unique habit of not stopping unabbreviated speech headings, a compositorial quirk found only in Simmes-shop quartos. Alan E. Craven in a 1973 article "Simmes' Compositor A and Five Shakespeare Quartos," SB, 26, 37-60, concluded that all of the 1603 Hamlet was the work of Compositor A, identifying him through his preferential use of unabbreviated unstopped speech headings. Moreover, in the 1597 quarto of Richard II, Craven used this trait as the crucial distinguishing mark between the two workmen responsible for the play's printing.¹⁷

Analysis of the speech headings in Oldcastle shows that of 392 unabbreviated speech headings 353 are unstopped while only 39 are stopped. Unabbreviated unstopped speech headings occur on sixty-four of the seventy-six

pages of text, and on three of the other twelve pages (B4r, H2v, and H3v) un-stopped numbers are used as speech headings. Furthermore, only on C4r do un-abbreviated stopped speech headings outnumber the unstopped (three to one), and two of the former, "Dol.", may be abbreviations for "Doll". From such evidence in Oldcastle it seems clear that the 1600 quarto was set by Compositor A.

Oldcastle was set by Compositor A in mid-career, so to speak, along with 2 Henry IV and Much Ado. In these 1600 Shakespeare texts, both substantive and set from manuscript or prompt-book, Ferguson and Craven noted shared compositorial and spelling traits. The dialogue in the plays is all set in roman type, italic being reserved for stage and speech directions. These directions, moreover, are placed on the page in a consistent manner. Spelling analysis also reveals a consistent pattern, as "heart", "eie", and "yong" are consistently preferred over "hart", "eye", and "young", while "-nesse", "do", and "go" are slightly preferred over "-nes", "doe", and "goe".

To a great extent the text of Oldcastle shows the same compositorial and spelling traits. The Oldcastle text has a very similar appearance to that of the Shakespeare plays, and its spelling also conforms to their norms (though a distinct preference for "-nesse" and "do" probably reflects the influence of such a preference in the MS copy).

And what is the manuscript copy for Q1? The evidence indicates that the MS is authorial rather than prompt copy (though some stage directions may be the additions of a playhouse reviser)¹⁸ and that these "foul papers" are in good enough order to have provided the Oldcastle compositor with an acceptable copy.¹⁹

Primary positive evidence in favour of authorial copy for Q1 and evidence