Conference or Workshop Item:
Mumming and guising plays are short verse folk dramas performed by ordinary people around pubs and houses at Christmas and certain other seasons throughout much of England, Scotland, parts of Ireland, and outposts in the Americas.

Script Extract

King George.
In comes I King George the man of courage bold
With my broad seas and sword I won ten crowns of gold
I fought the fiery dragon and I drove him to the slaughter
And by those means I won the King of Egypt’s daughter.
Headman.

Come in Turkey Knight.
Turkey Knight.
In comes I Turkey Knight,
From Turkey land to fight,
I’ll battle against you King George the man of courage bold
If th’ Lord be hot I’ll quickly make it cold.

King George.
Woe, woe, my little fellow, thou talkest very bold
Just like those young Turkey Knights I have been told
Miros Pies hot, minos pies cold
Send them up to London nine days old,
a battle a battle behold you and I
To see to see which on the ground first you or I.

(“King George and Turkey Knight do battle, King George gets wounded. Headman helps him, telling him to rise and fight again, when he ousts the Turkey Knight.”)

Headman.
Oh Doctor, doctor where be’s thee,
That Turkey Knight is wounded through the knee,
Through the knee, and through the heart,
The Turkey Knight is wounded in every part.
(Come in Doctor)

Doctor.
In comes I the jolly noble doctor
Who travelled far and near.
Headman.
Where didst thee travel then, Doctor?

Doctor.
Italy, I, Pitaly, France and Spain
Now I’m back to old England again.

Geographical Coverage of the Database

Applications

Scripts Explorer
- Searching for lines
- Investigating textual variants
- Plotting distribution maps

Typical Outcomes

"Trivial" variants are often shown to be significant
Some "ubiquitous" lines turn out to be localised
Cluster dates help assess the genealogy of scripts

Online Resources

- [http://www.folkplay.info/?texts.htm](http://www.folkplay.info/?texts.htm)
- The Folk Play Scripts Explorer [http://theses.wit.hse.ac.uk/13](http://theses.wit.hse.ac.uk/13)
- The main thesis conclusions

Research Difficulties

Too much information

Thousands of performance locations
Hundreds of scripts

“...the texts obviously contain vital clues— if only we could just learn how to read them!”

Tantalising textual similarities
Significant textual variation

Where to start?

Map of Best Text Availability

Some Variants of a Line

“...I am Saint George a man of courage bold”
“...I am Saint George the noble champion bold”
“...I am Saint George that worthy champion bold”
“...I am Saint George the champion bold”
“...Here comes Saint George, the noble champion bold”
“...I am Saint George that worthy champion bold”
“...Here comes I Saint George that worthy champion bold”
“...Here comes I Saint George that noble champion bold”
“...Here comes I Saint George a man of courage bold”
“...Here comes Saint George the noble champion bold”
“...Here comes Saint George the champion bold”
“...Here comes I Saint George that man of courage bold”
“...Here comes I Saint George with courage stout and bold”
“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...”

“...