

‘On editing Ford anew.’

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The first attempt to collect the writings of John Ford was made in 1652, when a volume entitled *Comedies, Tragi-Comedies: & Tragædies: written By John Ford* was compiled. Only one copy is known to exist, in the Advocates Library of the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.¹ The catalogue identifies the volume as ‘A unique collection of seven of John Ford’s plays, published between 1629 and 1639, bound for Walter Chetwynd of Ingestre and for whom the title page was probably printed’. Chetwynd (1633–1693), was a considerable public figure in Staffordshire, and spent much of his life collecting materials for a history of the county (*ODNB*). His bound collection of the original quartos, with its specially-printed title page, bears witness to the self-indulgence of a prosperous book collector, not to some public interest in Ford as a dramatist.

The first collection of Ford’s plays intended for the reading public was Henry Weber’s edition of *The Dramatic Works of John Ford. With an Introduction and Explanatory Notes*, in two volumes (Edinburgh, 1811). This consisted of the seven plays issued in single quarto editions during his lifetime that Ford had identified as his, either by the anagram of his name, FIDE HONOR, printed on the title page, or with his name at the end of the dedicatory epistle. These plays, published across a decade, formed his canon throughout the nineteenth century: *The Lovers Melancholy* (1629), *Loves Sacrifice* (1633), *The Broken Heart* (1633), *’Tis Pitty Shee’s a Whore* (1633), *The Chronicle Historie of Perkin Warbeck* (1634), *The Fancies, Chast and Noble* (1638), and *The Ladies Triall* (1639). To these Weber added two

¹ In Wing’s *Short-Title Catalogue* it is F1466A; the library call number is H.28.e.12.

co-authored plays, posthumously published: *The Sun's-Darling: A Moral Masque* (1656), by Ford and Dekker, and *The Witch of Edmonton* (1658), by Ford, Dekker, and Rowley. Henry Weber (1783–1818) was born in St Petersburg into the Moravian Brethren community, and subsequently studied at Jena, Halle and Edinburgh. From 1807 to 1814 he worked as an amanuensis and secretary to Sir Walter Scott, while pursuing his own scholarly interest in medieval literature, which yielded a three-volume edition of *Metrical Romances* (1810). His edition of Ford was his first venture into English drama, soon followed by a major edition of Beaumont and Fletcher (14 vols, 1812), but his inexperience led to an unsatisfactory edition which provoked three writers to publish separate critiques.²

One positive effect of bad scholarship is that its appearance can provoke others to do better. In 1827 Weber's edition was superseded by *The Dramatic Works of John Ford* (2 vols), 'with Notes Critical and Explanatory, by W. Gifford, Esq. To which are added *Fame's Memorial* and verses to the memory of Ben Jonson'. Gifford (1756–1826), was a notable satirist, journalist and editor. He translated Persius and Juvenal, published *The Baviad, a paraphrastic imitation of the first satire of Persius* (1791), edited the *Anti-Jacobin* (1797–8), and was editor of the *Quarterly Review* from 1809 to 1824. He also produced editions of Massinger (1805; revised 1813, both in 4 vols), Jonson (9 vols, 1816), and Shirley (6 vols,

² In the year of publication Octavius Gilchrist published *A Letter to William Gifford, Esq., on the late edition of Ford's Plays; chiefly as relating to Ben Jonson* (London, 1811; pp. 45). The same year saw the anonymously issued *A Letter to J. P. Kemble, Esq., involving Strictures on a Recent Edition of John Ford's Dramatic Works* (Cambridge, 1811; pp. 29), while the following year appeared *A Letter to R[ichard]. Heber, Esq., containing Some Observations on the Merits of Mr. Weber's late edition of Ford's Dramatic Works* (London, 1812; pp. 30). The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* article on Weber, by Margaret Clunies Ross and Amanda J. Collins, attributes the third pamphlet to 'the Revd John Mitford', the second to 'G. D. Whittington': but, on internal evidence, I see the hand of William Gifford.

1833, posthumously edited by Alexander Dyce). Gifford wrote a substantial Introduction to his Ford edition (I.iii-lxxxix) recounting the little that was known of the dramatist's life at that time, and evaluating the plays in a mixture of tart criticism and reserved praise. Towards the end of this essay Gifford recalled his first reactions, in 1811, to Weber's edition, which, after only 'a slight glance' he dismissed as 'utterly worthless; and I proceeded, with my habitual regard for truth, and reverence for the literary character of my country, to rescue not the worst of its poets from the ignorance which overlaid him and disgraced the national press' (I.lxiii). This, I believe, refers to Francis Jeffrey's notice of Weber's edition which had appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* vol. 36 for August 1811³, in which Jeffrey devoted most of his time to 'the history of our poetry', singling out the Elizabethan age for special praise, and commenting briefly on only two of Ford's plays, with copious excerpts. As a contemporary rightly objected, in this review 'Ford has been criticized almost entirely without reference to his editor'. Those words come from *A Letter to J.P. Kemble, Esq., involving Strictures on a Recent Edition of John Ford's Dramatic Works* (1811), and form one reason for attributing that work to Gifford. The other is the fact that, in a one hundred page supplement to the Introduction of his 1827 edition, Gifford itemized Weber's editorial shortcomings in the most scathing terms.⁴ In this critique, as in the *Strictures*, the identical errors in Weber's edition are criticized, with a frequent coincidence of wording, such as his emendation of a passage in *Perkin Warbeck*, 'Repair [we] | Unto our counsel' (4.3.53-4), where Weber found it 'absolutely requisite' to insert the bracketed word. The author of the *Strictures* objected to this unnecessary insertion in the identical terms that Gifford used in his

³ See *The Edinburgh Review*, August, 1811. Vol. 18, no. 36, pp. 275-304. For Jeffrey's authorship see W.E.Houghton (ed.), *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900* (Toronto and London, 1968), p. 448. Jeffrey reprinted the article in his *Contributions to the Edinburgh Review*, 4 vols. (1844).

⁴ Gifford, *The Dramatic Works*, vol. I, pp. lxxx-clxxx

Introduction.⁵ Gifford was certainly justified in criticizing Weber's unnecessary emendations, wrong explanations, erroneous punctuation, and other faults, but he did so in a manner which a contemporary writer described as 'scornful and intolerant. He often treats the most venial errors — the slightest mistakes — the very semblance of ignorance in his predecessors, with unmitigatable ferocity' (*ODNB*). Yet Gifford himself was equally liable to error, as Dyce frequently observed in his 1869 revision of Gifford's edition.⁶

The rapid growth of interest in Shakespeare and other dramatists in the early nineteenth century benefited Ford in several ways. Scholars not only had texts of the seven canonical and two co-authored plays, they also knew of works by Ford recorded in official documents from the seventeenth century but since lost. In 1811 Weber included 'A List of Ford's Plays' (I.xlix–l), running to thirteen titles. In 1827 Gifford expanded it to sixteen, acknowledging 'the researches of Mr. G. Chalmers'. George Chalmers (1742–1825) was a Scottish antiquary who had become involved in the controversy surrounding the Shakespeare papers forged by William Henry Ireland, and in 1797–9 published two huge volumes disputing Malone's exposure of the forgery. Despite his eccentric position on the forgery, Chalmers provided well-informed discussions of Elizabethan stage history and the

⁵. Compare *Strictures*, pp. 11–12 and *Works*, I.cxliv, referring to Weber II.77 ('makes nonsense of the whole speech'); also *Strictures*, p. 13 and *Works*, I.cliv, on Weber II.252 ('has destroyed both sense and metre'); *Strictures*, p.14 and *Works*, I.cxxxviii, on Weber II.388 (his 'unallowable violence' to Ford's text); *Strictures*, p. 15 and *Works*, I.clxvi, on Weber II.371, etc.

⁶ In his three-volume edition (1869) Dyce added many brief footnotes recording Gifford's textual errors with occasional tart comments: he 'carelessly' confused play titles (I.xlviii); 'Gifford, with his usual unendurable incorrectness of quotation' (I.li). But mostly Dyce contented himself with noting that 'Gifford printed' this or that erroneous reading, signing the note 'D'. Dyce did not reprint Gifford's hundred-page listing of Weber's errors, as he said, 'according to the wish of Gifford' (I.vi, lxix), although he preserved 'certain explanations of the text with which it is interspersed', as 'notes on the respective passages in question'.

chronology of Shakespeare's plays and poems, 'printing for the first time a number of documentary records, including ... further extracts from the Stationers' Register'.⁷ Thanks to such researches Gifford knew of seven additional play titles with which Ford was connected.⁸

While Gifford could pass on more information about Ford's lost plays than Weber had, he was also able to include one of Ford's two long poems, *Fames Memoriall*. This had been published in 1819 by the antiquary and bibliographer Joseph Haslewood (1769-1833), co-founder of the Roxburghe Club, in order to fill the gap left by Weber, but in a rather defective edition.

Another important source of information about early modern English literature was the founding of learned societies dedicated to re-publishing little known texts. An especially active body was the Shakespeare Society of London, founded in 1841 by J. O. Halliwell and John Payne Collier, which published 48 titles (issued in 19 volumes) between 1841 and 1853. Volume 10 (1843), contained *Honor Triumphant* and *A Line of Life*, 'Two Tracts by John Forde, the Dramatist, Unknown to the Editors of his Works, and now First Reprinted from the Original Copies Published in 1606 and 1620', a volume rather carelessly edited by Collier himself, according to one source⁹. Another scholar active in this wave of literary societies was Alexander Dyce (1798–1869), who was a council member of the Camden Society, for which he edited *Kemps Nine Daies Wonder* in 1840. That year he helped to found the Percy Society, and was one of the moving forces behind the Shakespeare Society,

⁷ Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford, 1991), p. 168.

⁸ The evidence for these attributions will be fully discussed in Volume II of this edition.

⁹ William Jaggard, *Shakespeare Bibliography* (Stratford-on-Avon, 1911), p.606.

founded a year later. Dyce had a remarkably productive scholarly career, which yielded (among many other works) editions of Peele (3 vols, 1828–39), Webster (4 vols, 1830) Greene (2 vols, 1831), Middleton (5 vols, 1840), Beaumont and Fletcher (11 vols, 1843–6), and Shakespeare (6 vols, 1857). In the last year of his life Dyce returned to Ford, expanding Gifford's edition as *The Works of John Ford* (3 vols), 'with Notes critical and explanatory by William Gifford, Esq. A New Edition, carefully revised, with Additions to the Text and to the Notes by the Rev. Alexander Dyce'. The seven canonical plays occupied the first two volumes and part of the third, together with the two co-authored plays, *The Sun's-Darling* and *The Witch of Edmonton*. Dyce followed Gifford by including *Fames Memoriall*, and he printed for the first time Ford's verse tributes to Barnabe Barnes, Sir Thomas Overbury, and James Shirley (see 'Uncollected Poems' in Vol. I). Dyce completed his edition by reprinting Collier's edition of *Honor Triumphant* and *A Line of Life* in a modernized text, adding further errors. Dyce's three volumes were reprinted in 1895 by A. H. Bullen, and stand as the last published attempt to collect Ford's writings.

It can be fairly stated that the nineteenth century editors were innocent of analytical bibliography and textual criticism as we know it. They mostly based their texts on a single copy of each work, not realising the need to collate multiple copies in order to check for corrections made during the printing process. They modernized spelling and punctuation at will, and emended freely. Their lack of any systematic approach to textual problems, and the frequent inaccuracy of their reproduction of the original texts make their editions unreliable at many levels. A partial improvement in the approach to editing Ford's works was signalled by the publication in 1906 of *The Queen, or the Excellency of her Sex*, 'nach der Quarto 1653

in Neudruck herausgegeben' by Willi Bang.¹⁰ The Quarto title page described it as '*An Excellent old Play. Found out by a Person of Honour, and given to the Publisher, Alexander Goughe*'. Bang knew from Wright's *Historia Histrionica* that an Alexander Goffe or Gough was described as 'the Woman Actor of *Blackfriars*', since, from at least 1626 to 1629, he had played female roles in Massinger's *The Roman Actor*, Ford's *The Lovers Melancholy*, and Massinger's *The Picture*. Gough had evidently acquired manuscripts of some plays performed before the closing of the theatres in 1642, and he subsequently published *The Widow* (1652), co-authored by Jonson, Fletcher, and Middleton, and Lodowick Carlell's *The Passionate Lovers* (1655).¹¹ As he explained in the preface, Bang ascribed *The Queen* to Ford since he recognised in it the same plot situations, characterisation, ideas, and vocabulary found in the mature tragedies (pp. vii-viii). In his extensive notes (pp. 41–57) Bang pointed out many parallels with Ford's other works, and his attribution has been universally endorsed.¹²

Two years later Bang brought out the first in a projected set of three volumes of Ford's works, in old-spelling texts, as De Vocht described them, 'meticulously exact reproductions of the original quartos', containing *The Lovers Melancholy* and *Loves Sacrifice*.¹³ This volume included a prefatory essay by S.P. Sherman, 'Forde's Contribution to the Decadence of the Drama' (pp. vii-xix), reflecting a conception of the drama between 1579 and 1642 in terms of growth and decay, one which persisted well into the 1950s. Bang's

¹⁰ *The Queen* (Louvain, 1906), was volume 13 in Bang's pioneering series *Materialien zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas*.

¹¹ See G.E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols. (Oxford, 1941-68), ii.446–7.

¹² See Bentley, iii.457–8.

¹³ *John Fordes Dramatische Werke in Neudruck herausgegeben von W. Bang, Erster Band*, (Louvain, 1908); volume 23 in Bang's *Materialien*.

projected complete edition suffered a major disaster in August 1914, when fire destroyed both the complete stock of forty-four published volumes and the new volume in preparation, with *The Broken Heart* already set in type. It was not until 1927 that Bang's pupil, Henry De Vocht, could issue the second volume of *John Ford's Dramatic Works Reprinted from the Original Quartos*.¹⁴ De Vocht included the five remaining plays of the canonical seven, and promised a third volume to contain *The Queen*, *The Sun's-Darling*, *Honor Triumphant*, *Fames Memoriall*, and *A Line of Life*. By the time that De Vocht was writing, the arrival of modern bibliography and textual criticism inspired by the work of R. B. McKerrow, W. W. Greg, A. F. Pollard and others, together with the Malone Society Reprints, had alerted scholars to the significance of textual variants between copies of early modern printed books. De Vocht noted in passing that, while collating different copies of *Perkin Warbeck*, he had discovered numerous variants in the final leaf (K5), and announced that 'a list of such variants and of textual notes for all plays by Ford will be published in a third volume, which will complete these *Dramatic Works*' (p.vii). De Vocht added: 'It will be moreover illustrated by an essay on the present state of the study of Ford, and on his share in different plays, from the pen of Mr. Bertram Lloyd, who is preparing a critical edition of his works'. Alas, De Vocht's volume three never appeared, nor did Lloyd's critical edition.¹⁵

Apart from the many separate editions of Ford's most popular plays, which will be dealt with by our editors in their place, the only substantial addition to the Ford canon in

¹⁴ Understandably, after the First World War, when German forces attacked Louvain, this Belgian scholarly project switched languages to English, the series being renamed *Materials for the Study of the Old English Drama*.

¹⁵ Lloyd mentioned his 'researches for a new edition of Ford's Works' in 'An Unprinted Poem by John Ford (?)' in *RES*, 1 (1925), 217–19.

modern times appeared in 1991, *The Nondramatic Works of John Ford*.¹⁶ The General Editor was L.E. Stock, who edited *Fames Memoriall* and Ford's 'Shorter Pieces'. Judith M. Kennedy edited *Honor Triumphant* and *The Monarches Meeting*; Dennis Danielson edited *Christes Bloodie Sweat*, which had been attributed to Ford by Joan M. Sargeaunt in 1934.¹⁷ Gilles Monsarrat, together with Stock, edited both of Ford's prose works, *The Golden Meane* (which Sargeaunt had also attributed to Ford in her 1934 essay) and *A Line of Life*. All the texts were freshly edited after collation of the surviving quartos, and were accompanied by individual introductions, textual notes, an extensive commentary and a glossary of rare words.

The present edition takes up where Dyce ended in 1869, and where De Vocht and Lloyd were planning to begin in the 1930s. It will consist of three volumes, in which all works will be edited from surviving manuscripts and the quarto editions, the only texts of any authority. This edition will include several plays which were included neither in Dyce's edition nor in that planned by Bang and De Vocht. Volume Two, containing all the co-authored plays, together with an extensive discussion of the methods used to identify Ford's hand, will bring together the two collaborative plays included by Dyce, *The Sun's-Darling*

¹⁶ This volume was published in Binghamton, NY, by Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, in conjunction with the Renaissance English Text Society.

¹⁷ Sargeaunt. 'Writings Ascribed to John Ford by Joseph Hunter in *Chorus Vatum*', *RES*, 10 (1934), 165–76. Her attribution was confirmed by Gilles Monsarrat in 'John Ford's Authorship of *Christes Bloodie Sweat*', *English Language Notes*, 9 (1971): 20–5. Regrettably, Katharine Pantzer, editor of the revised *STC* (1986), was unconvinced, and the poem is still listed under the authorship of Joseph Fletcher (*STC* 11076), but with the note 'the attrib. to Fletcher is dubious, and this is more likely by John Ford' (vol. 2, p. 490).

and *The Witch of Edmonton*. To those we shall add the following plays (with dates of probable performance):

The Lawes of Candy (c.1619), by Ford, Massinger(?) and / or Rowley.

The Welsh Ambassador, or A Comedy in Disguises (c.1623), by Dekker and Ford.

The Spanish Gipsie (1623), by Ford, Middleton, Rowley, and Dekker.

The Fair Maid of the Inn (c.1625), by Ford, Webster, Massinger, and perhaps Fletcher.

Our aim is to collate all surviving copies of the quartos, taking note of modern editions since Weber, although we do not offer a complete historical collation. Many alterations to Ford's text have been made in the course of two centuries, including speculative emendations of substantives and endless tinkering with such accidentals as punctuation and capitalisation, few of which are worth recording. We reproduce the original spelling and, as far as possible, the original punctuation; where we depart from this, in order to avoid ambiguity, all departures will be recorded. We also correct obvious misprints and follow the accepted conventions of modernizing i/j; u/v; the long 's'; expanding the ampersand and other contractions.

Volume One, which brings together all of Ford's prose writings and poetry, inevitably invites comparison with the 1991 *Nondramatic Works*. The editors of this volume are grateful to have had a predecessor of such a high scholarly standard, and acknowledge specific debts as appropriate. We aim to go beyond that achievement in several respects. For one, we add two new works to Ford's canon, the 1612 *Funerall Elegye* written for William Peter,

erroneously attributed to Shakespeare but independently authenticated as Ford's work by two of the present editors; and the *Elegy for John Fletcher*, discovered and attributed to Ford by Jeremy Maule, and here edited from a manuscript in the Clark Library, Los Angeles. Secondly, we have made greater use of the few surviving manuscripts connected with Ford. Leo Stock based his edition of *Fames Memoriall* on the 1606 Quarto. I have preferred the presentation manuscript given by Ford to Mountjoy's widow, Penelope, duchess of Devonshire, a manuscript that was formerly in the possession of Edmond Malone, and is now in the Bodleian. It gives several better readings, and is more sensitively punctuated than the printed version. For *A Line of Life* the 1991 edition presents the text of the 1620 duodecimo conflated with some passages found only in the other authoritative text, a presentation manuscript in British Library (Lansdowne MS 350). For this edition both texts have been edited and are presented complete, on facing pages.

Finally, we have provided fuller annotation than was given in the 1991 *Nondramatic Works*, adding more explanatory notes in the commentary, giving greater attention to glossing obsolete words, and indicating many more parallels in thought and expression to Ford's other works. We hope to have succeeded in providing readers with accurate, helpfully annotated texts of Ford's poems and prose writings.