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A Critical, Old-Spelling Edition of The Birth of Merlin (Q 1662)

JOANNA UDALL

THE MODERN HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

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by
JOANNA UDALL

LONDON
THE MODERN HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
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King's College London, 1990 J.U.

ABBREVIATIONS AND FREQUENTLY CITED EDITIONS

The titles of Shakespeare's plays are abbreviated in accordance with the system adopted by the Oxford Shakespeare. This list includes the surnames of the most frequently cited authors and indicates which editions are used. Anonymous works are listed by title. When an early and a modern edition are given, quotations will be from the former and secondary line (or page) references from the latter.

Abbott	*A Shakespearian Grammar* (1869).
AFQL	*Anything For a Quiet Life.*
ALL	*All's Lost by Lust.*
Apocrypha	C. F. Tucker Brooke, ed., *The Shakespeare Apocrypha* (1908).
Beaumont and Fletcher	F. Bowers ed., *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon* (1966–).
Ben Jonson	see 'Jonson' below.
Bentley	*The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (1941–68).
Bible	The Bishops' Bible (1591).
BM	*The Birth of Merlin.*
Caxton's *Chronicle*	*The Chronicles of England* (1528).
Chapman	A. Holaday, ed., *The Plays of George Chapman: The Comedies* (1970); T. M. Parrott, ed., *The Plays and Poems of George Chapman: the Tragedies* (1910); except for N. Brooke, ed., *Bussy D'Ambois*, The Revels Plays (1964); Phyllis Brooks Bartlett, ed., *The Poems of George Chapman* (1941).
CC	*A Cure for a Cuckold.*
Coverdale	*Remains of Myles Coverdale*, edited by G. Pearson (1846).
Cowell	*The Interpretor* (1607).
CR	*Cupid's Revenge.*
D	N. Delius, ed., *The Birth of Merlin* (1856).

Dekker	F. Bowers, ed., *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker* (1953–61).
Dekker Commentaries	Cyrus Hoy, *Introductions, Notes, and Commentaries to ... 'The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker'* (1980).
Dent	*Proverbial Language in English Drama Exclusive of Shakespeare, 1495–1616* (1984).
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*.
Drayton	J. W. Hebel, ed., *The Works of Michael Drayton* (1961).
E	K. Elze, *Notes on Elizabethan Dramatists* (1889).
ed.	editor(s). In textual notes, = 'this editor'.
Edward III	see *Apocrypha*.
EETS	Early English Text Society.
ELH	*English Literary History*.
F	Folio.
Forsythe	*The Relations of Shirley's Plays to the Elizabethan Drama* (1914).
GGN	*Gammer Gurton's Needle*.
Goffe	*The Raging Turk* (1631), and *The Courageous Turk* (1632), M.S.R. (1968 (1974)).
Greene	*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1594), M.S.R. (1926).
Greene(?)	*John of Bordeaux; or, The Second Part of Friar Bacon*, M.S.R. (1936).
Greg	*A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama* (1939–59).
H1	A. F. Hopkinson, ed., *The Birth of Merlin* (1892).
H2	A. F. Hopkinson, ed., *The Birth of Merlin* (1901).
Harbage	*Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (1952).
Harbage and Schoenbaum	*Annals of English Drama, 975–1700* (1964). Dating limits of plays are from this source unless otherwise stated.
Heywood	*1 and 2 If You Know Not Me* (1605 and 1606), M.S.R. (1935).
History of England	Raphael Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles* (1587).

History of Scotland	Raphael Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles* (1587).
Jonson	C. H. Herford and P. and E. Simpson, ed., *Ben Jonson* (1925–52).
JU	Joanna Udall.
Kökeritz	*Shakespeare's Pronunciation* (1953).
LM	*Love's Mistress.*
Locrine	see *Apocrypha.*
M	M. Moltke, ed., *The Birth of Merlin* (1869).
Marlowe	F. Bowers, ed., *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe* (1981).
Marston	*Antonio and Mellida* (1602), and *Antonio's Revenge* (1602), M.S.R. (1921).
Massinger	P. Edwards and C. Gibson, ed., *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger* (1976).
Middleton	R. B. Parker, ed., *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, The Revels Plays (1969); R. C. Bald, ed., *Hengist King of Kent* (1938).
Middleton and Rowley	R. V. Holdsworth, ed., *A Fair Quarrel*, The New Mermaids (1974).
Millican	*Spenser and the Table Round* (1967).
MLN	*Modern Language Notes.*
MLR	*Modern Language Review.*
MM	*A Match at Midnight.*
MP	*Modern Philology.*
M.S.R.	Malone Society Reprints.
N&Q	*Notes and Queries.*
n	note.
Nashe	R. B. McKerrow, ed., *The Works of Thomas Nashe* (1966).
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary.*
Partridge	*A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (1984).
Peele	C. T. Prouty, General Editor, *The Dramatic Works of George Peele* (1952, 1961, 1970).
PBSA	*The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America.*

PMLA	*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*.
Q	Quarto.
RES	*Review of English Studies*.
Robb	D. M. Robb, 'The Canon of William Rowley's Plays', *MLR*, 45 (1950) 129–41.
RP	Richard Proudfoot, unpublished notes.
Sandeman	G. A. Sandeman, 'William Rowley' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1974).
SB	*Studies in Bibliography*.
Scot	*The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584).
SD	stage direction.
Selden	'Illustrations' to the Songs in Drayton's *Polyolbion* (see above, 'Drayton', vol. IV).
SG	*A Shoemaker a Gentleman*.
Shakespeare	*Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories and Tragedies* (1623), 'The Norton Facsimile', prepared by C. Hinman (1968); except for *Hamlet*, *Pericles*, and *1 Henry IV*, which are quoted from: M. J. B. Allen and K. Muir, ed., *Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto* (1981). Additional line references are from: P. Alexander, ed., *The Complete Works* (1966).
Sidney	Philip Sidney, *Arcadia* (1593); Maurice Evans, ed. (1977).
SP	*Studies in Philology*.
Spenser	T. P. Roche, ed., *The Faerie Queene* (1984).
STC	Short Title Catalogue.
T	H. Tyrrell, ed., *The Birth of Merlin*, in *The Doubtful Plays of Shakspere* (1850?).
TB	C. F. Tucker Brooke, ed., *The Birth of Merlin*, in *The Shakespeare Apocrypha* (1908).
Tilley	*A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1966).
TLS	*The Times Literary Supplement*.
TMM	*The Two Merry Milkmaids*.

Tourneur	*The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607); R. A. Foakes, ed., The Revels Plays (1975).
trans.	translator.
TW	*The Thracian Wonder.*
The Two Noble Ladies	M.S.R. (1930).
Wells	William Wells, 'The Birth of Merlin', *MLR*, 16 (1921), 129–37.
Wilkins	*The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (1607), M.S.R. (1963 (1964)).
Willson	*King James VI and I* (1956).
WNV	*A New Wonder a Woman Never Vext.*
WP	K. Warnke and L. Proescholdt, ed., *The Birth of Merlin* (1887).
The Yorkshire Tragedy	see *Apocrypha*.

CHAPTER I

THE BIRTH OF MERLIN: TEXT AND PRINTING

The Quarto of 1662

The Birth of Merlin; or, The Child hath found his Father exists in one early edition of 1662 (Greg 822)[1] printed by Thomas Johnson for Francis Kirkman and Henry Marsh. No reference has been found for its existence prior to the quarto, after which it is named in several catalogues. At the end of Marsh's catalogue in Part I of *The Wits* (1662) it is listed as item 129 under a sub-heading 'Plays newly Printed', and in *Endymion* (1663)[2] it is listed twice (under its main and then its alternative title) as a comedy (Sig. A6^{v} and A8^{v}). It first appears in a Kirkman catalogue in Corneille's *Nicomède* (1671) and is designated a tragi-comedy (Sig. A1^{v} of the appended leaves).

Source of Copy

The source of the printer's copy is unknown, but it must be assumed that the play was one of the 'several *Manuscripts* of this nature written by worthy Authors', which Kirkman mentions in his preface to *The Thracian Wonder* (1661) as being in his possession, and on which he reflects that it is 'much pity they should now lye dormant and buried in oblivion, since ingenuity is so likely to be encouraged by the happy Restauration of our Liberties' (Sig. A2).

Kirkman himself had theatrical connections which may have provided a source for such manuscripts. He dedicated his translation of *The Loves and Adventures of Clerio and Lozia* (1652) to his 'much honored Friend' (Sig. A2), William Beeston, who had succeeded his father, Christopher, as governor of Beeston's Boys at the Cockpit in Drury Lane in 1639. He also claims, in his semi-autobiographical work, *The Unlucky Citizen* (1673), to have had

> so great an *Itch* at *Stage-playing*, that I have been upon the Stage, not only in private to entertain Friends, but also on a *publique Theatre*, there I have Acted, but not much nor often. (Sig. S2, p. 259)

Thomas Wilkes, in *A General View of the Stage* (1759), also states that Kirkman had been an itinerant actor during the commonwealth period, one of the kind, he says, who used to travel in small groups of five or six, 'performing select Scenes out of the most celebrated Plays at gentlemen's houses' (p. 213).

Printing

The printing of *The Birth of Merlin* links it with a number of other plays from the same printing house. It shares standing type on the title-page (the words, 'Written by', two rows of fleurons and the imprint) with another Kirkman play of 1662, *Anything for a Quiet Life* (821), an instance not noted in Greg's *Bibliography*. Both also connect with an identified group of plays likewise printed by Thomas Johnson for Kirkman, but in 1661. Kirkman's own statements in the preface to *A Cure for a Cuckold* and *The Thracian Wonder* give the order of printing within this group as follows: *A Cure for a Cuckold* (817 AI), *The Thracian Wonder* (819), and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (67(b)). Both Bowers and Greg then add *The Two Merry Milkmaids* (364(b)) which has typographical similarities with the group, and shares a setting of the imprint with *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, but they do not agree about the placing of a reissue of *A Cure for a Cuckold* (AII), and it has not been possible to examine a copy.[3]

The 1662 imprint places *The Birth of Merlin* and *Anything for a Quiet Life* together after this group, and the late inclusion of the latter (as number 130) along with the former (129) in Marsh's 1662 list would seem to confirm this link. There is one feature which connects the title-pages of all six plays, an identifiable rule with a kink in it (the kink points down in *CC*, *TW*, and *BM*, and up in the other three). Other links are the settings of the word 'COMEDY', which *AFQL* shares with *CC*, *GGN* and *TMM*, and of the phrase 'As it hath been several times Acted with great Applause', which *BM* shares with *CC* and *TW*. *CC* and *TW* also share a setting of *'Placere Cupio'*.

Gerritsen's enquiry into the Kirkman forgeries also allows for the plays to be linked, through *The Two Merry Milkmaids*, with *Philaster* (363(g)), *Loves Mistress* (504(c)), *The Scornful Lady* (334(h)), and *Band, Cuff and Ruff* (326(c)).[4]

Copies of the quarto are printed on a mixed stock of paper with four small pot watermarks, a fifth, larger pot appearing in the last sheet of the Dyce copy 25.A.128. The Worcester College copy (Plays 3.35(3)), however, is printed on a different stock of apparently superior paper with larger watermarks. Sheet A has a 'horn' mark similar in design to Heawood 2776 and 2777, and the rest large pots bearing the initials 'BA', and similar in shape to Heawood 3594.[5] The library's own copy of C.H. Wilkinson's history, 'Worcester College Library',[6] contains an interleaved manuscript statement supporting the printed suggestion (p. 277) that many of the plays in the collection, including this one, had once belonged to Gerard Langbaine and referring to Bodleian MS Wood E4. In this connection it is perhaps worth mentioning that a link between Langbaine and Francis Kirkman has long been suspected,[7] and it is conceivable that Kirkman was the immediate source of a fine-paper copy of the play.

The Text

The text is, for the most part, good: it seems to have been through a preliminary proof-reading, and the number of obvious errors remaining is small. Two pages, B4, and D3^{v}, have been subject to stop-press correction, and there is evidence of loose type on B1^{v}, B3^{v}, B4, C2, C4, C4^{v}, D3^{v}, E2^{v}, E3, E4^{v}, F2 and G4.

The play is divided into Acts, and the first scene of the last three Acts only is marked. There is an apparent case of immediate re-entry involving three characters at the beginning of IV.v (Sig. F4), when the appearance of the blazing star seems to mark the passage of time between the information that Vortiger is under attack (IV.iv.9–16), and the news of his death (IV.v.16). There is no reason to suspect a formal break in the action. Speeches are printed continuously, and verse is generally printed as prose, except in the case of rhymed couplets. These peculiarities of setting also prevail in *AFQL*, *TW*, *CC*, *TMM*, and *LM*, and probably indicate a consistent desire on the part of the printer to save paper. Both *TMM* and *LM* are printed from earlier, properly-lined editions of 1620 and 1640 respectively, so it is demonstrable in these cases that the space-saving devices are the work of the type-setter, and not features of his copy. On the final page of *LM*, he resorts to smaller type in order to squeeze the text into the last page of a gathering (G4^{v}).

Setting is by formes, the inner being precedent in all gatherings except G. Two skeletons were employed, the outer one being printed in a rearranged state in F, and then becoming the inner forme (imposed after the outer) in G.[8] Attempts at compositor analysis have not proved fruitful. No variant forms which might denote compositorial spelling preference (e.g. I'le/Ile, brest/breast, fly/flie, ifaith/yfaith) occur frequently enough to be useful as evidence. Three names appear in different spellings (not counting those in the *Dramatis Personae* on A2 which contains many variant forms): *Modestia* and *Edoll* appear in stage-directions only, while *Modesta* and *Edol* are found in stage-directions, speech prefixes and text. *Constancia* and *Constantia* both appear in stage-directions and text, but the name occurs only in its abbreviated forms in the speech prefixes. Uncertainty about final syllables in names is common in dramatic texts, and can be caused by misreading of copy or by wrong expansion of abbreviated forms. In *The Spanish Gipsy* (Q 1653) 'Clara' and 'Claria' are interchangeable, as are 'Ismena' and 'Ismenia' in *The Maid in the Mill* (F 1647).

However, the word 'country' appears exclusively in that form up to Sig. C2, and as 'countrey' from C3 onwards, and on C2^{v}, C3, and C3^{v} occur three of the play's four instances of the spelling 'wee'l' (all other examples having a single 'e'). The fourth occurs on E2^{v}, and there is one instance of 'shee'l' on B4^{v}. Another feature present in the C gathering and its vicinity is the printing of character names in roman type in otherwise italic directions, and this occurs on

C1^{v}, C3, C3^{v}, and D1^{v}. On F3, a single direction has the name in italics and the rest in roman.

Other features which also appear to be grouped include a number of square brackets in stage-directions on G1^{v} and G2^{v} (the only other example is enclosing a mid-line direction on A4), and two sets of round brackets, indicating parenthetical statements, which appear in the text on G3 and G4.

Evidence for the Nature of the Copy

When the stints of the compositors cannot be readily defined by means of some persistent quirk of setting, it is impossible to distinguish compositorial from copy features. The use of square brackets, and of roman type for names, both run across Act divisions, but the two examples of round brackets occur in the same scene. The former is perhaps more likely to be compositorial than the latter, but the work of a reviser or scribe at this point in the manuscript could just as easily be the dominant influence.

In addition to the change in the spelling of 'country', there is a change in the phrasing of stage-directions. Up to and including C3^{v} the singular form, *Exit,* is used with plural subjects, but from C4 to the end *Exeunt* is employed. The first part of the play has, for example, *Exit all but Hermit* (B2^{v}), and *Exit All* (C3^{v}), while the second part has *Exeunt. Manet Prince* (C4), and *Exeunt Omnes* (G4).

The C gathering seems to be the starting point for a number of changes in setting, although the differences do not tally page for page. One feature of this text, however, occurs sporadically in gatherings A, B, C, F, and G; that is the orthographic peculiarity of placing an apostrophe before 's', 'r', 't', or 'd', thereby signifying, erroneously, the presence of a contraction. The following words are affected:

ne're (A4, C4^{v}, F1^{v}) = near
reveren'd (A4^{v})
talk's (B3^{v}) verb
Hanger's (B3^{v}) a plural
place't (C3); see II.ii.190n.
Cardecu's (F1) a plural
fien'd (F1^{v}, F2)
wil't (three instances, F1^{v})
will't (G2)

The number of occurrences seems to be unusually high in this play. *Anything for a Quiet Life* contains only 'ha's' =has (B1), 'y'on' =yon (B3^{v}), and 'wil't' (F3^{v}).

Apart from one area of confusion, to be discussed later, the quarto's stage-directions would be adequate to performance, being, on the whole, full and detailed. Four in particular are notably long and precise: the processional entrances in II.ii.0.1 and V.ii.37, and two spectacles, a show of Hector and Achilles at II.ii.207, and one of King Arthur and his tributary kings at V.ii.93. Other shorter directions also often contain information in addition to character names: who pursues whom in the battle-scenes, which dragon has the advantage in the dragon-fight (IV.i.214) and, when a distinction is to be made between two factions or combatants, that the second should enter through the other door (II.ii.207.3–4, III.vi.52.2, V.ii.93.2). Followers may be 'a Drum and Soldiers', 'Attendants', 'Saxon Lords', 'Etc.' or 'divers Princes'. Numbers are not specified except in the cases of the the pairs of spirits, bishops and gentlemen. Information is provided about the Devil's disguise on his first appearance; both Modesta and Merlin enter with books; other characters carry letters or a jewel. Merlin has a wand in IV.i.208.1 and IV.v.122, and Joan enters '*fearfully*' at the beginning of V.i. Very little is left to chance, not even the '*Kiss*' at III.vi.25 and '*reads*' before the Hermit's letter in I.ii.37.

These directions, most of which might be designated 'literary', are usually in italics, and centred, with exits and shorter directions to the right. However, there is a distinct group of terse directions in roman type and on the left, preceding other centred, italic directions:

Flourish Cornets (I.ii.0.1, I.ii.71)
Loud Musick (II.ii.0.1, II.ii.118.1)
Flourish (IV.i.122.1)
Alarum (IV.iii.0.1)
Florish Tromp (IV.v.0.1)
Flor. Tromp (V.ii.37.1)
Hoeboys (V.ii.93.1)

In addition, 'Thunder within' occurs at II.ii.207.7 to the right of a longer direction, and 'Kneel' before a speech-prefix at III.ii.147.

All but the direction for thunder occur in such a position as to suggest that they may have occupied the left margin in the printer's copy, an area usually available for the additions by an adapter or book-keeper.[9]

Edwards and Gibson in their edition of Massinger's *The Maid of Honour*[10] describe a printed text with some similar features, including 'larger roman type used almost exclusively for information of a particularly theatrical kind' (p. 110). They distinguish between these and the more descriptive directions which are apparently authorial, and deduce that the compositors

incorporated directions added to an author's manuscript to fit it for stage use, like the directions added to *Believe as You List*. The bolder roman type may represent the bolder hand of the stage adaptor. (p. 111)

This distinction can also be made in *The Birth of Merlin*, where the centred italic directions are more literary in aspect, and more closely related to the text, often being corroborated by reference in the dialogue. In IV.ii.19 '*A Tucket*', and in V.i.82 '*Alarum afar off*' are both commented on, and '*Soft Musick*' at III.ii.44 is accompanied by the question, 'What musick's this?' (l. 45). '*Thunder, then Musick*' at the opening of V.i is expanded by Joan's reference to 'adulterate infernal Musick' (l. 3). Such directions as these, along with those for a Drum (IV.i.122.1, IV.ii.0.1, IV.v.0.2, V.ii.37.1) and Trumpets (II.ii.207.3), both of which require the players of those instruments to 'walk on', seem to be linked to the author's conception of the play, and they do not appear in a form made distinctive by lay-out or typography.

The occasional use of square brackets, or of a different type-face for names, may appear to be aberrant and the result of individual compositorial practice but, of course, may represent the copy quite accurately. The quarto cannot be relied upon to reproduce the superficial appearance of the copy. However, the distinction evident throughout the play between two types of stage-directions (often set side by side) in type-face, position and content, suggests that in this case a feature of the printer's copy (an adapted MS or a scribal transcript of one) has been preserved, and evidence from theatrical manuscripts of the period would support this view.

Although none of the other features traditionally associated with prompt-books (e.g. advance warnings, or inclusion of actors' names) appear in the quarto text, it would seem that the play had been through at least the initial stages of preparation for the theatre. W. T. Jewkes, comparing the state of the text with that of Rowley's *A Shoemaker a Gentleman*, a play known to have been performed, finds that 'if anything the indications of connection with performance are even stronger' in *The Birth of Merlin*.[11]

Whether a performance actually took place cannot be ascertained: a few minor deficiencies like the absence of exits for Oswold at II.i.148, and Joan and Merlin at III.iv.103, and of directions for Lucina's temporary departure at III.iii.19, and that of Proximus and the Spirits at II.ii.205, are without significance. The actions are implied by the context, and an actor would be in no doubt as to what to do. The absence of Gloster's name from the group entrance at III.vi.52 presents more of a problem. It may be the result of compositorial error, conflation of scenes, or of a deliberate attempt to remove him from the scene. He does, however, speak half a line towards the end of the scene (l. 133), and a consideration of the possible doubling pattern does not suggest that he would have been required to take, or prepare for, another role during this scene.

There are two isolated cases of redundant entrances in scenes which are otherwise straightforward. An entry is marked for Edwin, who is already present, at III.ii.45, and a rather ambiguous stage-direction in Q (IV.i.135) seems to suggest a second entrance for Merlin:

Enter Clown, and Joan, Merlin.
The grammatical structure implies that 'Merlin' has been added to the original form of the direction, perhaps to indicate that he should move forward to confront Vortiger, together with the newly-returned Clown and Joan.

None of these inconsistencies would be insuperable to performers, but one area of major confusion in the stage-directions would render a portion of the play unplayable as it now stands. The problem concerns, primarily, Oswold and Toclio and their part in the action of II.ii. These two characters are silent in a great many of the scenes in which they appear (following their entrances at III.ii.45, III.vi.52, IV.ii.0.1 (Toclio), IV.v.0.2 (Toclio) and V.ii.37). It has to be assumed that they are often present only to swell the numbers, and are not meant to be distinguishable as individuals. The fact that they go out with Aurelius and his faction at III.vi.132, yet are ever after to be found in the company of Uter, would suggest this. However, in II.ii, this anonymity is at odds with their speaking roles which have been built up in I.i, I.ii, and II.i. At the beginning of II.ii, they 'pass over the stage' with Aurelius and others. At line 118 they both enter, and Oswold is addressed (l. 122) but does not speak. Then, an individual entrance is marked for Toclio (l. 146), who is already present but has not spoken. The second entrance is not commented on, and he does not speak until ninety-three lines later, when he suddenly delivers news about Prince Uter which Aurelius has been anxiously awaiting. Shortly after, Oswold also makes a second entrance accompanied by Prince Uter (l. 244). Both Oswold and Toclio then behave as if they had just arrived from the forest scene of II.i. It would appear that their presence earlier in the scene, in the company of Aurelius, is anomalous.

The confusion suggests that the scene has been re-written, perhaps twice. The initial state may have incorporated Oswold and Toclio in their capacity as courtiers, carrying out servants' duties, like pouring the wine (l. 122). A different intention regarding their function, however, becomes apparent on Toclio's second entrance. Here, he is to be the bearer of important news, and is the same character who was earlier a witness to the distracted wanderings of Prince Uter. This second state is further confused by the time-lag between his entrance and the delivery of that news. Assuming that the entry is not just misplaced from the margin of an adjacent page, the most likely explanation for the delay is that the intervening lines are an interpolation, and since they incorporate the show of Hector and Achilles and all of its accompanying dialogue, this theory would not be improbable. The episode is extraneous to the plot, and completely self-contained, and might easily have been slotted in as an added attraction. Such insertions were normally made in the margin, or on slips of paper,[12] and might thus conceivably have been set in the wrong place — in this case after, rather than before the direction for Toclio's entrance. Such an occurrence would account for the present state of the text at this point.

Further evidence that some original intentions in the play had been re-thought is contained in the *Dramatis Personae*. The Hermit, Anselm, is described as 'after Bishop of Winchester', a title which he is not given in the play, and which cannot be accounted for by reference to source material. Obviously, when the list was compiled, the play was in a different form from that in which it is printed. This disjunction between the list and the text of the play is also evident in the spelling of character names, some of which occur in forms not found in the text; for example 'Edwyn', 'Nichodemus' and 'Jone Goe-too't'.

Another indication that the Hermit's role may have been revised is his apparently unnecessary appearance in V.ii, after an absence of almost two Acts. He speaks four words of no particular significance (l. 10), and the lines which follow, spoken by Donobert and Gloster, are scarcely comprehensible. E. H. C. Oliphant was surely justified in finding this exchange an inadequate conclusion to the Modesta/Constantia plot. He postulates a missing scene between the Hermit and Donobert, which the dialogue of III.ii appears to be anticipating.[13]

The play's failure to provide both a reason for Uter's disappearance and, initially, a context for Vortiger is also lighted on by Oliphant, but neither of these deficiencies creates problems for the reader or the actor.[14] The adaptation and blending of plots from different sources will be shown to account for both discrepancies, but it is impossible to tell whether the amalgamation was effected as part of the play's original design or is the result of later revision. A study of the development of the Clown's role will suggest that, in the latter part of the play at least, his lines may have been imposed on existing material. D. M. Robb's view that *The Birth of Merlin* 'probably has a difficult history of revision, abridgement, and augmentation'[15] seems likely to be correct.

NOTES

1. Reference numbers of editions are from W. W. Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama*, 4 vols (1939–59).
2. STC (Almanacs) 1649A. The full title is *Endymion, 1663; or, The Man in the Moon His Northern Weather-Glass*, and the imprint is obviously a joke: 'SELENOPOLIS (*alias* BETHLEHEM)', 1653. In almanacs, the date in the imprint is normally the same as the year of the title.
3. Fredson Bowers, 'The First Series of Plays Published by Francis Kirkman in 1661', *Library*, 2 (1948), 289–91; and W. W. Greg *Bibliography*, I, II, notes to individual entries.
4. 'The Dramatic Piracies of 1661: A Comparative Analysis', *SB*, 11 (1958), 117–31 (pp. 122–23).
5. Edward Heawood, 'Watermarks mainly of the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Monumenta Chartae Papyraceae Historiam Illustrantia*, edited by E. J. Labarre, Paper Publications Society, I (Hilversum, 1950).
6. *Oxford Bibliographical Society Proceedings and Papers*, I (1927), 263–320.
7. See Sidney Lee's article on Richard Head, *DNB*.
8. Richard Proudfoot (collation notes). He finds this particularly clear in the Worcester College copy.
9. W. W. Greg, *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses: Commentary* (1931; reprinted 1969), p. 213.

10. *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*, I (Oxford, 1976).
11. *Act Division in Elizabethan and Jacobean Plays* (1958), p. 310.
12. *Dramatic Documents*, 201–02.
13. *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (1927), p. 406.
14. A dramatic reading of the play by members of the English Department, King's College, London, on 27 June, 1978, raised no queries about these matters.
15. 'The Canon of William Rowley's Plays', *MLR*, 45 (1950), p. 139.

CHAPTER II

DATE, STAGING AND STAGE HISTORY

Date

The play cannot be positively dated on external grounds, and internal evidence is inconclusive. The joke about 'Great Britains' (III.i.60), in which the Clown alludes to his girth, has been taken to indicate a date after 1604,[1] when James I issued a proclamation uniting England and Scotland under this title, but this term had been used previously to distinguish the island of Britain from Little Britain, or Brittany, and Caxton's *Chronicle*, which will be shown to be a likely source for the play, refers to the country as 'grete Brytayne'.[2] Although such a remark would have been topical after the proclamation, the essentially British nature of the story might just have made the joke feasible before that date. A reference to the Gorgon in connection with the soldier Marius may derive from Topsell's *History of Four-Footed Beasts* (1607), but it is impossible to be sure that the story originated with him (see II.ii.77–79, and note).

More conclusive evidence for a Jacobean dating of part of the play is to be found in its links with Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge*. The plays share parallel passages, which will later be shown to indicate the priority of *Cupid's Revenge*. Unfortunately, its date of composition is unknown: it was performed at Court on 5 January, 1612, but a date as early as 1607 has been suggested for its composition.[3] As far back as 10 March, 1598, the Admiral's Men were in possession of a 'merlen gowne and cape'. Their lost plays, *Vortigern* and *Uther Pendragon*, referred to by Henslowe as 'ne' on 4 December, 1596, and 29 April, 1597 respectively,[4] are frequently cited as possible early versions of *The Birth of Merlin*, but a connection is not demonstrable.

Staging

The claim of the title-page that *The Birth of Merlin* was 'several times Acted with great Applause' is unenlightening even if it is true. No reference has been found to a performance prior to its publication. However, as has been indicated, the text does show some signs of preparation for the stage, and it is worth considering what resources a company and a playhouse would need in order to put it on, and whether the requirements are at all unusual. For the purposes of this analysis, it will be necessary to assume that stage-directions

(and other indications in the spoken text) represent someone's anticipation of the capabilities of a company and a theatre.

The play could be performed by a cast of nineteen (fifteen men and four boys), plus extras who would be be needed as attendants, soldiers and princes. Two episodes utilize the full cast: the procession at the beginning of II.ii, in which seventeen characters '*pass over the Stage*' immediately after a further two have left it, and the dumb-show in V.ii.93, where thirteen characters witness a show containing another three plus '*divers Princes*'. According to information in the spoken text, there should be thirteen princes (V.ii.96), but the writer of the direction was, perhaps, aware that the full number of actors would not be available.

The stage was expected to have two doors: the phrase '*at the other door*' occurs three times in stage-directions; and the availability of a trap-door is a possibility which will also be discussed. A throne, or state, on a dais, perhaps with steps, would appear to be in use at I.ii.139, when Aurelius 'descends' to greet Artesia.[5] The question of whether II.i actually employed properties to suggest a woodland setting has to remain open. A remark which the Clown makes implies that something substantial may have been visible:

JOAN ... he uses these woods, and these are witness of his oathes and promise.

CLOWN We are like to have a hot suit on't, when our best witness's but a Knight 'ath Post. (II.i.24–27)

Whatever things 'these' are which are witnesses, they are obviously an attribute of the 'woods', but the assumption that they are in fact property trees cannot be made. The gesture may be towards the stage posts, and if they were the only things visible the line might be taken as a joke about their inadequacy. It would be typical of the Clown's literal-mindedness to undermine an attempt at dramatic illusion in this way.

The scene is most specifically located: 'trees' are alluded to twice, 'leaves', 'plants', and 'bushes' once each, and the place is described as a 'Forrest' (once) and as 'woods' (four times) by characters on the stage. Reynolds notes several plays in which similar references occur but makes the point that, far from clarifying the position, these allusions raise significant questions about the interpretation of information from play texts.[6] It is impossible to tell from references which appear in the spoken text alone whether they are intended to fabricate an illusion or to reinforce the effect of something which the audience can see.

Dragons and traps

Since they are required to fight, pause and fight again, the two dragons who appear at IV.i.208 must have been actors in dragon costumes and not models

like that in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (l. 1198), or firework-powered effects.[7] Henslowe refers to 'Fierdrackes sewtes for Dobe' as well as the property, 'j dragon in fostes'.[8] In Heywood's *The Brazen Age* (1613), 'Achelous is beaten in, and immediately enters in the shape of a Dragon' (Sig. B3), and in Chapman's *Caesar and Pompey* (1631) a stage-direction requires:

> *Thunder, and the Gulfe opens, flames issuing; and Ophioneus ascending, with the face, wings, and taile of a Dragon; a skin coate all speckled on the throat.* (Sig. C3, II.i.24)

It is conceivable that the dragons in *The Birth of Merlin* were intended to enter through a trap-door; certainly the word 'appear' leaves this possibility open, unlike the specific reference to two doors for the entrances of Hector and Achilles.

The use of a trap-door requires a cue and some noise to cover the sound of the machinery, and both are here provided: '*Merlin strikes his wand*', and then the dragons' appearance is preceded by '*Thunder and Lightning*' (IV.i.208.1). A further occasion for the use of a trap would seem to present itself in III.iii, when the Devil commands that Lucina and the Fates should 'Rise, rise' (l. 14). Their appearance is accompanied by thunder, and the Devil subsequently directs Lucina ('there lies your way', l. 16), presumably out of one of the stage doors to find Joan. When she returns after the dance of Anticks, the Fates do not, and the means of her final exit is not specified, but the opening words of the next scene (III.iv.1–2) reveal that thunder has just been heard, which would be consistent with the trap's having been in use.

The death of Proximus

The Saxon magician Proximus is killed at the climax of his confrontation with Merlin by a falling stone which he had failed to foresee (IV.i.191). The effect must have been startling, but it is difficult to imagine how it would have been achieved. If the stone was free-falling, Proximus would have to stand on a pre-marked spot and have some kind of imitation stone dropped on his head, a procedure which could be ludicrous if the stone fell wide.

A similarly curious death singles out the enchanter Ormandine in John Kirke's *The Seven Champions of Christendom* (1638) when '*Thunder strikes him*' (Sig. H3), and the King in Henry Shirley's *The Martyred Soldier* (1638) when '*A Thunder-bolt strikes him*' (Sig. I4), and Lawrence thinks that the latter must have been achieved by means of a squib on a line.[9] It may be that a thunderbolt was an effect essentially different from a stone, but they share the characteristics of being selective in their victims and of striking from above, unlike the stones which are thrown in *The Travails of the Three English Brothers* (1607), Sig. D4^{v}, or the 'great peece of a Rocke' which Hector casts at

Ajax in *I Iron Age* (1632), Sig. F1ᵛ. In *The Brazen Age* (1613) Hercules kills Omphale with a piece of rock (Sig. L2), and in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Bonduca* (1647), '*Caratach kils Judas with a stone from the Rock*' (Sig. 4I3ᵛ, V.iii.127), while he is above and Judas below, but these are all personal attacks and not manifestations of the invisible hand of fate. Although the precise nature of the stone remains a mystery, it is evident from Merlin's order that the body be removed (l. 197) that no trap-door was involved in the operation, and that Proximus did not disappear through the floor as Hercules does in *The Brazen Age* when he is struck by Jupiter with a thunderbolt and sinks into the earth (Sig. L3).

The blazing star

The Birth of Merlin shares a blazing star with a number of other plays of diverse backgrounds. No two examples are exactly alike and, as D. L. Frost has shown, the effect cannot be used to identify a play with a particular theatre.[10] There seems to have been plenty of scope for additions to the basic star effect, that in *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607) alone possessing neither stage-directions nor dialogue which offer any elaboration (Sig. I2ᵛ, V.iii.0.3). In Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar* (1594), on the other hand, there is '*Lightning and thunder*' (Sig. E4ᵛ, l. 1165) before, and '*Fireworkes*' (l. 1176) after, and the direction, '*Heere the blazing Starre*' (l. 1174) is followed by the comment, 'Now firie starres and streaming comets blaze' (Sig. F1, l. 1175), and *Captain Thomas Stukely* (1605), and Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk* (1632) also contain general celestial conflagrations.[11]

The blazing star in *2 If You Know Not Me* (1606), Sig. E2ᵛ, l. 1255, offers further variations when a character notes how it 'streakes' (l. 1257), and another describes its shape:

> . . . this strange starre appearing in the North,
> And in the constellation of *Cassiopey*,
> Which with three fixed starres commixt to it,
> Doth make a Figure Geometrycall,
> *Lozengwise* cal'd of the learned *Rombus*,
> Conducted with the hourely Moone of heauen,
> And neuer altred from the fixed sphere.
> (Sig. E3, ll. 1270–76).

It is always risky to rely on the descriptive utterances of dramatic characters, but when the object described is visible to the audience there cannot be too marked a disjunction between the effect and what is said about it. However, it becomes crucial to interpret such statements correctly. The term, 'streakes', for example, may suggest movement, but the *OED*, offering this instance as its sole example, defines it, 'Of a comet: To emit rays or streamers of light. *Obs*.'

(v^2 4. *intr*. a.). This may, therefore, as easily refer to shape as to movement and, indeed, the title-page of Abraham Fleming's *A Treatise of Blazing Stars in General* (1618) depicts a simplified six-pointed star with lines from the points intersecting at the centre, short radiating lines between the points, indicating rays or beams of light, and a long tail resembling a feather. The rest of the description in *2 If You Know Not Me* indicates that the effect is indeed stationary. Three 'fixed' stars join with the blazing star to create a constellation in the shape of a rhombus, and the 'hourely Moone' is also visible. (The *OED* offers the possible meaning 'continual' for 'hourely'.) The final insistence that the star is 'neuer altred from the fixed sphere' confirms the static nature of the display.

Pliny describes blazing stars as 'dreadfull to be seene, with bloudie haires, and all over rough and shagged in the top like the bush of haire upon the head',[12] and it is this 'hairy' quality which so frequently crops up in dramatic descriptions. The term 'blazing star' (*OED* 1. *Obs*.) is synonymous with 'Comet', and there is always the possibility that the playhouse effect was intended to represent one of these shaggy stars and not necessarily to 'blaze' in the representation. But too many instances are supported by descriptions suggesting the presence of real fire, and theatrical tradition offers numerous examples of fireworks being employed in theatres. It is most unlikely that such an opportunity for spectacle would have been missed. The beams so often referred to could have been simulated by the method which Serlio recommends for the second phase of the lightning effect:

> But touching the beames of the lightning, you must draw a piece of wire over the scene, which must hang downewards, whereon you must put a squib covered over with pure gold or shining lattin.[13]

But there must have been some non-pyrotechnical foundation to many of the blazing stars as they are sometimes visible for quite lengthy periods. Although in *The Revenger's Tragedy* the star is commented on for only fourteen lines, in *The Courageous Turk* it seems to have been visible for at least eighty-eight lines (including a song), and in *The Birth of Merlin* it is still being referred to some ninety-six lines after its first appearance.

This last is the most elaborate single effect of all those so far described. It is supposed to include a dragon's head with two beams of light emanating from its mouth, and seven smaller beams pointing downwards from the main body of the star. The details of its shape are recounted twice, by the Prince and Edol (IV.v.2–9), and then again by Merlin as he expounds its significance (86–102, 127). The amount of detailed description makes Anthony Harris (in *Night's Black Agents*) suspicious:

> The fact that Merlin repeats the verbal account suggests that the display is not visible to the audience, who perhaps have witnessed nothing more than the initial

blazing star, which is the only effect actually described by the stage directions. (p. 155)

But this does not explain what the blazing star is, nor does it take into account that whatever Merlin sees, he persists in referring to it as if it is still there ('now observe my Lord, and there behold' (l. 86), and 'Again behold' (l. 91)) which would be baffling if he was pointing to a place where the star had been but was no longer.

John Babington, in his *Pyrotechnia* (1635) describes methods for producing outdoor firework displays which would seem, in principle at least, to offer the most likely solution to the problems raised by playhouse requirements for fiery effects. Two of the methods are headed

The manner of composing a wheele, which having finished his revolution, shall represent a Coat of Armes. (p. 25)

and

How to represent a Coat of Armes in fire, which having burnt a small while, the said Coat shall appeare in his perfect colours, and shall continue so a long while. (p. 27)

Both are illustrated (Fig. 7, p. 26), and the principle involves picking out a shape with small fireworks, and letting them burn down to a back-board on which the original design can be seen. This would need some skill in the making, and Babington obviously saw it as a spectacle for great out-door occasions, as he mentions wind-direction, and uses for his illustrations the Prince of Wales's Feathers and the letters CR, but it is an example of a very controlled use of fireworks which could be reduced in scale for employment in playhouses. The 'fire Wheeles' (like the modern 'Catherine' wheels) described in John Bate's *Mysteries of Art and Nature* (1634), Sig. L3, p. 77, could, as Lawrence suggests,[14] provide a basic star effect, but Babington's method also allows for the permanent aspect of the star, and could be adapted either to an ordinary comet-shape or to the more complicated designs required in *The Birth of Merlin* or *2 If You Know Not Me*.

The rock

The rock in *The Birth of Merlin* obviously provides a secondary acting area, but the stage-directions in V.i fail to make clear how this is linked to the rest of the stage. It would seem that Joan and the Devil are both on stage for their entrance: '*Enter Joan fearfully, the Devil following her*' (V.i.0.2), but that the Devil, at least, is on top of the rock at the moment when it opens up to swallow him. Line 38, 'And on this rock Ile stand . . .', could describe a present state or a future intention, but he is almost certainly above stage level by line 43, as he takes some time to recognize Merlin (l. 49) when he enters.

What is happening to Joan is also difficult to visualize from the directions, but the text gives clues. The Devil tells the spirits to 'Mount her as high as palled *Hecate*' (l. 37), which implies that she is to be raised or drawn up to some high place and not carried off to hell at or below stage level. It would seem that they must be trying to force Joan up the rock, and that they partially succeed, for Merlin orders them to 'let loose [their] hold' and to 'Set her down safe' (ll. 44, 45). In *The Triumph of Time*, one of the *Four Plays in One* from the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio (1647), something similar happens to Anthropos when Industry, Arts and Labour are required to 'conduct this mortal to the rock'. A stage-direction states that they '*carry Anthropos to a rock*' and it seems later that he may be on the rock as several allegorical characters move '*dancing (and mask'd) towards the Rock, offering service to Anthropos*' (Sig. 8F4).

Merlin would seem to remain on the stage throughout the scene, and he would presumably cast his spell on the Devil and the rock from a commanding distance. Reynolds's suggestion that all the participants in the scene could be on the rock, and that it is played entirely 'above', cannot easily be upheld:[15] the pursuit entrance suggests the open stage, and if Joan is to be elevated in some way it is unlikely that she is already on the balcony. Also, it would be preferable, dramatically, to have the Devil isolated for his engulfment; the other characters might appear to be in danger if they were on the rock with him, and it would be more effective to have the Devil gloating from an apparently secure and superior position, only to fall victim to an unsuspected trap-door. The episode may bear visually some comparison with the descents of Barabas in the *Jew of Malta* (V.v.63) and of Guardiano in *Women Beware Women* (V.ii.125–28).

The rock in *The Birth of Merlin*, then, has to be large enough to stand on, easy to climb from the outside, capable of 'swallowing' an actor, and also of giving vent to thunder and lightning. In John Kirke's *The Seven Champions of Christendom* (1638), probably written about 1613,[16] just such a rock appears, and its method of operation is made quite clear. The witch Calib explains:

> . . . on the outside of this Rocke I climbe
> Vp by the crags unto the top.
> (Sig. C2)

Then follows the stage-direction, '*Musick: the Rocke cleaves, she sinkes; thunder & lightning*' (Sig. C2^{v}). The event is prepared for, and more detail given, in an earlier speech by Calib:

> . . . take this charming wand;
> Make tryall of it then against this rocke,
> And with once waving it about thy head,
> The mortis sinnewed stones shall cleave in sunder,
> And gape like an insatiate grave, to swalow up what's
> theron:

And doe but wish that it should close agen,
Give but the other wave, and it is done:
(Sig. C1)

These extracts provide two important pieces of information. First it is made plain that the witch climbs up the outside of the rock, in full view of the audience, as she is talking while she does it. She does not disappear and mount an internal staircase, the usual way to get to the balcony. Secondly, the direction '*she sinkes*', coupled with the rock's ability to 'swalow up what's theron', indicates the precise nature of the action. It is not a case of the rock splitting from top to bottom as in the masques, but of a trap-door on the top of the rock (like an 'insatiate grave'). If this information is applied to the rock in *The Birth of Merlin*, the fact that a rock could be scaled from the outside removes Reynolds's problem of how the Devil gets up there, and establishes that a person could be swallowed up from the top of a rock. The noise of machinery could be disguised by thunder for which there are directions in both plays.

The source of *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, Richard Johnson's romance of the same name, evokes a rather different mental picture of the rock. It splits open, the witch enters, and it then closes behind her.[17] The specifics in the description in the play are presumably reflecting the operations of the theatrical apparatus.

A rock of apparently similar dimensions appears in Fletcher's *Bonduca* (F 1647): '*Enter Caratach upon a rock, and Hengo by him, sleeping*' (Sig. 4I1^{v}, V.i.0.1). The two characters spend the rest of the scene there, conversing with people below, and Caratach reappears there in V.iii.10, after another character below comments that he is invisible; and he exits by sitting down beside the sleeping boy (l. 18) and remains invisible for the rest of the scene. The manuscript version contains some stage directions which are not in the Folio of 1647 and which show that it was expected that this rock too could be scaled from the stage: '*climing the rock: fight:*' (ll. 2567–68), and '*they come of the rocke*' (ll. 2587–88).[18] There is no gap in the exchanges to cover this descent, which seems to be made in the space of one-and-a-half lines. According to R. C. Bald, the MS represents Fletcher's foul papers, and the Folio a text which has been 'thoroughly gone over by a producer'.[19] Although the directions about climbing the rock appear only in the MS, and hence might be taken to be wishful thinking on the part of the author, the rock itself is referred to in the Folio stage-directions and the additional action provided by the MS stage-directions has to be assumed in order that the dialogue should make sense.

The question of what the rock was remains open. There seem to be two possibilities: either it was some sort of fascia which used the stage balcony as its summit, or it was a free-standing object. Henslowe's inventory which includes a rock along with a cage, a tomb and a hell-mouth perpetuates the mystery.[20]

Rocks in masques and pageants were undoubtedly objects unambiguously rock-like in appearance. The Revels accounts contain many details about their manufacture, transportation and decoration.[21] The Merchant Taylors' records concerning the Lord Mayor's Show of 1610 include, interestingly, a payment to 'him that represented the person of Merlyn in the Rock',[22] and in a masque in Beaumont and Fletcher's stage-play, *The Maid's Tragedy* (1622), Aeolus enters '*out of a Rocke*' (Sig. B3, I.ii.185), which must have been a separate item; the masque is a self-contained event in the play's action and would have had to bring on its own furniture.

The information from plays, however, is usually more ambiguous, and in Wentworth Smith's *The Hector of Germany* (1615), acted at the Red Bull and the Curtain (according to the title-page), it is almost certain that the top of the rock is, in fact, the balcony. The scene in question opens with the direction, '*Enter young Fitzwaters aloft*'; he then speaks: 'Since I was cast vpon this fatall Rocke . . .' (Sig. F4). When his descent is required, someone is sent off-stage to bring him down (Sig. GI).

The evidence of Thomas Heywood's *Love's Mistress* (1636), on the other hand, suggests the presence of a rock which could be climbed both from on-stage (Sig. C2^{v}) and off-stage (Sig. C2^{v}–C3). Although the play was presented as a masque, with '*excellent Inventions*' by Inigo Jones, at Denmark House subsequent to its first performance on the stage at the Phoenix in Drury Lane in 1634, it would seem that the quarto stage-directions reflect playhouse conditions: the requirements are modest, and there is no attempt at retrospective description so common in printed masques.

The playhouse rock, it seems, was often accessible by more than one route and, in some cases, the sudden disappearance of a character from the top may indicate the existence of a trap-door. As with the blazing star there is nothing to suggest that the effect was the prerogative of a particular playhouse, but the close similarities between the operation of the two rocks in *The Birth of Merlin* and *The Seven Champions* may indicate that both playwrights had the same sort of equipment in mind. According to its title-page, *The Seven Champions of Christendom* was performed at the Cockpit and the Red Bull, and this suggests that it was under the auspices of Queen Anne's Men who were at the Red Bull from 1606 to 1617 and the Cockpit in Drury Lane from 1616 to 1619.[23]

Nearly all of the plays mentioned in connection with the staging of *The Birth of Merlin* have been (where their provenance is known) public theatre plays. The only exceptions are the two ambiguous works, *Four Plays in One*, and *Love's Mistress*. It seems reasonable to assume that *The Birth of Merlin* is also a public theatre play, and that the resources it calls for, despite their number and variety, could be provided on any public stage.

Stage history

If no reference has been found to a performance prior to the date of publication, there is a subsequent record of the presentation of a droll based on *The Birth of Merlin* at Southwark Fair in 1724.[24] The *Daily Journal* for 2 September (repeated on 5 September), advertises it as follows:[25]

At Norris's (alias Jubillee Dicky) Chetwood's, Orfeur's, and Oates's Great Theatrical Booth, next Mr. Bullock's in Bird-Cage-Alley, during the time of Southwark Fair, will be perform'd an excellent New Droll, never acted before, call'd, *Merlin, the British Enchanter*; or *The Child has found his Father*. With the comical Humours of Sir Nicodemus Nothing, Simon Go to'ot [*sic*], and his Sister Joan, with a Representation of the terrible Battles that were fought between the Saxons and the ancient *Britains*, with a shower of Fire, and the appearance of a Comet, with a fiery Dragon that prognosticated the Birth of King Arthur, the British Worthy. The part of Sir Nicodemus Nothing by Jubillee Dicky; Merlin, Mr. Norris jun; Simon Go to'ot, Mr. Oates; Duke of Gloster, Mr. Corey; Aurelius, King of Britain, Mr. Chapman; Oswald, Mr. Marshall; Hermit, Mr. Walford; Ostorius, Mr. Harrison; the Devil, Mr. Penkethman; Artesia, Mrs. Sterling; Joan Go to'ot, Mrs. Orfeur; Lucy, Mrs. Vincent; Edol, Earl of Chester, Mr. Wilks jun; Uter Pendragon, Mr. Orfeur; and Buffle-Head, Mr. Chetwood. With Scenes, Machines, Flyings, Sinkings, and Risings proper to the Droll. With several Entertainments of Dancing by the best Masters, and Singing by a Gentleman that never appear'd in Publick before, with a new Song by Mrs. Boman, representing the Genius of England. The principal Characters new drest.

Similar advertisements appeared in the *Daily Post* on 15, 17, and 18 September, with a revised version on 21 September, which adds that it has 'given a general Satisfaction this Fair', and admits that it was performed by 'Persons from Drury Lane'. It is further revealed that there were 'Devils flying in Showers of Fire'.

Although some of the play's original attractions have been retained, a number of alterations have been made: several characters have disappeared, and Sir Nicodemus Nothing, a small character-part with one appearance in the play, has become a leading role. The part was taken by Henry Norris, known as Jubilee Dicky after his success in a part of that name in *The Constant Couple; or a Trip to the Jubilee*, and described by Chetwood as a 'natural Comedian'; he was a 'diminutive figure', and would have been nearly sixty years old at the time of the *Merlin* droll. Appropriately, his son, who played the part of the boy Merlin, resembled him in stature.[26]

The cast list for the droll would suggest that the play's subplot had been discarded: neither the two girls, nor their father, nor their suitors appear. It is probable that Lucy was introduced to replace them, perhaps in some new romantic action. Buffle-Head is also new, and was probably a comic role.

The performances of 1724 do not appear to have been the last. *The Birth of Merlin, the British Enchanter; or, The Child has Found his Father*, was

advertised for Petty's Old Playhouse, Tottenham Court, from 4 August, 1736, and *The Birth of Merlin* for Lee's Playhouse, Southwark Fair, from 7 September.[27] There are no cast lists, but the former advertises 'a Representation of Merlin's Cave, and the Hermitage, as in the Royal Gardens at Richmond. Likewise several other Scenes performed by Merlin's Art'. This seems to show an indebtedness to William Gifford's revival of Dryden's *King Arthur* which appeared for the winter season of 1735–36 and offered similar attractions.[28]

There are several other entertainments in the eighteenth century which employ the character of Merlin, but there is no information which suggests that they were derived from the play. Lewis Theobald's piece, *Merlin; or, The Devil of Stonehenge* (1734), which was performed on 12 December 1734,[29] is indebted to *The Birth of Merlin* for one detail only. In his introduction, Theobald gives an account of the various theories about the origin of Stonehenge. That Merlin built it as a tomb for his dishonoured mother is, as far as can be ascertained, a version of the story first proposed in *The Birth of Merlin*, but Theobald comments:

This Tradition, as most fabulous and best suiting our Purpose, we have hinted at in this Entertainment; and I observe, that in an old Play, called *The Birth of* MERLIN, or, *The Child hath found his Father*, (said to have been written by *Shakespeare* and *Rowley*) this superstitious Opinion finds Countenance. (p. 9)

Samuel Ireland seems not to have referred to *The Birth of Merlin* in connection with his Shakespearian forgery, *Vortigern* (staged at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, 2 April, 1796), despite the appearance in his play of the characters Aurelius, Uter and Vortigern.[30]

The only recorded, full-scale production of the play is that directed by Denise Coffey at Theatr Clwyd in June, 1989,[31] with Roy Hudd as the Clown, Anna Karen as Joan, and Bill Homewood as Vortiger/the Devil. The director's intention to 'reveal the play for a twentieth-century audience, as entertainingly and as clearly as I can'[32] was amply fulfilled in a production which was faithful to the text but also not afraid of adaptation and addition. Relatively few cuts were made, and the new matter included a 'frame' (comprised of an induction scene and an epilogue, utilizing the Clown as 'stand-up' comedian), topical jokes, songs and a musical score.[33] The music was particularly successful, evoking atmosphere in scenes of prophecy and magic, and offering actors a way of tackling some of their longer and more sententious speeches, several of which were sung. The more aria-like speeches lent themselves to this treatment and revealed a link with later styles of romantic opera. Many roles were doubled, including Constantia/Lucina, Gloster/Nicodemus and Vortiger/Devil, and use was made of the audience in the comic scenes: Joan accosted a number of the men while looking for her child's father, and the two Gentlemen looking for the fatherless child handed round pictures as of a wanted criminal.

The production demonstrated not only the lasting power of the Merlin myth and the dramatic possibilities of magic, but the sheer quality of the comic writing.[34]

NOTES

1. E. H. C. Oliphant, *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (1927), p. 406.
2. For example, on folio 43^{v} of the 1528 edition.
3. See James E. Savage, 'The Date of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge*', *ELH*, 15 (1948).
4. *Henslowe's Diary*, edited by R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 318, 55, 58.
5. William J. Lawrence, *Pre-Restoration Stage Studies* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), p. 319.
6. George Fullmer Reynolds, *The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater, 1605–1625* (1940), p. 46.
7. Anthony Harris in *Night's Black Agents* (1980), pp. 155–56, notes several treatises on fireworks which provide for dragons, and assumes that such an effect would be employed here.
8. *Henslowe's Diary*, p. 317, l. 17, and p. 320, l. 84.
9. *Pre-Restoration Stage Studies*, p. 256.
10. *The School of Shakespeare: The Influence of Shakespeare on English Drama, 1600–42* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 259–60.
11. Sig. K1 and H1 (ll. 1603–04), respectively.
12. Caius Plinius Secundus, *The History of the World*, translated by Philemon Holland (1601), II.25.
13. Quoted by W. J. Lawrence, *The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies*, second series (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1913), p. 18.
14. *Pre-Restoration Stage Studies*, p. 257, n. 2.
15. *The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater*, p. 101.
16. Date suggested by John Freehafer, 'Shakespeare's *Tempest* and *The Seven Champions*', *SP*, 66 (1969), 87–103 (p. 102). The limits *c.* 1600–1638 are given by A. Harbage and S. Schoenbaum in their *Annals of English Drama, 975–1700* (1964). All further limits given for plays are from this source unless otherwise stated.
17. *The Most Famous History of the Seven Champions of Christendom* (1596; reprinted 1608), Sig. B2^{v}.
18. John Fletcher, *Bonduca*, prepared by W. W. Greg, M.S.R. (Oxford, 1951).
19. *Bibliographical Studies in the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1647* (1938, for 1937), p. 78.
20. *Henslowe's Diary*, p. 319, l. 56.
21. See Subject Index, ROCK (p. 509) in *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth*, edited by Albert Feuillerat (Louvain, 1908).
22. R. T. D. Sayle, ed., *Lord Mayors' Pageants of the Merchant Taylors' Company in the 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries* (1931), p. 91.
23. Freehafer, p. 101.
24. See *The London Stage, Part 2: 1700–1729*, edited by Emmet L. Avery (Carbondale, Illinois, 1960), p. 784; and Sybil Rosenfeld, *The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century* (Cambridge, 1960), p. 85.
25. The punctuation of the list has been regularized for the sake of clarity.
26. Information from the account of Henry Norris in W. R. Chetwood's *A General History of the Stage* (1749), pp. 196–99.
27. *The London Stage, Part 3*, edited by Arthur H. Scouten, pp. 593, 595.
28. *The London Stage, Part 3*, p. 537.
29. *The London Stage, Part 3*, p. 440.
30. The play was printed in 1799.
31. Reviewed by Joanna Udall, 'Britain as it never was', *TLS* 4499 (23 June, 1989), p. 693.
32. *'The Birth of Merlin': A Comedy Attributed to William Shakespeare and William Rowley*, with additional chapters by R. J. Stewart, Denise Coffey, and Roy Hudd (Shaftesbury, 1989), p. 53. This includes an edition of the play based on Farmer's facsimile and TB.
33. Composers: Stuart Gordon and R. J. Stewart.
34. Valuable comments on this aspect of the play are provided by Denise Coffey and Roy Hudd in their chapters: see note 32 above.

CHAPTER III

THE QUESTION OF AUTHORSHIP

There are Knaves in all *Trades* but *Book-selling*.
Richard Head, *The English Rogue* (1665), p. 144.

The Problem

The title-page of *The Birth of Merlin* causes problems: it links the names of two playwrights not otherwise known to have worked together and, further, two whose literary reputations differ so radically as to make their complicity suspect to later readers. Shakespeare died in 1616, his last plays, *Henry VIII*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and, probably, *Cardenio*, assumed to have been written 1612–13.[1] Rowley died in 1626, his first known play having been printed in 1607. Rowley was briefly a member of Shakespeare's company, the King's Men, about seven years after Shakespeare's death.[2]

The possibility of collaboration between the two is not necessarily precluded by the known facts, but a title-page ascription may indicate one playwright's revision of the work of the other, or just two names from a larger group of collaborators. The dates, histories and styles of Rowley and Shakespeare would seem to make revision the more likely connection between the two names, although Shakespeare is known as a collaborator, with John Fletcher, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and probably also *Henry VIII* and the lost *Cardenio*. His name is linked with that of Robert Davenport in a Stationers' Register entry of 1653 as co-author of the lost plays *Henry I* and *Henry II*.[3] If the entry is to be relied on, that collaboration too may have taken the form of revision since Davenport's earliest known writings date from 1624, some eight years after Shakespeare's death. But the information may not be accurate: the two plays are part of a block entry which includes *Cardenio*, attributed to Shakespeare and Fletcher, and *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, attributed for the first time in its history to Shakespeare, and although the former ascription is usually accepted, the latter is not.[4]

The same uncertainty dogs the title-page of *The Birth of Merlin*, as Kirkman's reliability has often been called into question; Symonds, for example, describes him as 'a most untrustworthy caterer and angler for the public'.[5] A man who, by his own admission, was arrested sixty times before the age of thirty is unlikely to have led a completely blameless existence, despite his

persistent presentation of himself as an 'Unlucky Citizen', a victim of circumstances; and the extent to which his associates were involved in the piratical printing of play-texts has been confirmed by modern research.[6] These factors do not, of themselves, invalidate Kirkman's statements about the authorship of plays, but W. W. Greg's analysis of his attributions in play-lists, and the nature of his errors, does not encourage confidence:

On the whole, while Kirkman showed some diligence in consulting the printed editions and was a good deal more careful in presenting the information drawn from them than his predecessors had been, the results of his boasted opportunities of acquiring knowledge about the pre-Restoration drama can only be described as disappointing.[7]

In the case of *The Birth of Merlin*, Shakespeare's name on the title-page has inevitably proved the more provocative of the two, and the presence of his hand in the play has been fiercely denied by writers who are happy to allow Rowley's. This apparently illogical position has been justified on the grounds that Shakespeare's name might have been employed for commercial reasons, as is thought to have been the case with other plays now among the Shakespeare Apocrypha.[8] E. H. C. Oliphant felt more convinced by Rowley's name than Shakespeare's, as he explains,

not because the one lived much nearer to Kirkman's own times than the other, but because in 1662 Rowley's name was of no weight, while Shakspere's was, and because, therefore, we cannot imagine Rowley's being attached to the play otherwise than in good faith, while Shakspere's may have been used with intention to defraud.[9]

Examination of entries in *The London Stage* for the years 1659–62[10] would seem to bear out this claim about the relative lack of popularity of Rowley's plays, although performances are recorded of *The Changeling* (pp. 7, 25), and *All's Lost By Lust* (pp. 26, 30). There is no reason why Kirkman's statement in his preface to *A Cure For a Cuckold* may not be an entirely just assessment of the state of Rowley's reputation:

I need not speak any thing in its Commendation, the Authors names, Webster *and* Rowley, *are (to knowing men) sufficient to declare its worth.* (Sig. A2)

However, there are grounds for doubting the authority of the Kirkman title-pages on which standing type claims *The Thracian Wonder* for Webster and Rowley as well as *A Cure for a Cuckold*. This may have been a time-saving ploy in the printing-house and have as little meaning as the phrase 'As it hath been several times Acted with great Applause', which appears on both these title-pages, and on that of *The Birth of Merlin*.

G. E. Bentley was disposed to give Kirkman the benefit of the doubt over his attribution of *Anything for a Quiet Life* to Middleton:

It is true enough that Francis Kirkman is not the ideal authority for facts concerning Jacobean and Caroline plays, but he was not necessarily ill-informed or dishonest, and in the absence of contradictory external evidence his statements of fact are generally to be preferred to the impressionistic 'conclusions' and parallel-passage 'evidence' of modern enthusiasts.[11]

This is not a rational alternative, but it is possible to sympathize with the attitude. To reject the only positive statement about the authorship of the play in favour of the chaos of endless possibility can seem wilfully perverse.

History of Attribution

The earliest theatrical historians did not question Shakespeare's part-authorship of the play. Gerard Langbaine lists it under Shakespeare's name, with a 'P' for pastoral, while admitting that it is the only title there not to be found in the Third Folio (1664).[12] He does not refer to it under the heading 'William Rowley', but includes there a cross-reference to Shakespeare. In *An Account of the English Dramatic Poets* (1691) Langbaine again lists the play (this time with a brief mention of sources) under 'Shakespeare', but also refers to it under 'Rowley'. Rowley is described, erroneously, as 'a Member of *Pembroke* Hall in *Cambridge*', and Langbaine adds:

I can say nothing further of his Life or Country; but as to his Poetry, and his intimate Acquaintance with the prime Poets of that Age, I can speak at large. He was not only beloved by those Great Men, *Shakespear*, *Fletcher*, and *Johnson*; but likewise writ with the former, *The Birth of Merlin*. Besides what he joyned in writing with Poets of the second Magnitude, as *Heywood*, *Middleton*, *Day* and *Webster*.[13]

Langbaine may have been relying on the evidence of title-pages for these connections, but none is known which links the names of Rowley and Jonson. The idea of collaboration between Rowley and Shakespeare appears to cause him no surprise; indeed, he refers to it again even more positively when he quotes Dryden's comments on *The Tempest*. Dryden, illustrating the 'copiousness' of Shakespeare's 'Invention', refers to Caliban, whom, he says, Shakespeare makes 'a *species* of himself begotten by an *Incubus* on a *Witch*' (p. 463). Langbaine then adds,

But this is not the only Character of this Nature that Mr. *Shakespear* has written; for *Merlin*, as he introduces him, is Cozen–German to *Caliban* by Birth; as those may observe, who will read that Play. (p. 464)

Although Langbaine had presumably read the play, the erroneous version of the alternative title, *The Child has lost his Father*, which crops up, with slight variations, in references during the succeeding centuries, appears to have originated with him. Giles Jacob perpetuates it in his *Poetical Register* of 1719, where he includes the play under Rowley's name only, but with the claim that

'*Shakespear* assisted'.[14] He also tones down Langbaine's 'beloved', and declares that Rowley was 'not only well known to, but associated with *Shakespear*, *Fletcher*, *Massinger*, *Marston*, *Webster*, and other eminent Poets of that Age' (p. 214), Massinger and Marston here being substituted for Langbaine's Jonson, Heywood, Middleton and Day.

Unlike *Double Falsehood* (now generally considered to be an adaptation of the lost *Cardenio*), the play does not seem to have been the subject of debate among Shakespearians in the eighteenth century. Some of the actors who performed in *Double Falsehood* at Drury Lane on 13 December, 1727, had also appeared in the *Merlin* droll at Southwark Fair in 1724,[15] but there is no evidence that audiences made any connection between the two plays and, indeed, Shakespeare's name was not used in newspaper advertising for *The Birth of Merlin*. Lewis Theobald's only recorded comment on the play was that it was 'said to have been written by *Shakespeare* and *Rowley*'.[16]

Nineteenth-century commentators became increasingly sceptical about the ascription to Shakespeare. The revised edition (1812) of D. E. Baker's *Biographia Dramatica* (1764) added that it was 'not very probable',[17] and John Genest offered critical support for this point of view in *Some Account of the English Stage* (1832). Unaware of Rowley's late link with the King's Men, he thought it unlikely that Shakespeare and Rowley would have collaborated 'as they belonged to different theatres'; in his opinion 'the serious scenes ... are tolerable — the comic scenes are good — Rowley himself probably acted the Clown, who is the best character'.[18]

After this, such mild expressions are hard to find. Henry Tyrrell, the play's first editor, fulminates:

> It is not probable that the great Shakspere, the acknowledged poet of the age, the friend of nobles, and the pet of princes, should have united with a dramatist of third-rate reputation for the production of a piece which has every appearance of being written as a holiday spectacle. Added to this improbability is the fact that the play does not contain in it one single trace of the genius of the bard of Avon.[19]

He illustrates the last point with references to aspects of the play which he finds particularly un-Shakespearian: the 'magical portion is too palpable, too material', and the characters of Edol and Uter are 'bombastic and unnatural'. He also objects, in his commentary, to Uter's beating of Joan: 'This violence is not only unprincely, but unmanly and savage. Shakspere could not have written this: he never shocks at once our feelings and our sense of probability' (p. 442).

Even amongst those who were convinced that he had nothing whatever to do with the play, Shakespearian echoes were often heard. F. G. Fleay, considering some parts of the play to be imitations of Shakespeare, asks his readers to compare II.ii.244ff., III.ii, iii, v, and vi, 'with such passages of Shakespeare as they call to mind', and particularly III.ii.85 ('This world is but a Masque') with *As You Like It,* II.vii.139 ('All the world's a stage'); III.iii.1–6 ('Mix light and

darkness') with *Lear*, III.ii.1–9 ('Blow winds'), and II.ii.332 ('A creature that goes backward') with, inevitably, *Hamlet*, II.ii.206.[20] It is certainly possible that the opening of III.iii was influenced by *King Lear*, and Warnke and Proescholdt point out an even more interesting parallel between *The Birth of Merlin*, IV.i.179–80 (see 178n) and *Lear*, III.iv.67–68, but attempts to reveal a significant link between the two plays have failed for lack of evidence.[21] Most of the passages which Fleay lights on are merely commonplaces and, as I have tried to indicate in the commentary, were used by writers besides Shakespeare.

The play's most recent editor, C. F. Tucker Brooke, is adamant:

> There is not a single poetic passage in *The Birth of Merlin*, which will justify for an instant the hypothesis of Shakespeare's authorship. The disjointed nature of the plot, moreover, the foolish and immature morality of the Modestia scenes, and the repeated appeals to the cheap make-shifts of sorcery and divination, stamp it as distinctively un-Shakespearian. (*Apocrypha*, p. xlvi)

Nevertheless, he is prepared to admit to the presence of 'occasional bits of poetry and characterization which have certainly a remote kinship to Shakespeare and were probably written under his influence'. He lights on the speeches of Prince Uter (II.ii.279–86, 300–22), and of Edol in II.ii (p. xlvi). However, the obvious differences in tone between, for example, Prince Uter's rhapsodies, the Modesta scenes and the Clown's rambling prose have led to speculation that other writers beside, or instead of, Rowley and Shakespeare were involved.

Fleay thought that Rowley might have revised the play for a revival *c.* 1622 but that 'in the main it is manifestly by another hand'. The comic scenes could be by Rowley, but the serious ones were 'palpably Middleton's', a suggestion he says he owes to P. A. Daniel.[22] F. A. Howe pursued the Middleton theory further with a comparison between *The Birth of Merlin* and *The Mayor of Queenborough*, a course recommended by Ellis in the Mermaid Middleton, who thought that both plays were by Rowley.[23] Howe investigated the similarities between the plots of the two plays and came to the conclusion that in *The Birth of Merlin* Rowley was revising a sketch by Middleton of a play intended to follow up *The Mayor of Queenborough* because Middleton had

> found it difficult, in handling the same story, to treat it in a sufficiently different style from that of his first use of it, and so laid it aside as unavailable.

Revealing his prejudices, he goes on to explain that

> the theory that Middleton and Rowley wrote *The Birth of Merlin* is far more respectable than the obsolete belief that Shakespeare and Rowley wrote it, and is, on the whole, the most probable theory respecting its authorship. (p. 205)

Macdonald P. Jackson in a more recent study of Middleton as a collaborator finds 'no convincing linguistic evidence of Middleton's hand in the play as we have it', but adds, tantalizingly:

It seems to me that a poet and dramatist of stature must have participated with Rowley in *The Birth of Merlin*, but his identity remains unknown.[24]

F. W. Moorman was likewise 'almost certain that more than one hand was engaged in weaving this particoloured vesture'.[25] He noted Uter's speeches in II.i (ll. 45–49, and 63–71), and commented:

In this and in other passages, drama is sacrificed to poetry, the verse grows lyrical and falls insensibly into rime. This romantic and lyrical strain is as foreign to Middleton as it is to Rowley, but it is singularly like what we meet with in the romantic work of Dekker. (p. 250)

Marie Thérèse Jones-Davies, however, dismisses the possibility flatly:

La suggestion de F. W. Moorman que Dekker en fut l'auteur est inacceptable.[26]

William Wells constructed a very elaborate hypothesis to account for the parallel passages which he discovered that the play shared with *Cupid's Revenge*. He postulated the existence of a play, 'X', which derived its plot from the Plangus episode of Sidney's *Arcadia* and which was Beaumont and Fletcher's first draft for *Cupid's Revenge*. When they discovered that John Day was working on *The Isle of Gulls*, also derived in part from the *Arcadia*, they abandoned *Cupid's Revenge* and re-wrote it, in a British setting, as *The Birth of Merlin*, the Merlin plot being supplied by 'an earlier play, very likely by Greene'.[27]

However, William Rowley remains the most generally-favoured candidate. Schelling comments, on the comic scenes:

In the grossly represented but pathetic plight of Joan, Merlin's mother, and in the coarse humor of her foul-mouthed but faithful brother we have a favorable specimen of the vigorous comedy of William Rowley.[28]

Irving Ribner felt sure that Rowley was 'one of several authors' of this 'strange conglomeration',[29] and C. W. Stork thought Rowley's hand the dominant one:

The play abounds in all of Rowley's characteristics and might well have been his unassisted work.[30]

On the other hand, Arthur Symons's opinion of the play was so low that he wished to spare even Rowley the shame of involvement with it:

the play is crude and lumpish; it is stilted and monotonous in the verse, gross and tame in the prose. It would be pleasant to think that Rowley had no more to do with it than Shakespeare; but it is difficult to be positive in the matter after reading *A Shoemaker a Gentleman*.[31]

Proponents of Shakespeare have been few and far between. In 1902, F. E. Schelling reported:

As to Kirkman's assignment of a share ... to Shakespeare, this has seriously imposed on the credulity of no one except the German poet Tieck, whose

enthusiasm laid him open to incessant visitations of the ghost of alleged Shakespearean authorship. (pp. 183–84)

Probably the first critic since Langbaine to accept the play's title-page at face value emerged in 1985. Mark Dominik[32] attempts to demonstrate that the play is, indeed, a close collaboration between Shakespeare and Rowley, but he falls into the trap of assuming that insignificant parallels of theme and expression, when collected together, amount to proof of common authorship. He does not apply the negative test by checking his findings against those from other plays nor, apparently, does he consult Tilley, Dent or *OED* to ascertain whether words or expressions are commonplace. As a result, his claims for the existence of spellings and image clusters which reveal the presence of Shakespeare's hand in the play have to be discounted.

The Possibilities

This brief account of the play's undistinguished 'critical heritage' reveals attitudes to it which are far from objective. Assumptions have often been based on factors which do not constitute evidence in an authorship enquiry:[33] quality of writing, stylistic similarities between parts of the play and other plays, and parallels of theme and expression. Even modern social attitudes to the assumed 'class' of the playwrights can be seen influencing views about collaboration.

Increasingly, however, more objective testing based on a playwright's spelling or linguistic preferences as manifested in his unaided work has been held to provide the alternative to such impressionism in authorship enquiries. The tests cannot, of course, derive their material from a text which is collaborative or of unknown authorship, but a text assumed to be the work of a single author can be subjected to a test designed to demonstrate a particular author's presence.

Attempts have been made to identify the characteristics of William Rowley's writing in order to distinguish his work either from that of his more critically-favoured collaborator, Thomas Middleton, or from the contributors to the 'Beaumont and Fletcher' canon, and it is perhaps worth considering whether the information amassed in these inquiries can be of any value in answering questions about the authorship of *The Birth of Merlin*.

The first problem becomes apparent immediately: the greater part of Rowley's output was collaborative and therefore of no use as evidence of his personal preferences in matters of spelling, colloquial contractions or asseverations. Cyrus Hoy, examining the Beaumont and Fletcher canon in terms of colloquial contractions and preferred forms, can tabulate only four plays by Rowley alone, *A New Wonder, a Woman Never Vext* (1632), *A Shoemaker a Gentleman* (1638), *All's Lost by Lust* (1633), and *A Match at Midnight* (1633), about the last of which he admits to having serious doubts.[34] If one agrees to set

this play aside, three remain, too few to provide an adequate picture of Rowley's habits. The difference in frequency or occurrence of, for example, *ye*, is marked: *WNV* (10), *SG* (34), and *ALL* (4). Hoy describes the incidence of *ye* (111) in *MM* as 'near Fletcherian', and on the basis of this figure suggests that the play is not essentially Rowley's. However, he is aware that he cannot automatically ascribe it to Fletcher on such grounds: this kind of evidence is of no use as a means of positive ascription.

The Birth of Merlin, when compared to plays in Hoy's table (p. 104), shows no striking tendencies. It contains *ye* (15), *y'* (2), *hath* (14), *doth* (5), *'em* (4), *them* (13), *i'th'* (10, of which 2 appear as *'ith'*), *a'th'* (1, appearing as 'ath), and *ha's* (2). Admittedly, it contains no *sh'as*, *sh'ad*, *'tas*, or *'tad*, which is unlike Middleton and very like Rowley, but also not unlike Ford. In fact there is little to distinguish between the output of Ford and Rowley as tabulated in this manner. Hoy's claim that 'the form by which Rowley is known is '*um*' (p. 84) is not very convincing as only *All's Lost by Lust* among his unaided plays (all printed in the 1630s) has any at all (8). The introduction of his collaborations with Middleton to 'prove' the *'em*/*'um* distinction between them is risky, especially when that test is one of the means of attributing their shares in the first place.

Another popular method for distinguishing between Middleton and Rowley was suggested by Pauline Wiggin in 1897,[35] and is frequently cited in authorship enquiries. Middleton prefers the exclamation *Push* (and sometimes *Pish*), and Rowley prefers *Tush*. According to D. J. Lake,[36] *Push* is used by Middleton and Dekker, but its only connection with Rowley is its five instances in the Middleton/Rowley collaboration *The Changeling*. *Pish* is used by Dekker and Ford as well as Middleton, and occurs once in the Middleton/Rowley collaboration *A Fair Quarrel*, but not in any of the plays thought to be exclusively by Rowley. *Tush* is relatively heavily used by Rowley and also, more lightly (at one instance in each of five out of seven plays) by Dekker. When it is revealed that *The Birth of Merlin* contains *Pish* (2), *Push* (1), and *Tush* (1), it is obvious that it would be folly to attempt attribution on such grounds.

In fact, the use of statistical information derived from other authorship enquiries is invalid for two main reasons. If *The Birth of Merlin* is a collaborative (perhaps revised) play the total of a count of any of its features would be misleading. Also, the late printing date makes it very likely that spellings and contractions will have been 'modernized' by Restoration compositors, a point made by Lake in connection with the play's 'stable-mate', *Anything for a Quiet Life*:

In so late an edition we cannot hope to use spelling evidence for authorship, and in fact Middleton's spellings are hardly anywhere detectable. (p. 175)

But the alternative is not necessarily to revert in despair to parallel-hunting and impressionism. It is worth asking on what grounds the Shakespeare ascription

has been, in more recent times at least, so readily rejected. Among the distinctive features which could be said to be the hall-marks of Shakespearian drama are the use of significant imagery, felicity of expression, thematic coherence, economy of structure, a questioning and inventive approach to source material, and a persistent reassessment of the commonplace. Can *The Birth of Merlin* be automatically excluded from the Shakespeare canon on the grounds that it exhibits few or none of these features?

In attempting to answer this question it becomes apparent that the play has been the subject of very little sustained analysis on a number of important points. In the absence of reliable external evidence the question of authorship must remain open: any individual (or combination of individuals) who was writing before 1662 may have had a hand in the play as it now stands, and as long as this is the situation, any speculation about its authorship must necessarily be secondary to the consideration of questions about content, construction and context.

NOTES

1. John Freehafer, '*Cardenio*, by Shakespeare and Fletcher', *PMLA*, 84 (1969), 501–13 (p. 508).
2. See G. E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols (Oxford, 1941–68), V, 1015–16.
3. E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (Oxford, 1923), III, 489.
4. See C. F. Tucker Brooke, *Shakespeare Apocrypha* (Oxford, 1908), p. xxxvii.
5. J. A. Symonds, *Shakspere's Predecessors in the English Drama* (1884), p. 373, quoted by F. A. Howe, with other references to criticism of Kirkman, in 'The Authorship of *The Birth of Merlin*', *MP*, 4 (1906), 193–205 (pp. 194–95).
6. The details of Kirkman's life, based chiefly on *The Unlucky Citizen* (1673), and Part 2 of *The English Rogue* (1668), are recounted by R. C. Bald in 'Francis Kirkman, Bookseller and Author', *MP*, 41 (1943), 17–32; his life and publications are further covered by Strickland Gibson in 'A Bibliography of Francis Kirkman', *Oxford Bibliographical Society Publications*, 1 (1947), 47–148; see also J. Gerritsen, 'The Dramatic Piracies of 1661: A Comparative Analysis', *SB*, 11 (1958), 117–31.
7. 'Authorship Attributions in the Early Play-lists, 1656–71', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions*, 2 (1946), 305–29 (p. 329).
8. See S. Schoenbaum, *Internal Evidence and Elizabethan Dramatic Authorship* (Evanston, 1966), p. 151.
9. 'Problems of Authorship in Elizabethan Dramatic Literature', *MP*, 8 (1911), 411–59 (p. 426).
10. *The London Stage 1660–1880, Part I: 1660–1700*, edited by William Van Lennep (Carbondale, Illinois, 1965).
11. *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, IV, 859–60.
12. *A New Catalogue of English Plays* (1688), pp. 21–22.
13. *An Account of the English Dramatic Poets* (1691; facsimile, Scolar Press, 1971), p. 428.
14. *The Poetical Register: or, The Lives and Characters of all the English Poets*, 3 vols (1723), I, 215.
15. *The London Stage 1660–1800, Part 2: 1700–1729*, edited by Emmett L. Avery, 2 vols (Carbondale, Illinois, 1960), II, 784, 949.
16. See his introduction to *Merlin; or, The Devil of Stonehenge* (1734), p. 9.
17. David Erskine Baker, *Biographia Dramatica; or, A Companion to the Playhouse*, revised by Isaac Reed and Stephen Jones, 3 vols (1812), II, 59.
18. *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830*, 10 vols (Bath, 1832), X, 56–57.
19. *The Doubtful Plays of Shakspere* (1850?), p. 411.
20. *A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare, Player, Poet, and Playmaker* (1886), pp. 289–90.

21. One of the more curious failures, which attempts both to reveal and deny a link, is R. F. Fleissner's 'The Misattribution of *The Birth of Merlin* to Shakespeare', *PBSA*, 73 (1979), 248–52, in which he suggests that whoever attributed *The Birth of Merlin* to Shakespeare was intending to make capital out of the Fool's prophecy of Merlin in *Lear*.
22. *William Shakespeare*, p. 289.
23. 'The Authorship of *The Birth of Merlin*', p. 198 and n. 1.
24. *Studies in Attribution: Middleton and Shakespeare*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature (Jacobean Drama Studies), 79 (Salzburg, 1979), pp. 145–46.
25. 'Plays of Uncertain Authorship Attributed to Shakespeare', *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, edited by A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, 15 vols (Cambridge, 1907–27; reprinted 1949–53), V, 249–51 (p. 249).
26. *Un Peintre de la Vie Londonienne; Thomas Dekker* (Paris, 1958), p. 344.
27. 'The Birth of Merlin', *MLR*, 16 (1921), 129–37 (pp. 135–36).
28. F. E. Schelling, *The English Chronicle Play* (1902), p. 184.
29. *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (revised edition, 1965), p. 261.
30. *William Rowley*, Publications of the University of Pennsylvania (Philology and Literature), 13 (Philadelphia, 1910), p. 59.
31. *Studies in the Elizabethan Drama* (1920), p. 237.
32. *William Shakespeare and 'The Birth of Merlin'* (New York, 1985).
33. See S. Schoenbaum, *Internal Evidence*, pp. 162–83.
34. 'The Shares of Fletcher and his Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon (V)', *SB*, 13 (1960), 77–108 (pp. 82–83).
35. *An Inquiry into the Authorship of the Middleton-Rowley Plays*, Radcliffe College Monographs, 9 (Boston, 1897), p. 38.
36. *The Canon of Thomas Middleton's Plays; Internal Evidence for the Major Problems of Authorship* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 198–230.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTEXT: SOURCES AND ANALOGUES

'Tis a fine Play:
For we haue in't a Coniurer, a Deuill,
And a Clowne too.
Prologue to *The Two Merry Milkmaids* (1620).

Chronicle History and Romance

For the sources of the plot of *The Birth of Merlin* Gerard Langbaine suggested consulting 'the Authors of those times: such as *Ethelwerd, Bede, G. Monmouth, Fabian, Pol. Virgil, Etc. Stow, Speed, Etc. Ubaldino, Le Vite della Donne Illustri, p.* 18'.[1] The apparently indiscriminate listing of chroniclers is Langbaine's way of indicating that the story is a feature of British chronicle history, and the reference to the life of Rowena in Ubaldino's collection of the lives of famous women (1591) shows that he recognized that the Artesia of the play is, in fact, the Rowena of the chronicles, thinly disguised.

G. A. Sandeman, considering sources, suggests the chronicles of Stow, Holinshed, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Higden, Drayton's *Polyolbion* (1612), Warner's *Albion's England* (1586) and Thomas Churchyard's *The Worthiness of Wales* (1587), the lost Admiral's Men's play, *Uther Pendragon* and Jonson's *Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers* (1610). She makes the point, which her selection of prose, verse and drama illustrates, that the sources of *The Birth of Merlin* are not 'readily definable . . . for the stories of Vortigern and the legends of Merlin were very widely disseminated'.[2]

The lack of any detailed investigation into the sources has contributed to general misjudgement, both of the play's contents and of the playwright's intentions, leading Irving Ribner, for example, to maintain that 'The author or authors of *The Birth of Merlin* were interested primarily in sensationalism and not at all in history'.[3]

I would hope, by examining the kind of material on which the playwright drew, to qualify this statement, and to question Geoffrey Bullough's categorization of the play, along with *King Leir, A Knack to Know a Knave, Cymbeline* and *Nobody and Somebody*, under the heading, 'Plays which introduce historical figures in situations taken from chronicles, ballads and folklore, and use them as subsidiary material in romantic plots'.[4] The Merlin material is far

from 'subsidiary' in this play, and the 'sensationalism' of events associated with Merlin is often as 'historical' as Merlin himself, although the historicity of Merlin, like that of Arthur, depends upon which authority one consults.

At the accession of James I (the date is an arbitrary one) the material available to provide information about Merlin falls very loosely into three groups, each group having at least one contemporary printed example to represent it:

1) Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* was probably completed about 1136[5] and included the 'Prophetiae Merlini', which had been circulated separately at least a year earlier.[6] Many printed editions appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries under a variety of titles, although no English translation appeared in print until 1718. Its influence was powerful and widespread. E. K. Chambers comments:

> Innumerable chroniclers, Latin, English, and French, throughout the middle ages ... treat Geoffrey as the primary authority for their accounts of Celtic Britain. They may question his individual statements or weigh them against those of other writers. They may add details from romance or perhaps here and there from oral tradition. They may exercise their own imaginations in interpretation or expansion. None the less, Geoffrey remains the fundamental source.
>
> Translations and paraphrases soon brought the material of the *Historia* into literature, and a series of vernacular *Bruts* links chronicle to romance.[7]

A version of the *Brut* known as 'Caxton's *Chronicle*' (not to be confused with Higden's *Polychronicon* which Caxton also printed) is very close to the *Historia* in its treatment of Merlin.[8] Thirteen editions are known from 1480 to the last printing, by Wynkyn de Worde, in 1528 (revised STC (1986), 9991–10002).

2) Holinshed's *Chronicle* (second edition, 1587) contains a *History of England*, which attempts a more rational and critical approach to earlier authorities, and leaves out the exploits of Merlin altogether in the interests of credibility; and a *History of Scotland*, which is likewise sceptical about Merlin. Similarly, the chronicles of Higden, Grafton, Fabyan and Hardyng and, later, Stow and Speed amongst others, all treat of the history of Merlin's time, but not of Merlin himself.

3) *A Little Treatise of the Birth and Prophecy of Merlin* (STC 17841) was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1510. Only one complete copy is known to exist, and is the sole printed representative, in English, of the romance aspect of Merlin literature. It contains a version of the history of Vortiger's reign, which is almost unrecognizable, but gives full measure to Merlin, and contains many elements not in the *Historia*, but obviously deriving ultimately from the French of Robert de Boron.[9] The chief characteristic of the romances in this category is the inclusion of the background to Merlin's birth, with a description of his mother and her family, and the devils' reasons for bringing about his conception. There are also several extant English MSS,[10] and a number of MSS and

printed versions in other European languages.[11] Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is not particularly relevant to this study, dealing as it does primarily with Arthur, but what Merlin material it includes is of French romance origin.

In order to recognize the variations in later versions, and appreciate the position of *The Birth of Merlin* in relation to them, a summary of Geoffrey of Monmouth's account of the period in question is necessary.[12]

Vortiger rouses the rebellious Picts to kill Constans, the 'puppet' king of Britain, and thereby becomes king himself. He feels threatened by the Picts, and by the two brothers of Constans, Uter and Aurelius, who have fled to the continent to save their lives; so when Hengist and Horsa arrive in Britain, he asks for Saxon aid against the Picts. He falls in love with Rowena, Hengist's daughter, and Hengist craftily agrees to let him have her as his wife if he will give him the kingdom of Kent in return.

The Saxons assume great power, and Christianity declines under their influence. Clerics abroad send two Archbishops, Germane and Lupus, to restore religion and preach against the Pelagian heresy. The Britons, frightened and angered by the influx of pagan Saxons, support Vortiger's son, Vortimer, and make him king. He fights against his father and the Saxons, but is poisoned by Rowena so that Vortiger again becomes king. The Saxons, at Hengist's instigation, secretly carry daggers to a peaceful meeting and kill a large number of Britons. On this occasion, one Eldol of Gloucester fights bravely on the British side.

Vortiger then attempts to build a castle for protection against the Saxons, who have turned against him, but the foundations collapse every night. Wise men advise him that unless the stones are sprinkled with the blood of a child who has no father the building will never stand. Messengers are sent out and, in Carmarthen, they hear a couple of boys quarrelling. One taunts the other for having no father. The messengers enquire further and are told that the child's father is not known, but that his mother is a nun, and daughter of the King of Demetia. She and her son, Merlin, are brought before Vortiger, and she tells her story about a mysterious visitor to her chamber who is apparently the child's father. One Maugantius then comments on the nature of *incubi*.

Merlin advises Vortiger to dig under the site of the castle, where he will find a pool of water in which two dragons are fighting, one red, and the other white. Merlin explains that the red represents the Britons, and the white the Saxons, and he utters a long and obscure prophecy which starts by predicting the overthrow of the Britons, but seems to suggest the eventual restoration of the country to them. He then advises Vortiger to flee the wrath of Uter and Aurelius who are returning to Britain.

On his arrival, Aurelius is made king by the disaffected Britons, and his men burn down Vortiger's castle with him in it. In a battle with the Saxons, Eldol

captures Hengist and finally beheads him. Aurelius then besieges Hengist's son, Octa, in York. Octa and his followers surrender and are given land near Scotland.

Aurelius wishes to have a memorial built to the Britons betrayed by Hengist's treachery, and it is suggested that Vortiger's prophet, Merlin, should be consulted. Merlin organizes the transportation of the 'Giant's Ring' from Ireland and creates Stonehenge, but not until the Irish, who fight to protect the stones, are defeated.

Aurelius is poisoned at Winchester by a man working on the orders of Vortiger's son Pascentius. While this is happening, a blazing star shaped like a dragon's head appears in the sky and is seen by Uter. Merlin interprets it as signifying that Aurelius is dead, that Uter must join battle with the enemy, and that Uter's son will be a man of great power, and his daughter Queen of Britain, succeeded by her sons.

Aurelius is buried at Stonehenge, and Uter becomes king. He has two dragons made in memory of the star, one to be placed in the cathedral at Winchester, the other to be carried in battle. He is now called Uter Pendragon.

Meanwhile, Octa, Hengist's son, joins with other Saxons in a revolt. The Britons are temporarily driven back, but have eventual victory. The chronicle then describes Uter's passion for Igreyne, and Merlin's part in the begetting of Arthur.

The Birth of Merlin appears to be set, as the *Dramatis Personae* indicates, during the brief period in which there were two kings of Britain; that is, between Aurelius's return from exile and the death of Vortiger; and the action continues up to the coronation of Uter. The playwright has prolonged the dual reign by making Vortiger live as long as Aurelius, and has altered the chronology so that the first appearance of Merlin, the building of Vortiger's castle, and the Dragon prophecy take place after, rather than before, Aurelius's arrival in Britain; in fact, there is no suggestion that Aurelius has been abroad. Although Vortiger, in the play, retains the character and main functions of the Vortiger of the chronicles, his relationship with Rowena, and the Britons' indignation at their marriage, is transferred to Aurelius, and Vortiger's Rowena becomes Aurelius's Artesia. The role of Hengist in bringing the two together for his own ends is taken on by the unhistorical Ostorius.

The dramatist, however, has not merely changed the names; he has gone to some lengths to individualize the 'new' characters and give them authenticity. F. E. Schelling recognized, as had Langbaine, that Artesia is 'undoubtedly borrowed from the Rowen or Rowena of the old chroniclers, and the hint of her wickedness is contained in Rowen's poisoning of her step-son Vertumerus [i.e. Vortimer]', but claims that, as opposed to Middleton (in *Hengist King of Kent*), who 'degraded his Roxena to a mere adventuress', this playwright transformed

her into 'a Judith who inveigled and slew her people's enemy for her people's sake'.[13]

Artesia's name, and some of her characteristics, seem to come from Sidney's *Arcadia*, in which Artesia is a woman so proud of her own beauty that she has a brave knight, Philautus, maintain against all comers that she is the most beautiful woman in the world. She betrays the two princesses into captivity, attempts to poison Amphialus, and is eventually executed. After her death, Pamela comments,

Wicked woman . . . whose vnrepenting harte can finde no way to amend treason, but by treason: now the time is come, that thy wretched wiles haue caught thy selfe in thine own nette.[14]

Although the playwright has here borrowed a name from a literary setting far removed from that of the chronicles, he has chosen one which evokes appropriate associations: a woman of heartless beauty, a poisoner and deceiver, who dies unrepentant. In the play, Artesia's death, as planned in V.ii.65–66, is an addition. Rowena fades out of the chronicles with no record of her receiving her just deserts.

Ostorius's attributes are compiled in a similar way. Although based on Hengist, he is Artesia's brother, not her father, and is King of the East Angles, whereas Hengist was King of Kent. Although Octa, a character bearing the name of Hengist's son, appears in the play, there is no suggestion that he is related to Ostorius. The name Ostorius does not appear in the *Historia*, but Holinshed, citing Tacitus, describes one Ostorius Scapula, a Roman 'legat or lieutenant' in the reign of Arviragus, who fought against the British rebels, including those in Wales where, on one occasion, 'vsing the victorie as reason moued him, he lead his armie against those that inhabited the inner parts of Wales, spoiling the countrie on euerie side' (*History of England*, 4.5.37). The name therefore does have anti-British associations, and Ostorius also appears in *The Valiant Welshman* (1615) by 'R.A.' as an aggressive and unpleasant character with lines like 'Yeeld thee, proud Welshman, or weele force thee yeelde' (Sig. G4v).

Cador also has an appropriate name, taken from a kinsman of Guinivere, who fought on the side of King Arthur and was the father of Arthur's heir, Constantine; and Edwin and Oswold are the names of kings of Northumberland, who appear later in the chronicles.

In the first three acts, such chronicle material as the playwright has selected is interspersed with scenes developing the stories of Modesta and Constantia, the search for the child's father, and Uter's passion for the unknown woman. From the beginning of Act IV, after Modesta and Constantia have determined to live chaste (and do not appear again), the child's father has been found, and Artesia's duplicity revealed, there is a much greater concentration of chronicle material, and much more reliance on the specific detail of the sources.

The playwright's initial interest, however, is in four aspects of the chronicle history: a miraculous victory (which does not appear in Geoffrey's *Historia*), the King's foolish marriage, the Britons' attitude to the pagan foreigners, and Edol's bravery.

The Hermit, who achieves the victory, seems to be filling the role of the St Germaine of the chronicles. Although he is called Anselm, he bears no resemblance to the real St Anselm. (The name, having saintly associations, is common amongst the fictional clergy: there is a Father Anselmo in Dekker's *1 The Honest Whore*, and a Friar Anselm in William Painter's translation of *The Story of Romeo and Julietta* by Bandello.)[15] The victory is referred to in the play more than once. In I.i.69–76, Toclio reports it as a miracle, but does not give the details; these are recounted later by Aurelius:

> Our Army being in rout, nay, quite o'rethrown,
> As *Chester* writes; even then this holy man
> Arm'd with his cross and staff, went smiling on,
> And boldly fronts the foe; at sight of whom
> The *Saxons* stood amaz'd: for to their seeming,
> Above the Hermit's head appear'd such brightness,
> Such clear and glorious beams as if our men
> March't all in fire, wherewith the *Pagans* fled,
> And by our troops were all to death pursu'd.
>
> (I.ii.17–25)

None of the chronicle accounts corresponds exactly to this. St Germaine was supposed to have terrified the enemy with the cry of 'Alleluia!', an event which Holinshed's English history places in the reign of Vortiger, but which occurs during that of Uter in his Scottish history. The latter provides a vivid description of the Bishop leading the army:

> Thus proceed they foorth to the battell, saint Germane bearing the kings standard in the fore front, & vpon the approch to the enimies, he with the rest of the preests crieng with a lowd voice thrice togither Alleluia, was answered by all the whole host, vttering and crieng the same crie so wholie togither, that the verie sound thereof caused such an eccho on each side by reason of the hollow mounteines and cliffes hard by them, that the Saxons amazed at this doubled noise, and doubting not onelie another power of their enimies to be hidden priuilie among the hilles which they saw on ech side of them, but also least the verie rocks & mounteins would haue fallen downe vpon their heads togither with the frame of the element, readie (as it seemed to them) to breake in sunder, they tooke them to their feet in such dreadfull hast, that their breath was not able to suffice halfe the desire they had to continue their course. (*History of Scotland*, p. 100a, 6–23)

The description in *The Birth of Merlin* may owe something to the account of another ingenious stratagem, which resulted in a victory for the Scots and Picts over the Britons and Saxons. This occurs a few pages earlier in the Scottish history. On this occasion the Scots threw bundles of burning heather down-hill towards the enemy, which set fire to their camp and caused panic among the

men, as it 'seemed as though the same had fallen from aboue, and euen foorth of the heauen if selfe' (p. 95a, 16–18).

The first description could have suggested the image of the holy man leading the army, the second, perhaps, the fire, but in the prose *Merlin*, which is not known to have been in print at this period, is an account of a victory, this time attributed to Merlin himself, which has more of the flavour of that in *The Birth of Merlin* than either of these:

Then he toke an horne and blewe it so lowde that all the wode resounded, and than he caste a marveilouse enchauntement ffor he made appere, and high in the heire a greate flame of fire as reade as thunder, and ran ouer the loigges [i.e. tents] of hem in the hoste, and whan that Arthurs peple saugh the flame of feir renne thourgh the heir, and also herde the horne blowe, thei hem blessed and smote the horse with the spores ... the wounded men cried and braied for the peynes of deth that hem distreyned; and than the sonne be-gan to a-rise clier vpon the bright armure that be-gan to glistere a-gein the bright sonne.[16]

These three extracts amply illustrate the problems which beset the investigation of sources for the play. The playwright could have been familiar with any or none of these texts. Records of visions of armies battling in the sky were a commonplace.[17] Thomas Dekker's description in the poem *Canaan's Calamity* (1618) is typical:

> Then in the ayre God shewed another wonder,
> When azurd skies were brightest faire and cleere,
> An hoast of armed men, like dreadfull thunder,
> With hidious clamours, fighting did appeare. (Sig. B2)

The playwright gives no explanation for the vision of men marching 'all in fire' (I.ii.24), an 'apparition/Of well arm'd troops which in themselves are air' (II.ii.164–65). In II.ii.155 Octa accuses the Hermit of 'magick, hellbred magick', while Aurelius claims 'it was the hand of heaven' (l. 159). The Hermit is introduced, therefore, as an exponent of the supernatural power of good, and as more than worthy to compete with the Saxon magician, Proximus.

The background to II.ii could have been suggested by the Scottish history's description of the aftermath of the 'Alleluia' victory: '... the Britains waxing proud thereof, nothing regarded the power of the Saxons, nor took anie heed for prouision of further defense' (p. 100a, 37–40). In the play, the failure to follow up the victory is made the first cause of conflict between the King and his court; it is the reason behind the Hermit's cryptic message (I.ii.38–42) and Donobert's criticism:

> No man leaves physick when his sickness slakes,
> But doubles the receipts. (I.ii.45–46)

The *History of Scotland* continues that the Britons, as well as resting on their laurels,

fell to all kinds of gluttonie and excesse, in following onelie their sensuall lusts and fleshlie concupiscence: which abuses, the bishops and other godlie men lamenting, ceassed not most earnestlie to reprooue, menacing destruction to the whole countrie, if the people leauing their wicked liuing and most heinous offenses towards God, did not amend and repent in due time and space. (p. 100a, 42–49)

In the play, Artesia enters at this point, as if the playwright had decided to represent bodily the road to 'excesse', but Aurelius's passion for her is depicted more as youthful folly than a manifestation of 'fleshlie concupiscence'. However, as the *History of Scotland* emphasizes the threat to 'the whole countrie' from general immorality, so the Hermit points out to Aurelius the wider political implications of his infatuation:

Thou hug'st thy ruine, and thy Countries woe. (I.ii.184)

In the English history, Holinshed (referring to Vortiger and Rowena) also considers the moral aspects as he describes how Hengist

vnderstood that the king was much giuen to sensuall lust, which is the thing that often blindeth wise mens vnderstanding,and maketh them to dote, and to lose their perfect wits: yea, and oftentimes bringeth them to destruction, though by such pleasant poison they feele no bitter taste, till they be brought to the extreame point of confusion in deed. (5.3. p. 79a, 47–53)

The playwright seems to accept this view: Artesia, the 'gilded pill' (I.ii.88), indeed causes the destruction of Aurelius, by poisoning him, in a kind of justice which is less apparent in the chronicles, where Rowena is only indirectly responsible for Vortiger's death.

The religious objection to Rowena and the Saxons is also made clear in the chronicles, and Donobert expresses such doubt about Artesia:

Marry a *Pagan*, an Idolater? (I.ii.153)

Holinshed observes:

This mariage and liberalitie of the king towards the strangers much offended the minds of his subiects, and hastened the finall destruction of the land. For the Saxons now vnderstanding the affinitie had betwixt the king and Hengist, came so fast ouer to inhabit heere, that it was wonder to consider in how short a time such a multitude could come togither. (*History of England*, 5.3. p. 79b, 15–22)

This is obviously the atmosphere of the scenes of confrontation between Aurelius and his court, but the playwright, by giving Aurelius some of the attributes of the chronicle Vortiger, whilst retaining Vortiger himself, has greatly increased the possibilities for tension and conflict. Instead of having a king (Vortiger) in alliance with a Saxon woman and her countrymen against the wishes of his own court, King Vortiger and the Saxons are in league ('Wee'l part the Realm between us', III.v.8) against another king (Aurelius), who thinks that the Saxons are in league with him against Vortiger. The courtiers,

who see the situation more clearly, are opposed to both Vortiger and the Saxons, although this also puts them at odds with Aurelius who, when he finds them critical of the Saxons, accuses them of being sympathetic to Vortiger's cause ('Go hence false men, joyn you with *Vortiger*', III.vi.128). The situation is further complicated by the introduction of a relationship between Uter and the Saxon woman, causing Aurelius to feel jealous of his brother and to expect treachery from that quarter. The conflicts come to a head in III.vi, when Artesia, in a Saxon plot referred to in the previous scene, attempts to seduce Uter, and then accuses him, calling to the Saxons for help. Both factions appear, and mutual accusation takes place.

One observation which can be usefully made here with regard to Bald's arguments about the relationship between this play and Middleton's *Hengist King of Kent*[18] is that *The Birth of Merlin* shows every sign of having been very carefully plotted to *avoid* the historical Vortiger/Rowena relationship, which Middleton uses, while retaining (and even improving upon) the opportunities for stageable conflicts which that story offers. The complicated political situation which develops in the play has not been achieved by merely changing a few names.

The explosion of rage in III.vi includes Edol's indignant question:

> does not every day
> Bring tidings of more swarms of lowsie slaves,
> The offal fugitives of barren *Germany*,
> That land upon our Coasts, and by our neglect
> Settled in *Norfolk* and *Northumberland*? (III.vi.105–09)

This seems to conflate three separate references which appear in Holinshed's English and Scottish histories. In the *History of England* it is explained why the Saxons were anxious to come to Britain:

> There was an ancient custome among the English Saxons a people in Germanie . . . that when the multitude of them was so increased, that the countrie was not able to susteine and find them, by commandement of their princes, they should choose out by lots a number of yoong and able personages fit for the warrs, which should go foorth to seeke them new habitations. (5.2. p. 78b, 7–15)

Middleton makes use of this idea in Dumb Show i and Chorus ii of his *Hengist King of Kent*,[19] but the playwright of *The Birth of Merlin* only implies this situation by use of the phrases 'offal fugitives' and 'barren *Germany*'. Edol's reference to Saxon settlement of Norfolk and Northumberland is a confirmation of Ostorius's claim in III.v.5–6. The English history tells how, during the reign of Aurelius,

> one Cerdicus and his sonne Kenricus came out of Germanie with fiue ships, and landed at a place called Cerdicshore, which as some thinke is called Yermouth in Northfolke. (5.10, p. 87a, 40–43)

The Scottish history describes how

Hengist and his son hasted with all speed toward Northumberland, in purpose to remaine in that countrie till they had recouered their strength by some power to be sent ouer vnto them out of their owne countrie. (p. 96b, 48–52)

One of the playwright's major debts to his sources is the character of Edol, Earl of Chester, the 'dux Claudiocestriae' of the *Historia.* Holinshed refers to him as 'one Edol earle of Glocester, or (as other say) Chester' (*History of England*, 5.5. p. 82a, 4–5). This alternative may have suggested two characters to the playwright, Gloster being the weaker of the pair, having no function in the historical plot except to swell the numbers of the court. Edol, on the other hand, is built up into a lively and appealing character, with something of the braggart soldier, and a good line in invective, much of which appears to be borrowed from a similar character in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge* (to be discussed later, pp. 74–80).

Edol's martial qualities are constantly referred to in the play (e.g. 'our bold, and hopefull General' (I.ii.59), 'a braver soldier/Breathes not i'th'world this day' (II.ii.114–115)), and this reputation has its beginnings in the *Historia.* Holinshed later describes how, on the occasion of Hengist's treacherous assault on the Britons, he 'got a stake out of an hedge . . . and laid about him' (*History of England* 5.5, p. 82a, 6–8), and that he was eventually responsible for the capture and death of Hengist, having asked King Aurelius for the privilege of hand-to-hand combat with him. He pursued him relentlessly through the battle to this end. Similarly, in IV.iii, Edol takes over the fight with Vortiger from Uter ('this task is mine', IV.iii.24), and it is reported (IV.iv.9) that Vortiger was 'beat down by *Edols* sword', but was rescued, and fled to his castle in order to meet the historical Vortiger's (and not Hengist's) proper end. Vortiger was burnt to death in his castle, according to the chronicles, either by wild-fire sent in by the enemy, or by retributive fire from heaven (*History of England*, 5.7, p. 84a, 53–60). The playwright opts for wild-fire (IV.iv.15).

So far it seems that the 1587 volume of Holinshed's *Chronicles* could have provided the information which the playwright uses to create the historical and political background to the events of the play, but it is by no means certain that this is the case, as the material is common to chronicles of this type, and the playwright's method is far from slavish. Rather than following a source doggedly, he either makes a passing reference to some specific detail (as with the settlement of Norfolk and Northumberland), or takes an idea (like the court's discontent over the Saxon alliance) and expands it into a whole scene, characterizing individuals and giving the conflicts a dramatic 'life'.

However, the playwright's methods with respect to source material change noticeably with the arrival of Merlin (III.iv), and in the supernatural episodes concerning his prophecies. It is possible to see that he is following 'history'

much more closely than before, both in the sequence and detail of events. Identification of the source is, therefore, made much easier, and the field of possibility is narrowed considerably by the fact that many chroniclers found the stories of Merlin unbelievable, no less than 'fantasticke fictions'[20] and left them out 'for dyuers consyderacyons'.[21] Holinshed was one who did so, as he explains in an oft-quoted passage:

Of the building of this castell, and of the hinderance in erecting the same, with the monstrous birth of Merlin and his knowledge in prophesieng, the British histories tell a long processe, the which in *Caxton*, and in *Galfrides* bookes is also set foorth, as there ye maie see: but for that the same seemeth not of such credit as deserueth to be registred in anie sound historie, we haue with silence passed it ouer. (*History of England*, 5.7, p. 84a, 1–9)

Caxton and Geoffrey of Monmouth are indeed the only chroniclers to treat of the subject uncritically and in full. Even so, their accounts differ in ways which suggest that it was an edition of Caxton's *Chronicle* which the playwright had closest to hand when writing these scenes. Wynkyn de Worde's edition of 1528 contains the following account of the building of Vortiger's castle and the discovery of Merlin:[22]

Masons in haste were fette, & began the werke vpon the hyll of Breigh. But certes thus it befel, all the werke th*a*t the masons made a daye, it fell down the night, & they wyst not what it myght be, & therof the kynge was sore anoyed of th*a*t chau*n*ce, & wyst not what to do[.] Wherfore he let send after the wysest clerkes & lerned men that were through out wales th*a*t myght be fou*n*de, for they sholde hym tell wherfore the fou*n*dame*n*t so fayled vnder the werke, & that they shold hym tell what was best to do. And wha*n* these wyse men longe tyme had studyed, they sayd to the kyng th*a*t he sholde do seke a childe borne of a woman th*a*t neuer had to do with man, and that chylde he sholde do slee, & tempre with his blode the morter of the werke, and so sholde the werke euer endure without ende. . . . Whan the kyng herde this, he com*m*au*n*ded his messengers anone to go through out all Wales to seke that chylde, yf they myght fynde hym, and that they sholde brynge hym forth with them vnto hym. And in recorde and in wytnes of this thynge he had taken them his lettres, that they ne were destroubled of no man ne lette. And than the messengers went thens & spedde so fast, that they came in to a town that was called Karmardyne, and as they passed forth theyr waye, they fou*n*de two chyldren of . xxiiii . [*sic*] yere of age chydynge togyder with hasty wordes, and one of them sayd to that other. Donebat quod he, ye do all wronge to stryue with me, for ye haue no wytte ne no reason as I haue. Certes Merlyn quod he, of your wytte ne your reason I make no force, for men tell comynly th*a*t ye haue no thy*n*ge of god almyghty, syth ye had neuer fader, but euery man knoweth well who was your moder.

The messengers of kynge Vortiger whan they herde this stryfe bytwene the two gromes, they asked of them th*a*t stode besyde them whens that Merlyn was borne, and also who nourysshed hym. And they tolde them th*a*t a grete gentylwoman of Karmardyne called Adhan was his moder, but none knewe who was his fader. Whan the kynges messengers herd these tydy*n*ges they went anone to hym that was wardeyne of the towne & tolde hym the kynges wyll, & shewed hym his lettre, &

wherfore they were comen thyder. Merlyn & his moder anone were fetched before the wardeyn of the towne, & he com*maun*ded the*m* that they sholde go to the kynge with his messengers. Merlyn & his moder went thens & came vnto the kyng, & there they were receyued w*ith* moche honour. And the kyng asked of the lady yf th*a*t chylde were her sone, & who hym begate. The lady answered full tenderly wepynge & sayd she neuer had company of man worldly[.] But syr sayd she, whan I was a yonge mayden in my faders chambre, w*ith* other of grete lignage in my co*m*pany, that ofte*n* tymes went to sporte them, I left alone in my chambre & wolde not go forth for bren*n*ynge of the sonne, there came on a tyme a fayre bacheler & entred i*n* my chambre where I was alone, but how he came in, & where, I wyst it neuer, ne yet knowe I not, for the dores were fast barred, & w*ith* me he dyd game of loue. For I had no myght nor power to defende me from hy*m*. And ofte*n* he came to me in the fore sayd maner, so th*a*t he begate this chylde, but neuer myght I wyte what he was . . . .

Whan Merlyn had herde all that his moder had sayd, he spake to the kynge in this maner.

Syr how I was begoten aske ye no more, for it falleth not to you nor to none other to knowe, but tell me the cause wherfore I am brought to you, & wherfore ye haue sent for me. Certes quod the kynge, my wyse cou*n*seylers haue done me to vnderstande, that the morter of a werke that I haue begon behoueth to be te*m*pred with your blode, or the fou*n*dament shall fayle for euermore. Syr said Merlyn, wyll ye slee me for my blode to tempre with your morter. Ye quod the kynge, or elles shall neuer my castell sta*n*de, as my cou*n*seylers tell me. (Folios 42–43)

The playwright adapts the circumstances (IV.i) so that Merlin is quarrelling with his uncle, the Clown, rather than with another child when the messengers overhear the statement that he has no father, and the quarrel between them is developed into a comic scene which includes a display of 'conveyance', and an opportunity for Merlin to foretell his involvement in the mystery of Vortiger's castle. The explanation that Merlin's mother is a gentlewoman called Adhan, is replaced by the Clown's punning reference to his parentage: 'Yes, and a Goshawk was his father, for ought we know, for I am sure his mother was a Windfucker' (IV.i.99–100). Then, instead of requiring a journey to Vortiger's castle, the playwright speeds up the action (from the point of view of staging) and has Vortiger appear immediately after Merlin's prediction that he will, thereby also providing another example of Merlin's prophetic gifts.

The first piece of evidence suggesting the influence of Caxton's *Chronicle* is the phrase 'Mortar temper'd with the fatal blood' (l. 60). The words 'mortar' and 'tempered' appear together four times in Caxton's account of the story. Geoffrey uses the words 'aspergerentur' (6.17.46) and 'diffunderetur' (6.19.47), for neither of which would 'tempered' be an obvious translation. It is also conceivable that the name of the child with whom Merlin was arguing, Donebat, suggested to the playwright the apparently original Donobert. Geoffrey calls the child Dabutius (6.17.47).

Merlin's mother's speech (IV.i.147–65) in reply to Vortiger's questioning occurs at this point, in *oratio recta*, in both chronicles, but Caxton includes her

admission that she 'wolde not go forth for bre*n*nynge of the sonne', a suggestion which the playwright appears to have adopted in 'And curst the Sun, fearing to blast my beauty' (IV.i.159), and expanded into a ten-line confession of pride. Vortiger's comment, 'Some *Incubus*, or Spirit of the night/Begot him then, for sure no mortal did it' (IV.i.166–67), occurs at the point where, in the *Historia*, Maugantius, a nonce character, expounds the theory of *incubi* with reference to Apuleius's *De Deo Socratis*: but the remark may just as easily have been suggested by the context, or perhaps by the *History of Scotland*, where the subject of Merlin's conception is referred to before being rejected (p. 97a, 30–36). The influence of Caxton is again apparent when Merlin intervenes to protect his mother from further embarrassing questions:

> No matter who my Lord, leave further quest,
> Since 'tis as hurtful as unnecessary
> More to enquire. (IV.i.168–70)

Caxton's Merlin protests: 'Syr how I was begoten aske ye no more, for it falleth not to you nor to none other to knowe'.

Caxton's *Chronicle* continues:

> Than answered Merlyn to the kyng. Syr said he, let them come before me those wyse cou*n*seylers, & I wyll preue that they saye not well ne truly. And whan the wyse men were comen, Merlyn asked yf his blode were the cause to make the werke stande & endure. All those wyse men were abasshed and coude not answere. Than sayd Merlyn to the kyng[.] Syr I shall tell you the cause wherefore your werke thus falleth & may not stande. There is vnder the mou*n*tayn where ye buylde your toure a grete pond of water, & in the bottom of the ponde vnder the water there is two dragons, that one is whyte & that other reed, that fyght togyder agaynst your werke. Do ye depe myne tyll your men come to the pond, & do your men take away the water all out & than ye shal se the dragons as I haue tolde you, th*a*t fight togyder agaynst your werke. And this is the cause wherfore the fou*n*dament falleth. The kyng anone let dygge vnder tyll the men came to that ponde, & let do away all the water, & there they fou*n*de two dragons as Merlyn had tolde them that egerly fought togyder. The whyte dragon egerly assayled the reed, & layde on hym so strongly that he myght not endure, but withdrewe him & rested in the same caue. And whan he had a whyle rested hym, he went before the reed dragon & assayled hym angerly & helde hym so sore, that he myght not endure agaynst hym, but w*ith*drewe hym & rested. And after came agayn the whyte dragon & strongly fought w*ith* the reed dragon, & bote hym euyl & ouercame hym th*a*t he fled fro*m* thens & no more came agayn . . . .
>
> This kyng Vortiger & his men th*a*t sawe this bataile had grete meruayle, & prayed Merlyn to tell hy*m* what it myght betoken. Syr sayd Merlyn, I shall tell you. The reed dragon betokeneth your selfe, & the whyte betokeneth the folke of Saxonie that fyrst ye toke & helde in your lond, that fought agaynst you, & haue dryuen & chaced you awaye. But Britons of your lignage ouercame them & droue them awaye. And sythen at the comynge agayne of the Saxons they recouered this londe, & helde it for euermore, & droue out the bryto*n*s, & dyd with this lo*n*de al theyr wyll & destroyed chrystendom through out this londe. Ye had fyrst ioye w*ith* theyr comyng, but now it is turned to your grete domage & sorowe. For the two

bretherne of Co*n*stance that was kyng, whiche ye let slee, shall come before a quinzeme passed w*ith* a grete power fro*m* lytel Brytayn, & shall auenge the deth of theyr broder, and they shall brenne you fyrst with sorowe, and afterwarde they shall slee a grete parte of saxons, & shall dryue out all the remenau*n*t of the londe, & therfore abyde ye here no lenger to make castel ne none other werke, but anone go els where to saue your lyfe. To god I you betake, trouth I haue sayd to you of thynges th*a*t shall befall. And vnderstande ye well that Aurilambros shall be kynge, but he shall be poysoned, & lytell tyme shall he regne. (Folio 43)

In *The Birth of Merlin* the white dragon's victory is made clear (IV.i.215), and although the playwright does not follow the phraseology of the passage he does retain the sentiments. The statement in Caxton,

The reed dragon betokeneth your selfe, & the whyte betokeneth the folke of Saxonie that fyrst ye toke & helde in your lond, that fought agaynst you, & haue dryuen & chaced you awaye,

appears in *The Birth of Merlin* as

> the Dragons then
> Your self betoken, and the *Saxon* King:
> The vanquisht Red, is sir, your dreadful Emblem, (227–29)

and

> The English *Saxon* first brought in by you,
> For aid against *Constantius* brethren,
> Is the white horror who now knit together,
> Have driven and shut you up in these wilde mountains. (234–37)

The observation,

Ye had fyrst ioye w*ith* theyr comyng, but now it is turned to your grete domage & sorowe,

is expressed as a warning:

> And though they now seek to unite with friendship,
> It is to wound your bosom, not embrace it. (238–39)

And the advice in the latter part of the Caxton passage is expressed much more succinctly by the playwright as

> Seek for your safety Sir, and spend no time
> To build the airy Castles, for Prince *Uter*
> Armed with vengeance for his brothers blood
> Is hard upon you. (242–45)

Besides these similarities, *The Birth of Merlin* shares some other features with the Caxton which do not appear in the *Historia*. The most important is that the white dragon, representing the Saxons, is seen to win. This is shown to be the deliberate intention of the playwright, as he reiterates the fact in V.ii, when Merlin prophesies:

> The Saxons, sir, will keep the ground they have,
> And by supplying numbers still increase,
> Till *Brittain* be no more. (V.ii.85–87)

The *Historia*, on the other hand, has the fighting still in progress as Merlin begins his prophecy:

> Ipsis ergo in hunc modum pugnantibus, praecepit rex Ambrosio Merlino dicere, quid draconum praelium porte*n*debat. (7.3.48)

The prophecies which follow in the *Historia* are long and confusing, full of covert allusions to past, future and contemporary events, many of which defy interpretation.[23] However, it is generally agreed that, although the greater part of the 'Prophetiae' refers to 'the final subjugation of the Welsh and the Norman dominion over Saxon and Briton alike',[24] there still remains, embedded in the prophecies, the hope for the future restoration of Britain to the Britons which derives from Nennius, Geoffrey's source for the dragon prophecy. The relevant passage of the 'Prophetiae' in the *Historia* states:

> Tunc erumpent Armorici fontes, & Bruti diademate coronabuntur. Replebitur Cambria laetitia: & robora Cornubiae virescent. Nomine Bruti vocabitur insula, & nuncupatio extraneorum peribit. (7.3.50)

The Birth of Merlin holds out no such hope, and is similar to Caxton's *Chronicle* in this, and in its use of the much briefer prophecy concerned with events of the more immediate future.

Between the prophecy and the next spectacle in IV.v are three swiftly-paced battle scenes. The playwright leaves out the siege of York, the building of Stonehenge and the defeat of the Irish, and concentrates on the war against the Saxons. He covers several details from the histories: Uter's quest for vengeance, Edol's bravery, the intention to destroy Vortiger by means of wild-fire and the changing of the country's name from Britain to England, or 'Hengist-land', a frequently-cited false etymology not given in the *Historia* but included in most subsequent histories written in English.

In IV.v, the playwright resumes his close attention to the detail, as given by Caxton, about the blazing star:

> Whan the kyng Aurila*m*bros was thus deed & empoisoned at wynchestre, on the morowe after that he was deed aboute the tyme of pryme there was seen a sterre grete & clere, & the beme of the sterre was bryghter than the sonne, & at the bought of the beme appered a dragons heed, & out of his mouth came two huge lyghtes that were as bryght as ony fyre brennynge, & the one beme toward frau*n*ce & streyght ouer the see thyderwarde, & out of th*a*t beme came vii. bemes full clere and longe as it were the lyght fyre. This sterre was seen of many a man, but none of them wyst what it betokened. Vter that was kyng Aurilambros broder th*a*t was in Wales with his hoost of Brytons sawe that sterre, & the grete light that it gaue, he wondred therof gretly what it myght betoken, & let call Merlyn, & prayed hym for to tell what it myght betoken . . . .

Merlyn sawe that sterre & behelde it longe tyme, & sythen he quoke and wept tenderly, and sayd. Alas alas that so noble a kynge and so worthy is deed. And I do you to vnderstande that Auril*am*bros your broder is empoysoned and that I se well in this sterre, & your selfe is betokened by the heed of the dragon that is seen at the bought of the beme that is your selfe that shall be kyng and regne. And by the beme th*at* st*an*deth toward the eest is vnderstande that ye shall gete a sone that shall conquere all Fraunce, & all the londes th*at* belongeth to the crowne of frau*n*ce, that shall be a worthyer kyng and of more honour then euer was ony of his aunceters. And by the beme that stretcheth toward Irlonde is betokened that ye shall haue a doughter that shall be quene of Irlonde. And the. vii. bemes betoken that ye shall haue. vii. sones, & euery one of them shall be kynge, & shall regne with moch honour. And abyde ye no longer here, but go and gyue batayle to your enemyes, & fyght w*ith* them boldly, for ye shal ouercome them & haue the victory. (Folios 44–45)

The dramatist includes Merlin's weeping as he realizes that Aurelius is dead (also a feature of the *Historia*) and adapts the prophecy slightly to indicate that Vortiger is also dead. Caxton's 'empoisoned at wynchestre' seems to be echoed in the play's 'At *Winchester*, this day is dead and poison'd' (IV.v.63). An error, one of many in this edition (and occurring in all editions except those of Caxton 1480 and 1482, and Machlinia(?) 1482), here gives the seven sons to Uter and not to his daughter ('ye' printed instead of 'she'). If the playwright had seen a copy which contained the error, he may have been moved to think up a new interpretation for the seven beams; he relates them to the heptarchy, the seven Saxon kingdoms which were eventually united to form a single monarchy.[25] More significantly perhaps, the daughter is described as future Queen of Ireland by Caxton, which the playwright adopts, and not of Britain as in the *Historia*. The playwright reverses the order of the children, describing the daughter first, presumably so that he can put more emphasis on the son by adding details which go far beyond those supplied by Caxton at this point: the son will conquer France, Germany and Rome, and his heraldry will bear thirteen crowns.[26] He is then described in his popular guise as one of the Nine Worthies, and as the creator of the Knights of the Round Table.

The play is concluded with the coronation of Uter, now Pendragon, as Caxton explains:

After the dethe of Aurilambros Uter his broder was crowned & regned worthely. And i*n* remembrau*n*ce of the dragon that he was likened to, he let make two dragons through cou*n*seyle of his Britons, & made that one for to be borne before hym wha*n* he went in to batayle, & that other for to abyde at Winchestre in the bysshops churche. And for that cause he was called ever after Uter pendragon. (Folio 45)

The playwright realizes the two dragons as a shield and a standard '*with the Red Dragon pictur'd in 'em*' (V.ii.37.2), and uses them in the triumphal entry.

The additional prophecy in the last scene ensures that the coming of Arthur is the focus of the end of the play. His 'fame and victories' (l. 98) are referred to

after a dumb-show which shows 'divers' Princes presenting their crowns to him in homage, the figure of Death striking him, and the subsequent crowning of Constantine (V.ii.37.1–4).

It seems more than likely, on the evidence, that the playwright consulted chronicles of the Holinshed type, if not Holinshed's *Chronicle* itself, for the parts of the play which deal with the historical and political background to the period, but that for the Merlin episodes he turned, as Holinshed had advised the curious reader, to '*Caxton*, and . . . *Galfrides* bookes', and that, of the two, what evidence there is points to Caxton.

However, there are other aspects of Merlin as he appears in the play which are not covered by reference to chronicle literature alone. The playwright must also have been familiar with the Merlin of the romances. Whether he knew a version in French, Italian, Latin or English is impossible to ascertain. The influence of the romance tradition is only apparent through passing references in the play. For the sake of convenience *A Little Treatise of the Birth and Prophecy of Merlin*, a verse romance in English, can be used to illustrate. It gives the background to Merlin's conception, and recounts how the fallen angels, who became the devils in hell, decided that they needed a child, also the product of a virgin birth, to counteract the influence of Christ. A devil was sent to seduce an earthly woman, and a child was born; but to their dismay he was christened and, as a result, although his powers were supernatural, they were used for the furthering of good, and the devils' plans were foiled. The playwright shows his awareness of this in Merlin's reply to his father: 'Thou didst beget thy scourge' (V.i.70). He is also aware of the child's supposed ugliness which is commented on in the romances but not in the chronicles: in III.iv, the Clown uses the terms 'Hartichoke' (l. 37), 'Moncky' (l. 44), and 'Urchin' (l. 57) to describe him, none of them complimentary. In *A Little Treatise* much is made of his appearance:

> But blacke he was withouten lees
> And roughe he was as ony swyne
> The mydwyfe anone ryght
> Was a greued of that syght
> For he was roughe of hyde . . .
> (Sig. C6)
> For so god me helpe and saynt Johan
> A fouler wyght sawe I neuer none
> Certes she sayd thou arte a foule wyght. (Sig. C7)

The infant Merlin becomes incensed at the midwife's remarks and answers back and, still only a child, he defends his mother against the charge of unchastity for which she is liable to be put to death. This precocity, and odd appearance, are gifts to the dramatist, who uses them to comic effect in III.iv, where the long-awaited new baby enters, complete with beard and teeth, studiously reading a book.

The poem also describes his mother's repentance:

> His moder he dyde anone make
> A grey habyte for to take
> And euer after verament
> She serued god omnypotent. (D3–D3^{v})

This appears to be echoed in the play when Merlin instructs her that she is to live in a 'place retir'd':

> There shall you dwell with solitary sighs,
> With grones and passions your companions,
> To weep away this flesh you have offended with,
> And leave all bare unto your aierial soul. (V.i.91–94)

The place is referred to as '*Merlins Bower*' (l. 90), and although it is not described, it may represent some memory of Merlin's 'balefull Bowre' in *The Faerie Queene* (III.iii.8), where the 'grones' come, more explicitly, from the tormented spirits who are captive there.[27] After this, the playwright adapts a piece of 'history' which he had left unused, and has Merlin promise to build Stonehenge, quite unhistorically, as a monument to his mother when she dies.

To summarize, the author of *The Birth of Merlin* probably knew Holinshed's *Chronicle*, but turned to Caxton for further information about the exploits of Merlin. He was also aware of features of the Merlin story which derive from romance. Although he adheres closely to the spirit of his originals, he remains independent of them in verbal expression: apart from the instances mentioned ('mortar' and 'tempered'), he does not seem to borrow phrases or unusual words from his sources. His use of material is resourceful and dramatically inventive.

There still remain, however, several other incidents and characters which are only loosely related to the Merlin material, or which have other sources or analogues.Two of the most sensational effects, the fighting dragons and the blazing star (both discussed under *Staging*) were integral to the story and are not gratuitous innovations. Others were more obviously added or expanded with public taste in mind.

The Devil and magic

The Devil is indeed a figure from the romance origins of the Merlin story, but his role in the play is greatly increased. He appears four times (twice after Merlin is born), whereas the sources imply that a fairly undistinguished devil-incubus (who does not appear subsequently) was delegated for the task of begetting Merlin. In the play, he is given all the characteristics of the popular theatrical devil. His first entrance is described in the stage-directions:

Enter the Devil in mans habit, richly attir'd, his feet and his head horrid. (III.i.141)

Here he is obviously the 'fayre bacheler' of Caxton's chronicle, and the traditional duplicity of the devil is exhibited in his appearance. The commonplace that the devil has 'power/T'assume a pleasing shape'[28] is exploited for dramatic purposes in a number of plays: Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Dekker's *If It be Not Good the Devil Is in It*, Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*, and the anonymous *Grim the Collier of Croydon* amongst others.

Devils were expected to be black, and this one is no exception. On his second appearance, he is decribed as having 'a face like a Frying-pan' (III.iv.64), and Joan later addresses him as 'black horror' (V.i.l). The blackness could have been make-up or a mask,[29] but there is no clue, as it is not specified whether his face changes colour when he changes his appearance suddenly in III.iv, when the Devil's ability to deceive is further illustrated in a stage trick which may have theatrical antecedents. The transformation of the Devil from 'Ragamuffin' (l. 64) to 'Gallant' (l. 67) is similar to an instance in *Wisdom who is Christ*,[30] where,

entreth LUCYFER in a dewyllys aray wythowt and wythin as a prowde galonte. (324)

Lucifer then goes out,

and cummyth in ageyn as a goodly galont. (380)

The Devil in *The Birth of Merlin* does not leave the stage, so the change must be effected by the removal or reversal of a cloak[31] (and perhaps a mask) and the donning of a hat, in the space of the four lines of the Clown's speech. The Clown's final remark,

though he hide his horns with his Hat and Feather, I spi'd his cloven foot for all his cunning. (III.iv.105–06)

suggests that a change of footwear could not be accomplished, and that the feet at least, remained 'horrid'.

When the Devil is swallowed by a rock in V.i, the playwright seems to be using the romance episode of Nimue's (or Vivian's) deception of Merlin, when he was similarly engulfed, having been beguiled into teaching her some of his magic powers. The event does not occur in *A Little Treatise*, but is in the French and English prose *Merlins*, and is referred to by Malory, Spenser, Drayton and Jonson amongst others. Sometimes he is imprisoned in a tower instead of a rock, but the story is widespread, and it is a fate not confined to Merlin. The *South English Legendary* contains an episode in which the body of Pilate is swallowed by a rock to the accompaniment of thunder, lightning and tempest after it has been cast into the Tiber.[32]

The scene accompanying Merlin's birth, which is assumed to be taking place off-stage, is something of a set-piece, and has analogues in non-dramatic

accounts of the births of extraordinary or supernatural children. The convention is ridiculed in *1 Henry IV*, when Glendower claims to have been noticed by the elements at his birth:

> at my natiuity
> The front of heauen was full of fiery shapes
> Of burning cressets, and at my birth
> The frame and huge foundation of the earth
> Shaked like a coward.
> *Hot.* Why, so it would haue done at the same season if your mother's cat had but kittend, though your selfe had neuer beene borne. (Q 1598, E4^v; III.i.13–20)

In the anonymous prose narrative *Robert the Devil*[33] the hero's birth is said to have been marked by darkness, thunder, lightning, storm and tempest (p. 8), and in *The History of Tom Thumb the Little* (1621), Tom's mother, like Joan, is provided with distractions:

> Such a Child-bed lying in was neuer seene nor heard of; for thither came the Queene of Fayres to bee her Midwife, with her attendants the Elues and Dryades, with such like midnight dancing shadowes, who gaue most diligent assistance, at that painfull houre of this womans deliuerie.[34]

In Drayton's satirical poem, *The Mooncalf*,[35] the circumstances are even closer to Joan's. The World is brought to bed and attended by the goddess Hecate/Lucina in her latter capacity, assisted in this case by the Furies (67–92). In her throes, she admits that the Devil, as an *incubus*, is the father of her child (141–44). Although the poem was not printed until 1627, this episode appears in the earlier part, which may have been in existence by 1607[36] and provided material for the play.

Births seem not to have been attempted on stage outside of the Mystery plays when the traditionally easy birth of Christ sometimes took place by means of a sort of conjuring trick on the open stage.[37] *The Birth of Hercules*, a manuscript play of unknown authorship, assumed to have been written after 1600,[38] places Alcmena off-stage, and provides horrific sound-effects in marginal stage-directions:

> *post clamorem parientis, tonitru ingens*
> *quod aliquam diu continetur oportet*
> (2318)

and also:

> *Alcmena shrikes out within,*
> *and presently together with her*
> *the Drums for thunder.*
> (2319)

The play bears no similarity to *The Birth of Merlin* except in the *Birth* of its title, but it is of course possible that one is recalling the title of the other.

The show of Hector and Achilles at II.ii.207.1–7 also observes conventions that are as much narrative as dramatic. It may have been suggested by an incident in Book I, Chapter 3, of Johann Wier's *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (1583), which also appears in a French version of 1597, although not apparently in the earlier Latin version of 1566. A very brief account is given in Thomas Beard's *The Theatre of God's Judgements* (1597), but the first full English rendering of Wier appears in Thomas Heywood's *Gunaikeion; or Nine Books of Various History Concerning Women* (1624). The episode concerns the Emperor Maximilian, who wished to see Hector and Achilles whom he had heard one of his counsellors praising. Heywood continues:

A Magitian at the same time liued about the court, who boasted so much of his skill, that he profest himselfe able to accomplish the desires of the Emperour, and that without danger or preiudice to any: this comming to the eares of the Emperour, he was sent for, and commanded to shew some testimonie of his art. The Magitian, in hope of reward, and promise of silence, free from all interruption, vndertakes it, and moreouer to secure the spectators from danger: when placing the Emperour in his regall throne, he cast about the same a wide and spacious circle, that done, he mumbles certaine vnknowne words to himselfe, which he seemed to reade out of a small booke of characters, which hee drewe out of his pocket. This was no sooner done, but *Hector* beates at the doore with such violence, that at the terrour of the stroakes, the whole pallace seemed to tremble: the doore being opened, *Hector* enters armed *Cap a pe* in a helmet plumed, his target vpon his arme, and in his right hand a long mightie speare, headed with brasse: who thus accountred [*sic*], with terrible and flaming eyes lookes round about the roome; his stature much larger than any that hath liued in our latter dayes. At another doore, first knockes, then enters *Achilles*, with the like maiesticke gate, compleatlie armed, with an austeare and menacing brow, beholding *Hector*, shaking and charging his speare against him, as if he instantlie purposed to inuade him. These two, after honour done vnto *Caesar*, hauing gone on, and returned backe three times, vpon the instant vanisht. (Sig. K3, p. 101)

The stage-direction in *The Birth of Merlin* contains more details than appear in this account. Hector must be '*attir'd and arm'd after the Trojan manner*', and have both '*Sword, and Battel-ax*'; Achilles must have a '*Falchon*' as well as a spear, and two trumpet players are called on to '*sound alarm*', and two spirits to conduct the combatants on to the stage. The spirit accompanying Hector is clad '*in flame colours with a Torch*', perhaps corresponding to his 'flaming eyes' in Heywood's translation of Wier, while Achilles's spirit is in black, perhaps to suggest his 'menacing' air.

Tempting as it is to offer the Heywood passage or its earlier Latin or French versions as the undoubted source for this episode in *The Birth of Merlin*, most of the other similarities (the occasion being the trial of a magician's skill, the request for silence, and the interest in authenticity of appearance) are standard

for shows in non-dramatic and dramatic literature. The source might as easily have been the episode in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* in which the Emperor Charles of Germany asks to see 'Great Alexander, and his paramour/In their true shapes and state majestical' (scene xii), or its narrative source in Chapter 29 of *The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus* (1592). It is not possible that Heywood's prose, despite its vivid realization of the scene, represents a memory of a staging of *The Birth of Merlin*: it is an accurate translation of the earlier Latin. If the colour-coding of the spirits' costumes according to the 'humours' of the two warriors is not just a commonplace, the writer of *The Birth of Merlin* may have borrowed the idea from Wier (or Heywood).

Another prose account of a conjuring of Hector and Achilles (on a different occasion) is provided by *The Famous History of Friar Bacon*, the romance on which Greene is assumed to have based his play. This echoes *The Birth of Merlin* only in the competitive spirit in which the show is produced:

> First, Bungye did rayse Achilles with his Greekes, who marched about Vandermast and threatned him. Then Vandermast raised Hector with his Troians, who defended him from Achilles and the Greekes. Then began there a great battell between the Greekes and Troians, which continued a good space: at last Hector was slaine, and the Troians fled. Then did follow a great tempest, with thundring and lightning, so that the two coniurers wished that they had been away.[39]

Hector was a popular hero and one of the Nine Worthies, so he and his fighting-partner, Achilles, were not an obscure choice for dramatic representation and require no immediate source. They appear in a number of other plays: in a masque in Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk* (performed 21 September, 1618 at Christchurch, Oxford), and as characters in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (1601–03) and Heywood's *I Iron Age* (1612–13).

This episode was undoubtedly introduced for its value as spectacle, as there is no justification for it in the source material. But such shows are traditionally the visible proofs of a magician's skill, and this one highlights a structural device which has been developed alongside the historical narrative from the beginning of the play, that of the magic contest. In this respect *The Birth of Merlin* owes something to Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (*c.* 1589–92),[40] and joins the ranks of a number of plays which derive shape and entertainment from battles of wit and magic: *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (*c.* 1587–90), *Grim the Collier of Croydon* (1600), *The Two Noble Ladies and the Converted Conjuror* (1619–23), and James Shirley's *St. Patrick for Ireland* (*c.* 1637–40). In *Friar Bacon*, as in *The Birth of Merlin*, the defeat of a foreigner is significant in a nationalistic as well as a religious sense, proving by combat, as it were, the superiority of one nation over another.

In *The Birth of Merlin*, the contest has four 'rounds' and the combatants are not always the same. The first event is the Hermit's supernatural victory over

the Saxons, which is reported in I.i. This is taken as a sign of divine intervention by Aurelius, and of witchcraft by the Saxons; the second, already mentioned, is when Proximus loses to the Hermit as his power fails to sustain the show of Hector and Achilles in II.ii; the third results in the singular death of Proximus when a stone drops on him (IV.i.191). The confrontation with Merlin of which this is the result may have been suggested by Merlin's disagreement with the 'wysemen' in Caxton who were 'abasshed' when he contradicted their solution to the problem of Vortiger's collapsing castle, but his sudden demise also exemplifies the ever-popular theme of the prophet who, busy predicting a momentous event, fails to anticipate some personal hazard. There is also, perhaps, an echo of one of the romance Merlin's 'Three Laughs'. The first of these concerns a man whom Merlin sees buying shoes: he laughs, and when asked why explains that the man will not live long enought to wear them. In *A Little Treatise*, messengers rode after the man to see what happened and 'founde him dede as any stone' (Sig. E1).

The fourth round of the contest is with the Devil himself in V.i, and Merlin succeeds in having him incarcerated in a rock and also prevents two spirits from carrying away his mother. The Devil's servant-spirits are forced to flee by the power of Merlin's art (l. 48) just as Armel and Plesgeth were put to flight by the Hermit when he dismissed the show of Hector and Achilles.

This series of conflicts provides numerous small dramatic climaxes, and also serves as an indicator of where the audience's sympathies must lie. The pattern is clear-cut: the losing side includes the treacherous Vortiger, the pagan Saxons, Proximus their magician, and the Devil himself. This faction suffers yet a fifth defeat in the final scene when the wicked Artesia is doomed to death by the re-established monarchy. The gleeful relish with which the manner of her death is contemplated resembles the brutal plans for Aaron and Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* (V.iii. 179–83, 195–98), and there is also, perhaps, an echo of Pucelle's father in *1 Henry VI* ('O burne her, burne her, hanging is too good', 2673, V.iv.33), when Edol insists that burning is too good for Artesia (V.ii.64).

The Birth of Merlin also bears comparison with *1 Henry VI* structurally, although Shakespeare's treatment of cause and effect in the developing sequence of conflicts involving supernatural aid is much more subtle: the claims and counter-claims of the French and English that the opponent is supported by devilish powers are initially left in the balance, and the decisive scene, in which Pucelle is actually seen talking to the spirits (V.iii), is not presented until the growing factionalism of the English has been established as the primary cause of the loss of France. In *The Birth of Merlin* the rights and wrongs of successive situations are pre-ordained on purely religious grounds. The Hermit, Merlin, and all who are against Artesia are in the right; at least (and more importantly from a dramatic point of view), they always win.

Modesta and Constantia

Besides those elements of the plot which have their source in chronicle and romance, there are scenes which would seem to owe their being to popular dramatic taste. The devil has already been considered as a manifestation of this; the two chaste sisters, Modesta and Constantia, are less easy to account for.

Chastity as a concern of drama is by no means unusual. Robert Forsythe, in an analysis of plot motifs in the plays of James Shirley, cites sixty-four plays (and another eleven by Shirley himself) which include 'Attempts at seduction which are indignantly resisted by the woman, often with one or more set speeches in praise of chastity'.[41] These range from Greene's *James IV* to Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, but *The Birth of Merlin* is not among them. What makes it different is the fact that the girls are not subject to any physical threat: as F. E. Schelling describes it, 'An underplot depicts the romantic but somewhat unreasonable preference which two young British maidens display for the cloister to their faithful lovers'.[42] The partners are obviously worthy, and their wooing honourable: the two girls deliberately choose to renounce worldly things, including men and the pleasures of family life, in favour of monastic chastity and religious observance. Because of this, Modesta and Constantia have fewer parallels in other plays than Forsythe's list might lead one to suppose.

Interest in chastity for its own sake appears to be a Jacobean development. Julia in Dekker's *Patient Grissil* is a rare Elizabethan example of a woman who remains unmarried on principle even though she has the opportunity to make an agreeable match. However, she differs from later examples in that her role is relatively small. Also, although she has one short speech about the religious aspects of renunciation (II.i. 261–67), her utterances about marriage appear to be intended to offer a satirical commentary on the view that it is better to marry than to burn as she declares that 'to be married is to liue in a kinde of hell' (II.i. 259). She has a structural function here too, in that she is the 'maid' to Gwenthyan's 'widow' and Grissil's 'wife', a traditional grouping.[43] The emphasis is not religious as it is in several later plays.

Massinger, in *The Maid of Honour*, allows Camiola to claim a chaste future for herself, and the unknown writer of *The Two Noble Ladies and the Converted Conjuror* has Justina, one of the eponymous heroines, reject her erstwhile lover, Clitophon, whom the plot has restored to her, explaining,

> my virgin life is vow'd to heauen now
> which hath so oft preserv'd it.[44]

This gesture causes no displeasure to Clitophon who decides, on the strength of it, to become a Christian himself.

The association of declarations of chastity with Christianity and conversion occurs in several plays. In *The Birth of Merlin*, despite the pagan/Christian polarization of the plot, no conversions to Christianity take place, but the scene in which Modesta persuades Constantia to adopt a chaste and unworldly life is similar in type to the conversion scenes in Henry Shirley's *Martyred Soldier* and Dekker's *Virgin Martyr*.[45] In both these plays conversion to Christianity is one of the major elements, and in both the heroines undergo martyrdom and transfiguration.

In Middleton's *Hengist King of Kent* it is a man, the rightful king, Constantius, who dies celibate, having first exhorted Castiza to the chaste life:

> Keepe still that holy and im*m*aculate fire
> You Chaste Lampe of eternitye, tis a treasure
> Too pretious for deaths moment to pertake,
> This twinckling of short life; Disdaine as much
> To lett mortality knowe you, as starrs
> To kiss the pauem*en*ts, y'haue a substance
> As excellent as theirs, holding yo*u*r pureness;
> They looke vpon Coruption as you doe
> But are starrs still; be you a virgin too
> *Cast* Ile neuer marry. (I.ii.179–88)

Here, as in *The Birth of Merlin*, both are Christians already, and the 'conversion' is to the acceptance of a life of chastity, but unlike Constantia Castiza is prevented by circumstances from keeping her vow, and the Chorus reports that

> since fate's pleasd to Change her Life
> She prooues as holy in a wife. (Chorus iii, 15–16)

It is the saintliness of Constantius, as well as the character of Castiza, which is illuminated by this conversion scene, and Castiza's act in accepting and then setting aside this way of life is shown to be hardly borne, and not evidence of capriciousness on her part; the stage direction describes her accepting Vortiger as her husband with 'a kind of Constraind Consent' (D.S.ii, 19–20). Her reluctance is not presented to the audience for the purpose of titillation, as it seems to be in Anthony Brewer's *Lovesick King* (1655), a version of the tale of Hiren the Fair Greek, where the lady, a nun, protests mightily, only to succumb with equal vehemence:

> I blush to say, I yeeld, I'm wholly yours, a spotless Virgin now is in your power, (Sig. C4^v)

nor as in Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, where Margaret vows to turn nun as an over-reaction to unrequited love, and gives up the idea when her lover is restored to her.

The chastity in *The Birth of Merlin* is apparently there for its own sake, being even less relevant to the historical plot than it is in *Hengist*, and the postulation of a life of chastity continuing beyond the end of the play groups it with *The Two Noble Ladies* and *The Maid of Honour*. A. B. Harbage, referring to plays for the most part performed before 1613, states that 'The popular playwrights displayed no interest whatever in virginity', and he notices only two characters who profess it: 'Delia, a minor character in *The London Prodigal*, has no wish to wed, and Matilda in *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington* buries such wishes with her love; but characters of this nature are hard to find'.[46] Among the plays he has selected (he left out those which could not be assigned to a company; p. 85), the subject of virginity is not common enough to be a distinguishing feature between public and private theatre plays, but this in itself points to the interest's being a later development. Those later plays already mentioned, although the ascriptions are by no means certain, seem to be associated with theatres or companies of the Beeston empire from about 1619–32. Harbage and Schoenbaum offer the following companies and dates:

The Martyred Soldier: Queen Anne's (?): b. 1627
The Virgin Martyr: Red Bull Company (Revels): 1620 (6 Oct. lic.)
The Two Noble Ladies: Red Bull Company (Revels): 1619–23
The Maid of Honour: Red Bull Company (?): *c.* 1621–32

Edwards and Gibson point out that the title-page of *The Maid of Honour* 'states that it had been acted by the Queen's Majesty's servants (Queen Henrietta's Men) at the Phoenix in Drury Lane', which makes it a Beeston play, although 'which one of Beeston's companies originally performed it depends upon the date of its first production ... it might be either Prince Charles's Men or Lady Elizabeth's'.[47] *Hengist King of Kent* is assigned to *c.* 1619 by Bald on external and internal evidence, but although the play belonged to the King's Men in 1641, its earlier history is unknown.[48]

To read these plays is to become aware of what can only have been a minor fashion for dramatic expressions of chastity in religious contexts. Massinger certainly added the religious element to Camiola's renunciation,[49] and the author of *The Birth of Merlin* has similarly chosen to incorporate this theme in a subplot which has no basis in his source material. Harbage suggests that an awareness of the contents of plays from different theatres could be used as 'an aid to conjecture in assigning such plays' (pp. 85–86); to conjecture only, as such a theory would ignore the likelihood that one theatre might attempt to capitalize on the success of another by imitation. All that can be maintained with regard to *The Birth of Merlin* is that its subplot would appear less of an anomaly if it were to be dated and located *c.* 1619 or later in one of the Beeston companies.

'For sexual abstinence as an ideal in itself ... we find no advocacy in Shakespeare' (Harbage, p. 233) is a point worth pursuing, considering the

play's status as 'Shakespeare Apocrypha'. Harbage refers briefly to *Measure for Measure* for support in this view, and a comparison between that play and *The Birth of Merlin* reveals the great difference between the writers' approaches to the subject of virginity.

Shakespeare's Isabella is intending to become a nun when her chastity is challenged by Angelo, but no simple or idealistic view is offered of her predicament. The vow of chastity and the desire for yet 'more strict restraint' (352, I.iv.4) are not allowed to constitute the final solution to the problems of life as they apparently are in *The Birth of Merlin*. The world, the flesh, and the devil intrude upon Isabella nevertheless. The simple lesson of renunciation which Constantia learns:

> I have no father, friend, no husband now,
> All are but borrowed robes . . . (III.ii.116–17)

is found wanting in this play. Isabella is forced to involve herself in worldly affairs on her brother's behalf, and the question of the desirability of chastity, or, more particularly, of isolation from the world and its concerns, is seriously questioned by the Duke's proposal of marriage.

The Birth of Merlin, on the other hand, offers little or no criticism of Modesta's attitude. That she is missing out on the joys of motherhood is easily countered by the character who sees the world but as 'a sad passage/To a dread Judgement-Seat' (III.ii.39–40), and utters speeches loaded with material from the 'Learn to Die' tradition. Shakespeare uses such stuff himself in *Measure for Measure* ('Be absolute for death', 1208, III.i.5), but in a context where it has to be questioned: the deliverer of the speech is not what he appears to be, and his hearer is finally unconvinced, afraid of death and clinging to life. No such qualifications are offered to Modesta's utterances.

Her first long speech (I.i.110–27) is relatively complex in its structure of ideas. She begins by confirming that Edwin is a worthy suitor ('Noble and vertuous: could I dream of Marriage,/I should affect thee *Edwin*'), but this leads on to speculation about the purpose of human existence which, she decides, is not pleasure. If it were, Nature could be justly criticized for creating man as 'a building/Of so much art and beauty', when he is so basely motivated. That man is like the beasts (among whom there is no distinction of rank) in every other respect except his ability to speak is too base a conception to contemplate. The power that gave man his attributes gave them so that he might show his gratitude to his maker. Therefore she will reserve her love for God.

The speech, as it stands, is difficult to paraphrase, and it is conceivable that a line or more has been lost after 121.[50] The connection of 'But still to fly from goodness' (line 122) to the preceding statement is difficult to make. It does not seem to be a commonplace that it is characteristic of beasts to fly from

goodness. It could conceivably be an exclamation, halting the flow of the speech and expressing surprise that *man* could fly from goodness given the aforementioned conditions. However, lines 123–25 seem to embody a recapitulation of the argument:

> that power
> That gave to man his being, speech, and wisdom,
> Gave it for thankfulness.

'Being' has been covered from line 115, and 'speech' from line 120, and it seems likely that a reference to the 'wisdom' of man should also have been included.

The commonplace nature of the sentiments in this speech is revealed by the occurrence of similar passages in other plays. Hamlet is using such material, somewhat cynically, when he addresses Rosencrantz and Guildenstern:

> What peece of worke is a man, how noble in reason, how infinit in faculties, in forme and moouing, how expresse and admirable in action, how like an Angell in apprehension, how like a God: the beautie of the world; the paragon of Annimales; and yet to me, what is this Quintessence of dust. (Q 1604, F2; II.ii.303–08)

In soliloquy, however, like Modesta, he asks:

> What is a man
> If his chiefe good and market of his time
> Be but to sleepe and feede, a beast, no more:
> Sure he that made vs with such large discourse
> Looking before and after, gaue vs not
> That capabilitie and god-like reason
> To fust in vs vnvsd. (Q 1604, K3^{v}; IV.iv.33–39)

But instead of building up to a consideration of the necessity of showing gratitude to one's maker, as Modesta does, Hamlet uses these accepted beliefs to taunt himself about his own earthly inaction, characteristically redirecting a general speculation about the nature and purpose of human existence to his own particular case:

> I doe not know
> Why yet I liue to say this thing's to doe,
> Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and meanes
> To doo't. (Q 1604, K3^{v}; IV.iv.43–46)

Voada's speech to the man about to rape her in *The Valiant Welshman* (1615) by 'R.A.' is more in the style of *The Birth of Merlin*: the statements are allowed to stand at their face value, and the effect is persuasive although far from subtle:

> Perhaps youle say, that you are flesh and bloud.
> Oh my good Lord, were you but onely so:
> It were no sinne, but naturall instinct:
> And then that noble name that we call man,
> Should vndistinguisht passe, euen like a beast.

> But man was made diuine, with such a face,
> As might behold the beauty of the starres,
> And all the glorious workemanship of heauen.
> Beasts onely are the subiects of base sense:
> But man hath reason and intelligence.
> Beasts soules die with them: but mans soule's diuine:
> And therefore needs must answere for eche crime. (Sig. H4)

The major particulars in which men differ from beasts have been variously expressed, although all are linked to the same basic premise: as Thomas Lupset explains in *The Way of Dying Well* (1534), 'It is the creatours wyl, that nothynge in this worlde shall haue a soule, but man alone: the which soule bringeth with him the vse of reason' (Sig. C1–C1^{v}).[51] Thomas Wilson in *The Rule of Reason* (1567) declares, more like Modesta, that 'to speake, and to haue power to laugh, doth onely agree to man, and to none other creature earthly' (Sig. C1^{v}); and Modesta's conclusion (lines 123–27) is close to that of Erasmus in his *Preparation to Death* (1543); 'The summe of mans felicitie is to contemplate and prayse his maker, redemer, and gouernour. To this ende is man created' (Sig. A6).

These correspondences with moralizing literature continue in III.ii, where Modesta, having indicated in I.ii her desire to lead the 'vertuous' life, converts her sister who is about to be married. Donobert, hoping to break Modesta's determination, orders the wedding party to adopt the tactics of Ulysses to Achilles in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (III.iii.38–54): 'Seem careless all, and take no notice of her' (*BM*, III.ii.58). The scene is also staged in Thomas Heywood's *1 The Iron Age* (1632), where Achilles, like Modesta, exclaims, 'Not looke on me?' (Sig. L2), but Modesta, by cleverly pretending to be open to persuasion (lines 71–78), gains an opening to put her point of view in an impressive speech in favour of renunciation of the world, owing much to the 'All the world's a stage' tradition. T. W. Baldwin has traced the history of the sentiments in Jaques's famous utterance (*As You Like It*, II.vii.139–66), and quotes a translation of the relevant passage in the *Zodiacus Vitae* of Palingenius by Barnaby Googe (1561):

> Wherfore if thou dost well discerne
> thou shalt beholde and see
> This mortall lyfe that here you leade
> a Pageant for to bee
> The diuers partes therein declared
> the chaunging world doth showe
> The maskers are eche one of them
> with liuely breath that blow.
> For almost euery man now is
> desguised from his kinde
> And vnderneth a false pretence
> they sely soules doe blinde.

So moue they Goddes aboue to laugh
wyth toyes and trifles vayne,
Which here in Pageants fond they passe
while they do life retayne.[52]

Sir Thomas More uses a similar image in *The Four Last Things* as a warning against Pride:

Now thou thinkest thyself wise enough, while thou art proud in thy player's garment, and forgettest that, when thy play is done, thou shalt go forth as poor as he. Nor thou rememberest not that thy pageant may happen to be done as soon as his.[53]

The deployment of this image in Modesta's speech (III.ii.85–94) is technically accomplished, and striking in its use of the couplet; as Constantia comments, 'Her words are powerful' (III.ii.95). The ten lines create a memorable picture and also exhibit some relatively subtle word-play. The image of the masque is a particularly appropriate one to illustrate the follies of the world, as it is the masque rather than the play which exhibits the greater impermanence, and also the necessity for masking the face. The picture evoked in *The Birth of Merlin* of the 'Vizard that falls off, the Dance being done' to reveal 'Deaths Glass', the skull as a *memento mori*, is particularly effective (lines 87–88). The passage continues, still apparently referring to the masque:

Our best happiness here, lasts but a night,
Whose burning Tapers makes false Ware seem right; (89–90)

but it is possible that a punning reference to sexual pleasure is also intended (see Commentary). The reference to a 'shift' (a kind of undershirt or smock) to cover 'shame' (line 92) could also support this, but 'shift' is also appropriate to the main masque image in its sense of 'a change of clothes', or even just an 'expedient'. Modesta continues to express the utter futility of life:

At best we do but bring forth Heirs to die,
And fill the Coffins of our enemy. (109–10)

Then Constantia is finally persuaded:

I have no father, friend, no husband now,
All are but borrowed robes. (116–17)

Miles Coverdale, translating Otto Wermullerus, advises just this approach to human ties:[54]

Whoso hath a train hanging upon him, as father, mother, sisters, brothers, wife, children, and friends, the same is the sorer laid at: for naturally we all are loth to depart from them. Here must we remember the words of Christ: 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me . . .'. (I.25.78)

Later he adds,

Lay not thine heart, love, and affection too much upon them, how good, profitable, and honest soever they be; but remember alway that they are transitory things, which thou mayest lose and forego, when time requireth. Love him most of all, whom thou canst not lose, even thy Redeemer. (III.9.127)

The debate between virginity and married chastity ('sanctity of life', l. 26) which looked like a possible development at the beginning of the scene, does not materialize as a major issue. Donobert agrees tamely to hear the Hermit putting the girls' case, his anger apparently turned to grief (l. 159). It is rather an anti-climactic ending to the scene considering the extremity of his rage at lines 144–47, and it is the last appearance of Modesta and Constantia. We hear in V.ii that they have entered a 'Monastery', and that is all. E. H. C. Oliphant postulated a missing scene in which Donobert is confronted by the Hermit,[55] but if this were the case, there would be no need for III.ii to fizzle out as it does. Donobert could have raged on to the end if his conversion were to be achieved later. *The Virgin Martyr* is an example of what can be made to happen in a plot like this when neither side is prepared to give in, but the writer of *The Birth of Merlin* presumably did not want the events of the subplot to dominate the play, and it seems likely that, at the end of III.ii, the situation is deliberately deflated in order to prepare the audience for the girls' disappearance. The loose end is tied up in V.ii, when the disappointed young men are made Donobert's heirs, again illustrating their worthiness, and the singularity of the girls' rejection of them.

So they disappear, unmarried and without trace, having had no appreciable effect on the course of the drama. Are they, as has been suggested, 'without the slightest excuse in the play'?[56] The scenes in which they appear are almost completely self-contained. Apart from the first scene, no material from the rest of the play is introduced or discussed in scenes concerning them, and they are mentioned in only two of the scenes in which they do not appear: near the end in V.ii, where, as one would expect, their story is wound up when Edwin reports that he has seen them both enter a monastery (V.ii.20), and at the beginning of III.i, where the Clown and Joan, who are 'now at Court' (l. 2), encounter Donobert and Edwin discussing the sisters' refusal to marry. The Clown refers to the wedding of Constantia as an ideal opportunity to further the search for a husband for his sister, and Sir Nicodemus is also connected, as he is producing a masque for the wedding.

Apart from these links, the credibility of Modesta and Constantia is supplied by their relationship with people who also appear in other scenes: their father, Donobert, seems to be the King's chief adviser; their lovers, Cador and Edwin, are courtiers and of noble families.

G. A. Sandeman is the first commentator on the play to suggest how the different aspects of the plot could be seen to interrelate. Treating the play as at least in part by Rowley she considers that the Merlin plot

may, in fact, have been carefully planned, not only to provide bawdy comic relief and spectacular effects but also in an effort to give greater depth to the discussion of the effects of lust, which is important both in the story of Joan and also in the Artesia/Aurelius and Modesta/Edwin plots. If this is so, Rowley's intention was to produce a more unified play than at first sight appears, dealing with themes that he later handled more successfully in *All's Lost by Lust*. (p. 87)

She continues:

In both plots the blindness of lust and its hellish qualities are insisted upon, just as they are in *All's Lost*, and here made to appear even blacker by comparison with the heavenly purity of Modesta and Constantia .... The dramatic juxtaposition of the chaste Modesta and the wanton Joan in the early scenes of the play is given an ironic twist when in the last act their fates are seen to coincide as each enters a religious seclusion for the sake of her 'aierial soul'. (pp. 88–89)

The end of the play does, in fact, bring together the fates of all three women. Artesia is to be immured alive as well, but in her case as a punishment, as she has refused to repent: 'Alive she shall be buried, circled in a wall' (V.ii.65). In this she also shares the fate of the other manifestation of evil, the Devil, who is swallowed up by a rock.

That the two sisters and Artesia represent the extremes on the scale of virtue is obvious: they live up to the modesty and constancy of their names, while she is addressed as 'Deadly Sin' (III.vi.78). Joan represents the middle way, with her not completely innocent simplicity seduced by the attractions of bodily pleasures, perhaps to become 'much more the better for being a little bad'. Sandeman senses this, although she is possibly over-estimating the playwright's seriousness in her conclusion:

Modesta's virtue is, however, unproductive compared with Joan's licence: Rowley has used to good effect the traditional paradox at the heart of the legends of Merlin's demonic origin, which suggests that from the moment of greatest abandonment to evil comes the greatest good. (p. 89)

No overt comparisons are made among the women in the play, but it is possible to see a relationship by taking the lead from Sandeman and comparing their stories, and examining the juxtaposition of the scenes in which they appear. Modesta and Constantia, their father and their suitors are the first characters on stage and the business of their intended marriages occupies the first scene with only a temporary interruption for other concerns of the play, the Hermit's victory and the disappearance of Uter, to be introduced. Modesta, characteristically as it turns out, expresses a desire to meet the holy man, but the meeting does not take place until further details have been given about his victory, and his disapproval of the Saxon presence at court and of the King's passion for Artesia have been made clear. His attitude here is in agreement with the sentiments of Modesta's last speech in I.i, in which she concludes that piety, not pleasure, is the end of human existence.

Modesta next appears '*reading in a book*' (I.ii.221.2), so often a sign of piety (Forsythe, p. 84), just as the stage has been cleared, and Aurelius has dismissed the Hermit's reservations about Artesia with:

> if such fair blood
> Ingender ill, man must not look for good. (220–21)

On cue, 'good' in the shape of Modesta, enters and seeks instruction from the Hermit. Her final words,

> For this was man in innocence naked born,
> To show us wealth hinders our sweet return, (256–57)

usher in Joan ('*great with childe*') also talking about birth as she, more prosaically, discusses the paternity of her unborn child (II.i). The change in mood is abrupt, but it would probably be a mistake to look for satirical intentions here. The contrast between the two women is not made to reflect badly on either, but merely produces a sense of incongruity which is the stuff of comedy. A similar impression is obtained later in II.i, when the romantic Uter, whose greatest wish is to know his lady's name, is confronted by Joan and the Clown who have more earthy matters in mind (l. 89).

Another 'run' of such scenes starts at the end of II.ii, when Uter's suspicions about Artesia's motives are aroused by the Waiting Gentlewoman's attempt to arrange an assignation for him. He agrees to it in a spirit of enquiry. After this comes Joan, a less successful seductress, accosting men of all sorts in order to find a father for her child (III.i). This episode in turn is contrasted with an interruption in which Donobert refers to Modesta's refusal to marry Edwin and orders the arrangements for Constantia's wedding (24–37). The unfortunate Edwin is then accosted by the Clown who offers him Joan as a wife (47).

After the brief appearance of the Devil to Joan (III.i.141) occurs a scene in which a different power seems to be at work: Modesta converts Constantia to her point of view, and their father agrees to listen to the Hermit putting their case. This is the last appearance of Modesta and Constantia: after this the direction of the play changes. There is a highly dramatic devil scene (III.iii), Merlin is born, and politics and prophecy prevail. Ostorius and the Saxons are seen plotting (III.v), and the promised meeting between Uter and Artesia sparks off open hostility between the two factions, and between Aurelius and his brother (III.vi).

The only sign of any continuing interest in the fates of the women is the very uncharacteristic verse speech on pride which the playwright gives to Joan (IV.i.150–65).[57] It is a kind of confession, the first step towards repentance, and is followed up by her rejection of the Devil's advances in V.i, and Merlin's arrangements for her seclusion in order, as he says,

> To weep away this flesh you have offended with,
> And leave all bare unto your aierial soul. (V.i.93–94)

This is a play which associates, by means of Artesia, lust and unbridled sexual interest with evil and anti-state activity, but has a humane attitude to Joan's transgression. Modesta and Constantia are not involved in any action which affects the world of the play: their rampant chastity is not called upon to accomplish or prove anything. Modesta's powerful speeches against worldliness speak for themselves and provide ammunition against the vices of Artesia and the failings of Joan; ammunition which the playwright does not actively deploy, as the two contrary attitudes are not brought to open confrontation.

The Modesta/Constantia subplot could have been written as a separate entity by a collaborator or a later reviser. With the exception of the news from the messenger in I.i, their scenes are exclusively concerned with their own business; but the play as it stands shows every sign that the conflation of the subplot and the main plot has been carefully undertaken, and the theme conscientiously planned to complement the rest of the play.

The Clown, Joan and Sir Nicodemus Nothing

The Clown in *The Birth of Merlin* has been one of the chief factors governing the general acceptance of William Rowley as at least part-author of the play. The character is similar in type to those which Rowley is known to have written and acted, and the most telling characteristic is his girth: two jokes compare him to a pregnant woman (II.i.88, III.i.60). Rowley has long been associated with fat roles,[58] but in view of the well-known proverbial saying, 'As fat as a fool' (Tilley F443), it is perhaps unwise to insist on Rowley's corpulency being a natural feature; anyone could play a fat clown with the aid of padding, as the Clown in *Wit at Several Weapons* (a play in which Rowley may have collaborated)[59] seems to be indicating when he says,

I ha' got a stomack six times, and lost it agen, as often as a traveller from *Chelsy* shall lose the sight of *Pauls*, and get it agen. (F 1647; Sig. 6L3)

On the other hand, as Bentley notes, 'fat' parts began to appear in King's Men's plays during Rowley's time in the company (i.e. *c.* 1623–25/26, 24 March).[60] Certainly *The Maid in the Mill* (lic. 1623) and *The Fair Maid of the Inn* (lic. 1626) contain fat clowns, and it has been suggested that the 'fat' part of the Bishop of Spalatro in *A Game at Chess* (lic. 1624) was added by Middleton to provide a role for Rowley.[61] If Rowley was a player of fat men, he would also have had ample scope in the revival of *The First Part of Sir John Falstaff* (probably *1 Henry IV*) which was played at Whitehall on 1 January 1624/25.[62] Rowley is known to have acted the part of the fat Plumporridge in Middleton's *Inner Temple Masque* in 1619, and the clown Jaques (of unspecified dimensions) in his own *All's Lost by Lust* (*c.* 1619–20?). He has also been suggested as the creator of the role of Cuddy Banks in *The Witch of Edmonton*.[63]

In the eighteenth-century droll based on *The Birth of Merlin*, the Clown is given the name of Simon, but in the play he is just 'Clown' throughout. R. S. Forsythe suggests that nameless clown characters 'occur chiefly in plays produced before 1615, and . . . nameless clowns in plays after that date are the creation of dramatists whose first work was done before 1600'.[64] The Clown in *The Winter's Tale* is also nameless, but the only Rowley clown without a name is the one in *Fortune by Land and Sea* (*c*. 1607–09), his collaboration with Heywood.

In many respects the Clown in *The Birth of Merlin* shows similarity to others from the pen of William Rowley (but see II.i.17n). He is the brother of a woman whose part in the plot is more significant than his own, and such additional brothers have been recognized as a feature of Rowley's comic writing, perhaps influenced by the one in *The Winter's Tale*.[65] This kind of clown role is to be distinguished from those in early Heywood plays in which clowns are often accounted for by their involvement in the action as servants or messengers, and their clowning is presented as incidental to their other functions.

The Clown in *The Birth of Merlin* is a fully-fledged clown character, tending to dominate the scenes in which he appears and, like many of Shakespeare's clowns, Launce, Young Gobbo, and the Clown in *The Winter's Tale*, often directing his reflections unashamedly to the audience, who are assumed to be engaging in sympathetic consideration of his predicament.

He speaks a lightly-pointed and highly-characterized prose, the sentence-structure imitating natural speech rhythms to such an extent that it is virtually impossible to read the lines aloud without falling into character. A tone of concern blended with exasperation is most realistically conveyed in II.i by means of unnecessary repetitions:

what with Childe, great with Childe . . . (1–2)
but *Joan*, *Joan*, sister *Joan* . . . (6)
Meet him, and what name shall we have for him, when we
meet him? (30–31)

The tone changes according to the situation, and he is also cheeky, defensive, good-natured or mischievous, his underlying loyalty to his sister and her interests being his governing principle. His dramatic importance, however, decreases during the course of the play: he is a dominating figure in II.i, III.i, III.iv, and IV.i (first appearance), and a very minor one in IV.i (second appearance), and IV.v.

His jokes in II.i, and III.i, are mainly puns or examples of literal-mindedness: arms (of the child/heraldic), hangers (for a sword/genitals), swear (protest love/affirm with an oath), lie (lie down/deceive), post (stage post/Knight of the Post), know (be acquainted/know carnally), felt (experienced/groped), etc. In addition to the one-liners, there is a running gag about

'Hangers' (starting at II.i.18) culminating in the Clown's objective comments on the genuine sword hangers of Prince Uter after the audience has been 'taught' the double meaning , an indication of some skill in comic writing.

Naïveté combined with relentless logic is the hall-mark of a particular kind of clown, frequently resulting in comic episodes which are mind-boggling inversions of the conventional moral stance. In Rowley's *All's Lost by Lust*, the Clown eventually agrees to hang Lothario at his own request but, as he explains,

tis not for any good will I beare unto thee, nor for any wrong that I know thou hast committed; but innocently for thy lands, thy leases, thy clothes, and thy money. (Sig. H3^{v})

Similarly in *The Old Law*, Gnotho intends to get rid of his wife (in accordance with the 'Law'), and then marry his wench: somewhat prematurely, he invites his friends to a joint funeral and wedding. The Clown's treatment of his sister in *The Birth of Merlin* is likewise 'innocent'. In revealing her predicament to all, he has no conception that he is publishing her shame, and is unaware of how she must appear to others. Edwin's rebuff that she is a whore and he a fool (III.i.48–49) is cruel, but the truth does not make a great impression. The Clown realizes that he has been 'scurvily' treated, but is undeterred in his quest for the missing father.

Parody is not part of this Clown's equipment as it is of some.[66] Nor is he given to throwing out Latin tags or partaking of witty exchanges. Allusion to a hackneyed proverb, 'Far fetched and dear bought is good for ladies' (III.iv.81–82), constitutes the literary high-point of his conversation. Some of the scenes in which he takes part are, however, lightly satirical in an unoriginal way. The arrival of the Clown at Court in III.i (the Clown's quest is used neatly here to link plots) becomes the occasion for broadly satirical references to court vices. The implication of the Clown's comment on the appropriateness of going to the court to look for the father of an illegitimate child is in itself satirical, and the audience is surely expected to laugh at Edwin when the Clown announces the existence of a child which looks like him. Instead of denying the possibility he retorts, 'Like me! prithee where is it?' (III.i.45), as if afraid that some sin may be about to find him out.

Traditional jibes at lawyers too are to be found in this scene (e.g. III.i.66–67), and also at the misuse courtiers made of their positions by accepting money from outsiders to promote their causes with the King (89). Sir Nicodemus protests the altruism of his knighthood, but refuses to do anything until he has been paid. After some nonsense exchanges with the Clown, he merely reasserts the power of accusation ('let her challenge any man, the childe shall call him Father', III.i.101–02), and departs with the money.

III.iv opens with the Clown informing the audience that he has lost his sister, and confessing to the pursuit of a swineherd's wife with dishonourable

intentions, a confession which gives Merlin the opportunity, on his first appearance, to exhibit his powers. He knows that this has happened, just as he knows that the Clown is his uncle. The humour in this scene relies on Merlin's precocity; he is small, having only recently been born, but he can walk, talk and read, and has not only teeth, but a beard. The part would surely have been played by a boy. He must also appear somewhat grotesque, for the Clown calls him 'Moon-calf', 'Hartichoke' and 'Urchin', and protests that he 'shames all our kindred' (III.iv.47).

The Clown's sense of what is socially acceptable does not desert him when he is finally introduced to Joan's lover. He refuses to shake hands:

Not till you have married my sister, for all this while she's but your whore, sir. (71–72)

But he is diverted by the Devil's attempts to buy him off with the promise of lacking 'nothing/That gold and wealth can purchase' (78–79). He seems satisfied, and admits Merlin to the family with a string of puns on place-names.

IV.i sees him as Merlin's 'Protector' and also the victim of the juggling of a 'little antic Spirit' who is Merlin's page. The object of the earlier part of the scene seems to be to set up an argument between the Clown and Merlin, to fulfil the requirement of the plot that the King's messengers should overhear the statement that Merlin has no father. The juggling is extraneous, and could be a later addition. The role of the Clown subsequently decreases in importance as Merlin becomes a public figure. His joke about 'stone fruit' (IV.i.195), after the curious demise of Proximus, is without comment or riposte, and Merlin insists that he and Joan must leave before he produces his 'apparition' of the fighting dragons. The Clown leaves reluctantly, still protesting that the Devil should have married his sister (IV.i.207–08). Here, as in the next scene in which he appears, he seems redundant. He interrupts the serious business with his comments, but no sallies of wit are thereby engendered; in fact, he is ignored.

The effect which this produces is, of course, in keeping with his lowly social status, which means that the King and other members of the nobility are under no obligation to speak to, or even notice him, but this is in marked contrast to the use made of such social differences in II.i, where counterpointing of the romantic postures of Prince Uter was so relatively skilfully achieved. One cannot help feeling that in both IV.i (second appearance), and IV.v, the Clown has been superimposed on scenes which have no need of him. If his comments, and Merlin's exchanges with him, are removed, no damage is done to the sense and continuity of the remaining speeches.

If the Clown was a later addition in these scenes, it could account for his re-entry in IV.i, and his subsequent abrupt dismissal (no reason given), and for the necessity of keeping him quiet in IV.v. In this scene, the Clown is addressed twice by Edol and Merlin, but again, in exchanges which do not disrupt the

conversation between Merlin and Prince Uter, and he is finally gagged magically and prevented from uttering anything but 'Hum, hum, hum'. This he does three times, on two occasions as an interruption to Merlin's long speech (103, 114), and once at the end (123). Merlin does lift the spell at line 122, but hastily reimposes it when it becomes obvious that the Clown still has no intention of keeping his peace. He releases him eventually at line 138 when the prophecy is over.

Even if the Clown were only a moderately gifted actor, his muffled attempts to speak would undoubtedly distract the audience, successfully up-stage Merlin and provoke laughter. The situation is inherently funny: one only has to remember Papageno attempting to sing with his mouth shut in Act I of *The Magic Flute* to recreate the effect. It is not easy to imagine why a playwright might wish to encourage such a reaction during this speech. Merlin's prophecy is relatively impressive, and authoritative in tone, not pompous or in any way asking for deflation. There is no suggestion coming from within it, or from other sources outside it, that it should not be taken seriously. It looks as if the Clown has been added to a scene in which no comic counterweight was originally intended.

The Clown's sister and side-kick, Joan, is also subject to changes in her role. In the earlier scenes of the play, she is a character of low standing (as her name indicates); she speaks a mixture of verse and prose, and shows every sign of being a fairly thick-witted country wench. Her attitude, when questioned about her seducer, was

> Alas, I know not the Gentlemans name Brother,
> I met him in these woods, the last great hunting,
> He was so kinde and proffer'd me so much,
> As I had not the heart to ask him more. (II.i.8–11)

He had most rich Attire, a fair Hat and Feather, a gilt Sword, and most excellent Hangers. (II.i.15–16)

There is nothing in her speech in IV.i which contradicts the information given earlier, but the details of place and the description of her lover have given way to a much more objective and moral view of the seduction in a sustained passage of relatively elegant verse. The speech is a confession, an identification of the sin:

> In pride of blood and beauty I did live,
> My glass the Altar was, my face the Idol,
> Such was my peevish love unto my self,
> That I did hate all other, such disdain
> Was in my scornful eye, that I suppos'd
> No mortal creature worthy to enjoy me,
> Thus with the Peacock I beheld my train,
> But never saw the blackness of my feet,
> Oft have I chid the winds for breathing on me,

And curst the Sun, fearing to blast my beauty,
In midst of this most leaprous disease,
A seeming fair yong man appear'd unto me,
In all things suiting my aspiring pride,
And with him brought along a conquering power,
To which my frailty yielded, from whose embraces
This issue came, what more he is, I know not. (IV.i.150–65)

K. M. Briggs, considering the play from the point of view of subject matter rather than style or authorship, finds the change noteworthy:

This is a very different person from the peasant girl who trails about the forest with her clownish brother .... The suggestion is rather of the Merlin of the legend, who was born of a pure virgin and saved by baptism as soon as he was born. The hermit who appears intermittently in the play seems to have been intended to perform the office, and to have somehow missed it. The play has the air of having been put together piecemeal from two very different plays on the same subject.[67]

The speech does indeed show signs of a different tradition, and also a different dramatic style. It is certainly conceivable that it is a relic of an earlier 'straight' rendering of the Merlin story. According to various chroniclers, Merlin's mother was a woman of noble birth and/or a nun. The degree of pride expressed in

such disdain
Was in my scornful eye, that I suppos'd
No mortal creature worthy to enjoy me,

would certainly be more appropriate to a person of high rank than to a naïve country girl. In its formal confessional tone the speech echoes that of Queen Elinor in Peele's *Edward I*:[68]

In pride of youth when I was yong and faire,
And gracious in the king of Englands sight,
The daie before that night his Highnes should,
Possesse the pleasure of my wedlockes bed,
Caitife accursed monster as I was,
His brother Edmund beautifull and young,
Uppon my bridall couch by my concent,
Enjoied the flowre and favour of my love.
And I becam a Traitresse to my Lord. (2469–77)

Similar to this, but much briefer, is Lady Faulconbridge's admission of her misdemeanours in Shakespeare's *King John*:

King Richard Cordelion was thy father,
By long and vehement suit I was seduc'd
To make roome for him in my husband's bed:
Heauen lay not my transgression to my charge,
That art the issue of my deere offence
Which was so strongly vrg'd past my defence. (266–71, I.i.253–58).

Whether the playwright was aware of these resemblances or not, he was obviously putting Joan in a conventional penitential posture, and both here, and in her final scene, making her seem more mature and not at all comic. To the Devil's protestation, 'I am the same I was', she replies: 'But I am changed' (V.i.32). The playwright may have felt that the spiritually-regenerated Joan should speak with a new voice, but there is nothing to contradict an alternative hypothesis that the change is the result of a change in authorship.

V.i incorporates the test of Joan's repentance as she is subjected once again to the Devil's blandishments. She passes the test, fleeing from him in an action closely resembling the opening of a scene in the last Act of Rowley's *All's Lost by Lust*, where Jacinta likewise attempts to escape the embraces of a black seducer, the Moor, Mulymumen (Sig. H4).

There is a marked difference between the ending of Joan's story and that of the Clown's. Joan accepts a life of penitence in V.i, and does not appear again. The Clown, however, lingers on, and as there is no place for him in the historical plot, he becomes isolated from the main concerns of the play. His presence in V.ii would seem to be merely token, an attempt to link plots; he speaks at line 41, but not again, and making such a garrulous character silent for so long without any magical gag to account for it is dramatically inept. The example of Lucio's inclusion in the last scene of *Measure for Measure* illustrates just how much skill and ingenuity is required to control and utilize a character of this type. The author of *The Birth of Merlin* found himself at the end of the play with a character whose thematic importance was nil and whose comic usefulness had been exhausted. He opted for the easiest solution, that of ignoring him.

This problem does not arise in the case of Sir Nicodemus Nothing who is kept on a tight rein; in fact, he has only one appearance, and although the role became a leading comic part in the droll, it has no equivalent in the play's sources.

The name is one of many made-up names in Elizabethan and Jacobean comic or satirical writing, alliterating on 'N', and having some kind of negative or derogatory word for the surname. One of the Vices in Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like* (1568) is Nichol Newfangle; Dekker's(?) *News from Gravesend Sent to 'Nobody'* (1604) is dedicated to '*Syr* Nicholas Nemo, *alias* Nobody';[69] among the *Fragments* of Du Bartas is an epitaph '*Vpon Sir Nequam Neuter*', a man who was 'nor for Deuill, nor for God';[70] and Nicholas Nebulo is the pseudonym of Gerardine in disguise in Middleton's *Family of Love* (1608), Sig. F3^{v}.

All of the above names have some meaning in the contexts for which they were invented, and Nicodemus Nothing is probably no exception. *OED* cites the obsolete words 'Nicodemical', 'Nicodemite', and 'Nicodemize' with meanings derived from the character and actions of the biblical Nicodemus (John 3),

who was the ruler of the Jews, and a disciple who came to Jesus by night. 'Nicodemite' is glossed as 'a secret or timid adherent', and 'Nicodemize' as 'to act or reason like Nicodemus', which covers both his timidity, and his apparent inability to appreciate metaphor, as revealed in his exchange with Jesus who says, 'except a man be borne from aboue, he cannot see the kingdome of God' (John 3.3). Nicodemus replies: 'Howe can a man be borne when he is olde? can he enter the second time into his mothers womb and be borne?' (John 3.4). The name might, therefore, have been considered appropriate to the character who takes part in a nonsense exchange about babies, and children begetting their own fathers, in *The Birth of Merlin*, but he is also a masque-writer, a Knight (he says), and a 'con' man.

In a curious occurrence in Dekker's *Satiromastix* (performed 1601) the name appears to be complimentary. Tucca tackles Horace about the time he played Hieronymo:

and when thou ranst mad for the death of Horatio: thou borrowedst a gowne of Roscius the Stager, (that honest Nicodemus) and sentst it home lowsie, didst not? (I.ii.355–58)

Yet another Nicodemus appears in *The Triumph of Honour*, the first of Beaumont's (or Field's) *Four plays in One* (written *c.* 1608–13). This is Corporal Nicodemus who, like Sir Nicodemus Nothing, has a pompous and affected manner:

My worthie Sutler *Cornelius*, it befits not *Nichodemus* the Roman Officer to parley with a fellow of thy rank. (Sig. 8D2^{v})

He boasts, interestingly, that he is soon to be knighted, 'Sir *Nichodemus* that shalt be' (Sig. 8D3).

In *The Birth of Merlin*, Sir Nicodemus's surname, 'Nothing', perhaps indicates his lack of importance and his self-inflating manner, and it also leaves him open to the Clown's pun, 'no-thing', implying that he is a kind of eunuch and incapable of fathering the child. Robert Fleissner even tries (unsuccessfully, in my opinion) to link him with Shakespeare's interest in the concept of 'nothing' in *King Lear*.[71]

Both names, it seems, might mean something to a Jacobean audience, and it would be quite reasonable to give up the pursuit of significance here, were it not for Sir Nicodemus's profession: A. F. Hopkinson, on apparently no other grounds than that the character professes to be a masque-writer, asks in a footnote: 'Is this an allusion to Ben Jonson and his masque writing?'[72] This smacks of rampant allusion-hunting, until one notices the phrase, 'out of my element', used by Sir Nicodemus at III.i.65. This expression has been particularly associated with the satirical caricature of Ben Jonson as the poet Horace in *Satiromastix*. It has been assumed that Dekker is here satirizing Jonson's use of the phrase in his *Poetaster* (performed 1601), and that in Shakespeare's *Twelfth*

Night (1600–02) 'the Clown's reference to the word's [i.e. 'element'] being overworn depends for its humour on the audience's familiarity with Dekker's play'.[73]

However, as Albert H. Marckwardt's findings suggest, this may be attaching too particular a significance to the phrase, which was used by other dramatists not engaged in jibing at Ben Jonson: Jonson himself used the expression satirically as part of the speech of affected 'gull' characters in *Cynthia's Revels* (1600–01). Marckwardt explains its recurrence:

This expression, first gaining currency late in the last decade of the sixteenth century, was taken up by those affected courtiers who aspired to be always in the height of fashion. Its popularity in court and almost-court circles increased to such an extent that it became tiresome, distasteful, and inane, which in turn called down upon it the ridicule of these playwrights.[74]

As a phrase generally used as part of the affected diction of courtly characters, it is highly appropriate to Sir Nicodemus Nothing and need not have any further relevance, but I am inclined to think that the playwright may have had Dekker's Horace in mind when staging Sir Nicodemus's entrance. Horace, like him, is introduced as a writer:

[HORACE] ... looke sir, tis an *Epithalamium* for Sir *Walter Terrels* wedding, my braines haue giuen assault to it but this morning. (*Satiromastix*, I.ii.37–39)

SIR NICODEMUS Earl *Cador's* Marriage, and a Masque to grace it,
So, so.
This night shall make me famous for Presentments. (*BM* III.i.56–58)

Sir Nicodemus has entered here '*with a Letter*' of commission for the masque like the one Horace exhibits:

heere tis, heere tis, heere tis, Sir *Walter Terils* letter to me, and my answere to him: I no sooner opened his letter, but there appeared to me three glorious Angels [i.e. the fee]. (I.ii.107–09)

Sir Nicodemus obviously represents a courtly type, and his inclusion is comically useful in that he plays, temporarily, Don Armado to the Clown's Costard, but whether he would have been identified immediately with a particular person is impossible to say.

'The Birth of Merlin' and 'Cupid's Revenge'

In an article in 1921, William Wells drew attention to the fact that *The Birth of Merlin* shares a number of parallel passages, and part of one of its plots, with the Beaumont and Fletcher play, *Cupid's Revenge* (1615),[75] and concluded that *The Birth of Merlin* was an early work of these playwrights. Although his conclusion is suspect, the relationship between the two plays is of some interest.

The parallel passages are given below, with the addition of two of my own (marked with an asterisk *), in the order in which they occur in *The Birth of Merlin*.[76] Each parallel (or group of parallels) is designated by a letter for ease of reference.

(a)

AURELIUS No tiding of our brother yet? (*BM* I.ii.1)

LEONTIUS No newes yet of my Sonne? (*CR* I.v.14)

(b)

AURELIUS Oh *Gloster*, he's a jewel worth a Kingdom: (*BM* I.ii.27)

[HIDASPES] Bee not ashamd Syr: you are worth a Kingdome. (*CR* I.v.59)

(c)*

[PRINCE] These trees would bend their tops to kiss the air,
That from my lips should give her praises up.[77] (*BM* II.i.48–49)

[LEUCIPPUS] I know not how to speake so much as well
Of thee but to these trees. (*CR* V.iv.65–66)

(d)

PRINCE Ha, what art thou, that thus rude and boldly,
Darest take notice of a wretch
So much ally'd to misery as I am? (*BM* II.i.90–92)

LEUCIPPUS What art thou, that in this dismall place,
Which nothing could finde out but misery,
Thus boldly steps? (*CR* V.iv.49–51)

(e)

[EDOL] It is a thought that takes away my sleep, (*BM* II.ii.32)

LEUCIPPUS Tis a truth
That takes my sleepe away, (*CR* III.ii.93–94)

(f)

CAPTAIN What shall we do with our Companies, my Lord?
EDOL Keep them at home to increase Cuckolds,
And get some Cases for your Captainships,
Smooth up your brows, the wars has spoil'd your faces,
And few will now regard you. (*BM* II.ii.35–39)

TIMANTUS It I had a companie my Lord –
ISMENUS Of Fidlers: Thou a Companie? No, no, keepe thy company at home, and cause cuckolds: The warres will hurt thy face, theres no semsters, Shoemakers, nor Taylors, nor almon milk ith morning, nor poacht egges to keepe your worship soluble, no man to warme your shyrt, and blow your roses: nor none to reverence your round lace breeches: If thou wilt needes goe, and goe thus, get a case for thy Captainship, a shower will spoyle thee else. (*CR* I.v.3–11)

(g)*

DONOBERT Preserve your patience, Sir.
EDOL Preserve your Honors, Lords, your Countries Safety,
Your Lives, and Lands from strangers: what black devil
Could so bewitch the King, so to discharge
A Royal Army in the height of conquest? (*BM* II.ii.40–44)

[ISMENUS] plague ont, Ime out of all patience: discharge such an Army as this, that would have followed you without paying, o gods! (*CR* IV.v.20–22)

(h)

[EDOL] your gross mistake would make
Wisdom her self run madding through the streets,
And quarrel with her shadow, (*BM* II.ii.72–74)

[LEUCIPPUS] The usage I have had, I know would make
Wisedome her selfe run frantick through the streetes,
And Patience quarrell with her shaddow. (*CR* IV.i.37–39)

(i)

[EDOL] death!
Why kill'd ye not that woman?
DONOBERT, GLOSTER Oh my Lord.
EDOL The great devil take me quick, had I been by,
And all the women of the world were barren,
She should have died e're he had married her
On these conditions.
CADOR It is not reason that directs you thus.
EDOL Then have I none, for all I have directs me, (*BM* II.ii.74–81)

ISMENUS Why killed you her not?
LEUCIPPUS The Gods forbid it.
ISMENUS S'light, if all the women ithe world were barren, shee had dyde.
LEUCIPPUS But tis not reason directs thee thus.
ISMENUS Then have I none at all, for all I have in mee directs mee: (*CR* IV.i.2–7)

(j)

EDWIN I have done sir, I take my leave.
EDOL But thou shalt not, you shall take no leave of me Sir. (*BM* II.ii.101–02)

[LEUCIPPUS] And so Ile take my leave.
ISMENUS Of whome?
LEUCIPPUS Of thee.
ISMENUS Heart, you shall take no leave of me.
LEUCIPPUS Shall I not?
ISMENUS No by the gods shall you not: (*CR* IV.v.35–40)

(k)

[PRINCE] a deeper reach in villany, (*BM* II.ii.370)

BACHA You have a deeper reach in evill then I: (*CR* II.ii.31)

(l)

ARTESIA You know me, Sir?
EDOL Yes, Deadly Sin, we know you,
And shall discover all your villany. (*BM* III.vi.78–79)

BACHA Doe not you know me Lords?
NISUS Yes deadly sin we know ye, would we did not. (*CR* V.ii.44–45)

(m)

EDOL Ratsbane, do not urge me. (*BM* III.vi.85)

[ISMENUS] ratsbane get you gone, (*CR* IV.i.205)

(n)

EDOL Wilde-fire and Brimstone eat thee. (*BM* III.vi.101)

ISMENUS I, wild-fire and brimstone take thee: (*CR* V.ii.49)

(o)

[VORTIGER] If it be Fate, it cannot be withstood,
We got our Crown so, be it lost in blood. (*BM* IV.i.256–57)

[BACHA] Nor shall it bee withstood,
They that begin in Lust, must end in blood. (*CR* III.ii.252–53)

(p)

EDOL Let my Sentence stand for all, take her hence,
And stake her carcase in the burning Sun,
Till it be parcht and dry, and then fley off
Her wicked skin, and stuff the pelt with straw
To be shown up and down at Fairs and Markets,
Two pence a piece to see so foul a Monster,
Will be a fair Monopoly and worth the begging.
ARTESIA Ha, ha, ha.
EDOL Dost laugh *Erictho*? (*BM* V.ii.52–60)

[ISMENUS] I would have thee in vengeance of this man, whose peace is made in heaven by this time, tyde to a post, and dryde ith sunne, and after carryed about and shone at fayres for money, with a long storie of the divell thy father that taught thee to be whorish, envious, bloudy.
BACHA Ha, ha, ha. (*CR* V.ii.54–59)

In considering the nature and distribution of the parallels, it is necessary to grade them.[78] There are six incontrovertibly parallel passages, (f), (h), (i), (j), (l), and (p). All these are long enough and distinctive enough for the possibility of coincidence to be ruled out in the individual instances, and there are enough of them to demonstrate that the correspondences are not merely chance use of the same commonplaces. In the second category are two shorter passages where the amount of correspondence is less: a few words, or the expression of a similar sentiment in a similar context: (d), and (g). The third category contains more (individually) doubtful parallels: (a), (c), (k), (m), and (n). These are significant only in so far as those in the first two categories are reliable since they follow a similar pattern: four are spoken by characters in corresponding roles, and the fifth, (k), is in a corresponding scene. The fourth group contains (b), (e), and (o), which are not supported in this way and are very doubtful.

(o) in particular is unconvincing as a parallel; it relies on a rather common rhyme, withstood/blood, and the couplet in *BM* can, in sentiment at least, be compared with, 'As it is wonne with blood, lost be it so' (*Richard III*, 744, I.iii.272). (e) relies on a similarity of expression which could be coincidental, as does (b), but a different criterion makes (b) more likely to be a genuine parallel: if one considers the disposition of the examples in *CR*, it becomes apparent that, just as in *BM*, they occur in only a limited number of scenes.[79]

(b) occurs in *CR* I.v, which also contains (a), another parallel from the third, and (f), a certain parallel from the first category. The two unlikely parallels, (e) and (o), are given no further support by these means, as they both appear in *CR* III.ii, in which no other examples occur. But (e) appears in *BM* II.ii, along with the greatest number of *CR* parallels. (o) still has nothing to recommend it.

Not only is a limited number of scenes involved, but a limited number of characters, for behind these parallels is a corresponding structure: Artesia and Prince Uter mirror Bacha and Leucippus, and Uter's brother, Aurelius, stands in the same relation to them as Leucippus's father, Leontius. Edol, the British General in *BM*, is paralleled by Leucippus's cousin and friend, Ismenus, also a General, and it is his expressions of anger which account for the greater part of the quotations. Ten out of the sixteen passages show Edol fuming with rage, and in eight of those the parallel is spoken by Ismenus. The other six passages involve, primarily, Aurelius, Uter, and Artesia, the very doubtful (o) passage, alone, involving Vortiger.

The fact that the plot in which they all occur is only a small part of *BM*, whereas it constitutes the main plot of *CR*, need not necessarily point to *BM*'s being the borrower, but other factors do tend to support this view: for example, the apparently unintelligent use of (h) in *BM*, where the omission of 'Patience' leaves Wisdom quarrelling with her own shadow, when the whole point of the image in *CR* is to make Wisdom frantic and Patience quarrelsome, contrary to the natures of these virtues. However, it could be argued (and it could certainly not be disproved) that the loss of 'Patience' is a scribe's or printer's error. Perhaps more convincing is the appropriateness of the lines to their context in *CR*, which is less obvious in *BM*. Wells felt otherwise about (f), but probably because he had not caught the taunting tone of Ismenus's remarks to the court fop, Timantus (pp. 132–33). Here, as in the other longer examples, *CR* offers a much more highly-developed context for the utterance. Edol at this point appears merely bad-tempered, insulting an inferior officer who, as far as we know, has done nothing to deserve it. In (j) too, this is apparent: in *CR*, the lines are part of a scene of considerable dramatic tension (rather like that between Amintor and Melantius in *The Maid's Tragedy*, III.ii), full of stiff upper lips and embarrassment, in which the two friends avoid expressing their true feelings. When an abbreviated version of the lines is used by Edol in a different context, the impression is of superficial irritation. Similarly in (h), the lines project a distinctive tone, but lack motivation when divorced from what I take to be their original context.

The priority of *CR* seems to be further confirmed when the sources of the plays are considered. The triangular relationship in *CR* can be accounted for by reference to the *Arcadia*,[80] whereas the involvement of Uter in the relationship between Aurelius and Artesia is completely without foundation since it is not a

feature of the Vortiger/Rowena story on which the plot is based. It would seem that this aspect of *BM* could be derived from *CR*.

Wells's hypothesis that both *CR* and *BM* are based on an earlier version of *CR* is pure speculation, as well as an unnecessary complication. The name Artesia, although derived from a different part of the *Arcadia*, could still have been selected by the adapter of the *CR* passages, and the use of the word 'talents' in the monetary sense in I.i.82, which Wells finds significant (p. 130), could also have been influenced by the Arcadian material of *CR*, or by the *Arcadia* itself; neither would require the existence of a third play to account for its presence.

It seems that *The Birth of Merlin* contains a completely extraneous romantic element, adopted from the plot of *Cupid's Revenge* in order to fill out a relationship between characters already present in the historical narrative, and adding thereby an extra, but undeveloped, twist to the conflict aroused by Aurelius's ill-judged marriage. Up to a point, the plays share a common plot: the marriage of the king to the evil woman, the woman's earlier relationship with a close relative of the king (and her betrayal of him to the king), the General's condemnation of the king's marriage, and his opinion on a suitable punishment for the woman. This story-line is abandoned in *The Birth of Merlin* when the historical narrative diverges from it. So, the relationship between Uter and Artesia is peripheral, and Uter's motivation in III.vi is unclear, and remains unexplained. His 'betrayal' becomes the signal for the commencement of open hostilities amongst the factions at Court. It is Edol's invective against the king's marriage in II.ii and III.vi which contains the most parallels with *Cupid's Revenge*, and the way in which this material stands out, because of its dramatic vigour, from the surrounding text suggests that this was the primary reason for its inclusion. Edol is noted as a brave soldier in the chronicles, but by giving him Ismenus's outspoken lines, the playwright is making him more politically courageous, turning him into a spokesman for the general discontent at court, and creating a dramatic character of no little power.

Establishing the priority of *Cupid's Revenge* unfortunately helps little with the dating of *The Birth of Merlin*. *Cupid's Revenge* was printed in 1615, and was in existence by 5 January, 1612 (new style), when it was performed at Court by the Children of the Queen's Revels.[81] Dates much earlier than this have been suggested for its composition, either based on internal 'evidence', or on attempts to order the Beaumont and Fletcher canon in terms of development, but these are speculative.[82]

The evidence also leaves open the question of the authorship of *The Birth of Merlin*. The parallels occur only in one plot of the play, and any decision resulting from their analysis would involve only those scenes. Also, parallel passages in themselves prove nothing. It is essential to bear in mind two of M. St Clare Byrne's 'Rules' regarding the use to which parallel passages may be

put: the first, that 'Parallels may be susceptible of at least three explanations: (a) unsuspected identity of authorship, (b) plagiarism, either deliberate or unconscious, (c) coincidence'; and the fourth, which includes the stricture that we may not 'logically proceed' from the collaborate to the anonymous play when using parallels to determine authorship.[83]

Since (c) has been ruled out, we are left with (a) and (b), and the main problem still unresolved. The validity of the fourth 'rule' becomes apparent if one tries to use the evidence to assert common authorship: to do so is to imply that Beaumont and Fletcher both erratically plagiarized themselves (sometimes in the same scene), because the parallel passages in *Cupid's Revenge* occur (according to Hoy's division of the play) in three scenes by Fletcher and five by Beaumont. As a method of working this seems implausible. To gain support for the view that *The Birth of Merlin* is their collaborative effort, one would need to be able to point to other plays in which self-plagiarism and joint revision or rewriting of old plots were part of their practice.

It would be more reasonable to suggest that one of them used material from their joint play in *The Birth of Merlin* (so the relevant scenes might be by either Beaumont or Fletcher). Here one would have to be confident of demonstrating not only that there was a reliable means of distinguishing between their work, but that the hand of one was, indeed, present in the *BM* scenes which include the parallel passages, a demonstration not feasible in the current state of knowledge.[84]

Considering the unsophisticated nature of *The Birth of Merlin*, and the undeveloped contexts for the lines, it is more than likely that neither Beaumont nor Fletcher was responsible, and that the parallels are the result of another dramatist using *Cupid's Revenge* as a 'source'.

'The Birth of Merlin' and 'Hengist King of Kent'

The relationship between *The Birth of Merlin* and Middleton's *Hengist King of Kent* (printed as *The Mayor of Queenborough* in 1661), noted and discussed by F. A. Howe,[85] is less easy to define and does not, on the whole, take the form of direct parallels. Howe makes two statements about the plays, which should be incontrovertible: 'Both plays are concerned with the same events' (p. 198), and 'To explain the resemblances as accidental is manifestly impossible' (pp. 200–01). However, on closer examination, a more justifiable (although at first sight self-contradictory) statement can be made: that the two plays are *not* concerned, for the most part, with the same events, and that most of the resemblances are the result of the playwrights' use of two slightly overlapping periods of chronicle history (and, in the case of *The Birth of Merlin*, of the conflation of events from both periods).

The Birth of Merlin commences in the reign of Aurelius, and ends at the coronation of Uter, but most of the action in *Hengist* concerns events presumed in *The Birth of Merlin* already to have occurred: Vortiger's attempts to gain the crown, the coronation and murder of Constantius, the initial stages of Saxon expansion in Britain under Hengist, and the beginning of Aurelius's reign. The relationship between Hengist, Vortiger and Rowena is not alluded to in any way in *The Birth of Merlin* which includes, unhistorically, its own version of that story, enacted by Ostorius, Aurelius and Artesia respectively. The role of Vortiger, therefore, becomes something of an anomaly: he appears in *The Birth of Merlin* even though his function in this area of the plot is being performed by Aurelius.

This is one reason why Howe is able to find so many parallels: different aspects of the transplanted Vortiger are embodied, in *The Birth of Merlin*, not only in the character actually named 'Vortiger', but in Aurelius as well. Parallels between Roxena and Artesia are likewise easy to find because, in fact, their roles are the same, and the increasing power of the Saxons and the final victories of Aurelius and of Uter in the two plays are analogous historical events.

The possibility of a significant relationship between the plays can be adduced from only three areas of similarity:

1) Roxena's affair with Horsus loosely parallels the involvement of Artesia with Uter.

2) The interest in chastity evinced by Constantius and Castiza is paralleled, in *The Birth of Merlin*, by that of the Hermit, Modesta and, eventually, Constantia. Of the four allegorically-named characters, only Constantius is strictly historical. There is one verbal parallel, which may or may not be significant, in the Hermit's question to Modesta: 'Are you a virgin?' (*BM* I.ii.245), which is also asked of Castiza by Constantius (*Hengist* I.ii.167).

3) The innovation in *Hengist* that Roxena (as well as Vortiger) is burned alive, is referred to as a possibility for Artesia, her counterpart, in *The Birth of Merlin*, and some conceivably parallel passages occur in connection with this. Before the deaths of Vortiger and Artesia respectively, occur:

> VORT Ha ha
> HERS Dost laugh . . . (*Hengist* V.ii.116–17)

and

> ARTESIA Ha, ha, ha.
> EDOL Dost laugh *Erictho*? (*BM* V.ii.59–60)

In this instance, it is necessary to remember Schoenbaum's scorn at what he calls 'the Case of the Solemn Ha, Ha, Ha,' and admit the possibility of coincidence.[86] 'Ha, ha, ha', is also uttered by the evil Bacha in the (p) passage

from *Cupid's Revenge* (quoted p. 77), when she gets her come-uppance. *Hengist* shows further similarities with passage (p) in the following lines:

> Burne burne, now I Can tend thee,
> Take time with her in torments, Call her Life
> Affarr of to thee, dry vpp her strumpet blood
> & hardly parch the skyn. (V.ii.191–94)

Edol's statement shares with this the use of burn/burning, parch, dry, and skin. Although burning is dismissed as too good a death for Artesia (*BM* V.ii.64), the reference could indicate knowledge of the story as told in *Hengist*, or the existence of a common source (perhaps *Cupid's Revenge* itself), or even the influence of *The Birth of Merlin* on *Hengist* (see also *BM* V.ii.52–60n).

G. A. Sandeman considers that *The Birth of Merlin* need not necessarily have been written after *Hengist* because possible source material for both plays is so widespread. She finds it conceivable that 'both dramatists were drawing on a well-known and popular stock of material' (p. 82). However, of the three areas of similarity mentioned above, the second at least reveals an emphasis which is foreign to the known historical sources, and suggests that one play may have influenced the other at some stage, or, as has already been suggested, both may be manifestations of a 'fashion' for the theme of chastity.

F. A. Howe, assuming influence, asks several questions in an attempt to solve the problem of priority, not all of them valid. For example:

> Why invent a Hermit to imitate the historical Constantius ... why ... duplicate the historical Castiza in a fictitious Modestia? (p. 201)

The Hermit has been shown to be based on St. Germaine who is native to this part of the source material, and not on Constantius who is not, and the two characters are in no way analogous as regards their functions. Modesta, likewise, does not 'duplicate' Castiza. The similarity between them lies in the emphasis on their chastity; their roles do not coincide.

Howe's more taxing and justifiable questions, however, still stand:

> Why ... did the writer deem it necessary to invent an Artesia to serve the same purpose in his play as that served by Rowena in Geoffrey's story, and by Roxena in *The Mayor of Queenborough*, serving that purpose, however, not in connection with Vortiger, but with his enemy Aurelius? Why did he not rather prefer to use Geoffrey's story, which would have appealed to his audience as history ...? (p. 201)

His answer is, of course, that the author of *The Birth of Merlin* was aware that the story had already been used, and that this play, in its present form, came after *Hengist*:

> If we try to suppose the more truly historical story to have been dramatized after the less truly historical one, the improbability of that order becomes apparent. (p. 201)

This objection is not easily overcome, although Sandeman's point about common sources illustrates one possibility, and these sources might include the lost *Hengist* and *Uther Pendragon* plays referred to by Henslowe: perhaps some such earlier works were the basis for the plotting of both *The Birth of Merlin* and *Hengist*,[87] and the division of material between the two plays was effected at that stage.

Other possibilities can only emerge if some other reason is found for the dramatist's adaptation of his material, and this will be considered further in the next section on the play's relationship with works of a topical nature. Meanwhile, R. C. Bald admits that

> we do not, in actual fact, know the exact date of either play; we cannot assert with complete confidence that either is based on an earlier play; we cannot be sure whether *Hengist* was originally written for the King's Men; and we can only guess for whom *The Birth of Merlin* was written.

He goes on to offer a hypothesis (which avoids giving priority to either play) that

> about 1620 they were rival plays, but that *Hengist* changed hands and came into the possession of the King's Men, already the owners of Rowley's play, who then made certain revisions in *Hengist*, and possibly also in *The Birth of Merlin*, to bring the two plays more closely into line with one another. (*Hengist*, p. xxiii)

In suggesting that *The Birth of Merlin*, whatever its origins, was at some stage in its history intended to be played as a sequel to *Hengist*, he attempts to account for one of the changes to *Hengist* which the existence of two different versions of the play reveals. These versions take the form of a printed quarto of 1661, with the title, *The Mayor of Queenborough*, and a version represented by two scribal transcripts (by the same hand) of a prompt copy, which contains one hundred and seventy-five lines not in the quarto. The quarto, on the other hand, contains twenty-five lines not in either of the manuscripts, but appears to represent a cut version, lacking much more than the two speeches marked for excision in the manuscripts. Bald is extremely cautious about suggesting that censorship has taken place, and he finds only three out of the twenty-three passages of more than two lines in length which had been omitted to be, in his opinion, censorable; fourteen of the omissions appear to him to be 'ordinary theatrical cuts' (p. xxxi, and notes 2–3). He feels that the censorship was probably undertaken at a late stage, as one of the omissions

> suggests the sensitiveness to anything that might be conceived as criticism of the throne that was especially characteristic of the years of Charles I's despotism. (p. xxxii)

However, he is not prepared to put the most striking of the cuts into this category.

The final thirty-four lines of the manuscript versions are not in the quarto, which has eleven (different) lines in their place. Bald postulates that the quarto version was intended to accommodate *The Birth of Merlin* as a sequel; that the ending was changed because Aurelius could not be seen to marry Castiza at the end of *Hengist* if he was to marry Artesia in *The Birth of Merlin*:

Only the possibility of such a *contretemps* would, it seems, suffice to explain the need for a new ending to *Hengist*. (p. xxxv)

Margot Heinemann, however, sees this cut too as evidence of censorship, and gives reasons inextricably linked with her opinion that *Hengist* is a highly topical play,[88] reasons which would seem to explain the new ending and perhaps invalidate Bald's case; it is difficult to agree with him that in seeing *The Birth of Merlin* as a sequel there would not be 'the same glaring inconsistency with *Hengist* in the references to Vortiger's death as in those concerning the wife of Aurelius' (p. xxxv, n. 1). Vortiger's death in *Hengist* is by fire, and rather spectacular, and a return to life after it would surely be more disconcerting than accepting that a living man could have two wives. A smoother transition from one play to the other would not seem to be promoted by any of the other alterations either.

The nature of the relationship between the two plays is still very much open to question, and there is no hard evidence against the proposition that they developed independently of each other, as F. E. Schelling believed.[89] The author of *Hengist* was interested in political and sexual entanglements, and followed history with due regard for chronological sequence. The author of *The Birth of Merlin* relies more on variety of incident than on subtlety of treatment, and gathers and organizes his material accordingly. This is a common dramatic method, which might go unquestioned were it not for the existence of *Hengist*.

NOTES

1. *An Account of the English Dramatic Poets*, 466–67.
2. Gillian A. Sandeman, 'William Rowley' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1974), p. 82.
3. *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (revised edition, 1965), p. 262.
4. 'Pre-Conquest Historical Themes in Elizabethan Drama' in *Medieval Literature and Civilization; Studies in Memory of G. N. Garmonsway*, edited by D. A. Pearsall and R. A. Waldron (1969), 289–321 (pp. 291, 293).
5. John J. Parry and Robert A. Caldwell, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth' in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, a Collaborative History*, edited by Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford, reprinted 1979), 72–93 (p. 80).
6. R. S. Loomis, ed., *Arthurian Literature*, p. 75.
7. *Arthur of Britain* (1927), p. 100.
8. It probably derives from an English translation of a French version of the *Brut* written by William Pakington, Treasurer to the Black Prince. See C. L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1913), p. 114.
9. See Alexandre Micha, 'The Vulgate *Merlin*' in R. S. Loomis, ed., *Arthurian Literature*, 319–24 (p. 319).

10. These include a prose romance *Merlin*, edited by H. B. Wheatley, EETS, Original series 10, 21 (1865–99), 36, 112 (1899–1938); and two verse romances, *Arthur and Merlin* (from the Auchinleck MS), the Abbotsford Club (Edinburgh, 1838), and Herry Lovelich's *Merlin*, edited by E. A. Kock, EETS, Extra series 93, 112 (1904, 1913), Original series 185 (1932).
11. See H. B. Wheatley's exhaustive account in *Merlin*, EETS 10, pp. xliv–clxxxiv.
12. This account is based on the English translation by Lewis Thorpe, *History of the Kings of Britain* (1966; reprinted Harmondsworth, 1978). Subsequent references are to *De Origine et Gestis Regum Britanniae* (Heidelberg, 1587), hereafter referred to as the *Historia*. References are to book, chapter and page in this edition.
13. *The English Chronicle Play* (New York, 1902), p. 185.
14. Philip Sidney, *Arcadia* (1593) p. 147v, ll. 34–37; (1977), III. 14, p. 520.
15. Reprinted in *Elizabethan Love Stories*, edited by T. J. B. Spencer (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp. 51–95.
16. H. B. Wheatley, ed., *Merlin*, EETS 36, pp. 386–87.
17. See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic, Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (1971; Harmondsworth, 1978), p. 104, and n. 48.
18. See R. C. Bald's introduction to his edition of *Hengist King of Kent; or, The Mayor of Queenborough* (New York, 1938). The possibility of a relationship between the two plays is discussed below, pp. 80–84.
19. R. C. Bald, ed. (New York, 1938). All subsequent references are to this edition. In quotations, superscript letters have been dropped to the line, 'y' changed to 'th' where appropriate, and indicated abbreviations expanded with the added letters in italics.
20. John Speed, *The History of Great Britain* (1611), p. 313b.
21. Fabyan's *Chronicle* (1516), Folio 36.
22. The 1528 edition was chosen because of its more modern spelling, and the following principles of transcription have been employed: superscript letters have been dropped to the line; abbreviations have been expanded, with any additional letters italicized; 'y' is changed to 'th' where appropriate, the regular oblique mark of punctuation is recorded as a comma, and the symbol for 'and' is represented by the ampersand.
23. See Rupert Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York, 1911), p. 11.
24. A. E. Parsons, 'The Trojan Legend in England', *MLR* 24 (1929), 253–64, 394–408 (p. 261).
25. This grouping of kingdoms is referred to by Holinshed, *History of England*, 5.18.97b, and by Caxton (but not using the term 'heptarchy', which is first noted by *OED* in 1576), Folio 53v.
26. A fact to be found in Gerard Legh's *Accidence of Armory* (1562), Folio 38v, and Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr* (1611), quoting a French 'Pamphlet' (Sig. F2, p. 35).
27. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, edited by Thomas P. Roche (1978; Harmondsworth, 1984).
28. *Hamlet* (Q 1604), G1; II.ii.595–96.
29. Both methods for 'blacking up' are recorded. See Eldred Jones, *Othello's Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 30, 33.
30. In *The Macro Plays*, edited by Mark Eccles, EETS, Original series 262 (1969).
31. A reversible cloak is referred to twice in Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*, III.v.77, and V.vi.55; noted by W. J. Lawrence, *Pre-Restoration Stage Studies* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), p. 56.
32. See 'Pilate' in *The South English Legendary*, EETS, Original series 236 (1956), ll. 243–60.
33. A reprinting of Wynkyn de Worde's edition (STC 21071 (1517?)) appears in *Early English Prose Romances*, edited by William J. Thoms, 3 vols (1858), I, 1–56.
34. See R. I., *The History of Tom Thumb*, edited by Curt F. Bühler, Renaissance English Text Society (Evanston, 1965), p. 5, ll. 22–28.
35. *The Works of Michael Drayton*, edited by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford, corrected edition 1961), III, 166–202.
36. See *The Works of Michael Drayton*, V, 209–10.
37. See Janet Cowen, 'Heven and erthe in lytel space' in *Aspects of Early English Drama*, edited by Paula Neuss (Cambridge, 1983), 62–77 (p. 66).
38. See introduction to the edition in Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1911), p.v. Subsequent references are to this edition. Superscript letters are dropped to the line, and 'y' changed to 'th' as appropriate.
39. *Early English Prose Romances*, edited by William J. Thoms, 3 vols (1858), I, 189–250 (p. 243).
40. Suggested by C. W. Stork, *William Rowley*, p. 59.
41. *The Relations of Shirley's Plays to the Elizabethan Drama* (New York, 1914), 69–71.
42. *The English Chronicle Play*, p. 184.
43. See M. C. Bradbrook, *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy* (1955; reprinted 1963), p. 140. Also proverbial; see Dent M26*, 'She is neither maid, wife, nor widow'.

44. Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1930), 2082–83.
45. Resemblance to *The Virgin Martyr* noted by C. W. Stork, *William Rowley*, p. 59.
46. *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (New York, 1952), p. 232.
47. *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1976), I, 113.
48. See Bald's introduction to *Hengist*, pp. xiii–xiv.
49. *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*, I, 107.
50. A. F. Hopkinson suggests this in his edition of *The Birth of Merlin* (1901).
51. Compare with : 'know I have lost/The onely difference betwixt man, and beast,/My reason'. *A King and No King*, IV.iv.64–66.
52. T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspere's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols (Urbana, 1944), I, 653–54.
53. Edited by D. O'Connor (1903), p. 53.
54. See the *Treatise on Death* in *Remains of Miles Coverdale*, edited by George Pearson, Parker Society (Cambridge, 1846). Subsequent references are to this edition.
55. *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (New Haven, 1927), p. 406.
56. F. A. Howe, 'The Authorship of *The Birth of Merlin*', p. 196.
57. See next section on the clown characters, pp. 70–72.
58. See T. W. Baldwin, *The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company* (Princeton, 1927), p.382.
59. According to Cyrus Hoy, the play is a Middleton/Rowley collaboration, 'Shares (V)', *SB* 13 (1960), 89–92.
60. Bentley, II, 556.
61. R. C. Bald, 'An Early Version of Middleton's *Game at Chess*', *MLR*, 38 (1943), 177–80 (p. 178).
62. Suggested by Sandeman, pp. 67–68.
63. Bentley, III, 271.
64. *The Relations of Shirley's Plays to the Elizabethan Drama*, p. 109.
65. See Sandeman, pp. 68, 70–71.
66. For example, those in *Fortune by Land and Sea*, *The Old Law*, *The Maid in the Mill*, *The Fair Maid of the West*, or *The Prophetess*.
67. *Pale Hecate's Team* (1962), p. 118.
68. *The Dramatic Works of George Peele*, edited by Charles Taylor Prouty, 3 vols (1952–70), II.
69. *The Plague Pamphlets of Thomas Dekker*, edited by F. P. Wilson (Oxford, 1925), p. 65.
70. See *Divine Weeks and Works*, translated by Joshua Sylvester, 2 vols (1605), II, 617.
71. 'The Misattribution of *The Birth of Merlin* to Shakespeare', *PBSA*, 73 (1979), 248–52.
72. A. F. Hopkinson (1901), p. 42, n.
73. *Twelfth Night*, edited by T. W. Craik and J. M. Lothian (1975), pp. xxxi (and n.3)–xxxii.
74. Marckwardt has cited Chapman and Middleton in addition to Jonson, Dekker and Shakespeare; 'A Fashionable Expression; Its Status in *Poetaster* and *Satiromastix*', *MLN*, 44 (1929), 93–96 (p. 95).
75. 'The Birth of Merlin', *MLR*, 16 (1921), 129–37.
76. Here, and in the technical part of the argument, both plays are referred to by their initials (*BM* and *CR*). References to *Cupid's Revenge* are from *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, edited by Fredson Bowers (Cambridge, 1970), II.
77. The parallel here is not, perhaps, an obvious one, but in this scene of *BM* there are two other references to trees being witnesses to Uter's protestations (58–60, and 83–84), and the idea seems unusual enough to be noteworthy.
78. See M. St Clare Byrne's third rule about the use of parallels for determining authorship: 'mere accumulation of ungraded parallels does not prove anything', quoted by S. Schoenbaum, *Internal Evidence*, p. 192.
79. *Cupid's Revenge*:

I.v.3–11	(f)
14	(a)
59	(b)
II.ii.31	(k)
III.ii.93–94	(e)
252–53	(o)
IV.i.2–7	(i)
37–39	(h)
205	(m)
IV.v.20–22	(g)
35–40	(j)

V.ii.44–45	(l)
49	(n)
54–59	(p)
V.iv.49–51	(d)
65–66	(c)

80. The Plangus episode occupies II.15.
81. E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, III, 225.
82. See James E. Savage, 'The date of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge*', *ELH*, 15 (1948), 286–94.
83. Quoted by S. Schoenbaum, *Internal Evidence*, pp. 191–92.
84. See Cyrus Hoy, 'Shares (III)', *SB*, 11 (1958), 85–106 (p. 86).
85. 'The Authorship of *The Birth of Merlin*', *MP*, 4 (1906), 193–205.
86. *Internal Evidence*, p. 196.
87. Bald puts forward this hypothesis with regard to *Hengist* in his edition, pp. xvii–xxii.
88. *Puritanism and the Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1980), 134–50. Her theories are discussed further in the next section of the introduction.
89. *The English Chronicle Play*, p. 185.

CHAPTER V

THE BIRTH OF MERLIN AND THE ENGLISH HISTORY PLAY

Returning to Ribner's claim that the dramatist was interested 'primarily in sensationalism and not at all in history',[1] it seems that this is a view which must be qualified. The playwright had read the 'history' of Merlin with some attention, and found that it already contained many sensational ingredients: a devil, magic exploits, fighting dragons, battles and a blazing star. These undoubtedly made the story an attractive proposition, and he could rely on the resources of theatrical tradition for the realization of such effects.

Nor does the play fall easily into the category of those which Ribner distinguishes from the 'true history play'. Such plays may be distinguished

> by an examination of their sources and by the fact that in them the historical setting is used entirely to set off romantic themes which have no relation to the serious purposes of history. (p. 25)

Examination of the sources has shown the play to be essentially historical, the only area which has no basis whatever in history being the Modesta/Constantia sub-plot which, nevertheless, has thematic links with the stories of Artesia and Joan. Admittedly, romance aspects of Merlin are also included and elaborated upon, mainly for comic purposes, and these episodes, along with the wanderings of the love-lorn Uter, the show of Hector and Achilles and the birth scene with its dancing 'Anticks', indicate that the dramatist was not embarrassed by the prospect of entertaining his audience.

Marie Axton, in *The Queen's Two Bodies* (1977), has taken issue with Ribner over his rejection of plays which do not immediately exhibit a didactic intention. She declares first that:

> A politically engaged dramatist announced his entry into debate by his choice of character, not his mode of imitation. (p. 88)

Then, on the subject of Ribner's distinction, she comments:

> It seems to me that 'romance' histories use the modes and conventions of court masque and pageantry whereas the plays he isolates as 'true' histories use an apparently reasoned language of political debate and chronicle event. (p. 89)

Her argument is that the former can be just as much the vehicle of political meaning as the latter and, as such, would have been as acceptable to contemporary audiences.

Although *The Birth of Merlin* has not, to my knowledge, been treated critically as a 'history' play, the appearance of King Arthur, and the emphasis placed on prophecies of his birth and victories, and of the country's future, make it necessary to investigate the possibility that the play contains political and/or panegyric elements. The variation on the story of Vortiger and Rowena (here presented by Aurelius and Artesia) also raises questions, as the theme had been used before as a political *exemplum*, and would seem to be fulfilling that function in Middleton's *Hengist King of Kent*.

My intention is to consider whether these aspects of *The Birth of Merlin*, aspects which have been considered, and sometimes demonstrated, to be of particular significance in other works, reveal anything about the nature of the play or the dramatist's intentions, and whether his choice of character and means does indeed indicate a conscious 'entry into debate'. I shall deal first with the Arthurian material and the use of prophecy arising from it and, secondly, with the Vortiger/Rowena analogy.

Arthur and Merlin

The influential work of C. B. Millican[2] on the background to *The Faerie Queene*, and also that of R. F. Brinkley[3] on the use of Arthurian material in the seventeenth century, incorporates a basic assumption that the Arthurian legend carried particular political weight both in the reigns of the Tudors, and in the earlier part of the reign of James I. Brinkley's assertions imply that it would have been impossible for the figure of Arthur to be employed innocently: she claims, with regard to the seventeenth century, that James

> was not only *like* Arthur; he was also considered to *be* Arthur returned to life through his descendant, or at least to be the successor of Arthur with all that such a claim implied. (pp. 9–10; her italics)

Arthur was important, not only as a warrior and a hero, but because he was ruler of a united Britain, like its mythical founder Brutus. As such, he was a gift to panegyrists, and the legend of his coming again could be put to good use around coronation times. This development from the hint in the *Historia* that Arthur survived his last battle, although apparently mortally wounded, and was taken away to the Isle of Avalon for his wounds to be tended, became linked with the Angel's prophecy to Cadwallader (the last British king), and with Merlin's prophecy, both of which imply the eventual restoration of the land to the Britons.[4] The analogy with Arthur was particularly appropriate to James I, who was to unite peacefully the kingdoms of England and Scotland for the first time since King Arthur did so by force of arms. It was an association which he himself apparently encouraged. According to D. H. Willson, James had referred to himself, before 1603, as 'a new Arthur about to unite the

kingdoms',[5] and the idea had certainly got through to the Venetian ambassador, who wrote how James was determined '"to call himself King of Great Britain and like that famous and ancient King Arthur to embrace under one name the whole circuit" of the island'.[6] The popular anagram, alluded to by Ben Jonson[7] and others, CHARLES JAMES STUART=CLAIMS ARTHURS SEATE (the spellings vary), seems to have been coined as early as 1594 by the Irish poet Walter Quin.[8]

There is a small amount of extant drama on Arthurian subjects from Elizabeth's reign. *The Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth* (1575) by George Gascoigne and others contains an episode of the Lady of the Lake, and opens with an allusion to the Arthurian connection with Kenilworth;[9] and Nichols records a 'Prolusion' of Prince Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, a 'little before the year 1588', which seems from the description to have been primarily an elaborate display of archery.[10] Payments to Richard Hathaway for his play, *The Life and Death of King Arthur*, started on 12 April, 1598 according to Henslowe,[11] but there is no record of its performance and the play is lost.

The only extant Elizabethan play in which Arthur appears is *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587) written by Thomas Hughes and other gentlemen of Gray's Inn for performance before Queen Elizabeth on 28 February, 1588 (new style). Here if anywhere the relationship between Arthur and a Tudor monarch would be worth examining. The view of Arthur which the play presents is far from uncritical, and Millican dismisses the work from his study (on the grounds that it 'contributed little or nothing to Spenser'), as he does Richard Lloyd's *The Nine Worthies* (1584).[12] In the latter, a verse about Arthur is followed by Lloyd's comment that 'liking of vnlawfull lust . . ./Depriued him by iudgement iust, from life and kingdome'. Lloyd continues in this vein, employing the terms 'adulterer' and 'incest', and referring to Sodom and Gomorrah, and then concludes that 'death is the reward of sin' (Sig. F2). It is true that this attitude to Arthur finds no place in *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser, perhaps deliberately, relieves himself of the necessity for recounting the more unsavoury aspects of the Arthurian genealogy by introducing an abrupt ending to the manuscript of the chronicle (2.10.68). Whatever their relationship to *The Faerie Queene*, however, it is not true that Lloyd's comments and the 'scattered allusions' of other writers 'blend into the perfectly focussed picture'.[13] The strong moralizing tone adopted by Lloyd and the authors of *The Misfortunes of Arthur* indicates that an attitude contradictory to that of Spenser was also acceptable during the reign of Elizabeth.

The Misfortunes of Arthur illustrates retribution falling on Arthur, not only because of his incestuous relationship with his sister which produced Mordred, but because he himself was unlawfully begot by Uther Pendragon disguised as Igerna's husband by means of Merlin's magic. Arthur admits, referring to himself and Mordred:

> both Heauens and Hell conspir'd in one,
> To make our endes a mirror to the worlde,
> Both of incestious life, and wicked birth. (Sig. F2v)

King Arthur is here obviously not closely identified with the Queen, or the play's implications would have been insulting. Not that he is utterly condemned; he is allowed to congratulate himself on his victories and thereby bring them to the audience's attention, and there is a brief reference to the myth of his eventual return when he asks Fortune to let his 'death and parture rest obscure' in order that, 'in euery Coast/I still be feard, and lookt for euery houre' (Sig. F3, signed 'F4'), but this is not developed. The play is, overall, distinctly gloomy in its assertions: Chorus 3 puts the question

> Whiles *Fortune* chops and chaungeth euery *Chaunce*,
> What certaine blisse can we enioy a liue,
> Unlesse, whiles yet our blisse endures, we die? (Sig. F3v)

and the Epilogue exhorts against the 'tickle trust of tyme' (Sig. F4), and warns that

> Him, whom the Morning found both stout and strong,
> The Euening left all groueling on the ground. (Sig. F4v)

The play shows every sign of being an attempt to 'Senecanize' an English subject, an attempt which at least one contemporary felt had not come off.[14] The sins of Uther and Arthur contribute to the decline of their 'house' and its eventual extinction with the death of Arthur's treacherous son Mordred. The process is relentless, despite Arthur's innate nobility. The ghost of the wronged Gorlois, Igerna's husband, oversees the working out of his revenge and reports triumphantly (in the performed version of the final speech by William Fulbecke) that, 'Sinne hath his pay: and blood is quit with blood' (Sig. G1v).

No direct link is made between Arthur and Queen Elizabeth, although she is complimented overtly both at the beginning and end of the play in Thomas Hughes's version and at the end only in the version which was performed. Hughes explains that his own opening and closing speeches for Gorlois were replaced in performance by two written by William Fulbecke, which are printed at the end of the octavo (Sig. G1). No reason is given for the change, but it seems likely to have been an artistic decision, as Fulbecke's are shorter and more dramatic. The substitution actually reduces the amount of overt compliment to the Queen, by omitting the rather distracting reference to her in the ghost's first speech (Sig. A2v), which tends to deflate attempts to arouse interest in Gorlois's desire for revenge. The substitution for the final speech means the removal of the only reference to Elizabeth's British connections (Sig. F4), which does suggest that the allusion was not felt to be indispensable. Fulbecke's speech includes the ancient pun on Angle/angel in compliment to

Elizabeth, who is thereby associated just as readily with her country's more recent name, derived from non-British invaders (Sig. G1).

It seems that compliments to the Queen in this play are not couched in Arthurian or specifically British terms, and it can be assumed (although the Queen's reaction is unknown) that the gentlemen of Gray's Inn had no reason to fear her displeasure at a play which exhibited Arthur as something less than virtuous.

Even without the knowledge that plays produced by the Inns of Court for the Queen were likely to have some topical content and that Queen Elizabeth was particularly adept at finding it,[15] it would be possible to discern a purpose at the heart of this Senecan morality play. Gertrude Reese has shown, by a comparison of the play with its sources, that Arthur's relationship with Mordred has been expanded, so that Arthur is presented facing a choice between a parental disinclination to wage war against his rebellious son, and the necessity of acting for the good of the country.[16] His failure to confront Mordred results in a bloody and wasteful civil war. Arthur's attitude is constantly criticized:

> No worse a vice then lenitie in Kings,
> Remisse indulgence soone vndoes a Realme. (Sig. C4ᵛ)

and

> Would Gods your minde had felt no such remorse,
> And that your foes had no such fauour founde.
> So mought your friends haue had far frendlier *Fates*,
> If Rebels for their due deserts had dyde. (Sig. F2)

Reese's comparison between the situations of Arthur and his son, and Elizabeth and her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, is fairly convincing. Mary had been executed in the February of the previous year, and it seems as if Elizabeth was being quietly congratulated on preventing in real life the kind of disasters which the play so amply illustrates: but Nicholas Trotte's conclusion to the play's introductory speeches suggests no such specific intention:

> The matter which we purpose to present,
> Since streights of time our liberty controwles
> In tragike note the plagues of vice recounts.
> How sutes a Tragedie for such a time?
> Thus. For that since your sacred Maiestie
> In gratious hands the regall Scepter held
> All Tragedies are fled from State, to stadge. (Sig. π4)

The Misfortunes of Arthur illustrates that the Queen could both resemble and not resemble Arthur in the same play, that Arthur's appearance was not so loaded with meaning as to divert the play from its aspiration towards classical tragedy, or from its concern with re-stating the essential moral which was also traditionally derived from the story of David and Absalom. The elaborations

which Reese describes can be seen to make the play a closer analogue to Peele's *David and Bethsabe* in which, as Inga-Stina Ewbank notes, the 'connection between David's sins and the sexual disorders within his House, as well as civil strife within his realm, was [Peele's] organizing principle'.[17] The case of David and Absalom, like that of Arthur and Mordred, illustrates the conflicting demands faced by a ruler, and exemplifies the necessity of avoiding the solution which 'Oft spilles the principall, to saue the part' (*The Faerie Queene* 5.10.2). The relationship here between Queen Elizabeth I and King Arthur is subtle, variable and intellectual, and in no way suggestive of the kind of 'historical primitivism' with which Millican credits the age.[18]

This, however, was an Elizabethan play, and it might be argued that circumstances were different under James I. More straightforward analogies with Arthur were particularly appropriate to the male ruler of a united Britain. Brinkley has referred to several instances of James being credited as the fulfiller of ancient prophecies, including those of Merlin (pp. 7–9), and his own awareness of the Arthurian parallel has already been mentioned. It may be possible to see a closer identification of Arthur with James than with Elizabeth.

The recently-discovered MS play, *Tom a Lincoln* (probable date 1610–13), however, confirms the conclusions suggested by *The Misfortunes of Arthur* that the dramatic character of Arthur need not be a model of earthly perfection, or even particularly virtuous.[19] The play opens *in medias res* (as part of the text is apparently missing) with King Arthur attempting to seduce the chaste and unhistorical Angelica, who protests far too much, and then gives in when Arthur threatens to stab himself. She agrees to his suggestion that she should pretend to become a nun so that he can visit her secretly. The picture is completed by Time as chorus:

> wherefore imagine for a twelve months space
> kinge Arthure did Angellica embrace
> within the Cloyster wth vnlawfull sports
> and wanton dalliance, in wich time shee had
> kinge Arthures issue, sealed in her wombe (135–39)

This 'issue' is Tom a Lincoln, whose exploits are recounted in the rest of the play. Arthur is thereafter a minor character, the reported winner of victories against the Saxons, French and Romans, and presider over the Round Table at the Feast of Pentecost.

The occasion of the play is not known, but its tone of high scurrility and academic wit suggests that it may have been an Inns of Court production. Arthur's is a minor role, and his presentation frivolous and irreverent, indicating once again that he was not exclusively the property of the panegyrist. If the postulated date is correct, however, the play could be close in time to the only other extant dramatic work from the reign of James (setting aside *The*

Birth of Merlin which is undated) in which Arthur appears, Jonson's more serious and pointed *Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers*.

Amongst his works, this is unusual in its use of Arthurian material. Herford and Simpson, in their commentary, show surprise at the choice of such a theme by one whose references to Arthurian romance are generally scathing.[20] On closer examination, it becomes apparent that the *Barriers* does not reveal as marked a departure from Jonson's usual stance on the subject as might at first appear.

The *Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers* were performed at Court on 6 January, 1610, as the framework for a spectacular tilting display, in which the fifteen-year-old Prince took part. As in the entertainment for Queen Elizabeth I at Kenilworth, the Lady of the Lake, the imprisoner of Merlin, has an important role. She introduces the subject and sets the scene: Britain 'hath regain'd her fame/Intire, and perfect, in the ancient name'(17–18), but the 'house of *Chiualrie* ... decayd/Or rather ruin'd seemes' (31, 33–34). Arthur appears 'Discouerd as a starre aboue' (64, margin) and asks the Lady to bring forth her Knight, Meliadus (played by Prince Henry), to 'restore/These ruin'd seates of vertue' (84–85). Arthur hands down a shield for the Knight, and bids the Lady release Merlin, who interprets the shield, explaining that the role of the monarch has changed since the days of King Arthur. He goes on to describe a selection of Henry's predecessors whose virtues make them suitable models for the young Prince, and after a brief compliment to James, uses the name of Meliadus to awaken sleeping Chivalry. The Barriers then take place, and Merlin concludes with further compliments to James through Prince Henry and his other son and daughter.

The status of the Arthurian background to this piece is very curious. Jonson is undoubtedly using Arthur and Merlin for the associations which they have with chivalry and knightly prowess, and with the glamour of Arthur's court. Such associations would have obvious appeal to the young Prince and the courtly spectators, but the impression gained as the *Speeches* progress is that Jonson is using the trappings of Romance to 'sugar the pill'.

Arthur's role in particular is difficult to assess. Little is said about him, but great emphasis is placed on his separateness from the events of the present. In the physical sense this is immediately apparent since he appears 'aboue' as a star. He is a distinct individual, not to be merged with James. There is no suggestion that James is a second Arthur, even if he occupies Arthur's seat (perhaps an indirect reference to the anagram mentioned earlier). The distinction between James's and Arthur's courts is made at least three times (23, 64, 79), and always James's is *more* glorious. This is not just an extravagant compliment to James: the shield which Arthur hands down for Meliadus tells of a world very different from that of Arthurian romance. As Merlin interprets it:

Not the deedes
Of antique knights, to catch their fellowes steedes,
Or ladies palfreyes rescue from the force
Of a fell gyant, or some score to vn-horse.
These were bold stories of our ARTHVRS age;
But here are other acts; another *stage*
And *scene* appears; it is not since as then:
No gyants, dwarfes, or monsters here, but men.
His arts must be to gouerne, and giue lawes
To peace no lesse then armes. (167–76)

Jonson is definitely not advocating a return to the concept of chivalry exemplified in Arthurian romance, but promoting a new order in which 'Defensiue armes th'offensiue should fore-goe' (99), and valour be characterized by moderation, as Merlin, stopping the Barriers, warns Prince Henry:

Nay, stay your valure, 'tis a wisdome high
In Princes to vse fortune reuerently.
He that in deeds of *Armes* obeyes his blood
Doth often tempt his destinie beyond good. (405–08)

It is interesting that, apart from Arthur's wish that Meliadus should be 'famous, as was TRISTRAM, TOR,/LAVNC'LOT, and all our List of knight-hood' (86–87), there is no suggestion that Henry should emulate any figures from pre-conquest history, not even Arthur. There is no reference to Arthur's own deeds: the earliest model given is Richard I, and James himself is 'the height' at which the Prince's 'thoughts must fly' (356). King Arthur is redundant once he has handed the shield to the Lady of the Lake. He may remain above throughout the proceedings, but as his presence is not referred to again, it seems more likely that he is no longer visible. The emphasis is increasingly on James and his particular virtues. As in *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, the relationship between the reigning monarch and King Arthur is far from being a simple case of identity with him. The visual symbolism has offered to make a connection here which the words do not reinforce. Arthur fades out as the past is superseded by the present, and the present by the future, as the focus of attention. In his choice of character and mode Jonson appears to be inviting nostalgia for Britain's glorious past, but the words spoken are constantly asserting the inappropriateness of the old heroic virtues to the modern ruler, and are subtly re-defining the concept of chivalry: Merlin's role as prophet is here an educative one.

In Jonson's next composition for the court, *Oberon the Fairy Prince*,[21] in which the part of Oberon was played by Prince Henry, Arthur does not appear and James is visually the focal point of the piece. Sylvane describes the occasion as

A night of homage to the *British* court,
And ceremony, due to ARTHVRS chaire,
From our bright master, OBERON the faire. (322–24)

The staging of the masque, with Oberon's bear-drawn chariot moving '*as far forth as the face of the* scene' (314–15), illustrates this orientation towards James in his central position in the audience. A reference to Arthur's chair has become a sort of short-hand compliment to the King, and his occupation of the chair as its 'proper hayer' [i.e. heir] (367) is alluded to four times.

The Arthur's Seat anagram crops up again seven years later in Jonson's ante-masque *For the Honour of Wales*,[22] with perhaps an allusion to the Merlin of the *Barriers*:

'Is a thousand place in *Wales* as finely places as the *Esperides* every crum of him: *Merlin* was borne there too, but wee would not make him rise now and wake him, because we have his Prophecies alreadie of your Madestee's name to as good purpose, as if he were here in presence. (365–69)

Then the anagram is expounded and the King complimented (rather belatedly in 1618) on being the first King of Great Britain to sit in Arthur's Chair.

It would seem that in these three works by Jonson of 1610, 1611, and 1618, King Arthur, although not naïvely identified with James, is implicitly his spiritual ancestor. The Arthurian references in *The Barriers* and the masques are clearly part of the complimentary procedure, but in all three the most important element of panegyric force is the very nature of the occasion. The masque, says Jonas Barish,

represents a society not so much aspiring after as joyfully contemplating its own well-being, the possession of the blessings it considers itself to have achieved. The compliments to the king, so often dismissed as ignoble flattery, are one expression of this self-congratulation on the part of the community. To eulogize the king is to congratulate the society, of which the king is figurehead, for the communal virtues symbolized in him.[23]

The significance of the figure of Arthur can be overestimated: it is not a 'given', but a variable factor influenced by such things as method of presentation, intention, emphasis and occasion.

The Birth of Merlin is not known to have been an occasional piece, and it shows every sign of being a public theatre play rather than a court offering. It contains no direct addresses or references to contemporary persons or situations, and it exhibits neither the ponderous interest in government of *The Misfortunes of Arthur* nor the self-mocking frivolity of *Tom a Lincoln*; but its author does appear to share with Ben Jonson an appreciation of the figure of Merlin and the dramatic possibilities of prophecy, and both *The Barriers* and *The Birth of Merlin* also include an appearance by King Arthur: in the former he represents the past, and in the latter the future and the climactic fulfilment of Merlin's prophecies. Structurally, the pieces reveal further similarities: in both, Merlin's introduction is delayed, and when he appears he swiftly becomes the dominant character, the voice of authority and the prophet of Britain's future, and he also has to hold the balance between the praise of a

father and a son, a common problem for those writing with enthusiasm about Prince Henry's prospects, who must nevertheless not seem to wish his father out of the way. Robert Fletcher in *The Nine English Worthies* (1606) had got round this, as Jonson does in the *Barriers* (353–66), by pointing to the father as the best possible adviser to the son, here described as the Ninth Worthy:

we reioyce and sing
For this Ninth Worthie, first for Iames our King,
Your famous father, and Great *Britaines* Ioy,
Your glorie also, guyder of your youth;
Whose carefull Counsell to preuent annoy,
Most like a King, he pend in perfect truth,
You to direct: and all young Gentlemen
(Your followers) are aduis'd, by Kingly Pen. (p. 50, Sig. K1ᵛ)

In *The Birth of Merlin*, however, the distribution of praise is based on the necessities of the historical plot. In the blazing star prophecy, the prospects of the son, Arthur, are made much of. In V.ii, as his coronation approaches, Uter becomes the subject, and then, at his request, a vision of Arthur appears. Of both Uter and Arthur, however, the commonplace terms of the Jacobean eulogy are employed. In V.ii, Uter is addressed as 'Happy Restorer of the *Brittains* fame', and 'Uprising Sun' (ll. 42–43)[24] phrases which would have been just as appropriate to James as to Uter,[25] although in the play they are accounted for by Uter's anticipated coronation and victory over the Saxons. John Speed dedicated his *History of Great Britain* to James as, amongst other things, 'Restorer of the British name'.[26] 'Monarch of the West', which is applied to Arthur (IV.v.110), is another phrase evocative of courtly compliment, and it is used by Dekker to describe James in the *Magnificent Entertainment* of 1603 (l. 849). Emrys Jones comments on the importance of Cymbeline's 'status as a *western* king' (his italics) in *Cymbeline*, V.v.473–74: 'the radiant Cymbeline,/Which shines here in the west', and relates this not only to Dekker (above), but to Jonson's *Panegyre* (1603),

Againe, the glory of our Westerne world
Vnfolds himself. (3–4)

and to James's reference to himself as a 'Western King', who would be prepared to 'go with the Patriarch of the West' (i.e. the Pope) for the sake of Christian unity.[27]

It seems, then, that a few phrases from the standard equipment of the panegyrist have crept into *The Birth of Merlin*, but the context of coronation and prophecy can account for this, and it is impossible to discern any specifically topical meaning in their use.

Elsewhere, too, source material adequately accounts for what could be taken as external allusion. In the blazing star prophecy, it is predicted that Uter will have two children, a son and a daughter (IV.v.98–99). James, of course,

had two sons and a daughter, although he might be said to have only one son after Prince Henry died in 1612, but the two children appear in the sources, and are not an addition. What is predicted of their futures is scarcely more suggestive, although the playwright adds, to his source's statement that the daughter will be Queen of Ireland, the clause, 'of whom first springs/That Kingdoms Title to the *Brittain* Kings' (IV.v.101–02). This is a fairly political addition, but not in the sense of relating Uter's daughter to James's; rather, it directs attention towards a much older concern of successive English monarchs, the establishment of their right to govern Ireland, a problem of considerable and perennial importance. Such a statement would have been an acceptable reflection of current attitudes at any time in the Tudor and Stuart reigns and beyond.

The 'Hepterchy' to which the playwright refers in accounting for the seven beams of the star (IV.v.131) is likewise an interpolation, but as a system of government, it has no analogy in seventeenth-century Britain, and was generally described as being a period of great upheaval and strife, from which Egbert, King of the West-Saxons delivered the country by uniting the seven kingdoms, under the name of England, into a single, more peaceful, monarchy. The playwright's reference to the establishment of the heptarchy as a resolution of the strife does, in view of this, seem mistaken.

The prophecy which concludes the play is also an addition. It states very positively, not only that the Saxons will triumph over the Britons 'Till *Brittain* be no more' (V.ii.87), but that King Arthur will die 'In the middest of all his glories' (V.ii.102). Both statements are somewhat surprising. Although we have been prepared by the outcome of the dragon fight for an ending which does not promote the view of a glorious re-establishment of the British, this is apparently at odds with the tone of Uter's attack on Vortiger for destroying his country and changing its name (in IV.iii.12–19), and with the generally anti-Saxon mood displayed in all the play's major conflicts. The very fact that *The Birth of Merlin* is based on unsceptical accounts of Merlin and his prophecies leads one to expect an ending in keeping with the use to which the 'Prophetiae Merlini' of Geoffrey of Monmouth were usually put, as an optimistic support for the idea of the country's British destiny. It is not to be compared with *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, where the classical tragic structure and the moral tone make the Chorus's statement appropriate:

> In *Brytain* warres and discord will not stent:
> Till *Vther's* line and offspring quite be spent. (Sig. B2)

The Birth of Merlin has not presented its action for scrutiny in this way, or actively encouraged moralizing, and so the vision of Arthur at the end of the play is perplexing. In a dumb-show of positively mediaeval gravity, we are shown the successful and powerful king being presented with the crowns of

'divers' princes whom he has subdued, and then succumbing to the figure of Death, who strikes him (presumably with his traditional dart), at which '*he growing sick, Crowns Constantine*' (V.ii.93.3–4). Seeing this, Prince Uter, who had instigated this 'show' when he asked Merlin to reveal, 'the full event,/That shall both end our Reign and Chronicle' (V.ii.77–78), seems satisfied and at ease with the dictates of Fate, and he concludes the play with the extraordinarily banal couplet,

> All future times shall still record this Story,
> Of *Merlin's* learned worth, and *Arthur's* glory. (V.ii.109–10)

The gloomy and resigned nature of the ending could be interpreted as a hangover from the morality-play commonplace that Death comes even for kings, but the blazing star prophecy was cheerful and eulogistic about the coming reign of Arthur, whereas the ending suggests that such optimism is mere vanity.

It would be convenient to deduce from this that *The Birth of Merlin* is not a 'British', but a 'Saxon' play in the sense of Brinkley's distinction. She declares that a study of the seventeenth century reveals that

> the Arthurian legend was closely interwoven with the political affairs of the entire century, that it was supported by the loyalists and refuted by the Parliamentarians with more depth of feeling than is usually awarded legendary matter, and that the decline in interest is in direct ratio to the supremacy of parliament and the interest in the Saxons. (p. 64)

But the Saxons are portrayed as lying, flattering traitors, and as unworthy successors to the kingdom. The play may not have a positive or pro-British statement at the end, but it is certainly not pro-Saxon. The tone is one of resignation, and almost of indifference, and is more reminiscent of Speed's 'modern' historical pragmatism than of the semi-mythological fabling of Geoffrey of Monmouth or Caxton. Speed seems not to care much about who wins, and he objects to prophecies of the British return:

> By such toies and illusions in those daies of darknesse, the euer-erring minds of men were content to be lead. (p. 323b)

His rendering of the early Saxon period is sympathetic to the British resistance, but firmly convinced that 'God and destinie withdrew from them the hand of defence' (p. 312a). The Saxons were a scourge to the Britons for their sins, as the Danes were to be to the Saxons, who were 'stricken by the same measure that they had measured vnto others' (p. 385a).

This view of events is possible because the ultimate focus of the history is King James, and Speed's perspective becomes clear in a passage referring to the daughter of Edmond Ironside, who became

> afterward sole heire vnto the *Saxon* Monarchy, married *Malcolme* the third of that name, King of *Scotland*, and commonly called *Canmore*: from which princely bed

in a lineall descent, our high and mighty Monarch, King IAMES the first, doth in his most roiall person vnite the *Britaines, Saxons, English, Normans*, and *Scotish* imperiall Crownes in one. (p. 384a–b)

In this sort of context, quite major events like the defeat of the British by the Saxons become trivial interruptions in the line of progress towards the culminating reign of James, and Speed is able to comment without distress on the optimism at the accession of Edward the Confessor, for example, that it seemed to 'prognosticate a perpetuall happinesse to the *English* . . . though this line againe failed, before it was well begunne' (p. 397b).

Merlin's statement at the end of *The Birth of Merlin*, that Arthur will die in 'the middest of all his glories', has a similar dying fall, but it is not relieved by any formulation of a wider perspective in which the information may be judged as something less than tragic. This could easily have been supplied, as it was in so many plays, by the use of prophecy. A prophecy which looks beyond the end of a play can extend the time-scale against which the significance of the play's action can be judged. The final scene of Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Henry VIII* is a good example of this, and the failure of *The Birth of Merlin* to fulfil expectations becomes all the more apparent when compared with this play's more satisfying and explicable ending.

Henry VIII, V.v, is very similar in structure to the latter part of *The Birth of Merlin*, where action has given way to prophecy, and the future becomes the focus of attention. Cranmer occupies the role of prophet, and the reaction of King Henry to one of his prophetic utterances is almost identical to Uter's reaction to Merlin's:

> Thou speakest wonders (*Henry VIII*, 3427, V.v.55)
> Thou speakst of wonders (*The Birth of Merlin*, IV.v.125)[28]

The possibility of coincidence cannot, of course, be ruled out: in *Mucedorus*, Segasto exclaims:

> Thou talkest of wonders, to tell me of white bears (I.iv.39–40)[29]

but it has to be admitted that the similarity of circumstance in the other two plays makes the parallel noteworthy. In both cases the comment is made by the current monarch (Uter is about to be crowned) to the man who is telling him something about his country's future.

Cranmer's speech about the promise of Elizabeth initially praises her (and possibly, indirectly, James's daughter, the Princess Elizabeth):[30]

> She shall be,
> (But few now liuing can behold that goodnesse)
> A Patterne to all Princes liuing with her,
> And all that shall succeed: (3390–93, V.v.20–23)

and then aims, through her, at direct reference to James, her successor:

> Who, from the sacred Ashes of her Honour
> Shall Star-like rise, as great in fame as she was,
> . . . He shall flourish,
> And like a Mountaine Cedar, reach his branches,
> To all the Plaines about him: Our Childrens Children
> Shall see this, and blesse Heauen.
> (3416–17, 3423–26, V.v.45–46, 52–55)

The Birth of Merlin is similarly structured to look forward to the coming reign of Uter, his son Arthur, and Arthur's successor, Constantine (who appears in the dumb-show, V.ii.93.4). In both plays the self-renewing Phoenix, the emblem of the stable monarchy, is referred to. Queen Elizabeth is compared to the 'Mayden Phoenix' in *Henry VIII* (3411, V.v.40), but in *The Birth of Merlin*, burning is rejected as too good a death for Artesia because it is a 'Phaenix death, and glorious' (V.ii. 63). Artesia, the evil influence, is here being neatly ousted from any, even metaphorical, connection with the royal line in Britain.

It is in the significance of this sequence of death and succession that *The Birth of Merlin* differs from *Henry VIII*, and from other plays which use the same device. Elizabeth's ashes, according to Cranmer, will

> new create another Heyre,
> As great in admiration as her selfe. (3412–13, V.v.41–42)

In Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon*, there is even a printed marginal note to ensure that an allusion to James I is recognized in:

> out of her ashes may
> A second Phoenix rise, of larger wing,
> Of stronger talent (III.i.234–36)

and in Thomas Drue's *Duchess of Suffolk* (1631), the death of Elizabeth is referred to as heaven's 'gratious prouidence' making way for another Phoenix which 'may enlighten Christendome' (Sig. I1).[31]

In these cases, the intention is obvious. The accession of James I requires the death of Elizabeth, and there is a sense of climax to be gained from this reminder. So Cranmer's admission, 'But she must dye,/She must, the Saints must haue her' (3431–32, V.v.59–60), can be seen as resignation in the face of a temporary sadness which has a more joyful context; whereas Prince Uter and Merlin between them make the end of *The Birth of Merlin* seem anti-climactic, and the succession precarious: Death, Merlin says, will seize Arthur, 'Scarcely permitting him to appoint one/ In all his purchased Kingdoms to succeed him' (V.ii.103–04), and Prince Uter professes to have learnt, presumably from witnessing the death of Arthur, that, 'always Fate/Must be observed, what ever that decree' (ll. 107–08).

The succession is indeed shown to be continuing as Arthur crowns his heir, Constantine, in the dumb-show. This is important, as Arthur himself is,

genealogically speaking, a backwater, and it is through Constantine and his successors that English royalty were to trace their ancestry back to Brutus; but this significance is not emphasized here. Unlike *Macbeth*, where Banquo's line is described as stretching 'to'th'cracke of Doome' (1664, IV.i.117), the play makes no obvious gesture to the current monarch. Uter's final couplet does not amplify the significance of the dumb-show, it rather ignores it: '*Merlin's* learned worth and *Arthur's* glory' will be the subjects for narrative in future ages. This is the first self-conscious utterance in the play, acknowledging the story's status as myth, and it may be a hint that the continuation, here seen only in dumb-show, could constitute the basis of another play. This theory might also account for the claim in the *Dramatis Personae* that Anselm the Hermit was 'after Bishop of Winchester', which is otherwise baffling.

If the end of the play does not represent an intention to provide a sequel, the question still remains as to why the playwright should fail to make a more positive statement about Arthur and the future when his material and the very structure of his ending offer him the means. Other possible reasons include, of course, ineptitude, and also imperfect revision or alteration: Sir Aston Cokain complained in 1658 that the end of his play, *The Obstinate Lady*, had been rewritten for publication without his consent when the final page of the printer's copy was found to be missing.[32] Another, wilder, conjecture is that the final picture of the nation's hope, blasted by death, is a gesture towards the untimely death of Prince Henry in 1612. That Henry, as well as his father, could be associated with Arthur is borne out by Henry Peacham's *The Period of Mourning* (1613):

> But now our bud hath bid the frost,
> And Britaine, warlike *Arthur* lost. (Sig. C4)

But this is pure speculation and there is no evidence to support it.

Close examination of the Arthurian content of the play does not reveal a latent purpose which would immediately explain the choice of a British theme, but it does expose, particularly through comparison with other Arthurian pieces, the possibilities which the playwright had available to him. His concentration on Merlin, and the dramatic emphasis placed on his prophecies, seem to imply an intention that the play should address itself to the question of the nation's future, but the meanings normally asserted by the prophetic form and by the British theme have either gone unrecognized, been deliberately disregarded, or become lost through revision. Henry Fielding's mock wonder at his own restraint with regard to Merlin, in a footnote to his *Tragedy of Tragedies* (1731),[33] indicates what kind of expectations the stock character might have raised in the eighteenth century:

> The Character of *Merlin* is wonderful throughout, but most so in this Prophetick Part. We find several of these Prophecies in the Tragick Authors, who frequently

take this Opportunity to pay a Compliment to their Country, and sometimes to their Prince. None but our Author (who seems to have detested the least Appearance of Flattery) would have past by such an Opportunity of being a Political Prophet. (p. 51, note 'c')

In both the *Barriers* and *Henry VIII*, Jonson and Shakespeare/Fletcher exploit to the full the opportunities inherent in the form for their own purposes of compliment, celebration and education, and they simultaneously create a powerful image of a stable and permanent monarchy. In *The Birth of Merlin* the same structures are used, but appear redundant; they create an effect of forward movement which is dramatically useful, but they fail to deliver a meaning.

Vortiger and Rowena

The status of the story of Vortiger and Rowena, both as history and dramatic typology, is rather different from that of Arthur and Merlin. The Saxon invasion of Britain was an undisputable truth, and the belief that it was consolidated by means of Vortiger's infatuation for Hengist's daughter caused the story to become established among the exemplary models of men led astray by their lust for women. As will appear, John Foxe used it to illustrate the dangers to a state of a prince's misguided, foreign marriage, and Thomas Middleton had serious lessons to draw from it in *Hengist King of Kent*, where he deals with Vortiger and Rowena (Roxena), and the rise of Hengist's power, and shows every sign of being aware of the potency of his material. As has been shown, the author of *The Birth of Merlin* went to some lengths to include the story in his play, contrary to the chronology of his historical sources, and so the question arises whether this signifies merely a desire for extra incident, or a conscious urge to tackle the issues which the story raises.

Margot Heinemann is convinced that *Hengist* is deliberately topical, and that although

it would be excessive to try to find in the events of the main story, drawn as they are from the chronicles with melodramatic embellishments, a detailed political parallel with Jacobean times, there are points which must have given it topical audience appeal.[34]

She argues convincingly for the topicality of the sub-plot, and suggests that elements of the main plot may be seen as comment on the intended marriage of Prince Charles to the Spanish Infanta, a Catholic match, and therefore very unpopular in England although pursued with great energy by King James. The play's unhistorical coupling of Castiza and Aurelius could, therefore, have been intended to represent the union of a monarch with the rightful Church (of England), and if this is the case, the alteration of the ending might have been an attempt to make the topicality less overt:

Open political-religious allegory, similar to that in *A Game at Chess* later, would clearly have been too risky for the players in 1620–3, when Puritan preachers were being silenced and imprisoned for commenting on the marriage plan. This may be why the 'emblematic' union of Aurelius with Castiza in the finale, which is found in the two extant MSS. of the play, was cut in the censored version on which the printed text is probably based, and most likely omitted in the original performance. (pp. 141–42)

Heinemann finds possible political or social resonances in a number of aspects of the play: Constantius suggests a flattering portrait of James I, Vortiger reminds her of Buckingham (p. 137), and 'the economic crisis, and the swarms of petitioners who besiege the King demanding redress of their grievances, are wholly Jacobean' (p. 138). This is difficult ground, however, as neither the situation nor the characters in the play are obviously analogous to those on the contemporary scene. More persuasive is the play's concern with the threat to state and religion from a foreign royal marriage. The sexual dimension of the play is increased, emphasizing the female nature of this threat, and the deployment of sexual vice and virtue in the plot mirrors its political polarization. Heinemann follows this line of thinking:

Castiza in the play, developed from a mere mention in the chronicle of the 'virtuous queen' put away by Vortiger, is raped by her husband in disguise, then disgraced for it so that he can marry Hengist's daughter Roxena. And Roxena herself becomes the 'mystical harlot', keeping Horsus as a secret lover .... Betrayal of religion through a disastrous marriage to a corrupt woman thus becomes a central theme in the play, which it scarcely is in the chronicles. It had, however, been strongly stressed by John Foxe, who dealt with Vortiger in his *Acts and Monuments*. (p. 140)

The story might indeed have been felt to be relevant during the time of negotiations for the Spanish marriage,[35] and it was already an *exemplum* from which Foxe had drawn a potent lesson. The Saxons, he said, had come over in such numbers that

the Britons at length were neither able to hold that which they had, nor to recover that which they lost; leaving example to all ages and countries, what it is first to let in foreign nations into their dominion, but especially what it is for princes to join in marriage with infidels, as this Vortigern did with Hengist's daughter, which was the mother of all mischief; giving to the Saxons not only strength, but also occasion and courage to attempt that which they did. Neither was this unconsidered before of the British lords and nobility, who, worthily being therewith offended, justly deposed their king, and enthroned Vortimer his son in his room.[36]

The statement that rebellion against the king (in favour of his heir at least) is justified in these circumstances is a view echoed in *Hengist* when Vortiger asks his lords why he has lost their support:

I speake to those alone
Whose force makes yo*u*rs a powre, w*hi*ch els were none:
Shew me the maine foode of yo*u*r hate, my Lords

> W*hi*ch Cannot be the murder of Constantius
> That Crawles in your revenges, ffor yo*u*r Loue
> Was violent Long since that
> GENT And had bene still
> If from that pagan woman, thoudst slept free
> But when thou fledst from heauen we fled from thee. (V.ii.64–72)

The objection to Rowena on religious grounds is, of course, a feature of the chronicles, but Middleton not only makes her into a treacherous whore (and quite conceivably the 'Whore of Babylon'),[37] he also introduces Castiza as an opposing image of virtue and purity, under threat from the forces of lust and paganism. The burning of Vortiger in his castle is intended by Aurelius to imitate the events of the day of judgement:

> That his destruction may appeare to him
> Ith figure of heauens wrath at the Last day; (V.ii.3–4)

and the burning of Roxena (which does not occur in the chronicles) also shows every sign of being a symbolic act:

> oh mysticall harlott
> Thou hast thy full due, whom Lust Crownd queene before
> Flames Crowne her now, ffor a trivmphant whore.
> & that end Crownes em all. (V.ii.199–202)

The marriage of Aurelius and Castiza after these events is obviously a deliberately planned contrast to Vortiger's liaison with Roxena. Aurelius restores Castiza's reputation for 'truth', a word often used as a synonym for the 'true' religion of the Church of England, as is made explicit in a passage from Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*:

> But God we know will alwaies put them downe,
> That lift themselves against the perfect truth,
> Which Ile maintaine so long as life doth last:
> And with the Queene of *England* joyne my force,
> To beat the papall Monarck from our lands,
> And keep those relicks from our countries coastes.
> (Scene xvii, 798–803)

The linking of Queen Elizabeth with this 'truth' also takes place in Heywood's *1 If You Know Not Me* (1605), where the young Elizabeth, having undergone many trials, is presented with an English Bible (1573 ff), which she exhibits as her country's salvation in her final speech whilst on her way to her coronation. Similarly, in Dekker's allegorical *Whore of Babylon*, Truth and her father, Time, appear in the opening dumb-show with 'a Booke' (44) which they present to Titania (Queen Elizabeth) who shows it to the returning Marian exiles who 'receiue [it] with great signes of gladnesse' (51). Both scenes are based on a pageant in Elizabeth's royal entry into London in 1559.[38] The marriage of Aurelius to Castiza is obviously a linking of this kind, a public

rather than a private act. Aurelius looks to the future of his country and speaks in terms of 'Truths plantation' (V.ii.284) and the destruction of paganism. He will not only destroy Hengist, the 'ambitious Pagan', but, he adds,

> so shall all
> W*i*th his adulterate faith distaind, and soild,
> Either turne Christians, dye, or liue exild. (V.ii.287–289)

'Pagan' was frequently synonymous with 'Roman Catholic', and John Bale, in his *Acts of the English Votaries*, Part I (1548), had connected the Saxon invasion with Britain's subjection to the Church of Rome:[39]

> The diademe of Brute is thee princelye power of this whole region, immediately geue*n* of God wythoute anye other meane mastrye worker to Antychrystes behoue. Fre was that power from the great whores domynyon (which is the Rome church) tyl the vyole*n*t conquest of the Englysh Saxons, which they had of the Brytaynes for theyr iniquities sake. (Sig. F4)

The statement by Aurelius that no religious toleration is to be expected for these 'Pagans' is greeted by the on-stage audience with approbation:

> OMNES *A Blessing on those Vertues*:
> *fflorish Exeunt*: (V.ii.290)

The printed quarto ends more succinctly, and much less provocatively. Aurelius, having given orders for the death of Hengist, concludes:

> it will become
> Our pious care to see this Realm secur'd
> From the Convulsions it hath long endur'd. (Sig. K2v)

The difference is striking. This shorter version shows merely a vague and unspecific desire for greater peace, while the longer version offers death or exile to those who reject the 'true' faith. It is difficult not to believe that a point is being pressed when such a forceful statement is delivered at the end of the play, and where the important stage image (presumably Aurelius and Castiza join hands) is not historical but invented. So the possibility that the play may be reflecting public unease about the plans for the Spanish marriage cannot be dismissed any more than it can be confirmed, but a number of circumstances make the possibility highly likely: the question of the marriage was particularly prominent in the years 1618–24, and Bald's date for the play is *c.* 1619–20; also, Middleton's interest in the subject of relations with Spain as dramatic material is attested by the more explicit *A Game at Chess* (1624). The alteration of the ending would be quite understandable in view of James's promotion of the marriage, and it may also be relevant that religious toleration was one of the main subjects under discussion by the two sides from 1617 onwards.[40]

The king's infatuation, the court's reaction to it, and the growth of Saxon power are, similarly, aspects of *The Birth of Merlin*, but the play does not

manifest to the same degree the attitudes and intentions of *Hengist*. Artesia, like Roxena, is certainly associated with lust, and with danger to the state and its religion, but the association is not defined and pointed by the portrayal of an opposing image, a victim like Castiza, or by any politically challenging statements. As has been indicated in the section on Modesta and Constantia, they do represent an alternative, but their chastity is not made relevant to the political dimension of the play: whatever 'truth' they may stand for is personal and not linked with concepts of government.

Remarks of a political nature are few, and the play's approach to 'dangerous' subjects is timid when compared with *Hengist*'s. The amount of criticism directed at Artesia and her paganism is entirely in keeping with the historical sources, and there is little to upset the *status quo*. The readiness of the noblemen to act against the king's wishes is very delicately handled: even Edol, the most outspoken of his critics, is described as 'ever most faithful/To the King and Kingdom' (II.ii.23–24), and his worst outburst is deflated by his own characteristic use of hyperbole:

> EDWIN This rage is vain my Lord,
> What the King does, nor they, nor you can help.
> EDOL My Sword must fail me then.
> CADOR 'Gainst whom will you expose it?
> EDOL What's that to you, 'gainst all the devils in hell
> To guard my country. (II.ii.87–92)

Donobert concludes this argument with a bland statement of orthodox loyalty:

> The King must Rule, and we must learn to obay,
> True vertue still directs the noble way. (II.ii.117–18)

In III.vi, it is also made clear that the nobles are loyal, and see their efforts as aimed to 'Preserve the person of the King and Kingdom' (l. 135). In fact, on all occasions, except the argument between the Hermit and Aurelius in I.ii.168–206, the interaction between characters is so structured that the loyal faction is confronting either Vortiger, Ostorius or Artesia, and never the lawful king himself.

It is made clear in IV.ii, during the course of the battle, that Vortiger is not considered to be king: he is the 'Murderer, and Usurper' (l. 14), and in IV.iii.11, also a 'Tyrant'. Aurelius does not take part in the conflict (being in his castle, where he is poisoned by Artesia), and the dramatist is relieved of the necessity of staging outright rebellion against a true king. The author of *Hengist* sails much closer to the wind: Vortiger is crowned in a dumb-show, having organized the murder of Constantius, and is recognized as king until Uther and Aurelius return to avenge their brother's death and deprive him of the crown by force. In *The Birth of Merlin* Aurelius is seen as merely deluded, bewitched in fact (III.vi.133; see also II.ii.43, 70), and no blame is attached to him retrospectively. Merlin, announcing his death, describes him as

the glory of our Land,
The milde, and gentle, sweet *Aurelius*. (IV.v.58–59)

Vortiger, not he, is the 'base destroyer of thy Native Countrey' (IV.iii.19), and is held responsible for the original introduction of the Saxons and the changing of the country's name (IV.iii.12–18). So Aurelius is the victim of feminine witchcraft, acting under the misguided impression that he is contributing to the peace and stability of his country. Edol offers further extenuating circumstances in the King's youth and the negligence of his counsellors:

It was your want of wisdom,
That should have laid before his tender youth,
The dangers of a State, where forain Powers
Bandy for Soveraignty with Lawful Kings. (II.ii.52–55)

Andrew Gurr notes, with regard to *Philaster*, how Beaumont and Fletcher operate what he calls 'the two kingdoms device, which makes the King at the same time a true king, not to be dislodged from his kingship, and a usurper on the throne which the play is concerned with'.[41] *The Birth of Merlin* could be said to contain a sort of 'two kings' device, which similarly gives the playwright freedom to indulge his instincts for what is dramatic without becoming too obviously controversial. Anthony Brewer seems to be practising this manoeuvre in his *Lovesick King* (1655), in which the invading Danish king, Canutus, is the focus of attention for most of the play in what is essentially a retelling of the story of the Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek.[42] Canutus is criticized explicitly by his courtiers for his infatuation with the English nun Cartesmanda, and for his consequent failure to sustain military action against the English. His story is followed through to its tragic conclusion with the death of Cartesmanda and the Danes' loss of power. When, finally, the crown of England is restored to the rightful king Alured, Canutus and the action in which he was involved are relegated to a secondary position, and in an interesting shift of perspective, he is clearly seen as foreigner, failed invader and moral inferior. England and English values triumph, but the possibilities of a king's amour and its political implications have been worked through.

This emphasis was not just an accident of source material. Cartesmanda, like Artesia, is the playwright's addition and has no place in the history of King Canute.[43] The effect of lust on kings and their government had long been a popular theme: George Peele wrote a (lost) play on the subject of Hiren,[44] and *Edward III* and *Locrine*, both Shakespeare Apocrypha, also embody the moral that the man who would govern others must first govern himself. From *The Spanish Tragedy* onwards, dramatic interest was increasingly found more in the awkwardness of the situation in which the king is defied (e.g. in *The Maid's Tragedy, All's Lost by Lust, King John and Matilda* and *Hengist King of Kent*) than in pointing a purely moral lesson. The dilemma of Hieronymo becomes a

staple ingredient of 'tragic' drama, and the last lines of *The Maid's Tragedy* sum up the conflict between divine justice and English law which is inherent in the situation and never fully resolved:

> on lustfull Kings
> Unlookt for suddaine deaths from God are sent,
> But curst is he that is their instrument. (V.iii.293–95)

The dangers of attaching too particular and local a significance to the choice of such a scenario is illustrated not only by the perennial nature of its popularity, but by the existence of *Fatum Vortigerni*, a Latin tragedy written by Thomas Carleton, and performed at Douay on 22 August, 1619.[45] This play covers the same period of chronicle history as *Hengist* (from Vortiger's murder of Constantius to Vortiger's own death), but it would be ridiculous to expect a play with this provenance to exhibit the same anti-Catholic bias as *Hengist* and, indeed, it has been suggested that

> the whole treatment of the Vortigern-Roxina situation is a transparent Catholic commentary on that of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn.[46]

Despite the strong influence of some of the more spectacular aspects of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, [47] and the emphasis of the play on the 'tragedy' of Vortiger, the author's intentions would seem to be not only theatrical, but didactic, with a keen interest in controversial issues, most particularly the relationship between the Church and temporal government.

To theorize about the topicality of *The Birth of Merlin* on the basis of perceived analogies between aspects of the plot and a major contemporary concern is, at best, to speculate. Two problems arise in any attempt to formulate assertions of this kind. The first is the question of where the line is to be drawn between unconscious and conscious topicality (that is, a question of authorial intention). All plays, in a sense, are topical to the period in which they were written whether the dramatist was aware of writing to a purpose or not; a given play may not embody a political moral or make deliberate parallels with contemporary events, but it will inevitably reflect, positively or negatively, conventional moral attitudes, political and otherwise. From the literary-historical perspective, therefore, any play is topical. Deliberate, conscious topicality, on the other hand, can only be detected if the pointing and redirecting of material makes the pursuit of an intention apparent.

This leads to the second problem. Topicality of some sorts, in the age of the censor, was unwise, as several playwrights found to their cost. This means that writers may have deliberately presented their material in such a way that its allusiveness could be denied if necessary,[48] and so escape the censor in their own times, and all but the most inquisitive critics in subsequent centuries. Historical precedents or literary models for current events had never been hard to find, and by keeping close to a known source, a dramatist might escape

censure.[49] In this case the modern reader may miss some of the play's significance unless prepared to accept that the author's decision to stage the re-enactment of a particular story at a particular time constitutes an active choice and may point to another dimension in which the play can be viewed.[50]

The Birth of Merlin, however, sorts ill with these assumptions about a writer's consciousness. Not only does it contain no obvious allusions to contemporary events, it offers no evidence that the author's interest in the themes tackled was anything more than an awareness of their superficially dramatic qualities. It reveals an approach which is imitative, but unquestioning. Compared with Middleton and Carleton the author of *The Birth of Merlin* has not taken the opportunities offered by the story of Vortiger and Rowena very far; in fact, he might almost be said to have retreated from the subject's more obvious implications. In this respect Middleton, with his consideration of, for example, the relationship between monarch and people, and between political and sexual tyranny, shows himself to be a much more abrasive, critical, and exploratory writer.

NOTES

1. *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*, p. 262.
2. *Spenser and the Table Round*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature 8 (1932; reprinted 1967).
3. *Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century*, Johns Hopkins Monographs in Literary History 3 (1932).
4. See Millican, pp. 8–9.
5. *King James VI and I* (1956), p. 250.
6. Willson, p. 252.
7. See *The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers*, 1.20 and n., *Ben Jonson*, VII and X.
8. Willson, p. 141.
9. *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, edited by John W. Cunliffe, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1907, 1910), II, 91–131 (p. 92).
10. John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols (1788–1805), III, p. *210.
11. *Henslowe's Diary*, edited by R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (Cambridge, 1961), p. 89.
12. *Spenser and the Table Round*, p. 143.
13. As note 12 above.
14. Janet Cowen and Joanna Udall, 'The Critical Misfortunes of Arthur?', *N&Q*, 228 (1983), 402–05.
15. David Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics, a Critical Approach to Topical Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), 8–9.
16. 'Political Import of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*', *RES*, 21 (1945), 81–91.
17. Inga-Stina Ewbank, 'The House of David in Renaissance Drama, a Comparative Study', *Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1965), 3–40 (p. 20).
18. *Spenser and the Table Round*, p. 46.
19. Information about the MS, and the use of a transcript, was kindly provided by Richard Proudfoot from material for his forthcoming edition in Malone Society Reprints.
20. *Ben Jonson*, X, p. 514.
21. Performed on 1 January, 1611. See *Ben Jonson*, X, pp. 518 ff.
22. Performed at the second staging of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* on Shrove Tuesday, 1618. See *Ben Jonson*, X, p. 576.
23. *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), p. 244.
24. A 'stock' image; see Elkin Calhoun Wilson, *Prince Henry and English Literature* (Ithaca, New York, 1946), p. 171.
25. Suggested by Sandeman, p. 83.

26. Quoted by A. E. Parsons, 'The Trojan Legend in England', *MLR*, 24 (1929), 394–408 (p. 402).
27. 'Stuart *Cymbeline*', in *Shakespeare's Later Comedies, an Anthology of Modern Criticism*, edited by D. J. Palmer (Harmondsworth, 1971), 248–63 (pp. 255–56). But although such phrases are obviously part of the vocabulary of compliment, it is difficult to conceive that 'western' has anything more than a purely locational significance: European, as opposed to Asian (see *OED* west, C. *sb.* 2 *spec.* a). Henry III in Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* quite justly addresses the Emperor and the King of Castile as 'monarks of the West' (p. 446).
28. The similarity was first noted by Richard Proudfoot.
29. In *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, edited by C. F. Tucker Brooke (Oxford, 1908).
30. R. A. Foakes, ed., *Henry VIII*, p. xxxii.
31. Judith Doolin Spikes sees such prophecies as 'among the salient characteristics of the Jacobean history play'; see 'The Jacobean History Play and the Myth of the Elect Nation', *Renaissance Drama*, new series 8 (1977), 117–49 (p. 144).
32. See 'The Authors Apology to the Reader', reprinted in Greg, III, 1240.
33. *The Tragedy of Tragedies; or, The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great* (1731; facsimile, Scolar Press, 1973).
34. *Puritanism and the Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 137.
35. Heinemann notes that the lost plays, *Valteger* (1596) and *Hengist* (1597) were produced at a time when a Spanish invasion was feared (p. 137, n. 6).
36. John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, with introductory matter by George Townsend, 8 vols (1843–49; reprinted New York, 1965), I, 320.
37. See Heinemann, p. 141.
38. David M. Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry, 1558–1642* (1971), p. 20.
39. Bale is interpreting Merlin's prophecy about the re-establishment of 'the diademe of Brute' as alluding to the rejection of Romish influence on British Christianity which he thought would be thrown off, finally, in his own time.
40. S. R. Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War, 1603–1642*, 10 vols (1883–84), III, 102–06.
41. See his introduction to *Philaster*, The Revels Plays (1969; reprinted 1973), p. lviii.
42. See R. W. Dent, 'The Love-sick King: Turk turned Dane', *MLR*, 56 (1961), 555–57 (p. 556).
43. A. E. H. Swaen, ed., *The Love-sick King*, Materialien zur Kunde des alteren Englischen Dramas (Louvain, 1907), p.x, and n.
44. *The Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek*, dated 1581–94 by Harbage and Schoenbaum.
45. F. E. Schelling, in *The English Chronicle Play* (1902), suggests enquiring into the relationship between the play, and *BM* and *Hengist* (p. 186). The MS is in the British Library, Lansdowne 723. For a scene by scene summary, see George B. Churchill and Wolfgang Keller, 'Die lateinischen Universitäts-Dramen Englands in der Zeit der Königin Elizabeth', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 34 (1898), 221–323 (pp. 258–64). I am grateful to A. F. Kidd for a translation of this. For demonstration of the date, place of performance and authorship of the play, see William H. McCabe, *TLS*, 15 August 1935, p. 513.
46. McCabe. See note 45 above.
47. McCabe. See note 45 above.
48. Heinemann makes this point about *Hengist*, p. 141.
49. This seems not, however, to have been the case with Ben Jonson and *Sejanus*; see Heinemann, pp. 39–40.
50. See Jerzy Limon, *Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/24* (Cambridge, 1986); he considers the intentions of the dramatist to be irrelevant since, for example, a non-political text may acquire a political function as a result of the time and place of its performance (pp. 14–19).

CHAPTER VI

EDITING *THE BIRTH OF MERLIN*

Previous editions

The play was first edited by Henry Tyrrell (T) in an undated edition (probably 1850) of Shakespeare's 'Doubtful Plays'. He followed Q in printing nearly all of the verse as prose. In 1856, Nicolaus Delius (D) brought out the first re-lined edition as one of a series of 'Pseudo-Shakespearian' plays, and in 1869 Max Moltke selected it as one of six 'Doubtful' plays for inclusion in volume 1041 of the Tauchnitz series. This edition is really a reprint of Delius's, the only innovations coming as a result of the practice of setting two half-lines from different speakers as a staggered full line. The play was re-edited by Karl Warnke and Ludwig Proescholdt (WP) in 1887, with an attempt at historical collation of a copy of Q with the editions of Tyrrell and Delius, and with reference also to the notes of Karl Elze (E), later reprinted in a collection (1889). Their verse-lining differs from that of Delius in many instances. A. F. Hopkinson edited the play twice, first in 1892 (H1) when, like Tyrrell, he reproduced Q's prose and verse, and again in 1901 (H2) in an edition for private circulation, in which he admitted the deficiencies of his previous effort, and offered a new, re-lined version. His ideas about verse were much less rigid than his predecessors', and he was often able to find metrical patterns in places where they had failed, while avoiding the temptation to try and turn what was obviously prose into verse. Tucker Brooke (TB) edited the play for the *Shakespeare Apocrypha* (1908), and collated previous editions up to, and including, WP, apparently unaware of Hopkinson's second edition. It has not been possible to track down another edition which Brooke lists (p. 441) as, 'JACOB, T.E., *Old English Dramas*. In the *Victoria Library*'. In 1910, a photographic facsimile of the quarto (C.34.1.7 from the British Museum) was produced by John S. Farmer in *Tudor Facsimile Texts*.

German translations of the play have not been consulted for the purposes of this edition, but are worth recording for the light they throw on German interest in the play in the nineteenth century. The first is Ludwig Tieck's in *Shakespeare's Vorschule* (Leipzig, 1829), II, 221–366 (verse and prose). Warnke and Proescholdt claim that *The Birth of Merlin* was 'the first play read and copied by Tieck, when he first came to London in 1817' (p. IX). Another translation is that of Ernst Ortlepp in *Nachträge zu Shakspeare's Werken von*

Schlegel und Tieck (Stuttgart, 1840), I, 159–260 (verse and prose). What is probably a third independent translation is described by Warnke and Proescholdt (p. IXn) as 'by H. Döring (Gotha, 1833; 2nd ed. 1840)', but it has not been possible to find a copy of this. A translation of V.i, by Count Adolf Friedrich von Schack, is to be found in *Die Englishen Dramatiker vor, neben und nach Shakespeare* (Stuttgart, 1893), pp. 189–93.

This edition

Lineation

Since the greater part of the play is printed as prose, re-lining the text as verse is a major task which has been attempted by four of the six previous editors. In most cases, re-lining is straightforward, and it has therefore seemed reasonable to use the edition which agrees most fully with this one as the basis for collation, instead of reproducing a line-by-line historical collation. The edition which I have chosen, as being closest to my own independent attempt, is that of Tucker Brooke (1908). All passages have been divided in the manner adopted by Tucker Brooke, unless otherwise stated. The earliest authority only is given for any other adopted division. Where more than one way of re-lining seems possible, alternatives from other editions are cited. In citations, the spelling and punctuation is that of my edition.

This method seems to cover adequately those passages where editors have been at variance, without subjecting the reader to lists of the more implausible suggestions, many of which would now no longer be considered feasible in the light of greater awareness of the variations in metre to be expected in dramatic texts. Others would be ruled out by the now common practice of setting out half-lines in such a way as to show their metrical connection.

Those lines which are printed as verse in the quarto are listed at the beginning of the lineation notes for each scene. For this purpose, a verse line is identified as one which begins with an upper-case letter and is set on a line by itself. Occasionally two half-lines by different speakers, or a single (or half) line speech by one speaker, are set out in this way, in some cases evidently by chance. Such instances have not been noted unless adjacent lines are printed as verse, or the compositor has obviously rejected an opportunity to set the speech continuously and failed to fill up space as he might. No attempt has been made to record Q's prose lining.

The text

Proper names in speech prefixes have been silently expanded, the three with alternative spellings appearing in the forms *Constantia*, *Modesta* and *Edol*. On

the rare occasions when this involves regularizing a name printed in full in another form, this has been noted.

In keeping with general practice in the quarto, stage-directions are centred, with exits, and some short directions, to the right. All are given in italics, and names, if abbreviated, are expanded to the standard form, but not otherwise altered. Ampersands are expanded to *and* or *et*, and *Ex.* is expanded to *Exit* or *Exeunt* as appropriate, and noted in the list of accidentals. Q's *Exit* accompanied by a plural subject has been retained. Additional stage-directions, and additions (other than expansions) to those already present, appear in square brackets. Q's own square brackets, therefore, are emended to round brackets or withdrawn, in which cases they will appear among the accidentals, as will any additional round brackets. Upper-case letters at the beginnings of stage-directions, and final punctuation, are supplied and noted.

In the text of the play, italicization of proper names, of the contents of Anselm's letter (I.ii.38–42) and of the spell (V.i.75–77), has been retained, but individual wrong-fount letters and punctuation marks have been silently corrected. Certain other alterations have also been made silently throughout: long 's' becomes 's', ligatures are not retained, and initial capitals, and the upper-case letters following them, are normalized.

Punctuation has been altered as little as possible. The quarto text is well-punctuated, although the modern reader may need to attach more weight to the comma than in current usage. Punctuation has been changed only where the reader might have been confused or misled.

Textual emendations and additions are credited to the first editors to adopt them, and interesting alternative suggestions are also noted, but no attempt has been made to compile a complete 'Variorum'-style record. The boundary between substantives and accidentals cannot always be precisely determined, especially in the case of punctuation, but all emendations which might in any way alter the reader's conception of meaning or action are counted as substantive, and are included in the textual notes.

This is an old-spelling edition, so variant spellings are not regularized, and unusual forms are retained.

Dramatis Personae

The order and spelling of the list on A2 of the quarto has been retained, but the final punctuation of each line, sporadic in Q, has been removed. Two spirits who speak, Armel and Plesgeth, have been added in square brackets. Apart from these, the list omits only the non-speaking roles: Hector and Achilles, three Fates, dancing 'Anticks', two dragons, 'a King in Armour' (Arthur), 'divers Princes', Death and Constantine.

Commentary

Since the play is of unknown date, is not part of a recognized 'canon', and has not been subject to any previous attempt at full-scale annotation, it has seemed advisable to err on the side of inclusiveness. References to, and quotations from, other works of the period which exhibit similar sentiments or expression can be justified not because parallel passages may indicate authorship, but because they can show how widespread and unremarkable the play's literary components are.

The Oxford English Dictionary has been used extensively, and category numbers and abbreviations are from this source. Definitions are derived from *OED* unless otherwise stated, but are not attributed in each case. Terminal dates ('from' and 'to') are given in full knowledge that they may not always be accurate. If words are glossed without comment, it can be taken that the usage is common throughout the period *c*. 1590–1662. Further information is given only when sense or usage appear to be unusual, rare or interesting, or when it is necessary to distinguish between senses.

THE

BIRTH

OF

MERLIN:

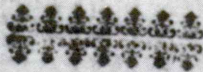
OR,

The Childe hath found his Father.

As it hath been ſeveral times Acted with great Applauſe.

Written by *William Shakeſpear*, and *William Rowley*.

Placere cupio.



LONDON: Printed by *Tho. Johnſon* for *Francis Kirkman*, and *Henry Marſh*, and are to be ſold at the *Princes Arms* in *Chancery-Lane*. 1662.

Title-page: Advocates Library H.3.c.20 (NLS 2).

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[type ornaments]

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Drammatis Personae.

The Scene BRITTAIN.

Aurelius, King of *Brittain*
Vortiger, King of *Brittain*
Uter Pendragon the Prince, Brother to *Aurelius*
Donobert a Nobleman, and Father to *Constantia* and *Modestia*
The Earl of *Gloster*, and Father to *Edwyn*
Edoll Earl of *Chester*, and General to King *Aurelius*
Cador Earl of *Cornwal*, and Suitor to *Constantia*
Edwyn, Son to the Earl of *Gloster*, and Suitor to *Modestia*
Toclio and *Oswald*, two Noblemen
Merlin the Prophet
Anselme the Hermit, after Bishop of *Winchester*
Clown, brother to *Jone*, mother of *Merlin*
Sir *Nichodemus Nothing*, a Courtier
The Devil, father of *Merlin*
Ostorius, the Saxon General
Octa, a Saxon Nobleman
Proximus, a Saxon Magician
Two Bishops
Two Saxon Lords
Two of *Edols* Captains
Two Gentlemen
A little Antick Spirit
[*Armel* and *Plesgeth*]
Artesia, Sister to *Ostorius* the Saxon General
Constantia and *Modestia* } Daughters to *Donobert*
Jone Goe-too't, Mother of *Merlin*
A Waiting-woman to *Artesia*
Lucina, Queen of the Shades

The BIRTH of MERLIN: [A3]

OR,

The Childe hath found his Father.

I.[i] ACTUS. I.

Enter Donobert, Gloster, Cador, Edwin, Constantia, and Modestia.

CADOR You teach me language, sir, as one that knows
The Debt of Love I owe unto their Vertues,
Wherein like a true Courtier I have fed
My self with hope of fair Success, and now
Attend your wisht consent to my long Suit.
DONOBERT Believe me, youthful Lord,
Time could not give an opportunity
More fitting your desires, always provided
My Daughters love be suited with my Grant.
CADOR 'Tis the condition sir, her Promise seal'd. 10
DONOBERT Ist so, *Constantia*?
CONSTANTIA I was content to give him words for oathes,
He swore so oft he lov'd me.
DONOBERT That thou believest him?
CONSTANTIA He is a man I hope.
DONOBERT That's in the trial Girl.
CONSTANTIA However I am a woman, sir.
DONOBERT The Law's on thy side then, sha't have a Husband,
I, and a worthy one: Take her brave *Cornwal*,
And make our happiness great as our wishes. 20
CADOR Sir, I thank you.
GLOSTER Double the fortunes of the day, my Lord,
And crown my wishes too: I have a son here,
Who in my absence would protest no less
Unto your other Daughter.
DONOBERT Ha *Gloster*, is it so? what says Lord *Edwin*?
Will she protest as much to thee?
EDWIN Else must she want some of her Sisters faith, Sir.
MODESTA Of her credulity much rather, Sir:
My Lord, you are a Soldier, and methinks 30
The height of that Profession should diminish
All heat of Loves desires,
Being so late employ'd in blood and ruine.

EDWIN The more my Conscience tyes me to re- | pair [A3v]
The worlds losses in a new succession.
MODESTA Necessity it seems
Ties your affections then, and at that rate
I would unwillingly be thrust upon you,
A wife is a dish soon cloys, sir.
EDWIN Weak and diseased appetites it may. 40
MODESTA Most of your making have dull stomacks sir.
DONOBERT If that be all Girl, thou shalt quicken him,
Be kinde to him *Modesta*: Noble *Edwin*,
Let it suffice what's mine in her, speaks yours;
For her consent, let your fair suit go on,
She is a woman sir, and will be won.

Enter Toclio.

EDWIN You give me comfort sir.
DONOBERT Now *Toclio*.
TOCLIO The King, my honor'd Lords, requires your presence,
And calls a Councel for return of answer
Unto the parling enemy, whose Embassadors 50
Are on the way to Court.
DONOBERT So suddenly,
Chester it seems has ply'd them hard at war,
They sue so fast for peace, which by my advice
They ne're shall have, unless they leave the Realm.
Come noble *Gloster*, let's attend the King,
It lies sir in your Son to do me pleasure,
And save the charges of a Wedding Dinner,
If you'l make haste to end your Love affairs,
One cost may give discharge to both my cares.
EDWIN I'le do my best. *Exit Donobert, Gloster.* 60
CADOR Now *Toclio*, what stirring news at Court?
TOCLIO Oh my Lord, the Court's all fill'd with rumor,
The City with news, and the Country with wonder,
And all the bells i'th' Kingdom must proclaim it,
We have a new Holy-day a coming.
CONSTANTIA A holy-day! for whom? for thee?
TOCLIO Me, Madam! 'sfoot I'de be loath that any man should make a holy-day for me yet:
In brief 'tis thus, there's here arriv'd at Court,
Sent by the Earl of *Chester* to the King, 70
A man of rare esteem for holyness,

A reverent Hermit, that by miracle
Not onely saved our army,
But without aid of man o'rethrew
The pagan Host, and with such wonder sir,
As might confirm a Kingdom to his faith.
EDWIN This is strange news indeed, where is he?
TOCLIO In conference with the King that much respects him.
MODESTA Trust me, I long to see him.
TOCLIO Faith you will finde no great pleasure in him, for ought that I can see Lady, they say he is half a Prophet too, would he could tell me any news of the lost Prince, there's twenty Talents offer'd to him that finds him. 80
CADOR Such news was breeding in the morning. [A4]
TOCLIO And now it has birth and life sir,
If fortune bless me
I'le once more search those woods where then we lost him,
I know not yet what fate may follow me. *Exit.*
CADOR Fortune go with you sir, come fair Mistriss,
Your Sister and Lord *Edwin* are in game,
And all their wits at stake to win the Set. 90
CONSTANTIA My sister has the hand yet, we had best leave them,
She will be out anon as well as I,
He wants but cunning to put in a Dye. *Exit Cador, Constantia.*
EDWIN You are a cunning Gamester, Madam.
MODESTA It is a desperate Game indeed this Marriage,
Where there's no winning without loss to either.
EDWIN Why, what but your perfection noble Lady,
Can bar the worthiness of this my suit?
If so you please I count my happiness
From difficult obtaining, you shall see 100
My duty and observance.
MODESTA There shall be place to neither, noble sir,
I do beseech you let this mild Reply
Give answer to your suit, for here I vow
If e're I change my Virgin name, by you
It gains or looses.
EDWIN My wishes have their crown.
MODESTA Let them confine you then,
As to my promise, you give faith and credence?
EDWIN In your command my willing absence speaks it. *Exit.*
MODESTA Noble and vertuous: could I dream of Marriage, 110
I should affect thee *Edwin*: oh my soul,

Here's something tells me that these best of creatures,
These models of the world, weak man and woman,
Should have their souls, their making, life, and being,
To some more excellent use: if what the sense
Calls pleasure were our ends, we might justly blame
Great natures wisdom, who rear'd a building
Of so much art and beauty to entertain
A guest so far incertain, so imperfect:
If onely speech distinguish us from beasts, 120
Who know no inequality of birth or place,
But still to fly from goodness: oh, how base
Were life at such a rate! no, no, that power
That gave to man his being, speech, and wisdom,
Gave it for thankfulness: To him alone
That made me thus, may I whence truly know,
I'le pay to him, not man, the love I owe. *Exit.*

[I.ii]

Flourish Cornets. Enter Aurelius King of Brittain, Donobert, Gloster, Cador, Edwin, Toclio, Oswold, and Attendants.

AURELIUS No tiding of our brother yet? 'Tis strange,
So ne're the Court, and in our own Land too,
And yet no news of him: oh | this loss [A4v]
Tempers the sweetness of our happy conquests,
With much untimely sorrow.
DONOBERT Royal sir,
His safety being unquestion'd, should to time
Leave the redress of sorrow, were he dead,
Or taken by the foe, our fatal loss
Had wanted no quick Herald to disclose it.
AURELIUS That hope alone sustains me, 10
Nor will we be so ingrateful unto heaven
To question what we fear with what we enjoy.
Is answer of our message yet return'd
From that religious man, the holy Hermit,
Sent by the Earl of *Chester* to confirm us
In that miraculous act? For 'twas no less,
Our Army being in rout, nay, quite o'rethrown,
As *Chester* writes; even then this holy man
Arm'd with his cross and staff, went smiling on,
And boldly fronts the foe; at sight of whom 20
The *Saxons* stood amaz'd: for to their seeming,

Above the Hermit's head appear'd such brightness,
Such clear and glorious beams as if our men
March't all in fire, wherewith the *Pagans* fled,
And by our troops were all to death pursu'd.
GLOSTER 'Tis full of wonder sir.
AURELIUS Oh *Gloster*, he's a jewel worth a Kingdom:
Where's *Oswold* with his answer?
OSWOLD 'Tis here my Royal Lord.
AURELIUS In writing, will he not sit with us? 30
OSWOLD His Orizons perform'd, he bad me say
He would attend with all submission.
AURELIUS Proceed to councel then, and let some give order,
The Embassadors being come, to take our answer,
They have admittance. *Oswold*, *Toclio*,
Be it your charge: [*Exeunt Oswold and Toclio.*]
and now my Lords, observe
The holy councel of this reveren'd Hermit: (*reads*)
As you respect your safety, limit not
That onely power that hath protected you,
Trust not an open enemy too far, 40
He's yet a looser, and knows you have won,
Mischiefs not ended, are but then begun.
Anselme the Hermit.
DONOBERT Powerful and pithie, which my advice confirms,
No man leaves physick when his sickness slakes,
But doubles the receipts: the word of Peace
Seems fair to blood-shot eyes; but being appli'd
With such a medicine as blinds all the sight,
Argues desire of Cure, but want of Art.
AURELIUS You argue from defects, if both the name, 50
And the condition of the Peace be one,
It is to be prefer'd, and in the offer
Made by the *Saxon*, I see nought repugnant.
GLOSTER The time of Truce requir'd for thirty days,
Carries suspicion in it, since half that space
Will serve to strength their weakned Regiment.
CADOR Who in less time will undertake to | free [B1]
Our Country from them?
EDWIN Leave that unto our fortune.
DONOBERT Is not our bold, and hopeful General
Still Master of the field, their Legions faln, 60
The rest intrencht for fear, half starv'd, and wounded,

And shall we now give o're our fair advantage?
Force heaven, my Lord, the danger is far more,
In trusting to their words, then to their weapons.

Enter Oswold.

OSWOLD The Embassadors are come sir.
AURELIUS Conduct them in, we are resolv'd my Lords,
Since policy fail'd in the beginning,
It shall have no hand in the conclusion,
That heavenly power that hath so well begun
Their fatal overthrow I know can end it, 70
From which fair hope, my self will give them answer.

Flourish Cornets. Enter Artesia with the Saxon Lords.

DONOBERT What's here, a woman Orator?
AURELIUS Peace *Donobert*, speak, what are you Lady?
ARTESIA The sister of the *Saxon* General,
Warlike *Ostorius* the East *Angles* King,
My name *Artesia*, who in terms of love
Brings peace and health to great *Aurelius*,
Wishing she may return as fair a present
As she makes tender of.
AURELIUS The fairest present e're mine eyes were blest with, 80
Command a chair there for this *Saxon* Beauty:
Sit Lady, we'l confer: [*She sits.*]
Your warlike brother sues for a peace, you say?
ARTESIA With endless love unto your State and Person.
AURELIUS Ha's sent a moving Orator believe me,
What thinkst thou *Donobert*?
DONOBERT Believe me sir, were I but yong agen
This gilded pill might take my stomack quickly.
AURELIUS True, thou art old,
How soon we do forget our own defects. 90
Fair damsel,
[*aside*] Oh my tongue turns Traitor, and will betray my heart —
Sister to our enemy: [*aside*] 's death her beauty mazes me,
I cannot speak if I but look on her —
What's that we did conclude?
DONOBERT This Royal Lord.
AURELIUS Pish, thou canst not utter it:
Fair'st of creatures, tell the King your Brother
That we in love, ha! and honor to your Country,

Command his Armies to depart our Realm,
But if you please fair soul — Lord *Donobert*, 100
Deliver you our pleasure.
DONOBERT I shall sir,
Lady return, and certifie your brother —
AURELIUS Thou art too blunt, and rude, return so soon,
Fie, let her stay, and send some messenger
To certifie our pleasure.
DONOBERT What meanes your Grace?
AURELIUS To give her time of rest to her long Journey,
We would not willingly be thought uncivil.
ARTESIA Great King | of *Brittain*, let it not seem strange
To embrace the Princely Offers of a friend, [B1v]
Whose vertues with thine own, in fairest merit 110
Both States in Peace and Love may now inherit.
AURELIUS [*aside*] She speakes of Love agen,
Sure 'tis my fear, she knows I do not hate her.
ARTESIA Be then thy self most great *Aurelius*,
And let not envy, nor a deeper sin
In these thy Councellors, deprive thy goodness
Of that fair honor, we in seeking peace,
Give first to thee, who never use to sue
But force our wishes; yet if this seem light,
Oh let my sex, though worthless your respect, 120
Take the report of thy humanity,
Whose mild and vertuous life loud fame displayes,
As being o'recome by one so worthy praise.
AURELIUS [*aside*] She has an Angels tongue — speak still.
DONOBERT This flattery is gross sir, hear no more on't,
Lady, these childish complements are needless,
You have your answer, and believe it, Madam,
His Grace, though yong, doth wear within his breast
Too grave a Councellor to be seduc't
By smoothing flattery, or oyly words. 130
ARTESIA I come not sir, to wooe him.
DONOBERT 'Twere folly if you should, you must not wed him.
[AURELIUS] Shame take thy tongue, being old and weak thy self,
Thou doat'st, and looking on thine own defects,
Speak'st what thoud'st wish in me, do I command
The deeds of others, mine own act not free?
Be pleas'd to smile or frown, we respect neither,
My will and rule shall stand and fall together.

Most fair *Artesia*, see the King descends [*coming down from the throne*]
To give thee welcome with these warlike *Saxons*, 140
And now on equal terms both sues and grants,
Instead of Truce, let a perpetual League
Seal our united bloods in holy marriage,
Send the East Angles King this happy news,
That thou with me hast made a League for ever,
And added to his state a friend and brother:
Speak dearest Love, dare you confirm this Title?
ARTESIA I were no woman to deny a good
So high and noble to my fame and Country.
AURELIUS Live then a Queen in *Brittain*. 150
GLOSTER He meanes to marry her.
DONOBERT Death! he shall marry the devil first,
Marry a *Pagan*, an Idolater.
CADOR He has won her quickly.
EDWIN She was woo'd afore she came sure,
Or came of purpose to conclude the Match.
AURELIUS Who dares oppose our will? my | Lord of *Gloster*, [B2]
Be you Embassador unto our Brother,
The Brother of our Queen *Artesia*,
Tell him for such our entertainment looks him, 160
Our marriage adding to the happiness
Of our intended joys; mans good or ill,
In this like waves agree, come double still,

Enter Hermit.

Who's this, the Hermit? Welcome my happiness,
Our Countries hope, most reverent holy man,
I wanted but thy blessing to make perfect
The infinite sum of my felicity.
HERMIT Alack sweet Prince, that happiness is yonder,
Felicity and thou art far asunder,
This world can never give it. 170
AURELIUS Thou art deceiv'd, see here what I have found,
Beauty, Alliance, Peace, and strength of Friends,
All in this all exceeding excellence,
The League's confirm'd.
HERMIT With whom, dear Lord?
AURELIUS With the great Brother of this Beauteous woman,
The Royal *Saxon* King.
HERMIT Oh then I see,

And fear thou art too near thy misery,
What magick could so linck thee to this mischief?
By all the good that thou hast reapt by me, 180
Stand further from destruction.
AURELIUS Speak as a man, and I shall hope to obey thee.
HERMIT Idolaters get hence, fond King, let go,
Thou hug'st thy ruine, and thy Countries woe.
DONOBERT Well spoke old Father, too him, bait him soundly,
Now by heavens blest Lady, I can scarce keep patience.
1 SAXON LORD What devil is this?
2 SAXON LORD That cursed Christian, by whose hellish charmes
Our army was o'rethrown.
HERMIT Why do you dally sir? oh tempt not heaven, 190
Warm not a serpent in your naked bosom,
Discharge them from your Court.
AURELIUS Thou speak'st like madness,
Command the frozen shepherd to the shade,
When he sits warm i'th'Sun, the fever sick
To add more heat unto his burning pain,
These may obey, 'tis less extremity
Then thou enjoynst to me: cast but thine eye
Upon this beauty, do it, I'le forgive thee,
Though jealousie in others findes no pardon,
Then say thou dost not love; I shall then swear 200
Th'art immortal, and no earthly man,
Oh blame then my mortallity, not me.
HERMIT It is thy weakness brings thy misery,
Unhappy Prince.
AURELIUS Be milder in thy doom.
HERMIT 'Tis you that must indure heavens doom,
Which faln, remember's just.
ARTESIA [*aside*] Thou shalt not live to see it — how fares my Lord? [B2v]
If my poor presence breed dislike, great Prince,
I am no such neglected soul, will seek
To tie you to your word. 210
AURELIUS My word dear Love, may my Religion,
Crown, State, and Kingdom fail, when I fail thee,
Command Earl *Chester* to break up the camp,
Without disturbance to our *Saxon* friends,
Send every hour swift posts to hasten on
The King her Brother, to conclude this League,
This endless happy Peace of Love and Marriage,

Till when provide for Revels, and give charge
That nought be wanting, which may make our Triumphs
Sportful and free to all, if such fair blood 220
Ingender ill, man must not look for good. *Florish.*
Exit all but Hermit.

Enter Modestia reading in a book.

MODESTA How much the oft report of this blest *Hermit*,
Hath won on my desires; I must behold him,
And sure this should be he, oh the worlds folly,
Proud earth and dust, how low a price bears goodness,
All that should make man absolute, shines in him:
Much reverent Sir, may I without offence
Give interruption to your holy thoughts?
HERMIT What would you Lady?
MODESTA That which till now ne're found a language in me, 230
I am in love.
HERMIT In Love, with what?
MODESTA With vertue!
HERMIT There's no blame in that.
MODESTA Nay sir, with you! With your Religious Life!
Your Vertue, Goodness, if there be a name
To express affection greater, that,
That would I learn and utter: Reverent Sir,
If there be any thing to bar my suit,
Be charitable and expose it, your prayers
Are the same Orizons, which I will number.
Holy Sir, 240
Keep not instruction back from willingness,
Possess me of that knowledge leads you on
To this humility, for well I know
Were greatness good, you would not live so low.
HERMIT Are you a Virgin?
MODESTA Yes Sir!
HERMIT Your name?
MODESTA *Modesta*!
HERMIT Your name and vertues meet, a Modest Virgin,
Live ever in the sanctimonious way
To Heaven and Happiness, there's goodness in you,
I must instruct you further; come look up,
Behold yon firmament, there sits a power, 250
Whose foot-stool is this earth, oh learn this lesson,

And practise it, he that will climb so high,
Must leave no joy beneath, to move his eye. *Exit.*

MODESTA I apprehend you sir, on Heaven I fix my love,
Earth gives us grief, our joys are all above, [B3]
For this was man in innocence naked born,
To show us wealth hinders our sweet return. *Exit.*

II.[i] ACTUS II.

Enter Clown, and his Sister great with childe.

CLOWN Away, follow me no further, I am none of thy brother, what with Childe, great with Childe, and knows not whose the Father on't, I am asham'd to call thee Sister.

JOAN Believe me Brother, he was a Gentleman.

CLOWN Nay, I believe that, he gives arms, and legs too, and has made you the Herald to blaze 'em, but *Joan*, *Joan*, sister *Joan*, can you tell me his name that did it: how shall we call my Cousin, your bastard, when we have it?

JOAN Alas, I know not the Gentlemans name Brother,
I met him in these woods, the last great hunting,
He was so kinde and proffer'd me so much, 10
As I had not the heart to ask him more.

CLOWN Not his name, why this showes your Country breeding now, had you been brought up i'th'City, you'd have got a Father first, and the childe afterwards: hast thou no markes to know him by?

JOAN He had most rich Attire, a fair Hat and Feather, a gilt Sword, and most excellent Hangers.

CLOWN Pox on his Hangers, would he had bin gelt for his labor.

JOAN Had you but heard him swear you would have thought —

CLOWN I as you did, swearing and lying goes together still, did his Oathes get you with Childe, we shall have a roaring Boy then yfaith, well sister, I 20 must leave you.

JOAN Dear Brother stay, help me to finde him out, I'le ask no further.

CLOWN 'Sfoot who should I finde? who should I ask for?

JOAN Alas I know not, he uses in these woods, and these are witness of his oathes and promise.

CLOWN We are like to have a hot suit on't, when our best witness's but a Knight 'ath Post.

JOAN Do but enquire this Forrest, I'le go with you, some happy fate may guide us till we meet him.

CLOWN Meet him, and what name shall we have for him, when we meet 30 him? 'Sfoot thou neither knowst him, nor canst tell what to call him, was ever man tyr'd with such a business, to have a sister got with childe, and

know not who did it; well, you shall see him, I'le do my best for | you, Ile make Proclamation, if these Woods and Trees, as you say, will bear any witness, let them answer; Oh yes: If there be any man that wants a name, will come in for conscience sake, and acknowledge himself to be a Whore-Master, he shal have that laid to his charge in an hour, he shall not be rid on in an age; if he have Lands, he shall have an heir, if he have patience, he shall have a wife, if he have neither Lands nor patience, he shall have a whore, so ho boy, so ho, so, so. 40

PRINCE UTER (*within*) So, ho, boy, so, ho, illo ho, illo ho.

CLOWN Hark, hark sister, there's one hollows to us, what a wicked world's this, a man cannot so soon name a whore but a knave comes presently, and see where he is, stand close a while, sister.

Enter Prince Uter.

PRINCE How like a voice that Eccho spake, but oh
My thoughts are lost for ever in amazement,
Could I but meet a man to tell her beauties,
These trees would bend their tops to kiss the air,
That from my lips should give her praises up.

CLOWN He talk's of a woman, sister. 50

JOAN This may be he, brother.

CLOWN View him well, you see he has a fair Sword, but his Hanger's are faln.

PRINCE Here did I see her first, here view her beauty,
Oh had I known her name, I had been happy.

CLOWN Sister this is he sure, he knows not thy name neither, a couple of wise fools yfaith, to get children and know not one another.

PRINCE You weeping leaves, upon whose tender cheeks
Doth stand a flood of tears at my complaint,
And heard my vows and oathes. 60

CLOWN Law, Law, he has been a great swearer too, 'tis he sister.

PRINCE For having overtook her,
As I have seen a forward blood-hound, strip
The swifter of the cry ready to seize
His wished hopes, upon the sudden view
Struck with a stonishment at his arriv'd prey,
Instead of seizure stands at fearful bay,
Or like to *Marius* soldiers, who o'retook
The eye sight killing *Gorgon*, at one look
Made everlasting stand: so fear'd my power 70
Whose cloud aspir'd the Sun, dissolv'd a shower:
Pigmalion, then I tasted thy sad fate,

Whose Ivory picture, and my fair were one,
Our dotage past imagination,
I saw, and felt desire.

CLOWN Pox a your fingering, did he feel sister?

PRINCE But enjoy'd not,
Oh fate, thou hadst thy days and nights to feed [B4]
Or calm affection, one poor sight was all,
Converts my pleasure to perpetual thrall, 80
Imbracing thine, thou lostest breath and desire,
So I relating mine, will here expire,
For here I vow to you, you mournful plants
Who were the first made happy by her fame,
Never to part hence, till I know her name.

CLOWN Give me thy hand sister, *The Childe has found his Father*, this is he sure, as I am a man, had I been a woman these kinde words would have won me, I should have had a great belly too that's certain; well, I'le speak to him: most honest and fleshly minded Gentleman, give me your hand sir.

PRINCE Ha, what art thou, that thus rude and boldly, 90
Darest take notice of a wretch
So much ally'd to misery as I am?

CLOWN Nay, Sir, for our aliance, I shall be found to be a poor brother in Law of your worships, the Gentlewoman you spake on, is my sister, you see what a clew she spreads, her name is *Joan Go-too't*, I am her elder, but she has been at it before me: 'tis a womans fault, pox a this bashfulness, come forward *Jug*, prethee speak to him.

PRINCE Have you e're seen me Lady?

CLOWN Seen ye, ha, ha, it seems she has felt you too, here's a yong *Go-too't* a coming sir, she is my sister, we all love to *Go-too't*, as well as your worship, she's a Maid yet, but you may make her a wife, when you please sir. 100

PRINCE I am amaz'd with wonder: Tell me woman,
What sin have you committed worthy this?

JOAN Do you not know me sir?

PRINCE Know thee! as I do thunder, hell, and mischief,
Witch, stallion, hag.

CLOWN I see he will marry her, he speaks so like a husband.

PRINCE Death, I will cut their tongues out for this blasphemy,
Strumpet, villain, where have you ever seen me?

CLOWN Speak for your self with a pox to ye. 110

PRINCE Slaves, Ile make you curse your selves for this temptation.

JOAN Oh sir, if ever you did speak to me,
It was in smoother phrase, in fairer language.

PRINCE Lightning consume me, if I ever saw thee,

My rage o'reflowes my blood, all patience flies me. *Beats her.*

CLOWN Hold I beseech you sir, [*Prince Uter turns to beat him.*] I have nothing to say to you.

JOAN Help, help, murder, murder.

Enter Toclio, and Oswold.

TOCLIO Make haste Sir, this way the sound came, it was a woman. [B4ᵛ]

OSWOLD See where she is, and the Prince, the price of all our wishes. 120

CLOWN The Prince say ye, ha's made a poor Subject of me I am sure.

TOCLIO Sweet Prince, noble *Uter*, speak, how fare you sir?

OSWOLD Dear sir, recal your self, your fearful absence
Hath won too much already on the grief
Of our sad King, from whom our laboring search
Hath had this fair success in meeting you.

TOCLIO His silence, and his looks argue distraction.

CLOWN Nay, he's mad sure, he will not acknowledge my sister, nor the childe neither.

OSWOLD Let us entreat your Grace along with us, 130
Your sight will bring new life to the King your Brother.

TOCLIO Will you go sir?

PRINCE Yes, any whether, guide me, all's hell I see,
Man may change air, but not his misery. *Exit Prince, Toclio.*

JOAN Lend me one word with you, sir.

CLOWN Well said sister, he has a Feather, and fair Hangers too, this may be he.

OSWOLD What would you fair one?

CLOWN Sure I have seen you in these woods e're this.

OSWOLD Trust me never, I never saw this place, 140
Till at this time my friend conducted me.

JOAN The more's my sorrow then.

OSWOLD Would I could comfort you: I am a Bachelor, but it seems you have a husband, you have been fouly o'reshot else.

CLOWN A womans fault, we are all subject to go to't, sir.

Enter Toclio.

TOCLIO *Oswold* away, the Prince will not stir a foot without you.

OSWOLD I am coming, farewel woman.

TOCLIO Prithee make haste. [*Exit Oswold.*]

JOAN Good sir, but one word with you e're you leave us.

TOCLIO With me fair soul? 150

CLOWN Shee'l have a fling at him too, the Childe must have a Father.

JOAN Have you ne'er seen me sir?

TOCLIO Seen thee, 'sfoot I have seen many fair faces in my time, prithee look up, and do not weep so, sure pretty wanton, I have seen this face before.

JOAN It is enough, though you ne're see me more. *Sinks down.*

TOCLIO 'Sfoot she's faln, this place is inchanted sure, look to the woman fellow. *Exit.*

CLOWN Oh she's dead! she's dead, as you are a man stay and help, sir: *Joan*, *Joan*, sister *Joan*, why *Joan Go too't* I say, will you cast away your self, and your childe, and me too, what do you mean, sister? 160

JOAN Oh give me pardon sir, 'twas too much joy [C1]
Opprest my loving thoughts, I knew you were
Too noble to deny me, ha! Where is he?

CLOWN Who, the Gentleman? he's gone sister.

JOAN Oh! I am undone then, run, tell him I did but faint for joy, dear brother haste, why dost thou stay?
Oh never cease, till he give answer to thee.

CLOWN He: which he? what do you call him tro?

JOAN Unnatural brother, shew me the path he took,
Why dost thou dally? speak, oh, which way went he? 170

CLOWN This way, that way, through the bushes there.

JOAN Were it through fire,
The Journey's easie, winged with sweet desire. *Exit.*

CLOWN Hey day, there's some hope of this yet, Ile follow her for kindreds sake, if she miss of her purpose now, she'l challenge all she findes I see, for if ever we meet with a two leg'd creature in the whole Kingdom, the Childe shall have a Father that's certain. *Exit.*

[II.ii]

Loud Musick. Enter two with the Sword and Mace, Cador, Edwin, two Bishops, Aurelius, Ostorius leading Artesia Crown'd, Constancia, Modestia, Octa, Proximus a Magician, Donobert, Gloster, Oswold, Toclio, all pass over the Stage. Manet Donobert, Gloster, Edwin, Cador.

DONOBERT Come *Gloster*, I do not like this hasty Marriage.

GLOSTER She was quickly wooed and won, not six days since
Arrived an enemy to sue for Peace,
And now crown'd Queen of *Brittain*, this is strange.

DONOBERT Her brother too made as quick speed in coming,
Leaving his *Saxons*, and his starved Troops,
To take the advantage whilst 'twas offer'd,
Fore heaven I fear the King's too credulous,
Our Army is discharg'd too.

GLOSTER Yes, and our General commanded home, 10
Son *Edwin* have you seen him since?

EDWIN He's come to Court, but will not view the presence,
Nor speak unto the King, he's so discontent
At this so strange aliance with the *Saxon*,
As nothing can perswade his patience.
CADOR You know his humor will indure no check,
Not if the King oppose it,
All crosses feeds both his spleen, and his impatience,
Those affections are in him like powder,
Apt to inflame with every little spark, 20
And blow up all his reason.
GLOSTER *Edol* of *Chester* is a noble Soldier.
DONOBERT So is he by the Rood, ever most faithful
To the King and Kingdom, how e're his passions guide him. [C1v]

Enter Edoll with Captains.

CADOR See where he comes, my Lord.
OMNES Welcome to Court, brave Earl.
EDOL Do not deceive me by your flatteries:
Is not the Saxon here? the League confirm'd?
The Marriage ratifi'd? the Court divided
With Pagan Infidels? the least part Christians, 30
At least in their Commands? Oh the gods!
It is a thought that takes away my sleep,
And dulls my senses so I scarcely know you:
Prepare my horses, Ile away to *Chester*.
CAPTAIN What shall we do with our Companies, my Lord?
EDOL Keep them at home to increase Cuckolds,
And get some Cases for your Captainships,
Smooth up your brows, the wars has spoil'd your faces,
And few will now regard you.
DONOBERT Preserve your patience, Sir. 40
EDOL Preserve your Honors, Lords, your Countries Safety,
Your Lives, and Lands from strangers: what black devil
Could so bewitch the King, so to discharge
A Royal Army in the height of conquest?
Nay, even already made victorious,
To give such credit to an enemy,
A starved foe, a stragling fugitive,
Beaten beneath our feet, so low dejected,
So servile, and so base, as hope of life
Had won them all, to leave the Land for ever? 50
DONOBERT It was the Kings will.

EDOL It was your want of wisdom,
That should have laid before his tender youth,
The dangers of a State, where forain Powers
Bandy for Soveraignty with Lawful Kings,
Who being setled once, to assure themselves,
Will never fail to seek the blood and life
Of all competitors.
DONOBERT Your words sound well my Lord, and point at safety,
Both for the Realm and us, but why did you 60
Within whose power it lay, as General,
With full Commission to dispose the war,
Lend ear to parly with the weakned foe?
EDOL Oh the good Gods!
CADOR And on that parly came this Embassie.
EDOL You will hear me.
EDWIN Your letters did declare it to the King,
Both of the Peace, and all Conditions
Brought by this *Saxon* Lady, whose fond love 70
Has thus bewitched him.
EDOL I will curse you all as black as hell,
Unless you hear me, your gross mistake would make
Wisdom her self run madding through the streets,
And quarrel with her shadow, death!
Why kill'd ye not that woman?
DONOBERT, GLOSTER Oh my Lord.
EDOL The great devil take me quick, had I been by,
And all the | women of the world were barren, [C2]
She should have died e're he had married her
On these conditions.
CADOR It is not reason that directs you thus. 80
EDOL Then have I none, for all I have directs me,
Never was man so palpably abus'd,
So basely marted, bought and sold to scorn,
My Honor, Fame, and hopeful Victories,
The loss of Time, Expences, Blood and Fortunes,
All vanisht into nothing.
EDWIN This rage is vain my Lord,
What the King does, nor they, nor you can help.
EDOL My Sword must fail me then.
CADOR 'Gainst whom will you expose it? 90
EDOL What's that to you, 'gainst all the devils in hell
To guard my country.

EDWIN These are airy words.
EDOL Sir, you tread too hard upon my patience.
EDWIN I speak the duty of a Subjects faith,
And say agen had you been here in presence,
What the King did, you had not dar'd to cross it.
EDOL I will trample on his Life and Soul that says it.
CADOR My Lord.
EDWIN Come, come.
EDOL Now before heaven.
CADOR Dear sir.
EDOL Not dare? thou liest beneath thy lungs.
GLOSTER No more son *Edwin*. 100
EDWIN I have done sir, I take my leave.
EDOL But thou shalt not, you shall take no leave of me Sir.
DONOBERT For wisdoms sake my Lord.
EDOL Sir, I'le leave him, and you, and all of you,
The Court and King, and let my Sword, and friends,
Shuffle for *Edols* safety: stay you here,
And hug the *Saxons*, till they cut your throats,
Or bring the Land to servile slavery,
Such yokes of baseness, *Chester* must not suffer,
Go, and repent betimes these foul misdeeds, 110
For in this League, all our whole Kingdom bleeds,
Which Ile prevent, or perish.
GLOSTER See how his rage transports him! *Exit Edol, Captains.*
CADOR These passions set apart, a braver soldier
Breathes not i'th'world this day.
DONOBERT I wish his own worth do not court his ruine.
The King must Rule, and we must learn to obay,
True vertue still directs the noble way.

Loud Musick. Enter Aurelius, Artesia, Ostorius, Octa, Proximus, Toclio, Oswold, Hermit.

AURELIUS Why is the Court so dull? me thinks each room,
And | angle of our Palace should appear [C2v] 120
Stuck full of objects fit for mirth and triumphs,
To show our high content. *Oswold* fill wine,
Must we begin the Revels? be it so then,
Reach me the cup: Ile now begin a Health
To our lov'd Queen, the bright *Artesia*,
The Royal *Saxon* King, our warlike brother,
Go and command all the whole Court to pledge it,

Fill to the Hermit there; most reverent *Anselme*,
Wee'l do thee Honor first, to pledge my Queen.
HERMIT I drink no healths great King, and if I did, 130
I would be loath to part with health, to those
That have no power to give it back agen.
AURELIUS Mistake not, it is the argument of Love
And Duty to our Queen and us.
ARTESIA But he ows none it seems.
HERMIT I do to vertue Madam, temperate minds
Covets that health to drink, which nature gives
In every spring to man, he that doth hold
His body, but a Tenement at will
Bestows no cost, but to repair what's ill, 140
Yet if your healths or heat of Wine, fair Princes,
Could this old frame, or these cras'd limbes restore,
Or keep out death, or sickness, then fill more,
I'le make fresh way for appetite, if no,
On such a prodigal who would wealth bestow?
OSTORIUS He speaks not like a guest to grace a wedding.
ARTESIA No sir, but like an envious imposter.
OCTA A Christian slave, a Cinick.
OSTORIUS What vertue could decline your Kingly spirit,
To such respect of him whose magick spells 150
Met with your vanquisht Troops, and turn'd your Arms
To that necessity of fight, which through dispair
Of any hope to stand but by his charms,
Had been defeated in a bloody conquest?
OCTA 'Twas magick, hellbred magick did it sir,
And that's a course my Lord, which we esteem
In all our *Saxon* Wars, unto the last
And lowest ebbe of servile treachery.
AURELIUS Sure you are deceiv'd, it was the hand of heaven,
That in his vertue gave us victory, 160
Is there a power in man that can strike fear
Thorough a general camp, or create spirits,
In recreant bosoms above present sense?
OSTORIUS To blind the sense there may with apparition
Of well arm'd troops which in themselves are air,
Form'd into humane shapes, and such that day
Were by that Sorcerer rais'd to cross our fortunes.
AURELIUS There is a law | tells us, that words want force [C3]
To make deeds void, examples must be shown

By instances alike, e're I believe it. 170
OSTORIUS 'Tis easily perform'd, believe me sir,
Propose your own desires, and give but way
To what our Magick here shall straight perform,
And then let his or our deserts be censur'd.
AURELIUS We could not wish a greater happiness,
Then what this satisfaction brings with it,
Let him proceed, fair brother.
OSTORIUS He shall sir,
Come learned *Proximus*, this task be thine,
Let thy great charms confound the opinion
This Christian by his spells hath falsly won. 180
PROXIMUS Great King, propound your wishes then,
What persons, of what State, what numbers, or how arm'd,
Please your own thoughts, they shall appear before you.
AURELIUS Strange art! what thinkst thou reverent *Hermit*?
HERMIT Let him go on sir.
AURELIUS Wilt thou behold his cunning?
HERMIT Right gladly sir, it will be my joy to tell,
That I was here to laugh at him and hell.
AURELIUS I like thy confidence.
ARTESIA His sawcy impudence, proceed to'th' trial.
PROXIMUS Speak your desires my Lord, and be it place't 190
In any angle underneath the Moon,
The center of the Earth, the Sea, the Air,
The region of the fire, nay hell it self,
And I'le present it.
AURELIUS Wee'l have no sight so fearful, onely this,
If all thy art can reach it, show me here
The two great Champions of the *Trojan* War,
Achilles and brave *Hector*, our great Ancestor,
Both in their warlike habits, Armor, Shields,
And Weapons then in use for fight. 200
PROXIMUS 'Tis done, my Lord, command a halt and silence,
As each man will respect his life or danger.
Armel, *Plesgeth*.

Enter Spirits.

[SPIRITS] Quid vis?
PROXIMUS Attend me. [*Exeunt Proximus and Spirits.*]
AURELIUS The Apparition comes, on our displeasure
Let all keep place and silence.

Within Drums beat Marches. Enter Proximus bringing in Hector attir'd and arm'd after the Trojan manner, with Target, Sword, and Battel-ax, a Trumpet before him, and a Spirit in flame colours with a Torch; at the other door Achilles with his Spear and Falchon, a Trumpet and a Spirit in black before him; Trumpets sound alarm, and they manage their weapons to begin the Fight: and after some Charges, the Hermit steps between them, at which seeming amaz'd the spirits [*quake*] *and tremble. Thunder within.*

PROXIMUS What means this stay,
Bright *Armel*, *Plesgeth*? why fear you | and fall back? [C3v]
Renew the Alarms, and enforce the Combat, 210
Or hell or darkness circles you for ever.
ARMEL We dare not.
PROXIMUS Ha!
PLESGETH Our charms are all dissolv'd, *Armel* away,
'Tis worse then hell to us, whilest here we stay. *Exit all.*
HERMIT What! at a Non-plus sir? command them back for shame.
PROXIMUS What power o're-aws my Spells! return you Hell-hounds:
Armel, *Plesgeth*, double damnation seize you,
By all the Infernal powers, the prince of devils
Is in this Hermits habit, what else could force 220
My Spirits quake or tremble thus?
HERMIT Weak argument to hide your want of skill:
Does the devil fear the devil, or war with hell?
They have not been acquainted long it seems.
Know mis-believing Pagan, even that Power
That overthrew your Forces, still lets you see,
He onely can controul both hell and thee.
PROXIMUS Disgrace and mischief, Ile enforce new charms,
New spells, and spirits rais'd from the low Abyss
Of hells unbottom'd depths.
AURELIUS We have enough sir, 230
Give o're your charms, wee'l finde some other time
To praise your Art. I dare not but acknowledge
That heavenly Power my heart stands witness to:
Be not dismaid my Lords, at this disaster,
Nor thou my fairest Queen: we'l change the Scene
To some more pleasing sports. Lead to your Chamber,
How'ere in this thy pleasures finde a cross,
Our joy's too fixed here to suffer loss.

[*Enter Toclio.*]

TOCLIO Which I shall adde to sir, with news I bring:
The Prince your Brother, lives. 240
AURELIUS Ha!
TOCLIO And comes to grace this high and heaven-knit Marriage.
AURELIUS Why dost thou flatter me, to make me think
Such happiness attends me?

Enter Prince Uter and Oswold.

TOCLIO His presence speaks my truth, sir.
DONOBERT Force me, 'tis he: look *Gloster*.
GLOSTER A blessing beyond hope, sir.
AURELIUS Ha! 'tis he: welcome my second Comfort.
Artesia, Dearest Love, it is my Brother,
My Princely Brother, all my Kingdoms hope, 250
Oh give him welcome, as thou lov'st my health.
ARTESIA You have so free a welcome sir, from me,
As this your presence has such power I swear
O're me a stranger, that I must forget
My Countrey, Name, and Friends, and count this place
My Joy and Birth-right.
PRINCE 'Tis she! 'tis she I swear! oh ye good gods, 'tis she!
That face within those woods where first I | saw her, [C4]
Captived my senses, and thus many moneths
Bar'd me from all society of men: 260
How came she to this place, brother *Aurelius*?
Speak that Angels name, her heaven-blest name,
Oh speak it quickly Sir.
AURELIUS It is *Artesia*, the Royal Saxon Princess.
PRINCE A woman, and no Deity: no feigned shape,
To mock the reason of admiring sense,
On whom a hope as low as mine may live,
Love, and enjoy, dear Brother, may it not?
AURELIUS She is all the Good, or Vertue thou canst name,
My Wife, my Queen. 270
PRINCE Ha! your wife!
ARTESIA Which you shall finde sir, if that time and fortune
May make my love but worthy of your tryal.
PRINCE Oh!
AURELIUS What troubles you, dear Brother?
Why with so strange and fixt an eye dost thou
Behold my Joys?
ARTESIA You are not well, sir.

PRINCE Yes, yes, oh you immortal powers,
Why has poor man so many entrances 280
For sorrow to creep in at, when our sense
Is much too weak to hold his happiness?
Oh say I was born deaf: and let your silence
Confirm in me the knowing my defect,
At least be charitable to conceal my sin,
For hearing is no less in me, dear Brother.
AURELIUS No more,
I see thou art a Rival in the Joys
Of my high Bliss. Come my *Artesia*,
The Day's most prais'd when 'tis ecclipst by Night, 290
Great Good must have as great Ill opposite.
PRINCE Stay, hear but a word; yet now I think on't,
This is your Wedding-night, and were it mine,
I should be angry with least loss of time.
ARTESIA Envy speaks no such words, has no such looks.
PRINCE Sweet rest unto you both.
AURELIUS Lights to our Nuptial Chamber.
ARTESIA [*aside to Prince*] Could you speak so,
I would not fear how much my grief did grow.
AURELIUS Lights to our Chamber, on, on, set on. *Exeunt. Manet Prince.*
PRINCE Could you speak so, 300
I would not fear how much my griefs did grow.
Those were her very words, sure I am waking,
She wrung me by the hand, and spake them to me
With a most passionate affection,
Perhaps she loves, and now repents her choice,
In marriage with my brother; oh fond man,
How darest thou trust thy Traitors thoughts, thus to
Betray thy self? 'twas but a waking dream
Wherein thou madest thy wishes speak, not her,
In which thy foolish hopes strives to prolong [C4v] 310
A wretched being, so sickly children play
With health lov'd toys, which for a time delay,
But do not cure the fit: be then a man,
Meet that destruction which thou canst not flie,
From not to live, make it thy best to die,
And call her now, whom thou didst hope to wed,
Thy brothers wife, thou art too ne're a kin,
And such an act above all name's a sin
Not to be blotted out, heaven pardon me,

She's banisht from my bosom now for ever, 320
To lowest ebbes, men justly hope a flood,
When vice grows barren, all desires are good.

Enter Waiting Gentlewoman with a Jewel.

GENTLEWOMAN The noble Prince, I take it sir.
PRINCE You speak me what I should be, Lady.
GENTLEWOMAN Know by that name sir, Queen *Artesia* greets you.
PRINCE Alas good vertue, how is she mistaken.
GENTLEWOMAN Commending her affection in this Jewel, sir.
PRINCE She binds my service to her: ha! a Jewel,
'Tis a fair one trust me, and methinks it much
Resembles something I have seen with her. 330
GENTLEWOMAN It is an artificial crab, Sir.
PRINCE A creature that goes backward.
GENTLEWOMAN True, from the way it looks.
PRINCE There is no moral in it aludes to her self?
GENTLEWOMAN 'Tis your construction gives you that sir, she's a woman.
PRINCE And like this,
May use her legs, and eyes two several ways.
GENTLEWOMAN Just like the Sea-crab, which on the Mussel prayes,
Whilst he bills at a stone.
PRINCE Pretty in troth, prithee tell me, art thou honest? 340
GENTLEWOMAN I hope I seem no other, sir.
PRINCE And those that seem so, are sometimes bad enough.
GENTLEWOMAN If they will accuse themselves for want of witness, let them, I am not so foolish.
PRINCE I see th'art wise,
Come speak me truly, what is the greatest sin?
GENTLEWOMAN That which man never acted, what has been done
Is as the least, common to all as one.
PRINCE Dost think thy Lady is of thy opinion?
GENTLEWOMAN She's a bad Scholar else, I have brought her up, and she 350
dares owe me still.
PRINCE I, 'tis a fault in greatness, they dare owe many e're they pay one, but darest thou expose thy scholar to my examining?
GENTLEWOMAN Yes in good troth sir, and pray | put her to't too, 'tis a [D1]
hard lesson if she answer it not.
PRINCE Thou know'st the hardest.
GENTLEWOMAN As far as a woman may, sir.
PRINCE I commend thy plainness, when wilt thou bring me to thy Lady?
GENTLEWOMAN Next opportunity I attend you, sir.

PRINCE Thanks, take this, and commend me to her. 360
GENTLEWOMAN Think of your Sea-crab sir, I pray. *Exit.*
PRINCE Oh by any means, Lady,
What should all this tend to?
If it be Love or Lust that thus incites her,
The sin is horrid and incestuous;
If to betray my life, what hopes she by it?
Yes, it may be a practice 'twixt themselves,
To expel the *Brittains* and ensure the State
Through our destructions, all this may be
Vaild with a deeper reach in villany, 370
Then all my thoughts can guess at, however
I will confer with her, and if I finde
Lust hath given Life to Envy in her minde,
I may prevent the danger; so men wise
By the same step by which they fell, may rise.
Vices are Vertues, if so thought and seen,
And Trees with foulest roots, branch soonest green. *Exit.*

[III.i] ACT. 3. SCENE 1.

Enter Clown and his Sister.

CLOWN Come sister, thou that art all fool, all mad-woman.
JOAN Prithee have patience, we are now at Court.
CLOWN At Court! ha, ha, that proves thy madness, was there ever any woman in thy taking travel'd to Court for a husband? 'slid, 'tis enough for them to get children, and the City to keep 'em, and the Countrey to finde Nurses: every thing must be done in his due place, sister.
JOAN Be but content a while, for sure I know
This Journey will be happy. Oh dear brother,
This night my sweet Friend came to comfort me,
I saw him, and embrac't him in mine arms. 10
CLOWN Why did you not hold him, and call me to help you?
JOAN Alas, I thought I had been with him still,
But when I wak't!
CLOWN Ah pox of all Loger-heads, then you were but in a Dream all this while, and we may still go look him: Well, since we are come to Court, cast your Cats eyes about you, and either finde him out you dreamt on, or some other, | for Ile trouble my self no further. [D1v]

Enter Donobert, Cador, Edwin, and Toclio.

See, see, here comes more Courtiers, look about you, come, pray view 'em all well; the old man has none of the marks about him, the other have both Swords and Feathers: what thinkest thou of that tall yong Gentleman? 20

JOAN He much resembles him; but sure my friend,
Brother, was not so high of stature.

CLOWN Oh beast, wast thou got a childe with a short thing too?

DONOBERT Come, come, Ile hear no more on't: Go Lord *Edwin*,
Tell her this day her sister shall be married
To *Cador* Earl of *Cornwal*, so shall she
To thee brave *Edwin*, if she'l have my blessing.

EDWIN She is addicted to a single Life,
She will not hear of Marriage.

DONOBERT Tush, fear it not: go you from me to her, 30
Use your best skill my Lord, and if you fail,
I have a trick shall do it: haste, haste about it.

EDWIN Sir, I am gone,
My hope is in your help more then my own.

DONOBERT And worthy *Toclio*,
To your care I must commend this business,
For Lights and Musick, and what else is needful.

TOCLIO I shall my Lord.

CLOWN We would intreat a word sir, come forward sister.

Exeunt Donobert, Toclio, Cador.

EDWIN What lackst thou fellow? 40

CLOWN I lack a father for a childe, sir.

EDWIN How! a God-father?

CLOWN No sir, we mean the own father: it may be you sir, for any thing we know, I think the childe is like you.

EDWIN Like me! prithee where is it?

CLOWN Nay, 'tis not born yet sir, 'tis forth coming you see, the childe must have a father: what do you think of my sister?

EDWIN Why I think if she ne're had husband she's a whore, and thou a fool, farewel. *Exit.*

CLOWN I thank you sir: well, pull up thy heart sister, if there be any Law i'th Court this fellow shall father it, 'cause he uses me so scurvily. There's a great Wedding towards they say, we'l amongst them for a husband for thee. 50

Enter Sir Nicodemus with a Letter.

If we miss there, Ile have another bout with him that abus'd me. See! look, there comes another Hat and Feather, this should be a close Letcher, he's reading of a Love-letter.

SIR NICODEMUS Earl *Cador*'s Marriage, and a Masque to grace it,
So, so.
This night shall make me famous for Presentments.
How now, what are you?

CLOWN A couple of *Great Brittains*, you may see by our bellies, sir. 60

SIR NICODEMUS And what of this sir?

CLOWN Why thus the matter | stands sir: There's one of your Courtiers [D2] Hunting Nags has made a Gap through another mans Inclosure. Now sir, here's the question, who should be at charge of a Fur-bush to stop it?

SIR NICODEMUS Ha, ha, this is out of my element: the Law must end it.

CLOWN Your Worship says well; for surely I think some Lawyer had a hand in the business, we have such a troublesom Issue.

SIR NICODEMUS But what's thy business with me now?

CLOWN Nay sir, the business is done already, you may see by my sisters belly. 70

SIR NICODEMUS Oh, now I finde thee, this Gentlewoman it seems has been humbled.

CLOWN As low as the ground would give her leave sir, and your Worship knows this: though there be many fathers without children, yet to have a childe without a father, were most unnatural.

SIR NICODEMUS That's true ifaith, I never heard of a childe yet that e're begot his father.

CLOWN Why true, you say wisely sir.

SIR NICODEMUS And therefore I conclude, that he that got the childe, is without all question the father of it. 80

CLOWN I, now you come to the matter sir: and our suit is to your Worship for the discovery of this father.

SIR NICODEMUS Why, lives he in the Court here?

JOAN Yes sir, and I desire but Marriage.

SIR NICODEMUS And does the knave refuse it? Come, come, be merry wench, he shall marry thee, and keep the childe too, if my Knighthood can do any thing; I am bound by mine Orders to help distressed Ladies, and can there be a greater injury to a woman with childe, then to lack a father for't? I am asham'd of your simpleness: Come, come, give me a Courtiers Fee for my pains, and Ile be thy Advocate my self, and justice shall be found, nay Ile 90 sue the Law for it; but give me my Fee first.

CLOWN If all the money I have i'th world will do it, you shall have it sir.

SIR NICODEMUS An Angel does it.

CLOWN Nay there's two, for your better eye sight sir.

SIR NICODEMUS Why well said: give me thy hand wench, Ile teach thee a trick for all this, shall get a father for thy childe presently, and this it is, mark now: You meet a man, as you meet me now, thou claimest Marriage of me,

and layest the childe to my charge, I deny it: push, that's nothing, hold thy Claim fast, thy words carries it, and no Law can withstand it.

CLOWN Ist possible? 100

SIR NICODEMUS Past all opposition, her own word carries it, let her challenge any man, the childe shall call him Father; there's a trick | for your [D2v] money now.

CLOWN Troth Sir, we thank you, we'l make use of your trick, and go no further to seek the childe a Father, for we challenge you Sir: sister lay it to him, he shall marry thee, I shall have a worshipful old man to my brother.

SIR NICODEMUS Ha, ha, I like thy pleasantness.

JOAN Nay indeed Sir, I do challenge you.

CLOWN You think we jest sir.

SIR NICODEMUS I by my troth do I, I like thy wit yfaith, thou shalt live at 110 Court with me, didst never here of *Nicodemus Nothing*? I am the man.

CLOWN Nothing, 'slid we are out agen, thou wast never got with childe with nothing sure.

JOAN I know not what to say.

SIR NICODEMUS Never grieve wench, show me the man and process shall fly out.

CLOWN 'Tis enough for us to finde the children, we look that you should finde the Father, and therefore either do us justice, or we'l stand to our first challenge.

SIR NICODEMUS Would you have justice without an Adversary, unless 120 you can show me the man, I can do you no good in it.

CLOWN Why then I hope you'l do us no harm sir, you'l restore my money.

SIR NICODEMUS What, my Fee? marry Law forbid it,
Finde out the party, and you shall have justice,
Your fault clos'd up, and all shall be amended,
The Childe his Father find, and the Law ended. *Exit.*

CLOWN Well, he has deserv'd his Fee indeed, for he has brought our suit to a quick end, I promise you, and yet the Childe has never a Father; nor we have no more mony to seek after him, a shame of all lecherous placcats; now you look like a Cat had newly kitten'd, what will you do now tro? Follow me 130 no further, lest I beat your brains out.

JOAN Impose upon me any punishment,
Rather then leave me now.

CLOWN Well, I think I am bewitch with thee, I cannot finde in my heart to forsake her, there was never sister would have abus'd a poor brother as thou hast done, I am even pin'd away with fretting, there's nothing but flesh and bones about me, well and I had my money agen, it were some comfort, (*Thunder.*) hark sister, does it not thunder?

JOAN Oh yes, most fearfully, what shall we do brother?

CLOWN Marry e'ene get some shelter e're the storm catch us: away, let's away I prithee. 140

Enter the Devil in mans habit, richly attir'd, his feet and his head horrid.

JOAN Ha, 'tis he, stay brother, dear brother stay.
CLOWN What's the matter now?
JOAN My love, my | friend is come, yonder he goes. [D3]
CLOWN Where, where, show me where,
I'le stop him if the devil be not in him.
JOAN Look there, look yonder,
Oh dear friend, pity my distress,
For heaven and goodness do but speak to me.
DEVIL She calls me, and yet drives me headlong from her, 150
Poor mortal, thou and I are much uneven,
Thou must not speak of goodness nor of heaven,
If I confer with thee: but be of comfort,
Whilst men do breath, and *Brittains* name be known,
The fatal fruit thou bear'st within thy womb,
Shall here be famous till the day of doom.
CLOWN 'Slid who's that talks so? I can see no body.
JOAN Then art thou blind, or mad, see where he goes,
And beckons me to come, oh lead me forth,
I'le follow thee in spight of fear or death. *Exit.* 160
CLOWN Oh brave, she'l run to the devil for a husband, she's stark mad sure, and talks to a shaddow, for I could see no substance: well, I'le after her, the childe was got by chance, and the father must be found at all adventure.
Exit.

[III.ii] *Enter Hermit, Modesta, and Edwin.*

MODESTA Oh reverent sir, by you my heart hath reacht
At the large hopes of holy Piety,
And for this I craved your company,
Here in your sight religiously to vow,
My chaste thoughts up to heaven, and make you now
The witness of my faith.
HERMIT Angels assist thy hopes.
EDWIN What meanes my Love? thou art my promis'd wife.
MODESTA To part with willingly what friends and life
Can make no good assurance of. 10
EDWIN Oh finde remorse, fair soul, to love and merit,
And yet recant thy vow.

MODESTA Never:
This world and I are parted now for ever.
HERMIT To finde the way to bliss, oh happy woman,
Th'ast learn'd the hardest Lesson well I see,
Now show thy fortitude and constancy,
Let these thy friends thy sad departure weep,
Thou shalt but loose the wealth thou could'st not keep,
My contemplation calls me, I must leave ye. 20
EDWIN O reverent Sir, perswade not her to leave me.
HERMIT My Lord I do not, nor to cease to love ye, [D3v]
I onely pray her faith may fixed stand,
Marriage was blest I know with heavens own hand. *Exit.*
EDWIN You hear him Lady, 'tis not a virgins state
But sanctity of life, must make you happy.
MODESTA Good sir, you say you love me, gentle *Edwin*,
Even by that love I do beseech you leave me.
EDWIN Think of your fathers tears, your weeping friends
Whom cruel grief makes pale and bloodless for you. 30
MODESTA Would I were dead to all.
EDWIN Why do you weep?
MODESTA Oh who would live to see
How men with care and cost, seek misery.
EDWIN Why do you seek it then? What joy, what pleasure,
Can give you comfort in a single life?
MODESTA The contemplation of a happy death,
Which is to me so pleasing that I think
No torture could divert me: What's this world
Wherein you'd have me walk, but a sad passage
To a dread Judgement-Seat, from whence even now 40
We are but bail'd, upon our good abearing,
Till that great Sessions come, when Death, the Cryer,
Will surely summon us, and all to appear,
To plead us guilty or our bail to clear: *Soft Musick.*
What musick's this?

Enter two Bishops, Donobert, Gloster, Cador, Constancia, Oswold, Toclio.

EDWIN Oh now resolve and think upon my love,
This sounds the Marriage of your beauteous sister,
Vertuous *Constancia*, with the noble *Cador*,
Look, and behold this pleasure.
MODESTA Cover me with night, 50
It is a vanity not worth the sight.

DONOBERT See, see, she's yonder, pass on son *Cador*,
Daughter *Constancia*, I beseech you all
Unless she first move speech, salute her not.
Edwin what good success?
EDWIN Nothing as yet, unless this object take her.
DONOBERT See, see, her eye is fixt upon her sister,
Seem careless all, and take no notice of her:
On afore there, come my *Constancia*.
MODESTA Not speak to me, nor dain to cast an eye, 60
To look on my despised poverty?
I must be more charitable, pray stay Lady,
Are not you she whom I did once call sister?
CONSTANTIA I did acknowledge such a name to one
Whilst she was worthy of it, in whose folly [D4]
Since you neglect your fame and friends together,
In you I drown'd a sisters name for ever.
MODESTA Your looks did speak no less.
GLOSTER It now begins to work, this sight has moved her.
DONOBERT I knew this trick would take, or nothing. 70
MODESTA Though you disdain in me a sisters name,
Yet charity me thinks should be so strong
To instruct e're you reject, I am a wretch
Even follies instance, who perhaps have er'd,
Not having known the goodness bears so high
And fair a show in you, which being exprest
I may recant this low despised life,
And please those friends whom I have mov'd to grief.
CADOR She is coming yfaith, be merry *Edwin*.
CONSTANTIA Since you desire instruction you shall have it, 80
What ist should make you thus desire to live
Vow'd to a single life?
MODESTA Because I know I cannot flie from death,
Oh my good sister, I beseech you hear me,
This world is but a Masque, catching weak eyes,
With what is not our selves but our disguise,
A Vizard that falls off, the Dance being done,
And leaves Deaths Glass for all to look upon,
Our best happiness here, lasts but a night,
Whose burning Tapers makes false Ware seem right; 90
Who knows not this, and will not now provide
Some better shift before his shame be spy'd,
And knowing this vain world at last will leave him,
Shake off these robes that help but to deceive him.

CONSTANTIA Her words are powerful, I am amaz'd to hear her!
DONOBERT Her soul's inchanted with infected Spells.
Leave her best Girl, for now in thee
Ile seek the fruits of Age, Posterity.
Out o'my sight; sure I was half asleep,
Or drunk, when I begot thee. 100
CONSTANTIA Good sir forbear. What say you to that sister?
The joy of children, a blest Mothers Name!
Oh who without much grief can loose such Fame?
MODESTA Who can enjoy it without sorrow rather?
And that most certain where the joy's unsure,
Seeing the fruit that we beget endure
So many miseries, that oft we pray [D4v]
The Heavens to shut up their afflicted day:
At best we do but bring forth Heirs to die,
And fill the Coffins of our enemy. 110
CONSTANTIA Oh my soul.
DONOBERT Hear her no more *Constantia*,
She's sure bewitcht with Error, leave her Girl.
CONSTANTIA Then must I leave all goodness sir: away,
Stand off, I say.
DONOBERT How's this?
CONSTANTIA I have no father, friend, no husband now,
All are but borrowed robes, in which we masque
To waste and spend the time, when all our Life
Is but one good betwixt two Ague-days,
Which from the first, e're we have time to praise, 120
A second Fever takes us: Oh my best sister,
My souls eternal friend, forgive the rashness
Of my distemper'd tongue, for how could she
Knew not her self, know thy felicity,
From which worlds cannot now remove me.
DONOBERT Art thou mad too, fond woman? what's thy meaning?
CONSTANTIA To seek eternal happiness in heaven,
Which all this world affords not.
CADOR Think of thy Vow, thou art my promis'd Wife.
CONSTANTIA Pray trouble me no further.
OMNES Strange alteration! 130
CADOR Why do you stand at gaze, you sacred Priests?
You holy men be equal to the Gods,
And consummate my Marriage with this woman.
BISHOP Her self gives barr my Lord, to your desires,

And our performance; 'tis against the Law
And Orders of the Church to force a Marriage.
CADOR How am I wrong'd! was this your trick, my Lord?
DONOBERT I am abus'd past sufferance;
Grief and amazement strive which Sense of mine
Shall loose her being first; yet let me call thee Daughter. 140
CADOR Me, Wife.
CONSTANTIA Your words are air, you speak of want, to wealth,
And wish her sickness, newly rais'd to health.
DONOBERT Bewitched Girls, tempt not an old mans fury,
That hath no strength to uphold his feeble age,
But what your sights give life to, oh beware,
And do not make me curse you.
MODESTA Dear father, (*Kneel.*)
Here at your feet we kneel, grant us but this,
That in your sight and hearing the good Hermit
May plead our Cause; which if it shall not give 150
Such satisfaction as your Age desires,
We will submit to you.
CONSTANTIA You gave us life,
Save not our bodies, but our souls from death.
DONOBERT This gives some comfort yet: Rise with my blessings.
Have patience, noble *Cador*, worthy *Edwin*,
Send for the Hermit that we may confer,
For sure | Religion tyes you not to leave [E1]
Your careful Father thus; if so it be,
Take you content, and give all grief to me. *Exeunt.*

[III.iii] *Thunder and Lightning. Enter Devil.*

DEVIL Mix light and darkness, earth and heaven dissolve,
Be of one piece agen, and turn to *Chaos*,
Break all your works you powers, and spoil the world,
Or if you will maintain earth still, give way
And life to this abortive birth now coming,
Whose fame shall add unto your Oracles.
Lucina, *Hecate*, dreadful Queen of Night,
Bright *Proserpine*, be pleas'd for *Ceres* love,
From *Stigian* darkness, summon up the Fates,
And in a moment bring them quickly hither, 10
Lest death do vent her birth and her together, *Thunder.*
Assist you spirits of infernal deeps,
Squint ey'd *Erictho*, midnight *Incubus*.

Enter Lucina, and the three Fates.

Rise, rise to aid this birth prodigious.
Thanks *Hecate*, hail sister to the Gods,
There lies your way, haste with the Fates, and help,
Give quick dispatch unto her laboring throws,
To bring this mixture of infernal seed,
To humane being, *Exit Fates [and Lucina].*
And to beguil her pains, till back you come, 20
Anticks shall dance and Musick fill the room. *Dance.*

[Enter Lucina.]

DEVIL Thanks Queen of Shades.
LUCINA Farewel, great servant to th'infernal King,
In honor of this childe, the Fates shall bring
All their assisting powers of Knowledge, Arts,
Learning, Wisdom, all the hidden parts
Of all-admiring Prophecy, to fore-see
The event of times to come, his Art shall stand
A wall of brass to guard the *Brittain* Land,
Even from this minute, all his Arts appears, 30
Manlike in Judgement, Person, State, and years,
Upon his brest the Fates have fixt his name,
And since his birth place was this forrest here,
They now have nam'd him *Merlin Silvester.*
DEVIL And *Merlins* name in *Brittany* shall live,
Whilst men inhabit here, or Fates can give
Power to amazing wonder, envy shall weep,
And mischief sit and shake her ebbone wings, [E1v]
Whilst all the world of *Merlins* magick sings. *Exit.*

[III.iv] *Enter Clown.*

CLOWN Well, I wonder how my poor sister does, after all this thundering, I think she's dead, for I can hear no tidings of her, those woods yields small comfort for her, I could meet nothing but a swinherds wife, keeping hogs by the Forestside, but neither she nor none of her sowes would stir a foot to help us; indeed I think she durst not trust her self amongst the trees with me, for I must needs confess I offer'd some kindness to her; well, I would fain know what's become of my sister, if she have brought me a yong Cousin, his face may be a picture to finde his Father by, so ho, sister *Joan*, *Joan Go-too't*, where art thou?
JOAN (*within*) Here, here brother, stay but a while, I come to thee. 10

CLOWN O brave, she's alive still, I know her voice, she speaks, and speaks cherfully methinks, how now, what Moon-calf has she got with her?

Enter Joan and Merlin with a Book.

JOAN Come my dear *Merlin*, why dost thou fix thine eye
So deeply on that book?
MERLIN To sound the depth
Of Arts, of Learning, Wisdom, Knowledge.
JOAN Oh my dear, dear son,
Those studies fits thee when thou art a man.
MERLIN Why mother, I can be but half a man at best,
And that is your mortality, the rest
In me is spirit, 'tis not meat, nor time, 20
That gives this growth and bigness, no, my years
Shall be more strange then yet my birth appears,
Look mother, there's my Uncle.
JOAN How doest thou know him son, thou never saw'st him?
MERLIN Yet I know him, and know the pains he has taken for ye, to finde out my Father, give me your hand, good Uncle.
CLOWN Ha, ha, I'de laugh at that yfaith, do you know me sir?
MERLIN Yes, by the same token that even now you kist the swinherds-wife 'ith'woods, and would have done more, if she would have let you, Uncle. 30
CLOWN A witch, a witch, a witch, sister: rid him out of your company, he is either a witch or a conjurer, he could never have known this else.
JOAN Pray love him brother, he is my son.
CLOWN Ha, ha, this is worse then all the rest yfaith, by his beard he is more like your husband: let me see, is your great belly gone?
JOAN Yes, and this the happy fruit. [E2]
CLOWN What, this Hartichoke? A Childe born with a beard on his face?
MERLIN Yes, and strong legs to go, and teeth to eat.
CLOWN You can nurse up your self then? There's some charges sav'd for Soap and Candle, 'slid I have heard of some that has been born with teeth, 40 but never none with such a talking tongue before!
JOAN Come, come, you must use him kindly brother,
Did you but know his worth, you would make much of him.
CLOWN Make much of a Moncky? This is worse then *Tom Thumb*, that let a fart in his Mothers belly, a Childe to speak, eat, and go the first hour of his birth, nay, such a Baby as had need of a Barber before he was born too; why sister this is monstrous, and shames all our kindred.

JOAN That thus 'gainst nature and our common births,
He comes thus furnisht to salute the world,
Is power of Fates, and gift of his great father. 50
CLOWN Why, of what profession is your father sir?
MERLIN He keeps a Hot-house 'ith'Low Countries, will you see him sir?
CLOWN See him, why sister has the childe found his father?
MERLIN Yes, and Ile fetch him Uncle. *Exit.*
CLOWN Do not Uncle me, till I know your kindred, for my conscience some Baboon begot thee, surely thou art horribly deceived sister, this Urchin cannot be of thy breeding, I shall be asham'd to call him cousin, though his father be a Gentleman.

Enter Merlin and Devil.

MERLIN Now my kinde Uncle see,
The Childe has found his Father, this is he. 60
CLOWN The devil it is, ha, ha, is this your sweet-heart sister? have we run through the Countrey, haunted the City, and examin'd the Court to finde out a Gallant with a Hat and Feather, and a silken Sword, and golden Hangers, and do you now bring me to a Ragamuffin with a face like a Frying-pan?
JOAN Fie brother, you mistake, behold him better.
CLOWN How's this? do you juggle with me, or are mine eyes matches? Hat and Feather, Sword, and Hangers and all, this is a Gallant indeed sister, this has all the marks of him we look for.
DEVIL And you have found him now sir:
Give me your hand, I now must call you brother. 70
CLOWN Not till you have married my sister, for all this while she's but your whore, sir.
DEVIL Thou art too plain, Ile satisfie that wrong
To her, and thee, and all, with liberal hand:
Come, why art thou fearful? [E2v]
CLOWN Nay I am not afraid, and you were the devil, sir.
DEVIL Thou needst not, keep with thy sister still,
And Ile supply your wants, you shall lack nothing
That gold and wealth can purchase.
CLOWN Thank you brother, we have gone many a weary step to finde you; you may be a husband for a Lady, for you are far fetcht and dear bought, I assure you: Pray how should I call your son, my cousin here? 80
DEVIL His name is *Merlin*.
CLOWN *Merlin*! Your hand, cousin *Merlin*, for your fathers sake I accept you to my kindred: if you grow in all things as your Beard does, you will be talkt on. By your Mothers side cousin, you come of the *Go-too'ts*, *Suffolk* bred, but our standing house is at *Hocklye i'th Hole*, and *Layton-buzzard*.

For your father, no doubt you may from him claim Titles of Worship, but I cannot describe it; I think his Ancestors came first from *Hell-bree* in *Wales*, cousin. 90

DEVIL No matter whence we do derive our Name,
All *Brittany* shall ring of *Merlin*'s fame,
And wonder at his acts. Go hence to *Wales*,
There live a while, there *Vortiger* the King
Builds Castles and strong Holds, which cannot stand
Unless supported by yong *Merlins* hand.
There shall thy fame begin, Wars are a breeding.
The Saxons practise Treason, yet unseen,
Which shortly shall break out: Fair Love, farewel,
Dear son and brother, here must I leave you all, 100
Yet still I will be near at *Merlins* call. *Exit.*

MERLIN Will you go Uncle?

CLOWN Yes, Ile follow you, cousin: [*Exeunt Merlin and Joan.*] well, I do most horribly begin to suspect my kindred; this brother in law of mine is the Devil sure, and though he hide his horns with his Hat and Feather, I spi'd his cloven foot for all his cunning. *Exit.*

[III.v] *Enter Ostorius, Octa, and Proximus.*

OSTORIUS Come, come, time calls our close Complots to action:
Go *Proximus*, with winged speed flie hence,
Hye thee to *Wales*, salute great *Vortiger*
With these our Letters, bid the King to arms,
Tell him we have new friends, more Forces landed
In *Norfolk* and *Northumberland*, bid him
Make haste to meet us; if he keep his word,
Wee'l part the Realm between us.

OCTA Bend all thine Art to quit that late disgrace
The Christian Hermit gave thee, make thy | revenge [E3] 10
Both sure and home.

PROXIMUS That thought sir, spurs me on,
Till I have wrought their swift destruction. *Exit.*

OSTORIUS Go then, and prosper. *Octa*, be vigilant:
Speak, are the Forts possest? the Guards made sure?
Revolve I pray on how large consequence
The bare event and sequel of our hopes
Joyntly consists, that have embark't our lives
Upon the hazzard of the least miscarriage.

OCTA All's sure, the Queen your sister hath contrived

The cunning Plot so sure, as at an instant 20
The Brothers shall be both surpriz'd and taken.
OSTORIUS And both shall die, yet one a while must live,
Till we by him have gather'd strength and power
To meet bold *Edol* their stern General,
That now contrary to the Kings command,
Hath re-united all his cashier'd Troops,
And this way beats his drums to threaten us.
OCTA Then our Plot's discover'd.
OSTORIUS Come, th'art a fool, his Army and his life
Is given unto us: where is the Queen, my sister? 30
OCTA In conference with the Prince.
OSTORIUS Bring the Guards nearer, all is fair and good,
Their Conference I hope shall end in blood. *Exeunt.*

[III.vi] *Enter Prince and Artesia.*

ARTESIA Come, come, you do but flatter,
What you term Love, is but a Dream of blood,
Wakes with enjoying, and with open eyes
Forgot, contemn'd, and lost.
PRINCE [*aside*] I must be wary, her words are dangerous.—
True, we'l speak of Love no more then.
ARTESIA Nay, if you will you may,
'Tis but in jest, and yet so children play
With fiery flames, and covet what is bright,
But feeling his effects, abhor the light. 10
Pleasure is like a Building, the more high,
The narrower still it grows, Cedars do dye
Soonest at top.
PRINCE How does your instance suit?
ARTESIA From Art and Nature to make sure the root,
And lay a fast foundation, e're I try
The incertain Changes of a wavering Skie.
Make your example thus. ——— You have a kiss. ——— [*Kisses him.*]
Was it not pleasing?
PRINCE Above all name to express it.
ARTESIA Yet now the pleasure's gone,
And you have lost your joys possession. 20
PRINCE Yet when you please this flood may ebb again.
ARTESIA But where it never ebbs, there runs the main. [E3v]
PRINCE Who can attain such hopes?

ARTESIA Ile show the way to it, give me a taste once more
Of what you may enjoy. *Kiss.*
PRINCE [*aside*] Impudent whore!—
I were more false than Atheism can be,
Should I not call this high felicity.
ARTESIA If I should trust your faith, alas I fear
You soon would change belief.
PRINCE I would covet Martyrdom to make't confirm'd. 30
ARTESIA Give me your hand on that, you'l keep your word?
PRINCE I will.
ARTESIA Enough: Help husband, king *Aurelius*, help,
Rescue betraid *Artesia*.
PRINCE Nay then 'tis I that am betraid I see,
Yet with thy blood Ile end thy Treachery.
ARTESIA How now! what troubles you? Is this you sir,
That but even now would suffer Martyrdom
To win your hopes, and is there now such terror
In names of men to fright you? nay then I see 40
What mettle you are made on.
PRINCE Ha! was it but tryal? then I ask your pardon:
What a dull slave was I to be so fearful?
[*aside*] Ile trust her now no more, yet try the utmost.—
I am resolved, no brother, no man breathing,
Were he my bloods begetter, should withhold
Me from your love, I'd leap into his bosom,
And from his brest pull forth that happiness
Heaven had reserved in you for my enjoying.
ARTESIA I now you speak a Lover like a Prince: 50
Treason, treason.
PRINCE Agen.
ARTESIA Help Saxon Princes: Treason.

Enter Ostorius, Octa, etc.

OSTORIUS Rescue the Queen: strike down the Villain.

Enter Edoll, Aurelius, Donobert, Cador, Edwin, Toclio, Oswold, [Gloster,] at the other Door.

EDOL Call in the Guards: the Prince in danger!
Fall back dear Sir, my brest shall buckler you.
AURELIUS Beat down their weapons.
EDOL Slave, wert thou made of brass, my sword shall bite thee.
AURELIUS Withdraw on pain of death: where is the Traitor?

ARTESIA Oh save your life, my Lord, let it suffice
My beauty forc't mine own captivity.
AURELIUS Who did attempt to wrong thee?
PRINCE Hear me, Sir. 60
AURELIUS Oh my sad soul! was't thou?
ARTESIA Oh do not stand to speak, one minutes stay
Prevents a second speech for ever.
AURELIUS Make our Guards strong:
My dear *Artesia*, let us know thy wrongs,
And our own dangers.
ARTESIA The Prince your brother, with these Brittain Lords,
Have all agreed to take me hence by force,
And marry | me to him. [E4]
PRINCE The Devil shall wed thee first: 70
Thy baseness and thy lust confound and rot thee.
ARTESIA He courted me even now, and in mine ear
Sham'd not to plead his most dishonest love,
And their attempts to seize your sacred person,
Either to shut you up within some prison,
Or which is worse, I fear to murther you.
OMNES BRITTAINS 'Tis all as false as hell.
EDOL And as foul as she is.
ARTESIA You know me, Sir?
EDOL Yes, Deadly Sin, we know you,
And shall discover all your villany.
AURELIUS *Chester* forbear.
OSTORIUS Their treasons sir, are plain: 80
Why are their Souldiers lodg'd so near the Court?
OCTA Nay, why came he in arms so suddenly?
EDOL You fleering Anticks, do not wake my fury.
OCTA Fury!
EDOL Ratsbane, do not urge me.
ARTESIA Good sir, keep farther from them.
PRINCE Oh my sick heart,
She is a witch by nature, devil by art.
AURELIUS Bite thine own slanderous tongue, 'tis thou art false,
I have observ'd your passions long ere this.
OSTORIUS Stand on your guard, my Lord, we are your friends, 90
And all our Force is yours.
EDOL To spoil and rob the Kingdom.
AURELIUS Sir, be silent.
EDOL Silent! how long? till Doomsday? shall I stand by,

And hear mine Honor blasted with foul Treason,
The State half lost, and your life endanger'd,
Yet be silent?
ARTESIA Yes, my blunt Lord, unless you speak your Treasons.
Sir, let your Guards, as Traitors, seize them all,
And then let tortures and devulsive racks,
Force a Confession from them. 100
EDOL Wilde-fire and Brimstone eat thee. Hear me sir.
AURELIUS Sir, Ile not hear you.
EDOL But you shall: Not hear me!
Were the worlds Monarch, *Cesar*, living, he should hear me.
I tell you Sir, these serpents have betraid
Your Life and Kingdom: does not every day
Bring tidings of more swarms of lowsie slaves,
The offal fugitives of barren *Germany*,
That land upon our Coasts, and by our neglect
Settled in *Norfolk* and *Northumberland*?
OSTORIUS They come as Aids and Safeguards to the King. 110
OCTA Has he not need, when *Vortiger*'s in arms,
And you raise Powers, 'tis thought, to joyn with him?
EDOL Peace, you pernicious Rat.
DONOBERT Prithee forbear.
EDOL Away, suffer a gilded rascal,
A low-bred despicable creeper, an insulting Toad,
To spit his poison'd venome in my face!
OCTA Sir, sir. [E4v]
EDOL Do not reply, you Cur, for by the Gods,
Tho' the Kings presence guard thee, I shall break all patience,
And like a Lion rous'd to spoil, shall run 120
Foul-mouth'd upon thee, and devour thee quick.
Speak sir, will you forsake these scorpions,
Or stay till they have stung you to the heart?
AURELIUS Y'are traitors all, this is our wife, our Queen:
Brother *Ostorius*, troop your *Saxons* up,
We'l hence to *Winchester*, raise more powers,
To man with strength the Castle *Camilot*:
Go hence false men, joyn you with *Vortiger*,
The murderer of our brother *Constantine*:
We'l hunt both him and you with dreadful vengance, 130
Since *Brittain* fails, we'l trust to forrain friends,
And guard our person from your traitorous ends.
Exeunt Aurelius, Ostorius, Octa, Artesia, Toclio, Oswold.

EDWIN He's sure bewitch.
GLOSTER What counsel now for safety?
DONOBERT Onely this sir, with all the speed we can,
Preserve the person of the King and Kingdom.
CADOR Which to effect, 'tis best march hence to *Wales*,
And set on *Vortiger* before he joyn
His Forces with the *Saxons*.
EDWIN On then with speed for *Wales* and *Vortiger*,
That tempest once o'reblown, we come *Ostorius* 140
To meet thy traiterous *Saxons*, thee and them,
That with advantage thus have won the King,
To back your factions, and to work our ruines.
This by the Gods and my good Sword, I'le set
In bloody lines upon thy Burgonet. *Exeunt.*

IV.i

ACT. 4. SCENE. I.

Enter Clown, Merlin, and a little antick Spirit.

MERLIN How now Uncle, why do you search your pockets so? do you miss any thing?
CLOWN Ha, Cousin *Merlin*, I hope your beard does not overgrow your honesty, I pray remember you are made up of sisters thread, I am your mothers brother, whosoever was your father.
MERLIN Why, wherein can you task my duty, Uncle?
CLOWN Your self, or your page it must be, I have kept no other company, since your mother bound your head to my Protectorship, I do feel a fault of one side, either it was that Sparrowhawk, or a Cast of *Merlins*, for I finde a Covy | of Cardecu's sprung out of my pocket. [F1] 10
MERLIN Why, do you want any money Uncle? sirrah, had you any from him?
CLOWN Deny it not, for my pockets are witness against you.
SPIRIT Yes I had, to teach you better wit to look to it.
CLOWN Pray use your fingers better, and my wit may serve as it is sir.
MERLIN Well, restore it.
SPIRIT There it is.
CLOWN I, there's some honesty in this, 'twas a token from your invisible Father Cousin, which I would not have to go invisibly from me agen.
MERLIN Well, you are sure you have it now Uncle? 20
CLOWN Yes, and mean to keep it now, from your pages filching fingers too.
SPIRIT If you have it so sure, pray show it me agen.

CLOWN Yes, my little juggler, I dare show it, ha, cleanly conveyance agen, ye have no invisible fingers have ye? 'Tis gone certainly.

SPIRIT Why sir, I toucht you not.

MERLIN Why look you Uncle, I have it now, how ill do you look to it? here keep it safer.

CLOWN Ha, ha, this is fine yfaith, I must keep some other company if you have these slights of hand. 30

MERLIN Come, come, Uncle, 'tis all my Art which shall not offend you sir, onely I give you a taste of it, to show you sport.

CLOWN Oh, but 'tis ill jesting with a mans pocket tho' —— but I am glad to see you cunning Cousin, for now will I warrant thee a living till thou diest. You have heard the news in *Wales* here?

MERLIN Uncle, let me prevent your care and counsel,
'Twill give you better knowledge of my cunning,
You would prefer me now in hope of gain,
To *Vortiger* King of the Welch *Brittains*,
To whom are all the Artists summon'd now, 40
That seeks the secrets of futurity,
The Bards, the Druids, Wizards, Conjurers,
Not an Aurasper with his Whisling spells,
No Capnomanster with his musty fumes,
No Witch or Juggler, but is thither sent,
To calculate the strange and fear'd event
Of his prodigious Castle now in building,
Where all the labors of the painful day,
Are ruin'd still i'th'night, and to this place
You would have me go. 50

CLOWN Well, if thy mother were not my sister, I would say she was a witch that begot thee; but this is thy father, not thy mother wit, thou hast taken my tale into thy mouth, and spake my thoughts before me; therefore away, shuffle thy self amongst the Conjurers, and be a made man before thou comest to age.

MERLIN Nay, but stay Uncle, you overslip my dangers: [F1v]
The Prophecies and all the cunning Wizards,
Have certifi'd the King, that this his Castle
Can never stand, till the foundation's laid
With Mortar temper'd with the fatal blood 60
Of such a childe, whose father was no mortal.

CLOWN What's this to thee? If the devil were thy father, was not thy mother born at *Carmarden*? Diggon for that then, and then it must be a childes blood, and who will take thee for a childe with such a beard of thy face? Is there not diggon for that too Cousin?

MERLIN I must not go, lend me your ear a while,
I'le give you reasons to the contrary.

Enter two Gentlemen.

1 GENTLEMAN Sure this is an endless piece of work the King has sent us about!

2 GENTLEMAN Kings may do it, man, the like has been done to finde out the Unicorn. 70

1 GENTLEMAN Which will be sooner found I think, then this fien'd begotten childe we seek for.

2 GENTLEMAN Pox of those Conjurers that would speak of such a one, and yet all their cunning could not tell us where to finde him.

1 GENTLEMAN In *Wales* they say assuredly he lives, come let's enquire further.

MERLIN Uncle, your perswasions must not prevail with me, I know mine enemies better then you do.

CLOWN I say th'art a bastard then if thou disobey thine Uncle, was not 80 *Joan Go-too't* thy mother, my sister? if the devil were thy father, what kin art thou to any man alive, but Bailys and Brokers? and they are but brothers in Law to thee neither.

1 GENTLEMAN How's this, I think we shall speed here.

2 GENTLEMAN I, and unlook't for too, go ne're and listen to them.

CLOWN Hast thou a beard to hide it, wil't thou show thy self a childe, wil't thou have more hair then wit? Wil't thou deny thy mother, because no body knows thy father? Or shall thine Uncle be an ass?

1 GENTLEMAN Bless ye friend, pray what call you this small Gentlemans name? 90

CLOWN Small, sir, a small man may be a great Gentleman, his father may be of an ancient house, for ought we know sir.

2 GENTLEMAN Why? do you not know his father?

CLOWN No, nor you neither I think, unless the devil be in ye.

1 GENTLEMAN What is his name sir?

CLOWN His name is my Cousin sir, his education is my sisters son, but his maners are his own.

MERLIN Why ask ye Gentlemen? my name is *Merlin*.

CLOWN Yes, and a Goshawk was his father, for ought we know, for I am sure his mother was a Windfucker. 100

2 GENTLEMAN He has a mother then?

CLOWN As sure | as I have a sister, sir. [F2]

1 GENTLEMAN But his father you leave doubtful.

CLOWN Well Sir, as wise men as you, doubt whether he had a father or no?

1 GENTLEMAN Sure this is he we seek for.
2 GENTLEMAN I think no less: and sir, we let you know
The King hath sent for you.
CLOWN The more childe he, and he had bin rul'd by me, he should have gone before he was sent for. 110
1 GENTLEMAN May we not see his mother?
CLOWN Yes, and feel her too if you anger her, a devilish thing I can tell ye she has been, Ile go fetch her to ye. *Exit.*
2 GENTLEMAN Sir, it were fit you did resolve for speed,
You must unto the King.
MERLIN My Service sir,
Shall need no strict command, it shall obey
Most peaceably, but needless 'tis to fetch
What is brought home, my journey may be staid,
The King is coming hither
With the same quest you bore before him, hark, 120
This drum will tell ye. *Within Drums beat a low March.*
1 GENTLEMAN This is some cunning indeed sir.

Florish. Enter Vortiger reading a letter, Proximus, with Drum and Soldiers, etc.

VORTIGER Still in our eye your message *Proximus*,
We keep to spur our speed:
Ostorius, and *Octa*, we shall salute
With succor against Prince *Uter* and *Aurelius*,
Whom now we hear incamps at *Winchester*,
There's nothing interrupts our way so much,
As doth the erection of this fatal Castle,
That spite of all our Art and daily labor, 130
The night still ruines.
PROXIMUS As erst I did affirm, still I maintain,
The fien'd begotten childe must be found out,
Whose blood gives strength to the foundation,
It cannot stand else.

Enter Clown, and Joan, [joining] Merlin.

VORTIGER Ha! I'st so?
Then *Proximus* by this intelligence
He should be found: speak, is this he you tell of?
CLOWN Yes Sir, and I his Uncle, and she his mother.
VORTIGER And who is his father? 140
CLOWN Why, she his mother can best tell you that, and yet I think the childe be wise enough, for he has found his father.

VORTIGER Woman, is this thy son?
JOAN It is, my Lord.
VORTIGER What was his father? Or where lives he?
MERLIN Mother speak freely and unastonisht,
That which you dar'd to act, dread not to name.
JOAN In which I shall betray my sin and shame,
But since it must be so, then know great King,
All that my self yet | knows of him, is this: [F2v]
In pride of blood and beauty I did live, 150
My glass the Altar was, my face the Idol,
Such was my peevish love unto my self,
That I did hate all other, such disdain
Was in my scornful eye, that I suppos'd
No mortal creature worthy to enjoy me,
Thus with the Peacock I beheld my train,
But never saw the blackness of my feet,
Oft have I chid the winds for breathing on me,
And curst the Sun, fearing to blast my beauty,
In midst of this most leaprous disease, 160
A seeming fair yong man appear'd unto me,
In all things suiting my aspiring pride,
And with him brought along a conquering power,
To which my frailty yielded, from whose embraces
This issue came, what more he is, I know not.
VORTIGER Some *Incubus*, or Spirit of the night
Begot him then, for sure no mortal did it.
MERLIN No matter who my Lord, leave further quest,
Since 'tis as hurtful as unnecessary
More to enquire: Go to the cause my Lord, 170
Why you have sought me thus?
VORTIGER I doubt not but thou knowst, yet to be plain,
I sought thee for thy blood.
MERLIN By whose direction?
PROXIMUS By mine,
My Art infalable instructed me,
Upon thy blood must the foundation rise
Of the Kings building, it cannot stand else.
MERLIN Hast thou such leisure to enquire my Fate,
And let thine own hang careless over thee?
Knowst thou what pendelous mischief roofs thy head, 180
How fatal, and how sudden?
PROXIMUS Pish, bearded abortive, thou foretel my danger!
My Lord, he trifles to delay his own.

MERLIN No, I yield my self: and here before the King,
Make good thine Augury, as I shall mine,
If thy fate fall not, thou hast spoke all truth,
And let my blood satisfie the Kings desires:
If thou thy self wilt write thine Epitaph,
Dispatch it quickly, there's not a minutes time
'Twixt thee and thy death. 190

PROXIMUS Ha, ha, ha. *A stone falls and kills Proximus.*

MERLIN I, so, thou mayest die laughing.

VORTIGER Ha! This is above admiration, look, is he dead?

CLOWN Yes sir, here's brains to make morter on, if you'l use them: Cousin *Merlin*, there's no more of this stone fruit ready to fall, is there? I pray give your Uncle a little fair warning.

MERLIN Remove that shape of death, and now my Lord
For clear satisfaction of your doubts,
Merlin will show the fatal cause that keeps
Your Castle down, and hinders your proceedings: 200
Stand there, and by an apparition see
The labor and end of all your destiny. [F3]
Mother and Uncle, you must be absent.

CLOWN Is your father coming Cousin?

MERLIN Nay, you must be gone.

JOAN Come, you'l offend him brother.

CLOWN I would fain see my Brother i'law, if you were married I might lawfully call him so. [*Exeunt Clown and Joan.*]

Merlin strikes his wand. Thunder and Lightning, two Dragons appear, a White and a Red, they fight a while and pause.

VORTIGER What means this stay?

MERLIN Be not amaz'd my lord, for on the victory 210
Of loss or gain, as these two Champions ends
Your fate, your life, and kingdom all depends,
Therefore observe it well.

VORTIGER I shall, heaven be auspicious to us.

Thunder: The two Dragons fight agen, and the White Dragon drives off the Red.

VORTIGER The conquest is on the white Dragons part,
Now *Merlin* faithfully expound the meaning.

MERLIN Your Grace must then not be offended with me.

VORTIGER It is the weakest part I found in thee,
To doubt of me so slightly, shall I blame
My prophet that foretells me of my dangers? 220
Thy cunning I approve most excellent.

MERLIN Then know my Lord, there is a dampish Cave,
The nightly habitation of these Dragons,
Vaulted beneath where you would build your Castle,
Whose enmity and nightly combats there,
Maintain a constant ruine of your labors:
To make it more plain, the Dragons then
Your self betoken, and the *Saxon* King:
The vanquisht Red, is sir, your dreadful Emblem.
VORTIGER Oh my fate! 230
MERLIN Nay, you must hear with patience Royal sir,
You slew the lawful King *Constantius*,
'Twas a red deed, your Crown his blood did cement,
The English *Saxon* first brought in by you,
For aid against *Constantius* brethren,
Is the white horror who now knit together,
Have driven and shut you up in these wilde mountains,
And though they now seek to unite with friendship,
It is to wound your bosom, not embrace it,
And with an utter extirpation 240
To rout the *Brittains* out, and plant the English.
Seek for your safety Sir, and spend no time
To build the airy Castles, for Prince *Uter*
Armed with vengeance for his brothers blood
Is hard upon you, if you mistrust me,
And to my words craves witness sir, then know
Here comes a messenger to tell you so. *Exit Merlin.* [F3v]

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER My Lord! Prince *Uter*!
VORTIGER And who else sir?
MESSENGER *Edol*, the great General. 250
VORTIGER The great Devil, they are coming to meet us.
MESSENGER With a full power my Lord.
VORTIGER With a full vengeance
They mean to meet us, so we are ready
To their confront as full march double footing,
We'l loose no ground, nor shall their numbers fright us,
If it be Fate, it cannot be withstood,
We got our Crown so, be it lost in blood. *Exeunt.*

[IV.ii]

Enter Prince Uter, Edol, Cador, Edwin, Toclio, with Drum and Soldiers.

PRINCE Stay, and advice, hold drum.
EDOL Beat slave, why do you pause?
Why make a stand? where are our enemies?
Or do you mean we fight amongst our selves?
PRINCE Nay, noble *Edol*,
Let us here take counsel, it cannot hurt,
It is the surest Garison to safety.
EDOL Fie on such slow delays! so fearful men
That are to pass over a flowing river,
Stand on the bank to parly of the danger, 10
Till the tide rise and they be swallowed,
Is not the King in field?
CADOR Proud *Vortiger*, the Trator is in field.
EDWIN The Murderer, and Usurper.
EDOL Let him be the devil so I may fight with him,
For heavens love sir march on, oh my patience,
Will you delay untill the *Saxons* come
To aid his party?
PRINCE There's no such fear, prithee be calm a while, *A Tucket.*
Hark, it seems by this, he comes or sends to us. 20
EDOL If it be for parly, I will drown the summons,
If all our drums and hoarseness choke me not.

Enter Captain.

PRINCE Nay, prithee hear, from whence art thou?
CAPTAIN From the King *Vortiger*.
EDOL Traitor, there's none such: Alarum drum, strike slave,
Or by mine honor I will break thy head,
And beat thy drums heads both about thine ears.
PRINCE Hold noble *Edol*,
Let's hear what Articles he can inforce.
EDOL What articles, or what conditions 30
Can you expect to value half your wrong,
Unless he kill himself by thousand tortures,
And send his carcase to appease your vengeance,
For the foul murder of *Constantius*,
And that's not a tenth part neither.
PRINCE 'Tis true,
My brothers blood is crying to me now,
I do applaud thy counsel: hence, be gone. *Exit Captain.*
We'l hear no parly now but by our swords. [F4]
EDOL And those shall speak home in death killing words, 40
Alarum to the fight, sound, sound the Alarum. *Exeunt.*

[IV.iii]

Alarum. Enter Edol driving all Vortigers Force before him, then Exit. Enter Prince Uter pursuing Vortiger.

VORTIGER Dost follow me?
PRINCE Yes, to thy death I will.
VORTIGER Stay, be advis'd,
I would not be the onely fall of Princes,
I slew thy brother.
PRINCE Thou didst black Traitor,
And in that vengeance I pursue thee.
VORTIGER Take mercy for thy self, and flie my sword,
Save thine own life as satisfaction,
Which here I give thee for thy brothers death.
PRINCE Give what's thine own: a Traitors heart and head,
That's all thou art right Lord of; the Kingdom 10
Which thou usurp'st, thou most unhappy Tyrant,
Is leaving thee, the Saxons which thou broughtst
To back thy usurpations, are grown great,
And where they seat themselves, do hourly seek
To blot the Records of old *Brute* and *Brittains*,
From memory of men, calling themselves
Hingest-men, and *Hingest-land*, that no more
The *Brittain* name be known; all this by thee,
Thou base destroyer of thy Native Countrey.

Enter Edol.

EDOL What, stand you talking? *Fight.* 20
PRINCE Hold *Edol.*
EDOL Hold out my sword,
And listen not to King or Princes word,
There's work enough abroad, this task is mine. *Alarum.*
PRINCE Prosper thy Valour, as thy Vertues shine. *Exeunt.*

[IV.iv] *Enter Cador and Edwin.*

CADOR Bright Victory her self fights on our part,
And buckled in a golden Beaver, rides
Triumphantly before us.
EDWIN Justice is with her,
Who ever takes the true and rightful cause,
Let us not lag behinde them.

Enter Prince.

CADOR Here comes the Prince, how goes our fortunes Sir?
PRINCE Hopeful, and fair, brave *Cador*,
Proud *Vortiger* beat down by *Edols* sword,
Was rescu'd by the following multitudes, 10
And now for safety's fled unto a Castle
Here standing on the hill: but I have sent
A cry of hounds as violent as hunger,
To break his stony walls, or if they fail,
We'l send in wilde fire to dislodge him thence,
Or burn them all with flaming violence. *Exeunt.*

[IV.v] *Blazing Star appears.*
Florish Tromp. Enter Prince Uter, Edol, Cador, Edwin, Toclio with Drum and Soldiers.

PRINCE Look *Edol*:
Still this fiery exalation shoots
His frightful horrors on th'amazed world,
See in the beam above his flaming ring,
A Dragons head appears, from out whose mouth
Two flaming flakes of fire, stretch East and West.
EDOL And see, from forth the body of the Star,
Seven smaller blazing streams, directly point
On this affrighted kingdom.
CADOR 'Tis a dreadful Meteor. 10
EDWIN And doth portend strange fears.
PRINCE This is no Crown of Peace, this angry fire
Hath something more to burn then *Vortiger*;
If it alone were pointed at his fall,
It would pull in his blasing Piramids,
And be appeas'd, for *Vortiger* is dead.
EDOL These never come without their large effects.
PRINCE The will of heaven be done, our sorrows this,
We want a mistick *Pithon* to expound
This fiery Oracle.
CADOR Oh no my Lord, 20
You have the best that ever *Brittain* bred,
And durst I prophecy of your Prophet sir,
None like him shall succeed him.
PRINCE You mean *Merlin*.
CADOR True sir, wonderous *Merlin*,
He met us in the way, and did foretell
The fortunes of this day successful to us.

EDWIN He's sure about the Camp, send for him sir.
CADOR He told the bloody *Vortiger* his fate,
And truely too, and if I could give faith
To any Wizards skill, it should be *Merlin*. 30

Enter Merlin and Clown.

CADOR And see my Lord,
As if to satisfie your Highness pleasure,
Merlin is come.
PRINCE See, the Comet's in his eye, disturb him not.
EDOL With what a piercing judgement he beholds it!
MERLIN Whither will Heaven and Fate translate this Kingdom?
What revolutions, rise and fall of Nations
Is figur'd yonder in that Star, that sings
The change of *Brittains* State, and death of Kings?
Ha! He's dead already, how swiftly mischief creeps! 40
Thy fatal end sweet Prince, even *Merlin* weeps.
PRINCE He does foresee some evil, his action shows it,
For e're he does expound, he weeps the story.
EDOL There's another weeps too. Sirrah dost thou understand what thou lamentst for?
CLOWN No sir, I am his Uncle, and weep because my Cousin weeps, flesh and blood cannot forbear.
PRINCE Gentle *Merlin*, speak thy prophetick knowledge,
In explanation of this fiery horror,
From which we gather from thy mournful tears, 50
Much sorrow | and disaster in it. [G1]
MERLIN 'Tis true fair Prince,
But you must hear the rest with patience.
PRINCE I vow I will, tho' it portend my ruine.
MERLIN There's no such fear,
This brought the fiery fall of *Vortiger*,
And yet not him alone, this day is faln
A King more good, the glory of our Land,
The milde, and gentle, sweet *Aurelius*.
PRINCE Our brother! 60
EDWIN Forefend it heaven.
MERLIN He at his Palace, Royal sir,
At *Winchester*, this day is dead and poison'd.
CADOR By whom? Or what means *Merlin*?
MERLIN By the Traiterous Saxons.

EDOL I ever fear'd as much: that devil *Ostorius*,
And the damn'd witch *Artesia*, sure has done it.
PRINCE Poison'd! oh look further gentle *Merlin*,
Behold the Star agen, and do but finde
Revenge for me, though it cost thousand lives, 70
And mine the foremost.
MERLIN Comfort your self, the heavens have given it fully,
All the portentious ills to you is told,
Now hear a happy story sir from me,
To you and to your fair posterity.
CLOWN Me thinks I see something like a peel'd Onion, it makes me weep agen.
MERLIN Be silent Uncle, you'l be forc't else.
CLOWN Can you not finde in the Star, Cousin, whether I can hold my tongue or no? 80
EDOL Yes, I must cut it out.
CLOWN Phu, you speak without book sir, my Cousin *Merlin* knows.
MERLIN True, I must tie it up, now speak your pleasure Uncle.
CLOWN Hum, hum, hum, hum.
MERLIN So, so ———
Now observe my Lord, and there behold
Above yon flame-hair'd beam that upward shoots,
Appears a Dragons head, out of whose mouth
Two streaming lights point their flame-feather'd darts
Contrary ways, yet both shall have their aims: 90
Again behold from the ignifirent body,
Seven splendant and illustrious rays are spred,
All speaking Heralds to this *Brittain* Isle,
And thus they are expounded: The Dragons head
Is the Herogliphick that figures out
Your Princely self, that here must reign a King,
Those by-form'd fires that from the Dragons mouth
Shoot East and West, emblem two Royal babes,
Which shall proceed from you, a son and daughter:
Her pointed constellation Northwest bending, 100
Crowns Her a Queen in *Ireland*, of whom first springs
That Kingdoms Title to the *Brittain* Kings.
CLOWN Hum, hum, hum.
MERLIN But of your Son, thus Fate and *Merlin* tells,
All after times shall fill their Chronicles
With fame of his renown, whose warlike sword
Shall pass through fertile *France* | and *Germany*, [G1v]

Nor shall his conquering foot be forc't to stand,
Till *Romes* Imperial Wreath hath crown'd his Fame
With Monarch of the West, from whose seven hills 110
With Conquest, and contributory Kings,
He back returns to inlarge the *Brittain* bounds,
His Heraldry adorn'd with thirteen Crowns.

CLOWN Hum, hum, hum.

MERLIN He to the world shall add another Worthy,
And as a Loadstone for his prowess, draw
A train of Marshal Lovers to his Court:
It shall be then the best of Knight-hoods honor,
At *Winchester* to fill his Castle Hall,
And at his Royal Table sit and feast 120
In warlike orders, all their arms round hurl'd,
As if they meant to circumscribe the world.

He touches the Clowns mouth with his wand.

CLOWN Hum, hum, hum, oh that I could speak a little.

MERLIN I know your mind Uncle, agen be silent. *Strikes agen.*

PRINCE Thou speakst of wonders *Merlin*, prithee go on,
Declare at full this Constellation.

MERLIN Those seven beams pointing downward, sir, betoken
The troubles of this Land, which then shall meet
With other Fate; War and Dissension strives
To make division, till seven Kings agree 130
To draw this Kingdom to a Hepterchy.

PRINCE Thine art hath made such proof, that we believe
Thy words authentical, be ever neer us,
My Prophet, and the Guide of all my actions.

MERLIN My service shall be faithful to your person,
And all my studies for my Countries safety.

CLOWN Hum, hum, hum.

MERLIN Come, you are releast, sir.

CLOWN Cousin, pray help me to get my tongue agen, you do not mean I shall be dumb still I hope? 140

MERLIN Why, hast thou not thy tongue?

CLOWN Ha! yes, I feel it now, I was so long dumb, I could not well tell whether I spake or no.

PRINCE I'st thy advice we presently pursue
The bloody *Saxons*, that have slain my brother?

MERLIN With your best speed, my Lord,
Prosperity will keep you company.

CADOR Take then your Title with you, Royal Prince,
'Twill adde unto our strength, *Long live King* Uter.
EDOL Put the Addition to't that Heaven hath given you: 150
The *DRAGON* is your Emblem, bear it bravely,
And so long live and ever happy styl'd
Uter-Pendragon, lawful King of *Brittain*.
PRINCE Thanks *Edol*, we imbrace the name and title,
And in our Sheild and Standard shall the figure
Of a Red Dragon still be born before us,
To fright the bloody Saxons. Oh my *Aurelius*,
Sweet rest thy soul; let thy disturbed spirit [G2]
Expect revenge, think what it would, it hath,
The Dragon's coming in his fiery wrath. *Exeunt.* 160

V.i ACT. 5. SCENE. 1.

Thunder, then Musick.
Enter Joan fearfully, the Devil following her.

JOAN Hence thou black horror, is thy lustful fire
Kindled agen? not thy loud throated thunder,
Nor thy adulterate infernal Musick,
Shall e're bewitch me more, oh too too much
Is past already.
DEVIL Why dost thou fly me?
I come a Lover to thee, to imbrace,
And gently twine thy body in mine arms.
JOAN Out thou Hell-hound.
DEVIL What hound so e're I be,
Fawning and sporting as I would with thee,
Why should I not be stroakt and plaid withal, 10
Will't thou not thank the Lion might devour thee,
If he shall let thee pass?
JOAN Yes, thou art he,
Free me, and Ile thank thee.
DEVIL Why, whither wouldst?
I am at home with thee, thou art mine own,
Have we not charge of family together,
Where is your son?
JOAN Oh darkness cover me.
DEVIL There is a pride which thou hast won by me,
The mother of a fame shall never die,

Kings shall have need of written Chronicles,
To keep their names alive, but *Merlin* none, 20
Ages to ages shall like *Cabalists*
Report the wonders of his name and glory,
While there are tongues and times to tell his story.
JOAN Oh rot my memory before my flesh,
Let him be called some hell or earth-bred monster,
That ne're had hapless woman for a mother:
Sweet death deliver me, hence from my sight,
Why shouldst thou now appear? I had no pride
Nor lustful thought about me, to conjure
And call thee to my ruine, when as at first 30
Thy cursed person became visible.
DEVIL I am the same I was.
JOAN But I am chang'd.
DEVIL Agen Ile change thee to the same thou wert,
Quench to my lust, come forth by thunder led,
My Coajutors in the spoils of mortals. *Thunder.* [G2v]

Enter Spirits.

Claspe in your Ebon arms that prize of mine,
Mount her as high as palled *Hecate*,
And on this rock Ile stand to cast up fumes
And darkness o're the blew fac'd firmament;
From *Brittain*, and from *Merlin*, Ile remove her, 40
They ne're shall meet agen.
JOAN Help me some saving hand,
If not too late, I cry let mercy come.

Enter Merlin.

MERLIN Stay you black slaves of night, let loose your hold,
Set her down safe, or by th'infernal Stix,
Ile binde you up with exorcisms so strong,
That all the black pentagoron of hell,
Shall ne're release you, save your selves and vanish. *Exeunt Spirits.*
DEVIL Ha! What's he?
MERLIN *The Childe has found his Father*,
Do you not know me? 50
DEVIL *Merlin*!
JOAN Oh, help me gentle son.
MERLIN Fear not, they shall not hurt you.

DEVIL Relievest thou her to disobey thy father?
MERLIN Obedience is no lesson in your school,
Nature and kind to her, commands my duty,
The part that you begot was against kinde,
So all I ow to you is to be unkind.
DEVIL Ile blast thee slave to death, and on this rock
Stick thee an eternal Monument. 60
MERLIN Ha, ha, thy powers too weak, what art thou devil,
But an inferior lustful *Incubus*,
Taking advantage of the wanton flesh,
Wherewith thou dost beguile the ignorant?
Put off the form of thy humanity,
And cral upon thy speckled belly, serpent,
Or Ile unclasp the jaws of *Achoron*,
And fix thee ever in the local fire.
DEVIL Traitor to hell; curse that I e're begot thee.
MERLIN Thou didst beget thy scourge, storm not, nor stir, 70
The power of *Merlins* Art is all confirm'd
In the Fates decretals, ——— Ile ransack hell,
And make thy masters bow unto my spells,
Thou first shall taste it, ———— (*Thunder and Lightning in the Rock*.)
Tenibrarum princeps, devitiarum, & infirorum, Deus, hunc Incubum in ignis eterni abisum, accipite aut in hoc carcere tenebroso, in sempeternum astringere mando. (*The Rock incloses him.*)
So, there beget earthquakes or some noisom damps,
For never shalt thou touch a woman more:
How chear you mother? 80
JOAN Oh now my son is my deliverer,
Yet must I name him with my deepest sorrow. *Alarum afar off.*
MERLIN Take comfort now, past times are ne're recal'd,
I did foresee your mischief and prevent it:
Hark, how the sounds | of war now call me hence [G3]
To aid *Pendragon*, that in battail stands
Against the Saxons, from whose aid
Merlin must not be absent: leave this soyl,
And Ile conduct you to a place retir'd,
Which I by art have rais'd, call'd *Merlins Bower*, 90
There shall you dwell with solitary sighs,
With grones and passions your companions,
To weep away this flesh you have offended with,
And leave all bare unto your aierial soul,
And when you die, I will erect a Monument

Upon the verdant Plains of *Salisbury*,
No King shall have so high a sepulchre,
With pendulous stones that I will hang by art,
Where neither Lime nor Morter shalbe us'd,
A dark *Enigma* to the memory, 100
For none shall have the power to number them,
A place that I will hallow for your rest,
Where no Night-hag shall walk, nor Ware-wolf tread,
Where *Merlins* Mother shall be sepulcher'd. *Exeunt.*

[V.ii] *Enter Donobert, Gloster and Hermit.*

DONOBERT Sincerely *Gloster*, I have told you all:
My Daughters are both vow'd to Single Life,
And this day gone unto the Nunnery,
Though I begot them to another end,
And fairly promis'd them in Marriage,
One to Earl *Cador*, t'other to your son,
My worthy friend, the Earl of *Gloster*.
Those lost, I am lost: they are lost, all's lost.
Answer me this then, ist a sin to marry?
HERMIT Oh no, my Lord. 10
DONOBERT Go to then, Ile go no further with you,
I perswade you to no ill, perswade you then
That I perswade you well.
GLOSTER 'Twill be a good Office in you, sir.

Enter Cador and Edwin.

DONOBERT Which since they thus neglect,
My memory shall lose them now for ever.
See, see the Noble Lords, their promis'd Husbands!
Had Fate so pleas'd, you might have call'd me Father.
EDWIN Those hopes are past, my Lord, for even this minute
We saw them both enter the Monastery, 20
Secluded from the world and men for ever.
CADOR 'Tis both our griefs we cannot, Sir:
But from the King take you the Times joy from us;
The Saxon King *Ostorius* slain, and *Octa* fled,
That Woman-fury, Queen *Artesia*,
Is fast in hold, and forc't to re-deliver
London and *Winchester* (which she had fortifi'd)
To Princely *Uter*, lately styl'd *Pendragon*,
Who now triumphantly is marching hither

To be invested with the *Brittain* Crown. [G3v]
DONOBERT The joy of this, shall banish from my breast 31
All thought that I was Father to two Children,
Two stubborn Daughters, that have left me thus:
Let my old arms embrace, and call you Sons;
For by the Honor of my Fathers House,
I'le part my estate most equally betwixt you.
EDWIN, CADOR Sir, y'are most noble!

Florish Tromp. Enter Edol with Drum and Colours, Oswold bearing the Standard, Toclio the Sheild, with the Red Dragon pictur'd in 'em, two Bishops with the Crown, Prince Uter, Merlin, Artesia bound, Guard and Clown.

PRINCE Set up our Sheild and Standard, noble Soldiers,
We have firm hope that tho' our Dragon sleep,
Merlin will us and our fair Kingdom keep. 40
CLOWN As his Uncle lives, I warrant you.
GLOSTER Happy Restorer of the *Brittains* fame,
Uprising Sun let us salute thy glory,
Ride in a day perpetual about us,
And no night be in thy thrones zodiack,
Why do we stay to binde those Princely browes
With this Imperial Honor?
PRINCE Stay noble *Gloster*,
That monster first must be expel'd our eye,
Or we shall take no joy in it.
DONOBERT If that be hindrance, give her quick Judgement, 50
And send her hence to death, she has long deserv'd it.
EDOL Let my Sentence stand for all, take her hence,
And stake her carcase in the burning Sun,
Till it be parcht and dry, and then fley off
Her wicked skin, and stuff the pelt with straw
To be shown up and down at Fairs and Markets,
Two pence a piece to see so foul a monster,
Will be a fair Monopoly and worth the begging.
ARTESIA Ha, ha, ha.
EDOL Dost laugh *Erictho*?
ARTESIA Yes, at thy poor invention, 60
Is there no better torture-monger?
DONOBERT Burn her to dust.
ARTESIA That's a *Phaenix* death, and glorious.

EDOL I, that's to good for her.
PRINCE Alive she shall be buried circled in a wall,
Thou murdress of a King, there starve to death.
ARTESIA Then Ile starve death when he comes for his prey,
And i'th'mean time Ile live upon your curses.
EDOL I, 'tis diet good enough, away with her.
ARTESIA With joy, my best of wishes is before, 70
Thy brother's poison'd, but I wanted more. *Exit.* [G4]
PRINCE Why does our Prophet *Merlin* stand apart,
Sadly observing these our Ceremonies,
And not applaud our joys with thy hid knowledge?
Let thy divining Art now satisfie
Some part of my desires; for well I know
'Tis in thy power to show the full event,
That shall both end our Reign and Chronicle:
Speak learned *Merlin*, and resolve my fears,
Whether by war we shall expel the Saxons, 80
Or govern what we hold with beauteous peace
In *Wales* and *Brittain*?
MERLIN Long happiness attend *Pendragons* Reign,
What Heaven decrees, fate hath no power to alter:
The Saxons, sir, will keep the ground they have,
And by supplying numbers still increase,
Till *Brittain* be no more. So please your Grace,
I will in visible apparitions,
Present you Prophecies which shall concern
Succeeding Princes, which my Art shall raise, 90
Till men shall call these times the latter days.
PRINCE Do it my *Merlin*,
And Crown me with much joy and wonder. *Merlin strikes.*

Hoeboys. Enter a King in Armour, his Sheild quarter'd with thirteen Crowns. At the other door enter divers Princes who present their Crowns to him at his feet, and do him homage, then enters Death and strikes him, he growing sick, Crowns Constantine.

Exeunt.

MERLIN This King, my Lord, presents your Royal Son,
Who in his prime of years shall be so fortunate,
That thirteen several Princes, shall present
Their several Crowns unto him, and all Kings else
Shall so admire his fame and victories,

That they shall all be glad
Either through fear or love, to do him homage; 100
But death (who neither favors the weak nor valliant)
In the middest of all his glories, soon shall seize him,
Scarcely permitting him to appoint one
In all his purchased Kingdoms to succeed him.
PRINCE Thanks to our Prophet
For this so wish'd for satisfaction,
And hereby now we learn that always Fate
Must be observ'd, what ever that decree,
All future times shall still record this Story,
Of *Merlin's* learned worth, and *Arthur's* glory. 110

Exeunt Omnes.

FINIS.

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Press Variants

Only one of the three variants in forme B, and one in forme D, appear to be the result of deliberate intention to correct. Others were probably caused by loose type.

Sheet B
Inner forme
B1^v (I.ii.121) of thy]
B4 (II.i.93, / 106) aliance, / witch]

State 1
of thy / aliance, / wicth
BL 1, BL 2, Bod 1, BPL, CL, CON, D2, Eton, Folg 1, ILL, PN, SJO, TCC.

State 2
of thy / aliance, / witch
Bod 2, CH, D1, HD, HN, NC, NLS 1, Y.

State 3
ofthy (plus inking space between 'Both' and 'States' in line 111) / aliance / witch
Folg 2, Folg 3, NLS 2, NYPL, WO.

Sheet D
Inner forme
D3^v (III.ii.63) sister]
fister CON (use of an 'fi' instead of an 'si' ligature). This variant was noted at a late stage, and has not been checked in all copies.

Sheet F
Inner forme
F2 (catchword) knows]
know Bod 1, Bod 2, Folg 1, Folg 2, NLS 2, Y (loss of type from catchword).

TEXTUAL NOTES

See Commentary for discussion of points of interest.

I.i

2 their] *Q*; her *WP*.
60 *SD*] *after line 59 in Q*
74 aid] *Q*; the aid *conj. E*
99 happiness] *T*; ~, *Q*
105 name,] *T*; ~‸ *Q*
 you] *T*; ~, *Q*
126 whence] *Q*; thence *D*

I.ii

scene division] *T*, *etc.*
22 Hermit's] *T*; Hermit *Q*
36 *Exeunt . . . Toclio*] *T*; *not in Q*
49 want] *RP*; not *Q*; not knowledge *T*
63 Force] *Q*; 'Fore *T*
75 *Angles*] *T*; *Anglese Q*
82 *She sits*] *ed*; *not in Q*
92 *aside*] *ed*; *not in Q*
93 *aside*] *H1*; *not in Q*
98 your] *ed*; our *Q*
112 *aside*] *H1*; *not in Q*
124 *aside*] *ed*; *not in Q*
132–33 him. / *Aurelius*. Shame take thy tongue] *D*; him, shame take thy tongue *Q*; him. Shame take thy tongue. / *Aurelius*. Shame take thy tongue *T*
139 *coming . . . throne*] *ed*; not in *Q*
161 happiness] *T*; ~, *Q*
162 joys;] *D*; ~, *Q*
183 Idolaters] *Q*; Idolatress *D*
200 love] *D*; love me *Q*; love like me *T*
207 *aside*] *ed*; *not in Q*
219 which may make] *D*; which make *Q*
221.1 *Exit . . . Hermit*] *at end of line 220 in Q*
253 leave] *Q*; let *T*

II.i

41 boy] *T*; by *Q*
60 And] *Q*; You *D*; Who *TB*
68 who] *Q*; whom *D*
69 *Gorgon*, at one look] *T*; ~‸~~~, *Q*
70 fear'd] *Q*; fared *conj. H2*
75 saw,] *ed*; ~‸ *Q*

77 not] *T*; now *Q*
79 Or] *Q*; On *D*
83 you, you] *T*; you *Q*
103 you] *Q*; I *conj. T*
106 stallion] *Q*; scullion *D*
116 *Prince . . . him*] *ed*; *not in Q*
119 a woman] *RP*; a wood *Q*; i'the wood *D*; a th'wood *TB*
139 CLOWN] *Q*; *Joan T*
148 *Exit Oswold*] *WP*; *not in Q*
155 you] *T*; your *Q*
162 knew] *T*; know *Q*

II.ii

scene division] *T, etc.*
17 Not] *ed*; no *Q*; Not even *conj. WP*
48 low] *T*; love *Q*
95 you] *T*; your *Q*
102 shalt] *D*; shall *Q*
119 *Scene iii commences T, WP, H1, H2, TB*
146 *SD omitted*] *ed* (*moved to 238.1*); *Enter Toclio Q*
152 which through] *WP*; which the *Q*; which thro *TB* (*silently*); which but for the *T*; when the *D*
165 which in] *T*; within *Q*
203.1 *Spirits*] *D*; *Spirit Q*
204 *speech-prefix*] *T*; *not in Q*
205 *Exeunt . . . Spirits*] *H1*; *not in Q*
207.7 *spirits quake and*] *RP*; *spirits, and Q*
236 your] *Q*; our *WP*
238.1 *SD*] *ed*; *after line 146 in Q*
246 Force] *Q*; 'Fore *T*
297 *SD*] *ed*; *not in Q*
301 griefs] *Q*; grief *D*
307 Traitors] *Q*; traitorous *D*
314–15 flie, / From] *ed*; flie / From, *Q*; flie. / From *WP*
373 Vaild] *ed*; valid *Q*; Veil'd *D*

III.i

19 other] *Q*; others *T*
both] *Q*; but *D*
126 find] *ed*; *not in Q*; *before* his *in D*
Law ended] *Q*; law-suit ended *WP*; law defended *TB*
138 *SD*] *ed*; *after* sister *in Q*

III.ii

scene division] *T, etc.*
44 *SD*] *T*; *after line 45 in Q*
45.1 *Bishops, Donobert*] *T*; *Bishops, Edwin, Donobert Q*
70 knew] *T*; know *Q*
78 have] *D*; *not in Q*
147 *SD*] *ed*; *before speech heading in Q*

III.iii

scene division] *T, etc.*
19 *and Lucina*] *ed; not in Q*
21.1 *Enter Lucina*] *ed; not in Q*
26 Learning] *Q*; Learning and *D*
35 *Brittany*] *D*; *Brittain Q*

III.iv

scene division] *T, etc.*
8 ho] *ed*; oh *Q*
103 *Exeunt . . . Joan*] *ed; not in Q*

III.v

scene division] *T, etc.*

III.vi

scene division] *D, M, WP, TB*
5 *aside*] *D; not in Q*
13 instance] *T*; instanced *Q*
17 *Kisses him*] *D; not in Q*
24 me] *Q*; you *WP*
25 *aside*] *T; not in Q*
44 *aside*] *T; not in Q*
52.2 *Gloster*] *ed; not in Q*
77 all as] *Q; omitted by T*

IV.i

44 Capnomanster] *TB*; Capuomanster *Q*; Capnomancer *D*
52 thee] *D*; this *Q*
135.1 *joining*] *WP; not in Q*
190 *SD*] *T; after line 189 in Q*
200 Castle] *T*; fatal Castle *Q*
208 *SD*] *T; not in Q*
254 as] *Q*; at *D*

IV.ii

scene division] *T, etc.*
11 they] *T*; then *Q*
19 *SD*] *ed; after line 18 in Q*

IV.iii

scene division] *T, etc.*
20 *SD*] *Q; spoken by Edol in D*

IV.iv

scene division] *D, M, WP, TB*

IV.v

scene division] *D, M, WP, TB*; Scene iv *T, H1, H2*
4 above] *ed*; that 'bout *Q*; that's 'bout *T*

54 PRINCE] *T*; *Mer Q*
62 Palace, Royal sir] *ed*; ~‸~~ *Q*; ~‸~,~ *T*
91 ignifirent] *Q*; igniferous *D*; igniserent *H1*
108 conquering] *T*; conjuring *Q*

V.i

21 *Cabalists*] *ed*; *Sabalists Q*; satellites *D*; Sabaites *or* Sibylists *conj. H1*; fabulists *conj. TB*
34 Quench to] *Q*; To quench *D*
35.1 *Spirits*] *T*; *Spirit Q*
37 palled] *Q*; pallid *D*
48 your] *T*; you *Q*
Exeunt Spirits] *T*; *Exit Spirit Q*
74 *SD*] *T*; *after* thy (*line 73*) *in Q*
75 *princeps*] *TB* (*conj. E*); *precis Q*
102 hallow] *T*; hollow *Q*
104 Where] *Q*; There *D*
sepulcher'd] *Q*; sepulchred *T*

V.ii

scene division] *T*, *etc.*
61 better] *T*; ~, *Q*

LIST OF ACCIDENTALS ALTERED

I.i

60 *Donobert, Gloster*] *Dono. Glost*
93 *Cador, Constantia*] *Cador. Constan*
106 their crown] theircr own

I.ii

0.1 *Flourish Cornets*] Flourish Cornets
12 fear] ~,
27 jewel worth] jewelworth
37 (*reads*)] [*reads*]
41 *looser*,] ~;
58 them?] ~.
60 Legions] Legious
71.1 *Flourish Cornets*] Flourish Cornets
92 heart —] ~,
94 her —] ~,
102 brother —] ~.
124 tongue —] ~,
179 mischief?] ~‸
207 it —] ~:
231 vertue!] ~?
233 you! . . . Life!] ~? . . . ~?
245 Sir! . . . *Modesta*!] ~? . . . ~?

II.i

14 by?] ~.
18 thought —] ~.
30 meet] weet
41 PRINCE UTER (*within*)] *Within Prince Uter*
78 feed] ~,
99 it] It
127 TOCLIO] *Tolico*
131 life] ~,
134 *Prince, Toclio*] ~‸~
138 one?] ~.
139 this.] ~?
153 'sfoot] 'Sfoot
155 *Sinks*] *sinks*

II.ii

0.1 *Loud Musick*] Loud Musick
24.1 *Edoll*] Edoll
96 it.] ~,

113	*Edol, Captains*] *Edol. Capt*
118.1	*Loud Musick*] Loud Musick
155	hellbred] hell- / bred
207.1–4	*Proximus . . . Hector . . . Achilles*] Proximus . . . Hector . . . Achilles
207.7	*seeming*] ~,
	Thunder within] Thunder within
211	ever.] ~‸
244.1	*Uter and Oswald*] Uter *and* Oswold
328	Jewel,] ~‸

III.i

17.1	*Enter Donobert, Cador, Edwin, and Toclio.*] *Ent. Dono. Cador, Edw. & Toclio*‸
39	*Exeunt Donobert, Toclio*,] *Ex. Dono. Toc.*
52.1	*Nicodemus*] Nicodemus
102	challenge any] challengeany
107	pleasantness.] ~,.
138	(*Thunder.*)] *Thunder.*
139	shall] ~.
154	*Brittains*] *Britiains*

III.ii

4	religiously] religiouslly
20	ye.] ~,
21	me.] ~,
52	*Cador*,] ~.
147	(*Kneel.*)] Kneel

III.iii

0.1	*Lightning.*] ~,
11	*Thunder.*] ~‸
13	midnight] midinght
19	*Fates*] *Tates*
30	appears,] ~‸

III.iv

10	JOAN (*within*)] *Within Joan*
41	before!] ~?
105	hide his] hid e his

III.v

III.vi

5	—] ‸
25	—] ‸
44	—] ‸
51.1	*etc*] *&c*
62	stay] ~,
101	Brimstone] Brim- / stone
132	*Exeunt Aurelius, Ostorius, Octa, Artesia, Toclio, Oswold*] *Exeunt Aurel. Ostor. Octa. Artes. Toc. Osw*

IV.i

44	Capnomanster] Capuomanster
100	Windfucker] Wind- / fucker
122.1	*Florish*] Florish
122.2	*etc*] &c
208.1	*strikes his wand*] strikes his wand
228	King:] ~,
247	*Merlin*] *Mer*
257	got our] gotour

IV.ii

22	me] me me
38	applaud] appaud
	Captain] *Capt*

IV.iii

0.1	*Alarum*] Alarum
	then Exit] *then / Exit* (turned under)
4	brother.] ~:

IV.iv

IV.v

0.1	*appears*.] ~‸
0.2	*Florish Tromp*] Florish Tromp
	Prince] ~,
	with] *with with*
18	this,] ~‸
19	want] ~,
34	not] nor
62	sir,] ~‸
76	Onion] Oinon
116	Loadstone] Load- / stone
122	*He . . . wand*.] [*he . . . wand*‸
124	*Strikes agen*.] [*strikes agen*‸

V.i

74	(*Thunder and Lightning in the Rock*.)] [*Thunder and Lighting in the Rock*.
77	(*The Rock incloses him*.)] [the Rock incloses him.]

V.ii

9	ist] Ist
37.1	*Florish Tromp*] Flor. Tromp
86	increase] incease
93	*strikes*.] ~‸
93.1	*Hoeboys*] Hoeboys
93.5	*Exeunt*] Exeunt

LINEATION

I.i

Prose Q, except lines 45–46, 58–59, 92–93, 126(Made . . . know,)–127.

36–39 Necessity . . . seems / Ties . . . rate / I . . . you, / A . . . sir] *H2*; Necessity . . . then, / And . . . unwillingly / Be . . . sir *TB*.

62–65 Oh . . . rumor, / The . . . wonder, / And . . . it, / We . . . coming] *H2*; *prose TB*.

67–68 *prose*] *TB*; Me, Madam! / 'Sfoot . . . make / A. . . yet *H2*; Me . . . man / Should . . . yet *E*.

73–76 Not . . . army, / But . . . o'rethrew / The . . . sir, / As . . . faith] *TB*; Not . . . without / [The] aid . . . Host, / And . . . confirm / A . . . faith *E*.

80–82 *prose*] *TB*; Faith . . . him, / For . . . say / He . . . tell / Me . . . Prince, / There's . . . him *H2*.

84–85 *prose* / If . . . me] *ed*; *prose TB*.

86–87 I'le . . . him, / I . . . me] *H2*; *prose TB*.

I.ii

Prose Q, except lines 41–42, 110–11, 122–23, 137–38, 162–63, 168–69, 183–84, 220–21, 252–57.

42–43 *Mischiefs . . . begun.* / Anselme . . . Hermit] *ed*; *one line in TB*.

65–68 The . . . sir. / Conduct . . . Lords, / Since . . . beginning, / It . . . conclusion *H2*; The . . . in, / We . . . fail'd / In . . . hand / In . . . conclusion *TB*.

82–83 Sit . . . confer: / Your . . . say] *ed*; Sit . . . brother / Sues . . . say *TB*.

89–93 True . . . old, / How . . . defects. / Fair damsel, / Oh . . . heart] *ed*; True . . . forget / Our . . . tongue / Turns . . . to *TB*.

93 Sister . . . me] *H2*; Our . . . me *TB*.

95–96 What's . . . Lord. / Pish . . . it] *M*; What's . . . conclude? / This . . . it *TB*.

205–06 'Tis . . . doom, / Which . . . just] *ed*; 'Tis . . . faln, / Remember's just *TB*.

245 Are . . . *Modesta*] *M*; *four lines in TB*.

II.i

Prose Q, except lines 68–71, 79–85, 133–34.

90–92 Ha . . . boldly, / Darest . . . wretch / So . . . am] *D*; Ha . . . darest / Take . . . ally'd / To . . . am *TB*.

143–44 *prose*] *H2*; Would . . . you: / I . . . have / A . . . else *TB*.

165–66 *prose*] *D*; Oh . . . did / But . . . stay *TB*.

169–70 Unnatural . . . took, / Why . . . he] *D*; Unnatural brother, / Shew . . . dally? / Speak . . . he *TB*.

II.ii

Prose Q, except lines 96–97, 110–11, 117–18, 139–45, 186–87, 214–15, 226–27, 237–38, 290–94, 311–22, 347–48, 372–77.

78–79 She . . . her / On . . . conditions] *TB*; She . . . died / E're . . . conditions *H2*.

185 Let . . . cunning] *ed*; *two lines in TB*.

208–09 What . . . stay, / Bright . . . back] *ed*; What . . . *Plesgeth*? / Why . . . back *TB*.
261–63 How . . . *Aurelius*? / Speak . . . heaven-blest name, / Oh . . . Sir] *ed*; How . . . place, / Brother . . . Angels name, / Her . . . Sir *TB*.
328 She . . . Jewel] *H2*; She . . . 'tis *TB*.
329 'Tis . . . much] *ed*; A fair . . . much *TB*.
335 *prose*] *H2*; 'Tis . . . sir, / She's . . . woman *TB*.
336–39 And . . . this, / May . . . ways. / Just . . . prayes, / Whilst . . . stone] *ed*; And . . . eyes / Two . . . Sea-crab, / Which . . . stone *TB*.
343–45 *prose*] *D*; If . . . witness, / Let . . . wise *TB*.
350–55 *prose*] *H2*; She's . . . up, / And . . . still. / I . . . owe / Many . . . thou / Expose . . . examining? / Yes . . . too, / 'Tis . . . not *TB*.
358 *prose*] *H2*; I . . . plainness, / When . . . Lady *TB*.

III.i

Prose Q, except lines 151–52, 155–56.
35–36 And . . . *Toclio*, / To . . . business] *H2*; And . . . must / Commend . . . business *TB*.

III.ii

Prose Q, except lines 4–5, 8–9, 15–24, 32(Oh . . . see)–33, 50–51, 56–57, 60–61, 66–67, 77–78, 85–98, 101–10, 142–43, 157(Religion . . . leave)–159.
31–32 Would . . . all. / Why . . . see] *H2*; Would . . . weep? / Oh . . . see *TB*.
52–55 See . . . *Cador*, / Daughter . . . all / Unless . . . not. / *Edwin* . . . success] *H2*; See . . . yonder, / Pass . . . *Constancia*, / I . . . speech, / Salute . . . success *TB*.
147 And . . . father] *ed*; *two lines in TB*.

III.iii

Prose Q, except lines 10–11, 20–39.

III.iv

Prose Q, except lines 18–22, 59–60, 91–101.

III.v

Prose Q, except lines 32–33.

III.vi

Prose Q, except lines 7–16, 21–22, 27, 35–36, 131–32, 144–45.
13 Soonest . . . suit] *M*; *two lines in TB*.
24–25 Ile . . . more / Of . . . whore] *ed*; Ile . . . me / A . . . enjoy. / Impudent whore *TB*.
51 Treason . . . Princes: Treason] *M*; *three lines in TB*.
77 'Tis . . . is] *M*; *two lines in TB*.
80 *Chester* . . . plain] *M*; *two lines in TB*.
86 Good . . . heart] *H2*; *two lines in TB*.
103 Were . . . me] *WP*; Were . . . he / Should . . . me *TB*.

IV.i

Prose Q, except lines 45–46, 146–47, 210–12, 256–57.
135–36 It . . . else. / Ha . . . so] *D*; *one line in TB*.

143 Woman . . . Lord] *M*; *two lines in TB.*
173 I . . . direction] *M*; *two lines in TB.*

IV.ii

Prose Q except lines 39–41.
5–6 Nay . . . *Edol*, / Let . . . hurt] *TB*; Nay . . . counsel, / It . . . hurt *D*.
15–18 Let . . . with him, / For . . . patience, / Will . . . come / To . . . party] *TB*; Let . . . devil / So . . . on, / Oh . . . delay / Untill . . . party *D*.

IV.iii

Prose Q, except lines 24–25.
4 I . . . Traitor] *ed*; *two lines in TB.*

IV.iv

Prose Q, except lines 15–16.

IV.v

Prose Q, except lines 38–41, 101–02, 159–60.
23–24 None . . . *Merlin.* / True . . . *Merlin*] *M*; *three lines in TB*; None . . . him. / You . . . wonderous *Merlin H2*.
31–34 And . . . Lord, / As . . . pleasure, / *Merlin* . . . come. / See . . . not] *WP*; And . . . satisfie / Your . . . come. / See, / The . . . not *TB*.
52–53 'Tis . . . Prince, / But . . . patience] *WP*; 'Tis true / Fair . . . patience *TB*.

V.i

Prose Q, except lines 8(What . . . be,)–9, 22–23, 103–04.
5 Is . . . me] *H2*; *two lines in TB.*
8 Out . . . be] *M*; *two lines in TB.*
49–50 Ha . . . *Father*, / Do . . . me] *M*; Ha . . . he? / *The* . . . me *TB*.

V.ii

Prose Q, except lines 38–40, 70–71, 90–91, 109–10.

COMMENTARY

I.i

1 *You . . . language*: Donobert has presumably been offering advice on the wooing of Constantia, or encouraging Cador to declare his love openly.
language: a manner of expression; a more generalized usage than in Caliban's 'You taught me Language' (*Tempest*, 504, I.ii.363).

2 *their*: since the exact subject of the conversation is not obvious, there is little to be gained from emendation to *her*. *Their* may refer to some qualities attributed to Constantia, or even to both sisters.

9 *Grant*: consent, permission.

10 *'Tis . . . seal'd*: 'Her promise already ratified this condition' (WP).

12 *for*: in exchange for.

15–16 *He . . . Girl*: In George Wilkins's *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (1607), ll. 208–15, and James Shirley's *St. Patrick for Ireland* (1640), Sig. F1^{v}, it is implied that a woman can judge whether a man is a man or not only by his sexual prowess.

18 *The Law's . . . then*: It is proverbial that 'Women will have their wills' (Tilley W723), but there is here, perhaps, the more sinister sense of Middleton and Rowley's *A Fair Quarrel*: 'The lawyer and physician here agrees,/To women clients they give back their fees' (III.ii.115–16).

28 *want*: lack.

30–33 *My Lord . . . ruine*: The general idea is that his ardour should be cooled by his recent involvement, as a soldier, in 'blood and ruine', which here have sexual as well as military connotations.

31 *height*: high degree.
late: recently.

33 *blood*: (1) spilling of blood; (2) passion.
ruine: (1) destruction; (2) dishonour of a woman (*sb*. II.6b, from 1624).

35 *The . . . succession*: a metrically defective line, conceivably justified by making *worlds* disyllabic. Emphasis on four syllables in *succession* would sound contrived.

39–40 *A wife . . . may*: perhaps alluding to 'An ill stomach makes all the meat bitter' (Tilley S871). Jarvis in *A Match at Midnight* (1633) refers to marriage as 'a cloying meate' (Sig. F2).

41 *of your making*: i.e. soldiers.
making: bodily form, 'make' (*vbl. sb.*[1] 6c).
stomacks: (1) appetites; (2) valour; a very common pun. See *Henry V*: 'they haue only stomackes to eate, and none to fight' (1784–85, III.vii.149–50). A similar jibe is made at the expense of 'the Dukes guard' in Dekker's *The Wonder of a Kingdom* (II.i.62–65), and Beatrice links appetite and war-service in *Much Ado* (I.i.41–43).

42 *quicken*: stimulate.

44 *what's mine in her*: the shares which others hold in the rights of disposal of a young female are frequently referred to: 'the maidenheads ye holde/Are not your owne alone, but parted are;/Part in disposing them your Parents share/And that a third part is: so must ye saue/Your loues a third, and you your thirds must haue' (Chapman's *Hero and Leander*, Sestiad V, 474–78). Gabriel Harvey in his *Vel duorum... Rhetorica* (1577) offers a similar division, three ways, between the father, the mother and the girl, as an analogy to the three parts of eloquence (Sig. B2ᵛ).
speaks: declares itself.

46 *She... won*: proverbial (Tilley W681).

50 *parling*: parleying; *OED* (*ppl. a.*) cites only *Lucrece* (1593), 100, and this instance (dated *c.* 1605).

51 *suddenly*: speedily.

52 *ply'd*: assailed.

57 *save ... Dinner*: Shakespeare draws attention to the possibility of economizing in Hamlet's facetious comment: 'Thrift, thrift, *Horatio*, the funerall bak't meates/Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables' (Sig. C2; I.ii.180–81). The cost of such functions must have been a common complaint as references to the use of feasts for more than one celebration continue; for example, *A Mad World My Masters* (1608), Sig. G4; *A Match at Midnight* (1633), Sig. D2ᵛ; *Eastward Ho*, III.ii.59–61; and in *The Old Law* (1656), it is suggested that there 'wil bee charges sav'd' if the rosemary from a funeral can be used subsequently at a wedding (Sig. G4).

61 *what stirring news*: The more usual form of the question would seem to be 'what newes is stirring?', as in Massinger's *The Duke of Milan*, II.i.68.

62–63 *the Court's ... City ... Country*: a commonplace alliterative linking meaning 'everywhere' (see Tilley C725). Cf. Greene's *James IV* (1598), New Mermaids (1967), Induction, ll. 40–46.

65 *Holy-day*: 'a day ... set apart for religious observance, usually in commemoration of some sacred person or event' (*OED*).

67–68 *Me ... yet*: Toclio is reluctant, presumably because holy-days are normally established after the death of the person commemorated. A grim twist is given to the idea in *Locrine*, when Strumbo refers to the after-effects of a battle: 'I think this is a holie day; euerie man lies sleeping in the fields, but, God knowes, full sore against their wills' (II.v.71–73).

76 *confirm*: a usage which combines *v.* 3 (make firm), with 4 (strengthen spiritually), and has the possible resonance of 5. *Eccl.* (administer the religious rite of confirmation).
his faith: i.e. Christianity. The miracle was spectacular enough to strengthen belief. The religious context makes it unlikely that the obsolete sense of *faith*, 'power to produce belief' (in him) (*sb.* II. 6, from *a*1638) is intended.

77 *strange news*: Thomas Nashe's pamphlet, *Strange News of the Intercepting Certain Letters* was first published in 1592. Much later the phrase 'strange news' seems to have become a cliché; Wing's STC entries S5812–5915A include about a hundred titles containing the formula, dating from 1642–97. The earlier Pollard and Redgrave STC has no anonymous works with this opening.

78 *conference*: conversation.
much respects: pays great attention to.

79 *Trust ... him*: similarly, 'Trust me, I long to hear't', *A Fair Quarrel*, II.i.52.

82 *Talents*: the value of talent weights used by the ancient Greeks etc. A talent was 'a monetary denomination of high value; it was equivalent to 6000 drachmas and was represented by more than half a hundredweight of silver', Terence Spencer, 'Shakespeare learns the value of money', *Shakespeare Survey*, 6 (Cambridge, 1953), p. 75. William Wells cites the occurrence of the word to support his theory about the play's origins in Sidney's *Arcadia* ('The Birth of Merlin' *MLR*, 16 (1921), p. 130).

83–84 *breeding ... birth ... life*: perhaps a verbal link with the Merlin plot.

87 *I ... me*: similarly, Dekker, *The Welsh Embassador*: 'Nor know I what fate followes him' (I.i.9).

89 *in game* (1) occupied in playing a game; (2) indulging in amorous play. The game here seems to be cards and/or dice, but since the couple have been engaged in conversation with Toclio until at least line 77, it is scarcely possible that a real game is intended. In *The Costly Whore* (1633) a game of dice is a noisy affair (Sig. D2). It is more likely that Modesta is showing signs of reluctance, and that the battle of wits which commenced with her riposte at line 29 is continuing in dumb-show. The dice metaphor, with its possibilities for innuendo, shows Constantia's worldly attitude in contrast with Modesta's spiritual stand on the marriage issue. Games of all sorts are common metaphors for courtship: for love as 'but a Card-play', see Dekker's *The Wonder of a Kingdom* (V.ii.143–52) and, for other game analogies, Congreve's *The Double-Dealer* (II.i.152–71), in Herbert Davis. ed., *The Complete Plays* (1967).

90 *Set*: contest (*sb.*[1] 25b. *fig*; this cited as earliest instance, dated *c.* 1605).

91 *hand*: advantage; a sense not supported by *OED*, which has only 'Better hand' meaning superiority (Hand, *sb.* II.47a).

92 *out*: in confusion. Another sense which would be appropriate here, 'no longer in the game', is not cited until 1754 (*adv.* II. 19c).

93 *Dye*: (1) 'A small cube ... having its faces marked with spots' (*sb.*[1] I. 1); (2) 'An engraved stamp used for impressing a design or figure upon softer material, as in coining money' (*sb.*[1] II. 5, from 1699). For other instances of 'coining' in a sexual context see *Measure*, II.iv.45–46, and 129–30.

94 *cunning*: skilful; the adjective here echoing the noun, used in its more modern sense (skilful deceit), in the previous line.
Gamester: a player of any game.

96 *either*: probably = 'both' (*a.* 1b, from 1561 to 1608). This fits better with Modesta's description of the game as 'desperate', than the modern sense of 'one or other'.

98 *bar ... suit*: legal terminology (Bar, *v.* 5b).

99–100 *If ... obtaining*: 'If you require me to consider my happiness to lie in the difficulty of winning you'.

102 *There ... neither*: 'There shall be occasion for neither (duty nor observance)'.

105–06 *If ... looses*: Alteration to the punctuation makes the sense clear: Modesta promises to marry Edwin if she marries anyone.

106 *looses*: = loses.
crown: consummation.

107–09 *Let . . . speaks it*: Modesta asks that Edwin should be restrained by his wishes (which have power because of their metaphorical *crown*) insofar as he has confidence in her promise. This is partly interrogative, as the question mark in Q suggests, and Edwin's reply is consequently two-pronged: his absence will be willing since it is at her command, and that will indicate that he does believe her.

110–27 For a discussion of this speech, see Introduction pp. 59–62.

113 *models*: microcosms.

117 *a building*: i.e. the body.

119 *A guest*: i.e. the soul.

122 *still*: always.

125 *for thankfulness*: in order that man might be grateful.

126 *whence*: from what cause.

127 *owe*: susceptible of two meanings here: the love owed, as a debt, to God, or the love 'owned'; i.e. all the love of which she is capable.

I.ii

1 *Cupid's Revenge* (a). Passages which have parallels in *Cupid's Revenge* are designated by letter, and quoted in full in the Introduction (pp. 75–77).
tiding: news.

2 *ne're*: i.e. near; the first of several orthographic curiosities in the play: see Introduction, p. 4.

4 *Tempers*: diminishes.

5 *much*: very (*adv*.).

6–7 *His . . . sorrow*: elliptical, the subject 'we' (or perhaps 'you') having been omitted.

9 *wanted*: lacked.
quick: fast; or living (playing on *dead* in line 7).

11 *ingrateful*: ungrateful.

12 *question*: inquire about.
with: at the same time as.
what we enjoy: i.e. the news of victory.

20 *fronts*: confronts. The present tense gives a sense of immediacy to the narrative.

27 *Cupid's Revenge* (b).

38 respect: regard, consider.

40 open: acting without concealment.

42 Mischiefs . . . begun: 'If mischiefs are not quite uprooted and destroyed, they will soon reappear with new vigour' (WP).

45 *slakes*: abates.

46 *receipts*: prescriptions, and hence, remedies.

46–49 *the word . . . Art*: The metaphor is of a remedy which is worse than the disease: 'Peace is desirable to the war-weary, but if we make peace on unfavourable terms, it shows our willingness to achieve it, but also indicates a lack of skill in statesmanship'.

49 *want*: Q's *not* is a not inconceivable misreading for *want*, and RP's emendation contributes greatly to the sense of the passage.
Art: skill.

50–52 *You . . . prefer'd*: 'You argue from analogy with physical defects. If the word 'Peace' and the agreed terms of the peace amount to the same thing, it should be promoted'.

52 *prefer'd*: promoted.

56 *strength*: an obsolete form of 'strengthen'; last citation, 1614.

57–59 *Who . . . fortune*: Cador is trying to raise support for an attempt to expel the Saxons. Edwin's non-committal reply seems to indicate preparation by the playwright for the revelation of the prophecy that the Saxons will 'keep the ground they have' (V.ii.85).

61 *intrencht*: either in, or surrounded by, trenches (*Mil.*).

63 *Force heaven*: Q's *Force* is usually emended to *'fore* (i.e. *before*), and the more common *fore heaven* does appear in Q at II.ii.8. But the expression *Force me* at II.ii.246 casts doubt on the desirability of emendation, and on the principle that the more unusual reading is the more likely to be correct, both instances of *Force* have been retained. All three exclamations are spoken by Donobert and may indicate an attempt to characterize his speech (Edol, for example, usually begins an exclamation with *Oh*). This use of *Force* in an oath is not supported by *OED*, and an exact meaning is not accessible.

67 *policy*: diplomacy.

71 *From*: from the position of.

72 *Orator*: spokesman, envoy.

79 *makes tender of*: offers for acceptance.

80 *present*: (1) a gift; (2) the person who is present (*sb.*[1] II. 2), as in *Pericles* (1609): 'ist not a goodly present?' (Sig. H3, V.i.65).

85 *Ha's*: He has.

88 *gilded*: referring to the practice of gilding a bitter pill so that it might be more easily swallowed; proverbial (Tilley P325). Here the image emphasises Artesia's duplicity.
take: affect (with some violence).

89–90 *True . . . defects*: Aurelius implies that Donobert is failing to make allowances for his own shortcomings (as an old man) in his judgement of Artesia.

90 *defects*: shortcomings.

93 *mazes*: stupefies.

98 *your Country*: The Q reading, *our*, makes little sense, as Aurelius is attempting to flatter.

102 *certifie*: inform.

105 *meanes*: intends.

106 *to*: appertaining to.

111 *inherit*: come into possession of. The subject is *Both States*.

118 *use*: are accustomed. The subject is the royal *we*.

119 *light*: (1) of small consequence; (2) wanton.

120 *my sex*: i.e. the fact that she is a woman.
worthless your respect: not worthy of your esteem.

122–23 *Whose . . . praise*: *Whose* refers to Aurelius, but *being o'recome* refers to Artesia, and is loosely dependent on *my sex* (l. 120).

loud: clamorous.
displayes: utters.
130 *smoothing*: flattering.
131–32 *wooe him ... wed him*: a proverbial connection. See Tilley W731: 'Woo, wed and bed (wear) her'.
134 *doat'st*: talk foolishly.
136 *act*: action.
137 *respect*: take notice of.
138 *stand and fall*: usually 'stand or fall', a phrase indicating the contingency of one thing upon another, here *will and rule* (Stand, *v*. 9c, from 1683).
139 *the King descends*: probably from a raised throne, or 'state', where he would be sitting to receive the ambassadors.
146 *state*: greatness, dignity.
152 *marry the devil*: a scoffing remark, and also, conceivably, an allusion to the Merlin plot.
160 *for such*: as such, in that capacity.
looks: expects.
161–63 *Our ... still*: It is proverbial that 'Mischiefs, like waves, never come alone' (Tilley M1004), but Aurelius is here using the wave analogy in connection with benefits: his marriage will be the next good thing to follow his *intended joys* (i.e. the league, and the arrival of his *brother*, Ostorius). Stronger punctuation was required after *joys* to separate the final line and a half, which is a reflection that man's good (or ill) fortune, in this way, accords with the action of waves. However, the inclusion of *ill* introduces an unconscious irony: Aurelius must be assumed to be thinking that nothing but good will come from his actions, but the audience, primed by the display of discontent in the court, is given the opportunity to appreciate the alternative point of view, a position also encouraged by the ambiguity of *double*: in double measure/duplicitous.
179 *linck*: join, couple.
183 *Idolaters*: It seems unnecessary to emend to *Idolatress*. The Hermit could be addressing the Saxons in the court.
fond: infatuated.
185 *too*: i.e. *to*, a fairly common manuscript form.
bait: harass.
188 *charmes*: spells, enchantments.
191 *Warm ... bosom*: proverbial (Tilley V68).
193–95 *Command ... pain*: an example of adynatic hyperbole, a rhetorical figure stressing impossibility.
199 *Though ... pardon*: 'Although jealous feelings in others do not dispose them to be forgiving'.
202 *mortallity*: mortal nature.
204 *doom*: judgement.
205 *doom*: punishment.
215 *posts*: messengers.
220–21 *if ... good*: recalling the Hermit's disapproval of the match with Artesia (ll. 177–81).
221 *look for*: expect.
222 *oft*: frequent.

223 *won on*: gained increasing influence over.
225 *price*: value.
226 *absolute*: perfect.
237 *bar my suit*: see also I.i.98.
239 *number*: count over.
242 *Possess me*: put me in possession.
244 *low*: humbly: 'By liuing low, where Fortune cannot hurt me', *3 Henry VI*, 2401, IV.vi.20.
247 *sanctimonious*: holy in character (*a*. 1); this obsolete sense has no suggestion of false piety.
250–51 *Behold . . . earth*: 'Thus sayeth the Lord, Heauen is my seate, and the earth is my footestoole' (Isaiah 66:1).
252–53 *he . . . eye*: The image is of someone climbing a mountain who might be distracted from his purpose by the sight of things of value left beneath. Modesta will resolve this problem by recognizing that her 'joys are all above' (line 255).

II.i

4 *Gentleman*: a man of gentle birth, entitled to bear arms.
5 *arms, and legs*: referring to those of the child which she is expecting. The pun on *arms* is a well-used one; e.g. *Hamlet* V.i.32–38.
6 *blaze*: proclaim; also blazon, describe heraldically.
7 *Cousin*: kinsman, often nephew or niece.
9 *the last great hunting*: on the occasion of the last, probably royal, hunt in that forest. The reference would have had particular significance for a Jacobean audience; James I was addicted to hunting and journeyed from one good hunting ground to the next, throughout the year, taking his court with him. Willson quotes Dunbar: 'We are all become wild men wandering in a forest from the morning till the evening' (p. 185). Joan would be quite justified in assuming, as she does in III.i, that her *Gentleman* with the *Hat and Feather* (II.i.17) was of the Court.
10 *kinde*: courteous; but in Joan's circumstances the sexual resonances of *sb*. 3c. are unavoidable.
11 *As*: that.
12–14 *had . . . afterwards*: The Clown's faith in the prudence of city women is presumably intended to make a satirical point.
15 *most rich . . . Sword*: among the standard external attributes of a knight: see Jonson, *Eastward Ho* IV.ii.199–201, and *A Match at Midnight* (1633), Sig. C1^v.
gilt: gilded.
16 *Hangers*: the straps on a sword-belt from which the sword was hung.
17 *Pox*: an infectious disease, usually syphilis; *Pox on* is a common exclamation of annoyance, but never, according to MacDonald P. Jackson, used by William Rowley: a fact noted by T. L. Darby in her edition of *A New Wonder, A Woman Never Vext* (Garland, New York and London, 1988), p. 9.
gelt: gelded; perhaps punning on *gilt* (l. 18), and illuminating the double meaning which the Clown picks up in *Hangers*. For similar jokes about being 'well hang'd/hung', see Rowley's *A New Wonder, a Woman*

	Never Vext (1632), Sig. D1^{v}, and Middleton and Rowley's *The Spanish Gipsy* (1653), Sig. D3.
18	*swear*: make declarations supported by oaths.
19	*I*: a frequent spelling of the affirmative, *ay*.
	swearing . . . together: as in the proverb, 'He that will swear will lie' (Tilley S1030, from 1629).
	lying: (1) telling lies; (2) lying down (for the purposes of sexual intercourse).
20	*roaring Boy*: one who cultivates a swaggering air, shouts (roars), bullies, and provokes fights. A common character in Jacobean drama, satirized in *A Fair Quarrel* in the added 'Roaring School' scene, which was probably written between 1614 and 1617 (Holdsworth's introduction, p.xiii). According to Partridge, the term was current from *c.* 1610, but *OED* has Roarer (=roisterer) from 1586. Dekker's play, *The Roaring Girl*, was printed in 1611.
22	*no further*: nothing more.
23	*'Sfoot*: = By God's foot.
24	*uses in*: frequents.
26	*hot*: attended with great exertion.
27	*Knight 'ath Post*: i.e. of the whipping-post; one who received payment for giving false evidence, 'a fellowe that will sweare you any thing for twelue pence', (Nashe, *Pierce Penniless* I, p. 164, ll. 9–10). The Clown may be indicating the presence of a stage post; see Introduction p. 12.
28	*enquire*: search (*v.* 1b); a rare usage. *OED* cites this as the earliest instance (dated *c.* 1605).
31–33	*was ever man . . . who did it*: the Clown's naïveté (as in lines 14–15) pointing out a, doubtless, fairly common predicament.
35	*Oh yes*: = Oyez!, Hear ye!; customarily shouted by the public cryer to command attention when a proclamation was about to be read.
	wants: lacks.
36–37	*Whore-Master*: a procurer, or anyone who has dealings with whores.
37	*laid to his charge*: imputed to him as a fault (Charge, *sb.* II. 16b), but also with the sense of being given financial responsibility for (II. 10e).
	rid on: more commonly with *of*; freed from (responsibility for).
38–40	*if he have Lands . . . whore*: This sounds proverbial, but Tilley has only 'Land was never lost for want of an heir'; (L54; one example only, 1678).
40–41	*so ho . . . illo ho*: a hunting call used to direct the attention of dogs and men towards the prey. It occurs frequently in the drama of this period (e.g. *Hamlet* I.v.115–16) as a call to or from someone being sought, and not yet visible. For numerous examples, see *Dekker Commentaries* (*Old Fortunatus* I.i.1n).
42	*hollows*: cries out; associated with crying to the hounds in hunting (Hollo, *v.* 1b).
43	*name*: mention.
44	*presently*: immediately.
	stand close: hide, keep out of sight.
46	*amazement*: stupefaction, distraction.
47	*a man to tell*: i.e. a man to whom he may give an account.
48	*These trees*: see Introduction, p. 12, for a discussion of staging.

48–49 *Cupid's Revenge* (c).
the air . . . praises up: i.e. his breath while he is voicing his praise of her.
52 *View*: scrutinize.
54 *view*: catch sight of.
57 *wise fools . . . another*: *wise fools* is an oxymoron; *wise* = clever (*a*. 2; latest instance, 1548), and their skill, or cleverness, the Clown implies, lies in begetting a child without sexual intercourse (see Know, *v*. II. 7).
59 *at*: as a result of.
complaint: a plaintive lament.
60 *heard*: The past tense is somewhat surprising here, unless the sentence is meant to be incomplete. Previous editors may be correct in assuming there is some corruption.
61 *Law*: a meaningless exclamation, here calling attention to an emphatic statement.
63–67 *As . . . bay*: a simile illustrating Uter's predicament when he caught sight of the unknown woman; it may have some proverbial basis: 'Passionate Men, like fleet hounds, are apt to overrun the scent' (Tilley M575; first instance, 1692).
63 *forward*: eager.
blood-hound: hunting dog for tracking large game.
strip: surpass, outstrip.
64 *cry*: pack (of hounds).
65 *sudden*: unexpected.
view: sight.
66 *a stonishment*: loss of courage; the separated prefix is a common MS form.
at his arriv'd prey: *arriv'd* could be taken as a *ppl.adj.* (i.e. the prey which has arrived), or as a transferred epithet (he, having arrived at the prey), but it is more likely that the line is corrupt: it rhymes with the following line, but is unmetrical.
67 *seizure*: the act of seizing.
68–70 Marius . . . *stand*: Marius (157–86 B.C.) was a consul, and eventually a commander of the Roman army; his history is recounted in Plutarch's *Lives*, but with no mention of a Gorgon. The source of the episode seems to be Topsell's *History of Four-Footed Beasts* (1607). Topsell considers the Gorgon to be an animal, and disregards the 'Poets . . . fiction that the *Gorgones* were the Daughters of *Medusa* and *Phorcynis*' (p. 262). In one state of the 1607 edition (the most common according to STC entry 24123), a picture of the Gorgon, not otherwise illustrated, appears on the title-page. It has cloven feet, and is covered in scales (rather like a pangolin); long wavy hair grows from the top of its head, partly obscuring its eyes. Topsell describes how Marius's soldiers 'sawe one of these Gorgons, and supposing it was some sheepe, bending the head continually to the earth, and mouing slowly, they set vpon him with their swordes, whereat the Beast disdaining suddenly discouered his eies, setting his haire vpright, at the sight whereof the Souldiors fel downe dead' (p. 263).
68 *o'retook*: caught up with.
69 *eye sight killing*: killing with a glance (Eyesight, 2).

70 *everlasting stand*: victims of the Gorgon were reputedly turned to stone.
fear'd: an acceptable seventeenth-century spelling of *fared*.

70–71 *my power . . . shower*: a metaphor on the same theme as the previous similes. The cloud (representing his capabilities) aims toward the sun (his objective), but dissolves and falls as rain (dissolution of hopes, with the suggestion of tears).

72 Pigmalion: a sculptor who made the image of a beautiful girl, and fell in love with it. The goddess Venus took pity on him and brought the statue to life so they could be united. The story is told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* X, which was the source of Marston's erotic poem, *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image* (1598).
sad fate: Although Pygmalion's story had a happy outcome, he was initially tormented by his passionate, and apparently hopeless, love. 'The Prince means, that he, like Pygmalion, had fallen in love with a lifeless, unreal thing—with one who, as far [as] he was concerned, might as well be a statue' (T).

73 *picture*: effigy, image.
fair: = fair one; often used elliptically for the beloved woman.

74 *dotage*: excessive love.
past: beyond the scope of.

77 *enjoy'd*: i.e. enjoyed carnally (*v*. 4b).

78 *thou*: *Pigmalion* is being addressed.

79 *Or*: The popular emendation to *On* destroys the sense. The Prince is comparing the slow growth of Pygmalion's love with his own sudden passion.
affection: passion, lust.

80 *thrall*: bondage, servitude.

81 *thine*: your beloved (i.e. the image), as opposed to *mine* (l. 91).
lostest breath and desire: wasted words and passion. The metre seems to require the rather ungainly elision of the *e* in *lostest*.

82 *relating*: giving an account of (*v*. 2c; from 1653 to 1667).
expire: die; also 'breathe out', perhaps suggested by *lostest breath* (l. 90).

84 *her fame*: the report of her.

85 *part hence*: leave here.

86 The Childe . . . Father: a sort of catch-phrase, as well as being the play's alternative title. It also occurs at III.iv.53, 60, IV.i.142, and V.i.49.

88 *great belly*: Although the idea of a man being pregnant would be sufficient for the joke, this reference, with that of III.i.60, does suggest that the Clown may have been intended to be fat. See Introduction p. 66.

90–92 *Cupid's Revenge* (d).

90 *rude*: rudely.

92 *ally'd*: joined in affinity.

93 *aliance*: relationship, kinship; the Clown echoes the word *ally'd* (l. 92), but in the sense in which it concerns him.

94 *your worships*: a title used in addressing persons of standing (not yet specifically magistrates).

95 *what a clew she spreads*: a *clew*, in its first, and obsolete, sense is a globular body or ball (*sb.*[1] 1), but the whole clause alludes precisely to 7. *Naut.*, and the obsolete expression, '*To spread a large (full, small) clew*: (of a square sail) to have the two lower corners of the sail wide (or otherwise) apart'. The image is, therefore, similar to that associated with Titania's Indian votaress (*Dream*, II.i.128–34).

Go-too't: to 'go to it' is to copulate, as in *Lear*, IV.vi.115, 125 (Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (1968), p. 115).

96 *bashfulness*: shyness, particularly with regard to the opposite sex.

97 *Jug*: diminutive of *Joan*, a term of endearment.

99 *Seen . . . too*: see IV.i.111–13n.

101 *Maid*: an unmarried woman, not necessarily a virgin.

102 *amaz'd*: perplexed, bewildered.

103 *What . . . this*: The Prince is taken aback by the Clown's suggestive remarks about his sister.

105 *Know*: see note 57 above. Perhaps the tone of Joan's voice is meant to suggest that he may know her carnally. It is unlikely that he would react so violently to the idea of mere acquaintance.

as I do . . . mischief: The Prince implies that it is as obvious as *thunder, hell, and mischief* what Joan is: he thinks she is offering herself as a prostitute.

106 *stallion*: whore (3. *Obs.*). The appropriateness of the word has been doubted as in *Hamlet* II.ii.583, where *stallyon* is the Q2 reading (F, *scullion*; Q1, *scalion*). Jenkins (Arden edition, 1. 583 Long Note) justifies the adoption of *scullion* on the grounds that association with *drab* in the previous line caused a misreading of *sc* for *st*, *stallion* being a male whore. He cites *BM* for 'what looks like the same error'. However, in *BM* the word is listed with *Witch* and *hag*, both of which denominate female categories, and neither of which is readily associated with kitchen servants. Other examples in *OED* also appear in the context of female turpitude.

108 *blasphemy*: irreverence.

110 *Speak . . . ye*: The Clown is either urging Joan to speak up for herself, or answering the Prince back: 'Call yourself *villain*'.

111 *Slaves*: a term of contempt.

temptation: enticement. Uter seems to fear a serious attack on his virtue.

113 *smoother*: more polished (in style).

115 *blood*: the supposed seat of the emotions.

Beats her: That a prince should be beating a woman is, says Tyrrell in his commentary, 'not only unprincely, but unmanly and savage', but the rules of chivalry seem to have been suspended in the case of women suspected of unchastity. Othello strikes Desdemona (IV.i.236), and in Robert Davenport's *The City Nightcap* (1661), licensed 14 October 1624, the jealous Lorenzo kicks his virtuous wife (Sig. A3), and a prince kicks a prostitute (Sig. E4).

116–17 *I . . . you*: I want no dealings with you; *OED*'s earliest example is 1724 (Say, *v.*[1] 2i), but this sense is evident also in *A New Wonder, a Woman Never Vext* (1632), where the Clown, similarly, tries to avoid a fight: 'I have nothing to say to you, Sir; I ayme at your Vncle' (Sig. D3). Yet

another example from Nathan Field's *Amends for Ladies* (1618) suggests that it is part of a quarrelling formula: '*Feesi*. Has either of you any thing to say to me?/*Husb*. Not we Sir./*Feesi*. Then haue I something to say to you. Haue you any thing to say to me?/*Broth*. Yes marrie haue I Sir./*Feesi*. Then haue I nothing to say to you, for that's the fashion' (Sig. H4^{v}).

119 *woman*: RP's emendation is the most likely for Q's baffling *wood*, and is supported by the surrounding dialogue. The courtiers have been brought to the scene by the sound of a female voice crying 'murder', and Oswold immediately exclaims, 'See where she is' (l. 120). The woodland setting has led previous editors into unconvincing attempts to retain *wood* by putting a preposition in front of it. Another possible emendation is, perhaps, 'a wood (i.e. mad) woman'.

120 *price*: = prize; something of value worth striving for.

121 *Subject*: (1) one under the dominion of a monarch; (2) one who is subject to something injurious (*sb*. 12c. *Obs*., from 1592 to 1597); here referring to Uter's attack on him.

123 *recal your self*: literally, 'summon yourself back'. Uter appears abstracted and has not answered the questions put to him.

fearful: causing fear.

124 *won . . . grief*: influenced his grief (so as to increase it). *OED* citations (Win, *v*.[1] 10b. *intr*.) do not include quite this sense, which is also apparent at I.ii.223.

127 *argue*: indicate.

distraction: madness.

130 *entreat*: induce.

131 *Your sight*: i.e. the sight of you.

133 *any whether*: = anywhither, in any direction whatever.

134 *Man . . . misery*: proverbial (Tilley P374).

change air: i.e. move to a different place.

135 *Lend*: grant.

139 *Sure . . . this*: It is not necessary to reassign this line to Joan. The Clown, having urged her to speak, is, typically, interrupting her. He also speaks for her at 145.

140 *Trust me*: believe me.

141 *conducted*: guided.

144 *o'reshot*: deceived (*v*. 3b. *fig*., from 1535 to 1656). Dent tentatively notes 'To overshoot oneself (be overshot)' as proverbial (091.1).

145 *A womans . . . to't*: The phrase *a womans fault* was also used by the Clown at line 96. He often speaks for Joan, and seems here to be offering human frailty generally (*we are all subject*) as an extenuating circumstance. The word *fault* may signify the vagina like the terms 'crack', 'flaw', and 'cut'; see John H. Astington, '"Fault" in Shakespeare', *SQ* 36 (1985), 330–34. He refers also to examples in Middleton and Chapman, and notes Hotspur in *1 Henry IV*: ''tis a woman's fault' (III.i.241).

go to't: a reference indicating the reason for Joan's surname. See line 95n.

151 *fling*: a passing attempt.

154 *wanton*: a playful person, sometimes a term of endearment.

159 *cast away*: throw away, waste needlessly.

167 *give answer*: make amends.
168 *tro*: believe, suppose; elliptically for *trow you*, (*Trow*, *v*. 4c). It is not necessary to consider H2's suggestion that *fro* (i.e. Dutch for 'woman') is intended.
169 *Unnatural*: lacking in natural feeling.
174 *Hey day*: an exclamation of wonder.
175 *miss of*: fail to obtain.
challenge: accuse.
176 *if ever*: i.e. 'as surely as we will'.
176–77 *the Childe . . . certain*: the humour, as in lines 12–14 and 151, lies in the Clown's considering 'father' to be a purely honorary title.
177 *shall*: = must, with the force of 'compulsory necessity' (Abbott, 141).

II.ii

0.1 Sword and Mace: symbols of authority.
2 *wooed and won*: a phrase echoing two proverbs about wooing and/or winning women (Tilley W681 and W731).
12 *presence*: the place prepared for attendance on the king, presence chamber.
14 *strange*: unaccountable.
15 *perswade*: induce.
16 *humor*: temperament.
17 *Not*: = not even. There is some warrant in *OED* for retaining Q's *no* (No, *adv*.[1] 1–3), although it is pointed out there that 'later examples . . . may be misprints for not'. In this case, certainly, the compositor may have been misled by *no* in the previous line.
18 *crosses*: i.e. the things which *cross*, or thwart, him.
feeds: provide fuel for.
spleen: bad temper.
19 *affections*: passions.
20 *inflame*: catch fire (*v*. II. *intr*. 5, from 1638 to 1871).
22 Edol . . . *Soldier*: similarly, Dekker, *The Welsh Embassador*: 'The kinge of *Leinster* is a noble soldier' (III.ii.150).
23 *by the Rood*: perhaps suggested by *Chester* in the previous line (see Tilley R167 for 'The sweet Rood of Chester').
29 *divided*: split into factions.
30–31 *the least . . . Commands*: 'few (of the court) are Christians, and least Christian-like in the orders they give'.
31 *Oh the gods*: 'Edol is lamenting the prevalence of idolaters and the depression of Christianity; but here and throughout the drama he not very consistently swears by the pagan deities' (T).
32 *Cupid's Revenge* (e).
35–39 *Cupid's Revenge* (f).
35 *Companies*: sub-divisions of an infantry regiment.
35–36 *What . . . Cuckolds*: a pun on *Companies*; see Tilley C565: 'Company makes Cuckolds'.
37 *Cases*: coverings, sometimes specifically clothes (*sb*.[2] 4b); see Marston's *Histriomastix* (1610): '*Giue your Courtier grace, and your Knight a new case*' (Sig. C4[v]); also *Love's Labour's Lost*: 'There, then, that

vizard, that superfluous case,/That hid the worse, and shew'd the better face' (2316–17, V.ii.387–88).
Captainships: *OED* cites instances of this belittling sense from 1611.

39 *regard*: take notice of.

40–44 *Cupid's Revenge* (g).

40 *Preserve*: retain (*v*. 2c, from 1617). In line 41 the meaning is shifted slightly to 'keep safe'.

42 *black devil*: an oblique reference to Artesia to whom, here as elsewhere (e.g. l. 70), the language of witchcraft is applied.

46 *give . . . credit to*: put trust in.

47 *stragling*: wandering, dispersed.

48 *low*: the Q reading, *love*, could easily be a misprint for *lowe*, and makes no sense.

49 *life*: i.e. staying alive.

50 *had won*: would have prevailed on.

53 *tender youth*: an indication that Aurelius is young.

55 *Bandy*: contend.

56 *Who*: refers to *forain Powers* (1.54).
setled: established.

58 *competitors*: rivals.

62 *full Commission*: complete authority.
dispose: direct, control.

65 *on*: as a result of (*prep*. 11); also, perhaps, with the adverbial sense of *close on*.
Embassie: the group consisting of ambassador and retinue, rather than the message which they brought; *this Embassie* appears congruent with *this* Saxon *Lady* (l. 69).

67 *declare*: set forth, unfold.

69 *whose fond love*: i.e. his doting love of her.

71 *I will . . . as hell*: The simile is proverbial (Tilley H397), and presumably alludes to the quality of the curse and not the effect on its recipients.

72–74 *Cupid's Revenge* (h).

73–74 *Wisdom . . . shadow*: an allusion to: 'Wisdome crieth without, and putteth forth her voyce in the streetes' (Proverbs 1: 20).

74–81 *Cupid's Revenge* (i).

76 *devil*: can be pronounced as a monosyllable; see Kökeritz, pp. 188–89.
quick: alive.

77 *And*: even if.

82–86 *Never . . . nothing*: similarly, Nestor's message, relayed by Priam to Hector in *Troilus and Cressida*: 'Deliuer *Helen*, and all damage else/(As honour, losse of time, trauaile, expence,/Wounds, friends, and what els deere that is consum'd/In hot digestion of this cormorant Warre)/Shall be stroke off' (987–91, II.ii.3–7).

82 *palpably*: manifestly.

83 *marted*: treated like merchandise.
bought and sold: tricked; proverbial (Tilley B787).

88 *Nor . . . nor*: = neither . . . nor; a common construction in verse.
help: obviate.

91 *What's that to you*: a proverbial response (Dent W280.4).

92 *airy*: empty, superficial.

94 *speak*: express.
duty: obligation.
faith: allegiance.

99 *beneath thy lungs*: hyperbole denoting an extreme degree; similar to lying 'in one's throat' (Tilley T268).

101–02 *Cupid's Revenge* (j).

106 *Shuffle*: The definition, 'to make scrambling efforts' (*v*. 6c) is as inadequate here as in the example *OED* cites from *Cymbeline*: 'your life, good Master,/Must shuffle for it selfe' (3371–72, V.v.104–05). The sense in both seems closer to that of Shift, *v*. I. 7, 'provide for one's own interests'.

110 *betimes*: in good time.

114 *passions*: emotions.

116 *wish*: hope.
court: invite, as in 'to court disaster'.

117–18 *The King ... way*: similarly, Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Noble Gentleman*: 'The King so wills, and Subjects must obey' (II.ii.163).
still: always.

119 There is no case for a scene division here; Donobert and Gloster remain on stage.

119–22 *Why ... content*: This formula for an entrance speech reveals to the audience that the speaker's attitude, or expectations, are at variance with those of the characters whom he will encounter; for example, Dekker's *The Welsh Embassador*: '*Kinge. Cornewall./Cornewall.* My lord./*Kinge.* Whie shines not brauery/Throughout our court in rich habiliments/Of glory? *Chester./Chester.* Sir./*Kinge.* Bee it proclaimd/That whoe soer'e presents most curious sports/Of art or chardge to grace our nuptiall feasts/Shall haue a lardge reward, wee wilbee royall' (V.i.1–6); Massinger's *The Parliament of Love*: '*Charles*. What sollitude does dwell about our court!/Whie this dull entertainement?' (I.b.1–2); and Wentworth Smith's *The Hector of Germany* (1615): '*King*. I haue dismist my Traine to steale vpon him,/But whats the reason all things are so quiet?/A Lordes house at so great a Cerimonie/As is a Marriage, should be like a Court' (Sig. C3).

120 *angle*: corner.

121 *Stuck full of*: crowded with.

122 *content*: satisfaction.
fill: pour out.
we: presumably the royal 'we'; Aurelius is taking the duties upon himself alone in line 124.
begin: take the first step in.
Revels: festivities.

124 *Reach*: pass.
begin a Health: propose a toast.

127 *pledge it*: drink the health (which has been proposed).

128 *to*: for (*prep*. VIII. 30a).

129 *pledge*: toast.

133 *Mistake not*: 'Do not misunderstand' (the meaning).
argument: token.

135 *ows*: feels bound to pay.

137 *Covets*: longs for, desires.
health: toast; also 'well-being' (*OED* sb. 5, last citation *c.* 1611).

138 *hold*: consider.

139 *Tenement at will*: The force of the metaphor is made apparent in a description of the legal position from *Littleton's Tenures In English* (1600): 'Tenaunt at will is, where landes or tenements bee letten by a man vnto another: To haue and to holde to him at the will of the lessor, by force of which lease the lessee is in possession. In such case the lessee is called tenant at will, for that he hath no certaine sure estate for the lessor may put him out at what time it pleaseth him . . .' (p. 14v). 'Also if an house bee let to holde at will, the lessee is not holden to sustaine or repayre the house, as tenant for terme of yeeres is holden to do. But if the lessee at will make voluntary wast, as in putting downe of houses, or in cutting or felling of trees: It is said that the lessour shall haue for that against him an acti*o*n of Trespas' (p. 15v). The playwright seems to be mistaken in the matter of repairs. For other analogies with the human condition, see R. Sutton's *Disce Mori* (1600): 'we are but Tennants at wil, in this clay farme' (Sig. D7v, Ch. 4, p. 86); and *The Two Noble Ladies*: 'this building is decay'd/My Soule the tenant is turn'd out of dore/because he now can pay his rent no more' (246–49).

140 *Bestows*: expends.

142 *frame*: body.
cras'd: infirm.

144 *fresh*: new.
appetite: inclination, craving.

145 *prodigal*: waster. The body is a waster of the luxuries bestowed on it because it cannot use them to benefit itself.

147 *envious*: malicious.

148 *Cinick*: a surly, almost misanthropic person (like Diogenes in Lyly's *Campaspe* (1584)); the Cynics were a group of philosophers in ancient Greece who adopted an ostentatious contempt for 'human nature', and the pleasures of life.

149–54 *What . . . conquest*: The sense of this passage is contorted. Emendation of Q's *the* to *through* in line 152 helps the syntax, but the line is unmetrical, which may indicate further corruption. Ostorius is sneering at Aurelius, and claiming to object to the use of magic in war (which Octa agrees is *treachery*, l. 158): 'What power (in the Hermit) could so humble your *Kingly spirit* that you take so much notice of a man who, encountering your defeated army, used magic spells to compel the men to stand and fight, who would otherwise have been slaughtered?' The question is an attack on Aurelius's integrity, but from the point of view of strategy it seems to answer itself.

149 *vertue*: power.
decline: lower.

150 *respect of*: regard for.

152 *necessity of fight*: unavoidable compulsion of fighting (Necessity, *sb.* 7a, from 1630).

156 *esteem*: consider.

158 *ebbe*: lowest point.
servile: ignoble, proper to slaves.

160 *vertue*: power.
162 *Thorough*: = through.
general: whole.
create: produce (*v*. 4, from 1599).
spirits: vital power or energy (16b. *pl*.). It is possible that the singular, meaning 'courage' (13a, from 1596), was intended here.
163 *recreant*: faint-hearted.
above present sense: beyond immediate perception.
165 *which in*: TB retains Q's *within* which may have some elliptical sense, but it is not immediately obvious. The compositor could easily have misread the abbreviated form of 'which' for that of 'with'.
166 *humane*: = human; a common spelling, not restricted in meaning until *c*. 1700.
168–69 *There ... void*: Aurelius is objecting that Ostorius's attempt to dismiss the conquering troops as apparitions produced by sorcery cannot alter the fact that they won. The legal terms (*law, deeds, void*) suggest a play on words, but it has not been possible to discover a law to this effect: in fact, Francis Bacon expounds the opposite principle in respect of wills, which may be repealed by the testator without written instruction (*The Elements of the Common Laws of England* (1630), p. 74).
168 *want*: lack
force: power.
170 *instances alike*: similar occurrences.
172 *Propose*: put forward.
give but way: only allow opportunity.
173 *straight*: immediately.
174 *deserts*: worthiness.
censur'd: judged.
176 *satisfaction*: acceptance of the challenge.
what ... it: i.e. the accompanying 'show'.
178 Proximus: Latin for 'next' or 'nearest', an odd choice for a name: it might conceivably have its origins in the common proverbial (Tilley N57) expression, 'Proximus sum egomet mihi' (Terence, *Andria* 636), 'I always put my own interests first'.
179 *charms*: spells.
opinion: reputation.
181 *propound*: set forth.
182 *State*: rank.
185 *cunning*: skill.
189 *trial*: test.
190 *place't*: an unusual spelling. The introduction to the MS play *The Faithful Friends*, M.S.R. (1975), finds instances of the 'et' ending for past participles to be 'perhaps uncommon enough to be noteworthy, especially if the play was composed as late as the 1620s', and suggests that they are authorial (p.x.). The apostrophe in this case might represent a compositor's response to an unfamiliar spelling of a past participle, which he reads as meaning *place it*. Examples (without the apostrophe) also occur in Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*, ll. 9, 74, 464, and 861.
191 *angle*: corner; or, more specifically in this case, one of the 'four astrological "houses", at the cardinal points of the compass' (*sb*.^{2} 7).

193 *The region of the fire*: the sphere of elemental fire which was thought to surround the sphere of air.

195–215 For possible sources of this episode, see Introduction, pp. 53–54.

196 *reach*: attain to.

198 Hector, *our great Ancestor*: 'Alluding to the tradition that the Britons were descended from King Brute and the Trojans' (T).

202 *respect*: consider.

203 Armel, Plesgeth: 'We have not been able to discover the names of the two spirits elsewhere' (WP). There is a Saxon character called Armel in Chabrier's opera, *Gwendoline* (1885) (librettist, Catulle Mendès), but the source is not immediately discoverable.

Enter Spirits: Emendation to the plural is necessary as both spirits are called by name: it would hardly be to Proximus's credit if only one turned up. They accompany Proximus as he leaves the stage (*attend me*), and return with Hector and Achilles, for whom they are apparently responsible: Proximus addresses them with recriminations when the action is interrupted by the Hermit.

204 *Quid vis?*: 'What do you want?' Spirits commonly open conversation in Latin; see Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1209), and *John of Bordeaux* (652, 1135).

205 *Attend*: wait on; the spirits must leave the stage with Proximus.

206 *Apparition*: manifestation, display (*sb*. 4, from 1533 to 1627).

on: on pain of.

207.2 Target: a light, round shield.

207.3 a Trumpet: i.e. a trumpeter, in addition to the spirit with the torch.

207.4 Falchon: a curved sword with the edge on the convex side.

207.5 manage: wield.

207.7 quake and tremble: *quake* is obviously the word omitted by Q: see line 221. The words crop up repeatedly as a pair, e.g. *Doctor Faustus*: 'Made the grim monarch of infernall spirits,/Tremble and quake at his commanding charmes' (1371–72, IV.ii), and, figuratively, *King John*: 'With my vext spirits, I cannot take a Truce,/But they will quake and tremble all this day' (938–39, III.i.17–18); also *The Play of the Sacrament*: 'For dred of the I trymble and quake' (l. 743), *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, EETS (1970).

208 *What means this stay*: (i.e. this pause); also IV.i.209.

210 *Renew*: recommence.

Alarms: perhaps pronounced as a trisyllable.

enforce: force on.

216 *at a Non-plus*: perplexed; a common expression (Tilley N206).

223 *fear*: frighten.

227 *onely*: alone.

236 *your*: Aurelius refers to *our* chamber at ll. 297 and 299, but there is no real inconsistency.

237 *cross*: obstruction.

238 *fixed*: firmly placed.

Enter Toclio: The Toclio who enters here, and the Oswold who enters at l. 244, are not, in function, the same characters who appeared earlier in the scene. See Introduction p. 7.

245 *speaks*: declares.

246 *Force me*: see I.ii.63n.
250 *all my Kingdoms hope*: = 'my Kingdom's only hope', or 'the hope of my entire Kingdom'.
251 *health*: well-being.
252 *free*: unconstrained; also possibly in the later, bad sense of 'forward', or 'over-free' (*a*. 23, from 1635).
253 *As*: = since.
259 *captived*: captivated; used twice in *All's Lost by Lust* (captiv'd), apparently for 'captured' (Sig. F2[v], H2); the verb was common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
266 *mock*: disappoint (*v*. 3b; one instance cited, 1541).
admiring sense: feeling of wonder.
283–86 *Oh say ... in me*: Uter suggests, hyperbolically, a way of preventing sorrow from reaching him by blocking up one of the *entrances*: 'Assume that I was born deaf, and let your silence (on the subject of Artesia's marriage) convince me of this defect or, at least, do not refer to my *sin* (of loving my brother's wife) because hearing becomes a defect in the circumstances'.
291 *Great Good ... opposite*: Aurelius is comparing the virtuous quality of his love with the incestuous nature of his brother's.
294 *least*: even the least.
304 *affection*: feeling.
305 *loves*: i.e. loves Uter.
307 *Traitors*: of a traitor; or possibly a contracted form of *traitorous*.
314–15 *Meet ... die*: Uter sees *destruction* as inevitable (without Artesia), and since he is *not to live* the most courageous thing he can do is to *die*. He goes on to explain that to *die* is to admit that Artesia is his brother's wife and lost to him for ever; he is not contemplating suicide.
317 *a kin*: = akin, related.
318 *such an act*: i.e. incest.
321 *To ... flood*: proverbial (Tilley F378).
322 *When ... good*: 'When vice turns out to be fruitless, virtue is the only course'.
Enter ... Jewel: a common ploy; see Middleton's *A Mad World My Masters* (1608): 'Here Lady, conuay my hart vnto him in this Iewel' (Sig. B2); and Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Scornful Lady*, I.i.202–03.
324 *speak me what I should be*: 'refer to me as I should be' (i.e. *noble*).
331–39 *It is ... stone*: see *Arcadia* (1593): 'Now the Princesse being about to withdrawe her selfe from vs, I tooke a Iewell made in the figure of a Crab-fish, which, because it lookes one way and goes another, I thought it did fitly patterne out my looking to *Mopsa*, but bending to *Pamela*. . . . and still kneeling, besought the Princesse that she would vouchsafe to giue it *Mopsa*' (Lib. 2, p. 56[v], 5–9; Bk. 2, Ch. 4, p. 233).
331 *artificial*: imitation (man-made).
332 *goes backward*: Crabs were popularly supposed to walk backwards (see *Hamlet* II.ii.203).
333 *from the way it looks*: judging by the direction of its eyes.
334–35 *There ... woman*: the innocent 'going' backward (retreating) perhaps takes on the sexual connotations of 'falling' backward with the Gentlewoman's cryptic 'she's a woman'. See *Romeo and Juliet*, 'doest thou fall

vpon thy face? thou wilt fall backeward when thou hast more wit' (390–91), I.iii.42–43).
moral: meaning.

338–39 *Just like . . . stone*: see Gerard Legh's *The Accidence of Armory* (1562): 'yet, where all other go forwarde, this goeth sidelong, or back warde. The Crabbe getteth his liuing by pollicy. For whilest the oyster gapeth for the Ayer, the Crabbe stelingly taketh a stone, and putteth between the two shelles, whereby he fedeth thereon safelie, w*ith*out any daunger to himselfe' (Sig. T4v). In the light of this quotation it seems that it is the mussel (and not the crab) which *bills at a stone*, and that the image is indicating generally devious behaviour rather than specific actions on the part of Artesia.

39 *bills*: pecks.

340 *Pretty*: clever, ingenious; often used ironically, as here.

343–44 *If . . . foolish*: She explains that she is not so foolish as to accuse herself if there are no witnesses to her dishonesty, perhaps alluding to the right, in law, not to bear witness against oneself.

345 *wise*: clever; used ironically.

351 *dares*: is so bold as to.
owe: be beholden to.

352 *in greatness*: amongst the great.
owe: be in debt to, echoing the previous line.

353 *examining*: testing by questions; but also here, perhaps, close scrutiny.

354 *put . . . to't*: in the sense of *go to't*; see II.i.95n.

355 *answer*: give back in kind; i.e. respond favourably in the sexual encounter.

358 *plainness*: frankness.

362 *any*: all.

363 *tend to*: proceed towards.

367 *practice*: conspiracy.

370 *Cupid's Revenge* (k).
Vaild: i.e. veiled, concealed. Q's *valid* is probably the result of the transposition of *i* and *l*: *valid* is first cited in the sense 'well founded' *a*1648, and is an inappropriate word in the context.
deeper reach: more devious scheme.

373 *Envy*: malice.

377 *Trees . . . green*: an analogy showing how good may come out of evil; for the same image, see Dekker's *The Wonder of a Kingdom*: 'Cast not thy scorne upon him, prove thou but just,/Ile raise thee; Cedars spring out first from dust' (IV.ii.209–10).

III.i

1 *all*: entirely, altogether.

3–6 *At Court . . . Nurses*: the trio of Court, City and Country recurs here (see I.i.62–63) in a passage referring to one of the social situations in which the three were linked. Courtiers were traditionally blamed for seducing citizens' wives, and the resulting children were often sent out of town for nursing; see *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, II.ii.174n.

4 *taking*: plight.
'slid: an oath; 'By God's eye-lid'.
get: = beget.

6 *his*: its.

9 *Friend*: lover.

14 *Loger-heads*: block-heads, idiots.

15 *look*: search for.

16 *Cats eyes*: cats are reputed to be able to see as well in the dark as in day-light: proverbial (Tilley C180). The Clown also refers to Joan in feline terms at l. 130.

18 *look about you*: a proverbial expression (Dent L427.1).

19 *other*: a recognized usage as a plural pronoun (Abbott, 5).

20 *both Swords and Feathers*: D's emendation of *both* to *but* is unnecessary; the *Swords* presuppose the existence of hangers.

23 *a childe*: with child.
thing: can be applied to a person, often in contempt or reproach; also euphemistically for the male member.

28 *addicted*: devoted, not in any derogatory sense.

43 *the own father*: the child's literal father, as opposed to the godfather.

46 *forth coming*: available to be produced when required; a legal term, so slightly incongruous in this context.

50 *pull up thy heart*: proverbial (Tilley H323).

51 *uses me so scurvily*: treats me so shabbily.

52 *towards*: in preparation, imminent.

53 *miss*: are unsuccessful.
bout: round (as in a contest).

54 *close*: secretive.

58 *This night . . . Presentments*: 'Is this an allusion to Ben Jonson and his mask writing?' (H2). See Introduction pp. 73–74.
Presentments: theatrical displays, the things presented. *OED* gives only the sense, 'the act of presenting', and cites this (dated *c.* 1605) as the earliest example.

60 Great Brittains . . *bellies*: The inference is that the Clown is as fat as his pregnant sister. See Introduction p. 66.

62–64 *There's . . . to stop it*: The Clown frames the question like one of the legal suits for trespass which William Rowley describes in *A Search for Money* (1609): one concerns two brothers, one of whose thatch blew into the other's garden and 'spoild a Hartichoke'; the other, a goose which laid an egg in another man's barn (Sig. D2). In *A Cure for a Cuckold* (1661), a cuckolded husband wins the right to his wife's child by comparing her to a sow which has been impregnated by a stray boar, in which case the piglets would remain the property of the sow's owner (Sig. F1[v]–F2). The natural father's case is based on the premise that whoever sows the seed should keep the crop (cf. Tilley C765, 'Who bulls the cow must keep the calf'). The reference in *BM* reveals a similar delight in the vagaries of the law of trespass, and also an awareness of further possibilities for sexual innuendo.

63 *Hunting Nags*: *OED* defines *nag* as a term of abuse (*sb.*[1] 1b, from 1598 to 1606) as well as a type of 'small riding horse'. A. R. Humphreys glossing *Galloway nags* (*2 Henry IV*, Arden edition, II.iv.186–87) gives

references showing that it was more derogatory (implying 'whore') when applied to women (see *Antony* III.x.10). An example which suggests male sexual predation occurs in *A Cure for a Cuckold* (Sig. E1v).

64 *question*: subject of debate.

Fur-bush: a furze or gorse bush. *Bush* may also refer to pubic hair, as in Day's *The Isle of Gulls* (1606): 'the olde Foxe has more holes then one, to hide's head in: But not to goe long about the bush with you./*Mis*. No good *Dorus*, I do not loue a man should go long about my bush' (Sig. F2v). *OED* does not admit this sense.

65 *out of my element*: beyond my sphere of knowledge; proverbial (Tilley E107). See also Introduction pp. 73–74.

67 *Issue*: (1) offspring; (2) outcome, a legal term. Both senses are incorporated in John Cowell's definition: 'It hat diuers applications in the common lawe: sometime being vsed for the children begotten betweene a man and his wife: sometime for profits growing from amercement or fine, or expenses of suite . . . sometime for that point of mater depending in suite wherupon the parties ioyne and put their cause to the triall of the Iury: and in all these it hath but one signification, which is an effect of a cause proceeding, as the children be the effect of the mariage betweene parents', *The Interpretor* (Cambridge, 1607), Sig. 203.

68 *a Gap . . . Inclosure*: The opportunity for including a commonplace metaphor for adultery has not been missed, even though Joan is not *another mans* property. For examples, see *The Winter's Tale* I.ii.195–98; *The Wonder of a Kingdom* I.ii.101–02; Wilkins's *The Painfull Adventures of Pericles* (1608), Sig. H3: and, for a parodic version in which the woman is compared to a private bowling-alley, *Four Plays in One* (1647), Sig. 8D2v.

69 *business*: euphemism for sexual intercourse. *OED* gives examples from 1630 to 1654 (19b), but there seems to be an awareness of the possibility in *Antony* I.ii.167.

71 *I finde thee*: probably 'I discover what you mean'; only one of *OED*'s examples of sense I.8 uses this expression (1741–43, Wesley).

76–77 *I never . . . father*: probably intended as nonsense, but the idea was expressed by Shakespeare in *The Taming of the Shrew*: 'I see no reason but suppos'd *Lucentio*/Must get a father, call'd suppos'd *Vincentio*,/And that's a wonder: fathers commonly/Doe get their children: but in this case of woing,/A childe shall get a sire, if I faile not of my cunning' (1289–93, II.i.399–403), and *Pericles*: 'thou that begetst him that did thee beget' (Sig. I1, V.i.194).

79–80 *he that . . . father of it*: for a similar sort of 'logic' see *Merry Wives*: 'Marry shee sayes, that the very same man that beguil'd Master *Slender* of his Chaine, cozon'd him of it' (2254–55, IV.v.32–33).

86–87 *my Knighthood . . . Ladies*: In *The Accidence of Armory* (1562), Gerard Legh lists, among the 'nine vertues of Chiualry', 'You shall vpholde maydens right', and also 'You shall doe no harme, to the poore' (Sig. F1). Sir Nicodemus is obviously ignoring the latter.

89 *Courtiers Fee*: See *The Wonder of a Kingdom*: 'I thinke these Courtiers have al offices in the Spicerie, And taking my lips for sweet-meates, are as sawcie with 'em, as if they were Fees' (II.i.17–19). Joel Hurstfield explains: 'Tudor governments made no attempt to pay their public

servants realistic salaries .... They left them to collect most of their own salaries from the public who used their services; and this practice extended down from the Lord Treasurer of England to his humblest menials. If you went to see them empty-handed you were wasting your time', 'The Politics of Corruption in Shakespeare's England', *Shakespeare Survey* 28 (Cambridge, 1975) 15–28 (pp. 18–19).

93 *Angel*: i.e. Angel-noble, a gold coin depicting the archangel Michael on one side.

94 *for your better eye sight*: either 'to improve your eyesight', or 'to be a more acceptable object' of it.

96 *presently*: immediately.

97–99 *You meet . . . withstand it*: A method for demonstrating paternity which relies, satirically, on the power of accusation.

98 *push*: a dismissive exclamation.

102 *challenge*: accuse.

107 *pleasantness*: sense of humour.

112–13 *Nothing . . . nothing sure*: For the possible implications of Sir Nicodemus's surname, see Introduction p. 73.

115 *process*: commencement of an action at law, summons.

117 *look*: expect.

123 *my Fee? marry Law forbid it*: The attachment of lawyers to their fees was a popular subject for satire. Walter Ralegh's poem, 'The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage', describes a heaven where 'Christ is the Kings Atturney:/Who pleades for all without degrees,/And he hath Angells, but no fees' (*Poems*, edited by Agnes M. C. Latham (1951), pp. 50–51).

126 *The Childe . . . ended*: Several attempts have been made to regularize the metre of this line, none of them convincing. TB's emendation of *ended* to *defended* is mistaken in assuming that *ended* is not the *mot juste*; but see *A Cure for a Cuckold* (1661): 'be assured, as we can determine it, the Law will end, for we have fought the Cases' (Sig. F1^v), and the proverb 'As a Man is friended so the law is ended' (Tilley M62).

128 *I promise you*: an assurance, without any future sense.

129 *placcats*: the openings in petticoats and, by extension, that part of the female body accessible through them.

130 *like a Cat . . . kitten'd*: This implies some identifiable gesture or expression. Cats which have recently had kittens are completely absorbed with them and show no desire to move. Perhaps Joan has slumped on to the stage as a result of her recent disappointment, but the simile suggests contentedness, which is inappropriate here.

tro: short for *trow you*, 'do you think'. See II.i.168n.

134 *bewitch*: *OED* offers no support for this form, which also occurs at III.vi.133. However, an analogous example in Marlowe's *Edward II* (I.iv.205) may be relevant: 'Unlesse the sea cast up his shipwrack body'. Bowers chooses to retain *shipwrack* (Q 1594) in preference to *shipwrackt* (Q2–4). *OED*, however, quotes the instance under Shipwrecked (*ppl. a.*) as *shipwrack'd*, but also recognizes Shipwreck as a rare adjective, giving and example in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (1598). It seems that the omission of the usual 'ed' (or equivalent) ending need not necessarily be a sign of compositorial error.

135–36 *there was . . . done*: see II.i.31–33n.

136–37 *I am . . . about me*: another hint that the actor may have been a fat man; *nothing but flesh and bones* is proverbial (see examples in Dent N260). *pin'd*: wasted.

137 *and*: if.

141.1 Devil . . . horrid: according to Nicolas Remy in *Daemonolatreiae Libri Tres* (1595), incubus demons had, amongst other attributes, 'manus strigosas, & villis, atque hamis deformes: pedes corneos, bifidosque' (Sig. K3, I.vii.77), and demons in general attempted to disguise their deformities: 'Cum igitur primum aggrediuntur hominem alloqui, ne is ad insolitae rei aspectum tam facile expauescat, humana libentius specie occurrunt, eaque adeo, quae prae se ferat honestiorem aliquam fortunam: nimirum quo verbis suis authoritatem, fidemque maiorem adiungant' (Sig. T3v, I.xxiii.150).

146 *if the devil be not in him*: a charm like 'God willing' or 'touch wood', here more than usually appropriate; used to similar effect in the title of Dekker's *If This Be Not a Good Play, the Devil Is in It*, a play which contains devils.

149 *For*: for the sake of.

151 *uneven*: unequal.

155 *fatal*: decreed by fate.

157 *I can see no body*: The dramatist eschews the comic possibilities offered by invisibility as demonstrated in *Doctor Faustus* and *The Tempest*.

158–60 *see where . . . death*: perhaps a memory of *Hamlet* III.iv.125–36, when the Ghost appears in Gertrude's closet.

161–62 *she'l . . . mad sure*: The Clown mentions the *devil* to emphasize his conviction that Joan is mad. As in l. 146, the allusion is more appropriate than he realizes.

163 *at all adventure*: whatever the consequences. *Adventure* is connected with *chance* with which it is synonymous in its first sense.

III.ii

1 *by*: by means of.

11 *finde remorse*: feel pity.
to: towards; *love* and *merit* are nouns, qualities belonging to Edwin.

12 *yet*: even now.

16 *the hardest Lesson*: an unconscious (?) echo of II.ii.355, where the meaning was far from pure.

38–44 *What's . . . clear*: a metaphor in which the life of man is seen as a period of bail before trial, with God as judge, on the day of judgement. The force of the metaphor depends on a knowledge of the legal terminology.

41 *bail'd*: Cowell describes bail as 'vsed in our common lawe, properly for the freeing or setting at liberty of one arrested or imprisoned vpon action either civill or criminall, vnder suretie taken for his apparence at a day and place certainely assigned' (Sig. H2).
good abearing: 'by an especiall signification, an exact cariage or behauiour of a subiect, toward the king and his liege people, whereunto men vpon their euill course of life, or loose demeanure are sometimes bound', Cowell (Sig. 2K3v).

42 *Sessions*: a judicial sitting. Sometimes the plural is used in a singular sense (Session, *sb*. 4); here accompanied by a singular pronoun and a plural verb.
Cryer: 'An officer in a court of justice who makes the public announcements' (2. *spec*. a).

44 *us*: ourselves; a reflexive use.
our bail to clear: If the person has committed no crimes within the period of bail, he has fulfilled the conditions and the surety is not forfeited. This is the position of those who have lived virtuously, as opposed to those who will have to plead guilty.

46 *resolve*: come to a decision; also, take counsel.

47 *sounds*: declares, announces.

50 *Cover me with night*: see also Joan's 'Oh darkness cover me' (V.i.16). Wells (p. 135) claims that these are Beaumont 'touches', and refers to *The Coxcomb*: 'Darknesse be thou my cover' (I.vi.20).

54 *move*: utter (4; from 1607 to 1674).
salute: greet.

55 *good success*: achievement of desire.

56 *object*: spectacle.
take her: attracts her interest.

58 *careless*: unconcerned.

61 *despised poverty*: Modesta assumes that this is the cause of their neglect of her.

62 *I . . . charitable*: i.e. more charitable than they.

66 *fame*: reputation.

70 *take*: have effect, succeed (*v*. 11. *intr*., from 1622).

72–78 *charity . . . grief*: Modesta is pretending that she would benefit from instruction in order to have an opening in which to express her point of view (see l. 84).

74 *Even follies instance*: the perfect example of folly.

75 *bears*: i.e. which bears.

83 *Because . . . death*: Modesta's reply utilizes the verbal association between *life* (l. 82), and *death*; there is no other logical connection.

85–94 *This world . . . deceive him*: For antecedents to this analogy, see Introduction pp. 61–62.

85 *catching*: drawing the attention of.
weak: weak-willed.

88 *Deaths Glass*: i.e. the skull which is the image of death.
Glass: mirror.

89 *Our . . . night*: a reference to the masque and perhaps, indirectly, the marriage night to which masques were often the prelude. Jonson describes masquing as 'the short brauerie of the night', *The Forest*, l. 10 (III, p. 96).

90 *Ware*: goods.

92 *shift*: (1) undershirt or smock; (2) expedient.

96 *infected*: contaminated, in a moral sense.

98 *the fruits of Age, Posterity*: children; *Posterity* is defined elsewhere as 'the blessings of the bed' (*A Cure for a Cuckold*, Sig. C3), and 'the blisse of marriage' (Wilkins's *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, l. 913).

99–100 *sure . . . drunk, when I begot thee*: proverbial: 'Who goes drunk to bed begets but a girl' (Tilley B195).
108 *shut up*: conclude, bring to an end.
112 *Error*: false beliefs.
118–21 *all our Life . . . takes us*: proverbial: 'Life is like an ague' (Dent L252.11).
124 *Knew . . . self*: 'Know thyself' is proverbial (Tilley K175).
131 *at gaze*: in an attitude of bewilderment.
133 *consummate*: bring to completion.
134 *barr*: 'A plea or objection of force sufficient to arrest entirely an action or claim at law' (sb.[1] 18. *Law*).
134–35 *desires . . . performance*: this pair of words is one of the 'multitudinous antitheses' (Kenneth Muir) which occur in *Macbeth*, (Arden edition, p.xxxi); also in *2 Henry IV* (II.iv.250–51).
135–36 *'tis against . . . to force a Marriage*: *Vis* (force) constitutes legal grounds for the annulment of a marriage. For a dramatic rendering of all the possible grounds, see Jonson's *Epicoene* V.iii.70–240.
140 *loose*: = lose.
yet . . . Daughter: he has already disowned her sister.
142 *Your words are air*: similarly, 'Words are but wind' (Tilley W833).
146 *your sights*: the sight of you.
147 *Dear*: probably disyllabic here; see Kökeritz, p.209.
158 *careful*: full of care.

III.iii.

1–3 *Mix . . . world*: F. G. Fleay compares this with *Lear* II.ii.1–9 ('Blow wind', etc.) in his *Life of Shakespeare* (1886), p.290.
2 *Be of one piece agen*: i.e. as they were before the creation; see Genesis, where dark is separated from light (1: 4), and the water from the land (1: 9).
turn: return.
5 *abortive*: monstrous.
birth: offspring.
7–8 Lucina, Hecate . . . Proserpine: all names for the same goddess, as Vincenzo Cantari, speaking of the moon, explained: 'with some she was called Diana, with others Proserpina, with others Hecate, with other some Lucina, and in AEgypt generally entearmed Isis', *The Fountain of Ancient Fiction* (1599), translated by Richard Linche (Sig. G4[v]). The names indicate different aspects of her power.
Lucina: goddess of childbirth; 'My wife full growne, and groaning, ready now/To inuoke *Lucina*', Thomas Heywood, *The Silver Age* (1613), Sig. E4[v].
Hecate . . . *Night*: also appears in *Macbeth*, Middleton's *The Witch*, and Jonson's *Masque of Queens*, where she is described as being called '*Triuia*, and *Triformis* . . . She was beleeu'd to gouerne in witchcraft; and is rememberd in all theyr inuocations' (note c. to line 237).
Bright Proserpine . . . Ceres *love*: Ceres was Proserpine's mother, who spared no effort to seek her daughter after she had been carried away to the underworld by Pluto. See Heywood's *The Silver Age*: 'What can

Alcides more for *Ceres* loue,/Then ransacke hell, and rescue *Proserpine*?' (Sig. K4v).

9 Stigian: associated with the Styx, the principal river of hell.

11 *vent*: discharge, carry off.

13 *Squint-ey'd* Erictho: 'a notorious witch of Thessaly, deciphered by *Lucan*', Thomas Heywood, *Gunaikeion* (1624), Sig. 2M5, Lib. 8, p.405. Her squint is not mentioned by Heywood or Lucan (*Pharsalia* (1614), translated by Arthur Gorges, Lib. 6).

13.1 the three Fates: 'The Fates or Parcae presided over the birth and life of all the human race' (T). They appear in a number of other plays and masques, including Campion's *Masque at the Earl of Somerset's Marriage* (1614), performed in 1613, where their costume is described: 'next come the THREE DESTINIES, in long robes of white taffata, like aged women with garlands of narcissus flowers on their heads, and in their left hands they carried distaffes, according to the descriptions of Plato and Catullus, but in their right hands they carried altogether a Tree of golde', Nichols, *The Progresses of King James the First* (1828), II, p. 710.

14 *Rise, rise*: This suggests that Lucina and the Fates enter from below, through a trap-door. The thunder (l. 11) would cover the noise of the machinery. See Introduction p. 13.

15 *Thanks . . . Gods*: as the daughter of Jupiter, Hecate/Lucina was half-sister to many gods.

16 *There . . . Fates*: an indication that Lucina must leave the stage with the Fates.

17 *throws*: i.e. throes.

20 *beguil*: divert attention from.

21 *Anticks*: grotesques.

22 *Thanks . . . Shades*: This address marks the return of Lucina.

27 *all-admiring*: astounding all (Admire, *v*. 4; one example only, *c*. 1650).

28 *event*: fate.

28–29 *his Art . . . Land*: The wall of brass is metaphorical here, and refers to the power of Merlin's *Art*. In *The Faerie Queene* (III.iii.10), and Drayton's *Polyolbion* (Song IV, ll. 331–32), Merlin is described as wishing to raise an actual wall of brass around Carmarthen, but it is most unlikely that that is meant here, as *stand* in the sense, 'cause to stand' is first noted by *OED* in 1837 (*v*. V. 65). The simile, 'like (a) brazen wall(s)' occurs in *The Welsh Embassador* II.ii.45; Thomas Churchyard's poem *The Worthiness of Wales* (1587), Sig. M2v; *The Noble Spanish Soldier* II.ii.50; and Goffe's *The Courageous Turk*, 470. Brass was considered to be impenetrable, and an actual wall round England is suggested in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (203–04), and one round Germany in *Doctor Faustus* (115, I.i).

32 *Upon . . . name*: Unless this is metaphorical, it seems that Merlin was expected to appear before the audience labelled, like Lucifer in *Like Will to Like* (1587): 'This name Lucifer, must be written on his back and on his brest' (Sig. A3).

34 Silvester: another name of Merlin Caledonius (as distinct from Merlin Ambrosius). Selden follows Giraldus in distinguishing between the two traditions (Song IV, p. 89).

35 Brittany: i.e. the island of Britain; *OED* has instances of this usage from 1579 to 1662; Q's 'Brittain' does not scan, and the form 'Brittany' occurs in another rhyming couplet at II.iv.110. Q2 *Edward III* similarly emends Q1's 'Brittayne', apparently to rectify scansion (II.ii.95, *Apocrypha*).

38 *ebbone*: i.e. ebon, a word used frequently by Heywood, presumably as more high-sounding than 'black'.

III.iv

4–5 *stir a foot*: also II.i.146.

6 *kindness*: obviously associated with 'the deed of kind' (i.e. copulation). *OED* offers 'love' and 'affection', but cites Dunbar's *Twa Mariit Wemen* (1508), where the sexual connotation is quite clear: 'Sum kissis me; sum clappis me; sum kyndnes me proferis' (l. 483).

8 *Cousin*: nephew, kinsman.

12 *Moon-calf*: an obsolete term, originally describing a fleshy mass formed in the womb, or a false conception: it is used in connection with Merlin by Thomas Heywood in his *Life of Merlin, Surnamed Ambrosius* (1641), Sig. E2ᵛ; see IV.i.42n. Caliban is twice referred to as a Moon-calf (*Tempest* II.ii.106–07, and III.ii.20–21) and there is a character of that name in *Bartholomew Fair*. Jonson (*News from the New World* (1620), 237–40) explains the term ironically: 'a very familiar thing, like our foole here on earth . . . The Ladyes . . . play with them instead of little Dogges'. Drayton's satire called *The Mooncalf* was not printed until 1627.

20 *meat*: food.

27 *I'de laugh at that*: proverbial (Dent L90.11).

37 *Hartichoke*: = artichoke; this vegetable insult perhaps suggested by *fruit* in the line above. A common term of abuse, as in *The Blind Beggar of Bednall Green* (1659), Sig. F2; *1 The Honest Whore* II.i.130–31, and *Satiromastix*, IV.i.176. It presumably derives from the shape and texture of the vegetable, and is perhaps aimed at men with beards.

38 *go*: walk.

40 *Soap and Candle*: often referred to together, and apparently the two most essential requirements in taking care of a baby: the soap for washing it, and the candle for night-time attention; see *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, Revels edition, II.ii.163–65, and 165n. It is therefore unnecessary to emend *candle* to *caudle* as some editors do, both here and in other cases (e.g. *The Chances* I.v.29) where the context is babies. However, the two words are obviously particularly susceptible to compositorial error (*u*/*n* confusion as a result of foul case), and an instance of *candle* being printed for *caudle* is noted among the 'Errors . . . escaped' on the final leaf of Florio's *Montaigne* (1603); another occurs in the First Folio *2 Henry VI*, 2723, IV.vii.84.

40 *I . . . teeth*: perhaps Richard III: 'Teeth had'st thou in thy head, when thou was't borne,/To signifie, thou cam'st to bite the world', *3 Henry VI* 3127–28, V.vi.53–54.

44–45 Tom Thumb . . . *belly*: This example of precocity does not appear in either of the extant printed early versions of the Tom Thumb story, *The History of Tom Thumb the Little* (1621), by 'I.R.', or *Tom Thumb His Life and Death* (1630), but C. F. Bühler, the editor of the former

(Evanston, 1965), notes allusions to Tom Thumb from as early as 1579 (p. vii).

45–47 *a Childe ... monstrous*: In a chapter headed, 'A Man before Age', Simon Goulart, *Admirable and Memorable Histories* (1607), gives three examples of babies born with teeth and hair or beards (Sig. V2). Strange births are common matter in discursive works of this sort.

52 *Hot-house ... Low Countries*: a brothel in Holland, or hell. The punning use of *Low Countries* for 'hell' also occurs in Dekker's *1 Honest Whore* IV.iv.90, and *The Noble Spanish Soldier* V.ii.89–90.

53 *the childe ... father*: another repetition of the play's 'catch-phrase'.

55 *Uncle*: address as uncle; the verb occurs in *Richard II*: 'Grace me no Grace, nor Vnckle me,/I am no Traytors Vnckle' (1198–99, II.iii.85).

56 *Baboon*: Topsell describes them as 'a kind of Apes, whose heads are like Dogges, and their other part like a mans ... *Apollonius* ... describeth them to be blacke haird, Dog-faced, and like little men', *The History of Four-Footed Beasts* (1607) pp. 10–11.

57 *Urchin*: Like *Baboon*, this suggests a strange appearance, and can signify a small or deformed person, a pert child, a supernatural creature like a goblin or elf (*sb.* 1c, 1584–1614), or even 'an offspring of hell' (5c, 1584–1648 '*rare*').

61 *The devil it is*: proverbial (Dent D238.1).

64 *a face like a Frying-pan*: i.e. black.

66 *juggle*: play tricks.

are mine eyes matches: i.e. an exact pair; the expression is proverbial (Tilley E271); equivalent to the modern 'Am I seeing straight?'

67–68 *Hat ... for*: The Devil has changed his costume without leaving the stage. See Introduction p. 51.

73 *plain*: blunt, outspoken.

76 *and*: even if.

81–82 *you may ... bought*: 'Far fetched and dear bought is good for ladies' (Tilley D12).

85–86 *if ... talkt on*: One remembers the enthusiasm of the Citizen's wife in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* for 'the little child that was so faire growne about the members' (III. ll. 275–76), and the reference in *Henry VIII* to 'some strange Indian with the great *Toole*' 3292–93, V.iii.33–35).

86–89 Suffolk ... Hell-bree: Robb gives a 'fondness for punning on the names of towns' as one of William Rowley's characteristics (p. 133), but the vice seems common; see Middleton's *A Mad World My Masters* (1608): 'y'are no true Linconsheere spirits; you come rather out of Bedforesheere, we connot lie quiet in our beds for you' (Sig. C2^{v}).

Suffolk: the pun seems to depend on the latter syllable being pronounced 'fuck'; a similar example occurs in Middleton's *Anything for a Quiet Life* (1662) at the beginning of a seduction scene: 'I am a *Suffolk* woman, my Lord' (Sig. C2), and perhaps *Hengist*: 'Theirs yet behind a paire of teemeing sisters/Norfolke & Suffolke' (IV.iii.117–18).

standing house: permanent dwelling-house.

Hocklye i'th Hole: According to Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary* (7th edition, 1849) Hockliffe, or Hockley, in the Hole, near Leighton Buzzard, was so called because of its low situation. See *The Roaring Girl* III.ii.87 for a reference to 'Hockly hole'. As a joke about copulation it

also appears in Middleton's *Black Book* (1604): 'they commit Brotherlrye, when they make many a man stand at *Hockley* in the Hole' (Sig. C3).
Layton-buzzard: A stupid or ignorant person might be called a 'buzzard' because the birds were considered too stupid to be trained for falconry. It was obviously a place-name which would raise a laugh. John Taylor uses it facetiously in a dedicatory preface to Sir Gregory Nonsense in his *Works* (1630), Sig. 2A1, and it was still funny in 1675 when it appeared in *Mercurius Verax; or, The Prisoners Prognostications for the Year 1675* (p. 51) as the site of a fair for fools.
Hell-bree: now Hilbre, a small island at the mouth of the Dee estuary, off the coast of the Wirral peninsula. The pun is, of course, on *Hell*, and also occurs in *Anything for a Quiet Life* (1662): 'My wife will be heard from *Hellbree* to *Divellin*' (Sig. G3v).

101 *still*: always.

105–06 *horns ... cloven foot*: two of the features by which devils can be identified: 'I look down towards his feet; but that's a Fable', *Othello* (3588, V.ii.289); and 'my heart was at my mouth,/Till I had view'd his shooes well: for, those roses/Were bigge inough to hide a clouen foote', *The Devil is an Ass* (I.iii.7–8).

III.v

1 *close*: secret.
Complots: conspiracies.

2 *with winged speed*: The same phrase occurs in *The Two Noble Ladies* (l. 869), and 'In winged speed' in Shakespeare's sonnet 51.

9 *quit*: rid yourself of.

11 *home*: effective (B. 5, from *a*1625).

14 *possest*: occupied.

15–18 *Revolve ... miscarriage*: The syntax is both inverted and elliptical. It seems to mean, 'Consider what great importance rests on the mere occurrence and outcome of our intentions, jointly, since we have put our lives at risk on the chance of the smallest error'.

15 *Revolve*: consider.
consequence: importance.

16 *bare*: mere.
event: the taking place, or coming to pass, or happening.
sequel: outcome.

17 *consists*: rests, is based.

26 *cashier'd*: discharged (*v*. 1a. *Mil*.).

III.vi

2–4 *What ... lost*: a commonplace; see Jonson, Fletcher and Middleton, *The Widow* (1652): ''Tis gone agen, since; such are all lifes pleasures,/No sooner known, but lost; he that enjoys 'em/The length of life, has but a longer dream,/He wakes to this i'th end, and sees all nothing' (Sig. B2).

2 *blood*: lust, sexual passion.

11–13 *Pleasure ... top*: The images are part of Artesia's continuing attempt to discover how long Uter's interest in her will last. She professes to fear

that pleasure, like the building or the cedar, decreases (or dies) when it reaches its highest point.

12–13 *Cedars ... top*: This sounds proverbial, but is not recorded by Tilley. Burton Stevenson, however, notes Swift's comment, 'I shall be like that tree — I shall die at the top' (*c.* 1740), in his *Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases* (1949).

14–16 *From ... Skie*: Artesia says that the images are from *Art* (the building), and *Nature* (the cedar), and are an attempt to secure Uter's fidelity before she will risk giving way to him.

22 *main*: elliptical for 'main sea', the open ocean, playing on *main* = the most important.

24–25 *give ... enjoy*: Q's *me*, often emended to *you*, perhaps suggests the reciprocal nature of a kiss. Its presence, however, makes the line unmetrical, and it may be an inadvertent interpolation by the typesetter.

28 *faith*: fidelity, and religion; part of the religious metaphor linking the words *Atheism* (l. 26), *belief* (l. 29), and *Martyrdom* (l. 30).

33 *Enough ... help*: a cry for help in iambic pentameter; similarly, *The Two Noble Ladies*: 'Help ye chaste pow'rs, help heau'n, help Angells, help' (l. 270).

36 *Yet ... Treachery*: a threat, which could involve the Prince drawing his sword.

41 *mettle*: (originally, = metal), quality of disposition.

43 *What ... was I*: a common expression of self-reproach; see Chapman, *All Fools*, V.ii.79.

50 *speak*: manifest yourself (*v.* IV. 29, from 1605).

54 *buckler*: defend, as with a buckler, a small round shield.

56 *my ... thee*: WP note a similar use of *bite* in *Merry Wives* II.i.118; and *Lear* V.iii.276.

59 *forc't*: brought about by force, but perhaps playing on the sense, 'ravished'.

62–63 *Oh ... ever*: Artesia claims concern for the safety of Aurelius: if he stops to speak now, he may not live to speak again.

62 *stay*: pause.

63 *Prevents*: precludes, stops.

70 *The Devil ... first*: an emphatic denial.

73 *Sham'd not*: did not feel ashamed.

77 *'Tis all ... she is*: the third *as* (before *foul*) could be an inadvertent repetition of the previous phrase.

as false as hell: proverbial (Tilley H398).

78–79 *Cupid's Revenge* (l).

78 *Deadly Sin*: perhaps Lechery.

79 *discover*: reveal.

82 *suddenly*: immediately.

83 *fleering*: grinning, jeering.

84 *Fury*: It is strange that Octa reacts to this word and not the insult.

85 *Cupid's Revenge* (m).

Ratsbane: a poison for killing rats. *OED* does not record it as an insult. There is a character called Ratsbane in *The Valiant Welshman* (1615).

urge: provoke.

88 *Bite ... tongue*: WP compare with *3 Henry VI*, I.iv.47.

94 *blasted*: tainted.
99 *devulsive*: *OED* takes this to be *divulsive*, and cites it as the earliest example (dated *c.* 1605), meaning 'tending to tear apart'. The word *diuul'st* appears in Marston, *Antonio and Mellida* (1602), l. 187.
101 *Cupid's Revenge* (n).
Wilde-fire: a mixture of highly inflammable substances used in warfare.
102 *hear*: pay attention to; this stronger sense (than the modern) makes Edol's reaction, and the hyperbole of his claim (l. 103), less unreasonable.
shall: very emphatic; as in *Coriolanus* III.i.89–90.
114 *gilded*: (figurative); possessing a deceptively favourable appearance.
115 *creeper*: small animal; for an insult, specifically a louse.
115–16 *Toad . . . face*: proverbial: 'Full as a toad of poison' (Tilley T360), and 'He has spit his venom' (Tilley V28). Topsell maintains that the 'spettle . . . of Toades is venomous, for if it fall vpon a man, it causeth all his hayre to fall off from his head', *The History of Serpents* (1608), Sig. S1, p. 193.
119 *Kings . . . thee*: Edol's point is that they will be protected from physical assault (by him) because they are in the area immediately before the king (the *Kings presence*).
121 *Foul-mouth'd*: with bad language; humorously appropriate in the wake of Edol's invective against Octa, but perhaps not a term which such a humourless character would use about himself: the author may have intended *Full-mouthed* (violently), which would be more in keeping with the lion simile.
quick: alive.
125 *troop*: gather into a troop (*v.* 2a, from *c.* 1590 to 1620).
130 *vengance*: an acceptable spelling, but rather old-fashioned by the date of printing.
133 *bewitch*: see also III.i.134 and note.
145 *Burgonet*: a type of helmet. H1 quotes *2 Henry VI*, V.i.201: 'And that Ill write upon thy burgonet'. See also *Locrine* II.i.84, and numerous occurrences in the works of Thomas Heywood.

IV.i

3 *overgrow*: grow beyond, exceed.
5 *sisters thread*: *thread* being the material of which something is composed (*sb.* 3b, from 1632) would sufficiently explain the phrase in this context, but see *1 The Honest Whore*: 'Bound with strong corde!/A Sisters thred yfaith had beene enough,/To lead me any where' (IV.iii.161–63). This suggests that the phrase had some more specific meaning which has been lost. It may have some connection with *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607): 'And carefull sisters spinne that thread ith night,/That does maintaine them and their bawdes ith daie' (Sig. D4, II.ii.144–45). The Revels editor, R. A. Foakes, glosses *sisters* here as 'probably = prostitutes', and cites *OED*, *Sister*, 3c, *sisters of the bank*, 1550. It is conceivable that the idea of 'the thread of life' has some bearing on the matter.
6 *task*: censure.
8–9 *I do feel . . . side*: i.e. his pockets are unbalanced.

9 *that Sparrowhawk*: i.e. the page.
Cast: (1) a hawking term for a pair, or group, of hawks; (2) a trick (*sb.* 24a; last instance 1609).
10 *Covy*: a collective noun for a family group of game-birds, usually partridges.
Cardecu's: 'A *cardecu* was a corruption of *un quart d'ecu*, the fourth part of a crown' (T).
11 *sirrah*: a term of address to an inferior.
21 *filching*: the verb to *filch* (= to steal) was originally slang, first recorded in the sixteenth century.
24 *juggler*: conjuror.
cleanly: deft, artful.
conveyance: stealing (by trickery); methods are described in Scot's *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), in a chapter entitled 'Of conveiance of monie' (Bk. 13, Ch. 24).
30 *slights of hand*: (i.e. sleights) tricks.
31 *all*: only.
34 *see you*: see that you are.
36 *prevent*: anticipate.
38 *would prefer*: intend to introduce or recommend.
40 *Artists*: skilled practitioners.
41 *futurity*: future time (2, from 1604).
42 *Bards . . . Wizards*: Heywood, in his *Life of Merlin, Surnamed Ambrosius* (1641), refers to 'the strange and prodigious impediments, which hindred the work, then his assembly of the *Bards* and *Wisards*' (Sig. E3–E3^{v}). See below, ll. 46–47 for *BM*'s use of 'strange' and 'prodigious' in this connection. There are very few correspondences between Heywood's *Life* and *BM*, and these could be coincidental; see other examples at III.iv.12 and IV.i.103.
Bards: A stage-direction in *The Valiant Welshman* (1615) by 'R. A.' introduces '*the ancient Bardh, a kind of Welsh Poet*' (Sig. A4). Selden refers to their 'powerfull enchantments' (Song VI, p. 122).
Druids: 'those great Philosophers, Priests, and Lawyers'; they are also 'in profession very proportionat in many things to *Cabalistique* and *Pythagorean* doctrine', according to Selden (Songs VI and X, pp. 122, 214).
43 *Aurasper . . . whisling spells*: presumably *Haruspex*, one who divines by looking into entrails. The connection with whistling is not clear; the custom of whistling for wind (proverbial, Tilley W440) is referred to in Marlowe's *Dido Queen of Carthage*: 'And silver whistles to controule the windes,/Which *Circes* sent *Sicheus* when he lived' (IV.iv.10–11). *Aurasper* is conceivably a coinage or a misunderstanding: Aura = breeze (Latin). *OED* quotes *BM* wrongly as *Aruspex*.
44 *Capnomanster*: not in *OED*, but obviously a practiser of capnomancy or divination by smoke.
46 *calculate*: 'To ascertain beforehand the time or circumstances of an (event . . .) by astrology or mathematics' (v^{1}. 2. *ellipt.*).
event: occurrence, or outcome.
47 *prodigious*: amazing and, possibly, ominous.
48 *labours . . . day*: *painful* is a transposed epithet.

49 *still*: always.
52 *mother wit*: natural common sense.
52–53 *thou ... mouth*: a rather old joke; see Peele's *The Old Wives Tale*: 'either hear my tale, or kiss my tail' (117), and the exchanges in *Shrew* II.i.209–15.
54 *shuffle*: mingle.
a made man: one whose success in life is assured.
56 *overslip*: pass over, fail to notice.
60 *fatal*: decreed by fate.
62 *If the devil*: i.e. whoever, a manner of speech particularly appropriate in the circumstances.
63 *Diggon*: Welsh for 'enough', and a word constantly used by stage Welshmen; see *Dekker Commentary* (*Northward Ho*, II.i.221n) for examples. In addition, there is a Welshman called Diggon in Huntington Library MS. HM. 22 (*Collections IX*, M.S.R. (1971 (1977)), pp. 67–75).
66 *lend ... ear*: proverbial (Tilley E18).
70–71 *the like ... Unicorn*: Similar phraseology occurs in *A Cure for a Cuckold* (1661): 'The like has bin done for the loss of the Wedding-ring' (Sig. H4^{v}). Topsell summarizes unicorn research in *The History of Four-Footed Beasts* (1607), Sig. 3S2^{v}–3S3.
82 *Bailys and Brokers*: both dealers in other people's financial affairs, and commonly regarded as dishonest. For the former, *OED* cites Fulbecke's (1602) definition: 'he to whom a speciall charge of procuring a mans profite, and the valuable increase of his wealth is committed' (Bailie, 4). A broker, as described by Cowell, deals in 'maters of mony and marchandise betwene Englishe men and Strangers ... not forgetting to grinde out something to his owne profit' (Sig. L1^{v}).
82–83 *brothers in Law to thee*: a play on words: as agents, both bailies and brokers would frequently be involved in legal suits.
84 *speed*: have success.
87 *more ... wit*: proverbial (Tilley B736).
99 *Goshawk*: a type of small hawk. Also the name of a lecherous character in *The Roaring Girl*; and see *2 Honest Whore*: 'wee heare of two or three new Wenches are come vp with a Carrier, and your old Goshawke here is flying at them' (III.iii.6–7).
100 *Windfucker*: an obsolete name for the kestrel (1, one example only, 1599), and also a term of opprobrium (2. *fig.*, from 1602 to *a*1616).
103 *But ... doubtful*: similarly, 'but his father doubtfull', Heywood's *Life of Merlin* (Sig. C1^{v}); see IV.i.50n.
111–13 *May ... been*: see also II.i.99, and *Troilus*: 'canst thou not heare? Feele then. *Strikes him.*' (869–70, II.i.10–11); also Greene's *Friar Bacon*, ll. 545–50; undoubtedly allusions to William Lily's *Short Introduction of Grammar* (part of the authorized school primer: see T. W. Baldwin, *Shakespere's Small Latine*, I. 97–98). This is probably what William is being tested on in *Merry Wives* IV.i (Arden edition, l. 13n), and it is quoted by Marston in *What You Will* (1607): 'A nowne is the name of a thing that may be seene felt heard or vnderstood' (Sig. C4). The Gentleman may *feel* Joan actively or passively, and she is a *thing* in more than one sense:

devilish thing: (1) violent creature (Devilish, *a*. 4, from 1612; Thing, *sb*,[1] II. 10); (2) the Devil's 'plaything', with *thing* used in sense II. 11c, the private parts, as in Iago's innuendo: '*AEmil*. . . . I haue a thing for you./*Iago*. You haue a thing for me? It is a common thing' (*Othello*, 1937–38, III.iii.305–07).

118 *staid*: = stayed, postponed, put off (*v*.[1] 10, from 1642).

121 low: of music, 'characterized by relatively slow vibrations; grave' (*adj*., II, 10a).

137 *by this intelligence*: by means of this information.

141–42 *the childe . . . father*: an allusion to the proverbial saying that it is a wise child that knows its own father (Tilley C309), but also a reference to the 'catchphrase' of the play's alternative title.

145 *Mother . . . unastonisht*: an unmetrical line; *be* should perhaps be inserted after *and*.

149 *yet*: so far.

150–65 A conventional confession-speech; see Introduction, pp. 70–72.

150 *blood*: birth, or parentage. It would be inconsistent to gloss it as 'lust' or 'passion' here, as the speech goes on to describe her complete self-regard and rejection of others as unworthy.

151 *glass*: i.e. looking-glass.

152 *peevish*: foolish.

156–57 *Thus . . . feet*: suggesting hypocrisy and too much interest in outward show; see *The Discovery of the Knights of the Post* (1597) 'By E. S.': 'what is become of the broker, the bird with the blacke foote and goulden taile' (Sig. B2[v]). Proverbial (Tilley P158).

train: the tail of a bird, especially the peacock.

158 *Oft . . . me*: as in *Hamlet*: 'That he might not beteeme the winds of heauen/Visite her face too roughly' (Sig. C1[v], I.ii.141–42).

159 *blast*: wither, blight.

166 Incubus: '*Incubi*, that is to vnderstand, such as conueieng mans seed from him (and therewith by illusion taking vpon them the shape and figure of man) doo lie with women, and vse them after the maner of carnall copulation', *History of Scotland*, p. 97, ll. 32–36a.

170–71 *Go . . . thus?*: Q's question-mark indicates the interrogative nature of the demand.

178–81 *Hast . . . sudden*: WP compare this to *Lear*: 'Now all the plagues that in the pendulous ayre/Hang fated o're mens faults' (1848–49, III.iv.66–67), a passage which derives from Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*: 'that all the sensible accidents should be made pendulous in the ayre, like Archimedes *doue*' (see *Lear*, Arden edition l. 67–68n).

pendelous: i.e. pendulous, overhanging; spelled *pendulous* at V.i.98.

183 *trifles*: lies (*v*.[1] 2, last instance 1602), combined with sense 4, wastes time.

191 A stone falls: See Introduction pp. 13–14.

192 *die laughing*: perhaps an echo of 'He laughs ill that laughs himself to death' (Tilley D154, from 1616).

193 *admiration*: the faculty of exciting wonder (3, last instance 1642).

195 *stone fruit*: the common term for fruit which contains a 'stone'.

197 *shape*: form, image.

198 *clear*: For the sake of the metre this needs to be a disyllable; perhaps *clearer* was the intended word.

203 *Mother . . . absent*: an unskilful way of removing characters from the stage; see also the silencing of the Clown in a similarly 'serious' scene (IV.v.83).

208.1 strikes: makes a sudden movement with (*v*. VI. 50, from 1607).

209 *What . . . stay*: identical to Proximus's question when the Hermit intervened to stop the show of Hector and Achilles (II.ii.208).

219 *doubt*: be afraid (*v*. 8a, last instance 1577–87).
slightly: readily.

221 *approve*: find by experience.

222 *dampish*: damp (perhaps with noxious vapours).

227 *To . . . then*: a metrically defective line.

233 *cement*: unite or stick, as with cement; accented on the first syllable.

234 *The English* Saxon: i.e. the Anglo-Saxons, now naturalized, as opposed to the Saxons still living in Germany.

238 *unite*: *OED*'s earliest example of intransitive use (4) is 1613; in a military context (5b), 'To form one combined or conjoint body', it is first cited *a*1700.

240 *extirpation*: extermination.

243 *airy*: lofty, or perhaps imaginary: the plural, *Castles*, suggests a dismissive tone.

252 *With a full vengeance*: an intensifying phrase indicating an extreme degree (Vengeance, 4b. *With a vengeance*). Vortiger is showing contempt for the enemy, as in his transformation of the *great General* to the *great Devil* (l. 251).

254 *To their confront*: for a face-to-face encounter with them. *OED* gives this, dated *c*. 1605, as its earliest example (Confront, *sb*. 2).
as: since, or because.
full march double footing: both pairs of words are apparently phrases signifying military fast-marching (not in *OED*).

256–57 *Cupid's Revenge* (o).

IV.ii

1 *advice*: = advise, take counsel, or consult (an imperative).

2–4 *Beat . . . selves*: The first line is addressed to the drummer, the next two to the Prince. Edol is impatient at being ordered to halt when the enemy is not yet in sight.

7 *Garison*: defence (*sb*. 2, last instance 1561).

19 Tucket: trumpet flourish.

22 *choke*: silence.

27 *drums heads*: the taut skins on which the sound is produced. *OED* has only 'drumhead', from 1622.

29 *Articles*: conditions, terms (*sb*. III. 6c, from 1650).
inforce: put into force.

31 *value*: to equal in value (*v*. III. 8a, from 1561 to *BM*, dated *a*1642).

32 *by thousand tortures*: similarly, 'though it cost thousand lives' (IV.v.70).

35 *And . . . neither*: see *Troilus* II.ii.21–25 for Hector's discussion of what is lost or gained by the war in terms of 'tenths'.

37 *My . . . now*: 'the voyce of thy brothers blood crieth vnto mee out of the ground' (Genesis 4: 10).

IV.iii

3 *onely*: sole.
fall: cause of fall, slayer (*sb.*[1] III. 17. *ellipt.*, last instance 1611).
4 *I . . . brother*: see *3 Henry VI*, II.ii.113n ('I slew thy father'). The Arden editor comments: 'Clifford's fixed idea again — the refrain of the first half of the play'.
12–18 *the Saxons . . . be known*: This false etymology of 'England' was often quoted. See Selden (Song I, p. 28).
15 *blot*: efface.

IV.iv

2 *Beaver*: a helmet (with a visor).
13 *hounds*: a contemptuous term for men; here presumably of low military rank.
13–14 *as violent . . . walls*: an allusion to the proverb, 'Hunger breaks down stone walls' (Tilley H811); used similarly in *Old Fortunatus* (1600): 'hunger is made of Gun-powder, or Gun-powder of hunger; for they both eate through stone walles' (II.ii.82–84).

IV.v

0.1 Blazing Star appears: see Introduction pp. 14–16.
0.2 Tromp: a variant spelling of trump; = trumpet.
2 *exalation*: meteor, as in *Julius Caesar*: 'The exhalations, whizzing in the ayre' (662, II.i.44); 'The sun was thought to produce meteors by drawing up vapours from the earth', T. S. Dorsch (Arden edition, note); he also refers to *Romeo*: 'It is some Meteor that the Sun exhales' (2045, III.v.13). The modern distinction between meteors and comets did not exist in the seventeenth century, and both terms are used to describe this blazing star (see ll.10, 34).
4 *the beam above*: This emendation from Q's *the beam that 'bout* is necessary on account of the syntactical incompleteness of the sentence as it stands, and is suggested by the corroborative evidence as to what is intended in a further description of the star at line 89. This description is consistent with the former in all details regarding shape, and it places the dragon's head 'Above yon flame-hair'd beam that upward shoots'. It is possible that *that* was interlined as a correction for *the*, and was inserted in the wrong place, *above* then being contracted to fit the metre. The emendation is a compromise, and is certainly open to question in view of the wording of Caxton's *Chronicle* from which the passage probably derives: 'at the bought of the beme appered a dragons heed'; *bought* (*sb.*[1], which can also be spelled *bout*) means curve, or angle, although for sense 3, for which the Caxton examples only are cited, *OED* gives no definition, but refers to *v.*[1], 'To bend, wind, fold; to link'. It is just conceivable that this word in Caxton influenced the text of *BM* in some way; for example, the line might have been intended as: 'See in the beam that bouts his flaming ring'. A compositor or transcriber unfamiliar with

the verb or, indeed, an author imperfectly revising an original intention to follow Caxton's wording, could have produced the Q reading.

6 *flaming flakes of fire*: these are later described as 'Two streaming lights' with 'flame-feather'd darts' (l. 89).

flakes: portions of flame.

8–9 *directly ... kingdom*: 'Some holde opinion, that it is to be marked, which way Blazing starres shoote their light, because (say they) that part of the earth seemeth to bee threatned, towardes which the Comet casteth his beames thickest and most directly', Abraham Fleming, *A Treatise of Blazing Stars in General* (1618), Sig. D1.

14 *If it ... fall*: i.e. if it was meant to indicate the fall of Vortiger alone.

15 *Piramids*: rays of pyramid (or obelisk) shape.

17 *These ... effects*: 'to touch the effects of *Blazing starres*, experiences manifold and innumerable haue sealed this for a trueth, that sometimes they signifie barrennesse of the earth, sometimes the sicknesse of the plague and pestilence ... sometimes chaunge of Kings and Kingdoms, alterations of common wealthes, and such slaughters as seldome are seene: with many more calamities infinite and innumerable', *A Treatise of Blazing Stars*, Sig. D1.

19 *want*: lack.

Pithon: a soothsayer, someone speaking by supernatural inspiration; Reginald Scot explains the origin of the term: 'our oracle of *Apollo* at *Delphos* ... was called *Pytho*, for that *Apollo* slue a serpent so called, whereof the *Pythonists* take their name' (Bk. 7, Ch. 5, p. 136). The form *Pithon* was frequently used both of the oracle and of those inspired by it.

36 *translate*: convey, transport.

38 *figur'd*: prefigured (*v*. 5, one example only, 1593).

50–51 *From ... it*: *in it* would seem to be pleonastic after *From which*.

61 *Forfend*: forbid, prohibit.

62 *Palace, Royal sir*: a comma after *Royal* (and not after *Palace*) is opted for by all previous editors, presumably thinking of Molière's 'Palais Royal' Theatre, later the home of the Comédie-Française. *OED* has no example under *Palace* or *Royal* of this combination. *Royal sir* is the more likely: Uter has just (on the death of Aurelius) succeeded to the crown and is addressed as *Royal Prince* at line 150. In IV.i.231, Merlin addressed Vortiger as *Royal sir*.

64 *Or what means* Merlin: 'By what means?' or 'What does Merlin mean?'

73 *portentious*: portentous, threatening.

75 *posterity*: succeeding generations.

82 *without book*: without authority; to 'speak without book' is proverbial (Tilley B532).

84 *Hum ... hum*: noises indicating that the Clown is unable to speak. In *All's Lost by Lust* the Clown twice attracts attention to himself with the same words, apparently clearing his throat, or actually humming (Sig. F2^{v} and F3). In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, '*Bungay is mute, crying Hud hud*' (l. 787).

85 *So, so*: perhaps accompanying some stage business, e.g. wand waving or other gestures to control the Clown.

91 *ignifirent*: the word does not appear in *OED*, but presumably means 'fire-bearing', as does D's emendation, 'igniferous' which appears in

OED from 1618; H1's 'igniserent', does not; it is glossed by him as, 'Ignescent; emitting sparks of fire'.

92 *splendant*: shining, brilliant.
illustrious: bright, luminous; *OED* gives this (dated *c.* 1605) as its earliest example (*a.* 1).

93 *Heralds*: officers who make royal proclamations; later, recorders of pedigree. Here used figuratively.

95 *Herogliphick*: = hieroglyphic, a symbol or emblem.
figures out: shadows forth (Figure, *v.* 15a, from 1602).

97 *by-form'd*: double; the Latin prefix, 'bi-', meaning two.

98 *emblem*: symbolize.

99 *a son and daughter*: i.e. Arthur and Anna. Madeleine Blaess gives useful information about inconsistencies in the chronicles on the subject of Arthur's sister, and also draws attention (with regard to Geoffrey of Monmouth's account of the blazing star) to 'the ray over Gaul signifying the powerful son who is to reign there, that over Ireland the daughter whose sons and "nepotes" will succeed to the kingdom of Britain'. She continues, 'So far as Arthur is concerned the prophecy is certainly fulfilled, but hardly with regard to Anna. Her children die .... Since one of Geoffrey's acknowledged objects is to proclaim the greatness of Merlin as a prophet, the apparent failure of his prophecy regarding Anna is particularly surprising', 'Arthur's Sisters', *Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne*, 8 (Paris, 1956), 69–77 (pp. 70–71).

101–02 *of whom ... Kings*: an affirmation not to be found in source material. See Introduction p. 99.

110 *Monarch of the West*: see Introduction p. 98.
seven hills: the seven hills on which Rome was built.

111 *contributory*: tributary; the phrase *contributorie kings* also appears in *1 Tamburlaine* III.iii.14.

113 *His ... Crowns*: 'King Arthure ... had his Shielde, Azure. xiii. crownes Or, 3. 3. 3. 3. and 1', Gerard Legh, *The Accidence of Armory* (1562), Folio 38[v].

115 *another Worthy*: Arthur is one of the Nine Worthies; Merlin implies that currently there are only eight (or fewer), but they must have been selected retrospectively: the earliest recorded reference is *c.* 1312 (W. C. Carroll, *The Great Feast of Language* (Princeton, 1976) p. 229). Although not all the names were constant, 'the Nine Worthies were generally reckoned to be three Pagans — Hector, Alexander, Julius Caesar; three Jews — Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus; and three Christians — Arthur, Charlemagne, Godfrey of Bouillon', A. R. Humphreys, *2 Henry IV*, Arden edition, II.iv.217–18n.

117 *Marshal Lovers*: i.e. 'martial' lovers, which could mean 'lovers of warlike feats', or refer to the knights' well-known propensities for both wars and lechery as described by Malory.

118 *the best*: the high point.

120 *Royal Table*: the Round Table. That the writer is aware that the table was round, even if he does not say so, can be assumed from the suggestion that the knights sat in such a way, 'As if they meant to circumscribe the world' (l. 122).

121 *all ... hurl'd*: A note in Selden's 'Illustration' to Song IV helps to explain this line: at the Round Table every knight was 'attended by his Esquire ... holding his shield' (p. 70). That this was part of the popular image of the gathering is suggested by the show which greeted the emperor Charles V on a visit to London in 1522. According to Edward Hall's account, 'vnder a rich clothe of estate sate kyng Arthur at a rounde table & was serued with x. kynges, Dukes and erles all bearyng Targettes of their armes' (quoted by Millican, p. 24).
round hurl'd: cast round about; *hurl'd* here does not indicate a violent action; *OED*'s closest sense is *v.* 4b, which includes an example from Chapman's *Iliads* (*c.* 1611): 'A heavenly veil she hurls On her white shoulders' (XIV. 150).

125 *Thou speakst of wonders*: Compare with the King's reaction to Cranmer's prophecy in *Henry VIII*: 'Thou speakest wonders' (3427, V.v.55); see Introduction p. 101.

131 *Hepterchy*: a term apparently introduced in the sixteenth century (*OED*) to describe the seven kingdoms established in Britain by the Angles and Saxons.

133 *authentical*: = authentic, trustworthy, authoritative.

133–34 *be ever ... actions*: Uter, unlike Aurelius, shows a proper respect for good counsel.

150–53 *the Addition* ... Uter-Pendragon: 'Pendragon' is an agnomen, or distinguishing title, like 'Coriolanus' (see *Coriolanus* I.ix.65). The Pen-prefix signifies 'head' or 'leader' (Welsh).

V.i

For a discussion of the staging of this scene, see Introduction pp. 16–19.

3 *infernal Musick*: evidently a theatrical classification. In Marston's *The Wonder of a Woman* (1606) a stage direction describes how '*Infernall Musicke plaies softly whilst Erichtho enters*' (Sig. E4), and in Jonson's *Masque of Queens*, 'These Witches, with a kind of hollow and infernall musique, came forth' (ll. 29–30).

5 *Is past*: has happened.

5–7 *Why ... arms*: The opening of this scene bears some resemblance to that in Rowley's *All's Lost by Lust* (1633) in which Jacinta enters chased by a Moor: '*Mo.* Thou mutable peece of nature, dost thou fly me?/*Iac.* Th'att frightfull to me. *Mo.* I shall be more frightfull,/If thou repell the proferd arme of love' (Sig. H4).

8 *Hell-hound*: originally Cerberus; used of a fiendish or evil person, as in *Macbeth* V.viii.3.

11 *Lion ... devour*: elliptical, omitting *which*; probably a biblical allusion: 'Bee sober and watch: for your aduersarie the deuill, as a roaring Lion walketh about, seeking whom he may deuoure' (1 Peter 5: 8).

14 *thou ... own*: similarly, *The Witch of Edmonton*: 'Ho! have I found thee cursing? now thou art mine own' (Sig. C4^{v}).

15 *charge of*: responsibility for.

16 *Oh ... me*: see also: 'Cover me with night', III.ii.50 and n.

17 *pride*: honour, glory (*sb.*^{1} II. 8b, last instance 1591).

19–23 *Kings ... story*: a view of the enduring quality of fame also put forward by Prince Edward in exchanges with Gloucester in *Richard III*, III.i.72–81.

21 *Cabalists*: Context suggests this emendation for Q's *Sabalists*. Scot describes the 'Cabalisticall art' as 'consisting of vnwritten verities' (Bk. II. Ch. xi, p. 198), and *BM* makes it clear that Merlin's fame will be transmitted orally. However, TB's suggestion of *fabulists* cannot be ignored; a fabulist is a relater of fables (from 1593), and a professional story-teller (from 1605), and the common confusion between *f* and long *s* is a likely source of error. D's suggestion of *satellites* (based on his misreading of Q as *Satalists*) can be safely ignored. H1's *Sabaites* is not known to *OED* (although *Sabaism* is star-worship, from 1727–41).

29 *conjure*: needs to be accented on the second syllable.

34 *Quench*: a rare use of the noun, meaning 'the thing which quenches', a sense not known to *OED*. It also occurs in the B text of Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*: 'rig'd with quench for thy lust', which Nicholas Brooke links with *The Revenge of Bussy* I.i.27–29, where it again appears in connection with *lust* (see *Bussy D'Ambois*, Revels edition, V.i.61n). Brooke considers the B text emendations to have come from a MS, probably 'a prompt-book which had been used in the theatre in the 1630s' (p. lxiv).

35 *Coajutors*: assistants.

spoils of: acts of destruction against.

35.1 Enter Spirits: The presence of more than one spirit is confirmed by plural references in lines 35, 44, and 48, and necessitates emendation of Q's *Exit Spirit* at line 48 as well. Error here and, apparently, at II.ii.203, associated with the word *Spirits*, suggests either that the final *s* was sometimes indistinguishable in the copy, or that the word was abbreviated. Since *Exit* with a plural subject would be inconsistent with the form adopted by Q from Sig. C4 onwards (see Introduction p. 4), the direction has been emended to *Exeunt Spirits*: the copy could have read *Ex. Spir.*, or similar.

36 *Ebon*: also used at III.iii.38 in supernatural circumstances.

37 *mount*: raise up, lift.

palled: covered with a pall. T's emendation to *pallid* (meaning pale or wan) is not unreasonable, but the references to 'fumes' and 'darkness' in the next two lines give a context for Hecate to be *palled*; compare *Macbeth*: 'Come thick Night,/And pall thee in the dunnest smoake of Hell' (401–02, I.v.47–48).

45 *Stix*: one of the rivers of hell. An oath by the Styx was considered to be inviolable, even by the gods.

46 *exorcisms*: spells, conjurations.

47 *pentagoron*: pentagonon, the form perhaps resulting from scribal error (*OED*); a five-pointed figure often credited with mystical power, as in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*: 'fiends,/Bow to the force of his Pentageron' (224–25). In *BM*, however, the word is used as if it means something else, like the council, or assembly, of devils.

48 Exeunt Spirits: see above, 35.1.

56 *kind*: birth, origin.

57 *against kinde*: contrary to nature.

58 *unkind*: ungrateful, playing on the two previous senses of *kind*.

65–66 *Put ... serpent*: Merlin has just addressed the Devil as 'an inferior lustful *Incubus*' (l. 62); now he seems to identify him with the serpent of Genesis (3: 14).

66 *cral*: crawl; *OED* gives *crall* as a common sixteenth-century form.

67 Achoron: '*An other riuer in hell*, Acherontis. *Sometime taken for all hell, and hellish* powers, as *diuells, &c.*', John Withals, *Dictionary* (1599), Folio 15a.

68 *local*: pertaining to the place.

75–77 Tenibrarum . . . mando: A. W. Ward describes this, surprisingly, as 'a terrific curse couched in fairly elegant Latinity', *A History of English Dramatic Literature* (1899), II, 244; but no satisfactory translation has been offered. T, having attempted it, came to the conclusion that it 'is in a Latin that Virgil never sung or Pliny ever wrote. It is very difficult to render into English at all'. However, adopting E's suggestion of 'princeps' for Q's baffling 'precis' (perhaps an error for an abbreviation of the former), it could conceivably be translated as follows: 'Prince of shades, god of riches and the lower depths, take this incubus into the abyss of eternal fire, or in this gloomy prison-house I command (you) to confine (him) for ever'. Similar examples of Latin invocations to spirits are to be found in *Bussy D'Ambois* IV.ii.32–40, and *John of Bordeaux* ll. 1147–51.

80 *How chear you*: literally, 'What is your state of mind?'

81 *my son is my deliverer*: i.e. her rescuer; he is now her *deliverer*, whereas she, at his birth, had been his. For similar play on 'deliver', with many more shades of meaning, see *All's Well*: 'In deliuering my sonne from me, I burie a second husband' (5–6, I.i.1–2).

84 *mischief*: plight, misfortune.

87 *Against . . . aid*: an unmetrical line; a word may have been lost before *Saxon*.

88 *soyl*: place, but perhaps also utilizing the available sense of a moral stain.

90 Merlins Bower: see Introduction, p. 50.

91–94 *There shall . . . soul*: The idea of a life of repentance for Merlin's mother occurs in the romances; see Introduction p. 50.

94 *all bare . . . soul*: i.e. with the flesh removed, the soul is revealed.
aierial: insubstantial, etherial (*a.* 2, from 1610).

95–97 *And when . . . sepulchre*: This seems to be the author's invention; in the chronicles, Stonehenge was erected in memory of the Britons slain by Hengist's treachery, although Aurelius was later buried there.
high: presumably 'superior in quality', as Stonehenge is not renowned for its height.

98 *pendulous*: see also IV.i.180.

100 Enigma: something puzzling, an unsolved problem; *OED* gives this (dated *c.* 1605) as its earliest example of figurative use.

101 *none . . . number them*: The stones were thought to be 'very difficult to be numbered', Holinshed's *Chronicle* (1587), p. 129, l. 74a. Sidney mentions the fact in his poem 'The Seven Wonders of England' (*Certain Sonnets* 22, 1–4), which is quoted by Selden (Song III, p. 60).

102 *hallow*: Q's *hollow* is an unlikely reading: Stonehenge is to be erected upon Salisbury Plain, rather than carved out of it (see ll. 95–96), and Merlin stresses that he will secure the place from evil spirits. For 'hallowed' in a similar context, see note 103 below.

103 *no Night-hag . . . tread*: slightly reminiscent of *Hamlet*: 'And then they say no spirit dare sturre abraode/The nights are wholsome, then no

plannets strike,/No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charme/So hallowed, and so gratious is that time' (Sig. B3–B3^{v}, I.i.161–64).

104 *sepulcher'd*: should evidently be pronounced to rhyme with *tread*.

V.ii

7 *My* . . . Gloster: Although Donobert is addressing the father, Gloster, he refers to the son, Edwin, as Earl of Gloster too.

8 *Those lost . . . all's lost*: a rather heavy-handed attempt at pathos; *All's Lost by Lust* is the title of a play by William Rowley.

10 *Oh no, my Lord*: It seems rather wasteful of resources to re-introduce the Hermit for such a short and unnecessary utterance. He plays no further part in the scene, the role of prophet being amply filled by Merlin. See Introduction p. 8.

12–13 *I perswade . . . you well*: similarly, Dekker, *Westward Ho*: 'Thou do'st perswade me to Ill, very well' (I.i.95).

15 *Which*: seems to refer to *good Office* in the previous line, but might, more logically, refer to *to marry* (l. 9). Donobert's lines to the Hermit (11–13), and Gloster's comment (l. 14), are not easy to interpret, but could be the tail-end of an argument with the Hermit who has been pleading the girls' case (as promised in III.ii.147–59). If this is so, the lines may represent an alternative opening to the scene.

20 *Monastery*: This is no contradiction to *Nunnery* (l. 3) as the two words were synonymous at this period.

23 *But . . . us*: an elliptical construction; they, having come from the King, offer to divulge his news, which is the *Times Joy*.

24 *The Saxon King* Ostorius: At I.ii.74–75, Ostorius is described as the Saxon general, and King of the East Angles, a minor inconsistency, but not necessarily a contradiction. However, the line is unmetrical as it stands, and *Saxon King* may represent an alternative to the name Ostorius. Either designation, followed by 'is', would make a more impressive (and metrical) announcement.

26 *fast*: secure.
hold: confinement, imprisonment.

40 *keep*: defend, protect.

45 *thy thrones zodiack*: a figurative use of *OED*'s first sense for *zodiac*, a belt of the celestial sphere in which the sun moves. The throne is here equivalent to the sun.

52–60 *Cupid's Revenge* (p). See also *Believe As You List*: 'haue my skinne flayde of, or stuffe it/with strawe like an aligator, & then showe it/in faires, and markets for a monster' (IV.iii.54–56).

55 *pelt*: skin, usually of animals, not people.

58 *fair . . . begging*: The monopoly is the exclusive right to collect money for showing the 'Monster'. The monopoly system was open to corruption and a source of much discontent throughout the reign of James I. 'The granting of monopolies was made illegal in 1624, though through a legal quibble Charles had managed to reintroduce the practice, in clear violation of the law', S. Orgel and R. Strong, *Inigo Jones; The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, 2 vols (1973), I. 64. For a joking reference, see *Anything for a Quiet Life* (1662): 'yet now I view thee well, methinks thou art a rare Monopoly, and great pity one man should enjoy thee', Sig. C2.

60 *Erictho*: see III.iii.13n.

61 *Is . . . torture-monger*: The *-monger* suffix is insulting, suggesting base and mercenary motivation. Artesia has just jeered at Edol's lack of originality, and sarcastically asks if there is not a better torturer. Q's comma before *torture-monger* makes an unlikely-sounding vocative and has been omitted.

63 Phaenix . . . *glorious*: an acceptable spelling of phoenix in the seventeenth century; the bird was often used to symbolize the succession of monarchs, the new one immediately taking the place of the old so that there is always a monarch, but only one.

70 *my . . . before*: 'The greatest of my desires has already been accomplished'.

85–87 *The Saxons . . . no more*: a repetition of one of the themes of Merlin's dragon prophecy in IV.i.

88 *apparitions*: appearances, manifestations.

90–91 *Succeeding . . . days*: i.e. Princes up to the time in the future when the present (of the play) shall appear to be the distant past. The sense of perspective is similar to that achieved at the end of the Fool's prophecy in *King Lear*: 'This prophecie *Merlin* shall make, for I liue before his time' (1749, III.ii.95–96).

93 Merlin strikes: probably his wand, as in IV.i.208.1.

93.1 Hoeboys: hautboys, oboes.

93.1–2 Shield . . . Crowns: see IV.v.113n.

93.2 divers: The writer was probably aware that the full thirteen could not be provided, when so many actors were already on stage. See Introduction p. 12.

93.3 Death . . . him: Death was traditionally portrayed with a dart, or long-shafted arrow; see *The Castle of Perseverance*, ll. 2808, 2837 (*The Macro Plays*, EETS, 1904), and James Shirley's *Cupid and Death* (1653), Sig. C3^{v} and C4.

93.4 Constantine: Constantine III, Arthur's successor, was the son of Cador, Duke of Cornwall.

107–08 *always . . . decree*: a commonplace; see *Locrine*: 'But what so ere the fates determind haue,/It lieth not in vs to disanull' (I.i.33–34), and *3 Henry VI*: 'What Fates impose, that men must needs abide' (2296, IV.iii.58).

109 *record*: recall or remember; or perhaps, relate orally (see V.i.21n).

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Credited on its first title-page to William Shakespeare and William Rowley, *The Birth of Merlin* continues to provoke speculation about its place in the Shakespeare 'Apocrypha'. The play is an imaginative re-working of the story of Merlin the magician and his part in the struggle against the Saxon invasion of Britain. It contains not only scenes of love, war, and court politics, but a Devil, a Clown, and an unusual number of spectacular stage effects.

This edition seeks to provide contexts for the play's diverse elements (chronicle history, romance, spectacle, and comedy), and considers its relationships with a wide variety of texts from Geoffrey of Monmouth and the English prose *Brut* to Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, with particular reference to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge* and Middleton's *Hengist King of Kent*. The question of what constitutes an English 'history' play is reconsidered, and *The Birth of Merlin* is compared with other Elizabethan and Jacobean attempts to dramatize Arthurian material.

The Introduction also presents the available evidence for date, authorship and stage-history, and includes a description of the text and printing of the 1662 quarto. This old-spelling edition is accompanied by full textual apparatus and a detailed commentary.