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Volume III

Edited by Fredson Bowers

Excerpt

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THE QUEEN OF CORINTH

edited by

ROBERT KEAN TURNER

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TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION

Fletcher, Field, and Massinger wrote *The Queen of Corinth* (Greg, *Bibliography*, no. 663) in 1616 or 1617, Massinger contributing Acts I and V, Fletcher Act II and Field Acts III and IV.¹ Thus all three playwrights participated in the play's three interwoven plots – Theanor's ravishing of Merione and his reformation; the Beliza, Euphanes and Queen of Corinth triangle and its resolution; and the parodic misadventures of the foolish travellers – Fletcher, as one would expect, writing the emotionally charged scenes immediately following the rape as well as one involving the wise and the foolish travellers. As for the date, the Second Folio's cast-list, presumably that of the premiere, names Richard Burbage, who died in March 1618/19, and Field, who joined the King's Men probably in 1616 and here was performing in his own work. The play itself mentions 'the *Ulisseean* Travellor that sent home his Image riding upon Elephants to the great *Magoll*' (III.i.124–5), an allusion to *Thomas Coriate Traveller for the English Wits: Greeting. From the Court of the Great Mogul*, published in 1616. In this pamphlet Coryate is not only depicted atop a marvellous elephant (the woodcut is, in fact, three times repeated) but in his address to the reader compares himself to Ulysses. Moreover, his

For who can purchase wisdom? Ten yeares? No.
Before I get it, I will go, and go

is in the vein of Onos' Tutor, who recommends 'but a journey of some thirty yeares' to assuage the dishonour of a baffling (V.iii.20–2). Professor Bentley is probably right that the reference to the Ulyssean traveller, which is continued in the present tense, 'would not be apt after his [Coryate's] death, which occurred in India in December 1617, or at least after news of it reached England', but when that news arrived is uncertain. *M^r Thomas Coriat . . . From Agra the Capitall City of the Great Mogoll*, entered on 2 October 1617 and dated on its titlepage 1618, refers to Coryate as though he lived, and the circumstances of the traveller's demise seem first to have been reported by Edward Terry, who returned to England from East India in

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September 1619.² Yet Professor Bentley's 1616–17 for the play's date is still a reasonable estimate because of the elephant. Coryate's Agra letter pictures him mounted upon a camel, an image that among Coryate-watchers might have superseded the earlier one.³

Having been included in the 1646 Stationers' Register entry, *The Queen of Corinth* was published in the Folio of 1647 as the first play in Section 6 (sigs. A1–C4, C4v blank), printed by Moses Bell.⁴ In the last two plays of the four-play section, reasonably clear signs appear of two compositors dividing the quires evenly, with a few exceptions, and setting from the inside of the quire to the outside. The second play in the section may also have been typeset in this fashion, but possibly by only one compositor.⁵ The typographical and spelling evidence found in *The Queen of Corinth*, however, is such as to make a reconstruction of its printing very uncertain. Dubious as they may be, the signs point to the following pattern of composition:

<i>Compositor</i>	<i>X X</i>	<i>X Y</i>	<i>? Y?</i>	<i>X? Y</i>	<i>Y Y</i>	<i>Y X</i>
<i>Forme</i>	A2v:3	A1v:4	A1:4v	A2:3v	B2v:3	B2:3v
<i>Compositor</i>	<i>Y Y?</i>	<i>X X</i>	<i>X –</i>	<i>Y? ?</i>	<i>Y? Y?</i>	<i>? X</i>
<i>Forme</i>	B1v:4	B1:4v	C1:4v	C1v:4	C2:3v	C2v:3

Although the text contains variant spellings (e.g., 'neere'/'neare', 'onely'/'only', 'houre'/'hower', 'beleeve'/'believe'), they correlate, if at all, as well with authorial divisions as with bibliographical. Compositor *X* spells 'doe' and prefers to space before semi-colons and question-marks. Compositor *Y* spells 'do' and spaces less frequently, although in spacing he does not differ pronouncedly from *X*.⁶ According to this analysis, however, the compositors' shares were, in the line-numbers of this edition:

Compositor X: I.ii.184–II.i.27; I.i.81–I.ii.72; I.ii.73–183(?); III.ii.40–154.1; II.iv.73–176; IV.i.119–IV.iii.138; V.iii.7–V.iv.69

Compositor Y: II.iii.49–143; II.iii.143–II.iv.72(?); II.i.28–II.iii.49; III.i.157–III.ii.39; III.i.31–156; II.iv.177–III.i.30; IV.i.o.1–118(?); IV.iii.139–V.ii.20(?); V.iv.70–191(?)

Unassigned: I.i.o.1–80; V.iv.192–235.1; V.ii.20–V.iii.6.

Quire B anticipates the order of composition followed later in the section; Quire C may have departed from this sequence to speed the delivery of formes to the press, C4v being blank and C4 being short. In Quire A, however, an unusual procedure was adopted; all formes

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share some typographical components, an indication that no forme was fully ready for printing before its predecessor had been at least partly stripped or even partly distributed. The quire appears to have been composed in almost random order, perhaps as another job was being finished. \$2v:3 is ordinarily the first forme in the rest of the section and \$2:3v the second. Why A1v:4 and A1:4v here may have followed A2v:3 is unclear, but quality of workmanship appears not to have suffered greatly in consequence. Despite some anomalies the play as a whole seems to have been printed with reasonable care from legible, orderly copy.⁷

Considering that three authors and at least two typesetters participated, some of the text's features are surprisingly uniform. When the minor courtiers are named in stage-directions, their names are usually given in the same order: Neanthes, Sosicles, Eraton, at I.i.o.1 (Massinger), I.iii.o.1 (Massinger), I.iii.94 (Massinger), III.i.72.1 (Field) and V.i.o.1 (Massinger). The exception occurs at I.iv.o.1 (Massinger), a direction which also begins an unmarked scene. The fools too are systematically listed: Onos, Uncle and Tutor at I.iii.14.1 (Massinger), II.iv.146.1 (Fletcher), III.i.72.1 (Field), V.iii.o.1 (Massinger). The exception here is at IV.i.o.1 (Field), where Uncle and Tutor are in regular sequence but Onos comes last, fortuitously as far as one can tell. The directions also regularly omit the conjunction when more than two characters are named, typically 'Enter Neanthes, Sosicles, Eraton' as opposed to 'Enter Theanor and Crates'.⁸ Furthermore, the text is carefully divided into scenes (not so carefully at I.iv and IV.iv, both unmarked) according to standard practice: e.g., 'Actus Secundus. Scæna Prima., Scæna Secunda.', etc. Edited authorial papers might attain such regularity, but in view of the text's freedom from the superficial confusion often found in derivatives from holograph, scribal copy seems more probable, and the scribe appears to have been given a list of characters' names from which in stage-directions and speech-prefixes he standardized to *Onos* the character known variously in the text as *Onos* and *Lamprias*.⁹

The inspiration of the main plot was *Controversia* 1.5 of the elder Seneca, the case of the man who raped two girls in one night, and the opinions expressed by the declaimers lie behind some speeches, especially those of V.iv, the trial scene.¹⁰ From this source the dramatists developed their scenario, apparently after a reading by

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Fletcher and Field of Massinger's Act I.¹¹ The F1 text contains revisions made *currente calamo* in Act I, and in Act II Fletcher is vague about how the tavern scene is to be presented.¹² Lyrics to the songs in III.ii are lacking. Contradictions and loose ends are numerous. Agenor is young at I.i.11 (Massinger), but old enough by II.ii.11 (Fletcher) to think in his wedding finery, 'I am younger then I was, farre younger' and to continue in the manner of one whose youth has been restored by love. At the end of the play, of course, he will marry the Queen, who has a grown son. Part of the grand design is the reformation of the bad brother, but the Crates who claims that Theanor easily persuaded him to abduct Merione because 'She was his Wife before the face of Heaven' (V.iv.197; Massinger) is exceedingly reformed from the wretch who not only urges the rape (I.i.65ff, Massinger) but also suggests that Theanor 'would have more of this sport' (II.iii.23, Fletcher). Theanor, who regards the lady as his wife 'Although some Ceremonious formes were wanting' (V.iv.198), earlier tries to frighten her witless, threatening her with his dagger as Proserpine's rape is sung and danced to horrid music.¹³ As it now stands, the fools are a nest of ninnies collected for the courtiers' amusement; they appear in just one scene of each act, and each time Onos performs an amusing leg-trick of some sort (I.iii.15, Massinger; II.iv.15off, Fletcher; III.i.8off and IV.i.4 and 30-1, Field; V.iii.13, Massinger). Onos is not entirely consistent, however; usually befuddled, if not moronic, he takes an unexpectedly aggressive part in baiting Euphanes in III.i.174ff (Field). Moreover, the writers may have abandoned an idea of involving him more deeply in the main plot. Although a usurer's son should be well off, Beliza has sponsored his travel (as she did Euphanes') 'till he came to age, | And was fit for a Wife' (I.iii.8-9). Crates, himself an unsuccessful suitor of Beliza (I.ii.188-9), now mysteriously thrusts Onos upon her, and Conon, promising Onos a dainty wench and a dish of pippins, will keep the fool company until he can discover and thwart Crates' plot (II.iv.224ff). In Field's III.i Onos is still Euphanes' rival (line 75), but by IV.i, informed that Euphanes has won Beliza, he confesses he never revealed his affection directly to her (lines 1ff). His challenge of Euphanes having resulted in his discomfiture by the Page, he disappears to embark on thirty years' travel. Onos now is the obverse of Euphanes' courtly highmindedness and *savoir faire*, but a scene

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designed to emphasize the contrast by bringing him together with Beliza seems to have been planned. The discrepancies between Acts I and V suggest that Massinger, instead of writing his sections in uninterrupted sequence, resumed work where Field left off, but neither he nor the others attempted a reworking of the entire play. There is virtually no indication that the text was reviewed by a prompter.¹⁴

The Queen of Corinth became a part of the repertory of the King's Men; its title is on the Lord Chamberlain's 1641 list of plays not to be published without the company's consent and in the 1668/9 catalogue of former Blackfriars plays 'now allowed of to his Ma^{tes} Servants' (Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, III, 398). It seems, however, not 'to have been produced between 1660 and 1710'¹⁵ or subsequently. The text appeared in the Second Folio of 1679, whose editor made a dozen sensible corrections of F1 (and perhaps sophisticated a few readings such as the one at III.i.72) and more importantly supplied the list of actors and the two song lyrics omitted from F1. He obviously had access to theatrical papers, but if these included a revised text he made no use of it.

Lester Beaurline very kindly lent me his copies of the manuscript versions of the songs. Virginia Haas, as always, helped greatly with the text and apparatus, and Andrew Gurr gave his expert opinion of the tavern scene's staging in II.iv.

NOTES

- 1 See Cyrus Hoy, 'The shares of Fletcher and his collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon (IV)', *Studies in Bibliography*, XII (1959), 98–100.
- 2 For the entry, see Edward Arber, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London; 1554–1640 A.D.*, III (London, 1876), 614, and for Terry's journey, *A Voyage to East-India* (London, 1655; repr. 1777).
- 3 See Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (Oxford, 1967), III, 399. The other actors listed by F2 are Henry Condell, John Underwood, Thomas Pollard (who joined the King's Men only shortly before *The Queen of Corinth*'s first production; see Bentley, *ibid.* II, 532–3), John Lowin, Nicholas Tooley and Thomas Holcomb (like Pollard, a new member of the troupe; see *ibid.* p. 475).
- 4 Iain Sharp, 'Wit at Several Weapons: a critical edition', University of Auckland diss., 1982, pp. 286ff.

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- 5 See in this series the textual introductions to *Women Pleased* (the second play), v, 445–6; *A Wife for a Month* (the third), vi, 357–67; and *Wit at Several Weapons* (the last), vii, 303–4.
- 6 The spacing evidence is Dr Sharp's. Both compositors adopt medial 'ile' except for one 'i'le' and one 'ile' on B2 and 'Ile' twice, after colons, on B4. *Y* may be Compositor *A* of *A Wife for a Month* and *Wit at Several Weapons* (see vi, 357, n.2 and vii, 303–4), but in neither of these plays does the 'do'/'doe' distinction hold. On unattributed pages the evidence is lacking or conflicting; in them as well as in pages given to *X* and *Y* another compositor may be lurking.
- 7 Although some typographical errors got by, the proofing may have been reasonably thorough. The collation of twenty-one copies – Bodleian B.1.8 Art.; University Library, Cambridge, Aston a.Sel.19 and SSS.10.8; Cyrus Hoy; Newberry Library; University of Illinois, two copies; Boston Public; University of Minnesota; Duke University 429544; Cornell University; Princeton University; Pennsylvania State University; University of Virginia, two copies; University of Washington; University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, four copies; and University of Wisconsin-Madison – turned up only one press-variant: in uncorrected copies (University of Illinois 2; Duke; and Pennsylvania State) the line 'Twas the Queens Token, and shall celebrate' (III.ii.103) is the last of column B3va rather than the first of B3vb. In order to accommodate a large catchword ('Actus'), the compositor had made up a taller type page than usual, with sixty-nine rather than sixty-eight lines in column a. Perhaps it was a trial, for the type line seems loose in the Duke copy, the apostrophe dropped and no space between 'Twas' and 'the'. The transfer of the line required the centre rule to be replaced so that the page could be shortened, and during the manoeuvre a space was inserted before 'the' but the apostrophe vanished.
- 8 The three fools, however, are accorded an 'and' except at III.i.72.1, an unusually long direction. Supernumeraries are sometimes treated collectively: e.g., 'Enter Euphanes and two Gentlemen' (II.iv.iii.1); see also II.ii.o.1 and IV.iii.29.1. At I.iii.o.1 Neanthes and Sosicles seem to enter at one door and Eraton at another, and at II.iii.o.1 Eraton probably follows the others. A 'with' in the direction evidently breaks the pattern; see II.i.21.1 and II.iii.27.1. At IV.ii.30.1 an 'and' may have been omitted so that in F1 the marginal direction can stand at a fair distance from the text.
- 9 See the textual note on The Persons Represented. The scribe who copied *The Queen of Corinth* may also have worked on *Women Pleased*, which has *The Queen of Corinth*'s kind of stage-directions and which is similarly divided into scenes. *A Wife for a Month* and *Wit at Several Weapons* lack these features.
- 10 Eugene M. Waith, 'John Fletcher and the art of declamation', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, LXVI (1951), 226–34, and *The Pattern of Tragicomedies in Beaumont and Fletcher* (New Haven, 1952), pp. 136–7. The story is also found in the *Gesta Romanorum*; see Herbert F. Schwarz, 'One of the sources of *The Queen of Corinth*', *Modern Language Notes*, XXIV (1909), 76–7. Cervantes' 'La Fuerça de la Sangre', one of the *Novelas ejemplares*, was identified as a source by Emil Koepfel, *Quellen-Studien zu den Dramen . . . Beaumont's und Fletcher's* (Erlangen, 1895), pp. 74–5.

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- 11 The textual note on II.iii.o.1–o.2 describes a tangle that may have occurred because Fletcher misunderstood a detail in Massinger's depiction of the rape.
- 12 See the textual notes on I.ii.71 and II.iv.14. The unusual order of the names in the entrance-direction for I.iv and the absence of a scene-head may also indicate some sort of revision.
- 13 Proserpine is Field's idea (IV.iii.83), the dagger and the dance Fletcher's (II.i.38ff), although the two are not necessarily incompatible. See the textual note on II.i.41. If at the play's end Crates is heavily shading the truth in order to win Theanor's pardon, the discrepancies disappear, but his doing so would contradict the premise upon which the conclusion rests, that Theanor's weakness has vanished before a hitherto suppressed nobility and that his real depravity lay in ravishing Beliza, as he thinks. His rape of Merione is no rape because she is his betrothed wife.
- 14 R. C. Bald believes the mention of lights in stage-directions at I.iii.64.3, II.ii.o.1 and II.iii.27.1 and properties at II.iv.20 and II.iv.47.1 may qualify *The Queen of Corinth* for conjectural inclusion among plays derived from prompt-books, but the evidence is slight (*Bibliographical Studies in the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1647* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 108–9). 'Bar brought in' at V.iv.39 also may resemble a prompt-notation, but Massinger was quite capable of writing such a direction himself; compare 'A chest brought in' in *The Roman Actor* (ed. Edwards and Gibson), II.i.330.
- 15 Arthur Colby Sprague, *Beaumont and Fletcher on the Restoration Stage* (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), p. 122.

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[More information](#)[THE PERSONS REPRESENTED IN
THE PLAY.]Agenor, *Prince of Argos.*Theanor, *Sonne to the Queene of Corinth, a vicious Prince.*Leonidas, *The Corinthian Generall, Brother to Merione.*Euphanes, *A noble young Gentleman, Favorite to the Queene.*Crates, *Elder brother to Euphanes; a malicious beaufeu.*Conon, *Euphanes Confident, and fellow-Traveller.*Neanthes,
Sosicles,
Eraton, } *Courtiers.*Onos or Lamprias, *A very foolish Traveller.*Tutor
and
Uncle } *to Onos, two foolish Knaves.**Page to the Lord Euphanes.**Martiall.**Lords, Gentlemen, Vintner, Drawers, Boys, Ruffians, Clerke, Flamen,
Executioner, Servants, Souldiers.*

WOMEN.

*Queene of Corinth, A wise and virtuous Widow.**Merione, A virtuous Lady, honourably solicited by Prince Agenor.**Beliza, A noble Lady, Mistresse to Euphanes.**Ladies.*

The Scene Corinth.]

*o.1 The Persons Represented] based on the list in F2

5 beaufeu] i.e., boutefeu, 'a kindler of strife and contention' (Cotgrave)

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Enter Neanthes, Sosicles, Eraton.

L.i

Eraton. The Generall is returned then?*Neanthes.* With much honour.*Sosicles.* And peace concluded with the Prince of *Argos*?*Neanthes.* To the Queens wishes: the conditions sign'd

So farre beyond her hopes, to the advantage

Of *Corinth*, and the good of all her Subjects;That though *Leonidas* our brave Generall

Ever came home a faire and great example,

He never yet return'd, or with lesse losse

Or more deserved honour.

Eraton. Have you not heard

The motives to this generall good?

Neanthes. The maine one

10

Was admiration first in young *Agenor*,(For by that name we know the Prince of *Argos*)Of our *Leonidas* wisdom, and his valour,

Which though an enemy, first in him bred wonder;

That liking, Love succeeded that, which was

Followed by a desire to be a friend

Upon what termes soever to such goodnesse;

They had an interview; and that their friendship

Might with our peace be ratified, 'twas concluded,

Agenor yeelding up all such stronge places

20

As he held in our Territories, should receive

(With a sufficient Dower, paid by the Queene)

The faire *Merione* for his wife.*Eraton.* But how

Approves the Queene of this? since we well know,

Nor was her Highnesse ignorant, that her Sonne

The Prince *Theanor* made love to this Lady,

And in the noblest way.