

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10294-0 - The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, Volume I

Edited by Fredson Bowers

Excerpt

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SIR THOMAS MORE

DEKKER'S ADDITION

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## TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION

THE following addition to *Sir Thomas More* represents the only preserved example of autograph dramatic composition by Dekker. By kind permission of the Malone Society, the text and footnotes have been printed from pp. 87–88 of *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, edited by W. W. Greg (Malone Society Reprints, 1911). No attempt has been made to preserve the facsimile lining of the Malone text, but otherwise the only change is the omission of the short rules separating the individual speeches. For these few lines from a Dekker manuscript the apparatus takes the Malone Society form, not that found subsequently for the critically edited text in these volumes. According to Malone Society practice, square brackets here enclose deleted material, and pointed brackets mutilations.

The date of the manuscript is customarily taken as about 1595–6 or somewhat later (Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, 1, 513).

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*Morr:* what ailst tho<sup>?</sup> art tho<sup>u</sup> mad now.*Falk.* mad now? nayles yf losse of hayre Cannot mad a man—  
what Can? I am deposde: my Crowne is taken from mee Moore  
had bin better a Scowrd More ditch, than a notcht mee thus, does  
hee begin sheepe sharing w<sup>th</sup> Iack Faulkner?*Morr:* nay & yo<sup>u</sup> feede this veyne S<sup>r</sup>, fare yo<sup>u</sup> well.*Falk.* why fare well Frost. Ile goe hang my Selfe out for the—  
poll head, make a Sarcen of Iack?*Morr:* tho<sup>u</sup> desperate knave, for that I See the divell, wholy getty  
hold of thee. 10*Falk:* the divellꝝ a dambd rascal*Morr:* I charge thee wayte on mee no more: no more, call mee thy  
m<sup>r</sup>.*Falk:* why then a word m<sup>r</sup> *Morris*.*Morr.* Ile heare no wordes, S<sup>r</sup>, fare yo<sup>u</sup> well.*Falk:* Sbloud farewell:*Morr:* why doest tho<sup>u</sup> follow [yo<sup>u</sup>] mee:*Falk:* because Ime an Asse, doe yo<sup>u</sup> sett yo<sup>r</sup> shavets vpon mee, &  
then cast mee off? must I condole? haue the fates playd the foolos  
*weepes*. am I theire Cutt? Now the poore Sconce is taken, must 20  
Iack march with bag & baggage?*Morr:* yo<sup>u</sup> Coxcomb.*Falk:* nay yo<sup>u</sup> ha poacht mee, yo<sup>u</sup> ha given mee a hayre, its here  
here.*Morr:* Away yo<sup>u</sup> kynd [foole] Asse, come S<sup>r</sup>, dry yo<sup>r</sup> eyes, keepe  
yo<sup>r</sup> old place & mend this fooleryes.

1 tho<sup>?</sup>] query-mark substituted for period

2 now?] query-mark substituted for period

2 man —] the dashes here and in line 7 are mere flourishes to end the line

3 deposde:] colon substituted for comma

4 Scowrd] *r* altered from *a*

22–24 marked for omission

25 *Asse*,] *Asse* interlined, first *s* doubtful; comma after *foole* traceable under the  
caret-mark belonging to *Asse*

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*Falk:* I care not to bee tournd off, and twere a ladder, so it bee in  
 my humor, or the fates becon to mee; nay pray S<sup>r</sup>, yf the destinyes  
 Spin mee a fyne thred, *Falkner* flyes another pitch: & to avoyd the  
 headach, hereafter before Ile bee a hayremonger Ile bee a whore- 30  
 monger. *Exeu*<

28 yf] interlined

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// THE  
SHOEMAKERS  
Holiday.  
OR  
*The Gentle Craft.*

With the humorous life of Simon  
Eyre, shoemaker, and Lord Maior  
of London.

As it was acted before the Queenes most excellent Ma-  
iestie on New-yeares day at night last, by the right  
honourable the Earle of Nottingham, Lord high Ad-  
mirall of England, his seruants.



Printed by Valentine Sims dwelling at the foote of Adling  
hill, neere Banards Castle, at the signe of the White  
Swanne, and are there to be sold.

1 6 0 0.

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THE first quarto, in 1600, of *The Shoemakers' Holiday* (Greg, *Bibliography*, no. 175) was not entered in the Stationers' Register, but the publisher Valentine Simmes seems to have had full rights to his copy, for he transferred these to John Wright on 19 April 1610. Wright published Q2 in the same year, Q3 in 1618, Q4 in 1624, and Q5 in 1631. On 27 June 1646 Edward Wright entered the transfer of the copy from his brother; and on 4 April 1655 William Gilbertson the transfer from Edward Wright. In 1657 Gilbertson published Q6, the last of the early editions. The copyright, therefore, seems clear except for the not too unusual lack of initial entry. Each edition was printed from its immediate predecessor.

Valentine Simmes's 1600 quarto appears to have been completely authorized. On 15 July 1599 Henslowe had advanced £3 towards buying the book from Dekker,<sup>1</sup> but the first recorded performance is that at court on 1 January 1600. This performance is referred to in the play's foreword, which there seems every reason to assign to Dekker; and this foreword, with the careful preliminary addition of the songs (for which no place is marked in the text), points without question to authorized publication.

The nature of the printer's copy is not certain, although surmise is possible. There are no definite signs of theatrical, or prompt, copy, and some indication that the author's papers may have been used, possibly the 'foul papers', although a transcript of these cannot be ruled out of the question. If we may believe that variation in speech-prefixes is a sign of author's copy, then the variation between the alternatives *Roger* and *Hodge* may have value as evidence. It is not wholly clear, perhaps, whether there is significance in the fact that Lacy's prefix does not rigidly coincide with his disguise as Hans.

<sup>1</sup> Although Dekker's name did not appear on the title-page, this entry, and the style of the play itself, fixes Dekker's authorship. The theory that Dekker collaborated with Robert Wilson, which was once advanced on the basis of a reported signed copy of Q1, is now known to rest on a Collier forgery: see my 'Thomas Dekker, Robert Wilson, and *The Shoemakers Holiday*', *Modern Language Notes*, LXIV (1949), 517–519.

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Lacy's own name is used in the stage-directions and speech-prefixes in I.iii and I.iv, though he is there disguised. At his first entrance in II.iii he is also labelled Lacy, and it is only on his re-entrance with the Dutch skipper at II.iii.114 that he is named Hans in the stage-directions and consistently thereafter in the speech-prefixes. In fact, the speech-prefix *Hans* persists even in the final scene of the play when he is named once more as Lacy in the stage-direction and it is almost certain that he must have entered in his own person. There is as much reason for guessing that the abrupt change at II.iii.114 was authorial as that it was a prompter's (or compositor's) tardy recognition of the disguise. Finally, the somewhat jumbled state of Eyre's speech in V.v.171 ff. may point more to carelessly and incompletely revised foul papers than to finished prompt copy.<sup>1</sup>

The 1600 quarto is the only substantive edition and therefore has sole authority. On acquiring the copy John Wright seems to have had some editorial work done on the text before printing the 1610 second edition. Various metrically rough lines were smoothed by the addition of presumed skipped words; more important, someone tried to straighten out Eyre's speech in V.v by free reworking. Many of the Q2 variants pass far beyond the compositor's normal responsibility and therefore represent editorial intervention. If so, the question arises immediately whether the editor was the author, or whether an author-corrected copy was passed on to Wright. In the case of many individual variants such as the metrical smoothing in I.i.187 or II.ii.23, for example, it is difficult to deny the possibility that they came from an authorially marked copy of Q1, even though the number of serious errors left untouched in the text would indicate major carelessness on Dekker's part if he had indeed prepared the corrected copy. But there is no reason to suppose that the person who tinkered with Eyre's final speech was not also the one who tinkered casually with the text elsewhere. If this is so, the revisions in Eyre's speech carry little conviction that they were made by the author. In this connexion one must also consider that

<sup>1</sup> The curious mistake in the stage-direction to III.iii which gives Sybil the French hood rather than Eyre's wife is doubtless due to a misinterpreted interlineation, but such an addition could have been authorial as easily as the work of the book-keeper.

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authorial revision of a late reprint by a practising dramatist who, unlike Ben Jonson, had no pretensions to literary eminence, is unknown in the period. The editing of Q<sub>2</sub>, on the whole, seems to have originated with the publisher, and this view may perhaps be supported by the further revision, certainly non-authorial, which was made in the text in Q<sub>3</sub> and even Q<sub>4</sub>, both also printed for Wright.

There is also the hypothetical possibility that some—though certainly not all—of the Q<sub>2</sub> variants could have had their origin in a copy of Q<sub>1</sub> in a different press-corrected state from any preserved. By chance, Q<sub>2</sub> follows the corrected state of the three known variant Q<sub>1</sub> formes, but it could be argued that correction in other formes, not now known, was made. An attempt to evaluate possible lost press-corrections by formes from any list of variants in a reprint is a notably difficult and uncertain task. Some case might be made out for a lost corrected state in Q<sub>1</sub> of the outer forme of sheet G, followed by Q<sub>2</sub>, but the evidence is conflicting and slight in the extreme. We may be reasonably sure that the five preserved copies of Q<sub>1</sub> do not provide us with complete information about proof-correction in some of the invariant sheets. Nevertheless, general experience indicates that with such a number of copies the odds are very much in favour of the invariant formes representing the corrected rather than the uncorrected states. Thus if any Q<sub>2</sub> variants are to be assigned to unknown variants in the Q<sub>1</sub> copy, Q<sub>2</sub> in all probability followed uncorrected rather than revised formes of Q<sub>1</sub>, and Q<sub>2</sub>'s manifest revisions, therefore, cannot reasonably be credited, even in part, to such an agency, even though some of its errors might hypothetically be so assigned.

If the editorial work on Q<sub>2</sub> was casual, that on Q<sub>3</sub> was thorough in a manner not ordinarily associated with a reprint. However, with Q<sub>3</sub> there is even less reason than with Q<sub>2</sub> to suspect the presence of any authority. The Q<sub>3</sub> reviser made a number of important and necessary substantive corrections; but he sometimes misunderstood the text and almost wilfully sophisticated it. This 1618 edition, in fact, may almost serve as a classic case of printing-house or publisher's editing. It is probable that many of Q<sub>4</sub>'s variants are editorial rather than compositorial, but Q<sub>5</sub> and Q<sub>6</sub> are straight reprints,



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carrying still further the corruption of the text begun in Q 2. Therefore, when in this present edition emendation is accepted from any source after Q 1, I do not presume authority in the adopted readings.

The exact degree of corruption in Q 1 requiring emendation is difficult to estimate. The most serious problem turns on the question whether certain imperfect lines were faulty in the manuscript, or whether compositor's eyeskip has caused words to be dropped. There are at least eleven such cases requiring decision,<sup>1</sup> one of which was 'corrected' by the Q 1 proof-reader, three by the Q 2 editor, three further by Q 3, one by Q 4, and the remaining three by modern editors. It would be well if bibliographical investigation could resolve these problems, but unfortunately its results are helpful only in a negative way.

The basic problem is, of course, compositorial; and hence it is necessary to determine whether one or two or more compositors set the text. The presswork on Q 1 follows a slightly unusual pattern, in that both inner and outer formes of sheets B, D, G, and I were printed with one skeleton-forme, and the inner and outer formes of sheets C, E, F, H, and K with a different skeleton-forme. Except for sheets E and F, which use the same, the sheets alternate in their use of the skeletons. In most circumstances one would interpret this pattern as indicating two presses, each printing and perfecting alternate sheets. If two presses were employed, we ought to find two compositors working in some combination to maintain the speed of setting level with that of presswork. Given two compositors, if the majority of the eleven debated lines proved to be the work of only one man, there would be a good argument to emend the lines on the ground that this compositor, but not his fellow, was peculiarly afflicted with eyeskip or memorial failure.

Unfortunately for theory, a spelling test seems to show that the major part of the text of Q 1 was set by only one compositor<sup>2</sup> and therefore that the pattern of the running-titles almost certainly

<sup>1</sup> I.i.41, 171, 187; I.ii.26; II.i.7; II.ii.23; III.i.1, 56, 103; III.iii.34; IV.iii.40.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Mr Oliver Steele and Mr Philip Harth for their spelling and typographical analyses which have materially assisted me in reaching such provisional conclusions as it seems legitimate to offer with any confidence.

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indicates no more than some effort to speed up the delay in press-work with one press between sheets.<sup>1</sup> To some extent, it is true, the typographical and spelling evidence is contradictory. For example, the compositor of B 1–3<sup>v</sup> carefully placed full stops after each speech-heading, but suddenly in the middle of B 4 four such headings in a row are not punctuated. The stops return on B 4<sup>v</sup> but they are totally absent in all speech-prefixes on C 1 and C 1<sup>v</sup>; thereafter, the tags are consistently punctuated until towards the foot of G 1<sup>v</sup> again no stops are found, and this lack of punctuation continues on G 2, skips to G 3<sup>v</sup>, and is found sporadically on G 4. Full stops are consistent on G 4<sup>v</sup>, but sporadic from H 1 to the end of the play. On B 4, in the section wanting stops, for the first time a character's name is set in roman instead of in black letter, and on C 1 and C 1<sup>v</sup> all names are in roman but thereafter in black letter until roman appears again on G 2, H 3<sup>v</sup>, and I 4 inconsistently, but consistently on K 3. The fact that on G 2 occurs the spelling *Rafe* (5 times), and *Sibil* (8 times), but on G 2<sup>v</sup> *Raph* (5 times) and *Sibill* (5 times; *Sibil* once) seems to confirm a change in compositors at this point, in spite of the fact that the variant spellings of these names are of little assistance elsewhere. Moreover, it does not seem to be pure accident that though Eyre's final (and corrupt) speech is set in prose on K 4<sup>r</sup>, it immediately switches to verse at the head of K 4<sup>v</sup>. When such pages as C 1 and C 1<sup>v</sup> (I.ii.1–58) and G 2 (IV.i.23–51), which seem definitely to be the setting of a different compositor from the regular workman, are analysed for spelling characteristics the results are rather disappointing, for about all one can gather is that this workman markedly favoured a -y ending instead of an -ie, and he seems to have spelled *Mayor* ordinarily rather than *Maior*, both in contrast to the regular compositor's practice. The few other variants that seem to have significance are too rare to be of much assistance or to have a sufficient check for reliability. Yet when this slender evidence is applied to the text, it seems possible, with some con-

<sup>1</sup> That is, if the press immediately backed the first-printed forme, as usual. It is just possible that the press printed one forme of the succeeding sheet before returning to perfect the preceding one. However, this would be an odd state of affairs for a quarto, and the use of one skeleton in the two adjacent sheets E and F does not encourage the hypothesis.