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Volume II

Edited by Fredson Bowers

Excerpt

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THE MAID'S TRAGEDY

edited by

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TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION

The exact date of the composition of *The Maid's Tragedy* (Greg, *Bibliography*, no. 357) is uncertain, but the play was probably in existence by 31 October 1611 when Sir George Buc, Master of the Revels, wrote on another dramatic manuscript: 'This Second Maiden's Tragedy (for it hath no name inscribed) may, with the reformations, be publickly acted.' Buc's terminology suggests that he had recently licensed *The Maid's Tragedy* itself.¹ The first specific mention of the play, however, occurs in a record of the payment made to John Heminge on 20 May 1613 for the presentation at court of 'fowerteene severall playes', among them *The Maid's Tragedy*.² On these two pieces of evidence it is usually held that the play was written about 1610. Fletcher seems to have contributed only four of the eleven scenes: II.ii, IV.i, and V.i and ii.³

The copy was entered, under the hands of Buc and the wardens of the Stationers' Company, to Richard Higgenbotham and Francis Constable on 28 April 1619; and Q1, with separate press-variant imprints for Higgenbotham and Constable, was printed in the same year by Nicholas Okes and another unidentified printer.⁴ A second edition, for Constable alone, was printed by Purslowe in 1622.⁵ On 27 October 1629 the copy was transferred to Richard Hawkins, who brought out Q3, printed by Augustine Mathewes, in 1630. Although there is no record of the transfer of the copy to him, Henry Shepherd, possibly acting on behalf of Hawkins's widow, published Q4 in 1638; the printer of this edition appears from his initials in the

¹ E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (1923), III, 224.

² *Ibid.* IV, 180.

³ Cyrus Hoy, 'The Shares of Fletcher and His Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon', *Studies in Bibliography*, XI (1958), 94.

⁴ No printer's name appears on the title-page. That the first section of the book (sheets B–G) was printed by Okes is shown by the appearance on B1 of an ornament known to have been in his stock and the continuity of running-titles from sheet B through sheet G (see W. W. Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, II [1951], 499–500).

⁵ Greg, II, 500. The identification of the printer again depends on an ornament.

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imprint to have been Edward Griffin, Jnr.¹ Ursula, the widow of Richard Hawkins, assigned the copy to Robert Mead and Christopher Meredith on 29 May 1638, and they, in turn, assigned it to William Leake on 25 January 1639. Leake published Q 5, printed by Elizabeth Purslowe, in 1641 and Q 6, printer unknown, probably in 1660.² Q 7 appeared with the suspiciously plain imprint 'LONDON, || Printed in the Year 1661'; it is perhaps one of Kirkman's fraudulent reprints. The play was included in the Beaumont and Fletcher Second Folio of 1679, and Q 8, the last edition before 1700, was printed in an unknown shop for Richard Bentley and S. Magnes in 1686. The early editions are lineally related to each other except for F 2 and Q 8, both of which descend independently from Q 6.

Questions of textual authority are confined to the first three editions, the rest being completely derivative. Q 3, a line-for-line reprint of Q 2, is also largely derivative, but it introduces about seventy substantive variations into the text, two of which must have been editorial and about twenty of which may have been editorial. Among the twenty possible editorial variants are additions and cancellations of one or more words which do not affect meaning greatly but which tend to regularize metre, other synonymous or near-synonymous substitutions of little importance, and a half-dozen reversions to the readings of Q 1. Occasionally, as in I.i.135 and IV.ii.190, quite obvious sophistications of the Q 2 text are found. In the first of these instances, Q 1 and Q 2 read

Amintor. She had my promise. . .

but Q 3 reads

Evadne. She had my promise. . .

As Evadne is not present in this scene and as her name appears earlier only twice in the text and not at all as a speech-prefix, it is highly improbable that the Q 3 error could have arisen through the compositor's memorial failure. Instead, it seems likely that an

¹ *Ibid.* II, 501.

² There were two issues of this edition: one bears on I 4^v an advertisement of books which were known to have been first printed in 1659 and 1660. Greg therefore argues that the edition was printed in 1660, although the title-page of both issues is dated 1650 (*ibid.* II, 502).

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editorial alteration of the ‘She’ of Amintor’s speech to ‘Evadne’ (incorrectly, as Aspatia is being referred to) was indicated, which the compositor, misconstruing, set as a speech-prefix. The second instance had its origin in Q 1, where the speech-prefix *Mel.* was set for IV.ii.190, the last line on I2, and again, incorrectly, for IV.ii. 191, the first line on I2^v. The superfluous second prefix was retained by Q 2, which printed on H 4^v:

Mel. Marke his disordered words, and at the Maske

Mel. *Diagoras* knowes he rag’d. . .

Attempting to correct this mistake, Q 3 wrongly altered the first of these prefixes to *Kin.*, the King being one of the speakers in the scene.

The hand of a reviser is even more clearly seen at III.ii.144–5 and V.iii.269. In the first of these passages, the Q 1–Q 2 reading ‘goe as high | As troubled waters’ is altered to ‘swell. . . | As the wilde surges’. In the second the Q 1–Q 2 reading ‘My last is said’ becomes in Q 3 ‘My senses fade’. Any case for the authority of the Q 3 alterations would have to rest heavily on these two changes in the text, but one is reluctant to think that if the exemplum of Q 2 which was to serve as Q 3 copy had been compared with an authoritative manuscript there would not have been more completely new readings introduced. It seems most likely that these and many of the other changes in Q 3 were made by an editor after consultation of Q 1 but chiefly after his own taste, and the fact that the Stationer’s Censure prefixed to Q 3 is in the form of a poem suggests that the composer, apparently Hawkins, might have felt qualified occasionally to improve on Beaumont and Fletcher’s lines:

The Stationers Censure.

Good Wine requires no Bush, they say,

And I, No Prologue such a Play:

The Makers therefore did forbear

To have that Grace prefixed here.

But cease here (Censure) lest the Buyer

Hold thee in this a vaine Supplier.

My Office is to set it forth

Where Fame applauds it’s reall worth.

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Except as a very occasional source of necessary and reasonable emendations when both Q₁ and Q₂ are corrupt, Q₃—like the later editions—can be ignored.¹

Because Q₁ and Q₂ are the basic documents for the establishment of the text, they warrant careful attention. Q₁ collates A² B–L⁴. Of it Greg noted, ‘The text was printed in two sections, B–G and H–L, in slightly different types: in the first the speakers’ names [the speech-prefixes] are set in small-caps, in the second in italic, but they are not indented in either. This might suggest that the copy was divided between two compositors, and that there had been an earlier edition. It is, however, more likely that composition was interrupted, and that on resumption the original type was not available, or possibly that the work was completed at another press.’² Several of these points may be clarified. First, there is no evidence of an earlier edition aside from the division of the copy for Q₁, and it has been shown many times since Greg wrote that copy could be readily divided between two or more compositors setting from manuscript. Secondly, there can be no doubt that, as Greg said, the book was printed in two parts. In addition to the differences he observed in type and typography, there is variation in the speech-prefix abbreviations, the tag for Calianax being CAL. in the first section and predominantly *Call.* in the last and that for Aspatia being invariably ASP. in the first and *Aspat.* in the last; and there is a clear difference in the running-titles between the two sections, two skeletons being employed in each. Third, gathering A (A₁–1^v blank, A₂ title page, A₂^v the list of speakers) is linked to the last section of the book rather than the first by the spelling ‘Callianax’ on A₂^v, the form usually adopted in sheets H–L but never adopted in sheets B–G. Sheets B–G can be ascribed to Okes by means of an ornament on B₁, but sheets H–L and A seem to have been printed in another shop.³

¹ The 1618 edition of *The Shoemaker's Holiday* provides an analogous case of heavy printing-house editing. See Fredson Bowers (ed.), *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, I (1953), 11.

² *Op. cit.* II, 499–500.

³ I previously believed that these sheets too were printed by Okes for reasons given in my ‘Printing of Beaumont and Fletcher’s *The Maid's Tragedy* Q₁ (1619)’, *Studies in Bibliography*, XIII (1960), 216–17. Of the items of evidence presented there,

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Okes's part of Q 1 was composed by formes in the order

B(o)–B(i)–C(i)–C(o)–D(o)–D(i)–
E(i)–E(o)–F(o)–F(i)–G(o)–G(i).

Typographical and spelling evidence indicates that Compositor *A* set sheets B–F (I.i.1–III.ii.170) and page G 3 (III.ii.304–IV.i.1) from one case; in G some variation of spelling and the fact that the outer rather than the inner forme was first composed suggests that Compositor *B* may have set G 1–2^v and G 3^v–4^v (III.ii.171–III.ii.303 and IV.i.2–IV.i.107).¹ There seem to have been some difficulties over the printing. One of these, a purely mechanical matter, arose from Okes's selection of the particular italic fount which supplied the running-titles, a fount which appears to have had enough lower-case letters to set eight running-titles (*The Maydes Tragedy*, on both recto and verso) but only five *M*'s and ten *T*'s. The compositor was therefore obliged to shift capitals from the running-titles of each forme returned by the press to the running-titles already imposed in the skeleton of the next subsequent forme. This procedure would have caused a press delay, although perhaps only a brief one, between the machining of each forme.² More important are indications that the compositor purposely delayed the distribution of wrought-off type. Ideally, when B(o) was returned from the press, B(i) should have been ready to print, after the necessary capitals were set into the running-titles and the type-pages locked into the chase. Thus while the press was at work on B(i), the compositor should have been able to distribute type from B(o) in order to set C(i), the

only one seemed conclusive—that the roman letter of sheets H–L of *The Maid's Tragedy* Q 1 is identical with that used in Okes's edition of Daniel's *Whole Works* (STC 6238). I am now convinced that the founts from which the two books were composed are not identical, nor have I encountered the H–L type in Okes's other books with which I am familiar. It is an ordinary roman the capitals of which have been augmented with letters from a fount of a somewhat larger size and heavier appearance. Type answering this description and of approximately the same size was used by George Purslowe for *The Maid's Tragedy* Q 2, but I have been unable to make positive identification of any broken letters appearing both in Q 2 and in sheets H–L of Q 1. A sampling of books printed about 1619 by E. Griffin, J. Legate, and B. Alsop, with whom both Higgenbotham and Constable did other business between 1617 and 1621, has failed to locate the unidentified fount.

¹ See 'The Printing of . . . *The Maid's Tragedy* Q 1 (1619)', pp. 203–14.

² See 'Reappearing Types as Bibliographical Evidence', *Studies in Bibliography*, xix (1966), 206–8.

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next forme, from a full case, and one should be able to find recognizable types from B(o) throughout C(i). As the following chart shows, B(o) was distributed just when it should have been, but every one of the subsequent formes later than it might have been, except F(i), which was distributed on time only because F(o) was not distributed at all:¹

<i>RT's show</i>					B(o) off				B(i) off				C(i) off			
					press				press				press			
<i>Forme</i>		B(o)			B(i)				C(i)				C(o)			
<i>Set</i>	1	2 ^v	3	4 ^v	1 ^v	2	3 ^v	4	1 ^v	2	3 ^v	4	1	2 ^v	3	4 ^v
<i>Distributed</i>				?				B(o)								B(i)
<i>RT's show</i>					C(o) off			D(o) off			D(i) off			E(i) off		
					press			press			press			press		
<i>Forme</i>					D(o)			D(i)			E(i)			E(o)		
<i>Set</i>	1	2 ^v	3	4 ^v	1 ^v	2	3 ^v	4	1 ^v	2	3 ^v	4	1	2 ^v	3	4 ^v
<i>Distributed</i>					C(i)	C 2 ^v ,3		C 1,4 ^v	D(o)					D(i)		
<i>RT's show</i>					E(o) off			F(o) off			F(i) off			G(o) off		
					press			press			press			press		
<i>Forme</i>					F(o)			F(i)			G(o)			G(i)		
<i>Set</i>	1	2 ^v	3	4 ^v	1 ^v	2	3 ^v	4	1	2 ^v	3	4 ^v	1 ^v	2	3 ^v	4
<i>Distributed</i>					E(i)			E(o)			F(i)					

Furthermore, the unusual alternation in composing the first formes of succeeding sheets (that is, outer and inner, then inner and outer, and so on) suggests that the workman, within the limitations of composition by formes, set adjoining pages consecutively whenever he could. He would thus have created, presumably in order to compensate for errors in casting off, slightly more favourable conditions for adjusting text to space than if he had regularly set either the inner or the outer forme first.

In sheets H–L there are a few indications—for example, a suspicious amount of white space on K 2^v—that two compositors were at work, but the evidence generally points to one compositor

¹ These conclusions are based upon a study of type reappearances which goes beyond that reported in 'The Printing... of *The Maid's Tragedy* Q1 (1619)', pp. 203–14.

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Q2. Many of these omissions are scattered throughout the text, but some are concentrated, notably the following:

I.ii.140–49. Ten lines of Cinthia's speech promising the masque audience 'a contented houre' and asserting her rivalry with Phoebus. Night's speech follows without a serious logical hiatus.

I.ii.234.1–248. A measure, a song, and two short speeches of Neptune and one of Cinthia introducing the song. The omitted Third Song is not substantially different in theme or manner from the Second Song, which Q1 includes. The action of Q1 follows without difficulty.

II.i.67–89. Two songs by Aspatia and Dula, with several closely related short speeches. The Q1 action proceeds logically in spite of the omission.

II.ii.7–10. Three and a half lines spoken by Aspatia about fidelity in love. This omission is probably related to the longer one a few lines below. Line 7 is metrically incomplete in Q1, but the progression of thought is adequate.

II.ii.15–27. The last three words in l. 15, the subsequent eleven lines, and the first four words of l. 27, in which Aspatia warns her gentlewomen against man's inconstancy. In Q1 the fragments of ll. 15 and 27 are run together to make a single hypermetrical line, but the thought follows satisfactorily.

III.i.203–6. One speech each by the King, Evadne, and Amintor. No damage is done to metre or to sense.

IV.i.81–6. Six lines of Melantius' attack on Evadne's unchastity. The entire speech is printed incorrectly as prose in both Q1 and Q2. The sense is not greatly affected by the Q1 omission.

There are, in addition, two variations affecting the assignment of speeches that deserve mention here. At I.i.139.1 Q1 omits the entrance of the Messenger and gives his speech (l. 140) to Amintor. In II.i the First Lady has a slightly greater part in Q1 than in Q2: in Q1 she speaks the part of l. 14 which Q2 assigns to Dula and the part of l. 125 which Q2 assigns to *Omnes*. In both texts, however, she has three other speeches, l. 111 and parts of ll. 109 and 110.

Some of these differences between Q1 and Q2 may result from errors of transmission, but on the whole they look as though they lie beyond such a cause. Certain of the passages omitted from Q1 seem to have been part of the original composition: the damage to metre done by the omissions at II.ii.7 and II.ii.15 suggests that the excluded matter was once part of the text, and (the songs in I.ii and

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II.i perhaps excepted) the differences seem too insignificant to be accounted for as augmentations of an early version. On the other hand, they are neither offensive enough to have been removed by censorship nor sufficiently thorough or far-reaching to be the sum of material cut for a theatrical abridgement of the full text. Yet it is striking that none of the passages removed leaves a serious break in the logic of the action, and the inference from this fact must be that the text was deliberately and thoughtfully cut, one can only suppose with performance in view. Thus it would seem that the Q1 text is based on one that had been partially abridged and otherwise altered; if so, it is likely that at one point in its history some of the material now included was marked for omission. Of particular interest in this respect is I.ii.180–1, where Q1 reads, awkwardly, ‘Bid them draw neere to have thy watrie race | Led on in couples . . .’ and Q2, ‘These are our musicke: next thy watrie race | Bring on . . .’, the reference in both texts evidently being to the ‘vernall blasts and gentle winds’ of l. 177. Possibly the Q1 reading was cobbled up to replace the Q2, but a change in the text represented by Q2 would have been necessary only if the songs that follow had been excised. In Q1, however, two of the three songs appear. It may be, too, that the word ‘safer’ at IV.i.72 appears anomalously in Q1 as ‘*Safer*’ because it was added in the Italian hand to a passage basically in secretary script.

Cutting suggests theatrical provenience; however, there are few features of Q1 that connect it with the theatre and some features that point away from such a connection. Among the former one may count the specification of a noise (*Knock within*, I.ii.21), the occasional making explicit of business (e.g. [*Exeunt*]. . . *other dore*, I.ii.33; *Enter Eolus out of a Rock*, I.ii.185.1; *Ties his armes to the bed*, V.i.35); and the precise designation of instruments to produce musical sounds (*Hoboyes*, I.ii.98; *Recorders*, I.ii.109; *Hoboies*, IV.ii.0.1). Yet Q1 is not very thorough in the indication of *withins* and *asides*, and it omits about twenty other stage-directions that are necessary to the action. It contains three indefinite directions (*Enter Aspatia passing with attendance*, I.i.58; *Musique*, I.ii.206; . . . *Guard*, V.ii.11.1), and one that is mistaken (*a Lady for Ladies*, IV.1.0.1). Although the naming of specific musical instruments