

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10295-7 - The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, Volume II

Edited by Fredson Bowers

Excerpt

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THE
Converted Curtezan

With,

The Humours of the Patient Man,
and the Longing Wife.

The Same as the Honest Whore.

Tho: Dekker.



LONDON
Printed by V. S. and are to be solde by Iohn
Hodgjets at his shoppe in Paules
church-yard 1604.

The title-page of Q2 from the only known perfect copy, in the
Bute Collection of the National Library of Scotland.

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TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION

THE first part of *The Honest Whore* by Dekker and Thomas Middleton (Greg, *Bibliography*, no. 204) was entered in the Stationers' Register on 9 November 1604 by Thomas Man the younger: 'Entred for his copye vnder the hand of m^r Pasfeild A Booke called. The humours of the patient man. The longinge wyfe and the honest whore.' Greg remarks, 'In spite of the entrance of the copy to Man, Hodgets here [on the title-page] appears as publisher, but in view of the imprint of (c)¹ it seems doubtful whether he really acted as anything but bookseller.' The date of composition is fairly well established by the payment of £5 from Henslowe to Dekker and Middleton for 'the pasyent man & the onest hore' between 1 January and 14 March 1604 on account of the Prince's men.² Although this payment was only in earnest of the play, we may presume that copy was delivered to the company before mid-1604. On the evidence of the Register entry, the first quarto, collating A–K⁴, must have been published in late November of the same year.

There is every reason to suppose that the printing was authorized and that a good manuscript was sent to the press. Indeed, the descriptive stage-directions which for all their detail are usually permissive, the lack of uniformity in the speech-prefixes for Candido's wife,³ and also the preserved fragment of continuous scene numbering,⁴ lead to the view that the printer's copy was the

¹ *I.e.* Q3, for which the imprint reads, 'Printed by V.S. and are to be sold by Iohn Hodgets at his shoppe in Paules church-yard 1605.' The title-page is printed substantially from the standing type of Q1, in the imprint of which the phrase was 'Printed by V.S. for Iohn Hodgets and are to be solde. . . .'

² The actor Towne, for whom the part of the sweeper in V.ii was especially written, was a member of this company.

³ Since she is given the prefix *Viola*, the name also provided in the stage-direction, only in I.ii but is invariably *Wife* in prefix and direction thereafter, the evidence is perhaps less significant than if there had been random variation. The change from one form to the other takes place between two scenes both present in sheet B; hence the alteration to *Wife* is not compositorial but instead a reflection of the manuscript.

⁴ The first scene to be numbered is III.i, given as 'SCENA 7', and thereafter the scenes are numbered in order, except for the unnumbered scene 12 (IV.iii), to '13. SCE.' or IV.iv. Whether the scene number precedes or follows SCENA is a distinguishing mark of the two compositors who typeset this section.

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foul papers or a transcript from them. There are no certain signs of prompt-book origin, and the only two possible hints are both suspect.¹

The first quarto of 1604 was set up in three sections comprising sheets A–B, C–D, and E–K. Sheets A–B, containing the title-page with its imprint listing V[alentine] S[immes] as the printer, distinguish themselves from the rest by the use of medial *v* and *j* (a practice silently altered in the present text in the interest of uniformity). Lower-case roman running-titles with heading capitals are employed, two skeletons to the sheet, and the printer's measure is 90 mm. With sheet C the type slightly changes, the measure shrinks to 87 mm., and the running-titles (again two skeletons to the sheet) are composed of italic full capitals. With sheet E there comes another slight change in the fount accompanied by different settings of the running-titles though still in italic capitals. This final section of the play, E–K, appears to have been machined on two presses, one of which printed sheets E, F, H; and the other, sheets G, I, K. Sheets E and F, both formes, are imposed and printed by one and the same skeleton, and this skeleton, with some running-titles in a different setting, also imposes both formes of sheet H. A different single skeleton is used for both formes of sheet G. This skeleton thereupon imposes the inner forme of I and both formes of K, while the skeleton of H, with some running-titles in a different setting, imposes the outer forme of I. Running-titles H₂^v–H₄–I₃ and H₃–H₁^v–I₂^v seem to be positively identified, but the swash *N* running-title E₃^v–E₄^v–F₄–F₄^v–H₃^v–H₄^v is not present in outer I, although, in a most puzzling manner, it reappears in the NLS Q₂ revised sheet E. The interlocking of the skeleton-formes shows that

¹ In II.i.45 early editors conjectured that *Sing* before *prety wantons* was not part of Bellafront's song but instead a stage-direction crept into the text; but this theory has not found universal favour. In Q₁ *Sing* begins a line at the left margin. Hence if it is a misplaced direction, for which there is no actual evidence, it would presumably be a prompt notation. In V.ii.335 *Bow a little*, which in Q₁ hypermetrically prefixes line 335, might also be taken as an intrusive direction. Its meaning in the text is admittedly obscure, but it is not quite the kind of direction one would imagine a prompter adding in the left margin of a manuscript, and hence is doubtful—like *Sing*—even as an indication of a book-keeper marking foul papers for later transcription of prompt. If *Bow a little* is an author's certainly very minute direction confused as text, its position to the left is perhaps odd.

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the E–K section was printed in one shop, a fact buttressed by the invariable signing of the four leaves in this section as against only the first three leaves in each gathering in sections A–B and C–D. The pattern of the skeleton-formes suggests the use of two presses, and this hypothesis is strengthened by the evidence of the printer's measure. The usual measure throughout sheets E and F is 86–87 mm. On G₃ recto, however, this measure expands to 88–89 and continues so for two pages to G₄ recto. Again, on H₂^v–4^v the normal measure expands to 89 mm., and once more on I₂^v–4^v. It would appear, therefore, that the original plan in this shop was to print with one compositor and one press. The use of only one skeleton for both formes in contrast to the two of A–B and C–D suggests that this workman was a rather slow typesetter. With the second half of sheet G the second compositor began to alternate. This introduction of a second workman under the circumstances would be matched by the appearance of a second press. Some interest inheres to the fact that it is only in this shop that the continuous scene numbers appear, though dropping out towards the end, perhaps as in copy.¹

Although the paper does not differ by sections as does the printing,² no reason exists to believe that Valentine Simmes printed any more than the first two sheets. The compositor in Q₁ and in the Q₂ resetting was Simmes's compositor *A*, whose work was identified in Q₁ of *The Shoemakers' Holiday*. The other printers are unidentified. The division among three printing houses is evidence of some haste in production. For example, earlier in the year Thomas Man the younger had allocated the first edition of Dekker's *Magnificent Entertainment* among five printers to rush it into print at the earliest possible moment.

¹ There seems to be a mechanical reason, not a literary significance, for the appearance of these scene numbers. That they came from the manuscript is evident, since the shop that printed sheets E–K would not be likely to have information about the number of preceding scenes. That they are present only in what we now assign as the third and fourth acts, therefore, cannot be used as evidence of authorship, since it seems almost certain that the compositors of A–B and C–D must simply have omitted to set the continuous numbering presumably present in the manuscript and also made no other numerical division into acts or scenes.

² If, as frequently, the publisher provided the paper, uniformity is no argument against sectional printing in different shops.

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Thomas Man's editions of *The Honest Whore* and *The Magnificent Entertainment* share another characteristic in that part of the type in each was kept standing and used in a second edition; moreover, apparently authoritative corrections appear in both books in the second edition. The circumstances of the publication of the second edition of *The Honest Whore*, with a change of title to *The Converted Courtesan*, are obscure since this second edition is known in only three copies, two of which are imperfect and lacking the title-leaf as well as the final leaves of text. In the Bodleian copy the last two leaves, K₃ and K₄, are wanting as well as A₁, and in the Folger Shakespeare Library copy the last leaf of I and all four leaves of K are missing, as well as A₁. The loss of leaves at front and back in two of the three known copies would ordinarily not be accepted as fortuitous. But it is difficult to see why the final two leaves should have been torn out deliberately, whatever could have been the reasons for excising the title-leaf without substitution; and hence it is probable that rough handling has accidentally affected both. This view may be supported by the recent discovery of a perfect copy of Q₂, with title and all text leaves, in the Bute Collection of the National Library of Scotland (NLS).

The use of standing type to print more than the legally allowed edition-sheet was prohibited by the rules of the Stationers' Company. Presumably a publisher conscious that he could sell an extra quota of copies but not necessarily enough to cover the cost of duplicate typesetting might in isolated cases make private arrangements by which his printers compounded with their compositors to forestall protests. That Man would be tempted in April of 1604 to circumvent the rules in order to produce large quantities of a coronation souvenir is understandable. Yet it may seem to be more than a coincidence that sometime after July of the same year William Aspley should combine with his printer Valentine Simmes to put out a second edition of Marston's *Malcontent* partly from standing type, and revised by the author; and later still that Man should employ Simmes for *The Honest Whore*, in which precisely the same procedure was followed. Finally, in early 1606 William Cotton published Marston's *Parasitaster*, printed by Thomas Pafort in a similar revised second edition in part from standing type. It

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may well be conjectured that at this time an attempt was being made with dramatic quartos to circumvent the Stationers' make-work rules. There are no records preserved that the Company took measures, but on the other hand no further such quartos were printed after *Parasitaster*.¹ That in each second edition the author—either Dekker or Marston—was available to correct and even to revise copy is one of the more suspicious circumstances. There are very likely peculiar and perhaps even related matters concerning these publications which we have as yet failed to grasp.

The running-titles of the second edition of *The Honest Whore* throughout label it 'The Converted Courtesan'.² By their type-settings these separate the quarto into four sections: A–B The converted Curtezan;³ C–D *THE CONVERTED | CVRTIZAN*;⁴ E–F *The conuerted Courtiſan*; and G–K *THE CONVERTED | CVRTIZAN*. In these sheets, A–B are printed from the same two skeleton-formes, C–D also from two skeletons, E and F each from two but the typesetting of the running-titles differing in F from E (perhaps indicating only the use of two presses). Sheet G was

¹ These cases are surveyed in my 'Notes on Standing Type in Elizabethan Printing', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, XL (1946), 205–224, but without reaching very satisfactory conclusions. See also the introduction in the present volume to *The Magnificent Entertainment*.

² The change to the title 'The Converted Courtesan' in Q₂ necessitated the resetting of the words *The Honest Whore* in Q₃ when that quarto returned to the form of Q₁ in its sheet A which is otherwise of the same typesetting as Q₂. For an earlier account of this resetting, see *The Library*, 4th series, XVIII (1938), 340–341. Greg's speculations that Dekker instituted the change in title are not necessarily proved by the Register entry in 1608 of Part 2 as 'the second parte of the conuerted Courtisan or honest Whore'. References in the text of Part 1 as at II.i.456, III.iii.100, and IV.i.196 seem to indicate the author's original intention to entitle it 'The Honest Whore', and similar references appear in Part 2. If he changed his mind, it must have been done within a relatively brief interval; and if so, it is odd that Q₃ should restore the rejected title and the Part 2 title (and text) confirm it. That Dekker made corrections and revisions in the Q₂ text does not demonstrate that the change in title was submitted to him or that he ever knew it was forthcoming. We simply do not know the reasons for the alteration, and it would be sheer speculation, though plausible, to connect it with the publisher's plan to conceal the illicit nature of the Q₂ printing.

³ In both the first and second editions the running-titles in sheets A–B are in roman type as against the italic of the other sheets.

⁴ In the second edition, as in the first, the typography of the C–D running-titles resembles that of later sheets although the actual typesetting differs. Thus it is barely possible that in Q₂ sheets C–D were printed in the same shop as sheets G–K.

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imposed from two skeleton-formes, and sheet H irregularly from one skeleton in a different setting. The skeleton imposing the inner forme of G thereupon was used to print both inner and outer I; that imposing outer G printed both inner and outer K. The settings differ from those of sheets C–D. On the evidence of the skeleton formes in G–K, two presses doubtless machined these four sheets.

The Bute copy has sheet E in a different state from that in the Bodleian and Folger copies. Instead of the running-titles *The Conuerted Courtizan* the Bute copy has *THE HONEST WHORE*. Moreover, in the E(i) standing type two variants appear. On sig. E2 NLS agrees with Q1 in reading 'A' in III.i.19 as against Bodleian and Folger Q2 'I'; and on E3^v NLS agrees with Q1 in reading 'thrumb' in III.i.98 as against Bodleian and Folger Q2 'thrum'. The Bute copy has been severely trimmed and as a result only the feet of the letters of the running-titles are preserved on sigs. E2, E3, and E3^v. However, so far as can be determined from photographs of the remaining running-titles it would seem that the same set (or substantially the same set) that printed sheets E–F, both formes, of Q1 also printed both formes of the NLS copy of sheet E in Q2, but the NLS sheet has been reimposed. (The swash *N* appears in NLS on sigs. E4 and E4^v, as in sheet F of Q1, whereas in sheet E of Q1 this swash letter in the running-title occurs on sigs. E3^v and E4^v.) Because of the difficulty, if not perhaps the impossibility, of positively identifying each individual running-title in NLS sheet E, a bibliographical analysis of this anomalous sheet is not at present practicable. (For instance, it is difficult to determine whether the running-titles in the NLS E formes are in exactly the same settings as in E–F of Q1 or else in the somewhat modified setting of sheet H of Q1.) It would be mere guessing to make a choice of the two possibilities that come first to mind: perhaps the NLS sheet was started in error with the Q1 headlines instead of the *Courtesan* titles, either by the printer of Q1 E–K or by the printer of Q2 E–F (if he differed); or perhaps it represents part of a special run to make up a short count in Q1. Speculation at this point is useless without the firm bibliographical evidence on which a hypothesis can be built. The position of the running-title on sig. F1 differs in NLS from that in Bodleian and Folger Q2 although the

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positioning of F 1^v-4^v is identical. Whether this fact has any connexion with the anomaly of sheet E I do not know. Very likely not. Elsewhere NLS contains only one variant reading from Bodleian and Folger. On sig. G 4 in IV.iii.16 NLS reads correctly 'let' as against 'le'.

If the unique typography of their running-titles can be trusted, sheets E and F were printed in a different shop from G-K, the reassignment from the division of Q 1 being made, perhaps, to speed up production. A peculiarity exists, however. When earlier in the year *The Magnificent Entertainment* had been reprinted in a similar manner and with some reassignment of sections, if a sheet was reassigned it was reset by the new printer. On the contrary, although E(o) is reset in *The Converted Courtesan*, E(i) remains standing, as does F(i) and most of F(o). It would appear that standing type was transferred on this occasion from one shop to another.

Of the 78 type-pages of text in Q 2, 42 are re-impressed from the standing type of Q 1 and 36 are reset. This proportion of about one-half the typesetting kept standing is what we find in the other similar books. Also conventional, and especially significant, is the fact that when only one forme of a sheet is reset, the outer forme is chosen and the inner left standing. The proportion of standing pages is somewhat unequal in the sections printed by different shops, in so far as the sections may stand for separate houses. Thus in Q 2 sheets A-B, both formes of sheet A (6 pages) are standing, and both formes of sheet B (8 pages) reset. In the C-D section, the outer forme of C and sig. C 1^v of inner C (5 pages) are reset; the remaining pages of inner C and both formes of D (11 pages) are standing. Sheets E and F contain reset outer E and reset sig. F 1 of outer F (5 pages); otherwise, E(i), F(i), and the remaining pages of F(o) are standing (11 pages). In the G-K section the resetting for the first time outbalances the standing type, for here we have both formes of G, outer H, outer I, and sigs. K 2^v, 3 of outer K reset (18 pages), and only inner H, inner I, all of inner K, and sigs. K 1, 4^v of outer K standing (14 pages). On the other hand, if on the evidence of similar typography though not identical typesetting in the running-titles we associate sections C-D and G-K, we find that twenty-five pages of type are standing and twenty-three reset.

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This may be significant and a slight added reason to assign the two sections as coming from the same shop. On the other hand, the difference in the skeleton-formes is troublesome to explain and hence it may be safer to conjecture that the shops differed although the alternative is tempting.

The resetting only of C 1^v of inner C, the first sheet of the C–D sections, may indicate that when this forme was machined in Q 1 the printer had not been instructed to hold the type for a second edition. The resetting of F 1, the first seven lines of F 2^v, and the first sixteen of F 3 in outer F is perhaps more likely to represent repair of pied type, since sheet E began this section in Q 1 and apparently also in Q 2.¹ The reset pages in sheet K comprise one vertical half of the quarto's outer forme (K 2^v–3). Since it can scarcely be suggested that the printer had started to break up the type before instructions for reprinting arrived, it would seem possible that the imbalance of standing to reset type in this sheet may have been caused by a general equalizing of the proportion in the C–D and G–K sheets taken as one unit. In these six sheets we find 23 reset pages to 25 standing. If G–K be taken as a single unit, it has one complete forme more of reset than of standing type.

The formes of standing type comprise A (i, o), C (i) substantially, D (i, o), E (i), F (i, o) substantially, H (i), I (i), K (i) and two pages of K (o). In most of these formes textual corrections and revisions appear in Q 2 both in the substantives and in the accidentals. Some of these changes, as the two slight ones in A (i, o) at l.i. 58, 137, the only alterations in the formes of A (besides the change on the lost title-page), could readily have been made by any publisher's or printing-house editor; but with the exception of sheet F (i, o) no printing section of Q 2 but contains variants that go well beyond the province of an editor or of a printing-house. Enough copies of Q 1 are not preserved to guarantee that when a forme of Q 2 shows only minor variants these were actually made in standing type between impressions and do not represent the type in a press-

¹ It may somehow be significant that only in sheet F does the standing type in Q 2 seem to contain no authoritative changes. This is one of the two sheets apparently transferred from one printing shop to another for the second edition. But authoritative variants appear in E.

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corrected Q₁ state, the uncorrected state alone being known from the four extant Q₁ copies. But the odds strongly favour the working hypothesis that the invariant formes in known copies of Q₁ (supplemented by some sheets of Q₃) represent the corrected state of the type if variance ever existed; and hence we are bound to assume that the observed Q₂ variants in standing type were in fact made subsequent to Q₁ impression.

The source of these corrections and revisions is not so clear as one would wish. Many of the corrections are of minor matters not beyond the competence of an editor to alter; but some are certainly more scrupulous and would seem to require authority, such as the alteration of Q₁ *Malauella* to *Malauolta* at II.i.91, and the rewriting of II.i.223 but especially of 300–302. Such a small but interesting matter as the correction of Bellafront's Q₁ *What* to *Whaat* at II.i.38 speaks for a considerable intimacy with the text (see her *shaall* at line 219), and there may be significance in the extremely minor change of Q₁ *dost* at I.v.228 to the spelling *doest*, which is that of Dekker's addition to *Sir Thomas More* though scarcely unique with him. The occasional relining of prose as verse argues for authorial care, and there would seem to be little question that the alterations stem from some authority, which was presumably Dekker.¹ This being so, an editor is bound to accept them in all

¹ Of course the printer on some few occasions may have added various of his own corrections if he observed what he considered to be errors. What I take to be a printer's variant in standing type occurs in sheet F at III.iii.106; and if this is so then the only other variant in standing type in this sheet, the minor alteration in the stage-direction at line 19, is the printer's work as well. Moreover, the compositor may not always have made the corrections in the precise form marked for him. Very likely at I.v.129, for example, he set a comma for what had been marked as an apostrophe, and perhaps at II.i.27 the preservation of the comma after *arise* was an error if it was not merely the result of the corrector's own carelessness. So, *accurs'd* at II.i.130 in Q₂ does not necessarily represent the actual spelling of the marked correction for Q₁ *a curst*. Yet there are only a few places where variants which seem to be non-compositorial are suspect. At first sight Q₂ *We are* for Q₁ *Were* at I.v.121 (instead of expected *We're*) seems like a sophistication; but the fact that the line is slightly indented in Q₁ argues for the loss of a type, which could have been a space plus *a* as well as a simple apostrophe. Moreover, if an author is correcting errors like this at a later date, he cannot always remember the precise form originally written. (If this could be strongly inferred, an editor would correct the original reading in preference to the author's inadvertent variant.) At II.i.204 the substitution of *melancholy* for what seems to have been the fashionable pronunciation *malancholy* might seem to be a sophistication, and