

On the Date and Authorship of *The Contention*

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In this paper, I wish to undertake the following:

1. Challenge the notion of “Bad Quarto” as an acceptable description of the Q text entitled *The First Part of the Contention*;
2. Argue that Q relies mainly on Hall’s *Chronicle* (1548-50) and only to a small extent, if at all, draws on Holinshed’s 1577 *Chronicle* and not on Holinshed’s second edition (1587);
3. Challenge the view that F precedes Q, arguing that the original text was Q, which was revised and expanded into F;
4. Explore Laurence Manley’s links between Eleanor Cobham in the play with Margaret Stanley (née Clifford), Countess of Derby as heiress presumptive to Elizabeth;
5. Suggest that Eva Turner Clark’s proposed date c 1579-81 for Q is supported by Manley’s identification.

I intend to consider the date of composition of the Quarto Text of *The First Part of the Contention* (1594) and its relationship with the 1623 Folio text of King *Henry VI Part 2* (1623).¹ The scholarly consensus is that the Folio reports the original text and the Quarto is a subsequent, badly derived text—probably a memorial reconstruction, perhaps a conscious abridgement by the playing companies or both.

This view on the priority of Q was accepted by Lawrence Manley as recently as 2003. Manley considered how the F text may have passed from Strange’s Men to Pembroke’s Men and may have been revised into the 1594 quarto. In particular, Manley observed strong similarities between the character of Eleanor Cobham in the play and the historical figure of Margaret Stanley (née Clifford), Countess of Derby, a portrayal which varies significantly between the texts. He argued that the Folio text of *Henry VI, Part 2* was almost certainly revised by the playwright into the Quarto text so as to portray Eleanor in a less favourable light. Manley’s view of the direction of revision was from F to Q.

Questions

Many of these points have been called into question. Roger Warren in his *Oxford Shakespeare* edition of *Henry VI, Part 2* (2003) argued that the direction of revision was from Q to F. If Warren is correct, then the revision of the play coincided with a more sympathetic depiction of Eleanor. As the Eleanor Cobham episode shows a remarkable coincidence with events among the Tudor aristocracy in the 1570s, I offer the conclusion that the quarto version of *The Contention* was probably written about 1579 by Edward de

Vere, Earl of Oxford but not published until 1594. The quarto version of the play was later revised and the Eleanor Cobham episode was altered (perhaps because the play passed to Lord Strange's Men in the late 1580s or early 1590s) and published in the First Folio.

Textual History

The First Part of the Contention (*The Contention*) was registered on 12 March 1594 without attribution to a particular author.² It was first published in quarto in 1594,³ again in 1604 and, for the first time with *The True Tragedy of Richard of Gloucester* (*3 Henry VI*), in 1619.⁵

There are very few differences between the three quarto texts. The play, or rather a longer version, appeared in the First Folio in its historical position.⁶ This longer version was entitled *The Second Part of King Henry VI*. Somewhat confusingly, some editors refer to the play as *The Contention* when reporting the folio text.⁷ Let me just clarify that in this paper *The Contention* refers to the Quarto text and the Folio text is called *2 Henry VI*. Both *The Contention* (Q1) and *2 Henry VI* (F1) follow the same plot and characterisation in the same 23 scenes but differ in a large number of readings, with Q1 containing only about two-thirds of the text of *2 Henry VI* in F1.

Attribution

Chambers (1930) asserted Shakespeare's sole authorship of the play. This has remained the majority position, e.g. Tillyard (1944), Cairncross (1962) and Hattaway (1991).

A number of critics, however, has expressed doubts over its authorship, without any consensus about the alternative candidate(s). Edmond Malone in 1790 suggested that Greene and others wrote *The Contention*, later revised by Shakespeare into *2 Henry VI*. Fleay saw grounds for assigning at least part of the play to Thomas Lodge. Tucker Brooke (1923) saw *The Contention* as by another author, but revised by Shakespeare. Dover Wilson (1952) believed that Nashe and Green contributed parts, especially the Jack Cade scenes as these are mainly in prose. Merriam and Matthews (1994) attribute both *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy* to Marlowe, later revised by Shakespeare. Wells & Taylor (1986), and more recently Knowles (1999), cautiously accepted the possibility of co-authorship between Shakespeare and other playwrights. Vickers has not (yet) made a special study of *2 Henry VI* nor offered any suggestion as to whether the play was co-authored.

Sources

We now move on to the sources for the play. According to Geoffrey Bullough, a source is a text which informs the majority of a play, whether in plot, characterisation or context. Bullough demonstrates that Hall's chronicle, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548-50) provided Shakespeare with the complete structure for the Yorkist tetralogy (i.e., the plays about Henry VI and Richard III). Hall

seems to be especially echoed in the full title of the play, *The firste parte of the Contention of the two famous houses of York and Lancaster*. Secondly, Bullough follows Hall's moralising narrative in assigning blame for the civil war to Margaret of Anjou, Henry VI's queen. Furthermore, Hall provides both the details and the treatment of the quarrel between Gloucester and Winchester as well as depicting the deaths of Winchester and Suffolk as retribution for the murder of Gloucester. Finally, Hall portrays Henry VI as a gentle king who fails to stop the Civil War (showing Lancastrian sympathies), not as the madman depicted in Holinshed (who follows the Yorkist interpretation).

There are many more examples, and Bullough believes that Hall (possibly as reported by Grafton) provides by far the largest amount of material. While Grafton's *Chronicle* of 1569 is often derived verbatim from Hall, two notable elements, added by Grafton, are used by Shakespeare: the incident involving Simpo's miracle (Q Scene V; F Act II.i) and the list of grievances raised in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, which the dramatist transferred to Jack Cade's rebellion in Act IV; details include the execution of "men of lawe that stood in their way, whether they were Spirituall or Temporall."

It is possible that Shakespeare made some small use of Holinshed's *Chronicles of Englande, Scotlande, and Irelande* (first edition 1577; second edition 1587), but not to the extent he did with Hall, e.g. in the dispute between York and Somerset over the regency of France:

But the Duke of Somersfette still maligning the Duke of Yorkes aduancement, as hee had foughte to hinder his dispathe at the firste when he was sent ouer to be regent, as before ye haue heard: he likewyse nowe wrought so, that the king reuoked his graunt made to the duke of Yorke for enioying of that office the terme of other fiue yeares, and with helpe of Williã Mar|ques of Suffolke obteyned that graunt for him selfe: (Holinshed, 1577, under 1446.)

This passage is reproduced verbatim in the later edition, with some changes in orthography:

But the duke of Summerset still maligning the duke of Yorkes aduancement, as he had sought to hinder his dispatch at the first when he was sent ouer to be regent, as before yee haue heard: he likewise now wrought so, that the king reuoked his grant made to the duke of Yorke for enioieng of that office the terme of other fiue yéeres, and with helpe of William marquesse of Suffolke obtained that grant for himselfe (Holinshed, 1587, under 1446; iii, 625.)

Holinshed also reports the use of Buckingham as Henry's negotiator to York:

But the King, whē he heard first of ye Dukes approche, fente to him messengers, as the Duke of Buckingham, and others, to vnderstãd what he meant by his comming, VVhethãsted. thus furnished after the manner of warre. (Holinshed, 1577, under 1455.)

This passage is also reproduced almost verbatim in the later edition:

But another historie-writer saith, that the king, when first he heard of the duke of Yorks

approch, The duke of Buckingham sent to ye duke of Yorke. sent to him messengers, the duke of Buckingham, and others, to vnderstand what he meant by his comming thus in maner of warre. (Holinshed, 1587 (under 1455, 643.)

These details occur both in Q (III.21) and in F (I.iii.102-207; IV.ix.37-8). It is possible that Shakespeare's source for these details was not Holinshed but "another historie-writer." Bullough cites further authors who might have furnished some incidental details. Neither Grafton nor Holinshed, are sources since they did not inform the majority of Shakespeare's play.⁸

The question arises: if Shakespeare did use Holinshed, which version? The first edition was published in 1577 and the expanded second appeared in 1587. Detailed comparison of Holinshed's second edition with the relevant passages in *Henry VI Part 2* was carried out by Boswell-Stone in 1896.⁹ Further studies by Lucille King in 1935 and by Hanspeter Born in 1974, seem to confirm the use of the 1587 Holinshed for the Folio text.

King, however, ignored the use of Hall as a source. She notes as "one of the most striking pieces of evidence" that when Warwick is praised for his house-keeping (Q: I. 124; F I.i.189), the word "house-keeping" is not found in the 1577 Holinshed but is found in the 1587 edition. However, Hall had used this word when describing Warwick:

Emong all sortes of people, he obtained greate love, muche favor and more credence: which thynges daily more encreased by his abundant liberalitie, and plentiful house keypyng: (Hall, 232)

King observes that the genealogy explained by York had to be garnered across 330 pages in the 1577 edition but was concentrated in 31 pages in the 1587 edition. Bullough, however, states that a much more likely source for the genealogy was the short passage in Hall (246) recording York's speech to Parliament in 1460. Only one detail in Q (concerning the wax-paper which Eleanor carries in the Stage Direction to Quarto Scene 8) seems to derive from the 1587 Holinshed edition; but this detail might have derived from other sources, as will become clear in the discussion below.

Bullough concludes that the dramatist relied mainly on Hall (and Grafton) and may have used Holinshed; if Holinshed was consulted, then either edition might have been used. Thus the earliest possible date for the play would be soon after Holinshed's 1577 Chronicle was published.

Apart from wrongly assuming Shakespeare's main source was Holinshed not Hall, these three commentators (Boswell-Stone, King and Born) also assume that F was the earlier text while Q was a subsequent derivation. These assumptions will be considered next.

Relation of Q & F

There is no contemporary evidence regarding the status of Q1 (as authorial or reconstructed) and its relationship to F (as to precedence and dependence).

Knowles has conducted a most useful review of the different interpretations. In the

nineteenth century, most critics were ‘revisionists’ who believed that Q1 was an early version, later revised by the dramatist for F1 as *Henry VI Part 2*. This standpoint lost ground during the twentieth century following A. W. Pollard’s seminal work in 1909, with most twentieth century editors accepting the notion of “Bad” Quartos and that *The Contention* was an inferior version of the original text as reported in the Folio.¹⁰

One feature generally assigned to memorially reconstructed texts is the reporter’s apparent or alleged faulty memory, involving the addition of lines from other works. Following Alexander and Cairncross, Hattaway (1991: 236-241) has applied this in detail to *The Contention*, although he himself refers to these as “recollections of lines from other plays which may have contaminated the memorial reconstruction from which Q1 derives.”

Of these, five examples come from the other *Henry VI* plays and four from *Titus Andronicus*. It seems just as likely that the author himself would echo wording from another play as an imperfect reporter would “contaminate” the true Shakespearean text. Two examples have parallels in *Edward III* (a text published anonymously in 1596 and supposed by some to be Shakespearean). One of these involves the reward given to Alexander Iden for killing Jack Cade (V.i.78-9), which is not in the sources; however, as Knowles points out, it seems to be an echo of the reward given to William Walworth, who killed Wat Tyler. Shakespeare apparently followed and transferred many other details in the chronicles about Wat Tyler’s rebellion to Jack Cade. Eight further examples are given by Hattaway of possible contamination by lines found in Marlowe’s plays, *Edward II* and *Faustus*.

While some of these examples are close, none is convincing (as Maguire states) and there always remain the possibilities that both writers were influenced by the same sources or that Marlowe’s plays were later than *The Contention* and were thus themselves influenced by Shakespeare. If we knew for certain that the text was memorially reconstructed, such suggestions as Hattaway makes are helpful; they are not however very strong evidence that the text of *The Contention* must have been a memorial reconstruction.

More recently, scholars have come to value the quartos as having independent authorial authority. Most important in this change is Laurie Maguire’s study *Shakespeare’s ‘Suspect’ Texts* (1996). Maguire summarises the range of possible relationships between the two texts as follows:

1. Both Q and F by Shakespeare:
2. Q as authorial draft later revised (nineteenth century revisionists; Urkowitz, 2000);
3. F as original; abridged into Q as an acting version (McMillin, 1972; Clare, 1990/11);
4. Q as a memorial reconstruction of F, with access to written material (Pollard, 1909; Chambers, 1930; Alexander, 1962; Hattaway, 1991; Knowles, 1999)

5. F as original; abridged and reported into Q (Doran, 1928);
6. Memorial reconstruction made while the London production was still in the reporter's mind (Montgomery, 1985);
7. Memorial reconstruction of a (lost) intermediate abridgement of a Folio-linked script (Irace, 1994);
8. Q was written by another author eg Marlowe (Merriam and Matthews, 1994) and revised by Shakespeare as F (Prouty, 1954). 13

Maguire's study begins with identifying in detail the characteristics of texts which were memorially reconstructed. Then she applies these criteria to a range of quartos. In the case of *The Contention*, she decided that the play was not a memorial reconstruction. Her most notable points were:

1. A reporter might be confused by intrusive memories of other texts; but no external echoes of other plays can be detected. Hattaway's supposed echoes are "not convincing."
2. A reporter might repeat or add material but there do not appear to be any internal repetitions or detectable insertions.
3. A reporter would struggle with a long speech (e.g. over ten lines) but *The Contention* has some 13 long speeches (i.e. over 14 lines in length).
4. A reporter would mistake the historical background but there is only one such "unconformity", viz, the error in "York's pedigree in Q Scene 6 which renders the conflict for the throne otiose, since York's claim is so clearly (albeit inaccurately) right." She believes that Alexander makes too much of this mistake (see note 11).
5. A reporter might report the action seen on stage but Maguire believes that the detailed Stage Directions in Q accord in line with a text for acting and contain many sensitive features which are often adopted in productions.

Maguire's verdict is that *The Contention* is not a memorially reconstructed text.

A Reading Text

Roger Warren, in his 2003 Oxford edition of *2 Henry VI*, broadly agrees with Maguire but still finds some traces of a memorial reconstruction. Warren therefore concludes that Q is an earlier version of the play, while F is later. Warren believes that the extensive additions and changes found in the Folio text point to active revision by the playwright. He lists nine passages in F which are not in Q, especially:

1. The first half of York's soliloquy ending the opening scene (1.1.213-34).
2. That Margaret is much more villainous in the Quarto text than in the Folio, exemplified by Margaret's huge speech after the discovery of Duke Humphrey's

body in III.ii.87.¹⁴

3. A reporter would gain nothing from leaving these passages out of the text. Warren then notes some unimportant details in Q which are not in F. In Q, Margaret Jourdain is called The Witch of Eye in line with the Chronicles. This reference is omitted in F, suggesting it has been cut from the original Text (i.e. Q must precede F). Similarly, during the Cade rebellion, some places are mentioned in passing in Q (Sc. 18: 58-9 The Standard In Cheapside and Mile End Green), but omitted in F. Warren finds it inconceivable that a reporter would add these details, but believes that they would have been cut in the revision stage since they contribute nothing to the action. Warren also cited significant changes between the texts, for example:
 4. Queen Margaret's first speech is completely different in the two texts (I.i.24-31). Indeed many other commentators had noted text;
 5. In the witchcraft scene (I.iv), Q adds a passage after the spirit's descent not in F.
 6. The spirit's prophecies in I.iv are read out by York in F, but by the King in the next scene in Q.¹⁵

Because of these very significant additions and revisions, Warren concludes that Q is the earlier text and was revised into F. Warren's conclusions about *2 Henry VI* coincide with similar views expressed by Lukas Erne in *Shakespeare as a Literary Dramatist*. Erne develops a detailed argument that Shakespeare's Quartos represent earlier acting texts and that the longer versions published in the Folio represent literary texts, for readers to study.

Further support for Q as an early text can be found in Urkovitz, whose comparative analysis of the opening scene in Q and F reveal significant differences: in Q, Henry VI is proud and Margaret is more demure; in F, there is more of a sense of foreboding, with the King circumspect and Margaret presumptuous.

Overall it seems most likely that Q is the earlier text, possibly reported, but later adapted and expanded by the author into the Folio text. One major alteration (to the treatment of Eleanor Cobham) was studied by Manley, who noted striking similarities between the actions of the Duchess of Gloucester in the play and those of Margaret Stanley (née Clifford) at the court of Queen Elizabeth in 1578-9. Since Margaret, Countess of Derby, was taken by many to be heiress presumptive to Elizabeth, it is important to review her life.

Margaret Stanley

From 1578, Margaret Stanley (née Clifford, 1540-96) was the last surviving granddaughter of Henry VIII's younger sister, Mary Tudor, and therefore was accepted by many to be in line to the throne. She was married in 1554 to Henry Stanley and had five children including Ferdinando (Lord Strange, 1559-1594) and William (1561-1642). Her husband assumed the title of Earl of Derby upon the death of his father in 1572; thus his

wife Margaret became the Countess of Derby. Although Margaret could claim to be heiress presumptive for eighteen years (from 1578-1596), modern historians have little to say about her.¹⁶

In his important article, Manley summarises important facts about Margaret's life: despite separating from her husband in 1567, she maintained an extravagant presence at court such that she was heavily in debt. She frequented the court until her disgrace in 1579, when she strongly opposed the possible match between Elizabeth and Alençon. She expressed her doubts to Francis Russell, 2nd Earl of Bedford (1527-1585) mentioning that she herself was a claimant to the throne. The Spanish ambassador reported that she had tried to discover by means of witchcraft how long the Queen would live. She was ordered to the Tower.¹⁷

At about this time, the Venetian ambassador reported:

[There has been] a conspiracy by a sect called the Puritans... to poison the Queen through the agency of one of her principal ladies, namely, the Countess of Derby, who is now in prison.

In one of her known letters, dated May 1580, Margaret petitions various courtiers in an attempt to regain royal favour: she asks Walsingham to have her released from house arrest saying she only knew the conjurors but did not get involved herself:

Sickness and weakness in my body and limbs I have of long time been accustomed to suffer; and, finding small remedy after proof of many, lastly upon information of some about me that one Randall had a special remedy for the cure of my disease by applying of outward things, I had him in my house from May until August next following, in which time I found some ease by his medicines: but since I have understood by report that man to have lived in great wickedness, wherewith it hath pleased God to suffer him among other not a little to plague me with his slanderous tongue whilst he lived.¹⁸

The reference appears to be to William Randall, executed in November 1580 for conjuring. Margaret also sent letters to Sir Christopher Hatton to intercede on her behalf with the queen.

It seems that from 1579 until her death in 1596, Margaret remained in the Queen's disfavour, as William Camden recorded:

And amongst so many men is not to be passed over with silence Margaret Clifford Countesse of Darby, the onely daughter of Henry Clifford Earle of Cumberland, by Eleanore Brandon Neece to King Henry the 8th; who out of her womanish weaknesse and curiosity, consulting with wizards or cunning men in a credulous vanity, and I know not what ambitious hope, had in a manner lost the Queenes favour a little before her death.¹⁹

The Countess, however, managed to elicit eulogies from at least two further writers: Robert Greene (1558-92) and Thomas Lodge (c.1558-1625). In 1584, Greene dedicated the *Myrrovr of Modestie* to the countess of Derby, as a woman whose "vertuous quallities" were "such, and so very great, that your verie foes...shall be forced mauger their face to speake well whatsoever their sightfull mindes doe thinke."

Greene had strong connections with the Stanleys: in 1589, he dedicated *his Ciceronis Amor* to Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange; shortly afterwards, Greene's plays *Looking-Glass for London and England* (c. 1590) and *Orlando Furioso* (c. 1591) were in the repertory of Strange's Men.²⁰

Thomas Lodge, who was credited in the Stationers' Register as co-author of *Looking-Glass* was also part of the Derby group. In the dedication of his translation of the *Mater Dolorosa* (1595), Thomas Lodge told the countess (who had recently lost her son Ferdinando) that "the world hath deceiued you long, but pietie will eternize you for euer." Oblique references to the Countess's disgrace might also be found in *John of Bordeaux*, a play in the repertory of Strange's Men where the heroine Rossalin is falsely accused of witchcraft.²¹

Margaret Clifford and Eleanor Cobham

The behaviour of Margaret Clifford in 1578-9 bears a striking resemblance to events ascribed to Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester, in *2 Henry VI*, as Laurence Manley observed in 2003. Eleanor plays a small but significant role in both versions of the play, somewhat anachronistically: her necromancy, trial and banishment took place in 1441, four years before Margaret of Anjou arrived in England to marry Henry VI. Nevertheless, Eleanor makes a striking foil to Margaret as well as allowing the dramatist to focus attention on Gloucester's downfall. While the outline events involving Eleanor are much the same in Q and F, she is treated more sympathetically in F than in Q, leading Manley to argue that the dramatist consciously changed his depiction of Eleanor. He develops a case that the less culpable "Eleanor" in F was the version used by Strange's Men but that she was portrayed as a more treasonous woman in Q when the play was revised and used by Pembroke's Men. Firstly, therefore, consideration will be given to the different versions in Q and in F and the arguments for the direction of revision (whether F preceded Q or vice versa). Then, this will be set into what is known of the playing companies who may have performed the play.

This dramatic sequence is developed by the playwright from small suggestions of Eleanor's sorcery and enchantment in the Chronicles:

Edward Hall (chapter 202; under the year 1440-1) states:

dame Eleanor Cobham, wyfe to the said duke, was accused of treason, for that she by sorcery and enchauntment, entended to destroy the kyng, to thentent to aduance and to promote her husband. Upon thys she was examined in sainte Stephens chappel, before the Bisshop of Canterbury, and there by examinacion convict & judged, to do open penaunce, in. iij. open places, within the cite of London, and after that adjudged to perpetuall prisone in the Isle of Man, under the keypyng of sir John Stanley, knyght. At the same season, wer arrested as ayders and counsailers to the sayde Duchesse, Thomas Southwel, prieste and chanon of sainte Stephens in Westmynster, John Hum priest, Roger Bolyngbroke, a conyng nycromancier, and Margerie Jour-dayne, surnamed the witche of Eye, to whose charge it was laied, that thei, at the request of the duchesse, had devised an image of waxe, representyng the kyng, whiche by their sorcery, a litle and litle consumed, entendyng therby in conclusion to waist, and destroy the kynges person,

and so to bryng hym death, for the which treason, they wer adjudged to dye, & so Margery Jordayne was brent in Smithfelde, & Roger Bolyngbroke was drawen & quartered at Tiborne, takyng upon his death, that there was never no suche thyng by them ymaged, John Hum had his pardon, & Southwel died in the toure before execution: the duke of Gloucester, toke all these thynges paciently, and saied litle.

Holinshed follows this almost word for word (1577 edition; under 1441; iii 622):

dame Eleanor Cobham, wife to the said duke, was accused of treason; for that she by sorcerie and inchantment intended to destroe the king, to the intent to aduance hir husband vnto the crowne.

Vppon thys, shee was examined in Sayncte Stephens Chappell before the Byshop of Can|terbury, and there by examination conuicte and iudged to doe open penaunce in three open pla|ces wythin the Citie of London, and after that adiudged to perpetual imprifonmet in the ylle of Man, vnder ye keping of fir Io. Stanley knight.

At the same seafon were arrefsted, arrayned, and adiudged gyltie, as ayders to the Duchesse, Thomas Southwell Priefte, and Chanon of Saynte Stephens at Westminster, Iohn Hun priest, [...]s Iohn [...]. Roger Bolyngbrooke, a cunning Necro|mancer as it was said, and Margerie Iordayn, furnamed, the Witche of Eye.

The matter layde against them, was for that they, at the requeste of the sayde Duchesse, had deuysed an Image of waxe, repreftentyng the Kyng, whiche by their forcerie by litle and litle confumed, entendyng thereby in conclufion, to waste and destroye the Kyngs perfone.

Margerie Iordayne was brente in Smyth|felde, and Roger Bolyngbrooke was drawne to Tyborne, and hanged and quartered, taking vpon his death, that there was neuer any fuche thing by them imaged. Iohn Hun hadde his pardon, and Southwell dyed in the Tower before execution.

The Duke of Gloucester bare all these thin|ges paciently, and sayd litle.

Holinshed’s 1587 Chronicle repeats this account almost verbatim, with the addition of two parentheses, the first after “after Citie of London”:

[Polychronicon saith she was inioined to go through Cheapside with a taper in hir hand.]²²

The second parenthesis adds that Southwell foretold his own death in the Tower, again citing the Polychronicon as the source.

Eleanor appears in four scenes in the play, with the same pattern in Q and in F. The following outline shows the Eleanor scenes within the context of the first eight scenes and first two acts in the play:

Q Sc 1	Suffolk presents Margaret who is married to Henry. Gloucester bemoans the match. Factions develop. York expresses his own ambitions.	F 1.1
2	Eleanor expresses her ambitions but Gloucester refuses to act treasonously.	1.2

3	Margaret rejects the commons' petitions, accuses Gloucester and insults Eleanor. York loses his bid to become regent in France to Somerset.	1.3
4	During Eleanor's conjuring, a spirit prophesies ominous fortunes for Henry, York, Suffolk, and Somerset. York and Buckingham interrupt and arrest the participants.	1.4
5	Gloucester and Winchester bicker while falconing. Gloucester exposes Simpcox.	2.1
6	York persuades Salisbury and Warwick to support his future claim to the throne.	2.2
7	Eleanor is sentenced to banishment and Gloucester surrenders the protectorship. Peter defeats a drunken Horner in their trial by combat.	2.3
8	Eleanor does public penance and bids her sorrowful husband farewell.	2.4

In Scene 2 (I.ii), Eleanor chides her husband for allowing the King to marry. She reminds him that he is at present next in line to the throne as the final surviving brother to Henry V.²³ However, if the King were to marry and have a son, then Gloucester would slide down the succession line; Eleanor's hopes of becoming queen would be reduced. Gloucester, however, refuses to countenance any evil thoughts. After his exit, Eleanor plots to find out by conjuration how long the king might live. In the Quarto scene 4 (Folio I.iv) Eleanor witnesses a conjuration in which various ambiguous prophecies are made. Eleanor is arrested. In Scene 6 (II.ii) Eleanor is found guilty of treason and sentenced to banishment on the Isle of Man. Finally in Scene 8 (II.iv), she walks through the streets in humiliation and is taken away by her gaoler, Sir John Stanley. Shakespeare follows the Chronicles in depicting her guilt and Gloucester's patient endurance.²⁴ There are however, four important differences in the treatment of Eleanor Cobham in Q compared to F

In Q: Winchester has little involvement; Eleanor seems the more culpable. Hume says at II. 72-75

Yet haue I Gold flyes from another Coast:
But I have gold comes from another place,
From one that hyred me to set her on,
To plot these Treasons gainst the King and Peeres.
And that is the mightie Duke of Suffolke.

In F: Winchester has greater involvement, slightly reducing Eleanor's guilt;²⁵ Hume says at I.ii.93-101:

Yet haue I Gold flyes from another Coast:
I dare not say, from the rich Cardinall,
And from the great and new-made Duke of Suffolke;
Yet I doe finde it so: for to be plaine,
They (knowing Dame Elianors aspiring humor)
Haue hyred me to vnder-mine the Duchesse,
And buzze these Coniurations in her brayne.
They say, A craftie Knaue do's need no Broker,

Yet am I Suffolke and the Cardinalls Broker.

2. In Q: Bullenbroke asks questions which Eleanor has clearly prepared. At the beginning of the conjuration scene (IV.1-5), Eleanor says:

Here Sir Iohn, take this scrole of paper here,
Wherein it is writ the questions you shall aske,
And I will stand vpon this Towere here,
And here the Sprit what it saies to you,
And to my questions, write the answeres downe.

In F (I.iv. 5-12): Eleanor enters later in the scene and Bullenbroke seems to have prepared the questions. Eleanor has less obvious involvement and is more of a spectator:

Hume. I, what else? feare you not her courage.
Bulling. I haue heard her reported to be a Woman of
an inuincible spirit: but it shall be conuenient, Master
Hume, that you be by her aloft, while wee be busie be
low; and so I pray you goe in Gods Name, and leaue vs. *Exit Hume.*
Mother Iordan, be you prostrate, and grouell on the
Earth; Iohn Southwell reade you, and let vs to our worke. *Enter Elianor aloft.*

In Q, Eleanor is guilty of a political crime. “[T]hese treasons thou hast committed against vs.”

King. Stand forth Dame Elnor Cobham Duches of Gloster, Mand here the sentence pronounced against thee for these Treasons, that thou hast committed gainst vs, our States and Peeres. First for thy hainous crimes, thou shalt two daies in London do penance barefoote in the streetes, with a white sheete about thy bodie, and a waxe Taper burning in thy hand. That done, thou shalt be banished for euer into the Ile of Man, there to ende thy wretched daies, and this is our sentence erreuocable. Away with her.

In F (II.i1-13; TLN 1054-1067), she has committed a religious offence and she is to “receive the sentence of the law for sins such as by God’s book are adjudged to death”

King. Stand forth Dame Elianor Cobham,
Glostors Wife: In sight of God, and vs, your guilt is great,
Receiue the Sentence of the Law for sinne,
Such as by Gods Booke are adiudg’d to death.
You foure from hence to Prison, back againe; 1059
From thence, vnto the place of Execution:
The Witch in Smithfield shall be burnt to ashes,
And you three shall be strangled on the Gallowes. 1062
You Madame, for you are more Nobly borne,
Despoyled of your Honor in your Life,
Shall, after three dayes open Penance done,
Liue in your Countrey here, in Banishment,
With Sir Iohn Stanly, in the Ile of Man.

In Q, Eleanor is sentenced alone, emphasising her guilt, whereas in F (TLN 1059-62, above) the accomplices stand alongside her and hear their sentences, thereby reducing her guilt.

These four changes mean that Eleanor in Q is more active and treasonous; in F, she is less active, not treasonous and guilty of an ecclesiastical offence. In his detailed study, Manley argues that these changes were made when the play (in its Folio version) passed from Strange's Men to Pembroke's Men (where it was changed into the Q version). According to Warren's interpretation of the direction of revision (Q to F), the dramatist has considerably softened his portrayal of Eleanor.

Performance History

There is no mention of performance on the title pages of Q1, Q2 or Q3 nor are there any other records of performances of *The Contention / 2 Henry VI* until 1680. There are suggestions, however, that the play may have been performed by Lord Strange's Men and /or by Pembroke's Men. The discussion involves many possible references to the other *Henry VI* plays.

Lord Strange's Men are known to have performed at least one play about *Henry VI* in 1592 as Henslowe mentions in his Diary on 3rd March:

Harey the vj as performed by Lord Stranges Men ne

The play drew enough audience to have it repeated on fourteen occasions to June 19th, and twice in January of 1593. The annotation "ne" may refer to a new play, but whether newly composed or newly acquired is not known.²⁶

It is usually believed that these entries refer to just one of Shakespeare's three *Henry VI* plays as there is no record of any other play about *Henry VI* from this period, but it is possible that different parts were performed and Henslowe simply called them by the same name. Most commentators take Henslowe's entry not as a reference to Parts 2 or 3 but to Part 1, citing two main reasons: first, Parts 2 and 3 were shortly afterwards published under different titles (*The First Part of the Contention* and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*). But it is possible that these plays might have been known under different titles. The second suggestion that Henslowe's entry cannot refer to *The Contention* is equally dubious: critics cite the reference in Thomas Nashe's pamphlet *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Divell* (SR 8 August 1592):

How it would have joyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lye two hundred years in his Tombe, he should triumph againe on the Stage, and have his bones embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least (at several times) who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh from bleeding.

Since Talbot fights and dies heroically in *1 Henry VI*, but is not known to feature in any other play, it has been argued that Nashe was referring to *1 Henry VI*. The phrase 'Terror of the French' appears to echo the Shakespeare play at I.iv 42, while at III.iii.5 Joan allows: "Let frantic Talbot triumph for a while." Although King Henry has a small

role in *I Henry VI*, the play encompasses the first twenty years of his reign, and following the historian Edward Hall, the play would probably bear his name somewhere in the title. Taken together, it is possible that Henslowe is only referring to Part 1, but by no means certain. Even so, it does not follow that the Q version (*The Contention*) cannot have been written by this time.

The records of Lord Strange's Men were reviewed by Chambers in 1923 (*ES*, iii, 118-127). Henry Stanley, 4th Earl of Derby seems to have run players from about 1573 (perhaps with a rival company run by his son for a short time in the late 1570s). They appeared at court in January 1580 as "tumblers" and continued to tour and to appear at court during the 1580s. They performed at The Theatre in 1590 and may have amalgamated with the Lord Admiral's Men 1591-4 for performances at court, although they seem to have toured separately. In 1592, they performed 158 times under Henslowe (*Diary*, 1.13). While the theatres were closed in 1593, a petition was made on behalf of Strange's Men, who included William Kemp, Thomas Pope, John Hemminges and Augustine Phillipps. The following year in 1594, these four actors joined Richard Burbage, William Shakespeare and Sly as members of the newly formed Lord Chamberlain's Men. Lord Strange's Men continued to perform under the sixth earl throughout the 1590s. Apart from Henslowe's reference to a Henry VI play and another play *Titus and Vespasian* (thought by Chambers to be *Titus Andronicus*), Strange's Men did not perform any plays associated with Shakespeare. The question emerges: if *I Henry VI* was a new play in 1592, how did Strange's Men obtain it?

That Pembroke's Men performed *The Contention* is an inference from the publication of *The True Tragedy (3 Henry VI)* in 1595. Both the title-page of the 1595 octavo and of the 1600 quarto state that the play was "sundry times acted by the Right Honourable the Earle of Pembroke his seruantes." It is assumed that *The Contention* (or *2 Henry VI*) was performed by the same players at the same time in the years prior to publication i.e. 1591-1595. Very little is known of Pembroke's Men (again review by Chambers in 1923, *ES*, iii, 128-31). Pembroke's Men are not mentioned before 1592 and Chambers in a "region of conjecture" suggests that this company came about as an offshoot when the Admiral's Men separated again from Strange's Men c. 1592, perhaps with a player bringing *Henry VI Part 3*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Taming of A Shrew*, three plays whose publication in quarto state that they were played by Pembroke's Men. Their recorded performances are infrequent, mainly between 1592 and 1594 but not again until 1597. It is often surmised that Shakespeare must have been involved as an actor at this stage with Pembroke's Men.

Doran (1928) followed by Cairncross (1962) argued that *Henry VI Part 2* was abridged to suit Pembroke's Men when they toured the provinces. McMillin (1972), who similarly assumes that F precedes Q, suggests that Pembroke's Men were fewer in number than Strange's, so that when they played *Henry VI Part 2*, they had to scale down the number of parts in line with the smaller cast required for *The Contention*.

McMillin goes on to identify named actors with specific roles. Manley (2003) argues that the play was originally owned by Lord Strange's Men as it contains similarities with other plays known to be in their repertoire. He suggests that the similarity between

Margaret Clifford (Countess of Derby and the mother of Ferdinando Lord Strange) and Eleanor Cobham supports the suggestion that Strange's Men owned the play before it was passed on to Pembroke's Players. Secondly Manley argues that the Folio text was revised by the author, Shakespeare, into the Quarto text, *The first part of The Contention*, when it passed from Strange's Men to Pembroke's Men.

What is not explained, however, is why the dramatist would make the changes so soon after its original composition, changes which involved deliberately increasing the culpability of Eleanor Cobham (and by implication Margaret Clifford) for Pembroke's Men. This point is best answered by taking the Oxfordian thesis of authorship and the date originally suggested by Eva Turner Clark and including Manley's findings about Margaret Clifford.

Eva Turner Clark

In 1931, Eva Turner Clark argued that *The Contention* was composed much earlier than 1590-1, the date usually assigned. Of course, she was arguing for Oxfordian authorship of the entire Shakespeare canon and worked hard to produce a revised chronology of the plays to coincide with Oxford's life. For *The Contention*, she suggested a court performance in 1579-80, making strong links between the play's depiction of a disastrous foreign marriage and Alençon's suitorship.

The play would thus have been intended as a warning against a French marriage. According to this view, Q1 is a publication of a play performed at court. Beyond Margaret as Alençon, Clark draws many further parallels, most notably between the Conte de Simier, and Suffolk; she cites a description of Simier's embassy to London and Suffolk's embassy to France. In addition, she sees similarities between Elizabeth's banishment of Lettys Knollys, Countess of Leicester (in 1578), which is compared to Henry's banishment of the Duchess of Gloucester. A further parallel between the alarming news of James Fitzmaurice and Nicholas Sanders's Catholic undertakings in Ireland, and of York's Irish army in the play.²⁷ The Quarto *First Part of the Contention* would thus have been derived from Hall's Chronicle with other details obtained from other chroniclers including Holinshed's first edition (1577). The play was later revised with material from a wider variety of sources. According to Clark, the action of the play points clearly to events at court in 1579-80 and that the only person who could have written the play was Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

Following Clark, it is clear that the play would have been performed at Court in the 1579-80 season and remained part of the repertoire of Oxford's Men. In 1583, some of this troupe, the brothers John and Lawrence Dutton, helped form the Queen's Men, who enjoyed royal patronage as they toured England during the 1580s.²⁸

By the end of the decade, however, the Queen's Men had been dissolved and some of their company passed over to Lord Strange's Men. It is generally accepted that when players transferred from one company to another, they took several play scripts with them. Thus both *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy* could have passed from Oxford's Men to the Queen's Men, to Strange's (who played then at Henslowe's theatres in 1591),

to Pembroke's (probably responsible for their publication) and then to The Lord Chamberlain's Men.

Of course, while Clark saw parallels between Eleanor Cobham and the banished Lettys Knollys, she did not know about the even stronger parallel between Eleanor Cobham and Margaret Clifford. In the Quarto, Eleanor is guilty of treason, just as Elizabeth believed about Margaret. In the Folio version, Eleanor is less culpable, but not completely exonerated, representing a softer of attitude. It is most likely that these changes and additions were made in the mid-1590s, so that the current owners of the original version, Pembroke's Men, were forced into publishing the shorter original versions—they were left with an otherwise valueless script. Who else would make these changes but the future son-in-law of Margaret Clifford, whose son, William, now the 6th Earl of Derby married the Lady Elizabeth Vere in January 1596?

A 1579 Composition

It seems likely that Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, composed *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy* for performance at court in 1579-80, featuring an astounding parallel between Eleanor Cobham and the recently disgraced Margaret, countess of Derby and that the plays were not published until the mid 1590s when they were being revised and expanded into the versions known in the First Folio as *Henry VI Part 2* and *Henry VI Part 3*.

Appendix 1: List of Scenes by Quarto and by Folio numbering

Q Sc1	F 1.1	Suffolk presents Margaret who is married to Henry. Gloucester bemoans the match. Factions develop. York expresses his own ambitions.
2	1.2	Eleanor expresses her ambitions but Gloucester refuses to act treasonously.
3	1.3	Margaret rejects the commons' petitions, accuses Gloucester and insults Eleanor. York loses his bid to become regent in France to Somerset.
4	1.4	During Eleanor's conjuring, a spirit prophesies ominous fortunes for Henry, York, Suffolk, and Somerset. York and Buckingham interrupt and arrest the participants.
5	2.1	Gloucester and Winchester bicker while falconing. Gloucester exposes Simpcox.
6	2.2	York persuades Salisbury and Warwick to support his future claim to the throne.
7	2.3	Eleanor is sentenced to banishment and Gloucester surrenders the protectorship. Peter defeats a drunken Horner in their trial by combat.
8	2.4	Eleanor does public penance and bids her sorrowful husband farewell.
9	3.1	Before a Parliament, Margaret leads allegations against Gloucester. Somerset reports the loss of the French territories, Gloucester is blamed. Margaret inspires a plot to kill Gloucester. York is dispatched to Ireland and outlines his ambitions.
10	3.2	Suffolk reports Gloucester's death to Henry, who accuses him of complicity and repudiates Margaret. Gloucester's body is examined. Warwick concludes he was murdered and

		accuses Suffolk, who is exiled by Henry. Margaret and Suffolk part.
11	3.3	Winchester, deranged and conscience-stricken, dies in his bed.
12	4.1	Suffolk is murdered on his way into exile by a sea captain and his crew, who express popular outrage at the murder of Gloucester and other abuse.
13-14	4.2-3	Cade's rebellion breaks out in Kent. The Staffords are killed by the rebels in battle.
15-17	4.4-7	Henry learns of Cade's advances while Margaret grieves over Suffolk. Cade crosses London Bridge and arrests Lord Say, who is beheaded.
18	4.8.	The rioters are confronted by Old Clifford and Buckingham, who offer Henry's pardon to those who will disperse. Cade flees.
19	4.9	Henry pardons the rebels. York is reported to have returned from Ireland with his army, demanding the arrest of Somerset.
20	4.10	Cade takes refuge in the garden of Alexander Iden, who fights and kills him.
21	5.1	Iden presents Cade's head to Henry and is knighted. York and his sons Edward and Richard, backed by Salisbury and Warwick, openly challenge Henry.
22	5.2.	The first battle of St Albans. York kills Clifford, whose son vows revenge, and Richard kills Somerset. Henry and Margaret are defeated and flee to London.
23	5.3	The victorious Yorkists pursue them to London.

Appendix 2 Margaret Clifford's claim to the throne

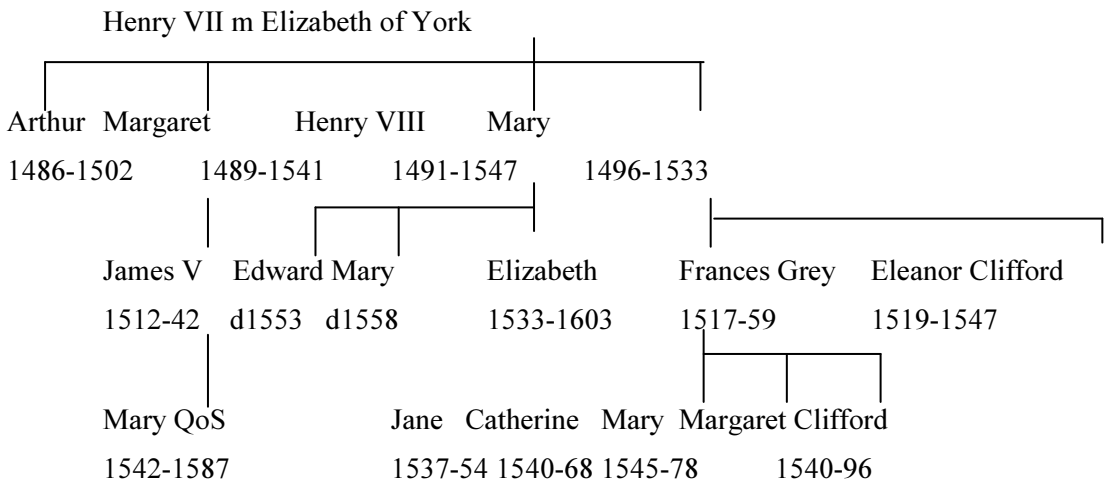
Queen Elizabeth held the throne due to the provisions of the The Third Succession Act of 1543 (Succession to the Crown Act 35 Hen. VIII c.1). By this act, the immediate succession was fixed as Edward (and any lawful heir), then any lawful heir by Henry VIII's sixth wife, Catherine Parr, then his daughter Mary by Katherine of Aragon and then his daughter Elizabeth by Anne Boleyn.

Henry was able to nominate further succession in his will, which he did (although there are irregularities in the will to suggest that some parts might not be genuine), adding his grand niece, Lady Jane Grey as next in line after Elizabeth. Despite the attempts of Edward VI and his protectors to direct the succession to Lady Jane Grey, the Crown duly passed from Edward to Mary and then to Elizabeth.

Gloriana, however, refused to name a successor and since she did not marry, there was considerable speculation about who was next in line. In his will, Henry VIII had deliberately excluded the Scottish lines descended from his elder sister Margaret. This was understandable for various reasons: Henry VIII had fought wars against Scotland as recently as 1542; Margaret's heir, Princess Mary (later known as Mary Queen of Scots), was still an infant in 1543, and Henry was keen to avoid passing on the Crown to a dangerous enemy. Nevertheless, many believed that dynastically, the Crown should pass to Mary as the heir of Henry's elder sister, (or possibly to Arabella Stuart, born 1575), descended from Margaret's second marriage to Archibald Douglas.

However, there were also those who followed the line in Henry's will by suggesting the younger daughters of Frances Grey. After they had died by 1578, the succession appeared to light on their cousin, Margaret Clifford (1540-96).

Descendants of Henry VII



Henry VIII's Heirs

Edward VI known as the Boy King, born in 1537 succeeded Henry VIII and nominally ruled until his death in 1553. Against his father's will, he named his cousin Lady Jane Grey as his successor.

Lady Jane Grey, Henry VIII's great niece, was proclaimed queen after Edward's death but lacked widespread support. She was arrested and executed in 1554.

Mary Tudor, known as Bloody Mary, was born in 1516, and with public support, she was received as Queen into London after the death of Edward. She ruled until her own death in 1558. Mary nominated her half-sister Elizabeth as her successor.

Elizabeth Tudor, became Queen in 1558 according to the wishes expressed in Henry's Will.

Frances Grey (née Brandon), Henry VIII's niece, and mother of Lady Jane Grey, died in 1559.

Catherine Grey (1540-68) Frances Grey's second daughter, was heiress presumptive from her mother's death. Catherine had a secret liaison with Edward Seymour; she claimed she was married but this could not be proved; their two children (Edward 1561-1612) and Thomas (b. 1563) were declared illegitimate and were barred from the succession. Catherine was kept under house arrest until her death in 1568.

Mary Grey (1545-1578) was the third daughter of Frances Grey. Mary married Thomas Keyes, in 1563, but they had no children. Like her sister Catherine, she did not seek Elizabeth's consent to marry and was subsequently kept under arrest. After the death of her sister, Catherine, Mary was heiress presumptive until her own death in 1578.

Upon the death of Mary Grey, the succession appeared to alight on Eleanor Clifford, another grand-daughter of Mary Tudor, Henry VIII's younger sister. Mary had borne four children by her second marriage to Charles Brandon, first Earl of Suffolk: two sons died without issue and there were two daughters: Frances Grey (died in 1559) and Eleanor Clifford (died in 1547). Thus, according to the terms of the Third Succession Act (1543) and of Henry VIII's will, Eleanor's daughter, Margaret Clifford, (1540-1596) became heiress presumptive from 1578 (the death of Mary Grey) until her own death.

There were other claimants. Many supported Mary Queen of Scots, until her execution in 1587 and then her son, James VI of Scotland, who was eventually appointed Elizabeth's successor. Another faction supported Arabella Stuart, also descended from Henry VIII's elder sister, Margaret (1489-1491). By her second husband, Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus (1490-1557), Margaret Tudor bore a daughter, Margaret Douglas (1515-1578), the mother of Lord Darnley and of Charles Stuart, Earl of Lennox (1555-76). Charles married Elizabeth Cavendish (1555-1582,) and together they had a child Arabella Stuart (1575-1616).

Notes

¹ Strictly this should read "the text underlying Q1 of *The First Part of the Contention*" and "the text underlying *King Henry VI Part 2* as reported in the First Folio (1623)". Somewhat confusingly, Wells & Taylor *William Shakespeare: the Complete Works* (1986) report the Folio text but call it *The First Part of the Contention*.

² The Stationers' Register in 1594 states: xij^o Marcij. Thomas Myllington. Entred for his copie vnder the handes of bothe the wardens a booke intituled, the firste parte of the Contention of the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster with the deathe of the good Duke Humfrey and the banishment and Deathe of the Duke of Suffolke and the tragicall ende of the prouwd Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable rebellion of Jack Cade and the Duke of Yorke's ffirste clayme vnto the Crowne vj^d.

³ The Title Page of Q1 1594 states: *The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humphrey: And the banishment and death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the Tragical end of the prouwd Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable rebellion of lacke Cade: And the Duke of Yorke's first claime vnto the Crowne.*

⁴ The Title Page of Q2 1600 states: *The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humphrey: And the banishment and death of the Duke of Suffolke, and the Tragical end of the prouwd Cardinall of Winchester, with the notable Rebellion of lacke Cade: And the Duke of Yorke's first clayme to the Crowne.*

⁵ The Title Page of Q3, 1619, which included both *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy* states: *The Whole Contention betwene the two Famous Houses, Lancaster and Yorke. With the tragical ends of the good Duke Humfrey, Richard Duke of Yorke and King Henrie the sixt. Divided into two parts: And newly corrected and enlarged. Written by William Shakespeare, Gent.*

⁶ The Title Page of the play in the First Folio (F1), 1623, states: *The second Part of Henry the Sixt with the death of the Good Duke Hvmfrey.*

⁷ Thus Wells & Taylor in *William Shakespeare: the Complete Works* (1986) and Stephen Greenblatt in *The Norton Shakespeare* (1997) report the Folio text but call it *The First Part of the Contention*.

⁸ The Simpcox miracle scene (II.1) might have derived from Grafton (as it is not in Hall) or John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (1563). The sympathetic treatment of Duke Humphrey was widespread in the fifteenth century chronicles and repeated in Hall, Holinshed and Foxe. Bullough considers it likely that Shakespeare read a wide variety of other historical sources including: Robert Fabyan's *New Chronicles* (1516) whom Shakespeare seems to have followed in reducing the time lag between Cade's Rebellion and York's return from Ireland. The dramatist might also have consulted the anonymous play *Life and Death of Jack Straw* (published in 1594) or its source *The Chronicle of Iohn Hardyng* (published by Grafton, 1543) for events described at 3.1.4-5. John Hardyng (died c. 1464) was the author of an extended verse chronicle, available only in manuscript, which apparently was used by Shakespeare for *1 Henry IV*. Holinshed seems to have used the abridged version printed in 1543. Shakespeare also consulted Richard Stanyhurst's *A Treatise containing a Plain and Perfect Description of Ireland* (1577, appended to

Holinshed, 1577). Other works which the dramatist might have read include the *Historia Angliana* and the *Chronicon Angliae* by Thomas Walsingham (d. 1422), some of which was published by Matthew Parker in 1574 under the title *Historia Angliae Brevis*. Warren suggests that Margaret's tearful farewell to Suffolk may have derived from the lament by Margaret of Anjou in William Baldwin's *Mirror for Magistrates* (1559). For the possibility that Caxton's edition of the *Polychronicon* was also consulted, see note 21.

⁹ *The Oxford Handbook to Holinshed's Chronicles* is currently being prepared by its editors Paulina Kewes, Felicity Heal, and Ian Archer. This handbook will relate the *Chronicles* to the historiography and literature of the medieval, early modern and subsequent periods. The parallel texts of the 1577 and 1587 editions are now available, enabling a comparison of the two versions both by regnal years and by Holinshed's original chapters. <http://www.cems.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.shtml> (accessed 7 September 2010).

¹⁰ A small selection from an impressive list includes: Sir Edmund Chambers, Sir Walter Greg, Peter Alexander, A. S. Cairncross (Arden2), Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor and William Montgomery (Oxford Shakespeare), Michael Hattaway (New Cambridge Shakespeare) Stephen Greenblatt (Riverside Shakespeare) and, in 2003, Laurence Manley. For a critical review of the general idea, see Paul Werstine's article 'A Century of "Bad" Shakespeare Quartos' in *SQ*, 50, 1999, 310-333.

¹¹ Clare (60-3) sees active censorship of the Folio text in a number of readings, thus allowing authorial authority to some of the variants in the Quarto, e.g., in the Yorkist claims.

¹² Alexander was particularly struck by the apparently illogical wording of York's claim to the Crown (2.2.9-27). In Q1, York places his ancestor, Edmund Langley, as Edward III's second son. If this was the case, then there would have been no argument over his right to the Crown. In F1, Langley is (in line with the sources) the fifth son and York has to claim the crown through matrilineal descent from the third son, Lionel. Using this and other observations, Alexander claims that *The Contention* is a memorial reconstruction made by the actors playing Warwick and Suffolk (who would have been doubled with Clifford). This mistake was repeated in Q2 but corrected in Q3.

¹³ Prouty argued that *The Contention* was "a source play" by another author, and Shakespeare adapted it to his play *2 Henry VI* as he had done with *Troublesome Raigne of King John* and *Famous Victories of Henry V for King John* and *Henry V* respectively.

¹⁴ The other major additions are: The King's long speech lamenting that he is unable to help Duke Humphrey (3.1.199-220). The King's lament for Humphrey (3.2.136-48). The Lieutenant's accusation that Suffolk has caused the loss of France and imminent rebellion (4.1.79-103). All but five lines of Lord Saye's self-defence to Cade and the rebels (4.7.55-98). Cade's soliloquy that opens his death scene (4.10.1-15). The passage that includes Salisbury's excuse for his oath-breaking (5.1.149-91). Almost all of Young Clifford's lament for his father's death (5.2.31-51).

¹⁵ Warren lists other major differences as follows. The plot to murder Duke Humphrey, and the plans to deal with the Irish rebellion, are differently handled in F (3.1.223-330) and Q (Scene 9). Duke Humphrey's murder takes place on stage in Q (Scene 10), but is only reported in F (3.2). The scene of Suffolk's murder is longer in F than in Q (Scene 12), which presents the text in a different order; Q has a Captain, whereas F has a Lieutenant. After F's 4.7.117, Q includes a passage (Scene 18) mingling bawdry and violence that is not present in F. In 4.10, Iden confronts Cade alone in F; but in Scene 20 in Q, Eyden is attended by five servants. In the course of apparently shortening F's version of 5.1, Q (scene 21) stages the assembly of the rival factions differently. In the battle sequence F (5.2) has the individual episodes in a different order from Q (Scene 22). The combat between York and Old Clifford is completely different in F (5.2.19-305) compared to Q (Scene 22). Warren concludes that these represent deliberate revisions by the author.

¹⁶ Alison Weir (*Elizabeth the Queen*, 1998: 42) describes Margaret Clifford in just one paragraph: “Despite the fact that Margaret had no desire for a crown, Elizabeth insisted upon her coming often to court ‘as one very near in blood to us,’ so as to keep an eye on her. Poor Margaret hated the court as much as her home life with her quarrelsome husband, and never knew true happiness or peace of mind.” Weir seems to have been unaware of Margaret’s disgrace.

¹⁷ Miguel Cabañas Agrela (ed.), *Bernardino de Mendoza, un escritor soldado al servicio de la monarquía católica (1540-1604)*, Diputación de Guadalajara: 2001. William Camden reports that in 1581 passing criticism on the Queen’s proposed marriage to Alençon was not a healthy activity: a lawyer named John Stubbs decided to attack the likely union, he published a pamphlet entitled *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf Whereunto England is Like to Be Swallowed by Another French Marriage*. Both Stubbs and his publisher William Page were tried at Westminster, found guilty of seditious writing and had their right hands chopped off. (Camden, Latin edition, 1625, *Annales Rerum Gestarum Angliae et Hiberniae Regnate Elizabetha*; English edition, 1675, *The History of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*).

¹⁸ Margaret’s letters to Walsingham and to Hatton are reproduced in *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton, being chiefly Letters addressed to Christopher, first Viscount Hatton, 1601-1704*, edited with introduction by EM Thompson, London, 1878, 145-150.

¹⁹ William Camden’s final entry for 1596 in *The History of Elizabeth* page 529. Nina Green gives a review of Margaret Clifford’s lineage and reproduces her will, showing her to be fairly poor at the time of her death: http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/Probate/PROB_11-88_ff_217-8.pdf (accessed 20 September 2010).

²⁰ Strange’s Men played *Orlando* for Henslowe on 22 Feb. 1592, and according to the posthumously published 1594 quarto, the play had also been performed before the Queen and Court. *Looking-Glass* was performed by Strange’s Men on 8 March 1592 (Chambers, *ES*, iii, 329-9).

²¹ The manuscript of *John of Bordeaux* names an actor, Peter Holland, who was associated with Strange’s Men. *John of Bordeaux, or The Second Part of Friar Bacon* appears to be an anonymous sequel to Robert Greene’s *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. It survives in a single manuscript, not printed and not named until 1936 (edition by W. L. Renwick and W. W. Greg). It is usually dated to the 1590–94 period, shortly after the success of Greene’s original *Friar Bacon*.

²² R. A Griffiths devotes a chapter in *King and Country* (1991: 233-252) to the case of Eleanor Cobham, saying that her story was reported in all the fifteenth century accounts. This material can also be found in his earlier account: ‘The Trial of Eleanor Cobham: an episode in the fall of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester’. *B. J. R. L.* vol LI (1968-9) 381-99. The *Polychronicon* by the medieval monk, Ranulf Higdon, originally covered events up to 1357. When William Caxton came to print this work in 1482, he himself added a continuation of the history in an eighth book down to 1461. Since Caxton was alive during the reign of Henry VI, it seems likely that the detail about the taper would have been historical. Caxton had also published, in 1480, *The Chronicles of England*, a medieval chronicle known as *Brut* which he had similarly expanded. According to Griffiths, the *Brut* gave most detailed accounts of Eleanor’s penitence. Both of these works are listed as sources for Holinshed’s 577 edition (see note 8). Both of Caxton’s *Chronicles* were reprinted (the *Polychronicon* six times by 1530), so it is possible that Shakespeare derived the detail of the taper from one of Caxton’s accounts, not from Holinshed. Both of these works are listed as sources for Holinshed’s 1577 edition (see note 8).

²³ Henry IV had four sons in quick succession by his first wife, Mary de Bohun: Henry of Monmouth who became Henry V (c. 1387-1422), Thomas, Duke of Clarence (1387-1421), John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford, who became Regent of France (1389-1435) and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (1390-1447).

Shakespeare's play *The Contention (2 Henry VI)* begins with the marriage of Henry VI to Margaret of Anjou which took place in 1445.

²⁴ While the chronicles vilified Eleanor, she was also celebrated as a tragic heroine in an anonymous fifteenth century poem *The Lament of the Duchess of Gloucester* (published in *Antiquarian Communications*, vol I, 1857, 177-190). In 1563, John Foxe in *Actes and Monuments* (fol 371) depicts her as a kind of early Protestant martyr: "Ellenore Cobham, a woman nothing at all degenerating from her stock, kindred & name received of her auncesters, albeit we can finde or understande none other thing of her but that for suspicion of hrsie, that is to say, for the love and desire of the truth she was by the papists banished into the ile of man; as Hardinge and Fabian do write."

²⁵ According to Griffiths (*King and Country* : 237n5), all the fifteenth century chronicles, mainly Yorkist in inclination, took an unsympathetic view of Eleanor (against the positive characterisation they assign to Humphrey); the Tudor writers, Robert Fabyan and Edward Hall, were the first to suggest that Eleanor had been "set up" by Winchester.

²⁶ Winifred Frazer, 'Henslowe's "ne"' in *N&Q*, 1991, 236,1,34-5 notes that plays are sometimes marked "ne" twice, and so could hardly be 'new' second time around.

²⁷ Alison Weir, *Elizabeth the Queen* (1998): on Simier's embassy to London, "anyone observing them together might have been forgiven for concluding that she meant to marry him rather than his master" (Weir, 319); Alençon was desperate to see Elizabeth (Weir, 322); the Queen dismissed the Countess of Leicester (Weir, 323). For attempts in Ireland by James Fitzmaurice and Nicholas Sanders (1579-81) to destabilise Elizabeth's rule, see *Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691* by Moody, Martin & Byrne (1991: 105-6).

²⁸ For Oxford's life and documented play-writing, see Alan Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary*. Manchester, MUP, 2003, especially 240-5. For the formation and career of the Queen's Men, see Scott McMillan and Sally-Beth MacLean. *The Queen's Men and their Plays*. Cambridge, 1998.

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