
“What stuff is here?” Edmond Malone and the 1778 Edition of Beaumont and Fletcher

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THE MANY AND VARIED CONTRIBUTIONS of Edmond Malone (1741–1812) to our understanding of early modern English literature, particularly of Shakespeare and of early drama, are too well known to require rehearsing. In fact, our scholarly work continues to be informed, for better or for worse, by the research questions influentially formulated by Malone in the late eighteenth century and by his assumptions about the nature and importance of documentary evidence, his search for authenticity in the complicated histories of Renaissance textual transmission, and his strong historicist conviction that the best way to study a literary text is to restore it as fully as possible to the original contexts of its production. Nevertheless, we still only imperfectly understand the production of Malone’s own scholarly work despite several remarkably rigorous and erudite studies published in recent decades.¹ There is, for example,

1. For different assessments of Malone’s scholarly legacy see: Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare’s Lives*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 97–178; Margreta de

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no edition of Malone's voluminous correspondence, currently scattered in various libraries around the world.² Perhaps because of his "horrible hand," as a major study of readers' notes from the period calls it, there is no systematic discussion of his copious (and often valuable) manuscript marginalia preserved in hundreds of books.³ Finally, there is still no comprehensive guide to the location of the surviving material relating to the life and work of "the last of the Shakspearians," as he styled himself toward the end of his life.⁴

It is normally assumed that those interested in Malone will find all they need in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, where a number of Malone's books were deposited soon after James Boswell the younger (1778–1822), to whom these books had been temporarily entrusted, completed Malone's unfinished edition of Shakespeare in 1821. The larger part of Malone's li-

Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Peter Martin, *Edmond Malone, Shakespearean Scholar: A Literary Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Simon Jarvis, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Shakespearean Textual Criticism and Representations of Scholarly Labour, 1725–1765* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 182–90; Marcus Walsh, "Edmond Malone," in *Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Malone*, ed. Claude Rawson, *Great Shakespearians 1* (London and New York: Continuum, 2010), 160–99.

2. Arthur Sherbo points out the need for an edition of Malone's correspondence in his article, "From the Sale Catalogue of the Library of James Boswell, the Younger (1778–1822): Did Boswell Play the Pianoforte?," *Notes and Queries* 51, no. 1 (March 2004): 62. Many letters by Malone have been published in the correspondence of his notable contemporaries, but many still remain unpublished.

3. H. J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 14; this parenthetical observation is the only reference to Malone the annotator in the book. The interest of Malone's marginalia and manuscript notes was stressed earlier, however, in James Prior, *Life of Edmond Malone, Editor of Shakspeare, with Selections from his Manuscript Anecdotes* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1860); for more recent discussions of some examples—in addition to Martin, *Edmond Malone*—see James M. Osborn, "Edmond Malone: Scholar-Collector," *The Library*, 5th ser. 19, no. 1 (1964): 11–37; Tom Lockwood, "Edmond Malone and Early Modern Textual Culture," *Yale University Library Gazette* 79, nos. 1 and 2 (2004): 53–69; Ivan Lupić, "Malone's *Double Falsehood*," in *The Quest for "Cardenio": Shakespeare, Fletcher, Cervantes, and the Lost Play*, ed. David Carnegie and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 95–114.

4. In a letter to Charles Burney the younger dated 14 February 1807, after the death of Isaac Reed; see Folger Shakespeare Library, MS C.a.2 (12), and also Martin, *Edmond Malone*, 257.

brary, however, had already been sold at auction in 1818. After Boswell’s portion of Malone’s books reached the Bodleian, its librarians continued to add to the collection by purchasing items not included in the bequest that occasionally came up for sale from various sources after 1818.⁵ While the Bodleian Library remains Malone’s primary home, it is important to remember that Maloniana will also be found in libraries other than the Bodleian—such as the British Library, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Huntington Library—and sometimes in uncataloged or inaccessible private collections. More surprisingly, books owned by Malone can still be acquired at a decent price by those lucky enough to stumble upon them on the online book market.

The purpose of this essay is to discuss one such instance: the ten-volume edition of *The Dramatick Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, published in London in 1778 and bought in 2014 by Brett Greatley-Hirsch at the price of US \$800.⁶ The set, originally owned by Malone, contains annotations in his hand in seven out of the ten volumes, and these seem to us sufficiently interesting to warrant a detailed report. Malone’s autograph notes tell us he often knew more about Beaumont and Fletcher than these authors’ eighteenth-century editors, as well as many later ones.

5. The bequest to the Bodleian included only Malone’s collection of “old English poetry and Plays,” as is correctly noted by J. K. Walton, “Edmond Malone, an Irish Shakespeare Scholar,” *Hermathena* 99 (1964): 19. For the 1818 sale, see *A Catalogue of the Greater Portion of the Library of the Late Edmond Malone, Esq.* (London: Wright and Murphy, 1818); for the list of books that reached the Bodleian, see *Catalogue of Early English Poetry and Other Miscellaneous Works Illustrating the British Drama, Collected by Edmond Malone, Esq., and Now Preserved in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1836). Some of Malone’s books and papers were apparently intermixed with those of Boswell, which is why they appeared in the sale of his library; see *Bibliotheca Boswelliana: A Catalogue of the Entire Library of the Late James Boswell, Esq.* (London, 1825). See Prior, *Life of Edmond Malone*, 326–30; James M. Osborn, “Edmond Malone and Oxford,” in *Eighteenth-Century Studies in Honor of Donald F. Hyde*, ed. W. H. Bond (New York: The Grolier Club, 1970), 334–36; Martin, *Edmond Malone*, 277–79.

6. *The Dramatick Works of Beaumont and Fletcher; Collated with all the Former Editions, and Corrected; with Notes, Critical and Explanatory, by Various Commentators; and Adorned with Fifty-four Original Engravings*, 10 vols. (London: Printed by T. Sherlock for T. Evans and P. Elmsley; J. Ridley; J. Williams; and W. Fox, 1778).

His annotations also reveal more about two important sources for the history of English drama: the no-longer-extant manuscript office book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels for the period 1623–73; and the early seventeenth-century manuscript copy of *The Honest Man's Fortune*. In what follows, we first provide an account of the provenance of the volumes under discussion; we then situate the 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher in its context and in relation to eighteenth-century editorial work on Shakespeare; and, finally, we discuss in full the autograph marginalia found in Malone's copy of the edition. If at times we bestow more labor on the object of our inquiry than is the norm, we can think of no stronger argument in our defense than Malone's own example. Our aim, after all, is to make clear the need for a full modern commentary on the plays in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon.

PROVENANCE

A copy of the 1778 edition of *The Dramatick Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, complete in ten volumes, was sold on 4 December 1818, the eighth and final day of the Sotheby's auction of "the greater portion" of Edmond Malone's library.⁷ The auction catalogue announced that "Many of the Books" offered for sale "have MS. Notes" by Malone, and his copy of the 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher, it will be seen, was no exception.

Annotated copies of the Sotheby's auction catalogue record the sale of the volumes for £4 10s. 6d. or, less precisely, £4 10s.⁸ This price is substantially more than was paid for any other dramatic text sold that day, with the exception of Malone's large-paper copy of the second edition of Robert Dodsley's *Select Collection of Old Plays* (1780)—a format in which only six copies were printed—that sold for £7 7s.⁹ Few other dramatic works sold for more than £1. The Furness copy annotations also name the purchaser of the Beaumont and Fletcher edition as "Clutterbuck," that is, Thomas Clutterbuck of Bushy House, Bushy, the younger brother of the Hertfordshire historian and magistrate Robert Clutterbuck. This identification is confirmed by the bookplate of "T. Clutterbuck" affixed

7. *Catalogue of Edmond Malone*, 78, lot 2380.

8. Houghton Library, B 1705.553 (£ s. d.); Beinecke Library, Osborn pd87; Furness Collection, University of Pennsylvania Libraries, EC8 M2978 818c (£ s. only).

9. *Catalogue of Edmond Malone*, 79, lot 2405.

to the volumes, which bears the family’s arms and crest. The bookplate is affixed to all the inside front covers of the volumes.¹⁰

An obituary in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* reported the death of “Thomas Clutterbuck, esq. of Bushey house, Herts, and Nottingham place, a distinguished patron of the fine arts,” on 20 January 1837 at the age of 62.¹¹ Sotheby’s auctioned Clutterbuck’s library over three days from 12 April 1837; an annotated copy of the auction catalogue held in the Cambridge University Library records the sale of the 1778 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher for £2 3s., but not the identity of its purchaser.¹² Though the catalogue erroneously lists the Beaumont and Fletcher edition as published in 1788 (no such edition exists), it does offer an additional detail not mentioned in the original 1818 Malone auction: the books were “bound by Johnson.” This must be a reference to the bookbinder known by that name and located near Long Acre, “evidently one of the outstanding craftsmen of the period 1765–80,” otherwise such detail is unwarranted.¹³ Similar listings appear in a January 1781 sale catalogue offered by Thomas Payne and Son, a bookselling firm for whom Johnson worked on an “extensive scale,” where copies of the ten-volume 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher edition “new and eleg[antly] bound by Johnson” are advertised for £3 10s. and £3 15s.¹⁴

By 1954, Malone’s copy of the Beaumont and Fletcher had found its way into the possession of the American broadcaster and journalist Howard K. Smith (1914–2002) and his wife Benedicte Traberg Smith (1921–2008). When, how, and from whom the Smiths obtained the books is unclear. The new owners were clearly intrigued by the presence of mar-

10. Greatley-Hirsch Hellfish Bonanza, item 33.1–10, <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/notwithoutmustard/rareandantiquarian>. The library is named the “Hellfish Bonanza” after the tontine of priceless European paintings liberated from the Nazis in an episode of *The Simpsons*.

11. *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, n.s. 7 (April 1837): 446.

12. *Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Late Thomas Clutterbuck, Esq. F.S.A. of Bushy House, Bushy* (London: Compton & Ritchie, 1837), 4, lot 38 (Cambridge University Library, Munby.c.71).

13. Ellic Howe, *A List of London Bookbinders, 1648–1815* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1950), 52.

14. Howard M. Nixon, “English Bookbindings: IV,” *The Book Collector* 1, no. 3 (1952): 244; *A Catalogue of Near Forty Thousand Volumes of Curious and Rare Books* (London: Thomas Payne and Son, 1781), 102 (lot 3429), 118 (lot 3964).

ginalia, but they could not tell whether Malone was their author. In a letter dated 28 July 1954, Bertram Schofield, then deputy keeper of manuscripts at the British Museum, wrote to Mrs. Smith: "We have specimens of Edmund [sic] Malone's writing with which you will be able to compare the notes in your volume."¹⁵ Whether Mrs. Smith undertook the comparison, we do not know. Presumably the Smiths acquired the books shortly before this date. On 3 March 2005, their library was auctioned by Waverly Rare Books, a subsidiary of Quinn's Auction Galleries in Falls Church, Virginia; Malone's Beaumont and Fletcher sold for \$1,300.¹⁶ At time of writing, the buyer is unknown.

On 19 April 2014, Greatley-Hirsch purchased the Malone Beaumont and Fletcher for \$800 from Mark Rogers of Roga Books in Boca Raton, Florida, who had acquired it from a dealer in Boston. Now in the UK, the edition forms part of Greatley-Hirsch's small but growing private library of rare and antiquarian books. The edition is a complete set of ten octavo volumes bound in early full-polished calf, expertly rebacked in calf with gilt arabesque and contrasting red and brown morocco labels, with gilt edges and marbled endpapers. All volumes collate complete and contain the pasted-in armorial bookplate of Thomas Clutterbuck; the 1954 letter from Schofield to Smith is laid-in and catalogued separately.

THE 1778 BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER IN CONTEXT

The 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher appeared in the same year as George Steevens's landmark ten-volume revision of the Johnson-Steevens Shakespeare, which launched Edmond Malone into the orbit of Shakespearean editing. Malone contributed various notes and wrote "An Attempt to Ascertain the Order in which the Plays Attributed to Shakespeare were Written."¹⁷ Unlike Steevens's 1778 edition, however, the

15. Letter from Schofield to Smith, Greatley-Hirsch Hellfish Bonanza, item 33.1a.

16. Lot 47, Waverly Auctions, "The Library of Journalist Howard K. Smith," *LiveAuctioneers*, 3 March 2005, <http://www.liveauctioneers.com/catalog/1903>.

17. *The Plays of William Shakspeare, in Ten Volumes, with the Corrections and Illustrations of Various Commentators, to which are added Notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens*, 2nd ed. (London: Printed for C. Bathurst [etc.], 1778), 1:348. For the notes Malone contributed to this edition, see Arthur Sherbo, "Edmond Malone and the Johnson-Steevens 1778 *Shakespeare*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 101, no. 3 (2007): 313–28.

edition of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher does not name the editor(s) on the title page. Still, it is clear that the editing of Beaumont and Fletcher in the eighteenth century developed in dialogue with the editing of Shakespeare and was influenced by the growth of the elaborate variorum apparatus that became the hallmark of the most influential Shakespeare edition of the century, that of Johnson and Steevens.

This dialogue between editing Shakespeare and editing Beaumont and Fletcher began early on. The 1711 seven-volume edition, entitled *The Works of Mr. Francis Beaumont, and Mr. John Fletcher*, which to this day remains seriously understudied, was modeled on Rowe's edition of Shakespeare's plays published in 1709.¹⁸ Its publisher, Jacob Tonson, urges the dedicatee of the edition, William Cavendish, Second Duke of Devonshire (1670/71–1729), “to approve of Publishing these Authors in the same Portable Volume, as *Shakespear* has so successfully appeared in.”¹⁹ Like Rowe's edition of Shakespeare, this edition of Beaumont and Fletcher is “Adorn'd with Cuts” and, again like Rowe's Shakespeare, it gives “Some Account of the Authors and their Writing,” followed by the text of the plays unfurnished with either textual or explanatory notes.²⁰ While Rowe has been touted as a pioneer and his edition even reprinted in facsimile in the twentieth century, the 1711 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, although in all respects comparable to Rowe's undertaking, is regularly dismissed as a mere reprint.²¹

18. *The Works of Mr. Francis Beaumont, and Mr. John Fletcher, in Seven Volumes, Adorn'd with Cuts, Revised and Corrected, with some Account of the Life and Writings of the Authors* (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1711). Often, and misleadingly, linked to the name of Gerard Langbaine (1656–92), the edition features an anonymous preface written in the first-person singular. The author of the preface, who mostly relies on Dryden's judgment, at one point borrows a short critical assessment written by “Mr. Langbaine, in his Account of the *Dramatick Poets*” (1:xxvii). The 1778 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, however, refers to “[t]he Octavo Editors of 1711” (1:xv), suggesting that there was more than one editor.

19. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1711), 1:III–IV. On Tonson's house style and the publication of vernacular classics in the early eighteenth century, see Robert B. Hamm, Jr., “Rowe's *Shakespear* (1709) and the Tonson House Style,” *College Literature* 31, no. 3 (2004): 179–205.

20. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1711), title page, 1:V–XLI.

21. It is rarely observed, if at all, that the 1711 Beaumont and Fletcher also appeared in an edition of ten volumes, with new title pages and a different arrangement of plays; see ESTC T179167.

The second multivolume edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, published in 1750, makes the link to Shakespeare even more visible.²² It was undertaken by Lewis Theobald (1688–1744), the great critic of Alexander Pope's editorial work and the most important early editor and elucidator of Shakespeare, whose plays he had published in 1733.²³ Theobald's edition of Beaumont and Fletcher was begun in the early 1740s, but he died before seeing the second volume through the press. Most of the work on the edition was performed by Theobald's coadjutors, Thomas Seward (1708–90) and John Sympson (1709/10–1766?), who made frequent use of Theobald's annotated copy of the plays. In this edition, extending to ten octavo volumes and again published by Tonson, the apparatus is essentially collaborative, with the notes clearly assigned to the contributing editors.

While, thus, we do know who contributed the notes to the 1750 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, the 1778 edition is more of a mystery. It is usually ascribed to George Colman the elder (1732–94), a theater manager and a dramatist who, interestingly, adapted the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher as well as those of Shakespeare for the eighteenth-century stage.²⁴ But Colman himself tells us that, “[o]f the Edition of the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher I never saw a line, to the best of my recollection, till near two volumes were printed.” He continues: “I afterwards revised the proof sheets, and by degrees interested myself still more in the publication; for which I had no other motive than the desire of preventing a probable loss to a person who had hazarded a very considerable sum

22. *The Works of Mr. Francis Beaumont, and Mr. John Fletcher, in Ten volumes, Collated with all the former Editions, and Corrected, with Notes Critical and Explanatory, by the late Mr. Theobald, Mr. Seward of Eyam in Derbyshire, and Mr. Sympson of Gainsborough* (London: Printed for J. and R. Tonson and S. Draper, 1750).

23. On Theobald's work as an editor, see Peter Seary, *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

24. On Colman's career in general, see Eugene R. Page, *George Colman the Elder: Essayist, Dramatist, and Theatrical Manager, 1732–1794* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935); on the role Colman played in promoting non-Shakespearean drama, see Robert D. Williams, “Antiquarian Interest in Elizabethan Drama before Lamb,” *PMLA* 53, no. 2 (1938): 439.

on the undertaking."²⁵ Colman's name, however, does not appear in the edition. Still, it is clear that he was committed to the commercial success of the 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher. We find proof for this assertion in an unsigned "Advertisement" for Colman's adaptation of Fletcher's *Bonduca*. There we learn that the adaptation mostly departs from the original by omitting and transposing passages, but that "[t]he particular Alterations it is almost impossible to point out, but by a reference to the Original Authors; of whose Dramas a most elegant Edition has been very lately published."²⁶ Adapted and authentic texts are not, as is usually supposed, in conflict; they are made to work together.²⁷

Despite his interest in the success of the 1778 edition, it is extremely unlikely that Colman was the sole person responsible for it. The unsigned preface, predictably discussing Beaumont and Fletcher in relation to Shakespeare, is curiously silent about editorial responsibility. All it tells us is that the new edition incorporates and improves upon the editorial work of Theobald, Seward, and Sympson: "Such of their notes as appeared incontestible, or even plausible, we have adopted without remark; to those more dubious we have subjoined additional annotations; those of less consequence we have abridged; and those of no importance we have omitted."²⁸ An early review of the edition claims that, "[t]he new preface to this edition is evidently the production of a very ingenious writer, and bears some striking marks of Mr. Colman's pen," but it concludes with a plural rather than a singular reference, stating "[t]he Editors of these Works have, we think, discharged their duty with great fidelity and exactness in the volumes now before us."²⁹

25. George Colman, *Prose on Several Occasions, Accompanied with Some Pieces in Verse*, vol. 1 (London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1787), x.

26. *Bonduca, a Tragedy, Written by Beaumont and Fletcher, with Alterations, as it is Performed at the Theatre-Royal in the Haymarket* (London: Printed by T. Sherlock for T. Cadell, 1778), A1^v.

27. David Scott Kastan has described this phenomenon, exemplified in Lewis Theobald's editorial versus his adaptational work, as expressive of "the era's schizophrenic relation to Shakespeare" (Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 93). While we observe the same phenomenon in relation to Beaumont and Fletcher, we are inclined to see it as perfectly normal.

28. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 1:xvii.

29. *The Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal* 62 (June 1780): 422 and 425 respectively. To make matters more confusing, while the preface is seen by the reviewer as

The matter-of-fact tone of the preface becomes much more judgmental at several points in the edition, where the interventions of Theobald, Seward, and Sympson are seen as excessive or their claims insupportable, even as their notes are reprinted as an integral part of the new apparatus. For example, in *Wit without Money*, included in the second volume of the 1778 edition, the adopted text reads: "He was a fool before, brought up amongst the mist of small-beer brewhouses" (see fig. 1). It was Seward who had preferred this reading to "the midst of small-beer brewhouses" found in the early editions. "How much the slight change I have made improves the sense," Seward writes, "the reader of taste will instantly see." He had used this opportunity to explain how emendations that appear natural do not always occur to editors easily, and that he "several times read o'er the passage without seeing the corruption." Theobald and Sympson had not noticed it either. The moral of the story, Seward concluded, is that there must be many other examples in the text of the plays where he and his co-editors had failed to notice the corruption, and that "the reader should not be too severe upon us for such oversights."³⁰ This caveat prompted a long comment by the new editors that is worth quoting in full because it gives us important information about the 1778 edition, including the fact, not otherwise noted, that work on the edition was begun at least by 1776:

A Reader who will not excuse the *oversights* of an Annotator must indeed be harsh and rigid; and did the Editors of Beaumont and Fletcher's Works in 1750 need exculpation on no other account, it is more than probable the Editors of 1776 would never have undertaken their laborious task; since their first inducement to it was, an observation of the unprecedented interpolations, omissions, and every other species of variation, UNNOTICED, made use of by their predecessors; and, in the process of their work, they have found each of those freedoms

the production of Colman, when it is quoted in the review it is introduced in the following way: "and to use the words of the Editors" (425). It is possible that the "striking marks" of Colman's pen that the preface bears are just marks and that more people were involved in its composition. Given that the prolegomena were, as usual, printed last, Colman could of course have written the entire preface even if he joined the project after two volumes had already been printed.

30. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 2:380.

380 WIT WITHOUT MONEY.

*Enter Uncle, Merchant, and boy*⁷⁹, *with a torch.*

Unc. 'Tis he.

Mer. Good morrow!

Val. Why, Sir, good morrow to you too, an you be so lusty.

Unc. You've made your brother a fine man; we met him.

Val. I made him a fine gentleman,
He was a fool before, brought up amongst the⁸⁰ mist
Of small-beer brewhouses. What would you have
with me?

Mer. I come to tell you, your latest hour is come.

Val. Are you my sentence?

Mer. The sentence of your state.

Val. Let it be hang'd then; and let it be hang'd
high enough,

⁷⁹ *Enter Uncle and Merchant: May with a torch.*] Thus say the quartos; the folio of 1679 says, *boy*. Whether *May* was corrupted at press from *man*, or whether it was the real or dramatic name of the *torch-bearer*, is not now to be decided.

⁸⁰ *Amongst the midst of small-beer brewhouses.*] How much the slight change I have made improves the sense, the reader of taste will instantly see. He will probably wonder how any one could miss it, and think it scarce deserves a note. But for my own part, I several times read o'er the passage without seeing the corruption, and am at last the discoverer, tho' Mr. Theobald and Mr. Symphon (whose abilities no one will I believe doubt) had very accurately studied the play. The same thing has frequently happen'd to me with regard to their emendations; and I doubt not but every sensible reader will find out many more, which we have all three missed, as obvious and certain as this. What therefore I would often inculcate is, that the reader should not be too severe upon us for such oversights: Because the same thing has happened to all editors of books, which abound with such numerous corruptions as do our Authors' plays. *Seward.*

A Reader who will not excuse the *oversights* of an Annotator must indeed be harsh and rigid; and did the Editors of Beaumont and Fletcher's Works in 1750 need exculpation on no other account, it is more than probable the Editors of 1776 would never have undertaken their laborious task; since their first inducement to it was, an observation of the unprecedented interpolations, omissions, and every other species of variation, UNNOTICED, made use of by their predecessors; and, in the process of their work, they have found each of those freedoms practised with much more latitude than they at first supposed or imagined had been taken.

I may

Fig. 1: *The Dramatick Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* (London, 1778), 2:380. The commentary is incorporative and interactive, but also dismissive and self-justifying. Greatley-Hirsch *Hellfish Bonanza* 33.2. Image from author's copy.

practised with much more latitude than they at first supposed or imagined had been taken.³¹

The language of this note strongly suggests that the 1778 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher was a collaborative editorial undertaking. While Seward, Theobald, and Simpson wrote their notes in the first-person singular, the unattributed notes are regularly in the first-person plural. These new unsigned notes, however, are not the only additions made. The ten volumes feature a variety of new notes explicitly attributed to several different hands. For instance, the letter *R* follows a large number of notes. These were contributed to the edition by Isaac Reed, who also contributed a couple of notes to the 1778 Johnson-Steevens Shakespeare and who was to become, in the 1780s, Steevens's editorial successor. While Reed's contribution to the edition has received scholarly attention on account of the number of notes he provided, the contributions of others have for the most part have passed unnoticed.³² They still deserve to be enumerated, for they helped in the elucidation of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays. There are notes explicitly ascribed to Steevens, Johnson, Peter Whalley, John Hawkins, William Warburton, Thomas Warton, and Thomas Percy. There are also a number of notes by J. N. (probably John Nichols), and at least one each by someone signed "G." and someone signed "M. R." Their identities remain a mystery. It is not impossible that behind one of these hides Colman's famous friend David Garrick,

31. *Ibid.* Nineteenth-century editors were not persuaded by Seward's "mist," but twentieth-century editors were, including the most critical ones. For examples of other passages describing the 1750 edition and the presumptions of its editors, see *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 2:391–92; 3:191; 4:365 (with three exclamation marks at the end of the note, a practice repeated at 5:439); 5:107; 6:182, 323, 329, 439; 7:42; 9:81. Toward the end of the edition, the 1778 editors write: "We have not, for several plays past, amused our Readers with an account of the amendments which the Editors of 1750 *pretend* to have made, in order to enhance the idea of their own ingenuity: We have not, however, discontinued that information for want of matter (there has all along been abundance!) but for fear of its becoming troublesome. After so long a recess, it may not be disagreeable to resume the character of Detectors, and reveal the Falshoods told of the play now before us" (10:107). See also 10:312–13.

32. Reed's contribution to the 1778 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher is discussed by Arthur Sherbo, *Isaac Reed, Editorial Factotum*, ELS Monograph Series 45 (Victoria, BC: English Literary Studies, 1989), 19–30; on Reed and the 1778 Johnson-Steevens edition of Shakespeare, see 86.

who is specifically mentioned in the edition as granting the editors access to his copies of old plays.³³ There are, however, no notes by Edmond Malone.

While not directly involved in the 1778 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, Malone would have been far from uninterested in the project. We learn from a letter he wrote to Steevens on 5 October 1777 that he had been contemplating an independent edition of these two dramatists. Steevens even composed a blurb for it at the end of the preface he was preparing for the 1778 re-publication of Shakespeare, but Malone intervened before the preface reached print: “I dont know whether I shall ever do anything in that business,” he writes, “and at all events should not chuse to be tied down to it by a publick engagement of this sort; and therefore request you will expunge what relates to those authors.”³⁴ Malone seems to have understood from the start that public interest would always pri-

33. For examples of Steevens’s notes, see *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 1:356–57; 2:37, 461; 6:249; 9:168, 191, 293. A number of additional notes on the two playwrights, written by Steevens probably at a later date, survive as a bundle of small manuscript leaves at the Folger Shakespeare Library, where they are cataloged as MS Y.c.1434 (51). For examples of Johnson’s notes, see 2:453; 4:387–88; for Whalley, see 2:325; 3:19–20; 9:249; for Hawkins, 9:167–68; for Warburton, 6:249; 8:59; for Warton, 1:376; 6:285, 436–37; for Percy, 6:459; 8:12; for J. N., 3:409; 4:133, 159, 231, 442; 5:273–74, 279, 313, 477, 488; 7:379; 8:199–200; 10:35–36; for G., 4:329; for M. R., 6:429. For the mention of Garrick, see 10:312. Some of these notes, particularly those written by established editors, were borrowed from already published works, such as Johnson and Steevens’s 1773 Shakespeare or Whalley’s 1756 Ben Jonson. But, unlike many other borrowed notes, these are signed rather than paraphrased by the unidentified editors or by Reed. The practice of signing notes was slightly changed after the first volume was printed; from the second volume onward Mr. Theobald, Mr. Seward, and so on, become simply Theobald, Seward, etc. For the suggestion that J. N. is John Nichols, see *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher, in Fourteen Volumes, with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes by Henry Weber, Esq.* (Edinburgh: Printed by James Ballantyne and Company for F. C. and J. Rivington [etc.], 1812), 4:265.

34. Folger Shakespeare Library, MS Y.c.5417; also quoted in Martin, *Edmond Malone*, 30, whose transcription we correct. Malone also seems to have toyed with the idea of editing Marlowe and Nashe, as a letter from Thomas Warton, dated 2 April 1781, suggests (Martin, *Edmond Malone*, 82). He returned to the idea of editing Beaumont and Fletcher in the 1790s, after his Shakespeare was published, but quickly abandoned it (165, 178).

marily be drawn to Shakespeare, and that editing Beaumont and Fletcher might mean missing an important career opportunity.³⁵

It soon became apparent, however, that Malone's decision to become an editor of Shakespeare was fundamentally different in nature from the earlier decision of Steevens. While Steevens never removed Johnson's name from the title pages of the editions he prepared, even long after Johnson's death, Malone saw himself as being an innovator rather than an active curator and perpetuator of the Johnson-Steevens legacy.³⁶ In this, he was not alone. A humorous letter by Steevens succinctly describes the Shakespearean editorial situation in the early 1780s. Writing to Thomas Warton on 16 April 1783, Steevens reports:

Whatever the vegetable Spring may produce, the critical one will be prolific enough. No less than six editions of Shakespear (including Capell's notes, with Collins' prolegomena) are now in the mash-tub. Reed is to occupy the old Red Lattice, and Malone intends to froth and lime at a little snug booth of his own construction. Ritson will advertise sour ale against his mild. Lowndes has contrived a surreptitious brewing; and another, viz. our text without notes (your true critical hops) will also soon be in tap.³⁷

Compared to this busy Shakespearean scene, the editing of Beaumont and Fletcher left a great deal to be desired in terms of both textual accuracy and explanatory comment. The 1778 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher could not, therefore, have been the reason behind Malone's decision not to follow through with his idea of editing the two playwrights: he would easily have shown his superiority over the 1778 editors had he undertaken a new edition. Part of the work would have been simple. It would have consisted of transferring the relevant verbal commentary from

35. Martin speculates along similar lines, but sees Steevens as maliciously trying to divert Malone from Shakespeare (*Edmond Malone*, 30). This reading of Steevens's intentions, while typical in the critical tradition, seems to us misleading as it projects the later enmity between these two editors onto their early and remarkably happy collaboration. As late as 18 February 1779, Steevens addresses Malone in the following manner: "Will you do me the honour to eat your Roast Beef here on Sunday, putting at the same time your night-cap in your pocket?" (Folger Shakespeare Library MS Y.c.1434 [15]).

36. For Steevens's view of the matter, see his advertisement to *The Plays of William Shakspeare, in Fifteen Volumes*, 4th ed. (London: Printed for T. Longman [etc.], 1793), 1:xxxiii.

37. *The Correspondence of Thomas Warton*, ed. David Fairer (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 480–81.

the existing Shakespeare editions, on which a great deal of critical labor, often yielding wonderful results, had been expended. This had been, to some extent, already undertaken by Reed, whose notes in the 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher often drew on Steevens's notes from the 1773 edition of the Johnson-Steevens Shakespeare.³⁸ Other tasks would have included providing fresh commentary, researching the biographies of the authors, identifying sources and analogues, attempting an accurate chronology of composition, and, in brief, doing for Beaumont and Fletcher what had already to a significant degree been done for Shakespeare.

MALONE'S COMMENTS ON BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER

Little of this work is found in Malone's sparsely annotated copy of the 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher. Instead, it seems that Malone inscribed his notes into the text at various times and in somewhat random fashion, mostly in order to show the deficiencies of the edition. In response to the statement reprinted from the Beaumont and Fletcher second folio (1679), where unlike the first folio (1647), the second edition also reproduces the plays previously printed in quarto, Malone sarcastically observes: "from the *latest* and most *incorrect* editions!"³⁹ In this he is in agreement with twentieth-century views: the second folio usually adopted the texts of the latest quarto editions, though they were riddled with errors accumulated through reprinting.⁴⁰ More damningly, however, in the same volume Malone comments on Seward's erroneous identification of George Lisle, author of one of the commendatory poems. Seward's long note rather desperately claims that George Lisle is in fact not George but "Sir John Lisle one of king Charles's judges."⁴¹ The entire note is crossed out in pencil by Malone, who then protests in the margin: "What stuff is here? S^r G. Lisle was the brave Royalist who was shot at Colchester." Malone was right, but the erroneous identification persisted until Alexander Dyce, in the middle of the nineteenth century, realized the mistake.⁴² The pen-

38. Reed always did so with proper acknowledgment; see Sherbo, *Isaac Reed*, 20.
39. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 1:xi.

40. For a representative statement in this vein, see *The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher: Variorum Edition*, ed. A. H. Bullen, 4 vols. (London: George Bell and Sons & A. H. Bullen, 1904-1912), 1:118.

41. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 1:cxii.

42. See *The Works of Beaumont & Fletcher*, ed. Alexander Dyce, 11 vols. (London: Edward Moxon, 1843-1846), 1:xxii. As late as 1812, Weber simply reprints Seward's

cil writing of this note is one of several indicators that Malone made his annotations at different times; the remaining annotations are in black ink of different shades, and the handwriting varies in quality, as do the pens Malone used.

Similar corrections appear in the text of the plays. The 1778 edition prints a passage from *The Scornful Lady* as follows: "Did I expound the Owl, and undertook, with labour and expence, the recollection of those thousand pieces, consum'd in cellars, and tobacco-shops, of that our honour'd Englishman Nic. Broughton?"⁴³ "Nic. Broughton" had been Theobald's expansion of "Ni. Br." in the original text; having invented him, Theobald then describes him in a lengthy comment as a noted theologian, thinking apparently of Hugh Broughton (1549-1612). Seward builds upon this, claiming that *The Owl* "is evidently some piece of Nich. Broughton's, or *some such doughty writers.*" In his copy Malone corrects both mistakes: "Br." stands for "Breton," and "*The Owl* was a poem by M. Drayton, published in 4.^o 1604." Even the frighteningly erudite Steevens, as late as 1798, was making the same mistake as Theobald.⁴⁴ It is not until Henry Weber's edition that Nicholas Breton properly enters the text and Drayton the annotation, and not until Dyce's that the year of Drayton's publication of *The Owl* is provided.⁴⁵

We say properly because both Malone and the later editorial tradition actually failed to give credit where credit was due. Already in 1750 the editors had come close to identifying Breton, who appears again in *Wit without Money*, now called "Britain" ("Prentices in Paul's Church-yard, that scented your want of *Britain's* Books").⁴⁶ Sympson found the same writer mentioned by Sir John Suckling under the name "Briton," and Seward drew attention to the relevant passage in *The Scornful Lady* (printed in the previous volume). It was, however, Reed who in 1778, in a new note on this passage in *Wit without Money*, correctly identified the author as

explanation, as the 1778 editors did, without any correction or additional comment (*Beaumont and Fletcher* [1812], 1:cxxv).

43. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 1:324. This is 2.1.97-100 in *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, gen. ed. Fredson Bowers, 10 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966-1996), 2:481.

44. In a passage included in J. Monck Mason, *Comments on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (London: Printed by V. Griffiths, 1798), 34.

45. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1812), 2:167; *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1843-46), 3:28.

46. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1750), 2:315.

Nicholas Breton and listed some of his works. He apparently failed to do so in time for the text of *The Scornful Lady*, printed in the first volume of the 1778 edition, to be mended.⁴⁷ In short, the correct ascription to Breton is already in the 1778 edition, but it can only be found when the relevant note from volume 2 (*Wit without Money*) is retroactively applied to the corrupt reading in volume 1 (*The Scornful Lady*). The collation of eighteenth-century editions of early English drama cannot simply be the collation of the text because the text and its commentary work together and across different volumes.⁴⁸

The endeavor to elucidate the Beaumont and Fletcher plays was at times made more difficult by the lack of relevant textual evidence. In the text of *The Humorous Lieutenant*, Seward struggled to emend the lines, "With sighs as tho' his heart would break; / Cry like a breech'd boy; not eat a bit."⁴⁹ He did not understand the meaning of "breech'd," and he noticed the faulty meter, so he changed the text to read "cry like an unbreech'd boy" and noted that "a new-breech'd boy" would be equally acceptable. Malone corrects this mistaken intervention in his copy and attempts to fix the meter by other means: "Breechēd is whipp'd. The old copy is right. There is no defect in the metre, if the word be written at length. E. M." Neither Seward nor Malone had access to the early transcript of the play, made in 1625 by Ralph Crane and entitled *Demetrius and Enanthe*, where there is no metrical difficulty but where we find more variant readings: "Will sigh as though his heart would breake: / And cry like a breech'd boy, not eat a bit."⁵⁰

47. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 2:346–47. It is also in vol. 2 of his set that Malone identifies the person behind the initial *R* in the 1778 edition as Reed: "R. throughout this edition stands for Isaac Reed" (2:5).

48. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1966–96), 2:481, has "our honour'd Englishman *Nicholas Breton*"; the historical collation (2:556) credits Dyce as the earliest editor to read "Nich. Breton," but this is evidently wrong.

49. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 3:87, where Seward's note is reprinted.

50. See *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1966–96), 5:385 (4.4.173–74). The manuscript was first brought to public attention by Dyce, who published a transcript of it in 1830: *Demetrius and Enanthe, Being The Humorous Lieutenant, a Play by John Fletcher: Published from a Manuscript Dated 1625, and Containing Passages Never Before Printed*, ed. Alexander Dyce (London: Thomas Rodd, 1830). It was Weber who restored the reading "breech'd," not failing to breech Seward for his emendation and for being "utterly unacquainted with old language" (*Beaumont and Fletcher* [1812], 3:472). Weber even provides a parallel from *Bonduca*, but neglects to tell us

Malone's metrical conjectures in the example just mentioned accord with his later writings on Shakespeare's meter, over which he and Steevens vehemently disagreed.⁵¹ He goes much further when, in *Monsieur Thomas*, he changes "I'll beat thee from head to toe" to "I'll beat thee from head to knee" in order to bring about a rhyme. The passage in question reads: "But if this be false, thou little tiny page, / As false it well may be, / Then with a cudgel of four foot long / I'll beat thee from head to toe."⁵² Seward, whose note is reprinted in the 1778 edition, had considered the possibility that "the Poets here design'd on purpose to disappoint the readers of a rhyme," but then suggested that perhaps we should read "I'll beat thee from *cap à pie*" since this phrase appeared in the play earlier and might be repeated here by a different character for humorous effect.⁵³ The 1778 editors found this suggestion "not unplaussible," but still "too violent to be admitted into the text."⁵⁴ Is there a textual problem here? Passing over it in silence, as modern editors do, is not particularly helpful. Even the judicious Dyce, always unwilling to admit fanciful conjectures into his edition, queried whether we should not fix the text by transposing words: "From head to toe I'll beat thee."⁵⁵

If at times we feel superior to eighteenth-century editors because we possess more evidence and have more rigorous scholarly standards, at other times we merely seem to be catching up with them. In a note on *Monsieur Thomas*, the 1778 editors follow Theobald's suggestion that the expression *du gata whee* ("Or get you gone again! *Du gata whee*, Sir!") is Welsh, explaining further that the "genuine Welch" would be *Duw cadw chw* ("God bless or preserve you").⁵⁶ Malone is resolute in his autograph

that he has borrowed both the meaning and the relevant example from Mason (*Comments*, 103-4).

51. For Steevens's opinions on this question, see his advertisement to the 1793 edition of Shakespeare (1:xvi-xvii). For Malone's surviving notes, mostly written in an attempt to refute Steevens, see Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Osborn d47.

52. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 4:440.

53. *Ibid.*, 4:438.

54. *Ibid.*, 4:440.

55. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1843-46), 7:376. *A Critical Edition of John Fletcher's Comedy Monsieur Thomas, or Father's Own Son*, ed. Nanette Cleri Clinch (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1979), 92, prints "I'll beat thee from head to toe" but does not comment on the absence of rhyme (4.2.62).

56. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 4:385.

comment, seeing the italicized phrase as a simple variation on a statement just made: "It is plain English and put into Italicks by mistake: —*Do-get-away*—He had just before said—Or get you gone again." Modern editors are not in agreement. Nanette Cleri Clinch mentions the 1778 gloss, but then adds that "[t]here is a slight possibility that this is a conflation of *du*, Welsh for 'black' or 'gloomy' and *gast*, Welsh for 'bitch'" and that "[a] curse would not be inappropriate."⁵⁷ Hans Walter Gabler, on the other hand, turns to his side of the Channel: "One need not quarrel with Colman's explanation, adopted by all subsequent editors, that *Q du gata whee* represents a corruption of Welsh *Duw cadw chwî*, 'God bless you', or 'God preserve you'. Yet the phrase, in its setting among an unholy mixture of continental European languages, sounds equally like mock-Dutch for 'you get away', re-emphasizing the preceding 'get you gone again'."⁵⁸ Whether Dutch or English, the suggestion produces a curious coupling. What would Malone make, we cannot help wondering, of Gabler's controversial edition of Joyce's *Ulysses*?⁵⁹

Farther down in the text of *Monsieur Thomas*, Malone casually updates the old spelling of the exclamation "*Indeed law*" to "*Indeed la*" in order to prevent misunderstanding.⁶⁰ At another point, he defends the original reading by pointing to a parallel expression and its explanation in the 1778 edition of Shakespeare. The reading in question is "A clean instep, and that I love as life," where the copy text actually has "a life."⁶¹ Malone suggests "a-life" and comments: "The old reading is certainly right. See Mr Tyrwhitt's note on the Two Gent. of Verona p. edit. 1778." The reference is imprecise, as the relevant note is found in the commentary on *The Winter's Tale*.⁶² Interestingly, while Thomas Tyrwhitt does try to explain the phrase in *The Winter's Tale*, it is Steevens who provides many

57. *Monsieur Thomas* (1979), 191, note on 1.2.8.

58. *Monsieur Thomas*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler, in *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1966–96), 4:518.

59. On Gabler's edition of *Ulysses*, see Geert Lernout, "Controversial Editions: Hans Walter Gabler's *Ulysses*," *Text* 16 (2006): 229–41.

60. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 4:395. This is 1.3.122 in *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1966–96), 4:442. In her edition, Clinch writes: "*Indeed law* is an exclamation of astonishment [. . .], *law* being a corruption of 'la', 'low', or 'Lord'" (*Monsieur Thomas* [1979], 213).

61. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 4:406.

62. *Plays of William Shakspeare* (1778), 4:390.

parallels for it, including, indeed, the one from *Monsieur Thomas*. Tyrwhitt, however, seems to have been wrong in claiming that “a life” is short for “at life” (comparable to “at work”); later editors explain the phrase as meaning “as my life,” “excessively.”⁶³

As we would expect, some of Malone’s marginalia rely on his detailed knowledge of the period when the plays were composed. In *Monsieur Thomas*, he underlines and corrects the punctuation of the phrase “My love premised” in the following statement spoken by the title character: “How would you have me write? / Begin with ‘My love premised; surely, / And by my truly, mistress?’”⁶⁴ The comment found in the margin of Malone’s copy is probably only partially correct: “The ancient mode of beginning letters—Surely &c, is no part of the introduction; but a phrase in the body of the letter.” As far as “My love premised” goes, this is true and should actually be noted in the modern editions of the play, but “surely, and” is more likely to be Thomas’s comment on his own suggestion, separating the beginning of the letter from what follows.⁶⁵

Similar reliance on historical knowledge is found in another note on *Monsieur Thomas*. In the 1778 edition of the text, Sebastian says to Dorothea: “What, should I leave my state to pins and poking-sticks, to farthingales and flounces? To fore horses, and an old leather bawdy-house behind ’em?”⁶⁶ In 1750, Seward had suggested reading “four horses,” which are followed by a coach, here described as a leathern bawdy house. The anonymous editors of 1778 defend the reading “fore horses” by suggesting that *fore* horses are meant to be understood in opposition to the coach *behind* them. Instead of praising Seward, Malone chooses to scold Seward’s editorial successor: “The writer of this note knew nothing of the manner of the time when this play was written, which was evidently about 1616 or 1617. when *four* horses was the high *ton*” (i.e. when four-horse carriages were in vogue). The problem has persisted to our day. Dyce noted Seward’s suggestion but retained “fore-horses” without ad-

63. See *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1843–46), 7:339.

64. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 4:398–99.

65. The passage is 2.2.15–17 in *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1966–96), 4:445, but no quotation marks are given as they are not to be found in the early editions. Clinch prints the text as we have described it (*Monsieur Thomas* [1979], 34); while she does not comment on the phrase “my love premised,” the expression “by my truly” is explained as “in good faith” (220).

66. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 4:427.

ditional explanation.⁶⁷ In this, he had the precedent of Weber, who in his edition of the play had reprinted both Seward's note and the note from 1778, deciding that, "in the present instance, Seward is right, as the explanation of the last editors is certainly far-fetched." Nonetheless, he had retained "fore-horses" in the text of the play.⁶⁸ The variorum edition, curiously, does not even have a note on this little controversy.⁶⁹ But the most far-fetched seems to us the explanation of the most recent critical editor of the play. "Fore-horses" is glossed as "a leading team, of horses (followed, by implication, by one or more teams)," which is seen as "a luxury." In support of this explanation, the editor draws attention to Dekker's *The Witch of Edmonton*, where "a Fore-horse in a team" is mentioned. How a fore-horse in a team becomes a fore-team in two or more teams is unclear, and it is even more unclear how the coach would be behind the fore-horses if there is at least one more team of horses between them.⁷⁰

MALONE, BOOK HISTORY, AND THEATER HISTORY

Chronology was one of the great passions of Malone's scholarly career. His first major contribution to the editing of Shakespeare, as we have observed, was "An Attempt to Ascertain the Order in which the Plays Attributed to Shakspeare were Written," published in 1778. Being both an avid collector of early drama and a diligent researcher in the archives, Malone often had access to information not available to others. His comment on the statement of the 1778 editors of Beaumont and Fletcher that the first edition of *Philaster* was published in 1628 is dry and matter-of-fact: "No;—in 1619."⁷¹ The first edition was actually published in 1620, but the Stationers' Register entry dates to 10 January 1619 (i.e. 1620), which is what Malone seems to be referencing here.⁷² Had Malone had a copy of the first edition of *Philaster* before him at the time, he would

67. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1843-46), 7:361.

68. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1812), 6:484-85.

69. See *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1904-12), 4:381.

70. *Monsieur Thomas* (1979), 271.

71. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 1:103.

72. See *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1966-96), 1:369. The 1836 catalog of the Malone books bequeathed to the Bodleian does list the first edition of *Philaster* (*Catalogue of Early English Poetry*, 3). Malone must have acquired it late, however, since its current shelfmark is Bodleian Library Malone 783. The second edition of *Philaster* (1622), on the other hand, is Malone 242 (2), and the 1628 edition is Malone 244 (4);

probably have commented on its drastically different text. A prefatory note on *The Faithful Shepherdess* in the 1778 edition states that, “[t]he first edition bears the same year in which it was first acted.”⁷³ Annoyed by this unsubstantiated claim, Malone comments: “This is not true. The first edition w.^{ch} is now before me, has *no* date; nor is it now easy to ascertain when it was printed. The piece was I believe first acted about the year 1608 or 1609, being mentioned by J. Davies of Hereford in his *Scourge of Folly*, 1611. The second Ed.ⁿ of the Faithful Shepherdess was in 1629. E. M.” The *Scourge of Folly* reference is still used to help date the edition.⁷⁴

Especially noteworthy are the comments Malone writes with the help of the manuscript office book of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, to which he first gained access in 1789.⁷⁵ This fact enables us to date at least some of Malone’s marginalia preserved in his copy of the 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher. As is well known, our knowledge of what Herbert’s office book contained depends in large measure on what Malone chose to publish in his 1790 edition of Shakespeare and in the edition James Boswell the younger published in 1821 with the help of Malone’s surviving papers. The book itself, of which Malone seems to have produced a manuscript copy, disappeared without trace even though some of Herbert’s papers were passed on to Boswell and were included in the sale of *Bibliotheca Boswelliana* in 1825.⁷⁶ Neither the office book, however, nor Malone’s transcript of it seem to have been among them.⁷⁷

A handful of new and previously unprinted references to Herbert’s office book were culled by W. J. Lawrence early in the twentieth century from marginalia Malone had written into his copies of old plays.⁷⁸ N. W. Bawcutt, the most recent editor of Herbert’s records, was able to find a few further references to the register in others of Malone’s books. While

they are bound together with the other Beaumont and Fletcher playbooks Malone owned.

73. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 3:113.

74. See *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1966–96), 3:485.

75. On Malone’s initial access to the office book, see N. W. Bawcutt, *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623–73* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 16.

76. Lot 3129.

77. For Malone’s statement that he made a copy of Herbert’s office book as early as 1789, see Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, 169, item 201.

78. W. J. Lawrence, “New Facts from Sir Henry Herbert’s Office Book,” *The Times Literary Supplement* (29 November 1923): 820.

Malone's copy of the 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher does not, unfortunately, furnish new entries to the office book, it does lend additional support to Malone's claim that he made a transcript of the entire volume for his own use, as the information we find here is sometimes more complete than Malone's previously published extracts from the Herbert papers. It also possibly provides a correction for an entry otherwise only known from Malone's edition of Shakespeare.

The 1778 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher includes a note on the prologue to *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* in an attempt to explain the following lines: “Do not your looks let fall, / Nor to remembrance our late errors call, / Because this day we're Spaniards all again.” The note says that the allusion must be “to the ill success of some tragedy, founded on a Spanish story, which had then been presented to the publick.”⁷⁹ Malone comments with confidence and with information that he could only have obtained from the office book of Sir Henry Herbert: “No, it relates to no tragedy: it alludes to Middleton's *Game at Chess*, which was played for the first time in June 1624, as this play of *Rule a wife &c* was first exhibited in the Oct^r of the same year. Middleton's play gave offence to Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador.”⁸⁰ For *The Maid in the Mill*, on the other hand, Malone simply copies the entry from Herbert's office book, but in a form that is more complete than the version he gives in his edition of Shakespeare: “A newe comedy called The Mayde of the Mill containing 12 sheetes and a leafe, written by Fletcher and Rowley [licensed] this 29th of August, 1623. For the Kings Players.' Sir Henry Herbert's Register. E. M.”⁸¹

79. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 3:421.

80. Weber was the first one to make the connection in print, and he was able to guess correctly because the Herbert papers were made public by Malone (*Beaumont and Fletcher* [1812], 2:415, for the relevant note, and 411 for the mention of Herbert's office book). On the basis of Herbert, Malone gives the date of *Rule a Wife* in *The Plays and Poems of William Shakspeare*, ed. Edmond Malone, 10 vols. (London: Printed by H. Baldwin for J. Rivington and Sons [etc.], 1790), vol. 1, part 2, 224; see also Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, 157, item 127. That Malone similarly got the date for Middleton's play from Herbert is confirmed by the note he left in his copy of *A Game at Chess*, Bodleian Library, Malone 247 (1); see Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, 152, item 105.

81. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 7:203. Compare this with the much shorter entry found in Malone's 1790 edition of Shakespeare, vol. 1, part 2, 224, reprinted verbatim in *The Plays and Poems of William Shakspeare*, ed. James Boswell, 21 vols. (London: Printed for F. C. and J. Rivington [etc.], 1821), 3:226. The fuller version

Completely new information, however, is found in Malone's note on *The Noble Gentleman*. He first claims that "[t]his play was solely Fletcher's," and then invites the reader (for he is clearly not writing the marginalia just for himself) to "[s]ee the next page." There we read: "This prologue was written on the revival of this piece, probably in 1640, or 1641. The Noble Gentleman was Fletchers *last* play, and was produced some months after his death; viz Feb. 9, 1625-6. He died in the preceding August."⁸² The interesting thing here is that the date Malone gives is 9 February (see fig. 2). When this entry from Sir Henry's office book is referenced in Malone's *Shakespeare*, the date supplied is 3 February (both in 1790 and in 1821). And since the *Shakespeare* editions in question have been our only authoritative sources for this entry, 3 February is found in all the later publications of it. We see it as a likely typographical error that had crept into the 1790 edition of *Shakespeare* and was repeated as such in 1821, and suggest that 9 February be accepted as the new date for the licensing (if not the original production) of *The Noble Gentleman*.⁸³ While this may be perceived as chronicling small beer, it does point to the possibility that new and more significant information from Herbert's office book might still be available—not just in Malone's books surviving in the Bodleian Library, but also in the volumes that never reached Oxford or, indeed, any public library.

given by Bawcutt (*Control and Censorship*, 144, item 54) comes from a different transcript. Bawcutt writes elsewhere: "Malone and Chalmers frequently abbreviated the entries they printed, sometimes drastically. They never included the length of the play, and usually omitted the fee" (44). The fact that in print Malone gives an abbreviated entry and in his copy of the 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher a fuller entry further shows that he must have made a complete transcript of the office book for his use and for easy reference.

82. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 8:381-83.

83. See Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, 162, item 159. For Malone's mention of the date of *The Noble Gentleman* in print, see his 1790 *Shakespeare*, vol. 1, part 2, 224, and Boswell's 1821 revision of the same, 3:227. In both of these publications the entries are identical, and they seem to suggest the date given is that of licensing. The production venue, however, is specified too (Blackfriars). Lawrence observes that, "Malone, in paraphrasing from the Office Book, had an ugly trick of giving the date of licensing as the date of performance, though he had absolutely no reason for assuming that the two synchronized" ("New Facts," 820); for a revised version of the statement, see W. J. Lawrence, *Speeding up Shakespeare: Studies of the Bygone Theatre and Drama* (London: The Argonaut Press, 1937), 166.

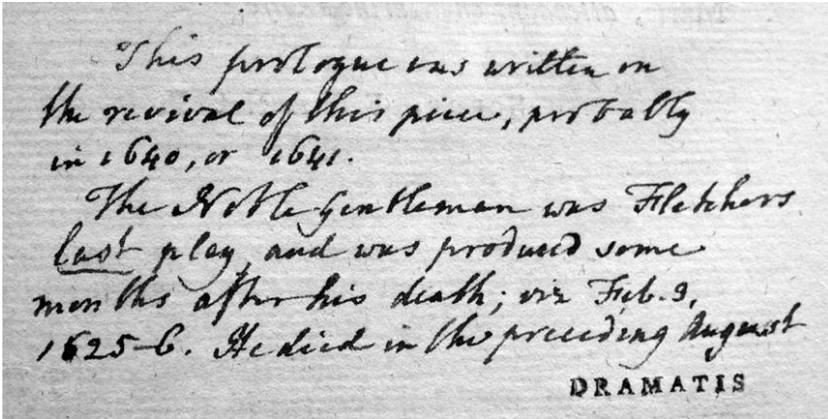


Fig. 2: *The Dramatick Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* (London, 1778), 8:383. Malone's dating of *The Noble Gentleman* based on the office book of Sir Henry Herbert. Greatley-Hirsch Hellfish Bonanza 33.8. Image from author's copy.

Malone wrote the greatest number of notes in the final volume of his copy of the 1778 Beaumont and Fletcher. Apart from one note on *The Nice Valour*, where he discusses the authorship of the song "Hence, all you vain delights," Malone devotes all of his energy to the text of *The Honest Man's Fortune*.⁸⁴ The reason for this is simple: unlike the editors of the play for the 1778 edition, who had the 1647 folio as the only authoritative witness, Malone had gained access to a manuscript of the play containing a significantly variant text. In his "Historical Account of the English Stage," published as part of his 1790 edition of Shakespeare, Malone says that, "[a] Manuscript copy of this play is now before me, marked 1613," and again, several pages later, "The manuscript copy of the *Honest Man's Fortune* is now before me, and is dated 1613."⁸⁵ This manuscript survives as part of the Dyce collection in the Victoria and Albert Mu-

84. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 10:354. Malone writes: "This song must have been inserted after Fletcher's death. Perhaps the play was left unfinished, and it was added by Shirley.—The Song, of which there is another stanza, was written by W.^m Strode, an excellent poet, & Publick Orator of the University of Oxford, who died, I think, in 1644." A similar claim is made by Malone in one of his manuscripts (Bodleian Library, MS Malone 21); see Edward F. Rimbault, "Song in Fletcher's Play of *The Nice Valour*," *Notes and Queries* 1 (5 January 1850): 146–47. On the authorship of this song, see *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1966–96), 7:434.

85. *Plays and Poems of William Shakspeare* (1790), vol. 1, part 2, 223, 226.

seum, and it has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention; two editions of the manuscript have been published to date.⁸⁶

While we know that the manuscript was probably purchased for Alexander Dyce at the sale of Richard Heber's library in 1836, it remains unclear how it had reached Heber and why it had not appeared in any of the sales that featured Malone's books and papers. The most recent edition of the manuscript, prepared by Grace Ioppolo, offers a speculative reconstruction of its provenance. Ioppolo suggests that the manuscript in question may have been among the play manuscripts that William Cartwright the younger (1606–86) bequeathed to Dulwich College and that "Malone may have removed this manuscript from the College, possibly returning it at a later point."⁸⁷ This supposition is, however, contradicted by Malone's manuscript marginalia in the tenth volume of the 1778 edition of *Beaumont and Fletcher*, where it is clear not just that the manuscript of *The Honest Man's Fortune* was "before" Malone but also that he actually owned it. Malone refers to it repeatedly as "my MS.," once as "MS. penes me" (Latin for "in my possession"), and once as "the orig. MS. in my poss."⁸⁸ Malone also left a trace of his ownership in the manuscript itself. The name "Taylor," missing from the torn edge of the last leaf of the manuscript containing Herbert's license, was supplied not by Dyce, as Ioppolo suggests, but by Malone: it is in his handwriting.⁸⁹ Malone was able to supply the missing name because he had access to Herbert's papers, where this information is preserved.⁹⁰ This means that the only trace of Malone's hand in the surviving manuscript of *The Honest Man's Fortune* dates from after 1789.

86. Shelfmark Dyce 25.F.9. See *The Honest Mans Fortune: A Critical Edition of MS Dyce 9 (1625)*, ed. Johan Gerritsen (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1952); *The Honest Man's Fortune*, ed. Grace Ioppolo, Malone Society Reprints 176 (Manchester: Manchester University Press for the Malone Society, 2012). A detailed discussion of the manuscript and its relation to the folio text can be found in Paul Werstine, *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 310–13.

87. *Honest Man's Fortune* (2012), ix.

88. For "my MS." see *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 10:409, 434, 454, 467, 470, 476; for "MS. penes me" and for "the orig. MS. in my poss." see 10:412. We read Malone's crossing out of "orig." not as a suggestion that he is working from a copy of the original manuscript but as his desire to stress his ownership of the original ("the manuscript in my possession").

89. See *Honest Man's Fortune* (2012), xvii.

90. See Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, 160, item 148a.

Since the manuscript of *The Honest Man's Fortune* survives, and since it is available in good modern editions, there is no need to describe all the instances where Malone makes corrections in the margin of the 1778 edition on the basis of the manuscript. In every instance, the reading Malone proposes agrees with the reading of the surviving manuscript.⁹¹ While he entered many corrections, he does not seem to have undertaken a systematic collation of the two copies. The point seems to have been simply to show, here and there, the importance of this new textual witness and, as usual, the foolishness of other editors. A good example of this attitude is found in reference to a passage that is printed as verse in the 1778 edition but that Malone's manuscript presented as prose: “All this dialogue is *prose* in the ~~orig.~~ MS. in my poss.ⁿ—The foolish ed.^{rs} have twisted this and a hundred other scenes, without any authority, into verse” (see fig. 3).⁹² At another point, the manuscript is cited to correct the printed text, but the same page features Malone's note in which the folio of 1647 is used to correct the 1778 text, even though the folio reading is *not* the reading of Malone's manuscript.⁹³ Malone was less interested in understanding the relationship between the folio text and the text of his manuscript than in showing his own superior knowledge.

CONCLUSION

While not very numerous, Malone's manuscript notes in his copy of the 1778 edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, described here in full, tell us that there is still significant work to be done on the elucidation of the plays of these two dramatists. The fact that, at times, Malone can offer more than Beaumont and Fletcher's subsequent editors is as much a compliment to Malone's skills as it is a reminder to us that we still lack a complete edition of their plays equipped with detailed and up-to-date commentary. The modern editorial tradition, inspired by the empiricist premises of the New Bibliography, produced exemplary old-spelling texts

91. Malone's interventions are found in the following lines (the line numbers follow *Honest Man's Fortune* [2012]): 676, 760, 769, 771, 772, 778, 1139, 1414, 1531, 1645, 1846, 2044, 2391, 2439, 2557, 2680, 2761.

92. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1778), 10:412. The note refers to line 772 and the surrounding text.

93. *Ibid.*, 10:482, where in line 2842 Malone inserts “God” before “Give you joy!”, adding “So Fol. 1647.” Further down on the same page, however, in line 2853, he replaces “As with” with “and” saying “so MS.”

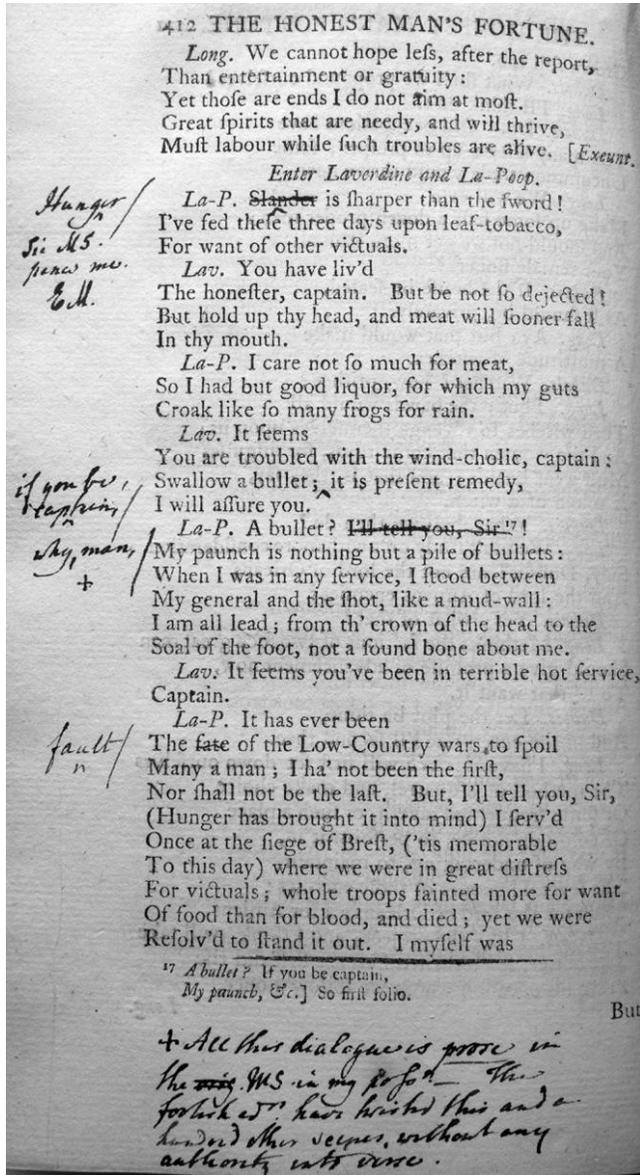


Fig. 3: *The Dramatick Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* (London, 1778), 10:412. Malone's corrections to the text of *The Honest Man's Fortune* based on the manuscript in his possession. Greatley-Hirsch *Hellfish Bonanza* 33.10. Image from author's copy.

of the plays, but provided no guidance for furnishing these texts with commentary. Fredson Bowers’s Cambridge edition stands as a good example of this tradition. When an earlier edition of *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* was announced in 1905, its editor promised that, once the text was completed, “a companion volume containing a series of explanatory notes upon the text” would follow.⁹⁴ But when he came to the last play, the same editor was unable to go on, simply stating that the work of commentary “must be left to other hands.”⁹⁵ The variorum edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, undertaken about the same time under the general direction of A. H. Bullen, never went further than volume 4 out of the 12 projected volumes.⁹⁶

The last complete edition of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher that features a full-scale commentary is still that of Alexander Dyce, from the middle of the nineteenth century. Before his own edition was published, but probably not before it was contemplated, Dyce had written: “A new and complete edition of those poets is, indeed, a desideratum in our literature: it is to be hoped that it will be undertaken by some gentleman fully competent to execute such a task; that he will illustrate, but not *over*-illustrate, the portions of the text that require a comment; and that he will not swell his notes with useless exultations over the errors of his immediate predecessor.”⁹⁷ While Malone clearly could not serve as a model in such a disciplined undertaking, we hope that some of his observations can nonetheless find a place in the work of the competent gentlemen—and gentlewomen—of the future.⁹⁸

94. *The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher*, ed. Arnold Glover and A. R. Waller, Cambridge English Classics, 10 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905–12), 2:vii.

95. *Ibid.*, preface, 10:v.

96. *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1904–12), 1:vi.

97. *Demetrius and Enanthe*, vi.

98. The section on provenance was written by Brett Greatley-Hirsch; the rest of the article was written by Ivan Lupić. The authors would like to extend special thanks to Margreta de Grazia, who originally put them in touch. Brett Greatley-Hirsch is grateful to Mitch Fraas, Kathryn James, Aaron Pratt, and Matteo Pangallo for kindly consulting and making reproductions of sale catalogues at the University of Pennsylvania, Yale University, and Harvard University respectively. Ivan Lupić thanks John Mustain and Irena Bratičević for their assistance, and David Scott Kastan and Tiffany Stern for their comments on an earlier draft of the essay.