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978-0-521-10298-8 - Cyrus Hoy: Introductions, Notes, and Commentaries to texts in 'The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker', Volume I

Edited by Fredson Bowers

Excerpt

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SIR THOMAS MORE

INTRODUCTION

Sir Thomas More is preserved as Harleian MS 7368 in the British Library, and in its present state it represents a heavily revised version of a play that seems to have run into objections from two quarters: from the members of the theatrical company for which it was written, and who apparently found it lacking in dramatic effectiveness; and from Sir Edmund Tilney, the Master of the Revels, who objected to it for political reasons. The manuscript contains six passages of additions intended to supplement or replace scenes in the original text, supplied presumably in an effort to make the deficient drama stageworthy. No effort at all seems to have been made to answer the objections of the censor; to have complied with his demands, as W. W. Greg has noted, would have been to eviscerate 'the play in a manner fatal to its success on the stage. The manuscript was consequently laid aside and the play never came on the boards.'¹

In addition to the written comments in Tilney's hand, the manuscript contains six other different hands: Hand *S* in which the original version of the play is written, and the five hands (designated *A*, *B*, *C*, *D*, *E*, according to the order in which they occur in the manuscript²) which are found in the six additions to the original play. Hand *S* has been identified as that of Anthony Munday,³ Hand *A* as that of Henry Chettle,⁴ Hand *B* may be that of Heywood

¹ From the introduction to Greg's Malone Society edition (1911) of *Sir Thomas More*, p. xv. Line numbers in the discussion of the text that follows refer to this edition.

² The designation of the Hands by letters of the alphabet was devised by Greg; see the introduction to his edition, pp. vii–viii.

³ W. W. Greg, 'Autograph Plays by Munday', *Modern Language Review*, 8 (1913), 89–90.

⁴ S. A. Tannenbaum, 'The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore', *A Bibliotic Study* (New York, 1927), pp. 53ff.

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but this identification is by no means regarded as certain,¹ Hand *C* is that of a theatrical scribe,² Hand *D* has been attributed to Shakespeare,³ Hand *E* has been identified as Dekker's.⁴ Opinions differ as to whether Munday wrote the original play by himself, or in collaboration with one or more other dramatists. Greg felt that the writer of Hand *B* was 'undoubtedly an original author'.⁵ E. H. C. Oliphant viewed the original play as the work of Munday together with Dekker and Hands *A* and *B*.⁶ J. M. Nosworthy attributed it to Munday, Chettle (Hand *A*) and Dekker.⁷ But most recent studies regard the original play as the work of Munday alone.⁸

¹ The suggestion that Hand *B* might be Heywood's was first made by Greg in *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of 'Sir Thomas More'*, ed. A. W. Pollard (Cambridge, 1923), p. 44, n. For a summary of subsequent views, see Harold Jenkins, 'A Supplement to Sir Walter Greg's Edition of *Sir Thomas More*', *Malone Society Collections*, 6 (1961), 181–182.

² First suggested by Greg in the introduction to his edition, pp. xvii–xviii, and subsequently confirmed by him when he found the same hand in two theatrical 'plots' (the plot of *The Seven Deadly Sins* at Dulwich College, and a fragmentary plot which may represent the lost play *Fortune's Tennis* in the British Library). See *Shakespeare's Hand in 'Sir Thomas More'*, p. 55.

³ A share in the additions had first been claimed for Shakespeare on internal evidence by Richard Simpson in 1871 (*Notes and Queries*, 4th series, 8 (1871), 1–3). Sir Edward Maunde Thompson pronounced Hand *D* to be Shakespeare's on paleographical evidence in *Shakespeare's Handwriting* (Oxford, 1916). For the subsequent controversy that has swirled around the identification, see Jenkins, 'Supplement', pp. 182–184.

⁴ Greg first suggested the identification in the introduction to his edition, pp. ix–x, where he found 'a strong resemblance' between Hand *E* and Dekker's acknowledged hand (p. ix). Later, he dropped all reservation; see *Shakespeare's Hand in 'Sir Thomas More'*, p. 53. The identification has never been challenged.

⁵ Introduction, p. xvii.

⁶ 'Sir Thomas More', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 18 (1919), 230.

⁷ 'Shakespeare and *Sir Thomas More*', *Review of English Studies*, new series 6 (1955), 13. Nosworthy considered it 'unthinkable that these two practising dramatists [Chettle and Dekker] were dragged in as an afterthought to contribute seventy lines and thirty lines respectively, especially as there is ample testimony that they often worked in harness with Munday'. But he gives no evidence of their work elsewhere in the play beyond the Additions previously ascribed to them. And he seems not to realize that Dekker was called in for more than thirty lines. He revised the whole of scene viii, to which the last thirty-one lines in his hand are a continuation.

⁸ E.g. I. A. Shapiro, 'Shakespeare and Munday', *Shakespeare Survey*, 14 (1961), p. 32; MacD. P. Jackson, 'Anthony Munday and *Sir Thomas More*', *Notes and Queries*, 10 (1963), 96. See also Karl P. Wentersdorff, 'The Date of the Additions in the *Booke of Sir Thomas More*', *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch* (Heidelberg), 101 (1965), 305–325; Scott McMillin, 'The Book of *Sir Thomas More*: A Theatrical Review', *Modern Philology*, 68 (1970), 10–24.

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Dekker certainly had nothing to do with it, his contribution to *Sir Thomas More* being confined to Addition IV.

The play has been variously dated from 1590 to 1605. The available evidence suggests a date of c. 1590–1593 for the composition of the original play, and c. 1594–1595 for the revision.¹

Addition IV of the *More* manuscript contains 242 lines and replaces scene viii of the original text. The first 211 lines are written by Hand C, that of the theatrical scribe. Lines 212–242 are in Hand E, which has been identified as Dekker's. The first 211 lines are Dekker's revision of the original scene viii, presumably the work of Munday; his work of revision has been transcribed by C. But following line 211, Dekker added 31 lines in his own hand which correspond to nothing in the original text and amount, not to revision, but to original composition.

In the original text, scene viii begins with More arranging for Randall, his servant, to impersonate him when Erasmus comes for a visit in the company of the Earl of Surrey. The entire scene is not preserved in the original version; it begins at lines 735 and breaks off at line 796; when the original text resumes, the joke on Erasmus has been played out, and we are in the midst of the Faulkner scene. The sheriff has brought Faulkner before More, who comments on his 'Ruffinlike disguise' (line 797); Faulkner tells of his vow not to have his hair cut for three years; More commits him to Newgate until the expiration of the period of his vow; Faulkner is taken away and More has a brief exchange with Surrey (who is still on stage). Now Morris, the master of Faulkner, appears, and announces that Faulkner has seen fit to cut his hair; he is brought in; More compliments him on his appearance and leaves the scene; Faulkner confesses to his master that he has 'bin much misgouvernde,/and led by ydle spleenes' (lines 866–867) but has learned the error of his ways, and the scene ends at line 876.

In Addition IV, the revised scene opens as in the original, with More and his man making ready for the jest on Erasmus; but before Erasmus and Surrey appear, the sheriff brings in Faulkner, and More dispatches him to Newgate. Then Surrey, Erasmus and attendants arrive, and their scene is played with the disguised

¹ Jenkins, 'Supplement', p. 189.

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servant, whose disguise is soon penetrated, and More appears to welcome his guests. As he is about to depart with them, Morris appears to announce that his man Faulkner 'has submitted him self to the mercy of a Barber' (Addition IV, lines 186–187) and is waiting outside 'to make a new vow befor your Lordshipp. heerafter to live Civell' (lines 187–188). Faulkner is brought in, and More, approving of his new appearance, orders him to be set free. More leaves the stage with a proverb (new to this version of the scene) which Dekker will allude to in *Satiromastix* (IV.iii.56):

thy head is for thy shoulders now more fitt
thou hast less haire vppon it but more witt

(*Sir Thomas More*, Addition IV, lines 203–204).

Alone with his master, Faulkner in the revision is anything but repentant. 'Did not I tell thee allwaies of thes Locks', Master Morris chides; and Faulkner replies:

And the locks were on againe all the goldsmiths in cheapside should not pick them open. shart. if my haire stand not an end when I looke for my face in a glass. I am a polecatt. heers. a lowsie Iest. but if I notch not that rogue tom barbar that makes me looke thus like a Brownist. hange me. Ile be worss to the nitticall knave. then ten tooth drawings heers a head wth a pox

(Addition IV, lines 206–211).

Here the revised scene once ended, but Addition IV which to this point has been written in Hand C¹ (the Scribe's), continues for thirty-one more lines in Hand E (Dekker's), and it is at this point that the passage reprinted in Professor Bowers' edition begins.

Dekker revised the original scene viii as a whole, and made it more dramatically effective by breaking the Faulkner episode into two parts, with the Erasmus scene at the centre. Where it is possible to compare the revision with the original, one finds a number of changes of word and phrase, none of great consequence. Dekker's presence in Addition IV can be genuinely felt only in the last fifty lines (the last twenty lines transcribed by C, and the thirty-one lines that follow in his own hand), where after the exit of More, he remodels the character of the shorn Faulkner, making him come to life in his truculence in a way that the original entirely misses.

* But Dekker added the words 'I am *ipse*' (unnoticed by Greg) to line 193. See Tannenbaum, '*Sir Thomas More*', p. 93.

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The source of the Faulkner episode is Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, where it is told not of More but of Sir Thomas Cromwell. In his 'story of the Lord Cromwell', Foxe relates how a serving man

who thinking to disceuer himselfe from the common vsage of all other men in strange newfanglenes of fashions by himselfe (as many there be whom nothing doth please, which is dailie seene and receiued) vsed to go with his haire hangyng about his eares downe vnto his shoulders, after a strange monstrous manner, counterfeiting belyke the wyld Irish men. . .

As this Ruffin ruffling thus with his locks was walkyng in the streetes, as chance was, who should meet him but the Lord Cromwell, who beholding the deforme and vnseemly manner of his disguised goyng, full of much vanitie and hurtfull example, called the man to question with him whose seruant he was, which being declared, then was demanded, whether his maister or any of his felows vsed so to go with such haire about their shoulders as he did, or no? which when he denied, and was not able to yeld any reason for refuge of that his monstrous disguising, at length he fell to this excuse that he had made a vow. To this the Lord Cromwell answered agayne, that for so much as he had made himself a votarie, he would not force him to breake his vowe, but vntill his vow should be expired, he should lye the meane tyme in prison, and so sente him immediately to the Marshalsey: where he endured, till at length this *intonsus Cato* beyng perswaded by hys maister to cut his haire, by sute and petition of freends, hee was brought agayne to the Lord Cromwell with his hed polled according to the accustomed sort of his other fellowes, and so was dismissed (*Actes and Monuments* (1583), II, 1188).

The name of Faulkner's master, Mr Morris, who appears at line 834 in the original scene, is the same as the name of Cromwell's secretary (Rafe Morice) who provided Foxe with the anecdote. The author of the original scene could have found him named in a marginal note on p. 1185 of the 1583 edition of the *Actes and Monuments*. Morris is one of the two speakers in the thirty-one-line passage that constitutes Dekker's autograph addition to the play. How the author of the original scene came to introduce an episode from the life of Cromwell into a play dealing with the life of More is a mystery.

As has already been noted, it is generally assumed that *Sir Thomas More* was never acted.¹ 'What seems to [have been] its first professional performance', as the critic in the *London Times* of

¹ For a critique of the opposite view of W. J. Lawrence, see Jenkins, 'Supplement', pp. 189–190.

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11 June 1964 (p. 17) noted with appropriate caution, came on 10 June of that year at the Nottingham Playhouse. The producer was Frank Dunlop, and Ian McKellen acted the role of More in what the *Times* critic described as 'a beautifully modulated performance' that kept 'the jocularity within the bounds of character'.

COMMENTARY

- 3 *my Crowne is taken from mee*. Cf. *Sat.*, IV.i.69–73.
- 4 *Scowrd More ditch*. *G.H.*, B4–B4v: 'to purge it wil be a sorer labour then the clensing of *Augeaes* stable, or the scowring of Moore-ditch'.
- 5 *sheepe sharing*. *G.H.*, D1, 'in scorne of periwigs and sheep-shearing'.
- 8 *poll head*. *M.G.*, p. 115: 'this middle of *Powles* lookes strange and bare, like a long-hayrde Gentleman new powlde, washt and shaud'. *G.H.*, D1: 'this polling and shauing world'.
- 8 *make a Sarcen*, i.e. an inn sign displaying a grotesque head, like the one that advertised the Saracen's Head at Newgate. Cf. *S.H.*, V.i.14, n. and *Sat.*, I.ii.301, n.
- 18 *shavets*. The word does not occur in the *O.E.D.*, and Dyce's emendation 'shavers' (in his edition of the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript (London, 1844)) is certainly right. 'Shavers' is common, often with the meaning 'swindlers'; see *W.H.*, III.ii.32, n. The passage from *M.G.*, p. 115, quoted in the note on 'poll head' (line 8), continues: 'and I may fitly say shauded, for there was neuer a lusty Shauer walking here this halfe yeare'.
- 20 *Cutt*. 'A familiar name for an animal, generally a horse, properly one with a short or cut tail. Hence, a term of reproach' (Halliwell).
- 21 *march with bag & baggage*. *W.Y.*, p. 35: 'let vs therefore with bag & baggage march away from this dangerous sore Citie'. *S.D.S.*, B3v; *W.A.*, C4. *N.H.*, I.ii.72–73.
- 23 *poacht*, stamped down, trampled. 'Land is said to be *poached* when it is trodden with holes by heavy cattle' (Halliwell).
- 27 *tournd off*. . . *ladder*. *W.E.*, IV.ii.2.
- 29 *Spin*. . . *fyne thred*. Tilley, T252.

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INTRODUCTION

DEKKER's source for *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, the first part of Thomas Deloney's *The Gentle Craft*, was entered in the Stationers' Register on 19 October 1597: 'Raphe Blore. Entred for his copie vnder thandes of master *Dix* and master Man a booke called the *gentle crafte* intreatinge of Shoemakers. vjd.' As Deloney's editor, F. O. Mann, remarks: 'This entry certainly applies to the first part, which would not be distinguished as such until after the publication of the second.'¹ The book is specified as *The fyrste parte of the gentill Crafte* in the transfer to Thomas Pavyer on 14 August 1600, by which time, presumably, Part Two had appeared. The earliest extant edition of Part One is that of 1648; of Part Two, that of 1639. Dekker's debt to Deloney in *The Shoemakers' Holiday* is confined to Part One.

The first part of *The Gentle Craft* consists of three main stories: (1) St Winifred and St Hugh, (2) Crispin and Crispianus, (3) Sir Simon Eyre. The first (chapters 1–4) recounts the love of the young Sir Hugh for the fair virgin Winifred, who rejects his suit in favor of a life of Christian solitude. He goes into melancholy exile, passes through sundry adventures in Venice and elsewhere, and returns to his native Britain, the pangs of unrequited love still heavy upon him. He lands at Harwick, 'where for want of money he greatly lamented. And made much moan. But meeting with a merry Iourneyman-shoomaker dwelling in that town, and after some conference had together, they both agreed to trauell in the Countrey' (pp. 81–82). Meanwhile, Winifred has been imprisoned for her religious faith, a victim of the persecution of the Christians 'in the dayes of Diocletian. . . During which time, Sir *Hugh* wrought in a shoemakers shop, hauing learned that trade, through the

¹ *Deloney*, p. 521. Parenthetical page references in the text are to Mann's edition.

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courteous directions of a kind Iourneyman, where he remained the space of one whole yeere, in which time he had gotten himselfe good apparell, and euerything comely and decent' (p. 82). But he has not forgotten Winifred. At length he returns to her, that 'he might sollicite his suit anew again', but learning of her imprisonment, 'he so highly commended her faith and constancy, that at length he was clapt vp in prison by her, and in the end he was condemned to receiue equall torment, for a triall of his own truth' (p. 83). The shoemakers remain constant to the end. 'But during the time that they lay both in prison, the Iourneymen Shoemakers neuer left him, but yeilded him great reliefe continually, so that he wanted nothing that was necessarie for him, in requital of which kindnesse he called them Gentlemen of the *Gentle Craft*' (p. 83). The Lady Winifred and Sir Hugh, now united in a higher love, are executed, she by bleeding, he by drinking her blood which has been mixed with poison. With his dying breath, he pledges 'the kind Yeoman of the *Gentle Craft*':

I drink to you all (quoth he) but I cannot spare you one drop to pledge me. Had I any good thing to giue, you should soon receiue it: but my selfe the Tyrant doth take, and my flesh is bequeathed to the fowls, so that nothing is left but onely my bones to pleasure you withall; and those, if they will do you any good, take them: and so I humbly take my leaue, bidding you all farewell.

There with the last draught, he finished his life, whose dead carkasse after hanged vp where the fowls deuoured his flesh; and the young Princesse was contemptuously buried by the Well where she had so long liued. Then had he the title of St *Hugh* giuen him, and she of Saint *Winifred*, by which termes they are both so called to this day (p. 87).

Later, 'a company of Iourneymen Shoemakers passed along by the place where Saint *Hughs* dead body was hanging, and finding the flesh pickt cleane off from the bones' (p. 87), they remember their legacy and return by night to claim their own. They resolve to make 'diuers' of their tools from the bones of the saint, the better to profit from any virtue which the relics might possess (and also to avoid the suspicion of the tyrant who has ordered St Hugh's execution); and in consequence the tools of shoemakers 'euer since were called Saint *Hughes* bones' (p. 89).

In the story of Crispine and Crispianus (chapters 5–9), Britain

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is still oppressed by Roman tyranny. The Emperor Maximinus is seeking to destroy all the noble youth in the land, and 'the vertuous Queen of *Logria* (which now is called *Kent*) – dwelling in the city *Durouernum*, alias *Canterbury*', sends her young sons from her in disguise to 'seek some poore seruice' that will preserve them from mischance against the time when they are restored to 'dignitie and honour' (p. 90). At Feversham, the young princes hear 'certain shoemakers singing. . . as they sat at their businesse' in the early morning (p. 90); they are attracted by the merry sound, present themselves at the shoemaker's door, and declare themselves to be 'two poore boyes that want seruice', having been 'stript' from their friends by the fury of the wars (p. 92). They are received with favor by the shoemaker and his wife; they are bound apprentice for seven years to the shoemaker's service; and they take upon themselves the names of Crispianus and Crispine. Maximinus' officers make search for them, and they see their mother the Queen led to prison, but the secret of their identity is preserved. Four or five years pass while they serve their master, who grows wealthy as they grow 'cunning in their trade'; his house gains the reputation for breeding the best workmen in the country, with the result that their master is preferred to be the Emperor's shoemaker. Business brings Crispine to court, where he wins the love of the Emperor's daughter, Ursula. They are secretly married by an obliging – and conveniently blind – friar. Meanwhile, Crispianus has been 'prest to wars into the Countrey of *Gaul*, now called *France*' (p. 99), whither an army of Britons is sent to aid the Gauls against the invading power of '*Iphicratis* the Persian generall' (p. 100). In a vaunting speech before the battle, the general of the Gauls derides Iphicratis' low birth, the Persian general being the son of a shoemaker. To which Iphicratis replies: 'Indeed, my fathers trade is a reproach vnto me, but thou art a reproach to thy father: but thou shalt vnderstand that a Shoemakers son is a Prince born, his fortune made him so, and thou shalt find no lesse' (p. 100). The truth of this assertion is finely confirmed in the event, for it is Crispianus who distinguishes himself beyond all others in battle, and who rescues the French prince when the latter is being carried off prisoner by Iphicratis. So moved is Iphicratis to learn that his

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heroic young adversary is a shoemaker by trade that he agrees to end the wars, and forever after to be a friend to the Gauls. The French King, writing his thanks to Maximinus for the Britons' help, recommends Crispianus to the Emperor's favor. Back in England, Crispianus visits his former master, only to discover that the Emperor's daughter, who has taken refuge in the shoemaker's house during her confinement, has borne a child to his brother. 'But after that he had in Princely manner saluted the new deliuered Lady, taking the infant in his arms, he kissed it, saying; Now I will say and swear (said he) that a Shoemakers Son is a Prince born, ioyning in the opinion of *Iphycratis*, and henceforth Shoemakers shall neuer let their terme die' (p. 106).

Crispianus then proceeds to court, delivers the French King's letter attesting to the honorable deeds he has so recently performed, is received with great favor, and – making known his true identity – secures the liberty of his mother, 'late Queen of *Logria*'. The Emperor would further reward him with the hand of his daughter, but she is not to be found. When eventually Ursula returns to court, accompanied by Crispine (still in his shoemaker's attire), her father promptly bids Crispianus take her to wife, but the daughter demurs:

Not so, dear Father (quoth she) this man hath best deserued my loue, that hath preserued my life, and his wife will I be.

Why *Vrsula* (said her Father) wilt thou darken the sun-shine of my ioy, with the clouds of foule obstinacy, and yoke thy selfe so vnequally? This man is a Prince.

And this mans son is another (quoth she).

That is strange (said the Emperour); can that child be a Prince, whose father is but a Shoemaker?

Then answered *Vrsula*, My Royall Father, a Shoemakers son is a Prince born:

Most gracious Lord (quoth *Crispianus*) the very like sentence did I hear the renowned *Iphicrates* pronounce to the King of Gauls, when he vpbraided him with his birth (p. 107).

The child is then presented, its parentage is made known, Crispine is revealed as the brother of Crispianus, and his secret marriage to Ursula 'confirmed openly, with great ioy and triumph':

at which time the Shoemakers in the same town made Holiday: to whom *Crispine* and *Crispianus* sent most Princely gifts for to maintain their merri-