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Richard Dutton

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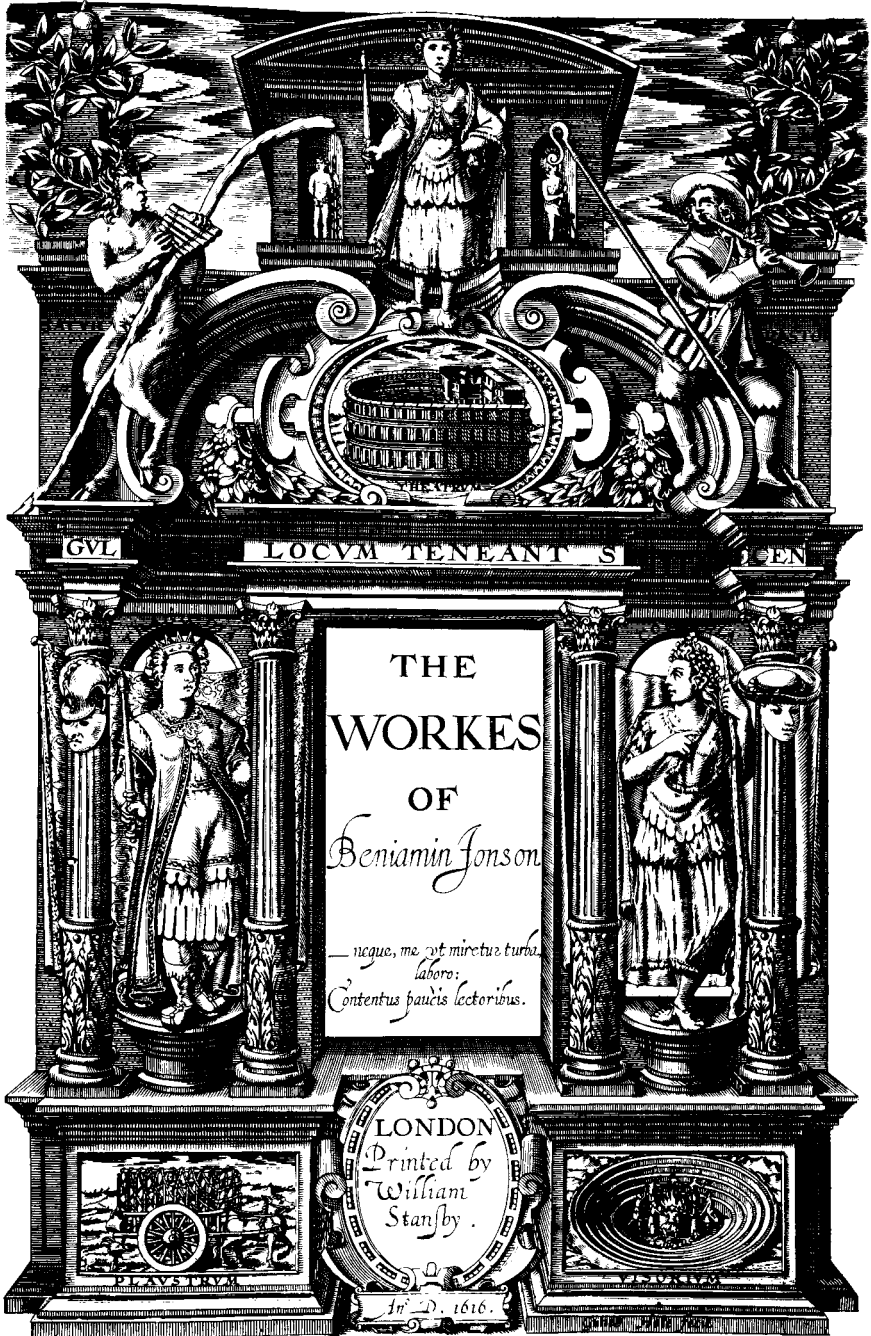
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Introductory Critical Studies

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Preface

This book has been a long time in the making. I first discovered Jonson at school where, unusually, we were given *The Alchemist* to study for 'A' Level. This led to a production of the play, which made me a devoted Jonsonian; I played Sir Epicure Mammon, which may help readers to understand some of the extravagances of the following pages. I studied Jonson again at King's College, Cambridge, and for a doctoral dissertation at the University of Nottingham. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all my teachers, and particularly Dr George Parfitt, who supervised my dissertation.

Over the past ten years I have published a number of articles on Jonson, and I should like to thank the editors for their permission to re-use material (usually in somewhat altered form) which first appeared in the following journals: 'The significance of Jonson's revision of *Every Man In His Humour*', *The Modern Language Review*, 69 (1974); '*Volpone* and *The Alchemist*: a comparison in satiric techniques', *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 18 (1974); 'The sources, text and readers of *Sejanus*: Jonson's "integrity in the story"', *Studies in Philology*, 75 (1978); "'What ministers men must, for practice, use": Ben Jonson's Cicero', *English Studies*, 59 (1978). More recently, I have had the pleasure of editing Jonson's *Epigrams* and *The Forest* for Carcanet Press and selections of *Jacobean and Caroline Court Masques and Civic Entertainments* (including many by Jonson) for Nottingham Drama Texts. I am grateful to the publishers of the former and the general editors of the latter for permission to re-use some of my introductory material in those volumes.

For the past eight years my students and colleagues at the University of Lancaster have borne patiently with my obsession, and I want to put my gratitude on record here, together with a general acknowledgement of all the comments and criticisms which have made this book a better one than it would otherwise have been. My apologies, finally, to my wife, daughter and cats, whose lives have been continually disrupted by the writing of this book.

August 1982. Lancaster

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A note on texts

Quotations from, and references to, the works of Jonson are based on the definitive Clarendon *Ben Jonson*, 11 vols. (Oxford, 1925–51), edited by C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (cited in the notes as H & S). I have modernised the spelling throughout, but I have retained Jonson's characteristic punctuation because it is often the key to his sense; when Groom Idiot is told

And so my sharpness thou no less dis-joints,
Than thou did'st late, losing my points
(*Epigrams* 58)

Jonson means by 'points' both his punctuation and his argument. It is useful to bear in mind that Jonson usually punctuates for the speaking voice, and that apparent difficulties often disappear when the phrase is read out loud.

Quotations from Shakespeare are taken from the single-volume *Pelican Shakespeare* (revised edition, Baltimore, 1969), general editor, Alfred Harbage, except that quotations from *The Two Noble Kinsmen* are taken from the edition by N. W. Bawcutt (Harmondsworth, 1977).

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The Catalogue.

Euery Man in his Humor,	To M ^r . CAMB DEN.
Euery Man out of his Humor,	To the INNES of COVRT.
Cynthias Reuells,	To the COVRT.
Poëtafter,	To M ^r . RICH. MARTIN.
Seianus,	To ESME LO. Aubigny.
The Foxe,	To the VNIVERSITIES.
The silent Woman,	To Sir FRAN. STVART.
The Alchemift,	To the Lady WROTH.
Catiline,	To the Earle of PEMBROK.
Epigrammes,	To the fame.
	The Forrest,
	Entertainments,
	Panegyre,
	Mafques,
	Barriers.