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# The Saint-Omer First Folio: Perspectives on a New Shakespearean Discovery

Jean-Christophe Mayer

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## The Saint-Omer First Folio—

### Perspectives on a New Shakespearean Discovery

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When the French local newspaper *La Voix du Nord* revealed on November 27, 2014 that Rémy Cordonnier, a rare books librarian of the Bibliothèque d'Agglomération de Saint-Omer (a small town in northern France, just a few miles from the English Channel) had discovered a copy of Shakespeare's First Folio (1623), news of the find spread to the national and international press and over the web and social media at lightning speed. The copy had just been authenticated by First Folio world expert Eric Rasmussen (who is Professor at the University of Nevada at Reno) and who happened to be in London precisely at the time to help set up a First Folio exhibition at the British Library for the four-hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death in 2016.<sup>1</sup> The reactions that the discovery stirred amply demonstrate the "cultural capital" which the "holy book" has acquired. Although not strictly speaking a rare book, the First Folio is at present one of the most expensive books in the world.

Since Mr Cordonnier's discovery there are now officially 233 known extant copies of Shakespeare's First Folio, out of an estimated initial print run of 800. However, two of the most recurrent questions as the book came to light were "why Saint-Omer?" and "why was this book not discovered before?". It is time now for scholars to look at the context of this find more closely and at the book itself in detail. Such discoveries happen on average every ten years only and every copy of Shakespeare's First Folio is of course unique and brings a wealth of information to the community of Shakespearean specialists and Shakespeare lovers.

#### *Why Shakespeare in Saint-Omer?*

In the Middle Ages, Saint-Omer, as Mr Cordonnier and Mrs Françoise Ducroquet (Head of the Saint-Omer municipal library) remind us, was fortunate to own the fourth largest library in

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Rasmussen co-edited with Anthony West, *The Shakespeare First Folios: A Descriptive Catalogue* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) and is the author of *The Shakespeare Thefts: In Search of the First Folios*. (New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). With Jonathan Bate, he also co-edited *The Royal Shakespeare Company's Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (New York: Random House; London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Christendom. It now still holds some eight hundred illuminated medieval manuscripts, over two hundred incunabula and owns about 16,000 early books, including a copy of the Gutenberg Bible.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, at Philip II's and Philip III's requests an English College was officially created there in 1594, although work had begun before that.<sup>3</sup> The English College and Saint-Omer itself was under control of the Spanish Netherlands, a region largely run from Brussels by Archduke Albert, whose wife Isabella was the daughter of Philip II of Spain. The College survived until the French Revolution and its situation (so close to Protestant England) made it an ideal educational institution for English Catholic boys between the ages of eleven and eighteen (mostly from recusant families) to receive an education dispensed by the Jesuits—the Company of Jesus being at the forefront of the English Counter-Reformation.

Jan Graffius, who is Curator of the Saint-Omer College archives at Stonyhurst in Lancashire (where the Saint-Omer Jesuits sought refuge after the Revolution and where some of their archives were stored) confirms what scholars have known for a while—that drama was a very important part of Jesuit education and that Saint-Omer was of course no exception. Indeed, according to Graffius, 'In 1620, the school had four music rooms and a theatre; by 1685 it possessed a Wardrobe for the Stage, Music-schools, a Great Theatre, a Little Theatre and a Common Magazine of the two Theatres in addition to a substantial drama library, highly necessary as a resource for the College's prodigious dramatic output'.<sup>4</sup>

Some time ago, Willem Schrickx observed that a copy of *Pericles* appeared in a 1619 catalogue of books belonging to Saint-Omer College and Martin Wiggins suggested that the Jesuit Francis Clarke (1619-1656) had no doubt used a copy of the First Folio to compose his Latin tragedy *Innocentia Purpurata*, which he composed in Saint-Omer. Wiggins argued that there are important linguistic parallels between *Innocentia Purpurata* and the First Folio text of four plays (*Henry VI, Part 3*, *Hamlet*, *King John* and, particularly, *All's Well That Ends Well*). He believes that the parallels make it highly plausible that Saint-Omer owned a copy of the First Folio.<sup>5</sup> Some sixty miles east of Saint-Omer, the town of Douai—also home to an English College—holds six

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<sup>2</sup> To get some sense of the library's holdings, access its digital portal at [http://www.bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/index/index/id\\_profil/79](http://www.bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/index/index/id_profil/79).

<sup>3</sup> *Revue Anglo-Française*, Tome Cinquième (Poitiers 1837) 315.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Graffius, 'The First Folio and Jesuit Drama in Saint-Omer', forthcoming in *The Times Literary Supplement*. I should like to thank Mrs Graffius for sharing her work with me ahead of publication. See also M. Whitehead and P. Leech, 'In Paradise and among Angels': Music and Musicians at St Omers English Jesuit College, 1593–1721', *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis* 61.1/2 (2011), 57-82 and M. Whitehead, 'Superior to the Rudest Shocks of Adversity': English Jesuit Education and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1688–1832', in Mary Hilton and Jill Shefrin, Jill (eds.), *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures, Practices* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 131-46.

<sup>5</sup> Willem Schrickx, 'Pericles in a Book-List of 1619 from the English Jesuit Mission and Some of the Play's Special Problems', *Shakespeare Survey*, 29 (1976), 21-32; Martin Wiggins, 'Shakespeare Jesuited The Plagiarisms of Pater Clarcus', *The Seventeenth Century* 20.1 (2005), 15.

Restoration transcripts of Shakespeare's plays from a copy of Shakespeare's Second Folio (*Twelfth Night, As You Like It, The Comedy of Errors, Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar, Macbeth* (Municipal Library of Douai, MS 787)). Interestingly, the Douai manuscripts are bound with transcripts of Lee's *Mithridates* (1678), Dryden's *Indian Emperor* (1667), and D'Avenant's *Siege of Rhodes* (1663). As further proof that Jesuits were interested in vernacular theatre, Ann-Mari Hedbäck has demonstrated that the Folger Library manuscript copy of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (MS V.a.85) is related to the Douai manuscripts and is in fact a copy of the Douai *Julius Caesar*.<sup>6</sup> Further south on the European continent, St. Alban's English College in Spain once owned a heavily annotated and censored copy of Shakespeare's Second Folio (now Folger Fo.2 no.07).<sup>7</sup> Finally, the Bibliothèque d'Agglomération where the current First Folio was found owns a copy of Ben Jonson's *Works* (1640; shelfmark inv. 2231) and a volume of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Comedies and Tragedies* (1647; shelfmark inv. 2229) among a large collection of religious, historical, theological, practical, but also poetic books (some of them in English) belonging to the Jesuit College.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the Saint-Omer First Folio is an important stone in a much larger edifice, which mainstream Shakespeareans are only beginning to fathom. Often obliterated by the question of the dramatist's personal religious beliefs, the early circulation and use of Shakespeare in both England and on the Continent through Catholic cultural networks is a far from negligible phenomenon and an important factor explaining why his works were beginning to conquer Europe and influence new forms of literature well before the eighteenth century. Lastly, the reason why this particular copy was only discovered recently (to answer some legitimate questions) is related not solely to a number of its physical features (which we shall highlight shortly), but because it belonged to a community that, although rich in books, had a long and very tumultuous history.<sup>9</sup>

*What does the Folio Look Like?*

[IMAGE]

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6 George Blakemore Evans, 'The Douai Manuscript - Six Shakespearean Transcripts (1694-95)', *Philological Quarterly*, 41:1 (1962), 158-72. See Ann-Mari Hedbäck, 'The Douai Manuscript Reexamined', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 73 (1979), 1-18; esp. 12-13.

7 Roland Mushat Frye, *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), 275-93.

8 A further word will be said later about these non-Shakespearean works in English, which are far less annotated.

9 As the Revolution raged, books and manuscripts from the Saint-Omer communities were confiscated and piled up in the nearby Abbey of Saint-Bertin. Eighty-five manuscripts and some five hundred printed books were moved to Boulogne-sur-Mer to create a new library much to the inhabitants of Saint-Omer's outrage. See, for details, the Saint-Omer library website descriptions of its rare holdings:

[http://www.bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/cms/articleviewpreferences/id\\_items/30/nb\\_aff/5/nb\\_analyse/10/display\\_order/Selection/display\\_mode/Submenu/summary\\_content/Summary/picto/vide.gif/libelle/Le+Fonds+Ancien](http://www.bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/cms/articleviewpreferences/id_items/30/nb_aff/5/nb_analyse/10/display_order/Selection/display_mode/Submenu/summary_content/Summary/picto/vide.gif/libelle/Le+Fonds+Ancien).

Figure 1: general view of the newly discovered First Folio, shelfmark inv. 2227. ©

Bibliothèque d'Agglomération de Saint-Omer.

From a physical point of view, the Saint-Omer First Folio is slightly under the average measurements of Shakespearean First Folios. Bound, it is 310 x 215 mm and unbound approximately 302 x 183 (width measured from the gutter). This suggests that its pages were cropped as it was rebound. The folio is not in its original binding. Its current binding is a mottled brown calf, which is foxed and stained in several places. It most likely dates back to the second half of the seventeenth century or to the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

The reason why the Folio was not readily identifiable (and that it was originally discovered in an eighteenth-century section of the rare books library, as Mr Cordonnier was looking for English books for his forthcoming spring 2015 exhibition on 'English Books in Saint-Omer Collections') is that it is missing all of its paratextual material (that is, some sixteen pages, including the Droeshout engraving of Shakespeare, the title page and all the dedicatory epistles). This is partly why it is a much thinner book than most First Folios (500 mm).

In truth, the Saint-Omer First Folio has all the features of a much "used book".<sup>11</sup> There are numerous traces of humidity, ink and dirt, which show that this book was not acquired to collect dust in some collector's library, but to be put to *use* (the annotations confirm this, in my view, as we shall see). Traces of spillage (some quite spectacular) occasionally do not spread logically to adjacent pages, indicating that the volume was perhaps not bound when the stains were made. Indeed, some plays or pages may have been extracted to be used on their own (for theatrical, educational or other reasons), but this—needless to say—is only a conjecture. The Folio lacks *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (the entire play—but there is no sign that it was torn out and thus censored by the Jesuits). Just before the absent *Two Gentlemen*, *The Tempest* looks also like it could have been pasted on.

Other plays are not devoid of imperfections either. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is missing pages here and there: D6r-v and E6r-v, but these pages were interpolated—probably by accident—by the binder between F1v and F2r of *Measure for Measure*.<sup>12</sup> Other plays are also lacking a few pages.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> This is confirmed by Rémy Cordonnier, Eric Rasmussen, and Renate Mesmer (Folger Library Laboratory), whom I would like to thank for their help.

<sup>11</sup> To use William H. Sherman's very apt terminology in *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, Saint-Omer's head of conservation found remnants of a quill pen in the gutter there.

<sup>13</sup> Otherwise, *Troilus and Cressida* is missing: ¶¶3r to ¶¶4v, but this seems to have been noticed by the person who at some point numbered the pages of *Troilus* in ink. There is no sign of tear here—and hence of potential censorship. *Coriolanus* is lacking cc1r-v; *Titus Andronicus* cc5r-v, dd1r-v and dd6r-v. *Macbeth* lacks Mm6r-v; *Hamlet*, Oo1r-v; *Anthony and Cleopatra*, x1r-v.

*Cymbeline* ends abruptly at aa6v on Guidereus's 'Where's my Brother?' and has thus eleven lost pages. The top cover of the Folio is slightly disbound, but the most intriguing features are the end flyleaves of the book, which appear to have dropped out or been almost totally torn out. For the leaves whose ends remain, one can still make out cropped marginal words in ink, written upside down—this could indicate that these end pages were used to create list of players or characters, or simply for penmanship exercises (most likely in an eighteenth-century hand).

As to the provenance of this First Folio, the name 'Nevill' appears on the title page of *The Tempest*, which is also now the opening page of the volume:

[IMAGE: OPENING PAGE OF TEMPEST]

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'Nevill' was most likely a pseudonym for someone who owned the book and donated it to the Saint-Omer Jesuit library. There are in fact two possible candidates. Nevill could be Edmund Sale's pseudonym. Sale (1604/5–1647/8) had studied at the College in 1621 and returned to Saint-Omer as Master of Poetry in 1630 and 1632.<sup>14</sup> However, the book could also have been bought by Edward Scarisbrick [*alias*] Neville (1639–1709), a Jesuit educated at the English College in Saint-Omer from 1653 to 1659. Scarisbrick taught humanities at Saint-Omer from 1664 to 1670 and returned there as head of studies in 1675.<sup>15</sup> That either of these men could have been the author of the annotations inside the book is difficult to ascertain at this time and ownership does not of course naturally lead to annotation. Alan Nelson finds that the letter "K" in the form used in the annotations inside the book is certainly idiosyncratic, but Jan Graffius confirms that there exists unfortunately no extant manuscript of either of these Jesuits to which one could refer for comparison.<sup>16</sup>

*The Manuscript Annotations: A Folio for the Theatre*

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<sup>14</sup> Graffius, 'The First Folio and Jesuit Drama in Saint-Omer', forthcoming in *The Times Literary Supplement* and his ODNB entry: Thompson Cooper, 'Sale, Edmund (1604/5–1647/8)', rev. R. M. Armstrong, in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19928> (accessed January 17, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Geoffrey Holt, 'Scarisbrick, Edward (1639–1709)', in Lawrence Goldman (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19931> (accessed December 10, 2014).

<sup>16</sup> Email exchanges with both Alan H. Nelson and Jan Graffius, whom I both wish to thank.

This brings us to the manuscript annotations themselves. Multiple hands have clearly been at work, probably at different periods of time. Of these various hands, the most prominent and apparent are those that one can distinguish in *Henry IV, Part 1*, which appear to date back to the second half of the seventeenth century or the beginning of the next, and a few annotations in pencil in *Henry V*, which are much later ones, probably from the eighteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Other common inscriptions, especially in *1 Henry IV*, are those that concern corrections to speech prefixes, additional stage business (entrances, exits, descriptions of stage movement). Many passages are also boxed or bracketed in ink, some are crossed out in black ink or pencil. Such passages were not necessarily discarded by theatrical annotators and, as opposed to those which were crossed out, could be included—or not—at a later stage, thus giving adaptors more choices. For scholars who have studied Restoration folios used as theatrical promptbooks, such as those edited by G. Blakemore Evans (now available online<sup>18</sup>), all these features (cuts, additions, some corrections) are characteristic of texts prepared for stage productions. To my mind, there is thus good reason to believe that the Saint-Omer First Folio was used, especially for two of its plays, to stage Shakespeare.

This does not preclude its being put to other uses too, but these are not readily apparent, as readers do not always leave traces of their activities. Another caveat is that these texts prepared for the stage (*1 Henry IV* and *Henry V* in this case) remain ‘documents of performance’. In other words, they may or may not have led to actual productions. They could also have served as intermediary preparation texts in a much larger paper economy (where other texts such as cues or backstage plots, for instance, could have played a part also).<sup>19</sup>

There is some indication, as well, especially in the case of *Henry V*, that the entire enterprise of cutting and annotating the play may not have led to actual staging (the project being altogether abandoned). Indeed, one should bear in mind that, in the words of Jerome McGann, ‘textuality cannot be understood except as a phenomenal event’, subject to changes and contradictions.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the cuts made *both* in ink and pencil in *1 Henry IV* *could* indicate that the texts were reworked at different times, perhaps several decades apart by different adaptors.

Even if texts were prepared for the theatre by a single adaptor, this did not exclude inconsistencies and the Saint-Omer First Folio is, as we shall see, no exception to the rule. What Paul Werstine has recently observed about the twenty-one (non Shakespearean) playhouse manuscripts he has studied closely also applies to early modern printed editions of Shakespeare

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<sup>17</sup> I am deeply grateful to Alan Nelson, Heather Wolfe, Curator of Manuscripts of the Folger Library in Washington, D.C. and her group of expert palaeographers for confirmation of the dating.

<sup>18</sup> <http://bsuva.org/bsuva/promptbook/>

<sup>19</sup> See Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009),

<sup>20</sup> Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 4-5.

annotated for the theatre: “Orderliness and thoroughness are not the marks of theatrical MSS; they are not finished texts”.<sup>21</sup> Before we go into the detailed study of the Saint-Omer cuts and annotations, let us bear in mind the words of those who studied Shakespearean theatrical promptbooks most closely, such as Charles H. Shattuck, who warned that theatricalized texts ‘are tricky, secretive, stubborn informants’.<sup>22</sup> Caution is advised and hasty conclusions are always to be regarded as suspect when dealing with traces of phenomenology.

Whether in manuscript or in printed books, the most frequent theatrical annotations are usually, in descending order: passages cut, addition of stage directions, correction, change, or addition of speech prefixes, corrections or change of dialogue, partial repetition of existing stage directions, censorship by bookkeeper or some other agent.<sup>23</sup> Broadly speaking, the Saint-Omer Folio follows this pattern, although because it was no doubt used in an educational context and in a Jesuit institution, whose policy was not to allow the parts of women to be interpreted by men.<sup>24</sup> Censorship is definitely more prominent. The Saint-Omer Jesuits, for that matter, neatly cut out some of the semi-naked female characters in a 1632 English illustrated edition of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in their possession (see inv. 2215).<sup>25</sup> Frustratingly for modern textual editors perhaps, emendations are relatively rare, as in most early modern texts (with a few notable exceptions).

Given the constraints of this article, it is impossible to account for all the manuscript changes introduced in the folio. Scholars interested in the details of these changes should access the digitised copy of the Folio soon to be online at this address: [http://www.bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/index/index/id\\_profil/79](http://www.bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/bibliotheque-agglo-stomer.fr/index/index/id_profil/79). Only the most significant and characteristic cases will be mentioned here—although I have examined the entire folio.

#### *Henry IV, Part 1: the Most Annotated Play of All*

Shakespeare’s most popular play (judging, in particular, by its seven reprints before the First Folio) was censored well before it reached the English College.<sup>26</sup> Thus, it is no surprise to

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<sup>21</sup> Paul Werstine, *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 242.

<sup>22</sup> Charles H. Shattuck, *The Shakespeare Promptbooks: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 9. Likewise, Edward A. Langhans remarked that some theatrical texts could be especially ‘chaotic’ in his *Restoration Promptbooks* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), xv.

<sup>23</sup> For a full list, see Werstine, *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts*, 243-44.

<sup>24</sup> ‘The Jesuit Order prohibited the portrayal of feminine characters on its college stages ‘*nec persona ulla muliebris vel habitus introducatur*’ Ratio Studiorum 1599’. William McCabe, ‘An Introduction to the Jesuit Theater’ ed. Louis Oldani (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1983), 178.

<sup>25</sup> The censorship extended to profanities also.

<sup>26</sup> Although this was mainly for political reasons, see Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, *The Olcastle Controversy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991).

find that Falstaff's profanities are often crossed out in the Saint-Omer copy also. Passages mentioning 'the clockes of Bawdes' and a 'Wench in Flame-coloured Taffata' in 2.2. (d6r: check for two passages) are crossed out in ink. On d6v (ACT, scene??), lines between the Prince and Poines are deleted in pencil, possibly because they mention "the diuel" and the "Pilgrimes going to Canterbury". On e6r (ACT, scene??), most of the scene containing Glendower's boasting about his supernatural powers and his Welshness are cut. On 5v, ACT, scene??), the end of Falstaff's speech is crossed out in ink and pencil, certainly because of its religious profanities: 'and made *Lucifer* Cuckold, and swore the Deuill his true Liege-man vpon the Crosse of a Welch-hooke; what a plague call you him?' Moreover, on the same page, eleven lines from a dialogue between the Prince and Falstaff are bracketed in ink and obliterated in pencil. The prince mentions that 'wee shall buy Maiden-heads' and Falstaff swears 'By the Masse Lad'. Dubiously political (anti-Lancastrian) comments, as well as arguably anti-Christian characters are part of the cuts: 'that Fiend *Douglas*, that Spirit *Percy*, and that Deuill *Glendower*'.<sup>27</sup>

On e2v (ACT, scene??), Falstaff's somewhat gross: "If I trauell but foure foot by the quire further a foote, I shall break my winde" is in pencil brackets, while his "Let a Cup of sacke be my poyson" is simply cut out. In the same vein, part of the Prince's speech on e3r-v because of its similar allusion to alcohol is expunged. Yet most of the tavern scenes are retained. Other elements, no doubt deemed too transgressive (but this time from a political point of view), such as the mock deposition scene with Falstaff as king (e5r check for ACT scene) are marked for deletion.

Other changes to *1 Henry IV* concern scenes containing female characters and scenes which, in the opinion of the inscriber(s), certainly required to be adapted more for the stage. In both cases, and as we shall see, the text continues to bear a number of inconsistencies despite an obvious will to modernize or clarify the folio version. *1 Henry IV* is almost totally divested of its female parts, some being masculinized and some disappearing altogether. Nonetheless, there are a few irregularities in the censorship that need to be pointed out. On d6r, the word "fellow" is added in ink and 'Hostess' is masculinized by Falstaff in 'Thou say'st true Lad : and is not my Hostesse of the Taverne a most sweet Wench?' Yet the same logic is not applied to Falstaff's ensuing 'Well, thou hast call'd her to a reck'ning a many time and oft'.

These inconsistencies point to the fact that, like professional theatrical adaptors, Jesuits could leave loose ends even in texts that clearly were meant for performance. On f. 1v [ACT, scene?] despite numerous efforts to masculinize a considerable number of expressions concerning women,

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<sup>27</sup> The Jesuits were reputed to support the Lancastrians. See Jean-Christophe Mayer, ' "This Papist and this Poet": Shakespeare's Lancastrian's Kings and Robert Parsons's *Conference about the Next Succession*', Richard Dutton, Alison Findlay and Richard Wilson (eds.), *Theatre and Religion: Lancastrian Shakespeare* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 116-29.

someone clearly forgot to deal with the hostess's 'There's neyther Faith, Truth, nor Woman-hood in me else'. [ref?]. Likewise, in the scene [ref?], when the Prince blames Falstaff ('Charge an honest Woman with picking they pocket?' [ref?].) no alteration to this line has been made. On f2r [ACT, scene], the logic is even more conflicting: '*Fal. Hostesse, I forgiue thee: / Come make ready Breakfast, loue thy Husband*' (f.2r).

Nevertheless and overall the adaptor(s) did masculinize the play pretty effectively. On e4r, 'Hostesse' is turned into 'Host' (the 'esse' is crossed out in black ink). This continues on the next page as the Hostess is not only addressed as 'Host' (e4v), but most speech prefixes are altered too

[IMAGE: e4v, speech prefixes masculinized]

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On f1v [REF?] considerable energy was deployed in order to get rid of expressions such as 'so haz my husband', 'you are a Woman, goe', 'I was never call'd so [a woman] in mine owne house before', which are all crossed out in pencil. Again, on e3r [ACT, scene?] the scene between Hotspur and his wife 'his Lady' is 'left out', as a note in underscored ink confirms literally (e3r). When on e6r, one reads "*Enter Glendower, with the Ladies*", it is not clear whether the ladies' appearance on stage was retained or not. Yet on 6v [REF?], the ambiguity is lifted, as all Welsh ladies' speaking parts are obliterated in pencil.

While in some cases it is difficult to determine whether a passage was censured or cut for theatrical reasons, there is an unquestionable tendency to modernize, simplify, clarify and tighten Shakespeare's text in this play. The tightening of the action is especially noticeable as we reach the end of the play. Long and/or overly poetic passages (and hence potentially difficult to convey on stage) disappear. The end of the speech in which Hal speaks of his transformation 'My reformation glittering o're my fault' (d6v) is omitted, whereas Hotspur's very long tirade from 'And as the Souldiers bare dead bodies by,' to 'Betwixt the Winde, and his Nobility', (e1r) is bracketed in pencil.

3.2. (on e6v) is simplified, as both the first five lines and the stage directions are elided leaving the King to speak directly to his son. Twelve lines of Henry IV's complaint to Hal (from 'The hope and expectation of thy time' to 'But like a Comet, I was wondered at') are marked out for deletion. Much of Henry's advice to his son disappears (both bracketed in pencil and crossed out (one wonders in passing what the Jesuits would have made of the King's 'my Person fresh and new, / My Presence like a Robe Pontificall'). Five lines concerning Percy are discarded, leaving the impression that the latter's role is sidestepped in the Jesuit version of the play.

Many of these lines are also cut to tighten up the plot. Worcester's eight lines about the preparations for battle are dispensed with (e1r). There are also numerous cuts of like nature in 3.3. (e5v). Much of the scene concerning the fantastic birth of Glendower the rebel (which may have been considered pagan and blasphemous anyway) disappears. Equally deemed unnecessary are approximately fifteen lines of Mortimer's speech about the rebels' military plans. The cutting continues on e6r, as the rebels carry on giving possibly unessential details. All of Glendower's boasting about his supernatural powers and his Welshness is cut [REF?]. Arguably unessential adjectives and descriptions disappear in column 2 of f2v. Some eleven lines of [REF?] scene 4 (f3v) are eliminated no doubt to get us to the military outcome—the battle of Shrewsbury. Other lines disappear for the same reasons in 4.4., such as those about the King's military preparations, on f4r, for instance.

Lastly, there are genuine efforts at modernizing and clarifying the text for the stage. Among the least necessary perhaps are the soon-to-be abandoned corrections of words spelled with a final 'e' on the opening page of the play. These black ink corrections no doubt meant to modernize the spelling of the play and were soon abandoned. D6r's change from 'Cozen' to 'Cousin' constitutes also an exception. On e5v, the rather cryptic 'ob' (meaning 'half') is replaced by '½' (half a penny) to create a clearer text for the audience.

What is more interesting and what was undoubtedly far more helpful from a dramatic point of view, are the clarifications often introduced in black ink to the play's stage directions. On e2v [Ref?], Hal is brought off stage by an additional manuscript direction to facilitate and/or clarify stage business. On the same page, some characters are eliminated, such as Peto, who also disappears later, but does not leave the play altogether (again the changes are not always consistent). Still, on e2v, 'Bardolph' is added in ink to the existing stage printed direction, while an extra 'Exeunt omnes' could be seen as an effort to clarify the scene [WHERE?].

Peto, who had been dropped from the play, reappears on e3v. After the folio's '*Enter Falstaffe*', one can read the following in black ink 'with Gadshill Peto & Bardolph'. On the same page (e3v), 'He drinks' is added after Falstaff's 'Giue me a Cup of Sacke, Rogue', probably not to prompt the actor to drink, but as a reminder for the stage manager to prepare the property. On e5r [REF?], an addition is made in black ink: 'Knocking heard, exeunt Bardolph & Host'. The addition is repeated a few lines down but it is obliterated there. The text of the folio is changed here, as four lines between Bardolph and Falstaff are cut. These dealt with the imminent arrival of the sheriff—the cut clearly made the second set of stage directions redundant.

So what do all of these cuts produce? Although it is difficult to judge how the play was actually staged, one could surmise that the Saint-Omer *1 Henry IV* was a much more serious play—at least

to our eyes. There were apparently no female characters. It was devoid of many religious and sexual allusions, but the tavern scenes remained, and so the humour emanating from this underworld still no doubt made the play enjoyable. Clearly, the anti-Lancastrian rebels were very much effaced from the play, for political reasons perhaps, to make the story easier to follow as well, but also to reinvent a plot which was less concerned about political ambiguities and more about loyalty to kingly power. Furthermore, this was a shorter and swifter play. Surprisingly, the Saint-Omer Jesuits seemed also to be remarkably conservative in their loyalty to English royalty—albeit Lancastrian royalty, which of course was very different from the Tudor and Stuart dynasties and was tied inextricably to a Catholic period of English history.<sup>28</sup>

### *Henry V: A Special Case?*

The cuts in the Saint-Omer *Henry V* consist mainly of pencil manuscript notes in what is at least an eighteenth-century hand. They delineate a number of passages with the words “Begin” and “End”. This, as will become apparent, will beg a series of questions, the first being (and to which we shall return) whether this play was ever meant to be staged in the first place.

Indeed, if one follows the logic of the cuts, one notices that whoever made them divested the play of its Prologue, and thus of its epic dimension, but also of its preliminary mention of Agincourt—a puzzling omission when one remembers that Agincourt is only some twenty-five miles south of Saint-Omer. Interestingly, however, all the beginning of 1.1. is excluded, that is, the discussion between the bishops of Canterbury and Ely voicing their worries against Henry V’s choice of implementing a law that could have disastrous financial consequences for the church: ‘if it passe against vs, / We loose the better halfe of our Possession: For all the Temporall lands, which mens devout / by testament haue giuen to the Church, : Would strip from us’ (h1r). What could have been regarded as a conversation unfavourable to the Catholic Church is censored.

So all of this disappears in the Saint-Omer *Henry V*, including the implicit deal struck between the church and the king, whereby Canterbury gets these unfavourable laws repealed by vindicating the sovereign’s rights to France through his Salic law speech. These elements did not make the church, especially the Catholic Church, appear in a very good light and so the play is cut accordingly and begins with Henry’s firm resolve to conquer France on h2v.

A straight line in pencil is followed by ‘begin’ at ‘*King*. Call in the Messengers sent from the Dolphin’ (h2v), while ‘end’ in pencil is followed by a straight line after ‘That this faire Action may on foot be brought. *Exeunt*’ [REF?]. The Saint-Omer *Henry V* is a sovereign who appears to have

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<sup>28</sup> For a tentative explanation of this, see Mayer, ‘This Papist and this Poet’: Shakespeare’s Lancastrian’s Kings and Robert Parsons’s *Conference about the Next Succession*, 116-29.

a firm resolve to fight for his rights in France. Cutting and altering the play in this way could have a certain logic for Jesuit exiles in an eighteenth-century context of Anglo-French wars and cultural, territorial, political rivalry. A mere ninety-five lines are retained of Act I, scene 1, making the conflict between England and France inevitable, but providing the reader with limited context for the feud.

Moreover, the so-called 'low-life' scenes between the soldiers Nym, Lieutenant Bardolph, as well as Mistress Quickly (the 'hostesse' of *1 Henry IV* now married to Pistol), the death of Falstaff, as well as Henry V's exposure of the traitors in his own camp (Scrope, Cambridge, and Gray at H3v-h3v) are expunged. All of these scenes could be considered digressive if one is concerned primarily by the larger history of the confrontation between the English and the French, which the Saint-Omer Jesuits seem to be.

On h4v, a straight line with 'begin' in pencil precedes the line '*Dolphin*. My most redoubted Father', the passage extending to h5r where 'end' in pencil appears at 'To answer matters of this conference. *Exeunt*.' In effect, this isolates the French court somewhat from the rest of the action. With these two cuts in Act I, the emphasis on the contrast between the English and French court is heightened and the confrontation between the two nations is simplified.

Act II is *drastically* cut also. It starts in fact at p. 81, ir, '*Tucket. Enter Mountjoy. /Mountjoy*. You know me by my habit', ending on the same page with the King's 'And on to morrow bid them march away. *Exeunt*'. We are made to hear the French Mountjoy's menaces to the English king, who recognises that he is not in a position of power at that point. Both Harfleur and Calais are mentioned in the course of the exchange. Act II is basically reduced to that and many scenes are left out, for instance the Chorus (h5r), the King's encouragement to his troops at Harfleur ('Once more vnto the Breach'); the scene with Nim, Bardolph, Pistol and Boy. The Scene on h5v with the three Welsh, Irish and Scottish Captains. On H6r, Henry's menacing speech to the Governor of Harfleur is cut also, as well as the ensuing English lesson scene with the French princess Katherine and Alice. That the latter should not appear is logical to some extent: the Jesuits would not have women on stage and the scene could be considered digressive. The insane bragging between the French on H1r, which carries on into i2v, is also omitted (with '*Constable of France, the Lord Ramburs, Orleans, Dolphin, with others*').

Act 3 begins p. 86, i3v with '*Glouc*. Where is the King?' and ends with the King's 'And how thou pleasest God, dispose the day. *Exeunt*' (p. 87, i4r). As a result, Act 3 is deprived of the long chorus, filled with pathos, describing the English army's preparation before Agincourt, cf. 'The Name of Agincourt' (i2r). Gone are also: the partly disguised dialogue between Henry and his troops before the battle (i2r-v); the King overhearing the conversations between his troops of various nations on

i2v (Fluellen, Gower and then Soldiers, Bates, Alexander Court, Michael Williams) and his own response to some of them, including his ‘I think the Kinge is but a man, as I am’ (to Bates on i2v), as well as the King’s defence about sending his troops to the slaughter: ‘Euery Subjects dutie is the Kings, but euery Subjects Soule is his owne’ (hi2v). Henry’s speech on ‘Ceremony’ (hi3r) is not included either, and the same goes for his complaint ‘We must beare all’ (hi3r). Not included either are Henry V’s apologies to God for his father’s murder of Richard II: ‘O not to day, thinke not vpon the fault / My Father Made, in compassing the Crowne. / I *Richards* body have interred new’ (i3r) and the French’s preparations and warlike speeches (i3v).

What is retained in the Saint-Omer version is Exeter’s worry that the English are fighting against great odds, but to this the King entering later into the scene answers: ‘No ‘faith, my Couze, wish not a man from England:’ (i3v). He then delivers his ‘Saint *Crispian*’ day speech, which in a Catholic/Jesuit context would probably go down well, especially in a community of English exiles:

And *Crispibe Crispian* shall ne’re goe by,  
 From this day to the ending of the World,  
 But we in it shall be remembered;  
 We few, we happy few, we band of brothers: (I4r)

The passage actually finishes on the King’s ‘And how thou pleasest God, dispose the day. *Exeunt*’ (p. 87, i4r), after Mountjoy’s final offer of surrender is refused by a king determined to die on French soil. Once more, this probably had a particular ring for these English exiles: ‘And those that leaue their valiant bones in France, / Dying like men, though buried in your Dunghills, / They shall be fam’d [...]’. [REF?] A very faint pencilled ‘Begin’ appears after ‘*Enter Pistoll, French Souldier, Boy*’ (i4r), but it is far from clear whether this scene and how much of the ensuing scenes were actually used, as the so-called low-life burlesque scenes appear to be eliminated.

The act ends where it does in the folio (with ‘End’ and a short straight line in pencil). Yet a passage spoken by Burgundy on i4v is marked as ‘left out’ in pencil. Indeed, the censor probably considered it contained too much bawdy: ‘Let vs dye in once more backe againe, / And he that will not follow *Burbon* now, / Let him go hence, and with his cap in hand / Like a base Pander hold the chamber doore, His fairest daughter is contaminated’.

Acts 4 and 5 are virtually untouched—there are no annotations whatsoever. Perhaps the idea was to reduce the play to three acts only, or to get the performers to speak only those portions of the play that were marked out. Another explanation—one that is not infrequent in other annotated playbooks—is that the adaptor simply stopped his work because he decided not to adapt the play at all. There are always a multiplicity of reasons for this: lack of will, of performers, external circumstances or because the play ends on a seduction scene between the King of England and

the French Princess Katherine (k1r-v)—a scene difficult to include in a Jesuit production. Thus, the Saint-Omer *Henry V* is indeed a special case—an adapted play which was perhaps never performed, or that was performed in parts.

### *Conclusions*

The reason why so much of this essay has revolved around *1 Henry IV* and *Henry V* is that this is where the bulk of the annotations is to be found. There are a couple of emendations in *The Tempest* ('firrs' into 'furze' on ACT, scene ?A1r) and in *Much Ado About Nothing* the word 'sorrow' in the line 'And sorrow, wagge, crie hem, when he should grone,' has a cross next to it referring to a marginal note 'sorrow' (Act 5, K5r). *King John's* 'Actus Quartus, Scæna prima' is corrected to 'Quintus' (p. 18, b3v). In *Troilus and Cressida* the missing pagination from ¶1v onwards has been completed in ink in the top right hand corner. The other plays show signs of use and hence that they could have been read, but contain no specific annotations (only tears, traces of humidity, ink, grease and dirt stains, burn or rust and penmanship exercises). What this copy of the First Folio shows beyond doubt is that Shakespeare was read and most certainly staged as early as the second part of the seventeenth century in English Catholic communities on the Continent. Despite the censorship, the copy proves the value of his works to these communities of exiles. It also shows that some English drama was certainly read if not admired by the Saint-Omer Jesuits, who also owned extant copies of Ben Jonson's *Works* (1640; shelfmark inv. 2231), a volume of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Comedies and Tragedies* (1647; shelfmark inv. 2229) and may even have read (and staged?) some Shakespeare before the second half of the seventeenth century if one bears in mind the 1619 reference to a copy of *Pericles* (first published in 1609) held at the English College in Saint-Omer.

There are no signs that the Saint-Omer Jonson volume served directly for dramatic production. Some attention in the volume was devoted to *The Silent Woman* and to *Sejanus* (a few annotations) and the book as a whole was certainly read, as its traces of use indicate. The same goes for the Beaumont and Fletcher volume, which was read (especially *The Loyall Subject*) but definitely not prepared for the stage. That the Saint-Omer Jesuits devoted some attention to vernacular literature before they annotated their First Folio is attested by an extant 1590 copy of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (inv. 2422), which belonged to the Jesuit John Wilson, and contains numerous annotations in a hand probably contemporary to the publication of the volume. It is also attested by another extant copy of Sidney's *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* (published 1638; shelfmark inv. 2238), which belonged to one James Platter and is bound with an almanac for the year 1639. More elements

about the Folio and its context will no doubt come to light as well during the conference that will be organised this summer (26-27 June 2015) in Saint-Omer around this discovery by the Bibliothèque d'Agglomération, where the volume was found, the Montpellier CNRS Institute for Research on the Renaissance, the Neo-Classical Age and the Enlightenment (IRCL) and the University of Paris's PRISMES research centre, under the auspices of the French Shakespeare Society (SFS).