INTRODUCTION

The textual problem

Othello remains a textual mystery. Not published at all for nearly twenty years after its first recorded performance, then published twice within the space of approximately a year, the Quarto of and the Folio of (and hereafter) present the same play in the same order of events, even the same order of speeches for the most part, yet the texts differ from one another on thousands of points. Some of these differences are prominent. Each text lacks some lines present in the other. Most noticeably, has about lines which does not, with some of the -only passages running ten or twenty lines. But it is the thousands of tiny differences which form the heart of the mystery. One can make reasonable surmises as to why does without parcels of dialogue present in , but why should use scores of commas and colons where uses periods, or dozens of contractions where uses uncontracted forms, or hundreds of perfectly good words where uses *other* perfectly good words? Here is Emilia in , refusing to hold her tongue at . . – :

>   *Em.* ’Twill out, ’twill: I hold my peace sir, no,
>   I’le be in speaking, liberall as the ayre,

Here is the version:

>   *Emil.* ’Twill out, ’twill out. I peace?
>   No, I will speake as liberall as the North;

As Greg remarked, an essay could be written about these lines, but the first question about the two versions is why should they differ in such numerous and trifling ways. Emilia’s meaning does not change from one to the other, but who made up the variation between ‘liberall as the ayre’ and ‘liberall as the North’? Was it an author, tinkering with his text? An actor, letting one version slide into the other through a slip of memory? A scribe, writing his own variations on his copy-text? A compositor, struggling with an illegible manuscript? There is no way to be sure, yet there are hundreds of examples like this, in addition to the differences of punctuation and lineation, which are as significant as the substantive differences. Many of the tiny variations do not matter in themselves, but in their accumulation they demand an explanation for their number and smallness, a theory of their punctiliousness.

For abbreviations throughout these notes, please refer to ‘Abbreviations and conventions’ at the beginning of this volume.

  An earlier version of the first half of this introduction appeared as ‘The *Othello* Quarto and the Foul-Paper Hypothesis’ in *SQ*   (   ),   – .

Q1 and foul papers

The   lines included in   but not in   are rich in metaphor and verbal energy, and no one doubts that they are Shakespearian. The textual theory proceeding from this observation has usually taken   to be our best representation of the play the author intended to write and   to be a useful but inferior representation, perhaps a theatrical version abridged for the stage, or (more frequently) a first draft which Shakespeare then enlarged with some of the   lines and touched up in other ways. The dozen or so lines present in   and not in   present no great problem to the argument that gives the fullest version of Shakespeare's design, for small accidental omissions were common in the process by which any play-text reached print.

The larger problem lies in the minute variations of punctuation and wording. The usual solution, recognizing that authors change some things as they work, that play-house bookkeepers touch up some details relating to stage presentation and that scribes and compositors make mistakes and take occasional liberties with their copy-texts, has been to call these agents together and imagine various hands making many small adjustments and errors in one text or the other. Thus the tiny differences are accommodated under the general principle of 'accidents happen' (no edition of *Othello* can do without this principle), and the larger differences remain the primary evidence for determining on what kinds of manuscript they happened. As a result, with the   lines unique to   leading the way, and with the hordes of small variations following at a reasonable distance,   has been the favoured text in most editions of *Othello* on the grounds that it is the most authentic Shakespearian version among the early printed texts. The leading hold-out to this trend was M. R. Ridley, whose Arden edition of   (the second Arden *Othello*) insisted on the possibility that   might contain revisions and interpolations by various hands, Shakespeare's among others, their contributions being indistinguishable from one another. So Ridley used   as his favoured text, to the consternation of most Shakespearians of his own time and later, who are optimistic enough to believe that an authentic Shakespearian *Othello* can be determined and that the foundation of the determination is   . Thus   is the basis of the first Arden edition, edited by H. C. Hart; of the Cambridge edition of   , edited by Alice Walker and J. Dover Wilson; of the New Cambridge edition of   , edited by Norman Sanders; of the one-volume Complete Shakespeares known as the Riverside, the Bevington, the Oxford and the Norton; and of the recent third Arden, edited by E. A. J. Honigmann, whose textual argument will be taken up shortly.

All of these editions have called upon   for certain features, however.   's stage directions are fuller and more descriptive than   's and give a welcome sense of the play's theatrical quality.   's dialogue is sharpened by oaths appropriate to the military society depicted in the play, but these either do not appear in   or appear in milder forms. On the small points of individual words, phrases or punctuation,   can be clear on some points left fuzzy or garbled in   . The editorial tradition has decided that   is preferred but not infallible, and where it seems to fall away from Shakespearian authenticity,   is waiting as the back-up text for a better reading.

In my view, that approach has worked well for   but has made   into a repository

of hope and desire among Shakespearian editors, who in the past fifty years have increasingly found the earlier text a reflection of the author's original manuscript of the play, his 'foul papers', exactly what one would like to have for a back-up text. The assumptions and reasoning behind the foul-paper hypothesis for   are deeply questionable, as I shall try to show in the paragraphs that follow.   is as remarkable for its punctuation and lineation as it is for its substantive variations from   , for example, and these 'accidentals' cannot have been the playwright's handiwork. No one has realized this point more fully than E. A. J. Honigmann, whose book on *The Texts of 'Othello' and Shakespearian Revision* I have found both indispensable for its detailing of the evidence and disagreeable for its determination to convert those details into evidence for the foul-paper argument after all. But Honigmann stands in the line of scholarship that goes back to Greg, and to see how   was manoeuvred into place as a reflector of foul papers, one must read Greg first. It is what every editor should do. One learns humility by discovering that achievements like Greg's and Honigmann's work on *Othello* are (in one's opinion) wrong.

I shall follow their arguments closely, because the evidence they dealt with in advancing the foul-paper hypothesis is often the same evidence which leads to a different conclusion, that   *Othello* comes from a theatre-script on which Shakespeare may never have left a mark in his own hand.

Greg sets the standard

Greg's *The Shakespeare First Folio* of   proved to be the decisive study in establishing the foul-paper hypothesis. Earlier in the   s, Alice Walker had argued that   proceeds from a theatrical manuscript written by a scribe who introduced vulgarizations remembered from hearing the play in performance. Thus   was, for Walker, 'contaminated' by the stage and distinctly removed from authorial papers. Greg, who had favoured a foul-paper origin for   at least as early as the   Clarke Lectures which became *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* (   ), found Walker's argument answerable in his *First Folio* book and restated his position: the signs of foul papers are unmistakable, and although some evidence does not square with this view (Greg was careful to lay out the contrary evidence), Walker's hypothesis of a theatrical origin for   leaves serious questions unanswered and cannot be accepted.

This statement of the foul-paper argument soon carried the day, with a growing appreciation of the likelihood that it was a scribal copy of the foul papers which eventually reached the printing house. Ridley agreed with Greg on the foul-paper origin of   (if not on much else) in his Arden edition of   . The one-volume student editions of Shakespeare mentioned above reflected Greg's theory of   *Othello* (although the Riverside reserved judgement on the question of foul papers). Norman Sanders's   Cambridge edition of *Othello* accepted foul papers or a scribal copy of foul papers for   , as did the Wells–Taylor *Textual Companion* of   , and, most

Walker's views on *Othello* will be found in 'The   Quarto and the First Folio text of *Othello*', *Sh. S.* (   ),   –   ; *Problems*, pp.   –   ; and Walker and Wilson, pp.   –   .
Greg, *Folio*, pp.   –   .

recently, E. A. J. Honigmann's new Arden edition of   , for which his *The Texts of 'Othello' and Shakespearian Revision* is a companion book. That foul papers lie behind   , probably at the remove of a scribal transcript, is now the standard editorial position.

The turning point of Greg's argument deserves examination, for there the trouble in the foul-paper hypothesis can begin to be seen. The paragraph in question occurs on p.   of *The Shakespeare First Folio*, shortly before Greg turns to Walker's argument. Greg is discussing   's ample stage directions, which he is interpreting through a framework constructed from the basic tenets of the New Bibliography. Formulated by McKerrow, Pollard, Greg himself and others over the previous half century, the New Bibliography held that certain kinds of stage directions – vague ones and erroneous ones – are signs of foul papers. Such faulty stage directions cannot have been written by the bookkeeper in his prompt copy, according to New Bibliographical reasoning, for bookkeepers (who combined something like the roles of prompter and stage-manager in modern terminology) required accuracy on these matters. Faulty stage directions came either from the author's first draft, when his intentions were still being formulated and bits of guesswork were left in his papers, or from a 'memorial reconstruction' later in the play's career pieced together for irregular purposes by persons who could be expected to get some details wrong. The trouble-spots were signs either of foul papers or of 'bad' quartos, in other words, and if a text could be saved from the category of 'bad', it could be assigned to the category of the 'foul', foul being finer than bad by virtue of being much closer to the author's original manuscript. Thus when   *Othello* reveals a vague 'two or three' in an exit direction at   .   , another vague 'and the rest' in an entrance direction at line   in the same scene and an erroneous entrance for Desdemona early in this scene, at line   , Greg, convinced that the quarto is not 'bad', was sure these imperfections 'can only be his' – i.e., the author's, in his foul papers. Moreover, the 'Messenger' designated in a stage direction at the beginning of this scene seems to be inconsistent with the 'Sailor' designation for the same character in two speech-prefixes; and another 'Messenger' in a stage direction at   .   seems to be 'an imaginary character'. Prompt copy for Greg did not tolerate such imperfections, which are signs of the false starts and early guesswork characteristic of authorial foul papers.

Yet there are contradictions in the evidence from a New Bibliographical perspective, and Greg does not ignore these. The vexing problem is that there are signs of *other* textual origins in   as well, according to the New Bibliographical categories – signs of prompt copy after all, and even signs of a manuscript prepared for presenta-

These points took hold. 'No prompter could let anything so imprecise stand in his prompt-book', Ridley wrote of the stage directions 'two or three' and 'and the rest' (Ridley, p. xlii). Bringing in a 'Messenger' who is then called 'Sailor' in speech-prefixes is 'muddled' for Stanley Wells, and the second 'Messenger' problem is 'nonsensical' (*Textual Companion*, p.   ). These errors therefore must come from foul papers.

   's error in naming Desdemona in the entrance direction at   .   'tells against prompt-book copy' for Wells. That most of these clues occur in one scene (.   ) might have raised some doubts about the foul-paper hypothesis for the entire play, but this concentration of presumed authorial signals seems not to have been noticed. Honigmann, *Texts*, follows this line of reasoning, and seeks new evidence in addition, which will be discussed below.

tion to a private patron. The approximately   lines present in   but not in   seem
to reflect theatrical cuts in a prompt book. There are act divisions and 'literary' stage
directions in   , which indicate copy dressed up for a reader, perhaps for a private
patron. '*Enter Brabantio in his night gowne, and seruants with Torches*', '*Enter Duke and
Senators, set at a Table with lights and Attendants*', '*they kisse*', '*Enter a Gentleman
reading a Proclamation*', '*The Moore runnes at Iago. Iago kils his wife*' – such directions
have touches of description rare in printed texts of the period. Thus   *Othello* brings
together characteristics which, according to the New Bibliography, do not blend.
tantalizes the scholar with a combination of clues, bearing signs of foul papers *and*
prompt copy *and* private transcript.

   Greg resolves this dilemma by eliminating two of its elements and leaving only
foul papers standing as a reasonable choice. The prompt book with its theatrical
cuts he eases out of the picture by imagining that the foul papers themselves contained
marks for *intended* cuts, which were recognized and obeyed by an alert compositor.
This deft move allows one to admit the 'theatrical cuts' phenomenon without
having to admit the theatre itself, on the grounds that authors like Shakespeare, a
man of the theatre if there ever was one, would naturally use their foul papers to
record second-thought theatrical revisions after they completed their first drafts. Thus
foul papers become foul-papers-touched-up-with-the-author's-second-thoughts as
a way of accounting for evidence of theatrical abridgement. There are no actual
foul papers in Shakespeare's hand against which to test this notion, which is thus
free to absorb the apparent cuts as 'intentions' without being troubled by matters
of fact.

   The private-patron possibility is more difficult to erase, for the 'literary flavour' of
the descriptive stage directions and act divisions have no place in the Shakespearian
foul papers imagined by the New Bibliography, not even at the level of 'intention'.
Greg deals with the private-transcript possibility by bringing it fully into view and
then sending it into oblivion with a neat turn of phrase. It comes into view (p.   )
when he notes that the literary stage directions and act divisions 'might be helps to the
reader added by someone who had seen the play performed and was preparing a copy
for a private patron'. He sends it packing with the next sentence: 'such a person could
be the book-keeper'. By converting the transcriber into the bookkeeper, Greg reduces
the posssible types of manuscript to two, for the book the bookkeeper kept was the
prompt book. Greg can then proceed as though all transcriptions are prompt-book
transcriptions. Since he has already cast doubt on a prompt-book transcription for
(because of the vague stage directions mentioned above, which only an author would
have written), and since the apparent theatrical cuts among the   lines missing from

   can be explained away (on grounds that the foul papers were marked for *intended*
cuts), the foul-paper hypothesis seems to survive as the logical choice. Now forgotten,
after having been glimpsed in one sentence, is the transcriber preparing a copy for a
private patron. Once he has been converted into the bookkeeper, the three possibilities
Greg had carefully brought into view are reduced to two, and a binary system of
alternatives comes into play, ranging from foul papers to prompt book and back again,
with foul papers winning on every rebound.

Economy in the New Bibliography

Paul Werstine has shown that a characteristic move in the logic of the New Bibliography is to frame textual problems according to the most economical line of transmission, from author (foul papers) to acting company (prompt book) to printing house. This economy creates a binary logic, with foul papers and prompt copy as the active terms. Left out of consideration when the binary reasoning does its work are other kinds of copy, such as transcripts made for private patrons, or transcripts made for later revivals of the play. Scripts made for private patrons or for revivals break the economical chain of agents, a chain which ideally remains confined to the author, the prompt-book scribe and the printer. Other scribes must sometimes be admitted. Greg's foul-paper hypothesis for *Othello* recognizes that the manuscript directly behind   might well have been a scribal copy of Shakespeare's foul papers. But a scribe outside the economical line of transmission – a scribe preparing a copy for a private patron, for example, or one preparing a script for a later revival of the play – is either not brought into consideration, or is brought in only to be dismissed in a move like the one I have outlined above.

The non-economical scribe is a problem because under his hand the text proliferates. He writes an 'extra' script, it passes to a private patron and there is no telling where it might go next. In this regard, the non-economical scribe is like the actors, who also generate additional text as they receive their 'parts', memorize their lines and deliver those lines many times in performance. Their performed versions of the text are multiple, uncountable and subject to the vagaries of memory, so the actors are either left out of the economy of the narrative or are counted in to explain error-prone printed texts thought to be 'memorial reconstructions' or 'bad' quartos. Greg's 'someone who had seen the play performed and was preparing a copy for a private patron' is rather like the actors in the difficulty he presents for New Bibliographical thinking, and the quick disappearance of this 'someone' from the paragraph in which Greg mentioned him is a trim example of preserving the author/bookkeeper dichotomy at the heart of New Bibliographical logic.

The later editors and scholars who have accepted Greg's foul-paper hypothesis for   have also had to accept his erasure of the possible agents of proliferation: the later scribes who may have prepared copies outside the direct line of transmission, and the actors who certainly performed *Othello* before the publication of   . This may seem a surprise to readers of E. A. J. Honigmann's book on the *Othello* texts, which spends much time reviewing the habits of scribes and compositors, but when it comes to the

'Narratives About Printed Shakespeare Texts: "Foul Papers" and "Bad" Quartos', *SQ*   (   ),   –   . See also Barbara Mowat, 'The Problem of Shakespeare's Text(s)', in *Textual Formations and Reformations*, ed. Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger (Newark, Del.,   ). For further scholarship on the handling of manuscripts in the theatres, see the essays by Werstine ('Plays in Manuscript'), Eric Rasmussen ('The Revision of Scripts') and Jeffrey Masten ('Playwrighting: Authorship and Collaboration') in Cox and Kastan, and William B. Long, 'Perspective of Provenance: the Context of Varying Speech-Heads', in *Shakespeare's Speech Headings*, ed. G. W. Williams (Newark, Del.,   ), pp.   –   . For a discussion of the economical transmission of text and its problems, see the 'Post-Script' in Gary Taylor and John Jowett, *Shakespeare Reshaped* (Oxford,   ), pp.   –   .

copy for   , Honigmann is interested only in the one scribe admitted by Greg, the probable copyist of the foul papers. Here is Honigmann bolstering the case for a foul-paper origin for   and disregarding the non-economical scribes who might have prepared copies for various situations: 'Was   printed from an authorial manuscript or from copy at one remove from the author, or was it printed from seriously flawed copy?' 'Copy at one remove from the author' is the first interesting phrase, for it tries to cover various kinds of transcripts that might have been prepared during the approximately twenty years that elapsed between the writing of the play and the entry of *Othello* in the Stationers' Register in   . Greg's 'someone who had seen the play performed and was preparing a copy for a private patron' would fit here. Why does Honigmann specify 'at one remove from the author'? As it turns out, he favours a transcript made as late as   (*Texts*, p.   ), but this is still thought of as at one remove from the author, i.e., a copy made from the foul papers. A transcript made for the third or fourth revival of *Othello* (which was a popular play and was performed at court in   , in London and Oxford in   and again at court in   –   , to count only the performances on record) might be three or four removes from the foul papers. A transcript made for a private patron who was himself interested in the third or fourth revival of the play might be a copy of a copy of a copy. The theatre generates text from time to time during the life of a successful play, and Honigmann's 'copy [made] at one remove from the author' does not allow for this fact of the theatrical profession. A play normally undergoes some theatrical revisions for revivals, owing to changes of casting or circumstances of production, and new 'books' would sometimes have been copied for the revivals. This possibility should be kept in view for *Othello*, as should the possible transcript made for a private patron, but Honigmann's 'at one remove from the author', like Greg's conversion of the private-patron script into the prompt-book script, has the effect of clearing away the proliferations and preserving the foul-paper/prompt-book dichotomy.

Copies made at more than one remove from the author are 'seriously flawed' in Honigmann's formulation – the second interesting phrase. This is where the actors become agents of proliferation. For 'seriously flawed' turns out to mean, one page further along, 'bad' quartos, i.e., texts proceeding in some irregular way – piracy, perhaps – from the memories of actors who had performed the play. Honigmann footnotes Alice Walker's argument at this point, but disposes of the 'bad'-quarto possibility for   on the grounds that it is unlike the 'bad' quartos we know of. The 'alternatives to a "bad" text provenance' are 'foul papers or a scribal copy of foul papers' (*Texts*, p.   ). Thus foul papers, perhaps at the one remove of a scribal copy, are locked into place as what we are left with if the 'bad quarto' possibility can be denied (and it can). The only thing left if one does not think   a 'bad' quarto is 'foul papers or a scribal copy of foul papers'. What of a theatrical copy made for a later revival? What of a copy of *that*, made for a private patron? They have dropped out of the argument. I shall try to demonstrate below that   *Othello* does indeed proceed from the acted version of the play, not by the way of a 'bad' quarto but by the way of

Honigmann, *Texts*, p.   .

a prompt book legitimately prepared once the actors have memorized their roles, but this possibility is occluded in the binary reasoning which sets 'bad' quartos against foul papers and prefers the foul to the bad at every turn.

Revision or abridgement?

The full range of Honigmann's argument needs to be stated if we are to understand the extent to which Greg's foul-paper hypothesis has now been carried. Having re-affirmed the view that   is based on a scribal transcript of Shakespeare's foul papers, Honigmann goes on to say (cautiously, in a thorough review of some evidence) that   is based on a scribal transcript of Shakespeare's *revision* of those foul papers. Thus the idea that a scribe made a copy of the foul papers is now expanded to the possibility of another hand being set to those foul papers, but not a hand 'at one remove', for this other hand is the hand of Shakespeare himself, Shakespeare in the act of revising his own foul papers after they had been transcribed in the version that eventuated in   , and before they had been transcribed in the version that eventuated in   . Thus Honigmann imagines not only foul papers in his hypothesis, but foul papers later worked over by the author. His hypothesis puts him within sight of the foul papers at two stages in their composition, stage one being Shakespeare's original conception of the play, reflected in   , stage two being Shakespeare's later revisions, reflected in   . These two versions are difficult to see, to be sure, not only because the foul papers do not exist in either state, but also because the scribes and compositors who intervened as these two versions of the foul papers made their separate ways into   and introduced errors and variant readings of their own. But if the printed texts can be purged of the scribal and compositorial interventions, Honigmann argues, then we can catch a glimpse of the foul papers as Shakespeare originally wrote them and as he later revised them. Thus Honigmann brings the foul-paper hypothesis into its fullest and most imaginative version, offering the hope of knowing Shakespeare's first conception of the play and something of his way of revising his own work.

Honigmann calls his argument 'pessimistic' (*Texts*, pp.   –), but this must be taken with a grain of salt. Having two views of the inferred manuscripts would occasion deep happiness among Shakespearian editors, who would thus have a theory for the practice they have always followed, of borrowing Shakespearian readings from one text when another lapses into obscurity or nonsense. What Honigmann means by his 'pessimism' is that the scribal and compositorial errors introduced in the copying and printing of the text amount to a large problem. Those errors stand between our reading of the printed texts and our inferences about the manuscripts the texts were printed from. Honigmann sets forth that problem clearly, then proceeds to solve it with vigour and confidence. This is not pessimism. It is the New Bib-liography working to catch sight of its desired objects, the imagined Shakespeare manuscripts.

Yet the revision theory must be studied closely, for it is a prominent belief among Shakespearians that other multiple-text plays like *King Lear* and *Hamlet* were revised from one form into another by the playwright himself. Honigmann was preceded in

the revision hypothesis by Neville Coghill's *Shakespeare's Professional Skills* of   ,
which used a pragmatic view of the theatre to argue that   *Othello* was the original
Shakespearian version and that   represents a deliberate enlargement of the play after
the   version had been tried out in the theatre. At the basis of Coghill's view is the
assumption that both   and   go back to two sets of Shakespeare's foul papers
(although Coghill also thought both sets had been copied into prompt books).
Honigmann favoured this argument at first, and sought to build on it in an essay of
      . He has now retreated from his support of the Coghill position, but (as may be
seen in the summary of his argument above) he retains the idea that   and   reflect
different states of Shakespeare's foul papers, and has found his own way of reasoning
that Shakespeare's revisions are apparent. Thus Honigmann and Coghill, each in his
own way, add revision to the foul-paper hypothesis: Shakespeare's revising hand can
be seen in the differences between   and   .

   In regard to the largest differences, however, the   lines present in   but not in   ,
it seems that the shorter text was cut down from the longer. The *distribution* of these
lines has not been noticed before. Here is a list of the   omissions by act. (I follow
Honigmann in counting only omissions of more than one line; the act references are
the conventional ones, from   ):

Act .   instances,   lines.
Act .   instances,   lines.
Act .   instances,   lines.
Act .   instances,   lines.
Act .   instances,   lines.

   Clearly Act   has the largest number of omitted lines, nearly   per cent of the total.
Acts   and   together have   per cent. Moreover, the Act   omissions centre on
Desdemona and Emilia, not only because the Willow Song is missing, but also because
other swatches of dialogue for these two boy-actors are omitted, including Emilia's
discourse on husbands' faults (lines in   .) and Desdemona's 'here I kneel' passage
before Iago (lines in   .). Forty-five of the omitted lines are from Desdemona's
part,   from Emilia's – again, about   per cent of the total. Coghill noticed Emilia's
larger role in   and thought Shakespeare was building up her character, but the
implication of his view would have to be that Shakespeare added lines to the later
scenes of a play that already ran upwards of   ,   lines. It seems more likely that the
play was cut towards the end because it was running too long. Perhaps the perform-
ance sagged because the boy-actors were not at their best here, or perhaps the per-
formance sagged in the later scenes even when the boys *were* at their best. *Othello* is a
long play.

      Neville Coghill, *Shakespeare's Professional Skills* (Cambridge,   ), pp.   –   . The recent trend
    toward Shakespeare revision-theory is summarized in Grace Ioppolo, *Revising Shakespeare* (Cambridge,
    Mass.,   ).
      The earlier essay is 'Shakespeare's Revised Plays: *King Lear* and *Othello*', *The Library*, sixth series (   ),
       –   . The change of view is in Honigmann, *Texts*, chapter   .

The distribution of the *Othello* lines agrees with those recently published by Eric
Rasmussen for *Hamlet* and for *King Lear*. In these cases it is the Folio text which is
shorter, in comparison with the   Quarto of *Hamlet* and the   Quarto of *Lear*.

Act	Lines cut	Act	Lines cut

The bulge in Act   is noticeable in all three cases. In all three, it is the latter half of the
play that is most sharply reduced. Shakespeare the reviser may have added the lines in
question, it can always be said, but why would he have lengthened the three plays
towards the end? The clearer hypothesis is that the later scenes were reduced for the
sake of production.

Moreover, an excellent analysis has been made on the   *Othello* lines by
Honigmann himself, who spots convincing signs of theatrical abridgement, although
he must later explain these in a different way in order to make foul papers the favoured
source of   . Desdemona's Willow Song from   .   . of   is not printed in   , but
does give the lines which introduce it:

> *Des.* My mother had a maid cald Barbary,
>   She was in loue, and he she lou'd, prou'd mad,
>   And did forsake her, she has a song of willow,
>   An old thing 'twas, but it exprest her fortune,
>   And she died singing it, that Song to night,
>   Will not goe from my mind – harke, who's that knocks?

As Honigmann notes, the writer would hardly have introduced the idea of the song
without the song itself in the first draft. It seems more likely that the song was fully
given in the first place, and was cut for the sake of the performance. The cutting was
carefully done, for Emilia's later quotation from the song is also missing in   .

Similarly, Desdemona's word 'usage' in   .   .   of   is a play on words which
appear only in   . ' 's final couplet,' Honigmann writes, 'being more precisely related
to the immediate context, suggests that 's version here preceded 's' (*Texts*, p.   ). In
another example,   leaves a loose end hanging at   .   . – when Brabantio refers
back to Roderigo's seventeen-line account of Desdemona's flight, included in   but
missing in   . It seems clear that theatrical cuts form the explanation for most of the
larger passages present in   but not in   . Coghill's version of Shakespearian revision
does not seem to work. The author did not expand the   version into the   version.
Someone reduced the   version into the   version, emphasizing cuts in the later acts,

'The Revision of Scripts', in Cox and Kastan, p.   .
Honigmann also makes it clear that no one explanation will serve all occasions. For example, he locates a
clear case of compositorial intervention at   .   .   , where a repeated speech-prefix shows that an error in
casting-off had to be corrected.