A RE-INVESTIGATION OF THE FIRST FOLIO TEXT OF SHAKESPEARE'S MACBETH

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"Where we love is home; home that
our feet may leave, but not
our hearts." --Oliver W. Holmes

PREFACE

Greatness has practically always bred skepticism; and Shakespeare, one of the greatest dramatists of all time, has attracted much dispute. Since Macbeth contains many discrepancies, I chose to investigate the F_1 text. In this study I have, first, attempted to summarize the various critical data which would be concerned with a date of composition. Also, I have summarized the various sources which Shakespeare, no doubt, consulted for material for the drama. Chapter II contains a summary of scholarly theories concerning the condition of the text from which the F_1 editors worked. Chapter III presents an investigation of Shakespeare's use of the supernatural element in Macbeth and the possibility that some of the witch scenes were interpolated by a contemporary, Thomas Middleton. In my final chapter, I have presented the findings of my own examination of the F_1 text.

All quotations from Macbeth in the first three chapters have been taken from The New Variorum Macbeth. In Chapter IV, I have quoted directly from the F_1 text.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Charles E. Walton of the English Department for his many valuable suggestions. Without the benefit of his scholarship, much of this paper would have been impossible. I am also indebted to Dr. June Morgan for her careful guidance and to those who have made available the many valuable books in the William Allen White Memorial Library.

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CHAPTER I

DATE AND SOURCE OF THE PLAY

Date of the Play

The first known printing of Macbeth occurred in the 1623 Folio compiled by John Hemming and Henry Condell, two of Shakespeare's fellow actors from the King's Men, who placed Macbeth in the "Tragedie" section between Julius Caesar and Hamlet, where it occupies pages 131 through 151, inclusively. Scholars assume that no Quarto version of this play had previously been printed, since the Stationers' Register mentions Macbeth as a play ". . . not formerly entred to other men."[1]

Many have tried to establish a date of composition for Macbeth, the most likely attempts falling within the time limits of 1601 and April 20, 1611, with the weight of evidence favoring 1606, as the following assessment of these critical views reveals.[2] However, Fleay points out that the Stationers' Register contains an entry suggesting that a play on the subject of Macbeth may have existed in the last decade of the

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[1]Edwin Arber (ed.), A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, IV, 107.

[2]Sir E. K. Chambers, Howard Furness, Henry Hudson, George Kittredge, and Hardin Craig.

sixteenth century: "27 die Augusti 1596. Tho. Millington--Thomas Millington is likewyse fyned at ij^{s} vj^{d} for printinge of a ballad entituled The taming of a shrew. Also one other Ballad of Macdobeth."[3] Fleay thinks that this "ballad" could not have referred to the play as printed in the 1623 Folio, but rather to another one on the same subject.[4] In his Dance from London to Norwich, written in 1600, Kempe refers to the same ballad as having been made by ". . . a penny poet whose first making was the miserable stolen story of Macdoel, or Macdobeth or Mac-somewhat: for I am sure a Mac it was, though I never had the maw to see it."[5] He further suggests that the writer ". . . leave writing these beastly ballets; make not good wenches Prophetesses, for little or no profit."[6] His words, "to see it," seem to indicate that the piece had been presented to the public not merely as a printed "ballad," and since Kempe was a very popular actor, he would probably have been inclined to refer to dramatic performances. Scholars conclude, then, that Kemp's reference is to an earlier drama employed as a source by the author of Macdobeth.

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[3]Quoted in Frederick Fleay, A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare, p. 28.

[4]Ibid., p. 56.

[5]William Kemp, Nine Daies Wonder, p. 31.

[6]Ibid., p. 32.

Scholars have also suggested that Shakespeare's references to Antony in Macbeth might be expected, inasmuch as he had recently read Plutarch's Life of Antony in preparation for writing Julius Caesar.[7] Shakespeare had Macbeth say "under him my genius is rebuk'd, as, it is said, Mark Antony's was by Caesar." (III.i.57) Also, Shakespeare would have found an account of the "insane root that takes the reason prisoner," in Plutarch's Life of Antony. Since Platter's London visit (September 21, 1599)[8] to a play on the subject of Julius Caesar fairly definitely fixes a date for the performance of Julius Caesar, it is logical to assume that Shakespeare had begun work on Macbeth shortly thereafter. Also, it is significant that Macbeth follows Julius Caesar in the Folio arrangement.

One of the earliest contemporary allusions to Macbeth occurs in Thomas Middleton's Blurt, Master Constable (1602), as follows:

> Camillo: And when the lamb bleating doth bid good night
> Unto the closing day, then tears begin
> To keep quick time unto the owl, whose voice
> Shrieks like the belman in the lover's ears.[9]

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[7]Howard Furness (ed.), A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, II, 360.

[8]Sir E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 397.

[9]A. H. Bullen (ed.), The Works of Thomas Middleton, I, 54.

The phrasing, here, is very similar to the words uttered by Lady Macbeth: "It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal belmam / Which gives the stern'st goodnight." (II.ii.5-6) Furthermore, the expression, "the fatal bellman," concerns an allusion to a Newgate custom in Shakespeare's day, in which the bellman would ring his bell on the night before a prisoner's execution as a warning to be prepared for the fatal morning. In 1605, Robert Dow, a London Merchant Taylor, donated money to provide for a bellman who would appear at the prison of Newgate and deliver "a most pious and aweful admonition" to condemned criminals on the night before they were to die.[10] However, it is possible that both Middleton and Shakespeare could have been referring to this well-known custom rather than alluding to its use in contemporary works.

Scholars have pointed out that Ross's account of the state of Scotland describes very well the condition of London in the summer of 1603, a time when many individuals were dying of the plague:[11]

> It cannot
> Be call'd our Mother, but our Grave; where nothing
> But who knowes nothing, is one seene to smite:
> Where sighes, and groanes, and shrieks that rent the ayre
> Are made, nor mark'd: Where violent sorrow seemes
> A Moderne extasie: The Deadmans knell,

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[10] Henry Hudson (ed.), The Tragedy of Macbeth, p. xxviii.

[11] F. P. Wilson, "Illustrations of Social Life IV: The Plague," Sp. Survey, XV (1962), 127.

> Is there scarse ask'd for who, and good men's lives
> Expire before the Flowers in their Caps,
> Dying, or ere they sicken. (IV.iii.189-198)

Obviously, Shakespeare is referring to the crucial turning point in severe afflictions of bubonic plague where the bubonic form changed into the much more infectious and deadly "pneumonic plague" that could kill within hours. Thus, it was at this stage that "good men's lives / Expire before the flowers in their Caps, / Dying, or ere they sicken."[12]

That Shakespeare had probably just read or seen Marlowe's Doctor Faustus (around 1592) also has been surmised from an allusion that occurs in the last scene of Macbeth: "Had I as many sons, as I have hairs, / I would not wish them to a fairer death" (V.viii.62-63) which appears to be an echo of Faustus's "Had I as many souls as there be stars, I'd give them all for Mephistophiles."[13] Macbeth and Doctor Faustus are further alike in that both are tragedies in which an attractive and heroic figure deliberately accepts damnation, according to Christian definition, and suffers the inescapable consequences of his choice. In the end, both characters recognize the uselessness of what has been chosen, considering the salvation

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[12]F. N. L. Poynter, "Medicine and Public Health," Sp. Survey, XVII (1964), 166.

[13]Havelock Ellis (ed.), Works of Christopher Marlowe, p. 186.

of the soul.[14]

In Macbeth, the line reading, "double balls and treble sceptres" (IV.i.143), has been taken as an indication of a date of composition after October, 1604, when the Constitution was changed, the phrase, perhaps, referring to the union of England and Scotland and their conjunction with Ireland under King James.[15] Obviously, it would have had little effect unless spoken from the stage shortly after the crowning of King James as King of Great Britain and Ireland on October 20, 1604.[16] Chambers argues, however, that the phrase, "two-fold balls and treble sceptres," bears no relationship to the triple style of King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, since the earlier English style was triple, and there were no sceptres for France and Ireland. Consequently, he suggests that the "two-fold" balls must be the "mounds" on the English and Scottish crowns, and the "treble sceptres" are the two used for the investment in English coronations and the one similarly used in Scottish coronations.[17]

In dating the plays, Chambers assigns "1605-06 (?)" to

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[14]Irving Ribner, "Marlowe and Shakespeare," SQ, XV (1964), 49.

[15]Fleay, op. cit., p. 239.

[16]George Brandes, William Shakespeare, A Critical Study, II, 94.

[17]Sir E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare I, 473.

The Tragedie of Macbeth, noting that the King's Men had visited Barnstaple on some date previous to Michaelmas in 1605.[18] He concludes, therefore, that Macbeth should be assigned to 1605.[19] However, an allusion by the Porter to an "engrosser" (one who bought corn when it was cheap and intended to sell it in the time of drought at an exorbitant price) hints at a 1606 dating: "Knock, knock, knock, Who's there i'th the name of Belzebub? / Here's a Farmer, that hang'd himselfe on the expectation of Plentie." (II.iii.6-8) Malone, who demonstrates that corn was plentiful in London and very cheap in 1606,[20] feels that a suspicion of engrossing could have been a controversial issue at the time of composition. Two years later, on June 1, 1608, James's Privy Council issued strict orders against such engrossing.[21] However, an allusion to the same condition occurs in Ben Jonson's Every Man Out of his Humour, first acted by the Lord Chamberlain's Servants in 1599:[22]

> Now, now, when the sunne shines and the ayre thus cleere Soule if this hold, wer shall shortly have an excellent crop of corne spring out of the high waies: . . . Go

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[18] Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, III, 488.

[19] Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, II, 212.

[20] Henry Paul, The Royal Play of Macbeth, p. 245.

[21] Loc. cit.

[22] Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, III, 26.

> to, I'l prevent the sight of it, come as quickly as it can, I have this remedie heaven.[23]

The engrosser, then, suspends the halter to a tree, ties the noose around his neck and says: "I have hid it as deep as hell from the sight of heaven and to it I goe now [falls off]."[24] This farmer hanged himself in the expectation of plenty, preparing at once to go to hell. However, Kittredge further points out that the farmer "that hang'd himself on th' expectation of plenty" was a stock figure as early as the thirteenth century and one not to be connected especially with the price of wheat in 1606.[25]

Some scholars think that allusions to equivocation to be found in Macbeth might very possibly have referred to the trial of Garnet and other Jesuits in the spring of 1606.[26] The Porter, pretending to be the doorman of hell, says "Faith here's an Equivocator, that could sweare in both the Scales against eyther Scale, who committed Treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to Heaven." (II.iii.10-13) Some think that these lines were written during the gloomy but exciting winter days following the discovery of the

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[23] Ben Jonson, Every Man Out of his Humour, p. kij.

[24] Loc. cit.

[25] Goerge Kittredge (ed.), The Tragedy of Macbeth, p. viii.

[26] Fleay, op. cit., p. 239.

Gunpowder Plot on November 5, 1605, which was to have destroyed not only the King and his family, but also the Court and Parliament.[27] The plotters, who worked at night in digging their tunnel, make their way into a vault under the Parliament House where they concealed powder barrels. Their attempted assassination failed, however, and they were convicted of treason on January 27, 1606, and executed on January 30 and 31 in the same year.[28] Some think, therefore, that the words, "yet could not equivocate to heaven," allude to the execution of Father Garnet, who was later tried for his part in the plot on March 28, 1606, and hanged on May 3, 1606.[29] Certainly, Shakespeare mentions equivocation earlier in Hamlet: "How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us." (V.i.148-149)[30] However, it is clear that equivocation had become a sensational issue in the spring and summer of 1606, for on April 5 John Chamberlaine wrote to Winwood:

> So that by the Cunning of his Keeper, Garnet being brought into a Fool's Paradise, had diverse Conferences with Hall, his fellow Priest in the Tower, which were overheard by Spialls set on purpose. With which being

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[27] Paul, op. cit., p. 36.

[28] Ibid., p. 229.

[29] Kenneth Muir (ed.), The Arden Shakespeare, Macbeth, p. xviii.

[30] Hardin Craig, The Complete Works of Shakespeare, p. 937.

> charged he stifly denyed it; but being still urged, and some Light given him that they had notice of it, he persisted still, with Protestation upon his Soul and Salvation, that there had passed no such Interlocution: till at last being confronted with Hell, he was driven to confess; And being now asked in this Audience how he could solve this lewd Perjury, he answered, that so long as he thought they had no Proof he was not bound to accuse himself; but when he saw they had Proof, he stood not long in it. And then fell into a large Discourse of defending Equivocations, with many and weak and frivolous Distinctions.[31]

The allusion to the hanging of a traitor that occurs in the scene in which Lady Macduff is conversing with her son also implies a date of composition sometime after the hanging of the Gunpowder conspirators. (IV.ii.55-68) Wilson, however, has suggested that this passage is an interpolation, since, as prose, it occurs in the middle of a verse scene. Nevertheless, he admits that he has no way of determining when such an interpolation took place.[32] He also suggests that the "milk of concord" and the "King's Evil" passages (IV.iii.112-115; 166-176) were 1606 interpolations for a court performance.[33] He does not, however, account for a possible allusion to the failure of Gunpowder plotters to kill the King, the result, thus, leading Shakespeare to cause Macduff, upon seeing the murdered king, to say, "Confusion now hath made his

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[31] Muir, op. cit., p. 35, citing Winwood Memorials, II, 205-206.

[32] Ibid., p. xxi.

[33] Ibid., p. xxiv.

Masterpiece." (II.iii.79) Also, Macbeth wishes ". . . that but this blow / Might be the be-all and the end-all here" (I.vii.9-10), and Lennox speaks "Of dire combustion and confused events / New hatch'd to the woeful time." (II.ii.67-69) One recalls, also, that blow was popularly used at the time of the conspiracy to refer to the plot.[34] Another proposes that the Porter's references to drunkenness and lechery could also have been directed at Father Garnet, who was further accused of having had illicit relations with Mrs. Vaux, although he disclaimed these accusations of fornication describing them as slanderous in a speech delivered while he was being prepared for hanging.[35]

When Macduff captured Macbeth, he taunted his captive, saying: "Then yield thee coward / And live to be the show and gaze o' the time! / We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are, / Painted upon a pole." (V.viii.30-33) Macduff's words show a close similarity to a line found in the King's Book, an official account of the treason, written in November, 1605, by Robert Barker, printer to the King. This book explains that people wished to see the captured traitors ". . . as the rarest sort of monsters; fools to laugh at them; women and

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[34]Paul, op. cit., p. 229.

[35]Arthur Stunz, "Date of Macbeth," ELH, IX (1942), 103.

children to wonder, all the common people to gaze."[36] It may be that Shakespeare had recently explored Barker's account of this treason while working on Macbeth.

A common Elizabethan jest concerns the "tailor . . . stealing out of a French hose." (II.iii.16) This allusion refers to the short and straight fashion then in vogue when ". . . the tailors took more than enough for the new fashion sake,"[37] a remark contained in A. Nixon's Black Year, entered in the Stationers' Register on May 9, 1606.[38]

The weather described in Macbeth has also been considered as strong evidence for dating purposes. For example, in the earlier part of the play, the weather is described as foul and tempestous, and the sun does not shine. Later in the play, such stormy weather is forgotten. Scholars suggest, therefore, that the equinoctal storms at the end of March, 1606,[39] may have given Shakespeare an inspiration for the dark and dreary mood at the start of his play. A similar parallel, however, occurs in Munday's The Downful of Robert, Earl of Huntington, listed by Henslowe in 1597-1598,[40] resembling

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[36]Paul, op. cit., p. 230, citing King's Book.

[37]Fleay, op. cit., p. 239, citing A. Nixon's Black Year.

[38]Arber, op. cit., III, 321.

[39]Paul, op. cit., p. 36.

[40]Phillip Henslowe, Henslowe's Diary, p, 87.

Macbeth, I.v.49-52 and III.ii.46-47.[41] Munday's similar lines read:

> Muffle the eye of day,
> Ye gloomy clouds (and darker than my deeds
> That darker be than pitchy sable night)
> Muster together on these high topped trees,
> That not a spark of light through their sprays
> May hinder what I mean to execute . . . .[42]

Munday creates a mood similar to that found in Macbeth.

In his new edition of A Continuance of Albions England (1606), William Warner included an account of a story on the subject of Macbeth,[43] the significant part of which follows:

> One Makebeth, who had traitrously his sometimes Souereigne slaine,
> And like a monster not a Man usurpt in Scotland raigne,
> Whose guiltie Conscience did it selfe so feelingly accuse,
> As nothing not applied by him, against himselfe he vewes;
> No whispring but of him, gainst him all weapons feares he borne,
> All Beings jointly to revenge his Murtheres thinks he sworne,
> Wherefore (for such are ever such in selfe-tormenting mind)
> But to proceed in bloud, he thought no safetie to find.
> All greatnesse therefore, save his owne, his driftings did infest
> One Banquho, powerfulst of the Peers, in popular affection
> And prowesse great, was murthred by his tyrannous direction

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[41] James McPeek, "Macbeth and Mundy Again," MLN, XLVI (1939), 391.

[42] Anthony Munday, Downful of Robert, Earl of Huntington, ll. 2387-2392.

[43] I. Gollancz (ed.), The Shakspere Allusion-Book: A Collection of Allusions to Shakspere from 1591 to 1700, I, 158.

> Fleance therefore this Banquhos sonne fled thence to Wales for feare,
> Whome Gruffyth kindly did receive, and cherist nobly there.[44]

Warner may have written his account because of the popularity of Shakespeare's play. However, he does not completely follow the events of the source as Shakespeare did. Instead, his account resembles Holinshed's history of Fleance's death because of its dwelling upon Fleance's amorous adventures with Griffith's daughter.[45] Warner's "bloud" reference, however, would seem to coincide with Shakespeare's "I am in blood / Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go o'er." (III.iv.167-168)

Scholars have pointed out that Macbeth contains a parallel to Marston's Sophonisba, a play entered in the Stationers' Register on March 17, 1606.[46] The pertinent passages in Marston's drama are all integral parts of Sophonisba: ". . . three hundred saile / Upon whose tops the Roman eagles streache / Their large spread winges, which fan'd the evening ayre / To us cold breath, for well we might discerne / Rome swam to Carthage."[47] Shakespeare's words are

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[44] Loc. cit., citing William Warner, A Continuance of Albions England, p. 376.

[45] Ibid., p. 158.

[46] Arber, op. cit., III, 316.

[47] John Marston, The Works of John Marston, p. 246.

comparable: ". . . from Fiffe, great King / Where the Norweyan Banners flowt the Skie, / And fanne our people cold." (I.ii.60-62) Nosworthy, who contends that the second scene of Macbeth is substantially authentic, suggests that Shakespeare borrowed one of Marston's best images from the second scene of Sohponisba.[48] If Shakespeare did so borrow from Marston, there is little possibility that Macbeth existed before 1606.

A play entitled The Puritan, evidently by Middleton, and acted by Paul's Boys in 1606,[49] contains the following allusion to Banquo's ghost: ". . . instead of a jester, we'll ha' th' ghost in a white sheet sit at upper end o' th' table."[50] It is possibly significant that Macbeth was Shakespeare's first play without a clown, although Banquo's ghost sits in Macbeth's place at the upper end of the table. In addition, Beaumont and Fletcher's The Knight of the Burning Pestle, acted in 1607,[51] contains another allusion to Banquo's ghost:

> When thou art at thy Table with thy friends,
> Merry in heart, and fild with swelling wine,
> I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,

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[48] J. M. Nosworthy, "The Bleeding Captain Scene in Macbeth," RES, XXII (1946), 130.

[49] Fleay, op. cit., p. 156.

[50] Ibid., p. 240, citing Middleton's The Puritan.

[51] Muir, op. cit., p. xviii.

> Invisible to all men but thy self,
> And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear
> Shall make thee Cup fall from thy hand,
> And stand as mute and pale as Death it self.[52]

Since Beaumont and Fletcher's play is known to have been acted in 1607, it is fairly certain that Macbeth was being performed, at least by 1606. The intervening months would have allowed time for writing, publishing, and performing of The Knight of the Burning Pestle.

Paul made a study of the use of profanity in Macbeth in an attempt to substantiate his theory that the play was written in the year, 1606. The Act of Abuses forbidding the profane use of the name of God upon the stage, became effective on May 27, 1606.[53] Macbeth contains no such profanity; but this observation cannot be made of Shakespeare's following play, Hamlet, in second quarto.[54] The Act of Abuses provided that, if any person

> . . . shall in any Stage play . . . jestingly or prophanely speake or use the holy Name of God or of Christ Jesus, or of the Holy Ghoste or of the Trinitie, which are not to be spoken but with feare and reverence, he shall forfeit for every such offense 10.[55]

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[52]Alexander Dyce (ed.), The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher, II, 216.

[53]Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 338.

[54]Paul, op. cit., p. 304.

[55]Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 338-339.

After the passage of this act, players may have removed all such offensive references from current texts in repertory. It has been suggested, for example, that a popular method for making the texts comply with the law was that of substituting heaven for God.[56] However, Paul found no irreverent uses of the name of God in Macbeth; neither did he find any substitution of Heaven for God in the first three acts, a condition which, however, occurs ten times in the last two acts.[57] He found that heaven was used twice to refer to the celestial canopy of the day and the starry sky of night in the first three acts, and once in IV and V. He found heaven used four times to name the abode of saints and angels, all in the first three acts. In IV and V, he found nine cases of heaven used as a synonym for Providence or God, with only one such case in III.vi.[58] If, as Paul adovcates, III.vi. belongs to the fourth act, it may be that heaven was not used as a synonym for God in the first three acts. Paul's data, then tends to indicate that the first three acts of the play must have been written while efforts were being made by the State to regulate theatrical profanity before the statute finally was enacted.

Paul also discusses two forms of the use of God's name:

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[56] Paul, op. cit., p. 304.

[57] Ibid., p. 305.

[58] Ibid., p. 313.

i.e., benediction, asking God to do good, and malediction or cursing, asking God to do evil.[59] He listed twelve uses of benediction, including "God save the king! (I.ii.58) and "God bless us!" (II.ii.37) These examples are all reverent uses of God's name. He also found thirteen uses of malediction, ten occurring after Act III. He suggests, therefore, that the three passages containing malediction in the first three acts were written at a later date and, then, inserted into their present places, including "Under a hand accursed" (III. vi.54); the sergeant speaking of the rebel's "damned quarrel" (I.ii.20); and Lennox ironically exclaiming, "damned fact." (III.vi.13)[60]

Another major theory concerns the possibility that the play was designed as a tribute to King James I.[61] Scholars argue that, since Macbeth was one of the first plays that Shakespeare wrote during the reign of King James, the dramatist may have wanted to impress the new King favorably. Therefore, they think that he prepared a text glorifying Banquo, the founder of the Stuart line, and blackening the character of Banquo's foe. Oldys, the antiquary, recorded that King James had written a letter to Shakespeare, asking him to write a

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[59] Ibid., p. 309.

[60] Loc. cit.

[61] Herbert Farjeon (ed.), The Comedies, Histories and Tragedies of William Shakespeare, p. i.

play which would trace the royal descent of King James from the line of present British kings to Brute.[62] It may have been that Shakespeare fulfilled the request in a play glorifying the founder of the Stuart line, as previously he had honored Queen Elizabeth in Richard III, in praising Richmond, the founder of the Tudor line.[63] It is also significant that the new king would not have been favorably impressed by chronicle history plays associated especially with the reign of Queen Elizabeth, since she had executed Mary, Queen of Scots, the mother of King James. Scholars think, then, that Shakespeare and the King's Men probably realized that the period of the English history play had ended when James was crowned; therefore, a switch to sources in Scottish history was necessary. Macbeth is full of matters which would have been pleasing to King James. For example, he would have been especially pleased with the resemblance of the incidents to the Gowry conspiracy, as well as the "twofold balls and treble sceptres" passage and "The touching for the King's evil." (IV.iii.140-159)[64]

It is also pertinent to recall that James was interested

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[62] Hardin Craig (ed.), The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, p. 1043.

[63] Fred M. Smith, "The Relation of Macbeth to Richard the Third," PMLA, LX (1945), 1016.

[64] Paul, op. cit., p. 4.

in witchcraft. He was active in the trial-by-torture of two hundred witches who were convicted for bringing on a storm that prevented his bride from crossing to Scotland.[65] These witches were later burned at the stake for their offense. If a dramatist, then were writing a play especially for the King's entertainment, scholars suggest that he would perhaps have found it necessary to make use of supernatural elements. Moreover, King James was very interested in the workings of the imagination and conscience, an interest which might have inspired Shakespeare to develop the psychological aspects of Macbeth more than he had done in characters in his other plays.[66] He made Macbeth into a study in the operation of evil by showing evil's seduction of man and the resulting effect of one man's sinful moral choice upon all men.[67]

King James's impatience with long plays might also account for the extreme compression of lines in Macbeth. The players in the King's Company had probably observed that the King often napped or even departed before some long performances had been finished.[68] The players, therefore, may have edited their text so as not to contribute to the King's restlessness.

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[65] Brandes, op. cit., II, 97.

[66] Paul, op. cit., p. 4.

[67] Ribner, op. cit., p. 147.

[68] Paul, op. cit., p. 3.

It is further significant that most scenes in Macbeth seem to require a darkened stage. Since a truly dark stage could not have been achieved in an open-air theatre during afternoon performances, it is possible that this internal evidence suggests a performance in a court theatre, very likely in the palace at Hampton Court. In tracing the history of the King's Men, one finds that, after Shrovetide, February 19, 1606, they did not perform again at court until the arrival of the King of Denmark on July 17.[69] On the third of August, King Christian was installed as a Knight of the Garter, and ". . . there is nothing to be heard at court," says Drummond of Hawthornden in a letter dated August 3, 1606, "but sounding of trumpets, hautboys, musick, revellings and comedies."[70] James and his brother-in-law spent most of their time at Greenwich, but they did visit Hampton Court on the evening of August 7, 1606,[71] the date which would have been a likely occasion for the presentation of a play glorifying the ancestry of King James. However, Chambers records that three plays were given at court by the King's Players at about this time: "To John Hemynges one of his M^ties players upon Warrant

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[69] Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 173-174.

[70] Furness, op. cit., p. 356, citing Drummond of Hawthornden.

[71] Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 121.

dated 18th October 1606 for three plays before his Ma^tie and the Kinge of Denmarke twae of them at Grenewich and one at Hampton Courte."[72] The only performance which might possibly have been that of Macbeth was the one performed at Hampton Court in conjunction with the visit of August 7. Muir assumes, reasonably, that the play was performed for King James and his brother-in-law, but thinks, however, that it was first performed at the Globe.[73] Beckerman supports this theory, concluding that, except for Troilus and Cressida, it is not likely that any of Shakespeare's plays in the "Globe decade" were first performed at any place other than at the Globe.[74] However, a later allusion to Macbeth occurs in George Chapman's Byrons Tragedie (1607), in which Chapman must have been considering the fate of Duncan's horses in Macbeth, II.iv:

> And to make this no less than an ostent,
> Another that hath fortun'd since, confirms it:
> Your goodly horse Pastrana, which the Archduke,
> Gave you at Brussels, in the very hour
> You left your strength, fell mad, and kill'd himself;
> The like chanced to the horse the great Duke sent you;
> And, with both these, the horse the duke of Lorraine,
> Sent you at Vimie made a third pressage . . .
> Who like the other, pined away and died.[75]

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[72] Ibid., p. 173.

[73] Muir, op. cit., p. xxvi.

[74] Bernard Beckerman, Shakespeare at the Globe, p. 23.

[75] George Chapman, Chapman's Dramatic Works, II, 281.

Obviously, Chapman was referring to the plight of Duncan's horses in Shakespeare's play.

The first actual record of a performance of Macbeth occurs in Dr. Simon Forman's manuscript, The Bocke of Plaies and Notes therof per Formans for Common Pollicie, in the following account of a performance witnessed at the Globe on April 20, 1610:

> In Mackbeth at the Glob, 1610, the 20 of Aprillh [Saturday], ther was to be observed, firste, howe Mackbeth and Bancko, 2 noble men of Scotland, Ridinge thorowe a wod, the stode before them 3 women feiries or Nimphes, And saluted Mackbeth, sayinge, 3 tyms unto him, haille Mackbeth, king of Codon; for thou shalt be a kinge, but shalt beget No kinges &c. Then said Bancko, What all to Mackbeth And nothing to me. Yes, said the nimphes, hailie to thee Bancko, thou shalt beget kinges, yet be no kinge. And so they departed & cam to the Courte of Scotland to Dunkin king of Scotes, and yt was in the dais of Edward the Confessor. And Dunkin bad them both kindly wellcome, And made Mackbeth forth with Prince of Nort umberland, and sent him hom to his own castell, and appointed Mackbeth to prouid for him, for he would sup with him the next dai at night, & did soe. And Mackebeth con rived to kill Dunkin, & thorowe the persuasion of his wife did that night Murder the kinge in his own Castell, being his guest. And ther were many prodigies seen that night & the dai before. And when Mack Beth had murdred the kinge, the blod on his handes could not be washed of by Any meanes, nor from his viues handes, which handled the bloddi daggers in hiding them, By which means they became both moch amazed & Affronted. The murder being knowed, Dunkins 2 sonns fled, the on to England, the Walles, to saue them selues, they being fled, they were supposed guilty of the murder of their father, which was nothinge so. Then was Mackbeth crowned kinge, and then he for feare of Banko, his old companion, that he should beget kinges but be no kinge him selfe, he contriued the death of Banko, and caused him to be Murdred on the way as he Rode. The next night, being at supper with his noble men whom he had bid to a feaste to the which also Banco should haue com, he began to speake of

> Noble Banco, and to wish that he wer ther. And as he thus did, standing vp to drincke a Carouse to him, the ghoste of Banco came and sate down in his cheier behind him. And he turninge About to sit down Again sawe the goste of Banco, which fronted him so, that he fell into a great passion of fear and fury, Vtterynge many wordes about his murder, by which, when they hard that Banco was Murdred they Suspected Mackbet.
>
> Then MacDove fled to England to the kinges sonn, And soe they Raised an Army, And cam into Scotland, and at Dunston Anyse overthrue Mackbet. In the meantyme whille Macdouee was in England, Mackbet slewe Mackdoues wife & children, and after in the battelle Mackdoue slewe Mackbet.
>
> Obserue Also how Mackbetes quen did Rise in the night in her slepe, & walke and talked and confessed all, & the doctor noted her wordes.[76]

Much speculation surrounds Forman's diary. In the first place, it has been shown that Forman's date, April 20, 1610, did not fall on Saturday.[77] Thus, it has been suggested that he may have intended to write 1611, in which year Saturday did fall on April 20.[78] Also, scholars have pointed out that, since the Globe was an "open" theatre, it was seldom occupied before May.[79] During winter months, the King's Men acted in the enclosed house at Blackfriars.[80] Furthermore, since Forman was known to have been a physician, a professional astrologer,

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[76] Sir E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, II, 337-338, citing Forman.

[77] Ibid., p. 338.

[78] Loc. cit.

[79] Furness, op. cit., p. 356.

[80] Hudson, op. cit., p. xxvi.

and a dabbler in black art, some think it unusual that he does not mention the Cauldron scene or the prophecies of the apparitions.[81] Since Forman's manuscript contains many blank pages, it suggests the likelihood of a Collier forgery in an attempt to establish external evidence for the date of Macbeth. In his examination of the manuscript, Klein found one blank page covered with ink where, he argues, Collier tested his ink and handwriting.[82] He thinks, therefore, that since there was no available space in which to put the Macbeth entry in its proper chronological sequence, Forman must have placed it after his 1611 entry on Richard II. If one is correct in assuming that Forman meant to write 1611 instead of 1610, however, this evidence would be inconclusive. Finally, the Clarendon editors believed that Macbeth must have been a new play when Forman had seen it; otherwise, they think that scarcely would he have taken the time to make such an elaborate plot summary.[83] Most evidence does point, however, to a date of composition some four or five years earlier.

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[81] David Klein, "The Case of Forman's Bocke of Plaies," PQ, XI (1932), 385. Forman's manuscript was discovered by John P. Collier, who had a mania for fabricating evidence in support of whatever theories he maintained regarding the Elizabethan drama, and published by him in 1836.

[82] Ibid., p. 387.

[83] Furness, op. cit., p. 359.

Sources of the Play

Scholars have shown that Shakespeare was often heavily indebted to his sources for plots, characters, and even phraseology, proving that he often took ancient plots, added to them, subtracted from them, changed their characters, included material from other plots, and, thus, made them his own.[84] Some suggest, therefore, that, possibly, a performance of three Sibyls at Oxford in 1605 had inspired him to turn to the story of Macbeth. The Oxford occasion was a royal procession of King James on August 27, 1605, when scholars stood on one side of the street and strangers on the other with an arbor of ivy erected at the gate of St. Johns.[85] Three students, dressed as sibyls, came out of the arbor and recited a dialogue, the verses for which, written by Dr. Matthew Gwynne, were found by Malone in a manuscript bound up with Gwynne's Latin play, Vertummus,[86] printed in quarto in 1607.[87] The following is a translation of the first twenty lines of Gwynne's Latin text:

1. There is a story, O renowned King, that once in the

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[84] Virgil K. Whitaker, "Shakespeare's Use of His Sources," PQ, XX (1941), 377.

[85] Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, I, 126.

[86] Hudson, op. cit., p. xx.

[87] Furness, op. cit., p. 397.

olden time the fateful sisters foretold to thy descendants an endless empire. Famed Lochabria acknowledged Banquo as its Thane; not for thee O Banquo, but for thine immortal descendants did those sooth-saying women predict immortal sceptres as thou didst withdraw from the court to the country for rest. We three sisters in like manner foretell the same fates for thee and thine, whilst along with thy family thou dost return from the country to the city, and we salute thee:
Hail thou who rulest Scotland.

2. Hail thou who rulest England.

3. Hail thou who rulest Ireland.

1. Hail thou to whom France gives titles whilst the others give lands.

2. Hail thou whom Britain, now united though formerly divided, cherishes.

3. Hail thou supreme British, Irish, Gallic Monarch.

1. Hail Anna, parent and sister and wife and daughter of Kings.

2. Hail Henry, heir apparent, handsome prince.

3. Hail Charles, Duke, and beautiful Polish princeling, hail.

1. Nor sit we bounds nor times to these prophecies; save that the world is the limit of thy dominion and the stars of thy Fame. Bring back great Canute with his fourfold kingdom; Greater than thy ancestors, O thou who hast been crowned with a diadem to be rivalled only by thy descendants.[88]

Chambers thinks that the entire Latin play was presented by the men of St. John's before James during his Oxford visit at Christ Church.[89] Having thus been inspired, Shakespeare, they

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[88] Paul, op. cit., pp. 163-164.

[89] E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, III, 332.

argue, went to the chroniclers for the major material of his play.

The earliest known version of the Macbeth legend occurs in the Scotichronicon, written about 1384 by John of Fordun.[90] Fordun, a canon in the cathedral church at Aberdeen, had gathered legends and stories and had arranged them into a kind of chronological system.[91] From the evidence contained in these Scottish chronicles, one learns that there was a King of Scots named Duncan, who reigned from 1034 to 1040, and who was killed and succeeded by Macbeth, who then ruled Scotland for about seventeen years until he was slain in battle and succeeded by Duncan's son, Malcolm Canmore.[92] Furthermore, Buchanan states, in his Rerum (1582), that, unlike other kings, Macbeth tried to make good and useful laws.[93] Since the reign of this historical Macbeth was marked by order and prosperity, the Macbeth of legend must have been altered through a process of story telling by the time Shakespeare made it a source for his play.

Another chronicle, tracing the history of man, was

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[90] Sir E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 475.

[91] Hudson, op. cit., p. x.

[92] Paul, op. cit., p. 206.

[93] Hudson, op. cit., p. x, citing Hume Brown's The History of Scotland.

written in 1424 by Andrew of Wyntoun, a Canon of St. Andrews.[94] The earliest known form of the prophecy of the Weird Sisters is found in Wyntoun's document, occurring in a dream:

> A mycht he thowcht in hys dremyng,
> That syttand he wes besyd the kyng
> At a sete in hwntyng, swa
> In till a leysh had grewhundys twa:
> He thowcht quhele he wes swa syttand
> He sawe thre wemen by gangand;
> And tai wemen than thowcht he
> Thre werd Systrys mast lyk to be,
> The fyrst he hard say gang and by,
> 'Lo, yhondyr the Thayne off Crumbawchly!'
> The tothir woman sayd agane,
> 'Of Morave yhondyr I see the Thayne!'
> The thryd then sayd, 'I se the Kyng!'[95]

The initial greetings of the weird sisters in Macbeth are very similar to these lines.

Hector Boece, first principal of King's College in Aberdeen[96] compiled the Scotorum Historiae, printed at Paris in 1526.[97] John Bellenden made a very free translation of this work into Scottish prose in 1533.[98] His Croniklis of Scotland contains a dramatic description of Macbeth's meeting with the witches and a much more detailed account of Lady

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[94] Ibid., p. xi, citing Wyntoun.

[95] Loc. cit.

[96] Furness, op. cit., p. 355.

[97] Hudson, op. cit., p. xii.

[98] Loc. cit.

Macbeth's complicity in the plot to murder Duncan.[99] Another translation of Boece (in metrical verse) was ordered to be made by Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scotland, for her son, James V, in 1535, a version prepared by William Steward, which remained in manuscript until 1858.[100]

However, the chronicler to whom Shakespeare is most heavily indebted for his source is Raphael Holinshed, who compiled the Chronicles of Scotland, and Ireland, first published in two folio volumes in 1577.[101] These chronicles were based upon Boece's Scotorum Historiae as Holinshed indicates on his title page:

> THE DESCRIPTION OF SCOTLAND,
> Written at the first by Hector Boetius in Latine,
> and afterward translated into the Scotish Speech
> by John Bellenden Archdeacon of Murrey, and now
> finallie into English by R. H.[102]

A second edition, "newlie augmented and continued," was published in 1586-1587.[103] It was from this second edition that Shakespeare borrowed, supplying, as he did, the murderous

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[99] Loc. cit.

[100] Sir E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 475.

[101] Hudson, op. cit., p. xiii.

[102] Raphael Holinshed, Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland, V.

[103] Kittredge, op. cit., p. x.

career of the hero, Macbeth, motivated by the prophecy of the witches as a framework for his tragedy.[104]

Holinshed's account tells how a good king of Scotland helped an exiled ruler to regain his kingdom. Shakespeare transformed the narrative to show the wickedness of regicide and its terrible punishment. In following the accounts of the reigns of Duncan and Macbeth, he adds to the account of the murder of Duncan such details as the drugging of the groom and the portents from the murder of King Duffe, the great-grandfather of Lady Macbeth.[105] Shakespeare also changed the character of Duncan, whom Holinshed described as lacking the characteristics of a good king, into a gracious and kindly king, in fact, into one of the most ideal kings in Shakespeare.

In Holinshed's version, Banquo is actively concerned with Macbeth's conspiracy to murder Duncan, a concept which Shakespeare changes to clear Banquo of the crime. Banquo appears in Holinshed in almost the exact sequences found in the Banquo plot in Macbeth. In the play, in the first scene with the witches (I.iii), most of what Banquo speaks is taken from Holinshed; however, Shakespeare alters Macbeth's personality as given in Holinshed by the addition of Banquo's speech: "Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear /

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[104]Beatrice Brown, "Exemplum Materials Underlying Macbeth," PMLA, L (1935), 701.

[105]Furness, op. cit., p. 355.

Things that do sound so fair?" (I.iii.51-52) This change alters Banquo as a companion of Macbeth into a contrasting figure to emphasize the degeneration of Macbeth's mind and character.[106] The endless line of Banquo's descendants (IV.i.117) and the imperial expansion of his dominions (IV.i.121) is not in Holinshed but contained in Dr. Gwynne's Tres Sibyllae. Translated, Gwynne's verse reads as follows: "An endless empire, O renowned King, to thy descendants."[107]

The most significant change which Shakespeare made in the Holinshed account concerns the personalities of Macbeth and his wife,[108] in which he emphasizes Macbeth's freedom of choice, as well as the influence of his wife. Lady Macbeth is barely mentioned by Holinshed, who writes that Macbeth is "greatlie incouraged" by "the woords of the thre weird sisters" to "usurpe the kingdome by force." "But," he adds, "speciallie his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she that was verie ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to beare the name of a queene."[109] Holinshed never mentions her again.

When Shakespeare wrote Macbeth, the people of Scotland had access to an official table of the reigns of the kings of

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[106] Whitaker, op. cit., p. 388.

[107] Paul, op. cit., p. 163.

[108] Ibid., p. 202.

[109] Holinshed, op. cit., V, 269.

Scotland, prepared under the direction of King James, by Sir John Skene, Clerk of Register.[110] This book, called Skene's Scots Acts (1597), was subtitled, "A Table of all the Kinges of Scotland, Declaring quhat 3eir of the world and of Christ they began to reigne, how lang they reigned, and quhat qualities they were of."[111] The description of Macbeth in Skene's work is closer to the character evolved by Shakespeare than that contained in Holinshed:

> LXXXIII, Duncane I, Beatrix, Malcolme, the Second his daughters Sonne, began to reigne in the 3eire of the warld 5004. In the 3eare of Christ 1034. a gud and a modest Prince. He was slaine by Macbeth traiterouslie, in the sext 3eire of his reigne.
> LXXXV Mackbeth, Dovada Malcolme the second his daughters Son, began to reigne in the 3eir of the world, 5010. In the 3eir of Christ, 1040. In the beginning of his reigne he behaved himselfe as a gud and just Prince, bot thereafter he degenerated into a cruell tyrant. He was slayne by his Successour Malcolme 3, in battle, in the 17 3eir of his reign.[112]

No doubt, Shakespeare drew upon any and all available sources for his great dramatic works. He was familiar with all of the controversial issues of his day and assimilated them into his writings.[113] For example, passages in Macbeth echo

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[110] Paul, op. cit., p. 219.

[111] Ibid., p. 220, citing Skene's Scots Acts.

[112] Loc. cit.

[113] George C. Taylor, "Shakespeare and the Prognostications," PQ, XX (1941), 373.

numerous sonnets in which the followers of Sidney and Daniel composed lines on the idea of "care-charmer sleep."[114] Hence, the opening lines of a sonnet from Batholomew Griffin's Fidessa (1596):

> Care-charmer sleep, sweet ease in restless misery,
> The Captive's liberty, and his freedom's song,
> Balm of the bruised heart, man's chief felicity,
> Brother of quiet death, when life is too long![115]

Here, one notes the similarity to Shakespeare's "Sleepe that knits up the ravel'd sleeve of Care . . . ." (II.ii.47-48)[116]

There is a possibility that Shakespeare also was influenced by the Basilicon Doron, King James's book of instructions to his son. This series consisted of three books, each telling of a king's duty to God, to his subjects, and a king's behavior.[117] All of Duncan's and Malcolm's speeches are good examples of James's teaching on the subject of a king's proper language. Furthermore, these two kings seem to meet all of the requirements of what a king should be and do.[118]

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[114] C. J. Rawson, "Macbeth on Sleep: Two Parallels," SQ, XIV (1936), 485.

[115] Sir E. K. Chambers (ed.), The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse, p. 634.

[116] Rawson, op. cit., p. 485.

[117] Jane H. Jack, "Macbeth, King James, and the Bible," ELH, XXII (1955), 175.

[118] Paul, op. cit., p. 137.

Shakespeare's descriptions of Duncan as "a most painted king" and of Malcolm's mother as one who "Oft'ner upon her knees than on her feet, / Died every day she liv'd" (IV.iii.126-127) are ones which James would have endorsed.[119]

Shakespeare drew upon parallels from the Bible, also. For example, some have thought Macbeth to partake of Paul's exposition in II Thessalonians 2:9-12:

> Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.[120]

As a Calvinist, King James would have, no doubt, been very interested in a drama dealing with the theme of the destruction of man's soul. Macbeth is aware of the Christian promise of salvation and the threat of damnation for those who will not accept it: ". . . mine eternal jewel / Given to the common enemy of man." (III.i.69-80) In his perseverance in crime, knowing full well that he cannot "jump the life to come" (I.vii.11), there is a defiance of the threat of hell.[121]

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[119] Lily B. Campbell, "Political Ideas in Macbeth IV, iii," SQ, II (1951), 286.

[120] The Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version, p. 259.

[121] Ribner, op. cit., p. 49.

Macbeth dies fully aware of his tragic error: "And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd, / That palter with us in a double sense; / That keep the word of promise to our ear, / And break it to our hope." (V.viii.25-28)

The fateful warning to Macbeth by Banquo's ghost who appeared at a feast can be compared with the Old Testament account of Belshazzar. One of the earliest examples of a supernatural warning at a feast, written of in Daniel, Chapter 5, tells of a hand which wrote words of fate on a wall at the feast held by King Belshazzar for a thousand of his lords.[122] According to this account, King Belshazzar is never guilty of treason; however, he does portray the extreme use of tyrannical power, and his feast illustrates a defiance of moral law.

It is further possible that Shakespeare used Thomas Deloney's story of Old Cole from Thomas of Reading (1599), as a supplement for material taken from Holinshed.[123] In Deloney, Old Cole spends a night at an inn where the host and hostess are murderers. He has a premonition that he is going to die, and after retiring, his fears are justified when he is murdered for his gold. In Holinshed, Duncan is weak and young; in Macbeth, Duncan is old, good, and gracious, like Cole. In

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[122]Beatrice Brown, "Exemplum Materials Underlying Macbeth," PMLA, L (1935), 711.

[123]William B. Bache, "The Murder of Old Cole: A Possible Source for Macbeth," SQ, VI (1955), 359.

Holinshed, Macbeth is simply encouraged by his wife; in Shakespeare and Deloney, the husband is not only encouraged by his wife, but actively assisted by her to the point in which husband and wife are actually partners in crime. Also, in Holinshed, Donwald kills Duff with the aid of four servants. Macbeth kills Duncan after confiding in his trusted friends, chief of whom is Banquo. In both Macbeth and Old King Cole, the husband and wife carry the guilt of murder alone.[124] Other parallels to Deloney may be cited. For example, the host asks Cole if he wants to go to bed:

> With that Cole beholding his host and hostesse earnestly, began to start backe, saying, "What aile you to looke so like pale death? Good Lord, what have you done, that your hands are thus bloody?" "What my hands? Why you may see they are neither bloudy nor foule; either your eies doe greatly dazell or else fancies of a troubled mind do delude you."[125]

This passage suggests the concern which Macbeth and his wife have for bloody hands; it hints at Macbeth's seeing the dagger and Banquo's ghost; and it foreshadows Lady Macbeth's bad dreams:[126] ". . . as she is troubled with thick-coming fancies, / That keep her from rest." (V.iii.42-48) In Deloney, while listening to musicians, Cole says: "Me thinks these instruments

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[124] Loc. cit.

[125] Francis Mann (ed.), The Works of Thomas Deloney, p. 258.

[126] Bache, op. cit., p. 359.

sound like the ring of Saint Mary Overies belles, but the base drownes all the rest: and in my eare it goes like a bell that rings a forenoones knell, for God's sake let them leave off . . . ."[127] This passage corresponds to Macbeth's comment upon hearing the signal bell: "I go, and it is done: the bell invites me. / Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell / That summons thee to Heaven, or to Hell." (II.i.76-78)

It may be readily acknowledged that Shakespeare also used emblems as a source of his imagery: e.g., "Look like the innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't" (I.v.73-74) might have been suggested to him by Paradin's Devises Heroique containing the picture of a serpent coiled from the base halfway up a flowering plant.[128] Such a medal was struck to glorify the keen discernment of King James in detecting the Gunpowder Plot.[129] Although this concept may have made an impression upon Shakespeare, the simile of a serpent concealed by a flower is also proverbial, employed by Chaucer in The Squire's Tale: "Right as a serpent hit hym under floures."[130]

Finally, no evidence has been found to date to show that there was any existing drama on the subject of Macbeth prior

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[127] Loc. cit.

[128] A. H. R. Fairchild, "A Note on Macbeth," PQ, IV (1925), 350.

[129] Paul, op. cit., p. 227.

[130] Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, p. 512.

to Shakespeare's play. However, in 1590, Robert Greene produced The Scottish Historie of James IV, slaine at Floodden, intermixed with a pleasant Comedie, presented by Oberam King of Foyeries, implying that dramatists were early attracted to Scottish legendary history as source material.[131] A tragedy, The King of Scottes, was given at court in 1567-1568,[132] and Henslowe refers to a play called Malcolme, King of Scottes, on April 27, 1602.[133] One has no way of knowing, however, whether Macbeth was the theme of any of these tragedies, since both works are lost.

As this investigation of sources shows, adequate materials for the plot of Macbeth are known. However, the fact remains, despite this accumulated evidence, that a date for the composition of the play needs yet to be accurately determined. Without such a fixed date, one is at a loss to know how to determine the possibilities of contemporary editings and interpolations of Shakespeare's text.

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[131] Hudson, op. cit., p. xviii.

[132] Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 144.

[133] Henslowe, op. cit., p. 200.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF MAJOR THEORIES RELATING TO THE STATUS OF THE TEXT

Even though Macbeth is considered to be one of the greatest of Shakespeare's plays, it is the one for which the worst text exists. Greg thinks it very improbable that the F_1 text represents the play as Shakespeare had left it.[134] Chambers reinforces Greg's theory, adding that the corruption of the text is due to an obvious rehandling.[135] Editors think of the original play as being roughly of the same length as Othello or King Lear;[136] however, as it now stands, it is shorter than any other Shakespearean text, except for the Comedy of Errors, and its 2,106 lines would furnish little more than a two-hours' performance. One concludes, therefore, that original incidents and even whole episodes have been lost through some, as yet unidentified, process of revision. Various theories have been formulated in an attempt to explain this textual corruption, summarily described as follows: the play was printed from a prompt copy which suffered ordinary

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[134] W. W. Greg, The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare, p. 147.

[135] Sir E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 471.

[136] J. M. Nosworthy, "Macbeth at the Globe," The Library, II (1947), 108.

dramatic change; the play was hurriedly written for an emergency; the play was transcribed from a dictated text; the play was shortened and revised for a court performance; the play contains errors which are the result of the mistakes of the compositor and the printer; and the play was revised by a second dramatist to include song and dance.[137]

Since no quarto version exists for Macbeth, the F_1 publishers very likely took their text from a prompt book.[138] Most scholars agree that the text came from a playhouse or prompter's copy that had been used in the theatre for an actual production, because of the presence of many full stage directions throughout the text which tend to reveal the hand of the bookkeeper who marked the text for his own use.[139] For example, a bookkeeper's "Ring the bell," a note for his own use, has been printed into the text at II.iii.85.[140] Moreover, most of the stage directions appear to be those normally made by a bookkeeper, except for a few which probably originated with the author, such as "meeting a bleeding Captain (I.ii.3), and "Macbeth's wife alone with a letter." (I.v.2)

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[137] Hinman, Paul, Forester, Schroeder, Chambers.

[138] Charlton Hinman, "Cast-off Copy for the First Folio of Shakespeare," SQ , VI (1955), 260.

[139] Arthur Brown, "The Printing of Books," Shakespeare Survey, XVII (1964), 209.

[140] Sir E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 471.

One may reasonably assume, therefore, that wear and tear on the stage affected all acted plays. The original manuscript supplied by the dramatist to the company was in two versions: the author's original copy and a clean copy.[141] Either one of these versions was altered by the producer, the cast, the prompter, or even the censor.[142] At times, even the actual language was made simpler and more colloquial for a particular audience.[143] Furthermore, the movement of the acting company to a different playhouse might have caused the producers to adapt certain scenes to different equipment of the stage.[144] Adaptations by the producers could have occurred on several different occasions. Since there were probably a first revision, a last revision, and an intermediary adaption between the two, scholars have been unable to determine the exact date at which time the play was revised.

One other theory with a slight degree of credibility suggests that an actor prepared a playhouse copy for a group of traveling players who were stranded in the provinces in need

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[141] Hardin Craig, A New Look at Shakespeare's Quartos, p. 92.

[142] Muir, op. cit., p. xiv.

[143] Hardin Craig, A New Look at Shakespeare's Quartos, p. 94.

[144] Albert Feuillerat, The Composition of Shakespeare's Plays, p. 331.

of a play.[145] At a later date, this reconstructed prompt book may have been acquired by a printer. This theory accounts for some of the textual obscurities and passages of irregular versification and is the basis of Greg's view that Macbeth came from a "rather mutilated stage adaptation,"[146] and Fleay's opinion that it was "abridged for the stage in an unusual degree."[147] Nosworthy is content that the fact that the play was written from a prompt copy explains all the irregularities of the text of Macbeth with the possible exception of the Hecate scenes.[148]

Paul tries to explain away the textual obscurities of the play by compiling evidence to indicate that Macbeth was written hastily and that Shakespeare was forced to finish it earlier than he had anticipated for an unexpected performance. Some discrepancies resulting from possible hasty composition may be noted.

F_1 handles only a single, simple plot. There is no subplot resembling the Glocester material in King Lear or the player scenes in Hamlet, a practice contrary to Shakespeare's

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[145] Max Forster, "Shakespeare and Shorthand," PQ, XVI (1937), 8.

[146] W. W. Greg, The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare, p. viii.

[147] Fleay, op. cit., p. 238.

[148] J. M. Nosworthy, "Macbeth at the Globe," The Library, II (1947), 108.

usual procedure; however, it would seem to be the natural way for a dramatist to compose hastily a text needed immediately for some special performance, a method which should not have been too difficult for one who had already experimented with various dramatic formulas.[149] By the time he composed Macbeth, Shakespeare had mastered the art of exposition and learned how to build an action scene. He had discovered that he did not need to invent characters.[150] Macbeth is filled with poetic inventions, and Spurgeon thinks that the imagery is more rich and varied than in any other of his plays.[151]

Shakespeare must have been writing with his source in Holinshed clearly in mind, since he has omitted no significant detail, but has simplified and compressed the material, apparently for the sake of dramatic economy.[152] Even Kittredge admits that nothing essential in Holinshed has been omitted in the play,[153] and Greg speculates that its many brief scenes might be due to "an unusual dramatic technique."[154]

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[149] W. Matthews, "A Postscript to 'Shorthand and the Bad Quartos of Shakespeare,'" MLR, XXVII (1933), 82.

[150] Ibid., p. 83.

[151] Caroline Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery, p. 324.

[152] J. M. Nosworthy, "Macbeth at the Globe," The Library, II (1947), 108.

[153] Kittredge, op. cit., p. vii.

[154] W. W. Greg, The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare, p. 147.

The individual act structure of Macbeth is compact and effective as is the structure of the play as a whole. There is no complicating subplot and there are no unnecessary speeches. The play simply represents a romantic tragedy with a conflict between two persons acting as a protagonist and several antagonizing forces. All the essential elements for a romantic tragedy are present. The introduction is contained in the first two scenes; the rising action begins with the meeting of Macbeth and the weird sisters in iii and continues until the climax or turning point in the murder of Banquo in III.iii. From the escape of Fleance, on through the banquet scene, the arousing of Macduff, and the retreat of Dunsinane, the fortunes of the protagonist, Macbeth and his wife, fall to the conclusion.[155]

The frequency of distasteful word repetition in the play would help to substantiate the theory of high-speed production. Shakespeare usually was careful not to place a word in juxtaposition to itself except where he was intentionally playing with words. All writers tend to violate this rule when they are in a hurry.[156] Some such repetitions are noted below:[157]

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[155] Hudson, op. cit., p. xxxviii.

[156] Paul, op. cit., p. 32.

[157] The italics occurring in these passages are the present author's.

To beguile the time, / Look like the time. (I.v.64-65)

Well, I will thither.
Well, may you see things well done there. (II.iv.36)

The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?
No; they were well at peace. (IV.iii.178-179)

Cleanse the stuffed bosom of this perilous stuff.
(V.iii.44)

We shall not spend a large expense of time. (V.viii.60)

By the grace of Grace We will perform. (V.iii.72)

Frequently, throughout Macbeth, Shakespeare appears to depart from his rules for regular versification, failing to complete some of his lines. Flatter believes that these lines indicate no traces of editorial influence so that existing irregularities are simply traces of Shakespeare's "producing hand."[158] Empson ventures that the number of incomplete lines gives a more dramatic and vigorous rhythm.[159] By 1600, Shakespeare was not concerned with rules. It would seem, then, that his inconsistencies are the result of unelaborated if not unfinished writing produced for some unforseen emergency.

One concludes, then, from these theories, that the text of the play represents Shakespeare's original draft, showing his constant effort to compress his thoughts as hastily as

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[158]Richard Flatter, Shakespeare's Producing Hand, p. 94.

[159]William Empson, "Dover Wilson on Macbeth," Kenyon Review, XIV (1952), 94.

possible. Shakespeare was writing a text for actor's use.

Scholars have attempted, also, to explain some obscurities in the text by an elaborate shorthand theory. Today, however, this theory receives very little support. Evidence does exist, however, to indicate that dramatic scripts were pirated during this particular period. For example, Thomas Heywood wrote of his play, If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody (1605): "Some by stenography drew / The Plot: put it in print scarce one word true."[160] In a preface to his tragedy, The Rape of Lucree (1608), Heywood further complained that some of his plays had been ". . . copied by the ear"[161] and put into print in such a corrupted form that he was unable to recognize them. Indeed, this pirating caused him to issue an authentic text of his plays.

Shorthand was well known and widely practiced in England a few years after F_1 was printed. The famous pedagogue, Comenius, wrote that in 1641 ". . . many boys and men followed the sermons at church with their pencil and took down every word in shorthand."[162] The German diplomat, Philipp Harsdorffer, asserted in 1653 that ". . . shorthand is such a common thing in England that even women do know it, so that they can take

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[160] Thomas Heywood, The Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood, I, 191.

[161] Ibid., V, 163.

[162] Forester, op. cit., p. 9, citing Comenius.

down a whole sermon word for word."[163] If the shorthand transcriber of the play was somewhat familiar with the play on stage, he could have reproduced actors' blunders. This practice could explain such uses as "qarry" for "quarrel" and "tale can" for "hail came." A transcriber might also have changed "Rebellion's head" into the obscure "Rebellious dead" as a result of mishearing the actor,[164] since a transcriber would tend to make aural errors rather than visual ones. Greg attended six consecutive performances of Shaw's John Bull's Other Island and was able to write down the play from memory so as to obtain a text comparable to that of what he calls a bad quarto.[165]

Some scholars speculate that Macbeth was revised for some special occasion.[166] They argue that the reviser omitted lines and scenes and interpolated others. It is very possible that the play could have been shortened for some performance and then expanded again at a later date. The mislineation of the text and the fact that the story of Macbeth's reign is told more briefly than usual for a Shakespearean play are grounds for such a theory.

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[163] Ibid., p. 9, citing Harsdorffer.

[164] Muir, op. cit., p. xiii.

[165] Forster, op. cit., p. 8, citing The Merry Wives, ed. Greg, p. xxviii.

[166] Nosworthy, Paul.

An investigation of possible subtractions from the text is warranted. These omissions could have resulted from a text revision for a traveling group of players who needed a shortened performance. Forman, after watching a performance of Macbeth at the Globe, made an entry in his Diary preserving some details not present in the F_1 text. It seems reasonable, therefore, to conclude that the details were in Shakespeare's original version, and that their absence from F_1 is due to a revision.[167]

Adams, in his edition of Macbeth, contends that portions of Shakespeare are lost or intentionally omitted in several places. Specifically, he notes three lost scenes. The first he would place in I.iv of the present text, in the third line of Duncan's speech of thanks to Banquo, just before the announcement of the proposed elevation of Malcolm and of Duncan's visit to Macbeth at Inverness:

> My plenteous Ioys
> Wanton in fulness, seeke to hide themselves
> In drops of sorrow. Sonnes, Kinsmen, Thanes,
> And you whose places are the nearest, know,
> We will establish our Estate upon
> Our eldest, Malcolme, whom we name hereafter,
> The Prince of Cumberland: which Honor must
> Not unaccompanied, invest him onely,
> But signes of Noblenesse, like Starres, shall shine
> On all deservers. From hence to Envernes,
> And binde us further to you. (I.iv.44-54)

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[167] J. M. Nosworthy, "Macbeth at the Globe," The Library, II (1947), 115.

The sudden transitions of thought seem to suggest an omission. A day is lost during which time Macbeth is supposed to have questioned the Weird sisters and sent a letter to his wife; Duncan, without adequate explanation, arranges for his son to succeed him on the throne; and Duncan suddenly announces his plan to visit Macbeth's castle.[168]

Adams would place the second lost scene directly after Banquo and Macbeth have bidden each other good night (II.i.42-43) and just before the dagger soliloquy two lines below. This scene would have represented Lady Macbeth's attempt to kill Duncan without her husband's help.[169] Up to this time, the scene is placed at shortly after midnight. Yet, Macbeth goes directly to commit the murder. In the sleepwalking scene, Lady Macbeth reveals that the murder took place after two o'clock, and the Porter declares that the servants were "carousing till the second cock," and even before Macbeth is finished with the murder, Macduff comes to wake Duncan for the next day's journey.[170] A later scene indicates that Lady Macbeth entered the death chamber and lost her nerve, because Duncan "resembled My Father as he slept . . . ." (II.ii.17-18)

Adams's third "lost scene" is based on the remark of

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[168] J. Q. Adams (ed.), Macbeth, p. 139.

[169] Ibid., p. 164.

[170] Loc. cit.

Lady Macbeth in the sleepwalking sequence: "I tell you yet again Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave." (V.i. 63-64) Lady Macbeth's statement seems to indicate a scene in which Macbeth, trying to find sleep, was bothered by the image of Banquo's ghost, and Lady Macbeth had to try to calm him of his fears.[171] Thaler reputes the validity of the existence of any of the three supposed scenes. He argues that none of them are necessary and that Shakespeare was too busy creating his story to allow time and space for redundancies.[172] He further suggests that it is part of Shakespeare's artistic economy to suggest things which he never actually stages.

Two contradictions exist between Forman's account of the performance of Macbeth and the plot of F_1. First, Forman places the banquet on the night after Banquo's murder, and F_1 puts the murder and the banquet on the same night.[173] While experiencing hallucinations at the banquet, Macbeth says, "If charnell houses, and our Graves must send / Those that we bury, backe; our Monuments / Shall be the Mawes of Kytes." (III.iv. 89-91) This speech would indicate that Banquo is already buried.

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[171] Ibid., p. 219.

[172] Alvin Thaler, "The Lost Scenes of Macbeth," PMLA, XLIX (1934), 847.

[173] D. A. Amnius, "Missing Scene in Macbeth," JEGP, LX (1961), 436.

Lady Macbeth, in the sleepwalking scene, refers to the same fact when she recalls what she told her husband on the night of the banquet: "Wash your hands, put on your Night-Gowne; / Look not so pale: I tell you yet againe Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave." (V.i.62-64) An interval, then, of at least a day, must have elapsed between Banquo's murder and the banquet. Macbeth, then, would have received the murder's report before going to the banquet. Thus, there would be no need for the murderer in the banquet scene.[174] The matter of the presence of the murderer in the banquet scene also brings one to a consideration of the second discrepancy. Forman seats Macbeth at the banquet table, but F_1 makes it clear that he has never been seated.[175] If the murderer never enters the room, Macbeth would have been seated and would have had to rise when offering his toast. Macbeth next describes the ghost: "But now they rise again, / With twenty mortal murders on their crowns, / And push us from our stools." (III.iv.100-102) The ghost, then, sits down in the chair behind Macbeth who stands to make his toast; when Macbeth turns to sit, again, he sees the ghost.[176] According to F_1, Macbeth does not even know where his place is:

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[174] Loc. cit.

[175] Ibid., p. 437.

[176] Loc. cit.

Macb. The Table's full.

Lennox. Heere is a place reserv'd Sir.

Macb. Where?

Lennox. Heere my good Lord.
What is't that moves your highnesse? (III.iv.59-63)

The day's interval and Macbeth's being seated would, thus, seem to fit together and to establish the accuracy of Forman's account. One thinks it improbable that Forman could have blundered into two closely interwoven inconsistencies, or could have invented them.

Moreover, scholars have suggested that the conversation in III.ii where Macbeth enters and talks to his wife should be placed after Banquo's murder:[177]

How now, my Lord, why doe you keepe alone?
Of sorryest Fancies your Companions making,
Using those thoughts, Which should indeed have dy'd
With them they thinke on: things without all remedie
Should be without regard: what's done, is done.

Macb. We have scorch'd the Snake, not kill'd it:
Shee'le close, and be her selfe, whilest our poore Mallice
Remaines in danger of her former Tooth.
But let the frame of things dis-joynt . . . .
(III.ii.13-21)

"Things without all remedy" would hardly be used by Lady Macbeth to refer to Duncan's murder since acquiring the crown would not be a misfortune. Also, "scorch'd the snake" would indicate that

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[177] Ibid., p. 438.

they were only partially successful; Banquo was murdered, but Fleance escaped. In III.ii, Macbeth seems depressed; however, at the close of III.i, he seemed to be in a very positive frame of mind, consulting with the murderers and elated with the thought that Banquo and Fleance are soon to die. This change of mood can be accounted for only, it seems, by the sudden failure of his plans. Necessarily, then, one must place this passage and the murderer's report in iv as part of a scene removed from F_1 text.[178] Also, a recurrence of the snake image in III.iv.37-39 ("There the growne Serpent lyes, the worme that's fled / Hath Nature that in time will Venom breed, / No teeth for th' present . . .") suggests that the passages from III.ii and III.iv were originally near to each other.[179]

One notes other similar indications that scenes were confused and occur at places other than where the dramatist must have intended them. Paul feels that III.vi must have been written to follow IV.i.[180] After the guests leave the banquet, Macbeth realizing that his thanes now know of his guilt, says that he will visit the sisters early the following day: "I will to morrow / (And betimes I will) to the weyard Sisters. /

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[178] Ibid., p. 439.

[179] Ibid., p. 440.

[180] Paul, op. cit., p. 276.

More shall they speake: . . . ." (III.iv.163-165) He has not yet summoned Macduff, but has just indicated his intentions to do so:

> Macb. How say'st thou that Macduff denies his person
> At our great bidding.
>
> La. Did you send to him Sir:
>
> Macb. I hear it by the way: But I will send:
> (III.iv.158-161)

In III.vi, Macduff has received his summons, rejected it, has fled to the English court, and news of his reception there has come back to Scotland. One feels that there is not sufficient time for all this activity to take place before Macbeth's visit to the witches. At the end of IV.i, Macbeth receives the message that "Macduff is fled to England." (IV.i.169) This line is completely misplaced if occurring after "another Lord" in Scotland knows both of the flight and its results. (II.vi.23-44) As this scene is now placed, the discussion between Lennox and another Lord must occur on the day after the banquet when Macbeth is guilty of the murders of only Duncan and Banquo; however, their conversation implies the murderous tyranny of the last two acts of the play.[181] This transposition of scenes would create a scene, showing how the desertion of Macbeth's thanes was brought about. Lennox was shocked by

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[181] Loc. cit.

what had occurred at the banquet and started a revolt among the Scottish lords with his sly ironical speeches. This action led to V.ii where he next appears directing the march of the revolting thanes toward Birnam.

Evidence exists leading one to believe that the F_1 version of Macbeth was taken from a text which had been revised for a performance in the court of King James. As shown earlier, the play does contain much that would have been of interest to the King. It is significant that James knew the story of Banquo, for in 1578, his schoolmanster, Peter Young, bought for James a copy of Holinshed's Chronicles.[182] The addition of the sorcery scenes could be the result of the King's special interest in the subject.[183] The description of touching for "the evil" (IV.iii.141-159) and the allusions in the Porter speech are passages which might have been interpolated for the King's amusement,[184] as well as the lines about the hanging of traitors (IV.ii.44-63), being prose in the middle of a verse passage.[185] No doubt, the players had noticed that the King was impatient with long plays and often took a nap or even departed before a play was over; therefore, they may have

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[182]Paul, op. cit., p. 21.

[183]Fred M. Smith, "The Relation of Macbeth to Richard the Third," PMLA, LX (1945), 1016.

[184]Hudson, op. cit., p. xxviii.

[185]Muir, op. cit., p. xxiv.

worked for omission and compression of lines in this special performance.[186]

Perhaps Shakespeare was the reviser of this play for a special performance before King James. It seems that one would show no disrespect to the memory of Shakespeare in believing that he was, at the close of his dramatic career, a reviser of plays which now bear his name.

Many of the obscurities in Macbeth may be errors made by the compositor or printer. Since scholars assume that F_1 represents the play's first printing, textual students can look only to this version for evidence and clues to possible errors. F_1 was printed by Edward Blount and Issac Jaggard, who secured formal license to print the book on November 8, 1623.[187] Behind the printed text in F_1 is a complete history of London printing practices which have an important bearing upon a textual study. In Shakespeare's time, a playwright wrote for the stage, not for the private reader. When a playwright sold his play to a theatrical company, he lost all control over it. The company, a joint-stock company usually owned by principal actors, became the legal owner and held exclusive rights for the performing of the play and for selling it to a printer for publication.[188] The companies, of course, preferred

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[186] Paul, op. cit., p. 3.

[187] Hudson, op. cit., p. xxix.

[188] Forster, op. cit., p. 2.

to keep the play out of print to increase their playhouse returns, since they made more money from the theatrical performances than from selling their manuscripts to a publisher.[189] Elizabethan copyright protected only the printer. In 1557, Queen Mary granted a patent to the medieval guild of London printers called the Stationers' Company, giving the London guild the sole right of publishing books in England.[190] She reserved for the Crown the right of censorship; every book had to be approved by the royal censor or his substitute and be licensed. Each licensed book was entered in the Stationers' Register.[191] The first process in the printing of a Folio is the setting of the type. The haste of the compositor who fixed the print could be responsible for many of the errors and discrepancies found in Macbeth. A rushed compositor would attempt to retain in his memory large sections of copy, a practice which could result in error. Also, any mental or physical problems of the compositor would tend to affect the quality of his work.[192]

Satchell confirmed that at least two compositors were

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[189] Loc. cit.

[190] Ibid., p. 6.

[191] Loc. cit.

[192] Norman Nathan, "Compositor Haste in the First Folio," SQ, VIII (1957), 134.

engaged at different times on F_1.[193] While making an orthographic variants analysis in the Folio text of Macbeth, he noticed that the spellings "doe" and "goe" appear consistently from the play's beginning through III.iii, with the exceptions of I.vii. In I.vii, and in all of the rest of the play, the words are spelled as "do" and "go." He confirmed his theory by other spellings: deare / deere, here / heere, maiestie / maiesty, traytor / traitor, and weyward / weyard.[194] Satchell never determined, however, whether these variations were made by the compositors who set the type or by the scribes who prepared the folio for Jaggard's shop.

Expert compositors changed the author's spelling into that which they had learned in the printing house. When they found a word that was difficult to read or understand, they often simply printed the author's representation of the word.[195] Also, printers may have made variations in the spellings of words either to economize or fill up space in lines. Variants such as les and lesse, and nes and nesse endings may be the result of a printer's spacing techniques.[196] Therefore, a

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[193] John W. Shroeder, The Great Folio of 1632: Shakespeare's Plays in the Printing House, p. 6, citing Satchell.

[194] Loc. cit.

[195] J. D. Wilson, "Thirteen Volumes of Shakespeare: A Retrospect," MLR, XXV (1930), 410.

[196] M. St. Clare Byrne, "Anthony Munday's Spelling as a Literary Clue," The Library, IV (1924), 10.

number of misprints in a printed text may often be explained as misreadings by the compositor of ill-written words in the author's manuscript, or as attempts of the printer to revise the text for mechanical purposes.

Some mislined blank verse might also be explained as compositors' errors. Compositors probably habitually inverted and omitted small words which did not alter the sense in prose, but worked havoc with meter or rhythm in verse.[197] Many scholars believe, however, that mislined blank verse is a result of Shakespeare's having made marginal additions in which the verse endings and beginnings were not clearly indicated for the compositor.[198] These additions could have been written in the right margin which usually contained enough space for from one to four verse lines placed at full length and at right angles to the main text. If the hand writing were parallel to the text, the lines of verse would have had to be divided and, thus, look like prose.[199]

McKerrow suggests, however, that most of the greatest puzzles in early dramatic texts are not compositor errors, but errors of correctors who have ". . . forcibly wrested to an

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[197] Ibid., p. 142.

[198] W. W. Greg, The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare, p. 125.

[199] Leo Kirschbaum, "Shakespeare's Hypothetical Marginal Additions," MLN, LXI (1956), 44.

impossible sort of half-sense passages which in the beginning probably contained merely one or two literal errors which reference to the MS., or even a little thought would have sufficed to put right."[200] It seems that before printing had advanced very far, the proof reader would secure a form which he would proof on only one page attempting to restore sense or meter when the compositor had made a mistake, but the printer would continue to run impressions with the uncorrected type while the proofing was being done.[201] Corrections were made after proof was returned, but the first sheets were not destroyed.

A final possible theory bearing upon the status of the text of Macbeth concerns the idea that another dramatist may have revised the play so as to include music and song, popular in the drama during the early part of the seventeenth century. This theory is based on a reference to two songs found in the text of Thomas Middleton's The Witch which were introduced at III.v.34 and IV.i.43 of Macbeth. Their content is indicated only by the opening words in Shakespeare's stage directions, but their full text occurs at III.iii.39 and V.ii.60 of Thomas Middleton's The Witch. Since the latter play has some echoes of genuine passages from Macbeth, it is not unreasonable to

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[200]Ronald B. McKerrow, An Introduction to Bibliography, p. 259.

[201]Wilson, op. cit., p. 412.

suppose that its author was also the interpolator of the Shakespearean text.[202] Dramatic functions of the songs in Elizabethan plays were varied. Some included the portraying of character, establishing of setting, foreshadowing and forwarding of action, solving of mechanical problems, such as lapse of time, and creating of an illusion of action off-stage.[203] Exits and entrances were often accompanied by songs. Music was also used to create atmosphere, a function definitely served in Macbeth.

If a play required a song necessitating the talents of a trained singer, the dramatist may have adapted his script in such a way as to enable this person, probably not a member of the cast, to be introduced onto the stage. Most often, these singers took the roles of lower class characters such as rustics, clowns, or supernatural beings. As was customary during this period, characters of exalted station seldom sang in public.[204] It seems that the etiquette of the day prohibited a gentleman from musically performing in public. One assumes, then, that the witch scenes in Macbeth were possibly interpolated into the text to provide music. The role of Hecate would certainly fit the lower station prerequisite and could very

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[202] Sir E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 472.

[203] John H. Long, Shakespeare's Use of Music, p. 8.

[204] Ibid., p. 3.

possibly have been introduced into the already existing manuscript as an excuse for the presence of a trained singer. The addition of such scenes would, of course, have necessitated alterations and revisions in the later scenes.[205]

This investigation shows definite discrepancies in the text indicating that some revisions of Shakespeare's original text have been made. The problems of identifying a reviser and establishing a date of revision remain yet to be resolved.

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[205] Muir, op. cit., p. xxxvi.

CHAPTER III

SHAKESPEARE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MIDDLETON

Toward the close of the eighteenth century, a manuscript called The Witch, written by Thomas Middleton, was discovered. This play has since proved to be of little significance except for the fact that it contains scenes about witchcraft similar to those in Shakespeare's Macbeth. A controversy among scholars has since ensued as to whether Shakespeare was indebted to Middleton, or Middleton to Shakespeare. Many and varied arguments have been written, and this chapter will represent an attempt to present some of the resulting opinions.

An exact date for the composition of The Witch has never been determined. The existing manuscript was transcribed by the scrivener, Ralph Crane, at some time between 1620 and 1627.[206] Middleton's dedication indicates that the play had been a failure on the stage and had not been acted for several years at the time the transcript was made:

> To The Truly Worthy and Generously Affected
> THOMAS HOLMES, Esquire.
> Noble Sir,
> As a true testimony of my ready inclination to your service, I have, merely upon a taste of your desire, recovered into my hands, though not without much difficulty, this ignorantly ill-fated labour of mine.
> Witches are, ipso facto, by the law condemned, and that only, I think, hath made her lie so long in imprisoned

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[206] R. C. Bald, "The Chronology of Middleton's Plays," MLR, XXXII (1937), 41.

> obscurity. For your sake alone she hath thus far conjured herself abroad, and bears no other charms about her but what may tend to your recreation, nor no other spell but to possess you with a belief, that as she, so he that first taught her to enchant, will always be
>
> Your devoted
> THO. MIDDLETON[207]

The scribe notes that the play had been performed at Blackfriars by His Majesty's Servants, a company which did not act before the fall of 1609.[208] Middleton had also stated in his dedication that the play had been "recovered" with difficulty. Bullen interprets this statement to mean that Middleton had to "recover" the manuscript from the King's company at the Balckfriars Theatre,[209] and Fleay suggests that The Witch was composed after Middleton had begun to write for the King's Men at the Blackfriars,[210] a company that had gone to the Blackfriars in 1613. Middleton is known to have written for the company from 1615 to 1624.[211]

Allusions within the play suggesting possible dates include Sebastian's scheme to prevent Antonio from consummating his marriage with Isabella, and the charm which she seeks from

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[207] Bullen, op. cit., V, 355.

[208] Muir, op. cit., p. xxxv.

[209] Bullen, op. cit., V, 355.

[210] Fleay, op. cit., p. xxv.

[211] Hudson, op. cit., p. xxxii.

the witches for this purpose. Sebastian may have been alluding, as some suggest, to the famous Essex divorce case of 1613.[212] If the allusion is accurate, the play, most likely dates from 1616, since the parts played by Simon Forman and Mrs. Turner in aiding the Countess of Essex were not disclosed to the public until the Overbury murder trials late in 1615.[213]

Middleton lived eleven years after Shakespeare's death; however, there is evidence to indicate that he had acquired a reputation as a dramatist as early as 1600, since in 1600 a poem in England's Parnassus was mistakenly attributed to him.[214] Furthermore, the following entries from Henslowe's Diary prove that Middleton was writing in the very early years of the seventeenth century:

> Pd at the apoynt of wm Jube the 21 of Octob3 1602 vnto mr medelton in pte of payment for his playe called chester tragedie the some of . . . .[215]
>
> Lent vnto Edward Jube the 9 of novmb3 1602 to paye vnto mr mydelton in fulle paymente of his playe called Randowlle earlle of chester the some of . . . .[216]
>
> Lent vnto the company to geve vnto Thomas deckers & midelton in earneste of ther playe called the pasyent

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[212] Bald, op. cit., p. 41.

[213] Loc. cit.

[214] Furness, op. cit., p. 391.

[215] Henslowe, op. cit., p. 205.

[216] Ibid., p. 206.

man & the onest hore the some of 1604 . . . .[217]

Lent at the a poyntment of John ducke in earneste of A playe called the some of . . . 3 of Octob3 1604 to mr mydellton . . . .[218]

Lent vnto the company the 22 of majj 1602 to geue vnto antoney monday & mihell drayton Webster & the Rest mydelton earenste of A Boocke called sesers ffalle the some of . . . .[219]

Lent vnto Thomas downton the 29 of maye 1602 to paye Thomas dickers drayton mydellton & webster & mondaye in fulle paymente for ther playe called too shapes the some of . . . .[220]

Chambers accepts the possibility of some interpolation in Macbeth which he limits to three passages: II.v; IV.i.39-43, 125-132.[221] These are all concerned with Shakespeare's use of the supernatural. He refers to the opening words of two songs, "Come away, come away," and "Black spirits," in his stage directions in III.v.34 and IV.i.43. The full texts of these songs occur in Middleton's The Witch, III.iii.39 and V.ii.60. Other scholars suggest that additional lines in Macbeth bear a more than accidental resemblance to Middleton or, at least, show traces of another hand. These passages include I.i, ii, iii.1-37; II.i.61, iii; IV.iii.140-159; V.ii.

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[217] Ibid., p. 209.

[218] Ibid., p. 217.

[219] Ibid., p. 201.

[220] Ibid., p. 202.

[221] Sir E. K. Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 472.

47-50, v. 32-33, viii.35-75, and ix. One must be especially concerned with the passages pertaining to witchlore, however, since they appear to be the most directly associated with Middleton. It is necessary, first, to survey the basic Elizabethan beliefs regarding the supernatural.

Shakespeare's time appeared to be a period in which devils and demons were numbered into the hundreds of thousands; even physicians often thought that sickness was a kind of demoniacal possession.[222] Most of the Elizabethans readily accepted the presence of spirits in the world, the active agents of the devil. Witchlore in the drama of the period seems to have been founded upon a species of superstition prevailing in England and Scotland. Witchcraft had attracted the attention of the government during the reign of Henry VIII who had enacted a statute declaring all witchcraft and sorcery to be felonious.[223] Those who practiced sorcery seemed to have greatly increased in numbers by the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign. For example, Bishop Jewel, preaching before the Queen, in 1558, told her:

> It may please your Grace to understand that Witches and Sorcerers within these few last years are marvelously

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[222] Elmer Stoll, "The Objectivity of the Ghosts in Shakespeare," PMLA, XXII (1907), 236.

[223] Madeline Doran, "That Undiscovered Country, PQ, XXIII (1941), 414.

> increased within your Grace's realm. Your Grace's subjects pine away, even unto the death, their colour fadeth, their flesh rotteth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft, I pray God they never practise further than upon the subject.[224]

Concern for witchcraft was accelerated in 1597, when King James VI of Scotland published his Daemonologie. His book contained a collection of the mysteries of witchcraft revealed by Agnes Wilson while being persecuted. It seems that Agnes and Dr. Fian, "Register to the Devil," were involved in a plot to drown King James on his return from Denmark in 1590.[225] The publication, News from Scotland, explains that Agnes, after severe torture, confessed that she

> . . . took a black toad, and did hang the same up by the heels, three days, and collected and gathered the venom as it dropped and fell from it in an oystershell and kept the same venom close covered, until she should obtain any part or piece of foul linen cloth, that had appertained to the King's Majesty, as shirt, handkercherf, napkin, or any other thing, ...[226]

She further confessed that her attempt was unsuccessful, but that had she obtained the piece of linen, she would have been able to bewitch the King to death. She also prepared a cat

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[224] Ibid., p. 474, citing Bishop Jewel.

[225] "Rump Worship," Gentleman's Magazine, VII (1737), 556.

[226] "Remarkable Accounts of Witches in Scotland," Gentleman's Magazine, XLIX (1779), 449, citing News from Scotland.

and parts of a dead man which were then

> . . . conveyed into the midst of the sea by all these witches sailing in their riddles or cieves, . . . there did arise such a tempest in the sea, as a greater hath not been seen: which tempest was the cause of the perishing of a boat or vessel coming over from the town of Brunt-island to the town of Lieth, wherin was sundry jewels and rich gifts, which should have been presented to the now Queen of Scotland, at her Majesty's coming to Lieth.[227]

Agnes finally admitted that her witchcraft was also responsible for the contrary wind which had detained King James' ship. When he did arrive finally in Scotland, James was present at the trial by torture and the burning of Agnes and two hundred other witches,[228] and soon after the publication of his book, six hundred persons were executed at one time for having been involved in witchcraft.[229]

Shortly after King James had succeeded Elizabeth in the English throne, his Daemonologie reappeared in 1603, now with a preface informing the reader of ". . . the fearfull abounding at this time in this country, of these detestable slaves of the Divel, the Witches, or enchanters."[230] Later, in that same

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[227] Loc. cit.

[228] Brandes, op. cit., II, 97.

[229] Drake, op. cit., p. 477.

[230] Loc. cit., citing King James' Works as published by James, Bishop of Winton in 1616.

year, he enacted a new statute, stating that anyone convicted of witchcraft or sorcery would be punished with death.[231] Along with the already existing superstitions, these fierce measures by the King tended to make popular the belief in witchcraft.

A number of parallels between the witch scenes in Shakespeare and those in Middleton may be explained in the theory that both writers made use of the same sources. For example, Middleton wrote "For the maidservants and the girls o' th' house,' / I spic'd them lately with a drowsy posset" (IV.iii.17), and "Sh'ad took the innocence of sleep upon her" (IV.iii.47),[232] which may be compared with Shakespeare's lines: "Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their possets" (II.ii.6), and "Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more! / Macbeth does murder sleep'--the innocent sleep." (II.ii.35) For their source material, Shakespeare and Middleton needed only to have observed their contemporary events, inasmuch as witch-hunting was becoming such a popular activity. Indeed, Stoll argues that most dramatists' superstitious lore was drawn from the events of the day, an attitude which affected an entire nation.[233] Thus, dramatists may not have needed to consult

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[231]Drake, op. cit., p. 478.

[232]Bullen, op. cit., V, 429; 431.

[233]Elmer Stoll, "The Objectivity of the Ghosts in Shakespeare," PMLA, XXII (1907), 240.

books and romances for this kind of information. However, if they did resort to the printed page, they could have found an abundance of material in the various accounts of the Scottish witch trials published near the turn of the century.[234] These Scottish witches, in whom King James had displayed such an interest, resemble closely those found in Macbeth. They were said to have possessed prophetic powers and to have been capable of brewing storms and sailing the sea in sieves. It is significant, one thinks, that Shakespeare may even have had occasion to visit Scotland. Chambers states that a certain acting company was residing in Aberdeen in 1603, perhaps the Chamberlain's Men, who had been forced to withdraw from London for a time because of their recent participation in the Essex "Innovation."[235] If Shakespeare had accompanied this group, his visit to Scotland provided him an excellent opportunity to pick up local color for his "blasted heath."

Reginald Scott's The Discovery of Witchcraft was also available, having been published in 1584.[236] Scott's witches, who bargain with the devil and sell both body and soul, were ugly, wrinkled, old women. These fearful wretches could place

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[234]Hardin Craig, The Complete Works of Shakespeare, p. 1045.

[235]Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, II, 269.

[236]Stoll, op. cit., p. 237.

curses on their neighbors resulting in illnesses and even death. Moreover, Scott records that a certain sect of witches made their living by telling fortunes, curing illnesses, and working miracles. These were capable, also, of brewing storms, raising spirits out of graves, and transforming themselves and others into various animals. Furthermore, some believed that these witches kept spirits in the form of toads and cats.[237] It is obvious, then, that both Middleton and Shakespeare could have consulted King James' work for material for their sorcery scenes, since the types of witches used by both dramatists are adequately described in James' writings.

As it has been shown, Shakespeare also used Holinshed's Chronicles as his source material for the main plot in Macbeth. It is possible to conclude, therefore, that the following passage from Holinshed's 1577 edition might have been used, also, by Middleton as a source for the cauldron scene:

> . . . found one of the witches rosting upon a wooden broch an image of wax at the fier, resembling in each feature the kings person, made and devised (as is to be thought) by craft and art of the divell: an other of them set reciting certeine words of inchantment and still bastet the image with a certeine liquor verie busilie.[238]

Middleton seems to have revised this material as follows:

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[237]Drake, op. cit., p. 480, citing Discoverie of Witchcraft, book i, chapter 3, pp. 7-11.

[238]Holinshed, op. cit., V, 234.

Hec. Is the heart of wax
Stuck full of magic needles?

Stad. Tis done, Hecate.

Hec. And is the farmer's picture and his wife's
Laid down to th' fire yet?

Stad. They're a-roasting both too?

Hec. Good, then their marrows are amelting subtly.[239]

Middleton, also, could have found material for the cauldron scene in the Daemonologie, wherein James wrote that these slaves of Satan ". . . make pictures of waxe or clay, that by the roasting thereof, the persons that they beare the name of, may be continually melted or dried away by continuall sicknesse."[240] Obviously, Shakespeare consulted Holinshed, also, as it is Holinshed who suggests the prophecy of the witches to Banquo and Macbeth:

> It fortuned as Makbeth and Banquho iournied towards Fores, where the king then laie, they went sport'ng by the waie together without other companie, saue onelie themselues, passing through the woods and fields, when suddenlie in the midest of a laund, there met them three women in strange and wild apparell, resembling creatures of elder world, whome when they attentiuelie beheld wondering much at the sight, the first of them spake and said: All haile Makbeth, thane of Glammis (for he had latelie entered into that dignitie and office by the death of his father Sinell.) The second of them said: Haile Makbeth thane of Cawder. But the third said: All haile Makbeth that

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[239] Bullen, op. cit., V, 368-369.

[240] Drake, op. cit., p. 482, citing James' Works by Winton, p. 116.

hereafter shalt be king of Scotland.

Then Banquo; What manner of women (saith he) are you, that seeme so little fauourable vnto me, whereas to my fellow heere, besides high offices, ye assigne also the kingdome, appointing foorth nothing for me at all? Yes (saith the first of them) we promise greater benefits vnto thee, than vnto him, for he shall reigne in deed, but with an vnluckie end: neither shall he leaue anie issue behind him to succeed in his place, where contrarile thou in deed shalt not reigne at all, but of thee those shall be borne which shall govern the Scotish kingdome by long order of continuall descent. Herewith the foresaid women vanished immediatlie out of their sight. This was reputed at the first but some vaine fantasticall illusion by Mackbeth and Banquho, insomuch that Banquho would call Mackbeth in iest, king of Scotland; and Mackbeth againe would call him in sport likewise, the father of manie kings. But afterwards the common opinion was, that these women were either the weird sisters, that is (as ye would say) the goddesses of destinie, or else some nymphs of feiries, indued with knowledge of prophesie by their necromanticall science, because shortlie after, the thane of Cawder being condemned at Fores of treason against the king committed; his lands, liuings, and offices were giuen of the kings liberalitie to Macbeth.[241]

The witches disappear from Holinshed immediately after the account of their meeting Macbeth on the blasted heath. The warning, "beware Macduff" (IV.i.84), is given by ". . . certeine wizards, in whose words [Macbeth] put great confidence."[242] The prophecies concerning "none of woman born" and Birnam wood (IV.i.96, 110-112) are made by ". . . a certeine witch, whome hee had in great trust."[243] Shakespeare reduces Holinshed's

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[241] Holinshed, op. cit., V, 268.

[242] Ibid., p. 390.

[243] Loc. cit.

witches to three, whom he pictures as Scotch sorceresses, old withered hags capable of some prophetic utterings, and who make invisible flights through the air. In addition, The Scotorum Historie (1526-1527), written by Hector Boece, describes the meeting of Macbeth and the sisters as an actual occurrence that took place on the road to Forres.[244] In Wyntown's Cronykil, these sisters appear to Macbeth in a dream.[245] The prophecies to "beware Macduff" and those concerning Birnam wood and"none of woman born" seem to have been spoken by the devil, who was, in Wyntown's version, Macbeth's father.[246]

A study of the similarities and differences between Shakespeare's and Middleton's sets of witches must next be considered. First, it is obvious that Shakespeare's witches are dried-up, hag-like creatures with choppy fingers, skinny lips and beards, who dwell in the murky desert places. They brew storms and rejoice in the disasters which they cause. They are not endowed with human qualities but seem to have no parents or offspring, no human passions or relations. With the exception of Hecate, they are nameless. They appear in thunder and lightning and vanish without a moment's notice.

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[244] Hudson, op. cit., p. xii.

[245] Furness, op. cit., p. 395.

[246] Kittredge, op. cit., p. xi.

They ride in sieves and are associated with evil spirits who dwell in toads and cats. Shakespeare's witches make compacts with the devil and his angels, who in turn, grant them prophetic powers.[247] They symbolize evil and represent demon power over the soul.[248] From the first moment after they meet Macbeth, his destiny is changed. Macbeth, who is a free moral agent on his first meeting, by Act IV, has sold himself to evil, and under the influence of Hecate, he is led to destruction.[249]

No superstitious characters in Shakespeare's plays are frauds; rather, he always treats them with dignity. In contrast, Middleton's witches play comic roles.[250] Even the names which he assigns to them, such as Puckle, Hoppo, and Hellwain, are meant to be humorous. These witches have human properties; they are also preoccupied with sex, and Hecate even has a son. They brew pieces of dead children, fly through the air, dance around caldrons, and melt waxen images. They are creatures upon whom one, who is plotting mischief, would be likely to call for consultation or help. On the other hand,

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[247] Walter C. Curry, "The Demonic Metaphysics of Macbeth," SP, XXX (1933), 395.

[248] Doran, op. cit., p. 414.

[249] Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clarke, "Shakespeare's 'Macbeth,' a Study Program," Poet Lore, XX (1909), 234.

[250] Elmer Edgar Stoll, Shakespeare Studies, p. 246.

the contents of the cauldron, in the heath scenes in both Middleton's and Shakespeare's plays are very nearly the same. However, instead of Shakespeare's "grease that's sweaten from the murderer's gibbet," and the "finger of birth-strangled babe" (IV.i.74, 75), Middleton's witches use "the gristle of a man that hangs after sunset" and the "fat of an unbaptized brat."[251] In both plays, an owl and cat give notice of the time for the witches to depart. In Shakespeare's play, Harper cries, ". . . 'tis time, 'tis time." (IV.i.5) Middleton wrote:

> Hec. Heard you the owle yet?
> Stad. Briefly in the copps.
> Hec. 'Tis high time for us then.[252]

Several of Hecate's lines in Shakespeare are similar to those in Middleton's play. For example, Shakespeare's Hecate remarks that Macbeth is but ". . . a wayward son, who loves for his own ends . . . ." (III.v.14) Middleton's Hecate similarly refers to a youth as follows, "I know he loves me not, nor there's no hope on't."[253] Hecate in Macbeth remarks, "I am for the air" (III.v.20); Middleton's Hecate says, "I am for

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[251] Bullen, op. cit., V, 366.

[252] Ibid., V, 414.

[253] Ibid., V, 376.

aloft."[254] Shakespeare's Hecate tells her sisters, "I'll charm the air to give a sound, / While you perform your antique round" (IV.i.129-130); Middleton's Hecate has a similar occasion to say, "Come, my sweete sisters, let the air strike our tune, / Whilst we shew our reverence to yond peeping moone."[255]

The subject matter involving Middleton's witches, who proclaim their supernatural characteristics in their songs, seems not to parallel that involving Shakespeare's witches who had neither voices not joints that could sing or dance.[256] Hecate's words and songs appear to be, therefore, inconsistent with the central motive of Shakespeare's play.[257] For this reason, many scholars have considered the role of Hecate to be an intrusion into Shakespeare's text, her lines having been interpolated into Macbeth at a date later than the one governing original composition. Hecate's first speech begins with her complaint that she has been cold-shouldered, as if she resents her exclusion from the scene on the blasted heath:

> How did you dare
> To trade and traffic with Macbeth
> In riddles and affairs of death.

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[254] Ibid., V, 416.

[255] Ibid., V, 446.

[256] George Herbert Cowling, Music on the Shakespearian Stage, p. 71.

[257] Paul, op. cit., p. 275.

> And I, the mistress of your charms
> The close contriver of all harms
> Was never called to bear my part
> Or show the glory of our art? (III.v.6-12)

Nosworthy feels that Hecate is not hurt because she was not included in previous scenes, but, instead, in previous performances.[258] Since her speeches resemble certain passages in The Witch, Middleton may have been the interpolator after Shakespeare had finished the play. If Middleton's play were unsuccessful, as previously suggested, he might have been employed at Blackfriars, nevertheless, to rework Shakespeare's more successful play and to develop its musical features to suit the growing popular demand for music in drama as well as to exploit a popular interest in the supernatural.[259] Since Hecate, who is an important and central figure in Middleton's play, could hardly have appeared for the mere purpose in singing her two songs, Middleton, would have had to rework two of his previous scenes in order to introduce her gradually into the play.

Several scholars, however, do not believe that Shakespeare's play was later reworked by Middleton. One of these is Hudson, who suggests that Middleton wrote The Witch at a time later

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[258] J. M. Nosworthy, "Hecate Scenes in Macbeth," RES, XXIV (1948), 138.

[259] Richard H. Barker, Thomas Middleton, p. 93.

than Macbeth and, hence, borrowed from Shakespeare. As it has been previously shown, Shakespeare had access to ample material from which to draw for the creation of his own scenes. The use of the supernatural seems necessary to Macbeth in order to create and emphasize the emotion of fear so essential to the entire plot.[260] In the first twelve lines, the appearance of the witches strikes the keynote of the whole drama, suggesting an atmosphere of darkness, blood, and general "hurly-burly," including thunder and lightning and turmoil and conflict among political powers.[261] That everything is confusion is emphasized by the fact that each of the first four opening scenes begins with a question: "When shall we three meet again . . .?" (I.i.1); "What blood man is that?" (I.ii.1); "Where hast thou been sister" (I.iii.1); and "Is execution done on Cawdor?" (I.iv.1) In fact, over twenty-five questions are asked in the first four scenes.[262] All of this evidence suggests an image of the destiny of Macbeth and of the tragedy in general, as well as the influence of environment upon man.[263]

Flatter suggests that the appearances of the witches

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[260] Campbell, op. cit., p. 209.

[261] Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man, p. 154.

[262] William Rosen, Shakespeare and the Craft of Tragedy, p. 58.

[263] Porter, op. cit., p. 229.

in these first scenes are necessary to an audience understanding in preparation for the time when the witches confront Macbeth and Banquo in I.iii.[264] Shakespeare found it necessary to prepare the audience beforehand for what they were going to see in the hope that they would accept these scenes as he had planned. It would have been impossible for Shakespeare to have prepared his audience adequately without these first scenes.[265] For example, IV.i opens with a witch scene that would not have been feasible without Hecate's preparation in III. The appearance of the witches, here, is more gruesome and suggestive of evil than in the first act in which they appeared as simple fortune tellers.[266] Now, with the help of Hecate, they become an active force for evil, seemingly taking delight in leading Macbeth astray with their prophecies.

Macbeth is not Shakespeare's only drama in which he uses the supernatural, although he seems to be more seriously preoccupied with it than he is in his other tragedies.[267] In IV.i.69-72, wherein Macbeth demands that the witches foretell his future, there is a direct parallel to a passage from 2 Henry VI, in which Eleanor, in her eagerness to learn what the

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[264] Flatter, op. cit., p. 95.

[265] Ibid., p. 96.

[266] Porter, op. cit., p. 234.

[267] Beatrice D. Brown, "Exemplum Materials Underlying Macbeth," PMLA, L (1935), 714.

future holds, sees a witch who raises a spirit by incantation and foretells the fate of those plotting to remove Gloucester from the Protectorship:[268]

Bolingbroke: What shall befall the Duke of Somerset?

Spirit: Let him shun castles!
Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains
Than where castles mounted stand.
Have done, for more I hardly can endure.

Bolingbroke: Descend to darkness and the burning lake!
False fiend, avoid![269]

In both Macbeth and Hamlet, Shakespeare uses the supernatural as a human belief which becomes a motive power leading to results by purely natural means.[270] The dramatist deals with inner thoughts, desires, motives, beliefs, and their consequences emerging into an action which begins with supernatural characters. Since, in both plays, Shakespeare is trying to create an atmosphere of confusion and bewilderment, he begins with darkness immediately conveying to the audience a sense of restlessness, doubt, and confusion.[271]

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[268]Oral S. Coad, "Was Macbeth Indebted to Henry VI?," MLN, XXXVIII (1923), 186.

[269]Hardin Craig, The Complete Works of Shakespeare, p. 245.

[270]H. M. Doak, "'Supernatural Soliciting' in Shakespeare," Sewanee Review, XV (1907), 321.

[271]Rosen, op. cit., p. 56.

To substantiate further the theory that Middleton was indebted to Shakespeare, Olive found other plays in which Middleton seems to have imitated Shakespeare. For example, in The Family of Love, Middleton creates a pair of lovers, Gerardine and Maria, who parallel Shakespeare's famous lovers, Romeo and Juliet.[272] The male lover in both plays overhears the girl express her love for him; and when he speaks, she wants to know who is there. The man, then, hears someone approaching and bids the girl farewell. The lover portests, and the girl promises to "send" to him. Gerardine, like Romeo, was banished from the house and had two companions who scoffed at love. Romeo was exiled, and Gerardine pretended self-exile. Middleton's comedy ends happily; however, its speeches, as in Macbeth, seem to emphasize the force of destiny: "More words cannot force what destiny hath seal'd. Who can resist the influence of his stars . . . ?"[273] Lines in The Family of Love with a similar impact are "In time's swift course all things shall find event, / Be it good or ill; and destinies do grant . . . ."[274]

Another instance in which Middleton may have borrowed from Shakespeare occurs in The Family of Love. Here, lines

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[272] W. J. Olive, "Imitations of Shakespeare in Middleton's The Family of Love," PQ, XXIX (1950), 75.

[273] Bullen, op. cit., III, 12.

[274] Ibid., III, 19.

resemble those of Falstaff, who knew the true prince by instinct, in I Henry IV:[275]

> Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules: but beware instinct; the lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter; I was now a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself and thee during my life; I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. Hostess, clap to the doors: watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, fellowship come to you! What, shall we be merry? shall we have a play extempore?[276]

Similarly, Mistress Purge, after trying to explain her actions in giving her wedding ring to her husband in the dark, relies upon her instinct: "I knew him then to be my husband e'en by very instinct."[277]

The fact that an exact date of composition has never been established for either The Witch or Macbeth makes it impossible for one to establish the extent of Shakespeare's indebtedness. One observes, however, that too many similarities exist between Shakespeare and Middleton for one to ignore the evidence which shows that a relationship of some type did exist. Perhaps, future research will shed new light on the problem.

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[275] Olive, op. cit., p. 77.

[276] Hardin Craig, The Complete Works of Shakespeare, p. 688.

[277] Bullen, op. cit., III, 113.

CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN TEXTUAL PROBLEMS IN THE F_1 TEXT OF *MACBETH*

An investigation of the text of F_1 *Macbeth* reveals several discrepancies and problems which tend to indicate that the text of the play is not exactly as Shakespeare had originally composed it. The most significant of these omissions pertains to directions involving staging conditions.

First, the episode of the murder of Duncan, III.i, probably was intended to take place on stage, in full view of the audience. Thus, his sleeping chamber may have been placed to the side of and above the stage in an alcove, perhaps with curtains to conceal it from the main area of the stage. Furthermore, stairs may have led from this area to the main stage, since one recalls that Macbeth tells his wife that he "descended" from the King's chambers. Hence, as II.i opens, one probably is supposed to observe Macbeth's murdering of Duncan. Lady Macbeth, then, enters the main stage area from an opposite side where she has just completed her task of intoxicating the king's grooms. The first line of her speech, "That which hath made them drunk, hath made me bold," may be to the drunken porter from whom she could have just parted, the character who, rudely interrupts iii. Afterwards, in her speech she refers to the grooms: "What hath quench'd them, hath given me fire." (1. 4)

As the owl shrieks, she notices that ". . . the Doores are open," and that her husband is "about it." (1. 7)

After Macbeth descends to the main area of the stage, he speaks to his wife, "This is a sorry sight." (1. 30) The two, no doubt, (along with the audience) are observing their handiwork, i.e., the bloody body of King Duncan, although most scholars think he is alluding to his bloody hands. Lady Macbeth, then, suddenly discovers the daggers which Macbeth so stupdily has removed from the murder chamber. Chiding him for being "Infirme of purpose" (1. 66), she returns to the chamber with the daggers and involves the guards by smearing them with blood. As she leaves the murder area, she may, then, close the "curtains," thus sealing the "sorry sight" from the audience. It is significant, at least, that Macbeth's speech during his wife's absence is short--only seven lines long. One thinks that these lines would hardly permit her to go to another part of the castle to complete her tasks. Therefore, the murder appears to have been located directly within the main stage area, as the text suggests. This theory is dramatically astute, since it encourages audience anticipation of future events.

Another similar staging situation may explain the problems involving the short broken scenes occurring in III.v and vi, and IV.i. First, there probably should be scene divisions in the passage beginning with III.v, since it may have utilized

the open area of the stage with the witches to one side, making preparations for their supernatural excursions. Attention is directed by the text to their conversation as the scene opens with the much disputed Hecate passages which do not seem to be an intrusion into the play at this point, since Hecate's appearance has been prepared for in previous passages. For example, the first is located in Macbeth's speech, II.i.65: "Witchcraft celebrates Pale Heccats Offrings"; and secondly, in another of Macbeth's speeches, III.ii.50:

> . . . ere the Bat hath flowne
> His Cloyster'd flight, ere to black Heccats summons
> the shard-borne Beetle, with his drowsie hums,
> Hath rung Nights yawning Peale,
> There shall be done a deed of dreadfull note.

Furthermore, the songs introduced into III.v may likely have been well-known ballads of the day, rather than Middleton's later creations. Rather than end the scene with Hecate's speech, ". . . come let's make haste, shee'l soone be Backe againe," the witches might have remained on stage, engaged in their weird preparations for the apparition scenes. In order to allow them the time needed to prepare their equipment, Shakespeare, then, brings in "Lennox and another Lord" on the other stage in the process of their journey. Engrossed in conversation, they walk across the stage, and the witches again are the focus of attention when the apparition passage occurs. The scene would, then, end upon Macbeth's last speech in IV.i.

This arrangement does away with the multiplicity of brief, interrupting scenes.

Before dispensing with a consideration of this apparition scene, it is necessary to call attention to Macbeth's speech that occurs directly after the stage direction, "A show of eight Kings, and Banquo last, with a glasse in his hand." Here Macbeth says, "Thou art too like the Spirit of Banquo: Down: Thy Crowne do's feare mine Eye-bals." It seems probable that "Down" refers to ghost's descent through a trapdoor by which means all of the apparitions may disappear from view. Indeed, in a previous speech, he suggests that stage properties are sinking: "Why sinkes that Caldron?" (IV.i.126) For that matter, bookkeeper's notes have been noted elsewhere by scholars in the text. For example, "Ring the bell" in II.iii.

A comma omission which also poses a problem occurs in the stage direction for III.i: "Senit sounded. Enter Macbeth as King, Lady Lenox, Rosse, Lords, and Attendants." Since no Lady Lennox is named elsewhere in the cast of characters, one concludes that a comma should be inserted between Lady and Lennox. The Lady, of course, would refer to Lady Macbeth as does a following speech assigned to "La.": "If he had been forgotten, / It had bene as a gap in our great Feast, / And all things unbeccming."

One notes, also, that this same stage direction never provides for Lady Macbeth's exit in III.i. It is apparent,

however, that Shakespeare did not intend for her to remain on the stage while Macbeth confers with the hired murderers, since her husband omits her from his plans: "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck." (III.ii.55) Original stage directions probably noted Lady Macbeth's exit when her husband bids Banquo, "Farewell," and turns to his lords saying, "Let every man be master of his time, / Till seven at Night, to make societie / The sweeter welcome." (III.i.49-51) Here, Macbeth addresses his wife: "We will keepe our selfe till Supper time alone: / While then, God be with you. (III.i.52-53) It is obvious that at this point Lady Macbeth should exit before Macbeth next speaks to his servant: "Sirrah, a word with you: Attend those men / Our pleasure?" (III.i.54-55)

A misassignment of lines occurs in III.ii. In this episode, Lady Macbeth has just found her husband alone and despondent. He tells her "O, full of Scorpions is my Minde, deare Wife: / Thou known'st, that Banquo and his Fleans lives." (III.ii.45-46) She then comforts him: "but in them, Natures Coppie's not eterne." (III.ii.47) F_1 assigns the next line to Macbeth: "There's comfort yet, they are assailable, / Then be thou jocund." (III.ii.48) This line probably should be included with Lady Macbeth's previous speech, since it is the advice which she would likely use to raise her husband's despondent spirits. The remainder of the speech might then be assigned plausibly to Macbeth: "ere the Bat hath flowne . . . ."

Further inadequate stage directions in the text may be noted in the banquet scene, where each entrance of Banquo's ghost has been indicated but never his exits. "Exit Ghost" should occur, first, after Macbeth's speech,

> Prythee see there.
> Behold, looke, loe, how say you:
> Why what care I, if thou canst nod, speake too.
> If Charnell houses, and our Graves must send
> Those that we bury, backe; our Monuments
> Shall be the Mawes of Kytes. (III.iv.86-91)

As Lady Macbeth begins the next speech, the Ghost should exit. The ghost's next exit would necessarily occur within the speech in which Macbeth addresses the apparition beginning with "What man dare, I dare: / Approach thou like the rugged Russian Beare . . . ." Here, Macbeth commands, "Hence horrible shadow, / Unreall mock'ry hence." In compliance with Macbeth's request, the Ghost probably should vanish as Macbeth's following statement seems to indicate: "Why so, being gone / I am a man againe: pray you sit still."

A likely printer's error occurs in V.iii. Here, Macbeth is asking the doctor to attempt to cure Lady Macbeth's illness: "If thou could'st Doctor, cast / The Water of my Land, finde her Disease." (V.iii.61-62) Shakespeare must have written, "my Lady" which the printer either confused or made an error in setting type. Macbeth obviously wants the doctor to make an analysis of his wife's urine for diagnostic purposes. The speech should probably read, "If thou could'st Doctor, cast /

The Water of my Lady, finde her Disease."

A final observation concerns another example of inadequate stage directions in V.v. Macbeth and his companions have fortified themselves within Dunsinane Castle. Here, a cry of women is heard, and Macbeth asks, "What is that noise." Obviously, Seyton leaves the stage to investigate the noise, during which brief absence, Macbeth says:

> I have almost forgot the taste of Feares:
> The time ha's beene, my, sences would have cool'd
> To heare a Night-shrieke, and my Fell of haire
> Would at a dismall Treatise rowse, and stirre
> As life were in't. I have supt full with horrors,
> Direness familiar to my slaughterous thoughts
> Cannot once start me. (V.v.13-19)

Stage directions are needed, here, to indicate Seyton's return at this point before Macbeth asks "Wherefore was that cry?"

Since most of these discrepancies may be resolved by the addition of adequate stage directions, one concludes that the text lacks some of Shakespeare's original notations. Perhaps, he had penned these instructions in the margins of his text and his compositors considered his notations insignificant. One feels that the proper staging of the scenes will eliminate many of these discrepancies which cause dispute. Also, it may be that the play text was a prompt copy, showing deterioration from numerous performances of the play. The text does contain lines resembling a prompter's notations for his own use. If the text were a prompt copy, it could show departures from

Shakespeare's manuscript extensively. However, unless a quarto version should suddenly appear, the extent of variation remains difficult to determine.

Even though obvious sources for Macbeth have been located, a date of composition has never been accurately defined. Allusions hinting at a date stretch into a ten-year span leaving too great a gap. Also the more than accidental resemblance of Macbeth to the Works of Shakespeare's contemporary, Thomas Middleton, leads one to believe that perhaps Middleton was involved in a reworking of the text. However, with no earlier text of Macbeth for comparison, the textual scholar can only make assumptions.

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